Getting on the Balcony: Strategic Youth Engagement

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Learning Goals

• Build understanding and buy-in to the value of youth engagement
• Develop understanding of what youth engagement and leadership looks like in and out of FYSPRTs
• Highlight and discuss youth engagement best practices
• Establish rapport with FYSPRT leadership and offer ongoing technical assistance
Welcome
Setting the Stage
Building Understanding and Buy-In
Youth Engagement Best Practices
Visioning for Youth Engagement
Close Out for Today
Unite the causes and the voices of youth while raising awareness around youth issues.

Advocate for youth rights and youth voice in systems that serve us.

Empower youth to be equal partners in the process of change.
• Unite members by convening young people and connecting chapter to chapter.

• Identify best practices around TAY engagement in services

• Engaging young people as advisees to organizations, policy and systems design

• Develop resources and training for meaningful engagement.

• Represent youth voice at the national level.

How we do it...
We envision a future in which every youth is recognized and accepted as an individual and a human who can make change — not just treated as a number, problem, or caseload.
• Share one reason youth voice is vital to our work.
What is Youth Engagement?

Building a Foundation

A strategy in which youth are giving meaningful input and have roles where they are authentically involved in working towards changing the service systems that directly affect their lives.
Building Understanding and Buy In
Value Added of Young Adult Voice

- Changes institutional culture and practice
- Can help design and implement new policies that better serve youth and young adults
- Builds awareness and understanding
- Builds self efficacy
- Builds sense of community
- Improves individual and organizational outcomes

http://youth.gov/youth-topics/effectiveness-positive-youth-development-programs
## Foundation of Youth Development

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<td><strong>The Objective</strong>&lt;br&gt;Personal grown of young people.</td>
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<td><strong>The Objective</strong>&lt;br&gt;Increased organizational effectiveness.</td>
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<td><strong>The Byproduct</strong>&lt;br&gt;Conformity of young people and acceptance of the program as it is.</td>
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<td><strong>The Byproduct</strong>&lt;br&gt;Personal growth of young people and adults.</td>
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**Object “To”**

**Recipient “For”**

**Resource “With”**
Ladder of Youth Involvement

1. Youth Initiated and Directed
   - Designed and run by youth and decisions made by youth

2. Youth Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults
   - Designed and run by youth who share decisions with adults

3. Youth and Adult Initiated and Directed
   - Designed and run by youth and adults in full partnership

4. Adult Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth
   - Minimum Youth Participation, designed and run by adults who share decisions with youth

5. Consulted and Informed
   - Designed and run by adults who consult with youth, Youth make recommendations that are considered by adults

6. Assigned and Informed
   - Youth do not initiate, but understand and have some sense of ownership

7. Tokenism
   - Symbolic representation by few, may not have genuine voice, may be asked to speak for the group they represent

8. Decoration
   - Adults use youth to promote or support a cause without informing youth

9. Manipulation
   - Youth are not involved in design or decisions; Youth involvement used by adults to communicate adults’ messages

More Information Available Here
Populations served

- Mental Health: 98%
- LGBTQI2-S: 83%
- Criminal Justice System (including juvenile justice): 81%
- Child Welfare: 81%
- Substance Abuse: 79%
- Runaway Youth Services/Homeless Youth Services: 62%
- Residential Treatment: 53%
- Parenting Teens: 47%
- Domestic Violence: 40%
- Developmental Delays: 70%
- Vocational Rehab/Supported Employment: 43%
- Sexual Assault/Human Trafficking: 38%
- Physical Disability: 40%
- Tribal Youth: 21%
- Immigrant and Refugee Youth: 23%
- First Episode Psychosis: 40%
- HIV/AIDS: 15%
- Military/Veterans: 11%
- Other (please specify): 9%

% of respondents (n=49)
What services and programs do you currently provide? (n=41)

- Youth leadership & advocacy training: 93%
- Community outreach & stigma reduction: 80%
- Social/Recreational: 80%
- Training & technical assistance: 49%
- Skill development groups: 68%
- Non-billable Youth Peer Support: 54%
- Navigation & referral services: 32%
- Evaluation: 34%
- New participant intake orientation: 34%
- Research: 27%
- Billable Youth Peer Support: 15%
- Other (please specify): 7%
- Mental Health and/or substance abuse screening or... 22%
Bravehearts MOVE New York

Video Break
What youth want:

- Choice of how to participate
- Options that build on skills/interests
- Clear understanding of roles, tasks, and expectations
- Support and coaching
- Be a meaningful partner
- Grow with opportunities to participate in the work
- Connection with others who share a common experience
Helpful Tips for Adult Allies

Adults looking to build partnership and better engage youth:

- Be open minded and flexible
- Respect the readiness of youth
- Create respectful and nurturing learning environment
- Don’t over promise and under deliver
- Be supportive and communicate expectation, yet be willing to ask what support looks like
What is the Y-VAL?

- Provides a framework of key indicators of meaningful and successful Y/YA voice in program design
- Assessing allows for a collective and reflective process to better understanding where the agency with Y/YA Voice
  - Promotes a shared vision for success
  - Identifies strengths and needs
  - Supports with moving towards sustainable engagement
- Help young people advocate for meaningful participation and support
- Aids in assessing impact of technical assistance
Y-VAL & Y-VOC Themes

1. Overall vision and commitment (8 items)
2. Collaborative approach (5 items)
3. Empowered representatives (5 items)
4. Commitment to facilitation and support of Y/YA participation (3 items)
5. Workforce development (4 items)
6. Participation in developing programming/program policies (5 items)
7. Participation in evaluation (4 items)
8. Leading initiatives and projects (3 items)
• Is there a shared (written) vision for youth engagement in your agency/collaboration?
• How do you express gratitude, respect, and welcome to youth?
• Are roles for youth clearly defined?
• How are youth able to share ideas with decision makers in your agency/collaboration?
Collaborative Approach

- How are youth engaged in planning stages of efforts in your agency/collaborative?
- Do you meet and communicate with youth in a way that works for them?
- Are decision making pathways transparent to youth?
Empowered representatives

• How are youth representatives trained and orientated to their role and your agency/collective’s work?
• What does preparation and de-briefing of meetings and events look like?
• Are there multiple roles youth can hold? Grow into?
Commitment to facilitation and support of Y/YA participation

- How do you actively remove barriers to youth participation?
- How are youth fairly compensated for their time?
- Do agency/collaborative staff have dedicated time to invest in youth engagement efforts?
Visioning

• How are youth engaged in your regional FYSPRT today?

• How are youth engaged in youth driven, community based efforts today?
Visioning

• In the future, how will youth engage in your regional FYSPRT?

• In the future, how will youth engage in youth driven, community based efforts?
What is one commitment you are taking away from today?
Next Steps

• Continued learning and connection amongst peers
• Access to the Y-VAL/Y-VOC assessments to gather data and develop strategic plans
• Region specific planning assistance with Youth MOVE National
What do you need to consider next steps in developing robust and community based youth engagement strategies?
THANK YOU!
Resources

- Youth Engagement Guide – SAMHSA Store
- #Things2Consider: Youth Advisory Boards
- #Things2Consider: Stipending Youth and Young Adults
- #Things2Consider: Measuring Success
- A Guide to Recruiting Youth
- Other Resources from Youth MOVE National
SAMHSA’s mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America’s communities.

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