



**TRIBAL YOUTH
RESOURCE CENTER**

www.TribalYouth.org

Protecting Our Most Vulnerable – Unsheltered and Runaway Youth

*The 1st of a 3-part Online Learning
Event Series*



WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS



Moderator: Jeri Brunoe
Consultant, Tribal Youth
Resource Center



Presenter: Sam Schimmel
Youth Ambassador, Tribal
Youth Resource Center



Presenter: Deborah Tobacco
TTA Staff, Tribal Youth
Resource Center

Opening in a Good Way

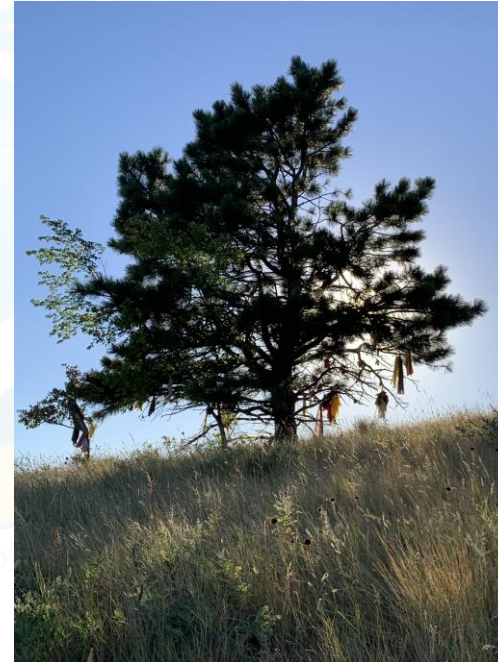
April 13th, 2023



Tribal Youth Resource Center
www.TribalYouth.org

▶ UNSHELTERED & RUNAWAY YOUTH

This online learning event is focused on the root causes of and current service gaps related to unsheltered and runaway Native youth across the country.

