

# NHCBH Workforce Development Network

Foundational Competencies in Children's  
Behavioral Health

*Youth Engagement and Leadership:  
Toward Youth Guided Systems and  
Supports*

# Mission

The NH Children's Behavioral Health Workforce Development Network is to build a sustainable infrastructure for the professional development of the children's behavioral health workforce based upon the core competencies and infused with the system of care core values and guiding principles.

# NH Children's Behavioral Health Core Competencies

System of Care Core Values and Principles

7 Key Domains

Levels: Foundational

Intermediary

Advanced

# Foundational Competency Modules

*Youth Engagement and Leadership:  
Toward Youth Guided Systems and  
Supports*

Foundational Level

# Youth Engagement

Hannah Raiche and Julian Abate  
Youth Move NH

# Youth Engagement and Leadership: Toward Youth Guided Systems and Supports

Youth Guided means that young people have the right to be empowered, educated, and given a decision making role in the care of their own lives as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all youth in the community, state and nation. This includes giving young people a sustainable voice and then listening to that voice.



# Being Youth Guided

Youth guided organizations create safe environments that enable young people to gain self sustainability in accordance with the cultures and beliefs with which they identify.



# Being Youth Guided

A youth guided approach recognizes the continuum of power that should be shared with young people based on their understanding and maturity; this process should be fun and worthwhile.





# Youth Guided Supports and Services

Our systems and communities must encourage full youth participation in **design**, **implementation**, and **evaluation** of initiatives that effect their lives.

- Adult allies and support staff should be skilled in genuinely engaging individual youth and in advocating for and encouraging youth to be full partners and leaders at system level tables.



# NH Children's Behavioral Health Core Competencies

The NH Children's Behavioral Health Core Competencies outline foundational knowledge and skills that should be fostered among all who work with and support children and youth with behavioral health challenges.



# Foundational Knowledge to Support Youth Engagement

Supportive Adults should understand Youth Guided supports and services including:

- 1) youth as **experts** on their own lives
- 2) youth as **equal partners**
- 3) youths' **cultural preferences and norms**
- 4) the value of acting in partnership with youth at all levels (**individual, policy, community**).



# Foundational Skillsets to Support Youth Engagement

- Recognizes the strengths, competencies, and needs of the youth in determining supports and services.
- Respects, supports and includes the dreams and goals of each child, youth and family in services
- Provides opportunities for success and building resilience.



# Foundational Skillsets to Support Youth Engagement (con't)

- Provides relevant information and data to youth
- Practices open, honest, sensitive communication skills using jargon-free language.
- Jointly sets goals and desired outcomes for treatment with the youth and family.
- Includes the youth and family in monitoring the treatment plan.
- Assists the youth and family to understand their rights and responsibilities in designing and receiving supports.
- Explains any relevant grievance policies to youth and families



# Foundational Knowledge to Promote Youth Leadership

- Understands the importance of youth and families as equal partners and leaders in organizational or systems change efforts
- Understands the value of youth voice and perspective in the design, implementation, and evaluation of service system and policy level work.



# Foundational Level Skillsets to Promote Youth Leadership

1. Shares information about youth leadership training and supports youth participation.
2. Promotes and encourages youth and families to provide input, feedback and participate in organization policy/program decision making.
3. Links youth and family with leadership opportunities



# Proven Strategies for Engaging Individual Youth

- Active listening to the youth's own story without interruption or correction
- Graphic facilitation
- Shared agenda setting
- Encouragement for the youth to bring to any meetings those people most important to and trusted by them
- Food and fun incorporated
- Meaningfully engaging the youth in tracking progress
- Shifting gears when necessary





# Proven Strategies for Engaging Youth Leaders in System Level Policy and Planning Work

- Work is youth-led and adult supported, not youth alone
- Clearly state the goals and expectations up front and then organize systems, trainings and supports focused on those goals
- Provide structure – youth are capable, critical thinkers but are not as successful when they start with an empty slate
- Provide ongoing support – hold youth accountable, check in frequently



# Proven Strategies for Engaging Youth Leaders in System Level Policy and Planning Work

- Retention
- Set a time limit – let youth commit for a defined time period and then at the end of that time period let them re-up or resign
- Be realistic about what will be achieved – clearly state the goals and make sure they are achievable in the defined timeframe
- Be sure that engagement is action oriented
- For sustainability, when youth join, let them know they are making a specific commitment and they can either re-up or resign – if they resign, they must nominate a replacement from among their peers



# Proven Strategies for Engaging Youth Leaders in System Level Policy and Planning Work

- Incentives
  - Many youth engage in civic opportunities because they have an opportunity to truly make a difference not because they are getting paid.
  - Many youth require financial assistance to counter missed work, transportation costs, child care, etc. Make sure your incentives consider both financial and social motivations and needs.
- Bring youth to the table in **meaningful** ways



# Proven Strategies for Engaging Youth Leaders in System Level Policy and Planning Work

- Find ways to appropriately recognize youth for their work
- Provide materials and “branding” that allow and encourage youth to identify with a larger initiative and a group



# Credits

- Materials adapted from and/or provided by Youth Move National, 6641 Hwy 98 W Suite 202 Hattiesburg, MS 39402
- Webinar Created and Presented by the youth staff of Youth Move NH: Justin Tilbe, Hannah Raiche, Julian Abate, 2013



# Thank You!

The NH Children's Behavioral Health Core Competencies and this module are made possible through grant funding from

- The Endowment for Health
- F.A.S.T. Forward, a SAMHSA grant awarded to the NH Department of Health and Human Services and
- the work of many people who are passionate about helping children, youth and families.