Alberta Provincial Wraparound Research Project
Alberta Provincial Wraparound Research Project

School-based Perspective on Wrapping Supports and Services around Alberta's Students: A Study of 13 Sites

The *School-based Perspective on Wrapping Supports and Services around Alberta's Students: A Study of 13 Sites* resulted from a collaborative Alberta Provincial Wraparound Research Project involving the Edmonton Public School District, Alberta Education, Learning Solutions, and the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP). Funding and other resources were provided by Alberta Education and the Edmonton Public School District.

Authors:
Jason S. Daniels, Learning Solutions, University of Alberta
Maija Prakash, Learning Solutions, University of Alberta
Niki Wosnack, Niki Wosnack Consulting Inc.
Jeffrey Bisanz, CUP, University of Alberta
Gloria Chalmers, Edmonton Public School District
Rebecca J. Gokiert, CUP, University of Alberta
Diane C. McNeil, Alberta Health Services
Mary Michailides, Alberta Education
Laurie Schnirer, CUP, University of Alberta
Stanley Varnhagen, Learning Solutions, University of Alberta
Catherine Walker, Alberta Education

Thank you to the Edmonton Public School District for its leadership role.

Please contact the University of Alberta for more information about:
- *Administrators' Perspectives on Wrapping Supports and Services around Students: A Pan-Alberta Survey*
- *Integrated Support for Children, Youth and Families: A Literature Review of the Wraparound Process*
- *School-based Perspective on Wrapping Supports and Services around Alberta's Students: A Study of 13 Sites*
- *Wrapping Supports and Services around Alberta's Students: Research Summary*.

Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP)
Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta
2nd Floor, Enterprise Square
10230 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4P6

E-mail: cup@ualberta.ca
Telephone: 780–492–6177
Website: www.cup.ualberta.ca

Please contact Alberta Education for more information about the wraparound approach in Alberta.

Alberta Education
Director
Cross-Ministry Services Branch
Main Floor, 10044–108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 5E6

Telephone: 780–422–5045
(Toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310–0000)
Website:
www.education.alberta.ca/wraparound

Table of Contents

School-based Perspective on Wrapping Supports and Services around Alberta's Students: A Study of 13 Sites

Wraparound Approach

Wraparound is often described as a definable planning process that results in a unique set of community services and natural supports that are individualized for a child or youth and his or her family to achieve a positive change (Burns & Goldman, 1999). The wraparound approach is beneficial in addressing the needs of children and youth whose vulnerabilities exceed the capacity of one school or sector, e.g., health, education, children's services, justice. These significant vulnerabilities may impact any aspect of a child's functioning, although the literature indicates that those with severe emotional and/or behavioural issues are the most frequent recipients of wraparound. The expression of vulnerabilities could stem from social disengagement, adverse life experiences, physical disabilities and/or other complex conditions.

A wraparound approach is a collaborative planning process that is team driven. The collaborative team should include the identified child/youth, his or her family/caregivers, other family supports, community members, school personnel, professionals and paraprofessionals, e.g.,mental health and behavioural specialists, public health nurses, social workers, counsellors, cultural brokers, learning specialists, recreation workers, youth workers. A wraparound team draws upon the knowledge, skills and services of all members to create a cohesive and integrated plan for the child/youth and his or her family.

Intervention plans, created in a wraparound process, are individualized and build upon the strengths and assets of the child/youth, his or her family, and the community (Burns & Goldman, 1999; Prakash et al., 2010; VanDenBerg & Grealish, 1996). Ideally, wraparound team members should meet regularly to implement and monitor plans to ensure their success.

A wraparound team was formed to create an intervention plan for Sydney, a Grade 9 student, who was increasingly socially disengaged and involved with high-risk activities. During the wraparound team's meeting, Sydney's teacher suggested that Sydney should become more involved with positive social activities at school. Sydney's mother shared with the team that her child really wanted to play hockey but had not been able to because of a lack of money for fees and equipment. The team discussed various ideas and decided that the after-school hockey drop-in would be the most feasible and immediate option for Sydney.

- The community recreation worker offered access to her club's hockey equipment.
- The team's resource officer offered to submit a referral to a sports-focused preventative program for at-risk youth.
- The individual acting as coordinator agreed to try to find tickets to a professional hockey game through her other community connections for Sydney and his estranged father to have a night out together.
- The mental health worker scheduled to meet with the student once a month to assess the progression and impact of this intervention.

Another meeting was scheduled one month from this one to reassess and revisit the intervention plan.

The wraparound approach aims to overcome the barriers of traditional interventions for children and youth with complex vulnerabilities (Bruns & Walker, 2010) by recognizing the following.

- Children and youth with numerous and systemic challenges often have overlapping and multiple problem areas, including basic needs that require attention.
- Families, children and youth are not always fully engaged in services as equal partners and their knowledge and strengths are rarely incorporated into intervention plans.
- Service systems tend to operate in silos, each with different philosophies, structures, funding streams, eligibility criteria and mandates.
- Service systems often do not work together spontaneously unless there is a mechanism to bring these systems together.

The following are some of the potential benefits of the wraparound approach (Suter & Bruns, 2009).

- Through collaboration, children and families can benefit from the skills, mandates and personnel of multiple services and sectors. This collaborative team format ensures that gaps and overlaps in service provision are minimized and that plans integrate multiple perspectives.
- Positive change has an increased likelihood of being maintained through efforts to involve families in plans and to maintain children within their own communities.
- Focusing on the strengths of children and families facilitates the development of new skills and increases competence, which may enhance optimism for the future. By building on strengths and assets, achieving familial buy-in is encouraged.
- Wraparound enhances community ties by establishing natural supports and unique community services for both the child/youth and his or her family. This can also help to build the overall capacity of the community to provide services that meet the needs of its population.

Upon entering a new junior high, Theresa found herself scared and alone. She was unsettled and very insecure from the shift from a small rural elementary to a much larger and more diverse urban school. At school, Theresa had crippling anxiety and depression and found herself alone most of the day. Home was no relief since her mother was also displaying mental health issues. After Theresa's father left, the family had no income. Theresa's mother was unable to cope with the demands of parenting and the prospect of finding a job, due to her own severe problems. Theresa started to cut herself and as the pressure continued she attempted suicide.

After a brief hospital stay, Theresa returned to school, but this time it was different. She was immediately referred to the school's wraparound team, which was made up of mental health staff, youth workers and other community partners. Theresa and her mother met with the team to create a plan that would address their full range of needs and build upon their strengths. Because the collaborating partners were already in place, implementation of the plan was almost immediate. Theresa's natural academic abilities were one of the strengths upon which the team focused. The wraparound lead worked with Theresa's teachers to make the classroom feel more safe and comfortable for Theresa. Social activities for Theresa were facilitated and supported by the wraparound team. Collaborating partners planned how to address her mother's mental health concerns.

Two years later, Theresa's GPA is over 90%, she is comfortable at school, and she is able to share her story of success publically and proudly. Her mother was able to go back to work after receiving supports. The family is now coping and succeeding. When pressures build up, both Theresa and her mother know which community services and supports to call upon to help them address their needs.

The following 10 principles are considered, by many, to be fundamental to all wraparound processes (Bruns, Suter, Force, & Burchard, 2005; Bruns, Walker, & The National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group, 2008; Burns & Goldman, 1999).

1. **Collaborative:** Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a single wraparound plan. The plan reflects a blending of team members' perspectives, mandates and resources. The plan guides and coordinates each team member's work toward meeting the team's goals**.**
2. **Community-based:** The wraparound team implements service and support strategies that take place in the most inclusive, most responsive, most accessible and least restrictive settings possible, and that safely promote child and family integration into home and community life.
3. **Culturally responsive:** The wraparound process demonstrates respect for and builds on the values, preferences, beliefs, cultures, and identity of the child/youth and family, and their community.
4. **Family engagement characterized by voice and choice:** Family and child/youth perspectives are intentionally elicited and prioritized during all phases of the wraparound process. Planning is grounded in family members' perspectives, and the team strives to provide options and choices such that the plan reflects family values and preferences.
5. **Individualized:** To achieve the goals laid out in the wraparound plan, the team develops and implements a customized set of strategies, supports and services.
6. **Natural Supports:** The team actively seeks out and encourages the full participation of team members drawn from family members' networks of interpersonal and community relationships. The wraparound plan reflects activities and interventions that draw on sources of natural support.
7. **Outcome based:** The team ties the goals and strategies of the wraparound plan to observable or measurable indicators of success, monitors progress in terms of these indicators, and revises the plan accordingly.
8. **Strengths based:** The wraparound process and the wraparound plan identify, build on, and enhance the capabilities, knowledge, skills and assets of the child and family, their community and other team members.
9. **Team driven:** The wraparound team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family and committed to the family through informal, formal, and community support and service relationships.
10. **Unconditional commitment:** A wraparound team does not give up on, blame or reject children, youth and their families. When faced with challenges or setbacks, the team continues working toward meeting the needs of the youth and family and toward achieving the goals in the wraparound plan until the team reaches agreement that a formal wraparound process is no longer necessary.

These value-based principles underscore the participatory and strengths-based nature of the wraparound planning process, especially the necessity of family involvement and the fundamental notion of family voice and choice. High fidelity wraparound (i.e., adherence to the fundamental principles of wraparound) has been associated with positive child, youth and family outcomes, such as increased behavioural strengths ratings, child functioning, parent satisfaction with the child's progress and a decrease in placement changes (Bruns, Suter, & Burchard, 2002; Bruns, Suter, Force, & Burchard, 2005). It has also been found that lower adherence to high fidelity wraparound has been associated with poorer outcomes (Dane & Schneider, 1998).

The potential success schools can have with the use of a wraparound planning process has also been documented, especially when schools have established preventative intervention structures (Eber, Breen, Rose, Unizycki, & London, 2008). Publications about school-led wraparound emphasize that a three-level intervention structure supports wraparound (Eber et al., 2008). These three levels of in-school interventions are:

1. Universal or primary interventions, which establish positive behavioural guidelines for all students.
2. Secondary interventions, which rely upon targeted group interventions.
3. Tertiary interventions, which include individualized interventions, such as wraparound.

By having interventions start at a universal level and then increase in response to the individual needs of a child/youth, interventions such as wraparound are manageable (Eber et al., 2008). Moreover, schools then have a foundation of supports for the wraparound approach (Eber, personal communication, November 24, 2009). When the wraparound approach is embedded in schools, children and youth are able to have their needs addressed systematically and consistently. Additionally, the families of students may feel more comfortable participating in the planning intervention for their child(ren).

Inconsistency with the use of the term *wraparound* has been identified as a potential concern in a recent review of literature on wraparound (Prakash et al., 2010). Wraparound is defined as a comprehensive planning approach requiring a specific set of values, elements and principles, all of which need to be in place for it to be considered wraparound (Burchard, Bruns & Burchard, 2002). Wraparound, as a term, has become bound to the 10 fundamental principles and carries an implication of the adherence to these principles. In examples where the process of wraparound is not as tightly defined, such as in interventions where the use of the term wraparound refers more to a case management style (McDougall et al., 2008), it is difficult to determine whether the strong value base of high fidelity wraparound is being adhered to, or whether only the case management components of high fidelity wraparound are being adhered to. This variability in terminology creates an ambiguity in the specific wraparound procedures and values being adhered to and the evaluation and measurement of the expected wraparound outcomes.

In this report, the term *wraparound* will be used to refer to individualized, integrated and coordinated supports for vulnerable children, youth and their families. It does not necessarily imply strict adherence to the 10 fundamental principles and achievement of high fidelity wraparound. Wraparound approaches, as described in this report, can consist of a variety of integrated and collaborative supports with high fidelity wraparound as one example within a spectrum of wraparound practices.

In summary, the wraparound approach is a collaborative and coordinated planning process that seeks to address the broad, as well as the specific, needs of vulnerable children and youth. Wraparound has a robust body of literature that supports and guides the practice with fundamental principles and practice guidelines.

The Wraparound Research Project

Numerous publications from the United States examine the current state of wraparound in various American contexts; however, there is very little information about wraparound-type interventions taking place in Canada and other parts of the world (Prakash et al., 2010). Context-specific information is needed about the strategies schools and authorities use to plan for students whose vulnerabilities exceed the capacity of the individual schools and/or school authorities.

In order to understand the wraparound approaches that schools within Alberta are using, a partnership was developed between the Edmonton Public School District, Alberta Education and the University of Alberta. The purpose of this partnership was to plan and design a research project examining wraparound in Alberta. The research project design included four objectives: (1) a literature review to determine how the wraparound approach is conceived, implemented and evaluated (Prakash et al., 2010); (2) a survey study on the current practice, importance and capacity of the wraparound approach with all school jurisdictions in the province (Daniels et al., 2010); (3) a site study of selected school jurisdictions across Alberta to determine how wraparound approaches are being practiced; and (4) support resources to provide information regarding how wraparound approaches could be implemented within Alberta. The purpose of this report is to fulfill the third objective.

Research Methods

The collaborative research team determined that qualitative inquiry would be most beneficial and productive for the wraparound research site study. Anticipation of a broad range of contexts, attitudes and complexities arising out of the data informed that decision. Qualitative inquiry is:

- concerned with understanding how a process, such as wraparound, is experienced, understood and implemented by all stakeholders
- dependent upon data collection methods that are flexible and sensitive to the context
- based on methods of analysis and interpretation that are sensitive to complexity, detail and context to achieve a thorough understanding of the topic.

