



**County-Wide Assessment of the Needs of  
Transitional Youth**

Psychological Services Center

***Report Prepared For:***

**Wood County Family and Children First Council**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background**

This needs assessment was conducted for the Wood County Family and Children First Council by staff from the Psychological Services Center (PSC) in the Department of Psychology at Bowling Green State University. Working collaboratively, Council members and PSC staff decided, for Phase Three of the needs assessment, to focus on the needs of “transitional youth,” (whom we define as individuals ages 18-24 who are no longer in secondary school and are not attending college) in the following areas: preparedness after High School; education; transportation; employment; housing; paying basic bills; accessing food; family planning; childcare; health care (medical care/medications/dental and vision care); mental health; substance use; legal problems; access to social services; and transitional youth with learning/cognitive disabilities. Key Informants (25 individuals in Wood County who provide services for transitional youth) were interviewed about each domain, focusing on those domains identified by informants as being within their area of expertise. Four main questions about each domain, except Preparedness after High School, were asked: A) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in this area?; B) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with this problem?; C) What are the challenges or barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services; and D) What gaps exist in these services? For every domain, Key Informants were able to identify several available services. More detail on services is provided in Appendix A.

In addition, two focus groups were conducted with nine Bowling Green School District youth ages 17-19 who are students in Penta Career Center’s Community Based Intervention (CBI) program. Many of the same concerns and challenges were identified both by Key Informants and participants in the CBI youth focus groups.

Finally, 10 pre-transitional (ages 17-19; still in high school) and 23 transitional (ages 18-24; no longer in high school) completed surveys reporting on their personal problems, life challenges, and barriers to accessing services for experienced life challenges.

In this Executive Summary, we highlight the results of the interviews with Key Informants and Youth Focus Groups, and the results of the pre- and transitional youths’ responses to the surveys. These survey responses reflect the opinions of those interviewed. The results reflected in this report should be understood in conjunction with findings from our previous (“Phase 2”) County-Wide Assessment of the Needs of Adolescents. The combined studies describe the needs of adolescents and young adults, ages 14-24, who are in transition from youth to adulthood.

## **Concerns and Challenges Identified by Key Informants and Youth Focus Groups**

### **Cross-Domain Themes**

Across many domains of functioning, the following concerns were identified:

- Lack of financial resources (e.g., paying bills, maintaining housing, pursuing secondary education difficult)
- Limited practical knowledge (youth may not know how to budget for bills, or how to complete job-related paperwork)
- Lack of transportation, or unreliable transportation (impedes access to employment, education, and social services)
- Inadequate adult role models or insufficient support from older adults
- Lack of knowledge of available services

### **Domain-Specific Concerns**

Some concerns were more unique to specific types of domains, including:

- Lack of budgeting skills may impact youths' ability to pay bills, retain housing, and live independently
- Perceived stigma may prevent youth from utilizing food services or other social services, and may prevent youth from seeking professional help for mental health problems
- Limited work experience and lack of available jobs are important challenges in the area of employment
- Developmental issues, such as immaturity, lack of motivation, and difficulty planning ahead, may impede youth functioning in work settings, as well as present barriers to accessing services designed for older adults
- Youth with particular challenges such as cognitive limitations, mental health problems, and substance abuse, may need more intensive or comprehensive services than are currently available

## **Results of the Pre-transitional and Transitional Youth Surveys**

***Pre-transitional youth.*** Ten students (9 males, 1 female; ages ranged from 17-19) from the Bowling Green Career-Based Intervention program completed a survey focusing on the following domains: 1) Problems experienced in the last year; 2) Violence and traumatic events experienced in the last year; 3) Plans for after they graduated high school; and 4) Areas of challenge now and in the future.

Only ten 17-19 year-olds completed the survey, and the results were consistent with those reported in our Phase 2 report on the survey of adolescents.

- Adolescents reported having experienced several personal problems in the past year including:
  - trouble with attention (8 out of the 10 adolescents reported this)
  - stress related to school performance (9/10)
  - serious financial stress in the family (5/10)
- Adolescents also reported having been exposed to violent or traumatic events in the past year (e.g., someone close to the youth who was mugged, robbed, or threatened (4/10); witnessed someone get attacked (5/10); someone close to the youth who was killed by fire, accident or natural disaster (4/10)).
- Respondents endorsed having plans for after they graduate from high school, and they were generally confident that they would have the ability to implement their plans.
- Areas of life challenge now and in the future include:
 

	Now	Future
○ finding transportation	(6/10)	(4/10)
○ paying basic bills	(9/10)	(6/10)
○ accessing social services	(2/10)	(4/10)

***Transitional youth.*** Twenty-three transitional youth completed the survey.

Top 5 personal problems experienced as either somewhat or extremely troubling:

- Trouble getting along with family members (e.g., parents, brothers and sisters). (87%)
- Serious financial stress in your family (e.g., lost our home, or a parent lost job). (79%)
- Eating problems (such as binge eating, purging, or starving self). (75%)
- Trouble with attention, focus, or concentration. (64%)
- Stress related to your school performance (if you are in school). (60%)

Life challenges reported include:

- 70% or more indicated having experienced problems with paying basic bills, getting further education to find a job, and finding a job
- More than a third experienced problems with legal issues, accessing social services, finding permanent and safe housing, transportation, and getting medical or child care
- Most of the participants who experienced these problems indicated that the problems were troubling to them

Respondents identified the following barriers to services:

- Paying for services and knowing where to get help for services

- Concerns over confidentiality were endorsed as a barrier to seeking mental health services
- Potential embarrassment was endorsed as a barrier to obtaining services for basic needs

### **Summary and Implications**

Across the domains surveyed, both common and unique challenges emerged. Key Informants and youth identified limited financial resources as a major problem faced by many transitional youth, and lack of knowledge of how to budget resources presents a barrier to improving their financial situation. Limited knowledge about how to address challenges, including how to access available services, also presents a challenge across domains, as does accessing transportation.

The economic challenges confronting transitional youth are daunting. These young adults and their service providers report that they have difficulties obtaining or paying for housing, utilities, food, and health care. Most of the surveyed youth indicated that their families have serious economic hardships; 82% reported serious financial distress (e.g., lost home/parent lost job) and almost half (48%) said that in the past year they had to live on their own or at a friend's because they had nowhere else to go. Further, 70% said that they had challenges finding employment and obtaining further education that would help them get jobs. Survey responses of both the “pre-transitional” and “transitional” youth indicated high rates of mental health problems including problems that are potentially life threatening (self-harm, eating disordered behaviors).

Key informants were able to describe both challenges facing this population and some services available to help them, but the size, scope, and outcomes of these services are not clearly defined. Many of the programs and coordinating bodies available to help children and adolescents do not continue once youth reach the age of 18 and/or leave secondary education. Further, there is often an abrupt shift in service delivery systems as youth move from the child into the adult system, with accompanying shifts in intervention models, eligibility criteria, and program philosophies.

Transitional youth face pivotal economic, social and educational challenges. Their success or failure in overcoming these challenges has significant consequences for themselves, their families, and their communities. Potential negative outcomes with associated economic and social costs are homelessness, chronic unemployment, untreated mental health and substance abuse problems, health problems, premature death, increased criminality, and chronic family discord including child abuse and domestic violence. In contrast, successful outcomes include reliable housing, increased opportunities for employment, improved health and behavioral health status, family stability, and positive contributions to the community.

Based on the needs and perceptions identified by this assessment, a successful approach to the needs of transitional youth in Wood County likely would include: the development of a

coordinated cross-systems service delivery approach to transitional youth, involving integration of child/adolescent and adult service delivery systems; supportive services, such as transportation and meal provision, to encourage and enable youth participation in programs; comprehensive behavioral health services that emphasize trauma-informed care, promotion of resilience and recovery practices, youth empowerment, evidence-based treatment, and an integrated approach to mental health and substance use disorders; continued family involvement; coaching and mentoring regarding a broad range of economic, health, family planning, and social needs; education regarding available services and resources; supportive employment practices for youth with disabilities; and active case management and outreach. Use of social media is highly recommended to reach the target population.

The findings of this needs assessment are consistent with national and state perspectives regarding needs of transitional youth and with related policy and practice recommendations. The Summary/Implications section of this report contains web references for three such national/state models and a description of the Ohio Department of Mental Health's ENGAGE planning process for transitional youth and young adults. Wood County FCFC is encouraged to link to such processes and program initiatives as it plans how best to meet the needs of local transitional youth.



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Wood County Family and Children First Council (FCFC) is one of the 88 county-level councils that works in partnership with the Ohio Family and Children First Council on a variety of important issues. According to the Ohio Family and Children First Council<sup>1</sup>, the County FCFCs serve to, “determine, develop, and implement strategies to achieve their own county’s highest priorities and implement strategies that make a positive impact on state-initiated priorities.” The Wood County FCFC includes representatives from human service agencies, community agencies, schools, government bodies, and local families. Periodically, the Council engages in empirically-based assessments of families and children in Wood County. Specifically, the Council seeks information on the needs of and services available to families in order to plan and coordinate services, resources, and systems that provide help to children and families so that these services can be as beneficial as possible.

Through careful review of previous assessments of the Wood County area, Wood County FCFC uncovered three major populations for which up-to-date needs-based information was lacking. So, in the fall of 2009, Wood County FCFC partnered with a research team from the Psychological Services Center at Bowling Green State University to conduct a 3- phase needs assessment to fill these gaps in knowledge. The first phase gathered information from the parents of children ages 0-12. A report summarizing the Phase One results was completed in November of 2010 and was presented to the council. The second phase was designed to assess the needs of adolescents from age 13 to 18-years-old and their parents; responses from the adolescents are presented in an August 2011 report, whereas responses from parents are presented in a September 2011 report.

The following report describes results of the third and final phase of this needs assessment, which assessed the perceived needs of “transitional youth” (i.e., adolescents, ages 18-24) who were no longer in secondary school, and also not in college, in Wood County.

<sup>1</sup>source: <http://www.fcf.ohio.gov/resources/presentations.dot>

## II. METHOD

In order to avoid overlap with previous needs assessments, the Wood County FCFC reviewed those assessments and identified the populations and issues that needed to be assessed. The Council then contracted with a research team at BGSU to create a survey for “transitional youth” (i.e., adolescents, ages 18-24) who were no longer in secondary school, and also not in college. The research team had planned to conduct this phase using a similar approach as that used in the previous two phases: by obtaining a representative sample of transitional youth from Wood County who would complete a survey. However, difficulty was encountered when attempting to find a representative sample of this age group, because these youth are no longer in formal education and are difficult to reach. Therefore, a decision was made to focus this needs assessment on three activities:

- We completed **semi-structured interviews with a representative sample of Key Informants** who provided various services for transitional youth.
- From these interviews, we were also able to gain access to small groups of pre-transitional youth (i.e., those still in high school but who did not plan to attend college), so we conducted **focus groups with these pre-transitional youth**.
- We administered **surveys to these pre-transitional youth as well as a sample of 18-24 year-olds who were seeking services at various Wood County agencies (Health Department, Job and Family Services, GED classes)**.

**Key Informant Interview (see Appendices B and C for the Key Informant Interviews)**. A semi-structured interview (lasting approximately one hour) was used to collect information on 15 domains that had been identified by the research team as possible areas of need for transitional youth. These domains were: 1) Preparedness after High School; 2) Education; 3) Transportation; 4) Employment; 5) Housing; 6) Paying Basic Bills; 7) Accessing Food; 8) Family Planning; 9) Childcare; 10) Medical Care/Medications/Dental and Vision Care; 11) Mental Health; 12) Substance Use; 13) Legal Problems; 14) Access to Social Services; and 15) Transitional Youth with Learning/Cognitive Disabilities. The interview consisted of four main questions about each domain: I) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in this area? II) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with this problem? III) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services? IV) What gaps exist in these services? After this information was gathered, informants were asked to rate the top three problem areas and identify any other areas where transitional youth faced problems or difficulties accessing services.

A total of 27 Key Informants were identified and contacted by the research team to complete interviews (see Table 1). Of these 27 people, 2 did not respond and 3 identified other informants within their agency who could provide more information on the topic of needs of transitional youth. Therefore, 25 key informant interviews were completed. One-hour interviews were conducted at a time, date, and place chosen by the interviewees to make the process as easy as possible for them. Before the interview began, informants were asked to rate how much knowledge they had about each of the 15 domains so that the interviewer could structure the interview to cover the most well-known domains first. Interviewers then asked about the

domains in order of how much knowledge the informant had and covered as many topics as possible. After the interview, Key Informants were asked to provide names of any other possible informants who could provide information about this population. Informants were also asked if they could identify any groups of transitional youth who could be interviewed for focus groups.

**Table 1. Key Informant Agencies and Programs**

<b>Key Informant Agencies/Programs</b>	<b>Description</b>
Behavioral Connections of Wood County Inc.	A comprehensive behavioral health care agency providing treatment for mental health and substance abuse concerns for residents of Wood County, Ohio and the surrounding area.
Bowling Green Police Department	Provides local law enforcement to the Bowling Green area.
Career Based Intervention (CBI)	Work-based learning and academic intervention programs operated by Penta Career Center for 11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> grade students who are over age and credit deficient for their grade level.
Children's Resource Center (CRC)	Offers a wide range of services including: individual counseling; family counseling; school-based mental health services, including services at Penta Career Center and its Wood County CBI classroom sites; parenting classes; an after-school therapeutic program ("partial hospitalization"); psychiatric services; short-term residential services for youth 2-17; crisis intervention; and home-based services. CRC also offers prevention programming (e.g., early child, suicide prevention). Additionally, CRC provides mental health services in the PATHE program operated at CRC by the Wood County Educational Service Center for students who have emotional barriers to learning.
Penta Career Center	Provides an alternative high school education for at-risk students and students who prefer a more hands-on learning environment. Also hosts adult learning and GED classes.
Wood County Educational Services Center (WCESC)	Provides support to school districts in the areas of curriculum, professional development and educational resources.
Wood County Health Department	Provides health and medical services for those in need including Help Me Grow, WIC, and Immunizations.
Wood County Job and Family Services (JFS)	Provides human services which are federally mandated, state mandated, and locally developed to assist families, children, and adults to restore, maintain, or improve their capabilities for self-support and family life. Delivers Public Assistance, Employment Resources, Children's Services and Social Services Programs.
Wood County Juvenile Detention	Provides both pre-trial and short term commitments for incarceration. Provides needed medical services and mental health services to residents.

Key Informant Agencies/Programs	Description
Center (JDC)	
Wood Lane and Wood County Board of Developmental Disabilities	County agency that provides direct or contracted services on a daily basis. The Board provides educational, employment, recreation, sport, and other support services to children and adults of all ages, who have developmental disabilities.

**Pre-transitional Youth Focus Groups.** The focus groups consisted of two parts: a semi-structured interview (see **Appendix D**) and a short survey (to be described in the next section). The interview portion asked participants to provide information on 5 domains that had been identified by the research team as possible areas of current and future need for these youth. These domains were: 1) Education; 2) Transportation; 3) Employment; 4) Independent Living; and 5) Mental Health/Substance Use. Interviewers asked more questions when necessary to clarify responses given by the participants.

Two focus groups, consisting of four and five students each, were conducted in the Bowling Green School District classrooms of Penta Career Center's Community Based Intervention (CBI) program. (An additional three students came in late and only completed the survey.) The focus groups each took 45 minutes to complete.

**Pre-transitional and Transitional Youth Surveys (see Appendices E and F).** Two separate surveys, one for pre-transitional youth (ages 17-19 and still in high school) and one for transitional youth (ages 18-24 and no longer in high school), were constructed. For the pre-transitional youth, ten Penta CBI participants from Bowling Green completed a survey asking about the following domains: 1) Problems experienced in the last year; 2) Violence and traumatic events experienced in the last year; 3) Plans for after they graduated high school; 4) Areas of challenge now and in the future (these questions mirrored the domains assessed in the key informant interviews); and 5) Demographic information. These surveys were completed after the pre-transitional youth focus groups by 12 students and took approximately 15 minutes.

For the transitional youth survey, participants were asked about the following issues: 1) Personal problems experienced in the last year; 2) Life challenges experienced (these paralleled the domains of areas of need for transitional youth identified through interviews with the Key Informants); 3) Barriers to seeking services for two specific life challenges they experienced; and 4) Demographic information. Participants who were 18-24 years of age (N=22) were recruited from the waiting rooms two agencies (the Wood County Job and Family Services (JFS) and Wood County Health Department (WCHD)); 8 participants were recruited from JFS and 14 from WCHD. Participants agreed to complete the brief survey in the lobby of the agency after receiving the services they were seeking at the agency. One additional participant was recruited from a local General Educational Development (GED) class. The surveys took approximately 15 minutes to complete and participants were given \$5 for their participation.

### III. RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS

#### **Common Problems and Barriers**

Several common themes emerged across domains. Key Informants repeatedly identified the following concerns as either problems facing youth, or as barriers to accessing services:

- Lack of knowledge. Transitional youth are seen as lacking basic knowledge about how to live independently, including how to search for jobs, how to budget, and how to take care of their basic medical needs. Youth also lack awareness of existing services, and do not know how to access these services including completing required paperwork and fulfilling eligibility requirements. This lack of understanding of services translates into a major barrier preventing youth both from seeking services and from being able to effectively utilize services.
- Limited financial resources. Given that the target population is not college bound, it is not surprising that lack of finances was repeatedly cited as a challenge or barrier. Youth have difficulty affording good housing, education, transportation, medical care, and basic bills. Limited available jobs, and particularly limited jobs that offer benefits or pay a living wage, exacerbate the problem.
- Lack of reliable transportation. Transportation was seen as a major problem across several domains. Many youth cannot afford their own car, or struggle to pay for gas and repairs. As a result, in the absence of public transportation, they have difficulty pursuing education or employment, and may be unable to access many services include health care and high-quality child care.
- Poor adult role models. Youths' lack of knowledge of important domains was frequently attributed to not having stable adult role models. Parents of these youth often suffer from the same problems, including unemployment and substance abuse, and may be ill-equipped to help their children navigate the transition to adulthood.
- Developmental immaturity. Expectations of transitional youth may be inconsistent with their developmental maturity. Transitional youth may be unmotivated, make poor decisions, or minimize the consequences of their actions. While an inability to plan ahead may be consistent with their developmental stage, within this population it can have lasting consequences. This immaturity can also present a barrier to services, as many services have expectations consistent with a more mature older adult.

