

Effective Strategies – Equitable Systems – Strong Communities



# Building Youth Resilience: How Invisible Work Shapes Stronger Futures

Brandi Gilbert, Ph.D.  
Cherae McWilliams

Alexandra Lohrbach  
Diego Uriburu

# Today's Takeaways

1. Using a resilience framework to inform youth-focused work
2. How resilience frameworks bring 'invisible work' to the forefront, with a focus on building trust and relationships
3. A look at strategies and programs that have strengthened youth resilience



# Meet Community Science

Effective Strategies. Equitable Systems. Strong Communities.



Community Science is an award-winning research and development organization that works with governments, foundations, and non-profit organizations on solutions to social problems through community and other systems changes fostering learning and improved capacity for social change.



A BCT Partners Company



# Welcome

## Your Host & Practitioner:



**Brandi Gilbert**  
Senior Associate  
Community Science

## Your Panel:



**Cherae McWilliams**  
Policy Associate  
Annie E. Casey Foundation



**Alexandra Lohrbach**  
Senior Associate  
Annie E. Casey Foundation



**Diego Uriburu**  
Executive Director  
Identity

# Shaping Youth Resilience

A first-person perspective of someone standing on a wooden plank bridge over a forest. The person is wearing brown leather boots and light blue jeans. The text "Shaping Youth Resilience" is overlaid on the bridge planks. The bridge is made of light-colored wooden planks held together by metal brackets and bolts. The background is a dense forest with green foliage, seen through the gaps in the bridge. Two thick, grey ropes run vertically on either side of the bridge, suggesting it might be a suspension bridge or a similar structure. The overall scene conveys a sense of adventure and stability.

# Community Science Community Resilience Framework

## Levers of Resilience

### Community Strength

- Sense of community
- Social capital (relations and linkages among residents and formal and informal institutions, within and between communities, between non-government and government organizations, and among non-profit organizations)
- Collective efficacy (experience of residents to work together across race, ethnicity, and culture, and with agencies and other formal institutions to address common needs)

### Equity Justice Wellness

- Ensure all community members have fair and just access to high-quality health, behavioral health, social services, employment, housing, education, and all other available benefits and assistance
- Ensure community planning, law enforcement, and business practices treat all community members fairly and equitably
- Promote pre- and post-incident population economic well-being, health, safety, and other community conditions

### Capable Community Infrastructure

- Public education on preparedness, risks, and resources
- Systems for recruiting, receiving, and placing volunteers as well as information exchange and coordination of volunteer efforts within and across organizations
- Active relations among community institutions (formal and informal)
- Ongoing methods of engaging community in decisionmaking, problem solving, and resource development
- Cross-racial, ethnic, and cultural capacities of institutions to mobilize and organize communities for mutual aid and support

### Data-Driven & Knowledge-Based Decisionmaking

Access to quality data on community conditions, resources, research findings, and evidence-based best practices, etc.; institutionalized use of data and knowledge for decision making; and public access to data.

## Elements of Community Resilience

- Spontaneous collective capacity to respond and care for all community members
- Support for community organizing and collective action
- Public transparency
- Engaged citizenry

- Social and psychological well-being of all community members
- Health, educational, and economic equity
- Shared sense of fairness and equity among all residents

- Public, private, and voluntary organizations have the capacity (knowledge, skills, relationships, and resources) to prepare, respond, recover, and mitigate in the event of acute and chronic stressors
- Local system to develop and maintain capacity of public, private, nonprofit, and voluntary associations
- Linkages to local, state, regional, and national resources

- Centralized, public accessible data
- Policies that require data and knowledge based decisionmaking
- Using data and research for decisions is a habit

## Ultimate Impact



Increased community capacity to be resilient + Progress toward racial equity and social justice

Community Context (e.g., geographic setting, history of community relations, experience with chronic stressors)



# The Impact of Uncertainty & Chronic Stress

---

- Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being
- Academic and Cognitive Development
- Physical Health
- Social & Behavioral Health

# Countering Uncertainty & Chronic Stress

---

## *Building Social Capital is Key to Resilience*

### It's Oftentimes Invisible Work

1. Understand the Strengths and Needs of Young People
2. Understand Their Journey- Their current situation, and how to reach them
3. Meet Youth Where They Are- Including addressing any basic needs
4. Meet the Needs of Early Participants to Build Trust—which supports community outreach
5. Grow Adoption Via Community Word of Mouth



