



Financing and Sustaining Youth Programs Webinar:

Effective Investments in Positive Youth Development: Implications of Research and Practice

October 13, 2009 from 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM (ET)

Question and Answer Session

- **Question: In this systematic approach to youth development, I often find that one partner is not at the table or not included well at the table - health. I think that many see health/public health as focused primarily on health care or prevention only, but they have a much broader role than this. Can you talk about this? Thanks!**

Answer:

Elizabeth Gaines: Health is absolutely at the table in many places but you are right that in the "fields" that address youth issues the health field is often seen as very separate. But in some places it is education that is missing ironically. When we say thriving in the slides I showed, it is really health that we are talking about. So it is one of the critical outcome areas and those stakeholders must be at the table. I think the common language is a barrier sometimes here because in the public health world there is such a strong pedagogy and language, finding ways to communicate across fields is so important. One of the things, though, that struck me as I was reading that question was that really, the public health world has its own taxonomy and language and way of operating, as do many other fields that are concerned about children and youth, and that's why that common language is so important that we talk about, because getting to a place where one person's counseling is another person's mentoring, is another person's something else – knowing how to communicate across fields and knowing how to compare apples to apples is a really important first place to start, I think.

Diana Hall: I would just comment that the county, as the local health provider, and then the educational service districts providing health services out here, have been part of our partnership from the beginning, both for the service angle but also from the public health standpoint that Elizabeth was commenting on. I think there is a real fertile partnership there, or fertile ground for partnership, because of the way that health professionals particularly in the public sector tend to see themselves.

- **Question: In the slide entitled "Developing Results and Indicators across a range of ages and outcomes", what is meant by "Thriving" - this seems by far the most vague of the terms in the column. Does that mean developing wealth, developing capacity, achieving goals?**

Answer:

Elizabeth Gaines: Thriving actually refers to health outcomes and healthy behaviors but good to hear feedback that it makes you think of wealth I tend to end up using health as the more commonly understood term

- **Question: Are any of the panelist familiar with Connected By 25 initiative for foster youth? The Ready by 21 is very similar.**

Answer:

Elizabeth Gaines: Yes I am familiar with Connected by 25. I would say they are similar in many ways, the distinction being that Ready by 21 addresses the full age continuum (0-24 really) and all populations of young people (not just foster youth). And the target of the approach is really building leader capacity (leaders are broadly defined though and includes advocates, policymakers, youth, superintendants, business leaders, etc)

- **Question: You talked about Mexico and Austin, Texas as examples- are there any similar, current models in New York and Florida? Thank you.**

Answer:

Elizabeth Gaines: Yes New Mexico and Austin are doing good work, but so are New York and Florida. Both states have Children's Cabinets similar to the New Mexico and Maryland examples I gave. There are also a number of Ready by 21 counties in NY state.

- **Question for Elizabeth: We are working on a youth initiative focusing on the "school connectedness" protective factor. Do you have examples of effective programs that focus on school connectedness? What are some good measurements/ indicators that can show impact later on? What have you seen in other states?**

Answer:

Elizabeth Gaines: I think that's a great question for Diana in terms of the practical sense of things that are working. But in terms of school connectedness, I have to make a plug for one of the Ready by 21 technical partners, which is the Gallup organization. They're the folks that you see doing regular surveys all the time. They've joined up with us because they have this well-being survey that's really all about – it's a survey that can be taken free in public schools. A superintendent or a principal can decide to use this survey, Web-based, and it measures hope, engagement, and well-being of young people in their schools. It really gives some interesting, interesting data back to people that are running schools about how well young people are connecting and are engaged in their school. So in terms of taking stock, I think that survey is a great way to find out. Diana, do you have any practical examples?

Diana Hall: I'd need to pull our student survey to get this totally correct, but we do ask – and we don't do as much as we might like to do, but it's something that we've been able to manage across all of our sites over the years consistently – we ask students once a year in a student survey about a variety of issues related to the youth assets, like the Search Institute assets, and school connectedness is one of those. We talk about – I'm trying to remember how it's phrased, but we do talk about their sense of the school and how supportive the school is. We do tend to also look at some of those other less

school-specific connectedness around do they have adults that they can go to for help, do they feel like the people available to them believe in them and believe that they can do good things and that kind of thing.

