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Webinar Transcript:

Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) Recruiting and Serving Youth in the Juvenile Justice System and Foster Care

July 23, 2020

Connie: Hi, thank you and welcome. One of our presenters today is Lynette Tannis, an expert on the topic of youth in the juvenile justice. Lynette is a Harvard graduate and faculty member and she has an extensive background in urban school administration. Lynette's co-presenter today is a lifelong expert in the foster care field Bill Hancock.

Bill's mission is to work with community-based, public and private, compassion focused leaders to change the way local communities care for vulnerable children and families. Bill is the founder and CEO of Faith Bridge Foster Care. Thank you for participating in this webinar and I hope you will gain a lot from this presentation and from these two experts that I am honored to call friends.

Today's webinar, our objectives are to understand why grantees should target youth involved in the juvenile justice system and those who are in foster care. To identify parts of successful program models that serve youth involved with juvenile justice system and those who are in foster care. And to list ways to recruit these two underserved populations. We'd like to invite you to introduce yourself in the chat box. Please share your name, state, territory, tribe or organization and one question that you might have about recruiting or serving foster care youth or youth in the juvenile justice system.

You may do that at this time and please select all attendees so that everyone can see your responses as we introduce one another. So, what are we talking about? Historically youth involved in the juvenile justice system or foster care are an underserved population. This is a particular area of opportunity for SRAE programming as many grantees are school based and may not be serving these youth. These underserved population may be hiding in plain sight.

We would like to ask you to participate in a poll question. You could answer this in the Q&A box. I believe Megan has pulled that up. We'd like to ask you how many of you are already serving one or more of these populations?

Megan: So, you should see a polling panel appear on the right-hand side of your screen where you can select your answer and then we will give it about 20 more seconds and we will close the poll and publish the results.

Connie: You could also feel free to type in the chat box how many years you've been serving this population, what type of services, so feel free to engage actively in the chat box.

Megan: Connie, you should see those results there on your screen from the polling question.



Connie: Okay, it appears that 40 or 52% have said yes, they are serving. 11% say no and 36% no answer and the poll is closed. We'll turn it over to Lynette.

Lynette: Hi, awesome, thanks very much, Connie. Good afternoon, everyone. So, as we get started in the discussion even about juvenile justice youth or youth served by the juvenile justice system, we wanted to make sure that you have just even a clarity of understanding of the types of facilities where they may be in. 52% of you have indicated that you are currently serving this population. It could be foster youth or those who are in facilities, but we wanted to at least give you a better understand that it could be youth that are in detention centers, youth who are in a long-term facilities. This also includes children who are in group homes, so we just wanted to make sure that you were just clear in terms of the types of facilities or programs that they may be a part of.

And so now that we have that in place, we have some numbers for you. And this is a way for you to engage with us to also stimulate your mind. And so these numbers do represent national juvenile justice numbers and so I'm gonna ask at this time, just even in the chat box, first of all just kinda think about, what do these numbers represent when you think about juvenile justice. And then if you have an idea of what the numbers represent, if you could just type your response in the chat box, that will be awesome. I'm gonna give you about 30 seconds to think about this and if you have an idea of what any of these numbers represent, please share.

And also if you are sharing in the chat box, if you can also put for all attendees. That will make sure that everyone's able to see those numbers.

Megan: And, Lynette, if we would actually like them to put all participants. So, all participants will allow us as panelists and presenters to see those responses as well.

- Okay, perfect.

- Thank you.

Lynette: All participants.

Connie: Lynette, looks like there's a lot of our participants are working with the juvenile justice and have spent a number of years doing so. I see several folks as long as 10 years that have been participating in that or maybe are no longer serving in that, but did for a long period of time.

Lynette: Yes, so I'll go ahead. I see there are a couple comments, not necessarily, okay, I see perhaps some that are relating to the data. So, we'll go ahead and jump in. So, in terms of the 1.1 million, that number actually represents, according to the juvenile court statistics, that more than 1.1 million court cases are heard in juvenile courts across the United States. Which then equates to about 130,000 youth who end up being involved with the justice system. That 48,000 is the figure for, on any given day, if you

were to assess how many children we have confined again, whether that be in a group home or...

Megan: Lynette, it appears that we may have lost your audio.

Lynette: Are you all--

Megan: I can hear you now.

Lynette: Okay, so hopefully you were able to catch that. And so, in terms of 76, that's actually a percentage which the percentage is that girls in facilities indicated, 76% of them indicated that they were sexually active and that's compare with 48% of girls who were surveyed who were in high school, in traditional high schools. So, you also see the disparity there that exists.

In terms of 70, I'm curious if anyone knows, oh, someone said to please repeat after 1.1. Okay, so let me just jump back. So, 1.1, oh and let me also say this. Although I'm sharing these stats with you, please know that we also have the slides that show the reference to what I'm referring to. But the 1,1 million represents, according to the national juvenile court statistics, more than 1,1 million cases heard in juvenile courts across the United States each year. That equates to about 130,000 youth incarcerated in a given year.

Which means on any given day, there would be 48,000 youth who are in a facility. Again, as we know, it could be a residential facility, a group home, a detention center, so there's that combination. The 76 actually represents the percentage. And that's the percent of girls who are in facilities who indicated they were sexually active. When you compare that to a survey that was done for girls in traditional high school, so not in a facility, it was 48%, so you also see the significance in terms of this population.

70, I am curious for anyone who might think what 70 represents. It is a percentage. I'll just pause just to see if there's anyone who is typing in. If not, I'll just jump in to share. 70% actually represents the number of youth who are in facilities who have a disability. So again, you also see the disparity when you compare that to children in our traditional public-school system in public schools that are assessed. It's typically like 12.6%. Children with special needs is about 36%, so it's almost three times as likely. But based on the recent research that's been done, it shows that 70% of youth in facilities have a disability.

