

RHEPCON23

THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE SYSTEMS

(Re)Imagining healthy sexual development
for youth in foster care

RHEP
for Foster Youth

THE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EQUITY PROJECT FOR FOSTER YOUTH (RHEP) BRINGS TOGETHER YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE AND THE AGENCIES THAT SERVE THEM TO NORMALIZE, SUPPORT, AND PROMOTE THE BODILY AUTONOMY AND HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE.

AGENDA

9:00A-9:10A

Youth Artistic offering and welcome
Jon Freret & Cindy Cruz

9:10A-10:30A

Main Stage Speaker:
Dr. Khiara M. Bridges- Professor of Law at UC Berkeley
Youth Q&A panel- RHEP Youth Advisory Board Members

10:30A-10:45A

Break

10:45A-11:45A

Breakout Session 1

11:45A-12:00P

Break

12:00P-1:00P

Breakout Session 2

1:00P-1:10P

Break

1:10P-1:15P

Youth Spoken Word
Parker

1:15P-1:30P

RHEP honors Supervisor Hilda L. Solis

1:30P-2:35P

Thinking Outside the Systems Lunch panel
Dr. Katherine Gardner- Lead Physician of Gender Health Program
Gabriel Maldonado- Founder and CEO of TruEvolution
Sarah Ferguson- Birth Worker and Advocate

2:35P-2:50P

Break

2:50P-3:50P

Breakout Session 3

3:50P-4:00P

Break

4:00P-5:00P

Breakout Session 4

MAINSTAGE SESSIONS

Morning Session:

The Impact of Dobbs on Reproductive Health and Youth in Care

Dr. Khiara M. Bridges will detail the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision and its impact on the greater landscape of reproductive health, especially for youth in foster care. Dr. Bridges will apply an intersectional lens to sexual health and reproductive rights by analyzing how race can impact sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

Lunch Session: "Thinking Outside of the Systems" How Culturally Specific Services Impact Youth

This panel will spotlight various programs and services that are available to communities that have historically been underserved. The panel will feature Dr. Katherine Gardner, Lead Physician of Gender Health Program; Gabriel Maldonado, Founder and CEO of TruEvolution; Sarah Ferguson, birthworker and reproductive advocate and a panel of youth with lived experience in the child welfare system to discuss the importance of specialized sexual and reproductive health programming for underserved communities.

Confidentiality Disclaimer:

We want to create safe and comfortable spaces for discussion. Please do not record or photograph. Some workshops will be recorded and available on the platform for a month after the event as will Q&A's. Some workshops are not being recorded at the request of the speaker. Please honor those who wish not to share.

BREAKOUT SESSION 1

10:45A- 11:45A

Foster Youth Mental Health: Current Landscape and Accessing Medi-Cal Services

Carly Myers, Nancy Lam, Dana Paycao & Rachel Velcoff Hults

This session will provide an overview of the mental health of foster youth and former foster youth in California, focusing on current trends in mental wellbeing and how youth can access mental health services through California's Medicaid program ("Medi-Cal"). We will present data highlighting trends in youth mental health; and we will discuss what Medi-Cal mental health services are available, how youth can access them, and recent reforms that make it easier to access care.

Abortion and Gender Affirming Care: How do Recent Changes in Laws Impact Foster Youth Access to Care?

Luciana Svidler and Rebecca Gudeman

The recent overturning of Roe v. Wade has pushed reproductive health rights to the forefront of health and political discourse. In addition, some states are waging an attack on trans youth and their families by trying to limit access to gender-affirming care. Even before these changes, youth in care faced additional barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive care. This workshop will review the landscape of newly enacted laws and proposed legislation impacting access to abortion and gender-affirming care across the country. We will talk about the specific implications of these laws on healthcare access for youth in care and how best to support youth access to the services and education they want and need.

"Crisis Pregnancy Centers": How to Help Youth Make Informed Decisions about Their Care

Dr. Andrea Swartzendruber, Dr. Danielle Lambert, Autumn Taylor, Barbara Facher & Mara Ziegler

Crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) are anti-abortion organizations that target young people. Many engage in misleading advertising, portraying themselves as medical clinics and appearing to offer health services that they actually oppose, such as abortion and contraception. The centers pose risk by providing inaccurate health information and failing to adhere to medical and ethical practice standards. Workshop attendees will learn how CPCs operate and how to help young people make informed choices and find safe care

BREAKOUT SESSION 1

10:45A- 11:45A

Reproductive Justice: Early Defense of Young Parents in Foster Care

Kaveh Landsverk and Ebony Porter

Children's Law Center of California's Pre-Filing Representation Project aims to keep families together by providing young and soon-to-be parents with the resources and support they need to thrive. In this workshop, we will discuss our experience developing a pre-petition representation project dedicated to young parents in foster care. Through the use of selected case studies and relevant research, we will consider how early defense projects like ours fit into struggles for reproductive justice and equity.

