

## **Y.O.U.T.H.FULL INTELLIGENCE FOR CHILD WELFARE SUPERVISORS**

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### **Connection**

Connection is everything. I saw that caption recently at the bottom of a movie poster. And yes, I thought "Connection **IS** everything". That could be the caption on the bottom of the movie poster for the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project's child welfare supervisor training alternately titled: *Y.O.U.T.H. Full Intelligence for Child Welfare Supervisors* and *Through the Eyes of the Youth: How Child Welfare Supervisors Can Positively Impact the Lives of Foster Youth*. Yes, there are two titles...and there begins the story of our training curriculum.

### **Background**

The Y.O.U.T.H. (Youth Offering Unique Tangible Help) Training Project started in October of 2000 with a three-year grant from the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau. The grant was to develop and deliver a training curriculum on transition-aged youth for child welfare workers in California. The project, named by the youth who developed our first curriculum, was a collaboration between the Bay Area Academy (BAA) of San Francisco State University (a child welfare training organization), and California Youth Connection (CYC), a statewide foster youth advocacy organization. The project was always imagined as a unique bridging of academia, professional child welfare trainers, and current and former foster youth. Leadership by current and former foster youth was infused from the inception of the grant, co-authored and envisioned by a social work professor and a former foster youth. Former foster youth were hired to implement the program's goal of truly empowering current and former foster youth to develop and deliver curricula to child welfare professionals, and that is what we did.

In 2003, the Children's Bureau announced that there would not be any continuation grants for the 12 transition-aged youth training curricula programs like ours. After three years we were finally getting somewhere: had trained about 20 young people (ages 16-24) to develop and deliver curricula, had presented the training to nearly 500 social workers, and we were ready to continue this good work. The project, originally housed at the San Francisco offices of CYC, to support good connection and easy access to youth leaders, moved across the bay to the Oakland offices of BAA. Seeing the value of the project and not wanting to lose momentum, BAA and Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project staff sought additional funding from local foundations and like-minded organizations, namely the California Permanency for Youth Project and the California Social Work Education Center. After surviving a year on patch funding, the project secured a two-year collaborative grant from two foundations and a local county. The county's participation allowed the project to draw down Title IV-E training funds and nearly double the foundation contributions. We trained 40 additional current and former foster youth to train our curricula, and updated the curricula to match some of the state's needs around the topics of permanency and youth engagement. We trained more than 2,000 child welfare workers in California and responded to an invitation to train child welfare workers and foster parents in the state of Hawaii. In 2005, we applied for and received funding from the Administration of Children and Families, Children's Bureau. Our work to train child welfare supervisors was underway.

### **Project Conceptualization**

We were delighted to receive the child welfare supervisor training grant from ACF so that we could continue our project mission: "This is not just a training. It's a movement. Join us!" Indeed we are true believers that some of the best experts on fixing the foster care system are youth who have been there. Our project has always had two overarching goals: To improve the child welfare system through our trainings and to improve the lives of the current and former foster youth who are our trainers. Receiving a grant to continue our work with supervisors was an affirmation that the child welfare system was maturing, that youth engagement was authentically having an impact, and that there was an interest that this work continue. Connecting current and former foster youth with child welfare supervisors, we believed, would continue to heal or improve a wounded system. The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project builds with youth is what helps them to be strong, vibrant presenters. Child welfare workers and supervisors alike say that hearing from the youth directly, being reminded about the importance of having good daily practice, is what makes our training powerful for them. This is what the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project is about: we're not just a training, we're a movement, and with each presentation we give, we invite child welfare staff to join us.

We conceptualized the project with a few points of reference including: 1) the grant guidelines (which later dictated our training competencies) that directed us

to cover the topics of permanency, positive youth development, youth engagement, independent living readiness, stress and crisis, and cultural competency among others; 2) the commitment to utilizing former foster youth as curriculum developers; 3) the importance of understanding our audience and their unique needs; 4) the belief that current and former foster youth can be excellent trainers (beyond passing out handouts and telling their personal story).

