

CALIFORNIA CHILD WELFARE COUNCIL
CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSFUL YOUTH TRANSITIONS COMMITTEE
Meeting Notes: September 10, 2014 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

○ **Introductions**

Rochelle and Gordon welcomed Committee members and asked them to introduce themselves and then tell the group about one person who has had a significant positive effect in their lives. Members introduced themselves and the following is a list of some of the extraordinary support people we heard about:

Committee participant	Person who had significant positive effect
Cherie	▪ Uncle who encouraged her despite adverse circumstances
Len	▪ Youth whom he encouraged to succeed
Trisha	▪ Her grandmother
Jane	▪ First client – a birth mother who modeled how to fight for what one needs
Pauline	▪ Director of a program who was a social worker
Sylvia	▪ Former mother-in-law who was unrelenting in her support
Gordon	▪ Former junior high drama teacher who gave him confidence (“I can do it”)
Rochelle	▪ Therapist at a homeless shelter who became a mentor; modeled “family”
Anna	▪ Former boss who became a mentor; provided letters of recommendation
Edward	▪ Civil rights attorney in Durham, North Carolina
Vanessa	▪ Bus driver who was a mentor
Camille	▪ Her granddaughter, age 8
Melissa	▪ Elementary school teacher who set the bar high
Carol	▪ Her clients
Cheryl	▪ Her mom

○ **Minutes of June 11, 2014**

The Minutes of June 11, 2014 were filed without discussion.

○ **Debrief of full Council meeting**

Gordon asked for reflections on the morning’s full Council meeting. Camille observed that all the presentations were excellent. Pauline noted that the presentation on Drug Courts could inform the work of the Quality Improvement Project. Others expressed that the Drug Court was an effective model for overcoming issues such as red tape and gaps in the system, especially when it comes to establishing Medi-Cal eligibility.

Vanessa noted that former foster youth also need priority access to services in the same way that parents who are the focus of the Task Force on Priority Access to Services and Supports (PASS) project, and Sylvia explained that birth parents were the first group to be targeted for priority access with the plan that other groups could be added in the future.

With regard to the sunset of the statewide Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care, Judge Edwards and others thought it would be good for the Council to maintain a relationship with local Blue Ribbon Commissions through activities such as keeping the Council informed about their work and the Council making requests for them to take up certain issues. (Since the Permanency Committee is staffed by the same person who staffs local Blue Ribbon Commissions, that Committee would be logical point of contact rather than our Committee.)

Commenting on the Partial Credits presentation, Jane pointed out that models being used for early childhood education could inform work with school age youth. The Local Control Funding Formula provides an opportunity to open doors to discussions about all aspects of foster youth's education.

○ **Foster Children's Healthy Sexual Development**

Rochelle presented the plan under development by the Foster Children's Healthy Sexual Development Work Group. By way of reminder, the Work Group was formed to:

- Examine research, gather effective policies, and learn directly from current and former foster youth, practitioners, trainers, regulators, and policy makers about how we can more effectively and consistently promote the healthy sexual development of young people growing up in foster care.
- Submit recommendations for consideration by the Child Welfare Council regarding strategies for improving practice, policies, and training curricula based on these findings.

The Work Group approached its charge by interview key stakeholders and reviewing information from literature, regulations, interviews, and training materials regarding how to promote healthy sexual development for all youth – LGBTQ and heterosexual – while maintaining protections for their safety. The Work Group also plans to document challenges that foster youth have had to face as a result of former sexual assault, sex trafficking, and/or early disrupted attachments.

In order to deepen its knowledge and understanding of the issues involved, the Work Group proposes to hold a gathering using Open Space Technology. This process "is effective in situations where a diverse group of peoples must deal with complex and potentially conflicting material in innovative and productive ways. It is particularly powerful when nobody knows for sure the answer and the ongoing participation of a number of people is required to deal with the questions." (From: Owen, Harrison, Open Space Technology: A User's Guide. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., San Francisco, CA. 2008. p.15.)

Participants would include members of the Child Welfare Council, foster youth, foster parents, group home providers, public agency leadership, community agencies, researchers and others who advocate for continuing to improve practices that will promote healthy sexual development of California's foster youth.

The gathering would be led by a skilled facilitator, and the proceedings are created as part of the process and captured in a "book of proceedings" prepared by the facilitator to be available within a short period of time. The "book of proceedings" would be reviewed by Work Group members who would present the findings and advisory recommendations to the full Child Welfare Council. The timeline for the gathering is targeted for late January or early February 2015, and the proceedings from the event would be shared with the Committee in March 2015 and the full Council in June 2015.

The planning, guest list creation, invitations and venue would be provided in kind by Work Group members and Child Welfare Council staff. Rochelle plans to seek funding which is needed for a skilled facilitator to lead the gathering and prepare the "Book of Proceedings" that documents the findings from participants. Additional funding will also be requested for lunch and snacks and for stipends to cover transportation costs of youth participants.

Committee members expressed support of the Work Group's plan and underscored the importance of addressing the issues noted by stakeholders. Cherie gave suggestion for training and ensuring that we have foster families that have the courage to do what's right to support foster youth's healthy sexual development. She uses the term "healthy and safe" rather than "normal" when referring to the goal for youth's decisions about forming relationships. Other models for supporting this work include Healthy Initiatives for Youth, Family Acceptance Project, and San Francisco Unified School District training for teachers.

- **Young Children in Foster Care**

Jane reported that this Work Group is continuing to coordinate with California First 5 to add information for caregivers of foster children to the new media campaign called “Talk, Read, Sing.” The First 5 website should have this additional material ready for viewing by the Child Welfare Council in December.

- **Partial Credit**

The successful implementation of the recommendations of the Partial Credits Work Group was acknowledged, and the work will continue with periodic updates to the Committee.

- **Over Medication**

Bill, Anna and Rochelle all stated that while the Quality Improvement Project is now beginning to make some progress, much work needs to be done in the areas of data collection and data integration. They suggested that through the MOU under development between the California Department of Social Services and the Health Care Services Department provisions could be added to link CWS/CMS with the SD-MC2 (Pharmacy) data bases, thus providing information such as the number of foster children authorized for psychotropic medications, how many drugs children are authorized, and which drugs are authorized for what diagnoses. Bill suggested that the Work Group could meet with the Council’s Data Integration and Information Sharing Committee to learn how issues related to HIPAA and other confidentiality requirement could be addressed while at the same time being able to collect data that would be critical to understanding the nature of the problem and informing solutions. Sylvia is to follow up on this suggestion.

- **Review of Work Plan Status**

Because of time constraints, the Work Plan was not reviewed.

- **Wrap up and next steps**

Rochelle and Gordon thanked Committee members for their participation. Gordon closed the meeting by offering the observation that all the morning presentations to the Child Welfare Council involved the use of PowerPoint and suggested that in the future every PowerPoints should include a slide that makes the “ask” very clear in very concrete terms. He noted that the presenters were not always up front about what they wanted from Council members. Sylvia will convey this message to staff supporting presenters as they prepare for future Council meetings.