



Planning Partnerships and Collaborating to Bridge Service Gaps

Module 8 Script

Slide 1: Introduction to Module 8

Welcome to the eighth module of the Promoting Positive Pathways to Adulthood Training Series which is being brought to you by the Research and Training Center on Pathways to Positive Futures at Portland State University.

The goal of the training program is to prepare service providers working with young people aged 14-29 with mental health difficulties to more effectively promote their positive transition to adulthood.

We have created ten hour-long modules based on a set of core competencies developed by the Pathways Transition Training Collaborative, which is an advisory committee of young adults, family members, practitioners and researchers. The eighth module, “Planning Partnerships and Collaborating to Bridge Service Gaps,” is focused on developing the skills needed for collaboration across programs and systems to better meet youth needs and on partnering with youth in change efforts, including system change.

At the conclusion of each slide, the marker labeled “onward” will be flashing. Please click on the marker “onward” to advance to the next slide.

Slide 2: Training series modules

This series of training modules is based on core competences. At the conclusion of the modules, participants will be better prepared to assist young adults with mental health difficulties to meet their personal goals as they become adults.

Although the modules are designed to be completed in this sequence, each can stand alone as an in-service training experience.

After you work through a module, you will be given a short quiz, and if you complete it successfully, you will receive a certificate of completion that you can use as a record of this continuing education experience.

The ten modules in our series focus on:

1. Partnering with youth and young adults
2. Promoting recovery
3. Increasing cultural awareness and building community support
4. Fostering resilience and family supports
5. Promoting cross-cultural and intergenerational relationships
6. Providing individualized and developmentally appropriate services
7. Supporting young people's healthy relationships
8. Planning partnerships with providers of other services and collaborating to bridge service gaps
9. Promoting support from family, peers, and mentors
10. Using evidence-supported practices and individualizing interventions

Slide 3: Module 8: Planning Partnerships & Collaborating to Build Service Gaps

Module 8: "Planning Partnerships and Collaborating to Bridge Service Gaps" addresses the challenges facing young people with mental health conditions whose needs span multiple service delivery systems and the skills needed for building and sustaining partnerships to address service gaps. We will focus on the skills needed for cross-system collaboration with service providers from different professions and disciplines. We will also address the skills needed to engage and support young people as active participants in meeting their own cross-system needs and in developing the confidence and skills to become advocates for systems change.

Slide 4: Module 8 Competencies

The eighth module addresses the following key practice competencies for working with young people in the transition years:

- Competency 4. Engaging in partnerships with providers of other services and collaborating to bridge service gaps. This refers to forming partnerships with service providers in relevant agencies and systems to develop and implement individualized transition plans for young people.
- And Competency 6. Meeting needs in key areas of living refers to collaborating with young people to meet their transition-related needs for education, employment, peer support, safe and stable housing, participation in community life, and adult well-being in the context of relevant policies and programs.

Slide 5: Module 8: Six Sections

This module includes six sections:

1. First we will examine service gaps related to the multiple systems serving youth and young adults with mental health needs and their different age and eligibility requirements

2. And we will examine the challenges to collaboration and partnerships related to membership in different disciplines and professions as well as organizational affiliations
3. Next we will focus on the skills needed for collaboration and partnerships
4. And the skills for engaging and supporting youth in advocacy to meet their own needs
5. Then we'll address consultation with young adults who are seeking accommodations as a way to bridge gaps between mental health services and school and employment
6. We will conclude with a discussion of ways to support youth as advocates to bring about program and system change

Slide 6: 8.1 Gaps in Services for Youth and Young Adults

Youth encounter gaps in services as they try to transition from child-serving systems into adult-serving systems. There are also gaps among the multiple service systems and programs that serve youth and young adults at any age, such as mental health, education, and the justice system.

This first section focuses on the multiple systems and different types of service providers serving young people with mental health disorders.

Slide 7: Service systems for youth in transition

Young people with mental health disorders are served by multiple service systems including:

- Education and Special Education
- Health
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- and for some youth:
 - Child Welfare,
 - Juvenile and adult Criminal Justice systems,
 - Addictions services,
 - Homeless and housing services, and
 - Domestic Violence services

Additionally, young people may have needs that are not specific to any system and including learning the skills needed for successful transition to adulthood, such as budgeting skills, self-care, and interpersonal relationship skills. This requires a holistic approach to work with them.

But each system is staffed with providers with different types of training and different cultures that include values, beliefs, attitudes, customs and behaviors. This means that each profession has its own professional mission and goals, values, problem-solving approaches, and jargon. Increasing specialization has led to even stronger immersion of service providers in the knowledge and culture of their own group, making teamwork difficult (Hall, 2005).

