Module 9:

Promoting Support from Family, Peers, and Mentors

Objectives

1. To collaborate with young people to identify their preferred supports for community living and participation.
2. To promote and enhance family support.
3. To connect with community supports, including support from adult allies, faith communities, and online support.
4. To work with formal and informal mentors to support achievement of young people's goals.
5. To access and partner with peer support providers.

Scenario for Team Discussion

Supporting Youth Decision Making ~ Tim

Tim, a 17 year-old youth who lived with his mom and a younger sister was arrested for vandalism at his school. He was introduced to a peer support provider as part of a diversion project focused on supporting youth goals and enhancing self-determination. The peer supporter, Alice, spent a lot of time getting to know Tim, who was a very sociable person and fun to be with. In one of their meetings Tim disclosed being on psychotropic medication and complained about how it made him feel.

About six months into their work together, Alice heard from Tim's mom that she was worried about his bizarre behaviors. Alice herself began to notice behaviors that matched the symptoms of early psychosis or schizophrenia. Tim had been arrested again as well as hospitalized following two incidents. Tim was very open with Alice about hearing voices and at the same time exhibiting extreme personality changes over the last several months. With Tim's agreement, Alice reached out to the local early intervention team for young adults experiencing a first episode of psychosis. A team worker met with Tim, conducted an assessment and concluded he was not experiencing psychosis at the time. Alice later learned from Tim that, combined with his prescribed medications, he was using a large quantity of street drugs that have effects that can mimic psychosis or lead to episodes of psychosis.

Questions for Team Discussion

After reading and thinking about the scenario above, engage in a staff discussion of the following questions:

1. How would you react to Tim's disclosure of use of non-prescribed drugs in combination with his prescribed medication?
2. What are the issues you would want to discuss with Tim?
3. If you were Alice, how would you engage with Tim to address these issues?
4. How might you involve Tim's mom?
5. Who else would you involve?

Debriefing

After discussing the scenario, it may be useful to reflect on what staff members learned from each other, using the following questions to guide the conversation:

1. What ideas about assisting Tim seem to be most useful?
2. Where are the areas of agreement and disagreement regarding Tim's illegal drug use?
3. What are the different perspectives about involving Tim's mom in services?
4. In what ways do the team's responses help you to think differently about how to proceed with Tim?

Module 9 Discussion Questions

Here we offer questions to guide discussion of how module 9 content could be applied in your team's work in the local area and with the young people you serve:

1. What makes it challenging to involve some families? What do you do in a situation where a family is very supportive in one area of the young person's life (for example, education) but is unhelpful in another area (drug use)?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your relationships with your own family and how do they affect how you work with families?

3. Think of a time you worked with a youth or family where there was conflict between the young person and the family. What did you do that was effective in improving relationships and increasing family support?

4. What challenges have you encountered connecting young people to community supports?

5. What community supports have you been able to connect young people with? What did you do to facilitate the connection?

6. Can you give an example of when you connected a young person with a mentor or peer support provider successfully? What did you do to enhance their relationship?