

The background of the slide features a silhouette of a tree on the right side, set against a vibrant sunset or sunrise sky. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a bright orange and yellow near the horizon, where a thin line of light suggests the sun is low. The tree's branches are dark and intricate, contrasting with the colorful sky.

Connecting Families, Youth Voice & Schools

10 practical strategies

*20th Annual Conference on
Advancing School Mental Health*

Presenters:

Jenah Cason & Mike Paget

Our experiences

- Jenah Cason, MSW
 - Federation of Families of SC
 - Youth MOVE SC Director
 - Currently chairing the Youth Involvement & Leadership Practice Group
- Mike Paget, M.Ed.
 - Formerly with the SC Dept. of Ed.; emotional, behavioral, & MH challenges; collaboration with the FOF and Dept. of MH
 - Currently an independent trainer for schools & districts



We've been working in a “Community of Practice”

- Federation of Families of South Carolina
- SC Departments of Education & Mental Health
- SC Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
- Schools
- Mental health centers
- Families
- Youth
- Other state agencies and partners
- National CoP for School Behavioral Health

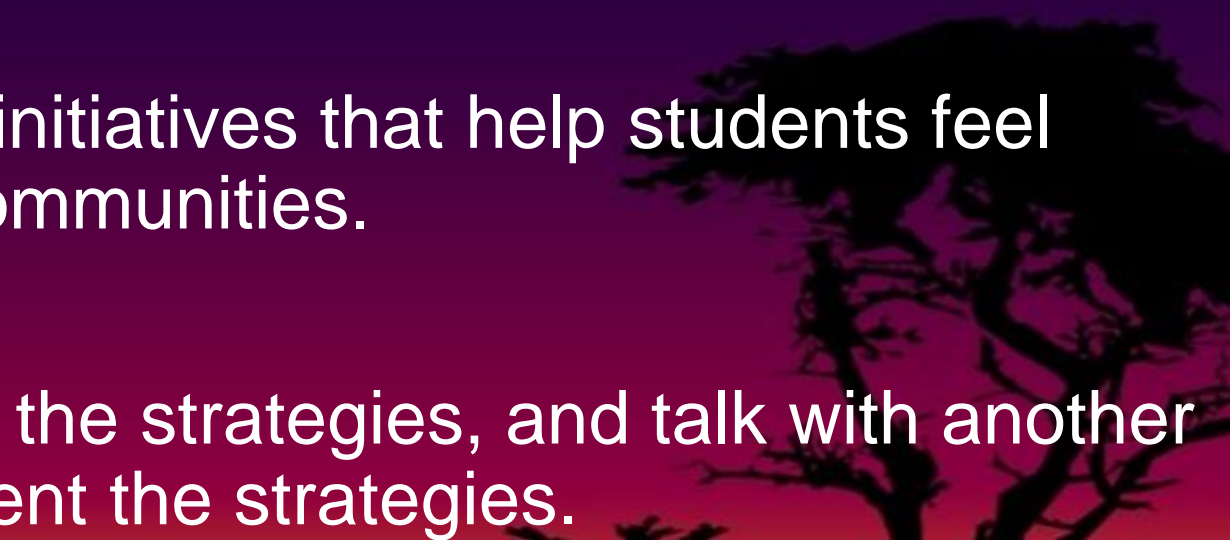


National Community of Practice on Collaborative School Behavioral Health

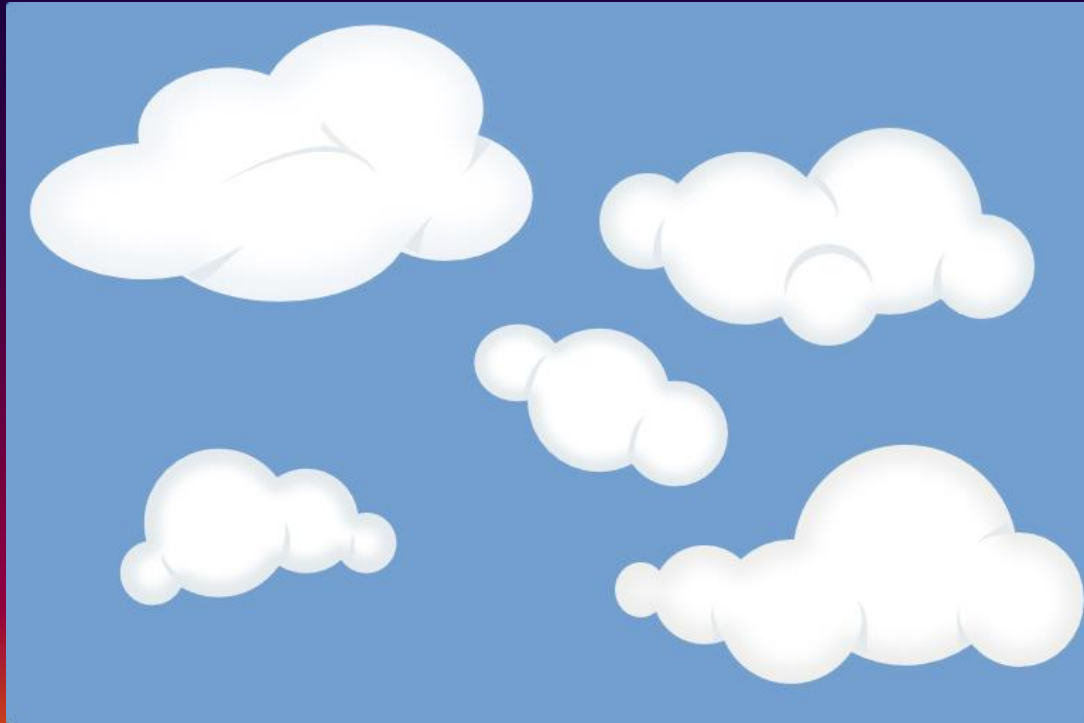
- A national dialogue with experts & concerned professionals
- Friends & colleagues
- The IDEA Partnership
- www.sharedwork.org



What we will accomplish

- **6:** We will share six principles that help schools meaningfully engage families.
 - **4:** We will share four youth voice initiatives that help students feel connected to their schools and communities.
 - **1+:** You will select one or more of the strategies, and talk with another participant about ways to implement the strategies.
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- A silhouette of a tree is visible on the right side of the slide, set against a background of a sunset or sunrise with a gradient from orange to purple.

