

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE YOUTH POLICY VOICE



Presenter

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Presenter

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- Director of Child Welfare Policy
- Expertize across child-serving agencies

Learning Objectives



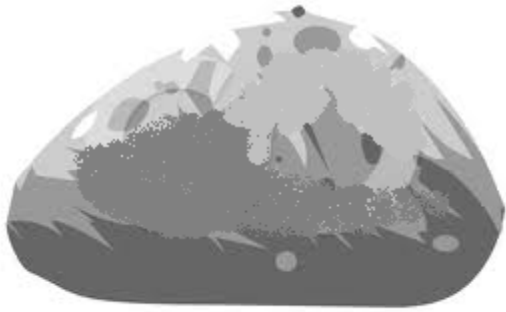
- Objective 1
 - ▣ Understand the impact of trauma and advocacy work

- Objective 2
 - ▣ Learn about what young people need to know in order to be effective advocates

- Objective 3
 - ▣ Learn trauma-informed strategies to engage and support young advocates

Getting to Know You





Trauma Affects

National Center for Trauma-Informed Care

Forget you man, I'm
out of here!!!!

st you.



- ❑ Trauma impacts one's spirituality and relationships with self, others, communities and environment
- ❑ Trauma often results in recurring feelings of shame, guilt, rage, isolation, and disconnection.
- ❑ Healing is possible.

PTSD: Key Symptoms



- ▣ Re-experiencing the traumatic event
- ▣ Intense psychological or physical reactions to triggers
- ▣ Avoidance of thoughts, feelings, places and people
- ▣ Emotional numbing
- ▣ Heightened startled response

Trauma and Culture

- Children and Adolescents from minority backgrounds are at **increased risk** for trauma and development of PTSD
 - Discrimination
 - Negative stereotyping
 - Poverty
 - Community violence
 -Then add in abuse/neglect

- These children have **more severe symptoms** for **longer periods of time** than their majority group counterparts

Trauma and Youth Voice

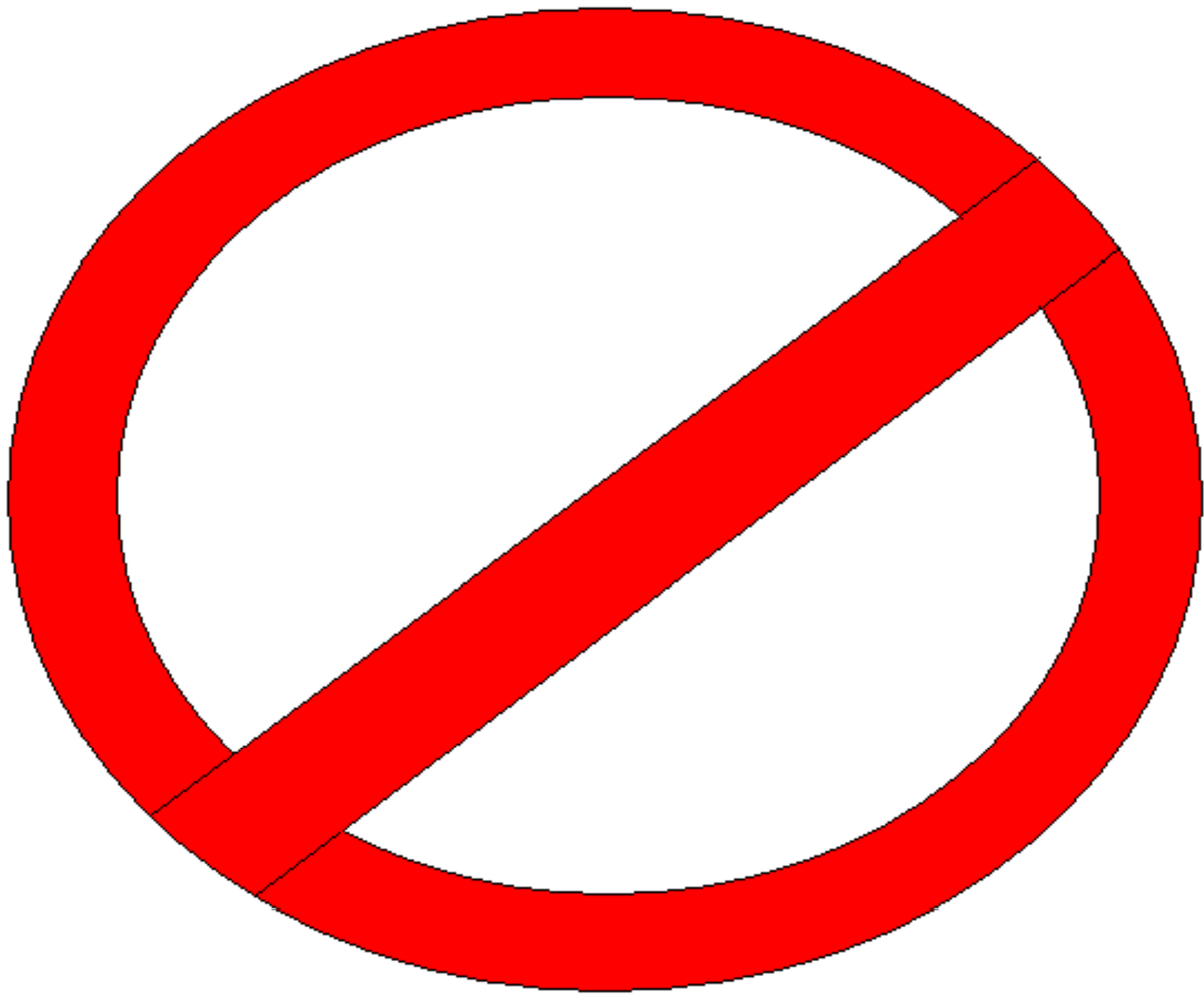
- So what are the difficulties that arise when we want youth to use their voice?

