Services for Youth as they Transition to Adulthood

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Positive Youth Development: An Approach in Step-Up

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Agenda

• Overview of Step-Up

• Step-Up Participants & Their Needs

• Positive Youth Development Model

• Recommendations for Providers
• What is Step-Up?

– Positive youth development program
– Addresses social emotional development
– Promotes academic achievement
– High school graduation
– Positive transition to adulthood
Program Goals

• Provide psycho-social support & mentorship

• Increase school engagement

• Improve academic performance

• Support on time high school graduation

• Development of post graduation plan

• Enhance social relationships

• Build positive identity

• Enhance strengths and protective factors

Program Components

• Life-Skills Youth Groups

• One-on-One Mentor

• Teacher/School Staff Engagement

• Academic Incentives

• Events, Trips, & Community Projects
• **Who are Step-Up Participants?**
  – Nominated student with identified potential

• **With one or more of the following:**
  – 75 GPA or lower
  – 1 academic year behind
  – Insufficient credits
  – Decreased attendance and academic performance
  – Difficulties forming/ maintaining positive relationships with teachers & peers
  – Family/home circumstances impacting academic achievement
Positive Youth Development (PYD)

• A framework used to design and guide programs and services for children and youth.

• PYD emphasizes the relationship between young people’s strengths and resources and their capacity to live healthy and productive lives.

(Baber, 2011)
PYD Perspective:

• Focus on strengths in the community, school, & family

• These strengths are “developmental assets” used to promote positive youth development

• These assets promote positive, healthy development

(Benson, 2007)
PYD Perspective Emphasizes:

• Positive relationships between youth and adults

• Activities that build important life skills

• Opportunities for youth to use these life skills as participants and as leaders

• Positive vision and vocabulary for discussing youth
Psycho-social measures for PYD:

• School engagement
• Practical support behavior from friends
• Emotional self-regulation
• Behavioral self-regulation
• Life skill knowledge in social relationships
• Life skill knowledge in self-care
Applying PYD to Step-Up

- Adolescents are motivated to make their lives work well and so we work to support their capabilities

- Focus on protective factors instead of risk factors

- Allow adolescents to be producers of their own development and life course

- Need the opportunity for trial and error to learn

- Provide a validating environment
Step-Up Data

- Years of Operation: 7
- Number of students served: 470 in 8 schools
- Male/ female ration: 45% male, 55% female
- Race breakdown: 56 % Latino, 37% African American
- Free Lunch eligible: 90%
- Completion of Step Up: 84%
- Graduation Rate: 84% (graduated or on track for high school graduation)
Findings on Academic Outcomes

- Participants who completed Step-Up were more likely to improve their academic performance after one year, earn more credits than students not engaged in Step-Up, and have higher odds of graduating from high school.

- Significant correlation between group attendance and academic improvement.
Recommendations for Providers

• Encourage, support and empower adolescents to use their capabilities to better their lives

• Focus on protective factors instead of risk factors

• Allow adolescents to be producers of their own development and life course

• Allow opportunities for trial and error in order to learn

• Provide a validating environment
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Youth in Progress
What is Youth In Progress?
YIP in NY State

What’s YOUR region?
YIP Team Members

- Youth ages 14-21 who are involved in the foster care system in NY State
- Adolescent Services Resource Network (ASRN)
- Representatives from the Office of Children and Family Services OCFS
- Mentors: Adults who work with youth in care who accompany youth leaders to YIP activities and participate
Mentors

- Staff members from child welfare agencies
- Offer guidance and support to youth leaders
- Support youth to lead the groups
- Contribute to meetings
- Act as a positive role model
YIP Activities

1. Monthly Regional Meetings
2. Quarterly meetings with Commissioners of OCFS and ACS
3. Youth development workshops
4. Youth Speak Out
Let Your Voice Be Heard!
Speak Out

- Annual Event
- Opportunity to speak directly with representatives from ACS, OCFS, agency leaders & representatives from family court
- They listen. We talk.
Meetings with the Commissioner of OCFS

• Opportunity for youth to be heard by Commissioners and advocate for youth in care

“I am a youth advocate for the 27,000 youth that currently live in foster care, and I love it. I enjoy representing and advocating for my peers. It has been the greatest thing I have ever accomplished.”
Responses from OCFS

- Need to Know Series
- Foster Care Bill of Rights
- Handbook for Youth in Care
- Position statement for “normalcy”
YIP Website
Challenges for Youth Transitioning from Foster Care

Each year approximately 20,000 youth are living in the foster care system in New York State, and about 4000 are between the ages of 18 and 21.