68 actually also is a percentage. 68% of our youth involved with the juvenile justice system are children of color. So disproportionately African American children. Disproportionately Latino-Hispanic children. And then also Native American and multiple races and ethnicities as well. 65 is a percentage. These are grim numbers. I know these are real numbers, but it's important that we know this population, but we can also provide the proper resources and support. So, there was a study that was done in 2011



by Read & O' Cummings. And they assessed at the time, there were 2,700 facilities throughout the United States.

And they assessed the educational programs for these youth. And it was determined that only 65% of the facilities were actually providing educational programs for all of the youth housed within the facilities. So that's very grim obviously. And then the next piece that same year Read & O' Cummings did a study where children with special needs in the United States, we refer to anyone with an IEP or individualized education program, they surveyed them and they said, basically, from the services you were receiving before you were involved in the juvenile justice system, before you were then in a facility, now that you're in a program, in a juvenile justice program, are you receiving those services that are outlined in your IEP? And only 46% said, 'yes.'

And so again there's just a great need to make sure that we are serving this population and providing them with the resources and support that they deserve. And the last number, I think, fully demonstrates the reason why Bill and I partnered together. Because juvenile justice involves youth. Those who are foster children as of 2006 based on the research that was done, they are four times more like to be involved with the juvenile justice system. So just wanted to provide a little bit of context and stats around this. Hopefully there's something new, even for those of you who have been involved in the space for a long time, that it's kind of stirring up something within you even greater to get involved even more.

Again, as I mentioned, these stats are provided for you. You will have them so that you can always go back to those resources and references that I discussed. So, this next piece that I just want to share with you in terms of juvenile justice successful program models, this is actually based on the research that I conducted in 2012 and what I've been doing to help states since that time. And so, I spent time actually, this research and book is based on my work in Florida and spending time juvenile facilities, interviewing the principals and teachers in those spaces and observing the classes in those spaces. And based on that data, there were four themes that emerged.

The importance of relationships, expectations, resources, and accountability. And what was discovered at that time is in places where these four themes were really strong, it equated to a higher quality of education for the youth, far more students who were on task and there were far fewer disruptions occurring in that environment. And so, I just want to emphasize a couple of these pieces. In terms of your work and this will also be highlighted as we talk about outreach efforts later on in the presentation. But in terms of your work, it really is important, the relationships piece and how that comes into place. And so, in these facilities, as you know, there is a high lack of trust just because of what people have experienced.

And because of that, the relationships piece is really important. And so, what was found there and then since then as I've been, again, supporting states and other facilities throughout the United States and even internationally is one of the key relationships that are important is the relationship between the program staff, the juvenile justice staff and



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the education staff and really making sure that they're, to the extent possible, on the same page. Equally important are the relationships that they have with the youth and of course just amongst one another. And then even with outside partnerships. So, it was determined that those successful programs actually partnered with people like you all to help bring in, which we'll also talk about in terms of the resources for the youth that they serve.

The next piece was expectations. So, making sure that expectations were both high, but also very explicit. So, one example is just, in these spaces in particular, heads up at all times. That was an expectation that was listed for the youth in a facility and what a difference it made. So, in one facility where these four themes were not strong, there were not strong relationships or expectations were really low. Well, if a child has his head down, we don't disturb him because he may curse you out. Which may be true, but that just shows with their expectations, resources were mixed and there was no level of accountability. Even with a classroom of only five children with two adults, two had their heads down, two were attentive and one was singing, rapping, doing his own thing.

And there was an average of one disruption occurring every 52 seconds. And the youth were actually brought to their classes approximately 20 minutes, 20 minutes of their instruction time. They were brought to class an average of 14 minutes late. And then I just want to counteract that with a facility where they're really strong in this. Even on non-educational issues, the principal and the educators are brought in to have conversations with the program staff and they make sure that the resources, again, like the programs and resources that you provide, are brought in for the youth.

Expectations, very explicitly saved on the wall with incentives for the youth, resources in place and a level of accountability. So, there was a schedule for everyone and everyone was where they needed to be. In that setting up to 19 students in a class and up to 19 students were on task. I mean, you would've thought that you were just in a traditional school. It was very powerful to see and there was an average of one disruption occurring every two minutes and 50.52 seconds. So that also makes significant difference there. The youth were still brought to class late, but it wasn't as much. They were missing out about 5.8 minutes late of their instruction versus the 14 minutes.

And so the reason why I share this with you is because I have been asked to also use this research. With research, you're not supposed to make generalizations, so I was excited of course. But this Florida. But as I went to Texas and Nevada and California and other places, it was like, oh, my goodness, this is the same thing all around. So, these seem basic. Of course, Lynette, these things matter. But it's really important that we focus in on these areas to make the most of our time with incarcerated youth. And so, I'm excited to share more with you as we we talk about the outreach, but at this time, I'm going to turn it over to Bill.

Bill: Thank you, Lynette. I'm grateful to be co-presenting with you today. And I'm extremely grateful to be able to speak with all the SRAE educators on this call. On



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behalf of 687,345 children in the US foster care system today, I just want to say thank you. And for those that are already doing outreach to our kinds and the foster system, I hope that at the end of this today that you would have the opportunity and maybe some new tools and ideas maybe to drive your outreach even further into the system. And for those that are considering doing outreach recruitment and retention, youth and foster care for SRAE education, that what you learn here today will help advance that agenda.

Today and with the time that I have, I want to accomplish three things. One is I want to set the context of youth and foster care in the US. Secondly, I want to address some of the challenges as well as some of the opportunities for you as a grantee and SRA education. And then thirdly, I'd like to give you some tools and some practical tools that you can implement as a result of being on this call today.

The last introductory comment is that as we go through these slides in the time that I have, each of these slides really have one main idea, a point that I would like to drive home. However, in the notes section, and what will be, you'll have access to these slides after the webinar. And there are notes, there are resources, places that you can access for publicly available data, tools and information that can help perhaps implement some of the ideas and strategies today.

