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CCYJ eQuality Project
Final Evaluation Report

MEMconsultants, LLC

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Executive Summary

About CCYJ

The Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) is a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to reforming Washington's juvenile justice and child welfare systems. CCYJ's programs and initiatives identify gaps and cracks, develop well-researched and creative approaches to mending problems, and then ensure that policymakers embed those reforms into practices and procedures.
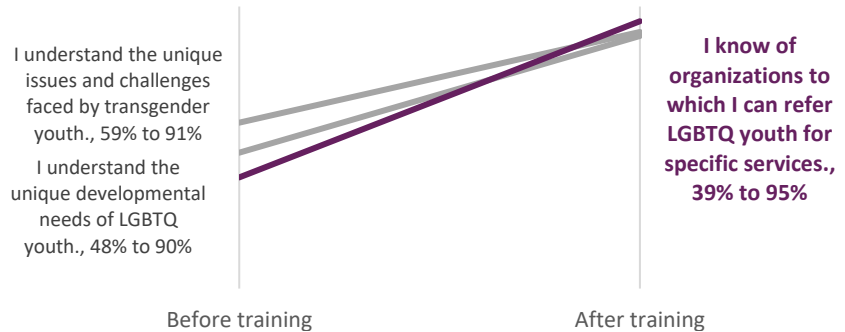
eQuality Project

CCYJ's eQuality Project is the first statewide effort in Washington state to help LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer/questioning) youth in foster care and the juvenile justice system find safety and support for the unique issues they face. This evaluation focused on Phase II of the project, during which CCYJ developed and piloted the _Protocol for Safe and Affirming Care_ . The 16-month pilot took place in King and Spokane Counties, Washington in 2017-2018. Pilot activities included: providing training for professionals working with youth, adding questions about sexual orientation and gender identity to intake procedures, referring youth who identify as LGBTQ to appropriate services, and collecting data on sexual orientation and gender identity for all youth.
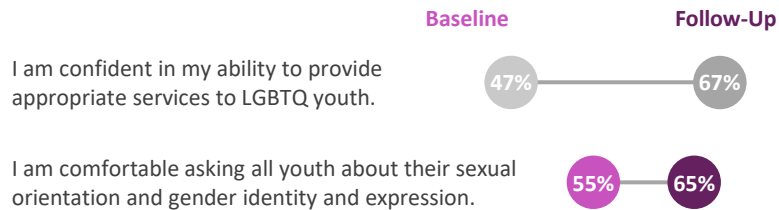
Evaluation Questions

1. What is the effect of the Protocol training on professionals and caretakers involved in the King and Spokane Counties pilot? What is the effect of use of the Protocol during the pilot?

2. What are the lessons learned from the Protocol for Safe & Affirming Care implementation in King and Spokane Counties?

3. Who are the LGBTQ system-involved youth in Spokane and King Counties?

Professionals reported growth in their knowledge, attitudes and skills to work with LGBTQ youth.

The training increased professionals' knowledge of organizations to which they can refer LGBTQ youth.

I understand the unique issues and challenges faced by transgender youth., 59% to 91%

I understand the unique developmental needs of LGBTQ youth., 48% to 90%

I know of organizations to which I can refer LGBTQ youth for specific services., 39% to 95%

Before training   After training

Compared to other attitudes and skills, professionals report feeling least prepared to talk to youth about their sexual orientation and gender after the eQuality Project.

Baseline   **Follow-Up**

I am confident in my ability to provide appropriate services to LGBTQ youth.   47% — 67%

I am comfortable asking all youth about their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.   55% — 65%

Collecting youth sexual orientation and gender identity and expression data was seen as the heart of the initiative, perhaps as it was a tangible practice.

Participants frequently referred to the completing of the SOGIE questionnaire as the primary activity or goal of the initiative.

> **Getting the form completed is a lot of how the initiative is being defined.** There have been other changes, but less recognized. – _Spokane County Core Team_

> **I don't think we'd be as far without [the questionnaire]**. It got the conversations going and gave us a project and a task. It created the intention. – _Spokane County Juvenile Court_

Organizational readiness varied across agencies.

Both Juvenile Court agencies were better prepared to make changes to their practices than Children's Administration.

The eQuality Project aligned well with other organizational priorities at both of the Juvenile Courts, and staff comments suggested greater overall engagement with the project and openness to change.

> **We feel it's important to impact disproportionality.** LGBTQ youth are unrepresented and unidentified, they've been invisible. – _King County Juvenile Court_

> **We have such a culture of change here.** We changed the mission statement to focus on marginalized populations. – _Spokane County Juvenile Court_

> We just got an email telling us to go to training. We need clarity on why we're doing it and what's expected. **We were just kind of thrown in to it.** – _Spokane Children's Administration_

10% of youth identify as LGBTQ+.

Of the 296 youth who completed a SOGIE questionnaire, 30 identified as LGBTQ+.

24 youth identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning their sexual orientation.

Gay or lesbian	3
Bisexual	19
Questioning	2

Two youth described their gender identity as transgender.

Trans male/Trans man	1
Trans female/Trans woman	1

In addition to the youth who identified as transgender, **5** youth indicated a **difference between their sex at birth and their current gender identity**.

Sex at birth	Current gender identity	Count of youth
Female	Boy/man	2
	Cisgender	1
	Unknown (illegible writing)	1
Male	Don't Know	1

Key Recommendations

Formalize the eQuality Project "program" for replication at other agencies.

- Encourage all agencies to create a multi-unit Core Team comprised of leadership and line staff.
- Provide internal Core Teams with tangible ideas for implementation.
- Work with local Core Teams to create resources for professionals to use.

Improve the SOGIE questionnaire and support more effective use

- Update the SOGIE questionnaire and provide a vocab sheet for professionals.
- Help agencies create internal policies and practices for collecting SOGIE data.
- Provide Core Teams with materials for conducting SOGIE questionnaire training with their peers.

Expand the reach of the eQuality Project.

- Consider organizational openness to changing practices when selecting sites for expansion.
- Create a more accessible version of the Protocol for Safe and Affirming Care.
- Provide training opportunities for other key constituencies.

