

## **Conversations with Families About Living Experiences and Housing Goals**

Brandi Black Thacker: We're glad you're here and thanks for choosing to spend part of your day with us. This is what we're here to talk about today. We're having conversations with each other but certainly in service of supporting families around their living experiences, and housing goals.

Now even with this title, guys, I want to just start here because you know where we're going with this. It is in service of families who are experiencing homelessness, so even the choice of language for this title is important. The living experience piece, we're gonna think together today about how to shift our language, whether that be out loud, whether it's on forms, how it operates within the construct of our environment, within our programs to make sure that we're actually choosing language that honors families and where they are and that we're not accidentally, even with our best intentions ... offering something that might have a negative context for a family as they're coming through their own journey and in their situation.

So, we're going to come back to that. But I want to do this, stick a pin there because this is going to be one of the things that you'll experience with us today as we go forward. So, let's look together. I want to introduce you guys to some of my most favorite folks. I can't tell you what an honor it is to be engaging in this level of dialogue over time in support of families experiencing homelessness.

And if we've never met before and you don't recognize my country accent that's me on the left-hand side. My name's Brandi Black Thacker. I'm the director of Training and Technical Assistance and Collaboration for the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. And today, we have a couple of special guests that I'm so excited for you guys to meet and interact with. And one of them is one of my colleagues Dr. Jennifer Olson.

Jennifer Olson: Hi, Brandi. This is Jennifer. I'm just thrilled to be here again and looking forward to that conversation and the learning that's going to happen. And I'm the senior training specialist at the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. And Adriana, do you want to share with us who you are, please? We're just so thrilled to have you.

Adriana Borrero: Thank you. Good afternoon everybody. So, happy to see so many ... people from different parts of the country. My name is Adriana Borrero, and I am a psychologist working as a behavioral health specialist. In Peninsula Family Service right here, in beautiful California, the Bay Area.

Brandi: Oh that's perfect, Adriana. We are so tickled that you're with us today and I can't wait for you guys to hear about the incredible things that Adriana is leading and ... co-leading in her program, and one of the things that she's going to kick us off with is telling us a little bit about what part of the country she's in, a little bit about her program and their set up. So, as we're going through the dialogue today we're going to do a little bit—well depending on your geography, I call it a teeter-totter but you might call it a seesaw. We just had this discussion this week that she's going to be leaning in with us. We're going to offer some ideas and then she's

going to tell you a little bit about how that's been working for her great team. So, you'll get the benefit of hearing from each other and certainly with Adriana who's blazing a whole lot of wonderful trails California. So, let me pause there, and tell us a little bit about where you're from and in the program.

Adriana: Are you talking to me right?

Brandi: Yes, please.

Adriana: OK. As a behavioral health specialist, we work in Peninsula Family Service. Peninsula Family Service is an agency that has trained the community by providing children, families, and older adults the support [inaudible] to realize the full potential and the healthy stable life. We envision a community where opportunity, financial stability, and wellness are secure for all. We, Peninsula Family Services was first founded in 1950 and have grown to an organization that reaches over 12,000 individuals each year at 17 sites located through Silicon Valley, our side program falls under three umbrella, [inaudible] learning which is the program that I work from, The other one is financial empowerment, and the third one is older adult services.

And Peninsula Family Service close the achievement gap by providing low-income children access to high quality, early learning opportunities. We help our neighbors build their credit and assets and enhance the knowledge of financial management. And we also provide support to older adults to stay healthy and connected to their communities. That's a short review of what we do. We operate in nine—in our program in early learning program—program, we operate nine child development centers.

Each year say serving around 604 low-income children ages 0 to 5. And our program targets the most at-risk children in our community, including those from homeless families and teen parents. And our ultimate aim is to provide children with a strong foundation in early care and preschool so they may be academically and in much emotionally successful in kindergarten and beyond. That's a short and graphic view of my organization.

Brandi: Thank you so much, Adriana. We are also going to have the honor in addition to Adriana, which we get so tickled to partner right alongside each of you who are doing the work in the field. We also brought back for you one of our most favorite folks Kiersten Beigel from the Office of Head Start and Rachel Gannon who was here with us last time as well. But we would love for them as our federal leaders to say hello and check in with you guys, too.

Kiersten Beigel: Hello Head Start, this is Kiersten Beigel, and I'm the lead for the Office of Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. This is a really important topic and I've got to tell you that I'm thrilled to see such an amazing showing for these webinars. It really tells us how important this topic is to you and how you're really trying to think about how to improve your practices and partnering with families who are really struggling in their particular living circumstances.

So, I just wanted to say hi. I'm going to be hanging out back here doing a little chatting and seeing what kind of questions come up. And if I can be of any assistance with things related to questions that are you know a little bit more always just related. So, I'm here and then to my right. We have ...

Rachel Gannon: Hello everyone. My name is Rachel Gannon and I'm a program specialist with Region 9. I see there's quite a few of you who are calling in from our area. It's great to see and again just as Kiersten had mentioned we think it's really important that we really agree with this topic we have posted it based on different questions grantees have been asking program specialists and we're really, really excited that you are all here with us today. Also we know that the big push from Dr. Bergeron and from Office of Head Start is to enroll families who are experiencing homelessness, and so you work on that enrollment piece. That's an absolute huge piece, but it all starts from the very first interaction of that relationship. So, we're really here to talk to you about how to start building that relationship, and I think Peninsula Family Services will be great to talk to us about what has gone well for them in this area. And again we're excited to take you on this ride.

Brandi: Thank you thank you so much, Kiersten and Rachel, I can't tell you how much it means to us as a community to have our federal leadership on the line and to be contributors into the conversation to allow this space for us to think together. So, thank you both for being here and thank you for hanging out in the foreground in the background as we go together in this dialogue. So, let's look, let's check out a little bit. And one of you asked a little earlier I believe about the first webinar in the series. It's the great out here but it's going to be up on the ECLKC very soon. We did that one on October 1<sup>st</sup> and what we talked about at the end was the performance standards and there actually seven of them that support power at having families experiencing homelessness in your program structure. So, if you miss that and you didn't get to be with us, no worries. We're gonna be putting that up for you on the ECLKC and it should be there soon. And today here we are on November 14<sup>th</sup> together to talk about conversations I'm going to go over the learning objectives here in just a little bit so that we can look at what we've planned together today. But as always when you're with us we really follow your lead and if there are places you want to hover we're gonna do our best to stay there with you for a little bit. And then we have for the third and final opportunity to come together a major lineup of expertise for you about can't wait for you to have this experience on December 5th at the same time

3 Eastern to 4:30. So, we get 90 minutes together and we do the after chat that sort of brings the whole excuse together if you have questions you want to hang out a little bit, we stay after. Actually the third and final is going to be about, as you can see here, establishing and sustaining that community partnership outreach and continuity. We have two incredible examples lined up for you for that discussion. So, come back and see us on December 5th. The other thing that I wanted to touch real quick and as we start to pivot into the content and the continued dialogue with each other is what we've proposed to do together today. And I promise first and foremost we're going to go right to the language and specifically language that we use verbally, language that we have in our form, how we really navigate sensitive interactions with families in a way that is genuine and honoring of where they are, and I would humbly submit based on their readiness.

So, that's the first piece. We also have some strategies and resources for you to consider connected to professional development. And I want to say here professional development is a process and then the pieces that can fall under that, I mean there are so many approaches that we use in our professional development journey and today we're going to look at a couple of

those. We're going to look at self-care in particular for each other as colleagues and we're also going to think a little bit about how to integrate professional development opportunities in your programming to support this. Because everybody needs to be on the same page with the ways that we come together around families experiencing homelessness. Certainly, all of our families so many of the techniques strategies applications can be also universally applied. And then there's some really specific ways that you can build and scaffold for families experiencing homelessness in particular.

So, let's jump in as promised. This is where we want to begin. We all know that wherever we are in our journey doesn't define who we are as a person or an individual. We have been working very hard as a community across this country to use people first language in Head Start. So, I'm not defined by the thing that's happening to me right now. I'm defined as the human being that I am in that experience. So, you'll notice very emphatically that we don't say homeless families, because we don't define each other about our situation. We specifically say families experiencing homelessness because that happens to be a point in time of what's happening in those moments. You can see here some extended language.

Homelessness is a situation that the family is in not a status and we want to make sure that the language honors where folks are culturally based on language or experience and how we want to come together in service of each other. So, I want to a here just for a quick second because not only is this how we say what we say out loud but this is also the construct that we build for each other and we call this like almost sight unseen. For instance like what do your forms look like.

And families are probably not going to know the construct of that McKinney Vento Act definition and nor should they be bothered with such things. So, part of what we're trying to do together is have this conversation around living situations without ever even using the word homeless, because think about it just for a second, go into your mind, and think about what comes to your brain both in knowledge and vision when you hear that word. You don't have to say or type anything. But just think about what that schema looks like based on the journey that you've had and your experiences and your exposures. It often does not bring and inspire positive images. For those of us who've been through that experience.

So, what we're really trying to do is think about the language and how we're saying what we're saying, how we're putting these things on our form because here's the beauty and we're so good at this. What we want to do is inspire conversation with the family. We want to know a little bit more about what's happening. We want to know do things like ask permission if it's OK to check in about living experience and situation so that way it's the family's choice to share if they're inclined to and if not that's ok, too. We've opened the door and we'll keep it open. So, when the family is ready we can jump in together.

So, I feel like I'm always a little vulnerable when I get to talk to you guys because I know who I'm speaking to in our Head Start community and you are very sophisticated in how you integrate these ideas but I think it's a great reminder as we have this is our specific focus to check what do we sound like when we're speaking out loud. How are our forms represented? Are we really thinking in a meaningful way about having conversations that hold no judgment and no stigma? And how do we know how do we know? So, we want to kind of kick off there

with that sentiment to get us started. And then the other piece and not you know I'm going to pause here because it was really Miss Jennifer who inspired the notion behind this slide, And I really appreciated what she said which is you know when we we all have our own story we all have our own journey and no matter what we've come through it's specific and individual to ourselves.

So, every family has a story. And if you've been able to serve one family who has experienced homelessness, you've served one family who's experienced homelessness. This is something that we're actually really good at being able to individualize. being able to guide from the side. and walk alongside the family because we know that no two stories are the same, which means no two approaches should be the same, no two solutions are the same. So, we really want to tailor each of those interactions with our families based on their journeys the cultures life experiences their values.

And it just really emphasizes what we always say right? Meeting families where they are and doing that in a way that's meaningful. The other thing that I think we'd be remiss not to offer here is that all of us carry our own stories too, each of us have our own journey, each of us have had our own experiences, and we bring those with us wherever we go. So, part of what we're going to think about together today, too is and really knowing yourself and reflecting on your own internal process. That's a huge part of how we get to be successful with families is knowing where we are as people and that's why we started off with that question about an experience that you might have had when you felt supported. Because we have to know as a person, as an individual, where we are about our own process, our own reflection.

So, that as families experiencing homelessness share their story, we can check in on all of that. And I still am strong to support this family has something about their journey triggered a memory for me, or maybe even a worry for me reflecting on ourselves and how we come into these conversations is critical and humbly submit to you guys that we don't give ourselves enough permission to stay here in service of ourselves as we navigate this work that can feel heavy, worrisome and also wonderful and amazing. You guys said things at the beginning like families gave me hugs because I was there for them, they told me I haven't sent those things come with this too, but making sure that we hold each other in the space and in service is a very important and critical thing it's going to be a big part of our discussion today.

Kiersten: Brandi you know I noticed in chat that folks were kind of doing some commenting around images, things that come to mind and also aspects of the McKinney-Vento definition itself. Like the term doubled up. So, as people are thinking about the term homelessness they have this some people have learned the definition from McKinney-Vento which is a flexible definition that allows us to hopefully prioritize more families whose living circumstances may be unstable in some different ways. And I think just the important point about language here is that while we have a definition that we need to know and understand just in terms of doing our eligibility work, the sensitivity we bring to our conversations and our relationships don't have to reflect all of that language in the way we do in our administrative practices.

So, I just wanted to point that up, doubled up you know means and that is the most flexible aspect of our definition that we know so many families live sometimes with each other due to a

loss of housing or due to a sudden economic downturn, but with a loss of housing and as a temporary solution for a housing situation.

So, that that's what doubled up does refer to in case folks were wondering. But just wanted to add that piece about the difference between our eligibility work and our relationship building in the language.

Brandi: Kiersten that is perfect timing and so helpful as we pull apart what pieces and where to apply them and how to make sure that we honor what the regulation requires in the way that we prioritize homeless families and families experiencing homelessness but also making sure that we're constantly in that relationship-based space so that we're checking in on those systems and checking in on the ways that we have set up those services to make sure that it all aligns in that meaningful way.

Ok, well let's keep going here. We actually have a moment. I'm going to just give you a little anticipatory guidance here. One of the things that we're about to do as we transition if you're type and feel free to finish your sentence. I want to give you a little direction here because we're going to go to another screen in a second.

What I want you to think about as a sort of prime the pump here as we led into the conversation. We want you to think about interacting with families experiencing homelessness. And what you do to get prepared before that interaction. How you partner during that interaction, and then what you pursue after. So, you can see a little bit about how we've lined up the piece you know how we do have acronyms we like to have alliteration for early childhood. So, we want you to think a little bit about how you prepare before, how you partner during, and what you pursue after.

So, we're going to transition to another format here, and we're going to ask you guys to type in to each of the boxes that you see here. Thoughts about what you do. For instance before you get your space ready to have your language together to sort of get yourself in that mindspace that's helpful. So, as your inclined type in the before, the during, and after we're going to gather up these thoughts and we'll summarize some of those we're going to reflect together and this is one of the many places today that we think we're going to have a whole lot of richness to share with each other and want to reflect these back to you.

I'm going to pause just for a second so you have some space to think and type and then we'll start to summarize a little bit of what we're seeing. I see a lot of activity in the before. Let's take some highlights here.

So, I see folks saying gather up resources just in case Sandy offers, I'm going to check in on what I know about the family situation, so I'm prepared. Be sure know who you're talking to. Jessica offers have those resources ready. Kristen offers get to know the family, make sure that we have the family story in our mind so that we don't ask them to repeat things certainly if we already know. Before we meet with the family that they have been classified as a family experiencing homelessness we might have some information.

And at this point we may not at the same time if it's before we've gotten to know the family in a deep way they may or may not have offered that information quite yet. So, we might be

coming into it with a little bit of a question mark on the data that we need to think about together, or with questions that we can pose in the way that Kiersten offered and that relationship building way to see if they're open to thinking about their living situation and what that might look and sound like. Octavia says ... Yes.

Jennifer: Hello. I just see so many things flying by and I'm so grateful that we're able to capture these later and look at them. Just fantastic ideas flying by and some of them particularly during really echoed the sentiments that people were sharing earlier in the conversation when they said what made them, what helped them feel comfortable in this sensitive situation and I see so many of those things being a good listener, being respectful, nonjudgmental complete the parent forms the whole time they're just flying by I mean my goodness gracious it's just fantastic all the wonderful ideas that people have to help themselves be ready and then be present during and then of course following up.

Brandi: Oh absolutely. I see other things with Jennifer to honor the family even before about ensuring confidentiality making sure that the environment is a place that can inspire. So, the family hasn't shared their living situation yet and they're feeling like they're in a place where they want to. The space is confidential it might be comfortable if so that the families all the things along in a way that allows them the space to have that conversation. I love that folks say in keeping an open mind having things and ready just in case but it really to me this is a thousand reasons why I love our community so much. It really is about building that relationship. And folks are acknowledging that in the before and thinking about how to go into rapport building how to really stay present in those conversations and even how to prepare for that.

Kiersten: And I'm seeing being ready culturally being aware of your community, and who you might be speaking with, and she has been in that before and during times Brandi, that is very very important aspect of being aware of the culture of whom we're working in the values attitude in our communities because every community is different. Sometimes even where our centers are located may be different. You know as Adriana mentioned she has seven or eight communities and they may be very different between and among those communities.

Brandi: It's true. And I don't know if you guys are keeping up with all the scroll until you can certainly scroll up and down to see what others are offering here. But I'm even looking at the during I see unconditional positive regard. Oh, my goodness. That I want to honor that. I feel that so deeply right now that I just feel like that could be citing the motto a t-shirt, unconditional positive regard. How we really stand in that space of unconditional love, acceptance and warmth. How can we constantly facilitate that human connection.

And you got to give super concrete ways to do that. I'm looking at the during, Rebecca says ask open ended questions. Get to know them, be open, judgment free and get to know their situation intimately so that you can follow them and provide resources that are useful and check yourself if you see them being overwhelmed they might need extra help following through with some things.

For now, I really appreciate that thoughtfulness, Rebecca, because it really illustrates exactly what you're saying is you you're truly following the family where they are at the ready and that

means so much to us when we're experiencing something that feels hard or stressful and Miss Jennifer what do you see over in the after area?

Jennifer: One of the ones I really noticed, Brandi earlier was expressing appreciation for the trust that the family is putting in you. I thought that was really wonderful I'm sorry the name was passed how it's gone now but here's Debbie saying thank them for their time it's the same type of thing you know really [inaudible] it for the trust they placed in you, thanking them for their time review and reflect.

You know that's something that's so important when you've been to a sensitive conversation you've covered a lot of ground and that opportunity for review and summary is just essential. And I've noticed a lot of people have said keeping notes and writing things down and maybe if there's next steps for the family. Maybe helping them make sure that gets written down in a meaningful way or notes or that to have some follow up there ... go be a cheerleader. This is a great read give a positive word and a hug. This is definitely an early childhood world.

Brandi: And sometimes that encouragement it goes farther than I think we give ourselves credit for. A positive word an encouragement and that kind of connection

Jennifer: And then we should ask them how they felt the meeting went. I'd really appreciate that one then having the family tell us about the meeting just go have this conversation feel for you.

