“LEEP” into Adulthood
Preparing Youth for Successful Transition out of the Children’s Foster Care System

Agenda
- Introductions
- Warm Up Activity
- Overview
- Life Skills Across the Life Domains
- Empowerment Opportunities
- Evidence Based Therapies
- Preventive and Crisis Planning- Permanency Pact Planning
- Q&A

Today’s presenters
- Mary Ann Hamidy, is the Director of the Cumberland\Cape May Counties Youth Advocate Programs in New Jersey.
- Jennifer Rodriguez, MSW, is the Director of the Gloucester/Salem Counties Youth Advocate Programs in New Jersey.
- Vanessa Boatwright, youth speaker, is from Cumberland County, NJ.

Clark and Unruh (2009)
- Evidence-supported practices
- Consistent and coordinated services and supports
- Developmentally and culturally appropriate and relevant services
- Address system fragmentation
- Focus on employment, education, training
- Peer supports to reach, engage and coach
- Reduce risk behaviors through prevention planning
- Fund and sustain services and supports
- Continuous Quality Improvement process

LEEP
- Life Skill Development
- Empowerment Strategies
- Evidence-based Therapies
- Permanency Pact Planning
Life Skills Group Activity

Group One
You recently started not feeling well and you have symptoms of frequent urination, constant thirst, weakness, fatigue, numbness of hands, legs or feet.

Group Two
It’s your turn to host Sunday Dinner for your friends and family. You are expecting about 10 people. You are pretty low on cash this week and you only have $100 to buy all that you need.

Group Three
You recently started dating someone new. You want to discuss with your new partner the idea of having intimate relations.

Group Four
You are being told by your landlord that you have to be out by the end of the month when your lease is over.

Group Five
You just graduated college with your Bachelor’s degree. You have a part time job but are looking for a full time job related to your degree.

Questions to answer
- What’s your issue?
- What’s your plan?
- What’s your goal?

Education and Employment
- Job Training
- College Courses
- Supported Work
- Employment

YABs
FSOs
Focus Groups
Speakers Bureau
What is a Youth Advisory Board (YAB)?
- Youth organized, Youth Run
- Input from adult supporters
- Provide feedback to inform policy and practice
- Facilitates personal leadership development and positive youth development
- Acquire and enhance skills in youth advocacy
- Acquire independent living skills

What is a Youth Partnership?
- Youth Organized, Youth Run
- Input from adult supporters
- Educate communities about mental health issues facing young people
- Facilitate personal leadership development and positive youth development
- Eliminate stigma by advocating for one another in the community
- Empower youth as self-advocates
- Foster connections between youth to support, educate, and advocate for and with one another

What are Focus Groups?
- Listen and gather information
- Understand how people feel
- Permissive environment that encourages participation without pressure
- Multiple focus groups per locality

Activities/Accomplishments
- Reviewed DYFS Aftercare policies
- Participated in a variety of charity events/service projects
- Planned and participated in Career\Education Expo.
- Planned and participated in Statewide Aging Into Adulthood Conference

Activities/Accomplishments
- Youth Partnerships have conducted workshops
- Engaged in public speaking and education
- Community Services Projects
- Trips to Historical Locations
- Attended State Conferences
- Fundraising
- Self Expression through artwork\poetry
- Talent Shows

Characteristics of Focus Groups
- Promote self-disclosure
- Allow individuals to respond without setting boundaries
- Moderator is not in a position of power or influence
- Comfortable location
- 5-10 people max
- Participants are similar to each other, but do not know each other
Focus Group Questions
- Pre-determined
- Phases of questions that are sequenced
- Most are open-ended
- Move from general to more specific

Speakers Bureaus
- Engaging and Mobilizing Youth to share their stories with others to:
  - Improve Systems and Policies
  - Train the staff working with other youth in the system
  - Support other youth in a similar situation

Ways to Tell Your Story
- Short Videos
  - Video Presentation Example
- Highlight Cards
- Verbal Training Engagements
  - Blogs
- Social Media Campaigns

Creating Your Own Story
- Answer these few questions
  - Where did you start?
  - Where are you now?
    - What are your current goals to get out the system?
    - What are your plans for the next 5-10 years?
    - What would you do to give back?
  - What message or two words would you want others to take from your story?
Evidence-Based Therapies

Some examples of Evidence Based Therapies are the following:

- Trauma Focused CBT
- Parent Management Therapy (PMT)
- Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
- Coping CAT CBT/CAT Project for Anxiety
- Taking ACTION CBT for Depression

Preventive & Crisis Planning

- Individualized for youth/family
- What is a crisis to them?
- Tailor to family (based on their needs, strengths and supports)
- Integrate local resources
- Develop well in advance of discharge and continue to modify throughout service
- Incorporate prior to discharge changes in resources available post-discharge of children's system

Developing Permanency Pact Plan

(FosterClub 2006)

Supportive adults who might offer you assistance once you have transitioned into adulthood.

Who is around you that supports you and helps you when you may fall?

Permanency Pact Plan

- A home for the holidays
- A place to do laundry
- Food/occasional meals
- Mentor
- Employment Opportunity
- Housing Hunt
- Storage
- Clothing
- A phone to use
- A computer to use
- Legal Troubles
- Motivation
- Co-Signer

Permanency Pact Agreement
Questions

Thank you!