

# LGBTQ 101 and the Importance of Emotional Support for Youth



PERMANENCY  
INNOVATIONS  
INITIATIVE

**PII**

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# Before We Begin...

- **LISTEN ACTIVELY**

- Respect others when they are talking.

- **SPEAK FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE**

- Use "I" instead of "they," "we," and "you."

- **DO NOT BE AFRAID TO RESPECTFULLY CHALLENGE ONE ANOTHER**

- Asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks.
- Focus on ideas.

- **PARTICIPATE TO THE FULLEST OF YOUR ABILITY**

- Growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.

- **SHARE YOUR OWN STORY AND EXPERIENCE**

- Be mindful of other's stories and experiences when sharing

- **BE CONSCIOUS OF BODY LANGUAGE AND NONVERBAL RESPONSES**

- They can be as disrespectful as words.



- In 2010, the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center received federal funding to launch RISE (Recognize Intervene Support Empower) to:
  - LGBTQ foster youth achieve permanency.
  - Increase acceptance and support for LGBTQ youth.
- Facts:
  - LGBTQ youth are disproportionately represented within the foster care system.
  - 40% of homeless LGBTQ transitional age youth spent time in foster care.

# RISE Project Guiding Principles

- LGBTQ children belong at home with their family and in their community.
- Families love their children and want the best for them.
- Family's culture must be acknowledged and honored.
- Strong, accepting communities empower strong, accepting families.



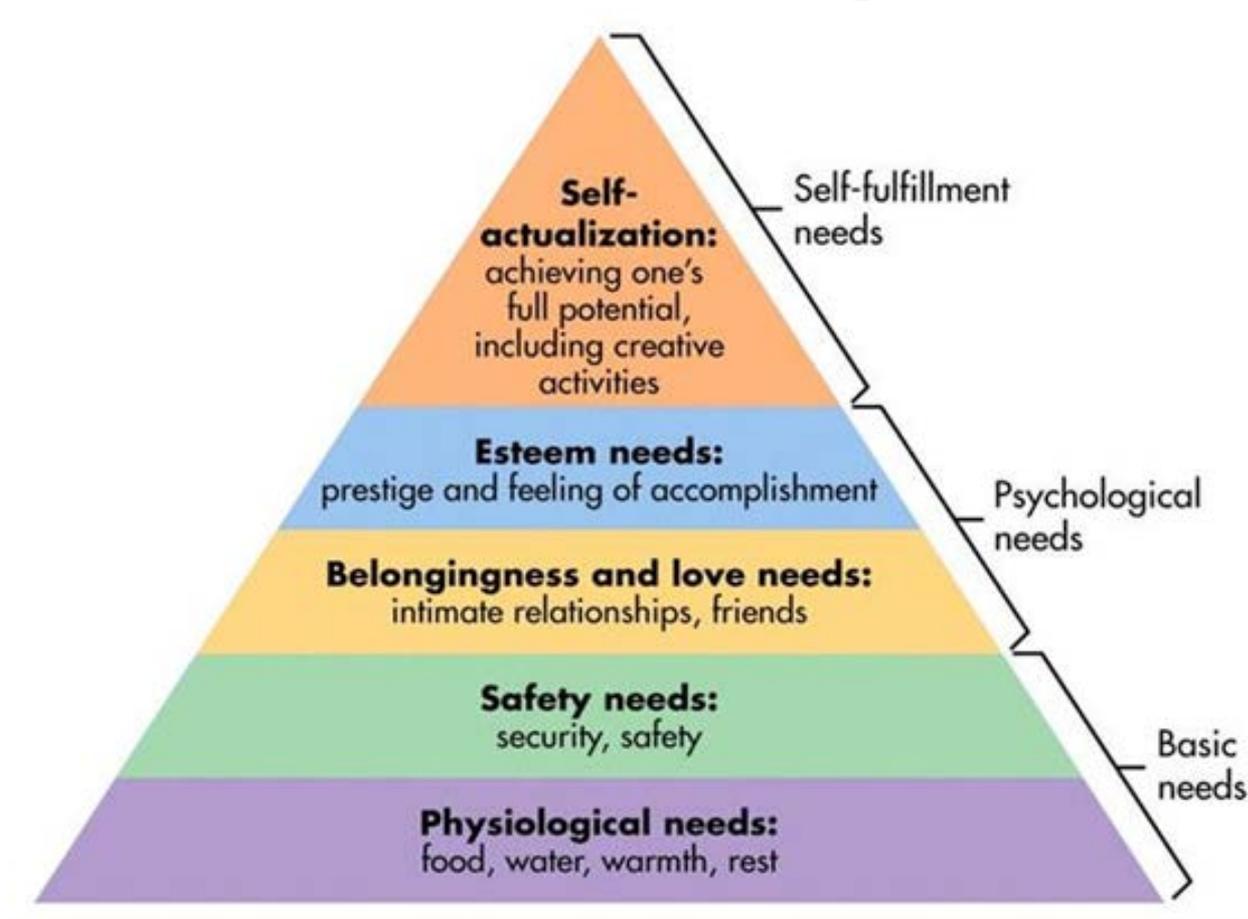
# The guiding belief behind RISE...