Introduction

About CCYJ

The Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) is a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to reforming Washington's juvenile justice and child welfare systems. CCYJ's programs and initiatives identify gaps and cracks, develop well-researched and creative approaches to mending problems, and then ensure that policymakers embed those reforms into practices and procedures.

CCYJ Mission

To create better lives for generations of children and youth by reforming the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

eQuality Project Goals

- Increase identification of LGBTQ youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems by professionals in those systems, in a safe, affirming, and respectful manner for the purpose of ensuring youth can be connected with appropriate services.

- Increase knowledge of and skill in creating safe and affirming environments and providing LGBTQ informed services among professionals and caretakers ("pilot participants").

- Increase knowledge of laws and policies protecting LGBTQ youth among pilot participants and youth.

- Increase use of existing resources for LGBTQ youth among pilot participants and youth.

- Increase data available and understanding of unique needs and circumstances of LGBTQ youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.[1]

eQuality Project

CCYJ's eQuality Project is the first statewide effort in Washington state to help LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer/questioning) youth in foster care and the juvenile justice system find safety and support for the unique issues they face. CCYJ launched eQuality in 2013 as a multi-phase project aimed at creating lasting systems reform and pathways to healthy stable adulthood for LGBTQ youth.

In Phase I of the eQuality Project, CCYJ gathered first-hand accounts from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning ("LGBTQ") young adults who had recently exited the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, collected the observations of systems professionals and community-based service providers about their experiences working with LGBTQ youth, and conducted extensive reviews of existing research, laws, policies, and practices. These findings culminated in a report, *Listening to Their Voices: Enhancing Successful Outcomes for LGBTQ Youth in Washington State's Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems*.

Based on the findings and recommendations in *Listening to Their Voices*, CCYJ launched Phase II, developing and piloting the *Protocol for Safe and Affirming Care*. The Protocol serves as a guide for youth-serving professionals in the foster care and juvenile justice systems to better identify, engage, and serve LGBTQ youth while simultaneously collecting data on their needs, experiences, and outcomes. The 16-month pilot took place in King and Spokane Counties, Washington in 2017-2018, and specifically included Spokane County Juvenile Court, Spokane County Children's Administration and King County Juvenile Court. Pilot activities included: providing training for professionals working with youth, adding questions about sexual orientation and gender identity to intake procedures, referring youth who identify as LGBTQ to appropriate services, and collecting data on sexual orientation and gender identity along with other demographic information for all youth. Phase II was funded in part by a grant from the Raikes Foundation, and support from the Pride Foundation, Seattle Goodwill, QLaw, and many individuals.

Context and Theory of Change

The limited data available suggests that youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems who identify as LGBTQ face unique challenges and have an array of negative experiences in the systems and outcomes after leaving the systems. These outcomes are linked to increased experiences of homelessness for LGBTQ youth with current or prior system involvement.

Through implementation of the Protocol and the associated trainings, CCYJ hopes to create changes within the child welfare and juvenile justice systems that, ultimately, improve outcomes for LBGTQ youth. The target audience for this project is primarily the juvenile probation counselors and child welfare case workers who work directly with system-involved youth. By providing these workers with information and resources, CCYJ believes they will be able to more effectively advocate for and serve LGBTQ youth they are working with.

See Appendix A for the eQuality Project Logic Model.

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[1] http://ccyj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CCYJ-eQuality-Proposal-Overview.pdf

The following questions are guiding the data collection for this evaluation:

1. What is the effect of the Protocol training on professionals and caretakers involved in the King and Spokane Counties pilot? What is the effect of use of the Protocol during the pilot?

2. What are the lessons learned from the Protocol for Safe & Affirming Care implementation in King and Spokane Counties?

3. Who are the LGBTQ system-involved youth in Spokane and King Counties?

eQuality Project Logic Model

See Appendix A to review the project logic model, which details intended participants, activities, short and intermediate outcomes and long-term impacts.

Evaluation Limitations

The scope of this evaluation did not allow for direct feedback from system-involved youth about their experiences and whether they noticed changes in how professionals worked with them over the course of this project. The focus of this evaluation is on the experience of the professionals in each agency.

Terms and Definitions

SOGIE: sexual orientation and gender identity and expression

LGBTQ: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer/questioning

About the Evaluation

Scope of Report

This evaluation effort focused on Phase II of the eQuality Initiative. This report focuses on the two evaluation questions related to the implementation of the Protocol for Safe & Affirming Care in King County Juvenile Court, Spokane County Juvenile Court, and Spokane Children's Administration.

When further data are available, an addendum to this report will address the question about the characteristics of LGBTQ system-involved youth.

Methodology and Data Sources

The primary data source for this evaluation are the professionals employed by Children's Administration and the Juvenile Courts. These professionals completed a series of surveys designed to gather information about changes in knowledge, attitudes and skills through engagement with the eQuality Project.

- **Baseline Surveys** | April/May 2017 – Completed online prior to briefings and trainings in King County; completed on paper at start of briefings in Spokane County
- **Briefing and Training Surveys** | April/May 2017 – Completed in-person at the conclusion of each briefing and training
- **Follow-Up Surveys** | May 2018 – Completed one-year after the briefings and trainings; completed online in both regions

Additionally, a sample of professionals from each agency participated in **focus groups**. The focus groups were designed to gather feedback about the implementation of the project and changes within each agency.

Data Source	Method	N
Baseline Surveys Total: 135	Spokane Children's Admin	24
	Spokane Co Juvenile Court	27
	Spokane (other)	8
	King Co Juvenile Court	59
Briefing & Training Surveys Total: 278	Spokane Children's Admin, Juvenile Court and CASAs	170
	King Co Juvenile Court	108
Follow-Up Surveys Total: 55	Spokane Children's Admin	15
	Spokane Co Juvenile Court	20
	King Co Juvenile Court	20
Focus Groups Total: 5 Participants: 33	Spokane Children's Admin	7
	Spokane Co Juvenile Court	11
	Spokane Co Core Team	5
	King Co Juvenile Court	6
	King Co Core Team	4

Both of the Juvenile Court sites collected data regarding youth sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and the evaluators reviewed a de-identified set of this **client SOGIE data** to gain further insights into the success and challenges of this key initiative activity. Data were collected using a tool developed by the evaluators, CCYJ and the Core Team, which was called the SOGIE Questionnaire. A copy of the tool may be referenced in Appendix B.

