EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

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For NAMI Central Mass Area Board
October, 18th, 2016
HELPING YOUTH ON THE PATH TO EMPLOYMENT

SURVEY OF INNOVATIVE PRACTICES FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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Rachel Stone
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, Department of Psychiatry, Systems & Psychosocial Advances Research Center.

Visit us at: [http://www.umassmed.edu/TransitionsRTC](http://www.umassmed.edu/TransitionsRTC)

The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant with funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, and from the Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services (ACL GRANT # 90RT5031, The Learning and Working Transitions RRTC). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Additional funding provided by UMass Medical School’s Commonwealth Medicine division. The contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, SAMHSA, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.
Survey of Innovative Practices Method

• Nominations of Programs
• Internet Survey
• Semi-structured telephone interviews
• Audio-transcripts
• Open coding using NVivo
• Three person team consensus on first order and second order constructs
• Categorization of codes into Kohler “Taxonomy”¹
• Inter-rater reliability testing of open codes

¹Kohler,P. “Taxonomy for Transition Programming”. Champaign: University of Illinois
PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Regional Distribution - Program Types - Services Offered - Length of Participation
Services Offered
N = 29

- Mental Health: 23
- Career Counseling: 22
- Supported Employment: 21
- Vocational Rehab: 20
- Ed. Support Services: 19
- Advocacy: 19
- Peer Support: 17
- Job Placement: 16
- Independent Living: 16
- Substance Abuse Counseling: 16

Length of Participation
N = 17

- 1-3 years: 9
- 6-11 months: 5
- 0-6 months: 2
- 3-5 years: 1
APPLICATION OF KOHLER TAXONOMY – “AXIAL CODES”
“We decided to build our model around four particular outcomes....school completion, employment, postsecondary education or training, and community integration”

Taxonomy

1Kohler, P. “Taxonomy for Transition Programming”. Champaign: University of Illinois
Taxonomy Adapted to Programs Serving Young Adults with SMHC

Family Involvement
- Psycho-education
- Empowerment
- Training

Program Structure
* Listed separately

Young Adult Focused planning
- Planning
- Participation
- Communication
- Support Services

Young Adult Skill Development
* Listed separately

Interagency Collaboration
- Collective Framework
- Collaborative Service Delivery

- Focus
- Models and Approaches
- Engagement and Retention
- Meeting Them Where They're At
- Doing Whatever It Takes

-Life Skills
- Employment Skills
- Education and Training
- Psycho-Education
- Social Aspects
PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- Focus
- Models and Approaches
- Meeting Them Where They’re At
- Engagement and Retention
- Doing Whatever It Takes
Focus

- Educational and vocational supports
- High school completion, post-secondary training, post-secondary retention
- Early intervention and prevention for the early signs of psychosis
- Social goals
- Related independent living supports (housing, transportation, food/nutrition, laundry)
- Recovery and community integration
Models and Approaches

- Transition to Independence Process (TIP)
- Individual Placement and Support (IPS)
- Supported Education
- Student Support Network (SSN at Worcester Polytechnic Institute)
- Environmental/Social Approach to Disability
- A Unique Population/Transition tasks
Specific Practices that are “Unique to the Population”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age-Specific Programming</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance for Missed Appointments and Gaps in Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protecting Non-Patient Role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adapting Practices to Fit Developmental Changes</td>
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<td>Continuous Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus on Both Work and School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth-Oriented Engagement Practices</td>
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Youth Oriented Engagement and Retention

• Build relationships (trusting, genuine, and understanding)
• Service flexibility for no shows or gaps
• Goal focus
• Assertive outreach – in the community; gentle but proactive
• Non-treatment environment
• Avoiding Diagnosing/Labeling Due to Stigma
• Younger staff, connection with youth culture, willingness to engage with social media, ability to text

“It’s a matter of doing everything you can within your own network … finding friends, calling … going to a place where you think they might have been last employed. So the idea is, I basically say to them, it’s like you really should know what they had for breakfast. So the idea is to really keep them engaged.”
Meeting Them Where They’re At

• Literally, service provision in the community, mall, home, school

  “Meet them where they’re at, on their terms, as often as you need to.”

