

Supporting the Education Goals of Young Adults with Psychiatric Disabilities

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Acknowledgements

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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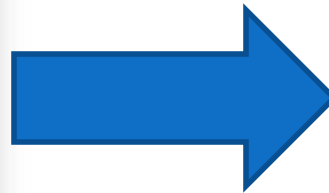
Overview of Presentation

- Scope of the Challenge
- School-based Supports and Interventions
- Supported Education
- Lessons Learned
- Next Steps for Research



Scope of the Challenge

Higher education leads to better income and careers¹



Impairments associated with psychiatric disabilities impact educational performance and attainment²



Scope of the Challenge

Students with psychiatric disabilities (PD) struggle at every level of education

- Over 50% of students with a mental disorder drop out of high school ³
- Special education serves a smaller proportion of the total number of high school students with mental disorders ⁴
- Only 11% of special education students with PD go to a four- year college ⁵



Scope of the Challenge

There are increasing numbers of students with PD at college:

- 9 – 18% of all college students have mild to significant mental health issues ⁶
- Increasing numbers of students seek help for mental health issues on campus ⁷
- Higher rates of suicide ideation, attempts, and completion among college student with PD ⁸



Scope of the Challenge

Those that do go on to college tend to:

- ❖ Have delayed enrollment after high school
- ❖ Enroll as part-time students ⁹
- ❖ Have high drop-out rates ¹⁰



Scope of the Challenge

Students with PD report difficulties in or unwillingness to seek help at college:

- 21% do not report their disability – the highest of any disability group¹¹
- Perceptions that student disability offices don't know how to help¹²
- A fear of being stigmatized
- Uncooperative responses to requests for accommodations¹³



Secondary Education Intervention

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997) specifies Transition Planning

High school completion among *special education students* increased from 47.4% (1990) to 78.1% (2005).

This 2005 rate is similar to that of general education peers. ¹⁴



**Teens on IEPs:
Making My "Transition" Services
Work for Me**

Tools for School - Tip Sheet 4 TRANSITIONS RTC October 2011

What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and "Transition" Services?

An IEP is an individual education plan written in public school for children ages 3 to 21 that by law, describes the special education services and goals for a student with an identified disability. Special ed services involve different techniques that help the student in a way that typical instruction cannot. Transition services are plans within the IEP that address your specific needs in relation to life after high school.

What Are My School's Responsibilities?

- Determine eligibility for special ed services (If you think you should be getting these services and aren't, ask for help!)
- To conduct an annual review of my IEP to identify my strengths, interests and needs (You can request meeting more often to review goals)
- Summarize my academic and functional levels
- Deliver accommodations decided by my IEP team
- At age 16, discuss with me my plans for after high school including "transition" services
- My attendance at IEP meetings on "transition" services or goals

What Should My IEP "Transition" Services Include?

- Identification of your interests and ideas for work or school after high school
- Measurable goals related to education, training, jobs and independent living
- Services or skills needed to reach goals
- Referrals or activities to link me up to adult services to meet my goals, i.e., vocational programs, supported employment or education and adult mental health services
- Depending on your state, a transition planning form specifically focused on transition services (Check your state laws for more information)

*For more information please visit: <http://ed.gov/parents/needs/spced/sguide/index.html#process> & <http://fcsn.org/parentsguide/sguide1.html>

If you would like information on "accommodations for college students" please see our Transitions RTC tip sheet: <http://sbs.wmanned.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/publications/Accommodationsipbsect2.pdf>

Vocational Rehabilitation

State Agencies of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) are an important resource for improving education outcomes

- Youth ages 16- 24 account for one third of all VR clients¹⁵
- VR can support education and training in the service of a vocational goal¹⁶
- States are innovating to improve transition of high school students to VR services and employment¹⁷
- Ten percent of young adults clients with PD received educational support. Nearly half completed their VR goal. ¹⁸

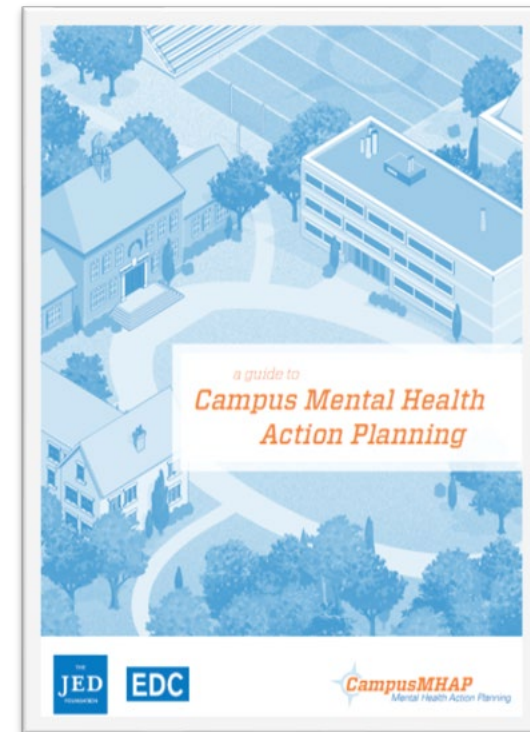


A thumbnail image of a document titled "Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): A Young Adult's Guide". The document includes a header with the title and date "April 2012". It features a small photograph of two young men sitting at a table, one looking at a laptop. The text on the page is organized into sections with bold headings: "The Word on Work - Tip Sheet 6", "Transition Services", "Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)", "Funding for Other Needed Services to Help You Work", "Vocational Counseling", "Job Development", "Post-Employment Services", and "Other Services".

