

The RISE Initiative

Recognize Intervene Support Empower
*Permanent Families for LGBTQ Children and Youth
in Foster Care in Los Angeles*

A Project of the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center

California Alliance of Child & Family Services
Fall 2011 Executive's Conference

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L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center
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L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center

Background

- * The Problem: LGBTQ youth languish in foster care
- * A Solution: Federal Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII)
- * *LAGLC one of 6 projects funded nationwide*
 - \$13.3 million for a 5-year demonstration project to improve...
 - i. Safety
 - ii. Wellbeing
 - iii. **Permanency**
 - ... for LGBTQ children and youth in foster care

Theory of Change

- * The theory of change espoused by the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center's (LAGLC) RISE Initiative is that:

When lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) foster youth and their families are competently identified and appropriately served, then they can achieve safe and stable permanency.

An Emphasis on Research & Evaluation

- * RISE is a 5-year demonstration and research project aimed at:
 - * Competently and safely identifying LGBTQ children and youth,
 - * Creating a climate/ecology of acceptance for them
 - * Coordinating their care, and
 - * Producing trained, competent professionals to serve them.
- * Intended long-term outcome:
 - LGBTQ children & youth gain forever homes.***
- * It is hoped that RISE Interventions will be replicable across the country

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Key Partners

Foster Care Providers

- * Five Acres
- * Hathaway-Sycamores Children & Family Services
- * Penny Lane Centers
- * Southern California Foster Family and Adoptions Agency
- * Vista Del Mar

Homeless Youth Providers

- * Children's Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA)
- * Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership (HHYP)
- * Los Angeles Youth Network (LAYN)

Other Key Partners

- * Dr. Caitlin Ryan and the Family Acceptance Project
- * L.A. County DCFS and DMH
- * Williams Institute (UCLA School of Law)

The Interventions

- * The RISE Initiative is comprised of 3 interventions:
 - * **Outreach and Identification (O&I)**
 - * **Care Coordination Teams (CCT)**
 - * **Training and Coaching Institute (TCI)**

Outreach and Identification (O&I) Intervention

- * **Outreach:** The process of child welfare professionals discussing issues of gender expression and sexual orientation with young people and caregivers for the purpose of improving services to meet their needs; and achieving safety, wellbeing and permanency.
- * **Identification:** The method to collect self-disclosed information directly from young people for the purpose of determining LGBTQ prevalence among children and youth in foster care.

Care Coordination Teams (CCT) Intervention

- * Combination of Wraparound teaming, Family Search and Engagement, and Family Acceptance Project™ technologies and materials to reduce family rejection, increase family support, and improve permanency for LGBTQ children and youth at risk of long-term foster care.
- * Development of a CCT Manual for RISE CCT's that incorporates Wrap, FSE and FAP practice, goals, activities and protocols for use in the implementation of this intervention.

Training and Coaching Institute (TCI) Intervention

- * **LGBTQ 101 training** of county workers, foster agency staff, etc., that addresses the issues of safe, accurate and sensitive identification and treatment of LGBTQ children and youth.
- * **O&I and CCT training** that ensures baseline intervention competence.
- * Development of a **fidelity measurement system**.
- * Development of **coaching protocols** to ensure ongoing cultural competency and practice fidelity of the O&I and CCT interventions.

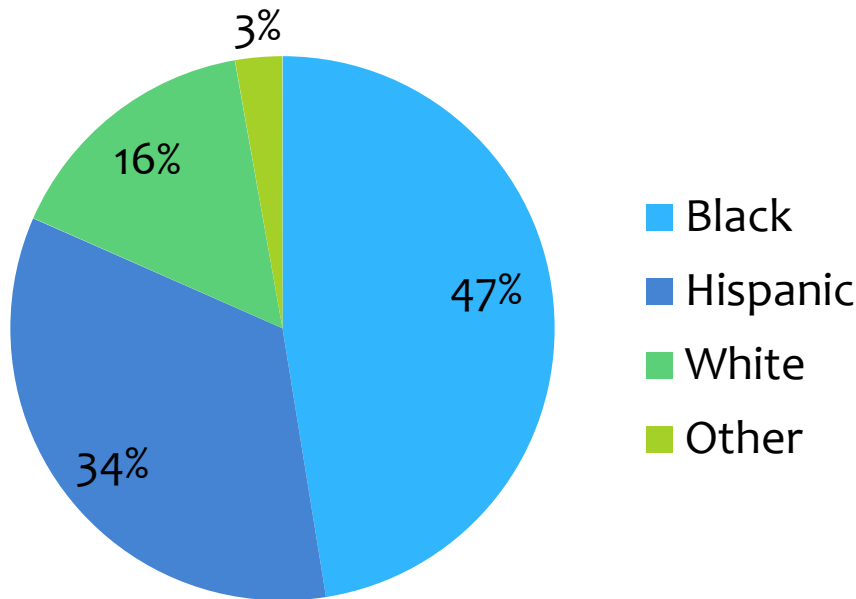
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Year One

