

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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[www.caseylifeskills.org](http://www.caseylifeskills.org)

## Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

### Poem by Josh

*I can cry out and scream hoping you hear my every word  
Or I could just watch you walk by and let the message go unheard  
I could be lazy feel self-pity  
Weep, sulk and complain  
But I'd rather be strong and press on  
Towards a positive change  
I could blame my family and society  
For what they have failed to give  
Instead of letting the strength inside me  
Dictate the life I live  
I could be selfish and worry about me  
And all the things I need  
Or invest the same effort  
Towards trying to feed my seeds  
I could accept the violence and drugs  
That destroys our neighborhood  
But I wish to replace that grief with peace  
Sincerely if I could*

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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Topic: Introductions  
Trainers: JP and BC  
Time: 9:00-9:20 am

### INTRODUCE TRAINERS

Provide brief introduction of experience, background of both trainers.  
Discuss picture of baby in a box (powerpoint slide)

Discuss desire to go beyond training event and provide Technical Assistance

### THE BASICS

Bathrooms  
Sign-in

Breaks  
Evaluations

Lunch  
CEUs

We are here today to discuss an often forgotten population in the foster care system. Older youth who transition from foster care. We want to begin by describing the process of how this training was developed. In part, because this process lays the foundation for the points we are hoping to make throughout this training, youth must be involved. The training we have developed is the result of a federal grant with the purpose of providing training to providers of services to youth who transition from care. The training was developed in collaboration with youth as well as workers across the state. Individual interviews and focus groups were conducted asking youth for input on preparation, planning, and areas that need improvement. From this information we developed youth driven competencies that are reflected throughout this training. Likewise, youth have been involved in every aspect of the training design, and as you can see in the training delivery.

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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Topic: Introductions  
Trainers: JP and BC  
Time: 9:00-9:20 am

### REFER TO AGENDA:

The training itself will cover a variety of topics focusing on both knowledge and skill acquisition. This morning we will cover some important pieces of knowledge related to the transition process, as well as policies, programs, and procedures, on both the state and federal level. After that we will break for lunch and spend the afternoon focusing on effective practice strategies and skills in working with this population of foster care. These will include defining and utilizing youth development, re-defining how we measure success, and specific skills related to assessment, preparation, transitional planning and aftercare.

If there are no questions lets do some introductions of who is present here today in the training.

### EXERCISE: ICE BREAKER

We know that working with teens that are making the transition from foster care to adulthood or who have already made that transition, is often difficult. We hope to provide information today that will be helpful in your work. In an effort to do this we would like for you to think of one or two things you hope to get from this training.

We would like for you to introduce yourselves provide your name, your job title, and one or two of your hopes for this training

*(Have flip chart and write responses down on chart and develop into goals for training)*

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## YOUTH DEFINED TRAINING COMPETENCIES

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Topic: Competencies

Trainers: JP and BC

Time: 9:20-9:30 am

The following competencies were developed by youth and compiled by the Kansas Youth Advisory Council. They provide the foundation for our training.

### Competencies

- *I want my worker and foster parent to know the system and help advocate for me*
- *I want my worker and foster parent to let me know what my rights are in the system*
- *I want my worker and foster parent to understand that I am unique (know me...not my case file)*
- *I want my worker and foster parent to know that I am “normal” and have all the same desires as other teens.*
- *I want my worker and foster parents to communicate with me by involving me.*
- *I want my worker and foster parent to be trustworthy and dependable*
- *Teach me how to advocate for myself*
- *I want my worker and foster parent to understand that they are a work in progress and so am I.*
- *I want my worker and foster parent to include me in decision making*
- *I want my worker and foster parent to know the importance of the work they do, because I do.*

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## CURRENT STATE OF TRANSITIONING YOUTH

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Topics: Outcomes  
Trainers: JP & BC  
Time: 9:30-9:40 am

### Learning Objective

Participants will be able to list at least four negative outcomes youth experience once they leave care.

