



How to use GoToWebinar

- Move any electronic handheld devices away from your computer and speakers
- We recommend that you close all file sharing applications and streaming music or video
- Check your settings in the audio pane if you are experiencing audio problems
- During the presentation, you can send questions to the webinar organizer. These will be held until the end.

A recording of this webinar will be available online at
<http://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/webinars-previous.shtml>

Better Futures

Co-Principal Investigators
Sarah Geenen & Laurie Powers

Graduate Research Assistant
Adrienne Croskey

Program Manager
Lee Ann Phillips

Coaches
Candis Williamson
Isha Charlie-McNeely
Catie Hankins

Youth Participants
Melissa Evers
Angel Villalta-Martinez



Better Futures

Goal of the Project: Implement and test a comprehensive intervention to assist young people in foster care with serious mental health conditions to prepare for and participate in post-secondary education.

Better Futures

BACKGROUND:

- Casey Alumni Study found that over half of former foster youth have diagnosed mental health problems (Pecora, 2005). In Oregon, we found that 70% of youth had a DSM diagnosis (Hogensen, J., 2007)
- 70-80% of youth in foster care and youth with serious mental health conditions aspire to go to college (McMillen, et al., 2003; Wagner, et al., 2007, Courtney, et al., 2004)
- Only 20% of youth in FC and 34% of youth with MH conditions actually attend (Wolanin, 2005, Wagner et al., 2007)

Better Futures

DESIGN:

- Youth randomly assigned to Community As Usual (CAU) or intervention group
- Youth enrolled in 3 waves
- Youth assessed 4 times



Better Futures

PARTICIPANTS:

Sixty-seven youth who:

- Currently are in foster care
- Experience a serious mental health condition
- Live in targeted geography
- Open to the idea of college

Wave 1:

17 youth, 10 intervention, 7 control

Wave 2:

25 youth, 15 intervention, 10 control

Wave 3:

25 youth, 11 intervention, 14 control

Better Futures

INTERVENTION:

Summer Institute:

- 10 to 15 youth, 2 Foster All-Stars and Staff
- 3 nights/4 Days in Dorms at Portland State University
- Daily Panels, Tours, Activities and Workshops
- Evening Activities and Dinner

Mentoring Workshops:

- Bi monthly with 5 total
- Various panels of college students and transition agencies
- Potential topics include essay writing, wellness tools, field trips, allies, college supports, strategic disclosure and graduation timelines

Peer Coaching:

- Minimum 2x per month for 9 months
- Peer support and collaborative problem solving
- Self determination and empowerment lens
- Build relationships, offer resources and support
- Youth directed on their personally valued goals
- Skill building and experiential activities

Better Futures

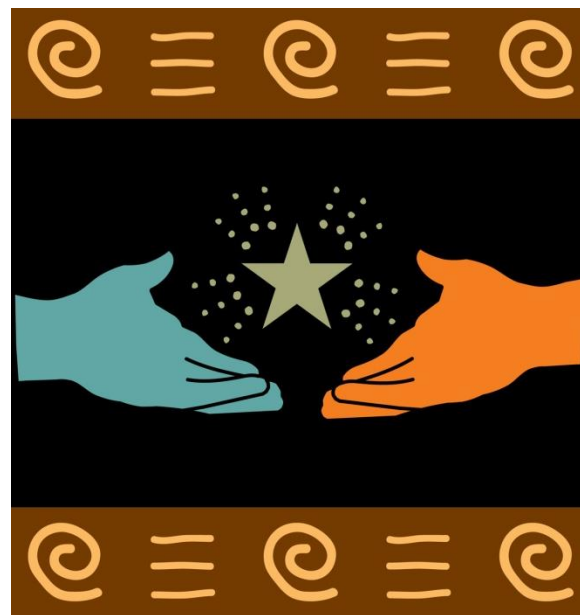
Major Strength of the Model is Near-Peer Support

Coaches are in college/voc. school and have lived experience with foster care and/or mental health

- Knowledge, credibility, experience
- Modeling through experiential activities
- Multi-level empowerment

Training and Support

- Role Clarity and boundaries
- Strategic disclosure
- Self Care



Better Futures

Thoughts/impressions from youth who have participated in the project



Better Futures

Questions for Youth

- Please share with the group your name, college or program attending and your future plans once you graduate.
- What was one barrier in your life that made it difficult to meet your goals?
- Talk about your experience in Better Futures. What were some highlights for you?
- How did your coach help you meet your goals?
- How was this program different from other support you have had in the past.

