Empowering Human Service Organizations to Embrace Evidence Informed Practice: International Best Practices

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What is Knowledge Mobilization?

Knowledge mobilization is a broad term that includes the products, processes, and relationships among knowledge creators, users and mediators who are individuals or intermediary organizations that support knowledge brokering.

(Hawkins, 2011)
Archetypes of KM

♦ Knowledge Production
♦ Brokering & Intermediation
♦ Evidence Advocacy
♦ Research in Practice
♦ Building Networks (COP)
♦ Continuing Conceptual Development

(Davies, Powell & Nutley, 2014)
Knowledge: Multidimensional

- Organizational
- Practitioner
- Service User
- Research
- Policy
- Community
- Societal Context
KM: Methods of Communicating

- Peer reviewed publications
- Story telling & metaphors
- Action research
- Webinars, podcasts, blogging
- User friendly research summaries, toolkits
- Program evaluations, data mining
- Research practitioners
- User-led dissemination of research
Embedding Knowledge into Practice

- Enabling Policy
- Socialization of Knowledge
- Creating a Learning Culture
- Promotion of Critical Thinking
- Engagement & Empowerment of Front Line Practitioners
- Users as Partners in Learning
Multiple Case Study Research to Identify Best Practices in KM

♦ Informants are members of a community of practice (COP) in the area of KM
♦ This network was created in 2008 at a meeting convened by Research in Practice
♦ Meetings are convened either in person or via WebEx
♦ The group discusses challenges, best practices and new developments in KM
Participating Organizations

♦ Ontario Centre for Excellence for Child & Youth Mental Health, Ottawa, Canada
♦ FoUI Norrbotten, Research and Development/Innovation, Sweden
♦ Research in Practice, Dartington, UK
♦ Center for Innovative Practices, Begun Centre for Violence Prevention Research and Education at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.
Participating Organizations

♦ Benevolent Society, Sydney, Australia
♦ Centre for Effective Service, Dublin & Belfast
♦ Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services, Glasgow, UK
♦ Practice & Research Together (PART), Toronto, Canada
Methodology

♦ Semi-structured Interviews
♦ SKYPE and one in-person interview
♦ 8 international KM organizations
♦ Member checking with synopsis of interview
♦ Collection of additional material – reports, guidebooks, websites, other publications
♦ Identification of primary/secondary themes
♦ Member checking with COP via Webex
Interview Questions:

♦ How does your organization implement your commitment to knowledge mobilization?
♦ What are some of your successes?
♦ What challenges have been encountered?
♦ If you were to share your ‘lessons learned’ in integrating knowledge into practice, what would they be?
Major Themes:

♦ Organizational Context & Change
♦ Service User’s Role in Promoting Knowledge Mobilization
♦ Building Bridges Between Practice and the Academic World
♦ Cultural Context
♦ Knowledge is Empowerment
Organizational Context & Change

- Learning organizations
- KM champions & teams
- Failure is part of learning
- Organizational philosophy
- Building infrastructure
- Never enough time or money
- Use of social media
- The role of leaders (formal & informal)
Service User’s Role in KM

♦ Often overlooked in KM discussions
♦ Service users can provide unique and helpful insights on programs & services
♦ They can identify the outcomes and impact of the utilization of new knowledge
♦ It takes time and resources to engage service users
♦ Develop research agenda with service users
Building Bridges Between the Practice & Academic Worlds

- Strategies for engaging in knowledge transfer
- Outdated perception of academics as drivers of KM agenda
- Need collaborative design and input amongst academics, practitioners and service users
- Promoting communities of practice
- Develop practice-based research agendas
Cultural Context

- Appreciation of different cultural contexts
- Use of organizational and community assessments to ensure fit of KM strategies
- International conferences and communities of practice can increase our awareness of similarities and differences
- Very important to assess evidence informed practices to ensure that they are both culturally and diversity syntonic
Knowledge as Empowerment

- An empowering approach to KM can be inspirational for workers & service users
- Promote the development of “learning organizations”
- Important to ensure the “voices” and knowledge of diverse stakeholders are encouraged
Factors Promoting KM

♦ Data Mining
♦ The Role of the Research-Practitioner
♦ The Learning Organization
♦ Facilitating the Voice of Service Users
♦ Academic – Practitioner Partnerships
♦ Enabling Government Policy
Organisational Knowledge

Cultural Knowledge

Knowledge from Service Users

Empowerment through Knowledge

Knowledge from Practitioners

Knowledge from Academic Institutions
Critical Concepts in Moving KM Forward

- Multidimensional Evidence Informed Practice
- Art and Science of Implementation
- Participatory Adaptive Implementation
- Managing Organizational Transitions
- Creating a Learning Organization
Critical Concepts (continued)

♦ Advocacy for Enabling Policy Frameworks
♦ Multi-stakeholder Partnerships and Collaborative Teams
♦ KM Strategic Plans to Focus Initiatives & Optimize Outcomes
♦ Bringing Fiscal Literacy into the Discourse
♦ Multi-method Evaluation to Document Process, Outcomes and Impact