Qualitative inquiry for the wraparound site study necessitated numerous interviews, focus groups and observations in the local context where collaborative and integrative planning was being practiced. Within these contexts, the perspectives of those individuals closest to wraparound were considered most important. The study was, therefore, designed to include the perspectives of school authority administrators, school administrators, wraparound lead personnel, teachers, parents and students involved with wraparound-type interventions in selected school authorities.

The research team developed research questions that guided the focus of the site study (Appendix A). Interviews and focus groups were designed to be semi-structured. The research team created interview guides for each participant role (Appendix B). Unrecorded observations of wraparound case conferences were also included as a part of the site study design.

Selection of Participating Sites

The research team set out the following criteria when recruiting and determining final participation of school authorities.

Participants from public and separate school authorities needed to be currently using some type of integrated and collaborative approach with their vulnerable students and representation was needed from:

- urban and rural sites within the province
- diverse geographical regions
- elementary, junior, and senior high schools
- specific vulnerable populations such as First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI), immigrant/refugee, children-in-care, or children with special needs.

Nine out of 61 public and separate school authorities across the province were invited to participate in this site study. After being invited to participate, superintendents were asked to recommend schools and/or projects that would provide a picture of what wraparound looks like in the local context. A total of 13 sites within these authorities participated. The sites afforded researchers the opportunity to collect data from locations that best represented a range of interventions, from simple in-school supports to more systematized and specialized intervention projects. Sites or projects selected differed in breadth and scope of focus as some served single schools or clusters of schools while others focused their interventions at the school authority level. Data were collected and results are discussed at the level of schools and/or projects.

Full Site Visit Participation

Full participation at each wraparound site included semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups with wraparound stakeholders. These stakeholders included:

- school authority administrators who oversaw or participated in the wraparound approach
- school administrators who oversaw or participated in the wraparound approach
- wraparound leads of the wraparound interventions taking place in the project, school or authority; this individual could have held one of many positions (school authority administrator, school administrator, project manager or coordinator) depending on the context and formation of the project utilizing wraparound-type approaches

- community partners who were collaborating with the project, school or authority practicing wraparound approaches (sites)
- teachers and other school staff who were professionally involved with the project, school or authority practicing wraparound approaches
- parents and students participating in wraparound.

Interviews and focus groups were designed to take approximately 40 to 60 minutes and were audio recorded to maintain the accuracy of the data and to be transcribed at a later date. At each site, researchers requested the opportunity to observe a wraparound case meeting, in which the targeted student, his or her family, the wraparound lead and any collaborating partners were in attendance.

Data Collection

Since each chosen site practices wraparound within different structures and systems, data collection had to be customized to each site. Researchers contacted each site affiliate to discuss the site's unique structures and approaches to wraparound. The researcher and the affiliate then agreed upon the best candidates to interview within the school authorities, schools and projects. This site affiliate contacted the site's partners and arranged for a separate community partner focus group.

Scheduling of data collection site visits was arranged between researchers and school or project staff directly. To accommodate contextual sensitivities, participation in each of the research activities (focus groups, interviews and observations) was voluntary.

Participation Rates

The total number of interviews and focus groups was 104. Each focus group's size differed, from two to 25 participants. In total, 250 individuals, ranging from superintendents to parents and students, participated in an interview or focus group (Appendix B). Interviews ranged in length from 15 (with students) to 90 (with wraparound leads or larger focus groups) minutes. At most sites, wraparound leads also participated in a follow-up interview.

The following table provides details regarding the number of sites, number of unique projects in each site, number of participating schools within each site, and the number of individual interviews/focus groups. Observation of wraparound case conference meetings was requested at every site, but was only possible at three sites. The limited numbers were the result of confidentiality concerns, the lack of current wraparound interventions or an absence of the practice of relevant individual interventions.

Table 1: Summary of Number of Participants from Each Site (School Authority)

School Authority	Sites using wrap-around	Schools visited	Grade levels of schools***	School Authority Admin Interview	School Admin Interview	Community Partner Interview	Teacher Interview	Wrap-around Lead Interview	Wrap-around Team Interview	Student Inter-view	Parent Interview	Other Interviews	Total Interviews	Meeting observations**	
														Case Team	Partner Team
1	2	2	JHS/HS	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	0		8	0	1
2	1	1	JHS	1	2	2	2	1	0	0	1	Teacher Assistants (2)	11	1	0
3	1	1	ES, ES	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	Community Leader	8	0	0
4	3	5	ES, JH, HS	0	4	4	4	5	3	7	4	Support Staff (2)	33	1	1
5	2	2	JHS, JHS	1	3	2	2	0	0	1	4	Teacher Assistants	14	0	0
6	1	1	ES	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	1		8	0	1
7	1	0	JHS	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	1		7	1	0
8	1	3	ES/JH/HS	1	1	1	2	2	1	0	1		9	0	1
9	1	2	ES/JH/HS	1	2	(included in WA Team)	0	1	1	0	0		5	0	0
10*	N/A	0	N/A	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		1	0	0
Total	13	17		8	18	13	15	15	8	9	12		104 interviews/ focus groups		

* Only participated in a teleconference (not counted as a site visit)

** Observations: Case Conference Meeting or a Collaborative Partners Meeting

***ES–Elementary School; JHS–Junior High School; HS–High School

Analysis

After transcribing all interview and focus group recordings, a coding framework (Appendix C) based on the initial research questions was created in order to sort the data into preliminary categories. Definitions for these initial themes were created and applied to two sample transcripts to check for coding agreement. Individual coding technique was compared and initial themes were collapsed or more rigidly defined to increase coding agreement between the researchers. This process was completed a total of three times. After the final comparison, an inter-rater agreement was assessed using NVivo 8 software (inter-rater agreement was 85%). Coding frameworks were shared with the research team for their input and approval. Two senior researchers on the team compared the final coding structure against the research questions (Appendix A).

The Wraparound Research Project was designed and carried out in a collaborative process, so that multiple organizations could provide different perspectives and expertise to this research endeavour. The site visit study was designed to include participation from all relevant stakeholders to solicit the opinions, ideas and experiences of those closely involved with the wraparound approach. Qualitative inquiry accommodated the unique contexts and sensitivities of all the sites, projects and schools. Qualitative analysis of the transcript data resulted in prominent themes and subthemes, which will be discussed in this report.

Results and Discussion

Defining Wraparound
- **Definition of Wraparound across Participant Roles**

Central Role of Collaboration for Wraparound
- **Spectrum of Collaboration**
- **Emergent Collaboration**
- **Evident Collaboration**
- **Exemplary Collaboration**

Attitudes

Resources for Collaboration
- **Coordination for Collaboration and Wraparound**
- **Wraparound and Building Space**

Elements of the Wraparound Process
- **Teams**
- **Students Served by Wraparound**
- **Student Referral to the Wraparound Process**
- **Planning and Implementation of the Wraparound Intervention Plan**
- **Use of Data in the Wraparound Process**
- **Accountability of the Wraparound Process**

Data gathered for this site visit study has been sorted into five salient components of wraparound. Each of the five components has sub-components (sidebar). In part, the development of these components and sub-components were guided by the research questions, but they also emerged through examination of the data. They capture the diversity of responses to the questions posed by researchers, while also capturing the significant trends that cut across all sites and respondents.

The core purpose of the discussion of these components is to provide information regarding how wraparound approaches are currently being used to address the vulnerabilities of children, youth and their families across Alberta. This report presents the data gathered from individuals who are currently practicing or participating in wraparound processes. Respondents, ranging from students to superintendents, voiced their opinions about wraparound, including strategies and barriers, to third-party researchers.

Defining Wraparound

Wraparound processes are facilitated by agreements and commitment to shared definitions, concepts, values and visions between collaborative practitioners and, at a more localized level, between staff in the same building. A lack of a shared vision—even at the level of terminology—can make the collaborative process more difficult. Common definitions more easily allow for shared discourse regarding wraparound practice. Thus, in time, working to develop shared terminology could lead to a systemic and shared understanding of collaborative goals and visions.

Interview and focus group participants were presented with a definition of wraparound (sidebar) and were then asked to provide their own definition of the wraparound approach. The responses revealed variation across and within school authorities and among participant roles. There were, however, some shared themes across participant roles and some unique themes dependent upon the respondents' role, e.g., school authority administrator, school administrator, wraparound lead.

> Alberta Education's definition of wraparound approach is: "a philosophy of care that includes a definable planning process involving the child/student and family that results in comprehensive, coordinated supports and services to achieve improved learning outcomes and improved quality of life. Coordinated services and supports, offered through multiple professionals and agencies that are school based and/or school linked, might include health and mental health-related services, mentoring, before/after school programs, and other supports and services for parents and families." {SETTING THE DIRECTION, 2009}

DEFINITION OF WRAPAROUND ACROSS PARTICIPANT ROLES

The definitions provided by school authority administrators, school administrators and wraparound leads were varied. In some cases, although school authorities or schools may be engaging in wraparound-like processes, the term wraparound was not used. In some cases, participants were reluctant to label their practices or processes wraparound. In fact, in some locations, participants even indicated that they felt uneasy that others might consider their intervention work to be wraparound.

Other respondents stated that they utilized their own locally derived definition of wraparound. Some respondents, for example, used terminology for special education interventions interchangeably with wraparound. The definition of wraparound appears to be shifting and evolving through practitioners' actual experiences with integrated and collaborative approaches.

The data revealed that while individual participant's definitions of wraparound varied, some themes were shared across the groups of respondents (school authority administrators, school administrators, wraparound leads and teachers). Interestingly, however, some common themes were underscored more heavily by certain groups of respondents than others. The characteristics of wraparound that were generally shared include the following.

1. Wraparound focuses on the whole child, not just on one domain of the child/youth. A student's success at school is considered to be dependent on the success of his or her family, home and community life.

2. The broader community, including other community services and agencies, has an important role within wraparound.
3. Wraparound requires an attitude of *doing whatever it takes* to support a multi-challenged student.
4. Wraparound requires true collaboration between partners, e.g.,schools, community agencies, support and government sectors. True collaboration is denoted by interdependence between the partners, which is fundamental to the joint planning process.
5. Cross-partner communication was highlighted as an important component of wraparound. A shared lexicon of terms and meanings between collaborating partners is equally important. There appears to be a cyclical relationship in which wraparound practitioners require communication between partners, but the wraparound practitioners may also be responsible for instigating and creating this communication loop.

> **Many respondents expressed frustration with traditional service provision, which is seen as unresponsive and bogged down with limited mandates and strict categories, all of which allow children to slip through the cracks.**

> **It must be noted that whether certain components of the definition were included in or excluded from the informal definition of wraparound provided by respondents, this did not suggest the absence or presence of these components within their practice; it only underlines where operational definitions of wraparound match those in the literature.**

These five common components of wraparound mentioned by participants are significant, given that they correspond with many of the more formally derived wraparound principles found in the literature (for example, Bruns, Walker, & The National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group, 2008).

Definition from School Authority Administrators

Respondents tended to emphasize those components of wraparound that they had experience with. For example, school authority administrators often focused their definitions of wraparound on the need for intersectoral collaboration:

> **"We're learning that with these [vulnerable children] we can't do it in our own silos. We can't. So at my level, I would say that wraparound is achieved when intersectoral agreements and relationships [are present]." {SCHOOL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR}**

School authority administrators indicated that the creation and facilitation of collaborative relationships between different ministerial sectors, such as Alberta Health Services, Alberta Children and Youth Services and Alberta Justice were essential. According to participants, these relationships were more likely to occur when the supervisory levels of the ministerial partners were involved with building collaborative partnerships.

Definition from School Administrators

School administrators tended to emphasize components of wraparound that focused on the school and those closely associated with the school. In their discussions of the definition of wraparound, school administrators stressed the importance of numerous services being available to students and the role that effective communication between wraparound stakeholders plays in ensuring that students' needs are met. School administrators also suggested that a wraparound approach should provide timely responses to students with vulnerabilities so they can receive help before their needs accelerate beyond the capacity of the school.

> **"For me, [wraparound] is about having multiple services available to students to support them on many different levels—like academic and social/emotional. This support comes from not only [this school board], but also from partners and the community that come in to support students." {SCHOOL PRINCIPAL}**

> **"Wraparound here has a structural piece where you actually have people in the building who are providing multiples services, supports and you've got things like [the monthly communication meetings], where people are getting together. Basically, wraparound is taking a look at students who seem to be either not achieving or ultimately at risk for not achieving. Wraparound starts when [a student] looks like he or she is not being cooperative, is sad or all of those things and you start putting supports in place to prevent it from getting to a point where the student is unable [to] cope." {SCHOOL PRINCIPAL}**

Definition from Wraparound Leads

Wraparound leads tended to emphasize the role and necessity of collaboration in wraparound processes. Wraparound leads were also more likely to mention components of wraparound that are child and family focused.

> **"I think that collaboration is key to supporting the child. In that collaboration process there is no right or wrong answer; everyone should put whatever they've got on the table and as a group try to figure out what on the table is the best for that child and their family. [It is] so very much an equal partnership, very much everyone contributing and participating in it." {WRAPAROUND LEAD}**

Principles of Wraparound not Mentioned

Although many of the central characteristics of the formal definition of wraparound were raised in site visits, there were certain principles of wraparound found in the literature that were not cited by any respondents as part of their definition of wraparound. The principles of wraparound not specifically mentioned by any of the participants were:

- the inclusion of natural supports in the wraparound planning process
- the necessity for the wraparound process to be outcomes based with measurable indicators
- the necessity for the wraparound process to be culturally responsive.

Central Role of Collaboration in Wraparound

During site visits, wraparound practitioners expressed an understanding that collaboration is the keystone to any integrated and coordinated approach; whereas, parents positively referred to the impact of having only one contact person and one shared team to address the needs of their children and their families.

