Health Program Sustainability

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Executive Summary

The ability of health programs to sustain key program components beyond funding is crucial for the continuation of program benefits and outcomes. There are many reasons why health programs are not sustained. Programs not sustained can result in wasted time, money, resources, and most importantly, the health issue that the program was created to address persists in the community. This can be especially harmful in rural communities due to already limited resources for health promotion.

Programs addressing opioid use disorder (OUD) are especially important in rural communities. Overdose deaths are the leading cause of preventable injury death, and there were 3,901 opioid overdose deaths in Arizona from 2020-2021. The Arizona Medication Assisted Treatment Mentors (AzMAT Mentors) program was created to address the healthcare workforce shortage to treat OUD in Arizona.

The goal of this internship was to identify facilitators and barriers to sustaining health programs, translate this understanding to develop an evaluation of the AzMAT Mentors program sustainability efforts, and provide general recommendations for program sustainment. Findings indicated there are six domains that facilitators and barriers of sustainability fall into: planning, environmental support, partnerships, integration, evaluation, and communication. In order to achieve sustainability of a health program, these domains should be understood and addressed. By conducting a focus group, the AzMAT Mentors team was able to discuss each domain of sustainability and understand the program's facilitators and barriers. Many facilitators were recognized by the team, and it was decided that AzMAT Mentors has addressed each domain of sustainability and will achieve sustainability of key program components in the absence of funding. Finally, three recommendations are given for health programs to address sustainability.
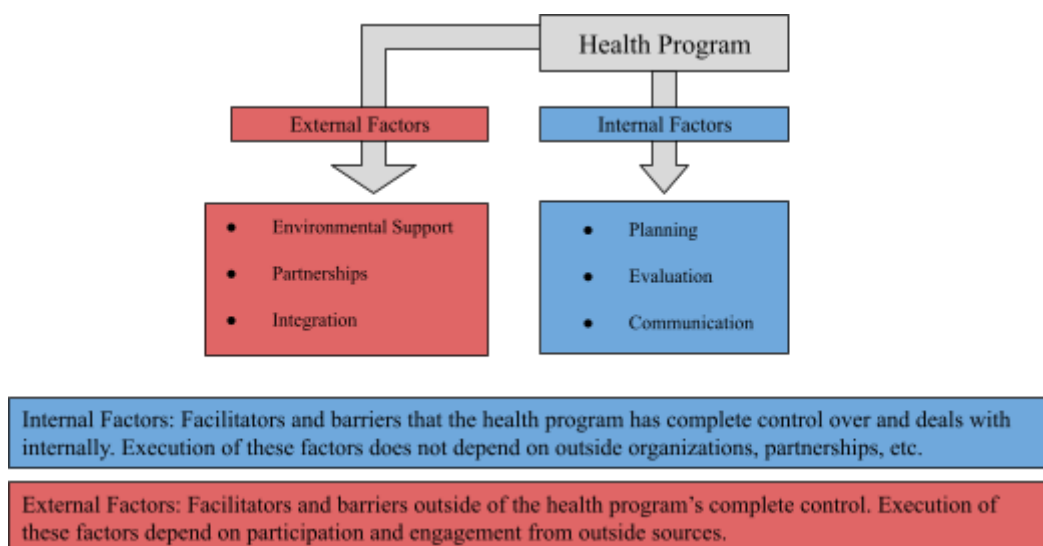
Health Program Sustainability

Sustainability is defined in a variety of ways in health science literature. In the context of health programs, one definition of sustainability is "General continuation and maintenance of a desirable feature of an initiative and its associated outcomes as well as the process taken to adapt and develop in response to emerging needs of the system."[1] A similar, but more general, definition is "the continuation of a project's goals, principles, and efforts to achieve desired outcomes."[2] Sustainability of health programs is an important but underreported and underrepresented topic in health literature. This is due to many factors, including a lack of clarity and consensus on the definition of sustainability, as well as a lack of reporting on frameworks and steps taken to attain sustainability.[1] Health programs and interventions are vital to addressing health inequities and health issues in communities but despite this importance, only 40 to 60% of health programs are sustained.[3] Therefore, there is a need for health programs to understand what sustainability is, be aware of and address facilitators and barriers to sustainability in program development, and take initiatives throughout the program to ensure sustainability.

A common idea mentioned in sustainability literature is that program sustainability is a topic that has not been thoroughly studied, reported, or streamlined for general understanding.[4] This leads to sustainability not being clearly defined, an infrequent use of sustainability frameworks, and a general lack of understanding how sustainability is influenced.[3,5] This is due to the fact that sustainability can mean many different things in the context of each health program. For example, sustainability can be defined as: (1) The ability for an intervention to produce intended results, outcomes, or health benefits once funding is terminated.[4] (2) The ability for a program to "institutionalize" or transfer program activities to a different, partner organization.[6] (3) "The capacity of a health program to maintain a level of services that will continue to provide prevention and treatment for a health problem."[7] This demonstrates that there are many different ways to measure sustainability based on the intended outcome, which contributes to the lack of consensus in sustainability research and reports. A systematic review[1] helps give a better understanding of sustainability in health programs by analyzing 62 sustainability publications and identifying the most common definitions of sustainability. It found that 86% of the articles included sustainability defined as "continued program activities" and 44% of the articles included sustainability defined as "continued health benefits." Regardless of how sustainability is defined, it is vital that there is a shared definition and understanding of

what sustainability means so that a plan can be created to achieve sustainability in the context of the program.

