

Youth in Transition Progress Report
July 2010-February 2011
Addison County

Major Activities and Accomplishments:

Much of the work in implementing the grant during this last reporting period has been in strengthening existing community and agency partnerships that work to serve transition aged youth. Members of the Addison County LIT team were able to identify key persons, including themselves, that currently engage with Transition age Youth on a regular basis and could therefore be instrumental in identifying service barriers and gaps. Through this partnership the dialogue is open in outreach efforts to identify and serve marginalized TAY in Addison County. In addition to reaching marginalized youth through this effort a greater degree of collaboration is occurring between partners such as the Addison County Parent Child Center (ACPCC) and the Counseling Service of Addison County (CSAC). In some situations, CSAC will serve one portion of a grouping of marginalized youth, while ACPCC will work with another portion of this grouping. This allows these groupings of youth to maintain their social networks while simultaneously addressing individual needs.

The YIT grant has also been successful in creating outreach opportunities where TAY traditionally congregate. The Youth Advocate has started having a weekly presence at the Middlebury teen center as well as the Hub located in Bristol. Already this has had the impact of allowing some young adults who may have been reluctant to access Transition aged services from being less intimidated when consulting with the Youth Advocate at a later date.

From the narratives of the youth we serve we know that the provision of services tailored for marginalized TAY has had an impact. One young adult began services with the Youth in Transition grant separated from his family, living in condemned housing, and without any means of self-sufficiency. At the time of this report he has been reunified with his family and is currently working full-time with excellent remarks from his supervisors, all while managing a major mental health condition.

Lastly, during the month of January YIT representatives partnered with ACPCC and VCRHYP to bring the high-low exhibit to downtown Middlebury. The showing in Middlebury was incredibly well attended. Additionally it provided for an opportunity for the boards of CSAC and the Parent Child Center to help with the opening event, and hopefully will lead to greater collaboration and communication going forward. YIT representatives also worked to encourage Mental Health Clinicians from CSAC to bring clients to the exhibit and discuss the stories presented. The feedback from this approach was that it led to a number of dialogues and discussions from these clients that had previously been unexplored.

Problems:

The YIT team and associated partners still struggle with the provisioning of housing for transitioned aged youth in Addison County. Of particular relevance is the population of young adults unable to live at home and are struggling to graduate from high school. The team has collaborated to offer support and guidance to these young adults on how they may work to find resources amongst their friends and family while they are looking for income and other necessary arrangements for stable housing. Many of the youth who are struggling with interpersonal difficulties are supported by a tenuous and unstable network of friends and family. The work has been to help these youth to find some source of stability within this network. However the lack of power in these relationships can often exacerbate underlying mental health conditions and interpersonal difficulties.

The Youth in Transition next major step to implementation of the grant is to arrange for the first meeting of an Addison County youth council. The difficulty in implementing this portion of the grant has been in generating the interest necessary to move forward with youth who are interested in participating. To pull from existing pockets of youth leadership in the service area requires some idea of what the youth council may be responsible for. While this content can be generated by the youth advocate, it is antithetical to define the role of the council without input from the members. Looking forward, finding the right candidates for the council is within striking distance and the first steps of defining the roles and relationships associated with the council as obtainable during the next reporting period.

Based upon input from other service areas, the Addison County Youth in Transition team sought to generate leads for the hiring for the youth advocate through the youth council. Some ideas that have been floated have been nominating from within the council or using the council to generate leads on transition aged youth who might be right to participate in the peer advocate position.

Significant Findings and Events:

As discussed above, housing is a significant barrier for the successful transition of marginalized youth in Addison County. From the stories of community members that one way or the other, these young adults are able to have a roof over their head for much of the winter months. However there is a call for guidance and support from these community members who open their homes to youth in need. Aside from looking at more stable housing options for transition aged youth, there is a significant call for additional support and guidance to community members who are already helping to house TAY.

Dissemination Activities:

Not applicable at this time.

Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period:

As mentioned above, activities for the next report include starting up the Youth Leadership Council.

Additionally we will hire the Peer Advocate after input from the peer council.

On April 1st 2011, CSAC will host training in Motivational Interviewing training with a young adult focus. This training will be offered for free to CSAC employees, but will also be open to the public for a \$25 fee. Youth in Transition personnel from other service areas will also be granted free attendance.

Representatives from YIT and JOBS will complete the TIPS readiness assessment as well as complete TIPS modules. YIT will work with members of the CRT team at CSAC to encourage their participation as well.

Work with community partners to improve housing stability and provide resources to community members helping to house TAY.