

CWLA 2024 Conference Workshops

(this does not represent a final list of all workshops that will take place)

Wednesday, April 17

Workshops A

1:35 pm – 2:50 pm

A1 - Transforming Child Welfare Through Workforce Policy

A quality child welfare workforce is essential to ensure good outcomes for children in the child welfare system. No issue has a greater effect on the capacity of the child welfare system to serve children and families who are vulnerable than the shortage of a competent, stable workforce. Congress has an opportunity to provide additional support for the child welfare workforce this year through Title IV-B reauthorization. Join the CWLA Policy Team and Congressional Staff for a discussion of the challenges facing the workforce and the legislative opportunities to address them.

Presenters: TBC

A3 - Collaboration and Evidence-Based Engagement Practices in Support of Child and Family Well-Being

National Children's Alliance (NCA) demonstrates leadership in using research to inform policies and practice in response to the needs of victims of child maltreatment and their families. The focus of our workshop will be strategies for enhancing collaboration with child/family service systems using the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) Multidisciplinary team model and evidence-based practices for engaging children and families in need of mental health services. We will share a collaborative process for the identification of and implementation of mental health services to reduce failed child welfare intervention goals, as well as outcome data that demonstrates a reduction in caregiver mental health symptoms as a result of participating in their child's evidence-based trauma treatment. We will also highlight information from the CWLA publication *Child Sexual Abuse: Practical Approaches to Prevention and Intervention* with strategies for implementing evidence-based interventions by multiple child abuse serving systems.

Presenters: Michelle Miller & Libby Ralston, National Children's Alliance, Washington, DC

A4 - Leadership Touchstone: Effective Leaders are Mission Based and Client Centered*

Mission statements reflect the fundamental qualities of an organization. Typically, they identify who is served, how care is provided, and the desired impact. In addition to helping an organization state its mission clearly, effective leaders assure that the resources of the

organization are utilized to support the delivery of services to those entrusted to its care. In a competitive environment where resources are limited, it is essential to maintain a client-centered focus. In this workshop we will examine how being mission based and client-centered reflects an effective leader. Presenters will share how they leverage their missions to maintain organizations that are focused on effective services. Come prepared to discuss how you deliver quality care that reflects the mission of your organization.

Presenters: Joe Costa & Julie Springwater, CWLA Senior Fellows

A5 - Empowering Voices: A Collaborative Redesign of Foster Parent Recruitment

Caregivers (foster, kinship, and fictive kin) serve as crucial pillars, providing a safe haven for children amidst tumultuous times. State agencies are facing increasing challenges in recruiting culturally diverse, trauma-informed, and competent foster families. Embarking on a collective journey, Mecklenburg County worked alongside WE Creative, Casey Family Programs, and Healthy Blue to spark a united movement encompassing youth, birth parents, foster parents, kinship and fictive kin caregivers, community partners, court officers, and staff to conceive of a Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention Rebranding initiative. Through insightful assessments and focus groups, WE Creative unearthed recurrent themes of fragmented services, communication gaps, and voices yearning to be heard. From these sessions, WE Creative developed a movement, "Voices, Wishes, Visions", which reimagines recruitment strategies to attract dedicated caregivers.

Presenters: Mark Washington & Kimberly Case, Elevance Health, Charlotte, NC; Jeffrey Penix, WE Creative Project, Charlotte, North Carolina

A6 - Bridging the Gaps in a 21st Century Child Welfare System: A Review of the Literature

23 high priority research gaps that span community-based prevention through foster care permanency services and workforce were identified by The National Research Agenda for a 21st Century Child and Family Well-Being System. In the past 3 years, what research has been commissioned to address these research gaps and what was found? This workshop will present the kinds of studies conducted, and highlights of their findings, to set the stage for an interactive conversation about what might be the most cost-effective strategies for actually applying these findings to policy, program design, and practice.

Presenters: Jana Woodiwiss, Consultant, Athens, GA; Kimberly DuMont, William T. Grant Foundation, NY, NY; Alexandria Maldonado, Casey Family Programs, Los Angeles, CA

A7 - Lessons from Rural Communities: Addressing Neglect in the Context of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Join CWLA's Rural Committee for an engaging workshop focused on addressing neglect in rural communities related to issues of substance abuse and mental health. This session will feature a dynamic panel comprised of authors of CWLA publications alongside experienced practitioners.

Together, they will shed light on this critical issue through both academic and practical lenses. Rather than dwelling on resource limitations, this discussion will emphasize the positive strides made in rural communities to tackle these challenges. Attendees are encouraged to come prepared to share their own innovative ideas. Together, we will explore how additional resources can further enhance the support and solutions available to these communities.

Presenters: CWLA Rural Committee

A8 - Onward and Upward? The Journey from Youth to Adult Activism for Alumni of Foster Care

Youth activism is a powerful force for driving meaningful change. However, as young activists transition into adulthood, their activism evolves in various ways. While the field of child welfare is growing in its commitment to authentic youth engagement and youth activism, there is much to learn about the impact of these efforts from a generation of people who grew up through activism in the child welfare field and are now in their late-twenties, thirties, and forties. This presentation aims to share recent research that explores the journey of youth activists with a background in foster care and how their experiences shape their continued engagement in activism into and throughout adulthood. Please join us to hear valuable insights into the factors influencing their activism, the challenges they've encountered, and recommendations for supporting current and future youth activists.

Presenter: Alexandra Lohrbach, University of St. Thomas, Baltimore, MD

A9 - Prevention as a Mindset for Strengthening Families: Lived Experience Matters

States and communities recognize that child abuse and neglect prevention activities can profoundly impact families. As a result, family strengthening programs look to collaborate with partners with lived experience to help transform systems and support families to strengthen their ability to provide safe, stable, and nurturing homes. Join FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention to explore efforts in states that are actively working to promote shifting to a prevention mindset. FRIENDS has joined with lived experience experts and subject matter consultants to support systems change efforts in 13 states over the last 3 years. FRIENDS will share the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the Prevention Mindset Institute with states representing a broad mix of geographic regions, population and budget size, and strategies employed.

Presenters: MaryJo Alimena Caruso & Edi Winkle, FRIENDS NC for CBCAP, Baden, PA; David Armstrong, FRIENDS National Parent Advisory Council, Orange, NJ

A10 - Child Welfare Safety Culture: Shifting Organizational Culture Beyond Psychological Safety with Respect, Accountability, and Transparency

This session will highlight Safety Culture, a non-punitive approach to understanding complex systems and approaches with a human-centered design perspective. Presenters from a leading

child welfare agency will discuss why it's important to ask what system improvements are needed, rather than who is to blame for an issue. They will share their efforts to integrate safety culture in all aspects of their organization to shift culture and to promote and advance family-centered community practice. The workshop will also explore how to create organizational safety, leading staff to feel psychologically safe and supported to deliver excellent services with respect, accountability, and transparency—so that children are safe and thrive in strong families and communities.

Presenters: Cheryl Beamon & Jaqueline Martin, Administration Children Services, New York, New York

A11 - Intersystem Collaboration: Interstate Compacts and Making State Systems Work for Children

Children in and adopted from state child welfare systems have increased needs for physical and mental health care. Their wellbeing relies on the stability of their placements and their access to vital support services. This need is compounded when children are placed or move across state lines. Interstate compacts were created to overcome the obstacles inherent in interstate transactions. The Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (the ICAMA) was created to overcome the obstacles inherent within and across systems of public services- to include Adoption Assistance, Guardianship Assistance, and Medicaid. This session will encourage solution-based considerations to service delivery and emphasize the use of ICAMA's new, electronic system of interstate communication that enables states to collaborate and coordinate the receipt of services- saving state, administrative time and eliminating the need for additional agency interaction by the family.

Presenter: Sharon McCartney, The Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance, Washington, DC

A12 - DULCE: A New Primary Prevention Strategy Occurring in Healthcare Settings that Connects Families to Concrete Supports

Historical injustice and racist policies have created the conditions for poverty to persist. Poverty, which disproportionately impacts families of color and immigrants, is detrimental to children's health, increases caregivers' emotional distress, and diminishes family well-being. Jurisdictions are looking for "upstream" approaches to assisting families that are struggling. Such approaches best serve families and communities in the promotion, prevention, and intervention arenas by facilitating strengths-based family access to concrete supports, and addressing social determinants of health through thoughtful cross-sector collaboration, rather than by surveillance and punishment. This presentation will discuss the success of Developmental Understanding and Legal Collaboration for Everyone (DULCE), an evidence-based cross-sector approach that nurtures family health and well-being that could be adapted at scale as a primary prevention strategy to avert child welfare intervention.

Presenters: Patsy Hampton & Martha Raimon, CSSP, Washington, DC; Sandra Moses, Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach, Palm Beach, FL; Deneisha Watson, FoundSource, Palm Beach, FL

A13 - Housing Former Foster Youth & Child Welfare Involved Families

Housing is a basic need for everyone. Youth who have been in foster care, and families in the process of adoption, reunification, and prevention, face increased barriers to securing stable and adequate housing. Collaboration between traditional child welfare partners (e.g., Department of Children and Families and Guardian ad Litem) and housing partners (e.g., local public housing authorities, Homeless Trust), as well as other local partners, can reduce instances of homelessness. Moreover, achieving housing stability can prevent reentry into “the system”. This presentation will showcase how collaboration amongst various entities can assist in the prevention of homelessness and demonstrate how agencies can access resources to develop housing and related supportive services in their areas.

