Establishing a Community Multi-Agency Transition to Adult Life Team

Guiding Questions for Multi Agency Planning (MAP) Team Development

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Interested in establishing a Multi-Agency Planning (MAP) team?

Begin by discussing the following Guiding Questions.

Team leaders may use these ten questions to facilitate discussions as members come together to plan for establishing a community multi agency team. As each issue is discussed, facilitators should take note of the team members' responses and views to help teams recognize the degree of planning and action that has occurred.

Teams that take the time to review and discuss these ten questions may find they are well prepared to confront the needs of transition youth with disabilities in their county or region. Or, teams may find areas that have not been addressed or recognized as a priority. In this situation, these discussions become the first step in developing the needed goals and action plans.

Each of these ten questions are important to discuss and address as a team is organizing and forming, however there is no specific order in which they must be discussed. Team members may wish to review all the questions prior to beginning a discussion in order to determine where to begin their team dialogue.

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Guiding Question	Considerations
1. BELIEF **Do all partners believe that youth with disabilities have the potential and right to succeed in community life engagement, which includes employment?** **All team members must share the belief that all youth are capable, no matter the extent of individual challenges!**	Multi Agency Planning (MAP) Teams share a philosophy of service that presumes that all Ohioans with significant disabilities can and should have opportunities to live, work and engage in the community. It means that individuals with disabilities: • Have the right to obtain jobs and engage in activities that are in line with their interests (person-centered). • Participate in jobs or other activities that they choose and feel comfortable doing (self-determination). • Access activities, pursue interests and are employed in locations typical of those ventures (community-based). • Receive compensation on par with their non-disabled counterparts in like positions (competitive employment). • Work, live, and engage in their community alongside people without disabilities (integrated setting). Individual team members must understand and embrace each of these principles. It is critical that partners base their work on this vision so that the collaborative efforts that result are aligned with community life engagement and employment. —Adapted from National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
2. PARTNERS **Are the right partners committed to collaborating as part of a multi-agency transition partnership?**	Transition Teams require partners within and across all agencies serving transition age youth. Effective Transition teams and partnerships include a diverse core group of partners such as: • Families and Individuals with disabilities • Local Schools, State Support Teams, and other Educational agencies • County Board of Developmental Disabilities • Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency • Mental Health and Addiction Services agencies • County Department of Job and Family Services/local Ohio Means Jobs agency Local teams need to determine the additional partners in their community that will be important to include as they establish the team and partners to add as they continue to organize. Consider non-traditional partners such as regional transportation providers, community organizations, civic organizations, providers of services to transition age youth, employers and non-profit agencies.

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3. MISSION **Do we have a focused and shared purpose for the team that all members understand and support?**	Multi-agency groups function best when members have a shared purpose or mission. Clarifying the purpose/mission is critical for the group to form an identity and for all individual team members to make a commitment to actively participate. The purpose/mission may be multi-pronged and can include functions such as: • An opportunity to identify common goals and work to reduce barriers. • A venue to understand the work of each partner and where the responsibilities align, overlap, create gaps, duplication or confusion. • A community partnership that can pool ideas, resources and connections to build capacity so that youth achieve successful adult outcomes. • A system for region-wide communication among partners. • An avenue to exchange agency information and updates. • An opportunity to gather new resources and ideas. • A systems change focus to develop a plan to improve capacity to serve transition age youth across agencies. • A commitment to changing the culture of agencies and systems working in silos to one of team-based collaboration and coordination.
4. INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT **Would a local interagency agreement provide a foundation for the team to work together?**	An interagency agreement can clarify each partner's role in working with transition youth and document an understanding about collaborative practices. • Interagency agreements can include details such as how and when systems will share information about youth served by more than one system and specifies the occurrence of regular communication among systems. • The agreement generally explains the mission and goals, as well as captures each agency's commitment to achieving the collaborative goals. • One of the responsibilities of a multi-agency Transition Team should be to ensure that colleagues not directly a part of the team know about and understand the Interagency Agreement. • It should be reviewed regularly as Team member agencies put in place collaborative practices and when team member agencies change or are added.

