

FOSTER CARE LIASON 101 TRAINING

June 10, 2024 – PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

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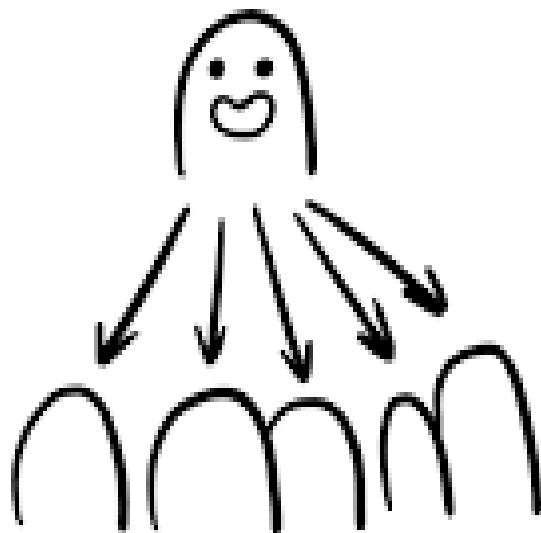


Understanding Foster Care

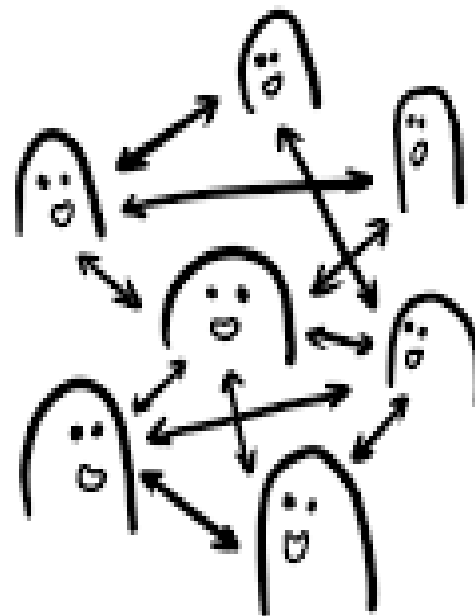
LISTEN, LEARN & LEAD

Building Community

LESS OF THIS.



MORE OF THIS.



Common Terms & Acronyms

COS

- Court Ordered Services/Circle of Support

CPS

- Child Protective Services

DFPS

- Department of Family & Protective Services

TMC/PMC

- Temporary or Permanent Managing Conservatorship

How Children Come Into DFPS Custody

- Reports of child abuse and neglect can be made either by telephone or online
 - **(800) 252-5400**
 - <https://www.txabusehotline.org/>
 - Remember... a reporter's job is only to suspect, not be positive about whether abuse has actually occurred

