

YOUTH POWER!

2007 Long Island Regional Youth Forum Youth Voices Speak Out About

What Helps? What Harms?

On March 10th 2007, YOUTH POWER!, the statewide youth network of Families Together of New York State and Long Island Families Together teamed up to host a regional youth forum. The theme of the day was ***Tell It Like It Is! What helps? What harms? Our voices for change.*** Over 30 young people ages 16-25 had an opportunity to express their thoughts on the services and supports they receive. During the forum the participants broke up into 3 groups and discussed what helps and what harms in their services, community and their general life. Each group then reported out to the entire forum the topics they discussed. This document created out of the flip chart notes written in the youth forum.

Education	
Helps	Harms
<p>School Environments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Schools intervening with bullying ★ Educational advocacy ★ Hold assemblies to talk about issues ★ Educational bridge ★ Guidance counselor that listens and cares ★ Counselors that encourage students ★ Peers that motivate ★ A comfortable setting ★ Activities for students with things they enjoy (sports, arts) ★ Give everyone a chance to be equal in school environment ★ School programs should focus on individual needs (different grading system) ★ Getting a choice in school materials ★ Tolerance from teachers, staff and students ★ Freedom of expression 	<p>School Environments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Drugs are available in schools ★ When parents don't get involved ★ Being labeled for having a different point of view ★ Lack of freedom of expression (censorship) ★ Focus is on passing state tests and not on student learning ★ Time out rooms/seclusion does not help ★ Teasing about personal aids ★ Peer pressure ★ Racial issues ★ LABELS (being put down by student/teachers, name calling) ★ Students bullying ★ School ignoring abuse






































Education Continued

Helps	Harms
<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Good teachers- (give time to finish, stay after to help students with assignments, commitment to students) ★ Flexibility in schools and teachers truly caring about students and education ★ Better quality teachers ★ Down to earth ★ Learn to listen/ teachers really listening ★ Leave personal frustration outside classroom ★ Understanding what the issues are ★ Patience ★ Stop having sexual relations with students ★ Student/ teacher forums ★ Talking to kids about what is going on ★ Feedback from teachers to help students advance and understand work ★ More motivation for students to study and get better grades 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Teachers telling you, you “can’t”, or “you’re not worth it”- even if it’s something you want. ★ When teachers give up and don’t teach ★ When you don’t get individual help ★ Ignoring social needs because of high grades ★ Teachers venting personal frustrations on class ★ Not allowing kids to participate in after school activities ★ Teachers not knowing students (judgmental issues) ★ Being embarrassed by teachers ★ Not being listened to ★ Not resolving bullying(not dealing with it) ★ Not allowing basic needs (bathroom) ★ Blaming ★ Favoritism ★ Improper teaching (feeling like you can’t ask questions- won’t get answers)
<p>School Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Administration supporting good programs and teachers ★ Students, teachers, administration working together ★ More options to meet needs ★ Study programs ★ Provide education about disabilities ★ Hold school accountable for bullying ★ More time on tests ★ BOCES ★ ROTC (some disagreement- choice is key) ★ Active learning and grade and age appropriate classes in Special Ed/ higher standards ★ Regular drug tests of teachers 	<p>School Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Curriculum limits teachers being creative ★ Loss of education because of consequences ★ Restrictive environment ★ Misinformation, coercion, dishonesty ★ Unreasonable transportation rules ★ Not being allowed to pass course because of time in class even though passed test ★ Out of community placements (out of district placement, residential)

Family and Community

Helps	Harms
<p>Family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Support and caring ☆ Sit down and talk ☆ mediation ☆ Family time(do something fun together) ☆ Knowing your rights and what is available ☆ Asking what we want helps ☆ Acting and not ignoring ☆ Youth should never give up ☆ Character building ☆ Listen to us ☆ Stop judging us 	<p>Family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Too sheltered ☆ Discouraged from participating by family ☆ Screaming and yelling ☆ Abandonment ☆ Verbal and physical abuse ☆ Lack of understanding ☆ Lack of communication ☆ Put down ☆ Families give up ☆ Attitude ☆ Abuse of power ☆ Isolating- staying in the house
<p>Employment in Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ More opportunities for youth jobs to get work experience 	<p>Employment in Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Discrimination based on mental health ☆ Stereotypes
<p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ More mentors- people who have been there ☆ Helping my peers/others helps me ☆ Role models ☆ Open Mic nights ☆ Basketball (indoor-outdoor courts) ☆ When Drop-In centers can't say if you are there ☆ YMCA ☆ Parks ☆ Library-computer access ☆ Medicaid-helps cover costs 	<p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Discrimination ☆ Being looked down on labeled-assumptions by appearance ☆ Drugs ☆ Transportation-not enough public transportation ☆ Shelter services-DSS run around, none around if they are not well funded. Rather be on the street sleeping at train station. ☆ Being removed from parents ☆ Families reaching out for help and CPS being called instead due to parent/child disability (MH) ☆ Never have strength based services ☆ Abuse of Power ☆ Not anything late and at night (To do)

Community Services

Helps	Harms
<p>Mental Health Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Listen to the youth and not only parent/guardian  Better communication between doctor and patient. Doctors/therapists that listen to you  Coping skills and identifying emotions-Anger management  Guidance with releasing emotions/feelings  Find out what is wrong before diagnosing, restraining, medicating  More real therapy that helps get at the issues inside  Treat us like human beings and people with feelings  Staying calm- get out with others, getting along with others  Laughing, watching comedy  Keeping confidentiality  Being able to trust your therapist/counselor  Support Groups (Peer) 	<p>Mental Health Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  No word of recovery  Too quick to diagnose/doctors diagnosing after 10 minutes-not really knowing you  Taking away your freedom  Being restrained  Chemical restraints
<p>Substance Abuse Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Behavioral modification  Helps substance abuse by having something to do that you enjoy  Builds relationship with family  Peer groups  Having people help in dealing with issues  Being able to talk about it  Being with others that understand  Groups/supportive helps release emotions  Counselors that can relate because they have been through it  Empathetic/sympathetic treatment  People you can trust (counselors/therapists)  Tough love  Inpatient programs 	<p>Substance Abuse Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Using drugs to take away your problems  Relief without solution (only helps for the moment) [Drugs]  Family not always being supportive  Counselors that belittle/put down  Family that enables  Counselors trying to "fix you" not helping you "fix it" yourself  People making their drug stories seem great or good ("war stories")

Out of Home Services

Helps	Harms
<p>Hospitals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Having time to educate yourself and further your goals × Need more peer groups × Building skills/coping mechanisms/anger management/ social skills × Supportive friends (access to) × Generate support groups with similar and life situation challenges × More advocacy from peers 	<p>Hospitals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Behind in school work × Insurance not paying for all medication in treatment × Staff giving wrong medication (low awareness) × Restraints as punishment/Restraints teaches violence × Low awareness about patient allergies × Over medicated × Misdiagnosed × People that don't need to be there but the system had nowhere to put them × Seclusion rooms × Food (old, expired, no alternative menus) × PRN- ask and you get it- counter to rehab (from drug abuse) × Not being able to check yourself out even if you checked yourself in × Get stuck there even if you think you are better × No self help × Stuck on meds not allowed to get off
<p>Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Lots of time to yourself to figure it out for yourself × Working × Working a program with transition to society based on time in a program and skills learned with coping and dealing with emotions × Baby steps- a little at a time × More support when re-entering society × Incorporate family and friends in group sessions and therapy × More advocacy from peers (older) "people who have been there" × More focus on rehab and recovery × More education and insight as to why and what your issues are and how to deal 	<p>Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Lack of transition × Not going on home visits × Denying right to see family × Not see friends from home × Out of State placements × Regulations × Far away (from home) × Counselors don't care because it is just a 9-5 job × Book educated can't relate (staff/counselors) × Can't give you advice that means something × Don't get a good education (person admitted) × No career development × It is a business- about money not help × No recovery

Medication

Helps

Medication:

- 📌 Listening to patient if medication is working or not
- 📌 Having information
- 📌 Psychiatrists not making money off of medication
- 📌 Not being forced to take meds
- 📌 Being involved in decision making

Harms

Medication:

- 📌 Give you controlled substance so they get you to keep coming back even if you don't need it
- 📌 Feed in to drug problems (medication)
- 📌 The fear they instill in you that you can't do without them the rest of your life. (medications)
- 📌 Money seems more important than the person
- 📌 Using drugs(meds) to take away your problems
- 📌 Pushing medication as "solution" to everything/ Medicating problems (life problems)
- 📌 Giving you meds that are being tested/ "Stop using me as a guinea pig"
- 📌 Putting pressure on parents to medicate
- 📌 Forcing medication
- 📌 Parent/Individual not being given information
- 📌 Parents thinking doctors are "God" and not questioning them
- 📌 Not being involved in decision making(not having a say)
- 📌 Not being yourself (while on meds)
- 📌 Not knowing why you have to be on meds
- 📌 Being given a lot of meds-sleeping, zombie, not knowing what is going on and being accused of being depressed or "flat affect" and being given more meds.
- 📌 Being medicated/Too much medication
- 📌 Medications mixing bad in the system
- 📌 Side effects limit quality of life "the end does not justify the means"/ weight gain
- 📌 Using medication for non psychiatric reasons
- 📌 Constantly changing medications