

Improving workflows and designs to create more welcoming, engaging and lower barrier care environments to SUD care

A key aim of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Bureau's (SAPC) R95 Initiative is to engage more people, meaningfully, in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. One important way to achieve this is by exploring the ways in which service design or organizational processes impact the client experience and may unwittingly serve as barriers to care or reduce lengths of stay.

Service design uses design thinking methodologies that put the customer at the center of challenges and opportunities to help solve the problems.

Adapting business and operational processes that lower barriers to services is at the heart of the R95 Initiative's Service Design effort. It supports SAPC provider agencies in modifying their operations, infrastructure, and physical environments to facilitate a more positive, welcoming, and engaging experience for a wide range of individuals who want to access, participate in, and complete treatment.

The Service Design component of the R95 Initiative supports agencies with adapting their operations and programs to facilitate a more positive, welcoming, and engaging experience for the individuals they serve. This is accomplished in various ways – by focusing on the environment and aesthetics of the environment they create for their service participants, by reviewing their intake process to ensure as streamlined a process as possible so that the focus can be on clients and not forms, by reviewing and optimizing a program's clinical services to ensure they are as engaging as possible, etc.

The focus of the Service Design component of the R95 Initiative is also focused on ensuring that agencies are establishing expectations and standards for optimally serving their patient population and understanding the experiences of their customers/clients so they can take a quality improvement approach to care. It is also important to develop a plan to monitor changes made to ensure appropriate implementation, adoption, and ongoing improvement.



R95 Initiative Service Design has two primary components :

Customer Walk-Through Experience:

Using a standardized set of activities providers use both role play and observation to better understand how their service workflows are experienced by the customer (i.e., patients).

Providers “walk-through” the major processes in a treatment setting to see where there are areas that can be streamlined or optimized to lower barriers to treatment and make the customer experience better.

The primary treatment processes include:

1. Individual’s First Request for Services
2. Intake/Screening/Assessment
- 3 Admission
4. Treatment
5. Care Coordination
6. Discharge/Transition



Developing an Implementation/Investment Plan:

Based on the information from the customer perspective, establish progress toward adapting organizational changes that lead to lower barriers to accessing services, better engagement of individuals in services, and improves completion of treatment.

The Implementation/Investment Plan is designed to outline the service design changes to organizational process that SAPC provider agencies commit to implementing that increase access and engagement for individuals who want to access, participate in, and complete treatment, including:

- ▶ Use information from the Customer Walk-Through Experience to identify the service design improvements in organizational processes that lead to improved patient engagement and retention around one or more the following priority areas:
 - Modify existing workflows that lower barriers to services
 - Improve language access
 - Implement R95 changes to policies, procedures, and protocols
 - Create safe and welcoming spaces in the physical environment
- ▶ Conduct process improvement planning (Plan Do Study Act) to identify what changes will result in improvement.

- ▶ Develop SMART goals and timelines for the implementation of the service design changes.
- ▶ Invest the necessary time to ensure adoption of new organizational processes by staff.

SAPC provider agencies participating in the R95 Initiative Service Design effort have the opportunity to optimize the way in which they engage individuals and serve their clients by taking a quality improvement approach to assessing organizational processes and implementing strategies that lower barriers to care.

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