

Identifying and Meeting the Legal Needs of Youth Experiencing Homelessness



This Session's Agenda

- Civil legal needs of youth experiencing homelessness – looking for attributes and developing screening tools
- How to bring in pro bono resources – pitfalls to avoid, successes to ensure
- How to bring in legal aid and ways to incorporate homeless shelters, defender and/or dependency offices, and youth
- How to bring in technology



Youth Homelessness and Housing Instability: Background Information



Not All Youth Homelessness Is The Same



Unaccompanied Youth: Running Away from What?

“Runaway” should be a value neutral term. The follow up question should always be running away from **what?**



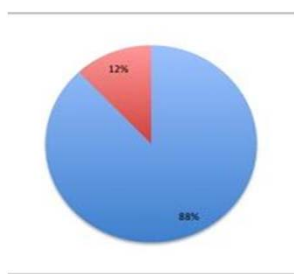
Running Away from What?

1.6 million children and youth (12-17) in the US experience homelessness without a parent or guardian.

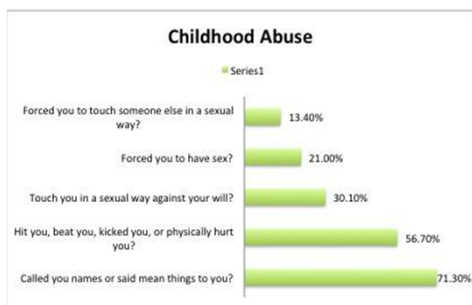
- 43% report being beaten by a caregiver
- 25% have had caregivers request sexual activity
- 20% had conflicts with parents around sexual orientation which caused them to leave

Fleeing Abuse

88% of Homeless Youth Report Experiencing Physical, Emotional or Sexual Abuse Prior to Becoming Homeless



11/6/2016



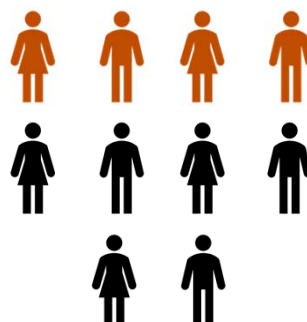
Juvenile Justice System Involvement and Homelessness

- Nearly 44% of youth interviewed had stayed in a jail, prison or juvenile detention center
- Almost 78% had at least one interaction with the police
- Nearly 62% had been arrested

Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau: Street Outreach Program Data Collection Project Final Report (April 2016).

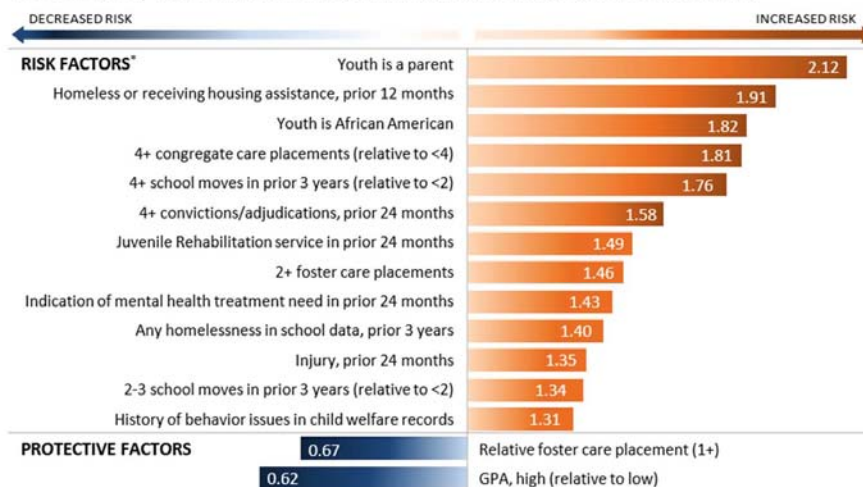
Child Welfare System Involvement and Homelessness

