



Transitions from Youth to Adulthood: Insights from Literature and Practice in Calgary and Area



Agenda

- Background and Purpose of the YTA Project
- Review of findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2
- Early thoughts on Phase 3
- Small and Large Group Discussion: Where are the opportunities for improving Youth Transitions to Adulthood in Calgary and Area?
- Wrap up



Calgary & Area RCSD

- In 2017 - focus on the transition needs of children and youth across the lifespan focusing on three main populations:
 - children aged 0 to 5
 - school aged children
 - youth about to transition to adulthood



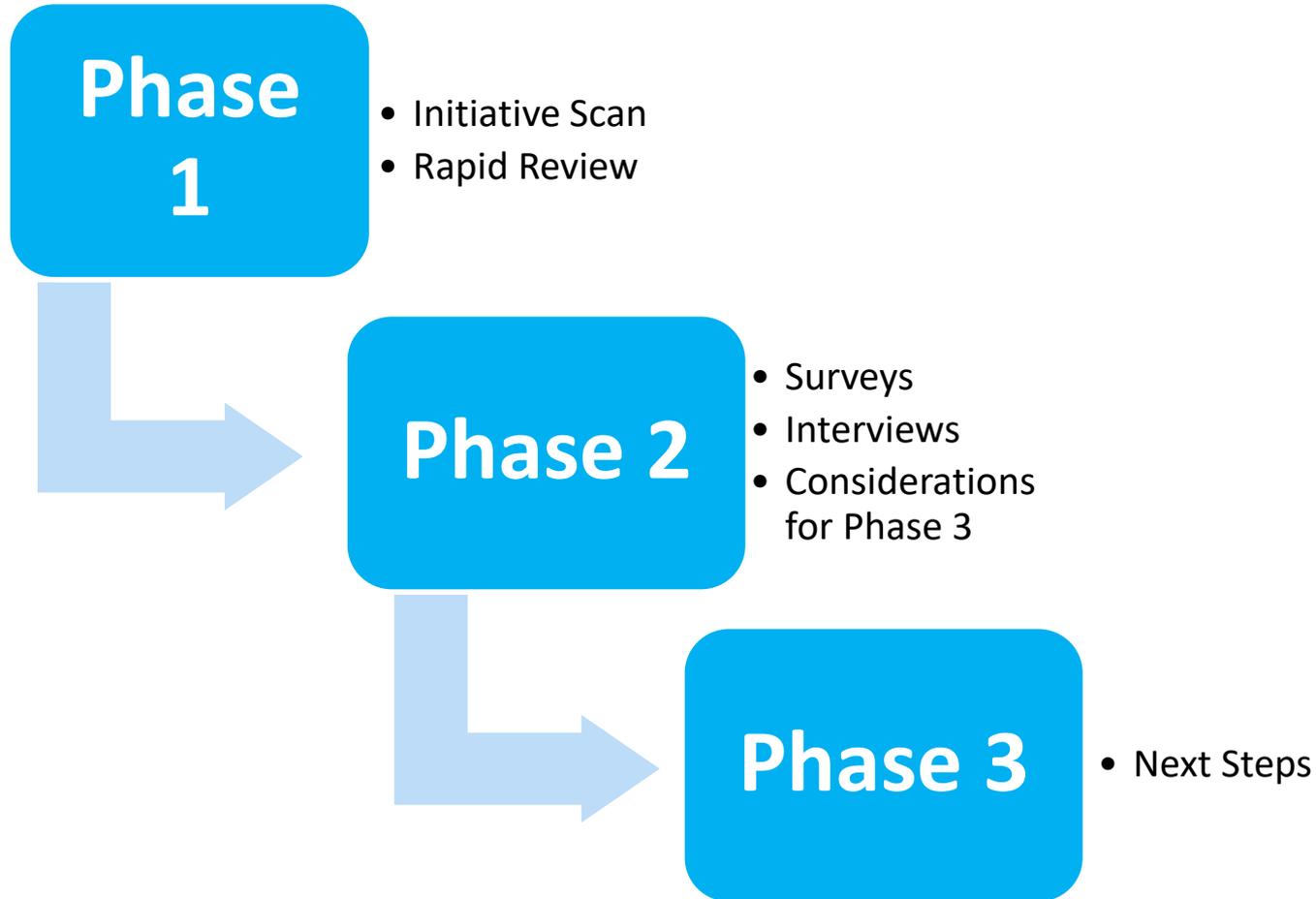
YTA Project Purpose

To identify opportunities in and across multiple initiatives (programs/services) to improve system (i.e. cross-program/sector) effectiveness of processes aimed at assisting youth with transitions to ***adulthood**** with special emphasis on inclusion and alignment across existing initiatives.