Slide 8: Challenges related to service fragmentation

Young people experience challenges related to age-linked eligibility for services:

- There are gaps in age continuity related to the separation between youth and adult-serving systems and age-based policies. For example, youth may continue to receive special education services up to age 21, but youth mental health services end at the 18th birthday in over two thirds of states. Age-related eligibility rules may result in youth abruptly losing access to a service because of a birthday or being unable to access a needed service because the agency is not funded to provide services to that age group.
- There are also different eligibility criteria for youth and adult services, for example, for youth up to age 18, criteria for eligibility for public mental health services include assessment of age-appropriate skills while adult criteria do not include any developmental issues and instead a focus on living skills (Davis, Green, & Hoffman, 2009). There are also variations among states.
- In addition to age-related eligibility rules, separate systems also have different eligibility criteria for services related to specific diagnoses. Also disability has an effect on employment, housing situation, income or health insurance status, which constrain young people's access to needed services.
- Finally, there is a lack of services specifically for youth in the transition years (Davis, Geller, & Hunt, 2006).

In the next slide, we show a chart developed by Maryann Davis representing the variations in age cut-offs across different services.

Slide 9: Child System – Adult System

Maryann Davis, a transition researcher at the University of Massachusetts Medical School Department of Psychiatry and Director of the Transitions Research and Training Center developed this chart which is included in a chapter she wrote with Melanie Green and Cheri Hoffman (2009). This chart indicates the systems serving youth and young adults at different ages, and the varied age cut-offs that can make it extremely difficult for young people to meet their own needs (Davis, Green, Hoffman, 2009). These differences also make it difficult for families and service providers to provide holistic support to young people (Davis, Green, Hoffman, 2009).

The chart reveals that child-serving systems usually end between 18 and 21 and that young people would be expected to have transitioned into adult-serving systems (Davis, Green, Hoffman, 2009). Additionally, some systems only serve young adults beginning at age 18 without any child-serving counterpart, so youth have to connect with new systems around age 18 (Davis, Green, Hoffman, 2009).

Slide 10: Challenges related to service fragmentation

As well as eligibility differences, there are additional challenges related to service fragmentation:

- Each individual young person's needs cross systems, but each service system is designed with a specific mission and goals, and with funding tied to providing narrowly-defined services, resulting in systems that are sometimes called silos.
- Many programs, services and systems are under-funded resulting in high caseloads and little time and few incentives for service providers to learn about services provided by other agencies or to build relationships with other service providers who serve the same youth.
- The system that a young person most identifies with may shape his or her identity as a mental health services recipient, foster care alumni, or offender, resulting in stereotyping and lack of responsiveness by other providers. Receiving Social Security Disability Income or Social Security Income may inadvertently lead a young adult to see his disability as a central feature of his identity or reinforce her hesitation to pursue employment or post-secondary education.

While there are no identified causal links, service fragmentation contributes to poor outcomes for young adults with mental health needs. For example, young adults who are unable to access mental health services are more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as substance abuse or criminal activity.

In the video segment that follows, Don Schweitzer, a professor at Pacific University, and a former service provider to homeless youth with mental health needs, talks about service providers' needs to find out about available services in their area and eligibility requirements for those services.

Slide 11: Assessment of All Available Services in the Area [Video Clip]

I think the first thing they need to know, and it seems kind of obvious, they need to know what is available out there, what kind of assistance, because every community is different. Some have a huge array of services and some don't have very many at all. But first, just knowing what's out there, then knowing how your services fit into what those other services are doing. For example, if you are a housing program or a skills building program,

or you are providing mental health services, what are the *other areas* in the young person's life that a system or service is interacting with, understanding that link. And as important as anything: what is the *gap* is that's out there, what are the gaps in services?

When you think of a continuum of service care, you tend to think of a more rural community. They tend to have a lot more of those gaps; not nearly enough services available for the young people they work with. In that scenario, the worker may find that this is a quick, easy assessment to do. We know what we do, we know what that other agency does; there isn't anything else for this young person. The other end of that spectrum is a more urban center, a large city. You could maybe spend years working at an agency providing a service, and not realize that: "Oh wow! There is this other service being provided just down the road from me" and we never knew it because it's so big and the population is so dense you just miss it.

It's really important to understand what kind of system is in your area, identify what those different services do, and, as importantly what they *don't* do. [In that bigger area] make sure you do an assessment of all the available services in the area.

My suggestion to workers with this population, look for advocacy groups that are focused around the specific population they are working with. The advocacy groups tend to have a lot of those laws and general policies already put together. There are things that they are looking at, things they might be trying to change, or things they are monitoring. So advocacy organizations, I think, are a good place to start.

Slide 12: Youth-specific needs

In addition to the challenges we've already mentioned, some groups of youth may prefer specialized services. In modules 3, 4, and 5, we addressed the challenges that many youth and families of color encounter related to economic difficulties and distrust of systems. Youth of color may prefer to be served by culturally specific agencies which are not available in all communities. Staff in mainstream organizations need to know about them to refer youth appropriately.

Similarly, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, asexual, and two-spirited (LGBTQIA2-S) youth and young adults may prefer specialized services. Again, service providers need to know if such services are available and make appropriate referrals.

Youth with co-occurring substance abuse disorders and mental health disorders have great difficulty getting their complex needs met in many communities if these different conditions are addressed by different systems.

