
Young Adult Peer Mentoring Organizational Self-Assessment & Capacity Building Toolkit



Version 1, Updated January 2021

Created by Children's Behavioral Health Knowledge Center
Massachusetts Department of Mental Health
Intended for use by state and non-profit agencies.

Table of Contents

What is this Toolkit? Why Should My Organization Use It?	2
What is Young Adult Peer Mentoring?	3
The Tools	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Self-Assessment and Resources	8
Focus Area One: Competency	8
Recruitment.....	8
Interviewing	9
Training.....	10
Supervision & Support.....	11
Professional Development	12
Focus Area Two: Organization	13
Peer Support & Transition to Adulthood.....	13
Resources & Technology	14
Wellness	15
Equity & Diversity.....	16
External Advocacy & Education	17
Focus Area Three: Leadership	18
Sponsorship	18
Strategy.....	19
Inclusion	20
YAPM Implementation Strategic Planning Template	21

What is this Toolkit? Why Should My Organization Use It?

Welcome! You are likely reading this because your organization is looking to expand or enhance the young adult peer mentoring (YAPM) services it provides. Or, perhaps your organization is just getting started with YAPMs. Either way, you've come to the right place! We designed this easy-to-use, practical organizational self-assessment tool to improve your agency's YAPM implementation. You can use this resource to assess your agency's YAPM implementation needs and connect to easily accessible free resources to address your agency's specific needs. We created this tool with the National Implementation Research Network's implementation stages and drivers in mind.¹

¹ <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/module-4/topic-1-implementation-stages-overview/what-are-stages>

What is Young Adult Peer Mentoring?

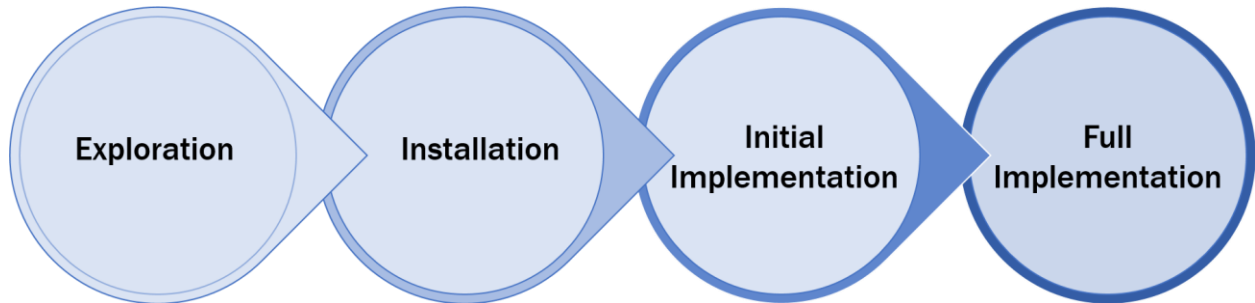
Young Adult Peer Mentoring is a practice whereby young people strategically share their lived, and living, experiences of navigating the transition to adulthood with mental health challenges. YAPMs inspire, motivate, and empower other young people who have struggled with similar life experiences. The [YAPM Practice Profile](#), developed through a collaborative process with YAPMs and their allies, guides peer mentors in their work. The Practice Profile outlines six core elements: cultural responsiveness, building relationships and collaboration, supporting young adult vision and goals, role modeling, promoting self-care and demonstrating safe, ethical and professional behavior.

Young adult peer mentors play an essential role in helping organizations with the following:

- **Improving care experience and outcomes of young people you serve** who have mental health needs. These young people may be at risk of employment and education struggles, justice system involvement, homelessness, substance use, commercial sexual exploitation, complex trauma, or other difficulties.
- Ensuring team and program approaches are **developmentally attuned, engaging, and culturally responsive** to youth and young adults and their unique needs.
- Providing **meaningful employment opportunities** for young people living with behavioral health challenges.
- Becoming more recovery-oriented by **promoting the value of integrating lived experience into care** & peers who can serve as important role models for young people.

Stages of Implementation

First, it may help to identify the stage of YAPM implementation at which your organization is operating:



Exploration.

Yes! We are excited you're considering a YAPM role! It is a role that can revolutionize your program culture, as well as youth engagement and outcomes.

