

Career Development for Transition-Aged Youth with Emotional Disturbances: Exemplary Practices of Florida Mental Health & Substance Abuse Agencies

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Executive Summary

Background

Relative to their peers in the general population, transition-age youth with emotional disturbances (TAY w/ED) face a challenging path to successful adulthood, particularly in the area of career development. These youth have significant difficulties progressing toward successful careers through obtaining early work experiences, completing their education and training at the secondary and post-secondary levels, and finding rewarding employment with possibilities for advancement. The implications of these career development difficulties for the long-term behavioral health of these youth are quite significant. Failing to achieve the transition to successful adult roles, particularly in the world of work, renders these youth vulnerable to a variety of poor outcomes with costly public health consequences such as continued, debilitating mental health problems, substance abuse dependence, and other serious issues (Davis & Koyanagi, 2005; Podmostko, 2007). Research has demonstrated the positive impact of certain evidence-based practices in improving career development outcomes such as supported employment (Twamley, Jeste, & Lehman, 2003). However, these strategies have not been adapted for TAY w/ED. Though an emerging literature on career development practices for TAY w/ED exists, this literature has not been systematically reviewed. In addition, efforts by publicly-funded sites in Florida to implement such programs have not been comprehensively described. The current project is designed to advance these aims to provide a basis for expanded implementation of career development programs for TAY w/ED in the state.

Method

The study had two primary aims: 1) Completion of a systematic review of the literature and consultation with experts on career development services for TAY w/ED (i.e., aged 14 -25) to identify exemplary practices for these programs; 2) Comprehensive descriptions of career development programs for TAY w/ED in the state, attending particularly to ways programs have implemented exemplary practices identified through existing literature and expert consultation. Statewide surveys of circuit level Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) administrators and Multi-agency Network for Students with Severe Emotional Disturbance (SEDNET) project administrators were used to identify programs. Data collection for the multiple case study included interviews with program directors, providers, TAY receiving services, and community partners, record reviews, and direct observations of services.

Results and Discussion

Eight conceptual clusters summarizing recommended aspects of services were identified based on the systematic review of literature describing career development programs for TAY w/ED. Many similarities between the summarized recommendations and recommendations identified in allied literatures (e.g., the supported employment literature and the literature on career development for TAY w/other disabilities) were noted. Interviews with content key informants shed further light on these areas. Conceptual clusters that were identified included the following:

(1) Strengths-based assessment and person-centered planning: Two ongoing and complimentary practices that focus on building a career development plan that is individualized to the identified strengths, preferences and goals of TAY w/ED. Experts indicated the importance of attending to matching the conditions as well as type or content of work experiences to strengths of TAY.

(2) Integration of employment and education: Recommendations related to this cluster included incorporation of complementary education and employment goals in the career development plan, coordination of support with education personnel, and individualization of educational programming. Experts emphasized the importance of beginning career development early with TAY w/ED to reduce school drop-out and maximize educational opportunities.

(3) Comprehensive service coordination: Comprehensive service coordination involves including career development services in a broader service package, providing services of sufficient intensity, and using multiple service modalities. Experts described three models for integrating career development and other services and described key helpful qualities of TAY service provider relationships.

(4) Developmentally appropriate: Needs for service adaptations were described in recognition of developmental priorities. Specific recommendations included responding pragmatically and non-judgmentally to shifting engagement, motivation, and goals. Experts emphasized the importance of training to discourage providers from attributing normal behaviors to ED.

(5) Community-based supports: Career development should occur in the community with an emphasis on competitive employment. Recommendations were identified for finding, cultivating, and matching community-based supports to TAY. Experts cautioned that support of community-based work experiences should not be allowed to compromise educational advancement.

(6) Promotion of skills and resources: Enhancing the personal skills of TAY and connections to sources of informal support promotes sustainable career development. Exemplary skills training is offered in relevant situations or otherwise incorporates real-life experiences of TAY to promote generalization. Informal supports should be involved extensively in plans and other aspects of services. Experts emphasized the importance of tailoring skills training to build on strengths.

(7) Long-term outcome orientation: A long-term outcome orientation involves tracking progress and providing support over sufficient time to ensure long-term positive career trajectories for TAY. Measurement of impact at the program level that is informative to quality improvement is also key. Experts indicated that certain types of commonly used outcome measures may not be appropriate for TAY.

(8) Non-stigmatizing services: Because community-based support can be stigmatizing to TAY, care must be exercised and TAY preferences followed regarding where and how support is provided and the extent and manner of communication with employers, educators, and others. Because of the potential for stigma, experts indicated that support must often be provided “off-site.”

The number of nominations of programs obtained from administrator surveys was small, suggesting that there are few programs to address career development needs of TAY w/ED in the state. By relaxing the initially specified set of selection criteria to include sites in operation less than three years and sites using sources of funding other than Medicaid funds, three sites were identified statewide, including: 1) the Transition Family Support Planning Team (TFSP) program of SEDNET District IV (Jacksonville and surrounding counties); 2) the Workforce Integration Through Highly Individualized Transition Services (“With It”) program of Bertha Abess Children’s Center (Miami-Dade County); and 3) the Young Adult Transition Program (YATP; Broward County).

Findings from the multiple case study provided many examples of practice principles from the literature review and ways to implement these with limited resources. Cross-site analysis suggested which practices may be more or less likely to be implemented by programs with limited funding. In addressing resource-related barriers, the three sites participating in the case study each illustrated a distinctive, overall approach to providing a variety of career development and other types of services in cooperation with other key stakeholders and organizations in their communities. An ideal approach to maximizing available resources may involve a combination of all three approaches.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The career development needs of TAY w/ED have been widely neglected in behavioral health systems until recently, but there is increasing awareness of this important issue such that it appears to be rapidly becoming a national priority. Results of the study provide an excellent resource to guide additional program development efforts at the local level in the state. However, as shown by the very small number of sites identified for the study, at present, state behavioral health systems are likely not providing an adequately facilitative context for these critical services. Thus, in addition to providing summary recommendations for adapting career development services to needs of TAY w/ED, the report includes a number of recommendations for policy changes and leadership at the statewide level, including recommendations for changes to Medicaid reimbursement guidelines, recommendations for leadership to help maximize the impact of Medicaid dollars spent on career development services for TAY w/ED, and recommendations for leadership to establish evaluation and process/fidelity monitoring mechanisms to establish the extent of impact occurring as a result of local innovation and statewide leadership efforts.

Practice Recommendations

The eight clusters based on the literature review and expert consultation generated the following eight guidelines for adapting career development practices to TAY w/ED:

Practice Recommendation #1: Integrate formal and informal methods of strengths-based assessment on an ongoing basis to facilitate person-centered planning for career development and other future goals.

Practice Recommendation #2: Integrate education and employment career development objectives through collaboration with secondary and post-secondary educators assisting individual TAY and developing more work-relevant programs in education settings.

Practice Recommendation #3: Coordinate multi-modal career development within a comprehensive service continuum at multiple levels involving providers and programs from across service sectors, and ensure the coordination process involves responsive, one-on-one relationships between TAY and providers that fit the TAY involved.

Practice Recommendation #4: Increase developmental appropriateness by understanding normative reasons for variation in TAY levels of service and employment opportunity engagement and motivation to pursue career development goals and providing services in a flexible manner to avoid exclusion of TAY based on this normative variability.

Practice Recommendation #5: Pursue job development and provide community-based support to TAY while avoiding possible stigmatization by monitoring and documenting opportunities available in the community, as demonstrated by TAY experiences, by optimizing the use of informal networks of program personnel and providing community-based career development assistance through partner agencies outside of the behavioral health sector, particularly through general employment assistance programs.

Practice Recommendation #6: Maximize the generalizability of career development related skills training by incorporating multiple intervention modalities and employing “real-life” situations, and increase the involvement of informal supports through a variety of strategies that reduce barriers to informal support participation in career development services.

Practice Recommendation #7: Commit to TAY on a long-term basis, and track outcomes at the individual and program levels to improve services for individuals and the quality of the program as a whole.

Practice Recommendation #8: Be aware of possibilities for stigmatization of TAY, and implement strategies shown in the field to reduce likelihood of stigmatization.

Collectively, the successes of the three fundamental approaches to coordination of the complex service arrays described in the multiple case study suggest the following recommendations for optimizing resources in implementing career development services:

Practice Recommendation #9: Create systems for the promotion of career development for TAY w/ED through a combination of facilitative networking, school-based services created to provide a springboard to post-secondary education and employment, and provider and program level partnering with specialty organizations in the community such as general employment assistance agencies.

The program with the clearest advantage among the three reviewed in terms of available resources was supported by Medicaid funds. This advantage was accomplished, in part, through close cooperation with the local DCF SAMH circuit office, suggesting the following recommendation:

Practice Recommendation #10: Work closely with DCF district offices starting from the program planning phase onward to assist in determining the best uses of Medicaid funding in combination with other funding sources to support the desired service continuum.

Given the qualitative similarities of career development problems across TAY w/ED and other groups facing career development challenges, career development literature for other groups are valid resources to consult in visioning, planning, developing, and implementing services. To the extent that the use of categorical labels such as ED as a basis for services may connote to providers or others in the community that TAY w/ED are fundamentally different in their needs for social inclusion and supports, the label may become a barrier to successful career development progress. These observations suggest the following practice recommendations:

Practice Recommendation #11: In planning services, providers should continue to consult extant career development literature on TAY and other populations facing significant challenges, including literature on TAY with disabilities and supported employment for older adults with severe mental illness.

Practice Recommendation #12: Consider possible implications of basing a service model on a potentially stigmatizing label and means for addressing this fundamental barrier such as carefully integrating principles of recovery-informed care into services.

Policy Recommendations

Although the goal of the present research was not to specifically investigate the levers by which the Agency for Health Care Administration or other stakeholders in the state could precipitate growth of the service niche of career development for TAY w/ED, several straightforward suggestions informed by our results should be considered for near and long-term planning informed by additional policy research. These include recommendations to facilitate behavioral health funding of career development services, recommendations to maximize the impact of this funding where available, and recommendations to ensure desired impact is being achieved and ongoing efforts are further enhanced through data collection and evaluation.

The following recommendations are offered related to funding and regulatory guidelines:

Policy Recommendation #1: Modify Medicaid reimbursement guidelines to underscore which specific career development services are fundable as part of a medically necessary service continuum and the circumstances under which these are fundable.

Policy Recommendation #2: Work with DCF at the State level to better operationalize methods for using Medicaid funding to support career development services or support specific reimbursable types of services provided in the context of comprehensive care programs such as those described in the case examples.

Policy Recommendation #3: Modify the Medicaid reimbursement structure in ways that encourage providers to spend more time for activities related to coordination with other providers and sectors in the community beyond simple referral (e.g., communicating with other providers, accompanying TAY to other agencies in the community, and participating in service coordination teams when efforts focus on individual cases in particular, etc.)

Policy Recommendation #4: Set an agenda for funding and regulatory reforms that reduce the likelihood of exclusion of TAY w/ED from services, particularly with respect to automatic discontinuation of services after missed appointments or arbitrary time periods in which no service encounter occurs.

Several recommendations are offered for maximizing the impact of funding through leadership at the state level:

Policy Recommendation #5: Identify and promote mechanisms for providers to form cross-agency and cross-sector collaborations to ensure an optimal range of career development, comprehensive services, and to avoid service duplication at the community level.

Policy recommendation #6: Promote excellence through sharing knowledge related to the development and implementation of career development services for TAY w/ED by supporting relevant services research and contributing to its dissemination (e.g., through distributing technical assistance material and supporting forums such as conferences and cross-site meetings).

Policy Recommendation #7: Help ensure impact by providing statewide leadership to identify suitable indicators and evaluation strategies for measuring individual career development progress and program effects.

Policy Recommendation #8: Provide leadership to local programs to develop common strategies for feasible, cost-effective utilization and evaluation data to support quality improvement.

Policy Recommendation #9: Support efforts to develop feasible process and fidelity measurement strategies to provide the capacity to link individual and program-wide changes to specific career development service innovations and emerging career development service models.

Background

Relative to their peers in the general population or others with disadvantages, transition-age youth and young adults with emotional disturbance (TAY w/ED) face a variety of serious challenges to healthy adjustment during their transition to adulthood (Clark & Davis, 2000). **Emotional disturbance** (ED) is generally defined as a mental health condition that is severe and persistent in nature and compromises functioning in one or more important domains (e.g., National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2004; U. S. Government, 1993). Consequences of ED for career development during the transition to adulthood appear to be particularly severe, such that TAY w/ED have shown very low employment rates compared to their age peers (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Davis & Vander Stoep, 1997; Karpur, Clark, Caproni, & Sterner, 2005; Stillington, Frank, & Carson, 1990; Vander Stoep et al., 2000). These youth also tend to receive less exposure to opportunities that increase the variety and quality of their employment options, such as post-secondary education and vocational training (Armstrong, Dedrick, & Greenbaum, 2003; Davis & Vander Stoep, 1997; Karpur et al., 2005; Vander Stoep et al., 2000; Vander Stoep, Weiss, Saldanha, & Cohen, 2003; Wagner, Blackorby, Cameto, & Newman, 1993).

The implications of these career development difficulties are quite significant. Links between employment status, quality of employment, and mental health rehabilitation and recovery are now well established in cross-sectional and prospective research (e.g., Bond et al., 2001; Ezzy, 1993; Harding, Brooks, Ashikaga, Strauss, & Breier, 1987; Mueser et al., 1997; Platt, 1984; Warr, 1987). Research on relationships between mental health symptoms and employment status among general populations of TAY illustrated similar links (e.g., Dooley & Prause, 1997; Fergusson, Horwood, & Lynskey, 1997). In addition, recent studies examining effects of employment experience among TAY w/ED suggested these links hold true for this population as well (Haber, Karpur, Deschenes, & Clark, in preparation; Karpur et al., 2005; Luecking & Fabian, 2000). In light of this evidence, identification and implementation of a range of career development services that focus on promoting employment of TAY w/ED could markedly improve their employment outcomes.

Distinctive Career Development Needs of TAY w/ED

Meta-analyses of intervention research have demonstrated the impact of certain evidence-based practices (i.e., practices with empirical support from rigorous methods such as randomized controlled or quasi-experimental trials; Miller, Zweben, & Johnson, 2005; Spring, Pagoto, Knatterud, Kozak, & Hedeker, 2007) in improving employment outcomes. One particular model of career development service delivery called ‘supported employment’ has shown both efficacy and effectiveness in improving career development outcomes, mental health status, role recovery, and mental health service utilization (Lehman, 1995; Twamley, Jeste, & Lehman, 2003). However, the strategies of supported employment have not been specifically adapted for TAY w/ED.

There are multiple reasons to question whether existing research findings on the use of supported employment will apply to TAY w/ED. First, samples used in existing research on supported employment have generally focused on older samples or included only small numbers of TAY w/ED. Second, because these studies have typically recruited individuals with SMI rather than those with other types of significant mental health problems, these studies may not apply to TAY w/ED with other types of specific diagnoses. In particular, generalizing these findings to youth and young adults with disruptive behavior disorders may be particularly problematic, given the close link between disruptive behavior diagnoses and criminal-offending and/or delinquent behavior (Wierson, Forehand, & Frame, 1992). Research on the effects of employment or career development services in transition-age criminal offending or delinquent populations has shown that these interventions may not be effective for these TAY (Uggen, 2000). If the number of hours worked (e.g., < 20) or amount of wages earned is high, some studies have shown that employment can increase criminal offending and substance use behavior, particularly among younger TAY (Bachman & Schulenberg, 1993; Staff & Uggen, 2003).

In addition to the above questions regarding the research on career development services for TAY w/ED, there is ample evidence to indicate that these TAY have distinctive needs. TAY in this population, for example, tend to have higher rates of workforce involvement and engagement in other forms of career development (e.g., school enrollment) than older individuals with similar mental health problems (e.g., Cook et al., 2005; Haber & Karpur, 2007). Employment is also very prominent in the post-secondary transition goals of TAY w/ED (Cameto, Levine, & Wagner, 2004). Thus, if their needs are appropriately addressed, these individuals may show greater potential for employment and career-related achievements than older populations.

Another distinctive issue faced by TAY w/ED—one that has sometimes complicated serving them in programs focused on older adults—is managing the competing demands of employment and education (Bellamy, Wilcox, Rose, & McDonnell, 1985; Egnew, 1993). Given the nature of the challenges faced by TAY w/ED, completion of high school and post-secondary education is likely to be delayed (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner et al., 2003), resulting in potentially competing educational and employment demands. Consequently, a promising strategy with particular applicability to TAY may be closely integrating educational and employment rehabilitation practices (e.g., Egnew, 1993; Phelps, 2003).

Finally, programs delivering career development services for adults with SMI have historically emphasized maintenance of employment stability once an employment opportunity is achieved. Patterns of employment tend to be quite unstable and complex in the TAY general population (e.g., Cooksey & Rindfuss, 2001) and among TAY w/ED (Zigmond, 2006). Experts have observed that, both for the general population in this age range and for individuals with ED, this pattern of instability is likely due, in part, to normative tasks of individuation and identity exploration (Arnett, 2004; Kastner & Wyatt, 1997; Vander Stoep, Davis, & Collins, 2001). Given that a higher level of employment instability is normative for the transition-age developmental period, expectations for TAY w/ED in programs delivering career development services clearly need to be different from those for older consumers.

Why Focus on Adapted or Promising Practices?

In response to the unique needs of TAY w/ ED as well as the lack of existing evidence-based career development services that are specifically designed for this population, many settings have developed new “promising” practices for career development services and/or adapted existing career development practices over the last two to three decades. A number of descriptive reports have been published regarding adaptation of services to TAY w/ED (e.g., Clark & Stewart, 1992; Egnew, 1993; Wehman & Revell, 1997; Wodarski, Wodarski, & Kim, 1989). Several evaluations also have been published (e.g., Bullis, 1999; Hagner, Cheney, & Malloy, 1999; Ellison, Danley, Bromberg, & Palmer-Erbs, 1999). The Transition to Independence Process (Clark, 1994, 2005), though designed to promote a range of transition-related outcomes (i.e., including but not limited to employment), has shown promise in improving employment outcomes in multiple evaluations, including a recent multi-site evaluation (Karpur et al., 2005, Haber, et al., in preparation). In the absence of evidence-based practices to meet “real-world” needs of specific populations (e.g. TAY w/ED), it is important to describe, document, and learn from such emerging practices. Such descriptive work, sometimes referred to as **practice-based evidence** (i.e., knowledge generated from careful observation of practices in the field rather than controlled experimental studies; Druss, 2007; Green, 2006), can also be useful in anticipating implementation and contextual issues that might arise in later dissemination of such promising practices (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005; Green, 2006).

Why Study These Services in Medicaid-Funded MHSAs?

Although service utilization in mental health settings decreases in late adolescence for individuals with ED, these individuals still frequently present in mental health service settings, particularly those classified with Axis I disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder (Stiles, Dailey, & Mehra, 2001). Thus, many TAY w/ED would still be expected to access and utilize mental health services. Research also suggests that career development services are most effective when well-integrated with mental health services, which is another excellent reason to examine how these career development interventions are implemented in mental health contexts (Cook et al., 2005). Furthermore, because effective career development services improve mental health as well as employment outcomes in adults, adaptation of career development services for TAY w/ED might decrease the mental health morbidity of this population as well, in turn decreasing its burden on the publicly-funded mental health care system. Career development services, while not mandated, clearly qualify as Medicaid fundable based upon “social necessity as articulated by Florida Medicaid service requirements².

Studying adapted and promising career development services in substance abuse treatment settings may also be an important step toward decreasing later utilization of costly, Medicaid-funded services. The lifetime prevalence of co-occurring substance use disorders among individuals with ED is extremely high (Weiss, 1992). Furthermore, the incidence of these disorders is likely during adolescence and young adulthood (Greenbaum et al., 1996). Thus, many TAY w/ED may present for services in substance abuse settings. This is suggested by two factors: the very high rates of co-occurring disorders in samples of TAY w/ED, and the very high rates of co-occurring disorders in substance abuse treatment settings, particularly among programs that are publicly funded and those that serve larger numbers of younger individuals (Ducharme, Knudsen, & Roman, 2006; Knudsen, Roman, & Ducharme, 2004). The use of substance abuse services by TAY w/ED is therefore a likely source of increased Medicaid-funded health expenditures in the behavioral health sector. Continued co-occurring substance abuse and mental health problems of TAY w/ED may also increase Medicaid costs substantially in the medical sector, as suggested by research on cost of medical service utilization among individuals with treated or untreated co-occurring disorders (Bartels et al., 1993; Dickey & Azeni, 1996; Morse et al., 2006).

Study Issues

This report summarizes results of two sub-studies designed to advance knowledge regarding promising programs for career development of TAY (i.e., youth aged 14-25), based on review of existing literature and a multiple case study of Medicaid-funded programs in Florida. Each sub-study objective is supported by two specific aims.

Sub-Study I: Identification of Principles and Practices

Objective. Identify principles and practices for effective adaptation of career development programs that would meet the needs of TAY (i.e., 14-25) w/ED

AIM #1: Literature Review. Systematically review literature on career development programs serving TAY w/ED to identify promising principles and practices.

AIM #2: Content Area Expert Consultation. Consult with content area experts to gain further insight and clarification into the principles and practices identified from the literature review.

Sub-Study II: Identification and Investigation of Florida Programs

Objective. Identify programs across the State of Florida that are implementing novel, promising practices or adapting existing adult career development services to meet the needs of TAY w/ED and conduct a multiple case study investigation.

AIM #1: Identification of Exemplary Florida Programs. Identify behavioral health programs that have developed exemplary career development services to meet the needs of TAY w/ED through a brief survey with Florida district administrators of the Department of Children and Families and the Multi-Agency Network for students with severe emotional disturbances.

AIM #2. Completion of Multiple Case Study. Complete a descriptive multiple case study to identify which promising practices identified through the literature review are evident in Florida career development programs for TAY w/ED, the methods used to implement these practices, and barriers to their implementation.

Methods

Sub-Study I: Identification of Principles and Practices

The first Sub-Study involved identifying principles and practices for effective adaptation of career development services by Medicaid-funded mental health and substance abuse agencies (MHSA) that would meet the needs of TAY w/ED. To accomplish this objective, two sources of information were consulted, including existing literature on career development programs for TAY w/ED and experts on these programs.

AIM #1: Literature Review.

Selection of sources. For the literature review, inclusion criteria required sources to 1) describe a specific career development program for TAY w/ED; 2) measure outcomes related to career development (i.e., employment or postsecondary education status) and provide descriptive summary or statistical tests (e.g., of pre to post differences) of these outcomes suggesting improvement of TAY resulting from enrollment in services; and 3) be published in a peer-reviewed article or book chapter. Additional materials describing programs (e.g., program manuals) were also consulted if these materials were explicitly referenced in one of the selected research articles. Sources published from 1987 through 2007 were included. PsychInfo and Web of Science databases were searched using all combinations of the following three categories of keywords: 1) mental disorder, emotional disturbance, behavior disorder; 2) employment, vocational rehabilitation, career development, and 3) youth, adolescent, young adult, and transition-aged. Backwards and forwards searches were then conducted to find any other sources that had been missed during the initial

database search. As a result, a total of seven sources meeting study criteria were identified, describing six distinct programs. See Table 1 below for a summary of the selected sources. An additional published article presenting further detail on two of the six programs found in the initial search and a program manual explicitly referenced in one of the articles were also included in the analyses. Although all programs reviewed described outcomes of TAY receiving services, these were not evaluated in rigorous designs. For example, only one of the sources used a comparison group to test for program effects. Consequently, these programs should be regarded as promising but with unsubstantiated effectiveness.

Data analysis: Generation of descriptive clusters. The specific features of the six programs described by study sources were listed and coded using a modified grounded theory approach. Specifically, two coders (i.e., the first and second authors of the report) independently: a) identified discrete features of programs, including general guidelines (e.g., “help youth to identify existing supports and resources in their community”), or specific content and/or structural features of programs (e.g., “didactic groups focused on job search, on the job, and social skills”); b) organized these features through constant comparative procedures into thematically similar groups, each of which was then given an overall descriptive label. Following independent completion of these procedures, coders shared their results and discrepancies between the sets of clusters independently generated by each coder were discussed and resolved.

Data analysis: Comparison to other literatures. Following the identification and analysis of recommendations for career development programs for TAY w/ED described above, results were further examined through a comparison to recommendations from other, closely related literature. The rationale for this comparison was to attempt to underscore possible unique elements of career development programs for TAY w/ED that could be further investigated through a consultation with experts (see “Aim #2: Expert Consultation”, below). Two literatures that appeared to be especially critical to better understand possible unique elements of career development programs for TAY w/ED included the literature on supported employment and on career development for TAY with disabilities generally (i.e., ED, but also learning, physical, and other disabilities). The literature on supported employment was used for comparison due to the fact that this literature has more rigorous empirical support than any other employment-related practice for individuals with mental health difficulties (see “Background”). The literature on career development services for TAY with disabilities was selected because it is closely related to literature on career development services for TAY w/ED, but much more extensive. A third literature selected for comparison purposes was the literature on vocational intervention for substance abusers. It was decided to include this literature in the comparative analyses due to the lack of attention to substance abuse issues in the literature on career development services for TAY w/ED, despite the high frequency of substance abuse issues in the population and the propensity for these issues to interfere with career development achievement (Davis & Koyanagi, 2005).

Rather than conducting additional systematic reviews, sources were selected to summarize the most important practice elements from supported employment, career development for TAY with disabilities, and vocational rehabilitation for substance abuse literature in adequate breadth and depth to permit informative comparisons. For supported employment, the two sources selected were a recent review (Bond, 2004), and, given the focus on comparison of discrete practice

elements, the fidelity measure for the individualized placement and support (IPS) model (SAMHSA, 2003). For the literature on career development for TAY with disabilities, two sources were also used, including two widely distributed reports from the National Collaborative on Workforce Disability for Youth (National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition, 2005; Podmostko, 2007). For the literature on vocational interventions for substance abuse, a recent critical review and synthesis of research was selected (Magura, Staines, Blankhertz, & Madison, 2004).

Systematic comparison of these related fields involved identifying their discrete program features in a similar manner to the approach used in the primary literature review.

Each feature was then compared to the specific features described in the literature on career development for TAY w/ED. Features that were unique, discrepant, or not mentioned were noted and described. For example, in the supported employment fidelity scale, a case load of 25 or less was mentioned as the optimal ratio of employment specialists to clients. Within the career development literature for TAY w/ED, a case load of 15 or less was specifically recommended. In each case in which a discrepancy was identified, a question was framed for the expert consultation survey to elicit expert opinion about the associated topic (e.g., recommendations for caseload in career development programs for TAY w/ED).

AIM #2: Expert Consultation.

Selection of content area experts. Individuals with expert knowledge related to career development services for TAY w/ED were identified as “content area experts” (referred to hereafter simply as “experts”). Several methods were used to generate a list of experts. Initially, this process began by reviewing the articles that examined programs providing career development services for TAY w/ED used in the literature review and making a list of the authors of these articles. Database searches were then conducted to establish whether these authors had published additional articles related to TAY with disabilities or career development services. This process was used to exclude authors who may have only limited knowledge of the field. Searches were also conducted for authors whose research has focused on (i.e., had several publications relating to) TAY w/ED issues and services but had not specifically researched career development programs for this population. Outside of peer reviewed research articles, authors of two recent, widely circulated works on career development services for TAY, “Transitioning Youth with Mental Health Needs to Meaningful Employment and Independent Living” (Woolsey & Katz-Leavy, 2008) and “Tunnels and Cliffs” (Podmostko, 2007), were also included in this group. Finally, the specific programs for TAY w/ED cited in these two reports were also noted, and the program directors were identified and added to the list of experts.

Table 1.

Sources for Literature Review

Source ^a	Program Name	Design	Education Outcomes	Competitive Employment ^b	Productivity (i.e., % in education OR employment)
Bullis et al. (1994)	Job Designs	Monthly FU during program enrollment + Post	Not reported	➤ 79% at any point during enrollment	Not reported
Cook et al. (1997)	Supported Competitive Employment Program	Pre-Post + 3 waves of FU (6 & 12 months post program intake and 6 months post first job)	Not reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 52% at 6 months after employment first attained ➤ Significant ($p < .01$) correlation between working and receipt of services 	Not reported
Malloy et al. (1998)	Project RENEW (Rehabilitation, Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education, and Work)	Pre-Post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 70% graduated from H.S. at post^c ➤ 50% of H.S. graduates enrolled in secondary education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 76% at post^c ➤ 94% at any point during enrollment 	Not reported

Ellison et al. (1999)	Choose-Get-Keep career education program	Baseline + 5 year follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ $p < .005$ increase^c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ $p < .005$ increase^c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ $p < .005$ increase^c
Hagner et al. (1999)	Project RENEW (Rehabilitation, Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education, and Work)	Pre-Post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 94% graduate from H.S. at post^c ➤ 70% of H.S. graduates enrolled in secondary education^c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 61% at post-test^c ➤ 83% at any point during enrollment^c 	Not reported
Rinaldi et al. (2004)	ETHOS (Early Treatment and Home-based Outreach Service)	Baseline + 6, 12 month FU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 27% in education or training at 12 month FU^c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 41% at 12 month FU^c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 61% at 12-month FU; $p < .05$
Karpur et al. (2005)	Steps-to-Success	Outcomes at 0-3 years after program exit compared to matched control group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 55.8% enrolled in H.S. or P.S. education ➤ Higher rate than comparison group; $p < .001$ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 41.9% ➤ Nonsignificant difference from comparison group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 55.8%; ➤ Higher rate than comparison group; $p < .05$

Note. ^a Full citations are provided in references, marked with a “*”

^b Competitive employment definitions vary slightly; in all studies presented, competitive positions were open to any applicant

^c No significance test reported

The steps outlined above resulted in an initial list of 32 individuals. During their interviews, each participating expert was given an opportunity to nominate additional individuals they believed would “provide crucial expertise” on career development services for TAY w/ED (see Appendix A for complete semi-structured interview tool for experts). A total of 23 additional experts (i.e., mostly program administrators and policy administrators) were nominated through this procedure, and these individuals were also included in the list of experts to be contacted. In all, 55 experts were nominated—11 authors from the literature review articles, 16 authors of literature focused on TAY w/ED issues and services, and 28 program and policy administrators.

Generation of interview protocols. The protocol for the semi-structured interviews with experts was designed to expand upon the literature review. Two specific objectives were outlined in this regard: 1) to gather further information on program features not addressed by literature review findings (e.g., recommendations regarding case-load size) or discrepant across literature review sources (e.g., use of “comprehensive provider” versus “specialist” models; see “Models for Service Coordination” subsection in Substudy 1 results) and 2) to gather further information in cases in which recommendations derived from descriptions of career development programs differed from those derived from descriptions of related literatures, particularly the literature on supported employment (see “Data analysis: Comparison to other literatures” section, above). Based on these procedures, an initial set of twelve specific questions was generated. These questions were then organized into four groups based on thematic similarity, a general “opening question” was designed for each group, and the questions from the initial set of 12 were rephrased as follow-up prompts. Organizing the interview protocol in this manner allowed it to be used in a flexible (i.e., “semi-structured”) manner while still ensuring breadth of coverage relative to the issues addressed by the 12 specific questions. The four broad questions covered issues of 1) the critical differences to be considered in providing career development services to TAY w/ED versus to older adult populations with mental health needs, 2) the delivery methods and models to be used in providing career development services to TAY w/ED, 3) the process of ensuring that TAY w/ED achieve positive employment outcomes, and 4) recommendations for working with particularly challenging TAY w/ED. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were asked to nominate other experts (see “selection of content area experts” above). The complete protocol (i.e., including the four broad questions, the sub-questions, and the request for expert nominations) is presented in Appendix A.

Interview procedures. Individuals who were identified as experts were first contacted by email. This initial contact email included the purpose of the investigation, the basic selection criteria for experts, a statement concerning confidentiality, participation requirements, and a copy of the interview questions. In an effort to maximize participation among this group of experts, participants were allowed to choose whether they preferred to participate by phone or send a written response. The experts were asked to choose which means of participation they preferred or to inform the researchers that they preferred not to participate. Individuals who did not respond were contacted once again by email approximately two weeks after the initial contact, by phone approximately three weeks after initial contact, and a fourth time by email approximately two months after initial contact requesting that they either respond or indicate their preference not to participate in the study. Experts electing to participate by phone were scheduled for a half-hour phone appointment, and all phone interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for later analysis.

Data analysis. Qualitative data analysis of the texts (i.e., emailed responses and transcribed interviews) first involved reading through the entire interview transcript or e-mail and then identifying meaningful units of content and writing a concise summary, or “memo” (Glaser, 1978), in the margins to summarize that unit. These memos and the original data were then copied into a spreadsheet to facilitate the process of coding the data. Each unique memo was coded on three dimensions: 1) its alignment to the eight clusters of principles and practices identified from the literature review, 2) which opening question and follow-up prompt to which the memo was most closely related, and 3) whether the memo pertained to implementation of practices or barriers to implementation rather than the practices themselves (e.g., how to train personnel to provide training in work-related skills, rather than the content of skills training).

Following coding, memos related to practices (rather than implementation) were grouped first by cluster and then, within each cluster, by the question or follow-up prompt to which they corresponded. Within each of these sub-groups, these were then further organized into a set of discrete themes. Each of these themes is indicated and related interview content described in the results section by conceptual cluster, such that literature review content related to the cluster is presented first, followed by the themes from the expert interviews, and then a synthesis of literature review and expert findings for the cluster. Response units related to implementation were analyzed through a similar process to units related to practices and presented separately in the “Implementation and Barriers” section of the Sub-Study I results of the report.

