

Welcome!

The National Building Bridges Initiative

Engage Us: The Family & Youth Engagement
Guides for Residential Providers

The webinar will begin shortly.



Webinar Agenda (all times Eastern)

1:00 – Housekeeping, Instructions to Participants

1:05 – Welcome, Introductions & Overview

1:15 – Family Engagement Guide

1:45 – Youth Engagement Guide

2:15 – Question and Answer

2:30 – Webinar concludes

Dr. Gary Blau:

Welcome and Overview of the
National Building Bridges Initiative



Building Bridges Initiative: Mission

Identify and promote practice and policy initiatives that will create strong and closely coordinated partnerships and collaborations between families, youth, community- and residentially-based treatment and service providers, advocates and policy makers to ensure that comprehensive services and supports are family-driven, youth-guided, strength-based, culturally and linguistically competent, individualized, evidence and practice-informed, and consistent with the research on sustained positive outcomes.



Building Bridges Initiative: Core Principles

- **Family Driven & Youth Guided Care**
- Cultural and Linguistic Competence
- Clinical Excellence and Quality Standards
- Accessibility and Community Involvement
- Transition Planning and Services (between settings and from youth to adulthood)



Highlights of Building Bridges Initiative (BBI)

- Began in November 2005
- National Steering Committee formed
- Three National Summits held (2006, 2007, 2010)
- Workgroups:
 - Outcomes
 - Youth/Family Partnerships
 - Family Advisory Network
 - Youth Advisory Group
 - Social Marketing
 - Cultural & Linguistic Competence
 - Fiscal/Policy
 - Ad-hoc Groups (i.e. Juvenile Justice; Child Welfare)



Highlights of Building Bridges Initiative

- **Documents to support the field:**
 - Joint Resolution
 - Matrix/Self Assessment Tool
 - Family & Youth Tip Sheets
 - Child Welfare Fact Sheet
 - Fiscal Strategies that Support the BBI Principles
- **BBI website:** www.buildingbridges4youth.org
- **Examples of documents in development:**
 - Successfully Engaging Families & Youth
 - Hiring & Supporting Youth Advocates
 - Cultural & Linguistic Competence Guidelines for Residential Programs
 - Fact Sheets (e.g., Juvenile Justice; Outcomes; Residential)



BBI History/Highlights

- Articles in national publications (National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare; Teaching-Family Association; CWLA Special Edition on Residential)
- State, City, County & Individual Program Initiatives
- A range of Partnerships: from funding Summits to endorsing Joint Resolution to full partnerships towards systems change
- Website: www.buildingbridges4youth.org

Joe Anne Hust

Co-Chairs BBI Youth & Family Partnership Workgroup

Rosa Warder

Member BBI Steering Committee

The Building Bridges Initiative Family Engagement Guide





Definition: Family-driven Care

Family-driven means families have a **primary decision making role** in the care of their own children as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all children in their community, state, tribe, territory and nation. This includes:

- Choosing supports, services, and providers;
- Setting goals;
- Designing and implementing programs;
- Monitoring outcomes;
- Partnering in funding decisions; and
- Determining the effectiveness of all efforts to promote the mental health and well being of children and youth.

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (2007)



Residential is...

- Never part of the family and youth's vision.
- Not the first option or the last resort.
- Only one of many options in the system of care continuum.
- One more transition.



Families Speak from the Heart...

“I felt like I was handing over my child to strangers as if he was defective and I was the reason.”

“Even though I knew she needed help, I felt like I was abandoning my daughter to a system where I did not even know what was going to happen to her.”



Why a Family and Youth Engagement Guide?

- Families and youth shared personal experience and identified best practices for residential.
- Identified best strategies to engage family and youth.
- Want better communication between community and residential providers.
- A tool for residential providers to improve seamless services and supports for families and youth.



BBI Workgroup Evolves

- Youth and Family Partnership Workgroup
 - Family, youth, and professionals
 - Liaison to BBI Steering Committee
- Two sub groups provide feedback
 - Family Advisory Network (FAN)
 - Youth Advisory Group (YAG)



BBI Family Engagement Guide

- **Our task:** To develop a guide for residential providers about how to engage families from a family member's perspective.
- **Gathering information:** Monthly conference calls with parents of youth previously or currently in residential treatment from across the U.S.
- **What they said:** Engage us and engage you and here's how.



Families Speak: Residential should...

- Keep youth close to home and connected to family
- Teach real world skills that are transferable home
- Include family and youth in all planning
- Keep education on track



Families Speak...

Before Residential:

- Reason for referral is clearly explained – why is this the right place for this child at this time
- Decision making process- right place, right time, and what is needed
- What do we need to know to be assured - seclusions & restraints, treatment philosophy, staff training and qualifications
- A sense of hope for the future



Families Speak...

