

Exploring transition pathways to post-secondary education and employment for youth with disabilities

Project Summary

Centre for Leadership in Participation and Inclusion

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Holland Bloorview

Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Bloorview
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

TRAIL lab

SHARING OUR WORK

- Peer reviewed publications
 - Lay summaries and presentations to key stakeholders
- Research conferences including:
- International Conference on Disability & Diversity, Hawaii, US
 - Accessibility conference, Guelph, ON
 - BRI symposium, Toronto, ON

WHAT WAS THIS STUDY ABOUT?

Going to college or university and obtaining employment are considered part of a successful transition to adulthood. Many youth with disabilities find the transition to post-secondary education and employment challenging.

- People with disabilities are persistently under-represented in higher education and employment.
- Obtaining post-secondary education credentials helps to narrow the gap in poor employment rates. Therefore, more efforts are needed to enable youth to participate in college and university.
- Our study explored youth, clinician and educators' experiences in preparing for transitions to post-secondary education and employment.

WHAT DID WE DO?

We sent a survey to all past clients who received post-secondary support services at Holland Bloorview. A total of 35 youth (aged 17-29) completed the survey; 21 of these youth also took part in an interview that asked about their transition experiences in further depth. Ten clinicians and educators from Holland Bloorview who are involved in helping to prepare youth for their transition were interviewed.

IMPACT FOR CLIENTS, FAMILIES AND CLINICAL PRACTICE

Clients and families: Helping youth to have a successful transition to higher education and / or employment can help to reduce their likelihood of experiencing social exclusion and poverty.

Clinical practice: Understanding the transition experiences will help to inform the development of evidence-based transition pathways and clinical programs.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Youth need support developing essential individual skills (e.g., self-advocacy, disclosure) and life skills (e.g., transportation, volunteering) to make a successful transition.
- Youth with disabilities experience supports from peers, family, clinicians and educators that influence their transition to post-secondary education and employment.
- Disability specific issues (e.g., coping, self-care, disability disclosure and accommodations) can influence youth's experiences at college and/or employment.
- Societal attitudes (e.g., stigma and discrimination), policies and timing of the transition and the supports influence youth's transition.

Implications for rehabilitation and clinical practice

- A team approach and inter-professional collaboration is needed to support youth in their transition.
- Formal transition pathways including bridging support and inter-agency partnerships (between high schools, disability organizations and post-secondary institutions) are needed to enhance the success of youth with disabilities.
- More evidence-based interventions, programs and assessments are needed to support parents and youth.

NEXT STEPS?

The team will be giving several presentations at academic conferences and also clinical audiences. Our findings are being submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. Members of our team have recently received additional funding to continue working on enhancing transitions of youth with disabilities.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS STUDY, PLEASE CONTACT:

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WHO ARE WE?

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THANK YOU!

To the youth and clinicians who took part in the study

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED BY:

Center for Leadership in Participation & Inclusion, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and in-kind support from the TRAIL lab.