- 40% of youth who aged out foster care in three states experienced episodes of homelessness or couch surfing by age 23 or 24



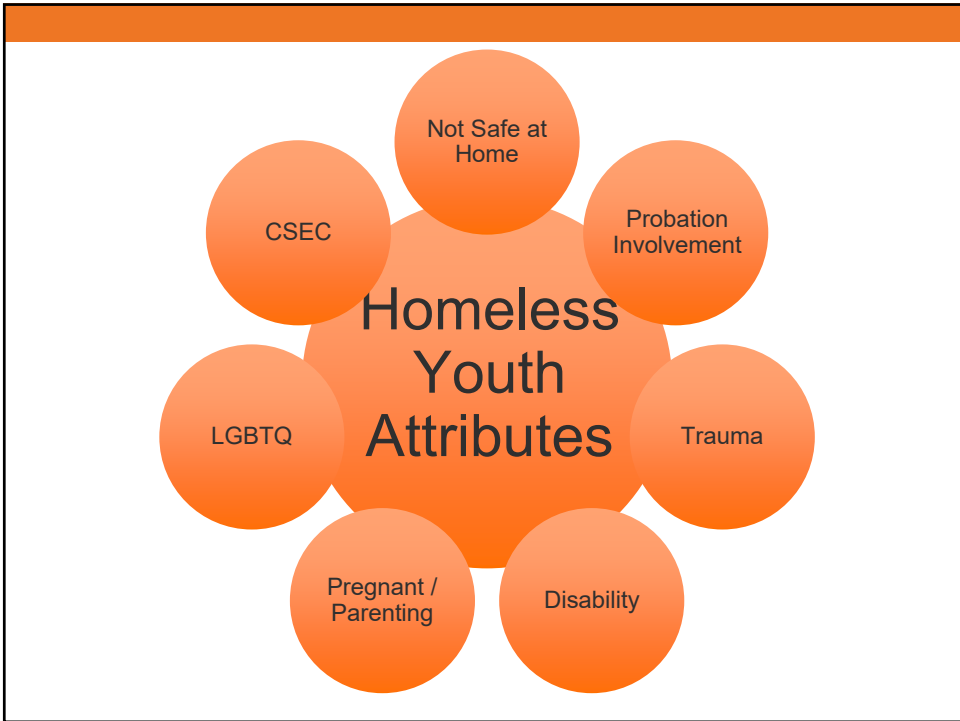

Amy Dworsky et al., *Assessing the Impact of Extending Care beyond Age 18 on Homelessness: Emerging Findings from the Midwest Study* (Chapin Hall 2010).

ODDS RATIOS | Odds of Experiencing Homelessness after Aging Out of Foster Care



*NOTE: 1) Disrupted adoptions are highly predictive of homelessness (Odds Ratio = 3.39), but the prevalence is extremely low (2 percent) and therefore not included in the above chart, 2) prior homelessness or housing assistance was based on data from ACES and HMIS and included permanent and permanent supportive housing, and 3) all factors are statistically significant at $p < .05$ except history of behavior issues in child welfare records ($p = .22$).

What is Homeless Youth Law Anyway?



Civil Legal Services: Adding more tools to the toolbox

- Housing
- Education
- Employment
- Foster Care
- Family Law
- Health Access
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Economic Safety Net Benefits
- Consumer Law



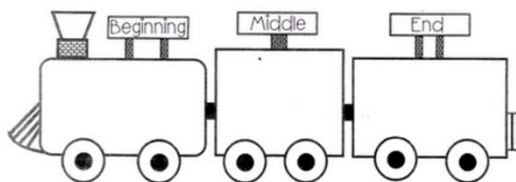
Bringing in Pro Bono





Tips for making pro bono really work!

- Start Small
- Beginning - Middle - End
- Honesty is the best policy. (Better known as ...managing expectations).



Tips for making pro bono really work!

