



NITT-Eval
NOW IS THE TIME
NATIONAL EVALUATION



Young Adult Voice in the Now is the Time- Healthy Transitions (NITT-HT) Initiative

Chair: Amanda Costa, Transitions RTC, UMass Medical
School

Discussant: Emily Lichvar, SAMHSA, CMHS

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Symposia Overview

- Paper #1: NIITT-HT Evaluation Overview and value of PAR
- Paper #2: Youth Voice in National Evaluation
- Paper #3: Youth Voice in NITT-HT Grantee Sites
- Discussion



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Paper #1

Background and Rationale for Youth and Young Adult Voice in the NITT-HT Evaluation

Mason Haber, PhD

Transitions Research and Training Center
(RTC), University of Massachusetts
Medical School

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

- A collaborative approach to research that involves communities in all aspects of research, recognizing unique strengths that each brings.
 - Used often with groups that are under-recognized, misunderstood, & lack voice, such homeless, victims of violence, immigrant groups. (cf. Jagosh et al., 2011; Viswanathan et al.; 2004)
 - Youth & young adults have been argued to be such a community (Jacquez, F., Vaughn, L. M., & Wagner, E., 2013).
- Begins with a research topic that is important to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change
 - A fully realized PAR approach involves participants in all aspects of design and data collection, from problem framing, to dissemination

PAR Strategies in Evaluation & Research

- Most common:
 - Formation of a *community research panel/advisory board*
 - Involvement in problem framing
- Less common:
 - Community members execute the research (e.g., collect data)
 - Members help interpret research results (*beyond* validity checking; e.g., serving as coders)
- **Least** common:
 - Involvement in design; researchers and community partner
 - Placing community members in leadership roles, w/ researchers serving as expert facilitators (i.e., they design, we help)

PAR in the Mental Health Community



Adult Movement

- Strong PAR history with adults with SMHC
- Case studies showcase benefits of PAR with adults with SMI

Innovations with Young Adults

- Little work reported that infuses meaningful youth voice in mental health research and service design however...

Young adults are more engaged and committed to services & supports if they have an active voice (Kirby et al, 2003; Oliver et al, 2006)

Benefits & Challenges of PAR

- **Benefits:**

- More ecologically valid

- Better accounts for aspects of setting that only insiders may be aware of
- Insiders understand their *perspective*, and this is part of the setting

- Practical benefits

- Helps in anticipating potentially unforeseen issues
- More trust = higher response rates, fewer problems with data
- Increased relevance, products more likely used, disseminated

- ***Results in change***

- Heightens awareness, skills for taking collective action
- Builds a research infrastructure in a community (openness, skills, motivation to collaborate and then lead research)

Benefits & Challenges of PAR

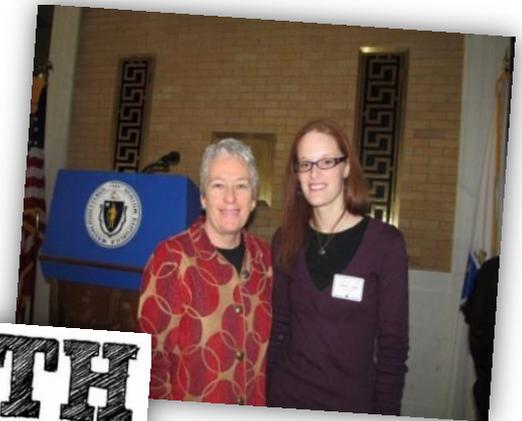
- **Challenges:**

- Takes a lot of time and effort, more than using trained researchers
 - You have to train community members in research methods
 - May need to compromise on efficiency in the interests of promoting consensus
- Community priorities may differ from funders', scientific community
- Potential “hot button” issues in making research decisions with a community may require sacrifices of certain aspects of validity
 - Examples: use of randomization, standardized vs. open-ended formats, ownership of interpretation of results and products
- You may not be able to make the same inferences
- *Doesn't magically erase differences of researcher & community*
 - Negotiating priorities & even finding common language can be a struggle

Bringing PAR to Young Adult Mental Health

Active involvement of youth & young adult research staff with serious mental health conditions (SMHC) in **all phases of research and evaluation efforts** from defining the problem to dissemination.

- For young adults, may be more potential for assuming leadership
- Right conditions include resources such as mentorship & time
(Jacquez et al, 2012; Mortensen et al., 2014)



**YOUTH
DECIDE**

Processes & Benefits of PAR with Young Adults

Source: New England Network for Child, Youth, & Family Services, et. al. (2005) "Reflect and Improve: A Toolkit for Engaging Youth and Adults as Partners in Program Evaluation."