So, let's get started. Children in foster care, one of the reasons on this slide I want to point out 687,344 children. That number, when you begin to investigate the number of children in your state, the number of children perhaps in your county or your region of where you live and operate, you'll find there are really two numbers that drive this number of children in foster care. There is this number I'm providing, over 600,000 and this will be the number of children that are served annually through federal state programming to vulnerable children who are underserved when it comes to particularly some of the work that you're providing.

Then there's a second number. And that number you'll find when you start your investigation, is little over 400,000, about 423. And that's a daily count. That count is taken every year, once a year on September 30th and then that is added to the mix as well. So, you'll basically see these two numbers or if you hear people present our foster care nationally, typically you will hear the 425 children in foster care. That's the daily count. But we really serve over 600,000 per year.

Of those 600,000 where the really, what I think is the target for us today is really the youth ages 12 to 18 that are served by the foster care system. And these numbers are directly from the administration of children and family at HHS. Some of you may be aware of the subtle reporting process for the annual children and family service review that states are required to report out on. So, these numbers are constantly updated and you can find your state numbers and in a moment I'm going to show you some resources, publicly available data where you can actually drill down on your state and find out where children are within the state, also within your county.



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So, as we look at over 600,000, the point here is that 12 to 18 children serve just well over 100,000, 128,000 or 21. And this is really our target. These are the kids that really desperately need your leadership and your service. So where are our children? The point here is when children come to the Department of Children and Family Services across the country and every state has this underserved population, the number of children varies by state. However, we all have responsibility for protection of these at-risk and vulnerable children.

A placement setting where children can no longer remain at home and have to be placed outside the home into protective custody. You look at the bars real quickly. Children primarily are removed from homes because of the abuse, of drug abuse and alcohol abuse primarily. 32% of that number of children that are in care today, they're in family foster care, relative care. Those are people that are family members that have agreed to go through the foster care approval process and be trained and licensed as a foster home, but as a relative foster home. And there is some credential invariance between relative fostering homes and non-relative fostering homes. But the majority of our children in foster care today are again non-relative foster placements and that's about 46% of the population.

Group homes as Lynette had mentioned earlier, about 4% of the children in protective custody are in group homes and these children are primarily the children that are in that age group of 13 to 18 to years old. And then of course 6% are in institutions. These may be mental health facilities and other support high need placements. Again, at the bottom of these slides, the resources for this data is available. And as we talk later about going out and knowing your community and studying, becoming a student of your community and learning where our underserved population in foster are. Take advantage of them.

Let's look at some of the unique needs that adolescents have in foster care. 160,000 adolescents are living in foster care. 22% or 35,200 are aged 13 and older. 20,500 youth leave the system every year. 25% of emancipated youth are incarcerated within two years. And again, I underscore working with Lynette and the opportunity to learn from her as we really tried to get more focused on how to move these children out of institutions whether it's foster care or juvenile justice incarcerated facilities. These children, once they leave their trajectory, is challenging.

Only 50% of our kids will graduate from high school. And this number at the bottom here, the 19,000-foster youth per year apply for emancipation. You may hear when you find out how many kids leave the foster care system, you'll read sometimes that there are more than 30,000 kids a year that leave our system. Age out is a phrase that's often found. But that's where that 30,000 number comes from. It's those that are aged out, that are 18. Then there are those that are 17, but have applied to age out and some of them are able to be granted by the court to go ahead and leave custody earlier than 18. And so that is often times where that number comes from.

And again, just to underscore the great work that's being done with Lynette is our foster kids, they're the pipeline from foster care to prison. 57.1% of young people who run by



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the foster care and the juvenile justice system while under 18, they will experience incarceration as an adult once they exit the system compared to 14% of children in New York City. We have kids that we have predisposed. Once they leave foster care, particularly our children who've been in extended long-term foster care, when they leave, there's unfortunately a very high chance that they will be incarcerated as adults.

And this is where I really want to zero in on particular the sexual behaviors and how this relates directly to SRA education. 71% of women who've been in foster care become pregnant before age of 21, I mean 21. 71% before age 21. That is always an alarming statistic to me regardless of how you taught to look at it, I still feel sometimes like it's the first time. That is a huge number of children that are having children and totally unaware of what the responsibilities and the pressures of parenting will be.

60% or more once compared to 33% of 21-year-olds actually will have more than one child. 60% more than once, they'll be pregnant. That is something, when I learned SRA education and the work that you were doing, I was so excited about the opportunity to share with you. Because this is a problem that you guys are really focused, well equipped, well-resourced to take on. And so, for me, this is the big takeaway. Here's the bull's eye and this is statistics that I have because of your contribution investment, we'll see these numbers go down. What are foster kids, oh, I'm sorry. I jumped a little bit ahead, now I'm going to pause right there and I'm going to toss it back to Connie and we're going to open it up to talk about how we can make a difference with these two underserved populations.

Connie: I love that passion that Bill has. He just got on roll and was so passionate about the population that he served that he just kept going. But at this point, we really want, I just want to stop and acknowledge so far what we've heard. We talked about who, who were talking about? The underserved population and then I really appreciate the research and the statistics that were shared and brought the why, why is it important and why should that be a goal of an SRAE program as you saw with the pregnancy rates and the sexual activity.

So now let's just shift a little bit to how can I make a difference? Maybe some of you have caught a hold of the passion that you've heard here from the work of the experts. And so, this time we'd like to take a poll from the grantees to assess the level of engagement that you have in juvenile justice and foster care. So, at this time, I would encourage you to just really in the chat box, to go ahead and let us know what that level of engagement is, number of years, if you're brand new. No matter where you are in that process, thinking about it, have questions, whatever that might be, please just drop that in the chat box.

