

# FOSTERING YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP IN VIRGINIA



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# INTRODUCING YOUTH MOVE



## WHAT IS YOUTH M.O.V.E.?

- A national youth-led organization devoted to improving services and systems that support positive growth and development by uniting the voices of individuals who have lived experience in various systems
- In addition to mental health, these systems include juvenile justice, special education, foster care and child welfare.



## USING LIVED EXPERIENCE

- Youth M.O.V.E. – “Motivating Others through Voices of Experience”
- Easier to work with a group of people who may have shared experience and understanding
- “Positive peer pressure”- comfort level in sharing
- With praise and support from peers comes increased self-esteem



## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- 1 in 5 children has a mental health disorder
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds.
- One half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, three quarters by age 25. Despite effective treatments, there are long delays between the first onset of symptoms and when people seek and receive treatment.
- Approximately 50% of students age 14 and older who are living with a mental illness drop out of high school. This is the highest dropout rate of any disability group.



## WHERE DOES YOUTH MOVE COME FROM?

- Like the national family movement, youth and young adults wanted a voice
- Youth Peer Support Partners started working in Systems of Care Communities
  - Work included PSA's, outreach, youth groups
- Youth MOVE started at the Federation of Families office
  - Initiated by SAMHSA (Gary Blau)
  - A few years ago they became independent



# YOUTH LEADING YOUTH

- Youth leaders have lived experience that can benefit other youth
  - Using negative experiences in a positive way
  - Authentic Peer Support
  - Offer hope to peers for overcoming obstacles
  - Opportunities to become positive role model for peers
  - Having walked along the same road, youth leaders can share their lessons learned



# DEFINING PEER SUPPORT

- Based on a mutual connection between two people who establish a relationship based on shared experiences

*-- Adapted from adult consumer movement*

- Peer support is getting help from someone who has been there.
- People with similar experiences may be able to listen, give hope and guidance toward recovery in a way that is different, and may be just as valuable, as professional services.





## LEARNING NEW SKILLS

- Youth leading other youth provides opportunities for personal growth, leading to gained skills that will be utilized in the future!

### Feel Empowered AND Empower Others!

- Guiding a group to complete specific tasks with end result
- Enable youth to lead in general discussion
- Conflict resolution skills/Empathetic listening
- Gives youth sense of control in an often uncontrollable world



## FOSTERING PERSONAL GROWTH

- Once you share your personal story, people are aware of your needs and will therefore be willing to help you in achieving your goals on a broader scale
- Learning from peers (and mistakes/successes) fosters individual growth
- Facilitates additional insight and perspective



# KEY TERMS

- **Lived-Experience** - Past participation in human-serving systems receiving services as a child, youth, or young adult (including but not limited to mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, and/or special education) or currently or formerly living with a mental health or substance abuse diagnosis.
- **Youth Voice** - The engagement, representation and application of lived experience of young people in program and systems development and implementation.
- **Transition** – Movement from child serving systems and youthfulness to adult serving systems and the responsibilities of adulthood.



- **Youth Advocate** - A young person, typically between the ages of 15- 25, who utilizes lived experience to educate, inform, motivate, and inspire others in an effort to create positive systems change.
- **Advocate for Youth** - A young adult, typically between the ages of 25-35, who has transitioned from being a Youth Advocate into a role of advocating for youth involvement across individual, program and system levels.
- **Supportive Adult** - An adult ally who supports young people in utilizing their voice in systems change.

