

Wraparound Practice: Chapter 4c.4

Youth Involvement in Wraparound at the Organization and System Levels

Janet Walker, Co-Director, National Wraparound Initiative, and Research Associate Professor, Portland State University School of Social Work



As Marvin Alexander points out in Chapter 4c.1 of the *Resource Guide*, ensuring youth participation in treatment planning is only part of what it means for wraparound to promote youth voice. Youth voice is also needed as part of leadership and decision making at the program, agency, and system level. The Technical Assistance Partnership has produced a valuable guide to help youth and adults understand how to cultivate youth voice at these “higher” levels of wraparound. *Youth Involvement in Systems of Care: A Guide to Empowerment* is included in its entirety as an appendix to this *Resource Guide* (see Appendix 6e.3).

The Guide is organized into ten 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

Author

Janet Walker is Research Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Portland State University and co-Director of the Research and Training Center on Pathways to Positive Futures. Her current research focuses on 1) exploring how individuals and organizations acquire capacity to implement and sustain high quality practice in human service settings, 2) describing key implementation factors that affect the ability of organizations and individuals to provide high quality services and treatment, and 3) developing and evaluating interventions to increase the extent to which youth with emotional or mental health difficulties are meaningfully involved in care and treatment planning. Together with Dr. Eric Bruns, Dr. Walker co-directs the National Wraparound Initiative.

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