

EVERYTHING UNDER ONE ROOF

Practical Lessons in Building Integrated Behavioral Health Care

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Behavioral health integration is more than offering multiple services in one organization. It requires intentional systems that connect clinicians, services, data, and learning around the patient journey.

FROM CO-LOCATION TO INTEGRATION

SERVICES → CONNECTION → COORDINATION → LEARNING

Proximity creates opportunity. Coordination creates integration.

FOUR PIECES OF INTEGRATION

Communication	Warm handoffs, real-time consultation, shared case review
Measurement	Outcomes, access, utilization, patient and team experience
Selective standardization	Clinical practice guidelines, referral pathways, shared workflows
Shared learning	Peer consultation, case conferences, education, feedback loops

CONSISTENCY WITHOUT RIGIDITY

REDUCE UNINTENTIONAL VARIANCE

- Inconsistent access
- Poor or failed handoffs
- Fragmented communication

PRESERVE INTENTIONAL VARIANCE

- Clinical judgment
- Patient preferences
- Individualized treatment planning

“Health care systems must minimize unintentional variance and promote and learn from intentional variance.”

— Ivany et al., Helping Soldiers Heal (2024)

INTEGRATION IS A SPECTRUM

DISCONNECTED Siloed providers Referral-based care	BASIC COORDINATION Warm handoffs Shared case review	INTENTIONAL INTEGRATION MBC + shared workflows Multidisciplinary coordination	LEARNING SYSTEM Data feedback loops Continuous improvement
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WHERE COULD INTEGRATION START IN YOUR SYSTEM?

Where do patients most commonly get stuck?

What is one thing you could measure to better understand the problem?

What is one change you could test in the next 90 days?

FOUR PLACES TO START

1. Improve communication: Create one reliable provider touchpoint, consult process, or warm handoff.

2. Measure something: Choose one outcome, process measure, or bottleneck and follow it over time.

3. Standardize selectively: Address one high-friction clinical pathway, referral process, or workflow.

4. Learn together: Create regular opportunities for disciplines to discuss cases and share expertise.

Integration is built through intentional, iterative change.

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