Engagement with Youth and Young Adults
Who are transition-aged youth?

There are 47.1 million youth and young adults in the United States.
In Wisconsin

• Overall population: 5,724,554
• Age 16–25 population: 790,000 (13.8% of overall population)
Why is this an unique time?

- Brain development
- Role changes
- Family structure
- Employment
- Education
- Housing
Basic Brain Function

- Executive Functioning
- Executive Processing
- Basic Life Functions
The Brain

• All of gray matter by age 12
• Transitional phase
  – Not fully wired and pruned until around age 25 (neuromaturation)
  – Connections added and taken away to make brain processing more efficient
  – Prefrontal cortex last to develop
  – Females done before males
Brain Maturation

National Institute of Mental Health
Increased font size and changed color to black to differentiate from footer.
Lori A. Schultz, 3/6/2018
Changes During This Stage

- Housing, shelter
- Relationship, role
Changes During This Stage

- Income, employment
- Education
When are you an adult?

Gwen White (Healthy Transitions Technical Assistance Center) and Johanna Bergan (Youth MOVE National)
# Why is this an unique time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms of Mental Health Concerns</th>
<th>Characteristics of Adolescent Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Confused thinking</td>
<td>- Searches for identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prolonged depression (sadness or irritability)</td>
<td>- Shows strong feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Feelings of extreme highs and lows</td>
<td>- Exhibits unpredictable moods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Excessive fears, worries, and anxieties</td>
<td>- Is self-conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Social withdrawal</td>
<td>- Seeks independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habit</td>
<td>- Eats more as growth occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Strong feelings of anger</td>
<td>- Questions authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Strange thoughts (delusions)</td>
<td>- Thinks and acts as if bulletproof</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mayo Clinic; California Department of Education
Why is this a unique time?

Symptoms of Mental Health Concerns
• Confused thinking
• Prolonged depression (sadness or irritability)
• Feelings of extreme highs and lows
• Excessive fears, worries, and anxieties

Mayo Clinic; California Department of Education
Why is this a unique time?

Symptoms of Mental Health Concerns (continued)

- Social withdrawal
- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habit
- Strong feelings of anger
- Strange thoughts (delusions)
Why is this a unique time?

Characteristics of adolescent development
• Searches for identity
• Shows strong feelings
• Exhibits unpredictable moods
• Is self-conscious
Why is this a unique time?

Characteristics of Adolescent Development (continued)

- Seeks independence
- Eats more as growth occurs
- Questions authority
- Thinks and acts as if bulletproof
Mental Health: Nationally

People ages 16–25 have the highest rates of mental health challenges of any age group.

• Four in ten 18- to 29-year-olds meet criteria for psychiatric disorder, most commonly an anxiety or mood disorder.

• One in five 18- to 25-year-olds meet criteria for at least one personality disorder.
Mental Health: Wisconsin

- People ages 16–25 access support and services at the lowest rates of any age group.
- In 2015, 69% of adolescents who experienced a major depressive episode did not receive treatment.

Wisconsin Department of Health Services; Mental Health America
Mental Health

- Wisconsin youth suicide rate is higher than national rate.
- Youth are most likely to be seen in emergency departments or to be hospitalized for self-inflicted injuries.
- Wisconsin has a higher-than-average rate of youth psychiatric hospitalizations.

Wisconsin Department of Health Services; Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Yellowbrick Journals
Psychiatric Disorders Predict

- Lower educational attainment: 14 times less likely to complete secondary school
- Significantly reduced earnings: four times less likely to be employed
Psychiatric Disorders Predict

- Marital instability
- Impaired parenting
- Legal challenges: three times more likely to have been involved in criminal activity
What are the barriers to seeking support?

- Insurance
- Transportation
- Knowing who to trust
- Stigma
- Judgment
- What and where are the resources
- Trans-exclusive; queer-exclusive
- Time
- Money
- Providers that invalidate me and do not understand
What is it like?

Resource roundup
No hyphen in "roundup."
What have you struggled with as you transition to adulthood?

- Finding the right people to trust to help me grow
- Doing too much and balancing everything
- Being unprepared
- Struggling with leaving or staying to help
What have you struggled with as you transition to adulthood?

- Being responsible for housing and employment
- Managing money
- Finding mentors
- Finding and needing more services
- Saying “no”
What do you wish providers or older adults understood?

- I’m still learning.
- Age does not determine wisdom; experiences do.
- Young adults know a lot.
- We aren’t perfect—still learning and need to be supported and not judged.
- Everyone is going through something.
- You may have been a young adult once, but I’m the young adult now.
What do you wish providers or older adults understood?

- Young adults have a different worldview.
- The world is different from when they were young.
- We all struggle.
- We are capable of understanding more than you think.
- We are youth and the future.
What do you need to become a successful adult?

