Foster Youth: Supporting Educational Success

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Trainer’s Guide
Acknowledgements

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California College Pathways provides resources and leadership to campuses and community organizations to help foster youth succeed at community colleges, vocational schools, and four-year universities. By engaging institutions to work together, sharing best practices, and advocating for policies that support foster youth in higher education, California College Pathways is helping foster youth across the state to achieve their higher education goals and move on to fulfilling careers.

California College Pathways:

• Supports campus networks of programs for foster youth
• Provides training and technical assistance for emerging and established campus programs
• Advocates for policies and regulations to improve higher education outcomes for foster youth
• Collaborates to create a more seamless pipeline to college for K-12 foster youth

For additional information visit www.cacollegepathways.org.

A special thanks also goes out to the following individuals for contributing their time and expertise to the content:

• Carol Davies, Career Ladders Project
• Rusty Johnson, Foster Club
• Joel Uruza, Core Leadership Team Youth, Foster Club
• Dyresha Williams, Core Leadership Team Youth, Foster Club
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Welcome & Overview
“Foster Youth: Supporting Educational Success”

Thank you for your interest in delivering this training to the faculty and staff on your campus. The purpose of this curriculum is to educate and empower the instructional and support staff on your campus about the unique experience of youth from the foster care system attending college. The training provides information on how growing up in the child welfare system can affect foster youth’s emotional and cognitive development as well as academic outcomes. The curriculum then offers tips and tools for faculty, counselors and administrative staff on how they can help foster youth to be successful in the classroom and beyond.

This curriculum is focused on heightening awareness about this student population on your campus and opening up an important dialogue about the circumstances that foster youth face from a very young age and how that translates to unique academic needs. The material provides an opportunity for campus professionals to gain exposure to the realities of the experience of growing up in the foster care system, thereby increasing their ability to be both empathetic and supportive of foster youth scholars on campus.

The content of the training includes four sections:
1) Overview of Child Welfare
2) Adolescent Brain Development
3) Foster Youth and College
4) How You Can Help

The training materials provide specific and practical information about the needs of foster youth in higher education.
General Training Tips

• The materials are intended for public use, to be distributed widely and at no cost, providing that proper citation is noted.

• The intended target audience for this curriculum is faculty and staff who work on college campuses, including both two-year colleges and four-year colleges and universities.

• The training is best delivered within a time frame of no less than 90 minutes. The training can be modified however for shorter time frames if needed.

• The training can be particularly powerful if co-delivered with foster youth from your campus. Whenever possible we encourage you to recruit students interested in sharing their experience and developing presentation skills to join you in the presentation. The trainer’s guide includes suggestions for where youth voice can be incorporated into the presentation.

  o If you plan to include a foster youth as a co-presenter, it is extremely important that you take time to help prepare the young person and coach them through the sections where they will be asked to contribute. We recommend that you not only provide this trainer’s guide to them directly to review, but also provide a separate document with the youth engagement questions specified. Pages 8-9 of this guide include all of the suggested youth engagement points. We encourage you to work with the youth to prepare their responses in advance and review them with you prior to delivering the training. In particular, it is important for you to review Section 3: Adolescent Brain Development, with your co-presenter prior to the training to make sure the content in this section is not inadvertently triggering to the youth and that they are comfortable with the information being presented.

  o If you would like to incorporate youth voice into your presentation, but need assistance with identifying a young person, please feel free to contact Rusty Johnson from Foster Club at rusty@fosterclub.com. He will determine if Foster Club can provide one of their Youth Ambassadors to co-present with you.

• The instructions for each slide contain both notes regarding how to present the material and suggestions for how you may engage the audience in an interactive discussion regarding the content. You may want to select the discussion sections you wish to focus on prior to the training.

• Prior to the training the facilitator should read and be familiar with the PowerPoint slides and the notes included in this guide. In addition, it is recommended that trainers review the additional resources listed below.

• The following training supplies will be needed to present this curriculum:
- Laptop computer
- LCD Projection screen
- PowerPoint slides
- PowerPoint Handouts
- If you wish to show the videos accompanying the training, Internet access will be necessary.
- 3 different color post-it note stacks
Resources and Readings

Recommended Readings:


• *At Greater Risk: California Foster Youth and the Path from High School to College*, Center for Social Services Research University of California, Berkeley, 2013. [http://www.cacollegepathways.org/sites/default/files/at_greater_risk.pdf](http://www.cacollegepathways.org/sites/default/files/at_greater_risk.pdf)


Additional Readings:


Books:

• Herman, J. (1997). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror.*
## Suggested Lesson Plan

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Foster Youth Engagement Questions
(These two pages can be provided to the foster youth co-presenter to assist them to prepare.)

**Section 1**

*Youth Engagement Opportunity A:*
Introduce yourself, sharing with the audience your name, age, number of years in the foster care system, number of placements, current educational status/goals, and other accomplishments. Sharing accomplishments is particularly important to establish you as capable of being a resource during the training.

**Section 2**

*Youth Engagement Opportunity A:*
If you experienced multiple moves, consider speaking to how that impacted your educational experience. Common themes include:
- Difficulty participating in extra-curricular activities
- School credit loss
- Difficulty making friends or loss of connections to peer support
- Disconnection from other community supports (church, etc.)

If you experienced placement or school stability, you can consider speaking to how that was helpful in your educational experience.

*Youth Engagement Opportunity B:*
If you are comfortable, you can share some information about your own experience in foster care. This can include elements of your story that address how having ‘a home’ – or not having a home – impacted your educational experience.

*Youth Engagement Opportunity C:*
Talk about your aspirations while in foster care – and what motivated you to work towards educational success and building a better life for yourself.

*Youth Engagement Opportunity D:*
If you have participated in services through Extended Foster Care (AB12) or have utilized priority registration you can speak to your experience and why these services are important.
Section 3

Youth Engagement Opportunity A: Speak about ways you prefer to be approached by adults (faculty, counselor, staff etc.)? For example respond to the questions “Can you think back to a faculty member or a counselor who approached you in a positive way and how that felt? What did they do, what did they say? How did that open you up vs. close you down?”

Youth Engagement Opportunity B: Provide input and suggestions on how the attendees in the room can best work with and speak to foster youth in a way that is respectful and appreciative of their experience.

