

CHAPTER XVII

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

*“Courage is not the towering oak that sees storms come and go;
it is the fragile blossom that opens in the snow.”*

— ALICE MACKENZIE SWAIM

CHAPTER XVI

INTRODUCTION TO RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations were consolidated from the chapters of the TAY Resource Guide and extensively reviewed by the TAY Subcommittee. The lead writers of each chapter were asked to develop a more detailed list of recommendations that can be found at the end of each chapter. Also, for every chapter much of the information and subsequent recommendations were obtained with the input of knowledgeable providers who are in the midst of developing promising practices.

It is in the spirit of true humility that these recommendations are offered. Each county is unique with its own set of circumstances and stakeholders. There cannot be a “one size fits all” approach. The following recommendations might be better called ideas to “try on” and see how they might apply in your setting. Hopefully, they represent what the TAY Subcommittee learned in its work: that there is depth and complexity in the issues facing TAY and those who work with TAY.

This list of General Recommendations would be useful in presentations to staff or stakeholders about the most important recommendations in the areas of TAY Developmental Issues, Organizational and System Change, Practice and Program Strategies, and Policy and Fiscal Issues. It is also hoped that some of the recommendations may support policy changes at county, state and federal levels that would ultimately benefit TAY, their families, and those who are involved with them. A crosswalk showing where each recommendation is discussed in the chapters is also included.

I. General Recommendations Related to *Developmental Issues*

- A. Transition age youth are characterized by specific ***developmental processes and tasks*** that have implications for unique approaches to assessment, service planning, and therapeutic interventions. These developmental issues provide opportunities to promote wellness by identifying needs and strengths, and in partnership with the client, developing individualized strategies to increase competencies in key domains and promote positive outcomes. Ideally, transition services for many youth should begin at age 14 and continue into the mid-20s.
- B. In order to maximize making a successful transition into adult life transition age youth need integrated and coordinated support in the areas of ***housing, education, employment, and social and family supports***.
- C. Due to the heightened risk in young adulthood of the onset or exacerbation of disorders such as psychoses, addictive disorders, and others, plans for services should ***actively address the unique diagnostic issues for this age group***. High rates of co-occurring substance abuse and mental health problems in this age group require an integrated approach to the concurrent assessment, referral, and treatment of both sets of problems.

II. General Recommendations Related to *Organizational and System Change*

- A. Services specifically designed for transition age youth should be staffed by those who are ***knowledgeable and genuinely enthusiastic*** about working with youth and young adults.
- B. Transition age youth should be provided ***opportunities to participate in all activities of planning, implementation, and oversight of services***. Meaningful support for participation includes financial compensation, childcare services, flexibility for meeting time and place, and other strategies that will provide incentives for their valued assistance.
- C. ***Coordination is required at all levels*** of administration of children and adult Community Support Services and planning groups at the State and local levels. These coordination efforts should serve as models for effective communication and partnerships at the practice level.
- D. ***Oversight at the County level*** would be facilitated by TAY-specific organized forums and workgroups, such as a county-wide manager level workgroup or a team composed of staff from multiple levels of job tasks. Such forums would encourage agency support at all levels. The establishment of a TAY Coordinator position is highly recommended.

III. General Recommendations Related to *Practice and Program Strategies*

- A. Given the unique developmental tasks of emerging adulthood, identifying strengths through ***“strengths discovery”*** is a key component of the assessment and service planning phases, and in all subsequent phases of involvement. This involves person-centered planning which is driven by the person’s interests, aspirations, dreams, strengths, and cultural and family values.
- B. Transition age youth are no less than others subject to barriers such as stigma and racial discrimination, which exacerbate other age-related barriers to continuity of care resulting

from developmental and systemic factors. ***Taking into account the cultural and language context of the person, his/her family, and community*** are vital to developing strategies for a successful transition to adulthood. The transition age youth should have a central role in this exploration.

- C. ***The outcomes of services*** should be defined in ways that are culturally relevant, appropriate, measurable, and driven by the person and his/her family. Service planning goals should be practical, they should have realistic timeframes, and they should be focused on youth-identified areas such as work, school, friends, and so on. Evaluating the success of the intervention should be a continuous activity.
- D. ***Educational support*** for the transition to adulthood should be age-appropriate and proactive. In the secondary grades, for youth with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) the transition to post-secondary education, employment training, or other realistic objective should be addressed from age 14 on. Promising practices in post-secondary education for transition-age youth with special needs include, for example, targeted strategies for recruitment, orientation, assistance with administrative tasks (such as application forms), tutoring, mentoring, financial aid, and linkages to employment training.
- E. ***Employment*** is an important “rite of passage” for young adults in our society, and is typically a top priority from the youth’s point of view. Activities such as obtaining a driving license and social security card are important milestones on the road toward competing in the marketplace. Job skills for youth who have never worked, or whose illness/disability makes it hard to interview for and maintain a job, need to be developed with help from others. Promising practices in employment services include components of comprehensive support, information, skills training, and linkages to the community.
- F. Transition age youth with special needs are at risk for homelessness. ***Housing*** should be made available that is age-appropriate, (i.e. normative group-living situations), and culturally congruent, with intensive case management and linkages to other services. The living environment should foster hope, support independence, and encourage positive social group interaction.
- G. Emerging adulthood is a time of “turning points” in a young person’s life, which are enabled through ***normative social activities*** that provide opportunities for positive reinforcement of strengths and relationships. Youth point out the importance of activities that foster positive peer relationships, that avoid stigmatizing or labeling, and that are integrated within the community. Transition-age youth also need opportunities to help others in volunteer activities, or by mentoring and coaching other children and youth by sharing their own experiences.

IV. General Recommendations Related to *Policy and Fiscal Issues*

- A. Each county and state agency should have ***specific policies related to the development and funding of services for the transition-age youth population***, and should also make concerted efforts to coordinate and integrate services with those of other organizations and agencies.
- B. State agencies should ***revisit general policies and outcome standards*** for children and adults that may be contradictory to the developmental stage of transition-age youth. For

example, some standards were developed for adults who would be expected to participate fully in the labor force (e.g., the Department of Rehabilitation’s 90 day standard of full employment as an indicator of success).

- C. ***Fiscal policy***, (i.e., determining the funding alternatives for services and associated eligibility criteria at the state and county levels) should be guided by the “vision” of program development — identifying gaps in services, gaining youth and community consensus, developing agency partnerships, and incorporating promising or best practices.

CHAPTER XVI

CROSSWALK OF GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CHAPTERS

RECOMMENDATION NUMBER	RECOMMENDATION	CHAPTER(S)
I A.	TAY Developmental processes and tasks require unique approaches	III
I B.	Integrated and coordinated supportive services	All
I C.	Address unique diagnostic issues of TAY	IV, VII
II A.	Staff should be knowledgeable and enthusiastic about TAY	XV
II B.	TAY should participate in system change and planning	II, V
II C.	Coordination is required at all organizational levels	II, VI, X-XIII
II D.	Establish TAY Coordinator position; develop county-wide forums to monitor services	XV
III A.	“Strengths discovery” is key	VIII, IX
III B.	Importance of cultural and language contexts	IV, VIII, IX
III C.	Defining outcomes of services for TAY	III, IV, VI-XIV
III D.	Education support practices	X
III E.	Employment support practices	XI
III F.	Housing support practices	XIII
III G.	Normative social activities	XIV
IV A.	County and state policies related to TAY services	II
IV B.	Revisit general outcome standards for children and adults	III, V-XIII
IV C.	Fiscal policy and vision building	XII, XV
IV D.	Policy strategies to minimize eligibility barriers	XII