Key Findings: Briefings and Trainings

Briefing and Training Attendees said

Loved it! Thank you for all the practice of pronouns and vocabulary words. It's important to not just know that I should ask, but how does it feel to ask? LOVED the coming out activity, thank you! I have a whole new perspective on what some may be feeling. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court*

This is **one of the best trainings** on serving LGBTQ+ youth/families I have ever been to. Thank you! – *King County Juvenile Court*

This was probably **the most engaging and effective LGBTQ trainings I have been to**. It was balanced and informative about various aspects of LGBTQ life. I was pleasantly surprised and learned new things. Thanks! – *Spokane Children's Administration*
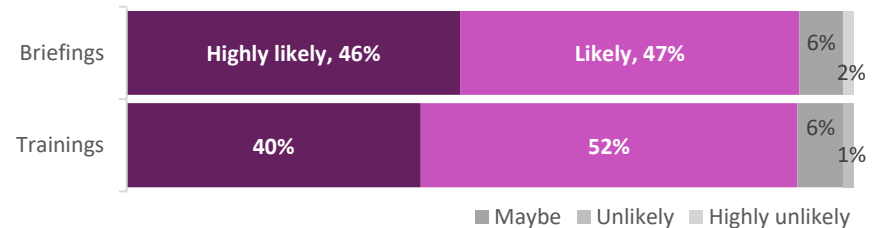
Professional Development Offerings

Briefings: Short learning sessions led by CCYJ with a focus on introducing professionals to the Protocol.

Trainings: Full or half-day sessions led by CCYJ and a community partner that serves LGBTQ youth with a focus on increasing professionals' skills to work with LGBTQ youth.

Professionals rated the briefings and trainings positively.

Professional development attendees were positive about the quality of the sessions.

There was no difference in the quality ratings between trainings and briefings.

Excellent, 34%	Very Good, 40%	Good, 23%

Fair, 3%
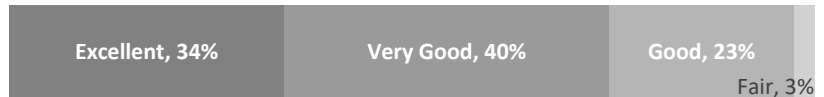
Over 9 out of 10 briefing and training attendees reported that they were likely to use what they learned.

Briefings: Highly likely, 46% | Likely, 47% | 6% | 2%

Trainings: 40% | 52% | 6% | 1%

■ Maybe ■ Unlikely ■ Highly unlikely

Several who reported they were unlikely to use what they learned also commented that they did not work directly with youth. This question may not have felt pertinent to them. This finding also suggests that training offerings could be been differentiated to better meet the needs of different audiences and to make the content equally relevant to those who do not work directly with youth.

> I do not interact with youth in setting that [would] allow such conversations.

> I work in the courtroom as a bailiff so do not have direct contact with youth.

> It is not in my job description to assess agencies. If the county allows, then I will.

Key Findings: Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills

Professionals reported increased knowledge of LGBTQ issues.

There was a growth in knowledge of SOGIE terms from the beginning to the end of the eQuality Project.

When asked to match a SOGIE term with its definition after the initiative, professionals were most commonly correctly defining biological sex, but were least likely to accurately define gender expression. Respondents most often confused gender identity and gender expression.
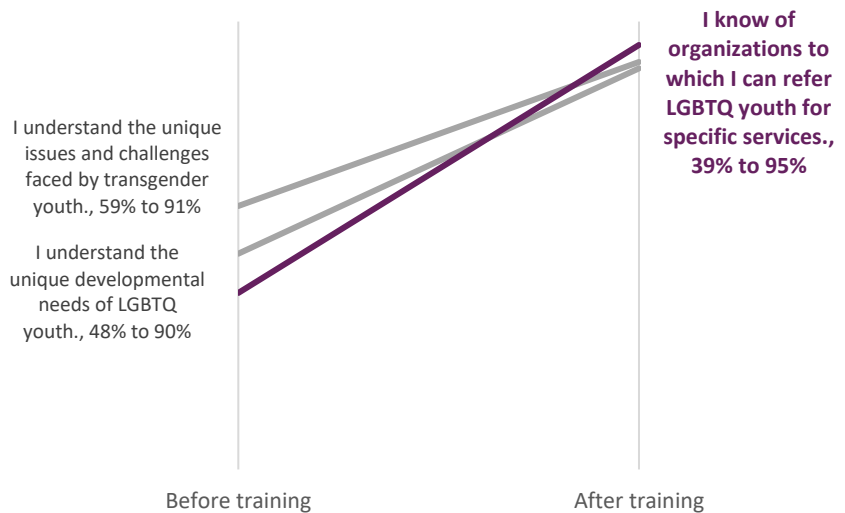
Baseline   **Follow-Up**

Biological Sex   92% — 98%

Sexual Orientation   81% — 89%

Gender Identity   78% — 84%

Gender Expression   75% — 82%
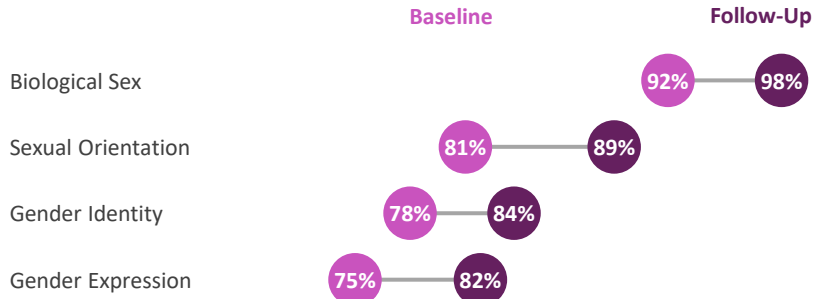
The training increased professionals' knowledge of the unique experiences of LGBTQ youth.

The greatest area of growth in knowledge was of potential **organizations to which to refer LGBTQ youth for services**.

