AMP/Thrive: Partnership for enhancing transition facilitator’s skills in promoting youth voice and participation
Pathways RTC Presenters

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Thrive @ 25 Presenters

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Agenda

- Thrive History and Purpose
- The Achieve My Plan Enhancement
- Implementing Achieve My Plan
- AMP as an Enhancement for Other Models
- Panel Discussion
Icebreaker: Are We Asking The Right Kinds of Questions?

Watch the eLearning Module, and with your polling tool choose what kind of question you think is being asked:
1. Stacking questions
2. Leading questions (aka suggestions)
3. Close ended question
4. Open ended question
Thrive History and Purpose

• Thrive@25 was created to improve outcomes and reduce the likelihood of experiencing homelessness for TAY in foster care across five rural departments of social services in Maryland.
• Phase I of Thrive@25 (9/30/13-9/29/15)
  • focused on designing an intervention model to prevent homelessness among specific populations of youth and young adults with current or prior child welfare involvement.
• Phase II of Thrive@25 (9/30/15-9/29/18 extended to 2019)
  • focused on installing, implementing, refining, and evaluating the intervention model:
    • Grounded in implementation science
    • A commitment to trauma informed care
    • To improve four core outcomes: stable housing, permanent connections, education/employment, and social-emotional well-being
Highlights from the Phase I Evaluation: State-Level Findings

• Youth and young adults aging out felt unprepared for or did not consider pursuing secondary education and lacked access to quality jobs

• Former foster youth (up to age 30 now) had secure housing for the first 3 months after leaving care but most became unable to manage rent and experienced housing instability
  • 99% stayed in a shelter or with a friend since leaving care
  • 100% had ever or were currently experiencing housing instability
  • 92% were currently looking for employment
Highlights from the Phase I Evaluation: Mid-Shore Findings

Youth currently in foster care

- Many had at some point in their lives experienced a lack of stable housing
- Reported wanting more contact with adults, including existing friends and family, and perceived it was difficult for others to visit them (Youth 14-17)
- Reported they had friends and permanent connections but were worried about losing touch with supportive adults after aging out (Youth 18-21)
- Were unaware of the Maryland Tuition Waiver but were more concerned about housing and employment than education (Youth 18-21)

Resource Parents, Foster Care Workers and Other Providers

- Lack of transportation impacts ability of youth to travel and connect with family and friends
- Trauma exposure and lack of mental health providers trained in trauma treatment
- Youth need support emotionally and practically to be able to navigate daily life
- Job opportunities on the Mid-Shore are scarce and many youth do not consider post-high school education to be an option for themselves
Thrive@25 Phase I Evaluation Highlights

https://www.thrive25md.org/resources

Thrive@25 Phase I Evaluation Findings

Thrive@25 is Maryland’s initiative to end and prevent homelessness among youth and young adults with current or prior child welfare involvement. Thrive@25 is led by The Institute for Innovation & Implementation at the University of Maryland School of Social Work in partnership with Maryland Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration (DHHS), the Talbot County Department of Social Services on behalf of the free local departments of social services on Maryland’s rural Mid-Shore and the National Center on Housing and Child Welfare. Thrive@25 is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children & Families, Children's Bureau, and seeks to build the capacity of Maryland's child welfare system to prevent homelessness among the most at-risk youth and young adults with child welfare involvement. Phase I of Thrive@25 (4/1/13-4/29/15) focused on designing an intervention model to prevent homelessness among specific populations of youth and young adults with current or prior child welfare involvement. Phase II of Thrive@25 (4/30/15-4/29/18) will focus on installing, implementing, refining, and evaluating the intervention model, which is grounded in implementation science and a commitment to trauma-informed care to improve four core outcomes: stable housing, permanent connections, education/employment, and social-emotional well-being.

Phase I Evaluation Process

The Project Evaluation had multiple components and the evaluation spanned the duration of the Phase I grant. The evaluation included the following components:

- Multi-faceted readiness assessment, including a review of more than 15 community needs assessments from 2013-2014.

- Administrative data analysis using:
  - COMBS (Maryland’s State Automated Child Welfare Information System)
  - Child & Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessments
  - National Youth In Transition Database (NYTD) and

- Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups:
  - Youth currently in foster care on the Mid-Shore
    - 79 surveys
    - 10 interviews
  - Youth formerly in foster care in Maryland
    - 79 surveys
    - 10 interviews
  - Foster Parents, Resource Parents, Child Welfare Workers & Group Home and Community Providers
    - 57 surveys
    - 10 interviews
    - 2 focus groups

#LEADINGCHANGE
Installation & Initial Implementation: March 2017-July 2018

Late 2012-Early 2013:
Local RB21 Committee Prioritizes Housing & Submits Concept Paper to State

Winter 2013:
UMD SSW meets with the State to discuss applying for grant to end and prevent youth homelessness among youth in foster care

Summer 2013:
MD is awarded 1 of 18 YARH Grants

September 2013-September 2015:
Thrive@25 team designs a model intervention and applies for a Phase II YARH Grant

August 2015:
MD is awarded 1 of 6 YARH Grants

September 2016-Today:
IMPLEMENTATION

#LEADINGCHANGE
Thrive: What was the need?