Brandi: And even if it wasn't gonna get to this here in a second. Miss Jennifer, we're going to do, we want you guys to keep typing here for just a couple more seconds. And then what we're gonna do is pivot back into the PowerPoint and showcase a few things that we have offered. Also in the before during and after and I have to tell you guys just like we knew it would. Much of what we have offered is going to be a confirmation of what we have on the slide and vice versa. So, let us offer you a couple of these ideas based on what you've shared. And then, we're going to pivot and shift our attention into a different part of the discussion ultimately around and the professional development process and even self-care.

So, we'll go there next that we want to stay in here for just a second and confirm a bit of what you guys have offered and then actually move forward. So, when we're looking at before you guys call this out straight away consider your environment. What does it look like? What does it sound like? We—we try very hard to ask each other to think about our space in a very sensitive way. What kind of words are families here and what do they see. What kinds of images are projected and what do they experience as they put all those pieces together.

And one of the things that we're trying to do is make sure that that's a place that we're taking and because you know what we say about the classroom the environment is that our teacher. So, here it could be a supportive part of our interaction.

So, just confirmation that what you guys already said to us part here we alluded to earlier to, about being able to reflect on your own state of mind and what am I thinking about today. Do I have my language together? Am I feeling overwhelmed? Am I feeling worried like I really want to come into this conversation in an open way? But are things coming up for me as a person



and as a professional that I need to be aware of in this interaction? And I guess we have to go here, the real. Am I holding any kind of subconscious bias about the family situation?

So, these are things that we not only have to be aware of and acknowledge but we have to also have the space to think and talk about it in our own reflection so that we can continue to serve our families in the highest quality way that they deserve. You guys did this to check in with the family and see what their hope is. We don't want to be in a space where you know always ready to jump in and serve even with our best intentions sometimes that can be an accidental withdrawal in a relationship with the family because they might not be ready for that they might just be in a place where they want to think they want to be heard and they kind of get a plan together with you as their partner.

So, you mentioned checking in with them to make sure that all of those things are together based on their hope for the time and then certainly here, I want to offer this because it's critical to this conversation. But I also want to say that there are many ways that this sentiment can be applied in terms of being aware of cultural considerations. And I want to sort of offer, you know that a lot of what happens as families work together and make choices or you'll hear a little bit more from Adriana a little later about what's happening with the housing market and the cost of living where she is. And a lot of times we bond together as families. And that's part of how we are just culturally based on our levels of culture whether it's our individual or familial our group or even our universal cultures.

So, one of the things that we want to make sure to keep in mind and you guys mentioned this a little earlier too and to be aware of and also to honor is what might be happening in communities for families and the choices that they make to be together to share resources to hold each other as they navigate through the systems and how that tapped into this conversation around families experiencing homelessness how we do that in with relationship and strength based approach in mind, but also how that we make sure that that is captured for enrollment purposes, too.

So, I just wanted to put that up here first and foremost in the before to kind of have that in the front of the space. We're going to look at some during now and I'm going to put them all up here so you can have them straight away and you can kind of look at these because so much of this has already come up in the proper course of our organic conversation. And again a vulnerable place to be talking to you guys because I feel like this is so organic to how we do what we do and be that guide from the side and not necessarily an expert. Sometimes what we need from each other is just that connection to a partner have the modeling that reciprocity offers space for each other and ask permission to check in. And as we mentioned earlier it's all right with you today if we think about your living situation.

I'm realizing there might be some things that we can offer in support of your journey if you're open and if you're ready. If not no worries. Making the human connection. You guys talked about some really concrete ways that that can happen. Making sure that we have the chance to I call it lean in and lean out or really be in that vulnerable space which honestly we're gonna think about a little bit more together later because when you have empathy and when you express that to another person it asks you to go to that vulnerable place that you might have experienced. So, you have to put yourself in a place that might be very similar to where the

family is to really have an interaction that's deep and meaningful which also leans itself for us to think about where we are in these conversations. Listen carefully. I don't think that could be underlined and exclamation pointed enough.

Use silence effectively makes sure the family knows that you're here and that you're listening and making sure that we lift up the family strength because I don't know about you guys but if you've been in the midst of something hard that's not necessarily where your mind goes first. Sometimes it takes us to really lift up all of the incredible strength that the family has and point that out as they're navigating through some of these situations and certainly [inaudible] strength-based approach. Absolutely. And you too really thinking about how to individualize this in a one on one basis with family based on where they are and being present and for that you know each of us that looks different and that one of the things that we know is, know folks have shared like you guys did at the beginning. Found the way the person made me feel like I was the only person on the earth in that moment and really making sure that our body language our sentiment our way with each other showed that we are fully engaged in that conversation and those moments.

And of course, we bring up after. Now I think he got one of the things that's interesting about this is that after this offer resources after if necessary if the families are ready and one of the things that we've heard from folks over these conversations is that I actually appreciated that nobody gave me a resource first and foremost because I wasn't sure that that's where I wanted to go right away. I just wanted to think out loud for a second. I wanted to just touch base so even here's an after opportunity and that follow up piece and keeping your word we all know is so critical and building so meaningful into how we do what we do.

But making sure that we also are connected, and you guys had this in your before like know my community let me see where the resources are. Let me make sure that folks have what they need and let me make sure if anything's changed and what's being offered in my community that I'm aware of that so that I say we've already we can refer them over. If that is their wish that that was a whole lot of something and a whole lot of confirmation of things that you shared with us. I'm going to pause because I'm thinking that maybe a couple of my colleagues might want to chime in here, too.

Rachel: OK. Thank you, Brandi. This is Rachel again and program specialist for region nine months on the call and I just wanted to, I've been reading some of these comments and a lot of people have been talking about you know how good a first home visit can be at really capturing what the family's going through, really helping the home visitor, or the teacher, or whoever is going to be doing that first home visit to really understand where the family's at. I think that's very strong. And I also think that it will also—there's one lens to look at it. It could be really good at helping to understand the situation, but another could be to really think that if you are in their home, and let's say maybe they're in a shelter, or they're sharing a room with another family, it could give you some pause that maybe this might not be the best way to grow a relationship with a family if you have the home visit in that specific environment.

So, we also want to give that idea of really if we're creating the space to have this if it's through a home visit if it's at your center you know they're coming in for intake whatever it may be, we

really want you guys to try to think and be creative in the ways in which that can best help to develop that relationship and where the family can be open and honest.

