

More Than a Roof Over Their Heads:

*A Toolkit for Guiding
Transition Age Young Adults
to Long-term Housing Success*

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**The New York City Children's Plan
Young Adult Housing Workgroup**

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Housing Transition Age Young Adults: Solutions for guiding younger clients to long-term housing success

In recent years, young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 have been recognized as comprising a distinct demographic group with age-specific needs that set them apart from adolescents on the one hand, and the general adult population on the other. In terms of social services, young adults straddle the youth and adult service worlds, fitting fully in neither, yet requiring support from both to achieve adult independence. Accessing appropriate housing for individuals in this age group presents a unique set of challenges. Shelter and housing providers taking in young adults can best serve them only when staff orientation and programming is informed by the particular needs of the age group. This document was created as a resource for shelter and housing providers, and also for advocates, policy makers and funders to enumerate those specific concerns impacting the housing of transition age young adults — their developmental levels, skill sets, vulnerabilities, proclivities, etc. — so that these individuals can receive the support services they need to progress successfully to independent adulthood.

Who are Transition Age Young Adults?

Transition age young adults (TAY), sometimes referred to as transition age youth, are for the purpose of this document, young adults age 18-25. As individuals, they are in the midst of the transition from adolescence to adulthood, with the incumbent shift in social roles this transition implies (e.g. from full-time student to full-time worker, from child to parent and/or spouse). As a group, their age prescribes their movement from one set of service providers to another (e.g. from pediatrician to internist.) Their characteristic state of flux is also, importantly, rooted in biology. Current scientific research indicates that the young adult brain continues to grow and develop long past the age of 18, up until age 25. This period of emerging adulthood is therefore distinguished by constant change for *all* young adults, whether system-involved or not.

Within the group, young adults who have grown up connected to systems such as child welfare, mental health services or juvenile justice, or who have suffered developmental disabilities or homelessness, are less likely than their peers to have acquired basic life skills expected of individuals their age. Self-care, job readiness, self-scheduling, laundry, food shopping, money handling — critical skills expected of young adults — are skills they may not possess. More importantly, young adults with histories of system involvement, loss and trauma often lack the social connectedness and personal support systems that are crucial for maintaining successful independence throughout their lifespan and essential to living independent of government assistance. When such young adults land at the door of a housing provider accustomed to serving clients in their 30's, 40's and 50's, individuals who have already navigated the passage from adolescence to adulthood, a discrepancy might arise between the expectations of that provider, and the actual capabilities of the young people entering adult housing programs for the first time.

Why housing?

The number of 18- to 25-year-olds in shelters and adult housing programs is relatively small but growing. The current economic downturn and attendant cuts in funding for those housing programs geared specifically to emotionally and developmentally challenged youth means even more vulnerable young people will have to rely on adult housing programs in the near future.

The wide variety of circumstances that land young people in unstable housing situations speaks to the need for thoughtful and differentiated responses on the part of providers:

- A 19-year-old man finds himself in a parental role to younger siblings after the sudden death of their mother, and is unable to pay the rent.
- A young woman leaves the child welfare system to join the Army at age 18, returning four years later traumatized, unable to find housing and never having lived without institutional support.
- A 22-year-old man is released from prison with a drug felony and cannot return to his mother's public housing due to his arrest and incarceration history. He has never lived on his own before.
- A 20-year-old woman ages out of foster care with a 1-year-old baby and tentative employment in place, but she can't maintain her employment, stops paying rent and faces eviction.
- An 18-year-old man has lived in residential care for over five years and has aged out of his facility. He is released from the residential facility, but has no home to return to. His family refuses to take him back because he is gay.
- A 21-year-old can no longer tolerate the domestic conflict in his household and is forced to leave an unhealthy home environment with no resources.