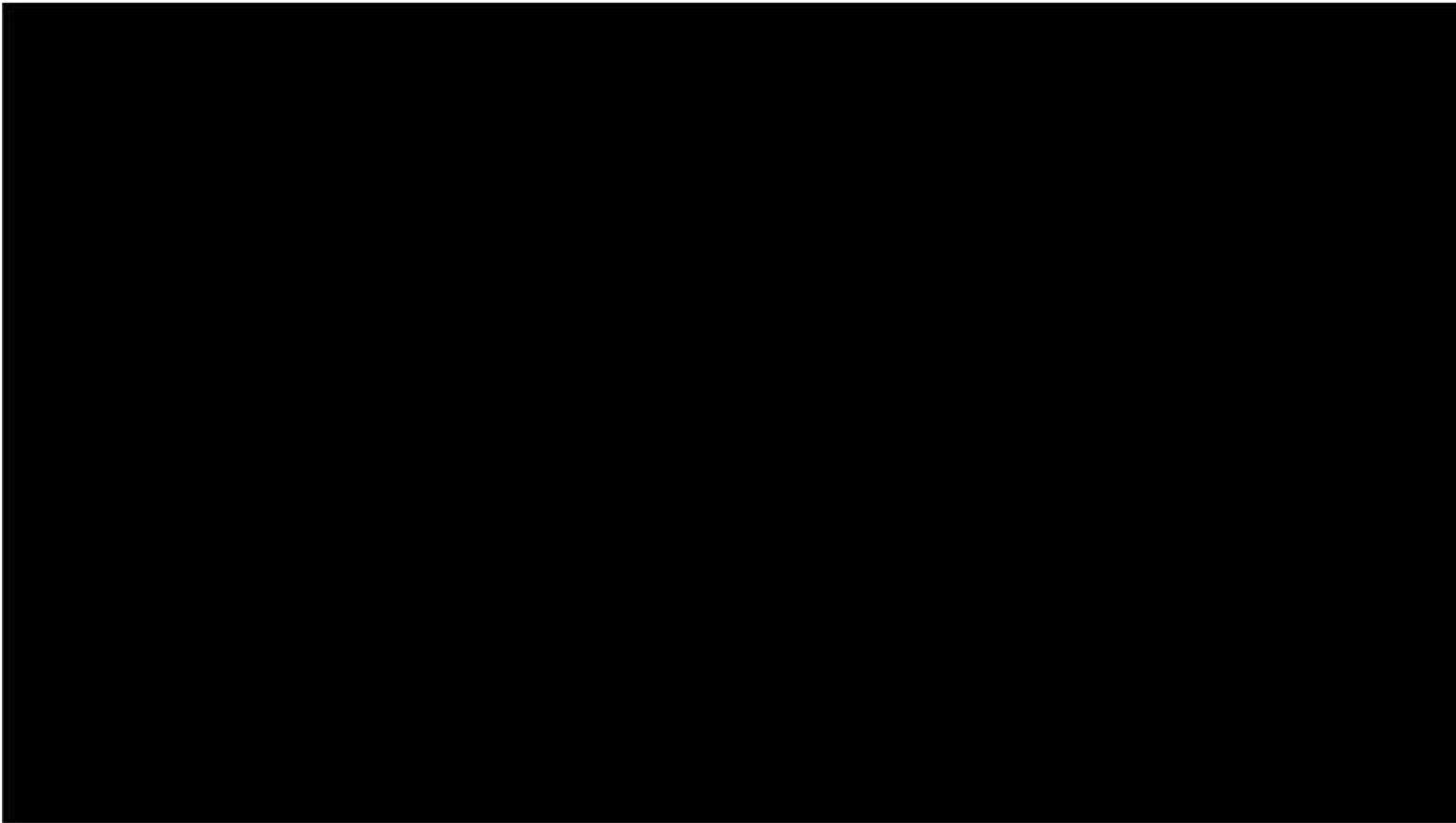


# PEER TO PEER SUPPORT

- Youth leaders are more engaging to their peers
  - Increases “buy-in”
  - Youth leaders speak the same language and share the same culture
  - Can be more responsive, empathetic and relatable
  - More likely to share similar life experiences



*SAY IT OUT LOUD...*



## WHAT IS YOUTH VOICE?

- The engagement, representation and application of lived experience of young people in program and systems development and implementation.



# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

## Life Experience for a Young Person

This age group experience various transitions within a short period of time

Those with MH challenges have another layer of transitions

## When Young Adults Engage

Based on need

Looking for non-traditional services and supports

Invited by a peer

## Services and Supports Preferences

Drop-in center vs. traditional mental health clinic

Pro-social environmental vs. clinical

Significant focus on plans does not interest young adults





## YOUTH MOVE VALUES

- YMN understands the importance of *youth voice* in developing responsive systems and supports for youth and young adults who have behavioral challenges
- Youth MOVE serves as a platform for youth and young adults to share their experiences in various systems, with the goal of affecting *positive change*
- Youth MOVE places great emphasis on developing *leadership* skills that will help youth grow as independent individuals



