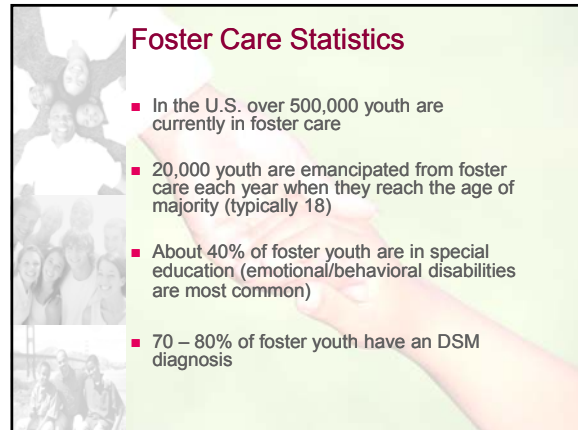




Effectiveness of the My Life Project: A Self-determination Transition Intervention for Youth in Foster Care and Special Education

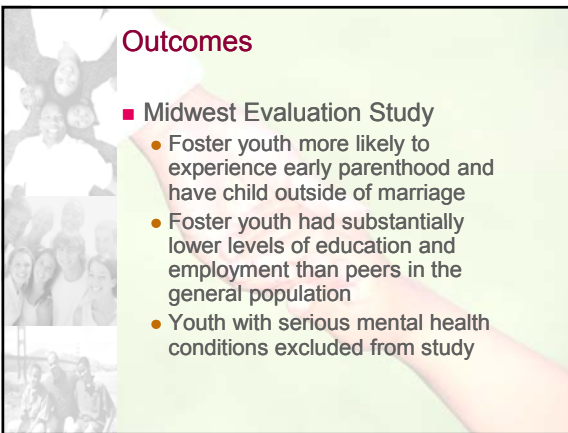
Children's Mental Health Research and Policy Conference
Transition Symposium
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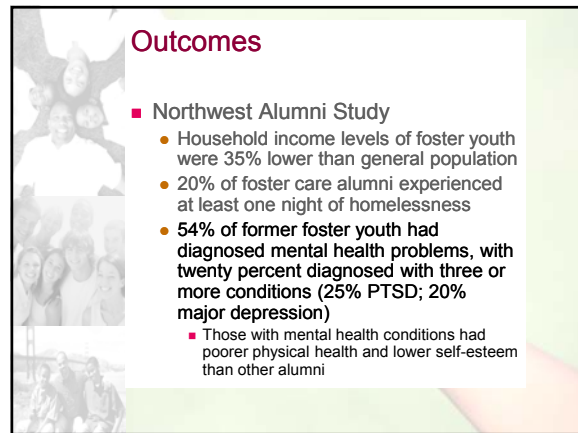
Foster Care Statistics

- In the U.S. over 500,000 youth are currently in foster care
- 20,000 youth are emancipated from foster care each year when they reach the age of majority (typically 18)
- About 40% of foster youth are in special education (emotional/behavioral disabilities are most common)
- 70 – 80% of foster youth have an DSM diagnosis



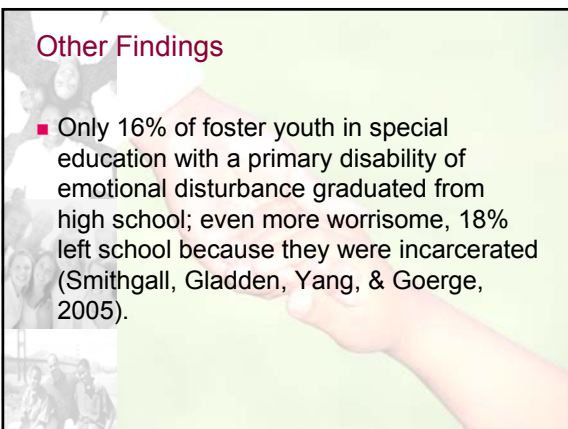
Outcomes

- **Midwest Evaluation Study**
 - Foster youth more likely to experience early parenthood and have child outside of marriage
 - Foster youth had substantially lower levels of education and employment than peers in the general population
 - Youth with serious mental health conditions excluded from study



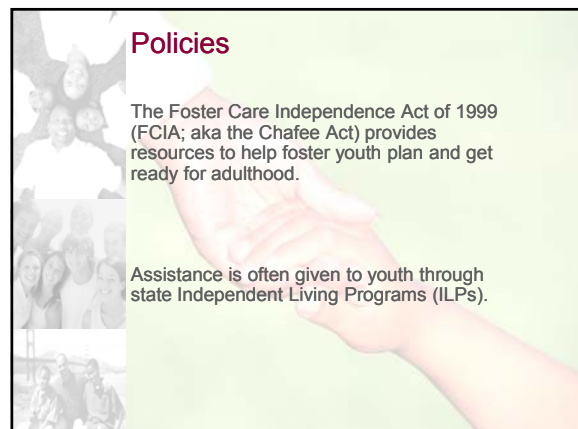
Outcomes

- **Northwest Alumni Study**
 - Household income levels of foster youth were 35% lower than general population
 - 20% of foster care alumni experienced at least one night of homelessness
 - 54% of former foster youth had diagnosed mental health problems, with twenty percent diagnosed with three or more conditions (25% PTSD; 20% major depression)
 - Those with mental health conditions had poorer physical health and lower self-esteem than other alumni



Other Findings

- Only 16% of foster youth in special education with a primary disability of emotional disturbance graduated from high school; even more worrisome, 18% left school because they were incarcerated (Smithgall, Gladden, Yang, & Goerge, 2005).



