Promoting Support from Family, Peers, and Mentors

Module 9 Script

Slide 1: Introduction to Module 9
Welcome to the ninth module of the Promoting Positive Pathways to Adulthood Training Series, "Promoting support from family, peers, and mentors," which is being brought to you by the Research and Training Center on Pathways to Positive Futures at Portland State University.

The goal of the training program is to prepare service providers working with young people aged 14-29 with mental health difficulties to more effectively promote their positive transition to adulthood.

We have created ten hour-long modules based on a set of core competencies developed by the Pathways Transition Training Collaborative, which is an advisory committee of young adults, family members, practitioners and researchers. The ninth module is focused on strategies guided by youth self-determination to support and maintain family involvement, and ways to obtain and strengthen support from adult allies, peers, and mentors to support community living and participation.
At the conclusion of each slide, the marker labeled "onward" will be flashing. Please click on the marker "onward" to advance to the next slide.

Slide 2: Training series modules
This series of training modules is based on core competences. At the conclusion of the modules, participants will be better prepared to engage in activities designed to assist young adults with mental health difficulties to meet their personal goals as they become adults.

Although the modules are designed to be completed in this sequence, each can stand alone as an in-service training experience.

After you work through a module, you will be given a short quiz, and if you complete it successfully, you will receive a certificate of completion that you can use as a record of this continuing education experience.

The series focuses on:

1. Partnering with youth and young adults
2. Promoting recovery
3. Increasing cultural awareness and building community support
4. Fostering resilience and family supports
5. Promoting cross-cultural and intergenerational relationships

6. Providing individualized and developmentally appropriate services (The fourth module will focus on tailoring the services you offer to the individual needs and developmental stage of the young person.)
7. Supporting young peoples' healthy relationships
8. Planning partnerships with providers of other services and collaborating to bridge service gaps
9. Promoting support from family, peers, and mentors
10. Using evidence-supported practices and individualizing interventions

We have designed these modules to be interactive, so please work through the questions and exercises that you will encounter throughout each module.

Slide 3: Module 9

This module focuses on Promoting support from family, peers, and mentors. In it, we offer strategies guided by youth self-determination to support and maintain family involvement, and ideas about ways to obtain and strengthen support from peers, adult allies, and mentors to sustain community living and participation.

Slide 4: Promoting Support from Family, Peers, and Mentors: Five sections

In this training on promoting support from family, peers, and mentors, there are five sections:

1. Collaborating with young people to identify their preferred supports for community living and participation.
2. Promoting and enhancing support from families.
3. Connecting with community supports, including support from adult allies and faith communities.
4. Working with formal and informal mentors to support achievement of young people's goals.
5. Identifying and accessing peer support, including online supports.

Slide 5: Competency

This training addresses the 8th core competency: *Promotes support from family, peers, and mentors*.

A service provider with this competency:

- Assesses young people's wishes and encourages family members, peers, and mentors to provide support in ways preferred by the young person.
- Promotes, maintains, and (if appropriate) rebuilds family support and other supports to achieve young people's goals.
- Supports youth desires for relationships with friends and others who believe in them.

Slide 6: 9.1 Collaborating with young people to identify their preferred supports

The first section of this module focuses on collaborating with young people to identify their preferred supports for community living and participation. While service providers can form strong and supportive relationships with young people, typically there are time limits on involvement and

young people may be reluctant to stay engaged in formal support services. Therefore, there is a need to encourage positive relationships with family, friends, peers, and community members to enhance long-term resilience, quality of life, and community participation. This is particularly important for youth leaving systems such as foster care and juvenile justice whose social support networks may have been more limited (Blakeslee, 2018; Miller, Blakeslee, & Hope, 2018; Klodnick, et al., 2014; Vorhies et al., 2012). These young people will need trusting relationships to enable them to feel safe (Klodnick, et al., 2014) and access to social connections and role models to build social capital to gain access to job opportunities. These types of supportive relationships can also aid the development of "soft skills" such as effective communication and self-management to enhance success in the workplace or educational settings (Miller, Blakeslee, & Hope, 2018; Vorhies et al., 2012). We will examine the types of social support young people say they need and the importance of seeking and acting on youth input about supports.

Research has shown that social support has important effects on mental health and well-being among youth. According to Hefner and Eisenberg (2009), social support in the form of instrumental, informational, and emotional assistance from family, friends, and significant others can positively affect young people's self-esteem and self-efficacy, as well as buffering the negative effects of stress.

We will begin by exploring the different types of support and then consider young peoples' preferences in supportive relationships.

Slide 7: Types of Social Support [2:16]

Social support can come from formal and informal sources and it is particularly valuable during times of difficulty or stress. Formal support is delivered by service systems such as mental health, juvenile justice, vocational rehabilitation, and health as part of a treatment or care plan. Informal support is offered by family members, friends, romantic partners, neighbors, and other community members and it may be a single event or provided consistently or episodically over time according to needs and availability. As a service provider, your role is to provide formal support to the young people and families you work with. Since formal support usually ends when a young person transitions out of services, it may be helpful to encourage youth and young adults to strengthen their existing sources of informal support and to connect them with other sources of social support.

Both formal and informal support can include several elements, such as:

- Emotional support, including empathy, validation, affirmation, or encouragement during times of loss and challenge, and assistance with the intellectual and emotional processes of problem solving.
- Sharing information about existing community groups, such as support groups, educational activities, and activity groups where youth can meet other young people with similar interests.
- Material assistance to meet concrete needs, which could include money, clothes, or food, and furniture or other resources needed for setting up a first apartment.

- Finally, support includes practical help such as practicing interview skills for a job interview, accompanying a young person to an important meeting, or teaching a new skill like driving or managing on a limited budget.

Next, we will look at the common characteristics of supportive and caring relationships that are needed to promote youth resilience and successful transitions to adulthood.

Slide 8: Youth preferred social support [1:58]
In a study with young adults who had been served by formal systems, participants described the elements of social support that they most valued. First, consistency and regular availability over an extended time period was essential, so that young people felt that they could rely on the person to be there for them, when needed.