### **DISCUSSION OF OUTCOMES -- (Refer to Powerpoint slide)**

- The outcomes for this population are poor and have been poor since IL first gained attention in the late 1980's and early 1990's.
- Nearly 50% never finish high school or gain a GED
- Nearly 50% are unemployed
- As many as 25% report being homeless at least one night
- Nearly 30% report inadequate and unstable housing
- As many as 40% are reported to be on TANF, food stamps, or public assistance
- As many as 37% are incarcerated at some point after leaving care
- As many as 60% in one study were reported to be pregnant or already parenting within 12 to 18 months after leaving care
- As many as 51% had no health care
- As many as 40% of youth had experienced some kind of physical victimization upon leaving care
- Higher divorce rate
- More problems establishing intimate relationships
- More violence within relationships
- Unresolved grief regarding loss of family
- Relationship instability

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BARRIERS THAT PREVENT SUCCESS FOR YOUTH

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Topic: Barriers that prevent success

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 9:40-10:00

### Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

Recognize stereotypes in themselves and in others

Identify resource barriers within their caseloads.

Recognize system barriers within their caseloads.

Identify support systems that need improvement.

Identify ways in which programs could be enhanced to eliminate barriers.

### **Discussion Points:**

1. Stereotypes
  - a. Can prohibit services to youth.
    - Stereotypes of foster youth may affect the services that are provided to them.
    - It takes away a youths sense of uniqueness
    - It gives youth a sense of helplessness and frustration

**Video Segment:** Watch a clip of 5 current/former foster youth talking about stereotypes

(continued on next page)

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BARRIERS THAT PREVENT SUCCESS FOR YOUTH

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Topic: Barriers that prevent success

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 9:40-10:00

### 2. Personal Barriers (internal and external):

Every youth has baggage and personal experiences they bring into care into whatever setting they may end up living. A key way of breaking the barriers down would be to make sure the youth is comfortable and not afraid. To connect with a youth care providers must talk with the youth to see what is the underlying situation

**Video Segment:** Show the “Bringing Baggage” video segment

### 3. System Barriers:

System barriers are those barriers that often occur because of the way policies or procedures are written. Or they may be due to budget or time constraints that make up the nature of child welfare work. Or perhaps they are due to unfair laws or legislation that must be advocated against.

### 4. Resource Barriers:

Resource barriers are typically barriers that are result of not having enough of something. However, they are often there because of lack of knowledge of or understanding of available resources. Likewise, resources must include both formal and informal resources---we must look to the naturally occurring resources in our own communities. One of the primary resource barriers is lack of community support and community linkage for youth transitioning from care.

***DISCUSSION OF RESOURCE MANUAL***

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## FEDERAL AND STATE POLICIES

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Topic: Federal and State Policies

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 10:00-10:30

### Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

Name 3 purposes of Chafee

Name eligibility requirements of Chafee

Name 4 requirements for the state

### **Discussion of Federal and State Policies:**

Federal and state policies lay the groundwork and the mandates for IL across the state. First we will discuss the very recent Federal Policy that was passed in 1999 and called the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. This Policy sets up the John H. Chafee Independent Living program and its requirements. The Chafee act was passed as a response to the poor outcomes experienced by youth once they leave the foster care system. Through the voices of child welfare advocates and most importantly, youth, the Act was passed. We will discuss the purpose of the act, eligibility requirements, and the ramifications for the state program. We will then discuss the goals, purpose, and requirements of the state IL program. We will try to keep this as interesting as possible, and at the end will have a little competition to see if you are still awake!

### **Chafee Purpose: (Powerpoint slide)**

- Calls for services and life skill preparation
- Emphasize the importance of relationships/mentors
- Promotes Health and Mental Health care
- Promotes Post-Secondary education/employment
- Provides assistance and services for older youth who have left foster care but have not reached age 21
- Allows states to use 30% of funds for room and board costs of youth ages 18-21 who have left care
- Helps older youth by giving states the option of extending Medicaid to 18, 19, 20 year olds who have emancipated from care
- Increases the asset limit from \$1000 to \$10,000
- Requires states to develop outcome measures

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## FEDERAL AND STATE POLICIES

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Topic: Federal and State Policies

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 10:00-10:30

### Chafee Eligibility (Powerpoint slide):

- Youth identified as likely to remain in foster care until age 18
- A portion of funds **must** be used to serve 18-21 year olds who aged out at 18
- “Foster care” is defined as “ward of the state” regardless of type of placement
- Eligibility not determined by placement or geography; if youth move from one state to other they are still eligible for services (the state of current residence bears responsibility)
- Eligible youth are those who left foster care at age 18 and who have not attained 21

