One Minute Guide - Motivational Social Work (MSW) Practice Evaluation Framework

What is the MSW Practice Evaluation Framework?

Motivational Social Work (MSW) is grounded in principles of *Motivational Interviewing (MI), Task Centred Social Work (TCSW),* and *Motivational Risk Assessment & Management (MRAM).* MSW is a relationship based model of practice that **aims to reduce resistance and ambivalence in service users (See – One Minute Guide – Motivational Social Work (MSW))**.

The evidence base for Motivational Social Work (MSW) identifies seven key elements essential to effective social work practice: *evocation, collaboration, autonomy, empathy, purposefulness, clarity about concerns and child focus*.

These seven elements are social work values that can be measured as behaviours during practice. It is these practice skills that we believe **make the difference in practice and are worth measuring**. **Our practice evaluation framework evaluates the degree to which these seven skills are employed by the social worker during their visits.**

Practice Evaluation Process

Our University of Bedfordshire practice evaluators have been embedded in the Child in Need and Disabled Children's teams since April 2015. The evaluation process has five key elements:

➢ ***Practice Observation***: social work practice is observed by a practice evaluator during home visits to service users (the aim is for each worker to be observed 5-6 times over the course of the project);

➢ ***MSW Coding Tool (reliable evaluation)***: the observation is evaluated against the MSW coding tool which grades each of the 7 MSW elements on a scale of 1-5 to determine proficiency (See ***One Minute***

Practice Observation → Observation Coded → Parent Interview → Coaching & Feedback → Practice Report → Training & Development → (Practice Observation)

Guide – MSW Coding Tool). A proficient social worker would score 3 or above in all seven areas, but ideally we are aiming for 3.5 and over;

➢ *Coaching & Feedback*: the outcome of the coded practice observation is fed back to the social worker in a coaching session to support them to develop their practice;

➢ *Service user feedback*: service users are consulted on their experience of service and complete a standardised questionnaire that measures change in family and service user outcomes.

➢ *Practice Report:* the scores of the coded practice observations and service user feedback are aggregated into a *Practice Report* by service and team break downs to identify areas of good practice and areas for support and professional development opportunities. Other measures like timescales for assessments and visits are less prominent in performance management and not used to drive practice reform, though are still monitored.

Our learning so far…

Early indicators show that Motivational Social Work (MSW) improves the quality of child and family engagement, and service user satisfaction. While it is too early to know if MSW influences outcomes the evidence has encouraged us to propose the model of practice and evaluation be extended to other areas of the service (Child Looked After Team, Independent Futures, and Youth Offending services).

A more emotionally intelligent style of practice needs a different style of leadership and management, particularly supervision. The existing literature tells us little about what skills are important to delivering 'good' supervision. In collaboration with the University of Bedfordshire we are developing the MSW Leadership and Management training program and MSW Supervision Evaluation Framework (reliable coding tool).

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