CREATING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR SUPPORTING TRANSITION AGE YOUTH WITH SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

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Acknowledgements

The Transitions RTC aims to improve the supports for youth and young adults, ages 14-30, with serious mental health conditions who are trying to successfully complete their schooling and training and move into rewarding work lives. We are located at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA, Department of Psychiatry, Center for Mental Health Services Research.
Visit us at:

http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/index.htm

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University of Massachusetts Medical School

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A Life in the Community for Everyone SAMHSA Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Creating A Community of Practice

- Defining a CoP
- Creating the NE MACoPTAYYA
- The Young Adult Perspective

What is a Community of Practice?

- *CoPs are "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis."* [1]

(Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4)

Characteristics of a CoP

Three important characteristics help distinguish a CoP from other groups:

1. **The *domain***
2. **The *community***
3. **The *practice***

(Wenger, 1998)

What is a Community of Practice?

- A CoP is more informal than a *work group* or *task force.*
- *Learning communities* focus on learning, CoPs focus on practice.[1]

(Wenger, 1998)

What is the purpose of a CoP?

- To develop the practice, through exchanging knowledge, skills, and experiences of the members.
- Members generally volunteer due to their interest in the topic/practice.
- Identification with the community and the practice keeps the group together.
- The community lasts as long as the members are interested in participating.[1]

(Wenger & Snyder, 2000)

Benefits of a Community of Practice

- Provides a new connection for members.
- Encourages interaction and communication among members.
- Encourages people to collaborate in a common venue of shared learning.
- Provides new knowledge for members to apply in other contexts.[1]

(Cambridge & Suter, 2005)

How is a CoP established?

- Identify the potential domain and how members can work together to grow the practice.
- Leadership and a champion give credibility and attract participation.
- An infrastructure and support are needed to help the community grow (e.g. sponsors, time to participate, communication channels).

(Wenger & Snyder, 2000)

The Northeast Massachusetts Community of Practice

(MACoPTAYYA)

How it all got started:

The Transitions RTC mission and
the Department of Mental Health “champion”:

- Inviting members
- Breaking down the silos
- Bridging the age divide

Breaking Down The Silos For Transition Age Youth

- Department Mental Health Transition Case Managers
- Medicaid Carve-Out Insurance Regional Managers
- Parents and Youth
- Foster Care and Child Welfare
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Child and Youth Service Provider Agencies
- Special Education
- Juvenile Justice

Bridging The Age Divide For Transition Age Youth

- Adult vocational rehabilitation
- Adult mental health service Providers
- Children and Youth service Providers
- Special Education
- Foster Care and Aging Out services
- Vocational Rehabilitation

The MACoPTAYYA Structure

- In-person Meetings, refreshments
- Selection of Leader
- Involvement of Young Adult
- On-line Meetings
- Electronic Meeting Space – E-mails
- Note keeping, reminders, agenda
- Formation of Sub-Committees
- Free discussion and consensus with leadership
- Donation of personal time

MACoPTAYYA Process

- Goal Selection: Tip Sheets
- Brainstorming: Topics and Content
- Sub-Committees
- Iterative Tip Sheet Development: Content and Design

MACOPTAYYA Process
Young Adult Feedback

- Young Adult Councils in Massachusetts
  - Positive and constructive feedback
  - Young adult friendly language
  - By and for Young Adults

MACoPTAYYA PROCESS

- Tip Sheet Celebration
- Tip Sheet Dissemination
- Evaluation
- Attrition, Leadership, New Members
- New Goal formulation/leadership

TTYL: Keeping in Contact

TTYL: Keeping in Contact With Your Professional

Community of Practice, Northeast Massachusetts 2011

Keeping in communication with professionals (doctors/counselors/psychiatrists/etc.) is very important. It will help keep you updated on appointments, insurance issues, medications, etc. Here are some tips on simple ways to stay in contact! No matter what form of communication you are using, you should always give 24 hours notice if you are cancelling an appointment, unless if it's an emergency. Find out your offices policy about no shows (i.e., some offices will charge you or stop working with you for missed appointments).