Factors specific to young adult development present particular challenges to the age group's successful integration in adult housing programs. Young people are less likely to know how to navigate complex bureaucratic systems, obtain benefits for themselves or advocate for — or even wholly understand — their rights. And yet stable housing is crucial in order for 18- to 25-year-olds to obtain the employment and education they need to lead independent adult lives.

How this guide was created

In 2008, nine New York State Commissioners from child-serving agencies released *The Children's Plan: Improving the social and emotional well being of New York's children and their families*, a blueprint for cross community and agency collaboration to promote family engagement, support, empowerment and youth voice as essential to the well-being of children and youth. In December 2009, the leadership of Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (CCSI) convened a NYC Children's Plan Roundtable to discuss the implementation of the NYS Children's Plan at the local level. Roundtable participants (that included providers, advocates, policy makers, families and youth) identified housing for young adults as a priority concern. This Young Adult workgroup was created as part of New York City's response. CCSI serves as a vehicle for cross-system collaboration to improve the social and emotional well being of children and youth within New York City's system of care. The work of CCSI is accomplished through a Citywide Oversight Committee (COC) and five Borough Based Councils (BBCs), where members identify and address local and citywide systemic issues, gaps in services, and differences in service provisions, as well as promote family and youth input into policy and program development.

The COC is co-chaired by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the New York State Office of Mental Health, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, and a family and a youth representative.

This Toolkit represents a product of the Young Adult Housing workgroup, which included both youth and adult service providers from government and voluntary sectors, advocates and policy makers. The group met monthly for nearly one year, defining the problem, identifying successful practices in the adult system, (which was defined for this process as services clients don't age out of,) and weaknesses in the adult system, determining what works and what does not work in the youth housing system and clarifying potential policy issues that might impact younger clients without providers' knowledge. Over the course of the year it became clear to all participants that this cooperative process and resulting document were both unique and important. The multiple perspectives at the table, checking assumptions and exploring promising models, philosophies and approaches, have already impacted the participating organizations' practices and forged new lines of communication across systems that share clients, but rarely collaborate. The process of creating this guide thus represents in itself a promising model for establishing important dialogues across systems, a process that warrants continuation and replication in other areas of social service.

How to use this guide

This toolkit should be considered a starting point. Organizations can use the information in the following pages to help assess and adjust practices and policies that may inadvertently create barriers to younger client success, and to confirm and codify methods that show promise. It can be used by policy makers and funders as a guide for creating funding opportunities, program aspects for grantees or contractors and for determining performance measures for transition age young adults. The document also suggests a series of policy concerns that advocates can use to prompt larger discussions about barriers to and facilitators of success for these vulnerable young people.

This document is not a comprehensive or definitive guide, and the proposed ideas are drawn from a consensus process based on practice knowledge and models that have shown promise in the field. It is not an evidence-based report. The authors recognize that the approach to service provision in the adult housing system is by necessity and design quite different from youth services, and that youth services are primarily responsible for preparing young people for adulthood. It is not our intention to suggest that adult providers can or should shift their entire approach to accommodate transition age young adults. For those who are interested in some of the philosophies or program approaches discussed here, there is a brief resource guide included.

The working group hopes that this document will find its way into the hands of those who are interested in taking on the difficult task of improving housing outcomes for young adults, and to this end would be willing to challenge their own traditional methods and approaches, their assumptions about the needs and behaviors of young adults, and perhaps even their notions about what success looks like for this complicated and challenging age group, with a mind toward achieving new levels of success.

We hope that you find it useful.

Staying Focused on a Moving Target: Understanding transition age young adulthood

Younger clients entering adult housing programs present with very different backgrounds, histories and issues than the general adult population. Individuals in this age group, still in the process of attaining adulthood, are often distrustful of other adults, making it particularly hard to assess their needs.