	YOUTH AS OBJECTS	YOUTH AS RECIPIENTS	YOUTH AS RESOURCES	YOUTH AS PARTNERS
RELATIONSHIP	Youth are evaluation objects.	Adults allow youth to participate in selected evaluation activities.	Adults view contributions of youth as beneficial, but they retain control.	Youth and adults share responsibility for the evaluation.
EVALUATION QUESTIONS	Evaluation questions are based on adult needs for information.	Evaluation questions are based on what adults believe they need to know to help youth.	Evaluation questions are developed with input from youth.	Evaluation questions are jointly developed by adults and youth.
METHODOLOGIES	Evaluation methods are determined by adults. Activities are performed by adults.	Adults determine evaluation methods, and they create situations in which young people learn from involvement.	Youth help adults decide on evaluation methods and help with evaluation activities.	Youth and adults jointly decide on evaluation activities. Activities are performed by youth and adults.
ANALYSIS OF DATA	Adults analyze data in ways that make sense to them.	Adults determine how data will be analyzed, and they create situations in which young people learn from involvement.	Youth help adults decide how data will be analyzed and help with analysis.	Youth and adults jointly analyze data.
EVALUATION USE	Adults use findings for their benefit.	Adults use findings in a manner they believe is in the best interest of young people.	Young people provide input regarding use of the findings.	Youth and adults use findings for their mutual benefit.
BENEFITS	Youth receive no benefit from involvement in the process. Youth indirectly benefit from the findings.	Youth receive limited benefit from involvement in the process. Youth indirectly benefit from the findings.	Youth receive moderate benefit from involvement in the process. Youth directly benefit from the findings.	Youth receive significant benefit from involvement in the process. Youth directly benefit from the findings.

Now Is the Time

- A new initiative to protect children and communities by making schools safer and increasing access to mental health services
- SAMHSA Now Is the Time (NITT) programs include
 - Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) State Grants
 - Healthy Transitions (HT)
 - Minority Fellowship Program – Youth (MFP-Y)
 - Minority Fellowship Program – Addictions Counselors (MFP-AC)

NITT-Healthy Transitions Purpose

Improve access to treatment and support services for youth and young adults through 3 populations of focus:

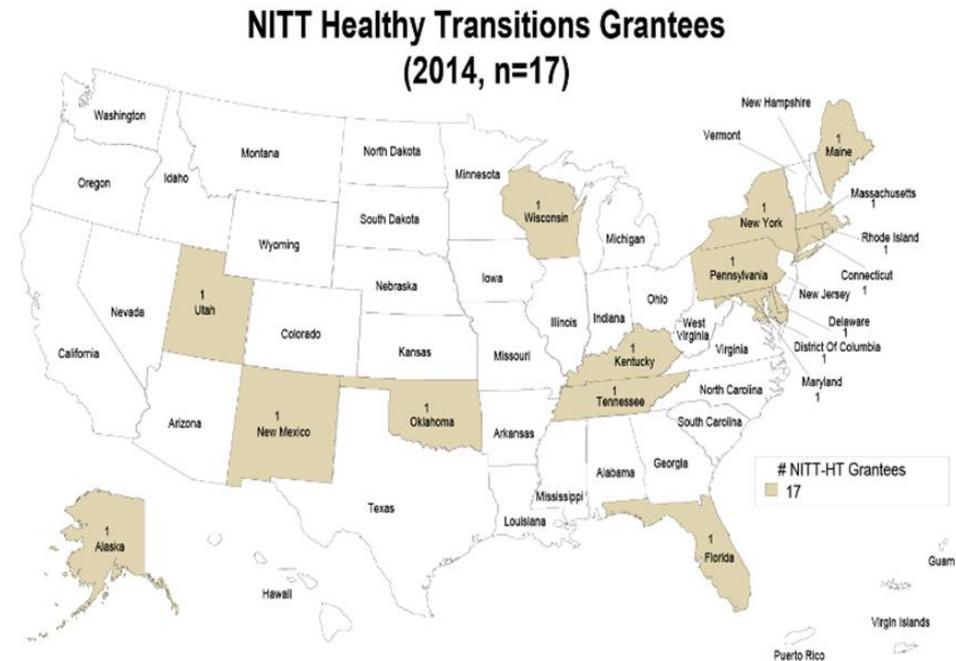
- 16 – 25 year olds *at risk of developing* a serious mental health condition who may otherwise be unidentified;
- 16 – 25 year olds who have *already been identified* as experiencing a serious mental health condition; and
- The community-at-large (i.e., general public).

Overview of NITT-Healthy Transitions (NITT-HT)

- NITT-HT program aims to:
 - Increase awareness about early signs and symptoms of mental health conditions in the community;
 - Identify action strategies to use when a mental health concern is detected;
 - Provide training to provider and community groups to improve services and supports for youth and young adults (16-25 years);
 - Enhance peer and family supports; and
 - Develop effective services and interventions for youth and young adults with a serious mental health condition and their families.