These common themes will not be repeated under each specific domain. Rather, problems unique to each domain are summarized below. The results of the interviews are organized by each of the 15 domains. Within each heading, Key Informant responses will be organized into: A) The biggest problems facing transitional youth in this domain; B) Current services and assets available that help youth within this domain; and C) Barriers to accessing services and gaps in services within this domain (combining questions C and D from original Key Informant interview). The domain "Preparedness after High School" is organized by type of preparedness.

## **1. Preparedness after High School**

### *Preparedness to Find Employment after High School*

- Not able to create a resume or complete a job application
- After high school, may lose contact with potentially helpful adults
- May not have enough previous work experience to obtain employment

### *Preparedness to Successfully Maintain Employment*

- Youth who have support after a failure may be more successful in the future
- May not understand policies related to vacations and sick time
- May have attendance or anger issues that may make it more difficult to maintain current employment

### *Preparedness to Live Independently after High School*

- Many transitional youth have made “superficial” plans to live on their own after high school, but they do not have a concept of the true costs
- Many may be lacking in self-care skills (e.g., nutrition, housekeeping)
- Youth in the foster care system, as well as youth with behavioral problems, will likely be forced to move out of the family home and live independently at age 18

## **2. Education**

### *A. What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of education?*

- Do not know how to navigate the “red tape” involved in educational programs, including how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Lack sufficient credits to graduate high school.

### *B. What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with educational problems?*

- Guidance counselors
- The Wood County Educational Services Center credit recovery center can help transitional youth complete missing credits in order to be eligible for enrollment in further educational programs
- Online General Education Development (GED) preparation classes

### *C. What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*

- One gap that exists is connecting the youth to the appropriate service provider or program. Because some guidance counselors are more likely to spend time and resources on promising, college-bound students, other youth are given less time and attention

### 3. Transportation

- A. *What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of transportation?*
- This population is rarely given vehicles and may lack funds to buy, register, insure, maintain, and support transportation
  - Youth who cannot afford a car or taxis must rely on friends or family to provide rides to work, school and appointments. This promotes another problem involving tardiness and absences because of unreliable rides
- B. *What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with transportation problems?*
- Although local taxis are expensive, this is one resource some transitional youth do utilize on occasion
  - Some specific services offer transportation, such as to and from doctor appointments for certain Medicaid recipients, Wood Lane transportation for youth involved with their programs, or employment services agencies
- C. *What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*
- Lack of public transportation in Wood County represents a major gap in services
  - A barrier to accessing the limited transportation provided by the employment services agencies is remaining eligible and complying to set rules and policies

### 4. Employment

- A. *What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of employment?*
- In the current economic climate, many jobs traditionally held by transitional youth (e.g., serving jobs, retail) are being taken by older adults who have more job experience and are unable to find work in their own fields
  - Available jobs are often part-time and do not provide a living wage or benefits such as health care
  - Lack of experience needed to obtain and keep a job
  - Unfamiliarity with the skills required in the workplace (e.g., following rules, being on time, interpersonal skills with customers/co-workers, ability to accept criticism)
  - Other problems that are often associated with this age group (e.g., prior involvement in the Juvenile Justice System, substance use problems, mental health problems, and cognitive/developmental disabilities) prevent them from obtaining or keeping employment
- B. *What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with employment problems?*
- Several Wood County services were listed as potential helpful resources for obtaining employment or job skills for transitional youth:
    - Behavioral Connections - has the Career Link program to help employ people with a mental health issue, and they are currently targeting transitional youth

- Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) - helps people with disabilities prepare for careers
- Bridges to Transition – a state initiative that assists youth with developmental disabilities between the ages of 14 and 22 as they transition from school to employment.
- Career Based Intervention (CBI): helps pre-transitional youth still in high school with job training, applications, resumes, and work permits
- Job and Family Services (JFS) - the One Stop Job Solutions program helps Wood County residents obtain employment
- Penta Career Center - offers training to pre-transitional youth still in high school and to transitional youth through adult education classes. For lower functioning students on an IEP, Penta has a program where seniors are placed at a job to practice interview and job skills
- Police and Probation officers - have connections to help youth who become informants to find jobs
- Temp Agencies – can help with finding entry level worker jobs
- Wood County Educational Services (WCESC) - offers different programs to help transitional youth find work and provides job-readiness seminars

*C. What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*

- Many of the services available are tailored towards older adults with more emotional maturity and life experience
- Some job programs are only available to lower functioning, transitional youth with mental health concerns, developmental disabilities, or substance use problems. There are fewer services for average functioning transitional youth
- Lack of a stable address or reliable transportation can be barriers to steady employment
- Stigma towards this age group by potential employers may also be a barrier

## **5. Housing**

*A. What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of housing?*

- Lack of affordable housing
- Youth may also lack in basic budgeting skills

*B. What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with housing?*

- Several Wood County agencies were identified as possible resources that transitional youth could contact when faced with problems regarding housing:
  - Job and Family Services
  - Behavioral Connections or Wood Lane for mental health clients
  - Friends and family
  - Salvation Army
  - Homeless liaison through Bowling Green City Schools
- Vouchers for subsidized housing are available for transitional youth meeting specific requirements such as low income and supporting a dependent



- C. *What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*
- Waitlists for housing vouchers, and vouchers may not be sufficient to cover all costs
  - Lack of emergency housing for those transitional youth who need immediate assistance.
  - Few low-income housing units, making waitlists months long
  - Youth may be unwilling to move outside a certain area (such as Bowling Green)
  - There are few programs to educate youth about budgeting or financial skills

## 6. **Paying Basic Bills**

- A. *What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of paying basic bills?*
- Lack of resources, lack of budgeting knowledge
  - Sometimes prioritize unnecessary purchases and “wants” before paying basic bills
  - Some transitional youth do not have parents who model good budgeting behavior
- B. *What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with housing?*
- Two local agencies were reported as providing assistance to when transitional youth were having issues paying basic bills:
    - Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) – this program will provide recipients with financial resource when in danger of having heat disconnected
    - Job and Family Resources (JFS) – JFS is also able to provide some financial assistance when individuals are in danger of having heat, water, and electricity disconnected
- C. *What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*
- Lack of awareness of existing assistance programs, lack of knowledge about the paperwork necessary to receive these services
  - Most assistance programs only provide assistance once a year, presenting a barrier for youth who may need to access them multiple times.

## 7. **Accessing Food**

- A. *What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of accessing food?*
- Primary problem reported was difficulty finding transportation to food pantries and taking food home
  - Many transitional youth have poor diets and make unhealthy food choices or cannot prepare meals for themselves
  - Many transitional youth are unaware of food banks/pantries, food stamps, and other resources, or do not qualify to receive these services
- B. *What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with accessing food?*
- Food banks/pantries and soup kitchens are perceived by Key Informants as being readily available in Wood County
  - Eligible youth could use food stamps, nutritional counseling and/or food from WIC

- No Wrong Door and United Way hotline (211) also provide limited food assistance
- Many transitional youth may receive food from parents and other family members

C. *What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*

- Limited hours and limited eligibility of the food pantries present a barrier
- Food pantries are often stocked with foods high in fat and starch, with few nutritious options
- Perceived stigma of food pantries may represent a barrier for some youth
- A final barrier regarding access to food was the inability of transitional youth to provide all the necessary materials for services (e.g., ID, Social Security card, referral)

## 8. **Family Planning**

A. *What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of family planning?*

- Lack of adequate sexual education prior to an unplanned pregnancy, contributing to a belief that family planning is not important
- Contraception may be unaffordable for many youth
- Having a “dependent” (a child) may be seen as desirable because it allows for a person to be eligible for more services

B. *What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with family planning?*

- Key Informants indicated that the following agencies provided some services to transitional youth facing problems with family planning:
  - Bowling Green Pregnancy Center
  - Bowling Green Women’s Clinic
  - Wood County Health Department
  - Primary Care Physicians
  - Wood County Children’s Resource Center-Parenting Program
  - Healthy Start
  - WIC
  - Planned Parenthood (located in Toledo)

C. *What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*

- Youth are not aware of existing family planning services
- Lack of transportation
- Limited flexibility of hours of some agencies
- Few services prior to an unplanned pregnancy, rather than after the pregnancy occurs

## 9. **Childcare**

A. *What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of childcare?*

- Limited availability of safe, reliable daycare services was cited as a major problem. Many transitional youth resort to using neighbors, friends, or other inappropriate individuals to watch their children

- Many jobs do not pay enough for youth to afford high-quality child care, and therefore many transitional youth end up having to choose between not working, or paying what they can for lower-quality care
- Government funding is limited for helping transitional youth pay for child care. Funding that did exist has been cut in the current economy

*B. What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with childcare problems?*

- JFS has a voucher program that will provide assistance to transitional youth who need help paying for child care
- Some government funding is available to help with issues regarding childcare

*C. What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*

- Some youth demonstrate a lack of motivation and “follow-through”
- Many youth are unaware of how to access a centralized listing of licensed and certified childcare providers

#### **10. Accessing Health Care (Medical Care/Medications/Dental and Vision Care)**

*A. What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of accessing health care?*

- Lack of medical insurance
- Lack of knowledge about how to apply for insurance, access resources, or determine if they qualify (e.g., for Medicaid)
- Lack of understanding about the importance of properly administering medications
- Lack of knowledge of medical services, as well as limited financial resources, may often lead youth to ignore medical situations until they are forced to use the emergency room, leading them to accrue even higher costs
- Discontinuity of care (e.g., losing eligibility for Medicaid or parents’ insurance plans after age 18). This is worsened by the hassle associated with obtaining and keeping independent insurance

*B. What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with problems accessing health care?*

- Free health care clinics
- Access to free/low-cost antibiotics and prescriptions at pharmacies
- New federal legislation for Medicaid and extension of parents’ insurance coverage through age 26, and longer if disabled
- Social Security for youth with disabilities
- Key Informants also identified various agencies throughout Wood County that offer health care services to transitional youth. These included the following:
  - Health Department for screenings and clinical services
  - Planned Parenthood for oral contraception, gynecological health, and pregnancy
  - Job and Family Services
  - BGSU Speech and Hearing Clinic

- Owens College for dental cleanings
- Lions Club for vision care
- Insurance coverage through Penta
- Hospital Care Assurance Program (HCAP) to assist youth with costs of medical care at the emergency room
- Mobile dental van for basic dental services

C. *What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*

- Available services do not advertise
- Transitional youth may lack education on health needs and preventative care
- Not all employers offer medical insurance
- Some physicians and specialists in Wood County do not accept Medicaid

## **11. Mental Health**

A. *What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of mental health?*

- Transitional youth face problems in transitioning from child/adolescent mental health services:
  - Some youth choose to stop treatment, or do not know where to go to get treatment
  - Treatment models for adult services do not always match up well with developmental needs of transitional youth. Youth move from a child/adolescent system that addresses developmental concerns, family involvement and cross-system coordination to an adult system that presumes independence and has a more individual orientation.
  - Funding streams and support services for children/adolescents are often unavailable for youth who turn age 18 and/or leave school.
  - Eligibility and priority population criteria change. Adolescents identified as “Seriously Emotionally Disturbed” (SED) youth do not necessarily meet criteria for “Seriously Mentally Ill” (SMI) adults.
  - Child/adolescent and adult-focused agencies in Wood County often do not communicate well or coordinate care with each other
- Many transitional youth minimize their mental health issues. Parents may also lack insight into their child’s mental health concerns, and do not encourage them to seek services beyond 18 years old
- Youth often cope with their mental health issues by using substances (alcohol, drugs)
- Mental health services can be expensive if a transitional youth does not have insurance

B. *What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with mental health problems?*

- Key Informants indicated that there are a number of agencies and programs that offer mental health services for transitional youth including:
  - CBI
  - Penta
  - Children’s Resource Center
  - Programs under the Safe Schools Grant

- Behavioral Connections
- Job and Family Services
- Connection Center
- Private clinicians
- The Link
- Family Services
- Patient assistance through pharmaceutical companies
- Bridges to Transition
- Harbor – Toledo
- Wood Lane assists its clients in getting mental health services
- Rehabilitation Services

*C. What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*

- Stigma may lead youth to deny that they need help
- The process of filling out paperwork for mental health services can be overwhelming
- At some agencies the wait lists can be quite long, and youth may give up
- Lack of family support
- In the adult mental health system, the youth need to pursue their own treatment more than when they were in the youth system
- Mental health providers may not offer convenient hours, such as weekend appointments
- Transitional youth may not trust mental health providers, and may doubt the confidentiality of their records
- Lack of long term hospitalization services for youth with severe mental illness
- Many of the Wood County services are located in Bowling Green or Perrysburg, which makes it difficult to get to the services they need if they do not live in Bowling Green or Perrysburg

## **12. Substance Use**

*A. What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of substance use?*

- Legal and illegal substances are easy to obtain
- Some youth do not believe substance use is a problem, and tend to minimize its risks. Some may also view substance use as a necessary “rite of passage”, for example drinking heavily on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday
- Many parents ignore, and in some cases, support substance use
- Some youth may use substances in an effort to “self-medicate” in an effort to escape depressed and anxious moods, as well as other stressors
- Perception of substance use as “cool”
- Belief that substance use is necessary to maintain social support
- Can lead to legal consequences

*B. What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with substance use?*

- Alcoholics Anonymous groups
- The judicial system, including probation and police officers, can act as a deterrent

- Programs that provide co-occurring mental health and substance use treatment (Children's Resource Center, Behavioral Connections)
- Several Wood County agencies could assist with substance use problems including:
  - Children's Resource Center
  - Behavioral Connections - They treat both adolescents and adults, which may facilitate continuity of care
  - Allies in Mental Health
  - High school prevention programs provided by the Wood County Educational Services Center

*C. What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*

- Lack of inpatient substance abuse treatment facilities
- Lack of follow-through and referrals for transitional youth who are identified as needing services
- Absence of local harm-reduction programs
- Many transitional youth do not believe that their substance use behavior is problematic or dangerous
- Lack of support from youths' social environment; family and friends may also be using

### **13. Legal Problems**

*A. What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of legal problems?*

- Many transitional youth lack an understanding of the difference between the juvenile and adult system
- Youth in juvenile detention are moved into the adult system once they turn 18, and are likely not prepared to deal with the new environment
- Some youth with cognitive disabilities are getting in trouble because they do not understand the laws, police orders, or court systems
- Many transitional youth have a number of risk factors, including a deviant peer group, lack of problem solving skills, and environmental stressors
- Youth can become trapped in a cycle where once they offend they find it difficult to get housing and a job, so they end up reoffending
- Many transitional youth lack the financial resources to hire a lawyer

*B. What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with legal problems?*

- Key Informants indicated that there are several services available to assist transitional youth with legal problems including:
  - Public defenders and court-appointed attorneys
  - Ohio Legal Rights Services (OLRS) – A State of Ohio independent agency that advocates for people with disabilities.
  - Youth mental health court – Operated by Wood County Juvenile Court as an alternative approach for adjudicated youth age 17 or younger who have significant mental health problems.

- Wood County Interagency Cluster – A FCFC committee that provides service coordination for youth age 17 or younger whose service needs may exceed the capacity of available community programming. Cluster can support coordination of court-involved youth and families. It does not provide direct legal representation to youth or their families.

*C. What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*

- Youth with mental health and substance abuse problems may not be developmentally ready to function as adults, despite being over 18. These youth may need a higher level of outreach and engagement to avoid legal problems
  - In addition, youth with substance abuse problems might benefit from residential services to help them build the skills they will need to succeed once released
- The existing system may have developmentally unrealistic expectations for this age group, and special services for this population may be needed to prevent recidivism
- Need to bridge the gap between the punishment-focused adult system and the rehabilitation-focused juvenile system
- Individuals who try to help this population may get “burned” (e.g., youth steals from the job an officer got him) which can lead reduced willingness to help
- The adult system does not coordinate well with the mental health providers as much as the Juvenile system does
- Some youth might benefit from stricter laws, to provide motivation to seek help

**14. Access to Social Services**

*A. What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of accessing social services?*

- The majority of these services are located in central Wood County, making transportation an issue for many
- Limited eligibility (e.g., no longer in high school, must have children) and strict criteria for benefits and resources (e.g., attending weekly job training classes) may be too daunting for youth at this developmental stage, leading them to stop seeking services
- There are few social services providers that specialize in the issues particular to this age group, so as a result transitional youth are treated the same as older adults.

*B. What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with problems accessing social services?*

- Key Informants indicated that a number of programs and services are available to help youth access social services including:
  - No Wrong Door
  - United Way
  - Job and Family Services

- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Ohio Benefits banks.
- Emergency Food And Shelter Program (EFSP)
- Medicaid (until the age of 21)
- Food pantries

*C. What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*

- Some transitional youth may get kicked out of services, or become too overwhelmed to navigate the requirements, because the expectations of service providers are the same for treating transitional youth and older adults
- Absence of developmentally tailored services
- There is a gap in appropriate services for youth still living with parents, as living with parents can disqualify youth from a number of services or resources

### **15. Transitional Youth with Learning/Cognitive Disabilities**

*1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth with learning/cognitive disabilities?*

- Some transitional youth with learning or cognitive disabilities have goals that do not match their abilities
- There may be unreported abuse within that population, because victimized youth do not know how to report or are reluctant to report abuse
- Youth with low average/borderline IQs or severe learning problems often do not qualify for services as adults because they are not in the clinically disabled range. Once they graduate, they lose services tied to IEPs
- Cognitive disabilities make it difficult for a youth to keep a job or problem-solve where to get needed services
- Limited availability of residential housing for transitional youth who cannot live independently. There are long wait lists for those who need 24-hour medical supervision

*2) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with learning/cognitive disabilities?*

- Key Informants indicated that there are a number of agencies and services available to assist transitional youth with learning/cognitive disabilities including:
  - Wood Lane
  - Bridges program
  - Project Search
  - Behavioral Connections
  - Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC)

*3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services and what gaps exist in these services?*



- Eligibility criteria may exclude individuals whose disabilities are sub-clinical, but still have difficulty functioning on their own
- Some parents of transitional youth with learning/cognitive problems suffer from similar disorders; thus they may not realize the importance of getting their child linked up with the appropriate services

#### **IV. RESULTS OF THE PRE-TRANSITIONAL YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS**

The results of the focus groups are presented under 5 major headings: 1) Education; 2) Transportation; 3) Employment; 4) Independent Living; and 5) Mental Health/Substance Use. Focus group participants discussed problems facing transitional youth in each of those domains.

