Young Adults Getting Involved: Participatory Action Research & Transition Age Youth

Tip Sheet 1 | **Transitions RTC** | *February 2011*

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a process in which researchers and transition age youth (TAY) collaborate on a research project designed to improve mental health services. Collaboration requires that TAY have the opportunity to be actively involved in all phases of the research from defining the problem to disseminating results.

Why?

- Enhances relevance of research questions and methods
- Generates actionable results
- Widens dissemination of research findings

Challenges Faced

- Distrust between:
  - Consumers and non-consumers
  - Experienced researchers and new researchers
  - Adults and young adults
- Different from traditional research training and methods
- Funding or infrastructure needed for team building
- Young adults may lack employment experience
- Young adults may have turbulent lives

How?

- Research leadership's commitment to active participation of young adults
- Promoting young adult self-efficacy and empowerment
- Adults and young adults working together
- Training on research for TAY
- Naturally occurring adult mentoring of young adults
- Availability of developmentally appropriate vocational supports

Positive Outcomes for Young Adults

- Vocational/skill development
- Self-efficacy that instills empowerment to act
- Self-confidence and a sense of hope
- Improved health outcomes
- Life-long civic participants

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