A common theme that emerged when looking at health program sustainability literature is the concepts of facilitators and barriers to achieving sustainability goals (Figure 1). There are both internal and external program factors that can influence the ability of a program to reach sustainability. When condensing the literature, these internal and external influences fit into six domains. These are: planning, environmental support, partnerships, integration, evaluation, and communication.

Figure 1. Diagram depicting internal and external domains of sustainability.

Internal Factors: Facilitators and barriers that the health program has complete control over and deals with internally. Execution of these factors does not depend on outside organizations, partnerships, etc.

External Factors: Facilitators and barriers outside of the health program's complete control. Execution of these factors depend on participation and engagement from outside sources.

Objectives

The purpose of this paper is to: (1) synthesize the facilitators and barriers to achieving sustainability; (2) translate this understanding to the Arizona Medication Assisted Treatment Mentors Program (AzMAT Mentors Program); (3) evaluate AzMAT Mentor's current state of sustainability; and (4) discuss recommendations for general program sustainment.

Sustainability Facilitators and Barriers: Literature Review

Planning

Planning is one of the most important domains of project sustainability. Having a sustainability action plan early in the program process will allow for: (1) the team to have an

understanding of the factors vital to sustainability, (2) an adequate amount of resources to be allocated for sustainability measures, and (3) the creation of a sustainability plan or for a framework to be followed. A systematic review[3] found that early planning for sustainability improves sustainability outcomes. Planning for sustainability should include creating a shared definition of sustainability in the context of the sustainability goals of the health program, determining what elements of the program should be sustained, and identifying the resources needed to sustain key elements. Literature[2,8] argues that not all elements of a program need to be sustained, only the elements that are vital for intended sustainability outcomes should be focused on. After elements are chosen, it is important to evaluate the resources needed to achieve these elements. A dominant barrier to achieving sustainability is, understandably, the amount of resources a program has to dedicate to sustainability efforts. This includes "funding, infrastructure, staff, and time."[1] Early planning facilitates sustainability by allowing the program to allocate resources dedicated to sustaining vital program elements.

Environmental Support

An important factor to facilitate sustainability of a program is the environmental support the program has. This can be in the form of program champions or other individuals of influence. Environmental support means having a supportive climate for a program, or general support from individuals in the community, community leaders, and decision makers. A review and synthesis[6] of 19 empirical studies found that having a program champion, an individual that is a committed and respected community voice who advocates for the needs of the program and has influence to gain resources and support from community leaders and decision makers, was a major facilitator to achieving program sustainability.

Partnerships

Similar to environmental support, partnerships are an important external domain of program sustainability. Partnerships differ from environmental support in that they are more structured agreements between organizations that share similar values or health outcome goals. A publication[2] found projects most likely to be sustained were ones that looked to diverse community partners for long term support. It is vital to have partners in order to maximize resources, and stakeholders in other organizations will support a program's ability to continue vital program components. The Rural Health Information Hub[8] emphasizes maintaining and developing new partnerships in the sustainability process. Relationships between the program

and partners will assist in "connecting you [programs] to greater resources or expertise, providing services if your program has to be cut back, and advocating on behalf of your cause."[9]

Integration

      Strong environmental support and diverse partnerships give the health program the ability to integrate key program activities "into existing organizational structures, routines, and roles."[3] This gives the program the ability to transfer program activities to a different organization in order to continue the health benefits and services provided by the program.

Evaluation

      Another important factor that influences a project's ability to be sustainable is how well the program measures its success in providing the intended health benefit or project outcome. In a systematic review[1] of 62 sustainability publications, 89% of the articles analyzed mentioned "demonstrating effectiveness" as an important factor of sustainability. There are many ways to measure this factor: looking at overall performance of the project, if the project functions as intended, or if the project reaches established outcome goals. "Monitoring progress over time" was an evaluation measurement mentioned in 84% of articles in the review, which means ensuring that the project has accurate data and monitoring systems that are suitable to measure progress, as well as consistent reporting structures in place. When program outcomes are accurately evaluated and monitored to demonstrate that the program is working as intended, a strong case can be made for why key program elements need to be sustained.[9] Evaluation data will provide evidence that key program elements are worth sustaining and assist in gaining support and resources from partners and stakeholders to facilitate sustainability.

Communication

      Program evaluation data can only facilitate sustainability if it is effectively communicated to stakeholders, clients, and partners. The Program Sustainability Assessment Tool[9] states that it is vital to communicate the objectives, accomplishments, and importance of a program to key stakeholders and partners. A sustainability review[6] discovered consistent support for the importance of evaluation communication, and states that ensuring "benefits to staff members and/or clients are readily perceived" was an important factor influencing the extent of sustainability. In addition, the review by Bodkin and Hakimi[3] states that when the benefits of a health program are effectively promoted and communicated, sustainability is facilitated. An additional way to communicate important information is the dissemination of materials created during the program. Developing materials that outline lessons learned and implementation

supports program replication and can facilitate integration of the project in a different organization.[10] Materials highlighting program resources, efforts, or accomplishments foster sustainment of vital program elements.