Brandi: Thank you for that Rachel. I appreciate that clarification. And I know also that Adriana is jumping in because she wanted to offer a couple of thoughts also about the during part that we have offered here as a frame.

Adriana: Yes, I was reading all the comments that the participants have been recognizing we can all agree that they acted to resolve the service providers clearly and its patients a very important role in the outcomes of the service that we are trying to deliver to our family. And one of the main things that we want to be able to form personal relationships that win the trust and the confidence of a variety of children and families.

As you know here in the Bay Area where we are working our community is very diverse. We have Asian descendants, Pacific Islanders, Latinos, Russians, and it's there is a very diverse community. And the most important thing is that we want to—to win the trust and the confidence of this families and the way to establish those relationships is to become truly supportive with our families.

We all you all mentioned about the active listening the non-judgmental things and those are valid very valid concepts that we need to have present all the time. And also, here in the Bay Are you know how the high cost of living is reaching varying to a point then. And I will say that all of us here in the Bay Area unless you own your own house and your house where you're paying your mortgage you are at risk to be homeless just like that. The high cost of living is putting is making our families to be at risk all the time. The median cost of an apartment here of one-bedroom and one-bathroom apartment is around \$2,500 a month.

So, our families are facing these tough situations on a on a monthly basis? If something happened, if your job is jeopardized for some reason ... You don't know if you're going to be able to pay the rent for next month and that makes another implication. As Rachel mentioned it before when a family is living in a room inside a house and sharing the house with other families with other people that makes the family dynamic different and it is affecting in so many ways that we are learning for example some families decide not to use the kitchen because they don't want to share because at the time that they wanted to cook there is another family cooking or because they don't want to have issues about the refrigerator. All the things that living with others implies. Right. So, how is this affecting them.

We don't have ... we don't have access to the way that the families used to eat together in the dining room. Our kids are not used to that anymore. And the budget for these families is low. So, the only option that they have is fast food for feeding our children. And usually they eat in the car or inside the room. So, all these type of situations we deal with them when the families have the conversation with us and they are noticing how all these little details of our daily life situations are affecting the way that the family is relating and is affecting their routines that they use to have.

So, we have to be very creative in ways to support the families. Because sometimes we don't have an easy answer for both situations. But what we need to do is to support the people in finding their own way of dealing with the situation in which they find themselves and offering

their support. As you mentioned before. without a judgment and being in contact with all the agencies local agencies. So, we all need to get together finding solutions for these situations that our families are dealing with. That's what I wanted to share with you.

Brandi: Adriana thank you for that. What a rich series of connections based on what you know about your community. What you know about your program and the way that you guys interact and the way that you support families as you said as they navigate through you know the cost of living the lack of housing the things that you guys have lifted up so we're grateful for those insights.

And one of the things that I can't believe how fast this time always goes when we are with you it never ceases to amaze me how 90 minutes just fly by but one of the pieces that we also want to lift up as we're thinking together about concrete ideas and strategies and are certainly the relationship-based competencies that many of you know them and you use them but also the professional development piece as a process. And so, Miss Jennifer is actually going to take us through some conversation. Now based on these kinds of ideas and how these are going to apply to how we honor families experiencing homelessness.

Jennifer: Well thank you, Miss Brandi. And I'm so excited to talk about the RBCs in this time right now because we've been mentioning all of these skills and practices and possibly the knowledge that we need to form these relationships with families and be open. But where do we go. How did this happen and how do we make sure new staff that we're bringing on have these skills and the confidence to do the activities that we've been talking about today. And this whole professional development process is key to all of that. So, we want to offer you the idea thinking that's relationship-based competencies as a tool to enhance that professional development process and complete including support around self-care and sensitive conversations.

Let me just get my little arrow going here and I know you're all familiar with this, but we did want to acclimate you again to how the RBCs are organized. I'm going to move really quickly here. You know there is that overview for all the RBCs in the lime green box there. That's critical to sharing the information about how they're organized the research all the background. And then as you all know we have the three different areas where we have relationship based-competencies listed for family service providers, service professionals, teachers, and child care providers.

And of course, home visitors, and I've been really excited to see all the interaction around home visiting today because we have our bases that really address that area. So, let's just make sure that we're all in the same place as far as the definition for the Relationship-Based Competencies. It's a set of knowledge skill and individual practices and other characteristics including our behaviors our attributes and our actions that are necessary to be effective in our daily work.

And when I look back at all of the information in the chat room and what Brandi was talking about before during and after those are really behaviors and actions that we demonstrate. So, I'd like to see how this is all coming together is a Relationship-based Competencies. So, really what they're all about, it's professional development planning and delivery is a key ingredient

as we all know to building capacity in the program. And so professional development is not only linked to quality services but to staff capacity satisfaction and retention. And the RBCs provide programs with a mechanism to identify staff interests and strengths and then to guide the selection of content. The RBCs actually give us the language that we need to really understand the skills that you've been talking about because frequently we haven't had that training and active listening.

We assume that everybody knows what active listening means but really do we have a common knowledge of what that can mean when we think about other skills associated with the environment. Have we really thought about having a common agreement on what that environment might look like and the Relationship-based Competencies can give us that language and create a common language and a common bond among us. So, let's look at what knowledge is. It's what professionals need to know in order to have the skills and individual practices. Often it's really, really helpful to have the knowledge behind the skills or what the professionals need to be able to do and practices include those key examples of what they actually do.

OK. So, again when we think about all the incredible ideas and skills and practices we've been talking about on this webinar the RBCs are a place where you can go to get that defined. So, people really know what we're talking about and what we're striving towards and the huge tool that we offer to you and I know you're aware of is the assessment tool that helps us really understand where are the staff or where we are as a person and where our program is so it can contribute to the continuous improvement goals by providing you with a mechanism for gathering baseline data.

And to evaluate progress via these tools. So, if you're thinking about family well-being which we will talk about in a few minutes you can get an idea about where staff are right now in their own self-assessment about where they are in their knowledge skills and practices around family well-being and family as learners. These assessments we want to remind you—you know exists for the practitioners and for the supervisor in each of those three roles.

