

Group 1 (Facilitator: Joe, HI HOPES: Tiffany)

Issue: Fairness and Nurturing in a Foster Home

1. What are some of the barriers for foster youth and resource caregivers that may prevent fairness/nurturing in a foster home?

- Trust, both ways
- Permission for everything (examples: sleepovers, sports, phone calls, contact (family), social activities and sibling connections)
- Isolation of case knowledge
- Rules
- Money
- Exclusion
- Lack of understanding and knowledge, lack of personal connection
- Liability
- Feeling of no control
- Isolation from biological family, from foster family and from peers and school
- Lack of resources

2. What are some solutions for addressing these challenges?

- Training and education of RCGs—hotline for questions
- Increase education of foster teens and SW and trainings/workshops/outreach—1 on 1 visits with SW and GAL
- Supportive relationship GAL/SW/RCG/Foster youth
- Collaboration and communication—group emails
- Child information folder
- Standardized information and requirements at placements
- Increased protection for RCGs—social policy change

3. What support is needed from CWS, Family Court or other professionals to assist resource caregivers and foster youth?

AND

4. What can CWS, Family Court and other professionals (GALs, CASA) check in with foster youth to make sure they are receiving the nurturing and fairness they need to thrive in a foster home?

- Open communication
- Consistency of home visits
- Visits are consistent, alone and face-to-face, encourage sibling visits and autonomy with RCGs
- Consistency of report writing
- Sleepovers? Protection to RCGs and RCG prudent parenting

5. How can foster youth be supported and empowered to express their concerns and feelings and self-advocate for their needs?

Group 2 (Facilitator: Sharla, HI HOPES: Noel and Karen)

Issue: Restrictive Environments & Privacy

1. What circumstances might lead to a more restrictive environment in a foster home?

- Youth running away
- Youth home past curfew
- Self-harm
- Trust (lack of)
- Illegal/criminal behaviors
- Past experiences with other youth
- Emotional issues
- RCGs don't have proper tools/training
- Fear of liability/authority (for RCGs)
- Cultural differences
- Foster parents fear huge liability

2. What are some solutions for addressing these challenges?

- Better screening of RCGs
- Better communication
- Compromising
- More training
 - Support groups/foster parent huis
 - Specific: how to make an emotional connection to youth
- Mediator in the home to help address problems/issues
- Bring youth 14 and older to 'Ohana conferences
- Recruit more foster families
 - Look at military families
 - Exposure to need for families
 - Adjust training classes

3. What support is needed from CWS, Family Court or other professionals to assist caregivers and foster youth?

- Availability
- Stay in contact
- Open communication
- Encourage oversight from judiciary to have youth participate in cultural/age appropriate activities
- Commitment of workers
- Flexibility

- Situations often come up for youth outside of business hours
 - Point of contact (same person/consistent) and supervisor of that person → inform the youth and RCGs of who to call (on all levels)
- Comprehensive checklist for SW visits with child/RCG
 - Very specific formal/informal assessments of the youth's living environment
- Visit with youth outside of the home
- Build relationships between all providers

4. How can CWS, Family Court and other professionals (GALs, CASA) check in with foster youth to make sure their living environments are free from burdensome restrictions and support normalcy and well-being?

- Comprehensive checklist
- Meet with youth outside the home
- Email
- Text
- Be present
 - Physically
 - Outside of "normal hours"
 - Commitment
 - Support RCGs
- Build relationship/build trust
- Service providers look at changing certain policies that may inhibit engagement/interaction with youth
- Be creative—think outside the box
 - Meet their friends
 - Social media (Facebook/Instagram)

5. How can foster youth be supported and empowered to express their concerns and feelings and self-advocate for their needs?

- Get them to see their judge
 - Attend court
 - One-on-one meetings
- Involve them in case planning/goal setting
 - Ensure them that they have a voice
- Show up—no matter what—be consistent
- Get them involved in programs
- Be sincere
- Show them you're human
- Listen to them
- Be fair to them

- Be honest; be real
- Don't over-promise

Group 3 (Facilitator: Mitch, HI HOPES: Patricia, Glenn)

Issue: Promoting Independent Living Skills

1. What are some of the barriers for foster youth, caregivers, social workers, judges and others to provide these opportunities for young people?

