Youth Involvement in Systems of Care:

A Guide to Empowerment

Reflections

From the Field

Youth Involvement in Systems of Care:

A Guide to Empowerment

January 2005

Marlene Matarese, M.S.W
Lorrin McGinnis
Martha Mora

Reflections from the Field are technical assistance products inspired by stories, questions, and needs of system of care communities. Each document in the series aims to educate the reader on a specific topic, providing insights, answers, and resources.

Reflections from the Field have been created in part by the Technical Assistance Partnership. To the extent possible, family members, youth, and professionals from system of care communities have reviewed each product.

Please direct all inquiries to:

Technical Assistance Partnership
1000 Thomas Jefferson St., NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20007
TAPPublications@air.org

Acknowledgments

This guide could not be developed without the resources and expertise of youth, youth coordinators, and other experts. We would like to acknowledge and thank the individuals who also reviewed and supported the development of this guide including: Bianca Jay; Jane Tobler; Stephanie Lane M.S.W; Victor Damian; Keva White; Kristina Hebner; Angela Pacinella; Myra Alfreds; Tricia Gurley; Eva Dech; Dally Sanchez; Daniel Toone; Nicole Penrielli; Jack Austin; Tahnee Camacho; Mike Friedman; Rachel Freed; Phyllis Gyamfi, Ph.D.; Natalie Henrich, Ph.D.; Laura Casteneda, M.S.W.; Holly Echo-Hawk, M.S.; Larke Huang, Ph.D.; Carlos Rodriguez, Ph.D; and Regenia Hicks, Ph.D. A special thanks to Youth Forum in Westchester, NY for hosting our review meeting.

We would also like to acknowledge the continual support of Gary Blau, Ph.D. and Diane Sondheimer, M.S.N., M.P.H. and the entire Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, Child, Adolescent, and Family Branch staff. CMHS had the foresight and commitment to youth engagement to fund a full-time youth coordinator position with the Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health. It is because of their ongoing philosophical and financial support that this guide was made possible.

A special thanks to Barbara Huff and The Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health for leading the way for young people's involvement and engagement in developing a national Youth Movement.

Contributing Authors:

Eva Dech, Mike Friedman, Rachel Freed, Bianca Jay, Stephanie Lane M.S.W, and Dally Sanchez.

Disclaimer:

The views, opinions, and content of this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of SAMHSA or DHHS.

The names and stories of the young people in this guide are real and the individuals gave us permission to print their stories and quotations with their names.

Contents

Acknowledgments iii

Youth Involvement in Systems of Care: A Guide to Empowerment ix

Preface xi

Purpose of the Guide xiii

A Walk Through the Guide xiii

I. Youth Involvement: Moving From a Good Idea to a Necessary Solution 1

Building the Rationale: Why We Do It 1

Positive Youth Development Approach 3

II. Who Benefits From Youth Involvement? 11

Benefits for Youth 11

Benefits for Families 11

Benefits for Adults 11

Benefits for Organizations 11

Benefits for Planners and Policymakers 12

Benefits for the Community 12

III. History of the System of Care Youth Movement 13

Families Paving the Way 13

Youth Gain Momentum 13

Surgeon General's Conference on Child Mental Health 13

System of Care Community Meeting in Atlanta 14

System of Care Community Meeting in Puerto Rico 14

Rosalynn Carter 17th Annual Symposium 15

New Freedom Commission Youth Presentation in Chicago 15

Youth Involvement Today 15

IV. Advancing the Youth Movement: Establishing the Value Base 17

How Do You View Youth Involvement? 17

Values of the Youth Movement 18

Keep It Positive: Be Strength-based 19

Participation = Shared Power & Empowerment 20

Recognizing and Avoiding Adultism 21

Cultural and Linguistic Competency: Valuing Diversity 22

Valuing Youth Culture 22

V. Getting Started: Hiring the Coordinator and Forming the Group 25

Involving Youth: The Role of the Youth Coordinator 25

Developing the Youth Group 26

VI. Cultivating the Environment for Growing Leaders 31

Leadership Development and Empowerment 31

Building and Sustaining Relationships Through Youth–Adult Partnership 32

Providing Training and Skill Development 34

Guiding Principles of Cultural and Linguistic Competency 34

Learn Essential Facilitation and Conflict Resolution Skills 37

VII. Youth Involvement in Systems of Care: Making It Happen 39

What Do Youth Groups Do? 39

Developing a Community Event 39

Getting Youth on Board 40

Creating Opportunities for Youth Roles in Evaluation 43

Social Marketing: Youth Getting the Word Out! 45

Sustaining Youth Involvement 47

Barriers and Solutions to Youth Involvement 47

What Makes Youth Involvement Successful? 48

VIII. On the Horizon 49

Conclusion 50

IX. Resources for Youth Involvement 51

Youth Participation in Evaluation/Research 51

Youth–Adult Partnerships 52

Youth Participation on Boards and Committees 52

Youth Development Approach/Theory/Practice 52

Youth Development and Civic Engagement/Action 53

Youth Participation in Community Planning 55

Youth Group Experiences and Examples 55

Guides/Training/Tool Kits 56

Cultural and Linguistic Competency Resources 57

X. References 59

Youth Involvement in Systems of Care: A Guide to Empowerment

Lorrin's Story—The Power to Make a Difference

On November 7, 1999, two days before my 15th birthday, I was almost successful in taking my life. It was not the first time I had attempted suicide, nor was it the first time that I had harmed myself. What makes this date so significant is that it was my last suicide attempt. My name is Lorrin McGinnis and I am 19 years old. I am also bipolar.

At the age of 12, I was institutionalized for self-harm. Upon being released from the hospital, I quickly turned to anything that would alter my painful reality, including alcohol and a variety of prescription pills. When I returned to school, classmates who had discovered my whereabouts during my month's absence ridiculed me. I was laughed at and made fun of. Some people thought it was a joke; others were afraid of me and treated me like a plague. There were even a few kids who were morbidly fascinated and wanted to know how I hurt myself, what I used, and what it felt like. I was a 'star.' Yet all I wanted was to be left alone. I became obsessed with suicide and began cutting myself on a regular basis.

When I was 15, I joined a youth advocacy group called Health N' Action (HNA). Before joining I had been through different systems of care and had seen different care providers, but nothing worked for me. I never felt like I was being listened to; I just felt like I was being talked at. By the time I discovered HNA I had pretty much given up on the system, and I was positive that it had given up on me. Joining HNA gave me hope and it gave me a voice. It taught me that I can take what I viewed as my biggest weakness—being bipolar—and turn it into one of my greatest strengths by using my experiences to help other people. Discovering this made every hard time worth it and gave every tear a purpose. For me, it gave my feelings validation, and in many ways, helped me to discover that my life had worth. By sharing my negative and positive experiences in the mental health system, I was able to truly make a difference with the people that I talked with. For the first time, I was able to see value in the feelings that I experienced. As Emily Dickinson so eloquently put it:

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

Creating partnerships with youth and giving them a voice works. I know because it saved my life. November 7, 1999, was the last time I attempted suicide because after that, I learned that all the pain I felt didn't have to be in vain. I was shown that people do care about the experiences that I have had and that they want to help. Most importantly, it taught me that because of everything I have been through, I too have the power to make a difference and to help other people.

Preface

Youth Involvement in Systems of Care: A Guide to Empowerment has been developed in partnership with two young people who are currently involved in local systems of care[1] as well as a team of youth and youth coordinator reviewers from across the country. The guide was also vetted to multiple reviewers including internal staff from the American Institutes for Research as well as Gary Blau, Ph.D. from the Center for Mental Health Services, Child, Adolescent, and Family Branch.

The lead authors, Lorrin McGinnis, Martha Mora and Marlene Matarese each have extensive experience within systems of care. The Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health (TA Partnership) conducted interviews with over 40 youth from across the country and Lorrin and Martha each had exceptional skills and expertise to be hired as the youth consultants on this project.

Lorrin McGinnis is a 20-year-old youth coordinator for Allies With Families in Salt Lake City, UT. Prior to her work in Utah, Lorrin was a youth leader for the King County, Washington youth group Health 'N Action. Her experience as a consumer in the mental health system since the age of 12 is illustrated throughout this guide. Martha Mora's experiences with system involvement are also illustrated throughout the guide. Martha is a 17-year-old youth leader for Sacramento Advocates for Family Empowerment in Sacramento, CA. She is bilingual in Spanish and facilitates five different support groups for teens in her area. Marlene Matarese began her work in the Burlington County, NJ system of care community as a care manager, lead care manager, and trainer on the wraparound process. She worked closely with the youth who were involved in the Youth Movement and the Youth Partnership in New Jersey before beginning her position as the Youth Resource Specialist for the TA Partnership.

Lorrin and Martha guided the development process, authored multiple sections, researched content areas, and interviewed community members on their work around youth involvement. Martha and Lorrin also co-led the focus groups with youth and youth coordinators during one of the vetting meetings. They are exceptional people who were the guiding force behind this project. Together, the three authors were able to gather information and convey the work around youth involvement and the Youth Movement from local and national perspectives.

[1] System of care is defined as "a comprehensive spectrum of mental health and other necessary services which are organized into a coordinated network to meet the multiple and challenging needs of children and their families" (Pires, 2002, p.4).

Purpose of the Guide

The goal for *Youth Involvement in Systems of Care: A Guide to Empowerment* is to provide a resource to youth, youth coordinators, family members, professionals, and other adults working with young people. This guide is a starting point for understanding youth involvement and engagement in order to develop and fully integrate a youth-directed movement within local systems of care.

The mission of *Youth Involvement in Systems of Care: A Guide to Empowerment* is to educate all professionals and adults who work with young people on the importance of engaging and empowering youth. This guide will serve in building the foundation and framework for the Youth Movement in order to enhance opportunities for young people and to utilize their expertise in system change.

A Walk Through the Guide

This Guide is organized in ten primary sections:

I. **Youth Involvement: Moving From a Good Idea to a Necessary Solution**
Youth involvement is a necessary solution to meet the needs of youth and families in systems of care. This chapter will provide you with the rationale for involving youth, including literature on the positive youth development approach and additional information providing support for youth involvement. Readers will understand how the power of youth participation helps to rebuild the community, fosters resiliency, and combats stigma around mental illness.

II. **Who Benefits From Youth Involvement?**
Everyone does. This chapter informs readers of the key benefits from authentically involving youth in systems of care. It addresses benefits for youth, families, programs, organizations, planners, policymakers, and the community as a whole.

III. **History of the System of Care Youth Movement**
The history of youth involvement has followed a path similar to that of the Family Movement. This chapter highlights critical milestones of the Youth Movement.

IV. **Advancing the Youth Movement: Establishing the Value Base**
Advancing the movement requires an understanding and commitment to the values around youth involvement. This chapter will inform readers about these values and how to utilize them in climbing the ladder towards authentic youth involvement.

V. **Getting Started: Hiring the Coordinator and Forming the Group**
This chapter provides the blueprint for the steps necessary to develop a youth-directed group in systems of care. It will guide readers through the steps of hiring a youth coordinator and developing the youth group.

VI. **Cultivating the Environment for Growing Leaders**
Leadership development requires an environment of support and training. Youth and adults need to build partnership and understanding in order to foster a youth-guided system. This chapter will enhance the readers' understanding of what it takes to cultivate this type of environment and build partnership.

VII. Youth Involvement in Systems of Care: Making It Happen

How do you make it happen? Readers will be guided through examples of involving youth in every level of system of care development from developing a communitywide event to meaningful engagement on boards, to evaluation and social marketing, and working towards sustainability.

VIII. On the Horizon

Youth involvement is continuously evolving within systems of care. On the Horizon informs readers about upcoming developments, including the development of the National Youth Development Board as well as focus group studies conducted by ORC Macro on youth involvement in system of care communities.

IX. Resources for Youth Involvement

This final chapter provides readers with a resource list that focuses on various components of youth involvement.

X. References

We encourage you to use this guide as a key learning tool on your journey to develop a youth movement and youth-guided system of care.

Section I

Youth Involvement: Moving From a Good Idea to a Necessary Solution

Building the Rationale: Why We Do It

Positive Youth Development Approach

I. Youth Involvement: Moving From a Good Idea to a Necessary Solution

This chapter provides readers with the reasons why we involve and engage young people in every level of system of care development from policy and planning and systems management to service provision and quality assurance. It informs readers about the positive youth development approach and additional research findings that support the emerging argument for youth engagement.

Building the Rationale: Why We Do It

The population of young people in the United States continues to increase annually. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are almost 100 million young adults between the ages of 0 and 24 years, making them the largest generation today at approximately 36% of the total population (United States Census Bureau, 2000). In understanding the mental health issues of this generation, we can differentiate between mental health problems and serious emotional disturbances. According to the 1999 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) report, *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General,* "serious emotional disturbances" refer to the range of diagnosable emotional, behavioral, and mental disorders that severely disrupt daily functioning in home, school, or community (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], 1999). Serious emotional disturbances effect approximately 5–9% (between 5 and 9 million) of children and youth in the United States in any given year (President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003). In order to best support the growing populations of young people, the systems that serve youth are beginning to realize is that they must involve youth fully in the process, much as families have been for the past 15 years.

"having hope and the opportunity to regain control of their lives was vital to their recovery"

Youth and family involvement is a necessary component in all levels of systems work. It is imperative that as consumers of services, youth and families play a directing role in their own recovery and feel committed to their own well-being. According to research by Burns, Hoagwood, and Mrazek (1999, p.238), "…the effectiveness of services, no matter what they are, may hinge less on the particular type of service than on how, when and why families or caregivers are engaged in the delivery of care…it is becoming increasingly clear that family engagement is a key component not only to participation in care, but also in the effective implementation of it." Additional research has emerged to support family involvement as a vital component to effective interventions. In fact, "Not all the studies show that improvements resulted from the intervention specifically. Family engagement may play a stronger role in the outcomes than the actual intervention program" (Thomlison, 2003, p.584). In addition, consumers and families told the Presidents New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Transformation that, "having hope and the opportunity to regain control of their lives was vital to their recovery. Indeed, emerging research has validated that hope and self-determination are important factors contributing to recovery" (p.27). These findings coincide with the experiences of many young people.

Though we are only in the initial steps in evaluating the effectiveness of involving youth, we do know the benefits of youth involvement from youth, family, and providers' anecdotal stories; the personal stories and quotes throughout this guide illustrate this. The attention to youth involvement continues to dramatically increase as young people, professionals, and other adult supporters see that it works. Youth involvement opportunities help young people achieve positive development, assist in their successful transition to adulthood, and develop deeper connections to their communities and their peers. Engaging youth helps to enhance the effectiveness of programs and youth-serving agencies. Research findings have shown that young people feel more able to control their own lives in a positive way, strengthen their connection to the community, engage in their education, and avoid risky behavior when

they are able to improve the lives of others (Lewis, 2003). Research has also revealed that effective adolescent programming tends to involve peer leaders who assist in program delivery (Fischhoff, Crowell, & Kipke, 1999). Youth involvement not only enhances the positive development of young people, but it also reaches throughout the community and system of care. These are the kind of opportunities for youth that we need to begin developing, cultivating, and sustaining within systems of care. Some communities have already begun the work. Westchester Community Network in New York is an example of the benefits of involving young people within systems transformation.

The first step in comprehending youth involvement is gaining a deeper understanding of the positive youth development approach.

Youth Forum is a Success!

Youth Forum is a peer run, peer-to-peer support group for adolescents and young adults transitioning from children services to adult services. It was developed with the support of Westchester County's Department of Community Mental Health and Westchester's family support organization, Family Ties. The members are ages 16–23 and are heavily involved with mental health, special education, juvenile justice, and social services. The group began in 1993 with a few members who considered themselves to be veterans of the system. Family Ties recognized the gaps in services and wanted to hear from older youth and young adults who had been in multiple mental health services and child serving systems. Family Ties asked the young people to participate in a focus group about their experiences with children's mental health services. Six youth agreed and met once a month for 6 months. The young people described various services, placements, and experiences that differed from each other; however, all the youth could identify with feelings of isolation and loneliness. At the end of the 6 months, the youth created a document called What Helps—What Harms. This document outlines what helped the youth and what hurt them in inpatient psychiatric hospitalization, residential placements, school (special education), therapy and treatment, family, and in their home communities. In 1994, the youth presented the document at the first Westchester Wraparound System of Care conference for 300 providers and families. This was an empowering process for the young people. Families, professionals, and providers listened to their experiences and recommendations and took the document seriously.

The group recognized the bond that had formed and they wanted to continue meeting in a safe place once a month and discuss youth-relevant issues. The youth requested funds from the county to continue meeting and to cover costs for food and transportation. The county and Family Ties agreed and provided a small amount of money, and the young people formally established Youth Forum.

Westchester Community Network contracted with the Health Services Research Unit, Department of Child Psychiatry, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University to evaluate the group. The study revealed that 100% of Youth Forum members believed they are listened to in the group and that their opinions count. The young people were also found to be more empowered and have higher self-esteem: 84% stated that Youth Forum changed the way they felt about themselves. The findings also showed that 75% of young people indicated that they would call another Youth Forum member if they needed peer support.. Of the active members interviewed, 50% were employed and 75% were in school or attending college. Most of the youth (75%) were currently involved in treatment and believed that it was necessary and helpful for success and transition into adulthood. Youth Forum members acknowledged that for many youth who have a mental illness or who are involved in the youth-serving systems, stigma silences them. Youth Forum works to stop the silence and to provide opportunities for young people to communicate their system-related experiences as well as their strengths and abilities.

