Enhancing Successful Transitions to Adulthood for Young Adults with Psychiatric Disabilities

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Figure ES.1. Conceptual Framework for Policies and Programs Serving Transition-Age Youth

Barriers
- Low expectations for working and self-sufficiency
- Lack of access to employment services and work-based experiences
- Uncoordinated handoff to adult services
- Inadequate access to social and health services
- Financial disincentives to work
- Lack of knowledge about how benefits change when a person works

Policies
- Employment support for youth and adults
- Specific to youth with disabilities
- Promotion of access across adult services
- Coordination of the transition from youth to adult services

Transition Environment
- Youth's characteristics and assets
- Schools, special education, postsecondary education, and training
- Mental health system
- Disability benefit programs
- Health care delivery and financing systems
- Community-based service providers
- Employers and economic climate
- Philosophies about social support

Key Outcomes

Short Term
- Employment-promoting activities
- Paid employment
- Total income from earning and benefits
- Attitudes and expectations
- Education
- Health and functional status

Longer Term
- Paid employment and earnings
- Total income from earning and benefits
- Engagement in productive activities
- Social integration
- Self-determination
- Health and functional status

Moreno et al., 2013
Emphasis on Transition-Age Youth in State VR Agencies, 2004-2006

- 26% - State VR plan contains goals & plans related to youth
- 76% - State has VR counselors with dedicated transition caseload
- % counselors w dedicated transition caseloads
  - 0% 24% (12)
  - 1-10% 41% (20)
  - 11-20% 20% (10)
  - 21+% 14% (7)
- Effort has shown some success - aggregate cross-disability, post-school employment rate 2-5 years after school exit rose about 9 percentage points from late 1980s to 2003 (NLTS)
Figure III.3. Employment Ratio (Ratio of VR Youth with Positive Employment Outcomes to Youth Served), by State

Source: RSA-911 closure records, fiscal years 2004 through 2011.

Honeycutt et al., 2013
State VR & Youth with Psychiatric Disabilities

• RSA 911 data indicate that transition age youth (ages 14-24) were 1/3 of all the eligible clients whose cases were closed in 2011

• After youth with learning disabilities, youth with psychiatric disabilities were the next largest group within the youth category, accounting for 16% of total closures

• The success rate for youth with MH problems (45%) was significantly lower than almost any other disability or age group.

Marrone & Taylor, 2013; Berry & Caplan, 2010
SSI & Transition to Adulthood

• Poor outcomes for youth on SSI prior to age 18
  – by age 19-23 years only 22% were employed, and 39% had dropped out of school (Loprest & Wittenburg, 2007)

• More positive outcomes for youth entering the SSI rolls at 18-19 years of age
  – better employment outcomes than any other age group, followed by those 20-35 years of age when they enter the rolls (Ben-Shalom et al., 2012)
Research on Transition Age SSDI Beneficiaries

• Young adults with disabilities enroll in employment services at much high rates than older groups of workers
DI beneficiaries first enrollment for employment services by age group

![Graph showing estimated probability of service enrollment by months since award and age group.](image)

Ben-Shalom & Mamun, 2013
Research on Transition Age SSDI Beneficiaries

• In the first 5 years after enrollment, young adults are more likely to enter their trial work period than older groups of workers.

• In the first 5 years after enrollment, young adults are more likely than older workers to have cash benefits suspended or terminated due to work.
DI beneficiaries suspended or terminated for work 5 years post-award by age group

Ben-Shalom & Mamun, 2013
Multivariate Analysis of Positive Vocational Outcomes Among DI Beneficiaries

• **Younger age at award** associated with higher probability of achieving positive service engagement & work outcomes within 5 years after DI award.
  – e.g., compared to beneficiaries age 50–57, those age 18–24 are 20.4 % points more likely to have started their Trial Work Period

• In addition, the probability of achieving the milestones is increased by having a **greater number of years of education**
30 Occupations with Largest BLS-Projected Percentage Employment Increases, 2010 - 2020

• 17 require Associates degree or above
• Of those that pay above the median annual wage of $33,840, all require an AA, BA, or advanced degree
• Of those that pay below the median, the average annual salary is $25,340

Lockard & Wolf, 2012
SSA’s Youth Transition Demo Model Components

- individualized work-based experiences
- youth empowerment
- family supports
- system linkages
- social & health services
- SSA work incentive waivers
- benefits counseling
Rise of “New Capitalism”

- increased competition, often leading to closures, takeovers or mergers, with consequent shedding of labor (increased lay-offs and unemployment)
- volatility of markets, requiring adaptability of workers to adjust to new skills needed to provide new products and services
- more efficient use of labor by employers to reflect fluctuating patterns of demand, involving increased use of temporary and other forms of non-standard labor

Sennett (1998)
Usefulness of transition concept?

- Early adulthood now characterized by multiple transitions, or shifting, between full time, part-time, temporary work & self employment; unemployment; education; travel; breaks for motherhood; & other domestic labor
- Transitions have become differentiated & individualized. The notion of a collective “transition” into the work force no longer applies due to plural education options & precarious labor market.

Bradley & Davadason, 2009; Goodwin & O’Connor, 2005
Typology of career trajectories, young adults age 20-34 (Bradley & Davadason, 2009)

**Shifting** - frequent changes between work statuses & jobs

**Sticking** - pursuit of single type of job or career

**Switching** - after some time in a particular occupation, making a conscious choice to change direction

**Settling** - After a period of shifting, making a conscious choice to pursue a single occupation or career

 Mostly low wage jobs, hi family interdependence, attitude of “internalized flexibility” allows for optimism
U.S. Labor Force Mobility – 1st 12 years after entry into the LF (Fuller, 2008)

- By 12th year after labor-market entry, men average 6.4 employer changes while women average 5.7
- Men are laid off & discharged more often than women, while women more often experience family-related quits that are followed by unemployment
- Job changing positively impacts wages earlier in careers but not later in careers
- In the 1st 5 years of a job, each year of tenure increases wages by 2% but this stops after 5 yrs
- Lay-offs, discharges & family-related separations associated with lower wages
- Workers with high mobility see wage advances from job changes eroded by decreases in job tenure
- Marriage & family depress women’s earnings, not men
Life Timeline – Late Teens & Twenties

What Kind of Interventions?

Late teenage years

High School or Post-Secondary Education

Labor Force Entry

Average of 6 job changes

Wage advantage from job changing greatest earlier in career

First 5 years of tenure at a specific job have biggest payoff

12 Years After LF Entry

End of 20s

Re-entry into education or training at any time
Context of Services for Young Adults with Psychiatric Disabilities

- Substance use & abuse
- Pregnancy & early parenthood
- Leaving the foster care system
- Juvenile justice involvement
- Housing instability or homelessness
- Transportation barriers
Strengths & Resiliency

• Importance of peer group
• Connection with family
• Use of social media offers networking possibilities
• IT sophistication creates job skills
• Societal recognition of young adult under- and unemployment
• Openness to service use for self-determination
THANK YOU

• Questions?

• Comments?