- Costs
- Transportation
 - To work
 - To activities
- Collaboration between agencies
- Logistical issues
- Knowledge of laws/procedures
 - Youth, caregivers and agencies
- Youth being able to express their wants and needs
- Ability to building trusting relationships with youth

2. What are some solutions for addressing these challenges?

- Awareness
 - Spreading the word
 - Education
 - Social media
- Establishing timelines for expectations and issues with youth—"milestones" for youth
- Providing opportunities for youth to speak
 - SW meeting youth one-to-one
- Encouraging youth circles
- Seeking resources to help cover costs and provide opportunities
- Bus passes for youth/carpooling with other caregivers and youth
- Easier access to enhancement funds and extend beyond 18
- Driver's ed specifically for foster youth
- Training for caregivers (liabilities, rights, resources)
- Communication statewide, sharing ideas

3. What support is needed from CWS, Family Court or other professionals to assure that young people are afforded the opportunities to develop independent living skills and exercise freedom and responsibilities?

- Support group to help youth
- Encourage youth to participate in court hearings to voice their needs/opinions
 - Reduce barriers to have youth attend their hearings
 - Educate the youth

- More money for enhancements
 - Training for youth on how to utilize the money
 - Maybe online training
- Access to technology/resources
- Collaborate with community partners
- Easier access to funding already available
 - Faster timelines
- Ensuring automatic rollover of health insurance
- Creativity for youth with developmental delays to balance safety vs. opportunities

4. How can CWS, Family Court and other professionals (GALs, CASA) check in with foster youth to make sure that they are receiving these supports and opportunities?

- Quality time, one-on-one meetings with youth
- More opportunities for youth to have cell phones
- Communication to best fit youth
 - Texting
 - Social media
- Revising service plans/case plans to include more independent living skills to report to Family Court
- In CWS forms (monthly face-to-face form), more focus on positive attributes, youth's strengths, communication, etc.
- Talk to youth about resources, youth circles, developing plans with youth at earlier ages

5. How can foster youth be supported and empowered to express their concerns and feelings and self-advocate for their needs?

- Taking time to build relationships with youth
- More education for youth about court hearings
- Less formal hearings with food and meeting judge
- Peer mentors
- Utilizing other foster youth to create positive connections
- HI H.O.P.E.S., Y.E.S. HI
- Following through/validation on youth's desires in case planning
 - Communicate with youth on progress of things
- More age range for Y.E.S. HI
- Focus on wider array on independent living skills
 - Cooking
 - Life skills
 - Provide to walk through activities with youth
 - Efforts to show the youth we care

Group 4 (Facilitator: Punahou, HI HOPES: Jade, Brayden)

Issue: Extracurricular and Social Activities

1. What are some of the barriers for foster youth and caregivers that hinder a young person's ability to engage in extracurricular and social activities?

- Main concern is safety of child
- CASA's rules and regulations they are under while in care
 - CASA needs to approve
 - Sleepovers—safe home? Need to know
- “every case is unique” but every home has pre-set guidelines
- GALS need to approve
- Don't train RCGs→train bio family or guardians
- Ensure the foster parent is educated enough to determine the safety of activity the child will partake in
- Some foster parents have motives not focused in child
- Education for parents
- Offices aren't 24/7 so workers are limited, access to them are limited
 - Youth have hard time/going through many people to get approval
 - Lessen the amount of people youth have to go through
- Instill little trust from the beginning
- Youth don't want to attend court, aren't participating
- Transportation for child
 - CASAs cannot transport
- Budget, less SWs
- Youth have hard time getting in touch with SW

2. What are some solutions for addressing these challenges?

- Encourage youth to participate in activities
- Teach youth to be responsible
- Utilize youth circle to find out what youth is interested in
 - Work with team of professionals/support to make it happen
- Find ways to motivate youth
- Expand youth circle
 - Informal, maybe at a friend's house
- Sustain motivation after youth circle
- Be connected with mentor, relatable person youth can work with
- Engage transiting youth with discipline
 - “What do you think your punishment should be?”
- Youth should understand rules beforehand

- Youth make and sign contracts/rules
- Help with transportation

3. What support is needed from CWS, Family Court state/administrative laws/rules or other professionals to assure that young people are afforded the opportunities to engage in these activities?

