Youth Transition: 
The Growing Role of Centers for Independent Living

Youth Culture, Youth Outreach, and Youth Involvement

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Review of Day 1
Post-It Feedback
Can you adapt your current programs to be youth friendly?

- See the need – do your research!
- What is your community telling you?
- Feedback from staff who are working on Core Services
- Talk to teachers and school administrators
- Talk with students and parents
- Community Partners
- Who else is doing what?
- Survey
- Host a transition related forum
Creating a Culture

• See the need
• Everyone’s all in!
• Youth Culture
• Youth Driven
• How do you find youth?
• Where? When? How?
Everyone is all in!

- Your staff – Must embrace that they may be involved at some level.
- Your Board – Must be supportive on many levels.
- Your community partners – As long as the consumers benefit we all benefit!
- Your funders – Do good work and funders are there.
- Your consumers – Get what they need and become the best advertising that there is!
Youth and Staff

- Do all staff members have a clear understanding of why your CIL has or wants youth programs?
- Are all staff open to working with youth?
- Talk with youth. Don’t talk down to or at or about.
- Allow for the dignity of risk—failure is a learning opportunity.
- If you criticize, make it constructive. Do offer solutions if requested.
- Treat with equality and respect while avoiding if possible:
  - Kiddo, kids, children, etc., “the real world,” “when you’re older...,” “you are too young to understand,” etc.
- Acronyms
Language Test

• Youth language


• Be REAL! Don’t pretend to be cool. If you don’t understand, ask – youth will get a kick out of getting to teach you something.
Youth Culture

• Recognize that the youth of today have their own culture.
• Today’s youth culture vs. the requirements of today’s society.
• It’s all about approach.
• Dress for your audience.
• Be an Adult Ally not a boss!
Youth Driven

- Youth tend to follow other youth.
- Offer activities that are:
  - Empowering
  - Educational
  - Consumer Controlled
  - Supported with Positive Peer Pressure
- Listen! A lot of youth with disabilities are talked at not to. Be comfortable with being uncomfortable. Allow them time and space to talk. Don’t fill the silence.
Does your CIL have a youth space?

• What hours do you operate?
  • Nights and weekends?
• How welcoming is your CIL for noise?
• Do you have a time where staff/volunteers/consumers can mingle and be more informal?
• Do you have opportunities for youth to have manipulatives or creative spaces?
• Do you have youth friendly art, brochures, magazines?
Where / When / How to Find Youth

• Anywhere and everywhere!
• Outreach
• Community Partners
• Core/Your CIL’s other Services
• Social Media
• Personal stories / successes
• Create the buzz around it!
• Young adults promoting
• “ How do I do youth programming and not work evenings and weekends?”
Where / When / How to Find Youth, cont’d.

- **CORE Services** – They’re usually the hook!
- **Consumer control** – sells itself
- **Connecting with parents**
  - Understand that they are also transitioning.
  - Respect the expertise they have about their children.
  - Realize they are generally looking for the social element for their children.
  - Success stories and other parents can draw them in.
Ways to Involve Youth

• Volunteer – front desk, events, other CIL activities
• Outreach and presentations
  • Resource fairs
  • Presentations, especially about any youth programming
  • Information fairs, other agencies, other groups, parents groups, schools, conferences, rotaries, legislators, colleges, anyone that will hear you!
• Personal stories
• Have youth who have been successful come back to talk with other youth.
Ways to Involve Youth, cont’d.

- Are you going anywhere that a young adult can go along?
  - Trainings, conferences, events, etc.
- Other programs your CIL is working on
- Social Media work
- Create a youth advisory board for all of your youth programming
- Youth on your CIL’s Board of Directors
Ways to Involve Youth, cont’d. 2

- Use their strengths and interests.
- Involve, introduce, incorporate!
- Community, Community, Community!
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