

41st Annual

# Wellness and Recovery Summit

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Mental Health Center of Denver

## Getting Engaged: Practical Strategies to Connect with Transition-Age Youth

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## Acknowledgements

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## Who are we?



- Vanessa is a Social Worker who conducts research with a primary gig at as a Senior Researcher at Thresholds, but has affiliations & partners with many institutions & people.



- Marc is a Clinical Psychologist who currently is the VP of Clinical Operations for Thresholds Youth & Young Adult Services & is an national TIP trainer who does consulting with many organizations.

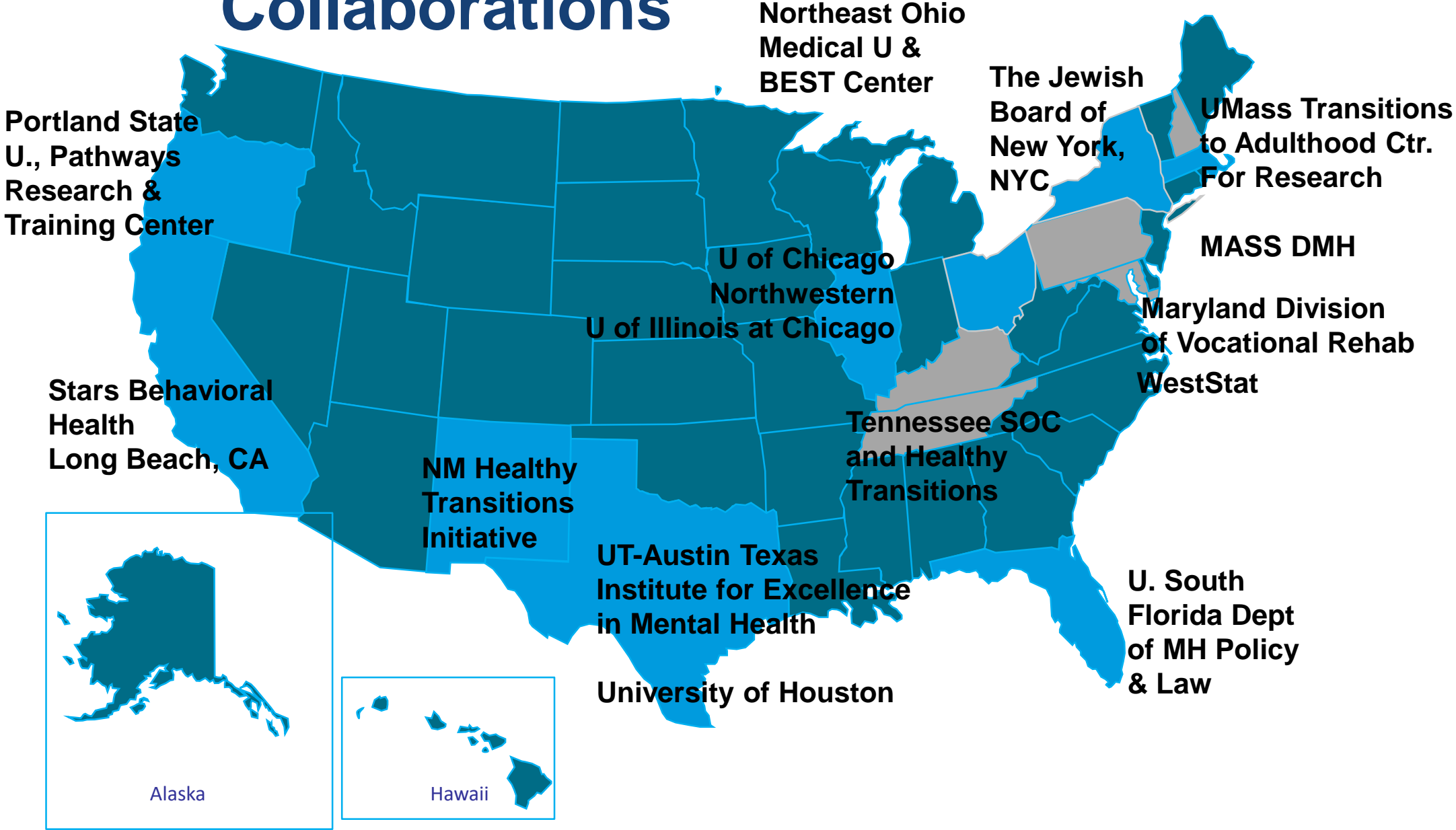
## What's this workshop all about?