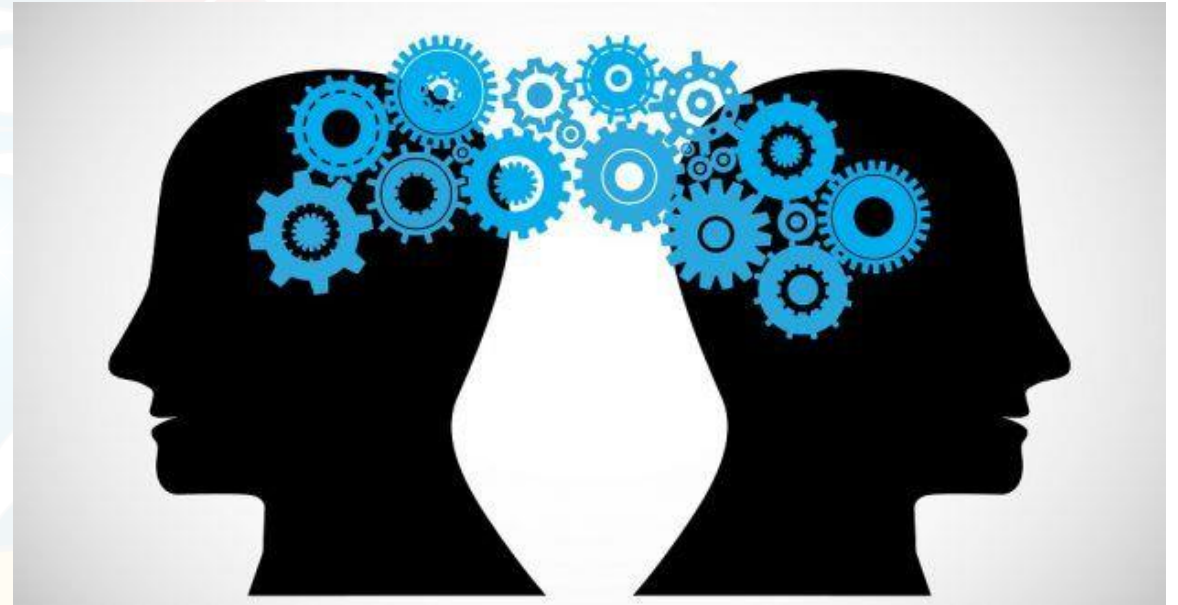


▶ LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Increase the foundational knowledge of the root causes of Native youth becoming unsheltered or running away from home and community.
- Increase the foundational knowledge of the connection between Native youth becoming unsheltered/running away and experiencing Sex/Human Trafficking victimization or becoming justice involved.
- Provide a peer learning forum for TY and JHWC grantees to discuss the needs of this specific Native youth population.

▶ PARTICIPANT POLL #1

How ***knowledgeable*** are you on the issues of unsheltered and runaway youth in your community?



SESSION OVERVIEW

OLE Part #1 of 3

Unsheltered and Runaway Native Youth: Exploration of Root Causes

The co-existing issues that unsheltered and runaway youth face are interrelated but conceptually different. These issues are critical indicators of both the root causes of unsheltered/runaway Native youth and the link to sex trafficking/human trafficking victimization and justice involvement.

Unsheltered youth are often included under the assumption that they are equally determined to be runaways and at high risk and do not differ from each other; *however*, we know that the issues of unsheltered and runaway youth remain prevalent and both are increasing across Native communities.



▶ UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS (UNSHELTERED)

- Homelessness is a circumstance that families may experience when they are faced with such challenges as extreme poverty and lack of affordable housing. It can also occur when a family's current living situation becomes unsafe or unstable.
- Homelessness is also a state of vulnerability for children and families. It exposes families to physical, mental, and developmental risks.
- Families experiencing homelessness often keep their situation and circumstances hidden from friends, professionals, and others because they feel ashamed or embarrassed.

***it is important for professionals to understand the definition of "homeless children and youth." It is included in Section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act [42 U.S.C. § 11435a(2)], and is hereinafter referred to as the "McKinney-Vento Act's definition.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT



Supposition/Food for thought:

“Homelessness is a circumstance that families may experience when they are faced with such challenges as extreme poverty and lack of affordable housing. It can also occur when a family’s current living situation becomes unsafe or unstable. It is a vulnerable state that exposes children and families to physical, mental, and developmental risks.”

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

PREVALENCE OF NATIVE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

In 2019, a national research study entitled, “Prevalence of Homeless Among American Indian and Alaska Native Youth,” with 25,492 responders revealed:

- The highest prevalence of homelessness among adolescents and young adults ages 13-25.
- During a 12-month span...
 - Approximately **10.2% of AI/AN households** with 13-17 year olds reported youth homelessness or runaway experiences that lasted at least one night.
 - Approximately **12.2% of AI/AN households** with 18-25 year olds reported youth homelessness or runaway experiences that lasted at least one night.
- Prevalence of reported youth homelessness/runaway experiences among AI/AN young adults was **three times** that of their white non-Hispanic peers.