Wraparound literature emphasizes the importance of 10 fundamental principles for wraparound (page 3). While these 10 principles are seen by some as important to achieving a high fidelity wraparound approach, in practice they constitute a standard that not all practitioners of wraparound or other collaborative, integrated approaches have been able to or want to achieve.

Of these principles, respondents remarked most often on the necessity of collaboration in effective wraparound processes. When collaboration was an integral part of a wraparound process, tangible benefits to the families were evident in the families' stories about the impacts of the intervention.

SPECTRUM OF COLLABORATION

Collaboration is differentiated from simple partnership in that collaboration tends to include interdependence between the partners (Lawson, 2003). The increased responsibilities that educators, service providers and professionals face when addressing the needs of their vulnerable students/clients/patients are potentially more manageable when team members pool their knowledge and skills (Friend & Cook, 2007). As one parent suggested:

> "The [wraparound] staff have been excellent. They've called us at home and we've been able to communicate with them outside of school hours and that is just a blessing. The biggest thing of all—last week we had a case conference. Now this is pretty neat. It was all the services together, all in one room … My wife and I shared our concerns, including what we've noticed about [our daughter], what we'd like to see, what we'd like to try and any other concerns. That was just wonderful getting everybody on the same page; what a huge help." {PARENT OF AN ELEMENTARY CHILD ACCESSING SUPPORTS THROUGH A WRAPAROUND APPROACH}

Effective collaboration requires good will, effort, flexibility and support from the participants and their leaders. Therefore, the level of collaboration tends to depend upon several contextual factors including, but not limited to:

- individual practitioner attitudes
- individual practitioner competencies
- cultural responsiveness
- student and family strengths and needs
- community buy-in
- support from leadership
- flexibility of process
- availability of resources, e.g., coordination, personnel, funding.

Thus, collaborative efforts need to be examined using a framework that acknowledges the unique contexts within which the collaboration is taking place. During site visits, a range of collaboration was observed, with some sites showing little evidence of collaboration or the beginning stages of collaboration, and others showing evidence of effective, mature collaboration. Between these extremes, a range of collaborative approaches (perhaps beyond the emergent or beginning stages but lacking some of the elements of the more effective or mature collaborative processes) were also observed.

Collaboration has been divided into three levels, which represent the types of collaborative processes that were observed during the site visits; each level will be used as a framework for describing the varying collaborative approaches and common characteristics. These levels of collaboration are: (1) emergent, (2) evident, and (3) exemplary. The differing levels of collaboration are not necessarily representative of any of the actual sites visited; rather, they represent a snapshot of examples of collaboration observed.

The following section introduces the three levels of collaboration and highlights their distinguishing features.

EMERGENT COLLABORATION

In communities with broad vulnerabilities, the emergent collaborative level may represent a first-step on the longer journey to exemplary collaboration or, in communities with less complex vulnerabilities, the emergent level may be the final point of collaboration for schools and communities with low levels of need and low levels of collaborative capacity.

Emergent collaboration was typically observed in situations in which schools were responding to an emergent situation. Often, the impetus for the collaboration seemed to be the crisis itself or the realization that the resources of an individual school were not sufficient to support the need. Ad hoc collaborative relationships were developed and resources were pooled.

Emergent collaboration is distinguished from other levels of collaboration by both the ad hoc nature of collaboration, the limited formation of collaborative partnerships with other agencies or professionals with whom goals and outcomes for the target student are shared and, in some cases, the lack of a designated coordinator. Respondents stressed that for collaboration to be effective, even at the emergent level, a coordinator, who can determine gaps in services, existing needs and the partner best suited to meet the needs of the student, is important.

EVIDENT COLLABORATION

Evident collaboration was typically observed in sites with more established collaborative processes than those displaying emergent collaboration. Evident collaboration is a more robust form of collaboration than emergent collaboration. In some of the observed cases, evident collaboration developed as emergent collaborative processes were formalized over time. This development often occurred as structural support for collaboration was strengthened. Although protocols and agreements between partners may not always be formalized, in most cases a more engaged and committed level of collaboration marks evident collaboration, even if this collaboration has not yet been formalized through protocol agreements.

Although lack of protocol agreements in some situations can lead to a high degree of flexibility when addressing student needs, because the protocols for collaboration are not as fixed, respondents suggested that there is generally a limit to the collaborative capacity of the team. If intersectoral protocols, such as information and resource sharing, are not addressed, there are limitations to what collaboration can actually accomplish.

Evident collaboration, typically, is characterized by a more systematic approach than emergent collaboration. For example, meetings with collaborating partners are scheduled regularly. Moreover, because the collaborating partners meet on a regular basis, the partners team is available to effectively provide early intervention and preventative planning, rather than merely reacting to approaching or actual crises.

> **Any collaborative model that requires regularly scheduled meetings depends upon a coordinating position to collect and assess referrals, create meeting agendas, maintain relationships with collaborating agencies, and be a central contact person for the team's wraparound approach.**

In cases where a developing crisis needs immediate attention, the strength of the relationships between collaborating partners helps to facilitate immediate interventions. Interventions can be more immediate with pre-existing collaborative relationships because collaborative protocols and overall capacity of the team are, in many cases, already established and maintained by a designated coordinator. Even in cases when meetings are not regularly scheduled, continual contact across partners is likely to exist in sites where evident collaboration is present. This contact is maintained through shared professional development, community events, workshops, in-service training and other mechanisms that keep the connection between partners active and energized.

EXEMPLARY COLLABORATION

Exemplary collaboration builds on evident collaboration and formalizes the process through the development of partnership agreements, protocols for sustained collaboration/problem solving, active championing, provision of needed resources to support collaborative planning and evaluation of outcomes. Respondents expressed that systematized and structured intervention strategies resulted in more students being seen proactively rather than receiving reactive interventions.

In certain sites visited in this study and for certain special populations of students, the level of collaboration required to meet the needs of the entire student body was higher than in other areas. Some schools have centralized and specialized services to address similar needs (e.g., pregnant and parenting teens, homeless youth), or the student body at the school may simply reflect the high needs of the local community.

One of the primary distinctions between evident and exemplary collaboration is the role of leadership in the collaborative process at the exemplary level. In exemplary collaboration, leadership (school authority administration and/or school administration) tends to be far more engaged in championing and creating the collaborative protocols and agreements in which the multiple needs of students can be addressed.

An additional distinction between the evident and exemplary levels of collaboration is that exemplary collaboration typically involves a greater degree of systems-level collaboration. The impact of multilevel collaboration (at the project/school level and system level) is broad. Supervisory leadership at the organization level comes together to create and support broader collaborative structures that may seek systemic changes within the school authority or community. People at the system level are in a position to oversee the required changes across ministries so as to address gaps in services and limitations between agencies regarding information sharing, budgetary boundaries and shared accountabilities.

The level of collaboration exhibited depends upon the capacity of the team members, their attitudes, the service capacity of the community and the maturity of the relationships that have been formed. In small communities where there are limited services, research suggests that it might be even more important to bring the community agencies together for shared meetings. Community agency meetings create a sense of shared purpose and goals. Community ties are formed and developed, and these ties may positively impact the skills and services available to those being served in the schools. As one respondent suggested:

> "Every two months [our town] has a meeting so all the agencies for our region get together for a meeting. Everybody updates about what they are doing and then we also become aware of programs and meet each other so that's really helpful for our whole community. Everybody knows each other because we all sit around the table on a regular basis and then at the break time you can say, 'Oh hi. I'm really interested in this, can we get together?'" {TEAM LEAD}

In summary, the three levels of collaboration (emergent, evident, exemplary) require, not only a system to communicate and mediate the decision making, but also a system for communicating and understanding how these decisions might impact service at the team level. Although each collaborative approach represents an incremental *laddering-up* of needs and requirements, it is important to note that some resources are universally required if collaboration is to be successful.

Aside from the fact that each of these approaches requires an increasing degree of commitment by and between the collaborative partners, focus must be placed on developing:

- the critical position of coordinator at the school authority level
- individual attitudes and organizational culture that mentor and foster partnerships and integrated case planning
- access to resources to support implementation of wraparound.

Attitudes

Almost universally, during site visits, respondents continually underscored the importance of attitude toward wraparound in determining whether wraparound processes, such as collaboration, would be used. It was also stressed that having a positive attitude toward wraparound is a necessary element for all practitioners of collaboration, but it is a particularly important aspect for those in leadership roles.

Attitudes Regarding Collaboration

Collaboration takes time, requires its own resources and depends upon the flexibility of all the stakeholders. According to most respondents in this study, a receptive and positive attitude toward collaboration can help facilitate the process of collaboration, especially when challenges or barriers are present. The fundamental belief that working together is more effective in serving the needs of students than independent approaches is necessary because without full support and conviction respondents claimed that:

- collaborative partners lose their trust
- partners become reluctant to rely upon each collaborative partner
- collaboration is minimized or hindered when sharing responsibilities and outcomes are unclear.

Children and youth with vulnerabilities are best served when there is collaboration in the provision of supports and services and shared resources and information. When practitioners endorse and enact this precept, they are very often referred to as *someone who gets it*. This was a common sentiment observed across sites. In some cases, those who *get it* were thought to be *big picture thinkers*, e.g., their priorities when addressing a child or youth's vulnerabilities were broad and encompassing.

Attitudes Influence Collaboration

According to the majority of respondents interviewed, attitude, particularly at the level of leadership, sets the culture for collaboration in school authorities, schools, projects and ministries. Culture can either facilitate or hamper shared processes like collaboration and wraparound. For example, it was observed that if leaders were amenable to change, even when considering hard-set traditional practice paradigms, others within the school authority or school were more likely to adapt and improvise as they form contextualized practices that support collaboration. In many situations, support among leaders for collaboration and/or wraparound can have a trickledown effect that permeates the entire culture of collaboration.

Most practitioners, coordinators and partners of wraparound stated the need for cultivating a positive, collaborative culture at every level, but especially by leadership within the school authority, school and in partner organizations. School authority and school administrators were also cognizant of the impact that their own personal attitudes toward collaboration had on the culture as a whole. The following are some of the ways in which leaders indicated that they could foster a culture of collaboration.

- *Recognizing that students have a range of needs that are best addressed through collaboration and expressing this realization by inviting others to participate in the collaborative process.*

  "One of our organization's pillars was community collaboration. The complexity of our children goes beyond classroom learning, and if we were going to improve their learning outcomes we had to address the needs of the whole child. As educators we are not experts around the whole child, therefore we must invite others to become part of the fabric of our schools." {SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR}

- *Overcoming institutional inertia. Leaders need to use their influence to bring disparate groups and agencies together for the benefit of students.*

  "You say, 'Well, no, you can't include Justice.' We say, 'Why not?' If we need to bring in the RCMP, as kids get older or their issues become more complex, we will. We know that. So, it is literally phone call by phone call—pulling people together … because sometimes that is just what it takes—a little catalyst to serve as the north pole and the magnet, and then the everything will all come together." {SCHOOL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR}

- *Advocating for change, while being creative with available resources.*

  "It is not about complaining that there is nothing for the kids, which can happen when there is intense frustration … it's really about, 'Okay, how do we go back to our own systems and push for other services for these kids and how do we support them right now with what we have got?'" {SCHOOL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR}

- *Listening to and learning from others. In collaboration one can learn from all partners.*

  "We begin to learn that we have greater understanding of one another's mandates across ministries … Then you begin to understand that [other ministries'] mandates create limitations that might exceed what your own uninformed expectations are of what another ministry can do, and this is really key." {SCHOOL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR}

  "I think we have to be careful to say all people have and all agencies have strengths in the way they have done things. Be open to looking at different ways and to using them; you cannot just work in isolation, but you need to all come together seriously and work together, honouring prior ways of doing things, acknowledging them and then deciding how to move forward." {SCHOOL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR}

Resources for Collaboration

Participants from all sites visited in this study cited financial supports and resources, particularly related to coordination and appropriate physical space, as critical to their wraparound and collaborative approaches. Respondents repeatedly, with the exception of parents and students, emphasized the need for a coordinating position. Other resources cited as important, but perhaps not essential, were sufficient time, sufficient personnel and the availability of flexible funding.

COORDINATION FOR COLLABORATION AND WRAPAROUND

In the respondent group, those who identified themselves as wraparound leads held diverse positions ranging from mental health workers to special education supervisors at the authority level, with the most common position being project manager or coordinator of in-school intervention projects. Typically, they were able to represent and speak for the wraparound approach and collaborative process at their given site.

The majority of wraparound lead respondents coordinated wraparound processes within schools, projects or authorities. They were generally responsible for bringing collaborating partners together, supervising the implementation of wraparound plans, acting as liaisons between parents, community partners, school administration and school authority administration, in addition to holding other primary positions, e.g., principal, school authority administration.

Although the need for a coordinating position was a common request, opinions regarding what this coordinating position should entail varied. In addition, participants also discussed the difficulty involved in maintaining an effective wraparound process when coordination is inadequate. As with other aspects of collaboration, sites in this study demonstrated various levels of capacity for collaboration, from emergent to exemplary.

Coordination of Emergent Collaborations

The primary tasks for emergent collaboration coordinators, as presented by respondents, include:

- establishing and nurturing buy-in from both new and established collaborating partners
- taking referrals for students who might need wraparound
- assessing students' immediate situations and triaging their needs
- contacting parent(s)/guardian(s) for consent to provide services and to arrange meeting times
- overseeing the case planning process
- engaging parent(s)/guardian(s) in the wraparound process
- being a communication hub by collecting information, by receiving referrals and by fielding phone calls (an under-recognized task) from all wraparound stakeholders
- sharing relevant information with school administration and teaching staff about the intervention
- gathering, maintaining and holding relevant documents and data, e.g., intake or referral forms, consent forms, meeting minutes
- marketing of the collaborative process.