### Chafee Requiriements for the State (Powerpoint slide):

- Have to define “likely to remain in foster care” as a measure of eligibility
- Must develop statewide services that help youth attain necessary life skills
- Must provide statewide training to workers, foster parents, and other providers on how to serve IL youth
- Must involve youth in every aspect of their care including case planning, program development, evaluation, and training
- Must develop IL services for youth who have aged out of care at 18 and are under 21 years of age
- Must develop stakeholder group
- Must make decision regarding Medicaid option to extend to 18-21 year olds
- Must determine on how to spend funds on room and board
- Must report on federally mandated outcomes

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## FEDERAL AND STATE POLICIES

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Topic: Federal and State Policies

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 10:00-10:30

### Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to...

- List SRS Program goals
- Name who is eligible for Subsidy
- List 3 contractor responsibilities
- List 3 SRS worker responsibilities

### SRS Program and Policies (Powerpoint slide):

- All youth age 15 and older **must** have a plan and receive services to help them achieve needed life skills (**forms; CFS 8550, CFS 3005A; CFS 3005B**).
- Foster parents and care providers will provide the core training and experiences youth need
- Gaps in skill development must be assessed
- Youth must be involved in all planning related to their case, especially their own case planning process

### SRS Subsidy (Powerpoint slide):

- Youth 18 to 21 are eligible
- Must have completed life skills training
- Must have entered and IL agreement that is focused on attending school, or to find employment, or for start up funds to establish housing (**forms; CFS 8590; CFS 8591; CFS 8593**).
- Must have a community advisor/mentor assigned (**form CFS 8592**)
- Maximum amount of the plan is \$400 plus \$50 for the community advisor

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## FEDERAL AND STATE POLICIES

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Topic: Federal and State Policies

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 10:00-10:30

### Contractor Responsibilities (Powerpoint slide):

- Will conduct an assessment of youth readiness for IL
- Will develop Individualized IL plan based on the assessment (**form CFS 3005A**)
- Will develop skills based on plan
- Will involve youth in case planning
- Will assist youth in finding a mentor
- Will conduct exit interviews: (**Form CFS 3005B**)

### SRS Worker Responsibilities:

- Will attend and participate in case planning conferences
- Will make sure planning will help prepare youth for independence
- Will participate in exit interview and invite area IL coordinator
- Area office is responsible for providing direct services to youth released from state custody and over age 18 who request IL services or subsidy

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## FEDERAL AND STATE POLICIES

---

Topic: Federal and State Policies

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 10:00-10:30

### STATE PROGRAMS FOR 18-21 YEAR OLDS

#### **SRS: SUBSIDY**

##### *Eligibility*

- The maximum amount of the plan is currently \$400 plus \$50 for the community advisor
- Youth 18 to 21 years of age
- Must have completed IL life skills training
- Have entered into an IL agreement that is focused on attending school, or find employment, or start up funds to establish housing (may include one or all of the above) (**Form CFS 8590; CFS 8591; CFS 8593**)
- Must have a community mentor/advisor assigned (**Form CFS 8592**)
- Mentors help with subsidy planning/encouraged to be a supportive stable “friend” to youth (may include: family, foster parent, teacher, minister, etc.)

#### **TUITION WAIVERS**

##### *Eligibility:*

- Youth must be in custody until 18 and accepted to Kansas Education Institution within 2 yrs of High School Graduation
- Tuition and fees waived (limit 8 semesters of undergraduate instruction)

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## FEDERAL AND STATE POLICIES

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Topic: Federal and State Policies

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 10:00-10:30

### Tuition Waiver Requirements:

- Full time student
- Good academic standing
- Part-time employment (minimum 10 hrs. a week)
- Continuing eligibility verified by the school of attendance
- Renew application annually
- Schools required to honor no more than 3 waivers an academic year

### Tuition Waiver Stats

- Summer 02: 1 applied, 1 accepted
- Fall 02: 25 applied, 15 accepted
- Spring 03: 13 applied, 6 accepted
- Fall 03 to Spring 04: 18 will remain eligible, 1 is now over the age of 21 and will no longer be eligible. New application process will begin

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BEST PRACTICE: RE-DEFINING SUCCESS

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Topic: Best Practice: Re-defining Success

