

Supporting Transition Age Youth with Mental Health Challenges

Putting the pieces together



Acknowledgements

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, Systems and Psychosocial Advances Research Center.

Visit us at: <http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/index.htm>

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Transition Age Youth— The Space between

- “Millenials”
- Situated in the divide between adolescence and adulthood





What are they all doing?

- Identity formation
- Creating and maintaining lasting and close relationships
- Self esteem via achievement
- Autonomy/ Separation from Family
- Vocation

How they are doing.....



- Less healthy than their adolescent and late 20s/Early 30s counterparts
- Heightened vulnerability to onset of mental health disorders
- Increased stress and sedentary habits
- Decreased role in work and family roles that decrease risk taking
- Heightened vulnerability to onset of mental health disorders

(*20% had mental illness in past year, 66% did not receive treatment, SAMHSA, 2014)

The times, they are a changing

- What it takes to make a living
 - most jobs require training
- The world is “networked” and “global”
 - Opportunities for entry level jobs
- Fairly Low Social mobility
 - Cost of living
- Economic Inequality
 - Expense of college
- Postponed family establishment
 - educated
- Parenting Early
 - less-educated



Challenges for TAY

- Typical transition challenges
- Self-advocacy, self knowledge
- Interruptions
- Fear and experience of stigma and discrimination
- Interference in accomplishing developmental tasks due to illness experience
- Availability of housing, transportation, treatment options



Challenges for service providers

- Developmental Transition vs Institutional transitions
- 18-21 years of age includes continuous development



Child System

Adult System

Education (Special Education)

Child Welfare

Juvenile Justice

Child Mental Health

Medicaid

Health Insurance



Childhood and Adolescence



18-21 years

Criminal Justice

Adult Mental Health

Medicaid

Health Insurance

Housing

Vocational Rehabilitation

Substance Abuse

Labor Department

Adulthood

Barriers to age appropriate services

- FUNDING
- Lack of leadership focused on TAY services
- FUNDING specifically for this group
- No strong advocacy group
- Fit of services to TAY
- Few supports are tailored to this age group
- FUNDING



During the transition

- Identity exploration
- Instability
- Self-focus
- Feeling in-between
- Age of possibilities
- Relation renegotiation
- Peers and romantic partners

*I'm terrified of growing up.
Once you become an adult, how
do you step back from that?
It's something that wakes me up
at night."*

Attributed to Lorde, 18
New Zealand singer and songwriter
Billboard 2014



Transition Thinking: Starting with and moving beyond IDEA

- Education and Training
- Employment
- Independent Living / Community Engagement

