[Jill Spielfogel] Hello, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar about, "Emerging Practices for Supporting LGBTQI+ Young People Across Human Services Programs." This project was funded by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and conducted by Mathematica in partnership with the Center for the Study of Social Policy and a young adult Steering Committee of LGBTQI+ young people with lived experiences navigating human services programs.

You just met Rayven Hoyte, who is a member of our project Steering Committee. I'm Jill Spielfogel. I helped to lead this project, and we're so excited to have you all here today to share learnings from our project and to hear from some very engaging and inciteful panel members who agreed to talk with us on this issue. So we can jump on in.

Please note that the findings and conclusions in this presentation do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[Rayven Hoyte] Hello, everybody.

We will begin today by hearing from Miranda-Lynch Smith, who is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Services Policy and senior official performing the duties of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Then Jill Spielfogel, who you just met, and Eli Michaels ,who led the Emerging Practices project, will provide an overview of the study and its findings. Sol Dixon and Marina Jones from our Steering Committee will also present on the collaborative research process used to co-develop the project and how it could be beneficial to other research projects. Then Brittany Tabora, who led the project Steering Committee from Mathematica, will introduce our panelists. The panel will last about 50 minutes, and there will be time for live Q&A. Please put your questions in the Chat for the Q&A period.

Finally, we will share project resources at the end of the webinar that will be published on the ASPE and Youth.gov websites in the next month.

Now I will turn it over to Deputy Assistant Secretary Miranda Lynch-Smith, who will share opening remarks.

[Miranda Lynch-Smith]Thank you so much, Raven.

Hello, everyone. Thank you all so much for joining us today. We're so pleased to welcome you to this webinar on "Emerging Practices for Supporting LGBTQI+ Young People Across Human Services Programs, hosted by my office, the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation or ASPE as we refer to ourselves. We are so excited for this wonderful opportunity to come together, have a discussion, and uplift emerging practices for supporting LGBTQI+ young people across human services programs, including those who may be involved in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice systems as well as those experiences homelessness and those seeking sexual and mental health services.

The social and systematic experiences of LGBTQI+ youth and their families influenced their overrepresentation in many human services programs. We know that LGBTQI+ young people have historically been prevented from equitable access to opportunities and resources, often due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. This has resulted in LGBTQI+ young people being significantly at higher risk of entering systems, such as the Child Welfare or Criminal Justice systems, and much more likely to experience homelessness or housing instability.

My colleagues and I at HHS are committed to addressing the barriers that LGBTQI+ young people face to strengthening faith in inclusive human services and supports, as well as preventing negative outcomes that could lead a young person into human service assistance.

Today's webinar will highlight findings from a recent ASPE project, and you'll have to stay tuned because the brief and infographic will be released very soon. That ASPE project sought to highlight innovative practices that human services agencies, programs, several staff and leaders are using to support and meet the needs of LGBTQI+ young people and their families.

During today's webinar, I'm really interested to hear more about how human services programs are addressing barriers to safe and supportive services; how programs are supporting folks with intersecting identities; and what programs are doing to promote protective factors to prevent LGBTQI+ young people from becoming involved in human services systems.

I know we're going to hear a lot of great information today from the project team and our panelists. But before we get started, I want to say a few thank yous to the project teams for all their hard work. So thanks to Kaitlyn Jones and Laura Chadwick, who served as project officers for ASPE. Thank you to Jill Spielfogel, Eli Michaels, Brittany Tabora, and the team at Mathematica. Thanks to everyone who participated in the key informant interviews and those who are also participating as members of the panel today. And a really big thank you to our project Steering Committee: Sol Dixon, Marina Jones, Ethan Westby, Rayven Hoyte, and Cass Phanord, who collaborated throughout the project to help co-develop some project activities and deliver goals.

Having that youth Steering Committee was essential to this project. Our Office understands how important it is to co-create and engage people meaningfully and authentically. It's so critical for breaking down the power dynamics inherent in our federal system that has caused historic harms and to prevent future harms. By building or rebuilding trust with people, we're able to engage them collaboratively in ways that can actually have a meaningful impact on our decision-making. Engaging people with lived experience, like in this project, can ultimately improve the critical outcomes by ensuring that our funding, our services, and all our work really meets people's needs and improves their access to services.

So without delaying us further, I'd like to thank you all again for taking the time out of your day to attend this inciteful and dynamic webinar. I'll now turn it back over to Jill and Eli to provide an overview of the project. Thank you.

[Jill Spielfogel] Thank you, Deputy Assistant Secretary Miranda Lynch-Smith.

In this section, we will provide some background information about the project that the Deputy Assistant Secretary just mentioned, which we called "Emerging Practices for Supporting LGBTQI+ Young People Across Human Services Programs." My colleague, Eli Michaels, will share findings from our research; and we will hear from members of our young adult Steering Committee about the collaborative research process we used to conduct this project.

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The project examined emerging practices for supporting young people, ages 10 to 24, who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and other non-heterosexual orientations and non-cisgender identities, LGBTQI+ for short.

By "human services," we mean programs that provide services and supports for youth involved in Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, those who are experiencing housing instability or homelessness, and those seeking sexual health services. The research questions addressed barriers that LGBTQI+ young people and their families face in navigating human services, how emerging practices are helping to address barriers, and how human services programs are providing intersectional services that meet the needs of a range of LGBTQI+ young people and their families.

Finally we examined what, if anything, human services programs are doing to prevent harmful outcomes such as homelessness or involvement in the justice system.

We began the project by recruiting a Steering Committee of five LGBTQI+ young adults. They had experiences navigating several of the human services I mentioned. Although not all experiences were represented on the committee, many of them were. The committee meetings began with an orientation to the project, and then we met together twice monthly over a period of nine months. We then started the research with an environmental scan of programs. This included a Web search to identify programs that were supporting LGBTQI+ young people and then a review of program materials to understand the practices they're using.

The findings from the environmental scan informed the protocols we developed for key informant interviews. We interviewed LGBTQI+ young people, parents and caregivers, and program and federal staff. These interviews provided information about the barriers young people face to receiving human services, emerging practices that human services programs are using to support the positive development of young people, and additional opportunities for improvement.

The Steering Committee provided input into findings from our environmental scan and key informant interviews. As mentioned, they collaborated on developing the project's issue brief of emerging practices. They also developed an infographic to highlight key findings from the issue brief.

Next slide, please.

