

Steps in the Public Policy-Making Process

Summit on Children's Mental Health

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What's public policy?

- ▶ *Oxford*: political sagacity; statecraft; craftiness; course of action adopted by government
- ▶ *Webster*: method of government; system of regulative methods
- ▶ *Floyd*: the laws, regulations, administrative guidelines, procedures and funding criteria established by government

Who makes public policy?

▶ Governments decide

- Elected politicians set the legislative and regulatory framework
- Civil servants develop administrative guidelines, procedures, and funding criteria

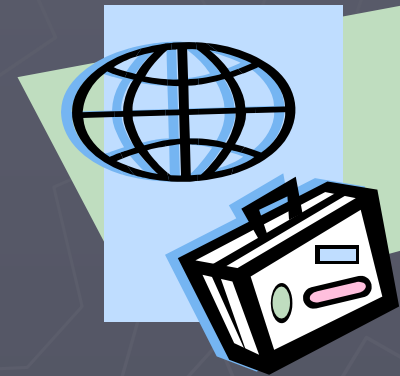
▶ Stakeholders advise, based on front-line experience

- When stakeholders resolve diverse views, their advice has more impact

Our challenge

- ▶ **Fill the policy vacuum** that has evolved after 15-20 years of neglect and/or inaction
 - We can only start the process at this Summit
- ▶ Bring **greater consistency** and **improved outcomes** to an array of services that is disjointed, uneven and idiosyncratic (i.e. create "a system")
- ▶ **Align** the activities & policies of all **sub-sectors** engaged in child & youth mental health
- ▶ **Stay focussed on the kids**, not the sub-sectors

Making public policy is like ...



planning a vacation

Planning a vacation

- ▶ Objectives: What kind of vacation?
 - Relaxing? Educational? Adventure?
- ▶ Principles: What are the parameters?
 - Within budget? ... safety? ... boycotts?
- ▶ Issues: What needs to be decided?
 - Mode of travel? Accommodation? Tour or solo? Access to health services?
- ▶ Options: What are the realistic choices that meet our objectives and principles?
- ▶ Bookings: Reserve flight, car, hotel, etc..

Vacation-planning

Policy-making

Objectives



Parameters



Issues



Options



Bookings

Goal & Objectives



Principles & Values



Issues



Options: Define/Assess



Action Steps

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Step 1: Setting the Framework

- ▶ What's the overall goal?
- ▶ What are the policy objectives?
- ▶ What principles and values should be reflected in the system?
- ▶ What issues (apart from \$\$) need to be resolved?

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Step 2: Defining the Options

- ▶ For each issue, what are the realistic policy options (or opportunities)?
- ▶ Which options are most consistent with our objectives and our principles/values?
- ▶ What are the arguments *against* options?
- ▶ Is more information needed to assess the options?

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Step 3: Assessing the options

- ▶ Do they meet **key criteria** for good policy?
- ▶ *Legitimacy*: Should this be done?
- ▶ *Feasibility*: Is it affordable? Will it make a difference?
- ▶ *Communicability*: Can it be explained?
- ▶ *Supportability*: Who's for; who's opposed?

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Step 4: Planning Implementation

- ▶ What bold action steps should happen first in order to resolve each issue?

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The overall goal (from CMHO's mission):

A sustainable system of mental health services for children, youth and their families

Note: Our framework is the WHOLE system, and our focus is on the mental **health** of ALL children and youth in Ontario

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Policy Objectives (from "*Towards a Mental Health Policy for Ontario's Children & Youth*"):

- ▶ **Reduce incidence** of mental health problems
- ▶ **Reduce stigma**
- ▶ **Increase early identification**
- ▶ **Enhance access** to services
- ▶ **Eliminate gaps** in core services
- ▶ **Provide a sustainable continuum** of services
- ▶ **Improve treatment outcomes**
- ▶ **Increase integrated service delivery**

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Principles and values to be reflected in the system (from "*An Ideal Model for SW Region*"):

- ▶ **Equitable access**
- ▶ **Family-focussed**
- ▶ **Community-based**
- ▶ **A balanced continuum**
- ▶ **Minimal residential** (more)...

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Principles and values (continued):

- ▶ **Integration** among systems
- ▶ **Collaboration** among disciplines
- ▶ **Case management support**
- ▶ **Accountability based on outcomes**
- ▶ **Culturally-appropriate** services

Summary: Policy-Making for Children's Mental Health

- ▶ The 30,000 foot view – across boundaries:
 1. Where do we want to go? (i.e. our objectives; what will success look like?)
 2. What is our starting point? (i.e. our principles, values and strengths)
 3. What choices and decisions need to be made?
 4. What options meet our objectives, our parameters and the key criteria for good policy?
 5. Where should we go first?

And after all that ...

... we'll all be ready for a vacation!

