MOVING FORWARD

Fostering Youth Leaders in the Mental health Community

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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, Department of Psychiatry, Systems and Psychosocial Advances Research Center.

Visit us at: http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/index.htm

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The 5 Questions We Will Answer:

1. How do we define leadership?
2. Why is youth leadership important?
3. What are important qualities in a youth leader?
4. How do we build leadership opportunities?
5. Bringing youth leadership to the wild web!
Who Are These Strangers?!
The Transitions RTC Team

Tania Duperoy, Amanda Costa, Lisa Smith
What is the Transitions RTC?

National Center that aims to:

- Improve supports for the successful completion of schooling and movement into rewarding work lives among young people, ages 14-30, with serious mental health conditions (SMHC)

How do we do that?

1. Conduct cutting-edge rigorous research that tests or informs interventions
2. Develop and translate knowledge to multiple stakeholders
3. Infuse Participatory Action Research (PAR) into all RTC activities
How Do We Define Leadership?
What Do You Think of When You Hear the Word Leader?
What is a Leader, Exactly?

“A person who can enlist the support of others to accomplish a common task”

“A boss says “go” a leader says “let’s go”- E.M. Kelly

“Someone who is open to new experiences”

“The ability to translate vision into reality”- Warren Bennis

“A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.” —Lao Tzu
Why is Youth Leadership Important?
Youth Leadership in Service Delivery

“We are the experts on ourselves”

• Ensures programming is young adult friendly and culturally appropriate
• Improves decision-making on key young adult issues
• Generates discussion, action plans and solutions most relevant to young adult’s needs and preferences
Benefits of Youth Leadership in Guiding Individual Care Plans

• Young adults are more engaged and committed to services that they had an active voice in
• Valuable life skills gained: negotiation, effective communication, advocacy
• Increased self-efficacy/self-determination leads to: optimism, better coping skills, increased mental health, healthy habits

http://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/proj-3-amp
Benefits in the Peer Community

• Providing peer support
• Serving as role model to others on path of recovery
• Advocating for services that serve the needs of youth first and foremost

Youth are the next generation the NAMI leadership community!
What Are Important Qualities In a Youth Leader?
What do YOUth Think?

fashionably ill
The Sick Woman's Stylist
Styling sick without shouldering
Emma Volesky

Strong Leader

- Passionate
- Reliable
- Self-Care
- Resilient
- Vulnerable
- Provide Support

The Leader in You
How Do We Build Youth Leadership Opportunities?
Step 1. Define Involvement
Creating Meaningful Involvement

Ladder of Youth Participation

Level 4
Youth Led
- Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults
- Youth-initiated and directed
- Adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth
- Consulted and informed
- Assigned but informed

Level 3
Youth Partnered
- Tokenism
- Decoration
- Manipulation

Level 2
Youth Involved

Level 1
Youth Informed

Step 2. Identify Challenges & Develop Solutions
Identify Challenges

- **Commitment From Team**
  - Fear of minimizing rigor
  - Lack of clarity of roles

- **Youth Culture**
  - Media Driven
  - Viewed as “inferior”

- **Lack of Professional Experience**
  - Imbalance in knowledge
  - Lack of advocacy skills
Develop Solutions

**Commitment From Team**
- Top down commitment from leadership
- Clear understanding of role

**Youth Culture**
- Thinking outside the box
- Empowerment
- Strength-based

**Lack Professional Experience**
- Mentoring and modeling
- Clear Guidelines
Mythbusters: What makes a good leader?

1. One Personality trait fits all
   - Charismatic/Extrovert/Authoritative vs. “anti-hero”

2. Leadership comes with age
   - Learn from past experiences & ability to influence peers

3. Leaders should have all the answers
   - Good leaders know their limitations

4. You’re not leading if you don’t have followers
   - Leading yourself / thought leadership

5. There is a shortage of great leaders today
   - LOOK AROUND YOU!
Step 3. Provide Structured Opportunities
Community Involvement

Teamwork

Rallying Support
Youth Advisory Boards

“Being a part of the YAB, I could see my comments put to good use. My thoughts and opinions felt important and I was treated with respect.”
Informing Products/Services
Leading Mental Health Research

The Academic Experiences and Perspectives of Young Adult College Students with Mental Health Conditions

• Secondary Analysis of Data from the “National Survey of College Students With Mental Illnesses”
  - survey by Mark Salzer, PhD.

  ▪ Created the research questions
  ▪ Analyzed data using SPSS Statistical software
  ▪ Interpreted Findings
  ▪ Developed publications
Peer Support

- Providing Peer Support:
  - Youth Council Leaders
  - Certified Peer Specialists/Peer Support Specialists
  - Running support groups/Trainings
Step 4: Support, Support, Support!
Mental Health Management
Bringing Leadership To The Wild Web
Managing Social Media
• For youth by youth
• Youth leadership from the top down
• Background leadership & Spotlight leadership
• Topics chosen by youth
Engaging the Online Community

strengthofus

Voices 4 Hope

Youth Engaged 4 Change

DO SOMETHING .ORG
Thank You!

Want More Information?
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