Keeping in Contact by Phone and Text

Cell Phones

- Let all professionals know right away if you have to change your phone number.
- You can use your cell phone's calendar to put reminders in your phone for appointments with your providers.
- Use the address book in your phone to put in all your professionals numbers and an emergency contact number so they are easy to locate.
- Write down all professionals numbers so you have a backup if a phone breaks or is lost. (Some cell phone providers will keep a backup for you online for free).
- Make sure to set up your voicemail so professionals can leave you messages about appointments/insurance issues/etc.
- Keep your cell phone charged at all times so you are easy to reach, & keep it on you whenever possible.
- Ask your professional if they are allowed to use text messaging.

SafeLink Cell Phones

- SafeLink is a government supported program that provides a free cell phone and minutes to those who qualify for State or Federal Assistance Programs.[1] For example, Medicaid, SSI, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Food Stamps and low income Home Energy Assistant Programs, etc.
- To find out if you are eligible for a SafeLink cell phone go to: www.safelinkwireless.com, put in your zip code and you will receive information on benefits, qualifying and applying for SafeLink that are specific to your State.
- You can also text on a SafeLink phone. Check your plan to see how many minutes are taken up by sending or receiving each text.
- To purchase additional minutes for your SafeLink phone you can either go online (24/7) to www.tracfone.com, by phone (24/7) 1-800-378-1684, or at local retailers (Wal-Mart, CVS, Kmart or Target etc.).

Keeping in Contact by Internet

Access to computers

- If you do not have a computer and need to use one to check e-mails, etc, you can go to your town's library, or use one in your school's computer room.
- If you own a computer or wireless device but don't have internet, most libraries offer free wireless internet. A lot of restaurants or coffee shops (such as McDonalds) have free wireless for customers.

E-mail accounts and Social Media

- Ask your professionals if you can contact them through e-mail.
- You can get a free e-mail account from websites like Google.com, Yahoo.com, etc.
- Make sure to check your email every other day if possible so you don't miss important messages.
- Some professionals will allow you to contact them through Facebook or Twitter, but make sure you ask if it's okay before contacting them.

[1]PCLS E-Government Services: http://pclsegov.blogspot.com/2009/06/free-cell-phones-safelink-wireless.html

Helpful Tips on Internet Communication

- Keep your passwords private & store them somewhere safe in case you forget them.
- Make sure your social media & e-mail addresses are appropriate. If you wouldn't be okay with someone like your parents seeing the picture, it shouldn't be posted. E-mail addresses should be rated PG.

Mail

- A lot of professionals send out notices & forms only through the mail. If your address changes, you need to let all of your professionals know as soon as it happens.

For Professionals
TTYL*: Keeping in Contact with a Young Adult (YA)

Keeping in Contact by Phone and Text

Many YA's change cell phone numbers and carriers due to bills, better service, etc.

- Ideally it is good to get an alternate number (family member, long-term friend, etc.)
- Young adults often rely on texting before calling. It is important to check your agency policy if texting is possible. Discuss with the YA in advance what is possible and preferable.
- Many YA's don't like to leave messages. Let them know if your voice mail is confidential and if they can call anytime day or night.
- YA's often rely on caller ID rather than a message so be sure to check your missed calls.
- If you use your personal cell phone be aware if your number will be displayed.
- Many youth have very limited minutes on their cell phone. Check if this is a concern when communicating.

Keeping in Contact by Internet

- YA's have access to the internet many places however, be aware that email is not always used on a regular basis.
- Check with YA's about how/when they use email and if it is a good way of communication.
- Most agencies do not allow professionals to be friends with YA's on Facebook/Twitter and other social media websites. Check your agency policy.
- Be aware of your own Facebook/Twitter and all social media privacy settings.
- Have a plan if a YA request social media contact in alignment with your agency policy.
- Be mindful that email can be a great way to communicate however HIPPA still applies and email is not fully secure.

When you cannot get in touch

- Call the emergency, friend, or back up number
- Try email
- Send a letter
- Depending on your relationship drop by the home if possible
- Be clear when you need contact by i.e., date, time of day, etc.
- Remember that YA's are learning how to communicate and manage appointments. Discuss ahead of time expectations on what the plan will be if an appointment or call is missed
- Be as flexible as your agency will allow and that will help YA's reach their goals

* text talk for "talk to you later"

Download at http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/Publications.html

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My "Must Have" Papers

My "Must Have" Papers

Community of Practice, Northeast Massachusetts 2011

There are some papers that everybody must have. Here are some tips about keeping and protecting your important personal records and information.