NITT-HT Grantees

- 17 grantees in over 40 laboratories across the US
- Target number of youth/young adults proposed to be reached varies from less than 100/year to more than 1,000/year
- Evidence-based service delivery models include: peer support, wraparound, motivational interviewing, and supported employment



NITT-HT National Evaluation Team

- **RTI International**

- Lead Contacts: Heather Ringeisen (NITT-HT program lead) & James Trudeau (NITT national evaluation Project Director)
- Roles: Lead NITT-HT evaluation; provide national evaluation TTA

- **University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS)**

- Lead Contacts: Mason Haber, Maryann Davis, & Amanda Costa
- Roles: Lead the NITT-HT process evaluation & *Youth Voices* sub study

- **Portland State University (PSU)**

- Lead Contacts: Nancy Koroloff & Janet Walker
- Roles: Conduct a web-based survey of system supports and coordination

- **Cloudburst**

- Lead Contacts: Steven Sullivan & Jamie Taylor
- Roles: Provide local performance assessment TTA

Process Evaluation Data Sources

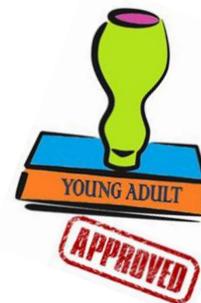
- **Grantee & practice community level** data on collaboration, infrastructure and supports for services, services offered, types, and extent of evidence based services
 - Standardized instruments, document review, qualitative interviews
 - Project Directors, Transition team members, Providers, Staff, Focus groups with Adult Allies, site visits
- **Participant-level quantitative data** from supplemental Y&YA interviews on service process, mental health, & functional outcomes.
- **Youth Voices Special Study:**
 - Focus Groups
 - Multimedia study

Goals NITT-HT Youth Voices Special Study

Youth Voices Special Study examines processes of young adult engagement in:

- **Service processes** – youth-guided care (e.g., setting own goals, guiding own care planning, teams)
- **Systems change processes** – design and development of grant activities, including changes improve outreach and services, local evaluation activities, and process of youth guided care
- **Youth experiences** – of their own strengths and challenges; of services and service systems.

*****PAR Process Goal: Involve youth voice in all aspects of design, planning, implementation, and interpretation of findings.*****



Youth Voices Special Study: Method

- **Young Adult Designed & Run Focus Groups** (1x during site visit)
 - **Group 1**: Young Adults directly involved in NITT-HT system change efforts including grant planning and local evaluation activities
 - **Group 2**: Youth who are recipients of NITT-HT services
- **Youth Multi-Media Project** (1x during years 3-4)
 - Youth submit feedback/perspectives through pictures, reflective text, and comments, through YA developed online platform
 - Probes are parallel those in focus groups
- ***Activities designed to be complementary & mutually reinforcing:***
 - Each contributes to engagement, provides distinct reflection opportunities that can build on one another.

Other Youth Participation in Evaluation

- The PAR ideal is to involve stakeholders in all activities
- The Special Study is an important factor in the youth guidedness of the study design; however, on its own, it would be more limited in impact
- “Enclave” versus “assimilation” strategies – we do both
 - Youth voice is heard within (Process Evaluation overall) and from outside (Youth Voices Special Study)
- UMMS PAR team has been involved throughout the NITT-HT design process
 - Amanda Costa is the Project Director for the Process Evaluation as well as the PAR study lead.
 - Both the PAR team and the National Youth Advisory Board (YAB) have been involved throughout the design process for the overall process evaluation, not just the Youth Voices Special Study

Experience of An Adult Ally

- Level of PAR involvement that has occurred in our evaluation design and implementation could not have occurred without an expert team of PAR staff.
- Youth and Young Adults involvement on our team complement their lived experience with competence – they are evaluators and researchers as well as stakeholders.
- Take home: PAR works best as a developmental process that extends beyond the confines of a specific project.
- Each project provides opportunities to hear youth voice, but also build capacity for youth voice.
- Nothing could be more important.

References

Kirby P, Lanyon C, Cronin K, Sinclair R. *Handbook - Building a culture of participation: involving children and young people in policy, service planning, delivery and evaluation*. Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills;2003.

Oliver K, Collin P, Burns J, Nicholas J. Building resilience in young people through meaningful participation. *Adv Mental Health*. 2006;5(1):34-40



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Paper #2

Youth Voice in the NIT-HT National Evaluation

Amanda Costa & Tania Duperoy
Transitions Research and Training Center (RTC),
University of Massachusetts Medical School

Bringing PAR to Youth Mental Health

Active involvement of young adult research staff with serious mental health conditions (SMHC) in **all phases of research and evaluation efforts** from defining the problem to disseminating results

- 7 PAR staff working 14-40 hours/week
- College internship program
- Engaging local and national community



