

Help Me Grow (HMG) Crisis Response System Enhancement: Enhancing CAP Services

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Introduction

In response to COVID-19, the HMG National Center partnered with Spring Impact¹ and the Childhood Prosperity Lab² to elevate strategies being deployed within HMG systems across the country. The highlighted strategy herein represents the tactics several affiliates³ used in their COVID-19 responses, and aims to elevate universal practices for crisis response work moving forward.

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Summary

Child wellness is inextricable from family wellness. This is especially true during times of crisis, when the challenges, stressors, and resulting needs for vulnerable families are exacerbated.

The **Enhancing CAP Strategy** explores how Community Access Points (CAPs) can expand and deepen services during times of crisis to best ensure holistic support of child and family wellness.

Relationship to HMG Core Components

- Community Access Point (CAP)

For more information on this component please see [here](#). More details on this system enhancement's relationship with the Core Components are below.

¹ Spring Impact is a nonprofit social enterprise born out of a frustration of seeing social organizations constantly reinventing the wheel and wasting scarce resources. Using a combination of successful and tested commercial and social sector principles while drawing on extensive practical expertise, we help organizations identify, design and implement the right scale model and strategy, enabling them to solve social problems at scale.

² Childhood Prosperity Lab (the Lab) seeks to help children flourish, thrive and succeed by building the capacity and transforming the culture of organizations serving and working on behalf of children. Childhood Prosperity Lab helps non-profit organizations, companies, government agencies, foundations, and networks enhance their support of children, families, and communities by helping them utilize new strategies, tools, and resources to advance their efforts and ensure they reach their desired level of impact.

³ A special thanks to all the affiliates who contributed to the development of these insights: HMG Long Island, HMG North Texas, HMG Pierce County, HMG Washington, HMG Alameda County, and HMG California.

Affiliate Highlight



HMG North Texas is a new affiliate who leveraged the HMG CAP structure to nimbly respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in their community.

Context:

Prior to the pandemic, North Texas had been focusing on building the partner and community relationships necessary to support its system, and had not yet launched their CAP. However, with the outset of COVID-19, the organizing entity and relevant subcommittees quickly realized families and partners were: inundated with information, traditional supports were stretched thin, and there were serious and urgent gaps in services being provided to the community. Notably,

- The local 211 had tripled their call volume from 300 to 900 calls a day, and were only able to spend 1-2 minutes supporting each family
- Many parents and caregivers were in need of emotional and mental health support through the crisis
- The added stress was resulting in severe cases of domestic violence, including a number of child deaths during the initial weekend of shelter-in-place

Action:

Together this painted a picture for HMG North Texas and its partners. The system realized launching the CAP was the best action it could take to support its community in navigating the crisis. Additionally, the system realized there were some gaps in services which the CAP itself was well-situated to fill. Namely, there was a gap in the mental health and crisis counseling support available to parents, which aligned with existing expertise within the organizing entity. Accordingly, HMG North Texas:

- Deepened their CAP services by training navigators to recognize a family in crisis and refer them to an on-call mental health crisis counselors
- Reallocated trained nurses from the Family Connects referral system to provide "on call" crisis counseling services
- Expanded traditional CAP services through connection to the local Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) to support emergency respite for families in crisis and at risk for domestic abuse, e.g. providing crisis counseling and connections to emergency childcare. Additionally, the system developed processes to work alongside existing mandatory reporting procedures to preemptively provide support to families flagged as 'at risk' for severe abuse and neglect

On this, Kathy A. Houston of My Health My Resources of Tarrant County said, "We aren't interested in taking the place of a crisis line, but rather filling in a gap we saw in our community... We could never duplicate the support the crisis line offers, but by incorporating the social determinants of health screenings we are able to compliment and hopefully prevent families and children from the abuse, neglect and issues that typically end up at an emergency crisis line."

Key Takeaway:

The application of the Enhancing CAP Strategy can look very different depending on the context in which it is being applied, but the principles and core components remain the same.

