Special Populations: Transition Age Youth

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Overview

- Who are Transition Age Youth?
- Unique Needs and Challenges
- Recommendations for Service Delivery
- Transition Age Youth in NYS Children's Transformation

Who are Transition Age Youth?

- Transition Age Youth (TAY) are individuals generally between the ages of 16 and 25, often with mental health challenges, that are transitioning from child-serving systems to adult-serving systems

Note: This age range represents a general developmental phase. The children's system redesign involves individuals up to age 21.

Gilmer et al. (2012)

The Transition Years

- A time when youth move from dependence on caregivers to independence or self-sufficiency

- Much psychological and social development occurs at this stage

- It is at this stage that youth start thinking about the future and their adult lives

- There may be new mental health challenges or ongoing ones that need continuous care
  - Half of all lifetime anxiety and mood disorders begin by age 14
  - ¾ of anxiety, mood and substance use begin by age 24
  - Highest rates of drug and alcohol abuse are between ages 18-25

(Davis & Munson, 2018; IOM, 2015; Pottick et al., 2014)

Transition Age Youth in Outpatient Mental Health

National Numbers:

- 49.3% are male

- 71.5% are non-Hispanic White

- 60% have a dual diagnosis

- 41% have a co-occurring medical condition

- 20.3% have a substance use problem

Most common primary diagnoses

- Depression (21.6%)

- Bipolar (14.6%)

- Disruptive Behavior (14.2%)

- Anxiety (12.9%)

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Transitioning Out of Foster Care

‣ **National Youth in Transition Database (2011-2015) for youth aging out of foster care reports the following for youth in New York:**

- About half get a High School Degree/GED by age 19 and 69% by age 21

- 26% are employed part or full time by age 19 and 48% by age 21

- The majority report at least one adult in their life who they can go to for emotional support

- 12% of 19 year olds had experienced homelessness within last two years

- Youth may or may not be participating in independent living services

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/data-briefs

Challenges and Barriers

‣ **Youth who are transitioning out of service systems that address mental health challenges (including those in child welfare, residential care, and juvenile justice) experience higher levels of mental health needs, homelessness, and worse educational and vocational outcomes.**

‣ **TAY with mental health problems are less likely to finish high school and be employed and more likely to become pregnant and involved in criminal activity.**

‣ **Many youth involved in service systems have also experienced adverse events, such as trauma and neglect, including complex trauma.**

(Manuel et al., 2018; Pottick et al., 2014)

Service Needs

These challenges combined with the developmental stages for transition age youth means that they may be at risk for poor outcomes

‣ **TAY often find transition services inadequate due to developmentally inappropriate care, lack of mentors and difficulty with independence**

‣ **Services tailored to meet the needs of youth in this stage are necessary for a successful transition**

‣ **Providers may need to recognize that many of these young people have engaged in high risk behaviors**

Trauma-Focused Lens

‣ **Age may not match the stage - Areas of development impacted by trauma:**

- Regulation - struggle with managing feelings; may rely upon unhealthy coping (e.g., substance use)

- Relationships - difficulty in forming and maintaining safe connections; distrust; distancing or vulnerable

- Identity - may have negative self-perception stemming from past; may not have a future orientation

- Information Processing - ability to take in information, make meaning of it and act on it is affected; may have difficulty with these skills and ability to seek and tolerate support in problem-solving

Services shift from caregiver-driven to participant/youth-driven with supports as one transitions into adulthood.

Service Recommendations

Discuss Transitions Early!

‣ **Provide individualized, developmentally appropriate services**

- Understand social, emotional, and cognitive development
- Work with youth to match individual's needs/goals with developmentally appropriate services and supports

‣ **Use of Engagement Best Practices**

- Align services with their identified goals/needs
- Strengths-based, validate, use psychoeducation
- Allow for flexible meeting times and locations

‣ **Use Trauma Informed Care models of services**

‣ **Mobilize Strengths and Build Resilience**

Trauma Informed Approach

‣ **Recommendations by Manuel et al., 2018 for trauma informed services:**

- environmental safety and stabilization, focus on concrete needs

- practicing healthy coping and emotion regulation skills

- promote healing, meaning making, and future orientation

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Tips for Engaging Young Adults

‣ **Use of person centered vs medical model (focus on youth driven goals)**

‣ **Use of motivational interviewing approach to elicit information and help identify goals and plans**

‣ **Connect them with services they feel they need**

‣ **Be genuine and likable vs authoritarian or parental**

‣ **Allow for flexible meeting times and locations**

‣ **Be consistent and follow through with plans**

Logan & Mullen (2018)

Tips for Engaging Young Adults

‣ Use open-ended question and then <u>wait</u> for the answer.

‣ Ask a question instead of just giving them the answer when you want to share information.

‣ Offer specific praise

‣ Provide reflection when young adult says something meaningful, personal, or important

‣ Use technology – e.g., texting to send appointment reminders

For more information and tips for engaging youth adults: Logan & Mullen (2018)
https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1132&context=pib

Address Independent Living Needs

‣ **Keep in Mind the Whole Youth (Whole Person)** – physical health and mental health concerns are compounded by the stress of transitioning to becoming an adult and all that comes with it.

‣ Focus on easing the transition by providing independent living supports or ensuring that they are connected with sources that can help.

‣ Evaluate whether they are using the supports and/or whether they are effective.

