[JACQUI CROWLEY]: Welcome everyone, and thank you for joining us. My name is Jacqui Crowley, and I am a researcher at Mathematica.

Today is going to introduce you to Healthy Sexuality for Youth in foster Care: An Online Training for Parents and Caregivers of Youth in Foster Care. This free, online training was developed with a large team of individuals and organizations including the Uhlich Children’s Advantage Network, or UCAN, the developer of the in-person curriculum we adapted. And our creative partner dfusion Incorporated. And so I want to thank – start by thanking the many people and organizations who contributed to the development of this training over the past several years. We’re really excited to share this new resource with you all.

The training was created to help parents and caregivers of youth in foster care ages ten and older learn about topics related to adolescent sexual health and strengthen their communication skills.

For the rest of the presentation we will use “foster parents” to describe parents and caregivers of youth in foster care for brevity.

This training is fun and interactive and covers topics like adolescent development, healthy sexuality, unintended pregnancy and STI prevention, online safety, and sex trafficking.

I’ll start today by sharing some background information on the development of the training and then share a brief overview of the training itself. Next I will share some feedback from foster parents who participated in the small-scale pilot of the training. Finally, I will share some tips for using the training.

We will have some time at the end of the webinar today to answer questions. Since we have a larger group today, please enter your questions into the chat, and we will try to answer as many as we can.

Before we begin, I would like to invite LeBretia White from the Family and Youth Services Bureau to open the webinar.

[LEBRETIA WHITE]: Thank you so much, Laurie.

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is LeBretia White. I am the Director of the Division of Optimal Adolescent Development at the Family and Youth Services Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families. Many of you may be familiar with the Family and Youth Services Bureau’s Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program such as our Personal Responsibility Education Program and Sexual Risk Avoidance Education Grant Project, just to give you a little context of the work that – mission-critical work that we support within the Bureau within the Division of Optimal Adolescent Development.

But on behalf of the Family and Youth Services Bureau, I just want to welcome you to this webinar which features the launch of the Healthy Sexuality for Youth in Foster Care: An Online Training for Parents and Caregivers of Youth in Foster Care. We are really excited to have you join us this afternoon, again as we launch this new and exciting online curricula to support foster parents in their engagement in communication with youth that are in their care.

The Family and Youth Services Bureau and the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, or OPRE, partnered with our contractor Mathematica to develop our free, online training to support parents and caregivers, again, of youth in foster care ages ten and older. We anticipate that this training will just really expand the capacity and the ability of foster parents to more importantly engage, again, and communicate more effectively with youth that are in their care about their sexual health. We know that this is definitely an important topic, an important area of focus for foster parents, and that foster care youth typically are somewhat transient, so we want to make sure that they can have an opportunity to learn as much as they can about healthy sexuality while in care.

So, state agencies and other organizations serving parents and caregivers of youth in foster care can offer this training to their parents and caregivers as a required or recommended training, for licensing, or just for the – the personal and professional growth of foster parents and caregivers.

Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program grantees and other youth service organizations can also offer the training link to parents, to guardians, caregivers, of youth in similar programs or other system-involved youth.

So, I am pleased this afternoon, again, and excited, extremely excited, this is – we’ve just discussed this has been a labor of love, several years of developing and finalizing this curriculum for launch on today. So, again, again, just really excited to share with you the online training after many years of planning, developing this course with our partners. Our presenters are excited also to share background information on the development of the online training, provide a brief overview of the course, and help participants understand how it can benefit parents and caregivers, again, of system-involved youth.

So, at this time, again, thank you for joining us. I hope that you will find this time to be advantageous to you in helping us to share information about this new and exciting curricula.

I will now turn the remainder of today’s presentation over to Jacqui Crowley of Mathematica.

Jackie?

[JACQUI CROWLEY]: Thank you so much, LeBretia.

So, just to build on the great background information LeBretia just shared, the online training was developed under the Personal Responsibility Education Program’s Promising Youth Programs Project, which I will refer to as PREP PYP, sponsored by the Family and Youth Services Bureau and the Administration for Children and Families.

