WE NEED TO TALK!

CHANGING OUR LANGUAGE TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE

Presenter: Tania Duperoy

The Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (Transitions RTC)
The Learning & Working Center at Transitions RTC 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/TransitionsRTC

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What is the Transitions RTC?

The Transitions RTC is a 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)/Youth Voice into all activities
Overview

“We Need to Talk: Changing Our Language to Engage Young People” is a workshop that will provide advice about providing an inviting space for young adults in how we write our publications, create our websites, manage our social media, and lead youth advisory councils.

Outline

Changing the Way We Do Things: Our Experience

Is Plain Language Enough?

Tips for Reaching Young Adults
CHANGING THE WAY WE DO THINGS
We Could’ve Done Anything

The Ask
A rehabilitation research and training center focusing on research and interventions for young adults with psychiatric disabilities on the path to successful employment lives

What We Did
The Ask

A Participatory Action Research (PAR) Component
Participatory Action Research (PAR)

PAR at the Transitions RTC is the process in which researchers and young adults (the population of interest) collaborate on research projects to help make research more relevant and to improve mental health services. Young adults are actively involved in all phases of the research from defining the research question to the dissemination process.
## Successes & Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Team</th>
<th>PAR Staff</th>
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<tr>
<td>• More authentic/rich interviews</td>
<td>• PAR staff transitioning into professional roles</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Engaging youth participants</td>
<td>• Increased self-efficacy/self-advocacy skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stronger connection to media/technology</td>
<td>• Strengthened youth voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strengthened relationship with local mental health community</td>
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Youth Councils

In Massachusetts
• Statewide Youth Advisory Council
• Child Behavior Health Initiative

Nationally
• NAMI National Young Adult Advisory Group
• Board for the Alternatives Consumer Conference
• The RTC’s Youth Advisory Board

And more....
IS PLAIN LANGUAGE ENOUGH?
What is Plain Language?

• The Plain Writing Act of 2010 was signed into law on October 13, 2010 requiring federal agencies to use "clear Government communication that the public can understand and use."

• Regulations must be “accessible, consistent, written in plain language, and easy to understand."

• Plain Language
  • Is Clear and Concise
  • Avoids Jargon
  • Is recommended to be at a 6th grade reading level

http://www.plainlanguage.gov/pllaw/index.cfm
http://ktddr.org/training/webcasts/webcast33/webcast_051116.docx
What is Plain Language?

Plain Language Writing Checklist - Detailed

SMIT (Single Most Important Thing):

BLAM (Bottom Line Actionable Message):

http://ktdrr.org/training/webcasts/webcast33/Plain_Language_Checklist_Feb2016_Learning_Institute_SickKids.pdf
I notice you are reading this sentence right now. There are few implications as to what that could mean. Maybe you are interested in what I wrote. Maybe you want to know what kind language gets this grade level. Who knows?

Visit https://readable.io/text/
What happened?!

Are we being friendly to young adults?

How’s our tone? Do they agree with our language?

Hitting Any Snags?

Knowledge Translation Principles

- **Written for the reader**
  - Know the range of skills and expertise among your audience. If the range is too broad, create different materials for different audiences. Use universal both literacy precautions when writing.

- **Organized to serve the reader’s needs**
  - Organize your content in the order the reader needs it. Choose a logical structure such as putting the most important material first, or arranging things chronologically.

- **Uses accurate and evidence-based content**
  - Content reflects current best-practices and is well-supported by the research (and context-specific) evidence.

- **Is actionable**
  - Readers are told exactly what to do and why to do it.
TIPS FOR REACHING YOUNG ADULTS
For Anything

- **Engage Them**
  - Have you talked with young adults face-to-face?
  - Have you studied how they talk?
  - Do you ask for their feedback?
  - Do you listen and take their advice to heart?

It’s all about relationship! No relationship, no authority!
Recommendations from the YAB

- **When communicating to this generation:**
  - Tone is important
  - Convey in professional manner
  - Listen more/take feedback seriously

- **Cultural Competence**
  - Understand the tools of today
  - How do they affect people today?
  - Is the way mental health viewed any different?
FOR TIP SHEETS
Example #1

- **Lessons Learned**
  - Having a few PAR Staff does not fully represent Youth Voice
  - Young Adults are very curious about what you are going to write about
  - Their edits and questions will expand and enhance your work
Example #2

- **Lessons Learned**
  - There are many things that we assume we know about young adults that we don’t know.
  - Asking young adults what they would want to see in plans (like a budget) and using that knowledge is key for their acceptance of your written work.
Example #3

- **Lessons Learned**
  - Make sure you use the right tone when translating knowledge from research work that was not originally intended for a young adult audience
  - Learn from previous mistakes!
  - Try to use more conversational and gentle language when giving a lot of information
FOR YOUTH COUNCILS
What To Think About

• Money
• Food
• Transportation/Accessible Location
• Young Adult Leadership
• Adults as Silent Supporters
• Presenters listen and don’t fight young adults
• Presenters show impact of what they learned from young adults
Ty’s Perspective

“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.”
FOR SOCIAL MEDIA
Recommendations from the YAB

• **The Mighty** – First-person stories from real people with mental health conditions

• **Posts in General** – quick information, language with good attitude (not negative towards young adults, teens, or millennials)

• **Following Pages** – would rather follow a movement that has become popular by word of mouth

• **Celebrities or Allies** – Supportive and Open (Ashton Kutcher, Katie Morton on YouTube, etc)
THANK YOU!

Contact Me at Tania.Duperoy@UMassMed.edu

Any Questions?