



## “Adult Ally”

*What Does it Mean to Parents?*

### PRESENTERS

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**As a parent when you hear the term  
“Adult Ally” in the context of role in the  
life of your young adult how do you feel?**

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## **From Youth Advocate Perspectives**

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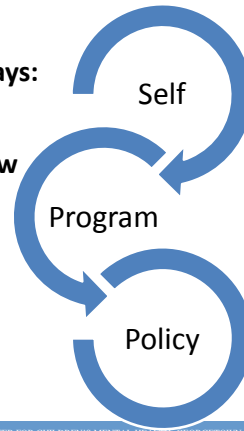
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## Transitions in the Youth Movement

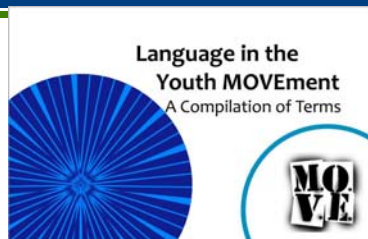
- Youth Advisory Group Convenes Nationally in 2003
- Systems of Care Federal Grants Require Youth Coordinator Position 2005
- Youth MOVE Chapters Start Up 2008
- National Focus (And Funding) Branches 2 Ways: Early Childhood and Transition Aged Youth
- Youth MOVE Chapters & Other Youth Voice Orgs. Continue to Grow...and grow...and grow

## Implications of Growth on Multiple Levels



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## Language in the Youth MOVEment

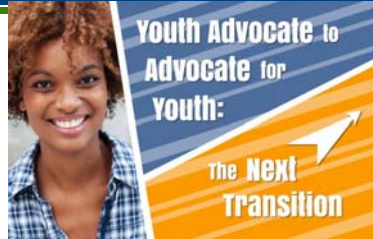


[Guide Found Online Here](#)

- Developed with input and guidance from Youth Advocates across the Youth MOVE Network
- Objective was to identify the language to be used by YMN
- Guide's focus is on the language of youth and youth work

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## Youth Advocate to Advocate for Youth



[Guide Found Online Here](#)

- Developed by YMN leadership and youth, young adults and adults who represented each stage identified
- Objective is to provide a common language and framework for the transition of youth who become systems change advocates
- Supports the transition of an individual AND provides direction for youth organizations to provide what is needed for this transition
- Language choice came from the work to create the Language in the Youth MOVEMENT

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## Oh the Options

Mentor Coach Dad  
 Adult Family and  
 Mom Supportive  
 Caregiver Ally  
 Member

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## The Multiple Roles ARE Important

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## The Importance of Defining Roles

Language **IS** important:

How we talk about things is how we do things.

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## Validation of Roles

Why define the roles?

Validates the role within services and systems

AND

Helps the individual own it

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Language in the Youth MOVEment

<http://www.youthmovenational.org/images/downloads/LanguageintheYouthMOVEmentWebFINAL.pdf>

Youth Advocate to Advocate for Youth: The Next Transition

<http://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/pb-Youth-Advocacy-Guide.pdf>

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As parents raising our youth who are transitioning to adulthood how are we handling the change in roles?

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## Parents as Allies

- Some of the strongest allies that youth with social emotional needs have are their parents and guardians. These are resources created by parent allies or specifically written with parents and family members of youth with social emotional needs in mind.

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**The imminent demise of parent voice, sort of**

Posted on January 4, 2015 by Lisa Lambert

Read the entire blog:

<http://ppal.net/2015/01/blog-posts/4803>

“Parents are unique in their son’s or daughter’s life. Their relationship has many layers and textures and nuances that no one else can come close to.”



**Don't call me an adult ally, I'm a parent. Always was, always will be.**

Posted on May 3, 2015 by Lisa Lambert

<http://ppal.net/2015/05/blog-posts/5049>

 National Technical Assistance Center  
for Children's Mental Health  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR CHILD AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



Parents,  
Families and  
Family  
Organizations as  
Youth Transition  
to Adulthood

Lisa Lambert, Executive  
Director  
Parent/Professional  
Advocacy League  
Boston, MA



## Family movement describes many parent roles

- Parents can be

Parent peer support providers	Story tellers
Educators and trainers	Product/document reviewers
Committee members	Advocates
Evaluators/Data Collectors	Cultural brokers

- Family voice is essential in systems of care
- Family voice is important in decision making
- **BUT**, parent role during a youth's transition is left undefined

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## Our culture loves the iconic loner

- Since the Wild West, American culture has promoted the myth of the loner from the Wild West cowboy to Luke Skywalker
- In this model of the loner, parents have either died, done their job or are remote supports.
- What we need is a new paradigm, a new model.



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## Thoughts about a new model



- There is room for many voices at the table with no need to choose one voice
- There is a lot of common ground between what youth want and what families want
- Showing families are valued sends a message to families and youth as well as providers. Conversely, not speaking with families sends a message as well.
- Everyone needs a team, often including family, for the journey

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## Parents and youth are learning new roles

### Parents

- To listen and hear
- To offer advice with no strings
- To coach and mentor
- To share your experience
- Not to judge
- To back away, give space
- To parent in a new way
- To value youth voice



### Youth

- To take on new responsibility
- To learn new skills and gain knowledge
- To rely on self more and more
- To ask for help when needed
- To balance family, friends, work and health
- To learn advocacy as needed
- To still value family participation

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## Being the “not ally”

- A parent’s role can sometimes be the “not ally”
- Sometimes it’s important to disagree (respectfully) and present a different option
- Sometimes we say we are pleased and proud, at others we say we are disappointed or concerned
- Parents can disagree with the choice but still respect the right to make it – we are not always cheerleaders
- You are still the parent you’ve always been, not the turbo model or version 2.0

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## Culture and parent role

- In some cultures, children – no matter how old – are their parents’ “baby”
- Some cultures value different kinds of parenting styles over others
- Parents from some cultures will not disagree with the authority and ask for a role



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## Comparing the parent role and adult ally

Roles	Parent	Adult Ally	Family Orgs
Create space for youth to take the lead	√	√	√
Emotional support	√	√	
Financial support	√		
Keep adjusting the relationship	√		
Personalize thinking, feedback	√		
Promoting youth voice/involvement	√	√	√
Providing personal history and context	√		
Using youth-friendly language	√	√	√
Value family involvement	√	√	√

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## A role for family organizations

- Family organizations and parent leaders worked hard with adult consumer organizations around the value of parent voice
- Many family organizations foster and promote youth voice and youth involvement
- Family organizations often align themselves with youth organizations on policy and practice issues
- Family organizations have experience to share about engagement, changing policies and creating strong relationships.


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## Important Links


### Evaluation Form

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TACenterWebinarEvaluation>

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