Partnerships for Youth Transition (PYT) Initiative: Some reflections

Nicole Deschênes, RN, M.Ed

The First Healthy Transition Initiative (HTI) Meeting

Annapolis, April 14, 2010
Talking Points

- Overview of Five (5) PYT Initiatives
- Lessons Learned
- Recommendations/Considerations
Partnerships for Youth Transition (PYT) Initiative

- Cooperative agreement programs
- Awards were for 4 years (2002 - 2006)
- SAMHSA & US Dept. Education
- Five (5) demonstration community sites (Competitively selected)
The goal of the PYT initiative was to develop, implement, stabilize, and document models of comprehensive programs to help support youth ages 14-21 with serious mental health conditions as they enter the period of emerging adulthood *(not transition from one service to another: children/adults)*.

Youth and young adults were to successfully transition to adulthood (overcome challenges and improve outcomes in all relevant transition domains).

PYT sites were *NOT MANDATED* to work on policies.
Some Grants Requirements/Activities and Products

- **Strategic Planning**
  - Partnerships
  - Logic Model/Shared Vision
    - Target Population
    - Unmet Needs/Barriers
    - Strategies
    - Outcomes
  - Written Action Plan

- **Comprehensive Model: Implementation**
  - Program Manuals

- **Process Evaluation**
  - How program is implemented
  - All elements of model in place
  - Coordinating structure
  - Gaps/Barriers addressed

- **Data**
  - Demographics
  - Service utilization
  - Outcomes
  - Satisfaction

- **Fidelity**
  - Assess elements of the program
    - Consistency with theory

- **Sustainability Plan**
Model Comprehensive Youth Transition Program needed to:

- Be tailored to the specific needs of various ethnic, racial, and cultural groups
- Ensure a process driven by the young person’s transition goals.
- Involve youth/young adults and family in the design and selection of services and supports
- Provide (access and/or coordinate) age-appropriate supports and services including (but not limited to the followings): education, vocational training, career development, employment, housing, mental health, family and peer supports, substance abuse services, activities of daily living, and legal services
- Provide continuity and coordination across the various relevant systems and service providers to ensure integration
- Organized and delivered efficiently and effectively.
Generic Logic Model
Transition System for Young People with EBD

Population

Young Person
14-21 Y/O with SED
Experiencing difficulty
transitioning to adulthood in:
- Education
- Employment
- Living Situation/Housing
- Personal & Community Engagement

Family & Natural Supports
- Difficulties relating to:
  communicating with youth
  leading to conflicts
  Feeling that young person
  is vulnerable/needs protection

System & Community
- Practices have traditionally
  promoted the use of restrictive
  & segregated placement & services
- Service providers need to meet
  multiple needs of youth & families
  that cross agency boundaries
- Gaps in services
- Services lack coordination & flexibility
- Need for model in transition
- Lack of understanding of needs
- Lack of knowledge/training
- Funding & policy issues

Assets
- Experience of PYT sites
- Community-based services
- Federal Funding

Guiding Principles
- Youth & Family Focused
- Strength-Based
- Individualized
- Community-based
- Culturally Competent
- Accessible
- Coordinated
- Agency Collaboration
- Accountable

Strategic Planning

Youth & Young Adults

Service Delivery Process:
Outreach, system entry, assessment of individual strengths & needs; age-appropriate mental health care; community-based service planning & service provision; service coordination, monitoring & evaluation of services. All transition supports & services adhere to agreed-upon values.

Supports & Services in all Transition Domains:
- Education
- Employment
- Living Situation/Housing
- Personal & Community Engagement

Families & Natural Supports
- Feeling Competent/Supportive

System & Community
- Engagement of a broad range of community members, including young people, families & organizations
- Formal & informal community opportunities for young people to achieve personal goals in all transition domains
- Additional services/support described in logic model are implemented and/or coordinated
- Resources are appropriately allocated and utilized locally
- Increased linkages & communication between youth, families, providers, & community
- Policies, regulations, & financial opportunities are supporting more effective services for young people in transition
- Responsive & caring community fosters opportunities for young people to succeed
- PYT sustained/stable funding

Learning Community

 pyt Sites & Learning Community Members

Community Agencies

State & Federal Agencies

Outcomes

Young Person
- Positive engagement &
  goal attainment in all transition domains
- Education
- Employment
- Living Situation/Housing
- Personal & Community Engagement

