

# Providing Hope and Healing: LGBTQ+ Youth and Initiating Change within Systems

## BREAKOUT SESSION: SUPPORTS & SPEAKER OVERVIEW

### HOMELESSNESS/HOUSING—10:45am—12:15pm

This session will focus on supporting youth, specifically LGBTQ+ youth, who are aging out of systems and community programs. One of the first national assessments on increased risks of homelessness for LGBTQ+ young adults, conducted by Chapin Hall, focused on the increased risk of homelessness when examining the intersections of identity, race and other factors. “Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America” highlights research related to the specific experiences of young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) face as it relates to homelessness. Coupled with the latest research, panel representatives will discuss current services and programming and how they are addressing some of these statistics. An overview of the types of housing available (transitional, interim and emergency overnight) will be discussed, while addressing safety (physical, emotional, psychological, mental, and spiritual), and how certain policies and practices encourage or threaten that safety for young folks. This session is designed to provide solutions to addressing youth homelessness with specific recommendations to help shape positive and healthy futures.

**Moderator:** Latonya Manley, Broadway Youth Center

**Panelists:** Devin Redmond, The Night Ministry, Beth Horwitz, Chapin Hall, Kevin Pleasant, Chicago House  
Carolyn Wahlskog, LGBTQ Youth Transitional Living Housing, 360 Youth Services

### WORKFORCE/EMPLOYMENT—10:45am—12:15pm

Unemployment rates among youth of color remain consistently higher than those of their white peers. Adding factors such as lack of education and systems involvement, create additional challenges in securing employment at livable wages for young people. Earning a GED or high school diploma is especially challenging for many LGBTQ+ youth. The National Youth Employment Coalition reports that lack of access to education, job training and work experience for systems-involved youth are barriers to housing and employment opportunities. This session will highlight challenges of finding employment with livable wages for justice-involved youth and youth who have experienced homelessness. Special attention will be paid to LGBTQ+ youth who are facing workplace settings where discrimination due to identity is still an issue despite legal protections.

**Moderator:** Jennifer Carroll, Lawrence Hall

**Panelists:** Kenneth Broady, UCAN, Carolyn Leach, Chicago House, Jevita Hamilton, Lawrence Hall, and Patti Flynn

### LEGISLATION/LAW/ADVOCACY—10:45am—12:15pm

Organizations, policy makers, advocates and brave litigants are advancing policies, laws and cases to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ young people. However, LGBTQ+ youth remain at risk for harassment, bullying and other forms of discrimination in many settings. From bathroom and locker room policies in schools to inappropriate foster care placements to strict gender binary policies in the juvenile- and criminal-justice systems, LGBTQ+ systems-involved youth are highly vulnerable to the whims of some of the most broken systems in America. In this session, attendees will learn about various efforts to reform and transform systems to better serve young people and build the capacities of the organizations, programs and communities that support them.

**Moderator:** Aisha Davis, Howard Brown Health

**Panelists:** Nora Collins-Mandeville, ACLU Illinois, Amanda McMillen, Illinois Collaboration on Youth (ICOY), Elena Quintana, Institute on Public Safety & Social Justice-Adler University

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## BREAKOUT SESSIONS: SYSTEMS & SPEAKER OVERVIEW

### CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM—2:00pm—3:30pm

This breakout session will look at how to build the capacity of families and other levels of care to support LGBTQ+ youth. Discussions will revolve around discrimination and stigma within and outside of the family systems. Children in care have a right to protection for their physical, mental and emotional well-being as they are often faced with harassment and maltreatment from systems tasked with providing safety and stability. Further discussion will revolve around prevention and support to family systems, in addition to looking more in depth on how institutions such as residential, group home care, and foster care can provide safety and consistency to avoid institutional traumatization for LGBTQ+ young adults, and create hope, healing, and permanency.

**Moderator:** Kenny Martin-Ocasio, Aunt Martha's

**Panelists:** Bill Bettencourt, Center for the Study of Social Policy, Ulysses Rosales, Office of the Public Guardian, Ghirlandi Guidetti, ACLU Illinois

### EDUCATION SYSTEM—2:00pm—3:30pm

In its biennial National School Climate Survey, GLSEN, a champion for LGBTQ issues in K-12 education, reported that victimization of LGBTQ youth in schools was not decreasing. This was the opposite of the consistent pattern of improvements over a 10-year period that had previously been reported. GLSEN reported that nearly 60% of LGBTQ students felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation and nearly 45% because of their gender expression. They also reported that over 87% of LGBTQ students experienced harassment or assault based on personal characteristics such as sexual orientation, gender expression. This breakout session will explore the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in the education system and include research on peer harassment in schools, programs for creating safe and supportive environments for all students, and other supports for youth and families.

**Moderator:** Renee Lehocky, Lawrence Hall

**Panelists:** Alan D. Johnson, Chicago Public Schools, Jennifer Leininger, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, Stacey Horn, PhD, University of Illinois at Chicago, Rodrigo Anzures-Oyorzabal, Illinois Safe Schools

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM—2:00pm—3:30pm

Although it is estimated that LGBTQ+ youth are only 7-9% of the US population, they make up about 20% of youth in the juvenile justice system (and as many as 40% of girls, according to the Prison Policy Initiative). Movement Advancement Project attributes the overrepresentation of LGBTQ+ people in the criminal and juvenile justice systems to pervasive discrimination and stigma, discriminatory enforcement of laws and harmful policing strategies and tactics. This breakout session will shed light on the experiences of LGBTQ+ justice-youth, especially those who identify as transgender/gender nonconforming. Panelists will discuss policies, programs and research for providing supports to justice-involved youth, including a focus on building the capacity of chosen and families of origin. Additionally, there will be discussion about how to set young people up for success when they re-enter their communities.

**Moderator:** Jeff Jefferson, Howard Brown Health

**Panelists:** Channyn Parker, Howard Brown Health, Anna Buckingham, Juvenile Justice Detention Center, Tisa Morris, Sheriff's office