# How to engage TAY!

This interactive workshop integrates research findings and real-world lessons learned through:

- (1) National research, evaluation, & programming for TAY
- (2) Operations of a continuum of services for TAY at Thresholds
- (3) Training & technical assistance we provide nationally to TAY providers and state systems.

# Thresholds YAYAS Partnerships & Collaborations



## Learning Objectives

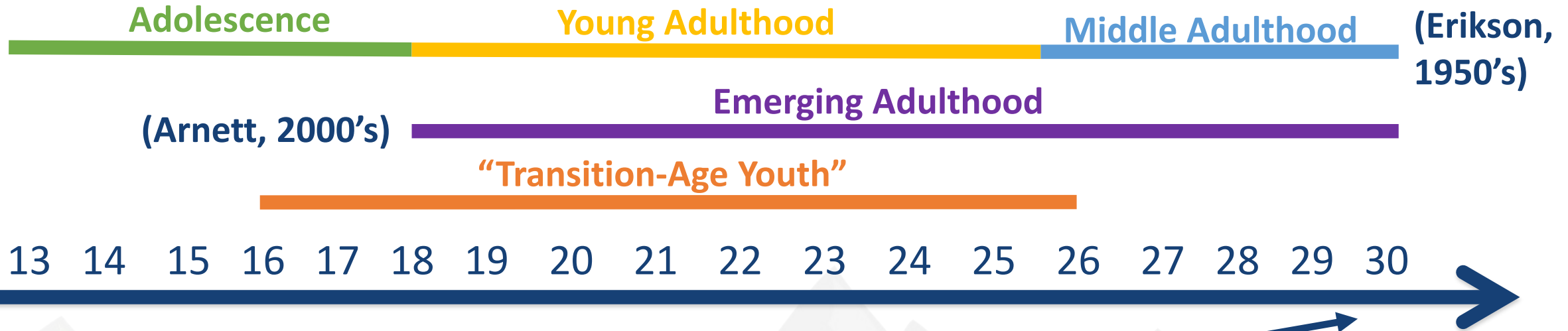
- Reflect on their personal transition to adulthood and identify the differences of being a transition-age youth today versus in the last 50 years.
- Describe three new ideas that can be implemented in practice to better engage transition-age youth with mental health challenges.
- Identify 2 unique elements of the transition-to-adulthood that facilitate an opportunity for unique learning for young people with mental health challenges.
- Compare lessons learned and tips from other real-world providers around engaging transition-age youth with mental health challenges.

## Engagement Activity 1 – Small Group

- Introduce self to small group
- Ice breaker: share most ridiculous think you did as a young adult.
- Envision your 20 year old self. What was going on in your life? What were you most focused on. What made you most happy? What was most frustrating?
- Report back commonalities



## The Transition to Adulthood



### Official Adulthood?

1. Taking responsibility for yourself
2. Making independent decisions
3. Becoming financially independent

Arnett, 2000

## Discussion Questions

So, why is it taking longer for people to "become adults"?

What has changed in our society?



## Engagement Activity 2 - Texting

What do you see young adults struggling with most at your agency?

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### Group discussion of themes:

- Why are they struggling with those things?
- What is your agency doing (or not doing) to address these things?

## Central Experiences in EA

### Identity Exploration

- Making choices about life, work, & relationships
- Taking advantage of opportunities to try out different vocations, relationships, living locations & situations

### Age of Possibilities

- Possibility for “Dramatic change” is the greatest
- Least oversight from parents & not “settled down”

### Instability

- Most instability in work, school, living situation, relationships compared to any other age group

### Self-focused Experiences

- Fewest daily role obligations & greatest scope for independent decision making

Feeling in-between

[www.psychrehabassociation.org](http://www.psychrehabassociation.org)

- 18-25 y/o's are most likely to respond to “do you feel you have reach adulthood” with “Yes & No”



Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association



ACADEMY of Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Recovery



Mental Health Center of Denver

(Arnett, 2004)

## TAY with SMHC

**Feeling in-between**



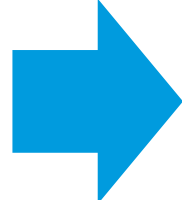
Feeling really young in Adult MH System & old in the child system! (Feeling misunderstood & misplaced)