**YOUTH
DECIDE**

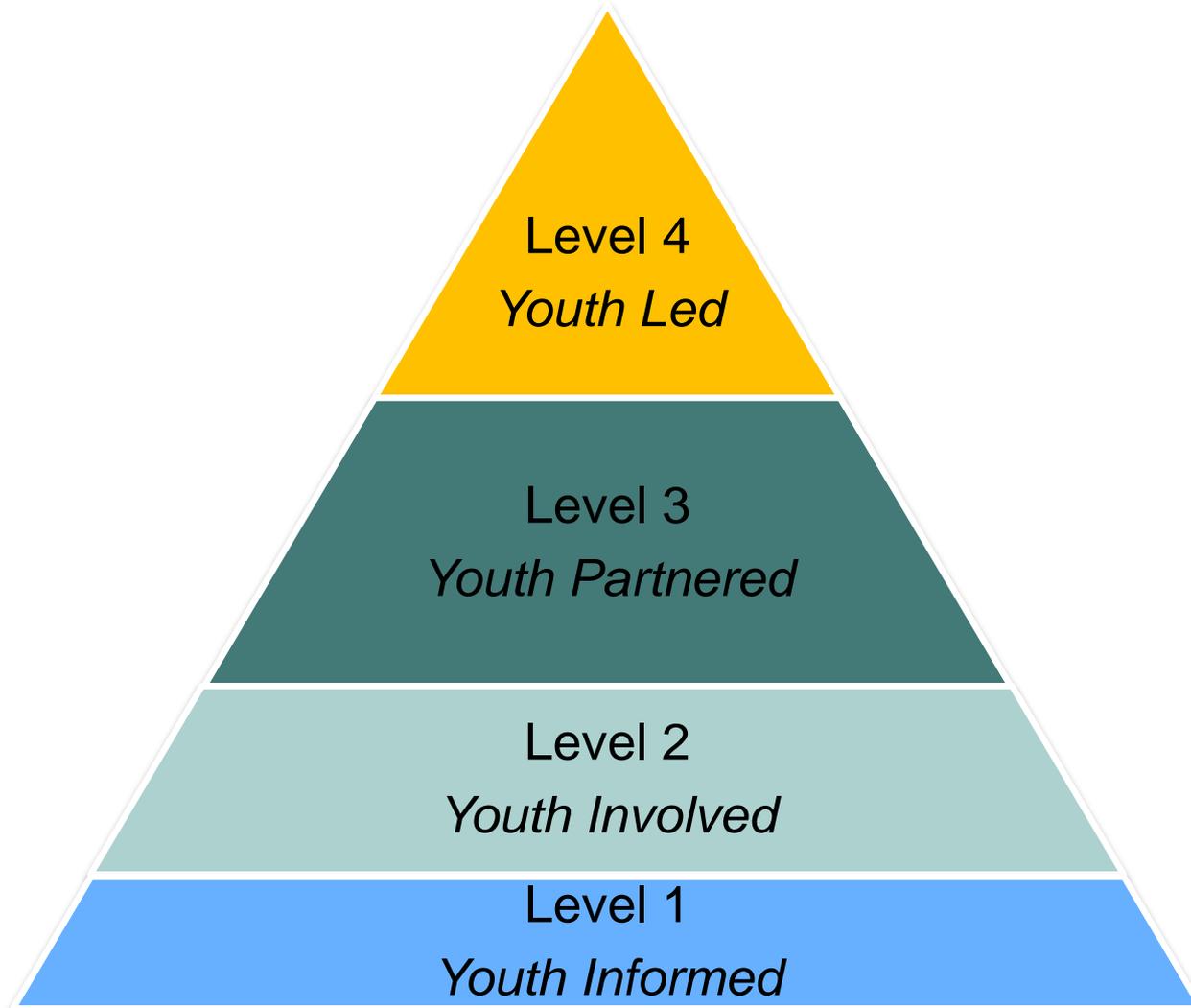
Learning to Do Research

Interviewer Training:

- Qualitative Interviewing
- Developing a research question
- Safety and research protocols
- Data management & analysis
- Engaging youth in research