During Placement:

- Be transparent
- Welcome and include us
- Communicate often – daily with our child
- Include siblings too
- Provide Parent Peer Support
- Don't forget - this is not home
- Focus on skill building for life beyond residential



Families Speak...

After Placement:

- Same child & family team in place
- Supports available
- Lots of practice runs
- Introduce and communicate with future provider and school if not the same
- Consistency of services- no down time, provisions for medication in place



Take Aways...

- Be clear with families about their inclusive role
- Ask what might hinder involvement – transportation, childcare, time, connection with staff
- Communicate often and facilitate daily contact with youth
- Recognize the family's range of emotions – loss, anger, shame, blame and don't shy away
- Focus on interventions that build skills for everyday life in home, school, and community
- Don't set staff up to be the expert
- Focus on the whole family
- Work with families and their individual culture
- Envision residential without walls

Lauren Polvere & Youth Presenters

Member BBI Youth & Family Partnership Workgroup

The Building Bridges Initiative Youth Engagement Guide





Understanding Youth-Guided Care

Youth-guided care means that: “....young people have the right to be **empowered, educated, and given a decision-making role** in the care of their own lives, as well as the policies and procedures governing care in their organizations and/or communities. This includes giving young people a **sustainable voice**.”
(www.samhsa.hhs.gov)



Understanding Youth-Guided Care

“...there is a continuum of **power** that should be given to young people based on their understanding and maturity in this strength-based change process. Youth-guided also means that the process should be **fun and worthwhile.**” (www.samhsa.hhs.gov)



Youth Engagement Guide: Purpose

Our Task: To present *youth perspectives* on promoting youth engagement and involvement in residential settings.



Developing the Youth Engagement Guide

- Our subgroup held focus groups with youth currently placed in residential settings
- We developed “themes” that emerged from these discussions
- We received continuous feedback on the guide, from youth and workgroup members



Theme 1: Facilitate Helpful Relationships for Youth in Residential

“It is important to have someone in the room [during treatment team meetings] that the youth trusts. The youth can give this person a look or say something if they are overwhelmed, or if they need to leave the room.”



Theme 2: Understand the Meaning of Resistance, Frustration, and Acting Out

“Some youth get frustrated because they feel like they can never leave placement. Fighting and acting out happens because this is so frustrating.”

“Try to understand why we are acting out and where we might be coming from.”

“Give youth time to reflect and process what is happening, and why they are acting that way.”



Theme 3: Recognize the Importance of Peer Support

“Don’t just rely on staff to encourage youth, but allow other youth to be supportive and encouraging.”



Theme 4: Encourage and Motivate Youth - Don't Coerce Them

“Try to understand us. Sit with us, talk to us. Tell us why this isn't a bad place and how it might help us.”

“Encourage us to participate, and don't give up! Keep trying!”

“Have boundaries...don't get on us... and give us space when we need it.”



Theme 5: Assure Fairness and Safety

“One staff member shouldn’t get to decide who gets privileges and who doesn’t. More people should be involved in those decisions.”

“When we report a problem, it should be taken seriously.”



Theme 6: Provide Opportunities for a Good Education

“Give us placement tests- that way the work will be at the right level.”

“Send us to school in our own communities, if possible.”



Theme 7: Create a Comfortable, Home-like Environment and Foster Relationships with Family and Community

“Residential should be “a respectful place”, “where we feel comfortable and where we can get ourselves together”

Providing opportunities for youth to spend time with friends and family *in their own communities*



One Strategy for Promoting Youth Involvement

Developing Youth Advisory Councils

- **Early Steps:** Youth involvement and feedback about daily concerns.
- **Later Steps:** Youth voice and involvement at the administrative level- impacting practices and policies, providing feedback regarding hiring staff, etc.



Suggestions for Youth Advisory Councils

- Meet regularly.
- Commit to the council, and follow through with scheduled meetings.
- Be flexible and open to change, based on youth feedback.



Youth Advisory Councils

Staff perspective:

“The peer council was a tool that we thought would be helpful. Staff were making all the decisions, and we needed input- who best to know what needs to happen than the youth?”



Key Messages

- Supportive relationships are important- with family, staff, mentors, and peers.
- Listening and providing empathy is critical, while maintaining boundaries.
- Peer support can be helpful.
- Youth should perceive residential as a safe, helpful, and fair place. Practices should promote these feelings of safety.
- Residential is an intervention- nearly all work in residential should be geared toward supporting youth and families in realizing success in their homes and communities.



Conclusions

- Promoting youth voice and involvement is critical to facilitating greater engagement in residential settings.
- Viewing youth as *competent and capable* of providing critical insight.



Question and Answer Session

- We will attempt to address as many questions as possible.
- Follow the operator's instructions for submitting questions to the presenters.
- Questions submitted during the presentation via chat feature will be addressed first.

Please note that sending a question does not guarantee its inclusion in the webinar.

Thank you for
participating in today's
webinar!