

## **Policy Recommendations to Promote and Sustain Effective Community Transition Systems**

**Policy reform** is needed at the local, state, and federal levels to promote the development, implementation, and sustainability of quality and effective community transition systems for youth and young adults with emotional/behavioral difficulties (EBD) and their families.

- Davis and Koyanagi (2005) formulated basic tenets that could guide development of transition to adulthood policies.
- Unruh and Clark (2009) and Clark, Unruh, and Deschênes (2010) have adapted and expanded these to incorporating lessons learned from our work on system development and TIP model implementation.

### **Recommendations and Considerations for Promoting Discussion and Action on Policy Reform** (03/31/2010)

1. Continuity of services and funding by redefining the age range for transition to be 14 through 29 years old (or a similar age range such as 14-25 or 16-29).
2. Access to and coordination of child and adult services to promote progress across all transition domains (i.e., employment, education, living situation, personal effectiveness/wellbeing, and community-life functioning).
3. Provision of developmentally-appropriate, stigma-free, culturally-competent, trauma-informed, and appealing services that are individually tailored to the interests, needs and goals of the young person, based on his/her voice and choice.
4. Appropriate supports, services, and education for family members (including parent-to-parent support organizations).
5. Emphasis on promoting “connections for life” and building social and economic capital with young people.
6. Encourage full and authentic partnering and participation with youth, young adults, parents, other family members, and community representatives in program and governance roles related to transition systems.
7. Build work force capacity through personnel training programs (e.g., pre-service and in-service training, web-base and college curricula) and field-based coaching to ensure that evidence-supported practices are used in working with young people. Work force capacity will need to include provisions for hiring youth, young adults, and parents in community transition systems.
8. Local, state, and federal support of evaluation and research to advance the development, implementation, and sustainability of effective and cost-efficient transition practices and systems.

**Refer to page 2 for some selected resources.**

### Some Selected Resources:

The new **Transition Handbook** contains several chapters related to the implementation of community transition systems and policy reform. For example:

Hoffman, C., Heflinger, C., Athay, M., & Davis, M. (2009). Policy, funding, and sustainability: Issues and recommendations for promoting effective transition systems. In H.B. Clark & D.K. Unruh (Eds.), *Transition of youth and young adult with emotional or behavioral difficulties: An evidence-supported handbook*. (pp. 235-262). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

Sieler, D., Orso, S., & Unruh, D.K. (2009). Partnerships for Youth Transition: Creating options for youth and their families. H.B. Clark & D.K. Unruh (Eds.), *Transition of youth and young adult with emotional or behavioral difficulties: An evidence-supported handbook*. (pp. 117-140). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

Davis, M., Green, M., & Hoffman, C. (2009). The service system obstacle course for transition-age youth and young adults. In H.B. Clark & D.K. Unruh (Eds.), *Transition of youth and young adult with emotional or behavioral difficulties: An evidence-supported handbook*. (pp. 25-46). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

Clark, H.B., & Hart, K. (2009). Navigating the obstacle course: An evidence-supported community transition system. In H.B. Clark & D.K. Unruh (Eds.), *Transition of youth and young adult with emotional or behavioral difficulties: An evidence-supported handbook*. (pp. 47-113). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

Unruh, D.K., & Clark, H.B. (2009). Futures focus: Practice, programs, system, policy, and research. In H.B. Clark & D.K. Unruh (Eds.), *Transition of youth and young adult with emotional or behavioral difficulties: An evidence-supported handbook*. (pp. 325-344). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

The **System of Care Handbook** has several chapters of relevance to transition systems and policies. For example, this first one listed below provides an overview of the Partnerships in Youth Transition (PYT) applications and evaluation across five communities; and the second one a description of youth-guided systems.

Clark, H.B., Deschênes, N., Sieler, D., Green, M., White, G., & Sondheimer, D. (2008). Services for Youth in Transition to Adulthood in Systems of Care. In B.A. Stroul & G.M. Blau (Eds.), *The System of Care Handbook: Transforming Mental Health Services for Children, Youth, and Families* (pp. 517-543). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

Matarese, M., Carpenter, M., Huffine, C., Lane, S., & Paulson, K. (2008). Partnerships with youth for youth-guided systems of care. In B.A. Stroul & G.M. Blau (Eds.), *The System of Care Handbook: Transforming Mental Health Services for Children, Youth, and Families* (pp. 275-300). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

Goldman, S.K., Stroul, B., Nahme Huang, L., Koyanagi, C. (2008). Policy Implications: New Directions in child and adolescent mental health. In B.A. Stroul & G.M. Blau (Eds.), *The System of Care Handbook: Transforming Mental Health Services for Children, Youth, and Families* (pp. 643-662). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

**Special Research Issue of JBHS&R:** Transition to Adulthood Research: Process & Outcome Findings. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research*, 35(4).

Clark, H.B., Koroloff, N., Geller, J., & Sondheimer, D.L., (2008). Research on Transition to Adulthood: Building the Evidence Base to Inform Services and Supports for Youth and Young Adults with Serious Mental Health Disorders. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research*, 35(4), 365-372.

Potter, K., Bilder, S., Vander Stoep, A., Warner, L.A., & Alvarez, M.F. (2008). US patterns of mental health service utilization for transition-age youth and young adults. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research*, 35(4), 373-389.

**Please consider visiting** our websites for additional resources:

- Transition to Independence Process (TIP) model:
  - <http://tip.fmhi.usf.edu>
- National Network on Youth Transition for Behavioral Health (NNYT):
  - <http://nnyt.fmhi.usf.edu>

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