##### **1. Education**

*What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of education?*

- Participants reported difficulty obtaining gas money for transportation as a problem in pursuing their education
- Participants worried that college would lead to more debt, and were uncertain whether college would improve their chances of finding a job in the current economy
- One youth stated that he felt that the military was the only choice for him and that this may allow him to go to college later
- A few youth stated that they were going to technical school. They recognized that technical school might limit their job choices but they liked that it was “hands on”
- Other youth indicated that if they went to college, they do not believe they would be motivated enough to go to classes and complete the required work

##### **2. Employment**

*What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of employment?*

- Many students appeared to believe that it is not difficult to find a job if you were willing to look for one. The majority of the focus group participants were currently employed at places like auto shops, the BGSU student union, and McDonalds. Some participants believed that it was easier for them to find jobs like these than older individuals, because young people can be “worked more for less” while other participants believed that they were not being hired because they did not have experience
- Unemployed focus group participants indicated that they had gotten several interviews but were unable to get hired after that point. They did not indicate any reasons for this
- One student noted that maintaining employment was difficult because employers were expecting him to know how to perform the job, but were not providing proper training

- The students reported that jobs they were currently working did not pay them enough to live independently. Many made comments such as, “budgeting is hard, I spend [my paycheck] way too fast and can’t save” and “I don’t have any money left over after bills”
- Students stated that one barrier to steady employment for many people their age is their attitude and poor work ethic. They stated that many friends lost their jobs because they had a bad attitude
- A few students who wanted to go to college stated that they were worried about trying to work around a college schedule

### 3. **Transportation**

*What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of transportation?*

- The number one need was for gas money, as many of the participants had access to a car (either their own or a family member’s car). A related need was not having enough money to fix the car if it breaks down
- When asked how they would get places if their car broke down, students stated that they would borrow another car, call a friend for a ride, walk, bike (if not snowing or raining), or just not go. While these students reported that they would find some way of getting where they needed to go, many of their friends might just choose not to work or go to school
- Also, drivers education courses to get a license is expensive and stops many of them from getting one
- There were also concerns about legal trouble due to driving without a license

### 4. **Living Independently**

*What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of living independently?*

- Students reported that their biggest concern was not making enough money to support themselves independently
- Difficulty budgeting was another problem. Several youth stated that they spent money on “stupid things” or that it was hard not to buy “things I want” when going to the store for needed items such as groceries
- Students stated that they knew it would be bad to get themselves in debt by using credit cards or taking out loans, but they appeared unsure where to go if they needed help. A few students reported that they knew Job and Family Services could possibly help but they had no idea what this organization did
- When asked what they would do if they had a bill they could not pay for, most students reported that they would turn to family or a boyfriend/girlfriend for financial help. Many appeared to have the mindset that their family would always be around to help although they would have limits on how much help they could give. Students thought family would be more willing to help if they were regularly going to work and school
- One student noted that he already helps his mother by paying for the electric and gas bill

## 5. Substance Use/Mental Health

*What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of substance use/mental health?*

- Most reported that substance use was a big problem for individuals their age. Students felt the most serious problem was that substance use cost too much money and could “leave you broke”
- Students reported that it would be hard to find a job or a place to live if a young person has drug charges on his/her record
- Other students noted that they worried about the addictive power of drugs and reported that they knew several older people who started out as casual users who are now fully addicted
- When asked how they would deal with a mental health or drug problem, most reported that they would prefer to seek help from friends or family or try and deal with the problem on their own. They voiced concerns that getting professional help or talking about substance use might make the problem worse. They stated that if a friend had a problem they would try and be supportive

## V. RESULTS OF THE PRE-TRANSITIONAL AND TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SURVEYS

**Pre-transitional Youth Survey.** Ten students (9 males, 1 female; ages ranged from 17-19) from the Penta CBI program completed a survey focusing on the following domains: 1) Problems experienced in the last year; 2) Violence and traumatic events experienced in the last year; 3) Plans for after they graduated high school; and 4) Areas of challenge now and in the future. Because the sample size of 10 is quite small, we highlight a few survey results in each domain that were endorsed by at least 1/3 of the students.

- ***Problems experienced in the last year***
  - Trouble with attention (8 out of the 10 students)
  - Stress related to school performance (9/10)
  - Anxiety or nervousness (6/10)
  - Moody or irritable (7/10)
  - Trouble getting along with family members (7/10)
  - Being sexually active (8/10)
  - Alcohol use (8/10)
  - Drug use (7/10)
  - Serious financial stress in the family (5/10)
- ***Violence and traumatic events experienced in the last year***
  - Someone close to the youth who was mugged, robbed, or threatened (4/10)
  - Witnessed someone get attacked (5/10)
  - Someone close to the youth killed in a fire, accident, or natural disaster (4/10)

- ***Plans for after they graduate high school***
  - Attend college immediately after high school (4/10)
  - Look for employment instead of attending college (8/10)
  - Move out of the family home (7/10)
  - Confident that they will be able to get a job right out of high school (8/10)
  - Confident in time management skills necessary for employment (9/10)
  - Confident in their ability to survive outside the family home (9/10)
  - Confident that they will have sufficient financial resources to move out of the family home (6/10)
  
- ***Areas of challenge now and in the future***

	Now	Future
○ Finding transportation	(6/10)	(4/10)
○ Finding permanent and safe housing	(6/10)	(4/10)
○ Paying basic bills	(9/10)	(6/10)
○ Getting enough food	(5/10)	(4/10)
○ Family planning	(4/10)	(5/10)
○ Medical care	(5/10)	(4/10)
○ Medications	(5/10)	(4/10)
○ Mental health services	(4/10)	(5/10)
○ Help with legal problems	(3/10)	(5/10)
○ Getting social services	(2/10)	(4/10)

**Transitional Youth Survey.** Twenty-three participants (7 males, 16 females; ages ranged from 18-24; 83% Caucasian, 9% Hispanic, 4% African American, 4% “Other”) seeking services from three Wood County agencies (Health Department, Job and Family Services, GED classes) completed a survey that asked about the following issues: 1) Personal problems experienced in the last year; 2) Life challenges experienced (these paralleled the domains of areas of need for transitional youth identified through interviews with the Key Informants); and 3) Barriers to seeking services for two specific life challenges they experienced.

***Personal problems experienced in the last year.*** Participants were they had experienced 13 personal problems during the past year (e.g., trouble with attention, stress related to school performance, anxiety, alcohol/drug use, eating problems), and how troubling the problem was if they had experienced it.

- The top 5 personal problems experienced in the past year were:
  - Anxiety, nervousness (feeling tense, anxious, nervous, worry a lot). (83%)
  - Serious financial stress in your family (e.g., lost our home, or a parent lost job). (82%)
  - Moody or irritable (frequent changes in your emotions). (78%)
  - Trouble getting along with family members (e.g., parents, brothers and sisters). (66%)
  - Trouble with attention, focus, or concentration. (61%)
  - Being sexually active. (61%)

- Of those that experienced the problem, the top 5 problems they reported as either somewhat or extremely troubling were:
  - Trouble getting along with family members (e.g., parents, brothers and sisters). (87%)
  - Serious financial stress in your family (e.g., lost our home, or a parent lost job). (79%)
  - Eating problems (such as binge eating, purging, or starving self). (75%)
  - Trouble with attention, focus, or concentration. (64%)
  - Stress related to your school performance (if you are in school). (60%)

**Table 2. Percentages of Transitional Youth Who Reported Personal Problems Experienced In the Past Year and How Troubling the Problems Were**

	<i>% who reported the problem happened in the past year</i>	<i>Of those who experienced the problem, % who reported the problem was “somewhat” or “extremely” troubling</i>
Anxiety, nervousness, (feeling tense, anxious, nervous, worry a lot).	83%	58%
Serious financial stress in your family (e.g., lost our home or a parent lost job).	82%	79%
Moody or irritable (frequent changes in your emotions).	78%	56%
Trouble getting along with family members (e.g., parents, brothers and sisters).	66%	87%
Trouble with attention, focus or concentration.	61%	64%
Being sexually active.	61%	33%
Had to live on your own or at a friend’s house because you had nowhere else to go.	48%	55%
Stress related to your school performance (if you are in school).	43%	60%
Eating problems (such as binge eating, purging, or starving self).	35%	75%
Trouble obtaining birth control/contraceptive (e.g., condoms).	26%	50%
Feelings that you want to hurt yourself (e.g., cutting)	21%	20%

Alcohol use.	21%	20%
Drug use.	8%	50%

***Life challenges experienced.*** Participants were asked whether they had experienced 14 life challenges that had been identified by Key Informants as relevant to transitional youth (e.g., getting further education needed to find a job; finding transportation; finding permanent and safe housing), and how troubling these challenges were if they had experienced them. Because these issues are an important focus of this needs assessment, in Table 2 we present the percentages of participants who experienced each challenge, along with the percent who described the challenge as “a troubling problem for me.”