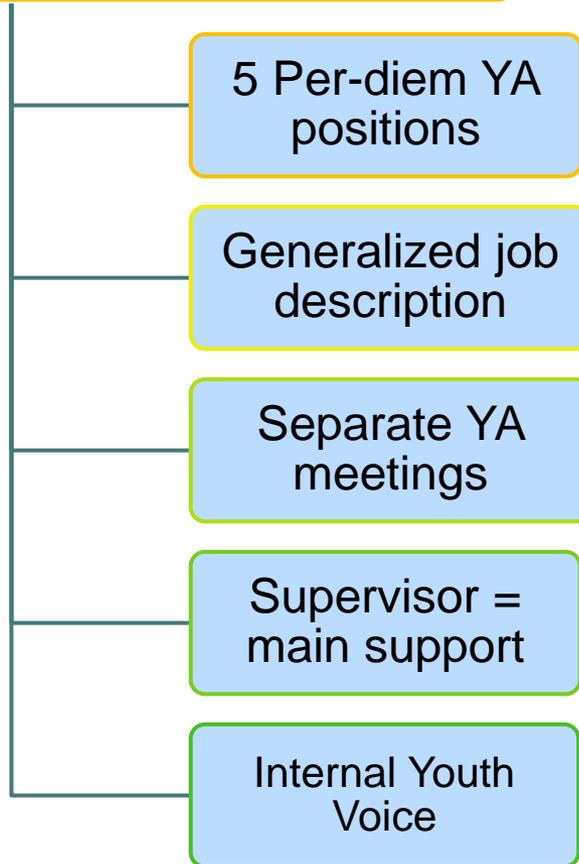


PAR Levels of Involvement

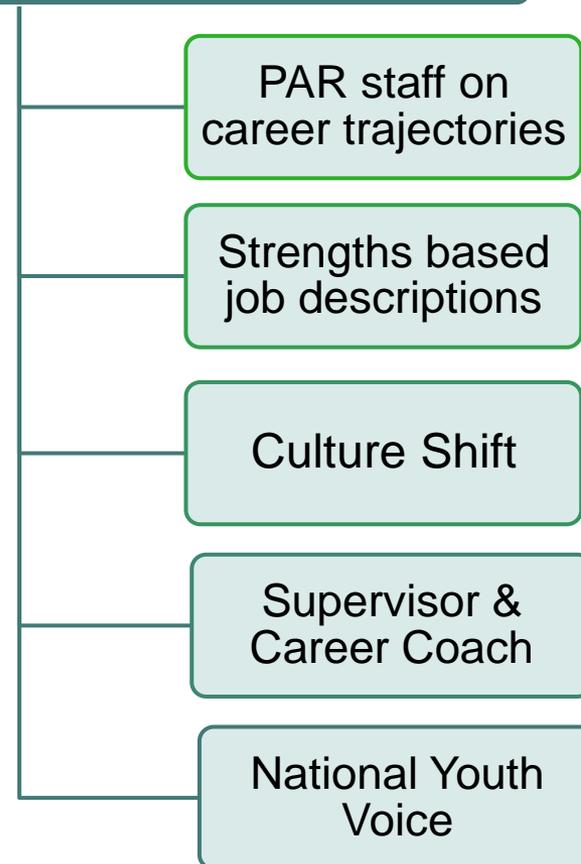


A History of Change

Breaking New Ground (Yrs 1-3)



Steering towards Success (Yrs 3-now)



Involvement in Evaluation Design



Survey & Recruitment Design



Youth Liaison Role



Youth Voice Special Study

SURVEY RECRUITMENT & DESIGN



Survey Questions

- Youth Friendly Design (The 4 L's)
 - Length
 - Language
 - Level of comfort
 - Laughter
- Creative ways to increase engagement
- Benefits of youth involvement
- Involvement across the years
- Technology use in instruments and recruitment plans

YAB



Diversity

National Voice

Engagement Through Video Media

Show Video

YOUTH LIAISON ROLE



Youth Liaison Role

“Each grantee will be assigned a site liaison who will serve as the grantee’s primary contact for all activities in support of the cross-site evaluation, and to triage questions from the grantee.”

- YA Liaison Role:
 - Second point of contact for grantees: emphasis on YC support
 - Disseminate materials to data collection
 - Support Site-visit Activities
 - Youth Coordinator Interviews
 - Oversee YA Voice Sub Study Data Collection
 - Youth focus groups
 - Multi-Media Project

Successfully Supporting YA Liaison Role

- Partnership with Senior Liaison
- Ongoing Training and Team Development:
 - Liaison Guide Development
 - Qualitative analysis guide
 - Peer Support: Weekly YA Liaison team meeting



YOUTH VOICES SPECIAL STUDY



NITT-HT Youth Voices Special Study

Youth Voices Special Study will examine the **processes** of engaging young adults in; design and development of grant activities, activities to improve outreach and services, local evaluation activities and process of youth guided care

- **Full inclusion** means including young adults in:
 - Framing questions
 - Designing methods (e.g., prompts, questions for focus groups)
 - Collecting, *interpreting* and *reporting* data



