

CQL Spotlight on 2020

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2020. Where do you even start? It has been a tumultuous, trying, and unprecedented year. As we attempt to navigate and comprehend our most disconcerting experiences and emotions from 2020, we must also at least attempt to balance that by exploring the lessons learned through adversity and the growth that has happened as a result.

We consistently advocate for this approach with our partners. While organizations should never ignore areas of opportunity for improvement, they should especially be reflective about their evolution and accomplishments. There is a lot to be gained from this type of outlook.

That's what this edition of Capstone is all about. We take this opportunity each December to look back at all of the developments across our organization throughout the last 12 months. In this Capstone Newsletter, we break down 2020 month-by-month and describe just some of the milestones we've experienced.

January – There's No Place Like Home

Starting in Spring 2019, CQL began a partnership with The Arc on a national housing study to look at where people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) live, and what their experiences are in those settings. In January 2020, the full technical report, multiple fact sheets, and an informational video were released to help increase knowledge of housing decision-making and identify barriers to housing decision-making and community relocation for people with IDD.

February – Adapting To The COVID-19 Pandemic

It's difficult to think back to when the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had just begun to garner more prominent national attention in the United States. In a February 25, 2020 report posted on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for example, just 14 COVID-19 cases had been diagnosed in the United States.



Following these developments in February, CQL started implementing changes to its traditional on-site services like Accreditation, Training, and Certification in March. After working directly with our partners and shifting in-person activities to virtual offerings, CQL also publicly released initial guidance involving adaptations for our services during the pandemic. Since Spring 2020, CQL has successfully transitioned all on-site services to being conducted entirely online.

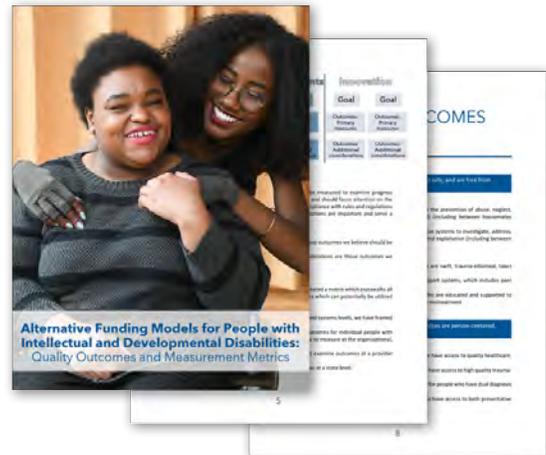
March – CQL Launches A New Website

In March 2020, CQL released a new website with enhanced features, functionality, navigation, and design. It is transforming the way people access information related to CQL and the human services field. Some key additions included a robust resources library, an archive of our research articles, and easier ways to learn about our tools - like through our Personal Outcome Measures® landing page.

April – Goals, Outcomes, And Metrics For Quality LTSS

Over the last couple years an IDD MLTSS Workgroup, comprised of dozens of thought leaders, held symposiums to develop a common understanding of value-based quality measures for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Released in April, the latest report is titled 'Alternative Funding Models for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Quality Outcomes and Measurement Metrics'. The report includes recommendations regarding goals and outcomes for managed long-term services and supports (LTSS) and people with IDD, as well as existing metrics to measure outcomes at individual, provider, payer, and state levels.



May – Using the Personal Outcome Measures® For Person-Centered Planning

We published the Capstone Newsletter edition 'Person-Centered Planning & The Personal Outcome Measures®' in May 2020, which was our most popular Capstone of the year. Authored by CQL staff members Elizabeth Sites and Carli Friedman, the newsletter focused on how the Personal Outcome Measures® can be used to inform a truly person-centered plan. To date, that edition of Capstone has been viewed more than 1,200 times on CQL's website.

June – Disability Research Mentorship Program

In June 2020, CQL announced the 'Disability Research Mentorship Program for Black Graduate Students,' which aims to support Black students and provide guidance about disability research and publication. After a months-long review process, CQL selected the first set of students as part of the 2020 cohort.

July – Ongoing Staff Development Makes An Impact

While CQL conducts many important webinars each year, the most popular presentation of 2020 was 'Ongoing Staff Development in Disability Services' in July 2020. On the first day when we publicly promoted the webinar there were more than 340 registrants, with more than 600 people ultimately signing up to participate in the presentation. This webinar covered recent research about the impact of ongoing staff development as well as best practices for implementation.

