

Incorporating those with lived experience into your support services for adoptive, foster, and kinship families

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Before we begin



This webinar will be recorded and shared.



Submit your questions via Q&A. Use the chat feature to connect with others or get tech support.



We'll use Mentimeter to get your input.



Please complete our survey at the end of the webinar. You'll receive an email from AdoptUSKids Evaluation.

Our mission



Raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children in the public child welfare system



Assist US states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, develop and support foster and adoptive families

Goals for this webinar

- 1 Discuss key considerations as you incorporate those with lived experience into your support programs.
- 2 Offer suggestions for how those with lived experience could be incorporated into your support programs.
- 3 Provide examples of how peer-led support is already being provided across the country.
- 4 Provide strategies for how to support and elevate those with lived experience.



Type into chat:

What are you most hoping to learn during today's webinar?



Lived experience: Who are we talking about?

- Those who experienced foster care, kinship care, and/or adoption as a child
- Current or former kinship caregivers
- Current or former foster or adoptive parents
- Birth parents



The value added by those with lived experience

- Part of a user-centered support program
- Improves your services, as the support provided by peers is often more valued by participants
- Helps your organizational culture as a whole when you prioritize and center those who experience your services



Barriers to elevating those with lived experience

- Educational or professional bias
- Peer-led support often deprioritized
- Lack of sufficient development or support
- Lack of compensation
- Organization not prepared to embrace their expertise

Setting the stage:

Ensure your organization is ready to positively receive people with lived experience.



Nathan's experience

Assessing organizational readiness

- What do current staff and volunteers say about the organization's willingness to listen to and prioritize those with lived experience?
- What do the caregivers and youth you are serving say about your services? Are your services meeting their needs?
- How is your organization perceived in the community you serve?

Assessing organizational readiness

- What is your organization's culture? What are the spoken and unspoken rules for membership and participation?
- How does the organization talk about those who have experienced foster care and adoption? Are they discussed with sensitivity and respect?
- What is your agency's experience with incorporating those with lived experience? Are they driving decision-making?



Incorporating those with lived experience:

Advisory

- Boards
- Workgroups
- Content review
- Policy review



Incorporating those with lived experience:

Existing services

- Therapists or other service providers
- Respite providers
- Navigation assistance
- Trainers
- Team member in intensive services



Incorporating those with lived experience: Specialized peer services

- Peer support group leaders
- Children's and teens' groups
- One-on-one support
- Mentors or buddies



Type into chat:

How are you incorporating those with lived experience into your support programs?

Traits of effective peer support providers

- Knowledgeable on the core issues in foster care and adoption
- Connected to the community
- Understands their experience is not universal
- Skilled in strategic sharing
- Maintains boundaries
- Has processed their own trauma and understands their triggers





Supporting and elevating those with lived experience

Training and development

- Core issues—trauma, race, FASD, grief and loss
- Role-dependent skills, such as group facilitation
- Strategic sharing
- Guidance around difficult topics or conversations
- Self-care



Support

- Navigating trauma triggers and secondary traumatic stress
- Developing boundaries and assistance in maintaining them
- Balancing this work with their personal life

Payment

- Provide compensation for time and expertise.
- Remove barriers so those with fewer resources can participate.
- Don't overburden.