We held three focus groups with child welfare supervisors (Los Angeles County, Orange County and Alameda County) and asked them what they needed in terms of training and how they wanted the training delivered. We heard a few common themes: 1) child welfare supervisors wanted regional trainings that would allow for cross county learning; 2) child welfare supervisors wanted trainings that would be inspirational, and different from the general trainings they attended; 3) child welfare supervisors wanted the training environment to be in a retreat like setting, off site and definitely not at child welfare offices; 4) child welfare supervisors valued the youth voice and wanted to hear from youth.

After gathering child welfare supervisor feedback, we assembled a team of six former foster youth who now hold professional jobs within and outside of foster care to develop our curriculum. Our team consisted of a nonprofit lawyer, a graduate student, an undergraduate student, a businesswoman, a university administrator and a child welfare supervisor. The curriculum developers also had varied experiences in foster care. Some were in kinship care, one had an excellent relationship with her foster parents, several were in group homes, and one experienced a failed adoption. One curriculum developer was placed in several psychiatric facilities and was a child prostitute, several had mental health diagnoses, some agreed with the diagnoses others did not. One curriculum developer was already a parent, all were doing well in their fields and all struggled, at least occasionally, from trauma related to foster care.

We met on weekends for a period of six months developing this curriculum. Before we began writing the curriculum, the team received training on adult learning styles, adolescent development, the daily life of a child welfare supervisor, evaluation principles, and transfer of learning theory among other topics. And over time the curriculum was formed, re-formed, revised, and piloted and revised again. We hired a child welfare supervisor (not a former foster youth) to advise us to keep our message(s) clear and useful to child welfare supervisors. Our curriculum, an eight-hour compilation of modules, was filled with humor, art, media, speeches, panels, and energetic activities. We capitalized on the availability of Y.O.U.T.H. Trainers who we would train to write keynote speeches and deliver them to large and small groups. And though the curriculum developers were primarily over the age of 21, they developed a creative and unique training experience, seldom found in child welfare trainings.

## Developing Curriculum and Ancillary Materials

### *Unique and Tangible: Material Development*

Having heard from the child welfare supervisors that they were tired of the same old training techniques, the curriculum developers strove to do something unusual in our training. We were never trying to get too clinical or too academic—we did not try to reach out of our skill set, we knew our strengths lay in telling real stories, teaching from direct youth experience, and in our creativity. We developed digital stories (short documentaries created entirely by youth) on the competency areas, we collected foster care artifacts and created the Museum of Lost Childhoods, we imagined the training would start by asking child welfare supervisors to walk in the shoes of a foster youth by placing all of their beloved belongings into plastic trash bags, or “foster youth luggage,” as they are commonly called.

Y.O.U.T.H. artists created a treasure map of an agenda, the idea being that participants would be given a treasure map upon entrance to the training room and at the end of the day, if they had reached all the listed destinations (Mountains of Permanency, Foster Youth Culture City Center, etc.) they would receive a treasure at the end of the day. The treasure, incidentally, was a re-usable grocery/tote bag (yes, we are California after all, Go Green!) that they would receive for trading in the plastic garbage bag. The emotional schema of the day was “break ‘em down, and build ‘em up!” We developed a second museum to aid in the build ‘em up section, the Museum of Foster Youth Empowerment held artifacts of success from various foster youth we encountered. The Lost Childhoods museum would be up at entrance and the second museum would replace the first in the afternoon. Our trainee packets included foster youth developed best practices (on white paper suitable for duplication for staff) covering the topics of the training, as well as instructions on how the child welfare supervisor could use our materials to transfer learning. The last piece of our curriculum titled, “*Giving Back*” was a chance for child welfare supervisors to get advice from youth on challenging cases, our chance to give back to child welfare staff!

### *Content of Training*

The plan for the day is strategic, as we discussed above in the curriculum development section. Before the day officially begins, participants receive a taste of the training’s content. First, when they register, they are each given a garbage bag, in which they are instructed to carry all their belongings for the rest of the day. This “foster youth luggage” is used as a teaching tool to simulate the foster youth experience. Participants are also given a case consultation form to fill out for a panel later in the day. It is optional, and provides an opportunity for supervisors to consult about any challenging cases about which they would like youth input. Next,

they are guided to explore the Museum of Lost Childhoods<sup>1</sup>, a collection of artifacts of foster youth culture. Many of these artifacts are actual items from former foster youth's lives, contributed to the museum in hopes of making an impact on the Child Welfare System. The artifacts include such items as empty bottles of medical prescriptions, a sanitary napkin made of toilet paper stapled together, and a hospital gown a youth was required to wear while living in a psychiatric facility. They are showcased on risers or in cases, displayed on black tablecloths. Each artifact is accompanied by a description of the item in the context of foster care, as well as the experience of the person who contributed it.