**Age of possibilities**



Truncated possibilities (perceived &/or real)

**Instability**



Acute, with high risk & with long-lasting consequences; resilience threatened

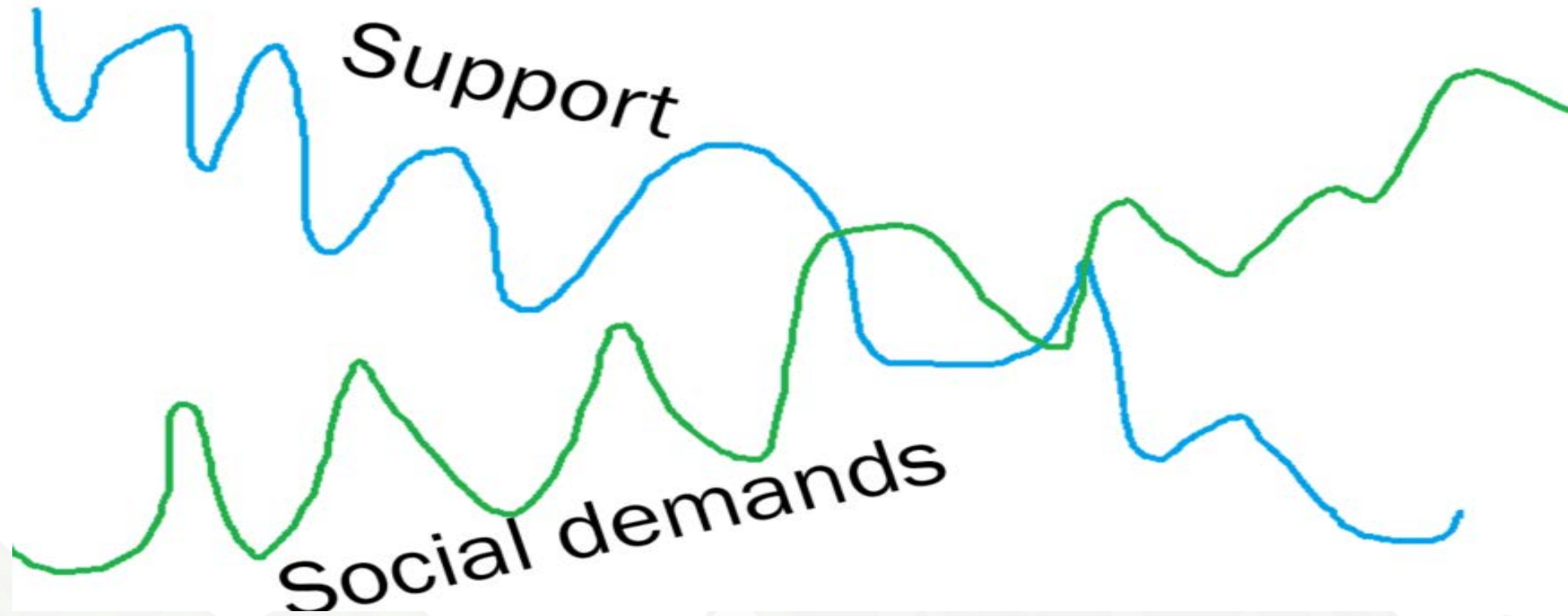
**Reorganization of Relationships**



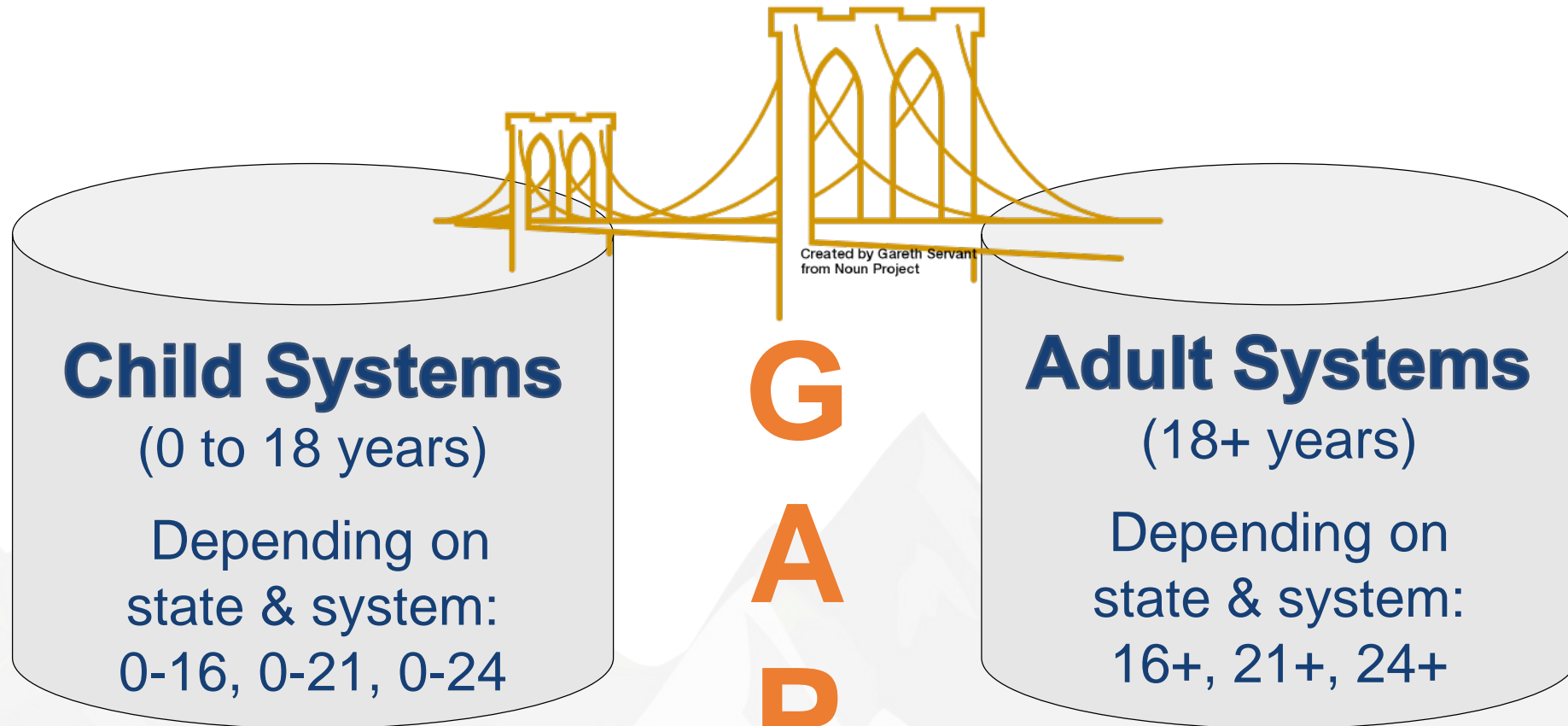
Complicated by what can be major shift in control & involvement in treatment