Sub-Study II: Identification and Investigation of Florida Programs

AIM #1: Identification of Exemplary Florida Programs.

Rationale for selection of administrators for identification survey. “Exemplary programs” providing career development services to TAY w/ED in the State of Florida were identified through a key informant survey method. Based on the recommendations of several state-level administrators, including the Agency for Health Care Administration liaison for the project and the statewide independent living coordinator for the Department of Children and Families (DCF), each in consultation with their supervisors, it was decided that district-level administrators would be best positioned to be familiar with exemplary career development programs for TAY w/ED in their respective areas. Several types of district administrators were identified for this purpose through procedures described in the next section. A survey was also developed to elicit nominations of programs from these individuals (see “Program Nomination Survey” below).

Selection of administrators for program nomination survey. The DCF independent living coordinator supplied a list of district administrators, identifying lead administrators for each of three areas - child and adolescent mental health, adult mental health, and substance abuse services - in each district. Several districts had one administrator per sector. Other districts either had one administrator covering two sectors (e.g., the same individual was responsible for child and adult mental health services, and another individual was responsible for substance abuse services) or had multiple co-administrators for any given sector (e.g., four individuals were responsible for child mental health services, one individual for adult, and one individual for substance abuse). In addition to the DCF officials, district project managers of the Florida Department of Education Multi-agency Network for Students with Severe Emotional Disturbance (SEDNET) were also selected. SEDNET projects are designed to facilitate comprehensive systems of care for high-risk students and students with emotional disabilities and their families. SEDNET consists of multiple project regions across Florida that align with the DCF districts. Individuals within the research department were also asked to identify state level individuals who were expected to have contacts for any additional individuals they could nominate with knowledge of career development services. Each administrator was also given the opportunity to identify any other individuals either statewide or within their geographic region who they felt had knowledge regarding programs offering career development services for TAY w/ED. A total of 54 DCF district level

administrators, 20 SEDNET project administrators, and 11 other nominated individuals (i.e., by DCF and SEDNET administrators or department faculty) were contacted, for a total of 85.

Design of program nomination survey. A protocol for surveying the 85 administrators was designed to help identify behavioral health programs that had developed novel and promising career development services to meet the needs of TAY w/ED in the state of Florida. The first survey item asked respondents to a) identify any behavioral health programs that they knew provided career development services to TAY w/ED, and b) identify which of those programs had specifically adapted their services to the needs of the TAY age group. The next item asked which of the programs identified in Item #1 they considered to be doing an *exemplary* job of providing services to TAY w/ED. Administrators were then asked to describe what they felt was exemplary about those identified programs. The final question asked administrators to evaluate the programs adherence to the principles of best practice that were derived from the literature on career development services for TAY w/ED. This administrator questionnaire is presented in Appendix B.

Collaboration with DCF and SEDNET state-level liaisons facilitated data collection. During an internal teleconference, these liaisons mentioned that the research team would be asking for assistance in identifying programs offering career development services to TAY w/ED. Following this telecommunication, emailed letters from the researchers were sent to the administrators that briefly discussed the overall purpose of the investigation, the selection criteria, confidentiality, a description of what participation would involve, and the brief questionnaire. Administrators were asked to respond to the brief questionnaire by typing their response and sending their answers back to the researchers electronically. Approximately two weeks following this email contact, follow-up emails from the liaisons were sent to the administrators asking them to respond if they had not already done so. A week after that communication, a member of the research team attempted to contact those administrators who had not yet responded by telephone to follow up. In cases in which contact was successfully made, the research team member asked the administrator whether he or she intended to participate, and where possible, asked the survey questions in a brief phone interview format lasting no more than 10 minutes.

Use of survey data to select programs. Responses to the questions from the administrator survey were designed to inform the selection of sites for the multiple case study. A series of minimal inclusion criteria were primarily designed to ensure selection of sites offering exemplary career development services. They were also designed to help ensure case study data collection methods were practical, programs served at least a small number of TAY, and programs have sustained their services for long enough for observations concerning implementation to have validity (significant implementation efforts typically require a minimum of 3 years; Fixsen et al., 2005). The specific criteria included the following:

- (a) at least one respondent has identified the program as ‘exemplary’
- (b) the program offers career development services that are either adapted in some manner for TAY w/ED or specifically devised for TAY w/ED
- (c) the program receives all or part of its funding from Medicaid or through private insurers sub-contracted to approve Medicaid funded services,

- (d) the program is based in Florida
- (e) the program has provided career development services to at least 10 youth and/or young adults in the transition age range of 14 to 25
- (f) the program has been in operation since prior to the start of fiscal year '05-'06
- (g) the program has provided consent for and has agreed to facilitate each component of data collection (e.g., to facilitate interviews with TAY receiving services, and staff, to provide identifying information on TAY served to facilitate collection of outcome data from administrative databases, etc.)

AIM #2: Multiple Case Study

Overall design and generation of study protocols. The multiple case study was designed to answer several questions framed with a view toward expanding upon the knowledge generated from the literature review and expert consultation component of the study (Sub-Study I). Question #1: What were the processes of adapting career development services to TAY w/ED that are both shared across sites and consistent with exemplary practice recommendations based on the literature review and expert consultation? Question #2: What are additional practices that are either a) not shared across sites, or b) not discussed in the existing literature that might show promise for improving employment outcomes? Question #3: What is the history of the implementation of career development services at each site (i.e., how were these services and their associated practice principles implemented, and more specifically, which particular financing, training, supervision, and other implementation strategies were used)? Question #4: What contextual resources and/or barriers impacted implementation of career development service adaptations and associated practice principles across the sites?

Three primary types of data collection were used for the multiple case study—1) interviews with stakeholders, including program administrators and/or supervisors, direct service providers, TAY served in programs, and program “community partners” (for further details on these participants, see “Interviews with Stakeholders” below); 2) chart review, and 3) direct observation. Additional interviews with program directors and reviews of program documentation were used to supplement these results in case study reports. Building upon the results of the Sub-Study I, similar component parallel methods were used to generate each protocol in the set employed for this multi-method data collection, including a data collection protocol for each type of interview participant, for chart reviews, and for direction observation. First, “analysis items” were created to represent the conceptual cluster and practice elements identified in the Sub-Study I results. Each item was designed to ascertain whether particular practice elements within the conceptual clusters were present or not in each program studied based on the data source consulted. For example, within the “Strengths-Based Assessment and Person-Centered Planning” cluster (see “Sub-Study I” results section), analysis items were designed to ascertain the presence or absence of aspects of assessment content (e.g., if TAY strengths were assessed, if TAY preferences regarding employment were assessed), assessment methods (e.g., if both formal and informal assessment strategies used, whether information was gathered from TAY family members and/or other supportive individuals in their lives), and person-centered planning methods (e.g., if person-centered plans included both short- and long-term goals, considered multiple life domains, struck a balance between challenging TAY and maximizing the likelihood of their success, etc).

Once analysis items were specified, questions and probes were created to elicit information necessary to rate the analysis items. Additional questions were generated through methods similar to those used to generate questions for the expert consultation component of the study. Specifically, these questions were framed to elicit additional information about practice elements regarding which the literature review and expert consultation provided weaker and/or conflicting information. Thus, the additional questions tended to pertain to more controversial aspects of TAY career development practice, such as those aspects of previously reported programs that were somehow inconsistent with recommendations from adult supported employment literature.

Following initial generation of analysis items, questions, and probes in the manner specified above for each protocol, a matrix was developed to identify whether similar data elements were sought in each protocol to maximize triangulation of data across data collection methods. In cases in which empty cells in the matrix – i.e., instances in which certain types of data were not consistently sought across protocols – the research team collectively evaluated whether additional items, questions, or probes appropriate to the data collection method(s) could be framed to populate these cells.

Interviews with stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at each site with: a) at least one direct care provider involved in delivering career development services to TAY at the site; b) at least one direct supervisor of the provider interviewed for the study or a more senior administrator with responsibility for overseeing the program in which the career development services were provided; c) at least one individual not employed by the agency with whom there was regular contact to coordinate care or employment for the TAY consumers; and d) interviews with at least two TAY w/ED currently receiving services from the program. TAY were selected for interviews in collaboration with the participating agency. A representative or representatives of the agency (i.e., direct care providers and/or their immediate supervisor) were asked to identify at least one TAY who had been particularly successful in the program and one TAY who had been particularly challenged in the program (with “success” and “challenge” being defined based on progress or attainment of goals). Consent was obtained from interview participants prior to their interviews. In cases in which interviews with adolescent minors (i.e., youth younger than 18) were sought, consent was obtained from a legal guardian and assent was obtained from the youth. TAY participants received financial compensation (i.e., \$50) at the conclusion of their interviews.

Chart review and direct observation. Four charts for the chart review at each site were collaboratively selected with staff of the participating agency from the complete pool of cases for which career development services were provided. When possible, selection of cases were selected to include two cases for which services and/or treatment objectives were completed as planned and two cases for which greater challenges existed with services and/or objectives. If these criteria were met, cases were selected to best represent the demographic characteristics of the TAY w/ED population served by the program. A chart review protocol was developed to assist in identifying elements of case files that were consistent with and those that were not consistent with the principles identified in the literature review. Thus, data from the chart review served to provide a second source of evidence regarding the consistency of adapted career development services at each agency with the principles identified from the literature. The chart review protocol also served to facilitate examination of whether chart data were consistent with data from interviews regarding implementation and contextual factors.

Direct observations of career development services provided to TAY w/ED at each agency were conducted. Because types of services provided were expected to vary from site to site, agencies were allowed to elect which specific services were to be observed as long as these services related directly to career development.

Results/Discussion

Sub-Study I: Identification of Principles and Practices

The first aim in the identification of principles and practices was to analyze specific program features from the published articles on career development programs for TAY w/ED to develop an overall framework of thematic clusters. In their independent analyses of literature review data (described in detail in the methods section), the first and second author developed similar sets of clusters with only minor discrepancies related to the comprehensiveness of certain clusters. More specifically, while one author grouped a larger set of related features into a more broadly defined cluster of ‘Comprehensive Service Coordination,’ the other author represented those same sets of features across more than three related clusters by the other author. Two other clusters that one author viewed as distinct principles were “developmentally appropriate” and “non-stigmatizing.” The features of these clusters were not separately defined by the other author, but rather the specific features were spread across the other categories as they related to other practices. The other five clusters closely paralleled between authors. The differences in analysis were discussed, resulting in the final set of eight mutually agreed upon clusters. These clusters are described in greater detail in the following sections. Briefly, the eight clusters include:

- 1) Strengths-based assessment and person-centered planning,
- 2) Integration of employment and education,
- 3) Comprehensive service coordination,
- 4) Developmentally appropriate
- 5) Community-based supports,
- 6) Promotion of skills and resources
- 7) Long-term outcome orientation, and
- 8) Non-stigmatizing services.

In order to address key issues regarding career development service issues that remained unresolved from the literature review, expert opinion was elicited through written responses to questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Specific questions for the questionnaires and interviews were targeted to gather additional information on career development practices that were either ambiguously described or did not seem consistent with recommendations from literature on related types of programs, particularly the literature on supported employment. From a total pool of 55 experts, 15 responded to the protocol question either through email ($n = 7$) or phone interview ($n = 8$). While only achieving a 25% overall response rate, the individuals that did respond provided significant insights into program practice and implementation. Furthermore, among a total pool of possible experts, 11 were authors of articles reviewing outcomes of career development programs specifically designed for TAY w/ED. From this sample, we received full responses from 5 (45% response rate) of these individuals (2 replied and declined participation, and there was no response from the remaining 4 experts). Another group of 16 experts that were included in this pool were individuals who were lead authors of closely related

literature, of whom another 6 responded (38% response rate). The remaining experts from the pool were federal and state government administrators and program directors ($n = 28$), of whom only 4 responded (14% response rate). Thus, response rates from published authors of the most closely related literature were the highest, followed by rates for authors of related literature, with the lowest rates yielded from government administrators and program directors.

As discussed in the Methods section, content from the expert interviews was initially organized by literature review clusters and then subsequently further broken into smaller subcategories. Organization of findings from the literature review and consultation with experts using the same set of clusters facilitated side-by-side comparison of results for the two data collection procedures. Below, results for each cluster are presented; first for the literature review and then for the expert responses. Following the presentation of these results, a synthesis of literature review and expert consultation findings for each cluster is presented.

Cluster #1: Strengths-based assessment and person-centered planning.

Literature review results. Strengths-based assessment and person-centered planning were presented repeatedly as two complimentary practices that focus on building a service plan that is individualized or tailored to the identified strengths of TAY w/ED. First, the concept of strengths-based assessment has been previously defined as a method for measuring “emotional and behavioral skills, competencies, and characteristics that create a sense of personal accomplishment; contribute to satisfying relationships with family members, peers, and adults; enhance one’s ability to deal with adversity and stress; and promote one’s personal, social, and academic development” (Epstein & Sharma, 1998, p.3). Specific to the literature reviewed, assessment was described to involve discussing the individual’s fears and perceived obstacles related to education and employment. Reviewing past school and work experiences was mentioned as a method for discovering both strengths and perceived fears. Several specific assessment procedures were mentioned in the literature, much of which put less emphasis on more traditional types of assessment. For instance, social problem-solving exercises were described as a useful method for gathering information. Additionally, situational assessments carried out through interviews and behavior checklists related to the workplace and self-report measures were types of assessment that were specifically mentioned as being useful in some instances. Integrating formal and informal supports to take part in assessment process was also an important feature of strength-based assessment for working with TAY.

The complimentary practice of person-centered planning is an approach to developing individually-driven plans that are based on the needs and preferences of the individual. Across programs, this planning process was presented to involve engaging TAY and building on their strengths and preferences to have the plan become youth-driven. Person-centered planning follows strength-based assessment in a relatively seamless process. Nevertheless, person-centered planning was also described as a frequent or continual process that would involve revising plans as situations or preferences change based on continual assessment. Similar to strength-based assessment, this process also involved informal and formal supports participating in planning and having informal supports commit to helping TAY in adhering to their plans. In developing a plan, it was recommended to make short-term, verifiable objectives and detailed strategies. Educational as well as career-related goals were mentioned as important to having TAY consider as part of this process. Another specific recommendation was to help TAY to achieve a balance between

being realistic and being ambitious in identifying goals; however, in general, recommendations also suggested that it was better to set a goal that is too ambitious rather than a goal that inadvertently underestimates TAYs' potential.

Expert Consultation Results. Overall, experts strongly affirmed the significance of using strength-based assessment and person-centered planning in career development services for TAY w/ED. Specifically, experts elaborated on the critical need to individualize plans to increase the motivation of TAY and their likelihood for success. Therefore, thoroughly conducting strengths-based assessment was emphasized for the purpose of determining well-suited career opportunities for TAY, especially those with the most challenging behaviors. Experts' responses to two specific protocol questions regarding how to determine a good job match for TAY w/ED and the suitability of competitive versus transitional type employment for this population provided particularly relevant responses to this cluster.

Individualization. In general, the responses reflected a perspective that individualization was even more critical for TAY than for adults. One response highlighted that service providers must hold a belief that person-centered planning can be used to find anyone a job where they will be successful. Another expert identified the tendency for mental health professionals to slightly curtail individuals' ambitions and stated it is particularly important for service providers to maintain an attitude that a supported plan for employment can be executed with any TAY who wants to get a job. By making the plan individualized to a person's needs, it was also mentioned that his or her motivation increases, which subsequently increases the likelihood of positive outcomes. Important distinctions were also made to clarify that plans should fit the assessed needs of the individual rather than a label or diagnosis associated with the individual. Similar to the literature review, education and employment goals were also described to be part of the individualized planning process, though this issue will be discussed in detail in Cluster #2 (i.e., Integration of Employment and Education).

Readiness to work. An issue that was not explicit in the literature, but emerged through several expert responses, was a discussion of assessing TAY readiness to work. This discussion primarily stemmed from the general questions concerning differences between working with TAY versus adult populations. Rapid job search and placement is a key principle of the supported employment model for adults with SMI, yet there was a degree of contrast to this principle of rapid job search and placement in comments on working with TAY. Assessment of work readiness was described as one of the many important roles of services providers. One expert discussed that when programs are implemented, there is often pressure from funding sources or desires to have good outcome data to push TAY into a job placement, but that it was important not to put undue pressure on TAY who are not ready. Nevertheless, the use of person-centered planning was described as a method to facilitate the varying levels of readiness as it focuses on developing a plan that is individualized to whatever needs an individual presents. Using person-centered planning to develop customized employment opportunities or work with other transition domains where the TAY is struggling were two recommendations for those not ready to pursue employment in the short-term.

Determining a 'good match.' A particular focus of the expert questionnaire was dedicated to how service providers should find a good match between the individual and a job. Several different qualities were mentioned by experts as important to identify during assessment and then incorporate into finding a matching career development opportunity that included an individual's strengths, skills, interests, passions,

and dreams. One specific comment highlighted that some TAY will be most motivated with work that is enjoyable and stimulating, but to remember that other TAY will be more interested in obtaining higher paying jobs as money is often their most motivating interest. Beyond making a good match according to individual interests, several experts mentioned the importance of individualizing the match based on job conditions. This meant that planning should consider the types of environmental conditions that will build on strengths and minimize barriers. One example for working with an individual who had a history of being a sex offender was simply to find a job in a warehouse setting not involving interactions with the public. Through the expert consultation process, it appeared that the consideration of job conditions was particularly important for TAY who are the most challenging. Other types of job conditions that were mentioned as needing to be taken into account included the types of supervisors, job duties, work atmosphere, and capability to make accommodations for an individual's needs.

Person-centered planning process. The process of developing the person-centered plan for all youth appeared to be particularly important for working with TAY w/ED, and even more so for particularly challenging cases. It was pointed out that having TAY actually map out a futures plan (i.e., the McGill action plan was specifically referenced) is very helpful for youth to understand the changes or steps they need to make to become successfully employed. While these short-term changes are important, it was also mentioned that including steps to gain certificates, degrees, or other credentials was important to include as a short-term goal that would lead to greater long-term career success.

Continual process. A final consideration that emerged involved the ongoing nature of the planning process. Exploring job options was regarded as part of an ongoing and interactive process. Assessing a good match and making changes to the plan was integral to many responses. The actual working experiences that TAY encounter were described as providing the best information to be used in planning. Experts discussed the need to work closely with TAY so that when problems would arise, the supports and placements could be altered to better meet their needs. It was described that attending to TAY behaviors and feedback from both the employer and TAY were methods of more carefully identifying their needs. Based on ongoing assessment, support services can be changed as time moves forward to more aptly promote success.

Summary of Literature Review and Expert Consultation Results for Cluster #1. Strength-based assessment and person-centered planning are essential practices for career development programs serving TAY w/ED, as these ongoing complimentary practices focus on building plans with TAY that are individualized to their uniquely identified strengths, skills, and preferences. Multiple methods of assessment were described with an emphasis on collecting situational information from TAY as well as formal and informal supports. Individualization through these practices promotes success among TAY w/ED as it accommodates varying levels of work readiness and challenging behaviors and serves to increase TAY motivation. Developing a career plan that best matches TAY interests and strengths should attend to both the type of job and the conditions of that job.

Cluster #2: Integration of employment and education.

Literature review results. All programs emphasized the importance of integrating employment and education in career development services for TAY, though recommendations tended to be somewhat general in nature. As discussed in the above section, all of the program descriptions indicated that including educational goals in career development plans for TAY is critical. One method that was mentioned to assist in identifying educational goals was to have career development service providers participate in team meetings at schools for TAY who are school enrolled (e.g., IEP or TIEP meetings). Participation in these meetings also can assist providers in identifying opportunities for collaborating with school personnel and using school resources to support goals.

Other recommendations in the literature focused on the importance of flexible programming with secondary students in order to promote school completion. For classroom-based learning, greater flexibility can be achieved through individualizing instruction as much as possible to match a youth's vocational interests. Another form of individualization emphasized in the literature was allowing learning experiences to be self-paced. Another practice that was mentioned was providing school credits for work in the community, particularly in cases in which work might produce training benefits generalizable to other work situations.

Expert consultation results. As indicated above, though there appeared to be general agreement in the literature regarding the importance of integrating educational and employment goals, specific recommendations were lacking for the most part. Thus, a probe was included in the expert survey protocol regarding means of employment and education integration. In response to this probe, while there was overall agreement regarding the benefits integrating education and employment, recommendations for particular methods of accomplishing this general goal were somewhat inconsistent.

Benefits of integration. In addition to voicing general agreement that integration of education and employment were important, experts provided elaboration about specific benefits associated with coordinated attention by programs to both types of career development goals. First, the importance of school achievement to achieving rewarding work over the long-term was emphasized. Perhaps more insightfully, finding ways to integrate employment into education was described as a means to reduce drop-out and otherwise promote engagement in education programs. In cases in which work experiences help to advance career planning, education achievement can benefit as well, since TAY can more easily identify and focus on the educational experiences that best further their careers. For these reasons (i.e., the possible effects of work experiences in reducing dropout and better focusing educational pursuits), experts recommended that integration of work into education start early, long before the school-to-work transition. Experts also pointed out that, because many TAY w/ED are initially identified in school settings and may not be connected to services elsewhere, by failing to work in collaboration with schools or begin working TAY at an early age, programs may lose the opportunity to provide support to a significant subpopulation of TAY (i.e., early dropouts who not yet service connected to mental health settings).

Planning the integration. General methods for bringing education and employment together were also discussed, and some consistent strategies were identified. Some described the importance of developing school to work transition plans (e.g.,

transition individualized education plans) for youth in special education at an early age (e.g., 14 or even sooner). Planning education and employment integration through wraparound approaches involving multiple service sectors (e.g., education, mental health, child welfare, and criminal justice) was also suggested.

Timing and emphasis of education versus employment goals. Disagreement between experts was evident for how to help TAY balance time and the pursuit of employment and education goals. Some experts suggested that TAY should not pursue education and employment goals simultaneously, since some might find negotiating the demands of both to be overwhelming. Others suggested that while this might apply to some TAY, others might benefit from the added stimulation of engaging in both types of activities simultaneously as an alternative to counterproductive behaviors fulfilling the same purpose (e.g., seeking added stimulation through substance use or other externalizing behavior). It was unclear based on expert response whether education or employment goals should be pursued first in cases in which a choice of emphasis might be necessary.

Methods of integration. Experts provided elaboration regarding means for integrating work and school experiences. Work-based learning was described as an effective method for connecting schooling to career and offering support along the way. Other experts cited the importance of helping TAY to be strategic in selecting career and technical programs by guiding them toward those known to have the best track records of placement and those in fields that are expanding and have plenty of opportunities for upward mobility. Two program models integrating employment and education that could serve as a model for career development services were Job Corps and Home Build. The Pro-Bank feature found through the website of the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth was also mentioned as a resource for integrating education and vocational needs for youth. Supported education (e.g., Sullivan, Nicolellis, Danley, & MacDonald-Wilson, 1993) was another model of service delivery that was identified as having potential to optimize performance of TAY w/ED in education settings.

Summary of Literature Review and Expert Consultation Results for Cluster #2. Integrating the domains of education and employment into the career development process is particularly beneficial for TAY w/ED. The best integration begins early. Collaboration with educators through participation in school-based IEP meetings or, conversely, inclusion of school personnel in wraparound meetings can help to address barriers and enhance the relevance of educational experiences to TAY career development needs. Educational experiences that are Individualized, self-paced, work-relevant, and or work-site based are most helpful. Education and work achievement are symbiotic, with education increasing work opportunity, and work experience increasing engagement in and focus of education. A variety of models for integration were suggested, with individualization being a key cross-cutting factor across the variety of suggested strategies.

Cluster #3: Comprehensive service coordination.

Literature review results. Career development programs in the literature uniformly addressed a broader range of needs beyond those related to career development. Other important domains of the youths' lives with immediate implications for career development that were identified included the domains of independent living, transportation, mental health needs, and peer/social needs. Coordination of services to address such a broad range of need is challenging, and programs pursued a variety of means to this end. Providing sufficiently intense services and providing multiple

means of service delivery were also emphasized as important considerations in service coordination.

Interagency collaboration was reported as a means to coordinate the efforts of professionals across service disciplines. Also suggested was the importance of extending beyond traditional service professionals to include collaboration with other types of community members such as business representatives, youth peers, consumer advocates, and family members. At the same time, it was suggested that drawing upon other members of the larger community and service domains should be based on the youth's particular needs with the youth determining who should be involved.

Models for service coordination appeared to vary between two basic types. In one model, specialists in career development were utilized in close collaboration with providers from other disciplines. A second model advocated emphasis of "generalists" serving as a primary means for delivering both career development and other types of services.

Service intensity recommendations included having regular contact with the youth, maintaining low case loads of 15 or less, meeting multiple times per week, and keeping interactions short. Titration of services over time was described to be best guided by individual needs and progress. Relatively high frequency of contact, made feasible through small caseloads, was preferred and thought to reduce the likelihood of crises that result in greater service utilization costs.

Multi-modal services, including both one-on-one and group modalities, were suggested by literature review results. Didactic and support groups described included groups focused on coping skills, substance abuse prevention, job search, on-the-job scenarios, social skills, and recreation. For one-on-one services, features of helpful relationships that were described included time spent helping TAY to share and clarify feelings related to practical problems and to engage in effective problem-solving. Other recommendations included spending time devoted to "relationship building" outside of job settings and expressing a hopeful and fun tone in interactions.

Expert consultation results. Content expert consultation related to this cluster was designed to assist in obtaining greater specificity regarding several issues that were raised but incompletely or inconsistently addressed in the literature. These included issues of coordinating services, caseload size, and exclusion rules.

Interagency collaboration. Analysis of content expert responses reaffirmed the importance of collaboration across diverse agencies, formal supports, and informal supports. Coordination of multiple stakeholders in supporting career development plans through wraparound method were all similarly identified as necessary methods for working with TAY w/ED. Recommendations were made to include several domains into programming for TAY w/ED—employment, education, mental health, development, mentoring, housing, juvenile justice, and informal supports. Importantly, comprehensive service delivery was pointed out as particularly useful when TAY are not "ready to work" since the service plan will be able to address other areas which may be interfering with setting career development goals. Descriptions of good case management involved working closely with TAY and taking responsibility for seeing that planning remains centered on supporting the individual. As a result of the multiple transition domains and stakeholders involved in the lives of TAY w/ED, strong recommendations were made for service providers

to be trained in multiple areas (i.e., including minimally some training in mental health and career development), regardless of the particular model of service coordination used.

Strong advocacy for the collaboration of services appeared to be fueled by recognition of the barriers that serve to impede this collaborative coordination. TAY w/ED have multiple challenges that must be navigated to make successful transitions, and the systems that offer support for those challenges are often separate agencies or individuals. Coordination with the mental health system, for instance, was described by one content expert as being particularly difficult. Although it was recognized as a challenge, creating a link between mental health and employment services for this population was seen as especially significant. The inclusion of the mental health component allows service providers to address vulnerabilities problems related to ED such as risk behavior that can disrupt achievement of career development goals.

As a group, experts generally disputed the perspective that some youth may not be “ready to work” based on ED related limitations. A pragmatic argument made against this position was that stabilizing symptoms prior to addressing career development increases TAY disengagement from services, and conversely, supporting career development achievements increases the likelihood that TAY will be motivated to work on mental health-related or other goals. Additionally, several experts concurred that employment can play an important role in stabilizing TAY w/ED by helping to structure time.

Models for service coordination. A specific sub-question was designed to address the issue emerging from the literature review of the relative merits of a “specialist” model, in which a provider primarily focuses on career development services but collaborates with other professionals to help meet TAY needs, versus a “comprehensive provider” model in which a single provider is primarily responsible for facilitating the full range of supports. Overall, disparate responses from experts mirrored the lack of consensus in the literature; however, responses did serve to provide further detail on this issue. Some conceded that both types of models could work, whereas others strongly advocated for only one type of model and provided explanations for their convictions.

Experts *in favor of the comprehensive provider model* discussed the merits of having a single individual with a clear understanding of the full range of TAY needs and thus optimally suited to assist in coordination decisions. Another argument was that using comprehensive providers reduces communication or collaboration problems endemic to many agencies. Supports can be more complicated for TAY to access when provided by multiple providers rather than a single provider. Problems often related to conflicting agendas or cultures of providers with different areas of focus also provide an argument for using a comprehensive model.

Experts in favor of the *specialist model* believed that this model better ensures the integrity of career development services. Related to this issue, the practicality of one individual effectively addressing all of the multiple domains in the lives of TAY was brought into question. Specifically, it was argued that providers dually trained in mental health case management and career development service delivery would have a tendency to put a greater emphasis on issues of mental health. One reason cited for this is the fact that in many systems providers focusing on career development are less highly trained (e.g., are less likely to have graduate degrees) and receive less pay. Thus, better qualified and more highly paid individuals in these systems would have a

primary affiliation and identification with mental health services. Another argument for utilizing a specialist model is that it is the model used in supported employment (i.e., the best supported intervention for assisting employment of adults). In the absence of specific reasons why specialists would be less suitable for TAY, the strong evidence for the supported employment model argues for using a specialist over a comprehensive provider in TAY career development services.

A third, *team model* of service delivery not originally described in the sub-question was also discussed. This model involved comprehensive case managers working as a team with the group of TAY on a caseload rather than being assigned on a one-to-one basis, as in the Assertive Community Treatment model (McGrew, Bond, Dietzen, & Salyers, 1994). In this fashion, one case manager would be responsible for following a case but would collaborate with his or her colleagues and work together at times when particular expertise was needed to better support the needs of TAY.

Supported employment principles. Other comments on process features regarding coordination of services were mostly similar or directly cited from literature on supported employment (e.g., Cook et al., 2005) or adults, since these provide a guide for how career development for TAY can be implemented, at least in cases in which there are no obvious issues in extending them to a TAY group. Specific process elements related to improved outcomes in delivering supported employment included providing career development and other services at the same location of the same agency, using a combined case record, and ensuring that communication between career development and other specialists occurs a minimum of three times per week.

Caseloads. As mentioned earlier, a specific probe included in the expert survey addressed the issue of whether there was an ideal caseload level in providing career development services to TAY, and more specifically, if lower caseloads were needed to for TAY w/ED versus older adult populations (particularly those with SMI, since these are the primary populations represented in the supported employment literature). While some experts were unsure about this question, the majority suggested that lower caseloads would probably be warranted. Typically, respondents suggested that caseloads should range between 8 and 15.

Availability. Specific recommendations were made regarding service provider availability. It was described that TAY should be able to contact service providers at “off hours” or even late into the night, though there was some suggestion that discretion about the extent of flexibility should be left to the individual provider. Since many TAY work “nontraditional shifts,” evening availability is probably necessary to ensure providers are available to quickly provide support to TAY when problems arise in work settings.

Strong relationships. Experts echoed recommendations from the literature regarding the importance of building good communication and other aspects of supportive relationships with TAY. The absence of a strong relationship was cited as a primary culprit in TAY disengagement from services. Also echoing recommendations in the literature, ample time for relationship building early in the process of working with TAY was recommended. Other features of relationships described as important included unconditional positive regard, honesty, sensitivity, and trust. One expert suggested good interpersonal skills with TAY should be valued more highly than any other form of qualification for career development positions. One barometer of the helpfulness of a career development provider-TAY relationship that was cited was the extent to which a TAY volunteers to discuss work-related problems.

Exclusion criteria. A specific question was included in the expert survey related to whether programs should have exclusion rules for TAY who might be particularly problematic to manage in a career development program. Most favored an absence of exclusion rules and a “zero-reject” policy, though in a minority of cases, experts indicated that dangerousness to self or others should be considered.

Summary of Literature Review and Expert Consultation Results for Cluster #3. Results of the literature review and expert consultation suggested that service provision for TAY w/ED in a career development program be comprehensive and carefully coordinated. Ideally, career development services should be delivered through multiple modalities (e.g., individual counseling, group-based interventions, and, where appropriate, on-site coaching) and be provided in the context of a broader service package addressing other critical transition domains at an intensity sufficiently responsive to TAY needs. Three general models of coordinating service delivery were endorsed by content experts, each of which were argued to optimize service providers’ abilities to effectively support TAY across transition domains in distinct ways. The importance of relationship building and specific helpful qualities of career development provider-TAY relationships were suggested.

Cluster #4: Developmentally appropriate.

Literature review results. Descriptions of programs highlighted several ways in which career development services could be adapted to normative development issues of the transition-age period. First, as relatively rapid movement from job to job is normal for TAY, program descriptions suggested that flexibility in this respect (e.g., focusing energies on supporting TAY to find positions rather than discouraging them from leaving or somehow penalizing them for leaving jobs). In fact, descriptions mentioned that holding a job for a short period of time was something that was to be praised by providers. Consistent with this perspective, some programs established brief (e.g., two to four week) internship opportunities to allow TAY to explore possibilities for jobs without needing to make long-term commitments. Another feature of programs related to sensitivity to normative development was encouragement of flexible provision of support that respects TAY efforts toward greater individuation and autonomy. Specifically, programs respected TAY preferences for extent of participation (e.g., which activities to participate in, how often, and in what manner). A related guideline articulated in program descriptions recommended providing guidance to family and supports to help these individuals to provide measured support following TAY preferences.