Address Independent Living Needs - Review and Discuss…

▸ **Health Insurance Plan/Coverage**

- Discuss what it is; what does it cover and not cover; how does it work; how to find the right service providers

▸ **Health/Behavioral Health –**

- Discuss what services are needed; who provides them; what are my rights and options; what treatments and medications do I need and why; staying healthy/nutrition; food insecurity

▸ **Budgeting and Financial Management**

- Discuss saving money; credit history; taxes; bills; debt; budgeting for food, housing, transportation, clothing, etc.; financial assistance

▸ **Housing**

- Discuss finding a place; renting; paying the rent; tenants rights; other housing options, etc.

▸ **School/Employment –**

- Discuss plans for finishing high school/GED; college; vocational training, finding and keeping a job; obtaining references

Building Support Networks

▸ **Explore the member's feelings about the adequacy of their supports and need for additional sources of support. What are their wishes as to who they prefer to have in their life? Encourage family members, peers, and others to provide support in way preferred by the youth**

▸ **Promote and/or work with the youth to rebuild supports to help achieve their goals**

▸ **Understand and support youth's desire for romantic relationships and friendships**

▸ **Assist youth in building a support system**

- Identifying formal and informal sources of support

- Skills to manage relationships and set appropriate boundaries; who to trust/not trust

- Managing relationships with previous caregivers if appropriate

Advocacy is Important

‣ **Help youth to build self-advocacy skills**

‣ **Provide information about their rights and ways to advocate for what they need**

‣ **Explain that they have choices and help them access information to make informed decisions**

‣ **Connect them with Youth Peer Advocate Services as indicated**

Get Feedback from Youth!

- **Engage youth in planning and developing services**
- **Collaborate with youth peer advocates**
- **Seek and use feedback to improve services**

Encourage others to do the same!

Service Models for TAY

‣ **Child Welfare Evidence Based Clearinghouse - http://www.cebc4cw.org/topic/youth-transitioning-into-adulthood/**

  • Better Futures

  • Transition to Independence Process (TIP)

‣ **Wraparound with adaptations for older youth - https://nwi.pdx.edu/pdf/wraparound-for-older-youth.pdf**

‣ **OnTrack NY – first episode psychosis http://www.ontrackny.org/**

Transition Age Youth in the NYS Children's System Transformation

Youth in Transition

- The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a challenging time. It is a time in which a young person is called upon to make complex decisions about education, work, finances, and personal relationships.

- The absence of a coordinated system of service delivery also presents significant challenges for youth and young adults with mental health needs as they transition from the adolescent to adult serving systems.

- Recognizing the importance of partnering with a variety of child and adult providers becomes essential to connecting these multiple systems so that youth and young adults with mental health needs have access to the full array of services needed to maximize their potential.

Expanded Population

- As a part of the NYS Children's System transformation services, Children's Health and Behavioral Health Services will now be available to all Medicaid eligible children who meet medical necessity criteria.

- Medicaid eligible youth, ages 18-21 years can elect to receive services as a youth, an adult, or both.

- Providers working with transitional age youth will need to make a concerted effort to:
  - Learn what other systems may provide
  - Make contacts within those systems
  - Coordinate services

Adolescent Versus Adult System

Considerations to explore:

- Service array needed to meet the needs of the youth
- Youth and family preference
- Developmental maturity
- Supports required
- Caregiver involvement
- Level of coordination required
- Traditional vs. nontraditional approaches

Notable System Barriers

- Recognize potential barriers and work to develop a plan to avoid interruptions in services and sources of support.

- Areas to explore:
  - Legal (e.g., consent), logistic and clinical differences
  - Potential lack of coordination, planning, and understanding between the adolescent and adult serving systems. The lack of a seamless youth-to-adult system can cause young adults to lose services.
  - Potential lack of expertise and focus on addressing the critical developmental needs of transition age youth in both the adolescent and adult serving systems.
  - Potential lack of co-occurring mental health and substance abuse services
  - Young people may refrain from seeking help because of stigma

Youth Peer Support Services

- Formal and informal services and supports provided to young people.

- Youth Peer Advocates provide training and support to increase engagement and active participation of the young person in their treatment and decisions that affect their lives.

- YPST Service Components include:
  - Skill-Building
  - Coaching
  - Engagement, Bridging and Transition Support
  - Self-Advocacy, Self-Efficacy, and Empowerment
  - Community Connections and Natural Support

- YPST can be provided in individual and group settings.

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Youth Peer Advocate Expertise

What can you do to support transition age youth?

‣ **If you work with TAY directly, use of best practices outlined above will better engage them in services and support better outcomes.**

‣ **If you are working with providers, ensuring that they are aware of these best practices and utilizing them are important.**

- For example, does the treatment plan reflect the youth's goals and needs as defined by them? Were they connected with the appropriate independent living services and supports? Are goals adjusted to meet developmental needs? Are youth peer advocate services being utilized?

Resources

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**
  - https://www.nami.org/
- **Community Technical Assistance Center of NY**
  - https://www.ctacny.org/services-best-practices
- **NYSOMH – Transitional Age Youth Resources**
  - https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/consumer_affairs/transition_youth/resources/
- **Youth Power – NY Youth Peer Advocates**
  - http://www.youthpowerny.org/
- **Youth in Progress - NY**
  - https://youthinprogress.org/
- **Pathways Research and Training Center**
  - https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu
- **National Child Traumatic Stress Network**
  - https://www.nctsn.org/
- **Youth MOVE**
  - https://www.youthmovenational.org/