



Peer Support for Transition Age Youth Fact Sheet

Peer Support for Transition Age Youth

Transition-Aged Youth, including foster youth, youth who have been through the juvenile justice system, and youth with mental health diagnoses, have unique needs that are often unaddressed. At this crucial stage in development, Transition Aged Youth peer-support programs allow young people to work with trained specialists in their own age group who have similar experiences, providing them with both the benefits of best practices and the connection with someone they relate to.

Why Peer Support?

- Youth have unique developmental needs.
- Developmentally, peer connections are prominent during adolescence and transition to adulthood.
- Role:
 - Help navigate current systems
 - Provide support and facilitation for case planning
 - Model positive self-advocacy
 - Provide guided support in individual recovery
 - Informal peer support (Recreation, social groups, internships, supportive social programming)

'A growing body of evidence suggests that peer-provided, recovery-oriented mental health services produce outcomes as good as and, in some cases superior to, services from non-peer professionals.'

-Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Who Are Transition Age Youth?

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- The term represents young people between the ages of 16 and 25. (Varies among states, agencies, and counties).
- Transition Age Youth do not fit perfectly within the children or adult system of care.
- They are a unique demographic that requires customized services and supports to meet their needs.

Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative

The Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative is a partnership of state and local community agencies and youth led organizations working together to assist Tennessee youth and young adults ages 16-25 who have or at risk of developing a serious mental health condition or co-occurring disorder in improving their health and wellness, leading self-directed lives, and reaching their full potential. By increasing public awareness and outreach efforts and providing effective and engaging services and supports, the Initiative aims to keep youth and young adults from “falling through the cracks.”

- This statewide initiative provides mental health and other support services (including supported employment and education and peer support) and creates opportunities for informal peer support.
- Informal peer support is offered in youth and young adult councils, which are comprised of youth and young adults ages 16-25 to years old.
- These councils provide a safe space for youth and young adults to develop leadership and advocacy skills, explore and create plans to address community issues, and learn how to create change within their communities and state.
- Direct services and supports are provided by Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System in Hamilton County and by Carey Counseling Center, Inc. in the following counties: Benton, Carroll, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion, and Weakley.

Resources

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- Tennessee Voices for Children

