

Increasing Youth Participation in Service and Treatment Planning: Tools and Strategies



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How are we doing?

- How satisfied are you with the level of youth participation in care / treatment planning in your agency?
 - Very satisfied. Youth are participating to the extent they should
 - Somewhat satisfied.
 - Somewhat dissatisfied.
 - Very dissatisfied. Youth should be participating a whole lot more than they are.
- What are the barriers? Supports?



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Barriers and supports



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Why is youth participation important?

- Reflections from personal experience...



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Aren't we doing that already?

- Research shows that few youth meaningfully participate in their education, care and treatment planning. Studies from...
 - Schools/ IEP
 - System of care
 - Wraparound
- Professionals are also dissatisfied with the level of youth participation



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What is the *AMP Project*?

- A five-year research project to develop and test an intervention to increase youth participation in planning
- Advisory Board--Youth, caregivers, providers, research staff—create materials/intervention, advise on research, make presentations
- What would be the characteristics of an intervention with best chance of success?
 - Feasible within resources of agencies
 - Appealing
 - Address concerns of providers and caregivers
 - Be engaging for youth
 - Increases participation in ways that are obvious (and/or measurable) and positive



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AMP FAQ

- Self-determination is a fundamental human right
- Can the youth we work with really be expected to do this?
 - Skills have been taught to, and participation increased among
 - children as young as five years old
 - young people with mild and moderate developmental disabilities
 - young people with emotional/behavioral challenges
 - youth with physical disabilities



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AMP FAQ continued

- What's to be gained?
 - Engagement increases when people feel they have a choice (choice as an EBP)
 - People who choose what they are doing have more interest, excitement, and confidence
 - When adolescents choose activities, they have more positive mood and higher well-being AND they perform better
 - Learning to make plans and achieve goals is an essential life skill. People with higher self-efficacy/self-determination tend to
 - be more optimistic and hopeful, persist in face of obstacles
 - have better mental health, cope better and avoid depression
 - adopt healthy habits and maintain behavior change
 - do better after high school (youth with disabilities)



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AMP best practices

- Supporting participation includes
 - Organizational commitment
 - Preparation for youth
 - During the meeting: meeting structures and interactions that promote youth participation
 - Accountability



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Organizational Commitment

- Organizational culture that values youth participation
 - Viewed as a priority, feasible
 - Practically supported
 - Time allotted
 - Training provided
 - Values that promote youth participation become part of organizational beliefs and practices more broadly



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Preparation

- Youth knows what's going to happen, how he/she will contribute— No surprises!!
 - Opportunity to contribute items/goals to the agenda
 - Opportunity to review the agenda before the meeting
 - Option to handle uncomfortable topics outside the meeting
 - Opportunity to plan what to say for each agenda item
 - Opportunity to practice communication skills for the meeting
 - Opportunity to plan what to do to stay calm and focused
 - How will youth get support—if needed—during the meeting



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During the Meeting

- Ground rules
 - speak directly to the youth
 - be solution focused and strengths based, rather than focusing exclusively on deficits and past problems, especially old history
 - everyone understands decisions and next steps
- Stick to the agenda—address youth items first
- New items are placed in the “parking lot”
- Youth has impact on decisions
- Strengths and assets are part of the meeting and part of the plan



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Accountability

- Accountability to the plan...
 - Record decisions. In subsequent meetings, follow up on who did what
 - Youth has a record of commitments/action steps and access to a copy of the plan
- Assess your efforts
 - “fidelity”—did the youth get preparation? Were meeting structures and procedures followed?
 - satisfaction
 - outcomes: youth participation and empowerment



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Youth Participation in Planning Scale

- Full scale with three subscales
 - Planning process and plan reflect my perspective and priorities (8 items, $\alpha = .90$)
 - *During planning, we make changes to my plan based on my ideas.*
 - *My plan includes the goals that are most important to me.*
 - Preparation (4 items, $\alpha = .75$)
 - *Before a meeting, someone helps me decide how I want to express my ideas to the team.*
 - Accountability (4 items, $\alpha = .78$)
 - *During a meeting, the team makes clear decisions about who will do what for my plan.*



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Youth Empowerment Scale-MH

- Full scale with three subscales
 - Self - managing one's own condition (6 items, $\alpha = .86$)
 - *I make changes in my life so I can live successfully with my emotional or mental health challenges.*
 - Services - managing services/ supports (7 items, $\alpha = .83$)
 - *I know the steps to take when I think I am receiving poor services or supports.*
 - System - improve services/ help others (7 items, $\alpha = .88$)
 - *I take opportunities to speak out and educate people about what it's like to experience emotional or mental health difficulties.*



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Other results...

