



Youth Guided and Collaborative Recovery: A Case Study.

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Background & Purpose

Childhood maltreatment, including trauma and neglect, are closely aligned with changes in neural structure and functioning, and increased risk for cognitive deficits & psychiatric illness, including substance use. Here we discuss a young woman exposed to parental substance use, her resultant emotional difficulties, and her own substance use since the age of 9 years. Through finding a collaborative partner and meaningful youth involvement for her and her sibling she has remained sober for 1.5 years, and continues to participate coequally. This case helps to underscore the benefit of systems of care, and its benefit to multiple domains of mental wellbeing.

The Case

Youth is an 18yo white female living with her grandmother and brother in Massachusetts, and is currently enrolled in a recovery high school. Her recovery high counsellor referred her for outpatient psychopharmacologic evaluation and support due to concerns for anxiety and trauma related symptoms.

Psychiatric History

- Diagnosed with ADHD at 7yo, started on Adderall, with no other changes.
- On clonidine for past 4 years for sleep.
- No prior medications, barring 2 weeks of hydroxyzine during detox.
- No therapists until began at Recovery High.
- Went through detox at 15yo.
- Medications prescribed by PCP prior to beginning with outpatient psychiatry 12 months ago.
- Referred for psychiatry due to persistent anxiety and trauma-related symptoms.

Medical History

- Patent foramen ovale.

Substance Use History

- Started cigarettes at 8; smoked 8-10 cigarettes a day at intake.
- Began smoking marijuana at 9; using daily at intake.
- First use of Molly at 13yo, which was her drug of choice until detox at 15.
- Began monthly alcohol use at 14yo
- Began regular use of benzodiazepines, synthetic marijuana, and prescription opiates at 14.
- Infrequent dextromethorphone.
- At clinic intake, only cigarettes and marijuana used.

Family History

- Numerous family members have struggled with addiction;
- Both parents noted to have struggled with polysubstance use and alcohol addiction.
- Maternal grandmother psychiatrically hospitalized for unknown reason in past.
- Brother diagnosed with ASD.

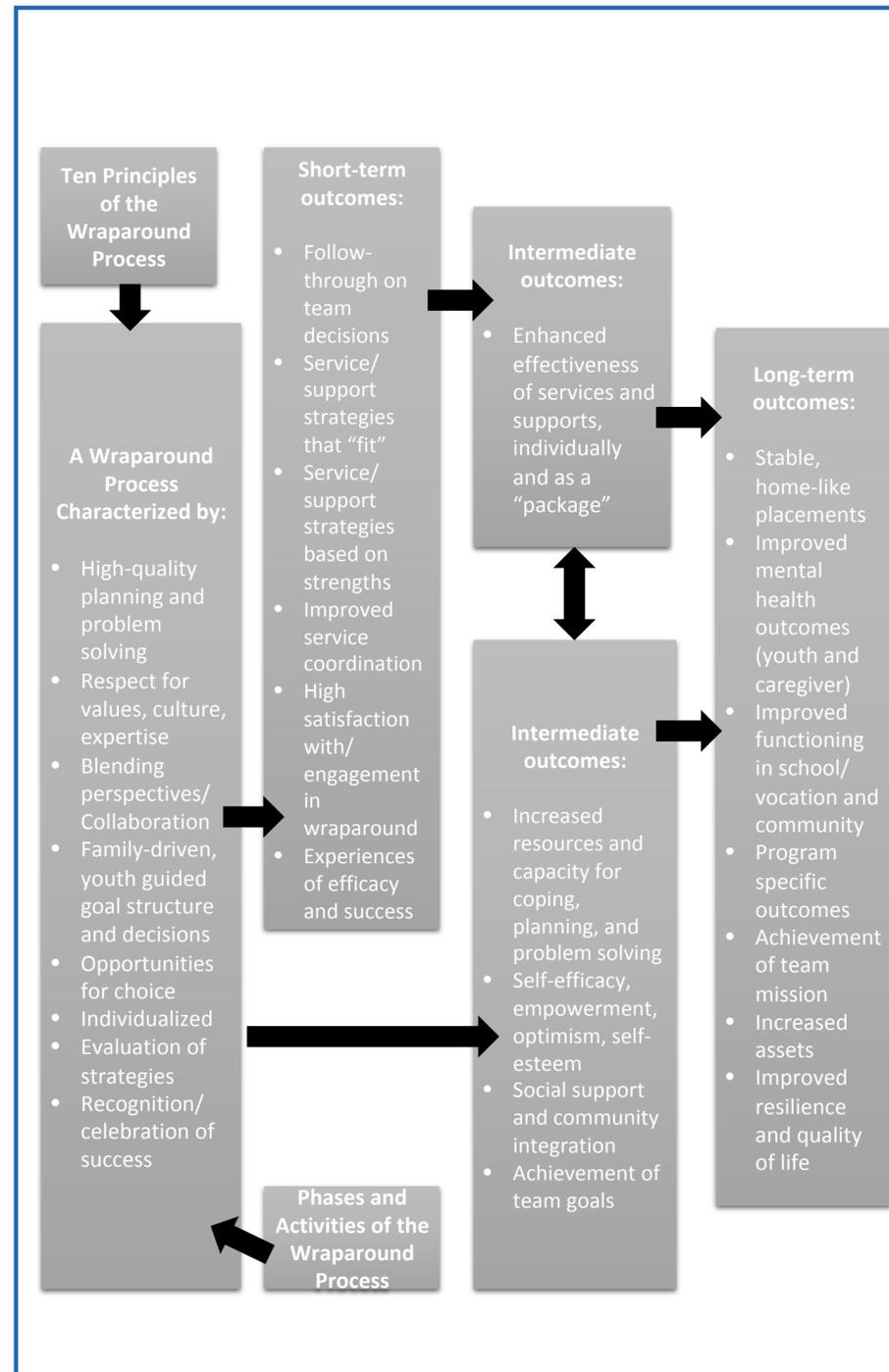


Figure 1: Principles of the Wraparound Process. Illustrates the principles and outcomes of the wraparound process which was applied to this youth and her sibling with positive outcomes. Adapted from Walker, J. 2011.

Developmental History

- No identified delays in milestones; no known perinatal complications.

Educational History

- Senior in recovery high school.
- A-B average in junior year; history of C-F average in 8th grade and earlier, with prior hx suspensions related to altercations..

Social History

- Living with maternal grandmother and younger brother, after being removed 2 years ago by DCF due to parental neglect and abuse.
- Hx of neglect, verbal and emotional abuse by parents in childhood;
- Physical abuse by romantic partner at 13yo;
- Witness to community violence and DV towards mom when very young.
- Further witnessed mother having seizure due to use.
- Placed into grandparents’ care due to father’s disinhibited aggression
- Youth’s Adderall stolen and sold for street drugs by parents on several occasions.
- Multiple interactions with youth legal system previously, due to A&B and possession of substances
- Assigned juvenile probation officer at one point.

Outcomes

- After initial struggle upon starting recovery high, youth identified as exemplar, supporting peers
- Sobriety, and tobacco cessation (including helping her therapist to quit)
- Learn from lapse
- Wraparound services became involved through her brother:
 - Helped youth, her brother and grandparents to manage challenges, improve communication, and integrate.
 - Helped brother have needs met,
 - Helped youth to improve shared understanding of her needs, and ensure continued pursuit of goals through support from family and school counselor.
- Patient’s Goals: To quit smoking and get her therapist to quit too (achieved), better manage her anxiety and ultimately graduate high school and go onto college to study criminal justice.

References

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