➜

(Youth Forum is a Success!...continued)

Youth Forum members present at local and national conferences. They are peer and self- advocates and continue to work toward enhancing the youth-serving systems. Youth Forum creates opportunities for young people to be successfully heard, to bond and create friendships, and to assume leadership positions. They believe that involving youth and providing a forum where young people can speak out and support each other will help to reduce stigma for all youth involved in the system of care.

Positive Youth Development Approach

"Youth groups give you a sense of belonging. If you're young, sometimes you feel like you have no place to go. Youth groups help you to move on, start to feel OK; your morale goes up, so does your self-esteem."

—Daniel Toone, Youth Leader. Youth Forum, Westchester, New York

The positive youth development (PYD) approach is a way of thinking, living, and acting as individuals and as a community. As adults and youth, we should expect more from young people and provide them with opportunities to give more and become more. It is important to remember that even though youth involvement promotes positive youth development, involving youth is not only a way to help them to develop positively, but also to utilize their expertise in enhancing systems transformation. The youth development movement was created to emphasize the positive outcomes that youth can create, rather than the negative outcomes that society hopes to prevent.

This concept of developing opportunities for young people to create change is not a new one. The PYD approach has been a relevant concept in adolescent development literature for the past 20 years. During this time, youth development has shifted from prevention (programs created to combat the problems of high-risk youth) to preparation (developing skills and encouraging broader development for all young people) to participation and empowerment (utilizing young people as partners in decision making). The Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Administration (YDDPA) describes the four components of positive youth development as having a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and power (National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth [NCFY], 1996).

These components comprise a comprehensive and inclusive approach to youth development:

- Young people and families need to be viewed as partners rather than clients of the system. They need to be involved in creating and implementing programs and services.
- Youth need to be given opportunities to participate in programs and services that will meet their developmental needs.
- Youth need opportunities to develop supportive and trusting relationships with adults.
- Adolescence is an important stage in the developmental process of young people and a valuable opportunity for communities to encourage youth to move in positive directions.
- Youth development is a natural and complex evolution.

(NCFY, 1996)

Why Is Positive Youth Development Important?

Young people need to be given opportunities that will meet their intellectual, social, physical, psychological, ethical, and moral developmental needs. Youth benefit from hands-on experiences, from belonging to a group while keeping their individuality, and from the support of and interest from adults. Youth also need to develop critical thinking skills whereby they learn to clearly express their opinions, challenge the assumptions of adults, and make sound decisions (NCFY, 1996). When young people are not given opportunities to grow and develop in a positive way, they are more likely to find harmful alternatives. For example, some youth may consider gangs as a way to belong, to find support, and to make decisions. When young people have access to appropriate supports and opportunities, they avoid self-destructive lifestyles, such as that of a gang member, and achieve a healthy sense of identity and the competencies necessary to become successful adults (Zeldin, 1995). The development of youth groups in system of care communities, in addition to involving youth in each level of systems transformation, creates opportunities for positive youth development.

Fostering a PYD approach in the community often requires a shift in beliefs relating to young people. Youth leaders and adult supporters must have an understanding of both the benefits and challenges of changing the community perceptions. It is the responsibility of these change agents to show practitioners, policymakers, and community members the importance of regarding young people as economic and cultural resources. Youth, families, and professionals need to be valued as equal partners in creating systemic change. In order to achieve authentic youth involvement, community and professional partners must accept that they need more than just youth input, and that young people must be actively engaged.

Rebuilding Communities With Youth

Young people should grow up in communities, not programs. An important factor in utilizing a youth development approach is the connection of the youth to the community (NCFY, 1996). It is through the connection with the community and youth development opportunities that young people gain a sense of personal power. All young people need to feel a connection and a sense of belonging and will seek out ways in which they can meet their basic physical and social needs, as well as build competencies that they feel are necessary to participate in society.

Often young people who are involved in systems of care are disconnected from their community due to out-of-home placements and isolation as a result of stigma. Young people who have a mental illness may be faced with reintegrating back into the community after stays in psychiatric hospitals, juvenile detention centers, foster homes, group homes, or residential facilities. Young people who are currently dealing with poverty, school failure, family crisis, and challenging behaviors are the least involved in youth development opportunities (Roach, Cao Yu, & Lewis-Charp, 2001). For these young people, socialization and discrimination have profound effects on their positive development. Youth and adults often react to a loss of belonging by engaging in high-risk behaviors to lessen feelings of seclusion and isolation (Kirshner, O'Donoghue, & McLaughlin, 2002). As healthy relationships between people dissipate, communities begin to fall apart resulting in a greater chance of violence and crime. One way to rebuild communities is to support youth, families, and community resources simultaneously so that the core problem, and not just its symptoms of the problem, can be treated.

The development of youth groups for young people in systems of care that are grounded in the community will foster a sense of connectedness. Allowing opportunities for youth to communicate about the barriers they have faced often helps them to move forward in positive ways. These groups may also help young people deal with issues of race, gender, sexuality, and religious differences in order to better understand each other's experiences. Talking openly and honestly about power, identity, adultism, control, and experiences within the system will help change attitudes relating to youth, youth perceptions of adults, and youth serving systems (Mohamed & Wheeler, 2001).

In order to rebuild a community, all community members must be seen as equal partners in the rebuilding process. The "community as partners" approach empowers members of the community – youth, families, and community supporters – to become active in making positive changes

in their neighborhoods (Kirshner et al., 2002). When an empowered community creates change, the community becomes a safe and supportive environment for youth to learn and develop new skills. These new skills can be developed through positive participation in community-building activities, which in turn create appreciation and public awareness of youth contribution.

The PYD approach requires that the community view youth contribution and partnering as an important investment in the future of the community. The youth development-community empowerment approach engages youth in activities that give them the opportunity to learn new skills and grow while simultaneously encouraging positive relationships that root them in the community (NCFY, 1996). Youth involvement and engagement is the foundation for rebuilding the community.

PYD Framework Fits in Systems of Care

- Youth development requires partnership.
- Youth and the community must share a common vision in order to implement a youth development approach.
- Organizational changes may be necessary when implementing a youth development approach.
- Youth groups need to partner with adults in creating evaluation indicators for youth development.
- Youth groups need to promote a positive image of youth in the community.
- Youth groups need to educate policymakers, providers, communities, and families.

The goal of system of care communities is to create transformation within the children's mental health system. Authentic transformation creates structural and philosophical change. Youth leaders, consumers, coordinators, and adult supports are all a part of system reform. The role of youth and youth coordinators is to foster youth development and involvement within their own group as well as throughout the community. However, given these fundamental principles, each youth organization is going to use a different model. The PYD approach emphasizes the importance of addressing the strengths, needs, and resources of individual communities in order to build the most appropriate framework. Family support, individual personality, socioeconomic status, access to education and opportunities, gender, physical capacity, and racial or ethnic background contribute to the development of young people and affect the types of contributions that youth are able to bring to their communities (NCFY, 1996). For example, while one young person may be able to advocate for youth through public speaking, another may express him or herself more effectively through art or writing. Thus, different youth development approaches are more effective for different youth. It is important to remember that youth development is contextual, not linear.

PYD Approach and Resiliency

Resiliency is also an important component in the positive development of young people. Why do some youth "make it" and become successful? Care and support, high expectations, and opportunities to participate help young people to become more resilient when faced with challenging life experiences. Young people who develop problem-solving skills, have positive relationships with adults, and have a sense of social competence, safety, identity, autonomy, purpose, respect, and future often have the ability to bounce back from adversity (Bernard, 1991). Resilience is a product of trusting relationships, internal strengths, skills in interpersonal relationships, and the ability to problem solve. Faith and self-esteem are also crucial in building resiliency in young people (Institute for Mental Health Initiatives, 1999). Having a sense of belonging and purpose, as well as resiliency, often allows young people to overcome the barriers that they face due to the stigma of having a mental illness.

Cloteal Norman is a youth advocate from the Youth Task Force in San Francisco, CA. This 20-year-old African American leader survived the murders of four of her siblings, drugs and violence on the streets, and experienced

over 10 years of therapy. She is a shining example of the resiliency of the young people involved in systems of care. Below is a poem written and presented by Cloteal at the Federal National Partnership for the Transformation of Children's Mental Health Care Meeting on November 22, 2004 to key leadership in the Federal government and national organizations.

My Ghetto, My Community

By Cloteal Norman

The ghetto…
Look at it rise
Listen to our cries
Look at the streets
They think they got us beat
Mind games played
People hanging around in a daze
Bagging up rocks
And hustling on street blocks
Hey, watch out here come the cops
Who really cares…
Who's really there?
You look at our clothes
But you should really look at our souls
Hurt
Sorrow
Stuck thinking there is no tomorrow
Anger one of our most common pains
Police knowing us one by one
Each by name
WHAT A SHAME!
What about the different systems
Juvenile justice
But what is really justified
How our lives compare to books
Mental health
Ha!
Most therapists seem to be crooks
Special education
What's really changing
Foster Care/Group homes
Yeah right,
You end up feeling all alone
Let's flip it
Let me tell you what the media doesn't see
I'm a representative of the class of
Two double O three (2003)
Graduated on May 21st with a 3.95 (GPA)
Now check me out and say that GPA isn't high
Three siblings dead
I've been raped
Molested
Abused
Misused
Remember being scared
From mama being sick
Thinking
Somebody help us now
Praying to God
Never being lost
But always found
Working everyday
Knowing the Lord always makes a way
Thinking no matter if people discriminate against
Or hate me
Because it doesn't make or break me
I quit selling dope
I quit hanging out
I quit fighting
I quit playing church
So now I am more real
I'm working
Towards telling people
Exactly how I feel
But all in all
Look at me
I'm no longer a statistic of society
Look at my ghetto so frequently talked about
Society talks about us
People pass by
Instead of helping us
But I rose above
I think beyond these earthly things
Like heaven
A place where I want to be
Look at me and my community
I'm a product of this "ghetto society"
Only because the Lord always looks out for me
He's the reason for my success in this ghetto society
So remember
That something good
Can come from the hood.

Countering Stigma With the PYD Approach

Lorrin's Story—The Sting of Stigma

Growing up, I experienced a great deal of stigma because of my mental illness. When I was institutionalized for the first time in sixth grade, I had to deal with my peers calling me crazy and taunting me about my failed suicide attempt when I returned to school. Many people were afraid of me and no longer cared to associate with me. There were others who simply chose to avoid me because they didn't know what to say. As I grew older, the stigma I endured in my life continued to increase along with the labels placed on me. I had people call me crazy and selfish. Some people accused me of being weak and encouraged me to "toughen up." I can't even count how many times I was told to "just snap out of it." I once had a boyfriend ask one of his friends, "What do you think it would be like to date somebody who is bipolar?" His curiosity stemmed from the stigma he had been taught about mental illness; the stigma that says that we are completely different from everybody else—a separate species even. And often I felt just like that. My involvement in the youth advocacy group I joined helped me to understand where the stigma I had felt all my life came from and how I could combat it.

A component of authentic youth involvement and engagement is understanding and combating stigma in the lives of young people. Many people deal with some type of stigma whether it is private, social, or even academic, but most do not face this on a regular basis. Unfortunately, this is not true for many youth who have a mental illness. Being a teenager is difficult enough, but having to deal with the stereotypes and stigma of having a mental illness makes it that much more challenging. In addition to adjusting to adolescence and trying to maintain stability and personal safety, young people with a serious emotional disorder are faced with the task of proving that they are people of worth, intelligence, and strength.

The stigma of mental health is closely associated with young people's feelings of isolation and being marginalized. The final report of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health describes stigma as "a pervasive barrier to understanding the gravity of mental illness and the importance of mental health" (President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003, p.20). Often, individuals do not recognize their own symptoms of mental illness, and when they do, the stigma prevents them from seeking treatment. The stigma against mental illness has become so pervasive that many young people would rather be labeled as substance abusers or juvenile delinquents than as being mentally ill, according to Lorrin McGinnis' experience. Being labeled as either a substance abuser or juvenile delinquent gives the illusion of control, whereas having a mental illness is not a choice but a medical illness. Many people do not recognize mental illness as a true illness; it is often perceived to be a personal weakness or a choice rather than a physiological disease. This stigma continues to effect youth within the education system.

Schools are supposed to be safe institutions where young people go to receive an education free from discrimination and stigma. However, many youth with a mental illness receive the "bad kid" label at school. When a young person is perceived to be struggling, the teacher will often increase discipline, focusing on the youth's negative behaviors rather than providing praise for his or her positive behaviors. This can lead to the reinforcement of a negative self-image, increased insecurities, and amplify feelings that the young person may already be experiencing in his or her life. Eventually, many youth are expelled or drop out because the school systems are not trained to reach out and to understand how mental illness affects young people. Of children with serious emotional/behavioral disorders, 50% drop out of high school, compared to 30% of students with other disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

Without individualized, tailored care, many youth are unable to be successful in completing their education. This is not a reflection of their intelligence. Partnering with youth to establish an individualized plan of care that would include

setting realistic goals and adjusting assignments or time limits to comply with individual youth's emotional needs is an important way to help them be successful in completing their school work and attending classes.

The most painful form of stigma that youth deal with is social stigma. The media and entertainment industries continually endorse stereotypes of mental illness. People with mental illness have been portrayed as being crazy, dangerous, stupid, slow, dependent, selfish, and unable to positively contribute to society. These labels reinforce the insecurities that many youth may already have, often leading to isolation and a further disconnection from society. Young people may refuse to seek support because they fear being judged. Thus, it is important for adults, professionals, and youth to use a strength-based approach in working with young people rather than a deficit-based focus. All too often, young people are criticized for their weaknesses rather than being praised for their strengths and potential. These criticisms are given at a time when young people feel unattached to society and feel that they no longer belong to it.

The development of youth groups and youth involvement is a step toward decreasing stigma. Young people are the professionals when it comes to their lives. Adults may have a degree in psychology or social work and have read about the subject, but young people live it. They know what it is like to be depressed and suicidal; to be living on the streets; to be dealing and using drugs; to drop out of school; to be locked up, institutionalized, and hospitalized; to lose friends through suicide and acts of violence; to be laughed at, patronized, and tokenized; and to have survived. Youth involvement and engagement is a way of acknowledging that young people are able to positively contribute to society. Youth groups create a partnership with young people that shows them that their illness is a strength, which helps youth create change. Encouraging young people to share their stories and advocate for themselves and other people will simultaneously empower them while decreasing the stigma and isolation that surrounds them.

Martha's Story—Overcoming Challenges and Creating Change

My name is Martha. I'm 17 years old and I'm from Sacramento, California. I moved to Sacramento about 5 years ago from the Bay Area. I started my first year of high school in Sacramento, that's when all my problems started. I was the new girl, so I had no friends. Everyone already had their little crews and didn't want to be friendly with the new Latina girl. The school I attended was mostly upper-class White kids. As time went by I slowly made friends, but the only people who would accept me were the kids who did drugs and skipped school. After awhile, I just stopped going to school and I started doing drugs. Once my parents found out, I ran away from home. I ran away because I was so upset with myself—I couldn't believe what I was doing to myself. I felt like I had to leave home for awhile because I was lost. I didn't know who I was anymore. I was feeling lost and hopeless. There was so much I was feeling and I didn't know why I was feeling like it. I was so scared. Finally after a week away from home, my mom found me.

When my mom found me, the police told my mom to take me to a place called The Neighborhood Alternative Center, where all the runaways go. On the way there my mom was yelling at me. I was so frustrated because it made me feel like she didn't even care that I was gone, so I tried to jump out the car while she was driving. She called the police and they took me to a local mental health hospital. Going to that hospital is what made my whole family wake up and realize that I had a problem and I needed help. At the time I was 14 years old. I didn't know that they had a mental health hospital. It was all new to me. When I finally saw the doctor and he went over with me and my family about me being depressed, I had no clue what he was talking about. I knew nothing about mental health. I just thought

➜

(Martha's Story—Overcoming Challenges and Creating Change...continued)

it was normal to feel the way I did. Soon after I was released from the hospital, I was connected with a youth advocate named Shannon. She was an advocate for the Sacramento Advocates for Family Empowerment (SAFE) program. Once I met Shannon, I decided to make a change in my life. Shannon helped me get back on track with school and my family life. She also helped my family and me understand more about mental health and the whole system overall.

After a few months went by I was tired of going to the same youth group every Tuesday, so I had asked Shannon how we could have other groups with different kids. So that's what we did. After a year went by, we had started two groups—a girls' discussion group at the probation center and a boys' activity group at the family court house. Once I turned 16, Shannon finally turned the job over to me because she started medical school. I've been working with the SAFE program for a year now and we have five youth groups that are running right now and are very successful and so many youth who have come a long way. The other groups that we have are a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning; Anger Management; and Teen Support, and the Youth Advisory Council.

If it wasn't for the SAFE Program, I don't know where I would be right now. In March of 2004 my boyfriend committed suicide. At the time, I was working with the SAFE program and also with the Sacramento system of care, the OASIS Project. If I didn't have all this work to keep me busy and all the great people to help me get through this, I don't know where I would be right now. I think that youth today just need that one person to make a difference in their life.

Section II

Who Benefits From Youth Involvement?

Benefits for Youth

Benefits for Families

Benefits for Adults

Benefits for Organizations

Benefits for Planners and Policymakers

Benefits for the Community

II. Who Benefits From Youth Involvement?

Everyone does! Youth, families, adults, organizations, policymakers, and communities as a whole benefit when young people have a voice that is listened to, respected, and utilized within systems of care. Youth engagement can assist in a successful transition to adulthood by providing training and opportunities such as budgeting, public speaking, program development, and peer advocacy. Young people are able to learn and enhance their skill sets in supportive environments. The entire system of care community benefits from the knowledge and abilities of these young people.