OK. So, we have really six booklets and then our tools and then at the introductory online green tool that explains the whole content. When you use the green line book with them it's always the best to have that it's kind of your key when you're moving into one of three roles. We want to remind you that they can be used for self-assessment as orientation tools for returning and new staff to help guide you reflective supervision. And of course, for professional development planning and they're all available on the ECLKC, so let's go. Let's look at one of these competencies number three is the one we've kind of chosen and I'm sorry.

So, the size of it here but we'll move into a larger screen. So, on this competency it really talks about supporting the families, reflections, and planning for their health, safety and education. So, let's look here at some examples of this. So, family well-being and families as learners. There's some knowledge that might relate to the conversations that we've been having around self-care and around sensitive conversations.

So, this one's who knows how to recognize family resilience strengths and resources and unique gifts and talents. You've been mentioning that so much I feel like I'm singing to the choir here.

When I looked at the chat room we all talked so much about how they helped families cope with challenges recognize resilience strength-based approach. I saw all that represented in your in your comments knows the signs of depression, trauma, substance use, homelessness, domestic violence. These are so important.

And if you have group of staff or staff members who are a little bit uncertain about that knowledge this is where you find out where they are where they feel they have the strength so where they might want a little more assistance. And finally, the third one we thought was particularly relevant today understands the importance of asking for support from their supervisor or colleagues about issues that are beyond your current professional skills and knowledge so they know how to come and ask for that support that they might need which is really, really critical to self-help and self and wellness here. Let's look at some skills for the family service professionals uses of supportive and nonjudgmental approach to talk with parents about difficult or sensitive topics.

That's what we've been chatting about. And if you think about this in the assessment from the assessment and professional development standpoint a staff member might be looking at that and thinking, "Yeah I do that pretty well but I'm not sure I like a little bit of reflective supervision on that. Sometimes I feel like I might come across as a little bit judgmental. I didn't mean to or I had some experiences with families where they thought I was a little bit judgmental."

So, you know I'm going to mark that as an area where I want to work with my supervisor for you know in my professional individual professional development plan to see if I can make sure that I can figure out what might be happening. So, these are just items on the screen we want to think about and the staff and supervisors looking at these as opportunities for growth or to substantiate and reward and reinforce and really celebrate what our staff are already doing and believe they're doing and doing well.

The second one that seeks support from their supervisors about how to be successful and then recognizes the importance of taking time for self-care for one's own well-being and for others especially when supporting families in crisis. And this is what we've been touching on all day. When Brandi talked about our own stories being really, really critical to that during preparation time that we're well aware of our own reactions and our own background and experiences. So, Adriana, may I turn this over to you now so you can share with us some of your incredible ideas and characteristics of your program regarding self-care for your staff?

Adrianna: Thank you. Because we know how important it is to keep our staff. We would we have been talking about the importance of support our community to know our community and our staff our teachers our family engagement coordinators. They are part of the community that we serve. So, we wanted to develop and implement an effective staff wellness program. Because as I mentioned before the type of relationships that we establish with our parents and children is to be reflected in the success of our programs. And if you want to have a positive relationship with the parents and the children that you work, but you need to feel good and appreciated and valued at your work.

So, we design as a base that the staff completed where we wanted to ask them how can we support you as staff what -- what would you like to be receiving from our from the administrative level and the teachers mentioned that they would like to have yoga classes.

So, we started to implement the yoga classes for this start breaking techniques. At least if you don't have the time to take the entire yoga class. We train. We provide the training so that they know breathing techniques because sometimes just sitting chair | and take five minutes of deep breathing make a whole entire difference in the way that you are dealing with this specific situation. We are promoting 15-minutes walks during breaks or lunch. We are trying to provide our breakroom with healthy snack by offering foods or granola bars instead of cakes and cookies and -- and sodas or sugar drinks to our teachers. We provide a water filters fountains in the breaks rooms for you know what centers just to remind our staff to stay hydrated to take care of themselves because they were asking for that if they want to show a commitment and engagement with the children and the families that were serving. It is very important that they feel committed to that to be that they understand that they are very a very important team in that process. Also we establish a partnership with another local agency that is authority staff to offer mental health consultation to our staff to our teachers.

So, they have the opportunity to open up to decompress to talk about how stress job-related or personal is affecting her life her moods their moods. And, and we are offering that opportunity so they can they can talk to. And those are mental health consultants that visits and is assigned to one of our centers and it is at once or twice a week. So, the teachers can have access to talk to these persons and at the beginning was a little bit hard because whenever you were thinking that you're having through difficult times it is a little bit difficult to give the first step. But then you start to value this opportunity and it has been very helpful. That's in the area of health care.

But also, we, because we want to keep our teachers in the centers, especially in the centers that we operate in the shelters, because for these children for the children who attend their centers located in the shelters. The classrooms are beyond these space. Would they know that they are what is going to happen next? The classroom is the only place that they feel safe and that is a predictable space and so we need to keep our staff that they know the community. They know the children. We don't have to have a high turnover in the personnel that is working with our children and families. We need to provide a stable staff. We want our teachers to stay with us. We want our family engagement coordinators to stay in our agency.

So, we are also supporting them if they want to continue classes and we reimburse them with 90 percent of the tuition for education classes and books and we continue to offer periodical formal and informal training in different topics that our teachers are showing interest.

Adrianna, this is a good place to check in on Cynthia's questions.

She, because I think what you just offered about coursework, and some of the pieces that you guys have created within the context of your program. She asks if you purposefully create a budget to honor the self-care activities that you've constructed for your colleagues and then she says or how is that additional support paid or what kinds of strategies do you guys use to make sure those are in place. Definitely someone its activities have been planned for the year. And we have to dedicate a budget aside for those activities.

And sometimes can come from projects that we want to write and look for financial support for our projects. But yes we have to designate a budget. And when we think you think about that that's the first question that many programs bring to the table. We don't have budget to do that. But if you look a long term is a win-win situation and you need to make that investment in your staff, in the self-care and professional development of your staff in order to have successful outcomes for your programs. So, I will say that is the most dedicated we need to have that budget. We need to think about a budget dedicated exclusively to the well-being of our work.