Campus Based Supports and Interventions

Environmental Supports ¹⁹

- Improve communication
- Educate the college community
- De-stigmatize mental illness



Campus Based Supports and Interventions

Changes in Policies ²⁰

- Leave of absence protocols
- Individualized re-entry requirements
- Policies for self-harm other than zero tolerance
- MOUs with local hospitals



My Mental Health Rights on Campus

Tools for School - Tip Sheet 5 **TRANSITIONS ETC** January 2012

Are you nervous about attending college if you have a mental health condition? If so, this information will give you the knowledge you need to address your rights, rules, and resources while at college.

Can my school discipline me for something I think happened because of my mental health condition? It depends...

- Not if the school is discriminating against you because you have a mental health condition resulting in a disability. You are entitled to request a hearing and/or appeal process in most schools if you think you are being discriminated against.

Disciplining you because of hospitalizations and related absences may be discrimination, and therefore, against the law. Get some legal help/advice if you want to appeal a disciplinary action.

- If your behavior violates a school's code of conduct, their disciplinary action may not be considered discriminatory as long as it is consistently applied to all students. Find out about the discipline policy and the disciplinary practice (such as "zero tolerance") in your school.

A school may be able to discipline you for disorderly conduct if it's in their rules, even if the behavior is caused by a mental health condition. Every school has different policies and the consequences of your actions may vary so find out the code of conduct at your school.

- Having an education accommodation may help prevent behavior that can get you in trouble. You can get an accommodation if you have a documented disability. See the tip sheet on accommodations at <http://aba.unmc.edu/transitionsETC/Resource/Publications.html>

Do not take on your school by yourself! You may need legal help to deal with these issues. You can get more information from the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law <http://www.bazelon.org/> and the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) www.ndrn.org

Can my school require me to take a leave of absence? It depends...

- A school should not impose a leave of absence simply because you have a record of a mental health diagnosis. A leave should only be imposed after an individualized assessment has been made to determine that the school considers you to be at risk of harming yourself or others.
- The school should also provide you with the same withdrawal arrangements as if you were leaving due to physical health reasons. Check your school's policies.
- If the school tries to make you leave involuntarily, due to your mental health condition, it should give you "due process protections." You can also file a complaint with the disability compliance officer and/or the civil rights office. See what your school's policies are regarding appeals.

Due process protections include notifying the student of the action the school is considering and an explanation of why the school believes that such an action is necessary. The student and his or her representative should have an opportunity to respond and provide relevant information.

*Codes of conduct may also be called "Expectations of Students" or "Conduct Requirements."

Campus Based Supports and Interventions

Educational Accommodations 21

- Students are unaware of rights or fear disclosure
- Disability staff don't know how to accommodate PD



Getting Accommodations at College: Tools for School

Tip Sheet 2 TRANSITIONS BYC March 2011

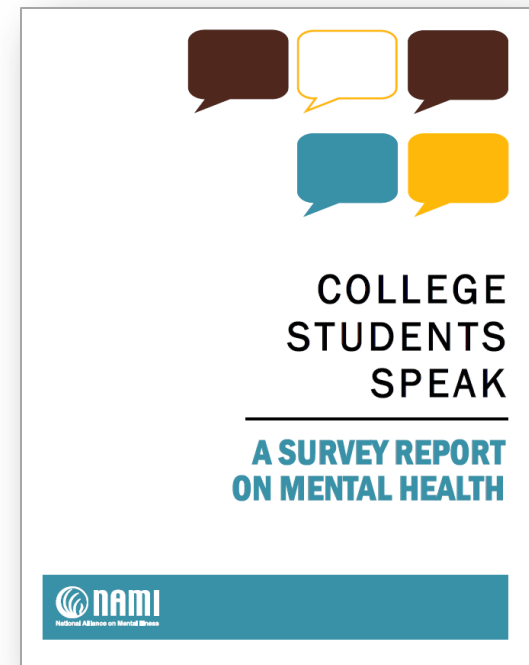
If you are having trouble with school due to mental health, your school is obligated to provide extra supports and services to help you succeed. These supports and services are called accommodations and they can make a difference! Your school may also make some modifications to the courses at your request.

What Accommodations or Modifications Can I Ask For?

