TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD:
PROGRAM MODELS AND EVIDENCED-BASED PRACTICE SUMMARY

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Young Adults Round Table
Jackson County Community Mental Health Fund
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Kansas City’s Leader for Evaluation, Research, and Consultation Services
Picture: One of Bartle Hall’s art deco pylons, an unmistakable fixture in the Kansas City skyline.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Resource Development Institute (RDI), under contract with the Jackson County Community Mental Health Fund, worked to identify and collect detailed information as a foundation for the identification, adaptation, and/or development and implementation of a collaborative service model for transitioning young adults in Jackson County. As part of this larger project, a review of research and literature was conducted to identify supported practices, service models, and promising programs. The results of this review are presented in this report.

Attached are descriptions of 16 transition programs and 3 practice models. Of the programs listed, three were based on one of the two models, the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) and Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) models. The Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) model, the third model included in this report, is the basis for one of the selected programs. The models upon which the other 12 programs were based were not clearly identified in the literature; however, all of the models incorporated a Systems of Care approach. The TIP, ACT, and TFC models are included as a part of the program model table.

According to TIP, ACT and the programs selected for this report, effective transition programs: are strengths based, youth driven, multi-agency collaborations that strengthen youths’ ties to community, family and friends; encourage family and youth involvement in every aspect of the program; and provide individual, developmentally appropriate service plans. The programs offer 24-hour information hotlines and emergency funds to assist youth in crisis, and provide housing, education, employment, money management and goal setting/future planning services to assist youth in developing general life skills. These programs also: advocate for changes that might improve youths’ experience with the foster care system; seek input from a steering committee or board comprised of youth that are currently in foster care as well as foster care alumni and their families; and offer supportive services for the families, communities, and agencies with which foster youth are involved. The TFC model and program focus on therapeutic interventions that will enable youth to experience better outcomes. The data contained in the model/program list is summarized below.

- Three of the five programs funded from 2002-2006 by SAMSHA’s Partnership for Youth Transition (PYT) initiative were based on the TIP Model.
- One of the three programs that utilized the TIP model combined it with the ACT model.
- All of the SAMSHA programs based on the TIP model were strengths based.
- All programs/models indicated that facilitating multi-agency collaborations and improving youths’ ties to community, family and friends were key program elements.
- Education/employment services were a part of all but two programs and the TFC model.
Nine of the 16 programs listed provide housing support/services as a program goal.

Family involvement was key for both models and eight of the programs.

TIP, ACT and eight of the programs provided general life skills services and emphasized youth involvement in all aspects of the program.

The importance of health care access was stressed by five programs.

Five programs also indicated that they were youth driven.

Three programs and the ACT model identified financial services/money management, and supportive groups as key elements.

Providing education/supportive services to the youths’ families, communities and involved agencies is included by four programs and at least two of the program models.

Advocacy, legal assistance and establishing a youth steering committee or board were identified as essential elements of a transition program by three programs and at least one of the program models.

Three programs indicated that they serve youth and young adults up to age 25.

24-hour information hotlines, emergency funds, assessment based service plans and developmentally appropriate services were also mentioned by more than one program as being a key element.

Web addresses for all programs and models are located in endnotes.

**Transition Programs**

**Adolescent Outreach Program**

(Massachusetts)

**Goal:**
To provide intensive, individualized skills assessment and training to youth ages 14-21 in out-of-home placement.

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Outcomes scheduled to be evaluated December 2007 by the Administration for Children and Families.
- Workers have an active caseload of approximately 15 youth.
- Workers meet with youth who are not on their active caseload on an ad-hoc basis to assist with specific independent living tasks (e.g., completing college financial aid forms).
- Weekly meetings between the worker and youth.
- Youth-directed.
- Emphasizes permanency achievement, pursuit of education and employment goals, and development of a transitional living plan.
- Workers serve as experts who provide consultation and training to other caseworkers on independent living topics.
Casey Family Programs

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Advocacy for advances in child-welfare practice and policy.
- Collaboration with foster, kinship, and adoptive parents to provide safe, loving homes for youth in our direct care.
- Collaboration with counties and states to improve services and outcomes for youth in out-of-home care.
- Inclusion of foster care alumni and their families.
- Assistance for youth in:
  - Establishing ties to a community and to supportive friends,
  - Accessing physical and mental health services,
  - Mastering daily life skills,
  - Accessing education (vocational or academic), and
  - Obtaining employment and job-search skills.
- Accessing safe housing.