The training begins with a welcome and introductions. Participants are introduced to the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, as well as to each individual trainer and staff person on site.<sup>2</sup> Following introductions is a review of the day's agenda, and a review of the contents of the packets the trainees will use throughout the day. We believe packet review is an important part of the day, because we believe that if you touch all the documents in a training packet, you are more likely to use them again in the future.

An opening keynote speaker addresses the topic of foster youth culture, the theme also addressed through the museums. The speeches are always delivered by a former foster youth. By foster youth culture, we mean the collection of shared experiences that influence beliefs, understandings and behavior. Examples of foster youth culture given by various speakers include a shared language full of acronyms (such as CPS, ILP, CASA, etc.), being without family in a culture where biological families are the norm (especially the case in Hawaii where family is so valued), and allowing other former foster youth to stay with you when they would otherwise be homeless. This shared culture is an important cultural competency for child welfare professionals to understand. The opening speech is followed by a question and answer period.

This brings us to the first workshop session. Trainees are divided into two groups to attend workshops. They attend either *Pooling Resources* or *Crisis Consensus*.<sup>3</sup> *Pooling Resources* is a workshop about Positive Youth Development (PYD), and the local resources available to help Child Welfare Supervisors implement this practice. The first activity in this module is a matching game similar to *Memory*, the childhood matching game. Participants are split into small groups, where they try to match the 11 elements of PYD with their definitions. These elements include

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1 As mentioned above, in the original training design, the Museum of Lost Childhoods was displayed for the first half of the day, and the Museum of Foster Youth Empowerment for the second half of the day. This proved to be a logistical challenge, so we recently began presenting both museums simultaneously for the duration of the training, equencing them intentionally so the Museum of Lost Childhoods would be viewed before the Museum of Foster Youth Empowerment

2 Typically at each training there are 5-8 youth trainers, as well as 2 support staff.

3 Participants all have the opportunity to attend both workshops (one in the morning, and one in the afternoon session). In some cases where space or the number of participants was limited, only one workshop could be presented at a time.

bonding; resilience; social skills; emotional competence; cognitive ability; principles and values; self-determination; spirituality; opportunity; appreciation; and youth engagement. The winning group is awarded prizes. Next participants watch a digital story and contemplate the PYD elements they identified, as well as missed opportunities. Following that is an activity called "Pooling Resources". Participants are split up into small groups (by county if it's a multi-county training). They are given a box filled with questions on slips of paper. Trainees take turns picking questions, which the group then tries to answer, exhausting all possible answers they can identify.<sup>4</sup> The answers are recorded on post-it notes and then posted on a pool poster on the wall. The end result is a "pool" of the county's resources for youth—a useful tool for implementing PYD. The pool of resources is later typed up by staff, emailed to participants, and made available on our website.

The concurrent workshop, *Crisis Consensus*, is a crisis management workshop designed to encourage supervisors to assess crises in foster youth's lives through different perspectives. The first activity, which takes up most of the time allotted to the workshop, involves watching three movie clips of potential "crisis" situations.<sup>5</sup> Each clip has a corresponding worksheet to be filled out afterwards. Then participants, divided into small groups, must come to a consensus about the urgency level of the situation (very urgent, somewhat urgent, or not very urgent). The reasons for the chosen urgency levels are discussed among the large group. After the third film clip is discussed in this manner, it is also used for the final activity, in which supervisors must use their small groups to conduct a mock Team Decision-Making Meeting (TDM). A youth trainer usually sits at the table with each group to include a youth perspective.

Once the workshops have ended, lunch is served. Having lunch included in the training was one of the requests supervisors made of our training design. By this point, the Museum of Lost Childhoods has been taken down, and the Museum of Foster Youth Empowerment set up in its place. The Museum of Foster Youth Empowerment includes such items as a youth's journal, pictures of a youth's current family, and a display of college graduation items. Trainees can begin looking through the museum during this break. At this time, the completed case forms for the Giving Back Panel are collected. Trainers and staff meet at lunch to read through them in preparation, as well as to do a general check-in about the day.