When LGBTQ youth have emotionally supportive and affirming adults in their lives, they gain the courage and confidence to embrace the steps towards independence.



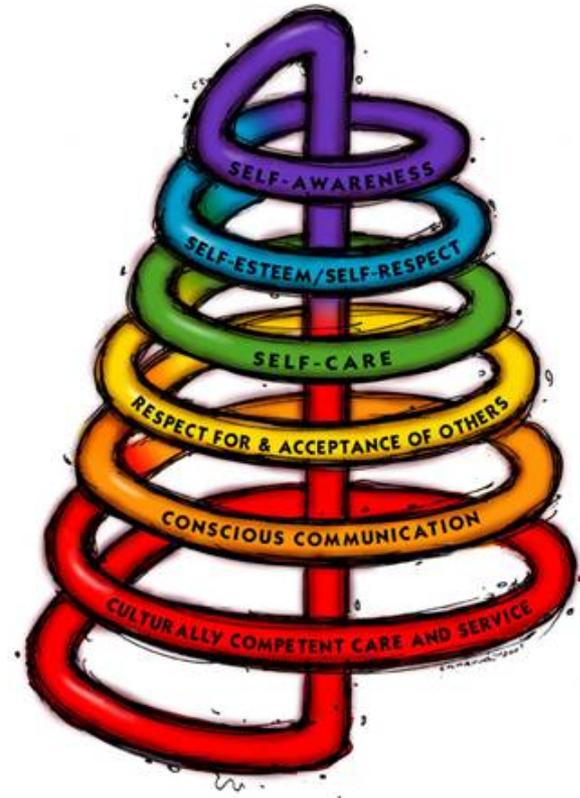
- Increase understanding of LGBTQ issues
- Increase knowledge of LGBTQ language
- Cultural Competency regarding LGBTQ youth
- Application of tools for LGBTQ youth
- Explore rejection/accepting continuum

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



# Cultural Competency regarding LGBTQ youth

- What is gender?
- What is sexuality?
- What is presentation?





