



# Participatory Action Research: Young Adults Making It Happen!

Tania Duperoy, BA; Amanda Costa, AA; Jennifer Whitney; Gillian Simons

## GETTING CONNECTED



The Voices4Hope website is a place for teenagers and young adults with mental health conditions to come and find resources and stigma busting information that can help them lead happy and independent lives.

This website was created and is maintained by four young adults with mental health conditions at the Transitions RTC.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

The Transitions RTC-Voices4Hope media pages are designed and maintained by young adults. The young adult project assistants use videos, pictures, articles, stories, and announcements as a tool to inspire, inform, and empower. Such tools aim to provide support for others like them in their efforts to attend school, find and maintain employment, and pursue fulfilling lives in recovery! They are also a powerful dissemination tool for Transitions RTC products and announcements.



## WHAT DOES PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR) AT THE TRANSITIONS RTC LOOK LIKE?

PAR consists of direct involvement of young adult project assistants with serious mental health conditions (SMHC) in:

- Impacting and improving services that best guide young adults with SMHC to reach their goals in employment and education
- Informing other youth and young adults, service providers, policymakers, consumers and family members
- Conducting research and knowledge translation activities



## YOUNG ADULT RESEARCH STUDY:

### Research Question:

What are the perspectives and experiences of young adult college students with mental health conditions on seeking and using reasonable accommodations in a college setting?

### Phase 1:

Conduct a secondary analysis of a national survey on the experiences of young adults with mental health conditions in college and disseminate findings.

### Phase 2:

Create tip sheets and briefs to inform college students and administrators of best practices based on other research.

### Phase 3:

Based on knowledge gained in Phases 1 & 2, propose a new research study to investigate this topic further.

## OTHER RESEARCH INVOLVEMENT:

### Interviewer Training

The young adults underwent an intensive interviewer training with Jon Delman, Director of PAR at the Transitions RTC. They were equipped with the skills to recruit and interview research participants

### Young Adult Employment Study (YAES)

The young adult project assistants worked with a research team on a qualitative RTC study looking at the experiences of young adults with employment supports in Massachusetts. They aided in the creation of the semi-structured interview script, as well as conducting one-on-one interviews with young adults, transcription and data entry.

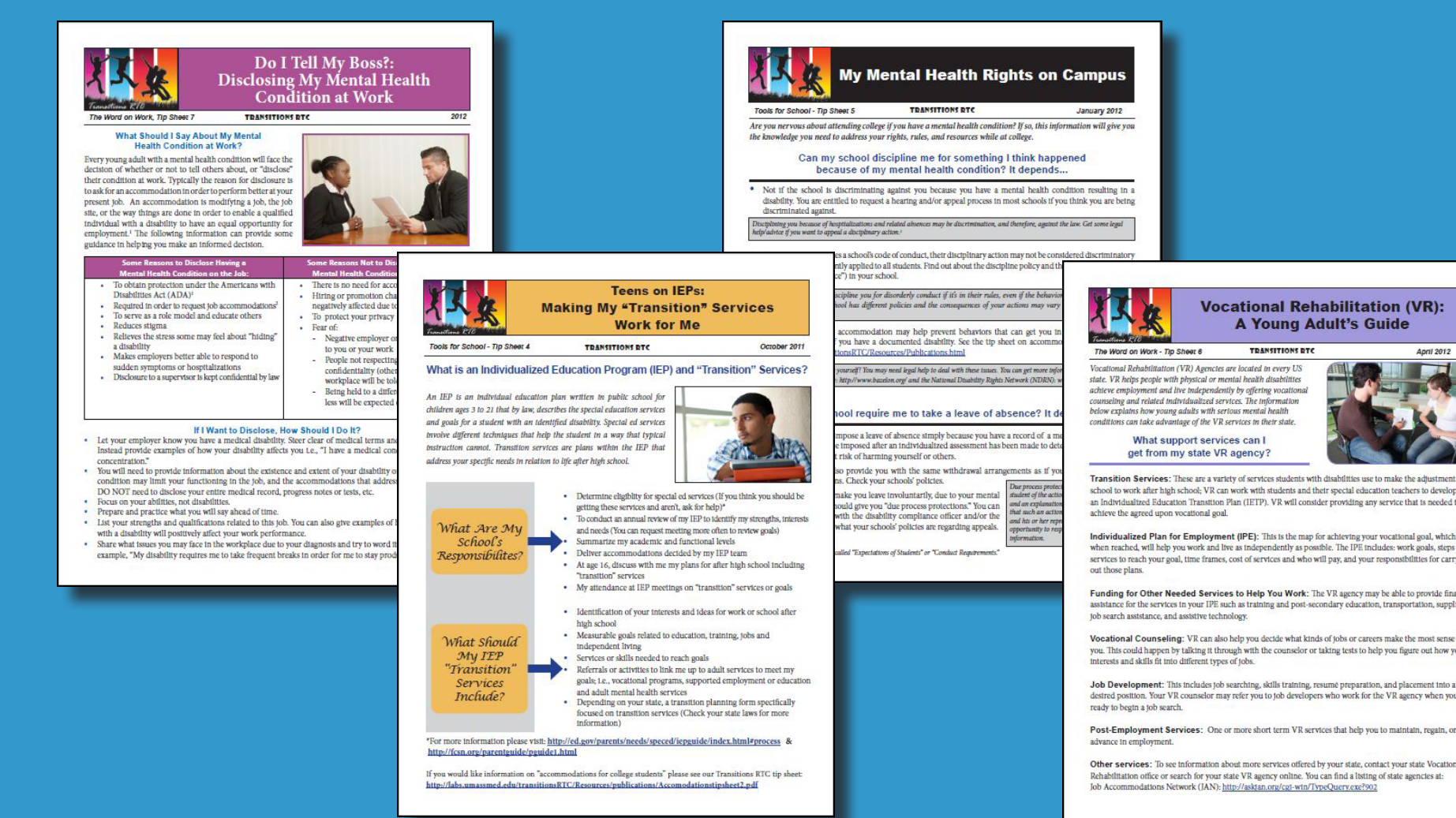
## SPEAKING OUT

The young adult project assistants know how important it is to spread the word and speak up for young adults with mental health conditions. They do this by: attending and presenting at mental health conferences, creating and disseminating helpful products, and attending youth councils to gather the youth voice.



## PRODUCTS

The young adult project assistants author informative tip sheets specifically geared towards a young adult audience. Tip sheet input is given by experts in the field as well as Massachusetts young adult councils.



## CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

- 30th Annual NAMI Mass State Convention
- Parent/Professional Advocacy League 2nd Annual Conference and Celebration
- Alternatives 2011
- 2011 NAMI National Convention
- USPRA 36th Annual Conference
- 24th Annual Children's Mental Health Policy and Research Conference



The contents of this poster were developed with funding from the US Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, and the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (NIDRR grant #133B00018). Additional funding provided by UMass Medical School's Commonwealth Medicine division. The content of this poster does not necessarily reflect the views of the funding agencies and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.