Get a Binder or Folder to Keep Important Documents – an "accordion folder" works really well

What to Keep in Your Wallet or Purse

- ☐ State ID or Driver's License
- ☐ SNAP Card
- ☐ Health Insurance Card
- ☐ Important numbers
- ☐ Appointment Book / Calendar
- ☐ ATM Card (only if needed)
- ☐ Who to call in case of emergency
- ☐ List of medications & what doctor prescribes them.

What to keep in your Binder

- ☐ Education documents
- ☐ Medical information
- ☐ Housing / Utilities information
- ☐ Work information
- ☐ Financial information
- ☐ Learn more about these on the other side of this paper

Essential Documents to Have

These documents can help you get the other information you may need. You only need 2 of these to get a job and fill out the necessary paperwork.

☐ **Birth Certificate** ☐ **Social Security Card** ☐ **State ID or Drivers License**

☐ **Passport: This document can replace all of the essential documents listed above**

If you need to get your birth certificate: Go to the Town Clerk or City Hall in the town/city you were born in and request it. If you were born further away you can contact the Town Clerk/City Hall (via internet or phone) and ask how to get it. Most often there is a fee (up to about $25). You may also ask a DCF/DMH/DYS worker if they either have a copy or can assist you.

If you need to get a License/ID/Permit: Go to the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV). You will need the required ID. Sometimes if you don't have enough forms of ID (such as a birth certificate and social security card) a letter from DMH or DCF may be helpful explaining your situation. MASS.gov/RMV has more info about this.

To get a social security card: You, or your representative payee, will need to present your ID to the Social Security office and request a new card. (there is a limit to the number of cards you can request in your lifetime so it is important you keep it safe). Don't keep your social security card in your wallet unless you are using it that day to apply for a job- store it somewhere safe. Try to memorize the number.

To get a passport: Go to your local post office or check with your state's Passport Agency for details.

If you keep information such as a social security number or bank information in your phone be sure to password protect it in case you get a new phone, or your phone is lost or stolen.

What to Keep in your Binder

Education Documents (these are important for school, college, vocational programs, etc.)

- ☐ A copy of transcript from all schools attended or GED Certificate
- ☐ Most recent IEP or 504 Plan
- ☐ Any other certifications (CPR/First Aide), Vocational, CNA, Etc.
- ☐ College information: Financial aid information (including passwords), & transcript
- ☐ Print copies of any email confirmations

Medical Information

- ☐ Copy of most recent physical & immunizations (important for school & jobs)
- ☐ List of doctors names & numbers (keep a copy in your binder & your wallet)
- ☐ List of medications, times, dosages, & who prescribes them (keep a copy in your binder & your wallet)

Work Information

- ☐ List of references – first & last names, their position, the company name, phone number, & dates worked
- ☐ Copy of letters of recommendations if you have them (don't give your last one away)
- ☐ Dates of places you have worked or volunteered & what your responsibilities were
- ☐ Work Permit – if you need it (you must get this through your school or city hall)

Housing / Utilities Information

- ☐ Phone billing contracts & the most recent 2 bills
- ☐ Copy of your Lease
- ☐ A copy of your current landlord's name, phone number and address
- ☐ Keep a list with your previous & current landlord's name, contact info, & the dates you lived there (a written reference from a landlord is even better)
- ☐ Most recent 2 gas, electric, cable bills & contracts
- ☐ Any housing list / subsidy information, copies of places you have applied

Financial Information

- ☐ A bank book or most recent statement
- ☐ Most recent Social Security award letter
- ☐ Keep all pay stubs
- ☐ Anything Social Security sends you
- ☐ All credit/debit card information
- ☐ Tax documents: Yearly W-2's, tax documents

You can also make folder on your computer or email and keep a lot of this information there – like important emails or confirmations.

What information You Should NOT Give Out

- Do not give out passwords (computer, PIN for Bank, Financial Aide, etc.)
- Keep passwords and logins in a safe place for your own personal use
- Social Security numbers (but sometimes it's OK, like on a job or housing application or for a bank application)
- Bank account information (unless for direct deposit of paychecks requested by employer)

Download at http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/Publications.html

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NIDRR SAMHSA

Applying for a Job

Applying for a Job:
The Young Adult's Guide

Community of Practice, Northeast Massachusetts 2011

Things to Keep in Mind When Looking for a Job

- ☐ Type of work you would like: restaurant, childcare, store, outdoors, office, etc.
- ☐ Schedule: what days and number of hours can you work? Try to be as open as possible.
- ☐ Transportation: how can you travel to get to a job? Will you get paid enough to cover transportation?
- ☐ What you're good at: your skills and abilities.