Here we show the key terms and concepts that guided our approach when reviewing programs and interviewing key informants. Recognizing that LGBTQI+ young people have multiple facets of their identity, we approached our research using an intersectional lens. Young people's experiences may be shaped by heterosexism, in addition to other forms of oppression like racism or ableism. These different forms of oppression do not work in silos but rather may compound to shape life experiences, health, and well-being.

Positive youth development is an approach that engages young people with their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive. It promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.

As mentioned, in addition to identifying the ways that programs are affirming and supporting young people who navigate human services, we wanted to understand how program support prevention or efforts to reduce risk factors and promote positive, protective factors to ensure the well-being of children and families can prevent the need for system involvement and further harm.

As we approached the research, we knew that young people's positive development is influenced by multiple factors. The structural context which you see here on the outer layer of the diagram includes laws and policies, shapes funding for programs, and protections for LGBTQI+ youth and their families.

Next, communities – including their research and culture – can either be affirming or unsafe for young people who identify as LGBTQI+. Human services agencies and community-based organizations play a key role in providing services and support to young people.

Next, families – whether it's family of origin or chosen family – may differ in their levels of acceptance of their children's identities and may have different kinds of resources available to them.

Finally, young people each have their own individual identities, lived experiences, and strengths. Findings from our study, as well as other research, shows that young people who identify as LGBTQI+ may face barriers to health and well-being at each of these levels. Families, caregivers, and human services providers and organizations can work together to affirm LGBTQI+ young people and support their positive development.

Now I will turn it over to Eli Michaels from Mathematica to share some findings about what human services programs are doing to provide affirming services with a focus on emerging practices at all four of these [interim] levels.

[Eli Michaels] Thank you so much, Jill.

Hi, everyone. My name is Eli. My pronouns are she/her, and I'm excited to share with you some of the findings from our research. All of the practices I will be sharing with you today are highlighted in our issue brief, which will be posted on ASPE's website later this month.

We will begin at the community level. The first practice we identified was programs are working to raise awareness and address stigma through community outreach. Many programs actively engage young people in these efforts through forming youth advisory committees or other groups, which can also serve to build professional networks, confidence, and skills. Programs also ensure they are connecting young people and their families with affirming resources in the community, such as gender-neutral housing and education or employment services.

These programs can really serve as a liaison between community resources and LGBTQI+ young people. For example, programs sometimes host pop-up events where various services from around the community can outreach to young people and their families. Programs also work at the organizational level. So within their own organizations, programs can create safer, affirming environments through practices like asking and sharing pronouns and displaying visual markers of diversity and inclusion, such as pride flags and gender-neutral bathrooms.

Note that no space is always safe for everyone, but practices like this can help to make spaces safer for LGBTQI+ young people.

Next, programs offer a range of social, health, and behavioral health services as well as concrete supports such as food, laundry, and hygiene products. Programs can also offer education, career and life skills training to support professional development.   Some programs have a physical drop-in center that operates as a one-stop shop for young people to receive integrated services all under one roof. This really represents a no-wrong-door approach to serving young people who may initially engage with a program, say, to receive housing support but may stick around for community or mentorship opportunities.

Another practice we found was that programs are hiring staff who reflect the communities they serve and share lived experiences with LGBTQI+ young people not only in terms of their gender identity and sexual orientation but also in terms of race, immigration status, sexual health, and other identities and experiences. We heard from key informants that it can be really helpful for young people in human services systems to see staff who look like them and can understand their experiences. In some cases, programs may hire previous participants as staff.

Now in addition to hiring practices, programs provide training and resources to ensure that their staff understand the unique experiences of LGBTQI+ young people and are prepared to support them.

Lastly, programs form peer support groups and host community events to bring together older and younger LGBTQI+ youth to form connections and foster a sense of belonging. Social events, like queer proms, create a sense of community and fun; and some events are specifically designed to recognize and celebrate intersectional identities.

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Okay, so given that fostering strong relationships is integral to positive youth development, supporting families is an important form of prevention. Programs are working to support families by using a relationships-based approach that builds connections with families and aims to understand their stage of acceptance of their child's sexual orientation or gender identity. In some cases, that may mean helping youth find, and even serving as, their chosen family.

Human services staff are aware of services available for families of LGBTQI+ youth and connect them to support groups, educational resources, and other services. Programs offer spaces for families and caregivers to connect, share experiences, and support each other as they're supporting their child.

So these practices at the community, organization, and family level really all come together to support LGBTQI+ young people by creating affirming environments and relationships. Programs are also directly supporting individual young people in several ways.

First, using a relationship-based approach that recognizes not all young people who identify as LGBTQI+ are the same. Programs know that the best service for one young person may differ than the best service for another. By listening, following the young person's lead, and seeking to understand rather than prescribe, programs can ensure they are provided the most appropriate services.

Next, a harm-reduction approach seeks to reduce harm wherever possible. This often refers to decreasing the negative consequences of recreational drug use and sexual activity without requiring abstinence. It recognizes that people who are currently engaging in a given activity can still make positive changes to protect themselves. For example, instead of expelling a young person from a program that they are struggling with substance use or behaviors that are perceived as challenging by staff, human services programs can engage that person in services to support them in learning and growing.

Relatedly, many programs use a trauma-informed approach which understands, anticipates, and responds to the impact that trauma can have for young people.

So that sums up the findings from our study. Now I'm excited to hand it over to Sol Dixon, who will talk about the collaborative process we used to conduct this research with our young adult Steering Committee. Thank you.

[Sol Dixon] Hey, everyone. My name is Sol. I use they/them pronouns, and I am one of the members of the Steering Committee. On this slide, I will share a bit about the activities that the Steering Committee was involved in. This committee helped give a sense of how to create and even involve young people or others with lived experience into their research projects.

What I loved the most about this project is that it took a very collaborative approach that began with an orientation for the proposed research. Immediately after, we were involved in every single step of the way; and this was about a six- or seven-month period. During that period, we provided input on research protocols used for the scan and helped develop key informant interview protocols to understand emerging practices for working with LGBTQIA+ young people. We reviewed the data from the environmental scan and the key informant interviews and worked together to make sense of the data and to discern what was most important and especially to evaluate what was missing.

Going through this process also easily allowed us to reflect on our own lived experiences in navigating human service agencies ourselves. The Mathematica team came ready with specific questions to guide our analysis and reflection of the data. After reviewing that data, we were able to share our feedback and then become more curious about the findings as a group. This led to – well, what we came to learn from this period was that there were more in-depth – there was an opportunity to have more depth in connections, and that could happen with more collaborative research.

