



# Research in the Works



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## Transition-Age Youth Psychotherapy Experiences (TYPE) Study

### Background

About 760,000 transition-age youth (TAY) use outpatient psychotherapy each year in the United States (IOM, 2013). However, when compared to mature adults, TAY are much more likely to either attend fewer psychotherapy sessions<sup>1</sup> or drop out of mental health treatment<sup>2</sup> altogether. Many psychotherapy treatments can reduce symptoms and increase medication adherence, but TAY often do not engage in psychotherapy for a long enough time to receive these positive benefits. Thus, it is important to identify and develop effective interventions to reduce treatment attrition in this age group by gaining a better understanding of the causes of attrition as well as retention that are specific to TAY.

### Purpose

The goal of the **Transition Age Youth Psychotherapy Experiences (TYPE)** study is to better understand:

- TAY-specific factors that contribute to treatment attrition or retention; and
- The degree to which adult retention interventions apply to TAY.

### Methodology

We will recruit up to 60 TAY, ages 18-25, with self-identified mental health condition(s) who are currently initiating individual outpatient psychotherapy or who have been engaged in therapy for less than 12 months. Data will be collected at 2 time points that occur 8-12 weeks apart. Time point 1 (baseline) will include a web survey and demographic questions. Time point 2 (8-12 weeks post-baseline) will include a web survey and a brief qualitative interview. We are recruiting TAY from across the U.S., so the qualitative interview will either be done in person or over the phone. We will measure: therapy expectations, stigma and social support,



psychological distress and autonomy level, therapeutic alliance, treatment experience and number of therapy sessions attended.

### Anticipated Outcomes

Once data collection is complete, we will:

- Analyze the variance between the number of attended therapy appointments and ratings of distress, autonomy, perceived stigma, social support, therapy expectations and therapeutic alliance;
- Analyze the relationship of change scores to sessions attended; and
- Assess themes from the qualitative data to better understand specific barriers that TAY face in continuing outpatient psychotherapy treatment.

Information gained from this study will be used to identify psychotherapy approaches/methods that are effective at retaining TAY in treatment. These findings can also help to inform and develop specific retention interventions for this age group.



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This is a product of Psychiatry Information in Brief. An electronic copy of this issue with full references can be found at <http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/pib/vol14/iss11/1>

## **Resources**

1. Olfson, M., Mojtabai, R., Sampson, N. A., Hwang, I., Druss, B., Wang, P. S., & Kessler, R. C. (2009). Dropout from outpatient mental health care in the United States. *Psychiatric Services, 60*(7), 898-907. doi:10.1176/appi.ps.60.7.898
2. Edlund, M. J., Wang, P. S., Berglund, P. A., Katz, S. J., Lin, E., & Kessler, R. C. (2002). Dropping out of mental health treatment: patterns and predictors among epidemiological survey respondents in the United States and Ontario. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 159*(5), 845-851.