



TAG in Action: Engaging Youth at FosterClub

As part of its national call to action, **Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow**® (TAG), the Office of Adolescent Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has identified a number of successful strategies for improving adolescent health throughout the country. This strategy highlights the approach of a national organization to engage youth in services that strengthen their own self-advocacy and personal growth.

The Goal

FosterClub was founded to help young people navigate foster care when they are removed from their homes because of suspected abuse or neglect. Led by former foster youth, the FosterClub All-Star internship program aims to help young people process their experience in foster care and develop skills for lifelong success.

The Game Plan

FosterClub helps young people currently and formerly in foster care connect to a peer support network and gain awareness of their rights. Based in Seaside, Oregon, and Washington, D.C., the organization seeks to inspire and empower youth involved in foster care by sharing stories of people who have succeeded before them. FosterClub also elevates the voice of young people in policy conversations so they can be represented in the decisions which have such a profound impact on their lives. The FosterClub All-Star program is an intensive one-year internship that engages youth in learning about foster care, leading training sessions for peers and other stakeholders, and sharing their story strategically to advocate for improvements in the child welfare system.

The Winning Plays

FosterClub developed a method for how a youth can share his or her own personal story to help others. Youth are trained in hosting peer-led events, such as at foster care conferences, which includes a routine, in-depth debrief procedure to help youth process the experience and promote positive youth development. Following a peer-led model, new interns learn from fellow alumni who have previously served as FosterClub interns in the past. The young people identify what works and what needs to be improved. Impact Justice evaluated FosterClub's successful youth engagement framework and identified five integral elements for building resilience: 1) System knowledge: young people understand the system they are navigating and are aware of the resources available to them; 2) Personal narrative: young people are able to reflect on their own story and recognize the value and impact of their lived experience; 3) Self-regulation: young people have an understanding about how past trauma impacts current thinking and behavior, and possess skills to make healthy decisions; 4) Connectedness: young people value permanence and connections to people they trust, and are connected to individuals and networks that can support them; and 5) Meaningful contribution: young people recognize how they can impact the people, systems, and world around them. "We're placing our bet on young people. We believe they are the catalysts for transforming their own lives – and for reforming the child welfare system..." - Celeste Bodner, CEO

Learn More

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