I understand the unique issues and challenges faced by transgender youth., 59% to 91%

I understand the unique developmental needs of LGBTQ youth., 48% to 90%

I know of organizations to which I can refer LGBTQ youth for specific services., 39% to 95%

Before training   After training
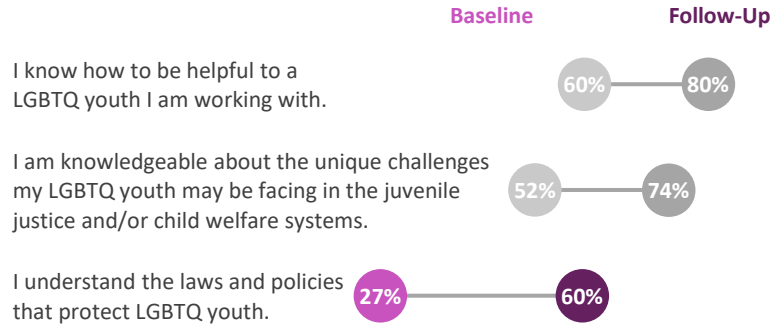
Professionals said

There was an activity with a paper star and depending on the color, we either kept the star legs or ripped them off – they represented spheres of influence and how they responded to you coming out. That **was powerful to me** – I had a star who didn't have to rip anything off. My coworker next to me had to rip off her best friend's name, and seeing her hesitate and not want to rip it off was hard. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court*

I used to think… they deserve the same opportunities as other youth in care.

Now I think… I have to work harder to make sure they have the **same opportunities** as other youth in care.

– *Spokane Children's Administration*

Professionals gained knowledge about the experiences of LGBTQ youth, as well as knowledge to work with them.

Professionals report gaining knowledge about working with LGBTQ youth over the course of the project. The area of greatest gain, and yet still the lowest percentage overall, was in **understanding the laws and policies that protect LGBTQ youth**.

Professionals shared that one reason they report not understanding the laws and policies is because they work with youth that are involved in several different systems (juvenile justice, child welfare, schools) and each system, or even school or school district, may have different policies.

> Maybe you understand the overall law, non-discrimination, but **not the specific policies such as restroom laws by region** or a policy in each school district. – *King County Juvenile Court*

Professionals increased their acceptance of and skills to work with LGBTQ youth.

Compared to other attitudes and skills, professionals report feeling least prepared to talk to youth about their sexual orientation and gender after the briefing/training.

Following the *briefings*, most participants reported being likely to take actions that are supportive of LGBTQ youth.

The smallest portion of people indicated that they were **likely to ask youth about their sexual orientation and gender**.

I will assess a community organization for their acceptance of LGBTQ youth before referring a youth.	**83%**	8% 8%
I will put up posters or signs indicating my workplace is LGBTQ-friendly.	**78%**	14% 8%
I will ask youth about their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.	**Highly likely + Likely, 70%**	23% 7%

■ Maybe ■ Highly unlikely + Unlikely
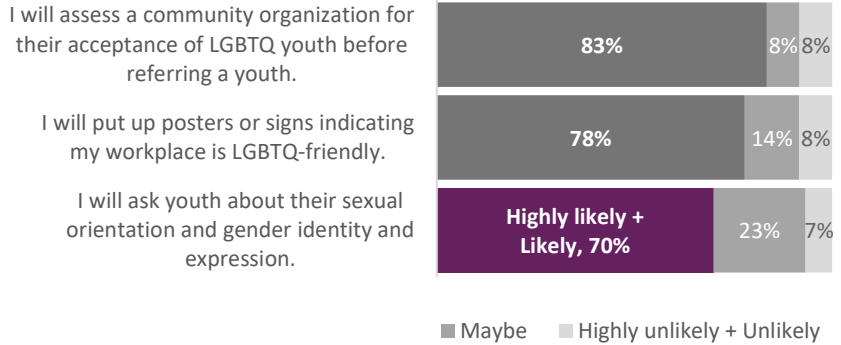
At the end of the *trainings*, most professionals report having the **skills** to talk with youth about their sexual orientation and gender.

I have the skills to create a safe and affirming environment for youth., 64% → 90%

I have the communication skills needed to talk with youth about their SOGIE., 40% → **86%**

Before training — After training
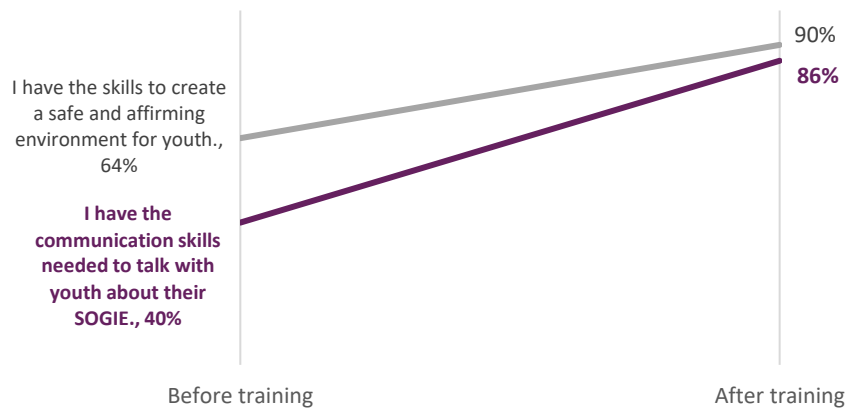
From the start of the eQuality Project to the end of the pilot phase, participants reported little change in their **comfort** with asking youth about their sexual orientation and gender.

Baseline   **Follow-Up**

I am confident in my ability to provide appropriate services to LGBTQ youth.   47% — 67%

I am comfortable asking all youth about their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.   55% — 65%

9
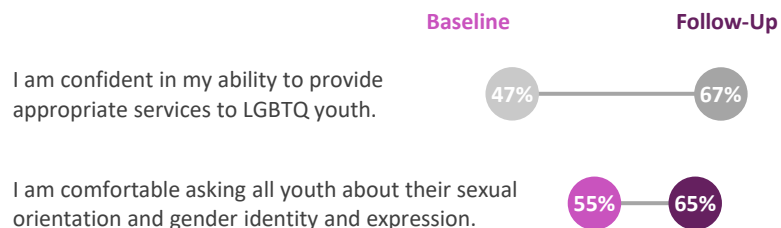
Key Findings: Project Implementation

SOGIE Questionnaire

A key component of the eQuality Project was to gather baseline data about LGBTQ+ youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Data about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression are not routinely collected in either system in most jurisdictions, locally or nationally.