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5. COMMUNICATION **Does the team have a method to communicate regularly about the group activities and function?**	Effective communication requires a recognized system of contact and information dissemination and is foundational to ongoing collaboration and achieving goals. • A system of communication includes a regular way to disseminate information and receive feedback about the work of the group. • Establishes methods to share information about specific youth among and between agencies. • Team communication may include regularly scheduled meetings, newsletters, email listservs, social media, websites, etc. • As teams form, they often require more frequent communication and in-person meetings than they will once they are more established.
6. STRUCTURE and COORDINATION **Has the team identified clear roles for each team member and a team 'coordinator' or 'facilitator'? And logistics for meetings?**	Team members benefit from a clear infrastructure for how the team will function. A collaborative multi agency team can be a catalyst for raising the priority of working with partners when it is viewed as productive and effective. A team that functions together at a high level of effectiveness includes these qualities and characteristics: • Clear roles for each team member to actively contribute to team functioning. • A working knowledge of each agency's role, procedures and responsibility in the transition process. • A multi-agency core team that works in concert with each other to share in planning and implementing team activities. • A written plan that provides focus, rationale and direction for what the team wishes to accomplish. • Leadership for coordinating team actions, communication, meetings, etc. Initially 'leadership' may be centralized in one person. Over time, 'leadership' should be a function, not a single person, that is actively shared among all team members. A few questions for the team to consider when creating an infrastructure include: Who will: • Facilitate meetings? • Take notes and disseminate to team • Send out reminders for upcoming meetings? • Prepare meeting agendas? • Follow-up on details or decisions made at meetings? Operations: • How will the team make decisions? • How frequent/long are meetings? • Is there a time of day/day of the week better for most team members? • Where will the team meet? Same site? Different member agencies

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7. ACTION PLAN **Has (or will) the team developed an action plan that identifies short and long-term goals for the group and activities needed to achieve goals?**	Teams that are strategic have Action Plans to guide their activities and decisions. • A collaboratively developed action plan charts the course so the team can stay focused on meaningful outcomes and their shared mission. • Action planning begins with a process to identify and prioritize the Team's resources and needs. • Then the team can set goals and activities. • Action plans are dynamic documents - the plan should be the focus of each team meeting and constantly updated as goals are implemented. • The shared beliefs and mission of the team can form a vision that serves as the anchor and beacon for the goals and implementation of team activities. • See the Community Investment Tool for Youth at the Employment First website, https://ohioemploymentfirst.org/up_doc/EF_Investment_Tool_.pdf for an example of a needs assessment tool focused on agencies serving transition youth. • See the Strategic Planning Guide for additional processes and tools for developing an action plan at https://ohioemploymentfirst.org/view.php?nav_id=398
8. DATA-DRIVEN **Are the goals supported by baseline data and a strategy for measuring progress?**	Data provides the team with a clear way to gauge progress and celebrate accomplishments. • Baseline data provides a factual and objective foundation for the work. It defines the starting point for goals in the plan. • A needs assessment (see #7) can generate baseline data for the formation of goals. • Baseline data must be measurable so that a team can gather progress data to evaluate and share their progress. • Data for measuring systems change efforts must be focused on the goals in a plan, and not on the details connected to activities or events that the team implements. Goals articulate the change, the team plans to accomplish. • Data that is most useful to the team for decision making is data that captures the amount of progress toward achieving the desired change described by each goal.

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9. EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICES AND PREDICTORS **Is the team familiar with the research about strategies, services and supports proven to assist youth with disabilities to achieve success?**	Teams must prioritize and focus on activities and services that have evidence of being effective. • Through research, a set of practices has been identified that are associated with transition youth achieving meaningful adult outcomes. • Referred to as Evidence Based Practices and Predictors, they provide transition professionals with research-based strategies useful across all systems to build youth's skills for community employment. • Evidence Based Practices are instructional methods and strategies proven through research to be effective to teach youth specific transition-related skills. The Practices can be used in the classroom and in a variety of settings, such as work sites, community environments, social settings, etc. • Evidence Based Predictors are activities, services and supports that occur during the school years that have been identified through research as being associated with higher rates of success as youth enter adulthood. • See the Employment First Evidence Based Practices and Predictors for Post School Success Tools on the Ohio Employment First website. https://ohioemploymentfirst.org/view.php?nav_id=454
10. SUSTAINABILITY **Does the team have in place strategies to ensure that the collaborative work will be sustained into the future?**	Community Multi-Agency Transition Team efforts must carry on over time, although team members will naturally change. Structures that support agencies to communicate and collaborate must be sustainable in the future. • Team members will change as roles change, however the work of the team must be built on a foundation that does not change with the players. • Efforts that result from the initial enthusiasm of members alone will not sustain the work over time. • Partner agencies must prioritize the work of the team and continue to support participation. • Blending and braiding resources will enhance the ongoing efforts and achievement of goals. • Market the plans and the results of the team's work, both within the partner agencies and the larger community. • Consider formalizing the existence of the team by creating rotating terms of service for representatives from partner agencies, developing interagency agreements, ensuring support from leadership in each partner agency.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST