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(Technical Difficulties)
(Joined in Progress)

>> Jeze: Now we also want to give an acknowledgment for the land where our campus sits on. This land on which we inhabit is physically situated in the original ancestral homelands. We pay respect to these people, past, present and future and their continuing presence in the physical diaspora. Now, today for our presentation, these are some of the things we want to touch upon. We want to make sure that we showcase a little bit of the improving educational outcomes motions that are being set in place, specifically in our state and in our institutions. We want to share a little bit of the trends and statistics, concerning our foster youth and different placements that they come from before attending higher education. We want to go into the study and explain not just the study itself but the impact it does to our students in their campus environment and in their later life.

I explain a little bit of the institutional barriers that sometimes our campuses create unintentional, but barriers nonetheless.

And then share a little bit of what reach has done to create foster friendly programming.

Now, we do want to make sure that we point out that there has definitely been an increase of dedicated support programs for foster youths in California, both at the four year private and public and at community colleges which is what Mt. SAC. 12 institutions of community colleges -- [INDISCERNIBLE].

That is quite considerable in such a short time per se.

116 community colleges also have what's called a foster youth success liaison.

>> Jeze: Now in 2011, there was one that provided prior to reg station at a community college -- at community colleges and Cal state and it

suggest st that private institutions also provided that prior to registration to foster youth.

Great efforts haven't been made, however, we want to point out that we are getting closer, but we're still not there. I think it's important to celebrate whenever a process, guideline or law is enacted, but I think the true celebration should happen when the correct implementation of that is actually in place.

So to give an example, the foster youth success liaison initiative was a great initiative that provided one person in each campus at a community college to be recognized as that liaison for fosters. However that, initiative did not provide any funding for community colleges to hire a full time person dedicated to that. Which that meant that someone that was already on the college having a specific job, whether it's working full time for EOPS or working full time for financial aid, admissions and records, got an addition will task added on to their plate. While this is great initiative in theory, it also brings limitations to what one person can do if they already have another assignment

You know, on top of what they are trying to do. Now, we do want to showcase a little bit of what has happened for us in 2015 our ruhe program was created.

It is one thing that we have very clear at reach is the great support that we have from our institution, and from our administration.

I think our vice-president of student services recognized the important role that community colleges can play when serving foster youth. We are an open campus accepting everyone that applies, a variety of resources available to support students and we are quite forgiving. There is a process for us to be able to support a student or find an appeal or do anything that can make sure we keep them in the higher education system.

So given in 2015 that we did not have a foster youth program, they decided not only to create a position, but to create program around it, funding two full-time positions, giving additional funding for discretionary funds to provide textbooks, to provide supplies, to provide support in mentoring and

that continuing effort has continued throughout the five years that we existed. Can
So much that in the beginning the lead person for the program was a coordinator or and a position that what year ago turned into a Director. Definitely moving to institutionalize the program. We want to recognize we are blessed and lucky compared the other institutions and we want to recognize our higher administration or taking the lead and doing all that.

Next slide, please.

>> Sorry, I'm having a little difficulty.

>> Jeze: I apologize, it's our first webinar at this scale so we can't be our normal charming selves in person as we usually are. And so we're just going to blame any technical mistake on spectrum, which is usually the provider that we have. We will just blame any technical mistake on spectrum, which is the provider that we have.

>> Briseida: It looks like it froze. I'm hoping we can have a resolution within the next couple of seconds.

Jeze, do you want to see if you can bring it in from your end.

>> Jeze: I'll try to see if I can go ahead.

There we go.

>> Briseida: Awesome. Thank you.

So moving on, we're going to go into discussing trends and statistics as we want to give everyone here today an overview of the foster care system as well as important background information regarding the foster youth student population we tend to work with at our community college.

Now, moving on, the foster care system is a temporary living arrangement for children and youth under the age of 18 who have been placed under the care of the state. According to the most recent A FCARS report which is a preliminary report released every year for the previous year in 2019 there were 423,997 youth in the foster care system.

Now there are multiple reasons why children and youth are removed from their homes such as maltreatment, sexual abuse, parental drug abuse among others, but the study that was brought up highlighted that the number one reason was due to neglect.

It's important to also highlight that not all youth who are placed in foster care are placed in a foster home.

Following the removal from their families, some of them may experience multiple different housing placements, and so by looking at the graph on our screen, we can see that 46% or 46% of them are placed in a foster family home with nonrelatives, meaning they are placed with complete strangers who they have never met before.

Following, we have 32% who are placed in a foster family home with relatives, meaning it could be extended family that perhaps they do or do not know.

We could also see that there are several different types of housing placements with 6% being placed in an institution-type. We also have 5% at trial homes and so on and so forth.

This goes to show how every foster youth student we come across with has a unique and different background within the foster care system.

The study also purported that on average there are -- youth spent 19.6 months in care before they get to see a resolution in their case. That's almost two years living in some type of temporary housing arrangement, not knowing whether they get to go back home or not.

Obviously the number one goal is to reunify them with their families, however, for those who permanently stay in care do tend to experience multiple home changes. They tend to attend different high schools

throughout that period, and overall, just experience a lack of stability in their lives.

And now it's important to consider all this because all of this can set them at an academic disadvantage even before they start attending our higher Ed institutions.

So moving on now, now I went over and discussed a little bit about the lived experiences of foster youth students I want to focus on discussing a very, very important study that informs us a little bit more about our foster youth programming.