- Liability is a strong barrier, but professionals should try best
 - “use the liability”
- Continued communication
- Plan for consequences
 - Youth should be proactive and have plan for pre-approval for the year’s activities for example
- Support for parents
- training

4. How can CWS, Family Court and other professionals (GALs, CASA) check in with foster youth to make sure that they are being allowed, encouraged and supported to engage in these activities?

- Do minimum visitations (CASAs 1x/month)
 - Talk to foster parents and child
- Talk to youth privately, outside of home to feel comfortable, at school get to know the teachers and counselors
- Professionals need to be more available
- Don’t rush the conversation, bring food

5. How can foster youth be supported and empowered to express their concerns and feelings and self-advocate for their needs?

- Have a better relationship with foster parents
- Training combined with youth and foster parents
- Engage youth in case planning
- One-on-one meetings
 - Build trust
- Let youth understand your role
- Youth should know they have the right to express themselves and professionals will try to follow through
- Include bio families/parents and to participate in case planning
- Youth need to be a part of case planning
 - Youth need to take control and tell professionals what they want

Group 5 (Facilitator: Laurie, HI HOPES: Tia, Mala)

Issue: Promoting Permanency and Family Relationships

1. What are some of the barriers for foster youth to maintain family and sibling connections? What are some barriers for foster youth in developing other lifelong adult connections? (ex: church, mentors, coaches, foster parents)?

- Relative and non-relative, non-relative is more difficult
- Cultural connections with family
- Placing children with family as a solution
- Non-relative resource/parents not able to communicate with bio family
- Training for SW on best practice/SW turnover
- Inconsistent application of practice
- SW time and resources
- Confidentiality rules as a barrier to openness
 - Solution=more openness to people who can help
- Deficit focused behavior instead of strength
- Keep kids in community

2. What are some solutions for addressing these challenges?

- Ohana conferencing
- Bring in permanent connection
- Collaboration
- Place for children with multiple children/sibling group
- Diverse foster homes and locations
- Parent partners
- More immediate connection of parents and kids (eg dr. appts, sports, prom etc.)
- Sibling visits
- Foster parents take lead in sibling visits
- Project visitation needs to be funded and statewide and ordered
- Need buy in for workers, families, RCG
- Parent partners
- Larger conversation about safety
- Building relationships

3. What support is needed from CWS, Family Court or other professionals to assist foster youth and caregivers?

- Support
 - Training
 - Funding for visits

- Interpret law for RC and families
- Resource family handbook
 - Need to be updated and handed out
- Best practices need to be adopted
- Kids in court to have a say
- Youth participate in case planning
- Youth participation in ct

4. How can CWS, Family Court, and other professionals (GALs, CASA) check in with foster youth to make sure that they are engaging in family connections and building supportive relationships with other adults?

- CASAs need to transport young people to speak privately in activities, etc.
- Members of team build
 - Team so that they have one goal—wellbeing of the child

5. How can foster youth be supported and empowered to express their concerns and feelings and self-advocate for their needs?

Group 6 (Facilitator: Kris, HI HOPES: Kapua, Billie-Ann)

Issue: Fairness and Nurturing in a Foster Home

1. What are some of the barriers for foster youth and resource caregivers that may prevent fairness/nurturing in a foster home?

