**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Enough is Known for Action Webinar Series

System-Involved Youth: Understanding Trauma-Informed Practice**

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BRIAN KEATING: Again, I want to welcome everyone to today's system-involved youth: understanding trauma-informed practice webinar, and this is, again, part of the Enough is Known for Action webinar series, the last that we're having this year. We'll leave that welcome chat up for another minute or two to give you an opportunity to introduce yourself, if you're just joining or haven't yet introduced yourself in that chat.

So again, all we're looking for right now is your name or the name of your organization or group, how many are joining you, if you're in a group, and where you're physically located. And while you type that up, we'll leave that up again for another minute or two.

We want to find out who you are. So you'll notice there's a polling window right now on your screen. We'd like to know your affiliation. So you'll notice who's on today's call is the question. Your choices are service provider, staff at state or local workforce development organization, workforce development board member, youth council member, federal agency partner, employer, or funder.

And if there is another category there that's not represented or if you want to let us know any context about that, you can also type that into the chat. So it looks like many of you have voted. We're going to give you just a few more seconds. Again, to vote click the radio button on your screen that is next to your choice. So many of you have, but if you haven't already done that, go ahead and click that now. And it looks like so far service provider seems to be most popular category.

I'm going to turn things over to our moderator in a moment, but Brian, anything you want to say about that?

BRIAN LYGHT: No. I'm very pleased that we have such a diverse group of individuals on this call and certainly hope that the information that we provide today will be useful. So thank you, Brian.

MR. KEATING: My pleasure. Okay. Great. Well, thanks, everyone, for voting in that. We'll have a couple of other opportunities to vote in polling questions throughout this 90-minute webinar, and we'll also invite you to type in any questions or comments you have once we get started here in a chat window that's on your screen. So feel free to type those questions and comments in, and we'll address as many as we can and as many as we have time for today.

All right. Great. I'm going to then turn things over to today's moderator, Brian S. Lyght, senior fellow with the Division of Youth Services, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Brian, welcome, and please take it away.

MR. LYGHT: Thank you, Brian. Good morning or good afternoon, depending on where you are, and welcome to today's Enough is Known for Action webinar series. Today, as Brian has stated, we will be discussing system-involved youth, understanding trauma-informed practice.

As stated, my name is Brian Lyght, and I'm a senior fellow at the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration where I work in the Division of Youth Services. Department of Labor is very pleased to be hosting this webinar in collaboration with our federal agency partners, and I'd like to extend sincere thanks, especially to our partners Linda Smith, Chris Holloway, and Angie Webley at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Family and Youth Services Bureau.

So before we begin and launch into the information on the webinar, we will ask you to vote on this following question, which simply asks to what extent do you see exposure to trauma impacting a young person's ability to achieve his or her personal and professional long-term goals? So if you will just take a moment to respond to that poll, it would be extremely helpful to myself and to our presenters as we frame the information that we will be providing on today's webinar.

MR. KEATING: All right. Great. And many of you have already voted, but if you haven't yet, just like a moment ago, it's the same kind of question here. So we're asking to what extent do you see exposure to trauma impacting a young person's ability to achieve his or her personal and professional long-term goals. You can pick none of the time, some of the time, often, most of the time, or all of the time. Please go ahead and click one of these radio buttons now to vote in this poll. So go ahead and click your choice. Choose one of these options, and then, Brian, feel free to respond here once we see the voting slowing down. Once again, you're just clicking your radio button on your screen. Click – feel free to vote now, if you haven't already done that.

MR. LYGHT: So I'm seeing that almost half of you, 48.5 percent feel that trauma impacts a young person's ability to achieve his or her personal goals most of the time with 20 percent of you feeling that that's all of the time. So certainly the majority clearly feels that either most of the time or all of the time trauma does in fact impact a young person's goals. And so that is very pertinent to today's discussion.

So let me just share with you our thoughts for today in terms of an agenda. And so first today you will hear from Kathleen Guarino, a senior technical assistant specialist at the American Institutes for Research. Kathleen specializes in supporting the adoption of trauma-informed care across social service systems. She also trains on traumatic stress, vicarious trauma, and trauma-informed care, provides technical assistance to support service providers to adopt trauma-informed practices, and has developed a number of resources to enhance organizational capacity to provide trauma-informed care. Kathleen will kick us off by defining trauma, describing its prevalence among system-involved youth, and sharing what we're learning from research regarding its impact.

Following Kathleen will be Tammy Hopper who serves as both the chief strategic initiatives officer at the National Safe Place Network as well as director of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau at HHS. Tammy's a licensed clinical social worker with more than 25 years' experience in providing trauma-informed services to youth and families. Tammy's remarks will focus on trauma-informed care and approaches that each of your organizations can take to promote a culture that views system-involved youth through a trauma-informed lens.

After we hear from Tammy, we'll switch gears to hear from experts in the fields of youth development and employment who will share with us steps that they're taking to support youth who've experienced trauma to transition to the workplace and to be successful in their first job experience.

We'll hear from Serita Cox, co-founder and executive director of iFoster, a national non-profit focused on providing life-changing resources for children being raised in foster care. Prior to founding iFoster, Serita was a strategy consultant with the Bridgespan Group and has also served as a senior executive leading global strategy, business operations, and e-business for 3Com Corporation. For her work at iFoster, Serita has been recognized by the White House Office of Social Innovation as a citizen innovator.

And we'll also hear from Mark Foley, senior vice president of human resources at Raley's Family of Fine Stores. Mark is a proven HR leader responsible for defining Raley's culture and values with the employees' voice in mind. Mark has roots in the grocery business where he held his first job as a grocery bagger while in high school and continued as a clerk through college.

So while I won't spend too much time on this slide, as I'm sure many of you are familiar with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, I would like to highlight two specific bullets. First, WIOA affirms the Department of Labor's commitment to providing high quality services for youth and young adults, whether opportunities for skills training, connections to jobs along a career pathway, or enrollment in postsecondary education. And second, WIOA requires that 75 percent of state and local youth funding be expended on out-of-school youth, which brings us to why we're here today and why the focus on trauma-informed practice for system-involved youth.

At the nexus of the fields of neuroscience, mainly brain development and youth development, is a growing body of research that's focused on the impact of unresolved issues of trauma on executive function among youth who were involved in public systems, whether they're youth in foster care or the juvenile justice system or whether we're talking about youth who are runaway and homeless or pregnant and parenting. These system-involved youth are indeed among those same youth, that 75 percent I mentioned earlier, who are eligible to receive services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

And indeed I contend that youth service providers and employers will find it difficult to realize the full potential of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, not the priority placed on serving out-of-school youth, nor it's affirmation of high quality services like skills training, connections to jobs and career pathways, and enrollment in postsecondary education, if they're ill-equipped to support young people by addressing issues of trauma that get in the way of their success.

David Lee sums it up best when he states, "Regardless of how state of the art or cutting edge programs may be, they fall far short of their potential when the people expected to utilize them are compromised emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Trying to teach…skills…or team approaches to a traumatized worker is like giving gourmet cooking lessons to someone who has been ravaged by starvation. They will be too depleted, preoccupied, and overwhelmed to care about, absorb, or act on what they are taught."