<p style="text-align:center">**Importance of Sustainability in the Context of Substance Use Disorder Programs**</p>

Health programs that are not sustained, partially or in their entirety, can waste time, money, resources, and most importantly, the health issue that the program was created to address persists in the community.[1,3] It is important to note that in some cases, programs should not be sustained if they do not reach intended program outcomes, or if the efforts are no longer needed due to the health issue no longer having an impact on public health (e.g. certain COVID programs, programs where the health issue has been eradicated in the community). However, there can be a loss of community support when programs are abruptly terminated[11] and the population served no longer has access to the benefits provided by the program, predominantly when the health problem is still present in the community. This is especially true in rural areas due to already "limited resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery."[12] Sustaining the services provided and efforts of programs that address SUD are essential to long term harm reduction. It can be disruptive to the population served by the program when it is terminated without sustainable ways to continue to provide key services. Focusing on sustainability will ensure that crucial program services are available to help treat individuals struggling with SUD and reduce harm in the community so that the benefits and activities of the health program are not lost.

Substance use disorder programs are especially important in rural communities due to the prevalence of individuals struggling with substance use, and more specifically opioid use disorder. Overdose deaths are the leading cause of preventable injury death[13], and there were 3,901 opioid overdose deaths in Arizona in from 2020-2021.[14] This demonstrates the need for providers in rural communities to be competent and confident in providing medication assisted treatment (MAT) to individuals struggling with OUD, who significantly benefit from this evidence based treatment. The AzMAT Mentors program meets the demand for MAT provider training and offers a unique, one on one training experience for MAT providers.

AzMAT Mentors Program

The AzMAT Mentors Program was implemented to address the healthcare workforce shortage to treat opioid use disorder in Arizona. The goal of the program is to increase Arizona healthcare providers' knowledge on and capacity to deliver medication assisted treatment.[15] In 2022, there were "3,405 non-fatal opioid overdose events and 1,927 confirmed opioid deaths."[14] Everyday, more than 5 people die from opioid overdoses in Arizona.[14] The opioid crisis affects thousands of individuals in Arizona, and these statistics demonstrate how vital it is to address this issue in communities. The AzMAT Mentors program facilitates the opportunity for less experienced MAT providers to receive personalized mentorship from an experienced MAT provider.

The AzMAT Mentors program begins recruitment by asking providers to fill out an interest form located on the AzMAT Mentors website. There are separate interest forms for experienced and less experienced MAT providers. Eligibility of the providers is determined based on these forms. The forms include questions about the provider's MAT status (number of patients, licensed controlled substance provider, etc.), time commitment for completing the program, as well as potential MAT goals that less experienced providers may want to accomplish upon completion of the program. Ineligible providers are referred to the Providers Clinical Support System (PCSS) Program, and eligible providers are engaged in the program. Experienced providers are added to the private website for less experienced providers to select someone to work with. This is how eligible less experienced providers choose their mentor. After an experienced and a less experienced provider have been matched, the AzMAT Mentors team conducts an orientation and reviews the goals that the less experienced provider chose. The goals selected are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and can be accomplished in a specified amount of time (SMART goals). The AzMAT Mentors team assists the mentor and mentee in scheduling five consultations where they meet and collaborate. After the date of their scheduled fifth collaborative consultation, both providers are invited to participate in a final program evaluation, and experienced providers are compensated for their time (see Appendix A for a flow chart that details this process).

Based on evaluations of the AzMAT Mentors third program year, less experienced MAT providers reported an increase in their confidence to provide MAT services. They also reported they are likely to begin or increase their MAT services.[15] The AzMAT Mentors program offers

less experienced MAT providers the opportunity to receive one on one assistance and learn from experienced providers' experiences providing MAT. This individualized learning opportunity is unlikely to exist in the typical work environments of providers, and the learning experience it allows is unique to participants of AzMAT Mentors.

Methods

Evaluation- Focus Group

As part of my research, I conducted a focus group with members of the AzMAT Mentors program. The meeting was scheduled for one hour and there were six individuals present from varying program roles (e.g., principal investigator; community outreach specialist). There were a total of 13 questions asked and the questions were broken down according to the corresponding domain of sustainability (see Appendix B).

To develop the questions, I utilized the six domains of sustainability to create open ended questions in each area. The intention of these open ended questions was to spark discussion and follow up questions that could be asked based on participant responses. Then, I shared the questions with my preceptor who offered feedback. After revision of the questions, I conducted the focus group. The focus group was recorded and data was transcribed and analyzed for common themes and ideas. This focus group allowed me to gain insight on and evaluate the facilitators and barriers to the AzMAT Mentors program achieving sustainability.

Results

Table 1. Summary of Results

Domains of Sustainability	Information from Literature	AzMAT Mentors Sustainability Focus Group Results
Planning	- Create a shared definition of sustainability in the context of the health program. - Determine key program elements to be sustained. - Identify and allocate resources needed. - Create a plan to address the domains of sustainability.	- Defined sustainability as delivering intended program benefits over an extended period of time after funding is no longer available. - Determined the collaborative consultation component and opportunities for ongoing provider training and learning as key program components. - Addressed sustainability by creating trainings, guides, and program processes.

What Sustainability Means to AzMAT Mentors

The first step of conducting this focus group was to ensure that the team recognized what sustainability looks like in the context of the AzMAT Mentors program. The team discussed the most applicable definition of sustainability and what components of the program were most vital. Overall, the sustainability definition that is most applicable to the program, as described by the participants, incorporates delivering intended program benefits over an extended period of time after funding is no longer available. The team concurred that the program's collaborative consultation component, as well as the opportunities for ongoing training and learning, should be focused on when thinking about sustainability.

Planning

When discussing the planning domain of AzMAT Mentors' sustainability, the AzMAT Mentors team brought up many important points such as the trainings, guides, and processes that have been created throughout the project.