After lunch, an engaging activity called "ILP Readiness" picks up the energy level of the group. "ILP Readiness" is a simulation of what it feels like to be a youth going through ILP (Independent Living Skills Program) before emancipation. It begins with an analysis of when youth are ready to learn independent living skills. This is done in two ways. First, trainers hold up posters, in turn, one of a piggy bank, one of a lemonade stand, and one of a bank and ATM. This illustrates the point that

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4 An example of a question is "What is a program to which you can refer youth to make them feel like they're changing the world?"

5 The movie clips are drawn from the movies *John Tucker Must Die*, *Freeway*, and *Girl Interrupted*.

youth are always ready to learn independent living skills, in ways that are developmentally appropriate to their age, using money management as an example. Next, trainers ask the audience to stand up if they agree with the statements asked. An example of the type of statements is, "Stand up and remain standing if you did your first load of laundry before the age of 12? 15? 18?" The diversity of answers in the room illustrates that youth are ready to learn independent living skills at all ages. Next comes the heart of this activity. Three volunteers come up to the front and are challenged to perform a list of ILP-related tasks in three minutes. Their task list includes tying a tie, sewing a button on fabric, finding an apartment that meets certain criteria, filling out a FAFSA, mapping a bus route between specified points, collecting 10 business cards, and getting three letters of recommendation from audience members. This challenge is set to Charlie Brown's "Linus and Lucy" as background music, which makes it energetic and fun. Afterwards participants show the trainers what they have achieved (usually only a few of the seven tasks) and receive a prize. This game illustrates how stressful it is for youth to have to cram all of their independent living skills training in the few years before they emancipate. The final activity about ILP readiness gives breaks supervisors up into for groups. Each group is given one of four youth descriptions (see Figure 1). Using the descriptions, they design ILP program recommendations for that youth. Each group shares their youth description and recommendations with the large group, after which it is revealed that the "four youth" are really four different descriptions of the same youth. This exercise highlights the point that youth and the services they need are often viewed through the lens of case notes. Those case notes reflect the bias of the person writing them, rarely offering a holistic picture of the youth.

Trainees then listen to a keynote speech on permanency, grief, and loss. This speech normally has a strong impact which is made even stronger by a youth panel following it. A panel of three youth trainers, moderated by the person who gave the keynote, answer questions about permanency, grief, and loss. The point of this segment is to (re)educate child welfare supervisors on the common experience of grief that foster youth share. This grief is often expressed through challenging youth behaviors, which often lead child welfare workers to believe adolescents seem inappropriate for permanent relationships. Next the trainees are again split into two workshop groups. This time, those who attended *Pooling Resources* in the morning attend *Crisis Consensus* in the afternoon, and vice versa.

The Giving Back panel follows the second workshop session. It is another moderated panel of youth trainers, this time giving feedback about the situations on the completed case consultation forms. These situations are usually quite challenging and complex. Youth trainers are prepared to give recommendations in thoughtful, self-reflective, and strengths-based ways. The day closes with trainees filling out their evaluations, which they exchange along with their garbage bags for the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project tote bags.

**Youth 1**

This youth who will emancipate soon is high risk and vulnerable. He experiences mental health challenges such as depression and trouble managing anger, and often has difficulty feeling hopeful about the future. He is on psychotropic medications. He has no permanent connections to any adult. He frequently has difficulty making good decisions and being responsible for his actions.

**Youth 2**

This youth who will emancipate soon has the potential to be very successful in college. He is smart and resourceful, but needs specific guidance on getting ready for higher education and the options available. He lacks information on scholarships, financial aid and timelines for application.

**Youth 3**

This youth who will emancipate soon has very little work experience and skills. He has never had any job training, and has no soft job skills. He has no clothing appropriate for employment or interviews, and lacks transportation to get a job. He does not have documents he needs for employment such as a birth certificate, social security card, and ID card. He is parenting, and will also need childcare in order to obtain employment.

**Youth 4**

This youth who will emancipate soon is struggling to complete high school and receive a diploma. He has attended non-public schools and special education classes, and lacks credits and basic academic knowledge. He is behind several grade levels, and needs special assistance catching up. He has no clear idea of what kind work he want to do as a career or a job he'd like to hold in the short term.

Figure 1: Descriptions of the “Four Youth” from “ILP Readiness” Activity

## **Barriers and Facilitators to Making the Trainings Happen**

### ***Unexpected Budgeting and Resource Issues***

One barrier we faced was budgeting and overall resources, both in our program, and the agencies we trained. Unexpected training design elements, the resources available in different counties, and unexpected transportation costs all influenced training delivery. Of course, the California state budget crisis also played an overarching systems-level role in as our training was delivered to various counties. We found that counties with the most budgetary turmoil struggled to get supervisors to the training.

One unexpected element was the amount of props and supplies needed for the training. This was the case when we developed the museums. We did not initially know we were going to create them. The idea emerged in the curriculum develop-



ment process. Therefore, we did not budget for them, and we had to seek additional funding to cover costs such as cases and risers. Transporting them was also an issue. We found it was more cost effective to drive our museum materials across the state of California (500 miles long), rather than to ship them. This decision also minimized breakage and loss of fragile or unique museum materials.

Another unexpected issue was the overall amount of training supplies and props. We think young people tend to develop curriculum that requires a lot of props, more so than curriculum developed by adults. Maybe it's because they haven't experienced years of schlepping materials around, maybe because they are more creative? Nonetheless, we had a lot of supplies to bring to trainings! Between the museums and other training supplies, we filled an entire minivan with necessary materials for the training. Some materials in the original training concept had to be dropped or modified for this and other reasons.

Originally, we had our "agenda" in the form of a treasure map, rolled and tied with a band. The agendas were given out by facilitators wearing pirate hats to sell the gag, and baskets of gold medallions were placed at the entrance of the training space. Early on we decided to abandon all of the treasure map business. First, the trainers thought it was too corny and didn't work with their professional training attire. Second, there were already too many props, so we abandoned it for that reason. And third, because the trainings were delivered differently depending on the kind of space we trained in, the participants couldn't follow the linear map we developed. We kept the training map posters that designated training locations/topic areas, and left it at that.

Another moment of levity that we dropped in the training came at the end of the "ILP Readiness" module. The writers, trying to emphasize that youth are always ready to learn independent living skills, had our artists make 7 large posters that read "Always." These posters were supposed to be held by trainers and staff in an answer to the question posed to the audience, "When are youth ready for independent living skills?" The trainers found this unbearably embarrassing and refused to hold the posters up. We then decided to tape the posters to the wall for that module and in answering the question posed to the audience we'd say, "The writing is on the wall." Slightly clichéd but still survivable.

We also initially were unaware that Child Welfare Supervisors would want the trainings delivered in a retreat-like format. Most of them stated they wanted it in a non-traditional setting. We did not budget renting hotel conference facilities, meals, etc. Instead we sought out collaborators to sponsor trainings in terms of spaces and meals. Supervisors also asked us for regional trainings, where they would have opportunities for cross-learning with other counties. This matched up with our idea of delivering the trainings in conference format. We asked counties to co-sponsor trainings that other counties would be invited to. That meant paying for space, breakfast, snacks, and lunches for their counties. What we experienced was that few counties were willing to cover the costs of attendees from other counties.

Not all counties have equal resources. Training spaces were very diverse. Youth trainers had really diverse experiences delivering the training. Sometimes it would be in a conference center with five star meals, excellent technological equipment and ample space, and sometimes our training would have to take place in one small crowded room without a podium or microphone.

Transportation also played a role as either a barrier or facilitator. In general, though we were able to budget our most preferred form of travel, costs of fuel and all forms of travel increased, which was challenging at times. The high cost of transportation between the mainland or Hawaii and Guam or American Samoa was a specific issue. Thus we have not been able to get to those islands to train them, or to get them to attend the trainings in Hawaii. In terms of our California trainings, having a statewide team of trainers was helpful. It allowed us to cut down on travel costs by inserting trainers from the region in which the training happened. This also better enabled us to address specific regional needs and respond authentically from a youth's perspective. This is true of our trainings in Hawaii as well. We trained youth from the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition to train alongside us, which also made the training more culturally relevant.