One aim of this project was to develop or adapt sexuality education curricula for underserved populations. Foster parents were selected as a focal population because of the important role they play in the healthy development of youth in foster care, a population at disproportionate risk of poor sexual health outcomes.

For project purposes, we defined a foster parent broadly as any person who cares for a child who is not their biological child and who is involved in the child welfare system.

Once foster parents were identified as a focal population, the project team completed several data collection activities to better understand the needs of the population and gaps in existing curricula. Through these activities, we learned about an in-person curriculum developed in 2013 by UCAN and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services called Promoting Healthy Sexual Development and Pregnancy Prevention With Children and Youth in Care. The original curriculum was created for foster parents and child welfare caseworkers, but we encountered challenges with creating an online training with tailored content for both populations. That said, caseworkers would likely find a lot of the content and suggested approaches useful in their interactions with youth.

To adapt the curriculum into an online format, we worked closely with federal partners, experts including UCAN, foster parents, young adults formerly in care, and dfusion, Incorporated which specializes in the development of online training.

Once the team revised the course’s content to reflect a national audience and a virtual learning environment, dfusion designed the visuals and programmed the training.

In the next few slides, I will share screenshots from the training to give you a look and feel of it. I will also show a few short clips of the training in action.

The training is designed to look like a virtual classroom where participants encounter two trainers and other characters or avatars serving as fellow foster parents. The use of a virtual classroom as the backdrop of the course allows participants to virtually interact with other avatars like themselves and simulate the experience of an in-person training. The avatars represent foster parents of diverse backgrounds and provide opportunities for participants to identify with and learn about their views, values, and lived experiences. Avatars model best practices, act out scenarios, and practice skills taught in the training.

Avatars also create opportunities to introduce more sensitive topics and acknowledge the values and viewpoints that may influence a parent’s perspective on a certain topic.

At the outset of the training, participants are invited to create a personal avatar to allow them to engage in scenarios and practice skills in a manner similar to an in-person training.

To keep participants engaged in the training, we designed interactive activities, such as a matching activity and one in which participants spin a wheel to hear actual youth who were formerly in foster care share what they need from caregivers as they transition to adulthood.

Throughout the course participants have opportunities to try strategies and practice skills by typing responses into open response fields. Information participants enter into open response fields will be erased once they complete the training.

The training contains ten modules or lessons and takes approximately three hours to complete with the option to complete it over multiple sessions. In the next few slides, I will provide an overview of the modules.

In module one, participants are introduced to the training and shown how to navigate it. Participants are then invited to set learning goals which they can revisit in module ten.

Participants are also introduced to two resource lists they can access throughout the training, one for parents and caregivers to learn about specific topics, and one for parents and caregivers to explore and share with youth as appropriate. Resources include articles, fact sheets, guides, and informational videos publicly available on the internet.

In module two, participants have the opportunity to consider their attitudes, beliefs, and values about adolescent sexuality and how they may be the same as or different from the attitudes, beliefs, and values of youth and their family or origin.

In module three, participants learn about how youth change and develop during adolescence and how parents and caregivers can support youth in foster care to grow into healthy adults. The module also covers adolescent brain development and the impact of trauma on the developing brain.

In module four participants are introduced to several communication strategies for communicating about sexual health with youth.

In module five, the trainers define sexuality and talk about how parents and caregivers can support youth as they come to understand their sexuality including how to support youth who identify as LGBTQ+ or gender nonconforming.

Module six focuses on helping youth navigate sexual feelings and behaviors, including how to avoid unintended pregnancy and STIs including HIV and Aids.

Module seven discusses how parents and caregivers can partner with youth to set expectations and rules that promote their health and wellbeing including how to help youth navigate the digital world.

Module eight builds on the online safety content in module seven and provides participants with a basic understanding of sex trafficking, why youth in foster care are more vulnerable to trafficking, and what parents can do to prevent youth from being trafficked.