**Table 3. Percentages of Transitional Youth who Experienced Life Challenges**

<i>Life Challenge</i>	<i>% who experienced the challenge</i>	<i>% of those experiencing the challenge who viewed it as “troubling”</i>
Paying basic bills (e.g., heating, water, electric).	78%	61%
Getting further education I need to find a job.	70%	56%
Finding a job.	70%	88%
Getting enough food.	44%	80%
Getting help with legal problems.	43%	70%
Getting social services I need (e.g., welfare, food stamps, Medicaid).	43%	50%
Finding permanent and safe housing.	39%	44%
Getting medical care I need.	39%	44%
Finding transportation.	35%	88%
Finding childcare for my children.	35%	50%
Getting dental care or vision care I need.	35%	50%
Planning for my own family.	30%	86%
Getting medications I need.	26%	33%
Getting mental health services I need.	26%	33%

For each Life Challenge, over a quarter of the sample indicated that they had experienced it. Seventy percent or more indicated having experienced problems with paying basic bills, getting further education to find a job, and finding a job. More than a third experienced problems with legal issues, accessing social services, finding permanent and safe housing, transportation, and

getting medical or child care. Most of the participants who experienced these problems indicated that the problems were troubling to them.

***Barriers to seeking services for two specific life challenges they experienced.*** We also asked participants to indicate which two challenges they found to be most troubling, and for these two, to indicate the degree to which various potential barriers might keep them from seeking services for the concern. Several life challenges were found to be troubling for a significant number of participants. We grouped similar challenges together in order for us to get a better understanding of barriers to similar services. We labeled one category “obtaining services to help with basic needs” (paying basic bills, getting enough food, permanent housing issues, and requiring social services); we labeled another category “obtaining education needed to secure a job” (getting further education to find a job, finding a job); we labeled another category “obtaining mental health services” (getting mental health services, trouble with attention, feeling that you want to hurt yourself). In addition, some participants did not indicate which challenge they were ranking barriers to, and these were combined to form the “non-specified problems” category.

**Table 4. Percentages of Transitional Youth who Reported that Potential Barriers Might Prevent them from Seeking Services for the Most Troubling Life Challenges**

	<i>Percentage who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the barrier might prevent them from seeking services for the life challenge</i>			
<b><i>Barrier</i></b>	<b><i>Obtaining services to help with basic needs (n=19)</i></b>	<b><i>Obtaining education needed to secure a job (n=9 )</i></b>	<b><i>Obtaining mental health services (n=3)</i></b>	<b><i>Non-specified problems (n=7 )</i></b>
Can handle the problem myself.	53% (10/19)	67% (6/9)	33% (1/3)	72% (5/7)
Confidentiality/privacy	32% (6/19)	22% (2/9)	100% (3/3)	72% (5/7)
Transportation	47% (9/19)	44% (4/9)	0% (0/3)	43% (3/7)
Embarrassing	63% (12/19)	22% (2/9)	33% (1/3)	72% (5/7)
Paying for services	74% (14/19)	67% (6/9)	67% (2/3)	72% (5/7)
Knowing where to get help is confusing	63% (12/19)	67% (6/9)	100% (3/3)	72% (5/7)
Would rather get help from friends/family members	37% (7/19)	44% (4/9)	33% (1/3)	72% (5/7)

Paying for services and knowing where to get help for services were viewed as barriers by over two-thirds of the sample with respect to any of the life challenges. Concerns over confidentiality were endorsed as a barrier by all individuals with regard to the challenge of seeking mental health services. Potential embarrassment was endorsed as a barrier by approximately two thirds of the sample with regard to obtaining services for basic needs.

## **VI. SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS**

Across the domains surveyed, both common and unique challenges emerged. Key Informants and youth identified limited financial resources as a major problem faced by many transitional youth, and lack of knowledge of how to budget resources presents a barrier to improving their financial situation. Limited knowledge about how to address challenges, including how to access available services, also presents a challenge across domains, as does accessing transportation. Although Key Informants were able to identify a number of services available to transitional youth, there may be limitations associated with some of these services. For example, employment-related services tend to be focused more on older individuals, food services may have eligibility and/or documentation requirements that present obstacles for transitional youth, and there appear to be limited availability of residential mental health and substance abuse services.

In addition to these systemic barriers, characteristics of the youth themselves may present barriers to receiving help they might need. Key Informants see youth as often minimizing the severity of their physical and mental health problems, causing them to delay seeking treatment. Youth in focus groups acknowledged that lack of motivation to work hard might prevent some youth from pursuing gainful employment. Youth may view some services as stigmatizing, and may not want to be identified as someone who might need social services or mental health treatment. Finally, Key Informants repeatedly noted that many transitional youth appear to lack stable adult role models, which contributes to their lack of preparedness for adulthood. Parents of transitional youth may share some of the same problems, making it difficult for them to provide support. Parents with a lack of knowledge about available services, or a lack of understanding of the barriers their children may face, are ill prepared to help their children successfully transition to adulthood. Other relatives, or adults in the community, may similarly lack the knowledge or the motivation to provide transitional youth with adequate support.

The economic challenges confronting transitional youth are daunting. These young adults and their service providers report that they have difficulties obtaining or paying for housing, utilities, food, and health care. Most of the surveyed youth indicated that their families have serious economic hardships; 82% reported serious financial distress (e.g., lost home/parent lost job) and almost half (48%) said that in the past year they were transiently homeless (had to live on their own or at a friend's because they had nowhere else to go). In the Phase 2 adolescent survey, smaller but still sizable percentages of the respondents had endorsed these difficulties (31%, serious financial distress; 7%, transiently homeless). Further, 70% of transitional youth said that they had challenges finding employment and obtaining further education that would help them get jobs.



Survey responses of both the “pre-transitional” and “transitional” youth indicated high rates of mental health problems. Anxiety, irritable mood, trouble getting along with family members, and problems with attention/concentration/focus were cited by 60% or more of the sample; these problems had also been among the top five problems endorsed in the Phase 2 adolescent survey. As with the adolescent survey, transitional youth respondents endorsed relatively high rates of problems that are potentially life threatening (self-harm, eating disordered behaviors). High rates of stressful/traumatic events were found among the small group of pre-transitional youth. Transitional youth were not surveyed about traumatic events, but results from the Phase 2 adolescent group had demonstrated that 10%-20% indicated the following items: experienced threats; harassed because of skin color, religion, sexual orientation, appearance; harassed via the internet; and physical conflict in the home directed at themselves or between adult family members. Those adolescents who experienced such stressful events were more likely to experience other behavioral and emotional problems.

Key informants were able to describe both challenges facing this population and some services available to help them, but the size, scope, and outcomes of these services are not clearly defined. Many of the programs and coordinating bodies available to help children and adolescents do not continue once youth reach the age of 18 and/or leave secondary education. Further, there is often an abrupt shift in service delivery systems as youth move from the child into the adult system, with accompanying shifts in intervention models, eligibility criteria and program philosophies. Programs for youth under the age of 18 often emphasize developmental concerns, outreach prevention, and family engagement, while programs for youth over 18 tend to reflect an emphasis on individually oriented programming and independence.

Transitional youth face pivotal economic, social, and educational challenges. Their success or failure in overcoming these challenges has significant consequences for themselves, their families, and their communities. Potential negative outcomes with associated economic and social costs are homelessness, chronic unemployment, untreated mental health and substance abuse problems, health problems, premature death, increased criminality, and chronic family discord including child abuse and domestic violence. In contrast, successful outcomes include reliable housing, increased opportunities for employment, improved health and behavioral health status, family stability, and positive contributions to the community.

Based on the needs and perceptions identified by this assessment, a successful approach to the needs of transitional youth in Wood County likely would include: the development of a coordinated cross-systems service delivery approach to transitional youth, involving integration of child/adolescent and adult service delivery systems; supportive services, such as transportation and meal provision, to encourage and enable youth participation in programs; comprehensive behavioral health services that emphasize trauma-informed care, promotion of resilience and recovery practices, youth empowerment, evidence-based treatment, and an integrated approach

to mental health and substance use disorders; continued family involvement; coaching and mentoring regarding a broad range of economic, health, family planning and social needs; education regarding available services and resources; supportive employment practices for youth with disabilities; and active case management and outreach. Use of social media is highly recommended to reach the target population.

The findings of the current needs assessment are consistent with national and state policy and practice concerns regarding transitional youth. Promising and recommended practices for communities to use to assist transitional youth can be found in *Paving the Way for a New Day for Young Adults in Ohio's Mental Health System* (<http://www.mh.state.oh.us/assets/children-youth-families/transition-age/paving-the-way.pdf>.) An evidence-supported approach to system integration and community support on behalf of these youth is the Transition to Independent Process (TIP) model developed by Hewitt Clark at the University of South Florida ([www.tip.fmhi.usf.edu](http://www.tip.fmhi.usf.edu)).

Finally, and particularly relevant to Wood County FCFC planning, the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) is funded through a Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) System of Care (SOC) statewide planning grant for Youth and Young Adults in Transition (YYAT). This initiative, called ENGAGE, has a planned launch with a stakeholder's conference held on February 14, 2012. The goals of ENGAGE include: foster the voices of YYAT and their families; enhance the availability of quality services along the prevention, treatment, resiliency, and recovery continuum and pursue the integration of physical and behavioral health services for YYAT; strengthen the availability of appropriate supportive services; expand the availability of workforce development services for YYAT; and improve intersystem coordination. ENGAGE has established work groups for each of these five goals as well as a sixth work group to focus on related social marketing strategies. ENGAGE reference documents can be found at <https://sites.google.com/site/engageohio/>.

