EVALUATION + DESIGN

PROGRAM DESIGN • EVALUATION DESIGN • INFORMATION DESIGN

evaluation 2016 OCTOBER 24-29 | ATLANTA, GA

Asking the Experts:

Engaging Youth and Young Adults in Enhancing Program Design

CRI CENTERSTONE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Overview

- Healthy Transitions Overview
- Youth Engagement and Healthy Transitions
- Youth Participatory Action Research
- Hamilton County Young Adult Leadership Council YPAR Project
- Lessons Learned and Next Steps
- Conclusions and Questions

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Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative

The Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative assists Tennessee youth and young adults (Y/YA) ages 16-25 **with** or **at risk of developing** a serious **mental health condition or co-occurring disorder** in improving their health and wellness, leading self-directed lives, and reaching their full potential

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Healthy Transitions Partner Agencies

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SAMHSA

TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

Carey Counseling Center, Inc.

VOLUNTEER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

TENNESSEE VOICES FOR CHILDREN

CRI CENTERSTONE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Centerstone Research Institute

- Based in Nashville, TN
- Affiliate of Centerstone Behavioral Health
  - Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, Florida, Kentucky
- Evaluation research is one of multiple services of the Research Institute
- Grants and contracts
- Evaluations are designed by funders, contractors and CRI

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Healthy Transitions Service Areas

Carey Counseling Center, Inc.

Northwest Tennessee

- Lake
- Obion
- Weakley
- Gibson
- Carroll
- Henry
- Benton

Southeast Tennessee

- Hamilton

VOLUNTEER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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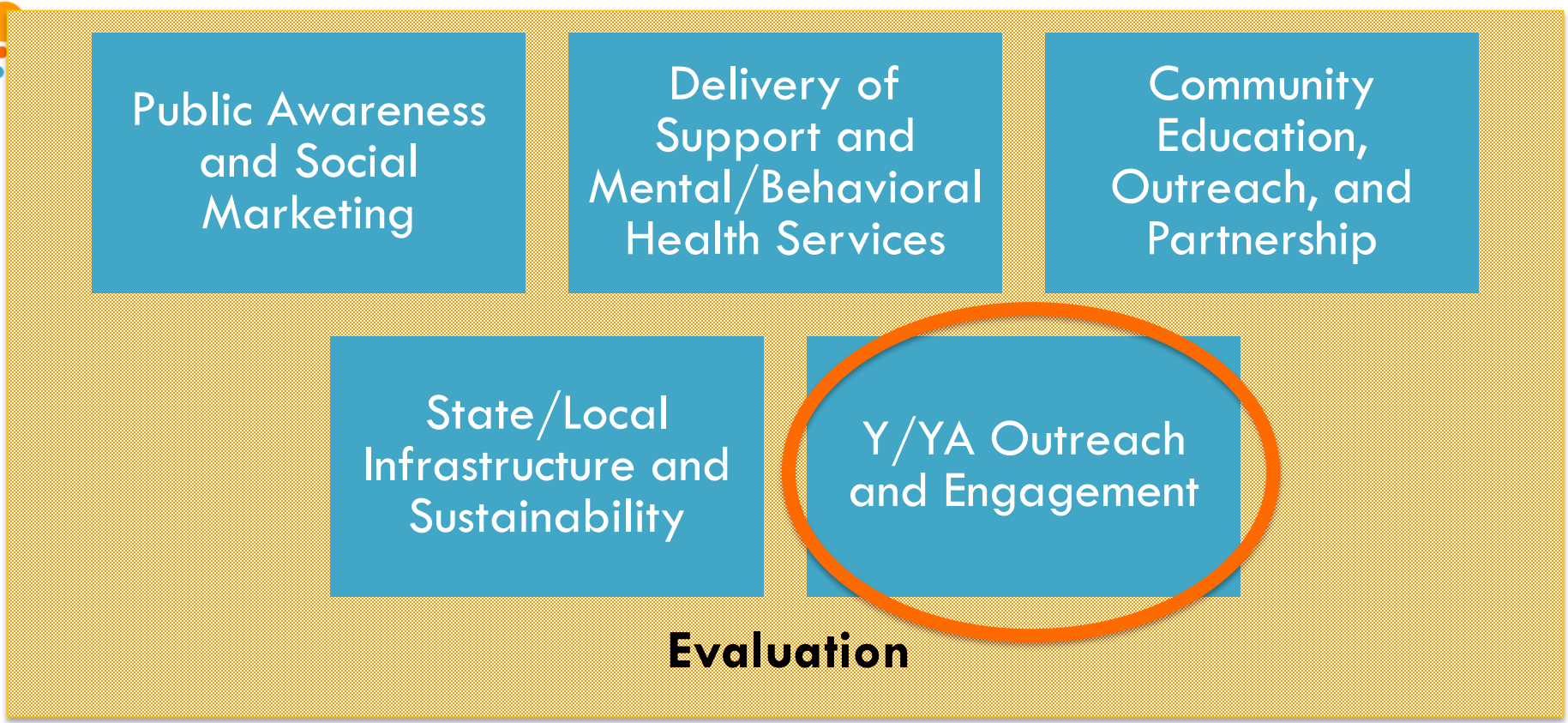
Healthy Transitions Focus Areas



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Why ensure meaningful engagement and involvement?

