



# Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures

RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTER FOR PATHWAYS TO POSITIVE FUTURES



## Achieving Housing for Young Adults: Important Considerations

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Research & Policy  
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Adolescent, and Young  
Adult Behavioral Health

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# Purpose

**Purpose: To examine policies and practices that help or hinder young adults' efforts to find and maintain stable housing.**

- Contextual issues
- Perspective of young adults
- Review housing support options and related research
- Recommendations

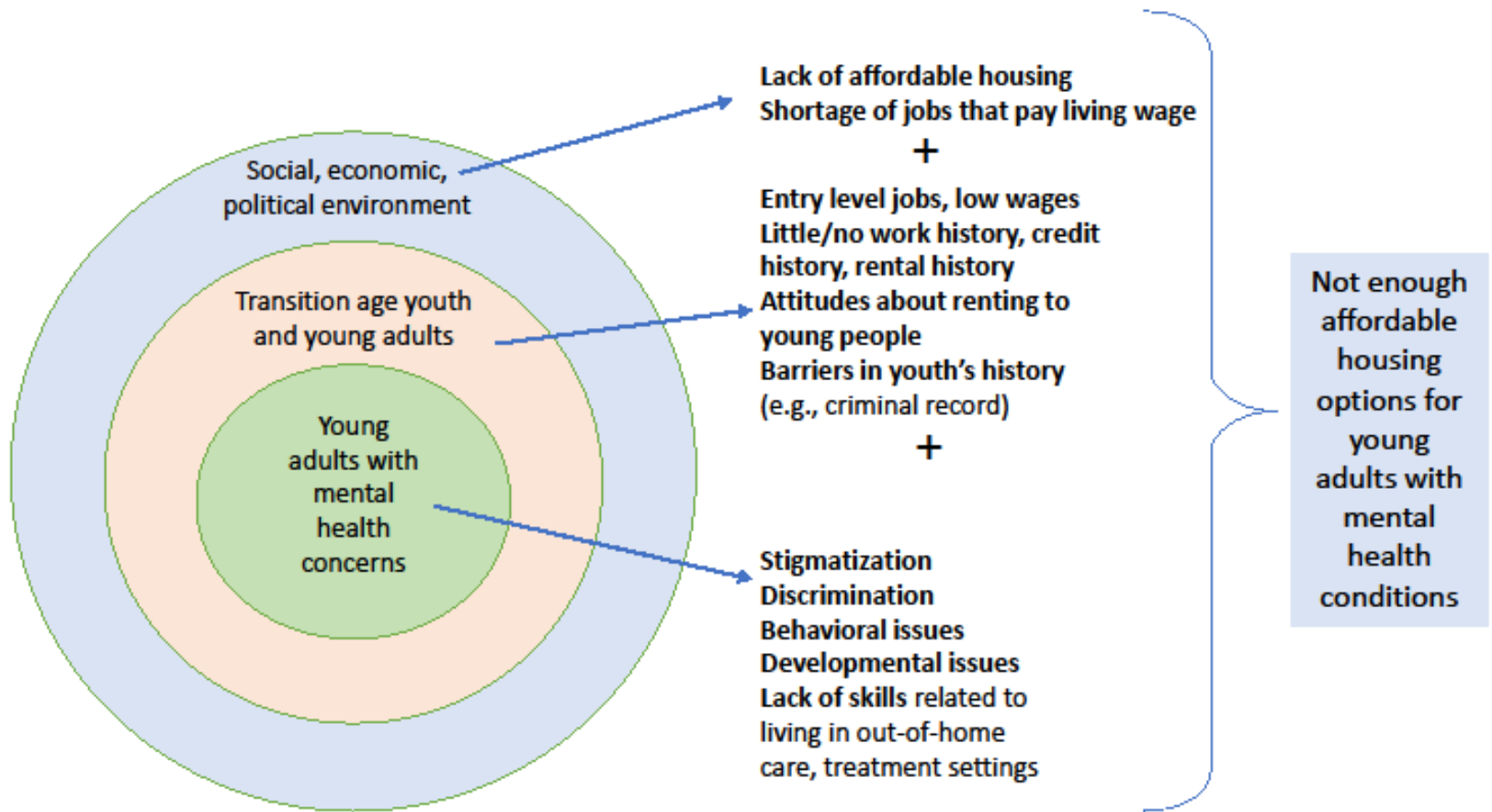


# Methods

- Iterative process
- Interviews with state, federal housing administrators, program directors.
- Review of literature that reported young adults' experiences and perspectives.
- Review of research literature about housing
- Website of national housing organizations
- Website and e-mail conversations with local and state programs



# Affordable and Stable Housing Context





# Other Contextual Issues

- Intersection of groups: homeless, child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice
- Cultural considerations
  - » Emphasis on independent living may be at odds with they and their families would prefer
  - » Choices about goals
- Family role
  - » Not recognized as a resources
  - » Normative for parents to provide financial support and housing
  - » Situation for each young person and family is unique
- Housing philosophy



# Housing Support Philosophy

- Housing First
  - » Immediate placement in permanent housing
  - » No housing readiness requirements
  - » Services are available but voluntary
- Continuum of Care (Treatment First)
  - » Building skills for living in independent housing
  - » Temporary housing, often congregate
  - » Mandatory case management, clean and sober, job, savings



