

Promising New Approach for Challenging Behaviors

More than 300 youth ages 18 to 25 years receive **Young Adult Services (YAS)** from private, nonprofit and DMHAS operated care providers in 7 areas of the state. They are young people who are seriously challenged by emotional and behavioral problems that limit their ability to succeed in life and live in the community. The **Positive Behavioral Support planning (PBS)** approach is now used for youth with the most serious behavior problems that put them at risk for injuring themselves or others, or that will lead to negative relationships, stigma, or hospitalization. The **DMHAS Young Adult Services** unit has shown promising results in reducing problem behaviors while improving the quality of life for young adults through **Positive Behavioral Support** planning.

How are Positive Behavior Support plans different?



- PBS puts the young adult first—he or she is an active participant.
- A core team of staff, family, and others work to understand the unique meaning of the problem behaviors.
- PBS changes the person’s environment, teaches new skills, and rewards behaviors that improve the youth’s life.
- Information is collected to show the young adult and the team their successes in making positive changes.
- Changes to the PBS are made as the needs and desires of the young person change.
- PBS plans use only positive reinforcement (rewards). Punishment is not used as a strategy for change.

Positive Behavior Support Planning Works

One young adult had spent more than 7 consecutive months in a psychiatric hospital before his PBS plan was implemented. Since discharge to the YAS program more than 19 months ago, he has shown significant improvement in several areas:

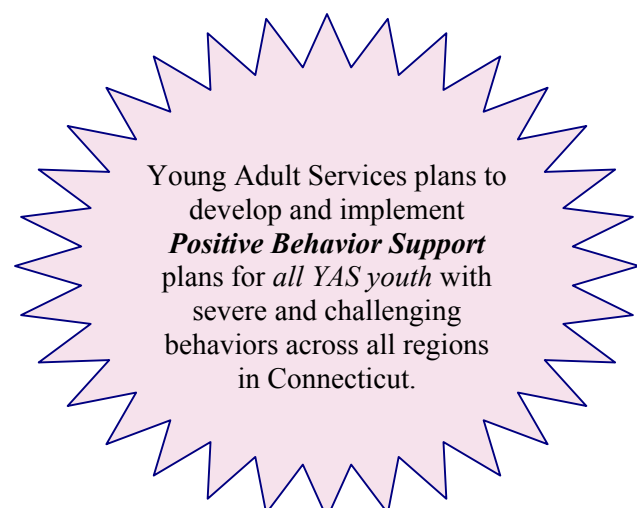
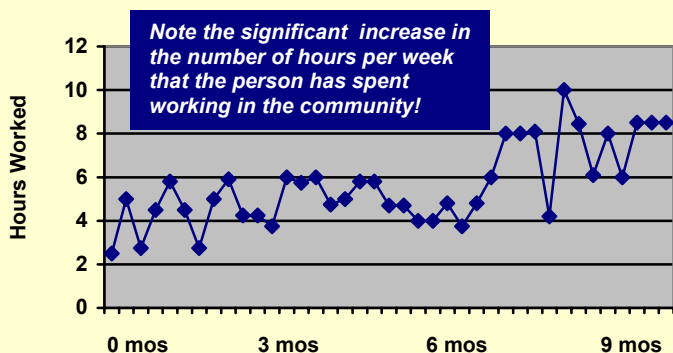


- zero days of inpatient treatment



- decrease in the amount and severity of “alarming statements” (*statements that imply risk of physical harm, or behavior that could cause arrest, or risk of unsafe behavior*)

The young adult is living on his own in the community with minimal staff support, has been working, and has a much improved relationship with his family and “core team” of staff.



For more information on YAS’ **Positive Behavioral Support Planning (PBS)**, please contact Nikki Richer at 860-418-6631.