The presenters really want to make this tailored to your needs and the things that you would like to have answered. So, I would just highly encourage you at this time to do that and we'll monitor that and pitch those to the experts to answer to or to speak to if they choose to do so, if it's a question. And we'll allow just a few minutes for that to take place.



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Lynette and Bill, I think this is a common question that I've heard come up with grantees and providing technical support is that they don't have a chance to serve the foster youth, because they're not always aware of any group homes in the area and as you mentioned, I quoted you that sometimes they hide in plain sight. So as other answers are coming in, you might choose to speak to that or we can hold it to the end.

Bill: Sure, thank you for that question. Our children in youth and foster care, they have mastered blending in the background, particularly when they're out in large groups, like places like schools, churches, community centers, youth activity centers. They tend to hide. There's a lot of public and social stigma with being in foster care and kids try to avoid that brand of being the foster kid and foster child.

So how do we identify them and connect with them? Foundationally, the way you connect and sustain connection with foster children is through relationships and not, and when we don't have those relationships, we have to leverage the relationships they have with other safe and stable adults in our community. That's why I'm going to talk to you about a tool to help you investigate the stakeholders in your community to find out who are the people that are serving this population relationally. Who are the people that are providing the mentoring, the safe and stable homes.

The ability to connect with those other adults and bring along your assets, your social capital, your relationship abilities as well as your content and author all of that in a relationship so that you become part of a group of adults that's building that relationship and earning the buy in from the youth based on relationship. And then once we've established a safe, stable and respectful relationship, they are desperate and looking for adults who will lead and speak truth into their life.

Connie: Bill, I'm very excited what I'm seeing in the chat box. It looks like a lot of folks are very interested in foster care and how to interact with those. And, Lynette, I'm sure you've seen that there are several that have been engaged in the juvenile justice center for a number of years and describe their programs as exceptional services. I'm also seeing quite a few folks that are going to really enjoy this next section as we talk about recruiting and retaining. Because I see a lot of folks that are saying, we really have the desire but need a place to start or there in the school and we know they're there and sometimes they're identified but have desires to learn how to access them in a greater way.

Some say they're relying on teachers to identify those groups. So just having a lot of questions and robust interaction here that we can, at the question and answer period speak to. I'd like to tell grantees at this time that you would be watching, there'll be a slide coming up where we're going to use the raise-the-hand feature. And we're going to ask folks to just share tips. If you're a new person to this approach and to this population, that's fine. We'd like to hear what you're doing. If you're a veteran that's been doing it for several decades, we'd like to hear from you as well. So, prepare as we come upon that slide.



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So, at this time we're going to move on to examining strategies of how you might recruit and retain these underserved groups in your SRA program. So, Lynette and Bill, I'm going to take note of these things in the chat box and we'll move on and come back to those later. At this time, I'll turn it back to Lynette.

Lynette: Awesome, thank you, Connie. Yeah, it's really exciting to see all the comments in the chat box. It's clear that there is definitely a continuum. Those who are now starting and just wanting to know where to begin and others who seem to be doing this and even shared how well they'd been doing that. So, my hope is that you all would even be able to interact with one another even beyond this presentation, this webinar.

But I go back to these four scenes and also what was mentioned earlier in the chat about, I don't even know where to begin, where do I find even where these are and whether it's a rural area that you are in or urban or suburban, where do I begin? And so again, I go back to these four themes, but one thing I just want to share is that according to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, OJJDP is the acronym, there are just about 1,500 facilities or programs throughout the United States. And when you think about our 50 states within those 1,500, approximate 1,500 facilities, 55% of those are publicly owned, 45% are privately owned which could be by not for profit or for profit.

So just kind of keeping that in mind. And then within the states, of course, you have the variation that exists as well. So, you have, in some states, the educational program itself, it is the Department of Juvenile Justice that's responsible for the education, that's about 16 states. You have another about 16 states where it is the Department of Education, the State Department of Education that's responsible for the education. Then you have a handful of states where it's the Department of Health and Human Services. So, division of youth and family services or division of children, youth and families, that kind of thing. And then some that are just their own school district.

So, it does vary and so, one, I would say just along the relationship side is to even find out what it is within your state, it is helpful if you go even just to the state site to just at least even get information about who are the providers for the programs within the state. It might also mean that you have to reach out and make a few calls, because unfortunately it's a lot of work to even find out what's the name of this program and how many youth are involved and that kind of thing, so that's also really important.

I will say just one example is years ago when the youth in New York for example, if they were detained, say, at Ryker's fortunately because a lot of the work that's been done for get children out of Ryker's Island. But at the time when they were detained there, if it was determined that they were going to go to a residential facility, they would be sent to a facility in upstate New York. But because of the fact that it would take hours for families to go and see those children, there was a whole initiative that was done called the Close to Home project. And so for the last couple of years, low offense is the

terminology that was used for low-offense youth, low-risk youth. They then created more like group homes within the boroughs for those youth.

So smaller group setting and they're definitely closer to home. So, within Brooklyn, within the Bronx, et cetera. So, it's really important that you are able to see, one, what types of programs do you want to be most involved with whether it's a residential program. Can you all hear me now hopefully? Okay, I see Bill nodding, so okay, good. Sorry about that. And so, part of that is building those partnerships and relationships with those programs. But as I said trust is, it is a issue in this area. So many people have been let down and so how can you build those trust and relationships? Who are you as an individual, as an organization and how can they benefit from you and how can you provide support to them?

The next thing is just expectations. What can they expect from you and what do you expect from them? And consistency has to be part of that piece. Because they do need the support and resources, but making sure those expectations are explicit is really important. And then resources. Again, this is a population who would benefit tremendously from having the resources, so what can you share about either other places that you've implemented this program, if you have data about that, even if it's anecdotal. Perhaps just a quote from a child or a family or just actual, hard statistics that will be helpful for you to share and align with the resources.