### ***Organizational and Regional Culture***

The cultures of our organization and other agencies/counties impacted our training delivery. Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project organizational culture was one of the facilitators to successfully rolling out our curriculum. Our staff is majority former foster youth and so there's an affinity there. We also have a social justice commitment and perspective. All staff have personal lives that can accommodate the frequent travel which is required of us. The staff has really prioritized the work, and finds it and each other enjoyable. That has facilitated the training process. We see our success as encouraging to other foster youth. Not only do we expect that our training will have a positive impact on social work, we also expect that it will increase the sense of possibility in foster youth watching the project from afar. Some of our staff were continuing their education in social work while working for the project, and were able to take on research as part of their educational goals that also benefit the project.

Organizational culture had a big influence on when or how a county was able to follow through with their commitments to us. One county in our state (who we will not identify) simply stated they did not believe they needed training on serving the needs of teenagers. When they were surveyed about receiving our training, they fully passed on the opportunity. This is a county that believes they have enough knowledge to serve youth well and are beyond needing to be trained by youth. They are actually a county that only hires MSW level staff and believes they are in need of very little training because there just that good on their own. Needless to say, this organizational perspective troubles us.

There were also organizational facilitators that helped us deliver our trainings.

On a bureaucratic level, ACF's understanding, open, trusting, and flexible attitude towards program delivery made the overall experience better. On a county organizational level, some counties facilitated ways for supervisors to attend, going above and beyond what we asked of them. Some counties were very supportive of the training and of what Child Welfare Supervisors asked for. For example, one county provided additional resources so child welfare supervisors could have a very special lunch and more giveaways than normal during the training, and therefore more incentive for supervisors to participate. Another county mandated the training for its supervisors, and required managers to handle all emergency phone calls that day so that supervisors could really enjoy the training.

One aspect of organizational culture especially stood out, and should get a mention all of its own: one county had low enrollment each of the two times our training was offered in their county, and we had to cancel the trainings both times. Our steady child welfare supervisor advisor did a little underground sleuthing for us (she asked her colleagues) and found that several people did not sign up for the training because they thought that our current and former foster youth trainers would just come to "yell at them." We were shocked to hear this, but strategized with our advisor and other child welfare supervisor allies on how to address this issue. This is when our second training name was born. We decided that for whatever reason the child welfare supervisors were "afraid" to attend our workshop, we would respond by clarifying that our workshop was not about blaming or shaming child welfare staff, but about supporting child welfare supervisors in their work and seeing the work from the eyes of youth. Somehow our *Y.O.U.T.H. Full Intelligence* title was too threatening, so we changed the name and happily recruited staff from that county. There was a slight confusion with one or two child welfare supervisors who signed up for the newly named training after having taken the previously named (but same) training, but they were good natured about it.

Lastly, cultural differences between Hawaii and California impacted our trainings there in particular. General island culture influenced child welfare staff in Hawaii so; therefore, we had a cultural bridge to cross. In organizing the trainings, we had different work styles. While we like to have registrations done well in advance, Hawaii's island style was able to recruit a full house of participants within less than five days of the training. It was a learning experience for us all.

### ***Scheduling***

A few scheduling issues became barriers. The first, typical to many grant situations, we received notice of our grant within weeks of our project start date. Because of lengthy university hiring processes and bureaucracies we had a late start on some of our programming. The second scheduling barrier was the over-scheduling of youth trainers. Sometimes there are only a handful of youth available at a given time, as many youth have work and/or school obligations. Finally, we were sometimes forced to schedule trainings back to back, due to a limited number of dates to

choose from when coordinating schedules with counties. Back-to-back scheduling is never ideal and required staff to go from training to training, sometimes on the road for a week at a time.

### Project Evaluation

The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project uses a training model based on transfer of learning theory and research. The project focuses on the critical relationship between the caseworker and his or her supervisor and its pivotal role for public child welfare agencies to achieve federal outcome standards around permanency, safety, and child well-being. The primary cohort of trainees are supervisors, but child welfare managers and directors are included to ensure a “top” to “bottom” understanding of and commitment to a youth-focused approach to supporting transition age youth.