** Not simply a transition to adult services but a transition to full participation in adult life/society*



Project Plan and Progress





Phase 1



Initiatives Scan

- Environmental Scan completed in 2017
- List of 75 initiatives occurring in Calgary and Area with some connection to YTA
 - Details on youth served, broad description, contact person
 - 26 in the area of School/Work/Vocation
 - 22 in the area of Community Integration/Housing
 - 27 in the area of Health



Rapid Review

- Conducted by C.E. Adair, U of C
- 134 peer reviewed articles
- 58 grey literature documents
- Three specific transition topic areas:
 - Education/Work/Vocation
 - Housing/Income/Community Integration
 - Health (including Mental Health and Addiction)



Rapid Review: Broader Context of YTA

- Cultural and familial shifts (i.e. expectations re: post secondary)
- Economic (precarious and temporary work)
- Growing class disparities on attainment of adult milestones
- Particular challenges for vulnerable youth (youth with disabilities, involved with foster care and justice systems, youth with special health or educational needs)



Rapid Review: Themes Identified by Youth

- Need for information about process
- Opportunity to try new roles before decisions made
- To have a say in the process
- Flexibility in timing of process
- Attend to emotional aspects of transition



Rapid Review: Education/Work/Vocation

– Predictors of successful transition to Post-Secondary:

- Social and emotional support; belonging
- Realistic expectations of post secondary education
- Inclusive high school placement



Rapid Review: Education/Work/Vocation

- Predictors of successful transition to work:
 - Youth and family involvement in planning
 - Individualized transition planning
 - Vocational instruction and work experience (hands on)
 - Instruction/experience for independent living (life skills)
 - Age appropriate inclusion with peers
 - Interagency involvement and collaboration
 - For youth with ASD, starting planning at 14



Rapid Review: Education/Work/Vocation

- Other recommendations:
 - Provide opportunities for experiences in everyday activities that can influence future social roles
 - Identify meaningful outcomes (i.e. participation, citizenship, and community engagement)
 - Building capacity of youth to participate in experiences and everyone in their lives to provide opportunities towards full inclusion
 - Recognition that work and education do not reflect the breadth of domains of quality of life



Rapid Review: Education/Work/Vocation

– Literacy:

- “Literacy remains elusive for too many young people at precisely the time of societal insistence of its growing importance” (Tilleczek et al, 2013)
- Strong associations were reported between low literacy and low income
- Importance of 3rd grade reading achievement as predictor of success and poverty avoidance
- Social return on investment of literacy interventions and connection to poverty reduction strategies



Rapid Review: Income/Housing/Community

- Youth transitioning from Care
 - At greater risk during transitions to adulthood than peers not in care
 - Expectations to transition quickly despite potential history of trauma, instability and shaky social supports
 - Importance of looking not just at vulnerabilities but potential strengths – “the age of possibilities” (Arnett, 2007)



Rapid Review: Income/Housing/Community

- Youth transitioning from Care
 - Importance of approach that is individualized, trauma informed, developmentally informed and person-centered
 - Value of learning skills around self determination, weighing options, mobilizing supports
 - Critical importance of Social Supports
 - Natural Supports
 - Peer Support
 - Mentoring (in addition to natural supports)
 - Community level engagement
 - Altruistic activities generate a sense of belonging



Rapid Review: Income/Housing/Community

- Other findings:
 - Social and economic costs of unsuccessful transitions out of Care (i.e. not graduating high school, poorly treated mental health problems) are estimated at 7.5B over 10 years
 - Importance of cultural safety and cultural safe engagement
 - Gradual and extended transition process for youth from Care
 - Risk of loneliness is high – need for meaningful connections



Rapid Review: Income/Housing/Community

– Housing

- Importance of choice
- Necessity of permanence:
 - “not just a place to live but a state of mind”
 - Positive relationships and lifelong connections
- Developmental importance of families providing housing stability during transition
- Value of attending to needs in multiple domains; more than meeting the basic needs



Rapid Review: Income/Housing/Community

– Youth with Justice Involvement

- Importance of developmental approach and understanding that most youth age out of criminal activity
- Focus on educational and occupational attainment (protective factors)
- Community reintegration: coordination, transition tool kits, elimination of intra and inter organizational barriers



