

Implementing a Successful Program for Youth in Transition

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Overview

- Needs of youth and young adults with social, emotional, and behavior problems
- What are the key components of providing successful transition mental health services
- Lessons learned from provision of transition services
- Discussion and questions



Needs of Youth with social, emotional, and behavior problems

- “Crossing the threshold into adulthood is a major struggle for young people, and especially for youth with emotional or behavioral difficulties.”
(*Transition to Adulthood*, Hewitt Clark, Ph.D. and Maryann Davis, Ph.D.).



Needs of Youth with social, emotional, and behavior problems (cont.)

- Young adulthood is a critical stage of development
- Rapid changes and critical stage for identity formation, rehearsing social roles and increasing cognitive abilities.
- For youth with social, emotional or behavioral difficulties this is a much harder period to navigate.



Needs of Youth with social, emotional, and behavior problems (cont.)

- For young people dealing with a mental illness the challenges multiply and the supports suddenly disappear, as they are expected to be “independent”
- Their challenges are not only limited to struggling with debilitating symptoms, but also with life domains and societal expectations.



Setting the Context

- Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4) is a behavioral health organization providing prevention, and behavioral health services to children, adolescents and adults with social, emotional, and behavior problems.
- Experienced in serving children with social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties and their families.
- As our adolescents turn 18, they must go to the “adult system” for outpatient services or other appropriate services.



Setting the Context

- Current Illinois mental health system still has a system for youth and another for adults.
- As they “age-out” and are referred/link to adult services older adolescents/young adults often falls between system “cracks” and re-appear with chronic mental illness in the “adult system”
- Across the country there is a demonstrated and overwhelming need for comprehensive services targeted to this population



Starting Transition Services

- Recognizing this concern, C4 started planning and implementing services for Transitioning Youth in 2005 developing a YASSC.
- The *Young Adult Services Steering Committee (YASSC)* researched different models for serving this transition population
- Selected the Transition to Independence (TIP) model, and brought Dr. Hewitt “Rusty” Clark for consultation



The Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model

- The TIP model:
 - is strength-based
 - evidence supported
 - describes a service system for transition-age youth and young adults, ages 14 to 25, with emotional or behavioral disturbances



The Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model

- focuses on helping youth to make a successful transition to adulthood in the areas of:
 - employment
 - education
 - living situation
 - community living



Formally starting YAS

- In November of 2006 C4 was selected by the State to develop Transition Services for Youth 16 to 18 years old with emotional or behavioral disturbances, who are transitioning to the adult mental health system or youth with transition needs who are being discharged from the corrections system and are re-entering the community.
- The grant allowed C4 to enhance the services and formally start the **Young Adult Services Program (YAS)** which served youth 16 to 18 years old, but also older adolescents and young adults up to 23 years old.



The Young Adult Services Program (YAS)

- **Mission:** The Youth and Young Adult Services at C4 offers accessible, individualized, comprehensive, and collaborative quality services focused on promoting empowerment, independence, and the overall well-being of our valuable consumers.
- **Vision:** The Youth and Young Adult Services of C4 will be integral in promoting and practicing an approach which bridges traditional and innovative behavioral health services while educating the communities we serve.



Implementation of YAS

- C4 hired a YAS Coordinator to implement and supervise the Transition Services staff.
- Hired two full-time “Transition Advisors”, (name chosen by the youth on the C4’s Youth Advisory Services Steering Committee (YASSC)).
- Scheduled a two-day training with our TIP consultants as the kick-off and start-up of the TIP model at the entire agency



Identifying the YAS clients

- Identified referral protocols for accepting appropriate referrals to YAS.
- Identified current young people being served in different C4 services, who would benefit from services from the YAS team.



Partnering with community

- Trained on the TIP model, Transition Facilitators started to :
 - work with youth in the community
 - serve as resource to other community partners dealing with this population.
- A *YAS Community Advisory Board (YASCAB)* was developed with partner organizations, youth representatives and parents.
- The YASCAB meets quarterly and their purpose is to serve in an advisory capacity for the development and implementation of these services.



YASCAB

- Assist in:
 - identification of successes and barriers in the TIP system
 - advises on possible solutions and support in the education of the community regarding the TIP system
 - promotes its acceptance to recruit additional support for its goals, such as access to additional business sites for competitive employment.
- The Board serves in an outreach capacity to strengthen the interagency and community network to improve the availability of and access to transition services and supports appropriate to these youth and young adults.



YASCAB

- Members of the C4 YAS Community Advisory Board include a parent, young adults, a community college, a bank, a tutoring agency, psychiatric hospitals, a youth agency, representative from the detention center and from Corrections, a child welfare agency as well as vocational services, and others.
- This broad representation was sought out to represent the transition domains in a child's life.



YAS Program Purpose

- The Young Adult Services (YAS) provides community based services to youth and young adults who present with serious emotional, behavioral, and/or social challenges which are affecting their ability to make a successful transition to adulthood.
- Services are uniquely tailored to each young person using a strengths-based approach to help the young person identify and reach their transitional goals as they move towards greater independence.



YAS Eligibility

- Youth between the ages of 16 to 23 years old with social, emotional or behavioral difficulties, and with needs in one or more of the following areas:
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Living Situation
 - Community Life Adjustment
- Youth and young adults must express a high degree of motivation for services



What Services Does YAS offer?

- Mental Health Assessments
- Community Support and Case-management
- Linkage & Referrals to other Community Supports
- Assistance with Independent Living Skills
- Support to Family Members
- Case Coordination with other Treatment Providers
- Community Presentations



Some of YAS Successes...

Include assistance in accessing the following types of community supports:

- GED programs and/or getting re-enrolled in School
- Job Training
- Recreational and Social Activities
- Obtaining Entitlements
- Opening and learning about checking/savings accounts
- Learning how to use Public Transportation
- Housing



Demographics of Population

- **Since Jan 07 to June 30, 09: 150 clients**
- **FY 09: YAS served 85 clients**
- **Currently serving 22 clients**
 - 13 Females, 9 Males
 - 18 (16-18 year olds), 4 (19-23 year olds)
 - 9 African American, 8 Caucasian, 1 Vietnamese, 4 Latino



Life Domains

- Education: 12 High School, 5 GED, 4 College, 1 Not Enrolled
- Living Situation: 16 Family, 5 Independent, 1 Supervised Living Arrangement
- Employment: 13 Unemployed, 6 Seeking Employment, 3 Employed (through school or after school program)
- Community living: 3 took GED, 4 enrolled in college, 2 obtained more independent level of housing (group home and back to community), 5 learned money management skills, 8 linked to recreational activities, 9 learned and use public transportation.



Lessons Learned

- How do we define success?
- Success stories of youth and young adult participants in YAS
- Challenges and barriers in working with youth and young adults in transition



Key Components in Providing Services to this Population

- Culturally competent staff
- Community based services
- Evidence supported model
- Community partners-Advisory Board
- Client and parent participation in development, implementation and feedback of services
- Funding



Discussion and Questions