Carol Behrer: We have several questions in the Iowa youth survey that relate to how young people feel about their school. I think we've – if I can remember now off the top of my head – I think we have a school connectedness set of questions that deal with that, a construct that we've been measuring. I don't think "youth connectedness" is the word, though; I've forgotten what it is.

Then in terms of sort of responding to that, because we do see it as a key indicator, as part of our Collaboration, our Department of Education has a major initiative called Learning Supports, and it really is all about how do we ensure that young people that might not be particularly connected to school, how do we build those supports around them to improve that. And it's all those different things that happen in schools that aren't academic.

Participant Response: See publications on the website of the Healthy Youth Development - Prevention Research Center at the U of MN <http://www.med.umn.edu/peds/ahm/programs/hyd/home.html>. Also, Bob Blum's work at John Hopkins University School of Public Health: [http://faculty.jhsph.edu/default.cfm?faculty_id=1441&grouped=false&searchText=&department_id=0&departmentName=Population, Family and Reproductive Health](http://faculty.jhsph.edu/default.cfm?faculty_id=1441&grouped=false&searchText=&department_id=0&departmentName=Population,FamilyandReproductiveHealth).

- **Question: Is the Iowa Youth Survey available online?**

Answer:

Carol Behrer: Yes: www.iowayouthsurvey.org

- **Question: I am noticing that economic issues (i.e. ready to work job (at teen ages) successfully, capable of contributing financially to self or family) are missing from the list on the slide entitled ICYD's Council Vision and Results Areas. Wealth and economic capabilities show up in our youth's needs regularly. Why is this not an element or line item hear?**

Answer:

Carol Behrer: ICYD includes the economic issues the question refers to as part of our result area: "Youth are prepared for productive adulthood." Among the indicators/data we pay attention to are youth employment and youth idleness (e.g., not working or going to school), along with high school graduation rate, which is a key indicator for future economic success. ICYD did a Data Brief on this result area a year or so ago. All the data briefs can be found on the ICYD website www.icyd.org.

- **Question: Are youth service agencies in Iowa mandated to participate in the Iowa collaboration?**

Answer:

Carol Behrer: No - it is a completely voluntary group.

- **Question: SUN - are the collaborations focused on programmatic partnerships, administrative? other?**

Answer:

Diana Hall: The collaboration is at various levels: policy, operations, programmatic. I would be happy to share more if you would like to chat. Diana

- **Question: What would you suggest one can go about finding funding? I am in a small community that doesn't have a United Way or other agencies. We have lost our funding as of this year. Our grant was ended one year earlier than expected because of the economy and budget cuts. I have a school based mentoring program and our school is having major budget cuts also.**

Answer:

Torey Silloway: This is an area obviously that The Finance Project, we've done quite a bit of work around in just a couple things. We have a Finding Funding on our website which I think is in all the materials – www.financeproject.org. We have a section called Finding Funding and it's actually an interactive Web-based database where you can look for federal funding sources. You can cut the data in many different ways, whether you're looking for mentoring programs or youth development, and you can cut it at a lot finer level than that as well.

Obviously The Finance Project has a lot of briefs, and probably the most relevant one is a brief on finding funding for mentoring programs. I believe we also have a separate one on finding funding for rural programs.

- **Question: Are there examples of systemic collaborations being ignited from outside agencies or interagency collaborations? If so, what do you say is the first step? Obviously, state level partnerships are key, but they are not entirely on board....yet.**

Answer:

Elizabeth Gaines: Certainly, and it is often outside advocates or coalitions of providers that spark the creation of the state interagency collaborations. It seems to me that the carrot approach rather than the stick works better right now, and I am finding it surprising how receptive to the Ready by 21 approach bureaucrats and policymakers are especially right now.