Contributions of Family & Youth Voice to Building Systems of Care

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Contributions of Family & Youth Voice to Changes in Thinking and Practice

• How things have changed
• Why things have changed
• Lessons learned: Ideas for the next 25 years.
• Platitudes to live by.

Changes in Systems of Care (What has changed?)

• Changes in focus of services
  - Expanded attention to needs of the entire family;
  - Addition of family & youth support services (e.g., respite, individual support for education & recreation, peer-peer, family-family support) to traditional mental health treatment services.
• Changes in practice
  - Wraparound as a process for planning & coordination;
  - More authentic inclusion of family caregivers & youth in service planning;
  - Emphasis on strengths-based, as well as problem-focused work.

Changes in Systems of Care (What has changed?, Cont.)

• Changes in systems & policies (infrastructure)
  - Flexible funds reflect comprehensive approach to services;
  - Family members increasingly important part of SOC workforce;
  - Policy recognition of importance of family & youth input in decision-making.

Family & Youth Voice - System Changes & Sources of Influence

Lessons Learned:
Implications for Next 25 Years
Lessons Learned: Implications for Next 25 Years

- Contributions of family/youth voice to system development were neither recognized nor planned 25 years ago.
  - Strategic use of information about building influence could accelerate positive change.

- Much progress has not been linear, but rather evolutionary and opportunistic.
  - Long-range, big-picture goals help recognize and build on opportunities.

Lessons Learned: Implications for Next 25 Years

- Much change in family/youth influence has been linked to government-stimulated initiatives (mandates, incentives, consequences).
  - These strategies are also available to agencies, organizations, systems of care.

- Families and family organizations excel at building relationships, training, and sharing information. Also some capacity to provide incentives, establish consequences.
  - Focused training on these strategies that builds intent, skills could accelerate change.

PLATITUDES TO LIVE BY

MAYBE IT'S NOT A NAIL

DIVERSIFY; Funding sources & collaborators

ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE
PERSERVERE:
What doesn't kill us will make us stronger