At emergent levels of collaboration, there are typically a number of barriers that impact the effectiveness of collaboration processes and ultimately wraparound. For collaboration to move to evident or exemplary levels, some of these barriers need to be addressed.

The following are barriers identified in this study.

- *Lack of designated time.* There is often not enough dedicated time to achieve the tasks required.

- *Lack of family involvement in choosing the wraparound lead.* Literature emphasizes that the wraparound team, in collaboration with the family, should determine which team member would be best as the wraparound lead, a position that may be separate from, and supported by, a coordinator. However, in the emergent collaborations observed, families were not involved in this important decision.

> **The biggest barrier or what slows the process down is actually getting all those players at the table, coordinating the time and schedules— we are all very busy people. {School Authority Administrator}**

- *Lack of capacity for coordination within the school building.* Schools engaged in emergent collaboration may not yet have the capacity for coordination within their school building. In this case, coordination is best handled at the school authority level. However, there are additional challenges associated with this strategy of coordinating the collaborative process outside the school at the authority level, including:
    - establishing buy-in from all stakeholders and ensuring equitable decision-making capacity
    - establishing buy-in from students, families, partners and school staff in a timely manner.

- *Lack of effective communication.* Communication between stakeholders is fundamental to establishing collaborative relationships that increase the likelihood of buy-in. In emergent collaboration sites, lack of communication can be a barrier to achieving collaboration.

- *Unavailability of decision makers.* The decision makers are rarely at the table in emergent collaboration. When decision makers are unavailable, it is difficult to attend to necessary decisions regarding collaborative protocols, such as confidentiality agreements, mandate softening, and resource sharing. Emergent collaboration coordinators, if they are present, often face barriers to accessing the necessary decision makers. Emergent collaboration, therefore, depends upon school and/or school authority administrators as champions to help overcome these challenges.

- *Extended period of team planning.* Despite its importance, the development of the initial agreement between partners on roles, tasks and reporting responsibilities was said to take up to two years or longer to be fully realized. However, very often this necessary information-sharing process is dependent on the active participation of individuals who act as champions of collaboration and are credible within their own organizations.

- *Frequent turnover in personnel.* When key individuals exit the process for various reasons (e.g., job promotion, illness, moving, replacement), the process of integrated collaboration can be hindered.

- *Lack of organizational supports and protocols for sustainability.* Emergent collaborations do not typically have institutional structures that provide protocols for the collaborative work. Without sustaining structures, such as regularly scheduled meetings, referral protocols and accountability structures, the collaborative process has the benefit of flexibility but usually at the loss of sustainability provided by systems of support. Once again, such conditions highlight both the importance of a passionate individual and the potential problems that may arise when a collaborative approach is coordinated by a single individual.

Coordination of Evident Collaborations

Based on analysis of the site visit data, the primary tasks for evident collaboration coordinators include many of the same tasks as in emergent collaboration, in addition to:

- maintaining and sustaining collaborative relationships
- facilitating development of an integrated case plan
- planning and organizing professional development for collaborating partners
- creating innovative and personalized plans for students and families.

Locations with more mature collaborative approaches tend to exhibit an evident level of collaboration. As this maturity may be an indication of systemic vulnerabilities or long-term needs, additional collaborating partners may need to be invited into an existing collaboration team or wraparound staff might need to increase their capacities with specialized training (e.g., grief counselling) to address specific needs.

Creativity and flexibility are often heightened at this stage of collaboration. Accessing services and scheduling collaborating partners meetings can be a challenge. However, with individual relationships established on a foundation of trust and knowledge, the wraparound coordinator has built the necessary social capital for determining *which, when and how* certain services should be accessed. In addition, the coordinator is responsible for chairing scheduled collaborating partners meetings with fixed agendas. Regularly scheduled meetings, made possible by the presence of a coordinator, further help facilitate preventative interventions.

One in-school coordinator suggested that collaboration is mature when schools recognize that collaboration is a two-way street with both the schools and the partners benefiting from the collaboration. There is also a critical moment when the collaborative team recognizes and respects the limitations of its partners. For example, when collaborating partners are over-taxed and operating at full capacity, there is an understanding of the limited options for the collaborative team and the community as a whole.

> **"They (school division employees) are dedicated to those schools and we can make it work. But when the health region is down by three or four mental health therapists, they are going to be so overrun with crises that getting out to the school for a wraparound meeting, even though in the best of all worlds they would want to do that, they just don't have the time, the ability to shuffle their schedules … Being able to get everybody together, that is a real challenge in our community."** {SCHOOL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR}

Although many of the barriers that constrain the effectiveness of collaboration at the emergent level are no longer of primary concern once relationships begin to mature and become more formalized, there are still barriers that keep collaboration from being as effective as it could be. The following are some of the barriers that impact evident collaboration and wraparound.

- *Personnel turnover* is still a problem because this structure relies heavily on individuals, especially the coordinator. The coordinator, therefore, has the capacity to be the driving force for the collaborative process that feeds wraparound. Respondents often spoke of the impact of losing key individuals and how the collaboration was negatively affected.

- If there is a *lack of strong structural support to maintain the collaborative process*, the collaborative capacity can be significantly diminished. In evident collaborations it was revealed that the capacity of the coordinator to build relationships with partners and school is indelibly linked to the capacity of the collaborative structure itself. As in all levels of collaboration, collaboration is much more likely to occur if people believe that it is important and are committed to the collaborative goals and requirements.

- Evident collaboration *requires more coordination capacity* than emergent collaboration to manage the increased number of meetings with more partners, more referrals and the addition of preventative interventions facilitated by regular meeting schedules.

- *Increased communication requirements* amongst collaborating partners and organizations, school administration and families must also be managed by a designated coordinator.

Coordination of Exemplary Collaborations

The primary tasks for exemplary coordinators, as discussed by respondents, typically included most of the same tasks as seen in evident collaboration with the addition of the following:

- managing budgets and addressing funding gaps
- setting the agenda and chairing regular wraparound case planning team meetings
- meeting with policy and funding decision makers to communicate the challenges and outcomes of wraparound processes
- preparing reports of outcomes and accountabilities to funders
- working with partners to create structured protocols and procedures for wraparound, such as shared consent form strategies
- identifying and supporting leader champions within each partnering organization
- advocating the importance of collaboration and partnerships.

The basic responsibilities of coordinators of exemplary collaborations are generally the same as the evident collaboration coordinators with the addition of structural and operational planning of collaboration and system-level communication. At various sites in this study, the exemplary collaboration coordinator typically held a full-time position. In many situations, the coordinator was responsible for coordinating collaborative activities across multiple schools. Without a strong coordinating position, the structural and system-level work, which characterizes exemplary collaboration, would be difficult to attain.

> **"I'll tell you why I think [having a coordinator] is so mandatory. First of all, it stops the isolation from happening. This person is key in making sure that isolation doesn't occur, not only between the schools, [but also between] principals, administration and central office ... [The coordinator] advocates in the community, and has the pulse on the all the agencies here. She has really helped build relationships and that's where we are really seeing a difference in our programs ... She also keeps the wraparound team together, so they support each other ... She is also the go-to person for so many people. She is kind of the cog in the middle." {SCHOOL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR}**

In exemplary collaboration sites, coordinators were often responsible for overseeing teams made up of school staff, youth care workers, counsellors, social workers and other associated paraprofessionals. Teams will sometimes enlist the services of additional collaborating partners to discuss student intervention and implementation strategies.

The logistics of overseeing daily activities were within the purview of many exemplary collaboration coordinators. The coordinators must, therefore, be aware of the caseloads and the general intervention strategies employed by intervention staff. The coordinator at the exemplary collaboration level must also be aware of potential issues that may arise.

> **"Day-to-day, I supervise and I coordinate the coaches and the students. The coaches and I meet on a regular basis. They hand in their weekly logs and I look them over and follow-up with questions like, 'OK, you haven't seen this kid for a few weeks' or 'What are your next steps with this kid'. I am responsible for that kind of thing." {TEAM LEADER}**

Because wraparound intervention teams are generally formed with staff from different agencies or governing bodies, overseeing these disparate staff can be challenging, especially since the coordinator is usually not the staff's official supervisor. Tensions can arise when there are distinct differences between salaries, benefits and work expectations, as well as competing priorities between organizations.

Exemplary collaboration requires a high level of communication across multiple levels of hierarchy. The coordinator needs to be in contact with all team members. Additionally, coordinators meet with systems-level decision makers to discuss issues, such as information-sharing agreements between ministries and large service organizations, mandate boundaries, shared funding, shared accountability, and future planning. Exemplary collaboration is more likely than other level of collaboration to produce change and have an impact at the student and family levels largely because there is a coordinator who can pull together and motivate various levels of stakeholders.

Coordination across the Spectrum of Collaboration

The following section presents a list of tasks cited by respondents for which the coordinator at any level of collaboration is responsible. Each of these tasks was mentioned by multiple respondents as important to the overall functioning of the wraparound and collaborative endeavour.

The questions asked were framed to explore the following themes:

- the reasons a coordinator is important to the wraparound process
- the challenges faced when there is no wraparound coordinator
- statements about a shared coordinator position.

A wraparound coordinator (at the school authority or school) is important because he or she is . . .

- the communication hub for families and supports
- an advocate for the needs of the student, family and project
- the liaison between agencies and partners
- different from a special education coordinator.

A wraparound coordinator . . .

- helps to overcome inevitable challenges and growing pains of the initial phases of the wraparound process
- manages cross-sectoral hurdles, e.g., scheduling, information sharing, mandates
- researches and accesses resources available to the wraparound team
- prevents the isolation and silo effect from happening
- makes collaboration happen
- mobilizes the community
- facilitates sincere partnerships
- increases the team's ability to merge knowledge and find creative solutions for families
- amalgamates data, which assures that wraparound is outcomes driven and increases accountability
- liaises with other coordinators across the province to create a broader community that is able to share ideas that impact students
- plans and organizes shared professional development for building staff, which would be difficult for a principal to take on
- saves the teachers and partners time through coordinated sharing of responsibilities
- can act as a broker between agencies to acquire required services
- has the freedom to do what he or she believes is right for the student.

Without a coordinator . . .

- collaboration is limited
- partners are not always sure what their role entails or who is working with which child
- service overlaps and gaps remain unidentified
- administration tasks are either left undone or fall onto the desk of other staff
- there is no single contact for parents, which results in a parent-driven rather than a team-driven approach
- reporting and accountability structures are severely limited; files may not even be kept and therefore no outcome measures are determined
- the staff subsequently perceives the impact of the intervention as limited, which decreases morale

- it is a nightmare communicating intervention plans to all staff in the building
- sustainability of the relationship with the family is severely curtailed or not even attempted.

If the coordinator has more than one role within the school, project or school authority, then . . .

- the appropriate time needs to be reserved/released for wraparound coordination activities, e.g., phone calls, scheduling, file management
- a chain of communication between all stakeholders must be established
- there is a risk that neither role gets the attention it deserves; the individual does not have the time to be as effective as he or she would like to be in the joint positions
- time is often too limited to develop relationships with the students and families or to build community partnerships
- additional funding through grants, donations and other external supports may not be secured due to time constraints.

WRAPAROUND AND BUILDING SPACE

Wraparound and the coordination of collaboration require space. Space for small intimate interventions with a student and maybe one other family member that foster trust and comfort are as important as larger meeting rooms for team meetings or even classrooms for student activities. For most sites, space was a limited resource. In some cases, principals and other leaders found inventive and creative ways to facilitate wraparound or other collaborative activities; in other cases this was more difficult.

Borrowed Space: External to the School

When schools begin to use a wraparound approach to address the needs of students and families, building space may become a concern. The shortage of space is often met creatively by scavenging a small space in a school for collaborative work.

In other groups, however, appropriate space is simply not available (or not made available) and the collaborative team is forced to borrow space outside the school to conduct meetings. As many respondents suggested, borrowed space is often unreliable and inflexible, and these conditions can have an impact on the wraparound process.

> **"We did have a space, but not the most reliable. It was the child and youth services' boardroom, but if they needed it, they got it, even though we booked for the rest of the year; of course they meet their agency's needs first, so now we are using another agency's space … but it is not very big. It can be really tight if you've got a family in there and then there is a great big room that is really not conducive to more intimate conversations." {WRAPAROUND LEAD}**

Shared Space: Benefits and Challenges

When different agencies, partners and schools are able to meet in the school, even if it is only for a few days a week, a positive impact on multiple fronts can result. For example, wraparound within a school environment has been shown to:

- impact how children are supported
- increase the comfort levels of families
- reduce the barriers to accessing services and supports
- encourage creative and multi-pronged approaches to the most challenging of problems
- build capacity and knowledge of all staff and partners, as a result of sustained physical presence.

Students whose needs are already identified and those students whose challenges are undisclosed are both supported when schools share space with community partners.

Based on data from interviews, students benefited from having in-school and/or onsite supports available. One of the most immediate ways students benefit was by having experts and specialists available to them every day. As research has shown, these proximal experts and specialists are then in a better position to see and assess when a student needs extra supports and offer those supports in a sensitive, appropriate and timely manner.

> "With this one student, we saw him in the hallway just sitting out there every day, hunched over—his body was really covering him, his head was down and he listened to his headphones. We all noticed it because we'd walk by him every day, and we'd say 'You know, you're welcome to come into this room.' And he'd sit there. We all gently prodded him to come in, and so after about a month he came into our room." {WRAPAROUND LEAD}

At-risk students who have access to services and supports *in their schools* were also more likely to utilize referred services and to return to their class after accessing needed services. Researchers visited two schools where many of the services that the students required were in-house. Although these types of schools are rare, the potential impact on student well-being is enhanced.