In the clouds or in the hands?



6 principles that help schools meaningfully engage families

Welcome

Listen

Positives

Engage

Share strategies

Value the relationships in the family



1 Clearly welcome parents

- Attractive front entrance, easy parking for visitors, clear signage
- Make it clear that the building is safe – security is ensured – all visitors report to the office
- Someone to warmly greet everyone who enters the building
- Comfortable waiting area for parents – seating, refreshments



2 Listen deeply

- Schools should hear the thoughts and feelings of parents
- Go beyond hearing – respond to the thoughts and feelings
- Listen more than talk
- Value *and include* parent input when developing any plan
- Be available for any questions or concerns



3 Positives

- Your first, and the majority, of your interactions with parents should be positive
- A serious commitment to seeing each student's strengths – always keep those up front



4 Engage families

- Partnership
- Variety
- Value
- Appreciation



5 Share strategies

- Positive behavior supports in the home and school
- Teaming with families, schools, and other services
- Schools intentionally building relationships with parent supporting entities, e.g., FOF




6 Value relationships in the family

- The Search Institute – “Don’t Forget the Families”
- Families are critical in developing character
- Character is grown through “Developmental Relationships”



What a child needs from their family to nurture their character

- **Express Care:** Show that you like me and want the best for me.
 - **Challenge Growth:** Insist that I try to continuously improve.
 - **Provide Support:** Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.
 - **Share Power:** Hear my voice and let me share in making decisions.
 - **Expand Possibility:** Expand my horizons and connect me to opportunities.
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Bringing Developmental Relationships Home

**Tips and
Relationship
Builders for
Families**



Search >
INSTITUTE

Discovering what kids need to succeed

Examples that embody the 6 principles

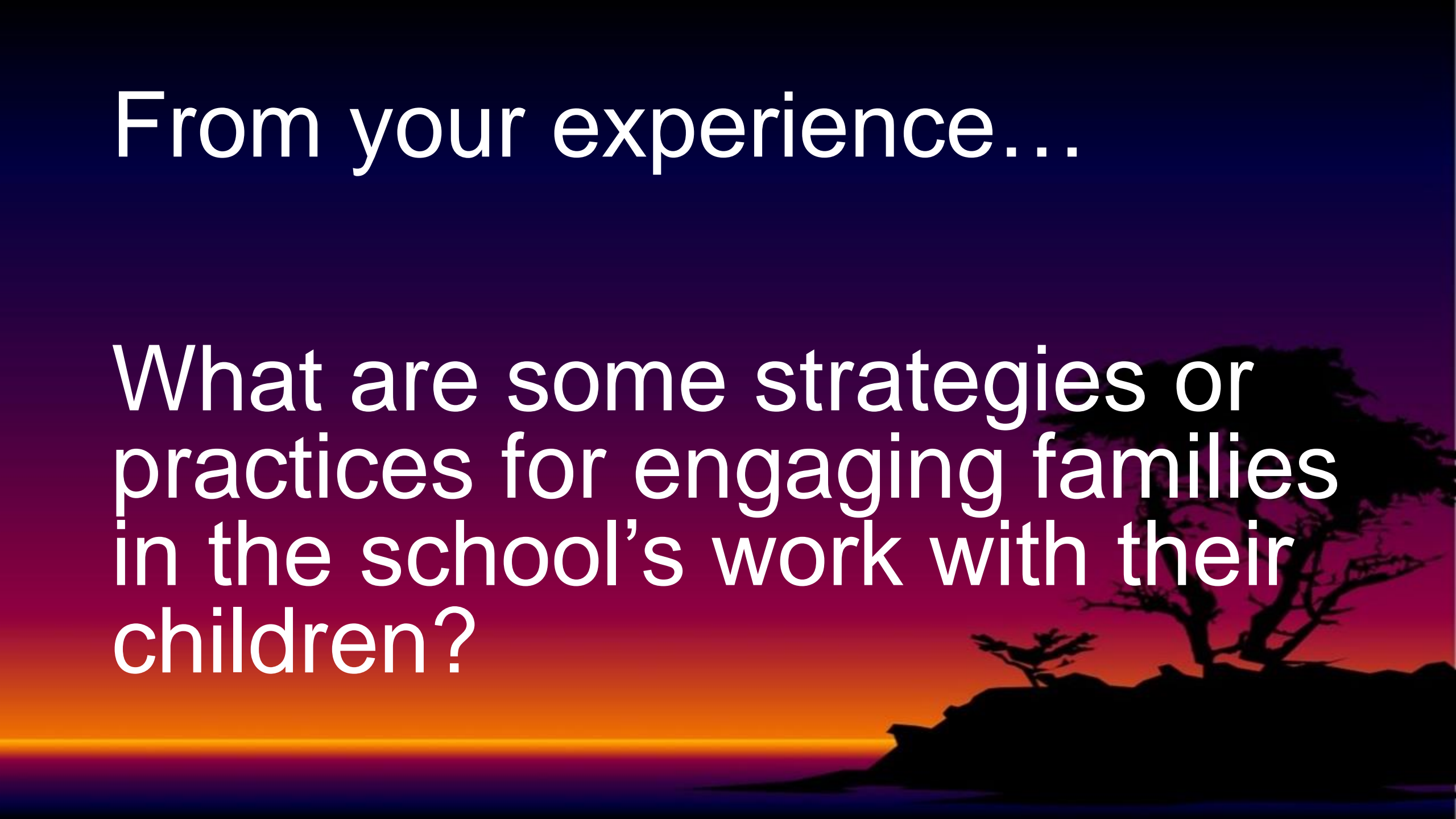
- Developing plans
 - Cautions: drafts, jargon, monitoring for effectiveness
- Parent Academy
- Date night
- The roof repair
- Parent resource center
- Parenting classes
- Perhaps school staff reading and discussing “Bringing Developmental Relationships Home”



