FRAMEWORK: RESEARCH ON LEARNING AND WORKING DURING YOUNG ADULTHOOD

For Those with Psychiatric Disabilities
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, Center for Mental Health Services Research. Visit us at:

http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/index.htm

The contents of this presentation were developed with funding from the US Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, and the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (NIDRR grant H133B090018). Additional funding provided by UMass Medical School’s Commonwealth Medicine division. The content of this presentation does not necessarily reflect the views of the funding agencies and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.
Conference Goal

SHARE STATE OF THE SCIENCE TO IMPROVE THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES IN ADULT SYSTEMS
Extensive Reviews

- Reviews of the Research Literature in
  - Education/Training
  - Working/employment
  - Systems/Policy
- Each paper included young adults with lived experience
- Each paper has a “response” paper
  - Reviewed by a panel of experts with a variety of perspectives
  - Summarized by a “lead” responder
- Each topic includes a research agenda
“Career Development”

- **Careers** are occupations with opportunities for growth, that are undertaken for a significant period of a person's life.
- **Career development** is comprised of the learning and cognitive elements that influence career choices, activities, performance and attainment.
“Young Adults”

Chronologically: Ages 18-30 years
“Psychiatric Disability”

When a mental health disorder causes significant functional impairment

• Mental health disorders
  Mental, behavioral, or emotional disorders in DSM-V
  NOT
  • “V” codes (temporary conditions)
  • Substance use disorders
  • Developmental disorders

• Functional impairment – reduced abilities in
  • basic daily living skills,
  • instrumental living skills
  • functioning in social, family, and vocational/educational contexts
IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG ADULTS
Young Adults Still Undergoing Psychosocial Development

Identity Formation
Cognitive
Moral
sexual
Social
Cognitive Abilities Changing

• Anticipation of Consequences (Steinberg, et al., 2009)
• Complex strategic planning (Albert & Steinberg, 2011)
• Behavior & cognitive control towards emotional or distracting stimuli (Hare et al., 2009, Liston et al., 2006; Christakou et al., 2009)
Developmental Characteristics

Identify formation
• Distrusting authority
• Experimentation
• Self-Determination

Social development
• Peer influence (positive and negative)
• Mixed ages can be unappealing

Psychosexual development
• Sexuality and sexual relationships
• Resolving gender identity and sexual orientation
• Common age to have children
Developmental Changes Underlie Abilities to Function More Maturely

Complete schooling & training

Contribute to/head household

Develop a social network

Become financially self-supporting

Obtain/maintain rewarding work

Be a good citizen

Developmental Changes Underlie Abilities to Function More Maturely
Youth Culture
Family

Balance of self-determination and family support

- More family involvement than older adults
- Less family involvement than younger youths
Age-Typical to Focus on Career-Building

- About half of young adults attend some postsecondary education/training
- Initiate working
- Pursuing education/training while working more common in young than mature adults