Feeling cared for, connected and loved was considered important and this sense of being cared for was a motivation for youth to take steps toward pursuing a successful adult life.

Empathy was expressed when a key helper possessed a shared understanding of specific experiences that enabled them to provide support in a more meaningful way.

Mutuality, defined as the process of give and take in relationships, was described as helpful because it allowed closer sharing between the young person and service provider. The young person developed an awareness that the support person was "real," as well as the possibility of young people giving support and feeling needed, as well as receiving support.

Finally, acceptance was valued because they felt accepted for who they were (Munson et al., 2015).

As well as being essential for service providers, these common elements are desirable qualities and behaviors for family members, peers, mentors, and allies seeking to support youth in pursuing self-determined goals.

When working with young people, you may want to examine your own ways of demonstrating them, as well as talking with young people about how members of their social networks exhibit them.

Slide 9: Effects of social support
Social support can assist young people to achieve their self-identified goals by providing opportunities to discuss and clarify those goals with an interested person. Supportive people can also help youth to develop strategies, practice skills, and gain encouragement, especially when they encounter setbacks. Support can also take the form of a social network of people who have relationships and resources that can help a young person to access a job or training opportunity, providing increased connectedness, and strengthening their belief that others will help.

Social support has also been shown to have strong effects on the mental health of young people, contributing to lower stress, reduced depression and fewer symptoms, with family support showing the strongest relationship to well-being including (Hefner & Eisenberg, 2009; Weber et al., 2010):

- Improved functioning
- Better decision making
- Acceptance of mental health challenges, and
- Improved follow through with treatment (Munson et al., 2015; Thorsteinsson, Ryan, & Sveinbjornsdottir, 2013).

For LGBTQ youth, social support is helpful in addressing youth loneliness, hopelessness, and mental health outcomes (McConnell, et al, 2015). Additionally, the presence of a larger and helpful social network has been associated with African American youths' greater use of school-based mental health services (Lindsey et al., 2010).

The next slide presents the first of our interactive questions.

Slide 10: Question 9.1
What are the key elements of supportive relationships for young people?
Please enter your ideas in the text box.

Slide 11: Promoting and enhancing family support
The second section of this module focuses on family support, and ways that service providers can strengthen family support for young people with mental health needs. Family support and involvement are significant factors in successful transitions to adulthood (Stein, et al., 2016). Many families already provide substantial emotional support and practical assistance to their adolescent and young adult children (Jivanjee et al. 2009; Miller et al., 2017). Particularly in times of economic difficulty and in the context of limited affordable housing availability (Friesen & Koroloff, 2018), for many young people, families are providing a home, meeting basic needs, and facilitating access to community and mental health resources. Family support also includes the understanding that families who are caring for a young person with a mental health condition are likely to experience challenges and stress, as well as frustration due to barriers to their involvement (Gerten & Hensley, 2014; Miller et al., 2017; Skubby et al., 2015). Consequently, family members may benefit from the support of other families who are currently dealing with, or who have previously dealt with, similar challenges and family support organizations. In this segment, we focus primarily on the support that families provide to their youth and young adult children, while also recommending resources to support families.

Slide 12: Shifting family relationships and the effects of mental health needs
First, we need to think about changes in family relationships for all youth in the transition years. Then we will consider the complexity of the changes in the presence of a mental health condition, so that you can tune in to parents' and family members' responses to their young person.

Typically, in adolescence parents anticipate youth becoming more independent, as peers and interests and activities outside the home become more central in their lives. Parents of the young person with a mental health condition may fail to understand their behaviors and become unsure of how to be helpful.

Additionally, families experience:

- Distress about youth experiences of stigmatization
- Fear and uncertainty about their child's future, and
- A sense of helplessness (Jivanjee, Kruzich, & Gordon, 2009)

They may also experience grief (Gerten & Hensley, 2014) and strain, which can impair their capacity to provide support to their child (Haber et al., 2012). Families may experience frustration and feelings of being burdened and not helped related to a lack of treatment options and long wait times (Miller et al., 2017; Skubby et al., 2015). Parents also report feeling disrespected by service providers and "de-skilled"—described by Harden (2005) as the process in which parents who had previously felt competent as parents were made to feel incompetent as they tried to navigate mental health services with their children in the transition years. Parents who have been strong advocates for their children in earlier years may find that they are excluded from services after youth reach the age of legal decision-making, which varies from state to state (Gerten & Hensley, 2014; Jivanjee, Kruzich, & Gordon, 2009; Skubby et al., 2015; Walker & Pearson, 2018).

For family members who are stressed, support from other families, especially from those connected with family support organizations, can be very helpful. Family members can obtain peer support, information, and resources from family support organizations such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI.org) and the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (FFCMH.org), both of which have local organizations and networks, as well as web-based resources. These organizations are included in our resource list.

In the video clip that follows, Corinne Spiegel, a parent and disability services coordinator, talks about parents wanting to help but being unsure of their role and provides possible ways service providers can facilitate family support.

Slide 13: Corinne Spiegel on facilitating family support [Video Clip]

Parents feel more helpless because as their young adults become more dependent and enter the care system for adults rather than for children, parents are not included and so they're bewildered about what to do. So providers are there to advise parents on how to be supportive—how to provide love and encouragement, and acceptance, without feeling the guilt as well.

[There are] two ways parents can be involved. One is easier if they happen to be legal guardians because they can be involved in medical appointments or the result of a medical appointment—getting a report on what was discussed. But when a young adult is meeting with a provider and isn't sure if they want their parents involved, the provider can explain to the young adult, sometimes, the benefit of having a parent involved and just saying, "We don't have to give them the whole

story," for example, "but let's include your parent in the discussion about maybe the medication, or maybe the treatment that you're expecting to do." It's a provider's position to try to help that young adult see the benefit, if there is [one], with having a parent included. But because the laws are the way they are, in most states once a young person is considered an adult, parents are no longer involved in treatment, and they have to be invited and approved by the young adult. And that would include signing a form indicating that the provider has the *legal authority* to talk to the parent. It should be by *mutual consent*. Hopefully the parent is interested in being involved, but certainly the provider needs to protect their own practice or involvement by asking the young adults to sign that it's okay to talk to parents, and that could include, with limitations.

