

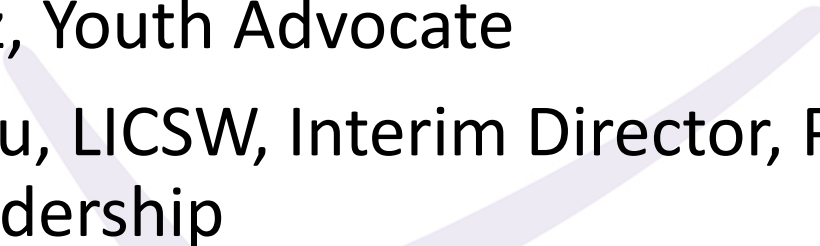


ACRC Conference August 2021 - **DRAFT PPT**

# Presenters



## Plummer Youth Promise

- Catharine Cubby, MSW, Permanency Social Worker
  - Jay-Jay Ortiz, Youth Advocate
  - Mary LeBeau, LICSW, Interim Director, Permanency Practice Leadership
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# From APPLA to Adoption Pressing Ahead for Older Youth Permanence

## Panel Presentation

### Presenters:

- Catharine Cubby, MSW, PYP, Permanency Social Worker
- Jay-Jay Ortiz, Youth Advocate

# Panel Discussion Questions

- What does the word “permanency” mean to you?
- What things helped you decide that you needed more than independent living skills to be safe and happy?
- Why do youth need a parent-figure and family in their life, even at 18 and older?
- How was your voice heard throughout the process of moving your goal from APPLA to Adoption?
- What worked well?
- What needs more work?
- Preparing yourself for adoption doesn’t happen with a flip of a switch. Having mixed feelings and feeling anxious are part of the journey. Has this happened for you?
- Do the professionals have to learn new ways of behaving when working with young adults interested in adoption? What should that look like? How can they be most helpful, what do you need from them?
- Please sum up your advice to other young adults who are seeking permanency?




# When Permanency Doesn't Exist for Youth in Residential

- No birthday cards or phone calls
- Nowhere to go for holidays
- No pictures of childhood and family
- Arriving at group home with belongings in trash bags
- Emergency contacts are staff and social workers
- “Where are you from?” = last program youth lived in

# Plummer Transformation



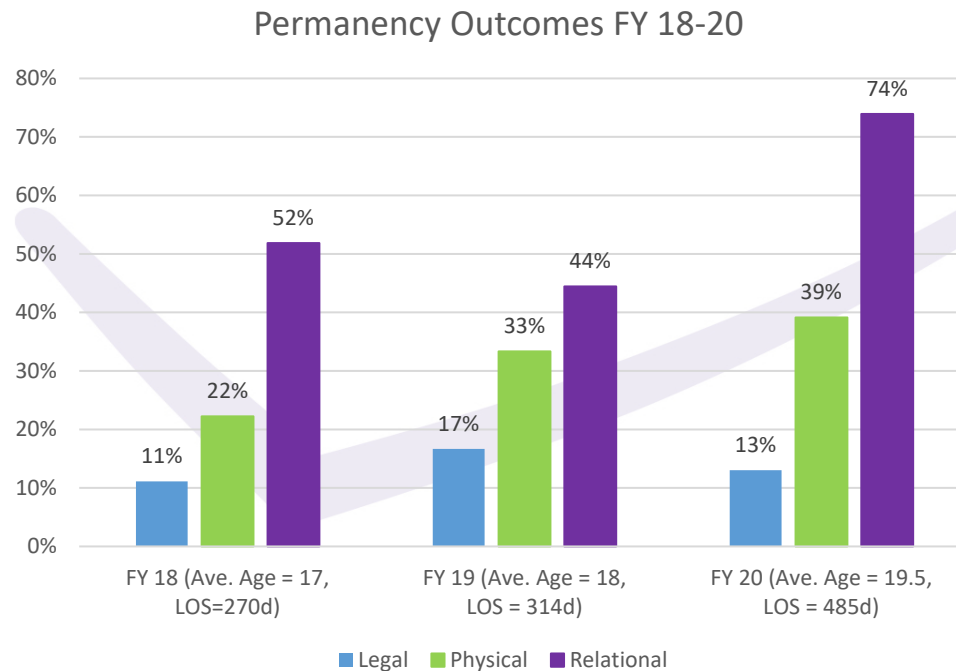
- Sparked by staff frustration
  - Adopted a Strategic Plan prioritizing the development and implementation of an Intervention & Outcome Model
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# Plummer Intervention and Outcome Model