Today we're going to think together about how we can address issues of trauma among system-involved youth so that we can ensure that these young people have the best education and employment outcomes possible. So I ask you to sit back, relax, and join with me in learning more about trauma. And as a reminder, please post your questions to the section on your screen which invites questions. So with that, Kathleen, if you could take it away.

KATHLEEN GUARINO: Sure. Thank you, Brian. And welcome, everyone. Appreciate your time today and the work that you do. I'm going to start us off, as Brian said, by talking about both the prevalence of trauma among system-involved youth, so what they're experiencing in the day to day in their lives, as well as the impact that that trauma exposure can have and particularly the impact it can have when it begins early in life. But I want to start us off today by just kind of talking about what we mean when we use the term trauma.

So certainly all of us experience stress in the day to day, and I would imagine this time of year particularly for service providers can be extremely stressful. But fortunately, most of us have developed a capacity for coping with a certain level of stress and sometimes really even intense stress.

But when we talk about trauma, we're really referring to an experience, usually one that involves a threat to our physical or emotional well-being, that overwhelms our ability to cope. And as a result, it leaves us feeling helpless, vulnerable, and out of control in ways that are different from day-to-day stresses. And for many, particularly when trauma happens over a course of time, can really – these experiences can really change how we see the world, how we view other people, and how we see ourselves.

So there are a few different types of trauma that I just want to review briefly. One of the things that I think is important always for us to think about when we're thinking about trauma is that what makes the stress traumatic is really less about what the event is itself and more how it's perceived by the person who's actually involved. But there are certainly a number of different types of experiences that often are experienced as traumatic by most of us, whether adults or youth.

So one type of trauma is acute trauma. That's what we talk about as more of a single incident or one-time event. It tends to be an event that occurs at a particular time and place and is usually short-lived. Examples might be natural disasters, accidents, sudden losses, or one-time experiences of violence.

And certainly, a one-time experience of trauma could have a significant long-term impact, but one of the things that we know when we think about in this case children and youth is that with the right support and with a sense of sort of safety and security, kids and youth are more likely to be able to move on from that type of experience without developing more significant challenges.

When we talk about chronic trauma, we're talking about overwhelming experiences that occur repeatedly over longer periods of time, and these kinds of experiences, like chronic abuse and neglect or ongoing exposure to violence in communities, illness, experiences like chronic homelessness, can certainly have a more significant impact on people over time. I would also really encourage us to think about expanding our perspective on what trauma might be and including experiences like chronic exposure to poverty and deprivation, experiences of structural oppression, and racism as also having a traumatic impact on kids and adults over time.

At a broader level, when we use the term historical trauma, we're really talking about the collective trauma that's experienced by a particular group and that's experienced by that group across generations that are still in the present suffering its effects. So examples may include things like violent colonization of a particular group, traumatic assimilation policies, slavery, segregation, racism, and discrimination where whole groups are still sort of grieving the loss of identity, of land, of people, of place, of safety, and security that's still manifesting today.

And then I want to talk about complex trauma quite a bit in today's presentation because I think it is particularly applicable to system-involved youth. So when we talk about the term complex trauma, we're really talking about chronic trauma that starts early in life, often during kind of key stages of development, and within caregiving relationships. And I'm going to talk a little bit today about what we've learned about the immediate and long-term impact of trauma that begins young during critical times in brain development. And what we see is that early chronic trauma is unfortunately quite common among system-involved youth.

So I think we see that youth who are involved in systems like child welfare and juvenile justice have often experienced trauma that is not a one-time event. These experiences are often interpersonal in nature and chronic in nature. For a lot of kids in these systems it's not trauma so much as life, but that life is kind of on a regular basis impacted by overwhelming stress.

And we see – we also see high rates among runaway and homeless youth, really high rates of trauma both within family systems prior to becoming homeless and then certainly exposure to trauma while on the streets. And then in particular for LGBTQ youth in the runaway and homeless population, rates of trauma, particularly violent trauma, are even higher than their heterosexual peers both prior to and once becoming homeless.

So given what we know about – and you all said this really at the beginning in some ways in the polling about the presence of trauma in the lives of the youth that you're working with. It's worth just spending just a bit of time talking about kind of what we've learned about what happens when kids are exposed to trauma while the brain is still developing, and that's really such a key piece of this.

So one of the things that particularly over the past couple of decades the research has shown us is that as kids are exposed to constant threat while the brain is still developing, it really can change the course of brain development. The brain does what it needs to do to adjust to whatever experiences we're having. And in this case, when exposed to constant trauma, the brain begins to organize itself in a way to focus on survival. And unfortunately, for many of the youth that we see, that is in – at the expense of developing other skills that are so important to success both in school and in later employment.

So at a kind of structural level in the brain, what we start to see happening is that the emotional part of our brain that's responsible for our survival becomes overactive, and so the brain really becomes set up to mainly focus on potential threat. And really that starts to mean that youth are constantly on guard for potential threat, mistrustful of others, and really over-reactive to even reminders of past trauma, which we'll talk about in just a little bit.

And what we see is that the higher level regions of the brain that are responsible for thinking and planning and problem solving and processing information and coping and regulating our emotions, those areas of the brain are less well-developed. And ultimately we see early experiences of trauma can even lead to smaller overall brain size and certainly smaller structures within the brain, in particular those thinking parts of the brain.

So it's really important for us to kind of begin to understand the way that trauma gets laid down within the architecture of the brain in such a way that the brain develops a very patterned response that's focused on survival. And that patterned response can be really difficult for kids to break over time.

So let's just talk a little bit about what that looks like. So what we see when the brain focuses on survival and is mainly staying in survival mode is that we see kids having a really difficult time trusting other people and forming healthy relationships with others.

We also see youth having a lot of difficulty identifying, expressing, and managing what they're feeling because those higher level regions of the brain, that kind of thinking part of the brain is less developed and harder to access, and that's really the part of the brain that helps us to manage all those emotions that we have.

With that you end up seeing higher incidences of aggressive or risky behaviors, dissociative responses, so kids who are really overwhelmed by stress responding by just shutting down, disconnecting from the present moment. Not surprisingly, we see kids really struggle with learning difficulties, and this is both in school and beyond school, difficulty concentrating, planning, processing new information.

Not surprisingly, we see poorer academic performance as a result and a real impact on how kids see themselves. And ultimately, even though adolescence is a time where you tend to be more focused on the moment than the future, for kids who have experienced a lot of trauma, the focus even at the brain level is really on survival, not on sort of creativity and thriving and really thinking and planning ahead for the future. Kids have enough to do just focusing on kind of survival in the moment.

And ultimately all of these pieces can increase kids' risk for things like mental health and substance abuse issues and certainly risk for other system involvement, if they aren't already involved in those systems.

And one of the things that is very compelling about the adverse childhood experiences or what's called the ACE study is we really see this link. We really see a connection between adverse childhood experiences and greater risk for challenges in adulthood, and those challenges include things like high-risk behaviors, smoking, engaging in unprotected sex, mental illness, and physical illnesses like heart disease, obesity, autoimmune disorders, and even cancer. So we're really seeing this link and kind of further confirming kind of trauma and exposure, particularly to early trauma, as a significant public health issue.