Module nine builds on the communication strategies shared in module four and offers opportunities for participants to practice the strategies they have learned.

The final module, module ten, highlights key messages from the training and asks participants to create action plans for accomplishing the goals they set at the start of the training. Participants can also create new goals based on what they learned in the training and think about an action plan for achieving them. Module ten also includes a short ten-question knowledge check to reinforce key messages from the training. Participants must complete all ten modules and answer eight out of ten questions correction on the knowledge check to receive their certificate of completion.

On the next set of slides I will show three short clips from the training to give you a sense of it in action. In the first clip you will see the two trainers introducing participants to module four on communication strategies. The second and third clips feature the two activities I mentioned earlier, the spin the wheel activity and a matching activity on adolescent development.

[CLIP ONE]: Welcome to module four, Communicating About Sexuality, Part One.

We hope the last module, module three, on Adolescence, gave you a deeper understanding of how to help youth navigate the transition to adulthood. This module builds on module three and gives you a few tips for talking to youth about relationships and sex.

Later in the course we will return to the topic of communication and, in module nine, give you some opportunities to practice your communication skills.

Welcome to module four.

Youth in care need open and honest communication and conversations with their caregivers.

Youth in care need positive, nurturing relationships with their caregivers.

Youth in –

Bleed. Physical growth slows for girls, continues for boys.

Most girls now have regular periods.

Young women are typically fully developed. Young men contain to gain height, weight, muscle mass, and body hair.

Adolescents in this phase typically experience less physical development and more cognitive development, continue to strengthen their ability to think abstractly, solve problems, empathize with others, and think about concepts they can’t necessarily see. Youth also have greater capacity for setting goals and start to use more moral reasoning and think about what is right and wrong when making decisions.

Bleed. Physical growth slows - .

[JACQUI CROWLEY]: Now that you hopefully have a sense for the content and look and feel of the training, I wanted to share some of the feedback we received from the small-scale pilot we conducted in September.

Overall pilot participants found the training to be informative, relevant, and useful for their roles as foster parents. One pilot participant said they found the training to be very informative for how to approach all aspects of sexuality to a teen. Another said they felt like they were in a support group.

Pilot participants also suggested the training could be circulated to other youth-serving professionals including child welfare caseworkers, school guidance counselors, and group home staff.

We tried to make the training as accessible and user-friendly as possible. Anyone can sign up for an account and reset their password as needed. Once you create an account, you can leave the training and resume your progress at a later time. You do not need to complete the training in one sitting.

As I mentioned earlier, participants must complete all modules and correctly answer eight out of ten questions on the knowledge check in module ten to receive a certificate of completion.

Finally, we recommend viewing the training on a computer rather than on a tablet or a Smartphone.

For administrators, we recommend offering the training to parents and caregivers as required or recommended training for foster parent – parent licenses or just for their personal development. Once participants satisfy the requirements for their certificates of completion, their certificate can be downloaded and shared with caseworkers or administrators as proof of completion.

In response to a suggestion by one of the pilot participants, the team also developed a set of tip sheets to accompany the training. These tip sheets pull out practical guidance from the training as well as suggestions from pilot participants to make key information readily available and easy to find for future users. The four tip sheet topics are Communication Strategies, Contraceptive Options, Safety, and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

A link to a report summarizing how we adapted the curriculum into an online training and results from the small-scale pilot I mentioned will also be available soon on the training website.

Before we start taking questions, we wanted to let you know that the training is now available at the link on your screen at [www.fosterparenttalk.org/home](http://www.fosterparenttalk.org/home). But we are still putting the finishing touches on a few things, so we recommend waiting a few days to take the training or offering it to others. We will send out an announcement by early next week when the training is ready, and we encourage you to share the training website widely with your networks.

Links to the training and related resources will also be posted on The Exchange and Child Welfare Information Gateway.