And then lastly in terms of accountability, it's kind of like what are you going to do to hold yourself accountable and how are you also going to hold the facility accountable. Well, listen, we said that we're going to meet every Tuesday, but we notice every Tuesday they're on lockdown or they can't come out. So being able to have those conversations are also going to be very helpful. And then over to you, Bill.

Bill: Thanks, Lynette. As we transition to some of the how-tos, how to reach in, the comment sections from all the participants has been extremely helpful and informative. And one of the things is clear as one participant said, fidelity to relationships and being able to become and trust, we hear that, Lynette's already mentioned that several times. Once we establish relationship, many of the other opportunities to engage and retain youth in the training programs that we offer, that's the information.

What is really sticky in terms of helping them change and a sustainable change is the relationships that follow them through some of the continuous disruption in the process of being in foster care. And in one last comment as I talk about, what do youth in foster care need to thrive? One other comment that really stood out to me is going in to schools sometimes and attempting to connect with foster children is a challenge in my experience, because one, children don't want to be identified. And then in some school systems, some of you maybe have run into this, there's perhaps some confidentiality issues with teachers or other school administrators communicating the legal status of a child in the school and particularly when it comes to foster care and family court.



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So those are some really great observations from the participants to date. So, what do foster youth need to thrive as adults? Safe, stable and permanent family relationships with caring adults, fundamental, fundamental. And one of the problems that continues in this historically continue to undermine the effectiveness of the foster care system, both public and private is the fact that we have never been able to supply enough families to meet the demand. So, there's been a supply and demand problem since the foster care was even conceived. And so that permanent family relationship with caring adults is truly missing. And then meaningful multi-generational community connections and relationships.

Once we connect with them, part of this retention and keeping them engaged is to help broaden their community and create a multi-generational connection with them so that they can replace perhaps some of the intergenerational mishaps in terms of connecting with family and extended family. Enough foster families equipped to serve foster youth. That's a huge one. That is a very difficult target age group for recruitment. But I am hopeful. I have seen particularly in the last 12 years, 15 years, a new movement, particularly in safe communities that are being mobilized and organized around building community organizations that are responding to the unique needs of foster children and particularly older youth.

So, I'm going to talk a little bit more about engaging that community here in a moment. And to avoid when possible, large peer group traditional foster homes. To be able to really put kids more in connection with intergenerational and adult relationships where they are constantly being socialized within peer groups, they become peer dependent and at times drives some of the challenges for them toward. Access to independent living programs and life skills training and provide sexual risk avoidance education in context of safe families and meaningful communities.

What I want to do now is shift to a practical tool box that I want to share with you. And use a particular organization in Central Florida who is someone that I have worked with for years as an adviser. And just use them as a case study to illustrate how these tools can be used. So really, the question I want to answer at this point is how can I reach, recruit and retain foster youth?

Well, I'm suggesting and there's evidence with proven concepts and tools and processes, that you conduct a local foster care landscape study. And in 2014, November 17, an organization in Central Florida, Orlando area called Grace Landing was a private 501c3 tax exempts company that was really working with age adoptees when kids were leaving the system. We mentioned earlier, they're over 20,000 that leave that age and it's about 30 that end up out of the system.

And really with no plan and no direction. Their goal is just to get away. To get out of the foster care system. So, Grace Landing worked in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole County and particular ran these group homes. And the founder and board wanted to transition away from the group home environment. They wanted to reach more kids and youth and so they were looking for different models. So, we implemented a community



based collaborative model that engaged three sectors of the community. We identified stakeholders in three primary social sectors within a geographical area.

We focused on counties and within that county, we looked at community organizations that provided goods and services to foster children. Where were the organizations that were contracted with government agencies that were responsible for delivery of services to foster kids? And in Florida, not all those services including case management is privatized and outsourced to community-based organizations. So, we looked at all of the models of systems of care that were being presented through the government system of response to child abuse, the community's current system of response. And then we went into the faith community and other value-based communities and looked at what services they were providing.

And we found out something very interesting that less than half of a non-profit community organizations were really focused on this population, but in the stakeholder interviews, we learned that of those that were not engaged, they were said, 48% said, if they had the systems, the process, the tools, content, the know-how, if you will, they would actually move towards this population with their service already. Much like Grace Landing was willing to do. So, the point here is that many organizations who are in the community want to serve this organization, they want to engage with a number of services that these children desperately need.

The community struggles with knowing how to engage this population. This population is truly, they really do hide in plain sight. They're hard to uncover. So, we really had to come up with a methodology that we could move into these three systems and begin to identify the stakeholders, interview stakeholders and then create standardization of a metrics that we could communicate, quantify the demand for services for foster youth and then qualify the services within these lenses that were available to them. And then really do a gap analysis to understand where can we take current non-profit services and where can we begin to move into some of these gaps.

And so, we designed this methodology around what we call a landscape study. And we completed the Central Florida landscape study in November 17, 2014. And over to the right here is a Fostering Our Future: Our Journey which is the proof concept report. These votes were reports that were presented to the community stakeholders over a period from November 17, 2014 to November 2018. So, we were able to begin to really quantify and qualify goods and services. We developed strategies to move those willing partners together in a collaborative model to move towards this group and at the same time, we were able to begin to set metrics so we can measure that and quantify the impact of moving from institutional service, more family-like services that was really driven more around relationship, social capital and primarily more driven by the community and less by professional agencies.

So, let me talk to you just a minute about the methodology. One, within each of the stakeholders, and in a moment, I'm letting you know that we do have a toolbox that provides you some of the tools to uncover the stakeholders in your community. The



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professional interview standard booklets for both those interviews. And then the final is a report template on how to take the leading social indicators in your community in these three lenses and roll them up in a stakeholder report that's based on publicly available data as well as the professional interviews that you did with stakeholders. Let's look at the eight key stakeholders.