Slide 13: 8.1 Question

What are the major challenges that prevent youth getting their needs met holistically?
(Please enter your answer by checking the correct box).

Slide 14: 8.2 Challenges to Collaboration and Partnerships

In this section, we focus on challenges to collaboration and partnerships.

Slide 15: Challenges to collaboration

Young people are served by service providers who have different amounts and types of training, who work for different systems, and who identify with different professions, or provider groups. As a result, these providers may not be prepared to collaborate to meet youth's needs holistically. For example, psychiatrists, social workers, peer support providers, and housing providers have very different training, missions, values, and goals, as well as distinct areas of expertise.

They also develop roles and defined areas of responsibility sometimes described as "professional turf" as well as their own jargon and abbreviations, which has the effect of excluding young people, families, and peer support providers from the conversation. Professional training also typically prepares service providers to make independent decisions, and to value their own autonomy, resulting in the potential for conflict with providers who view the situation differently.

Additionally, there are few organizational supports for collaboration and service coordination, and high caseloads limit the time service providers have available to engage in collaboration.

These differences are associated with different levels of power and the emergence of hierarchies in teams. For example, physicians and psychiatrists may use their power to limit others' influence on decisions, thereby silencing team members such as peer support or family support staff, who may know the youth and family better.

Slide 16: Ethical dimensions of collaboration

Collaboration is also constrained by the different codes of ethics for various professions. For example, medical providers are bound by the Hippocratic Oath to do no harm. The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers emphasizes the goals of social justice and service user self-determination while the codes of counselors and psychologists emphasize the qualities of service providers, such as responsibility, honesty, and trustworthiness.

- Confidentiality is a guiding principle for all helping professionals and there are legal requirements related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (often called HIPAA). In post-secondary education settings, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (also called FERPA) limits disclosure of information to others. These laws constrain what information service providers are willing to share with other providers in order to plan collaboratively, although these rules can be waived when the young person signs a release of information form.
- Client safety is another over-riding principle for all professions that may unite providers working together.
- Also, competence is an ethical principle which limits service providers to their own area of expertise, and may increase collaboration if providers are aware of complex needs that they are unable to address alone.
- Finally, regardless of professional affiliation, intersystem conflicts may provide challenges to collaboration as Don Schweitzer will describe in the next video segment.

Slide 17: Challenges to Collaborators [Video Clip]

It is challenging because people within their own systems have their own needs, concerns, fears. They are fighting for funding here or perhaps losing some there; maybe someone is providing a service that seems like “That’s what we do. Why are you taking that service?” You can have these intersystem conflicts that start to occur. When we go into these collaborations we need to understand (just as we would working with a young person) what are these people’s needs and what are their concerns and what are their fears, and making sure we understand that as we are working and trying to build a system of care together.

Slide 18: 8.2 Question

What are two examples of challenges to collaboration? Please type your answer in the text box.

Slide 19: 8.3 Skills for Cross-System Collaboration and Partnerships

In this section we will focus on the skills and supports needed for collaboration and partnerships across systems and professions that are necessary to meet the needs of youth and young adults.

Slide 20: Collaboration to bridge systems

Collaboration is defined as reaching within and across services and systems to build constructive working relationships focused on assisting young people to achieve their goals when confronted with fragmented systems. Ideally, effective collaboration requires supports at the organizational and system levels as well as attitudes, knowledge and skills on the part of service providers. First we will focus on organizational supports for collaboration, then we will examine the attributes needed by service providers whether or not there are organizational supports in place.

Slide 21: Organizational structures to support collaboration

Ideally, collaboration and partnerships are supported by policies, structures, and resources at organizational and system levels that recognize their interdependence in serving youth and young adults holistically (Bronstein, 2003). The system of care approach supports comprehensive, integrated services and has influenced the development of Wraparound services where providers agree to “wrap services and supports around” a youth and family using team-based planning. In some communities, some agencies and systems have pooled their funding as a strategy to support a holistic approach to meeting youth needs and this in turn supports collaboration and partnerships. At the federal level, in recent years there have been initiatives to create integrated care systems, where behavioral health and substance abuse services are integrated with primary care. These initiatives have led to the development of co-located and integrated systems where primary care is viewed as the gateway to all needed services. In integrated care systems, young people are served by a collaborative interprofessional team who develop, plan, and implement an integrated treatment plan with shared funding and record keeping to ensure holistic care. The creation of collaborative and integrated care systems has advanced further in Canada, Australia, and the U.K., compared with the U.S., and unfortunately in many U.S. communities, services for young people continue to be fragmented.

Slide 22: Organizational supports for collaboration and partnerships

Several studies featured in the resource list for this module have identified organizational supports for collaboration and partnerships, such as:

- Clearly defined roles
- Agency-level representatives and teams meeting regularly to avoid and resolve tensions (Weist et al., 2001).