So on this slide, I will go more into some of the benefits of collaborating. For those who are leading research projects, involvement from people with lived experiences helps immensely to provide deeper insights into the different types of narratives and identities within a community, especially those who are marginalized; and those kind of identities and narratives can get lost in the objectiveness of research.

For example, the five of us all have distinct experiences as LGBTQI+ young people; and with our different paths, this project was able to be more expansive and authentic to the LGBTQIA+ community. Although there are common themes for the barriers we've encountered, we were able to help synthesize the findings of the range of intersectional experiences based on the data the project team collected.

Another benefit is that partnering with people with lived experiences also allows research to know what is most important in the eyes of people who have experienced those issues and that involvement of those with experience can improve the rigor of the questions being asked and how findings are interpreted. This can also help ensure that the findings are relevant to the people being researched.

Another side of this benefit is that those with lived experiences who participate in research projects are able to gain extremely useful research skills. For many of us, this was our first time being involved in a research project. We learned about developing interview instruments, recruiting participants, analyzing findings, and developing written products. We also benefitted from learning to work together on a project with a tight timeline.

Getting five people together during a six-month period was a lot, and we figured out how to do it. We came together during this project because of the challenges we experienced navigating human service agencies, and we had the opportunity to dig into an issue we care a lot about and do research that could help drive change.

Finally, we developed important relationships as part of this process that helped to address some of the issues we face as LGBTQI+ young people. Our involvement helped create a real sense of community and enhance our interest in continuing to do work that can benefit young LGBTQIA+ people long after this project. For myself, I can say that I gained so much insight into my past experience as a young adult involving kinship care and other human service programs. It really became a mirror for my needs as a young adult navigating those systems and even for my current path into adulthood, and I'm glad I had this chance to reflect on that.

Now I will hand it on over to Marina, who was also a member of the Steering Committee.

[Marina Jones] Hello, everyone. I am Marina (she/her pronouns), also a member of the Steering Committee.

On this slide, we share some considerations for others who are interested in including the panel or Steering Committee of people with lived experiences with the research topic. To begin, it is important to devote time to relationship building and provide an orientation so committee members can get familiar with the expectations and the roles on the project.

From the beginning, the group asked about our goals for being a part of the project and our preferred learning styles. They also invited us to provide either written or verbal feedback, depending on our preferences. To collectively brainstorm, we used platforms such as mural boards, which is similar to a Jamboard for those who are familiar, to document our group's responses to questions. We really liked this approach because it was a very organized way to gather feedback from all of us.

The team helped us build trust by being truly open to our feedback, learning from the examples we shared, and accommodating us based on our feedback. This helped create an environment where we looked forward to working together. We also had opportunities to take the lead on different aspects of the group, such as facilitating the meeting introductions or analyzing data.

Finally, logistics are important for effective collaboration. Before and after each meeting, the Mathematica team sent e-mails with clear agendas, instructions, and next steps which made it clear to know what to expect, how to prepare, and how to manage our time on a busy project. Many of us as the project wraps up have reflected on what we learned together as a group. It helped deepen our own understanding and our interest in the topic of better supporting LGBTQI+ young people in human services programs.

Now we will move on to our panel discussion.

[Rayven Hoyte] Well okay, so now that we have shared some of the findings of our project, we will turn it over to our panel of two young people, a parent and a foster parent, and two human service providers to discuss how human services programs are working to support LGBTQI+ people's positive youth development. They will help provide more detail about some of these emerging practices. Brittany Tabora from Mathematica will moderate this discussion.

[Brittany Tabora] Hello, everyone. My name is Britany Tabora. I use she or they pronouns. I'm with Mathematica. I was helping to lead the Steering Committee for this project.

I'd like to start by welcoming and thanking all of our panelists today. Let me go ahead and introduce them.

We have Amanda Cruce, who is a long-time foster and adoptive parent. She and her wife have focused on making their home safe for LGBTQI+ youth in the foster care system. She was the former director for the Florida Foster/Adoptive Parent Association and has worked as a federal consultant to help implement laws and policies nationwide to make more affirming homes for children in foster care. In 2022, Amanda entered a Ph.D. program; and her research focuses on LGBTQI+ well-being and how we get there.

I would also like to introduce Cass Phanord. Cass is a member of the project Steering Committee and is based in Philadelphia. They are a black, socially-conscious, queer, and trans and disabled. They hold a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and international relations from the University of Pennsylvania. Cass has lived experience navigating housing services, nutrition supports, and mental health services. They currently work as a peer specialist and are passionate about building a quality care support space through an organization called Lavendar Space.

We also have Alex Roque. Alex Roque has over 20 years of experience in the nonprofit sector and is the current Executive Director of the Ali Forney Center. He has led community and business development, fundraising, communication for nonprofit organizations. In 2011, Alex was recruited to the Ali Forney Center to launch the agency's first in-house development department aimed at building capacity, community relations, and business infrastructure.

In 2018, Alex was appointed to the board of Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation. There he works closely with the Foundation's founders and leadership on their work to support young people throughout the United States and around the world. Alex lives in Brooklyn with his husband and their seven-year-old son.

We also have Sarah Rosso, who is the Executive Director of the Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation and was selected to serve on both the Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh Inaugural LGBTQ+ Commissions. They are the chair of both the Pittsburgh Commission and the Pennsylvania Youth Committee. Sarah is part of a national team developing best practices in Child Welfare; built the first LGBTQI+ Pacific Foster Program; and is a consultant and expert trainer for the Human Rights – Human Resource Campaign Foundation. They have been instrumental in advocating for and implementing groundbreaking foster parent requirements and policy improvements to better serve LGBTQI+ youth in Child Welfare systems.

Last, we also have Ethan Westby, who is a member of the project Steering Committee and currently resides in Minneapolis. He graduated with a bachelor's in business management and entrepreneurship this spring. Ethan has a great passion for helping people. Since graduating, he started a cleaning business to help spread joy around the world.

So, yes, thank you again to all of our panelists. Why don't we go ahead and jump in to some of our questions.

My first question is: *What supports do LGBTQI+ youth and families need from human services programs to feel healthy, safe, supported, and affirmed?*

Maybe, Amanda, would you like to kick us off?