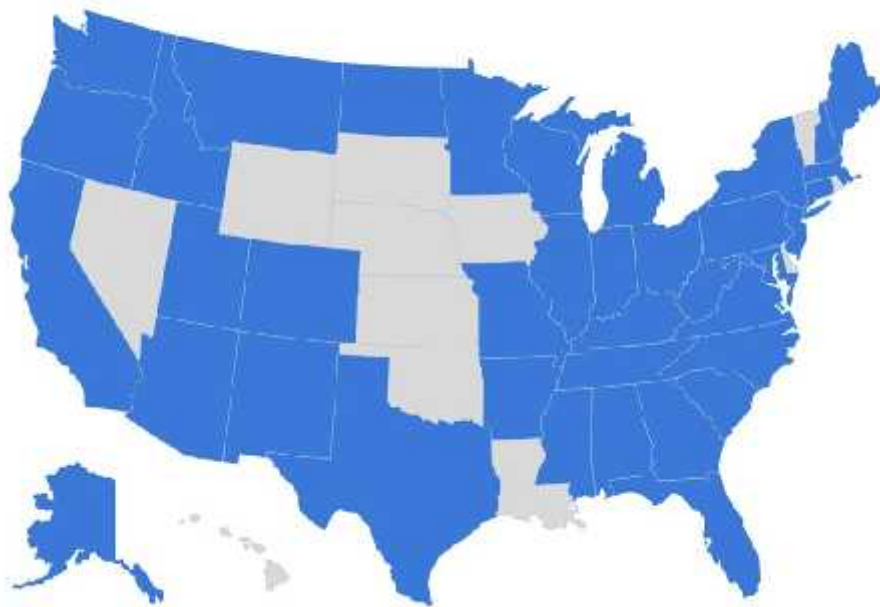
## STRUCTURE

- YMN is similar to NAMI National in that it is a grassroots collective that operates on 3 different levels- national, state and local.
- Just like NAMI, YMN has state chapters and local chapters all across the U.S.
- With state and local chapters all over the country, Youth MOVE National is a testament to the strength and power of the youth voice.
- There are 2 other NAMI state chapters that house Youth MOVE chapters: NAMI Utah and NAMI Ohio



# YOUTH MOVE CHAPTER NETWORK

## Youth M.O.V.E. Chapters



[www.youthmovenational.org](http://www.youthmovenational.org)

37 States, Tribes & DC  
Over 10,000 Youth Advocates  
Multi-System Youth Voice  
National, State & Local Networks

Youth MOVE National, (2014). *Georgetown University Peer Support Webinar* [Power Point Slides]



## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR NAMI VIRGINIA?

- Becoming a Youth MOVE state chapter is a way for NAMI Virginia to build capacity in the work we are doing with youth and young adults (one of the key components in the strategic plan).
- Youth MOVE is a program of NAMI Virginia. More specifically, Youth MOVE falls under NAMI Virginia's Children and Youth Programs Department.



## STATE CHAPTER

- A statewide chapter within the Youth MOVE National Chapter network is a youth-led organization that has a focus on affecting positive change using expert and authentic voice at the *state level*. The chapter's primary focus is on network building across systems, organizations, geographic regions within a state and focus on state policy advocacy efforts.



## LOCAL CHAPTER

- A local chapter within the Youth MOVE National Chapter Network is a youth-led organization that has a focus on a specific community including a city, county or region. This community of focus is smaller in geographic size and population than that of the entire state in which the chapter is located.



## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

- State chapters focus more on advocacy and system change, while local chapters place more of an emphasis on individual support and social activity in communities.
- While we still want to provide youth and young adults with peer support, we mainly aim to provide the infrastructure for communities to build their own local youth groups (and local chapters, if they choose to do so) as a part of the state chapter.



## EXAMPLES OF STATEWIDE ADVOCACY

- Advocacy Day at the General Assembly
- Virginia Family and Youth Leadership Summit
- Statewide Trainings
- Advisory Board comprised of young adults from all over Virginia
- Presentations at CSA Conference
- Children's Mental Health Awareness Day Activities





## WHAT IS YOUTH M.O.V.E .VIRGINIA?

- Youth MOVE Virginia is a grassroots network of youth and young adults who are committed to providing opportunities that support, educate, and empower other youth and young adults with mental health needs.
- Youth MOVE Virginia places great emphasis on advocating for youth-guided policy, peer support and mentorship throughout the mental health system and the state of Virginia.



## MISSION, VISION AND GOAL

- To support and engage a grassroots peer-to-peer network in which youth and young adults with lived experience are empowered to be active guides in their own care, while advocating for mental health policy and programs that are specific to the unique needs of the youth and young adult population.

- To cultivate an atmosphere that emphasizes community engagement, recovery, leadership and support for youth and young adults throughout the state.