Jennifer: Adrianna, how do you prepare what kind of training do you think your staff needs. Who specifically work with families experiencing homelessness. I know you referred to the fact that your—that your providing center-based services at different homeless shelters and shelters for families can reside for a short period of time. So, what kind of training do they need to be prepared to work with this population but also be able to have success with this population.

Adrianna: Sure. I would say two centers that operate on the shelters are very different from traditional centers because it has different characteristics by, for example. You never know how many children you're going to have. The population varies and maybe we can have children that are going to be with us for a period of two months. And so, two or one months and suddenly you come on a Monday and you ask for oh wait John. No John left. He's not here with us anymore. So, for teachers they need to be ready and they need to be more focused in their social emotional development of these children.

So, we are trying to support our teachers by providing the training on the pyramid model that emphasize the social and emotional development of the children so they can have that component instead of focusing or thinking only about their curriculum part for these children that are, are experiencing homelessness and having a place to as I said as I mentioned before where you have a predictable environment is more important than maybe know how to count from one to 20. Knowing that and make them sure that after lunch they are going to take a nap and they are going to be safe. And the teacher is going to be next to them and the music that we're playing for calming them. It is very important. More than many view other topics of the curriculum and the teachers needs to be open to that and having that training specifically in the social emotional development. It is very important for the teachers.

The other part is to understand that many of these children also come I mean just the only main factor of being homeless is -- is a traumatic event for a 2- or 3-year-old. And so, we know that these children need a lot of hugs need a lot of support and they need to be listening all the time and the teachers know that sometimes when a child is presenting challenging behavior and is disrupting the normal development of the class and the teacher has difficulty to handle the situation she can ask for support and there is another person in the classroom to give that support to give that support to the teacher or to give that support to a specific child. That's why for example in this classroom we don't have more than 12 children.

Brandi: Adrianna, you guys have created so many incredible structures it's clear that the connection to your colleagues. I just have lost words because it's just so critical and it's difficult and you have a budget and you have a structure and you have an intentionality that's been



woven in that really touches everybody from the children to their families and our colleagues and many of you lifted up and chat that a lot of us have gone through similar or maybe even currently experiences similar situation. So, not only is this critical for each of us no matter where we've been what our experiences have gifted us but specifically if those of us that our colleagues in our servant families in similar situations it's critical to have these pieces in place for each other as we continue to serve and as we continue to sometimes need to be served in our own way.

So, that acknowledgement and awareness of what this spring forward for each of us is just a critical part of this conversation we're so grateful for you guys you know sharing openly today in the chat and your strategy. And then Rachel I appreciate how you really brought the conversation through Adriana's brilliant examples to the professional development piece and what that looks and sounds like in terms of training and I have to tell you guys this isn't just for one role that we have. I mean as Jennifer was saying earlier she's going to kind of bring it back to us here.

But even the professional development piece as it relates to training how do we make sure that each of us have the opportunity to have this conversation. And I would say no matter what our role is we should all be speaking consistently we should all have the opportunity to you really modeled in as an extreme amazing example for each of us engage in this dialogue so that we have the chances, Adrianna, to do what in terms of connecting those pieces and making sure that we have the knowledge that we need. Miss Jennifer, I'm thinking about you because you taught us about the knowledge the skills and the practices and we have some real-life examples of course here from Adriana that Miss Jennifer's gonna bring it back around and have you guys think about how to apply this even with the Relationship-based Competencies as a potential support for you in this.

Jennifer: Right, Brandi, and I'm just checking in with you regarding time. I feel like are wonderful participants have been sharing some of their stuff here strategies. But do we want to give a little bit more moment there for them to share a little bit more Brandi. What are your thoughts.

Brandi: I would love it if you guys I mean you have been so kind to share things that you're that you've been doing. But let's keep it going because so many of you have told us things like you know go back and I go to ECLKC, and I listen, and I hear some of these strategies or approaches and I'm reminded all over again what I got excited about. So, feel free to type in the chat as we take you through this next piece some of the self-care strategies that you offer for your colleagues. And Miss Jennifer's going to showcase a little bit of how all this can be applied to she already showed you that third competency around well-being how this same approach can be really highlighted and emphasized for number 10, as well. Professional growth.

Jennifer: Thank you, Brandi. You know Adriana has created an atmosphere in which people can share and ask for the support that they need because she does have the resources and she has the intentionality of opening that door for her staff. You can just hear how much progress she's made and Adriana I'm imagining that that didn't happen overnight. I'm imagining that you came in and had to create an atmosphere of sharing and openness and trust. Could you share a little bit about how you started the whole program of self-care and the responsiveness to your staff.

Adrianna: Well sure yeah. And as I mentioned from the beginning we are work in progress is a process and we continue to work and everything starts with a survey because we as I mentioned before also the big cost of living here in the Bay Area is so high. And we are starting to notice how so many families were facing these adverse situation of homelessness. And we we are starting to notice how this is effecting the children and the behavioral the children and their behavior of the children also affected the way that the teachers were willing to work with them. We are starting to notice that it was a high turnover with our staff, that the teachers were tired, that they were dealing with type of behaviors that they would not use to deal before.

So, we are starting to notice how many things were happening at the same time and affecting the performance at all levels of the teacher. at the children level, at the family level. So, we were concerned about that and we did these surveys with our staff. They completed they completed in June 2018 and we continue to work on that. We start to develop some wellness activities. We have to adjust the stage rules as you mentioned before we have nine different centers. So, we need to rotate where we were going to develop the activity. And so we as we were taking advantage also of the diverse population that we have between our staff. So, some teachers help us with Taichi classes, because they are from China and they know how to work this technique and they share. We start to notice that maybe one or two teachers were doing that during breaks. And I noticed that and I say why don't we share with other teachers. And notice how that that was an idea that had an echo I and some other teachers show interest in doing that.

So, others were not into the Taichi thing but they wanted to have a space maybe a comfortable couch to take 10 minutes break. And so we just have to open the conversation and be willing to listen. And in our agency have everybody on the same page. How can we contribute because we want to be part of the solution to present to our communities. We're not just delivering service, we are part of our community. And that is how we are working you know what is it is a working class.

