

Useful NMS Findings to Date from Workers/Peer Support/Providers

- One of the barriers to cross-system navigating is acknowledging that a young child has problems that are not easily solved. The availability of and accessibility to current, useful information can be an important aid for families, both practically and emotionally.
- Young people, family members, caregivers, peer supporters and workers need good information on Systems 101 – from the starting point of family concerns. The specifics of eligibility or agency boundaries may not mean anything to families, especially at the earliest points in their journey.
- Parents who must navigate multiple systems almost always need *navigator assistance*-workers, peer supports, etc. to work with them. There are many reasons why this is true: system complexity; cognitive factors; psycho/social factors; lack of coordination/communication among service providers; lack of clear eligibility requirements, etc.
- Resources/tools that empower youth and family members include materials that can be used by workers/peer supporters/ and families together. Remain aware that service providers are not always immediately familiar with services beyond their respective domain(s).
- Lists of services alone are not that helpful (to parents or providers). There must be simplified, explanatory information and information to help distinguish distinctions between services and supports.
- Many parents get their navigating info from: school personnel; family's health care provider (pediatrician, family doctor, clinic, etc.); and early care providers, like Head Start. While a school social worker may be more likely to understand the community services landscape; others can really benefit from navigation aids aimed at parents and young people, but which can also look be reviewed with workers/supports/peers/professionals.
- Services, systems, methods differ **by county, region and school district**. Capturing or dealing with the variation will be a challenge when designing the information resource. Helping to better understand private market and voluntary services as well as local government services should be a longer view project goal.
- Make room in the project to create information that helps bridge varied types of service and supports disconnects, especially to aid in producing self-directed care.
- While each case is unique, there are patterns of needs (case or situational scenarios) that might be identified and useful to determining ways to organize information resources.
- Families and young people often need printed or printable resources as well as online help. Even if the base product is web-based, providers need something to hand out that they can take off of the webpages for the parent/guardian to take home.
- Language used should be as non-technical as possible and made available for non-English speakers.
- Technical terms should be defined in a way that is **clearly evident** to users.