Challenges for Transition Age Youth and Their Families

Teri S. Brister, Ph.D., LPC
NAMI, Chief Program Officer
"Society says "ADULT," we say
'they are still our children'"
Objectives

• What changes should you be prepared for as a typical healthy child ages?

• What will be different about this process if your child has experienced a mental health condition growing up?

• What resources are available as you begin to plan for these transitions?
What are your expectations?
What “transition” are we talking about?
Is there a difference in the amount of control the parents of these two boys have?

Are you the same person you were when your child was a toddler?
Some transitions can feel like walking off a cliff...
As a parent of a child with mental illness facing transition into adult services...

it can feel like you are throwing your child off that cliff
What age are your kids?

Younger than 14 years?  Between 14 and 17?  Between 18 and 21?  Between 22 and 26?  Older than 26?
Challenges of Transitions for “typical” Youth
What are some of these challenges that you have already experienced with your child?
Additional challenges facing our children with a mental health condition
• 50% of all mental disorders are present before age 14

• 50% of students with mental illness will drop out of school

• Unemployment rates for those with mental illness are higher than their peers
Uncharted waters of transition age issues

FAMILY LAND
Parent is CEO

HOPE

ADULT CHILD LAND
Parent is Partner
What is the most difficult part of all this for us as parents?
How do we prepare?

Its about how we treat each other. Take time to connect.
Some of the tools we will be sharing...

- Prevention Planning for Transition
- Action Plan Timeline and Checklist
- Youth self-assessment
- Family/parent assessment
What is Prevention Planning?

• Why do we need it?
• Who should be involved?
• When should we do it?
• What does this plan look like?
Getting the Youth's Perspective

• What are his/her/their goals and dreams?
• What do they want to do after high school?
• Where do they want to live?
• How do they plan to make these dreams happen?
Getting the Parent/Family's Perspective

• What are your goals for your child's future?

• Education? Employment?

• Housing?

• What is your assessment of their ability to reach these goals?
Know where to look for puzzle pieces for your child...

Educational Resources

Mental Health Resources

Vocational Resources

Benefits Experts
...and for yourself!

- Better navigation tools
- Support of those who have traveled the same road
It is possible to navigate the cliffs.

- Find the natural bridges
- Look for the steps
'We've considered every potential risk except the risks of avoiding all risks.'
Put the puzzle together and keep your family as whole as possible
What is one thing that you have heard today that you plan to follow up on and learn more about?
Disability and mental health

• Make sure your mental health provider is familiar with disability

• Ask the provider if the office is accessible

• Your insurance company or HMO case manager should have a list of disability-friendly providers, though all should be ...
Thank you!

For more information:

• www.nami.org
• www.nami.org/basics
• www.nami.org/crisisguide