Presenters: Gianfranco Patuzzo, Citrus Family Care Network, Miami, FL; Jason Ruiz, Hialeah Housing Authority, Miami, FL

A14 - Recruitment is an Equity Issue

Recruitment and equity go hand-in-hand. Wayside Youth and Family Support Network is focused on fostering careers in mental health and family services with people who share our commitment to anti-racism, social justice, and advocacy. In this workshop, we will share replicable strategies that have worked for Wayside, such as the steps we took to change our DEI culture and how we utilize DEI conversations from recruitment to trainings. We will also share how we hold ourselves accountable as an anti-racist and equitable organization when we are recruiting, hiring, and onboarding new team members.

Presenters: Juliana Ferreira & Daniela Thermora, Wayside Youth & Family Support Network, Framingham, MA

Wednesday, April 17

Workshops B

3:10 pm – 4:25 pm

B1 - Congressional Action to Reduce Child Poverty

Poverty is a key driver of child welfare involvement because it can exacerbate stress and deprive families of resources. After the expiration of COVID relief funds, child poverty more than doubled in 2022. Decades of research and the success of the American rescue plan's expanded child tax credit prove that with the right Federal investment, we can significantly reduce child and family poverty in the United States. Join the CWLA Policy Team, Congressional staff, and National partners in a robust discussion on the impacts of child poverty and the actions Congress can take to address it.

Presenters: TBC

B2 - Key Components of a 21st Century Child Welfare System: A Review of Recent Scholarship

What are the key components of a 21st Century Child and Family Well-Being system, as espoused by various authors? As child welfare continues to build on the growing body of research from brain science, child development, mental health treatment, public health conceptualization breakthroughs, trauma science and other fields, scholars, people with lived expertise, and advocates are writing about what a 21st Century Child and Family Well-Being system should look like and what key policies and program components should be emphasized and included. This presentation will engage the audience in exploring the most common themes and gaps in thinking, as well as the areas with the most difference in perspective.

Presenters: Brittany Mihalec-Adkins, Child Trends, Rockville, MD; Peter Pecora, Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA

B4 - Leadership Touchstone: Effective Leaders are Talent Driven*

The workforce environment is extraordinarily competitive. Improvements to minimum wage, a limited number of available staff, and a variety of employment options create a very challenging environment to attract, secure, and sustain employees. The inability of funders to adequately reimburse services impacted by all these factors creates significant obstacles for securing employees. Additionally, nonprofit organizations are committed to providing a workforce environment that embraces an agenda of equity, inclusion, and respects diversity. Given these many variables, the effective leader is nevertheless able to address these issues by developing a competitive compensation program and a workforce environment that is supportive and offers opportunities for professional development and growth. Presenters will share strategies that they have employed to create organizations that are talent driven. Come prepared to share your efforts at creating a workforce that is not only competitive but embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Presenters: Joe Costa & Julie Springwater, CWLA Senior Fellows

B5 - Combining Evidence-Based Practices to Support Stability for Families (Kinship, Guardianship, and Adoptive)

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption (DTFA) is implementing its evidence-based Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) program across North America, resulting in permanency for more than 13,000 children. DTFA is also strategically expanding its investment in promising post-adoption strategies to ensure that families created through the WWK program have the necessary support to remain intact. Adopt America Network's Ongoing Adoption and Kinship Support program (OAKS) uses the Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship's Permanency Continuum Framework to prevent permanency disruption. Through DTFA's investment in OAKS, placement disruptions are being reduced, families are remaining intact,

and trained staff with lived experience are individualizing the continuum of services to help families access needed formal and informal supports for long-term stability.

Presenters: Wendy Spoerl & Christy Holtz, Adopt America Network, Toledo, OH; Rita Soronen, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Dublin, OH

B6 - Mentorship Matters: Supporting and Cultivating Leadership Skills in the Emerging Child Welfare Workforce

As agencies are challenged with recruiting and retaining their child welfare workforces, mentorship remains an effective tool in supporting and nurturing leadership capacity at all levels. Research has shown the importance of investing in the professional development of existing staff to strengthen their interest and commitment to the child welfare workforce. This session will focus on a Leadership Learning Series developed by CWLA's Emerging Leaders Committee, offered to child welfare professionals of varying position levels. We will reveal the benefits and challenges of replicating a scalable group mentorship program which includes professionals in the field with lived experience, and covers topics such as leadership identity, fundamental management skills, and creating psychological safety in the workplace.

Presenters: Alycia Blackwell, Fairfax County Department of Family Services, VA; Terrell Thomas, Stanford Sierra Youth and Families, Sacramento, CA; Bacall Hinks, Wellsprings Child and Family Counseling, UT

B7 - Youth Assertive Community Treatment (ACT): Holistic Support for Youth at Risk of Residential Care

Youth ACT is a person-centered, inter-disciplinary approach to working with youth who have severe mental health disorders, and who are at risk of entering residential care. The Youth ACT program in New York State is less than two years old, and JCCA opened the first team in New York City. This presentation will discuss its implementation and outcomes, along with the challenges JCCA faced and how we overcame or are working to overcome them. The workshop will include a presentation by two of the program's teammates, a Licensed Mental Health Professional and a Youth Peer Advocate, who work closely with the youth in the program and their families. We will look at the interface between the Youth ACT program and other institutions, such as schools and New York City's Administration for Children's Services. Finally, we will facilitate a discussion on ways to create similar programs that help youth remain in the community.

Presenters: Abby Jeffrey & Dominique Whiteman & Kianna Bell, JCCA, Brooklyn, NY

B8 - Kinship Care: Strengthening our Practices by Listening to the Voices of Indigenous Elders and Kinship Caregivers

The use of kinship care placements by child welfare organizations has increased in recent years. In the context of child welfare practice with Indigenous peoples, these placements are intended

to offer a collaborative, community-centered approach. However, the question remains as to whether kinship care policies and practices are truly collaborative and community-centered. This presentation will highlight research done with First Nations and Métis Elders and kinship caregivers in British Columbia, Canada through an anti-colonial theoretical framework. Findings will be described, with a focus on suggestions for how those involved in social work practice, policy-making, and education can better create kinship care processes that honor Indigenous wisdom and traditional Indigenous practices.

Presenter: Susan Burke, University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, BC, Canada

B9 - Preserving Families of Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders in Child Welfare: Challenges and Opportunities

This workshop will offer opportunities for participants to consider practices that support the well-being of children impacted by prenatal alcohol exposure and that help preserve their families. The information presented will encourage participants to think about the prevalence of children in their communities, and in their caseload, that may have unrecognized fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). Activities will promote reflection on how state laws, agency processes, and misunderstanding of the causes of FASD can contribute to disproportionate involvement in child welfare of individuals who are Black and American Indian, drive inequitable outcomes, and interfere with engaging families. The workshop will address the types of services that can meet the needs of children, promote reunification, and improve placement stability. Discussions will focus on building partnerships with community service providers, and developing a service array that can help recognize and meet the needs of children impacted by prenatal alcohol exposures and their families.

Presenters: Tammy Richards & Nicole Miller, James Bell Associates, Arlington, VA; Jacqueline Bertrand, Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, GA

B10 - Building Blocks for Effective Co-Parenting

This workshop will provide an engaging, informative framework that highlights the importance of effective co-parenting. When done properly, effective co-parenting can aid and assist in the overall growth and healthy development of children. We understand that parents become separated for a variety of reasons and this training provides an opportunity to: recognize reasons why some relationships end; learn how these actions can impact children's identity and self-esteem; and offer strength-based, solution-focused strategies and techniques to create consistency and support for all involved parties. Many of these core principles can be applied to all families—including birth, kin, foster, and adoptive. The purpose is to create a resource that can assist families who are separating, training specialists, community providers, court mediation staff, and others in learning how to work together with the common goal of putting the needs of the children first.

Presenter: Marcus Stallworth, CWLA, Washington, DC

B11 - A Methodology for Bringing Child/Youth Systems Together

All children/youth and their families should be able to receive care, be it profound mental health services or any other component that might address social determinants of health. To accomplish this vision, we must bridge gaps by creating working partnerships amongst the various systems that youth may interact with such as: child welfare, juvenile justice, education, systems that address youth with behavioral health needs (mental health and substance use) and intellectual and developmental disabilities, Medicaid, licensing entities, and universities. By harnessing the leadership from these systems, we can effect transformational change. This workshop will discuss strategies for creating these partnerships, and share successful efforts to expand access to mental health treatment through Medicaid and other health systems with a special focus on services to children, adolescents, and youth.

