



RECOVERY THROUGH PARTICIPATION

Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) believes that young people should have opportunities to work collaboratively with adults and to have a voice in decisions impacting their own lives and communities. This belief is supported by research suggesting that youth engagement strengthens outcomes for young people and makes services more effective. The Recovery Through Participation pilot allowed TNOYS to advance our training and technical assistance model while supporting Central Texas organizations in implementing trauma-informed youth engagement.

Year 2 Highlights

- 3 collaborative Idea Share events
- Peer Wellness Specialist Training, intensive 2-day training for youth partners
- 12 collaborative partner organizations that engaged youth in a variety of new ways (surveys, assessments, advisory councils, focus groups, and in consultant and leadership roles)
- Statewide youth-adult conference focused on youth voice, including:
 - 73 youth engaged as presenters, partners, & participants
 - 395 professionals and advocates engaged engaged in training and networking
- Young Adult Leadership Council launched
- 171 people from 71 Central Texas organizations reached + 100+ organizations reached statewide

Lessons Learned/Common Themes

- Authentic, sustained youth engagement takes time, attention, patience, staff capacity, and funding
- Organizations understand the value of youth engagement and are eager for support in this area
- Our events laid a foundation of awareness; not all organizations were able to move to action
- Even small steps toward youth engagement and one-time consultations made a clear impact

Organizational Culture Change

Feedback from evaluations of project participants revealed progress in organizational culture change:

- Young people's perspective will enhance our work: 88% "strongly agree" (up from 79% in Year 1)
- Young people are reliable and can be trusted partners: 100% "agree/strongly agree" (up from 78% in Year 1)
- We should invest financial resources in youth engagement: 63% "strongly agree" (up from 56% in Year 1)
- Youth are paid for their work/input: 25% said "always" (up from 0% in Year 1)
- Young people should have a clear role (board, staff, council): 75% "strongly agree" (up from 56% in Year 1)
- Youth work with staff to plan/improve services: 50% said "often" (up from 17% in Year 1)

Future Vision

Recovery through Participation allowed TNOYS to pilot and package a fully-developed training and technical assistance program and build stronger working relationships with organizations in Central Texas, Houston, and statewide. Now, we are seeking funding and partnerships to extend the model through new opportunities with current partners and to other communities such as Dallas. We will also continue to build and grow our Young Adult Leadership Council to guide youth engagement in our work and at our annual conference.