The adverse childhood experiences study, otherwise referred to as the ACE study, was a collaboration done between the CDC and the Kaiser health clinic. It is one of the largest studies ever conducted that links the relationship between adverse childhood experiences or childhood trauma and later life effects such as health and social issue problems.

Now, researchers interviewed a little over 17,000 team members who underwent a comprehensive physical examination and who chose to also provide detailed information regarding their childhood experience in areas of abuse, neglect and family dysfunction.

Part of the participants demographic consisted mainly of mostly white, middle and upper middle income class who were college educated. And so all of them belong to the Kaiser health appraisal organization.

So after the study, what they found was that an astonishing two-thirds or about 66% of the participants have reported experiencing at least one ACE, and then also one in six participants experienced having had four or more ACEs.

Some of those ACEs, as we can see on the screen, were in regards to experiencing physical and emotional abuse, as well as neglect and some type of household dysfunction, such as mental illness, having an incarcerated relative, having someone in your family who had substance abuse and so on.

Now, another important thing that the study concluded was that the higher the amount of aces, the greater the risk of developing certain health effects as adults.

And since the study was conducted, again, back in the 1990's, there has been numerous research done looking at how ace disproportionately impacts our communities of color as well as our low income folks, which is also a demographic that our foster youth population tend to come from.

So knowing your score. Before we dive into discussing what are some of the later life effects that folks who experience at risk childhood experiences are, we want to provide a space for you all to get to know your ACE score.

In the link, in the box there will be a link provided that you can click on and follow and you'll be briefly redirected.

Or you can also scan the QR Code we provided on the screen with your camera phone. Essentially it's going take you to a ten question questionnaire that is very similar to the one used for the ACE study.

But before you do so, I do want to mention that some of the questions can be triggering, so feel free not to participate.

Its e also anonymous. So we're going to provide maybe two to three minutes, Jeze, for those of you who are interested in taking the quiz, to do so and then we'll go ahead and meet right back in here.

>> Briseida: So Jeze we do have -- if we can go back to the link.

>> Jeze: There you go.

>> Jeze: So we'll give one more minute and then we'll go ahead and move on to the next slide so we can share the results for this.

>> Briseida: You want to click on that one.

>> Jeze: Okay, so whomever feels comfortable to share, if we can maybe ask you please text bmaciel330 to 37607 it will give you the option then to cast your vote, depending on the score that we have. So -- A for 0, B for 1, C for 2, D for 3 and E for 4 our more.

>> Briseida: We want to do this follow up activity to have an overview and some insight as to what is maybe perhaps the average ACE score within the audience.

Feel free to share if you're comfortable.

>> Jeze: So we can see them populate and we can see the diversity within everyone here on this webinar, ranging from 1, all the way to 4 or more. As of now, we actually have not had a single person say that they did not experience an ACE.

>> Briseida: Okay. I think it looks like maybe we're done. So we can -- oh.

>> Jeze: That's okay. We can continue.

>> Briseida: Awesome. So it's kind of also very astonishing to see that within our audience we have folks who have experienced four or more aces at 50%.

>> Jeze: And I think that's a demonstration of the resiliency factor that so many people have. Obviously if they are experiencing adverse situations as a child, and then growing up. So I think as you all saw the questions, they are quite intense. Quite invasive. And so imagine those are some of the situations that our students have encountered before coming to us and before coming to higher education.

>> Briseida: So we can move on. So now we're going to go ahead and talk about some of the long term and later lieu effects that folks who have

experienced adverse childhood experiences -- traumatic trauma, we're going to go ahead and go over and see what they look like.

So on this slide on the picture right here we can see that folks later on can tend to develop more serious injuries, such as traumatic brain injuries, fractures and bumps. We can also see some mental health related challenges such as experiencing depression, anxiety, suicide, PTSD.

We also see the unintended pregnancy, pregnancy complications and fetal death.

Folks are also probably more likely to engage in risky behaviors, referring to using alcohol and drugs and substance abuse and being involved in unprotected sex.

We could also see a development in chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, obesity and heart disease. And then also one of the ones that catches our attention the most would be the opportunity in regards to education, occupation and income.

Now, how are ACE-related back to our foster youth population -- and like Jeze mentioned a few minutes ago, a lot of them get to experience a lot of traumatic events throughout their childhood, and that translates to them facing some of the challenges that we start seeing in higher ed institutions.

So there has been research in the past that have found foster youth to have a high -- or report a high ACE score. Again, from statistics, we know that for example youth go through at least two traumatic events, one is being removed from their home and then, two, the abuse or neglect that got them removed in the first place.

>> Jeze: Now, obviously, how does this look on campus is something we they'd to look into. Many times we expect certain behaviors to have an explanation or sometimes we don't look into why these behaviors have an explanation.

And so it's important for us to have that trauma lens put on every time we encounter our students, every time we service our students. In order for us to try to understand the why of something, I think it's key for us to start

changing that mentality from what is wrong with you to what has happened to you? That information -- there is a reason why these behaviors are here and there is reason why these behaviors have served a function in the past.

Something that we'll see in the classroom or on campus, the inability to focus for our student. We might see them disengage, we might see them not fully committed to a class or fully committed to coming and receiving services that attrition rates that are quite high for foster youth support programs.

Many times it has to do with the way that they were raised, the way that these ACEs have impacted their development or that trauma that they are continuously reacting to in different situations.

You'll see the higher levels of anxiety and stress. Now, true that tests, buying books, the college experience is stressful as it is and full of anxiety every single week and semester. Now our students sometimes would react so much higher than the other population that might have less of this history.

