

Transitions RTC

The Learning & Working
During the Transition to Adulthood
Rehabilitation Research & Training Center



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Maryann Davis, PhD, Director

Transition age youth and young adult (TAYYA) men and women with serious mental health conditions and Vocational Rehabilitation

24th Annual Children's Mental Health
Research and Policy Conference

Models of Supported Employment: What works for
young adults of transition age
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Acknowledgements

The Transitions RTC aims to improve the supports for youth and young adults, ages 14-30, with serious mental health conditions who are trying to successfully complete their schooling and training and move into rewarding work lives. We are located at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA, Dept of Psychiatry, Center for Mental Health Services Research. Visit us at:

<http://labs.umassmed.edu/TransitionsRTC>

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Learning Objectives- Participants will be able to:

- ❑ Discuss employment disparities for young adults with serious mental health conditions (SMHC) and the role of vocational supports
- ❑ Describe what appeals to young adults with SMHC in vocational support programs
- ❑ Discuss social and cultural aspects in using vocational supports for young adults with SMHC
- ❑ Discuss recommendations for programmatic adaptations of vocational support programs for Latino and non-Latino young adults with SMHC



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Background

- A rough estimate of the current employment rate for all adults with psychiatric disability is 22-25% - more than 75% of the population unemployed. Yet 70% of unemployed adults with a serious mental health condition (SMHC) want to work.
- Job placement services make the biggest difference between working and not working for individuals with a SMHC (Rosenthal, Dalton and Gervey 2008).
- These vocational support initiatives come in the form of standard state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment, and the International Center for Clubhouse Development model (ICCD) designed to help individuals with disabilities prepare for and engage in gainful employment.



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Young Adult, Employment, and Mental Health Study (YAES)

- The YAES study is a research study that focuses on addressing employment disparities of young adults with a SMHC by examining their own experiences with three widely disseminated vocational support programs (Clubhouses, Individual Placement Supports, and standard state Vocational Rehabilitation services in Massachusetts).
- The study pays particular attention to Latino TAYYA as they are a group less likely to seek specialty mental health services and are the fastest growing racial ethnic group in the United States.
- They are also at high risk for negative outcomes including high unemployment and low educational attainment compared to their white counterparts.



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Significance

Knowledge gained through this study will improve our understanding of what young adults need in a vocational support program. It will also provide information for the design of the next iteration of culturally informed vocational support programs that will more effectively target at-risk youth and young adults with a SMHC while successfully retaining them in vocational support services.



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Research Study Goals

The research study will focus on three main goals:

- Identify common factors that appeal to Latino and non-Latino young adults across the three established vocational support programs
- Identify cultural, developmental, and contextual common factors that facilitate participation in vocational programs
- Identify factors from goals 1 and 2 that differentiate Latino and non-Latino TAYYA



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Methods

- A one-time, one-hour semi-structured interview
- 135 TAYYAs between the ages of 18 and 30
- In the past or are currently using employment supports through clubhouses, IPS programs, or standard state VR services in Central MA
- 1/3 Latino of the 135 participants equal men and women
- Interviews conducted by young adults with lived experience



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Participatory Action Research

This study embraces Participatory Action Research (PAR) in principle and in practice by:

- Incorporating an partnership with Transition Age Youth and Young Adults (TAYYA) in the entire research process (developing the interview guide, conducting the interviews, screening participants, weekly meetings, data analysis and report writing)
- Employs the services of consultant Jon Delman who works with the TAYYA in research training activities including the nature of the Center grant, research and policy.



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Preliminary Findings

Table 1. Demographics

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	41
Male	56%
Female	44%
Age range	18-30
Average Age	23
ETHNICITY	
American Indian/Alaska Native	7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0%
Black/African American	2%
Hispanic	20%
White (non-Hispanic)	69%
Other (Did Not Know)	2%

LANGUAGE SPOKEN MOST OF THE TIME	
English Only	86%
Spanish Only	0%
Both English & Spanish	12%
Both English & Other (German)	2%
MARITAL STATUS	
Never Married	86%
Married	12%
Living as Married	0%
Separated	0%
Divorced	2%
Widowed	0%



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Table 1. Demographics cont...