Expert consultation results. The idea that services should be sensitive to individual’s developmental stage was consistently affirmed by content expert responses. None of the protocol questions were specifically targeted to address this issue independently, but many of the responses across questions represented the need to take TAY’s developmental stage into consideration. Experts recommended that because key developmental issues are similar across different types of populations of TAY, best practices for TAY with other types of special needs or TAY at risk should be followed when working with TAY w/ED, although the barriers and vulnerabilities that TAY w/ED encounter were described by some as being qualitatively different or more severe. In particular, experts described how ED could result in delayed, more challenging, or more complex transitions. A question included in the survey about responding to problems with motivation was often addressed by experts in reference to normative developmental expectations. In particular, it was noted that lack of motivation can be confused with rather typical developmental cynicism and

distancing from adult norms. Similarly, the developmental appropriateness of trying and leaving multiple jobs was emphasized. Experts concurred that service providers must be prepared to help TAY obtain more than one job as well as help youth learn appropriate methods for leaving a job when it is not a good match.

Summary of Literature Review and Expert Consultation Results for Cluster #4. Multiple aspects of career development programs were described with the consideration of being developmentally appropriate for the TAY population. Attending to different aspects of transition to adult roles (e.g., in addition to career development, transition to independent living, starting of families, etc.), respecting developmentally appropriate emphasis by TAY of autonomous functioning and independent decision-making, respecting needs for career exploration, being prepared to find multiple employment opportunities, and keeping program attendance and participation requirements flexible were all specifically mentioned practices respecting TAY's developmental stage. Issues of TAY w/ED were described as similar (albeit, often more intense) to TAY with and without other disabilities, and service providers should receive more training and support for working specifically with transition-age issues.

Cluster #5: Community-based support.

Literature review results. The literature consistently detailed the use of community-based support to assist TAY w/ED in securing their employment and education goals. Career development programs for TAY w/ED described in the literature assist in the job development process, emphasize competitive employment, provide support to both TAY w/ED and their supervisors and employers, and identify and support mentors in the community.

Assistance with the job development process was demonstrated at both the program and individual levels. At the program level, service providers drew on personal contacts and made high volume, 'cold calls' to identify a variety of potential employment opportunities. In this way, service providers worked assertively to recruit employers and identify sites that are already supportive for all employees. Working to develop a pool of opportunities on a program level then facilitated the service provider's ability to find a good match or tailor a position to meet an individual's needs and interests. At the individual level, providers support the various tasks and stages of the job search process. While most of the programs discussed job development in terms of securing competitive employment, this was not always clearly stated. For instance, in one case other types of employment were considered useful for some situations.

Several specific practices were described to provide support to employers. These included providing education regarding the needs and issues related to TAY w/ED, providing consultation regarding accommodation strategies, welcoming employers to serve on program advisory boards, arranging meetings to support the relationship between employer and TAY, cooperatively designing job training curricula and strategies, and paying the employer additional money from vocation rehabilitation funds for extra training and supervision given to TAY. Similar to the need to individualize services for TAY w/ED, programs also sought to tailor support to the particular needs of supervisors or employers.

Another means of implementing community-based supports was through the identification and support of well-matched mentors for TAY w/ED. Within the literature, it was discussed that identifying natural mentors, such as a peer, supervisor,

or co-worker, at a job site would be helpful. Suggestions for the identification of a well-matched mentor included finding someone who shared similar interests to the youth. Also, finding mentors that could provide tutoring was suggested. Other specific practices included providing money to mentors to cover any associated costs, providing guidance in developing a mentorship plan, and arranging social events for mentors.

Expert results. Two probes were incorporated into the expert survey addressing this cluster. The first probe sought recommendations concerning the level of priority to assign to supporting TAY in achieving competitive versus other types of employment. Since some diversity of opinion on this topic was evident in the analysis of literature on career development programs for TAY w/ED, this was a key difference between this literature and the supported employment literature. A second probe sought recommendations on the extent to which services should be provided by mobile providers versus site-based personnel, since programs described in the literature varied in this respect as well. However, information related to this cluster was also presented in response to many of the other questionnaire probes. Overall, there was agreement across experts on the importance of competitive employment in continuum (though not necessarily for all youth) as well as the importance of community-based service provision in continuum, in addition to the importance of natural supports within the continuum for sustainability. However, echoing the findings of the literature review, findings of the expert consultation suggested a range of opinion concerning the extent to which these features should be emphasized and instances in which they should not be emphasized (e.g., which instances might be appropriate for non-competitive employment placement, the extent to which and types of services that should be offered at centers, etc.).

Critical importance. Supporting TAY w/ED in community employment was viewed as being critical to keeping this population engaged. Specifically, this was identified to reduce drop-out rates and offer opportunities to develop valuable skills and appropriate behaviors. Thinking about employment in behavioral terms, the money and/or school credits that TAY can earn in work opportunities serves as reinforcement. Functionally then, building community-based experience into IEP transition plans was an explicit recommendation for building school and overall engagement. Similar to the purpose of developing IEPs for ESE students to ensure appropriate learning experiences in least restrictive environments, it was also pointed out that providing access to community-based experiences is part of treating this population with equitable fairness. The provision of service in the community offers opportunities for in-vivo teaching in natural settings an expert identified as following best practices for working on transitioning all youth. It was considered important that placement into the community and delivery of community supports occur quickly following initial involvement of TAY into a career development program.

The importance of community-based support was also expressed in relation to expectations. One expert went into some detail about a program he was involved with that maintained higher expectations than what is commonly afforded to this population in terms of the types of competitive employment that could be achieved. Significantly, these comments suggest that maintaining natural expectations will lead to the population successfully obtaining their goals.

Competitive employment. Responses to the sub-question regarding the priority of competitive employment spanned the entire continuum from “absolute priority” to explicit arguments that competitive employment should be delayed. Several different positions were articulated falling along this continuum. Upon closer examination, the

arguments relating to varying priorities of competitive employment revealed differences concerning the priority of education over employment rather than transitional employment opportunities over competitive employment opportunities. Several arguments were made for competitive work to be the absolute priority with all experiences to occur in natural community settings. Others believed that competitive employment should be the top goal, but not necessarily the first stop. Another perspective emphasized that the pursuit of competitive employment should be individualized so that in some cases transitional work or an emphasis on training or educational experiences might be preferable. A small minority suggested that competitive employment should be the priority only after other needs are addressed. Overall, the topic of the scope and manner in which competitive employment should be emphasized over other types of career development options appears to be one of the key controversial areas in the field of career development for TAY w/ED.

Summary. An important aspect of career development programs is the use of community-based support for TAY w/ED. Conducting job development at both the individual and program levels, identifying community employment opportunities that already offer supportive environments, providing support to employers (and educators) through coaching, education, and consultation were specific practices for increasing community-based support. Expert consultation explored an issue regarding the emphasis to be placed on securing competitive employment (as opposed to other types of career development opportunities). However, responses yielded a continuum of well-articulated opinions on the degree to which competitive employment must first be pursued, leaving this issue unsettled or perhaps needing to be addressed at the individualized levels.

Cluster #6: Promotion of skills and resources.

Literature review results. A general thrust of services evident across the program literature was an effort to bolster the sustainability of TAY career development progress beyond their tenure in services by 1) enhancing their skills related to career development, and 2) building stronger connections to informal supports (i.e., friends and family) that can continue to assist TAY w/ED in their career development and other aspects of transition when formal supports are no longer available or are reduced.

Skills training. Discussion in the literature regarding skills training focused on the types of skills that should be included in training and methods for skills training. A focus was to increase the internal abilities and skill sets of TAY w/ED. One way in which this was depicted was through recognizing and supporting existing strengths that were uncovered during assessment. For example, when TAY w/ED had previously been competitively employed, service providers made sure TAY maintained the skill set that was involved in holding such a position. For skills that are needed but not mastered, training occurred in both group and one-on-one levels to increase the overall competence of TAY. Determined by individual need through situational assessment, the focus of skill development ranged considerably, including issues relating to job search, keeping a schedule, planning for transportation, managing sleep schedules, substance abuse prevention, coping skills, problem-solving, communication with employers, dealing with co-worker conflicts, workplace romances, and other types of social skills.

An area of skills training covered in detail in the literature was skills training related to self-advocacy and self-determination. Recommended skills training related

to self-advocacy and self-determination included skills training in decision-making, goal setting, self-monitoring, self-expression and self-determination. To complement skills training in these areas, a number of other practices were recommended for enhancing TAY self-advocacy and self-determination abilities. One type of practice indicated was engaging youth in program development, governance and advocacy. Another recommended practice involved asking successful youth to participate as paid or non-paid supports for other TAY w/ED.

To facilitate the acquisition of skills, several different training practices were described in the literature. One practice recommendation involved integrating didactic instruction with real-life experiences by having TAY use monitoring logs and journals, carry out group-based role-plays, reflect in group on personal experiences, and participate in other situational training experiences. Practicing skills in groups and with a variety of people, settings, and situations was recommended to improve generalization. In regards to designing and facilitating these groups, one program specified they used educators and mental health professionals to plan and co-teach group sessions.

Building informal supports. Informal support systems (e.g., peers, family) were integrated into many levels of the programs. Service providers helped youth identify their own natural supports to help them find jobs. Relationships with informal supports were facilitated using mediational techniques and other strategies. The informal supports were invited to participate in program development, governance, and advocacy. Support groups, guidance, and education for informal supports were also described as ways to enhance their supportive functioning for TAY w/ED. In promoting these naturally occurring informal supports, service functions performed by the program could be shifted to a resource that was sustainable.

Expert results. No questions were framed in the expert consultation interview and survey that explicitly related to this cluster, as there appeared to be general agreement across publications describing programs for TAY w/ED and between this literature and other literature regarding the key importance of skills training and inclusion of natural supports. Content related to this cluster emerged from expert findings in other ways, however. For example, in response to the question about how to assess and respond to a poor job match for TAY, a number of respondents discussed this situation as an important opportunity for TAY to acquire important employment-related skills.

Critical importance. Responses reflected a perspective that placed particular importance on enhancing strengths, competencies and resources. Building on strengths was described as a useful means for creating successes and confidence for TAY that reciprocally increase the chances of future success. While it may require extensive searching, building on strengths was considered even more critical for individuals with the most challenging behaviors and disturbances. Developing coping strategies with TAY was another specifically mentioned competency that was viewed as especially important for being prepared when employment challenges arise. Youth leadership and development opportunities, self-determination, and decision-making skills mentioned in the literature were also explicitly mentioned as being particularly important for TAY.

In-vivo training. Several responses endorsed the use of using real-life experiences as opportunities to enhance competencies and strengths. Two sub-question probes that asked for recommendations for encouraging youth to persevere despite challenges and ways in which changing jobs should be carried out provided the most detail

concerning this type of in-vivo training. Recommendations were made for letting youth make bad decisions and contact natural consequences rather than forcing good decisions. This method of learning was described as particularly useful for TAY to begin overcoming barriers. When issues or needs did come up, providing support and capitalizing on teaching moments were suggested to improve competencies. The experiences that TAY have during even short-term competitive employment were described as amazing successes and learning experiences for TAY. When youth do leave a job for whatever type of problem encountered (i.e., not necessarily a problem with the TAY), a more explicit depiction of the teaching moment recommendation was to provide additional services or counseling to address the problem in an effort to decrease the likelihood of a similar problem occurring in the future. Essential to this in-vivo training seemed to be the coinciding maintenance of clear communication and strong relationships between TAY and their formal and informal supports.

While a greater number of comments focused on using in-vivo type training, one final point from the expert responses relating to this cluster discussed the provision of formal education and training. While the integration of education into the employment plan has already been discussed in an earlier section, one expert was particularly explicit regarding vocational training. Enrolling in training courses to secure varying credentials was described as a “legitimate pathway towards competitive employment.” However, integrating specifically targeted vocational courses to increase competencies and/or qualifications into TAY plans was described as a priority that is secondary to competitive employment.

Summary. Building upon the personal skills and connections to natural support resources is an important aspect of promoting success for TAY w/ED. This was carried out through the use of multiple modalities (e.g., both one-on-one and group-based) and incorporation of “real-life experiences” for skills training, the development of skills to promote self-advocacy, and the facilitation the identification and engagement of a variety of natural supports and resources into TAY’s lives. Experts emphasized the importance of promoting strengths and turning “real-life” challenges into in-vivo teaching and learning opportunities to increase competencies for future situations.

Cluster #7: Long-term outcome orientation.

Literature review results. The long-term outcome orientation theme that emerged from the program literature involves being concerned with outcomes both at the short and long-term levels. To this extent, programs provided support over time to ensure a good long-term outcome is achieved. Under this type of orientation, a program would be more concerned in developing a long-term positive career trajectory. Person-centered planning procedures focused on setting up both short and long term goals. Outcomes were described to be assessed based on the achievement of such individualized goals, but also on more objective goals as well. Ongoing assessment of progress and carefully adjusting follow-along services to meet TAY needs were integral to service delivery, though specifics regarding follow-along service duration were not clearly defined. The assessment of progress was described to include the collection of information from both employers and TAY. A specific practice involved the use of surveys to gather this information. Data on job quality and status of employment were collected. This outcome orientation served to help assess and adjust supports for the individuals being served, but was also described to assist at the program level to ensure services were provided effectively. For example, the use of fidelity instrumentation was one method used to ensure positive future outcomes.

Another program practice was to regularly analyze and check data for quality on a quarterly basis. Long term outcomes were also assessed in these programs by following TAY after exiting the program through phone contacts. Data-informed decision making could then be carried out to make program level improvements.

Expert results. Overall, the expert consultation protocols were designed to mainly focus on characteristics of programs to build specific knowledge about how programs should operate. Because the program domain has not yet been clearly specified, the consultations did not emphasize evaluation issues that would be more associated with assessing outcomes. Nevertheless, one of the sub-questions posed asked experts to specify how long follow along services should be maintained. Responses to this sub-question probe comprised the majority of responses to this cluster.

Follow-along services. The length of support services that was recommended differed across expert responses, ranging from providing services for a standardized duration of time to completely individualizing the length of service based on determined need. On the standardized side, eight to twelve months of service support was suggested as ideal. Another expert indicated based on her experience that six months of follow-along services was not enough for most TAY and suggested that one to two years worked best for most youth. Responses affirming complete individualization discussed maintaining services as long as necessary and basing the decision on the “cues” of the TAY w/ED. Other responses fell in the middle of the continuum, suggesting standardizing services on the basis of event-related, individualized criteria. For example, one response suggested that service could range from just a week to a full year, but the decision of length would be individualized on performance.

Outcomes. Other responses discussed issues relating to difficulties in measuring outcomes. Some experts expressed that using measurements such as job retention were not suitable for this population considering the normative nature of job change within the general TAY population. One expert commented that research suggested job changing to be positively related to better labor force participation. New alternative measures were recommended to be developed and used to more accurately reflect success and serve as an accountability tool. Another outcome of a career development service program was that participants were more likely to connect with mental health system to find support when that connection was introduced within the service plan. This was viewed as an important positive outcome, although in some contexts this might be regarded as a negative outcome.

Summary. The long-term outcome orientation involves a dedication on behalf of the career development program to supporting TAY w/ED over long periods of time to cultivate a positive career trajectory and successful long-term outcomes. The use of ongoing follow-along services is integral to this orientation; however, the duration of these support services varied (or was not specified) across literature articles and expert responses. Experts suggested using standardized periods of service (i.e., between 8 to 12 months), discontinuing services after reaching particular criteria indicative of progress, and basing the duration entirely on individualized decision-making. Traditional measures of successful employment outcome success were indicated to be not aptly representative of TAY progress due to insufficient sensitivity to incremental career development improvements and oversensitivity to behaviors and events that are common or even normative given characteristics of the age group (e.g., job losses or changes, engagement in risk behaviors such as using alcohol or illegal substances).

Cluster #8: Non-stigmatizing.

Literature review results. As somewhat of an extension to developmentally-appropriate service, attention to keeping career development services non-stigmatizing emerged as a critical principle in the literature. Also, similar to the developmentally-appropriate cluster, the material relating to non-stigmatizing service provision pervades materials found across other clusters. For instance, service providers needed to be willing to adjust to TAY preferences regarding the location of service delivery as some TAY w/ED feel stigmatized having formal supports at their work place. Therefore, a service provider must be comfortable with delivering supports both on and off-site. For off-site locations, educational and rehabilitation sites were also described as stigmatizing for some, but post-secondary institutions and non-traditional education sites were suggested as being more acceptable.

In addition to carefully considering the location of services based on individual preferences, an important consideration regarding stigma involved communication. One consideration discussed was to follow TAY preferences for whether the service provider should have contact with their employers. Consequently, formal community-based supports for employers would not always be an option for some TAY w/ED. When there is communication with employers, a recommendation that was made in the literature was to emphasize characteristics that were most relevant to the job, both good and bad. Another recommendation in the literature stated that discussing diagnoses and the specific symptoms was usually unnecessary. Not disclosing that information would therefore keep TAY w/ED feeling less stigmatized.

Expert results. This final cluster of non-stigmatizing services for TAY w/ED is less complex than those that have previously been discussed but nonetheless appears particularly important to this population. There was a minimal focus represented in the questioning of experts regarding this cluster, as there was not explicit disagreement or lack of clarity in the literature. Typically, the idea that services should be non-stigmatizing is regarded as fairly acceptable. The sub-question that was most related to issues of non-stigmatization involved asking experts their recommendations for the extent to which service delivery should be provided by mobile personnel (e.g., at a worksite, in the community) versus at a “center” (e.g., schools, colleges, mental health centers, “youth house,” etc.).

Peer influence. TAY as a group are more sensitive to perceptions of peers than older adults. Therefore, in considering the potential for situations to have a stigmatizing impact on TAY, it is important to consider whether peers are present, and how the presence of peers may amplify the potential for a situation to be stigmatizing. For example, on-site job assistance might be comfortable for a TAY in a situation in which co-workers are not of similar age, but uncomfortable and unacceptable to the same TAY if co-workers include own-age peers.

Settings and supports. Some experts maintained that one reason for preferring competitive over transitional employment was the potential of the latter to convey stigmatizing messages. More generally, findings from the literature review and expert consultation indicated that support in the community rather than centers and employment with natural supports are ways of reducing the likelihood that TAY will be stigmatized.

A particular challenge relating to the issue of providing non-stigmatizing services was broached by one expert. The individual decision that TAY must make regarding whether or not to disclose information regarding their ED was identified as a potential barrier to service delivery. While choosing to not disclose was viewed positively, it limits the ability to provide support at the job site. It was then recommended that should a TAY choose to not disclose this information at first but then encounters job difficulty, he or she may rethink the decision to access more formal job supports. This potential limitation serves to highlight the need to have TAY identify and draw upon natural supports at their employment site.

One final recommendation regarding a program practice that reduced stigma was provided. An expert described a program that he was associated with in which case managers from the adult mental health system worked with TAY w/ED who were in high school. A suggested outcome of this practice was that TAY became more comfortable with accessing the mental health system to receive supports. This early link to the mental health system was described as reducing perceptions of stigma associated with the mental health system.

Summary. Service provision for TAY w/ED must be especially sensitive to avoid stigmatization. Peers and their perceptions have a greater influence in TAY's lives than older populations, and consequently feel an increased sensitivity to being perceived in a stigmatizing manner. Both the setting of employment and provided supports need to be non-stigmatizing to keep TAY engaged. Service providers must be responsive to TAY preferences regarding communication with employers. They must also be flexible in their service delivery methods (e.g., working with TAY on- or off-site), letting TAY determine whether the costs of possible stigmatization outweigh the possible benefits of open collaboration between the program and employer.

Implementation Issues and Barriers.

Beyond the clusters of principles and practices identified from the literature review, information regarding program system barriers and other program considerations emerged during expert consultation. While the issues that are represented here were not specifically addressed by multiple experts, the insightful and unique essence of the issues that were mentioned by particular individuals brought to light important implications for future research and program implementation.

Program barriers. A noteworthy statement was made regarding the reality of employment specialists being the least paid and trained individuals that will work with TAY w/ED. In terms of merging the roles of an employment specialist and case manager, it was suggested that it may be difficult to combine a lower paying position with a higher one. On the other hand, it was also discussed that being an effective employment specialist also entails difficulties in that they must have some degree of case management knowledge. While this position would typically include less formally trained individuals, being successful requires the need to understand and be familiar with TAY w/ED. A method for promoting success among service providers that was suggested that could serve as a way to cope with these difficulties was to offer performance rewards or recognition for the service providers. Another recommendation was to offer cross-training through professional development at the program level.

Segregated systems and program development barriers. Transition is a frequently discussed issue among practitioners and an issue of frequent interest to students and young researchers. At the same time, it was described that developing programs and research for this population has been difficult due the nature of this population and the systems used to serve them. It was mentioned that children and adolescents are traditionally served in one system while individuals who are 18 and older are served in a separate system. TAY (ages 14 to 25) are by definition at the margins of these service systems, but their needs were identified as being developmentally unique. The low frequency of service system integration was described as preventing research for this population. Another major impediment described was the lack of coordination across systems other than mental health. The diverse needs of this population were suggested to require coordination across service sectors. In order to sufficiently address the diverse needs of this youth, a recommendation was made for conducting a demonstration project and research agenda involving participation from across the federal government sectors (i.e., especially housing and workforce development sectors) rather than those solely tied to SAMSHA.

Summary of Sub-Study I Results.

Detailed analysis of the published literature describing career development programs for TAY w/ED led to the development of eight conceptual clusters, each of which summarizes a particular set of related guidelines and practices. Collectively, these clusters provide a framework to assist in identifying exemplary practices in providing career development services to TAY w/ED. Eight clusters were identified:

- (1) Strengths-based assessment and person-centered planning: Two ongoing and complimentary practices that focus on building a career development service plan that is individualized to the identified strengths, preferences and goals of TAY w/ED.
- (2) Integration of employment and education: Attending to employment and education goals in career development, coordinating with education personnel and individualizing programming are critical components for integrating employment and education into the career development of TAY w/ED.
- (3) Comprehensive service coordination: Coordinating services to sufficiently address the multiple needs of TAY w/ED in a program's effort to promote career development. Comprehensiveness refers to covering a wide area of concerns, addressing particular concerns in a manner that is sufficiently intense and providing multiple means of service delivery.
- (4) Developmentally appropriate: Closely attending to TAY needs across transition domains, actively focusing on removing barriers to facilitate transition, and maintaining respect and flexibility in regards to the needs for TAY's autonomy and independence characterize the importance of keeping career development services developmentally appropriate.
- (5) Community-based supports: Support of career development should occur in the community with an emphasis on competitive employment and the provision of assistance to TAY, employers, and other informal supports.
- (6) Promotion of skills and resources: Enhancing the personal skills and connections to resources of TAY w/ED promotes career development success that can later be maintained independently of the program's support.
- (7) Long-term outcome orientation: Concerned with both short and long-term goal achievement, career development programs provide ongoing.

- (8) support and assessment of progress to develop long-term positive career trajectories for its TAY w/ED consumers.
- (9) Non-stigmatizing services: Due to the developmentally normative heightened sensitivity to stigma, career development programs for TAY w/ED must carefully provide non-stigmatizing service.

In order to address key issues related to career development services left unresolved from the literature review, expert opinion was surveyed through written responses to questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Specific questions for the questionnaires and interviews were targeted to provide further information on practices that were either ambiguously described or appeared inconsistent with recommendations in literature on related types of programs, particularly the literature on supported employment. Overall, the consultation with 15 experts affirmed the importance of the framework developed from the literature review and helped to address areas of ambiguity in the available literature on career development services, although key points related to discrepancies between this literature and related literatures were left unresolved. Specific recommendations offered by experts included:

- (1) Successful planning for employment placements should involve both matching employment placements to individually assessed interests as well finding job conditions that are naturally accommodating to the individual's needs.
- (2) Starting the integration of employment and education early through flexible programming attuned to vocational interests can promote engagement in both employment and education.
- (3) The importance of relationship building and flexible availability of the service providers is critical to successfully coordinating comprehensive career development services to TAY w/ED.
- (4) Service providers working with TAY w/ED should be knowledgeable of service barriers and vulnerabilities related to all TAY, but realize that these issues may present themselves more severely among this population.
- (5) Engagement and successes will increase when providing community-based support, as this increases motivation and allows for in-vivo learning opportunities for TAY w/ED.
- (6) Building upon even the smallest and difficult to find strength is critical in promoting successful career development for TAY w/ED.

Recommendations and considerations for implementation were also expressed by the experts. These included the following:

- (1) Cross-training professional development opportunities offered at the program level can facilitate overcoming barriers related to effectively coordinating comprehensive services.
- (2) The creation of multi-agency, multi-sector systems, rather than stand-alone programs, is necessary to meeting career development needs of TAY.
- (3) The importance of relationship building and flexible availability of the service providers is critical to successfully coordinating comprehensive career development services to TAY w/ED.

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(3) Comprehensive service coordination: Coordinating services to sufficiently address the multiple needs of TAY w/ED in a program's effort to promote career development. Comprehensiveness refers to covering a wide area of concerns, addressing particular concerns in a manner that is sufficiently intense and providing multiple means of service delivery.

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(5) Community-based supports: Support of career development should occur in the community with an emphasis on competitive employment and the provision of assistance to TAY, employers, and other informal supports.

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(7) Long-term outcome orientation: Concerned with both short and long-term goal achievement, career development programs provide ongoing support and assessment of progress to develop long-term positive career trajectories for its TAY w/ED consumers.

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- (3) The importance of relationship building and flexible availability of the service providers is critical to successfully coordinating comprehensive career development services to TAY w/ED.
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- (1) Cross-training professional development opportunities offered at the program level can facilitate overcoming barriers related to effectively coordinating comprehensive services.
- (2) The creation of multi-agency, multi-sector systems, rather than stand-alone programs, is necessary to meeting career development needs of TAY.
- (3) Conducting a demonstration project and research agenda involving multiple federal government sectors (i.e., especially housing, workforce development, and mental health sectors) would make use of greater specialized expertise and result in a more comprehensively developed program model.
- (4) New strategies for measuring outcomes must be developed to be accurately responsive to particular challenges of population.

Issues left unresolved included the following:

- (1) The degree to which competitive employment should be emphasized varied significantly, as multiple perspectives were offered in regard to prioritizing the integration of competitive employment and other types of career development opportunities in service plans.
- (2) Optimal means of balancing career and educational demands in this population is an unresolved issue and may vary depending on the particular needs of individual TAY w/ED.

- 3) Despite common agreement relating to the need to address multiple domains of needs and challenges faced by TAY w/ED, well-articulated arguments by different experts support the use of distinct models of service delivery.
- (4) While a long-term focus was endorsed across experts, there was little consensus on an optimal standard length of service provision.
- (5) The majority of experts believed that smaller case loads were needed for TAY versus adult populations, yet the size of recommended case loads ranged from 8 to 20.

Taken as a whole, the information gleaned from the literature review and consultation with experts provided a framework to guide career development services of TAY w/ED, consisting of both general principles and specific practices that can inform future program development and provide specific questions for future research. This framework served as the basis for the Sub-Study II protocols (i.e., the protocols for the multiple case study).

Sub-Study II: Identification and Investigation of Florida Programs

AIM #1: Identification of Exemplary Florida Programs.

Selection of the case studies for this project was based on survey responses DCF and SEDNET district administrators, as described in the methods section. A very limited number of programs were identified by district administrators ($n = 16$), suggesting a paucity of programs in Florida known to provide career development services to TAY w/ED. In the minority of cases in which administrators were able to identify at least one program, responses to questions designed to elicit information nominated programs either were not answered or answered in minimal detail. It appeared based on communications from administrators accompanying some of the responses that this was often due to a lack of detailed knowledge about the nominated programs. Respondents were particularly reluctant to offer opinions regarding whether sites were “exemplary.” To address these issues, a modification was made to the original inclusion criteria. Specifically, selection criterion (b) described in the Methods section specifying that programs included in the case study should be “exemplary,” was changed such that the program could be included if any of its specific practices were described in a positive manner, and in sufficient detail that the reasoning for the positive evaluation of the specific practice was clear. Application of this modified inclusion criterion resulted in a reduction of the list from 16 programs to five ($n = 5$).

Once the five programs were selected through the process described above, attempts were made to gather further information from remaining sites to verify that they met study criteria. One of the five programs did not respond to several communication attempts. After speaking to a program administrator for another one of the five programs, it was discovered that it did not have an adapted focus of career development services for TAY and was subsequently excluded. The remaining three programs were the sites ultimately included in the multiple case study. These included the *Transition Family Support Planning Team (TFSPT)* program, the *Workforce Integration Through Highly Individualized Transition Services (“With It”)* program and the *Young Adult Transition Program (YATP)*. However, these sites also did not fully meet study criteria aside from the criterion that they be identified as “exemplary.” One of these criteria was that the program

should be a current recipient of Medicaid funding. This was only true, strictly speaking, for one of the three sites considered – YATP. Though the case management services that are assisted by the TFSPT program utilize Medicaid funds, the TFSPT program itself does not receive Medicaid funding per se. Rather, the program is funded through SEDNET and other Florida Department of Education programs. Similarly, the “With It” program, despite close cooperation with Medicaid funded services, is not directly funded by Medicaid. Another criterion that was specified at the outset of the study was that programs be in operation for at least three years. Had this criterion been kept, YATP, the only program currently using Medicaid dollars to fund services, would have been eliminated from the multiple case study. In the interest of describing practices at the only three programs indentified from our statewide survey to address career development needs of TAY w/ED, we decided to include the three remaining programs despite the fact that none fully met both the funding and the program operation criteria. Below is a table summarizing which of the initially specified inclusion criteria were met by programs in the multiple case study.

Table 2.

Original Inclusion Criteria among Selected Programs

Selection Criteria	Transition Family Support Planning Team	Workforce Integration Through Highly Individualized Transition Services	Young Adult Transition Program
Identified as offering exemplary ^a	Yes	Yes	Yes
Career development services adapted or specifically devised for TAY w/ED	Yes	Yes	Yes
Funded by Medicaid or private insurers sub-contracted to approve Medicaid funded services	No (funded by SEDNET and other Florida Department of Education programs)	No (funded by Miami-Dade County)	Yes
Based in Florida	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provided services to 10 or more TAY w/ED	Yes	Yes	Yes
In operation since prior to the start of fiscal year '05-'06	Yes	Yes	No (Began operation in fiscal year '06-'07)
Consent to participate in and facilitate data collection	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note. ^a “Identified as exemplary” was operationalized to mean a district administrator described at least one specific career development practice as ‘exemplary’ or other similar descriptor.

AIM #2: Multiple Case Study.

The purpose of the multiple case study component of the overall case study was designed to expand upon knowledge of practice principles identified through the systematic literature review, consultation with expert key informants, and by carefully documenting the specific ways in which the practices of “exemplary sites” adhered or failed to adhere to these principles. This involved more than a process of simply verifying whether or not practices as described by the literature and experts consulted were present or not in a “yes or no” fashion. Rather, the aim was to discover ways in which these principles could be put into practice in particular “real-world” contexts, with their attendant challenges and limitations, that are often overlooked or are simply impossible to capture without careful attention paid to the idiosyncrasies of a particular geographic locale, service population, cultural, and resource situation. In addition, we hoped to identify unique or emerging practices not yet reflected in the literature, either at particular sites or across sites that might show promise in promoting career development of TAY w/ED, and examine the history of implementation at each site and factors that have promoted or inhibited implementation.

As discussed in the results of the administrator survey, the lack of information shared by administrators across the state regarding programs filling this important service niche was striking. It is possible that some programs were missed due to knowledgeable but non-responding administrators or simply because programs are very new or poorly publicized in their areas; however, the number and breadth of individuals who could not identify a single program in their respective service areas suggests that very few if any programs in the state meeting our criteria were missed. We made the decision to drop some of our original inclusion criteria so that we would be able to examine practices in the area of career development for TAY w/ED in existing programs.

Given the few programs identified by administrators and the consequent relaxation of inclusion criteria, results of the multiple case study cannot be interpreted as representing a sample of “exemplary” practices in the field in the same manner as originally intended. Rather, while these programs exhibit many exemplary features, they appear to represent perhaps the *only* programs serving their important niche in the behavioral health service continuum in the state of Florida, despite, in two of three cases, lacking any Medicaid funding to support their efforts. Thus, the focus of the multiple case study analysis was shifted to focus on ways in which programs can implement some of the exemplary practices identified through literature review and expert consultation despite resource limitations, and possible implications for maximizing impact of resources of a hopefully larger pool of programs serving the function of promoting career development in the future.

In the systematic literature review and expert consultation components of the study, key principles were identified from descriptions of programs supporting career development of TAY w/ED in existing literature. Below, we summarize: 1) methods of implementation through which programs have optimized resources to sustain and enhance their services over time and 2) conceptual clusters of similarities and differences across sites that implement principles identified in the literature review and expert consultation.

Models of Implementation

The three programs included in the multiple case study represent three very different approaches to optimizing resources in providing career development services to TAY w/ED. These approaches are referred to here as “The Facilitative Network” (i.e., the Transition Family Support Planning Team program [TFSPT]), “The Springboard” (i.e., Bertha Abess Children’s Center’s “With It” program), and “The Partner” (i.e., Gulf Coast Community Care/Jewish Family Services and Department of Children and Families Substance Abuse and Mental Health Office of Broward County’s Young Adult Transition Program). See Appendices D, E, and F respectively for the complete descriptive results of each individual case study. In the proceeding subsections, each approach is described and evaluated.

The “Facilitative Network” approach. Fundamentally, this service paradigm involves adapting and enhancing existing services and administrative structures – i.e., case management agencies and their partnering providers – to better promote career development of TAY through: 1) provision of technical assistance (i.e., trainings on resources available in the community to promote career development and other needs of TAY w/ED; provision of technical assistance on dual certification; maintaining a resource library; and being available on an ongoing basis for consultation), and 2) creation of an additional coordinating layer to help case managers, their supervisors, and community partners to better identify, access, and support services most likely to meet the needs of the population of interest, and provide flex funding to assist in addressing gaps in services where they occur.