**Comprehensive Youth Transition Program**
(Pennsylvania PYT)

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Based on Transition to Independence Process (TIP).
- Youth-driven.
- Serves young adults ages 14 to 25 years who have emotional or behavioral health needs.
- Partnership with young adults to work with local youth-serving agencies and organizations, as well as others, to deliver a seamless, highly flexible array of services and supports to youth and their families.
- Education and employment, housing and health insurance, as well as mental and physical health services.
- Daily living skills and financial management.
- Linkages to providers and systems as needed.
- Information and education on numerous topics.
- Youth mentors and transition coordinators.
- Youth support groups.
- Social opportunities.

**Goal:**
To provide and improve—and ultimately to prevent the need for—foster care.

**Goal:**
To help young adults to transition into adulthood by addressing prolonged dependency on social services, education, employment, housing, health insurance, physical health, daily living skills and financial planning as well as the real risks for school failure, unemployment, involvement with police and correctional systems.
**Goal:**
To help foster and probation youth ages 14 to 15 achieve their emancipation goals and begin the process to successful independent living through a combination of workshops, field trips, in-home tutoring, and mentoring.

**ESTEP-Tutoring: Early Start to Emancipation Preparation - Tutoring**
(Los Angeles, CA)

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Outcomes scheduled to be evaluated December 2007 by the Administration for Children and Families.
- Provided through The Community College Foundation under contract to the Department of Children and Family Services.
- Up to 65 hours of tutoring and mentoring to foster youth who are one to three years behind grade level in reading or math.
- Tutors meet one-on-one with the youth in the youth’s foster home.
- Tutors are encouraged to continue the mentoring relationship by meeting or speaking with the youth at least once a month until the youth turns 18.

**Independent Living-Employment Services Program**
(Bakersfield, CA)

**Goal:**
To enable foster youth age 16 and older or youth who have been in foster care after their 16th birthday to achieve self-sufficiency prior to exiting the foster care system by providing independent living skills assessment, training and services, as well as a written transition independent living plan for every participant.

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Outcomes scheduled to be evaluated December 2007 by the Administration for Children and Families.
- Collaboration between the Children’s Services Division (child welfare) and the Employment Services Division (public assistance).
- Offers a series of nine classes three times a year.
- High school/college credits for class completion.
- Weekly job listings.
- Individualized job search counseling.
- Referrals for foster youth and former foster up to age 21.
- Modest clothing allowance to purchase outfits appropriate for interviews.
- ILP offers activities such as:
  - computer camp,
  - a ropes course outing,
  - a GPA Incentive outing, Independent City, Kern County California Youth Connection (CYC) meetings/activities,
Transition to Adulthood: Program Models and Evidence-Based Practice Summary

LST: Life Skills Trainingvi
(Lo Angeles, CA)

Key Elements of Program:
- Outcomes scheduled to be evaluated December 2007 by the Administration for Children and Families.
- Provided through The Community College Foundation under contract to the Department of Children and Family Services.
- Thirty hours of life skills training over five weeks.
- Classes held on community college campuses throughout Los Angeles County.

Goal:
To provide a classroom-based life skills training program that increases educational attainment, higher employment rates and stability, greater interpersonal and relationship skills, reduced non-marital pregnancy and births, and reduced delinquency and crime rates among foster youth ages 16 and over.

Missouri Chafee Foster Care Independence Programvii

Key Elements of Program:
- Emergency funds to cover auto repairs, utility payments, food, rent, etc.
- Support services that provide referrals to resources and identify a personal advisor who has a personal interest in the youth and truly cares about them.
- Educational assistance that involves realistic goal setting, selecting the appropriate resource, or assistance in completing financial aid forms. This program may also provide some limited tuition/book assistance.
- Job training that offers referrals to training sites with possible financial assistance during the training period.