- Establish a peer support youth group in each region of the state that will serve as a resource for leadership development, self-efficacy and personal growth.



## WHY PEER SUPPORT?

- It works!! Research has shown peer support is a key element of recovery in has a positive impact on outcomes.



Youth MOVE National, (2014). *Georgetown University Peer Support Webinar* [Power Point Slides]



## REMEMBER....

- **Youth perspective** is based on the youth's lived experiences and priorities.
- A youth/young adult has a different experience navigating the mental health system.
- **Youth culture** has unique values and norms.
- Young people experience various major life transitions within a short period of time
  - Those with mental health challenges have a whole other set of obstacles



## When Young Adults engage

- Based on need
- Looking for non-traditional supports/services
- Usually invited by another peer

## Services and Support Preferences

- Drop-in center vs. traditional mental health clinic
- Pro-social environmental vs. clinical
- Generally more interested in the process as opposed to the product (action oriented)
- Wellness and hopeful language is key
- Community based



## **BEING YOUTH GUIDED IN POLICY, PROCEDURE, AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

- Promote an organizational culture that sees youth participation as valuable and feasible
- Ensure youth are present when decisions that impact them are made, from individual service delivery to program development to policies/procedures – HEAR and USE their feedback
- Help prepare youth for active participation – training on purpose of policy making committees, advocating effectively, etc.
- Review agendas prior to meetings to allow youth real opportunity to think about what and how they want to contribute to topics on the agenda
- Learn to talk in ways that don't alienate youth
- Develop a welcoming, safe environment for youth involvement and participation



# YOUTH MOVE VIRGINIA TIMELINE

## ○ 2013

- Virginia Youth Leadership Network formed
- Held first Youth Leadership Training
- Established Youth Advisory Board

## ○ 2014

- Developed a youth track for the Annual Family and Youth Leadership Summit
- Became a Youth MOVE state chapter

## ○ 2015

- Hosted Advanced Youth Leadership Training
- Developed Youth MOVE Virginia logo



## YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

- Youth M.O.V.E. Virginia is governed by an advisory board, comprised of 12 young adults from around the state who have lived experience with a mental health condition.
- These individuals were recruited because of their experience with the mental health system and insight based on personal or family experience.
- Board members are routinely included in discussion about mental health policy and practice, and hold quarterly meetings to stay accountable and informed on current activity across the state.





## ROLES FOR YOUTH

- Hire a youth coordinator
- Youth group facilitation
- Peer advocates
- Educators/Trainers
- Youth representatives on committees and boards
- Social marketing
- Evaluation
- Decision making, leading, organizing



# Youth want to feel.....

- Valued
- Listened to and heard
- Less guilt, less blame
- Confident
- Knowledgeable
- Proactive (vs. Reactive)
- Assertive (vs. Aggressive)
- Informed
- Involved/included in a meaningful way
- That they are regarded as the expert on their own care
- Hopeful for their future



# STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- Hosting social events
- Providing a space for youth to tell their story
- Compensate them for their time, i.e. as youth representatives at meetings, forums, speaking events, etc.
- Youth friendly meeting times
- Share resources
- Provide training
- Start a youth group (*we can help!*)
- Be honest, set clear expectations, and clarify your limitations
- Scholarship youth for conferences (ie Georgetown Training Institutes Youth Track)



## THE STATE WE ARE IN

- *Our systems operate under a deficit based system*
  - We are set up to look at what is NOT there, rather than the strengths that ARE present
  - Assessments usually based on deficits and what is wrong
- *Traditional training does not focus on youth focused care and youth involvement or leadership*
  - Training is usually based on a medical or professional model
  - Learn to “do to” youth rather than “do with” youth
- *Assumptions we make about young people*



## WHAT IS YOUTH GUIDED CARE?

- *Youth Guided* means that young people have the right to be ***empowered, educated***, and given a decision making role in the care of their own lives as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all youth in the community, state and nation.
- This includes giving young people a ***sustainable voice and then listening to that voice***.
- Youth guided organizations create safe environments that enable young people to gain self ***sustainability*** in accordance with the cultures and beliefs with which they identify.



- A youth guided approach recognizes that there is a continuum of ***power*** that should be shared with young people based on their understanding and maturity in a ***strength*** based ***change process***. Youth guided organizations recognize that this process should be ***fun*** and ***worthwhile***.

