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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!

- 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
- <http://www.mtv.com/news/2720889/teen-slang-2016/>
- 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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