

How to Adjust Powerfully to Young Adulthood and Independent Living

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Your Experience of Galactosemia

- How has having Galactosemia impacted you?
- What have been the benefits?
- What have been your biggest struggles?
- Group Process

The Cognitive Meaning

- All events in our lives are given a personal and independent “cognitive meaning” which impacts us greatly in how we deal with something.
- Exploration of individual’s cognitive meaning of having Galactosemia.
 - What did you make it mean?
 - Group Process: What are some powerful cognitive meanings for having Galactosemia?

Entering Adulthood

- What is the most exciting part for you about this time in your life?
- What are some possible fears you each might have about this time?
- What are common adult responsibilities each of you are now taking on?
- Group Process: Common worries and struggles and how each participant is handling them.

Independent Living

- Group Brainstorm: What specific skills are required for independent living?
 - Responsible food preparation
 - Maintaining a regular sleep cycle
 - Facing increased peer pressure
 - Maintaining own living space (laundry, etc).
 - Skills that are necessary for dealing specifically with Galactosemia as a young adult.

Feelings that are Common During Young Adulthood

- Joy and excitement
- Worry and feeling overwhelmed
- Recklessness as you have greater independence
- Self-doubt
- Decrease in self-esteem as you deal with the new world of independence.

Understanding and Recognizing Signs of Specific Feelings: Anxiety

- Anxiety:
 - Physical symptoms: lots of worry, changes in appetite, restlessness, low energy, not being productive, racing heart, changes in sleep (either too much or too little).
 - Socially, may be more withdrawn from friends or find yourself avoiding what you need to get done. May be more easily irritated.
 - You may feel shut down, powerless and overwhelmed
 - Understanding when you need to ask for help
 - Group process: Explore when you have felt feelings of anxiety and how it shows up for you individually.

Understanding and Recognizing How You Feel when you are Anxious

- Make a list here of how you feel when you are anxious:
 - E.g., my palms sweat

Make a list of people you could talk to if you feel this way.

How I will know if I need to talk to someone: (e.g., I haven't been going to class, etc..)

Understanding and Recognizing Signs of Depression

- Depression:
 - Physical Symptoms: Sadness, irritability, low self-esteem, changes in appetite (either dramatic increase or dramatic decrease), changes in sleep (again, either needing too much or unable to fall asleep).
 - You may find yourself avoiding friends or responsibilities.
 - You may feel helpless, hopeless, and like you cannot make it.
 - Understanding the difference between Depression vs. Sadness and when you may need to ask for help
 - Group Process: Explore a time you might have felt down and what that looked like in your life (note: each person will deal with depression, sadness differently).

Understanding and Recognizing Your Signs of Depression

- Make a list here of how your body feels when you are sad or depressed.
- Make a list of people you could talk to if you are feeling this way.
- Write how you will know if you need to talk to someone about this (e.g., I haven't slept well for several days).

Understanding and Recognizing Signs of Overwhelm or being Shut Down

- Many young adults feel overwhelmed by all the additional responsibilities and instead of reaching out for help they simply retreat and shut down.
- Because young adults have less contact with parents or concerned friends it is easy for them to “pretend” that all is well.
- Group Process: Explore times you have felt overwhelmed or shut down. How did you deal with it?
- Write what you will do if you feel overwhelmed or shut down.

How to Deal with this Tough but Exciting Transition

- Know that all young adults feel overwhelmed and scared. It is normal and natural.
- Do not be afraid to let your parents, Resident Assistant (RA) or supportive friend know if you are struggling.
- Have a list of things you can do that makes you feel better when you are feeling scared or sad or overwhelmed.

My list of things I can do to make myself feel better

- Make a list here of things you can do to make yourself feel better when you are feeling down.

- Listen to music
- Talk to best friend
- _____
- _____
- _____

Establishing a Support System

Establish a support group before you leave home of people you can trust and turn to at your new location.

- Check in with them regularly and be a support for them as well as they cope and adjust.
- All colleges will have Counseling Centers that are either free or charge a minimal fee. Having someone you can check in with on a regular basis is always helpful.
- Have your parents help you get this set before you move out so that you are in contact with someone who can always help you.

Other Important things that help Young Adults Cope

- Exercising on a regular basis helps tremendously.
- Having a structured schedule where you know what is expected each day.
- Getting good sleep on a consistent basis.
- Eating healthy and nutritious food.
- Getting help as soon as you feel you might need it instead of waiting until you are completely overwhelmed.

And Finally....

- Know that you are going to be fine.
- It is a rough adjustment for everyone.
- You might even be ahead of the game with all the skills you have had to learn in dealing with Galactosemia.
- Know that there are always people there to help and reaching out is a sign of maturity, not weakness.
- Good luck!