Ready-Set-Go:
Helping Teens Transition into Adulthood - Peter Pan is Alive and Well and Living in the Basement

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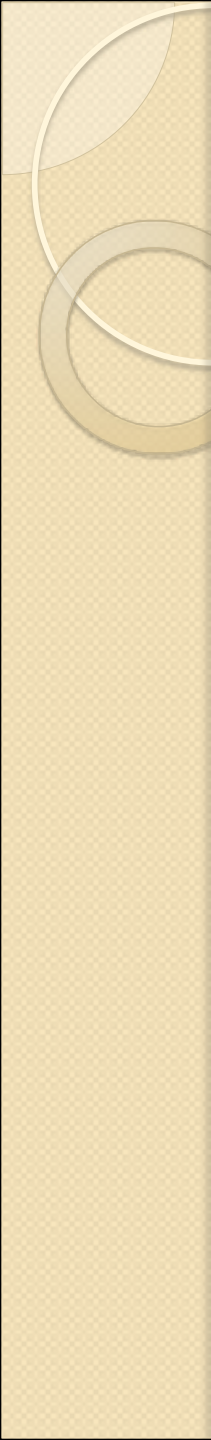
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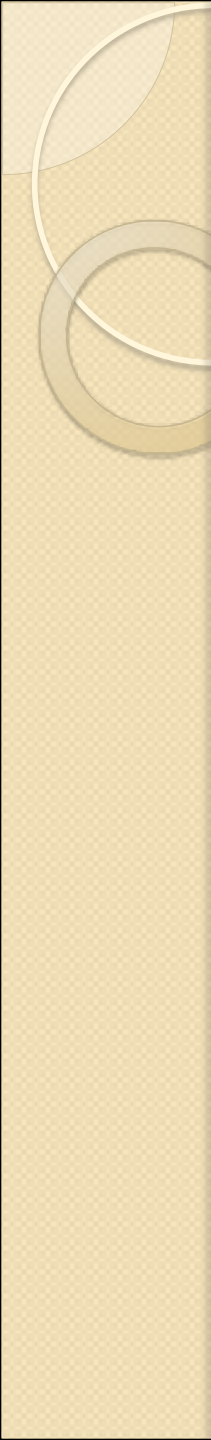
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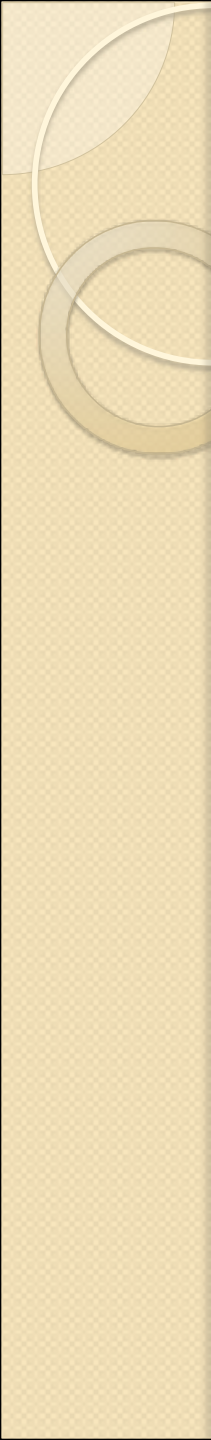Indianapolis, IN 46220

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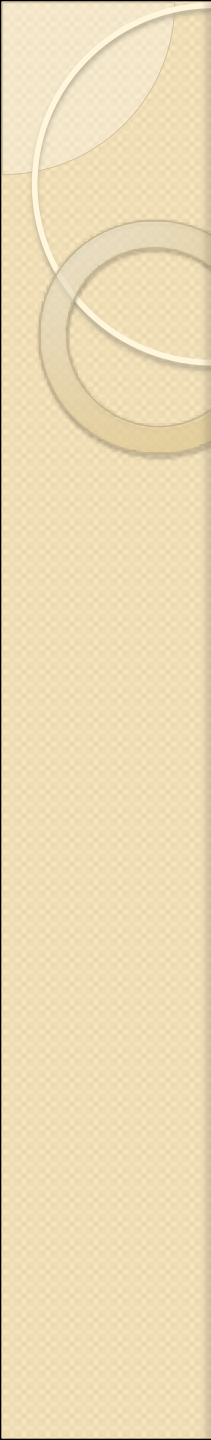Fax: 317-465-9689

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- From the moments children are born they are on a trajectory of independence and self- sufficiency.
- They move toward this goal by accomplishing a series of developmental tasks. Each set of tasks lay the ground work for the next set of tasks.

