



Public-Private Collaboration to Transform Child Welfare Systems for LGBTQ+ Youth Thriving

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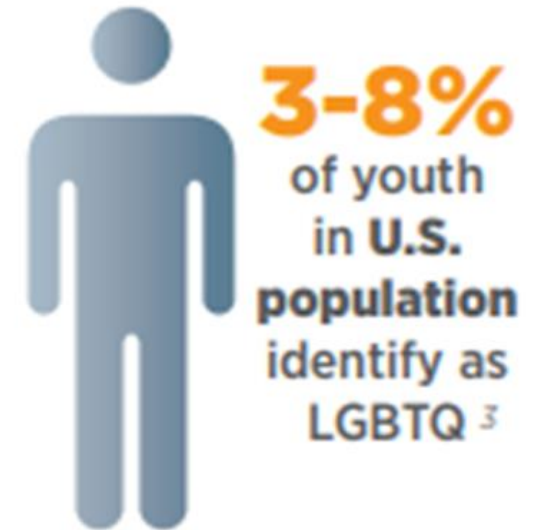
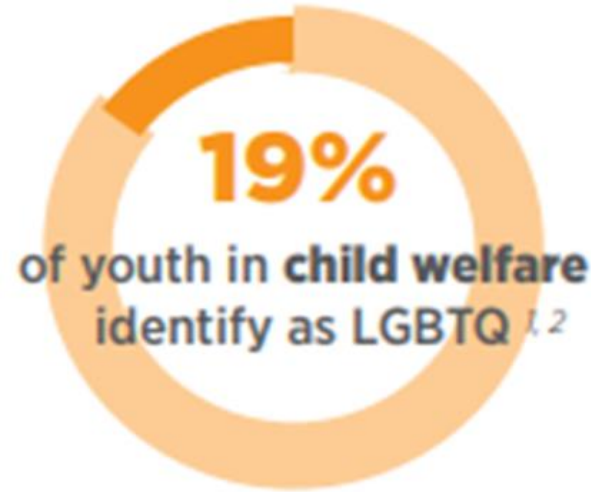
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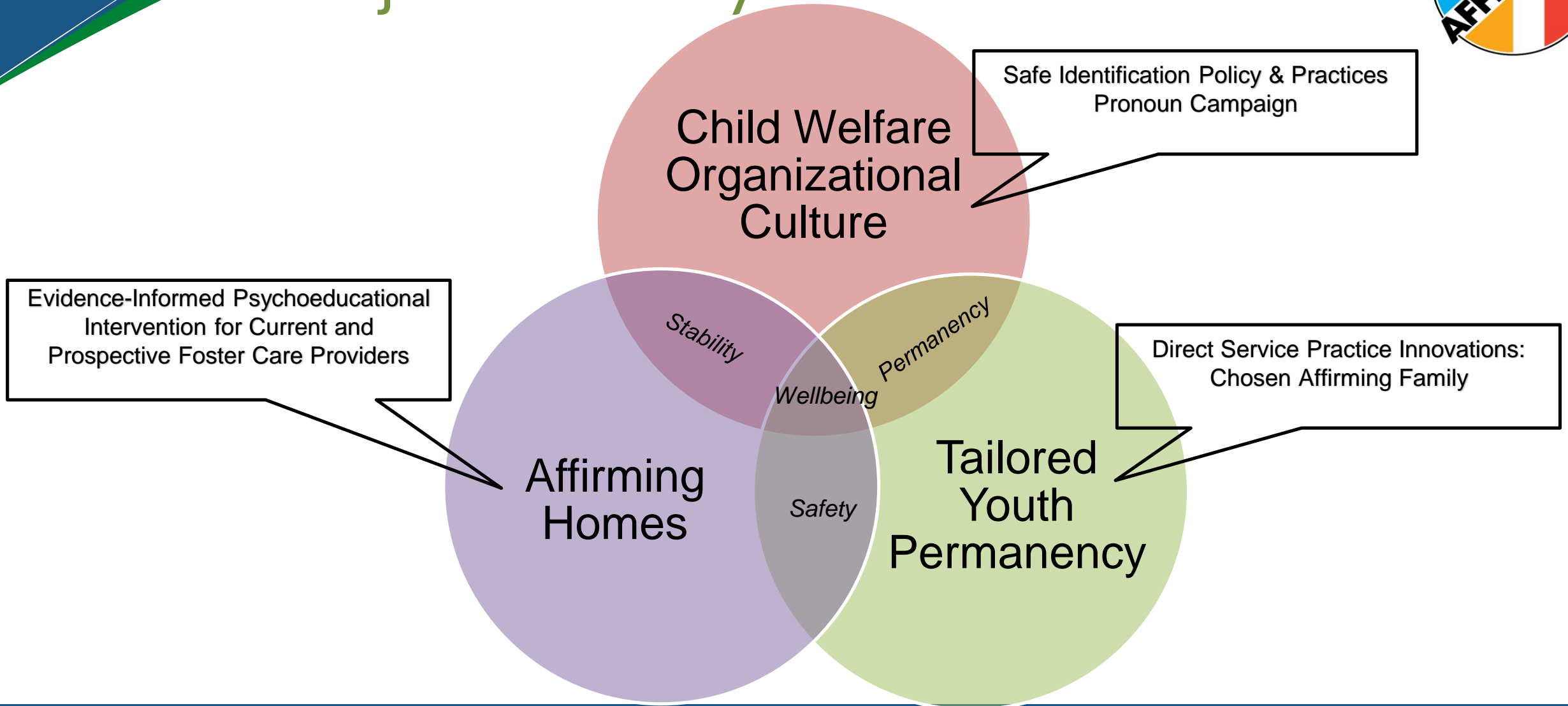