Youth Voice Special Study: Focus Groups

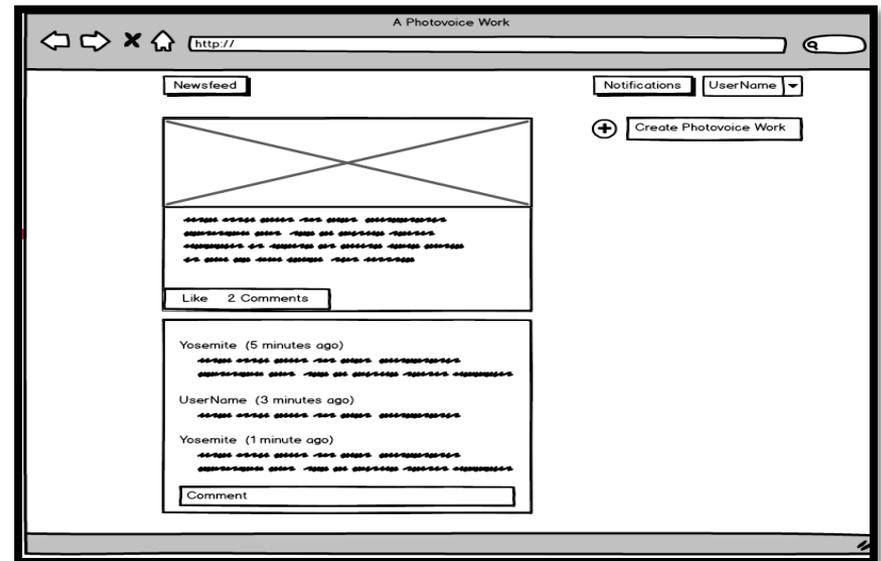
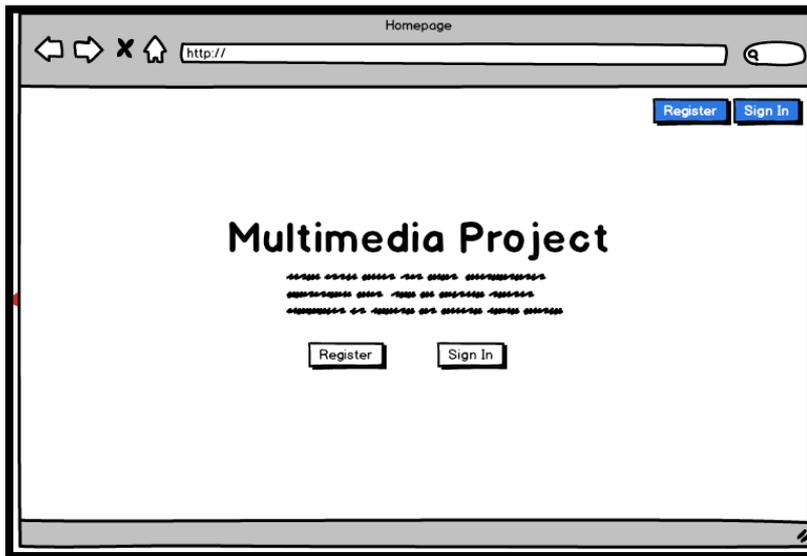
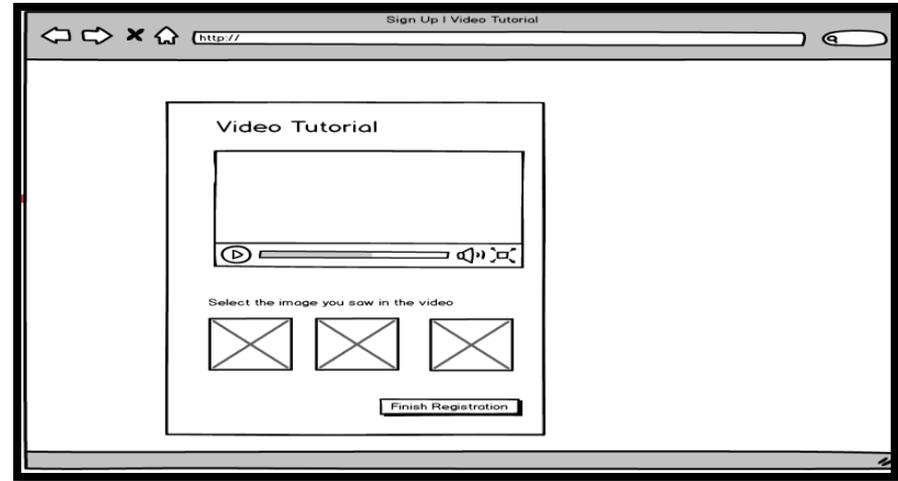
- Young Adult Led Focus Groups (1x during site visit)
 - Group 1: Young Adults directly involved in NITT-HT system change efforts including grant planning and local evaluation activities
 - Group 2: Youth who are recipients of NITT-HT services
- Example YA designed Questions:
 - Group 1: “Did you ever have the opportunity to change your goals as your interests changed? What did that process look like? “
 - Group 2: “How has your team used your ideas to change the way they provide services?”

Youth Voices: Multi-Media project

- Young Adult Multi-Media Project- (1x a year during site visit)
 - Any YA engaged in NITT-HT through services or grant activities are invited to participate
 - YA participants will submit feedback/perspectives through text and photography within YA developed online platform
- Eight week data collection period
- Recruitment:
 - Partnership between Youth Liaisons and Youth Coordinator
 - YAB: designing youth friendly recruitment materials



Youth Voices: Multi-Media Project



Successes & Benefits of Participatory Research

Research Team

- Strengthens approach and ensures relevancy
- More authentic/rich interviews
- Improved research questions
- Engaging young adult research participants
- Stronger connection to media/technology
- Strengthened relationship with local mental health community

PAR Staff

- PAR staff transitioning into professional roles
- Opportunity to address issues important to young people
- Strength based work environment
- Provides training and skills in community engagement, leadership, research, and advocacy
- Increased self-efficacy skills
- Strengthened youth voice

Thank you for your time!