How Do I Find A Job?

Online - Some examples of job search websites are **monster.com, snagajob.com,** and **craigslist.com.** To find a list of these sites, go to a search engine (ex: Google) and type in keywords such as "online job search sites" and you should find a list of popular sites. Also, check out company websites directly (e.g., Target.com, Homedepot.com). *Helpful Hints:* Sometimes job postings are listed under "Careers" or "Human Resources."

Visiting Businesses in Person - You can also visit a business in person to ask the hiring manager if they are accepting applications. Make sure you have your mock application with you in case you decide to fill out an application while you are there.

Do Wear

- Button up shirts
- Blouses
- Dress pants or khakis
- Shoes

Don't Wear:

- Short skirts, jeans or shorts
- Low cut shirts or anything too revealing
- Stained or wrinkled clothes
- Flip-flops

Career Centers/Clubhouses/Employment Supports - Job support programs will help you with all the steps involved in getting and applying for jobs. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is one vocational support in Massachusetts. Talk to your helpers (case managers, guidance counselors) for places to go.

Networking - Ask around! Family members, friends and neighbors may know of places that are hiring.

Filling Out Job Applications

There are a few ways to apply to a job and separate businesses ask you to apply in different ways. If you know where you want to apply, call or go online and find out how that specific place wants you to fill out an application.

****Make sure to have your mock application with you to fill out any job applications****

On Paper - Applications on paper tend to be the shortest, and you are usually allowed to take them home to fill out, and bring back when you're done. Take 2 copies of the application if possible, in case you make any mistakes.

Example of a Job Application

Please fill this out and keep it handy because most job applications ask for this information!

Instructions: Print clearly in black or blue pen. Answer all questions, sign and date the form.

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Name (First, Middle, Last): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: I___I___I Zip Code: I___I___I___I___I___I

Phone: (I___I___I___I) – I___I___I___I- I___I___I___I___I Cell: (I___I___I___I) – I___I___I___I- I___I___I___I___I

Email Address: **(Tip: Clearly show the difference between an L and a 1. Make sure your e-mail address is appropriate.)*

_____

Social Security Number: I X I X I X I – I X I X I – I___I___I___I___I *(*Tip- Bring full Social Security number with you)*

Have you been convicted of a crime within the last five years? **(Tip: If yes, leave blank and if you have to, explain in person instead.)* Yes_____ No_____

POSITION/AVAILABILITY:

Position Applied For: _____ Full Time _____ Part Time _____ Seasonal _____

When can you start: _____

Desired Wage: $ I___I___I.I___I___I / Hour **(Tip: Check http://www.dol.gov/whd/minwage/america.htm for what the hourly minimum wage is in your state; it will help you to decide what to ask for.)*

Days/Hours Available: **(Tip: Make sure to keep school in mind. Also, leave a day open so you can use it to schedule appointments and keep your availability as open as possible.)* Please check below the days and times you can work.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Mornings							
Afternoons							
Evenings							

EDUCATION HISTORY:

School Name & Type (Vocational, High School, GED or College)	City & State	Years Attended	Completed (Yes or No)

How to keep a Job

How to Keep a Job:
The Young Adult's Guide

Community of Practice, Northeast Massachusetts 2013

Starting and keeping a new job can be stressful for anyone. However, there are healthy ways to deal with this stress. This sheet has some tips to help you be more prepared to start and keep a new job, and hopefully be a little less stressed.

You Are Not Alone

Make sure you have people to talk to. Create a list of your supports. These people can be anyone that you talk to when you have problems: friends, family, teachers, role models, coworkers, church members, online friends. You may be surprised how many people can relate to how you are feeling right now.

Know the Rules Before You Begin

Most companies have a clear policy or handbook on many of these questions. Take the time to review it, and sit down with your boss to ask questions if any part of it is not clear before you begin working.