- Written interagency agreements and practice guideline to coordinate referral, eligibility determination, and service delivery across systems with progress reports exchanged regularly.
- Release of information forms across systems to allow information flow with clear agreements about confidentiality.
- Regular cross-training of staff
- Reduced caseloads to allow time for collaboration
- Interagency liaisons or specialist coordinators assigned to service users, and
- Broadened eligibility criteria for mental health services to integrate preventive, early intervention, and treatment services

(Darlington & Feeney, 2008; Kapp et al., 2013; U.S. GAO Report, 2008).

Slide 23: Developing collaborative relationships

Even where there are no formal inter-agency policies or procedures in place, individual staff can cultivate the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and relationships needed for partnerships and collaboration. Service providers can share information with other service providers involved with the same youth and families. Taking time to clarify roles, resolve boundary issues, and identify a lead agency will assist in meeting youth and family needs more effectively.

In thinking about how best to meet young people's needs, service providers identify the partners involved with the young person including those from both the youth and adult systems as well as from different service domains, and clearly define roles and leadership.

Collaboration is facilitated when service providers share responsibilities and goals for youth based on the idea that youth don't "belong" to one system or the other but to both. It is also important to have joint case conferences or wraparound-type meetings, negotiating confidentiality and sharing information.

Successful collaborative relationships are characterized by mutual respect for each other's knowledge, skills, and roles. Regular contacts, trust and consistency are also helpful for relationships to be sustained.

Finally, staff's personal characteristics and behaviors are also important, including being responsive to requests, following through, and being friendly, interested, attentive, and open to suggestions (Bronstein, 2003; Darlington & Feeney; Kapp et al.).

Slide 24: Skills for collaboration

Based on her research, Pippa Hall (2005) has identified skills for collaborative teamwork which we encourage you to cultivate in yourself:

- Cooperation: Acknowledging and respecting other opinions while being willing to examine and change personal perspectives.
- Responsibility: Accepting and sharing responsibilities and participating in group decision-making.
- Communication: Effectively sharing important information and discussing ideas.
- Autonomy: Developing the ability to work independently.
- Coordination: Achieving efficient coordination of group tasks and assignments.
- A clear focus or goal is needed for teamwork to succeed. Collective ownership of goals is associated with greater success in the implementation of plans. Care is needed if conflict arises, for example, if one team member takes on the role of youth advocate in conflict with collective team goals. Youth voice and where appropriate, family voice in team-based goal setting is an important element of empowerment which we discuss in the next section.
- Leadership skills are crucial. It is important to recognize group dynamics and facilitate the team discussion. This may be especially important when the team is made up of members of different groups, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and peer support providers. Reflection on the process of working together is an opportunity to use feedback to strengthen collaborative relationships and effectiveness (Bronstein, 2003).
- Next, we'll discuss two examples of programs that have partnerships as a central feature of their programming.

Slide 25: Collaboration examples

There are many programs that are using collaboration and partnerships with other programs to assure that young adult needs are met comprehensively. Here we will feature two that were described in a 2014 Pathways webinar on Bridging Service Gaps (see Melton, Campbell, Fagan, and Brennan on our resource list for the link to this webinar (https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/Webinar_Bridging-Service-Gaps-08.26.14.pdf))

The Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA) in Portland OR provides outreach and early intervention with youth and young adults experiencing their first psychotic break. The goal of services and supports which are developed and delivered through partnerships with families and a range of providers is to minimize disability and support entry into normal adult roles.

We also featured Thresholds Youth Programs in Chicago IL, which serves young adults transitioning out of child welfare and residential treatment settings. Thresholds has a

holistic focus and aims to meet needs in all domains of the young adult's life, including: education, employment, housing, peer supports, family relationships, successful launching into adulthood, and holistic wellness (Melton, Campbell, Fagan, & Brennan, 2014).

Slide 26: Expanding collaboration and partnerships

Based on our work with youth, young adults, and families, we recommend expanding collaborative groups and partnerships to include the voices of youth, family members, peers, advocacy groups, and community organizations to better serve young people.

As we noted earlier, some groups of youth have specific preferences that should be considered in collaborative efforts. Therefore, we also recommend:

Partnering with members of culturally diverse communities for mentoring and support

Partnering with staff and advocates at LGBTQI2-S serving organizations

In the next video segments, Don Schweitzer talks about the skills needed for collaboration.

Also, Joy DeGruy emphasizes the importance of finding service providers who have the skills to work with African American youth and families.

Slide 27: Skills for Collaboration [Video Clip] **

Don Schweitzer: Some skills needed for effective collaboration with other service providers, the first thing is patience. We have to be patient when we're doing this kind of collaboration work. We also have to be very thoughtful about it, too. It's challenging work to do collaboration building, but it's needed and necessary work, if we want the young people that we are serving to thrive. But it is also challenging because people within their own systems have their own needs, concerns, fears. They are fighting for funding here or perhaps losing some there; maybe someone is providing a service that seems like "That's what we do. Why are you taking that service?" You can have these intersystem conflicts that start to occur. When we go into these collaboration meetings we need to understand (just as we would working with a young person) what are these people's needs and what are their concerns and what are their fears, and making sure we understand that as we are working and trying to build a system of care together. Being patient and kind and forgiving, because we are going to interact with people we may not care for. And that is no excuse, because of the responsibility we have to the young people we work with, that is no excuse to not continue to build that collaboration and that system of care.