We also see kind of in particular one trajectory is the long-term impact of those adverse childhood experiences on employment. And we see that manifest as impaired job performance, greater absenteeism, serious financial problems, and higher rates of unemployment. And that's not surprising, given all of the other pieces that we just talked about that can often be connected for kids who have that more chronic exposure to trauma.

So what does this look like in your service settings or in a job setting? I can't see people, but I'm just going to imagine hopefully some heads nodding. But we see youth being more easily agitated sometimes or more easily angry or aggressive, appearing kind of more tense or nervous.

Kids tend to have a lot of concerns about safety, may even kind of misread queues. May read an interaction or a tone of voice or a gesture as threatening, when it wasn't intended that way. That leads to a lot of trouble engaging with other people and sustaining relationships, managing your emotional responses, kind of knowing what's an appropriate level of emotional response to have in the moment or in a particular context and that can be a real challenge in an employment setting.

Difficulty – trouble following rules and guidelines, feeling kind of targeted, maybe not being truthful about information or inconsistent in relaying information, giving up quickly or having trouble following through, and fundamentally really having a hard time believing in their own capabilities or identifying their own strengths.

And I think when you look at this list, these are challenging behaviors. No question. But I think if you were to look at this list at face value, one of the things that we might do is really easily misunderstand these behaviors maybe as purposefully rude or manipulative or lazy or defiant or unmotivated, any number of things that could lead to real considerable frustration on the part of service providers and employers.

So how we understand the origins of these responses – if we were to understand these as survival strategies, as sort of automatic patterns that the brain has laid down for how to operate in the world, that could really change how providers and employers view and respond to this particular youth, which can really change their opportunities for success.

So another thing that we know is that for kids exposed to trauma, their brain gets really good at remembering any reminders of past traumatic experiences, and we call these reminders triggers. And triggers in the environment can cause the body to react as if the traumatic event is really happening again in that moment. And that could include any situation that leaves a youth feeling helpless, vulnerable, fearful, or out of control.

So these are things to really pay attention to in our relationships and in our service environment. So what I pull up here is a list of potential triggers for youth who've been exposed to trauma, but I want to acknowledge that we can't possibly know every trigger that a youth may have, and we can't possibly eliminate every trigger within our relationships, within our environments. But knowing what potential triggers are, we can do our best to reduce or minimize the potential for triggers, and we can try to adjust our environment and our practice to best support youth who had these experiences.

At an even more significant level, what we're always looking to avoid is creating environments, whether they be service environments or work environments, that actually mimic past trauma. And that might include kind of negative environments, belittling behaviors, kind of very rigid or punishment-driven environments, environments that are chaotic or disorganized. I mean, these kinds of environments aren't great, for example, working environments for any of us but, certainly for youth exposed to trauma, they only continue to re-traumatize kids. So they certainly don't facilitate healing, recovery, or success.

So the question becomes – and what we're going to talk about for a large part of the next portion of this presentation is how do we ensure that youth have the greatest chance for success? And I think what we've learned is that considering trauma has to be part of that equation, and as a result, trauma-informed care has really emerged as an approach to working with youth that is grounded in an awareness and an understanding of trauma and emphasizes the need to create environments that are going to best support recovery, healing, success.

And that means environments that ensure safety, choice, control, and empowerment for youth. And trauma-informed care is definitely an approach that's being adopted across a number of service systems, including behavioral health, child welfare, schools, juvenile justice, and it's really an approach that's applicable in any service setting, including agencies and programs that focus on workforce development, and in work environments.

At its broadest level, when we talk about trauma-informed care, we're talking about kind of an organization-wide approach. A trauma-informed organization realizes the prevalence of trauma among the youth that it's serving or employing, recognizes the impact of that trauma so that we avoid kind of misunderstanding and misinterpreting what's going on for youth and how they're responding, and then certainly responding by integrating this knowledge of trauma into policies and procedures and practices that we know are most conducive to healing and success. And at the minimum we're looking to avoid re-traumatizing youth by creating environments that become barriers to success and interfere with healing.

So trauma-informed practices is really grounded in a number of core principles that really can inform all of our work with system-involved youth. And those include understanding trauma and its impact, believing that healing happens in relationship but not in just any relationship – right – but in relationships that ensure safety, that support choice and control for youth, that are aware of cultural background, cultural differences, and even experiences related to historical trauma, and that understand that traumatic experiences and every experience that a youth has, that all of their experiences are related and viewing a youth holistically.

So this is the next step in our work to create environments that are going to best support success. And what I'm going to do at this point is transition to Tammy Hopper who's going to really take us through what it looks like to uphold these core principles in your daily practice. So thank you, and I'll turn it over to Tammy.

TAMMY HOPPER: Okay. Ms. Kathleen, I really appreciate all that you've shared with us, and I see the number of questions that are coming in from all of you and appreciate those questions. And I know that we're going to get to some of those as we wind up the particular – the webinar.

So moving on to our next polling question, based on the information you've heard so far, how confident do you feel in your ability to practice in a trauma-informed way?

MR. KEATING: All right. Great. And just like the previous questions, we want to invite you to go ahead and vote now. So choose one of those radio buttons to choose that. That would be great. Thanks very much. Again, your choices are not at all confident, somewhat confident, confident, or very confident. Looks like many of you are voting. If you haven't already done so, we'll give you a few more seconds. Go ahead and click the radio button next to your response. And, Tammy, I'll turn things back over to you to comment on what you're seeing.

MS. HOOPER: Great. Thanks, Brian. Yeah. This is not a surprise. There are some of you on the call that I know are trained as clinicians. You've been to many trauma-informed trainings. You know what you're doing, and you've done it a lot and you've work is appreciated by the youth and families that you encounter. Others of you this is a new thing for you. Maybe even though you might have a graduate degree, trauma-involved care wasn't something that you studied when you went through your educational program.

Some of you might be youth care workers that are out there doing the heart of the work with youth each and every day and you've heard about trauma-informed care but you've always heard about it as clinicians talk about their work and not necessarily something you could do there at your jobs on the local level. So that's what we want to talk about is how do we kind of maximize your ability to do trauma-informed care really no matter what role you play with youth and families. So if we can remove the poll from the screen, thanks.

Moving on, given the consideration of time, I just want to reiterate that from what Kathleen shared, when you think about trauma-informed interventions, you want to take the trauma into account and understand that there can be different triggers that bring forth human reactions that you didn't expect. And we have to adjust our behavior to understand how to best support the youth and families that we work with, and we want to allow those survivors to manage their trauma symptoms successfully. We want them to feel confident in their own ability to deal with what they've been through and to understand that what has happened to them doesn't define who they are.

When I talk about trauma-informed care practice, I really encourage organizations, whether they're human service organizations or workforce investment opportunity centers or any other type of healthcare environment, to consider looking at trauma-informed care in one of four or all of four ways. The first is philosophy. Your organization has to buy in to the importance of the value and the necessity of trauma-informed care.

You also have to look at the policies that you have under your operational umbrella. Are there policies that act in contradiction to trauma-informed care practices? What procedures do you have in place? Is everyone trained in the ability to know what's the right thing and the challenging thing to do with youth and families? And finally, what does practice look like? How do you know that you're doing it right?

