



Youth In Transition:

Supportive Preparation for Adulthood



MHA's Youth In Transition residential program helps young adults overcome barriers or personal challenges as they develop skills and build networks they need to live their best life, with the greatest degree of independence. The program serves transitional aged youth 18 to 22 who are experiencing cognitive or mental health challenges or related conditions.

Youth In Transition staff provides individuals with caring and consistent support while teaching basic life skills, encouraging educational and/or vocational pursuits, and modeling conflict resolution and interpersonal communication skills.

When individuals transition out of the program, they are equipped to make healthy choices and prepared to manage their lives successfully, as part of a community they choose. Some will move on to supported living in the community. Others may be able to live independently, with or without the engagement of an outreach worker. All will have access to the resources they need to make meaningful connections to ensure their long term success and wellbeing.

The Right Fit

Creating an effective match with those we serve lays a cornerstone for success. Youth often have experience with a variety of complex life experiences and barriers, and a desire to move forward in recovery. The program is not designed for individuals who require a more intensive level of treatment.

Teachable moments are part of each day as staff help individuals plan for their future while sharing a home with others who are on their own journeys. Great care is taken to pair staff with persons served to ensure compatibility as the basis of a productive relationship and to safeguard that each youth referred is appropriate for the program.



Personal Approach

Just as every person is unique, so too is our approach to the care of every person we serve. Each treatment plan is based on individual goals, with the first plan created within 72 hours, reviewed in 30 days and again after 90 days. Programming is provided based on assessed, individual needs.

All individuals have access to clinical services from BestLife (MHA's Emotional Health and Wellness Center) or other area providers. Many individuals are interested and find benefit in connecting with an individual clinician.

Stages to Transition

Staff helps individuals prepare for their transition to adulthood and greater independence through incremental steps:

- 1. Orientation**
- 2. Engagement**
- 3. Persuasion**
- 4. Active Treatment**
- 5. Transition**

During the two-week orientation, new individuals and staff get to know one another. There is time for personal reflection, many conversations about any struggles or accomplishments, and setting the foundation for long-term goals.

All youth attend daily group sessions, some clinical in nature, others with a focus on life skills. In addition to structured daily activities, individuals aspire to engage in 20 hours of schooling, 20 hours of volunteering, or 20 hours of work each week. Completing these hours successfully is one way individuals fulfill responsibilities to themselves and to the program. Individuals connect informally in the home each day to share experiences and ideas. They also may be taken shopping or on other outings.



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Choices and Responsibilities

For many individuals, having the opportunity to make choices for themselves is significant. Seeing how different choices lead to different outcomes and learning about accountability can be transformative. Individuals are also taught to manage personal responsibilities, such as budgeting, banking, grocery shopping and cooking, scheduling appointments, the appropriate use of electronics, and more.

Each individual has their own bedroom, which they can decorate as a personal space. Even the task of making their own bed each morning has value as the day's first accomplishment! Individuals who demonstrate responsibility earn greater levels of independence.

Measuring Success

Youth in Transition weighs the success of our individuals in a variety of ways:

- As basic as completing a training module for budgeting or cooking
- As vital as regular attendance in school or maintaining a vocational experience
- As life-changing as getting a learner's permit
- As momentous as building their own plan for independent living

We celebrate each success, acknowledge and learn from any setbacks, and continue to focus on the goal of transitioning each individual to adult living with the greatest level of independence.

Availability

Youth in Transition has four places for females in one residence and five places for males in another residence. For questions regarding availability or program information, please contact the Youth In Transition Program at:

YITreferral@mhainc.org

MHA in Brief

The Mental Health Association (MHA, Inc.) is a nonprofit provider of residential programs and supportive services to people impacted by mental illness, developmental disabilities, substance use, homelessness and acquired brain injury. Our core values are Respect, Integrity and Compassion. Throughout greater Springfield, MHA operates extensive residential, outreach and supported living programs, and a state-of-the-art outpatient behavioral health center.

MHA was founded in 1960 by concerned citizens to provide advocacy for people with mental illness living at Northampton State Hospital. Throughout the deinstitutionalization movement, MHA developed a continuum of housing and support options to participants with a wide variety of needs.

Our services reflect the belief that everyone deserves quality affordable housing, the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential, and the support to pursue their personal vision and meaningfully participate in the life of their community.







995 WORTHINGTON STREET, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01109

844-MHA-WELL (844-642-9355) | MHAINC.ORG