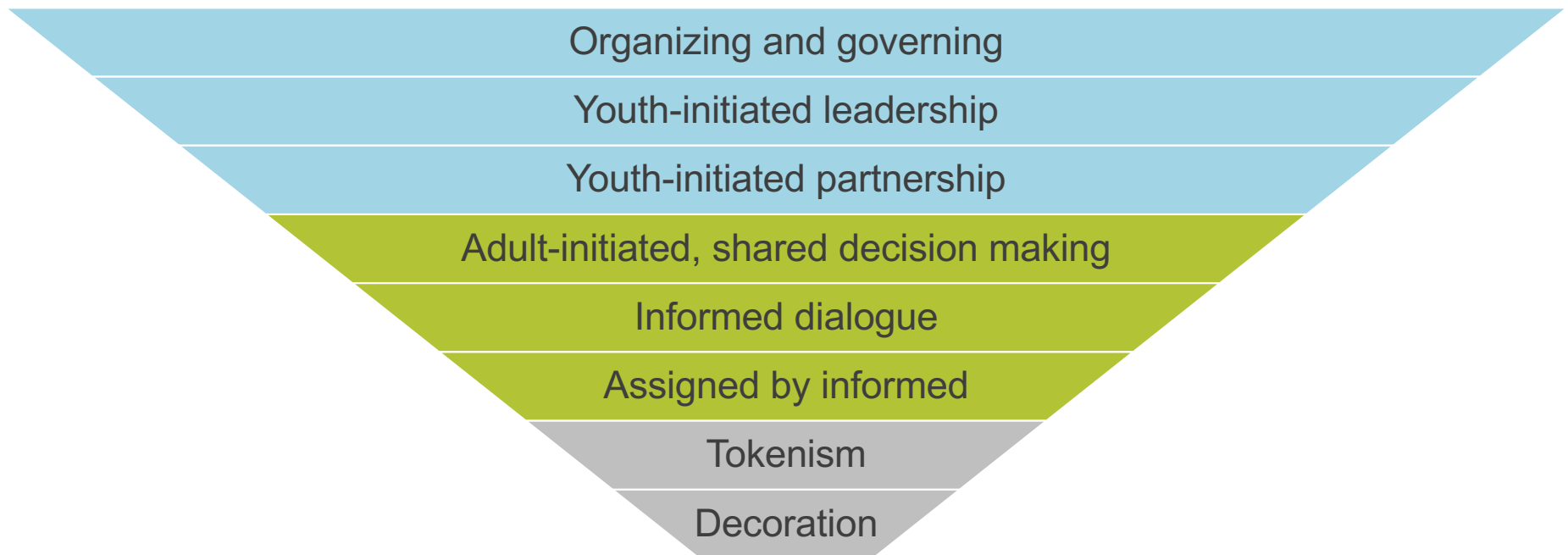


Type into chat:

What different considerations are there to supporting:

- Relative caregivers?
- Adoptive and foster parents?
- Young adults?
- Teens?

Youth engagement ladder



Youth engagement toolkit from Texas Network of Youth Services
Adapted from works by J. Nowicki and R. Hart

Supporting caregivers is different than supporting those who were in care

- Who chose this path?
- Who does this story belong to?
- What are the long-term implications for being open with their experiences?
- What are the power dynamics?





Competing priorities: What happens when caregivers and young people have different views?

- Both viewpoints are valid.
- Help them each shape and refine their perspective from the other person's experience.
- Facilitate a joint conversation.
- Consider who is most marginalized and most likely to be harmed.



Power dynamics matter

- Who holds authority?
- How does authority change depending on the context?
- Who holds marginalized identities?
- Can those with less power speak safely?
- What do those with less power risk when they choose authenticity?

How do we create safer environments for those with lived experience to show up authentically in organizations?

- What are you already doing?
- What's one thing you hope to improve after this webinar?
- What do you hope will be possible in the near future?

Continue the conversation!



Join us for a peer meeting on December 13 at 3:00 p.m. eastern standard time. Share your successes and challenges with your peers and get help for your agency.

Register for the meeting at the link in the chat.



New tool!

Available at professionals.adoptuskids.org

Assess the cultural competence of your support services with a new tool from AdoptUSKids.

[Cultural competence assessment tool](#)



More AdoptUSKids resources

Available at professionals.adoptuskids.org

Resources for parent group leaders:

- **Discussion guides** on topics such as the impact of trauma on behaviors, grief and loss, and navigating racial identity
- **Recorded webinars** such as understanding secondary traumatic stress, effective group facilitation, and helping resource parents embrace trauma-responsive parenting
- **Articles and tip sheets** on topics such as strategic communication in support groups, navigating challenging group dynamics, and bringing joy to the support group experience
- **Five-module parent group leadership curriculum** complete with full script, slide decks, and handouts



Contact information

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We'd love to talk to you about your system's needs! Reach out to consultation@adoptuskids.org to discuss capacity building or other support AdoptUSKids can provide.



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