An Adjunct Group Intervention for Youth with Mood and Anxiety Disorders Transitioning to College

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- Grant funding: NIMH, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, The Brain and Behavior Foundation
- Royalties: Guilford Press
- Employers: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh Physicians

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- Grant funding: NIMH
- Consulting Fee: LEK Consulting
- Employers: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh Physicians
Mental Health Concerns are Significant for Transition-Age Youth
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college-aged youth
- One in 12 college students makes a suicide plan
- In the past year, 31% of college students reported depression and 50% reported anxiety that impacted their functioning

Mental Health Concerns Impede College Success
- Depression and anxiety are the largest impediments to academic performance (American College Health Association, 2011)
- 64% of young adults who dropped out of college cite mental health-related reasons (most commonly mood and anxiety disorders)
- Youth with mental health disorders are more likely to misuse alcohol, experience academic distress and sexual victimization on campus

College Students Rarely Seek Mental Health Services
- 40% of college students with diagnosable mental health conditions do not seek help; 57% do not request accommodations
Aims

To create an adjunctive group to assist transition-age youth (i.e., 17-20 years of age) build independence and optimize success in the transition to college/community and independence.
Who is the Group For?

- Youth preparing to graduate from high school
- Relatively stable symptoms
- Engaged in individual therapy
Group Structure and Timing

Young Adult Group: Monthly for 6 months

March April May June July August

 Concurrent Parent Group: Bi-monthly for 6 months

March May August
Independence as a Continuum

Completely Dependent  Mostly Dependent  Somewhat Dependent  Somewhat Independent  Mostly Independent  Completely Independent
Domains of Independence

**Health**
- know my diagnosis
- manage my medications
- make my appointments

**Academics**
- manage my workload
- know my accommodations

**Daily Life**
- get myself up in the am
- do my laundry
- manage my time

**Relationships**
- solve problems with others
- get what I need from others
- know where to get support
Young Adult Group Structure

- Ice breaker
- Snacks
- Feedback from last meeting
- Session content
- Wrap-up
Young Adult Session Content

Session 1: Knowing My Body & Mind
Session 2: Advocating for Myself
Session 3: Managing my Academics
Session 4: Living Independently
Session 5: Managing My Relationships
Session 6: Graduation
Importance of having accurate knowledge of:

- diagnosis/symptoms
- baseline behavioral patterns (e.g., eating, sleeping)
- treatment
- warning signs
- coping skills
**Session 1: Knowing My Body & Mind**  
**Self-Assessment**

Circle the number that indicates the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of these sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know my diagnosis.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2. I know the warning signs of a relapse.</td>
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<td>3. I know the names and doses of my medications.</td>
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<td>4. I know what my insurance does and does not cover.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I take my medications independently.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I make and track my own appointments and can fill my own prescriptions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I can name my providers and reach them.</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating a Health Portfolio

- Personal Health History
- Family History
- Emergency/Contact Information
- Treatment History
- 504/IEP
- Safety Plan
- Health Insurance Information
Session 2: Advocating for Myself

- Understanding the importance of self-advocacy
- How to communicate with (potential) providers
- How to handle emergencies/crises
- How to find services on campus/in the community (and what to look for…)
- Who should I tell about my mental health condition?
- Making independent decisions
### Session 2: Advocating for Myself: Self-Assessment

Circle the number that indicates the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of these sentences.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have checked out available mental health resources on campus and/or in the community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I know and have copies of the documentation that is required to receive accommodations at most post-secondary institutions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know the accommodations that work best for me to effectively participate at school and in the community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I maintain a folder with my health documents and insurance card.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Session 3: Managing My Academics

- Academic accommodations
- Differences between high school and college
- Note taking
- Structuring time
- Asking for help
## Session 3: Managing My Academics

### Self-Assessment

Circle the number that indicates the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of these sentences.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know what I need to do to graduate from high school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I know my academic strengths and weaknesses.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I have a system for managing assignments and can complete assignments in a timely fashion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I have a system for studying for tests and exams.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I understand it is important to know how to take good notes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 4: Living Independently

- Managing money
- Managing time
- Doing laundry
- Grocery shopping
## Session 4: Living Independently

### Self-Assessment

Circle the number that indicates the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of these sentences.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I set and respond to a wake up alarm.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I know how to manage my sleep.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I have a system for scheduling and managing time.</td>
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<td>4. I maintain a reasonable diet.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I know how to do my own laundry and basic cleaning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6. I have a driver’s license and/or use public transportation.</td>
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<td>7. I know how to manage my finances (i.e., use an ATM card, debit/credit card, write a check).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Session 5: Managing My Relationships

- Relationships with parents
- Relationships with friends from high school
- Building new relationships
### Session 5: Managing My Relationships

**Self-Assessment**

Circle the number that indicates the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of these sentences.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I understand my relationships with family will change.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I can express my feelings.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I understand my relationships with peers will change.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4. I have friends who are supportive.</td>
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<td>5. I know how to resolve conflicts with people.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>6. I have strategies to deal with peer pressure and bullying.</td>
<td>1</td>
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Session 6: Graduation (Joint group with parents)

- Presentation of the Health Portfolio
- Review of lessons learned
- “Graduation” party
Session 1: Before College Checklist
Session 2: University Counseling Centers
Session 3: Graduation
Session 1: Before College Checklist

Planning for:

• continued mental health care (includes health portfolio)
• communication and monitoring
• how to intervene if needed

“Yes mother, I told you I am doing fine on my own at college...Hey, could you log on and find my schedule, order my books, and call me when it’s time for class?”
Session 2: University Counseling Centers

- Services offered
- Timeline
- Limitations
- Common pitfalls
Parent Group Session Content

Session 1: Before College Checklist
Session 2: University Counseling Centers
Session 3: Graduation
Overall, my level of satisfaction with the quality of the Transition Age Group Program is:

![Bar chart showing satisfaction levels for Parent and Young Adult groups.]
The length of the Transition Age Group Program was:

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<tr>
<td>Much too short</td>
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<td>Slightly too short</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
<td>Slightly too long</td>
<td>Too long</td>
<td>Much too long</td>
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Parent Mean: 4.0 (Appropriate; Range 4-4)
Young Adult Mean: 3.7 (Appropriate; Range 3-4)
The frequency of the visits in the Transition Age Group Program was:

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Much too frequent</th>
<th>Too frequent</th>
<th>Slightly too frequent</th>
<th>Appropriate</th>
<th>Slightly too infrequent</th>
<th>Too infrequent</th>
<th>Much too infrequent</th>
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<td><strong>Appropriate</strong></td>
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</table>

Parent Mean: 4.3 (Appropriate; Range 4-5)
Young Adult Mean: 4.0 (Appropriate; Range 3-5)
Acknowledgments

- We acknowledge with gratitude the Pennsylvania Legislature for its support of the STAR-Center and our outreach efforts.
- Services for Teens at Risk (STAR) Center
- Child and Adolescent Bipolar Spectrum Services (CABS)
- Kim Poling LCSW, Brian McKain MSN, Caroline Oppenheimer PhD, Laura Dietz PhD
- STAR Faculty and Staff
- CABS Faculty and Staff
- Participants and their family members