> "All of the services come to this school and I think that sets the student up [for success], because every time our students have to leave (to go to something else or where they have to go to a doctor or they have to go see a nurse), just for minor things, it's one more reason why they don't need to be in school, and when you already have a vulnerable at-risk population, it doesn't work. They go and they don't come back or they go and it gives them another reason not to be here so everything [needs to be] in-house." {SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR}

By having supports available to all students and having the providers of the supports visible on a day-to-day basis, whether they are mental health workers, addictions counsellors, mentors or resource officers, practitioners maintain that the stigma of needing these supports gradually diminishes and students are more comfortable accessing these normalized services.

> **"[Working in the school with other partners is] insanely important. It is head spinning and that has been one of the most massive transitions between wraparound services here and my other experiences in the field. [Previously], we had to call over and try to connect with somebody to get certain resources or to collaborate. Hopefully, we would get hold of them. A lot of times they were in different towns—there's a distance. Here it is immediate. I've had kids [say] stuff and I'll walk over and say [to the partner], 'I'm not giving you any names, but if a kid said this to me, is that something you're concerned about?' and they'll say, 'Ask these questions and if they say X or Y then let us know.' It is incredibly helpful." {COMMUNITY PARTNER}**

Onsite services and supports facilitate more timely interventions and are better equipped to operate in a more preventative/proactive manner. Families also benefit from schools sharing the building with service agencies. For example, when services are available at the same school their children attend, the barriers are reduced and easily surmountable. Similarly, for families who are typically disengaged from the school, connections can be made slowly, especially when parents are introduced to support workers from partner agencies and collaborating ministries during positive activities and events such as open houses and potluck dinners.

Professionally, there are numerous benefits to be gained from working in a shared space. One of the more obvious is the development of individual relationships between school and agency staff. As many respondents explained, working in a shared environment fosters personal relationships and enhances opportunities for meaningful collaboration. Moreover, when collaborating partners see a student with complex needs in the natural environment of the school, intervention plans can be more sensitive to the individualized needs of the student.

> **"The research shows that if kids have one positive role model in their life and someone they can trust, they can be successful despite whatever deplorable situation they are [in]. Success coach, counsellor, teacher, principal and/or the special education coordinator—there is somebody there for every kid in our school." {SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR}**

Sharing of professional space means more than just sharing a physical site. It also means being open to an operational change. Operational changes resulting from collaborative arrangements might be as simple as a success coach being allowed to remove a student from the classroom for a 10-minute check-in, or as complex as changing the school's timetable in order to facilitate group work led by mental health professionals. The issue of who pays for the shared space is also important to consider, as some respondents noted. However, while the question of finances is significant, the matter of shared space is also notably related to the issue of attitude and commitment to wraparound.

As one respondent explained:

> "It is the readiness of the principal to be open to looking at his or her building [as shared space] and then the willingness to allow partners to come in a use the space. [This attitude] is the principal's philosophy and his or her willingness to work that way. We have had some examples of principals who have refused to allow partners to do their work in the school." {SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR}

Elements of the Wraparound Process

TEAMS

Data regarding team processes was gathered through direct observation of case management meetings and of other process-related meetings. Additional information was gathered from responses to interview questions from various stakeholders.

Wraparound is a planning process entirely dependent upon teams. In wraparound there are interdependent and interconnected levels of teams each with specific roles and functions. Definitions of what constitutes a team varied by site. In some sites, the team referred to the project staff. In other sites, the *team* referred to the group of collaborative partners who regularly met to share information about student concerns, take referrals and triage individual interventions. For others, the team referred to the actual wraparound planning with the student, family and wraparound lead. Finally, in some sites, the team referred to the supervisory body overseeing the collaborative process from the point of view of leadership. Three types of team meetings were identified: the wraparound case planning team, the collaborating partners team and the systems-level team.

Wraparound Case Planning Team

The wraparound case planning team operates at the school or field level, which is where the front line work of wraparound takes place. In this team structure, families and students come together with the staff to address the students' broad challenges. The wraparound case planning team works directly with the student and/or family to help address identified needs. This team may meet once to help plan an intervention or it may meet multiple times to both plan and guide the implementation of the intervention. Although there are no fixed guidelines regarding who should be present at these meetings, generally at field-level wraparound case planning meetings, it is essential to have the child (age dependent), the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of the child and a wraparound lead present. Formal wraparound literature states that *natural supports* are also required on the wraparound intervention team (Bruns et al., 2005). Natural supports are described as individuals who are not necessarily service providers or professionals, but are mentors who know the family personally and are able and/or willing to help provide support during the implementation of the wraparound plan. Common natural supports include extended family members, pastors, neighbours and friends. In Alberta, the inclusion of natural supports on the wraparound case planning team was rare. Collaborating partners, teachers, school/authority administration, etc., may be standing or invitational members on the wraparound case planning team.

Collaborating Partners Team

The collaborating partners team includes system level administrators from the school authority, other authorities and other community agencies that provide services and supports that operate at the school, community, organizational and/or system levels. Collaborating partners teams can be *on call,* as in the case of emergent collaboration, or they can be regularly scheduled meetings with standing members, as in the case of exemplary collaboration. The collaborating partners team is generally responsible for the following.

- Creating protocols and/or procedures for intake of student referrals or triaging referrals, sharing information and conflict resolution processes when system-level issues arise that need resolution, and considering and collating different skills and bodies of knowledge in order to best address the student's challenges.

- Determining which partner will take the lead on particular cases.

- Navigating within and between participating partner systems to provide support to wraparound case planning teams.

- Re-evaluating the intervention plan if goals are not being met.

The collaborating partners team meetings usually take place prior to the wraparound case planning team meetings that are held with the family and/or child. In emergent collaboration, these meetings take place in response to need. Often in cases of evident collaboration (and necessarily in cases of exemplary collaboration), these meetings are scheduled in advance with standing members while invitational members may be called upon when needed.

The location of coordination for these types of meetings is relevant to the level of collaboration. In emergent sites, the planning meetings could be coordinated either from the school or from the school authority level. In evident collaboration, the meetings were coordinated either within the schools or through a third-party team.

Systems-Level Team

The final level of teams relevant to the wraparound process is the systems-level team. The existence of this level of team indicates an exemplary level of collaboration. The distinguishing feature of a systems-level team is that it is capable of policy and fiscal decisions. For the sites visited, *system* refers to intersectoral administration and governance. These teams (generally called committees) may include the supervisory/governance level of the collaborating partners and school authorities, and may include the provincial ministry when the issues to be resolved are provincial in scope or responsibility. As observed during the interview process, these teams focused on strategic planning, shared resources and operations of the collaborative process.

Necessity of Team Integration

The multiple levels of teams and the focus and function of these teams can have a very real and material effect on the extent to which collaboration is sought and achieved. That is, if the team's focus (regardless of the level of team) remains solely on its own level of operation and fails to recognize, communicate with, or incorporate all levels of the desired collaboration, successful wraparound becomes difficult if not impossible to achieve.

The links made between various teams, however, do not have to be unidirectional regardless of the real or perceived hierarchy in place. Rather, the existent literature regarding wraparound identifies the need for multi-level communication, referred to as forward and backward mapping (Walker & Koroloff, 2007).

As one respondent remarked:

> **"She was putting so much effort into creating and maintaining collaborative relationships with other agencies and sectors that she was probably neglecting her own education personnel in the collaborative process." {School Administrator}**

Thus, for wraparound to be successful, it is important to recognize and to plan for the team meetings and the subsequent communication across and between all levels; yet, it is also important to consider the time factors involved in such planning. As suggested from the interviews and research, all levels of teams spend a great deal of time connecting with the agencies and partners, learning their skill sets, sharing ideas and developing/changing protocols. Consequently, they may feel that there is little time left for actual applied work with the students. This is especially the case if the coordinator has been allotted a very limited amount of time in which to fulfill his or her duties. Moreover, it is natural for teams to take years to become efficient and resilient to change, and to be able to focus fully on forming and implementing solutions to the very complex situations some students present.

As one respondent remarked:

> **"Well it is my fifth year with this team, it is my third in this role and I think we've been a fairly consistent team. We haven't had a lot of turnover. This year there has been some so we are in a year of transition … This team works in part because [we] have good leaders who know how to help create a team. Part of it is a level of experience and everybody here has had many years and just get it, so a lot of our time is not spent getting it. It is spent addressing it." {School Authority Administrator}**

Thus, the collaborating structures must work out the operational issues, but this work needs to respond to the needs of the front line teams. There must be some type of mechanism to link the structural development and systems changes to the actual intervention process.

A further challenge associated with this work in Alberta is the difficulty in defining the actions and purposes of the wraparound team. Just as there is no shared understanding of wraparound, there is no mutually agreed upon definition of a wraparound team. Within the current literature regarding wraparound, wraparound team is generally used synonymously and interchangeably with the front line team that meets with the student and family (the case planning team).

In practice, however, the wraparound team was generally thought to be synonymous with the organizational level team (the collaborating partners team). Teams at all levels and of all structures would benefit from a consistent approach to delineating and clarifying all operational terms for collaborative and integrative interventions.

Maintaining and sustaining a team through multiple challenges and changes, such as funding and personnel turnover, is, as one respondent casually remarked, "much like tending a garden; a little bit of work every day is much more valuable than a weekend of 12-hour days." As such, individual relationships must be nurtured and provided with the resources—particularly communication tools—needed to support the building of a flexible and strong team. The effect that adequate contact and communication can have between collaborating partners and teams is apparent and of equal concern when considering the many challenges associated with fostering a sense of team integration. One respondent described multiple communication strategies that helped build a strong, integrated team:

> "We have regularly scheduled advisory committee meetings. But I am also in touch with them by e-mail. We have videoconferences for the project. We have a videoconference about how things are going and information and [the collaborating partners] are invited to those and they usually attend. And the [partners] like to hear about the kids. So, at those advisory committee meetings, I'll either tell kid stories or bring kids in, so they can tell their own stories." {WRAPAROUND LEAD}

STUDENTS SERVED BY WRAPAROUND

Wraparound leads were asked to describe what kinds of needs or populations they served. There were subtle differences between students served at the emergent, evident and exemplary collaborative levels of wraparound. With the exception of schools serving specific populations, many respondents did not single out specific populations of students to be served through wraparound. The respondents from exemplary collaborations, for example, seemed to be the most adamant that within their practice they chose not to specify eligibility criteria related to target populations as their expression of wraparound was inclusive. They indicated any student who presented with vulnerabilities was a candidate for wraparound. The following comments demonstrate their inclusive approach.

> "It's broad. I couldn't say it's one kind of population, I'd say it's one kind of need or several kinds of needs." {WRAPAROUND LEAD}

> "It's individual. Any kid in need." {WRAPAROUND LEAD}

Wraparound practitioners from exemplary collaborations refer more often to the broad issues and societal environments (children in poverty, past emotional traumas, homeless youth) within which students operate.

To better understand the question of who wraparound serves, wraparound leads were asked who received wraparound at their sites. Their responses revealed that the populations served by wraparound broadened as the level and capacity of collaboration increased. Sites with emergent collaboration were found to serve a focused population, while sites with exemplary collaboration were found to subsume more of the tightly defined populations within broader categories, e.g., at-risk youth, economically disadvantaged.

If a wraparound team has more supports and more effective collaborating partners, the supports that the team can provide may naturally broaden. Thus, when exemplary collaborators did cite their target groups, the groups were inclusive of many needs, as the following statement suggests.

> "Our original proposal was for 50 at-risk youth. At-risk is so broad—it could refer to something as simple as attendance … So the criteria are attendance, drug use, any social, emotional and/or any behavioural problem (like cutting). We do have an anger group for any kind of behavioural situation." {WRAPAROUND LEAD}

STUDENT REFERRAL TO THE WRAPAROUND PROCESS

One of the primary steps of a wraparound intervention is the referral process. The referral process is the means by which students who demonstrate multiple vulnerabilities that exceed the capacity of the classroom or school are brought to the attention of the school administration and, in certain schools, school authority central office. The referral process is seemingly simple, but in practice it can be bogged down by bureaucratic complexities resulting from information sharing and meeting mandates. The following section presents the results of respondents' discussion of student referral. The results will be discussed in concert with the three levels of collaboration: emergent, evident and exemplary.

> For all levels of collaboration it was found that onsite school staff, such as the teachers, counsellors and administrators, are the primary sources of referral.

Referral in Emergent Collaborations

Sites engaged in emergent level collaboration structures did not usually have pre-existing wraparound teams readily available; thus the referral process was flexible and, very often, improvisational. In emergent sites, there were few clear guidelines or thresholds for when a wraparound should be initiated and who should be present for supports. Students were reported to school administration, who determined the necessary testing and supports required and accessed the appropriate partners. If the students' vulnerabilities were multiple and complex, the school administration determined either the referral agencies or how to maximize in-school supports. Certain school authorities required students with high vulnerabilities to be referred directly to the school authority level.

If a referral is made at the school authority level through a phone call, a referral form or conversation, the intake will determine if the student's challenges fall under the realm of special education or mental health because there are different protocols and funding streams for different categories. At this point, a range of *next steps* is available as the following comment demonstrates.