Slide 14: Youth perceptions of family support

A 2012 interview study by McCann and associates reported on young people describing ways that family and significant others provided essential positive supports. Parents and siblings helped to strengthen resilience through expressing:

- Patience
- Tolerance of behaviors associated with their condition
- Understanding, and
- Encouragement (McCann, Lubman, & Clark, 2012)

In contrast, youth reported that lack of understanding, criticism, and family conflict among other family members compromised their ability to cope with depression. This included blaming and expressing anger in response to their depression-related behaviors. These authors recommend that service providers have important roles in increasing family members' and significant others' understanding of depression and through their provision of "timely, accessible, and enduring support" (p. 459), by facilitating their access to helpful resources.

Slide 15R: Trusting relationships with families

In McCann's study, young people with depression described trusting relationships with families as important because they:

- Allow youth to talk openly about their depression
- Are associated with being accessible
- Include willingness to give time and to listen
- Persist even when youth try to put them off
- And are linked with providing: Emotional support, Practical assistance, and Encouragement (McCann et al., 2012).

As a service provider, with youth permission, you might talk with family members about the ways that these relationship elements might be helpful to their child or sibling and how to be supportive.

Slide 16: Strengthening family support

Service providers have important roles in acknowledging and strengthening the support families provide to their youth and young adult members by:

- Demonstrating empathy with families' struggles

- Providing information and teaching families how to recognize and understand mental health difficulties
- Assisting families to find a balance between protecting youth and letting them make mistakes and learn from them
- Encouraging families to provide needed supports for young people, and
- Facilitating family access to resources and supports that can connect them with other families with similar challenges (McCann et al, 2012).

Parents of adolescent or young adult children experiencing a first episode of psychosis have expressed desires for service providers' honesty about their child's condition and the diagnostic process, and the provision of information about the disorder and available treatments (Skubby et al., 2015). Providers may also offer guidance and options to these parents and caregivers, even if the young person is not ready to engage in treatment (Miller et al., 2017). Parents benefit from receiving accurate information, encouragement, and connections to family support groups from service providers who demonstrate empathy (Gerten & Hensley, 2014). Parents may also gain relief for themselves, a reduction in stress, and comfort in knowing that their children are engaged in supportive relationships and enjoyable activities with a caring adult when they participate in services such as mentoring programs (Keller et al., 2018). We have prepared a tip sheet for service providers on strengthening family support, which is included in our resource list and is also available to download in Spanish.

Slide 17: Legal considerations with families
It is important for service providers to be prepared to discuss legal issues with families who are involved in their youth or young adult's services.

After young people reach a specific age which varies from state to state, and in some states is as low as 14, they are able to make their own health and mental health decisions without parental notification. So it is important to know the legal age of consent in your state to be able to advise youth and families.

There are also legal requirements for privacy and confidentiality in health and mental health care as laid out in the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act of 1996 (also known as HIPAA; PL 104-191). Providers cannot discuss health information with a parent unless the youth specifically grants permission. A HIPAA Release is a legal form that young persons can sign to authorize disclosure of protected health information to parents or other persons they designate. Knowing that families can be a valuable source of support, it can be useful to explore with young people the possible benefits of sharing information with their parents or other close family members as well as discussing their concerns with them. You can then assist them to decide what is in their best interests.

There are also legal options regarding competency. When a young adult is clearly not competent to make independent decisions, parents may petition the court to become their children's guardian,

conservator, or representative payee to make health care or financial decisions even though they have reached the age of majority.

Our resource list includes a comprehensive guide prepared by the Utah Chapter Parent Center for parents navigating transitions with their youth. Also, the Parent/Advocacy League of Massachusetts' legal guide for parents of youth with mental health needs, might be useful, although some of the information is specific to Massachusetts.

Slide 18: Families can share their experiences
Family members who have had their own mental health challenges can also be helpful to young people by sharing their own experiences of living with these difficulties.

For example, parents and siblings with experience of depression or knowledge of relatives with depression can:

- Share positive examples of effective treatment
- Help youth to access treatment
- Offer support and guidance based on their own experiences
- Suggest coping strategies that have been helpful
- Help youth to manage the impact of stigmatizing behaviors (Wisdom & Agnor, 2007).

If you are aware that a young person has family members who had experienced mental health difficulties, you can encourage the young person to talk with them and learn about what has been helpful for them.

In the next video, Corinne Spiegel talks about engaging families in providing support.

Slide 19: Corinne Spiegel on engaging families [Video Clip]
Providers need to recognize that the parents are often bewildered, afraid, scared, overwhelmed. They're concerned, but they're backing off because this is at an age when they expect to be less involved in their young adult's life. They have planned for more independence in their young adult's life and abilities to handle their own things, and it's at a time when they're ready to step back and look at other things that they have to concern themselves with. Service providers need to recognize that these are the issues parents are dealing with, and try to guide them in allowing them the luxury of recognizing that they're going through a very difficult time as well, and that the providers are there to give them information and support and encouragement. At the same time, assuring them that what their young adult might need is some one-on-one attention once in a while. Certainly, *letting go* is a difficult thing for parents with children at any age. I'm a parent of four children who are all in their 20s and early 30s and so letting go is still a difficult thing for me. I want to go in and fix things for them. I may have even been accused of being a "helicopter mom" now and then, but in reality providers need to guide parents a little bit on when to let service providers, or let the adult system, help their young adult more and encouraging them to let their child make some mistakes, let them fail sometimes. It's okay, it's part of the learning process, and that they're going to still survive; that what we need to do is have supportive parents but not those

who are taking care of everything that comes along. We don't want enablers—we want parents who are encouraging, and loving, and supportive, but not there with the idea that they need to fix everything.