We are asking youth to face the thoughts, feelings, emotions, places, people and activities that are potential triggers to their emotional stability.

Remember healing is possible, but advocacy isn't about healing

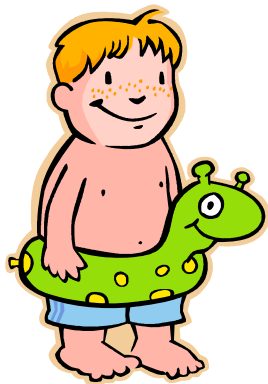


But if you take the necessary steps to support me then maybe I can



Preparation

Advocacy work takes time and attention to avoid re-traumatization.



What Every Young Advocate Needs



- Training/Support
 - Strategic Sharing
 - Understanding Policy
 - Public Speaking

Training/Support

□ Strategic Sharing

- Purpose: Why share?
- Clarity: What is the message?
- Risks and benefits: Set boundaries
- Readiness: Emotional safety from the issue
- Support: Trusted friend/adult support person
- Safety Plan: Protection from re-traumatization



I suppose I am not ready to share if I get angry each time I think about that boulder?

Training/Support



□ Policy

□ Understand **how**:

- the system works
- policy is made
- policy guides practice
- to influence policy

□ Understand **where** and **when** to influence policy

□ Understand **who** are the people/groups to influence

Training/Support

- Public speaking
 - Study the topic
 - Use a speech template
 - Create cue cards
 - Targeted audience
 - Engagement of the audience
 - Answering questions
 - Practice!



But I am afraid
of speaking in
public

Training Resources



- National Resource Center on Youth Development
<http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu/publications/Youth%20Leadership%20Toolkit/All>
- Foster Care Alumni of America
http://www.fostercarealumni.org/resources/Strategic_Sharing.htm
- Youth M.O.V.E. National's Youth Advocacy Training
<http://www.youthmovenational.org/youth-advocacy-and-policy>
 - Webinar Series
 - Youth M.O.V.E. National speech template
- Youth Voice in Policy handout

Engagement



Steps to Engagement

The first step in healing process should be building rapport and trust.

Step 1

Create the Environment

- Physical comfort
- Emotional comfort
- Fun/stimulating

Step 2

Set the Tone

- Avoid jumping right into work
- Avoid labeling
- Don't solution find

I agree.
These are
great steps!