Section 4

Youth Engagement Opportunity A: If you feel comfortable, share some about your experience with placement instability, school instability or other factors that impacted your academic achievement.

Youth Engagement Opportunity B: Speak to your experience once entering college. Describe what it was like enrolling, registering for classes, being a student or anything else that illustrates how important it is for faculty and staff to be role models and demonstrate “how-to do college.” Consider if there was someone on campus who was there to help you and how this impacted your experience. If applicable, speak to how faculty are different than who you used to interact with such as judges and social workers, who viewed you primarily in the context of your foster youth status.

Youth Engagement Opportunity C: Share about the challenges that you faced when coming to college including both academic and non-academic struggles.

Section 5

Youth Engagement Opportunity A: Share about your feelings regarding keeping your foster care status private and when you felt comfortable talking about your experience. You can also touch on any challenges that you faced asking for help.

Youth Engagement Opportunity B: Share about what kinds of supports were helpful to you and enabled you to be successful in college and/or what additional supports would have made things easier for you. What are some of the less obvious places you found support? Examples could include: extracurricular activities, faculty, sororities/fraternities, social support, academic clubs (e.g. school newspaper), or working on campus.

Youth Engagement Opportunity C: It can be helpful to leave the audience with an optimistic view of the future for foster youth. Discuss your future plans, such as continued education plans, career goals, future family plans, and/or your plans for contributing to your community and changing the world.
**SECTION 1**

Welcome and Introduce Trainers & California College Pathways

**Time: 10 min**

**Materials:**
PowerPoint Slides 1-3

**Training Tips and Discussion Points:**

**Step #1.** Display slide 1.

*Presenter Notes:* Welcome participants and introduce yourself and any co-presenters. If the group is small you can ask people to introduce themselves. If the group is larger ask how many are faculty, how many work in student services, etc. If there are others you want to point out such as foster youth program staff or a Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) Liaison in the room, do so at this time.

**Youth Engagement Opportunity A:**
Allow your youth co-presenter(s) to provide a professional introduction of themselves. Suggest that the youth share with the audience their name, age, number of years in the foster care system, number of placements, current educational status/goals, and other accomplishments. Sharing accomplishments is particularly important to establish the young person as capable of being a resource during the training.

*Engagement opportunity:* Ask “how many of you are familiar with this population?” Allow a few folks to explain their involvement and/or understanding of the foster youth population and why they are interested in learning more.

**Step #2.** Display slide 2 and quickly pay tribute to all those who contributed to the content of the training.

**Step #3.** Display slide 3 and ask the attendees how many of them are familiar with the California College Pathways (CCP) project.

*Presenter Notes:*

- This training is sponsored by California College Pathways (CCP).
- CCP is an initiative managed by the John Burton Foundation (JBF) that is focused on supporting campus-based efforts to improve access and retention for foster youth in higher education.
- The primary goal of the project is to provide support to campuses to be able to take the next steps towards developing a successful support system for foster youth on campus – with the ultimate goal being that more foster youth go to college and more foster youth stay in college.
• JBF provides direct assistance to campuses that are interested in enhancing their already existing services or beginning new services for foster youth on their campus, sponsors trainings, develops and disseminates resources, advocates for system change and convenes practitioners who are focused on foster youth in higher education.

• There are over 45 campuses with comprehensive campus based foster youth support programs across the state and close to 40 additional campuses with lighter touch programs. \{Introduce briefly what you have on campus\}. Campus Support Programs typically provide assistance with admissions, applying for financial aid/ scholarships, academic support, mentoring, personal counseling and referrals to other resources. These programs are designed to lighten the burden for foster youth who enter post-secondary education and provide them with a support system, in particular when there is no family to play that role.

• CCP hosts a website dedicated to supporting the success of foster youth in higher education which has a lot of valuable tools including a database that lists campuses with foster youth support programs in the state along with contact information both to connect campuses to each other and as a resource for youth deciding where to go to school. You can also sign up for the CCP mailing list to get e-mail announcements of upcoming trainings and other information.

End of Section
Section 2:

A Glimpse at Child Welfare

Total Time: 20 min

Materials:
PowerPoint Slides 4-11

Training Tips and Discussion Points:

Step #1. Display slide 4.

Presenter Notes: Let participants know you’ll be starting with an overview of the child welfare system.

Engagement opportunity: Before diving into the material you may want to ask a few questions to engage the attendees and gauge what they already know.

• “What do you think some reasons would be for why a child is removed from the home of their biological parents?”
• “What do you think some of the challenges of being in foster care might bring that impact educational success?”

Step #2. Display slide 5.

Presenter Notes:

• There are a variety of reasons that children are removed from their home and placed in the foster care system. This can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, extreme neglect by parents, abandonment or if the parents are incarcerated and there are no family or friends available to care for the child. In California, only about one third of the cases where there is a substantiated report of abuse or neglect result in removal from the home, meaning that these are the most severe and difficult cases of maltreatment and neglect.
• While the foster care population often goes unnoticed, in California over 50,000 children and youth are in out of home placements.
• The child welfare system tries to move children out of foster care into permanent living arrangements through reunification with the biological parents, adoption or permanent guardianship but for some youth, these options are not available. In particular if a youth is older when they enter foster care, the chances of adoption are significantly less. As a result, a percentage of these youth transition to adulthood under the care of the child welfare system. In California in 2011, 4000 youth turn 18 in foster care each year.¹

¹ Data from “Foster Care in California Achievements and Challenges,” Public Policy Institute of California, 2010; Kidsdata.com; and the Center for Social Services Research Child Welfare Services/Case Management System Reports
**Step #3:** Display slide 6.

** Presenter Notes:**
Make sure to complete the information about the number of young people in the foster care system in your county prior to delivering the training. You can use this information to “build your case” about the need for understanding about this special population among the larger campus community.

The Administrative Office of the Courts has extensive data regarding each county’s child welfare caseload at [http://www.courts.ca.gov/brc.htm#acc18886](http://www.courts.ca.gov/brc.htm#acc18886).
The California Child Welfare Indicators Project can also produce various data reports by county at [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/TopicDefault.aspx](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/TopicDefault.aspx).