Trainings

A participant noted that a vital component of the program is the training materials provided to experienced providers at the onset of their participation. This training contains four

modules and incorporates a wide range of topics, including best practices on issues that may arise in MAT, best practices on addressing stigma and engaging families in care, as well as training on the application of Two-Eyed Seeing Framework.[16,17] One participant noted that many experienced MAT providers have returned each year. As such, they may have already participated in the initial training. These providers are given the opportunity to access training through the Arizona's Rural Opioid Response Implementation Program Provider and Community Learning Hub as well as a webinar on Advancing Racial Equity in the Substance Use Field. Participants noted these trainings are relevant to all MAT providers and can be available following the conclusion of the project, which will provide a sustainable opportunity for continued education.

Guides

The AzMAT Mentors team created a resource guide containing relevant SUD and OUD resources, and quick guides containing additional resources for providers. There was discussion about the quick guides being available for providers on the AzMAT Mentors website. Participants noted having these available are helpful to assist providers in their collaborative consultations. These quick guides are based on important SUD topics such as starting conversations about substance use, cultural humility, stigma, and perinatal OUD. These materials are additional opportunities available for providers to receive ongoing training and assistance from the AzMAT Mentors program after the conclusion of the program.

Processes

An additional idea discussed in the focus group was the purposeful development of the provider engagement system. This engagement system was developed with the intention to allow providers the ability to create their own collaboration plan based on their identified goals. The engagement surveys are designed to give the less experienced providers a list of goals and activities that are important when providing MAT (see Appendix C). After the provider has chosen their goals and accompanying activities to achieve and measure the attainment of the goals, the provider is able to print this form and utilize it in their collaborative consultation process. When thinking about sustainability, one participant noted an opportunity to streamline this component and allow for this process to become web based and completed by the provider on their own. This would allow for the mentorship component of the program to achieve sustainability. One participant discussed an additional opportunity for the creation of training materials to address the most sought out goals identified by providers. This would increase the

amount of materials available to providers and assist in achieving the sustainability of the training component of AzMAT Mentors.

Environmental Support

Participants suggested environmental support can be found in the funding given by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration via the Arizona Department of Health Services who supports and is committed to the success of the project. Additionally, there was discussion about the AzMAT Mentors program's development of environmental support in many programs that share similar missions and visions such as ASU's Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) Echo, and the Comprehensive Pain and Addiction Center (CPAC). These programs support providers and practitioners in the state and provide a platform to promote and champion AzMAT Mentors. These partners are invested in seeing materials and efforts of the program maintained and support from these programs will allow for AzMAT Mentors to have a lasting effect in the SUD field.

The AzMAT Mentors team was able to determine that there is a valued and respected community voice present on the team that is skilled at community outreach and education. This individual is able to advocate for the vision of the program in person at community sites and is passionate about the population served by the project. This individual fosters vital partnerships including but not limited to; Cochise Addiction Recovery Partnership (CARP), Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition, and St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank. A participant noted that the ability of this individual to continue to bring attention to and disseminate resources and materials created by AzMAT Mentors is vital to the sustainability of the program.

Partnerships

When discussing the partnership domain of sustainability, the team determined many partners invested in the success of the program. It was noted by the team that a principal partnership in the AzMAT Mentors program is the providers that are involved. Participants discussed that an essential component to the sustainability of AzMAT Mentors is the extent to which providers believe in the process and outcomes of the program. The team noted that there are instances of multiple new and experienced providers returning each year to participate in the program, and there are experienced providers that returned all four years of the program. These providers are invested in the success of the program, promote the program in various settings, and fully support the program's vision and goals.

There were many future partnership opportunities discussed in the focus group. There are many organizations that have similar missions and visions that would value the materials and developments of the program and assist in the sustainability of AzMAT Mentors after funding. A participant noted that one potential partnership could be found in the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), which has a chapter in each state. A relationship could be cultivated with this organization to facilitate ongoing dissemination of materials and resources.

It was noted that tribal health departments are a partnership to explore. One member of the AzMAT Mentors team brought up the potential of partnering with tribal health departments and introducing MAT services into tribal based programs. Tribal communities are an important community to connect with, especially for rural health programs that serve individuals in these communities.

Integration

One participant noted that AzMAT Mentors has cultivated a connection with the Providers Clinical Support System (PCSS). This organization is a resource for providers that is dedicated to training and educating providers in the evidence-based prevention and treatment of OUD. This participant also noted that AzMAT Mentors is organizing a webinar with PCSS to collaborate and engage additional individuals. This is an opportunity to integrate existing activities and materials and get providers connected to this organization to provide sustainable opportunities for education and training.

It was mentioned in the focus group that recruitment is currently integrated in the experienced MAT providers that engage in the program. An asset that the AzMAT Mentors team determined is that providers believe in the program and assist in providing internal recruitment. Through this recruitment, there is an opportunity to integrate additional existing practices into current partnerships. The team discussed the possibility of integrating mentorship through these dedicated experienced providers. These providers have the opportunity to recruit and continue collaborative consultations with less experienced providers in a less regimented way. This could be through general conversation or a lunch meeting with less experienced MAT providers.

Evaluation

It was agreed by the team that AzMAT Mentors conducts thorough evaluations of program goals and outcomes. One participant noted that the main goal of AzMAT Mentors is to increase less experienced providers' confidence in and intent to offer MAT. To measure this goal, providers are asked to rate their confidence at the beginning and end of the program, as well as

asked to rate their intention to offer MAT at the end of the program. On a scale of 0 to 100 with higher scores indicating greater confidence, the evaluation findings of year three saw an increase in less experienced MAT providers' confidence go from 30 at the beginning of the program to to 86 at the conclusion of the program.[18] The less experienced MAT providers' likelihood of beginning or increasing MAT services was rated an 83/100.[18] Additionally, overall program satisfaction is evaluated and year three program findings showed an average satisfaction score of 92/100 for experienced MAT providers and 90/100 for less experienced MAT providers with higher scores indicating higher (favorable) satisfaction.[18] A participant discussed an additional evaluation that is underway to determine the long-term impact of the project on provider capacity for offering MAT. Focus group participants indicate the thorough evaluations that AzMAT Mentors conducts demonstrates that the program is working as intended and creates a strong argument for why key components of the program should be sustained.

Communication

A facilitator that the AzMAT Mentors team discussed was the communication practices they employ. One participant noted that outreach is conducted through social media and in person visits. This participant also noted that outreach and marketing communicated through social media is systematically tracked and analyzed for effectiveness. The team also noted that all materials are developed for cultural and linguistic responsiveness. For example, they are developed in English and Spanish, and are reviewed from an American Indian/Indigenous viewpoint. This allows for effective communication to a wide range of audiences.

An additional strength discussed was the dissemination of important program information. A participant mentioned that members of AzMAT Mentors have conducted many coalition presentations, and findings of reports and evaluations have been presented to many audiences. There was discussion about the program's evaluation findings and how they are displayed through infographics on the website and are easily understood.[18] (See Appendix D) The program ensures that all materials are kept consistent with graphic design and are available on multiple platforms.

A participant mentioned an opportunity to utilize new methods of social media outreach and engage additional partners and organizations. Social media is a modern day tool to disseminate information and generate partnerships in the community.

Discussion

The purpose of this work was to synthesize sustainability findings to assist health programs in planning for and achieving sustainability. Experts agree that rural health programs many times do not have the resources (funding, infrastructure, staff, and time) to plan for sustainability. Often, rural communities are tasked with creating a sustainability plan, but do not have the resources to create a strong plan or fulfill a plan due to the short term nature of projects, the inability to begin or continue writing grants, or inadequate staff to properly dedicate time to sustainability efforts (Hospodar J, personal communication, 2023). If health programs are aware of the six domains of sustainability and able to incorporate each domain into their program, the burden of planning for sustainability may be eased.

AzMAT Mentors plays a vital role in addressing the OUD crisis, which is why it is important that the key components of this program are maintained and the MAT assistance it provides is sustained after the program ends. Through discussion in the focus group and input from the AzMAT Mentors team, it can be determined that the AzMAT Mentors program has addressed each domain of sustainability and will achieve sustainability after funding. By addressing the six domains of sustainability, AzMAT Mentors will be able to deliver the intended program benefits of collaborative consultation and opportunities for ongoing provider training and learning after funding.

AzMAT Mentors is strongest in the planning domain due to the numerous trainings, guides, and program processes in place that will allow for continued opportunities for provider collaborations, training, and learning. Environmental support from ASU's MOUD Echo and the CPAC may provide support for providers and practitioners in the state and allow for materials and efforts of the program to be distributed and maintained. AzMAT Mentors has support from PCSS to give providers sustainable opportunities to train and continue learning about the evidence-based prevention and treatment of OUD. Integration of mentorship through internal provider recruitment creates sustainable opportunities for collaborative consultations. Program evaluations recognize that AzMAT Mentors achieves program goals and functions as intended, and the program effectively communicates these evaluations to partners and stakeholders through presentations and infographics.

Recommendations

Based on this research, there are a few recommendations that can be made to health programs trying to address sustainability. First, it is important that programs plan for sustainability in some way. Ideally, at the onset of the program, so that the team understands the domains of sustainability, allocates resources for sustainability measures, and creates a sustainability plan. If the importance of sustainability is realized at the onset of a program, streamlined to address facilitators, and integrated into the development of the program, it will be easier for a program to plan for sustainability over the course of the program period. If the program is in its last phases and has not thought about sustainability, it is not too late. At any time, programs should create a shared definition of sustainability in the context of the sustainability goals of the health program, determine what key elements of the program should be sustained, and identify resources needed.

A second recommendation is to realize the importance of cultivating and sustaining relationships in health programs. This applies to relationships with program partners and with individuals that foster environmental support. Relationship building provides increased opportunities to sustain programs. Especially in rural communities, where resources are limited, there is a responsibility for health programs to build relationships with businesses, legislative leaders, and the individuals in these small communities (Hospodar J, personal communication, July 2023). Having strong relationships in the communities served by the health program will increase the likelihood that a program will be able to be integrated and sustained.

The third recommendation is to have sufficient evaluation methods throughout the program. Evaluation of program outcomes and goals are vital to determining if the program is functioning as intended and will strengthen the argument for why key program components should be sustained. If a program can prove that it is successful in delivering intended benefits, program partners and stakeholders will be more inclined to continue the key components of the program. Evaluation of the program will create a strong argument for the integration of key program components into existing structures, and will facilitate sustainability.

Sustainability is a vital component of health programs. Achieving sustainability will allow for the program to provide long term support to the population it serves and extend program benefits past the conclusion of the program.

Author's Note

At the onset of the AzMAT Mentors program, the term Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) was widely utilized for the use of medications to address opioid use disorder. Since then, SAMHSA recommends replacing the term Medication Assisted Treatment with Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD).[19] For the consistency of this paper MAT terminology was used as it was the preferred term when AzMAT Mentors started, but the author acknowledges the medical terminology has transitioned to the use of MOUD.

