Guide for Developing Family Councils

Engagement of Lived Experience · https://bridges4mentalhealth.org/hub/youth-family-engagement/guide-for-developing-family-councils/

GUIDE FOR **DEVELOPING COUNCILS**

The needs of children, youth, and their families often require resources from more than one system at the same time, such as child welfare and mental health. Ensuring that the right resources are available can be a challenge when there is no single plan of care to guide community-level staff in their decision-making, to inform the coordination of services across agencies, or to align goals and intended outcomes across systems. This leaves policy, funding, and practice decisions made without the benefit of full information. When systems act independently of one another, the essentials that youth and families require may be overlooked, leading to disparities in care, poor outcomes, and involvement with additional systems such as juvenile justice. We are excited that you are dedicated to working in partnership across systems to serve children, youth, and families.

Youth and their families who have been involved with multiple systems (lived experience) have the unique knowledge, and insights necessary to help co-design solutions and support a shared approach – they are the natural bridge among systems. One way to benefit from lived experience is by forming a committee, advisory board, or council that welcomes youth and families as members, and that considers the broad input of their peers through affinity and focus groups.

Establishing, supporting, or retaining an effective committee requires a lot of planning. There are many things to think of before you begin to recruit members and hold meetings. This guide includes some areas for you to consider. We hope this document helps you establish an effective group to guide the important work you are doing in partnership. If you have challenges, let us know so we can help your committee be efficient and effective. We are available to provide you with tools and strategies for success!

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING A COMMITTEE

The following information relates to four primary areas, including checklists, prompts, or questions to guide your development of a structure to support your collaboration.



1 Setting the foundation



2 Strategies for recruiting members



3 Getting the work done



4 Sustainability

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