Strengths. The effectiveness of the additional coordinating layer providing by the TFSPT appears to some extent to be predicated on the direct participation in planning for individual TAY of key players with wide knowledge of relevant community resources. In the TFSPT program, these included the SEDNET project staff, and, at least in some locations within the five-county SEDNET District IV area, school board representatives. In addition to directly enhancing the “human capital” available to the treatment planning team through inclusion of participants with excellent knowledge of available resources (and in many cases, close professional and personal relationships with the purveyors involved), participation of such “high profile” personnel may indirectly encourage case management to improve upon case management “as usual” by communicating that the community highly values services that are responsive to the needs of TAY. These individuals may also increase the likelihood of attendance at planning meetings by representatives from across the various relevant service sectors that otherwise might be absent, such as representatives from specialty employment assistance agencies or the Juvenile Justice System.

Weaknesses. A possible disadvantage of the facilitative network model is the logistic issue of convening SEDNET project managers across such a large area, further complicated by attempts to involve school board representatives and other high level administrators. This decreases the likelihood that TAY w/ED and their families can attend the meetings. From a practical standpoint for these personnel to attend, meetings must be held during the day at locations that are convenient to personnel and not necessarily convenient to family members. Thus, TAY in school and parents that work during the day may be unlikely to attend. This prediction was borne out by the observations shared in interviews with TFSPT program personnel. In addition, the larger size and higher status of participants in TFSPT meetings resulting from SEDNET, the school board, and/or other community official participation could

discourage active participation by TAY and family members even in cases when they are able to attend. Though astute case managers may be able to compensate for this disadvantage by skillfully representing the interests and perspectives of TAY and their family members, there is likely to be some variability in the adequacy with which case managers serve as representatives, particularly in the absence of training and quality monitoring designed to increase the quality and consistency of case managers' performance in this role.

Additional contextual barriers. Clearly, TFSPTs can only serve their facilitative function well if there are adequate resources in their communities to meet TAY needs. Flex funds can fill gaps to some extent, but some gaps will continue to persist even when given substantial flex funding. An example is the inability of teams in rural areas of the SEDNET district to facilitate flex-funded transportation in the typical manner (i.e., through purchase of bus passes). SEDNET project personnel, though well positioned to facilitate integration of behavioral health, educational, and vocational rehabilitation system resources, have had greater difficulty in allocating resources from certain other sectors critical to employment needs of many TAY w/ED, including the employment assistance and juvenile justice sectors.

Strengths. As with the first program in the case study, the With It program is well positioned to benefit from the expertise and assistance of area secondary and post-secondary institutions in identifying referrals, gathering information about TAY, and contributing to plans *The "Springboard" approach*. The second program included in the case study, BACC's "With It" program, was described as offering a "springboard" approach to transition services. Services are concentrated in school settings to assist TAY w/ED in making the transition into the world of work by helping ensure TAY acquire necessary basic educational credentials for rewarding jobs (i.e., GED, diploma, or alternative diploma), helping make education experiences as work-relevant as possible, facilitating early employment experiences (e.g., part-time, entry level work, internships), and supporting TAY in laying the groundwork for continued training, education, and employment-based career development through futures planning and providing other support toward these goals. This method of assisting transition of TAY w/ED is perhaps the most commonly encountered method across service systems. For example, the only large professional organization in the U.S. focused on transition issues is composed primarily of school-based professionals. Some of these "springboard" programs have enhanced their capacity to provide a more complete continuum of services to TAY w/ED by integrating behavioral health funding, personnel, and services with secondary and post-secondary education and training resources (e.g., Karpur et al., 2005). In so doing, they better approximate the integrative approach to addressing behavioral health and employment issues represented in the literature on supported employment. BACC was able to do this until recently, but changes in day treatment funding have posed challenges. However, the program continues to encourage its facilitators to address a wider continuum of needs than career development alone. through school-based opportunities and programs. In addition, being closely affiliated with secondary schools increases the likelihood that the program can begin working with TAY w/ED on transition issues from a relatively early age since many more TAY w/ED have their emotional and behavioral issues initially identified and addressed in school systems than in the behavioral health system. As indicated by the literature review and expert consultation, working with TAY on transition issues from an earlier age (e.g., the beginning of secondary education) decreases the likelihood of drop-out and the detrimental effects of drop-out on subsequent career

trajectories and increases the likelihood that TAY will acquire skills during their education that are helpful in the world of work. By attending to ways in which emotional and behavioral problems and related contextual issues may be disrupting progress of TAY w/ED and extending services where possible into the post-secondary period to ensure successful transition, school-based personnel can further enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes for TAY.

Weaknesses. Results of the literature review and expert consultation suggest that although helpful while TAY are still in school, “springboard” services will have limited sustained effectiveness if they lack the capacity to effectively follow TAY into the post-secondary period. Although With It transition facilitators have attempted to continue to work with TAY beyond secondary school wherever possible, personnel across the board admit that TAY are likely to drop out of services at the same time that they leave school due to graduation, drop-out, or other reasons. By concentrating resources – most conspicuously, staff time – in school settings, springboard programs are much less likely to be able to continue to engage TAY once they have left school, particularly in light of the fact that many TAY w/ED have had negative school experiences and are quite eager to leave the school setting (and perhaps anything or anyone that reminds them of these experiences) behind. A strategy pursued by some communities to address this problem is to engage TAY w/ED while still in the school system with adult system-based personnel such as adult mental health case managers. However, this and similar innovations requires funding from the adult behavioral health system or other adult service sector providing these linking personnel. They may also be imperfect solutions in the sense that movement from one system (e.g., education) to another (e.g., adult mental health) is still required, although the presence of professionals from the destination system in the system of origin certainly could facilitate this process. In addition, providing services in schools may decrease engagement of certain TAY even while they are still in the school setting, since TAY that dislike school may have poor attendance or may prefer to spend time elsewhere in sanctioned ways (e.g., on-the-job training programs).

Additional contextual barriers. An additional contextual barrier faced by Springboard programs of increasing relevance in the State of Florida is the possible impact of these shifts on the rate of identification of ED and availability of ED settings, due to changes in policy de-emphasizing SED centers and other specialized programs in favor of mainstreaming and associated changes in identification practices (Murray, 2008). While there are clear advantages to practices that decrease the likelihood of a potentially pathologizing label, these changes undermine one of the advantages of the “springboard model” at least insofar as this model benefits from more frequent or early detection of ED. Interviews at the With It program suggested that the recent closure of an SED center has at least temporarily resulted in fewer referrals to the program.

The “Partnerships” approach. The final program in the study, the Young Adult Transition Program, was described as pursuing a “partnership” approach to career development services, in which a small program offering a set of core services is complemented and extended through close collaboration with other organizations in the community. In the case of the YATP program, its partnerships have made possible the creation of the continuum of employment assistance services it offers to its TAY, which are typically offered in an empowering manner as a “menu” of options at the outset of services through a presentation of program brochures by YATP life coaches. The YATP program has succeeded in establishing and

developing these partnerships, in part, through participation of its leadership in a community wide task force on transition, the Transition to Independent Living Task Force (chaired by an administrator from the local United Way). This task force was instrumental in devising the “JobLink” program, through which the TLL is maximizing local employment assistance services by directing TAY to the “right” personnel (i.e., job developers with greater experience in and connections with the business community) without additional commitment of resources. In addition to employment supports, the program has partnered with a range of other organizations to provide services not provided in-house (e.g., substance abuse services), or supplement available services (e.g., additional supported housing). Most of these partnerships are not formalized on the level of the parent agency through memoranda of agreement or other such means, but developed through the efforts of individual YATP program personnel who share knowledge about programs gathered from the TLL with TAY, help them select suitable programs, accompany them to appointments to ensure transportation and aspects of enrollment proceed smoothly (e.g., paperwork is brought), and, where appropriate, communicate with provider personnel at partner agencies about TAY needs.

Strengths. Efforts of YATP personnel to incrementally extend their personal contacts and knowledge in the process of helping TAY to access resources in the community over time have resulted in a larger pool of resources for all life coaches to draw upon (e.g., by consulting a resource book or through their regular communication with other members of the team). This process is likely facilitated by the highly collaborative, intra-organizational climate of the YATP program in which life coaches frequently discuss TAY with one another in staffing and team meetings or support one another in other ways in providing services to TAY (e.g., lending an extra hand when a TAY is in crisis). Efforts to further develop knowledge and strengthen connections also benefit from the deployment of the full-time life coach personnel in community settings, creating more opportunity for contacts between YATP providers and providers in other settings, and holding monthly transition team meetings to which providers engaged with TAY from other agencies. Although there was no apparent attempt to avoid formalizing partnerships at the inter-agency level – and this may indeed happen over time, as YATP is a very new program – continued pursuit of informal contacts may be necessary to provide the full spectrum of desired resources in a rapidly changing environment in which many programs are short-lived due to funding constraints or other factors.

Weaknesses. Attempting to create a career development and comprehensive service continuum for TAY w/ED through partnerships creates more complexity and perhaps instability in the process of service provision than would exist in a single, well-resourced program providing a range of comprehensive services. This is well illustrated by the fact that programs currently partnered with YATP to provide employment assistance services are slated to be de-funded or threatened with loss of funds. Partnered programs providing services needed by TAY may not always provide them in a manner responsive to challenges with this population. For example, despite attempts by life coaches to facilitate access to some of the Urban League’s programs, providers at both programs reported that TAY from YATP were often excluded due to not achieving required scores on a test of basic skills used by the Urban League, or due to not adhering to attendance requirements. Poor performance on testing (consistent with comorbid learning disabilities or due to problems specific to testing related to ED) and difficulties in attending appointments are often found among TAY w/ED. Finally, as with other programs in the case

study, the program cannot facilitate connections to the community that do not exist. Where resources of the community as a whole to support career development transition of TAY w/ED (or TAY in general, for that matter) are poor, it is unlikely that development of partnerships will enhance the continuum of services for TAY. Providers at the YATP site and partnering agencies in the community commented that resources have increased recently for supporting transition of former foster youth, but that options for “community” youth – TAY w/ED living with parents currently or prior to their transition to independence living – are much more limited.

Summary: Three complementary models? Although programs participating in the multiple case study were identified with a specific approach, all programs incorporated each of the approaches in some manner. For example, the TFSPT program shared elements of the springboard approach since, though aiming to network resources across the community to assist in planning for particular TAY, some of its strongest relationships are with area school systems and it tends to focus on the point of exit from school rather than career development during transition years more broadly construed (e.g., descriptions of referral patterns by TFSPT and YATP providers suggested that, relative to TFSPT, the YATP program is more likely to engage TAY *after* they have exited the school system). Both With It and YATP personnel participate in area Steering Committees serving some of the same functions as the TFSPT facilitative network, though not in the same manner (i.e., because these meetings focus on resources available to the community generally rather than those fitting the needs of particular youth). Similar to YATP life coaches, With It staff are clearly familiar with a variety of referrals in their communities and attempt to facilitate TAY receiving career development and other services in these other programs, although relatively less emphasis is placed by With It on facilitating referrals and community-based work and more on engaging TAY in school settings. Finally, YATP works closely with area schools, particularly SED centers and alternative programs, though its emphasis on these collaborations and TAY engagement in educational settings is somewhat less pronounced than for the With It program. Thus, in terms of their degree of correspondence to these different approaches, the three programs described are distinguishable not in an absolute sense but by their degree of emphasis on one or another of the approaches.

Given that all of the programs incorporated elements of all the approaches and that each approach had characteristic strengths and weaknesses, one way to understand their collective implications for practice is to regard them as complementary dimensions of an “ideal” program. By developing a distributive network of career-development and other resources across a community and specific mechanisms for utilizing this network for individual cases, programs maximize the likelihood of identifying and accessing a range of resources for TAY. By developing strong relationships with secondary and post-secondary school systems, programs increase their capacity to promote educational achievements of TAY w/ED critical to their achievement of rewarding employment over the long-term. By aggressively developing partnerships between a core comprehensive services program and a range of other programs in a community – particularly employment assistance programs – behavioral health programs serving TAY w/ED can capitalize on the considerable expertise and resources outside of the behavioral health on how to promote employment and other needs for all TAY while helping to adapt these services to TAY w/ED through the expertise of its own program personnel focused on the TAY w/ED population.

A final point is how case studies illustrate the relationship between intensity, breadth, and other aspects of quality of services in career development programs for TAY w/ED relate to the manner in which funding resources are allocated. Two types of funding resources are particularly important: 1) the resources available to support career development and other aspects of transition for *all* TAY, across a community, and 2) the availability of behavioral health funding. Regarding #1, the case studies illustrate ways in which services not designed for TAY w/ED or with specific behavioral health needs in mind – in particular, services provided by general employment assistance programs – may contribute to their career development. The breadth of education, training, and competitive employment opportunities available to TAY can also clearly impact the quality of career development services delivered to the population. Given the connections between career development service quality in programs for TAY w/ED and opportunities for TAY generally in a community, either through formal services or through education and competitive employment options, it is clearly advantageous for stakeholders in the behavioral health system to contribute to efforts to enrich career development transition resources on community, state, or national levels.

Regarding behavioral health funding, limitations of programs included in the study *not* currently receiving behavioral health funding help to underscore the critical nature of this funding stream within the broader range of community resources for TAY w/ED. The facilitative network and springboard sites included in the multiple case study were clearly more limited in their options for serving the career development needs of the population than the partner approach program. One of the ways in which behavioral health funding appears to be critical is through a synergistic impact on utilization of resources in other sectors. More specifically, as illustrated at the partner program site, in addition to making it possible to serve more TAY more intensively, having a staff of several professionals working full-time in the community on behalf of TAY w/ED increases the capacity of a program to develop knowledge and links to resources across sectors.

Although confidence in generalizability is somewhat tempered by the small number of programs included, results of the multiple case study suggest which practice principles identified by existing literature and experts are most likely to be applied in the field and which are less likely to be applied. More importantly, implementation features associated with practices that were applied consistently across the three programs suggest ways in which community agencies can develop services reflecting these practices despite the significant program and community-level limitations faced by sites participating in the multiple case study. In the description below, application of practices within each cluster across sites is considered first, followed by a description of the relative extent of application of clusters as a whole across sites.

Analysis by Clusters.

Cluster #1: Strengths-based assessment and person-centered planning. Results of the literature review and expert consultation supported ongoing, multi-method, and comprehensive strength-based assessment and person-centered planning as the foundation for provision of career development services to TAY w/ED. All three sites implemented these practices to a substantial extent. Both of the “program-based” sites (i.e., With It and YATP) placed a high value on both ongoing, informal assessment of TAY (i.e., through ongoing discussions and informal observation) and formal measurement through standardized measures and data collection forms. With the remaining program, TFSPT, implementation of a consistent battery was

somewhat impractical due to the nature of the service provided, but results of various formal assessments by participants in TFSPTs (e.g., vocational rehabilitation personnel) were regularly considered. Case manager participants in TFSPT teams were expected to have strong relationships and intimate knowledge of TAY represented in team meetings and thus could be considered the sources of informal data collection in this context.

Sites varied somewhat more in how they regarded and applied person-centered planning processes. TFSPT, for one, relied on case managers to serve as intermediaries between TAY, families, and planning teams, although lack of participation of TAY and families in this “second-level” of planning should not be assumed to preclude their direct participation in additional planning meetings that could be taking place at case management sites. Though both of the remaining two sites described person-centered planning processes that directly included TAY, and to a lesser extent, family members, the With It program was somewhat more structured in its approach than the YATP program by emphasizing educational objectives over objectives in employment and other domains to a greater degree and assisting TAY and families to a greater extent in helping TAY to select “realistic” goals. These goals were assessed by the transition facilitators to fit TAYs’ strengths and limitations, rather than following the lead of TAY, by breaking stated goals into feasible steps. It is important to note that these were largely differences in degree, rather than a rejection by personnel at either site in an absolute sense of the value of supporting TAY choices versus providing guidance. Across sites, an aspect of this cluster most likely to be absent or inconsistently evident was incorporation of informal supports into the assessment and planning process. Specific ways in which formal assessment data were used to support planning were also infrequently described. Only one of the two program-based sites (i.e., With It) used formal assessments on an ongoing basis, though once again the impact of these is unclear since a strategy for making use of this information was not articulated in detail.

Summary: Sites highly valued both formal and informal data collection methods and used these wherever possible, but were sometimes unclear in how to apply data collected through formal means and were inconsistent in applying formal methods on an ongoing basis. Sites placed differing levels on emphasis on the degree to which planning processes were directive to maximize feasibility of goals, though all sites valued person-centeredness in the planning process.

Cluster #2: Integration of Employment and Education. Results of the literature review and expert consultation suggested collaboration with educational institutions at two levels to integrate educational and employment-related career development assistance: 1) at the individual level, collaborating with educators to individualize curricula to be more responsive to employment interests of TAY; and 2) working at the programmatic level with secondary and post-secondary institutions to develop more work-site based, individualized, and self-paced curricula. The latter is clearly a more complex objective, and guidelines for this process were not mentioned by experts or laid out in sufficient detail in the literature examined to provide a basis for system reform. Regarding #1, some simple suggestions identified through the literature review and expert consultation were provision of work-site based learning experiences and inclusion of education and training objectives in the career development plan. A principal identified from the expert consultation was starting the process of career development early with TAY in order to increase TAY engagement (thereby decreasing the chances of school drop-out) and increase the relevance of education to future work experiences. However, few additional details were provided that

would assist providers in identifying specific means through which these two innovations could occur. In addition, ways of determining the relative emphasis employment and educational goals should receive in career development planning and methods for addressing any apparent conflicts between the two were not apparent from these sources.

Data from sites related to this cluster provide a variety of practical suggestions for integrating employment and education in career development programs for TAY w/ED, though specification of how these practical suggestions could be used in conjunction with one another in a coherent, overall approach was lacking. It is noteworthy that across the three sites, education tended to be more highly emphasized than work experience, though the extent to which this was the case and ways in which the relatively higher priority received by education was manifested varied based to a large extent on whether the overall “approach” demonstrated by the site was more or less school-based (see “Key Features of Sites and Models of Implementation” above). As a means for moving forward in this area, it is worthwhile to briefly summarize specific methods identified in site data as a basis for developing models in the future. These include: 1) involving education personnel on career development program person-centered planning teams and becoming involved in analogous teams based in the educational system such as TIEPs; 2) facilitating alternative and post-secondary training and educational experiences (e.g., sharing of knowledge regarding these options in the planning process, assistance in linking to supportive personnel such as guidance counselors, assistance with the enrollment and registration process, monitoring their progress and assisting them with challenges, etc.); 3) helping TAY to identify and take advantage of work-based learning programs available in secondary and post-secondary settings such as on the job training programs; and 4) learning about the school experiences of TAY, broadly construed (i.e., not just liked and disliked subjects, but successful and unsuccessful teacher and peer relationships, memorable projects, etc.) as a basis for furthering exploration of their interests

A limitation of the literature review and expert consultation for the present study was the failure to systematically search for and include sources in the literature on supported education, which is largely distinct from the literature on employment support for TAY and older adults. Thus, an important future step for expanding on the results of the present research would be integrating its results with findings from this largely separate supported education literature.

Summary: The literature review and expert consultation offered principles to guide integration of employment and education objectives that were in evidence at multiple case study sites. Literature, expert, and site data sources varied in the extent to which prioritization of education versus work experiences was suggested, and optimal models for implementing principles and specific innovations in a single, coherent approach were unclear. Examination of supported education literature might further illuminate some of these issues.

Cluster #3: Comprehensive service coordination. Results of the literature review related to this cluster suggested that career development programs will optimally meet needs of TAY w/ED when they provide career development services through multiple modalities (e.g., individual, group, on-site coaching, didactic instruction), integrate these multi-modal services in the context of a broader service package that includes support for other domains critical for TAY w/ED, develop a service matrix to guide collaboration of service agencies and other community stakeholders, and modulate of

intensity of services in a manner responsive to TAYs' needs and changes in those needs over time. Results of the expert consultation reaffirmed consensus in the literature that matrices or conceptually similar frameworks for community systems, rather than stand-alone programs, are needed to fully address career development needs of TAY w/ED and that regardless of the particular frameworks and innovations used to integrate these services at the individual level, career development and comprehensive services need to be provided through flexible and responsive relationships between providers and TAY. Each of the sites contributed to providing an array of services, including a variety of career development services various modalities and types and other types of services more broadly meeting the needs of TAY w/ED, through a combination of bolstering the facilitative administrative infrastructure for service coordination, through partnering with other agencies, and through direct provision of service (See "Key Features of Sites and Models of Implementation"). Flex funding was identified as a pivotal factor in success with particular TAY at one of the sites. Site data suggested through provider descriptions and vivid examples from TAY a variety of ways in which responsive one-on-one provider-TAY relationships can be forged, though the specific factors responsible appear to vary significantly from individual to individual, suggesting that provider-TAY match may be an important consideration in many cases.

Summary: Data from the literature review, expert consultation, and multiple case study provided convergent evidence of the importance of multi-modal, service, and sector coordination at the level of the system, the program, and the one-to-one provider TAY relationships. A variety of methods were espoused across these sources for types and levels of service coordination, with site data providing detailed descriptions of the implementation of three basic coordination approaches. An important ingredient in coordination success is the responsiveness and flexibility of the one-on-one provider-TAY relationship, which may be determined in part by the degree of fit between the provider and the TAY involved.

Cluster #4: Developmentally-appropriate. Results of the literature review, expert surveys, and multiple case study yielded somewhat different, but complementary implications for provision of exemplary career development services to TAY w/ED. The literature review suggested a number of discrete principles for providing developmentally appropriate service, including attending to needs across different aspects of transition to adult roles (e.g., in addition to career development, transition to independent living, starting of families, etc.), respecting developmentally appropriate emphasis by TAY of autonomous functioning and independent decision-making, respecting needs for exploration by finding ways to allow TAY to sample different types of educational and work experiences and respecting the normative pattern of "job-hopping," and keeping program attendance and participation requirements flexible. Expert responses were largely consistent with these principles, but suggested ways of understanding how to be developmentally appropriate on a broader conceptual level (e.g., TAY w/ED show similar developmental issues and struggles to other TAY but these may be more severe or challenging due to the disadvantages associated with ED), and suggested that to adequately respond to the greater complexity of issues associated with transition providers may need to be more extensively trained and supported than providers of career development and behavioral health services for other populations.

Site data also supported the principles identified in the literature review, but provided a variety of additional suggestions for adapting services. Variation across responses seemed to occur more on the individual than the program level. For

specific personnel suggested that providers assume a “pragmatic attitude” in cases in which TAY threaten to leave or leave a job in which the TAY is assisted in weighing the benefits and costs of prospective or recent decisions and assisted in planning for the future based on this information. Others suggested that absences, leaving job or educational opportunities, or other indicators of low or variable motivation should be understood as reflecting developmental needs to sample different experiences and thus set the occasion for renewed or reinvigorated person-centered planning with the provider. Certain personnel also indicated that providers should be sensitive to times when behaviors that might otherwise be interpreted as signaling poor motivation stem from the variety of demands upon some TAY related to transition, such as simultaneously coping with greater levels of individual responsibility while still negotiating family-of-origin issues such as mental or physical illnesses of co-residing parents. Related to the literature review principle of keeping participation requirements flexible, all sites indicated the importance of attempting to stay engaged with TAY who “disappear” for periods of time and addressing any administrative barriers to re-inclusion of these individuals if possible (e.g., rules that TAY have to be dropped from caseloads if there is no contact with them for a certain length of time).

Summary: Expert and site data supported principles identified in the literature review for developmental-appropriateness across the continuum of career development and comprehensive services. In addition, in different and complementary ways, experts and personnel at sites offered perspectives on ways to understand developmental needs and be more responsive to these needs. Informants at sites stressed the importance of allowing TAY who “disappear” for a period of time to re-enroll in services.

Cluster #5: Community-based support. Principles for increasing community-based support for TAY identified in the literature review included conducting job development at both the individual and program levels, identifying employment opportunities in the community where adequate support is provided to all employees and particularly TAY (regardless of ED or other issues), and providing support to employers and educators through job coaching, education, and consultation. Expert consultation focused in part on an area of some discrepancy between the literature on TAY w/ED and supported employment literature, i.e., the extent to which competitive employment opportunities should be emphasized over other types of career development, in particular, varieties of non-competitive employment, such as paid internships. Results of expert consultation failed to support a particular position on this issue, as strong arguments were made both for placing emphasis on competitive employment and for a more diversified approach. Some experts also articulated reservations about some methods of community-based support as being unpalatable to many youth.

Overall, sites appeared to favor the diversified placement position to allow for placement of a wider spectrum of TAY and preparation for competitive employment opportunities. Whether barriers to competitive employment placement would be overcome by verifiable adherence of participating sites to supported employment principles (i.e., through the use of appropriate fidelity measurement and associated quality improvement) is an open question. In regard to principles for community-based support identified in the literature on career development for TAY w/ED, to a large degree sites conspicuously *did not* adhere to these principles. In interviews, echoing views of some of the experts surveyed, site personnel described TAY reluctance to be perceived as needing extra assistance in community settings and employer reluctance to make special accommodations, take risks on TAY w/ED

problems, and take responsibility for lack of direct program involvement with employers in the community. Where the issue was specifically addressed, site personnel expressed support for the idea of helping TAY w/ED to find employers providing support overall rather than bolstering it in response to issues with specific employees.

Though each of the program-based sites diverged significantly from principles, they differed from one another in their degree of their divergence and particular methods for providing community-based support to the level that it was provided. One of the site directors indicated that, due to the factors described in the preceding paragraph, the program no longer engaged in any program-level job development and support efforts. However, over time and following the lead of individual TAY who have succeeded in specific community-based opportunities, the program has acquired a list of “go-to” employers that have come to know the program through its individual youth and regard it favorably or are simply known to provide supportive environments (to TAY w/ED, TAY generally, and/or all their employees). YATP program personnel reported that job development and supported occurred primarily through its connections to general employment assistance programs and thorough the personal connections of its individual direct care providers. In this way, job development and support can occur without being specifically identified with a behavioral health agency (see “Non-Stigmatizing” for additional discussion of this point).

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Summary: Principles identified in the literature review for community support of employment of TAY w/ED in the community were NOT consistently adhered to across sites participating in the case study. Sites described reluctance to directly contact employers either to develop further opportunities for the program or support placement of specific TAY due to TAY reservations about appearing to need help and employer reservations about making accommodations or taking risks for particular employees. Each of the program-based sites described specific methods through which job development and support functions have been provided to a more limited extent than some authorities in the existing literature would recommend by monitoring and documenting experiences of TAY, engaging partner agencies providing general employment assistance services (i.e., not tailored to needs of TAY), and through personal contacts of direct care providers.

Cluster #6: Promotion of skills and resources. The literature review suggested several principles related to building TAY skills and natural supports, including the use of multiple modalities (e.g., both one-on-one and group-based) and incorporation of “real-life experiences” for skills training, promotion of auxiliary “soft skills” such as those advocated in the literature on employment transition for TAY with disabilities (e.g., self-determination), and facilitation of involvement by a broad variety of natural supports, including both immediate and adoptive family as well as members of TAYs’ “permanent family” such as significant others and other peer supports. Experts elaborated on skills training principles described in the literature by pointing out specific ways that career development skills training could be applied to real life experience (e.g., even leaving a job can provide an opportunity to develop skills if TAY are encouraged to give notice, etc.) and the importance of building on youth strengths in the skills training process. Interviews with providers and TAY at sites suggested various examples of how role play and demonstration could be employed for these purposes. Site data also suggested how programs can enhance their capacity to provide individual and group-based training in employment and other life skills by working through employment assistance agencies, transitional or independent living programs, either through facilitating referral outside the agency or by bringing other personnel “in house” (as at the YATP program).

Site data also suggested ways to involve family and other informal supports despite barriers commonly encountered in the field (e.g., ways to facilitate informal support participation in teams and other planning despite limited accessibility due to transportation or scheduling programs, ways to handle issues related to information disclosure with age of majority TAY, etc.) and also underscored the importance of strategically involving supports to participate more fully in the ongoing planning process and celebrate achievements and strengths rather than only being involved at times of emergencies or crisis.

Summary: Literature review, expert consultation, and site data consistently supported the importance of maximizing generalizability of skills training through the use of multiple modalities and “real-life” situations and maximizing involvement of informal supports despite barriers. Site data suggested a variety of opportunities to implement relevant skills training, to extend site resources for skills training implementation through partnerships, and methods for overcoming barriers to informal support participation.

Cluster #7: Long-term outcome orientation. Literature review, expert consultation, and site data consistently indicated a commitment by the field to engaging TAY w/ED in career development over relatively long periods of time to help to ensure that complex needs are addressed and gains are maintained. However, the operationalization of the length of time necessary varied across types of data sources and particular sources within each type (e.g., a set or “rule of thumb” for guiding decisions regarding minimal commitment of services, particular criteria indicative of progress that could be used in conjunction with specific time period recommendations, or entirely individualized services). Additionally, while the literature review suggested general guidelines for tracking of individual progress and program impact, expert consultation findings suggested significant unresolved challenges in this regard such as a lack of appropriate measures given challenges faced with the population that are both: 1) sufficiently sensitive to incremental career development improvements, and 2) not overly sensitive to behaviors and events that for other populations might be regarded as significant setbacks, but are common or even normative given characteristics of the age group (e.g., job losses or changes, the

engagement in risk behaviors such as using alcohol or illegal substances). The typical mechanism for assessing progress and identifying needs for adjustments in service was through plan reviews or team meetings. At the program level, although one of the three sites used specific indicators to assess program impact (TFSPIT) and one of the sites administers measures to track TAY progress on an ongoing basis, none of sites appear to have well articulated strategies for using this information for program improvement. In addition, little insight was gained from any of the data collected on issues of measurement of fidelity or other aspects of program process, in the absence of which implications of impact data for program improvements are unclear.

Summary: Although there was consensus on a general level across data sources about principles for length of commitment and individual and program outcome tracking, little agreement was evident on how these general principles should be operationalized. These are clearly important issues for additional policy innovations and research on career development services for TAY.

Cluster #8: Non-stigmatizing. As indicated previously in the summary of findings related to Cluster #5 (“Community-Based Support”), the dynamics of communications between career development programs and employers in the community should be carefully considered to avoid having a stigmatizing impact on TAY and thereby increasing their likelihood of exclusion from these opportunities or other harmful effects of labeling. The literature review provided a number of principles to guide communications with employers and otherwise minimize the possibility of stigma in these situations, and the follow TAYs’ lead in determining whether the costs of possible stigmatization outweigh the costs of support that might follow from communication or collaboration between programs and employers. Experts pointed out that an additional factor to consider in weighing these decisions is the sensitivity of TAY to perceptions of peers. The presence of peers – in other ways likely to be a positive attribute for a given career development opportunity – may render potentially stigmatizing situations even more fraught for TAY w/ED.

Results of case studies suggested that at least in this small sample of sites, providers in the field weigh issues related to potential stigma relatively heavily and are often discouraged for his reason from providing community-based support for employment or even other types of career development opportunities. Personnel at the site making the greatest use of community-based support articulated a variety of strategies at the individual provider level (e.g., communicating to employers that program focuses on promotion of career and independent living), and at the program level (e.g., working through programs outside of the behavioral health sector, in particular, general employment assistance programs, to provide community-based supports and job development services). Comments by providers and TAY about meeting TAY in their homes underscores that issues of stigma should be considered in other community contexts as well, and also that challenges related to perceptions of TAY by others can manifest in a variety of other ways (e.g., TAY can be concerned about the perceptions of the direct care provider of their supports in the community as well as vice versa).

Two important issues related to non-stigmatizing service that failed to be explicitly addressed in data from the literature review, expert consultation, or multiple case study are: 1) the possible utility of peer mentors in overcoming barriers to non-stigmatizing community-based support (though the use of “therapeutic friends in the TFSPIT program, while not explained in this manner, serves as a practical example of this innovation); and 2) the issue of the extent to which providing specialized career

development services to an “ED” population at all may be stigmatizing. The latter issue is important to consider in particular, as it challenges the premise of these services, which, while clearly meeting a specific need, could also have iatrogenic impacts (e.g., if youth are referred to them who do not clearly belong in the category, if services do not include a recovery component that can help transform the meaning of service participation, etc.).

Summary: Data from sites complemented principles for non-stigmatizing services identified in the literature review and expert survey by suggesting specific ways on the individual provider and program level for minimizing potential stigmatizing impact of community-based services for “TAY w/ED”. Important issues left unaddressed were ways to integrate peer mentorship into career development services to reduce stigma and the fundamental issue of the relative advantages and disadvantages of providing career development services in any context to a labeled population.

Conclusions

The needs of TAY w/ED, particularly in the area of career development, have been widely neglected in behavioral health systems until very recently. In addition, although programs have occasionally been described to address this niche in the last several decades, generally very little services research on this topic has been completed and consequently there has been an absence of direct guidance on promising practices in the area. Increasingly, however, innovative sites across the country have begun to implement services to assist TAY w/ED in developing careers and otherwise progressing toward achievement of their adult responsibilities and future goals, providing an opportunity to use practice-based evidence to provide a basis for guiding program developers as the field grows and identify important service characteristics to consider including in programs, barriers to the implementation of these characteristics, and methods for overcoming these barriers. To achieve these objectives, the current research was designed to build upon recommendations derived from the few publications describing methods for addressing career development needs of TAY w/ED, knowledge from other literatures such as the literature on supported employment with possible implications for service design of career development programs for the population, recommendations from experts in the field, and finally, the experiences of pioneering programs in the state of Florida. Because of the importance of integrating career development services with behavioral health services for populations with significant behavioral health needs and the likely importance of public behavioral health funding sources such as Medicaid to achieve such integration, an effort was made to identify sites currently using Medicaid funding to help support these career development services.