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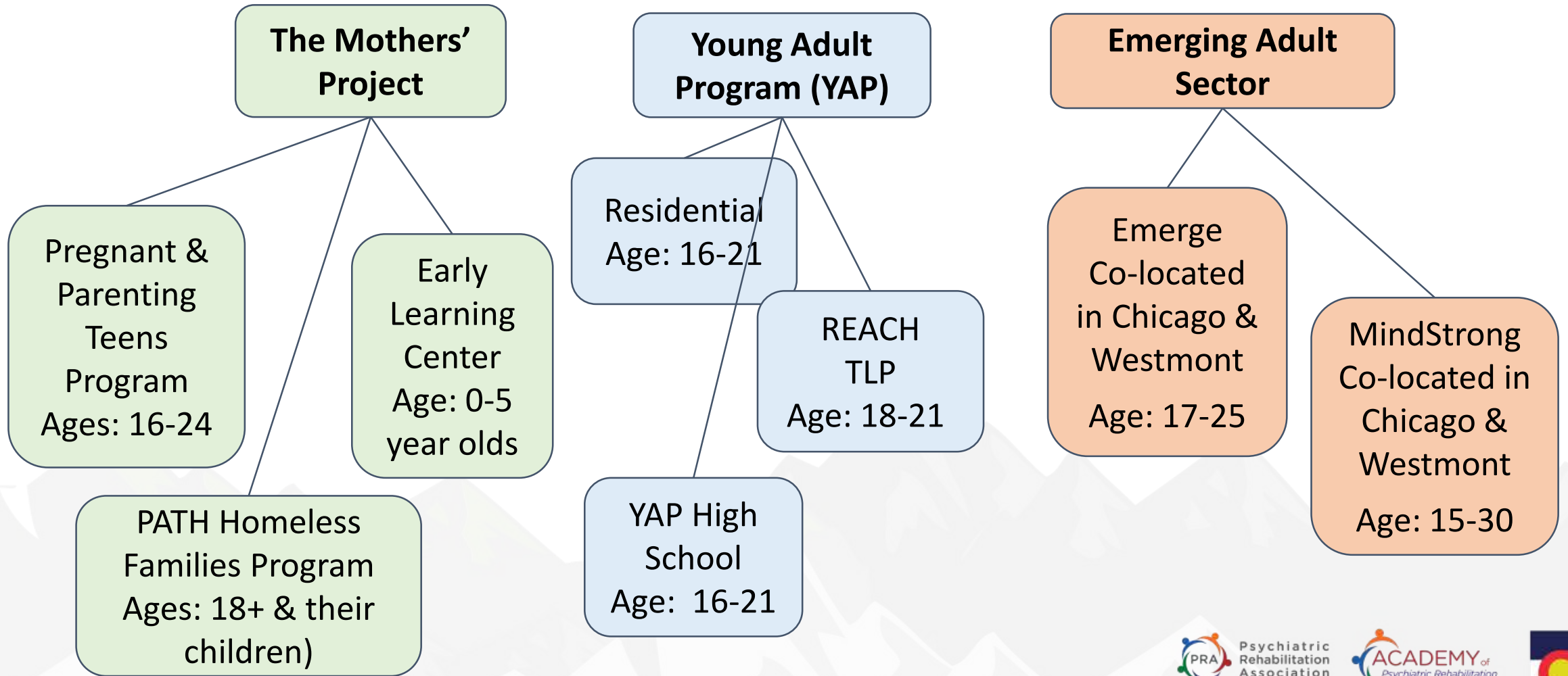
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## Goal of many TAY Service Providers...