North Texas was able to build on the HMG model to expand and deepen the services typically provided by CAPs in order to fill critical service gaps, including critically needed mental health supports for families during the crisis.

Detailed Definition of the System Enhancement

Objective of the System Enhancement: Expand or deepen the functions of CAP to serve families in the ways most important during crisis response.

Core Components of the System Enhancement:

<p>Analysis and Gap Identification</p>	<p><u>Analyze various data sources to identify trends in emerging and urgent family needs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use CAP data and qualitative partner feedback to identify keep gaps in services <p><u>Analyze partner landscape to identify potential service providers, including the HMG CAP</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing partnerships and 'updated resource library' strategies to organize relevant emergency support services • Helpful Hint: Undertake ecosystem mapping in order to understand the key roles for all stakeholders, including the HMG system. It is imperative to not be duplicative of existing efforts and external expertise, but rather build on stakeholder strengths • Consider remaining service gaps and determine potential impact and overall feasibility of inclusion to CAP e.g. does the expansion of service or deepening of service align with the HMG system's values, existing expertise, capacity, funding availability, etc.
<p>Systems Building</p>	<p><u>Connect with other referral systems and relevant stakeholders regarding service gaps, e.g. consider partnering with 211, Family Connects, or emergency response actors such as the local DV and/or Child Welfare actors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful Hint: Messaging is a key consideration for collaboration. HMG North Texas found systems/ actors often think of families and children they serve as 'theirs.' Thus, they've worked to reframe the messaging to 'we all want to serve and support all families.' If you work from the very beginning with the mindset to include all children and families, it makes collaboration easier <p><u>Determine the nature of collaboration and interaction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider who in the HMG system is best placed to provide proactive resources and emergency respite support for families in crisis
<p>Capacity Building</p>	<p><u>Training of CAP and other relevant staff to understand when a family might need new services, proper referral processes, and general sensitivity on new topics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful Hint: Training Navigators around active listening, motivational interviewing, and screening SDOH was particularly relevant for HMG North Texas
<p>Implement, Analyze, and Refine</p>	<p><u>Implement solutions, collect data, and refine services based on learnings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data from families and partners • Continue to improve services based on findings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine which, if any, activities will extend into long term services
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Structural Requirements of the System Enhancement:

Strong Community Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships and trust of relevant stakeholders and similar referral systems in the community
Coordinating Backend Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand existing communication flows and structures to inform support systems Develop new support structures as needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to coordinate and share data systems as much as possible Train staff on new referral systems and processes Helpful Hint: Especially in emergency response, prioritize speed and actionability of solutions
Flexible Staffing Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff with the capacity and relevant expertise to be repurposed towards new crisis response activities
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate decision making structures that enables cross-sectoral perspectives to inform action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E.g. HMG North Texas saw that subcommittees were operating in siloes, and decided to appoint 3 chairs for each subcommittee. Each chair represented an important subsector e.g. Childcare, Home visiting, and Health Care

Common Measures of Success

A Logic Model or Theory of Change in an intentional effort to define and relate social enterprise activities to impact results. Key components of these frameworks include concepts such as: inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact. The outputs described here are the initial indicators a system might review on the path to measuring and understanding its impact. **Key note:** As a result of the rapid response nature of this enhancement strategy, an exact logic model is still under development.

Output Indicators:

- Linkage rate
- Direct service rates

Readiness Assessment for Implementing Affiliates

Overview:

This exercise will help you to assess your HMG system's readiness for implementing the described solution, and enable you to make more informed decisions in what may be involved in preparing for execution.

This is not meant to be a prescriptive answer of 'yes, ready to implement' or 'no, not ready to implement'. The outputs of this exercise **are not** meant to prohibit a system

from implementation. Rather this is a lean planning tool to support more robust thinking and application in rapid response.

Instructions:

To complete this test, read each question and then write the number which most accurately represents the current situation in your system. We suggest you make a note on why you have scored each answer so that you can reference back to it later as you continue to plan and develop your operations.