And so you might see some of our students over reacting over certain situations or what seem like an overreacts to us based on our experience and background, but in reality it is not. It's the norm of where they live and so it's important for us to make sure we realize

Whenever there is something that seems out of the norm or out of what we would normally be used to seeing, there might be a situation. And so identifying that student as they might be of a specific population or former foster youth and trying to create that correct support system for them.

The difficulty building relationships -- I think you can see that from swinging from one side to the other. Either attaching very fast to certain people, if you're a professor, if you're a staff that supported them and did something for them that they then all of a sudden you become this hero and this person that is, wow, you're wonderful. You're the best ever.

But then the next day you might be someone that is not able to bend something for them and all of a sudden, okay, that's it. I'm done with

you. You are not listening to me. I have a reason. I have justifications of these things.

And I think sometimes that difficulty of understanding, an excuse my explain the situation but does not justify it and allowing that part to sink in is sometimes difficult for our youth. Building those relationships that's why you might see someone jumping into a romantic relationship very fast and breaking in and burning that bridge later on.

You'll see with the students they change their group of friends quite rapidly. Cycling through them due to different issues. Mental health challenges -- I think it's to expect that anyone that has been system impacted might have seen a therapist or a clinician at some point, sometimes required and mandated by whatever program they were involved in.

And so many themes our -- many times our students once they age out and have the right to choose, they don't want anything to do with having mental health therapy. They don't want to address these things. And you'll see a lot of untreated mental health challenges that they are actively dealing with.

And sometimes do not connect. They might just think I had a bad week, that's why I didn't get up this week. That's why I didn't come to school because I was feeling down, but it's okay. I slept it off and I'm fine, but when you look at those patterns throughout the semester, or a couple of semesters, that gives you an indication of something else deeper happening.

I'm sorry, go ahead.

>> Briseida: Let me chime in and add to the mental health challenges. Even when we start looking across the board to the types of research that there has been focused and identifying the specific barriers that they face while they are trying to attend college, one of the main ones that keeps coming across over and over again.

Is that mental health -- those mental health needs that they have.

>> Jeze: Absolutely. Thank you for bringing that up, Briseida.

And finally, triggers. I think there might be certain things that are triggering for our students that we have not experienced. We all have different triggers. We all have different things and for us to be mindful of some of those things.

I remember a student of ours that shared with us that one of the most difficult things for them in the classroom was when the door would open. Because of their experience and past traumatic events, every single time the person that would abuse them would open the door, they knew, okay, something is happening. Something is going to happen to me. So experiencing that for years so now that opening the door would be a triggering event. And so something that this person would have to do is always sit in a position in the classroom that would always have their eyes on the door so they could see who was coming in or out.

They said if so many people are coming in or out there is a point where I cannot focus and I shut down or have to leave. Those are some of the things to keep in mind when service willing our students.

>> Briseida: And then, Jeze, we do have some in the comment box. We're going to go over them at the end of the presentation, correct?

>> Jeze: Yes, we'll have some more of our response. We definitely want to hear from everyone and the experience and we obviously want to make sure that this is the experience that we've had and this is some of the relationships that we've built.

But we do not want to put this on everyone. Obviously different people are going to have different perspectives, and obviously there is going to be different data out there that is going to be able to support and help us build a better program in general.

Now, one of the things that we want to make sure that we include is obviously the voice of our students in every single thing that we do. If we are a program for students, this voice has to be included. We wanted to give the opportunity for our youth and our students to come in and show a little bit of their narrative and explain a little bit of their perspective

of some of the things that have happened to them and some of the things that they found useful within programs or within campuses.

So for this portion I would like to invite Davianna and Richard to come back and help us out with some of these questions.

So, first, I will ask them to go ahead and give us a little background about themselves and then we'll go ahead and move on to the question portion.

Sorry, Davianna, have Davianna and then Richard after that.

>> Davianna: My name is Davianna, a bit about myself, I'm 21 years old now. I entered the stem when I was 15 and I was fortunate enough to stay with my siblings in the beginning. However, you know, things change and I ended up having to go to different homes and was even homeless for some time.

But even before that my home life wasn't the best. There were many things that I didn't understand because I was kept so sheltered and so after I entered the system, I was made very aware about the realities of what was really going on in my life and because of that I had to deal with

>> Davianna: The journey was difficult to say the least, however, I was able to get the help I needed to become the person I am today which now allows me to do things like this where I can advocate for other and future foster youth.

>> Jeze: Thank you very much for sharing that. Richard, tell us a little bit about yourself, please.

>> Richard: Hello, my name is Richard. A little about me is I was in foster -- [INDISCERNIBLE] three times at the age of five and my last time being at 12 until I aged out. And eventually became -- gotten my independence.

I separated from my siblings various times until the last few years where I was completely unowned by any of them. More about me is my mother lost their parental rights over me and my educational rights.

I was also moved around in multiple foster homes and I entered a group home. My last four years of care until I aged out.

Although the system has many benefits that I utilize now such as some medical and educational ones, one place that has failed me is it made me very isolated which caused me to have initially very poor social skills. Since the only people I would talk to in the system were social workers and therapists.

>> Jeze: Thank you so much, Richard, for sharing that with us. Now, for the first question, what were some of the barriers you experienced at the start of your college journey?

>> Davianna: So for me, when I began to apply for Mt. SAC, I was actually homeless. So the huge barrier with that was I didn't have access to a computer or Wi-Fi or even transportation.

So it made it really difficult for me to get access in order to go to the orientations and interviews and things of that sort.

>> Jeze: Thank you, Davianna.

Richard?

>> Richard: [INDISCERNIBLE] when I first started my journey in college at Mt. SAC was the [INDISCERNIBLE].

I did not have anyone to take me to my first [INDISCERNIBLE] or explain to me that I was supposed to be there early to be there (Audio Distortion).

And so this may seem to most others -- for me it was very discouraging -- if it wasn't important to anyone else, then why would it matter to me?

>> Jeze: Thank you, Richard.

Now, for the second question: Can you give me two examples of a different resources that had a significant impact on your college journey?

>> Davianna: The biggest impact for me was the support program like reach, especially in the beginning. I didn't know anything, so having them walk with me, step by step, with things like financial aid, the workshops that I should be taking, and the many opportunities I have as a foster youth helped me so much.

And also having access to book vouchers was really great. I was able to get the books that I needed almost immediately rather than waiting for -- to get the books and risking the chance of being left behind because I couldn't afford them.

>> Jeze: Thank you so much, Davianna. And Richard?

>> Richard: A couple of things of significant impact on my college journey, one would be joining a support system like reach because [INDISCERNIBLE] they invest in me more than I was in myself, which really helped motivate me to show the same interest and the same level of care and support in myself as they are putting to me.

A second resource that impacted me was AmeriCorps. Since joining AmeriCorps, this led me to work on campus which eased my time as a student. This also helped me prove my development skills [INDISCERNIBLE] and networking.

>> Jeze: Thank you, Richard. Just to clarify, I cut a little bit off, but Richard mentioned day AmeriCorps as a program that he was part of. It's a branch of AmeriCorps specifically designed to provide job opportunities for foster youth here in California.

And now for the final question: What were some of the things you were expected to know but never heard about before?

>> Davianna: So when you apply for things like school, they asked me about documents I had never heard anything about. I didn't know what --

how to get a transcript or what approve of dependency letter was. I didn't know about nonl. R. S. filing letters or even what a Social Security number was.

So when they asked me and they even have these little question marks at the corner of the applications and they didn't tell me what they were or where to get them and it kind of just goes to show how they expect you to know everything that's on the application before even applying to them.

>> Jeze: Thank you, Davianna. Richard?

>> Richard: Some things expected to know but didn't were many of the things you think -- [INDISCERNIBLE].

And the college culture -- for instance, for me, when I experienced -- [INDISCERNIBLE] I should check out -- check my E-mail, I'll be receiving multiple things from the school and professors and the classes there.

I interpreted that as my E-mail I used to register for classes and school -- [INDISCERNIBLE] rather than Mt. SAC making individual E-mail for me to use as a student at Mt. SAC. And one of the other things would be financial aid -- contract disbursements or a couple of things I was expected to know but didn't know.

>> Jeze: I know Richard is cutting off a little bit. So some of the things he said were that he definitely had trouble was the campus culture in understanding it. Other specific situation was when he went to financial aid and you will receive it on E-mail and what the next steps are. So he assumed that through his personality E-mail he was going to get an E-mail from Mt. SAC and make sure they would keep him in the loop. What he didn't understand was that actually each Mt. SAC gets their own Mt. SAC E-mail and that's where they receive that information. So those were some of the things that he said that as part of the campus culture that he was expected to know but he obviously did not know when starting Mt. SAC.

Thank you so much to Richard and Davianna for sharing this -- your perspective and for any program, for the perspective of students is the most important part.

It's what we should be basing part of our program or implementations or our basically our interventions or anything that we create for them.

So go hand share my screen again.

>> Jeze: So moving on to unintentional institutional barriers. Now, as I go over this graph that we created, or this work flow, I ask you to think about your institution, whether it's higher education or nonprofit, whatever it may be and think about the different loops that sometimes we turns our youth or students into.

Now, this comes as great intention, everything that we try to do is to obviously provide support and to make sure we are there for them. However, at times we create these unintentional barriers that we cannot -- what they call realize at that moment.

So for starters, here at Mt. San Antonio College, we have a college application whenever coming in. So obviously every application has to be completed and in process. Now, we are a two-year college, which means that we accept pretty much everyone that applies. There is a registration process.

So that in itself makes it so much easier compared to if we were a four year institution that had obviously a much stringent path for acceptance.

Let's say a new student applies to college. Then they will have their -- they have to complete financial aid. They have to complete registration to enroll and get everything done.

for financial aid you might have the Chafee educational training voucher that is for foster youth. You might -- you will have to complete the FAFSA, which is obviously the federal financial aid application. Now, if you get picked up for verification, there is going to be additional documents you have to turn in for that.

You have to turn in dependency -- if you said you were a form R foster youth. You might have to turn in proof of income if you said that you filed or not filed depending on how those things are.

for registration, you're going to have to complete an orientation for the college. You might have to complete a placement assessment whether that is a questionnaire, whether that is bringing your transcripts from high school, or taking a test. And then residency. Obviously we have to determine if you're a resident -- in state resident or nonstate resident for tuition purposes.

Some of our students, depending on what they put on the application, they might be flagged as nonresident which means there is an additional layer of documents that need to be provided for to us complete that.

Now, for any foster youth that comes on to our campus, we would obviously ask them and tennis ball them and advise them, join a support program. Join a foster youth support program, reach, in our case. So each of those also have their own application, also have their own orientation and then obviously whatever document requirements that follow after that.

So all of this is just for one, a brand new student that has no experience dealing with college yet or the campus culture as Richard pointed out.

