



# IMPROVING YOUTH TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD

May 6-7, 2020  
MacEwan Hall at the University of Calgary  
424 Collegiate Blvd NW, Calgary, AB

CONNECTION · COLLABORATION · INNOVATION

## DESCRIPTION

Integrating Research, Practice, and Policy for Improving Youth Transitions to Adulthood (YTA) in Alberta will be a unique opportunity to bring attention to the importance of optimizing youth transitions to adult life. This conference will bring together those with a shared interest in understanding the value of utilizing an integrated approach across systems to improve transitions. Presenters will be sharing brief overviews of their research and innovative practice in breakout sessions highlighting the area of youth transitions to adult life.

## OBJECTIVES

- *Explore* existing research, policy, and practices in adolescent and adult systems in Alberta, incorporating diverse perspectives, and Indigenous and western research methodologies;
- *Learn* from youth, caregivers, and other natural supports regarding their recommendations for supporting youth transitioning to adulthood;
- *Examine* practice-based evidence, initiatives, and projects focused on the transition of youth to adulthood in Alberta;
- *Commit* to sharing and applying learnings to improve how we work together to support young people in the transition to adulthood.

## **PROGRAM-AT-A-GLANCE**

### **Day 1: Wednesday, May 6, 2020**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>
8:00-8:30	Registration <i>Coffee and Light Refreshments</i>
8:30-9:00	Opening Remarks
9:00-10:15	<b>Plenary Session 1: Enhancing Systems Collaboration for Youth Transitions to Adulthood</b>
10:15-10:30	<i>Nutritional Break</i>
10:30-11:45	<b>Plenary Session 1 Continued</b>
11:45-12:45	<i>Lunch Provided</i>
12:45-2:15	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b>
2:15-2:30	<i>Break</i>
2:30-3:45	<b>Plenary Session 3: Getting There: A Special Report on Emerging Adulthood and Using Administrative Data to Understand the Child-to-Adult Transition for Albertan Youth with Disabilities</b>
3:45-4:00	Closing Remarks
4:00-5:00	<b>Networking Reception – Poster Presentations</b> <i>Hor d'Oeuvres and Cash Bar</i>

### **Day 2: Thursday, May 7, 2020**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>
8:00-8:30	Networking <i>Coffee and Light Refreshments</i>
8:30-8:45	Opening Remarks
8:45-10:15	<b>Plenary Session 4: Optimizing the Transition to Adulthood: Centering Youth and Families in Help-Seeking and Treatment</b>
10:15-10:30	<i>Nutritional Break</i>
10:30-12:00	<b>Plenary Session 4 continued</b>
12:00-1:00	<i>Lunch provided</i>
1:00-2:15	<b>Concurrent sessions</b>
2:15-2:30	<i>Nutritional Break</i>
2:30-3:45	<b>Plenary Session 5: The Future of Work for Youth</b>
3:45-4:00	Closing Remarks

### Optimizing the Transition to Adulthood: Centering Youth and Families in Help-seeking and Treatment

*Dr. Michelle Munson*

In this address, Dr. Michelle R. Munson will discuss practice-based research on optimizing the transition to adulthood with illustrations from twenty-years of clinical and research-based experiences. These experiences have led to knowledge and emerging questions for the field on how best to work together to strengthen opportunities for youth as they emerge into adulthood. The talk will bridge science and practice to illustrate the importance of coming together as a field to advocate, serve and ultimately improve the lives of youth and families.



#### Biography

Dr. Michelle R. Munson is a Professor at New York University Silver School of Social Work. She is a recognized expert in mental health services and interventions for adolescents and young adults. She is also the Director of NYU Silver's Youth & Young Adult Mental Health Group. Dr. Munson's research focuses on three inter-related areas of inquiry among youth and young adults with serious mental health conditions: (1) mental health decision-making, (2) testing of 'engagement' and 'treatment' interventions, and (3) understanding the development of 'working' mental health narratives and how they impact young adults' treatment decisions.