What Constitutes Abuse or Neglect

Physical
Neglect

Neglectful
Supervision

Physical
Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Abandonment

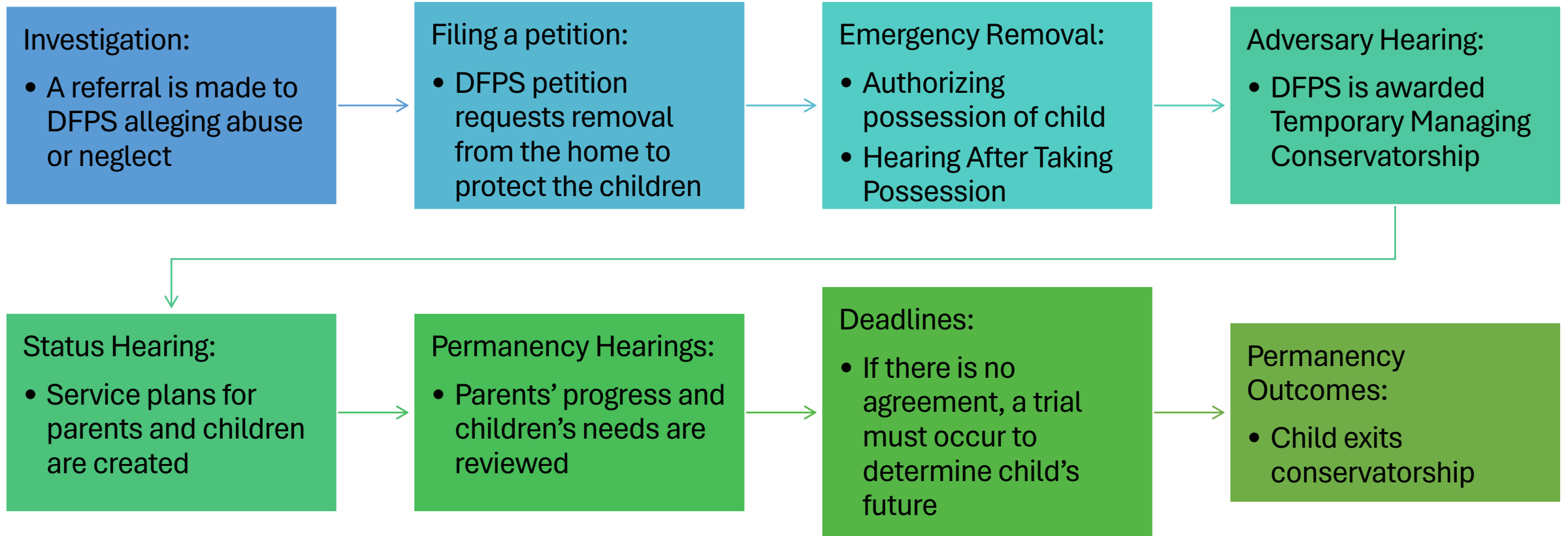
Labor & Sex
Trafficking

Medical
Neglect

Emotional
Abuse

As defined by the Texas Family Code Section 261.001

Legal Stages of a Child Welfare Case



FOSTER CARE 101:

Where Does a Child or Youth Live When Placed in Foster Care?



Kinship
Caregiver



Foster Home



Emergency
Shelter



General Residential
Operation (GRO)



Residential
Treatment
Centers (RTC)



Monitored
Return



Supervised
Independent
Living (SIL)

Exiting Foster Care



Family Reunification



Adoption by relative,
kin, or unrelated
person

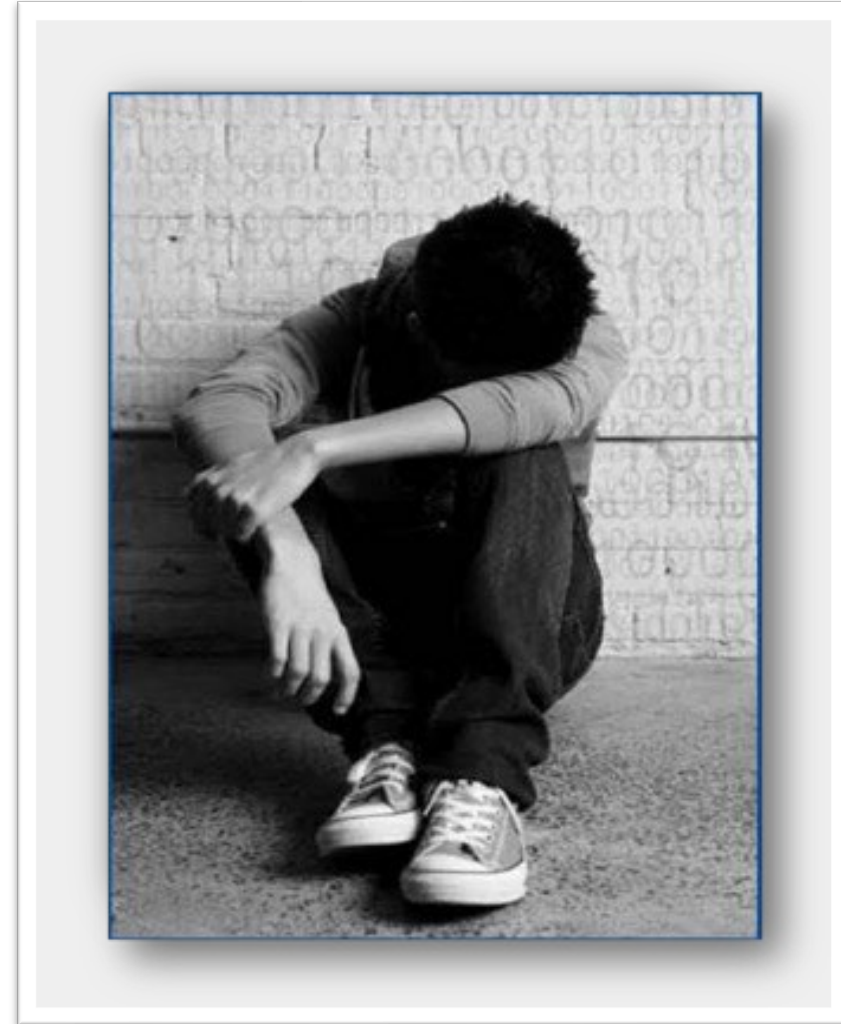


Permanent Managing
Conservatorship to
relative or suitable
individual



Another Planned
Permanent Living
Arrangement (e.g.,
Independent Living)

Each year approximately **1,200**
youth age out of foster care in
Texas.



Statewide Context Child Welfare:

Statistics – Outcomes after Aging Out at Ages 23/24

25% will experience homelessness before their 22nd birthday.