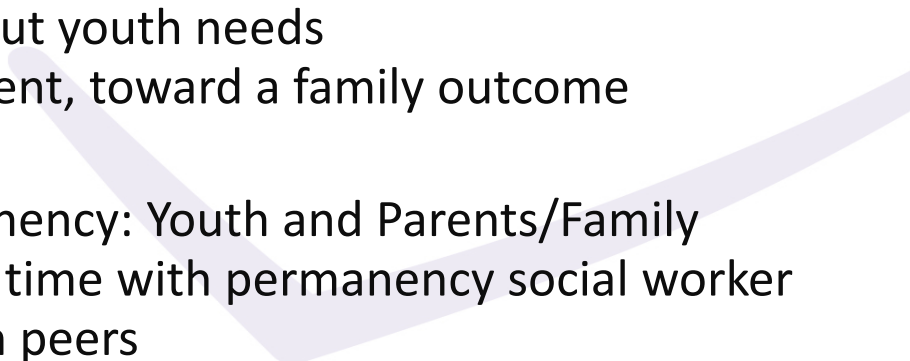
# PYP Residential Intervention: Permanency Outcomes

0% of the youth who enter our residential programs and community apartments arrive with a stable parenting relationship. In FY 18, by the time they discharged, 52% of the youth in these programs had developed a safe, stable emotionally secure parenting relationship. In FY 20, that percentage had increased to 74%.



# Permanency




- Family Search and Engagement
    - Importance to the youth
    - Immediate, persistent, ongoing
    - Involvement in treatment and teaming
  - Youth-Guided, Family-Driven Teaming
    - Realistic, individualized permanency plans
    - Youth voice, about youth needs
    - Family involvement, toward a family outcome
  - Readiness for Permanency: Youth and Parents/Family
    - Individual youth time with permanency social worker
    - Group work with peers
    - Family contact prioritized, family support needs addressed
- 

# Plummer Transformation: Vision



## Vision 2009

A community committed to providing all children the support necessary to successfully navigate into adulthood.




## Vision 2016


Every young person has a family unconditionally committed to nurture, protect, and guide them to successful adulthood.

# Permanency Defined



- Achieving a goal of PERMANENCY is not satisfied by a process, plan or placement.
  - Achieving a goal of PERMANENCY means a FAMILY RELATIONSHIP that offers physical safety, legal permanency and emotional security over time.
- 

# Youth Quote



*“How Is It That They Can Take You Away From Your Family,  
Cut Off Your Right To See Them And Then Let You Grow Up  
And Go Out With No One?  
In What World Does That Make Sense?”*

*- “June”, foster care alumna*



[http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/publications/2011\\_07\\_21\\_NeverTooOld.pdf](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/publications/2011_07_21_NeverTooOld.pdf)



# Tuning In



What is 1 word that describes your experience in 2020 with the Covid-19 pandemic?



Respond



*"I'm gonna die in this place.  
All I've ever wanted is to get  
back to my family."*


- Age 19  
Plummer Youth Promise



# Loneliness is Bad for Your Health



## Social Pain Overlap Theory

- Loneliness triggers the same neurological pathways as physical pain
  - The distress of social pain (isolation) is biologically identical to the distress of physical pain
- 

Amy E. Banks, M.D.  
Wired to Connect, 2015

# Loneliness is Bad for Your Health

## Effects of Chronic Loneliness

- Impaired cognitive performance
- Compromised immune system
- Heart disease

Source: John T. Cacioppo, University of Chicago



# Loneliness is Bad for Your Health

Loneliness kills:

Increases the risk of **early death**  
**by 45%**

It's a fact:

People who have strong ties to family and friends are as much as **50% less at risk of dying** over any given period of time than those with limited social connections

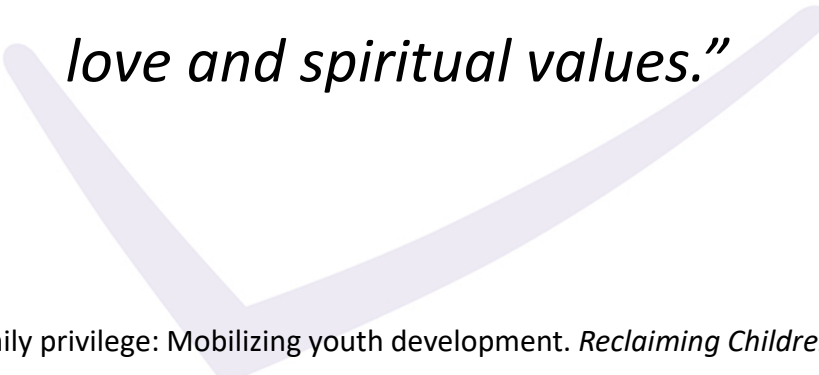


Source: John T. Cacioppo, University of Chicago

# Family Privilege




*“Benefits, mostly invisible, that come from membership in a stable family... It is an invisible package of assets and pathways that provides us with a sense of belonging, safety, unconditional love and spiritual values.”*