Questions to ask

- **Cell Phones** – Are they allowed at work? What about texting?
- **Computer Use** – Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites are generally not appropriate while at work, check the policy.
- **How do I request or schedule time off?**
  - How long do you have to work before you have personal time?
  - Do you have to find someone to cover for you?
  - Do you need to call a certain amount of time before your shift?
- **Breaks** – When do I get them? Where do I take them? What are the rules?
- **Is there a uniform or dress code?**
- **Overtime** – What are the rules? Is it in the Handbook?
- **What are the guidelines** for workplace relationships?
- **Trainings**
  - Is there orientation training where policy and procedures are reviewed?
  - Mandatory vs. Voluntary – (What trainings do I have to go to and which are optional?)
  - Are there ways to advance your career?
  - What trainings are paid for by the company? What trainings are non-paid?
- **Harassment** – What is it and what is the policy?
- **Raises** – How are they given?
- **Probation Period** – What does this mean? How long is it?

** If you are wondering if you should disclose your mental health condition on the job, please see the tip sheet, "Do I Tell My Boss" at:*
http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/publications/Tipsheet7.pdf

How to Succeed Once You Begin

Here are suggestions to help you keep your job and avoid some mistakes people make when they start a new job.

- **Keep track** of your schedule—make an extra copy to keep in a safe place.
- **Arrive on time** - being late frequently will get you fired. If you are late once, explain why.
- **Plan ahead**
  - How are you going to get to and from work?
  - What's a backup plan to get to work?
  - What should you do in an emergency?
- **Know your job description**
  - Just like an employee handbook, most jobs have a job description.
  - Review your job description carefully and ask your supervisor any questions.
  - Let your supervisor know if there are tasks that you aren't able to complete.

Use Your Supervision Time Well

Having supervision does not mean you are in trouble. Some bosses schedule time to meet with employees. Use this time to ask questions, build skills and be curious.

- Your boss does not expect you to know everything; it is ok to ask questions. There are no dumb questions.
- If your boss does not regularly schedule supervision, ask him or her if he or she could give you a few minutes each week to discuss how you are doing.
- Ask them what you are doing well, what they would like to see you change, and make an effort to apply this information to your work.
- It's ok to ask your boss for help with difficult situations (such as with customers, co-workers, etc.).

Take Care of Yourself

You can't be a good employee if you do not take care of yourself.

- Live a healthy lifestyle.
- Get enough sleep.
- Take care of any health issues you may have.
- Just as important is taking care of your emotional health.
  - Schedule time to do the things that you enjoy
  - Spend time with the people you love
  - Don't stop doing the activities you love, work them into your schedule responsibly
  - Reach out to people who care about you: friends, family, mentors, church members, counselors, etc.

Reasons That Could Cause You to Lose Your Job

- Being late
- Being rude
- Breaking the company rules
- Lying
- Using drugs or alcohol on the job
- Not being flexible
- Not showing up
- Stealing
- Being unprofessional (language, dress/hygiene, or sharing too much)
- Badmouthing the company (to other coworkers/on social media)

Leaving a Job on a Good Note

- Generally, you want to give your job advanced warning if you plan to quit, so you can leave on good terms.
- Most employers expect at least a two-week notice, but more can be helpful.
- Be honest and polite when telling your boss why you're leaving.
- Be careful about speaking negatively about former employers or coworkers when you leave a job.
- Doing the above can help you get a good reference from a past employer for future jobs.

For useful tips on how to get a job, download our free "How to Get a Job" tip sheet:
http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/publications/Employment.pdf

Download at http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/Publications.html

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Telling Your Money What to Do

Telling Your Money What to Do:
The Young Adult's Guide

Community of Practice, Northeast Massachusetts 2013

Has it ever felt like your money, or the lack of it, is telling you what you can or can not do? If you take control of your money and spending, you can find ways to do more with what you have. This sheet provides tips on how this can be done.

Top Money Tips

Tell your money what to do by following these tips.

- ✓ **Track your money** for one or two weeks to see where your money is going – then develop a basic budget to set goals on spending. You can use the one on this tip sheet.
- ✓ **Monitor your checking account** and make sure you understand your bank's policy on overdrafts. Fines for overdrafts can be costly. You may need a savings account to prevent overdraft fees. You can also ask the bank to deny charges that overdraws your account.
- ✓ **Fees and interest on credit cards** can add up. To avoid this, pay as much of your bills as you can each month.
- ✓ **Emergency funds** can save you if you have a car breakdown, unexpected medical expenses, a traffic ticket, etc.
- ✓ **Start Saving,** 5 to 10% per paycheck is a great start.
- ✓ **Eating out**, though convenient, is VERY expensive – cooking at home can save you a lot of money.
- ✓ **Smoking, drinking and drugs** add up and are expensive. Make sure to include them in your budget.
- ✓ **Borrowing money** from friends or family can add stress to your relationships. If you have to borrow money you may want to put yourself on a payment plan to pay it back.
- ✓ **Lending money** can also add stress to your relationships. Family and friends have financial stress too, so they may not be able to pay it back.