Within 12-18 months of leaving care

- 33% will be on some form of public assistance
- 40% will not have completed high school
- 50% will be unemployed

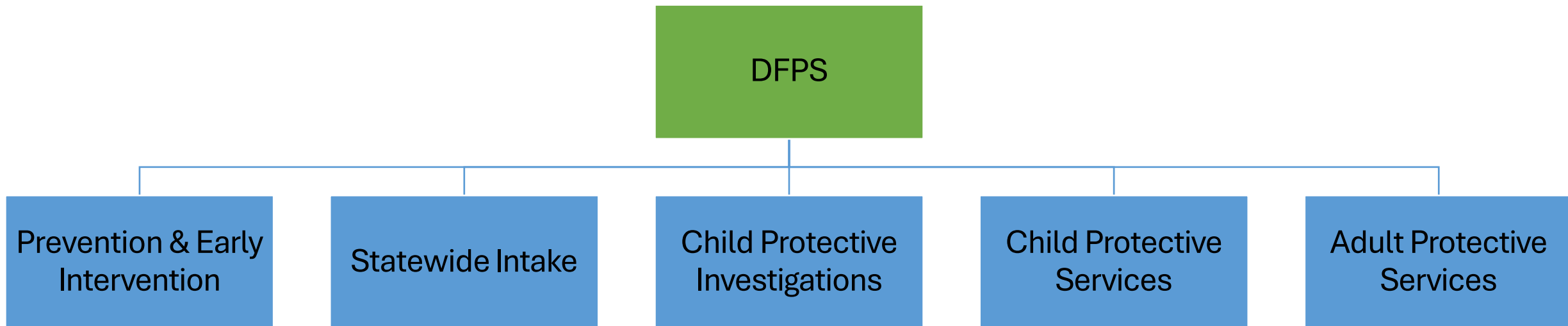
Within 18 months of leaving care

- 26% Of the young ladies will have a child outside of marriage.

70% of youth leaving foster care report a desire to attend college.

Less than **3%** obtain a college degree.

Statewide Context Child Welfare: Dept. of Family & Protective Services



Community Based Care

Area	SSCC	Current Status (June 1, 2024)
<u>Texas Panhandle (Region 1)</u> 41 counties	Saint Francis	Stage III
<u>Big Country and Texoma (Region 2)</u> 30 counties in North Texas	2INgage	Stage III
<u>Metroplex West (Region 3W)</u> 10 counties around Fort Worth	OCOK	Cook, Denton, and Wise counties: Stage II; Southern 7 counties: Stage III
<u>South Central and Hill Country (Region 8b)</u> 27 counties	Belong	Stage III
<u>Metroplex East (Region 3E)</u> 9 counties	EMPOWER	Stage II
<u>Piney Woods (Region 4)</u> 23 counties	4Kids4Families	Stage II
<u>Deep East (Region 5)</u> 15 counties	Family Care Network	Stage II



