Emerging Adulthood: A Developmental Perspective

Amanda Zayde, PsyD
Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Montefiore Medical Center

Thomas McMahon, PhD
Yale University School of Medicine
Connecticut Mental Health Center

Chelsea VanderWoude, PhD
Ohana Montage Health
Community Hospital of Monterey Peninsula

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Learning Objectives

Identify three social, economic, and technological trends that have changed the transition from adolescence to early adulthood in a postindustrial society.

Explain why emerging adulthood can be characterized as both a time for reflection, optimism, and exploration and a time of high risk for social and psychological difficulty.

Describe two approaches to the organization and delivery of psychological services to better meet the needs of young people making the transition from adolescence to early adulthood.
Why the Attention to Emerging Adulthood? 
Five Intersecting Trends

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.
#1. Why the Attention?
A Changing Social Context

- Contraception
- Social norms
  - Family planning
  - Premarital sexual relations
  - Cohabitation
  - Births outside marriage
- Delayed marriage
- Cohabitation
- Delayed parenthood
- Births outside marriage
#1. Why the Attention?  
A Changing Economic Context  

- Globalization  
- Technology  
- Higher education  
- Higher cost of living
#1. Why the Attention?
A Changing Legal Context
#1. Why the Attention?
A Changing World

MacArthur Foundation
Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood

2000-2008
#2. Why the Attention?
Emerging Adulthood as a Distinct Developmental Phase

#2. Why the Attention?
Emerging Adulthood as a Distinct Developmental Phase

- An age of feeling in-between adolescence and adulthood
- An age of identity exploration
- An age of possibilities
- An age of self-focus
- An age of instability

Deeply impacted by culture and sociodemographic variables
#3. Why the Attention?
Development Continues
#3. Why the Attention?
Development Continues

Arnett, 2000
Help-Seeking for Behavioral Health Problems

- Any Behavioral Health Disorder
- Substance Use Disorder
- Any Services
- Any Behavioral Health Services

Percent of Sample

- Adolescence
- Emerging Adulthood

Copeland et al. (2015) Increase in untreated cases... *Psychiatric Services, 66*(4), 397-403.
#4. Why the Attention? 
Emerging Adulthood as a Time of Risk
On the surface, then, emerging adulthood looks like a positive development...giving adolescents and emerging adults a greater amount of choice and freedom.

[However,] without guiding structures to give meaning to the potential choices people face, realistic and informed choices [may] become burdensome for many young persons.

This situation may be especially critical for... teens from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with psychiatric challenges, and so forth.

James Côté, 2006
#5. Why the Attention?
Concern about Systemic Transitions

On Your Own Without a Net:
The Transition to Adulthood for Vulnerable Populations

D. Wayne Osgood et al. (2005)

MacArthur Foundation
Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood
#5. Why the Attention?
Concern about Systemic Transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child/Adolescent System</th>
<th>Adult System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High School</td>
<td>• Post-Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High School</td>
<td>• Workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Special Education</td>
<td>• ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pediatric Healthcare</td>
<td>• Primary Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child Mental Health</td>
<td>• Adult Mental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child Welfare</td>
<td>• ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Juvenile Justice</td>
<td>• Criminal Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Civil Legal/Dependent</td>
<td>• Civil Legal/Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Service/Child</td>
<td>• Social Service/Adult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
#5. Why the Attention? Concern about Systemic Transitions

- Systemic Transitions
- Wait Lists
- Few Developmentally Informed Adaptations
- Unmet Treatment Needs
- Poor Adherence
- Limited Research

Pottick et al., 2008; Singh et al., 2010; Wang, 2007
Emerging adulthood may be a turning point in development.

Emerging adulthood may represent an opportunity for a developmental reframe.

Clinical intervention must be a comprehensive, strategic, developmentally informed series of professional efforts pursued collaboratively with the client to decrease psychopathology and promote developmental competence.
Carefully plan for systemic transitions
Stretch the age limits for pediatric systems
Define developmental criteria for transition
Add developmentally informed programming
Outreach to emerging adults
Target specific populations
Build transitional programs
Locate services in alternate locations
Create integrated service centers
Create lifespan clinics for special populations
Bridging the Gap for Emerging Adults: Ethical Considerations

How do we evaluate and expand emerging adults’ capacity to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities as an adult?