Rapid Review: Income/Housing/Community

- Very few papers focusing on transitions for Indigenous youth
 - One study noted resilience to be of particular importance for predicting positive outcomes for transitioning Indigenous youth
 - Potential area for further research
- Immigrant and Refugee Youth
 - Target strategies
 - Involve parents/families
 - Apprenticeships



Rapid Review: Health

- Key recommendations for specific illnesses:
 - Importance of developmentally-based timing of transition
 - Value of using a key worker approach, written plans
 - Involvement of family doctor
 - Youth involvement; teaching youth medical history
 - Supporting parents
 - Attending to relationships (loss of pediatric providers)
 - Communication with adult providers



Rapid Review: Health

– Recommendations for conditions with broader functional impact:

- Patient centeredness – recognizing differences in readiness; youth and family involvement
- Flexibility
- Responsiveness
- Continuity – training on the receiving side (i.e. adult)
- Comprehensiveness – attending to broader domains
- Coordination



Rapid Review: Health

- Mental Health and Addictions:
 - Recognition of adverse impacts of poor YTA transitions; can result in high rates of unemployment, homelessness, incarceration, substance abuse, unplanned pregnancy, high risk behaviours
 - Challenges of long waitlists, crisis driven systems, and youth and caregiver feelings of powerlessness
 - Importance of distinguishing between institutional needs (need to transition the youth) and developmental needs (need for youth's growth)



Rapid Review: Health

- Mental Health and Addictions
 - Essential elements of transition:
 - Good coordination (timing, communication, follow up, availability for ongoing consultation)
 - Starting planning early (at least a year before transfer)
 - Discussing self management with youth and family
 - Including youth in planning
 - See youth alone for part of consultation (as developmentally appropriate)
 - Identify adult provider before transfer



Rapid Review: Summary

- In summary

Successful Youth Transitions to Adulthood:

- Are understood in a larger context
- Start early
- Are flexible, coordinated, individualized, trauma informed, developmentally oriented, youth and family centered, and empowerment enhancing
- Attend to natural supports, permanence, relationship, and resilience
- Result in connection, community engagement and inclusion



Phase 2



Phase 2 Methods In Brief

- **Surveys:**

- Questions sent to targeted 33 organizations via email
- Descriptive info collected for primary/secondary programs:
 - Age range of youth served
 - Type of youth served (12 types e.g. rural, youth w/ physical disabilities)
 - Geographic range of services
 - Number of youth served annually
 - Duration of service
- Data received from 29/33 organizations (88%)



Phase 2 Methods In Brief

- **Interviews:**

- Interviews conducted by experienced interviewers
- Early March to end of May
- 31/34 completed (91%)
- Data compiled by question
- Analysis by content analysis



Health (8)

| Organization/Program | Brief Service Description | Youth Served | Age range Served (Years) |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------|
| AHS <i>Emerging Adult Treatment Clinic (EATC)</i> | Mental Health Services | Youth with mental illness and Transitions Challenges | 16-24 (most 18+) |
| AHS <i>Pediatric Home Care</i> | Medical Supports Post Acute | Youth with medical support needs at home | 0-18 |
| AHS <i>Well on Your Way</i> | Provider Capacity Building across Clinics + Direct | Youth with Chronic Health Conditions | 12-25 |
| AHS <i>Arnika Clinic Catalyst Team</i> | Psychiatric and behavioral services | Dual Diagnosis of Developmental Disabilities and mental illness and multi-system involvement if PDD eligible and (for Catalyst, poses risk to others or property) | 16+ |
| C & A RCSD/AHS <i>Conex</i> | Navigation + supports for system connections | Youth with multiple vulnerabilities including a mental health diagnosis, and multiple system involvement | 6-20 |
| CMHA Calgary <i>Welcome Centre Recovery College</i> | Peer and Recovery Supports Recovery | Youth with mental illness including addictions | 16-24 |
| CANLEARN <i>Attention Clinic</i> | Formal ADHD assessments and medication management | Youth with ADHD | 6+ |
| PCN Mosaic Health Clinic <i>Refugee Health Clinic Child & Youth</i> | Primary Care, community agency connections | Immigrants/Refugees | 1-24 |



Education/Employment/ Vocation (12)

- Bow Valley College
- Calgary Bridge Foundation
- Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
- Calgary Board of Education
- City of Calgary
- Immigrant Services Calgary
- Inclusion Alberta
- McBride Career Group
- Prospect Human Services
- Sinneave Foundation
- United Way of Calgary and Area
- Vecova Centre for Disabilities and Research