*Inner most psychological sense of self.*

## Gender Identity

WOMAN

MAN

BOTH

BI-GENDERED

TWO-SPIRITED

NEITHER

GENDER QUEER

TRANSGENDER

QUESTIONING



*Present and/or communicate gender.*

## Gender Expression

feminine

androgynous

masculine

BE  
MINE

*Attraction*

## Sexual Orientation

LESBIAN

GAY

BISEXUAL

QUESTIONING



# Attraction and Gender Identity In Practice

## How to respect the youth's gender identity...

- Use correct name, form of address and pronoun
- Ask if unsure
- Allow

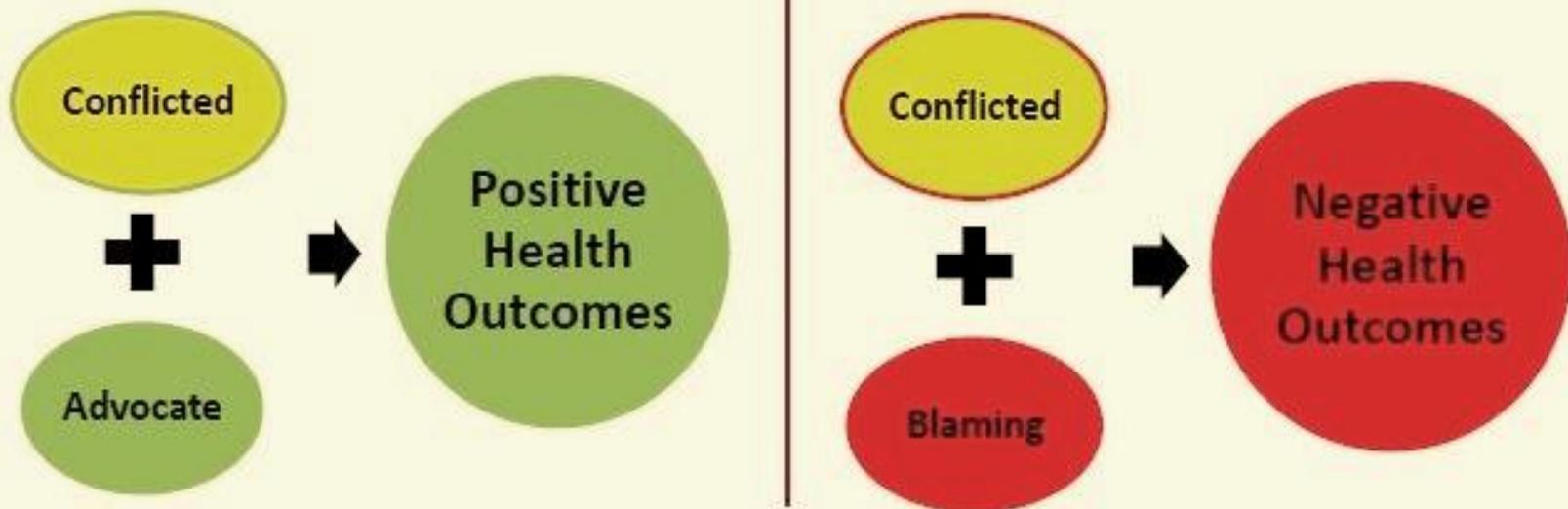
## How to respect the youth's sexual orientation...

- Use open-ended and non-judgmental questions
- Avoid assumptions
- It's not about personal curiosity

□ It's about SELF-IDENTIFICATION. Allow the youth to SELF-DEFINE.

# Not knowing what to do happens...

- Conflicted or unsure (uncertainty) of how to react
- Disappointed by child's SO, GI, and/or GE
- Concerned for your child's safety



**Thinking before acting...**

Ryan, C. (2009). Supportive families, healthy children: Helping families with lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender children. San Francisco, CA: Marian Wright Edelman Institute, San Francisco State University. (pp. 9)

# Recognizing the 3's in Care

## The "3's"

ANTI-GAY BIAS | ANTI-TRANSGENDER BIAS | HETEROSEXISM

What actions or behaviors might **cause entry** into system(s) of care?

- Violence in the home after coming out
- School truancy



What actions/behaviors that **can cause harm**?

How might you see it's **impact on the child or youth**?



What actions or behaviors **challenge permanency options**?

- Rejection by potential permanency resources
- Systems trauma making a child hard to place due to behavioral challenges



# Connecting the Dots



**“Social Support is significantly related to resilience.”**

# Indicators of Emotional Permanency

- A place to stay in an emergency
- Emotional support of a caring adult
- Family members who regularly check-in
- A place to go for family meals
- Concrete support