Certainly to run through these briefly, philosophy, there are tips about organizational leadership really needs to define and promote your commitment. They need to engage staff members and volunteers in understanding and committing to trauma-informed care, and we need to look at your mission statement, your guiding principles, to see if they're aligned. And finally, please understand that if you're familiar with positive youth development, you're already doing a lot of what is part of trauma-informed care.

Also, want you to consider to look at your policies. Look for language or operations that are contradictions to trauma-informed care and consider adding new policies that might in fact help your organization be more trauma-informed. Also, look at your policies as they relate to contractual funding or collaboration agreements. Sometimes there are things that are contraindicated to trauma-informed care that can be discussed with a funder. Remember contractors, funders, they want to be utilized as partners, and sometimes they just need to know what trauma-informed looks like so that they can write in processes in the next contract that can be helpful to both organizations.

Procedures, if it isn't written, it didn't happen. How many of you guys know that it has to be written down for you or your staff to be able to follow what is expected and to do it efficiently? So we want you to make sure that you look at your procedures and look for things that imply trauma-informed care.

For instance, if you don't know already, one of the first places that people lose a particular client in terms of outcomes is the receptionist position. It's the person who answers the phone. If they don't have procedures on how to handle phone calls in ways that are sensitive, culturally competent, appropriate, and appreciative of where these clients are coming from, you can start to have a bad outcome right with that very first phone call.

And so putting procedures in place for every role within your organization can help ensure that you guys are more trauma-informed care. We also want you to consider having your youth or family service participants review your procedures to say, hey, do you actually do these things. And if so, how do they impact them day to day if they experience your services?

The practice, the fourth P, this is how you knew that you're doing it right. You want to might – maybe you want to ensure that trauma-informed care is part of your new hire orientation in your annual training requirements. Think about how to have teaching moments around trauma-informed care. When you see something happening, to take that staff person aside or to think about it yourself and go to your supervisor and say, you know what, I am stuck with this client.

They push every button that I have as if they've installed it, and yet I know that they're having difficulties. I know they're having challenges. How can you help me do better with this client? That's practice. That's trauma-informed. Trauma-informed isn't being an expert. It's asking for help when you need it. Make sure that all of your employees are aware of the importance of trauma-informed care. It's not just the clinicians.

Those of you who are clinicians that are listening to my voice, you guys know that you've been trained, and part of our role as clinicians is to share what we know in ways that are effective so that case managers and youth care workers and employers and youth themselves understand the world that we live in and the way that we can be effective despite situations we may have encountered. And please make sure that you've got role-specific training for all of your staff.

So just want to talk about something that's easy for you guys to focus on right out of the bat. So this comes from an evidence-based curriculum, the SPARCs curriculum, which is a 16-week group intervention for youth.

And what has been pulled out that a lot of agencies are using to focus on trauma-informed care is the ARC model. This is attachment, self-regulation, and competencies. Many of you will have heard of ARC in other types of formats. There's lots of ARC models are out there. But as I talk about it today, we're talking about attachment, self-regulation, and competencies as it relates to trauma-informed care.

Specifically, positive attachment is the capacity to form and maintain those healthy relationships that we have seen, that we want, that we feel comfortable and safe and cared for in those relationships. We want those for all of the young people that we work with. So think about your service participant's strengths, points of interest.

Ask them what do they enjoy doing. Who are their strongest supports? What type of relationship you'll say to them? Start to have those conversations because guaranteed when you're looking to place them in an employment setting or an education setting, attachment will be one of the things that either helps them succeed or will cause them to have challenges.

Make sure that you're celebrating the successes that you have with the young people and the families that you're serving, and make sure that you can connect service participants to safe and age appropriate activities with others. Nothing on this particular slide is rocket science. I bet all of you already do this, and you may not have realized that you are already doing attachment. And as such, you're also doing trauma-informed care.

Self-regulation is your ability to maintain and develop a sense of controlling your own feelings and your reactions to those feelings, so frustration, happiness, anger, and fear. Those of you who have been shopping recently know it's easy to get frustrated. It's easy to get angered. But because we have self-regulation, we don't end up on YouTube in a brawl. We know how to stop ourselves and to control ourselves.

Well, youth who've been through traumatic instances sometimes have very poor senses of self-regulation, and they – we act without thinking and they are quick to act out because they have poor impulse control. At the same time, helping them learn how to self-regulate is something that you can do that is trauma-informed that will help them throughout their lives.

Specifically, you might want to consider teaching service participants to utilize mindfulness techniques. It's out there. It's everywhere. Anybody can get ahold of it. You also want to work with your participants to identify those emotional triggers before they run into them. One of the first things I encourage you to do when you first meet a young person is to find out what makes them angry, what do they look like when they're angry, and how can you help them when they're angry.

Just by asking those three questions when you first start to build that relationship, you're developing a profile of how to help avoid those triggers. Far too often in our systems we wait until the young person blows up. We wait until the young person threatens to drop out of services because they're so upset to start to find out the answers to those questions. And we really, really want to find out those answers initially, if we can.

Moving on focusing on competencies, this is what helps young people feel good about what they can offer the world. Remember our young people suffer no lack of being told that they are worthless, that they can't accomplish things, that they are a burden on society, that they are useless. They've heard this from their families. They've heard it from their communities.

You might be the very first person that they encounter that says, I believe in you and I believe in your ability to do something that impacts our community and this world in a positive way. What are you interested in doing? What are you interested in learning about? What are you interested in doing in the future? And asking and engaging youth in these conversations is critical to helping them overcome the impact of trauma.

Don't be a dream killer. I don't say that facetiously. It is not often our role to say to a young person, your dream isn't valid. You can't achieve that dream because what you've been through. Our job is to listen to that dream and expose them to opportunities to learn about that dream and then help them make decisions about the dreams they have. Make sure that you provide opportunities for success by working on the best match for services versus the easiest match.

I've done the work, everyone; I've been out there in the field. I know that sometimes there's not enough jobs, there's not enough placement. You have to do the best you can, and we can do a better job by talking to the young person and figuring out who they are at the onset to inform our choices when we can.

Also encourage service participants to get involved utilizing their skills in ways that benefit others. Community service is critical. Again, trauma-informed care isn't about putting a young person on a couch and seeing if they'll cry. Trauma-informed care is about helping them understand the impact of their trauma and how they can live healthy, productive lives despite what they've been through. And try and reward progress for [inaudible] people so they know that you're noticing.

When you download these slides, you'll see that I've taken the acronym trauma, and I've built those out just to have some tips for you and your staff. These are not highly clinical, nor should they be. Everybody from your case manager to the person who drives the van to the receptionist to maybe somebody who helps with school work, everyone should be on board with how to do trauma-informed care. And as you look at these tips, I bet you're going to figure out that it really is just about being respectful, culturally competent, and meeting young people where they are.

So if we take our T's, a couple of examples that I would emphasize is remember to talk only when the person is done. As experts we often fall into the trap of thinking that we know the answer and that we have the right answer. We've done that – (inaudible) – here. We've served hundreds or thousands of young people. We know what to do here. But for the particular young person we're working with, we may actually be wrong. So talk to that person and let them talk to us and make sure that we're really listening to what they have to say.

Tell the person if you need to involve others in their case and why. With trauma confidentiality and sharing of information is a big deal. Make sure that the young people that you're working with understand why you may have to share their stories with others.