Slide 20: Question 9.2
What do you think are valuable elements of family support?

Slide 21: Connecting young people with community supports
In this section, we will explore sources of support outside the family and service system. Youth and young adults with mental health difficulties may withdraw socially and lose community connections, which can result in loneliness. These losses are attributable both to symptoms of their illness, and the stigmatization and discrimination they may experience from peer groups and social networks (Sale et al., 2018). As we noted earlier, like other young people, youth and young adults with mental health needs want to feel normal, to access community resources, opportunities, and support, to be connected with friends and others, and to engage in similar activities to those pursued by other young people.

Community participation is a young person's self-determined engagement in the naturally occurring life of a community through participation in employment, education, volunteer activities, and social and recreational activities.

In an interview study (Wisdom, Clarke, & Green, 2006), one respondent, complaining about over-prescribing of medications, encouraged service providers to push community supports such as a YMCA or summer camp, instead of pushing meds.

The authors recommend that:

- Service providers listen to youth's expressed preferences for supportive relationships and activities to pursue their interests and achieve their goals,
- Assist them to identify people and venues where they find what they wish for,
- And if necessary "walk with" them through the early stages of making connections or strengthening existing supports (Wisdom, Clarke, & Green, 2006).

Slide 22: Types of community support
Most communities have a variety of activities for youth and young adults that provide sources of material assistance and opportunities to connect with others around shared interests.

As a service provider, you can develop your knowledge of available supports in your community to be able to refer youth who are seeking support outside of the mental health system.

Examples could include the YMCA and other community-based youth groups, drop-in centers, and food banks.

Youth may also be interested in engaging with community supports associated with shared interests in sports, art, music, theater, and outdoor activities such as swimming, biking or hiking.

For LGBTQ youth, there are many support groups and gay-straight alliances in schools and colleges that you can help connect young people with.

Slide 23: Preferred community supports
In a focus group study by Jivanjee, Kruzich, and Gordon (2007), youth and young adults were asked about their experiences and preferences related to community engagement.

They reported wanting to engage in activities that allowed them to connect with others with shared interests such as music, sport, or hiking.

Youth described their desires for access to meaningful adult roles, including employment and the importance of having colleagues and supervisors who had some understanding of their mental health difficulties. For low-income young adults, community assistance included access to basic needs and resources, such as food, housing, and use of computers for information seeking related to employment and supportive services.

Young people reported seeking opportunities to express their creativity, such as through art or to engage in pursuits such as gardening.

For some youth, participation in volunteer activities gave them opportunities to practice employment-related skills as well as feeling needed and forming relationships with others.

Finally, youth appreciated having mutual support through connections with others in their community who had experienced mental health conditions.

These findings might give you clues about goals and areas of interest to explore with young people as you work together to identify possible sources of community support.

Slide 24: Support for college students
For many students with mental health conditions, going away to college can be an isolating experience. There is also support available through NAMI on Campus groups. If you are working with a young person planning to go to college, or who is currently at college, you can find out if there is a NAMI on Campus group at that college on the website which is included in our resource list. NAMI on Campus provides peer support, information, and resources to support students' mental health and to empower them to take action on their college campuses. It helps to ensure that all students have positive, successful, and enjoyable college experiences.

Active Minds is another peer-run organization that empowers students to change perceptions of mental health on college campuses.

In the next video clip, Corinne Spiegel talks about community support.

Slide 25: Corinne Spiegel discusses community support [Video Clip]
There are some young people though, who have no family connection at all and for those people it might be guiding/abetting these young adults to find other places they can go for support. It might be their religious organization or church or synagogue or temple; it might be a social club that's in the community; it might be an organization such as Youth MOVE; it might be an organization such as a YWCA or YMCA down the street; it might even be helping somebody else as a mentor. But getting them involved with other people in the community can sometimes serve as a replacement for a family that may not be there for them.

Slide 26: Support from faith communities
For many people dealing with mental health challenges and stress in their lives, spirituality is used as a coping strategy, to help with meaning-making and as a source of comfort.

Membership of a faith community can be helpful because of the spiritual, emotional, social, and material support that members of faith communities can provide to participants. In addition, faith communities often sponsor youth groups that provide rich opportunities for intergenerational relationships, as well as ongoing encouragement and mentoring through youth outreach and services to disadvantaged youth (Rhodes & Chan, 2008; Schwartz, Lowe, & Rhodes, 2012).

Pastors, ministers, and other faith leaders play important roles in identifying and addressing mental health needs in members of their faith communities. In the study by Jivanjee and her co-workers (2007) mentioned earlier, some youth described the importance of their spiritual beliefs, and affiliation with a particular faith group, and a few mentioned connections with faith communities.

DeKraai and his colleagues (2011) have proposed a model for faith communities to use their resources and assets to enhance the effectiveness of behavioral health systems at multiple levels and to support young people with mental health needs within the context of their faith.

Slide 27: Faith-based support and culturally diverse youth
There is evidence that culturally diverse youth are less likely to access mental health services and instead rely on families, peers, other adult allies, and community supports.

In many families, prayer and spirituality may be used as coping strategies. Traditional healing practices may be preferred, especially among Native American and Hispanic or Latino families.

While youth from many communities benefit from faith-based support and gain comfort from their spirituality, there is some evidence that African American youth experience higher levels of spiritual support. Urban churches serving African American communities provide a wide range of supportive community-based activities for youth, including mentoring programs, and some Black churches are recognized for supporting people with mental health conditions and connecting them with resources and services (Taylor et al., 2000). However, there are wide variations within all

population groups and therefore it's important to explore the roles of spiritual beliefs and faith community participation in the well-being of young people you are working with (Cauce et al., 2002; Lindsay, et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 2000).

It is also important to facilitate access of faith leaders to culturally appropriate sources of information about mental health conditions and to explore young people's preferences for sources of cultural support.