Goal:
To help youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18 make a successful, self-sufficient and productive transition to adulthood. CFCIP also expands the Independent Living Program to provide services to youth who have left foster care after age 18, but have not yet reached age 21.
Housing assistance that includes money for food, rent, security deposits, utility deposits, and/or start-up kits with supplies and necessary furniture.

**Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC)**

**Key Elements of Program:**

- Intensity of training, support, and supervision of foster parents distinguishes MTFC from other types of Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC).
- Promising evidence-based outcomes.
- Evidenced based practice according to TFC.
- Evidence of the feasibility and effectiveness of MTFC obtained from eight randomized trials and numerous other studies.
- Six-month intensive program that includes:
  - Intense training, support, and supervision of foster parents (both pre-service and in-service),
  - Close supervision of youth and minimized association with deviant peers (only one youth is placed in each TFC home),
  - Proactive, structured behavior management (individualized points and level system),
  - Weekly therapy and skill-building,
  - Daily call with MTFC staff to monitor youth behavior,
  - 24-hour access to family’s supervisor, and
  - In-home coaching on how to manage difficult behaviors.
- Family therapy with the youth’s aftercare placement (e.g., family to which the child will return).
- Intensity of training, support, and supervision of foster parents distinguishes MTFC from other types of TFC.
**Key Elements of Program:**

- Encourages counties to provide services to youth in foster care ages 13 through 15 and to youth and young adults who were discharged from their custody as teens but prior to their 18th birthday.
- A service plan based on an assessment completed by the youth and his or her caregiver, concerning the youth’s strengths and needs for further information and training that also includes the youth’s interests and goals and responsibilities for fulfilling the plan.
- Services are individualized but usually include group activities; participation in community activities that promote maturity; one-on-one instruction; volunteer activities; employment; specific life skills training; exposure to educational and vocational resources, etc.
- Reimburses each county Department of Social Services for program operations.
- Desired outcomes for all young adults from the foster care system are:
  - Sufficient income to meet daily needs,
  - A safe and stable place to live,
  - Sufficient academic and/or vocational training that is in keeping with the youth’s goals, interests, and abilities,
  - Connections to and emotional support from a variety of adults outside of the public child welfare system,
  - Avoidance of high risk behaviors,
  - Postponement of parenthood until emotionally and financially capable of parenting, and
  - Access to routine mental health, health and dental health care.

**Goal:**
To provide services to all youth in foster care age 16 to 18 and to those young adults who are voluntarily in care between the ages of 18 and 21, as well as to young adults who aged out of foster care at age 18 in order to help these youth and young adults have better outcomes.
PACT 4: Putting All Communities Together 4 Families
(Minnesota)

Goal:
To work as a collaborative to reduce duplication and provide a family driven continuum of quality, innovative, and cost-effective, culturally sensitive and strength-based services for children and their families, and implement a more prevention focused and family friendly system of care.

Key Elements of Program:
- Collaboration between county social service, public health, and corrections agencies; school districts; mental health providers; and other child serving agencies to fill gaps in services and reduce duplication.
- Strength based and outcome driven.
- Value children and families and treat them with respect.
- Parents input and involvement.
- Supports for families.
- Only grant site in the country with three System of Care Grants for children’s mental health (Project SUCCEED, the Wraparound Initiative, and PRIDE) in the same location.

PAL: Preparation for Adult Living Program
(Texas)

Goal:
To ensure that older youth in substitute care are prepared for their inevitable departure from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services’ care and support and to provide each of these youth with skills and resources they will need to be healthy, productive adults.

Key Elements of Program:
- Initial assessment of youth’s general readiness to live independently around their 16th birthday using the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment that is used to develop individual service plans.
- Post-assessment conducted between the youths 17th birthday and two months after discharge from substitute care.
- Provision of training to assist youth in developing necessary future planning, money management, personal, interpersonal and job skills as well as assistance obtaining adequate housing, transportation and health care to function as an adult.
- Optional support services based on need and availability of funding including:
  - Vocational assessment and/or training,
  - GED Classes,
  - Preparation for college entrance exams,
  - Driver education,
  - High school graduation expenses counseling, and
Volunteer mentoring.

