Addressing Self-Determination in Transitions
Transitions Booster, Sept 2021

Andrew Schlegelmilch, Ph.D.

Elements of Presentation

• Present three case studies
• Discuss clinical features
• Review case studies
• Influence of Pandemic
Carl

• College Freshman, online
• Dropped some classes, still failing one
• Avoiding asking for help
• Comfortable, but low mood
• Taking spring semester off?
• Grinding to a halt

Rebecca

• Pandemic high school graduate
• Delay college entry, part time job/volunteer
• Unprepared for job search process
• Videos all day
Roy

• Vocational track
• Disability support services
• Compliant, cheerful, self-contained
• Major service disruption
• Low maintenance, but low progress

Self-determination

• Low drive
• Is it laziness?
• Social rewards
• Skills deficits
(Social) Rewards and Incentives

• Examining the nature of rewards
• Influence of resource and status
• Materialism and simplicity
• Enjoyment over status
• Not laziness

Skills Deficits

• Much adult activity is planned or routine
• Heavy dependence on EF and organizational skills
• Paying specialists for specialized, important tasks
• Goal setting
• Complicated, tedious tasks
Feebleness

- Lack of exposure to stress
- Avoidance of effort, risk, or experience
- Emotional and social atrophy
- Additional obstacle in the goal of forward progress

Carl (recap)

- College Freshman, online
- Dropped some classes, still failing one
- Avoiding asking for help
- Comfortable, but low mood
- Taking spring semester off?
- Grinding to a halt
What’s Happening Carl?

• Depression (needs a professional evaluation)
• Address EF deficit
• Problems with reducing expectations
• Exercise, socialize, screen time reduction
• Semester “off” only with something to take its place

Rebecca (recap)

• Pandemic high school graduate
• Delay college entry, part time job/volunteer
• Unprepared for job search process
• Videos all day
What’s New Rebecca?

• Loss of superstructure of academic institution (i.e., high school)
• Needs a job immediately
• Needs planning/organizing/social support
• Examine incentives
• Don’t have to go home, but can’t stay here...
• Use positive and negative reinforcement to physically leave the house

Roy (recap)

• Vocational track
• Disability support services
• Compliant, cheerful, self-contained
• Major service disruption
• Low maintenance, but low progress
What’s Up Roy?

- Too easily satisfied (hardest parenting challenge)
- Needs a job, and a skilled case worker
- Clear, specific directions with follow through
- Great risk for feebleness even without pandemic
- Perpetual independent living goal

Transition

- Transitions are hard
  - Skills Deficits
  - Incentives
  - Feebleness
  - Question laziness theory
- Ask good questions/gather info
- Learn to transition