California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions

Katie A. Technical Assistance Webinar Series

Engaging Youth in the Implementation of Pathways to Well-Being

(Katie A.)
Overview of Webinar

- Key value of Core Practice Model – Youth are full partners in the process to ensure better outcomes for children & families
- Different models/programs of involving youth in Katie A.
- Three models:
  - Statewide Organization: California Youth Connections
  - Community Based Organization: VOICES, Napa County
  - County Program: Riverside County Youth Partners Program

Polling Question 1

Please tell us where you work:
- State/County child welfare
- State/County behavioral/mental health
- Contract agency/CBO providing services
- Education/training organization
- Other
Polling Question 2

Please let us know the nature of your work:
- Work directly with children and families (case worker, clinician, wraparound facilitator, etc.)
- Supervisor/manager
- Family partner/Youth/peer provider
- Consultant/trainer/TA provider
- Other

Polling Question 3

In your county do you have a formal Youth Partner program?
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know
Mental Health Policy and Youth Engagement Presentation

Presenter
Eric Wagoner, CYC Member
Thursday, July 31, 2014

About California Youth Connection (CYC)

California Youth Connection (CYC) is a youth led organization that develops leaders who empower each other and their communities to transform the foster care system through legislative and policy change.

Our core activities include:
- Outreach and Community Education
- Youth Development and Leadership
- State and Local Advocacy
- Training and Sharing of Best Practices
CYC Mental Health Bill of Rights

1. You have the right to interview two to four therapists prior to working with them so that a connection can be built.

2. You have the right to refuse medication as long as you are not at risk of hurting yourself or others and you are at least 10 years old.

3. You have the right to be presented with all of your mental health options, including but not limited to: holistic or natural approaches, mentoring, peer counseling, therapy, and medication. In addition, you have the right to refuse treatment after you have attempted your options.

4. You have the right to continue services with your therapist or counselor if you have moved placements within 30 miles of your previous placement. It is the County Department of Social Services' responsibility to find appropriate transportation to ensure you can continue these services.

5. You have the right to have your mental health assessed by a trained evaluator who has had no personal ties to you before you entered into services.

6. You have the right to have mental health services provided outside of your place of residence.
CYC Mental Health Bill of Rights

7. Your social worker must help complete the necessary paperwork in order for you to obtain mental health services and these services must be included in your emancipation checklist.

8. You have the right to obtain your health records. (i.e. education and health passport).

9. You have the right to confidentiality when interacting with mental health professionals, unless you are at risk of harming yourself or others.

Voices of the Unheard Taskforce

The Taskforce consisted of CYC members representing Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties who represented foster youth who experience challenges with accessing public and mental health services and were traditionally unrepresented at policy making tables.
Bay Area Mental Health Forum Project

CYC surveyed youth from 5 Bay Area counties

- Alameda
- Contra Costa
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Santa Clara

The purpose of these surveys were to focus on what’s working, what’s not working, what can be improved upon, and to provide recommendations to support a collaborative change.

Our Process

- 491 youth were surveyed
- 98 surveys collected in San Francisco
- These are preliminary findings.
Medication

Issue 1: Foster youth aren’t aware of the mental health services available to them
- Have a community health fair in the county where youth can get more info on their mental health services.
- Invite an expert on foster youth mental health and wellness should be at the TDM.
- Mental health services providers add their information to TAY websites to make it easier to access.

Issue 2: Foster youth aren’t given options as alternatives to medication.
- Work with youth to provide outlets for behaviors

Issue 3: Foster youth don’t have the time or resource to receive mental health services
- Create a mobile services that go directly to the youth in the community.

Issue 4: Every foster youth should receive quality and relevant mental health services.
- Counties should adopt CYC’s Mental Health Bill of Rights for Foster Youth.

Recommendations
Local Youth Engagement

Engaging CYC Youth in Local Katie A. Implementation Efforts

- CYC has 33 Chapters throughout CA!
- Find out if you have a local Chapter.
- Ask to get on their Agenda of their meeting.
- Ask how they would like to be included in implementation process.
- Find out how best to support youth attending meetings.
- Organize youth focus groups or develop surveys to gather information.

For More Information Contact Us
California Youth Connection
(800)397-8236
www.calyouthconn.org

Sacramento. Oakland. Fresno. Los Angeles
VOICES

- Non profit organization in Napa County
- Established one-stop for youth to receive services and case management support for current and former foster youth.
- Collaborate with numerous county agencies including: probation, health and human services and education.
- Provides youth voice on the implementation of local programs and initiatives including most recently Katie A.
- Receives funding from a wide array of private, community and county funds.
VOICES Programs

- Independent Living Program (ILP)
- Explorations College and Career Center
- Changes Health and Wellness Program

Independent Living Program (ILP)

Life Conferences

- Goal Planning
- Youth invited supporters
- Youths option
- Youth choose goals he/she wants to work on
Independent Living Program (ILP)

**Life Skills Coaching/Workshops**
- Life skills Workshops based on youths needs
- Individual coaching on different life goals
- Weekly practical life skills activity
- Youth Council

