

Transition Readiness Scale (TRS) by ILR, Inc.



WHAT IS THE TRS?

The TRS is a tool created by young adults for young adults to help them recognize where they are on the road to a safe transition to a happy, healthy and successful adulthood. It facilitates self-assessment in 13 important transition areas, and is structured to motivate young adults to progress on the scales across time. It can also help guide professionals working with the young adults to assist them with the transition.

WHY WAS IT CREATED?

The TRS was created in response to two common questions:

1) *Why isn't there a tool that speaks to me, to what I need to do, and how I can get there?*

Young adults most often are asked to use assessment scales that were primarily developed by adult professionals using formal adult language. These assessments are often conducted solely to complete a requirement and provide limited motivation for young adults to “get going” on their plans. Preliminary testing indicates that the TRS generates useful data, the goal plans created by the young adults are efficient and “look like their lives,” and the process of using the tool instills the initial motivation and insight for young adults to reconsider their transition paths.

2) *How do I know when it's safe to start letting go of the young adults I'm working with?*

Adult professionals have long been concerned that their relationships with youth in transition are either too dependent or, in other cases, not supportive enough. The TRS can help professionals know when young adults are in a “safe” place to make a transition for a particular domain. Knowing a young adult is making progress to a safer status in all areas has the potential to help those relationships become more supportive instead of dependent.

HOW IS IT USED?

ILR hopes the TRS will be used broadly with young adults in transition. The TRS is intended to be administered and driven by young adults. It is recommended that the introduction of the tool be made by one or more young adults who have become familiar with the tool. These young adults can then introduce the TRS to a group of youth in transition, and have these youth respond to each item by circling the number that BEST matches their status at that moment. Young adults enjoy receiving the advice about their self-assessed status that comes from other young adults like them rather than from an older professional. The last page compiles the scores for each area. After completion, it is recommended that the young adult review the advice and goals with a trusted adult, particularly to address how their program(s) and other formal and informal supports can help. Young adults have suggested that it be repeated every six months to monitor and celebrate progress. It takes approximately 20 minutes or less to complete the *first time*, and 10 minutes or less for subsequent ratings.

HOW CAN YOU HELP FURTHER ITS DEVELOPMENT?

If your agency is using the TRS, ILR would be interested in receiving the scores and other status information about the youth adults completing the TRS to help us further evaluate the utility of this instrument. Participant names will not be included, although if you are sending multiple scores over time, creating a unique number ID would be helpful for tracking. The young adult could also contact us directly to report their scores. ILR has created an Excel worksheet that can be used to report youth TRS scores. The completed TRS should be kept by the young adult and/or agency as agreed upon. More details of the development of the TRS are provided on the reverse of this page. For more information, please contact nancy.carter@ilrinc.com or call 800-820-0001.

Transition Readiness Scale - continued

HOW WAS IT INITIALLY DEVELOPED?

Nancy Carter, TRS Project Manager, began meeting with young adults from four counties in NC – two urban (Wake, Durham) and two rural (Orange, and Johnston). The young adults were self-selected and agreed to meet over periods of four to six months (approximately 4 – 5 meetings in each county) with the goal to develop a tool that could help young adults create a useful path as they transitioned to adulthood and also guide professionals to know when young adults can legitimately make that transition. These young adults had either just transitioned from foster care or were in the process of their transition. See Chart 1 below for the demographics of the participants.

Numbers	Gender	Age	Race (self-identified)
N= 33 19 young adult meetings 124 total youth contacts Durham County (8 different youth) Johnston County (5 different youth) Orange County (6 different youth) Wake County (17 different youth)	Male – 11 Female – 23	Age 17 – 1 Age 18 – 2 Age 19 - 5 Age 20 - 8 Age 21 – 6 Age 22 – 3 Age 23 – 2 Age 24 – 3 Age 25 - 1 Age 26 - 2	African American - 14 Bi-Racial – 7 Caucasian – 7 Latino – 4 Native American - 1

The meetings were designed to meet the following five objectives:

1. To identify the AREAS that are most important to young adults to make a healthy, successful transition to adulthood. (Young adults did not want to call them domains.)
2. To define each of the AREAS
3. To create a SCALE connected to each domain
4. To determine where young adults need to be on the SCALE for each AREA to launch towards self-sufficiency.
5. To give young adults and professionals a guide to know when young adults have the best chance for a healthy transition.

The meeting agendas were consistent from county to county. Each meeting included some social icebreaker to help the young adults get acquainted, food, and a small stipend or gift card (value normally about \$10). First meetings included blank flipchart pads and brainstorming the areas young adults believe are needed to make healthy, successful transitions. Subsequent meetings built on the information from the previous meeting and the aggregate information from the other counties. Revisions in all transition areas, definitions, and advice occurred at each meeting as young adults learned how other young people from the other counties thought. Posters with possible revisions were hung around the room so that words could be crossed out for clarification or to “sound” more like young adults speaking.

After the initial scale was developed, each county pilot tested the scale to see how long it took, if the directions were clear for self-administration, and if they liked it. A few adjustments were made to the directions, and the timing was much quicker than everyone initially thought – ranging from 14 – 20 minutes to complete it. Young adults from all the counties were motivated by the scale and the information they gained from the advice.

“You did a great job representing the voice of all of us, the “young people”, in this scale. It’s very easy to understand and it’s clear that our opinions and words are represented here. Thank you!” – Alyssa, age 21