

**System of Care
Youth Focus Group – Plan Feedback
Results
June 11th, 2014**

Overview: In an effort to maintain youth involvement in the development of the System of Care, the opportunity to hold focus groups to review the System of Care plan was offered to Behavioral Health Regions, community providers and other youth groups. The short review time and time of year limited the response rate significantly. Feedback from thirty-two youth was gathered from Behavioral Health Region 3, 4, and 6. Nebraska Families Collaborative offered groups; however, no youth were able to attend.

Participating agencies were provided an informational packet containing focus group instructions, a synthesized version of the System of Care plan, questions, invoice, and notes template. Questions were determined during a meeting of Program Management Team members and are listed along with their responses.

Notes: Below are condensed notes of the responses gathered.

1. *If the System of Care prioritized which services they would provide first and offer to all youth, what would it be?*

- Therapy (16)
 - Telling them about counseling services on a sliding fee scale and medication help and programs
- PPP (6) – help you understand you need to do
- SSI/Health insurance (3)
- Housing (3)
- School services (3)
- Legal advice
- Making sure placements are safe
- Housing/Independent living place
- Disability assistance
- Substance Abuse help (3)
- Project Everlast
- Transitional PP.
- School daily or at least 3 times a week.
- Medication appointments if medications are needed.
- Most of all we need friendships, deep, meaningful friendships
- No idea
- Personal supervision

2. *If you were having a really bad day and were in crises, what would help you the most?*

- Having someone to talk (12)
 - Parent/Family (2)
 - Who knows what you're going through
 - Support person at school
 - Friends
- Sitting by myself/Go to set place to calm down (8)
- Music (6)
- Go outside (5)
 - Running/walk (3)
 - Work out to relieve my stress levels
- Play video games (3)
- Getting to see family/friends (3)
- NA/Counseling (2)
- Doing something you enjoy
- Reading
- Using coping skills (2)
 - Walking away/deep breaths
- Punching a pillow
- Sleeping
- I don't think the hotlines are helpful when I am in a crisis. I think a safe, respite house the youth can go to where staff is present to help you through the crisis would be better. It would need to be the youth's decision to go and not the foster family's decision.
- I don't know, I'm still trying to figure that out.

3. *What advice would you give to the people who make all of the rules about the services you receive?*

- Be less strict (5)
 - Take the needs into consideration, talk to youth first
 - Make a later curfew in summer
 - Expect a little less, kids will try less, but will want to prove self if can accomplish it

- Individuality (5)
 - Need to learn about the person served and be able to match the right service to the right person
 - To remember not everybody is the same, treat everyone individually
 - Not everyone is the same, treat them as they are
 - Everyone has their own way of thinking
 - Pay attention and listen
 - Services need to pay attention to their abilities/help toward goal client wants
- Consumer Voice/Increase Understanding (4)
 - Tell them what we think about the services
 - Learn more about what consumers need
 - I think they should talk to more people who are no longer in the foster care system and get to know what their experience was like firsthand. They need to stay in a foster home for a night to see what it is like.
 - Have them follow same rules for one week and see how they like and they might change to make easier
- Continue what you're doing (4)
 - Keep doing what doing and keep listening to what their needs are
 - Keep doing what you're doing and you're doing a good job (2)
 - Don't change them, they are good how they are
- More time (2)
 - Allow workers to spend more time with us
 - Frequent contact with clients
- Less Time (2)
 - Not have to meet monthly if there are no current problems
 - Shorten sessions up
- Follow directions given, if not, it will get worse
- Give me more video games
- Transportation assistance
- N/A
- Having a PP who helped find the best services I had no idea about has been my greatest asset
- Give more
- You all need to be working together. The schools, counselors, doctors, Region 3 people need to work together!
- Make an easy connection between them and the kid, making for easier communication
- Not to take those decisions lightly
- Live your life, never say I can't

4. *What would you teach staff who work with youth who have behavioral health needs and their families?*

- Verbal De-Escalation (6)
 - Self-calming techniques
 - What helps me calm down
 - Show them what way to talk to youth that helps situations
 - If kids get angry, don't push, let alone then try talking later about it
 - If kids are freaking out, don't tackle them and put in JCD or restraining them/talk through problem and send to room
 - Talk to them to calm down, talk through their issue
- Be Patient and Calm (7)
 - You can see the frustration or irritation on their face some time or in their voice over the phone
 - Kids won't change right away, takes time, stay with them every step of the way
 - Understanding about being a teenager in this generation
 - Don't put too much pressure on them
 - Be easy and be nice