To gather such information, the evaluators, CCJY and the eQuality Project Core Team developed the SOGIE Questionnaire to be used by professionals in the three pilot sites. The form asks youth to provide their age, and identify their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and race and ethnicity. Additionally, youth are asked whether they have experienced homelessness, about their level of comfort to be themselves in the system, and if they would like a referral to any particular services.

A copy of the SOGIE Questionnaire may be referenced in Appendix B.

Few professionals reported actively using the Protocol.

As a multi-page document, the Protocol was not adopted as a tool for professionals to use regularly as they did their work. They viewed it as reference material, something to go to if they needed more information.

> There are a lot of things in my cube to read, but **there just isn't time**. – *Spokane Children's Administration*

> I have it in my office and I suppose **I could refer to it** if I needed. – *King County Juvenile Court*

However, some staff remember receiving a "cheat sheet" to which they have referred since the training.

> I still refer to the **cheat sheet** they gave me. – *King County Juvenile Court*

Collecting youth data via the provided SOGIE questionnaire was perceived to be the key element of the eQuality Project.

The SOGIE questionnaire was seen as the heart of the initiative, perhaps because it was a tangible practice.

The overall goal of the eQuality Project was to change the way in which professionals work with LGBTQ youth, but participants frequently referred to "completing of the SOGIE questionnaire" as the primary activity or goal of the initiative. While they noted individual or organizational practices that have changed (detailed in following section), the SOGIE questionnaire was perceived to be the key change in practice they were being asked to make.

> **Getting the form completed is a lot of how the initiative is being defined.** There have been other changes, but less recognized. – *Spokane County Core Team*

> **I don't think we'd be as far without [the questionnaire]**. It got the conversations going and gave us a project and a task. It created the intention. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court*

> Now that [the eQuality Project] rolled out, **it's just a matter of gathering the questionnaires**. – *Spokane Children's Administration*

> We are doing the questionnaires, collecting and getting good feedback. That's going OK. But **we believe we should be doing more**. – *King County Juvenile Court*

Further training on SOGIE questionnaire use is needed.

Survey responses reveal how professionals are mixed in their level of comfort with asking youth about their sexual orientation and gender. Some felt very comfortable talking through the questionnaire while others refused to use it.

> There are times when it's in child's best interest and times when it's not. **If the person isn't asking with the goal of meeting the child's needs, then what's the point?** – *Spokane County Core Team*

> There are a few people who are **just not comfortable asking these questions**. They think it's not relevant or fear it will be used to treat the youth poorly somewhere down the road. – *King County Juvenile Court*

> I've heard rumors that there are those who think it's not important or that it's even damaging. And **kids can pick up on that** when they are administering. – *Spokane Children's Administration*

Internal agency policies and practices on administering the SOGIE questionnaire have not been established.

Professionals reported inconsistency about when the questionnaire was administered across all three agencies. For example, at the King County Juvenile Court, a youth may be asked to complete the questionnaire first at intake, then again at supervision, and possibly again if they enter specialized supervision. Professionals also expressed concern about finding an appropriate time to talk with a youth about their SOGIE, after some trust had been developed and when there was an opportunity for privacy.

> There is **nowhere to indicate in the notes** for the child that the form was done. – *King County Juvenile Court*

> Don't gather at intake, gather at supervision. **At supervision, you are trying to build rapport**, be supportive, and can make choices about the best time. – *King County Juvenile Court*

> Sometimes **there isn't time to build that trust** with a kid for them to tell you something that could be dangerous to them. – *Spokane Children's Administration*

Changes in individual and organizational practices are reported on a limited basis.

Participating agencies have taken steps to create a welcoming and affirming environment for LGBTQ youth.

All three agencies report having Safe & Affirming Spaces posters up around the office where youth can see them.

Professionals in both Juvenile Courts shared that even if they were already doing so prior to the initiative, they now felt more confident in referring to youth by their preferred names and pronouns when those differed from those used by their family or others involved in the youth's life. They appreciated knowing that they would be supported in that practice by their agency's leadership should any conflict arise. Professionals also use the youth's preferred name and pronouns in official documentation.

> We're **using the preferred pronouns and preferred names now**. And having them in the documentation too. *– Spokane County Juvenile Court*

> **It did open up those conversations**. Maybe I wasn't asking in the same way otherwise. There's one person on my caseload – very complex person – I had no idea [they identified as LGBTQ]. Had I not asked those specific questions… He gave me so much more information. *– Spokane Children's Administration*

> For the intake workers, having **this SOGIE conversation is so unique and new that it's a positive advancement**. It was never happening before. *– King County Juvenile Court*

Participating agencies are motivated to refer LGBTQ youth to appropriate services.

Professionals report having more information about places to make appropriate referrals for LGBTQ youth. The King County Juvenile Court put a link listing resources on their internal Sharepoint site so that Juvenile Probation Counselors across the county could find resources in their area.

> We bring the **resource list to every one of community diversion boards** and give it to them. *– Spokane County Juvenile Court*

> Largely, the questionnaire hasn't changed how I work with youth, except maybe **referral to services**. *– King County Juvenile Court*

> Once we have this information collected, **we need to have clear pathways** [to resources] for these kids. *– Spokane Children's Administration*

The eQuality Project played a role in organization culture change.

King County Juvenile Court recognized that the eQuality Project helped raise awareness at multiple levels within the agency and that it was helping to change the conversation about diversity.

> From a leadership perspective, **we now talk about diversity differently**. It's not just black and brown diversity. We've had some challenging conversations that make some people uncomfortable. *– King County Juvenile Court*

Key Findings: Agency and Regional Differences

Core Team composition appears to play a role in internal project success.

Larger core teams comprised of staff in varied positions at Juvenile Court agencies provided valuable leadership.