Implications for Programs

The eight conceptual clusters identified in the literature review supply a framework describing aspects of services that providers of career development services for TAY w/ED have generally found to be helpful. Within each cluster, a number of specific practice principles were summarized. Through expert interviews, these principles were clarified further, and specific areas of ambiguity, controversy or discrepancy with literatures outside of the existing literature on career development services for TAY w/ED, particularly the literature on supported employment, were

explored. The multiple case study provided many examples of how these principles can be implemented optimally in contexts where resources to support such services can often be scarce.

Key Practice Recommendations

Practice Recommendation #1: Integrate formal and informal methods of strengths-based assessment on an ongoing basis to facilitate person-centered planning for career development and other future goals.

Practice Recommendation #2: Integrate education and employment career development objectives through collaboration with secondary and post-secondary educators in assisting individual TAY and developing more work-relevant programs in education settings.

Practice Recommendation #3: Coordinate multi-modal career development within a comprehensive service continuum at multiple levels involving providers and programs from across service sectors, and ensure that the coordination process involves responsive one-on-one relationships between TAY and providers that fit the TAY involved.

Practice Recommendation #4: Increase developmental appropriateness by understanding normative reasons for variation in TAY levels of service and employment opportunity engagement and motivation to pursue career development goals and providing services in a flexible manner to avoid exclusion of TAY based on this normative variability.

Practice Recommendation #5: Pursue job development and provide community-based support to TAY while avoiding possible stigmatization by monitoring and documenting opportunities available in the community as demonstrated by TAY experiences by optimizing the use of informal networks of program personnel and providing community-based career development assistance through partner agencies outside of the behavioral health sector, particularly through general employment assistance programs.

Practice Recommendation #6: Maximize the generalizability of career development related skills training by incorporating multiple intervention modalities and employing “real-life” situations and increase the involvement of informal supports through a variety of strategies that reduce barriers to informal support participation in career development services.

Practice Recommendation #7: Commit to TAY on a long-term basis, and track outcomes at the individual and program levels to improve services for individuals and the quality of the program as a whole.

Practice Recommendation #8: Be aware of possibilities for stigmatization of TAY, and implement strategies shown in the field to reduce likelihood of stigmatization.

The multiple site case study described three fundamental approaches to coordination of the complex service arrays that have been emphasized as key to effectively meeting employment and education need of TAY w/ED, including: 1) building a *facilitative network*, an additional coordinating layer upon existing services in which key, “high profile” stakeholders from the relevant service sectors participate, to provide technical assistance and training leadership, help access critical resources for particular TAY, and communicate the importance of the service niche to the community, 2) creating a *springboard* for TAY, by working closely with schools to help ensure that TAY w/ED obtain necessary basic educational credentials and complete other tasks involved in bridging the gap between secondary and post-secondary education and training and/or employment; and 3) through a *partnership* model, in which a continuum of career development and other comprehensive services is established through working closely with relevant specialty programs such as employment assistance specialty agencies.

Each of these approaches implemented exemplary practices from the eight literature clusters in somewhat different ways characteristic of their overall approach, so future programs seeking to emulate one of these overall methods to contend to the particular ways in which the relevant program implemented exemplary practice principles. Since each of these approaches demonstrated particular types of strengths and weaknesses, however, efforts to create responsive service continua meeting employment development and other comprehensive needs of TAY w/ED might maximize their potential for impact by combining the best of all three models to create a responsive *career development system* for TAY w/ED.

Practice Recommendation #9: Create systems for the promotion of career development for TAY w/ED through a combination of facilitative networking, school-based services created to provide a springboard to post-secondary education and employment, and provider and program level partnering with specialty organizations in the community such as general employment assistance agencies.

In terms of resources available to support implementation, in particular, its number of committed full-time staff, access to in-house specialty providers, ability to provide ongoing training and supervision, etc., the site with the clearest advantage of the three reviewed was the site currently utilizing Medicaid funding to contribute to its provision of core services. It has accomplished this, in part, through close cooperation from planning of services onward with its local DCF SAMH circuit office, which likely assisted in identifying specific allowable reimbursements and ways to integrate these into the overall mixture of funding support for the program

Practice Recommendation #10: Work closely with DCF district offices starting from the program planning phase onward to assist in determining the best uses of Medicaid funding in combination with other funding sources to support the desired service continuum.

Finally, in examining the principles for exemplary practice and associated innovations identified in the current study, it is clear that there is limited attention paid among these to ways of addressing particular *types* of problems within the continuum of difficulties known as ED. An explanation consistent with this “practice-based knowledge,” as well as general principles of research on the interaction between developmental tasks and behavioral and emotional problems (e.g., the developmental psychopathology literature), may simply be that problems of TAY w/ED in the area of career development, though definitely more severe than those of TAY generally, are not fundamentally different in the qualitative sense. Stated differently, TAY may need more support to meet more severe challenges, but in many ways the types of support needed are not dissimilar from those needed by any TAY. Ways in which other types of populations have successfully faced significant challenges to attain (or recover) role functioning may also be informative.

Given this indicated qualitative similarity of career development problems across TAY w/ED and other groups of TAY facing challenges, existing methods for providing career development support to other populations facing challenges that interfere with their progress such as TAY w/disabilities and adults with severe mental illness are therefore valid sources of additional information for providers to continue to consult in visioning, planning, developing, and implementing services. To the extent that the use of categorical labels such as ED as a basis for services may connote to providers or others in the community that TAY w/ED are fundamentally different in their needs for social inclusion and supports for this, the label may become a barrier to successful career development progress. This and other implications of the ED label for designing and implementing services and ways of addressing these issues such as operating within a recovery informed framework should be carefully considered from the planning phase onward.

Practice Recommendation #11: In planning services, providers should continue to consult extant career development literature on TAY and other populations facing significant challenges, including literature on TAY with disabilities and supported employment for older adults with severe mental illness.

Practice Recommendation #12: Consider possible implications of basing a service model on a potentially stigmatizing label and means for addressing this fundamental barrier such as carefully integrating principles of recovery-informed care into services.

TAY w/ED clearly have some needs that are specific to the types of problems they have. Unfortunately, the present, highly imperfect system of diagnostic classification has been found wanting as a means for planning services responsive to the priority needs of community-based behavioral health populations. A promising method of addressing specific behavioral health needs worthy of exploration is cluster based planning.

Implications for State Policy and Policy Research

Efforts to identify programs meeting criteria established for inclusion of programs in planning for the multiple case study were not successful, and even once criteria were broadened – for example, by allowing inclusion of programs not currently using Medicaid funds – a very low number of programs providing career development services to TAY w/ED were found in the state. Establishment of services addressing this niche has been identified as a national priority because of the clear unmet needs of TAY w/ED for this support and the clear implications of not providing such support for exacerbating long-term burdens faced by public service systems. TAY w/ED that are not successful in their efforts to transition to successful employment and other aspects of successfully achieving productive adulthood are extremely vulnerable to outcomes that place considerable burdens on these systems such as incarceration, contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as HIV, substance dependence, and becoming poor parents and thus placing the next generation at risk.

Although programs have begun to emerge addressing those among these TAY who are aging out of the child welfare system, the absence of such focused efforts for the bulk of TAY not meeting this criterion suggests that this population is being relatively neglected. By not prioritizing the area of career development and other transition services for the TAY w/ED living in the community, the state will be left behind as the nation orients toward providing successful solutions to address this area and will fare more poorly than other states that have begun to devote significant attention to this issue to capitalize on increasing research, policy, and financial resources being applied to pursue it.

Although the goal of the present research was not to specifically investigate the levers by which the Agency for Health Care Administration or other stakeholders in the state could precipitate growth of the service niche of career development for TAY w/ED, several straightforward suggestions informed by our results should be considered for pursuing in the near term and for long-term planning informed by additional policy research. These include recommendations to facilitate behavioral health funding of career development services, recommendations to maximize the impact of this funding where available, and recommendations to ensure desired impact is being achieved and ongoing efforts are further enhanced through data collection and evaluation.

Policy Recommendations

#1 – #4: Modification of funding and regulatory guidelines

Policy Recommendation #1: Modify Medicaid reimbursement guidelines to underscore the methods and conditions of specific career development services that are fundable as part of a medically necessary service continuum.

Policy Recommendation #2: Work with DCF at the State level to better operationalize methods for using Medicaid funding to support career development services or support specific reimbursable types of services provided in the context of comprehensive care programs such as those described in the case examples.

Policy Recommendation #3: Modify the Medicaid reimbursement structure in ways that encourage providers to spend more time for activities related to coordination with other providers and sectors in the community beyond simple referral (e.g., communicating with other providers, accompanying TAY to other agencies in the community, and participating in service coordination teams when efforts focus on individual cases in particular, etc.).

Policy Recommendation #4: Set an agenda for funding and regulatory reforms that reduce the likelihood of exclusion of TAY w/ED from services, particularly with respect to automatic discontinuation of services after missed appointments or arbitrary time periods in which no service encounter occurs.

Policy Recommendations #5 & #6: Maximization of impact of public behavioral health funding of career development services

Policy Recommendation #5: Identify and promote mechanisms for providers to form cross-agency and cross-sector collaborations to ensure an optimal range of career development, comprehensive services, and the avoidance of service duplication at the community level.

Policy recommendation #6: Promote excellence through sharing knowledge related to the development and implementation of career development services for TAY w/ED by supporting relevant services research and contributing to its dissemination (e.g., through distributing technical assistance material and supporting forums such as program planning and career development TAY w/ED conferences and cross-site meetings).

Policy Recommendations #7 - #9: Assist in measurement and monitoring to ensure impact of career development services

Policy Recommendation #7: Help ensure impact by providing statewide leadership to identify suitable indicators and evaluation strategies for measuring individual career development progress and program effects.

Policy Recommendation #8: Provide leadership to local programs to develop common strategies for feasible, cost-effective utilization and evaluation data to support quality improvement.

Policy Recommendation #9: Support efforts to develop feasible process and fidelity measurement strategies to provide the capacity to link individual or program-wide changes to specific career development service innovations and emerging career development service models.

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[Note: References used in systematic literature review are marked with a “*”.]

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Appendices

Appendix A [Expert Survey]

Key Informant Questionnaire/Interview For AHCA Exemplary Practices in Employment Transition Support study

Below are several broad questions regarding employment-related services for **transition-age youth and young adults (14-25 years) with emotional disturbances (TAY w/ED)**. We are requesting your answers to these questions to help clarify areas of ambiguity in the literature on this subject. For each broad question, sub-questions are also provided to help direct your responses.

We would be grateful for your responses to these questions, either by phone or by e-mail. *If you prefer to answer these questions in a phone interview, please contact the Principal Investigator, Mason G. Haber, Ph.D. by email (mbaber@fmbi.usf.edu) or by phone (813-974-6448) to arrange an interview time. If you prefer to type your answers, please email your responses to mhaber@fmbi.usf.edu.*

[Please Note: Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish to decline participation, simply indicate “Decline” in the subject line of your e-mailed reply and discontinue this survey].

1. What are the most critical differences to consider in providing employment-related services to TAY w/ED versus providing those services to older adult populations with mental health needs?
 - ❖ *To what extent should maintaining competitive employment be prioritized over other possible career development experiences (e.g., sheltered, time-limited, transitional employment experiences) for TAY w/ED?*
 - ❖ *Are lower caseloads needed for TAY w/ED versus older adult populations?*
 - ❖ *What are particular barriers that TAY w/ED populations may encounter more frequently than older adult populations, and how might those barriers be addressed by an employment-related service program?*

2. What methods do you recommend for the delivery of employment-related services to TAY w/ED? Please explain your recommendations.
 - ❖ *Should a single provider focus on providing employment-related and other rehabilitative services (a “comprehensive provider model”) or focus on providing only employment rehabilitation services in coordination with other rehabilitative service providers (a “specialist” model)?*
 - ❖ *To what extent should education be integrated with employment-related services for TAY w/ED? How should they be integrated?*
 - ❖ *To what extent should service delivery be provided by mobile personnel (e.g., at a worksite, in the community) versus at a “center” (e.g., schools, colleges, mental health centers, “youth house”, etc.)?*

3. How should employment-related service providers ensure that TAY w/ED consumers achieve positive employment outcomes?

- ❖ *What are ways to identify whether the TAY w/ED is a good “match” once youth begin working in a competitive job or other career development opportunity?*
- ❖ *How can TAY w/ED be given opportunities to explore career options?*
- ❖ *When should TAY w/ED be encouraged to persevere despite challenges?*
- ❖ *What should happen in cases when a change is necessary?*
- ❖ *How long should follow along services be maintained?*

4. How should programs be adapted for particularly challenging TAY w/ED (e.g., if youth are dangerous, have other disabilities, have a co-occurring substance use disorder, etc.)?

- ❖ *Given limited funding, which exclusion or removal criteria are advisable?*
- ❖ *What are the advantages and disadvantages of supporting complete abstinence for individuals with substance use disorders?*
- ❖ *What are the advantages and disadvantages of accommodating different levels of youth readiness, motivation, or ability to participate in career development?*
- ❖ *To what extent can a program increase motivation among TAY w/ED?*
- ❖ *How can poor/inconsistent attendance at activities be addressed?*

5. To help ensure that our list of experts on TAY employment-related services is adequately inclusive, we would like for you to nominate a small number of individuals who you consider to be among the most important authorities in this area. While we have provided space for up to 10 nominations, please nominate only those individuals that you believe would provide crucial expertise on employment-related services for TAY.

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____
- iv. _____
- v. _____
- vi. _____
- vii. _____
- viii. _____
- ix. _____
- x. _____

Thank you for your valuable assistance with our research!

Appendix B [Administrator Survey]

Services Key Informant Questionnaire/Interview

For AHCA Exemplary Practices in Employment Transition Assistance study

*Below are several questions designed to help us identify behavioral health programs that have developed novel and promising employment-related services to meet the needs of **transition-age youth and young adults (14-25 years) with emotional disturbances (TAY w/ED)**. Please feel free to type your responses directly into the e-mail or into the word attachment and reply to mhaber@fmhi.usf.edu.*

1. Which Medicaid-funded behavioral health programs (i.e., in child mental health, adult mental health, or substance abuse sectors) do you know of that do the following things:
 - Provide employment services to transition-aged (i.e., 14-25) youth w/ED.
 - Provide employment services that are *specifically adapted* in some manner to this age group.
2. Which, if any of these programs would you say is doing an *exemplary* job of adapting their employment assistance services to this age group?
3. What is exemplary about these programs, and how do you know this information?
4. In what ways do these programs adhere or fail to adhere to the following criteria for evaluating best practices derived from the literature on employment assistance for TAY w/ED?
 - Strengths-based assessment and person-centered planning
 - Integration of employment and educational supports
 - Incorporation of variety of supports of sufficient intensity
 - Integration with mental health, substance abuse, and other types of services
 - Youth has central role/control over which of the available supports are provided and how
 - Supports are provided in the community and in cooperation with nonformal providers (e.g., employers or job supervisors in competitive settings)
 - Program teaches specific skills in engaging ways
 - Data is collected on whether services are provided in the intended way (fidelity data), are effective (outcome data), and are engaging/satisfying to youth (satisfaction data)
5. Who else would have knowledge regarding exemplary programs to assist employment of TAY w/ED [statewide/in your geographic area]

We greatly appreciate your time and effort in assisting us with our research!

Career Development of Transition-Age Youth

STUDY PROTOCOL

MATRIX

1. Strengths-Based Assessment & Person-Centered Planning

Direct Service Provider	Supervisor/Administrator	TAY Interview	Community Partner	Record Review
		Description of self (strengths, challenges in all transition domains: Education; Employment; Living Situation; Community Life)	TAY strengths and challenges/observed	Description of TAY All transition domains: Education; Employment; Living Situation; Community Life)
		Describe transition program & case manager		
Kind of information used to assess LIST	Kind of information to gather LIST – Match?	Type of questions asked by case manager to know TAY Describe meeting with case manager/questions, involvement, how it ends	Kind of information needed/asked	Strengths & Preferences Fears/Obstacles Past history (work & school)
Method used to assess LIST	Method used to assess LIST	Method used to assess LIST	Method used to assess LIST	List of documents in file – Titles/Description/Dates Tools, strategies, interview used to assess data – AMT of data collected
			Describe role in providing/receiving info to agency (or TAY)	
Type of support & resources used in assessment	Type of training & resources/supports provided to DSP			
	Supervision process Frequency of team meeting to discuss cases and other issues			Supervisory notes?

Development of plans/goal Planning process	Planning process – Explain	Plans for the future that were discussed with CM AND What TAY did to come up with plans AND Steps discussed to help in following plan Feelings RE plan	Participation in planning Process? Knowledge RE TAY’s employment plan/goals	Future goals/plan; strategies for achieving goals/ Planning process
Extent of involvement of different people in planning process LIST	Extent of involvement of different people in planning process LIST	Extent of involvement of different people in planning process	Level of involvement/ commitment to support TAY’s employment	Persons involved in assessing youth? Persons involved in supporting youth’s plan?
Ex. Of plans (2)	Ex. Of plans (2)	Describe plan	Describe plan	Copy of plan
TAY participation in development of plans/goals		What TAY has done in regard to development of plan and to follow plan		Evidence of youth participation in development of plan Strategies to achieve goals/plans
			Kind of resources/sup ports setting receives from employment support Agency	

2. Integration of Employment & Education

Direct Service Provider	Supervisor/Administrator	TAY Interview	Community Partner	Record Review
Agency's role in providing or coordinating Educational Experience AND DSP role LIST	Agency's role in providing or coordinating Educational Experience AND Supervisor role LIST	How CM helped find classes of interest If class not helpful has CM helped find better class?	Agency's role in providing or coordinating training experience	Educational Goals – Strategies applied to meet goals
How are educational needs of TAY assessed AND Average & range achievement	How are educational needs of TAY assessed AND Average & range achievement			Assessment of TAY educational needs?
Types of educational settings and experiences % of TAY involved in each – Occurring less frequently? Why?	Types of educational settings and experiences % of TAY involved in each-	Type of classes (practicum, skills training) taken	Training offered/observed	Educational programming (details RE: Classes, setting, etc)
How is TAY educational plan individualized	How is TAY educational plan individualized	How is TAY educational plan individualized – what could be changed – how?		Individualized Plan?
Ways educational experiences benefit TAY	Ways educational experiences benefit TAY	How have classes helped TAY in working towards finding a job or other future plans Something TAY would like to learn but has not yet been taught? What TAY likes/dislikes most about classes		Educational Goals Documentation of progress or delay in making progress

3. Comprehensive Service Coordination

Direct Service Provider	Supervisor/Administrator	TAY Interview	Community Partner	Record Review
			Number of TAY employed (from ES Agency)	
Describe methods used to provide services to TAY (LIST)	Describe methods used to provide services to TAY (LIST)	TYPE of activities (Group, individual, skills, etc)	Describe services provided to TAY	Modes of service delivery Type of services provided (skills training, social skills, counseling)
Describe DSP work including direct involvement with TAY – Typical activities	Describe DSP work (expectations) including direct involvement with TAY and employers – Typical activities	Describe DSP work including direct involvement with TAY – Typical activities – Frequency – How case manager helps Things TAY Likes/does not like about Case Manager (CM) Ways CM helped TAY the most? (Why here – Why not in coordination?)	Describe DSP work including direct involvement with TAY – Typical activities	
How formal & informal supports help TAY in employment AND Benefits of supports to TAY	How formal & informal supports help TAY in employment AND Benefits of supports to TAY	Involvement of various supports/people		Involvement of other supports – Whom – How involved?
			Employment setting appropriate match for TAY's ability Employment setting appropriate Match to TAY's abilities?	Community Base learning experiences?

Describe coordination process used – Role in Coordination LIST	Describe coordination process used - Role in Coordination LIST	Who coordinates plan – how?		Document coordination process/evidence Collaboration across community stakeholders
Intensity of services – variance according to needs	Intensity of services – variance according to needs	AMT time spent working with CM Frequency of meetings with CM	Level of involvement to support TAY’s employment goal	Frequency of contacts/sessions
Describe change in provision of services over time LIST	Describe change in provision of services over time LIST	Proposed changes to meetings with CM to make them better	Satisfaction related to provision of services – support?	
Size of typical caseload	Range of caseloads – Maximum?			
Areas/domains supported by program (LIST)	Areas/domains supported by program (LIST)	Areas where help was offered (Housing, transportation, etc) – LIST		Type of assistance accessed/received – Areas/domains
Agencies involved in service provision Outside agency – group of individuals to find/deliver services – LIST	Agencies involved in service provision Outside agency – group of individuals to find/deliver services – LIST	Helpful Community Resources (child care, housing, etc).		List of agencies/people involved in service delivery
How DSP work with other agencies/organizations/informal supports to assist TAY	How DSP work with other agencies/organizations/informal supports to assist TAY (expectations)	What program did to help TAY find job & move forward with employment plans	How DSP work with agency/organization	
What if TAY does not take part?	What if TAY does not take part?	Wish to stop program – Why? Why continue?		

4. Developmentally Appropriate

Direct Service Provider	Supervisor/Administrator	TAY Interview	Community Partner	Record Review
Difference between TAY with EBD & other populations in your work – Normative issues	Difference between TAY with EBD & other populations in your work – Normative issues	How different/same does TAY feel treated	Difference between TAY with EBD & other populations in your work – Normative issues	
Describe style of service delivery (listening, solving problems, etc) LIST	Describe style of service delivery (listening, solving problems, etc) LIST	EX of how program listens/did not listen to concerns & preferences – change made/no change made	Describe style of service delivery (listening, solving problems, etc) LIST	
Support from program when problems occur in employment or education	Support from program when problems occur in employment or education	If unhappy with plan, employment or help you receive – how CM finds out? AND Help provided when TAY quit /was fired from job If miss appointment, what happens?	Support from program when problems occur in employment	Evidence of flexibility in service provision Identification of barriers Methods to overcome barriers

5. Community-Based Support

Direct Service Provider	Supervisor/Administrator	TAY Interview	Community Partner	Record Review
Type of employment./work setting DSP helped TAY find LIST	Type of employment./work agency helped TAY find LIST	Type of employment /jobs held	Setting – Type of employment offered	
Describe job development process Finding employment opportunities, recruitment, etc.	Describe job development process Finding employment opportunities, recruitment, etc.	How job was accessed	Contacts/communication with ES agency? When & How first became aware of ES agency AND Why became involved with ES agency	Documentation RE: Job Development Process?
			# TAY employed that receive services from ES agency	
Describe support provided to employers LIST	Describe support provided to employers LIST	Describe support provided – helpful?	Describe support provided to employers LIST AND Describe hesitations in working with ES agency	Supports to employers
How decision to provide support is made	How decision to provide support is made		Support from ES agency satisfactory?	
How are potential mentors and community supports identified AND how supportive relationships developed	How are potential mentors and community supports identified AND how supportive relationships developed	Help from people not involved in agency's program AND How was this person helpful? E.g. mentor – others?	Involvement of Mentors AND How is this person helpful?	Evidence of involvement of mentors & other informal supports – How used?

6. Enhancement of Strengths, Competencies, and Natural Supports

Direct Service Provider	Supervisor/Administrator	TAY Interview	Community Partner	Record Review
Ex of skills training provided LIST	Ex of skills training used by DSP LIST	Skills worked on LIST – Skills most helpful	Ex of skills training provided LIST	Type of skills training – LIST
			Methods used to support TAY – Other than standard training & supervision	
			Advice/guidance received from ES agency regarding how to help TAY succeed at work	
What determines type of skills AND method of training to use	What determines type of skills AND method of training to use	How skills are taught AND learned (e.g., role play) LIST What has been most helpful in learning skills (How diff than previous question?) AND Most difficult aspects of learning skills AND How program could do better job in helping TAY learn skills		
Describe ways informal supports participate in supporting a TAY in the agency	Describe ways informal supports participate in supporting a TAY in the agency	Use of Informal support? How?		Involvement of natural supports

Describe strategies to promote participation of informal supports in assisting TAY	Describe strategies to promote participation of informal supports in assisting TAY			Support of natural supports
How are functions performed by formal support shifted to more natural and informal supports?	How are functions performed by formal support shifted to more natural & informal supports?			

6. Long-Term Outcome Orientation

Direct Service Provider	Supervisor/Administrator	TAY Interview	Community Partner	Record Review
How is progress determined? Short list	How is progress determined? Short list	Ways to find out how TAY doing at job	Ways to find out how TAY doing at job LIST	Ongoing assessment
Assessment of TAY success/completion of services				Data collection method (survey, observation, etc.)
Type of info collected (On-going basis) to assess progress? LIST	Type of info collected (On-going basis) to assess progress? LIST	Type of info requested to find out if TAY happy at job – Others	Type of info requested by ES agency related to progress and status at work	Type of info collected (On-going basis) to assess progress? LIST
From whom info is collected? LIST	From whom info is collected? LIST			Data collection sources (TAY, employer, mentors)
Response if TAY does not progress – has difficulties LIST	Response if TAY does not progress – has difficulties LIST	Difficulties RE following plan?	Communication with ES agency – Regular? Difficulties – How handled by ES agency?	Documentation of progress/difficulties & change to goal/plan; what has been successful; not been successful

Steps to ensure program effectiveness	Steps to ensure program effectiveness	What has program not done for you but you think would be helpful	Communication/relationship with ES agency? Describe how involvement from ES agency changed over time	
Length of time to remain in contact with TAY & monitor outcomes AND how was this decided?	Length of time to remain in contact with TAY & monitor outcomes AND how was this decided?			

6. Non-Stigmatizing Services

Direct Service Provider	Supervisor/Administrator	TAY Interview	Community Partner	Record Review
Setting in which services are typically provided? LIST	Setting in which services are typically provided? LIST	Setting in which services are typically provided? LIST	Setting where services are provided	Service delivery location
How decision regarding what info to share/not disclose with employer is made	How decision regarding what info to share/not disclose with employer is made	How decision regarding what info to share/not disclose with employer is made	How approached by ES agency – How was TAY described (strengths/challenges, etc)?	Evidence of communication with employer – Documents provided?

9. General

Steps taken to reduce possibility of stigmatization LIST	Steps taken to reduce possibility of stigmatization LIST	Has program made TAY feel uncomfortable at job or in front of others – EXPLAIN AND Comfort RE CM & Program personnel to be present at work?	What info RE: TAY was disclosed to supervisor/co-workers? How was this provided to them?	Documentation related to HYPPA – Guidelines regarding communication with employer
Aspects of program considered most critical to achieve successful outcomes	Aspects of program considered most critical to achieve successful outcomes		Aspects of program considered most critical to achieve successful outcomes	
Aspects of program to improve in order to be more effective with TAY being served	Aspects of program to improve in order to be more effective with TAY being served	Aspects of program to improve in order to be more effective	Aspects of program to improve in order to be more effective with TAY being served	

Appendix D

Program #1: “The Facilitative Network” Transition Family Support Planning Team Program Case Study Report

Title of program. Transition Family Support Planning Team

Agency. District IV Multi-Agency Network for Students with Emotional Disabilities (SEDNET)

Contents

- I) Case Specific Methodology
 - This section describes the site-specific adaptations to the multiple case study methods.
- II) General Description of Program
 - This section provides information about the overall purpose of the program, its history, basic site information such as service area, eligibility for services, and referral process, and a brief description of core services provided by the program.
- II) Analysis of Program Characteristics by Literature Review Cluster
 - This section provides an analysis of program characteristics organized by their correspondence with eight (8) types of best practices, or “clusters” identified based on a systematic review of available literature on career development services for transition-age youth with emotional disturbance (TAY w/ED). Data sources for this section of the report include interviews and record review.
- III) Community Partner Interviews and Direct Observation: TAY Case Study
 - This section summarizes findings from an “embedded case study”, involving description based interviews with multiple informants and observation of ways in which experiences of a particular TAY illustrate optimal characteristics of community based career development as practiced by the program.
- IV) Implementation Barriers
 - This section summarizes, based on findings from all data sources (i.e., interviews, record review, and observation), three barriers to implementation experienced by the program and the ways in which the program has attempted to address these barriers.

Section I: Case-Specific Methodology

Program selection

Inclusion criteria for participating in the multiple case study included: a) being located in the State of Florida; b) providing career development services; c) adapting career development services to the specific needs of TAY w/ED; d) receiving all or part of the funding for these services from Medicaid or through Medicaid contracted private insurers; e) being described as “exemplary” in some specific way by services key informants (SKIs); f) being in operation since prior to the start of fiscal year ’05-’06. (For further information on study criteria and program selection, see “Methods” section in full report). The program was nominated twice by SKIs, who provided specific details about aspects of services they believed to be “exemplary”, thus meeting criterion e). Based on an initial interview with the program director, TFSPT was confirmed as meeting inclusion criteria a) through c) and f). Regarding d), although the TFSPTs that form the core of the program are financed through SEDNET and Transition to Independence Process (TIP) funding, TFSPTs provide support to Medicaid-funded case-management services. Thus, while the program does not criterion d), strictly interpreted, its close association with and supportive role relative to Medicaid funded case management services were thought to provide good justifications for waiving this criterion, particularly given the fact that *no* programs in the State of Florida met all of the initially identified study criteria.

Adaptations to Case Study Method

Information regarding program history was taken primarily from initial and on-site interviews with the program director, Miriam Crowe. Because the structure of the TFSPT program fundamentally differed from those of the other two sites included in the multiple case study, data collection methods for the site were adapted in certain ways. First, because the “service” in the case of the TFSPT was not direct care per se, but rather, coordination of direct care service, case manager supervisors providing site coordination for TFSPT teams were interviewed. Because the case management sites participating in the program were highly diverse and widely distributed geographically, it was decided in preliminary discussions with the TFSPT program director to supplement the one detailed “provider” (i.e., case manager supervisor) interview called for by the protocol with several additional brief interviews with case manager supervisor/TFSPT coordinators at other sites. The detailed direct provider interview served as the primary basis of provider information for the case study analysis; however, where reports of other case managers suggested significant discrepancies in the functioning of TFSPTs across the sites participating in the TFSPT program, these discrepancies are noted.

In addition to the adaptations above, the site requested that two community partner interviews be conducted (i.e., thus adding one community partner interview to the standard design). Both of the community partners selected for this purpose by the site were connected to the program through a particular TAY whose experiences TFSPT personnel believed particularly exemplified optimal provision of career development services in the community. One of the community partners interviewed was the TAY’s mother, and the other was the TAY’s job supervisor (see “Community Partner Interviews” section). The TFSPT staff member who provided services to this TAY was also interviewed, and the TAY connected to the community partners was also interviewed as one of the three TAY interviews conducted. Finally, for the direct observation, the site requested that the research team observe this TAY in his current because the TFSPT program does not directly provide services. Due to the fact that the community partner interviews, the supplementary TFSPT staff member interview,

competitive employment position, rather than observing provision of transitional case management services to him or another TAY. This adaptation was made in part the direct observation, and a TAY interview all focused on the experiences of a particular TAY, we were able to provide a rich description of the experiences of this individual, and could thus use these experiences to help illustrate optimal provision of TFSPT-facilitated services from the perspective of TFSPT staff. Cumulatively, these descriptions represented an “embedded case” within the multiple case study design (Yin, 2003).

Section II: General Description of Program

Program Purpose

TFSPT was established in response to identified priorities of the advisory board of District IV of SEDNET. The program, developed through leadership of Miriam Crowe and others with the SEDNET District IV project, was designed to build upon the Department of Children and Families’ (DCF) Family Services Planning Team administrative operating procedure to provide coordination of services especially focused on needs of TAY w/ED. The TFSPT team generates ideas and gathers financial and other resources to enhance transitional case management services (TCM), in similar manner to wraparound model teams (Clark et al., 1998). An additional contribution of this program is technical assistance to facilitate case management through: 1) establishment of a clearly delineated, straightforward procedure for dual DCF certification in child and adult case management; 2) provision of trainings designed to familiarize transitional case managers with the range of resources across service sectors in their areas that could be useful to TAY.

Program History

Based on their conviction that SEDNET projects in other districts should not have to “re-learn” methods for developing this critical type of service, documenting the planning and course of the TFSPT program development efforts has been a priority for the TFSPT leadership. Thus, the program has developed accessible brief historical documents summarizing their program development to share with interested stakeholders in other areas, which we summarize here. In early 2003, a workgroup was convened to identify main concerns for establishing this service and plan strategy. A key priority for these planners was to identify “all key stakeholders” that would be helpful to involve in the development and implementation of the program. Once this was accomplished, the project leadership described fundamental features of their service model and criteria for enrollment in the program. Meetings were convened to gather input on the program from identified stakeholder groups, including the range of providers of services addressing needs of TAY w/ED, case manager supervisors, TAY, and family members. Following these, adaptations to TFSPT operating procedures forming the basis for the TFSPT approach were described, stakeholders identified as vital to the success of the TFSPT program were contacted and invited to participate, sources for flex funds were identified, and planning was undertaken to address potential barriers to TCM identified in the planning process (e.g., difficulties related to finding housing for TFSPT TAY over the age of 18). Finally, a series of trainings for TCMs to establish their dual child and adult case manager certification and familiarize them with resources in the community to assist transition was planned and undertaken in 2004.