> "The intake person … will make the decision on which team that child would be best served by and then we put the pieces in place there. That is for an education-sponsored kind of funding mechanism. With something like mental health, I might get a phone call; we have some programs for students with severe behaviour. We'll either refer [the student] back to the school if we think the school can manage it, or we'll bring the school in and say we need to sit around … we need to have a discussion about this, so the people need to be at the table." {SCHOOL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR}

Referral in Evident Collaborations

In evident collaboration, referral processes were unique and dependent upon the context and individual collaborative structure. For functional collaborative teams, referrals were usually directed to the school administration from partners, including the wraparound coordinator, in-school personnel, community partners, school authority administration and parents. In most cases, the school administrator communicated with the coordinator to determine if a wraparound, or another kind of intervention, was necessary. Unfortunately, no site was explicit about the order and process of the intake protocol.

Referral in Exemplary Collaborations

In schools with exemplary collaborative structures, the referral process is usually quite systematized and, in many cases, the supportive structures exist prior to the need. In this structure, *any* interested party could refer *any* child needing extra supports, but the referral generally had to be finalized through the school administration.

> In large schools, referrals to the in-school system of supports could be based on empirical data. If a student's records revealed a sudden and consistent decline in attendance or sharp increases in disciplinary action, school administration could refer the student for extra supports and services.

The school is able to keep abreast of the needs and services accessed by channeling referrals through school administration. Moreover, school administration is able to communicate to school personnel any pertinent information about the student. Thus, an important communication loop is created between the school administration, the wraparound coordinator and parents. As one respondent noted:

> "So the principals in each school always sign those referrals off. It always gets passed through the principal first, just to ensure that it's going to the correct service. Principals just need to be aware of what is going on in their schools and I'm really trying to move toward more of that because, in the past, a counsellor would just do his or her thing and the principal didn't even know who was on the counsellor's caseload. So now the principals are very aware and they are signing off on the referrals." {WRAPAROUND LEAD}

> Some of the interviews conducted at exemplary sites revealed that referrals from parents noticeably increased after word of the positive outcomes was shared amongst the community—a very positive reflection of the exemplary collaborative interventions.

In schools that serve at-risk students, such as transient youth, referrals must be quick and efficient. In these cases, a wraparound team staff remains in contact with the student to keep him or her accessible, slowly engage him or her in the process of wraparound, and build the needed trust that will ease the process for all concerned. Thus, the referral process should have strong pre-existing protocols to make the response efficient and timely. It should be noted that the more *at risk* the student, the faster the wraparound referral process needs to be.

As one interviewee explained:

> **"I get calls [from shelters, justice, child welfare and others] saying, 'Here is a kid, it's not working and he is blowing up.' My first step is to find a connection for the kid closer to the ground. I ask 'who will *own* this kid?' It is much better for the kid to be *owned* closer to the ground than by me [at the school authority]. If no youth workers are available, then the kid goes in here (pointing to her binder) and it is my job to try to find an attachment somewhere for him or her—something that is going to work for that kid." {SCHOOL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR}**

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WRAPAROUND INTERVENTION PLAN

The core activities of the wraparound process are: (1) the planning of an intervention, and (2) the implementation of that intervention plan. It is during the planning and implementation phase that meetings and hours spent working out collaborative partnerships, protocols and processes are finally put into action. As some have said, this is *where the rubber meets the road*. The collaborative structure in which the wraparound process grows remains crucial, even once the planning and implementation stages of the wraparound process are initiated.

Similar fundamental components of wraparound planning were present across most sites. Emergent, evident and exemplary collaborations all generally emphasized and followed (or intended to follow) similar procedures for wraparound planning. Not surprisingly, differences in the implementation of the wraparound plan were apparent across the various levels of collaboration. Furthermore, the challenges presented during the implementation of the wraparound plan at different sites appeared to be directly related to the availability of required resources.

What follows is a discussion of the various components of the wraparound process based on interviews, focus groups and observations of the two different types of team meetings.

Discussion of a Composite Example of Wraparound Planning

The following section, which describes the basic processes of wraparound, is guided by a composite example that represents an amalgam of many narratives provided by respondents. This example is intended to reflect the processes that occur in the middle to upper range of evident collaboration. The components of the wraparound process take into consideration and are underscored by the shared definition of wraparound, as well as by the definitional components provided by wraparound.

Many wraparound processes taking place in Alberta fundamentally diverge from the high fidelity model of wraparound presented in literature. It was found that, in practice, emergent collaborations have greater divergences from high fidelity models than evident collaborations, which, in turn, demonstrate greater divergences than exemplary. Overall, it was found that the wraparound process in sites with exemplary collaborations meet the majority of high fidelity wraparound principles.

The discussion of the wraparound process presented in this section necessarily assumes that a certain degree of collaboration has been achieved, that there is a bare minimum of coordination available and that the child or youth has gone through the referral process where key decisions, such as the types of partners needed and who will be taking the lead for the student's individual case, have been made.

Rather that presenting a formal, fixed and, therefore, misleading list of steps that should be followed to engage the practice of wraparound, the following composite example provides a representative illustration of how the individual needs of a child and his family are met in site visits in Alberta.

Kenny's name was brought up in a wraparound planning meeting with the school administration, collaborating partners and coordinator. Although Kenny had not been spoken to yet, his teachers reported seeing a rapid change in Kenny at school and that he often came to school hungry and with very dirty clothes. He was also acting like a thug in the schoolyard and threatening violence to his peers. His grades had dropped remarkably. His teacher had heard through the community gossip that Kenny's oldest brother was recently jailed, but this was not substantiated. Kenny's younger sister seemed to be functioning well in school, both academically and socially. The planning team did not know what specific services would be best to get in place, but knew that some basic needs, such as nutrition and hygiene support, could be met at school immediately. The recess supervisors were asked to watch Kenny closely. It was decided that Alice, one of the youth workers who shared her time between two schools, would be the best youth worker to take on Kenny's wraparound.

The principal had already called Kenny's mother to let her know that Kenny's name had been referred and that Alice would be calling her. Alice placed the call and started the conversation by speaking about her position at the school and what wraparound planning looked like. Kenny's mother was reticent to share many details but relieved that Kenny's problems were being noticed. Alice asked if she would be willing to go out for a coffee with her in order to learn more about how to plan for Kenny, the supports he needed, and to gain consent for the school and partners to share information about Kenny between them and to access services on his behalf. When Alice went to pick up Kenny's mother, she saw a small bungalow with children's toys and hockey sticks lying around outside. She saw a dog in the fenced backyard and was welcomed by a very nervous mother. The two went to the local coffee shop. Alice began the conversation by telling Kenny's mother about playing street hockey with Kenny at recess yesterday. She talked about what a good player he was and mentioned that he had many friends who enjoyed playing hockey with him. Kenny's mother relaxed a little. Over coffee, Kenny's mother mentioned some of the concerns she had about Kenny's recent behaviour. She said he demonstrated deep anger and flew into rages where he broke things and screamed hateful things at her. He would leave the house and not come back for an hour. He refused to bathe or to change his clothes. She was aware of his changes but felt powerless. Kenny's mother did not speak about any family details except that she could not be home in the mornings to get the kids ready for school. She did not know that Kenny was hungry at school, and she felt shameful about it, but she shared that Kenny was responsible for making sure his younger sister was fed and ready for school every morning. Kenny's mother signed the shared consent but did not give consent for the school's resource officer to be a part of Kenny's team. Once consents were signed, Alice spoke to the coordinator to discuss some of the immediate options for Kenny. The coordinator suggested that Kenny join an active group intervention as a first step while waiting for the monthly wraparound planning team.

> **At school the next day, Alice took Kenny out of social studies class, simply because it was the only time she had available in the day. Kenny was very reluctant to speak to her in her office when Alice told him that his mother knew Alice was going to meet with him. Since the silence was making Kenny feel awkward, Alice asked Kenny if he would be willing to help her clean up the craft table in her office, which was covered with glue and scraps from her previous group. She also asked him to choose a CD from her pile for some cleaning-up music. He put on an old Dr Dre CD as he willingly helped her clean. He mentioned that his brother loved Dr Dre. Alice delicately asked about Kenny's brother. Kenny mentioned that he was 20 and had moved out and would not be coming back ever. After 10 minutes, Alice thanked Kenny for helping her and asked him to join her grief-counselling group for students who have experienced a loss. He asked when it was. She said a time that overlapped his math class, and so he readily agreed to attend. After meeting with Kenny, she immediately called the mentor agency to start making arrangements for a male mentor for Kenny as a longer-term support.**

This composite example demonstrates that wraparound must be flexible and responsive to any situation. The following features of this example are particularly noteworthy.

- Even though the mother does not have much support, the family's basic needs are being met and there are comforts, such as sports equipment and a pet.

- At the personal level, there are factors that must not be overlooked when addressing a child. This relates not only to his positive interpersonal traits, but also the things from which he derives pride and a sense of belonging and connection.

- Not every personal detail needs to be expressed or discovered before appropriate supports are put in place.

- The wider psycho-social context, such as the grief Kenny feels over the absence of his brother, must be considered and explored once a demonstrable level of trust is reached.

- While appropriate mentorship is being sought, the wraparound lead can work with the student to explore/resolve personal issues. Trust is built incrementally.

As this example suggests, the very process of engaging the family and student creatively provides ample opportunity to find positive aspects of a child's life to build up and promote across multiple life domains. When looking at the child, the needs must first be uncovered, prioritized and then planned for by the wraparound team. Time constraints and schedules of the partners will impact this process. In this example, Alice has to wait until the monthly planning team meeting before hearing from all wraparound partners. In the interim, she discusses intervention plans with the coordinator. In most places in Alberta, the planning process initially takes place in a wraparound case planning team meeting without family present. After options and plans are discussed in the closed team meeting, options for an intervention plan are presented to the family for input and potential uptake.

> After two weeks of working with Kenny in groups, he opened up and told Alice that his older brother, who was responsible for a lot of the child care at home, was recently jailed for drug trafficking. He mentioned that his mother was so angry and ashamed; she told the brother he would never be allowed to come home, even when his sentence was complete. Kenny was livid with his mother. Alice was not sure what next steps to take, especially since Kenny's anger toward his mother was unresolved. His teachers were still reporting outbursts at school though his taunting in the schoolyard was lessening. In the monthly meeting with the wraparound team, Alice presented Kenny's case to the team. A social worker on the team suggested Kenny's mother attend a support group for women whose partners and family were recently incarcerated. The coordinator called the RCMP to find out more about the support groups. While in contact with the police, she learned about an after school sports program for at-risk boys. It would have been great for Kenny, but his mother had not signed consent for contact with the police and so the coordinator could not make specific inquiries.
>
> Alice called Kenny's mother and asked her if she would like to meet for a few minutes to speak about the progress Kenny was making at school. When they met, Alice showed Kenny's mother the art he created during his group work. Alice praised the honesty and intensity of the art, which portrayed the feelings about his brother, his mother and the situation. Kenny's mother was immediately quiet and ashamed that Alice knew of her older son's incarceration, but Alice continued talking and praised the older son for his ability to provide caring child care for Kenny and his sister even when he was conducting illegal activities. Alice also shared that she was confident that Kenny had not been exposed to any drug culture until the moment of arrest and the subsequent court case. Alice added that, like his older brother, Kenny was taking good care of his sister and is always very helpful at school. She casually mentioned that there must have been good lessons at home for helping each other.
>
> Alice then introduced the idea of the RCMP support group. Alice also asked if she would reconsider signing the consent for working with the resource officer so Kenny could start to rebuild some trust for the police and possibly join this police-sponsored sports program. Kenny's mother reconsidered and said she would sign the consent when she came to the school on Wednesday to join her daughter at the Alice in WonderSchool's tea party. Alice asked if she would mind coming a bit earlier so she could meet together with the resource officer, the principal and the coordinator to get the details for applying to the sports program and to discuss any other ways that the school could support their family.

The second part of this composite example illustrates the impact of working with a team where ideas and knowledge of other agencies' programming can help support an intervention. The following important details are revealed here.

- The wraparound leader is able to draw on her team for ideas. The coordinator is able to make contact with connections that will effectively help meet the needs of the student and family.

- By addressing the needs of the family, the whole family can be helped, which illustrates the impact of positive support and builds on these positives for all members of the family.

- The school is involved in the intervention even if it is behind the scenes. Later on in the wraparound process, for example, after learning more about Kenny's strengths in the monthly wraparound case planning meeting, the principal is able to provide an opportunity for Kenny to build on his desire to help people by asking him to assist the younger students with after-school reading supports.

- Small social events, like the tea party, which involve the students and an appropriate adult supervisor, help build trust and augment relationships between the school and all students and families.

This composite example of cases from the site visits illustrates the importance of persistence in the wraparound approach. Kenny's in-class behaviour did not change immediately in response to the intervention and he continued to act aggressively toward his teacher and other students. However, by considering the different areas of his life and by being willing to build up the whole child, the school was able to see more positive sides of Kenny's character. By revealing his hidden skills for helping and nurturing the younger students, the teaching staff were able to see him in a new way. The result was an attitudinal shift for all involved and, importantly, led to a growing sense of involvement and positive engagement by the student involved.

This example obviously describes a condition in which there are in-school resources to draw upon. Yet, it also demonstrates that the needed resources are not necessarily as taxed as one would expect. The wraparound process required a few resources, such as a part-time coordinator and an intervention staff member who could have been an in-school support with dedicated time and the right attitude. Alice demonstrated the impact of one-on-one sessions with students who have more severe emotional and/or behavioural needs as well as the importance of targeted groups for students with concerns that could be met in group sessions. She also collaborated with the school personnel to offer social activities that incorporated the community and helped to make the school a safe and positive place for all students and their families.

This example did not include a formalized wraparound meeting with the family, members of the community agencies, and other partners to create a structured plan of intervention. At the site visits throughout Alberta, these more formalized meetings seemed to take place inconsistently. However, the casual contact with families, especially to share positive news, was more commonly discussed in interviews and focus groups.