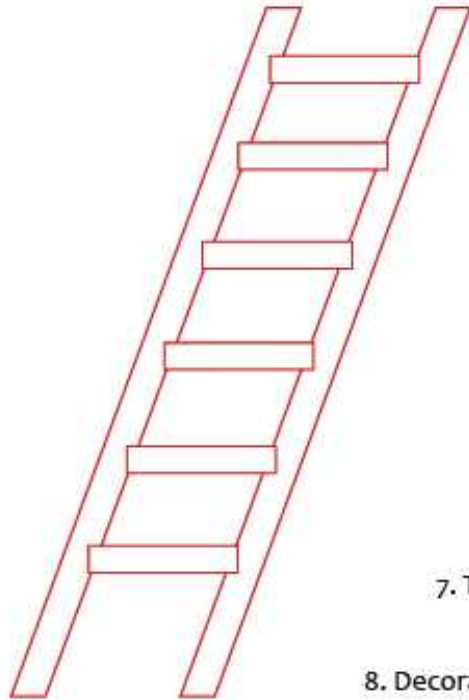


## PEOPLE VIEW YOUTH IN DIFFERENT WAYS BASED ON THEIR ROLE

- An educator sees a student in danger of dropping out/going down the wrong path
- A clinician sees a client with mental health issues
- A probation officer sees a potential runaway or delinquent
- A family member sees a sister, brother, daughter, son who has unique needs
- A youth sees a peer who is struggling



# Ladder of Youth Involvement



1. Youth Initiated and Directed
  - Designed and run by youth and decisions made by youth
2. Youth Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults
  - Designed and run by youth who share decisions with adults
3. Youth and Adult Initiated and Directed
  - Designed and run by youth and adults in full partnership
4. Adult Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth
  - Minimum Youth Participation, designed and run by adults who share decisions with youth
5. Consulted and Informed
  - Designed and run by adults who consult with youth, Youth make recommendations that are considered by adults
6. Assigned and Informed
  - Youth do not initiate, but understand and have some sense of ownership
7. Tokenism
  - Symbolic representation by few, may not have genuine voice, may be asked to speak for the group they represent
8. Decoration
  - Adults use youth to promote or support a cause without informing youth
9. Manipulation
  - Youth are not involved in design or decisions; Youth involvement used by adults to communicate adults' messages



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship, UNICEF





# CONTINUUM OF HELPING RELATIONSHIPS

- Helping occurs on a continuum, and is relationships based. These relationships can be one-directional and reciprocal.