## Appendix A: Summary of Services Identified by Key Informants, by Domain

<u>Name of Agency</u>	Education	Employment	Housing	Paying bills	Food assistance	Family planning	Child care	Health care	Mental Health	Substance Abuse	Legal problems	Accessing social services	Cognitive/learning disabilities
Allies in Mental Health										X			
Behavioral Connections		X	X						X	X			X
Bowling Green Pregnancy Center						X							
Bowling Green State University Speech and Hearing Clinic								X					
Bowling Green Women's Clinic						X							
Bridges to Transition		X							X				X
Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR)		X											
Career Based Intervention (CBI)		X							X				
Children's Resource Center						X			X	X			
Cluster											X		
Connection Center									X				
Emergency Food and Shelter Programs (EFSP)												X	
Family Services Center									X				
Harbor (Toledo)									X				
HCAP program								X					
Healthy Start						X							
Home Energy Assistance Program				X								X	
Homeless liaison through Bowling Green Schools			X										
Job and Family Services (JFS)		X	X	X			X	X	X			X	
Lions Club (vision assistance)								X					
No Wrong Door					X							X	
Ohio Benefits Banks												X	
Ohio Legal Rights											X		
Owens College (dental program)								X					
Penta Career Center		X						X	X				
Planned Parenthood						X		X					

<u>Name of Agency</u>	Education	Employment	Housing	Paying bills	Food assistance	Family planning	Child care	Health care	Mental Health	Substance Abuse	Legal problems	Accessing social services	Cognitive/learning disabilities
Planned Parenthood (Toledo)						X		X					
Police and Probation officers		X								X			
Project Search													X
Salvation Army			X										
The Link									X				
United Way (211)					X	X						X	
WIC					X	X							
Wood County Educational Services Center	X	X								X			
Wood County Health Department						X		X					
Wood Lane									X				

## Appendix B: Key Informant Knowledge of Domains Rating Scale

### WCNA Survey Areas

The Wood County Family and Children First Council is conducting a needs assessment about “transitional youth.” By transitional youth, we mean youth/young adults ages 18-24 who did not go to college or who dropped out of college. You have been identified as a Key Informant who might have knowledge about transitional youth. **Below is a list of domains in which transitional youth may have needs (e.g., education, transportation, employment, housing). Please read through the list and rate your level of knowledge on a scale of 1 (no knowledge) through 5 (extensive knowledge) about the needs and resources related to each domain for transitional youth.**

**1 = no knowledge**

**2 = little knowledge**

**3 = some knowledge**

**4 = a lot of knowledge**

**5 = extensive knowledge**

<b>How much knowledge do you have about transitional youths’ needs and resources in the domain of.....</b>	<b>No Knowledge</b>	<b>Little Knowledge</b>	<b>Some Knowledge</b>	<b>A lot of Knowledge</b>	<b>Extensive Knowledge</b>
Preparedness after High School	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Education	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Transportation	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Employment	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Housing	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Paying Basic Bills	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Accessing Food	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Family Planning	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Childcare	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Medical Care/Medications/Dental/Vision Care	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Mental Health	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Substance Use	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

<b>How much knowledge do you have about transitional youths' needs and resources in the domain of.....</b>	<b>No Knowledge</b>	<b>Little Knowledge</b>	<b>Some Knowledge</b>	<b>A lot of Knowledge</b>	<b>Extensive Knowledge</b>
Legal Problems	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Access to Social Services (such as access to welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, etc.)	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Youth with cognitive or learning disabilities	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

## **Appendix C: Key Informant Interview**

**Agency Name:**

**Date:**

### **Key Informant Interview**

We are interested in finding out about the needs of transitional youth in Wood County. For this study we are defining transitional youth as those aged 18 to 24 years old who did not go to college or who dropped out of college. For each of the following questions please keep this group in mind

**-When we say transitional youth, who are you thinking of? What kinds of characteristics make up this group?**

### **Preparedness after High School**

- 1) How prepared are these youth to find a job right after high school?
- 2) How prepared are these youth to be successful at working right after high school?
- 3) How prepared are these youth to live on their own successfully right after high school?
- 4) How likely is it that the parents of these youth made them move out even when they had no other place to go?

### **Education**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of education?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with education?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

### **Transportation**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of transportation?
- 2) What assets or services are currently available to help these youth with transportation?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

### **Employment**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of employment?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with employment problems? Specifically, what are the services available for job placement and what are the services available for job training?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

### **Housing**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of housing?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help youth with housing problems?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

**Paying Basic Bills**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of paying basic bills such as electric, car insurance, phone, etc.?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help youth with paying basic bills?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

**Accessing Food**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of food?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with food problems?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

**Family Planning**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of family planning?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help youth with family planning?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

**Childcare**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of finding childcare for their children?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with childcare issues?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?
- 5) What issues arise from this population not being able to find childcare?

**Medical Care/Medications/Dental and Vision Care**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of medical care/medications?
- 2) What assets services are currently available to help these youth with medical care/medications?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

**Mental Health**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of mental health?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with mental health problems?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

**Substance Use**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of substance use?



- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with substance use problems?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

**Legal Problems**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of legal problems?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with legal problems?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

**Access to Social Services (such as access to welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, etc.)**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth in the area of social services?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with social services problems?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services?
- 4) What gaps exist in these services?

**Transitional Youth with learning/cognitive disabilities**

- 1) What are the biggest problems facing transitional youth with learning and cognitive disabilities?
- 2) What assets and services are currently available to help these youth with learning and cognitive disabilities?
- 3) What are the challenges/barriers transitional youth with disabilities face?
- 4) What gaps exist in services for these individuals?

**Of all the problems we have talked about which do you think are the three most important?**

**What are other problems transitional youth face not already mentioned?**

## **Appendix D: Pre-Transitional Youth Focus Group Interview**

### **Focus Group Outline and Procedure 60min MAX!!**

-Read introduction

-Ask EACH student to introduce themselves (Recorders should be drawing a basic map of what students are sitting where and information about their voice future coding)

- 1) Name
- 2) Where you live (with parents/grandparents/with a friend?)
- 3) What is your job/volunteer activity
- 4) What do you plan to do after graduation (ok if not sure yet)

- GENERAL PROMPT FOR EACH SECTION

“Some people have noted that \_\_\_\_\_ is an issue. How is this like for you and your friends now? How do you see it for you and your friends in the future? “

-Sections we MUST cover in the Focus Group

1. Education – now and later
2. Employment – applying to jobs/interviewing
3. Transportation – getting to work/school/appointments/groceries
4. Independent living (housing, food, bills)
5. Substance use/mental health

**Example:** “We have heard from a number of people that one of the things you are having problems with is applying to jobs. What is this like for you AND YOUR FRIENDS now? How do you see it for you in the future?”

-Administer the Survey (Be sure to leave at least 15 minutes for this)

## Appendix E: Pre-Transitional Youth Survey

### Wood County Family and Children First Needs Assessment

The Wood County Family and Children First Council is a group of community agencies, schools, and family representatives that plan services for teens, children and families in Wood County. To help plan needed services, we have put together a questionnaire that asks questions about you—about your opinions, experiences, and feelings. Your responses are anonymous. At no time can your individual responses be singled out and connected to you because we are not collecting names. It is important that you understand this so that you feel free to answer the items as accurately as you can. Hopefully, from the information we learn from Wood County students, we can plan and develop better services for young adults.

#### SECTION 1: Have You Experienced any of these Problems?

We are interested in the kinds of problems you experience. Please indicate whether each item has happened to you in the past year, and if so, how much it has troubled you. Circle one response for each question.				
	Did not happen in the past year	Happened in the past year but not at all troubling	Happened in the past year and somewhat troubling	Happened in the past year extremely troubling
1. Trouble with attention, focus, or concentration	1	2	3	4
2. Stress related to your school performance	1	2	3	4
3. Feelings that you want to hurt yourself (e.g., cutting)	1	2	3	4
4. Anxiety, nervousness (feeling tense, anxious, nervous, worry a lot)	1	2	3	4
5. Moody or irritable (frequent changes in your emotions)	1	2	3	4
6. Trouble getting along with family members (e.g., parents, brothers and sisters)	1	2	3	4
7. Being sexually active	1	2	3	4
8. Trouble obtaining birth control/contraception (e.g., condoms)	1	2	3	4
9. Alcohol use	1	2	3	4
10. Drug use	1	2	3	4
11. Serious financial stress in your family (e.g., lost our home, or a parent lost job)	1	2	3	4
12. Eating problems (such as binge eating, purging, or starving self)	1	2	3	4

13. Had to live on your own or at a friend's because you had nowhere else to go	1	2	3	4
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## SECTION 2: Things I Have Experienced

**Please indicate whether each item has happened to you, using the following responses:**

1 – Never

2 – Happened, but more than a year ago

3 – Happened, in the past year

Circle one response for each question.	Never Happened	Happened, BUT MORE THAN A YEAR AGO	Happened, IN THE PAST YEAR
14. When you were at school, did you hear threats of property being destroyed, or did you actually see property being destroyed (e.g., bomb threat, fire, vandalism)?	1	2	3
15. Was anyone close to you, like a family member or a good friend, robbed, mugged, or threatened with or without a weapon?	1	2	3
16. Have you been on the internet and had someone try to talk about sexual things with you when you did not want to?	1	2	3
17. Has anyone used the internet or cell phone to bother or harass you or to spread mean words or pictures about you?	1	2	3
18. Have you seen someone attacked with or without an object or a weapon?	1	2	3
19. Has your home been damaged by fire, accident, or natural disaster (e.g., bad storm, tornado, flood)?	1	2	3
20. Has someone close to you been hurt or killed in a fire, accident, or natural disaster (e.g., bad storm, tornado, flood, or car accident)?	1	2	3
21. Did someone you were dating threaten or do something to you verbally, sexually, or physically?	1	2	3
22. Have you been harassed because of your skin color, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, or because of where your family comes from?	1	2	3
23. Have you been in a situation where there was physical conflict between teenagers and adult family members where you were concerned that someone might get hurt?	1	2	3
24. Have you been in a situation where there was physical conflict between adult family members where you were concerned that someone might get hurt?	1	2	3

### SECTION 3: Life after High School

We are interested in your preparation for life after high school.  
Please circle one response for each question.