Benefits for Youth

Involvement helps youth to:

- Understand the community in a different way
- Make friends
- Have a support group of people who "get them"
- Create a positive change in their community
- Develop new skills and knowledge
- Reframe their personal identities from an "SED kid" to a leader and change agent
- See themselves reflected from peers and family members in a positive light
- Develop confidence and strengthen their sense of pride, identity, and self-esteem
- Create a better system that will help themselves and others
- Have their voice heard and utilized

Benefits for Families

Youth engagement helps families to:

- See their sibling or child evolve into a leader with competencies and a sense of belonging, self-advocacy, and independence skills
- See that their children are resilient
- View the youth as a model for the family for utilizing mental illness as a strength
- Become more strength-based as they see the youth growing and becoming change agents
- Gain relief and respite from caregiving
- See that the youth has the ability to connect with peers and have sustained relationships

Benefits for Adults

Youth engagement helps adults to:

- Experience young people's competence
- View youth as legitimate and essential contributors to the organizational decision-making process
- Feel more effective, confident, and competent in their work with youth and the work of youth
- Gain a stronger sense of community connectedness

Benefits for Organizations

Organizations and staff also benefit from involving young people in decision-making opportunities. In a study conducted by the National 4-H Council (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, 2000), researchers found that youth involvement in organizational decisions helps in a variety of ways. Youth engagement helps organizations:

- Bring clarity to their mission
- Improve adult staff involvement
- Enhance their responsiveness to the community
- Strengthen their commitment to the work
- Raise funds

➜

(Benefits for Organizations...continued)

- Better meet the needs of young people when they understand youth
- Enhance the commitment and energy of adults
- Embed youth involvement principles in the organization practices
- View the importance and benefits of involving a diverse community in decision making
- Generate increased creativity
- Bring underrepresented groups into organizational decision making

Benefits for Planners and Policymakers

Planners and policymakers benefit from youth involvement and can utilize the expertise of young people to enhance youth-serving systems.

Youth involvement helps planners and policymakers:

- Develop a better understanding of the needs and issues of the youth population they serve
- Gain a different perspective of youth experiences with multisystem involvement
- Develop systems that are more creative and better meet the needs of children and families
- Know what works and does not work based on real-world youth experience

Benefits for the Community

Youth involvement helps the community:

- Interact with youth to overcome youth culture stereotypes
- Increase its understanding of how young people view the world
- Identify ways to enhance their community
- Generate fresh and innovative ideas of young people
- Increase community relations
- Increase youth ability to make positive contributions to the community

Involving young people enhances systems from the lives of individuals and families to organizations, programs, and the community. Authentic youth involvement means that young people are engaged and have opportunities to have their voices heard and utilized, and adults and youth share power in decision-making.

Section III

History of the System of Care Youth Movement

Families Paving the Way

Youth Gain Momentum

Surgeon General's Conference on Child Mental Health

System of Care Community Meeting in Atlanta

System of Care Community Meeting in Puerto Rico

Rosalynn Carter 17th Annual Symposium

New Freedom Commission Youth Presentation in Chicago

Youth Involvement Today

III. History of the System of Care Youth Movement

Today, the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program requires that young people with a serious emotional disturbance who have systematically been denied the opportunity to share in their home, community, and educational life have a "voice" in each system that serves them. However, this has not always been the case.

Families Paving the Way

Over the past 15 years, the family movement has led the way for positive change in children's mental health services. Their work has clearly paved the way for the youth movement. Families have been involved in systems of care in various roles since the authorization of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Program for Children and Their Families in 1992. The language and values around the family movement have evolved through the years from being primarily child- and family-centered, to encompassing family friendly, family support and, now, family driven efforts. Families remain advocates at the individual level and have developed into a national movement and network of families. The movement gained momentum with the establishment of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (FFCMH) organization by Barbara Huff and other family activists in 1988. In addition, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and the National Mental Health Association developed advocacy movements and linked adult mental health consumers, their families, friends, concerned citizens, and professionals for decades (Cheney & Osher, 1997). Family members continued to become actively involved in policymaking at the local, state, and national levels. Families have also consistently provided peer-to-peer support individually as well as through support groups. Local family organizations, many affiliated with FFCMH, are located throughout the United States as 501(c)(3) organizations and are often connected with local system of care communities.

Youth Gain Momentum

The youth movement is following a path similar to that of the family movement. Youth are viewed as valuable partners and experts on their own needs. Youth involvement in policymaking has steadily risen. Some of the organizations that have helped spread the word are the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, the Children's Defense Fund, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS). Their willingness to have youth involvement at their annual conferences has helped youth to educate more young people, families, and professionals on the value of youth involvement, engagement, and empowerment.

Surgeon General's Conference on Child Mental Health

The Surgeon General's Conference on Child Mental Health was held on September 18 and 19, 2000. This was a pioneering conference where young people were invited to "sit at the tables" with families and professionals to discuss the Surgeon General's focus on children's mental health. Although the adults at the tables were well intentioned, the youth voice was lost in the jargon, competition for time, and other variables that made the youth feel unwelcome and tokenized. That day, the youth made a decision that would change the shape of youth voice in public policy; they unanimously decided to not attend the conference the

second day due to what they felt was a lack of respect. Their absence was noticed. In fact, it left a void. The youth rejoined the group after writing a manifesto asking the parents and professionals to treat them with respect and dignity. Among the requests were to:

- Not use acronyms without explanations that youth would understand
- Not use acronyms, labels and diagnoses to describe youth in meetings (e.g. SED kid)
- Fund and support youth organizations at the same level as family organizations
- Make room for youth to participate when they are asked to sit at policy tables

After this presentation the entire conference became more youth-friendly. At the end of the meeting, Cecilia Nation from Alaska delivered to the Surgeon General, Dr. Satcher, an impassioned plea that was written by all the youth attending the conference. The plea was simple: Nothing About Us, Without Us, which was first echoed within the family movement. Ms. Nation received a standing ovation, and the youth movement has rapidly moved forward for the past 4 years.

System of Care Community Meeting in Atlanta

Following the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health, the biannual Fall 2000 System of Care Community (SOCC) meeting in Atlanta, GA, had a team-building, conflict resolution skills workshop for youth, youth coordinators, and advocates attending the meeting. During this conference, youth also participated in panel presentations during the workshop sessions. This was a well-received and empowering experience, and young people wanted to have more youth workshops at all conferences.

System of Care Community Meeting in Puerto Rico

For the Spring 2001 SOCC meeting in Puerto Rico, youth were invited for the first time to present at both the opening and closing plenary sessions of the conference. Youth also presented at various workshops with their communities and facilitated a collaborative workshop on the various youth groups and their activities in their communities. During the planning process for this conference, the youth expressed a need to have their own meeting room for the duration of the conference where they could socialize, connect with other youth, and prepare for their presentations. The youth and youth coordinators planned a two-day youth track workshop in which more than 20 youth from Puerto Rico and more than 25 youth from the various grant-funded communities attended. During these two days, youth learned conflict resolution skills and team building and developed their personal mission statements and goals. Young people facilitated a powerful discussion on the needs of youth in the system of care across the nation and developed a list of recommendations for their communities and national policymakers.

Some of the most important recommendations suggested were:

- Involving youth in all policymaking and governing bodies
- Providing access to resources and skills to make youth effective advocates
- Promoting collaboration between youth and family organizations
- Building a mutual relationship between consumers and professionals, with a goal of shared power
- Hearing and utilizing youth voice
- Developing a youth curriculum for professionals and youth coordinators
- Developing a national, recipient-run youth organization
- Coordinating an annual youth/young adult conference
- Hiring of a youth coordinator at a national level who has been a recipient of services
- CMHS Request for Applicants should require:
    - Youth involvement
    - Youth participation in all conferences
    - Hiring local youth coordinators

Rosalynn Carter 17th Annual Symposium

The youth's reputation for being experts led to their participation in the Rosalynn Carter 17th Annual Symposium in November of 2001, which focused on children's mental health. The youth participated in a panel discussion with four professionals in which they discussed their experiences and the different things that worked and did not work in the children's mental health system. The youth also had the opportunity to have lunch with Mrs. Carter and to discuss their issues and concerns. During the conference, young people further addressed the importance of having a national, full-time youth coordinator with officials at SAMHSA. The youth also participated in work groups where they brainstormed ideas with the professionals and other symposium participants on solving the issues put forth in the Surgeon General's report. The Carter Center printed a report of the symposium's outcomes shortly thereafter.

New Freedom Commission Youth Presentation in Chicago

On September 11, 2002, the Metropolitan Child and Adolescent Network's Teen Advisory Council in Chicago presented research findings to the President's New Freedom Commission. This committee was comprised of 10 adolescents, ranging in age from 14 to 19, all of whom had been primary consumers of community mental health services. The youth presented a strong voice to the commission and contributed to the commissioner's viewpoint that services need to be consumer and family driven.

Youth Involvement Today

Young people continue to be engaged at the national level in conference planning, youth track development, policymaking, and advocacy. The 2002 Request for Applicants in the Child Mental Health Initiative now requires youth involvement with the hiring of local youth coordinators and ensures youth involvement in every level of system of care development. To respond to this new requirement, the Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health has hired a full-time national youth resource specialist dedicated to supporting the various youth groups and system of care communities across the nation. There are currently more than 40 youth groups dedicated to youth voice in public policy. The movement continues to gain momentum with new and exciting advances on the horizon discussed in the final section of this guide.

Section IV

Advancing the Youth Movement: Establishing the Value Base

How Do You View Youth Involvement?

Ladder of Youth Involvement

Values of the Youth Movement

Keep It Positive: Be Strength-based

Participation = Shared Power & Empowerment

Recognizing and Avoiding Adultism

Cultural and Linguistic Competency: Valuing Diversity

Valuing Youth Culture

IV. Advancing the Youth Movement: Establishing the Value Base

"Youth are a major part of what forms the system of care so therefore we should and need to be included in decisions and meetings concerning anything with the system of care. Our voices can be very powerful if we are heard by the right people. I believe very strongly that youth can make a humungous difference if we're given the chance. So let us!"

—Sarah Oram, Youth Leader, Burlington Youth Partnership, Burlington County, New Jersey

What does it mean to truly value youth involvement in a meaningful way? Individuals may be at varying levels in this process. This chapter will guide readers through the progression of developing and understanding the philosophies and values around youth involvement. To begin with, you should ask…

How Do You View Youth Involvement?

Building a partnership with young people requires an understanding of personal views of young people and a willingness to change those perceptions if necessary. Adults may view young people as objects, recipients, or partners (Innovation Center For Community and Youth Development, 1996). The Ladder of Youth Involvement, pictured below, illustrates the different relationships adults can choose to engage in with youth. Each rung of the ladder fits into one of the above-mentioned roles. As one moves closer towards the top, maximum youth involvement is approached, and a youth-adult partnership becomes a reality.

Ladder of Youth Involvement

Step 9. Youth Initiated and Directed

Step 8. Youth Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults

Step 7. Youth and Adult Initiated and Directed

Step 6. Adult Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth

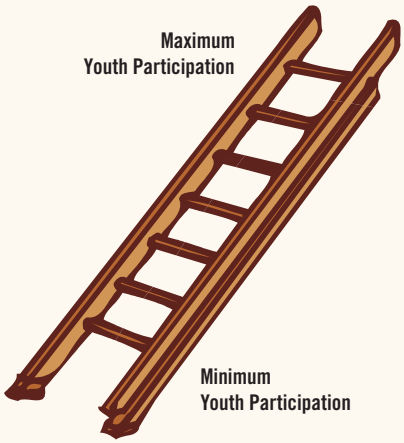
Step 5. Consulted and Informed

Step 4. Assigned and Informed

Step 3. Tokenism

Step 2. Decoration

Step 1. Manipulation



(Adapted from "Hart's Ladder" from "Youth Participation in Community Planning," a report of the American Planning Association Innovative Centre for Community and Youth Development. Available at: www.theinnovationcentre.org)

View of Youth Involvement	Outcome	Steps of the Ladder
Youth as Objects Adults know what is best for young people.	Involves youth in adult-controlled situations at the discretion of adults. Young people's contributions are insignificant and underutilized. Young people maintain a powerless position.	1. Manipulation 2. Decoration 3. Tokenism
Youth as Recipients Adults view youth participation as an experience that will be good for them.	Creates an opportunity for young people to learn from the adult experts, which will help them when they become adult contributors.	4. Assigned and informed 5. Consulted and informed 6. Adult initiated, shared decisions with youth
Youth as Partners Adults view youth as important contributors	Encourages youth to become involved in all aspects of the organization, group, or project. Youth and adults share power and are equal partners in decision-making, Both bring strengths, abilities, and expertise to the table. The system of care is youth-guided.	7. Youth and adult initiated and directed 8. Youth initiated, shared decisions with adults 9. Youth initiated and directed

Understanding how adults view young people will help adults refrain from tokenizing youth. Young people can be involved in many ways within systems of care, but how they are involved and the level of authentic partnership makes the difference. Involvement can range from manipulation as the lowest level of participation to youth initiated and directed involvement, the highest level of participation. Youth and youth coordinators strive for youth initiated and directed involvement. At this level, youth are making decisions, setting goals, and developing action strategies with the youth coordinator who is serving as the coach to encourage and empower youth, not to lead them.

In system of care work, communities vary in their level of youth involvement. The primary goal is to move beyond stages 1–5. Shifting youth involvement to stages 6–9 can be challenging, but it is necessary in achieving authentic youth involvement and becoming a youth-guided system of care. As youth involvement is maximized, adults' roles in working with youth are also evolving, from being mentors to becoming partners and coaches. It is essential for adults to eliminate traditional youth–adult relationships that are based on power imbalances. Young people and adults must overcome stereotypes about each other before this partnership can fully occur. Youth and adults should have a mutual understanding of what the partnership will entail; roles and shared responsibility must be clear (Drake, Ling, Fitch, & Hughes, 2000). Adults, allies, and youth coordinators must be passionate supports to young people. It takes dedication and drive to support a youth-led movement and to instill or revive that passion in each other and in the community.

Values of the Youth Movement

Similar to the family movement, the youth movement is constantly evolving. Youth involvement has recently shifted to youth-guided systems of care. Young people now are not simply involved in a token way, but are actively engaged and supported in guiding their own service and support planning as well as the planning for the system of care. Young people are in the process of developing a working definition of "youth guided" as well as the principles and values of the youth movement.

The five primary values in partnering with youth include cultivating and maintaining a strength-based focus, sharing power and empowering young people, recognizing and avoiding adultism, valuing cultural and linguistic competence, and valuing youth culture.

Initial discussions around the values of the Youth Movement and youth-guided systems of care include:

- Youth involvement is offered as proof that individuals with mental illness can function and be contributing members of society.
- Youth have rights.
- Youth are utilized as resources and part of the solutions in the development of themselves, their communities, and youth-serving systems.
- Youth have an equal voice and are engaged in developing and sustaining the policies and systems that serve and support them in every level of system of care development.
- Youth are active partners in creating their individual treatment and support plans.
- Youth have access to information that is pertinent to their treatment and lives.
- Youth are valued as experts in creating systems transformation and in their own lives based on their personal experiences.
- Youth's strengths and interests are focused on and utilized.
- Families, professionals, and other adults share power with youth.
- Adults and youth respect and value youth culture and all forms of diversity.
- Youth are supported in a way that is developmentally targeted to their individual needs.

Keep It Positive: Be Strength-based

In general, adolescents are looked down at by society. For more than 20 years, the HHS has focused on the strengths of young people as the fundamental principle in youth development rather than their weaknesses in their youth-related programs (NCFY, 1996). Continual recognition of individuals and the work of the entire group will help to build a strength-based environment, as will laughter and having fun. Using the energy of youth makes life more exciting and enjoyable. Youth expression and creativity must be fostered within any meeting involving young people.

Identifying and acknowledging strengths will steer the youth group in the right direction. Everyone in the group has something amazing to bring to the table. It is important to take time to figure out what the youth group's strengths are and how they can be used to the group's benefit. Conducting a strengths assessment should occur throughout the lifetime of the group. Some questions to ask as part of the strengths assessment are:

- What are each of your individual strengths?
- What do each of you bring to the table?
- What are the group's strengths?
- What are the strengths of your community?

A strengths assessment can be incorporated into a youth group meeting as an agenda item. It can be as simple as going around in a circle and having each individual say what he or she believes is his or her greatest strength that can be shared with and utilized by the youth group. Taking it one step further, one group member can write down the strengths as they are shared and hang up the list so the group can actually see, and be reminded of, the myriad strengths that empower the group. Identifying the strengths

of young people who are participating in board meetings and committees will also help youth select roles that match their expertise and interests.

Participation = Shared Power & Empowerment

Authentic youth involvement creates opportunities for young people to actively engage in decision making. Youth involvement means that youth voices should be heard, valued, and utilized in all decisions that affect their lives and the lives of their peers and families. Young people have the ability to create significant change and to cause others to make change. Participation can be defined around three general areas: contact with the political, economic, and social spheres of society; decision making in arenas that will influence one's well-being; and involvement and planning in the community (Youth Council for Northern Ireland, 1993).

Youth participation is key in the development of a social conscience and social responsibility. Youth involvement in policymaking occurs when youth have direct decision-making authority in making public policy decisions. This happens when youth are board members, committee members, or voting members of commissions (Mullahey, Susskind, & Checkoway, 1999). Young people should develop youth support and advocacy groups, should be involved in every level of system of care development from the planning stages to service delivery, and positions for young people on governing boards and other decision-making bodies should be created.

The Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) conducted a study in 2000 on the effects of young people who participated on boards and committees. They found that youth benefited from participation on governing boards in numerous ways. Youth board members reported that they learned how to make better decisions about issues facing their peers. They believed they were better at planning and facilitating meetings. Young people reported that they were more comfortable sharing ideas in a group, having leadership roles, and giving presentations. Youth board members reported being more committed to helping the community, and involvement helped them develop positive relationships with adults. Young people were also found to be more prepared and interested in higher education (YLI, 2000). Young people are the present and future agents of change and need support from the adults in their community to be successful. Developing an authentic youth involvement movement in system of care communities requires that young people are given opportunities, and adult and professional power is shared with youth.

Adults innately want to "fix" and "save" children and defend their rights. Young people are often represented in the media as violent, irresponsible, drug addicted, pregnant, school drop outs, homeless, and many other images that create stereotypical images of youth. As stereotypes continue to be reinforced, young people become more alienated from adults and their communities (see chart below). How can we help youth? The question should be reframed—how can we help youth help themselves and their communities? We do this by providing tools, training, and opportunities.

Young people can accept responsibility for creating social change and often want to develop the competencies and skills to make this happen. Young people can identify social concerns and develop methods to address those concerns. Young people can develop, initiate, and organize projects that respond to personal needs as well as the needs of their peers and their community. Youth development and youth involvement are interlinking concepts. Young people need youth development opportunities in order to transition successfully into adulthood and to enhance the quality of services they receive.

Adults sometimes make generalizations about "today's youth." The following examples are from conversations and discussion groups with youth and youth coordinators.

Generalizations	Realities
They are disrespectful.	They are respectful, especially when treated with respect.
They don't act and dress appropriately in meetings.	Youth have a culture of their own which should be as equally respected as adult culture.
They don't know what's good for them and they're unreliable.	Youth are resources. They do know what's good for them and what works in many circumstances. They have valid life experience.
They can't see the long-term consequences of their actions.	Being involved will help youth see the consequences of using their voices in creating change.
They are always acting out.	Being involved will help youth see the consequences of using their voices in creating change.
Youth don't want to contribute to society.	Youth need to be given opportunities.
They are too young to have anything to offer to the community.	Young people need the chance to make important decisions without adults doing it for them.

Empowerment

Positive youth development requires that young people have access to youth-empowering environments. These environments should enable youth to do the following (NCFY, 1996):

- Feel a sense of belonging in a community
- Learn and master skills and tasks
- Feel invested in the outcomes of their lives
- Give back to the community
- Utilize their expertise from their personal experiences within the child serving systems to create change
- Have a voice and choice in their life planning

Recognizing and Avoiding Adultism

In bridging the gap between young people and adults, adults must be aware of adultism. What is adultism? It can be defined as the assumption that adults are better than youth and can therefore act on behalf of young people without their agreement because youth lack life experience and are inferior to adults (Stoneman, 1988). Comments such as "You're so driven for 16," foster the type of attitude that can lead to undervaluing youth and can be oppressive and counterproductive.

Adultism may enter into the work of youth development, but there are ways to counteract this. Adults should listen to and partner with young people by supporting them, not controlling them. Adults need to avoid parenting youth and should be patient, reliable, and respectful. They must also validate young people by welcoming all ideas and helping young people form their ideas into realistic possibilities. Adults are not alone in leading the youth movement; they are there to provide resources and support to the young people with whom they partner. This is not an easy task for some adults. Often, we place an importance on training young people to become stronger advocates but lose sight of the value of preparing adults to better partner with youth. The youth coordinator is responsible for partnering with young people in fostering an empowering environment for all youth involved within the local system of care. This process includes a focus on the value of diversity.

Cultural and Linguistic Competency: Valuing Diversity

Youth come to the table with experiences similar to those of their peers as well as their own unique life experiences; both should be celebrated. The youth group should respect, reflect upon, and embrace diversity such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, talents, and interests within the youth group. Diversity should be recognized and appreciated and assumed to be necessary and beneficial to the functioning of the group. This is all part of fostering a culturally competent environment for young people.

Cultural competency is accepting and respecting diversity and difference in a continuous process of self-assessment and reflection on one's personal perceptions of the dynamics of culture. Reaching towards cultural competency requires engagement in the ongoing development and integration of cultural knowledge (Center For Mental Health Services [CMHS], 2000). The term culture defines more than one's ethnicity or race—it also embraces beliefs, practices, and values. Culture helps one understand the historical events and the current contextual factors that impact a group's political, economic, and social status in society. This is especially important in the field of mental health, where a young person's psychological well-being can be directly affected by the socioeconomic and political circumstances of his or her cultural group.

A lack of cultural competence can contribute to the development of stigmas associated with mental illness. Minority populations are underserved in the current mental health system where the history, traditions, beliefs, languages, and value systems of diverse populations are often not incorporated (President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003). People from minority groups are less likely to have access to available mental health services and to receive mental health care. Further, minority populations often receive poorer quality of care and are underrepresented in mental health research. As America continues to grow in numbers and diversity, mental health providers have begun to recognize cultural competence as a critical component in offering effective mental health services. It is equally as important for youth groups and youth leaders to understand the role that cultural competency plays in youth development and participation.

Valuing Youth Culture

The gap that occurs in youth–adult relationships is often rooted in one thing: understanding. To say it is difficult to understand another culture is an understatement. Fully understanding a different culture may be a bit too ambitious, but respecting it is something we can all do. All diverse groups have a unique culture that makes up who they are, and all diverse groups deserve to be to valued and respected. Youth culture is no exception.

Young people today are not the same young people of 10 years ago, nor will they be 10 years from now. Youth culture is ever-changing, forcing a constant adjustment by those trying to understand it. One can try to define youth culture by clothing, appearance, or music, but an image of a boy in baggy pants and a jersey with his tongue pierced rapping along with Eminem or 50 Cent is no less accurate a picture of youth culture than a girl in a short plaid skirt and hoop earrings with blonde highlights singing to Britney Spears. All of these characteristics define youth culture, though not all are applicable to every young person. To understand youth culture is to accept that there is no one definition of youth culture, but the diversity that is youth today.

Youth culture is a form of expression. Young people use their appearance, their choice in music, even their language, to express themselves. For example, slang is often overheard in conversations between young people. Slang has been a significant part of youth culture for decades and is a way of connecting, bonding, and identifying with other youth. As a "native tongue" for youth, slang is what they grew up hearing on the playground, around the neighborhood, and perhaps even in their own homes. When young people use words such as "dawg," "tight," or "fo' shizzle," it is no different than their parents using the words "groovy" or "right on." It is important that adults recognize slang as a way youth communicate with each other and respect it as such. Young people do not expect adults to learn slang, nor do they expect adults to bleach their hair or tune their radios to hip hop or

alternative music. What they do expect is for adults to accept these things as part of who they are, but not all that they are. Self-expression does not limit one's potential, and it should not be used as an excuse to lower expectations.

Mutual respect must exist between young people and adults. Each must respect the other for both their similarities and differences. It should not come as a surprise when young people and adults butt heads because they see things differently. Growing up in different times and having different experiences will cause people to view things in varying perspectives. When this happens, it is important to embrace these differences rather than shoot them down as wrong. Allowing both sides to explain their reasoning will enlighten the group, perhaps bringing a new understanding and respect for the other's point of view.

Part of understanding youth culture is supporting the limitations of young people. For example, a young person attending a board meeting may find him or herself unfamiliar with abbreviations and acronyms and need the group to take the time to explain them so he or she can fully participate in all agenda items. On the same note, holding meetings after school hours or helping youth find accessible transportation are ways adults can show youth how important they are to the group.

For some young people, having multisystem involvement becomes part of their culture. This is why adults need to listen to the experiences of young people and work on building relationships together. Youth and adults can partner by focusing on similarities such as wanting to see young people succeed. Both youth and adults bring valuable expertise and experiences to the table, and in bridging the two cultures both will need to listen, share, and acknowledge that both generations care, want to create change, and need to work together to make it happen.

Culture, in any form, needs to be respected, valued, and embraced in a partnership between young people and adults. Building on a deeper understanding of difference will begin the work of involving young people and developing a youth group.

Section V

Getting Started: Hiring the Coordinator and Forming the Group

Involving Youth: The Role of the Youth Coordinator

Developing the Youth Group

V. Getting Started: Hiring the Coordinator and Forming the Group

This is the "getting started" section of this guide. This chapter will lead you through the steps for hiring a youth coordinator and developing a youth-led youth group in your system of care community. This is a blueprint that should be customized to fit the specific needs of individual communities. Initiating youth-based initiatives for social change allows young people to choose their focal issues, lead the organization, and select the strategies to reach their goals. Often, young people use strategies such as advocacy, social action, education, and community and program development to achieve their goals for social change.

Involving Youth: The Role of the Youth Coordinator

"This program has been just as therapeutic for me as it has for the youth we serve. As the Youth Coordinator, I've been given the opportunity to take the most negative things in my life and turn them into something positive for other youth. While battling severe mental illness, I used to sit around and wonder what I should do with my time and with my life. Now I don't have the time to sit and wonder. I have purpose in my life, I finally feel alive again."

—Melanie Green, Youth Coordinator, Clark County Options Program, Vancouver, Washington

The role of the youth coordinator is to be a coach for youth. When we conceptualize the word coach, we think of words such as encouragement, support, guidance, energizing, empowering, and supportive. The coach is someone who is a part of the team as a supportive resource but is not the person playing the game.

Activities of Effective Youth Coordinators

The youth coordinator should be a coach in all aspects of forming and maintaining the youth group. Although it is important to let the youth lead, the youth coordinator should still be present as a support person. He or she should be involved as the youth develop ground rules. The youth coordinator should head off any discussions that violate the group's rules. The youth coordinator should not be a director or disciplinarian. Young people do not need another authoritarian figure to exert control and manage their behaviors. Rather, they need support and encouragement in their activities and guidance from an experienced individual. Youth coordinators need to ensure that all contributions are valued and to emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. They should be careful not to dominate the discussion or step in as the "expert." Instead, they should be present as a resource, a support, and a coach. The youth coordinator should be a model listener and encourage others to listen with open minds. Youth advisors should advocate for their youth, empowering them and enhancing their leadership skills. Youth should be involved in all steps of the process, including developing policies and guidelines for the group, designing the group logo, planning and implementing strategies, and selecting the time and location for meetings. Young people should know about and be part of developing the group budget and share in the decision-making process in allocating funds.

Characteristics of Effective Youth Coordinators

Youth coordinators who are hired within systems of care should have the following characteristics:

- Be flexible
- Be youth-focused
- Understand the various child-serving systems (ideally from personal experience)
- Respect youth culture

- Relate to young people
- Be strength-based
- Be able and willing to build partnerships
- Partner with youth
- Focus on a youth-driven and youth-run process
- Be willing to give up power and share power
- Understand the complexities in the lives of young people

The roles of the youth coordinator should include the following:

- Raise awareness of the importance of valuing youth voice and incorporating youth voice into policy development and service delivery
- Build a bridge between the youth and professional worlds
- Educate adults and professionals on the importance of youth involvement
- Advocate continually for increased authentic youth involvement within the system of care and the broader community
- Support youth and advocate for their participation on governance boards and other committees
- Coordinate the development of a youth-run group in the community for youth who are involved in the mental health system
- Provide training to youth members to enhance their leadership skills
- Attend trainings to enhance their personal skill sets
- Serve as a representative on relevant committees at the state and local levels
- Connect youth with community-based resources
- Reconnect youth with the community

Developing the Youth Group

In the development of the youth group, the youth coordinator may begin by identifying youth. Once young people are involved, they should develop a mission statement, goals, objectives, and strategies that will guide the group through its work.

Identifying Youth

Many youth coordinators get started without youth partners. Identifying youth in the beginning stages can be challenging. Youth can be found in family organizations and schools or through other youth, care coordinators, teachers, therapists, and child welfare workers. A youth coordinator need not worry if he or she can identify only one or two interested young people, because those youth often become links to others. A small number of youth is all that is necessary to move to the next stage in developing the group.

It is important to begin with the development of the youth group because it provides the support and foundation for youth involvement in other areas within systems of care. Young people need to feel supported by their peers when participating on boards and committees and need to know that they can turn to a group of individuals who are all facing challenges associated with creating change. Isolated positions within the community will often continue to foster feelings of isolation within the young person.

Youth will be more motivated to participate in a group that is unfamiliar to them if they are able to see the group as meaningful. From the beginning, it is important to explain to young people that this is an opportunity for them to reclaim their identity and to become empowered to create systems change and improve their lives and the lives of their families and peers.

Identifying Place and Space Really Matters!

The place where youth meet is a critical component in developing and maintaining a youth group. This should be a place where young people feel welcome, respected, and comfortable, and opportunities exist for youth development and relationships to foster between peers and adults (Pittman & Cahill, 1992). This includes a physical space that is accessible to youth that they can consistently count on as their own. It is not, for example, a room next to a CEO's office or the room in the basement of a building. Location is key to ensuring that youth will be able to access the space and that it is centrally located in the community. Giving youth their own space will help to instill a sense of value and

importance in the group. This space is a youth-friendly zone where youth want to be, feel comfortable being, and are not hesitant to express themselves. It is a space that the young people take a sense of ownership in, have a sense of pride in, and consider to be their own.

Creating a Mission Statement—Why Are We Doing This?

It is important that the youth group have a unified vision that is shared by its members. Developing the mission statement can be a challenging task. Youth members are going to be responsible for carrying out this mission, so it is important that this be a group endeavor. This effort is most effective in the beginning stages of the youth group when the core group is small so that the youth can work intimately together to fully develop the statement. It is important for the mission statement to be short and jargon-free.

In developing the mission statement, ask the following questions:

- What is the purpose of your youth group? What do you hope will be the result of the work you will do?
- What need(s) is your youth group trying to address?
- What are the values or beliefs of your youth group (e.g., teamwork, creativity, youth empowerment, a need for mental health systems reform, an end to the stigma associated with mental health)?
- Who will be affected by the work of your youth group?
- What makes this youth group unique?

Sample Mission Statement

To educate professionals, families, and peers on mental health issues and reduce stigma within our communities in Region III; to support other youth with mental health disorders; and to provide a youth voice within our local systems of care.

—Youth Encouraging Support (YES), Kearny, Nebraska

Developing Goals and Objectives—What Do We Want to Do?

Youth should establish goals and objectives that are specific and realistic and related to the mission statement. Goals can be both short- and long-term. An objective is a statement of an outcome you want to achieve that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely.

In developing goals and objectives for the group, consider these questions:

- What opportunities for your youth group will come from your mission?
- What are the barriers to reaching your goals?
- What would help you reach the goals of the group?
- What short- and long-term goals, based on your group's mission, do you hope to achieve?

Planning Strategies and Activities—How Are We Going to Do It?

The group needs to brainstorm strategies to figure out how to reach their established goals and outcomes. They need to develop activities that are linked to their goals. In addition to this process, certain "nuts and bolts" activities will help pull together the work of developing a youth movement. These components include time lines and budget development, funding identification, consent forms and confidentiality, community mapping and stakeholder partnership development.

Establishing a Time Line

It is important to review the notes from your prior discussion, prioritize aspects of the project, and establish a time line. This will ensure that everyone is accountable and that the set goals are met within a reasonable amount of time. You may even want to assign different youth group members as leads on different parts.

Developing a Realistic Budget

Youth groups cannot function at their optimal potential without funding and a budget. It is crucial to develop a realistic budget early in the process. Develop the budget before reaching out to the stakeholders who may be willing to support your effort. Potential funding sources

are the system of care, charitable foundations, corporate sponsors, community members, provider organizations, and government departments. An organization may not be able to give your group monetary donations but may be able to donate in-kind supplies such as pens, paper, and other materials or office space.

Identifying Funding Sources

Identifying funding sources is necessary. Youth should know how their group is funded and should be part of both raising funds and deciding how to use the funds. A significant portion of the youth group budget should come from the system of care funding, especially for communities with cooperative agreements. Youth groups should not rely on this funding source for longer-term sustainability, which is discussed further at the end of this chapter. In many instances, youth groups are part of the local family organization that is connected with the system of care and are part of their overall budget. Creative fundraising is a way to both raise funds and awareness of the group within in the community. Youth groups may also want to ask for in-kind donations of meeting space, office supplies, volunteers, food, and other materials.

Using Consent Forms and Ensuring Confidentiality: Trips and Other Liabilities

Once young people are identified, they should partner with the youth coordinator to create updated, youth-friendly consent forms for participation in meetings and trips. These forms should include emergency contact information, medications the young people take, allergies, and other relevant information. Some groups may choose to include consent for youth to be photographed. Many youth groups have a lawyer who reviews the consent forms to ensure the youth and family's safety and rights and the agency's protection.

The youth should also determine what information will be confidential within the group. This discussion should be revisited frequently as the group develops and changes. The group may choose to create an environment in which all discussions stay within the group whereas other groups may not. The important thing to remember is to allow the young people to make that decision. The youth coordinator can present the confidentiality form as a covenant between the individual and the group and remind the youth of the promise they are making when they sign it. Once the issues of liability and confidentiality are taken care of, the next step is often to map the community.

Mapping the Community

Many youth groups choose mapping the community as the first group activity. The mapping process can lead to opportunities that expand support to another group of young people; identify gaps in resources in the community; or lead to partnering with other groups to create events, projects, or programs. Young people canvass their community to identify and document each resource that they find. Examples of resources are the local community center, mental health centers, or other local youth groups. Youth may already know some resources from their personal experience or from that of their peers. They can expand the process by calling programs they find in the yellow pages or other listings. Youth groups may choose to create "We've Been Mapped" posters that foster community awareness and eagerness to participate. They also may develop a fact sheet of what community mapping is and why they are doing it. The Academy for Educational Development (AED) Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, Community Youth Mapping (www.communityyouthmapping.org) offers more in-depth information on this topic.