Housing/Community Supports (11)

- Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD)
- Boys and Girls Club of Calgary
- Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network
- Calgary John Howard Society
- Calgary Scope Society
- Children's Link
- Enviros
- Hull Services
- McMan Calgary & Area
- Pathways Community Services Association
- Wood's Homes



Services Provided

| Direct Services (to Youth or Parents/Caregivers) | Indirect Services (to Service Providers/Organizations) |
|--|---|
| <p>Navigation/case coordination</p> <p>Brokering services</p> <p>Mobilizing natural supports</p> <p>Cultural connections/practice</p> <p>Consultation</p> <p>Benefits planning</p> <p>Clinical/medical services including diagnosis/medication management</p> <p>Assessment incl. diagnostic, achievement and language testing</p> <p>Counseling/therapy (group and one-on-one)</p> <p>Social activities (clubs, camps, events, after school programs)</p> <p>Mentoring/coaching/tutoring</p> <p>Settlement support</p> <p>Education/literacy</p> <p>Housing/shelter</p> <p>Basic needs including financial and practical support</p> <p>Incentives including bursaries</p> <p>Community connections</p> <p>Self-care/recovery services</p> <p>Peer support</p> <p>Restorative justice</p> <p>Leadership</p> | <p>Provider Education/Training/Coaching</p> <p>Capacity Building</p> <p>Services Mediation</p> <p>Services Coordination</p> <p>Multi-Service Planning</p> <p>Multi-Service Case Review</p> <p>Employer Outreach and Support</p> <p>Consultation</p> <p>Information/Communications (e.g. Transitions Fair)</p> |



Types of Youth Served

| Types of Youth Served | Serve at least Some of This Group % |
|---|--|
| Youth from rural areas around Calgary | 68 |
| Youth who have recently immigrated to Canada | 68 |
| Refugee youth | 68 |
| Indigenous youth | 84 |
| Youth with physical disabilities | 71 |
| Youth with complex medical conditions | 58 |
| Youth with developmental disabilities or learning disabilities | 90 |
| Youth with mental health including addictions issues | 97 |
| Youth involved with justice-system involvement | 71 |
| Youth involved with Children's Services including intervention services | 74 |
| Youth with gender-related challenges | 81 |
| Youth with literacy issues | - |



Service Processes

- **Referrals**

- e.g. 67% allow self or parent referrals

- **Turning Referrals Away and Frequent Reasons**

- Did not fit (not PDD eligible, lang. or cog capacity)/ lack of service capacity

- **Waiting Lists**

- 63% have active waiting lists

- **Other Organizations' Understanding**

- 76% said that other organizations understand what they do



Service Processes (con't)

- **Use of Standard Intake/Assessment Tools**
 - 88% use standard tools; 70% are purpose built
- **Use of Standard Program Models or Guidelines**
 - 61% identified standard program models
- **Decisions about Aspects of Transition**
 - 59% youth/family led; rest program led
- **Involvement of Parents/Caregivers**
 - 38% central; 48% some; 14% not involved



Service Collaborations

“We are better together”

| Promoters of Effective Collaboration | Detractors from Effective Collaboration |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-standing relationships • Connector functions (e.g. Children’s Link) • Organizations evolving to work with those over 18 • Regular, proactive communication including face-to-face and site visits • Co-planning • Free flow of information • Children’s First Act has assisted information sharing • Openness of most agencies to learning • Using a Collective Impact Approach with tables at various levels to address issues • Information sharing (e.g. Transition Resource Fair) • Having a neutral facilitating role with the organizations • Keeping the focus on particular youth • Funding models that incent collaboration rather than competition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional (e.g. schools, hospitals) policies that limit community providers coming in • Time-constrained funding models (e.g. single school year only) • Agency adjustment to funders’ new ways of working • Time and effort required to sustain relationships • Information hoarding (noted sharing most difficult with health) • Delays in receiving consent • Lack of common indicators of success/shared outcome measures • Territoriality (holding on to clients to secure or maintain funding) • The closure of some adult learning services • Recent reduced involvement of key players • Lack of community capacity (e.g. insufficient housing resulting in a requirement for a high level of acuity to qualify) • Practice trends <i>“trauma doesn’t quality a client for PDD”</i> • Recipients of referrals can be mistrustful and question motives • Differences in philosophical approaches (e.g. the Dignity of Risk; harm reduction) • Different approaches to accountability of clients (e.g. degree of tolerance of missed appointments) |