What We Know About Youth with Diverse SOGIE

- **Victimization:** physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse
- **Rejection:** biological family, foster family, child welfare workers
- **Runaway and Homeless**
- **Mental Health Disparities**
- **Isolation:** Needs for a sense of belonging and strong social ties



Project Goal: System Transformation





What is Safe Identification?

Safe identification is a **process** we use to ensure youth feel safe having SOGIE conversations with their DCFS staff.

- Youth know their information will be kept confidential unless we have permission to share their information and youth are told when their SOGIE information would be shared before they share their SOGIE information
- We only share information with others without expressed permission if/when there is an emergent safety concern where SOGIE plays a role.
- SOGIE information is not entered into our electronic record system unless a youth gives permission or is open about their SOGIE..



Safe Identification Tools and Strategies



- Developed agency-wide policy and procedure with input from youth and a variety of agency staff;
- Implemented a script to assist in making staff comfortable in have SOGIE conversations with youth;
- Adopted tools from sites who were already having SOGIE conversations with young people;
- We did 1 on 1 role playing and practice with staff who needed it or asked for it.

Accessibility Moving Forward



We are working with our internal agency team to develop a desktop icon where all of the tools needed to have a good SOGIE conversation will be housed and we are also working on getting into an app format for mobile devices



The icon will have the referral form, resource guides, tips, glossary of terms etc. to assist staff in have good SOGIE conversations with youth in a “one stop show” location



AFFIRM Caregiver Intervention



- 92% of LGBTQ youth believe they can be a happy adult when they have a high level of family acceptance (Ryan, Family Acceptance project, 2009)
- AFFIRM Caregiver is a 7-session manualized intervention designed to enhance identity-affirming parenting practices among LGBTQ+ youth and emerged from AFFIRM, a CBT-based, evidence informed youth intervention (Craig & Austin, 2016).
 - AFFIRM Caregiver helps caregivers move away from rejection of LGBTQ+ identities and towards affirmation.
 - The purpose of AFFIRM Caregiver is threefold—to help caregivers Learn, Reflect, and Grow.
- **Group Modules focus on:**
 - LGBTQ Identities
 - Anti-LGBTQ Attitudes and Behaviors
 - Traumatic Experiences and Supporting Youth
 - Compassionate Caregiving
 - Developing Safe and Supportive Caregiver and Youth Social Networks
 - Overcoming Barriers and Building Hope Through Affirmative Caregiving





