

# Gay & Lesbian Center



## Pathways to Permanency for LGBTQ Homeless and Foster Youth

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# Background



- 4000 homeless youth (18–24 years old) in LA County (point in time)
- Up to 50% of homeless youth have a history of foster care or probation
- Nationally, 25% of young people who come out to their parents are forced to leave home
- 20% to 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ nationally

# Presenting Issues



- Crisis and trauma
- Domestic violence; harassment; physical, sexual and emotional abuse; homophobia; racism
- Mental health issues
- Literacy issues and interrupted/incomplete education
- Lack of “soft” skills including communication, work ethic, problem-solving, etc.
- Abandonment and isolation

# At the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center



## Jeff Griffith Youth Center

- Drop-in center, open 7 days

## Emergency Overnight Bed Program

- 6 beds, plus cots for overflow

## Transitional Living Program

- 24-bed facility/18-24 years old/up to 18 months

## Independent Living Program

- 2 single supportive apartments

## LifeWorks

- Youth Development program

## RISE (Recognize Intervene Support Empower)

- Research project to improve permanency for LGBTQ foster youth

# Strategies

- Trauma Informed Services
- Linkages to HHYP agencies and DMH
- GED Preparation and Education Program
- Employment: Individual Placement and Support Services
- Services for LGBTQ youth in foster care
- Harm Reduction: Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention



The Jeff Griffith  
Youth Center



A PROJECT OF THE L.A. GAY & LESBIAN CENTER

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100 years of serving our nation's children and families



# RISE

## The Need



- LGBTQ youth languish in foster care
  - LGBTQ youth lose their placements more frequently
  - Multiple placements = lack of educational progress
  - 100% of LGBTQ youth in group homes report abuse
  - LGBTQ youth more readily give up on family connections and age out with nowhere to go

# RISE

## The Focus



- Federal Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII)
  - LAGLC one of 6 projects funded nationwide
    - 5-year demonstration project to improve...
      - i. Safety
      - ii. Wellbeing
      - iii. **Permanency**
- ... for LGBTQ children and youth in foster care



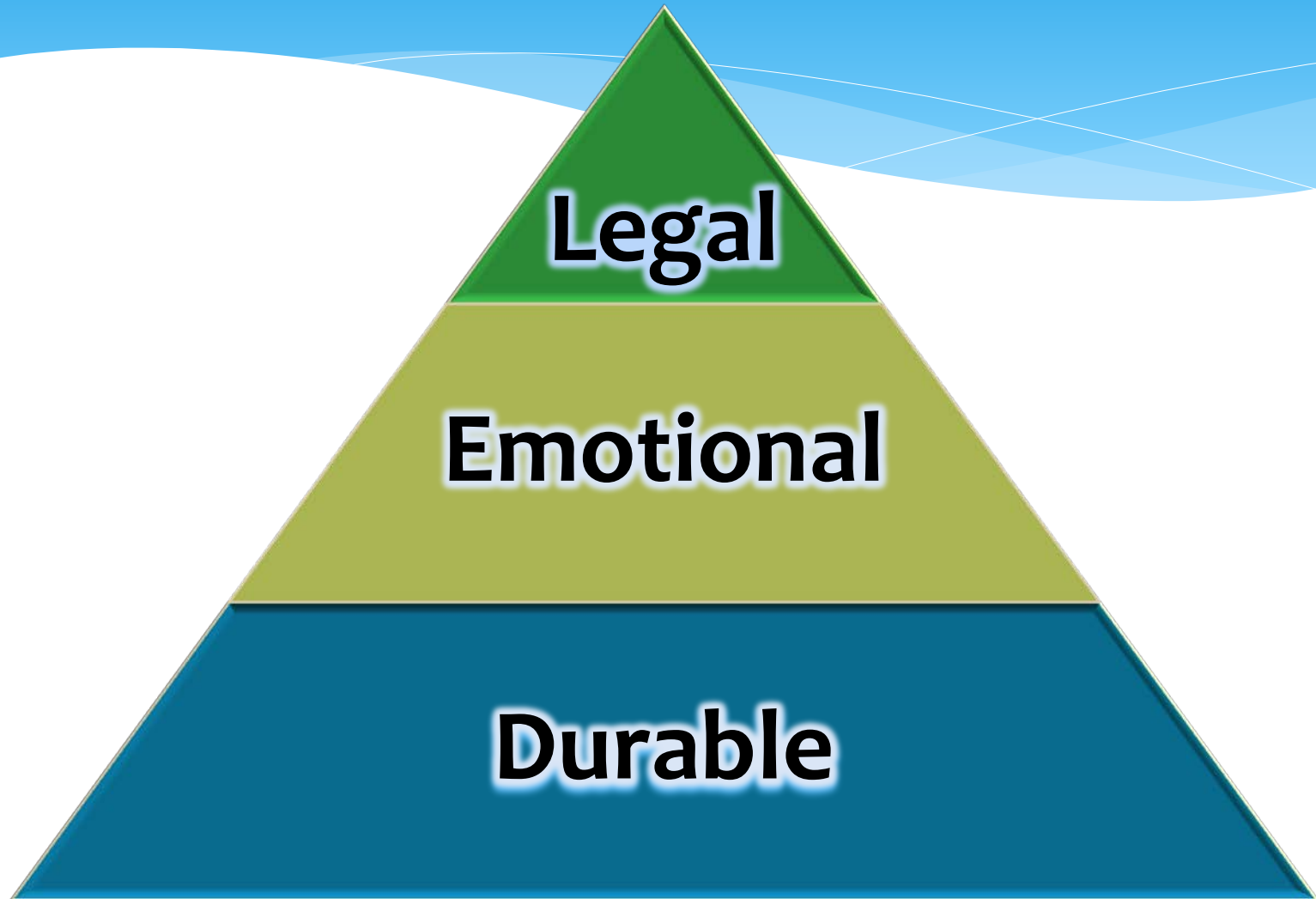
# RISE

## *The Theory of Change*



- The theory of change espoused by the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center's (LAGLC) RISE Initiative is that:

***When lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) foster youth and their families are competently identified and appropriately served, then they can achieve safe and stable permanency.***



# RISE Components



RISE Training & Coaching Institute (TCI) that develops and supports training and coaching efforts needed for the three interventions

## Identification Survey (I)

RISE will create an anonymous survey of foster youth ages 11+ years that focuses on safety and youth development domains, which includes questions designed to assess the proportion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth in foster care.

A system level intervention

## Outreach and Relationship Building (O)

RISE will provide LGBTQ competency training to public and private agency staff, and use posters and other visual symbols in the environment to communicate that diversity in sexual orientation and gender expression as well as equal rights are valued.

An organizational level intervention

## Care Coordination Team (CCT)

RISE will create CCTs using a wraparound approach combined with family finding and engagement, plus LGBTQ-competency strategies, in order to increase durable connections and emotional and legal permanence by reducing barriers to permanency for LGBTQ youth at risk for long term foster care, including those arising from heterosexism and anti-transgender bias.

A child and family level intervention



**Improve permanency for LGBTQ youth in the foster care system by reducing heterosexism and anti-transgender bias.**

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