And second, this is also before we even take classes. We haven't met with a counselor or looked at majors or anything academic. This is the process to get them started and there is also not taking into account what's happening at home, if they have a job, if they have income, if they have emotional support. All those things are outside.

So whatever issue or barrier or difficulty they have outside of this, they have to deal with and then come and deal with these things.

Now, all these things are necessary. All these things are very helpful. The OPS and joining a foster support program could be the difference of staying in college or graduating or being successful, but nonetheless, those create additional steps in which each of them can be a potential place for our students to simply just give up and say, you know what, this is too difficult. Or is it really worth it? At this point we also have to notice that they don't know what the services might be or even if they know those services, they still don't know the true value that a book voucher is.

The true value of having prior to registration, having access to a counselor or any of these resources. And so for them at this point it might not be worth it if too many of these steps are becoming complicated.

Now, what have we done to support our community and to support foster youth? The first thing we created a holistic support services, a wrap around approach. It's true we are a campus support program and meaning that we want them to do well educationally. We want to do well academically. We want them to graduate, transfer, whatever their goal may be.

However, in order for that to happen, we have to step back and look at what are the things outside that might prevent you to be successful before you even step foot on campus? Do you have a job? Do you have income? Do you have emotional support, a support system around you to be there with you when something happens?

Do you have stable housing? If those are not being met, then we cannot worry too much about tutoring, about book vouchers, about having counselor appointments because there is other things that are more important for me like knowing where I'm going to sleep tonight or next week than that tutoring service.

So something that we have done is we created a position -- we created a position as a life skills coordinator. And this person what they do is they first assess every single student that comes in to see what are the issues or what are some of the deficiencies that they have when it comes to their life skills.

Is there housing secure? Do they have a job? Do they know how to budget? Do they know how to self-sustain when it comes to grocery shopping? Can they make ends meet with income they do have or don't have?

And depending on that we create a series of workshops through out the whole year for them to hopefully increase that knowledge. And depending on that we refer out if some of these things are not for us to address, for example, we're not going to address any mental health challenge. We're going to refer it to the experts when it comes to that.

But that allows us to create those services around a student that can support them.

A trauma-informed care programming, every single thing we do we need to make sure we have that from the language we use, we need to start using certain things as a support program instead of -- support system instead of family. Not everyone will have those roles.

Asian I mentioned earlier, we need to make sure we have that mindset changed of what is wrong with you or what has happened to you? And some of those things that we have done is through our faculty trainings, through our trainings for our classified and direct contact staff that understand some of these things and understand at least the basics

of what happens to triggers a trauma-informed thought process you need to do whenever talking to someone. And that also allows them to identify that youth and maybe provide the adequate resource.

Mentorship -- the peer to peer is crucial. I think the most important part and component of our program is the fact that we hire former foster youth that have been on our campus one or two years already and are usually within one year of transferring to become peers to the new generation.

So each of them have a caseload of about 15 students that they are responsible for for the whole year. And so that they must meet them in face -- in person at least once a month. They must have contact with them at least once a week. They are the ones that are the first point of contact for our youth.

Our youth might not have that comfort to come and speak to the other staff at first, but they will have an easier time coming in contact with one of their peers. And the key thing is we're asking our peer mentors to simply teach them about the mistakes that they themselves made. And how did they learn these things and what were the lessons that they made? And obviously there is a lot of training that is involved in that, the part we're going to mention a little bit down the line of how do we prepare these students? Because we want to make sure we take care of them emotionally as well so they don't suffer any vicarious trauma that can happen to anyone of us

Growth opportunities versus punitive responses. Every opportunity is a learning opportunity. A mistake is a challenge, but it's also that opportunity to make some true change. So an example is whenever someone comes in late, are we -- to an appointment. If there is 20 minutes left of that time, maybe -- spend those 20 minutes speaking to them about what went wrong or how can you prevent yourself from being late next time? What were some of the things can you do? Instead of saying, like, nope, I'm sorry, you have to leave. Come back next week or make an appointment and then be here on time.

I think it's important that we show our students that we're there to help them but we also have to hold them accountable to their things. We have to make sure we tell them the truth but give them that opportunity to perform better. And those tools for them to learn from that instead of just being on the negative side.

We have to remember that students and youth that have experienced time in the system, they have several people telling them about what they did wrong.

So if they skipped school one day, they are going to have their lawyer tell them or their case manager or their social worker or therapist or whomever is on their case, so you're going to have five or six people bringing this punitive response to something that might simply be normal behavior according to the development and according to the age.

Something that wouldn't happen for someone that lives with their bio parents which they would have mom and dad to tell them about that and that's it. We they'd to make sure we take that approach of how can I help you learn from that opportunity?

We want to make sure that we build trust and empower. Be consistent and strength-based. It's okay to be tough. It's okay to have these very specific roles as long as you're consistent. I know there are certain programs that would tell them if you're more than 15 minutes late, then you can't come to that appointment.

I think that's obviously something that can happen, as long as you always hold to that. As long as, one, you're giving them that 15 minute grace period is more than plenty for them to show up. And have that

approach. However, you need to make sure that you hold to that. Because the more consistent you are every single time they come

Okay, if I do, A, you said you're going to be there for B. If every time I have A you're always there for B, then that trust will start building. But if you start switching around and being inconsistent, if you're the ones canceling the appointments and doing all these things, that's going to be difficult for them to find that trust and build that moment.

