

Achieving Permanency for Foster Youth Who Cannot Return Home



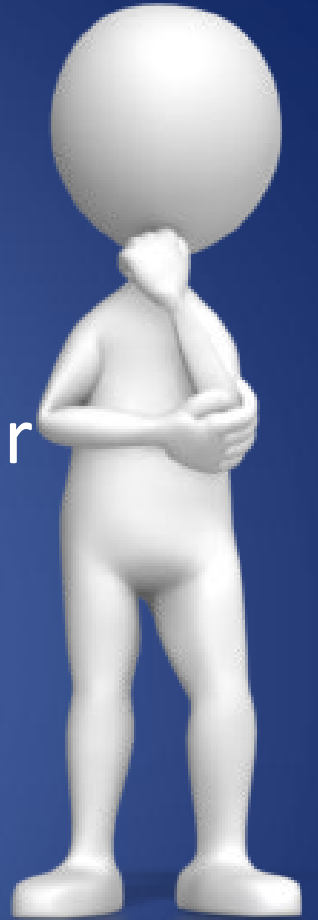
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What

Permanency Is:

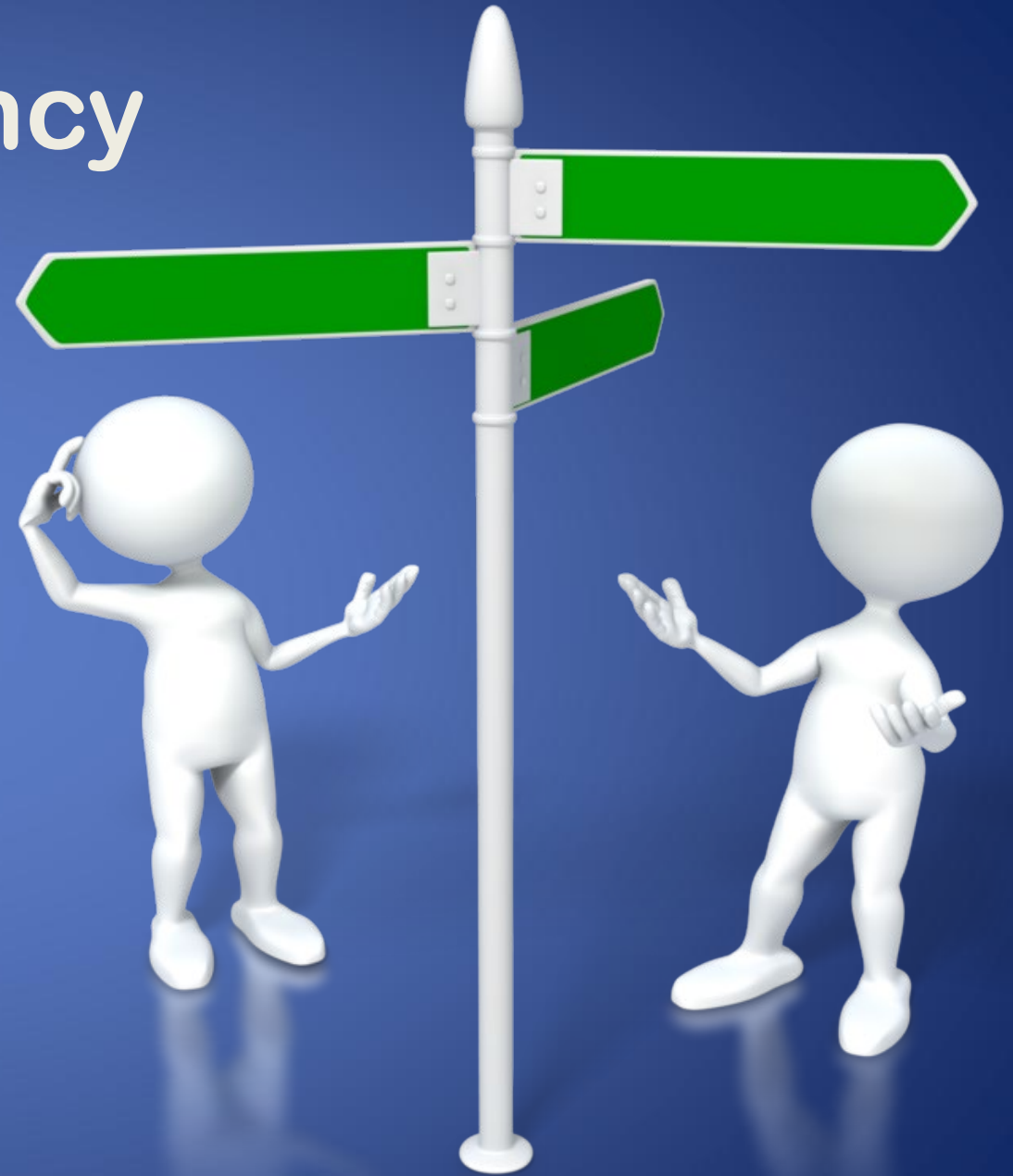
A permanent connection to a supportive, committed adult who takes on a parental role in a foster youth's life and provides:

- A safe, stable and secure parenting relationship
- Love
- Unconditional commitment
- Lifelong support in which the youth has the opportunity to maintain contacts with important persons including brothers & sisters



Forms of Permanency

- Reunification
- Adoption
- Tribal Customary Adoption
- Guardianship
- Permanent Placement with a Fit & Willing Relative
- Relational Permanence





Statutory Preference for Permanent Plan

- Reunification
- Adoption / Tribal Customary Adoption (as appropriate)
- Legal Guardianship
- Permanent Placement with a Fit & Willing Relative
- Continuation in Foster with a plan for reunification, adoption / tribal customary adoption, guardianship or permanent placement with fit & willing relative, or for youth age 16 or above – APPL

Why

*"The greatest disease
is to be nobody to anybody"*



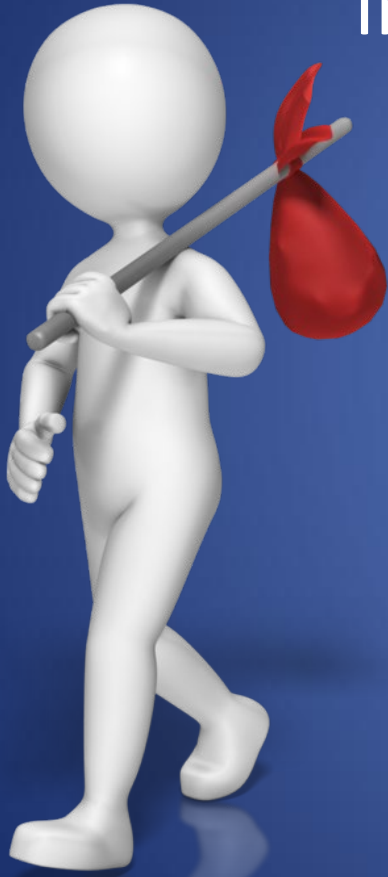
Mother Teresa

Aging Out Alone – Outcomes are Poor

Increased risk of:

- Incarceration; food, housing, and income insecurity;
- Unemployment;
- Educational deficits;
- Receipt of public assistance
- Mental health disorders

Within 2 years 50% are homeless, incarcerated, or dead





Impact of Placement Instability on Behavior

- Research confirms that placement instability, independent of a child's problems at entry into FC increases the probability of behavior problems by 50%-63%

- Rubin DM, O'Reilly AL, Luan X, Localio AR. The impact of placement stability on behavioral well-being for children in foster care. *Pediatrics*. 2007;119(2):336–344. doi:10.1542/peds.2006-1995

See also

- [Aarons GA](#)¹, [James S](#), [Monn AR](#), [Raghavan R](#), [Wells RS](#), [Leslie LK](#) *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2010 Jan;49(1):70-80.

- [Lockwood KK](#)¹, [Friedman S](#)², [Christian CW](#)² *Curr Probl Pediatr Adolesc Health Care*. 2015 Oct;45(10):306-15. doi: 10.1016/j.cppeds.2015.08.005. Epub 2015 Sep 26



AND... It's the Law - WIC 706.5

- Case plan must show reasonable efforts to safely return the minor to the minor's home or to complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the minor.
- If 16 or above & in APPLA must make intensive and ongoing efforts to return the minor to the parent, place for adoption, or establish a legal guardianship as appropriate.
- Describe barriers to achieving permanent plan and efforts made by department to address those barriers.

Permanency is Possible

A Moral & Fiscal Imperative

- We know how to achieve permanent families for “hard-to-place” children, teens, and nonminor dependents.
- Keeping these children in foster care is very expensive and results in grim adult outcomes.
- The dollars saved by moving these children and youth into permanent families far outweigh the cost of effective child-centered specialized permanency services.
 - They can pay for themselves, often in the same fiscal year, and free up funds for other critical county needs.