Key Processes of Wraparound Typically Practiced in Alberta

Sites engaged in wraparound used the following wraparound processes that enabled them to meet multiple needs:

- assuring appropriate resources, such as coordination and positive attitude
- planning collaboratively for students and their family
- building relationships with the student through available and demonstrable strengths and assets
- building a relationship with the family through strengths and assets
- determining the individualized and contextualized needs of the student
- responding with appropriate flexibility to needs, which may include identifying immediate, moderate and long-term needs
- addressing the immediate needs of the family and providing ideas for addressing long-term needs by identifying possible resources.

Implementation of Wraparound

Implementation of the wraparound plan differed across the collaborative structures. As anticipated, the capacity for implementation of an intervention plan was bound to the collaborative capacities of the sites, especially in the relation to the following:

- the attitudes toward collaboration as demonstrated by a willingness to share data, maintain team members' trust and to work toward shared responsibilities
- the capacity of the collaborative community, including the number of services available and their respective distances
- the capacity for coordination of the implementation of a wraparound plan, especially when teachers became the *de facto* coordinators, who were often overwhelmed with non-integrated intervention plans from collaborative partners and could rarely establish release time (in sites with adequate coordination, integration and execution of the plan was not a limiting factor for the intervention).

USE OF DATA IN THE WRAPAROUND PROCESS

Because the wraparound process often requires sustained input from already limited resources, it is necessary to determine the impact these resources have on wraparound interventions. In other words, there must be measurable outcomes for the wraparound interventions, especially because the number of required resources increases as collaboration levels move from emergent, to evident, to exemplary. However, measurable outcomes for wraparound are limited. Moreover, collecting, managing and preparing data as indicators is time intensive, and, as numerous respondents stated, time is a very limited resource for all wraparound practitioners.

In emergent and evident collaboration, data collection generally consisted of standard academic or school authority-based indicators. In the sites with exemplary collaboration, data collection was part of the system-level accountability structures, so measurable outcomes were systematically collected and reported. Practitioners were conscious that their project funding would be linked to measurable outcomes and also expressed concern that traditional measurable outcomes did not capture the true impact of their interventions with students, nor were student outcomes solely a result of wraparound initiatives.

> The standard educational indicators, such as grade point, suspensions, course completion and attendance are applicable to measuring wraparound outcomes, but these indicators do not reflect the quality of life changes that are also sought through wraparound interventions.

Data from families and students were important to many of the sites. The data were collected through satisfaction surveys given to both parents and students at determined periods. With these results, practitioners were able to adjust their practices to be more responsive to the needs of the families. Student satisfaction surveys were given to assess students' comfort level with the intervention programming and project staff. For the exemplary collaborations, these surveys were mandated and provided by funders.

In general, the surveys were found to be beneficial to the intervention process, as stated by a wraparound lead:

> "[There are] things like surveys on the timeliness of services and that is good information because we can break it down into *what do the parents feel about it, what do the students feel about it and what do the staff feel about it*. Well to me, that data from the students is really important—data about 'How are you feeling? Do you feel that there are caring adults in the school? Do you feel that this is a good place to be?' I think that's great data." {WRAPAROUND LEAD}

One of the challenges of collecting data from students and families, especially in the beginning stages, was that it could be considered invasive. At one site, practitioners said they often did not collect *pre*-data until they had built a level of trust and rapport with the students. Practitioners felt it was just too invasive.

Capturing the *right* data was a continual concern for practitioners of wraparound. Understanding that strictly quantitative indicators do not always reflect the changes in students, many exemplary sites mandated reports requiring qualitative data in the form of anecdotes from students, parents, teachers and other school staff. For many practitioners, quality of life indicators were thought to be more important than the numbers, though specific indicators were not described. Some collaborating partners complained that their reporting structures only required treatment data when prevention data was far more powerful and reflective of their actual work with the wraparound process. In general, practitioners felt the need to broaden the understanding of relative and important data; many respondents considered that a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study would best reveal the overall impact of the exemplary wraparound interventions. One special population school had an SROI conducted on longitudinal data of their student population.

Collecting appropriate data was not the only challenge. The archiving of data was also an issue for some sites. To ensure confidentiality and to maintain mandates, one site made the point of not collecting or storing data about the child and/or family. Minutes of meetings were not stored because there was concern about who would own those records. In other sites, the school's standard record-keeping system was utilized to hold data about the wraparound intervention, although all decisions about what was put in the file was in line with appropriate confidentiality measures. Practitioners of wraparound expressed a desire to have longitudinal data to determine if their early interventions had impact on high school completion and post-graduation.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE WRAPAROUND PROCESS

The wraparound process needs to be accountable to its stakeholders. Accountabilities are mechanisms to ensure that the collaborative and planning processes are effective, appropriate and sustained. Accountabilities range from internal team accountability plans that divide responsibilities between partners to system-level reports that evaluate the impact of the whole intervention. How these accountabilities are envisioned and realized differs across the collaborative continuum.

Since emergent and evident collaborations do not have system-level protocols and agreements, the accountability structures for these wraparound initiatives are minimal. At some sites, no accountability structure or procedure was present, while in other sites the accountability structure was simple—the wraparound team was accountable to the team and/or the school principal. Similarly, collaborating partners were accountable to their supervisors. There did not appear, however, to be systems in place for the team to be accountable to the wraparound process, and accountability appeared to be dependent upon the team members' passion for, and attitude toward, the process.

The role of attitude and buy-in is connected to the accountability of the wraparound process. One school authority administrator, who worked at a very high system-level collaboration, remarked:

> **"When someone is really passionate and that they mean it from up top, it increases the accountability." {SCHOOL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATOR}**

The collaborative team structure encourages personal engagement and responsibility in the wraparound process. As one school counsellor put it:

> **"So I guess about accountabilities, I want to have something to say when I go in there that I followed up. When I say that I tried to engage somebody in counselling, I don't want to go for the next meeting and say I haven't engaged them yet. Or at least I want to have a reason why I haven't been engaged, so it keeps me on my toes that way." {SCHOOL COUNSELLOR}**

Teams did not cite any specific internal accountability mechanisms for ensuring engagement in the wraparound process for school personnel or collaborating partners.

Throughout the interviews, practitioners from the exemplary sites were best able to articulate their accountability structures. This was most certainly tied to their system-level funding. The funding bodies had built in data collection and reporting structures for assurance of effective practices. Some exemplary sites also spoke about their local accountability structures, which started in the school with the principal, followed by the school board and school trustees. Some sites included the mayoral office within this accountability structure. The accountability structure was deemed important for advertising the effective work being done in schools and a necessary step in assuring continued funding.

Almost all respondents were aware that school staff and collaborating partners were accountable to their own systems and their system mandates. These mandates were presented as a necessary structure, but also as a limit to the potential creativity of intervention plans for students. Some respondents reiterated that their intervention projects were accountable to their distinct funders for the funds intended purposes.

> **"Well, I mean, I'm accountable to the public in how funds are used and my focus is on making sure that, while working with other agencies, those funds are used for what they are intended to be used for ... education dollars go to education, money that has been donated through various agencies for nutrition actually ends up in the nutrition pot." {WRAPAROUND LEAD}**

Data and accountabilities were thought to be limited or missing in capturing the time and quality of the collaborative process. One school and its partners were in the process of determining how to best evaluate their entire collaborative process. The collaborative process requires its own resources (coordination, space, and time) and practitioners want to capture these inputs as a component of the complete evaluation.

Overall, wraparound practitioners were cognizant of the inherent challenges arising with multiple accountability structures necessitated by numerous funders, collaborating and cross-sector partners, and local government. As one respondent explained:

> "You're accountable to a lot more places. Because when I am working for the school system, I have to keep in mind that it's a balancing act because you have your agency (its mission and philosophies), and then you have the school (its mission and philosophies). Then you work with child and youth services and Big Brothers, Big Sisters and lots and lots of stakeholders, so just for myself, I really have to balance between school needs and my agency needs." {COMMUNITY PARTNER}

One site created a joint reporting and accountability system for the school and its collaborating partners. This reporting system, guided by advisors, was a system that had years of success and history behind it.

> "We had an advisory team to guide this [shared reporting process] … Information that went into this [report] came from all partners. We share information with each other. I do an annual report and I've given it annually to the principal and I will continue to do that. It's all accessible. It's about whatever you need. The three partners and whoever else is in the leader position have a chat, looking at the report in terms of review and, then, if there are gaps then they can address that. It's done informally. Maybe we should formalize the process. I think it has always worked in the past because of that informal willingness, but I think it's safer for the structure to have something formal. {COMMUNITY PARTNER}

Conclusion: The Wraparound Research Project

This report contributes to the body of literature on wraparound, a review of which was undertaken in the first phase of the Wraparound Research Project (Prakash et al., 2010), and reflects data collected from 13 sites across Alberta and from interviews and focus groups conducted at every level of wraparound involvement. The data collection and analysis process was guided by a series of focused and germane research questions that had been approved and directed by the collaborative research team. The aim of the data collection was to better understand the current state of wraparound in Alberta by highlighting necessary inputs and discovering effective practices for wraparound. This data will support the next phase of this project, which will focus on wraparound resource development for schools and school authorities wishing to increase their wraparound capacity.

The data in this report focus on five salient components. Each major component and the associated sub-component(s) were derived from the qualitative inquiry methodology and were subject to appropriate and rigorous data analysis. Overall, the current practice of wraparound across Alberta, was found to be a in a state of positive development. At the sites visited, wraparound practitioners readily voiced their excitement at the increased capacity to address the vulnerabilities of students within a collaborative context in a school/community environment. Practitioners reiterated that after working in such collaborative environments, they could not imagine turning back to the traditional siloed way of addressing these needs. Challenges and obstacles to the collaborative process, however, were mentioned. Challenges often arose during the development of the collaborative process, through accessing inputs, or when practicing with too few personnel. Some challenges were considered minor and easily addressed by creative leadership and close collaboration. These challenges were regarded as reflections of the natural stages of collaborative development as the expansion of services attempted to keep up with the expansion of needs.

Serious concerns, however, were also raised. Many practitioners voiced concern about the sustainability of their funding for personnel. Comparatively, those with more permanent funding were able to focus their energies on taking every advantage that this funding facilitated. In most cases, respondents mentioned that in order to meet both the needs of Alberta's children and youth and also expand collaborations from emergent collaborations to exemplary collaborations, certain resources— attitudinal, financial and physical—were paramount.

In the existing literature, the wraparound planning process is characterized in the following way:

- plans are designed by a team of people important to the family
- the plan is driven and owned by the team, family and child/youth
- strategies in the plan include supports and interventions across multiple life domains and settings, e.g., behaviour support plans, school interventions, basic living supports, family supports, help from friends and relatives
- natural supports and unique strengths are emphasized in team and plan development
- plans include supports for adults, siblings and family members as well as the identified youth (Bruns & Walker, 2010).

These statements produce a series of ideals. While there are many sites in Alberta whose collaborative models reflect many of these ideals—especially the sites with exemplary collaborations—there were other sites that would benefit from further wraparound training and the introduction of focused implementation strategies. Currently, in the sites visited, most respondents accept and aspire to the fundamental precepts of the wraparound model. Moreover, it was found that regardless of how the site measured against the ideals mentioned above, the collaborating partners worked enthusiastically and positively within the limits of their projects to foster and support wraparound.

Wraparound is a process or an approach, not a program or service. The point of wraparound is to bring knowledge and skills together across sectors for the benefit of children and youth and to step away from single-source funded programs that operate in silos. More than anything else, the wraparound approach represents an attitudinal shift. Certain inputs, such as coordination and personnel, are beneficial and relevant to the wraparound approach, but the collaborative attitude of wraparound is not resource dependent. Communities across Alberta are embracing this important attitudinal shift toward integrated and collaborative planning.

As this report reflects, wraparound approaches appear to be both feasible and beneficial in addressing the often complex needs of vulnerable students in Alberta. According to the overwhelming majority of respondents and the suggestions presented in this report, Alberta's at-risk children and youth would benefit from increased capacity and scope of wraparound approaches.

References

Bruns, E. & Sather, A. (2010) Webinar 3: Accountability and quality assurance in wraparound. (Webinar Series National Wraparound Initiative 2010.) Wraparound Evaluation and Research Team, University of Washington. http://www.nwi.pdx.edu/webinars/Webinar3.pdf.

Bruns, E. J., Suter, J., Force, M., & Burchard, J. (2005). Adherence to wraparound principles and association with outcomes. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 14(4),* 521–534.

Bruns, E. J., Suter, J., & Burchard, J. (2002). Pilot test of the wraparound fidelity index 2.0. In C. Newman, C. Liberton, K. Kutash, & R. M. Friedman (Eds.), *The 14th annual research conference proceedings: A system of care for children's mental health*. Tampa, FL: Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health.

Bruns, E. & Walker, J. (2010) Webinar 1: Overview of wraparound. (Webinar Series National Wraparound Initiative 2010.) Wraparound Evaluation and Research Team, University of Washington. http://www.nwi.pdx.edu/webinars/Webinar1.pdf.

Bruns, E. J., Walker, J., & The National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group. (2008). Ten principles of the wraparound process. In E. Bruns & J. Walker (Eds.), *The resource guide to wraparound*. Portland, OR: National Wraparound Initiative, Research and Training Center for Family Support and Children's Mental Health.

Burchard, J. D., Bruns, E. J., & Burchard, S. N. (2002). *The wraparound approach: An overview of the wraparound process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burns, B. & Goldman, S. K. E. (Eds.) (1999). *Promising practices in wraparound for children with serious emotional disturbance and their families* (Vol. IV). (Systems of Care Promising Practices in Mental Health, 1998 Series). Washington, DC: Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, American Institutes for Research.