It All Adds Up

One meal out may not seem like much, but if you look at costs over time you see how much it takes from your wallet.

SPENDING

	Average Cost per Item	Average Cost per Week	Average Cost per Month
Energy drinks	$2.50	7x$2.50=$17.50	$75
Daily Coffee	$2.00	7 x $2.00 =$14	$60
Cigarettes	$6.25	4 x $6.25=$25	$100+
Eating Out	$7.00	2 x $7.00 = $14	$60
Taxi Rides	$10	1 x $10 = $10/week	$40
Cat	---	---	$60
Dog	---	---	$100

A little bit of savings also adds up over time.

SAVINGS

Average Savings per Week	Average Savings per Month	Average Savings per Year
$5.00	$20.00	$260.00
$10.00	$40.00	$520.00
$25.00	$100.00	$1,300.00

To Tell Your Money What to Do: Track Your Income & Spending!

Track daily expenses using an app on your phone or a daily log and then enter totals on this monthly budget sheet. This will give you a picture of how you are spending your money on a monthly basis. Does your income match your expenses? Where are places you can cut down?

MONTHLY INCOME

Monthly Income:
Social Security: _____
TAFDC (welfare): _____

Weekly Income:
Paycheck 1st Week: _____
Paycheck 2nd Week: _____
Paycheck 3rd Week: _____
Paycheck 4th Week: _____
Paycheck 5th Week _____
(some months have 1 extra pay period)

Additional Income:
_____
_____

Add all lines for
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME:

ACTUAL MONTHLY SPENDING

Transportation:
Car Payment _____
Gas _____
Insurance _____
Repairs _____
Car Fees _____
Bus Pass/Fees _____
Train Pass/Fees _____
Taxi Fares _____

Child Expenses:
Baby-sitting _____
Child Support _____
Diapers/Formula _____
Clothing _____
Medical Expenses _____

Housing & Utilities:
Rent _____
Gas _____
Electric _____
Phone _____
Cable _____
Internet _____
Cleaning Supplies _____
Household Goods _____

Medical:
Prescriptions _____
Co-payments _____
Over the counter medications _____

Food (don't forget energy drinks):
Groceries _____
Eating Meals Out _____
Coffee/Drinks Out _____

Recreation:
Sports _____
Video Games _____
Computer Games _____
Gaming Fees _____
Drinks/Alcohol _____
Cigarettes _____
Movies _____
Lottery _____

Personal Care:
Work clothing _____
Laundry _____
Haircuts _____
Personal Products _____
Clothing _____
Manicures _____

Gifts:
Birthdays _____
Holidays _____

Debt:
Loan _____
Credit Card _____
Credit Card _____
Other _____

Savings: _____

Giving/Donations:
Faith Community _____
Other _____

Miscellaneous:
_____
_____
_____

TOTAL MONTHLY SPENDING:

How to Speak Up and Be Heard
Self Advocacy

How To Speak Up and Be Heard: Self Advocacy

Community of Practice, Northeast Massachusetts 2014

Self advocacy is the ability to speak up for yourself and for the things that are important to you. As you become older and take on more responsibilities in your life, self advocacy helps you:

- Get what you need
- Make your own choices
- Learn how to say no
- Express your feelings respectfully

Places to Use Self Advocacy

AT WORK OR SCHOOL

- Adjusting your schedule
- Participating in meetings
- Asking for accommodations
- Requesting tutoring
- During a job interview
- Asking for a raise

AT HOME

- Managing finances (bills/ roommates)
- Requesting personal space/time
- Renting an apartment
- Sharing food costs
- In a relationship

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Arranging transportation
- Presenting in court
- Making a complaint
- Paying a check

AT THE DOCTORS OFFICE

- Making an appointment
- Reviewing a treatment or recovery plan
- Requesting a second opinion
- Asking for clarification

Putting it Into Words

- **At School:** E-mail to professor: "I am asking for a week extension for this assignment. I haven't been feeling well and I fell behind."
- **At Work:** "I can't work on Sunday, I have a family commitment. Can I work a different shift instead?"
- **With Roommates:** "I have class at 8 A.M. Can you stop playing your music by 10 P.M.?"
- **Argument with a Significant Other:** "I need to remove myself from this conversation, could we talk about this later when we are both feeling less angry?"
- **At the Bank:** "I don't understand this statement, can you explain the fees to me?"
- **Splitting a Check:** "I'd love to go out to dinner. Can we split the check?"
- **At the Doctor:** "Before we make a final decision, I would like to get a second opinion."
- **Medical Appointment:** "The side effects of this medication are bothering me. Can we discuss other options or choices?"