- Blaming for ridiculous reasons
 - No means to defend
- Segregation
- Agency that recruits RCGs need to educate them; continuous education and training
- RCGs becoming defensive
- SPs not reacting/supporting
- Not having accountability
- SPs asking youth to ride it out
 - i.e. “you’re almost 18 years old”
- Lack of resource homes/placements
- Lack of participation of SW and GAL

2. What are some solutions for addressing these challenges?

- In service training/continuous training
- More accountability of workers, RCPs, agencies
- Involving youth in court process
- Skills and education for youth to advocate for self
 - Educate youth of their rights
- Connect youth with mentors, agencies, other youth
- Outreach for youth in care
- Social networking
- Packet of resources, information, rights, for ALL youth in care (Ages 6-18) “goodie bags”
- SWs and GALs/CASAs meet statutory requirements of visiting youth
- SW and GAL in the RCGs home explaining rules before placement
- Prior to licensing home, go over all requirements conditions of being a RCG
- Have a kid-friendly grievance procedure
 - Have a number to call to report issues
 - Let RCGs aware of this right
- SPs encourage youth to come to court
 - Arrange for private discussion with judge
- Establish guidelines at time of placement—for both RCGs and youth
 - Have SP in home explaining during initial placement
 - Include “welcoming” guidelines
 - Should be in writing

- Initial meeting in family setting

3. What support is needed from CWS, Family Court or other professionals to assist resource caregivers and foster youth?

- Getting necessary assessments for youth
 - RCGs receive all vital info for youth in order to identify services
- Inquire as to RCG's idea of nurturing and fairness
 - Educate RCGs of youth's idea of nurturing and fairness
- Youth and/or RCG, write a letter to FCT and judge to make it confidential
- RCGs be educated about all issues
 - Including LGBTQ issues
- Unconditional acceptance

4. What can CWS, Family Court and other professionals (GALs, CASA) check in with foster youth to make sure they are receiving the nurturing and fairness they need to thrive in a foster home?

- Confidential process of getting information from youth to judge
- Youth feel comfortable contacting SPs
 - SPs need to make effort to build rapport/relationships
- SP realize youth have been traumatized
 - Youth sometimes need to be told they don't need to sit back and take it

5. How can foster youth be supported and empowered to express their concerns and feelings and self-advocate for their needs?

- Know they have a voice
- Know they have certain rights
- SPs build relationship with youth
- Know the resources->goodie bags

Group 7 (Facilitator: Robin, HI HOPES: Stephanie)

Issue: Restrictive Environments & Privacy

1. What circumstances might lead to a more restrictive environment in a foster home?

- Worries about teen girls getting pregnant
- Unclear roles of foster parents and foster children rules
- History of drug use/runaway
- Judged based on their parents
- Not a good match (resource home)
- How pro. Deliver info to FP re: youth (lack of info/no info)
- RCG have had bad experiences from prior children
- RCG not equipped with info of children's prior behaviors
- Separate bio-child away

2. What are some solutions for addressing these challenges?

- More training (quality) for RCGs
- Move home visits from CWS (unannounced)
- More time for transition from INV—placement to build rapport
- Better communication, better for everyone—CWS/RCG/youth
- Increased response time if youth calls during crisis
- Special privi./checklist for teens
- Less reactive, more proactive
- Trainings—conflict resolution for RCG
- Multi-agencies work together on same/one plan
- Increase funding
- Self-advocacy workshops
- Better recruitment for RCGs

3. What support is needed from CWS, Family Court or other professionals to assist caregivers and foster youth?

- Mediation Services
- Specialized units to focus on teens only
- More support staff to be available during business hours and easily accessible to expedite
- Have children more active in their case planning with pro.
- Foster youth social gatherings/support groups
- Extend WRAP services to PC cases (teens) with youth involvement
- Access to website with resources, forms, links in area, with info on community events, etc.
- More respite options for the RCGs/CH (printout/handout)
- Clean definition of roles of every service provider

- More funding
- Program for foster youth similar to “Kids First”

4. How can CWS, Family Court and other professionals (GALs, CASA) check in with foster youth to make sure their living environments are free from burdensome restrictions and support normalcy and well-being?