Trainers: JP and BC

Time: 10:45-11:00 pm

**“The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but to reveal to him his own”**

**Benjamin Disraeli**

### Learning Objective

Participants will be able to:

Define Interdependent Living

Identify how this definition changes the way we prepare youth to transition

**Video segment:** Lisa and Alicia; youth and foster parent talk about Success

### Discussion Points:

I think the first step in effectively preparing youth to make the transition from care comes from looking differently at the way we view success and ultimately the way we view youth. First and foremost I think we need to understand how we define success for these young people in care is very different than the way we define success for youth growing up in a family. (Refer to quote on slide from foster youth who talks about success). How we have typically viewed success is by telling these young people to achieve “self-sufficiency”, “to live independently”, to “make it on their own”, what we propose in this training is that these are all fallacies. None of us live independently, and none of us make it on our own. Let’s just look for a minute at the definition of success....”Independent” and compare it to the definition of success that we promote “interdependence.”

Independent is defined as: “...not influenced or controlled by others; not relying on others for aid or support.”

Interdependent is defined as: “a process of counting on other people to provide help in coping physically and emotionally with the experiences and tasks encountered in the world when one has not sufficient skill, confidence, energy, and/or time”

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BEST PRACTICE: ENGAGING AND MOTIVATING YOUTH

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Topic: Engaging and motivating youth

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 11:00-11:40 pm

### Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

Identify the examples of adultism within their agency and practices

### **Owning Our Adultism as a way to begin engaging youth:**

Traditional child welfare has operated through an adult lens sometimes failing to take the child/youths view into consideration. The first premise that we must come to understand before talking about PYD is that we must begin by understanding and combating adultism and understanding how adultism contributes to youth feeling a sense of learned helplessness.

**Adultism**: Only seeing the world through an adult perspective and thereby minimizing the perspective of youth. In child welfare youth are often excluded from decision making regarding their own lives, and have little impact on their own case outcomes.

**Learned Helplessness**: A result of adultism we may create for youth a sense of learned helplessness. This may often get translated as lack of motivation.

**Raising our belief and expectations of youth rather than lower “the bar”.**

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BEST PRACTICE: MOTIVATING YOUTH THROUGH--POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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Topic: Positive Youth Development

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 1:00-1:30 pm

### Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

Identify ways to incorporate positive youth development into their practice

Identify ways to support positive youth development.

Identify where their practice and agency fall on the degrees of PYD

### Discussion Points:

To counteract this sense of learned helplessness and to avoid adultism it is critical to begin incorporating a positive youth development approach. Typically when we think of youth in care we focus on problems, and assume that if problems are eliminated then youth will inevitably develop the range of social, educational, and vocational competencies needed for productive citizenship. Development doesn't just happen on its own youth need programs and services that help contribute to their overall development.

### PYD is defined as (Powerpoint slide):

- Emphasize the strengths and capacities of youth
- View youth as a resource
- Involve youth in every aspect of their care
- Allow for opportunities for youth to take on leadership and decision making roles
- Understand normal aspect of adolescent development (they are all in turmoil whether in foster care or not)
- As Batavik (1997) describes: there are three possible approaches to working with youth, 1) if youth are seen as needy, we provide them with things 2) if youth are seen as problems, we contain them, 3) if youth are seen as a resource, we build on their strengths

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BEST PRACTICE: MOTIVATING YOUTH THROUGH---POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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Topic: Positive Youth Development

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 1:00-1:30

### Degrees of PYD (Powerpoint slide):

**None at all:** unchallenged and complete authority of worker

**Tokenism:** worker sets agenda, makes decisions. One or two youth consulted but not taken seriously

**Consultation:** worker consults youth but parameters set by workers

**Representation:** select number of youth chosen to represent peers, usually via committee

**Participation:** Youth set agenda, decide on issues and activities, have joint accountability with workers

**Self-managing:** youth manage with little or no adult guidance

### Goal of PYD (Powerpoint slide):

- Create environment and allows for opportunities for youth to feel safe in practicing skill, learning about relationships, and connecting to their community—give them a chance to develop and practice their competencies.
- Involve youth in every aspect of their care, and in all phases of the IL program including, planning, development, and delivery, and evaluation of IL services.
- Establish Collaborative Partnerships between youth and adults (workers, foster parents, community)
- Facilitate Youth Empowerment—teach youth who to find their own voice, their own power, and how to advocate for themselves. Adults shed the role of “expert” and begin sharing knowledge and power.