- Train for autonomy!
- "If you build it, they will come"
- The right tool for the right job. (And sometimes pro bono volunteers are just not the right tool).
- Never, never, never enough thank yous



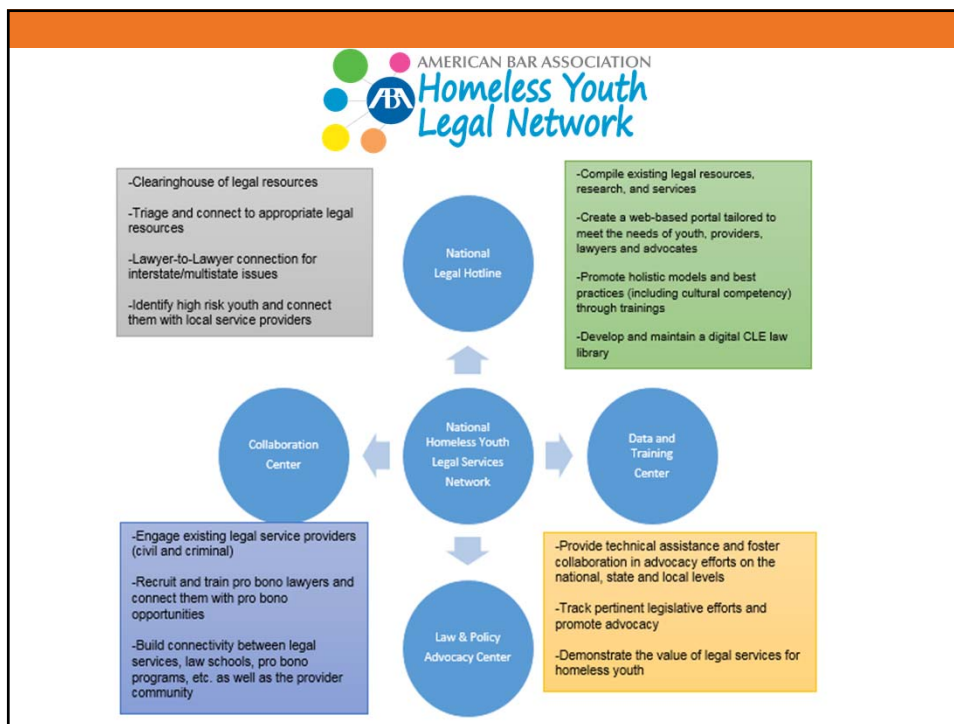
Tips for making pro bono really work!


- Plan the dive -- Dive the plan
- Make sure volunteers know exactly what they need to accomplish.
- Shape the assignment so it is clear what the volunteers should do.
- Trim it down to exactly what you will need.



Tips on what to avoid!

- Taking on the mountain, rather than one rock at a time
- Only one volunteer when two can do the job. (Teams rock!)
- Show them the library, so you don't need to read them every book!





Ways to engage with the HYLN:

- Visit our website: www.ambar.org/HYLN
- Join our listserv by e-mailing hyln@americanbar.org
- Help us map existing programs and unmet legal needs by taking our survey: <http://bit.ly/2jwUWme>
- Request free Technical Assistance by emailing Amy.HortonNewell@americanbar.org.

Bringing in Legal Aid



Best Practices in Working with Homeless Youth

- Meeting youth where they are
- Develop access points
- Build a net of referral sources
- Recognizes strengths and roles of partners



Getting Civil Lawyers Involved

- Why bother?
- Consider the partnership model
- Areas of focus
- Begin with open planning discussion



The Value of Civil Legal Advocacy

- Youth served from 7/1/11 – 1/30/16
 - 447 youth clients aged 13-21
 - 665 separate legal matters.
 - Recovered over **\$7 million** in entitlements with **the vast majority** coming from federal funding streams
- Helped youth obtain housing, disability benefits, food, and safety



Youth Directed Representation

- Youth may be silenced or have their voice minimized
- Youth are in the best position to know what they need
- Stated Interest vs. Best Interest
 - ✧ The discussion should be one of the first you have with any legal services partner



Partnerships Serving Delinquency and Dependency Involved Youth



How Much Am I Expected to Know or Do?