- Be gentle, I don't like pushy people. If someone is pushy I'll do the exact opposite
- How to Relate (6)
 - How to get youth to open up more; how to keep our attention (rapping)
 - To talk more
 - Talk to her or parents then take her on outing to go and talk about problems
 - They won't give out information unless they are comfortable
 - Interpersonal skills
- Individuality (3)
 - People are different
 - Being able to listen to needs of person
 - Don't just read a file of a youth, get to know them personally. I had better relationships with staff that go to know me instead of just reading my file and making assumptions they know me.
- Let teens be more independent (2)
 - Teach how to let kids (youth) make decisions
 - Let me be more independent (play games)
- Be Nonjudgmental (4)
 - Separate behavioral health problems and the person – they are not their disability
 - Don't assume anything about kids and family
 - It's not easy to ask for help so nothing but support for the youth is crucial, even when family doesn't understand or agree
 - That everyone makes mistakes
- I would teach them not to “drag shit out” – let kids be kids and not be so picky. I don't think they should be so strict about rules, especially if the behaviors are not causing a safety concern. There are specific rules I didn't understand and why they were enforced.
- The things learned in counseling
- More about self (strengths/weaknesses)
- More group settings with everyone involved
- Put less pressure on them
- How to handle special need a little bit more

5. *We all know that it's important for youth to understand the system and services they get. How should youth learn about the systems and services they are involved in? (Ex: Social media, one on one conversation, tip sheets, a website, resource library, trainings, etc.) What should these look like?*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One-on-One (18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take time giving them the opportunity to learn it ○ Actually do something and have someone explain while doing it ○ Talking about it makes it easier to understand ○ Explaining it thoroughly ○ Talk to school counselor ○ Talking about it in words that are easy to understand ○ Youth asking questions about what they want to know ○ I will not read a tip sheet or visit a website in my own time, especially if I'm not worried about learning about the systems of care. ● Social Media (11) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Webinar or blogs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Websites (7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kid-friendly ● Class (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I think they should teach classes about the different resources out there to access ○ Class that goes over different services ● Tip sheets/Posters (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It's more discrete and helps make the choice private because it's not always easy to admit I need help. ● Be being involved in them ● Read ~_Then, just maybe, I would be interested in looking at a tip sheet. Like I say below right now my daily energy is spent just trying to do daily tasks and continue breathing. I have no interest in learning about the systems of care unless you can explain to me how learning about it would help me get better. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No idea |
|--|---|

- Good learning opportunities

6. *The System of Care Leadership Team wants youth involved in making the System of Care plan happen. How do you want to be included? Some options might be (but are not limited to) training staff or other youth, reviewing programs, deciding where funding goes, advocating for policy and law changes, providing peer support to other youth, etc.*

- Peer Support (7)
 - Giving positive reinforcements to youth in services
- Advocating for policy and law changes (5)
- Train Staff (5)
 - Keep up to date
- Fun Opportunities (3)
 - Incentives
 - Socializing
 - Being involved in fun activities
- QA (3)
 - Consultants with youth regularly
 - Talking to the team about it
 - Reviewing what is done
 - Reviewing programs to gauge the effectiveness
- Training youth (2)
 - Let know options and what services are available
- Any way (2)
 - I would be interested in helping out in any area
 - I want to be a leader in mental health
- All of the Above (2)
 - Little bit of each of the pieces listed, wants to give input on everything
 - All of the above! It's important for youth to know that they need to be involved and help other youth who are going through the same thing
- Not sure (2)
 - just funding probably
 - Because I am unaware of how the system of care works, or how staff are currently trained, or where funding is currently going, or what policies and laws need to be changed, I'm unable to help answer this question. Currently I don't care because all my daily energy is spent just trying to accomplish daily tasks like going to the grocery store and trying not to hurt myself. I don't want to take on another responsibility when I already have a hard time caring for myself. I believe this question would be better aimed at people who are more recovered than me.
- Perhaps just by keeping involved and really participate with whatever they can
- Just ask us our opinion
- Help create an organization to help the troubled youth

7. *How do you want to learn Leadership and Advocacy skills?*

- By example (13)
 - By example and watching others in those positions
 - Watching other leaders and learn from that
 - Talk to them and get advice
 - Being taught by a leader and teaching from them how they acquired those skills
 - Learn from examples
 - By example of a leader (veteran)
 - Watching a leader and learning from them.
 - Watch other leaders
 - Learning how to follow others first
- One-on-One/Hands On (5)
 - Be being taught hands-on
 - Talked to about them
 - Have someone help through the process to help learn