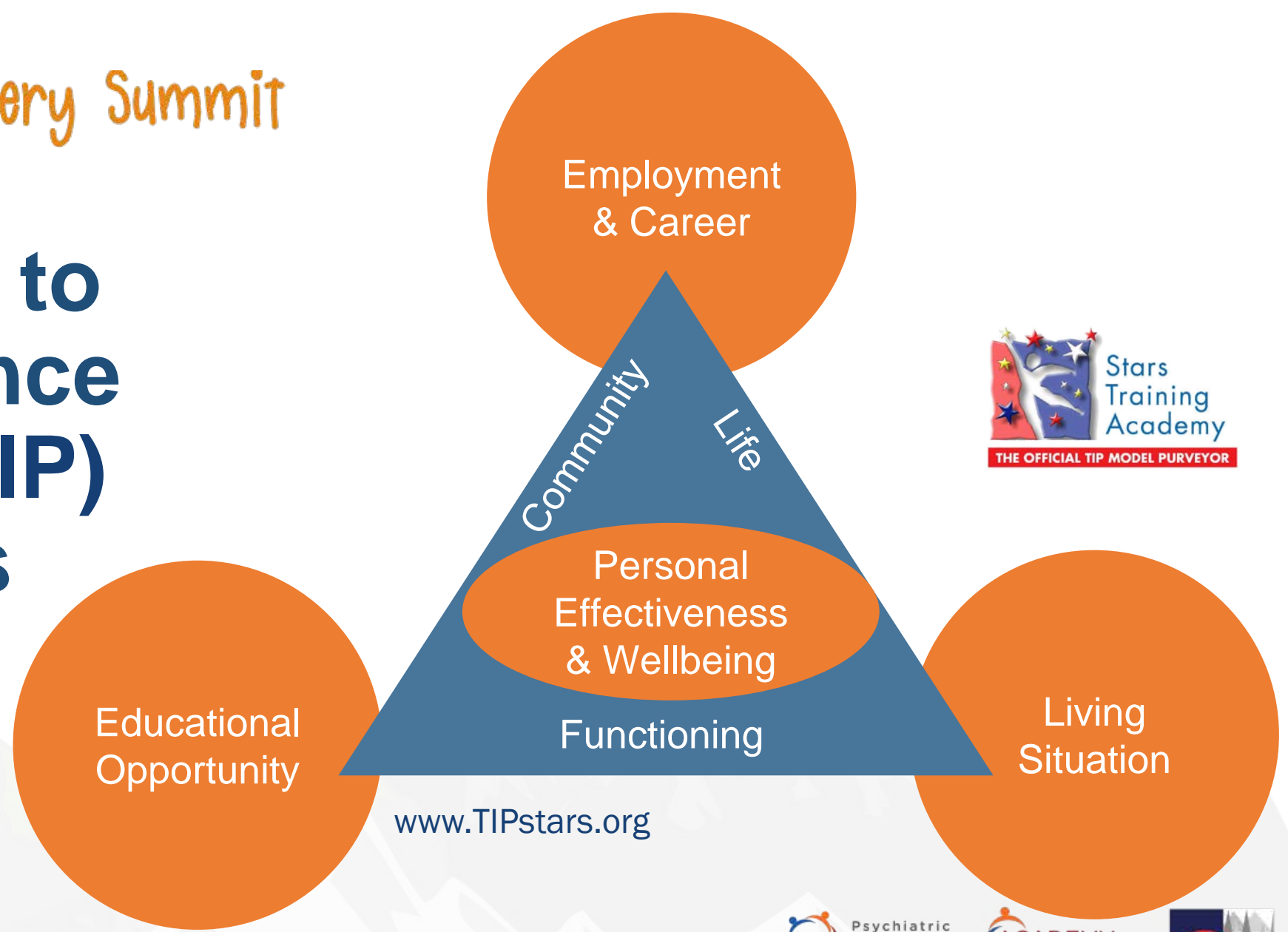


# Thresholds YAYAS





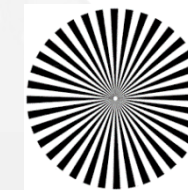
## Transition to independence Process (TIP) Domains



1. Engage young people through Strength Discovery and Futures Planning.
2. Tailor services to assist in goal attainment across the transition domains
3. Acknowledge and develop personal choice and responsibility with young people.
4. Build and ensure a safety-net of support.