[Amanda Cruce] Yeah, I would be happy to, thank you so much.

I think that it is so simple but still seems so hard to do – think creating spaces where people are able to be their authentic selves. Hopefully, that starts at home. The goal is that children don't have as much contact with human services, with Child Welfare; and we are able to put services in place before those are needed. We're able to help families struggle through difficult times.

As a foster parent, one of the main reasons that kids were coming into our home was part of their coming out story – was really having that conflict at home, not having a third party or someone safe that was able to help them work through it, and then getting placed into foster care. Another big struggle for us was that we were seen as their only option as a gay home for the youths that were also identifying as LGBTQI+, and that's not always the right answer either. There should be multiple affirming places that youth and families can be and can feel connected and safe.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Amanda.

Ethan/Cass, any thoughts on this question?

[Ethan Westby] Sure, I can jump in. Kind of to add to what Amanda was saying, instead of a care that is rigid, more connected with life, being able to go to one place and this place leads to a multitude of options for that person so that they don't have to constantly look for care elsewhere, look for other options, something that is just well-rounded.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Ethan.

Alex or Sarah, anything based on your perspectives leading human service agencies?

[Alex Roque] I have to say homophobia and transphobia is so deeply-routed in people's experiences in lives, and hate is isolating. What Amanda shared about community is *so* critical, but you have to build communities for families that look like the families who are experiencing this hateful experience of homophobia or transphobia, building community care and connection around lived experiences of the actual family. So families who are conservative families, who have been in homophobic or transphobic communities, need to actually see themselves and other families who accept their children, who accept LGBTQ folks, and who have been able to build the bridge over this really hateful experience that they've had.

So it's this community piece on the family side. Look, I'm not advocating for the families. I work with gay people who are rejected by their families all the time; but there is an opportunity, I think, to extend a connection, to show them there's a way to get over this hate. There's a way to accept your family, your child, your loved ones, in spite of what you've been led to believe for yourself for your entire life.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Alex.

Thank you, everyone, for those great insights. Really hearing the theme of connections – both to your community as well as to services and resources that young LGBTQI+ people need.

The next question that I'd like to ask is: *Based on your experiences, when LGBTQI+ youth and guardians are navigating services, how are they able to find services? What is their entry point? What's most helpful at that time?*

I'd like to maybe start off with hearing from Cass -- if you wouldn't mind?

[Cass Phanord] Yeah, sure, I think that something that came up a lot during our meetings with the other Steering Committee members was word of mouth was really important as coming up a lot. So we tell each other about things, and I think that that's a little-utilized method of outreach a lot of time. That can look like literally conversations. It can look like social media – stuff like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook. I've personally connected with a lot of services through making a post somewhere and being like, "Does anyone have any recommendations," so just that kind of social media word-of-mouth awareness.

Also, finding services through other services – I think we've touched on that when we mentioned connectivity earlier – so that inter-organization collaboration when you have firing in the clinic and things like that, or a case manager is available that helps you connects to other services. I think that's a really popular way for youth and families to find services.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Cass – yeah, great points on collaboration between agencies, word of mouth, really utilizing those ways to get the word out and reach out to more LGBTQI+ young people.

Sarah, I'm curious from your experience if you have anything to add to this question about how are youth and young people and guardians able to find services.

[Sarah Rosso] Yeah, echoing what Cass was saying, we have to think about informal networks and building those relationships across non-traditional points of entry. So the more points of entry we have, the better. We can think about pulling in faith-based communities, pulling in medical providers, and all sorts of potential partner networks to share resources and information. Now, you have to make sure they're up-to-date; but all of those things are really important.

When we look at referrals, often we see that there can be single points of entry. When we *only* have those single points of entry, a staff referral from an HHS person or a health and human service provider, there's a lot of gaps there and a lot of missed opportunity. So don't underestimate how important it is to have those informal community-based – and as Cass said, word-of-mouth opportunities, social media groups, support groups for families. All of those things are really critical to share resources that are available in our communities.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Sarah – yeah, really great insights as well.

Amanda/Ethan, anything to add to this question?

[Amanda Cruce] Yeah, it just has me thinking...it is so isolating trying to find services. Services are often so siloed that if you're going and you have multiple issues, they want to send you to multiple agencies; or there's this one agency that's LGBTQ-friendly, but you also need these other things. There's not this idea that each person really still needs to be affirming as you're seeking services. People are intersectional, and they're not looking for just a referral to one type of service. They want to be accepted for what they're sitting across the desk from you for or on the phone with you for.

I've lived in multiple places with the youth that I fostered and adopted, and I think there's so many ways it can be done. But so long as it's not siloed and everyone's really working on that affirming piece, we make much better outcomes for the people we're working with.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Amanda – yeah, so the importance of all steps in the process – all people involved being affirming and being a resource for people who are seeking services.

I also heard you bring up intersectionality, so I'd like to ask a question on that: *Do LGBTQI+ young people with intersecting identities based on gender, race and ethnicity, age, ability, and other identities – what is something that human services can do to better support LGBTQI+ young people in their intersectionalities? Do folks with intersecting identities need different or additional supports?*

[Amanda Cruce] I guess I'll start, but I am not that intersecting person necessarily. I mean, we're all intersecting, right? I definitely have intersecting identities. But I think that it's important to the person that your working with and do what they need because each person comes with different expectations and

different needs. I think our biggest problem is when we're not listening to what those are – whether it's listening to the words or to the behaviors or how someone communicating with us what their needs are is when we get into the most trouble.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Amanda.

I know intersectionality is something we've talked a lot about in the young adult Steering Committee.

Cass or Ethan, do you want to add anything to this?

(Multiple voices)

[Ethan Westby] Sure—

[Cass Phanord] Oh, go ahead, Ethan.

[Ethan Westby] You can go – or, okay. So I previously worked in group homes, and the focus is person-centered. So person-centered can mean care that – it's complete empathy. It's you putting that person first and valuing their experience, valuing where they are in life. So some of the individuals that I worked with – some of them have autism, some of them are disabled in other ways, in a wheelchair. But it's meeting that person where they are and working with them to where they want to be. It's pretty much like what we were talking about. It's like meeting everybody where they are and appreciating that they made it this far, and they are coming to you for help and helping them get to where they want to go.

[Brittany Tabora] Cass, do you want to jump in?

