Setting Priorities

Since we can't do everything, it is important to engage in a process to determine the program opportunities which are the highest priorities for your organization. The table below presents priority criteria that reflect the values and concerns of most organizations. Here is an example from one of our quality teams:

Priority Ranking Form

		example					
Prior Efforts	prior efforts to work on this ➡ -1 (unsuccessful), +1 (successful), or 0 (none)						
Magnitude of Threat	level of danger to the organizational mission, staff or clients						
Likelihood of Harm	probability of harm to organization, staff or clients						
Treatability	likelihood that problem will respond to intervention					0 is lowest	
Urgency	level of urgency to deal with problem					5 is highest	
Readiness	availability of staff, resources, skills, and time						

	Prior Efforts	**Magnitude of Threat**	**Likelihood of Harm**	**Treatability**	**Urgency**	**Readiness**	**Total**
Problem or Causal Factor	-1 to +1	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	
Stigma of opioid use	0	4	5	2	3	3	17
Long distance to care	-1	3	3	2	2	1	10
Unfamiliar with MAT	1	3	3	5	3	5	20
Siloed providers	0	5	5	4	4	4	22

These criteria will help your team decide which problem or causal factors are the most important to tackle. You can distribute the template below and ask stakeholders to rank the problems you have identified. Then you can tally up the results and use them to lead a discussion.

Priority Ranking Form

Prior Efforts	prior efforts to work on this issue ➡ -1 (unsuccessful), +1 (successful), or 0 (none)						
Magnitude of Threat	level of danger to the organizational mission, staff or clients						
Likelihood of Harm	probability of harm to organization, staff or clients						
Treatability	likelihood that problem will respond to intervention					0 is lowest	
Urgency	level of urgency to deal with problem					5 is highest	
Readiness	availability of staff, resources, skills, and time						

	Prior Efforts	**Magnitude of Threat**	**Likelihood of Harm**	**Treatability**	**Urgency**	**Readiness**	**Total**
Problem or Causal Factor	-1 to +1	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	

Setting Priorities

Different ways to reach consensus around priorities:

By design **Brainstorming** generates a long list of ideas. There are more program opportunities than can be addressed in one plan of work. Several methods of voting are described below which help groups narrow long lists into a prioritized grouping that guide the development of process improvement initiatives.

Simple Voting – Each member votes for the one item on the list they feel is the highest priority. After everyone has voted the votes are counted and the items with the most votes are designated as highest priority.

Multi-Voting – In this activity participants are allowed to vote for as many items as they wish. They may vote using a show of hands or colored dots or stars. Votes for each item are totaled and all items receiving votes from half the people voting are included in the next round. (Example: If 20 people vote, items receiving 10 votes are in the next round.) Everyone votes again. Each person is allowed to cast votes equal to half the number of items on the list. Repeat until there are six to ten items on the list. Discuss remaining ideas and selecting top priorities.

100 Votes – Sometimes called *Weighted Voting,* each participant is given the opportunity to cast multiple votes, in this activity it is 100 votes. The participants allocate their votes to the items they feel should have the highest priority. For example, there may be 5 items they feel are priorities. They then write the number of votes beside the items, i.e. 35 beside the two that they feel strongest about and 10 beside the other three or some other combination totaling 100 votes. If they wish, they may cast all 100 votes for one program idea. All votes are totaled and the group discusses the items and ranking determined by the voting. Group determines the cut off for priority programs.

Nominal Group Technique - This technique begins with silent brainstorming to generate program ideas. In round-robin fashion, each participant shares an idea until their list is depleted. Discuss all ideas. Share pros and cons. Similar ideas are grouped. Each member is then asked to rank order their top ten ideas, with ten being the highest ranking. This may be done directly on the flip chart sheet listing the ideas or on a 3 X 5 card. Rankings are totaled and ideas are ranked with the one receiving the highest total being the highest ranked. You may want to record the number of people who ranked each of the items. Discuss rankings and determine program priorities.

College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment