



Transition Aged Youth Focus Groups on Prevention & Early Intervention
as regards the Mental Health Services Act
April – May 2007

Finding Theme	Service Category	Recommendations
Youth Involvement in Policy and Decision-making	Cultural Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold meetings during accessible times of day • Choose locations accessible by public transportation • Hire young and/or culturally competent moderators/facilitators • Outreach through CBOs/agencies that have trusted relationships with youth
Youth Involvement in Policy and Decision-making	Addressing Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide lunch or dinner • Pay stipends to youth to demonstrate the value of their time and input • Provide or reimburse transportation
Families as the Unit of Service	Program Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer counseling to the whole family, not just the young person in the system • Free support groups for parents whose kids are detained in juvenile halls or CYA to help them manage their anger or shame or heartache • Support teen parents in becoming the parents they want to be with: classes, support groups, housing assistance, childcare.
Families as the Unit of Service	Housing/Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency housings shelters that keep the whole family together • Keep siblings together or provide funds/transportation for them to spend time together regularly • Visiting hours at out of home placements that fit family needs, not system needs.
Families as the Unit of Service	Addressing Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate statutory payments parents must pay for each day their child is incarcerated that hurt families most in need • More (and toll free) phone calls home to parents or other family members • Transportation assistance for parents to visit their kids in detention/placement.
Innovative Therapy	Cultural Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer Support groups as a “gateway” to individual psychotherapy for young people who have a hard time trusting or opening up to adults. • Research and invest in developmentally appropriate mental health programs for transition aged youth, ie drug rehabilitation
Innovative Therapy	Program Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use mental health funds for alternatives to talk therapy • Therapy “on Demand”, modeled after treatment on demand (immediate access) for drug and alcohol users as a means of preventing violence, crime or incarceration • Free therapy and other services for non-system youth, before they get in trouble • More therapists/counselors on staff at schools and juvenile halls
Innovative Therapy	Clinical Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify young people’s destructive behavior as coping mechanisms, not crimes • Identify a young person’s survival needs as a starting point in therapy, to build trust and demonstrate an understanding of where s/he is at • Monitor strengths and goals, not just mistakes, in young people’s case files • Therapists working with youth should be clinically empowered to reveal personal information, about life experience or mood, as appropriate, to build the trust bridge with youth clients. • Therapists and case managers should inform young people about their rights in dealing with the system, as a way to build trust and be a resource.



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No Medication without Communication	Cultural Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing education trainings for psychiatrists and therapists on how to talk to young people about medication Mandate processes that ensure the young person knows why they are prescribed medication Special communication about meds for kids who come from families with drug abuse
No Medication without Communication	Clinical Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctors should follow strict guidelines about youth dosages Follow up services after release from detention or placement Every youth on meds should also be given adequate opportunity to feel and address their emotions.
Prepare Adults to Support & Respect Youth	Cultural Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train and hire people from the community or former program beneficiaries so staff reflect the constituency of clients. Supplement therapy with mentorship programs that match young people with role models who have been through similar experiences
Prepare Adults to Support & Respect Youth	Program Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When an adult leaves a position, the young people on his/her caseload need supplementary support in managing the emotions of the transition. Mental health training for staff who are non-therapy providers of service. Ongoing, required trainings for foster parents - about parenting, conflict resolution, child and youth development, and other issues.
Prepare Adults to Support & Respect Youth	Clinical Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition meetings for youth, outgoing and new therapists/case workers when staff changes Therapy and support groups for staff, teachers, social workers, judges, case workers, foster parents and therapists working with stressed out young people Required support groups and trainings for staff or foster parents with LGBTQ youth
A Place to Go, Something to Do	Addressing Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job training programs that lead directly to jobs Wages and stipends during training Incentives for young people to meet benchmarks toward independence and self-sufficiency
A Place to Go, Something to Do	Program Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use mental health funds for youth-driven recreational spaces that teach leadership and offer a chance to impact the community. Use mental health funds to support physical fitness and sports. Fund programs with flexible rules and timelines.
Engage Stigma	Cultural Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire young people to do outreach at schools and CBOs about mental health resources, what therapy is like, support hot lines, etc.
Engage Stigma	Program Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free or subsidized therapy or support groups for parents of children diagnosed with mental illness.