Many Voices, Many Partners: Critical Elements for Policy Development

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Many Voices, Many Partners: Critical Elements for Policy Development

• FOCUS: Including the voice of youth and young adults in policy making
Objective:

a) Inspire each team to review how youth and young adults voice is supported in their state and HTI project.

b) Expand thinking about assuring diverse perspectives

c) Learn from the experiences and successes of young adults.

d) Provide ideas for resources available to expand young people’s skills in policy work
Policy: a definition

• A guide to action..... in future, unanticipated situations. Policy identifies the general principles which an individual, organization or government uses to make choices and decision in unfamiliar circumstances.

• Rules and regulations that govern the day-by-day delivery of services.
1. Include many voices in policy change

Multiple perspectives lead to more novel and innovative solutions. The more diverse the perspectives, the better the solutions.

Including young people will result in more accurate assessment of the policy problem and more acceptable solutions.
1a. Include diverse youth voices.

- Different levels of experiences with advocacy
- Cultural and linguistic diversity
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and other sexual preferences and life styles
- Different experiences with service
2. Build capacity and culture within HTI programs that allows youth and young adult leadership to thrive and regenerate.
Help to develop and support the ongoing work of youth and young adults advocacy groups

Youth Move National
State Chapters of Youth Move
Other state or local groups
Benefits:

Gives the young person a role and status on the team.
Gives them the benefit of the groups of experiences, not just their own.
Gives them backing and support of peers.
Individual who represents a group has more influence.
Other ways to support youth leadership

• Opportunities to learn, build skills
• Opportunity to sit at the table
• Background about the context of the issue and ongoing updates
• System ally; mentoring, coaching
Resources that can help

- Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health, state chapters and other family advocacy organizations
- Adult mental health consumer/survivor organizations.
- Leadership groups in other service systems (e.g. Foster Care All Stars, National Youth Leadership Network).
3. Start the (policy) conversation in a different place (Brittany Couch)

Listen to the challenges and concerns of young adults; identify the related policy gap or issue
Walking it back
(Shannon Crossbear)

Describe a families experience and walk it back to policy issue.
Backward Mapping  
(Elmore)

a process for developing policy that begins with a statement of a specific behavior at the lowest level of the implementation process.
Summary

1. Include many and diverse voices
2. Build capacity and culture for youth leadership.
3. Start the conversation in a different place.
4. Consider policy change at different levels

If you start the conversation at a different place, you will be required to think about policy and system issues at different levels.
“Where you stand depends on where you sit”

- Federal
- State
- Region/County/Behavioral Health Authority
- Managed care entity
- Agency or Organization
- HTI program
5. Transition Policy Consortium
Pathways RTC

Policy issues to be addressed will emerge from challenges identified by young people and family members.

Starting with existing reports of youth summits, youth and family driven needs assessments, youth run discussions, focus groups on biggest challenges, etc.
• Asking individuals to join us in the consortium to share experiences, examine research and produce an analysis of the policy issues as it affects young adults transitioning into adulthood.

• Disseminate results to clarify policy issue, stimulate dialogue, propose solutions.
Acknowledgments/Funders

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For example.....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Adult (%)</th>
<th>Youth (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The importance of strength-based counseling models.</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving youth complete access to their case files.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth involvement in developing their own counseling plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth input in choosing his or her counselor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal power relationships between youth and counselors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offering peer-to-peer counseling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing therapeutic activities in out-of-the-office settings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The importance of confidentiality between counselor and youth.</td>
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<td>The overuse of labels and diagnoses by counselors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The importance of health providers encouraging healthy life habit changes first (sleep, diet, exercise, etc.) before…</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing youth information on the effects of taking medication with counseling and skill building versus taking…</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing youth information about the effects of medications in clear, youth-friendly language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing youth access to treatment using alternative options to medications, such as herbal remedies and body work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informed choice and consent by youth for prescribed medications.</td>
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OPTIONS
your power • your right • your choice