▶ PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

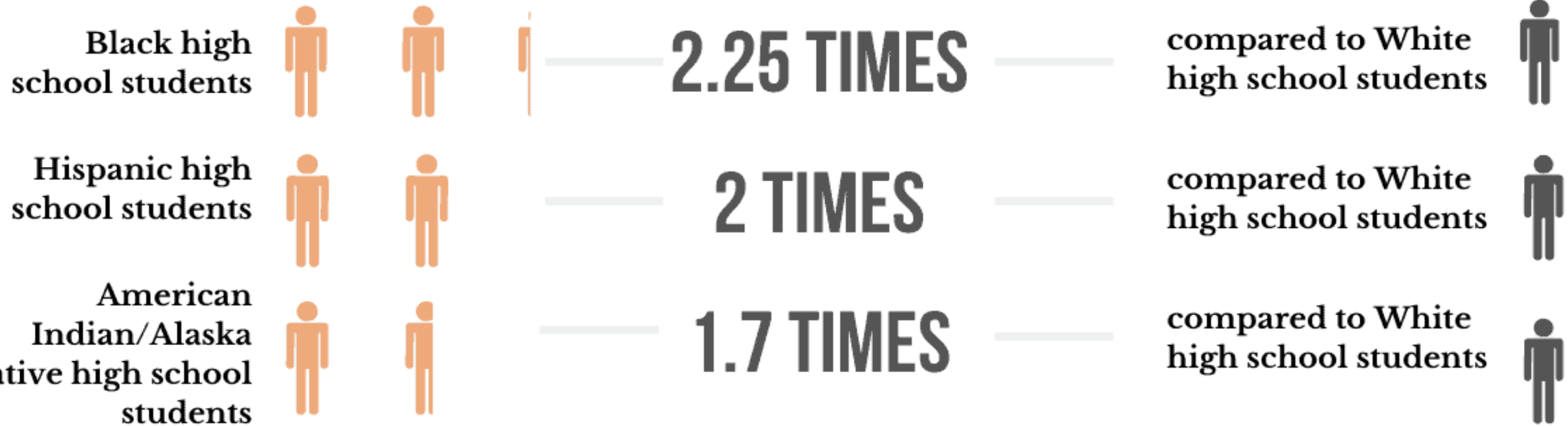
The U.S. Administration for Children and Families Health and Human Services (www.acf.hhs.gov) Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) defines their mission as, "to support the organizations and communities that work every day to reduce the risk of youth homelessness and adolescent pregnancy and domestic violence":

- Every year, as many as 550,000 young people are homeless for more than a week.
- Living on the streets, youth can become victims of violence.
- Many youth develop serious mental health and addiction problems.
- Youth may be forced to trade sex for basic needs.



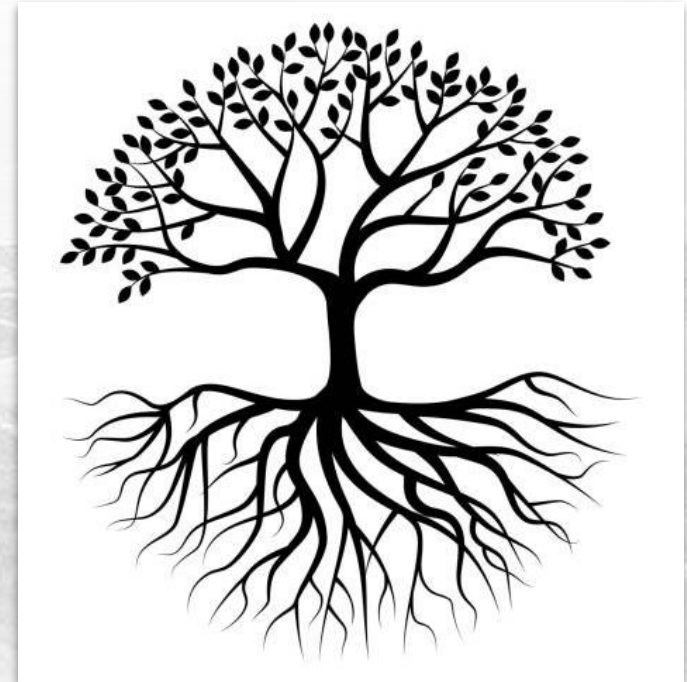
LIKELIHOOD TO EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS

Data: All the numbers are from SchoolHouse Connection's analysis of 2019 YRBS data from 27 states (AK, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, ID, IL, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MT, NH, NM, NC, ND, PA, RI, SC, SD, VT, VA, WI).