Among her current research projects, Dr. Munson is Principal Investigator of a National Institute of Mental Health-funded randomized clinical trial of a Young Adult Engagement Program designed to orient young adults to treatment and improve their engagement and investment in their mental health treatment and their overall wellness. Dr. Munson and her colleagues apply the Experimental Therapeutics approach to their scientific methods. This approach has emerged to move services and intervention science forward – allowing investigators to answer not only if interventions are effective, but also how interventions impacts outcomes – uncovering the mechanisms of change (see Raghavan, Munson & Le, 2019). The interventions use empirically-based communication strategies, creative arts, and dual provider teams comprised of a licensed clinician and a person with lived experience of a mental health condition.

A widely published scholar, she is a consulting editor/article reviewer for more than a dozen peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Munson is a strong advocate for mental health services, research and continuing a social movement to end pervasive discrimination against people living with mental health challenges.

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## Enhancing Systems Collaboration for Youth Transitions to Adulthood

*Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos*

For youth engaged with multiple systems of care who experience mental health and substance abuse issues, navigating the transition to adulthood can be complex. These youth may experience adverse outcomes because of limited information sharing, collaboration and communication across systems and sectors. The goal of this keynote is to disseminate the results of an Alberta wide study identifying best practices and policies for enhancing coordination and collaboration across systems to improve the transition and service experiences of youth affected with mental health issues and substance abuse. This study will present the results from this two-phase project. Phase one included over 255 qualitative interviews with young people ages 18-24, parents/caregivers, and service providers to understand their experiences with systems and perceptions of barriers, facilitators and challenges to systems collaboration. The second phase consisted of over 15 nominal technique groups with each stakeholder group setting recommendations and priorities for improving how systems work together to better support youth as they move into adulthood. Youth with lived experiences and caregivers will participate in this keynote to share their recommendations for facilitating policy and system level changes to support individuals to successfully launch into adulthood.



### Biography

Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos is an Associate Professor with the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. She is cross-appointed with the Department of Psychiatry, Pediatrics and a full member of the Mathison Centre for Mental Health Research and Education and the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute. Her research focuses on inter-agency collaborations to support adolescents and emerging adults with mental health, chronic health conditions and trauma to transition to adult services and adulthood. She is conducting research in the area of youth and family engagement and evaluating peer support models and navigator interventions to improve outcomes for youth with mental health issues, chronic illnesses and child maltreatment.

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## A Critical Time: A Special Report on Emerging Adults Leaving Children's Services Care

*Del Graff, Patti Ferguson, Colleen Hagel, Angela Grier*

In this plenary session, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will share the findings from *Getting There: A Special Report on Emerging Adulthood*, which examines the supports and services young people receive as they emerge into adulthood. The rationale for the report stems from the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) receiving notification that six young people passed away within a nine-month period of each other. Each had received services under a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement<sup>1</sup> (SFAA) with Child Intervention Services. During the same period, 102 young adults requested advocacy services from the OCYA for similar difficulties related to their SFAA's.

'Emerging adulthood' is a useful concept for understanding the lived experiences of the young people in this report. Emerging adulthood is a distinct stage of development that occurs in the period when young people receive SFAA's. This period is especially difficult for young people who were involved with Children's Services because some were not adequately prepared for independence, have histories of trauma, mental health and substance use and have limited emotional and financial support. However, there is little understanding of emerging adulthood as a unique stage of life in policy and therefore minimal practice guidelines on how to support young people between 18 to 24 years old. Emerging adults require supports from multiple systems that must utilize an integrated approach to improve transitions and help young people navigate to adulthood successfully.



## Biographies

### **Del Graff, Alberta Child and Youth Advocate, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate**

Mr. Graff is the Child and Youth Advocate for the Province of Alberta. He has worked in a variety of social work, supervisory and management capacities in communities in British Columbia and Alberta. He brings experience in residential care, family support, child welfare, youth and family services, community development, and addictions treatment and prevention. He has demonstrated leadership in moving forward organizational development initiatives to improve service results for children, youth and families.



