

What we need in order to support young people

A collective message from mental health and substance use providers, family-run organizations, and parent peer support specialists.



In 2021, FREDLA hosted focus groups with the Youth MOVE National Peer Center to learn what family-run organizations, providers of mental health and substance use services, and parent peer specialists need in order to better help young people (ages 16-25) transition to adulthood. This document reflects the discussions each of these sectors had with their peers, and contains the areas they shared in common. Participants need help in the four areas below.

1

Fostering Independence & Interdependence

Being able to support young adults and their families with the tools they need in order to promote independence is crucial. What do we need?

- Life skills & self-advocacy training for youth
- Coaching and tools for young adults and families to be confident as they share and transfer responsibilities
- Tools & mentoring to help families know when “letting go” is appropriate and “holding on” is detrimental
- Supporting parents to dream new dreams in this stage of their ‘child’s’ development

2

Understanding the Value of One Another's Role

Lack of clarity about roles adds to the confusion that youth and families experience with the systems that support them. A few examples of the training or information participants need include:

- The value and role of family-run organizations
- Promotional materials regarding the benefits of engaging young adults and their families in care
- Help providers understand that speaking with parents about coordination and other items does not require them to violate HIPAA

3

Supporting the Wellbeing of LGBTQ+ Youth & Families

Adolescent development is marked by rapid physical and emotional changes while youth work to develop autonomy and a sense of identity. Participants need to know how to:

- Affirm youth identities and promote their rights
- Help prevent suicide
- Create a safe environment for complex conversations
- Use key terms and concepts for sharing language and building relationships

4

Advocating for Policy Changes

Participants agreed that more information is needed in order to change policies that currently disrupt appropriate and efficient treatment for youth and young adults, including:

- Developing a national bank of state policy changes that have supported transition to adulthood
- Solutions to housing challenges
- Funding strategies for youth to keep relationships they have with providers rather than starting over as they age
- Transportation to support access to care for young adults

