

Angela Diaz: My name is Angela Diaz, and I would like to speak to you today about the need for adolescents and young adults-centered care and how they can be wrong effectively. I want to start by acknowledging that the healthcare system in the U.S. was created by adults for adults. And then we try to fit young people into the system and when it doesn't work we call them non-compliant and hard to reach, when in deed what is hard to reach is the system itself, the way those services are designed.

Angela Diaz: Adolescence and young adulthood are really critical stages where the responsibility for healthy behaviors start shifting from the caregivers to the young people themselves. It is a stage when people are becoming more independent. There is a lot of experimentation and experimentation is not bad. Young people need to experiment and try new things in order to really gain the skills to be able to be independent. And what we need to do as adults, is really creating environment where young people can experiment, try things, learn in an environment where they are not going to get into difficulties. So that's really, really important.

Angela Diaz: And the behavior of young people affect their health status during adolescence and during young adulthood, but also establish their health status over the life course. So if you are not healthy as an adolescent, if you get engaged in behaviors they're not particularly healthy, that is really going to affect your health as an adult. It is really, really important for providers to really encourage young people to engage in healthy behaviors, to modify their behaviors, to become great healthcare consumers. And when you provide services in a way that is adolescent-friendly, and youth-friendly in general, the young people are much more likely to change their behaviors. So we really can have a tremendous influence in that age group.