Brandi: It's fantastic. Adrianna, thank you so much. Because it tells us that we can start small. We can start in little places and build that trust and confidence and it comes back to this competency number 10 professional growth, that something we really need to stop and say what does that mean that participants participate and professional growth activities and are aware of the fact that they may need that professional development or professional growth. So, just very, very quickly I will remind us of the knowledge the family service professionals looking at the importance of ongoing effective practice and coaching, and nearly have again the self-care habits, understand the importance of healthy self-care habits for one's own well-being but if you have an assessment like Adriana used to survey if you're using the RBCs you may find people ranking a little bit lower because they don't see the relationship between healthy self-care habits and one's own self being able to be responsive in the classroom and with families so that would be an important indicator for you.

Again, here's our skills. Engages in reflective practices, ask for help when needed. And Adriana has opened the door for her staff so that they can come to her and share their ideas. So, what will help them in that self-care area and minimizing the stress that they're feeling. Use this

information learn and learn through formal and informal professional development to enhance their practices.

So, these are just basic, but they give us a common language and they give us an opportunity to assess where supervisors and staff how they feel they're doing in these areas. The last one to look at really quickly is what I want to remind you that these staff and supervisor's assessment tools for each role are—are aligned.

And so, we'll look at this example here that the staff maintain healthy software habits for one's own well-being and meanwhile the supervisor works with family service professionals to understand the connection between self-care and the ability to build effective relationships.

So, you see that line or a reminder of that alignment. And then finally the practices that were looking again at reflective supervision to gain insight participate in peer to peer learning opportunities and creates and follows through within the visual professional development plans. So, Brandi I got that I sent it back. What we had to figure out which was right. Your dream is to just kind of wrap up any comments about professional development or are there any other thoughts that you might have to want to share right here at the end.

Rachel: Actually, I might share something real quick. So, right before Adriana might want to share something. So, I've seen that everyone is being able is typing so many great things that they're doing for their program. We've got paid wellness. I've like one-half hour of paid wellness time, mental health wellness, state wellness, wellness Wednesday, yoga, mental health, professionals coming in, wellness heals—I don't even know what that is, but it sounds awesome—exercise equipment, massage, someone's getting a couch, a wellness committee, a social committee.

And maybe everyone might want to try to do something. I'm throwing it out to you guys because even at the Central Office of Head Start and throughout the different regions we have decided to embark on doing different types of wellness challenges as well. You can even ask your program specialist if they've participated in one we've been trying to model this behavior as we see it now and the performance standards and we're really trying to make that time for understanding professional development and wellness. And so, this might be a fun opportunity for everyone to you know get inspired. Yeah. So, just want to throw that out there.

Adrianna: Yes. I would say that the most important thing is to open the conversation and you will be surprised with all the great ideas that we all have when we want to feel better and take care of ourselves.

Jennifer: Absolutely. Yeah go ahead. There you go.

Brandi: Well I'm at a loss for words and you guys. Those of you who know me know that's not a frequent occurrence, but I'm so inspired about Adrianna's words I'm inspired that you guys have been sharing so meaningfully both with the self-care ideas and certainly the things that we could do together around professional development and thinking of professional development. Many of you have already discovered these but we also want to offer them just in case you haven't you probably know that serving families experiencing homelessness has always been a priority of ours. But we have a campaign from the office of Head Start and Dr. Bergeron that's

called home at Head Start. You're gonna see a lot about that here and a little bit but in that we've created 8 modules that live on the ECLKC. And those are crafted for you to be go to go and take in a self-paced fashion. And once you finish all eight you get a certificate for your own professional development file, which we know is really important. And on top of that you get exposure to lots of topics like specifically thinking about the McKinney Vento Act definition and a lot of what we've talked about today in terms of conversations and even where we'll go next time around community building and outreach.

So, if you guys haven't checked this out yet, I believe it's in our Web link—right, Ms. Lina—over on the left-hand side of your screen. If you click the web link and hit browse to it is going to take you off into another part of the world. And which is a running click, but you will have access to those modules in case you haven't found them yet. The other thing that we want to offer here is an opportunity to see some of the things that we've been doing across the country in terms of the home at Head Start campaign. If you haven't checked out Dr. Bergeron blogs she often gives us insight and inspiration in how we're doing and what an impact you guys are having as you've really started and not only enhanced your focus on families experiencing homelessness but as you've also been enhancing how you're doing what you're doing with your system and with your approaches not only for the families but certainly with each other as colleagues.

And I wanted to remind you a couple of things well we're coming to a close for our time today, but we are going to be coming back together for the third and final part of this web series on December 5<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. Eastern. And we also are going to be hanging out here for a little while after this webinar to from 4:30 Eastern to 4:45 or so we stay we take questions.

We continue the dialogue. If those if those came up for you and you didn't feel like they got answered or now you're inspired with new questions we're going to hang out for a little bit and answer those. So, feel free to stay with us in the 15 minutes after and then I wanted to offer a couple things. One of them is brand new. You might not have ever heard of this before. So, get ready everybody. This one you would have hopefully you doing this over in the map here is community.

You can sign up on the ECLKC, and there are a couple that actually have conversations around families experiencing homelessness and are seeing one for managers and coordinators but certainly one that we're in all the time. The PFCE Deepening Practice Community. So, come on over and see us. Many of you ask questions a lot about sharing forms and policies this practice. It's a safe space to go and talk to each other about how you're doing what you're doing. And so much of what Adriana shared today comes up over there.

You support each other in that conversation, and every once in a while as the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement we all chime in, too. And just say hey we have a resource for that or hey maybe you could consider this. We heard something recently that sounds like it might fit with where you're going so come visit us at MyPeers. I want to thank everybody for coming to spend time with us today.

And I want to thank our federal leaders. Kiersten and Rachel, really want to thank my colleague Jennifer and I wish you guys could clap out loud listening for Adriana the time that she's dedicated to this conversation.

The gift that she has given each of us as we think about how to do this in a meaningful way. And we want to thank you guys for coming and spending time and sharing your gifts and insights today, too.