18- to 25-year-olds form a distinct social demographic. Young adult brains are different. Their emotional development is different. Even under the best circumstances, their sense of social responsibility is still emerging, and many individuals in the age group entering the adult system have grown up in far from ideal circumstances. The developmental consequences of trauma in the life of a young person cannot be overstated. Young adults who have experienced complex trauma often develop behaviors and coping mechanisms that may appear confusing or even irrational to someone who is not familiar with this dynamic. The greater the sensitivity amongst providers to the unique characteristics of the cohort, the better the needs of these vulnerable young people can be served.

1. **Young adults are constantly changing — far more rapidly than older adults.**

Young people really do think and behave differently than older adults. Recent research shows that our brains don't fully develop until age 25. Long-term consequential thinking is more difficult for younger people and risk-taking behavior more likely.

Because young adults are still growing and changing, benchmarks for them should be adjusted accordingly, plans and goals tailored to this accelerated potential for change. A 19-year-old can undergo significant positive or negative transformations in three, six, nine or twelve months. It is also normative for them to change their minds from week to week, or even day to day. When young clients do change their minds, staff should accept their behavior as a normal part of adult development, not as a signal that clients are “flaky.” Most importantly, check-ins should occur with greater frequency, probing deep enough to account for possible short-term vicissitudes — good or bad. Assess and re-assess!

2. **Age is relative.**

Trauma adversely affects young people's ability to respond to the emotional and social stress of new situations in an “age-appropriate” way. Problems that arise in the housing program (e.g. failure to pay rent, damage to the apartment) might prove difficult to communicate or handle for a young adult who is 23 years-old but thinks and reacts like a 16-year-old. Providers should assess young adults' functional ages in order to help them be successful.

3. Young people are at risk for emerging mental illnesses.

Transition age young adults can experience their first significant mental illnesses without knowing what is happening to them, or can feel shame or fear about sharing their concerns. When checking in on younger clients, staff should be alert to changes in weight, appearance, smell, speech and behavior that might signal emerging illness. A change in attendance and engagement at work and school may also indicate an emerging issue. Do not assume that young people necessarily understand what is happening to them.

4. Young people are in need of supportive reality checks.

With less life experience, young people have a harder time gauging potentially negative situations. Studies show that individuals in the age group routinely expect positive outcomes for themselves, even when staff recognizes pending difficulties. Further blurring realities, young people will often put on a “good face” for adults, even if things are going very badly. Supportive interviewing techniques (e.g. motivational interviewing) and harm-reduction approaches can build client trust, helping young adults make clearer, more grounded assessments of their needs, plans and capacities to achieve attainable benchmarks. Setting frequent short-term goals that are continually reassessed for appropriateness encourages success.

5. Young adults may feel overwhelmed managing the nuts and bolts of bureaucracy.

When first encountering the complexities of the adult housing system, transition age adults may not comprehend or retain crucial information the first time they hear it, and may not be able to decipher written bureaucratic language on required forms and applications. Help them complete their paperwork. Taking time to ask young adults what they understand, listening to ensure their comprehension and correcting or reviewing their perceptions can relieve both client anxiety and frustration for the worker, allowing for improved initial engagement.

6. Young adults may feel overwhelmed by the life skills required for independent living.

Many young adults have never taken care of themselves in any practical way. Providers should explore hands-on methods for developing necessary life-skills amongst younger clients, e.g. bank excursions, grocery-list making, laundry lessons. Young adults may never have worked — providers may need to help them gain entrance to the workplace, learn work habits and develop soft and hard work skills.

Young adults might also not appreciate that their neighbors don't necessarily want to stay up all night listening to their party, music or television — teaching them the tenets of being good neighbors can help head off real problems.

7. With young adults, appearances and behaviors can be deceiving.

Many 18- to 25-year-olds look scary to the older housing population — they act tough, speak out. But intimidating behaviors in these young clients often mask deep-seated fears regarding their new housing situations and unaccustomed independence. Fostering supportive relationships between older adults and transition age clients can alleviate fears on both sides, creating a climate of trust that will help the young people adjust and succeed in their new surroundings.

