



Systems Integration as Prevention: Considerations & Possibilities

Dr. Alina Turner

Principal, Turner Strategies

Fellow, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary

CAEH 2017, Winnipeg

Key Questions

Effective homelessness prevention requires & presumes system and service level integration.

- What exactly do we mean by integration in our work to prevent & end homelessness?
- How do we know integration is effective?
- When is integration not the answer?

Process



Literature review of **50 key sources** in academic and grey literature on system integration with particular relevance to homelessness.



Aim to discern **integration elements** that **improve outcomes** for homeless populations.

*Project supported by
Calgary Homeless Foundation &
School of Public Policy.*

What is 'Integration'?

Refers to efforts to increase **the coordination of operations across systems** in order to improve efficiency and client outcomes.



- A highly fragmented system with service delivery organizations working in isolation

- Loose, informal cooperation (e.g. information sharing) between practitioners.
- Sharing of office location, facilities and overheads, but no integration of services.

- Some formal sharing of resources (e.g. staff, tools, data) and joint planning.
- Information on multiple services available through single employee or website portal.

- Integrated staffing funding, technology applications, service delivery tools, and case management.

The Integration continuum - (Konrad, 1996; KPMG 2013)

Several U.S. studies suggest that service coordination **closest to the client** is more effective than broader top-down structural integration measures in terms of individual **housing and health outcomes**.

(Hambrick & Rog, 2000).



The Integration Imperative

1

Same vulnerable individuals/families interacting with **multiple systems**

2

Duplicated services impact effectiveness/efficiencies

3

System(s) reported to be **difficult to access** and navigate

4

Lack of coordination and **information sharing** among systems compromise outcomes and efficient use of resources

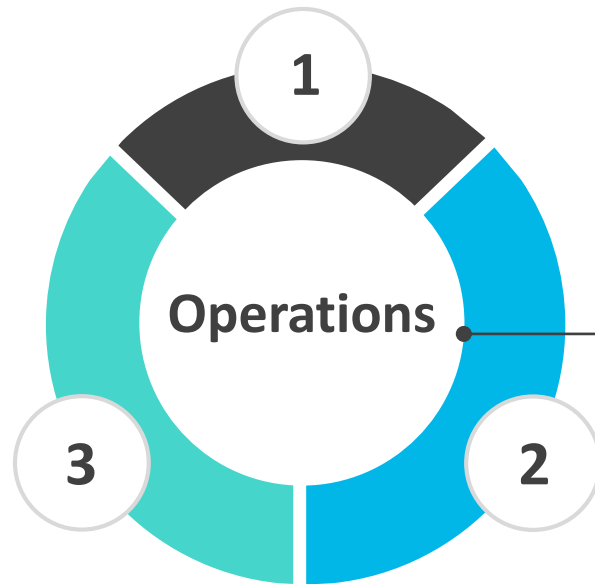
5

Confusing number of large number of ad-hoc providers and programs operating in **fragmented manner** with multiple funding sources

KPMG International 2013

Benefits of Integration

- **Increased capacity** and value for money, reduction in duplicated administrative processes



- Simplified, coordinated **access to supports** and services
- Holistic, *person-centered* supports



- Swifter and more **coordinated assistance** can help stabilize clients' conditions, limit need for high-cost crisis interventions (e.g. ER)
- Improved **strategic planning and system integrity**, sharing of information between different agencies and program areas

- Improved **outcomes** & user experience
- Faster **response time**

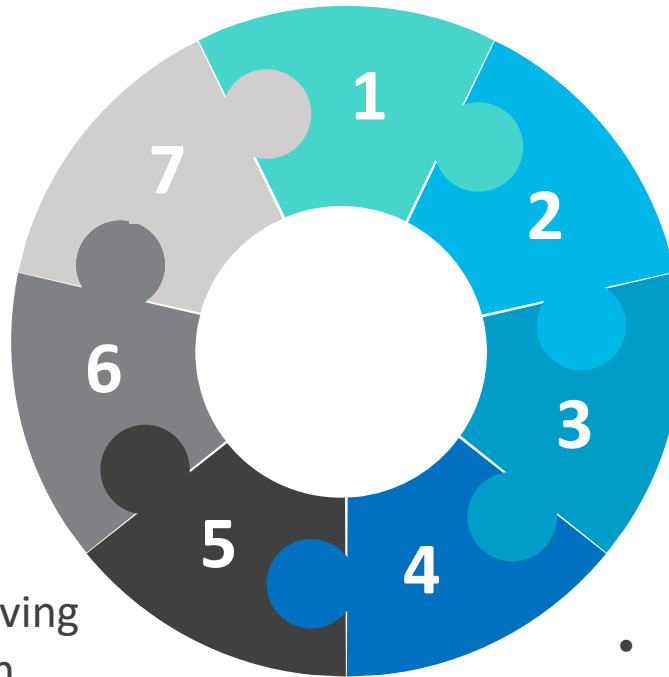
Emerging Global Practices in Integration