Your organization is exploring whether the YAPM role is a good fit within a program/team, and if your agency has the resources to support implementation. You are learning about what needs to be in place to best support YAPM integration. This self-assessment will help you realize those needs and identify where to get started.

Installation.

Your agency is dedicated and motivated to implement YAPMs!

Your organization has decided that YAPM is a good fit for your organizational mission. Your organization is focused on ensuring critical organizational elements are in place to hire YAPMs and move into initial YAPM implementation. Use the included self-assessment and strategic planning tool to plan initial implementation effectively.

Initial Implementation.

Your agency has made some initial progress on YAPM Implementation! Well done!

Your organization has hired one or more YAPMs and implemented some of the items on the YAPM organizational self-assessment. Your organization's next steps are to continue integrating the remaining identified systems and processes to implement YAPMs fully. Use the self-assessment and strategic planning tool to progress to full implementation.

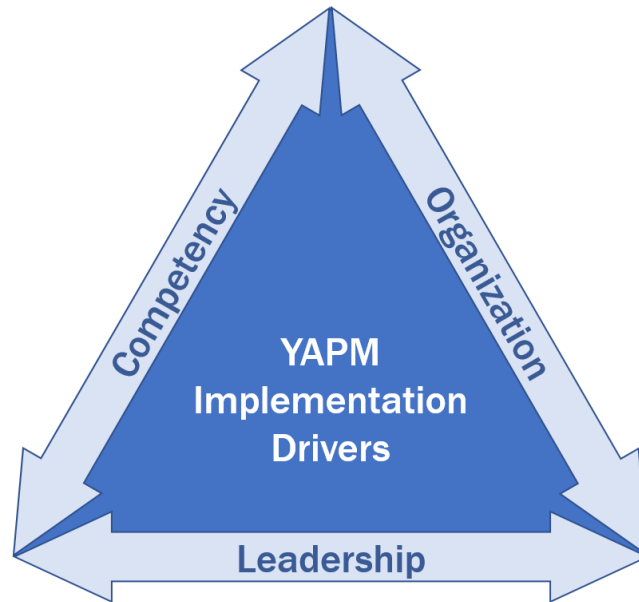
Full Implementation.

Your agency has made major progress with YAPM Implementation! Awesome!

Your organization has hired multiple YAPMs and implemented all or most of the items on the YAPM self-assessment. Your organization's focus is on improving currently implemented systems and processes to enhance YAPMs' on-the-job experience and address any identified implementation barriers. The self-assessment will provide your organization with helpful resources!

Implementation Drivers

At each stage of YAPM implementation, your organization should consider the following drivers of high-quality service implementation, as adapted from the National Implementation Research Network:²



Competency:

- Recruitment
- Interviewing
- Training
- Supervision & Support
- Professional Development

Organization:

- Peer Support & Transition to Adulthood
- Resources & Technology
- Wellness
- Equity & Diversity
- External advocacy & education

Leadership:

- Sponsorship
- Strategy
- Inclusion

² <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/module-7/active-implementation-frameworks/fidelity-assessment-and-implementation>

Instructions for Use

This toolkit provides two tools and dozens of resources to support your organization in exploring and implementing Young Adult Peer Mentoring. The resources, divided by topic, can be used as a reference guide. Additionally, you can use the Self-Assessment and Strategic Planning Template to structure and direct your implementation.

Self-Assessment Instructions:

Complete the YAPM organizational self-assessment by reviewing each guiding question and using the provided space to note the degree of implementation using the scale provided below. You may also note any evidence for the implementation status, progress, or barriers. Ideally, a review of this self-assessment should be done by a multi-departmental committee at your agency. The results of this self-assessment can identify gaps and areas for improvement at your agency and, along with the Strategic Planning Template, indicate steps forward.

Recommended implementation scale:

- 0 – No effective implementation
- 1 – Early or partial implementation
- 2 – Intermediate implementation
- 3 – Sustained or full implementation

Strategic Planning Template Instructions:

Following completion of the self-assessment, determine and prioritize next YAPM implementation steps through completing the strategic planning template. This template will help your multi-departmental team to identify objectives, champions, smart goals, and related tasks. The template can be copied and reused for each objective identified.