Acknowledgements

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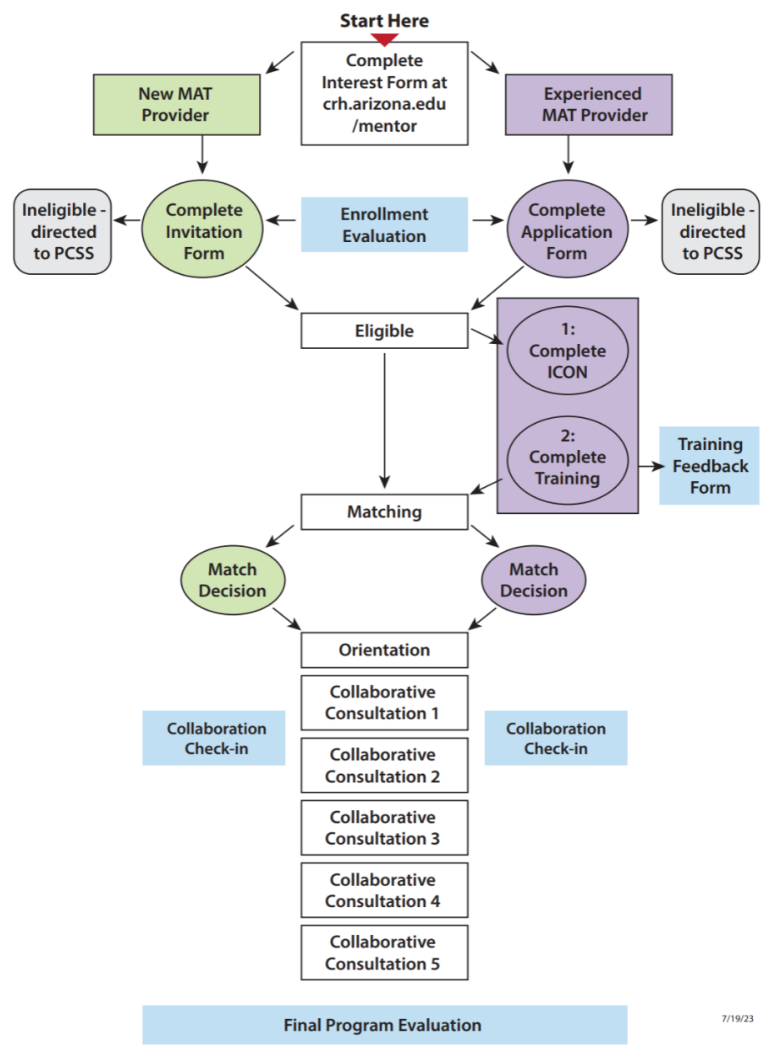**Appendix A: Flow Chart Detailing the Process That New and Experienced MAT Providers Undergo.**

Chart derived from the AzMAT Mentors Program.

Appendix B: Questions Asked in Focus Group

PLANNING

   1. What is the team's definition of sustainability?

   For reference, here are some ideas from the literature:

   After termination of major financial assistance from an external donor the program will be sustained by:

      a. Maintaining program services (creating ways for the program services to be self-sustainable or institutionalizing services within a different organization/partner)

      b. Delivering intended benefits over an extended period of time (Increase MAT provider confidence, providing a way for inexperienced providers to be mentored, etc.)

   2. What key components of the program should be sustained?

ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT

   1. Who are the champions that strongly support the program? (Champion: "A committed and respected community voice" An individual or individuals who advocate for the needs of the program and have influence with stakeholders and partners to gain resources and support.)

PARTNERSHIPS

   1. What community organizations are invested in the success of the program?

   2. What community partners/organizations are not currently members of the program, but you think should be to facilitate sustainability of this program?

   3. What specific strategies have worked in obtaining organizational support for this program?

INTEGRATION

   1. What components of the program's activities are integrated into existing partner practices/policies?

   2. What components of the program could be integrated into additional organizational structures, routines and roles?

EVALUATION

   1. How are program outcomes and effectiveness monitored and assessed?

   2. How effective is the program in functioning as intended and meeting program objectives/goals?

COMMUNICATION

   1. How is the vision of the program effectively communicated to external partners/stakeholders?

   2. How are program outcomes and effectiveness communicated to stakeholders?

   3. What program benefits do you believe stakeholders perceive as valuable?

Appendix C: Provider Engagement Forms

New Provider Goal Bank For Year 4

This next section is designed to determine your main priorities for mentoring. The list below represents issues related to clinical care, person-centered care, and community and social support. Please review the list and select your top three priorities. We will use this information to develop collaboration goals and your collaboration plan that we will review with you and your mentor.