5. Enhance and build upon the young persons' competencies.
6. Maintain an outcome focus in the TIP system at the young person, program, and community levels.
7. Involve young people, parents, and other community partners



TEEN CHOICE 2016



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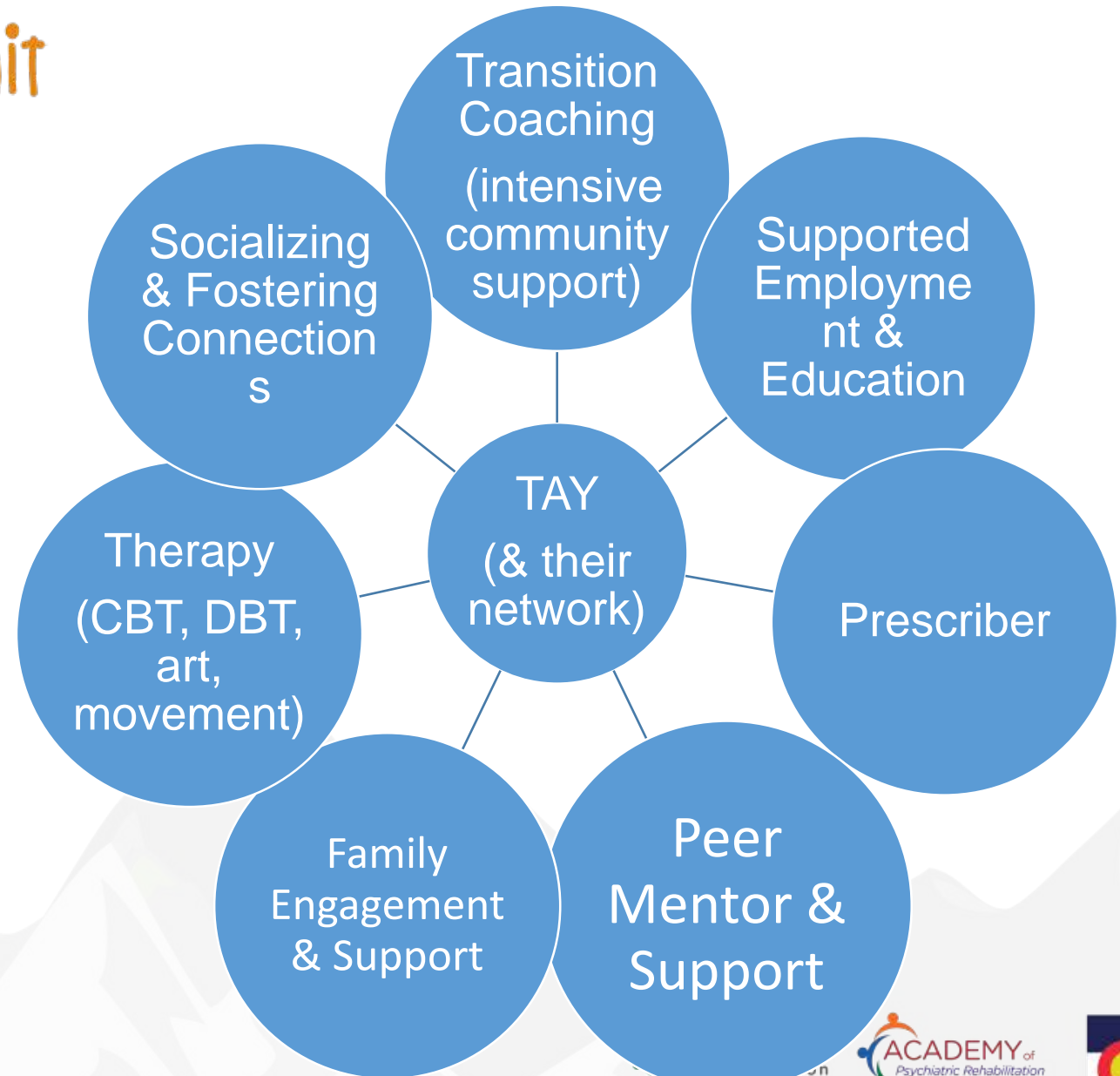
**Question:**  
In a word or two, what  
does TAY engagement  
look like?