Next, we'll hear from Corinne Spiegel, and also Don Schweitzer, an associate professor of social work at Pacific University in Oregon, and India, a young woman participating in a mentoring program, who will talk about the importance of support from faith communities.

Slide 28: Corinne Spiegel, Don Schweitzer, and India discuss faith communities [Video Clip]
Corinne: We need to recognize that religious or spiritual connections are really important for people, and that for many years, I think, professionals thought that religion and religious support was something else out there in the community but it didn't involve the kind of support they're giving an individual. But we find out now that people with mental illness can be very spiritual, and need to feel connected. So as a professional, one of the things I've done is go to people within different churches and synagogues, talk with the leadership (including the clergy), but also the educational directors, and anybody else involved in the leadership capacity, to figure out ways that they can be more accepting and inclusive of people with mental illness.

Don: Once that work's done, I think—especially the faith community—there's just a huge opportunity to engage the faith community in ways to provide programs, services. I'm still thinking about employment—real employment opportunities, mentoring opportunities. Helping young people be connected and stay connected their community, I think, is a critical part of young people kind of taking that step back and saying, "this is my community."

India: My pastor from church—he really helps me understand the things that I don't understand, like putting God into my life and understanding that, if you do something wrong and you feel like you can't be forgiven, God would forgive you either way. You're his child so he's going to forgive you. I feel as though I've been through a lot growing up in understanding that I am forgiven for whatever I have been through or done. It's like the best thing that I could ever encounter.

Slide 29: Question 9.3
What is **not** a positive example of community support for youth with mental health difficulties? Please check the correct answer.

Slide 30: 9.4 Working with formal and informal mentors
In Section 4, we focus on working with formal and informal mentors. Mentoring has been demonstrated to be an effective source of support for some young people, including those with mental health challenges.

A mentor is a caring person who provides companionship, support and guidance to a young person, with a goal of developing their skills and character (Rhodes et al., 2006).

Informal (or what is sometimes termed "natural") mentoring has a long history of young people gaining information, advice and support, coping capacities, skills, and social connections through relationships with significant adults in their lives, and there is increasing evidence of the benefits of programs supporting youth-initiated mentoring (Schwartz et al., 2013; Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016; Spencer et al., 2016). Additionally, there are formal mentoring programs in which a volunteer is introduced to a young person for the purpose of developing a relationship that may include promoting personal and social skills, enhancing psychological well-being, fostering community involvement, and preparing youth to be successful adults (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). These programs may be community-based, such as Big Brothers, Big Sister (BBBS) or Friends of the Children, school-based, or integrated in other youth services (Schwartz, Lowe, & Rhodes, 2012) and they may focus specifically on developing supportive relationships with youth or may involve parents in different ways (Keller, 2005). There are also programs such as tutoring or coaching that are not designed specifically as mentoring programs but provide opportunities for natural or informal mentoring relationships (Beltman & McCallum, 2006). Whether formal or informal, mentoring relationships provide a context for the development of resilience, and they may be especially valuable for youth and young adults who do not have a strong family support system. As a service provider, you may want to inquire about the presence of an informal mentor in young peoples' lives, and consider encouraging the development of a formal or informal mentoring relationship to support them to increase their well-being, connect with opportunities and resources, and achieve goals.

Slide 31: Mentoring and youth development

There are possibilities of informal mentoring relationships in communities of all sizes, and many larger communities have formal mentoring programs provided through such organizations as Big Brothers, Big Sisters and Friends of the Children. Both are well worth exploring with youth. Whether formal or informal, youth mentoring has been demonstrated as having beneficial effects on youth developments. Typically, mentors promote youth development in the following ways:

- Enhancing emotional well-being, through a caring mentoring relationship that provides support in dealing with stress,
- Increasing social skills by conveying that the youth is valued and building confidence in developing knowledge and skills,
- Improving personal competence and intellectual skills through instruction and dialogue,
- Fostering identity development by serving as a role model and advocate, and
- Expanding social networks by connecting youth with opportunities for employment and other activities (Keller et al., 2018: Rhodes, et al., 2006).

All of these may be relevant to the well-being and resilience of youth with mental health conditions.

First, we will discuss the roles of formal mentors.

Slide 32: Roles of formal mentors

Formal mentoring programs are growing in popularity as a way of engaging community members who want to volunteer with youth who are facing challenges in their lives. There are wide variations in the goals and strategies used, the amount of training provided to mentors, and the frequency and intensity of contact.

Research on mentoring programs shows that the most successful mentors engage in developmental relationships based on their belief that their purpose is to meet the needs of the young person. They are described as flexible, supportive, reassuring, and kind, and they allow time for the youth to gain trust that they will provide reliable support.

Effective mentors identify the needs and interests of the youth and encourage youth to select mutually enjoyable activities. They respond to requests for help in a non-judgmental way, offer problem-solving ideas, and avoid criticizing and lecturing (Keller, 2007).

These roles may be useful to consider as you talk with youth about mentors.

Slide 33: Youth mentoring outcomes

While some mentoring research indicates only modest benefits to youth, and even harm in situations where mentoring relationships end prematurely, in general high-quality mentoring relationships result in benefits to youth in three aspects of development: social-emotional, cognitive, and positive identity when the relationship between youth and mentor is based on a foundation of mutuality, trust, and empathy (DuBois & Keller, 2017; Rhodes & Lowe, 2008; Schwartz, Lowe, & Rhodes, 2012). Due to mutual influence among these developmental domains, increased self-esteem and positive self-perception of academic abilities may contribute to cognitive and identity development while the social-emotional benefits may result in improved family and peer relationships (Schwartz et al., 2012, p. 20). Research on youth mentoring for young people has shown that youth see the mentoring relationship as a means to master skills, explore opportunities, and achieve valued goals (Keller, 2007).

