

Section 1: Abstract

The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures: Supporting Successful Transition for Youth and Young Adults with Serious Mental Health Conditions incorporates rigorous research, targeted training and technologically sophisticated dissemination into a framework that is informed and advised by the voices of young people with serious mental health conditions. The eight research projects are grounded in the best available research, and all adhere to a single conceptual framework that synthesizes research with positive development and recovery approaches. This framework guides an intervention approach focused on building assets in four areas 1) self-determination and positive identity, 2) youth-and young adult-directed decision making, 3) skills for adult roles, and 4) supportive relationships with peers and adults.

Three of the research projects employ randomized controlled trial designs, each focused on testing the efficacy of an intervention to improve outcomes for transition-age youth and young adults with serious mental health conditions. R1: My Career Vision tests an approach to career planning and employment for young adults, ages 21-25, who are receiving SSI or extended special education services. R2: Better Futures tests a comprehensive intervention to assist young people in foster care with serious mental health conditions to prepare to participate in post-secondary education. R3: Achieve My Plan studies the efficacy of an approach to helping young people lead their mental health treatment planning teams, and to build service capacity to support youth engagement.

The Center proposes two projects that will develop and test assessment inventories. R4: Transition Policy Consortium will develop an inventory that assesses the level of community support for transition services with a specific emphasis on measuring collaboration and continuity of care between the child and adult mental health systems. R5: Finding Our Way furthers the development of a culturally specific self-assessment tool for American Indian/Alaskan Native young people. Developed for youth ages 13-19, the tool will be modified to include issues relevant to transition. Project products include training, supervision and coaching materials to improve provider practice.

R6: eHealth is a developmental project that will contribute to a knowledge base about the ways youth and young adults use the internet to find information about mental health care, conditions, symptoms, or medications. This project will identify the kinds of information that young people look for, track their search processes and assess how they verify the accuracy of the information they find; and use this information to develop and test an eHealth literacy curriculum.

Projects R7: Recovery Outcomes and R8: Mediators of Stigmatization are both secondary analyses of large national data sets. R7 will analyze data from the System of Care National Evaluation related to young people's recovery outcomes. R8 will analyze data from nationally representative samples of youth and young adults, and use this information to identify potentially effective anti-stigmatization strategies.

These research projects are surrounded by a rich array of training, technical assistance and dissemination activities. A Training Community of Practice will develop both graduate and undergraduate course modules appropriate for individuals who plan to work with transition-aged youth and modules for in-service delivery. A national State-of-the-Science conference, the annual review *Focal Point* and collaboration with vocational rehabilitation, mental health, education and other relevant organizations will further the wide dissemination and application of products and findings.