10 Ways to be Heard

1. Ask questions.
2. Listen! Be interested in what the other person is saying.
3. Think before you speak. People listen when you choose your words carefully.
4. Write down your thoughts and/or rehearse what you will say with a friend or in a mirror.
5. Speak to others in the way you want to be spoken to.
6. Know to whom you are talking. For example, friend, grandparent, or boss and use language and tone that they would find respectful.
7. Know when to stop talking and how to exit a conversation politely.
8. Be willing to compromise and be flexible.
9. Using words like "please" and "thank you" go a long way.
10. Do your research. Find out if what you're asking for is reasonable.

Questions to Ask Yourself

If you are getting ready to advocate for something you need, think about the questions below. You can review your answers with someone you trust. Role-playing the scenario can also help you to figure out exactly what you want to say and how.

1. What am I advocating for? What do I want?

   _____

2. Why is it important?

   _____

3. How should I make my request?

   _____

4. Who do I need to talk to?

   _____

5. Who else will this affect?

   _____

6. Is there a compromise or another option?

   _____

7. What should I do if my request is denied?

   _____

For additional information on self advocacy visit these websites:

http://www.ncwd-youth.info/tip-sheet/becoming-a-self-advocate,
http://www.selfadvocacyonline.org/learning/
SAMHSA Guide on self advocacy: http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA-3719/SMA-3719.pdf

Download at http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/Publications.html

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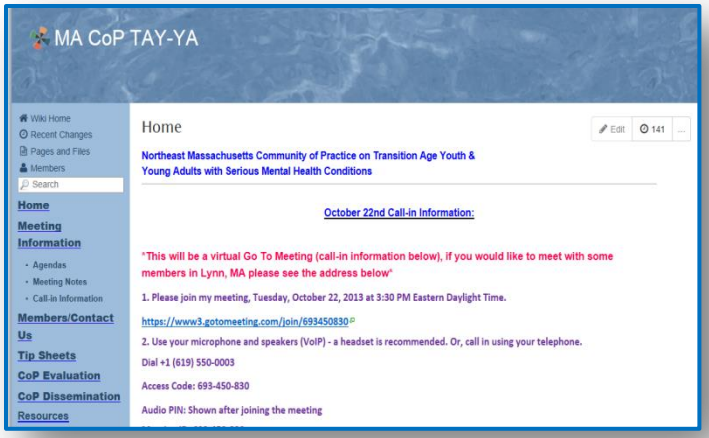
Key Factors of MACoPTAYYA Sucess

- Champion engaging stakeholders from differing systems
- Leader who was supported by their employer
- Young adult with lived experience participation in the CoP
- Young adult feedback of the tips sheets
- Support of the Transition RTC

The Young Adult Perspective

Experiences With Technology

- Learning Computer Software
  - Go To Meeting & Wikispace
- Providing ongoing support to CoP members
  - Invites/Agenda/Minutes
  - Training members on computer software



Personal Experience

- Infusing Youth Voice
- Working with passionate change makers
- Exposure to new organizations and resources
- Learning “ins and outs” of mental health community

Importance of Youth Involvement

- Bringing unique expertise to the table
  - (technology/language)
- Forming YA/Adult partnerships
- Youth empowerment
- Knowing what matters

"I believe the success of our tip sheets was largely due the extensive inclusion of youth voice in this CoP"

We Provide Technical Assistance

Presentation slides will be posted on the RTC website (also find all our tip sheets here):

http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/

Any Questions?

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[1] ***Creating a Community of Practice for supporting Transition–Age youth with serious mental health conditions, Presentation to the 2012 National Transition Conference June 1, Washington DC., Joann Starks, M.Ed., SEDL, Marsha Ellison, Ph.D. & Amanda Costa, Transitions RTC .***