## Engagement in more than attendance (or compliance with our developmentally mis-attuned connection attempts).

- Service engagement is both an outcome & a process influenced by individual, family, & treatment provider variables (Kim, Munson, & McKay, 2012)
- One's beliefs, personal (psychological & emotional) investment, trust, & behavior throughout the process of seeking & receiving services are part "engagement" (Staudt, 2007; Yatchmenoff, 2005)
- Engagement Dimensions (Samuels, 2017, Voices of Youth Count)
  - Where young people are with their **identity** in regards to what service utilization would personally **mean**
  - Accumulated **systems experience**, especially with trusting systems
  - Personal **agency** through **perceived need** for services

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Best TAY approaches are **MULTIDISCIPLINARY, TEAM-Based & blend child & adult evidence-based practices thoughtfully using TAY Developmentally-attuned foundation.**



## Blending...

### Adapted Assertive Community Treatment

- Team-based
- Community-based
- Multidisciplinary, includes case management, vocational support, therapy, & social activities
- Fully operates on fee-for-service Medicaid billing

### Integration of TIP Model Framework

- Understanding intersection of child & adult systems
- Focus on identity development, social factors, career, & competency in navigating life
- Riding ebb/flow of engagement & using persistence
- Coaching in TAY driven approach
- Staying curious culture
- Understanding impact of trauma
- Taking a more therapeutic care coordination approach

## Your Organization or Team Needs to Commit to Engaging TAY

- Commitment from agency leadership.
- Form a TAY Engagement Committee
- Get all sectors involved: clinical, employment & education, psychiatry/prescriber, peer support, etc.
- Need a plan to engage TAY; Need to set benchmarks & examine challenges in meeting these benchmarks

## Embrace Discovery-Oriented Care

- Engagement is all about self-discovery through a meaningful bond with someone who gets you
- Engagement is getting the right amount of support in the space that is desired & makes the most sense at the time
- Services are dynamic, flexible, attuned, & responsive.



## Philosophy Shift from:

Recovery

to

Discovery

*“A process of change through which individuals improve their health & wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.” -SAMHSA*

*“The act of finding or learning something for the first time: the act of discovering something.”  
– Merriam Webster Dictionary*

WHO AM I?

## TAY Perspective

What kind of progress have you made with Emerge?

*Oh, well, I'm finding out a lot more about myself. I am a lot further than I was before without them. Also, I have gotten more laid back. More laid back?*

*Yeah, when it comes to like things that like being laid back with like helping be gentle. I've gotten more familiar with me and who I am.*

In explaining why she didn't engage at first...