Take time away when you get most frustrated with a service predicament. Each and every one of us is human, and you are going to encounter a young person or a family member that makes you crazy because you're human and because they have many, many needs that you may not have the resources to meet. But take the time away and talk to a supervisor and come back and meet that young person where they are so that you can do the very best work possible.

If we move to the R, recognize that the person may not respond the way that you expect. Doesn't mean that their situation isn't valid. Make sure that you focus on relationship, and make sure that you think about refraining situations and outcomes in ways that respect the person's perspective.

Under A, your ability to attend and listen and refrain from judgment is critical. Again, these youth are used to being put down for the way that they think, the way that they behave. I'm not saying they shouldn't be held accountable for when they have actions, but I'm saying that we have to understand where they're coming from and talk with them as an equal partner in their services. Allow and encourage participants to ask their questions regarding your efforts, and ask for training and supervision to help you best be prepared to help them be successful.

The U, understand that individuals are in different stages of grief, crisis, and recovery. And just because Bobby responded in one way to your services doesn't mean that Trevor and Jonah will respond in the exact same way. Individualized services are key, and although that takes a lot more time on the front end, it's better [inaudible] in terms of controlling danger on the back end. And remember to use your communication as a key instead of a lock.

Your M, maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries. I can't emphasize this enough. Young people who have been through trauma will touch us in ways that make us want to flex our boundaries, and some of that can be helpful. But if you cannot maintain, if you launch into behavior that mirrors things that were going on in their families in terms of secretive behavior, dysfunctional boundaries, inappropriate gossip, those young people actually do not feel safe anymore.

So really want you to think about how you engage with young people in ways that healthy. Monitor for changes with the young person and notice those changes and maintain an environment with an eye toward triggers. If say that you have a young person who has significant issues with crowds. They have very low comfort in being with large numbers of people. Job at Walmart may not be the best option. So it's about thinking about those triggers and managing those when you can in terms of placement. And then actively seek service participants as partners. Ask them and engage them as full on partners in what you're achieving, and they're going to do much better.

And then my reminders is remember that consistency isn't the goal. That goes against everything you might have heard in systems, but remember that things can be consistently bad. They can be consistently unhealthy. They can be consistently difficult. So when you're striving for consistency, strive for good. Strive for partnership. Strive for listening. Strive for trauma-informed care.

Remember that it's not easy, and you're not going to see successes immediately, but also remember that every single interaction that you have has the potential to be life changing. Really just a simple hello, a smile, an engagement can make a young person want to talk with you more, and that makes our jobs more worthwhile than any of us may realize.

So I'm going to turn it over to Serita and Mark, and wish all of you well. Thanks.

SERITA COX: Thank you so much, Tammy. That was great, and just building off of what Tammy and what Kathleen have said, Mark and I are going to give you essentially a case example that could potentially help most of you our service providers. So we'll give you the case example of our program, the iFoster jobs program. It's relatively new, and it's focused exclusively on system-involved youth. So that would be either those in foster care or those who are cross-over youth, so foster and probation youth.

And because most of you are service providers, we thought it would be great to hear from an employer, one of our employer partners. So I'm just going to tee this up, and then I'm going to ask Mark Foley, who's the vice president of HR for Raley's, our first partner and our closest partner in our program, why he works with us, why they hire our youth, and why they see them being successful.

But just to give you – step back a little bit and go through our program, our program is to provide entry-level jobs and management career opportunities for system-involved youth 16 to 24. We do that by creating a pipeline of prequalified potential hires for the grocery industry, and we're very specific on the industry we picked and the employers we pick. That's part of our whole positive youth development and the way we approach making sure that our youth can be successful.

And then the third piece of it is we take a very holistic approach. We work with child welfare agencies, with the independent living programs, DCSS, the transitional housing programs that are out there, and we integrate with them a comprehensive job skills training. We make sure the necessary concrete resources are in place before we ever put a youth forward for an interview because, if they don't have transportation, they don't have a cell phone, they don't have housing stability, getting them a job is just one more stress.

We make sure they have a job coach and that that job coach is integrated with us and the employer so there's a constant feedback loop and a constant network of support. And then of course we want our youth to succeed and move up from entry-level jobs. So integrating scholarships, tuition reimbursement, and opportunities in the grocery industry and outside of the grocery industry is really important. So that's in a nutshell what it is that our program's about.

Quickly, why we chose the grocery industry, and I heard, I think it was Tammy mention, that we all are looking for jobs. Well, let me tell you the grocery industry, there are over 34 million jobs in the United States in the grocery industry, everything from consumer packaged goods through supply chain, warehousing, logistics to retail and such a diversity of jobs that we can make our youth excel and feel confident and comfortable in any environment and situation because of the breadth of jobs that are available. The jobs come with minimum wage pay and guaranteed minimum hours, which gives you stability.

A huge criteria for our youth, entry-level jobs where our youth can excel, where their competencies match, they feel confident and empowered. And employers are experienced in developing a young diverse workforce. All of our retailers routinely hire 16, 17, 18, 19-year-olds that could be system-involved – they don't even know – and have experience that this is a first job for many of our young people. And so they have the training and the skills to be able to manage that.

But let me turn it over to Mark and ask the question, we selected Raley's. We thought Raley's would be great, but let's flip it around and say, why would a company like Raley's want to hire foster youth?

MARK FOLEY: Well, thank you, Serita. Let me first tell everyone that – a little bit about Raley's, and then I'll answer that question. We're a – as Serita said, we're a grocery chain. We're 120 stores located in Northern California, and we have 12,000 team members that work for us. And we're very deeply rooted into our community that we serve. We've been privately held for 80 years. So giving back to the community is really important to us.

So Serita approached us earlier this year about this opportunity to partner with her, with iFoster. I have had a background working with foster. So I understood some of the challenges that fosters face. But what made this different and unique and worked very well for us as a partnership was first her passion for wanting to help fosters.

But more importantly was the approach that she took when she approached us, which was to meet our business need. She came with a business case, understood our business, understood that we hired youth, we hire 2,000 to 3,000 people a year in our business, and a lot of them it's their first job and we hire from a very diverse background. So we have very experienced hiring managers that know how to deal with young people coming into the workplace.

So this idea that she had this understanding of our business and our needs, it really was a good kickoff to the meeting and a good understanding of what we could do to work together. At that point we started to work even closer in developing what the needs that I would have.

So Tammy said it earlier. You don't want to match somebody at a Walmart that doesn't fit the needs of that job, and that was important to us that we took a look at the skill sets that were needed. So we talked at length about those skill sets, what assessment would be needed, and how to properly prepare these youth, many of them for their first interview. Serita went back and developed those assessments and then came back to me one last time, and we partnered again on making sure we had the right things in place to ensure the right matches.

At that point we then, which I think was critical to the success of this program because we had alignment now at the executive level, but more importantly we needed alignment at the hiring manager level. And so we discussed with our hiring managers this opportunity, why we wanted to do it, how it met their business needs, and how it helped meet the communities we served. And so we had total alignment at the hiring manager level before we even started to interview and ultimately hire.