Our training model is reflected in our evaluation design. It involves a retrospective pre-test survey, as well as a follow-up survey three months post-training. In addition, select counties are identified as sites to conduct additional follow-up, in the form of child welfare worker surveys, and manager and director interviews. See Figure 2 for more details. These tools are used to evaluate progress toward short-term and intermediate outcomes in the current evaluation (see Figure 3).

- ▶ **Retrospective Pre-test Survey:** Training participants complete an evaluation form at the end of the conference to measure training satisfaction and changes in knowledge, attitudes, and intended practice.
- ▶ **Follow-Up Survey (with trained and untrained supervisors and managers):** Supervisors and managers complete an online survey three months following the training to learn whether and how participation in the training has resulted in changes in a department’s approach and achievement of successful outcomes for transition age foster youth (as compared with departments whose supervisors were not trained).
- ▶ **Child Welfare Frontline Workers Survey:** Frontline workers complete an online survey three months following their agency’s supervisors’ and managers’ participation in the training to discern any changes in the training, direction and support they receive from their supervisors as it pertains to their work with transition age foster youth.
- ▶ **Interview Agency Directors:** Korwin Consulting will interview agency directors to determine their perspective on benefits of training to the organization and its ability to improve child welfare outcomes.

Figure 2: Evaluation Methods

<p><b>Short-term Outcome</b></p> <p>There are five desired short-term outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Resource materials are accessed by those working in the field.</li> <li>▶ The new training curriculum on youth-centered practice is available for use with child welfare supervisors.</li> <li>▶ Foster youth have increased skills and feelings of empowerment and being heard.</li> <li>▶ Child welfare supervisors are better able to listen to and understand foster youth.</li> <li>▶ Child welfare supervisors have gained skills and knowledge required to increase their ability to supervise a worker in seven competency areas (see figure in curriculum development section).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intermediate Outcomes</b></p> <p>There are five desired intermediate outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ There is an increase in training of supervisors/managers with the new curriculum on youth centered practice.</li> <li>▶ Youth have an increased sense of control over decisions that affect them.</li> <li>▶ Supervisors/managers are integrating skills and knowledge in the seven competencies (see full list in Short-term Outcomes list, above).</li> <li>▶ Supervisors/managers are providing increased supervisory support for front-line child welfare workers.</li> <li>▶ There is improved collaboration between public child welfare agencies, community partners and foster youth.</li> </ul>
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Figure 3: Short-Term and Intermediate Training Outcomes

### Continuance

We received feedback from supervisors that they would like their workers to receive this same topical training, with slight adaptations to gear it more towards workers' experience. Therefore, we will be seeking state and foundation support to adapt the curriculum and provide the revised training to child welfare workers. We will also provide the supervisor training on a fee-for-service basis to counties throughout California, Hawaii, and possibly other states as requested. We will work with our regional child welfare training academies to assess interest and find available resources to provide this training to child welfare supervisors. We also hope to continue presenting the museums as a stand-alone traveling exhibit.

Any discussion about continuing any particular curricula that Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project develops begs the question about the continuance of a youth-driven training program in general. We will be looking at how to continue developing youth in California to be able curriculum developers and trainers. We are also hoping to use everything we learned in the last seven years of public and foundation funding to assist other states in doing the same. Part of the issue of continuing a foster youth driven program is the task of convincing adults that young people have more to offer than just a sad story and that, in fact, youth can provide a fresh and

needed approach to child welfare training curricula. Furthermore, this curricula lives beyond the original youth who write it and train it initially. It's not just about the curriculum, it's about youth developed and delivered trainings. We will continue to challenge adultism in order to keep these trainings available.

### **Accessing Materials**

Nearly all of our training material is available online for those who want to utilize it. However, we have a strong and specific preference that our training curricula be delivered by young people who have experienced the foster care system. Materials are currently available on our website, [www.youthtrainingproject.org](http://www.youthtrainingproject.org). Digital stories are available for a small fee to cover duplication and shipping costs. Resource lists from the Pooling Resources workshop described above are compiled by county and available on the website. There are also biographical descriptions of the trainers, available to speak on various topics, as well as for fee-for-service trainings. The website will soon also have curriculum posted on it. A slideshow of the museums is available, along with information about how to book the museum to come to your city. Also on our website, you can access best practices developed by current and former foster youth, as well as California child welfare legislative policy updates.