

## Making it Stick: Building an Infrastructure to Support Sustainability of the London Service Collaborative's Youth Transitions Protocol

The London Service Collaborative's intervention involves a protocol for supporting youth transitioning from the London Health Sciences Centre's (LHSC) Pediatric Emergency Department (PED) to community services (via the Crisis Intake Team (CIT) of Vanier Children's Services, Western Area Youth Services, and Craigwood Youth Services). Specifically, upon determining that a youth presenting at the LSHC PED would benefit from engaging with community mental health or addiction agencies or other community supports, LSHC PED physicians record key information on the *Mental Health and Addictions Referral for Children and Youth and Consent to Release Information Form* developed by the London Collaborative; this form is immediately faxed to CIT. The form records essential information such as youth needs, service involvement, and preferences (e.g., language). Within one business day of receiving the fax form, CIT contacts the youth and/or their family in order to discuss their specific needs and develop a plan to support them through the next steps of their journey. Possibilities for these next steps include connecting the youth/family with a previous/current service provider, intake to children's mental health services, referral to services and supports in other sectors, or plans for future follow up by CIT.

Implementation of this protocol has been extremely successful. "One year into implementation, 113 youth have been served by the London Service Collaborative's transition protocol with outstanding results," says John Mackay, the lead for CIT (working out of Vanier Children's Services) and a key player involved in developing the Collaborative's protocol. "I cannot imagine not continuing to provide and maintain a pathway which supports our youth and their families when they are most vulnerable," he says.

Indeed, developing supports to sustain the Collaborative's transition pathway has factored prominently into their planning processes. The Collaborative has established structures and processes to monitor and support the intervention over time, ensuring that feedback loops are in place to maintain the quality and relevance of the intervention. These structures and processes are occurring at both the agency and system levels, thus representing a comprehensive community infrastructure for sustainability.

The London Service Collaborative's sustainability plan is built around Implementation Drivers identified as "engines of change" by the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN). NIRN's implementation model represents one of the foundational frameworks of the Systems Improvement through Service Collaboratives initiative, and has helped Collaborative members understand what is needed to create and maintain system change. The drivers outlined by NIRN include Competency Drivers (selection, training, coaching, and performance assessment), Leadership Drivers (technical leadership and adaptive leadership), and Organization Drivers (decision support data systems, facilitative administration, and systems intervention)<sup>1</sup>. In London, these drivers have informed the development of a sustainability infrastructure that includes:

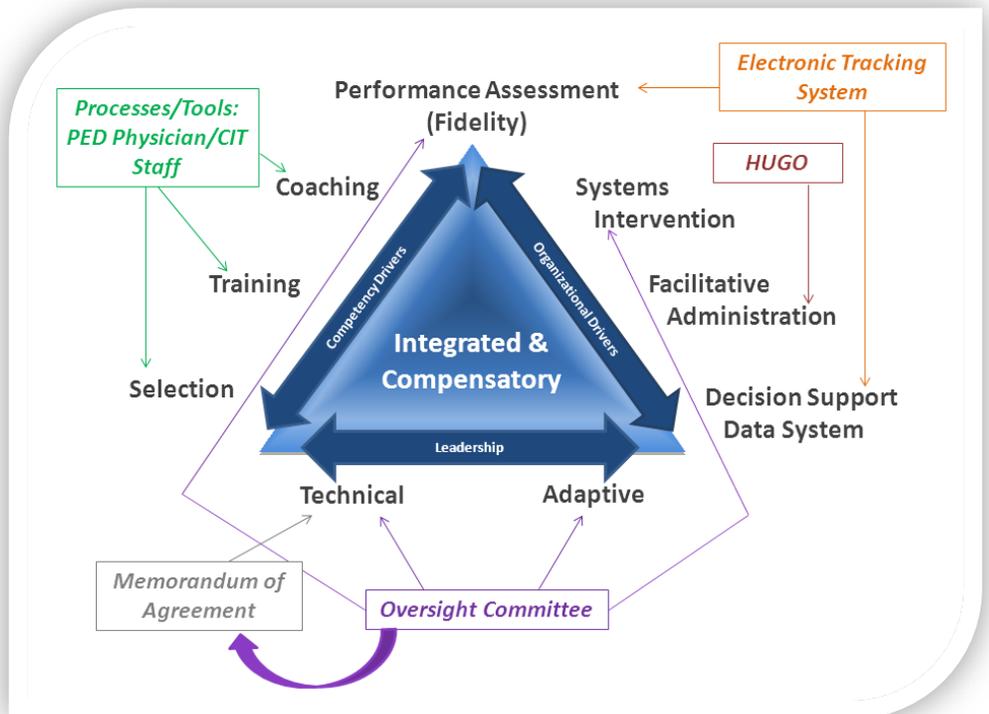
- ✓ An **Oversight Committee** composed of a small group of Service Collaborative members. This Committee will provide ongoing monitoring and review of the intervention and its system impacts, and will provide feedback and guidance to participating agencies and other relevant community stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about Implementation Drivers, see the NIRN website - <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation/implementation-drivers>

## Elements of the London Service Collaborative's Sustainability Plan and their Connection to the National Implementation Research Network's (NIRN) Implementation Drivers

- ✓ A **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)**, developed by the Service Collaborative to formally document the intervention protocol and to establish community commitment to sustain the intervention in the long term. The MOA outlines the details of the intervention, as well as its underlying values and principles. It provides the framework that participating agencies and the Oversight Committee will use for accountability, monitoring, and communication moving forward.



- ✓ **Electronic tracking systems and processes** at the agency level. For example, Vanier created an electronic database specifically to track youth connected with CIT through the London Service Collaborative transition protocol. This database is being used for evaluation and decision support at the agency and system levels. At the LHSC PED, the Service Collaborative's *Mental Health and Addictions Referral for Children and Youth and Consent to Release Information Form* will be included in the electronic database being established as part of the hospital's Healthcare Undergoing Optimization (HUGO) initiative, involving a shift from paper to electronic processes (including referrals).
- ✓ **Processes and tools associated with training, coaching, and selection drivers** at the agency level. This will ensure that the protocol is embedded in processes, structures, and roles so that it is sustainable despite staff turnover. For example, at LHSC, use of the *Mental Health and Addictions Referral for Children and Youth and Consent to Release Information Form* is part of standard practice for PED physicians, and all new PED physicians are trained on the transition protocol. At Vanier, a process map has been created outlining staff responsibilities for contacting youth/families referred from the LHSC PED and for supporting them to access appropriate community services. This map serves as a training tool for Vanier staff and ensures fidelity to the Youth Transitions Protocol.

Overall, the London Service Collaborative's sustainability plan is structured to maximize opportunities for performance assessment, evaluation, and training, while simultaneously allowing for a consideration of how the intervention is affecting (and affected by) organizational and system contexts. Moving forward, the feedback loops embedded in the sustainability structures and processes established by the Collaborative will facilitate any adaptations needed to maintain the success, quality, and relevance of the intervention in the long term. Through these mechanisms, the Collaborative is aiming to ensure that youth in need continue to be supported in their transitions from the LHSC PED to community services.