

Integrated transition planning is a path to living a full, meaningful, and connected life as a community member. It means planning for what will change as your child becomes an adult. Every child is different, so every idea might not be right for your family. This fact sheet will help you start planning for your child's transition to adulthood as a youth with mental health challenges.

Did You Know? Many mental health conditions like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression may not be diagnosed until a person is in their late teens or twenties. These conditions make the time of transition, ages 18 to 21, more complex as your child's needs might not be fully understood.



The **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **988** or visit [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).

TWO PATHS TO SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

Path 1: Your child's **primary diagnosis** is an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD), like autism or Down syndrome, **with co-occurring** mental health needs, like anxiety or depression. In this case your child's transition services likely will include the following:

- If your child is 17 ½ or older, connect with your county's Aging and Disability Resource Center ([ADRC](#)) to request an eligibility determination for adult long-term support like Family Care or IRIS.
- Apply, or re-apply, for Supplemental Security Income ([SSI](#)). Even if your child didn't qualify, they might be eligible as an adult. SSI only looks at the child's income starting at age 18.
- Talk with your child's doctor and medical specialists about transitioning to adult providers. Your [CYSHCN Regional Center](#), CLTS service coordinator, Family Care Managed Care Organization or IRIS consultant can help find providers. Look for providers who:
 - Are **in network** with your child's health insurance.
 - Have experience working with adults who have IDD and also mental health needs.

Path 2: Your child's **diagnosis is solely mental health-related** their path will look different. You'll find that services may vary depending on the county where your child lives. Here are some steps to follow:

- Contact your county's Human Services Department to learn about county-based, adult mental health programs and resources.
- Apply, or reapply, for [SSI](#). Understand that denials are common and you can [appeal the decision](#).
- Talk with your child's mental health providers about transitioning to adult providers. Adult programs and services may be available for your child starting at age 18 or 21.



Learn more on the Family Voices website's [Resource Library](#).





COMMUNITY SUPPORTS FOR YOUTH

Children's Long-Term Support Program (CLTS)

Young adults with IDD typically transition from CLTS and move into Family Care or IRIS at age 18. But young adults with mental health diagnoses may not qualify for Family Care or IRIS. If this is the case for your child, consider staying enrolled in the CLTS waiver program until age 21.

Intensive Mental Health Programs

For young adults living with serious mental health challenges, intensive community-based programs offer a wide array of supports. These include **Comprehensive Community Services (CCS)** and **Community Support Programs (CSP)**. These programs offer care coordination, medication management, employment, therapy, family education and other services. If your child is currently enrolled in a county mental health program, they may be able to continue services or transition to one of your county's adult programs.

- Be aware that these programs are available in **most**, but not all counties in Wisconsin. Contact your [county human services department](#) to learn more.

Tip for Families



Teens will need to decide if, and when, they tell others about their mental health diagnosis. Your child may feel most comfortable keeping it to themselves, but this means that they might not receive the support they need to stay healthy. Talk with your child about how, when and to whom they choose to disclose their diagnosis.



PLAN FOR EVERY PIECE OF TRANSITION

This section applies to all youth with mental health needs—with or without IDD.

Start

Your child's school IEP team can offer support to plan for college, other post-secondary options, and employment. Your child's primary care provider can offer support to plan for health and wellness.

- **Education**
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) supports will end when a child leaves high school. Post-secondary programs aren't required to provide support for those with mental health needs. However, many colleges and universities have **Disabled Student Programs and Services** or other campus-based mental health services.
- **Employment**
Families and school IEP teams can request a referral to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation ([DVR](#)). DVR offers supports to prepare youth to work in their community. See the WITPP Employment fact sheet.
- **Health and Wellness**
Encourage your child to work closely with their primary care provider to make sure they have what they need to stay healthy. Also, if your child takes medications, be sure they understands the importance of taking them on time, refilling them and not mixing them with other drugs or alcohol.

Tip for Families



Support groups let you connect with others who understand the challenges your family is facing. To find a group visit namiwisconsin.org/being-together.