But the proof was in the pudding; right? And ultimately the fosters that came forward and interviewed, we found that they were good matches. And in fact, we had such a great success, there was a demand for more. We saw that our turnover actually went down with the number of people that we were hiring that were fosters compared to the general population of the entry-level position.

So we've had some really great success and store team leaders have embraced it and actually more stores have asked to participate in the program.

MS. COX: Thanks so much, Mark. So a couple of key things, and we do this with every employer. So we hand pick our employers. We go. We sit down with the executive team. We get buy in exactly the way Mark said, and then we make sure it goes all the way down to the line managers because, if there's not buy in to hire our youth, I mean, unlike a lot of service providers, we only see foster youth. If we don't have buy in there, then it's not going to work.

And for us, one of the biggest things was we take a look at the culture of an organization, the values of the organization. Do their line managers already hire young people in their first jobs, a diversity of people? In the case of Raley's, Mark was already familiar with foster youth. He had sat on a board of a foster youth serving organization, but with other ones of our employers who aren't so familiar we actually go through some workshops and training around the positives and negative impacts of growing up in foster care. And we make sure that executives down to line managers are exposed to our youth before they ever even apply.

So we work very hard on that, and then, as Mark said, we prepare our youth. First of all, we all know that youth have to be committed and actively engaged wanting to get a job. That's first and foremost, but once you've got them there, then it's training them. And we do what's called an employer needs assessment that understands what it is, what makes an employee successful in that job at that company, and we teach to that. So they tend to be mainly soft skills, and then we assess.

After youth go through about 30, 40 hours of training, there is an assessment that is done. We bring in volunteers from the community who are all professionals to assess our youth with interviews around all of these soft skills so that we can match them effectively. Not every youth is going to be fantastic for a customer service job at Raley's. They might be much better suited in a warehouse, and we look to do those matches.

And then the third thing is we make sure our youth are set up for success with the right concrete resources. We will not put a youth forward if they don't have housing stability for at least three months. We give them a cell phone with voicemail if they don't have one. We make sure that they can get to the job even in off hours. If they need childcare, they have childcare, and if they need mental health services, that that's all built in before they ever even apply and we take that in consideration when we match.

So as we match a youth, we match them based on their skills, their competencies, their personality, the work environment temperament. We know our employers. So we know exactly what it's like to be at Raley's versus Ralph's versus Save Mart. And their own job and employer desires because, as both Tammy and Kathleen brought up, it's important for the youth to feel empowered that they can achieve and they're going to be successful.

Transportation is a huge issue, and while you don't think of it as trauma, if you are constantly anxious that you will not make your job because of transportation, it will trigger trauma. It will trigger issues. So we call it the zone of employability, and we work with our employers to make sure that the store our youth goes to, they can get to even if they're scheduled on a holiday in the middle of the night.

And then all of our partners, because they hire young people, are very used to being flexible around school, around parenting, and that's wonderful for our youth so they're not feeling boxed in. And then finally, we make sure that every one of our youth has a personal network of support in place and that they're engaged. That includes the employer, the supervisor hiring manager, iFoster, and the job coach.

We work very closely with independent living programs, with child welfare agencies, and in each one of those agencies we identify the case manager or job coach that works very closely with this youth already and we constantly interact with them so that there is a full 360 network of support supporting them.

And then finally, we do regular communication. So this is not once they go off they're out of our hands. In actual fact I think we invest more once our youth have started work. We do standardized check-ins prior to their interview, once they've interviewed, first 10 days on the job, and monthly and at probation review. A check-in happens with the youth, happens with an employer, and happens with the job coach.

We provide ongoing support and guidance to make sure that they are following up on career opportunities, training, tuition reimbursement, scholarships, if they need concrete resources because they had a car and their car broke down but they still need to get to work. We are constantly there to be able to support and help them. So we're essentially minimizing the instances of trauma, if you will. And then that relationship building means that we can get to immediate interventions.

And to walk you through a couple of case examples of that, one that didn't work and one that did work because you will not – you can minimize potential for trauma, but you can never totally take it away. So you have to be able to intercept when something happens, and it's building those constant relationships with your employer that will allow that to happen.

So case example one, we had a young lady. She was doing well but it seemed that she was having trouble multitasking. That feedback came back from the employer. We worked with her and her job coach around multitasking, but in actual fact, unfortunately, that was not the issue.

The issue really was that she had to wear a headset and hearing somebody talking in her ear, especially one that wasn't directed at her, while she was trying to do her task was – triggered trauma for her. And unfortunately, we did not catch that early enough, and it ended up being that she was not a good match for that job. So now, that's something that we think about that trauma can come in multiple different formats, and we need to think through this before we put a youth in a job position so that they can be successful.

The second one was John – I'm calling him John – was a stellar employee, but one day he had a complete meltdown at work. He swore, which he's never done before. He yelled at his colleagues. He even kicked a can, and he said he hated his job, which is totally not true. Because we had a relationship built up with the employer, that employer called immediately. That supervisor called immediately, and we were able to rope in John, his case manager. We talked it through.

The real root cause was financial stress. John was 22, no longer supported in foster care, was on his own, and making ends meet was really, really tight. The solution for that was once we got to that root cause, iFoster, we have a fund to be able to provide emergency funds, as needed. We did that, and the employer, Raley's, said, well, you know what, we will cross-train John to be a cashier as well and then he can have more hours and be able to be financially viable. So even though it was a horrible situation, if you have built up the relationships in advance, these things, you can have turnaround situations even when trauma happens on the job site.

Mark, did you want to add anything else in around our youth, how this program's been working, and why you think Raley's and the grocery industry are a good match for our youth?

MR. FOLEY: Well, I think it's a good match, again, because the fact that we hire so many youth and we have experience. I think that's really important for the service providers to look for employers that do have experience with hiring youth, especially youth that come from a diverse background like we do. So it was – our hiring managers were comfortable with the situations that might come up with hiring fosters, for example, no cars and how to deal with that.

I think what's also really important is this open line of communication. You learn from each other. You learn from the partnership. So, as Serita talked about, we learned from the partnership, from each hire we made, and we made alter- – we made changes. And that was critical, and we also could give feedback back to the coaches to give feedback to the individuals that we hired.

Overall our hiring managers saw that we were getting people much more prepared for the job than the normal applicant that would come into the store looking for a job. So that's why ultimately it's been successful is because it met the needs that we had as a business.

MS. COX: Wonderful. Oh, go ahead.

MR. FOLEY: No. No. Go ahead, Serita.

MS. COX: I was just going to hand it off to Brian and say I think we're now at questions.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Well, this is Brian Lyght. Just want to thank Kathleen, Tammy, Serita, and Mark for what was a tremendously powerful presentation around this issue of trauma-informed care and how we can best support young people who are making the transition not only to work but to life and the many challenges that transition brings with it. And so with that we encourage you to post your questions.

We do have a few that have been submitted already, and so why don't we just walk through those questions. But again, please feel free in the remaining time that we have about 22 minutes or so, please feel free to post questions.

And so let's start with a question for Kathleen. There was one participant asking, "At which age range is this most prevalent?" And I'm assuming this means the impact of trauma on a young person.

