



JOHN BURTON
Advocates
for Youth



California
Community
Colleges

Examining Intersectionality—Focus on LGBTQIA + and the Experience of Foster Youth

February 29, 2024

Introductions

Name/Pronouns

College

Your Title

What identities show up for you in your everyday life? (e.g. student, parent, teacher etc.)





Grounding on Intersectionality Framework

Josh Williams, M.S.
John Burton Advocates for Youth

Origins: Dr. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw



Professor of Law at UCLA and Columbia Law School.

Coined the term *Intersectionality* which is rooted in Black feminism.

Intersectionality is an expansion of critical race theory (CRT).

DeGraffenreid v. General Motors



Intersectionality



Race, class, gender, sexuality and other axes are systems of power that must be recognized.

Interconnected systems of power that have that result in inequalities that shape people's lives.





FosterClub

the national network for
young people in foster care



WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO

We created FosterClub for young people who experience foster care.



“I can’t imagine not having FosterClub in my life.”

**how to make
being in
foster care
not suck.**

**THE FOSTERCLUB
WAY**



WE BELIEVE:

**With resources and connections,
young people can make it and thrive....**

**And can help find a way
to make the foster care experience
a bit better for the next kid...**



1

Provide direct support to young people who experience foster care.

2

Drive change in the child welfare system that is informed by their lived expertise.

Types of service opportunities for LEx Leaders @ FosterClub

Direct Support to Young People

Peer Led Training

- Resources and Referral
- Peer Support and Mentors

System Change informed by LEx

- Public Policy
- Practice Improvement
- Public Awareness

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE:

When young people have the support they need and opportunity to drive change in their life, they become self-determined and do better.

When the system listens to young people, it does better.



Queer Experiences in Foster Care



Research has shown that LGBTQ2S+ youth are **over-represented** in the foster care system.

“While dealing with many forms of abuse as a child and moving from home to home was hard, nothing was more difficult than knowing I was gay at a young age and keeping it to myself.

Without many supportive adults in my life, I felt like I did not have anyone I was comfortable with to share that information.”

- Marcus, experienced foster care in California

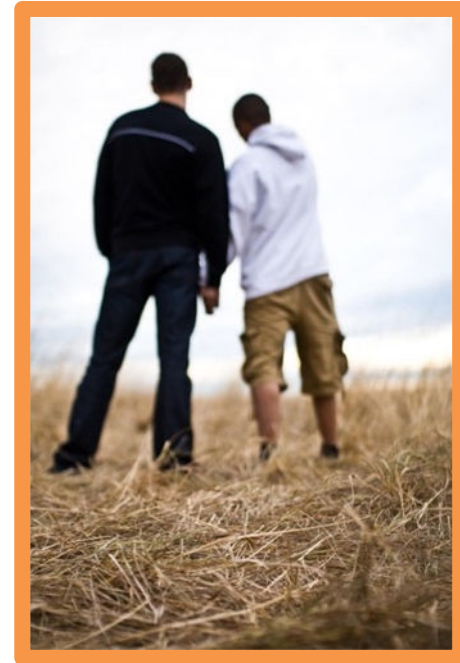
Disparities in Outcomes

Compared to their non-LGBTQ2S+ peers in foster care:

LGBTQ2S+ youth experience **higher than average** number of foster care placements.

LGBTQ2S+ youth in foster care are **2.5x more likely** to live in a congregate care or group home setting.

LGBTQ2S+ youth are **more than twice as likely** as their non-LGBTQ peers to report being treated poorly by the foster care system.



Our System Change Efforts

Every youth in foster care deserves **safe and equitable care**, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.



Federal Advocacy

Educating Practitioners + Caregivers

Public Awareness

Supporting LGBTQ2S+ Youth



Supporting LGBTQ2S+ Youth



Understand experiences in foster care could include harm based on identity

Communicate your affirmation and support of young person's identity

Connect to resources on/off campus, including peer support

What are your ideas?

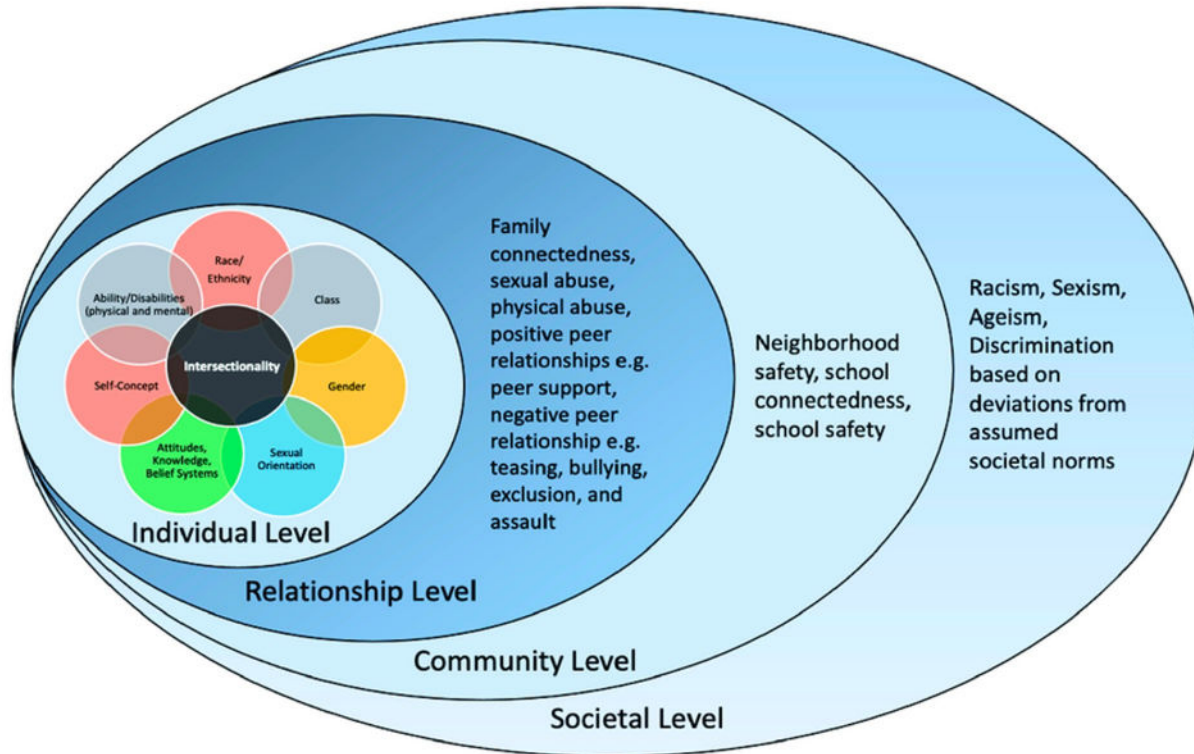


**Together
we will
make things
better for youth
in and from
foster care.**



Learn more, get involved: www.fosterclub.org 503-717-1552

Socio Ecological Model



Interconnected systems of power that result in inequalities that shape people's lives.

Social Justice advocacy must transition from solely single identity politics to dismantling interconnected structures and systems.

Takeaways



Listen & don't make assumptions



Consider historical context



Intentional partnerships



Create inclusive environments



Invest in professional development



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