AFFIRM Initial Evaluation Outcomes: Changes in Caregiver Attitudes and Behaviors

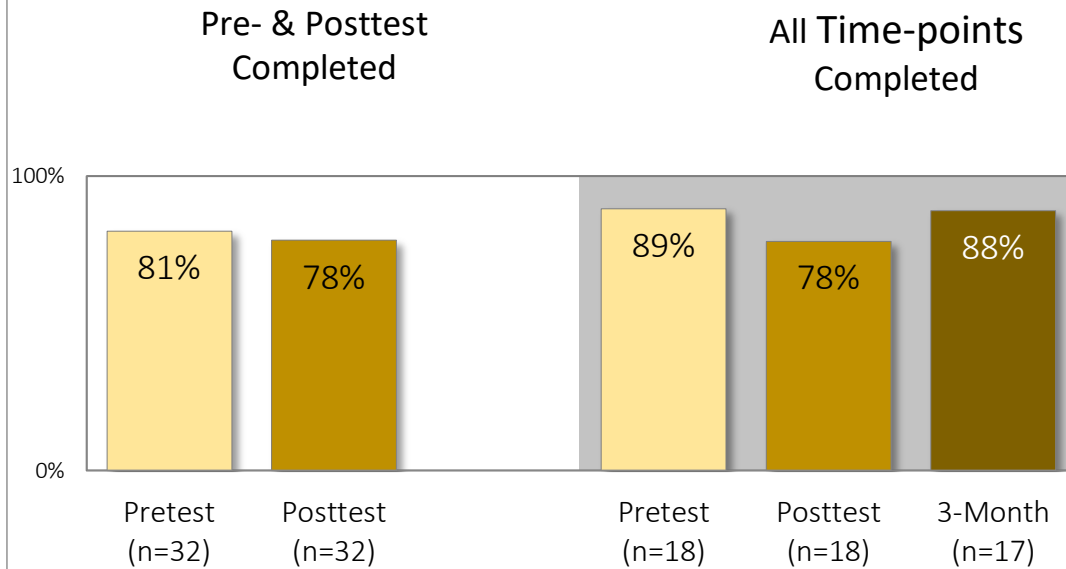
	N	<i>average (sd)</i>	
		Pretest	Posttest
Attitudes toward Diverse SO	31	4.25 (0.78)	4.59 (0.52)
Attitudes towards Diverse GI	31	4.22 (0.73)	4.55 (0.55)
Behaviors Related to Caring for LGB Youth	31	4.46 (0.60)	4.63 (0.48)
Behaviors Related to Caring for Transgender Youth	30	4.41 (0.60)	4.61 (0.54)
Confidence in Caregiving Abilities	27	5.28 (1.20)	6.26 (0.73)
Comfort Participating in Affirmative Caregiving	32	6.41 (1.21)	6.72 (0.63)