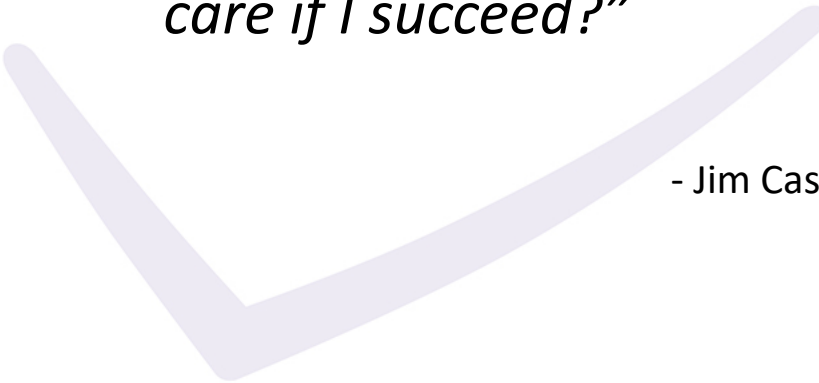
Seita, J. R. (2005). Kids without family privilege: Mobilizing youth development. *Reclaiming Children & Youth*, 14(2), 80-84.

Seita, J. R. (2001) Growing up without family privilege. *Reclaiming Children & Youth*, 10(3), 130 -132.

# Youth Quote



*“If you don’t have anybody that believes in you, how do you believe in yourself? That’s one of the biggest things that foster youth deal with. Nobody cares if they succeed, so they think well, why do I care if I succeed?”*



- Jim Casey Youth 2011

# What Do We Know About Youth Who Age-out?







Merely 55% will graduate high school by age 19

Fewer than 3% will earn a college degree by age 25



More than 43% have experienced homelessness by age 21



More than 40% did not earn enough to be self-supporting



24% will be incarcerated within two years of leaving the system



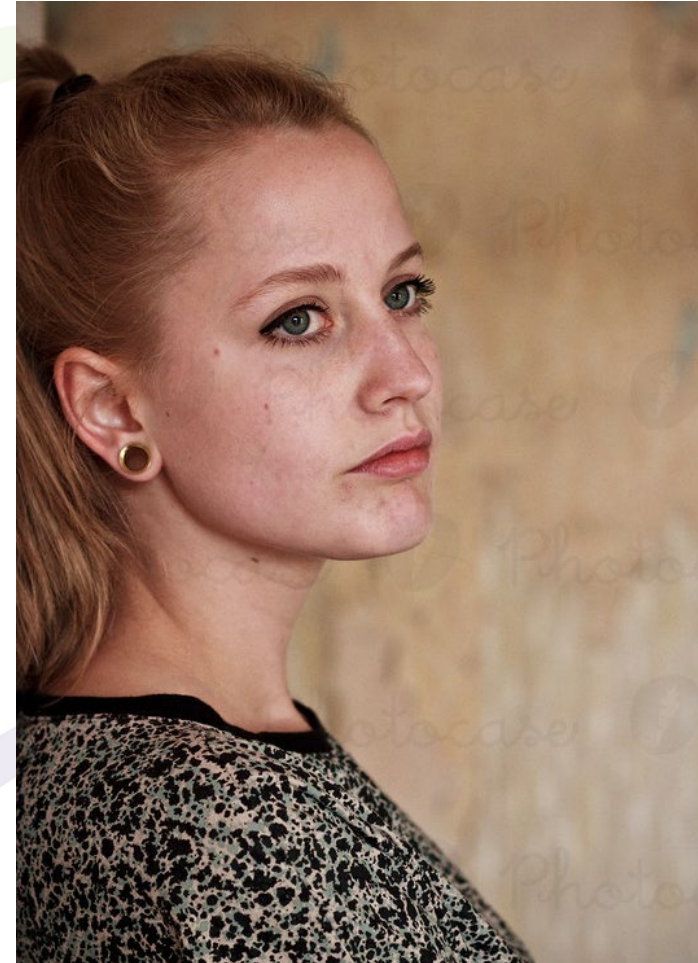
65% of young women reported having been pregnant since leaving care

Source: National Youth Transition Database (NYTD) 2018, [info@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:info@acf.hhs.gov)

# Youth Quote

*“Right away there were challenges: no money, no job, no school. I was left on my own and not prepared. The people who had given me a little bit of help that I’d had, weren’t really there. I was on my own trying to figure out what I was going to eat, where I would wash my clothes, where I would work, and watching out for myself at night...you know, staying safe.”*