Joy DeGruy: I guess really finding out what is within in the community; who are the key people in this kid's life that are going to make a difference that I can engage in this process of helping them. Who are the key players and what are the agencies, who within those agencies is aware of these kinds of issues and is able to competently deal with them? Again, it's like with anyone else. If you were to ask me to recommend a couples' therapist, I

would ask you a whole lot of questions about what do you mean, what kind of person, who are they? We would talk about whether they would want a female [therapist]. Somehow we go all the steps and miss the cultural piece. I say we've got to add in that [cultural] layer, and by the way, does this person know how to engage African Americans? That's the first question I have whereas other people [say] "Oh Gee, I think they will do well with a female therapist, or with someone who has a background in abuse and, oh yeah, maybe we need to see if they are used to working with Black people." No, no, I'm going to ask that first. Is this person that's engaging with this person, this family, this child, this youth – does this person have the skills that are appropriate and necessary to work with the African American community and African American people? That's number one.

Slide 28: 8.3 Question

Why is collaboration among service providers helpful in youth and young adult mental health services?

Please type your answer in the text box.

Slide 29: 8.4 Engaging and Supporting Youth to Meet Their Needs

In addition to engaging in collaboration and partnerships with other service providers to bridge service gaps, it is vitally important to partner with youth and young adults, and where the youth wish, their families. In this section, we will address the supports you might provide for youth and young adults to participate effectively in their own service planning across systems.

Slide 30: Supporting young people navigating service systems

To support youth and young adults to engage in their own cross-system service planning, in 2008 a report was published by the Government Accountability Office titled *Young adults with serious mental illness: Some states and federal agencies are taking steps to address their transition challenges*. (<http://www.gao.gov/assets/280/277167.pdf>) This report identified strategies for assisting young people to navigate service systems, including the following:

- Assist youth to identify goals across life domains and to find settings that will provide opportunities to achieve goals
- Develop relationships with providers in agencies you refer youth to, so you understand each other's roles and approaches and can be confident youth will be treated with respect. Cultivate relationships with culturally specific agencies so that youth cultural preferences will be addressed
- Collaborate across systems to develop shared goals and coordinated plans.
- If youth wish, accompany them to visit new agencies and meet new providers.

- Coach youth in skills to advocate on their own behalf in reaching out to new providers, teachers, or employers.

This report and one from the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law entitled “*Promise for the future: A compendium of fact sheets on federal programs for transition-age youth with mental health conditions*” (<http://www.bazelon.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Promise-for-the-Future.pdf>) are included on our resource list for this module.

Slide 31: Supporting youth engagement in collaboration

Janet Walker and her associates on the Achieve My Plan project at the Pathways Research and Training Center have developed a model of coaching to prepare youth and young adults to participate effectively in team-based planning on their own behalf. Many of the strategies they recommend may be useful in your work. Some of these strategies and steps occur in advance of the meeting, such as:

- Promote an organizational culture where youth participation is seen as feasible and valued
- In advance of the meeting consult with youth about their agenda and what they hope to accomplish in the meeting
- Provide adequate preparation so youth have time to think about and prepare what they want to say. This may involve discussing what the youth wants to say and practicing or role playing with the youth before the meeting.
- Work with the young person to plan how to stay calm and focused, and
- Invite youth to identify support persons and prepare those persons for their role in meetings.

Additionally, Walker and her team provide useful tips for conducting collaborative meetings so that youth are engaged as active participants and their contributions are taken seriously. We encourage you to review their Best Practices document which is included in our resource guide and available on the Pathways RTC website.

Slide 32: Effective collaboration with youth and young adults

As a service provider encouraging youth and young adult engagement in collaborative services planning, you can work to assure that the conditions needed for youth-driven services are present. According to Jennings and colleagues (2006), for youth to be full collaborators in planning and decision-making, the following conditions must be met:

- Establishing a safe, welcoming, and non-stigmatizing environment where youth are supported by selected allies, such as a parent, peer support person, or mentor.

- Striving for meaningful engagement and participation, implying that service providers create real opportunities for young people to have their say in meetings, listen respectfully, and assure that service plans are in line with youth preferences, if possible. Where this is not possible, young people deserve to know the reasons and to learn about potential alternatives.
- Working toward more equitable power sharing since this mode of communication draws attention to the power differential between youth and service providers. We will examine issues of power in the final section of this module.
- Where there are disagreements, it may be helpful to engage in critical reflection on the interactions that have occurred and agree on strategies to manage or resolve tensions.

In the next video segment, Janet Walker talks about the benefits of assisting young people to have a voice in decisions as a preparation for becoming effective advocates.

Slide 33: Supporting Youth Voice [Video Clip]

Success is one of the primary drivers of more success. We see this in all of the contexts that we work with young people; where they take a voice, they know what they want, they ask for help. It's often extremely surprising to the providers that they're working with, but also, they *like* it.