The group should begin the mapping process by developing a budget that includes cost of food, transportation, telephone calls, printing, technology, and office supplies. The group may also want to reach out to local provider agencies for financial support if this process would help the agencies identify needs for additional community programming. The group will also need to decide how it will disseminate the information it gathers and should choose action steps to address any issues that arise, such as gaps in services. However, before choosing any action plan, the youth group will need to identify community supports such as stakeholders.

Collaborating With Stakeholders

Youth involvement should be a community value that is embedded in the work of your system of care. To this end, the

youth coordinator, in partnership with young people, should work to create a system-wide "attitude change." Part of this process is identifying key stakeholders in the development of a youth movement. Stakeholders may include community program staff, local provider organizations, elected officials, community- and faith-based organizations, educators, civic and service clubs, and business owners. They should be community members who have knowledge and expertise that can be incorporated into your program. The community mapping activity will often identify possible stakeholders. The group may choose to identify organizations that are serving youth in the community and discuss how those organizations could better provide those services. The youth group should think about how they will pique the organization's interest in learning from youth to enhance the positive outcomes of the organization's work.

It is important to engage a diverse group of stakeholders in order to increase the sustainability of the group efforts. Partnering with stakeholders will create formal and informal linkages throughout the community for collective growth with a base of shared values and vision for youth involvement. These stakeholders should be a support for the growth and sustainability of your youth group.

Identifying stakeholders requires asking five key questions:

1. Who in your community will be interested in the work of your youth group?
2. What are all the youth-related resources that you can find in your community?
3. Why is the development of your youth group important for your community members?
4. Who in your community has an investment in the mission and outcomes of your youth group?
5. Who in your community will support your efforts?

In addition to assisting in the growth and sustainability of the youth movement, stakeholders create partnerships where all parties can benefit. An example would be a partnership with the local school system. Stakeholders who support youth involvement will be more likely to invite youth in for presentations and staff training. Youth who participate in conferences during the school year may be able to use their conference experience for course credit or class assignments. This is just one example of an opportunity furthering a local youth movement; there are numerous opportunities for continual development.

Section VI

Cultivating the Environment for Growing Leaders

Leadership Development and Empowerment

Building and Sustaining Relationships Through Youth–Adult Partnership

Providing Training and Skill Development

Guiding Principles of Cultural and Linguistic Competency

Learn Essential Facilitation and Conflict Resolution Skills

VI. Cultivating the Environment for Growing Leaders

Throughout the evolution of youth involvement and engagement in communities, there are certain areas that are ongoing opportunities for growth. This section will discuss the need to continually address issues of leadership development and empowerment, building and sustaining youth and adult partnerships, and training and skill development with a focus on cultural and linguistic competency as a core value of the youth group.

"I've learned a lot of new things [from getting involved] and it's helping me push towards my goal more and I want to be a better person. They've [system of care professionals] taken time to hear me and help me on lots of different occasions. They have lots of trust in me and that makes me feel very important…they have nominated me for so many things and I love it 'cuz I'm learning and experiencing different things and it will help me through college."

—Crystal A. Henson, Youth Leader, CARE - New Hampshire

Leadership Development and Empowerment

Creating systemic change requires leadership. Youth leaders must continually create youth-focused activities, emphasizing young people's strengths and advocating for experiences that will bring them closer to the community. It is the role of youth leaders to create opportunities for new young leaders to further develop.

What Does It Take to Become a Leader?

- **Courage** • Most truly challenging situations require not only creative solutions, but also the determination to make them happen.
- **Action** • Leadership is challenging. However, the actions of a leader can make future changes happen easier and quicker.
- **Listening** • To have an open-mind, and to have respect for different ideas and beliefs.
- **Valuing** • Considering and valuing the ideas and beliefs of others, even if it means putting aside one's own biases or wishes.
- **Learning** • Decision-making, learning from the outcomes, sharing the credit, accepting the blame, and taking something valuable away from the experience.

(NCFY, 1996)

There are multiple leadership opportunities for young people within the system of care.

Youth can:

- Provide input to local mental health boards, commissions, and task forces in the youth-serving systems
- Reach out to local mental health directors and departments
- Establish youth development committees that are cross-system—including mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, education, etc.
- Develop and facilitate support groups for youth with serious emotional disturbances
- Initiate peer counseling and mentoring programs that match young people with other youth with whom they can relate and establish healthy relationships
- Develop presentations for peers and professionals within youth-serving systems regarding mental health issues, treatment, and peer support
- Establish support groups in schools and other community settings

Building and Sustaining Relationships Through Youth–Adult Partnership

> *"[Authentically involving youth takes] stepping back, letting youth know that their voice is really being heard by implementing some of their ideas, by compromising when we don't agree or understand. We need to let youth educate us by listening and not be condescending. We need to be true partners with youth."*
>
> *—Pat Mosby, Family and Youth Advocate and Care Coordinator*

Building a youth–adult partnership is a building block to youth involvement. Partnership is demanding and requires commitment. Authentic partnerships provide opportunities for youth and adults to learn from each other, as well as plan and strategize together. Young people need a network of adults who are leading change agents and decision makers and are also willing to authentically involve and support youth. Both groups need to recognize the strengths, interests, experiences, and power the other group brings to the table.

Adults bring:

- Age and past experience, offering guidance and support to young people
- Connections to community resources
- Professional experience and connections with the youth-serving systems
- Access to resources such as financial status and legitimacy that young people may not have
- Authorized professional power

Youth bring:

- Uninhibited honesty; the lack of subtlety that may hold back adults allows some realities to be brought to the table
- Unauthorized power to challenge providers and organizations
- Connections to other youth
- Energy, fresh ideas, and creativity
- Personal experience with system involvement

Training Professionals

Professionals and other adults may provide additional support in partnering with young people. Adults should be trained (by young people in partnership with adults) to:

- Empower youth to be involved in their treatment plan and in creating system-wide change
- Knock down the walls of professionalism
- Build relationships and partnerships with young people
- Encourage and cultivate youth voice, ownership, and access
- Focus on youth needs, including culture-specific needs
- Not give up on young people!

Building Relationships

Building relationships with young people takes time. Creating a trusting relationship requires patience and may be tested over time to make sure that the adult is truly there to partner with the young person and will be a consistent source of support.

Open communication is key to a successful relationship between the youth coordinator and youth participants. Examples of some guiding questions you may want to ask to help build this relationship include:

- How do you know when someone cares about you?
- What makes you care for others?
- What would make you want to come back to the youth group?

The answers to some of these questions may assist the youth leader in developing a caring environment based on the needs and perceptions of the young people. Youth–adult partnership is built on the foundation of a caring environment.

Youth FAIR Shows that Friends Are Important Resources

Youth Friends Are Important Resources (FAIR) in West Palm Beach, Florida, is a youth group that is widely recognized for the group cohesiveness and genuine care of the youth for each other. Their members are comprised of young people under the age of 22 who have system involvement. In their mission statement, Youth FAIR members describe themselves as "The voice of hope, love, strength and unity." Youth FAIR members agreed to an interview to discuss their group culture.

Youth FAIR members attribute the group's caring environment to the food, resources that are available to them, the warm and caring people, and deep personal conversations in a safe and supportive space. The members believe that the safe space is the outcome of their mutual respect for peer established ground rules, a high level of confidentiality, and continual feedback. The members stated, "Members of Youth FAIR do not look at each other's weaknesses but their strengths and for who they are inside." New members are never singled out and all members express a dedication to the group, because they believe in the group mission. The members also are culturally sensitive to the diverse backgrounds of the members. The group always fosters an open line of communication and peer support; often the youth connect outside of Youth FAIR activities. All members present expressed that they genuinely care for each other.

The Youth FAIR members agreed that they need and value adult support in their youth group. They described their adult supporters as caring and respectable people who always communicate without yelling, screaming, or arguing. One youth member reported, "The adults teach and mentor with love, showing care by following up on youth needs and allowing them to vent their feelings."

Youth FAIR members described the necessary components to creating a safe, caring, and supportive environment for youth.

Youth groups can foster a caring environment by:

- Developing equal ground rules by members
- Ensuring a strong line of communication between the youth and the coordinator
- Creating a shared mission between youth members and the coordinator
- Encouraging and valuing feedback
- Identifying any challenges the group is facing and brainstorming possible solutions
- Hosting discussions based on youth interest
- Assisting with transportation
- Providing food at each meeting
- Creating opportunities for youth to explore and demonstrate their talents and skills
- Recognizing youth participation through stipends, celebrations, trips, newsletters, and awards
- Supporting and mentoring each other

Supporting and Mentoring

Peer-to-peer support and mentoring are key components of developing a youth movement. Young people need to have support from each other and a sense of belonging; these are essential for a functioning youth group. Young people gain a sense of validation when they can relate to others with similar challenges and life experiences. Participation in socialization and recreational activities often decreases loneliness and isolation, preventing further depression and mental health challenges. Spending time with peers provides an opportunity for normalization for young people who do not always feel "normal." Young people can help other youth know their rights and find necessary resources within the community. This support and knowledge builds advocacy networks for other youth to address their mental health needs.

The need for support also pertains to the youth coordinator. Youth coordinators can also feel isolated in their work. The work of change agents is exciting and rewarding, but can also be challenging and isolating. As a result, youth coordinators need a tremendous amount of support from administrators, supervisors, and peers. In addition, youth coordinators can connect to the national youth coordinator community for support to generate ideas and exchange resources. Both youth and adults who are working to create systems change need to be supported and reminded of the importance of their work and to have their achievements celebrated. In many ways, support comes in the form of training and skill development.

Providing Training and Skill Development

To be successful in their endeavors, young people need support and education in areas that are relevant to their lives and their work. Young people should have learning opportunities both locally and nationally. Youth groups may want to bring in speakers from the community to educate young people on various issues.

Conferences also give youth and youth coordinators an opportunity to collaborate with individuals from other youth groups. Conferences provide a time and space for young people to strategize on their challenges and share their successes. Additionally, conferences can provide youth with direct contacts to leaders in the government and other valuable resources, thus encouraging a dialogue that can benefit both youth and the government. Many conferences offer youth workshops to help young people develop the skills needed for effective youth participation, such as public speaking, knowledge of laws and regulations, and leadership training. Training and a deeper knowledge of the systems and other topic areas will help young people become stronger advocates and contributors. Training needs to be an ongoing support for young people throughout the growth of the group. Each new activity or group endeavor may also require additional training.

The need for training also pertains to youth coordinators. Youth coordinators bring tremendous strengths, experiences, and skills to their work, and they too need opportunities for growth. Training should include cultural and linguistic competency as a core value.

Guiding Principles of Cultural and Linguistic Competency

By becoming culturally competent, youth leaders and youth group members will acquire the knowledge and skills to work effectively with diverse populations. There are three guiding principles to effectively integrate cultural competency into the youth group setting: knowledge development, community bonding, and cultural inclusion and training (CMHS, 2000).

Youth development, involvement, and change are more likely to happen when youth leaders and young people have access to relevant information and develop attitudes that are culturally competent. This requires youth groups to make an extended effort to utilize existing resources and initiate contact with anyone who can provide additional knowledge to the group. Building their information base will give group members a general idea of the various cultures that comprise their community, and hopefully will initiate further curiosity into the practices and beliefs of their peers.

Cultural competence in a community-based system of care requires a personal understanding of the diverse cultures that make up the community. To have neighbors engage with each other in cultural activities is the next step in the process. For example, Family HOPE, the system of care community in West Palm Beach, FL, has formed a cultural exchange program where youth and families come together each month to learn about the different cultures in their community through traditional dances, food, and ceremonies. Such a program can work to unite a community as members are exposed to new and different cultural practices and gain an appreciation for the traditions of their neighbors.

A youth group cannot be culturally competent without the inclusion of members of various races and ethnicities, religions, genders, and sexual orientations that compose the community. There must be a constant effort to integrate all youth into the group. Extra effort needs to be made in reaching out to those in the community who may not feel comfortable participating in a group separate from their own

culture. One way to do this is to ensure access to bilingual leaders, volunteers, or youth so that all young people will have someone to communicate with in the group. An ongoing plan to train and develop the young people in each youth group on cultural competency is another way of going about this. Scheduling trainings will help all group members process the knowledge they have gained and the customs they have been exposed to, as well as really make sense of the values and behaviors of their peers. It is essential to foster a safe environment for open discussion where everyone can share and challenge their values and stereotypes.

Training Members of the Youth Group

Training on cultural competence should include the following activities:

- Discussing issues that define different racial/ethnic groups, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, etc., including youth's diverse histories, values, traditions, belief systems, etc.
- Identifying how acculturation affected/affects individuals from the different racial/ethnic groups
- Recognizing how ethnicity, racism, class, social status, gender, and sexual orientation impact youth values, belief systems, attitudes, and mental health
- Understanding the different causes of mental illness (e.g., supernatural, religious, etc.) and the stigma concerns specific to each group and their subgroups
- Listening and communicating successfully across all cultures (CMHS, 2000)
- Developing relationships with youth and family members from the diverse populations through culturally appropriate community resources

Circle-of-care and tribal system of care communities have set examples on the importance of culture and tradition in partnering with youth. Each Native community is distinct in its approach to working with youth, however the message that most tribes strive for is to connect youth with their culture and elders. Choctaw Nation Cares and the Native American Health Center provide two tribal communities' perspectives.

Youth Involvement in Tribal Communities

Many tribal system of care communities and circle-of-care communities use the term temporary emotional disharmony rather than the label serious emotional disturbance when discussing the needs of their children and youth. Native communities also focus on tribal culture and tradition. In Oklahoma, Choctaw Nation Cares system of care serves youth and families in 11,000 very rural square miles. Many of the native children and youth are extremely shy and Jack Austin, youth coordinator, has found that introducing cultural

> *"Culture is so important because it brings youth back when they think something isn't going right or there are so many issues in their lives, it reminds you of what your ancestors have been through and it grounds you. Even traditional dance and art give youth a healthy cultural escape from their problems."*
>
> *—Tahnee Camacho, Youth Coordinator, Native American Health Center Circle of Care in Oakland, California*

a holistic approach in working with youth that includes the social, mental, physical, and spiritual areas of personal wellness. Within these communities, there is a particular focus on tradition and culture in working with Native young people.

Circle-of-care and tribal system of care communities are involving young people in various ways that reflect activities helps them open up and build trust. One of the youth activities is Healing Groups. The Healing Group process is based on the four medicine wheel quadrants and focuses on the four main areas of life: community, mind, spirit, and body. The first quadrant represents the community, and youth participate in activities to increase their self-esteem. The belief is that

➜

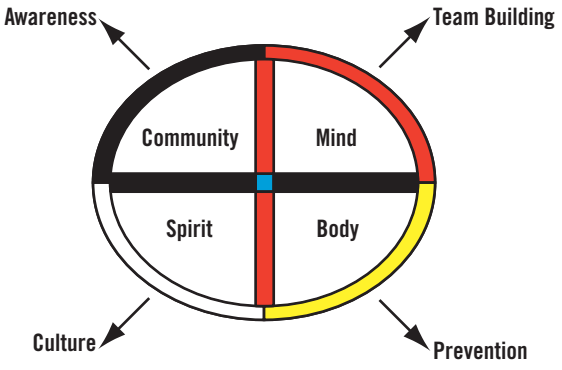
(Youth Involvement in Tribal Communities...continued)

increased self-esteem leads to decreased disharmony in the family. The second quadrant represents the mind, and youth are guided through thought-provoking, team-building activities. The third quadrant represents the body, and youth participate in substance abuse prevention activities. The youth wear DUI goggles, which blur their vision, and then walk the line, or try to shoot basketballs. Youth are able to feel the effects of alcohol consumption without actually drinking and can see that substance use blurs a person's version of reality. The fourth quadrant represents the spirit, and youth participate in a talking circle. Youth are asked a question such as, "What would you change about your community?" Youth then pass an eagle feather or talking stick and everyone is able to share their thoughts when they have the feather or stick. Jack Austin commented, "One youth was so thankful because she said that was the only time her voice had been heard."

Another example of a youth activity is the Tribal Scavenger Hunt where youth explore the community in an attempt to get signatures from certain people. All of their directions are written in the Choctaw language and youth are given Choctaw dictionaries in order to find out whom they need to get a signature from without speaking English. The process helps them understand their ancestors' way of life. Some of the signatures that youth need in the scavenger hunt are from the tribal elders. The elders only speak Choctaw to the youth, which helps the youth further connect with their culture.

Similarly, Tahnee Camacho, Youth Coordinator, Native American Health Center in Oakland, California, is working to connect youth with the elders in their community. Tahnee found that many youth in the urban environment are not keeping tribal traditions and the youth group is a way to bring that back into their lives. The Native American Health Center is developing a mentoring program between youth and tribal elders. In addition, tribal youth in Oakland are connected to the monthly powwows where they participate in native dancing, crafts, and traditional foods. Both of these communities are examples of the importance of valuing and incorporating culture into work with youth in order to preserve and celebrate traditions.

Healing Groups



Austin et. al. (2004 June). Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Cares Project, Georgetown Summer Institutes 2004 Youth Track: San Francisco, CA.

Learn Essential Facilitation and Conflict Resolution Skills

Another important training area is around group facilitation and conflict resolution. Youth leaders usually need to teach the members of the youth group the skills that they will need to function effectively and successfully.