Better Futures

Update on coaching with wave 3 youth



Better Futures

Paul

Barriers

- Has had multiple placements as well as being separated from siblings
- His gender identity was challenged by the system and he faces a lot of adversity surrounding his sexual orientation.

Successes

- Paul is a senior in high school and mostly makes mostly A's.
- He is very involved in his high school, plays the saxophone in the school band and is part of student council.
- After attending the Oregon College fair he applied as well as got into U of O (his top choice), U of P and OSU. Youth completed FAFSA and some scholarship applications.
- He is in the process of getting his license, currently taking Driver's Ed.
- Got his food permit and applied to a fast-food restaurant and got the job and is now working part-time.
- Youth received a 2500 dollar scholarship to U of O for early admission and has an audition w/music dept. at U of O.
- Paul is now saving up money for the fall when he plans to attend his first school choice, U of O.

"Better Futures is there for me when I need anything. Glad I have a coach that is helping me get to college."

Paul

Better Futures

Jonathan:

Barriers

- In foster care system since 10 years old
- Lives in restricted foster home that does not allow for autonomy
- His team are resistant for him to learn independent living skills because of his disability

Successes

- Applied for PSU, PCC, and MHCC
- Completed FAFSA and OSAC, and several other scholarships
- Visited PSU, MHCC, and PCC and learned about their music and theatre programs
- Despite adversaries and barriers he faced, he attended school everyday and was involved in band, theatre, and other after school activities.
- Went with coach to go see the play Peter Pan at the Northwest Children's Theatre and Back Space as a fun way to learn about his career interest in theatre and music.
- His next goals are to learn the bus system, learn how to manage his time, and how to budget money.

“I now think that I am capable of becoming independent.”-Jonathan.

Research & Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures, Portland State University

Better Futures

Sharon

Barriers

- Multiple placements in foster care
- Suicidal ideation and depression

Successes

- Applied to her first choice, University of Portland, and was accepted into the nursing program
- Was awarded the *Beat The Odds* scholarship
- Obtained her drivers permit
- Completed FAFSA and OSAC
- Visited her back up choice, Western Oregon University
- Her next goal is to be more active in her Independent Living Program (ILP)
- Despite her many adversities, she continues to be active in the project and remains connected with me and focused on her goals.

“It’s an amazing resource if you’re willing to use it. It’s worth it and I’m thankful”- Sharon

Better Futures

Update on Project Data/Preliminary Findings:

Participant Demographics
Data from Summer Institute

Better Futures

Demographics:

| Variable | Control (n = 31) | Intervention (n = 36) | Total (n = 67) |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Age (Mean) | 16.74 | 16.78 | 16.76 |
| Gender (% Female) | 51.6 | 52.8 | 52.2 |
| Race/ethnicity (%) | | | |
| Hispanic | 3.2 | 5.6 | 4.5 |
| Native American | 32.3 | 16.7 | 23.9 |
| Asian | 0 | 2.8 | 1.5 |
| African American | 16.1 | 22.2 | 19.4 |
| Caucasian | 38.7 | 44.4 | 41.8 |
| Multi-ethnic | 9.7 | 8.3 | 9.0 |

Better Futures

Demographics:

| Placement type % | Control | Intervention | Total |
|---|---------|--------------|-------|
| Non-relative Foster Care | 64.5 | 63.9 | 64.2 |
| Relative Foster Care (Kinship) % | 25.8 | 27.7 | 26.8 |
| Group home/RTC % | 6.5 | 8.3 | 7.5 |
| Other (with a friend/own apartment) | 3.2 | 0 | 1.5 |
| Length of time in foster care (mean years) | 6.9 | 5.6 | 6.2 |
| Experienced placement change in past year % | 48.4 | 30.6 | 38.8 |
| Total number of placement moves past year | 2.73 | 2.82 | 2.77 |

Better Futures

Demographics:

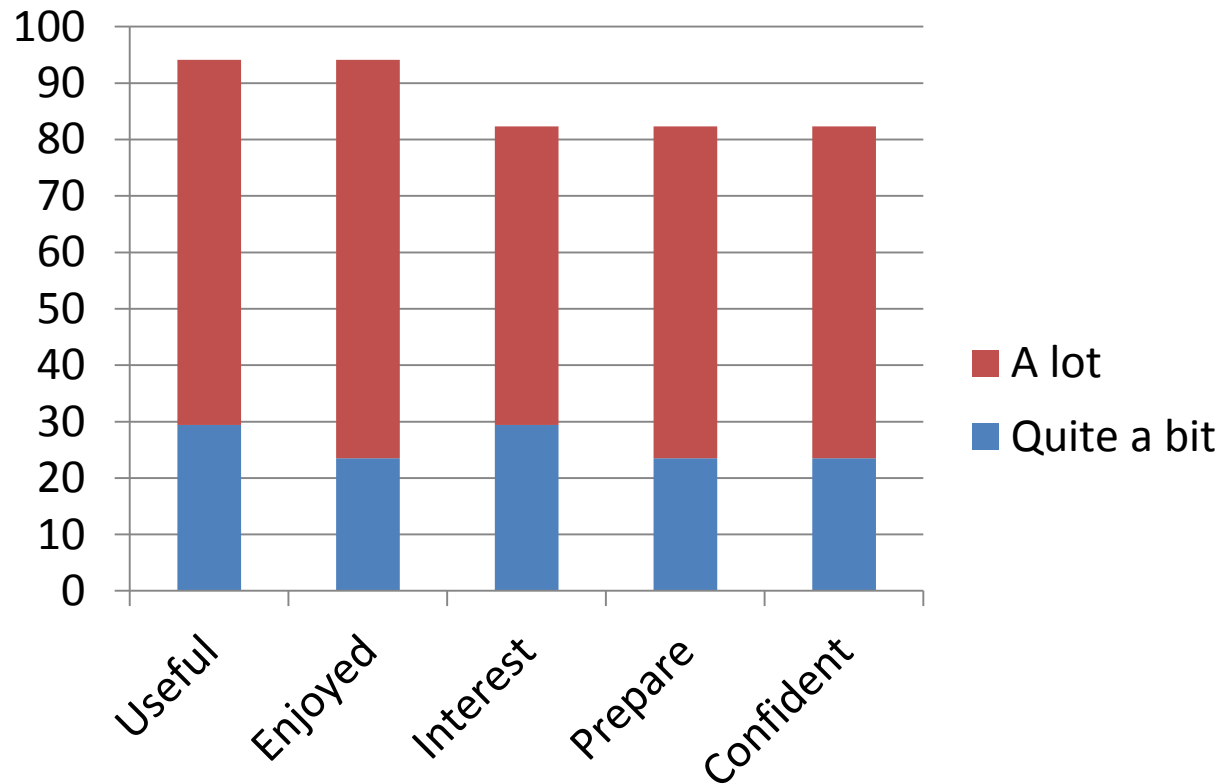
| School Status | Control | Intervention | Total |
|--|---------|--------------|-------|
| Working towards GED | 16.5 | 8.3 | 12.0 |
| Attending school % | 83.5 | 91.7 | 88.0 |
| Grade | | | |
| Sophomore | 3.8 | 3.0 | 3.4 |
| Junior | 50.0 | 36.4 | 42.4 |
| Senior | 46.2 | 60.6 | 54.2 |
| Taking mental health medication % | 29.0 | 48.6 | 39.4 |
| Accessing mental health services % | 64.5 | 72.2 | 68.7 |
| Receiving special education services % | 41.9 | 30.5 | 35.8 |

Better Futures-Preliminary Findings

Group differences (Intervention vs. Control) at T2 (post-Summer Institute) for all waves combined:

- Mental Health Recovery Measure (ES .31)
- Youth Efficacy / Empowerment Scale-Mental Health (ES .38)
- Quality of Life Scale (ES .58)*
- Transition Planning Assessment (ES .66)*
- AIR Self-Determination Scale (ES .69)*
- The Hopelessness Scale for Children (ES .71)*
- Career Decision Self Efficacy Scale (ES .76)*
- The Arc 's Self Determination Scale (ES .85)*

Better Futures: Summer Institute Feedback



Better Futures

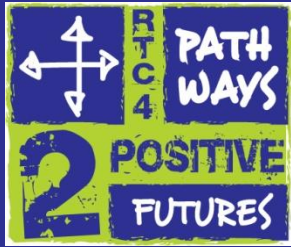
Next Steps:

- Partnership Plan with Allies
- Closure process Wave 3 in May
- T3 beginning in early June for Wave 3
- Graduation and Celebration Wave 3
- Data Results and Dissemination
- Collaboration with Foster Club on tool
- Focal Point Article-just released
- Peer Mentorship Model Article

Better Futures

Questions and Answers





Acknowledgments/Funders



The development of the contents of this presentation were supported by funding from the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research, United States Department of Education, and the Center for Mental Health Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services (NIDRR grant H133B090019). The content does not represent the views or policies of the funding agencies. In addition, you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