- Client pathways respond to **level and nature** of support clients need.
- Provider **funding regimes** linked to outcomes measurement.
- Coordinated **upstream interventions** focus on prevention.
- Cross-government/department/funder **joint commissioning, integrated case management**, harmonized reporting requirements, data systems **interoperability**.
- Funder-provider inter-sectoral integration to create **common client databases**, joint **investment** strategies, **service networks** that offer clients streamlined access points and seamless referrals.
- Restructuring along **geographical** rather than program lines to better understand and respond to local needs.
- New **governance models** where control over finances and systems management is devolved to local authorities and community organizations.

Integration Strategies

Successful integration achieved when particular strategies applied across systems.

- Adopting and using an interagency management information system
- Co-locating mainstream services within homeless-serving agencies and programs
- Centralized authority for homeless-serving system planning & system coordination
- Common policies and protocols, shared information
- Coordinated service delivery and training
- Having staff with the responsibility to promote systems/service integration
- Creating a local interagency coordinating body



Prerequisite Conditions



Prerequisite Conditions

Leadership & Governance



- Broad consensus on system objectives
- Clearly identified target population
- Clear governance and accountability arrangements
- Leadership engagement at the highest decision-making levels to set direction and tone
- Engagement between local leaders and the community services sector
- Engagement across organizational levels

Prerequisite Conditions

Resource Alignment



- Buy-in and resource commitments from each level of government/key funders
- Understanding of current spending patterns and funding arrangements
- Funding arrangements that support integration
- Resources to strengthen and stabilize community providers
- Resources to support local authorities with low capacity to assume control

Prerequisite Conditions

Data & Research



- Sufficient evaluation capacity
- Data sharing protocols and IT infrastructure across agencies and governments supporting integration work
- Procedures to monitor implementation fidelity
- Performance management frameworks and funding models that promote innovation

