

CODY'S EXPERIENCE OF WRAPAROUND

Wraparound teams may find it challenging to involve youth in meetings. Youth may find the meetings boring, they may be easily distracted, or they may get upset about what team members are saying about them. However, when youth are en-



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gaged in their own team meetings, they can take part in the development of their plan.

Cody, who is 11, has had a Wraparound team since 2000. He is an example of a youth who finds Wraparound meetings boring. In the beginning, Cody said he acted out during the meetings because he was bored. As Cody puts it, "It's not exactly the funnest thing to do!"

Despite being bored, Cody participates as a member of his team and admits his team has helped him and his family. "It [attending the meetings] is usually kind of boring for me, but now I kind of realize that it's to help me." Since realizing this, Cody listens to what his team is talking about and realizes they are looking after his best interests. "Some of the adults see things that I don't even know I do!" He finds it helpful when the team talks about these things and discusses ways to work on them.

Cody is appreciative of the team for listening to his needs. When he describes things that he would like to do, like attending summer camp, the team makes it happen. They also hired a mentor for him, which he says

helped him make friends. "Now I'm making friends really good. I used to be shy and I didn't want to go up and say, 'Hi!' to somebody. And now I just go up and say 'Hi, what's your name?'" The team even helped Cody and his brother get along better, despite their "over-the-top sibling rivalry." For Cody, the boredom of the meetings is worth it because in the end, good things have come from these meetings.

What does Cody like best about the team meetings? He likes it when the team talks about the good things. "I like it when I get to name my strengths because that's a really easy thing to do!" He says the team does a good job at recognizing his strengths and helping him to use his strengths. At the same time, it is helpful for him to hear what he needs to change and get the help from the team to work on these changes.

Cody's suggestion for making the team meetings better is to have lots of free food at the meeting and discuss the bad things about his brother. It seems as if sibling rivalry is still around!

— **Kathryn Schutte**