- Former Foster Youth, Age 18, MA



# Contact with Birth Family after Emancipation

*Research shows that youth search  
for birth family after emancipation*

- **542** Alumni of foster care interviewed (ages 19–25)
- **87.9%** Reported being in contact with birth family
  - 40.9% Birth Mother
  - 20.5% Birth Father
  - 58.6% Siblings
- 66.1% Other Relative

Fall Issue of Focus, “Conflict with Birth Families and Emancipation”: Results from two Alumni Studies and Implications for Practice, 2008 and 2011 (Havalchak, White & O’Brien)

# Contact with Birth Family after Emancipation

Youth in these studies report that interacting with birth family gives them:

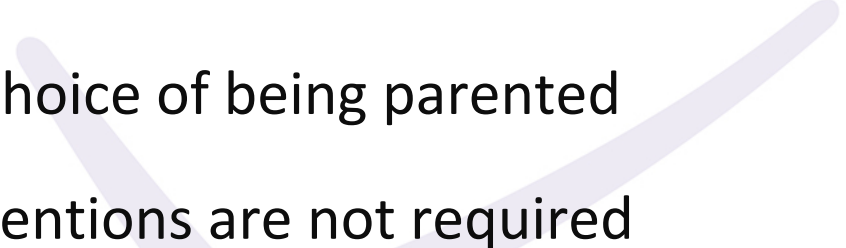
- Sense of Identity
- Cultural Belonging
- Historical Connection
- Emotional and Tangible Supports

Fall 2008 Issue of Focus, “Conflict with Birth Families and Emancipation”:

Results from Two Alumni Studies and Implications for Practice” (Havalchak, White & O’Brien)

# Traditional Child Welfare Approach for Older Youth in Residential Care



- Preparing kids as best we can for adulthood
  - Older youth aren't ready for family, don't want or already have family
  - A mentor or "committed adult" is the most we can hope for
  - Youth are given a choice of being parented
  - Permanency interventions are not required
- 

# “Advice to My Younger Self”



# Permanency Focused Approach: Relationship-Building with Youth and Families

- All Youth have a Voice
- All Youth Voices Count
- Youth Voices have to be Heard *and* have Influence in Planning /Decision-making
- Having a Voice ≠ Making all Decisions

# Permanency Focused Approach; Relationship-Building with Youth and Families

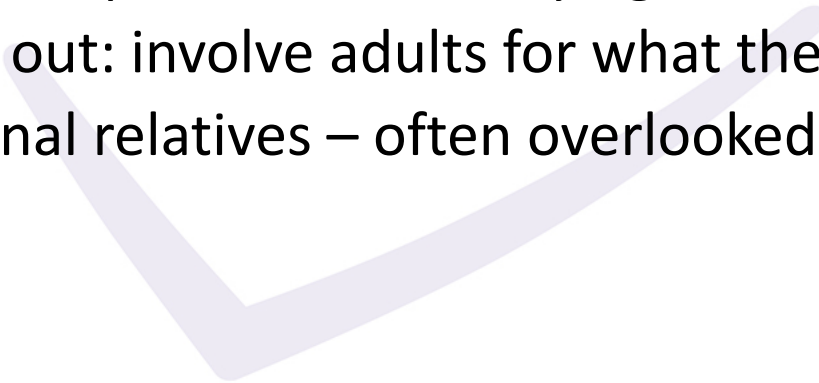
- All Youth have Families
- All Families Count
- Only Included Families can become Involved Families
- Identify Safe Parenting Adults



# Prioritizing Permanency



This requires a shift in thinking and practice:

- Balance physical and psychological safety
  - Focus on gathering information not finding placement
  - Understand the importance of clarifying history and life events
  - Rule in vs. rule out: involve adults for what they can contribute
  - Consider paternal relatives – often overlooked
- 


# Shift in Practice

Traditional Practice		Youth Guided Practice
Agency expertise and clinical recommendations prioritized in decision-making	➡	Youth and family expertise is sought after and honored in decision-making
Engage family members primarily for placement	➡	Engage family members for team planning, rebuilding relationships, providing information and support
Case contacts for placement stability, behavior management, IL Skills	➡	Case contacts to advance progress to permanency, promote permanency conversations, preparation for adulthood
Maximum extension of services can result in disincentives for permanency	➡	Urgency, focus is on agency exit to permanent family relationships

# Safety, Permanency, Well-Being



*“...the single most common factor for children who end up doing well is having the support of at least one stable and committed relationship with a parent, caregiver, or other adult.”*



The Harvard Center on the Developing Child (2015). *The Science of Resilience* (InBrief). Retrieved from [www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu).

# Reflection



What is one thing I can incorporate into my practice with young people to help them maintain, re-establish or establish relationships with family?





# Thank You!

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