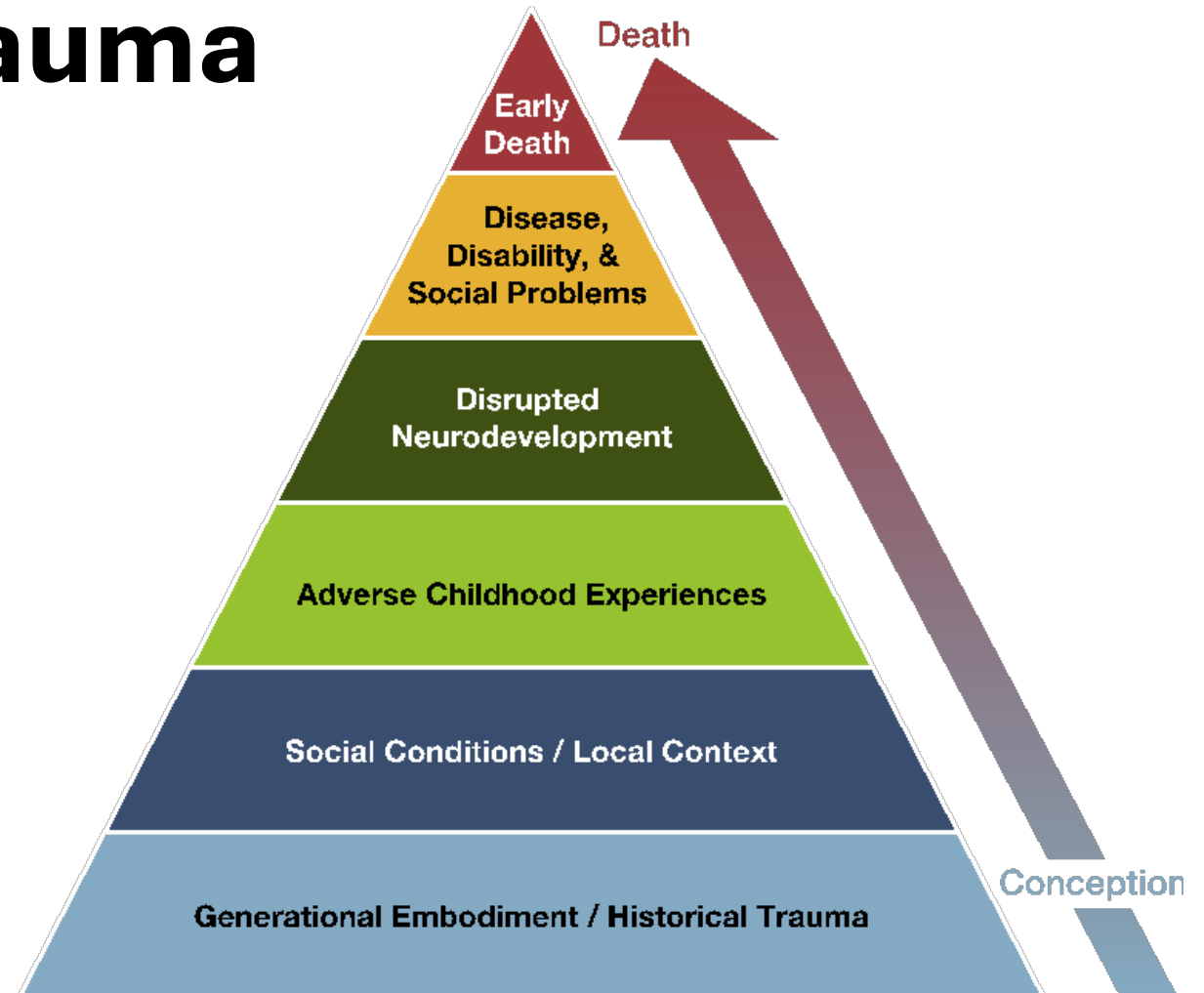
What Makes This Student Group Unique

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Understanding Complex Developmental Trauma

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, caregiver neglect, mental illness and household violence
- The more ACEs a child experiences, the more likely they are to suffer from health, substance misuse and poor academic achievement
- Too many ACEs without intervention can lead to early death/toxic stress



The Effects of Trauma on the Brain

- The Triune Brain Model
 - Brainstem
 - Reflexes, breathing, muscles control, heartrate
 - Limbic Area
 - Categories sense-like a switchboard
 - Assesses for threats
 - Emotion Regulation Center
 - Cortex
 - The Thinking Brain
 - Your Brain on Trauma
 - Rational or thinking brain in under-activated
 - Emotion regulation center is under-activated
 - The Amygdala/fear center is over-activated



Overcoming the Trauma Paradox

[I Survived Foster Care](#)



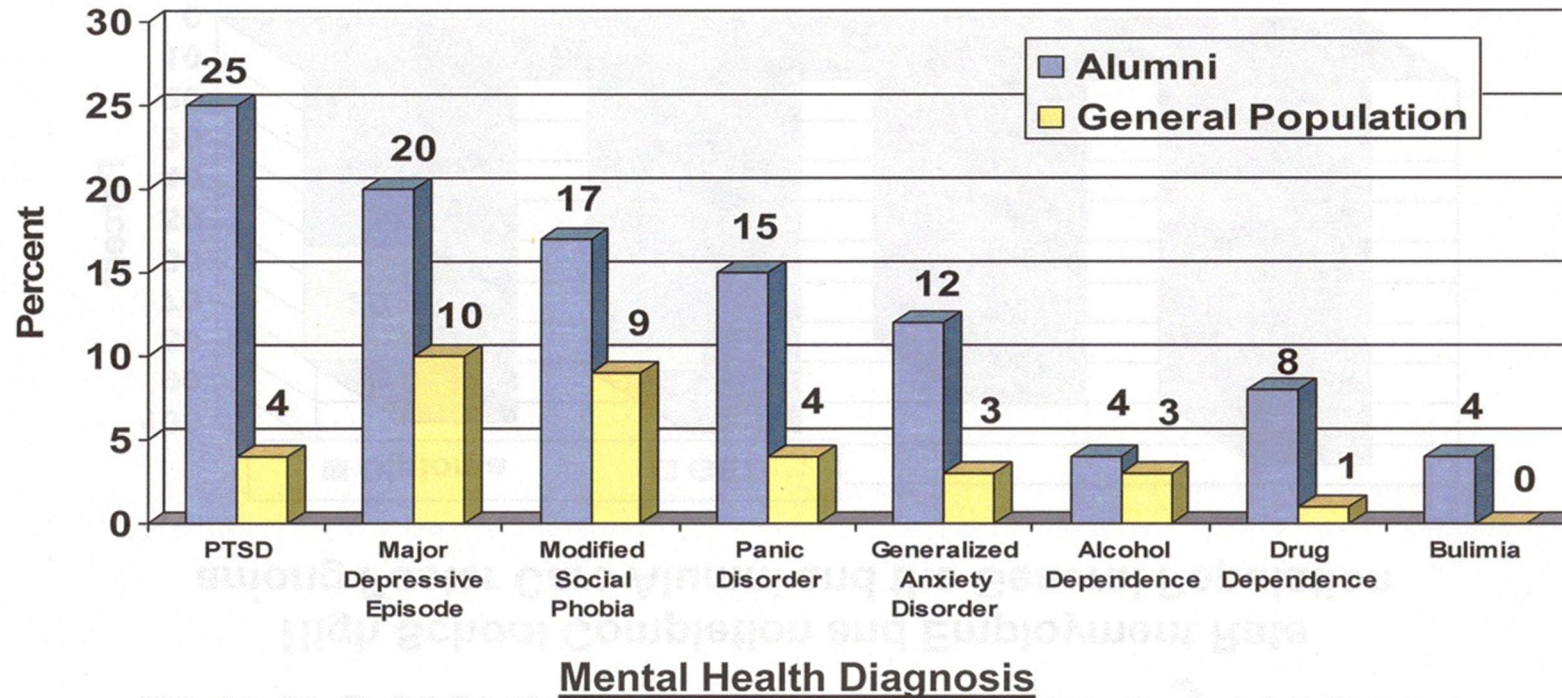
Guiding Principles of Trauma Informed Care

SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach, 2014 <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4884/SMA14-4884.pdf>



Mental Health

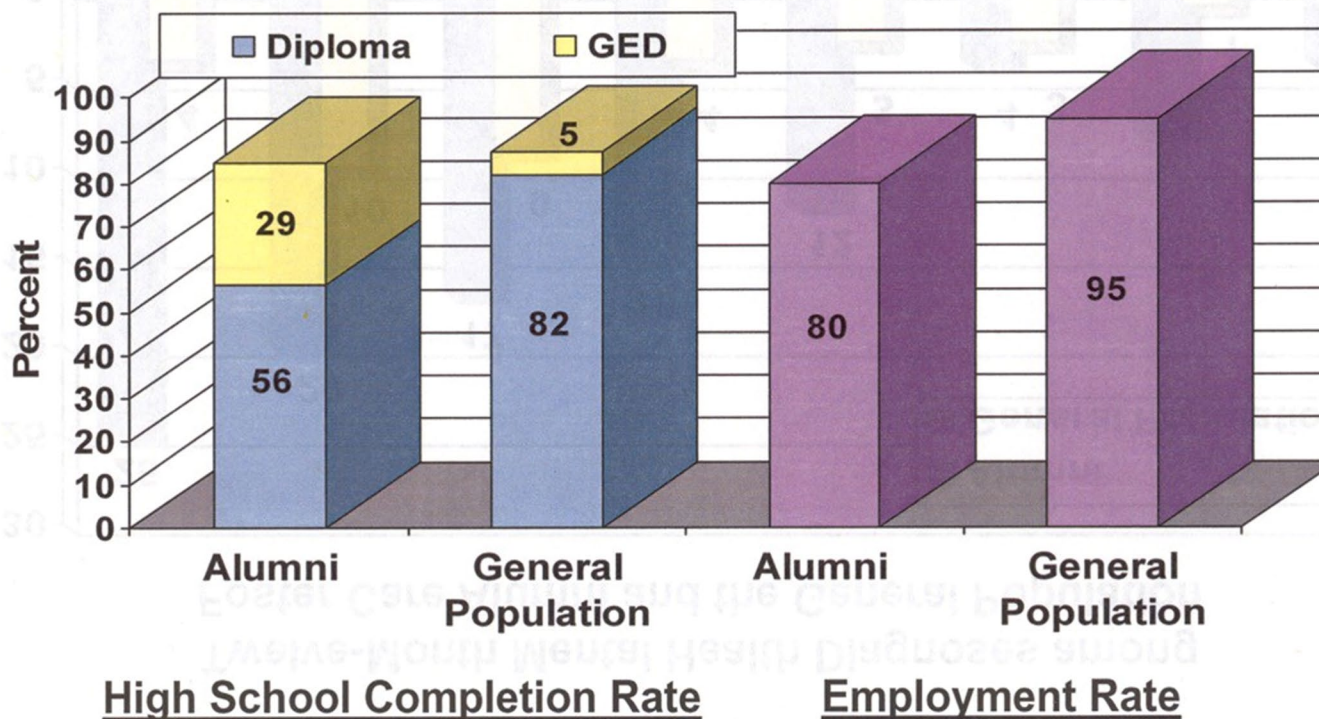
Twelve-Month Mental Health Diagnoses among Foster Care Alumni and the General Population



