The National
FOSTER CARE
YOUTH & ALUMNI
Policy Council

Foster Youth & Alumni Priorities on Mental Health
May 2022

For more information, go to: nationalpolicycouncil.org

We must be educated & informed.

- More than response to our "bad behavior"
- Offer services more than once & provide opportunities for youth-initiated services.
- We need grief services, peer based education and outreach along with alternatives to traditional therapy. Help us reconcile our past.
- Provide specific and inclusive supports for LGBTQ+ youth and other special populations.
- Support mental health while we transition:
  - Continuity of health services - including mental health as we transition
  - All youth should be supported regardless of how they are "externally" coping.

Improving Youth Engagement & Access to Mental Health (2013), Older Youth Successful Transition to Adulthood (2020)

Curb over-reliance on medication

- Often 'first fix' is medication when we start to exhibit issues due to trauma. We need trauma-informed services, not medication only.

- Part of curbing the over-reliance of medication is to ensure informed consent and have an established and independent appeal process available to youth with a medication regimen (especially while the regimen is being considered regardless of whether the medication is over the counter or prescribed including off label use).

Improving Youth Engagement & Access to Mental Health (2013), Quality Residential Services (2020)

Beyond Mental Health - Family & Community

- Substance misuse and mental health crises are tearing our families apart — treat them with the urgency and resources that they require
- Engage with us during the investigation and when developing prevention services for my family.
- Recognize the importance of preserving healthy family ties,
- Create opportunities for us to access mentors, and
- Involve us
  in community-based and culturally inclusive services and activities.
- Make sure we have access to and can retain our community, family, and cultural connections.

Historic Opportunity for Reform: Prevention (2019), Social Capital (2017), Quality Residential Services (2020)

Questions?