8. Safety comes first.

There are instances when young adults do present actual safety challenges to providers. Gang affiliations and drug-related behaviors, for example, demand clear-cut security protocols that are made explicit to new arrivals up front. Forming solid relationships with local police precincts as well as hiring staff who are unafraid of dealing with young people can prevent more serious infractions that could lead to eviction.

9. Some young adults, scarred by trauma, just aren't ready for independence.

Many young adults leaving service systems have been abandoned by their families. Lacking the social and emotional preparedness for sustaining themselves at a young age, they are unable to manage the trauma of young homelessness without guidance. Creating structured interventions that apply trauma-informed approaches to these vulnerable clients, including ensuring connections to service systems (health care, parenting classes, mental health) and providers familiar with the needs of the age cohort, can help them achieve successful integration.

10. Entering one new home signals leaving another, again.

For some young adults, the process of moving into a new home environment recalls previous, traumatic moving experiences. Whether they were forcibly removed from abusive family situations, transitioned repeatedly through foster care homes or housed in shelters, the very act of resettling in a new home environment might trigger traumatic feelings and associated behaviors in young adults. Sensitivity to this potential re-traumatization on the part of housing staff can help providers suggest appropriate guidance measures to ease the transition for such young people.

Making the Demographic Leap:

Effective strategies for transitioning young adults between youth and adult systems

Young adults will benefit from attentive changeovers from one service system to another. Some solutions to significant transition issues impacting providers include:

- 1. Coping with new rules:** Young people coming from “whole person” systems (e.g. child welfare, residential care, juvenile justice systems) are not accustomed to programs that sanction them or require benchmarks to be met as a requirement for continued participation or service. Given this relative unpreparedness, referring or releasing systems can work to better prepare young clients for the expectations and demands of adult housing programs, and to orient the receiving systems regarding their clients’ previous experiences with youth system regulations.
- 2. Relationships matter:** Working together, youth and adult systems can provide opportunities for young adult clients to develop relationships prior to their entry into new programs, including interaction with onsite staff in the receiving program familiar with the youth serving system.
- 3. Out of sight is not out of mind:** Ongoing follow-up from referring youth providers is essential to the successful transitioning of young adults. Adult systems must coordinate and facilitate after-care services with referral organizations.
- 4. Timing can be critical:** Young adults aging out of youth systems can face hard deadlines that require speedy referrals and interventions. Providers should work to present as few barriers as possible to assistance in such situations dictated by the clock. Alternatively, young adults may not ever have encountered hard deadlines in a housing environment (e.g. crisis shelters’ 60-day limits.) Providers must make sure that young clients fully understand the time limits of services.
- 5. There is support beyond the housing environment:** Adult systems staff should be trained to recognize and refer younger clients to young-adult-friendly or -oriented services in the surrounding community for support and supplemental services.

Core competencies for working with young adults

Understanding how to work with younger clients in ways that appreciate and support their strengths, encourage them to learn as they navigate their way and let them feel respected moves the work along more easily, allowing everyone to get more of what they want from interactions, plans and outcomes. Below are some “core competencies” for working with transition age adults — philosophical approaches that have proven successful with younger clients.

1. Recognize young adults for their potential, skills and remarkable resiliency.
2. Set high expectations for young adults and establish clear limits. This helps them reach and stretch to their capacities — capacities they may not know they have, or may not ever have been encouraged to explore.
3. Create a safe and structured environment. Young adults may still need some external structure to help them focus, but many of them have had experiences when they could not trust staff or the surrounding environment. The housing environment should foster a sense of belonging, and include the development of trusting relationships with other caring adults.
4. Young adults, particularly those who have developmental, cognitive or emotional limitations, often learn best through activities that allow them to gain mastery rather than just being told how to do something.
5. Communicate and interact with young adults in ways that support assessment and development of their values and attitudes. This includes non-judgmental communication and an active interest in creating interactions that help client growth and learning.
6. Ensure that there are avenues for this age group to participate in any structured client feedback venues.
7. Be able to promote responsible and healthy decision-making among all participants.