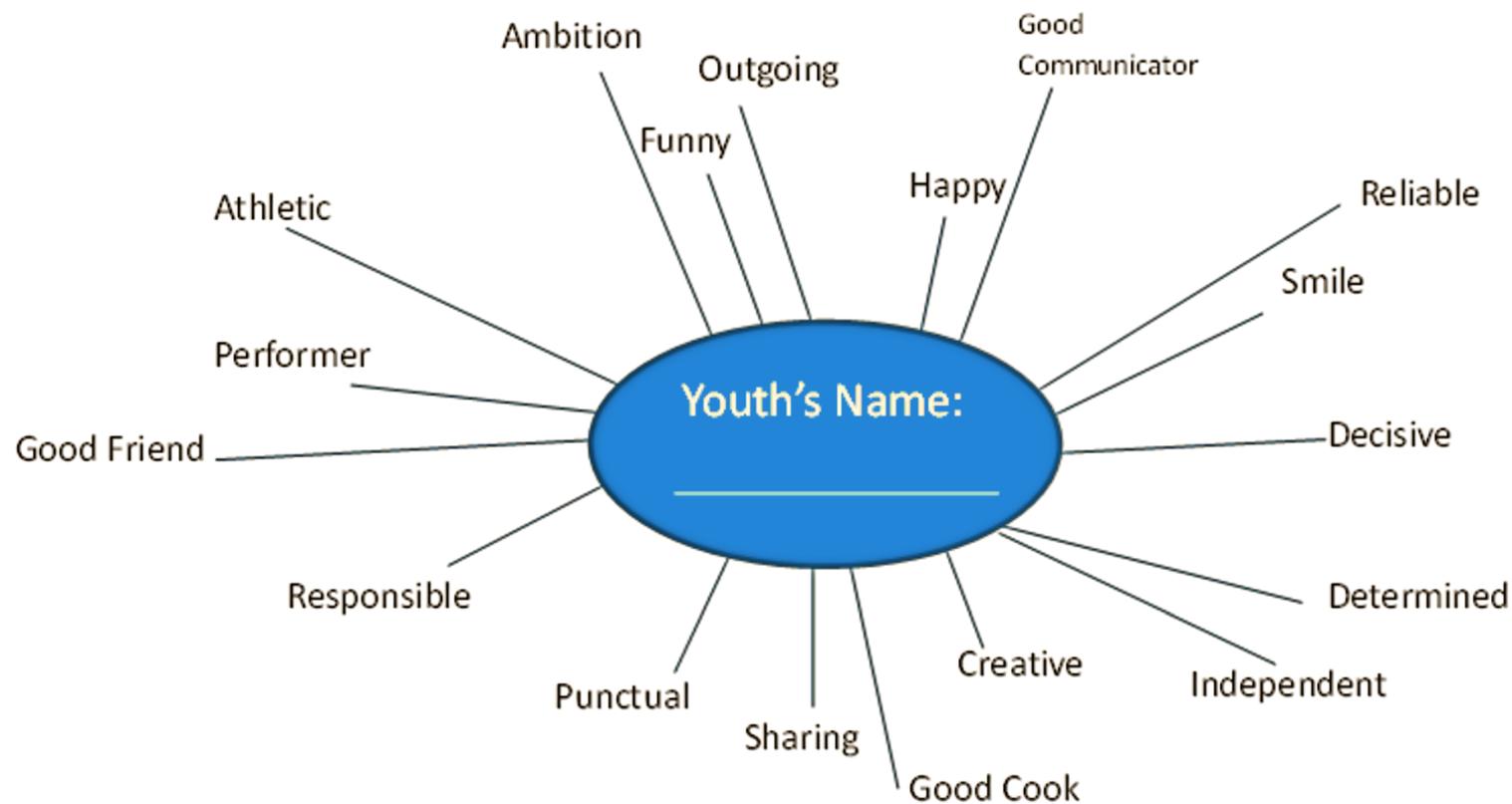


# Why are we giving you these tools?

- Identify strengths of LGBTQ youth
- Identify youth and family driven goals
- Identify and expand community connections
- Identify supportive adults
- Improve family relationships by increasing supportive behaviors and decreasing rejecting behaviors towards LGBTQ youth.

# Strength's Chat

- The purpose:
  - Get to know a youth well enough so that the identified strengths inform the treatment plan and direct the youth's goals.
  - Assist the youth in identifying and building their strengths.
  - Remind the youth of the positive qualities they possess.
- **GOAL:** As the youth works to achieve their goals, the youth will be able to see their strengths grow and feel empowered to independently utilize their strengths to build upon improving their life.