DIAGNOSIS: CO MORBIDITY HIGH	
Participants w/1 Diagnosis	41%
Participants w/2 Diagnoses	44%
Participants w/3 Diagnoses	5%
Participants w/4 Diagnoses	10%
Bipolar	63%
Depression	51%
Anxiety	29%
Schizophrenia	24%
Schizo-Affective	5%
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	5%
Others	5%

PHYSICIAN PRESCRIBED PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATION.	
Yes	96%
No	2%
No Answer	2%
CURRENTLY TAKING MEDICATION	
Yes	88%
No	12%
No Answer	0%
HOSPITALIZED W/THIS DISORDER	
Yes	76%
No	24%
No Answer	0%



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Preliminary Findings

Qualitative Data

- Vocational Rehabilitation program features such as staff and peer support, *educational supports*, goal setting, job skills training (resume building, communication skills, interviewing skills) – main themes coders agreed on
- In general, Vocational Rehabilitation features such as focus on menial jobs (low skill jobs), staff turnover, staff/client boundaries, and fast pace does not appeal to young adult consumers
- Having a job symbolizes social and economic independence and contribution to society
- The majority of young adults work part time, service type jobs and earn minimum wage



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Preliminary Findings

Qualitative Data

- The process of looking for work is hard and difficult
- Mental health and lack of GED, higher education and *transportation* are the biggest barriers to employment for all young adults
- For Latinos, socioeconomic status, social environment, language, and stigma impact their experience with vocational supports.
- The role of family in vocational support programs is mixed



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What are young adults saying?....



It should not be assumed that individuals in this photo have a mental health condition



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Social and cultural consideration in Psychiatric Rehabilitation Programs (Latino/a young adults) (Socioeconomic status, Social Environment. Language, Stigma)

Socioeconomic status (social networking)

- “...the lines, these lines are city lines, so that each ring is a step outside of the city...so if you live in a poor community you're bound to go to a poor school which can't afford you know a lot of books you want, athletic program....instruments for music...so then you're bound to get a poor job.....you have gangs, you have you know STDs that keeps you in the poverty circle, you have drugs...there aren't any programs you can go to....program X creates outskirts...you create highways for yourself..”



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Social and cultural consideration in Psychiatric Rehabilitation Programs (Latino/a young adults) (**Socioeconomic status, Social Environment. Language, Stigma**)

Stigma:

- “Oh yea, yea...like people be like ‘oh, he’s probably on SSI or something,” which I’m not and I wouldn’t to take that road. I wouldn’t ever want to be on SSI...So they think just because you have a mental illness...It makes me feel bad because I know my mother was on welfare and stuff like that, but I wouldn’t want to like, that no the road I want to go through.”



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Social and cultural consideration in Psychiatric Rehabilitation Programs (Latino/a young adults) (**Socioeconomic status, Social Environment. Language, Stigma**)

Language:

“More people speaking Spanish because I don’t like talking in English...I’m fluent in both but like I don’t like talking in English...Cause like I love talking, I love talking in my language because like it makes be feel important about what I am, like showing who I am. When I’m talking in English I be like ya I don’t like talking in English. Yea, that’s why I hang out with mostly Spanish because I can just talk and talk..”

“I think as far as they should focus on finding job that are only for bilinguals or that like pay more due to the fact that they’re bilingual”

“Innovative program – marvel things – more inviting. I know there are festivities, Latino festivals, Centros Las Americas, supermarkets, we could find jobs in those environments.”



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Social and Cultural Considerations

- The social environment includes the groups in which we affiliate (e.g., race and ethnicity), the neighborhood in which we live, the way our place of work is organized
- Socioeconomic environment can cause: chronic stress, reduce access to resources such as appropriate mental health services, education, recreation, social support, employment opportunities, access to job interviews, reduced social interactions and social networks
- Low socioeconomic environments are characterized by high unemployment, drug use and availability, crime etc.
- Cost availability affects: children's academic achievement and socialization
- Quality of Housing affects: self identity, despondency, depression



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Conclusion

- Having a job symbolizes social and economic independence and contribution to society
- Vocational Rehabilitation program features such as staff and peer support, *educational supports*, goal directed, job skills training, and involvement of mental health counselor appeals to young adult consumers
- The process of looking for work is hard and difficult
- Mental health, lack of GED or higher education and *transportation* are the biggest barriers to employment for all young adults
- For Latinos, socioeconomic status, social environment, language, and stigma impact their experience with vocational supports.



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Recommendations

- Post secondary education is vital to develop skills and credentials to be employed – supported education. *Supported Education (SEd)* is an emerging evidence–based practice that has successfully addressed these kinds of challenges for civilians with serious mental illnesses but not readily available in all programs.
- Provide social networking opportunities (e.g., career fairs, social gatherings)
- Strategies to improve coordination of relevant state agencies (e.g., education, housing, employment, transportation)
- Interventions must provide ongoing support when needed by employees and employers
- Employment initiatives should be developmentally and culturally relevant
- Strength based approaches to vocational supports
- Recovery should be the goal



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What we know: Inequities result in loss of productivity, use of services at a later stage of illness, and health care and social costs to all.

“...I’ve paid a high price for this elevation of medical treatment and dismissal of ongoing rehabilitation services. I’m here today to tell a story of what didn’t have to be in the hopes that, soon, others won’t have to count the years lost and wonder who they might have been had they just had the services they needed.” Lynn Legere, *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 2007, 30(3): 227-229.



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