• Figuratively, responding to their felt needs and goals at that time

• Varying intensity of services according to need

  “We’ve had people who were literally unwilling to come out of their room, in fact we had one fellow who was literally in his closet, and we did a series of home visits and we have communicated with people using sticky notes…we’re about as flexible as we can be”
Specific Practices for “Meeting Them Where They’re At”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Varying Intensity of Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Provided According to Need</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rapid Response to Goals/Needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Considering all Possible Resources</td>
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<td>Meeting Anywhere in the Community</td>
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<td>Goal Setting is Not Dependent on Assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using Stages of Behavioral Change Model</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matching Interests to Jobs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Varied Education Outcomes are Supported</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitating Communication Between Systems when the Individual Can’t</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“Soup to nuts is a very non-professional grouping or classification of what we do … we do whatever it takes basically, whatever the kid needs.”
YOUNG ADULT-FOCUSED PLANNING

Planning – Participation – Communication - Supports
Planning

• Plan Development
  • Functional Orientation
  • Person Beyond Diagnosis
• Client Centered
  • Individualization
  • Participant goal driven
• Strengths Based
Participation and Communication

- Youth Voice/Empowerment
- Participant Administrative Involvement
- Participant Communication
  - Texting capabilities
  - Social Media
  - Flexibility in communication methods

“You can call them all day long and not get a response, but if you text, they get right back to you- they don’t like getting on the phone to talk ... [The communication] looks like anything, anytime, anywhere.”
Support Services

• Accommodations
• Motivational Enhancement
• Therapy
• Peer Support / Peer Mentors

Value of Peer Support

“A visitor asked one of the (peer) members (of a peer support group) why the group was so important, and the member of the group said, ‘well let me put it this way. So I came in a while ago and I had shaved off my eyebrows, and this other person said ‘hey dude, what’s with the eyebrows’ and my response was ‘psychosis’ and [the other guy said], ‘oh cool.’ It’s like ‘okay so you shaved your eyebrows cause you got psychotic, I get it, it’s not a problem.’”
Other Support Services

- Substance use counseling
- Crises planning
- Housing, residential services
- Daily living needs (child care, transportation)
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT
Family Involvement

• Psycho-Education
  • Learning about mental illness
• Illness Management
• Getting Benefits
• Health Insurance

“I would really emphasize again that you have to work with families; there’s no way to do this work without working with families.”
YOUNG ADULT SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Life Skills - Employment Skills - Education and Training
Psycho-Education - Social Aspects
Life Skills

- Skill Building
- Coping skills
- Financial skills
- Executive functioning
- Time management & calendaring
- Self-Advocacy
- Disclosure

“You went from high school to college – no one ever told you that there was something called an agenda, and that you can put all your assignments in it, and help you map out your time.”
Employment Skills

- Interview Experience
- Work Behavior and Skills
- Structured Work Experience
  - Internships
  - Supported Employment
  - Job Coaching
Education and Training

- Education Skills
  - Accessing Available Resources
  - Applying for School and Financial Aid
  - Transition to College Stress
- Financial Aid Planning
- Secondary Special Education & Transition Planning
- Vocational Schools and Vocational Training
Psycho-Education

• Help youth understand their diagnosis
• Managing symptoms
• Treatment options (medications) and dealing with providers

Social Aspects

• Youth groups and networks
• Social/Recreational activities
• Inter-personal Skills
INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

Collaborative - Service Delivery
- Collaborative Framework
Collaborative Service Delivery and Framework

- Community Connections
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Employers
  - Police
  - Social services
- Mental Health Integration
- Campus Disability and Counseling services
- Vocational Rehabilitation
What we didn’t find

- Specified or manualized approaches
- Emphasis on skill development
- Systematic approach to career development
- Well articulated or defined practices
- Systematic program evaluation
# Mass Programs Included