So for example, one of our interventions that we have is young people who have been working with Wraparound teams. So these are teams of providers that they have been working with for some time. So our intervention goes in and provides them with some coaching as to how to present their own goals and activities to the team. We do a post-meeting survey after the initial meeting where they presented their goals. You might think on the one hand, they are getting their own ideas [expressed] maybe they will run counter to the team. But the post-meeting surveys we have are universally just really positive. The adults in the room, and the providers, and families are excited about seeing the young people taking the initiative, doing something. Of course our intervention structures it to be something that the young people really want, and that they know the team will support as well. The design is to build a successful experience.

In turn, we hope that through this experience, not just on one team, but across these [Wraparound] teams, that the organization will start to loosen up a little bit; to understand what it means to have youth involved and to become more supportive, and more deeply involved in promoting youth participation and understanding what it really means.

Slide 34: 8.4 Question

What is **not** an effective way to partner with youth? Please check the correct box.

Slide 35: 8.5 Consulting with Young Adults Who Are Seeking Accommodations

In this section we will discuss the roles of service providers assisting youth and young adults in deciding whether and how to seek accommodations in the workplace or college setting to be successful in these areas of life and as a way to bridge service gaps.

Slide 36: Seeking accommodations in college or employment

One of the effects of stigmatization due to being seen as a person with a mental health difficulty is that young people may be fearful about pursuing opportunities through education, or employment.

For recovery, pursuing these opportunities is important for good mental health and not pursuing them is likely to have negative effects such as a lack of sense of purpose and meaning, social isolation, and worsening mental health. By sharing information about their needs, young people can increase their likelihood of success. They also take a personal risk because of the widespread prevalence of stigma toward mental health difficulties.

Slide 37: The right to accommodations

Under federal laws, people of all ages with disabilities, including mental health disabilities, are entitled to accommodations to be able to be successful in school or employment. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (or IDEA) entitles students in school to accommodations in their educational program.

While the arrangements are different in college and university settings, in comparison with primary and secondary schools, students who qualify are entitled to accommodations. These accommodations are arranged through the Disability Resource Center on their college campus. Additionally, the Americans with Disabilities Act includes language about accommodations in the workplace.

Youth and young adults may not be aware of their rights under these laws, so you may be able to inform them of the potential benefits as well as risks, and support them in decision making about accommodations. You may also talk with them about the risks associated with the necessary disclosure.

Slide 38: Deciding whether to disclose

The first step in obtaining an accommodation is making the decision to disclose a disability and you can assist youth to decide if they wish disclose their condition. In the school system young people are entitled to certain supports but once they transition to post-secondary education or employment they need to actively seek accommodations and prove eligibility. A conversation about disclosure is necessary in order to bridge gaps between child and adult services systems.

As a service provider you assist young people by helping them to think through the advantages and disadvantages of disclosure. Help them to consider:

- Possible disadvantages that may include stigmatization, trouble with self-image, and fear of being seen as needy
- On the other hand, a likely advantage is access to accommodations that enhance success.

There are several useful guides to deciding whether to disclose a mental health condition to an employer, which are included in our resource list. For example, Eric Lulow and the Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health have prepared a Strategic Disclosure Guide and JoAnn Sowers and her colleagues on the Career Visions Project at Pathways prepared a publication titled “If, when, and how to disclose to an employer that you have a mental health disability.” Both of these publications are available on the Pathways website and included in our resource list.

Slide 39: 8.5 Question

Why is it important to encourage youth to consider seeking legal accommodations they are entitled to? Please type your answer in the text box.

Slide 40: 8.6 Supporting Youth to Be Advocates

As youth and young adults gain confidence and skills in representing themselves in meetings to better meet their own needs, they may become motivated to engage in broader advocacy efforts to address service fragmentation and bridge service gaps. In addition to supporting youth in collaboration and partnerships to bridge service gaps to meet their own needs, we recommend engaging and supporting young people to become involved in advocacy for program and system changes. In this section, we will suggest supports you might provide to young people to engage in advocacy for system change. We will also focus on the importance of meaningful power sharing.

First we will hear from Martin Rafferty, Executive Director of Youth MOVE Oregon as he describes Youth MOVE’s support for youth advocacy. Then Maria a young woman engaged in advocacy on behalf of Latino youth talks about how she was supported to develop leadership skills.

Slide 41: Youth Advocacy [Video Clip]

Martin Rafferty: Youth MOVE Oregon is a state chapter of a national movement; MOVE is an acronym for Motivating Others through Voices of Experience. The work that we do is that we utilize peers that means folks who have been through the [service] systems. Our primary audience are young people with mental health [experience]. We work with young people in the mental health system as an audience, and also work with folks who are

providing services to youth in the mental health system. We also work with families of youth in the mental health system. So it is not just about working with youth; it's also about working with families and professionals. We have drop-in centers across the state, and leadership curriculum groups across the state. Our goals are to make young people into leaders of their own lives, and then eventually have them come back and become leaders in the system. Youth MOVE is a direct service, but also an advocacy services as well, fueled by the young people themselves.