Presenters: Alan Vietze, CWLA Senior Fellow, Vallejo, CA; Ruby Goyal-Carkeek, Center for Health Care Strategies, Hamilton, NJ

B12 - The Central Role of Family Partner Participation in Building a Comprehensive Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework

The North Carolina Division of Social Services convened a multidisciplinary workgroup to create a comprehensive framework to strengthen families and prevent child maltreatment. This framework aligns primary, secondary, and tertiary family support prevention and intervention services, including Family First Prevention Services. The workgroup included the expertise and perspectives of state and county child welfare staff, public and private agencies, and persons with lived experience, and developed shared principles based on the Protective Factors and Principles of Family Support. The Family Partners who served on this workgroup gathered feedback from their peers to amplify family voice into the prevention plan. Presenters will discuss how state and local programs can engage families and promote leadership in their strategic planning efforts.

Presenters: Heather McAllister, NC Division of Social Services, Raleigh, NC; Deborah Day, NC State University, Raleigh, NC; Candace Williams-Collins & Kelly Kirk, NC Child Welfare Family Advisory Council, Siler City, NC

B13 - Implementing a Sustainable Evidence-Based Practice Provider Program within a Medicaid Managed Care Environment

Supporting sustainable evidence-based practice (EBP) programs for providers is crucial to ensuring quality of services for children and families. This session will explore best practice sustainability efforts between multiple entities and how synergies between the three can propel the program forward. Discussions will touch on the importance of organizational support, resource allocation, sustainable billing practices, and the integration of EBPs into existing service arrays. Additionally, the discussion will highlight considerations for providers in the child welfare space on how to engage with parents (foster, adoptive, and biological). The findings will inform

policy recommendations and organizational guidelines to strengthen the collaboration between providers, state partners, and managed care, ultimately enhancing the quality of services provided to children and families within the managed care system.

Presenters: Kimberly Case, Elevance Health, Gainesville, Florida; Jaclynn Kuchta, Pathways Transition Program, Savannah, Georgia; Rhonda Brown, Elevance Health

B14 - Trauma Treatment is Trauma Prevention: A Foster/Medicaid-Focused Dissemination of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Child trauma (CT), particularly sexual abuse is documented to increase risk for life-long negative health and mental health outcomes including revictimization. Agencies and caregivers seek effective, evidence-based treatments and prevention services for youth and families. Effective treatments for CT can prevent further abuse. Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) is recognized by SAMHSA and the California Evidence-based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare as an effective treatment for CT. An approved TF-CBT national trainer will introduce professionals and caregivers to TF-CBT, its application for multiple types of trauma, and Centene's unique approach to free training for its Medicaid/Managed Care provider network - while assisting providers toward becoming nationally certified. Information on locating trained TF-CBT providers, therapist training, the importance of prevention skills and caregiver engagement will be highlighted.

Presenters: Cheryl Fisher & Roy Van Tassell, Centene Corporation, Houston, TX

Thursday, April 18

Workshops C

10:30 am – 11:45 am

C1 - The Mental Health Crisis Continues: Policy Advocacy to Help Children and Families

Last year, Congress passed a number of provisions related to mental health, and youth mental health in particular, as part of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. However, accessing and addressing mental health services continues to be a significant challenge within child welfare and in the broader community. More needs to be done to address the increasing mental health concerns of children and families and the numerous barriers that prevent access to the services available. Join the CWLA Policy Team, Congressional staff, and National partners in a robust discussion on the recent legislative advancements and what more needs to be done to address mental health in our communities.

Presenters: TBC

C2 - Residential Outcomes: From Robust Relationships to Shared Responsibility

Children are in crisis nationally at levels never seen before. In every community, children are languishing in emergency departments and child welfare offices because too few beds and

services are available to treat them. The increasing number of children and youth with severe, high-acuity conditions and complex needs is exerting mounting pressure on these systems. This pressure has sparked a critical discussion: whether residential treatment interventions should remain a part of the comprehensive range of behavioral services and child welfare. However, this debate must contend with the reality of the complexity of children and youth's needs, as well as the ineffectiveness of community-based behavioral health services in many parts of the nation. Currently, removing residential treatment from the system is an unachievable reality. In this session, a panel of child welfare, behavioral health, and family representatives will share best practices, tools, and resources that agencies can use to ensure the residential intervention is as short as possible and results in youth successfully returning to their home and community.

Presenters: Pat Hunt, FREDLA, Turner, ME; David Miller, NASMHPD, Alexandria, VA; Julie Collins, CWLA, Washington, DC

C3 - Adoption Policies, Programs, and Practices: Achievements, Challenges, and Future Directions

When family reunification is not possible, adoption offers a social and legal option to provide children with families intended to be safe, nurturing, and enduring. This workshop emphasizes the rationale for a model of practice for adoptive family recruitment, assessment, development, and support. The presenters will share strategies that can be applied to different types of adoptions and feature work tools to prevent disruptions that are strength-based, family-focused, and culturally responsive. Post-adoption issues and implications for public and private agency partnerships, including advocacy, will be highlighted. One special feature will be guidelines for a respectful reframing of historically deficit words and expressions, such as children "joining" families instead of "being placed" and "family assessments" instead of "home studies." Another focus will be a legislative chart that outlines adoption policy and practice achievements and challenges.

Presenters: Maria Quintanilla, Latino Family Institute, West Covina, CA; Eileen Mayers Pasztor, California State University, Long Beach, CA; Wendy Whiting Blome, The National Catholic School of Social Service, The Catholic University of America (retired), Washington, DC

C4 - Leadership Touchstone: Effective Leaders are Inclusive

At any given time, there are several stakeholders that need to be engaged in order to create an organization that is truly inclusive. Aside from the governing body and the community at large, other interested parties include staff and, very importantly, the perspective of the clients and those who benefit from the improved well-being of those we serve. The challenge is to create an environment in which these many voices can be raised, acknowledged, and addressed. To be able to do this effectively requires that organizations are authentically inclusive. An effective leader engages these various stakeholder groups, addresses their perspectives, and creates consensus. Presenters will share the challenges of maneuvering the varied agendas of multiple interested parties while creating a sense of common purpose and support. Come prepared to

share your experiences with these varied interests and strategies you have utilized in developing inclusive organizations.

Presenters: Joe Costa & Julie Springwater, CWLA Senior Fellows

C5 - A Program Evaluation of Family Resource Centers Using Geographic-Based Comparison Groups

The Family Resource Center (FRC) coalition is a collective impact initiative dedicated to strengthening prevention and intervention services to reduce child abuse and neglect in a large county in a western state. This FRC evaluation describes the characteristics of neighborhoods served by the family resource centers (FRCs) and examines whether the neighborhood-level CPS outcomes (first referral, substantiated referral, and subsequent referral) are different in neighborhoods served by FRCs compared to similar neighborhoods that are not served by FRCs. This study is aligned with how states are expanding their Community Prevention Pathways to secure Families First funding, and the findings address some of the community-based prevention and preventing foster care research gaps in the National Research Agenda for a 21st Century Child and Family Well-Being System.

Presenters: Rita Rangel, Orange County Social Services, Tustin, CA; Claudia Juarez, Orange County Social Services, Tustin, CA; Laura Neal & Toni Rozanski, Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA

C7 - Identifying and Supporting Family Housing Stability at the Intersection of Housing and Child Welfare Involvement

Shifting toward an integrated, accessible, culturally responsive services continuum that supports families must include housing strategies and partnerships. For families at the intersection of child welfare involvement and unstable housing, being connected to housing resources can greatly improve outcomes for them and their communities. This session will introduce approaches to systematically identify and address the housing needs of families within child welfare and community-based prevention contexts. Participants will explore the progress, data, lessons, and emerging evidence from the implementation of housing screening tools and processes within public child welfare agencies, community-based prevention programs, and other relevant systems to holistically improve the well-being of families. Building from their recent article in CWLA's Child Welfare journal, the presenters will elevate housing strategies and resources to advance racial equity and family well-being.

Presenters: Andrew Johnson & Leah Lindstrom Rhea, Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), San Diego, CA; Carolyn Crook, Hennepin County Children and Family Services, Minneapolis, MN

C8 - Child-Centered Screening & Immigration Legal Referrals: Sample Scripts & Strategies for Success

The American Bar Association and Casey Family Programs have created standardized screening tools for case workers and attorneys to early identify foster children who are non-citizens and make referrals for legal assistance. This presentation will discuss the creation of a child-centered interview environment, considered through the lens of cultural-humility and utilizing trauma-informed practices to ask kids about their immigration needs. Screening considerations and sample scripts will be provided to aid the dialogue. Attendees will learn how to incorporate both screening and issue-spotting for immigration relief into their practice and will leave inspired and with better tools to assist children on their caseload.

Presenters: Rachel Konrad, Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA; Cristina Cooper, American Bar Association, Washington, DC

C10 - Crisis Nurseries: Uniting to Keep Kids Safe and Families Together!

For nearly five decades, crisis nurseries have independently operated across North America to keep children safe and families together. Providence House and Maryville crisis nurseries will explain the varied service models and core commonalities of the nearly 90 crisis nurseries in our network, and will provide specific examples of our own direct services and outcomes. Attendees will also learn about the national movement to connect, educate, and share the crisis nursery model through the Center for Crisis Nurseries, and the active formation of a North American Crisis Nursery Coalition focused on advocacy, research, and funding to support and expand crisis nursery services as an integral part of the child welfare continuum.