Families & Natural Supports
- Feeling Competent/Supportive

System & Community
- Engagement of a broad range of community members, including young people, families & organizations
- Formal & informal community opportunities for young people to achieve personal goals in all transition domains
- Additional services/support described in logic model are implemented and/or coordinated
- Resources are appropriately allocated and utilized locally
- Increased linkages & communication between youth, families, providers, & community
- Policies, regulations, & financial opportunities are supporting more effective services for young people in transition
- Responsive & caring community fosters opportunities for young people to succeed
- PYT sustained/stable funding

Evaluation & Feedback

Implementation of Transition Model

DRAFT
May 2003
Engage relevant partners & champions

- Young people and their families
- Mental Health Services (children & adult)
- Foster Care and/or Child Welfare
- Juvenile and Criminal Justice Services
- Department of Health
- Department of Education
- Workforce Services
- Corporate/Business Community
- Housing Providers
- Substance Abuse Services
- Several other Community and Faith-Based Organizations representing the ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of the geographical region in which the model was implemented
Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model
TIP System Guidelines

1. Engage young people through relationship development, person-centered planning, and a focus on their futures.
2. Tailor services and supports to be accessible, coordinated, appealing, non-stigmatizing, and developmentally-appropriate -- building on strengths to enable the young people to pursue their goals across relevant transition domains.
Transition Domains

- Employment & Career
- Educational Opportunity
- Living Situation

Community Life Functioning

Personal Effectiveness & Wellbeing
3. Acknowledge and develop personal choice and social responsibility with young people.

4. Ensure a safety-net of support by involving a young person’s parents, family members, and other informal and formal key players.

5. Enhance young persons’ competencies to assist them in achieving greater self-sufficiency and confidence.

6. Maintain an outcome focus in the TIP system at the young person, program, and community levels.

7. Involve young people, parents, and other community partners in the TIP system at the practice, program, and community levels.
Youth-Guided Supports & Services

- Youth input viewed as important and critical ~ They are the transition experts
- Youth and young adults were involved in the development of their transition plans from the beginning and had a voice on deciding what will work for them
- Involvement of Youth on the Advisory Committee and Youth Councils
- Youth assisted with hiring of staff
- Youth as staff – Involved in all facets of decision making process and implementation
- Involvement of Youth in development of evaluation tools, conducting and analyzing focus group data
- Youth advocacy – obtaining new resources, policy changes, sustainability efforts and program expansion,
- Presentations – local, state, national
Linkages with families & other natural resources

- At community level, Family Support Specialists (Staff) meet individually with family members; organized group activities that engaged and supported parents and other natural supports.

- Family members and other natural supports were involved on all levels of implementation of PYT including decision making, programming, budgeting, human resource development, and fiscal management.
Role of Transition Facilitators/Coaches

- Worked with young people to assist them in planning and achieving their goals across all relevant transition domains.
- Provided or brokered individually-tailored services and supports to best meet the needs and goals of each young person.
- Coordinated community supports/services
- Coached, taught skills, and guided social problem solving with young people.
- Recognized when to involve a young person with a professional with particular expertise (e.g., trauma therapist, behavior analyst, psychologist, DBT therapist, psychiatrist).
Cross-training/support expertise

- Initial & ongoing training & coaching of personnel and other community partners in the transition system.
  - Principles of the model
  - Core personnel competencies
- Created/shared a Program Manual
- Participated in and actively shared learning across the grant-communities to leverage training, support, dissemination, intervention adoption, and evaluation/research.
Accountability

- Identified & defined measurable outcomes
  - Employment
  - Graduation from secondary school
  - Postsecondary educational exposure
  - Dropped out of high school
  - Mental health interference
  - Substance use interference
  - Arrests / Incarceration

- Developed/used the Transition Program Fidelity Assessment

- Used collected data for Continuous Quality Improvement
Trends of Progress indicators for Youth in PYT Initiative with One Year of Program Exposure - A

- Employed
- Graduated and/or had postsecondary education exposure
- Dropped out of high school
Trends of Progress indicators for Youth in PYT Initiative with One Year of Program Exposure - B

- Percentage of Young People
- Arrested
- Mental health interference
- Drug or alcohol use interference

Init. Qtr 1. Qtr 2. Qtr 3. Qtr 4

Percentage of Young People
Lessons Learned from the PYT Initiative

- Youth and young adults have many dreams as they transition to adulthood including finding employment, graduating, finding a home or being good parents. Multiple systems (child and adult) with their own set of policies, funding mechanisms and eligibility requirements are necessary during the transition to adulthood. These systems tend to be quite difficult to navigate for everyone including youth, young adults and families. Access to and coordination of child and adult services to promote progress across all transition domains are required.

