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DEVELOPMENTAL TRAJECTORIES OF YOUTH WHO
HAVE CONTACT WITH MULTIPLE SYSTEMS:

EXAMPLES AND EXPLANATION FROM THE UNITED STATES (U.S.)



Overview

- In the U.S., multi-system youth are in child welfare and juvenile justice systems, youth involved in multiple systems of care are also relevant in many other countries
- In the U.S., the overall mental health and well-being of these youth are a concern, given challenges faced
- In the U.S., when comparing youth who have contact with multiple systems to those only involved in one system, “multi-system youth” face greater challenges and have higher rates of involvement in the criminal justice system



Sources: Thomas, 2016; Trejos-Castillo & Noriega, 2020; Vidal, et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020

Development and Well-being of Youth who have Contact with Multiple Systems

Several factors are important to trajectories (i.e., the life path) of youth involved in foster care, juvenile justice and other systems of care.

Generally, youth who experience multiple systems, experience challenges and instability, which can change the direction of their lives

Critical: Seek insight into experiences of youth who have contact with multiple systems with a focus on mental health and ability to develop attachments and relationships with others



Data with youth who have contact with multiple systems in the U.S.

- Data collection with youth experiencing multiple systems of care can be challenging
- Challenges = An incomplete picture and window into these youths' experiences and this can have bearing on our ability to fully support them
- Complexity of the situation
 - Placement length of stay
 - Relocation within and across states (in the U.S.)
 - entering or reentering care services
- Challenges and information may directly and/or indirectly connect to the outcomes of multi-system youth such as their placement in foster families, adoption agencies, schools, courts, mental and behavioral health supports



Reflection Questions

If you are working in the U.S.

- How are the challenges that multi-system youth encounter relevant to your organization? How can an understanding of these issues relate to better service and support for these youth?

If you live in a country outside the U.S.

- Who are the children and adolescents in your home country that have contact with multiple systems of care and what is your view of what some of their challenges and needs maybe?

References & Recommended Further Reading

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CREDITS

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