Works Wonders:
A Career Development & Employment Engagement Intervention for Youth in Foster Care

July 2018
The Impetus

- The biggest predictor of employment success is having a history of work experience.

- According to national NYTD data, about half (49%) of 19 year olds report having no employment-related experiences.

- In RI, the youth unemployment rate is 20%, it is more than double at 52% for youth who have experienced foster care and only 46% of foster youth ages 17-19 had earned a HS Diploma or GED.

60% of Works Wonders Participants Never Had A Work Experience.
The Model

Works Wonders Program Model

1. STEP Enrolment
   - Target population: current and former foster youths ages 16-21.
   - Employment specialists coach youths on career development and employment engagement.
   - Participation is voluntary.

2. STEP EE Training
   - 50-62 hours of soft skills training in a group setting.
   - Non-therapeutic, strength-based, coaching concrete skill development & mental support.
   - EE training has two partner support and educational.

3. STEP Career Coaching
   - 12 weeks of individualized job coaching.
   - Youth are supported in exploration of career interests & educational pathways.
   - Completion of career readiness portfolio.

4. STEP Experiential Learning
   - Youth are connected to employers willing to provide employment training.
   - Informational interviews.
   - Job Shadowing.
   - Internships.
   - Paid Employment.
   - Opportunity to practice skills in the workplace.

5. STEP Employment, Education & Vocational Training
   - Youth connect to paid jobs, continued educational opportunities, & vocational programs.
   - Youth are on the path to achieving educational & employment goals.
   - Youth follow up with employment specialists, as needed.
The Partners

- Private Org
- State Partners
- Federal Partners
- Employers

Youth
The Innovation

• Partnerships across sectors that is flexible and creative to balance accountability with need for developmental time.

• Research shows that Works Wonders helps to bridge the skills gap for a population that has historically been left behind.
The Challenges & Opportunities

Δ/+ Time vs. Results

Δ/+ Relational Competency vs Cognitive Development

Δ/+ Youth Participatory Process
The Possibilities

- Expansion
- Replication
- RCT

"Just beyond the horizon of the so-called impossible, is infinite possibility."
- Bryant McGill
For More Information

Kat Keenan, MA
Deputy Director
Foster Forward
kat.keenan@fosterforward.net
401-438-3900 x106

Thank you for your time!