

Transition Domain: Physical Well-Being

Transition Challenge: Stable Housing

<p>Explanation of Physical Well-Being Transition Domain</p>	<p>Being physically safe and secure in one's daily living is the young person's most basic need. A big part of transitioning into adulthood is gradually taking on responsibilities for one's own safety and security, and in some instances the safety and securing of others (e.g., a child, partner, etc.). This domain also includes care of one's body and physical health.</p>
<p>What transition difficulties with the challenge of housing stability may look like; behaviors and situations you may see.</p> <p>(Note that well-being domains aren't discrete, in real life they often overlap.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young person falls behind in rent and is homeless; sleeping at the homes of friends.• Young person chooses to leave home to live on her/his own; has been unable to find a place to live and can't/won't return home.• Cannot seek assistance from parents due to conflicts with them that resulted in being "kicked out" of the house eight months ago. (This example shows how physical well-being and emotional/social well-being can go hand-in-hand.)• Difficulties in school or work - not able to keep a job, difficulty concentrating, poor attendance• Difficulty sleeping, tired all the time• Chronic illness/poor health• Poor hygiene, lack of seasonally appropriate clothing• Lack of family or other supportive relationships (Emotional & Social Domain)

Some Staff Competencies Needed for this Transition Challenge:

1. Partnering with young people.
2. Addressing domain-specific transition needs.
3. Planning partnerships with providers of other services.
4. Promoting support from family, peers, mentors.

Some Things You Can Do:

Engaging:

- Establish trust with young person. Enhance young person's dignity and strength. (**Link 1**).
- Formal or informal interviewing to acquire information needed for problem-solving and advocacy with landlords (**Link 2**). Motivational interviewing if needed (**Link 3**).
- Does the Y/YA have somewhere to stay at the moment (Immediate Need being met)
 - If yes, break down the large goal of obtaining housing, this also continues with equipping.
 - If the Y/YA does not have a job, maybe job assistance is the first step in the larger goal of finding housing
 - If no, assist with immediate need

Equipping:

- Coaching regarding lease/rental agreements, financial planning, selecting a roommate, etc. through in-vivo teaching.
 - Through role playing
 - SODAS
- Assess young person's independent living skills and provide training as needed
 - Skills to Pay the Bills
- Work with youth to identify and secure housing, providing case management services and referrals to address needs and issues that may arise (e.g., depression, transportation, etc.).

Empowering:

- Conflict mediation and resolution with parents for family reunification and support of the young person's transition to sustained housing independence (**Link 5**).
- Reviewing budgets, roommate relationship in place of teaching (coaching) on these things

Link 1: According to the Homelessness Policy Research Institute (2018), effectively engaging young people that are experiencing homelessness involves:

- Trust: Gained through genuineness, consistency, dependability, and transparency.
- Safety: When the young person feels safe, she/he is more willing to voice opinions or fears, set boundaries, and form attachments.
- Respect: Service providers must attempt to see the whole young person, their perspectives, behaviors, expressed ideas, and experiences from a non-judgmental stance.

Trust, safety, and respect activates an important shift in the young person's brain. On the surface, what you may see are fewer or less intense signs of fear, sense of doom, despair, and hopelessness. What's going on in the brain is that its defensive or avoidance neural pathways (e.g., fight, flight, and freeze) are "settling down," so to speak. What's beginning to "turn on" is its offensive or approach neural pathways (e.g., explore, discover, and engage/connect). So be patient. She/He may be angry, distrustful, and quite illogical. That's the defensive brain-mind.

Link 2: Some basic areas for initial information-gathering included in various transition assessment tools are listed below. You don't necessarily have to cover every item in a single interview, and in many instances an informal interview approach is best. This list just gives you some items that would provide information needed to assist the young person with securing stable housing, among other things.

- Personal information (birth date, ID, SSN, etc.)
- Life skills (see link 4)
- Finances, money management
- Employment
- Education (including educational aspirations, if any)
- Self-care and health
- Housing (prior to this current situation)
- Community involvement and social life
- Transportation

Advocacy with Landlords: An important best practice is engaging landlords early in the process. By engaging well with the youth, you will have acquired information and insight important for meeting with landlords and advocating on the youth's behalf. Having the young person join in doing this also can serve as a form of coaching, also called "in-vivo teaching." ("Did you notice how I talked with the landlord? Money and tenant rules are their bottom line. That's why they come across as so inflexible. To work well with them you have to understand them. What do you think? Want to try a role play with me for fun? Then you can lead to discussion in our next meeting with the landlord.)

Depending on the young person emotional and mental state, Motivational Interviewing techniques may be useful. This would be more likely if the young person has been referred or "brought in" (as opposed to voluntarily and proactively

seeking assistance) and verbalizes a preference for their unstable housing situation (“I’m fine with sleeping on my friend’s sofa for a while. My stuff is in his garage. I get play video games most of the day. I’m set for now”).

Link 3: Motivational Interviewing

<https://www.co.ozaukee.wi.us/DocumentCenter/View/8185/Definition-of-Motivation-Interviewing?bidId=>

Link 4: Young people in this situation that also have mental health and/or substance use disorders may have significant difficulty with life skills that you and I take for granted. This isn’t because they are inferior. Rather, past developmental experiences may have been inadequate to build what are called executive skills. These skills involve things like managing attention (e.g., staying focused), making plans and figuring out tasks or actions to carry out the plan, then being able start the actions, control oneself when doing the actions, and maintaining the actions for as long as needed to accomplish the goal. *These skills are developed. We aren’t born with them. This is why you provide training.* So be very careful to not undermine the young person’s dignity and sense of worth.

Life skills involve using executive function capacities for actions or tasks important for independent daily living. What might those actions or tasks be? In addition to talking with the young person, there are many tools for assessing life skills. Here is one example, others may be found online:

- [Washington State Life Skills Inventory – Independent Living Skills Assessment](https://transitioncoalition.org/blog/assessment-review/life-skills-inventory-independent-living-skills-assessment-tool/)
<https://transitioncoalition.org/blog/assessment-review/life-skills-inventory-independent-living-skills-assessment-tool/>

Link 5: Family reunification, when safe and appropriate, can limit homeless recurrence (Homeless Policy Research Institute). Whatever were the dynamics in the young person’s family, it is nonetheless a primary context during infancy through late teens for initially developing trust, self-management (or autonomy), a sense of initiative, and drive to succeed (or industry). All these capacities are needed for what it takes to live independently. Even though the young person’s prior developmental experiences with family may not have been sufficient to develop one or more of these capacities, even at this point it is still a context where they can still be developed or strengthened- especially trust. It is in this sense that you are working to support the family becoming “reunified.”

Other links:

Skills to Pay the Bills Curriculum: <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical well-being outcome and a recovery story from YES pilot sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy functioning in daily life. Involves dealing effectively with problems and crises; doing well in school, work, and relationships (see pages # - # of PHI's Evaluation Report: Link 6 to PHI's Final Evaluation Report).• Socially connected. Involves friendships with which one is happy; belonging; people to turn to in a crisis (see pages # - # of PHI's Evaluation Report: Link 7 to PHI's Final Evaluation Report).
---	--