MS. GUARINO: Sure. So certainly one of the things that we've learned about brain development is how important the very early years are. So one of the things that we know is that by the age of five, the brain has grown to about 90 percent of its adult size. But certainly the brain continues to develop and pare back and get more efficient and more effective over the course of adolescence. And I see that this kind of flows, Brian, into a question around what age an individual's brain is considered fully formed.

And I think we don't necessarily totally know the answer to that yet, but we know that the brain isn't fully developed until at least our mid-20s. So certainly we have a really significant window of time, not just in early childhood but in early adolescence and in early adulthood, very early adulthood being a time of another little mini kind of spike in the rate of brain growth. So we have a lot of opportunities in that window to help youth kind of re-pattern themselves or find kind of new ways to respond to the world if those ways have been shaped in the past by trauma.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Thank you, Kathleen. A question for Tammy, "What are the strategies for balancing not being a dream killer when out-of-school youth may have difficult career aspirations like working in the music industry?"

MS. HOOPER: We all know that our youth, many of them – and it's so exciting when they have big dreams to be an NBA player. I remember when I was first doing work and a young person was just wanting to play basketball, wanted to play basketball, and he wasn't very tall. And there was a staff person that said, look, you'll never play basketball, and I'm like, have you ever heard of Spud Webb? You can play basketball, but you got to do certain things first.

And so I think the easiest way to balance it is if you encounter a young person who has a dream that feels like it might be challenging is find somebody with the actual kind of street cred to talk about that. Unless you're a musician or you write music or you've published a song, they're just listening to you as a case manager. They're just listening to you as a therapist.

So if there's somebody in your community that does music, a music teacher, someone at a local college that is willing to come in as a volunteer and say, hey, dude, you think you've got some talent. Let me see what you've got. Let me talk to you about what it means to be prepped. Let me talk to you about how you can make it as a success. And that young person is smart enough to know, hey, I can do some of these things, and some of these things may be a challenge.

So whether it's a music teacher or it's a coach or it's an artist or it's a mechanic at the local garage, whoever it is, when this young person has a dream, my suggestion is find somebody with the street cred to volunteer an hour to come in and talk to that young person one on one. It will be a meaningful experience for the adult. It will be a meaningful experience for the child, and it takes you out of the role of being dream killer.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Thank you, Tammy. Serita, did you want to respond to that question as well?

MS. COX: Yes. I completely agree with Tammy. We actually use a program called Career Cruising, and if any of you have foster youth, we can sign them up for free. It is an online program that is integrated – it covers over 600 different careers. A music industry producer is one of them. So is an NBA player.

And what it allows a youth to do is explore different careers, and then it backtracks them through exactly what they need to do, what education they need, what skills they need to be successful and achieve that career. And what we've seen happen, to give you the case example of an NBA player, we like to have all our youth going to our jobs program do it.

And one young man wanted to figure out how he was going to be an NBA player and within half an hour had come back with his plan B, if he didn't make the NBA team, was to be a sports therapist. And so I think that's a great program. It's called Career Cruising, and most schools have it. We have it for youth. So any foster youth can use it. That can really, really help and give them an idea of what the pathway would be to achieve that goal.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Thank you, Serita. While we have you, there was a question with regards to whether or not your youth attempt to complete the National Career Readiness Certificate to help them understand their areas of strength. Are you using the NCRC?

MS. COX: We are not using the NCRC. What we use – we actually use Career Cruising to help some identify their strengths, and then because we partner with different counties and different localities, we use what WIBs and the WIOAs in those areas are using.

So we just haven't come across one who's using the National Career Readiness Certificate, but in a lot of cases it's the Work Readiness Certificate and that's what we use. And more importantly, we've come up with our own rubrics for really getting under the soft skills assessment, which to us is the – to match a youth to a job is the most important piece.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Thank you, Serita. So we talked a lot about issues of trauma with young people, but clearly what we're finding is that trauma also crosses over into adults. And there's a question here in terms of what recommendations do you have with vicarious trauma and self-care for service providers. So these are the young – these are the adults that are providing services to young people. Kathleen or Tammy, either one of you might want to jump in on this one.

MS. GUARINO: Sure. Well, I can start, but I'm sure Tammy has done a lot of work in this area as well. It's certainly true and I think particularly true for providers and folks that work with trauma survivors that there's a really – a very real impact of doing that work on the provider, and there are a number of different concepts used to talk about that.

But certainly secondary traumatic stress or vicarious trauma or even compassion fatigue are some that refer to kind of different aspects of this experience. And certainly we know and see, as I'm sure many of you have, that the kind of impact of this kind of work can manifest in a lot of ways that are really kind of subtle and hard for all of us to detect.

I'll speak for myself when I was doing direct service work but certainly it can begin to kind of manifest in a lot of different ways around how you react both inside and outside of work in ways that can really impact your ability to do kind of quality work that's also nourishing to you. So I think there are a number of ways for organizations to educate their staff around those concepts and to really try to integrate care for providers into the fabric of how an organization operates. But I'll let Tammy also respond to that.

MS. HOOPER: Yeah. No. I agree, Kathleen, and I would say two quick points. I think the first point here is really you need to look at the organizational culture as a whole, and your culture has to be such that workers feel safe and confident in coming to a supervisor and talking to someone else and saying, I am being challenged by this, this is difficult for me; I'm really struggling here.

Because in our world sometimes there are cultures where our workers don't feel safe and during that they feel like they'll be seen as less than when compared to other employees or is that somehow going to end up on a performance appraisal. And then being able to talk about it is the critical piece for them to be able to kind of assist – get assistance for the help when they need it.

The second quick piece is that we really need to look at what are reasonable expectations for our young people. I think that sometimes youth care workers and case managers feel completely overwhelmed by the expectation for certain levels of outcomes, and they don't know how to achieve those outcomes because maybe those outcomes aren't the best outcomes for those individual young people.

So for example, if a young person has been having issues with authority their entire life, to suggest that just because they're in a program those issues are going to disappear within two weeks isn't reasonable. And youth care workers and case managers sometimes feel this incredible pressure, and that relates to the kind of trauma that they feel in terms of trying to achieve outcomes for these young people when maybe they're not the appropriate outcomes to begin with. So just consider those as you move forward.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Thank you very much, Tammy. Mark, I have a question for you. "As an employer, what advice would you give to other employers, other HR professionals with regards to facilitating and supporting early employment opportunities for out-of-school youth, youth who have been involved in public systems like child welfare or the juvenile justice system?"

MR. FOLEY: I would support it, and I would encourage others to support it. I think that's – I think as an employer I feel an obligation to help the communities I serve, and I hope that other employers feel that way. But I would encourage it.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Thank you. Serita, someone mentioned that many public libraries have the Career Cruising program for free. Alameda has access to Career Cruising with a library card. So is there any advice you would give to those on the phone in terms of other ways that they might access Career Cruising?

MS. COX: Yeah. Definitely libraries. Many schools have Career Cruising at school. They have a license for it, and then, like I said, if any of you have foster youth or probation foster youth, they – we will be happy to give it to you for free.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Thank you. Here's a question for Tammy. "There was a reference to there sometimes being things in contracts or grant agreements that are counter to running trauma-informed practices. Could you please give some examples to help educate those of us who fund and draft such contracts and grants?"