**Step #4.** Display slide 7.

**Presenter Notes:**
- Why are we singling out foster youth as a special population requiring special considerations? Although these youth are often incredibly resilient, showing tremendous resourcefulness, the reality remains that they have suffered from experiences far outside the norm of a typical childhood, and even outside the norm for other low-income students or first generation students.
- Even before a child is removed from their home they have already encountered many challenges. Their parents are often young, uneducated and may be drug or alcohol abusers. These children often do not have positive adult role models to look up to and lack familial support.
- Foster children have significantly higher rates of health problems than children in general. Few have normal physical examinations. They tend to have very low weight and height as well as developmental delays. There is a high prevalence of untreated acute conditions, as well as chronic illnesses, poor nutrition, inadequate immunizations, and health records that may be very limited.
- Children in foster care are very likely to have been exposed to violence, both before and after being separated from their biological parents. Most foster children have witnessed violence, often repeatedly. Half have been victims of violence, and many of these children have histories of multiple rather than single forms of maltreatment.²,³

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² Foster Care Today, Kathy Barbell & Madelyn Freundlich, Casey Family Programs, 2001.
³ Foster Care for Children: Information for Teachers By Nancy McKellar, PHD, Wichita State University, National Association of School Psychologists, 2007
**Step #5.** Display slide 8.

*Presenter notes:* Explain that people sometimes confuse foster youth with juvenile probation youth. Clarify that the criteria for ending up in foster care has to do with the behavior of the child's parents, not the child themselves.

**Step #6.** Display slide 9.

*Engagement Opportunity:* Before diving into the trainer's notes ask, “What does ‘home’ mean to you?” Allow a few people to shout out their ideas: e.g. comfort, security, warmth, love. Then you can say, “imagine being removed from all of those feelings without knowing why and possibly never having any closure.”

*Presenter notes*
- Foster youth, by definition, have been removed from the home of their biological parents due to abuse or neglect. Feeling psychologically vulnerable is the primary effect of being removed from biological parents. Foster children may experience confusion, anger, alienation, and ambivalence. They may withdraw and isolate themselves, test rules excessively, engage in wishful and magical thinking, be dependent and passive, and/or have limited self-confidence.
- Even when the home situation is characterized by abuse, separation from biological parents can represent a significant loss for the foster child. But the loss is more pervasive than just losing parents because the child usually loses siblings, grandparents, pets, and belongings when placed in foster care. The shock, anger, despair, and acceptance that comprise the grieving process are experienced by foster children as they mourn the loss of their biological home. As a result, adolescents often struggle with authority figures; experience conflicting loyalties between their biological and foster families; feel inferior, different, or worthless; and become anxious over their approaching emancipation. They may keep relationships superficial in order to protect themselves from interpersonal loss.

*Engagement Opportunity:* Distribute 3 sets of 3 different colored post-its to each attendee. Then have the group write down three things from their own life in each of three categories: people, hobbies and possessions (each category is represented by one color). Give them just 2 minutes to write down a word on each colored post-it in each category. The presenter should then go around the room and take 2 out of 3 from each color. Then have the attendees look at what they have remaining and ask them how they feel about what they lost. Have a couple people share.

*Presenter notes:*
- Instability is likely to characterize their lives after they enter foster care. Children experience a median of four placement changes during their first 18 months in foster care. Children who have experienced several out-of-home placements may feel they have no control over their lives, leading to a pattern of behavior referred to as learned helplessness. The end result of this is young people who grow up without any connection or support from an adult. This may lead to difficulty trusting anyone since they didn’t develop trust when they were younger and never
attached to a special person who cared for them when they were little. The more life situation changes experienced, the more likely the child will be hostile and oppositional.

Youth Engagement Opportunity A:
If youth co-presenter(s) experienced multiple moves, consider asking them to speak to how that impacted their educational experience. Common themes include:
- Difficulty participating in extra-curricular activities
- School credit loss
- Difficulty making friends or loss of connections to peer support
- Disconnection from other community supports (church, etc.)

If youth experienced placement or school stability, they can consider speaking to how that was helpful in their educational experience.

• Whenever their placement is changed, foster children often must also adjust to a new school and new ways of teaching, resulting in a higher probability of academic and behavioral difficulties. While new laws have been passed in recent years designed to increase school stability, frequent changes in school still occur, presenting academic challenges for foster youth.⁴

Youth Engagement Opportunity B: If you have youth co-presenting with you and they are comfortable, they can share some information about their own experience in foster care. Encourage youth presenter(s) to share elements of their story that address how having ‘a home’ – or not having a home – impacted their educational experience.

Step #7. Display slide 10.

Presenter notes
• As the chart on this slide shows, all of these factors take their toll. Outcomes for foster youth by the age of 24 are notably worse than for their peers.⁵,⁶
• All of the information presented in these last few slides paints a troubling picture.
• Despite these dismal statistics however, there is actually much to be hopeful about. Along with hardship can come resilience and as we’ll talk about as we move through the rest of the presentation, changes are happening that create tremendous opportunities to improve the outcomes for these youth. With you as their partner in this process, we can see these numbers change.

• Make sure to stress the last statement: “despite all of these things foster youth are making their way to college. We need all of you to help us increase the number of youth who are

⁴ Source: Foster Care for Children: Information for Teachers By Nancy McKellar, PHD, Wichita State University, National Association of School Psychologists, 2007
⁵ Mark Courtney, et al, Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 23 and 24, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2011.
⁶ Comparison group for this study: National Longitudinal Study Of Adolescent Health
accessing and completing their education and change the narrative of this population in California!"

Youth Engagement Opportunity C: Youth presenter(s) can talk about their aspirations while in foster care – and what motivated them to work toward educational success and building a better life for themselves.

Engagement Opportunity: After you complete this slide ask people to share what they just learned in the last few slides.
• What light does this information shed on the foster youth experience for you?
• Does this information shift your understanding of the experience of foster youth?

Step #8. Display slide 11.

Engagement opportunity: Lead with the question “How many of you have heard about recent legislation that provides additional support for older foster youth?”

Presenter notes
• In recent years there have been a couple of very significant legislative changes that impact foster youth that are important to highlight.

• AB 12 or Extended Foster Care allows foster youth who turn 18 in foster care to continue to receive support for an additional 3 years. Prior to AB12, youth emancipated at the age of 18 with no family support, income or life skills and often ended up homeless. With Extended Foster Care in place now in California, the hope is that the narrative about foster youth will begin to change for the better. The extension of foster care will likely mean that more foster youth will be able to go to college because they won’t be thrust into the world on their own as soon as they finish high school with no support. They will have housing for three more years along with a social worker who can advise them and help them to use the additional time in foster care to gain the skills necessary for independent living. In exchange, youth are required to go to school, work or engage in activities leading to work or school (with some exceptions for disabled youth). New housing options created by AB12 allow these youth to live with a relative or foster parent, or they can live independently in their own apartment, a college dorm, with roommates, etc. and receive financial support as well as services from the child welfare system.