Policies

The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (FCIA; aka the Chafee Act) provides resources to help foster youth plan and get ready for adulthood.

Assistance is often given to youth through state Independent Living Programs (ILPs).

MY LIFE STUDY



- Funded by NIDRR
- Partnership with Mike Wehmeyer at University of Kansas
- RRI PIs: Laurie Powers, Sarah Geenen
- First opportunity to experimentally study the longitudinal impact of self-determination enhancement
- First experimental study of self-determination enhancement or any transition intervention with foster youth, with or without disabilities

Project Goals

- Enhance the self-determination of youth with disabilities in foster care
 - Document the impact of the intervention in promoting transition outcomes of youth in foster care
 - Investigate whether the intervention results in different outcomes for youth than the ILP

Research Design

- Youth identified by comparing DHS and School District databases
- 69 Foster youth with disabilities, 16.5 to 17.5 years of age, were randomly assigned to either the control or TX group
- Youth were enrolled in waves over three years
- Youth were evaluated at baseline, conclusion of TX (12m) and 12m post-intervention
- Attrition overall at 13%

My Life Intervention

- Take Charge for the Future Self-determination curriculum (fidelity 90% for wave 1, 93% for wave 2, 95% for wave 3)
- Weekly coaching for a year (mean = 50.36 hours)
- Youth engagement in transition plan meetings
- Youth participated in mentor workshops conducted with foster care alumni (mean = 2.82 to 3.67)

Data Collection

- Demographics
- Youth self-determination
- Educational participation/attainment
- Individualized Education Plans
- Engagement in desired career areas
- Independent living

Measures used:

- Empowerment Scale
- Arc Self-determination Scale
- AIR Self-determination
- Quality of Life Measure
- Transition Planning
- Outcome Survey
- Demographic Survey (administrative data)

Results

Significant changes were noted in the following areas:

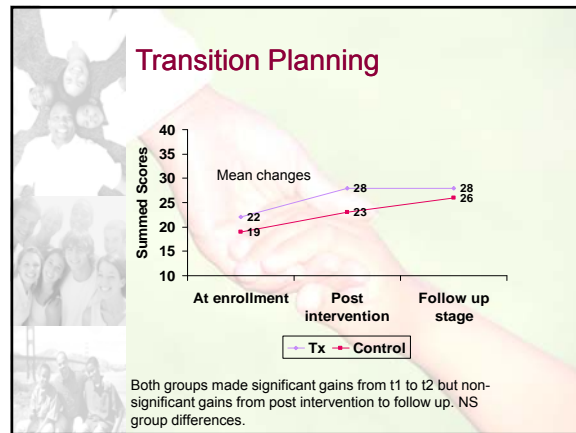
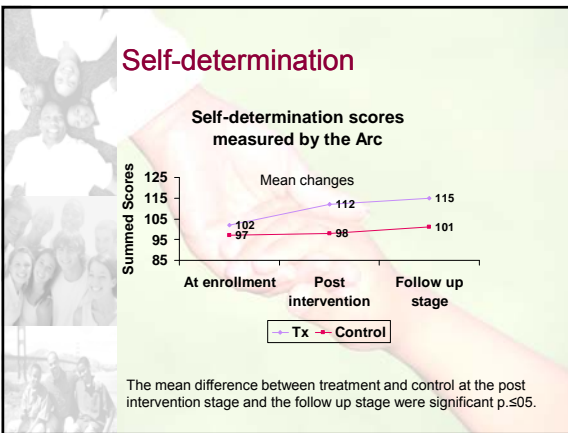
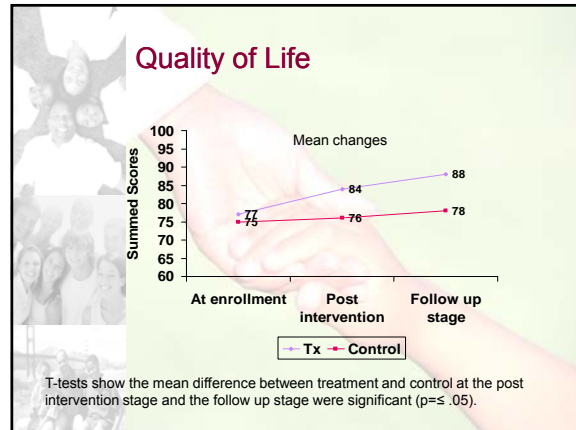
- Self-determination
- Perceived quality of life
- Transition planning