- * The RISE Initiative has collected qualitative information and some data about the experiences of LGBTQ children & youth in foster care, and the experiences of staff who work with them:
 - * Baseline Data (GLASS residential placements)
 - * Case Reviews of 20 closed and 20 open cases
 - * Youth Speak Outs
 - * DCFS Staff & Agency Provider Speak Outs
 - * Expert Roundtable on O&I

Baseline Data (392 GLASS Youth)

Demographics of Children with a GLASS Placement



- * Over HALF were younger than age 13 at their first placement.
- * Mean length of stay was 5.8 years (nearly 2x the 3 years that defines *long-term foster care*)
- * Females had longer lengths of stay than males (6.2 years vs. 5.4)
- * Black youth had longer lengths of stay than white or Hispanic youth (7.6 years vs. 4.2)
- * 61% of the children had probation involvement

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Case Reviews

Commonalities among the Cases-

- * Increase in suicidal ideation;
- * Lack of connecting struggles with sexual orientation or gender identity with acting out behaviors;
- * Children who seemed to fare best had stability and stayed in one placement for an extended period of time;
- * There is a disconnection between training and practice; and
- * Youth who were older or entered the system at an older age had more successful outcomes.

Youth Speak Outs

- * **Disciplinary action** should be taken against adults/staff who verbally abuse, reject, dismiss or undermine LGBTQ youth.
- * It is beneficial to see LGBTQ adults who have “**made something of their life.**”
- * **Boundaries** need to be put into place and staff needs to be held accountable for their actions when they are disrespectful towards LGBTQ youth.
- * There should be **more visuals** (rainbow flags, supportive posters) in group homes that show support for LGBTQ youth.

Youth Speak Outs (Cont.)

- * Group homes should have **LGBTQ support groups** and **GSA's**.
- * Staff need to be trained thoroughly on LGBTQ issues and there should be a **specialized training on transgender issues**.
- * **Language should be inclusive** and part of the everyday routine and create a systematic change.
- * **Safety** is the biggest issue for youth, workers need to let LGBTQ youth now that they are safe in their care.

DCFS Staff & Agency Provider Speak Outs

- * Case workers would like a “**script**” to help guide them when they are discussing LGBTQ issues.
- * Offer **case scenarios and role plays** during training.
- * The majority of staff at both DCFS and partner agencies were not aware of **AB 458** which bans discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.
- * Many openly LGBTQ staff seem to be dealing with their own issues regarding internalized homophobia, which could lead to **projection and counter transference** with youth.

DCFS Staff & Agency Provider Speak Outs (Cont.)

- * **Prominent displays** in group homes of LGBTQ-affirming posters, stickers and other materials.
- * **Training for staff and peers** of the youth.
- * Developing **rapport and trust** through training and coaching.
- * **Top-down** insistence on agency-wide adherence to non-discrimination policies and laws.

Expert Roundtable: Purpose

- * To explore how to identify and share info about LGBTQ youth in out of home care:
 - * The ways in which youths' sexual orientation and gender identity are safely identified.
 - * How this information is appropriately managed and used to promote safety, well-being and permanency. This includes sharing it as part of case planning, recording it in case files and court records, and collecting it as data for evaluation.
 - * To assist in the development of practice guidelines for the R.I.S.E. Initiative and to inform appropriate practice in child welfare and related fields.