Basic Program Information

Eligibility and service area. Eligibility is defined broadly to include any TAY 16-21 who

are “emotionally disturbed needing a transition plan”; have “a major mental health diagnosis,” and who are “in an education program or desire to be in one.” All three criteria are broadly construed in order to provide some guidance to providers assessing whether the TFSPT program might be an appropriate referral, without excluding TAY who might be able to benefit from services. Thus, essentially, the program has a “zero-reject” policy. The *service area* for the program includes the five SEDNET District IV counties and their associated transition case management provider agencies, including the Child Guidance Center (Baker County), Clay Behavioral Health Center (Clay County), the Child Guidance Center (Duval County), Sutton Place (Nassau County), and St. John’s County Mental Health.

Number of TAY served and units of service provided. TFSPTs served 40 TAY in fiscal year 2007-2008. Meetings of TFSPTs across the five county service area occur approximately 2 times a month, and several TAY are discussed at each meeting. Each TAY served by TFSPTs is discussed approximately once quarterly, though more frequent TFSPT reviews can occur for TAY if needed. The TFSPT program director estimated that TAY receive roughly eight hours each month of case management, the primary direct service facilitated by TFSPT meetings.

Referrals. Referrals typically include individuals entering the service age range already served in FSPT teams or referrals from public school-based programs for TAY w/ED served by the local SEDNET district program (e.g., centers or mainstream school-based services for youth with ED), the latter often as they approach graduation or if determined to be at risk of dropping out.

Service process. As described in the TFSPT service brochure, the basic steps of the TFSPT *service process* subsequent to referral involve the following: 1) Preparing an application for candidates for services and having this application reviewed by the TFSPT site coordinator for each county (see “Eligibility and Service Area”, above) to determine appropriateness for the service (note that, consistent with the “zero-reject” model, candidates are not excluded from service, but rather, referred to a more intensive service in cases in which the TFSPT service intensity is deemed insufficient such as a Florida Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) team); 2) Scheduling and presentation of TAY at a TFSPT meeting, attended by relevant provider representatives, and, whenever feasible, by youth and family members; 3) Development of a Community Plan, including transition goals, description of current status on goals, methods and strategies for achievement of goals, persons or agencies responsible for providing supports, and frequency and duration of these requested supports; 4) Ensuring that the planned service linkages and other aspects of the plan are implemented; 5) Reviewing the plan on a quarterly basis or more frequently as needed.

Additional elements of the program. As mentioned above, in addition to implementing the TFSPT meetings, the program facilitates transitional case management through assistance with credentialing and previously (at the outset of the program), by providing a series of trainings.

Outcomes. The primary measure of program impact utilized by the TFSPT program is a coding of the result of services at program exit based on determination of TFSPT participants. Of the 15 TAY exiting TFSPTs in fiscal year 2007-2008, 9 were “successful” (i.e., were determined to no longer be in need of case planning and coordination), 1 moved out of the area, 1 declined services, and 4 were referred to adult services. The TFSPT director indicated that both the “successful” and “referral to adult services” codes were considered to reflect positive program impact, the former because a reduced need may indicate improved functioning as a result of

services, the latter because linkage to the adult service system is an important function of TFSPTs.

Section III: Analysis of Program Characteristics by Literature Review Cluster

Analysis by Cluster #1: Strengths-based Assessment and Person-Centered Planning.

Strengths-Based Assessment. Interview results indicated that the substance of TFSPT meetings is to a great extent focused on identifying youth strengths and resources from their formal and informal support systems, and in turn, identifying ways to use these to meet priority needs and support goals of TAY. A variety of information sources are considered by TFSPT teams. Service history information is regarded as key in understanding what has been tried in the past, in order to build on past successes and avoid service strategies that have been less effective for TAY. Information from school and vocational rehabilitation personnel “fills out the picture” of TAY strengths, abilities, achievements, and possible resources that fit these positive characteristics (see “Integration of Education and Employment”, below). The variety of information presented at these meetings was described as in depth and rich. For example, one of the case manager supervisor interview participants admired the thoroughness with which this information was collected and considered by TFSPT teams and suggested that the tone for the depth of exploration was set by the program director.

Person-Centered Planning. Interview results suggested that the TFSPT person-centered planning process tends to unfold over multiple meetings, such that initially, the focus is on meeting immediate needs such as avoiding restrictive residential placement or meeting needs for shelter, clothing, transportation, and food. A transition support or “futures plan” may not emerge until later meetings; however, this is highly valued, and identification and support of this futures plan is regarded as the primary product of the TFSPT. Interviews suggested that providers highly valued the process as well as the content of the TFSPTs. Specifically, providers remarked that the creative, “brainstorming” climate of these meetings was very conducive to better identification of priorities and problem solving.

Analysis by Cluster #2: Integration of Education and Employment

Contribution of educational personnel to the TFSPT process. As described in the strength-based assessment and person-centered planning section, data from school personnel were seen as critical by interview participants. Education sector representatives on multiple levels are invited to TFSPT meetings, including school-board representatives and school staff who have worked with TAY. Unfortunately, participation by these individuals is inconsistent, with sites in some counties more successful in involving these personnel than others. Many of the referrals from school systems are generated from transition individualized education plan (TIEP) meetings as part of the process of developing TIEPs. Because it is common to involve vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies in TIEP meetings, data from VR assessments is often available for these referrals and can enrich the process of strengths-based assessment by providing more detailed information about career-related aptitudes and achievements. VR personnel also sometimes attend TFSPT meetings as well and can consequently offer their perspective directly where this occurs. Contributions from school and VR personnel to the TFSPT meeting can help to integrate the TFSPT and TIEP plans, resulting in greater complementarity of

planning and associated efforts by personnel from education, VR, and mental health sectors at the critical school-to-work juncture in the transition to adulthood of TAY w/ED.

TFSPPT integration of education assistance. In addition to facilitating integration involving educational and VR sectors in planning for TAY w/ED, TFSPPTs contribute to the integration of educational experiences into career development assistance in a variety of other ways. For example, for those TAY w/ED enrolled in schools, TFSPPTs frequently strive to find ways to build opportunities available through the school-system into the TFSPPT plan. Close ties between the program director and schools due to her position as SEDNET project coordinator certainly would be expected to contribute to the capacity of teams to identify and access these opportunities. Specific types of assistance provided through TFSPPT teams promoting TAY educational progress include providing transportation to educational programs and facilitating permissions to attend programs outside the catchment area of a particular school or district. Flex funding is also used to support a variety of educational objectives (see “flex funding” under “comprehensive service coordination” below). Finally, through ongoing participation, participants in TFSPPTs become more aware of the variety of postsecondary education and training opportunities available in the area such as community college and technical school based opportunities, and can more readily refer to or facilitate access of TAY to these services.

Analysis by Cluster #3: Comprehensive Service Coordination

Cross service and sector coordination: TFSPPT meetings. The primary means for coordinating services through the TFSPPT program is through attendance at meetings by representatives from across the spectrum of available community services. Typical attendees at TFSPPTs include the transition case manager, the service site coordinator for TFSPPTs, and the SEDNET project management staff. In some of the counties, a school board representative will attend, along with personnel from school programs such as teachers and behavioral rehabilitation specialists. Attendance by school board representatives and school board personnel is regarded as being particularly helpful where it occurs because of the additional perspective provided about resources available through the schools and because of the vital perspective on TAY needs that school-based personnel can provide. Other common participants include personnel from the TCM service site including TAY counselors, therapists, and psychiatrists. VR personnel will often attend, frequently in the wake of a recent TIEP. Attendance by representatives from other sectors, including juvenile justice and workforce development, was seen as potentially valuable but uncommon (see “Implementation Barriers” below).

Key elements of coordination. An important focus identified in interviews for TFSPPT comprehensive service coordination is facilitating TAY transition from the child mental health to the adult mental health system. This is accomplished in two ways: 1) through dual certification of case managers, usually involving acquisition by child case managers of the adult case management credentials; 2) through convening representatives knowledgeable about both systems to help identify adult mental health services appropriate for TAY that can be incorporated into TFSPPT plans. In some cases, where transition needs are complex, the TFSPPT may refer TAY to services of a FACT team. Another key point of focus for TFSPPTs is facilitating the connection between TAY and either general employment assistance agency or VR services.

Linkage to comprehensive services. TFSPTs are often useful in facilitating an array of additional services and opportunities beyond those mentioned above. Regarding housing services, subsidized and/or supported housing resources available to TAY were described as “good”; however, TFSPTs try to encourage TAY to remain with families whenever possible to decrease the complexity of transition-related demands on TAY and increase their access to the emotional and other supports from their families. TFSPTs also assist in arranging access to transportation if possible, though providing this assistance was described as often difficult due to limited availability locally of mass transit. While medication management is readily available through TCM for those TAY that need it, TFSPTs can sometimes be of assistance in negotiating problems with medication adherence by TAY who are ambivalent about medications or have limited insight into their medication needs, in some cases through appointment of an advocate. TFSPTs can also be useful in strategizing ways to increase family support. Respite services were described as a highly desirable but “new” and limited aspect of the comprehensive service continuum in the area.

Flex funding use. TFSPTs are helpful vehicles for disseminating flex funding resources. Some specific applications of flex funding include educational resources (e.g., tutoring, GED classes, art, music, and other extra-curricular courses, purchase of tutoring services), transportation resources (e.g., a bike), summer camp, and “anything related to transition”. The flex funding available through TFSPTs was highly valued by all interview participants. Many case examples were offered across interviews of the role played by flex funds in facilitating career development and other aspects of transition for TAY with very complex or severe problems. This contribution was consistently described as pivotal (e.g., [the TAY] “blossomed”; [in response to flex-funded tutoring] “his grades went way up”; “camp ‘did it’ for her”).

Transition case management. In addition to describing the coordinating role of TFSPTs, interview participants described case management services assisted by TFSPTs and the features and qualities they believed characterized these services. Structurally, TCM services facilitated through TFSPTs appeared to resemble typical case management services (e.g., in terms of caseloads and competing demands, basic responsibilities, etc.). However, in contrast to the way “treatment as usual” case management services are often described in the relevant professional literature, descriptions of case *Transition case management.* In addition to describing the coordinating role of TFSPTs, interview participants described case management services assisted by TFSPTs and the features and qualities they believed characterized these services. Structurally, TCM services facilitated through TFSPTs appeared to resemble typical case management services (e.g., in terms of caseloads and competing demands, basic responsibilities, etc.). However, in contrast to the way “treatment as usual” case management services are often described in the relevant professional literature, descriptions of case “my best friend”; “she kept coming around and build trust over time”). Based on TAY descriptions, it also appeared that CMs were highly available to TAY (“she gave me a cell number to calm down...I called her when I was angry with mom”), and at least occasionally accompany TAY to provide support for their career development in the community (e.g., one TAY indicated that his TCM planned to accompany him to a community college to assist him with the enrollment process the following week).

Additional resources. Though its primary function is to facilitate TCM through the TFSPT meetings, The TFSPT program has served as a training and technical assistance resource to TCMs in other ways as well. Two specific ways have included the provision of a series of trainings for TCMs to familiarize them with resources

available to facilitate transition from across the community, and the compilation of a “transition library on wheels” – a rolling file box containing the latest information on community career development and comprehensive transition assistance resources.

Analysis by Cluster #4: Developmentally Appropriate

Limited information was provided in response to interview protocol questions related to the Developmentally Appropriate cluster for this site. However, in the main supervisor and provider interviews where the topic was addressed in the greatest detail, there seemed to be general agreement with the principles of patient, flexible service provision identified in the literature review as being essential in providing services to a TAY population. More specifically, interview participants indicated the importance of being able to re-enroll TAY in services after a hiatus due to a temporary relocation or other reasons, the importance of understanding that it is ultimately up to TAY to make choices about how they wish to be assisted in their career development, and the importance of providing informative but non-judgmental guidance in situations in which TAY make choices that may expose them to risks or reduce their opportunities (e.g., risk behaviors such as substance abuse or criminal behavior).

Cluster #5: Community-Based Support

Job coaching and other on-the-job support. Because the primary foci of TFSPT services are planning and linkage rather than provision of direct service per se, limited information was provided about community-based support by TCMs in the district. Job coaching services were described as available but limited and difficult for TAY to access. Similarly, general employment assistance program resources were described as infrequently incorporated into TFSPT plans or otherwise accessed by TAY in a meaningful way.

Job development. Formal job development resources were described as limited in the communities served by TFSPTs (“there is a job developer in every county, but they are not highly involved with [TAY w/ED]”). Interviews described the usefulness of informal, one-on-one contacts between TCMs and other TFSPT and TCM program staff in creating job opportunities for TAY.

Mentorship. Though mentorship opportunities in the community were also described as limited, some resources for matching TAY to mentors were described, though some had been applied more successfully than others. Some traditional, widely available programs were described as being of limited usefulness or as being poorly accessed by TAY (e.g., community-based mentorship programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters and school-based mentorship). It was suggested that a key barrier related to poor access to these services was that many mentors were more interested in working with younger individuals. Interestingly, it was also suggested that needs for mentorship might be adequately sufficed in many cases through strong relationships with TCMs. Therapeutic friend programs were mentioned by multiple respondents as being increasingly used by TFSPTs. “Therapeutic friends” are typically younger than the mentors provided by many mentorship programs and focus on engaging TAY in recreational activities and using these to teach social skills.

Analysis by Cluster #6: Promotion of Skills and Resources

Promotion of skills. Interview results suggested that TCMs supported by TFSPTs often provide various types of basic employability training (e.g., counseling and assistance with job searches, guidance regarding resumes, proper attire and behavior for

interviews, etc.). General employment assistance programs may provide additional services, but these were described as sometimes inaccessible or of limited usefulness to many TAY w/ED, either due to limited scope of services or inflexibility in service provision (e.g., discontinuing services in response to missed appointments). Two of the young adults interviewed receiving TFSPT-facilitated services indicated that they had been referred to a local transitional living facility that both spoke very highly of, and indicated that they had received group-based training in “life skills” and “coping skills” there. According to TCM providers, the facility identified does not specialize in serving TAY, but has nonetheless apparently done an excellent job in engaging TAY in services in some cases.

Promotion of informal supports. Although family members do not typically attend TFSPTs (see “implementation barriers” below) several other methods for ensuring that TAY families participate in planning were described. Commonly, TCMs will contact families the day before and shortly after TFSPTs to ensure that they are apprised and “on board” with options being considered for the plan, and, following the meeting, the plan itself. Family members have also been encouraged to communicate through e-mail or letters, and in some cases, conference calls have been arranged to facilitate family participation. Generally speaking, TCMs are considered to be “the voice for the parent” in optimal cases, and thus, direct participation of family members in TFSPTs is often not considered to be necessary. TCMs are thus expected to put considerable effort into communication and relationship building with families by TCMs outside the context of TFSPT meetings. Two of the young adults interviewed for the case study indicated that their TCMs knew their immediate family members very well and had been helpful in mediating differences between them and their family members. It was observed that generally, families tended to “agree” with plans, and that, in the few cases in which this was not the case, disagreements tended to stem from families wanting TAY to be put in a residential placement due to being overwhelmed by the demands of providing for TAY supervision and care. Respite services were cited in this context as being an important additional resource to expand in the local the service continuum in the future.

Cluster #7: Long-Term Outcome Orientation

Commitment to TAY over the long term. Interviews suggested that in the best cases, TCMs conceptualize their commitment to TAY over the long term, and continue to maintain some level of involvement with TAY even after a case is formally closed (e.g., one respondent stated, “they never go away completely”). The primary provider interview participant indicated that TFSPT services will typically be discontinued for TAY once they have been assessed by the teams as “successful” in 1) their transition to adult services, including case management, that is suited to their needs; and/or 2) being on a sustainable course of improvement in their career development, indicated by obtaining rewarding employment or making substantial ongoing gains in post-secondary training or studies. These discontinuations are not necessarily “final”, since sites have flexibility to re-open cases if appropriate.

Assessing progress of individuals and adjusting plans as necessary. The primary means for assessing the ongoing progress of TAY in TFSPT programs are the regular (quarterly or more frequent) TFSPT meetings where their plans are reviewed and updated. A priority is placed on carefully tracking services received and service outcomes informally in TFSPT meetings and using this information to adjust plans. In addition to informal review of services received and service outcomes. Specific indicators of

progress and outcome are rated and entered into a database for all TSFPT TAY based on informal TSFPT discussions; however, these data are not typically used to inform adjustments to service plans or changes on the program level. The TSFPT program has been considering implementing an automated data collection system (i.e., the “Transition Tracker”) that could more easily provide feedback to staff than the current database system, but has not yet elected to do so due to concerns over accessing necessary technical assistance.

Assessing progress, impact of the program. As stated above, a set of specific indicators, including indicators related to services received and indicators related to service outcome are collected for the program. These are rated by the TSFPT coordinators based on information gained through their participation in TSFPT meetings. Other than reporting these for funding purposes, the program has not been able to use these data to inform program improvement. An important challenge related to this issue is ascertaining how to assess effectiveness given the wide variety of programs used, and many different relevant service indicators and outcomes associated with the variety of services available.

Cluster #8: Non-Stigmatizing Services.

Responses to queries associated with this cluster mostly described barriers related to stigma rather than methods for implementing community-based career development services in a less stigmatizing way. Interview results suggested that while TCM programs generally encourage their CMs to work with TAY on career development in the community wherever possible, there is apprehension about providing community-based support in work settings due to possible stigmatizing impact of mental health personnel in these situations (“you don’t want to jeopardize a job by introducing a job coach”).

Section IV: Community Partner Interviews and Direct Observation/ TAY Case Study

Both of the community partners interviewed for the study were associated with a particular TAY, including the TAY’s mother and the TAY supervisor at his place of employment. Additional sources of information on this “embedded case” (see “Adaptations to Case Study Method” section) included a brief interview with the TSFPT staff member who worked with this individual, an interview with the TAY, and direct observation of the TAY in his activities at his job. Interviews focused on ways in which the TSFPT staff member had helped this TAY to make progress academically and obtain rewarding competitive employment. The TAY’s progress was described as representing a “remarkable” success and serving as an illustration of ways in which community-based services could produce dramatic career development progress, even for TAY facing the greatest challenges in their school and employment functioning. The TSFPT staff member providing career development support to this TAY had been referred to work with him through the local school district’s homebound schooling program, a type of program in which guidance counselors provide teaching and tutoring to TAY at their homes in cases in which they are deemed unmanageable or otherwise a poor fit for available mainstream or specialized setting schooling options. Thus, the TAY in question was an individual who the school district had struggled to maintain successfully in school settings, including the specialized SED classroom where he had previously been placed.

Each interview respondent provided a distinct perspective on the process through which the TAY was engaged in services and supported in his career development progress. All of the interview respondents identified as critical that the TFSPT staff member provided services to the TAY at a preschool for children where she served on staff, rather than at home as a typical guidance counselor for the homebound program would have done. Working with the TAY outside the home in this preschool setting created opportunities for the TAY to volunteer in the setting before or after times that he met with the TFSPT staff member, which he was eager to do. Initially, the volunteering involved cleaning and straightening preschool classrooms, but as TAY earned the trust of staff members at the school, his responsibilities were gradually expanded to include supervising the preschool students. Over time, the volunteer role of the TAY was formalized, and eventually, he was hired into a competitive part time and then a full time teacher's aide position at the school.

In her interview, the TAY's mother spoke enthusiastically of the amount of time spent and commitment shown by the TFSPT staff member with the TAY. She also greatly appreciated the staff member's advocacy in assisting him in avoiding being placed again in a specialized SED setting (since he had previously not done well in such settings) as well as her advocacy in helping him obtain his competitive employment position. The TAY's mother was also impressed by the way in which the TFSPT staff member helped restore her belief in the potential and abilities of her son, which previously weakened over the course of a long string of disappointments related to his difficulties in school. In her interview, the TAY's work supervisor talked about the incremental process of including the TAY in the work environment, how various "normal" types of support (i.e., that she would provide to any supervisee) were used to meet his needs in the setting, and how she was able to gently and with humor handle instances in which the TAY appeared to need special support. In her interview, the TFSPT staff member talked about the variety of types of support that she had provided to assist the TAY, her emphasis on providing ample praise and deferring constructive feedback early on in the relationship, her use of teaching techniques tied to "real world" situations (e.g., the use of the "Real Math" game, which provides math teaching and practice in the context of instruction on independent living skills), and her support of him in pursuing a GED and specific credentials and training to advance his work in the preschool setting. Finally, during his interview, the TAY focused on the persistence of the TFSPT staff member's support and advocacy of him, and the variety of ways in which she had used situations that arose in his employment at the pre-school to assist him in improving employability and social skills (e.g., "helping me know when to speak out, when not, some confrontation is OK...", "learning the mindset that these are special needs children").

Details presented above and other information shared in interviews suggested specific ways in which the literature review principles for TAY career development services were applied in this case in an optimal fashion. First, the TFSPT staff member carefully attended to the TAY's strengths (Cluster #1: Strengths-Based Assessment and Person-Centered Planning), and used this information to inspire him to further his skills and to shape the impressions that other adults had of the TAY, thus fostering their support (Cluster #6: Promotion of Skills and Resources). The TFSPT's staff member spoke of how her knowledge of other formal support providers and their "style" of delivering services helped her in coordinating her efforts with these individuals, and all interview respondents described how characteristics of the TFSPT staff member's manner of relating to the TAY such as

her flexibility, patience, and availability had assisted him in gaining confidence and making progress (Cluster #3: Comprehensive Service Coordination and Cluster #4: Developmentally Appropriate). As indicated above, working with the TAY on educational goals within a community setting where opportunities for employment were available appeared to play a key role in his progress (Cluster #3: Employment and Education Integration and Cluster #5: Community-Based Support). Finally, in her interview, the TAY's supervisor at the preschool stressed how the supports provided to him in his role, while ample and adequate to address his needs, were no different from those provided to any other staff and that he was rarely singled out in any way (Cluster #8: Non-stigmatizing).

Direct observation of the TAY in the preschool setting helped to illustrate the ways in which the setting may have provided a “fit” to the TAY's needs, despite the fact that few if any special accommodations were provided to him. For example, the room was small, and the group of children to be supervised was relatively few in number. The TAY was in the presence of a second responsible adult at all times, consistent with normal operating procedures of the facility to always have two staff present with any group of children. Activities in the setting with the children were structured and conformed to a predictable schedule. Overall, then, the setting provided a “normal,” but highly supported, supervised, predictable, and structured environment suited to a TAY who is still developing skills for functioning in an employment setting.

Section V: Implementation Barriers

Some of the key implementation barriers mentioned in the preceding sections limiting TFSPTs include: 1) inconsistent attendance of key players, including school personnel, workforce development representatives, youth, and families; 2) inability to facilitate service linkage due to lack of resources in key areas such as transportation and family support resources; and 3) relatively few committed and accessible employment assistance resources or vocational rehabilitation resources in the community.

In regard to #1, interview respondents suggested that the practice of scheduling meetings during the daytime precludes participation for many TAY because of school or work obligations and for many parents and guardians who have day work schedules. In addition, for sites serving rural or semi-rural areas of the District IV region, transportation and/or transportation time to TFSPTs may be a key issue for TAY and family members. Increasing the accessibility of these meetings by having them in homes is not practical for TFSPT meetings in their current form, as this would make it impossible to review a group of cases during one meeting, which is a critical element of the process if “high profile” participants such as the TFSPT coordinator or school board representatives are to attend. Not having this high profile participation would fundamentally change the nature of the services delivered, since the individuals involved would no longer be able to share their knowledge and linkages to community resources directly in planning meetings for individual cases, a key distinguishing feature of the service. Scheduling meetings in the evenings would also be impractical for the same reason, and would interfere with the participation of some TCM program personnel (e.g., therapists, psychiatrists). Ideally, the TCM is serving as an effective “voice” for the TAY and family, but interview respondents admitted that there is considerable variability in how well TCMs perform this function. Using technology to facilitate increased participation

might be helpful in some cases (e.g., conference calls), but this option might be logistically prohibitive for routine application. Clearly, the barriers introduced to TAY and family participation represent an important cost to consider in implementing a TFSPT rather than a wraparound model meeting, in which attendance of youth is required and attendance of family is more highly encouraged, but access to high level service representatives is much less likely. In regard to #2 and #3, perhaps the most critical areas of weakness, the TFSPT program may provide an effective means for identifying and facilitating access to resources where these exist, but clearly will be ineffective in cases where they are lacking. One way of regarding this “barrier” and possible responses to it would be to conceptualize the TFSPT or similar facilitative network as one element in a complete career development “system” for TAY w/ED. Remaining cases in the multiple case study provide examples of possible additional “missing pieces” in this optimal system.

Appendix E

Program #2: “The Springboard” [“With It” Program Case Study Report]

Title of program. With It

Agency. Bertha Abess Children’s Center (BACC)

Contents

- I) Case Specific Methodology
 - This section describes the site-specific adaptations to the multiple case study methods.
- II) General Description of Program
 - This section provides information about the overall purpose of the program, its history, basic site information such as service area, eligibility for services, and referral process, and a brief description of core services provided by the program.
- II) Analysis of Program Characteristics by Literature Review Cluster
 - This section provides an analysis of program characteristics organized by their correspondence with eight (8) types of best practices or “clusters” identified based on a systematic review of available literature on career development services for transition-age youth with emotional disturbance (TAY w/ED). Data sources for this section of the report include interviews and record review.
- III) Findings from Direct Observation
 - Direct observations were conducted at each program participating in the multiple case study of a discrete episode of service delivery, selected by the program director in collaboration with the principal investigator. This section summarizes findings from these direct observations.
- IV) Findings from Community Partner Interview
 - This section provides a summary of findings from the community partner interview, conducted with an administrator or other individual of the program director’s choice who has collaborated in providing services or community-based supports to TAY in the program.

V) Barriers to Implementation

- This section summarizes, based on findings from all data sources (i.e., interviews, record review, and observation), barriers to implementation experienced by the program and the manner in which the program has addressed these barriers.

Section I: Case-Specific Methodology

Program selection

Inclusion criteria for participating in the multiple case study included: a) being located in the State of Florida; b) providing career development services; c) adapting career development services to the specific needs of TAY w/ED; d) receiving all or part of the funding for these services from Medicaid or through Medicaid contracted private insurers; and e) being described as “exemplary” in some specific way by services key informants (SKIs) (For further information on study criteria and program selection, see “Methods” section in full report). The program was nominated twice by SKIs, who provided specific details about aspects of services they believed to be “exemplary,” thus meeting criterion e). Based on an initial interview with the program director, With It was confirmed as meeting inclusion criteria a) through c). With regard to criterion d), until recently, the agency’s day treatment programs were funded in part through Medicaid dollars, and With It program worked closely with these sites. Due to changes in Medicaid reimbursement rates, the Bertha Abess Children’s Center (BACC) did not request Medicaid funding for day treatment services during the fiscal year 2007-2008, but will request Medicaid funding for services in 2008-2009. Currently, the With It program receives funding from Miami-Dade County’s Department of Human Services. Although the With It program consequently did not meet the criterion of being Medicaid funded during the study period, it was decided to include it because of the lack of sites statewide meeting the full set of inclusion criteria. It was also thought that inclusion of the program would help to highlight the formidable funding challenges faced by programs designed to address transitional needs of TAY w/ED in the absence of public behavioral health funding support.

Adaptations to case study method

Information regarding program history was taken primarily from initial and on-site interviews with the program director, Charles Ochipa. At the request of the director, the data collection method was modified to allow for interviews with both direct care providers (or “transition facilitators” (IFs)) on staff. This modification was performed because these two providers were based in different regions within the metro area, worked from separate sites, have different mixes of referrals, and worked independently from one another, though under the common supervision of the program director and guided by the program model, the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) system.

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independently from one another, though under the common supervision of the program director and guided by the program model, the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) system.

Program history

Bertha Abess Children's Center (BACC) is a private, non-profit community mental health agency providing a variety of services to over 850 children and adolescents with ED or at risk of ED in Miami-Dade County. Prior to forming the With It program, BACC was the primary mental health service provider partnering in the "Steps to Success" program, a school-based multi-modal service program providing a variety of mental health, education, and career development services and supports to assist in career development and other aspects of transition for TAY with ED referred by Individualized Education Plan (IEP) committees in the Miami-Dade school system. Experience and existing resources from this program, also informed by the TIP model, provided the foundation for the With It program. The With It program is currently in its fourth year. In establishing this program, BACC extended the one-on-one transition support services provided in TIP programs such as Steps to Success by the "transition facilitator" (see "Service Process", under "Basic Program Information" below) to a variety of specialized and mainstream school-based settings in Miami-Dade public school district secondary schools and local community colleges.

The program supports the work of two part-time TFs working across settings including three Miami-Dade school district high schools and the Kendall campus of Miami-Dade Community College. The variety of one-on-one services provided by the TFs in these school and other community settings constitute the core service feature of the program. Recently, a regional severely emotionally disturbed (SED) center that frequently referred TAY to the program was closed, as part of a statewide policy to reduce these centers and further integrate TAY into mainstream education. This may have had an impact on the pattern and frequency of referrals to the program (see "Implementation Barriers").

Basic program information

Service Area and Eligibility. 16 -21 year-old TAY w/ED currently enrolled in Miami-Dade schools are eligible for services.

Number of TAY served and units of service provided. Since its inception, With It has served a total of 83 TAY, with a target for the 2007-2008 fiscal year ending September 30th, 2008 of serving 40 TAY for the year. Units of service provided range widely depending on TAY needs. File review and interview responses suggested that meetings with each TAY occur approximately biweekly.

Referrals. Referrals typically stem from IEP or transition IEP teams in the public school system or through the local Florida Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional Disabilities (SEDNET) case management program, which is a service funded by the local SEDNET Area project to provide assessment and service linkage to school-enrolled individuals upon discharge from inpatient or outpatient mental health services. Thus, many TAY are referred to the With It program after completing more intensive services focused on their mental health needs in order to assist them as they stabilize in re-focusing on normative developmental tasks, most conspicuously (but not limited to) completion of school, development of career

Service process. Following referral, all TAY enrolled in the With It program are administered a standardized assessment protocol developed especially for programs focusing on needs of TAY w/ED, the Transition to Adulthood Assessment Protocol, and an initial transition support plan is created. Transition facilitators (TFs) meet with TAY biweekly, weekly, or more frequently, depending on need, to help them to pursue their transition-related goals through assistance in identifying and enrolling in post-secondary education or training programs of interest, obtaining employment, or pursuing other tasks related to increasing their independence (e.g., enrolling and completing driver's training courses). TFs also work with TAY on employability skills such as resume preparation. In addition, transition facilitators are instructed to seize "teachable opportunities" in the process of providing this assistance to TAY by, for example, demonstrating and rehearsing behavior for job interviews, for seeking information or addressing issues with teachers or employers, etc. As TAY obtain their training and employment placement goals and achieve initial successes in these placements, service delivery may be less frequent but continues until TAY elect to discontinue service or successfully complete six months of postsecondary education and training or acquire six months of work experience.

Additional elements of the program. In addition to monitoring transition-related achievements of TAY through quarterly updates of transition support plans, the With It program uses a standardized tool, the Progress Tracker, to assess gains of TAY in the program in career-development and other transition-related areas on a quarterly basis.

Outcomes. Although With It tracks a variety of outcomes (see "Long Term Outcome Orientation" under "Analysis of Program Characteristics by Literature Review cluster below), these data were not requested initially and were unavailable in time for preparation of the present report. According to the BACC Chief Executive Officer, adverse outcomes that are reported monthly to funders including arrests and episodes of homelessness occur with very low frequency among enrolled TAY.

Section III: Analysis of Program Characteristics by Literature Review Cluster

Analysis by Cluster #1: Strengths-Based Assessment and Person-Centered Planning

Informal strengths-based assessment. The With It program uses both formal and informal assessment strategies in order to identify strengths to use in building toward the person-centered plan. Informal assessment is ongoing, involving consultation with multiple informants, including the TAY themselves, family members, and various professionals and review of school records. TFs gather information regarding abilities, strengths, and TAY interests and ambitions, particularly their post-secondary education and employment plans. Past successes and challenges, particularly in school settings, are explored. Other background information collected includes information on home environment including level of support from family and family background such as the educational achievements and challenges of other family members.

Complementary formal assessment. Two formal assessment instruments are used, the "Historical Assessment of a Transition Age Young Person" (otherwise known as TAAP, see above), and the Progress Tracker, the former as an initial assessment, and the latter as an assessment of ongoing progress. These instruments cover detailed information about multiple domains of transition, including education and employment history and further contribute to the ongoing process of learning about

young adults' positive attributes and challenges. In order to ensure that formal information gathering occurs in a context of adequate rapport with the TAY, these instruments (including the "Historical Assessment"/TAAP) are not used until after a two-month rapport building period and are administered over multiple sessions. In addition to these instruments, one of the providers indicated that she had created her own form to help elicit TAY statements of their goals and interests at the outset of her work with them.

Person-centered planning philosophy. The program director and providers discussed the importance of helping youth to select plans that not only reflect their interests and desires but also are realistically achievable given their talents and resources. More specifically, it was observed that TAY in the program sometimes have misconceptions about what they can conceivably do or have limited knowledge of realistic steps for achieving their goals. In addressing this issue, providers indicated that they try to increase both awareness of the level of "realism" of goals as well as engage TAY in attainable goals by breaking long-term, ambitious goals into steps. Frequently, these steps involve acquisition of educational credentials or taking post-secondary classes in the area of interest. Another way to support TAY autonomy while increasing awareness about the level of "fit" of a given goal is to help TAY achieve employment "in proximity" to what they want to do. For example, a TAY who wants to become a cosmetologist might be assisted in obtaining a job as a receptionist at a salon. In this way, TAY can acquire "hands-on" exposure to a work environment in an area of interest to better evaluate whether the effort in attaining qualifications needed to work in the area will be worthwhile for them. Interview respondents also indicated that it is necessary to explore job process – for example, issues such as the degree of social interaction TAY would like to have in a job, the amount of physical activity they believe that they will be comfortable with or need, etc. – as well as job content (i.e., the type of work to be performed).