August – POM Interviews In A Virtual World

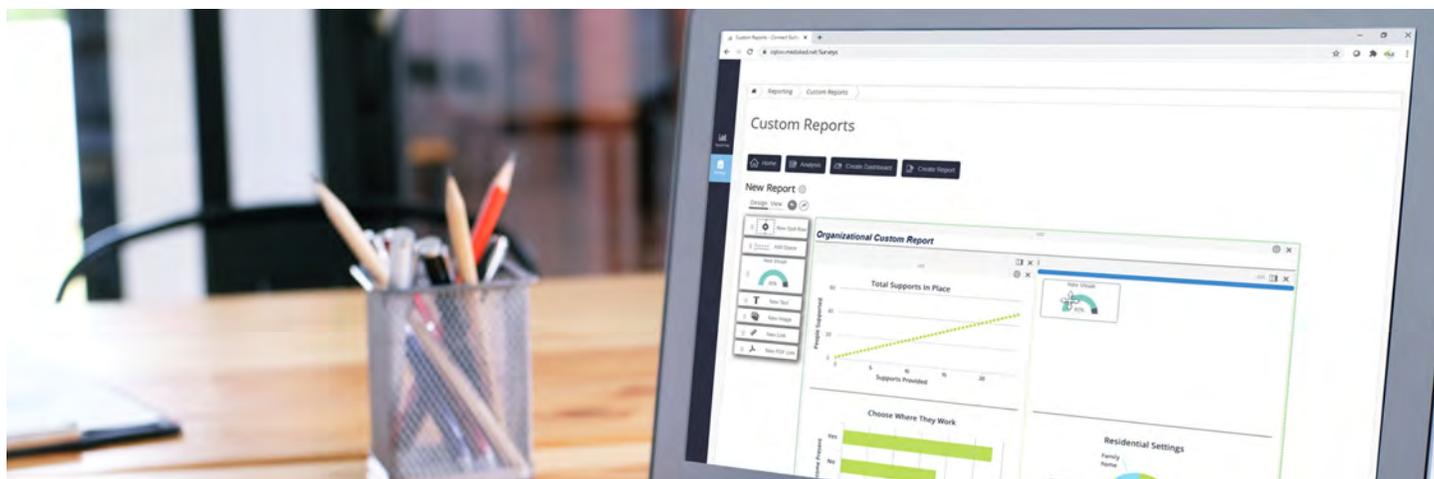
CQL developed various resources to support people in their application of the Personal Outcome Measures® throughout the year. One of the most significant – especially in the midst of COVID-19 – is the guide ‘Personal Outcome Measures® Virtual Interview Tips.’ Published in August 2020, it provides tips and information for completing Personal Outcome Measures® interviews when using online platforms.

September – Recognizing DSPs All Year Long

National Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week occurs every September. It’s a time for the human services field to express gratitude and appreciation for this essential workforce. Most often organizations, people receiving services, and others hand out awards, cater lunches, deliver prizes, and more, all to say “thank you” to DSPs. In September 2020, CQL and NADSP partnered on a campaign to highlight programs that make a meaningful impact on DSPs beyond just National DSP Recognition Week. Whether it’s establishing career ladders or enhanced benefits for DSPs, the campaign helped organizations learn about long-lasting initiatives they might be able to introduce at their agency.

October – An Extensive Upgrade To CQL’s PORTAL Data System

In October 2020, CQL released a fully revamped PORTAL Data System with a simplified menu structure, intuitive design, and brand new capabilities. Through the updated platform, users can now collect, access, and analyze data like never before.



PORTAL incorporates data from CQL’s internationally-recognized tools, the Personal Outcome Measures® and Basic Assurances®. It is used to gather and evaluate data about personal outcomes and agency supports at the individual, organizational, and national level across hundreds of different data elements.

November – TEIS Network Accreditation Kickoff

This year, it was announced that the Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS) will begin the process to pursue CQL Network Accreditation. TEIS, a program within the TN Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), provides services to children ages birth up to age three who have disabilities in Tennessee. In November 2020, TEIS in partnership with DIDD, hosted informational ‘Lunch and Learn’ style webinars to share more details with providers and families across the State.

December – Celebrating Human Rights Month

Human Rights Month is recognized each December, tied to a number of noteworthy December milestones. These include the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Throughout the month, CQL shared a number of rights-related resources on our social media accounts like Facebook and Twitter. We also highlighted significant dates during December, such as International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd and Human Rights Day on December 10th.

Looking Ahead To 2021

It's probably fair to assume that most of us are looking forward to 2021 and an eventual return to some semblance of normalcy. We dream of hugging our family members again. We can't wait to get together with friends at a restaurant. We are excited to see our colleagues face to face – not over a computer screen.

As we hopefully bring back a version of life as we once knew it pre-2020, we can also carry with us some of the insight we gained this year. We're actively doing that right now at CQL. Are there any adjustments to our services that can be useful in the future? Did we develop certain practices that would benefit our partners in a post-pandemic world? What did the shift to online platforms teach us about how we can better collaborate with others?

Let's take some solace in learning seemingly hidden lessons during such unfortunate circumstances. While that may be an excessively simplistic and overly optimistic perspective through these difficult times, it's something to hold on to as we head into the new year.