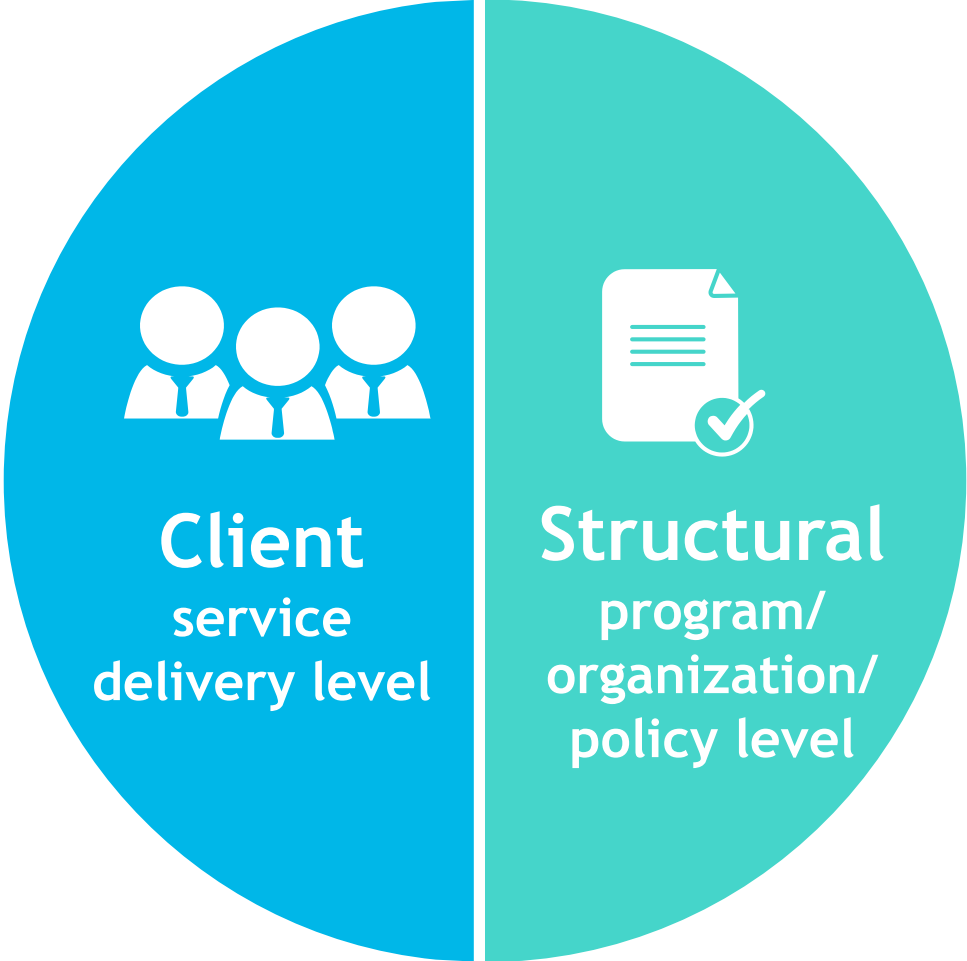
Prerequisite Conditions

Community of Practice

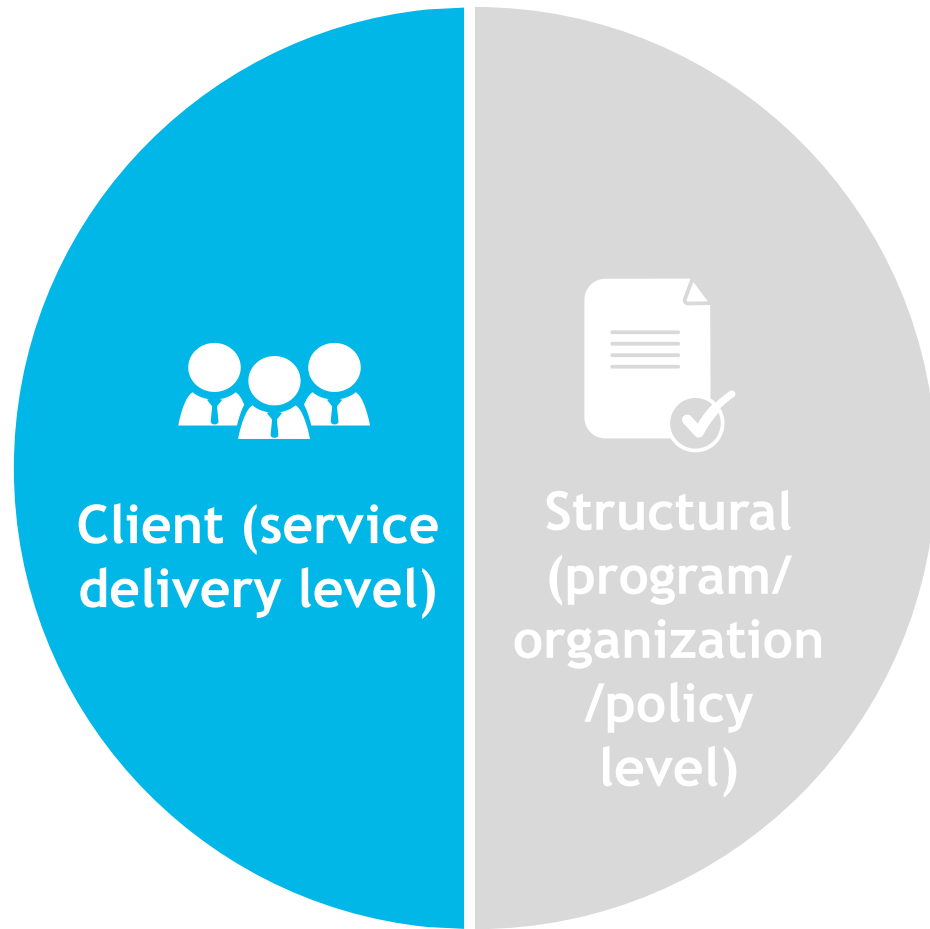


- Adoption of a systems approach to case management
- Access to evidence-based practice body of knowledge
- Support service providers in transitioning to new delivery models
- A workforce with new skills, including an ability to manage multiple service areas
- Understanding of incentives that work against collaboration

