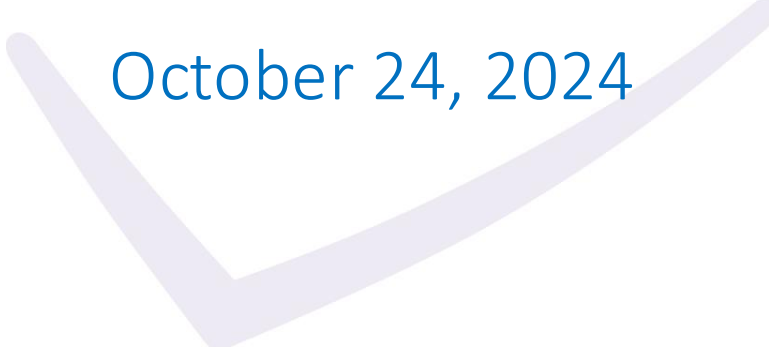


Shared Voices, Shared Solutions:  
Engaging Youth for Better Outcomes

Kin Mobilization Coffee Talk  
October 24, 2024

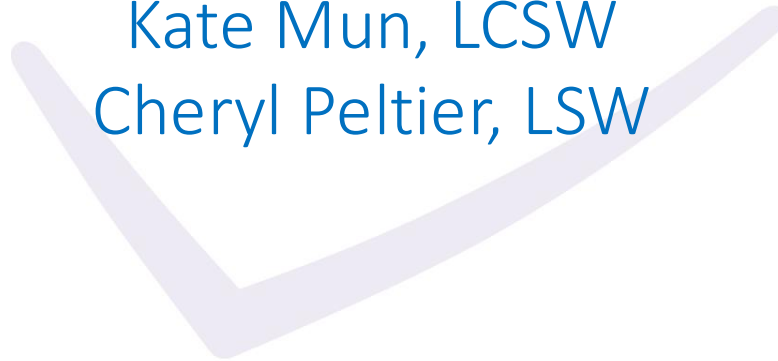


# Welcome



## Plummer Youth Promise Permanency Practice Leadership

Kate Mun, LCSW  
Cheryl Peltier, LSW



# Tuning In

Which extended family member or supportive adult has had the biggest impact on you? Why?





# Advisory Alert from the U.S. Surgeon General

Loneliness has become an epidemic and represents an urgent public health concern:

- Loneliness is associated with increased risk for anxiety, depression and dementia
- Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk for premature death by 26% and 29%
- Lacking social connection can increase risk for premature death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day

[www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities)

# Why Belonging Matters

A sense of belonging provides the security and self- assurance needed to achieve potential in one's life.



\*Child Welfare Gateway Bulletin for professionals 2019




# Youth Engagement

# Definition of Youth and Family Engagement



A **strength-based approach to partnership** that enables youth and families to have direct and meaningful input into, and influence on, case planning, goal setting, and services to achieve desired outcomes.



Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015



“

*We need connection to survive. Physically. First and foremost, our attachment system keeps us alive.*

Brilliance of Attachment, 2021

”






# Definition of Family and Young Adult Engagement



A **strength-based approach to partnership** that enables families and young adults to have direct and meaningful input into, and influence on, case planning, goal setting, and services to achieve desired outcomes.



Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015

# Engagement Essentials

- **Trust-based Relationships** – Built on honesty and respect and defined areas of mutual concern, shared expectations and accountability
- **Self-Determination** – Those impacted most by child welfare decisions-young adults and families-need to be central actors in their own case planning and decision making
- **Strengths and Needs Focus** – Identify capabilities, strengths and protective factors that can be leveraged within individuals and family systems to address needs

# Engagement Essentials

- **Skillful Use of Authority** – Mitigates the inherent power imbalance through honest and transparent conversations and fair and equitable treatment
- **Sense of Urgency** – Demonstrates a Sense of Urgency- influenced by young adults' experience of time as “aging out” approaches
- **Collaboration** – Better outcomes are achieved when we work in partnership with other systems/providers to promote positive solutions and outcomes