[Cass Phanord] Yeah, sure, I think that considering intersection and intersecting identities, what we're trying to do plainly is trying to fill a discrepancy because certain marginalized populations – like certain people who live at specific intersections – have had fewer supports in the past. So I think it's definitely helped to think about concrete ways to kind of meet that space, that gap.

So I think that lower thresholds to entry for programs come to mind; for example, like maybe if a program has some kind of entry requirements that certain people of certain identities can have different or lower or fewer barriers to entry. Also maybe one-on-one support and having support be available – like support with paperwork or bureaucratic processes that can be really confusing and intimidating for young people. So those are definitely things that I think are good, concrete ideas for how to meet intersectional identities where they're at.

[Brittany Tabora] Yeah, definitely – thanks, Cass.

Thanks, Ethan.

Sarah and Alex, I'm curious about how your organizations think about intersectionality and what you're doing around that important topic.

[Alex Roque] At the Ali Forney Center, we create spaces where we bring together the intersecting identities of (inaudible) coworkers and clients that come to the work of the organization. We also create awareness around the intersection identities. We have a really big focus on our DEI work that transcends the entire agency. Similarly, we create those spaces and create events and create awareness. We also listen to the 1% of the voices in our care. So there are young people who represent just 1% of the intersecting identity that we have at the agency. We actually elevate that voice and make it equal to the other voices that have more community within the work.

So we really focus on ensuring that all folks – if they're not represented because of the limited opportunities for the intersectionality among our coworkers or among other clients, that they also at least have more access and more connection because of the limited representation they may have.

[Sarah Rosso] Then when we look at our work, it's important for our team and our staff and the folks who are facilitating and building services to not only just be representative across the many intersections of identities, but also making sure that there is space for young people to be involved in decision-making processes. So getting youth feedback and involvement and engagement, providing those coaching and leadership opportunities, are really important. We *have* to make sure that when we're doing this work, it is intersectional.

We have to make sure that when we're looking at our programs and when we're thinking about what Health and Human Service providers can do to support intersecting identities, we have to allow space for innovation; and we have to allow space for unique opportunities to emerge. Because if we continue with status quo and programs that have always existed or resources that have always existed, we'll get the results that we've always seen before. We *have* to be able to invest resources, provide support, and allow folks to lead who have the lived experiences and provide space for that to emerge in our work.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, everyone. Yeah, definitely hearing some great connections between your different insights in terms of meeting people where they are; really uplifting the voices of people who are in marginalized communities; and really taking into account the historical and systemic reasons why there are marginalized communities; and creating the opportunities to hear new ideas and innovations while all considering intersectionality.

So this next question, I'd like to shift gears a little bit and talk about some of the challenges that LGBTQI+ young people and their families face. So the question is: *What do you see as some of the unique challenges that LGBTQI+ young people and their families face?* Then, the second part is: *How can programs support those needs?*

[Alex Roque] For us in the work that we do, or in the limited work that we've done around family reunification and family supports, is we've really identified that homophobia and transphobia or LBGTQ homelessness is not an LBGTQ issue. It's not LBGTQ people who are rejecting their children, who are creating homophobic or transphobic environments; it's non-LBGTQ people. When you're looking to connect with those families to offer those supports, to my previous point, they are coming into spaces that are entirely LBGTQ or community spaces that are for the LBGTQ community at large and not community spaces that are for families that are looking to connect with their LBGTQ young people or looking to heal the damage they've done.

So I think one of the challenges is that there's this really awful dearth of support for families who are facing those struggles and the acceptance of those struggles and trying to build that connection. On the other side, as it relates to LBGTQ young people, in a place like New York City that is so affirming and so accepting and so LBGTQ-focused or centered, we still face this other identity that our young people have.

We work with unhoused LBGTQ youth. For us, you can be an LBGTQ provider, but you're not a homeless or a non-house provider. So that's another issue that LBGTQs face is once they're homeless, they are now singled out as not only being LGBTQ but also being homeless. Other LBGTQ services might be affirming for LGBTQ youth who have families and not unhoused young people, which is also very challenging. So that's the two sides of the spectrum for us.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Alex.

Amanda, I can see you nodding. Do you have anything to add to what Alex was talking about?

[Amanda Cruce]Yeah, everything Alex was saying was just *really* hitting home. I think it is really hard even as a gay family with gay youth to find those appropriate services. It becomes really difficult because of all of the homophobia and transphobia. It is difficult to find those unique spaces. You go to certain communities – and I think Allegheny County is one of those – because they find ways to create these safe spaces in different ways for families. But it is not an overarching thing. So I think the challenges we face, just even in all HHS systems, even in the school system of judgment, of lack of acceptances, makes it really difficult to seek out services.

I think the best thing to do is really training and holding workers accountable for what agencies expect. I know lots of agencies that have really amazing policies about how LGBTQ families and youth are treated, but that doesn't mean each staff member or each person that they hire believes that or follows through with that. So having clear standards, holding those standards up in very – I don't know – actionable ways could really help families feel safe and that they have a voice.

When things don't go well, who do you turn to – who do families turn to? Having that person be clearly identified, not just for your staff but for people seeking services, would really help change some of those fears.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Amanda.

Sarah, Ethan, Cass – oh, go ahead, Ethan.

[Ethan Westby] So I experienced this. I was homeless and didn't speak to my family.. So finally, I think the way we kind of made the most headway in this was through therapy. Therapy -- just having somebody that is there to hear both sides, is not there without motive or with anything, just to bring people together and to reach a place where there's some type of talking and some type of relationship. Starting small also, not getting everything done right away but small steps and being consistent. I found that that was very helpful in bringing me back to my family.

[Brittany Tabora] Sarah/Cass, anything to add?

[Cass Phanord] Yeah, I think that what Alexander was saying earlier really struck me – about needing to be intersectional essentially – like the fact that we are queer and needing other services in addition to support what that can be just like so overwhelming and services are so fragmented. I have experienced being sent all around trying to find support for just my current life situation, and it's so stressful.

That piece on a place for families I think is so important too and reminds me of this idea of like a third place that I think is really important. I think we've lost this third place – a place that's not home or work or for youths that might be school – like somewhere that is a place for connection, for community connection, for family connection. I'm thinking places like libraries or community centers. Really pouring into those third places, I think, is a way to support that unique need.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Cass.

So kind of related to this idea of a third place and also what Amanda was talking about with the importance of training, we've talked about how programs can help young people and families feel safer. I wanted to zoom out a little bit to the community level.

