



## San Francisco Children's System of Care

### Youth-Guided Care Assessment Tool March 2007

The Youth-Guided Care Assessment Tool is intended as a guide to help public agencies gauge how well their programs and services are youth-guided. It was developed by the San Francisco Children's System of Care on behalf of Community Behavioral Health Services under the Department of Public Health. The tool offers a series of questions that public agencies and their service networks can examine as they consider strategies to promote youth-guided care. As with any tool, agencies may wish to add questions that reflect the unique characteristics, cultures, and issues presented by the children, youth, and families they serve.

**Youth-guided means that young people have the right to be empowered, educated, and given a decision making role in the care of their lives, as well as policies and procedures governing the care of youth in their community.**



### *We embrace youth-guided care. Don't we?*

- ✓ We believe young people are our partners rather than numbers, problems, or caseloads in the system.
- ✓ We believe our programs and services should strive to meet the needs of youth rather than the other way around.
- ✓ We believe youth should feel safe, cared for, valued, and respected.
- ✓ We believe youth should have opportunities to develop supportive and trusting relationships with adults.
- ✓ We believe in educating, training, and supporting our staff in meeting the needs of youth.
- ✓ We believe in youth.

**If your system holds these beliefs to be true, please begin the assessment.**

#### *Area #1: Youth have a right to make informed decisions about their care.*

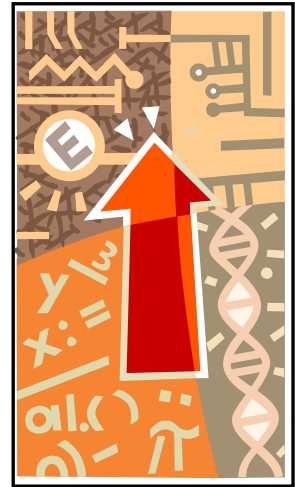
1. How do we educate youth about who we are and what our role is in their care?
2. How do we communicate with youth in language that is understandable?
3. How do we educate youth about their rights within our system?
4. How do we invite youth to share strengths, needs, and perspectives in our assessments?
5. How do we honor youth choice with regard to supports, services, and providers?
6. How do youth rate our supports, services and providers and how is this feedback incorporated into our program planning, development and evaluation?



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***Area #2: When youth feel safe and supported, we increase their chance of success.***

1. How do we create an environment where youth feel comfortable advocating for themselves?
2. How do we provide an atmosphere that is safe and nurturing especially in times of crisis?
3. How do we encourage and build upon positive youth behaviors?
4. How do we allow youth to articulate their experience about what helps and what harms?
5. How do we involve youth mentors in care planning and implementation?
6. How do we value what youth have to say?
7. How do we build trust and respect between youth and adults?



***Area #3: Youth are valued within our system.***

1. What training do we provide our staff, programs, and service providers on youth-guided care and how do youth participate in this training?
2. How do we promote keeping an open mind about youth and eliminate youth stereotypes?
3. How familiar are we with the challenges youth face at school, at home and within the community?
4. How do we strive to acknowledge and address the different cultures, beliefs, and values that may exist between youth and the staff who work with youth?
5. How do we support youth in understanding the power and opportunities they have in creating change in their lives and our programs and services?
6. How do we provide staff sufficient time and incentives to work with youth who may have complex and changing needs?



**Be a Change Agent!**