- More visits at school
- More funding
- Access to SW/service providers outside of home
- Extra-curricular activities (movies, eat out, community events)
- Youth to have an allowance—create plan to earn money
- Increase foster licensing home visits for quality monitoring
- Online venue/APP to access service providers
 - Still have regular contact with service provider, not replaced
- Youth have access to SWs email address for communication
- Survey for youth to fill-out after visits
 - Asking about life events, questions to engage youth
- Better engagement skills for service providers
- Youth to be educated about their rights in care, normalcy

5. How can foster youth be supported and empowered to express their concerns and feelings and self-advocate for their needs?

- Teen mediation: former foster youth—teens learn how to become mediators for current foster youth
- Break desensitization for service providers
- Trainings for youth/teach how to ask for help/find resolutions
- Involve DOE/counselors to be more involved in foster youth’s life
- Educate RCG on teen needs, clarify rules in home, offer opportunity to build trust
- Access to meet judge—talk to GAL to schedule appointment
 - Understand that judges are open to communicating with youth outside of court
 - Empowered to know judiciary staff are supportive
 - “talk story”
 - Invite them to youth circles
 - Prep youth to have discussion with judge, making sure youth is clear on what is available to them from judiciary support staff

Group 8 (Facilitator: Kamaile, HI HOPES: Cat, Rachel)

Issue: Promoting Independent Living Skills

1. What are some of the barriers for foster youth, caregivers, social workers, judges and others to provide these opportunities for young people?

- Not knowing what is happening in the home
- Not knowing what the youth needs and how to address this with caregivers
- Shortage of foster homes
- Lack of good resource homes
- Cost of things needed
- Licensing issues
- Case load—too large

2. What are some solutions for addressing these challenges?

- Having resources
- Training for resource caregivers
- Lack of referrals
- Think creatively—i.e. approach phone companies in future, referrals will be automatic
- Encourage youth to go to hearings
 - Assist with transportation
- Therapy, in home vs. office
- Finding a balance with everything for the youth
- Giving them the knowledge

3. What support is needed from CWS, Family Court or other professionals to assure that young people are afforded the opportunities to develop independent living skills and exercise freedom and responsibilities?

- More communication between agencies, youth
- Get referrals earlier
- DOE: classes for independent living/life skills for all children, not only foster youth
- More check-ins by social workers
- Youth being part of their plan
- Age appropriate plan for each child
- Transportation: bus pass w/CWS

4. How can CWS, Family Court and other professionals (GALs, CASA) check in with foster youth to make sure that they are receiving these supports and opportunities?

- See youth in other contexts—not only in the resource home, to get a full story
- Check in with child only, RCG not present

- Bring food/drink to make child/youth comfortable

5. How can foster youth be supported and empowered to express their concerns and feelings and self-advocate for their needs?

- Talking to a judge
- Provide different opportunities to allow youth to speak
- Knowing their rights/what to expect
- Meeting them where they are at
- Giving youth time before making decisions
- Following through
- Training for foster parents
- Peer advocates
- Adult mentors
- More transparency
- Informing youth about case—becoming more empowered
- Connecting with bio family
- Education on social media before giving cell phone/computer

Group 9 (Facilitator: Marilyn, HI HOPES: Gernani, Kaitlyn)

Issue: Extracurricular and Social Activities

1. What are some of the barriers for foster youth and caregivers that hinder a young person's ability to engage in extracurricular and social activities?

- Putting the youth first—create opportunities and support
- Expenses
- Adequate room and board payments—unusual expectations
- Multiple placements as well as time in placements
- Time management and resource management
- Liability (being sued)
- Fear, second thoughts, i.e. injuries
- RCG encouraging youth to participate
- Having that trust

2. What are some solutions for addressing these challenges?

- Waiving restrictions and liability
- Contact respective agencies to collaborate to support youth with resources
- SW possibly providing assistance
- Training for RCGs
- Bio parents involved with training as well
- Updated resource booklet
- Develop individual normalcy plan for youth
- Creating balance
- Pair youth with a mentor
- Learning advocacy—speak up for themselves

3. What support is needed from CWS, Family Court state/administrative laws/rules or other professionals to assure that young people are afforded the opportunities to engage in these activities?