• Research supports the prediction that there are likely to be more foster youth enrolling in college and university as a result of the availability of extended foster care benefits. The “Midwest Study” surveyed 732 youth who exited foster care from Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin at ages 18, 19, 21, and 24. Iowa and Wisconsin discontinue benefits at 18 and Illinois continues benefits until 21. The difference in outcomes was significant with youth in Illinois being 2.5 times more likely to attend college and 3 times more likely to obtain BA. Other outcomes included a 38% reduction in the risk of becoming pregnant and a 65% reduction in the risk of being arrested.7

7 Mark Courtney, et al, Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 23 and 24, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2011.
Another significant change is AB194 which beginning 2012, gave youth who were in foster care when they turned 18 the right to priority enrollment at community colleges, CSUs and many UCs.

**Engagement Opportunity:** Ask the group if they know how priority enrollment for foster youth is happening on their campus. Make sure you know in advance about how priority registration has been implemented on the campus so that you can answer any questions that arise.

**Youth Engagement Opportunity D:** If youth are co-presenting and have participated in services through Extended Foster Care (AB12) or have utilized priority registration they can speak to their own experience and why these services are important.

End of Section
SECTION 3

Trauma and Brain Development

Total Time: 20 min

Materials:
PowerPoint Slides 12-18

Training Tips and Discussion Points:

It is important that youth presenters have an opportunity to review and discuss the content in this section prior to presenting. This may be the first time they hear this information – and it could be triggering to some youth. Youth need an opportunity to hear and process this information well in advance of the presentation, if possible.

The presenter and youth presenter should be prepared to deflect or sidestep well-intentioned, but possibly inappropriate or intrusive audience questions.

Step #1. Display slide 12

Presenter’s Notes:
Prior to diving into this section make sure to mention that even though all foster youth do experience some form of trauma, not all youth are affected by trauma in the same way and that each young person is unique and different. One youth may display a variety of symptoms while another may not manifest any.

Engagement Opportunity: Ask if there are any biology, child development or psychology professors in the room. If there are, see if they would be willing to add knowledge and information from their expert opinion. If you have a good number of folks who are familiar with this content, then you do not need to spend too much time going over it in-depth.

Presenter’s Notes:
Brain development, or learning, is actually the process of creating, strengthening, and discarding connections among the neurons; these connections are called synapses. Synapses organize the brain by forming pathways that connect the parts of the brain governing everything we do—from breathing and sleeping to thinking and feeling. This is the essence of postnatal brain development, because at birth, very few synapses have been formed. The synapses present at birth are primarily those that govern our bodily functions such as heart rate, breathing, eating, and sleeping.

The development of synapses occurs at an astounding rate during children's early years, in response to the young child's experiences. At its peak, the cerebral cortex of a healthy toddler may create 2
million synapses per second. Early experiences that include trauma can have profound impacts on overall brain development. Early experiences affect the quality of brain architecture – think bricks and motor. Is the foundation being built solid or weak? What can this foundation support?

Adolescence in particular is a time of profound change in brain structure and function. Studies using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) techniques, involving brain scans at regular intervals, show that the brain continues to grow and develop into young adulthood (at least to the mid-twenties). Right before puberty, adolescent brains experience a growth spurt that occurs mainly in the frontal lobe, which is the area that governs planning, impulse control, and reasoning.

**Stress that the effects of early trauma can impact foster youth behavior later in life and therefore foster youth may require additional effort to engage and connect with. You can mention that later on in the training they will be given tips and tools on “how they can help”**

**Step #2.** Display slide 13.

**Presenter’s Notes:**
The limbic system generates and controls our emotions — the thalamus, hypothalamus, and the amygdala. The limbic system is the home of emotions, motivation, the regulation of memories, the interface between emotional states and memories of physical stimuli, physiological autonomic regulators, hormones, "fight or flight" responses, sexual arousal, and some decision systems. For example, the limbic system is what gets "duped" when people get addicted to hard drugs. Because the addiction happens in the "lower," "preconscious" portion of the brain, we cannot rationally consider its effects, and therefore recovery and relapse avoidance can be difficult.

On top of the limbic system is the cerebral cortex, the "thinking brain." What are some of the functions of prefrontal cortex?

1. Impulse control
2. Setting priorities, organizing, planning
3. Decision making
4. Sensitivity to feedback
5. Self-control, self regulation
6. Initiating appropriate behavior
7. Inhibiting inappropriate behavior

The brain functions like two race cars. The Limbic System car is first off the line and is ahead most of the race. Hopefully the Prefrontal Cortex car gains on the Limbic and will overtake or at least they will cross the finish line together. With this gap in timing: gradual prefrontal cortex maturation and more rapidly developing limbic system – the impulsive behavior characteristic of teens and young adults may result.

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For teens who have been abused, neglected, or traumatized – such as foster youth – this impulsive behavior may be even more apparent. Often, these youth have developed brains that focus on survival, at the expense of the more advanced thinking that happens in the brain's prefrontal cortex. An underdeveloped prefrontal cortex can lead to increased impulsive behavior, as well as difficulties with tasks that require higher-level thinking and feeling. These teens may show delays in school and in social skills as well. They may be more drawn to taking risks, and they may have more opportunity to experiment with drugs and crime if they live in environments that put them at increased risk for these behaviors. Teenagers who lack stable relationships with caring adults who can provide guidance and model appropriate behavior may never have the opportunity to develop the relationship skills necessary for healthy adult relationships.\(^\text{10}\)

**Youth Engagement Opportunity A:**
Youth can speak about ways they would prefer be approached by adults (faculty, counselor, staff etc.)? For example, ask the youth to respond to the questions “Can you think back to a faculty member or a counselor who approached you in a positive way and how that felt? What did they do, what did they say? How did that open you up vs. close you down?”

**Engagement Opportunity:**
- Ask if they have noticed difficulties in these areas if they have ever worked with foster youth. What have they done to address this?
- Allow folks to turn to their neighbor and offer suggestions on how they could work with foster youth students in mastering these necessary brain functions.

