

Team Discussion Guide



Teen Matters - Meeting the Needs of Adolescent Youth

After viewing the video presentation “*Teen Matters - Meeting the Needs of Adolescent Youth*” use this Discussion Guide to facilitate a conversation within your team. Discuss the questions that are most relevant to your program. At the conclusion of the discussion, formulate and assign specific action steps as a way to move forward.

1 DISCUSS NEEDED PARADIGM SHIFTS

Discuss the following paradigm shifts. How can your team best make the philosophical and programmatic shifts needed to meet the needs of adolescent youth and their families?

- Adults make the decisions without input from young people
- Evaluating youth as “doing okay” or are “making poor decisions” based on a set of external behavior
- The youth’s behavior determines the opportunities or services they get
- Youth shouldn’t remain in contact with their biological families because they are a bad influence
- Youth are destined to recreate the family situation they’ve experienced
- After age 18 youth don’t need support and should learn how to do it themselves
- Youth are destined to recreate the family situation they’ve experienced

Discuss how some of these shifts can be incorporated into your mission and values.

Examine current budget and policies that affect adolescents and their families. How could shifts in practice be translated to changes in your budget and policies?

Prioritize 1-2 areas and provide training to support these shifts and new mindsets

2 DISCUSS AND PRIORITIZE YOUTH VOICE

- How can you learn more about what adolescents need to promote recovery and healing, permanent family connections, education, employment, and important life skills? To what extent has your team effectively incorporated and integrated youth voice in case planning and program design? Staff training? Community outreach?
- Discuss how youth ages 14+ can be more involved in the development of their case plan and transition planning for successful adulthood.
- How can you incorporate youth and family voice or representation in your team and/or governance structure?



DISCUSS & USE DATA

- What key baseline outcome data regarding youth and families are you currently collecting? What baseline data are you currently not collecting but would be important to have?
- Do you know how many adolescent youth are attached to the families you are serving? If not, how can you begin to collect this information?
- Is your program primarily focused on young children ages 0-5? What was the rationale for that? Are there any plans to expand your target population to include older siblings or families with only adolescent children?
- Do you know of any families who are or have been involved in the juvenile justice system? If not, how can you begin to gather information on cross-over or dual-involved families?
- Do you know of other systems your families are involved in? How are you gathering and documenting this information?
- Do you know about permanency and time in placement for youth in foster care? How are you closely monitoring number of placements for older children?
- What outcomes matter most to families? Do they match with your program's goals? Do any of goals focus on youth and family well-being?



DISCUSS SOCIAL CAPITAL - CONNECTIONS TO FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

- Discuss the concepts of social and recovery capital for youth and their families in your program. What domains of recovery are youth doing well in? What areas are they struggling?
- How are you healing the relationship between adolescents and their families? What services exist (or do not exist) that are helping achieve healing?
- How is your team connected with education, employment, housing, and health care systems? Are any of these connections equipped to respond to the unique needs of adolescents?
- How is your team connected with systems, agencies, or organizations that are involved with the family?
- How are you supporting relational permanency for adolescents in your program? How are you meeting the needs for autonomy and independence and interdependent connections with family, peers, caring adults, and the community?
- What kind of partnerships exist in your community that could support positive connections and promote positive self-identity?



DISCUSS NEXT STEPS

- Identify 1-2 specific steps you and/or your team will take as a result of this discussion.
- Share key takeaways from your discussion with your governance structure or court leadership.
- Download the *Take Action Guide* for additional next steps for your team.
- Identify next steps to collect and/or examine baseline data and budgets to ensure real change



CONTACT INFO

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