

Title: Collecting Histories of Education and Employment Activities from Young Adults with Serious Mental Health Conditions

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Young adulthood is a critical time for establishing the foundation of an adult working life. As adolescents mature and explore career interests, they also begin to focus in on particular career pathways. However, lower levels of employment and educational attainment, as well as the demands of parenting, prevent and delay Youth and Young adults (Y&YAs) with serious mental health conditions (SMHCs) from participating in settings where career development and exploration activities typically occur. Of Y&YA parents who do work, the majority will work part-time, at low-level service jobs, and at low salaries (Osgood, et al., 2005). Y&YA parents with SMHCs are particularly vulnerable as they are more likely than their normative peers to experience unemployment, poverty, and dependence on government assistance (Luciano, et al., 2013). Through a one-time, semi-structured interview, this study seeks to describe the education and employment activities of Y&YAs between the ages of 25-30 with SMHCs, explore barriers and facilitators to these activities, and understand how parenting affects these experiences. Preliminary findings will be presented as they relate to themes of career exploration/development, the barriers and facilitators to education and employment activities this population encounters, including the impact that parenthood can have on these activities in young adulthood. We will also describe the education and employment activities and trajectories that were obtained as part of these interviews.

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