EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS IN YOUNG ADULTS

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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

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“CAREER DEVELOPMENT”

- Careers are occupations with opportunities, that are undertaken for a significant period of a person's life – skilled, unskilled, or professional occupations.

- Career development is comprised of career choices, activities, and performance and the learning and cognitive elements that influence them.
“YOUNG ADULTS”
Chronologically: Ages 18-30 years
LIMITED RESEARCH ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS IN YOUNG ADULTS

No strong research to identify exactly how career supports for young adults should differ from more mature adults

Research on interventions to support career development in this young adults in its infancy
WHY FOCUS ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD?
YOUNG ADULTHOOD IS THE TYPICAL TIME FOR LAUNCHING CAREERS

- By their mid-20’s, most young adults are in long term or career-consistent jobs
- The impact of choices to pursue college degrees or not, and to start families are not, are clearly seen in individuals’ careers by their mid 20’s – with long term consequences
YOUNG ADULTHOOD IS A CRITICAL TIME FOR LAUNCHING CAREERS

- Young adults’ career efforts predict later career success.
- Important aspects of career development (e.g., vocational identity) crystallize during young adulthood and may be more difficult to change later.
- This is a time of life when strong efforts to support current and future vocational opportunities has the longest term benefits.
Young adults have lower employment rates than mature adults – within those with mental health conditions.

Young adults with mental health conditions in adolescence have lower employment rates than other disability groups or in the general population.
IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG ADULTS
DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES

Cognitive development (how we think)
- Anticipating consequences of choices and actions
- Complex strategic planning
- Behavior & cognitive control towards emotional or distracting stimuli

Identity formation
- Distrusting authority
- Experimentation
- Self-determination
DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

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 MATURELY

Complete schooling & training

Head a household

Develop a social network

Become financially self-supporting

Obtain/maintain rewarding work

Be a good citizen
Balance of self-determination and family support

- More family involvement than older adults
- Less family involvement than younger youths
Birth → → → → 18yrs → → → → 30yrs → → Death

CHILD SYSTEM

- Child Welfare
- Education
- Juvenile Justice
- Child Mental Health
- Medicaid
- 18-21 yrs

ADULT SYSTEM

- Higher Education
- Criminal Justice
- Adult Mental Health
- Medicaid
- Housing
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Substance Abuse
- Labor
### 18-Month Outcomes for Youth in 4 Supported Employment Controlled Trials

**Competitive Employment Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>20 up to 25</th>
<th>25 up to 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SE (N=15)</td>
<td>Control (N=23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed at any time</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean weeks worked</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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</tbody>
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[http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/Publications.html#Webinars](http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/Publications.html#Webinars)
INDIVIDUALIZED PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT – YOUNG ADULTS

Two versions for young adults with early stages of psychosis have growing supportive research findings

• Combine supported employment with supported education
• Plus curriculum on working, substance abuse information, family education

Transitions RTC – young adults with psychiatric disabilities (PI-Ellison)

• Supported employment/supported education
• Peer mentors
MODELS UNDER DEVELOPMENT – SHARED FEATURES

1. Centrally involve young adult VOICE
2. Emphasis on career exploration, assessment and planning
3. Support of concurrent employment and education or training
4. Support of young adults leading and improving their capacities for career planning and implementation
5. Include family members as potential supports
REFERENCES

Slides 5&6: Osgood et al., 2005; Sandefur, Eggerling-Boeck, & Park, 2005; Swanson, 1999; Herr, 1993; Super, 1988; De Vos, De Clippeleer, & Dewilde, 2009

Slide 7: Waghorn, Chant, & Harris, 2009; Frank, 1991; Neel, 1988; Newman et al., 2011; Vander Stoep et al., 2000

Slide 11: Steinberg et al., 2009; Albert & Steinberg, 2011; Hare et al., 2009, Liston et al., 2006; Christakou et al., 2009

Slide 18: Killackey, Jackson, & McGorry, 2008; Nuechterlein et al., 2008