- Any questions?! Contact us at:
 - Amanda Costa: Amanda.costa@umassmed.edu
 - Tania Duperoy: Tania.Duperoy@umassmed.edu

Feel free to contact us for any questions regarding youth voice in research and evaluation: www.UMassMed.edu/TransitionsRTC





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Paper #3

Experiences of Young Adults Working at NITT-HT Grantee Sites

Gustavo Payano,

NITT-HT MA, Massachusetts Dept. of Mental Health

Tania Duperoy,

Transitions Research and Training Center (RTC), University of
Massachusetts Medical School

Overview

MA as a Leader in Youth Voice

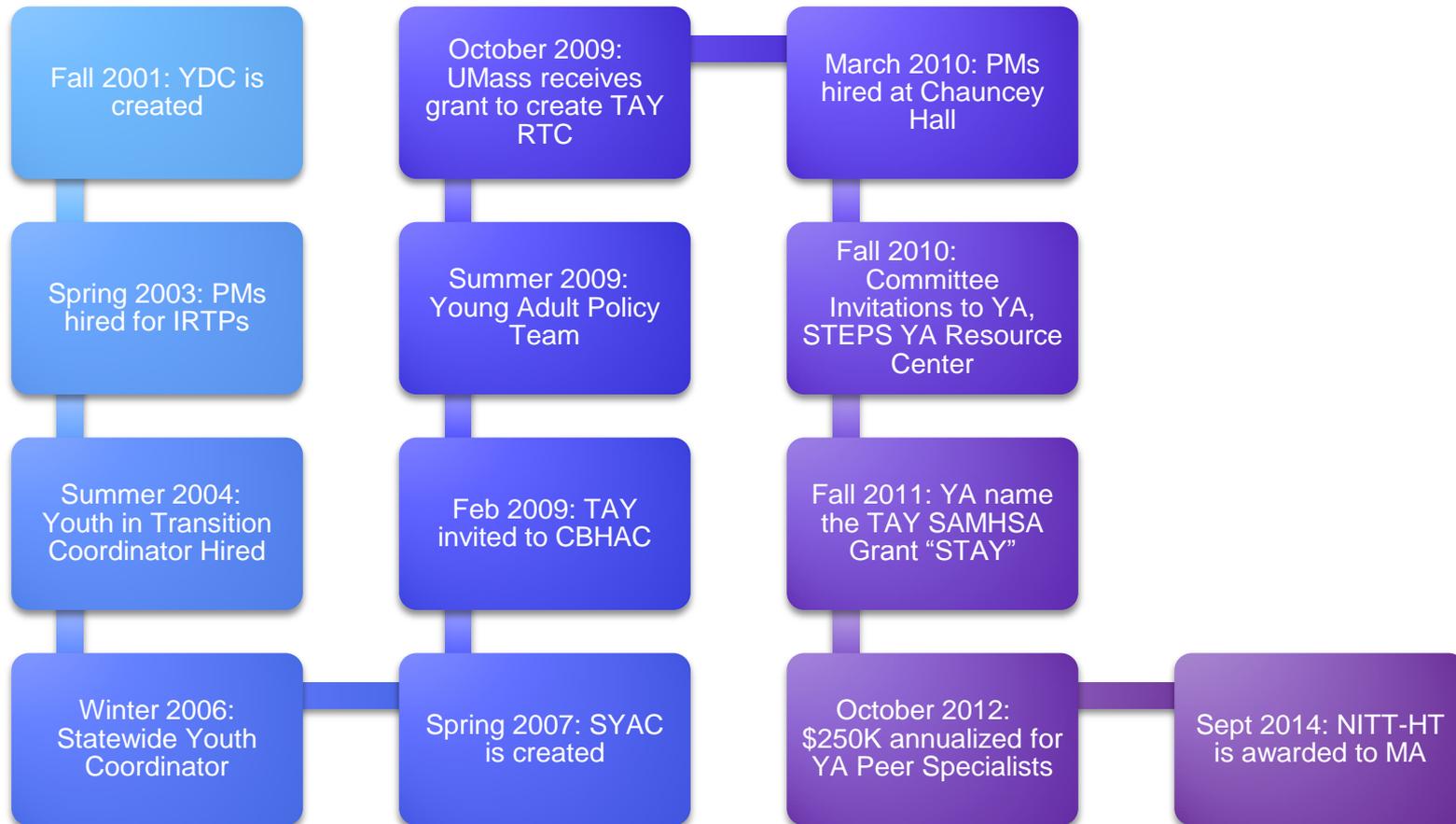
Youth Coordinators Across the Nation

Youth Coordination on a Grantee Level

YOUTH VOICE IN MA

Massachusetts as a leader in Youth Voice

Brief History of Youth Voice in MA



Youth Councils and Groups

Statewide Youth Advisory Council

- Award-Winning
- Fully Young-adult driven/led
- Provide feedback for YA-related efforts throughout state