First is the child protective service agencies in your community. So different people are, different states would call their child protective service agency something different. In Florida we're primarily based out of Jacksonville and Atlanta, that's called the Department of Children and Families. In Georgia or Bronx, it's DFCS, Department of Family and Children Services. But regardless, if you just went to your search engine and you put into your search engine your state, example Florida, and put foster care state services, you would pull up your state agency.

Foster care, foster parent associations. Foster parent associations are in just about every county. They are set up primarily through child placing agencies by the state or by case management companies that have a vested interest in trying to support families when they choose to foster. And so, they create these associations. Those associations meet promptly and they have an agenda to provide training and support to foster families. So, there's a really platform there in every county in order to go in and provide value added services. SRA education is one, but there are other opportunities there to provide education services for parenting, marriage and family and as well as the SRA education.

Foster family support agencies. These are agencies that are typically non-profit organizations, community based, that provide goods and services for families. That perhaps a family needs a new bed. They need clothes for a child or sometimes they just need family enrichment support. So, these support agencies are in communities and they primarily work with the foster or parent association, so that tends to be the rally point for many of these agencies in communities that are sanctioned by your protective service agent. Foster family bridge organizations.

These are organizations that I mentioned earlier, there's been a movement of organizing in faith communities and other value-based communities. And many of them are, I refer to them as bridge organizations. Because what they do is they go into their communities. They're from their communities and neighborhoods and as they become aware of the need for foster families and volunteers to support those who foster, they will go and recruit, identify people willing to support, willing to foster.

So, they're bridging a potential resource families, caregiver families with the agencies that need them. They're not case management organizations. They're not an association and they're not a support agency. They're not really looking at goods and services. They're really mobilizing families and volunteers within their social network. This is something that's just been emerging too. This is a relieve dynamic. It's very exciting to see it.



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Foster youth group homes and mentoring organizations. These are really key stakeholders. Because they have a very high focus on this population. Faith and community organizations that were mentioned now. There is a mobilization movement in faith communities. Having those resources where you can connect with a number of these organizations. Some are local, some are state and some are actually national. Local government officials. Once you Google your state agency, is recommended to child protective services at the top. You need to look out and maybe Google your local government foster officials.

And then of course foster care licensing and training agencies. Those are usually the local case management, foster care case management companies that work with family court and state agencies as outsource case managers. So, these are the stakeholder groups. And then part of this methodology is once you identify, you reach out to your state, the county child protective service agencies, you want to ask them for a name of the folks that contract with them. And ask them through the Freedom of Information Act, we have some standard letters in the toolkit, that you can send out as part of an email campaign to begin to collect data.

Who are the contractors? Who are the people that serve this population of 13 to 18 as well aged out youth. So, once you reach out to your county and state protective service agencies, then that's really where you can begin to drill down on who are the people that are at work. And I mentioned already, Google your state name, Florida and foster care agency. And it's typically, pops up right at the very top of the list.

Within this study, one of the things you'd be doing is not only identifying who the stakeholders are, those are the folks you want to really go out and just sit and talk to and ask them what they're doing right now to serve kids and how they're having impact and how the kids are doing in terms of people in the community who're serving them. But once you go to the publicly available databases in your state and nationally, there are 11 leading social indicators that you can identify at those databases and their search engines. You can just type in these key phrases. And these is a pretty standard metrics of measurement of terms of social quality indicators.

Once you identify and quantify where these trends are in your community, with some reasonable sense of accuracy, you could begin to project perhaps what the supply and demand needs could be in the future for your services and who is in position best to meet those needs. And those become great partners for you to speak out and look for ways to serve them as they served you and begin to leverage their relationship with youth in the community. Then the report back.

The 11 social indicators we go through, unemployment rate, people with high school diplomas, per capita income past 12 months, students eligible for free lunch, reduced lunch programs, students not graduating on time. So, this is all going to be rolled up into sections in your final landscape study report. One of the values of doing the interviews when we schedule the interviews, in this report I'm using as a case study. We interviewed 65 folks throughout those three lenses and was able to really find several



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things about the service array that was the existing current service array in the community. Who is really engaged? Who are the ones that had thinking plans? Who are the ones that understood the trends and forces that are driving this population and what they're thinking of doing?

That becomes a real collaborative opportunity and the collective impact opportunity within foster care today are increasing. And so, we wrap it up with really knowing and understanding your local systems care. Just being able to become a student of your local community and the foster kid. Where are they? How well are we serving them? What can we expect in the future from the kids who are being served?

Will we continue to see these trends that Lynette and I have talked about or can we within our local community, town, region and perhaps state, could we possibly begin to grind those numbers down and show evidence of the impact of our work for the future so that we can then have demonstration sites around your county as well as the data that could drive investments to take it to scale around your county, your region, your state. With that, I'm going to turn it back over to you, Connie.

Connie: Okay, great. Let's see how many grantees we can get to share a tip. Whether you're new or you've been doing these things for a long time. We have just a few minutes to share. We'd like to ask to ask grantees to use the raise-the-hand feature. Megan will then unmute you and we would ask you to share one tip that you'd use to reach out to these populations. If you're not serving these populations, maybe you would just like to ask for one tip and then we'll answer those in the question and answer.

So, we ask that you keep your answer short so that we have time for other presenters to share the rest of the information and then we'll park those and come back to them at the question and answer period. But this time, I'd like to have you use the raise-the-hand feature and Megan, I would ask you to unmute and let's grantees share their tips and ideas around this.

Megan: Absolutely, so it looks like we have some input from John Williams. So, John, you are unmuted, go ahead.

John: Yeah, thanks for the opportunity, guys, to hear Bill. Thank you so much for sharing. The tip that I would offer even as we're an organization that's fairly new to offering services to kids in care is what we've discovered from state agencies and even local care providers is that they are very receptive to outside help and to slide any way that it can be offered. So, if you're in an area and you're unsure who to talk to, I would imagine in less than a half a day, just by working the phone and send in some emails, you would be able to find someone who would be probably very excited to hear what your organization could bring to the table.