- 20% leave care with a high school diploma or GED
- At age 24, only half of these youth will be employed
- A quarter of foster youth will experience homelessness within the first four years of aging out of the system
- One in four will be entangled in the justice system within two years of exiting foster care
- 2.5% will complete a four year degree as compared to 23.5% of the general public
Future Recommendations

• Adequate educational support for youth in foster care

• Career development and employment opportunities for youth ages 14 and older

• Funding for kinships programs so that youth can continue to remain with relative foster families and receive financial assistance for living expenses

• Full tuition aid to SUNY/CUNY for youth in foster care and those who age out

• Create additional supportive housing options with on-site clinical and transitional support services
Sources


Fostering Youth Success Alliance website
http://www.childrensaidssociety.org/fysa


Youth in Progress website
http://www.youthinprogress.org/
Cortney Lovell

Why we do what we do
What is YPR?

• Frequenty Asked Questions (FAQs)
  – National volunteer network of chapter leaders and members
  – Providing peer-to-peer services for young people in, or seeking, recovery
  – Improving access to:
    • treatment
    • educational resources
    • employment opportunities
    • secure, stable housing that sustains young people in recovery
    • fun social events with an alternative peer group that supports recovery
  – Embracing all pathways to recovery (12-steps, SMART recovery, harm reduction, faith-based, etc)
  – Welcoming parents, friends, and co-workers of young people in recovery in all service/leadership positions and to sign up as a SUPPORTER
History of YPR

• 2013:
  – Originally created as a strategic initiative by SAMHSA in 2010, YPR incorporates in Denver, CO with national staff, Board of Directors

• 2015:
  – 48 Chapters across the country
  – Second National Leadership Conference will be held in NY at Adelphi
  – First UNITE Youth Recovery Conference in partnership with Association for Recovery Schools in Philadelphia, PA
  – 2015 SAMHSA National Recovery Month event sponsor with NatCon, TYR, ARS
  – Currently executing 2 federal grants, 4 state contracts, 3 private contracts
YPR by the Numbers

30% of YPR membership are from a diverse background that includes People of Color as well as the LGBT community.

A diverse demographic of gender is represented by our members: 35 do not identify with a specific gender, 250 identify as male, 200 identify as female.

Over the last year, YPR Chapters and their members have served over 7,500 community members through community engagement.

Community Members Served

485 Active YPR Members

Young People in Recovery currently have 485 members across the country. Of this, 250 are men, 200 are women, and 35 do not identify with a specific gender.

85 YPR members are over the age of 35.

Ages 35+

180 YPR members are between the ages of 25-35.

Ages 25-35

220 YPR members are between the ages of 16-25.

Ages 16-25

Numbers are estimated off of a 2014 chapter demographic survey.
How do YPR chapters work? What do they do?

- All YPR services are **100% free** to the general public
- Workshops offered in:
  - *Employment*— how to write a resume/cover letter; finding recovery-friendly employers, how to explain “gaps” in experience or incarceration due to addiction
  - *Housing*— how to find safe, affordable housing that supports long-term recovery
  - *Education*— how to continue/complete one’s education, Collegiate Recovery Programs, filling out forms for applications/financial aid, explaining “gaps”
YPR in the Community

- YPR chapter leaders & members:
  - Speaking engagements/public awareness events
  - Continuing education workshops for treatment professionals
  - Town hall meetings, school assemblies, community forums
  - Awareness/education events on prevention, addiction and recovery
  - Collaboration with criminal justice organizations, school systems/school boards, community task force on drug addiction/prevention
  - Source of accurate, evidence-based information on addiction and recovery for the news media
  - Recovery celebration events/Recovery Month
  - Local, state and national conferences
  - FUN!
Member Engagement

2015 Climate Survey

Duration of Member involvement

- < 1 yr
- > 1 yr

YPR Members who plan to be involved in YPR in a year from now

- Plan to be involved
- Will not be involved

youngpeopleinrecovery.org
How Can You Support YPR?

• Become a SUPPORTER Today! Register at www.youngpeopleinrecovery.org

• Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and Instagram:
  – Facebook.com/youngpeopleinrecovery
  – Instagram: @yngpplrecovery
  – Twitter: @yngpplerecover

• Make a gift to YPR:
  – Text RECOVERY to 41444
  – Visit our website & click on the DONATE button

youngpeopleinrecovery.org
New York State Youth Run Network

STEPHANIE ORLANDO
Mission Statement:
YOUTH POWER! is the New York State network of young people who have been labeled and are seeking change. Together, we have decided to speak up about our experiences because no one knows what it is like for us better than we do. Through peer-to-peer mentoring, we empower young people to be active citizens who are aware of government operations, their rights and the ability to use their voices to influence policies, practices, regulations and laws. We are young people helping other people, ensuring availability of self-help and peer support while changing systems so that young people get the support they need with the respect and dignity they deserve.
Working Across Systems and Disabilities

* Mental Health
* Special Education
* Foster Care
* Juvenile Justice
* Addiction
* Developmental Disabilities
* Independent Living
* All Disabilities
YP! Leadership

The YOUTH POWER! Board is the guiding force of all of the network’s work and activities.

Current Board Priorities Are:

• Transitioning to independence as YP! inc.
• Leading the Working Groups
• Recruiting and engaging members
• Fundraising
• Guiding the work of YP!
• Advocacy for our Priority Agenda
Regional Youth Partners (RYP)

* Young adults with personal experience in receiving services from multiple state systems
* Ensure meaningful two-way communication between youth-serving agencies and the young people using their services
* Are charged with networking youth involvement on a regional level
* Assist local youth peer support and advisory councils to build, develop, and strengthen advocacy skills

Visit YOUTHPOWERNY.org for contact information.
Members can contribute to YP! by joining a team

**Outreach Workgroup**
creates ways to grow the network and strengthen its voice. The workgroup acts as an editorial board for our printed member newsletter.

**Special Events Workgroup**
Takes the lead in planning our major statewide events such as the FTNYS conference and YP! University

**Action Workgroup – Speak Out**
The Workgroup advances the YP! priority agenda by creating action campaigns.

**Regional Teams**
Each of the 5 regions has a team to plan events and projects/campaigns
Priority Agenda

• Began producing an advocacy agenda in 2008
• Decided to move to a three year agenda in 2013
• Hold regional forums to gain input from young people who are currently in residential placement and in the community.
• Incorporate information from Surveys, focus groups and other events YP! hosted in the past couple of years.
• Priority Agenda show cases the top issues we are working on and focuses our advocacy efforts.
• The current agenda was brought to a meeting with President Obama.
Spreading Hope
@YPSpreadsHope
#YPHope
The System of Care Values

* **Family-driven**: Families have primary decision making roles
* **Youth-guided**: Young people have the right to be empowered, educated, and given a decision-making role in their own care and care of all youth
* **Strength-Based**: Focusing on the strengths of a community
* **Culturally Competent**: Being sensitive to the wide variety of cultures and languages, and the integration of said cultures and languages
* **Community-Based**: Needed supports should be readily available within one's own community
Rensselaer County Example

VOYA
Voices of Youth Advisors
Youth Peer Services

Differing Titles:
- Youth Advocates
- Youth Peer Support Person
- Youth Peer Mentors

Differing Settings:
- Residential
- Inpatient
- Community

Differing “Systems”:
- Building in Foster Care and in the Disability Independent living movement
OMH Waiver YPA Training

Online and in person training components covering:

★ Role of Youth Peer Advocate in the Waiver System
★ Peer Advocacy and Support
★ Group Facilitation Skills
★ Professional Expectations: Confidentiality /Supervision
★ Self-care and support
★ Systems navigation
• 2\textsuperscript{nd} annual took place in June 2015 and will center on the ADA anniversary.
• 4 day conference modeled after the college experience
• Major in Systems Advocacy or Peer Advocacy
• Stay overnight in a dorm
• Leaders’ Dinner with state government officials
• Planned by the special events working group
• Currently seeking sponsors/partners for 2015
Employment Initiative

- Conference Workshops
- Youth Videos
- Adult Webinars
- Supporting Self-Advocacy Trainings
Albany County Mentoring Program

- Career Mentoring program for youth with disabilities who are at-risk of involvement in JJ
- Last Year of identified funding
- Funded since 2009 by OJJDP
- Led by IEL
- Serve 30 youth per year
OMH TAY WORKGROUP

Resource Webpage:
http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/consumer_affairs/transition_youth/resources/

Youth Culture and TAY Videos
TAY CONFERENCE

Collaborators of the Transition Age Youth Institute:

NYSRA

MHA in NYS
Mental Health Association in New York State

NYS Coalition for Children’s Mental Health Services

LDA
Learning Disabilities Association of New York State, Inc

October 1&2, 2015

YOUTH POWER!
We are Young
We are Strong
We are
YOUTH POWER!

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