PRINCIPLE	TEACHER TO PARENT	OFFICE TO PARENT
WELCOME		
LISTEN DEEPLY		
POSITIVES		
ENGAGE FAMILIES		
SHARE STRATEGIES		
VALUE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FAMILY		

From your experience...

What are some strategies or practices for engaging families in the school's work with their children?

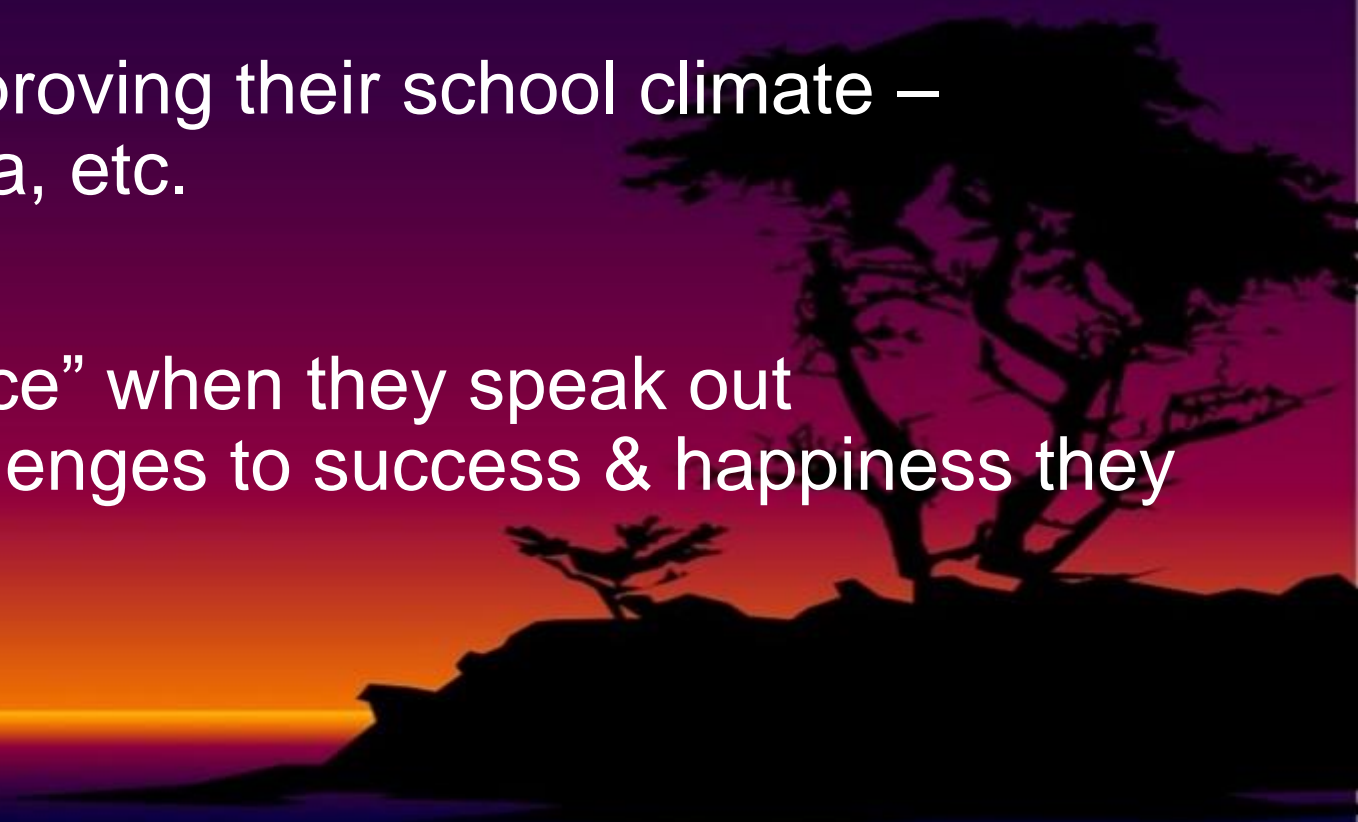


A true story of the authentic compassionate
voice of youth: *Chapin High School:*
“Students Loving Students”



Where should the voice of youth be heard?

- Youth should be active in their own meetings – graduation planning, 504, IEP, medical decisions, etc.
- Youth should be active in improving their school climate – bullying, school safety, stigma, etc.
- Youth have an “authentic voice” when they speak out compassionately for the challenges to success & happiness they and their friends experience



The Youth Voice Projects

The more we do this work, the more important it becomes to hear the real voices of youth.

We assist youth in learning how to understand their stories and we support their personal development as youth spokespersons through their participation in advocacy, activities, conferences and trainings.



