

Treatment Goal Considerations for Clinical Practice for Adolescents and Young Adults Transitioning to Adult Care and Independent Self-Management

Background: Health care transition is an important process for all adolescents and young adults (AYAs), but particularly for those with chronic physical and mental health conditions. Unfortunately, only 14% to 41% of AYA with chronic health conditions report being adequately prepared for health care transition (AAP, 2018). Unsuccessful health care transition can result in disruptions in health care, poorer well-being, and adverse health consequences, such as exacerbated symptoms (e.g., Crowley et al., 2011). Successful health care transition should be patient-centered and follow a biopsychosocial approach, in order to ensure continuity of care and optimize long-term health outcomes (e.g., AAP, 2018; Devine et al., 2017). Pediatric psychologists are uniquely positioned to advocate for the importance of promotion of psychological and social functioning, in addition to medical functioning, during the health care transition process for AYA.

Project Aim: The purpose of the current project was to provide a clinically-relevant list of transition-related treatment goals, following a similar structure to the PracticePlanners series of Treatment Planners (e.g., Jongsma et al., 2014).

Methods: Six practicing pediatric psychologists and one doctoral student specializing in AYA transition to adult health care independently created lists of clinical treatment goals in the below domains highlighted by previous research in AYA transition. Professionals then collaboratively established operational definitions for each domain and finalized treatment goal lists.

Identified Domains for Clinical Treatment Goals for AYA Health Care Transition:

- **Transition Knowledge/Readiness and Skills Application** – assessment and preparation of patient knowledge and skills related to the process of transitioning to adult healthcare, with a focus on coordination of healthcare needs
 - *Example:* Identify and implement problem solving strategies to address barriers to transition readiness and skills.
- **Disease Self-Management** – universal knowledge and skills important to most chronic health condition management
 - *Example:* Identify and utilize symptom management strategies.
- **Risk Behaviors and Safety** – patient's ability to identify when they are in crisis or engaging in behaviors that put their health at risk, focusing on promoting responsibility of self-care and use of refusal skills related to potentially risky behaviors
 - *Example:* Improve ability to recognize crisis situations, potential triggers for a crisis, and coping strategies.
- **Motivation** – building one's autonomy and self-efficacy as they relate to management of their chronic health condition symptoms
 - *Example:* Increase insight of motivational state and identification of personal values.
- **Caregiver Support/Supporting Autonomy** – refers to the balance of caregiver support for increasing independent self-management of one's healthcare and AYAs' competence for independent self-management
 - *Example:* Create with caregivers a list of desired independent tasks to enhance AYA's autonomy in their medical care (e.g., scheduling appointments, refilling medications).

Considerations:

- Proposed treatment goals are meant to be a guide that extends across all chronic health conditions and are not meant to be inclusive of all disease-specific self-management strategies
- For mental health concerns that warrant a diagnosis or have at-risk or clinically significant impairment, readers are guided back to the appropriate adolescent and/or adult Treatment Planners from the PracticePlanners series (e.g., Jongsma et al., 2014).
- Three types of treatment goals cross-cut several of the above domains:
 - Barriers to care
 - Communication
 - Adherence
- Assessment by the provider and collaboration with the patient and caregiver is necessary to select applicable treatment goals

Note: Full list of specific treatment goals will be included in the final publication, which is currently in preparation.

References

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