▶ EXPLORING ROOT CAUSES

- Abuse (sexual, mental, emotional, physical, spiritual)
- Family, school, and community violence
- Neglect/Attachment syndrome
- Trauma
- Socioeconomics of the community
- Bias: LGBTQ+/Two-Spirit



▶ EXPLORING SYSTEM GAPS

- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Behavioral Health
- ❖ Youth Services
- ❖ Temporary Youth Shelters
- ❖ Economic



▶ MOVING TO ACTION

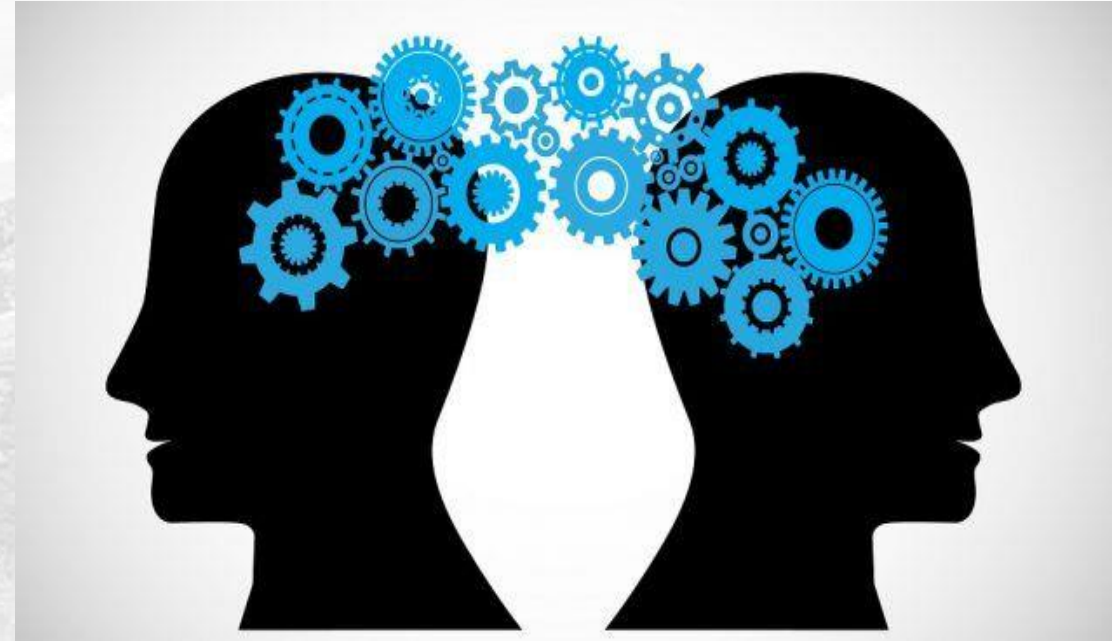
- ✓ *Partnering with schools to collect data* on students experiencing homelessness. This could include basic identification data, as well as data on students experiencing homelessness who are suspended/expelled, chronically absent, may not graduate on-time, etc.
- ✓ *Focus groups* with youth to better understand the issues and needs of unsheltered youth.
- ✓ *Research* local and regional resources for unsheltered youth.
- ✓ *Work with other youth programs* to discuss, plan, and move to action to respond to the needs of unsheltered and runaway youth in your community.

▶ LINKAGES TO SEX/HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMIZATION



▶ POLL #2

How *knowledgeable* are you on the issues of Sex/Human Trafficking of Native youth?



▶ UNDERSTANDING THE DEFINITIONS

Labor Trafficking occurs when employers use physical or psychological control, such as physical abuse, demanding a laborer to repay a loan, threatening to hurt family and friends, and/or taking away identification documents or money so that victims believe they have no choice but to continue working for that employer.

Sex Trafficking occurs when an person engages in commercial sex by force, fraud, or coercion.

Commercial Sex is when a sex act is exchanged for something of value, which does not have to be money.

Human Trafficking occurs when a person performs labor or services by force, fraud, or coercion.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

“Historical trauma impacted Indigenous communities in many ways across the United States and created vulnerabilities in these populations that led to staggering rates of trafficking and exploitation of Indigenous people.

These vulnerabilities are a direct result of systematic oppression and impact Indigenous people across multiple levels today. Rooted in the risk of trafficking that Indigenous people carry are the systems that oppressed them for hundreds of years and the continued ramifications for each successive generation. Historical trauma refers to the “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma.” (Brave Heart, 2003, 1998).