Using Effective Group Facilitation

Often, youth groups choose to create ground rules, which are peer developed and mutually agreed on. Some groups consider their ground rules to be their bylaws, which provide the group with a framework. These ground rules are often a good resource for resolving incidences of conflict within the group.

One of the challenges of any youth coordinator is to take a group of individuals and help them learn to function as a team. Although each group is a bit different, certain participant roles are likely to be found within any group. The key is being able to emphasize the positive contributions of each participant. A positive group dynamic will lead to equal, individualized participation, with all voices being heard in the group.

Even with a cohesive group in the most ideal circumstances, conflicts may arise. Active listening is the core competency needed to manage challenging group scenarios. Usually when someone is frustrated or angry, all he or she really wants is to be heard in a respectful manner. In this process, it is important that the youth coordinator bring the group back to the ground rules, which should include respecting and listening to one another. Although the initial role of the youth coordinator may be to manage conflict, the ultimate goal should be to help young people develop the skills they need to manage the conflict within the group without adult facilitation.

Resolving Conflicts

Each group needs to learn and understand the following five skills for effective conflict resolution.

1. Listen—Focus on the person speaking and encourage him or her to use "I statements." Recognize that there are differences of opinions. Ask questions for clarification. Summarize the situation as you understand it to ensure that everyone agrees on the facts. Avoid jumping to solutions. Affirm and acknowledge that a challenge is present and that feelings are involved, but recognize that this can be a win-win situation.
2. Keep It Positive—Create a win-win situation. Challenging behaviors are almost always a result of unmet needs. The win-win approach says, "I want to win and I want you to win, too." The person facilitating the situation will need to discuss the underlying needs in the situation. Often these needs will be very similar. Create opportunities for members to share power. Identify ways to meet all their needs.
3. Reframe—Transform problems into opportunities for creating change. The outcome can be another learning opportunity and lead to increased understanding. Be sure to facilitate a dialogue that will attack the problem, not the person, and continually provide feedback in a nonjudgmental way. Discuss the outcomes that both parties hope to achieve.
4. Negotiate—Focus on needs, not positions, and emphasize a common ground. Be creative about identifying options and solutions. Create opportunities for youth to back down without feeling humiliated or being perceived as "losing face." Help facilitate trade-offs that may be part of trial and error in finding a solution.
5. Focus on the Future—Discuss options for moving forward and identify the clear solutions that all parties have agreed on. Try to develop an agreement to move forward without focusing on the past. Remind the youth that this experience was a challenge from which everyone can learn and grow.

(The Conflict Resolution Network, 2004)

Identifying youth, developing a group mission statement, goals, objectives, strategies, and ground rules, and understanding how to manage conflict are all part of the core foundation of youth involvement.

Section VII

Youth Involvement in Systems of Care: Making It Happen

What Do Youth Groups Do?

Developing a Community Event

Getting Youth on Board

Creating Opportunities for Youth Roles in Evaluation

Social Marketing: Youth Getting the Word Out!

Sustaining Youth Involvement

Barriers and Solutions to Youth Involvement

What Makes Youth Involvement Successful?

VII. Youth Involvement in Systems of Care: Making It Happen

Authentic youth involvement in a system of care community permeates the community and is actualized through the meaningful involvement of young people in each level of system of care development. This chapter will guide you through this process. Young people are able to partner with a supportive adult and take the lead in all aspects of the youth movement. Young people in youth groups continually work to sustain youth involvement in their communities through outreach, stakeholder groups, activities, and projects in the community, as well as through evaluation and social marketing projects. Sustainability depends on commitment, dedication, and a willingness for a community to change and adapt. The youth movement within a system of care begins with the developed youth group.

What Do Youth Groups Do?

Currently, systems of care across the nation support more than 40 groups for young people. These groups have different looks, missions, and activities, but all share the common goal of supporting youth voice and involvement within the system of care.

Young people nationally have undertaken a variety of tasks:

- Developing presentations and products such as tips sheets for professionals
- Creating Web sites, chat rooms, and Internet-based bulletin boards
- Organizing fundraisers and community-wide events
- Participating on governing boards and committees
- Developing social marketing campaigns
- Engaging in research
- Providing peer support, advocacy, and bonding activities for other youth

Developing a Community Event

Many youth groups in systems of care develop community events to create change, decrease stigma, forge partnerships, and involve other young people. This process can be challenging if it is not thoroughly planned. It is important to ensure that the voice of young people is the center of the event.

Begin with a discussion of the purpose of the activity—is it to raise community awareness? Plan whom you will invite and how many people you can expect at the event. Make sure that the agenda of activities and the location and time of the event all take into account the target audience. Appropriate venues for advertising the event may be local organization bulletin boards, youth centers, or schools the targeted audience attends. The group will also need to plan the number of staff needed, the tasks each will be responsible for completing, and possible compensation. It is important for the group to seek out community support in each event or project to increase the visibility of the group in the community. Involving the community in all aspects of event planning and the events themselves will foster support and can affect sustainability. It is also essential that the youth group record every aspect of the project's development in case it needs to apply for future funding. Finally, it is important to have a follow-up meeting to allow the group to reflect on what went well and suggest changes for future events.

Many youth groups have successfully produced community events. In 2001, the King County, WA, Health 'N Action! youth group developed the first Teen Health Summit for the community.

2001 Health 'N Action Teen Health Summit

The mission of Health 'N Action! (HNA) is to bring youth issues to the attention of policymakers, professionals, youth-friendly adults, and other youth involved in the system of care in order to promote understanding and action by community leaders by using youth expertise. Following their mission, the youth of Health 'N Action! organized the first "For Youth, By Youth" teen health summit in King County, Washington. More than 350 youth, parents, and providers attended the event.

HNA started early and allowed a year for planning. The group focused on four components of event planning: goals, message, audience, and activities. HNA had to first agree on the goal of the Teen Health Summit and then make sure that its actions would lead to meeting this goal. The group decided that the goal for the event would be to start a dialogue about youth voice in public policy. With this goal in mind, the youth focused next on developing messages for the event. They divided into work groups to develop the messages they wanted to convey. They decided that each workshop would have a different message, but each would relate to the overall goal. After determining that the audience for this event would be youth, the group moved on to developing activities for the Summit. HNA determined that fun and informative activities would keep the audience engaged. The group decided that each workshop should have a number of youth-friendly activities and breaks. This approach would keep everyone's attention and break the long day into more manageable and memorable sessions.

During the Summit, youth and young adults learned about health and safety issues. They shared their concerns and priorities with the people in government, law enforcement, and social services who plan and provide these services. The young people developed workshops about HIV/AIDS and safety issues surrounding sexual activity, safe driving, teen health care plans at no or low cost, chemical dependency, and mental health issues that affect teens but often go undiagnosed or untreated. Policymakers, professionals, youth, youth-friendly businesses, and service providers came together to discuss issues that affect youth growing up in today's ever-changing world.

Although the King County Mental Health, Chemical Abuse & Dependency Services Division, the Children and Families in Federal Mental Health grant, and the Seattle Center collaborated in sponsoring the Teen Health Summit, Health 'N Action! coordinated the majority of the planning and organization of the event. Youth who stayed for the day received community service credit certificates and were eligible for raffle prizes that included a trip to Disneyland, donated by Alaska Airlines and Disneyland. Health 'N Action! reached out to numerous community partners to make this event happen. By following the four key components to event planning, HNA youth planned and executed a successful event.

Getting Youth on Board

"Youth involvement makes a difference in our community by bringing the policymakers and the youth that are directly affected by the policy together. This open communication allows youth to discuss what works for them and what doesn't and the policymakers get to realize that sometimes even the best of intentions can be harmful if the people that the policies will directly affect are not consulted. The very presence of youth in policy meeting breaks down the invisible 'us and them' barrier that develops when doing things for and to people instead of with them."

—Stephanie Lane M.S.W, Youth Coordinator, Health N'Action, King County, Washington

In addition to participating in youth groups, young people are taking on other roles within systems of care as voting members on governing boards and committees. Significant roles in the community must be given to youth to really engage them and develop their leadership skills. Involving young people can be a tremendous asset to the community and the organization if it is done well.

Challenges can occur in placing youth on governing boards when young people are filling a quota or are treated as observers. Youth involvement may not be successful if adult board member mentors are not selected carefully, do not have time to adequately support young people, or expect that everyone will immediately know how to work together (Hoover & Weisenbach, 1999). Solutions to some of these challenges include selecting mentors who have time and are dedicated to providing support and encouragement to interested youth. In addition, providing time and a comfortable environment for the mentor and the youth to get to know each other helps the process.

Both young people and adults will benefit from the relationships fostered through the training and youth board participation. Adults will need to make sure that youth have transportation to and from meetings and that they are held at a time that does not require young people to miss school. Mentors should also spend time with youth before and after meetings to answer questions and create a more supportive environment.

Generating Momentum

Organizations need to know why and how to involve young people in the decision-making process. Young people will often need support in being a part of this process. To involve young people successfully in decision-making roles in the community and to create a community-wide shift to involve young people, organizations need to take the following key steps (Hoover & Weisenbach, 1999):

- Promote local legislation to stipulate inclusion of youth on nonprofit boards and local governing bodies
- Train youth to be able to stand up and assert themselves
- Train adults so that they better understand youth involvement, the needs of youth, and ways to partner with youth for training on positive youth development
- Develop public relations and social marketing in the community

Adult Responsibilities for Involving Youth in Meetings: 5 Simple Strategies

There are a few simple strategies to use when adults ask youth to participate in meetings or conferences. Implementing these strategies will ensure that adults who are involving youth in meetings allow ample time and provide support for youth preparation for authentic participation.

1. **Identify youth and adult support**
   a. Involve more than one youth in meetings; adult supports should participate as coaches to the youth.
   b. Ensure that youth have the appropriate skill set for their role in a particular meeting. This may vary according to meeting type, i.e., governance board, committees, presentations, workshops, etc.
   c. Identify requirements for youth participation such as experience presenting, public speaking, advocacy, understanding of the system, personal experience within particular systems, etc.
   d. Facilitate introductory communication (written or verbal correspondence) once the youth is identified
   e. Involve youth in developing the content and setting the time and location (if possible) for the meeting
2. **Ensure preparatory support**
   a. Send official invitation 30 days in advance, which will include:
      i. Objectives for the meeting
      ii. Meeting agenda with youth listed on the agenda
      iii. Logistical information
   b. Coordinate a conference call with youth and adult support
   c. Identify and support cultural and linguistic needs (i.e. interpreters)

3. **Clarify roles and responsibilities**
   a. Facilitate conference call with youth and adult supports at a time that is convenient for both individuals
   b. Discuss specific responsibilities and youth role with youth and adult supports
   c. Review meeting objectives (specifics on topics and youth role in those topical discussion areas)
   d. Ensure that the adult support and youth have developed a coaching schedule to prepare for the meeting or presentation (should be weekly)
4. **Ensure logistical support**
   a. Identify, coordinate, and provide travel arrangements to and from the meeting
   b. Set protocol for stipends/honorariums for youth participation; youth should be compensated for their work
   c. Ensure that meals and expenses related to the meeting are covered in advance; advance the per diem if travel is involved
   d. Coordinate early arrival to ensure adjustment to the new environment
5. **Orient youth on location**
   a. Orient youth prior to the meeting at the meeting location. This will facilitate time for questions, familiarity with the meeting environment, and adjustment to the new environment. For presentations provide time for the youth to walk on stage, use the microphone, etc.

CARE New Hampshire is on Board

Care New Hampshire system of care community has applied these steps in generating a training program for young people to enhance their leadership skills. New Hampshire's Youth Leadership program is a training curriculum for youth who are interested in participating on boards, on committees, and in policy advocacy relating to child and youth mental health. The program has space for 12–18 youth from all regions of the state. The program comprises youth who have a history of personal mental illness or have family members with a mental illness. Their ages range from 16 to 24.

The Youth Leadership Series began with a teen group discussion. Youth were asked what would make them feel comfortable enough to participate in a board meeting with adults. The youth reported that they would need to know what the adults were talking about so that they would feel competent enough to contribute. This helped the adult coordinators better understand the training needs of youth so that they could develop the training curriculum. The Youth Leadership Series is now in its fourth year. The Youth Leadership Series began out of a model of positive youth development through funding from the Care New Hampshire grant and the Department of Behavioral Health. The funding allowed the group to bring in speakers to train young people on various aspects of board participation. In addition, the Youth Leadership Program was able to hire a young adult graduate from the program as the Youth Leadership Assistant.

The training consists of a series of seven sessions that train youth to be active participants in systems change. Training sessions include team building, cultural competency, peer relations and negotiations, spokesperson training, understanding mental health symptoms, legislative advocacy, board development, negotiation on boards, and an in-depth training on the mental health system and the Department of Child and Family Services. All sessions include guest speakers, expert presenters, onsite visits, and experiential learning opportunities centered on the best practices for each subject. During their first training, the youth choose a project to create change in their community. The youth then develop a public service announcement on the issue for the local radio station. For the final weekend of the series, youth participate in an overnight trip and a high ropes course. At the end of the series, graduates

➜

(CARE New Hampshire is on Board...continued)

are invited to a job fair where local providers come to recruit graduates for their boards and committees.

Initially, the Youth Leadership Program focused on training for young people, but it has since learned that adult providers also need training on youth–adult partnership and authentic youth involvement. Staff members now train providers on the Dignity of Expertise, which helps professionals partner with youth and helps families share power and value life experience as expertise. Both training components have shown to be necessary to authentically involve youth on boards and committees.

Creating Opportunities for Youth Roles in Evaluation

Involving youth in research is part of creating social change and improving their lives and the lives of their peers. In addition to board and committee participation, young people have been involved in evaluation (Sydlo et al., 2000). Young people should be involved from the beginning stages of defining the problem to collecting and evaluating information, making decisions and taking action. Youth involvement will give these young people opportunities to learn about research and evaluation (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2003). Youth have been involved in evaluation as subjects, consultants, and partners. Young people have served as co-evaluators and directors and have organized their own research project to study a problem of their choice.

One example of this process comes out of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (FFCMH). FFCMH partnered with youth to conduct a 2-year study on the experiences of youth with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse problems and their families. The purpose of the study was to provide opportunities for youth and families to share their experiences in these systems and to make recommendations for change. The youth guided the study and received research training in the process. Ten youth were trained to design the questions, facilitate the focus groups and interviews, and analyze the data. The youth came from all over the country and did most of their work via the telephone with the help of the researcher who was hired to train them. The youth core research team interviewed 150 youth and families and then formulated recommendations, which were published in *Blamed and Ashamed: The Treatment Experiences of Youth with Co-Occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Health Disorders and Their Families* (Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, 2001).

Three Main Purposes of Involving Youth in Evaluation and Research (Smith, 2001)

- To help youth develop and to encourage their active involvement in the decisions that affect their lives and the lives of their peers
- To enable youth to contribute to the development of the organization or program
- To provide young people with the opportunity to create real community change

What Makes Youth Involvement in Research Successful?

- Readiness of the organization and community to support young people throughout the process
- Training and support for youth to help young people understand the project and gain a sense of competency in completing the work
- Training and support for adults partnering with youth to eliminate stereotypes of youth and to battle adultism
- Support for youth who may participate with different levels of intensity or at different times depending on their outside obligations
- Compensation for youth, transportation, and food for meetings held during meal times

Chicago's Metropolitan Child and Adolescent Network's Teen Advisory Council

In March 1999, the Metropolitan Child and Adolescent Network established the Teen Advisory Council (TAC), a subcommittee of its Network Advisory Council. This committee consisted of 10 adolescents, ranging in age from 14 to 19, all of whom had been primary consumers of community mental health services at agencies in the Metro C and A Network. The TAC's first evaluation project, the Adolescent Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire, was initiated from a youth-led discussion about personal experiences in the mental health system. The young people in the TAC realized that they represented a small portion of the youth who receive counseling services, so they decided to develop a survey to find out whether other young people were satisfied with their mental health services. Funded by the Illinois Office of Mental Health, the project provided youth stipends, food, and materials. The young people worked in partnership with two adult supporters to develop the survey and write all the questions. The youth then distributed the survey to community mental health agencies and asked therapists to distribute the survey to their youth consumers. Because the TAC members believed that it was important for teen respondents to be able to participate autonomously and anonymously, they included self-addressed, stamped envelopes with the survey.

The results of their survey showed that 91.5% of adolescents responding to the survey found their counseling to be "worthwhile." However, they also found that some young people were not receiving the type of help they needed through counseling and did not always feel heard. As a result of the survey, the TAC developed a newsletter called Letz Talk About It. The newsletter discusses how youth use counseling. It is developed by, and targeted at, youth in counseling.

The TAC has also presented its findings to the local consumer parents' group, the Network Advisory Council for the Office of Mental Health, and the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health Annual conference. The young people of TAC used this project as a basis for amplifying their voice; the project gave them an evidence-based platform from which to talk.

After completing their work on the Adolescent Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire, the youth developed an approach and wrote a proposal for developing and administering a survey addressing the incidence of violence within the teen mental health population. The Illinois Violence Prevention Authority received the group's proposal and gave them a $5,000 grant. Having gained more expertise in evaluation, the youth wrote and distributed the survey themselves, asking community mental health agencies to distribute it randomly. They had a very good response rate and compiled and entered the data into the computer. The youth also wrote the final report. A striking finding in the survey was that 40% of teens who had been victims of violence did not inform their therapist of this fact.

