



North Carolina Families United, NFFCMH, Inc.
Damie Jackson-Diop, Youth Transition Program Director
330 S. Greene Street, Suite 200, Greensboro, NC 27401

Phone:
336.215.6422
Fax:
336.217.9750
Website:
www.ncfamiliesunited.org

Futures Ready! Under & Over 18

A Transition Workshop for emerging young adults 14-26 struggling with severe emotional disturbances and/or co-occurring disabilities

Background:

Thank you for your interest in hosting a Futures Ready workshop!

North Carolina Families United is the Statewide Family Network and the state chapter of the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. The organization has taken the lead in promoting Systems of Care that are responsive to the needs of young adults with serious emotional disturbances and their families. Among the many services offered by the organization, Families United hosts an annual youth leadership development program and mentors youth (ages 14-26) during the transition period into adulthood. Additionally, the organization works with System of Care grantees to bring youth-guided and family driven technical assistance to funded initiatives.

In 2007, the North Carolina State Collaborative endorsed the definition provided by North Carolina Families United, NFFCMH, Inc., to define Child Families Teams as follows:

***"Child and Family Teams** are family members and their community supports that come together to **create, implement and update** a plan **with** the child, youth/student and family. The plan builds on the strengths of the child, youth and family and addresses their needs, desires and dreams."*

North Carolina Families United staff is pleased to offer The Futures Ready workshop throughout the state as a free resource to youth, families, and cross-system agencies to improve transition outcomes of youth/young adults struggling with mental wellness. The curriculum not only adheres to the values of System of Care, but serves as a catalyst for a comprehensive approach to transition that is driven *by* youth, not *for* youth, a process that promotes the ongoing guidance of their families/caregivers, and encourages the active involvement of cross-system agencies, including schools.

Your decision to host this workshop contributes to the advancement of System of Care values inherent in the Child Family Team approach, subsequently improving transition outcomes of youth/young adults struggling with mental wellness issues throughout the state.

This opportunity is made possible through a grant awarded to North Carolina Families United, (National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health) Inc., by the NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services Block Grant Funds.



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Purpose:

The purpose of this workshop is to actively engage participants in understanding how services change for emerging young adults who struggle with mental wellness issues, particularly when transitioning from child to adult mental health services. The instructional plan is intentionally designed to meet youth where they stand by addressing transition-related issues from a multiple entry point perspective. These multiple entry points include, but are not limited to: life after school, hospitalization to school, foster care to independent living, re-entry from juvenile justice system to the community, and pediatric to adult health care system.

The curriculum was developed by family members of persons who are mental health-consumers. To create relevant and meaningful learning experiences, input and participation was provided from those impacted directly by the training, such as youth, families/caregivers, and staff within child serving agencies.

By the end of the workshop participants will have:

- Gained a clearer understanding of transition-related issues as it relates to youth/young adults with severe emotional disturbance and/or co-occurring disabilities;
- Examined the delivery of mental health services;
- Explored the laws, policies and procedures that govern decisions made across multiple services sectors (education, employment, mental health, health care and housing);
- Learned an approach to mapping the futures of youth/young adults who struggle with severe emotional and/or co-occurring disabilities that is youth-guided and adheres to System of Care values;
- Developed a Futures Ready! transition plan using a Child Family Team approach that is youth-driven, family/caregiver-guided with cross-systems agencies including school-staff involved;
- Reflected on the diverse perspectives of transition by considering the voices of youth, families/caregivers, and staff within cross-system agencies.

The Benefits of Hosting a Futures Ready! Training:

- Opportunity to partner with youth, families, and cross-system agencies;
- Increase community awareness of resources available through your agency;
- Contributes to creating a healthy community of youth/young adults at the local level

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Course Design:

