Student Voices Webinar

September 17, 2015
Introductions & Welcome

Student Voices Project /Research Team

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  Director of Learning Differences Programme, Oak Foundation
• Sheldon Horowitz, EdD, Director, LD Resources, NCLD
• Marshall Raskind, PhD, Educational Researcher
• Erica Anthony, Research/Marketing Consultant
The Importance of Student Voices

- The purpose of this study was to:
  - **Listen carefully** to young adults about their experiences
  - Show what factors contribute to successful **transition outcomes** for young adults with learning and attention issues (LAI)
  - **Identify opportunities** to help them experience greater success and satisfaction in their lives.
- The results speak to a large audience of young adults – including those **not** formally identified with LAI.
- The implications should impact the way that we—parents, educators, employers, policy makers, organizations—provide support and services to young adults
Knowledge Gained Will Impact . . .

• The ways that **schools provide instruction and support services** for teens as they transition to and from high school
• The development and growth of **mentoring and internship opportunities**
• **Teacher education and professional** development across the helping professions
• The development and implementation of **K-12 policies**
• Ways for parents, educators and others to directly engage and support teens and young adults
• **How the public views** young adults with LAI
• The ways that **organizations** can share resources and partner to increase impact
Study Design
Project Process Overview

Student Board Identification
- Ensure the research is YA focused, driven by and guided by insights from young adults
- Board had check points throughout the research to ensure they were active advisers throughout the project

Qualitative Research
- One-on-one interviews in 2 cities (Paramus, NJ & Denver, CO)
- Sharing of results

Incorporate Qualitative and Expert Learning into Quantitative Questionnaire
- Incorporating: Multiple qualitative learning presentations, Student Board Input, Team/Expert hypothesis generation, existing research in the field

Quantitative, National Study
- Deep dive into learning with core team members, field experts, research partners
- Multiple statistical analyses used
Surveyed 1,200 young adults who graduated from public school in the last two years

Who
- 1,221 young adults surveyed
  - 1-2 years out of public high school
  - Ages 15-25 (the majority were 18-21)
  - Sample demographics were reflective of the LAI young adult community

How
- Survey conducted online in English
  - *Read Speak* survey option provided; 19% opted in

When
- Survey administered between August 15, 2014 and September 8, 2014
The survey included young adults with both identified and unidentified learning and attention issues.

**Survey Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N=1,221</th>
<th>N=816</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without LAI</td>
<td>405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With LAI*</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified (816)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not identified (457)</td>
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**Definition**

- ‘**Identified**’ young adults with ‘LAI’ self-report having been evaluated and received a formal LAI diagnosis before the survey.

- ‘**Not identified**’ young adults were never evaluated or never received a formal LAI diagnosis but reported struggling with at least one LAI issue.
The survey asked 50 questions about participants’ high school experience.

**Family and Community**
- Family’s availability and willingness to help
- Help and support in transition from high school to post-high school job or college
- Mentorship and every day assistance and encouragement
- Participation in activities and hobbies
- Ease in key areas of life

**Education**
- Experiences in and out of the classroom
- Grades and test scores

**Attitudes**
- Self-esteem and assertiveness in the classroom setting and in social situations
- The overall mindset while a student in high school

**Employment and Life Outcomes**
- Employment status
The survey also asked **50 questions about participants’ post-high school experience**

**Family and Community**
- Family’s availability and willingness to help
- Openness to LAI services
- Help and support on a daily basis
- Familiarity with online platforms
- Participation in activities and hobbies
- Ease in key areas of life

**Education**
- Experiences in and out of the classroom
- Post-high school education
- Grades and test scores

**Attitudes**
- Current stress levels and coping techniques with LAI since HS
- Self-esteem and assertiveness in the classroom setting and in social situations
- Confidence in current responsibilities
- Overall mindset

**Employment and Life Outcomes**
- Employment status
- Living situation
- Financial and non-financial responsibilities
The Learning
Transition Outcome Analysis: Segmenting the YA Community

Post High School behavioral/situational and attitudinal data were entered into the Segmentation Analysis
Overview of YA Post-HS Outcome Continuum

Young Adults are primarily segmented on their attitudinal mindsets/feelings about themselves in their POST High School lives, ranging from STRUGGLERS to NAVIGATORS.

- STRUGGLERS
  - Very low self confidence
  - Unwilling decision-makers
  - Poor self advocates
  - Feel unsupported by family and community
  - Have received negative messages
  - Socially isolated and inept

- COPERS

- NAVIGATORS
  - Well adapted and self confident
  - Self advocates
  - Decisive
  - Feel supported by family and community
  - Effective at navigating relationships

Young Adult Post High School Outcome Continuum
Overview of LAI YA Post-HS Outcome Continuum

The three major subgroups of strugglers, copers and navigators are each sizeable. YAs who fall into each of the groups have different needs and will need different approaches to transition support.
LAI/No LAI Presence Across The Outcome Continuum

There are LAI and Non-LAI Young Adults in every group along the POST High School Transition Outcome continuum, although LAIs do have a stronger presence among strugglers.
Identified/Unknown LAI Presence Across The Outcome Continuum