Areas to Focus and Issues to Screen

No one can know it all. No one can do everything.
 The goal: knowing when to call for an assist.

- ➔ Education
- ➔ Criminalization and Collateral Consequences
- ➔ Identification (IDs)
- ➔ Permanency Planning & Disposition
- ➔ Health & Mental Health Care
- ➔ Basic Public Benefits
- ➔ Housing



Permanency Planning and Disposition

- Questions to Consider
 - ❑ What **community-based dispositional options** exist for delinquency-involved youth?
 - ❑ What **funding, services, and supports** exist for youth completing probation in community?
 - ❑ What needs to be in place for my client to avoid returning?
- Major Areas of Focus
 - ❑ Parents and Guardians
 - ❑ Education Rights Holders
 - ❑ Extended Foster Care
 - ❑ Continuing Access to Services



Additional Considerations for Shelter Partnerships

- The Pitfalls
 - ✧ Language
 - ❖ Providers: TAY VI-SPDAT, CES, HMIS, “Outcomes”
 - ❖ Lawyers: Confidentiality, entitlement, & our own alphabet soup
 - ✧ Specialization
 - ✧ How lawyers practice – geography, subject mater, at our desks
 - ✧ Getting fired
- The Partnership
 - ✧ Build the relationship – fostering formal and informal relationships between attorneys and homeless providers is critically important
 - ✧ Educate each other
 - ✧ Find the right messenger to deliver the right message

Starting a New Partnership?

- Possible Resources
 - Collaboration w/ RHY Funding
 - OJJDP
 - Housing and Civil Legal Services Partnerships (HUD-OJJDP)
 - Demonstration Projects – Hot topic with a lot of private funders right now
 - DOJ- OVC Grants, VAWA Funding
 - County funding
- Basic Considerations
 - Getting the right partners to the table
 - Supervision and support
 - Deliverables and staffing

2017 HYLN Model Programs



Arizona: Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services (ALWAYS) Alwaysaz.org

California: Bay Area Legal Aid Youth Justice Project Baylegal.org

Connecticut: Center for Children's Advocacy Cca-ct.org

Maryland: Homeless Persons Representation Project, Homeless Youth Initiative Hprplaw.org

Minnesota: Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, Youth Law Project Mylegalaid.org

New Mexico: Pegasus Legal Services for Children Pegasuslaw.org/youth-law-project

New York: The Door door.org

New York: Urban Justice, Peter Cicchino Youth Project Pcyp.urbanjustice.org

Ohio: Family & Youth Law Center at Capital University School of Law Familyyouthlaw.org

Pennsylvania: Community Legal Services of Philadelphia (CLS) Clsphila.org


Utah: Homeless Youth Legal Clinic <https://www.voaut.org/homeless-teen-services>

Washington: Legal Counsel for Youth and Children (LCYC) Lcycwa.com

Bringing in Technology



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ALLIANCE for CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

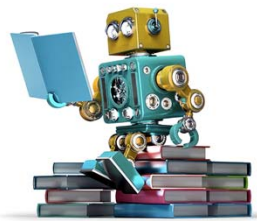
Children's Law Center of California

Survey Alerts Housing Employme... More

Approaches and Considerations

NE  TA
LOGIC

MY OTHER LAWYER
IS A
ROBOT
LEGAL ROBOT



Felicity

Felicity is 17 years old. She has been couch surfing and staying at shelters off and on for a little over two years. Last year, her mom's new boyfriend tried to get her to have sex with his friend. When she told her mom, she was kicked out and has been on the street ever since.

Six months ago, Felicity was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder NOS. She has been hospitalized two times this year for her depression including one suicide attempt.

What civil legal areas might she need help with? What additional questions might you ask? What other resources might you turn to?

Questions?