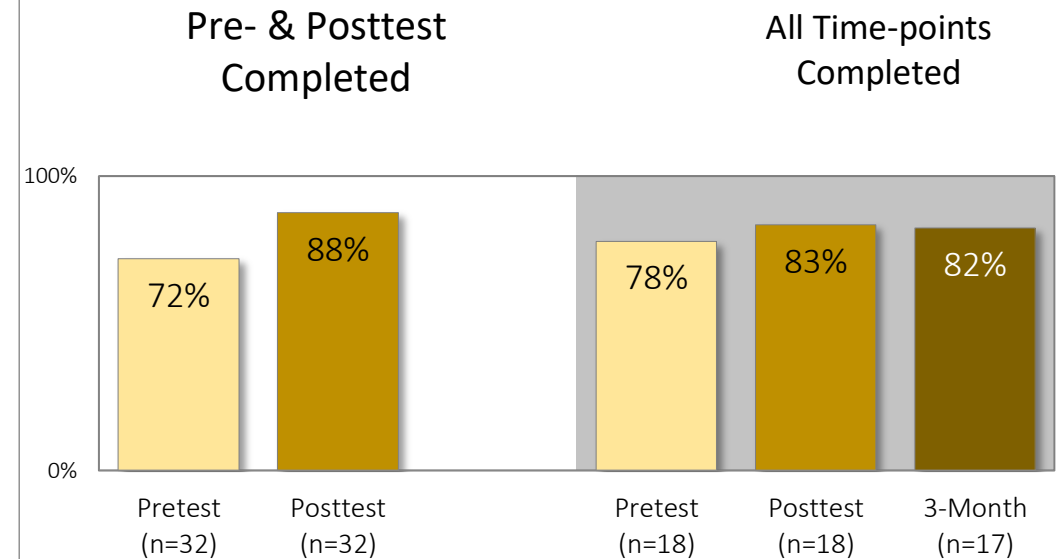


AFFIRM Initial Evaluation Outcomes: Primary Caregiver Concerns

Youth Will Be Discriminated Against



Youth Will Be a Target of Violence





LGBTQ+ Young People need Permanent, Accepting Relationships

1. Youth have a **right to leave child welfare with a robust network of supports** and it is our job to help create those for them;
2. With support and accurate information **families can change** to accepting and affirming their youth;
3. Variation in sexual orientation, gender identity and expression are **part of the normal spectrum of human diversity** - the increased risks faced by LGBTQ youth are not inherent to their identities, but stem from the stresses of prejudice, discrimination, rejection, and mistreatment;
4. Efforts to change a young person's sexual orientation or gender identity are **harmful, unethical, ineffective and unnecessary**.



Chosen Affirming Family Finding



Efforts to locate and engage as many family members and significant adults as possible with the goal of identifying committed lifelong positive connections in a robust network of **affirming** individuals who provide emotional and potentially legal permanency.

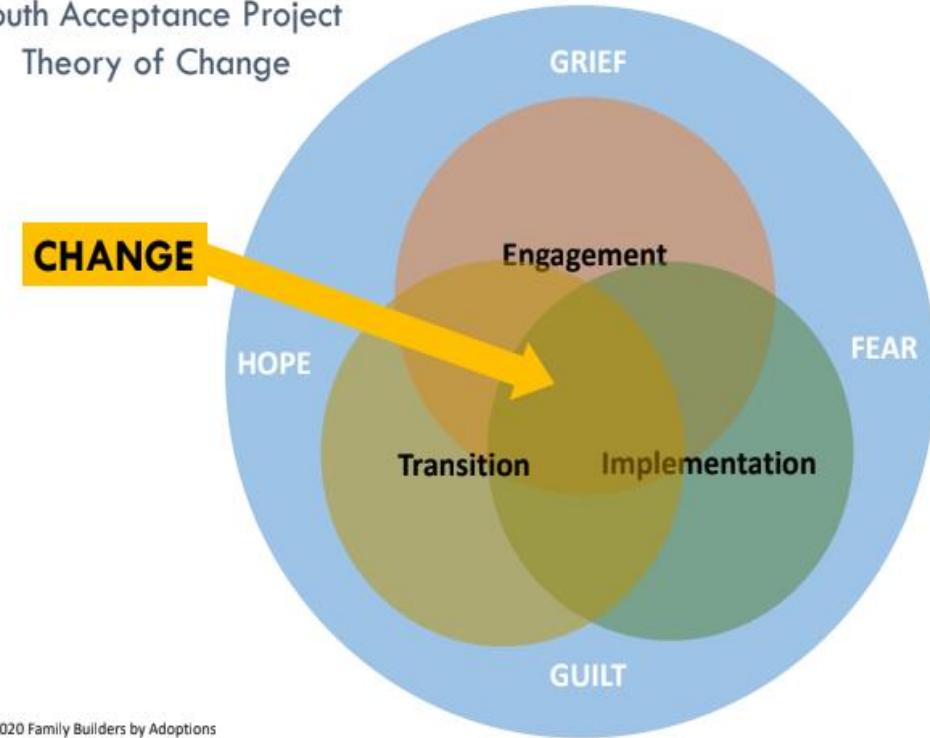




Youth Acceptance Model

A series of interventions (engagement, support and affirmation, inquiry, education and planning) to move caregivers through varying stages of grief, fear, guilt, and hope associated with their young person's SOGIE and forward on a pathway toward affirmation.

Youth Acceptance Project
Theory of Change



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Family First Prevention Act



The Youth Acceptance Project Intervention was recommended for inclusion in Ohio's Title IV-E Prevention Plan.



Lasting Impact on Child Welfare



Safe Identification at the Front End of the System, because without it we miss:

- Kids coming into care because of their SOGIE;
- Opportunity to join with families to become affirming of their youth's identity;
- Critical decision to place young people with affirming caregivers;
- Engaging affirming family members for support and/or placement.





Moving the System Forward

Continue training with employees, caregivers, providers, and community partners

- How and Why:
 - to ask about SOGIE
 - to become an affirming caregiver to LGBTQ2S young people
 - to use chosen affirming family finding
 - to join with families and build affirmation for all LGBTQ2S young people



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