Presenters: Natalie Leek & Amy Mills, Providence House, Cleveland, OH; Amy Kendal, Maryville Crisis Nursery, Chicago, IL

C11 - Moving from Transactional to Transformative Interventions with Direct Investments in Children and Families

This session will prompt participants to think about how organizations can make direct, transformative investments in the lives of program participants and provide a blueprint for measuring and tracking this commitment on a practical, everyday level. As part of its ongoing work around racial and social justice, The Children's Village developed a theory of change that seeks to define, quantify, measure, and ultimately increase direct investment. Participants will learn why direct investment is important and how family input in spending decisions can increase engagement, discuss which costs should be counted, learn how to review their current spending, and set up systems to track direct investment going forward. We will also discuss barriers to direct investment, how the pandemic influenced agency responses to material needs, and how we can increase funder and stakeholder openness to the funding flexibility needed to support direct investment in children, families, and communities.

Presenters: David Collins & Kerlyne Colin & Warren Kent, The Children's Village, Dobbs Ferry NY

C12 - Advancing Quality Family First Implementation: The Role of Family First Regional Prevention Consultants

Recognizing the critical role of implementation support practitioners in developing the capacity of frontline staff to stand up and sustain evidence-based practices, this workshop will elevate North Carolina's (NC) investment in an implementation support practitioner role to build county child welfare agencies' capacity to implement the Title IV-E Family First Prevention Plan. Recently hired regional consultants are co-developing and testing a learning community syllabus, rooted in implementation science, that elevates the function and importance of the implementation support practitioner role and the skills and competencies this role requires to build and support workforce capacity for implementation. We will elevate NC's use of implementation support practitioners and co-development of an implementation science learning community as a best practice example of how to support effective implementation in jurisdictions across the U.S.

Presenters: Kristin O'Connor & Beth McDaniel, Chapin Hall, Chicago, IL; Heather McAllister & Larissa Spell-Berger, NC Division of Social Services, Raleigh, NC

C13 - Engaging Fathers to Strengthen Families

This interactive workshop will highlight new “#dadication” resources and best practices for engaging, recruiting, and serving fathers. The free resources were created to increase services for fathers and families. We believe that intentionally serving fathers to address their personal and family needs in a holistic and nurturing format helps fathers succeed as parents. These practices and strategies come from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, which is a federally funded resource under the US Department of Health and Human Services that focuses on serving fathers, families, and practitioners. Participants attending this session will gain a greater understanding of how to effectively engage fathers in their work; why fatherhood/male involvement is so important to children; and how the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse can help with local/regional fatherhood programs.

Presenters: James Worthy & Eugene Schneeberg, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, Reston, VA

C14 - Imagining a Prevention-Oriented Family & Child Well-Being System: Providing a Meaningful Alternative to Child Welfare

There is growing consensus about the need to establish an alternative approach to meet the needs of families, without subjecting them to the traumatic experience of involvement with child protective services. The federal Family First Prevention Services Act has created new opportunities to imagine, operationalize, and fund a prevention-oriented family and child well-being system. We will describe a comprehensive cross-sector framework to proactively reduce our nation's over-reliance on the deployment of child protection services and ensure that families have the resources they need. We will also describe a demonstration project launched by the Doris Duke Foundation in multiple jurisdictions to test how an alternative system response can help families without involvement of the traditional child protection system.

Presenters: JooYeun Chang, Doris Duke Foundation, New York, NY; Clare Anderson, Chapin Hall, Chicago, IL

Thursday, April 18

Workshops D

1:25 pm – 2:40 pm

D2 - Transforming California: What It Takes to Move from Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting

This presentation will engage the audience in California's journey to leverage the Family First Prevention Services Act as a starting point to reimagine what it means to move from mandated reporting to community supporting and safely narrow the front door to child welfare. Presenters will discuss how over two years of work from the statewide California Child Welfare Council's Prevention and Early Intervention Committee, in partnership with the California Department of Social Services, led to the development, approval, and early implementation of a comprehensive set of recommendations to reform California's mandated reporting system while simultaneously building a community pathway of supports and services to keep children safe and families strong and together.

Presenters: Dana Blackwell, Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA; Roger De Leon Jr., Parent Partner/Fatherhood Advocate, Riverside, CA; Kathy Icenhower, SHIELDS for Families, Los Angeles, CA; David Swanson Hollinger, Ventura County Human Services Agency, CA

D3 - Strengthening Families to Keep Children Safe: Maine's Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan

In February 2023, Maine's Governor Janet Mills directed the Maine Department of Health and Human Services to work with the Maine Child Welfare Action Network to develop a child maltreatment prevention plan – to keep children safe by keeping families strong. The Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan is the outcome of this cross-sector effort, which was developed based on information gleaned through community and state partner engagement sessions, including persons with lived experience, and gathering data on the identified needs of families across the state. This presentation will focus on the development of the plan and its strategies, which emphasize interagency collaboration and coordination of community-based resources to build the protective factors that make child maltreatment less likely.

Presenters: Christine Theriault, Maine Office of Child and Family Services, Augusta, ME; Mariette Aborn, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Augusta, Maine; Melissa Hackett & Debra Dunlap, Maine Child Welfare Action Network, Augusta, Maine

D4 - Advancing Service Equity through an Equity Micro-Lab Process

The Oregon Office of Equity & Multicultural Services (OEMS) has made a commitment to implementing Equity Micro-Labs, which support the review of policy and practice and can serve

as a think-tank to improve service delivery where needed. In an effort to demonstrate proof of concept, Washington County partnered closely with OEMS to establish an Equity Micro-Lab with the goal of running the local permanency committee process through the concept. This presentation will cover the seven steps taken to implement the Equity Micro-Lab, the process to establish a facilitator cohort, as well as materials that will help guide the audience in bringing this concept to their own jurisdictions. Time in the presentation will be allotted to allow for conversation and brainstorming for the audience to identify topics that would be effective in their own Equity Micro-Labs.

Presenters: Aprille Flint-Gerner & Ashley Wortman, Oregon Department of Human Services, Salem, OR

D5 - Getting Beyond Burnout: Reducing Impacts to Medicaid/Managed Care Providers through Evidence-Informed Skills

Let's face it, the family-helping workforce is in crisis at all levels - from foster care to child welfare to mental health. We can't be trauma-informed without addressing the impacts of secondary trauma on the helper. In this session we will introduce Components for Enhancing Career Experience and Reducing Trauma (CE-CERT), an evidence-informed model developed by Dr. Brian Miller, that reverse-engineers aversive symptoms of workload stress. Applying tools and knowledge synthesized from multiple science domains, CE-CERT supports helpers to "practice within their practices", sustain helping work, and reduce turnover. CE-CERT is being implemented by San Diego Co. Child Welfare, the National Center on Child Advocacy in Huntsville, and Univ of Oklahoma's Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, among others. CE-CERT skill components help the helper more effectively reduce the broad impacts of secondary trauma and distress. The skills are designed to meld into all levels of supervision and personal wellness practice.

Presenter: Roy Van Tassell, Centene, Tulsa, OK

D6 - Beyond Stability: Shifting Services to a Holistic Coaching Approach to Promote Economic Well-Being

This session will introduce Mobility Mentoring®, a unique initiative to transform prevention services with an evidence-informed approach grounded in brain science. This approach shifts practice to a participant-driven mentor-supported approach that recognizes the impact of toxic stress from economic adversity. In 2020, the NYC Administration for Children's Services partnered with EMPATH to implement Mobility Mentoring with a cohort of seven providers across the city. We will share learnings from the implementation of the approach in NYC, tools and strategies from the model including drivers of economic mobility, and strategies for shifting services.

Presenters: Rosemarie Caward, EMPATH, Boston, MA; Pilar Bancalari, NYC Administration for Children's Services, NY; Gwendolyn Gonzalez, The New York Founding, NYC, NY

D7 - PRIDE (Parent Resource for Information Development and Education) Model of Practice

This workshop, based on a CWLA Signature Curriculum, will share how the PRIDE Model of Practice provides agencies with the opportunity to ensure that staff and resource families commit to your agency's vision, mission, and values; have complementary competency-based roles; use strengths-based language; implement culturally responsive best practices; and work to achieve outcomes that support safety, well-being, and permanency for the children in your care.

Presenter: Marcus Stallworth, CWLA, Washington, DC

D8 - Supporting Foster Youth in their Immigration Case: Tips & Tools for Case Workers

The National Foster Care Youth & Alumni Policy Council published an Immigration Priority in December 2022, with three important takeaways for child welfare stakeholders. This was the result of extensive polling of former foster youth with immigration needs and based on their experiences within the system. The following was identified: the child's need for obtaining legal status before exiting care; the need for trained case workers to assist in immigration matters; and the need for support in understanding, accessing, and exercising their basic rights. Our presentation will provide guidance to case workers so that they are better able to identify the immigration needs of the children they work with, understand immigration processes and child-centered relief options, and assist children in securing immigration representation.