### **Patti Ferguson, Manager, Investigations, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate**

Patti is a Manager of Investigations with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. Prior to joining the Advocate's office, Patti was a Senior Manager with Children's Services, Co-Directed a disability advocacy organization, and worked for the Government of Alberta in various front-line and leadership roles over her 26 year career.



### **Colleen Hagel, Advocate, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate**

Colleen is presently working as an individual advocate on the Direct Advocacy team in Calgary. She has enjoyed working in the Human Services field as a Social Worker for 25 years, in various roles and communities across Alberta. Her interest comes from working with youth and young adults in the Child Intervention system who are experiencing challenges navigating emerging adulthood.



### **Angela Grier, Indigenous Engagement Consultant, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate**

Piiohksoopanskii ("Comes Over Singing") is from the Piikani Nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Angela has been working with Indigenous peoples and communities on and off reserve for over 20 years in post-secondary, various leadership and community roles and in a private counselling practice. Angela graduated from the University of Lethbridge with a Master's of Education specializing in Counselling Psychology.

## **Using Administrative Data to Understand the Child-to-Adult Transition for Albertan Youth with Disabilities**

*Dr. Matthew Russell*

In this session, Dr. Matthew Russell will review the findings of a study aimed at understanding the challenges youth with disabilities faced during the child-to-adult transition in Alberta using cross-Alberta, cross-ministry administrative data from 2005/6 to 2010/11. Researchers looked at three challenges faced by youth with disabilities in the transition 1) health care use, 2) corrections involvement, and 3) homelessness.

Outcomes and interpretations were informed by multiple stakeholder groups, including partners in the Government of Alberta, pediatricians, and youth, young adults, and families experiencing transitions. The findings suggest that many social, individual, and service/program factors during the transition from child-to-adult services were associated with challenges youth with disabilities faced (health care use, corrections involvement, and homelessness). In particular, mental health needs were suggested to be an important issue to address in the transition, with connection to all three challenges.



## Biography

Dr. Matthew Russell is a CIHR Health System Impact postdoctoral fellow working with the University of Calgary and PolicyWise for Children & Families, with expertise in cross-ministry administrative data analysis. Matt's primary research uses administrative and community data to provide information on the transitions that children and young adults with disabilities face. These transitions include 1) identification and intervention, 2) school transitions, and 3) the child-to-adult transitions.

Study Co-authors: Yunqi Zhang<sup>1</sup>; Jennifer Zwicker, PhD<sup>2, 3</sup>; Suzanne Tough, PhD<sup>4, 5</sup>; and Xinjie Cui, PhD<sup>1</sup> Affiliations: 1: PolicyWise for Children & Families; University of Calgary; 2: School of Public Policy, 3: Department of Kinesiology, 4: Community Health Sciences, Cumming School of Medicine and 5: Pediatrics, Cumming School of Medicine

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## The Future of Work for Youth

### Nibal Fisher

The world of working is changing, and young people are unprepared. Canada's youth are set up to fail in the new economy. In fact, today's generation is at risk of ending up poorer than their parents. Failing to close the gap in unemployment rates between Canadian youth and people of prime-working age would mean missing out on a nearly \$30B lift to our economy. Young people deserve a chance, and that's why RBC created Future Launch. If youth fail, we all fail.

RBC Future Launch is a 10-year, \$500 million dollar commitment, RBC's largest commitment to a single issue ever. Through the RBC Foundation, we will invest in four key areas aimed at helping prepare youth for the future. These include helping youth gain new skills, get work experience, increase their networks and enhance their mental wellbeing. RBC has released several thought leadership papers around the topic of the future of work including: *Human's Wanted* and *Bridging the Gap*. *Human's Wanted* was the biggest labour force data project in Canada where the RBC team spoke with students and workers in their early careers, educators and policymakers, and employers in every sector. *Bridging the Gap* is a follow-up to *Humans Wanted*. It's the result of discussions with more than 5000 Canadians, ranging from youth and workers to employers, educators and policymakers, each with perspectives on how Canada can prepare for a disrupted future. Canadians told us about the skills revolution and 7 key themes and ideas that emerged from *Humans Wanted*. RBC Branch Manager and Future Launch Champion, Nibal Fisher will share the outcomes and recommendations from two of these whitepapers.

