

Transcript

Cameron Conner

You're listening to a Life Launch Conversation on Show Me Today, the Voice of Missouri. I'm Cameron Conner. Today we're joined by Grace Chapel with Early Psychosis Care. She's a youth and family liaison, and the topic is about supporting teens and young adults during critical transition years. Whether you're an educator, counselor, mentor, case manager, or parent, we'll explore professional tools and strategies available through LifeLaunchMo.org. The goal? To help young people thrive. Grace, looking over the Life Launch Moe Professionals page, it includes a playbook and staff checklist. How can professionals integrate these tools into their daily work with transition-age youth?

Grace Chapel

I would say the first step you should take is go through our For Professionals page and familiarize yourself with the different resources that we have. So we have a playbook for professionals. This is a long resource. It has a lot of information on it. It has all sorts of stuff for you on different struggles and common problems that youth and young adults are likely to face. You're going to want to have that info in your back pocket. So when a youth tells you, I'm really having a hard time with this guy I'm dating, you know, he's kind of mean. I don't know if that's okay or not. You can remember for why young adults get into these situations and what helps get them out of it and things like that. So having that information in your back pocket, being really familiar with all the stuff we have on offer to you helps you to use it when you're working with the young adults.

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For emerging adults, the site highlights best practices. What makes this group developmentally unique and how should that shape our approach?

Grace Chapel

So the thing with emerging adults is they are having big transitions and very big questions, often for the first time. And these questions follow us throughout our lives, but there are a lot of them in the lap of a young person all at once for the first time. So they might be leaving the world of high school or college. They might be entering the world of employment. They might be entering the world of living away from their own family. They might be entering the world of having to take responsibility for stuff like their finances and their health. And they're dealing with these questions like, Who am I? What matters to me?

What kind of life do I want to build? And so they're doing that while navigating all of this new stuff. They have all these new responsibilities. They're in all these new environments, and it can be really, really scary. They're wired to be experimenting and taking risks and exploring their identities, but the parts of their brain responsible for impulse control, emotional regulation, and long-term planning are still developing, which is a really difficult combo to have to live through. It's really important to remember that even though they might seem young, they are very confident and don't totally know what they're talking about yet. Their ideas and their values and their feelings are just as real and valid as those of a more established adult.

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You know, it's part of hiring that young professional, but they're not going to have everything figured out all the time. So I feel like professionals have to balance making sure they're accountable sticking to their accountabilities and also fueling autonomy for that young professional. It's definitely a balance. It's a challenge. What does that look like?

Grace Chapel

So youth and young adults have just received all this freedom and autonomy and agency for their own lives. There's nobody telling them what to do anymore. They get to do whatever they want. They don't have a bedtime. Nobody's telling them what they're allowed to eat. Nobody's telling them where they're allowed to go, what to spend their money on. And so they're very reticent to lose that. So they're learning how to do all this. They're not always experts. They're going to mess up and you have knowledge. But if you start telling them what to do and telling them you need to do this, you need to do that, that's not okay. They are going to shut down because you are making them feel like a little kid again. And that is the last thing that a new adult or an emerging adult wants. So when you are working with them, it is helpful to speak in the positive. You did a great job with this. Let's improve it by adding this or hey, I notice you're having a hard time. How can I help you? You want to recognize that it's their life. They have to live it. If you want to support them, you can't be shutting them down and telling them what to do because they're going to shut you off. They're not going to communicate with you. They're not going to trust you, and your ability to help is going to be cut off at the knees. You want to be very supportive. You're going to want to respect their pace and help them develop the skills that they need to do this on their own. They're not always going to have services available or mom and dad to be a safety net. And so helping them learn how to navigate these problems and build the life skills that you have and you want them to have so that they don't always need to turn to somebody for help in order to navigate those challenges.

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You can explore these resources anytime at lifelaunchmo.org. One of the things I appreciate about the Life Launch Hub is that it doesn't just talk about the topics. It gives you the step-by-step analytics. Those resources you need. This Life Launch conversation is focused on supporting teens and young adults through critical transition years. Grace Chapel with Early Psychosis Care is with us. And Grace, for our wrap-up, how about peer support and the importance of the youth voice? What does that do and how does that play in strengthening outcomes for these young adults?

Grace Chapel

So certified peer supports are professionals in Missouri who have lived experience with what they're working with. We have some who work in the mental health field. They have experienced a mental health challenge and they've gotten through it. We have some who are just young adults who have gotten through being a young adult for the first time. And so if you are working with services that have a peer support available, it is critical to get them connected with your youth or young adult because they can tell you, I've been there before and you can get through it. When you hear it from somebody who looks like you, who is young, who is isn't 50 years old and they've had a house for 20 years and they have no idea what it's like to be a young person today. When you hear it from somebody who is only a few years older than you and is telling you I was exactly where you are in recent memory, I can tell you what I was wearing. A youth is much more likely to listen to them, to feel heard, and they're more likely to open up because another young adult can't take away their newfound agency and autonomy in the same way a more established adult can. So peer support is absolutely crucial, and it is one of the best ways to get through to young adults and help them build the confidence to utilize services and become the best full-fledged adult that they can be.

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To download the playbook, staff checklist, and other professional resources, visit lifelaunchmo.org. professionals. This is Show Me Today.