**Step #3.** Display slides 14.

**Presenter’s Notes:**
For foster youth, it is likely they have experienced Trauma and Toxic Stress in their lives to levels that extend beyond the average student.

Two particular types of trauma that foster youth may face are complex trauma and ambiguous loss.

**Complex trauma** – the dual problem of exposure to multiple traumatic events and the impact of this exposure on immediate and long term development. For young adults in foster care, traumatic events might include poverty, neglect, physical and sexual abuse, separation from and loss of family or multiple moves and relationship disruptions.

**Ambiguous loss** – a loss in which there is no verification of death, no certainty that the person will come back, no assurance that the person will return to the way she or he used to be. This form of loss lacks clear boundaries and has no clear ending. There are often no culturally or societally recognized rituals for grieving or even for acknowledging the loss. How do you grieve being taken away from

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your parents, siblings, or friends? How do you grieve having to relocate from your foster parent to a group home?\footnote{Jim Casey Opportunities Initiative, “The Adolescent Brain: New research and its implications for young people transitioning from foster care.” 2011.}

Research on these phenomenon show that they can lead to
- marked brain development disruption
- hypersensitivity to stressors, and
- an increase in mental and physical illness\footnote{Herman, J. “Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror.” New York, NY: Basic Books. 1997.}

**Step #4.** Display slide 15.

*Presenter’s Notes:*

The results that you may see in the classroom as a result of the impact of trauma on brain development can include:
- Problems with trust, autonomy, initiative
- Difficulty with independence, intimacy, self-care
- Patterns of intense, unstable relationships and interactions
- Interference with cognitive development
- Difficulty interpreting and identifying emotional responses\footnote{Herman, J. “Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror.” New York, NY: Basic Books. 1997.}

**Step #5:** Display slide 16.

*Presenter’s Notes:*

Childhood trauma can be a precursor to mental health challenges later in life. Here is a short list of some red flags to look for in the classroom and when working with these students. If you identify a student that appears to be experiencing serious mental distress, it is vital that you reach out and connect the young person to help.
- If there is a sudden change in a youth’s grades, yet they are still putting forth the same amount of effort in their work this could be a sign that he/she is having problems focusing and/or dealing with some psychological changes.
- When youth are unable to behave and respond normally to everyday issues that may arise this is also a signal that there is a problem.
- Excessive worrying or anxiety that may indicate serious mental distress is often characterized by the fact that it disrupts usual activities and responsibilities and is of a duration or intensity beyond the norm for college students.
- Aberrant behaviors that come on suddenly, or out of nowhere. The once dedicated, smart and contributing student could do a complete 180 turn and become angry or withdrawn,
disconnected and uninterested in their studies as a result of mental health issues that he/she may not even know they have.

- Excessive drug or alcohol use that interferes with normal life activities could be a sign of emerging mental illness. The use of substances can be an attempt to self-medicate, to alleviate symptoms of mental distress, stress and anxiety.

- As campus professionals, we aren’t necessarily looking for mental health warning signs and may overlook a serious situation. Evidence has shown that intervening early when mental illness is arising can dramatically change the trajectory of the individual’s progression and recovery. Assisting foster youth who may be manifesting mental illness for the first time can have an enormous lifetime impact. Students in general, but foster youth in particular may not necessarily know how to ask for help.

**Engagement Opportunity:**
Ask participants: What are the resources that are available to help students who are facing mental health challenges on our campus or in our community? How could you go about making these referrals if you notice a student who seems troubled?

**Step #6.** Display slide 17.

**Presenter’s Notes:**
Resiliency is the factor that enables youth to thrive even in the face of adversity. With the proper support, youth can emerge from childhood trauma and mature into successful and productive adults.

Science has shown that diverse social relationships and networks—the essence of social capital—are crucial to healthy development and functioning. They act as protective factors that build young people’s knowledge, skills, and confidence and aid in the successful transition to adulthood, resiliency, and recovery from trauma. Research has consistently shown that the presence of developmental supports and opportunities (protective factors) provide a better indicator of whether youth will grow up to become successful, well-adjusted adults than does the presence or absence of risk factors (i.e. poverty, drug-use, etc.). By providing youth with caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation, youth develop the strengths that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Science has shown that even when a young person has experienced complex trauma, neuroplasticity makes the brain capable of overcoming trauma and gaining resiliency in the face of risk. While professionals working with young people in foster care do not need to be trauma specialists, they do need to engage in trauma-informed practice—that is, they need to understand the impact of young people’s experiences with trauma and ambiguous loss on their brain development and provide supports and opportunities to reverse that impact.

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The life histories of young people in foster care underscore the importance of trauma-informed approaches with foster youth. Such practice is characterized by the presence of basic knowledge about trauma and its impact on human development. Similarly, trauma-informed services are delivered in a way that acknowledges the role that neglect, loss, relationship disruptions, abuse, and violence play in the lives of many foster youth. Understanding the vulnerabilities or triggers of trauma survivors that traditional service delivery approaches may exacerbate, helps us design services and programs can be more supportive and avoid re-traumatization.\(^\text{15}\)

A trauma informed approach includes a paradigm shift from thinking in terms of “What is wrong with you?” to “What has happened to you?”

**Youth Engagement Opportunity B:**
If presenting alongside a youth, have them provide input and suggestions here on how the attendees in the room can best work with and speak to foster youth in a way that is respectful and appreciative of their experience.

**Step #8.** Display slide 18.

**Presenter’s Notes:**
Play video found at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVOX1dZ1J6s&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVOX1dZ1J6s&feature=youtu.be) (2 minutes, 24 seconds). This video provides an explanation of how the teenage brain is different from an adult brain, thus affecting the age at which foster teens should age out of the system and take responsibility for their own lives.

**Engagement Opportunity:**
Once the video is over, have folks discuss “how do they feel about what they learned in this section?” “Has this information changed they way they view youth from foster care?” If time allows, you can break participants into small groups for this discussion.

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\(^{15}\)The Adolescent Brain: New Research and Its Implications for Young People Transitioning From Foster Care, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, 2011.
SECTION 4

Foster Youth and Education

Total Time: 10 min

Materials:
PowerPoint Slides 19-26

Training Tips and Discussion Points:
Step #1. Display slide 19.