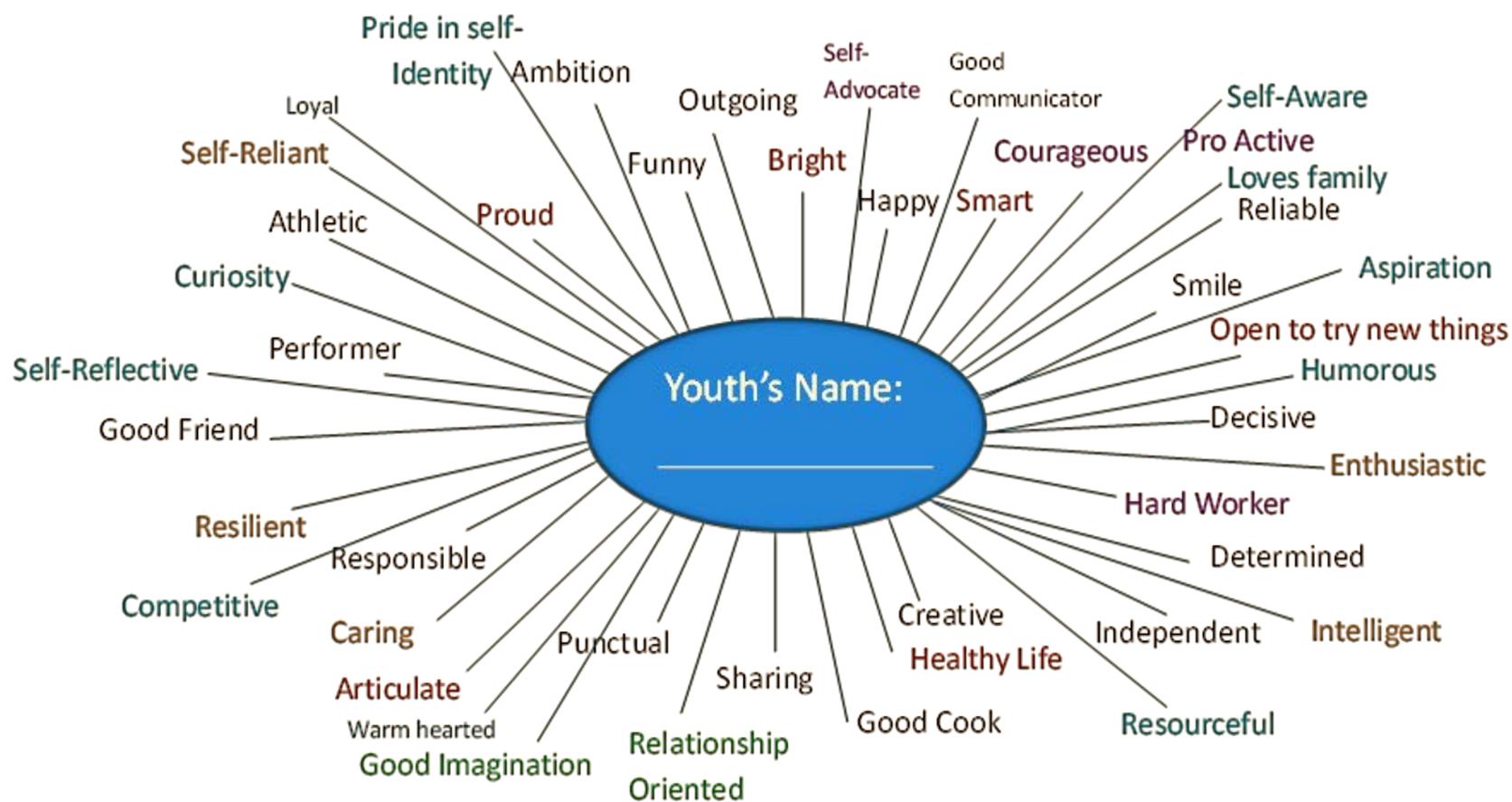


### Strength's Chat

Youth's Name:

Month: July 2012

Number of strengths: 18



### Strength's Chat

Youth's Name:

Month: May 2013

Number of strengths: 46

# Vision Statement

- The purpose:
  - Assist youth in identifying and establishing realistic short-term goals.
- Ask 3 questions:
  - Where does the young person want to be in life?
  - Who does the youth want to be connected to?
  - Who does the young person want to receive more LGBTQ support from?
- Example: *Find a full-time job while working towards becoming a Corrections Officer; reconnect with my aunt and build my support as a lesbian with my aunt and cousin.*
- GOAL: *The youth's voice is acknowledged and the process becomes youth driven. The young person and service providers are provided clarity and direction in obtaining successful outcomes.*

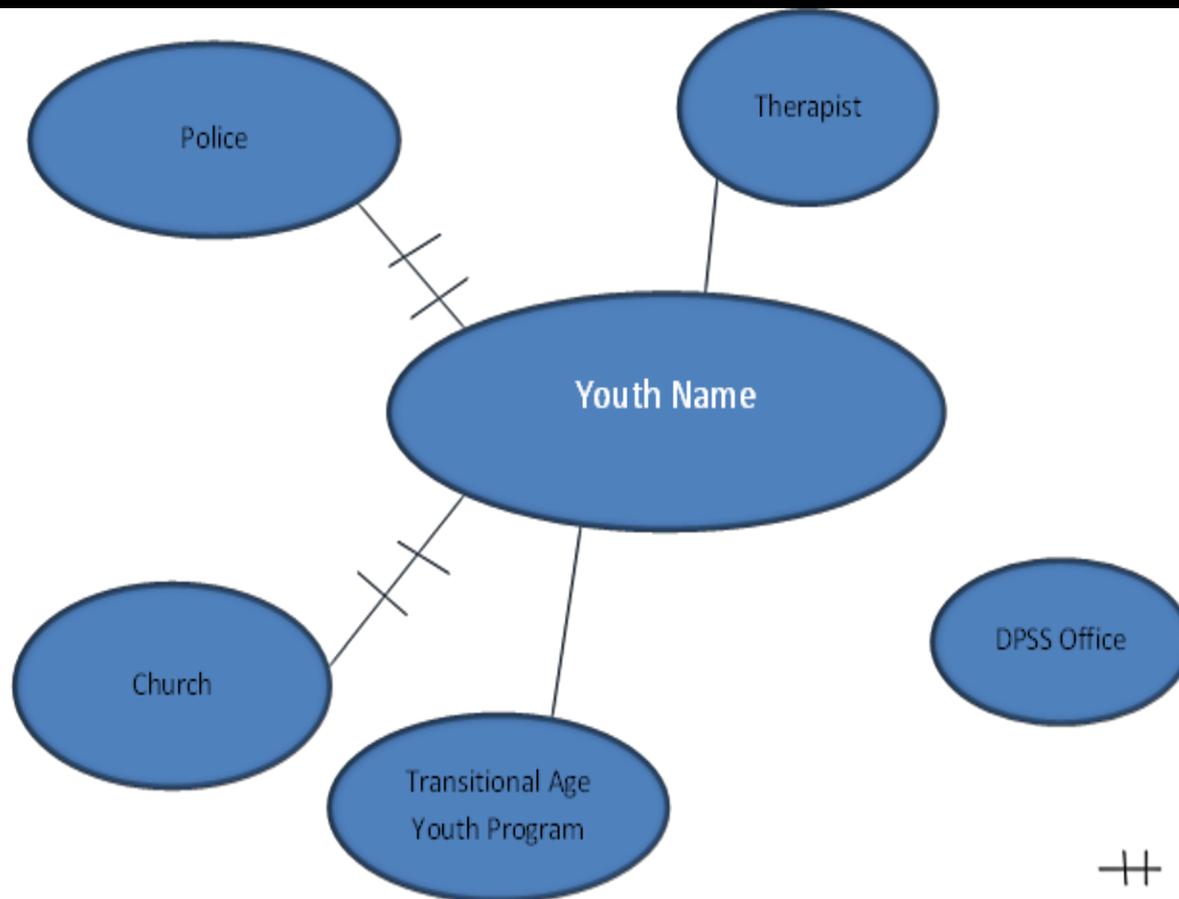
# Vision Statement Continued

- Provides direction
- Focuses the youth and team on the goal
- Decision-making tool
- “Do your actions fit your vision statement?”
- Assists in identifying when youth is ready for graduation



# Eco Map

- Purpose:
  - Assist the youth in identifying and building their community connections.
  
