

IL-NET

CIL-NET · SILC-NET

Youth Transition: The Growing Role of Centers for Independent Living



Planning for Youth Work at Your CIL

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Needs Assessing

- A need means something that specifically relates to a particular group or community.
 - Do not make a broad assessment.
 -  Ex: We need a youth program.
 -  Ex: Youth 14-22 years old want/need us to create a skill-based group for youth.

Needs Assessing, cont'd.

What do youth with disabilities in your community need and want?

- Where do you find youth to ask?
- How and what do you ask them?
- How is it the same or different than what typical CIL consumers need and want?
- How is that the same or different than what youth without disabilities need and want?

Brainstorming

What's the "Dream"

- What would you as an organization like to offer youth?
- What would you like to see youth get out of a CIL?
- What would you like to see youth give back to IL?
- Are there other stakeholders? (VR, transition teachers, employers...)
 - What do they see youth with disabilities needing?

Out of the Box Thinking



NUMBER

BEMNRU

Identifying Strengths/Assets

- Do you already have classes/activities that might appeal to youth?
- Are youth already accessing I & R?
- Do you already have youth peer mentors?
- What advocacy are you already providing for youth?
- What infrastructure do you already have that makes you accessible, exciting, and able to serve youth?
- Who do you know and how can they help?
- Who is already providing the services you identified that youth want and need?

Areas for Improvement

What are you missing?

- *What* does the CIL still need to achieve the dream?
- *Who* does the CIL still need to achieve the dream?

What if I am starting at Square 2?



- Pull out all those Evaluations and start digging in!
- Spend time as a team reviewing and evaluating what you have done so far including what you learn from the Evaluation Data (the youth!).
 - Like about your program?
 - Want to change about your program?
 - Like to add? Like to take a break from?
 - Are you achieving the outcomes you hoped for? Unexpected outcomes to look more into?
 - What identity groups and age groups of youth typically use your services? What groups would you like to see more of?
 - Do your staff feel like they have enough support and training in the program? If not, what do they need?

Programs

- Use evaluations to revise the programs you already have.
 - Add more activities
 - Take out or clarify concepts that are confusing
 - Adjust for barrier patterns (change hours, locations, facilitators, etc.)
- New programs—Expand into more specialized areas.
 - Healthy relationships, Disability pride and identity, travel training, soft skills, job placement, volunteerism, financial planning, problem solving skills for roommates, etc.

Expanding Consumer Groups in Your Existing Programs



- Pull out all those evaluations and start reading them!
 - Some programs will help you synthesize the data such as survey gizmo.
- Adapt your material for youth with ID, or different identity or cultural groups, working with at-risk youth in correctional institutions or foster systems.
- Create a diversity advisory group of youth who want to get more involved to do outreach, expansion, and adaptations.
- Join nonprofit organizations or other community groups to expand beyond typical disability partners.

Expanding into Fee-for-Service or Other Sustainability Plans



- Gather your evaluations and testimonials from youth and other stakeholders to show the need and the value.
- Research programs similar to yours and their price schedules.
- Update or create PR materials.
- Identify partners who could use your help.
 - VR, School Districts, DD Councils, Child Protective Services, group homes, state institutions like prisons.
 - Do they have funding? If you don't ask, the answer is always no.
 - Are there grant opportunities that target these groups? (ex. Kellogg, Mitsubishi, Darden, Walmart, Motorola....)

Expanding Leadership Opportunities

- Hire youth on staff or offer opportunities for youth to try start-up programs on a trial basis at your CIL.
- Train youth to be active board members.
- Create internship opportunities.
- Encourage youth to get involved with national issues/organizations.
- Start a youth leadership forum with youth staff and planning committees.

Expanding Leadership Opportunities, cont'd.



- Have youth organize a disability pride event for your community, including finding sponsors.
- Help youth find other ways to give back, e.g. have a community give week where youth try volunteering for different organizations.
- Have a youth committee in charge of community awards like a good access is good business award or an Above and Beyond the ADA award.
- MORE!

Lessons Learned Along the Way

- Siloing youth programs.
- Tokenizing a youth staff or volunteer.
- Chasing money for the sake of chasing it.
- Forgetting the sustainability plan in the beginning.
- Forgetting the evaluation plan from the get go.
- Forgetting to evaluate as a team of staff.
- Intellectual property and ideas living in staff's brains and not in their computers.
- Being everything to everyone... focus objectives.
- Rome wasn't built in a day. We all started at step 1.
- Policies/procedures for safety of youth and staff .

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