Specifically, mentoring has been associated with outcomes such as:

- Reduced feelings of sadness and loneliness, and **increased**:
  - Mental health and problem-solving skills
  - Self-confidence, self-worth, and motivation
  - Understanding of, and management of, emotions
  - School success and self-assurance
  - Skills in refusing alcohol and other drugs, and
  - Skills for successful adult life (Beltman & MacCallum, 2006, p. 25; Osterling & Hines, 2006).

In the next video clip, Dr. Thomas Keller, Professor of Social Work at Portland State University, and Director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Mentoring Research, talks about the goals of formal mentoring programs.

Slide 34: Tom Keller on formal mentoring programs [Video Clip]
Programs for transition-age youth should think about what they are helping the youth to achieve. So the one I referred to before, "My Life" program for example—it's about promoting *self-determination* and helping youth to become advocates for themselves in thinking about their future and the services that they want and need, and how to *think* about their goals and how to *pursue* those goals.

Slide 35: Ideal qualities of mentors
In their reviews of research on youth mentoring, Beltman & MacCallum (2006) and Deutsch & Spencer (2009) identified the following ideal qualities and behaviors:

Good mentors:

- Are good listeners and tolerant
- Are friendly, empathic, and nurturing
- Are non-judgmental
- Have developmentally appropriate expectations informed by youth preferences
- Provide appropriate support and challenge
- Are able to set limits and follow through, and
- Are able to relate well to young people (Beltman & MacCallum, 2006; Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Additionally, the mentor's role changes over time from showing empathy and giving advice, to acknowledging the personal strengths of the mentee and empowering her or him.

Slide 36: Youth preferences in mentoring
In research studies by Renee Spencer and her collaborators, youth involved in formal mentoring programs have been found to value mutuality and empathy in their relationships with mentors. The young people have reported a preference for the active participation of both parties in constructing the relationship by being open, respectful, understanding, and responsive in their interactions (Spencer, Jordan, & Sazama, 2004, cited by Keller, 2007). These authors also report that research on helping relationships shows that helpers generally are more effective when they demonstrate the qualities of empathy, a positive attitude, warmth and authenticity.

Next we hear from Rena Allen, a professional mentor at Friends of the Children, a national youth mentoring organization with programs in Boston, New York, Seattle, and in Portland and Klamath Falls, Oregon. Rena talks about how she builds mentoring relationships with youth, and then India, a young woman participating in Friends of the Children reflects on her relationship with her mentor, "Miss Rena."

Slide 37: Rena Allen and India discuss mentor-mentee relationships [Video Clip]
Rena: Share some of the person that's working with them—some of their personal struggles, something that can connect them to the young people, and then I believe a lot of times our young people will let some of their guards down as they build that trust, and then they can begin to open

up. It's not going to happen overnight, but it's going to take some work, being open and honest. I don't think our youth can ask for any more. Just be down to earth. “Don't judge me when I walk through the door. Don't put me in—don't put me in the category with everybody else”—and that's coming directly from the young people I work with. I'm, you know, “Just because I'm 17 I'm not the same 17-year-old that might be doing something different.” So again, it will take you back to the very beginning to get to know the young people, and to not judge, and to be open and honest with these young people, to listen to them, to hear them out when they're ready to talk. Let them talk and maybe give some feedback, but not always suggestions. And ask them: do they want some feedback? Or ask them if they want your opinion, because on a lot of occasions, I may be driving down the street with some of the youth I work with and they're telling me about their day and telling me about what went on and then I ask, “Now, do you want me to comment or do you want me to answer any of your questions?” and sometimes it's literally, “No, I just needed you to hear what I have to say,” and sometimes that's one of the best things that we do is to just listen.

India: She's like my diary. Like, I tell my mentor everything. And so like, when I go through something, I can call her, I can text her. When I see her, I can just run through whatever I'm going through and she actually listens and she gives me good advice. So I'll feel relieved—I don't have this burden on my shoulders and I can just be relaxed.

Slide 38: Informal mentors
Informal or “natural” mentors are non-parental adults who provide ongoing guidance, instruction, and encouragement to develop youth character and skills.

Informal mentoring is much more prevalent and more variable than formal mentoring in terms of length, frequency of contact, and types of shared activities. Informal mentors are particularly important in later adolescence as youth seek more autonomy from parents and formulate and work toward goals. In a study of African American youth (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010), informal mentoring relationships were found to moderate the relationship between stress and depressive symptoms and the researchers suggested that mentors may provide youth with resources to cope more effectively with stress and enhance their sense of self-worth. Homeless youth also reported that in the absence of supportive parents, they highly valued the practical, emotional, and informational support, and feedback provided by informal mentors and that this enhanced their mental and physical health by buffering the effects of stress (Dang et al, 2013).

In another study, young people reported their appreciation of the mutuality of informal mentoring relationships. They specifically valued honesty, respect, and openness to learning from one another, including learning from failures and mistakes (Spencer, 2007).

Slide 39: Elements of effective informal mentoring relationships
Informal mentoring relationships that have been shown to be most effective in buffering stress and improving mental health have been associated with:

- Close interpersonal relationships
- Long duration, and
- Frequent contact

These relationships help young people to build key interpersonal skills, establish or strengthen a sense of secure attachment, improve self-acceptance, and more successfully manage conflict in other relationships (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2014).

For African American young people, informal mentors who share their race may be more able to connect with them, given their shared histories, life experiences, and values (Hurd & Sellers, 2013).

New informal mentoring relationships may develop in young adulthood with new connections in employment or education (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2014). Also, some youth may benefit from multiple informal mentors in a context in which caring adults are available to them, but not necessarily assigned to them individually (Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016).

Slide 40: Youth-initiated mentoring

Youth-initiated mentoring (YIM) is a new approach to encouraging and supporting young people that combines the advantages of formal and informal mentoring. In YIM, youth nominate an adult from their existing social network with YIM staff providing screening, training, and supporting the nominated adult (Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016). Preliminary research indicates that YIM relationships were more likely to endure when youth chose their mentors and when mentors were of the same race, and that these relationships were associated with positive educational, vocational, and behavioral outcomes 3 years after entering the study (Schwartz et al., 2013).