The two Juvenile Courts created internal Core Teams to implement the eQuality Project within their agencies. These teams were comprised of a person in a leadership position, but primarily staffed by front-line workers. At one court, leadership reported that the Core Team was put together "specifically with line staff from different units so people can go to someone at the same level as them."

At the other court, staff discussed recruiting for personalities who "speak from their heart, speak what they believe in, and speak truth to power." Members of both teams stressed the importance of including front-line workers in order in increase the comfort of their peers in seeking out support.

People come ask me how to best serve kids when they feel overwhelmed. They have **a safe person to ask questions** of. That's a huge thing. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court Core Team*

Having a peer is helpful because you **don't necessarily want to go to a supervisor if you're getting it wrong**. You don't want it to affect an appraisal. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court Core Team*

[Juvenile Probation Counselors] have a **choice of who to go** to for comfort reasons. – *King County Juvenile Court Core Team*

As a gay person, people don't necessarily want to talk to me about it when they are struggling with it. You have to have some **buy-in from the majority to legitimize the social movement**. – *Spokane Children's Administration*

Organizational readiness varied across agencies.

Both Juvenile Court agencies were better prepared to make changes to their practices than Children's Administration.

The eQuality Project aligned well with other organizational priorities at both of the Juvenile Courts. Staff reported that their participation in other trainings on LGBTQ and other social justice issues in the past several years had heightened their sensitivity to the issues as well as made them open to learning more. This project felt like a natural continuation of that work.

A large group of us went to another similar training a year before we started eQuality. A lot of us were **already on that track**. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court*

Additionally, staff comments suggest that the organization culture of both juvenile courts is open to change.

We have such a culture of change here. We changed the mission statement to focus on marginalized populations. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court*

The training shows **we have support from within our system**, they sent us. – *King County Juvenile Court*

I felt really happy that [the training] was a **clear signal from the administration** that this was our agency's approach to [working with LGBTQ youth]. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court*

We feel it's important to impact disproportionality. LGBTQ youth are unrepresented and unidentified, they've been invisible. – *King County Juvenile Court*

Children's Administration professionals reported less engagement with and buy-in to the eQuality Project.

We just got an email telling us to go to training. We need clarity on why we're doing it and what's expected. **We were just kind of thrown in to it.**

I don't see anyone who is resistant, but **we work in a triage environment**. I went to a training recently but I had to leave part way through to get to court.

One of the challenges at Children's Administration is that the **LGBTQ-specific policy has not rolled out**. There is an anti-discrimination policy in place, but not specifically for this group. **Until you put it in policy, people don't care.**

Reported increases in knowledge and skills varied by agency.

Professionals at Spokane Children's Administration reported the lowest average knowledge at baseline and again at follow-up.

Spokane County Juvenile Court professionals reported the greatest growth in knowledge.

	Baseline		Follow-Up
Overall	46%		71%
King County Juvenile Court	50%		73%
Spokane County Juvenile Court	46%		79%
Spokane Children's Admin	37%	57%	
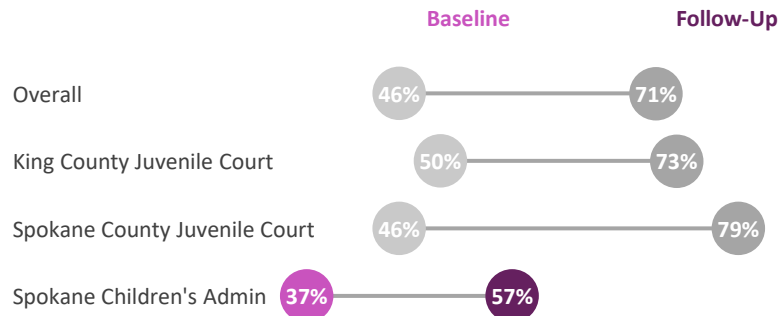
Professionals at Spokane County Juvenile Court were most likely to report gains in skills.

Spokane Children's Administration professionals reported very little growth in skills.

	Baseline		Follow-Up
Overall	51%		66%
King County Juvenile Court	52%		65%
Spokane County Juvenile Court	42%		75%
Spokane Children's Admin	54%	56%	
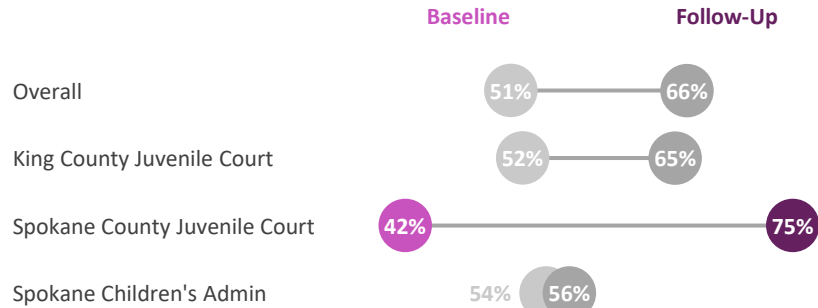
King County Juvenile Court professionals were least likely to report being comfortable asking youth about their sexual orientation and gender.

While fewer disagreed at follow-up, there was little change in the percentage who agreed. Many respondents were neutral or mixed.

	Strongly Agree + Agree	Neutral or Mixed	
Baseline	Strongly Agree + Agree, 49%	Neutral or Mixed, 30%	21%
Follow-Up	50%	45%	5%

■ Strongly Disagree + Disagree
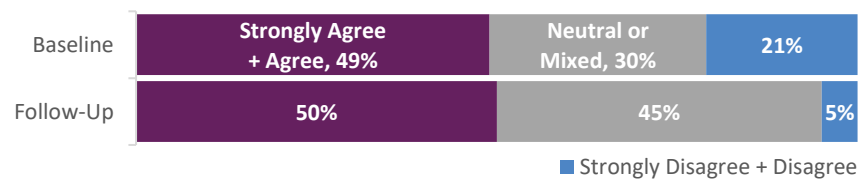
Spokane County Juvenile Court professionals reported increases in areas related to directly helping youth.

At follow-up, professionals reported an increased level of knowledge about **how to be helpful to LGBTQ youth** they are working with.