"You lose everything. You lose your support system and everything all at once when you age out."

Thrive@25: What was the Need?

• All youth and young adults deserve a safe, stable home and support to transition successfully into adulthood.

• Youth in foster care need help to:
  • Find stable and affordable housing
  • Make and sustain permanent, supportive relationships and connections
  • Develop and achieve educational and employment goals
  • Promote social and emotional well-being
Rural Context: The Uniqueness of the 5 counties

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2010 Summary File 1
population by census tract

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maryland_population_map.png
What does child welfare look like on the Eastern Shore?

- Caseloads
- Staffing
- Degrees of Specialization
- Regional Approach

Talbot County Department of Social Services maintains national accreditation. The Star Democrat, January 18, 2018
Achieve My Plan (AMP)

• AMP stands for Achieve My Plan
• It’s an intervention designed for young people with serious mental health challenges, and has been developed to support young people to learn skills, set goals, and become more active and engaged in their treatment planning.
• AMP was originally designed to be an enhancement to Wraparound.
Why Create AMP?

- Research showed that few youth meaningfully participated in their education, care, and treatment team planning:
  - Schools/IEP
  - Systems of care
  - Wraparound
- Professionals are also dissatisfied with the level of youth participation in wraparound
- Ongoing experiences reinforce this: Limited voice and choice
Randomized Study of AMP

- Enhancement intervention for older youth in Wraparound
- Focused on key elements of effective approaches for Y/YA
  - Youth driven/engagement
  - Structure for person-centered planning
  - Model and teach self-determination skills
- Young people received Wrap with AMP vs Wrap “as usual”
- Findings strongly favored the intervention condition
  - Participation, engagement, alliance with treatment team; meetings more productive and “better” (youth/team members)
AMP: The Gold Standard

“Gold standard” elements of practice-focused staff development:

- observation of practice (either live or via audio- or video recording)
- provision of feedback in a manner that is
  - connected to the intervention theory and
  - based on objective criteria
- repeated until specific benchmarks achieved

Dorsey et al., 2013; Kolko, Baumann, & Davis, 2010; Milne, Sheikh, Pattison, & Wilkinson, 2011; Garland, 2013; Herschell, 2014)
• Trainees can log on to VCP and watch examples of actual practice (both good and not so good)

• VCP allows users to submit video of actual practice for trainers to review.

• Trainers observe practice and provide direct feedback regarding specific techniques.
AMP: What Trainees Learn

• Use a set of specific **techniques** to ensure
  • youth driven, **strengths based/engagement** throughout

• Use a set of structured yet flexible **modules** to support young person’s acquisition of **self-determination skills**
  • Explicit focus on teaching a discreet set of skills—naming, practicing, coaching
Guide without leading (GWOL)

In conversation with another person about their thoughts and ideas, a delicate balancing act

Too much leading

Too little guiding
AMP Themes

- **Youth Driven**
- **Strengths/Identifying Assets**
- **Positive Connection to People & Community**
- **Expanding Skills**
- **Promoting Discovery**
- **Guiding/Keeping it on Track (KIOT)**
AMP: What Trainees Learn

Dreaming
Narrowing down
Identifying support
Plan B

Anticipating the situation
Effective communication
Identifying support
Agenda Planning

Take Action!
Community activity
Meeting with care team
Meeting with gatekeeper

Engagement techniques: open ended questions, reflections, descriptive praise, normalizing, checking in
Foundational Techniques

- Open-ended questions
- Reflections
- Descriptive Praise
- Checking in
- Labeling/teaching self-determination skills

Advanced Techniques

- Keeping it conversational
- Goldilocks Effect
- Stitching together
- Normalizing
AMP: What Trainees Learn

Specific sessions structured to help the worker guide the youth in thinking about goals, preparing for meetings/events, taking action, and repeating/reviewing.
AMP: Practice Change

Trainers code videos of trainees practicing the AMP curriculum and findings show significant practice change between the first and final video!
“AMP has been a valuable tool for working with our youth in foster care. It has helped engage the youth more in planning for their future and feeling like they have control over deciding their goals and how they will achieve those goals...[and] as a worker, AMP has made me more self-aware of the skills I am using with youth and afforded me ample opportunities to work on fine-tuning some skills that I have not used with youth in a while. [It] has also helped align me with the youth I work with and strengthen our rapport, as the AMP model encourages cooperation and is so youth-driven, which decreases the youth's perspective of being told what to do.”

