

Angela Diaz: At the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center, we serve over 10,000 young people, ages 10 to 24 every year and their children, if they have children. We welcome all the young people within our young age range of 10 to 24 but we cater to low income disadvantage, disconnected young people, because we know that they do not have access to care. The young people that we serve, 98% of them are low income.

Angela Diaz: Some of those young people have loving families. They are going to go to school. They aspire to go to college. They gave in for work and some of them are homeless, some of them are foster-cared, some of them have been sex-trafficked, some of refugees, and the beauty is that they all feel comfortable coming to our center. No one knows where they are coming because our program has no stigma. It is not a program for family planning or HIV or substance or ... It's just a teen center and they all feel very comfortable coming and all 10,000 of them sit next to each other in the waiting room and is only behind closed door that actually we find out what they are there for.

Angela Diaz: Something that is really important, we always take care of whatever the issue that brought them in. In addition to having all these services under one roof, we also know that it is important to provide as many services as possible during one visit. So the young person, when they come to see me, I will do their history and physical exam, I will connect them to the health educator so they learn more about their body and decide on family planning, if they need that. I will have the mental health persons see them if I discover that they are depressed or could benefit from that.

Angela Diaz: So if we see the acne, we take that very seriously. We make sure we treat the acne, but then we asked them all of these questions to get a sense or how they are feeling, their type of behaviors, the type of family relationship that they have, and for example, if we identify that they are depressed or they have a need for mental health, we provide that there. So we have really all the services integrated; physical health, sex and reproductive health, dental, optical, behavioral, and mental health, from dental to mental, from head to toe, everything. And the more that you can have under one roof, the better it is. And it's not just about being co-located, it's really about being integrated.

Angela Diaz: All these people are working together and the young person will know that there's a team taking care of them. Over the years, people come from around the globe to see the way we work at the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center. And they often ask, "Why are 10,000 young people coming to you every year? They come to you asking for help. What is it that you do? What is it that you are giving them? They are making line before 8:00 in the morning usually to get healthcare."

Angela Diaz: So with the support from the New York State Health Foundation, we created a blueprint about our philosophy and our approach. And this blueprint gives a roadmap of how people who are interested in either adapting or replicating our services or modifying what they are doing can find that in this blueprint. So this

particular blueprint was designed to be used by people depending on their context, depending on their needs, depending on their resources, depending on what they want to do.

Angela Diaz:

You can use any of the principles that we have there and shape it to your context and what is allowable, what is doable for you, in your context. And in addition to that learning that we are doing as we serve them, in our program is also very important to us to have the voice of young people. So they really inform, formally like we have advisory boards of youth, we do surveys of them asking them what is working for them in the program, what's not working, what else would they like to see, so the whole work that we do, everything that we do, is in form and shape by the need and the voice and the desire of young people. So they are our partners in the work. We are not serving them, our approach is that we want to empower them but we work in partnership and everything that we do is informed by them and what they need and what they would like to see.