Baseline	Strongly Agree + Agree, 54%	Neutral or Mixed, 25%	21%
Follow-Up	67%	33%	

■ Strongly Disagree + Disagree
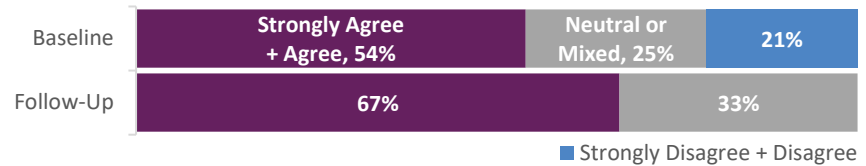
Additionally, professionals reported **confidence in their ability to provide appropriate services to LGBTQ youth**.

Baseline	Strongly Agree + Agree, 41%	Neutral or Mixed, 45%	14%
Follow-Up	80%	20%	

■ Strongly Disagree + Disagree

Spokane Children's Administration professionals reported little change in their skill levels.

This group reported low **confidence in their ability to provide appropriate services** to LGBTQ youth at baseline. At the follow-up, over half of respondents reported feeling neutral or mixed about their ability.

Baseline	Strongly Agree + Agree, 33%	Neutral or Mixed, 42%	25%
Follow-Up	33%	53%	13%

■ Strongly Disagree + Disagree

Spokane Children's Administration professionals reported at both baseline and follow-up that they are **comfortable asking all youth about the sexual orientation and gender**.

Baseline	Strongly Agree + Agree, 75%	Neutral or Mixed, 14%	8%
Follow-Up	79%	14%	7%

■ Strongly Disagree + Disagree

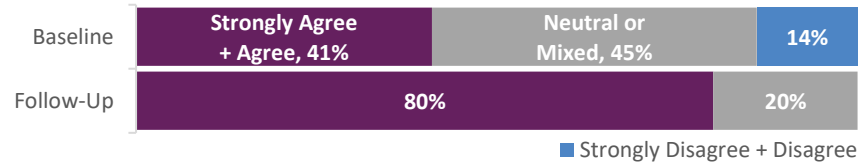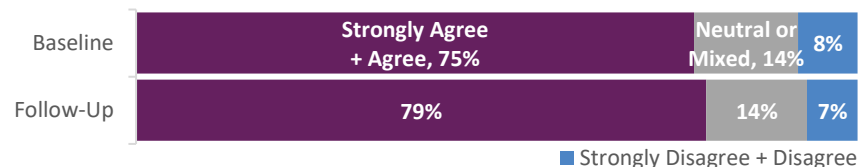This self-report contrasts with focus group discussion, which suggests that Children's Administration professionals were the least likely to administer the SOGIE questionnaire with their youth. The challenge with professionals at Children's Administration may not be in the willingness to have the conversations, but in some other aspect of having to complete a specific form with the youth on their caseloads.

> I don't even bring the forms with me. **I hate sitting in front of a kid with a form.** They don't want to give any information.

> Some kids I had to explain what each term meant. I don't think that's my role as a social worker. I think it's **opening a huge can of worms**. If they don't know what it is, how can we ask them to label themselves?

> I have several developmentally disabled kids on my case load. They have no idea. Some of these **questions are so beyond** what they are focusing on and comprehending. I have to do this form because someone says so.

> [Having it be a] separate thing looks very official and "judgey." **Kids want to know where it's going.**

Key Findings: Youth SOGIE Data

Data Collection

Juvenile Court professionals in King and Spokane Counties collected 296 total SOGIE questionnaires between November 2017 and June 2018.

Agency	Forms Collected
King County Juvenile Court	125
Spokane County Juvenile Court	171

Professionals at Children's Administration completed the questionnaire with fewer than 20 youth. Due to the low response rate and concerns with the representativeness of the data, questionnaires from Children's Administration were not included in this analysis.
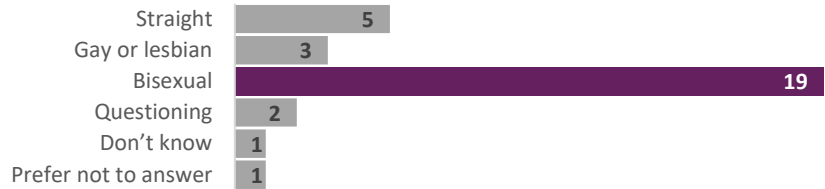
Gender Expression Confusion

Data suggests that youth, like adults, had difficulty understanding gender expression. Youth answers to the gender expression question often did not align the rest of their identity, according to the other responses they provided. Professionals agreed that youth they talked to had trouble understanding gender expression.

> [Youth have trouble understanding gender expression] because everyone is dressing the same. They all wear t-shirts and jeans instead of skirts and dresses. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court*

10% of youth identified as LGBTQ+.

Of the 296 youth who completed a SOGIE questionnaire, 30 identified as LGBTQ+.

The majority (63%) of LGTBQ+ youth identified their sexual orientation as **bisexual**.

Straight	5
Gay or lesbian	3
Bisexual	19
Questioning	2
Don't know	1
Prefer not to answer	1

Two LGBTQ+ youth identified their gender identity as **transgender**. Of the youth who indicated that their gender was not listed, one described themselves as "cisgender", but the other response was illegible.
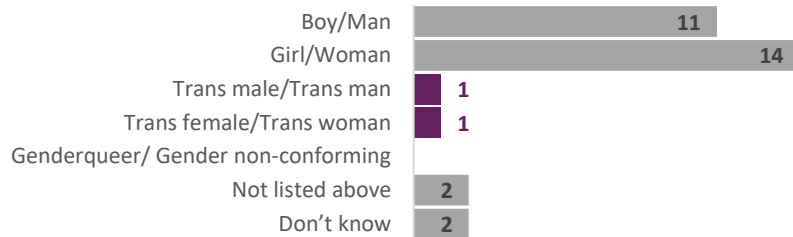
Boy/Man	11
Girl/Woman	14
Trans male/Trans man	1
Trans female/Trans woman	1
Genderqueer/ Gender non-conforming	
Not listed above	2
Don't know	2

In addition to the youth who identified as transgender, **5** youth indicated a **difference between their sex at birth and their current gender identity**.