- Provision of a transitional living allowance of up to $1,000, distributed in increments not to exceed $500 per month, to youths who fully participate in the PAL program after they leave care.
- Provision of up to $3,000 in aftercare room and board assistance, distributed in increments of up to $500 per month, that may be used for rent, rent deposit, utilities, and food/groceries.
- Texas Youth Hotline resource for youths under age 21.
- Tuition and fees waivers for foster youth who attend state supported vocational schools, colleges, and universities.
- Partnerships with Texas A&M University at Commerce, the University of Texas at Arlington, the University of Texas at Pan American, Southwest Texas State University and Western Texas College, and Texas A&M University at College Station.
- PEAKS Camps.
- Statewide/Regional Teen Conference.
- College Weekend.
- Statewide Youth Leadership Committee.

**Partnership for Youth Transition (Washington PYT)**

**Key Elements of Program:**

- Combines TIP and ACT Models.
- Targets youth 14-21 years of age.
- Use of Transition Facilitators.
- Use of Peer Mentors/Supporters.
- Community & provider education.
- Targeted education and support for families.
- Use of a community based strategic planning process.
- An infrastructure that can identify & address policy and funding barriers and sustainability issues.
- Enhanced employment services to the target population.
- Integration and coordination of existing services.
- Use of young adults as service providers and advocates.
- Expansion of the role of youth in governance, service provision, and evaluation.

**Goal:**

To build a system of treatment to address the particular difficulties that youth with serious emotional disturbances or serious mental illnesses face in making a successful transition to adulthood.
Institutes a long term outcome evaluation.
Steering Committee made up of youth/young adults, parents, and representatives of key participating agencies.

**Portfolio for Success (Maine PYT)**

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Partnership between the youth and agencies who are involved in the transition of adolescents with special health care needs including: the Maine COT system, the School to Work. Partnerships, LEARNS Maine Cite, and representatives from adolescents, parents, health care providers, employers, and other system representatives such as social service providers, school personnel, higher education faculty, policy makers and community members.
- Adolescent-centered procedures through which adolescents are identified, plan for their transition, and obtain support and services necessary for successful transition.
- Education and training for providers and community members involved in adolescent transition about the special needs of this group.
- Technical assistance to providers, schools, employers, etc. who are involved in the transition of adolescents with special health care needs.

**Goal:**
To increase high school and college graduation and employment rates among youth, ages 14 to 21 and continuing to 25, with serious mental illnesses and to decrease homelessness, substance abuse, and criminal activities.

**PRIDE: Persons Realizing Independence & Developing Empowerment (Minnesota PYT)**

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Based on Transition to Independence Process (TIP).
- Teaches community-relevant skills.
- Encourages completion of secondary education.
- Exposure to community-life experiences.
- Promotes movement into post-school employment, educational opportunities, living situations, and community life.

**Goal:**
The intent of this project is to develop, implement, and document models of comprehensive programs to help support youth, ages 17 to 24, with serious emotional disturbances or emerging serious mental illnesses as they enter adulthood.
Transitions to Adulthood: Program Models and Evidence-Based Practice Summary

- Transcends the age barriers typical of child versus adult services.
- Respects the self-determination of young people.
- Assists parents and youth with the transition between the parent-driven, child-focused wraparound system to the person-centered, client-driven TIP process.

**RECONNECT: Responsibilities, Education, Competency, Opportunities, Networking, Neighborhood, Employment, and Collaboration for Transition (Utah PYT)**

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Based on Transition to Independence Process (TIP).
- Involvement of various government/private entities and community and business member including: mental health, substance abuse, education, child welfare, health, and homeless youth shelters. In addition, representatives from ethnic/racial communities, parent organizations, and youth in the development of project concept.
- Community consensus on the design and implementation plan of the service model.
- Developmentally appropriate, strength-based, youth-focused, family engaged, culturally competent, outcome driven, community-oriented, comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated model of service.
- Assists youth age 14 to 21 with emotional disturbances or emerging mental illnesses to gain competency of functioning in adulthood in areas of employment, education, living situation, and community life adjustment.

**St. Louis Aging Out Initiative**

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Targets 16-year-olds in residential or transitional living arrangements.
- Youth followed through age 25.