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YAVP (Young Adult Vocational Program)</td>
<td>Arlington, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tempo: Young Adult Resource Center</td>
<td>Framingham, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genesis Clubhouse, Inc.</td>
<td>Worcester, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEPS: Young Adult Resource Center</td>
<td>Arlington, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quinsigamond Community College Mental Health</td>
<td>Worcester, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recovery Education Program (Boston University)</td>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Support Network (Worcester Polytech)</td>
<td>Worcester, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLean College Mental Health Program</td>
<td>Belmont, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bedford VA, VITAL program</td>
<td>Bedford, MA</td>
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COLLEGE AND EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES

From the Perspective of Young Adults With Lived Experience

Tania Duperoy, B.A.
Raphael Mizrahi, B.S.
Navigating College and Beyond-
My Mental Health Friendly Guide
Background

Born and raised on the Jersey Shore
UMass Amherst ‘16 graduate- Magna Cum Laude
B.S. in psychology/neuroscience & pre-medical track
Research experience in ADHD & Autism research
UMass Amherst Active Minds chapter
Recently started working at the Transitions RTC as a Research Coordinator
My Future Goals

• Attend medical school in a few years
• Eventually establish a career as a child and adolescent psychiatrist
• Combine my medical education and research experience to assist in the application of clinical neuroscience research to diagnose and treat mental illness
My College and Mental Health Experience

These are some of the major areas having a mental health condition impacted my college experience:

• Accessing disability services for accommodations
• Accessing college counseling services
• Advocating for others with mental health conditions through Active Minds and fighting the stigma around mental health on a large college campus
• Accessing accommodations for the MCAT exam
My Advice to the Future/Current College Student with Mental Health Concerns

• Be proactive and advocate for yourself - the more you stand up for your mental health rights on a college campus, the more successful you will be.

• Take advantage of your campus resources (counseling/disability services, Active Minds/mental health advocacy groups) - the resources are there for you!

• Make an effort to find a group of people you connect with - at college, your friends become part of your family!
My Workplace and Mental Health Experience

• Disclosing my mental health condition - the workplace and medical school
• Finding an accepting environment
• Understanding how my mental health condition affects my work - using it to my advantage
My Advice to the College Graduate with Mental Health Concerns

• Don’t disregard your mental health concerns when choosing your graduate school/job position
• Consider how your mental health will affect your work/studies and vice versa
• If you feel comfortable doing so, disclose to your employer at the right time (see our tip sheet)
The Employment Experience

Tania’s Background
The Back Story

• Did Well through High School
  • Social Butterfly
  • 3-page resume with all extra-curricular activities
  • Top 5%, good college admissions

• Everything Went Downhill in College
  • Still a Social Butterfly
  • Still in extra-curricular activities
  • But…
    • Lack of Concentration
    • Bad habits vs. Serious determination
    • Self-Criticism and Low Self-Esteem
    • Worsening Grades
Diagnosis Late in Life

- Got supports I needed and was diagnosed at age 21... only had 1 year left of school
- Medications didn’t work
- Took leave of absence
- Got a job at the Transitions RTC
- Came back and graduated by sheer determination and with a big support system
- Was still new at my diagnosis and working at the same time
Employment at the Transitions RTC
PAR and the Learning Curve
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?

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 activities**
What is PAR?

Active involvement of young adult staff with serious mental health conditions (SMHC) in all phases of research and knowledge translation from defining the problem to disseminating results.
Things We Do

- Run, Coordinate, an/or give feedback for Research Studies with training from Principal Investigators (PIs)
- Attend and Present at Local, National and International Mental Health Conferences
- Run a National Web Show that is a resource for young adults
- Are part of Youth Councils both nationally and locally
- Run 4 Social Media Platforms at Transitions RTC
- Maintain our own Young Adult Resource Website
- Create and edit Written Products
- Run a Youth Advisory Board
Written Products
Tipsheet Tuesday: What is a 504 Plan and How Can It Help My Teen?

Through research, training, and dissemination activities, the Transitions RTC aims to improve the supports for youth and young adults, ages 14-30, with serious mental...
Voices 4 Hope

Voices4Hope is a place for teenagers and young adults with mental health conditions to find resources and stigma-busting information that can help build happy and independent lives.

This website was created and is maintained by young adults with mental health conditions in the Transitions Research and Training Center (RTIC).

Find out more about the Voices4Hope creators.

Calling Young Adults! Participate in the Transition-Age Youth Psychotherapy Experiences (TAYPE) Study!

