

Top Ten things About the Youth-in-Transition Program

1. Youth-in-transition services reduce the stigma often attached to mental illness. It takes the public health approach (promotion, prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery support) and work with the young person and their families from a whole person's perspective.

Transition facilitation helps a young person to gain competency and stability in employment, housing, education and community living. The emphasis on these critical life domains reduces the stigma on mental illness and young people are more willing to stay in the treatment.

2. Through the focus of whole person approach, youth-in-transition program is able to work with young people and their families who do not receive public mental health services due to various reasons: stigma, lack of understanding of the mental health issues, lack of funding, and not being able to navigate mental health system, etc.

These young people often are isolated; they are left to manage the mental health issues on their own until it reaches the crisis level when the danger of harming self and others are present. The emphasis on whole person approach and recovery support helps these young people to be identified early and stay in treatment.

3. Youth-in-transition services integrate multiple evidence-based or promising practices to assist young people reach their maximum potential when transitioning into adulthood. They include motivational enhancement, supported employment, supported education, and peer support services. Although these practices have been demonstrated effective for the adult population, it needs adaptation so they are developmentally appropriate and effective for young people in transition age.

4. Transition facilitation helps young people stay engaged in the treatment process.

As young people reach 18 and can make medical decisions for themselves, many choose not to stay in the mental health treatment or continue taking the psychotropic medication. Recovery support services are what these young people want because the services help them with day to day functioning at home and in the community. Also, young people will not be able to focus on their mental health treatment if their immediate needs are in jeopardy, e.g., housing and income.

5. Transition facilitation helps young people who do not have adequate family support.

Many young people do not have the family support they need to develop the competency and stability in critical life domains (employment, housing, education and community living). Youth-in-transition services become the critical support for these young people until they can establish their own natural support system.

6. Youth-in-transition services have strong traumas focus.

Many young people have experienced and/or witnessed trauma. Trauma focus is integrated into the transition and recovery support services to remove the barriers trauma has on the young people's quest for independence.

7. Youth-in-transition services work with young people with complex needs.

Many of the young people have other challenges besides mental health issues, such as substance abuse and developmental disabilities. Many of the young people with developmental disabilities are isolated and have inadequate social interaction with peers. The transition services help these young people develop appropriate and meaningful social relationships.

8. Young Adults and their families praise the youth-in-transition services as helping them gain their own success. Through the process, young adults feel respected, they are supported to make their own decisions, and there is a focus on the needs of the whole person, not just the mental health condition.

9. In addition to providing crucial services to young adults in transition and their families, the program increases the capacity of the communities in which they exist to effectively address the needs of emerging adults. Through the establishment of multi-system service collaboration mechanisms, communications are improved and bureaucratic hurdles are mitigated.

10. The youth-in-transition program has a strong focus on prevention and reintegration efforts for young people in juvenile justice and adult corrections. The approach reduces the impact of incarcerating young people, and allows young people to contribute to society and the tax base.