Young People with Intellectual Disability Transitioning to Adult Life from Out-of-Home Care

Child Aware Approaches Conference
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Outline

“Growing Up After Foster Care”
Research
• Sarah MacDonald
• University of Queensland
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“Living the Dream”
Practice Approaches
• Jessica Burke
• ARROS Team Leader
• Community Living Association Inc.
“Growing Up After Foster Care” Study

6 young people
- Aged 18-30
- “Mild” or “borderline” intellectual disability

10 service providers
- Min. 12 months support and/or advocacy role
- Single practice experience interviews
RQ1. How do young people with intellectual disability experience adult life after OOHC?
“Pursuing Goals”

Roles
• Relationship & Occupation

Rights & Responsibilities
• Freedom & Duty

Valued Identities
• “Being Normal” & “Being Capable”
“Having Difficulty”

**Difficulty managing tasks**
- Gaps in resources and support

**Ongoing control**
- Capacity gaps and constraints

**Devalued Identities**
- “Not normal” & “Not capable”
Capacity

Resources [or Gaps]
• Skills & Knowledge; Material

Support [or Gaps]
• Relationships; Services

Opportunities [or Gaps]
• Participation; Self-Determination
RQ2. How might young people’s earlier life experiences have influenced their experience of adult life after OOHC?
Multiple adversity in early life

- Impairment Effects & Discrimination
- Abuse & Neglect in Relationships
- Regulation & Disruption in Service Systems

Developing complex needs in adult life
Good fortune in early life

- Learning & Inclusion Experiences
- Care & Nurturing in Relationships
- Participation & Growth in Service Systems

Building capacity for adult life
RQ3. What are the implications of this knowledge for policy and practice with this group of young people?
Capacity Building Policy & Practice

Responsive to abilities & needs
• Intellectual Disability; Trauma-Recovery

Relationship-based
• Personal Relationships & Services

Developmental
• Learning, Nurturing, Participating
PRACTICE APPROACHES IN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL OR COGNITIVE DISABILITY ON THE FRINGE
Sally’s Life at Age 17

Risk of homelessness
Mental health issues – self harming, suicide attempts
Drug use – overdosing on prescription and illicit drugs
Severe dysfunction in family relationships – DVO, welcoming & excluding, pay day invitations to connect, police interventions to end contact
Criminal justice & other legal issues
What we work towards:

• Places to live
• Spaces to belong
• Roles for meaning
• A community that welcomes and includes young people from the fringe
Practice Approaches that Work

1. Pro-active outreach
2. Skilled workers to build and hold a relationship with the young person
3. Flexibility
4. A commitment and ability to engage with the people in the young person’s life
5. Capacity to work holistically
Contact details

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RQ1. How do young people with mild-borderline intellectual disability experience adult life after out-of-home care?

RQ2. How might their earlier life experiences have influenced their experience of adult life?

RQ3. What are the implications of this knowledge for policy and practice with this group?