

# #NAMIcon16

## Session A.12 - Youth and Young Adults: A Key to Building a Movement

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From the NAMI National Young Adult Advisory Group



# Workshop Description

The language we use matters in involving youth and young adults in our movement. Just how important is social media, smart phones and slick resources to a younger generation? Will they still come if you don't have it? Are there generational divides and how do we overcome those? Learn about messages that motivate youth and young adults to action.



# Workshop Overview

Part 1	Welcome
Part 2	Lessons Learned from the National TA Center, Transitions RTC
Part 3	Lessons Learned from a NAMI State Affiliate, NAMI VA
Part 4	Tips from the NAMI National Young Adult Advisory Group
Part 5	Interactive Q&A
Part 6	Wrap-Up



# Lessons Learned from a National TA Center, Transitions RTC



# What is the Transitions RRTC?

## National Center that aims to:

- Improve supports for the successful completion of schooling and movement into rewarding work lives among young people, ages 14-30, with serious mental health conditions (SMHC)

## How?

1. Conduct cutting-edge rigorous research that tests or informs interventions
2. Develop and translate knowledge to multiple stakeholders
3. Infuse Participatory Action Research (PAR) into all activities



# PAR at the Transitions RRTC

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

**YOUTH  
DECIDE**



# The Young Adult College Study

## *The Academic Experiences and Perspectives of Young Adult College Students with Mental Health Conditions*

- Secondary Analysis of Data from the “National Survey of College Students With Mental Illnesses”
  - survey by Mark Salzer, PhD.

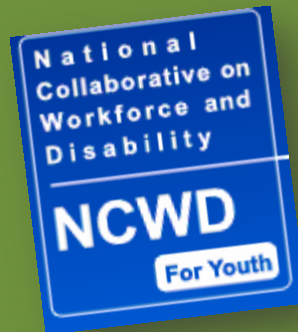


- Created the research questions
- Analyzed data using SPSS Statistical software
- Interpreted Findings
- Developed publications





# ACTION: Speaking Engagements & Councils



NAMI National Convention

Denver, July 6-9, 2016



# YAB



## Diversity

- Child Welfare
- MH Services
- Foster Care
- Juvenile Justice
- Racial Minority
- College Student
- Homelessness

## National Voice

- Youth MOVE
- Home for Little Wanderers
- NAMI National
- Youth Voice Colorado



# THE PAR FRAMEWORK



# Genuine Involvement vs Tokenism

- Having youth just to say you have youth
- Having one youth give feedback everything youth-related
  - One young person doesn't represent the voices of all young people
- All youth members should be approached equally for opinions and decisions

**Not willing to make changes:** “[...] When a group knows what they want to do, and they just want to check a box that says youth engagement so **they try and convince youth of their ideas rather than listening.**”



# PAR at the RTC: Trial and Error

## Breaking New Ground (Yrs 1-3)

5 Per-diem YA  
positions

Generalized job  
description

Separate YA meetings

Supervisor = main  
support

Only Internal  
Youth Voice

## Steering towards Success (Yrs 3-now)

PAR staff on  
career trajectories

Strengths based  
job descriptions

Culture Shift

Career Coach

National Youth  
Voice



# Continuum of Youth Involvement

## Ad Hoc Input

Environment where young people can contribute ideas/information about their needs

## Influence

Formal structured input in order to ensure at least a minimal influence on the organization

## Negotiation

Young people and rest of organisation each contribute their ideas, information and perspectives and decisions are reached by compromise

## Structured Consultation

Deliberately develop a strategy to seek young people's opinions about what they need, what problems they face or what strategies to employ