Keeping It Real: The importance of peer-to-peer work

Young adults are often more trusting and open around people close to their own ages. Peers can articulate system rules, guidelines and expectations in language that is accessible and user-friendly, speaking to new clients from first-hand experience. Peers can also help alleviate some of the fears that transitioning young adults might experience when faced with the generally older population in adult housing programs. Young people are more comfortable sharing their concerns and asking questions around their peers, and such interpersonal exchange supports the successful transitioning of new clients. Some key opportunities for peer involvement:

- Involve peers in new client orientation.
- Have peers check in with clients periodically.
- Use peers as mentors.
- Submit system literature, language and process to peer staff for review to ensure that it is comprehensible and appropriate for younger clients.
- Try to refer younger clients to services in cohorts, or partner them for support.

It Takes a Village:

The importance of social connectedness for transition age young adults

Strong connections to family and community can promote the successful integration of young clients into adult housing systems. Some strategies that support the establishment of such permanent relationships providers might consider include:

- 1.** Evidence shows that connectedness is not just helpful, but is essential for lifetime independence. Family relationships that support a young client's transition to independence should be encouraged. This effort might require expanding the traditional definition of family to include other relationships in a client's personal network that can be included in their housing and lifelong support plan. Providers should allow and help young people to identify whom they might turn to as "family." However, providers should also be aware that many young adults have left abusive, dangerous or exploitive family situations and should not be reflexively pushed toward those family situations simply because a family resource exists.
- 2.** Mentoring (professional, volunteer or peer-to-peer,) represents a means of consistent adult support throughout potentially difficult transition periods.
- 3.** Young adults can feel easily overwhelmed. Providers should expose younger clients to various aspects of the adult system "experience" in small, intimate settings. Rather than following set templates for interaction, orientations can take place gradually over time, and can provide opportunities to engage and build relationships, rather than just review rules and regulations. By setting younger clients at ease, such methods encourage peer-to-peer interaction, as well as the potential for intergenerational programs.
- 4.** Young adults need to learn self-advocacy skills in order to assert necessary boundaries in their social relationships, including those with family and the adult system staff.
- 5.** Teaching staff and co-residents to better understand youth culture — i.e. music, clothing styles, language — will facilitate social relationships for younger clients within housing programs.
- 6.** Creating avenues for the voicing of young adult perspectives in decision-making processes, such as allowing for young adult representation on consumer housing boards, can solidify social investment in the new setting.
- 7.** Sensitive and informed roommate pairings promote a sense of connectedness for new arrivals to the system.

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8. Transition age young adults who are parents are to be encouraged to stay together with their children when possible, if they want, and receive the necessary service support from providers to succeed as young families (e.g. parenting classes, connection to medical care, etc.)
 9. Informing younger clients about available services early on, including vocational, educational, medical and mental health services, will support the process of adult socialization.
 10. Encouraging young adults to balance and prioritize work, school and community service helps them gain self-sufficiency and establish independence in a context outside of the housing system.
 11. For young clients housed in clusters at scattered sites, efforts should be made to link them to one another socially through more frequent caseworker visits.

On the Scene:

Staff skills checklist for working with transition age young adults

Working with younger clients can be difficult for staff who are not oriented to the ways young adults think or express themselves. Staffing your program with individuals who are interested in working with young adults, who respect and enjoy the age group and who are invested in achieving success can go a long way in support of young clients. Below are a few key skills for staff:

Youth culture

- Having an avid interest in young people and youth issues, including youth cultural trends.
- Fluency in popular modes of social media and communication, including texting, instant messaging, Facebook and Twitter.
- Awareness of signs indicating gang presence and/or violence, such as tattoos, clothing colors. (Young adults aging out of foster care are more vulnerable to gangs as they sometimes feel drawn to them for social support.)