**St. Louis Aging Out Initiative**

**Goal:**
To assist youth, between the ages of 14-21 and with serious emotional disturbances or emerging mental illnesses, to successfully transition from children to adulthood.
Transition to Adulthood: Program Models and Evidenced-Based Practice Summary

Practice Models

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)

Goal:
To lessen or eliminate the debilitating symptoms of mental illness each individual client experiences and to minimize or prevent recurrent acute episodes of the illness, to meet basic needs and enhance quality of life, to improve functioning in adult social and employment roles, to enhance an individual’s ability to live independently in his or her own community, and to lessen the family’s burden of providing care.

Key Elements of Program:
- Identified as an evidenced-based practice by California Institute for Mental Health.
- Focuses on persons with severe mental illness.
- Psychopharmacologic treatment.
- Individual supportive therapy.
- Mobile crisis intervention.
- Hospitalization.
- Substance abuse treatment, including group therapy.
- Behaviorally oriented skill teaching (supportive and cognitive-behavioral therapy), including structuring time and handling activities of daily living.
- Supported employment, both paid and volunteer work.
- Support for resuming education.
- Support, education, and skill-teaching for family members.
- Collaboration with families.
- Direct support to help clients obtain legal and advocacy services, financial support, supported housing, money-management services, and transportation.
Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC)

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Identified as a promising practice by National Child Traumatic Stress Network.
- Consultants Inc.
- Explicitly focuses on treatment.
- Provides substantial training and supervision for treatment parents (most training is done prior to placement and regular, on the job coaching occurs less frequently MTFC).
- Parents viewed as front-line practitioners rather than parent substitutes.
- Limits the number of youth in each home to allow for individualized treatment, attention and supervision.

**Goal:**
To provide a less restrictive and less costly alternative to standard out-of-home interventions (e.g., residential treatment, hospitalization, group home) that allows youth who have problems that have escalated to a point where residential or out-of-home interventions are necessary to be maintained in a community- and family-based setting.

Transition to Independence Process Model

**Key Elements of Program:**
- Identified as a promising practice by California Institute for Mental Health.
- Engages young people in a relationship with a caring adult to plan for their own future.
- Tailors services and supports to be accessible, coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and build on strengths.
- Acknowledges personal choice in the participant’s need to find their own way.
- Ensures a safety net of support, including family, to reduce risks.
- Strengthens young people’s competencies to assist them in achieving greater self-sufficiency and confidence.
- Helps youth maintain a focus on outcomes.
- Involves youth, parents and other community partners in the TIP system at all stages and levels.

**Goal:**
To assist those young people (ages 14-25 years old) in achieving, within their potential, their goals in the transition domains of employment, education, living situation, and community life functioning.
ENDNOTES


ii Web Site: http://www.casey.org

iii Web Sites: http://ntacyt.fmhi.usf.edu/partnership/sites_detail.cfm?siteid=3; http://ntacyt.fmhi.usf.edu/partnerships/files/PA_LM.doc


v Web Sites: http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/NR/rdonlyres/6D0E379A-013F-4497-81A3-C08106F0C15F/0/foster_youth_update.pdf; http://www.co.kern.ca.us/dhs/FosterFamilyResources/independent_living_program.html


ix Web Site: http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/c_srv/cserv_ind.htm


xi Web Site: https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Preparation_For_Adult_Living/

xii Web Site: http://ntacyt.fmhi.usf.edu/partnership/sites_detail.cfm?siteid=5

xiii Web Site: http://ntacyt.fmhi.usf.edu/partnership/sites_detail.cfm?siteid=1

xiv Web Site: http://ntacyt.fmhi.usf.edu/partnership/sites_detail.cfm?siteid=2

xv Web Site: http://ntacyt.fmhi.usf.edu/partnership/sites_detail.cfm?siteid=4

xvi Web Site: http://www.epworth.org/Programs%20Pages/Aging%20OutQuickFact%20SheetFINAL.pdf

xvii Web Site: http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=About_Treatments_and_Supports&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8075

xviii Web Site: http://www.nationalcasa.org/JudgesPage/Article/therapeutic_foster_care.htm