	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
Differentiating types of MAT medications, their uses, and appropriate dosing.	○	○	○
Screening (and pre-screening) for substance use concerns and addiction.	○	○	○
Treating pain by following Arizona's prescribing guidelines and offering naloxone.	○	○	○
Working with patients to develop a strength-based treatment plan inclusive of toxicology and behavioral benchmarks and recovery support.	○	○	○
Using healthcare technologies such as telemedicine, Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program & health information exchange.	○	○	○
Identifying and treating clusters of disease associated with substance misuse including COVID-19 (i.e., Syndemics).	○	○	○
Reviewing neurobiology, trauma, and social issues associated with substance use prevention, treatment and recovery.	○	○	○
Identifying and affirming patients strengths and resiliency factors.	○	○	○
Educating patients about unhealthy substance use and misuse.	○	○	○
Enhancing motivation for change through patient-centered behavioral strategies.	○	○	○

Responding to cultural and linguistic needs.	○	○	○
Engaging family or peer support services/networks.	○	○	○
Determining when to treat and/or refer to higher level of (specialty) care.	○	○	○
Addressing legal-ethical issues.	○	○	○
Engaging pharmacies.	○	○	○
Strategies to address and reduce stigma.	○	○	○
Developing or enhancing an integrated behavioral health model or collaborative care approach.	○	○	○
Accessing services associated with the social determinants of health.	○	○	○
Building organizational commitment for substance use services and supports	○	○	○

Please select an outcome you would like to pursue during the program for differentiating types of MAT medications, their uses, and appropriate dosing.

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Review AZ prescribing guidelines. Create a decision-making checklist based on the guidelines and implement with one patient.	○
Review patient population and determine which medications/doses may be most effective. Develop a workflow.	○
Review practice setting and determine which medications and doses are feasible. Develop workflow which addresses feasibility and regulatory issues.	○
Review buprenorphine effectiveness for fentanyl. Discuss micro dosing practice guidelines.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to screening (and pre-screening) for substance use concerns and addiction.

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Review and discuss potential screening tools and implementation protocols. One or two screening tools will be identified.	○
Review and discuss potential screening tools. Select a screening tool and develop implementation protocol.	○
Review and discuss potential screening tools. Implement a screening tool with at least two patients.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to treating pain by following Arizona's prescribing guidelines and offering naloxone.

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Discuss the types of pain patients present with (e.g., acute; chronic). Develop a workflow using the Arizona prescribing guidelines.	○
Review AZ prescribing guidelines and state policies on naloxone distribution. Develop plan for how to provide patients access to naloxone.	○
Implement a plan for providing patients access to naloxone and monitor for 30-days.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to working with patients to develop a strength-based treatment plan inclusive of toxicology and behavioral benchmarks and recovery support.

Outcome I would like to accomplish

Review current treatment plans to determine where improvements can be made. Update treatment plans and request organizational approval, if necessary.   ○

Review options for strength based treatment plans that incorporate toxicology, behavioral benchmarks and recovery support. Select one to implement in the next 30-days.   ○

Select a strength based treatment plans that incorporate toxicology, behavioral benchmarks and recovery support. Implement the plan with at least one patient.   ○

Other   ○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to using healthcare technologies such as telemedicine, Arizona Prescription Monitoring Program & health information exchange.

Outcome I would like to accomplish

Discuss healthcare technologies. Create a checklist for when to use/access healthcare technologies.   ○

Discuss healthcare technologies. Create a table detailing the different types of healthcare technologies and when/how to use them clinically.   ○

Discuss healthcare technologies. Create a checklist for the types of information needed to use healthcare technologies (e.g., consent; access).   ○

Other   ○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to identifying and treating clusters of disease associated with substance misuse including COVID-19 (i.e., Syndemics).

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Review and learn about syndemics and strategies for responding. One strategy for responding is identified.	○
Identify one or two diseases that cluster with SUD. Develop a workflow for responding.	○
Develop a coordinated care workflow. Implement the coordinated care workflow for patients that have other chronic health conditions.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to reviewing neurobiology, trauma, and social issues associated with substance use prevention, treatment and recovery.

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Examine the latest science regarding neurobiology, trauma, and social issues with collaborator. One clinical implication can be articulated.	○
Develop a non-stigmatizing verbal script that addresses primary issues associated with substance use that provides hope to patients. Present to one patient.	○
Identify one patient resource that addresses an issue associated with substance use that provides hope. Share with at least one patient.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to identifying and affirming patients strengths and resiliency factors.

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Review ways to identify and affirm patient strengths and resiliency factors. One strategy can be articulated.	○
Review ways to identify and affirm patient strengths and resiliency factors. Develop talking points for identifying and affirming patient strengths and resiliency factors.	○
Review ways to identify and affirm patient strengths and resiliency factors. Implement a strategy to identify and affirm patient strengths and resiliency factors with at least three patients.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to educating patients about unhealthy substance use and misuse.

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Discuss with collaborator strategies for educating patients about unhealthy substance use and misuse using non-stigmatizing strategies. One strategy can be articulated.	○
Identify culturally and linguistically appropriate materials for educating patients about unhealthy substance use and misuse. Select one to use in practice.	○
Discuss with collaborator strategies for educating patients about unhealthy substance use and misuse using non-stigmatizing strategies. Select and implement one patient-centered educational approach with at least one patient.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to enhancing motivation for change through patient-centered behavioral strategies.

Outcome I would like to accomplish

Identify methods for enhancing motivation for change with individuals with SUD. Identify at least two methods. ○

Identify methods for enhancing motivation for change with individuals with SUD. Role play strategies to increase patient motivation with collaborator. Practice with at least one patient. ○

Identify methods for enhancing motivation for change with individuals with SUD. Implement at least two strategies to enhance motivation with at least two patients. ○

Other ○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to responding to cultural and linguistic needs.

Outcome I would like to accomplish

Discuss training needs regarding cultural and linguistically appropriate services. Identify a trainer and set a date for training on cultural and linguistically appropriate services. ○

Review the OMH Cultural and Linguistic Appropriate Services website. Select and implement one strategy to update your clinical practice, communications, or tools. ○

Discuss organizational needs regarding cultural and linguistically appropriate services. Conduct a walkthrough of the patient process. Discuss outcomes with collaborator. ○

Other ○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to engaging family or peer support services/networks.

