



Using Research to Improve Practice with Young People with Mental Health Needs: A U. S. Perspective

Pauline Jivanjee, Ph.D.

RTC on Pathways to Positive Futures

Portland State University

Portland, Oregon, USA

jivanjee@pdx.edu

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Research Methods

- Consultation with advisory groups of youth and young adults aged 17-24 to plan study.
- Recruited 59 participants with self-disclosed mental health conditions and diverse racial identities to participate in focus groups:
 - 36 males
 - 23 females
 - Age range 15-28 (mean 19.5, SD 2:45)
- Trained youth researchers (who had experience with mental health services) facilitated 12 90-minute focus groups with questions focused on community integration and experiences with services.
- Discussions were audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed.

Findings

Positive experiences with mental health services were related to:

- Practical assistance
- Independent living skills
- Provision of advocacy and leadership training
- Positive relationships with service providers were associated with their personal qualities:
 - Showed they cared, friendly
 - Were honest, genuine
 - Conveyed hope
 - Had personal experiences of difficulties

Findings

- Negative experiences with mental health services were linked with:
 - Lack of information and access to support
 - Inappropriate diagnoses and services
 - Concerns about confidentiality
 - Inflexible services -- Loss of supports at age 18
- Poor relationships with service providers were associated with:
 - Not being heard
 - Discouraging attitudes about youth aspirations
 - Lack of involvement in decisions
 - Not believing service providers had their interests at heart.

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- The Pathways Transition Training Collaborative (PTTC) is a national advisory committee of young people with mental health service experience, family members, and service providers and researchers focused on developing research-based training for service providers:
 - Developed core competencies.
 - Offered graduate social work course
 - Pilot-testing free 8-module asynchronous online training program that features narrated slides, video clips of young people, service providers, and family members, and interactive questions.

Training Module Themes	Content
1. Partnering with youth and young adults	Reviews core competencies gives an overview of the training series Provides tools for collaborative relationships using positive development and empowerment approaches.
2. Promoting recovery	Offers basic information on mental illness and resources for recovery, including diet, exercise, medication, peer support, and self-advocacy .
3. Meeting the needs of diverse young people	Teaches skills to provide culturally responsive supports for young people from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds
4. Providing individualized and developmentally appropriate services	Features research findings about brain development and trauma specific to young adults Addresses the implications for interventions.

Training Module Themes	Content
5. Developing healthy relationships	Focuses on strategies to overcome stigmatization and develop and maintain healthy relationships Addresses the specific needs of LGBTQ young people.
6. Planning partnerships with providers of other services and collaborating to bridge service gaps	Addresses attitudes and skills for cross-systems collaboration and strategies to overcome service gaps. Includes steps to obtaining accommodations.
7. Promoting support from family, peers, and mentors	Offers strategies to promote and maintain support from family and peers.
8. Using evidence-supported practices and individualizing interventions	Examines the features of best practices with young people based on positive youth development.

Note. Competencies based on Jivanjee, Brennan, & Sellmaier (2012).

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- See Pathways website for more information:
 - www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/project-trainingcollaborative.shtm