- What Do I Need In the Classroom?**
 - Preferred seating
 - Breaks allowed during class
 - Voice recorded lectures
 - Classmate acts as a note-taker
 - Text and syllabus available in advance
 - Class materials available on computer
 - Frequent feedback on ongoing class work
 - Alternate formats for assignments
- What Do I Need During Exams?**
 - Exams in alternate formats such as written, oral, or electronic
 - Extended time for test taking
 - Exams given one-on-one
 - Breaks allowed throughout test
 - Testing in a room with limited distractions
 - Allow exam to be taken in 2-3 sessions throughout the span of a few days
- What Do I Need Completing Assignments?**
 - Extended time to complete assignments without lateness affecting grade
 - Advance notice of assignments
 - Textbook available on tape
 - Assistive technology available for assignments
 - Working in pairs on in-class assignments
 - Help with assignments during hospitalization
- In General?**
 - Reduced course load (being a full time student without having to be signed up for the normally required 12 credits)
 - First choice for signing up for classes to make a less stressful schedule
 - Textbook given in different format (on computer/on tape)
 - Incomplete given instead of failure if relapse occurs
 - Assistance with filling out financial aid/registration forms
 - And more!

Campus Based Supports and Interventions

- Campus Mental Health Counseling
- Peer Support
- Suicide Prevention



Supported Education-Definitions

- Services that enable a person to choose an educational goal, pursue activities needed to achieve that goal, then maintain those activities until goal achievement (Choose, Get, Keep)
- Interventions that support and assist to access, enroll, retain and succeed in postsecondary education
- Interventions that provides assistance, preparation, and support for enrollment in, and completion of, postsecondary educational programs.
- Interventions designed to assist individuals in making choices about education and training and to assist them in maintaining their “student status” until their educational goal is achieved ^{22,23}



Key Components²⁴

- Coordination with mental health services
- Use of specialized SEd staff
- Career/vocational counseling
- Help with financial aid
- Help to develop skills to cope in academic settings
- On campus information about rights/resources
- Off campus mentorship and support
- Access to academic supports
- Access to general supports



Supported Education-Models

- **Classroom model** -classes on campus for information and support
- **Onsite model** -individual support provided by educational institution
- **Mobile support** -support and services through a MH agency
- **Free-standing model** -support through other organizations such as clubhouses



Values of Supported Education

Similar to the values of supported employment and rehabilitation in general

- Integrated educational settings
- Choice and self-determination
- Provision of supports as needed and wanted
- Focus on skill development rather than on symptoms/diagnosis/pathology alone



SEd—State of the Field

- SEd developed/tested mostly with adults who have serious mental illness through MH agencies
- Some models involve Offices of Disability Services on campuses
- Models not tested with young adults and may need to be adapted
- While values of SEd may be same across lifespan, the issues confronting young adults may vary
- Means of communicating information and supporting young adults may also be different



Effectiveness of Supported Education- Systematic review–1990-2010; updated in 2013²⁵

- Writings on the principles and processes of providing supported education
- Found 41 articles; 21 reviewed for research quality
- Very limited number of rigorous studies
- Simple pre post studies; descriptions of models
- One large RCT in the literature
- Two new fidelity measures are available^{26,27}, but could not locate research studies utilizing fidelity assessments



Outcomes Generally Examined in SEd

- Educational engagement
- Enrollment in educational setting
- Educational attainment (components completed, acquisition of degree)
- Employment outcomes
- Subjective measures such as self esteem/mastery
- Quality of life



Effectiveness of SEd

- No evidence from a randomized trial or well controlled quasi experimental trial that participation in a supported education intervention results in significantly greater educational engagement or enrollment
- No significant difference in the employment rates at follow-up of individuals participating in a supported education intervention versus those not participating



Effectiveness of SEd

- Suggestive evidence of improvements in employment and educational status as a result of participation in a supported education intervention
- Self esteem/quality of life may improve
- Individuals who remain engaged in SEd may complete courses and achieve satisfactory GPA
- Evidence is weak



Conclusions

- Several studies suggest that SEd is a viable model
- Improvements in educational status and attainment suggestive, but studies weak and older
- Therefore: not enough evidence to say that there is robust effectiveness data for SEd models



Promise on Horizon

- Nuechterlein-recent onset schizophrenia-career development intervention based on SE-IPS model²⁸
- RAISE study—multisite NIMH study focusing on young adults
- Salzer/Gill/Mullen -2013 RCT underway but effectiveness data not yet available
- Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation has an exploratory study combining supported education component with supported employment-no preliminary data
- Two preliminary studies done in OT field—Australia and NYC--
BRIDGE



Lessons Learned-Landscape of Supports

- Policy innovation in special education has been beneficial—but we don't know why it is effective
- Young adults with SMHC lag behind general population in educational attainment
- College campuses seem unprepared to assist with challenges of SMHC population
- Literature includes support strategies but few are tested



Lessons Learned

- Adaptations of existing models for young adults is needed
- Further adaptation and innovation is needed for special populations such as those involved in foster care or the criminal justice system
- No data currently exist that speak to long term outcomes of SEd



Next steps for research—we need:

- Additional data about barriers and facilitators to educational attainment—from perspective of young adults with SHMC
- Innovation, adaptation, refinement of models of SEd
- Specification and rigorous testing of SEd models
- Rigorous evaluation of models that focus on young adults with SMHC on campus



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