Person-centered planning process. The document describing the person-centered plan for the With It program – the Transition Support Plan – and several examples of this completed form were inspected in the course of the file review. The plan lays out goals, timelines, strategies, and parties responsible for pursuing strategies in language accessible to young person. Providers differed somewhat in how they described the process and timing of generating a plan and associated goals with TAY, with one provider indicating a more extended process and focusing on the approach of the transition out of school as providing an impetus for more substantive planning, and the other provider indicating a greater emphasis on planning up front of more immediate goals such as making money at a part-time job or other goals that are less directly career-related but engaging for TAY (e.g., goals to increase independence by obtaining a driver's license), or specific behavioral goals to increase the educational success of TAY still in school settings (see "integration of education and employment" below) . Providers indicated that they tend to focus on a small number of goals with TAY at any given time ("no more than three") a finding supported by the record review. The importance of working with other supportive adults to help engage them in a consistent plan with the TAY was also recognized. A challenge in this regard is that sometimes, similar to the TAY themselves, other supportive adults may push TAY to work toward particular employment and educational objectives without adequately considering fit to the strengths, challenges, and interests of TAY. "A lot of communication" is sometimes necessary in addressing this challenge. Knowledge of a range of alternative options can also be helpful (e.g., a TAY in a family that "insists" on a high school diploma despite reservations of the TAY can be placed in a non-traditional diploma earning program such as an accelerated

program in an adult skills center).

Iterative process of assessment, exploration, and planning. Both of the providers interviewed described an iterative process of information gathering and exploration with TAY, in which active exploration of educational and employment opportunities leads to better mutual understanding of TAY interests and goals. For example, activities such as browsing educational program websites with TAY provides better insight to both the TF and the TAY about areas and programs of potential interest to them. These details can then be incorporated into the content of the plan. One way of translating this process to creating a written plan document that was described was framing very broad, consistent objectives as goals (e.g., “get a job,” “make money,” “explore P-S opportunities”) and then over time tailor and individualize by outlining specific strategies or steps used to achieve the initially identified objectives (particular types of P-S settings in which to explore or enroll, types of jobs to pursue and steps for pursuing them, etc.). TAY data were supportive of this iterative approach. In response to questions about planning, the TAY interviewed provided more vivid descriptions of plan exploration activities (e.g., browsing websites, visiting community college, etc.) than the up-front generation of an initial plan.

Analysis by Cluster #2: Integration of Employment and Education

Prioritization of education over employment development. Interview respondents consistently indicated that educational achievement is generally emphasized more greatly relative to employment achievement in the With It program, particularly for TAY lacking the basic educational credentials of a diploma or a GED, which most TAY in the program lack at their point of referral. This was described as being motivated by the pervasive limitation of the absence of these credentials on the earning potential of TAY. Thus, educational goals are typically explored first and given priority in transition support plans. Though emphasis of school over employment for almost all youth in the program may be inconsistent with the initial stated (or unstated) goals of some TAY, providers strive to link school completion to employment objectives, thus unifying the educational priorities of the program with basic principles of a person-centered planning process (see “Strengths-based assessment and person-centered planning” above).

Program is mostly school based and school-oriented. Given that the program is largely school-based and highly prioritizes school-related objectives, educational achievements and objectives are clearly central to the With It program’s career development work with the majority of TAY. This is exemplified by the fact that TFs refer to TAY as “students”. In addition to specifying attainment of basic secondary education credentials prominently in most transition support plans, TFs monitor and support the achievement of tasks necessary to this overall objective. More specifically, TFs monitor TAY attendance, grades, performance on FCAT exams (i.e., the Florida statewide standardized test used in compliance with No Child Left Behind statutes), community service credits, and in cases where TAY are placed in SED centers, their achievement of points in behavioral modification points systems. TFs work with school personnel by participating in IEP, TIEP, and/or case conference meetings, and regularly communicating and cooperating with school personnel including teachers, counselors and school psychologists, and behavioral rehabilitation technicians to help all supportive adults in TAYs life participate in supporting their plans. Because of the close links to schools, TFs are able to easily identify and help TAY access and include in their plans various types of school opportunities such as school on-the-job training programs.

Use of educational history in career development planning. Interview respondents described specific ways in which they have used information about TAY's educational experiences (e.g., from TAY, from teachers, through their participation in case conferences, reviewing school records, etc.) to assist them in the ongoing process of better identifying career development goals. Use of this information extends beyond straightforward applications such as identifying areas of interest or skill based on past performance in certain subject areas, as TFs also consider issues such as TAYs' social relationships with teachers and peers, their demonstration of skills in specific roles such as serving as assistants (e.g., monitors or teachers' aides), etc. Sometimes recognizing strengths or opportunities based on this data may require some creativity on the part of a provider, given that school is highly challenging for many TAY w/ED. For example, one provider used an example of a TAY answering, "lunch" when asked for their favorite subject in school. In this case, helpful follow-up questions might relate to whether TAY had rewarding social interactions in this context, and how any strengths associated with these successes might be generalized elsewhere (e.g., a job in a customer service or sales setting where interaction with others is the focus of the work).

Support of post-secondary goals. Identification and support of post-secondary training and education goals is an important aspect of the With It program. In addition to emphasizing post-secondary planning in the person-centered planning and career development exploration process, TFs assist with logistical tasks associated with program or financial aid enrollment and registration such as obtaining, completing, and monitoring deadlines for submitting applications; communicating with admissions staff, financial aid officers, guidance counselors, and other post-secondary education personnel; and helping students keep important documents and remember passwords for their accounts, etc. TFs also help TAY monitor and evaluate whether post-secondary education programs are helping them to achieve their goals and assist them in finding alternatives in cases in which they are dissatisfied with a program. Both of the TAY interviewed spoke highly of the specific forms of support that they had received from their TFs in pursuing post-secondary training goals. In one case, the TAY was assisted by being accompanied to the college's guidance counseling offices and "introduced to a counselor" by the TF. The other TAY indicated that the TF had helped him "get out of" a program that he disliked and was currently assisting him in re-enrolling for a vocational rehabilitation (VR) program to support his enrollment in a different training program. The TAY indicated that in the past, his VR services had been unexpectedly discontinued, and thus that he greatly appreciated the support of the TF in assisting with re-enrollment and otherwise ensuring that he receives these services.

Analysis by Cluster #3: Comprehensive Service Coordination

Interagency coordination: Miami-Dade Transition Steering Committee. In addition to being well aware of school-based services, the With It program personnel are familiar with resources for supporting other aspects of a comprehensive service continuum through participation in the Miami-Dade Transition Steering Committee. This group of providers meets on a regular basis to disseminate knowledge regarding services available and new developments community-wide in the transition services arena as well as strategize to fill service gaps. In addition to the program director, With It TFs regularly participate in this committee to increase their knowledge of available resources.

Interagency coordination: Other activities. Other key With It program personnel activities related to interagency coordination that were identified in interviews included direct

communications and facilitation of TAY communication with a variety of service providers, including VR, adult education, technical school community college personnel. Among these organizations, VR agencies were singled out as often presenting access challenges for TAY (e.g., due to closing cases in response to missed appointments). The Transition IEP meeting was identified as being a point of optimal opportunity to collaborate with VR personnel, since they often participate in these meetings, frequently providing assessment data or recommendations for specific VR services. One of the providers indicated that she has had difficulties working directly with VR personnel (e.g., reporting that they have generally been unwilling to communicate with her outside of meetings with the TAY), but has still been able to assist TAY in accessing VR services by asking that they review letters from VR with her, by reviewing VR materials with TAY prior to appointments, and by attending VR appointments with TAY to ensure that they are able to understand information presented and to communicate their needs (e.g., by stopping and summarizing or asking the VR counselor to summarize information). The provider indicated that she framed difficulties in accessing services (either from VR or other agencies) for TAY as representing a “real-life” problem and help them recognize and work on skills for dealing with this problem more effectively (e.g., communicating directly and clearly, monitoring and retaining records of written communications to and from providers, etc.).

Transitional case management and other comprehensive services. The core service provided by the program is the one-on-one career development and other transition facilitation provided by TFs. However, TFs play an important role in helping TAY access other services in the comprehensive service continuum and, where appropriate, in obtaining financial support for basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. Flex funds are available to support TF purchases of career development related items for TAY such as portfolios, day planners, or other business and personal management supplies, clothing for job interviews, etc. TFs also frequently assist with transportation needs (e.g., by helping TAY to access bus passes). The maximum case load for each of the two facilitators is 20. Contact is weekly or biweekly for TAY still in school settings, and more intermittent for TAY who have left school or graduated and are now non-school based (e.g., GED) or involved in post-secondary training or education programs. TFs reported difficulties in engaging new TAY and/or maintaining contact with TAY that are not enrolled or have graduated from secondary school programs. Although the program definition for “successful” completion of service is 6 months engaged in a post-secondary education or employment setting, TFs indicated that they often lose contact with TAY shortly after graduation from school or during summers despite attempts to stay in touch with these TAY. One of the providers discussed how this might relate to the fact that even though the program focuses on facilitating TAY futures post-school, the fact that With It services are mostly provided in school settings may discourage TAY from participating after graduation, since many have had very challenging school experiences and consequently want to avoid anything associated with a school setting after their exit.

Transitional case management relationship. The TFs and TAY interviewed saw the TF-TAY relationship as being somewhat unique among service provider TAY relationships and saw merit in this uniqueness. For example, a TF observed that she could be more “real” in her role as a TF than in prior positions as a counselor, and could focus more on practical situations and less on “feelings”, a difference she valued and saw TAY as valuing as well. TAY similarly described transition facilitation as having a more practical focus than other behavioral health services

they had experience (e.g., “she’ll ask how was my day, we’ll talk about career, ask if I need help”). TFs frequently meet with TAY on their caseloads who are no longer in school at home or in places in the community such as a coffee shop, based on the preferences of the TAY. Meetings can vary in length. Contact is also maintained over the phone (TF cell phone numbers are available to TAY). The TAY interviewed, both of whom were no longer in high school – both were employed or enrolled in post-secondary education – indicated that they appreciated the fact that TFs met with them in the community, were willing to accompany them on visits to providers, etc. One of the TAY indicated that he felt it was only after graduating from high school that he really felt that he “started to get to know her [the TF]”. The same TAY indicated his appreciation of the practical, career development focus of the TF (“she hasn’t gotten into [my] life much, doesn’t talk down [to me]... treats [me] as an adult...professionally”).

Analysis by Cluster #4: Developmentally Appropriate

Responses to queries for this cluster mostly emphasized the importance of maintaining a pragmatic focus in responding to expected engagement challenges with TAY, whether the engagement at issue is engagement in plan goals, engagement with a job or school setting (or conversely, being fired or quitting a job or school setting), or engagement in the With It program. In regard to the issue of engagement in employment settings, With It personnel described possibilities for using this situation as a “teachable opportunity” for helping TAY understand and practice evaluating and planning choices (e.g. “listing advantages and disadvantages with them and assessing where they want to go”), for practicing communication by discussing with supervisors or peers the issues related to wanting to leave a job, or practicing relevant skills such as giving notice or even composing and submitting a termination letter. In regard to TAY lack of engagement in transition support plans, providers indicated that instances of this provide an opportunity to revisit the plans and examine whether they are truly in line with TAY goals.

Analysis by Cluster #5: Community-Based Support

Assistance with employment in the community. TFs described in detail various strategies they have used to assist TAY with the job search process, including assisting them in browsing through on-line and print classifieds, assisting with on-line applications, transporting to interviews, providing materials to assist with the job search, application, and interview process (e.g., portfolios, clothes for interviewing), helping TAY to avoid misplacing documents (and keeping extra copies in cases where documents become misplaced), etc. The With It program does not offer direct on-the-job support such as job coaching, and TFs are typically reluctant to interact directly with employers (see “Non-stigmatizing”, below). The program has sought to partner with other agencies in order to provide this service but has thus far been unsuccessful in those efforts. TFs described monitoring TAY performance on the job through their ongoing contacts with TAY and as-needed problem-solving with TAY regarding issues that arise or considering alternative employment where appropriate.

Job development. The program director described past formal “resource mapping” efforts pursued in collaboration with TAY to attempt to identify a pool of potential employers, but found these efforts were largely unsuccessful due to employers not wanting to hire TAY known to have mental health issues based on their association with the program. Since that time, the typical means for helping TAY to identify potential jobs has been through one-on-one work with TFs. However, the program

has maintained a list of employers that have hired youth in the past, including certain instances in which employers have become acquainted with the With It program after hiring TAY and had positive experiences with the program.

Analysis by Cluster #6: Promotion of skills and resources

Promotion of skills. Skills training in the With It program occurs “in-vivo” as TF help TAY with real-world challenges related to job acquisition and maintenance. TFs teach, demonstrate, and role-play with TAY appropriate behavior for interviews or on-the-job situations such as making schedule change requests, etc. The program director described emphasizing in his supervision of these activities of TFs that they “cannot assume that they know” basic skills in these areas, thereby missing potential training opportunities. A TF indicated that each stage in the process of acquiring jobs and dealing with on-the-job difficulties is an opportunity to teach and discuss “responsible professional behavior.” In describing skills training related to searching for jobs, educational, and other professional development opportunities, one of the TFs described the usefulness of helping TAY to perform online searches in teaching online search skills as well as Internet and cyber-safety. The same TF also described use of web-browsing to help TAY evaluate the fit of jobs through on-line descriptions of specific positions or more general on-line descriptions of the type of work being considered. For example, information accessed on the web might reveal the need for specific credentials, circumstances of certain positions that might require accommodations, etc. One of the TAY interview respondents described a step by step process of going through such a process with his TF recently.

Promotion of informal supports. The With It program director spoke of the importance of assessing family support and continuing to monitor this support over time, given the rapid changes that can occur in TAY support networks. With It staff also described the nature of contact with TAY family members, indicating that it typically occurs “once a month or couple of months” and is occasioned either by reviews of the TAY plan, their entry into new programs or services, or problems at school or work for which family involvement is desirable. One of the TFs described how she has assisted in the process of disclosing information to family members when parental/family notification is required (e.g., for certain in-school problems of minors such as attendance), and helped TAY to understand the necessity for disclosure in these instances. In their interviews, TAY described specific ways in which TFs had been helpful in enhancing not only their relationships with family members but their peer informal supports as well. For example, one of the TAY described how his TF had helped him to reconnect with another TAY who had attended the same SED school program with him. Another TAY described how his TF had suggested seeking tutoring from his informal support network members (i.e., through his church) to assist in his efforts to earn vocational credentials. A TAY also described how his TF worked with him and his wife as a couple in helping them negotiate the practical and emotional challenges of living with one another for the first time.

Analysis by Cluster #7: Long-Term Outcome Orientation

Commitment to TAY over the long-term. As discussed earlier, the program commits to continuing to follow TAY for a significant period of time beyond attainment of employment or post-secondary placement to monitor whether these achievements are stable, but given the primarily school-based nature of the service, the practical limit to program contact with TAY in many cases is school graduation or exit.

Tracking progress on the individual and program levels. As described earlier, the With It program has implemented a structured tool for tracking progress in transition-related areas of employment, education, and living situation (e.g., who the TAY is living with, whether they have had episodes of homelessness) and challenges threatening progress in these areas (e.g., substance abuse). However, for making adjustments to plans for individual TAY, periodic reviews of transition support plans with TAY, rather than consultation of specific indicators, was regarded as being most helpful. The program director indicated that some of the data from the specific indicators collected has been useful in establishing the impact of the program and demonstrating the program's relevance to funders' priorities (e.g., collecting information on episodes of homelessness). At the same time, some of the issues tracked are relatively infrequent in occurrence among TAY in the With It program (perhaps due to the fact that it is school-based), and consequently not useful for program improvement. Ascertaining how to analyze data collected for program improvement given the limitations of a very small staff (i.e., one full time and two part time staff) has been an issue.

Analysis by Cluster #8: Non-stigmatizing

As discussed earlier, the With It program largely avoids direct contact with employers due to employers' reluctance to hire youth known to have mental health needs. TAY were also described as being reluctant to have program staff interact with employers or anyone else outside of the secondary school locations where With It personnel typically work. For example, providers indicated that some TAY do not want to be seen with With It staff in post-secondary or alternative school settings such as adult education or vocational settings. One TF described being careful to assess when meeting with TAY in the community their level of comfort, both through direct questioning and gauging "non-verbals." In situations where any discomfort is detected, she indicated that she typically will find a different location to hold the meeting. Both of the TAY interviewed routinely meet with TFs outside of school settings, one at the home where he resides with parents and siblings, and one at a local coffee shop. Both of these TAY described initial ambivalence but then increasing comfort over time about meeting the TF in these situations. In the case of meetings at home, however, the issue for the TAY was not being seen by family members with the TF, but having the TF witness what he described as the "dysfunctional" dynamics of his family.

Section IV: Findings from Direct Observation

The observation conducted of a TF interaction with one of the With It program youth in the Kendall school provided further corroboration and some of the positive attributes of TF-TAY relationships described above (see "TF-TAY Relationship" under "Cluster #3: Comprehensive Service Coordination") and suggested additional strengths of these relationships. Many aspects of helpful interactions in behavioral health contexts were evidenced, such as frequent expressions of empathy, a good balance of directiveness, guidance and listening, and patience and helpful redirection in response to TAY frustration. An upbeat and 'fun' atmosphere was maintained, despite engagement in a challenging task, role-playing an upcoming audition for a performing arts program. The role-play activity was expertly executed, and information gained from the role-play was subsequently used in a problem-solving discussion with the TAY to generate coping strategies should similar problems to those evidenced in the role-play (i.e., forgetting lines) arise in the actual audition. In the same session, the TF had a constructive discussion with the TAY regarding a

recent conflict with a friend and did an online search related to one of the career development objectives of the TAY. It was clear based on aspects of the interaction observed that the TAY-TF relationship was a warm and trusting one. In short, the observation helped to confirm many of the strengths of TF work with TAY that had been described in the interviews and displayed the competence of the TF in using “in vivo” skills training techniques

Section V: Community Partner Interview

The community partner selected by the With It program director for this interview was Dianne Halfaker, the regional project manager for the Miami-Dade SEDNET project. SEDNET projects are funded statewide by the Florida Department of Education to bolster communication and cooperation across agencies and service sectors in serving the needs of TAY w/ED, with one project per SEDNET region. SEDNET projects serve varying functions. The Miami-Dade SEDNET project provides case management services for TAY enrolled in Miami-Dade schools who have recently been discharged from a mental health psychiatric hospital or residential placement service, focusing on those who may need school-based services or special school placement.

In addition to delineating basic characteristics of the Miami-Dade SEDNET project as described above, the community partner identified methods of cooperation between the SEDNET project and the With It program and ways in which these programs support one another. Miami-Dade SEDNET serves as a referral source for With It, connecting students to this service in cases in which significant vocational guidance assistance will likely be needed or where the school-led transition planning individualized education planning (TIEP) process has been challenging (e.g., due to lack of student engagement or other issues). Two possible additional functions of the Miami-Dade SEDNET in supporting With It in the future include: 1) quality improvement support, and 2) provision of additional services. Regarding #1, Miami-Dade SEDNET aims to provide data to support program planning efforts, though systems to provide and facilitate use by school and With It personnel of SEDNET data are still in development. Regarding #2, Miami-Dade SEDNET is currently developing two programs to teach TAY w/ED employability skills, one of which will be a “school-based entrepreneurship program”, designed to promote TAY capacity for future self-employment through hands-on experience with aspects of managing a business. In regard to With It benefits to SEDNET and the broader community, the community partner described With It as serving a unique function, indicating that no other service provider in the Miami focuses exclusively on the needs of TAY w/ED or has the same capacity to work with TAY in the community both before and following exit from school.

Section VI: Barriers to Implementation

Data collected from the site suggested barriers to implementation on program, inter-agency, and systemic levels. On the program level, a likely implication of the small number of staff serving a large geographic area is that services are far outstripped by need. Despite this, one of the TFs indicated that she had experienced difficulties in obtaining new referrals, particularly since the closure of one of the SED centers that had formerly referred to the program on a regular basis. In the past, in addition to receiving referrals from SED center sites, the With It program worked closely with these centers and was able to effectively use them as a “base” to flexibly provide transition-related services to TAY. While the movement toward

better integration of TAY into “mainstream” campuses likely has some significant benefits, a possible drawback might be the absence of adequate systems to identify, monitor, and engage these youth into helpful services in less specialized settings. Because the program is primarily school-based, accessing referrals from sources outside of the school system is problematic. More importantly, as observed by program staff, the fact that the program is mainly school-based may increase the likelihood of TAY drop-out from the program at school exit or graduation.

A question on the program level relates to the implementation of the TIP model. Although With It services were described as adhering to the TIP model, fidelity of the program to the model has not been formally measured. Further operationalization of the TIP model through use of fidelity measurement or other strategies might enhance the effectiveness of the program, by serving as a basis for efforts to improve model implementation. Because measurement of fidelity and other process monitoring can be resource-intensive, it is likely that the program would require set-aside funds or technical support in order to accomplish this objective.

At the interagency level, staff reported excellent success in collaborating with a variety of programs providing post-secondary training options to TAY w/ED including local community colleges, adult education, and technical schools. However, one important resource for supporting career development work, VR services, has been harder to access. Reports of With It staff and staff suggested that possible reasons might include high caseloads at VR agencies or routine use of practices that result in exclusion of TAY w/ED (e.g., closing cases in response to no-shows).

At the systemic level, important barriers described included a general lack of resources to support transition of TAY w/ED in the broader community, particularly those TAY who live independently or whose families lack insurance or private pay financial resources. Although With It program staff appear to be knowledgeable about the opportunities that are available, their increased knowledge may only underscore the systems level resource problem if resources are entirely or mostly absent in key areas. In addition to sharing their observations regarding lack of services, providers also described poor availability and variety of employment opportunities to youth lacking basic educational credentials or attempting to schedule work around education or training schedules. Although this situation was described as longstanding (and hardly unique to the Miami Dade community), impressions of With It staff were that this situation has been exacerbated by a weak economy.

Appendix F

Program #3: The Partnered Program [Young Adult Transition Program Case Study Report]

Name of program. Young Adult Transition Program (YATP)

Agency. Gulf Coast Community Care/Jewish Family Services and the Department of Children and Families Substance Abuse and Mental Health Office of Broward County

Contents

- I) Case Specific Methodology
 - This section describes the site-specific adaptations to the multiple case study methods.
- II) General Description of Program

This section provides information about the mission of the program, its history, basic site information such as service area, eligibility for services, and referral process, and a brief description of core services provided by the program.
- III) Analysis of Program Characteristics by Literature Review Cluster
 - This section provides an analysis of program characteristics organized by their correspondence with eight (8) types of best practices, or “clusters” identified based on a systematic review of available literature on career development services for transition-age youth with emotional disturbance (TAY w/ED). Data sources for this section of the report include interviews and record review.
- IV) Findings from Direct Observation
 - Direct observations were conducted at each program participating in the multiple case study of a discrete episode of service delivery, selected by the program director in collaboration with the principal investigator. This section summarizes findings from these direct observations.
- V) Findings from Community Partner Interview(s)
 - This section provides a summary of findings from the community partner interview(s), conducted with administrators or other individuals of the program director’s choice who have collaborated in providing services or community-based supports to TAY in the program.
- VI) Barriers to Implementation
 - This section summarizes, based on findings from all data sources (i.e., interviews, record review, and observation), barriers to implementation experienced by the program and the manner in which the program has addressed these barriers.

Section I: Case-Specific Methodology

Program selection

Inclusion criteria for participating in the multiple case study included: a) being located in the State of Florida; b) providing career development services; c) adapting career development services to the specific needs of TAY w/ED; d) receiving all or part of the funding for these services from Medicaid or through Medicaid contracted private insurers; and e) being described as “exemplary” in some specific way in DCF and SEDNET administrator surveys (for further information on study criteria and program selection, see “Methods” section in full report). The program was nominated by one administrator who provided specific details about aspects of services believed to be “exemplary”, thus meeting criterion e). In particular, the administrator described how the program was able to expand upon its core services through collaboration with agencies in the community, including the Urban League

Adaptations to case study method

Information regarding program history was taken primarily from initial and on-site interviews with the program director, Tania Hamilton. In addition to the standard data collection, a relatively more extensive data collection for the “Community Partner” component of the multiple case study protocol was completed. Visits were conducted to three programs to which YATP TAY have been referred regularly for services, and whose staff YATP direct care providers (“life coaches”) work with closely to ensure that youth benefit from services they receive. Interviews were

conducted with personnel affiliated with these programs ($n = 6$) and integrated into findings for the Community Partner component of the cross-site data collection plan (see “Findings from Community Partner Interviews” section). The rationale for this more extensive community partner data collection was that collaborations between YATP and other community agencies, including the Urban League and the United Way, were specifically mentioned as a valuable aspect of the YATP in the nomination of the program for the study (see “Program Selection” above).

Section II: General Description of Program

Program Mission

Implementation of the program has been informed by the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) model. According to the TIP manual, the purpose of a TIP program is to “assist young people with emotional and/or behavioral difficulties (EBD) in making a successful transition to adulthood with all young persons achieving, within their potential, their goals in the transition domains of education, employment, living situation, and community life” (Clark, 2005). Clearly, the first two of the four “transition goals” mentioned suggest the high priority placed on career development in a TIP program, though the program is more comprehensive in scope and addresses other needs such as needs for housing support, training in independent living skills, and support in other community participation objectives. The program places a priority on following the interests and preferences of young adults in determining specific types of support to be provided for a given TAY.

Program History

The YATP program was developed through the efforts of a county-level “Transition to Independent Living” (TIL) committee, a group consisting of participants from multiple agencies concerned with transitioning youth as well as TAY family members, in cooperation with the local DCF circuit for Broward County (for more information on the TIL committee, see “Transition to Independent Living (TIL) committee” subsection under the “Cluster #3: Comprehensive Service Coordination” heading). According to the program director, aggressive advocacy from family members of TAY w/ED in the community played a significant role in the decision-making process leading to the establishment of the program. Family members also made contributions to initial program planning and development through participation in a separate, YATP steering committee begun to help guide the planning process. The program has been in operation since January of fiscal year '06-'07. The TAYP team has received ongoing training and technical assistance on the TIP model and other aspects of career development services from the developers of the TIP system, the National Center on Youth Transition (NCYT) throughout its development, from its pre-service planning phase onward. However,

program life coaches also receive training in a variety of areas from other experts (e.g., substance abuse among TAY).

Basic program information

Service area and eligibility: Broward County 16 -21 year-old TAY w/ED who have serious emotional or behavioral difficulties or serious mental illness are eligible for the program.

Number of TAY served and units of service provided. Since enrollment of TAY began in January of 2007, 91 TAY have received services from YATP, with 51 of these cases currently active. Program records indicate that in the first 11 months of FY '07-'08 (i.e., through May '07, the month that data collection was completed for the study), YATP provided 8,810 hours of services to TAY in the program. Assuming that census levels for the year were relatively constant, units of service per TAY may be estimated by dividing the overall hours of services by the current census. This calculation results in an estimate of 173 hours of service per TAY per year, or about 14 hours per TAY per month.

Referrals. A variety of sources provide referrals, including programs for youth with SED in area public schools, and local DCF child and adult case managers.

Staff. The YATP staff is composed by three full-time life coaches, a full-time life coach team leader, a master's level marriage and family therapist, and a program director. A "transition coordinator" is employed part time by the agency to lead initial screening procedures (see "Service Process", below). The program also works closely with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH) director for the local DCF circuit, whose office approves all admissions to the program. The SAMH director also provides guidance to ongoing operations of the program through the YATP steering committee.

Service process. Prior to enrollment, TAY in the program meet with the transition coordinator and the supervisor of program "life coaches" to complete an initial transition assessment (see "Interview Results"). This assessment includes a description of TAYs' presenting behavioral health problems including mental health difficulties and possible issues with substance abuse, a brief functional assessment of the TAY, and a description of TAYs' strengths, resources, and goals. TAY are also evaluated for their housing needs and appropriateness for program run supported housing. The TAY is then assigned a life coach thought to best complement their individual needs based on the initial assessment. In their first 90 days, the life coach is responsible for completing with the TAY: 1) an additional functional assessment, including in-situation assessment of their independent living skills for those receiving supported housing services; 2) a transition support plan specifying TAYs' transition-related goals, and 3) a plan for who to include on the transition team, a group of individuals meeting monthly with TAY in the community to review progress and make adjustments to transition plans and otherwise address TAYs' needs. Life coaches maintain contact with TAY in-person and by phone weekly or more frequently in order to provide support, in-vivo skills training, and support linkage to services and other opportunities in the community by providing transportation, accompanying TAY to appointments, etc.

Additional elements of the program. In addition to the core program elements of life coaching, transition team meetings, and, for the majority of program TAY, housing, the program has periodically offered group services to TAY including life skills groups and groups providing psychoeducation on recovery. The program also offers individual psychotherapy with a master's level marriage and family therapist. The therapist works closely with the transition teams to help inform the psychotherapy work, and, where appropriate given the limits of confidentiality, provide an additional perspective on how to best assist TAY in their transition-related goals through the work of the life coaches and transition teams. The program regularly provides or subsidizes transportation for TAY and has flex funds available to support transition-related activities in other ways as well. Finally, a conspicuous strength of the program is its success in partnering with the community in both private and public sectors to broaden the range of supports to TAY in the program.

Outcomes. YATP is still developing an outcome tracking system and thus did not report outcome data for the study (see “Analysis by Cluster #7, Long-Term Outcome Orientation”).

Section III: Analysis of Program Characteristics by Literature Review Cluster

Analysis by Cluster #1: Strengths-based assessment and person-centered planning

Pre-enrollment assessments. A distinctive feature of the YATP program is the substantial extent of assessment completed even prior to enrollment of TAY. Pre-enrollment assessment is conducted to enable the program to identify the critical program or external resources necessary to help ensure success of TAY (e.g., needs for specialized substance abuse treatment such as services from the local “Starting Place” agency; see “Comprehensive Service Coordination”, below), particularly for those TAY who might be assigned to supported housing available through the program. Collection of useful information on functioning and TAY strengths and resources up-front is also thought to facilitate engagement, as life coaches can use this information to generate ideas for topics to explore with TAY. The pre-enrollment assessment is conducted by the life coach team leader (i.e., the title for the life coaches’ immediate supervisor) and the transition coordinator (see “staff” above). The assessment covers a wide variety of topics and includes global ratings of functioning in areas including education, employment, medical, housing, and substance abuse history. A psychiatric evaluation is also conducted during the pre-enrollment phase to “assess whether they [TAY] have the capacity” for the program (see “implementation barriers”, below). Despite the fact that the pre-enrollment assessment is primarily designed to anticipate problems, significant information about positive youth attributes and self-assessments is also collected through use of a “goals and dreams” form, which the initial assessment team assists TAY in completing and reviewing. The information is also used to match TAY to the life coach on the team who, based on global impressions of the pre-enrollment assessment data, is judged to be best suited to the TAY.

Other formal assessment. In addition to the pre-enrollment assessment, additional formal assessment is conducted by life coaches within 10 to 14 days of admission. This assessment covers some of the same areas as the pre-enrollment assessment, but includes an extensive checklist documenting TAY independent living skills. For those TAY who elect to use psychotherapy services provided by the agency (see “Comprehensive Service Coordination”), the therapist conducts an additional, semi-structured assessment that focuses to a great extent on youth strengths and resources

(e.g., by including a detailed review of TAY informal support networks, including information on the quality of relationships with specific network members)

Informal, ongoing strengths-based assessment. The YATP life coach interviewed for the case study indicated that she carefully considers the up front pre-enrollment assessment material prior to meeting with the TAY. The overall program philosophy described for “getting to know” TAY is that this early assessment information provides a foundation for ongoing exploration of TAY strengths and weaknesses (examples of related statements from the director and provider interviews include: “don’t look at the surface”, “[look at] strengths, talents they may not realize”, “[knowing] what they’re looking for and want takes a lot longer”, etc). The provider underscored the importance of following TAY’s lead, individualizing the ongoing informal assessment process, and beginning the process of working with TAY by focusing on transition-related or other practical goals, avoiding conversations about history or other potentially unpleasant subjects until rapport is better established. As the process of becoming acquainted with TAY proceeds, TAY interests, career goals, strengths, abilities, skills, and formal and informal supports are explored in greater depth, and this information is integrated into the planning process with TAY. Past experiences are thoroughly considered to identify strengths relevant to career development that might not be apparent on a superficial level. For example, the life coach indicated in her interview that she often will ask about less formal or “unconventional” work experiences (e.g., babysitting, selling things on the street).

Independent Living Plan. A “independent living plan” reflecting career-development and transition-related goals is quickly created at the same time as the initial life coach assessment (i.e., in the first 10-14 days). A small number of goals and strategies for achieving these goals are described. This plan is viewed as a basis for ongoing work with TAY, to be periodically considered by the team in monthly transition team meetings (see “Comprehensive Case Coordination”) and quarterly plan review and updates. As commented by the program director, “plans can be generic and not give credit to what is going on...the [Transition Team Meetings] are different from what is going on in the chart”.