Explorations College and Career Center

**Career Support**
- Resumes
- Cover letters
- Job Searching
- Job Applications
- Mock interviews
- Dress for success
Explorations College and Career Center

College Support

- College searching
- College applications
- Scholarships
- FASFA
- Connecting to Counselors

CHANGES

Wellness Activities

- Yoga
- Hiking
- Voices Youth Softball Team
- Recreational afterschool games
- Cooking Classes
- Gardening Events
- Harm Reduction Groups
CHANGES

Clinic Ole Clinic

- Clinic Ole satellite
- Two times a month
- Appointments on a as needed bases
- Youth see a consistent doctor
- MediCal application support

VOICES Youth Staff

- One Youth Staff in each program,
  - One youth staff lead, four Youth Staff total
- Youth Staff hold one event a month at least
- Activities are youth lead
- Youth have opinions on what activities are held
VOICES Mental Health

- Youth Staff provide a voice for youth and oversee each program to ensure it is reflective of their needs.
- Facilitate youth in obtaining needed mental health services and integrate that plan into their existing programs.
- As case managers we ensure they take the necessary steps to address their mental health needs including transportation and referrals as well as monitoring progress toward goals.

Youth Voices

- Youth have provided their voice in Napa County by:
  - Participating as “peers” in the child welfare Peer Review process.
  - Co-facilitating focus groups that are conducted with Youth in the county.
  - Assist dependency youth in advocating for mental health services.
  - Participating in a Katie A. focus group regarding mental health services.
  - Some of the recommendations the youth made were and the county is considering implementing are:
    - Have a mental health clinician come to VOICES on a regular basis, not for therapy, but to be available for questions.
    - They recommended a transition period for taking medication to teach them how and when to take it so they can do it on their own when they leave care
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HOURS:
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND FRIDAY:
10:00AM – 6:00PM
TUESDAY AND THURSDAY:
12:00PM – 6:00PM

Youth Partners Program
Riverside County
Youth Partners Program

Riverside County’s Mission:
Partnering with communities to protect and empower vulnerable people.

Presented by Keith Diaz and Michelle Wohl

Youth Partners Program

Riverside County Children’s Services Division has a formal Youth Partner Program
• Youth Partners are uniquely qualified because they are former foster youth
• Serve a variety of roles and perform many functions
Youth Partners Program

Some of the functions of a Youth Partner:
- Empathetic
- Mentor youth
- Advocate
- Liaison
- Translate CSD "lingo"
- Provide consistency
- Assist in policy design

Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Youth is accountable for:**
  - Keeping in contact with the Youth Partner

- **The Social Worker is accountable for:**
  - Updating the Youth Partner with new information and changes
  - Open communication with both the Youth Partner and the Youth

- **The Youth Partner is accountable for:**
  - Contact with the Youth
  - Completing a youth summary report for the SW
Youth Partners Program

Youth Partners are also part of the Katie A. Implementation Plan, they:
- Participate in our work groups
- Are on our Steering Committee
- Join us at Community Forums.
Youth Partners Program

Youth voice has helped:

- Direct how we develop our forms to be more family and youth-focused
- Inform how we are structuring our Child and Family Team meetings to ensure that the voice of youth and families are at the forefront
- Remind us to be more youth- and family-focused in our language

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Questions

Please type in the questions box, found in your control panel about two thirds of the way down.

Youth Engagement

- "Engagement" can mean a number of different things and occurs on a number of different levels.
- The International Association for Public Participation developed a scale for determining the level of engagement you're aiming for, called the Ladder of Participation.
- The fifth rung is the ultimate goal for true and effective engagement, but each step is important and necessary to get there.
Youth Engagement

LADDER OF ENGAGEMENT

- **Informing and educating young people**
  - Creates a connection between the issues and the youths lives
- **Gathering information from young people**
  - Enables young people to share their opinions
- **Consulting with young people**
  - Shared exchange of ideas and greater value on youth's opinions.
- **Involving young people**
  - Ideas and opinions of youth are deliberately sought and affect important decisions.
- **Establishing collaborative partnerships with young people**
  - Full-on collaboration between adults and youth.

Youth Engagement

BENEFITS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Direct youth involvement offers benefits to the young people—and to the organizations. Benefits Include:

- Youth gain experience and confidence;
- Organizations gain a fresh perspective on youth culture;
- Organizations develop more effective outreach.
10 TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUTH IN YOUR WORK

1. Recognize that involving youth is a two-way street.
2. Involve a critical mass of youth in the agency’s work. One young person cannot represent all youth.
3. Identify a staff person to coordinate and be a liaison to youth partners.
4. Make certain that youth represent the target population the agency is trying to reach.
5. Choose youth who have the expertise needed and are well supported by local or state organizations.

6. Provide young people stipends to recognize, professionalize and incentivize their efforts.
7. Provide adult staff with the training they need to work effectively with youth.
8. Be cognizant that timing is an issue.
9. Hold meetings when young people are available.
10. Provide youth with feedback and clearly demonstrate the impact of their efforts.
Contact Information

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