Step 3

Allow the Youth to Lead

- Let youth determine their own identity
- Allow youth to determine their comfort level
- Meet there immediate needs

Engagement Exercise

Time for an exercise



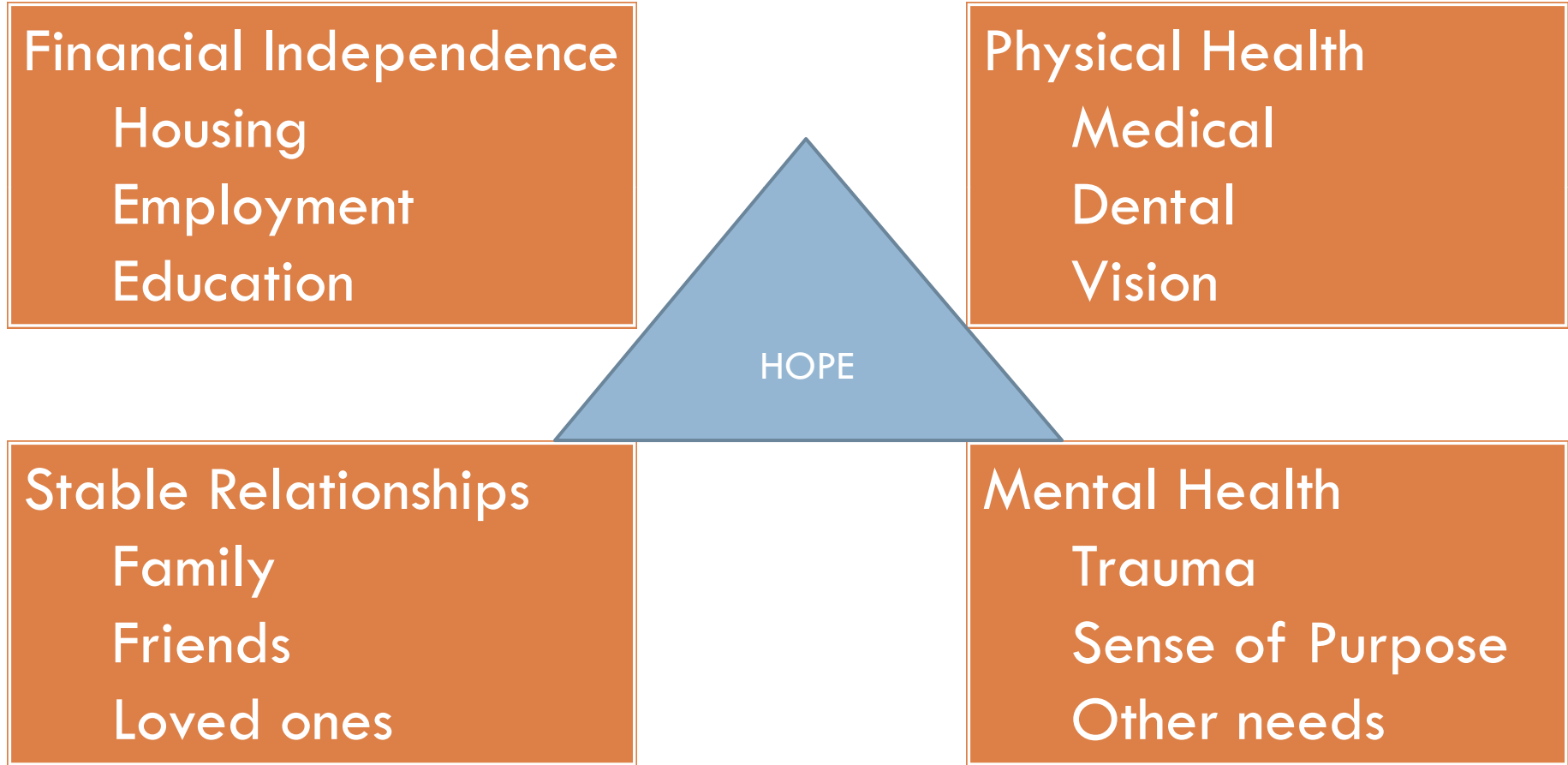
Advocacy Focus

- What are areas that young people may be passionate about that could effect policy?

What are young people typically passionate about?



Advocacy Focus



Additional Strategies



- ❑ Be clear about the expectations of staff in their roles and responsibilities in recruiting youth to be advocates
- ❑ Provide training for staff on how to engage youth from a trauma informed prospective that focuses on building a strong partnership/relationship
- ❑ Conduct joint trainings/meetings with young adults to offer opportunities to practice using their voices
- ❑ Provide feedback and support to young advocates; help them use advocacy experience to enhance personal development

Create Effective Youth Voices

- This is the end of our presentation but hopefully the beginning of effective youth voice.

- Try your best



Wise this youth is.
Strong Advocate
will he be....

Do or do not...
there is no try...

Wait Eric you
forgot one of the
most important
rules....



Contact Information

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If you wish to send
any fan mail, Eric
will forward that to
me