- Having someone teach them
- Classes/Trainings (5)
 - Interactive not lectures
 - Giving lots of examples of what to do and what not to do
- Life Experience/Practice (4)
 - Having a job
 - Leadership is an important skill for youth to have. Leaders blaze their own trail they do not follow the sometimes dangerous trails of others. Leaders are less prone to peer-pressure and know how to make good decisions not only for themselves but for others. Youth need to be put in leadership roles (with guidance) in order to learn leadership. I learned leadership by being involved in organizations like FCCLA in high school.
 - Yes, for me being in sports taught me how to be a leader and how to cooperate better with peers and others
- Respect, being truthful
- Doing the right thing, helping others
- Be a good role model to peers, got in trouble so learned from mistakes
- Group work
- I think advocacy is a big skill that is very important for youth to have. You need to be able to advocate for yourself because no one else is going to do it for you. But learning to advocate for yourself takes time and in the beginning we need someone to advocate for us until we learn how. I'm still learning how to advocate for myself and it has taken time. I'm very grateful for the people who have advocated for me and are slowly teaching me how to advocate for myself by example. Role playing maybe helpful in learning how to advocate for oneself. Having someone there beside you during everyday life experiences to guide in advocating for yourself is the most helpful.
- Leadership and advocacy are important and empowering skills for anyone to have
- Teaching is the best way to help the youth

8. *One goal of the System of Care is to “develop and build on standards and successful efforts to ensure that all plans developed with youth and families are individualized to their unique culture, beliefs and values”.*

a. *What components about your culture and beliefs are important to include in the services you receive?*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Faith/Spirituality (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ God ○ Supernatural/paranormal ● Family (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family reunion ○ Background ● Understanding addiction/Sobriety (2) ● Goals for school ● Just awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I have no certain beliefs ● Communication ● Knowledge that there is a difference and it's there ● Old table from 1800s/worth lots of \$\$ ● Core beliefs of a culture should be learned. ● People should have options based on faith ● Do things by the young ones culture or beliefs |
|--|---|

b. *How could a worker learn about these?*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk to the worker (21) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conversation vs Q&A ○ Nicely ○ Privately ○ Sit down ○ Talking to youth/adults ● Training classes (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workers need to go through training on how to deal with certain types of kids (drug and alcohol, behavioral, mental health, self-harmful, etc.). Role play with the workers. ● Research/Read (2) ● Texting worker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be open and ask or share own values ○ Spend time with the youth and do something they enjoy. ○ Ask us about what it's like and how we do things |
|---|---|

- Your staffs are probably more informed than I am. I am very naïve about the world around me. Just make sure they know about social media, and drugs. Do not let them put down homosexuals, transsexuals, or anyone struggling with their sexuality. Try to banish the stigma around mental health and the LGBT community; we are all people worthy of love and belonging.
- Staff members could get some background info on the person about their beliefs, so they can connect on a better level
- It should be up to the individual
- People should know so they don't offend others about their country's culture
- It's helpful to get people involved in groups to talk about what is working and more peer support workers at every agency.
- Through her art
- Go to NA,

9. *What is the first thing the System of Care should focus on to for helping youth with their mental health needs?*

- Get to Know the Person (5)
 - Make them feel comfortable
 - What are they comfortable with
 - Learning how kid acts and feels about things
- Prioritize with the Client (4)
 - Each individual's specific needs instead of assuming everyone needs the same thing.
 - Determine what to do, then figure out how to do it
- Anger (4)
 - Let them know kids can get mad easy, but stay with them
- Focus on Biggest Issue (2)
 - Figuring out the biggest issue and focusing on that
 - Figure out problem/work on main problem and then do small ones
- Important to focus a little on all aspects, it was done for me and was helpful
- Safety
- Being in school
- Getting out of legal trouble
- Learning life skills
- Help work on their issues and then everything else that needs worked on
- Social skills
- How to get to appointments/set up/start
- Communication
- Educate them on their diagnosis
- How they can help themselves
- They should focus on their approach
- Places where there are professionals finding the best services and providing financial help
- Accessibility
- Counseling
- Making services more known and widespread. There are so many people that are unaware of services, even doctors, therapists, and schools or they don't understand what services you offer. There are so many people with mental health problems and not enough people to help them.
- Find peers to the youth who support getting help so it is easier for the youth to ask for help
- Just talking to make sure things are ok
- Supervision should be the most important

10. Do you have anything else to add?

- The mental health system helps me a lot when I needed