▶ EXPLORING THE CORRELATION BETWEEN UNSHELTERED/ RUNAWAY YOUTH & HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking transcends demographic categories. Its survivors span the spectrum of race, class, and geography.

However, some populations are at greater risk for trafficking than others, and runaway and homeless youth (RHY) are among the most vulnerable.

Researchers are finding that running away significantly increases young people's risk of commercial sexual exploitation as well as labor trafficking.

[Human Trafficking and Runaway and Homeless Youth | NCHYF \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/nchyf/human-trafficking-and-runaway-and-homeless-youth/)

▶ EXPLORING THE CORRELATION BETWEEN UNSHELTERED/ RUNAWAY YOUTH & HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Youth who run away are at considerable risk for sex and labor trafficking. The Polaris Project, one of the largest organizations serving trafficking victims, includes RHY among those at high risk, with “a higher susceptibility to victimization and human trafficking.”
- Youth Experiencing Homelessness Trafficked at High Rates – Unsheltered youth are more likely to fall victim to sex trafficking. According to a 2016 report from the Family & Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), 24% of youth living on the streets exchanged sex for money, and 27.5% did so for a place to stay.

CRITICAL DATA GAPS

In 2019, the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) - a tri-annual census of young people in Minnesota's schools - added a new question for 9th and 11th graders about trading sex:

Have you ever traded sex or sexual activity to receive money, food, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, or anything else?

1.4% of all students answered "yes."

5.9% of transgender and gender diverse (TGD) students answered "yes."

TGD students self-reported trading sex at a rate **4 times greater** than the overall base rate for students who participated in the survey.

*****There is a critical gap in information about the intersections between gender identity and trading sex, hindering work in the field.**

▶ CRITICAL DATA GAPS

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Native Americans (ANA) notes that American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander women and girls are at higher risk for experiencing sex trafficking.

[Information Memorandum on Recognizing and Responding to Human Trafficking among American Indian, Alaska Native and Pacific Islander Communities. | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](#)

******There are critical gaps of information in the field about sex trafficking and Native Youth***

▶ A STORY OF TWO TRIBAL NATIONS – SIGNIFICANCE OF AGE DEMOGRAPHICS



SIGNIFICANCE OF AGE DEMOGRAPHICS



The information shared about these two Tribal Nations is important, as it reflects that in Native communities, there is a significant decline in the presence of the elderly, thus providing a decline in wisdom passed down and support for Native youth.

This can lead to peer-to-peer learning in place of parent or grandparent teaching and, as a result, lead to more unsheltered and run away youth in our Tribal communities.

▶ PREVENTION



According to RHY Clearing House, researchers are finding that running away significantly increases young people's risk of commercial sexual exploitation as well as labor trafficking. Therefore, reducing runaway incidents is crucial to prevent young people from becoming homeless and falling into trafficking situations.

<https://rhyclearinghouse.acf.hhs.gov/blog/2020/07/overlapping-human-trafficking-and-runaway-and-homeless-youth>



Culture as a Protective Factor in Preventing Human Trafficking in Native Youth:

<https://htcbc.ovc.ojp.gov/library/publications/culture-protective-factor-preventing-trafficking-among-native-youth-tribal>



MOVE INTO BREAKOUT ROOMS





GROUP SHARING



MOVING TO ACTION

- ✓ *Collect data* on youth in your community/surrounding area impacted by sex trafficking/human trafficking
- ✓ *Focus groups* with youth to better understand the issues and needs of youth who have been victims of sex trafficking/human trafficking
- ✓ *Research* local and regional resources for youth who are victims of sex trafficking/human trafficking
- ✓ *Work with other youth programs* to discuss, plan, and move to action