Presenters: Rachel Konrad, Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA; Angel Petite, Foster Club, Seaside, OR

D9 - Brave Conversations about S-E-X: Working Together to Support the Sexual Health of Youth in Care

This interactive workshop will provide attendees with tangible resources and information to increase their capacity for supporting the sexual health of youth in their care. We will highlight core concepts of our approach: strengthening youth-adult connections through ongoing, trauma-informed conversations; modeling healthy relationship skills; facilitating access to medically accurate sexual health information; and affirming youth's identity and rights to advocate for their needs. This presentation will engage participants through practice scenarios and small group work. Attendees will be introduced to strategies for developing sexual health policies for child welfare organizations. Throughout the workshop, we will highlight the voices of youth, caregivers, and child welfare professionals who helped develop, test, and refine user-centered interventions. Together, these strategies will help participants shift to proactive guidance and support of the youth they serve.

Presenters: Andrea Requeses & Barbara Ball & Sharon Hoefler, Texas Center for Child and Family Studies, Austin, TX

D10 - You are Everybody's Customer: Linking Families across Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency

This workshop will present an innovative model that Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency programs can use to work together to positively impact mutual customers. We will share our process to identify shared customers; best practice models for collaborating across systems; how to blend program funding streams to maximize customer supports and maximize staff positions; customer and staff engagement strategies; and how to identify and collect outcome data. We will show how we used our Linkages model to begin cross-system identification, overcome legal challenges, and refine our collaborative processes using CQI to increase customer participation. Our Linkages model is a useful strategy for implementing FFPSA prevention efforts and child welfare system improvement plans.

Presenters: Michelle Wohl & Sandra Bowlan, Riverside County DPSS, Riverside, CA

D11 - Strategies for Supporting Kinship Care through Diligent Family Search and Engagement

For the past two decades, the rate of children entering care nationally in the United States has hovered near 3 or 4 per 1,000. That equates to over 200,000 children in care each year. There is an ever-growing mountain of research that indicates children have better outcomes when they reside with kinship caregivers, yet the national rate for placement with kin is only 35%. This workshop will provide an overview of the Kinnect to Family Program, which is a specialized, intense family search and engagement program that uses diligent search strategies to identify a vast array of connections for children and families encountering child welfare. We will share our program goals, our strategies for achieving higher placement rates, and how we work to support stabilization.

Presenter: Rick Dencer, Kinnect, Cleveland, OH

D12 - Strengthening Permanency through Cross-Agency Collaboration

This session introduces a unique partnership that addresses outcomes for youth while unifying permanency best practices across child-serving agencies. Our collaboration joins five nonprofit child welfare providers and the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families through proven practices and shared measurement to create a pathway to permanence enabling every child to stay home, go home, or find home. Participants will hear from youth, practitioners, executives, and evaluators to learn about our process to collectively engage in practices, advocacy, and outcome evaluation to ensure safe permanency.

Presenters: Michael Semel, Home for Little Wanderers, Boston, MA; Cheryl Peltier, Plummer Youth Promise, Salem, MA; Meredith Rapoza, Justice Resource Institute, Needham, MA

D13 - Chicago REACT: Addressing Community Violence with a Culturally Specific Trauma-Informed Model

The University of Chicago Medicine Recovery & Empowerment After Community Trauma (REACT) program provides youth and families affected by gun and community violence with brief trauma-focused intervention and access to ongoing therapeutic services. Using recent data

from a collaborative study with Chapin Hall, this session will demonstrate how this culturally specific trauma-informed model improves mental/behavioral health and social outcomes for youth and families with exposure to gun violence. Participants will learn core components of the Chicago REACT model, effective strategies to engage youth and families in behavioral health intervention, and how to improve mental health and trauma literacy among communities of color.

Presenters: Sonya Dinizulu, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Katrina Dorse & Dana Weiner, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

D14 - Expanding A Child's Circle: How Co-Care Helps Parents Collaborate

Co-Care encourages an intentional relationship between parents and foster parents. Positive Co-Care relationships are beneficial for all involved and are in the best interest of the children. Parents are experts on their children's needs and foster parents do all they can to provide the best possible care to the children while they are in their homes. Working together and maintaining connections leads to better outcomes. Learn how by following the release of the Administration for Children and Families Information Memorandum: Foster Care as a Support to Families in April 2020, Indiana DCS and Service Providers came together to Reimagine Foster Care in Indiana by overcoming cultural and structural barriers to building meaningful relationships between parents and licensed foster or kinship families that are supporting children.

Presenters: Angela Smith Grossman, Indiana Department of Child Services, Lafayette, IN; Pam Knight, The Villages of Indiana, Indianapolis, IN; Gale Spells-Bellamy, Dockside Services, Indianapolis, IN; Ann Davis, Indiana Association of Resources and Child Advocacy (IARCA), Indianapolis, IN

Thursday, April 18

Workshops E

3:00 pm – 4:15 pm

E1 - An Unlikely Collaboration: CWLA and Media Working Together to Change the Narrative

Extensive, negative media coverage of statistically rare, yet tragic, cases resulting in children's deaths or serious injuries continues to distort the narrative about child welfare. These crises often drive "foster care panic" which results in increased, unnecessary placements into care and can undermine innovation efforts focused on strengthening and safely preserving families. These panics also take a toll on workers, fueling burnout and turnover. This workshop will provide new resource guides to help child welfare agencies and their partners better navigate and hopefully prevent these kinds of crises. Solutions Journalism is a best practice approach that uses data, context, and regular coverage to frame constructive narratives about complex social issues and our reactions to them.

Presenters: Vicky Kelly CWLA Board of Directors, Millsboro, DE; Steve Volk; Resolve Philly; Philadelphia, PA

E3 - From Reporting to Supporting: Reframing Mandated Reporter Training

This workshop will review the Technical Assistance for Mandated Reporters program developed by Hennepin County Children and Family Services, which moves away from traditional liability-focused training. This reformation effort aims to engage agencies identified through analysis of reporting trends and disparity data in a high-level 6-month training partnership. We will highlight utilizing agency-specific data to connect with mandated reporters and share their personalized reporting trends, training for those agencies with a focus on implicit bias awareness and critical thinking, and intentional creation of partnerships between community providers, prevention agencies, and mandated reporters. The presentation will walk through the initial launch of this program with one of Hennepin County's largest school districts and discuss initial key learnings. Additionally, presenters will showcase the use of Power Bi to generate data-informed intervention, as well as discuss collaboration between the Child Protection and Community Engagement areas of Hennepin County Children and Family Services.

Presenters: Kristen Huffman & Allison Boynes, & Cathy Spann, Hennepin County Children and Family Services, Minneapolis, MN

E4 - Unmentionable is Unmanageable: Helping Children and Youth Heal from Loss and Trauma

All children/youth experiencing foster care and adoption have experienced loss and many also have experienced trauma. These events are often compounded by multiple placements, broken attachments, and often occur without the opportunity for youth to understand what has happened and to talk about their feelings, thoughts, and needs. Professionals may not be prepared for the feelings and may be uncomfortable initiating difficult conversations. Yet, this crucial work to help youth grieve and begin to heal is essential for them to prepare for permanency. Through case scenarios and discussion, this workshop will help participants build skills and gain confidence in helping children/youth talk about their story, acknowledge their trauma, losses, and grief, and manage their feelings and thoughts about what they know, what they don't know, and what they need to find out.

Presenters: Debbie Riley & Ashley Garcia-Rivera, C.A.S.E., Burtonsville, MD

E5 - Indiana Family Preservation Services: Preserving Families and Keeping Kids Safe

This workshop will discuss how the Indiana Family Preservation Services (INFPS) model uses evidence-based interventions and the provision of concrete supports to keep families with substantiated histories of abuse or neglect safely together. Indiana launched this service in all 92 counties on June 1, 2020, and has reduced the number of children in out-of-home care by over 35% since that time with significantly improved child safety, while also addressing racial inequities in removals. The model focuses on the development of protective factors within

families to help keep kids safe, and shifts the provider reimbursement model to per-diem to help provide resources to serve even resistant families.

Presenters: David Reed & Austin Hollabaugh, Indiana Department of Child Services, IN

E6 - Racial Equity Efforts in Child Welfare: The Importance of Relationships and Community Connections

This workshop will share current efforts underway in Santa Clara County's (California) Department of Family and Children's Services Racial Equity Agency Leadership Team (REAL). The team panelists will share ways they have worked to address institutional racism and race-based disparities, specifically in child welfare. Examples of this will include both internal efforts with staff and external efforts to improve service delivery to families. This team represents a group of diverse communities of color, underserved populations, from different work classifications and intersections. The work we are doing is intersectional and works toward coalition building, trust, inclusion, and a way of supporting one another in our respective affinity groups. It is complicated and has to be a constant work in progress so that we do not fall back into institutionalized oppression and white supremacy systems that have been in place.