There is much more to the LAI Young Adult journey than whether or not he/she has been identified or is receiving services.
82% of why a young adult is a “navigator,” “coper,” or “struggler” after high school is primarily driven by three factors:

1. A supportive home life
2. Connection to friends and community
3. Self-confidence
Young Adult Experiences that lead to these drivers:

**Supportive home life**
- My parents always made me feel that I would be successful
- I had at least one parent/adult who was able to help me with my learning or attention issues
- I had at least one parent/adult who understood my difficulties with my learning or attention issues
- Relative ease with family issues
- I liked spending time with family

**Connection to friends and community**
- I felt I belonged to my school community
- I was self-confident
- Relative ease with social issues
- I was comfortable taking the first step in making new friends
- I made friends easily
- When it came to my social life, I didn’t give up even when things were hard or got in my way

**Self-confidence**
- I was comfortable taking the first step in making new friends
- Relative ease with social issues
- I felt I belonged to my community
- I made friends easily
- I tended to see the positives in situations
- Comfortable speaking up in class
- I felt I belonged to my school community
Other factors are strongly associated with young adults’ success: IEP timing and input (1 of 2)

Young adults who receive IEPs **early** (i.e. in elementary and middle school) are more likely to “thrive”

Young adults with LAI who have IEPs early **and have input** on them are also more likely to “thrive”

* Strongly associated with positive transition outcome, but not a driver of them*
Other factors are strongly associated with young adults’ success: mentoring, teacher support and others (2 of 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have mentor in HS</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher support</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher understands my needs</td>
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<td>Teacher makes sure I understand things</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Help in academics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get help in academics</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Having key conversations</th>
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<td>Career</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<th>Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sports/martial arts</td>
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<td>Outdoor activities</td>
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<td>Group activities (Clubs, groups, Boy/Girl Scouts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Movies, etc., w/ friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hang with friends</td>
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* Strongly associated with positive transition outcome, but not a driver of them*
The Role of Parents

Prior learning from work done to understand the parents of children with LAI was used in this current work to allow an overlay that examines the relationship of self-perceived parental “success” in coping with a child’s LAI to YA transition outcome.

- Daunted by all LAI* challenges
  - Does not enjoy parenting,
  - Shares childcare with spouse but feels alone, depressed
- Overwhelmed, stressed by child’s LAI* issues, school, family pressures

Strugglers (35%)

Conflicted (31%)

Optimistic (34%)

- Successfully manages all LAI* challenges
  - Enjoys parenting, Shares childcare with spouse
  - Friendly, outgoing
- Optimistic view of child’s LAI* issues, Positive relations with school, community, family

- Success Dealing with LAI Challenges
  - LAI Impact on Child

* Learning and/or attention issues
Source: 2012 Parent Project
The Relationship Between Parent Success*/YA Transition Outcomes

There is a clear relationship between parental ability to cope with a child’s LAI and the transition outcome of that child.

* Self perceived success
Note: Only LAI Young Adults/Parent Pairs interviewed in this research.
Implications

Parents
Educators
Funders & Program Providers
Implications for Parents

• Help your child to believe in themselves, to develop confidence and not to give up when confronted with challenges.

• Encourage your child to participate in activities that build and reinforce a sense of belonging.

• Help your child understand the nature of their LAI and become an effective self-advocate.

• Be an active partner with school personnel.

• Be on constant alert for negative messaging, and take action when it occurs.

• Connect with other parents—there is power in community.
Implications for Educators

- Recognize the characteristics of each group ("strugglers," "copers," "navigators") to plan and implement interventions and supports

- Look beyond IEPs and 504 plans to understand who the young people are and what they need to succeed

- Ensure that all students with LAI are provided with opportunities to develop and enhance social-emotional competencies

- Identify and address the needs of all students who struggle with LAI—before they experience frustration and failure
Implications for Funders

- Students with LAI represent **20% of the public school population.** The **opportunities** for supporting these students are significant, as are the **risks** of ignoring them.
- Funding should support **all teachers in general education settings**—where students with LAI are primarily educated.
- Special education research and evidence-based practices must be **shared across all educational settings**.
- Helping students to become **confident and effective self-advocates** is a key to
  - Success in **school** for all students with LAI
  - Successful **postsecondary transition.**
Implications for Program Providers

Understanding the characteristics of young adults with LAI should inform activities in:

- Public policy development and advocacy
- Juvenile justice
- Young adult leadership development
- Mentoring
- Workplace policies and culture
- Public awareness
- Transition and support services in higher education and
- Teacher preparation
Recommendations

• Build in access to tools such as Understood.org to:
  • Help build parental/caretaker knowledge about LAI
  • Foster confidence in supporting their child
  • Promote feelings of optimism about their child’s journey through school and beyond.

• Help students with LAI to:
  • Become more engaged in their school and general communities
  • Develop strong relationships with peers
The Poses Family Foundation

Next Steps
Next Steps

• **Share the Student Voices findings** with colleagues, friends and young adults with LAI

• **Engage organizational allies** to use the Student Voices research in their programs

• **Dive into the data and ask new questions**, make changes in our thinking and practices that reflect what young adults have told us about what mattered most to them during this time in their lives

• Contact NCLD at [studentvoices@ncld.org](mailto:studentvoices@ncld.org) with comments, questions and suggestions