Creating a “Community of Practice” on Transition Age Youth & Young Adults With Serious Mental Health Conditions in Northeast Massachusetts

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What is a Community of Practice?

A Community of Practice (CoP) is described as “a group of people who share a concern, a set of problems, a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). CoPs may evolve organically or may be supported and/or brought together by an organization.

Benefits of a Community of Practice

- Provides a new connection for members
- Encourages interaction and communication among members
- Encourages people to collaborate in a common venue of shared learning
- Provides new knowledge for members to apply in other contexts

Transitions Research & Training Center & Department of Mental Health Support

The Northeast Massachusetts Community of Practice for Transition Age Youth and Young Adults (MACOPTAYYA) was initiated through the involvement of a champion, a regional director of the state Department of Mental Health (DMH). With support from the Transitions Research and Training Center (RTC), the CoP built a partnership of committed stakeholders from various points of the system of service for TAYYA, thus building bridges across the adult and children mental health agencies.

Bridging the Age Divide for Transition Age Youth & Young Adults (TAYYA): CoP Members Represented

- Providers & transition case managers from child mental health services
- Mental health managed care organization, (Medicaid)
- Adult vocational rehabilitation services
- Young adults with serious mental health conditions
- Families
- Advocates

Contact Us

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Steps in Developing a CoP

- Leadership and a champion give credibility and attract participation
- Clarify the vision, purpose, goals and develop background documents
- Establish the infrastructure and support for communication, such as e-mail, discussion groups, other tools for building the resources of the community
- Identify a launch event and invite potential members. At the launch, try to identify and agree on initial goals

MACOPTAYYA Wikispace Website

A virtual discussion board with documents crafted for the CoP

Tip Sheet Dissemination Vehicles

- MACOPTAYYA members
- Constant Contact and Vertical Response email marketing software
- State and national conferences, events and presentations
- Transition RTC, Voices4Hope, UMMS CMHSR & Psychiatry Department websites
- Facebook & Twitter
- A multitude of local and national dissemination partners and collaborators

Products Disseminated 11/2011 – 02/2013

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