Presenters: Carla Torres & Sonya Stamper & Marisol Agustinez, Santa Clara County Social Services Agency, San Jose, CA

E7 - Statewide Scale-Up of High-Quality Child Welfare Programming: Implementation Best Practices and Cross-System Partnerships

Research points to the critical role of effective implementation and enabling contexts in ensuring services achieve their intended outcomes. Yet, many child welfare agencies have not integrated implementation best practices into their work. This session will describe the systematic approach the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) took to scale up family and youth services through the building of implementation infrastructure and adoption of evidence-based strategies to improve service delivery and outcomes. Examples include investment in internal program development and research offices, implementation plans to improve services totaling \$300 million, and intentional partnerships to facilitate evidence-based decision-making. We will highlight how DCF used these strategies with its Youth Council to select and implement programming for youth. Participants will discuss lessons learned and potential applications in their agencies.

Presenters: Nancy Gagliano & Michael Doyle & Pamela Lilleston, NJ Department of Children and Families, Trenton, NJ

E8 - Mental Health Services and Services Research: A Time for Revitalization

Mental health services in the United States have deteriorated over the past two decades. A small number of mental health experts, academics, researchers, advocates, and people with life experience came together this year to discuss the state of mental health services. The result

was the development of a series of recommendations for the revitalization of mental health services. This workshop will provide the audience with those recommendations and include an informative discussion of the process which produced those recommendations.

Presenter: William Reay, Omni Inventive Care, Omaha, NE

E9 - We Are in a Capacity Crisis with Only One Way Out: Radical Change

Child welfare's problems are rooted in our lack of capacity to keep up. The pressure workers feel causes stress, leads to inconsistent decision making, and contributes to turnover. By addressing the root causes, we can serve families better and eliminate the pressure symptoms. In this workshop, we will explore the concepts behind Indiana's award winning SafeACT solution, including: managing workflow and workload; getting the most from our shrinking number of experts; breaking up bottlenecks and batches; supporting workers closest to the families; assuring the right care, for the right kids, at the right time. Multiple state and county agencies are using a similar solution to see a 50-80% reduction in assessment caseloads, 90% timeliness improvements, and 30% fewer children in care.

Presenters: Bill Bott, Change & Innovation Agency, Liberty, MO; Sarah Sailors, Indiana Department of Child Services, Indianapolis, IN

E11 - The Journey from Client to Colleague

This session will explore the inspiring transformation of individuals who have navigated the path from being clients of social systems to becoming successful colleagues in their respective fields. Our presentation will highlight strategies, programs, and initiatives that bridge the gap between care and career. Real-life stories will demonstrate how fostering a supportive environment and providing tailored resources can help break down barriers and cultivate talent within the community of those with lived experience in systems. Attendees will gain insights into the value of fostering inclusive workplaces that embrace the diversity of intersecting identities and experiences, recognizing the positive impact on both individuals and the broader workforce. The presentation will empower child and family services staff, showcasing how their efforts play a critical part in empowering clients to pursue fulfilling careers.

Presenters: Victor Sims, The Annie E Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD; Nicolee Biddle, The Center for the Study of Social Policy, Pittsburgh, PA; Scout Hartley, ICF, New Jersey

E12 - Rooting in Community: Transforming Foster Care with Mockingbird Family

Using Mockingbird Family as a framework for reference, this workshop will walk through our learnings over the past 2 decades of transforming systems, starting with the very questions we ask of ourselves. We have sought to find a different way to deliver foster care than the network of single family and group homes that so many systems rely upon. By looking at the oldest form of support – extended-family networks – Mockingbird Family has restructured the way foster care is delivered so that every parent, child, and young person has not just a placement, but a

community of aunts, uncles, and cousins to help them develop life-long relationships. Participants should come with the ability to write and reflect on their own organizations and a readiness to engage in conversation as we walk through systems transformation.

Presenter: Hayley Bridwell, The Mockingbird Society, Seattle, WA

E13 - Exemplary Kinship Practices Supported by Cross-System Collaboration

The Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network is the first federally funded National Technical Assistance Center on Grandfamilies & Kinship Families. We provide technical assistance and support to multiple systems whose services benefit kinship families. Through our work, we have captured exemplary practices that are being implemented across the country, supported by cross-system collaboration and kinship caregiver engagement. We will elevate a number of these replicable practices. Among the most critical practices we will elevate is the meaningful engagement of kinship caregivers in cross-system kinship advisory groups. Participants will hear from a grandparent caregiver who will share her expertise in developing a statewide advisory council and participating in the federal Advisory Council on Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, which is working to implement the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers.

Presenters: Ana Beltran & Melissa Devlin, Generations United, Washington, DC; Sarah Smalls, Formed Families Forward, Fairfax, VA

E14 - Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in this Moment of Crisis

This workshop will highlight the avalanche of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation from the past two years and provide tangible ways youth-serving professionals and organizations can create more welcoming, affirming, and supportive environments for youth who are LGBTQ+ and their families. This presentation will focus on sharing information about youth who are LGBTQ+, an underrepresented group currently experiencing a wave of legislative actions. The presentation will also focus on sharing equitable practices with participants on how to support and affirm youth who are LGBTQ+ and their families in this difficult political moment. We will cover promising practices for creating gender-inclusive agency environments and best supporting youth and adults with diverse gender identities and expressions. Finally, we will review newly released data from the Human Rights Campaign's 2022 National Youth Survey.

Presenter: Phii Regis, Human Rights Campaign Foundation, Washington, DC

Friday, April 19

Workshops F

9:15 am – 10:30 am

F1 - How Early Head Start is Primary Prevention for Children in Foster or Kinship Care

Early Head Start (EHS), a program designed specifically for women who are pregnant and children birth through three years of age, is designed to meet the unique needs of children in

foster or kinship care and their families. In fact, these children are categorically eligible for Early Head Start and services can begin before a baby is born. Working with both families – birth and foster – EHS can provide the comprehensive services necessary to ensure infants and toddlers from our most vulnerable populations get the high-quality early care they need. In this session, we will discuss how child welfare and Early Head Start can collaborate to create systems that easily connect families with their local Early Head Start provider.

Presenters: National Head Start Association staff

F2 - Advancing Equity in Adoption through Innovative Provider Payments and Data-Driven Policy Changes

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is working with Public Consulting Group (PCG) to tackle systemic inequities in adoption by modifying the incentive-based adoption provider case management rate and assessing the policies and practices within the department that may contribute to inequities. The proposed case management rates incorporate individual case characteristics, including race, as important contributors to workload and duration and are built to accelerate permanency for all populations of children, enhance equity, and reduce financial deficits common among providers. The equity policy assessment aims to identify opportunities for changes in policies and practices that may be contributing to prolonged time in care and disparities in outcomes for identified populations.

Presenters: Samantha Bone, Public Consulting Group, Boston, MA; Sarah Goad, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

F3 - Creating Stability During Change: Leveraging Public-Private Partnerships to Prevent Resource Family Disruptions and Increase Retention

Finding and keeping families who foster and adopt has been a challenge for decades with public and private child welfare agencies competing for funding and families. Recognizing that collaboration could be more effective, a partnership of public and private child welfare and mental health agencies joined together for an initiative aimed at retaining resource families by decreasing disruptions. A culturally diverse leadership team with lived and professional experiences advocated for a research and demonstration project that would focus on creating stability. The result was a strength-based and commitment-focused model of practice. Shared work tools emphasize families as a system, respect the impact of loss and trauma on family members, and use data to inform outcomes. Learn how the Creating Stability During Change (CSDC) Model of Practice initiative can be replicated in your own community.

Presenters: Eshale Williams & Bernadette Boylan

F4 - Leadership Touchstone: Effective Leaders are Strategic and Fiscally Responsible

In a fast-paced, ever-evolving environment it is especially important to have a clearly stated strategy that serves as a point of reference for the direction of an organization. Good strategies

are rooted in mission effectiveness, consider all the critical issues there are at play, and identify resources needed to develop a sustainable pathway. More than anything else, strategy is about having a command of critical issues and maintaining a constant vigilance that allows an organization to be data-driven while at the same time agile. Effective strategies consider the financial resources and capital assets required to implement a plan of action and maintain the well-being and the financial sustainability of an organization. Presenters will share their experience in developing effective strategic plans considering the challenges of diversifying funding sources and being ever responsive to the needs of an evolving child and family serving field. Come prepared to share your experiences with strategic plan development and implementation.

Presenters: Joe Costa & Julie Springwater, CWLA Senior Fellows

F5 - How Building Our Safety Practice Model Has Strengthened Our Work with Mandated Reporters and Beyond

Our work at the front-end of the CPS system is vital for ensuring the immediate safety, well-being, and permanency of children. By collaborating with community-based partners to implement our Safety Practice Model, we have observed an increase in the quality of information from mandated reporters and fewer unwarranted reports to the careline. As a result, we're able to curtail unnecessary investigations and prevent hasty family separations. This enables us to deliver more effective interventions to children assessed as unsafe or conditionally safe. In this workshop, we will outline our Safety Practice Model and tools, which promote a consistent way of thinking about child safety, known as the "ABCD Safety Paradigm". In order to prioritize keeping children at home within their communities whenever possible, we must also take into account protective factors and family strengths alongside understanding family issues, incidents, patterns, and initial reasons for referral.