Body Image & Stereotypes in Media: A Conversation on Body Positivity

Miyana Evans and Lonnell Schuler

Get Smart B4U Get Sexy is a comprehensive sex education program that provides prevention and intervention resources for youth and young adults particularly those who are African American, Black, girls, in foster care systems, and/or at high risk for sexually transmitted infections. Join our session for a discussion on body positivity as we investigate "Body Image & Stereotypes In Media." The goal of this session is to unpack the impact of media and highlight how we can empower our community to outsmart influences on how we see ourselves.

BREAKOUT SESSION 2

12:00P-1:00P

It Takes a Village, but Where do I Start?

Dayna Freier and Alexa Weishaar

There are many moving parts within the foster care system and knowing where we stand can sometimes be hard to identify. Fostering UNITY will look at three layers of the system to identify how our impact has a ripple effect and how our services can positively impact our youth in care. The goal? Bridging the gap within foster care so that our youth have a strong, inter-connective network that supports their health, well-being, and growth.



What are Youth Saying about Sexual and Reproductive Health? Results from our Youth Survey

Luciana Svidler and Rebecca Gudeman

In 2019 and 2021, the Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth surveyed a representative sample of Los Angeles County youth in foster care to understand how they receive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services. The study also asked about child welfare workers' roles in providing SRH information and services, shedding light on implementation of California's Foster Youth Sexual Health Education Act (SB 89), which was passed in 2017. In this workshop, attendees will learn about the results from the two surveys of youth including where they get sexual health information, how they access care, as well as barriers that they faced. We will also highlight differences in results based on age, gender, sexual orientation or racial or ethnic identity. Attendees will learn about the role that social workers have played in ensuring that Los Angeles County youth in foster care receive the care and support mandated by legislation. The presentation will provide opportunities for discussion around what results may mean and what these results may suggest for future research and next steps.

Shifting From Trauma-informed to Trauma-responsive Engagement

Theresa Reed

Being trauma-informed is the first tool needed to engage with foster youth. Knowing and doing are not synonymous. To aid youth in their healthy sexual development, we need to be trauma-responsive doers. Learn how to put this knowledge into action by being responsive versus reactionary.

BREAKOUT SESSION 2

12:00P-1:00P

Built to Last: Creating Nurturing and Thriving Spaces for Young People

Steph Zapata

Attend this session to challenge and define support and care through radical intentionality and vulnerability. A Thriving Space is needed if we want our young people to live beyond survival. Steph will guide participants from the path of unlearning colonial notions of safety traditionally centered on action/accomplishment, to understanding the profound impact of a feeling-centered approach. Here are your tools to create a space where youth come into awareness and relation with their own emotional consciousness.

Reimagining YOUTH and Reproductive Justice

Amelia Torres, Elia Garcia, Mariela Vasquez & Luisa Ruiz

Young parents are part of the fabric of our communities and we recognize that systemic issues such as: immigration, access to healthcare and education, and housing can negatively impact the wellbeing of young families. Additionally, we recognize that people's perceptions of young parents directly affects whether or not young people have access to the support and resources they need to thrive. Join us as we discuss how CLRJ is creating narrative shifts around youth sexuality and young families.



BREAKOUT SESSION 3

2:50P-3:50P

Guaranteed Income During Pregnancy to Advance Reproductive Justice: The Abundant Birth Project

Dr. Anu Manchikanti Gomez and Jessica Allen

The Abundant Birth Project (ABP) is the first guaranteed income program for pregnant people in the U.S. Designed in partnership with community, ABP provides \$1000 monthly to Black and Pacific Islander pregnant women and birthing people in San Francisco, CA, no strings attached. Lessons learned from our community-driven program development and evaluation process have important implications for future guaranteed income programs that aim to promote economic, racial, and reproductive justice.

Supporting Youth Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation Through Reproductive Experiences

Maria Contreras, Alia Dewees, Angelica Zuniga & Chelsey Holzer

This session will provide an understanding of the needs of youth experiencing commercial sexual exploitation who are also experiencing pregnancy, childbirth, parenting and who are seeking other reproductive care. Lived experience experts will share practical tips to understand how trauma may manifest and how service providers can and should continue to support youth through these experiences.

New Medi-Cal Services to Support Reproductive and Sexual Health for Foster Youth and Former Foster Youth: Full Spectrum Doula Care and Community Health Workers

Amy Chen, Jasmine Young, Andrea Mackey & Shene Bowie

Please join us for a two-part panel on Medi-Cal coverage of full spectrum doula care and community health workers. The first part of the panel will share information about these two new services and how they can benefit foster youth and former foster youth. The second part of the panel will be a moderated discussion with Shene Bowie, a doula, and Andrea Mackey, a community health worker, to hear from them both directly about these services.