Bill: I could not agree more. That's a healthy perspective in terms of reaching out into the community and saying, we have some value to add and we want to be able to do our part. Because serving at-risk underserved populations, it's an all-in community



effort. And being able to differentiate what you do, share it openly, the opportunities would tend to follow that level of communication and authenticity.

Connie: Thank you for sharing, John. You said your program is new to that, so I appreciate you sharing. Is there anybody else who would like to share? We'd like to hear from as many grantees as possible. Anybody else that would like to share? Megan can unmute if you use the raise-the-hand feature.

Megan: If you happen to be struggling with finding that raise-your-hand feature, feel free to drop a message in the chat and we can physically click on your name to unmute you as well. So, we have a couple of different options here.

Connie: Bill, we have someone that has put in the chat box that at the state level that they send out confirmation of a program being evidence-based and selling that as a good program for youth. They talk about the challenges of permissions and those sorts of things. I would imagine that's the struggle that lots of grantees face.

Bill: Yeah, my comment about that is the true influencer in that relationship at times is the foster parent, particular of the 12 to 18-year-old youth. Because those families are really, really highly valued, because there are so few of them. So, the real way to connect with them is to build those relationships with those caregivers. And not just foster parents, but the family caregivers, the kinship caregivers. Those folks can have a tremendous amount of influence when it comes to getting a case manager to sign off on providing that educational material.

And another thing I would encourage is to consider how to leverage a trainer model to train foster families, train advocates, youth mentors within the community that can deliver those messages in bite sized portions maybe through their youth gatherings, through their activity schedules. Just have huddles and groups. I'm not sure tactically what the delivery system is with content, but figuring out how to get that to them in a way that people who have the influence can influence that material getting to them.

Connie: Bill, I'm going to park this next question until we get to Q&A because I think it's very valuable and I think it's something you can really speak to and that's the one about how to partner at the state level. So if we could park that one, come back at the Q&A. Because I see where John is talking about once we do that, that's disseminated more broadly and there's more readily or more readable access to that group. And so I think that's really important, so we can come back to that.

It's looks like folks are weighing in on that. I'd like to move to the next question that we have. We just kind of like to do another grantee poll question. I see that some of that has already started and so, Megan, do you mind to advance to that next slide and we'll pull up that question. We'd like for folks to share what are some of the most challenging aspects that you have experienced when you're targeting and serving vulnerable youth in your community. I do realize that sometimes it's challenging to talk about what our challenges are, but that's something that's very real to look at what are some of the



challenges we face and how can we tap into some of this experience that you have in front of you right now?

So, if you'd go ahead and just share in the chat box some of those challenges that you've experienced, then we'll ask our experts to see if they can weigh in on that as we come into the question and answer section. We'd like to make it as tailored to your needs as possible while you have access to these experts, get some of those questions answered.

We'll give just a few more moments on that. See some answers coming in. We'll give our experts a chance to review those and think about ways to provide insight. And each community is unique and has its own unique set of challenges. So, we'd love to hear from grantees from all over and maybe you'd feel comfortable putting in your state with some of the challenges that you've had in your state specifically. Okay. We have another question.

We'd just like to ask the grantees to weigh in again just in the effort of trying to provide specialized focused answers for you that the experts might be able to answer for you. So, if your program is serving youth in foster care or involved in the juvenile justice, which phase are you in? Preparation, implementation or CQI, continuous quality improvement? Just go ahead and answer with preparation, implementation or CQI.

Oh, and I like that, Bill and Lynette. Participation, they're in buy-in from staff and facilities. I bet you have something to say about that. I think you're going to get some robust conversation going around these. And you might be dealing with several of these. Sometimes we're trying to build the car while we're driving it. So, some might be still trying to prepare while they're engaging in the opportunity to implement. So, we do understand that some of those things work together.

Lynette: I would just say, based on one of the comments that were made in terms of getting turned away or not really sure where to turn in terms of the state, you might get a no, but it's important for you yourself to overcome obstacles because of how important this work is. But just understand that within the state and just really how the system is set up, some states will actually publish what their volunteer requirements are or other educational programs are.

So, you might want to look at that and then also, of course, reaching out to individual facilities or group homes, other programs. I ran into a situation where my research was very unique but I saw in the stateside it said I needed to get the site approval, but the site superintendent was just like, no, well, until it's approved by the state and so I was in between. Now this is pre-COVID, but what I did was put together a little neat packet and actually flew down to this particular facility in Florida, drove, made my way there and just rang the bell and they opened the gate and I was able to have a conversation with the facility superintendent.



And it was that personal connection that then allowed him to write a letter saying that he wanted me to be there. So again, just go back to how important this work is and thinking about that, yes. Trying to navigate the system which can seem overwhelming at times, but there are definitely ways to get this done.

Connie: Okay, we'll do the question and answer portion now as I see we have about 10 minutes remaining and we parked a few questions and had a few questions on the front end. And so, Lynette and Bill, if you'll just provide some practical information to grantees as they try to engage the population. Looks like folks are very motivated and so I'll turn that back to y'all for question and answer and try to provide support with some of the questions we've parked. Looks like COVID-19 and challenges of access are the top question folks are having, it appears.

Bill: We'll comment about influencing, working with your state agent, getting buy-in at the top and doing a top down strategy and trying to steward that influence at the state level and use that to gain access to youth. I would encourage, that is a perhaps, a candy, a really good strategy. But it really depends on your state, a child welfare commissioner or secretary, the person that's really at the top. That's a stakeholder I would recommend. If that's something you think in your state that would be a good approach, I would start and go ahead and look at communicating with your state child welfare commissioner.

Those are appointments by the governors and those individuals, really most of the time are there. They're looking particularly now for innovation. And some state child welfare agencies are actually creating options of innovation, learning, involvement. So that's an opportunity there, I would agree. But it's not all states. Across the states, we're like at Florida, some innovation there. Arkansas, Georgia, Missouri, some places that influence some good things in California. And that there's some innovation in getting buy-in at the top.