Belief in me

Supportive, healthy relationships

A listening ear from the higher power

Confidence in my decisions and a gentle hand to guide
What do you need to become a successful adult?

- Respect, feedback
- Resources
- Support without judgment
- Knowing how to “keep calm” in a storm
What can you do?

• Provide relationships, support.
• Reduce stigma.
• Increase youth voice.
Relationships

• What happens to relationships in teens and early 20s?
  – Change in dynamic with parental figures
  – Self-identification within groups of friends
  – Age out of foster care systems
• Why does the divide appear to grow between adults and young adults?

New York Times; Journal of Public Mental Health
Developmental Relationships

These are relationships youth and young adults form with anyone, including parents, family members, friends, peers, staff members, and caring adults in communities, who help young people attain the psychological and social skills essential for success.

Search Institute
Moved ", including parents,..." to behind the noun it is describing.

Lori A. Schultz, 3/6/2018
Developmental Relationships

Research has shown that these types of relationships help young people:
• Get better grades.
• Have higher aspirations for the future.
• Participate in college-prep activities more frequently.
• Have a sense of belonging and competence.
• Decrease involvement in unhealthy behaviors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Express Care</strong></td>
<td>![Icon for Express Care]</td>
<td>- Be someone I can trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Show me that I matter to you.</td>
<td>- Really pay attention when we are together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen</td>
<td>- Make me feel known and valued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Believe in me</td>
<td>- Show me you enjoy being with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be warm</td>
<td>- Praise me for my efforts and achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge Growth</strong></td>
<td>![Icon for Challenge Growth]</td>
<td>- Expect me to live up to my potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Push me to keep getting better.</td>
<td>- Push me to go further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expect my best</td>
<td>- Insist I take responsibility for my actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stretch</td>
<td>- Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hold me accountable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflect on failures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provide Support</strong></td>
<td>![Icon for Provide Support]</td>
<td>- Guide me through hard situations and systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help me complete tasks and</td>
<td>- Build my confidence to take charge of my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>achieve goals.</td>
<td>- Defend me when I need it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Navigate</td>
<td>- Put in place limits to keep me on track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empower</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advocate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set boundaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Share Power</strong></td>
<td>![Icon for Share Power]</td>
<td>- Take me seriously and treat me fairly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treat me with respect and give</td>
<td>- Involve me in decisions that affect me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>me a say.</td>
<td>- Work with me to solve problems and reach goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect me</td>
<td>- Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Let me lead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expand Possibilities</strong></td>
<td>![Icon for Expand Possibilities]</td>
<td>- Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspire</td>
<td>- Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broden Horizons</td>
<td>- Introduce me to more people who can help me grow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do you wish providers did differently?

- Stop judging me; validate more.
- Don’t require youth have their parents in the room with them.
- Listen and hear me.
- Have younger people be a part of the process.
- Understand who I am before telling me what or how to change.
- Don’t invalidate my identity or experience.
What do you wish providers did differently?

- Explain stuff (insurance, the system) better.
- Provide more ways and options to get support.
- Be more affordable and accessible.
- See us as equals.
- Give concrete suggestions.
- Explain why and the direction of care.
How to engage?

- Know it takes longer than you may expect.
- Address basic needs of youth, young adult first.
- Be aware of appearance.
- Be flexible on structure.
- Exercise patience.
Youth Engagement

• Youth are not recipients of services.
• Citizens becoming more actively engaged and involved in the processes that affect them.
Removed the semicolon.

Lori A. Schultz, 3/6/2018
Sparks

The power of sparks come when:
• You know your spark(s).
• Your spark(s) is important to you.
• You take initiative to develop your spark(s).
Organizational Engagement

• Agency leadership must see the benefits and needs.
• Support staff are a part of the helper group.
• Staff must recognize barriers they’ve set themselves.
Communication Strategies

• Texting
• Emails
• Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter)
• Drop-in center
Communication Strategies

Strengths-based, nonthreatening language
• Recovery versus discovery
• Case manager versus transition facilitator
• Service plan versus future’s plan
• Pronouns
What questions do you want adults to ask?

- How can they help us (young adults)?
- What matters to the young adult?
- What can I do?
### What questions do you want adults to ask?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of yourself as a young adult?</td>
<td>What do you do for self-care?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do your intersecting identities affect your experiences with mental health and mental illness?</td>
<td>Are you ready to meaningfully include youth voice? Is your organization? What will you do about it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relationship Building Strategies

• Youth-centered
• Innovative, nontraditional services
• Support young adult leadership and skill development
• Choices
• Flexible, flexible, flexible
Relationship Building Strategies

• Eliminate or minimize barriers (transportation, communication resources).
• Discuss what their goals are and be open to healthy risk-taking.
Relationship Building Strategies

- Support family members so that they are well informed.
- Identify natural supports.
- Collaborate with other supports, agencies, etc., and provide opportunities for youth to do so.
- Create opportunities for community activities and groups.
How does stigma impact you or your loved ones?