- GOAL: Over a period of time the youth will be able to see their growth and feel empowered to appropriately use community connections on their road to success.



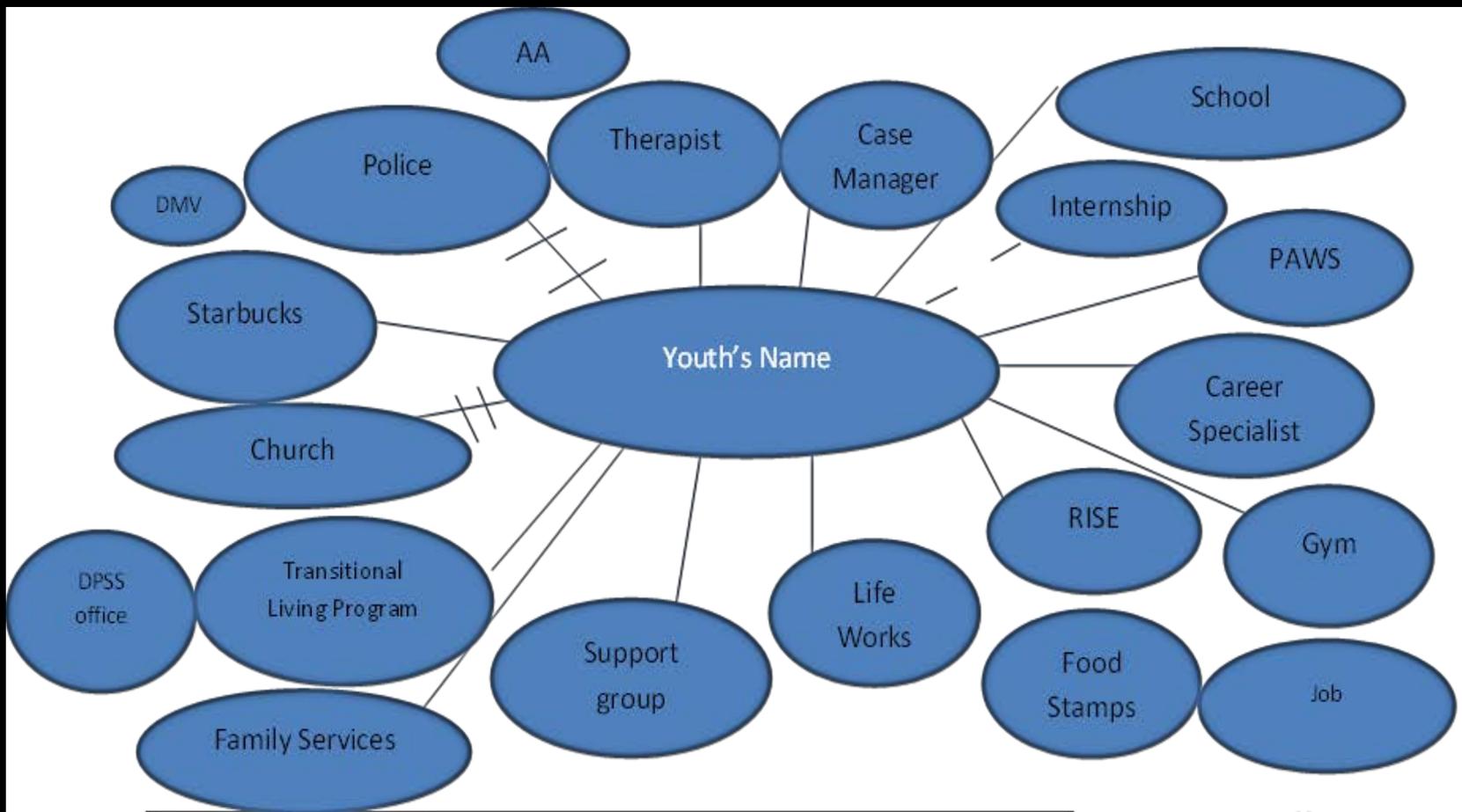
- Key**
- ++ Not Supportive
  - Somewhat Supportive
  - Supportive