- Norms and traditions change as youth become a standard part of decision-making.
- Youth raise new, complex issues in organizations and systems that become part of the agendas of these decision-making bodies.
- Youth organizers can engage a wide range of community partners to create new community coalitions.
- Public institutions respond with resources, policies, and programs to better serve youth and young adults.

http://forumfyi.org/files/YouthAdultPartnerships.pdf

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How do Youth and Young Adults Benefit?

- Safety and Belonging
- Efficacy and Empowerment
- Sociopolitical awareness and civic competence
- Community Connections

http://forumfyi.org/files/YouthAdultPartnerships.pdf

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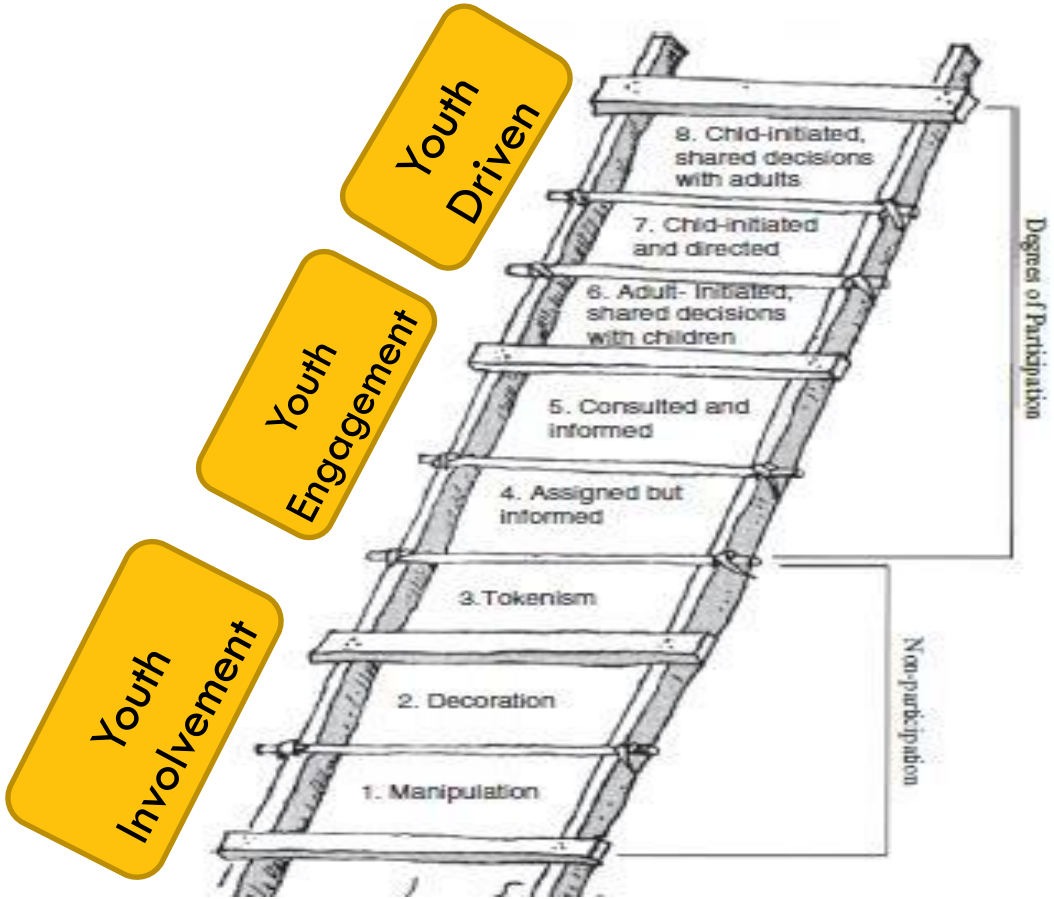
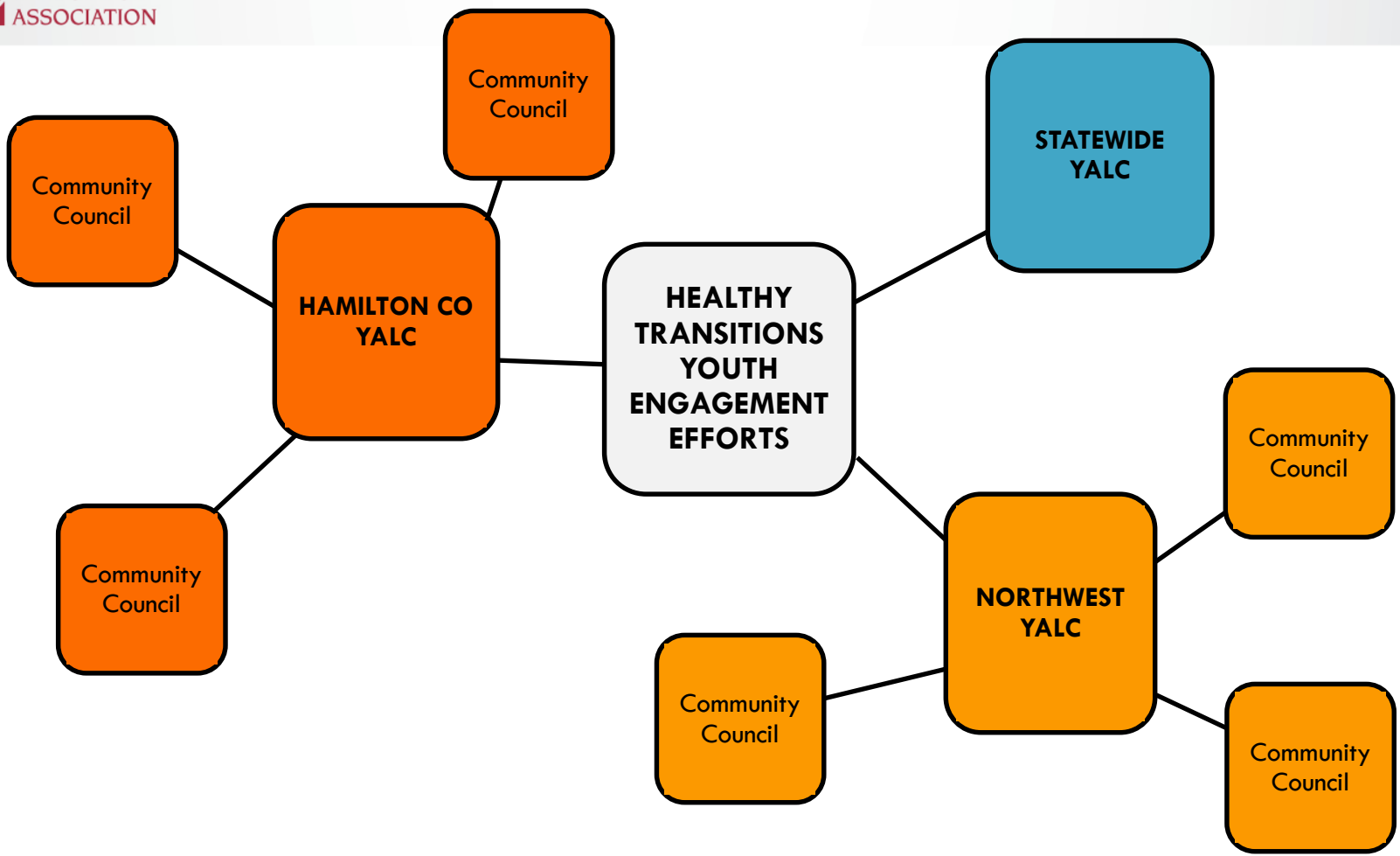
How do we engage youth and young adults?




