

# WHAT TRANSITION- AGE YOUTH WANT YOU TO KNOW

Trauma-Informed Considerations

# OBJECTIVES

- Identify trauma-informed considerations for Transition-Age Youth (TAY)
- Learn strategies to engage successfully through voice, choice, empowerment, and peer support
- Increase understanding of TAY by hearing their stories and experiences

## WHO WE ARE:



- LifeWorks has a long history with Youth Residential Services and other youth programs
- LifeWorks has long been a Champion for Transition-Age Youth
- Challenges faced led to programming customized for TAY, like Community-Based Peer Support and Counseling (CBPSC)
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded CBPSC for 5 years with additional requests

# CBPSC SAMHSA GOAL

LifeWorks CBPSC will improve disparities in access, service use and outcomes for transition-age youth by:

- 1) Using Peer Supporters to increase outreach and engagement
- 2) Deepening LifeWorks' trauma treatment expertise
- 3) Increasing community collaboration around the needs of these youth and how to effectively serve them

# COMMUNITY-BASED PEER SUPPORT & COUNSELING (CBPSC)

Trauma-Informed Services for Transition-Age Youth



# WHAT IS THE TYPICAL AGE RANGE OF TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH?

(A) 17-19

(B) 18-21

(C) 16-24

(D) 13-30

(E) 18-30

Source: [youth.gov](http://youth.gov)

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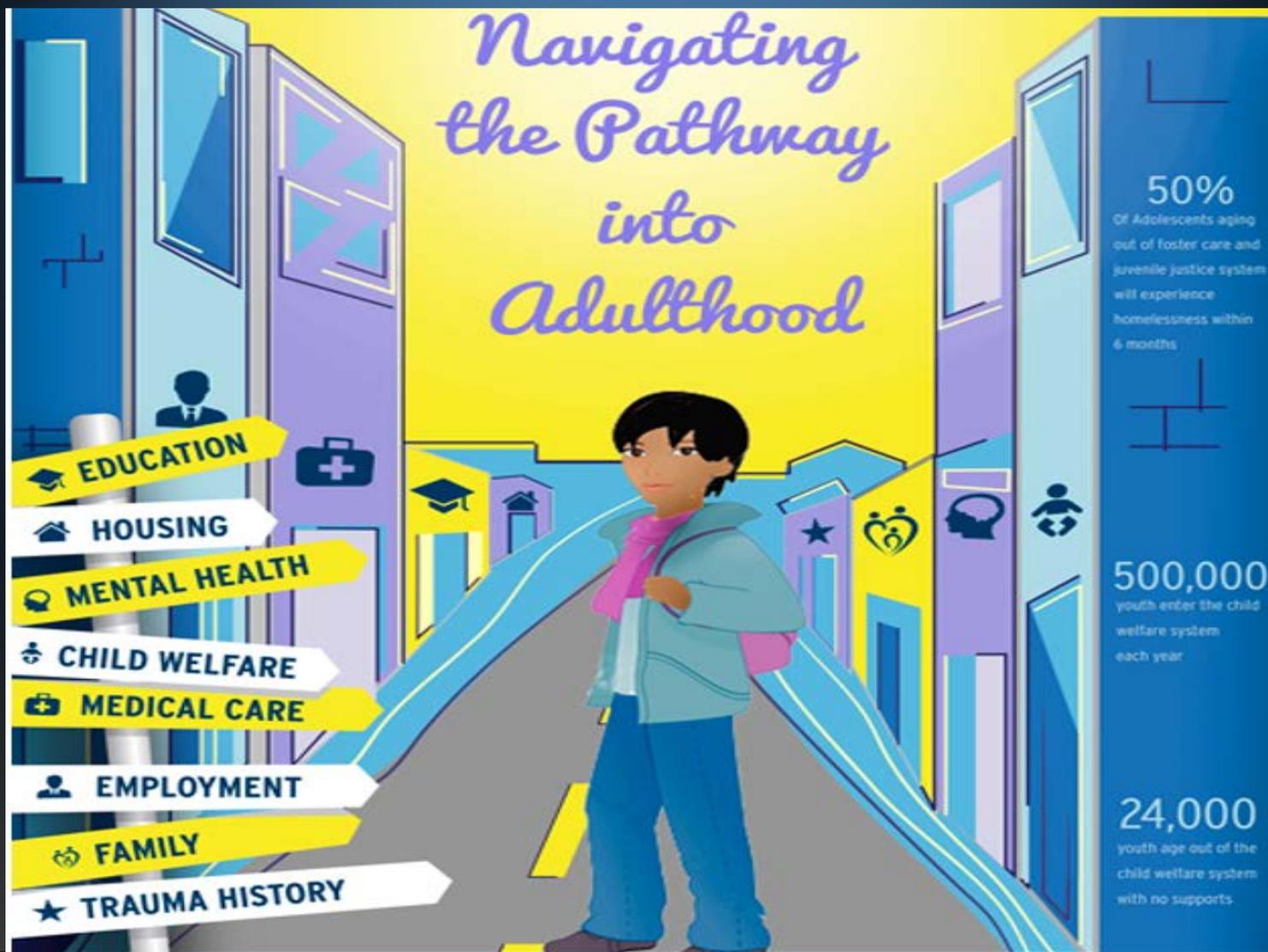
# WHICH DESCRIBES TRANSITION- AGE YOUTH (TAY)?