## Delegation

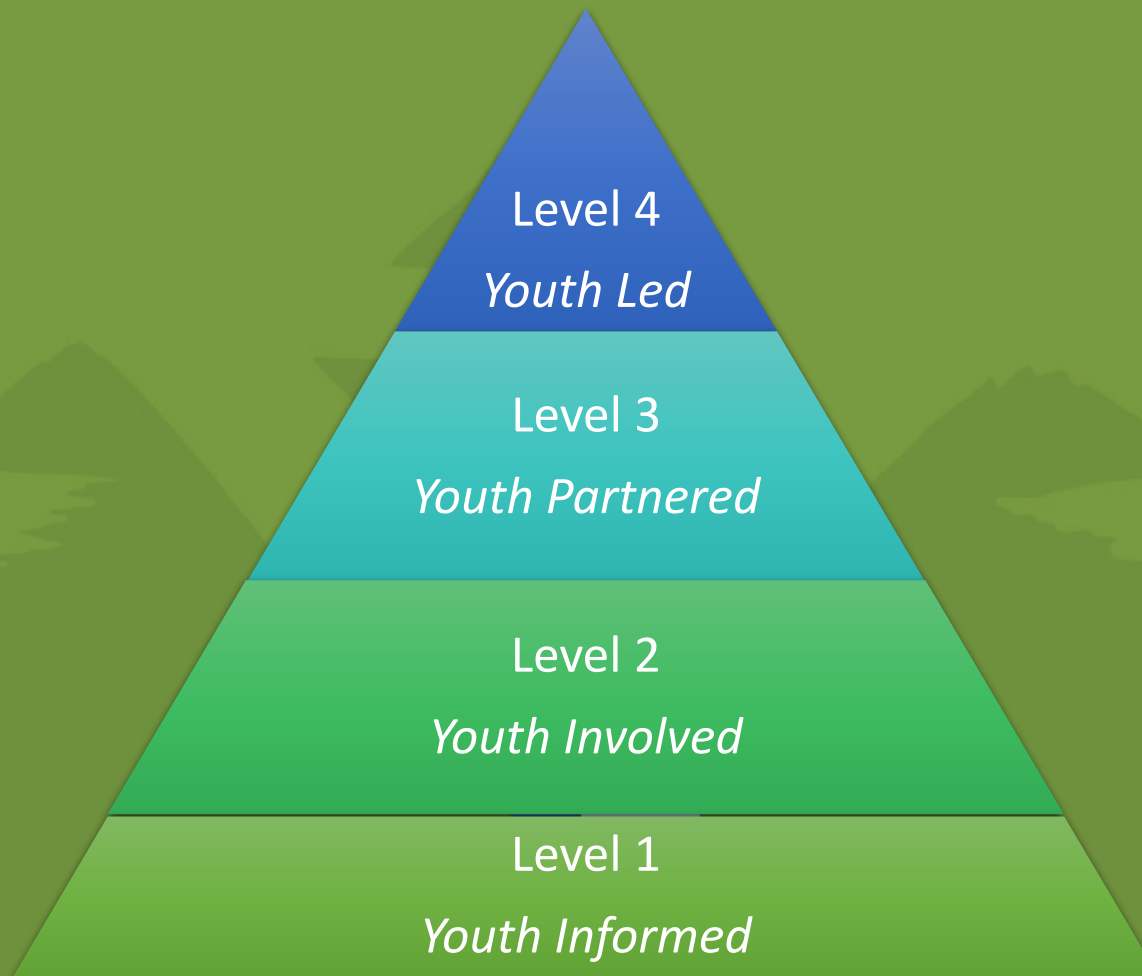
Real responsibility for undertaking particular tasks of the organization

## Control

Young people make many or all of crucial decisions within the organisation, from policy, programming, financial management, hiring and firing of staff

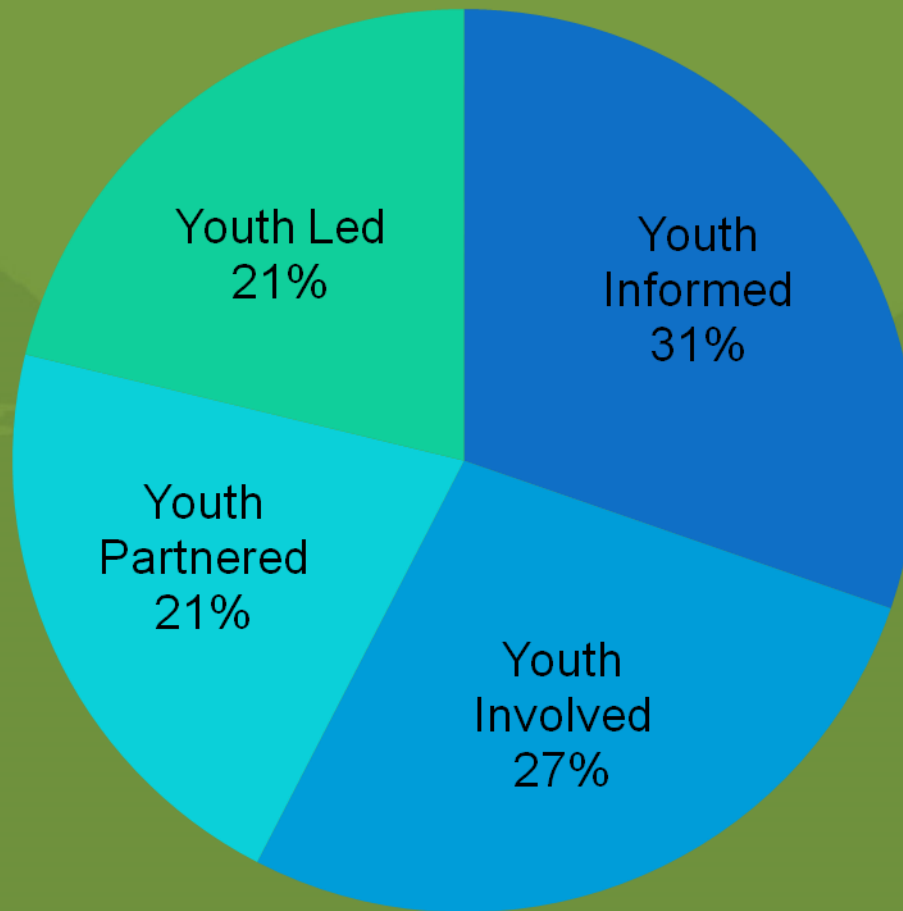


# PAR Levels of Involvement





# Levels of Involvement in Projects



# Lessons Learned



# Solutions to Challenges

## Employer Experiences

### Team Commitment

Top-down commitment by ensuring involvement

### Youth Culture

Understanding youth culture by thinking outside the box, empowering and assigning tasks based on strengths

### Professional Experience

Mentoring and giving clear guidelines for professional development

## YA Employee Experiences

### Team Commitment

Ensure commitment and involvement through peer support and self-advocacy

### Youth Culture

Become self-aware by reading, receiving peer support, and voicing concerns

### Professional Experience

Develop professionally by requesting supports and taking initiative



# Successes & Benefits

## Research Team

- More authentic/rich interviews
- Engaging youth participants
- Stronger connection to media/technology
- Strengthened relationship with local mental health community

## PAR Staff

- PAR staff transitioning into professional roles
- Increased self-efficacy/self-advocacy skills
- Strengthened youth voice



# Lessons Learned from a NAMI State Affiliate, NAMI VA



# What are we talking about here?

1. Creating and sustaining youth-adult *partnerships* (Y-APs)
  - Y-AP is the central aspect of youth engagement
  - The use of “*partnerships*” reminds us that the engagement AND voice of both youth and adults are critical
  - Are there legitimate opportunities within your organization to work collectively – REGARDLESS OF AGE – while bringing unique talents and perspectives to the table?
  - Remember, change occurs when there is an active discussion about how research and theoretical concepts relates (or do NOT relate) to one’s experience.
2. Positive youth, organizational, and communal development





# What are the ingredients for quality Y-AP?

- 1) *Youth need choice and options*
  - Different skillsets and interests
- 2) *Establish clear roles and expectations*
  - Helps with increased functionality because everyone knows what he/she is expected to accomplish.
  - Clarity, structure, and boundaries should be discussed
- 3) *Time and preparation for QUALITY Y-AP*
  - Get to know one another, brainstorm, work together, share experiences
- 4) *Encourage Collective Mentoring*
  - “Shared teaching and learning”
- 5) *Carefully select where Y-AP is most needed*



# Where should Y-AP take place?

- Governance and Policymaking
  - If an organization serves young people, then the young people should have key roles of organizational decision-making.
  - Do not just listen to youths, but **HEAR** them, and allow their input to be heard
- Training and Outreach
  - At the very least, adults benefit from hearing the youth perspective.
  - Hopefully this ignites sparks of hope!
- Organizing and Activism
- Communication and Media
- Service and Philanthropy
  - Youth of all ages can serve as mentors for younger youth
- Research and Evaluation
  - Research participants AND research assistants/researchers



How can organizations create a “culture” that allows the flourishing of Y-AP?



# Tips from the NAMI National Young Adult Advisory Group



# Tips from the NAMI Young Adult Advisory Board

**What would make you want to get  
involved in NAMI programs as a  
participant and/or a program  
leader and stay active?**



# Tips from the NAMI Young Adult Advisory Board

## Creating a Supportive Group

<https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers>

- Showing young adults in the group they are not alone
  - Have other youth in the room
  - Do icebreakers for group cohesion
  - Allow for them to meet in person if possible
    - ✓ Have an annual conference or a big meeting?
- Allowing young adults to have a creative outlet
  - social media pages, websites, videos, etc.





# Tips from the NAMI Young Adult Advisory Board

## Fostering Leadership

Even if an adult(s) leads the group, it's important that young adults...

- Have a voice
- Youth voice causes action

There should be clear opportunities for the youth to get involved

- Have certain roles, tasks, or projects for young adults
- Have end-products or projects
- Have learning opportunities and activities that benefit others or at least benefit the young adults' own futures



# Tips from the NAMI Young Adult Advisory Board

## Support from Above

- Senior staff/adults on the team show their support and that they are partners on projects
- Senior staff/adults understand the value of youth voice and the participation of youth in planning and implementation

## Recommended Reading

*Youth and Adult Partnerships*

<http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/files/CreatingYouth-AdultPartnerships.pdf>



# Interactive Q & A



What do your goals look like?

Any issues you want to address with us?



What resources will you look into moving forward?

Any resources you can share here?



# Thank You!

**Want More Information?**

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