Person-centered planning process. In addition to the career development areas of employment and education, goals considered in the person-centered planning process can include independent living skills-related goals (e.g., money management) and goals related to mental health and substance abuse recovery. Career development is not always emphasized at the outset, particularly for TAY coming into the program who are overwhelmed and may need a period of stabilization prior to investing energy in their career development growth. Life coaches try to strike a balance between following TAYs’ lead on these issues and bolstering their confidence about moving ahead when they are ready to do so. At the other end of the spectrum, the life coach spoke in her interview about handling TAY with “grandiose” goals by helping TAY to identify the discrete steps that would be involved in achieving these goals (“it’s OK to have grandiose plans, but you have to break them down”). The life coach also articulated the importance of consulting TAY formal and informal support network members. Interviews with TAY in the program identified other possible important features of the YATP person-centered planning process. Specifically, one of the TAY talked about how her life coach had helped her to link short and long-term work goals, by discussing how part-time entry level employment could increase her attractiveness for more competitive positions in the future. As part of the person-centered planning process, life coaches will frequently share information on programs in the community by reviewing program

brochures with TAY (e.g., the variety of employment assistance referrals that are regularly used by the YATP; see “Analysis by Cluster #3” and “Community Partner Interview” sections).

Analysis by Cluster #2: Integration of employment and education

Use of educational history in career development planning. Life coaches frequently communicate and work closely from the outset of their work with TAY with school personnel, particularly in “alternative” settings such as adult ed/GED programs and SED centers. Information is gathered about school experiences, subjects that TAY enjoyed the most or were most successful/challenged at, relationships with peers and teachers, etc. Sometimes recognizing strengths or opportunities based on this data may require some creativity on the part of a provider, given that school is highly challenging for many TAY w/ED.

Coordination with schools and school-based personnel. The YATP works closely with school programs for school-enrolled TAY to ensure that YATP and school plans (e.g., IEP or TIEPs) are complementary. According to the program director, though coordination with educational program is considered important in all cases, coordination with the school is prioritized particularly highly in cases in which TAY have been referred from SED centers. Life coaches are aware of a range of secondary and post-secondary options (e.g., a local “drop back in” program for drop-outs to earn their diplomas with added supports from the school system) and regularly work with TAY to refer them or help them to enroll in these programs. In her interview, the provider mentioned that she often uses community service hour requirements of the local school district as a vehicle for helping TAY re-engage in school or help link school achievement to practical career development interests. She also indicated often helping TAY search for roles or other opportunities in secondary settings in which they will be more able to achieve success than in conventional classroom-based work (e.g., serving as a teacher’s aide or helper formally or informally, using extra-curricular activities as the basis for written reports to be turned in for credit, etc.). In one of the TAY interviews, a TAY described how a life coach had worked with the guidance counselor at her school on her behalf to help her stay abreast of her work despite absences due to psychiatric hospitalizations.

Support of secondary and post-secondary goals. YATP places a high priority on school achievement, though life coaches are encouraged to help TAY identify a full range of possible educational achievement alternatives (e.g., in cases in which academic aptitude appears to be limited, appropriate courses of technical or vocational training). For TAY lacking a GED or diploma, achieving these basic educational credentials would be a standard item to include in the career development plan, and life coaches generally encourage TAY to stay in school, in alternative settings where appropriate (e.g., in cases where TAY do not want to return to a standard school setting, a “drop back in” program). The importance was also related of helping TAY to identify situations and develop skills to advocate for themselves with school personnel (e.g., through discussion, role-plays, etc.). In her interview, the life coach indicated that she encourages TAY to meet with school personnel one-on-one if possible to ask about types of support available or ask other questions that they may have about school programs.

Linking school and work goals. Life coaches are encouraged to help TAY evaluate how to balance their educational and work loads in cases in which they are simultaneously pursuing education and work, and tend to encourage TAY to prioritize educational goals in situations in which there is an apparent conflict (e.g., by planning work

schedules around school rather than vice versa). In both the administrator and provider interviews, however, YATP staff indicated that, in most cases, they saw school and work goals as being complementary rather than in conflict. For example, one stated, “if they get excited about work, it can help them with school”. Staff also indicated that showing links between educational and employment goals in discussions with TAY (e.g., by helping TAY identify necessary educational qualifications for jobs that they are interested in) improves their engagement with both. In her interview, one of the TAY described how her life coach had done this for her (“[the life coach] helped me to sign up for GED, been pushing, pushing, kind of annoying, but I realize I need to do it, because I want to go to BCC [the local community college] and work with elderly or kids”). The process of linking school and work goals was observed to be more successful in cases in which the program is able to “start early” with TAY (i.e., “get them at age 16 or 17”) so that they do not miss opportunities in their secondary education to acquire career-relevant experiences and skills.

Analysis by Cluster #3: Comprehensive service coordination

Core services. Core services offered by the YATP program include 1) for all TAY, career development and other life coaching through one-on-one life coach-TAY relationships and Transition Teams (see “Transition and Life Coach Teams” and “Structure and nature of life-coach-TAY relationship”, below), and 2) supported housing in one of the apartments in the community owned by the program. Over time, the program has developed trusting relationships with owner/operators of rental units it leases for TAY in the community through frequent communication and prompt intervention in the minority of cases where TAY have caused problems (e.g., noise, damage to units). In cases in which TAY are employed and earning money, TAY pay a portion of rent from their earnings (i.e., 30%, in accordance with Housing and Urban Development guidelines).

Other services. In addition to these services, the program offers psychotherapy services to TAY desiring these provided by an in-house full-time marriage and family therapist. Psychotherapy typically focuses on development of practical coping skills through application of solution-focused and cognitive-behavioral techniques. YATP also periodically offers time-limited groups on specific topics related to life skills and recovery provided on-site by contracted personnel. Recent groups have included a group facilitated by faculty from a local graduate clinical psychology training program, and a currently ongoing peer-led group curriculum focused on recovery planning (i.e., “Dream Again”). Finally, the program frequently provides transportation to TAY to school, work, or program activities by issuing bus passes and through other means (e.g., paying for taxis in some cases).

A continuum of employment and other supports through partnerships. The YATP has been successful in expanding the continuum of services that it offers by regularly referring and closely working with programs in the community. This is particularly the case in the area of employment, in which YATP refers and works with several outside organizations on an ongoing basis that specialize in providing employment services to disadvantaged groups. Two such partners – WorkForce One (through its JobLink and Summer Youth programs) and the Urban League (through its Youth builders and Youth Empowerment program)—work with YATP TAY by providing employability skills training, assisting them in referrals to GED or to diploma-earning programs, providing employment-oriented case management and counseling, and facilitating linkage to short-term paid work experiences and competitive employment. The Youthbuilders program is a more unique employment program in

which youth participate in the construction of apartments and in the process earn both construction trade credentials and the opportunity to live in subsidized Youthbuilders constructed apartment units. In addition to Workforce One and the Urban League, YATP has begun partnering with the local Goodwill agency to provide job coaching services to youth.

Process of collaboration with partners. YATP life coaches and the life coach supervisor facilitate YATP TAYs' success in partner programs by accompanying youth to initial visits at the programs, assisting with enrollment, and, as appropriate with permission of the TAY, communicating with program staff over the phone to help staff in gathering background about the TAY and, in a non-stigmatizing way, provide insight about special needs of the youth (see "Non-stigmatizing" section). Although collectively, these partners and their programs constitute a relatively impressive array of career development services available to TAY in the YATP, some of these programs will be discontinued in the near future due to loss of funding (see "Implementation Barriers" sections).

Gulf Coast Work Program. In addition, in order to meet the particular needs of a small number of TAY, YATP has started a small "Gulf Coast Work Program" in which the program hires one TAY at a time to work for the agency at tasks including cleaning and custodial work. This program was observed to be very helpful by program staff and the current TAY employed through it. This TAY was previously having difficulty finding employment. She indicated that she sees herself as acquiring skills for future competitive positions through the Gulf Coast work experience ("I am learning for the future in this job [the GCC work program]... basically learning how to work with people").

Other referrals in community. In addition to the range of services offered by the agency itself and employment services offered through partners, YATP regularly refers to a variety of other types of programs in the community to meet the variety of needs of its TAY. One regularly utilized type of program in the community is subsidized or supported housing programs run by other agencies, used in cases in which program TAY either do not qualify or are not judged to be a fit for program supported housing, but are nonetheless in need of housing assistance. Currently, one such program houses a number of YATP TAY. TAY in these other housing programs still receive similar housing support to TAY in YATP housing, since life coaches and transition teams regularly meet with TAY on site in their housing at these programs, in the same manner that they meet with TAY in YATP program-supported units. The program also regularly refers to a local outpatient substance abuse program specializing in treatment of TAY with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders (i.e., "Starting Place").

Transition to Independent Living (TIL) committee. YATP is assisted in identifying and accessing potential partner programs to support TAY through participation of its leadership in a local "Transition to Independent Living" committee led by the Broward County United Way, where administrators of programs for at risk or special needs TAY populations (e.g., TAY "aging out" of foster care) meet, exchange resources, identify service gaps, and identify strategies to address these gaps. The program director shares information on programs gathered from TIL meetings with her life coaching staff, who then follow-up and gather additional information about the programs as needed based on the needs of TAY on their caseloads.

Structure of Life coach-TAY relationship. Life coaches typically meet with TAY in the community on a weekly or more frequent basis. Meeting length can be as brief as a half an hour or as long as several hours, depending on TAY needs. Most commonly, life coaches will meet with TAY in their program apartments or other places of residence, but they also frequently accompany TAY into the community to provide support (e.g., by assisting them in accessing services or in enrolling in employment or education programs, by transporting and/or escorting them to important appointments and meetings, etc.). Life coaches are available “7 days per week, 24 hours a day” by YATP-issued cell phone, and are covered by other members of the team on vacations. Because the three life coaches and life coach supervisor will often accompany one another to meet with TAY in certain situations (e.g., when TAY are in crisis) and because the program leases several apartments in each complex where units are located, life coaches have opportunities to meet TAY not on their personal case loads. Thus, all members of the team have met and are familiar with most TAY that have been in the program for a substantial period of time. Each of these TAY can then count on support from a familiar adult, even in cases in which their personal life coach is not available.

Quality of Life coach-TAY relationship, other program interpersonal support. In her interview, the life coach discussed needing to individualize the way in which she provided life coaching services for each youth, particularly on the dimension of how much support and guidance is provided, depending on whether TAY are prone to being overly dependent and feel that they need to be “rescued” or, on the other end of the continuum, try to be independent to a fault and do not ask for help when it is appropriate and needed. The life coach also talked about using the logistics of setting up meetings with youth as a skills training opportunity in which TAY are given increasing levels of responsibility for arranging these meetings. Both of the TAY interviewed observed how their life coaches had initially been very structured and directive with them but expected increasing levels of independence from them over time and saw this as a reflection of their own growth. One of the TAY interviewed expressed appreciation for how this and similar strategies of requiring increasing levels of responsibility from her over time had contributed to her sense of personal competence. TAY also commented on the liberal use of praise by their life coaches (“[she gives me] a high five because I went to an appointment”) and the warmth of their relationships with life coaches (e.g., “she’s like a mother”).

Transition Team meetings. In addition to the regular one-on-one meetings between life coaches and TAY, transition team meetings are held for each TAY in the program once quarterly. In these meetings, attended by the assigned life coach, the life coach supervisor, other key formal players in TAYs’ lives (e.g., mental health case managers, or for foster youth, workers from the local child welfare system funded agencies providing support to transitioning foster youth). Frequently, TAY family and friends (parents or other family, boyfriends or girlfriends), and, if she is providing psychotherapy to the youth, the program’s therapist will also attend. At these meetings, the TAY’s career development and independent living plans are discussed, their progress on plans reviewed, plans are modified, and additional supports are identified and recruited if appropriate.

Analysis by Cluster #4: Developmentally-appropriate

Responses to queries for this cluster focused on issues of TAY motivation and engagement (e.g., with plan, with jobs, with the program). Interview respondents emphasized the importance of empathy for the various sources of motivational and

engagement variation among TAY. It was observed that TAY may appear unmotivated or disengaged simply because they are overwhelmed or distracted by the variety of issues that they may be struggling with in their lives. For example, respondents indicated that difficulties with family can often distract TAY from being invested in school and work. In other cases, lack of motivation and engagement was observed to stem from lack of fit between the career development plan and/or current education or job placement, in which case renewed focus on strengths-based assessment and person-centered planning is helpful. In addition, interview respondents agreed that movement from job to job was normative for the period and suggested that it could be regarded as part of a process of exploration, rather than reflecting poor motivation or responsibility. In addressing low motivation or engagement, respondents emphasized the importance of recognizing and praising TAY incremental progress (e.g., if a TAY is fired from a job but had maintained it longer than he/she ever has maintained a job before, this would be an occasion for praising the TAY). For TAY who “disappear” from the program, YATP does not allow cases to remain open indefinitely due to restrictions on keeping open cases in the absence of contact; however, in cases in which TAY want to re-enter the program, a commitment to re-instating them if possible was shared.

Analysis by Cluster #5: Community-based support

Assistance with job search. As discussed above, YATP has cultivated, in large part through its relationships in the service community, a range of non-competitive potential work opportunities and encourages TAY to select from this array by sharing brochures on these programs. Competitive employment, however, is highly valued and encouraged for any TAY who are willing to pursue it, at least insofar as it does not detract from their advancement in education or training programs that could ultimately lead to more rewarding higher paying jobs (balancing work and education demands was one reason discussed for referrals to Urban League programs). To assist TAY in searching for competitive employment, life coaches help TAY in retrieving applications and putting together resumés, accompany TAY to interviews in cases where transportation or “moral support” is needed, and accompany TAY in their search for employment to job fairs or even door-to-door in the community. In difficult cases (e.g. situations in which criminal backgrounds are a barrier), life coaches help TAY brainstorm options in their one-on-one meetings and at Transition Teams. One of the TAY interviewed indicated that her life coach had assisted her with her job search by setting short-term goals for job search tasks, such as a goal to submit at least two applications per week.

Job coaching or other on the job support. YATP is partnering with the local Goodwill Industries job training site to provide job coaching services for the TAY currently served in the on-site work program. On-site support of employment is also available for opportunities offered through WorkForce One and the Urban League. On-site support of other employment (i.e., private, competitive jobs) has generally not been offered, however, in large part due to the perceived stigmatizing impact of providing on-site support to competitively employed TAY (see “Cluster #8: Non-Stigmatizing”). The YATP life coach interviewed for the study indicated that she provides a variety of support off-site to assist TAY on the job. Specifically, she described discussing work-related issues with TAY, providing them with encouragement to “stick with it” and reminding of why they value a job at challenging points. She also indicated the importance of helping TAY manage their “sense of rejection” if not hired or fired, assisting them in problem-solving regarding work-related issues, and role-playing difficult work-related situations (see “Promotion of Skills and Resources” below).

Job development. Many job opportunities are identified through individual life coach networking in the community, including gathering information through personal acquaintances such as friends and former employers, and inquiring at places where they normally shop or pursue recreational activities. In part through these contacts, YATP has several “go-to” employers that can hire multiple youth or have multiple hiring sites.

Mentorship. YATP refers to widely available types of mentorship programs (e.g., “Big Brothers Big Sisters”) and has recently referred some of its TAY in transition out of the foster care system to the “Walk a Mile” program, a mentorship program in which TAY are paired with policy-makers who, as part of their mentorship duties, “walk a mile in their shoes” by living on the same budget as the TAY for a specified period. One of the TAY interviewed at the site mentioned that she was involved in this program and was excited about it.

Analysis by Cluster #6: Promotion of skills and resources

Promotion of skills. Life coaches are encouraged to seize any opportunities that arise to help train TAY on career development-related and other life skills as issues arise in TAYs’ employment settings, at school, in living independently in the community, etc. Since supports related to employment are usually provided off-site, career development skills training typically involve demonstration and role-playing based on TAY descriptions of challenging situations (e.g., approaching a boss to change a schedule, working with “difficult” customers, etc.). One of the TAY interviewed described a recent role play of interview techniques with her life coach and “tips” the life coach had shared with her regarding interview behavior and comportment. As mentioned above (see “Comprehensive Service Coordination”), the YATP has offered skills training groups in the past focused on developing coping strategies useful in employment and other situations (e.g., communications skills, anger management, relaxation techniques, etc.).

Promotion of informal supports. The YATP highly values TAY relationships with informal supports as a primary means for ensuring that they are supported in their career development needs over the long-term. In addition to immediate family, including parents or non-parent caregivers or former primary caregivers and siblings, YATP life coaches pursue opportunities when appropriate to work with TAYs’ own-age peers informal supports, particularly romantic partners. One of the TAY interviewed described how her life coach communicated with her boyfriend at times when she has missed appointments or school to ensure that she is OK. Any informal support valued by the TAY can be included in life coach-TAY meetings and Transition Team meetings, at discretion of the TAY. The on-site psychotherapist also frequently includes family and friends in working with TAY. The program strives to include informal support not only to help address problems, but also to celebrate TAY achievements (e.g., parents might be especially encouraged to attend a Transition Team meeting after the TAY has successfully completed an education or training program or acquired a new job). The YATP program has created a special release of information document which is included in every intake packet, which is used to assess TAY preferences regarding informal supports to include in their work with life coaches or in Transition Team meetings as well as obtain their formal consent to involve these individuals in the program.

Analysis by Cluster #7: Long-term outcome orientation

Assessing Progress of TAY and adjusting plans. Emphasis is placed on using both one-on-one life coach-TAY meetings and transition team meetings to review TAY progress and, where appropriate, adjust their career development plans. To ensure that plans are being reviewed on the required quarterly schedule, 90-day update documents are included in all TAY files. In describing how plans change over time, the direct provider in her interview stated that the goals largely stay the same, but the “criteria” – i.e., the indicators of progress in these areas – change over time as TAY improve. YATP staff strive to attend to indications of “effort” as well “success” (e.g., simply enrolling and/or consistently attending a program or job, even if maintaining adequate performance in other ways has been a struggle). Progress of TAY is followed beyond program exit through a 90-day follow-up interview.

Commitment to TAY over the long-term. Life coaches are encouraged to “never give up” on TAY and “vent their frustration” in staff meetings so as to maintain a positive attitude with TAY in the face of their struggles. In their interviews, various statements by TAY suggested that they were confident of their life coaches’ commitment to them over the long-term. Although TAY are limited to one year of

housing in units leased by the program, they are assisted in obtaining further supported or subsidized housing services through partner programs in the community if there is a continuing need for housing support.

Assessing progress and impact of the program. Currently, the program does not formally monitor objective outcome indicators for the purposes of ongoing quality improvement. However, a TAY satisfaction survey is used quarterly and examined in aggregate for the program as a whole and by transition facilitator. In regard to the latter process of examining outcomes of TAY for each life coach, the program director indicated using this analysis to identify instances where life coaches may need additional training or other assistance.

Analysis by Cluster #8: Non-stigmatizing

Communicating with employers and employment program personnel. As discussed earlier, life coaches communicate with supervisors of competitive employment positions relatively infrequently, due to concern about the possible stigmatizing impact of such contact. However, contact with employers or supervisors does occasionally occur. Moreover, contacts with employment assistance program personnel (e.g., Urban League program staff) occur on a regular basis, based on reports of the YATP and Urban League staff (see “Findings from Community Partner Interview(s)” section). In cases in which life coaches and TAY decide that an employer should be contacted, a certain protocol is followed to reduce the likelihood that such contacts will be stigmatizing. First, as with all communications involving protected health information between YATP personnel and any individual not on the program staff, a release of information is obtained. When employers or employment program personnel are first contacted, life coaches do not discuss specific features of TAYs’ mental health difficulties or even the mission of the program to serve TAY with mental health challenges. Rather, the program is simply described as providing career development and independent living assistance to TAY. Subsequently, and with TAYs’ permission, specific difficulties may be disclosed if these are impacting their employment functioning (e.g., through difficulties managing anger with co-workers or customers, missing work on days when symptoms are overwhelming, etc.). TAY are encouraged to communicate the nature of the difficulties that they are having with employers themselves or with the assistance of life coaches.

In the community or at home. In her interview, the life coach described efforts to respect privacy of TAY when visiting them at residences shared by peer roommates or and/or working with TAY elsewhere in the community. In these situations, she indicated that she will allow TAY to describe who she is or offer a non-pathologizing explanation (explaining that she is a “friend” or “mentor”). TAY that were interviewed indicated that they are generally comfortable with the way in which their life coaches and other YATP staff interact with them at home and in the community.

Section IV: Findings from Direct Observation

Selected by the program director in consultation with the research team, the life-coach-TAY interactions observed occurred during a visit by the life coach and a TAY to the offices of a summer work program. This occasion was selected due to the central role in the YATP program of linkage to partner program services. The observer (i.e., the principal investigator) met the life coach and TAY in the parking lot of the summer youth program office and observed the facilitator-TAY interactions, during, and following the TAY’s appointment at the agency. It is noteworthy that, consistent with the model used by YATP of expanding team knowledge of resources through life coaches’ personal connections, the life coach was aware of the summer work program because his own son had just enrolled. It should also be noted that the life coach offered key supports to facilitate service linkage that were not directly observed. First, the appointment was scheduled after the close of the program’s enrollment period, and, according to the program director, might not have been scheduled in the absence of the advocacy by the life coach on the TAY’s behalf. An additional support provided to the TAY was transportation to the program in the life coach’s personal vehicle.

Several supportive functions by the life coach were observed directly. First, the life coach assisted the TAY in navigating the office for the program, which was located in a large office complex and was at least moderately challenging to find. The life coach allowed the TAY to identify himself and his purpose for being at the office to the front desk receptionist. When the TAY was received by program staff, the life coach left him to work independently on completing application forms and other enrollment procedures, while meeting independently with the program director to find out more about the program, the nature of the program and specific resources that it provided, and whether it might be beneficial for other TAY on his caseload. After this brief meeting, the life coach rejoined the TAY, helped him to complete his paperwork, discussed with the TAY arrangement for bringing documents needed to complete enrollment that he did not have on hand. The life coach also participated in a conversation with the TAY and a member of the program staff about which of the possible job opportunities through the summer work program might be the best fit for him. After the appointment, the life coach reviewed with the TAY the responsibilities involved in participating in the program such as attending initial orientation sessions, and asked the TAY if he felt that he could fulfill these responsibilities. The quality of interactions between the life coach and the TAY throughout the appointment was warm and mutually respectful. In addition, the life coach communicated optimism and enthusiasm about the opportunity to the TAY in their conversations during and after the appointment without being overbearing. It was clear based on the TAYs demeanor that he shared the life coach’s enthusiasm and looked forward to participating in the program.

The observation of the supports provided to the TAY helped to underscore the importance of life coaches in facilitating TAY linkage to opportunities in the community. Through these supports, a number of challenges that might otherwise have obstructed the TAY's access to the program were addressed, including obtaining an appointment after the close of the enrollment period, having transportation to the program's office, finding the office once on site, completing necessary enrollment procedures, and planning ahead to ensure completion of initial responsibilities (i.e., providing documentation and attending the initial orientation). At the same time, the life coach provided these supports in a measured way, allowing the TAY to practice skills related to navigating a new program and the application process (e.g., by allowing the TAY to announce his presence and purpose upon entering the office, and allowing him to start the enrollment procedures on his own). Finally, the life coach used the opportunity of visiting the program with the TAY to gather additional information on how the program might be useful to others on his caseload, thus increasing the likelihood that these other TAY would have access to the program.

Section V: Findings from Community Partner Interviews

As discussed in the “Adaptations to Case Study Method” section, six interviews with providers affiliated with three programs were conducted for the community partner component of data collection. In addition to providing further evidence regarding the supports provided by YATP personnel facilitating linkage of TAY to other services, these interviews provided insight into the variety of potential partnering agencies that may be available to career development programs, and indicated possible barriers to access to these programs that may need to be considered. The sections below describe the partner programs and methods of collaboration between these programs and YATP. The issue of barriers is considered in Section VI: “Barriers to Implementation”).

Community partner interview sites

Based on further information provided by the YATP director and a local United Way administrator, it was determined that one of the most important vehicles through which United Way contributes to YATP TAY career development supports is through the “Joblink” program. Although the United Way helped to establish this program and still serves as a conduit for referrals to the program, Joblink services are actually provided by another agency, Workforce One, a publicly-funded employment assistance agency. Thus, two interviews were conducted to gather information on Joblink, one with the United Way coordinator of the program, and one with one of the Workforce One staff member who participates in providing Joblink services. A third community partner interview was conducted at a different Workforce One office, the office for the Workforce One youth summer program, in conjunction with the direct observation (see “Findings from Direct Observation”). The three remaining community partner interviews were conducted with personnel at the local Urban League office, each of whom was involved in a distinct aspect of Urban League services to which YATP youth have been referred.

Workforce One Programs

Joblink. Joblink receives referrals through the local United Way office of youth from a variety of sources, including the YATP. Joblink is supported by two job developers on the staff of a Workforce One “one-stop” center.¹ Information on the Joblink program was provided through an interview with the United Way coordinator for

through the program over this period based on the respondent's estimate. Joblink job developers provide job search assistance and counseling services to TAY at specified times during the week at their offices, which are in a separate building across the parking lot from where most of the Workforce One one stop center services are provided. The Joblink program was established through leadership of the United Way, which proposed core features of the program to Workforce One, including the innovation of involving job developers rather than counselors in providing direct services to TAY, and provided initial supervision and training to the developers to orient them to the needs of the population.

The innovation of referring TAY to job developers at a separate site is significant for several reasons. First, one-stop centers, including the Workforce One one-stop center, often provide services to several hundred adults a day, which can sometimes result in a chaotic, hectic environment that can alienate or frighten TAY. Provision of services at a separate site at specified times was designed to allow TAY to access job assistance services in a more supportive environment. Second, at many sites, the Workforce One site included, job development services – efforts to help identify and/or create job opportunities through networking with employers in the public sector and business communities – and job search assistance and counseling services are typically provided by separate personnel. The result is that individuals with the best knowledge of available opportunities are not directly accessible to TAY. In referring TAY to job developers, Joblink provided a means for TAY to directly access the individuals better knowledge of available employment opportunities than a typical employment assistance counselor. Statements by the United Way administrator in her interview as well as details from the job developer interview suggested that Joblink developers possess similar or even superior counseling skills relative to typical employment assistance program counselors in providing job search assistance and counseling services.

Summer Youth Program. The Workforce One *Summer Youth Program*, in operation since the summer of 2005, serves approximately 600-700 TAY per year aged 18 and younger. This program, established through funding from the county, helps to match youth to summer job opportunities and provide supports to help ensure their success. The program has been able to access a large number of employment opportunities, well in excess of the number of TAY accepted into the program, perhaps because employers are eager to hire screened and supervised youth at a low rate (i.e., minimum wage). According to the program director, due to the high number of job opportunities available, the program is able to match TAY selected for the program to jobs based on their geography and transportation resources, and has even been able to place a substantial number of TAY with “background issues” such as criminal records. Because youth are identified only as “economically disadvantaged”, the program does not have to address issues related to stigma in the same manner as mental health programs seeking to provide career development supports. Supportive services include an initial 3-session orientation at which TAY receive information about the program and participate in trainings on employability skills. After TAY begin working, monitors “check in” to ensure they are adjusting and performing adequately at their jobs 2 to 3 times per week.

Although this program appeared to provide a potential useful resource in matching YATP youth to job opportunities, the program orientation, at which consistent attendance is required in order for TAY to receive services, presents a possible barrier to participation by TAY w/ED. During the current year, the orientation program was scheduled for three successive Saturday mornings at 9 a.m.,

Urban League

Three personnel were interviewed at the local Urban League office, including the office job developer, and the coordinators for both of the employment programs run by the office, including the YouthBuilders program, a program providing supervised paid construction employment and associated training and credentialing, and the Broward Urban Youth Empowerment Program (BUYEP).

Interview with job developer. The interview with the job developer, whose primary role at the agency is to identify employment opportunities for TAY in Urban League programs, focused on the nature of the population served by the programs, characteristics of YouthBuilders and BUYEP programs, and barriers to her work in the community. Both BUYEP and YouthBuilders are designed to serve high school dropouts, most of whom are economically disadvantaged, and many of whom have criminal backgrounds. Both programs involve an initial phase in which TAY's basic skills are tested using a standardized instrument designed to assess employment-relevant basic math, reading, and writing skills, and a one week employability training provided in groups in which TAY are trained on interviewing, resume preparation, on-the-job etiquette, and other employability skills. After this week-long curriculum, TAY are placed in YouthBuilders or BUYEP. Each of these programs offers a variety of services, including facilitation of GED completion (e.g., referral, transportation, and incentives for progress), job placement and training, and case management focused on employment and independent living issues. YouthBuilders provides opportunities for supervised paid employment and training in construction. The BUYEP program is a more general employment support program, which offers as a first phase placement in a variety of eight week paid internships in the community, following which TAY are assisted in finding competitive employment.

In reference to challenges to job development, the job developer indicated that key barriers include scarce employment opportunities in the community for work other than low-paid, part-time and/or seasonal jobs, limiting the capacity of the program to connect TAY ultimately with rewarding employment as an outcome of the program. TAY with criminal backgrounds present a particular challenge. To address needs of these TAY, the job developer indicated that she strives to work with small business owners, who frequently have more discretion than supervisors at large businesses to hire these individuals.

Interviews with program coordinators: YouthBuilders and BUYEP. The interview with the YouthBuilders coordinator was kept brief, since according to the coordinator only one of the several (the coordinator estimated six) individuals referred from YATP had been successfully retained in the program beyond the initial phase. Given this, the focus of the interview was on the reasons why YATP youth had difficulty being retained in the program. The coordinator gave two reasons: 1) several of the youth did not qualify to continue in YouthBuilders services because the program inclusion criteria include scoring beyond minimal thresholds on sections of the program's standardized basic skills test; and 2) TAY did not complete the initial week of the program (i.e., the employability training groups).

The interview with the BUYEP coordinator was somewhat longer, given that the program has more successfully retained TAY from YATP due lacking the same test score requirements as YouthBuilders. The BUYEP coordinator described supports provided by the YATP staff to ensure the success of their TAY in the program. In addition to providing transportation and accompanying TAY to initial appointments, the program coordinator that YATP staff will communicate with BUYEP staff about particular TAY challenges; however, she noted that both BUYEP and YATP tended to avoid discussions of diagnoses or symptoms, and tended to orient discussions to specific practical problems of TAY related to work (e.g., difficulties with attendance, behavior problems specific to the work setting, etc.). YATP staff will also meet directly with BUYEP staff for TAY having difficulties in the program. Although BUYEP and YATP offer similar services in many respects (e.g., both are oriented to promoting career development and both offer case management and service linkage to address broader needs) the coordinator did not see services as being complementary and not duplicative.

Section VI: Barriers to Implementation

Implementation barriers identified from data collection from the YATP site and its community partners appeared to be primarily related to TAY access to services. First, YATP has an admissions process whereby TAY may be screened from the program at multiple points. This is at least in part to determine suitability for services based on need; however, a possible result of this approach is to reduce access to services by those who need them. The screening process may be motivated in part by the fact that the program serves a large community and has a relatively small staff. Second, there appears to be time-limited eligibility for some services, in particular, housing services, though through its partnerships the program has found ways to extend care beyond the set time limit (for housing, 12 months). Thus, in some cases, the program may not be able to serve TAY who need services or serve them for as long as services are needed.

Second, as alluded to above, the continuum of career development services that the program has managed to create through partnerships with other agencies can be affected if partnering programs are reduced or defunded. In particular, the comprehensive employment assistance program offered by the Urban League – BUYEP – was slated for defunding at the time of this writing. In the absence of career development resources from partner programs, YATP career development supports are largely limited to one-on-one work with life coaches. This one-on-one work can play an important role in TAY career development, but is limited in significant ways. Despite their relevant practical experiences, YATP life coaches are not trained as employment counseling or job development specialists. In addition, life coaches must split their time between providing career development and other types of support to TAY, such as support in coping with their ED, including management of psychiatric crises, and support related to housing and independent living. YATP is well positioned through its active participation in the TLL to identify additional potential partners to help facilitate TAY career development, but access to this networking resource is only helpful to the extent that needed resources exist and are accessible to the majority of TAY in the program (e.g., are not limited to those with insurance or who can afford to pay “out of pocket”).

In addition to facing reduced opportunity due to funding changes at partner agencies, many YATP TAY are excluded from certain currently available employment assistance opportunities through partnered program, despite the fact that these programs are designed to address the needs of TAY who have special needs and/or “at risk”. Barriers include stringent test score requirements and attendance requirements that, in some cases, seem deliberately designed to “weed out” youth who might be more challenging to serve (e.g., scheduling an up-front orientation for TAY on three successive Saturday mornings). The argument for these requirements made by their proponents is that TAY screened out would be unlikely to succeed in the program. However, as indicated by the literature review and expert key informant consultation, this policy interferes with opportunities for TAY to build incrementally toward greater levels of success and responsibility. In addition, such policies increase the likelihood of unsuccessful placement for TAY who are least capable of weathering this type of discouragement.

Finally, although the YATP services are based in part on the TIP model, very little explicit acknowledgement of the model was evident based on review of programmatic and administrative documents and files, and adherence to the model has not been formally measured. Without establishing clear links between a specific model and its services, preferably through systematic monitoring of model adherence, the program can document its level of effectiveness, but cannot clearly establish the mechanisms through which it achieves these results. In turn, this limitation reduces the capacity of the program to engage in effective quality improvement or serve as an example to other programs with similar objectives.

Footnotes

¹ (One-stop centers are sites, typically run by publicly-funded general employment assistance agencies, that provide a range of employment supports to adults in the community such as computer terminal access for job search related tasks, counseling, and employability skills training, etc.).