Abstract

The current study is an examination of the transition process for transitional aged youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities since the implementation of the Tri-Ministry Integrated Transition Protocol (2013) from the perspectives of professionals working in the field of developmental disabilities in the Niagara Region.  Questionnaires, focus groups, and individual interviews were completed with professionals who work with transitional aged youth in the Niagara Region, and were used to gain a deeper understanding of how youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities participate in the decisions affecting their futures during the transition period. Further, the study also examined how youth could be better included in their transition plans, if they are not currently active participants. Although previous research has noted that youth are not active participants in their transition planning process, the current transition policy in Niagara, as reflected in the *Tri-Ministry 2013-2014 Implementation Guide* and the *Transition Planning Protocol and Procedures for Young People with Developmental Disabilities - Hamilton Niagara Regional Protocol,* acknowledges the importance of providing youth with opportunities to participate. It is therefore the goal of this study to uncover if this mandated strategy of including youth is being met. A thematic analysis will be used to examine the perceptions of participants.  Based on a preliminary analysis, it is hypothesized that, despite current policy, we continue to plan for, rather than with youths, and that evidence-based strategies must be developed to ensure that the goals of youth are being heard, respected, and achieved.