- Have a solid prudent parenting curriculum
- More resources
- Matching youth with appropriate housing placements and vice versa
- Inputting law into HRs
- Statutes
- Clear grievance process for youth

4. How can CWS, Family Court and other professionals (GALs, CASA) check in with foster youth to make sure that they are being allowed, encouraged and supported to engage in these activities?

- Talk to youth

- Make it informal (attend graduation; grab coffee or food, etc.)
- Encourage youth to come to court
- Written report or statement in place of being able to attend court
- Include extracurricular/social activities to checklist
- Have CASA more involved

5. How can foster youth be supported and empowered to express their concerns and feelings and self-advocate for their needs?

- Each youth understands what their rights are
- Understand what is happening
- Emphasize the youth's wishes
- Honor the youth's wishes
- Build social capital
 - It should be part of practice
- Supportive environment

Group 10 (Facilitator: Nina, HI HOPES: Keola, Sam)

Issue: Promoting Permanency and Family Relationships

1. What are some of the barriers for foster youth to maintain family and sibling connections? What are some barriers for foster youth in developing other lifelong adult connections? (ex: church, mentors, coaches, foster parents)?

- Fear
 - If youth not doing well
 - Fear that connecting = worse
 - If doing well, will compromise that
- Lack of resources and creativity
 - Not enough CWS staff
 - Lack of creativity looking at other options for visit
- Contract for visits minimally funded
- Non-relative placements creates more disconnect
- Homes limited capacity to take sibling groups together
- Transportation
 - Agencies trying to set up opportunities for mentoring, but big barriers is transport
- Lack of trust—youth unsure who to trust based on experience or lack of
- Moving placements

2. What are some solutions for addressing these challenges?

- Money
 - More aids with AWS
 - Service providers
 - Expand CCSS visitation
- RCG given training/support to do outings together with kids
 - Building relationships on Oahu is encouraged when siblings in different home
 - Encouragement comes from licensing units
- Educating RCGs on importance of forming connections
- Lots of emphasis on importance of family connections before finalizing adoption
- Relative placement a law
 - Not at all costs when safe/appropriate
- More flexibility with who can support visits
- Youth driven perspective—letting them decide what types of places they would like involved in
- More volunteer outreach for trans./people that can support
- Encourage all kids to be involved in programs together, e.g. boys and girls club
- Attorney for youth
 - To advocate in court for exactly what the youth wants

3. What support is needed from CWS, Family Court or other professionals to assist foster youth and caregivers?

- More CWS staff
- Everyone take ownership and make it a priority
- Legislation to make priority
 - Doesn't get prioritized because it's not the law, e.g. sibling visits, etc. and extended family
- Ensuring normal activities are part of youth's plan
- Liability with driver license
- More outreach to include extended family—doesn't matter if not placement—more efforts to keep family involved

4. How can CWS, Family Court, and other professionals (GALs, CASA) check in with foster youth to make sure that they are engaging in family connections and building supportive relationships with other adults?

- Judge check in with youth at court
- Priority for CASA and CWS, SW to check in on these subjects during monthly visits
- CASA and GAL to include in court reports so it will be priority/attorney aware of
 - Simple list is fine—put it on radar
- GAL/CASA transport to visits
 - Too restrictive
 - GALs not allowed
- Excluding everyone involved from liability the way CWS SW are

5. How can foster youth be supported and empowered to express their concerns and feelings and self-advocate for their needs?

- Give them their own attorney
- Foster youth support groups
- Have them do their own court report
- Really get to know, talk to and try to understand
- Journaling
- Fear to speak but because direct
 - Often discouraged
 - Solution: really connect and build trust so you can know what's really going on
- Social media outlets