Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

# Information Sharing between the Child Welfare and Behavioral Health Systems: Perspectives from Four Stakeholder Groups

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ABSTRACT: This qualitative study articulates the challenges, best practices, and facilitators to information sharing when addressing the behavioral health needs of children in out-of-home care. Thirteen interviews and nine focus groups were conducted to illuminate the perspectives of foster parents, mental health clinicians, provider agency social workers, and city-employed child welfare professionals. In total, 65 individuals participated in this qualitative study and data were analyzed using a modified grounded theory approach. Results indicate that challenges and best practices in cross-system information sharing articulated across the four stakeholder groups are attributed to variation in information accessibility, clarity in roles and protocols, ability in obtaining signatures for consent /release forms, and attitudinal differences towards collaboration. Implications to improve policy and practice are discussed.

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