BREAKOUT SESSION 3

2:50P-3:50P

Incorporating Ancestral Knowledge and Practices in Sex Ed Conversations

Ceci Martinez and Dr. Franchesca Ocasio

Like everything in the world around us, sex education is informed by white supremacy and the lasting impacts of colonization. As sexual health educators, we are uniquely positioned to offer culturally relevant information to include the experiences of systemically excluded communities. Join us for an interactive conversation around cultural knowledge and practices that can be incorporated into sex-ed conversations. None of us have all the solutions, but together we can work towards a sex ed that acknowledges and honors a variety of cultural perspectives.

Ending the Stigma: An Interactive Discussion Exploring Barriers to Abortion Access for Foster Youth

Dr. Susie Baldwin, Alonso Machuca, Erika Martinez Abad & Isabel Checa

Los Angeles County (LAC) is implementing a state-funded Abortion Safe Haven pilot program to expand equitable access to care both for County residents and visitors. The LAC Department of Public Health (DPH) is eager to structure the Abortion Safe Haven pilot to serve the needs of marginalized and systems-involved populations, including foster youth. As the DPH Office of Women's Health and partners develop the LAC Abortion Safe Haven roadmap, we want to hear from youth, caregivers, health care and social service providers, child welfare workers, public health nurses and deputy probation officers about the barriers to abortion care for foster youth. In this 60-minute session, we have three key objectives: 1) Share a brief introduction on the LAC Safe Haven Abortion pilot; 2) Facilitate a conversation with session participants about abortion access for foster youth; and 3) Build linkages with youth and stakeholders in this field to facilitate coordinated and complimentary programming.



BREAKOUT SESSION 4

4:00–5:00P

Healing Centered Approaches to Reproductive Coercion and Exploitation

Dr. Elizabeth Miller

This presentation will describe the history of research on reproductive coercion, outline the impact of reproductive coercion on young people's health, and describe promising clinic-based interventions to prevent and address reproductive coercion in health care settings. A healing justice framework that supports youth strengths, resiliency, and autonomy grounds this work.

The Foster-Friendly Healthcare Toolkit: A Guide to Delivering Quality Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare to Youth in Foster Care

Erica Monasterio and Alexis Obinna

A multidisciplinary team working with RHEP, including youth with foster care experience, developed "The Foster Friendly Healthcare Toolkit" to explain what it takes to implement inclusive, respectful sexual and reproductive health (SRH) care that contributes to building a sense of agency for youth in care and with diverse identities. The Toolkit includes tools to evaluate and modify both individual practice as well as the practice environment so that youth in foster care can successfully access SRH care. This presentation will introduce the Toolkit and some of its content. After attending this workshop, participants will be prepared to engage in a preliminary evaluation of their own program and practice for its 'foster friendliness' and identify concrete changes they can implement to improve the quality and accessibility of their program for youth, including youth in foster care.



Navigating the Intimate Space of Sexual Personhood

Vanessa Davis

I am a victim and survivor of sexual violence and I also spent 16 formative years of my life in the foster care system. This experience left me with many lessons that have shaped who I am, especially in terms of my experience with sexual relationships and my own sexual identity. I have also had the experience of becoming a foster parent to my siblings, a parent to my son, a social worker, and a lived experience mentor, educator, and facilitator of Healing Spaces for those I consider my peers. I am deeply aware of the complexity of navigating intimate discussions regarding sex and sexual experiences. From my multi-view perspective, the foster care system can be antithetical to navigating this intimate space and yet, our skillful navigation of this space can support personal and systemic transformation. This interactive learning space will provide tools to support attendees in cultivating their unique capacity to be an informed guide and resource in fostering healing, healthy, and restorative sexual experiences and practices for themselves and others.

MAINSTAGE SPEAKERS



Dr. Khiara M.
Bridges



The Honorable
Supervisor
Hilda L. Solis



Sarah Ferguson



Dr. Katherine
Gardner



Gabriel
Maldonado

MODERATOR



Cindy Cruz

SESSION SPEAKERS



Jessica Allen



Susie Baldwin



Shene Bowie



Isabel Checa



Amy Chen



Maria Contreras



Vanessa Davis



Alia Dewees



Miyana Evans

SESSION SPEAKERS



Barbara Facher



Dayna Freier



Jon Freret



Elia Garcia



Anu Manchikanti
Gomez



Rebecca Gudeman



Jacqueline
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Nancy Lam



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Andrea Mackey



Ceci Martinez



Erika Martinez
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Liz Miller



Erica Monasterio



Carly Myers

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Alexis Obinna



Franchesca Ocasio



Dana
Paycao



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Ebony Porter



Theresa Reed



Luisa Ruiz



Lonnell Schuler



Luciana Svidler

SESSION SPEAKERS



Andrea
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Autumn Taylor



Mariela Vasquez-
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Alexa Weishaar



Jasmine Young



Steph Zapata



Mara Ziegler



Angelica
Zuniga

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD



Brandy



Cody



Madonna



Patrick



Princess



Tamar

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Advancing Reproductive Health
Equity for Youth in Foster Care

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