# Perceptions of Young Adults

- First person accounts
- Include questions about some aspect of transition or a program focused on transition.
- One study with homeless youth was specifically about housing (Forchuk, et al, 2013)
- All were qualitative in design



# Research on Perceptions of Young Adults

- Nine studies that focused solely on youth and young adults with mental health challenges
- One study on young adults with mental health concerns and homelessness
- Five studies of young adults with both mental health and child welfare services
- One study of young adults with both developmental disabilities and mental health issues





## Research on Perceptions of Young Adults (cont.)

- Eighteen articles about experience of youth transitioning out of foster care
- Nine studies with homeless youth as primary informant
- One study of youth with physical or intellectual disabilities
- One study of post-secondary transition among Native Americans



# Perceptions of Young Adults: Some Findings

- Expectations for independence seemed unrealistic and confusing for some youth
- Young people may both want help and support and reject it
- Young people had wide ranging views of program helpfulness and quality
- Many reports about “mixed messages” that they should become self-reliant and independent while living with many rules and constraints
- Support needs included emotional support, instrumental (practical support), supportive relationships and support in obtaining information



# Review of Housing Options and Related Research

- Transitional Living Programs
- Host Homes
- Supported Housing



# Transitional Living Programs

- Focus is on building skills for independent living
- Provide safe living situation that is time limited
- May use a level system, compete one set of tasks before moving to next level of independence
- Congregate settings or clustered apartments
- Close supervision
- On-site staff

Note that the term transitional living program may also refer to programs that do not provide housing but do provide classes for skill building.



# Research on Transitional Living Programs

- Montgomery, Donkoh & Underhill, 2006
  - » Systematic review of Independent Living Programs
  - » All had positive finding regarding housing outcomes
- Rashid, 2004
  - » Homeless youth who had been in foster care
  - » Average length of stay was 7 months
  - » 90% were living in stable housing at 6 months post discharge
- Skemer & Valentine, 2016
  - » Evaluation of transitional living programs for youth in foster care
  - » Published by Youth Villages
  - » Did not provide housing
  - » Two year follow-up documented increased housing stability



# Critique

- Participants may get stuck at a level and drop out
- Participants have trouble finding housing after program
- Participants report mixed message between lots of rules vs expectation of independence



# Host Homes

- Private home that voluntarily host young people in need of shelter
- Level of supervision and restrictions vary
- May house more than one young adult
- Length of stay is open ended
- Home owner is not paid – may receive stipend for food
- Host Home Program – paid staff who coordinate program, negotiate conflict, provide case management for young people



# Research on Host Homes

- One study by Runaway and Homeless Youth TTA Center
  - » Average length of stay was 40 days
  - » 44% had mental health issues
  - » 38% had substance abuse issues
  - » At exit 54% went to live in a private residence
  - » Low follow up rate
- Two examples (may not be mental health):
  - » State of Washington
  - » Avenues for Youth – Minnesota





# Supported Housing

- Immediate permanent housing
- No housing readiness requirements
- A wide array of voluntary support services
- Full integration into the community
- Scattered site housing
- Consumer preference is primary



# Research on Supported Housing

- Effectiveness is well established for adults with mental health challenges, adults with substance abuse and adults who are homeless
- Kozloff, 2016
  - » Subset of data from larger Canadian study
  - » Randomized study compared housing first to treatment as usual
  - » At 24 months, intervention participants in stable housing 65% of the time vs 31% for comparison group



# Research on Supported Housing (cont.)

Gilmer, 2016

- Subset of larger study of permanent supported housing in California
- Comparison group created by propensity scoring
- Administrative data
  - » Young people in high fidelity supported housing had higher costs
  - » Found greater decline in use of inpatient programs
  - » Found greater increases in outpatient service use



# Research on Supported Housing (cont.)

## Stable Homes, Brighter Futures, 2015

- Established by Corporation for Supported Housing, Los Angeles, California
- Transition aged youth who are homeless and engage in high risk behaviors, 70% had mental health challenges
- Year 2 Interim Report
  - » 170 served, 30 exiters
  - » Average length of stay for exiters was 15 months
  - » More likely to be male and involved in criminal activities
  - » Positive increase in self-reported health status and service utilization (n=23)



# Choices Around Program Design

- Will the program provided scattered site, clustered housing or both?
- How will the program help young people manage the cost of housing?
- Will the use of services such as case management be voluntary or mandatory?
- Will the mental health organization build, own and/or manage the housing?
- What skills and attitudes do program staff need to have?



# Recommendations

- Conduct research on housing programs developed or modified for young adults
- Define outcomes for young adults. What does “permanent” and “stable” mean for someone who is 19 or 20?
- Include young people with lived experience in the discussion
- Investigate the perspective of family members and their potential roles
- Focus on interdependence as well as independence



# Coming Soon...

## *Housing and Transition: Meeting the Needs of Young Adults with Mental Health Conditions*

Authors: Barbara Friesen & Nancy Koroloff

- Available at [www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu](http://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu)
- Announced through RTC Updates (sign up now)



# For More Information or Questions

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