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BEST PRACTICE: ASSESSMENT

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Topic: Best Practice: Assessment

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 1:30-1:40

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

Identify when to conduct assessments

Identify the critical assessment components

Complete an Ansel/Casey Assessment Form

Assessment is a critical piece of all child welfare practice. What is important with IL youth is to begin assessments early on and to conduct them repeatedly. Accurate assessments allow for individualization of preparation. Assessment help avoid the “cookie cutter” approach.

- Conduct standardized assessments (Independence should be based on readiness of youth not just by age)
- Assessments need to evaluate youth readiness in both tangible and intangible areas
- Should assess skill areas of Education, Employment, Housing, Money Management, Health, Pregnancy and Parenting, Social Support
- Continue to assess family connections
- Examples of standardized assessments

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BEST PRACTICE: PREPARATION & PLANNING

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Topic: Best Practice: Preparation & Planning

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 1:40-2:00

### Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

Identify effective preparation strategies

Develop preparation strategies for a case example

**Video Segment:** Abdul discusses preparation and mentoring

The typical ways in which we have prepared youth for life out of foster care is to begin teaching life skills at age 16 or older, focus primarily on tangible skills like education, employment, housing, and finances, teach skills in a classroom like setting for a designated period of time.

When considering effective preparation & planning the following should be considered:

- Youth should be encouraged to remain in care until adequately prepared to make the transition
- Create a “hands on”, “real world” learning environment in which youth can learn needed life skills.
- Allow time for youth to practice and rehearse these skills in the real world
- Begin preparing youth at early ages
- Plans and preparation must be continuous and ongoing
- Emphasize positive youth development
- Assist youth in establishing/re-establishing or working through their relationships with family of origin prior to discharge
- Establish Relationship Permanency

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BEST PRACTICE: PREPARATION & PLANNING

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### Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

Identify Effective transitional planning components

Develop effective transitional plan related to case example

Transitional Planning should flow directly from the assessment. It should be individualized to meet the specific needs of the youth. It should begin early in the life of the youth once that youth is identified as likely to remain in care.

- Create comprehensive, continuous transitional plan based on unique needs of youth (as determined by assessment)
- Need to include plans related to education, employment, housing, health, finances, pregnancy/parenting, support
- Encourage Youth participation in their life plan
- Be clear of roles and expectation of all participants
- Establish Relationship Permanency

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BEST PRACTICE: CONNECTING YOUTH----RELATIONSHIP PERMANENCY

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Topic: Best Practice: Relationship Permanency  
Trainers: JP & BC  
Time: 2:00-2:10

Learning Objectives:

Participants will:

Define relationship permanency

Identify ways in which they can establish relationship permanency on their caseload

The glue to a successful transition from foster care to life out of care is said to be “relationship permanency”

Relationship Permanency:

Re-thinking permanency as more than a placement, but a lifelong relationship. Must assist youth to define family or family like connections prior to and after leaving foster care

As one national expert remarks, *“Supportive relationships are the single most important factor in how successful youth will be when they leave care. The quality of the personal support network will be the greatest indicator of success for these youth once out on their own”*

Programs that establish continuous connections for youth lead to better outcomes for youth once they leave care.

Social Support is the “glue” the foundation in which to build all other life skill preparation

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## BEST PRACTICE: RELATIONSHIP PERMANENCY

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Topic: Best Practice: Relationship Permanency

Trainers: JP & BC

**Video Segment:** Lisa and Alicia talk about Relations and Attachments

### **Vehicles for Establishing Relationship Permanency**

1. **Mentoring:**

- Formal mentoring
- Informal mentoring opportunities
- Peer mentoring
- Foster parent mentoring
- E-mentoring

2. **Bridging Ties of Foster Parents:**

- Foster parents are the single most important teacher in life skill development
- Need policies and practices to encourage ongoing involvement of foster parents
- Need to provide support and training to foster parents on how to work with older youth.

# Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success

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## ENDINGS AND EVALUATION

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Topic: Endings and Evaluation

Trainers: JP & BC

Time: 3:40-4:00 pm

**Video Segment:** Roots workshop Michael's poem

Complete evaluation form and write down action plan goals

## **Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Partnering for Success**