1 Children's MH Week poster contest

- Groups of youth in schools and mental health centers
- Emails for PR
- Posters displayed on a website for viewing & voting
- Posters are displayed at a statewide conference
- Onsite and online votes are tallied, and the winning submission is announced at awards luncheon
- From 500 to 36,000 votes



South Carolina



Turning the tide on children's mental health

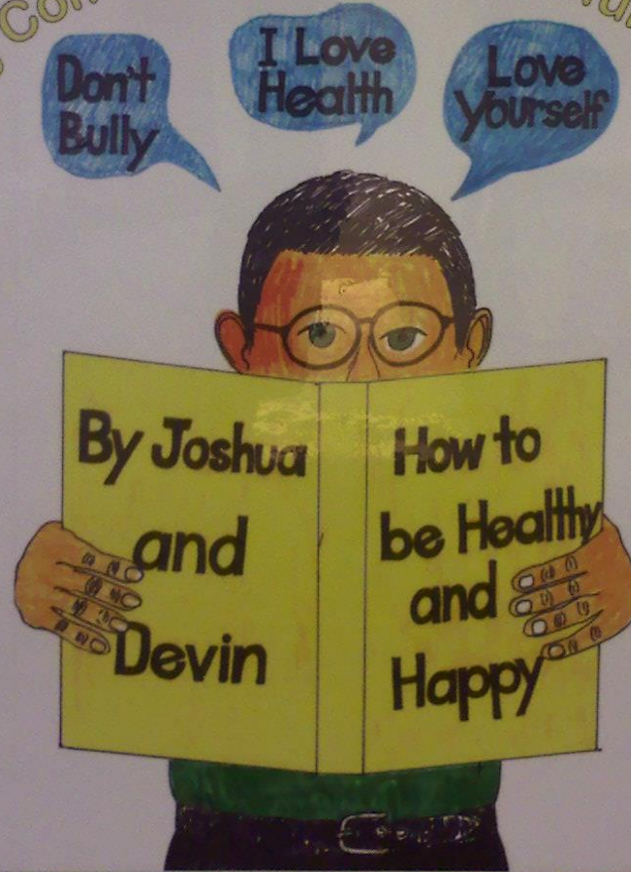
Children's Mental Health Week; May 1-7, 2006

In South Carolina, 131,000 students experienced mental health issues. Of those, 86,000 South Carolina students have mental health issues that are not addressed by their schools. For more information about children's mental health and family supports, call the Federation of Families of South Carolina 803-779-0402 or toll free 866-779-0402.

Insurance coverage of the common carrier system is a Special Agent Insurance of Standard & N. It may be obtained by mail, or through agents of Standard in New York, New York, or through agents of Standard in New York, New York.

Children's Mental Health Week: May 7-12, 2007

Caring Communities, Successful Children



Approximately 135,000 South Carolina students experience mental health issues, 88,000 have mental health issues that are not addressed.

For more information about children's mental health and family support,
call the Federation of Families of South Carolina 803-779-0402 or toll free 800-779-0402.

Children's Mental Health Week is a national observance. It is a time to raise awareness of children's mental health issues and to promote the importance of mental health care for all children. The Federation of Families of South Carolina is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing support and resources for families of children with mental health issues. For more information, visit our website at www.federationoffamilies.org.

May 3rd - 9th, 2009

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week



Approximately 125,000 South Carolina students experience mental health issues;
88,000 have mental health issues that are not addressed.

For more information, please contact your local health and family support center or the Department of Education at 800-774-4477 or visit www.scdhs.gov.
This poster is a collaborative effort between the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Family Support. It is not intended to be used for any other purpose. All rights reserved. © 2009 South Carolina Department of Health and Family Support. All rights reserved.