YouthMove MA Chapter/ PPAL

- Provide support to YA served and parents
- Provide supports to YAs in peer support workforce

STAY Grant

- Young Adult Groups (YAGs) at service provider level
- Provide feedback for services provided to them
- Provide supports and activities to YA served

Youth Voice in Workforce Development

GIFT Training – for Young Adult Peer Mentors

- Train-the-trainer curriculum
- Revamped and Evolving

Young Adult Peer Mentor Workgroups (YAPMW)

- Community of practice and network to better define and support Peer Support Worker Roles
- Recommendations for provider and systems leaders that are actionable, reasonable, and driven/informed by the actual workforce

NITT-HT YOUTH COORDINATORS

Across the Nation

Youth Coordinator (NITT-HT)

Youth Coordinator Position in RFA

“Hiring a full time equivalent Youth Coordinator with lived experience at the state level reporting to the Project Director to support development, implementation and evaluation grant activities and ensure that services and systems effectively engage youth.”

Youth Coordinator – Leveraging the Role Meaningfully

1. Importance of Lived Experience

- i. Supporting peer mentors
- ii. Modeling how lived experience is useful in the processes of our grant work



Youth Coordinator – Leveraging the Role Meaningfully

2. Young Adult Voice

- i. Youth Coordinators facilitate and support the voices of youth being served
- ii. YCs also bring their voice to the table when youth being served are not present



YOUTH VOICES

Youth Coordinator – Meaningfully Leveraging the Role

3. Education

- I. Sharing, learning, growing, and educating co-workers and providers
- II. Educating young adults
- III. De-stigmatizing and normalizing mental health



Youth Coordinators: National Call

Background

- Monthly Project Director call
- Needing for peer support as Youth Coordinators

Purpose

- Foster and sustain a community of practice that serves as a safe space and open forum in which we can connect with one another to share successes, challenges, and brainstorm solutions. We set the stage to enhance our own professional capacity in the workforce by drawing on the collective wisdom and experiences of our fellow peers.

Youth Coordinators: National Call

Structure

- Monthly
- Topics are voted on in call, polls
- Resources / Guests
- Facilitators Rotation



Successes

- Wiggin / Resource Library
- National community of practice
- Sharing resources / workshops

NITT-HT GRANTEE

Massachusetts

Youth Voice in Data Collection

Feedback form / data results

- Why/How
- Data Practice
- What we learned
- Informed our programming

Peer Mentors for data collection

- Training
- Competencies
- Supervision
- Coaching
- Self care
- Options

Youth Voice on our Team

Peer Mentors

- Peer support
- Training - Swiss army tool
- Face of our grant
- Strong voice from programmatic to day-to-day grant work

Exciting Engagement Strategies

Youth Marketing Team

- Youth are the driving force of:
 - Part of creative design team
 - 3 meetings
 - On-going opportunities to be part of communication strategies



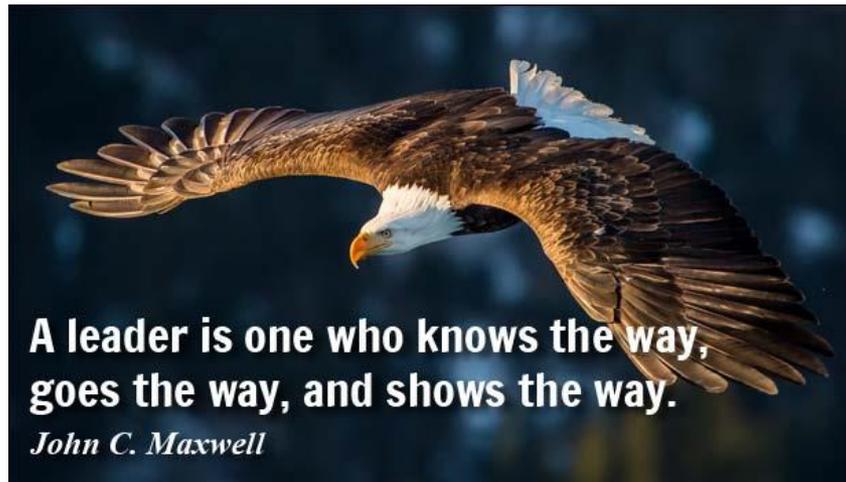
Youth Committee

- Comprised of YAs receiving services
 - Voice in supports and services offered
 - Leadership opportunities

Youth Coordinator in HT-MA

MA Youth Coordinator

- ✓ Driving force behind youth engagement strategies
- ✓ Supervision of peer mentors
- ✓ Seat at the leadership table
- ✓ Much more



**A leader is one who knows the way,
goes the way, and shows the way.**

John C. Maxwell

Thank you for your time!

We are available for questions!

- Gustavo.Payano@state.ma.us
- Tania.Duperoy@umassmed.edu



Feel free to contact us for any questions regarding
youth voice in your State

Question & Answer for entire symposia

Any questions, thoughts,
or comments?