So, and the other thing in terms of stewarding the influence of people in the space who are stakeholders is your professional association, the association where all the group home directors, the child placing agencies, the adoption agencies. There usually a professional association in your state. They have an annual conference. They have work groups. You may want to consider becoming a member of that. In Florida it's called children advocacy, advocacy for children, the Florida coalition for children. And they're basically an advocacy group, but they're also a lobbying group for the organizations that serve these populations.

So those are two things I'd say about that. The other thing about just time management around these issues. This is a complex system. Both juvenile justice and child welfare, very complex. And being able to really become focused on what can we do in the short-term, the mid-term and the long-term. Someone mentioned earlier, this is really a long view initiative. You have to really take this on to say, we have to first burn our way into this community. It's a very close community. Secondly, we have to add value. And thirdly, we have to build that trust. And so, I would strongly encourage you to dedicate

some time and resource and look at maybe dedicating someone toward this population, to move into this population with a very strategic focus.

Lynette: Yeah, and someone mentioned within the chat in terms of the technology piece. And it is true. In some state policies within juvenile facilities, there is no technology, there's no internet access in the classrooms. But because of the COVID-19, that is actually changing primarily because of children with special needs. There's no federal mandate in terms of, well, every state has their compulsory attendance laws, but really the one piece that is able to allow people to take someone to court for not fulfilling an educational responsibility is through special needs students.

And so, because of the large population of special needs students, that has happened during this time where advocacy groups actually took several states to court. One, just trying to even decrease the number of youth in facilities. But two, arguing that they were not getting their education as outlined in their individualized education programs. And so, because of that, in some states, I won't name this particular state, but one state in particular where within the state policy is that they would not have internet in the classrooms.

They made that change because they knew that they had to provide some type of learning for those children. And so part of it is like, how can you capitalize on this piece with technology. You're not having to fight your way in the door, but what is it that you can provide again via platforms like this, Webex, Zoom and others that you can provide that resource within the facilities. A lot of them are increasing the amount of technology that they now have and need to meet the needs of their learners.

Bill: I think one question and folks are asking, how do we reengage youth that maybe have fallen out of our programs, how do we reengage them? I think one way is you recruit and retain them and this can also work to reengage is to reach out to those, maybe even start with those that have passed on and go make them part of the feedback group. Find out what might be the challenge for them right now. Why have they fallen out. How can you better serve, better support them. And I would also encourage you if you use things like life planning tools, like life tools with your youth, to put the SRA content within a context of a youth-centered life plan.

Most often if you assess, if you're using life skill training with a youth and you're asking them what their vision of the future is, most of these kids are not going to say, I really want to, be great if I end up in jail for drug dealing once I get out. But most of them will have a sense of what they would like to do. It's often times very simple view of, want to get a good job, I want to buy a house, I want to have a good car. I want to live. I want to be saved. I'd like to take care of everything. I'd like to have a family one day. That's probably the biggest things I hear when I'm doing life planning with this population is, I want to have a family.

I think that's one of the primary reasons that we see such a percent of teenage girls having a second pregnancy before they're 21 is because they're really trying to replace



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something that's lost and that's that feeling. And if you can somehow bring that content into that context, that this is really tools to help them achieve what they define as their future and again tie that into, tie that into relationship and maintain it within relationships and focus on a broad range of interactions with the youth around youth-centered interest so that they earn that right to speak to the heavier subjects of sexuality and their future.

Lynette: Yeah, and to add to what Bill just shared, I would just say, don't underestimate the power of one human being and our own stories. And so are there youth who have experienced your program, who can just speak positively for what it did for them. I think it's really important to be able to share those brief clips so that children are seeing themselves, so to speak, in these youth. I think it's really important. I think it's also important that we don't just make assumptions even if we don't even think we're making assumptions, this implicit bias sometimes that may start to happen or we just think, oh, well, of course, everyone would know that, because that's where we've lived.

So, I think about a youth that was at the county juvenile detention center and he was 18 and I was just providing a demonstration lesson about mentoring and in his mind, it was like, well, no. I'm not a little kid. Like children, you mentor little children because of big brothers, big sisters. And so just for me to even be able to say, I have mentors as a grown adult and just to have that conversation, it was like, oh, okay. So sometimes even as we use terms like mentoring, it is a very vague or abstract concept. And so, making sure that whatever we do, whatever we share, there is clarity around that. And again, perhaps using those visual images, those stories of former participants who, it's been a wonderful experience for, I think, will further elevate your program.

Bill: I totally agree with that. And one of the comments says, let's give children and youth their voice back. And part of doing that is exactly what I hear Lynette saying and what I'm trying to emphasize as well is if you've got some kids that have just fallen out of the program, you don't know where they are, just go find them. Have a cup of coffee or coke or whatever their favorite drink as long as it's healthy for them. And keep them engaged with their story, their own story.

Sometimes we miss the fact that for, in children's narratives, they're hearing adults a lot of times using our professional terms like mentoring, support, all those things as meeting a deficit in them, because that's really, their self-awareness is broken. I can't measure up. Something's wrong with me. But to be able to just invest the time to ask the right questions, to engage and to let them talk and just let them talk and get it on the table. And some point in time try to assess what that means. But I think that's huge, giving them their voice back and one of the comments in the chat box, couldn't agree more.

Connie: We're just about out of time and I want to say that there's a lot of love coming through in the chat box and so I just have to say thank you so much to the grantees for participating today. And I also want to thank the experts for providing such great information and research and more importantly, their own personal story with the work.



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So, thank you so much, everyone. And it looks like, I want you to see in the chat box all the love that folks sent to you as they enjoyed what you've given to them. So excellent information. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Have a good day, everyone.

Bill: Thank you.