Self-Assessment and Resources

Focus Area One: Competency

Recruitment	
Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Have a clear job description for YAPMs?	
Have hiring managers and human resource personnel who understand that ideal YAPM candidates have lived experience?	
Commit to recruiting and hiring YAPMs from diverse backgrounds and representing the population served?	
Have a YAPM marketing and recruitment strategy that is young-person appropriate and shared through social media?	

The Resources:

- For marketing tips and sample job descriptions, review the webinar recording and job aids from [Best Practices in Recruiting & Hiring YAPMs](#).
- The PDF book [A Guide to Supervising and Developing Young Adult Peer Mentors](#) by Vanessa Klodnick, Ph.D., includes a chapter on recruiting, hiring, and screening.

Interviewing

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Avoid screening out YAPM candidates based on insufficient education, experience, or involvement with the criminal justice system?	
Have phone screening questions for the YAPM role?	
Have appropriate, non-discriminatory interview questions?	

The Resources:

- For sample screening and interview questions, review the webinar recording and job aids from [Best Practices in Recruiting & Hiring YAPMs](#).
- The PDF book [A Guide to Supervising and Developing Young Adult Peer Mentors](#) includes a chapter on recruiting, hiring, and screening. Refer to pages 6–8 for specific details.
- The PDF book [Effectively Employing Young Adult Peer Providers](#) by Jonathan Delman, Ph.D., and Vanessa Klodnick, Ph.D., includes a chapter on recruiting, hiring, and training. Refer to pages 45–46 for specific details.

Training

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Use YAPM onboarding checklists?	
Support YAPMs in accessing Massachusetts DMH-sponsored CORE Elements Training?	
Support YAPM Supervisors in accessing YAPM Supervisor Training, especially reflective supervision training?	
Support YAPMs by providing resources and guidance in navigating the new hire orientation process and paperwork?	

The Resources:

- For an example YAPM onboarding checklist and schedule, review the webinar recording and job aids from [Navigating Young Adult Peer Mentoring On-Boarding & First Few Months of Work](#).
- To learn about YAPM core elements trainings and schedule sessions, please visit the [Speaking of Hope website](#).
- The PDF book [A Guide to Supervising and Developing Young Adult Peer Mentors](#) includes content related to onboarding and supporting YAPMs.
- For effectively supporting YAPMs with their first months, review the webinar recording [Supporting Self-Reflection & Navigating Common Early YAPM Role Challenges](#).

Supervision & Support

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Require weekly supervision for YAPMs?	
Use the YAPM Practice Profile Self-Assessment to guide YAPM skill development in supervision?	
Provide opportunities for YAPMs to connect with other peers regularly?	

The Resources:

- For easy-to-use YAPM Core Element tip sheets, self-assessment tools, videos, and more, please visit [the YAPM Practice Profile website](#) and explore the section for each core element.
- To learn about and effectively support YAPMs in understanding ideal, developmental, and unacceptable YAPM practices, download the PDF Vignettes for YA Supervisor Training.
- The PDF book [A Guide to Supervising and Developing Young Adult Peer Mentors](#) includes content focused on the supervision and support of YAPMs.
- To learn about YAPM training, social, and advocacy events, please visit the [Speaking of Hope website](#).
- To support the transition from youth advocate to young adult advocate, download the [Youth Advocate to Advocate PDF](#) courtesy of Pathways RTC.
- Create a group supervision or monthly learning collaborative experience at your agency, in person or virtually with other agencies.
- Connect YAPMs to more senior peers or supervisors with lived experience and experience in the peer role.

Professional Development

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Provide or connect YAPMs to professional development opportunities?	
Provide career advancement opportunities for YAPMs?	
Promote YAPMs?	

The Resources:

- For resources and articles that empower youth and are created for youth by youth, visit the website youthempowerment.com.
- The Massachusetts-based organization [Reachhire](#) provides resources for supporting young adult career development via their website.
- For peer support training opportunities, please visit the [Speaking of Hope website](#).
- For peer conferences, trainings and events, visit the [National Association of Peer Supporters website](#).
- Join peer support mailing lists, such as:
 - [Pathways RTC](#).
 - [iSPARC](#).
 - [Kiva Centers](#).
 - [Transitions ACR](#).
 - [Wayside Youth & Family Support Network](#).
 - [Youth Move National](#).