-AMP-certified foster care worker [emphasis added]
Discussion:

• What are your initial thoughts?
• Did you notice the worker using open ended questions, reflections, descriptive praise, or another foundational skill?
• Did you notice any improveables?
Discussion:

• What are your initial thoughts?
• Did you notice the worker using open ended questions, reflections, descriptive praise, or another foundational skill?
• Did you notice any improveables?
• How would you compare these videos to the previous videos?
Implementing the AMP Enhancement

• Existing teaming process
• Organizational buy-in
• Support of the time needed for training and coaching
• Supervisor participation
• Agency culture that values youth engagement and empowerment
• Cultivate and support a flexible approach—don’t just say “no”
• Engagement of stakeholders and youth supports
Why AMP?

• Youth needed an intervention because they were not prepared to exit care; the existing FIM model and the overlay of AMP was a natural fit.

• The model helps grow the skills of the workforce--the necessary skills to engage meaningfully with youth around their own transition plans.

• Intervention shift with a focus on youth driven relationships and skill building.

• An individualized, youth-guided transition planning process will result in plans that are more successful, more sustainable after care, and improve outcomes for youth.
Maryland’s Ready by 21

Video of youth about Foster Youth Rights and RB21 https://vimeo.com/252957944
RB21 and Information about domains http://dhr.maryland.gov/foster-care/youth-resources/ready-by-21/

- All youth, starting at age 14, receive services and planning supports tailored to their needs related to being successful in adulthood (in addition to and complementary with services and supports related to safety, permanency, and well-being).

- Goals, services, and supports are focused on 5 life domains:
  - Education
  - Employment & Financial Stability
  - Health & Well-Being
  - Mentors & Permanent, Supportive Connections
  - Safe & Stable Housing

Aligns with USICH Framework
Enhanced Youth Transitional Planning Utilizing Achieve My Plan (AMP)

• Thrive@25’s enhanced youth transitional planning process—utilizing AMP—is about more than just a meeting!

• The intervention includes:
  • An individualized, youth-driven, strengths-based transition planning process
  • Comprehensive and integrated Transition Plans that address all life domains
  • Increased frequency of transition planning meetings
  • Training for caseworkers, facilitators, and stakeholders. Coaching for supervisors
  • Prep work with youth to support them in identifying goals and supports, and driving their transition planning process
  • CANS-TAY and Thrive@25 Risk Screen tools to inform transition planning
Lessons Learned

• Need for shift from initial intervention
• Keeping training up to date
• Ongoing support
• IT challenges
• Community partner buy-in
• Adapting training for facilitators
• Frontloading expectations and support needed
• Perceived caseworker burden
Implementation Science is the study of factors that influence the full and effective use of innovations in practice. The goal is not to answer factual questions about what is, but rather to determine what is required. (NIRN, 2015; emphasis added)
AMP: Applying the Gold Standard of Coaching

- **Learn** about the module during a video-conference.
- **Observe**: Log into VCP to watch an experienced coach.
- **Practice** doing the module, video record, upload to VCP.
- **Get feedback** on strengths and “improvables” via the teleconference and report from VCP.
- **Repeat!**
Sustainability and On-going Coaching

• Training alone is inadequate
• Support and buy-in of leadership
• Supervisory shift from AMP trainee to chAMPions
• Training for supervisors around the implementation and management of a new practice framework
• Operationalizing the Values of the model—Focus on Skill Development
• Clear expectations and structured processes
• Feedback loop that includes accountability
Sustainability

• Collaborative planning with stakeholders at the local and state level
• Integration with existing initiatives, including Title IV-E Waiver activities related to the practice model and transition-aged youth service array
• Development of sustainable, replicable policies and procedures
• Partnering with experts to train
  • youth on effective sharing of their stories, and
  • foster care workers and supervisors on how to engage with youth and young adults in a systems-level context
• Receiving intensive Family Finding implementation technical assistance
AMP as an Enhancement to Other Models

• AMP is an adaptable curriculum
  • Wraparound
  • Peer support (AMP+)
AMP for Wraparound

• Enhancement that can be used by care coordinators or other providers on the team
• Focuses on helping the youth identify strengths, goals, activities and plan for their meeting
• Built to be something that providers can do as a part of their regular work with young people
• Findings show that youth and providers were more satisfied with their meetings.
AMP+ for Peer Support Specialists

• Provides clarity and structure for the peer role
• Findings show that post training youth peer support specialists report less burnout, more role clarity, and feel more confident in their ability to help the young people they work with.
Panel
Thank you!

To learn more about Achieve My Plan (AMP), please visit www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu.

To learn more about Thrive@25, please visit www.thrive25md.org
The development of the contents of this presentation were supported by funding from the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research, United States Department of Education, and the Center for Mental Health Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services (NIDRR grant H133B990025). The content does not represent the views or policies of the funding agencies. In addition, you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.
Thrive@25 Partners

Caroline County Department of Social Services
Dorchester County Department of Social Services
Kent County Department of Social Services
Queen Anne’s County Department of Social Services
Talbot County Department of Social Services

This presentation was funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau, Grant #90CA1835. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the funder, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This information is in the public domain. Readers are encouraged to copy and share it.