What do we mean by a continuum of care?

Source: Place Matters: Aligning Investments in a Community-based continuum of care for Maine Youth Transitioning to adulthood. Mara Sanchez, Erica King, and Jill Ward, University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service and the Maine Center for Juvenile Policy and Law (March 2019).
Key Questions

• What do we know about **statewide** challenges and barriers to creating an environment where we can have an effective continuum of care for the State of Maine?
  • Resource allocation
  • Policies and practices

• How can we support **communities** in their development of their own relevant and responsive continuums of care for youth and families?
  • Resourcing communities directly to support individualized continuums
  • Attention to geography
  • Responsiveness to race, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, gender, disability, LGBTQ status

Statewide Challenges: Key Themes

• **Resource Allocation**
  • Inadequate investments in behavioral health care for children and youth
  • Wait lists for community-based programs and interventions
  • Lack of supports for families in crisis and youth without engaged caregivers
  • Investment in costly secure care for youth with “no other place to go”

• **Policies and Practices**
  • Need for intentional multi-agency collaborations and approaches to vulnerable youth and families focusing on meeting underlying needs vs. responding to behavior/charge
  • Need for greater restrictions on school push-out
  • Absence of “no reject, no eject” policies for youth in programs
  • Lack of limits on lengths of stay for secure placement, community supervision
Community-Based Challenges: Key Themes

- Resourcing communities directly to support individualized continuums in individual communities
  - Lack of county infrastructure that is the vehicle for other states’ reinvestment initiatives
- Navigating challenges with geography
  - Agreeing upon resource allocation in northern Maine and rural parts of the state to prevent justice by geography
- Responsiveness to race, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, gender, disability, LGBTQ status
  - Ensuring community-based continuums and child-serving agencies are accountable and responsive to needs of each group

Helpful Resources for Task Force Members

- Best single publication on funding strategies to support community-based continuums of care
  - Strategies for reinvesting youth justice system resources
  - Ways of leveraging existing state and federal funding streams
  - Options for creating new sources of funding to support programming in communities

https://urbn.is/31S6YLC
Helpful Resources for Task Force Members

- Detailed information on how New York City and New York State developed a continuum of care to support youth and families in the community
  - Detailed information on the continuum of care that makes Close to Home possible
  - Step-by-step outline of steps taken to transform the youth justice system
  - Key takeaways for other jurisdictions

https://justicelab.columbia.edu/moving-beyond-youth-prisons