Pathways to Permanency: Dismantling Foster Care's Pipelines

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Intros

- Name
- Pronouns
- Role (i.e. Parent, Advocate, Social Worker, etc.)
Recognize, Intervene, Support, & Empower

- Reduce LGBTQ+ youth in systems of care.
- Increase permanency options.
- Decrease bias and discrimination in care through education and coaching.
Permanency Disruptions

- Experiencing Homelessness: 40%
- Juvenile Justice: 20%
- Child Welfare: 23%
- SOGIE-Based Bullying or Harassment: 85%

Williams Institute, NCLR, Irvine et al, GLSEN
In the Life Media: 
Our Bodies, Our Rights

Lily’s Story
Understanding the Cycle

- Juvenile Justice
- Health
- Permanency
- Education
- Housing Instability
- Foster Care
- Caregivers
Education

• Non-affirming school climate
• Punitive Discipline
• Truancy

Analysis of State Laws that Address the Consequences of Bullying (as of 4/30/11)

- Laws that Rely Solely on Punitive Consequences: 57%
- Laws that Rely on Punitive Consequences & Supportive/Remedial Interventions: 43%

Source: U.S. Department of Education
Access to Healthcare

- Access to knowledgeable providers
- Access to gender-affirming care
- HIV/AIDS & STI Status
- Stigma

Fenway Health
Caregivers

- Misinformation
- Lack of resources
- Unique developmental needs & milestones

- More likely to attempt suicide (8x)
- More likely to report high levels of depression (6x)
- More likely to be at high risk for contracting HIV & STIs (3x)
- More likely to use illegal drugs (3x)

Family Acceptance Project
Experiencing Homelessness

• Survival Crimes & “Quality of Life” Offenses
• Lack of identification (i.e. couch surfing youth)
Juvenile Justice System

- Overcriminalization
- Incorrect placement and/or solitary
- Abuse
Child Welfare System

- Bias from: social workers, court, attorneys, caregivers, etc.
- Confidentiality and Outing
- Lack of legal framework and/or implementation
- Unaffirming and unsafe placements

2x as likely to report poor treatment by the foster system.

2x as likely to live in a group facility, rather than with a loving family.
State of the Union: Child-Welfare Non-Discrimination Laws

- Prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (24 states + D.C.)
- Prohibits discrimination based only on sexual orientation (13 states)
- No statute on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (13 states)
- Explicit guidance requiring that trans youth be assigned to housing in accordance with their gender identity (3 states)
- Requires LGBT-inclusive training for staff and/or foster parents (9 states)
Brainstorm

What elements would you want to see to know that a system of out-of-home care was safe and affirming of LGBTQ+ youth? (i.e. Training for staff, specific policies, visibility, data collection, etc.)
Creating a Standard
Advocacy Campaign: LGBTQ+ Foster Youth

**Goal**
- Provide LGBTQ+ specific programs, services, and funding

**Targets**
- Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

**Power Analysis**

**Tactics**
- Letter writing
- Phone calls
- In-person lobbying & listening sessions

**Stories**
- Impacted community members
Power Analysis

1. Define the problem
2. Name the competing agendas
3. Sketch major issue/policy battles
4. Sketch Decision-makers
5. Sketch organized Opposition Groups
6. Sketch organized Ally Groups
7. Sketch unorganized constituents
Power Analysis

Social Justice Agenda

- LA County Commission on Children and Families
- LA LGBT Center
- Child Welfare Coalitions
- LGBT Affirming Foster Care Organizations
- LA LGBT Center Volunteers
- Board of Supervisors
- Foster youth

Opposition

- Providing LGBT Specific Services
- Promote LGBTQ Preparedness
- Create funding streams
- Non-LGBT Inclusive Foster Care Service Providers

Decision making power
Active participant
Power to influence
Take into account
Not on radar

Ally
Long-term Solutions
Supporter
Medium-term Solutions
Inclined
Short-term Solutions
Inclined
Short-term Damage
Challenger
Medium-term Damage
Opponent
Long-term Damage
Tactics

Media:
- Op-Ed
- Letters to the Editor
- Press Conferences
- Social Media

In-person:
- Lobby visits
- Testimony
- Marches
- Rallies
- Holding space

Remotely:
- Phone banks
- Letter writing
Sharing your story...

Dayvon Williams, Youth Justice Coalition & Joshua Arguelle, NFYI
Start Small, Think BIG

What is one area relating to LGBTQ+ youth in systems of care that you would like to focus your local and/or state advocacy on?
How will you RISE up for LGBTQ+ Youth?

R - Recognize LGBTQ+ and gender-variant children and youth are in your care and caseload.
I - Intervene to reduce barriers.
S - Support children and youth.
E - Empower yourself and co-workers.

Contact Us

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Works Cited


Works Cited


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