	Not at all	Somewhat	Fairly	Very	Does not apply
25. How likely is it that you will graduate from high school?	1	2	3	4	5
26. How likely is it that you will attend college right after high school?	1	2	3	4	5
27. How likely are you to look for a job right after high school instead of attending college?	1	2	3	4	5
28. How likely is it that you will be moving out of your family home right after high school?	1	2	3	4	5
29. If you decide not to go to college, how confident are you that you will be able to get a job right after high school?	1	2	3	4	5
30. How confident are you that you will have the time management skills to either succeed in college or succeed at a job?	1	2	3	4	5
31. How likely is it that your parents will make you leave home after high school, even if you don't have somewhere else to go?	1	2	3	4	5
32. If you move out of your family home right after high school, how confident are you that you will have the skills to manage on your own?	1	2	3	4	5
33. If you do not go to college, and you move out of your family home right after high school, how confident are you that you will have the financial resources to live on your own?	1	2	3	4	5

### SECTION 4: Where am I Now?

Please circle one response for each question.

34. Where are you currently with your education?	Currently in High School	Graduated HS, no further schooling	Currently in vocational school		
35. Where do you currently live?	With Parents	With other Relatives	With Friends	My own Permanent Residence	No Permanent Residence
36. Do you currently have a job?	No	Yes, less than 20 hours a week	Yes, 20-39 hours a week	Yes, 40 or more hours a week	

## SECTION 5: Areas of Challenge Now and in the Future

Below is a list of areas where young adults may face concerns or challenges. Please think about each issue below and whether it is currently a problem for you and whether you think it will be a problem after you are done with high school.

First answer whether each issue is currently

- Not a problem for me
- A problem, but not troubling to me
- A troubling problem for me

Then answer whether it you think it will be a problem after you are done with high school

Possible area of concern or challenge	Is this currently an area where you face problems?			Will this area be a problem after high school?	
37. Getting further education needed to find a job	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
38. Finding transportation	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
39. Finding a job	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
40. Finding permanent and safe housing	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
41. Paying basic bills (e.g., heating, water, electric)	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
42. Getting enough food	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
43. Planning for my own family	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
44. Finding childcare for my children	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
45. Getting medical care I need	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
46. Getting medications I need	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
47. Getting dental care or vision care I need	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
48. Getting mental health services I need	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
49. Get help with legal problems	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No
50. Getting social services I need (e.g., welfare, food stamps, Medicaid)	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me	Yes	No

### SECTION 6: Background Information

Write in answer or circle one response to each question					
51. How old are you?	_____ Years				
52. What is your sex?	Male	female			
53. What is your ethnic background?	Caucasian (white)	African American (black)	Hispanic	Middle Eastern	Other
54. Do you have children of your own?	Yes	No			
55. If you have children, do they live with you?	Yes	No	I do not have children		
56. Are you covered by health insurance or Medicaid?	Yes	No	Don't Know		
57. How long have you lived in Wood County?	0-12 months	1-5 years	6-10 years	10-15 years	16+ years
58. Do you have internet access at your house?	Yes	No			

## Appendix F: Transitional Youth Survey

### Wood County Family and Children First Needs Assessment

The Wood County Family and Children First Council is a group of community agencies, schools, and family representatives that plan services for youth, young adults, and families in Wood County. To help plan needed services, we have put together a questionnaire that asks questions about you—about your opinions, experiences, and feelings. Your responses are anonymous. At no time can your individual responses be singled out and connected to you because we are not collecting names. It is important that you understand this so that you feel free to answer the items as accurately as you can. Hopefully, from the information we learn from Wood County students, we can plan and develop better services for young adults.

#### SECTION 1: Have You Experienced any of these Problems?

We are interested in the kinds of problems you experience. Please indicate whether each item has happened to you in the past year, and if so, how much it has troubled you. Circle one response for each question.

	Did not happen in the past year	Happened in the past year but not at all troubling	Happened in the past year and somewhat troubling	Happened in the past year extremely troubling
1) Trouble with attention, focus, or concentration	1	2	3	4
2) Stress related to your school performance (if you are in school)	1	2	3	4
3) Feelings that you want to hurt yourself (e.g., cutting)	1	2	3	4
4) Anxiety, nervousness (feeling tense, anxious, nervous, worry a lot)	1	2	3	4
5) Moody or irritable (frequent changes in your emotions)	1	2	3	4
6) Trouble getting along with family members (e.g., parents, brothers and sisters)	1	2	3	4
7) Being sexually active	1	2	3	4
8) Trouble obtaining birth control/contraception (e.g., condoms)	1	2	3	4
9) Alcohol use	1	2	3	4
10) Drug use	1	2	3	4
11) Serious financial stress in your family (e.g., lost our home, or a parent lost job)	1	2	3	4
12) Eating problems (such as binge eating, purging, or starving self)	1	2	3	4
13) Had to live on your own or at a friend's because you had nowhere else to go	1	2	3	4



## SECTION 2: Areas of Challenge for You

Below is a list of areas where young adults may face concerns or challenges. Please think about each issue below and whether it is currently a problem for you.

Answer whether each issue is currently

- 1) Not a problem for me
- 2) A problem, but not troubling to me
- 3) A troubling problem for me

Possible area of concern or challenge	Is this currently an area where you face problems?		
14) Getting further education needed to find a job	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
15) Finding transportation	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
16) Finding a job	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
17) Finding permanent and safe housing	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
18) Paying basic bills (e.g., heating, water, electric)	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
19) Getting enough food	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
20) Planning for my own family	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
21) Finding childcare for my children	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
22) Getting medical care I need	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
23) Getting medications I need	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
24) Getting dental care or vision care I need	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
25) Getting mental health services I need	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
26) Get help with legal problems	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me
27) Getting social services I need (e.g., welfare, food stamps, Medicaid)	Not a problem for me	A problem, but not troubling for me	A troubling problem for me

### SECTION 3: Your Opinions about Seeking Help for Problems

Write in the number from Section 2 (page 2) for the problem that is currently most troubling for you (for example, #14, "Getting further education needed to find a job").

Problem # \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Circle how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about getting services for that problem.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
28) I am able to handle this problem myself	1	2	3	4
29) Confidentiality/privacy is a problem	1	2	3	4
30) Transportation or distance is difficult	1	2	3	4
31) It is embarrassing to get help for the problem	1	2	3	4
32) Paying for services for this is a problem	1	2	3	4
33) Knowing where or how to get help for this is confusing	1	2	3	4
34) I would rather get help from family members or friends for this problem	1	2	3	4

Write in the number from Section 2 (page 2) for the problem that is currently the second most troubling for you (for example, #14, "Getting further education needed to find a job").

Problem # \_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Circle how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about getting services for that problem.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35) I am able to handle this problem myself	1	2	3	4
36) Confidentiality/privacy is a problem	1	2	3	4
37) Transportation or distance is difficult	1	2	3	4
38) It is embarrassing to get help for the problem	1	2	3	4
39) Paying for services for this is a problem	1	2	3	4
40) Knowing where or how to get help for this is confusing	1	2	3	4
41) I would rather get help from family members or friends for this problem	1	2	3	4

#### SECTION 4: Background Information

Write in answer or circle one response to each question					
42) How old are you?	_____ Years				
43) What is your sex?	Male	female			
44) What is your ethnic background?	Caucasian (white)	African American (black)	Hispanic	Middle Eastern	Other
45) Do you have children of your own?	Yes	No			
46) If you have children, do they live with you?	Yes	No	I do not have children		
47) Are you covered by health insurance or Medicaid?	Yes	No	Don't Know		
48) How long have you lived in Wood County?	0-12 months	1-5 years	6-10 years	10-15 years	16+ years
49) Where are you currently with your education?	Currently in High School	Graduated HS, no further schooling	Currently in vocational school		
50) Where do you currently live?	With Parents	With other Relatives	With Friends	My own Permanent Residence	No Permanent Residence
51) Do you currently have a job?	No	Yes, less than 20 hours a week	Yes, 20-39 hours a week	Yes, 40 or more hours a week	
52) Do you have internet access at your house?	Yes	No			