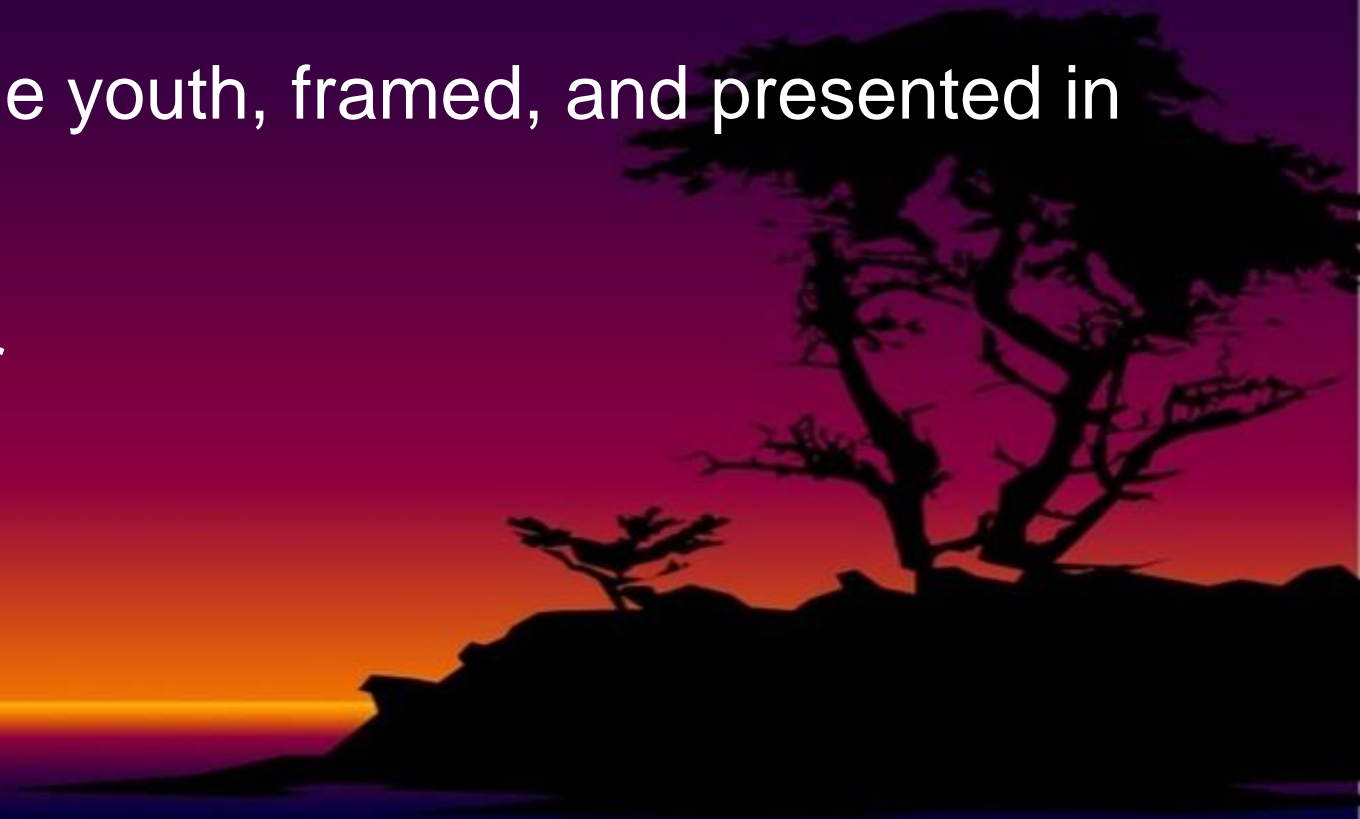
caring COMMUNITIES
SUCCESSFUL
CHILDREN

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

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2 PhotoVoice

- Youth took pictures that portrayed some aspect of behavioral health from a personal perspective
- The photos were captioned by the youth, framed, and presented in an art gallery opening
- The exhibit has continued to tour



“Being Picked On” by Libby Perry

When people pick on me, I feel like an old beat up piece of cardboard that no one cares about and runs over.



Disclaimer



“My Sickness” by Phillip deKrafft

I cut myself to make
sure I am still alive.



“Capable of Blossoming” by Kayla Campbell



The dead tree is symbolizing the negative things people think about mental health. In actuality, the people with mental health issues are blossoming flowers who enjoy life



Morbid Perception by Chelsey Bivens

Everyone has those moments when they feel all alone and abandoned. Depression and anxiety can cause these feelings and it's hard to ask for help.

However, there are "community changers" out there who will fix up your abandoned feeling; you just have to ask for them.

Current national project



The Youth Lens Project

The Youth Lens Project provides a way for young people to express what they know about isolation and stigma through words and pictures.

Create
Take an original photo

Relate
Choose a photo from our gallery



Write
Describe what the picture means to you

Visit us at www.youthlens.org or scan this QR Code



@YLPContest  #YouthLens

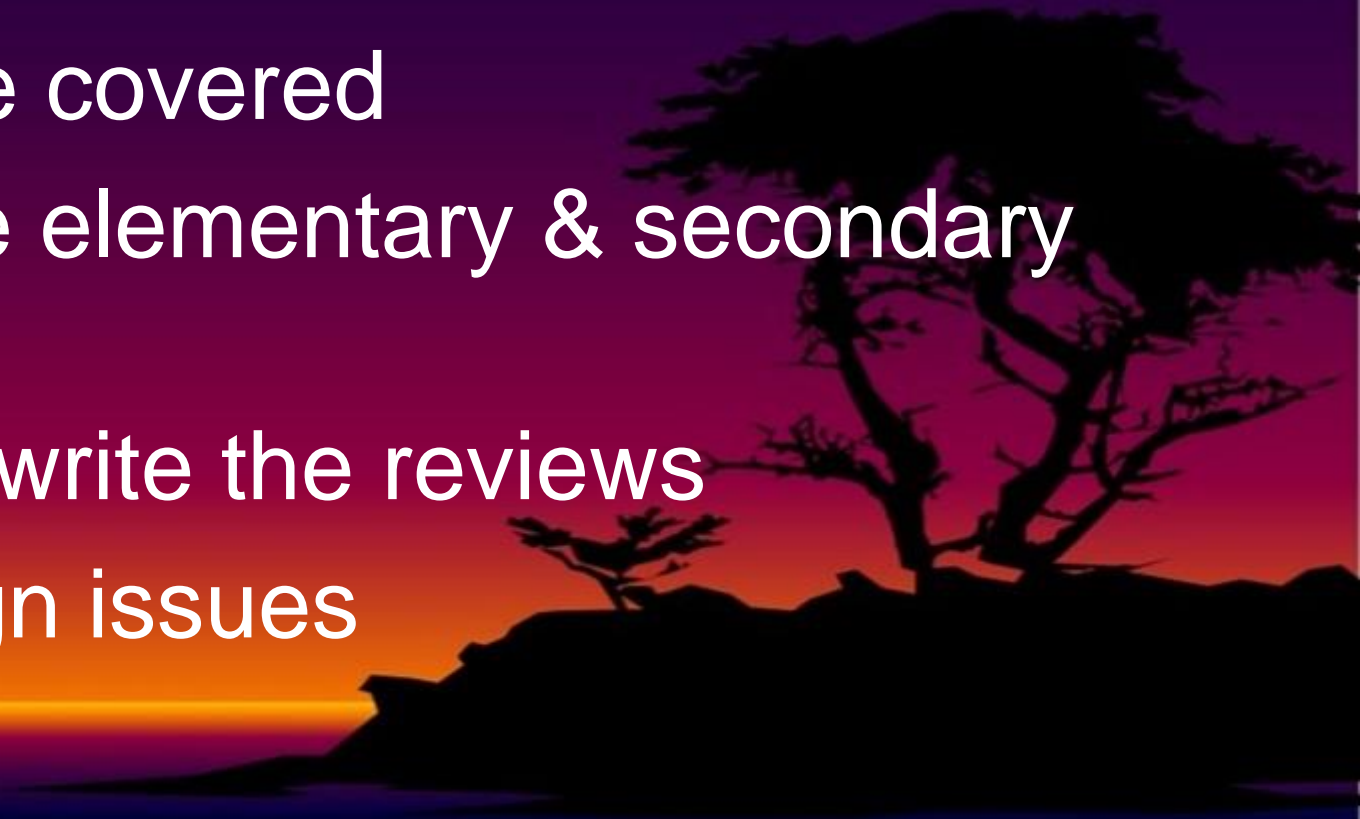
3 Children's Story Project

- Developing a document that covers an array of youth challenges
- Creation of an annotated bibliography
- Free distribution of the document