Presenter’s Notes:
We have focused during the first part of this presentation on the challenges that foster youth face and the disparity in outcomes. Despite the obstacles however, many foster youth do enroll in college. Estimates vary on the exact percentage who enroll. One recent study of California’s foster youth reported a 43% enrollment rate as compared to a 59% enrollment rate within the general population.\(^\text{16}\)
It is estimated that there are about 15,000 foster youth enrolled in community colleges and 3-4,000 more at CSUs and UCs.

This is still far less than the number who say they want to go to college and many of these youth who make it to college do not graduate. Eighty four percent of the 17 and 18 year old Midwest Study participants aspired to complete some college. In a survey conducted by the Alliance for Children’s Rights prior to the implementation of Extended Foster Care (AB12) 83% indicated an expectation that they would attend college.

Clearly the need for additional supports for these youth in order to help them achieve their educational goals remains significant.

Step #2. Display slide 20.

Presenter’s Notes:
There are a variety of factors that are linked with poor academic outcomes for foster youth.

- Research shows that children and youth in foster care are four times more likely to change schools in a given school year than other students. This instability comes from frequent placement changes and can lead to students falling behind in studies, missing needed classes and being unable to form relationships with teachers, peers and school counselors who may be able to help them academically.

- On top of the disruption presented by being in foster care, foster youth are more likely to be attending poor performing schools. Fifteen percent of children and youth in foster care attend the lowest performing 10 percent of schools in California, as compared to just 10 percent of the general population.

\(^\text{16}\) At Greater Risk: California Foster Youth and the Path from High School to College, March 2013.
• Finally, nearly one in five youth in foster care has a disability, twice the rate of the general population.

Youth Engagement Opportunity A: If the students present feel comfortable, ask them to share some about their experience with placement instability, school instability or other factors that impacted their academic achievement.

Step #3. Display slide 21.

The result of this is that foster youth may enter college well below the average student in terms of academic preparation. As you can see from this graph, foster youth score below proficiency levels at twice the rate of the general population and are 50% more likely to be below proficiency even than other youth from similarly economic disadvantaged backgrounds.

Step #4. Display slide 22.

Presenter’s Notes:
What are some of the factors that lead to many foster youth’s failure to thrive in higher education?

• Success in college is bolstered by a stable and supportive family structure where the members of the family are connected and committed to their child doing well. It is important for youth to have caring adults in their life who simply ask about school, check in with them about their assignments and provide guidance when necessary. Foster youth are often lacking this type of support.

• Due to their experiences in the foster care system many foster youth don’t know how to ask for help or are reluctant to ask. Foster youth may have not had the experience of having supportive adults in their life. As we all know there are many folks on campus who are here to help them (counselors, tutors, etc.) but foster youth may not seek out these services on their own. They may need a gentle nudge from one of you, to help them to connect to the services that will enable them to succeed in college.

• There are certain skills or behaviors that students exhibit that they learn in high school or from their parents. How you act in a classroom, communicate with a professor, organize your semester planner and your notebook are all actions that we either see modeled for us or we learn from others. Since foster youth may not have this exposure it can be extremely difficult for them to put these behaviors into action. Something as simple as understanding that they need a notebook to take notes in or a backpack for books may not occur to a foster youth. It is easy to take for granted that students have certain basic skills and knowledge that these youth may not have yet learned.

18 At Greater Risk: California Foster Youth and the Path from High School to College, March 2013.
• Being a student is as much of a learning process as are the classes one takes. It takes work to be a “good student.” Supporting foster youth with basic study skills may present another opportunity to empower youth with the skills they need to succeed in the classroom.

• Foster youth may not be prepared for the academic demands of college. This might be the case if frequent school changes disrupted their education as often happens when foster care placements are unstable, or if they are tracked into high school courses for the non-college-bound.

• Housing instability can also be a major factor. Some foster youth who live in dorms do not have a place to go over breaks if dorms are closed. Without parents to fall back on, others may lose their housing due to financial difficulties.

There are ways however to overcome these challenges. One proven method for improving outcomes for foster youth is to offer comprehensive campus support programs designed specifically for foster youth. One study showed that foster youth are three times more likely to persist if they participate in such a program, demonstrating outcomes that exceeded those of the general student population.19

Youth Engagement Opportunity B:
Allow youth input here - what was their experience once entering college? Allow them to describe what it was like enrolling, registering for classes, being a student or anything else that illustrates how important it is for faculty and staff to be role models and demonstrate “how-to do college”. Foster youth may want to consider if there was someone on campus who was there to help them and how this impacted their experience. If applicable, youth can speak to how faculty are different than who they used to interact with such as judges and social workers, who view them primarily in the context of their foster youth status.

**Step #5.** Display slide 23.

**Presenter’s Notes:**
The result of this is that foster youth stay in college at rates well below the average student as well as below similarly matched economically disadvantaged students.20

**Step #6.** Display slide 24.

**Engagement Opportunity:**
Ask how many of the participants are familiar with “Guardian Scholars” programs. Make sure to have an adequate understanding of the current support on the campus where you are presenting.

**Presenter’s Notes:**

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20 At Greater Risk: California Foster Youth and the Path from High School to College. (March 2013),
There are different types of support structures on campus that can address academic and personal struggles.

Comprehensive support programs are programs that have dedicated staff for foster youth, designated point people in various departments on campus and are well resourced to provide extra financial assistance to youth who participate in their program. At many campuses these programs are known as Guardian Scholars programs. These programs can look different and be called different names on every campus but a few of the common elements include: a dedicated staff person to assist foster youth, assistance with obtaining financial aid, academic support, counseling and linkages to other resources. They may also provide a dedicated space for foster youth, provide housing resources including year round housing in dorms and offer workshops and community building events. These programs are high touch and work with their students consistently throughout the term.

Low-touch support refers to campuses who have not formalized their program for foster youth, but who are willing to assist them and provide quality time to ensure that they are connected to the campus and receive the support that they need. Most often, this comes down to a passionate counselor in EOP/EOPS or a dynamic FYSI liaison at a community college.

Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) liaisons are found at all community colleges, often in the financial aid office. These individuals have the knowledge to help youth complete the FAFSA and access resources specifically for foster youth such as Chafee grants. They are often a great resource for referrals to other assistance as well.

