



Asian Counseling & Referral Service

Substance Abuse Treatment Program

- Multi Social Service agency serving Asian Pacific American immigrants and refugees population covering 30 different languages in Seattle, King County, Washington
- Bilingual and bicultural staff
- Funding Sources: County Indigent Funding, Medicaid and Sliding Fee
- Adults Only
- High % court mandated with DUI or DV Charge
- Services provided: Level I.0 Outpatient and Level II.0 Intensive Outpatient

Picture of Organization



Aim Addressed

- Decrease the days from assessment to the completion of assessment summary (paper work).

What and Why the Problem?

- On average, about 28 days were needed to complete an assessment summary.
- (1) Staff's assumption about requirement for collateral information to complete assessment summary, and (2) no clear program guideline existed about the number of collateral contact attempts, particularly when staff was not successful in reaching the individual(s) resulted in lengthy time.
- Referral sources and clients frequently complained about the long waiting time for the assessment summary.

Changes Made

- Limit the length of time and the number of collateral contacts to 3 contacts in 3 business days.
- After three days of contact attempts, the assessment staff will complete the written summary and treatment recommendations with the available information.
- Goal of completing the assessment summary in 10 working days.

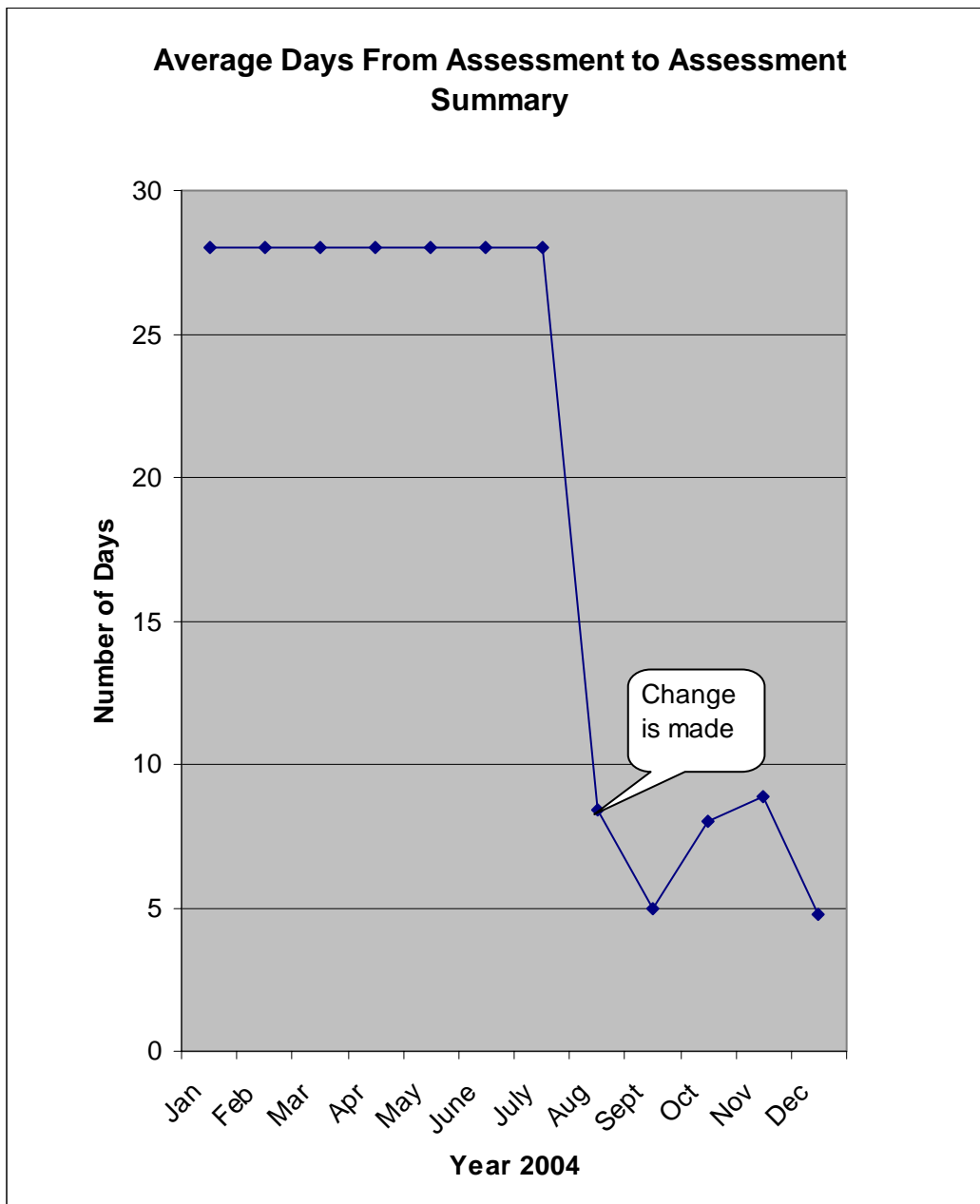
1 Key Event Particularly Instrumental in Making This Project a Success

**Clarifying that there is no requirement around collateral information in assessment and
Setting a clear, simple, reasonable guideline for the change**

Picture of Team



Results



Future Plans

- Strive for 100% completion of assessment summary in less than 5 days.
- Develop a data system that can track elapsed time from assessment to completion of assessment summary through our data department instead of hand counting.
- Reduce time from assessment to admission to treatment

Change Exercise Status Report "3 in 3 days"

The change that was addressed by Asian Counseling & Referral Service Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP) was regarding the collection of collateral contact information as a part of the assessment process. No clear program guideline existed about the number of collateral contact attempts, particularly when staff was not successful in reaching the individual(s). So, there were often prolonged delays in completing the assessment summaries which then impacted a client's court date and entrance to treatment. Referral sources and clients frequently complained about the long waiting time for the assessment summary. In addition, staff's valuable time is spent trying to repeatedly reach the contacts and coordinating interpreters' services to gather the information. The staff felt stressed from the unclear expectations.

The SATP staff decided the change exercise would be to limit the length of time and the number of contacts to 3 contacts in 3 business days. After three days of contact attempts, the assessment staff will complete the written summary and treatment recommendations with the available information. Our goal is to complete the assessment summary in 10 working days.

We measured the elapsed time between the dates of assessment and the dates of the assessment summary completion by reviewing the files. Assessment dates are entered in the data system. However, the date of the assessment summary had to be collected manually. We are currently working on developing a data system that can track this information through our data department instead of hand counting.

This change has resulted in a dramatic reduction in the needed time to complete an assessment summary. Prior to implementation of this change, on average, about 28 days were needed to complete an assessment summary. After the change exercise, the average number of days was reduced to 7.2 days in December. This is a significant reduction in the amount of time needed to complete the assessment summary.

	January 2004	June to August 2004	September to December 2004
Average length of time	28 days	8.28 days	7.2 days

By reviewing the findings with SATP staff, especially in cases where it took longer than 10 days, they reported the following: (1) Staff shortage due to staff turn over; (2) Individual cases where staff strongly believed that collateral information was needed; and (3) Difficulty in getting police reports in order to complete the summary. We are now working on the staffing issue, doing more case consultations with staff, and working closely with the referring sources to obtain the police report before or at the time of the assessment. It is our plan to review the progress periodically to study the results, celebrate successes, identify challenges and problems, and work to resolve them.

Since we implemented the change in June we have noticed a significant reduction in the number of complaints from clients regarding their assessment summaries. The assessment staff also report reduced level of stress and are more able to focus their time and energy on completing additional assessments.