



Systems of Care for Children's Behavioral Health

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Alaska Behavioral Health Roadmap
Steering Committee

Background and Expertise



PERSONAL NAVIGATION
EXPERIENCE



IMPLEMENTATION AND
POLICY EXPERIENCE



ACADEMIC AND
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

What is the role of systems of care in children's behavioral health?

HISTORY OF
SYSTEMS OF CARE
(SOC)

DEFINITION OF A
SYSTEM OF CARE

PRACTICAL ASPECTS
OF SYSTEMS OF
CARE

BENEFITS AND
CHALLENGES IN
SYSTEM OF CARE
DESIGN

QUESTIONS TO ASK
WHEN DESIGNING A
SYSTEM OF CARE

Where did the system of care concept originate?

- Beth Stroul and Robert Friedman introduced the concept in 1986
 - unmet youth mental health needs
 - lack of community services
 - overuse of excessively restrictive settings
 - lack of cross-agency coordination
 - lack of youth and family partnership
- Widely accepted and implemented
- Large body of evaluation and research literature demonstrating effectiveness
- Improved and updated, first in 2010 and most recently in 2021

history

definition

practical
aspects

benefits and
challenges

questions to
ask

What is a system of care?



A comprehensive spectrum of effective services and supports for children, youth, and young adults with or at risk for mental health or other challenges and their families that is organized into a coordinated network of care, builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth, and is culturally and linguistically responsive, in order to help them to thrive at home, in school, in the community, and throughout life.

Stroul, B.A., Blau, G.M., & Larsen, J. (2021). The Evolution of the System of Care Approach. Baltimore: The Institute for Innovation and Implementation, School of Social Work, University of Maryland.

history

definition

practical
aspects

benefits and
challenges

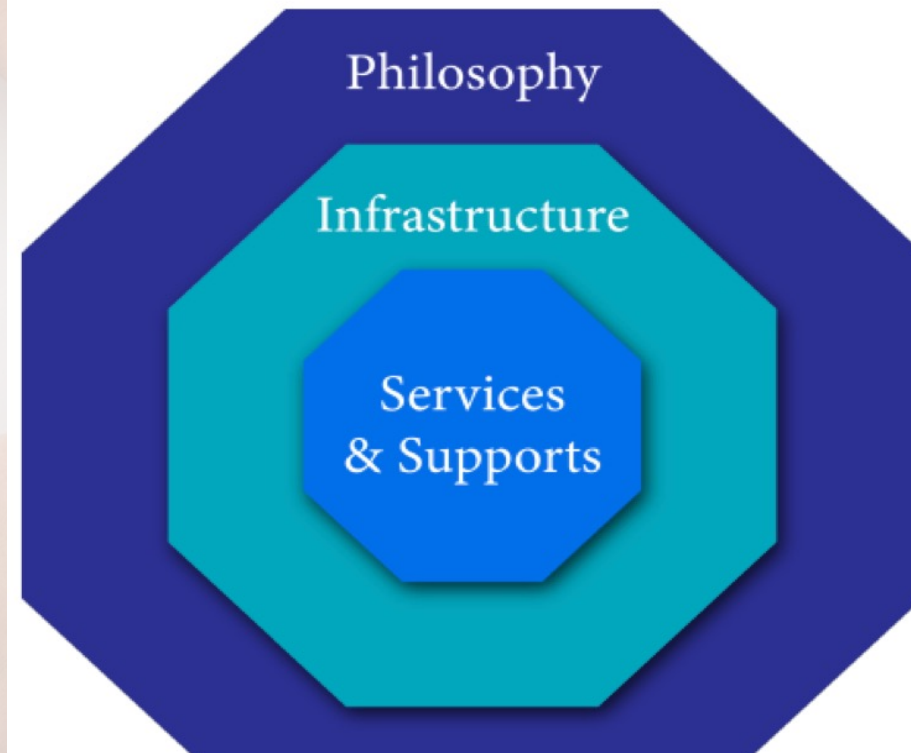
questions to
ask

How is a system of care conceptualized?

Figure 1. Dimensions of the System of Care Framework (Adapted from Stroul et al., 2010)



Figure 2. Elements of SOCs (Stroul et al., 2010)



history

definition

practical
aspects

benefits and
challenges

questions to
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What is a system of care philosophy?

CORE VALUES

1. Family and Youth Driven
2. Community Based
3. Culturally and Linguistically Competent

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Comprehensive Array of Services and Supports
2. Individualized, Strengths-Based Services and Supports
3. Evidence-Based Practices and Practice-Based Evidence
4. Trauma-Informed
5. Least Restrictive Natural Environment
6. Partnerships with Families and Youth
7. Interagency Collaboration
8. Care Coordination
9. Physical Health-Mental Health Integration
10. Developmentally Appropriate Services and Supports
11. Public Health Approach
12. Mental Health Equity
13. Data Driven and Accountability
14. Rights Protection and Advocacy

history

definition

practical
aspects

benefits and
challenges

questions to
ask

What is a system of care infrastructure?