# How the Invisible Work Support Your Efforts

What

Community Awareness of a Program

Message Reaching Audience

Articulating Need

Support & or Service Delivery

Building & Growing Lasting Trust



Goal

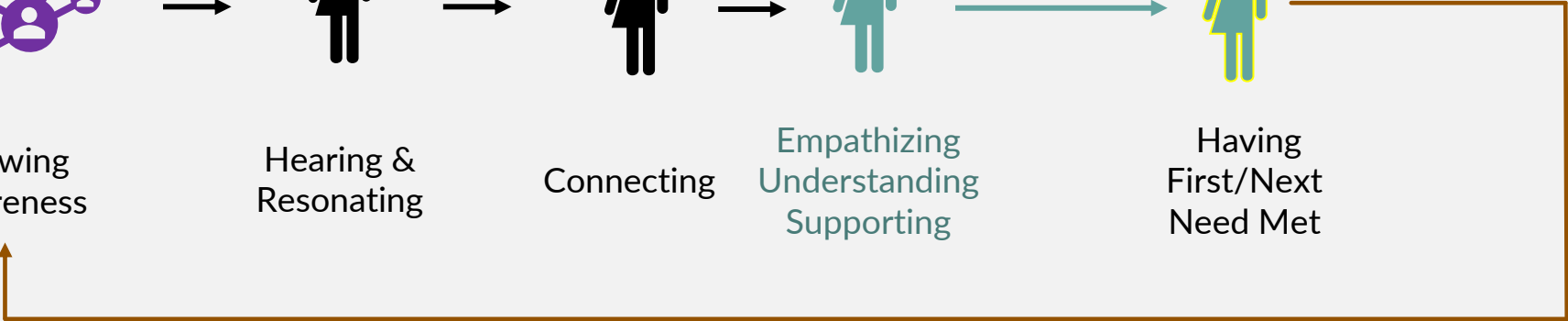
Growing Awareness

Hearing & Resonating

Connecting

Empathizing  
Understanding  
Supporting

Having First/Next Need Met



# Stories of Hope



# Panel Discussion



Q & A



Effective Strategies  
Equitable Systems  
Strong Communities

# Resources Provided by The Panel

- [A Framework for Effectively Partnering with Young People](#)
- Information about the [Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative](#)
- [September 2024 Guidance from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment](#) benefit under Medicaid (this is a potential resource in response to the question to the panel about young people in foster care access to physical health resources)

EPSDT, or **Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment**, is a Medicaid benefit specifically designed to ensure that children and youth under 21 receive comprehensive and high-quality health care services. This is especially important for children and youth in foster care, who often have unique and extensive health care needs due to trauma, displacement, and possible neglect or abuse. EPSDT mandates a broad array of services aimed at promoting the healthy development of children in Medicaid, and it does indeed strive to be both comprehensive and high quality.

## Key Components of EPSDT for Foster Youth

EPSDT covers a range of essential services that must be made available to children and youth in foster care. These include:

**Early and Periodic Screening:** Regular health screenings are required to detect any potential health, developmental, or mental health issues early on. This includes assessments for medical, vision, dental, hearing, and developmental concerns. These screenings are scheduled at intervals recommended by health professionals to ensure regular check-ins on the child's development and health

**Diagnostic Services:** When a screening indicates a need for further evaluation, EPSDT covers diagnostic services to determine the nature of the health issue. This may involve a range of tests, specialist consultations, or mental health assessments

**Treatment:** EPSDT mandates that any medically necessary treatment identified through screenings or diagnostics must be provided. This includes everything from dental treatments to therapies for mental health conditions, as well as prescriptions, surgeries, and other specialized care.

## Comprehensive and High-Quality Care

EPSDT is explicitly designed to be **comprehensive** and to meet a high standard of **quality** care. For foster children and youth, this is essential because the disruption they experience in their lives can impact their health in ways that require vigilant, trauma-informed, and sustained intervention. The requirement of Medicaid is to provide all treatments, interventions, and therapies that are deemed medically necessary to prevent, diagnose, or treat a health condition.

## EPSDT's Role in Promoting Holistic Well-being

For children and youth in foster care, EPSDT helps ensure that all aspects of their health – physical, emotional, developmental, and behavioral – are addressed. This aligns with best practices for child welfare, which emphasize stable, holistic, and high-quality support services for foster youth.



THANK YOU