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## Place Matters

# Community Reintegration Work Group

## Notes

*October 9, 2020, 1pm*

### **Attended:**

Mara Sanchez (USM), Jill Ward (MCJPAL), Erica King (USM), Bonnie Porta (JJAG), Megan West (RJIM), Samantha Fenderson (DOL), Autumn Magee (YAP), Amanda Morais (RJIM), Anwar Whiting (DOC), Hailey Virusso (TOA), Asia Bowman (Vera- EGI), Kim Deering (DOC), Missy Cormier (Day One), Stephanie Netto (DOC), Malory Shaughnessy (ALLIANCE)

### **Introductions/Check-In Discussions:**

Amanda – Here in Kelsey's place today but also going to be a more consistent presence at these tables due to our reentry program we are starting up. Only have one young person that we are working with right now but figuring out what young people at that stage want and how the different cases will look.

Hailey – TOA will be partnering with Preble Street to be doing outreach November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Samantha – Met with some reps from Long Creek about what needs are at the facility. Established that between VR and adult corrections there is some procedural guidance for our counselors that doesn't happen on the youth side. Discussed replicating that for the youth side to create consistency. Looking at co-enrollment with other employment-based programs to ensure that we are providing everything we can.

Jill – One update is the completion of planning tool for those working with youth transitioning out of systems: <https://mainelaw.maine.edu/academics/clinics-and-centers/maine-center-juvenile-policy-law/>

### **Regional Care Teams Update**

Erica – Presentation on RCTs to the Children's Cabinet this week and I thought those materials would be helpful to share. (walked through ppt slides)

- To ground us back in the work that we are doing together, we are focusing on transition-aged youth, and wanting them to thriving them as they move into adulthood.
- When we look at data, one thing we don't know is how many youth are cross system involved. We are trying to have the continuum of care be a place-based strategy.
- So far there have been seven cases referred across all three regions. Not only is the goal to identify immediate responses and resources for those youth, but to lift up macro issues to try to get things to change.
- The number one thing that has been raised in every one of these cases is a lack of supportive housing for youth. There was a subgroup that started out of this workgroup, championed by Victoria Morales, focused on how to build more transitional living programs for young people.
- In addition to that, we've been able to respond with flex funds for some unmet needs. Those have included food, healthcare, and in one case, family respite services, as well as technology needs. It has begun to spark some energy on how to generate and leverage funds across agencies.
- Confidentiality has been raised up in every region and so we've done some updating to our meeting protocol to try to address that.

Jill – Region 1 that there has been a lot of collaboration with all partners coming to the table and expressing positive feedback about the process.

## **Supportive Housing Discussion**

Erica – Update on Second Chances Act planning/funding

- Maine DOC was the recipient of an OJJDP Second Chance Act reentry grant. We are concluding the planning period and getting ready to go into year 1 of implementation. The goal is to bring 10 young people back into the community in the next year. In that process we have a technical assistance provider who have been really great about bringing in the Coalition for Supportive Housing, who also provides services to Maine State Housing to redesign our whole shelter care system.
- Question: They were asking me to describe the young people in Maine transitioning from confinement back into community, what buckets would we describe? One of the buckets is young people who are aging out of the youth system but are still medically compromised – do people agree? What are some other buckets?

Samantha – Tying into that bucket, there are youth with disabilities, especially the

disability of mental health. There's a big shift from youth services to adult services, and does that transition happen? There's also the bucket of individuals who have disabilities just in general.

Erica – I think Kim and other folks could say it better, but there are some individuals who are borderline IQ and need some services but what are they?

Autumn – Along the lines of the mental health transition, but specific to substance use, that is a beast of its own. I think that a lot of programs that our youth have there isn't that bridging connection to adult.

Erica – What do you imagine would work for a transitional living program, is it sober housing for youth? Individual supportive housing?

Autumn – The first thing that came to my mind was some kind of programming that was specific to that youth's substance youth and could monitor them and offer replacement therapies like medically assisted treatment.

Erica – Would you add any more nuance to that Stephanie and Kim?

Stephanie – Not that I want to keep kids in these systems and programs longer than needed, but there needs to be a continuum so that they can step down.

Erica – A step down from Long Creek, a little more independent.

Stephanie – We talk about what that looks like in a general sense, but I see the kids and they are terrified to be out in the community. If we could gradually transition them it would be better. On one hand I would like them to connect with people and form connections, it's also hard for our kids to do that and have trust. One model that Mara and I have been pondering has been the open table model. It's like wraparound but building a natural supports table of volunteers.

Mara – In Knox County they are going to be piloting Open Table.

Erica – One vision is to have an organization willing to hold a master lease in each of the regions, so we can have a building with housing in each region where we could put supportive housing. We have some things loosely starting to come together, thinking of starting with a few apartments in each region, and converting some of the existing vouchers to be able to be used. If we had a way to help that matching more we could come up with some better transitional housing resources for young people.

Amanda – Often times this might be the first time a young person has a relationship

with someone who is holding a lease. Something that I think about in the pilot that we are developing is opportunities for repair along the way for young people to maintain housing. Making sure it's a part of the transition to repair those relationships. A bucket of youth is those who have burned all their bridges. A lot of young people don't have those supports because they are in need of repair. They may need an apartment so that they can do that repair work to go back to housing. I like the idea of step-downs where they'd have an opportunity to try independence.

Jill – I don't want to put YAP on the spot but YAP or TOA, agencies that do natural supports, connecting the dots type of model, we should be leveraging. In other places where YAP is more robust, they are the catalyst for bringing in more community supports in ways that will build the relational piece in the community. As we think of services and programs also think about connections. The more we try to build that into the way we make programs. If there is more a community based credible messenger that could be sustained in the community, those are the types of natural supports that the system can get kids plugged into and not have to come back again.

Hailey – I think the biggest bucket is kids without community, without family or friends. I'm going to keep saying host homes. Yes apartments are great but most of the kids we are seeing are struggling with attachment and really need one supportive adult. Amanda brought up that most kids want to go home, but yes, where can that home be. Host homes can provide safety for a child for the first time. Supportive homes and apartments are incredibly important but youth need a connection who can care for them while they can learn to care for themselves.

Erica – That's what these calls are about, how do we try together? I love this conversation, I did have host homes, but I've added a few more buckets and in my next call with CSH I will have those to add. We anticipate in the new year, January 2021 we will have a more detailed brief or review that you can expect. There's not enough data there to do that now.

## **Closing & Next Steps**

Announcement of Place Matters new website and virtual asset mapping tool.

- Check out the new Place matters website: <https://placemattersmaine.org/>
- Virtual asset mapping tool: <https://placemattersmaine.org/community-resources/>

Erica –Upcoming report about young people and what they feel their journey through systems have been. We could use a few external peer reviewers; you can let Mara know if you'd be willing to do that. Also lifting up Jill's transition planning tool, Young People's Caucus lives at USM as well and Mara and I are increasingly working with that team to increase the opportunity pathways for system involved young people. Trying to have better alignment within our own organization to scale up how we are supporting young people and supporting systems to support young people. That's all we have, but we invite you to come every time to share what you are doing.

Jill – Part of the rationale of holding these monthly is that the way we communicate is through the task force listserv, but that may shift to the JJAG, and this is a transitional place to have these conversations. We are all moving together in the same direction but it's not as tightly defined.

Erica – If you have feedback on how we can do that better, let us know.

**Next Call: November 13 at 1pm.**