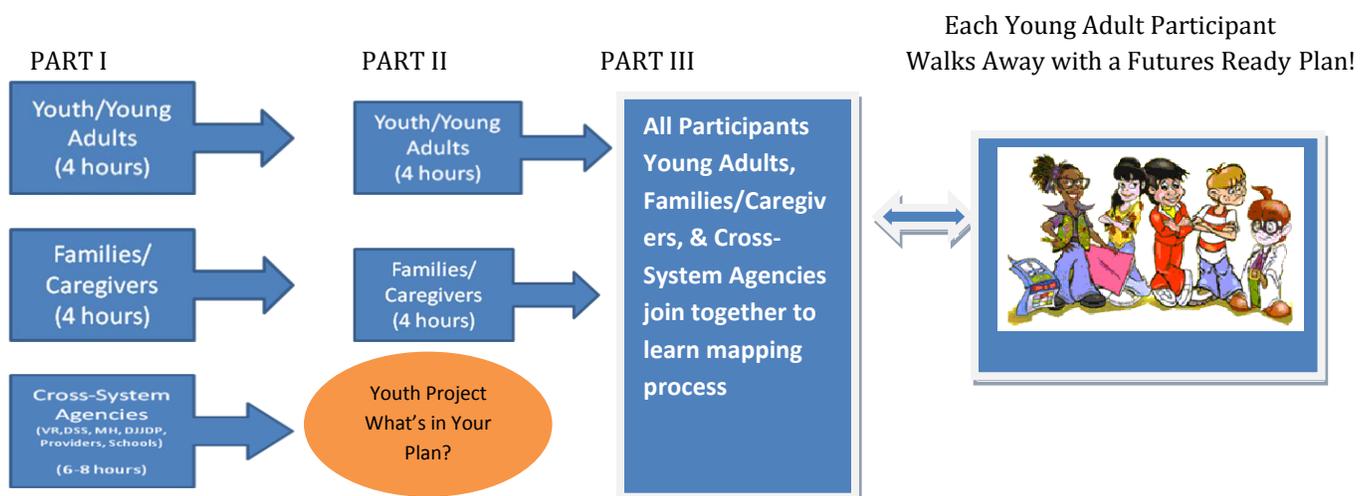
The Futures Ready course is designed to engage 6-8 participants representative of the following groups: youth, families/caregivers, and cross-system agencies (including schools). The workshop consists of three parts: *What is Transition?*, *What to Expect: Under & Over 18*, and *Let's Get Futures Ready* which can be delivered 2-3 days over the course of 1-2 weeks. Parts one and two of the training are delivered to participants separately. As part of the workshop, youth/young adults will be given a project entitled: **What's in Your Plan?** Where youth participants will be asked to request a copy of their "Plan" (see page 4). For part three, participants join together to learn the Futures Ready mapping process, which results in each youth/young adult participants of the training leaving with a transition plan in-hand. While all participants of the training receive the same content of the curriculum, some sections are adapted to each of the participating groups.

The program requires at least six participants representative of these three groups:

Young adults ages 14-26 with severe emotional disturbances and/or co-occurring disabilities or who struggle with mental wellness issues;

Families/Caregivers or natural supports of transition aged young adult who support them in transition preparedness activities;

Cross-System Agency Staff (including school-staff) who are involved in the health/education for youth adults under and over the age of 18 who struggle with mental wellness, students receiving special education services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) or students currently served under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.



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Why 2-3 Days?

Given the complexity of issues and consideration of multiple service sectors, the 2-3 day format maximizes participant opportunity for processing the curriculum content. **Part I** of the workshop begins with defining transition, the laws that govern delivery of services, mechanisms used for transition, and an opportunity for young adults to demonstrate what they learned through the project “What’s in Your Plan?” where they request and review a copy of their “Plan” (IEP, 504, PCP, IHP etc). **Part II** of the workshop identifies the issues that emerge as a result of gaps in service system, overlap of services, and fragmentation. **Part III** or last day of the workshop culminates with all participants learning a mapping process to transition planning that leads to the development of a transition plan with each youth participant that is youth-driven, family/caregiver –guided, with cross-system agencies actively involved.

Youth Project Activity: What’s In Your Plan?

What’s In Your Plan is an experiential learning project intended to provide youth participants (including families/caregivers, cross-agencies in the preparation stages) with an opportunity to discover what they learned through direct experience. At the end of day one or day two, youth will be asked to request a copy of their educational or treatment plan. They will be given a questionnaire to help guide them on reviewing the document. They will present their reactions and finding at the beginning of day three of the training.

