

FROM ADOLESCENCE TO ADULTHOOD... TAKING THE ROLLER OUT OF COASTER

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OUTLINE FOR DISCUSSION

- Adolescence - a unique developmental period
- Brain injury in adolescence
- System issues
- Strategies for successful transitions
- Case examples

ADOLESCENCE IS A UNIQUE DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD


- Need for freedom and control
- Higher level of awareness than younger children in terms of skills and limitations
- Risk taking behaviors/drugs and alcohol associated with feelings of being invincible
- Need to conform to a peer group
- Need to break free from parental protection

Gagnon et al 2008




BRAIN INJURY IN ADOLESCENCE

- Adolescence has the highest incidence of mild traumatic brain injury in the paediatric population
- Often due to associated risk taking behaviors
- Understudied population




BRAIN INJURY IN ADOLESCENCE

- Physiological issues/neurochemical changes
- Straddling childhood and adulthood
- Specific challenges in all areas
 - academic
 - sports
 - peers/social
 - family




SYSTEM ISSUES

- At an age where they need to cross sectors
- Scarcity of resources
- Big picture is fragmented and compartmentalized and does not address the unique needs of adolescents
- Silos of care that don't interconnect
- Privacy legislation




TRANSITION ISSUES

- Anticipated independence is interrupted by the injury—for both the adolescent and their parents
- Need to “normalize” the need for support
- Acknowledge the importance of continuing the developmental trajectory
- Support ongoing communication in the context of a dynamic process




SUPPORTING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ...

- Adolescent and family
- Adolescent and school
- Family and school
- High school and post secondary school or workplace
- Family/school/rehab therapists




SUPPORTING SUCCESS

- Communication and information sharing
- Regular review of goals, progress and changing needs for support
- Need for a “buy in” on the part of the adolescent (e.g. driving school = license)
- Reframing others’ goals to reflect client’s goals—assist negotiation talks
- Support activities and courses of interest
- Explore areas of strength and new interests




SUPPORTING SUCCESS

- Recognize normal adolescent behaviors
- It isn't always about the brain injury
- Appreciate and respect the client and family's perspective, personal views and beliefs




SUPPORTING SUCCESS

- What are YOUR goals?
- How do you imagine you might meet them?
- What does that look like to you?
- What has helped you to be successful so far?
- Can we use any of those strategies?




SHAWN

- 17 years old, grade 12
- Three concussions within one year playing hockey
- Fatigue, headaches, concentration drop in grades, executive dysfunction
- Had to quit part-time job
- WHAT WERE HIS GOALS?
- Plans to attend college to become an electrician




TRANSITION PLAN FOR SHAWN

- Needed 4 more credits to graduate → 2 more semesters taking a reduced course load to ensure optimal marks → tutor resource
- Assisted with identification process to support transition to post secondary → application for students with disabilities → e.g. getting a lap top (buy-in), accommodations for assignments and testing, additional funds (bursary), student services support
- Successful transition to college




RANDY

- MVC at age 3: severe closed head injury = severe learning and behavioural difficulties requiring intensive and ongoing supports
- Complex psychosocial situation + + +
- In and out of CAS care until age 16-currently in supported housing through CAS
- Extensive drug use/abuse and high risk environment




TRANSITION PLAN FOR RANDY

- Ongoing supports as Randy's goals for independent living emerged
- Insurance funds protected through Public Guardian and Trustee
- Rehabilitation worker hired to assist with job training, experience and independent living skills
- WHAT WERE HIS GOALS?




GOAL DIRECTED PLAN FOR RANDY

- Wants to work in an auto body shop detailing cars → rehab worker hired to assist with job training and volunteer placement → Youth Opportunities Unlimited
- Wants to have more control over his money → Capacity Assessment (PGT)
- Wants to be in more successful peer relationships → assist in finding more suitable housing
- Wants to work with horses → volunteer at stables



SUPPORTS

- CAS
- Youth Transition Worker
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited
- Privately funded Rehab support
- Insurance settlement monies structured and protected



NEED FOR INDIVIDUALIZED AND DYNAMIC PLANNING

- Ensure appropriate testing (neuropsych or vocational) to document strengths and deficits
- Know who you are working with and what this means functionally - realistic vs idealistic approach
- Be willing to stretch the parameters of 'pediatric service' to ensure smooth transitions
- Connect with adult services to link client before discharge