Young adults 18 to 21 years old are invited to participate in a research study to better understand the experiences of outpatient therapy. Study participation involves two 1-hour interviews over the course of 8 weeks.

Comprehension provided.

Calling All YOUNG Adults!

We need you to participate in this research study.

Are you interested in participating in a research study?

If you are interested, please continue reading below

http://www.voices4hope.com

Social Anxiety

Social Anxiety is a feeling of discomfort, fear, and apprehension that is based on interactions with others. Social Anxiety specifically refers to a fear of being negatively judged or looked down upon by others. Social Anxiety can not only be felt during an interaction but also felt when thinking about past and future social interactions. Social anxiety is very commonly felt by people with other mental health conditions.

Facts

Some of the main social interactions that stir up social anxiety are:

- Starting a conversation with a stranger.
- Speaking in a class or meeting.
- Attending a party.
- Joining a conversation.
- Performing on stage.
- Being alone in public.
- Eating in front of others.

For more information visit:
http://www.voices4hope.com

Statistics

- 15 million (6.8%) Americans have Social Anxiety Disorder.
- Social Anxiety Disorder is equally common among men and women.

Eating Disorders

Do you or someone you know suffer from an eating disorder? Eating disorders often make a person feel scared and alone. This page will provide you with information and resources to help you learn about the different diseases, specific populations, and guide you or someone you know in the process of recovery and starting to live a fulfilling life.

Bulimia.com

- Eating disorders affect up to 30 million people in the US of all ages, and have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness.
- Anorexia is currently the third most chronic illness in the US, which is why VOYTH needs to be wary of any signs that they may be suffering from an eating disorder.
- The sooner we get help for our problems, the greater the likelihood of a positive outcome.
- Eating disorders have many medical issues which can affect our long-term health.

- To learn more about various medical issues related to eating disorders, as well as co-existing psychiatric disorders, visit the site’s “Medical Issues” section.
- Check out the main site, Bulimia.com!
- Many thanks to Mel Harten who contributed the information and resources.
**Comeback TV** is a YouTube show aimed at the “comeback” of young adults ages 14-30 with mental health conditions. The show is a place for young adults to find the resources they need for mental health recovery, especially regarding work and school.

*See episodes on* Tips on Looking for a Job, Mental Health-Friendly Schools, Animal Therapy, Job Applications, Interview Attire, Peer Mentoring, and more!

**Check out Comeback TV on the Transitions RTC Channel at** [http://bit.ly/1Yt5HmZ](http://bit.ly/1Yt5HmZ)
Focal Point Magazine and Pathways RTC

Focal Point Magazine
PAR Levels of Involvement

Level 4
Youth Led

Level 3
Youth Partnered

Level 2
Youth Involved

Level 1
Youth Informed
Challenges and Solutions

**Employer Experiences**

- Top-down commitment by ensuring involvement
- Understanding youth culture by thinking outside the box, empowering and assigning tasks based on strengths
- Mentoring and giving clear guidelines for professional development

**YA Employee Experiences**

- Ensure commitment and involvement through peer support and self-advocacy
- Become self-aware by reading, receiving peer support, and voicing concerns
- Develop professionally by requesting supports and taking initiative
Accommodations cont’d

Bring in experts on accommodation process (i.e. ADA, askjan.org)

• Ask for written resources & guidance
• YAs can ask for review of request from time to time
Career Coaching

Career Coaches consult with employed people (whether while working with a company or an individual) about developing professional, social, and self-advocacy skills in order to obtain:

1) Trainings for professional skills
2) Workplace accommodations
3) Fulfilling other desires and needs
4) Strategies to relate well with coworkers and supervisors
5) Finding and applying to the right job (if you don’t have a job or are thinking of switching)

Career Coaching
www.radiatecareers.com
http://www.findacoach.com/
Thank You!

Want More Information?
Marsha Ellison: marsha.ellison@umassmed.edu
Tania Duperoy: tania.duperoy@umassmed.edu
Raphael Mizrahi: raphael.mizrahi@umassmed.edu

Transitions RTC Website: labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC
DISCUSSION