Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
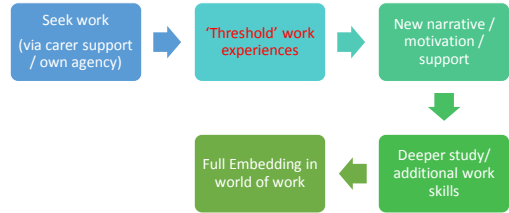The University of Dublin

Becoming Established in the World of Work   - an Important Potential Source of Resilience for Young People Transitioning from Care

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Pathways to Resilience IV, Cape Town
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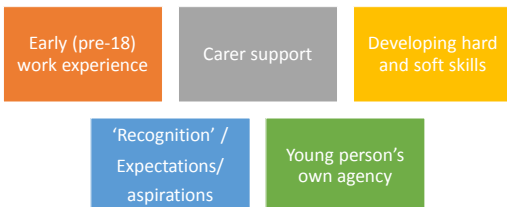

Young Person's Care to Work Pathway

Seek work (via carer support / own agency) → 'Threshold' work experiences → New narrative / motivation / support → Deeper study/ additional work skills → Full Embedding in world of work

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Relevant Forms of Work

Volunteering | Work experience | Internships
Self employment | Part/full-time job

Key 'Threshold' (Entry) Experiences for Work
– examples from international Research
(source of work record and references)

Volunteering
• Morrison, 2016

Internships etc
• Tanur, 2012
• Laub and Sampson, 2009

Part-time work
• Arnau & Gilligan, 2016

Influences on progress on the care to work pathway

Early (pre-18) work experience | Carer support | Developing hard and soft skills
'Recognition' / Expectations/ aspirations | Young person's own agency

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Hobbies as potential gateways to work
(Gilligan, 2008)

Hobbies
- Dance as hobby to dancing professionally
- Helping in stable to being a jockey
- Playing sport to working in sport

Value of Volunteering
(soft skills)

- Care leaver (now social worker) reflecting on influences on care to work pathway

- *'During my A-levels, I began volunteering.…………… The benefits of volunteering included learning to be part of a team, meeting new people and developing communication (verbal and listening) skills and interpersonal skills…………………. [also] time-management skills'* (Morrison, 2016)

South African young person from care
on value of his internship experience – from Tanur (2012)

'What I enjoy the most is the people that I work with and the friendships that they have for me.

I have learnt to cook and to make a lot of stuff.

I have learnt that I can stand up for myself.

I can be with people that I am not used to being with as equals and I can make friendships with them……….

…….The internship has given me more confidence and it has helped me to look after myself and my family……..

Value of Part-time / Summer Work
(New Identity)

- "*Work gave me independence or my own autonomy like to think that like oh right I can … I've a job like and I'm a responsible young adult and not just a little boy that's in foster care like, do you know. And I think having work gives you the opportunity to shine and be your own person and I think people in work gave me an opportunity to be like that.*" (Case 10, Ireland) (Arnau and Gilligan, 2016).

Carer Support –
Sharing Hard and Soft Work Skills

- "*Em, well, say my foster mum, Sinead, she would, she worked, she was a, a secretary, so she worked in an office. So, like, I used to go in and do work experience say for, with school and stuff, em, to her office. So, like that, it would be, computers like she showed me kind of everything to do with computers. Em, all like basic office stuff, like binding, eh, filing and it did, it all stood to me* (Case 6, Ireland) (Gilligan and Arnau, 2017)

'Work Capital'
(Arnau and Gilligan, 2015)

- Work experience builds work capital:

- Familiarity with world of work
- Work record
- References
- Hard skills
- Soft skills
- Motivation / confidence
- 'Recognition' as competent 'worker'

How work opens up 'narrative of potential'
for young person in care

Building skills	• Develops hard and soft skills • Renews commitment to training / education
Social capital	• Offers valuable new connections (friendships etc) • Possible opportunities for being mentored within workplace
New identity	• Widens expectations / aspirations • 'Recognition' (Thomas et al., 2016)

From 'Narrative of Failure' to 'Narrative of Potential' (Gilligan, 2015)

Work 'feeds' narrative of potential/ resilience

Positive work experience

Disrupts narrative of failure

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