Focus Area Two: Organization

Peer Support & Transition to Adulthood

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Train all staff in recovery and peer support principles and practices?	
Use people-first language in all agency communication?	
Include recovery in mission statement and marketing materials?	
Train all staff in developmental experiences facing young adults and positive youth development?	
Have youth and young adults design spaces where individual meetings, groups and activities are held at your agency?	

The Resources:

- To better understand peer support, review the PDF [What Is a Peer Support And What is Not Peer Support?](#) courtesy of Pathways RTC.
- To learn the benefits of collaborating with peer providers, review Video Brief 9: Collaborating With Peer Providers on the [Pathways Transition Video Brief Series](#) webpage.
- The PDF book [A Guide to Supervising and Developing Young Adult Peer Mentors](#) includes example training exercises to increase self-awareness of assumptions and biases. Please refer to page 35.
- For creating safe and brave environments and ensuring YAPMs are part of the team, refer to the PDF [Best Practices for Increasing Meaningful Youth Participation in Collaborative Team Planning](#). Note pages 5–7.
- To learn more about recovery and how to incorporate recovery-oriented philosophy and practice at your agency, see the following SAMHSA webpages:
 - [Video trainings promoting recovery-oriented services and supports by highlighting new knowledge areas, hot topics, and cutting-edge programs.](#)
 - [Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale Technical Assistance Center Strategy \(BRSS TACS\) & Resources.](#)
 - [SAMHSA Recovery Support Tools & Resources.](#)
- For incorporating people-first language at your agency, see the articles “[The Importance of ‘People First’ Language](#)” and “[Five Ways Employers Can Use People First Language.](#)”

Resources & Technology

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Have tools for YAPMs to work effectively? (e.g. smartphones or service reimbursement, flex funds, available spaces, travel expenses, etc.)	
Have policies supporting safe and ethical smartphone use at work that includes text, email and video chat?	
Have a policy for the use of social media at work?	

The Resources:

- For supporting young person engagement through virtual platforms, download the PDF job aid [Telehealth Tip sheet](#) from Pathways RTC.
- For evidence that providers are using social media and texting to engage young people, download the PDF [Strategies for Engaging Youth & Young Adults](#).
- For a template and guidelines in writing effective agency social media policy, view the webpages [SHRM Social Media Policy](#) and [SAMHSA Social Media Policy Suggestions](#).

Wellness

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Require staff complete on-the-job wellness plan?	
Train all staff in how to request reasonable accommodations?	
Provide wellness opportunities and incentives for staff?	

The Resources:

- For how to develop and support staff self-care plans, refer to the webpage [YAPM Practice Profile for Promoting Self-Care](#).
- For supporting on-the-job self-care, Refer to section five of the PDF book A Guide to Supervising and Developing Young Adult Peer Mentors.
- See [Supporting YAPM On-the-Job Wellness and Effectively Negotiating Reasonable Accommodations](#)
- To understand reasonable accommodations, refer to the [ADA fact sheet webpage](#).
- For an easy to use YAPM-Supervisor Accommodations Process, refer to chapter seven in the PDF [Effectively Employing Young Adult Peer Providers: A Toolkit](#).

Equity & Diversity

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Require staff self-awareness training to increase personal awareness of biases, privilege, racism, and ableism?	
Have anti-discrimination policies that are valued and enforced?	
Have same general job performance expectations for peer and non-peers?	
Has peer staff employed in non-peer positions across administrative and clinical divisions?	