Source: Pecora, P. J., Kessler, R. C., Williams, J., O'Brien, K., Downs, A. C., English, D., White, J., Hiripi, E., White, C.R., Wiggins, T. & Holmes, K. (2005). *Improving Family Foster Care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study*. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs. www.casey.org

Education and Employment

High School Completion and Employment Rate
among Foster Care Alumni and the General Population



Source: Pecora, P. J., Kessler, R. C., Williams, J., O'Brien, K., Downs, A. C., English, D., White, J., Hiripi, E., White, C.R., Wiggins, T. & Holmes, K. (2005). *Improving Family Foster Care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study*. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs. www.casey.org



Higher Education Foster Care Liaison

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Texas Education Code Section 51.9356

Passed by the 84th Legislature (HB 3748) and requires:

- Each institution of higher education in Texas must appoint at least one employee to serve as a liaison for students formerly in the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Passed by the 86th Legislature (HB 1702):

- Adds the following, "The institution shall identify those students from information provided in admissions or financial aid application or other available resources."
- Also includes information on training, publicizing campus resources, and foster care liaison information.

Texas Education Code Section 51.9356

- This includes:
 - Any public technical institute
 - Public junior college
 - Public senior college or university
 - Medical or dental unit
 - Public state college or any other educational institution as defined by law

Duties of the Higher Education Foster Care Liaison

Provide information to SEFC regarding support services

- Resources and Benefits provided through DFPS

Inform SEFC about other resources available at the institution

Provide other relevant information to assist the students

Duties of the Higher Education Foster Care Liaison

- **On campus:**
 - Coordinate interactions between SEFC and college and university staff/faculty who serve the specific needs of students (financial aid, housing, etc.)
- **Off campus:**
 - Collaborate with higher education professionals interested in networking with SEFC across campuses
 - Foster care liaisons at local independent school districts or charter schools
 - Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
 - Texas Education Agency
 - Child welfare stakeholders including DFPS, Court Appointed Special Advocates, Child Placing Agencies, etc.



Education Reach for Texans



Campus Support

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Identifying Students with Experience in Foster Care On Campus

Request a list of students formerly in foster care using Tuition and Fee Waivers (Financial Aid, Registrar)

Use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Request a list of Education and Training Voucher Recipients

Admissions-Apply Texas list

Cover your campus with posters, flyers, brochures

Develop a network across campus (Campus Champions)

New student orientation

Maintaining Student Privacy

- FERPA
 - Working with high school students
 - Students on college campuses and gaining access to information
 - Knowing who your FERPA people are
 - Legitimate educational interest

