Preparing Individuals for Transition to Successful Employment and Community Placements

MOST™

A new model for ensuring successful transitions when the school bus stops

Marcy A. Bennett, MBA
VA ACCSES Provider Conference
Norfolk, VA
June 8, 2015
Jewish Foundation for Group Homes, a non-sectarian provider agency founded in 1982 by a group of families with children with disabilities

First home opened in Rockville with 6 individuals

Today JFGH operates 23 homes which support 106 residents
The fastest growing residential program is the non-group home program

85 individuals living in their own homes receiving a range of supports based on needs

JFGH is committed to providing individuals with developmental disabilities and/or chronic mental disorders with the opportunity to live independently within the community.
In 2007, JFGH received money from the State of Maryland and Montgomery County for the down-payment on a building to house administrative offices

Conditions were:
- Space was not to be used solely for administrative purposes
- Program uses could not be for residential services
Meetings with multiple stakeholders revealed:

A cohort of young adults who completed high school but were unable to find placements with adult providers

- Disconnect between individual’s/family’s assessment and programs’ assessment of the individual’s skills and abilities
- Families overwhelmed by the transition process
- Families’ failure to follow through
- Poor match revealed after transition occurred
- Capacity issues with providers
Challenges of Graduation

- Lost predictability, structure, and comfort of school
- Loss of familiar support personnel for families and young adults
- Navigating new system of agencies, services, supports
- “What will happen to my child?”
- “What will happen to me?”
Guideposts for Success

Critical areas that promote successful transition among young adults with disabilities:

- Education/Training
- Career Preparatory Experiences
- Youth Development and Youth Leadership
- Family Involvement
- Connecting Activities

The National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition (NASET),
National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth (NCWDY)
Developed the MOST™ Program
Meaningful Opportunities for Successful Transitions™

- Post-graduate (gap) year to solidify skills
- Bridge between structure of school and independence of adulthood
- Build support network, social and recreational opportunities within adult community
- Link:
  - to existing service community
  - to social, recreational, and therapeutic resources
  - to further education and employment
Program Components

- Assessment
  - Skills
  - Interests
  - Needs
  - Preferences
Program Components

Develop Individual Transition Plan

- Case Management
  - Independent living skill training and practice
    - Travel training
    - Cooking, cleaning, ADL’s
- Recreational activities
  - Socialization
  - Provide opportunities for individual to pursue new interests
- Family support
  - Monthly family support groups
  - Ongoing individual family support
- Employment Experience
  - Targeted Placements
  - Work or educational experience to build resume
Program Components

- Collaboration
  - Critical to this program
    - With families
    - Vocational providers
    - Support Coordination
    - Educational programs
    - Recreational programs
    - Social/therapeutic programs
  - Familiarize families and participants with services available to support them within the community
Active Family Partnerships

- Support efforts to maintain and promote independence
- Provide monthly multi-family group
- Provide ongoing support to family
- Educate and inform of resources available
- Support efforts to identify opportunities for social, recreational, educational services
MOST™ Participant Characteristics

- Have a wide range of abilities

- Are in need of a one-year transition program
  - May stay for less than one year, but not one day longer than one year

- Understand that goal of program is transition
MOST™ Participant Characteristics

Exclusions

- Individuals who are a danger to themselves or others
  - Facility location and layout does not lend itself to supporting this population

- Elopers
  - Facility location is close to high volume of traffic, so risk of injury is high

- Individuals with significant on-site medical care needs
Goals in Three Domains

- Self-sufficiency
- Community
- Employment Planning
Self-Sufficiency

- Personal hygiene
- Dress for Success
- Food preparation
- Safety skills

- Household chores
- Interpersonal communication
Community

- Social skills
- Recreational activities
- Public transportation
- Shopping
Employment Planning

- Job skill development
- Volunteer opportunities
- Resume Building

- Educational planning
- College
Admissions Procedure

- Review materials:
  - MOST Program Application
  - Psychological Assessment
  - Psychosocial History
  - Medical History
  - Resume
  - Educational History including most recent IEP

- Interview
  - Applicant
  - Family
  - If indicated, professionals who provide services
Admissions Procedure

- Observe
  - In school
  - At home, if indicated
  - In current work-place, if indicated

- Complete Individualized Transition Plan
  - Individual with family identifies goals and desired outcomes
  - Individual with MOST™ staff identify strategies for achieving goals and outcomes
Admissions Procedure

- Admission Review and Discharge Committee recommends admission
  - Committee consists of physicians, allied health care professionals, and educators with experience working with individuals with a range of disabilities and ages
MOST™ Milestones

- Meeting with applicant and family up to 2 weeks before admission to review ITP and adjust to reflect current status
- Ensure all documents are completed
- Confirm that transportation and other logistics are secured
- Outline expectations for first week in program
MOST™ Milestones

- Daily staff meeting during first week
- 30 Day Meeting
  - Review initial ISP
  - Review goals, add, change, or discontinue as needed.
  - Add, change, or discontinue strategies as indicated.
- Quarter 1 Meeting
  - Review ISP
  - Add, change, or discontinue goals and strategies as needed
Each quarter thereafter, the team meets again to review ISP

- Goals and outcomes are reviewed
- Strategies are reviewed, changed, added
- Decisions are data driven based on progress towards goals
MOST™ Milestones

At the Quarter 2 meeting
- Identify placement options
- Identify steps to be accomplished by conclusion of year

During Quarter 3
- Contact with community providers
- Contact with educational programs
- Trial placements may be pursued
MOST™ Milestones

By conclusion of Quarter 3
  ◦ Transition goal is being completed
  ◦ Individual may have started to work or attend classes.
  ◦ Next step is actively being pursued and/or implemented

By conclusion of Quarter 4 transition is complete
Participants’ Primary Disabilities

- Intellectual Disability (without Physical Disability)
- Intellectual Disability (with Physical Disability)
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Other: Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Psychiatric Disorder
Reasons for Enrolling in MOST™

- Not accepted where he or she applied
- Began a job or program after leaving school, that did not work out
- Dropped out of "system"
- Parents did not engage in transition planning
- As MOST™ has become better known, many participants select MOST™ over other options when leaving school.
Successful Transitions After MOST™

Yes 91%
No 9%
Successful Transitions After MOST™
What does this mean for you?

A comprehensive one year community based assessment

- On the job experiences
- Community based experiences
- Life as an adult
Marcy A. Bennett, MBA
Director of MOST™
Jewish Foundation for Group Homes
9703A Fairfax Blvd.
Fairfax, VA 22030
mbennett@jfgh.org
240–283–6000
www.jfgh.org