

**Program Evaluation of Region Ten**

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## **Program Evaluation of Region Ten**

### **Data Collection Methods**

This evaluation included the use of interviews, observation, visual inspection, and analysis of historical data and records. The interview process included a face to face interview with staff members from the Louisa branch of Region Ten, the most notable of which and the ones that will be discussed include interviews with Mr. Richard “Charlie” Fawcett and Mrs. Julia Wood. Mr. Fawcett and Mrs. Wood are the agency director and senior intellectual and developmental disability case manager, respectively.

The interviews focused on subjects such as the history of the agency, funding and insurance, chain of command, accessibility, services offered, complaints, and problems within the program. Each interview lasted around sixty minutes and were conducted in the offices at the agency’s location in Louisa, Virginia. At the same visit, an inspection of the grounds was conducted as well as an observation of services. Copies of blank forms the agency uses for various purposes were also collected.

### **Results**

#### ***Interview Results***

**Interview with Mr. Fawcett.** As stated above, the interviews with staff members were some of the most revealing evidence in the entire program evaluation. The first interview was with Mr. Richard “Charlie” Fawcett, Director of the Satellite Office for Louisa and Mineral. He has worked for Region Ten since 2006, the last five years of which were in his current position. Before his current position, he worked part time. Mr. Fawcett’s interview revealed extensive information about the history of the agency and its inner workings.

Region Ten is dedicated to helping people by connecting them to services, whether that be for mental health, drug abuse or misuse, or developmental disabilities. There are multiple locations for Region Ten. The Louisa office is referred to by the employees as one of the “rural offices.” There are also offices in other rural counties, such as Orange County, Nelson County, and Fluvanna County. The main office is located in Charlottesville. Since the Louisa office is only a smaller branch of Region Ten, it does not offer as many services as the Charlottesville location.

There are only around thirteen to fourteen people employed within the entire Louisa office of Region Ten. However, there are additional staff in the schools that provide services to the school system. There are four staff members that rotate around the schools; there are six public schools total in Louisa County: four elementary, one middle, and one high school. The Region Ten staff provide services like counseling or crisis care as needed because they have been hired by the school system. Many of the intellectual and developmental disability case management clients find out about the program through these school counselors.

The Louisa location offers services such as substance abuse counseling, outpatient counseling, prevention services, medical services, crisis counseling and services, and intellectual and developmental disability (ID/DD) case management. While this specific program evaluation was looking into the nature of the ID/DD case management program, all of the Louisa branch’s programs are equally important and intricate. Case management is one of the most important services for someone with intellectual disabilities or developmental disabilities (Maddox et al., 2019).

The ID/DD case management program is one of the most utilized programs at Region Ten. Intellectual and developmental disability case management aims to connect those with

disabilities to services that can assist them in living as independently as possible. Independent living and establishing routines and normalcy are the keys to thriving with a disability (Johnson et al., 2022). The key questions for this evaluation called into consideration both the accessibility of the services and the satisfaction of the clients receiving those services.

Questions regarding the accessibility of the services provided by Region Ten revealed interesting answers. Though the implications will be discussed shortly, the answers themselves were concerning. Questions such as, “How does Region Ten market its services to new clients?”, “How did your current clients find out about your services?”, and “What are your biggest challenges?” brought back these quoted answers: “we don’t,” “they just know,” and “paperwork.” An agency with little fears or challenges is an agency that needs to take more risks.

**Interview with Mrs. Wood.** Mrs. Julia Wood is the senior case manager at the Louisa branch of Region Ten. Her main job is to work with those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, making her interview a key informant interview due to the valuable knowledge she provided. Most of her answers were very similar to Mr. Fawcett’s but revealed more in terms of client perspective.

Mrs. Wood was asked what her favorite part of the job was. She explained that the satisfaction of being able to tell a client they have been approved for services is very rewarding and that the entire process of case management is an emotionally fulfilling job. She noted that often, clients are on a waitlist for a waiver for months to even years, so finally being able to call the client or their caregiver to let them know that they were approved is an emotional moment.

Waivers are what the state gives out to qualifying people with disabilities that allow them to use the government to pay for their services. While these waivers are extremely helpful when it comes to supplying funds for the activities of daily living, the waiting lists for these waivers

are incredibly long. Because of this, only around fifteen percent of the clients at Region Ten who receive ID/DD case management services use federal or state government funds. The remaining majority eighty five percent of clients pay for services using insurance reimbursement.

Mrs. Wood revealed that the main complaint from clients is frustration that has little to do with the actual services provided. Due to the restrictions from the government on how insurance and waivers can be used, clients often call with complaints due to dissatisfaction with the rules. Since there is little the Region Ten staff can do to change the government restrictions on funding and accessibility, there is little that can remedy these types of complaints.

### ***Observation and Visual Inspection***

The visual inspection of the grounds was conducted on November 9, 2023. At that time, the building was undergoing construction in multiple areas. The construction annoyed the staff, who made it a point to specifically mention that to me. The construction caused intense, loud drilling noises throughout the building, making it difficult to focus on the business at hand. There was also no signage to keep individuals away from the construction equipment or unstable grounds.

The building itself is located in a convenient area for clients to reach. The Louisa branch of Region Ten's office is located near a doctors' office and a local government building. Louisa itself is a quiet, rural county with the agency's office located in the busiest part of the county, making it easily accessible for clients. The building itself does not have a clear entrance; in fact, there is a sign pointing in the opposite direction that the office is actually in. I walked around, confused, until Mr. Facett poked out of a back door and called my name.

### ***Historical Data and Records***

Due to the classified nature of the majority of the agency's records, very little could be learned from the data I was allowed to see. Nevertheless, I took a look at blank copies of the forms the agency uses in its regular business since I am not cleared to see any completed forms.