Foster youth also often qualify for non-foster youth specific campus support programs such as EOP/EOPS and disabled students programs and can be supported to access these resources when appropriate and available.

**Step #7 Display slide 25.**

*Presenter’s Notes:*
Make sure to complete this information prior to delivering the training. If you are not the primary foster youth support point person, invite the point person for foster youth from the campus to come and say hello to everyone and explain the support that they can provide.

**Step #8. Display slide 26.**

*Presenter’s Notes:*
Play the short video that provides foster youth testimony to the efficacy and importance of campus support programs.
Youth Engagement Opportunity C:
If you have youth presenting with you, this is also a good place in the training to have them share about the challenges that they faced when coming to college including both academic and non-academic struggles.

End of Section
SECTION 5

How You Can Help

Materials:
PowerPoint Slides 27-35

Training Tips and Discussion Points:

**Step #1.** Display slide 27

There are a variety of things that you can do, regardless of your role within the campus to help these youth. This last section of the training will give you some options for how you can help foster youth to succeed in their educational careers.

**Step #2.** Display slide 28

**Engagement Opportunity:**
Ask attendees if they have heard of “Student Support (Re)Defined: Using student voices to redefine support” published by the RP Group. Depending upon the response you get, then proceed to go over the findings of the RP Group’s research. After you have reviewed the six success factors, ask for their reaction. Does this resonate with them?

**Presenter’s Notes**
A study by the RP group at the community college level identified 6 key factors that support student success. Although the study focused on community colleges the finding are applicable across post-secondary systems. These broad areas can provide a useful framework for understanding how to best support foster youth to succeed at college. The study was not specific to foster youth, but the concepts are nonetheless useful when talking about how to best support this population.

When discussing what contributed to their success, students completing surveys and participating in focus groups prioritized having a specific educational goal and plan (directed) and staying motivated to achieve that goal (focused). Many participants indicated that having a goal helped them remain motivated while others stated that staying focused on school helped them clarify a direction and establish a specific outcome over time.

Given both the priority participants place on having a goal and their reported struggles to find direction, this research suggests that students need support—both in the form of tools and people—that help them establish an end-point, identify what courses they need to take and allow them to track progress toward their educational goals.

Students also indicated that receiving care and concern from others was a critical motivator in their academic progress and success. The research showed that nurturing was a catalyst to the other five success factors. Students are clearly active agents in their educational process. Yet, this research
underscores that students still need to feel others care about them and their success. Among the
general student population, family is identified as the most common source of nurturing. Foster
youth are more likely to lack these family ties and therefore the nurturing that comes from others in
their life such as teachers and counselors is that much more important.21

Step#3. Display slide 29.

Presenter’s Notes:
When describing engagement, students most commonly reported that having teachers who engaged
them in class was key to their success (48%), followed by receiving academic support such as tutoring
(16%). Access to and receipt of academic support stood out as critical to several subgroups,
particularly African Americans. Of current students who had skipped a term of college, lack of
academic support was a very important factor in deciding not to enroll.

The findings from this study suggest that feeling connected goes hand-in-hand with being engaged.
Students suggested that faculty have a key role in fostering their sense of connection by promoting
their involvement in the college, both during and outside of class time.

Finally feeling valued – that their skills, talents, abilities and experience are recognized – contributes
to college success.

Step#4. Display slide 30

Engagement Opportunity:
When the slide appears, it will show only the title initially. ASK: Are there any faculty in the room? Ask
for their ideas about what they can do to help foster youth. As you go through the points below,
connect them to the ideas raised by participants.

Presenter’s Notes

Display each bullet point one by one.

• Faculty are key to the success of these young people on campus. As a first step, identifying who
  the foster youth are in your classes can allow you to pay special attention to these students.

• Provide career exploration and discipline specific advising: As resources for career advising have
  shrunk in recent years, faculty can be enormously helpful to a student who is looking for advice
  about a career path. Also, whereas a counselor has a lot of general information, a faculty member
  can help a student to drill down into the specifics of their chosen field. If there is a formalized
  mentoring program on your campus for foster youth, offer to participate.

• If there is a campus support program or an FYSI liaison at the school, develop a relationship with
  the coordinator of the program. Not only can you refer the foster youth who you know about to

21 Student Support (Re)Defined: Using student voices to redefine support, RP Group, January, 2013
services, you can post flyers in your classroom or office about upcoming events or resources so that foster youth who haven't identified themselves become aware of this information.

- Programs are often looking for adults on campus to serve as a resource, mentor or provide other types of support. Let your program know if you're willing to help.

**Step #5.** Display slide 31

**Presenter's Notes**

Display each bullet point one by one.

- Pay special attention to the academic progress of foster youth and intervene if problems arise. Students consistently express that they want to receive ongoing feedback rather than find out at the end of a course that they did not do well.

- Provide some additional support to foster youth if you see them struggling. They may be reluctant to ask for help, so make a point of offering it. As faculty within the context of higher education you may have the expectation that it’s the duty of the student to ask for help. Foster youth, however, have often been conditioned to not ask for help. For instance, asking for help in a foster home can result in being moved or punished, or asking for anything at all could be a set-up for being let down by yet another adult.

- Let foster youth know that you are there for them and invested in their success. Not only do you WANT them to succeed but you KNOW that they CAN. As you have learned, it is rare for foster youth to have positive adult role models in their life, so you all have a very special and important role to uphold. Often what a foster youth needs in order to be successful is simply someone who believes in them. That someone can be you.

- Foster youth should NEVER be publicly "outed" in class. But rather a note in the syllabus should be included so foster youth can connect with appropriate foster youth resources/programs on campus. Like students with a disability – foster youth status is a private identity that can be accompanied by stigma and faculty should be respectful of this. A student who has been in foster care must be allowed to make their own choices as to when and with whom they choose to share this information. While one may be comfortable sharing this information, another may not want anyone to know.

**Youth Engagement Opportunity A:**

Youth can share about their feelings about keeping their foster care status private and when they felt comfortable talking about their experience. Youth can also touch on any challenges that they faced asking for help.
Step #6. Display slide 32.

Engagement Opportunity:
When the slide appears, it will show only the title at first. ASK: Are there any counselors and support staff in the room? Ask for their ideas about what they can do to help foster youth. As you go through the points below, connect them to the ideas raised by participants.

Presenter’s Notes

Display each bullet point one by one.