Completion of Services

- **Criteria**

- conventional/structural (age skill attainment, set program duration) OR more fluid (no longer in need)

- **Successful Outcomes**

- highly variable; 35 different 'outcomes'; most structure or process

- **Specific Tools/Measures**

- 21% no specific tools; 13 tools listed; a few expressions of desire to have better tools



Adult Services

- **Understanding of Adult Service Providers**
 - **44% don't understand; 32% partial; 24% do**
 - *"They do not understand the developmental needs of these youth."*
 - **What Could Work Better**
 - More communication and awareness raising
 - Consistency in standards and expectations
 - *"a broader coordinated effort across the needs; so not just transitioning based on housing or health but an integrated focus"*



Special Issues

- **Age of Majority**

- Lots of examples of hard stops in each sector: Disability Services, Education, Health, Justice and some examples of attempts to soften them

- **Guardianship**

- For those with the need – need for more and earlier info for parents; info on options such as co-decision-making, capacity assessments

- **Inclusion**

- Most described inclusion as a core value and central to practice



Barriers/Gaps

- **More than 400 highly variable comments; most policy level but also service level**
- **Barriers and Gaps listed:**
 - For Youth
 - For Families/Caregivers
 - Regarding the Service System



Recommendations for Change

- For *services and programs* recommendations included:
 - improved navigation and coordination
 - relaxing hard age limits in all programs
 - more work with parents and natural supports
 - educating and supporting parents and providers to start planning earlier
 - more shared understanding of the transition process



Recommendations for Change

Education/Employment

- More supports for transition to employment including earlier planning and work experience opportunities

Collaboration

- More shared understanding of YTA transitions, more coordination, reducing barriers to working across settings, and better info sharing

Mental Health Services and Other Supports

- More services and better access across continuum, trauma-informed care, supportive housing

Youth Engagement

- Consult with youth on needs, involve them in service planning and operations

General

- Start planning earlier, use a life course approach, outreach to youth not currently being served



Policy/Societal Level Themes

1. Reform income support and disability support esp. PDD eligibility
2. Graduated supports in all YTA relevant programs/services
3. Homelessness Prevention
4. Reform education
5. Reform employment approaches
6. Identify youth at risk early (life course approach)
7. Cross-ministry integration – e.g. special cross-Ministry fund
8. Reform agency funding
9. Developmental lens in all policy
10. Youth-informed
11. More support for parents
12. Mental health/addictions services



Summary

- YTA service providers very engaged
- Participation rate high
- Massive amount of descriptive information and suggestions for improvement; retained richness of detail more than is typical
- Needs and expectations of YTA transitions service providers are high, but committed to working together to advance successful transitions for youth and families.



Other Observations

- Frustration and need for change mostly directed at policy level
- Commitment to inclusion clear
- Commitment to collaboration clear
- Need more resources but not just more money: bigger/bolder changes



Phase 3



Considerations for Phase 3

YTA Systems Connector Role:

- September 2018
- Development of Phase 3 with Transitions Working Group

Top 4 Recommended Areas of Focus:

- Education/Training
- Coordination/Connection of Existing Services
- Program Development and Evaluation
- Information Resources and Brokering



Considerations for Phase 3

Other Areas:

Outreach

Concern for unserved/underserved youth

Youth and Parent Engagement

Advisory groups and ultimately peer support

Message about youth having meaningful places to engage

Policy-level Sharing Opportunities

Is there a role for advocacy?



Considerations for Phase 3

- Need to continue to explore what initiatives are occurring (i.e. Youth Systems Table, Calgary Employment Initiative for Vulnerable Youth)
- Clarity on where the alignment opportunities already exist

Stay tuned!



Discussion 1



Questions

- At your tables please discuss:
 - What is working well in your YTA work/planning or in your sector?
 - What would you like to add into your work based on the information from today or from other sources?
 - Where do you see opportunities to improve the transition to adulthood for vulnerable youth?
Where are the leverage points in the systems?



Discussion 2



Discussion Question

- What is one thing you commit to doing to contribute to improved transitions for vulnerable youth?
- Timeframe?
- Any common themes? Opportunities for collaboration?



Many thanks to Carol Adair, University of Calgary, for her work
on this project

Thank you also to the Calgary and Area RCSD Transitions
working group who have led this work



Thank you!

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