The forms provided to me were titled "On-Site Visit Tool" and "Crisis Risk Assessment Tool Final." The first form, the on-site visit form, is used by the agency when the staff meet with clients to check in on them. The form takes the safety of the client very seriously, going through every aspect of their lives and how they have been functioning. The second is less detailed and deals with the evaluation of a client's risks and need for emergency services and funding.

## **Implications**

### ***Negative***

**Marketing.** The question of accessibility was answered with disappointing results. When asked how clients knew about the services Region Ten provides, both Mrs. Wood and Mr. Fawcett said that the clients "just know." The same clients Region Ten has today are the same clients they have had for years and the same clients that they will likely continue to have for an extended period of time. There is very little being done to attract new clients or even to let potential clients know about the services Region Ten offers.

When I inquired as to what Region Ten does to promote its services to potential clients, the answer was very simple: that they do not market their services. This in itself is a very telling answer that provides extensive insight into how the agency thinks: like a business. The staff members seem to have lost the sense of humanity and humility that comes with working with individuals with disabilities.

It does not affect most of the staff members at Region Ten if no new clients are made aware of the services being provided. Whether or not the agency has ten or ten thousand clients

receiving services, the staff members at Region Ten will still be paid. The staff members seem to be lacking in all motivation to help more people and are instead just focused on day to day work. An agency dedicated to helping society should want to spread the word to as many individuals as possible so that many people can receive services. The fact that Region Ten pays no attention to attracting more clients is very concerning.

In addition to apathy, a main reason for not wanting to attract more clients is the lack of staff. The interviews also asked what the staff members *least* favorite part of their jobs was, and the answer was unanimous: paperwork. The amount of paperwork and documentation that goes into recording the history and services of a single client is overwhelming for the staff to keep up with. The data collection with the two forms I was able to see showed that the paperwork is indeed very detailed, which, while being a good thing for organization's sake, can also be very detrimental to the attitudes of the staff.

**Safety.** Most of the visits and meetings with clients are done in the schools, homes, or workplaces of the clients instead of the actual Region Ten office building. That said, there were still some very serious safety concerns for anyone who does visit the building. The construction around the various parts of the buildings without any signage could be very hazardous for children or individuals with disabilities. Considering the fact that Region Ten works with individuals with disabilities on a regular basis, signage and safety should have been considered. Even without the construction, the lack of any signage on the doors or on the building makes the office difficult to find and identify.

**Satisfaction.** Given the lack of complaints regarding Region Ten's actual method of providing services, the successful walk-around, the observation of clients, and the interviews with staff, clients seem generally satisfied. However, there were significant complaints about the

restrictions the government has recently placed on the clients' services. The ever-changing laws and funding rules for people with disabilities leaves many clients frustrated and confused. While the laws are not necessarily Region Ten staff's fault, the confusion could be mitigated with increased consultation and explanation to clients.

### ***Positive***

**Satisfaction.** Though the clients are frustrated with government restrictions and funding problems, they seem to be generally satisfied with the actions within the Region Ten staff's control. All of the staff interviewed were kind and understanding and the interactions with staff were very positive.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Marketing***

Region Ten needs to obtain more clients. People in the Louisa County area who are not already involved in Region Ten's services know nothing about the agency. Due to funding issues for families with children or young adults with special needs, many children and young adults with special needs are enrolled in public schools. Public schools would be the perfect place to talk to school employees about connecting more with the students there. Though the schools do have Region Ten employees who visit occasionally, more emphasis should be placed on the students using other Region Ten services. The bridge from school to home and therapy services is much easier since the Region Ten staff already rotate around the schools: they will not be starting from nothing.

Marketing could also be done through the newspapers, radios, and signs around the town. Since the town of Louisa is very rural, many residents rely on signage and reading to know about



important things going on around the county. This makes the next recommendation even more so important given the lifestyle of the Louisa County residents.

### ***Signage and Labeling***

**Building.** The lack of signage around the building makes it incredibly difficult for new clients, visitors, new staff members, or anyone else trying to visit the building. Currently, the building has one small sign in the front on the lawn, but the actual building has nothing to identify it. There is an even smaller lawn sign with an arrow that is poked into the ground right outside one of the doors with an arrow on it that points to a building across the street. The proper recommendation is to either point the sign in the correct direction of the building, or to remove any signs that point to buildings that have nothing to do with the actual agency. The second recommendation is to put some sort of sign on the building that can identify the agency.

**Construction.** While, obviously, the construction on the building will not last forever, while it is currently happening, the safety issues need to be mitigated. Proper construction signs need to be placed around the areas with unstable ground and the equipment needs to be roped off.

### ***Staffing***

The current staff at Region Ten are overwhelmed with clients and paperwork. Even if they market to new clients, they are at maximum capacity when it comes to providing services. The agency needs to hire more staff members who can take on more clients; that is the only way the agency will grow. Paid training is required to attract employees; no one will want to be hired if there is a long, extensive training period without any pay (Bogenschutz et al., 2019).

### **Goals**

### ***Marketing***

**Schools.** The agency will promote their services to the four elementary schools in Louisa County by providing paper materials such as pamphlets, brochures, and flyers to the guidance counselors of the schools, as well as anyone else who works closely with students with special needs. The agency will also come up with a small amount of funds to provide a scholarship to one of the graduating students with disabilities who is enrolled in case management. This will encourage more students to enroll in case management services.

### ***Signage***

The building will be labeled with the name of the agency and unsafe construction areas will be roped off with “caution” tape.

### ***Staffing***

The agency will hire more employees who will start out as paid interns who assist with paperwork so that the current employees feel less overwhelmed. The goal is to employ at least three interns over the summer of 2024.

## References

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