# Youth Engagement

Engage youth in thinking about who has been important in their life – past and present

- Ask questions related to the past (i.e., most memorable place they lived, siblings in and out of care, key supports along the way)
- Ask questions about the present (social networking, who's in cell phone, who they'd call with good or bad news)
- Use tools “I Want to Say Something” (youth/parent version) and “10 Things I Want You to Know About Me”



# Initiating Permanency Conversations

- Facilitate a process **with** the youth, not **to** or **for**
- Get behind the “NO”
- Emphasize having “someone to count on”, “somewhere to belong” - not as emotionally loaded
- Suggest possible adult connections
- Be future-oriented; don’t get bogged down by limitations of the past
- Follow the youth’s lead **and** create momentum in pacing the process



# Justice's Background

Justice, age 13, she/her/hers

Justice (she/her/hers) is a 13-year-old youth who was adopted as an infant. The adoptive parents relinquished their rights and the adoption was dissolved when Justice was 12 y/o. She has been in CYF custody since that time and has lived in both foster and group settings.

Justice has many strengths, she is caring, does well academically, and enjoys sports, especially soccer. Her caseworker describes Justice as being, "one of the sweetest kids I've ever known." Given her history of trauma, loss and family disruptions, Justice is understandably ambivalent about joining a new family. She has shared that she would want a family that also enjoys sports, is active and has other children, so she will have siblings.

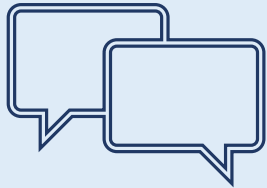
This is a beginning conversation to engage Justice as a full participant in the development of her narrative.



- Mm-hmm.



# Practice Tools



“I Want to Say  
Something”  
(youth version)

10 Things

“Ten Things I Want  
You To Know  
About Me’



# 10 Things Tool

**10 Things I Want You to Know About Me**

*“I want a family of my own—a family who will love me, help me do well in school, and really prepare me for the future. And I want to be a part of something. I have a lot of love to give.”*  
\*Hannah

1. These are my strengths and what I like best about myself...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. These are my favorite fun things to do...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. These are my favorite foods... This is my favorite food to cook...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. This is my favorite class/subject at school...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. If I had three wishes they would be...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. These are the important people in my life that I want to stay connected to...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. I am most proud of...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. My favorite book, movie and activity is...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. These are my worries about joining a family...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. These are my hopes about family...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from AdoptUKids.org

# “I Want to Say Something” About My Life, My Family, My Plan”

These are the safe and supportive family members and caring adults that need to be on my team:

Things I want you to know about my family and team:

When it comes to family and caring adults, these are the things that:

- Are going well
- I’m worried about
- I hope will happen

I need my team to help me plan how to get to a safe, supportive and lasting family relationship. My team should:

1 \*Adapted from North Carolina Family-Centered Meetings Project 3/2007 Nothing About Them Without Them: Children’s Participation in FGDM December 3, 200 Teleconference Handout #29 Revised for NH DCYF by 3P Consulting LLC 2016 [www.3PLLC.net](http://www.3PLLC.net)

# Tips on Using Tools

- Use these tools to:
  - Engage youth in a non-threatening, concrete way
  - Bring the youth's voice into planning
  - Identify significant people who may be part of a Safety/Support Network
- Focus on facilitating a process not completing a product
- Help educate parents, family members, kin and significant adults about the youth's needs