Presenters: Joyce Taylor & Denise Dawson, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT; Michael Williams, Connecticut DCF, Hartford, CT; Sheri Trivane, CCBC, Essex, MD

F6 - Driving Change in Child Welfare: Collective Lived Experience Perspectives from the National Policy Councils

The National Foster Care Youth & Alumni Policy Council has advised the last six Commissioners at the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families and affected significant change in child welfare. Supported by partner staff, Council members will begin this session by providing an overview of the Council and its key priorities. Attendees will work in small groups to reflect on the Council's priority areas and how these could be incorporated into or inform work in their own communities. The workshop will end with a dialogue session regarding youth perspectives on Council work.

Presenter: Angel Petite, FosterClub, Seaside, OR

F7 - Building Resilience through Equity Work

Join CWLA's Member Equity Committee for an engaging and insightful discussion on strategies for implementing equity initiatives nationwide. Presenters from the Committee will share their journeys in advancing equity within their respective organizations. Our speakers will encompass a spectrum of perspectives, from staff members who are just beginning their journey into equity work to those who have already established a robust commitment to equity within their organizations. Attendees will hear from staff from both public and private agencies, as well as people with lived experience. Time will also be allocated for participants to exchange their own experiences and insights in the ongoing effort to promote equity.

Presenters: CWLA's Member Equity Committee

F8 - Empowering Professionals for LGBTQ+ Support: Addressing Misinformation in Child Welfare

The presentation introduces Chosen Affirming Family Finding (CAFF), a model by the National SOGIE Center and Kinnect, a Cleveland-based nonprofit reimagining child welfare. CAFF targets youth who are LGBTQ+ and experiencing child welfare, building a supportive network of lifelong kin and chosen family. Adapting the Family Finding model from Kevin Campbell, it emphasizes safety, intersectionality, and family affirmation. Evidence of overrepresentation of youth who are LGBTQ+ in foster care, family rejection's impact, and positive outcomes of acceptance will be discussed. Participants will learn CAFF adaptations, effective communication with youth who are LGBTQ+, and gender-affirming support in child welfare. Attendees will also develop critical thinking skills to identify and challenge biases and misconceptions related to LGBTQ+ issues, ensuring accurate and unbiased support for LGBTQ+ youth.

Presenters: Shannon Ward & Heather Jamison, Kinnect to Family, Cleveland, Ohio

F9 - Implementing Trauma-Informed Care across the Federal Government through an Interagency Task Force

Through the passage of the SUPPORT for Patients Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Communities Act, the Interagency Task Force for Trauma-Informed Care (the Task Force) was charged with developing and implementing a National Strategy for Trauma-Informed Care. Through the work of twenty-three agencies and an engaged community, the Task Force created a three-phase operating plan to implement the four pillars of the National Strategy to identify and evaluate best practices and ways federal agencies can coordinate responses to families affected by substance use disorders and trauma. This presentation will explore a process of engaging disparate federal agencies that is responsive and informed by a diverse group of engaged community organizations, researchers, evaluators, youth, and persons with lived experience.

Presenter: Melinda Baldwin, SAMHSA, Rockville, MD

F10 - Identifying and Addressing Grief and Ambiguous Loss to Prevent Trauma and Support Connection, Culture, and Identity

Drawing on the work of Pauline Boss and others, this workshop will explore the prevalence of ambiguous loss and unacknowledged grief in the child welfare system and its impact on children and families. Together, we will consider how responding to ambiguous loss in a trauma-informed manner builds relationships and should be part of a holistic treatment plan. Participants will leave this workshop with the ability to succinctly inform and educate others about ambiguous loss; practical steps that can be integrated into casework practice and work with children and families; a list of actionable steps for participants to take back to their agencies; and an understanding of how acknowledging and responding to ambiguous loss can improve relationships with children, parents, caregivers, and family members.

Presenter: Richard Heyl de Ortiz, CASA of New York State, Albany, NY

F11 - A New Take on Opposition in Adolescence: Changing How We See, Understand, and Relate to Adolescents!

Opposition in adolescence has become synonymous with oppositional defiant disorder. This view of opposition as a disorder is limiting and puts adults in conflict with youth. This workshop will discuss the need for opposition to be seen on a continuum, with healthy and constructive degrees of opposition as part of typical development at one end and opposition as a disorder at the other end. Opposition is typically seen as a behavioral problem; the workshop will show how opposition in adolescence is experienced and constructed relationally and needs relational interventions. We will discuss the construct of opposition as advocacy and power expression and the need for alternative approaches to working with opposition in adolescence in a non-blaming and strength-based manner.

Presenter: Tawanda Hubbard, Rutgers School of Social Work, New Brunswick, NJ

F12 - The Science of Hope and Barriers to Belongingness

Over 2,000 published research studies suggest the strengths-based approach of hope, which is the belief that the future will be better than today, is strongly linked to child, youth, and family well-being. Numerous studies on hope provide evidence that hopeful thinking is a protective buffer in the face of stress, such as adverse childhood experiences, toxic stress, and other adversities. This presentation will outline a cooperative strategy funded by the Department of Justice Office of Victims of Crime to build a community of practice for multiple law enforcement agencies to adopt a Hope Centered and Trauma Informed approach while building belongingness in communities. Additionally, we will introduce hope as a framework for action and highlight an innovative approach to service delivery that can be implemented by frontline staff.

Presenters: Romero Davis & Amy Templeman, Social Current, Washington DC; Angela Pharris, Hope Research Center, Norman, OK

F13 - Family Well-Being from the Beginning: Prevention Not Intervention

We will share how our community collaboration grant, Supported Families, Stronger Community, has had an impact on early intervention/prevention in our community through successful partnerships with families, community agencies, and our navigation team. By using community navigators who are connected to their community through lived expertise and cultural connections, we are improving protective factors, increasing support networks, and navigating needed services and supports. Participants will hear from an agency partner who shares our vision and has been with the project from the planning stages through implementation. We will also share our evaluation outcomes to date which demonstrate the success of the project and our plans moving forward.

Presenters: Deb DeLuca-Forzley & Radhwan Jubair & Mary Maldonado, Larimer County Department of Human Services, Fort Collins, CO

F14 - Advancing Court Performance: Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program Courts, Dependency Timelines, and Equity

The presentation will provide an overview of the dynamic impact of Washington State's Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP) courts, as they lead the change in fostering incremental and quantifiable improvement in dependency court systems. In this interactive workshop, we will take a deep dive into the Interactive Dependency Database, a cornerstone of continuous quality improvement within the FYJCIP approach. Through real-world case studies, attendees will engage in thought-provoking discussions around data, igniting critical thinking and insightful analysis. This session will provide practical tools to practice equity and enhance outcomes within attendees' professional roles.

Presenters: Arina Gertseva & Jennifer Nguyen, Administrative Office of the Courts Olympia, WA

Friday, April 19

Workshops G

10:50 am – 12:05 pm

G1 – Practice Makes Permanent: Incorporating Experiential Learning into Your Foundational Training

Experiential learning and simulation exercises allow new workers to practice crucial skills in a safe and realistic environment prior to entering the field and allows seasoned workers to refine their practices. Skill building in safe learning environments promotes a culture of better practices and improved critical thinking skills. The Alliance for Experiential Problem-Based Learning team is collaborating with CWLA to provide the steps needed to embed simulation training in foundational learning. This workshop will address the evidence-based model's implementation, key strategies and curriculum design, and how it is being integrated as part of the upcoming revised volume of the CWLA Child Protective Services Function Standards of Excellence. Participants will experience a simulation scenario remotely and observe the transfer of learning that takes place during the debriefing process.

Presenters: Betsy Goulet & Amy Wheeler, Alliance for Experiential Problem-Based Learning, Springfield, IL

G2 - The Happiness Advantage

Engagement in services to children, youth, and families who experience significant distress can take a toll on workers' life satisfaction. As witnesses to the impacts of poverty, injustices related to oppression, and systems that can be more harmful than helpful, it is difficult to maintain a sense of balance, much less experience joy. Positive psychology can mitigate some of the stressful components of child welfare work, providing insights and tools to help each other thrive. This session will explore the research of positive psychology, including the impact of genetics, actions and thoughts, external circumstances, and overall positive ratio. We will also discuss supportive workforce practice, how targeted supervision can lead to increased retention of team members, the importance of buy-in from leadership, and how to move from compassion fatigue to compassion satisfaction.

Presenter: Kelli McKnight, Options Counseling and Family Services, OR

G3 - Faith Communities as Pillars of Support: Integrating Prevention and Aftercare in Child Welfare

The workshop will explore and discuss the vital role of faith communities in the context of child welfare. Through understanding the roles of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), exploring prevention strategies, highlighting aftercare support, and fostering collaboration, attendees will be equipped with valuable insights and tools to forge meaningful partnerships in their respective communities. The workshop will have three components: understanding the role of faith communities in child welfare; prevention and aftercare strategies within faith communities; collaboration and communication between child welfare agencies and faith communities.