Achieving Permanency for Foster Youth Who Cannot Return Home

- Margot C. Quick, Senior Deputy Probation Officer, Sacramento County Probation Department
- Jeff Levasseur, Deputy Probation Officer, Sacramento County Probation Department
- Rachel Stahl, Senior Probation Officer, Tuolumne County Probation Department

HOW

Best Practices plus

- address systemic barriers,
- shift beliefs,
- instill what-ever-it-takes culture throughout organization



HOW

Seek First to Understand

- Link Between Loss & Behavioral Issues
 - Emphasize trauma-informed practice
- Trauma impact on structure and function of brain
 - Consider neurological capacity for accountability
- Strength-focused treatment improves positive change

Research* shows that change is caused by:

- ✓ 55% strength
- ✓ 30% relationship
- ✓ 15% hope and expectations

*Dr Barry Duncan



Know Your Youth

- Undeniable link between child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency. (Widom (1989), and others)
- ~ 57% of youth in the probation child welfare system were once served in the child welfare system due to abuse and neglect. The statistic is much higher if cases with numerous unfounded allegations are included. (Peer Review case with 27)
- Most have (and continue to have) lots of loss



Watch for Barrier Beliefs

It's not true that:

- No one wants to take on a teenager
- Teens in foster care don't want families
- Teens in foster care are too troubled,
- The teen is not stable enough for a family
- You can't place with grandma – the apple doesn't fall far from the tree..
- Paternal relatives don't even know the child exists, you can't ask them
- That person has a professional relationship with the youth... they can't



a family is nowhere

- Are you a permanency champion or a permanency denier?
- A family is... Nowhere?
 - No where? Or Now here
- Examine your beliefs and step up or get out of the way

—



Engage

- Make youth fully involved partners in directing their own permanency planning & decision making.
 - Make sure they know what permanency is, how to achieve it;
 - Unwrap the “no”; Move at their speed;
 - Address their fears, concerns and attitudes about building relationships and permanency;
 - Involve them in identifying, connecting with permanency resources, including family and others they find important;
 - Provide prep that enables them to advocate for themselves
 - Communication with them is honest, direct, & respects them as true partners



Be Sensitive and Aware

- The hurtful words of legal terminology is as salt to the open wound of loss (*TPR, death certificate, whereabouts unk.*)
 - Due to lacking essential, supportive and caring relationships, the good feelings hurt, are foreign and uncomfortable and feel like they won't last, especially if they do wrong....so they are ready to run when things get tough. (Casey)



Unwrap the “No”

- Oftentimes they will reject before they get rejected
 - They may display sabotaging behavior to create distance, test relationship, hurry up the “inevitable”.
 - Some youth never unpack ... so they can be ready on a dime to leave. Anticipated feelings of another loss is too painful.



Copy the Best – a small sample

- LA County Probation Dept, CA
- Family Builders, Oakland
- Destination Family Youth Permanency Program – Sacramento, CA
- KIDSAVE Weekend Miracles, CA
- You Gotta Believe – New York, NY
- Ampersand Families – St. Paul, MN



Service Delivery

- Develop Relationship with the Youth
- Locate and Engage Permanent Connections for the Youth
- Youth Specific Recruitment
- Develop the Permanent Families
- Sustain the Permanent Families



What Works

Most achieve permanency with someone already in their life circle

- Help youth identify connections – current or earlier
- Mine the case files
- Use family finding & engagement
- Use people finding & engagement
- Build / mend relationships
- Provide “permanency-competent” support



Some Best Practices Used

- Family Finding and Engagement
- Darla Henry's 3-5-7 Model
- Denise Goodman's Recruitment Model
- "Family Bound " Prepping Teens for Permanency
- Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy
- Trauma Focused Cognitive Therapy
- ARC skill building curriculum for foster and resource families

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/arc-reflections-trauma-training-for-foster-parents-and-caregivers/>



Lessons Learned

- Best practices are not enough: Must address systemic barriers, shift beliefs, instill what-ever-it-takes culture throughout organization
- Programs with external partners yield best results
- Involve judiciary and attorneys early
- Make the youth “real” to potential families
- Provide pre- and post-adoption/permanency support to families
- Permanency best practices have double bottom line:
 - Improved permanency outcomes
 - Fiscal savings
- Support of “electeds” for fiscal investments key to driving high Return on Investment



Whatever it Takes: Let's Get Crazy With It!!

(appreciation to Lisa Campbell-Motton, LA Co Probation, for sharing!)