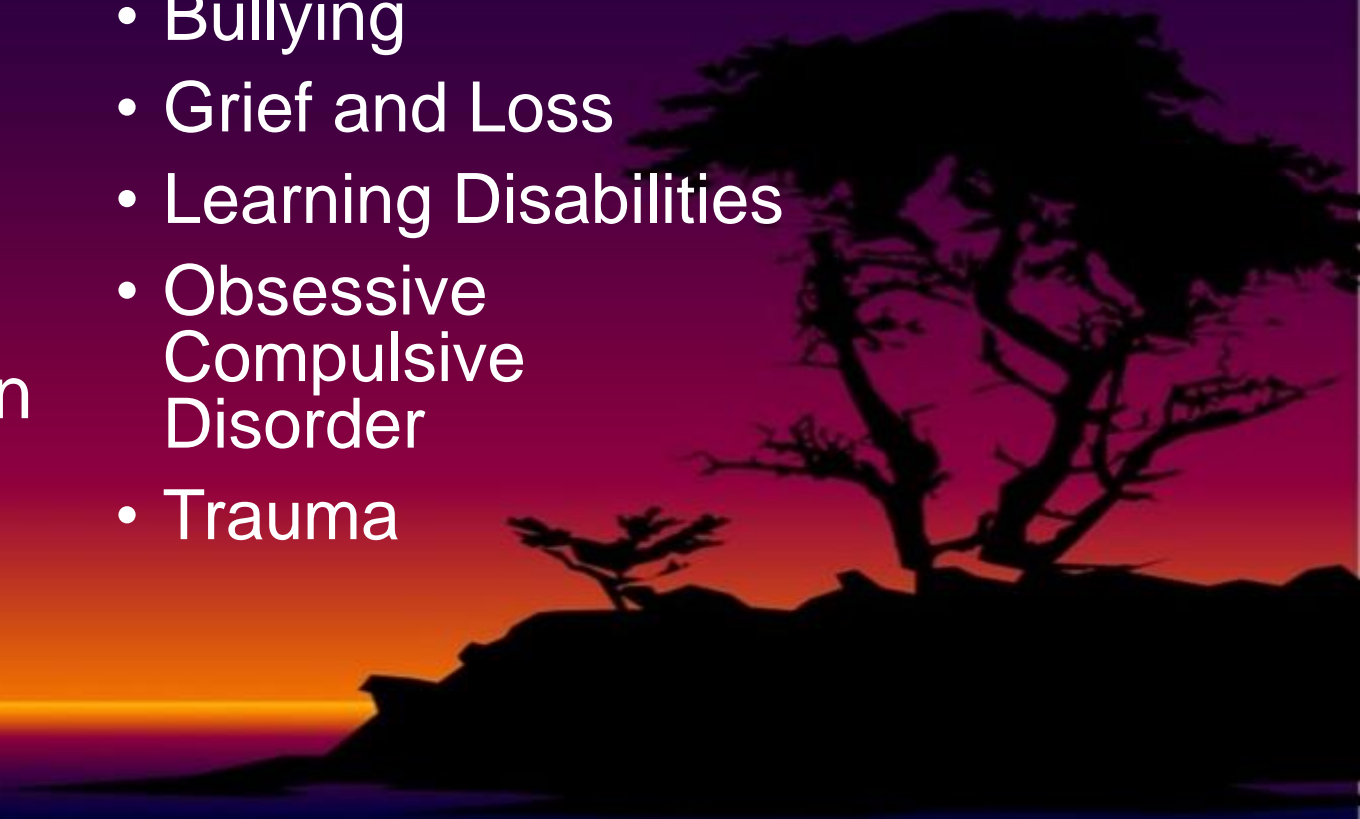
Process

- Find youth who are interested in reading & reviewing books
- Figure out the topics to be covered
- Find examples at both the elementary & secondary levels
- Give guidance on how to write the reviews
- Think about graphic design issues



The Issues

- ADD/ADHD
- Anger
- Anxiety/Divorce
- Anxiety/New Environments
- Anxiety/Separation
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Bipolar Disorder
- Bullying
- Grief and Loss
- Learning Disabilities
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Trauma



Keeping it Cheap

- Emails
- PDF publications
- Limited hard copies of the document
- No cost websites
 - www.fedfamsc.org



Shifting the Process

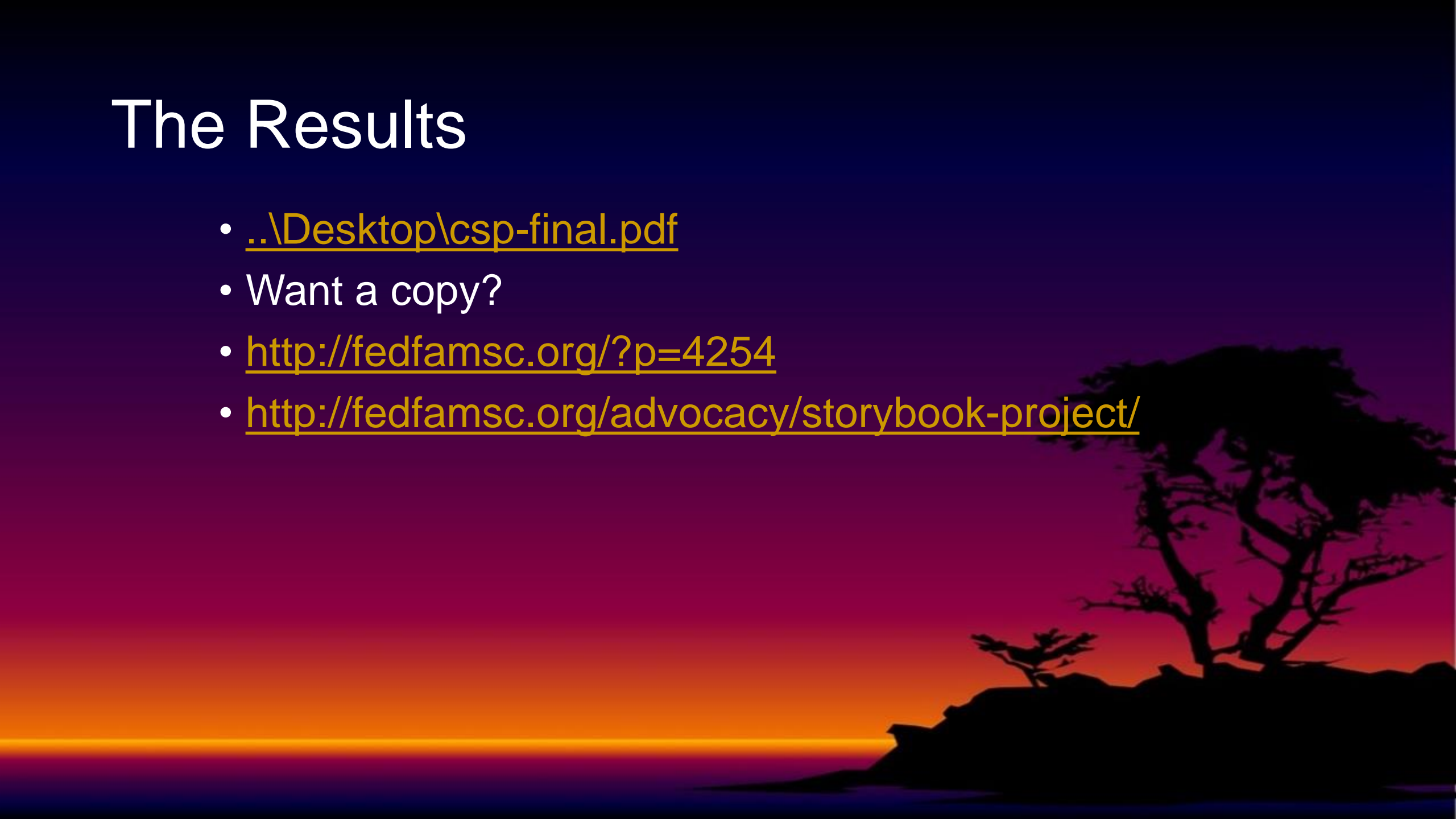
Challenges

- High school honors/magnet class
- Elementary school students
- Richland/Lexington Local Support Network
- Youth MOVE SC Advisory Council
- Competing demands on students' time
- Quality graphic design
 - HS graphics class or Professional graphics designer?
- Adjusting our deadlines



The Results

- [..\Desktop\csp-final.pdf](#)
- Want a copy?
- [http://fedfamsc.org/?p=4254](#)
- [http://fedfamsc.org/advocacy/storybook-project/](#)