Youth behavior

- Knowledge of social and emotional needs of the age group, including an understanding of young adult brain development.
- Familiarity with signs and symptoms of emotional trauma.
- Ability to identify various cultures of drug use.
- Proficiency in boundary and limit setting.
- Comfort level with discussion of sexuality, sexual practices, family planning and contraception.

Interventions

- Familiarity with use of harm reduction model of intervention.
- Fluency in ADL skills: shopping, cleaning, managing finances, scheduling, washing clothes.
- When dealing with young adults with healthy family relationships, willingness to engage with broader support networks that extend beyond the young client alone.
- Ability to address dysfunctional relationships and domestic violence issues (e.g. abusive boy/girlfriend, parent, etc.)

- Training in motivational interviewing to best engage young clients.
- Familiarity with issues surrounding sexual and gender identity.

● **Additional considerations for providers regarding staff:**

- Engage maintenance, security, front-desk and intake staff in training on young adult population, including how to handle psychiatric decompensation and other mental health issues. Non-clinical staff are present at all hours and may have different information and relationships with clients. Consider them part of the team!
 - Include peer specialists on case management team; encourage mentoring relationships amongst peers.
 - Conduct staff training on identifying and checking “age-ism” to promote understanding and empathy amongst age groups within the system.

Making a House Feel like a Home:

Physical environment and transition age young adults

If your agency is lucky enough to be developing housing from the ground up, the list below is a best practice to consider in your design. If instead you are housing young adults in pre-existing stock, see below for ways you might better accommodate younger clients.

Accommodating younger clients requires particular considerations in terms of physical housing and its management:

1. Young adult clients remain active later. Staff hours need to be extended to accommodate more frequent late night and weekend activity. Providers must establish protocol for late night security and emergency contacts.
2. Young clients are harder on furniture and equipment than older housing populations. Durability should be a factor when purchasing for this demographic.
3. Bold colors on walls appeal to youth and keep interiors from feeling institutional.
4. Housing should be outfitted to accommodate young people's increased use of technology, including sufficient electrical outlets, computers and wireless Internet.
5. Providers should consider additional soundproofing to deal with young clients' louder activities, music, etc.
6. Facilities housing this age group might require a greater degree of maintenance and repair. Young adults should be made aware of consequences for damage to environment.
7. Physical exercise is often important to young people. Providers should consider including space for exercise, and promoting relationships with community centers providing sports to young people and families.
8. Office and case management space catering to young adults should be welcoming and comfortable to encourage trust.
9. Providers should offer shared apartments to young clients who would like to have roommates.
10. Larger apartments should be made available to young adults caring for children.
11. Housing close to public transportation allows young adults easier access to employment and education opportunities.

Nuts and Bolts:

Program recommendations for adult providers servicing transition age young adults

Service providers working to build trusting relationships with younger clients should not be responsible for rent collection. Service support and potentially strained financial interactions should remain separate.

