

BEFORE/AFTER SURVEY TO UNDERSTAND HOW PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCE NAO

In June 2013, as part of SEED's first introductory meeting, we administered a "BEFORE" survey with 10 members of the existing Youth Aging Out of Foster Care (YAO) working group, then convened by the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA). SEED designed the survey to establish a baseline against which to measure future gains to "vitality" and "effectiveness" of the working group. Participants rated 12 items from very poor (-2) to poor (-1) to so-so (0) to good (1) to very good (+2) to exceptional (+3).

"BEFORE" Survey Highlights

FPWA had been convening the working group monthly for two years, prior to this survey. In the "before" survey, members voiced appreciation for the opportunity to network, share and receive information and resources, and become informed. Participants looked forward to the meetings and found them different from their normal work routine. Some indicated that they developed confidence to be more outspoken and express their opinions through these meeting experiences.

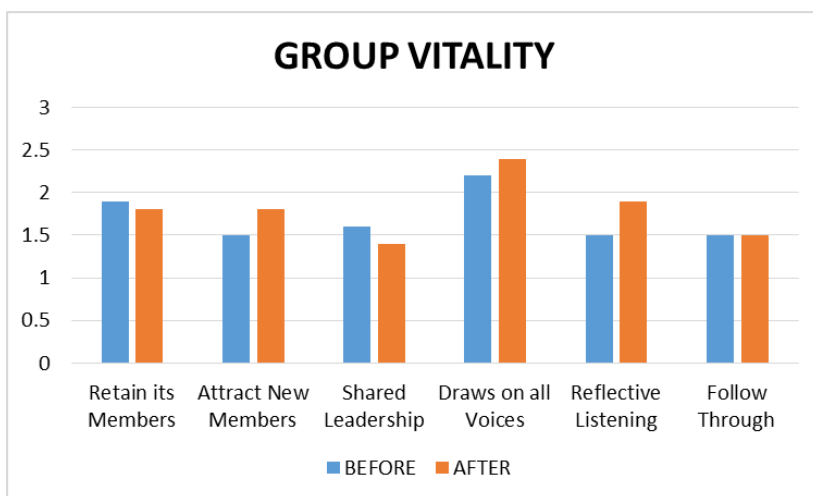
In contrast, where participants felt that the potential of the working group had not been realized to the desired extent was in two key impact areas that received the lowest ratings:

- (a) Expanding services and programs, and
- (b) Advancing important public policies.

Participants were also seeking greater clarity about their *shared purpose* and the *specific roles* they could play. They felt that the *opportunity to develop leadership skills* had not yet happened. As well, the opportunity of *becoming a force for change* did not yet exist.

The baseline "before" average rating for "vitality" was 1.7. The baseline average rating for "effectiveness" was 1. Collecting this data prior to SEED's involvement contributed to our perception that NAO might especially benefit from hard skills development (to expand effectiveness), more so than soft skills development (to expand vitality). The working group had been entirely staffed and driven by one person at FPWA. In attendance were skilled clinical social workers, case workers, attorneys and youth, all functioning as passive onlookers. SEED invite FPWA to step back and guide participants to define a vision, create a strategic plan and assume co-leadership roles to advance their shared purpose.

The survey was repeated in December 2015. During the 30-months since SEED began offering strategic coaching and capacity-building to new leaders, the working group renamed itself Nobody Ages Out (NAO), and the convening role shifted from FPWA to You Gotta Believe, Inc. The average attendance increased from 8 to 15 per month in 2013, to from 25 to 40 per month in 2015. Whereas 10 respondents had completed the "before" survey, 18 completed the "after."



"AFTER" Survey Highlights

The changes in ratings are instructive. Increases in group effectiveness (page 2) affirm SEED's value-add with hard skills development. The decreases (at left) in group vitality suggest areas that will benefit from creative attention in the future.

VITALITY RATINGS. The overall average VITALITY increase was from 1.7 to 1.8.

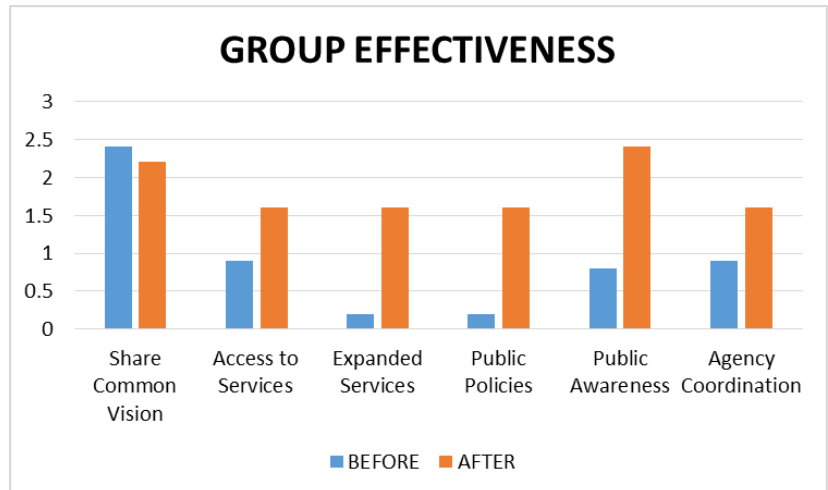
Notable increases:

- **Use of reflective listening practices:** from 1.5 to 1.9
 - *Respondent insight:* “This group goes very deep and I think are profoundly moved by the discussions and ask very deep questions for others to go further into topics.”
- **Ability to attract new members:** from 1.5 to 1.8
 - *Respondent insight:* “The group is growing from word of mouth - the room is filled to capacity.”

EFFECTIVENESS RATINGS. The overall average EFFECTIVENESS increase was from 1.0 to 1.8.

Notable Decrease:

- **Common Vision:** from 2.4 to 2.2
 - *Respondent insight:* “The majority of the attendees are really committed to improving connections for youth before they age out of care at varying levels. Everyone seems to truly acknowledge the extent of the problem and are just not as sure about the solutions.”



Notable Increases:

- **Expanding Access to Services:** from 0.9 to 1.6.
 - *Respondent insight:* “I truly think that the regulars have gained enough information to be able to improve outcomes for their clients and to help them identify alternatives to just getting housing upon discharge from care.”
- **Expanding Services and Programs:** 0.2 to 1.6.
 - *Respondent insight:* “The services are absolutely improved because we are working together to achieve the shared goal of permanency. We are told about services we had never heard of - this expands the services we then offer.”
- **Advancing Public Policies:** from 0.2 to 1.6
 - Credit for this improvement was attributed, among other factors, to deeper engagement of more diverse agencies and professionals, as well as cultivating youth advocates.
- **Fostering Greater Public Awareness of Problems and Solutions:** from 0.8 to 2.4.
 - *Respondent insight:* “I think we have truly touched everyone who attended and have broadened their awareness of the issues surrounding youth aging out of care on their own and the dire need to help them connect to a caring adult prior to leaving care. Many, many activities of the NAO Advocates outside of the monthly meetings have been extremely instrumental in raising awareness among agencies, judges, politicians, policy makers, both within and outside of New York.”
- **Contributing to Cross-Agency Coordination:** from 0.9 to 1.6
 - *Respondent insight:* “We definitely see cross talk among agencies and communication about how different agencies do things differently in an attempt to learn from one another.”
 - *Respondent insight:* “I see lawyers advise foster parents and foster parents advise foster agencies and foster agencies advise lawyers and foster kids advise us all. It's invaluable.”