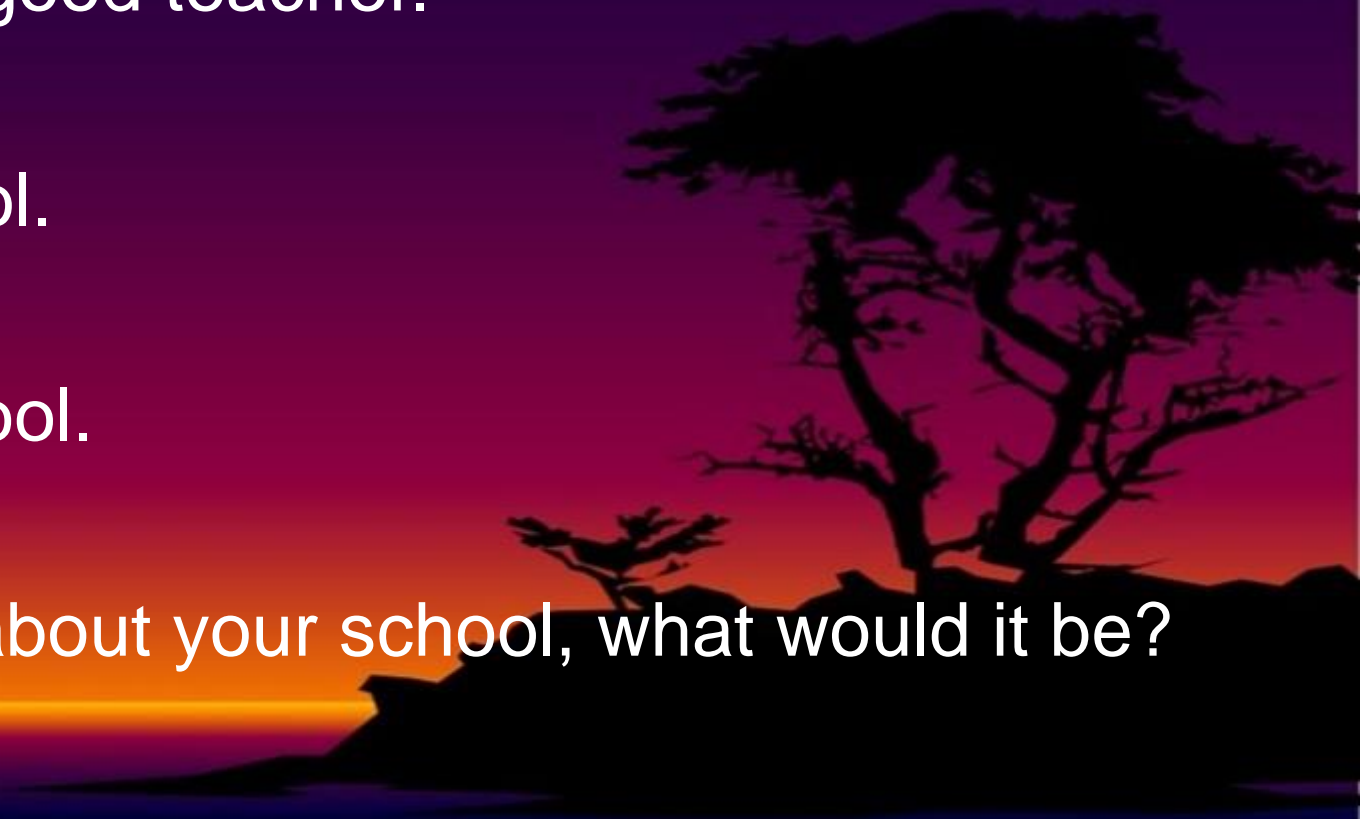
4 Youth focus groups

- Maximum of 6 – 8 youth
- A discussion facilitator
- A scribe
- Rules: safe, confidential, kind
- Exit interviews
- School commitment to “hear”



Examples of topics

- What do you like best about your school?
- Talk about what it takes to be a good teacher.
- Talk about bullying at your school.
- Talk about “respect” at your school.
- If you could change something about your school, what would it be?

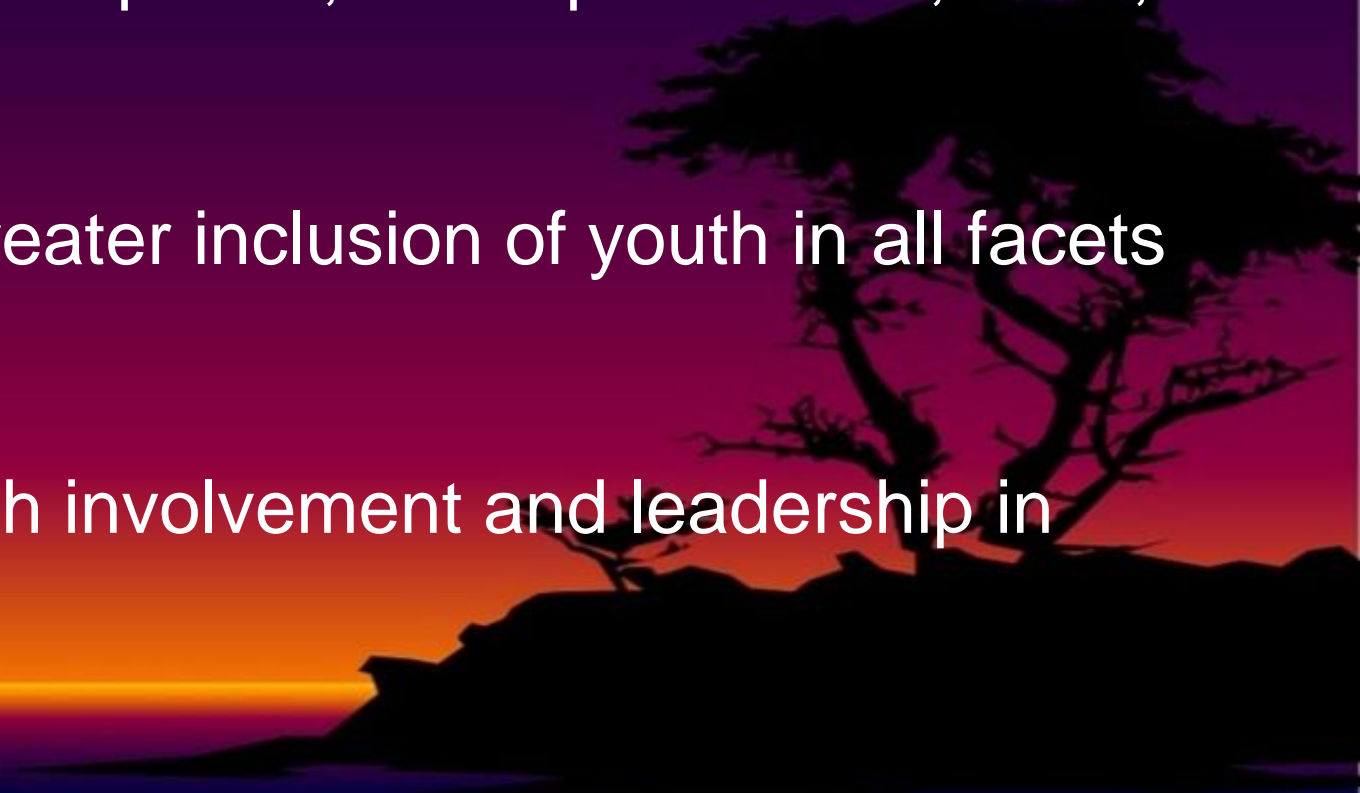


Encouragement for this work:

Youth Involvement & Leadership Practice Group

(Jenah chairs this group)

- <http://www.sharedwork.org/en/web/youth-involvement-and-leadership/home>
- Expanding youth leadership, participation, and input at local, state, and national levels;
- Organizing a dialogue around greater inclusion of youth in all facets of school mental health;
- A resource to help advance youth involvement and leadership in schools and communities.



From your experience...

What are your experiences
with hearing the “authentic
compassionate voice of
youth?”



Intentional commitment

- **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:** Think about your current successes & challenges. Write down at least one improvement idea.
- **YOUTH VOICE:** Think about your current successes & challenges. Write down at least one improvement idea.
- Share with a neighbor.



Thank you for your important work & for your interest in engaging families & supporting the voice of youth!

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