RESOURCES

- ❖ Martin, L. P.-G. (2020), "Prevalence of trading Sex Among High School Students in Minnesota: Demographics, Relevant Adverse Experiences, and Health-Related Statistics," *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 1011-1013, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33032931/>.
- ❖ Morton, M. H., Chavez, R., & Moore, K. (2019), "Prevalence and Correlates of Homelessness Among American Indian and Alaska Native Youth," *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 1-2, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31691062/>.
- ❖ [Student Homelessness: Lessons from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\) - SchoolHouse Connection](#)
- ❖ <https://www.1800runaway.org/teachable-tuesday-voy>
- ❖ [Home - National Network for Youth \(nn4youth.org\)](#)
- ❖ [Combating Trafficking Native Youth Toolkit on Human Trafficking \(hhs.gov\)](#)

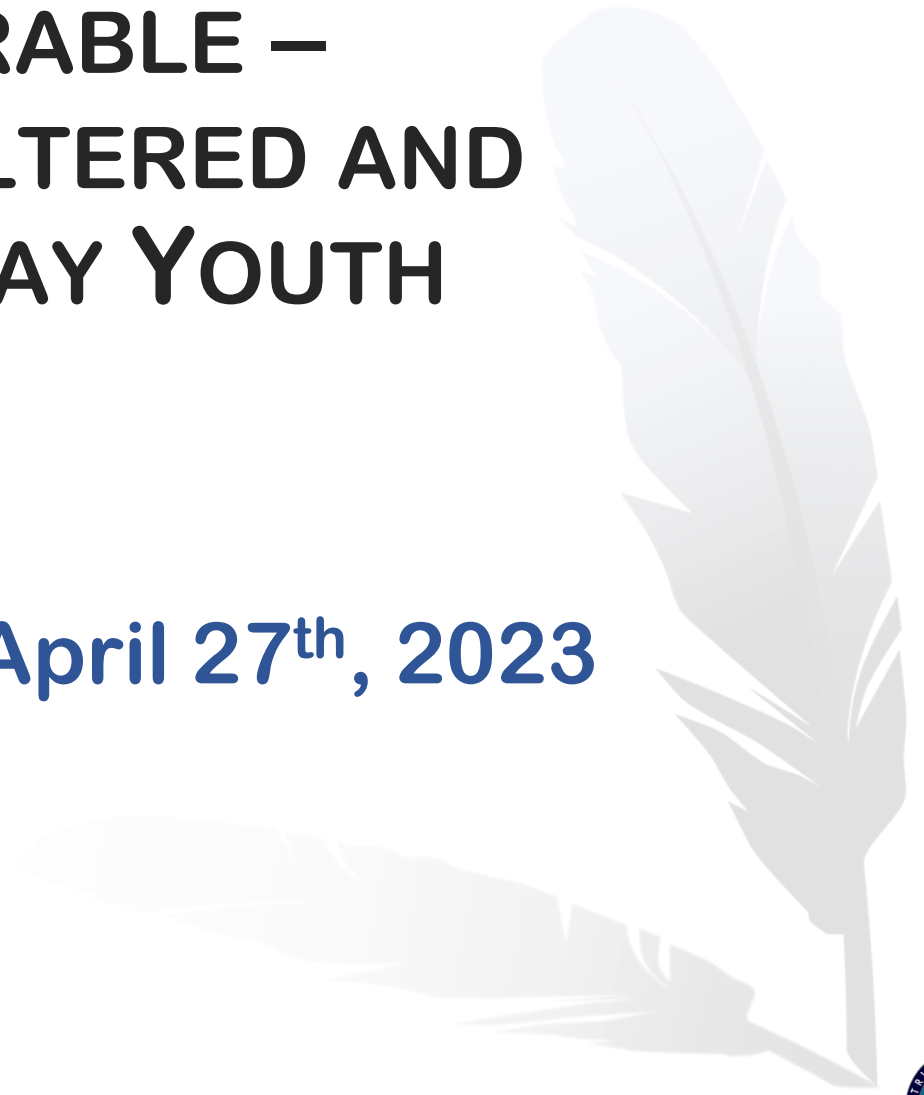


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PROTECTING OUR MOST VULNERABLE – UNSHELTERED AND RUNAWAY YOUTH

Part 2: April 27th, 2023





CLOSING IN A GOOD WAY

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