Differences in Mental Health Service Satisfaction Among Clients Interviewed by Consumer and Non-Consumer Researchers*

Sue Pickett-Schenk, Ph.D.
Pam Steigman, M.A.
UIC Center for Mental Health Services Research and Policy
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Program Satisfaction Studies

- Give clients opportunities to rate the quality and appropriateness of the services they receive
- Help us understand clients’ service needs
- Give us insight as to why clients may not access or use services
- Help providers develop more effective services
Prior Research: Results and Limitations

• Suggest that clients have high levels of satisfaction with the services they receive
• Use agency-specific assessments
• Focus primarily on Caucasian client populations
• Typically are conducted by program staff
• Suggest that clients and staff have different opinions about clients’ service needs
Participatory Action Research (PAR)

• Consumers actively participate in all phases of the research. This includes:
  • Research design
  • Instrument/protocol development
  • Study implementation
  • Result interpretation and dissemination

• PAR increases:
  • Consumer empowerment
  • Research relevance
Taking Program Satisfaction Studies to the Next Level

• The CAPI Study:
  – Uses standardized, ‘universal’ satisfaction measures
  – Focuses on program satisfaction among African American mental health consumers
  – Examines differences in program satisfaction ratings made by clients interviewed by consumer researchers to ratings made by clients interviewed by non-consumer researchers
  – Uses PAR
  – Uses Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) technology
Study Procedures

• Over the 3 years of the study, a total of 800 clients will complete satisfaction surveys.
• Clients are randomly assigned to 1 of 2 groups. Group 1 clients complete satisfaction surveys administered by consumer interviewers. Group 2 clients complete satisfaction surveys administered by non-consumer interviewers.
• Clients and staff are blind to study condition.
• Clients receive $10 for completing the survey.
• All surveys are conducted via CAPI.
Survey Items

- Client Satisfaction Questionnaire
- Self-Help Agency Satisfaction Scale
- Mental Health Statistics Improvement Program (MHSIP) Consumer Survey
- Mutual Empowerment Scale
- Open-ended items on program likes/dislike/areas of change; interviewer’s consumer status; laptop use
- Demographic characteristics
Preliminary Results

- Two waves of interviewing have been completed. A total of 321 clients have been enrolled, with 161 clients randomly assigned to consumer interviews, and 160 clients randomly assigned to non-consumer interviewers. To date, 243 clients have completed satisfaction surveys.
- To date, there are no significant differences on measures of satisfaction, reaction to CAPI, or demographic and psychiatric illness characteristics by interviewer consumer status.
Preliminary Results: Subject Demographic, Psychiatric Illness and Service Use Characteristics

• Demographic characteristics: Slightly more than half of our subjects (52%) are female. Nearly all (90%) are African American; 6% are multi-racial; the remainder are Asian, Caucasian or Native American. Clients have an average age of 43 years.

• Psychiatric illness characteristics: 24% have primary diagnoses of schizophrenia; another 24% have primary diagnoses of major depression; 21% have bipolar disorder; 12% have not been diagnosed. Clients have an average illness length of 18 years and have experienced 11 inpatient admissions.

• Program characteristics: Clients have been receiving services from the target agency, on average, for 32 months. Primary services received include medication management, groups, case management, individual therapy, and housing assistance.
### Preliminary Results: Satisfaction Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall satisfaction with CMHC</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in treatment decisions</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service satisfaction</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service quality</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service accessibility</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived influence within program</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived program support/acceptance</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client empowerment and respect</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preliminary Results: Service Outcomes

• The majority of clients report that, as a result of target agency services, they:
  – Deal more effectively with daily problems
  – Feel better about themselves
  – Are better able to control their lives
  – Are better able to deal with crises
  – Get along better with their family
  – Do better in school and/or work
  – Aren’t as bothered by their psychiatric symptoms
  – Have become more independent
  – Are more effective in getting what they need
Preliminary Results: Target Agency Likes and Dislikes

• Likes: Clients report that they most like particular staff; overall staff support and agency resources; other clients; that services meet their needs; and service accessibility. In regard to specific services, clients most like groups, individual therapy, food, medication management, and housing assistance.

• Dislikes: Clients report that they most dislike the lack or absence of specific services, activities and food; staff; program rules and regulations; groups; other clients; and service inaccessibility.
Preliminary Results: Suggested Program Changes

• 41% of clients stated that they wouldn’t change anything about or at the target agency.

• Most frequently suggested changes:
  – Staff
  – Housing/facility improvements
  – Services
  – Group
  – Food
Preliminary Results: Comments About CAPI

- Clients’ comments about using CAPI to administer their satisfaction surveys include the following:
  - Faster and easier than filling out papers by hand/writing
  - High tech is the way to go!
  - Very modern, unique, innovative
  - It’s an efficient way to enter responses more rapidly
  - I have no problem with it
  - No comment
  - Typing takes too long
  - Worry about cyber thieves
Preliminary Results: Comments About Interviewers’ Consumer Status

- The majority of clients (68%) reported that the interviewer’s consumer status did not make difference to them, and did not affect their responses or how they felt about the survey.
- The remainder made very positive comments about the consumer interviewers:
  - You (interviewer) understand some of the services we use
  - It made it (the survey) easier
  - Made me feel more comfortable
  - Consumer interviewers give others (i.e., clients) hope
  - You (interviewer) can relate and understand what I’m going through
  - Interviewer is more knowledgeable
  - It was encouraging
Conclusions

• Program satisfaction surveys may be most valid when they incorporate standardized measures and a PAR model.

• Overall, clients report high levels of satisfaction with the target agency. They feel that services meet their needs, are of a high quality and are easily accessible. Clients also feel a sense of empowerment and respect by staff.

• Clients report moderate levels of satisfaction with their involvement in treatment decisions and program planning.

• Clients report that target agency services help them deal more effectively with their daily problems, lead more independent lives, and get along better with their family.
Conclusions, continued

- Clients primarily made positive comments about the use of CAPI.
- As these are preliminary results, additional data may show significant differences in satisfaction ratings between clients interviewed by consumer researchers and those interviewed by non-consumer researchers.
- Although interviewer’s consumer status did not make a difference to most clients, several stressed that being interviewed by a consumer was a positive experience.