

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

**How to Engage T-A-Y Into
Adult Services**

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**Families
Together**
in New York State

FTNYS

FAMILIES TOGETHER IN NEW YORK STATE

- Family-run organization that represents families of young people with social, emotional, behavioral, and cross-systems challenges.
- Credentialing body of the Family Peer Advocate (FPA) credential, and Youth Peer Advocate (YPA) credential.
- Youth Power is Families Together's statewide network that is run for and by youth and young adults.

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FTNYS GOAL:

Our goal is to ensure that ALL children and youth have the support they need in order to succeed.

Youth Power

Youth Power is the New York State network of young people who have been labeled and are seeking change. Together, we have decided to speak up about our experiences because no one knows what it is like for us better than we do.

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WHAT'S YOUR COMFORT LEVEL?

What is your comfort level with engaging young adults?

1. Not comfortable at all
2. Somewhat comfortable
3. Very comfortable

WHAT IS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT?

- Youth engagement is the result when young people are involved in responsible, challenging actions to create positive social change. This means involving youth in planning and in making decisions that affect themselves and others.
- Youth engagement happens in youth-adult partnership that are structured so that both groups contribute, teach, and learn from each other.
- Other phrases for “youth engagement”
 - Youth Guided
 - Youth Voice
 - Youth Participation
 - Youth in Governance

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WHY DO WE NEED T-A-Y ENGAGEMENT?

- **Young people** benefit by gaining skills, knowledge, self-esteem, and connectedness.
- **Adults** benefit by enhancing their own competencies, learning to better understand and value youth, and increasing their commitment and energy to their organizations.
- **Organizations** benefit by improving their programs, gaining community recognition, and attracting funders.
- **Communities** benefit by improving quality of life, coordinating youth services, and authentically embracing diversity by representing young people.
- **Increased** number of youth members/participants

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* In his 2007 book "The Good Teen," Richard M. Lerner included this additional outcome

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TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE T-A-Y ENGAGEMENT

- Youth participatory evaluations
- Person centered planning
- Trauma informed approaches
- Self directed practices
- Creating spaces specifically for T-A-Y



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LET'S HEAR FROM THE YOUNG ADULTS



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T-A-Y ENGAGEMENT IS NOT

Manipulation:

- Adults use young people to support their own projects and pretend they are the result of young peoples inspiration

Decoration:

- Young people help implement adult initiatives

Tokenism:

- Participation for show – young people have little or no impact on their activities



T-A-Y & ADULT PARTNERSHIPS



T-A-Y & ADULT PARTNERSHIPS



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

- Two-thirds of young people reported that they were struggling or starting to struggle to **pay their bills**.
- Two-thirds reported a **reduction in, or loss, of employment** and providers reported that helping youth navigate filing for unemployment benefits was a highly requested service.]
- Just over half reported they are experiencing some level of **food insecurity**.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

- Over 1/3 of young people reported that the health crisis had a negative impact on their **educational progress**.
- More than half reported struggling with **safe and stable housing** and their service providers and allies listed housing at the top of the list of requests for assistance and at the top of list where resources were lacking.
- COVID has exposed disparities within communities of color

COVID'S IMPACT IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

People of color are:

- At an increased risk for serious illness if they contract COVID-19 due to higher rates of underlying health conditions, such as diabetes, asthma, hypertension, and obesity compared to Whites;
- More likely to be uninsured and to lack a usual source of care which is an impediment to accessing COVID-19 testing and treatment services;
- More likely to work in the service industries such as restaurants, retail, and hospitality that are particularly at risk for loss of income during the pandemic;
- More likely to live in housing situations, such as multigenerational families or low-income and public housing that make it difficult to social distance or self-isolate; and
 - Often working in jobs that are not amenable to teleworking and use public transportation that puts them at risk for exposure to COVID-19. (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2020; Health Affairs, 2020)

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CHALLENGES FACES BY T-A-Y AT LARGE

- **Discrimination**
 - Discrimination is still one of the primary reasons TAY do not seek help for mental health challenges.
- **Lack of representation**
 - Transition Age Youth are underrepresented, they do not have a voice in local or state governments and all too often the needs of TAY are ignored.
- **Absence of Trust**
 - Youth do not trust local and state elected officials, police officers, counselors, and mental health providers.
- **Lack of TAY Specific Services**
 - Transition Age Youth do not have their own mental health system of care. They fall in the children's or adult systems of care and these structures are inadequate in addressing the needs of TAY.

CHALLENGES FOR T-A-Y

- **Disempowerment**
 - Youth feeling less than an equal partner in meetings, committees, and boards. TAY are led to believe that their voice does not matter – but it does!
- **Misunderstanding of TAY Culture**
 - People do not understand the culture of today's youth which furthers stigma and discrimination.
- **Access to services already in existence**
 - Even when a youth is able to overcome stigma, many youth still do not know where to go, or who to turn to when they need help.
- **Housing**
 - California has one of the highest rates in the country of homeless youth. In order for youth to find success, they need a stable place to live!
- **Education**
 - Youth need opportunities to become successful and a path to an education can open the door to success.

STATEWIDE NETWORK ACTIVITIES



- Regional focus groups for young people
- Regional Peer Leader Support & Development (PLSD) and Youth Peer Advocate Leaders (YPAL) Meetings
- Training, Educational & Skill Building Workshops
- Technical Assistance (TA)
- YP membership, YP Ambassadors
- Youth Power Advisory Council
- Free 2 Be Podcast
- #YPSpreadHope Campaign

RESOURCES & TOOLS

Tools for Youth Engagement:

- <https://adamfletcher.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ASIYE.pdf>

COVID-19 and Behavioral Health Disparities for Black and Latino Communities in the U.S.

- <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/covid19-behavioral-health-disparities-black-latino-communities.pdf>

Creating Youth & Adult Partnerships:

- <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Youth-Adult-Partnerships-in-Decision-Making%3A-and-an-Zeldin-Petrokubi/1523ac6dc144d65f964e10964868d38b435dc8>

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

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