- When teens encounter situations which prevent them from accomplishing appropriate tasks they experience developmental trauma.
- Our job is to assess their task completion. It is sometimes important to back up to help them resolve these developmental traumas.

- This generation of teens and young adults have experienced significant disruption in their development due to Covid.
- This population experienced cognitive, social and psychological malnourishment due to their isolation.

- The world went back to normal and is filled with young people who don't feel "normal" in it.
- It is more important than ever to focus on the developmental challenges and to provide teens and families with a path for developmental growth.

Teens Transitioning into Young Adulthood

- Enter young adulthood with unprecedented rates of diagnosed psychiatric, learning and behavior disorders. These disorders not only affect day to day functioning, but may also delay completion of developmental tasks.

- These diagnoses significantly effect teen's perception of themselves and their sense of competence in entering the adult world. Unfortunately, often creating a sense of incompetence for the teen.

Teens Transitioning into Young Adulthood

- Very academically prepared but emotionally unprepared ever to enter college

- Have experienced trauma which has altered their view of themselves in their world and experiencing developmental delays

Teens Transitioning into Young Adulthood

- Are victims of adult cultures, "do it for them or abandon them" to get it done on their own. They need assistance from adults committed to helping in learning how to get it done themselves.

What Does This Mean for Transitions into Young Adulthood?

- There are a few, but very significant, longitudinal studies that track the impact of adolescent behavior patterns, academic patterns and relationship patterns into young adulthood. Adolescent issues are for the most part strong indicators of behaviors transitioning into young adulthood.

What Does This Mean for Transitions into Young Adulthood? (Cont'd)

- Adolescent onset of psychological disorders further disrupts the developmental process.

- National survey of counseling center directors on college campuses report the following increase in the last five (5) years:
  - Learning disabilities (71%)
  - Self-Injury (51%)
  - Alcohol Problems (45%)
  - Other drugs (49%)
  - Sexual Assaults (33%)
  - Eating Disorders (58%)

What Does This Mean for Transitions into Young Adulthood? (Cont'd)

- Obsessed with how others view them (pictures, Instagram, etc.)
- Many feel they have never done the right thing on their own and don't believe they can
- Unrealistic view of status and accomplishments (over, as well as, underestimate themselves)
- Everyone has solved problems for them leading them to believe they can't solve problems on their own.

What Does This Mean for Transitions into Young Adulthood? (cont'd)

- Fail to develop a sense of trust in themselves.

- Struggle to develop a sense of self-- independent of parents

- Confused about identity development

Protective Factors and Young Adults

- Group memberships and attachments
- Regulation of sleep cycles
- Minimal use of alcohol or other substances
- Involvement in religious, spiritual and/or value development
- Ability to develop and access support networks that include, but are not limited to, parents

Protective Factors and Young Adults (cont'd)

- View young adult phase of life from a perspective in which achievement is a means to independence.

- Have stress reducing leisure time activities (people, places, things, self-soothing skills)

- Ability to share complex feelings and experiences with others.

Protective Factors and Young Adults (cont'd)

- Possess collaborative conflict resolution

- Interpersonal understanding

- Flexibility

Developmental Challenges of Transition

1. Identity Development:

- In adolescence, teens struggle or experiences role confusion when they sacrifice their identity and over identify with heroes, fictional characters, peers,celebrities or parents

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

- In young adulthood, the challenge is the conflict between intimacy and isolation. Intimacy requires a certain level of cognitive and emotional maturity and involves many experiences including close affiliation with others and intuition into one's self and others in relationships. Isolation is often a result of seeing others as dangerous, untrustworthy or judgmental.

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

- Becoming one's own authority vs. adhering to, or depending on, demands of authority figures

- Grieving the loss of old adolescent identity

- Reality based awareness of roles vs. role playing in adolescence. "What I am doing vs. what I say I am going to do."

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

Activity: Boundary Development

Boundary development that teaches teens to <u>decide</u> which feedback from others they allow in and which they reject or modify.

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

2. <u>Social Development:</u>

- Respond to people as individuals without regard for past experiences, peer culture affiliations. Young adults are free of their previous social and personal history and can focus on relationship building and become more responsive in relationships. In order to do this there needs to be a movement away from who they have always been.

- Greater sensitivity to others

- Increased capacity to live in real relationships with people around him/her.

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

3. Value Development:

- Focus on higher moral issues

- Put values in an appropriate life construct

- Values become incorporated into identity

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

Value Activity:

- What do you value about yourself?
- What matters to you in your small world as well as large world?
- What are your moral constructs?
- What are your guiding principles?

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

4. <u>Increase Empathy for Others:</u>

- Social Interest

- Nurturing others

- Concerned about welfare of community

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

5. <u>Family Relationships:</u>

- Physical and emotional autonomy with family

- Transfer attachment and emotional needs from family to peers, romantic relationships and mentors

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

6. Sense of Self Responsibility:

- Actively involved in pursuing self sufficiency
- Meaningful involvement in work, community and peers
- Sense they are in charge of directing their own lives
- Ability to establish reasonable goals and appraise progress toward these goals

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

7. <u>Avoidance:</u>

- The developmental process becomes disrupted when the teens primary coping strategy becomes avoidance.

Developmental Challenges of Transition (cont'd)

- Dynamics of Avoidance:
  - Teen becomes terrified of potential failure
  - Teen avoids things that are difficult and challenging.
  - Teen avoids things that are unpleasant, boring mundane.
  - Teen replaces life with distraction from life.
    - Distraction is:
      - Anything to keep mind off current situation
      - Feels good in the moment
      - Distractions include:
        - Internet
        - Social media
        - Games
        - Reading (for those a bit ambitious)
        - Netflix
        - Sleeping all day
        - Online gambling
        - Online porn

  - Avoidance is fueled by self-criticism.

Why Trash Talking Yourself Does Not Work

- When you make a mistake, your mood drops.
- When you are self critical, your mood drops more and your anxiety goes way up.
- This creates an extreme emotionally uncomfortable state.
- In an attempt to avoid this feeling, you begin to avoid things.
- Avoid and become afraid of things that you don't know how to do, you don't understand, you might not do perfectly, you might fail, people who might make you uncomfortable.

How to Overcome Self Trash Talking

- Counter self trash talking
  - (I am not defective)
- Acceptance of pain
  - (This is hard)
- Decrease self blame
  - (Blaming myself is causing more pain)
- Humans fail
  - (It's normal to mess up sometimes)
- Lessen isolation
  - (It's not just me)
- Decrease self criticism
  - (Maybe this is not happening because I am a bad person)

Name It, Claim It, Shame It

Name It:	Claim It:	Shame It:
Call it	This is what	I am stupid
This is what	I think about it	Crazy
It is	This is what I feel This is what I need to do	Bad Defective

- Practice name it and claim it
- Be mindful of shame it
- Bring mind back to name it and claim it
- Claim it is how you take responsibility
- Staying out of shame helps you learn from mistakes, gives you courage to try again, gives you emotional strength and resiliency

Parent-Child Dynamic that Disrupts Launching

- Child realizes they do not have to be responsible because parents will remind them (make them).

- Child completes tasks when they are reminded but do not have a sense of accomplishment because they were reminded.

- Child does not develop a sense of competence.

- Child is angry at self for needed reminding and angry at parent for reminding them. Parent becomes mirror of child's inadequacy.

- It is more important that the child does it independently than that they do it perfectly.

Shifting Parental Parenting Dynamics

- To prepare a teen for independence, the parenting dynamic needs to shift
  - Shift from protecting teen by removing obstacles and blocking potential challenges, to following the child with support and accountability.
  - Focus on building and teaching problem solving communications.
  - Speak to the teen in adult language. Refer to them as an adult.

Communication Which Promotes Launching

Instead of…	Say or Do…
Have you-Did you-Don't forget	What have you done? What do you still need to do?
Telling them what you think	What do you think?
Warning them of consequences	What will be the consequences?
Focusing on the reasons they are not ready to transition	Focus on the reasons they are ready to transition
Focusing on how they need us to trust them	Focus on why they can trust themselves
Problem-focused communication	Problem-Solving

Transitioning Into Young Adulthood is a Family Process

- Have the family make a list of things that they currently do for the teen that the teen can learn to do for themselves.

- Develop a plan for gradually trusting the teen to assume responsibility for those tasks.

- Encourage parents to prioritize the task with a plan to release these tasks to the teen, one at a time. When one task is mastered, move on to the next.

- Set a plan for assisting the teen in accomplishment of the task.

Transitioning Into Young Adulthood is a Family Process

- If the teen does not understand the tasks
  - Explain task to teen with parent present while parent completes task.
  - Have adolescent complete task with parent present.
  - Release task to teen.

  Once the teen has assumed responsibility for the task, they assume complete ownership for it!

Transitioning Into Young Adulthood is a Family Process

- Entering into Senior year of high school discuss this transition with teens and parents.

- Have the families and teens view the launch sequence.

- List which things on the list that the adolescent has already mastered.

- Develop a goal of moving together toward transition

Transitioning Into Young Adulthood is a Family Process

- If the teen avoids assuming ownership, parents release responsibility
  - ie, If teen refuses to drive when means to drive are available, parents no longer assume that responsibility.
  - ie, If teen refuses to work, parents stop financing every aspect of teen's life.
  - Stop checking student school work!

Ready, Set, Go- Behavioral Launch Sequences

10. Demonstrates ability to self regulate study, work, sleep patterns, curfew.

9. Demonstrates ability to maintain and manage one's schedule and show independence in regards to schedules, appointments, commitments.

8. Demonstrates a willingness to speak with adults and authority figures on own behalf.

Ready, Set, Go- Behavioral Launch Sequences

7. Demonstrates financial responsibility and is able to budget money, pay bills, prioritize spending.
6. Demonstrates willingness for personal responsibility, laundry, getting self up in the morning.
5. Demonstrate ability to think ahead, plan, organize, focus on tasks at hand.
4. Self imposes limitation using screens, (TV, computers, video, cell phones, games), to avoid reality, social interaction, unpleasant tasks.

Ready, Set, Go- Behavioral Launch Sequences

3. Displays ability to address conflicts with others in a direct, healthy, and appropriate fashion.

2. Has been able to maintain at least part-time employment and has a driver's license.

1. Maintains a balance in leisure, work, social activity.

Ready, Set, Go- Emotional Launch Sequences

10. Displays ability to control and regulate emotional reactions to situations.

9. Displays stability with psychiatric, emotional, behavioral and learning problems.

8. Is able to manage stress and has a variety of activities which are relaxing.

7. Is focused on achievement as a way to independence.

Ready, Set, Go- Emotional Launch Sequences

6. Begins process of making peace with parents.
5. Demonstrates some ability to engage their frontal lobe in decision making.
4. Demonstrates the ability to function outside a highly structured routine and schedule.
3. Willingness to take responsibility for mood states and not act impulsively based on moods.
2. Makes arrangements for taking care of mental health issues through the transition.
1. Begin developing of identity independent of peer group and activities.

Transition- The Group

- **Goal**: This group is designed to facilitate honest, open and positive discussion among tens about what to expect in the next six months of their lives. The group framework is on of what works, and what they can do to guarantee success vs. what they might do to ensure failure.

- **Structure**: The group is a mixture of information sharing and discussion centered around themes. It meets for 90 minutes one time per week for six weeks.

- **Membership**: This is a coed group. Membership is closed after the first session. Participants are high school seniors in their last semester of high school. Membership is open to teens with a variety of post high school plans including college, military, work, vocational school.

Transition- The Group

- Group One: Internal Conflict- Conflict is any time you feel two opposite emotions at the same time. This group focuses on:
  - Feeling excited and scared
  - Feeling unsure but acting confident
  - Outwardly stating readiness but inwardly doubting it. Whenever there is transition, there is conflict and conflict causes stress

Transition- The Group Cont'd

- <u>Group Two: How will You Know You Are Ready?</u>

  - Focus on launch sequence information. Have participants pick ones to move towards, identify what they've already accomplished, put plan in place for completion.

Transition- The Group Cont'd

- ## Group Three: What Works to Ease Transition?

  - Discussion of why it is stressful, most people feel stressed, it's okay to make mistakes, self care, time management, stress management. Making friends, getting involved, seeking help, dealing with roommates.

Transition- The Group Cont'd

- ## Group Four: Guest Speakers or Speakers

  - Someone who survived their first year of transition and lived to tell about it.

Transition- The Group Cont'd

- <u>Group Five: Finished Business</u>

  - Finish business, resolve old conflicts, make peace, finalize, make amends with friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, parents, siblings, family members. Visit Grandma, be nice to your mom, etc.

Transition- The Group

- ### Group Six: Practice Makes Perfect

  - Review concerns, problem solve concerns. Discuss plans to ease transition, how to set up rooms.

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