



Center and Research Overview: 2014-2019

The *Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures* incorporates rigorous research, targeted training and technologically sophisticated dissemination into a framework that is informed and advised by the voices of young people with serious mental health conditions (SMHCs). Young people who have experienced SMHCs have collaborated in designing the research projects and other activities proposed in this application, and they will continue to participate in the work—as staff members, consultants, advisors and research participants—as it moves forward. Collaborations with young people and other stakeholders, including providers, researchers and family members—help ensure that interventions are practical and feasible, and that training and dissemination are relevant and useful.

The six proposed research projects are grounded in the best available evidence and theory, and all adhere to a single conceptual framework that synthesizes empirical evidence with theories of positive development and social ecology. This framework guides an intervention approach focused on building self-determination and enhancing community participation and community living outcomes.

Two of the research projects are randomized controlled trials that test the efficacy of interventions. *Project FUTURES* (R1) tests an approach to improving college retention and success, as well as community participation and self-determination, among first-year college students with serious mental health conditions who are, or have been in foster care. *EASA Connections* (R2) tests a web-based psychoeducation and decision-aid intervention that is designed to increase the extent to which young people who are experiencing a first episode of psychosis are engaged and self-determined with regard to their treatment. A third project, *Mentee-Nominated Mentoring* (R6), is a

developmental investigation of a cutting-edge approach to helping young people who have been living in psychiatric inpatient facilities transition back to the community and build social and cultural capital.

Also proposed are two projects that are developing and evaluating interventions designed to increase providers' skill in working with youth and young adults with SMHCs in ways that increase their self-determination and enhance their community living and participation. *Technology-Enhanced Coaching for Positive Development* (R3) focuses on professional providers and their supervisors, while *AMP+: Developing the Young Adult Peer Support Workforce* (R5) works with young adult peer support providers and their supervisors and agency administrators. Both of these projects employ new technology to improve training, coaching and supervision.

System/Policy Analysis and Change (R4) is focused on better understanding key system issues and policy challenges that impede or support accessible and effective services for young adults with SMHC. R4 also looks at examples of young adult-lead policy change and the challenges young adult advocacy organizations face when they enter the policy arena.

These research projects are surrounded by a rich array of training, technical assistance and dissemination activities. A targeted knowledge translation evaluation project is also proposed. This project will assess the utilization of Promoting Positive Pathways to Adulthood, a series of online training modules designed for service providers who work with youth and young adults with serious mental health challenges. A national State-of-the-Science conference, the annual review *Focal Point*, and collaborations with mental health, education, advocacy and other relevant organizations will amplify dissemination efforts and promote the uptake of products and findings.

Project funded by 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).

