Business as Usual is Not Enough: Engaging and Innovating with Young Adults in Research and Practice

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The Learning & Working Center at Transitions ACR is a national effort that aims to improve the supports for youth and young adults, ages 14-30, with serious mental health conditions 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/TransitionsACR

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Presentation Disclaimers:

- **Young adults** are the experts of this topic!
  - We’re going to poke fun at you, and ourselves, in the name of positive growth!

- In recognition of the value of young adult expertise, this presentation was co-developed and presented by young adults
  - Change doesn’t often happen in your comfort zone...prepare to get uncomfortable!
The Why, Where & How of Engaging Young Adults

Don’t stress, it’s only taken us 8 years and counting to figure it out...
The mic-drop worthy sales pitch...

Why engage Young adults?!
Young Adults & Advisory Boards: History in the making
Council Members speak out

I can give advice to those who need it, those who have lived experience might need those services and you can find out about resources from other members”

“Because we are all from different areas, we can all see the different perspectives of people from around the country”

“Being able to learn from other people, you can take that knowledge and grow from that and garner life experience”
Food, Funds & Feedback...the winning trio
Young Adult Researchers on Staff
Research lessons learned: from bland to brilliance....
Step #1: Recruitment
Out with the old…

Join the BLAND Research Study

We are the BLAND research study and we are going to tell you what we are doing with a bunch of fancy jargon you’ll have to google in order to understand.

Still don’t understand? Pick up the phone and call us to answer your questions! (no, we aren’t joking...)

Criteria: We are recruiting young folks with severe psychiatric disorders with high symptomatology who meet DSM criteria

Dates: Probably when you’re at school or at work

Stipends: Low money, low engagement

Travel: Don’t you all have cars???

Food: Bring your own bagged lunch or soup thermos

Want to join us? Send your contact information:

- By carrier pigeon
- By snail mail
- By smoke signal
In with the new!

New Career Development Course for Young Adults!

Are you interested in pursuing your goals around school and work?

Do things get in the way of pursuing those goals, like low energy, feeling forgetful or stuck?

HYPE can HELP!!

What is HYPE?
Helping Youth on the Path to Employment (HYPE) will provide flexible, solution-focused, career-oriented services based on your needs and preferences including, but not limited to:

- Finding out what you want to do
- Getting a job
- Enrolling in and completing college or vocational-technical programs
- Securing academic funding

Is HYPE right for me?
We are seeking young adults interested in developing and working on employment and education skills to participate in an inspirational and informative FREE 12-week HYPE career development course beginning in March!

Location: Webster House, 746 South Street, Roslindale
When: Weekly, from March 14th-May 30th
Time: Thursday's from 12:30-3:30pm

**Free Lunch Provided**

Interested in learning more?
- Attend a HYPE Information Session at Webster House:
  - Thursday March 7th, 1-2:30pm
- Contact HYPE facilitator (Amanda) to RSVP:
  - Text/Call: 781-854-0247
  - Email: Amanda.costa@umassmed.edu

Visit our website:
umassmed.edu/hype/hype-course-in-ma/

This HYPE training is offered by The Transitions to Adulthood Research and Training Center in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health.
Tap technology... young adults already did!
UMass Medical School is seeking young adults (ages 16-25) with mental health conditions to participate in a study about school & work activities. Complete 4 online surveys over 12 months. Earn up to $95. All information will be kept confidential.
Step #2: Screening
Yet another ancient relic from humanity's distant past

Please

No more email
This short 5-10 minute screening survey will ask you some short questions about your school, work, and mental health experiences to help us determine if you are eligible to participate in the SEED study.

If it appears that you are eligible, you will be asked to provide some basic contact info (first name, phone number, email, city/state). A member of our team will then be in touch to tell you more about the study!
I SHOULD JUST CHANGE MY VOICEMAIL GREETING TO: "PLEASE HANG UP & TEXT ME"

-MILLENNIALS
Step #3: Consent and Data Collection
SNAIL MAIL
Don't worry, it'll get there

http://2dchew.deviantart.com/
FAX?

WHY DON'T YOU JUST SEND IT OVER ON A DINOSAUR?
Signature

Please sign using your finger on the line below.
Be helpful, be flexible
Step #4: Thank you

WHO'S AWESOME?
YOU'RE AWESOME!
Switch up your Swag!
Step #5: Spreading the word
From words to images
Engaging Young Adults in Services: Success in Kentucky

Shifting from a place to a movement
History

• Young adult partnership: how do we write the grant?!

• Was impressed with Youth ERA

• YA Partners: Kentucky Youth MOVE

• Consultation with Voices of the Commonwealth

• Partnership from start to finish
Shifting from ragged...
...to revolutionary
More than just a place...a movement...

Top down Support

All voices at the table

Service, leadership, CQI

READY TO CHANGE THE WORLD?

SOOO.....
State Level Efforts:  
Started from the bottom
now we’re here:

- Increasing youth voice
- Youth Coordinator = network development & service engagement
- Network Development design
Policy Level

- Policy Changes happening as result of increased youth voice
- More interest in other systems taking on youth voice
- Youth Seats on SIAC Standing Committees
- Youth seats on RIACS
Local Level

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
Teams & Youth Peer Support Services
Service Level (Community Efforts)

- Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team
- Less about billing and more about relationships (Grant $ now, but will continue without)
- Blended funding to support Tyler’s time
- SOMETIMES TO REACH PEOPLE, WE CANNOT BILL FOR OUR INTERACTION WITH THEM!!!
- This requires community partnership to be feasible
Adolescent ACT Data

• Small data set
• Short term Program
• Meet the young person where they are at!
• Hope to see consistent results over time with where program goes next
It takes innovative funding to do this type of work.

Traditional funding mechanisms will only get you so far.

Get creative in thinking about contract and grant funding and monitoring activities.

Short term pain for long term gain!!
Take-A-Ways

• There’s not many places where you cannot involve youth voice in some way...
• Programs that utilize youth voice work :)
• Getting out of your comfort zone and innovating and engaging with young adults IS WORTH IT!

“If you are meeting about youth programming, and there is not a youth in the room...ask yourself why?”
-Paula Saenz, KY DCBS
Shout Outs

- Youth MOVE National
- Pathways RTC (AMP+)
- Youth ERA
- Transitions ACR
Thank You!!

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