Youth/Young Adult Voice at the Agency Level (Y-VAL):

Developing and validating an assessment of youth / young adult voice in agency-level advising and decision making

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Child, Adolescent and Young Adult Mental Health

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Overview

Topics for today’s presentation

• The value of young adult participation in advising and decision making at the organizational level

• The need for a defined set of best practices and an assessment of the extent to which these are in place

• The development and testing of the Youth/Young Adult Voice at the Agency Level (Y-VAL) assessment and TA tools

• Development and testing of the Youth/Young Adult Voice on Councils/Committees (Y-VOC)
Understanding Youth Voice

Youth MOVE National's (YMN) Best Practices Committee has been working to support the field with understanding:

- What it means to be youth guided and young adult driven
- What youth and young adult leaders contribute to the field through meaningful engagement and what youth organizations offer for supports and services for the field
- What are indicators of success related to
  - Youth and young adult peer support
  - Meaningful youth and young adult engagement
  - Quality health and wellness for those with MH challenges
Identified as a Priority

YMN Best Practices committee identified a need to understand what supports youth/young adult “voice” at agency and system levels

– Clarify what sorts of resources and commitments are required
– Prevent people from reinventing the wheel each time and/or causing distress or harm
– Provide a tailored and data-driven approach for developing, implementing and advancing youth-driven activities
Agency Assessment

• Provides a framework of key indicators of meaningful and successful Y/YA voice
• Assessing allows for a collective and reflective process to better understanding where the agency with Y/YA voice
  – Promotes a shared vision for success
  – Identifies strengths and needs
  – Supports with moving towards sustainable engagement
• Helps young people advocate for meaningful participation and support
• Aids in assessing impact of technical assistance
Theme 1: Overall Vision and Commitment

(a) Commitment to meaningful participation

• The agency has created a formal statement affirming its commitment to promoting Y/YA leadership and meaningful participation in advising and decision making within the organization.

• The agency and its leaders assertively communicate this vision to stakeholders — including young people, management and staff.

• The agency has engaged in training or other activities designed to help foster meaningful partnerships between young people and adults.
Response...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does not apply, or I do not know about this</td>
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<td>MIDWAY</td>
<td>FULLY DEVELOPED</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>none of the aspects in place/ not true for our organization</td>
<td>all aspects consistently in place/ completely true for our organization</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Development Process

- Literature review, expert review/debrief, best practices committee: search “pathwaysrtc”
- 41 items grouped into 7 “themes”
- Feedback on each item:
  - How essential is it to include this as an expectation?
    - Essential, optional, inadvisable
  - What do you think about the wording?
    - Fine as is, minor revision, major revision
  - Open-ended comments
- Feedback on the theme
  - Do the items “cover” the themes adequately?
Essential, Optional, Inadvisable
Wording: OK as is, Minor/Major Revision
New version

1. Overall vision and commitment (8 items)
2. Collaborative approach (5 items)
3. Empowered representatives (5 items)
4. Commitment to facilitation and support of Y/YA participation (3 items)
5. Workforce development (4 items)
6. Participation in developing programming/program policies (5 items)
7. Participation in evaluation (4 items)
8. Leading initiatives and projects (3 items)
Validation study

• Online survey including the Y-VAL and parts of two other assessments with published information on reliability/validity

• Recruitment using two strategies
  – Organizations recruited/registered—data collection began early February, ongoing
  – “Open call”—data gathering starting March 1

• Incentive: 1 in 50 chance at $100 gift certificate
Responses

- 385 total received, but 134 partial
- 84% of these stopped when they could view theme 1
- Non-completers were significantly more likely to
  - Not be directly involved in efforts to increase voice at the agency level
  - Older
- Non-completers removed.
- Remaining data only 1.3% missing
Location of organization/agency

- OREGON: 8%
- TENNESSEE: 8%
- CALIFORNIA: 8%
- OKLAHOMA: 7%
- FLORIDA: 7%
- KENTUCKY: 6%
- OTHER: 56%
Select all that apply

- System-level advising and advocacy: 100
- Administration of services for young people: 71
- TA to programs working with young people: 77
- Advocacy and/or leadership development: 154
- Direct services provided to young people: 164
Organizational focus

Select one

- **Mental Health**: 50%
- **Child Welfare/Foster Care**: 9%
- **Youth and/or Young Adult Advocacy, Development, or Support**: 20%
- **Family Advocacy, Development, or Support**: 9%
- **Other**: 12%
Respondents

“Other” includes consultants, higher-level managers

- PROVIDER: 32%
- MID-LEVEL ADMIN: 20%
- SUPERVISOR: 13%
- PEER STAFF: 13%
- SERVICE RECIPIENT: 4%
- OTHER: 18%
Respondents’ ages