And empower -- you want to start with what they are doing well. I think it's important for us to look at maybe we have a student that always shows up late to appointments but this student still shows up and is still there. That is different than if they stopped showing up.

I remember a specific situation with one of our students that is one of the ones that would participate the most with us, however, they would tend to drop in the middle of the semester and then disappear and come back next semester.

There was one particular semester in which I found them about a week after grades were due and he had just found out he had failed his math class and he's in tears and telling me I tried really hard. I don't know what's wrong with me. I can't believe it. All these things. He was definitely having a hard moment. So I listened to him but then as soon as he was done venting. I said before anything, I want to tell you how proud I am of you. Last semester you would drop and just not show up for six or eight weeks and we did not hear from you until next semester. Here you are today crying and upset because you did not pass a class. Because you thought that you could do better because there are so many other things because you tried. And I know it's an F, but I want to tell you that you earned this F which I know sounds weird but it is something that you have earned and so this puts you at so much of a closer chance of passing the next time because you're starting to get that discipline right.

And I think looking at what they have done correct instead of always focusing on the other things and the strengths they already have and the foster youth are one of the most resilient and strong people that we will encounter because of everything that they've overcome.

So the fact that they have stepped foot on campus in a higher education campus regardless of everything else that has happened is something to be celebrated.

Mental health resources -- we definitely want to make sure that we have things available for them. We mentioned that they had challenges. So something that we have done on our campus is, yes, we do have a couple of clinicians available for students, but we have a campus close to 30,000 students. So two or three clinicians will not be enough for that amount of students. We've partnered with local nonprofits and created MOU's in order for them to be able to see our students and for us to refer to them with the permission of the student. And it has definitely worked out well.

Some of our students prefer to keep these types of services off campus, nothing to do with us. So we find out nothing about it. They just like to take care of their personal life outside. Also it allows us to readily available -- be readily available for these services and refer to them and also a long and consistent service for as long as they want to.

While campus resources sometimes allow them to to take five or six sessions, these companies we have created an alliance with are continuous and it's up to the student to follow through for as A or as long as they want.

Accountability -- we need to make sure that we help them hold themselves accountable to something. We have the saying in our program that at first when they come in, they are accountable to us. We are the ones that they don't want to let down because we're reminding about them and hounding them about things in certain perspectives from them.

But we are there all the time. But eventually it starts hopefully to click that I go to class because I know that it's good for me. Because I know that it actually is putting me closer to my educational goal instead of doing it because Jeze or Briseida or Davianna or someone from reach is telling me about it.

We need make sure we teach them and do that switch that it's okay for you to have an excuse for something, but that excuse can only take you so long. An excuse explains the behavior but doesn't justify it.

So if your car broke down today and you're late for something, then that's okay. That's understandable, but if your car breaks down every single week or a couple of times a week, then maybe it's time for a different car or a bus or other options. Can
Because we need to make sure that we empower them to realize there are certain positions to be accountable for but you do have the power to change them.

>> I think there is a difference between doing things with them rather than -
- versus doing things for them. Right?

And so oftentimes we can create situations in which we want something so much for them that we'll schedule the appointment for them to see a counselor or perhaps the liaison or perhaps their case worker wants to meet with one of us and whatnot.

So we have to be mindful of the student and take into perspective of what they want and so accountability comes into play in regards to allowing them to have the opportunity to do these things for themselves, but you know, also being along with them, supporting them every step of the way.

>> Jeze: Absolutely. It's a partnership. We cannot work harder for them than they do for themselves.

A step by step process, explain the how and the why. I think so many times what we do is second nature to us. If we work in higher education, we know thousand financial aid process works. We know how auditing a class works. We know how the calendar works. For our student sometimes that doesn't happen and we need to make sure we have that understanding.

And that respect towards them that we cannot expect them to understand in 30 seconds something that has taken us years to master. So we need to have that pace for that process and break it down into easy steps.

We might tell a student go on to your FAFSA and change X, Y and Z and submit it and come back and check the financial aid in a couple of

weeks. We haven't checked to see if they have a laptop or compute R for them to access. We haven't checked in to see if they have adequate Internet access, if they know the web page for them to access FAFSA.

There are so many other steps that sometimes we need to make sure we account for and help them build that and as we learn not just the how, but the why. Why is this important? Why is a more second deadline for a FAFSA important? Why are you supposed to do these things? Why is it important for you to show up to every class on time and be there ready to learn and whatever that may mean? It's important for us to respect them as adults intellectually and explain the rationale that we know and that will hopefully help them build more accountability and also empower them to make some of these decisions on their own.

>> Briseida: And if I can add to that as well, we have to be mindful especially for folks who are perhaps haven't had the opportunity to work with foster youth in the past, that foster youth are considered an at risk student population, meanings they are more likely than their counter peers who do have the parental support and do have extended family support to drop out, right? To not persist, to not continue achieving their higher education goals, and so they are a subgroup within the first generation college student population, meaning when they get to college, it is completely foreign to them. They are not aware of what the different departments are.

They do not know how to do certain things and so it's really important to incorporate that explanation behind some of the things that we expect them to do automatically. Right?

by default; but being mindful of that can definitely help in assisting our foster youth once they continue attending higher education.