The Resources:

- To better understand YAPM cultural responsiveness practice, visit the webpage [Practicing Cultural Responsiveness](#).
- To avoid & address YAPM discrimination, refer to pages 35–37 in the PDF [Effectively Employing YA Peer Providers: A toolkit](#).
- To improve understanding of Structural Racism in Mental Healthcare, visit the webpage [APA Addresses Structural Racism, Part 3: The Trauma of Structural Racism and its Transmission Across Generations](#).
- Visit the webpage [Mental Health Resources for Black, Indigenous and People of Color \(BIPOC\) in Massachusetts](#) for resources.
- To learn more about working with Native American Youth, review Video Brief 6 on the [Pathways Transition Video Brief Series](#) webpage.
- To learn more about working with LGBTQ, review Video Brief 7 on the [Pathways Transition Video Brief Series](#) webpage.
- Read the article ["How to Provide Antiracist Healthcare"](#) for clinical practice recommendations.
- To learn about antiracism and how to effectively address systems of oppression and historical trauma, visit the webpage [Anti-Racism & Racial Healing Webinars & Resources](#) from USCF.
- For tools to help your agency improve culturally and linguistically competent service delivery, visit this [recorded SAMHSA webinar on YouTube](#).
- To help your agency staff understand and gain awareness of their implicit biases, take and share the [Harvard Implicit Bias Test webpage](#).

External Advocacy & Education

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Educate external partners, including referral sources, other local organizations, families, funders, and others on YAPM role and value?	
Advocate for YAPMs beyond the agency?	

The Resources:

- Visit the [Children's Behavioral Health Knowledge Center YAPM Overview](#) webpage.
- Download the PDF [2020 YAPM Role Overview through the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network Presentation](#).

Focus Area Three: Leadership

Sponsorship	
Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Have strong executive leadership support for YAPM integration?	
Actively educate board of directors, funders, leaders, and direct staff on value and impact of the YAPM role?	
Have at least one committed program director or manager who is responsible for leading YAPM integration efforts?	
Dedicated resources to support YAPM integration? (e.g. funding for training, leadership time, etc.)	

The Resources:

- For resources that describe the impact of peer support in mental health:
 - Read the article [“Peer Support for Youth and Young Adults who Experience Serious Mental Health Conditions: State of the Science”](#) to learn what research tells us about its effectiveness in mental health services.
 - Download the PDF [Evidence for Peer Support](#) from Mental Health America.
 - Review the webpage [Science Behind Peer Support](#) from Peers for Progress, a UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health project.
 - Download the PDF [Making the Case for Peer Support](#) from the Mental Health Commission of Canada.
- For guidance in integrating young adult peer support, visit the [Pathways RTC webinars archive](#) to review past webinars.

Strategy

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Have a cross-departmental committee that meets regularly to support YAPM implementation?	
Have a strategic plan for YAPM integration?	
Evaluated YAPM integration efforts?	
Have a plan for financial sustainability of YAPM role?	

The Resources:

- This YAPM organizational assessment will help your agency to identify what areas need addressing.
- For an approach to effective YAPM implementation, visit the webpage [Kotter 8-Step Process for Leading Change](#).
- For examples of how to evaluate YAPM integration efforts, download the PDF [Best Practices for Increasing Meaningful Youth Participation in Collaborative Team Planning](#) from Pathways RTC.
- Track and examine YAPM satisfaction and tenure outcomes.
 - Time to hire, length of tenure, turn-over rate.

Inclusion

Guiding Question: Does your agency	Current Status
Include YAPMs on agency boards, advisory committees, and other relevant bodies?	
Have more than one YAPM per team or program?	
Have a youth and young adult advisory board?	

The Resources:

- Connect to local, state & national youth advisory boards:
 - [MA Youth & Young Adult Councils](#).
 - [YouthMove](#).
- To create a youth and young adult board at your organization, download the PDF [#Things2Consider: Creating a Youth Advisory Board](#), presented by Youth M.O.V.E. National.
- For resources on supporting young people in their advocacy, download the PDF [Strategic Sharing Guide](#) from Pathways RTC.
- For Improving staff collaborations with YAPMs and evidence for the importance of having more than one team, review Video Brief 9: Collaborating With Peer Providers on the [Pathways Transition Video Brief Series](#) webpage.
- Review existing committees at agency, and systematically invite YAPMs to participate.

YAPM Implementation Strategic Planning Template

Objective:

Who is responsible for managing this objective and its achievement?

How will you know that this objective has been achieved?

(i.e., measurable/observable change)

What needs to happen to achieve this objective?

List	Task Description	Task Owner	Due Date
Task 1			
Task 2			
Task 3			
Task 4			
Task 5			
Task 6			
Task 7			
Task 8			