Recruiting 16 and over, per IRB

- **UNDER 18**: 2%
- **18 - 26**: 22%
- **27 - 30**: 12%
- **OVER 30**: 64%
## Internal reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach's $\alpha$</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Overall vision and commitment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Collaborative approach</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Empowered representatives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Facilitation/support for participation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Workforce development/readiness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Impact on programs and policies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Role in program evaluation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Leading initiatives and projects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>All themes</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.97</td>
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**CFA**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>X2</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YVAL model</strong></td>
<td>1020.24</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>0.934</td>
<td>0.942</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>0.065</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Single-factor model</strong></td>
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<td>0.788</td>
<td>0.098</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Missing data handled using multiple imputation built into AMOS. Ten imputed datasets averaged for CFA
- Very good fit:
  - CFI and TLI > .95
  - RMSEA < .06
  - SRMR < .08
- Change in X2 = 1104, df = 48, p < .001
Theme means

1 Overall Vision and Commitment
2 Collaborative approach
3 Empowered Reps
4 Facil/Support for Participation
5 Workforce devel and readniess
6 Impact on programs and policies
7 Role in program evaluation
8 Leading initiatives and projects
ALL/Mean of Means

1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5

3.36
3.52
3.24
3.47
2.94
3.07
3.12
3.04
3.22
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2(b) Respectful partnering</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(c) Culture of partnerships</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(a) Commitment to meaningful participation</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4(b) Addressing barriers to participation</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2(c) Youth/Young adult-friendly meetings</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7(a) Feedback on services</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2(a) Collaborative partnering</td>
<td>3.45</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Tended to reflect relatively more abstract expectations
## Items with lowest means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1(h) Assessment of participation efforts</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3(a) Decision-making processes are transparent</td>
<td>2.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>6(b) Improving services</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7(b) Participation in evaluation activities</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6(a) Programs and practice models</td>
<td>2.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>5(c) Responsive staff evaluation</td>
<td>2.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>5(a) Participation in hiring</td>
<td>2.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>8(c) Control of funds</td>
<td>2.45</td>
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</table>

- Reflected concrete expectations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall vision and commitment**</th>
<th>1 Overall vision and commitment**</th>
<th>3.13</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Collaborative approach**</td>
<td>2 Collaborative approach**</td>
<td>3.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Empowered representatives**</td>
<td>3 Empowered representatives**</td>
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<td>4 Facilitation/support for participation**</td>
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<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All themes**</td>
<td>All themes**</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall and theme mean organization type

- Youth/Family Advocacy
- MH, CW, Ed, etc.
What about possible impact of role?

• Univariate ANOVA
  – DV=Y-VAL grand mean score
  – Fixed Factors
    • Youth or Peer (versus other role) yes/no
    • Youth/Family Advocacy Organization (versus service organization) yes/no
  – Model: Main effects plus interaction
Validation: ANOVA

- Type of organization significant $p < .01$
- Youth/YA/Peer vs other, significant $p < .05$
- Interaction n.s.
- Same pattern for themes
Validation: Other assessments

- Youth-Adult Partnerships in Community Programs (Zeldin et al., 2014) demonstrated strong factorial, discriminant, and concurrent validity for two subscales:
  - Supportive Adult relationships, 4 items, $\alpha = .84$ in their study, $\alpha = .77$ in our study
  - Youth Voice in Decision Making, 5 items, $\alpha = .85$ in their study, $\alpha = .81$ in our study

- Youth Program Quality Assessment (Hohmann & Smith, 2005), strong psychometrics for two constructs from the Youth-Centered Policies and Practices subscale
  - Influence on Settings and Activities (3 items), $\alpha = .77$ in our study
  - Youth-Centered Policies and Practices (5 items), $\alpha = .84$ in our study
## Inter-scale correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Y-VAL</th>
<th>SAR</th>
<th>YVDM</th>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Policy</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>SAR</td>
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<td>YVDM</td>
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<td>.843**</td>
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<td>.490**</td>
<td>.516**</td>
<td>.718**</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Correlations with themes

Pattern of correlations was as predicted:

• The two subscales of the Y-AP were most highly correlated with theme 2 of the YVAL (0.49 and 0.66, respectively)
  – both focus on collaborative approach
• The two subscales of the YPQA were most highly correlated with theme 6 (0.64 and 0.65, respectively).
  – both focus on policies and practices
What now? Y-VAL

- YMN testing a process for technical assistance:
  - Identify TA needs using the Y-VAL
  - Review results and identify priorities
  - Provide TA and resources from a toolkit linked to Y-VAL themes
  - Reassess

- Contact: bmasselli@youthmovenatioanl.org
What now? Y-VOC

- YMN and Pathways are about to launch a test of the Y-VOC: Youth/YA Voice on Councils/Committees (system-level)
  - Adapted through a process of expert review (research partners, best practice committee, external experts)
  - Themes are same as 1-4 on Y-VAL
  - Councils/Committees with 15 or more members
  - Have a "point person" contact atopaloff@youthmovenational.org
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