What roles can programs have in changing the structures in the communities surrounding LGBTQI+ young people and their families? What role do programs play in changing those structures in communities?

[Cass Phanord] I can speak a little on this. I think that what comes to mind first and foremost for me is trying to find community as alternatives to like carcerality – that just being things that are like jail or literally jail – alternatives to that, being really rooted in community care and how programs can support making those connections and fostering that. I think that collaboration with community members is really central to that. I heard Sarah mention that earlier – like faith leaders and other community leaders of that genre, like really connecting to them and making them known resources and alternatives for youth who are really vulnerable to experiencing things like mental health crises. Having the community be part of a safe alternative to that, I think, would be good and proactive.

Also, I definitely feel like education and continuing education could be a good protective factor against entering systems. So practice outreach for educational support and things like that I think is also an important piece there.

[Brittany Tabora] For sure.

Sarah or Alex, anything to add about the roles that programs have in changing the structures in communities?

[Sarah Rosso] Yeah, for us I think one of the key opportunities that we've had is to really think about getting into communities. I think the idea that we can have a one-stop shop or a one-location service is not accessible to families. We have to think about how we can build relationships within different communities. We have to think about how we embed prevention services here. So much of this is after the fact of something. We have to invest in communities to be able to provide support, and being innovative in that is really important.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Sarah – yeah, I definitely agree.

Amanda/Alex/Ethan – anything for this question about the role that programs play in changing structures in communities?

[Amanda Cruce] Yeah, I think just quickly when I'm thinking about ways of combatting homophobia/transphobia, I think it's so important. I see often that different HHS groups come and have tables at pride parades and really want to be visible in different pride communities. I think that's great. I'm definitely not saying stop that, but I'm also saying we also need to take that same message to other communities and show how supportive we are – not just in pride communities. I think that that often gets lost in translation.

So then you have families that are experiencing HHS don't necessarily know that the organization, the system, that they're working with is affirming. That gets lost, and it's harder to do the pushback when they haven't seen the narrative in every space that they're in, and kind of that consistent messaging across the board not just when you're in a pride community.

[Alex Roque] Yeah, and I think on the other side of that too is also what we're doing for young people in our care. We have a responsibility to also communicate those experiences and what we're seeing, right? I say that as it relates to the migrant crisis that we're experiencing. I'm saying that as it relates to the increase of clients that came into our care as a result of the 2016 presidential campaign. There's been a 20% increase in crimes year over year. We have to communicate that. We, as providers, have to also tell that story. There's a shift in our members that we can attach to hateful events in our community. I think it's important that we give voice to that, that we also represent information.

So this is more on the internal side. How we can give voice to the young people in our care is by also kind of sharing what changes were seeing or shifts we're seeing as it relates to current events in our world.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Alex.

So I know we talked a little bit already – I think, Sarah, you brought it up – about prevention. So I'd like to ask a question about that: *How can human service agencies help prevent the entry of LGBTQI+ young people into services, into systems, and ensure that the systems don't make LGBTQI+ people more vulnerable?*

[Alex Roque] You know, I have been beating this drum for over a decade. This is kind of a different, unique take or a different take on how we can protect young people. There are no systems that prosecute or address family rejection as it relates to homophobia or transphobia. If you abuse your child, if you don't send your child to school, if you deny your child food, that's considered child abuse; and there are systems that help those families. I'm not saying to be punitive. I'm saying when you identify there's

abuse, you are then able to support the family – it's identified in court. It's identified in the child protective systems.

I've been beating this drum that homophobia and transphobia is child abuse, and we need to recognize it as such. I think providers really need to take that on and give face and value to the detriment of homophobia and transphobia of family rejection. It's so vital that we take a stand – that we make our court system, that we push our systems to identify this as such. We had so many instances where young people have run away from their homes, have come into our care, and we've literally had to hand over a young person to their family in front of a child protective worker because they said that it's a personal family view – that homophobia and transphobia is a personal family view and that the child is not being abused although that child is being made to pray the gay away, is being told they are going to have HIV if they're gay, is being told really, really awful things.

I really think that providers who are seeking to represent LGBTQs have to really support a system's change on how systems address homophobia and transphobia. Right now, nothing happens to those families. Not one of the families whose young people are in our care make any headlines for kicking the young people out, for rejecting them, for denying them love, care, shelter or a home. If they were denying them food or denying them access to school or denying other things, there would be headlines. There would be prosecution. There would be court systems.

So I think there's a really big need for systems change around how systems see homophobia and transphobia. This is not a personal choice. I'm sorry, that's a big soapbox for me; and I really think it's a really big way to start a change to help these young people.

[Brittany Tabora] Yeah, thanks for that soapbox, Alex. It's really important. Yeah, thinking about the systems of homophobia and transphobia that surround why a lot of young people need to enter systems like this, getting to those root causes is very critical.

I'm curious, Ethan and Cass, do you have thoughts on this question about prevention?

[Cass Phanord] I do think, like I mentioned earlier, I think that education and continuing education can be really preventative. So I'd really like to see college prep support or testing support or just like transitional counseling because youth are so often in a state of transition, let alone queer youth. This is such a transitional age; so just support with that, I think, is so important.

Also, transportation support – I think that not having a safe place to get where you need to go can precede a lot of dangerous and unsafe situations for youth. So I think non-judgmental transportation support is also a really great idea – like shuttle services or even just access to public transportation vouchers, things like that.

[Ethan Westby] I would just like to add. So an example of this, I went to a Catholic university, the University of St. Thomas. So for a while, their history is Catholicism. It's very rigid in the Church. But then this past decade, they've been trying to reform and trying to change that. So recently, there's one of the biggest chapels in St. Paul; and they spent – they invested in it and built out a huge building underneath it – so like a basement – and then attached to it for people of all faiths, all identities, to go and have a safe space. But chapels tend to be – it's for Catholics. You go I there, you pray, you speak to the priest, and stuff like that. But it's not there for everybody to go and have a safe space to be able to – it's not preventing any fear. It's kind of imposing more of this fear. It's more of this, "You are different, so you're not welcome in this space." My school actually said, "No, everybody's welcome." They spent millions of dollars to make this, and they didn't have to. But that's just one way of connecting – trying to connect, trying to make a change so that everybody feels welcome, everybody's a part of it.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Ethan.

Amanda/Sarah, anything to add on this question about prevention?