The second phase of this project involved producing a film discussion on teen violence, "Letz Talk About Violence." The TAC conducted a pretest, showed the film, had a focus group discussion on the content of the film, and then administered a posttest. The goal of this project was to raise awareness about the extent and effect of violence in the lives of young people. After completing the film project, the group used the remaining funding to hire a marketing consultant working with the system of care grant to design a poster on the results of the survey. The youth worked with the consultant and decided which statistics were important

> *"As adolescents and children, we have been asked for very little feedback, and we question whether our perspectives are taken seriously. We should be taken seriously because some of us will be in this (mental health) system for our whole lives."*
>
> *—Quote from a survey respondent*

➜

(Chicago's Metropolitan Child and Adolescent Network's Teen Advisory Council...continued)

to highlight as well as the design and overall content of the poster. The TAC youth printed the poster and provided it to community mental health agencies; the poster is currently posted in many mental health waiting rooms in Chicago.

The New Freedom Commission invited the TAC young people to present this project when the commission met in Chicago. The presentation is now posted on the commission's Web site. The TAC youth also presented their work to a consumer parent group and at the Building on Families Strengths Conference in Portland, Oregon. The work of the Chicago TAC is an exemplary example of the strengths, abilities, and successes of young people when they are involved in the evaluation process.

Social Marketing: Youth Getting the Word Out!

Social marketing is a valuable tool for changing behaviors among key audiences. At its core, social marketing is an application of marketing strategies that are effective in the commercial world. Instead of persuading people (your audience) to buy a certain brand of soap or see a new movie, social marketing encourages them to take actions that will lead to better health or some other social good. Or, as a youth who works on social marketing in Florida defines it, "Social marketing is how you get the word out."

How does it work? By offering benefits people want, reducing barriers people face, and using persuasion, not just information. By identifying and addressing the benefits and barriers, effective social marketing is also culturally and linguistically competent. The key is to get to know and involve your audience in your social marketing efforts.

Young people "get" other young people in ways that adults never will. Because of their personal experiences, young people know what works and what needs to change. Social marketing is an area in which young people can tap into their experience-based knowledge and develop campaigns that will best reach their peers. Traditionally, social marketing campaigns attempted to reach their target audience through gathering historical data, conducting market research, and developing cultural profiles. This process has been successful in numerous social marketing programs. However, there has been a recent endorsement for youth to step outside their traditional target audience roles. Young people are now assisting with program conceptualization and developing and executing strategies for program implementation. Youth can and should be involved in every aspect of social marketing.

The social marketing planning process uses the following steps (Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign):

- Determine the goal of the project
- Identify and profile audiences
- Develop messages
- Select communication channels
- Choose activities and materials
- Develop and pre-test activities and materials
- Implement the plan
- Evaluate and make midcourse corrections

Youth can be involved in:

- ➜ Sponsoring a forum
- ➜ Hosting a community event
- ➜ Testifying before a legislative body
- ➜ Speaking in front of an assembly
- ➜ Conducting media outreach
- ➜ Creating newsletters, web sites, videos, songs, public service announcements

Burlington County Youth Partnership: Combating Stigma Through Social Marketing

The Burlington Partnership in New Jersey shows that youth are indeed the experts in developing relevant social marketing projects.

A significant element in the mission of the Burlington, New Jersey, Partnership system of care is to reduce the stigma associated with having a mental health illness. To combat stigma, the Burlington Partnership produced a 30-minute informational video. This video attacks stigma by presenting real people with mental health challenges and their families and by describing the care available in Burlington County.

The project began in 2003 when the Burlington Partnership asked the Youth Partnership to spearhead the project. The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) funded the project at close to $18,000 and provided the necessary technical assistance to complete it.

The Youth Partnership began by building its team with youth who were committed to the necessary hard work required to develop the video. Youth volunteered to help coordinate the project, and members from the Department of Human Services and families and children from the Burlington System of Care volunteered to participate in the interviews that would frame the video.

After pulling together four strong youth leaders, the team worked with UMDNJ to develop a storyboard and identify three key questions to ask the public to shape the video.

1. What is a system of care?
2. How does a system of care work?
3. Why is a system of care such a great idea?

To address issues of confidentiality, the team drafted a standard consent form designated for both adults and minors and consulted with an attorney to review the form and ensure that it was legally sound. All interview participants signed the form before the video went final production.

The youth interviewed more than 25 individuals ranging from directors and CEOs of provider organizations at the state level to families and children at the local level. They depicted the diversity of their community through the different genders, ages, experiences, and cultural backgrounds of the people they interviewed. The youth also showed a diversity of roles by including the voices of children and families alongside the voices of directors from the state level.

The group planned to incorporate the video into training packages for local communities, providers, family members, and systems partners. The goal of the project was to help viewers gain a more in-depth overview of the systemic reform that is occurring throughout New Jersey. The video premier was on August 3, 2004 and stakeholders including administrators, key staff, family members, youth, and providers attended the showing. The premier received glowing reviews from participants.

The Youth Partnership believed that once a potential family saw actual family members and youth on tape, the likelihood that they would enroll in the system of care would increase. The interviews on the video are genuine and reflect the experiences of real families and professionals who care about the well-being of children with serious emotional and behavioral disorders. The video reflects the intense dedication and hard work of four youth leaders from the Youth Partnership of Burlington County whose vision and creativity will help other youth receive the services and support that they need to succeed.

Sustaining Youth Involvement

Sustainability depends on both philosophical and fiscal support. Sustaining a youth group often comes down to the need for funding. As mentioned previously, youth should be actively engaged and driving the process of sustaining the group. In order to respond to most funding opportunities, the youth group must be under a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization. This has historically been under the local family organization. Youth groups that are well developed can complete the Application for Exempt Status Under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, which is a long process with strict requirements. Information on the process can be located on the Internal Revenue Services Web site at http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/charities/.

Identifying funding sources begins with research on local, state, and national resources that are available in supporting youth involvement. Youth groups need to consider national, community, and corporate foundations for funding opportunities. The youth group should ask for the foundation's annual report or funding guideline information to ensure that the funding requirements and their mission fits with the youth group mission and vision. The youth group should also know the geographic focus and area of interest before applying for funding from a foundation. Federal agencies may also be a possible funding source. They often issue Requests for Proposals that are located in the Federal Register. Local newspapers, state announcements, and even Internet searches are ways to identify funding opportunities. Youth groups may also want to investigate corporate giving programs in their area. Large companies and corporations often provide local programs with financial support based on a set of priorities established by the company (www.nydic.org/nydic/fundfact.html).

Fundraising is also important to build funds for the youth group as mentioned earlier in the chapter as well as in-kind donations. Building community partnerships where you can pool your resources and bring together diverse stakeholders who are committed to the group and to youth involvement are critical components to sustaining youth involvement.

Barriers and Solutions to Youth Involvement

Even in the best circumstances, there are often barriers to involving young people within the system of care. For many of these obstacles, there are solutions to make the possibility of youth involvement a reality. During the 2002 Georgetown University Training Institutes and the 2003 Spring System of Care Community Meeting, youth involved in the system of care verbalized their feelings and ideas about barriers and solutions to youth participation. The following list of barriers and solutions are examples of their thoughts and ideas.

Barriers to Youth Involvement	Solutions to Youth Involvement
Youth have ideas, but don't know how to implement them	Provide training opportunities for young people
Adults refuse to share power with young people	Educate about the power and benefits in involving youth
Adults plan projects without involving youth	Provide training for adults who will partner with young people
Adults view young people as problems rather than resources	Create opportunities for youth to train adults and providers
Youth don't view themselves as change agents	Listen to and value the suggestions of young people so they become more comfortable and competent when making suggestions
Youth are unwilling to get involved (because they have never been invited to the table before)	Use youth leaders to link with other youth in the community
Lack of support for young people when they come to the table	Identify an adult mentor for youth to help in understanding meeting processes and protocols
Distrust between youth and adults	Facilitate a discussion or activity where youth and adults can learn about each other

➜

Barriers to Youth Involvement	Solutions to Youth Involvement
Lack of transportation to meetings	Help youth decide how they will get to the meeting (e.g. Provide bus tokens if youth use public transportation or schedule a car pool)
Scheduling of meetings	Schedule meetings after school and provide dinner if the meeting is during a meal time
Financial Constraints	Provide compensation for youth involvement (cash, vouchers, credits, community service hours)
Cultural differences	Provide cultural competency training that includes youth

What Makes Youth Involvement Successful?

Involving youth in decision making will be a successful venture when young people have support and training opportunities and when the organizational leader is committed to youth partnership.

Effective youth participation happens when:

- Empowered youth voice is woven throughout your system of care
- Youth are valued for their experience and expertise
- Youth consumers are advocates and educators
- Youth members are on boards and committees
- Youth are decision-makers
- Youth on boards are treated the same as other members
- Youth are able to get to meetings (transportation and schedule)
- The group's efforts are sustainable
- Adults in the community are allies and support youth involvement
- Equal partnership and shared respect

Examples of what it takes to successfully involve youth:

- ➜ Youth provide pressure and support for increasing youth participation
- ➜ Decision-making body of an organization committed to forming a youth–adult partnership
- ➜ Increase opportunities for youth partnership and governance and changing organizational operations
- ➜ Older youth involvement initially helps to create adult support
- ➜ An adult visionary leader with institutional authority who advocates for youth involvement in decision-making
- ➜ Adults believe that there is a good reason to partner with youth
- ➜ Adults observe young people excelling in the boardroom or other places that are commonly adults' territory
- ➜ Adults view youth as competent decision makers

Section VIII

On the Horizon

Conclusion

VIII. On the Horizon

"Youth involvement is the next step towards effective and productive service. Youth need to be involved as equal partners in the planning of their lives. They will always know more about themselves than their providers will know about them"

—Victor Damian, Youth Coach, Youth Task Force, San Francisco, California

Youth involvement in system of care communities and the youth movement is ever evolving. There is national momentum keeping the force behind the movement with tremendous support from the CMHS Child, Adolescent, and Family Branch. Examples of upcoming developments around youth involvement and the youth movement include the creation of the National Youth Development Board and the focus groups conducted by ORC Macro.

Currently, the Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health and the Child, Adolescent, and Family Branch are in the beginning stages of developing the first National Youth Development Board (NYDB). The NYDB is made up of a diverse group of young people from system of care communities. The purpose of the board is to unite the voices and causes of youth; act as consultants to youth, professionals, families, and other adults; and be more involved in the politics and legislation of mental health policies. In addition, the board will support a national youth movement; assist in developing the Youth Leadership Program at national conferences; create youth movement principles and policies; and develop training tools, guides, and other documents. This will be the first youth-driven advisory board at a national level in the history of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Program for Children and Their Families.

As of 2002, all newly funded system of care communities are required to have a youth coordinator and youth involvement. At this time, communities are working to define the role and responsibilities of their youth coordinators and the nature of youth involvement in their systems. To help form an understanding of what is going on in the communities with respect to the role of youth coordinators, ways in which youth are involved, and barriers and facilitators to involvement, the national evaluator for CMHS-funded systems of care conducted focus groups with youth coordinators and youth from communities funded in 1999 through 2003. The information obtained from the focus groups will be disseminated to improve understanding of the status and issues related to youth involvement, and will aid in the development of a standardized interview to be administered to a sample of youth in all system of care communities as a component of the System of Care Assessment for the national evaluation.

Based on the initial focus groups, ORC Macro found that youth expressed feeling disempowered and disrespected when they are denied an opportunity to have a voice or get involved, which outweigh the benefits of being part of a system of care. In contrast, being active in their system of care communities gives them a sense of pride and accomplishment, an opportunity to help others, a place to go, and something to do. Findings such as this will generate increased momentum around issues of youth involvement and create a bright picture for the future of youth as change agents.

Conclusion

This guide has taken you on a journey toward authentically involving young people in systems of care. Youth involvement is key in developing and managing a system of care for many reasons; young people's skill sets and abilities are enhanced, and adults, organizations, policies, communities, and child-serving systems benefit. When young people are actively involved, stigma surrounding mental illness is reduced. Though there will be barriers during this journey, this guide has provided you with the necessary tools to find solutions in partnering with young people. In order to forge this partnership, adults and young people need to step outside of their comfort zones and begin taking risks and steps toward mutual understanding and respect. This involves fostering a respect for differences and similarities as well as respect for the experiences that young people and adults bring to the table. This guide has taken you through the process of initiating a youth group and identifying ways in which doors for youth involvement can be opened. Enjoy the journey!

Section IX

Resources for Youth Involvement

Youth Participation in Evaluation/Research

Youth–Adult Partnerships

Youth Participation on Boards and Committees

Youth Development Approach/Theory/Practice

Youth Development and Civic Engagement/Action

Youth Participation in Community Planning

Youth Group Experiences and Examples

Guides/Training/Tool Kits

Cultural and Linguistic Competency Resources

IX. Resources for Youth Involvement

Youth Participation in Evaluation/Research

Adam, G. J. & Weimann, C. M. (2003). Adolescents as peer data collectors: An exploratory study. *North American Journal of Psychology, 5*(1).

Campbell, P., Edgar, S., & Halsted, A. L. (1994). Students as evaluators: A model for program evaluation. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(2), 160–165.

Checkoway, B., & Richards-Schuster, U. K. (2003). Youth participation in community evaluation research. *American Journal of Evaluation, 24*(1), 21–33. Retrieved October 29, 2004, from http://www.ssw.umich.edu/youthandcommunity/pubs/AJE_Paper.pdf.

Checkoway, B., & Richards-Schuster, K. (1999). *User's guide to participatory evaluation for lifting new voices.* Ann Arbor, MI: Lifting New Voices, School of Social Work, University of Michigan.

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. (2001). *Blamed and ashamed: The treatment experiences of youth with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders and their families.* Alexandria, VA: Author.

London, J. (2000). The experience of youth in focus: Youth development through youth-led research, evaluation and planning. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14,* 35–36. Retrieved October 28, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=347&choice=download

London, J. (2002 June). Youth involvement in community research and evaluation: Mapping the field. Paper presented at the Wingspread Symposium on Youth Involvement in Community Research and Evaluation, Racine, WI. Retrieved October 29, 2004, from http://www.ssw.umich.edu/youthandcommunity/pubs/London_YouthResEval.pdf.

Horsch, K., Little, P., Smith, J., Goodyear, L., & Harris, E. (2002). Youth involvement in evaluation and research. *The Evaluation Exchange, 1,* 1–8. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education. Retrieved October 29, 2004, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/content/projects/afterschool/resources/issuebrief1.pdf.

Matysik, G. J. (2000). Involving adolescents in participatory research. *Community Youth Development Journal, 1*(4), 6–10.

Smith, J. (2001). Pizza, transportation, and transformation: Youth involvement in evaluation and research. *The Evaluation Exchange, 7*(2), 10–11. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education. Retrieved October 28, 2004, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue17/html/promising1.html.

Youth evaluating programs for youth: Stories of youth IMPACT. (2002). *New Directions for Youth Development, 96,* 101–117.

Wingspread Symposium on Youth Participation in Community Research. (2002) [Summary of Proceedings]. Racine, WI. Retrieved October 29, 2004, from http://www.ssw.umich.edu/youthandcommunity/pubs/SymposiumII.pdf.

Youth–Adult Partnerships

Camino, L. (2000). Youth-adult partnerships: Entering new territory in community work and research. *Applied Developmental Science, 4* (Suppl. 1), 11–20.

Checkoway, B. (1995). *Adults as allies.* Battle Creek, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/YouthED/Pub564.pdf.

Kurkoski, J., Markendorf, K., & Straw, N. (1997). *Youth voice begins with you.* Seattle, WA: Washington Youth Voice Project.

McLarney, M., & Leifer, L. (1997). *Younger voices, stronger choices: Promise project's guide to forming youth/adult partnerships.* Kansas City: Promise Project.

National 4-H Center. (1996). *Creating youth/adult partnerships: A training curriculum for youth and adult teams.* Chevy Chase, MD: Author.

Youth Participation on Boards and Committees

Council of Michigan Foundations. (n.d). *Guidelines and resources for establishing a youth advisory council.* Grand Haven, MI: Council of Michigan Foundations.

Do Something, Inc. (n.d.). *How-to guide and summary of research on recruiting, involving and developing young leaders in community organizations.* New York, NY: Do Something, Inc.

Hoover, A., & Weisenbach, A. (1999). Youth leading now! Securing a place at the table. *New Designs for Youth Development, 15*(3), 29–35. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.cydjournal.org/NewDesigns/ND_99Sum/Hoover.html.

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. (2001). *At the table: Making the case for youth in decision-making research highlights from a study on the impacts of youth on adults and organizations.* Chevy Chase, MD: Innovation Center (available online at www.theinnovationcenter.org).

Mohamed, I.A., Wheeler, W. (2001). *Broadening the bounds of youth development: Youth as engaged citizens.* A Joint Publication of The Ford Foundation (New York) and The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development (Chevy Chase, MD). Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/images/products/01240215092930_YLDI-BroadeningtheBoundsofYouthDevelopment.pdf.

Youth On Board. (1999). *Youth governance: 14 points to successfully involving young people in decision-making.* Somerville, MA: Author.

Zeldin, S., McDaniel, A., Topitzes, D., & Calvert, M. (2000). *Youth in decision-making: A study on the impacts of youth on adults in organizations.* Chevy Chase, MD: National 4-H Council.

Youth Development Approach/Theory/Practice

American Youth Forum. (1995). *Contract with America's youth: Toward a national youth development agenda.* Washington, DC: Co-published with the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research and the National Assembly of Health and Human Services Organization.

Benson, P. L., Galbraith, J., & Espeland, P. (1998). *What teens need to succeed: Proven, practical ways to shape your own future.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Press.

Catalano, R. F., Berglund, L. M., Ryan, J. M., Lonczak, H., & Hawkins, J. D. (2002). Positive youth development in the United States: Research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs. *Prevention and Treatment, 5.* Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.journals.apa.org/prevention/volume5/pre0050015a.html.

