### Stages of the Family Life Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Family Features</th>
<th>Changes</th>
<th>Potential additional challenges families of children with serious mental health conditions face</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Families with adolescents**              | Increasing flexibility of family boundaries for child's independence and grandparent frailties | • Parent/child relationships shift to permit adolescents’ dependence to wax and wane  
• Refocus on midlife marital and career issues  
• Shift toward caring for an older generation | • Stresses of raising a child with a chronic health condition or special needs  
• Many youth involved with public systems have been in out-of-home care, which typically restricts parental roles during the time away, if not implicitly communicating parental incompetence  
• Higher family rates of:  
  ○ Single parent household  
  ○ Poverty  
  ○ Mental health conditions  
  ○ Substance use  
  ○ Incarceration  
• Challenges can impede successful “launch” during transition years |
| **Launching children and moving on**       | Accepting a multitude of exits from and entries into the family system (i.e., birth of grandchildren, passing of elders) | • Renegotiation of marital system as dyad  
• Children and parents develop adult-to-adult relationships  
• Inclusion of in-laws and grandchildren  
• Loss of senior generation | |