Outcome I would like to accomplish

Identify internal and external resources for linking patients to peer or family support services. Create a list to share with patients. ○

If peer or family support specialist staff are available, review best-practice strategies for including them in patient care. Select one strategy. ○

Discuss peer or family support services. Implement at least one change to improve how support specialist staff are included in the patient service workflow. ○

Other ○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to determining when to treat and/or refer to higher level of (specialty) care

Outcome I would like to accomplish

Discuss treatment and referral decision making. Develop a decision-making checklist for knowing when to treat or refer. ○

Review screening tools to support decision making processes. Select a screening tool that indicates when additional social assistance or resources are necessary. ○

Create a list of community-based organizations that offer SUD/OUD services. Contact at least two to determine the enrollment criteria and referral process. ○

Other ○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to addressing legal-ethical issues.

Outcome I would like to accomplish

Review legal requirements and ethical principles for providing SUD/OUD treatments. At least two legal-ethical issues can be articulated.   ○

Discuss legal-ethical issues related to MAT. Develop a checklist for documenting legal and ethical practices required for providing SUD/OUD treatments.   ○

Review consent/release forms for screening, brief intervention and referral. Implement with at least one patient.   ○

Other   ○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to engaging pharmacies.

Outcome I would like to accomplish

Discuss local pharmacy issues with collaborator. At least one strategy for improvement can be articulated.   ○

Identify pharmacy-related barriers patients experience in accessing MOUD. Develop a plan to meet with pharmacy to discuss collaboration and patient-level issues (e.g., numbers; stigma).   ○

Discuss patient education tools. Implement one or two patient education tools for communicating with pharmacy personnel on prescriptions.   ○

Other   ○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to strategies to address and reduce stigma.

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Review organizational tools to determine if they inadvertently precipitate stigma. Update one organizational tool to eliminate stigmatizing beliefs/values (e.g., treatment plans; EHR).	○
Identify specific training needs. Host a lunch and learn that includes stories from people who have had or currently have SUD/OUD.	○
Discuss different types of stigma associated with SUD/OUD. Develop strategies for reducing stigmatizing beliefs.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to developing or enhancing an integrated behavioral health model or collaborative care approach.

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Discuss methods for integrating behavioral health/coordinated care in your setting. Determine if methods can be implemented.	○
Examine existing integrated care/coordinate care practices. Select one that requires quality improvement. Develop a plan for quality improvement and review with organizational leadership.	○
Discuss quality improvement strategies. Implement a quality improvement process for enhancing integrated/coordinated care for people with substance use concerns.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

Please select an outcome related to accessing services associated with the social determinants of health (SDOH).

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Determine what SDOH services the patient population needs. Identify two or three referral sources. Contact potential referral sources to discuss eligibility criteria.	○
Discuss value of patient-input. Query 1-2 patients (and their families) about which services and supports they currently use. Ask them to indicate their satisfaction.	○
Identify referral sources that address SDOH. Develop a patient tool that indicates how patients can access these referral sources.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

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Please select an outcome related to building organizational commitment for substance use services and supports.

	Outcome I would like to accomplish
Discuss organizational challenges associated with SUD services and supports. Develop an outline that includes two or three strategies for starting to work towards organizational commitment. Present to leadership.	○
Discuss organizational challenges associated with SUD services and supports. Identify two or three ways organizational commitment could be enhanced. Develop strategies. Present to leadership.	○
Discuss organizational challenges associated with SUD services and supports. Develop metrics for evaluating organizational commitment. Collect data for one month. Present results to leadership.	○
Other	○

Please write the goal you would like to accomplish.

_____

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Appendix D: AzMAT Mentors Year 3 Program Results Infographic

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Center for Rural Health

AzMAT Mentors
Year 3 Program Results

PARTICIPATION

Year 3 total participants by type
Experienced MAT Provider: 9
New MAT Provider: 16

FINAL SURVEY RESPONSE RATE

The results of Year 3 come from the completion of the final evaluation survey

New MAT Provider - 81%   Experienced MAT Provider - 89%

PROGRAM SATISFACTION

Average satisfaction score for
Experienced and New MAT Providers
(Range: 0-100)

Experienced **92**

New **90**

GOALS REACHED

92% of New MAT Providers accomplished
their goal by the end of the program

92%

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

New MAT Providers confidence rating to implement MAT services

Before program **30**

After program **86**

0   25   50   75   100

New MAT Providers' likelihood of beginning or increasing MAT services

83

0   25   50   75   100

PROGRAM TESTIMONIALS

EXPERIENCED MAT PROVIDERS

"AzMAT Mentor Program is a great tool for the new MAT Providers who would like to have real world experience, interaction with the real patients, and hands on experience in the clinic settings."

"I really enjoyed the MAT mentor program. It definitely helps me in going over cases with my mentees to realize how complex the decisions I make for my patients can be."

NEW MAT PROVIDERS

"I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to meet and learn from a professional mentor in the program. My mentor was driven and extremely passionate about the program, which in turn motivated me. Our sessions were informative, reassuring, and helped me build confidence within myself as it pertains to being a MAT provider."

"The most valuable thing for me I learned from the AzMAT Mentor Program is that now I have a direct line of communication with another MAT physician whom I can contact any time I need help or support with patient treatment decisions."