- Test-retest showed high correlation for the YPP (.75, $p < .001$) and the YES (.64, $p < .001$)
- Caregiver and youth total participation scores were highly correlated (.63, $p < .001$)
- Mean scores for the total participation and total empowerment scales were significantly different between youth with low, medium, and high satisfaction with their plan (a variable created from six survey items—YPP: $F(2, 156) = 13.0$, $p < .001$; YSS: $F(2, 155) = 18.7$, $p < .001$)
- Total empowerment and participation scales were correlated (.623, $p < .001$) and subscales were correlated according to prediction, with highest correlation between participation (planning) and empowerment (services and supports) (.72, $p < .001$), and lowest correlations between empowerment (system) and the three participation subscales



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What exactly is the “AMP *intervention*”?

An intervention that is implemented for youth within an organization/agency/school

- AMP process with youth

PLUS

- AMP organizational intervention

➤ Goal: to create change with least “burden”

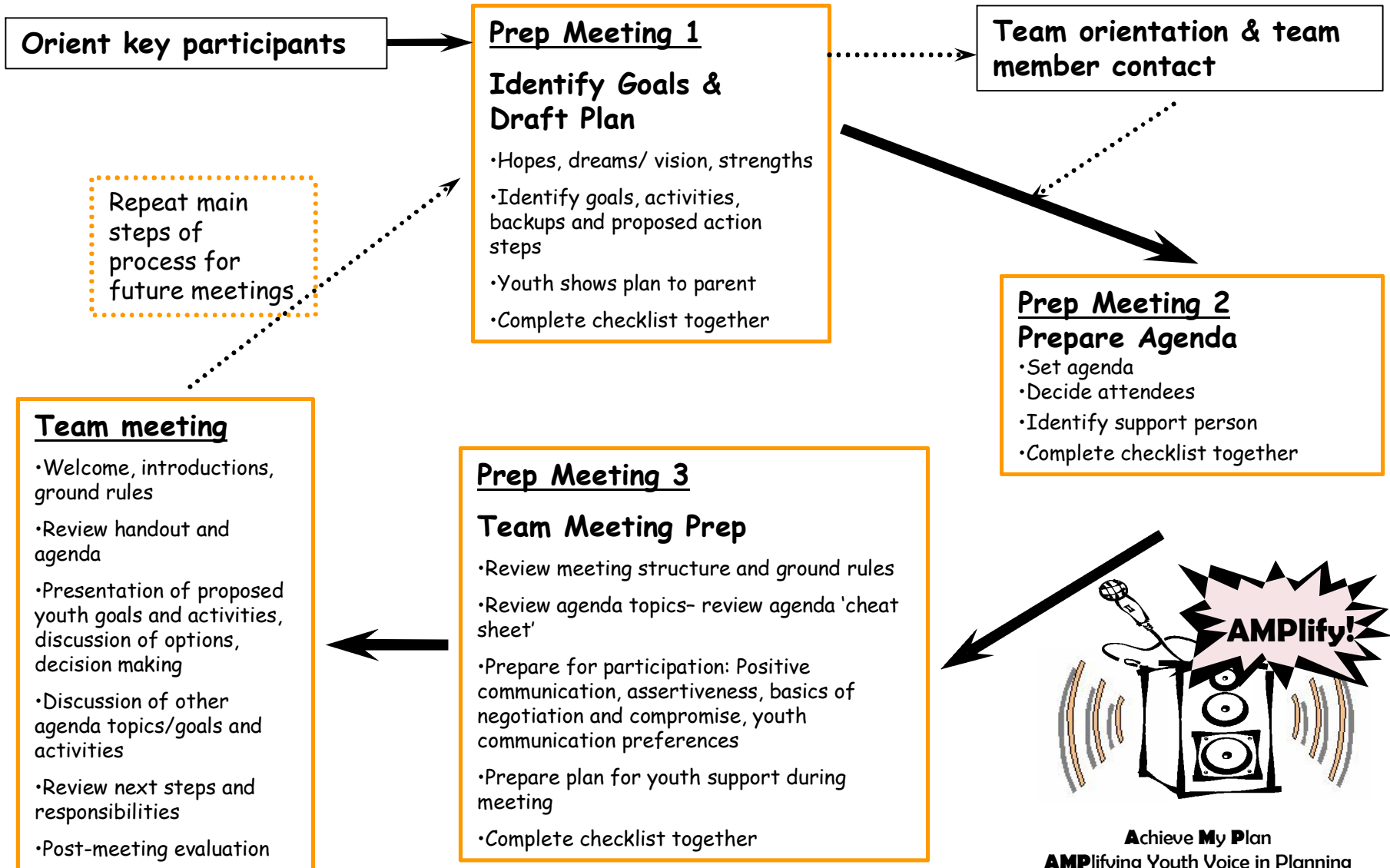
- **PLUS a formal evaluation** of this work: Does AMP really increase participation? Does it make staff more positive about youth participation?



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Steps in the AMP Intervention Process



Training Tools

- Facilitator Training and AMP! Orientation
 - Web/video based
 - Detail role of meeting facilitator
 - Orient team members to structure of AMP! meeting
 - Example of an AMP! meeting
- Coaches' Training (in development)



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