Client-Focused Integration Practices

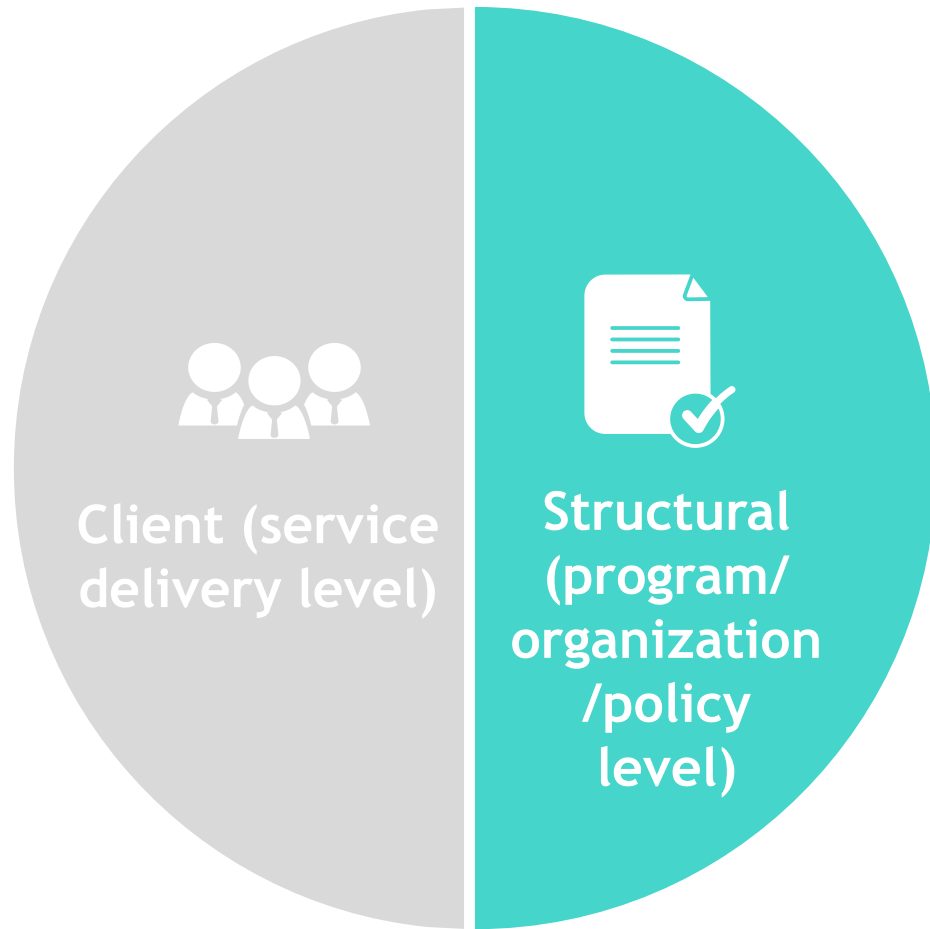


Client-Focused Integration Practices



- Shared information system
- Co-location
- Joint staff training
- Interagency meetings
- Common application/referral processes
- Joint delivery processes
- Staff secondments
- Staff recruitment and volunteer programs
- Case conferencing/review
- Local resource registers
- Provider produced good practice guidelines
- Monitoring and evaluation

Client-Focused Integration Practices



- Shared guidelines
- Common targeting strategies
- Joint/pool funding arrangements
- Protocols
- Memorandums of understanding
- Joint strategic/policy documents
- Agency /program amalgamations
- Shared resources (inc. transport)
- Joint administrative processes
- Joint planning
- Cross and peer training
- Local forums/seminars/conferences
- Integration pilots or demonstration projects
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Regular promotions and publications

Considerations Moving Forward

- Imperative is improved **participant & population outcomes**, not saving money.
- Maintain a clear **line of sight** to participant/population outcomes, demonstrable through evidence (data, client reports).
- Majority of resources (time, money) are spent at **frontline** level participant/service provider (case management, client costs) not administrative layers (task forces, councils, initiatives).
- **Decision-makers** at highest-level aligned in integrated strategic planning & execution.
- Evaluate what works/what doesn't, and **focus on positive, demonstrable participant impact**.

Calgary Homeless Foundation
School of Public Policy

THANK YOU

TURNER | STRATEGIES

DR. ALINA TURNER, PhD



403-827-8722



alina@turnerstrategies.org



turnerstrategies.org