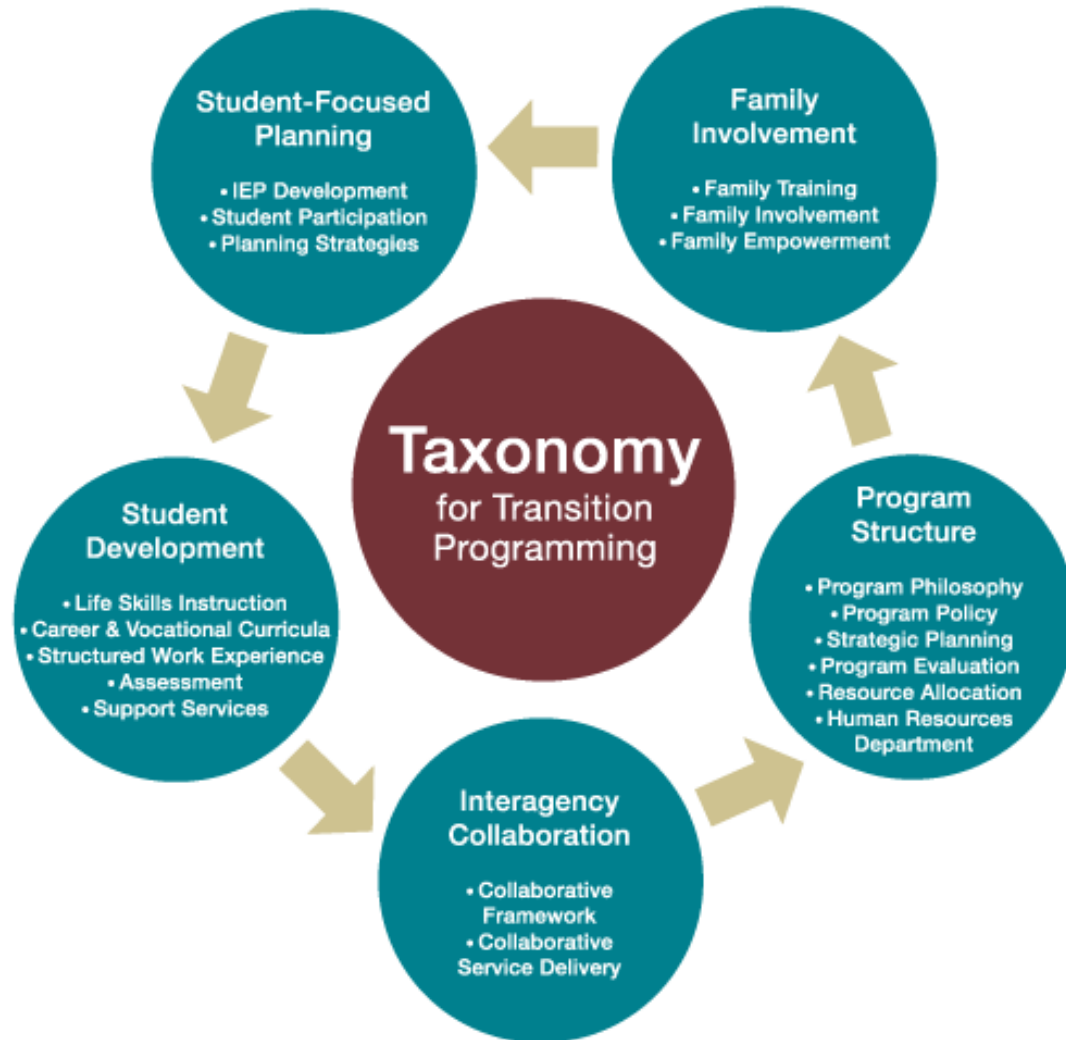


Taxonomy for Transition Programming

Developed by Dr. Paula Kohler

- Linking research and practice
- Intended to operationalize the process with focus on key elements
- Developed in collaboration with researchers and practitioners





Taxonomy (Kohler, 1996)



- identifying post school goals based on: student abilities, needs, interests, and preferences
- developing instruction activities and educational experiences to prepare students for their post school goals
- a group of individuals (including the student) work together to develop goals and activities



Transition and College

What's new?

- Leave of Absence Guidelines
- Individualized re-entry requirements
- Policies for self-harm

Transition and College

Strategies

- De-Stigmatize Mental Illness
- Educate College Community
- Peer Support
- Suicide Prevention
- Improve Communication
- Train Disability Staff in Accommodations



Vocational Rehabilitation

- Coordinate with Special Education for transition planning
- Support Education and Training for vocational goals
- Combine Educational Goals with Employment Goals





Supported Education

- Choice and Self Determination
- Coordination with Mental Health Services
- Career Counseling
- Assistance with financial aid, developing academic skills, information about rights and resources
- Academic Supports

Supported Employment

- Participant Preference
- Time unlimited supports
- Rapid Search
- Integration with mental health treatment
- Systematic Job Development
- Zero Exclusion
- Include paid internships, volunteer opportunities, educational activities
- Benefits and financial aid planning
 - Career Education
 - Youth Voice and Advocacy



Transition Thinking Collaboration



- Establish Communities of Practice
- Alignment of Programs
- Focus on Transition Outcomes:
Education/Training, Employment/ Community
Engagement and Independent Living
- Designate a person to be the Transition point
of contact with other agencies
- Adult and Child Systems establish shared
responsibility for TAY



Collaboration

- Target age appropriate services and environments to needs and preferences of TAY
- Capitalize on opportunities to expand service provision under the Affordable Care Act
- Commit to sustained effort over time (training, resources, culture)
- Establish state level leadership tasked with coordination across agencies and departments

What's ahead on the horizon

- Innovative practices
- RAISE Study results
- Improved teacher education training in Transition
- Factors associated with school completion and post school employment
- Culturally informed practices
- Adapted Supported Employment
- Need, services and outcomes for Supported Education
- Perspectives on Peer Recovery Workers
- Adapted Supported Employment
- Need, services and outcomes for Supported Employment
- Perspectives on Peer Recovery Workers



These are all our children and we shall
profit by, or pay for, what they become.

~James Baldwin