If I could say one thing to service providers, and it's a really simple thing that they can do to radically change the effectiveness of their overall system, is to bring young adults and near peers, people who have just gone through their system, bring them onto the decision making Boards. Bring them into real authority in the organization and the processes. Sometimes it doesn't make sense to bring in youth who are going through services at that level. Youth who have been your success stories, who have walked through your services, bring them back and give them the reins over the program, give them leadership, real leadership over the program. So many times when we have encouraged service providers here in Oregon to do that, they've been shocked by how much money they save, how much more success they have, and all the value that these young adults bring.

When we bring young people into big council rooms or big Boards and we give them the skills and the tools to speak well on these subjects and influence change in the systems, they feel such an achievement from that, that it can't help but bubble over into the other parts of their lives. When they feel that they can advocate for themselves or for other young people going through the system, it really changes how they think of themselves. They start to think of themselves as very confident and very able to create real change. That advocacy helps the system, helps other young people, but it truly helps the youth who are advocating as well.

Maria: One of the many providers that really helped me is Yolanda Gonzalez. She works with Speak Up and Empower. She's the one that pretty much helped me get out of my shell and get out there and become a great leader. She was my mentor for two years and I am really grateful for that. She is the one who was working, kind of like facilitating the project. She was the one who was teaching me and everybody else in the project new things, such as how to be in a council. Thanks to her, I'm now a youth executive representative at CMHSAC, the Children's Mental Health Systems Advisory Council of Portland. She has made a really great impact on my life.

Slide 42: Engaging youth in advocacy

As we've heard from Martin and Maria, it's important for young people to be given opportunities and support to practice their advocacy and leadership skills and gain confidence in their abilities to speak out. As a service provider, you can create the

conditions needed for youth engagement and offer support for youth involvement in advocacy in program change and system change.

Jennings and colleagues (2006) recommend supports for youth to be full collaborators in advocacy, planning and decision-making regarding program change. For effective youth engagement in program and system change, they recommend: a safe and welcoming environment where youth have meaningful engagement and participation. Ideally, there will be a continuum of empowerment so that as youth and young adults progress in their recovery and gain confidence and skills in advocacy from individual-level to system-level, they can become active participants in system change to make systems more responsive to young people's needs.

Slide 43: Ladder of youth voice

Roger Hart, a sociologist who worked for UNICEF, developed the ladder of youth participation to illustrate the levels of influence that are possible when youth participate in planning and decision making. According to Andrew Fletcher and the Free Child Project who have extended Hart's work, the three lowest levels do not constitute participation, while the upper levels indicate increasing levels of influence over decisions.

For service providers inviting young people to engage in planning and decision making, it may be informative to consider the level of youth participation you and your organization are willing to support. For example, the lower levels refer to involving youth in ways that are superficial and in which they have no influence over planning or decisions. The higher levels denote increasing levels of influence and power, with youth initiated proposals and plans shared with adults at the highest level.

Slide 44: Supporting youth in collaboration and advocacy

Advocacy and support organizations such as Youth MOVE National and its state chapters support the meaningful involvement of young adults and families in developing policies and aligning supports for youth with mental health difficulties.

Lacy Kendrick Burk, former Executive Director of Youth Move National, Johanna Bergan and other Youth MOVE National leaders have developed a guide for young people advocating for service and system change titled "Youth advocate to advocate for youth" which is included in our resource list. This publication guides young people through steps to expand their advocate role and conceptualizes the role of Supportive Adult. Another Youth MOVE publication titled "What helps, what harms" also provides useful information for service providers engaging with young people.

It is important to be aware that talking about their experiences in a public setting may be a traumatic experience for a young adult. As a service provider you can support young

people to prepare for such disclosure and offer follow up support. In Module 6 of this training series, we talked about the Trauma-Informed Method of Engagement or TIME model. If you have not done so, we suggest that you review this module before encouraging a young person to “go public” with their story, so that you are prepared to support the young person and alleviate the potentially traumatic effects of disclosing difficult personal experiences. The resource list for this module includes useful resources to recommend to youth involved in strategic disclosure.

Slide 45: Youth MOVE advice for supportive adults

Youth MOVE offers advice for Supportive Adults to assist young people engaging in advocacy and leadership, which you may find helpful:

- To begin with, let youth speak first and define what they need. Don't assume you know what the young person wants.
- Give space for youth to contribute meaningfully and drive the conversation. This may require stepping back and allowing the young person to make mistakes in order to learn.
- Find ways to let a young person lead, initiate, and take control of his or her life and story – asking questions may be a good way to encourage this, which enables the young person to arrive at his or her own decisions.

In the next video segments, Don Schweitzer talks about engaging youth in system level change activities initially through participation in an advisory group, and paying youth for their time.

Lacy Kendrick Burk, a partner at Change Matrix, talks about preparing youth to engage in advocacy and Martin Rafferty adds his advice.

