Young People With Lived Experience in Foster Care Recommend Improvements to Mental Health Supports

Adoption Competent Mental Health · https://bridges4mentalhealth.org/hub/adoption-competence/young-people-with-lived-experience-in-foster-care-recommend-improvements-to-mental-health-supports/

Young people with lived experience in foster care emphasize that **mental health services are most effective when they are accessible, relationship-based, and responsive to their individual needs and experiences**. Their perspectives highlight that trauma, instability, and disrupted relationships shape mental health needs, and supports must be flexible and sustained over time rather than limited or crisis-based.

Youth report that **trusted relationships with supportive adults and peers are critical to engaging in mental health care**, yet many face barriers such as difficulty navigating systems, inconsistent providers, and services that do not reflect their lived experience. Programs that incorporate lived experience voices, provide continuity, and focus on long-term well-being help young people build resilience, trust, and stronger connections to care.

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