1. Is there an ambitious yet realistic strategy for responding to the crisis? I.e. defined scope of the problem, need, and the potential response?
 - 1) Limited to no strategic thinking in place on how to respond to the crisis and community needs.
 - 2) Good understanding of the size of the problem and need, as well as a sense of how your system will seek to address it. i.e. A strong sense of how your system fits into the larger ecosystem of actors, as well as what your contribution will be.
 - 3) Detailed understanding of the problem you are seeking to address backed up by research and data. Theory of Change as well as ambitious SMART targets in place for helping to solve identified challenges with a realistic plan.

Your Score & Why: _____

2. Is there cultural alignment, i.e. does new/altered response align with your mission? Are you avoiding mission creep or consciously pivoting to redirect resources out of perceived necessity?
 - 1) Proposed strategy does not align with values and overall mission of the HMG system.
 - 2) HMG system and stakeholders are open to expanding services to encompass holistic family support as it makes sense within crisis response only.
 - 3) System is actively engaged with promoting services supporting the social determinants of health and holistic family wellness. Stakeholders interested in enhanced CAP services in crisis and beyond.

Your Score & Why: _____

3. Do you have a clear financial strategy and funding for implementing the solution?
 - 1) No dedicated funding or pathway to reallocate resources.
 - 2) Funding and resources able to be reallocated towards emergency response activities.
 - 3) Funding and resources able to be reallocated towards emergency response activities, as well as dedicated funding secured to support sustained implementation.

Your Score & Why: _____

4. Is there a clear project owner (individual, organization, subcommittee) with capacity to drive and deliver strategy?
- 1) There is no clear 'owner' of initiatives or decision making structure in place.
 - 2) There is a clear project owner with a relevant skill set. The decision making process across stakeholders is understood well enough to drive actions.
 - 3) The project owner is an experienced individual with previous experience in scaling and is trusted by stakeholders. The decision making structure represents a holistic set of perspectives and has been validated.

Your Score & Why: _____

5. Are the functions necessary for replication well defined and developed for delivery while ensuring quality? E.g. operations manuals
- 1) Few or no processes, systems or values exist or they are fragmented and difficult to find.
 - 2) Most processes and documentation for delivery and replication are in place but with some gaps. Values have been established.
 - 3) Accurate documentation is in place for process, systems, training, legal agreements, procedures & ensuring quality. Values are in place, recognized and embedded across the organization.

Your Score & Why: _____

6. Is there a supply of people or partners willing and able to take on the new way of working?
- 1) There are no interested parties who are willing and/or qualified to take on this strategy or those people are difficult to access.
 - 2) There is evidence of a supply of people or organizations willing and qualified to implement this strategy.
 - 3) There is evidence of a large supply of people or organizations willing and qualified to implement this strategy.

Your Score & Why: _____

Scoring Rubric:

- No score lower than 2, and at least four 3s: Ready to implement this strategy with minimal additional planning required
- No score lower than 2, with up to three 3s: You have a promising ability to implement this strategy, with select areas to focus your preparation
- A mix of 1s, 2s, and 3s: You have more work to do to prepare for robust implementation of this strategy

Potential Risks to Implementation

Risk	Severity of Impact	Likelihood of Impact	Mitigating strategies
Creating a competitive environment with partners through duplication of efforts	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest adequate time in stakeholder mapping activities Leverage network input for inclusive decision making Avoid implementing duplicative services, and establish clear reasoning for actions
Sustained mission creep	Medium	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If system is embracing basic need supports, define the parameters around which your system might be helpful e.g. connecting to housing solutions vs. providing housing solutions Look to connect with other systems/ experts to divert "creep" in the long term
Poor service provided	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure system is taking on the supports services it has the expertise to handle Invest in adequate capacity building

Additional Resources

- Recorded webinar session
- CAP working group materials

Conclusion

The Enhancing CAP Strategy encompasses common practices that Spring Impact observed across rapid response approaches. Its ability to leverage existing HMG infrastructure and relationships, flexibility in application, and promising outputs make it a highly compelling strategy to consider for future response efforts.