Family Intervention: Building Relationships and Increasing Stability for Runaway and Homeless Youth

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Tania Pryce, Youth Services of Tulsa
Dr. Norweeta G. Milburn, UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior
June is Family Reunification Month

National Reunification Month is sponsored by the American Bar Association's (ABA's) Center on Children and the Law.
The Discussion

• **André** will provide an overview of family intervention, which will include family reunification, family connecting and family finding.

• **Tania** will discuss family intervention work being done within a continuum of service options, the challenges and opportunities to family intervention, as well as how to reduce barriers to providing services to families and individuals in need.

• **Norweeta** will discuss a short family intervention model, Support to Reunite, Involve, and Value Each Other (STRIVE); the components that are included in STIVE sessions, and how family intervention can be delivered for families of homeless youth.
Family intervention can facilitate the process of youth returning home, strengthen families, and address trauma to mitigate future ejects from the home.
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**Family intervention** is an umbrella term that can include discrete strategies such as *family reunification, family connecting and family finding*. *Aftercare services* can be a form of family intervention that is provided to a youth and their family, after a youth has exited a program.
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• **Family reunification** in refers to the process of returning children and youth in temporary out-of-home care to their families of origin.

The process of family reunification planning should always involve the child/youth in decision making, and include on going assessments of safety.
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• **Family connecting** includes connecting a youth with their family to facilitate an emotional reunification if a physical reunification is not possible.
Family Finding is a model that is used in child welfare to identify and engage extended family, fictive kin adults that are important in the life of a youth. The model, which centers around the youth, includes six stages:

1. Discovering
2. Engaging
3. Planning
4. Decision-Making
5. Evaluating
6. Follow-Up Supports

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• **Aftercare services**, which can be found in a number of service contexts, such as juvenile justice, child welfare, and homelessness can be formal or informal, depending upon the objective of the intervention.
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Benefits of Family Intervention

• Reunify youth with their family in the home to **end an episode of homelessness**
• Create a **housing destination**
• **Improve the relationship** between a youth and his/her family
• Emotionally connect youth with their family to **increase a youth’s outcomes**
• Prevent or decrease the risk of a youth running away or being **thrown out of the home** in the future
• Keep **families in tact**
• **Addressing trauma**
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Evidenced-Based Models

• Strengthening Families Program
• Brief Strategic Family Therapy
• Family Behavior Therapy
• Project STRIVE (*discussed later during the webinar*)
• Family Acceptance Project
• Multisystemic Therapy
• Functional Family Therapy
• Family Group Decision Making/Family Group Conferencing
• Intensive Family Preservation Services
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## How Youth Services Reduces Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple doorways</th>
<th>Full continuum</th>
<th>Multiple Locations</th>
<th>No Pre-authorization Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Safe Place</td>
<td>• Crisis services</td>
<td>• 5 Satellite offices</td>
<td>• Same week appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shelter</td>
<td>• Counseling</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sliding scale payments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Counseling</td>
<td>• Youth development</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Solution focused</td>
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<tr>
<td>• TLP</td>
<td>• Strong community connections</td>
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<td>• SOS</td>
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<td>• GLBTQ</td>
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Youth and Young Adults

- Crave connections
- Separation from services
- Feelings of guilt and shame
- "Unsuccessful" reunification
- Seek out family
Youth and Young Adults

Changing the Cycle

- Youth crave connections
- "Unsuccessful" Reunification
- Continued services
- Seek out family
- Open discussions with staff
- With staff support
- Services to lessen impact
- Continues developing connections

Youth Services
Families

Strength Based
- Show families respect
- Look for opportunities

Valuable Resource
- Providing support, education, resources, counseling etc.

Mechanism to stay connected
- Support team, visits, family counseling
Staff

Need to protect

Youth Driven
“Lucy”
• TLP entry
• Mom became a team member.
• Reunification

“Dylan”
• Entry through Street Outreach
• Counseling services
• Reunification

“Adam”
• Entry through shelter
• Mechanism to stay engaged
• Reunification
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Family-Based Intervention for Homeless Adolescents

Norweeta G. Milburn, Ph.D.
Nathanson Family Resilience Center
Overview

Research → Family Intervention

Project STRIVE
Negative Picture

How do we intervene to prevent chronic homelessness?
Who Goes Home?
**Project STRIVE: Support to Reunite, Involve, and Value Each Other**

- Runaway behavior: Response to unresolved family conflict

- Family intervention
  - Family strengths
  - Problem solving
  - Conflict negotiation
  - Role clarification

- 5 sessions
Project STRIVE: Elements

- Tokens
- Feeling Thermometer
- Problem Solving
- Role Playing
- Reframing
**Project STRIVE: Session 1 Tasks**

- Introduction and begin using tokens
- Understanding program,
- Commitment to participation
- Introduce family album
- Feeling good about each other
- Identify family strengths
- Developing tools to reduce risk of running away: Stating positives about self
- Identifying and uncomfortable situation and introducing coping plan
- Preparing for future high risk situations
- Identifying social supports
- Have family members sign contract for returning home
- Giving to each other
- Establish the phone contract and assign post session activity of having conversations and giving “verbal” tokens to each other
Results

Mental Health

Substance abuse and HIV sexual risk

Milburn, Iribarren, Rice et al. (2011)
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Thank you

We will now take time to take your questions