Review and Feedback on “Supporting The Education Goals of Young Adults with Serious Mental Health Conditions “

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Strengths and Key Points of Agreement

1) Excellent synopsis of the importance of higher education to employment
2) Good discussion of the current state of educational attainment for this population
3) Described great resources and programs that will be helpful for young adults
4) Good start at a review of lessons learned and future research directions.
5) Document was easy to read and was written very clearly, which is very important to multiple stakeholders who are not necessarily researchers

Clarification

- First section switches back and forth between data for differing populations. Some clarification about potential implications is needed (i.e., are we comparing apples to apples).
  - Students served in special education
  - General college student population with mental health needs
  - Those with new diagnoses
  - Those with long histories of psychiatric disabilities.
- What is this paper focusing on –
  - Addressing the educational needs of students with mental health issues
  - Or the mental health needs of students. The mention of suicide and counseling programs on college campuses, for example, seems to confuse the reader on the focus of the paper. If it is the latter, than need to mention the numerous school-based mental health programs in secondary educational settings.

Request for More Information/Discussion

1) Expand lessons learned and next steps for research
2) Need to further discuss, and provide evidence, if possible, for why SEd programs need to be adapted for young adults.
   a) For example, what are the developmental factors and illness career factors that make this specific focus important?
3) What should be the role of VR be vis-à-vis education.
4) More discussion is needed about the SEd program models studied, the fidelity scales used (or not used) to assess adherence, the designs and outcome measures used, and the actual findings.
5) Include more peer and self-advocacy programs

Request for More Information/Discussion

6) Broaden the review to include the following:
   a) Early psychosis intervention research and promoting education
   b) Prevalence of supported education programs
   c) Challenges in measuring educational outcomes
   d) Review of college student experiences in post-secondary educational settings

State-of-the-science

1) Should programs without any peer-reviewed research evidence even be discussed?
2) How should we describe possible policies to improve mental health supports on campus and diminishing barriers when there is no evidence? Pre-scientific?

Special Populations – Challenges to the Field

1) Perspectives of young adults need to be considered in the design of new programs, especially program goals.
2) More attention is needed on the potential impact of racial, gender, and other sociodemographic factors on educational attainment for this group, especially identifying potential disparities.
3) More attention is needed to students from marginalized cultural groups as students who are over-identified or under-identified for Special Ed services.
4) Interventions must attend to cultural differences.

Future Research

- More than one reviewer believes that if supported education is ever to move beyond description, and conduct higher quality outcomes studies, than researchers will need to rigorously define program models.
  - Unger's fidelity scale is widely used, but there are others (e.g., Manthey et al., 2012).
  - More work is needed to define and measure the critical ingredients.
- Evaluations of the effectiveness of programs need to consider the perspectives of young adults.
- What is the policy innovation in special education that has had a beneficial impact? Are you suggesting that having a transition plan in place by age 16 is the key? What do we know about these transition plans? Who do they work for and what should be included in them?
- Need research on the lack of academic preparedness of classified students in high school and the need for higher academic standards and early vocational preparation for this group
- Need more research and discussion about lack of knowledge/skill of the students with SMHC advocate on campus, i.e, Office of disability services, and the potential long-term impact of lack of advocacy, expertise and protections for this group on campus.
- More research is needed to examine differences in educational attainment, access to services, outcomes, etc. by gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status to identify disparities.