



SIXTH ANNUAL
SYMPOSIUM ON FAIRNESS AND EQUITY ISSUES
IN CHILD WELFARE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Interactive Workshop

**Love Matters: Former Foster Youth Talk about Wellness,
Relationships, and the Things that Matter Most**

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Summary
April 17, 2008

The presentation began with a group exercise titled “Pooling Resources.” This activity consisted of trainees forming teams and pooling their resources to produce items on a scavenger list. The point of the exercise was to convey the importance of collaboration for finding creative solutions to meet the needs of foster youth. Next, the youth panel screened three digital stories of former foster youth sharing experiences about their relationships with caring adults who helped them achieve well-being and succeed through challenging times.

The youth panel also provided trainers with *Positive Youth Development Elements*, an information sheet created by the Y.O.U.T.H Training Project which indicates how providers can support youth in developing and maintaining wellness.

The *Positive Youth Development Elements* are as follows:

- **Bonding:** When a youth has a chance to develop a deep connected relationship with another person.
- **Resilience:** When a youth learns to persevere through obstacles (and understands and identifies the strategies she/he used to keep on keeping on).
- **Social Skills:** When a youth knows how to act and feel comfortable in groups, with individuals friends, etc.
- **Emotional Competence:** When a youth knows that she/he has feelings but doesn't have to act on them; when youth learn to soothe themselves.
- **Cognitive Ability:** When a youth can plan a party, pass a class, get an A on a test, think through a problem.

- **Principles and Values:** When a youth can identify right and wrong; can act accordingly and communicate her/his beliefs to others.
- **Self-Determination:** When a youth has the ability to live and grow by self-developed, internal standards and values.
- **Spirituality:** When a youth develops a sense or belief in a higher power, internal reflection or meditation.
- **Opportunity:** When a youth gets a chance to master a skill, earn a paycheck, and generally become proficient at something.
- **Appreciation:** When a youth is told that he/she is valued, and recognized for his/her strengths.
- **Youth Engagement:** When a youth has meaningful participation in her/his case planning and critical life decisions, and involvement in the development of a service, or piece of legislation.