The YIM approach empowers young people to identify, draw upon, and strengthen existing support and has the benefit of enduring relationships that can provide significant emotional and practical support. YIM participants described their prior connections and shared backgrounds as facilitating trust and persistence in their relationships (Spencer et al., 2016). Young people also felt that having a mentor who had faced similar challenges gave them hope and strategies for a better future (Spencer et al., 2016).

In the next video, Tom Keller talks about informal mentoring in the community.

Slide 41: Tom Keller on informal mentoring [Video Clip]

Some of the distinctions between informal and formal mentoring are interesting in this context because sometimes *informal mentors* can do things that would not be allowed of mentors in formal programs. So for example, one youth who happened to be in foster care talked about an informal mentor that she had who drove her out of state to go to a relative's funeral, which was a very important thing for her to do. But of course, in a program the mentor would not have been allowed to do an overnight trip out of state—you know, something like that—because of program guidelines. So sometimes there are examples in which that informal relationship which is developed naturally with somebody that the youth already knows can do more personally meaningful things because they don't have all of the program guidelines dictating what's allowed or what's not allowed. Now, the program guidelines are important. They typically have a reason for their existence, but sometimes a program mentor cannot be there in the same way as a family

friend or a relative or somebody like that. But I think that's often the goal of these programs: to try to replicate a close relationship that the youth knows they can count on.

Slide 42: Question 9.4
What are the two or three ways you believe that mentoring is most beneficial for young people? Please check your selections.

Slide 43: Partnering with peer support providers
For most youth and young adults, friends are important sources of support. However, widespread stigma may inhibit young people from disclosing their experience of a mental health condition and constrain their willingness to engage in traditional mental health services.

For these youth, support from peers who have lived experience of mental health difficulties and are further along in their recovery may be perceived as more acceptable. Peer support providers may be perceived by youth as more credible and understanding of their concerns than non-peer providers, and they may be helpful in engaging youth in treatment and in navigating the disconnect between child- and adult-serving systems (Gopalan et el., 2017). Service providers may play important roles in assisting youth to identify and connect with peer support providers who may be employed in a wide range of supportive activities and roles.

Slide 44: Peer support and recovery
Support and services offered by people who have also experienced mental health difficulties are preferred by many youth and young adults because they have "been there" and are living examples of recovery as well as offering personal encouragement and a vision for a better future. According to Delman and Klodnick (2017), peer support can provide a young person with a sense of mutuality and trust that generates hope and confidence to take steps towards recovery. Young adult peers who are further along in their recovery can share similar and recent experiences of challenges, and inspire hope, empowerment, and self-esteem, which can in turn lead to symptom reduction (Delman & Klodnick, 2017). Peer support providers can also reduce stigma and enhance young people's capacities to manage their condition and treatment due to increased knowledge, skills, and confidence, thus contributing to reduced frequency of hospitalizations (Gopalan et al., 2017, p. 89). For young people experiencing a first episode of psychosis, peer support as part of a comprehensive early intervention program can help to increase hope and empowerment and facilitate recovery by supporting recovery skills and helping to make reconnections with others (Sale et al, 2018).

Slide 45: Peer support programs
A wide range of peer support specialist roles have been implemented, including group management, bridge to services, assistant to clinical mental health providers, and case manager (Gopalan et al., 2017). Generally, peer programs employ peer support specialists to develop, give, and receive support with goals of:

- Overcoming stigma
- Preventing discrimination

- Promoting self-help groups, and
- Promoting recovery from mental illness (Galasso et al, 2009).

While peer support may be provided through traditional mental health agencies, some peer support programs operate through residential programs or clubhouses or drop-in center venues. Clubhouses and drop-in centers are safe and supportive community centers that offer young adults who have mental health conditions a place to spend time where they feel accepted and supported, and where they work with other young people toward recovery and achievement of their full potential. Once relationships are developed in one of these settings, peer support may also be provided in community settings. Additionally, some peer support programs employ near peers to support youth to achieve specific goals, such as successful transition from foster care (Klodnick et al, 2014), or success in college (Philips et al., 2013) or employment (Klodnick, et al., 2015).

Slide 46: Outcomes of peer support

Studies of mutual support and consumer-managed services for adults experiencing mental illness, depression, anxiety, and bereavement show there is some evidence of the benefits. With the awareness that peers are typically vital sources of support for youth and young adults, peer support is viewed as a promising strategy for young people and it is increasingly popular in services for young people with mental health conditions. A number of studies reviewed by Gopalan and associates (2017) demonstrated positive outcomes of peer support initiatives, such as increased hopefulness, confidence, empowerment, and well-being, reduced substance abuse, improved family relationships, and greater success in education and employment. However, these studies used small samples and there is a need for more clearly specified role descriptions and outcomes and rigorous research methods to be able to draw firm conclusions about the benefits of peer support (Gopalan, et al., 2017; Walker, Baird, & Welch, 2018). In the meanwhile, peer support offers advantages that many young people prefer to traditional mental health service providers and peer support providers may be instrumental in engaging young people in services.

Slide 47: Advantages of peer support

According to Goldstrom and her associates (2006):

- Peer supports provide an array of types of supports and services in an atmosphere of mutual support and respect.
- A focus of peer support is on recovery and resilience.

Engagement in peer support also provides opportunities for mutuality, giving young people a way to give back and have a relationship that goes both ways. This in turn provides a way for young people to feel normal, needed, and good about themselves (Munson et al., 2015). Another advantage is reduced effects of stigma and discrimination (Goldstrom et al, 2006, p.101). Across a number of studies, young people expressed appreciation for relationships with peer support providers, including their empathy, shared life experiences, and understanding (Gopalan, et al., 2017). In addition, they appreciated specific peer support providers' qualities, such as authenticity, trustworthiness, strength, and flexibility (Gopalan, et al., 2017).

Slide 48: Examples of peer support services

Peer support programs for youth and young adults have been developed in several areas, where young adults with lived experience of mental health difficulties receive training to support other young people who are encountering challenges.