About the Futures Ready! Co-Trainers:

Futures Ready workshops are provided by professional staff Damie Jackson-Diop and Gail Cormier of North Carolina Families United, NFFCMH, Inc. The co-trainers are skilled in curriculum development and instructional planning that, not only adheres to System of Care values, but promotes experiential learning environment based on best or promising practices and research. Since North Carolina Families United staff is committed to authentic partnerships with those who are directly impacted by the delivery of mental health services, the Futures Ready workshop was developed by family members or parents of a child/young adult with a mental health diagnosis. Furthermore, the trainers are committed to actively learning from the diverse perspectives of all participants in order to support children with emotional and behavioral challenges and their families through advocacy and systemic change.

Co-Trainer Bio’s:

Gail Cormier is the Executive Director of NC Families United, a non profit specializing in supporting families and children struggling with mental health issues, NC Families United supports and unites

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the voices of children, youth, and families with mental health concerns to educate, support and advocate for improved services and lives. We live at UNCG/CYFCP CEO and Co-founder of a nonprofit corporation in NH associated with UNH. ACS supports the education, social, emotional needs of youth with mental health issues as they struggle through the transition into adulthood. Over saw and co developed nationally recognized transition program RENEW, state Co-Director of the PBIS High school DROP OUT PREVENTION grant from DOE, Directed the National winner of the Youth Leadership Series for youth with disabilities. Co- authored many book chapters, professional journal articles and TIME magazine stories. Key note speaker for national conferences for at-risk youth. Presenter and trainer for many national conferences on PBS, At-Risk youth, Transition aged youth, and Systems of Care.

Damie Jackson-Diop is the Youth Transition Program Director for North Carolina Families United. She is disability-experienced and a family member of individuals with developmental disabilities and mental wellness issues. Her research interests include improving educational and employment outcomes of youth/young adults. In addition to developing the Futures Ready curriculum on transition, she provides oversight to the planning and implementation of the Annual Youth Leadership Development Program. Jackson-Diop also develops networks that support youth (14-26) who are struggling with mental illness or who have co-occurring disabilities and mentors eight young adults to help facilitate a more comprehensive transition into adulthood. She continues to volunteer for Guilford County Schools as a Surrogate Parent and is a member of the North Carolina Collaborative for Children, Youth and Families –Youth in Transition in Raleigh, NC.



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Hosting Guidelines

This set of guidelines has been developed to help individuals, communities, agencies/organization (including school staff) understand the responsibilities of hosting a Futures Ready transition workshop.

What We Provide

- Two professional transition trainers experienced in facilitation and co-operative learning, who is a family members of individuals who struggle with mental wellness challenges, and
- A young adult who struggle with mental wellness challenges to co-train on the futures ready mapping process
- Basic teaching materials (some of which we may need you to photocopy)
- Training materials: chart paper, markers, LCD projector, and laptop¹
- Participant Toolkit
- Pre/Post Survey: Futures Ready Feedback Form
- Technical assistance to guide host with publicity and filling the course (including a sample of publicity flier to promote the course)
- Fun, energy, and creativity to the learning experience!!!

What We Need From You

- Prepare participants for the workshop prior to their attending the first session
- A space for the training that would be suitable for 20-25 participants
- Sound, light, temperature, and seating can all impact learning, therefore, it is suggested the space be well lit, ventilated, and seats comfortably positioned in the view of all participants and co-trainers
- Arrange seats at the tables in conducive to co-operative learning positions such as horseshoe, full circle or circle or semi-circle

¹ If site is hosting concurrent sessions addition equipment (LCD project and laptop) may be requested as needed.



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- Provide space on the walls for co-trainers to hang visual aids and props
- A list of participants, especially youth (age, grade), and agencies represented
- Provide notice or inform co-trainers of any special accommodations or adaptation of training materials needed for individuals with disabilities
- Contact the agency/organization for each youth participant to request a copy of their current Plan in place (i.e., IEP, PCP, IHP, 504).
- Refreshments, light snacks or meal if feasible
- Incentives for participants to attend the training (gift certificates, certificates of completion).
- Childcare (if needed)
- Transportation