*"...when we did finally meet, she had just went straight into all the extremely personal details of my life, and it wasn't stuff that was absolutely needed to know, at the moment. She was just trying to get the- **Not get an idea of who I am.**"*

**Help adult family members  
(& your colleagues)  
understand that being “all over  
the place” is normal TAY thing.**

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*Parent: “And it's like my son is back, because at one point he was really depressed, he really was. And he's so much better than what he was. He was looking forward to one day having his own apartment. **He's just all over the place of what he was going to do with his life.** One minute he's saying I want to be a engineer, and then “Maybe I should be a police officer.” And I'm like- I mean, “Would you be mad at me if I just go and drive a bus?” **Okay, you just everywhere, you know?** But at least he's trying to figure out, he's coming around with ideas of what he wants to do.”*

## Engagement Discussion Activity

- We all know someone at our agency who just gets young adults!
- What is it about this person? How do you know that they just get young adults?
- Share with large group!

## Identify Team Members who Enjoy Working with TAY

- **LOVE** working with TAY
- Important staff characteristics:
  - Patience
  - Flexibility
  - Creativity
  - Able to communicate in a way that young people understand
- **You are going to do more for TAY!** More phone calls; more transportation; more reminders!
- Staff can't take TAY actions personally. Focus on youth experience; not your "failure."
- Staff need to "**go to**" rather than wait for a call
- Desire to work with family & who TAY identify as supportive

## How to engage...

- Be Genuinely Curious.
- Balance talking with doing.
- Explore & reflect – always.
- Be real.
- Best way is to admit, ” let’s figure it out together.”

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Embrace ah-ha moments together around identity! (recognize, celebrate, & integrate: both TAY, natural supports & team!)



= **Self-Discovery**



## Balance Clinical with a Developmental Focus

- Balance exploration/processing/education of MH struggles with real life developmental struggles
- Balancing being “real” with being clinical/professional
- Support TAY in balancing their social & vocational obligations with service engagement
- Balance clinical language & MH education with non-stigmatizing, developmentally appropriate language

## Being Flexible feels Respectful to TAY.

- Balancing flexibility with having clear limits & expectations of what service engagement means:
  - Behavior, language, & communication style
  - Appointment making & structure of appointments
  - Minimal “engagement” expectations (& discharge policy)
- Balancing location, length & frequency of service delivery
- Balancing communication modes
- Balance casual conversation & **FUN** with goal-driven activities
- Balance risk averseness (or supporting dignity of risk)
- Balancing individual with group interactions

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## Being flexible...

*I think like the format of the program I guess. Like it wasn't like I went to an office once a week and talked to someone for fifteen minutes. Like we could go out and eat, and like meet for like two hours if I wanted to, and like I could do it more if I needed to.*

Was there anyone one team that you particularly connected with?  
*Jessica, and Ella.*

Okay, and what was your relationship like with Jessica?  
*I don't know, we joked around a lot, but at the same time I felt like, I don't know I feel like I'm a hard person to understand, but I feel like she got me. But at the same time, it wasn't all serious all the time, like we could joke around.*

What about Ella? What was your relationship like with her?  
*It was less like goofy, but it was the same kind of like, I felt like she understood me, and respected me...*

## Activity – Strategic use of self

“Being real” is so important to engaging TAY. Share with your group/team how you remain “real” with your clients (& coworkers).

How do you share a little bit about you, who you are & what you have been through?

Anything that you specifically have wanted to share, but haven't> why?

## Engage in Targeted, Tailored & Persistent Outreach

- Connect with TAY as soon as referral is made! Best practice is to meet with referral source for a warm handoff.
- Find out where the young adult clients are at your agency. Just be around to connect with young adult clients!
- Do outreach. Go to TAY & keep connecting. Do not give up until TAY tell you that they do NOT want to work with you. Then, go back in a month – and keep re-engaging! “No” is for right now.
- Leverage peer supports!!

## Build trust by Supporting TAY in Directing their Service Experience.

- Tailor engagement strategies based on TAY interests
  - Meet them where they hang out
  - **Talk about what they want to talk about** (no matter how trivial & seemingly unrelated to their goal attainment)
- **Listen** to what they have to say. Use Active Listening skills. If they don't feel heard, they will disengage.
- **Go at their pace.** Your agenda is not their agenda.
- **Don't try to drastically change TAY** by correcting their speech, dress, & behavior. Take them to where they want to work & together discuss what they observe (& how they need to change to fit in).

## Questions? Thoughts? Contact us!

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