>> Jeze: Thank you very much, Briseida. That's extremely true. Now how we built the support system or our youth. First we identified who the foster youth on our campus were. We look in order the data and made sure that what were the ways for us to know who we're servicing and how they are doing? Something that we've done within our database is we created attributes for anyone that self-identified themselves as foster youth and

anyone that has been verified. So when everyone reports, we understand, okay, this is self-identified, it's a potential foster youth, but then this code tells us that this person has been verified and therefore they are a foster youth. We created an advisory council with local stakeholders. If we're servicing the community, which we are, we need to make sure that the community has input. Not just our campus community, but our students or potential students or high school principals, or high school liaisons, or nonprofits or Department of Education, anyone that has a direct line with some of our students can tell us.

Hey, the next year this is what they are looking for. You had should be expecting a group that maybe lives more in unstable housing because of different reasons. Maybe providing more information on housing at your next presentation is probably better for this group.

So making sure that this group provides that oversight for the program to make sure that we have the ear to the ground and can mimic those trends and meet them accordingly through our program.

The case management approach with our peer to peer mentoring as we mentioned. These students are peer mentors. They are tasked to keep in the loop with these students and provide these services and give resources. But then we also provided that training to them. Once a week we have trainings for them in various things we have taught them some basic things of how to answer a phone to how to write a correct E-mail to maybe even how to ask open-ended questions, how to do those motivational interview questions. And then how to log this and how to create notes and do case consultation once a week, too.

We come in everyone as a group and bring up are there any concerns or something that is going on? And then we have the community -- our program community come back and say okay maybe this is how we can do this to address that.

The intrinsic services, we need to make sure we are there for them. Our students receive allotted of E-mails and information from us. Even texts messages or so on, we have a newsletter that goes out that is created through mail chimp and whenever a student clicks in on something, one we know what time did they click on that and what time they were looking at it

and what were the things they clicked? And how interested they were in that and those would be some of the things we need to do more of.

Diversified delivery of our services -- it's not enough just to have a phone line. Not enough to have an E-mail, but you need to have other options for them to be able to communicate with you. In our program, we obviously have a phone line. We have a couple of phone lines and a text line. We have a chatting service that they can log in. We have a web E-mail form where they can ask questions. We also have a virtual front desk Monday through Thursday in which a student can log in and ask questions.

Obviously, all of our E-mails are out there for them to be able to contact at any point but then we're also in the point of creating a frequently asked question section on our website that can have some of those responses for our students at any time they join in.

So if they have a question, they put down the first night at 1 a.m. and say wasn't the drop date next week and maybe I can go on the reach frequently asked question and get that answer even though staff are not on the clock at that point.

Creating videos that are embedded within the website, all those things can diverse Phi platforms we deliver services to.

Sorry, yes?

>> Briseida: If I could just add to the intrusive services -- it is really important to ask that foster students do have -- who do need that intense high care, however, there is a difference between cuddling or holding by the hand versus checking in with them, right, versus knowing what are some of the things that they are going through, perhaps wanting to connect with them and letting them know that you're there to support. And so I just wanted to mention that. Because oftentimes that creates all the difference between a student wanting to come back or not.

Knowing that there is someone who is mindful of them, and who does care, right, in regards to their higher education goals and things like that.

>> Jeze: Yes. And then finally, centering student services -- student voices. You need to make sure that you create avenues for students to

present their opinions and feedback. We have pre and post tests after every event. We have a testimony that will be going live on the website in which students at any point during the semester can bring up their testimony but also their input of what we need to be doing better.

We need to make sure we always have avenues for them to give its feedback at the beginning and at the end.

Centralized services -- anything that can be done in the one stop shop should be done there. Any time you can avoid sending a student on an errand to go somewhere else is a great tool. You might risk a chance of losing them if you're sending them somewhere else. And if you do, go with them or provide a clear contact of who they are going there to talk to.

Finally, we started meeting youth in their own world. I think we are so used to our culture and so used to how we do things, even our education, and so many of our ideas come from there.

So what we needed to do is making sure that we started with simple question, how are you doing? Why are you here? Is this important to you? Who sent you? Because so many of them come because their social worker told them. So many came because their transitional housing is connected to these things. Helping them decide why is it you're here and how can we help you with that? Making sure there is so many other things outside of cam campus that affect them and making sure we try to understand that part before we start giving advice, before we do anything else, let's try to meet the person and try to meet the youth of who they are and help them teach us as they are the experts in themselves.

And we have to make sure we do not take for granted that contact that we have with them, whether they showed up for a meeting or sent an E-mail, picked up the phone, because we cannot guarantee that they're going to do that again. We cannot have that guarantee that they are going to be available.

So if there is anything you can do while you have that captive audience, you need to make sure you make that count. You need to make sure you do that. And I always use this metaphor as in baseball, I'm from Los Angeles, so I'm a Dodgers fan so I have a lot of experience losing at a high level obviously in the World Series. And so I think about if you're at the

bottom of ninth inning, already two outs, three balls, and you have one swing left and swing away and make it counted. So that's the way we should look at every single time we uneven counter a foster youth. Making sure we do everything we can for them because we cannot guarantee they will come back the next day.

And that concludes our presentation. Thank you so much for joining us. Thank you so much for joining us in this presentation. Here is our contact information. Our E-mail, please feel free to contact us if there is any follow up or anything we can partner with. I think sharing information is fantastic. And at this point we definitely want to make sure that we open it to questions.

>> Briseida: So we want to thank --

>> Dr. Irungu: We want to thank Briseida and Richard and Davianna for a good presentation. I think as educators we are committing ourselves to making sure that we support all of our students regardless of who they are or their backgrounds or what they have e been through. So this was very helpful.