Following the video we will provide a link to the references and resource list prepared for this module which will be posted on the Pathways website.

Slide 46: Supporting Youth in Advocacy [Video Clip]

Don Schweitzer: There are multiple ways of engaging young people, and I would suggest that it really comes down to this individual, and who they are, and what their desires are. I want to preface that a little that oftentimes young people are not thinking about their desires in changing and improving services. It's about starting to have a conversation with them about that, and what would it look like in those kinds of ways. Right on the heels of that, the most success that I've had with engaging young people in any kind of project has been to *pay* them, just as I like to be paid for the work that I do. I know that it can be challenging for organizations and agencies. I know that there are not enough loose dollars running around for this. Little things can make a big difference; it has such an impact on

the young person. It becomes a job for them even if it's just an hour or two a week; it gives them money that they can go out and spend. It helps them feel a sense that they are starting to take control of their lives. I think there are so many benefits to engaging young people in this, aside from you're going to create better services if young people's voices become a part of this process. Aside from that, there are so many benefits for the young person in their own personal development. We have to start looking for ways to hire young people within our organizations and in our structures. It needs to be part of what we do.

The skill sets needed to engage young people again come back to that same set of skills you need to engage and collaborate with systems in your community. You need to be patient; it takes time. I like to think of it as an investment in doing things better as well as the benefits the young person is going to get around this. It may not work the first time. Some of the challenges come when we go out into our agencies and recommend a Youth Advisory Board; that seems like a fundamental place to start, and I would agree with that if you don't have something like that in place already. It's not surprising that a lot of people respond saying: "We tried that and it didn't work." That's no reason not to try it again. Why didn't it work? Think about who was involved, what did you try to do. Let's try this again.

I met with some people doing youth services in Scotland over the summer and I asked them the question about youth involvement, meaningful youth participation. They talked about how they tried to put youth on the Board and it didn't work. They felt it was because there were discussions about finances and policy changes and it was just boring young people to death. What they did was to split up the responsibilities of the agency. The Board of Directors was taking care of finances, policies, and those kinds of things, but there's a Youth Board was in charge of programming: how do we do the services within the agency, how do we do programs that are youth friendly and youth empowering. They have had great participation in that.

Lacy Kendrick-Burk: Youth Move National is the national youth led organization which works to unite the voices and causes of young people across different systems. Youth Move stands for Motivating Others through Voices of Experience. We work in a collective to unite young people who have experienced various systems including mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, and education. We present that voice and support young people and adults working together to create positive change.

One of the most helpful things service providers can do for young people is to *listen*. Listen to the young people individually (in their own case plans) and also listen on an organizational level and include Youth Voice and the work that they do at a program level, at a systems level, and at an administrative level. Also being able to recognize strengths in young people, meeting young people where they are and helping to build them up,

allowing for room to learn from mistakes and helping to believe in them when sometimes young people don't believe in themselves.

One of the biggest questions we get is "What we can do to keep young people more engaged?" Involving young people at a program level is one great way to get young people engaged and to keep them coming back. Because if you are meaningfully involving young people at a program level, in the design of the program, the implementation and delivery, and also the evaluation, then young people are much more likely to come because they had a say in what it's supposed to look like and what's working for them.

Martin Rafferty: When bringing young people on to lead and to advocate in the system, it's always important to bring two youth or more. Creating that team and creating a group, within the group, to really lean on each other. It's also really important to understand that these young people don't have the nine to five experience that other people around these decision making bodies have.

I think it's a mistake to look at young people who are coming into a council, an advisory council for instance, and say, "It's a drag for us to slow down and explain everything to these young people because they are not educated and they don't understand; how could they possibly understand?" What's really lacking in that statement, and that feeling against young people and consumers in general, is that you take anyone from the street, someone who is expert in some other field and you bring them into this field, they are not educated in the acronyms and the jargon. You have to spend the time to educate them, and it's not because they are not just as capable as you are. It's because they don't work the job nine to five like you do, so you have to slow down.

Slide 47: Resources

On this slide, we provide a link to resources and references that you may find helpful in your work and we encourage you to share relevant items with youth, young adults, and families.

Slide 48: Next Module

We would like to invite you to participate in Module 9, "Promoting Support from Family, Peers, and Mentors." This module focuses on:

- Promoting and enhancing support from families, adult allies, and others,
- Identifying and partnering with peer support providers, and
- Working with formal and informal mentors to support achievement of young people's goals.

Finally, we conclude this module with a quiz covering the major areas of content.

Slide 49: Credits

We'd like to acknowledge and thank the people who contributed to the development of this module on planning partnerships and collaborating to bridge service gaps.

Slide 50: Acknowledgements / Funders

The contents of this module were developed through funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research and from the Center for Mental Health Services.

Slide 51: You're Almost Done!

Please complete each of the 10 questions in the Module 8 Quiz as part of your training experience. Please check the BEST answer for each question.

Participants who successfully complete this final part of the training will be able to print out a certificate of completion.

Slides 52: Module 8 Quiz**Slide 53: Certificate of Completion**