**Eco Map**

Youth:

Month: July 2012

Number of Community Connections: 5



**Eco Map**

**Youth:**

**Month: May 2013**

**Number of Community Connections: 20**

**Key**



Not Supportive



Somewhat Supportive



Supportive

# Family Connections Map

- Identify who the youth wants to:
  - Reconnect to
  - Connect with
  - Strengthen relationships with.
- GOAL: The youth is able to see the people they already have in their lives, begin to conceptualize their “chosen family”, and expand the necessary supports to achieve success.

# Building Relationships and Support

*“Improving youth’s ability to form positive relationships is important for enhancing their development and well-being.”*

## ○ Reconnect

- Use open ended and probing questions to *identify potential people to reconnect to.*

## ○ Connect

- Use open ended and probing questions to *identify connections that the youth wants to maintain.*

## ○ Strengthen

- Role play communications.
- Teach youth how to maintain relationships.
- Explore the benefits of maintaining relationships.



# Coming out Process

- o Open discussion

- o Review of RISE Coming Out Process





# COMING-OUT: CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS

*Stigma & discrimination*

*Fear-informed stress*

*Concealment*

*Fear of being found out*

- **Empower**
- **Promote self-esteem**
- **Create wholeness**
- **Families come-out too**

# How might a person feel after someone comes out to them?

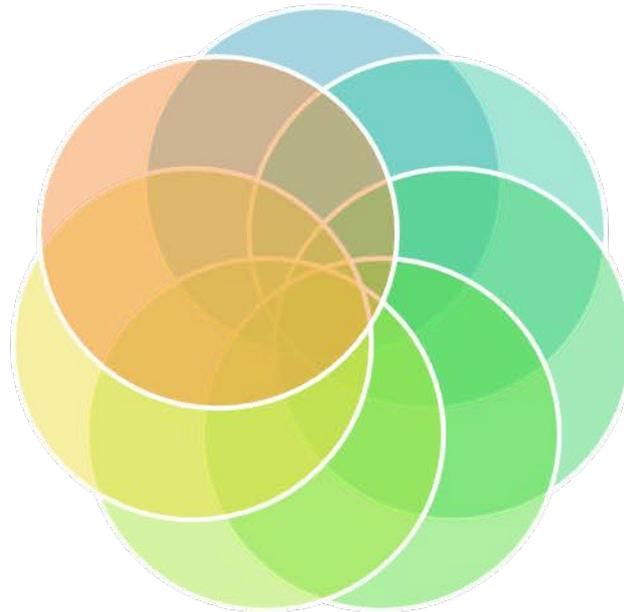
Grateful

Disbelieving

Appreciated

Guilty

Scared



Angry

Shocked



# Rejection and Acceptance

## Acceptance

- Higher self esteem
- Closer relationship with family
- Believe they can be a health happy adult

Require respect

Support

Advocate

Express Affection

## Rejection

Blaming

Shaming

Excluding

Name-Calling

- High risk for HIV and STDs & STIs
- Use illegal drugs
- High levels of depression
- Attempted suicide
- Loss of relationships

# Grief, loss and the LGBTQ community

- *LGBTQ youth encounter more grief and loss than others because of their experience of rejection and discrimination from family, friends, co-workers, employers, teachers and other caregivers.*
- *Addressing the rejection and discrimination encountered provides space for the youth to make changes necessary to reach their goals.*
- *Addressing the fear of future rejection and teaching the youth how to advocate for themselves helps empower the youth.*