Dane, A. & Schneider, B. (1998). Program integrity in primary and early secondary prevention: Are implementation effects out of control? *Clinical Psychology Review, 18*(*1*), 23–45.

Daniels, J., Wosnack, N., Bisanz, J., Chalmers, G., Gokiert, R. J., McNeil, D. C., Michailides, M., Prakash, M., Schnirer, L., Varnhagen, S., & Walker, C. (2010). *Administrators' perspectives on wrapping supports and services around students: A pan-Alberta survey*. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta (available at www.cup.ualberta.ca).

Eber, L., Breen, K., Rose, J., Unizycki, R. M., & London, T., H. (2008). Wraparound: As a tertiary level intervention for students with emotional/behavioral needs. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 40(6),* 16–22.

Friend, M. & Cook, L. (2007). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals.* (5th edition). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Lawson, H. A. (2003). Pursuing and securing collaboration to improve results. M. M. Brabeck, M. E. Walsh, & R. Latta (Eds.). *Meeting as the hyphen: Schools-universities-communities-professions in collaboration for student achievement and well being*. (The 102nd Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II.) Chicago, IL: National Society for the Study of Education.

McDougall, T., Worrall-Davies, A., Hewson, L., Richardson, G., & Cotgrove, A. (2008). Tier 4 child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) – Inpatient care, day services, and alternatives: An overview of tier 4 CAMHS provision in the UK. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 13(4),* 173–180.

Prakash, M., Bisanz, J., Chalmers, G., Daniels, J., Gokiert, R. J., McNeil, D. C., Michailides, M., Schnirer, L., Varnhagen, S., Walker, C., & Wosnack, N. (2010). *Integrated supports for children, youth and families: A literature review of the wraparound process*. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta (available at www.cup.ualberta.ca).

Suter, J. C. & Bruns, E. J. (2009). Effectiveness of the wraparound process for children with emotional and behavioral disorders: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 12,* 336–351.

VanDenBerg, J., E., Grealish, E. M. (1996). Individualized services and supports through the wraparound process: Philosophy and procedures. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 5(1),* 7–21.

Walker, J. S. & Koroloff, N. (2007). Grounded theory and backward mapping: Exploring the implementation context for wraparound. *Journal of Behavioural Health Services and Research, 34(4),* 443–458.

Appendix A: Research Questions

1. How is success defined? Why?

2. What are the critical elements for success? Why?

3. What problems and barriers have arisen? Why?

4. What kinds of solutions have been developed?

5. Are programs limited to certain groups or populations and, if so, why?

6. What are the perceived costs and benefits of wraparound approaches?

7. How do these perceptions differ depending on the nature of involvement (e.g., administrator, teacher, parent, service provider)?

8. What kinds of leadership are necessary, and at what levels, to implement and sustain wraparound approaches?

9. What are the most promising ways to train people who implement wraparound programs? Why?

10. How are families being supported, if at all?

11. What are the most promising ways of supporting families?

12. Under what conditions are they (promising ways of supporting families) optimal? Why?

13. How is collaboration being implemented?

14. What are the most promising ways of collaborating with community service agencies?

15. Under what conditions are they (ways of collaborating with community service agencies) optimal? Why?

16. What kinds of resources are needed to implement and maintain wraparound programs?

17. How can wraparound approaches contribute to academic, social and health goals, such as high school completion rates?

18. Once implemented, what are the best ways to evaluate wraparound approaches?

Appendix B: Interview Guides for each Participant Role

School Authority Administration Interview Guide

Wraparound approach is a philosophy of care that includes a definable planning process involving the child/student and family that results in comprehensive, coordinated supports and services to achieve improved learning outcomes and improved quality of life. Coordinated services and supports, offered through multiple professionals and agencies that are school based and/or school linked, might include health and mental health-related services, mentoring, before/after school programs, and other supports and services for parents and families.

Context

1. Can you describe your wraparound process(es)?
   a. What are your goals?

Measurement and evaluation

2. How do you define successful implementation of wraparound in your district?
   a. What are the critical elements for success?
   b. Can you provide some examples of success you have had with wraparound (student or program)?
3. What steps have you taken to evaluate the impact or outcomes achieved through use of wraparound processes in your district?
   a. What data would be most important/useful to you?
   b. Do you have instruments that you use? If so, can we get copies of these?
   c. Are wraparound results included in annual reports (if so, what data do you use?)

Barriers/Challenges

4. What barriers/challenges have arisen?
   a. How have these barriers/challenges been addressed?

Leadership

5. What kinds of leadership support and actions are necessary, and at what levels, to implement and sustain wraparound programs?
   a. What is your role (or the district's role) as a leader in promoting the establishment and effective implementation of wraparound approaches?

Engaging families

6. What strategies does your district use to engage parents and students in planning, implementation and evaluation of services provided?

Building and maintaining relationships

7. What strategies does your jurisdiction use to establish and strengthen community partnerships necessary to implement wraparound approaches?
    a. What actions have been the most successful and why?
    b. What are the problems you have encountered in trying to develop and maintain these partnerships?

School Administration Interview Guide

Wraparound approach is a philosophy of care that includes a definable planning process involving the child/student and family that results in comprehensive, coordinated supports and services to achieve improved learning outcomes and improved quality of life. Coordinated services and supports, offered through multiple professionals and agencies that are school based and/or school linked, might include health and mental health-related services, mentoring, before/after school programs, and other supports and services for parents and families.

Context

8. Can you describe your wraparound process(es)?
    a. What are your goals?

Measurement and evaluation

9. How do you define successful implementation of wraparound in your school?
    a. What are the critical elements for success?
    b. Can you provide some examples of success you have had with wraparound (student or program)?
10. What steps have you taken to evaluate the impact or outcomes achieved through use of wraparound processes in your school? If you have not begun this process, what would be helpful to you in establishing evaluation procedures and data collection processes to aid in this task?
    a. What data would be most important/useful to you?
    b. Do you have instruments that you use? If so, can we get copies of these?
    c. Are wraparound results included in annual reports (if so, what data do you use?)

Barriers/Challenges

11. What barriers/challenges have arisen?
    a. How have these barriers/challenges been addressed?

Leadership

12. What kinds of leadership support and actions are necessary, and at what levels, to implement and sustain wraparound programs?
    a. What is your role as a leader in promoting the establishment and effective implementation of wraparound approaches?

Engaging families

13. What strategies does your school use to engage parents and students in planning, implementation and evaluation of services provided?

Building and maintaining relationships

14. What strategies does your school use to establish and strengthen community partnerships necessary to implement wraparound approaches?
    a. What actions have been the most successful and why?
    b. What are the problems you have encountered in trying to develop these community partnerships?

Teacher and School Staff Interview Guide

Wraparound approach is a philosophy of care that includes a definable planning process involving the child/student and family that results in comprehensive, coordinated supports and services to achieve improved learning outcomes and improved quality of life. Coordinated services and supports, offered through multiple professionals and agencies that are school based and/or school linked, might include health and mental health-related services, mentoring, before/after school programs, and other supports and services for parents and families.

Context

15. Can you describe your wraparound process?
    a. What types of wraparound services are needed in your class(es)?

Measurement and evaluation

16. How do you define successful implementation of wraparound in your class (can you provide specific examples)?
    a. What are the critical elements for success?
17. What steps have you taken to evaluate the impact or outcomes achieved through use of wraparound processes?
    a. What data would be most important/useful to you?

Barriers/Challenges

18. What barriers/challenges have you encountered?
    a. How have these barriers/challenges been addressed?
19. What kinds of resources are needed to implement and maintain wraparound programs?
    a. What support (funding, staffing, and materials) does your district and/or school provide for wraparound?

Leadership

20. What kinds of leadership engagement or actions are necessary, and at what levels, to implement and sustain wraparound processes?
    a. What leadership support do your district and/or school provide in promoting the establishment and effective implementation of wraparound approaches?

Engaging families

21. What strategies do you use to engage parents and students in planning, implementation and evaluation of services provided?
    a. What actions have you or other teachers/staff taken to strengthen family engagement in the planning and implementation team for wraparound?
    b. What actions have you or other teachers/staff taken to engage students as part of the wraparound team?
22. How are families being supported?
    c. What are the most effective strategies for supporting children, youth and families?

Building and maintaining relationships

23. What professional development topics would be useful to help teachers/staff to successfully participate as part of wraparound teams?

Parent and Guardian Interview Guide

Wraparound approach is a philosophy of care that includes a definable planning process involving the child/student and family that results in comprehensive, coordinated supports and services to achieve improved learning outcomes and improved quality of life. Coordinated services and supports, offered through multiple professionals and agencies that are school based and/or school linked, might include health and mental health-related services, mentoring, before/after school programs, and other supports and services for parents and families.

Context

24. What types of wraparound services are available to your family and your child?
    a. What types of wraparound services are needed?

Measurement and evaluation

25. What would you consider to be a successful wraparound implementation for your child/family?
    a. How would you know if it was working?
26. What elements of wraparound are essential to success?

Barriers and challenges

27. What barriers/challenges have you encountered?
    a. How have these barriers/challenges been addressed?
    b. What kinds of support are needed to implement and maintain successful wraparound processes?

Engaging families

28. If you were giving advice to staff to help them to work more collaboratively with parents as partners, what would it be?
    a. What should they avoid?
    b. What is your role when it comes to planning and delivery of services?
        i. What would you like it to be?
    c. What support have you received?
    d. What are the most effective strategies for supporting children, youth, and families?
29. What has worked well in engaging you as a partner in planning and delivery of wraparound?
    a. What changes would help you to be more involved?

Building and maintaining relationships

30. To what extent are nonprofessional support members (extended family, church or cultural leaders, etc.) part of the wraparound team?
    a. What role, if any, should these people play?

Student Interview Guide

Sometimes students have difficulty in school and in their lives and sometimes they just need some help to do better. Sometimes people at school try to help.

Measurement and evaluation

1. If students are having difficulty in school and/or in their lives (e.g., academic, social, emotional), what are the best ways to help them?
    a. Can you provide some examples of this?
    b. How would you know if this help worked?

Barriers and challenges

2. Why don't some students receive the help that they need?
    a. How do you think this could be fixed?

Engaging families

3. Do students have a say in the kind or amount of help they receive?
   a. What role do you think students should play in planning where, when, how or how much help is provided?
4. Who else has a say in the kind or amount of help students receive?
   a. What role do you think parent(s)/guardian(s) should play in planning where, when, how or how much help is provided?
   b. What role do you think teachers/principals should play in planning where, when, how or how much help is provided?
5. If you were to provide feedback to parents and teachers who work with students, what are the three most important things that they need to know?
   a. Would it be the same for other kids?

Appendix C: Thematic Coding Structure

Definition of Wraparound

Impact, Evaluation and Reporting *(code here for any discussion on impact, reporting and evaluation processes)*

- **Accountability for Program** (*Structure, process, responsibility to funders, WA outcomes*)
- **Attitudes and Buy-in** *(stigma for MH, necessary attitude for WA, setting culture for WA, parent buy-in)*
- **Instruments and Data Use** *(data collection, evaluation, rubrics, attendance, instruments)*
- **Program Maturity** *(issues related to duration of program, start-up issues, desired changes, school needs before WA in the district, phases of wraparound program development)*
- **Recipient Evaluation of WA** *(teacher, parental and student assessment of the process)*
- **SROI** *(social return on investment, cost/benefit discussions)*

School

- **Administration** *(tasks, culture-setting, attitudes, goals, tasks related to sustainability, leadership, implementation)*
- **Jurisdiction** *(tasks, culture-setting, attitudes, goals, tasks related to sustaining program, implementation)*
- **Teacher/School Staff/Classroom** *(tasks, theory of classroom management, classroom behaviours, attitude to WA)*
- **Three Tiers of Intervention** *(wraparound as tertiary, FBS, school-wide intervention, preventative model)*

Wraparound components and practices *(non-resource issues related to WA and collaboration, both positive and negative)*

- **Confidentiality** *(issues related to confidentiality and informed consent)*
- **Cultural Competencies and Language** *(any discussion of cultural differences and/or sensitivities)*
- **Family Related Aspects** (*anything with family; i.e., how to support, mental health*)
- **Natural Supports** (*non-professional supports for family*)
- **Goals and Results**
  - **Community Partner**
  - **Family**
  - **School**
  - **Students**
- **Planning Process for Student and Family** *(process of setting up program/plan)*
- **Poor Practices**
- **Strengths-based Practice**
- **Team** *(members, structure, meeting structures/recurrence, activities)*
- **WA and Collaborative Specific Practices** *(specific instances of WA and collaborative services, cases, examples, WA services utilized by parents and students)*

Wraparound Program Structure

- **Populations Served and School Context and Environment** *(specific populations, reasons for referral, defining characteristics)*
- **Referral Process for Student**

Wraparound Resources *(pertaining to all resources/assets necessary for wraparound; both positive and negative)*

- **Collaboration** *(mandate/policy issues, building, maintaining a collaborative practice)*
- **Collaborating Agencies** (*list of specific agencies schools collaborate with*)
- **Critical Elements and Barriers for WA** *(list of all critical elements—usually double coded)*
- **Finances/Expenses** *(sustainability, flush funds, extra expenses, granting issues)*
- **Personnel** *(staffing requirements, training and professional development, retention and availability issues)*
- **Physical Location/Proximity** *(onsite/offsite programming, distance issues, building issues, infrastructure)*
- **Time** *(time as a resource for both the schools an partners)*