

Statewide Family Networks: Helping America Transform the Children's Mental Health System of Care Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health Idaho

Statewide Family Network Grantees are attempting to transform the mental health service delivery system into one that is youth and family-driven by implementing strategies to produce changes to youth and family members, mental health care providers, and mental health care policy and program decision-makers. Ultimately, these changes are expected to strengthen youth and family members' ability to actively participate in mental health care policy, planning, and service delivery decisions; strengthen mental health care providers' ability to share decision-making authority with youth and family-members about a youth's mental health care; and to change the quality of mental health care policies, programs, and services that support youth-guided and family-driven mental health care. Statewide Family Networks are enhancing the capacity of families to meet their child's mental health needs within the context of their home, their family, and their community.

Children's Mental Health Care Needs

- 4 million youth suffer from a major mental illness that results in significant impairments at home, at school, and with peers. [U.S. Surgeon General's Report, 1999]
- One in ten children and adolescents has a mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment. Yet, only about one in five of them receive mental health services in any given year. [U.S. Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health, 2000]
- Among children ages 9-17, there is one or two with serious emotional problems in virtually every classroom in the country. [President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2002]
- Among youths ages 15-24, suicide is the third leading cause of death, after auto accidents and homicides. [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention]
- It is estimated that nearly 17,000 children in Idaho are living with a mental illness. [Idaho Dept. of Health and Welfare]
- According to the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections 50.6% of youth in DJC custody have a mental health diagnosis. 37.6% have a SED diagnosis and 23.8% on probation have a mental health diagnosis.

Current Grant

The SFN grant currently awarded to the Idaho Federation of Families provides funding to support parent to parent support groups, funding to provide statewide trainings to clinicians and families, and support for overhead costs.

Accomplishments

Idaho Federation of Families provides parent to parent support groups throughout Idaho. Groups are available to both urban and rural communities. In addition, newly formed youth peer to peer groups are being offered in four regions of the state.

With Statewide Family Network funding, the Idaho Federation of Families was able to create the Idaho Youth Council made up of youth with mental health needs as well as youth who have been through the Juvenile Justice system. All of the youth have identified themselves as leaders and will be providing youth involvement training to children's mental health clinicians statewide in April of 2008.

Partnerships

The Idaho Federation of Families has been working in collaboration with the Department of Health and Welfare to publish a poetry book which is a collection of poems from youth across Idaho. An official "kick

off” event will be held in February 2008 with a formal introduction being provided by the First Lady of Idaho.

The Idaho Federation of Families has also been working closely with the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections to implement youth support projects. There is currently a pilot project at a DJC facility in which youth who are preparing for release identify community support people in their community who they can rely on once they are home. To show the importance of supports to youth, the Federation and DJC staff created a “Support Team Game”. This board game allows a youth to choose supports and internal assets. As they are given different life situations, they can see the importance of having both the right supports and the right internal assets in order to be successful in life.

For Further Information:

