# Transitions Theatre Script: Parent Monologue

1 Jordan's a pretty quiet guy. He’s often in his world, happily I’d say. But boy he loves to have other people around him. Adam and I, we just thought, oh my God there's proof, proof that... As much as we think he'd be just happy in his room watching his DVDs all the time, what he loves most is just meeting people. Like… we are not enough for him. Yeah. He needs more than just, you know, his parents. He needs other people. Other people give him different kinds of things.

2 And he will communicate. He does. If he trusts you, he will write, or he will force you to write, like he’ll hold onto your hand and force you, right? It’s about trust.

So, if I imagine the future…

[Pause]

3 ...We’re very frustrated with the system. The slowness of the system. Applying for adult funding, like, years in advance. And even then, you still wait. Even after you qualify you still have to wait to even see any of the money.

4 There is also this emotional... there's just a barrier that gets that... it's hard, it's really really… as a parent... No matter how engrossed you are in the world and your life, it's really hard for some reason to open that computer and... and start the process of applying to adult funding. Oh, and life gets in the way. The pressure of those immediate things that need to be dealt with. It’s hard to think that the day will come when Jordan will reach 21.

5 And I was like, am I in denial? He will turn 21. He will be dropped from his current things, systems, institutions. We were suddenly told he can’t go anymore. Except it wasn’t sudden ‘cause we’d known it was coming. But it still felt sudden. Because he’s been going there since he was two. And all those people, those people he trusts, they’ll disappear from his life. From our life.

6 And lots of programs, post-21 programs are pay-per-service. Even those are costly and they’re hard to get into because Jordan’s non-verbal, so he needs someone who gets his cues. And, really, medically, people don't know what to do with these 22 year-olds, you know, kids that 25 years ago might not have survived into their early adulthood. So what kind of programs are out there for these kids, for Jordan?

7 There’s almost this kind of ‘warehousing’ that happens. Where people go just to be occupied. To fill time. Where kids might be ‘safe.’ Where people might be kind and lovely, but there’s really... there’s no fire in anybody's eyes – and yes, truly many of these programs are doing the best that they can – but they’re not very aspirational. Where will he go then? How will he contribute to this world? Because he can.

8 If I imagine the future, I imagine a place where Jordan can go, he has a place to go to during the day that if he's having a rough day, somebody can sit down with him and, you know, and be with him... Based on him. We need a beautiful space and fill it with kids and with young people as well as, you know, support people. Not just a place to be safe, a place to just go.

9 A place where my kid’s successes are celebrated – where, if he smiles 5 times in a day, that’s a celebration. He doesn’t have to be an Olympian to be seen as valuable, or to be showcased in a fundraising campaign. He can just be his awesome self. With potential. Interacting with other kids. Delivering attendance. Or whatever. ‘Cause that’s his job, his responsibility, his thing. His medical needs are met, sure, that’s fine. But that’s not the reason for living. That’s not living.

10 This is what we need from our system to move into the future. I don’t need an institution to give me pamphlet, pamphlet, pamphlet.

Sure, he needs us as parents. But when I imagine the future, I imagine a community, a community for living.

**Acknowledgement:**

This script was written by Julia Gray & Yukari Seko based on narrative interviews with seven family members of youth with disabilities (17-22 years old).

# Group Discussion Questions: Youth Script

## Main discussion questions:

1. Which part of the script stood out to you? Which part do you feel is most relevant to your personal or professional life? Why?
2. If you were to support this person, what important perspective does your profession bring to the situation?

1. What do you think is your responsibility as a (role) in supporting this parent in their youth’s transition?
2. What similarities and differences do you notice?
3. Is there anything that surprised you?
4. Have you learned something new about other professions?

## Additional Questions (if time allows):

1. The Parent says: “*We were suddenly told he can’t go anymore. Except it wasn’t sudden ‘cause we’d known it was coming. But it still felt sudden. Because he’s been going there since he was two*.”
   1. What support would you offer to families who share the same feeling as this Parent?
   2. Think of a similar situation where a client/family had shared that they felt like they are standing at the edge of a cliff. What was one thing you did that helped to support the client/family? How could it apply to the transition to adult life?
2. In the script, the Parent says: “*I don’t need an institution to give me pamphlet, pamphlet, pamphlet*.”
   1. Why do you think this was a problem for the Parent?
   2. What are ways you can think of to mitigate this “pamphlet conundrum”? How could we provide helpful information in other ways than providing pamphlets?
3. The Parent says: “*He doesn’t have to be an Olympian to be seen as valuable, or to be showcased in a fundraising campaign. He can just be his awesome self.”*
   1. How would you highlight what families are doing well to support their child?
   2. What difference would that make?