Here we provide examples of innovative peer support services, with more details in our resource list.

- First, at the Youth and Family Training Institute in Pennsylvania, young adults are trained and supervised to provide support and advocacy to youth, as well as helping them to find their voice and connect to others. http://www.yftipa.org
- The Youth Empowerment Support (YES!) Program in Auburn, California hires and trains staff 18 years of age and older who have knowledge of local systems, to provide support to young people aged 12 through 26 in three phases: first, an introductory phase allows an assessment of the level of support needed, then a phase of intensive or periodic support focuses on providing support, connecting youth with community resources, and assisting them to learn to navigate systems independently. The final transition phase focuses on ensuring that youth have the resources they need to move forward. http://www.youthempowermentsupport.com
- Youth MOVE provides peer support, advocacy, and leadership nationally, and through local chapters. Peer support providers work with youth to stay in school and work toward graduation or getting a GED, to obey the law, and to work toward their own goals. https://www.youthmovenational.org
- Active Minds provides campus-based peer support and empowers students in college to change the perception about mental health on college campuses. http://www.activeminds.org
- As Tom Keller mentioned, the Better Futures project at Portland State University was a peer support program for young people transitioning from foster care, offering Individualized peer coaching by a near peer who is a young adult who has had similar experiences to those of the young person seeking support. https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/p2c-better-futures
- A follow-up project, named Project FUTURES, applies a similar model of near peer mentoring for college students transitioning from foster care. In both projects, peer coaches are further along in their recovery and education and focus on helping those they are supporting to complete the steps needed to get to, and be successful in, college.

In the next video clip, Martin Rafferty, Director of YouthMOVE Oregon, talks about YouthMOVE as a peer support provider and the benefits of peer support and Tom Keller discusses peer mentoring

Slide 49: Martin Rafferty and Tom Keller talk about peer support [Video Clip]

Martin: Youth MOVE Oregon is a state chapter of a national movement. MOVE is an acronym for Motivating Others through Voices of Experience. And the work that we do is—we utilize peers, and that means folks who have been through the systems. Our primary audience are—our primary youth are mental health, so we work with young people in the mental health system and as an

audience, because we also work with folks who are providing services to youth in the mental health system, and we also work with families of youth in the mental health system. So it's not just about working with youth—it's also about working with families and about working with professionals. We have drop-in centers across the state and leadership curriculum groups across the state. So our goals are to make young people into leaders of their own lives and then eventually have them come back and be leaders in the system. So Youth MOVE is kind of a direct service, but also an advocacy service as well, fueled by the young people themselves.

One great alternative to medications or just using medications is *peer support*. It's having young people who've gone through the mental illness that another youth is going through, and coming and talking to them about what's going on. Peer support has helped so many of our young people really step through some of the barriers of dealing with everyday life.

Tom: Another trend we're seeing is for what I call "*near peer mentors*"—people who have had a similar experience but are further down the road. So we're talking about transition-age youth—so maybe early adults who left the system themselves and had to navigate that transition, and then they sort of have some instant credibility for having been there and knowing what it's really like and having figured out how to make the transition. So I think that can be very powerful. It can give them that instant credibility and they might have a better insight into what strategies are going to be effective. So I think that, again, it's all a matter of how programs are designed to meet the needs of the youth that they're serving and what's the best strategy for them to do that, so that factors into which mentors are appropriate for them to use and how they're trained, and again, what the activities might look like.

Slide 50: Online support resources

Young people in rural areas who have little access to community supports, or who resist them after encountering stigmatizing behavior, or whose mental health condition makes it difficult to engage with others face-to-face may gain valued information and emotional support from online support resources (Chung, 2013). Young people with mental health symptoms have reported benefits such as social connectedness and a sense of group belonging from their online interactions with peers sharing personal stories and strategies for coping with the challenges of their condition (Naslund et al., 2016). Through learning from peers online, young people can gain information about important health care decisions and personal empowerment and hope that can lead to challenging stigma. While there are risks such as exposure to misleading information, or derogatory comments, Naslund and colleagues (2016) conclude that the benefits of online peer-to-peer support appear to outweigh the risks. Examples of online support include the following sites:

OK2TALK – is designed to create a community for teens and young adults struggling with mental health problems and to encourage them to share their personal stories of struggle, hope, and recovery: http://ok2talk.org

ULifeline is an anonymous, confidential, online resource center, where young people in college can be comfortable searching for the information they need regarding emotional health: http://www.ulifeline.org

The Trevor Project is a national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ young people under 25. http://www.thetrevorproject.org

These are all useful sources of support that may appeal to youth who are reluctant to engage in face-to-face relationships or who are "wired." They are included in the resource list that accompanies this module, along with several other sources of online support.

Slide 51: References and Resources
We have prepared resource and reference lists to accompany this module. These lists include many key publicly available resources regarding family, peer, mentor, and community supports, as well as references we have used in preparing this module.

Now, we'd like to introduce you to the tenth module.

Slide 52: Next module—Using evidence-supported practices and individualizing interventions
We would like to invite you to participate in Module 10, *Using evidence-supported practices and individualizing interventions.* This tenth and final module of our training series focuses on improving services offered to emerging adults by incorporating practices based on sound evidence from research studies including those focused on positive youth development. We also argue that the interventions we offer must be individualized, based on the preferences of the young people being served, and their cultural background. Then we discuss the importance of partnering with young people to evaluate the effectiveness of the services, and improve their quality.

Finally, we conclude the ninth module with a quiz covering the major areas of content.

Slide 53: Acknowledgements
We'd like to acknowledge and thank the people who contributed to the development of this module on promoting support from family, peers, and mentors.

Slide 54: Funders
The contents of this module were developed through funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, and from the Center for Mental Health Services.

Slide 55: Module 9 Quiz
Please complete each of the 10 questions as part of your training experience. Please check the BEST answer for each question. Participants who successfully complete this final part of the training will be able to print out a certificate of completion.