• For foster youth there is a very real risk that they may at any point decide “this is just NOT for me, I can’t do this.” Stepping foot on a college can be extremely daunting and possibly even a little scary for anyone. It can be even more frightening to a foster youth who is taking this step without family support and lacking the knowledge about how to navigate the complex bureaucracies of a college campus. Connecting foster youth to the services that they need is crucial to their success. Make a point of knowing about all of the resources that can help foster youth so that you can provide this information to them.

• We spoke earlier about how to recognize when a student may be experiencing mental health issues. Be aware of the resources that are available such as on-campus counseling services and community mental health providers who focus on youth and young adults so that you can easily refer to these services if necessary. Beginning in 2014 foster youth who were in the system at 18 will be eligible for Medi-Cal until the age of 26 which may open up additional resources.

• Communicate and demonstrate to foster youth that you care about their success. Little things that show you care can make a big difference. Students consistently express that one single person who stepped in to offer support and who was invested in their success can make a huge difference. Foster youth often express that they stuck with school because they didn’t want to let down a person in their life who was rooting for them.

• There are also some very practical things that you can do to help foster youth. We talked earlier about new legislation that provides priority registration for foster youth. Campuses vary considerably in the extent to which they outreach to make sure that all eligible foster youth have access to this benefit. If you know of a foster youth who doesn’t have priority registration, assist them to complete the necessary paperwork to obtain it.

• In some cases, this may mean that the student needs to show documentation that they were in foster care. Navigating the child welfare bureaucracy in order to obtain this can be daunting and having an adult supporter assisting with this process can be invaluable.

• Campus staff do not have to be the go-to person to help the youth or serve all their needs. Instead, they can serve as a “connector” in their communities by locating mentors, community activity groups, and other campus programs that can assist the youth. These connections to other caring adults may also facilitate the establishment of long lasting relationships that the student can access for a variety of support as they move into adulthood.
Step #7. Display slide 33.

Presenter’s Notes

Display each bullet point one by one.

• Research shows that foster youth who access financial aid are five times more likely to persist in college. Making sure that foster youth are taking full advantage of the resources that are available to them is essential to their success. In addition to the usual types of federal and state aid available to all students, foster youth should make sure to apply for Chafee grants. Chafee grants are grants of up to $5000 that are available only to foster youth. Although not all foster youth are able to receive these grants during their first year because of insufficient funding, applying during one’s first year increases their chances of getting a grant later – even if they don’t receive one the first year.

• An educational plan can be a valuable tool for foster youth. Giving foster youth priority for the services needed to create an ed plan is a way that campus staff can provide extra support to these youth. As ed plans are now required for accessing certain benefits such as priority registration at the community colleges, ensuring access to these services for foster youth becomes an even greater priority. In addition offering special access to services such as tutoring and writing labs for foster youth can be of great benefit.

• Scheduling regular check-ins or other mechanisms for accountability can provide an external motivation for foster youth that can result in them holding themselves to a higher standard than they otherwise might. Students say that “this person cares about me, I can’t let them down, I have to succeed.” Setting up frequent and timely check-ins and sit-down meetings with these youth is extremely important not only to help monitor their academic progress, but also to assess how they are doing overall. In these meetings it is a perfect time to have a casual conversation to see if they are accessing the services that they may need. If they aren’t that is a perfect opportunity for you to bridge that connection and either walk them over to the place to meet the person they should contact or set-up an appointment for them and then follow-up with them to make sure they went. Having a simple resource guide of all of the services on campus, the names and numbers of those who work in the departments and any other external partners who work with foster youth can be helpful.

• Identifying a point person in key departments can be crucial to ensuring foster youth access services. Foster youth have had, often from a very young age, more than their fair share of bureaucratic systems controlling their lives. Helping these youth to bypass some of the usual long waits and red tape can be enormously beneficial.

Youth Engagement Opportunity B: Ask the youth present to share about what kinds of supports were helpful to them and enabled them to be successful in college and/or what additional supports would have made things easier for them. What are some of the less obvious places they found support? Examples could include: extracurricular activities, faculty, sororities/fraternities, social support, academic clubs (e.g. school newspaper), or working on campus.
Step #8. Display slide 34.

Presenter's Notes:
This is really a “call to action”. End on this high note and encourage the faculty and staff in the room to believe in these students and to encourage them to open themselves up to foster youth as a mentor and an advocate for them in their classroom, on their campus and in their community.

Sometimes you will find that a foster youth is on campus, but they still do not believe that they can do it. Here is your chance to show that that they can! Let them know that you are there for them and invested in their success. As you have learned, foster youth often do not have positive adult role models in their life and creating a supportive and caring relationship with an adult can make a huge difference. That someone can be any of you in this room

What you say to a young person matters more than you may think. Assuming that a youth will not succeed in college can have a significant negative outcome whereas believing in a youth’s ability to be successful, regardless of their past, can be a strong motivator.

Research abounds that supports the notion that one’s belief in oneself can greatly influence outcomes.

Example 1: In the famous Oak School experiment, teachers were led to believe that certain students selected at random were likely to be showing signs of a spurt in intellectual growth and development. At the end of the year, the students of whom the teachers had these expectations showed significantly greater gains in intellectual growth than did those in the control group. Studies conducted in higher education settings show an equally significant “expectancy advantage” for those for whom instructors maintain higher expectations. (Rosenthal, Robert; Jacobson, Lenore (1992). Pygmalion in the classroom. http://www.ntlf.com/html/pi/9902/pygm_1.htm)

Example 2: In colleges across the US, women with the same credentials do worse in advanced math tests than men. In an experiment researchers told women prior to taking a test that the test has been structured to eliminate the gender gap in results. Making that statement prior to giving the test eliminated the actual performance gap even though the test itself had not been altered. (Research by Claude Steele, Dean of Stanford School of Education).

End of Section
CLOSING/WRAP-UP

Step #1. Display slide 35.

Make sure to add your own contact information to this slide before presenting. Allow a few minutes to debrief and for any questions. Ask the participants to share how they are going to incorporate a few of the tips into their work. “What is one thing you are going to do as a result of what you learned here today?”

Youth Engagement Opportunity C: It can be helpful to leave the audience with an optimistic view of the future for foster youth. Allow youth presenter(s) to indicate their future plans, such as continued education plans, career goals, future family plans, and/or their plans for contributing to their communities and changing the world.

End of Section