Expert Roundtable: Panelists

- * **Garry Bevel**, American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law, Opening Doors Project
- * **Gary Gates**, PhD, The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law
- * **Samson G.**, 16-year-old youth
- * **Jill Jacobs**, MA, Executive Director, Family Builders
- * **Gerold P. Mallon**, DSW, Executive Director, National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections, Hunter College School of Social Work
- * **Jody Marksamer**, Esq., National Center for Lesbian Rights
- * **Robin McHaelen**, Executive Director, True Colors
- * **Luke M.**, 20-year-old youth
- * **Shannon Minter**, Esq., Legal Director, National Center for Lesbian Rights
- * **Kim Pearson**, ED Trans Youth Family Allies
- * **Carolyn Reyes**, MSW, Esq., Legal Services For Children
- * **Jana Rickerson**, LCSW, Family Mosaic Project
- * **Caitlin Ryan**, PhD, ACSW, Director, Family Acceptance Project, San Francisco State University
- * **Shannan Wilber**, Executive Director, Legal Services for Children
- * **Bianca Wilson**, PhD, The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law

Year 2 and Beyond

- * The RISE Initiative is a 5-year project:
 - * October 2011-January 2012—Pre-pilot testing
 - * February 2012-April 2012—Pilot testing of services to up to 36 youth
 - * November 2012—Final implementation of RISE CCT begins with 4 CCT teams serving 40 youth by end of
 - * Ramp up to “hybrid” CCT teams in each partner agency serving 80 youth
- * Integrated Schedule

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Integrated Schedule

| | June 2011 | July 2011 | Aug. 2011 | Sept. 2011 | Oct. 2011 | Nov. 2011 | Dec. 2011 | Jan. 2012 | Feb. 2012 | March 2012 | April 2012 | May 2012 | June 2012 | July 2012 | Aug. 2012 | Sept. 2012 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|----------------------------------|--|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|---|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|---|---|--------|--|
| Out-reach "O" | Focus Groups Speak Outs Roundtable | | Develop draft outreach protocols | Begin usability testing at partner agencies Begin usability testing at DCFS | | | | | Finalize outreach protocols | Implement at partner agencies Implement at select DCFS offices | | | | | | | Expand to more partner agencies or more DCFS offices if possible? | | | |
| Identification "I" | Focus Groups Speak Outs Roundtable | | Research ACASI surveys | Draft RISE survey | Begin usability testing at partner agencies Begin usability testing at DCFS | | | | | Finalize survey protocol | Implement at partner agencies Implement at select DCFS offices | | | | | | | Expand to more partner agencies or more DCFS offices if possible? | | |

OUTREACH AND IDENTIFICATION (O & I) INTERVENTIONS

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| CCT | JUNE-JULY Collect Wrap, Family Search and Family Acceptance materials | AUG.-SEPT. Develop CCT Manual | OCT.-JAN. CCT design and usability testing at RISE With current staff and partner agency clients. | FEB.-APRIL Hire & Train RISE Staff 3 RISE teams at LAGLC | MAY-OCT. Pilot CCT for 6 months in 3 RISE CCTs By Oct. 2012: 12 youth served by 3 RISE teams With case loads capped at 4 children per team | Add 4th Rise Team RISE serves 40 youth Develop 4 RISE Wrap teams @ partner agencies 80 youth served by 8 teams | Add more partner agencies? |
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CARE COORDINATION TEAM (CCT) INTERVENTION

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|------------|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| TCI | JULY-AUG. Convene initial meeting of Training Workgroup Draft LGBTQ 101 training | SEPT.-NOV. Draft O & I training Draft CCT training Draft coaching protocols for O&I Finalize LGBTQ 101 training | DEC.-FEB. Finalize O & I training Finalize CCT training Finalize coaching protocols for O & I Draft coaching protocols for CCT | MARCH-MAY Train O & I Train RISE CCTs Begin coaching O & I Finalize coaching protocols for CCT | JUNE-SEPT. Train community on LGBTQ 101 Begin coaching RISE CCTs | Train partner agency trainers on CCT Train partner agency RISE Wrap teams Begin coaching RISE Wrap |
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TRAINING & COACHING INSTITUTE (TCI) INTERVENTION

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|------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| EVAL PLAN | JUNE-AUG. Case Reviews & GLASS data Resources Estimates Y2 Eval & Benchmark Plan | AUG 15 Williams Institute begins | FEB. Begin data collection TCI | MARCH Begin data collection O & I | MAY Begin data collection CCT |
|------------------|--|--|--|---|---|

EVALUATION PLAN

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Conclusion

* Questions and Answers