

Title: A meaningful future: how do client outcomes inform mental health policy for young people.

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Mental health problems can affect all aspects of a young person's growth and development and can also undermine their ability to complete education and meet the normal developmental milestones through adolescence and early adulthood. Appropriate services and support can help to ameliorate these impacts.

Psychosocial support for children and adolescents has never been expansive, instead the focus has been short term clinical (eg. headspace) or intensive clinical (e.g. CAMHS and CYMHS).

However, young people are desirous of supports that help them get on with their lives, including vocational engagement, staying connected to friends and supportive housing options beyond symptom focused clinical care.

At Mind Australia Youth residential sub-acute services, clients showed a highly significant reduction in psychological distress ($p < .001$) with a substantial effect size of 0.58 (Cohen's d). Young people are more distressed on entry compared to clients at Adult sub-acute services and show less reduction in distress than adults. A virtual version of this program, implemented at the height of the pandemic, showed similar reductions in distress, improved coping and capacity to work on personal goals.

Longer term residential rehabilitation supports showed substantial improvement in confidence, inclusion and empowerment. Ninety percent felt they had independent living skills at exit compared to 30% at entry; 67% reporting a sense of belonging at exit compared to 40% at entry; and 100% feeling they had the ability to achieve things that are important for them at exit compared to 40% at entry.

These outcomes as well as analysis of qualitative data from young people using our services suggests that young people are keen for services that support their wellbeing across a range of dimensions and that more resources should be focussed on these approaches.

Key Learnings

1. How can psychosocial support assist young people with mental health concerns?
2. What outcomes can be achieved with psychosocial supports for young people?
3. What are the policy and practice implications for the field given current funding options and the latest effectiveness evidence?