Chalmers, M. (2000 Fall). Lessons in strengths-based youth involvement: Minding the mays, the dos and the possibles. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14*(2), 24–27. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=344&choice=download.

Delman, J., & Jones, A. (2002). *Voices of youth in transition. The experience of aging out of the adolescent public mental health service system in Massachusetts: Policy implications and recommendations.* Dorchester, MA: In a report submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, sponsored by Consumer Quality Initiatives, Inc. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.cqi-mass.org/pdf9.pdf.

Drake, I.N., Ling, S., Fitch, E, Hughes, D.M. (2000 Fall). Youth are the future of America. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14*(2), 32–34. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=346&choice=download.

Ginwright, S., & James, T. (2002). From assets to agents of change: Social justice, organizing, and youth development. *New Directions for Youth Development, 96,* 27–46.

Lane, R. (1996). On the journey to community youth development. *New Designs for Youth Development, 12*(3), 14–18.

Langston, S. (1989). *Teen power: A user's guide to youth community involvement.* Ipswich, MA: Stuart Langton and Associates.

Lewis, A. (Ed.). (2003). *Shaping the future of American youth: Youth policy in the 21st century.* Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.aypf.org/publications/shaping_future_youth.pdf.

Maciejewski, G. (2000 Fall). Standing on the shoulders of giants. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14*(2), 6–8. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=337&choice=download.

McLaughlin, M. (2000). *Community counts: How youth organizations matter for youth development.* Washington, DC: Public Education Network. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.publiceducation.org/pdf/communitycounts.pdf.

National Assembly. (2000). *Community education/youth development A dialogue toward common ground.*

National Assembly of Health & Human Service Organizations. (1999). *Youth development: On the path towards professionalization.*

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth. (1998 December). Translating youth development into action. *The Exchange.* Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.ncfy.com/Trans-YD-Action.htm.

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth. (1996 July). *Reconnecting youth and community: A youth development approach.* Silver Spring, MD: Author. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.ncfy.com/reconnec.htm).

O'Donoghue, J. L., Kirshner, B., & McLaughlin, M. (2002). Introduction: Moving youth participation forward. *New Directions for Youth Development, 96,* 15–26.

Pittman, K. J., & Wright, M. (1991). *Bridging the gap: A rationale for enhancing the role of community organizations in promoting youth development.* Washington, DC: Center For Youth Development and Policy Research.

Pittman, K. J. (1992). *Defining the fourth r: Promoting youth development through building relationships.* Washington, DC: Center For Youth Development and Policy Research.

Quinn, J. (1995). Positive effects of participation in youth organizations. In M. Rutter (Ed.), *Psychosocial Disturbances in Young People: Challenges for Prevention.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stevenson, L. (2000 Fall). Bringing youth to the table in systems of care. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14*(2), 16–19. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=341&choice=download.

Youth Development and Civic Engagement/Action

Boyer, E. (1990). Civic education for responsible citizens. *Educational Leadership, 48*(3), 4–7.

Boyte, H. C. (1991). Community service and civic education. *Phi Delta Kappan, 72*(10), 765–767.

Duitch, S. (2002). *Speak up: Tips on advocacy for publicly funded nonprofits.* New York: Center for an Urban Future. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.caseyfoundation.org/publications/data/advocacy_tips.pdf.

Edwards, K. (n.d.). *Youth leadership, youth development, youth voices: Tools and resources for change.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Education Laboratory.

Fleisher, P. (1993). *Changing our world: A handbook for young activists.* Tucson, AZ: Zephyr Press.

Caplan, E. H., & Schutte, K. (2002). Community service: Rationale, outcomes and best practices. Service opportunities for youth with emotional and behavioral challenges. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 16*(1), 19–20. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=202&choice=download.

Lesko, W., & Tsourounis, E. (1998.) *Youth!: The 26% solution.* Information USA.

Lesko, W. (1992). *No kidding around! America's young activists are changing our world and you can too!* Information USA.

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. *Youth leadership for development initiative: Broadening the parameters of youth development and strengthening civic activism.* Chevy Chase, MD: Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/images/products/01240215095111_YLDIBrochure.pdf.

Pearson, S., & Voke, H. (2003). *Building an effective citizenry: Lessons learned from initiatives in youth engagement.* Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.

Roach, C., Cao Yu, H., & Lewis-Charp, H. (2001). Race, poverty and youth development. *Poverty & Race, 10*(4), 3–6. Retrieved on October 30, 2004, from http://www.prrac.org/topic_type.php?topic_id=2&type_group=10.

Sherman, R. (2002). Building young people's public lives: One foundation's strategy. *New Directions for Youth Development, 96,* 65–82.

Stoneman, D. (2002). The role of youth programming in the development of civic engagement. *Applied Developmental Science, 6*(4), 221–226.

Youth Participation in Community Planning

Beilenson, J. (1993). Looking for young people listening for youth voice. *Social Policy, 24*(1), 8–13.

Mullahey, R., Susskind, Y., & Checkoway, B. (1999) *Youth participation in community planning.* Chicago: American Planning Association

Checkoway, B. (1994). *Youth participation in neighborhood development.* Washington, DC: Academy for Educational development.

Checkoway, B. (1995). Six strategies of community change. *Community Development Journal, 30,* 2–20.

Checkoway, B. (1995). *Young people creating community change.* Battle Creek, MI: W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Checkoway, B., Richards-Schuster, K, Abdullah, S., et al. (in press). Young people as competent citizens. *Community Development Journal.* Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.ssw.umich.edu/youthAndCommunity/pubs/CitizensPaper.pdf.

Driskell, D. (2002). *Creating better cities with children and youth.* London: Earthscan.

Finn, J., & Checkoway, B. (1998). Young people as competent community builders: A challenge to social work. *Social Work, 43*(4), 335–345.

Hughes, D. M. (1994). Community youth development. *New Designs for Youth Development, 11*(1), 3–5.

Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. L. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets.* Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University.

Pancer, M., Rose-Krasner, L., & Loiselle, L. D. (2002). Youth conferences as a context for engagement. *New Directions in Youth Development, 96,* 47–64.

Seita, J. R., Mitchel, M., Barrett, C.T. (1997). Connectedness, continuity, dignity, and opportunity: Essential ingredients for creating our village. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 6*(1), 46–47.

Youth Group Experiences and Examples

Allison, T. (2002). Whose turning point? A paper on the experiences of the San Francisco Youth Commission's work to influence legislative action. University of Michigan School of Social Work. Unpublished paper. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.ssw.umich.edu/youthandcommunity/pubs/whose_turning_point.pdf.

Almen, R. (2000 Fall). What one "yooper" has learned about youth involvement. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14*(2), 14–15. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=340&choice=download.

Choi, J. (2000 Fall). Valuing the voice of our young people. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14*(2), 9–10. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=338&choice=download.

Davis, J., Smith, C., McCants, R. (2000). Youth millennium 2000: Leadership in progress. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14*(2), 44–45. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=345&choice=download.

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. (1999). *Integrating technology into youth and community development: Lessons learned from the Powering Up Project.* Chevy Chase, MD: Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. (Available at http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/images/documents/012402154809100_Powering%20Up%20Lessons%20Learned%20-%20External%20-%20Revised%208-01.pdf).

LaMonaca, J. (2000 Fall). Being our own advocates: Youth and young adults as partners in planning, evaluation and policy making. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14*(2), 5–6. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=336&choice=download.

Linetzky, M. (2000 Fall). Youth development: Putting theory into practice. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14*(2), 10–14. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=339&choice=download.

Leffert, N., Saito, R., Blyth, D., & Kroenke, C. (1996). *Making the case: Measuring the impact of youth development programs.* Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Tice, K. (1998). *Empowering youth: Lessons learned from the Michigan Community Foundation's Youth Project 1991–1997.* Grand Haven, MI: Council of Michigan Foundations.

Villines, C. (2000). Listening to voices. *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, 14*(2), 22–23. Retrieved on October 28, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=342&choice=download.

Guides/Training/Tool Kits

Alliance for Justice. (1999). *Co/Motion guide to youth-led social change.* Washington, DC: Author.

Academy for Educational Development Center for Youth Development and Policy Research in collaboration with the National Network for Youth. (1996). *Advancing youth development: A curriculum for training youth workers.* Washington, DC: Author.

Sydlo, S. J., Schensul, J. J., Owens, D. C., et al. (2000). *Participatory Action Research Curriculum for Empowering Youth.* Hartford, CT: The Institute for Community Research.

Brown, D., Maxwell, S., DeJesus, E., & Schiraldi, V. (2002). *Barriers and promising approaches to workforce and youth development for young offenders toolkit.* Baltimore, MD: The Annie E Casey Foundation. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.aecf.org/publications/pdfs/workforce_overview.pdf.

Center for School and Community Services Academy for Educational Development. (2002) *BEST strengthens youth worker practice: An evaluation of building exemplary systems for training youth workers (BEST).* A summary report. New York City: Author. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.aed.org/ToolsandPublications/upload/best.pdf.

Constitutional Rights Foundation, & Close Up Foundation. (1994). *Active citizenship today field guide.* Los Angeles, CA: Author.

Constitutional Rights Foundation, & Close Up Foundation. (1996). *Civic action guide.* Los Angeles, CA: Author.

League of California Cities Investing in Our Youth Task Force. (1995). *Youth development planning guide: A step-by-step guide to making children and youth a priority in your city.* Washington, DC: National League of Cities.

Lewis, B. A. (1995). *The kid's guide to social action: How to solve the social problems you choose and turn creative thinking into positive change.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Press.

Project Adventure. (1994). *Youth leadership in action: A guide to cooperative games and group activities.* Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Cultural and Linguistic Competency Resources

Besner, H.F. and Spungin, C.I. (1995). *Gay & Lesbian Students: Understanding Their Needs.* Taylor & Francis: Washington, DC.

Camino, Linda. (1992). *Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Differences in Youth Development Programs.* Washington, DC: Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development.

Cross, T. L., Bazron, B. J., Isaacs, M. R., & Dennis, K. W. (1989). *Towards a culturally competent system of care: A monograph on effective services for minority children who are severely emotionally disturbed.* Washington DC: Georgetown University Center for Child Health and Mental Health Policy, CASSP Technical Assistance Center.

Equality Today. An electronic magazine published by Young People's Press that deals with issues of multiculturalism and anti-racism and how they affect youth. http://www.equalitytoday.org/

Haley, J. (1999). Beyond the tip of the iceberg: Five stages toward cultural competence. *Reaching Today's Youth Journal 3*(2), 9-12.

Isaacs, M. R. (1992). Developing culturally competent strategies for adolescents of color. In Elster, A., Panzarino, S., and Holt, K., eds. *Proceedings of the American Medical Association State-of-the Art Conference on Adolescents Health Promotion.* Arlington, VA: National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health.

Lynch, E. W. & Hanson, M. J. (Eds.). (1998). *Developing cross-cultural competence: A guide for working with young children and their families.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing

Messina, S. A. (1994). *A Youth Leader's Guide to Building Cultural Competence.* Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth.

Nebelkopf, E. and Phillips, M. (Eds). (2004*). Healing and Mental Health for Native Americans: Speaking in red.* Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Treadway, L. and Yoakam, J. (1992). Creating a Safer School Environment for Lesbian and Gay Students. *Journal of School Health, 62*(7), 353.

Section X

References

X. References

Academy for Educational Development, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research. (1996). *Advancing youth development: A curriculum for training youth workers.* Washington, DC: Author.

Bernard, B. (1996). Fostering resiliency in kids: Protective factors in the family, school and community. In *Advancing youth development: A curriculum for training youth workers.* Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research.

Burns, B., Hoagwood, K., & Mrazek, D. (1999). Effective Treatment for Mental Disorders in Children and Adolescents. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 2*(4), 199–254.

Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign (2004). Youth & social marketing. In *Social marketing and youth involvement.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://systemsofcare.net/Favorite_Documents/Youth and Social Marketing Learning Opp.ppt.

Checkoway, B., & Richards-Schuster, K. (2003). Youth participation in community evaluation research. *American Journal of Evaluation 24*(1), 21–33. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.ssw.umich.edu/youthandcommunity/pubs/AJE_Paper.pdf.

Cheney, D., & Osher, T. (1997). Collaborate with families. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 5*(1), 36–44.

The Conflict Resolution Network. *12 Skills Summary.* Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.crnhq.org/twelveskills.html.

Drake, I. N., Ling, S., Fitch, E., & Hughes, D. M. (2000 Fall). Youth are the future of America. In *Focal Point: A National Bulletin on Family Support and Children's Mental Health 14,* 32–34. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php?documentID=346&choice=download.

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health and Keys for Networking, Inc. (2001). *Blamed and ashamed: The treatment experiences of youth with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders and their families.* Alexandria, VA. Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. Retrieved on October, 29, 2004, from http://www.ffcmh.org/publication_pdfs/blamedashamed.pdf.

Fischhoff, B., Crowell, N., & Kipke, M. (Eds.). (1999). *Adolescent decision making: Implications for prevention programs: summary of a workshop.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Hoover, A., & Weisenbach, A. (1999). Youth leading now! Securing a place at the table. *New Designs for Youth Development 15*(3), 29–35. Retrieved on October, 29, 2004, from http://www.cydjournal.org/NewDesigns/ND_99Sum/Hoover.html.

Institute for Mental Health Initiatives. (1999 Fall). Resilience. *Dialogue: Insights into Human Emotions for Creative Professionals, 7*(1). Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/imhi/downloads/dialogue/Resilience_Vol7_Fa99.pdf.

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. (1996). *Creating youth/adult partnerships: A training curricula for youth, adults, and youth-adult teams.* Takoma Park, MD: Author.

Kirshner, B., O'Donoghue, J. L., & McLaughlin, M. W. (Eds.). (2003). *New directions for youth development: Youth participation improving institutions and communities.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lewis, A. (Ed.). (2003). *Shaping the future of American youth: Youth policy in the 21st century.* Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.aypf.org/publications/shaping_future_youth.pdf.

McLaughlin, M. (2000). *Community counts: How youth organizations matter for youth development.* Washington, DC: Public Education Network. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.publiceducation.org/pdf/communitycounts.pdf.

Mohamed, I. A. & Wheeler, W. (2001). *Broadening the bounds of youth development: Youth as engaged citizens.* New York, NY: The Ford Foundation; and Chevy Chase, MD: The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/pdfs/Broadening_the_Bounds.pdf.

Mullahey, R., Susskind, Y., & Checkoway, B. (1999) *Youth participation in community planning.* Chicago: American Planning Association.

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth. (1996). *Reconnecting youth and community: A youth development approach.* Silver Spring, MD: U.S. Department Of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.ncfy.com/Reconnec.htm.

National Collaboration for Youth. *National Youth Development Information Center.* Retrieved April 2, 2004 from www.nydic.org/nydic/funding.html.

Pires, S. A. (2002). *Building systems of care: A primer.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child Development Center, National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health.

Pittman, K., & Cahill, M. (1992). *Youth and caring: The role of youth programs in the development of caring.* Paper commissioned by the Lilly Endowment Research Grants Program on Youth and Caring and presented at the Conference on Youth and Caring in February 1992.

President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. (2003). *Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America. Final Report* (DHHS Publication number SMA-03-3832). Rockville, MD: Author.

Roach, C., Yu, H. C., & Lewis-Charp, H. (2001). Race, poverty, and youth development. *Poverty & Race 10*(4), 3–6. Retrieved on October, 29, 2004, from http://www.prrac.org/full_text.php?text_id=21&item_id=167&newsletter_id=57&header=Poverty+%2F+Welfare.

Smith, J. (2001). Pizza, transportation and transformation: Youth involvement in evaluation and research. *The Evaluation Exchange 7*(2), 10–11. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/content/eval/issue17/evalex17.pdf.

Stoneman, D. (1988). *Leadership development: A handbook from the Youth Action Program of East Harlem Block Schools.* New York: Youth Action Program

Sydlo, S. J., Schensul, J. J., Owens, D. C., Brase, M. K., Wiley, K. N., Berg, M. J., Baez, E., & Schensul D. (2000). *Participatory action research curriculum for empowering youth.* Hartford, CT: The Institute for Community Research.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). Table 1. Total population by age, race and Hispanic or Latino origin for the United States: 2000. In *Summary File 1 of the United States Census, 2000.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/phc-t9/tab01.pdf.

U.S. Department of Education. (2001). *Twenty-third annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Results.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/2001/index.html.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1999). *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General.* Rockville, MD: Author. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/NN/B/B/H/S/_/nnbbhs.pdf.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services (2000). Cultural Competence Standards. In *Managed mental health care services: Four underserved/underrepresented racial/ethnic groups* (Publication number SMA 00-3457). Rockville, MD: Author.

Youth Leadership Institute. (2000). *Changing the face of giving: An assessment of youth philanthropy.* San Francisco, CA: James Irvine Foundation. Retrieved on October 29, 2004, from http://www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs/youth/Youth_Philanthropy.pdf.

Youth Council for Northern Ireland. (1993). *Participation: Youth work curriculum guidelines.* Belfast, Ireland: Youth Counsel for Northern Ireland.

Zeldin, S. (1995). *An introduction to youth development concepts: Questions for community collaborations.* Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research.

Zeldin, S., McDaniel, A. K., Topitzes, D., & Calvert, M. (2000). *Youth in decision-making: A study on the impacts of youth on adults in organizations.* Takoma Park, MD: Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. Retrieved on October, 29, 2004, from http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/pdfs/Youth_in_Decision_Making_Brochure.pdf.

AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW | Washington, DC 20007-3835