MS. HOOPER: Yeah. Thanks, Brian. I think that certainly we don't see this as much federally as our federal partners are embracing trauma-informed care and really expect organizations to offer it from that perspective. But sometimes we have state, local contracts, and it specifically – when you talk about systems-involved youth where there are levels of care so that certain youth in certain levels of care require certain types of precautions, considerations as it relates to liability.

And so we just encourage you to look at that contract from the front end, to have discussions with those contractors to say, what is or isn't reasonable, depending on the young person? And what precautions can you take to put into place to ensure that there's effective supervision?

A concrete example, sometimes with certain level systems in certain states young people have to be accompanied at all times. And so this may involve the restrooms in a physical plant being locked and young people having to be escorted to the restroom with a key to unlock that door for the young person to be able to use the restroom. That type of environment may evoke trauma reactions to young people who have had certain experiences of neglect, abuse, authoritative parents that have been highly abusive because it takes away their sense of control.

That's not questioning whether or not that's a good precaution to have or that it's wise in terms of liability, but it is letting you know this might invoke and cause even more issues with young people than you're trying to prevent.

And so it's about having those conversations with contractors to say, is this in there because it's really been an issue, or is this in there because we're afraid it might become an issue? And we shouldn't punish young people simply because something might be an issue in the future. We need to base policy on actual experience. Hopefully that helps.

MR. LYGHT: That's very helpful, Tammy. Kathleen, would you care to share your perspective on that particular question?

MS. GUARINO: I think that's a great example that Tammy gave. I think I would be thinking kind of along similar lines. Are there things kind of contractually that would kind of restrict or inhibit choice and control or – for example, to create quality relationships and engage, is the time frame allotted unrealistic?

Are there certain kind of no tolerance expectations or particular types of kind of rules of policies that people are being kind of asked to have that may in fact kind of be re-traumatizing to youth? So I would be thinking kind of along those same lines, but I think that concrete example is a great one.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Thank you, Kathleen. A question for Serita and Mark, perhaps more so Mark. "Is Raley's open to working with WIOA youth statewide or only where this program is operating?" If I'm not mistaken, it's Placer County.

MR. FOLEY: No. I'd be open to have further discussion to understand more what the opportunity would be, and we're throughout Northern California and Northern Nevada.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Thank you. A question for Tammy and Kathleen and perhaps even Serita and Mark. "A lot of the work that we all do requires partnerships, and to the extent that our organizations or your organizations may be doing that work through a trauma-informed lens but one of your partners is not, then how do you prevent the undoing of all that you've done in terms of best supporting these young people in the workplace or throughout their course of their own professional growth and development?"

MS. HOOPER: Well, I'll go first on this one. This is Tammy, everyone. Two really quick things. I encourage you to engage your partners in as much training that you can access. So often there's trauma-informed care training that's available at the local level, and invite your partners to come in and experience that.

That being said, there are some cultures in some of our systems partners that aren't yet ready to fully embrace trauma-informed care, and so I think that embracing helping the young person understand what to expect is one of the things that I encourage.

So for instance, if you're listening and you're a case manager, go and spend a few minutes at every referral agency that you refer to just sitting in the lobby, just watching the flow, just watching how the receptionist answers questions, just observing so that when you go back and you meet with that young person, you can say, look, I'm referring you to this particular agency. Let me prepare you for what you're going to experience. It's chaos. The person is answering 50 phone calls a minute and they may not get to you right away but that's not about you and it's not because they don't care about you. It's because of that environment. I think that if you can't change the agency, you can prepare them to best deal with what they experience.

MS. GUARINO: Yeah. This is Kathleen. I totally agree. I think obviously it's hard enough sometimes within your own organization to create a culture of trauma-informed support, but I think a key piece of that is also to turn outward and to provide where you can certainly cross-training but, if nothing else, kind of informal education as you begin to create partnerships and work with folks.

And sometimes you don't have a lot of options for what the resources are in the area, but when you do, kind of doing your due diligence to connect with folks who you think do share a similar philosophy or do have an understanding of trauma and its impact. And where you can't, I think Tammy is right on, being able to anticipate ahead of time kind of what that might look like, be able to anticipate with youth what triggers may come up and how to sort of manage those pieces.

But I think continuing to build those relationships and whether formally or informally begin to kind of share that perspective.

MS. COX: And this is Serita. I would – I'd just like to add onto that, that the way we work is we form or we work with collaboratives – community collaboratives of agencies that serve our youth or have exposure to our youth. And it's through those collaboratives that informal understanding of here are the standard operating procedures that we use to implement our jobs program, and those standard operating procedures are infused with a positive youth development perspective or trauma-informed perspective. So that's the first thing.

And then the second thing is we – when we are referring a youth anywhere, we actually do a warm handoff always. We will never send a youth somewhere by themselves. They – it will already have – already happen between partners. We would have called or partner. Everything would be set up, and when the youth arrived, even if it was chaotic, there was – something was set up and ready for them. And if not, which sometimes it doesn't happen, that youth knows they can always call us, and we will make it right.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Thank you very much. We have time for one last question, and so let me pose this to all of you. Speaking of time, "How much time do you consider appropriate to build an initial relationship with a young person? And also how much time do you consider appropriate to infuse within an organization this culture around trauma-informed care?" Would any of you like to take that one, or should we –

MS. HOOPER: I will say – and I don't know what the other panelists will say. Just trauma-informed care is so individualized, and you will find the young person that you connect with right away and start to build a positive relationship. There are others that after five, six, seven years you're still trying to break through that wall, but it's worth every bit of effort. And I think the same thing can be said for your organization.

There's a lot of foundational cultural type of work that needs to happen for trauma-informed care to be a success. If you're in an organization where staff respect each other and appreciate your job and everybody's on the same page about the mission and what's right for young people, I think you can do it with a committed effort in a shortened time frame of maybe a year to two years to get everybody on board with everybody being trauma-informed. But with one training, with one hour training you can start people down that pathway. So no matter how long it may take, it's worth every effort to start as soon as you can.

MS. GUARINO: And I would just add I don't think it's a linear process. So I agree with the time frames in terms of organizational change can take time for sure, as can individual relationship building but I think also just being aware that some of that learning's going to happen as you evolve. An organization may start to feel like they're really headed in a trauma-informed direction, and something happens and they say, where did that come from or what happened with us there?

So it's the same with relationships with youth. I think it's just also helpful to not think about it as a linear process so much as kind of an up and down evolution that's going to kind of a step-wise piece that you're going to kind of build over time. But you may go backwards a little bit too and learn from that and then maybe jump up kind of to a higher kind of level than you even were before. So I think it's helpful to think about it in those terms sometimes.

MR. LYGHT: Great. Well, thank you so much, and we are almost out of time.

So let me thank all of you, and let me also agree with one of our listeners that this is one of the best webinars I've ever taken. Practical tips, great case examples, just such an excellent group of panelists. I can't agree more.

And so with that I'd like to thank you, Tammy Hopper, Kathleen Guarino, Serita Cox, and Mark Foley. And this webinar will be made available on Workforce3One, and let me also say on January 14th we will be holding the first in 2016 webinar focusing on make this new year's resolution a commitment to save. We'll be talking about financial literacy and financial capability.

So we hope that you'll all join us then. Thank you so much.

MR. KEATING: All right. Great. Thanks so much, Brian.

(END)