Community Council
Community Council
HAMILTON CO YALC
Community Council
HEALTHY TRANSITIONS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS
STATEWIDE YALC
Community Council
NORTHWEST YALC
Community Council
Community Council

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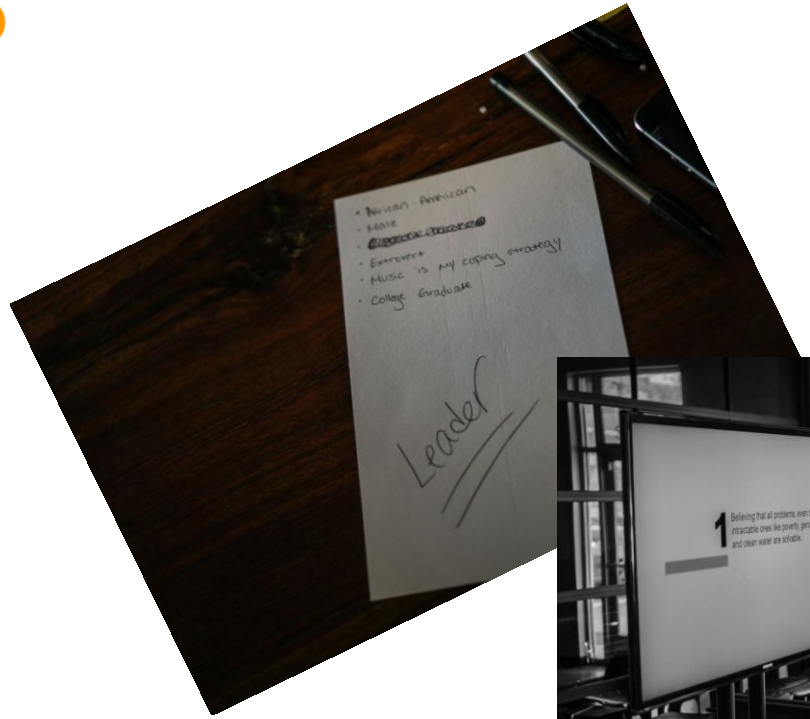
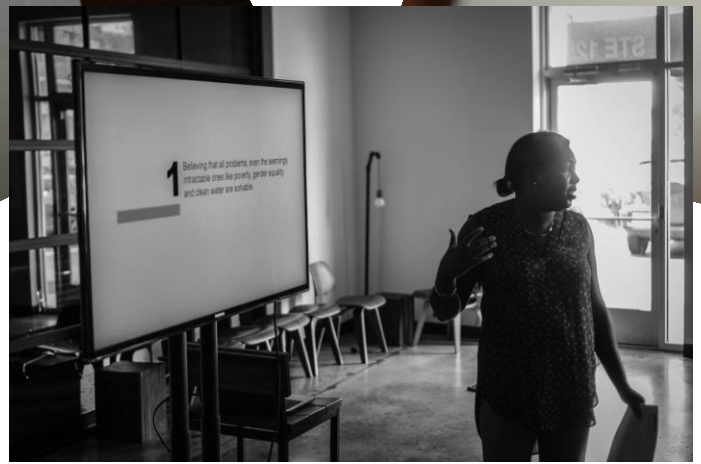
Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)





Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

YPAR Can…

- **Redefine** who has expertise to produce knowledge
- **Provide** skills that are important to the development of Y/YA
- **Generate** findings that provide insights into issues faced by young people
- **Promote** young people's sociopolitical development and psychological empowerment
- **Evaluate** programs, policies, and practices that affect young people.

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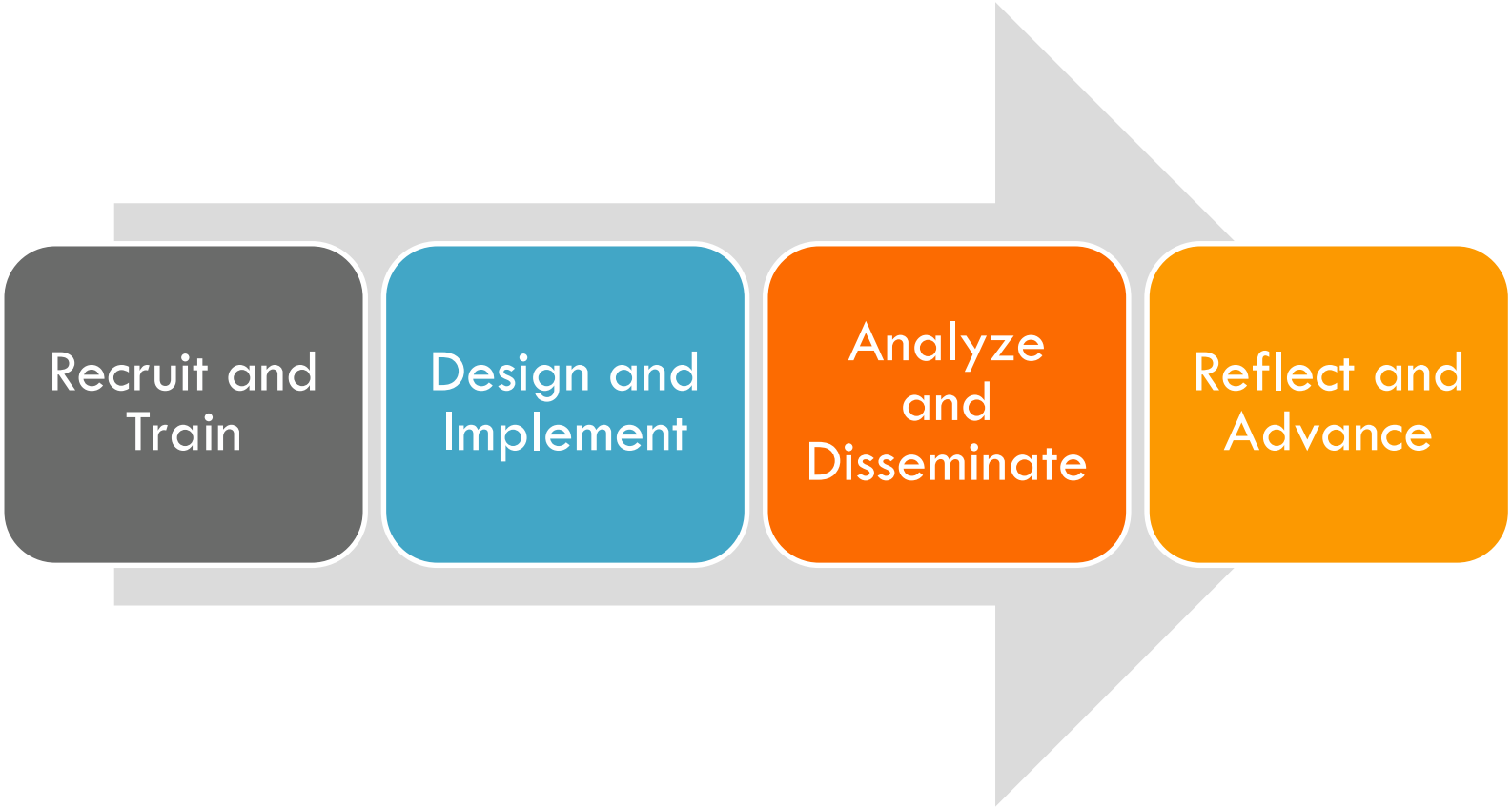
Healthy Transitions YPAR Process



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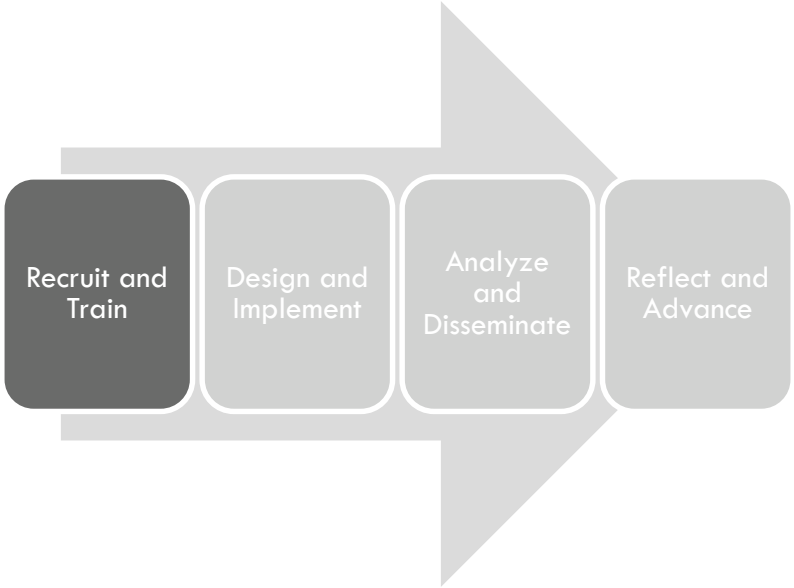
Healthy Transitions YPAR Process



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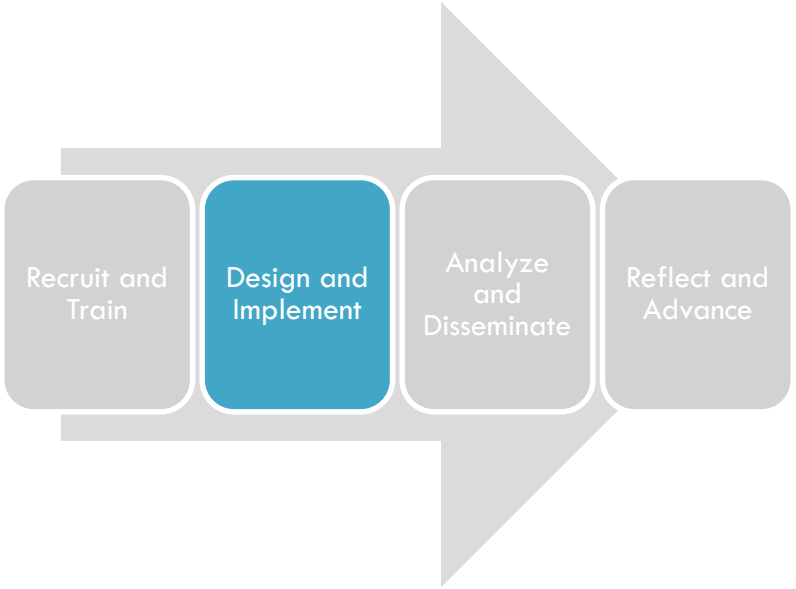
Healthy Transitions YPAR Process



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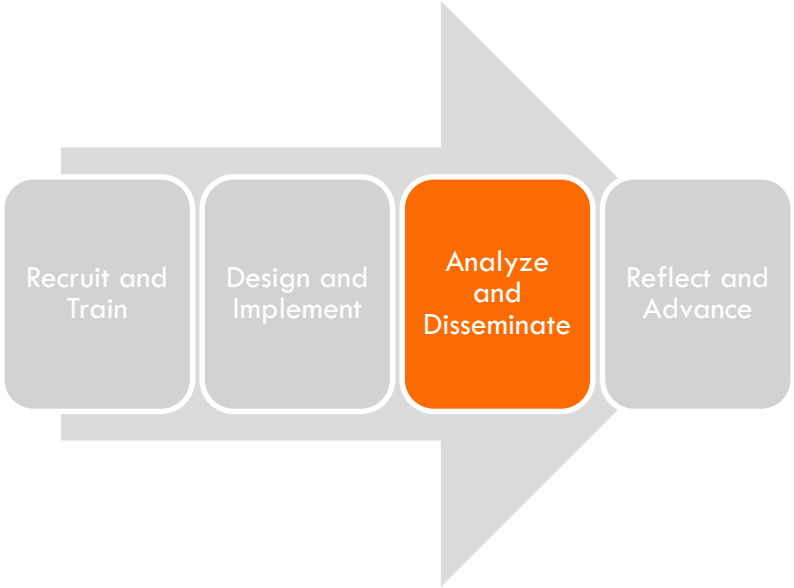
Healthy Transitions YPAR Process



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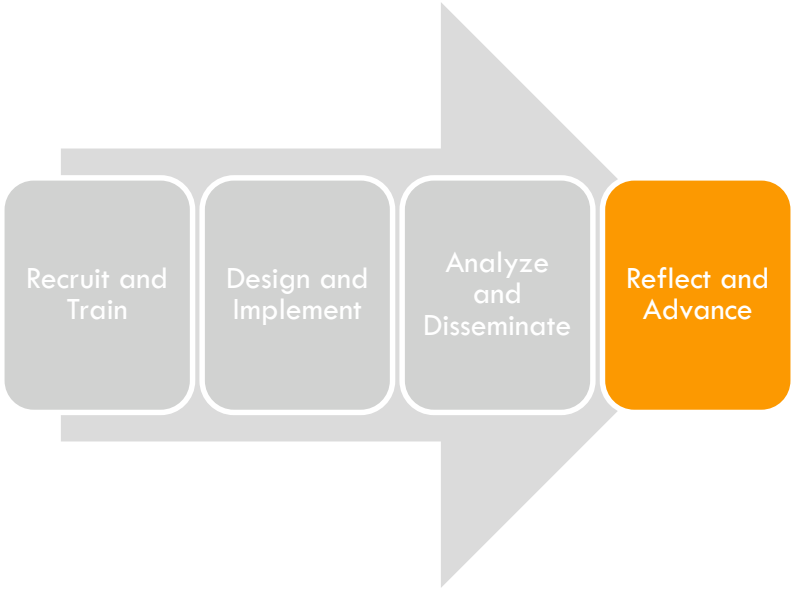
Healthy Transitions YPAR Process



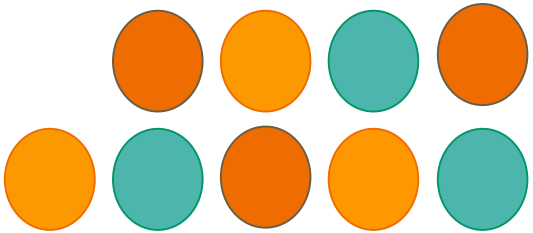
Youth Participatory Action Research

Mental Health & Transitioning to Adulthood in Hamilton County

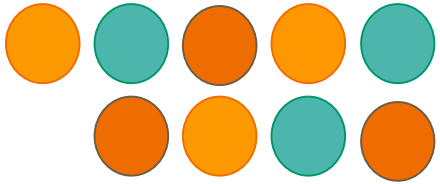
Introductions

The Beginning...

- Developed in response to the question, “What do we want to learn about?”
- Engaged in a collaborative process involving brainstorming
- Topic consensus:
  - *Transitioning to Adulthood*
  - *Mental Health*
  - *Stigma*



Research Questions



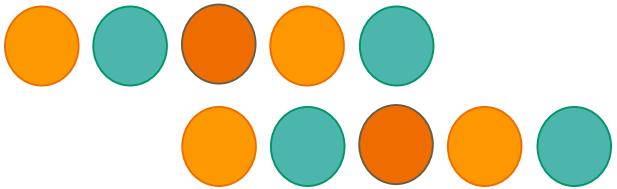
- What are the biggest challenges of youth and young adults as they transition to adulthood?
- How do youth and young adults experience stigma?
    - *What stigmata have they faced and how do they handle these stigmata?*
- Do youth and young adults experience mental health challenges and in what ways?
- What do youth and young adults perceive as helpful in terms of mental health and the transition to adulthood?
- Do youth and young adults know of the resources available to them and can they access them?

Why is this important?

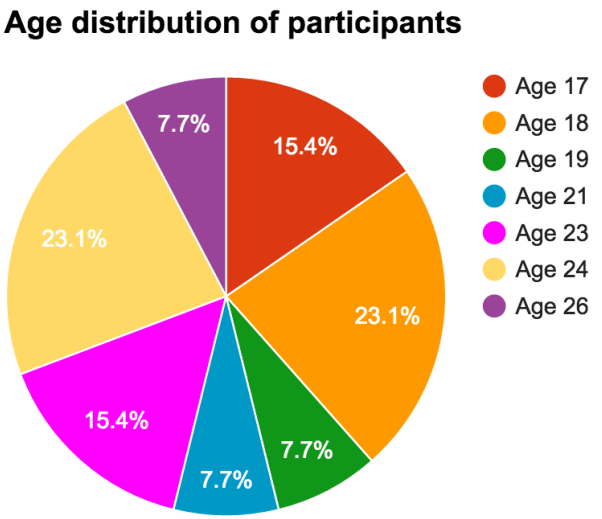
- Helps us better address the needs of individuals in the Hamilton County area
- We previously only had our own assumptions to go on
- We need to know what kinds of programs to develop
- To spread awareness of programs that currently exist
- To learn where current programs are lacking
- Public perception of current programs and issues so they can be addressed

Methods

- What is the problem?
- Coming up with research questions
- Researching and constructing a focus group and survey for local young adults
- Analysis of the data
- Finding solutions and next necessary steps based on the data collected



Demographics

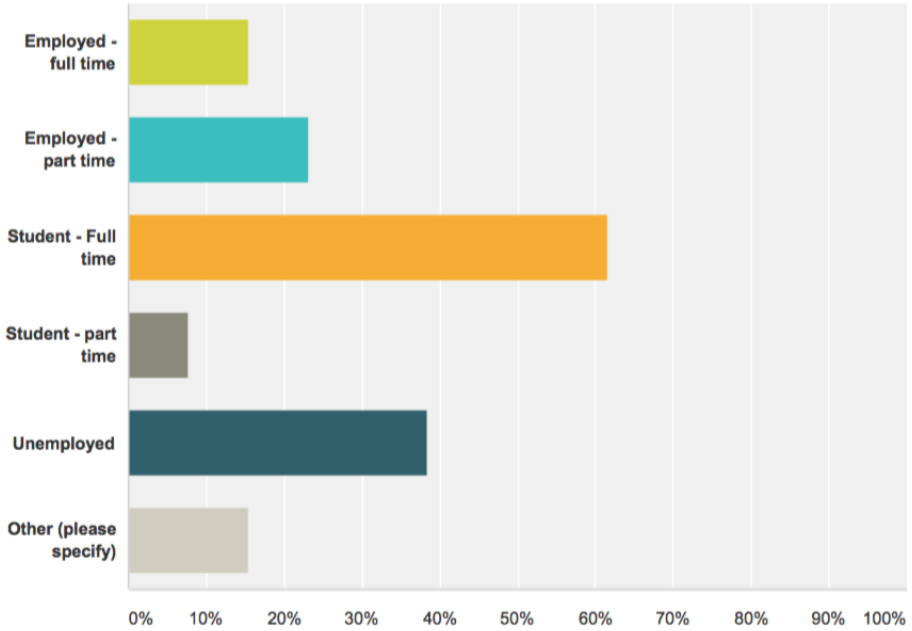


- ***The ages of 17, 18, 23, and 24 were are largest participants.***
- ***The participants were open to stating their gender; but more than half left the question of sexual orientation unanswered.***

A majority of the participants were full time students, 8/13 were full time.

There was a lack of anyone who had a physical disability.

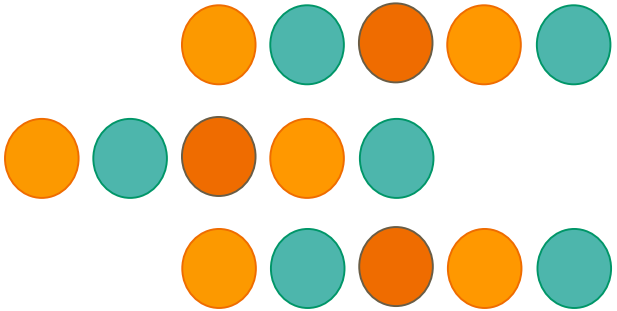
There was a dip in the number of minorities represented within the number of participants.



Findings

Q: What are the biggest challenges of Young Adults as they transition to adulthood?

- Money
  - How to manage money & make a living wage
- Time Management
- School
  - How to afford it & balance it with other life responsibilities
- Life Skills
- Not feeling ready!



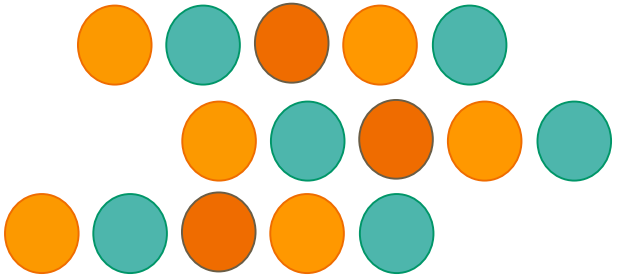
Findings

Q: How do young adults experience stigma?

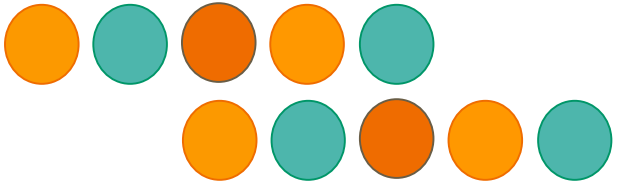
- Disavowal of Problems
  - *Anti-mental health home*
  - *Discouraged from seeking help or admitting to others to be facing issues*
  - *Embarrassment*
  - *Pride*
  - *Denial*
- Expectations
  - Continuing things that may be perceived as childish.
    - *Watching cartoons*
- Use of stigmatizing language

Findings

Q: Do you think young adults experience mental health challenges and in what ways?



- Depression
  - *Motivation*
  - *Poor Habits*
  - *Remembering Responsibilities*
- Neurodevelopmental disorders
  - *Attention deficit disorder (ADD)/Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)*
- Anxiety
- Sleep-wake disorders
- Lack of awareness of their own issues



Findings

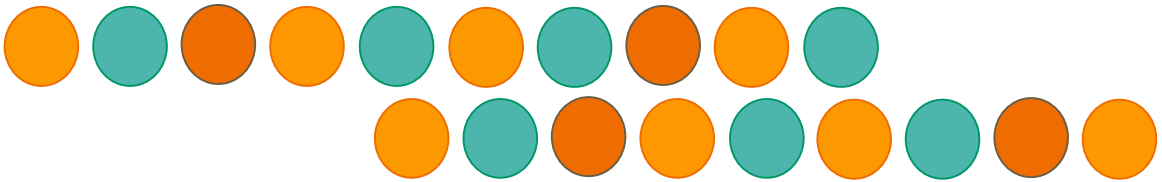
Q: What do young adults perceive as helpful in terms of mental health and transitioning to adulthood?

Helpful

- School Resources
  - *Access to Counselors*
  - *Access to Community Resources*
- Social Support
  - *Family Members*
  - *Caseworkers*
- Community Programs
  - *Healthy Transitions*

Not Helpful

- Stigma
  - *Families*
- Inaccessibility
  - *Costs*
  - *Doctors*



Findings

Q: Do youth and young adults know of the resources available to them and can they access them?

- Those in school (especially if they are in college) had access to resources.
- Those not in school or those new to the community do not have access to resources.
- Social media, online resources, apps, and family members were a popular resource

Implementing Action

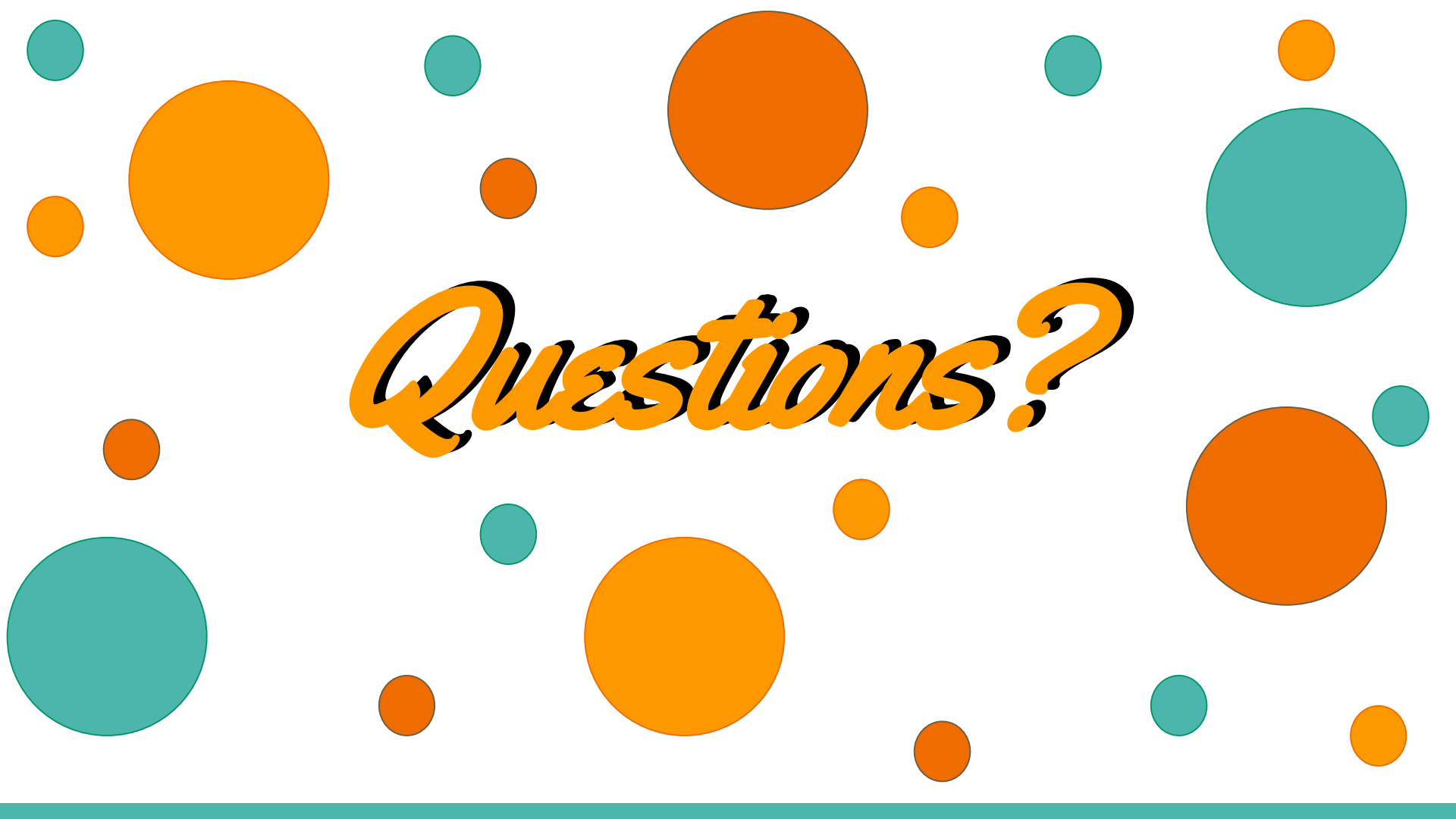
- Partnering with Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System
- Create life skills class
- Creating an accessible tool or program to reduce stigma
- Developing efforts to teach emotional intelligence in schools

Further Research

Go deeper into final research question and figure out what caused the variability in youth and young adults' access to resources (i.e.: does family help, school, age, location, etc.)

Reflections

Conclusion


Questions?