What is the ethical thing to do when a young adult may need an alternate or collaborative decision maker?

How do we acknowledge and ethically manage risk for harm to self and others?
Bridging the Gap for Emerging Adults: A New Area of Professional Competence and Practice
The BEAM program aims to develop, implement, and evaluate developmentally-informed policies and interventions for emerging adults with a wide range of presenting concerns. Our goal is to offer assessment, treatment, consultation, education and training to improve our ability to meet the needs of emerging adults as they present to, and transition among, clinics across our health system....
## Emerging Adult Self-Assessment Questionnaire

**Directions:** We are trying to get sense of how prepared you feel to transition into adulthood and specifically, into an adult treatment clinic. Please rate how ready or prepared you feel today in terms of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little bit</th>
<th>Somewhat Fairly</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
<th>Completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Independence (e.g., knowing what you are feeling, how to express yourself, how to deal with difficult emotions)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Independence (e.g., supporting yourself financially, living on your own, managing your bank account, knowing your own insurance information)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity (e.g., knowing your own values and goals)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress in work/school (e.g., feeling that you are making progress or are where you need to be in terms of work or school)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Independence (e.g., feeling comfortable making your own friends, initiating spending time with friends, able to maintain friendships)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks of daily living (e.g., making your own decisions, time management, making and sticking to a budget, preparing your own food)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to manage my own treatment (e.g., attending sessions on your own, remembering to take your medications, calling your therapist to reschedule when you need to)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall (e.g., in general, how ready do you feel to be an adult?)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

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A
Becoming an Emerging Adult at Montefiore (BEAM)

Developmental Hierarchy

- Filling out a job application
- Calling an old boss to ask for a reference
- Researching job options
- Meeting new people independently
- Reminding my parents not to cook for me
- Going to the grocery store on my own
- Preparing my own meals
Becoming an Emerging Adult at Montefiore (BEAM)

Specialty Programming

- College Readiness Group
- What’s Next Group
- Virtual Town Hall
- Voter Registration Drive
- Resource Sharing
Evidence-Based Practice in Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Scaffolding and Support Beams: Clinical and Administrative Tools for Emerging Adult Programs

Amy Kranzler, Sandra S. Pimentel & Amanda Zayde

To cite this article: Amy Kranzler, Sandra S. Pimentel & Amanda Zayde (2018): Scaffolding and Support Beams: Clinical and Administrative Tools for Emerging Adult Programs, Evidence-Based Practice in Child and Adolescent Mental Health, DOI: 10.1080/23794925.2018.1551092
Connecticut DMHAS Young Adult Services: A Statewide Network
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DCF Referrals → DMHAS

DMHAS → YAS Eligibility

Regional Liaison → Local YAS

Local YAS → Local Referrals
Connecticut DMHAS Young Adult Services: A Statewide Network

- 18 to 24 years of age
- Serious and persistent psychiatric difficulty
- High-risk behavior
- Complex treatment needs as a young adult
- Previous involvement with the child welfare system
- Interest in an intensive ambulatory program
Connecticut DMHAS Young Adult Services: A Statewide Network

- Complex treatment needs
  - Clinical
  - Medical
  - Vocational-educational
  - Occupational therapy
  - Residential support
  - Social
  - Recreational
  - Family
  - Psychosexual
  - Parenting
  - Legal
  - Risk management
The DV 53 EA SIG

Goals of the EA SIG

• Education and outreach
• Clinical interventions
  • Defining best practices
  • Prevention and early intervention
  • Attention to intersecting and minoritized identities
• Research
• Diversity, equity, and inclusion
• Advocacy and collaboration
The DV 53 EA SIG

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Vice-Chair: Kelly Schloredt, PhD
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Join the EA SIG at:

https://sccap53.org/emerging-adulthood-special-interest-group
Questions?

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chelsea.vanderwoude@chomp.org
azayde@montefiore.org
thomas.mcmahon@yale.edu