

# #Transitions4Youth: It's about Growing Up

## Event Recap



Children's Healthcare Canada hosted the first ever Canadian Transitions Pop-up event, on January 26-27, 2021. The event focused on how we can collectively build bridges to promote the best possible health outcomes for youth and families in Canada.

## Why focus on Transitions to Adult Systems of Care?

Transition to adult healthcare has long been a priority for Children's Healthcare Canada and our members. In 2012 a Community of Practice in Transition from Pediatric to Adult Health Care was established that led the development of A Guideline for Transition From Paediatric to Adult Health Care for Youth with Special Health Care Needs: A National Approach (2016). This national collaboration involved stakeholders from across the continuum of healthcare, including families and youth with lived experience.



## Children's Healthcare Canada's Health Hub in Transitions

In 2019, Children's Healthcare Canada created "Child Health Hubs" to connect individuals from member-organizations with 'like' peers from coast to coast to share information, ask questions, and exchange resources related to their position or role in their organization".

Under the leadership of Dr. Jan Willem Gorter, a Child Health Hub in Transition to Adult Healthcare was formed. The vision for the "Transition Hub" is to create a knowledge (mobilization) network that aims to bridge the gap between current treatment practices and evidence-based solutions for youth and young adults transitioning from pediatric to adult health care. The Transition Hub members organized this conference together with support from Children's Healthcare Canada.

## What is a Pop-up event?

Virtual Pop-Up events are focused mini-conferences and another way for Children's Healthcare Canada to bring relevant content to our members in areas of strategic priority. These events are characterized by a focus on a specific area of child and youth health that fits within our identified priorities. They present an opportunity for members to share research, new/promising programs and services, convene thought leaders to identify and prioritize health system issues, identify gaps in research or services, and build national relationships and network with colleagues across the country.

## Shared Humanity

First up on the agenda, Dr. Javeed Sukhera, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at London Health Sciences Centre spoke of Re-humanizing Transitions in Care, focusing on the concept of shared humanity. He posits that Shared Humanity is foundational to our work with transitional aged youth, stating that our ability to be human (and a bit vulnerable), to be honest and authentic, to share and connect will make the biggest impact in our care, healing and relationships. Referencing the Shared Humanity Framework, a model co-designed with youth to help re-humanize transitions in healthcare, Dr. Sukhera described the model's three central pillars: sharing trust, sharing power, and sharing humanity.



"Every look we give, every word we say matters." - Dr. Javeed Sukhera

## If I Knew Then

A moderated youth panel reflected on the experiences of four young people as they transitioned to adult services. The main take-aways from this thought-provoking panel suggest the importance of peer mentorship and becoming one's own champion in successful transitions. The panel reminded us that youth with disabilities have the same wants and needs, concerns and responsibilities as other youth. The supports they need to successfully transition and LIVE LIFE extend beyond healthcare to housing, education, and entry into the workforce.

"Allow us to live a life! Moving out, housing, getting a job, starting a relationship. Transition is so much more than continuity of care." - Alex Carey





Sue Robins and her son, Aaron Waddingham, shared their experiences with transition and reminded us all that transition is really about growing up and peer support matters.

If I had a magic wand, I wish our system didn't need a navigator... I need connection with other families who've been through it. - Sue Robins

## COVID-19, the great equalizer

Maayan Ziv, Founder & CEO, AccessNow, opened Day two with the acknowledgement that COVID has enabled others to peek into life as many with disabilities often experience it. As a result, we now have an opportunity to see people for people. If honed correctly, this shift in perspective can lead to a culture shift in what has historically divided people as those with and without disabilities. Rather than focusing on "fixing the person", Maayan urged us to think instead about changing the environment for people with disabilities or any other health condition to make a difference in the lives of youth as they transition to adulthood.

"The people who've had an impact on me were those who saw me for me, as opposed to a medical diagnosis." - Maayan Ziv

Self-love, confidence and advocacy skills are important to foster from an early age among young people with disabilities. Maayan, reflecting on the time when her mom (somewhat reluctantly) allowed her to take the subway without her for the first time, reminded us to provide youth with opportunities to be in the driver's seat as they take charge of their own healthcare and parents to let our kids take risks; and then cry in the car where they cannot see you.

"People with disabilities are also growing up. If they are not given the right leaders, right mentors, and right support systems, they grow up feeling less." - Maayan Ziv



## Transitions from a systems perspective

Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos, Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, reported on the findings of the Systems Collaboration for Transitioning Youth study that aimed to identify 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. Throughout the study, Dr. Dimitropoulos and her team consistently heard of the importance of active, meaningful engagement of youth in their care and of having a navigator for services with youth transitioning in care.



Young people told us “Meet me where I’m at rather than making me fit a mold”. - Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos

## Join the Transitions Hub

The Transition Hub, through three workshops, leveraged the event to develop priorities and a workplan for the next 12 months. These priorities include: engaging adult providers to bridge gaps with the adult system; building new and strengthening existing partnerships with other sectors and ministries, and identifying and addressing major structural barriers to effective care transitions. Dr. Gorter extended an invitation to those in attendance to join the Transitions Health Hub. Immediately following the pop-up event, the health hub saw a 26% increase in membership. If you have not already done so, join the hub today by clicking on the link below:

[Join Today!](#)