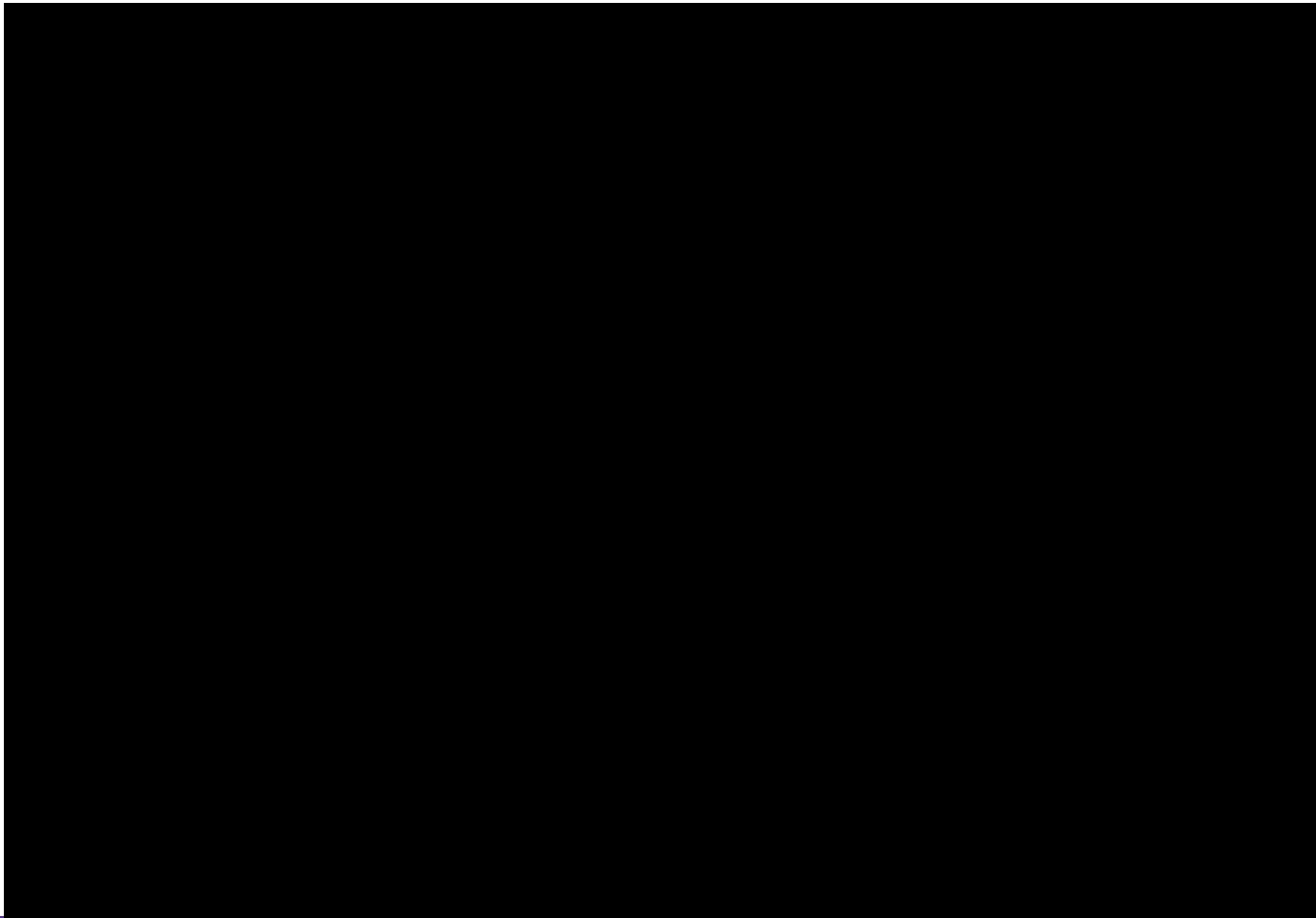


# Safety *Within* Relationships, Not *From* Relationships

What would need to be in place for this person to safely:

- Provide and share information?
- Participate in planning?
- Have contact with youth?
- Be considered for placement?

# Youth Voice



Every  
interaction with  
youth person  
matters...  
Make yours  
count!



AECF Brainframes Keeping the family conversation alive



# Thank You!

[consulting@plummeryouthpromise.org](mailto:consulting@plummeryouthpromise.org)