- Having to switch providers of services at a certain age is, at time, very traumatic for youth, young adults and families. Policies regarding continuity of supports and services from age 14 through age 29 regardless of chronological age are required.

- Transition personnel who used informal strength-based assessments (rather than traditional formal assessments that tend to be deficit-based) and person-centered future planning were more likely to engage young people. Engagement and enrollment need to be different. Policies and funding need to respect that difference.
Lessons Learned (Cont’d)

- Services provided in youth-friendly, non-stigmatizing community environments, at home, at work, in school, in a youth house, a career center or in a park were well received by young people. **Respect and understanding of youth culture** is critical. Yes, it involves different ways of doing business.

- To be effective, environments where youth and young adults are evolving/are transitioning to (e.g., school, home, employment) need to provide opportunities for them to develop their full potential. Policies should really pay attention to these contexts/environments.

- With informal and formal supports, young people were able to develop goals and become successful in various transition domains. PYT initiatives learned that “it takes a village!” Policies and funding need to **acknowledge** these supports and partnerships.
Lessons Learned (Cont’d)

- Youth, young adults and family members have proved to be great advocates and change agents - They need to have a central role in program delivery, governance roles, research and policy change.

- Interagency linkages provided for some major “barrier busting”. These partnerships increased the availability of needed resources and helped improved transition planning and services delivery for youth and young adults. Policies need support the creation of linkages and partnerships.

- Younger teens between the ages of 14 and 16 seemed to require activities that differ from those that were implemented for the greater majority of young people who are between the ages of 16 and 21. As the PYT initiative unfolded, it became apparent that the process and types of activities selected by older young adults were less appropriate and beneficial for younger adolescents. Provision of developmentally-appropriate, culturally-competent, and appealing services that are individually tailored to the interests, needs and goals of the young person are required.
Lessons Learned (Cont’d)

- PYT communities built their work force capacity through cross-training of personnel (including youth, young adults and family members) of evidence-based practices related to transition. This practice allowed for greater understanding of models of practice as well as values across agencies and partners. Cross-training and communities of practice were not only helpful to strengthen practice/competencies, it helped communications use of existing resources.

- Some system barriers are “myths” that are not grounded in reality. For example, in one of the PYT communities, a barrier to services was that the bureaucracy consistently indicated that a particular set of funds was only available to serve a certain age group. This proved to be a myth due to changes in state law that had occurred a number of years prior, but had seemingly gone unnoticed by the bureaucrats and system providers. Thus, funding was available up to 21 years of age, not terminated at 18. Bottom line: Always question existing policy, rules and regulations - Get things in writing.
Partnerships for Youth Transition (PYT) Initiative: Additional reflections related to Policies
What facilitated transition to adulthood

- Increased awareness of transition issues.
- Funding/grants.
- Legislations (to implement programs, coordinate services and provide TA).
- System thinking of administration and partners (interaction and interdependences – social, economic, political, human aspects of transition).
- Promising theoretical models and frameworks (TIP, supported employment, supported education, ACT).
- Relevant policies such as Child Welfare (Chafee) and Special Education (IDEA).
- Push toward system coordination.
- Determined champions & advocates including youth and families.
Additional recommendations & considerations

- Policy outcomes need to be defined early in the process.
- Encourage use of incentives and mandates for policy change. Make sure appointment of appropriate high level individuals are made in regard to selected policy change.
- It will take time...There will be resistance...Be patient and don’t give up!
Please consider visiting our websites for additional resources

- National Network on Youth Transition - NCYT website
  - http://nnyt.fmhi.usf.edu

- Transition to Independence Process - TIP website
  - http://tip.fmhi.usf.edu

- TIP System Development and Operations Manual
- Personnel Training Modules
- Theory and Research Basis for TIP System
Partnerships for Youth Transition (PYT) Strategies

1. Develop Leadership
2. Shared Vision
3. Partnering/Champions
4. Comprehensive Community Supports & Services
5. Youth-Guided Supports & Services
6. Linkages Natural Resources
7. Coordination
8. Cross-Training Community of Practice
9. Results Orientation/Accountability