[Amanda Cruce] I think just a lot about the value of peer support and the value that parents need in this peer support. It is not easy having teenagers of any type, right? Raising teens is just really hard. If there was more access to different types of peer support to help talk through challenge, look at different areas and issues of homophobia and transphobia, I think that it could really help with prevention. For a vast majority of the youth that's spent time in our care, I think throughout 11 years we've fostered maybe 60 youth. Most of them were LGBTQ. Most of them went home after six months of us working and talking with their parents and helping them – I don't know – just to work through it all, the homophobia, or see that their child still had an amazingly bright future and it was not an all-encompassing part of their identity. It was just *a* part of who they are. I think that that could have happened so much earlier for a lot of those families if there had been available services, available parents they could have talked to, and just different ways of talking through difficult teenage times.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Amanda – yeah, so I mean definitely hearing a lot about the support around prevention that's needed at several different levels – around like what Alex was talking about, addressing systemic issues like homophobia and transphobia, what Amanda was saying around the peer support for families, what Cass was also saying kind of the concrete needs that youth needed to get safely from place to place so they don't become in unsafe environments. So, yeah, those are all great points. So I'd like to turn to a question that we've received, and it relates to a conversation that we were having earlier about supporting families and supporting of people where they're at and where they're coming from or where they're at. The question is: *Do any of you have advice for affirming agencies who live in communities who aren't as supportive of LBGTQ+ identities – especially in places where there are not multiple agencies for individuals to be referred to? So there's just not as many agencies, not as many resources.*

[Alex Roque] For us, we've actually taken that as a problem to solve or a problem to help. We are currently working with 50 new partners across the United States, and we're actually operating in 12 countries. So there are resources available if you can't find support through your local LBGTQ center or through your local LGBTQ groups – organizations like the Ali Forney Center. A few others, like PFLAG, the national organizations have local chapters. GLSEN is another one. So there are resources; and I think connecting with the nearest and most accessible LGBT agency is a really good way or a conduit to begin a pathway to receiving LBGT support sin your local community. You're not alone, and you can definitely be an agent of change in your community when you're facing a dearth or a desert of LGBT support services.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Alex. Cath/Ethan/Sarah/Amanda, what would you say about this question? When there's a lack of resources or agencies, what advice would you give to the agencies who are trying to serve LGBTQI+ young people?

[Cass Phanord] I think connects to agencies that are rooted in online and remote – like just the immediate example that comes to my mind is the small organization IRA. We mostly do work online, so we can connect to anybody anywhere in theory; and we're not the only org or grassroots org of that genre. So connecting to grassroots organizations is great in general, but also specifically ones that do online and remote outreach are really great options.

[Brittany Tabora] Thank you, Cass. Yeah, I think that's really important, especially given that we are still living in a pandemic; and virtual services is still much more accessible for a lot of people and really critical.

[Amanda Cruce] I think also staying the course – stay as visible as you can. Attend lots of different meetings. Even if you're the only one solely doing the work, it really matters having that one organization at the table. I think it can make a big change. I started fostering in Florida, where there was definitely a lack of really openly-affirming agencies. But that doesn't mean it wasn't there. It just wasn't every person. So I think staying firm, staying true to that mission and that goal and making it as clear as you can, and helping other people adapt and change policy over time. It's definitely a long game and not a short game.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Amanda. Yeah, I feel relates to the points that were made earlier about what can programs do on a structural level or a community level in terms of changing the communities that surround LGBTQI+ young people and their families.

[Ethan Westby] Sorry.

[Brittany Tabora] Go ahead, Ethan.

[Ethan Westby] I think listening is very important. Just be open to it -- even if you might not agree, even if you might not support it or stuff like that. Just being able to listen and to see somebody else's perspective of where they're coming from – that is very important. If there is any change, somebody might think about something because of early intersection identities that I might never think about in a million years. So it's important to listen.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Ethan – yeah, I feel like that is so closely tied with what you were talking about earlier about the importance of empathy – really of trying to understand where someone is coming from and empathize with them. Yeah, so thanks for that point. Another question that we got is: *Do people know of some comprehensive online resources that are centered around LGBTQI+ youth that we can utilize or even about programs or families that youth could utilize when they're thinking about developing programming, staff training, staff structures?* I know that one that we've talked about on this project is Youth.gov, which is associated with ASPE. So that's definitely one to check out. But, yeah, wondering what other people know of or would recommend.

[Alex Roque] Sure, there's a number of online resources. GLSEN is one that has for young people in schools -- communities and schools and schools that wish to build GSAs. But it's beyond the GSAs. It's actually community building around the school if the school is an accepted GSA. Or if the family doesn't want to go into GSA, PFLAG has resources and supports for families. True Colors Fund, Cindi Lauper's program, has a really fantastic online resource that's really education and community-change based. Born This Way Foundation, Lady Gaga's foundation, has a host of really important mental health certification programs, peer-led support programs, channel kindness advocacy programs, storytelling programs. As was mentioned earlier by Ethan, mental health is so important. There's a really big one through Born This Way, and even the Judd Foundation and NIMH on the teen mental health toolkit. So those collectively, at least from my experience, are very helpful. I've actually sent our national partners that way. Also, the Ali Forney Center has as it relates to unhoused young people and helping communities build around that issue. The Ali Forney Center also has a supporting center online.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Alex, yeah, those are – so GLSEN, Born This Way Foundation, and also Ali Forney's resources on housing. Ghose are all really great, and I definitely encourage everybody to look into those. What about others? Are there other online resources? Even if you have suggestions or tips about how a young person might go about trying to find online resources, I think that would also be helpful to hear your perspectives on.

[Sarah Rosso] I think for youth who need online resources, you can look to – in addition to all of those that Alex shared – the Trevor Project and the National SOGIE Center has lots of the practice information that folks can take a look at. But I would also say that when you're looking at organizations and what organizations can do to build self-competency in programs and other things, don't forget that national organizations and online resources are really wonderful. But there's a really rich and important opportunity in building community locally with folks who are around you doing the work. That can really help you in your programming. Even if you're in an area that doesn't have as many resources, there are folks around. So find and build that community and bring those folks in because that can really help and enrich those programs and staff supports that you're looking to build.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Sarah. Cass, I'm wondering actually if you have anything to add on that point, knowing the work that you do in your community with Lavender Space – to Sarah's point around really utilizing and leveraging the support and community that might exist locally?

