Creating Connections

Creating Mental Health Connections for Children and Youth in Foster Care

Purpose

Improve the social and emotional wellbeing, safety, and permanency of children and youth in out-of-home care by helping them get their mental health needs identified and met.

Implement effective strategies to connect children/youth/families with the most appropriate and highest quality research-based mental health services (i.e., evidence-based practices; EBPs).

Improve the consistency of communication and information-sharing between social workers, mental health providers, and the systems they work in so that children and youth in out-of-home care with emotional or behavioral health concerns are identified, referred, and engaged in the best available services to help them function at their greatest.

Collaborative Partners

Children's Administration | University of Washington
Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery | Health Care Authority
Youth Alumni Partners | Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress
Veteran/Foster Parents of the Child Welfare System | Department of Health | Children's Bureau

Strategies

Case Planning

Create a common language between child welfare, mental health, and families to enhance engagement in effective services

Referral for Mental Health Treatment

Increase confidence in identifying mental health behavior problems for child welfare involved children, youth and parents

Screening

Embed tools that screen for trauma into existing screening processes

Progress Monitoring

Screen children and youth for mental health needs at regular intervals after entering out-of-home care and track their progress

Service Array Reconfiguration

Increase use of data to support system level planning that aligns EBP capacity building with the mental health needs of children and youth in care

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