Presenter: Grace Weltman, Communities in Motion, Los Angeles, County, CA; Dan Broyles, Valencia Hills Community Church, Santa Clarita, CA; Michael Rauso, Los Angeles County DCFS, CA

G4 - Initial Evaluation Findings from a Prenatal Alcohol Exposure Resource Collection for Child Welfare Workers

Prenatal alcohol exposure (PAE) can result in a variety of behavioral, cognitive, developmental, and/or physical effects. This presentation will provide initial findings of an evaluation of a PAE resource collection for child welfare workers that investigates their knowledge of PAE, attitudes toward alcohol use, perceptions of the usefulness of the resource collection, and perceptions of the applicability of the resource collection to their work. Convenience sampling approaches were used to survey child welfare workers from four agencies on these topic areas and descriptive statistics will be presented. These initial findings will ensure that the PAE resource

collection contains the appropriate content to effectively assist child welfare workers to recognize and address PAE and ultimately solidify strategies for supporting children with PAE.

Presenters: Amanda Barczyk & Leah Bouchard, James Bell Associates, Arlington, VA; Jacquelyn Bertrand, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA

G5 - An Innovative Approach to Combining Agile and Implementation Science to Increase Parent Engagement

In the aftermath of COVID, the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) identified the need to improve family engagement. In partnership with the Capacity Building Center for States (CBCS), DCF launched a series of two-week Agile Sprint cycles, grounded in an implementation science informed approach to developing, implementing, and monitoring clear practice behaviors. DCF has been able to quickly (within a 6-month period) conduct problem exploration, develop parent engagement practice profiles (with a specific focus on fathers), and pilot, test, and adapt them. This session will provide an overview of: the Agile/Implementation Science process and timeline; creating an inclusive practice profile team (including social workers and people with lived experience); the practice behaviors, tools, training, coaching, and communities of practice being implemented in pilot offices; and lessons learned in an accelerated, structured, and inclusive process to support social workers in post-COVID family engagement.

Presenters: Ruben Ferreira & Laura Brody, Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, Boston, MA; Tori Russell, Child Welfare Capacity Building Center for States, Reston, VA

G6 - Evolving from a Placement System to a Treatment System in State Foster Care

This session will describe the 3-year process of implementing FFT-Foster Care in Connecticut, while incorporating the perspective of all the key stakeholders involved. Comprehensive data regarding service delivery, treatment model fidelity, and youth and family feedback were crucial in successfully guiding implementation and maintaining high-quality services that advance the well-being of youth in the system. Attendees will learn specific strategies and will walk away with practical tools to use in large implementation projects, an understanding of the role data and ongoing CQI play in guiding implementation, and strategies for changing culture from a placement system to a treatment system at a state level.

Presenters: Tom Sexton & Marta Anderson, FFT Partners, New York, NY; Nicole McKelvey-Walsh, Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Hartford, CT

G7 - Working with Latino Families of Youth with Problematic Sexual Behavior: Cultural Considerations

Caregivers impacted by problematic sexual behavior (PSB) are often bereft of guidance on what to do to address the safety and treatment needs of their youth and of others impacted by their child's behavior. Professionals across systems are mired in misconceptions. Evidence-based

practices exist to address PSB and to address trauma symptoms in victims, but most communities don't have access to such resources. There is often inherent reluctance to engage or seek supportive services based on several factors such as cultural experience. Latinos are dramatically changing the demographic profile in the U.S., yet remain a demographic less likely to connect to services. Approaching clinical care for this population with sensitivity and cultural humility is critical for providers. Limited understanding of cultural norms and language may present as barriers which can be further impacted by the shame of PSB and cultural views of mental health treatment.

Presenter: Ingrid Murre, Children's Institute, Los Angeles, CA

G8 - Implementing and Evaluating a Peer Mentoring Program for Youth Entering Foster Care

EnlightenMENT is a near-peer mentoring program for youth ages 14-21 who enter foster care in New Jersey. It was proposed by young adults with lived experience in child welfare and launched in 2022 across nine New Jersey counties. This workshop describes the peer mentoring practice, continuous quality improvement (CQI) framework, and evaluation study behind EnlightenMENT. We will describe the successes, challenges, and lessons that New Jersey's Department of Children and Families encountered while building a programmatic infrastructure for EnlightenMENT capable of implementing the novel practice, maximizing CQI with stakeholders, partner providers, and communities, and building an evidence base in tandem. Participants will leave the workshop with a detailed blueprint and technical knowledge on implementing, monitoring, and evaluating innovative peer mentoring services for youth in foster care.

Presenters: Daniela Guarda & Jonathan Marsh, NJ Department of Children & Families, Trenton, NJ

G9 - Ties that Bind: Supporting Families with Youth Experiencing Housing Insecurity and Homelessness

This session will introduce YouthConnect Center's Family and Youth programming, which emphasizes the importance of wrapping around the whole family unit to prevent generational poverty, child abuse, and child welfare system involvement. Real life examples and explanations of success stories will be shared, as well as hurdles and lessons learned through the development of a new and progressive program. A systemic explanation and statistics will be provided to support the importance of strengthening ties within families and how this work chips away at the generational issues plaguing families. We will also discuss best practices when working with the unsheltered as well as positive youth development techniques.

Presenters: Erin Washburn, FosterAdopt Connect, Springfield, MO

G10 - Preparing Resource Parents to Partner with Families of Origin to Support Reunification and Permanency

This workshop will introduce the Children's Bureau funded Maryland Center for Excellence in Resource Family Development (CfE). This innovative approach to supporting families with children in foster care has the potential to transform child welfare practice by better engaging families of origin and partnering with resource parents to expedite reunification and permanency. With training and multiple evidence-based programs, the CfE prepares resource parents to partner with and mentor the families of origin of the children in their care. Partnership across resource parents and families of origin supports ongoing connection between the child(ren) and their families; consistency in parenting for the child(ren) as they transition from a resource home to reunifying with their families; and timely, successful reunification for that family. The presentation will reflect on the implementation process within different communities, allowing attendees to consider how to bring the model to their own jurisdiction.

Presenters: Jessie Watrous, University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD; Valerie Douglas, Maryland Department of Human Services, Baltimore, MD

G11 - Maintaining Evidence-Informed Practices in a Social Service Agency: Fidelity Matters!

Implementation and maintenance of evidence-informed practices are often a struggle for social service agencies due to staff turnover, caseload sizes, and productivity requirements. The RE-AIM Framework is used to measure the success of dissemination of interventions from the original effectiveness research to real-world settings as a practical counterpart to traditional evaluation methods and includes both individual and organizational level analysis. Originally created to examine the dissemination of clinical practice changes, the framework has been applied to the planning and evaluation of behavioral, policy, systems, and environmental changes. This session will discuss various techniques for agencies to use resources to ensure fidelity, including a demonstration of the RE-AIM Framework and a look at of the use of a Practice Lead on staff.

Presenters: Annette Trunzo & Chelsea Cowden, JusticeWorks YouthCare, Pittsburgh, PA

G12 - Project IMPACT: An Effective Family Preservation Program for Parents with Intellectual Disabilities

Research demonstrates that a substantial number of families who have child welfare involvement include a parent with intellectual disabilities. These families are at increased risk of disruptive interventions including foster care placement and termination of parental rights. Despite this, there are few programs designed to meet the unique needs of these families. Project IMPACT is an intensive, in-home, behaviorally-based parent training program designed for parents with intellectual disabilities who are at risk of foster care placement. The program aims to identify risk and protective factors for families and provide parenting education and training tailored to the individual needs of families with the goal of promoting healthy child development and preventing children from entering foster care. This presentation will share research findings, provide details about the program, and discuss how child welfare

organizations can develop expertise to work with families who have a parent with intellectual disabilities.

Presenters: Wendy Zeitlin, Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ; Trupti Rao, Westchester Institute for Human Development, Valhalla, NY; Astraea Augsberger, Boston University, Boston, MA

G13 - Safeguarding Unaccompanied Children: Understanding Human Trafficking Risks and Eradicating Barriers

In this presentation, participants will gain an increased understanding of unaccompanied immigrant children (UCs) and the intersection between UCs and human trafficking. We will delve into the intricacies of the migration journey, the Office of Refugee Resettlement family reunification process, and post-release services. Furthermore, we will address the critical issue of trafficking risks that occur among the UC population, equipping participants with the knowledge to recognize and respond effectively when providing services to this population. We will explore best practices for providers interacting with unaccompanied children including cultural sensitivity and trauma-informed care to improve outcomes for UCs. Finally, we will shed light on the importance of creating community partnerships to eradicate barriers and ensure the well-being and safety of unaccompanied children.

Presenters: Sofia Jimenez Omaña & Margarita Jimenez, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Arlington, VA

G14 - Centering Parent Advocacy in Child Welfare through Peer Specialists and Health Care Coordinators

This presentation will emphasize ways that two rapidly emerging positions, Certified Peer Recovery Specialists and Health Care Coordinators, are uniquely centered around advocacy and emotional support for families involved in child welfare services, and often serve as a contrast to case management processes that have become oriented toward oversight and adherence. Using data from two regional evaluations of child welfare interventions in Jacksonville and Miami, FL, the presenters will draw from voice memos recorded by peer specialists and healthcare coordinators to highlight ways that family advocacy contributes to engagement with families and understanding root causes of child welfare involvement.

Presenters: Linda Callejas & Anna Abella, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL