

## **Humboldt County Transition Age Youth Collaboration Policy Recommendations on PES/Sempervirens, Counseling Center and Crisis Line**

Youth who are experiencing severe emotional or mental health distress and crisis must rely on Humboldt County's Crisis Line, Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility and Counseling Center for adequate support and appropriate treatment to help them through a difficult time. Unfortunately, many youth report that difficulties in accessing services and getting appropriate, consistent treatment leave Humboldt County transition aged youth in crisis and at extreme risk for suicide, arrest and dangerous situations.

### **A. Ensuring Meaningful Inpatient Intake, Assessment and Treatment**

1. Develop consistent standards for inpatient admission that can be communicated to youth and other consumers as well as alternative treatment options when beds are full.
2. Create an intake protocol that provides adequate privacy and appropriate support for youth experiencing a crisis.
3. Consistently develop and implement developmentally appropriate treatment plans that include personal check-ins, therapy, and team case management.
4. Address issues around psychologist, psychiatrist and good staff consistency and retention so youth have opportunity to build a trusting relationship.
5. Work with HCTAYC and the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project to develop and deliver training for mental health providers, psychologists, and psychiatrists on adolescent development and good practice.
6. Limit use of sedation and restraints except when no alternative is available. Train staff on alternative methods of working with TAY in crisis.
7. Develop a continuum of inpatient and aftercare mental health services to help youth transition from services through providing independent living support and training, assistance in finding housing and employment and support and encouragement.
8. Develop a discharge protocol including required documents, referrals to services and automatic follow up after release.
9. Ensure TAY are educated about their rights as patients and have developmentally appropriate mechanisms for addressing concerns and complaints.

### **B. Creating a Humane Environment for Transition Aged Youth**

1. Ensure facility meets the comfort and health needs of youth including access to at least 2 blankets per patient, maintenance of heat and hot water, adequate food and decent beds and pillows.
2. Decorate the facility to create a more welcoming environment.
3. Evaluate alternatives to security guard supervision of youth, such as university or mental health interns.
4. Create truly option activities and services that are developmentally appropriate and consistently offered to transition aged youth patients including activities that promote coping skills, promote socialization, physical activity, outside time, creativity, and overall mental well being.
  - a. Have appropriate art and reading material available.
  - b. Collaborate with the Humboldt holistic, healing, harm reduction and university community to create alternative treatment options and integrated services for youth.
5. Evaluate visitation rules and procedures to ensure they are conducive to healthy family visits.
6. Identify a new facility for TAY inpatient and counseling center services that is accessible to public transportation, has dedicated space for TAY separate from the adult facility, and is convenient to other TAY services.

### **C. Improving Support Available on the Crisis Hotline for Transition Aged Youth**

1. Work with HCTAYC and the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project to develop a plan for consistent supervision and training of Crisis Line staff on TAY Issues.
2. Develop plan to ensure adequate, dedicated and supportive staffing of Crisis Line that incorporates consumer feedback.
3. Create youth positions or a specific youth Humboldt crisis line where youth volunteers can provide peer support with the supervision of a professional.