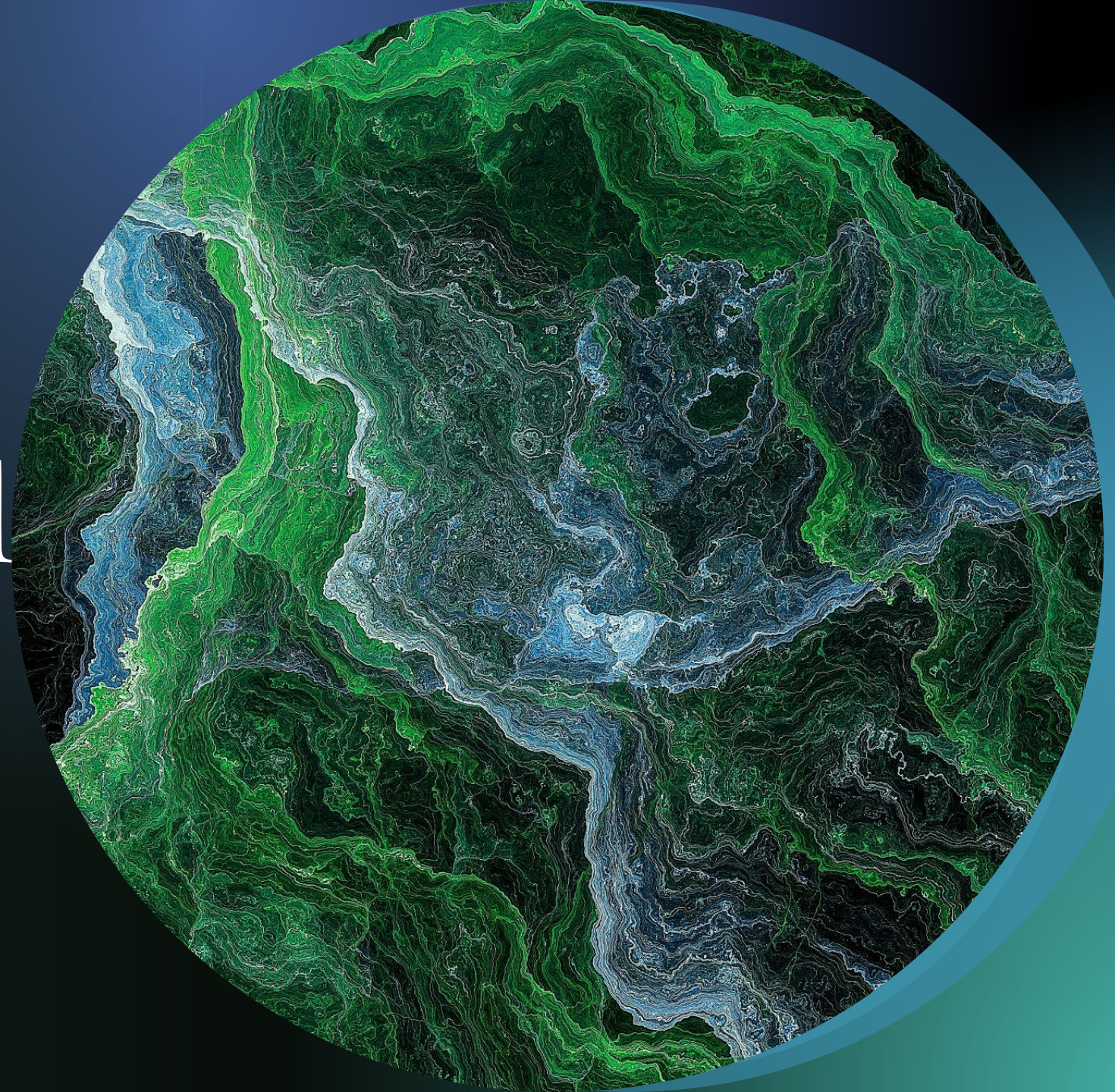


Rising Acuity in Residential Treatment

WHY IS IT HAPPENING AND WHAT DO WE
DO ABOUT IT?



Objectives

- Participants will be able to:
 - State 2 reasons driving the increase in acuity
 - State 2 obstacles or challenges facing residential treatment programs
 - Identify the role of psychosocial assessment in case conceptualization and treatment planning
 - Identify 2 interventions to use in their own programs

What is a “high acuity” youth?

- The Children’s League of Massachusetts defines a “high acuity” youth as “one whose behavioral, mental health, and/or medical management needs are mismatched to the care setting in which they are placed.” (Children’s League of Massachusetts, 2023)
 - Reduced use of residential treatment contributes to:
 - Program censuses including increased numbers of youth with more severe behavioral presentations
 - Youth with more severe behavioral presentations being concentrated in programs

Contributing Factors

- Social & environmental stressors
 - Social media & technology use
 - Academic pressure
 - Family instability & economic stress
 - Exposure to trauma & violence
- Changing availability & nature of pornography
- Pandemic-related impacts
- Societal & cultural shifts
- Biological & genetic factors
- Increased awareness & diagnosis but reduced access to mental health treatment
- Substance use & misuse

Contributing Factors: Family

- Changes in family structure & constellation
 - Rise of single parent households
 - Rise of families w/limited social support
 - Blended families & stepparent dynamics
 - Extended family living arrangements
 - Parental separation &/or divorce
 - Non-traditional family structures
 - LGBTQ+ families
 - Grandparents or older siblings as primary parent figure
 - Co-parenting families
- Increase in toxic family involvement
 - Emotional abuse & neglect
 - Parental mental health issues
 - Substance misuse & disorders
 - Domestic violence & family conflict
 - Over-controlling or distant parenting
 - Inconsistent boundaries & discipline
 - Intergenerational trauma

Roadblocks: how they are the same & how they are different

- Stigma around mental health
- Limited access to mental health services
- Lack of early detection & intervention
- Cultural & socioeconomic barriers
- Lack of family understanding & support
- Systemic barriers in schools
- Technology & digital mental health tools

The world has changed, and
we cannot approach
residential treatment with
the interventions of a world
that no longer exists.

So, now what?



Paradigm Shift

Some Ideas

- Multidisciplinary Team Approach
 - Diverse professionals
 - Youth & families
 - Collaborative communication & shared goals
- Youth-centered approach—holistic & empowerment-based assessment & treatment
 - Comprehensive assessment & treatment planning
 - Multimodal interventions
 - Long-term planning
- Cultural competency: of providers & in planning interventions
- Family & community engagement
- Ongoing monitoring & flexibility
- Ongoing training & professional development, including cross-disciplinary training

Some More Ideas

- Trauma-informed Care
- Restorative Justice
- Individualized therapy
- Family therapy and family involvement
- Skills-building & social skills training
- Group therapy
- Behavioral interventions & positive behavior support
- Medication management
- Education & academic support
- Crisis intervention & safety planning

Ideas



We can, and must,
change the world of
residential treatment!



You have within you the
strength, the patience, and
the passion to reach for
the stars to change the
world.

– Harriet Tubman