- Remove the term “Sex Offender” and return the child home with services and supervision (Juan)
 - Transgender youth ?—surround them with love and acceptance and place them where they feel comfortable
 - Provide incentives for churches/synagogues to visit a child every weekend
 - Increase use of host weekend families—pay them to provide family life for our kids for the weekend to prepare them for a family
 - Put youth on Electronic Monitoring until they can build a supportive network
 - Create an after hours team that will “hang out” with CSEC youth through the night hours!
- What's your crazy idea?? It just might work!!**
- Our kids don't have time for our red tape and politics!**

AB 1006 (2017)

- Defines Specialized Permanency Services. (WIC 16501(a)(8))
- Requires all members of a CFT to be provided with written or electronic information on specialized permanency services. (WIC 16501.1(d)(2)(B)(ii))
- Requires case plan documentation of the specialized permanency services used or, if not used, why not. (WIC 16501.1(g)(15)(A&B))
- Requires written information be given to prospective adoptive parents or legal guardians regarding the importance of working with mental health providers that have specialized adoption clinical training and experience & a description of what the family should look for when choosing an adoption- competent mental health professional. (WIC 371 & 16119)



Specialized Permanency Services Defined



- Services to assist a child or nonminor dependent achieve a permanent family through reunification, adoption, legal guardianship, or other lifelong connection to caring adults, including at least one adult who will provide a permanent, parent-like relationship for the child or nonminor dependent.
- For children with case plan is for permanent placement or supportive transition to adulthood.
- Services are **designed for and with** the child to address the child's history of trauma, separation, and loss.

Specialized Permanency Services May Include:

- (A) Medically necessary mental health services, as needed to ameliorate impairments in significant areas of life functioning that may reduce the likelihood of the child or nonminor dependent achieving a permanent family.
- (B) Other services designed to address the child's or nonminor dependent's history of trauma, grief, loss, stigma, and rejection that reduce the likelihood of the child or nonminor dependent achieving a permanent family.
- (C) Permanency support core services, as appropriate to achieve, stabilize, and sustain the child or nonminor dependent in a permanent family.
- (D) Services designed to prepare the identified permanent family to meet the child's or nonminor dependent's needs, set appropriate expectations before and after permanency is achieved, and stabilize the placement.



Medi-Cal &
Specialty Mental
Health Services



IV-E,
Realignment,
Realignment
Growth, ASIST



As defined in
CCR



IV-E,
Realignment,
Realignment
Growth, ASIST &
Medi-Cal where
needed

Required: Written or Electronic Info Provided to CFT Members

Why

- Most CFT members – including professionals – have little knowledge about the effectiveness of specialized permanency services.

Why

- If CFT members do not know about them they will not recommend them for the child or nonminor dependent.

How

- **WIC 16501.1** requires CDSS to develop information describing services and activities, including specialized permanency services, shown to be effective in achieving and sustaining permanency for all children, youth, and nonminor dependents.

How

- CDSS will develop and disseminate the documentation



Required Case Plan Documentation



- For children in care 3 years or more and with case plan permanency goal is adoption or legal guardianship, or APPLA.



- Case plan documentation must include:
 - Specialized Permanency Services Used, and
 - If they have not been used, documentation requires explanation of why not.

Required Information on Adoption-Competent Clinical Services

- Prospective adoptive parents and guardians must be provided written info on importance of working with mental health providers with specialized training & experience in adoption clinical issues **AND** what to look for when choosing a therapist.
- Info is to be provided at the time of application to adopt, when the court orders a dependent child or ward placed for adoption or appointed a legal guardian, and immediately prior to finalization of the adoption decree.
- CDSS has developed a brochure to give to the families

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/FMUForms/M-P/PUB511.pdf?ver=2019-05-14-110438-993>



Finding a Competent Therapist

Tips for Adoptive and
Guardianship Families

Asking for Help
Is a Strength

CDSS

CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF



Permanency Services: Resources

- [Guide for the Finding a Competent Therapist](#) – CDSS Tips for Adoptive and Guardianship Families
- [Funding Youth Permanency](#) – A County Guide to Funding Child-Centered Specialized Permanency Services for Youth in Foster Care
- [Somewhere to Turn](#) – Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Adoptive and Guardianship Families
- [A Guide to Permanency Options for Youth](#), Alameda Co DCFS
- [FFTA Webinar - Is it "Bad Behavior" or a Brain Issue?](#) June 12, 11 AM
- [Destination Family Youth Permanency Program](#) – Sierra Forever Families
- [Family Builders](#)
- [KIDSAVE Weekend Miracles](#)