- Social media can be utilized as a programmatic tool, helping providers engage and assist young clients. Communication channels such as email blasts, Facebook and mass texting can facilitate social integration and connectedness.
- Given the unique challenges involved in housing young adults, providers could be offered incentives for taking in this population and adjusting programs in a way that is responsive to young adult needs.
- Support services, particularly those available up front, can help providers transition young adults from system to system. For example, *HARTS*, (*Housing Assistance for Relocation and Transitional Services*), a program run by NYCHA for youth aging out of foster care and other special populations, *Critical Time Intervention*, which promotes a careful transition of services from one system to another and has promising outcomes (see <http://www.criticaltime.org/>), Rental Assistance Programs and *ISS* offer support to ease the path to adult independence. The *Transition to Independence Process* (TIP) is an approach that enhances the quality and effectiveness of your work with young people and their families by providing a framework for engaging youth and building on young people's strengths and interests.
- Because many young adults leaving foster care or other "whole person" systems may not have experience complying with program requirements, providers should consider building stipulations into their programs (e.g. mandatory school attendance, vocational training or employment) in order to support the development of necessary, and often absent, self-sufficiency skills and attitudes.
- Some populations do better with more specialized services. Youth housing providers have created unique programs to work with LGBTQ, pregnant and parenting, developmentally delayed, substance using and undocumented young people, as well as young females who have been sex- and labor-trafficked within the United States or across our national borders. These specialized programs offer staff training, programming and supportive services designed to meet the specific needs of these populations, and have proven successful in addressing a broad range of housing and psycho-social issues for such groups.
- Many transition age young adults fall in the cracks between policies, regulations and protocols. Due to their age, they may lose access to certain benefits and have a very narrow time frame within which they can access others. Ensure that your program has someone on staff who understands and can advise younger clients on their benefits.
- Make sure clients meet eligibility requirements. For example, some adult housing providers do not accept full-time students into their programs. Sending a young person who is attending college full-time to such a program creates real problems. Check and double check.

Resources

Adkins Life Skills Model

The Adkins Life Skills Program: Career Development Series is an innovative, multimedia, group employability learning program developed at Columbia University specifically for economically disadvantaged and under-served adults and youth.

<http://www.adkinslifeskills.org/>

Ansell-Casey Life Skills

Here you will find free and easy to use tools to help young people prepare for adulthood. The life skills assessments provide instant feedback. Customized learning plans provide a clear outline of next steps, and the accompanying teaching resources are available for free or at a minimal cost.

<http://www.caseylifeskills.org/index.htm>

A Book on the TIP System and Transition Issues, H.B. Clark and M. Davis (Eds). Brookes Publishing Company, P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD.

Order on line at <http://www.brookespublishing.com>

Core Competencies for Youth Work Professionals and Supervisors of Youth Work Professionals

A comprehensive guide developed to raise the capacity of youth-serving organizations and staff to serve their participants more effectively.

http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/resources/developing_youth_workers.shtml

Lifenet

1-800-LIFENET, a confidential, toll-free help line for New York City residents, is operated by the Mental Health Association of New York City (www.mhaofnyc.org) in partnership with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

LIFENET operates 24 hours per day/7 days per week. The hotline's staff of trained mental health professionals helps callers find the most appropriate mental health and substance abuse services for their needs. LIFENET is multilingual and multicultural.

http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cis/cis_lifenet.shtml

Mental Health Information for Homeless Young Adults

"Connecting the Pieces: Homeless Youth and Mental Health Services."

<http://www.empirestatecoalition.org/main/pdf/MH%20REPORT%202012-13-10.pdf>

Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing is a client-centered, directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence.

<http://www.motivationalinterview.org/>

National Network on Youth Transition

A network dedicated to improving practices, systems and outcomes for transition-age youth and young adults (14-29 years of age) with emotional and/or behavioral difficulties (EBD). Site has research and resources for practitioners.

<http://nnyt.fmhi.usf.edu/>

New York State Children's Plan, 2008

<http://www.ccf.state.ny.us/initiatives/ChildPlanHome.htm>

Seeking Safety

Seeking Safety is a present-focused therapy to help people attain safety from trauma/PTSD and substance abuse. The treatment is available as a book, providing both client handouts and guidance for clinicians. It is used with youth, adults, women, men, veterans and criminal-justice involved clients.

<http://www.seekingsafety.org/>

Transition to Independence Process (TIP)

Transition to Independence Process (TIP) system assists young people with emotional and/or behavioral difficulties (EBD) in making successful transitions to adulthood with all young persons achieving, within their potential, their goals in the transition domains of education, employment, living situation and community life.

<http://www.tipstars.org/>

YouthConnect

DYCD Youth Connect is a free and confidential information service that connects youth to jobs, afterschool programs and training opportunities. 1-800-246-4646

http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/youth_connect/youth_connect.shtml

Credits

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