- (A) Youth turning 18
- (B) Youth aging out of the child welfare system
- (C) Youth aging out of juvenile justice facilities
- (D) Youth who are experiencing homelessness
- (E) All of the above

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# WHO ARE TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH?



# YOUTH PANEL QUESTION #1

Can you share a bit about who you are, how you came to LifeWorks, and what you are working on now?

# WHAT IS TRAUMA? THE 3 E'S

1. Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances
2. that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening
3. and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

# WHAT IS COMPLEX TRAUMA?

The term complex trauma describes both children's exposure to multiple traumatic events, often of an invasive, interpersonal nature, and the wide-ranging, long-term impact of this exposure.

# IMPACT OF COMPLEX TRAUMA ON TAY

- Even while being on the verge of transitioning to adulthood, these youth may not be as emotionally and developmentally prepared for adulthood as their non-traumatized peers.
- They are more likely to have instability in their housing
- May lack caring relationships with adults
- They are more likely to have disrupted education
- Left untreated, trauma can lead to anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, aggression, and conduct problems
- New symptoms brought on by adolescence are often unexpected when they are connected to trauma that occurred much earlier

## YOUTH PANEL QUESTION #2

What impact has trauma had on you?

# CHALLENGES IN WORKING WITH TAY

- They don't fit into children's services or adult services
- Insurance status is often vague
- Many have experienced complex trauma
- Most are not knowledgeable about services
- Life skills are sometimes limited
- They often use drugs or alcohol
- They are the highest risk group for HIV transmission
- Their need for "family" is present even if independent
- They are often mistrustful of adults and professionals

## YOUTH PANEL QUESTION #3

What were some of the challenges you faced in getting help or moving towards adulthood?

Or

What has a helping adult done that caused you to shut down or lose trust?

# CONSIDERATIONS

- Use warm hand offs
- Address sharing power up front – let them know their rights and give them choices
- Give them time to develop a trusting relationship
- Offer peer-to-peer support when possible
- Manage expectations (grown body does not equal grown mind)

# MORE CONSIDERATIONS

- Be curious about resiliency and coping
- Encourage youth involvement on a program level
- Learn the language of youth - social media, texting, etc.
- Prioritize immediate needs first – safety, food, shelter, clothing

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Forming a trusting relationship is critical for TAY who have suffered trauma. You can help by:

- Having quality interactions with the youth - fully engaging with and listening to them
- Not making commitments or promises that you may not be able to keep
- Involving the youth in decisions that effect their lives
- Focusing on the youth's strengths and resilience

# WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

- Set up relationships and situations that avoid re-traumatization
- Help youth discover their "triggers" and ways to stay safe
- Focus on youth's strengths - what they CAN do and identify their existing coping skills
- Ask for their ideas about how they want to be helped

## YOUTH PANEL QUESTION #4

What kinds of things can “trigger” your past trauma?

What have others done to help you after being triggered?

## YOUTH PANEL QUESTION #5

What can helpers do to gain your trust and encourage your involvement?

Or

What helped you to "never give up"?

## YOUTH PANEL QUESTION #6

What else would you like people to know about Transition-Age Youth?

# SMALL GROUP CASE EXAMPLES

- Break into small groups
- Have a youth representative sit in each group
- Use these real life scenarios to discuss ways to improve your interactions with youth

# CASE SCENARIO 1

Jamar is a 17-yr-old who has been bouncing between friends after an incident at home resulted in him being told to leave the house. As he describes his history of trauma, he asks, “do you know where I can get some food?” You tell him about the free meal nights and give him a handout with the information. Then, you continue on with the discussion. Jamar becomes more difficult to engage and starts shutting down.

## CASE SCENARIO 2

You've been meeting with Jill, an 18-yr old Mom of a 4 month-old baby. Despite her childhood full of domestic violence, in the last meeting she revealed that her boyfriend is abusive to her. Today, Jill shows up 20 minutes late and the reception staff tells her that she will have to reschedule. She begins to argue with staff until she is asked to leave the building.

## CASE SCENARIO 3

Every time you encounter Nic, you notice his clothes are dirty and he smells. After getting to know him, you inquire about it and he tells you that he doesn't have money to wash his clothes. So, you provide him with vouchers for the laundromat. The next time you see Nic, nothing has changed so you assume he isn't motivated to improve hygiene. You wonder what he did with the vouchers.

## CASE SCENARIO 4

It is your first meeting with Maya and she is very reluctant to share information with you. You try to explain how you are there to help her but it does nothing to open her up. You try to make her feel safe with you so that she will talk more but it doesn't seem to be working.

# WHAT TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH WANT YOU TO KNOW

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