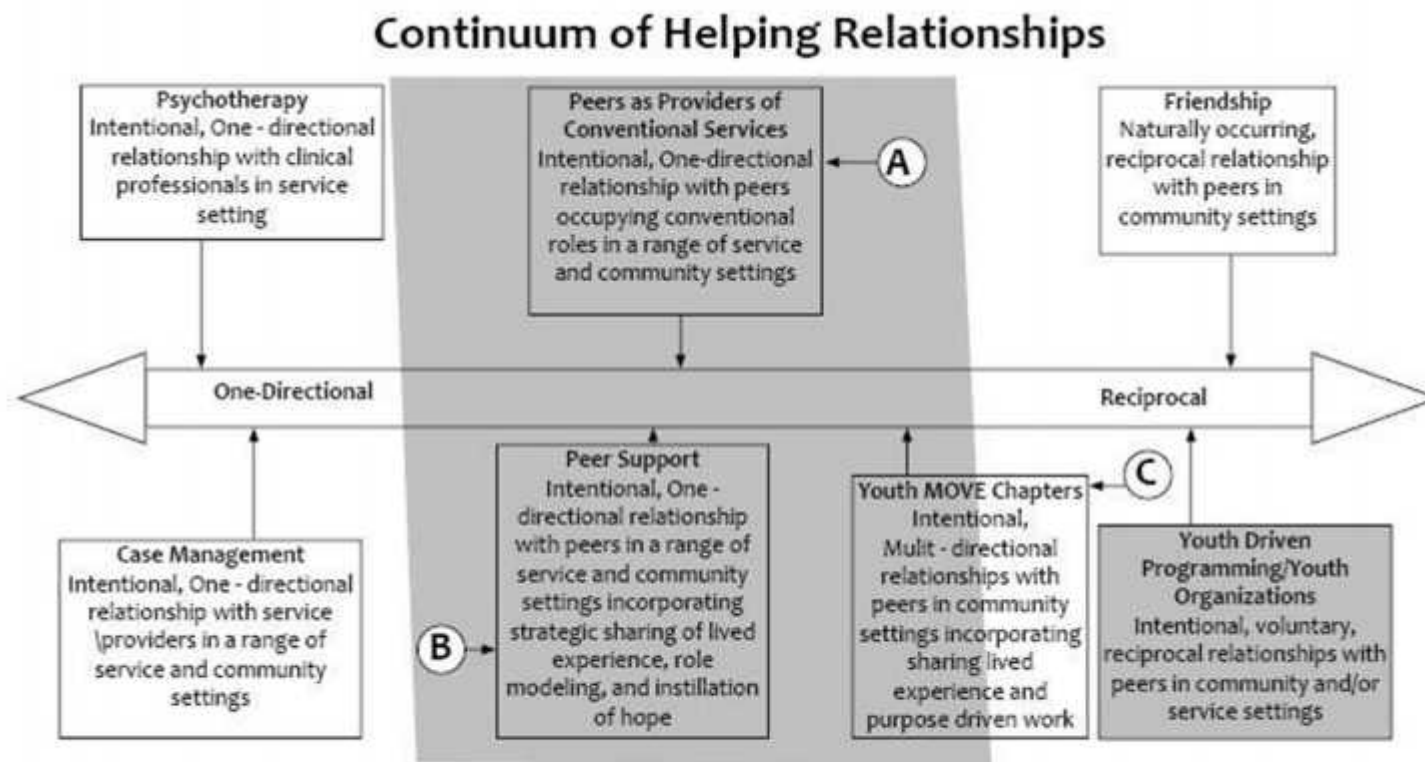


- Opportunities for peer to peer supports fall throughout this continuum and are offered in a variety of ways

Youth MOVE National, (2014).  
*Georgetown University Peer Support  
Webinar* [Power Point Slides]



# WHERE DOES YOUTH MOVE FIT?



Adapted from 'A Continuum of Helping Relationships' Davidson L et al. Schizophr Bull 2006;32:443-450



## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

- One of Youth MOVE's main goals is to work toward the day when all people will recognize and accept the culture of youth, their families, and the communities that serve them in order to be truly culturally-competent.
- YMN looks forward to the day when youth are no longer treated as numbers, problems or caseloads, but as individuals and humans. We will stand as partners: youth, youth advocates, supporters, parents and professionals to see our youth become successful.



## WHERE WE ARE NOW

- Launched NAMI Ending the Silence (an in-school presentation for high school students with an emphasis on mental health awareness and suicide prevention).
- Say It Out Loud- teaming up with DBHDS to distribute toolkits to communities across the state
- Developing a blog with youth advisory board member profiles
- 2 youth peer support groups
  - “HopeVoice” in Richmond
  - “Stronger Together” in Fairfax
  - One in Hampton on the way!



## WHAT OTHER COMMUNITIES ARE DOING

- NAMI Northern Virginia has adapted Peer-to-Peer for young adults
- Youth Voice Coordinator in City of Alexandria, Department of Community & Human Services, Center for Children and Families
- Project Life (Living Independently, Focusing on Empowerment) is a partnership with the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) that serves foster youth, ages 14-21, throughout five regions of Virginia.



## WHAT IS THE YOUTH COORDINATOR'S ROLE?

- To help any individuals who are interested in getting involved or starting their own local youth group or local Youth MOVE chapter.
- To serve as a facilitator between youth/young adults and partnering organizations/supportive adults.
- Provides training and technical assistance to other youth leaders across the state and facilitates connections between youth leaders with the goal of growing and further developing Youth MOVE Virginia.
- Develops programs for youth and young adults while supporting affiliates and community organizations in their youth outreach efforts.



## YOUTH PEER TO PEER RESOURCE LINK

### **Youth MOVE National:**

<http://www.youthmovenational.org/youth-peer-to-peer.html>

SAMHSA News Release. (2006). Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC.U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



## HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- Start a youth group!
- Host a training!
- Attend our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Family and Youth Leadership Summit (May 2<sup>nd</sup> 9-4).
  - Johanna Bergan, Executive Director of Youth MOVE National will be a keynote speaker.
  - There is once again a separate youth/young adult track
- Join our Children's Mental Health Awareness Day Celebration (May 7<sup>th</sup>) at DBHDS.





**M.O.V.I.E.**



**NO  
MORE  
STIGMA!**



# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!

- To learn more contact:  
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## WEBSITE:

<http://namivirginia.org/programs/youth-and-family-programs/youth-move-virginia>

## FACEBOOK:

<https://www.facebook.com/YouthMOVEVA>