So, that is all the information I wanted to share today. Thank you very much for joining us. We have a few minutes to answer questions, so please enter your questions in the chat if you haven’t done so already. If we don’t have time to address your questions on this webinar, we will follow up with a response via email. But I think we have got about ten minutes, so hopefully we can get through a good chunk of them.

[JEAN KNAB]: Great. Hi, everyone. I am Jean Knab. I am the Project Director of this contract, and I am going to host the question and answers.

So, Jackie, while we have the question-and-answer session, can you just go – or Katie, go back a slide to where the links are there so that people can see those.

So, there were some early questions. I am just going to reiterate some of those.

Certificate of completion, I think Jackie covered. There is nothing for today. This webinar is just introductory. This is a training itself, but if you complete the three hours of the training and you get eight out of ten on the knowledge check, then there is a certificate of completion. There are no CEUs attached to this specifically. You would have to work with your – with your state about the requirements. All we provide is a certificate of completion.

Several people have asked, is there a cost to the training? No, it’s free. (Inaudible) funded us to develop this training so that it is a free public resource for you.

And finally, several people asked whether the slides will be available after the webinar, and yes, we plan to send those around to attendees afterward.

So, I’ve seen a few questions. I’m going to throw the first one to Jackie. And someone asked, is there content on how to be trauma informed and how to talk about sex with a young person who might have been sexually abused?

[JACQUI CROWLEY]: Yes. So, we do cover content about how to talk to a young person who has been sexually abused, and we have some great – links to some great resources including a fact sheet that (inaudible) and OPRE put together. So, there are some certain sections sprinkled throughout, but in general the training is geared for a general population of youth, but we do have some information in their about how to talk with a young person who has – has experienced trauma.

[JEAN KNAB]: Great. Someone asked if we partner with organizations to facilitate workshops for youth. So, this training was designed for parents and caregivers. As Jackie noted, this was sort of seen as a gap in the field. So, you know, at this time, you know, we do not provide any sort of additional training for foster youth associated with this project.

Jackie, someone asked why don’t we recommend a Smartphone or tablet for this?

[JACQUI CROWLEY]: So, it doesn’t quite work as intended on a Smartphone. You can listen to it, so if you are in the car and you want to put it on you will hear the audio just fine, but some of the visuals aren’t – we didn’t – we wanted to make it fully mobile compatible on a Smartphone, but we really ran out of time. So, you can listen to it, but the images don’t expand to fit the screen so it really is not ideal for being able to see the visuals and participating, you know, in terms of writing in your own responses and really being an active participant. But I think, you know, if you wanted to listen to it on your phone, that is – it is an option, just know that it won’t have the full functionality as it would on the computer.

[JEAN KNAB]: Great. Someone asked, does the training discuss LGBTQ+ issues?

[JACQUI CROWLEY]: It does, yes. So module five has a section on how to support LGBTQ+ youth and gender nonconforming youth and what parents can do to let youth know that their home is a safe environment and gives other recommendations about how to talk about healthy sexuality and relationships with youth in a way that is not, you know, shaming of that is, you know, recognizes LGBTQ+ youth.

One of the piece of feedback that we got from a pilot participant was the recommendation to ask young people if they have anyone special in their life rather than asking if someone has a boyfriend or a girlfriend. So, we have some – some recommendations in there. But it is, you know, in general it is more of a light touch on sexual orientation and gender identity but it is in there in module five.

[JEAN KNAB]: Someone asked, does this resource require an IRB approval? So, we had to get IRB approval to do our pilot testing when we were collecting data to inform the creation of this product, but there would be no IRB approval that I would be aware of for using this. As an organization, if a state agency requires this of foster parents, you would not be getting any data from users except that they would send you their certificate of completion. So, it’s not research, it’s not data collection, so I would not think so though I would always say check with your IRB, but I do not see how this would require IRB approval for you.

Someone asked, am I understanding that we do this training on our own in our own time? Jackie, do you want to talk about that a little bit?