Other notable improvements:

- Educational outcomes
- Percentage employed
- Perception of being prepared for life as an adult
- Trend toward more stable living for treatment group

Results-overview

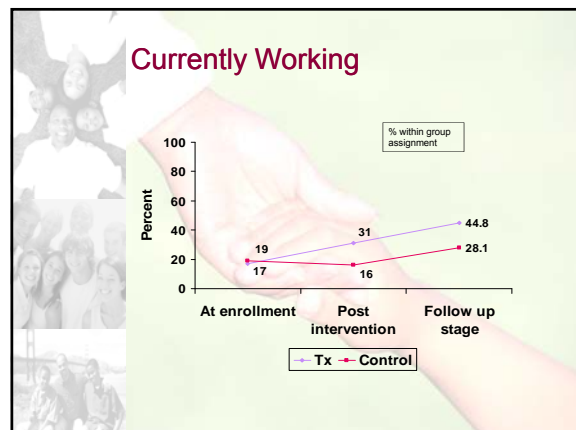
Measure		Pretest	Posttest	Follow along
Quality of Life	Tx	M=76.87	M=84.30	M=87.63
	Control	M=74.56	M=76.11	M=78.07
Arc Self-determination	Tx	M=102.38	M=111.83	M=115.02
	Control	M=96.78	M=97.55	M=100.57
Transition Planning	Tx	M=21.79	M=27.97	M=27.93
	Control	M=18.94	M=23.29	M=25.55
Education-graduated with regular diploma	Tx	100%	24.1%	31.0%
	Control	100%	9.7%	21.9%
Employment	Tx	17%	31%	45%
	Control	19%	16%	28%
Prepared for Life	Tx	37.9%	72.4%	58.6%
	Control	62.5%	65.6%	71%

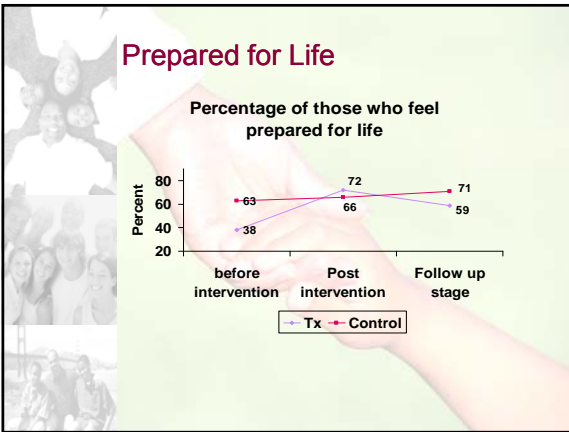


Education

Treatment vs. control within each category from post intervention (t2) to follow up (t3)

		Baseline	Post	Follow
Still in HS	Tx	100%	(14) 48.3%	(3) 10.3%
	Con	100%	(20) 64.5%	(9) 28.1%
Enrolled in GED	Tx		(3) 10.3%	(4) 13.8%
	Con		(1) 3.2%	(3) 9.4%
Graduated reg HS	Tx		(7) 24.1%	(9) 31.0%
	Con		(3) 9.7%	(7) 21.9%
Graduated Modified	Tx		(4) 13.8%	(9) 31.0%
	Con		(3) 9.7%	(7) 21.9%
Earned GED	Tx		0	(4) 13.8%
	Con		(2) 6.5%	(3) 9.4%
Dropped	Tx		(1) 3.2%	(4) 13.8%
	Con		(2) 6.5%	(3) 9.4%





Treatment youth achievements and goals from Outcome Survey

Went to summer school, going to youth leadership program (Portland YouthBuilders), got my ID, got into a talent agency
got OR state ID card; only been to 'D' room 3 times; more open at home (I don't shutdown); communication skills are better
identified career goals, took cooking class, went to Teen conference; got state ID, improved grades and school attendance
got permit; left Taylor house; looking at colleges; picked a college
turning 18; finding credits; getting a job; completing My Life
Got a standard diploma, got my license, led my YDM-IEP, completed my FAISA, created a resume, had speaking engagements
graduating from high school and getting through My Life. Getting my state ID. Going to PCC. Going to OMSI and having fun when it is the fun day
Visiting colleges, applying for jobs, staying in school, being obedient, loving my peers
I got myself an internship with the coolest cat who ever worked in a computer repair shop. Worked out family issues. I'm advocating for how I want to run my life. I ran my own YDM.
getting a job, going to Texas for church, getting a bank account, own cell phone in my name, Job Corps
Passed my GED, graduated from a treatment school
got ID, back into school, had baby, taking care of her on her own
Getting a life and maintaining my life even when I was having a rough time. Getting a new job 2 days after I found out my boyfriend was in jail. Rebuilding my relationship with my family.
I got out of school, I got a 3.5 GPA, I was a captain for the dance team and the Japan Club, I'm going to go to hair school
got state ID, went to a big meeting and spoke in front of lots of people
Get skills in facility maintenance, problem solving skills on the job, better communication skills, balanced life