- It may make people scared to reach out for help.
- Because I’m involved and graduated, I should “have it together.”
- It creates loss of hope and self-identity.
- I’m “unstable” and “dangerous” to children. (I’m a teacher…)
- It may make people unable to disclose and help others for fear of self and career safety.
- It plants seeds of fear of being judged and makes it hard to reach out for help.
Stigma

- Public stigma—Reaction that the general population has to people with mental illness
- Self-stigma—The prejudice which people with mental illness turn against themselves

Internal Stigma

Internalized Shame/Self-Stigma

Public Stigma

↓ self-esteem  ↓ sense of efficacy

I am not good  I am not able

So, why try?
Avoidance and apathy
Ask for Help

- Independence
- American values
- Employment impact
Public and Structural

- Insurance companies
- Employers and potential employers
- School
- Community
- Police
- Hospitals
- Mental health professionals
- Families
Media

- Criminal or violent
- Look different
- Childish and silly
- Mental illnesses—all severe or all alike
- Psychiatric hospitals—cause more harm than good
- No recovery
- Misuse of terms
Schizo: The Movie

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJC-AJWNES8
This is Who I Am

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xew-rFlVk4U&feature=youtu.be
Are you perpetuating stigma?

• The factors affecting burden of stigma include:
  – Perceived control that a person has over a condition.
  – Perceived fault in acquiring condition.
• Use person-first language (person with a mental health diagnosis).
Are you perpetuating stigma?

Use technical language instead of colloquialisms or words with inconsistent definitions.
Importance of Language

“She had a clean urine test.”

“My boss is crazy.”

“She’s lost his mind.”

“Depression’ is just an excuse not to work.”

“It’s because of your borderline personality disorder.”
Overcoming Stigma

• Educational campaigns:
  – Share factual information in an attempt to correct misinformation or negative attitudes and beliefs.
  – Are effective in reducing self-stigma.
  – May not be effective in changing public stigma
THE MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

Although Americans are increasingly likely to view mental illness as a biological condition, rather than a character flaw, they are no more willing than in the past to associate with someone who suffers from mental illness. But Americans are more likely to see the mentally ill as violent.

HOW PEOPLE DESCRIBE MENTAL ILLNESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's a mental illness</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a chemical imbalance</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a genetic problem</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's part of normal ups and downs of life</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a sign of bad character</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It reflects the way someone was raised</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's a mental illness</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a chemical imbalance</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a genetic problem</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's part of normal ups and downs of life</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a sign of bad character</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It reflects the way someone was raised</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

INTERACTIONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will work closely with them</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will have them as a neighbor</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will socialize with them</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will make friends with them</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will have them marry into your family</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen as violent to themselves</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen as violent to others</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schizophrenia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will work closely with them</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will have them as a neighbor</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will socialize with them</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will make friends with them</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will have them marry into your family</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen as violent to themselves</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen as violent to others</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depression

Source: American Journal of Psychiatry, 2010
Overcoming Stigma

• Mental health literacy campaigns:
  – In-school programming to increase knowledge, attitudes, and help-seeking behaviors
  – Are effective in explaining biological role and reducing blame.
  – Are less effective in reducing perceptions of dangerousness or desire for reduced social distance.

Overcoming Stigma

• Protest and advocacy:
  – Letter writing, product boycotts, public demonstrations
  – Are effective in engaging and activating unengaged stakeholders and, especially, “fence sitters.”
  – Are effective in creating a sense of solidarity.
  – Evidence of “rebound effect”

Overcoming Stigma

• Contact and peer-led interventions:
  – Facilitate positive interactions and connections.
  – Promote relationships.

Overcoming Stigma

Honest, Open, Proud (HOP) seeks to replace the self-stigma felt by some who have faced trauma, mental illness, and other challenges with beliefs in recovery, empowerment, and hope.
Overcoming Stigma

HOP is a framework for thinking about:
• The story we tell ourselves.
• The benefits and costs of disclosure.
• The points to consider when deciding about disclosure.
• How to maintain well-being after disclosure.
Summary

• Use person-first, technical language.
• Increase contact and peer led services.
• Be aware of yourself, your thoughts, and your actions.
Best Advice Received About Becoming an Adult

- Take your time.
- Please and thank you will get you far.
- Don’t get hung up on every slip.
- You don’t have to know what you want to do with the rest of your life.
- It is a process; there is no timeline.
- You are not meant to be liked by everyone.
- If you aren’t making people uncomfortable sometimes, change doesn’t happen.
Resources

• Pathways Research and Training Center
• Transitions Research and Training Center
• Youth.gov
• Frameworks Institute
• Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
• Wisconsin Institute for Stigma Elimination (WISE)
• Search Institute