There are a few questions, but before I go to the questions, I think there is a comment here from Daniela that I totally agree with. She says in their walk through with aged-out youth, we say to them we will work hard with you, but we will not work harder than you. So they also have a responsibility to do the work.

>> Jeze: Absolutely.

>> Dr. Irungu: So one of the questions is about mentoring. So was that caseload 15 or 50 for peer mentor?

>> Jeze: It's 15 per peer mentor.

>> Dr. Irungu: So the other question here is there a reason the abuse of prescription drugs is not included in question 8?

>> Briseida: So in regards to that question, maybe I did not mention it, but the quiz that we did, we did have everyone participate if they wanted to, and we pulled it from the Center for Disease Control website. It is a questionnaire that they use for the ACE study. And so if we remember

correctly, it's only focusing on measuring three different areas, right, which was negligence, household dysfunction, and abuse.

And so perhaps maybe that's one of the reasons is it was not included in there because it's not measuring other different types of ACEs.

>> Dr. Irungu: So the other question is how do you get students to participate, an attendee is asking. We do a lot of [INDISCERNIBLE] but participation numbers are very low.

>> Jeze: I think the first thing that we have to do, especially in virtual things, we have to be comfortable with some of our participations to be low. We have had events in which three or four students show up and we'd have events in which 19, 25 students show up. I think the biggest number we had once is we did have like 120 something students for one big event that we had.

So I think one of the things is you want to make sure that the students have that input on the type of event that you want to have. And the delivery of the event. I think we have ourselves made certain mistakes in creating something that is very great, but great to our standard ordinary or great to the delivery method that we want compared to what the students want and how they want it.

I think something that we have done also is have our peer ambassadors or mentors help us without reach and do that invite for the students.

I think it's very different if I say, hey, I'm going to be there. No one cares. Students don't care if I'm going to be there to do that, but if one of the people that they have a contact with, if they have a relationship with, if they say, hey, I'm going to be there, come with me. That is powerful and so utilizing them for that personal outreach per invitation is more important even than sending a flyer or creating these beautiful newsletters that go out to students.

>> Briseida: And if I just add to that comment also or to the question in regards to how do we get students to participate in events like these and

sharing their story? I think one of the important things is right off the bat is having that relationship with them, right, getting to know the student. Getting to know who they are, what their interests are.

So you start analyzing is that this student will enjoy this opportunity, right, they can greatly benefit from developing certain areas, right, throughout their time here with us.

And so I think one of the greatest things we can do as me being a former foster youth myself, someone realizing that I do have a space and that I can give back to my community and that I've made it somewhere, where I can participate in things like this.

As Davianna mentioned, now she's in a position where she can come in and be able to participate and advocate for other foster youth.

>> Dr. Irungu: So we have two more questions before we wrap up. Carry Holt is asking what's valuation are you using to determine level of life skills?

>> Briseida: So I'm the Life Skills Specialist. So I specifically created an assessment that students that are first year students take at the very beginning when they first join our program. And that allows me to analyze the different areas that they need help, or that I may start looking into so I can assist them.

And so some of the areas that the assessment focuses is in analyzing which looking at research we can see that once students have a lack of knowledge in regards to just really basic independent life skills such as financial literacy, healthy relationships, nutrition and whatnot, and so through that assessment I am able to provide the support services that they need.

Now, in regards to my giving you a little bit more of background, right, once the students take that assessment, then there is a curriculum that I always created in regards to students who need assistance in these different areas, how I'm going to approach that. And so, for example, financial literacy, we go over credit fundamentals as well as how do you create a budget. And I think it's really, really important that when we are having these meetings and these conversations with our students we don't just tell them, but we involve them in the process as well as making it if you can

hands on, so we can create that lived -- that active learning experience for them. So that when they walk away

Then they can remember some of the things that we talked about during our meetings.

>> Dr. Irungu: So our final question here is what is your funding source for extended foster care students services? That's from Rene day.

>> Jeze: So we have several funding sources. So our main funding source in the state of California, there is what's called student equity funds that are given to community colleges for specific populations, foster youth being one so we receive most of our funding for that -- my salary, the salary of the program specialists comes from that. However, we also through our resource allocation for our campus requested additional funding from our General Funds so we received a portion of money yearly from our General Funds, but then in order for us to grow and continue growing, what we have done is actively looking for different grant opportunities.

Specifically for this population. So since we have been around, we have received four different grants to support youth, obviously depending on different projects. So, for example, creating cohorts and caseloads came from a project, creating a Life Skills Specialist came from a grant. These different things that first we try it out for the grant for a year and then we go back to our institution and say, hey, this is the data that we have. This is the impact that we've had, comparing the students that participated and those that did not and we have been successful a couple of times in receiving backing from our institution to keep on funding some of these events.

>> Dr. Irungu: Well, thank you so much. Jeze, Briseida, Richard and Davianna from Mt. San Antonio College in -- not California, please reach out to them. You see that they have posted their contact information on the screen. If you want to start a similar program or if you have any questions about this webinar, please reach out to them. Thank you so very much.

Our attendees, our panelist, I also want to thank our NCORE team for putting this together. There is a lot that happens behind the scenes for this to happen.

I also want to thank the Sorenson team for providing our interpreters and closed captioning. Thank you so very much. This is Dr. Jane Irungu here and the NCORE office. Thank you so very much. If you want to sponsor a webinar, you can reach out to us at NCORE.ou.edu. Let us know what ideas you have. We love supporting emerging scholars

Like we had today and emerging scholars webinars are free. So reach out to us. Let's have a conversation and join us next time. Thank you so very much.