## Biography



Nibal Fisher is a Branch Manager at the Hillhurst Branch. She graduated with a Bachelor of economics degree from the University of Montreal and has been with RBC for five and half years. As part of her journey with RBC, and her commitment to youth, she is an ambassador for RBC's Future Launch Program that helps young people be better prepared for the future. She has been highly involved with Future Launch doing workshops/events with both our youth and local Future Launch champions to spread the word and connect with the community. She was a treasurer on the Fort McMurray SPCA board of director and is currently involved with AARCS in Calgary. Nibal has helped many youth with the skills, experiences, and networks they need to feel more prepared for the future. She is always ready to take on new challenges and learning to connect with the youth in her community.

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Title	Presenters
Teens Talk Transition	Deb Thul, Keighley Scofield
Optimization of the Alberta Children's Hospital <i>Well on Your Way</i> Transition Program	Suzanne Libbey, Sandi Oelhaupl
Well on Your Way: Helping Youth Transition to Adult Healthcare	Dr. Renee Farrell, Deborah Thul, Karen Johnston, Stacey Nyl
Building Hearts and Minds Together	Dr. Cheryl Kinzel, Noella Wells, Miriam Perry, Jacinta Fox
The Youth Resiliency Project: Empowering Justice-involved Youth to Find Positive Identities and Pathways	Robyn Webster
Transitions to Adult Life: A Cross System Approach in Calgary and Area	Calgary and Area Regional Collaborative Service Delivery Transitions Working Group
Using Social Return on Engagement™ to Embrace Natural Supports	Karen Cepuran; Amelia Larson
RBC Youth Empowerment: Transition Through Academics, Life Skills and Youth Engagement	Catherine Clark
The All in For Youth Model: Addressing Barriers to High School Completion	Eunice Bawah, Craig Barabash
Youth Advisory Table: The Truth About Transitions	Shane Rempel, Calgary's Youth Advisory Table (YAT)
Launching into Adulthood: Identifying Successful Practices in Supporting transition for Individuals with Autism	Dr. Shane Lynch, Dr. Katelyn Lowe
Exploring Common Factors for the Successful Transition to Adulthood for Youth with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: LCFASD's Transition Program	Lisa Murphy, Audrey McFarlane
A Speechless Transition to Adulthood: What We Have Learned So Far	Jenna Meers, Louise Buchanan, Lora Baker
Keeping Pace with Emerging Adults: Lessons, Changes, and Opportunities from an EA program	Amanda Richardson, Dr. Michael Stubbs
Grounded Theory Study of Mental Health Service Use Experiences Among Youth Accessing Care at a Foundry BC Centre	Dr. Shelly Ben-David, Michelle Biddell, Chantal Vien
Real-World Counselling Outcomes for Emerging Adults in Calgary	Dr. Robbie Babins-Wagner, Dr. Amy Bender, Angela Laughton
When the World Flips Upside Down: Navigating Transitions for Youth with Chronic Illness	Kristin Tinge, Melanie Taylor
Transition Navigator Trial: Evaluating the Impact of a Patient Navigator on Health Care Utilization by Patients Transitioning to Adult Care	Dr. Susan Samuel
Randomized Controlled Trial of a Transition Intervention Program for Young Adolescents with Congenital Heart Disease	Dr. Andrew Mackie

Transitioning into Post-Secondary	Emilie Bassi, Nicole Colley-Lewis
Advancing Futures: A Transitional Support Program for Current and Former Youth in Care who are Pursuing Post-Secondary Studies	Rio Liepert
NPower Canada: A Holistic, Sector-based Workforce Development Model for Youth Success	Meaghan De Laurentis, Lisa Moon
“We deserve to talk”: Youths’ Experiences of and Recommendations for Transitioning from Pediatric to Adult Services	Brooke Allemang, Olivia Cullen, Katelyn Greer
Parents’ Experiences and Recommendations for Improving Youths’ Transitions to Adulthood	Olivia Cullen, Brooke Allemang
Findings from a One-Year Pilot Program Supporting Youth with Intellectual Disabilities Gain Work Experience in High School	Jenny Kelly, Kim Yager, Erin Leveque
Creating a Youth-Friendly Hospital Experience for Emerging Adults with Serious Mental Illness	Dr. Graham Gaine, Jonathan Dubue,
Perspectives from Primary Health Care Providers on Supporting Adolescents and Young Adults with Chronic Conditions Transitioning from Pediatric Care: A Descriptive Qualitative Study	Dr. Kyleigh Schraeder
Identifying Solutions for Engaging Primary Health Care during Transitions to Adult Care: Initial Findings from Primary Health Care Providers in Calgary	Dr. Kyleigh Schraeder
Using High Fidelity Wraparound to Improve Youth Transitions to Adulthood	Janet Bun
Collective Wisdom: A Panel Discussion on Emerging Adults	Amanda Richardson and Dr. Michael Stubbs
The Journey of Substance Use, Wellness and Being an Emerging Adult	Suzanne Leacock, Kara Boyd, Patti Beres

## **POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Presenters</b>
The Improving Treatment Together (ITT) Project: Methodology and Lessons Learned So Far	Margaret Clarke
Growing Up Online: A Toolkit for Service Providers Working with Children, Youth and Families Experiencing Problematic Use of Digital Technology	Dr. Linda Kongnetiman, Arianna Mestre-Wong
A Mental Health Literacy Approach with Embedded Life Skills to Support Transitions to Post-Secondary Environments: Results from 5 Post-Secondary Institutions in Canada	Dr. Yifeng Wei, Andrew Baxter, Lori Roe
Transition to Primary Care Following Specialty Care among Adolescents and Young Adults Affected by Chronic Conditions: Initial Findings from a Scoping Review	Dr. Kyleigh Schraeder, Ashley Felske



Identifying Important Elements and Indicators for Successful Transition from Pediatric to Adult Healthcare in Different Patient Populations at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital	Michelle Roy, Curtis Perrott
Using Implementation Science to Develop and Adopt an Evidence-Based Pediatric-to-Adult Transition Framework at a Rehabilitation Hospital	Michelle Roy, Curtis Perrott
Stigma Towards Young Adults with ADHD: What Can We Do?	Darby Attoe
Let Youth Know About On-Campus Accessibility Services: Youth and Staff Perspectives on the Transition to Higher Education with Sickle Cell Disease	Brooke Allemang
Shifting the Research Focus Away from “The Problem with Youth”	Dr. Candace Lind
Youth Makers	Dr. Patricia Kostouros, Kerry Harmer, MRU Capstone students
Youth Engagement in Research: Participatory Action Vs. Patient-Oriented	Katelyn Greer, Olivia Cullen, Brooke Allemang
Calgary Region Learning Disabilities and ADHD Network	Pam Lougheed

## SPECIAL THANKS

### Conference Planning Committee

- Alberta Health Services (Alberta Children's Hospital, Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network, Child & Adolescent Addiction, Mental Health & Psychiatry Program, Maternal Newborn Child and Youth Strategic Clinical Network)
- Alberta Mentoring Partnership
- Bow River Regional Collaborative Service Delivery
- Calgary and Area Regional Collaborative Service Delivery
- Calgary Regional Post-Secondary Mental Health Network
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region
- Children's Link Society
- Enhancing Systems Collaboration for Youth Transitions to Adulthood Research Project
- Government of Alberta (Children's Services, Community and Social Services, Education)
- I Heart Home
- PolicyWise for Children & Families
- Sinneave Family Foundation
- United Way of Calgary and Area

### Sponsors