[JACQUI CROWLEY]: Yes, you do.

[JEAN KNAB]: (Inaudible) people using this?

/JACQUI CROWLEY]: Yeah, yeah. So – so, knowing that the training is three hours in length, we did not want to have people feeling forced to sit down at their computer for three hours because that is just unrealistic. But each module is about 15 to 20 minutes in length, so I think we have envisioned, you know, someone could sit down for one or two modules and then come back, you know, a few days later. One thing to note is that you can pause midway through a module, you know if you need to get up and do something for, you know, a few minutes. It might time out, so we recommend, you know, setting aside some time to see if, you know, make sure you complete one module so you don’t lose your – your time you’ve spent in that given module because it, you know, doesn’t pause – pause forever. You can’t log out and log back in to a spot midway in the module. So. But in general we envisioned folks being able to, you know, complete this over multiple sessions, multiple days, as they had time available.

[JEAN KNAB]: Yes. And so, from our perspective, we created, you know, what would be this, you know, optional publicly-available free training. The goal of this webinar was to let folks know that it is out there. It is possible that a state agency might require its, you know, foster parents to use that, but that would come from them, you know, at a later time. So, we just want everyone to know that this resource is out there and available for your personal grow or – or to be used more formally as part of a foster parent training program.

Someone said they don’t understand which link for certification. So, the link there is that [www.fosterparenttalk.org/home](http://www.fosterparenttalk.org/home) is the home page where you would go, and you would register and get an account. And then that would provide you access to this three-hour training. You wouldn’t get the certificate of completion until you completed that three hours of training and you got an eight out of ten on the knowledge check at the end.

Someone asked what is the exact name of the training that we will find on any of the training links. That Healthy Sexuality – I don’t want to say it wrong. What – do you have that name?

[JACQUI CROWLEY]: Yes. Healthy Sexuality for Youth in Foster Care, and then colon, and then An Online Training for Parents and Caregivers of Youth in Foster Care. So, it’s a bit of a mouthful.

[JEAN KNAB]: Great. Are there pre and post surveys? No, there are not pre and post surveys. There is a knowledge check at the end that’s ten questions, but, again, that data is not provided to anyone. So, if a state agency asks their people to take the training, they would only, you know, be provided the certificate of completion by participants. There is no data that is shared with anyone else as part of this training.

How do you access the training? The link is there.

Is there any connected standalone material that can steer someone toward this research like a tip sheet?

[JACQUI CROWLEY]: We do have four tip sheets, yes. So, and that is something that folks could use, you know, after they take the training as a refresher. One of the, as I mentioned, one of the pilot participants actually asked if we had anything that they could print, you know, to have handy when they are having conversations with youth. In particular she mentioned, you know, wanting to have some guidance on contraceptive options to walk through some of that information with the young person in her care. So, those four tip sheets on four different topics are also available if you click on that fosterparenttalk.org/home. You’ll see a section down at the bottom if you scroll to the bottom. They should be uploaded there. If they are not there, they will be there in the next day or two.

[JEAN KNAB]: And we are hoping that organizations, you know, link to this training. So, any organizations on this call that think this is a great resource, you can feel free to, you know, point folks to this resource. That is one of the reasons we are hosting this today.

So, it is 2:30. I want to respect people’s time. I’m just looking to see. Question, certificate does not automatically go to a caseworker. You would need download it and send it along.

I guess one last question. Can staff do this in a group setting of foster parents, Jackie?

[JACQUI CROWLEY]: I think it is possible. That is something that came up in the pilot. You know, I think it is really up to, like Jean said, you know, local county and state child welfare agencies if they want to offer this in a group setting for foster parents. But that is definitely something that others have brought up.

[JEAN KNAB]: Right. Well, thank you all for attending. Thank you, Jackie, for the overview. Thank you (inaudible) for funding this really-needed work in the field. And thank you all for attending today. We hope that you will use this great resource.

Thanks, everyone.

[JACQUI CROWLEY]: Thanks all.