Casey Family Programs Supporting Success Model

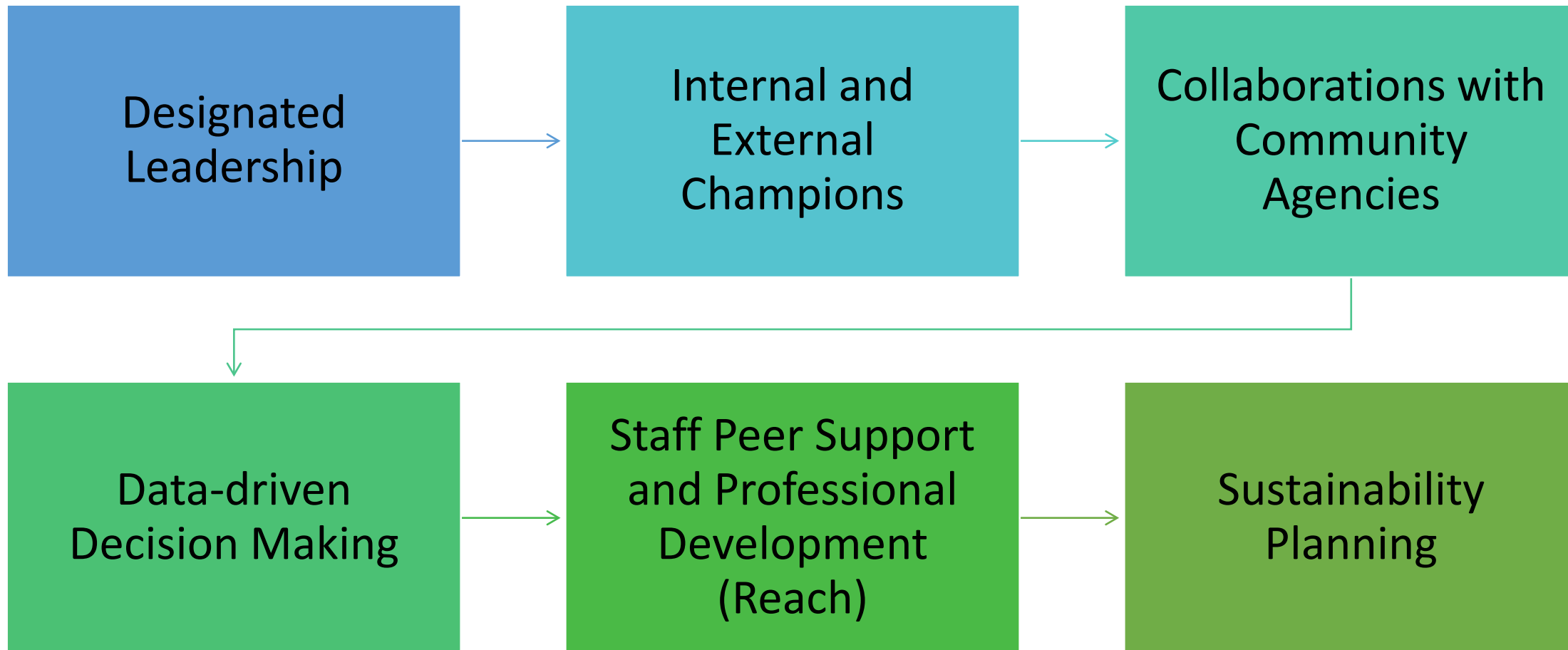
Designated Point of Contact

- Campus Champions
- Training of Campus Champions

Start Small and Prioritize Basic Needs First (Use Stakeholders to Assist with Prioritization)

- Phase 1: lay groundwork (sustainability)
- Phase 2: year-round housing, financial aid, academic advising
- Phase 3: counseling, engagement in university, transition assistance

Core Elements For Program Development





Student Organization & Engagement

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Engaging Students on Your Campus



- Have a Designated Point of Contact (Casey Family Programs Supporting Success)
- Recruit Campus Champions
- Form a Student Organization for students with a background in foster care
- Resource Provision (If you give it, they might come!)
- Campus Programming
 - Financial Literacy
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Life Skills Building
 - Career Planning
 - Tutoring/TRIO
 - Academic Advising

Student Organizations

- Dedicated to SEFC
- Can/should allies participate?
- Require additional support than traditional organizations
- Normalizing activity as a collegiate experience
- Helps students locate each other on neighboring campuses creating a network
- Isolating SEFC further?



Illusion Of Order

I'm a senior...

I don't have
money to buy
textbooks



Grant opportunity

What is an
advisor, again?

Rent is due... TOMORROW!

I'm an office of one



“The world breaks everyone,
and afterward, some are
strong at the broken places.”

~ Ernest Hemingway



Helpful Resources

Education Reach for Texans

- <http://www.educationreachfortexans.org/>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

- <http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/financialaid/tofa2.cfm?ID=429>

Transitional Living Services

- https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/

Texas Foster Youth Justice Project

- <https://texasfosteryouth.org/>

Foster Love aka Together We Rise

- <https://www.togetherwerise.org/about-us/>

Casey Family Programs

- <https://www.casey.org/>

Education Reach for Texans



Benefits

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Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni

- Preparation for Adult Living (PAL)
- State of Texas Tuition and Fee Waiver
- Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV)
- PAL Transitional Living Allowance
- Supervised Independent Living Program
- Extended Foster Care
- Transition Centers
- Former Foster Care Children (FFCC) Healthcare Program and Medicaid
- Housing Vouchers via Foster (Youth to Independence, Family Unification Program and Project 811)
- Grants (Pell) and Scholarships

Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni: Preparation for Adult Living (PAL)

- The purpose of Preparation for Adult Living program is to help youth transition to a successful adulthood through coordinated permanency and transition planning as they leave foster care and after.
- The program provides services, benefits, resources, and supports to youth and young adults up to age 21. The PAL staff or Aftercare case manager serve as the subject matter experts for the Transitional Living Services Program.
- Services provided:
 - Transition Support Services
 - After Care Room and Board
 - Transitional Living Allowance (up to \$1,000)
 - State of Texas Tuition and Fee Waiver Letter
 - Chafee Education and Training Voucher
 - Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth
 - Former Foster Care Youth In Higher Education Healthcare Program
 - Extended Foster Care

Benefits Available To Foster Care Alumni: Tuition & Fee Waiver

- The waiver provides exemption of tuition and fees at Texas public institutions of higher education for youth formerly in Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) conservatorship, adopted youth, and certain other youth. Students must enroll in a state supported school or a dual credit course by their 25th birthday.
- There are two state laws that exempt or waive payment of tuition and fees at state supported colleges or universities for foster youth:
 - TEC 54.366 Exemption for Students Under Conservatorship of DFPS
 - TEC 54.367 Exemption for Adopted Students Formerly in Foster or other Residential Care
- Fees that are required for educational purposes are covered with this waiver.

Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni: Education & Training Voucher (ETV)

ETV is a federally-funded, state-administered grant program for some youth or young adults who experienced foster care.

Eligible population includes youth 16+ currently in foster care, young adults who aged out of foster care, and those who were either adopted or subject to a Permanency Care Assistance agreement after the age of 16.

Based on the cost of attendance as established by higher education institutions, eligible youth may receive this assistance each year until their 23rd birthday to help reach their postsecondary educational goals at accredited or pre-accredited, nonprofit, private, or public institutions of higher education.

Students must submit a FASFA when applying for ETV.

Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni: PAL Transitional Living Allowance

Must have completed PAL training and aged out of care

Be in a Independent Living Situation

Must have been in paid placement 24 months prior to requesting

Must be attending school, working 20 hours a week, or attending vocational program

May receive up to \$1,000 in two payments of \$500

Benefits Available To Foster Care Alumni: Extended Foster Care

- A voluntary program that offers young adults (ages 18 up to 22) opportunities to continue their foster care placement and facilitate the transition to independence with DFPS supervision, if there is an available placement.
- To qualify, a young adult must have been in DFPS conservatorship the day before his or her 18th birthday.

Criteria:

- 18 to 22 years old and...
 - Regularly attending high school or enrolled in a program leading toward a high school diploma or school equivalence certificate (i.e. GED)
- 18 to 21 years old and ...
 - Regularly attending an institution of higher education or a post-secondary vocational or technical program (minimum 6 hours per semester); or
 - Actively participating in a program or activity that promotes, or removes barriers to, employment; or
 - Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
 - Incapable of doing any of the above due to a documented medical condition, which includes receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Benefits Available To Foster Care Alumni: Supervised Independent Living (SIL)

SIL is an option for young adults in Extended Foster Care to live in a variety of settings including apartments, dorms, and shared housing. SIL allows young adults to live independently with increased responsibility and without 24-hour supervision. Young adults placed in SIL settings receive minimum case management services.

Allows young adults to practice necessary independent living skills and achieve self-sufficiency in a supportive environment before leaving the placement.

While in SIL, young adults have increased responsibility such as managing their own finances, making their own medical appointments, finding their own means of transportation, buying and preparing their own food, and learning how to work with a landlord.

Case managers assist young adults with learning valuable life skills, engaging in community resources, achieving educational goals, and making connections to caring adults.

Housing Vouchers

- Foster Youth To Independence (FYI) Vouchers
 - Age 18 and not yet 24 years old
 - Was in foster care
 - Homeless or at risk of homelessness
 - Last 3 years, with possible 2-year extension (or until 24th birthday)
- Family Unification Program (FUP) Vouchers
 - Age 18 and not yet 24 years old
 - Was in foster care or will leave in 90 days
 - Homeless or at risk of homelessness
 - Last 3 years (or until 24th birthday)
- 811 Project Rental Agreement Program
 - Age 18 to 62 years old
 - Youth with disabilities who were in foster care
 - Project based rental assistance for low income
 - No term (participant may remain until age 62)

Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni: Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth (MTFCY)

- MTFCY provides medical coverage to young adults ages 18 through 20 not eligible for the FFCC program because they were not receiving Medicaid at the time they aged out of foster care.
- Eligibility criteria:
 - 18 through 20 years of age
 - In Texas foster care at age 18, or older
 - No other healthcare coverage
 - Meet program rules for income; and
 - A U.S. Citizen or have a qualified alien status

Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni: Grants (Pell) & Scholarships

- Freshman Success Fund for Foster Youth
 - Grant for first time college freshman formerly in foster care. Each year there will be four one-time grants of \$1,000 available for one young adults enrolling in their freshman year. These grants are to cover basic non-tuition related expenses such as books, supplies, computers, software, tools, uniforms, and transportation. Student must be enrolled in Texas state-supported college, university, or vocational/technical school that accepts the state college tuition and fee waiver.
- C. Ed Davis-PAL Scholarship
 - For basic non-tuition needs for former foster youth who are majoring in government, political science, history, or another pre-law field. Scholarships are for \$1,000 per academic year and are available to sophomore, junior, or senior year students.

Potential Challenges

- Identifying and locating students
- Engaging students and building trust
- Privacy issues and helping students avoid stigma
- Remembering the effects of and helping students cope with adverse childhood experiences and trauma
- Vulnerability

Education Reach for Texans



Questions?

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