- partnership with families and youth
- defined access/entry points to care
- financing (infrastructure, services, supports)
- interagency partnerships/agreements
- sufficient provider network
- process for workforce development/training
- quality management, accountability & improvement process
- strategic planning/resolving barriers

history

definition

practical
aspects

benefits and
challenges

questions to
ask

What are system of care services?

- Home and Community-Based Treatment and Support Services
 - Screening, assessment, diagnosis
 - Outpatient therapy
 - Care coordination
 - Crisis response and stabilization
 - Peer support
 - School-based services
 - Respite services
 - Transportation
 - And many, many more
- Residential Interventions
 - Treatment family homes
 - Therapeutic group homes
 - Inpatient services
 - Residential treatment
- Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention
- Specialized Services for Transition Age Youth and Young Children/Families

history

definition

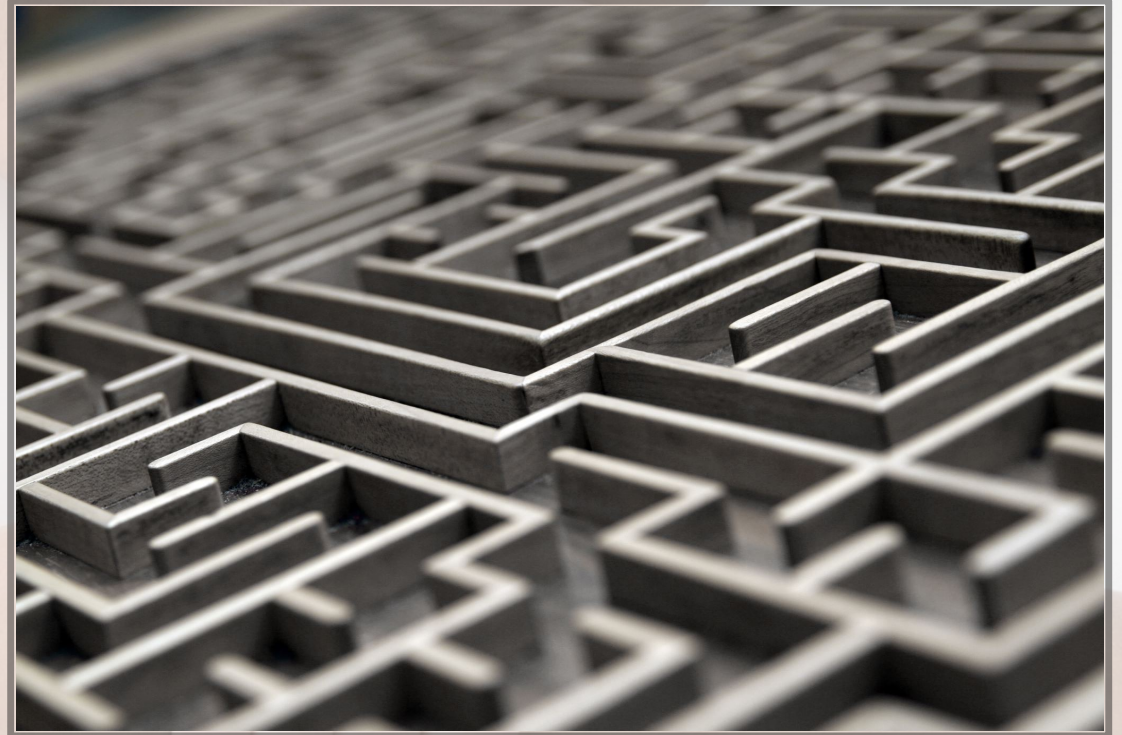
practical
aspects

benefits and
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What should families and youth experience in a system of care?

- No wrong door to access
- Complexity is hidden
- Stories are told once
- Alignment in SOC philosophy
- Full partners in decisions
- Co-creation and co-evaluation
- Experts whose voice matters



history

definition

practical
aspects

benefits and
challenges

questions to
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What are the challenges and benefits?



- Complex needs and complex systems/programs
- Access points and connections
- Evaluation can be challenging
- Data-driven, family/youth-centered, community-focused
- Flexible and adaptable concept
- More positive outcomes

history

definition

practical
aspects

benefits and
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ask

What should be considered in SOC design?

- How will service access differ based on community/region?
- What is the difference between accessing a service (medical necessity or other criteria) and accessing the system?
- What services are needed and how can they be funded?
- How will families/youth be included as partners in the design, implementation and evaluation process?
- What are the infrastructure priorities and how can they be addressed?

history

definition

practical
aspects

benefits and
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References:

Stroul, B. (2002). Issue brief: Systems of care: A framework for system reform in children's mental health. Georgetown University Child Development Center, National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health.

Stroul, B. A., Blau, G. M., & Friedman, R. M. (2010). Updating the System of Care concept and philosophy. Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health.

Stroul, B.A., Blau, G.M., & Larsen, J. (2021). The Evolution of the System of Care Approach. Baltimore: The Institute for Innovation and Implementation, School of Social Work, University of Maryland.