

Developing an Effective Message to Sustain THP-Plus in Your County

Presenter: Laurie Kappe, *i.e.* communications



Agenda

- Messaging 101
- Practice Session
- Presentations with Critique



Messaging 101

For What? So What?

Communicate the value of THP + to county decision makers in order to sustain and grow these evidence-based programs which benefit young people

Why Now?

Realignment is a game changer. Programs will need to be 100% county funded, there is no federal matching, and there will be competition for these resources.



Messaging 101

- Identify your target audience (who makes the decisions, or influences the decision makers)
 - County Supervisors & their staff
 - Agency Director
 - Program Administrators
 - County advocates for youth and families
 - Media
- Understand who they are
 - What do they know? What (and who) do they care about?
 - What are their values? Politics? Where do they get their information?

Develop Effective Messages

- Why THP + matters
 - Keep it simple: memorable & quotable
- Use facts + stories
 - Make it specific, specific cases, provide evidence and share anecdotes
- Anticipate counter or competitive messages



Why THP + Matters Even More (post AB 12)

- THP + serves older youth.....
 - With increasingly “higher needs”
 - More likely to have experienced homelessness (statewide increase from 18% to 25%)
 - More likely to be parenting (25% increase)
 - More likely to have special needs, e.g., disabilities

Why THP + Matters

- With THP +, this vulnerable population of young adults are able to become productive and independent (*versus an economic burden to community*), with funding locally controlled with locally directed programs.
- Provide compelling DATA
 - Exited TPH + to Renting Own or Shared Housing: 47%
 - Earned HS diploma, GED or Equivalency: 36%
 - Average earnings increased
- Be prepared with stories/profiles of youth

Counter (or competitive) Messages

- Many worthy uses for limited dollars, e.g., child care, that can be allocated to other programs, versus THP +
- THP + is 100% county funded, with no federal (Title IV E) match
- If this young person has had support and services for many years, why continue to provide more? Why will this make a difference?

Practice Session: Scenarios

Scenario 1:

- A provider is seeing an increase in the number of parenting youth participating in their THP-Plus program and believes that the current THP-Plus rate is not adequate to meet the needs of both the young parent and young child.
- Rumor is that the county agency is not open to a rate increase.

WHAT'S YOUR MESSAGE?



Practice Session: Scenarios

Scenario 2:

- It has been a good year for the state's sales tax and there are ample funds that have been deposited into your county's Social Services Growth Account. However, you are being told that those funds cannot be used for THP-Plus.
- Rumor is that your Board of Supervisors are not very familiar with 2011 Realignment and how the Local Revenue Funds are organized at the county level.

WHAT'S YOUR MESSAGE?



Practice Session: Scenarios

Scenario 3:

- You have met with county child welfare agency and they say there is “no future” in THP-Plus. It isn’t a federally reimbursable placement and with the new county discretion.
- Rumor is that the county will probably reduce its budget over time so that those funds can be used for more essential services.

WHAT’S YOUR MESSAGE?



Messaging workshop session

- Brainstorm key messages responding to your scenario.
- Remember to be specific (if possible) with numbers and stories.
- Anticipate the counter arguments.
- It's not only about the dollars! Make the case for program effectiveness—real numbers, real lives.
- Designate a spokesperson.

Criteria for good messages

- Balance between stats and stories.
- Clear (not jargon) and compelling (memorable).
- Tailored to your audience.