
*North Sound Region
Youth and Family Coalition (YFC)
2019 Needs Assessment*

Introduction

The North Sound Youth and Family Coalition (YFC) is a regional Family, Youth, System Partner Round Tables (FYSPRT) committed to creating an opportunity for youth and families to share their experience as a mechanism to improve the behavioral health system (mental health and substance use disorders). The YFC works to identify needs in the North Sound region which include Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Island & San Juan Counties. The goal is to improve outcomes for youth with behavioral health needs by bringing forward barriers and/or unresolved community issues, needs and recommendations to the Statewide FYSPRT.

Background

On July 1, 2019, the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (BHO) transitioned to the North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization (ASO) which resulted in not only a change in organizational structure and oversight, but a significant staffing reduction. While YFC meetings and expert presentations have continued at each YFC meeting throughout the transition, other items such as surveys to identify needs were not completed. However, in reviewing previous documentation prior to the transition, consulting meeting notes, monthly evaluations and noting the size and geographical make-up of the North Sound Region, the most significant historical and current challenge has been bringing youth and families from all 5 counties together to participate in YFC. Barriers such as distance / travel, childcare and investment in local community interests have been cited as a few of the issues. Therefore, the determination was made by the current YFC group to expand and create local groups in each county; a breathtaking task.

Needs

Identified Need #1 – Develop Local Chapters of YFC in each North Sound County

Challenge	Proposed Solution
Engaging allied systems in each county to form a local YFC	Current members of YFC who cover multiple areas can be helpful in engaging others to create local groups In each county

Engaging families / youth in each county to attend YFC	Utilizing allied system partners (e.g. WISE, school) to recruit youth / families. Consult other FYSPT groups statewide for suggestions regarding recruitment.
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Identified Need #2 – Engage Family Participation in YFC Meetings

Challenge	Proposed Solution
Meeting venue is currently a Behavioral Health Administrative office which is not family / youth friendly	Change the meeting location where youth / families are (e.g. YMCA, library, school)
Promoting YFC to families, parents, caregivers, etc.	Eye catching flyers and 5x7 card to distribute. Holding events / presentations with topics families, caregivers, parents feel are important. YFC members posting the YFC link on allied system websites
Strategic Plan is complex and not written in plain language	Revamp the strategic plan

Identified Need #3 – Identify and Develop Youth Leaders in each North Sound County

Challenge	Proposed Solution
Meeting venue is not youth friendly	Youth to have a separate meeting time from the adult meeting before coming together for the second half.
Promoting YFC to youth particularly	Planning and promoting topics youth care about and getting Youth Move involved
Strategic Plan is complex and not written in plain language	Revamp the strategic plan