[Cass Phanord] Yeah, so I think that with the organizations that I see locally, a lot of them are again really fragmented. We all seem to offer different things. So collaborating is really important. We connect a lot with Facebook community groups, which I know sounds very niche and specific but is like a really, really popular way that people will discover new programs – at least in my area. I'm in Philadelphia, but I've also seen that in other areas – like St. Louis I see that a lot or like Miami, I've also worked there. So I think that as strange as it is, really getting on social media and putting it out there in as many on-the-ground ways that you're doing things is really important. Sorry, I lost my train of thought a little bit; but I hope that begins to answer the question.

[Brittany Tabora] Yeah, definitely, I think it also relates to the important point you made earlier about really leveraging online and virtual platforms and channels that exist and how that can be really accessible for a lot of folks. Yeah, I mean, I'm part of a lot of Facebook groups where I've found great resources in community, so definitely hear that. Do people have any other thoughts on this question about online resources, either for organizations or for youth? Oh yeah, Amanda, please go ahead.

[Amanda Cruce] Yeah, my thoughts were all about organizations and how do we view (inaudible) restructure and think about becoming more affirming. There's a couple different programs I'm aware of, and I'm sure there's many, many more. The Human Rights Campaign has a resource where people can become affirming organizations. They look at policies. I think the Child Welfare League of America has a handbook. It's a little bit older, but it looks at how does your organization become more affirming. I think that that's just as important as making sure that the youth have everything. How do we make sure that our staff and our policies and our procedures are just as matched and ready for this so that we have those – I don't know – teeth and standards that are really clearly laid out so that we're treating people with respect.

[Brittany Tabora] Yeah, and I feel like that also relates to the point you were making earlier about not only having training and education for staff, but also kind of the structures and policies in place so that staff are able to actually implement and practice those important things and be held accountable to the expectations for serving young people and families.

[Cass Phanord] If I could just add one more thing – oh, goodness, I lost my train of thought as soon as I started (laughing). Oh, okay, I remember now. Feedback – I think that community feedback is so important. For example, Lavendar Space – we try to always have feedback forms available and always be asking for community feedback, asking the community what they want whether that be through just a Google form or through asking through our Facebook group what people want to see, and really actually trying to implement that feedback as quicky as possible. Because I do think that sometimes feedback with a slow turnaround can not feel as affirming if that makes sense. So really trying to make it clear – like we hear that, and we're going to work on it in a timely fashion -- I think is really important. Also for the people we work with too – so if I have volunteers helping me with something, I also want to hear how they felt working and if something would have made their jobs easier. Because I know that I might miss something that they know because they did more direct work, for example.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Cass – yeah, that was definitely a theme that came up in the key informant interviews and the environmental scan – like the importance of gathering feedback and involving youth. And also, yeah, involving and engaging staff and their own experiences and then using that feedback to improve services. So, yeah, I know that we are coming near to the end of our webinar today. So I'd like to ask one last question and would love to hear from everybody: *Are there any other emerging or innovative practices that you're aware of that programs are currently using to support LGBTQI+ young people that we haven't talked about today and you think is just really critical for people to know?*

[Ethan Westby] This is Ethan. I worked part-time for the Youth and AIDS Project in the Twin Cities. One important thing that they did – well, I also did -- was going to homeless shelters and giving free HIV testing and also talking about PrEP and giving information about PrEP. I think just meeting people where they are – it's hard for people to come to you and come to your organization. So I think it's good for them to go out. Does that answer...?

[Brittany Tabora] Yes, I think one of the things I'm taking from that is just the importance of going out into communities, doing the education services, especially around sexual health. Is that right, Ethan?

[Ethan Westby] Yes.

[Brittany Tabora] Got it, okay. What about others, what are your emerging or innovative practices that people should really know about?

[Alex Roque] Yeah, we have a couple. One is a direct cash transfer for unhoused individuals where we are linking them, our clients, to cash without strings attached. There's a lot of data on this in places where this has helped, particularly in the UK where under Prime Minister Tony Blair's time in office, they actually reduced homelessness by 90%. Direct cash transfers was one of the key programs around it -- so direct cash transfers, trusting young people and clients with supports. Another approach that we've had in addition to having voices of young people at the table, hiring our clients to be on our staff and also to be on our board, we've taken a step further. We actually have our clients go through our program and actually provide concrete feedback and sit with me and our leadership on changes to make to the organization. So it's beyond the hiring and the giving voice and the representation. It's also giving power. Actually taking actionable steps on the recommendations that come from the groups are some of the key things that we're doing -- so active listening and responding with giving the young person power.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Alex. I know that I said I would like to hear from everyone, but I would also just love to be conscious of time. So maybe if one or two more people want to give their thoughts – what are emerging and innovative practices that people should know about? Amanda, I think I saw you unmute.

[Amanda Cruce] I did, but I didn't want to be the only one.

[Brittany Tabora] No, please.

[Amanda Cruce] I think parent networks are a really big thing right now in a lot of the Child Welfare field, and a couple places are doing it very specifically to make sure that families with LGBTQ youth are connected with parents who previously have removed children with that identity. I think the outcomes are just astronomical. It's so hard because it's such a small number, so it's really hard to quantify or write about. But we're really seeing families do better, and that's the goal.

[Brittany Tabora] Thanks, Amanda. Thank you to everyone so much for participating in this panel. There are so many great insights. I hope everyone listening in was able to learn something new about how human service agencies can better support LGBTQI+ young people and their families. So, yeah, thank you everybody. With that, I'll turn it back over to Rayven for our closeout.

[Rayven Hoyte] All right, on behalf of all the panelists who attended to our attendees today, we thank all of you for joining us today. We hope that this conversation provided a helpful overview of practices that Human Services programs are using to more effectively support LGBTQI+ young people. Our panelists and the project team took a comprehensive approach to understanding emerging practices. This includes sharing practices at the community organization level and the individual level. We also shared practices that are beneficial to others who are interested in conducting collaborative research with young adults or those with lived experience with the topic being research. If you would like to learn more about our work, we will be posting our issue brief on ASPE's website towards the end of the month. The Steering Committee helped to develop an infographic that will also be posted on ASPE's website. Finally, we will post and send out today's webinar recording to webinar attendees when they are available. Next slide. So one more time, thank you again. If you have questions about the Emerging Practices Project, please reach out to the subject matter experts at ASPE, Kaitlyn Jones or Laura Chadwick. Thank you, everyone, for coming to our panel. It was a pleasure having you all.