Sex at birth	Current gender identity	Count of youth
Female	Boy/man	2
	Cisgender	1
	Unknown (illegible writing)	1
Male	Don't Know	1

30% of LGBTQ+ youth indicated that they **did not know their gender expression**.

More masculine	8
Equally masculine and feminine	8
More feminine	4
Not listed above	
Don't know	9
Prefer not to answer	1
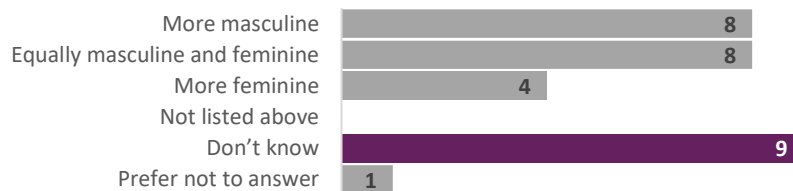
Two-thirds of LGBTQ+ youth were female at birth. Two youth reported that they were intersex at birth.

Female, 19	Male, 11

LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to have been homelessness.

A total of **63% of LGBTQ+ youth** reported having **experienced homelessness** at some point, compared to 40% of their non-LGBTQ+ peers. *(Percentages total to greater than 100% as some youth may have experienced homelessness as a child and on their own.)*

I was homeless with my family when I was a younger kid	43% / 27%
I have been homeless on my own in the last few years	20% / 11%
Other	10% / 4%
I have not experienced homelessness	37% / 59%
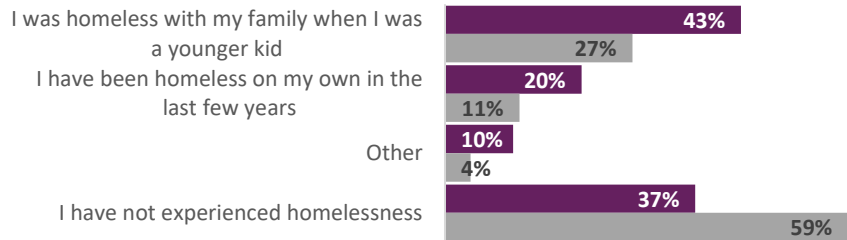
Youth of color are less likely to report identifying as LGBTQ+.
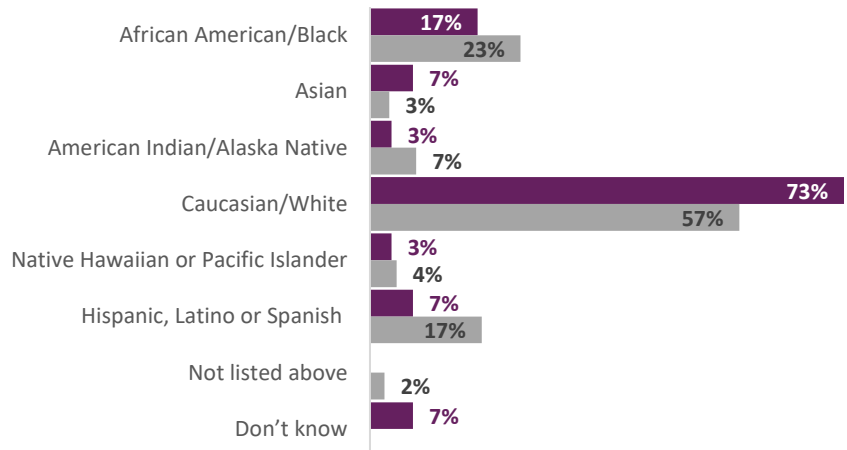
33% of LGBTQ+ youth are youth of color, compared to 52% of their non-LGBTQ+ peers. *(Percentages total to greater than 100% as youth may have selected more than one race or ethnicity.)*

African American/Black	17% / 23%
Asian	7% / 3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	3% / 7%
Caucasian/White	73% / 57%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3% / 4%
Hispanic, Latino or Spanish	7% / 17%
Not listed above	/ 2%
Don't know	7%

Compared to their non-LGBTQ+ peers, LGBTQ+ youth reported less comfort with being themselves in the system.

A greater percentage of youth reported being **Not at all comfortable** and a smaller percentage reported being **Very comfortable**.

When thinking about your experience with juvenile justice and/or child welfare, how comfortable have you felt to be yourself?

	Not at all	Somewhat	Mostly	Very
LGBTQ+ youth	13%	27%	43%	17%
Non-LGBTQ+ youth	9%	29%	32%	28%
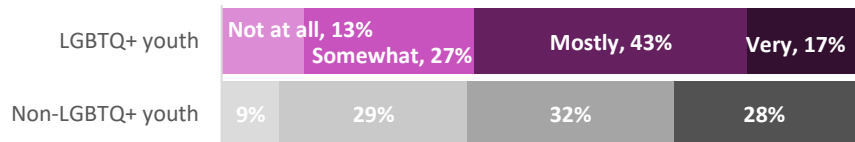
Youth in King and Spokane counties were equally as likely to identify as LGBTQ+.

According to The Williams Institute, 4% of the overall population in Washington State identifies as LGBT.[2]

	LGBTQ+	non-LGBTQ+
Spokane	11%	89%
King	9%	91%

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[2] Same-sex Couple and LGBT Demographic Data Interactive. (May 2016). Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.

Workshop Attendee Feedback

Professionals said

In our system, many people see our kids. JPC Screener, referrer, intake, supervision, drug court, specialized intake. All of these people need training, **everyone needs to be on the same page**. – *King County Juvenile Court*

I'd recommend **rolling it out across the whole court**. Especially in diversion, we have kids on multiple caseloads, but we're the only ones who have gone through the SOGIE training. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court*

It can be easy in a small community to think that you have nobody, but you do. Even just a few. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court*

It would be good to know who on our provider list is friendly. If someone could send out questionnaires to our providers to find out if they could meet the needs of these kids. Find out wider breadth of services in the community. – *Spokane Children's Administration*

Attendees provided feedback about ways to improve the briefings and trainings.

Provide more resources and examples at the trainings.

One theme in the feedback was a request for more information about **resources** for LGBTQ youth. Participants would like:

> Resource guide as a handout we can take with us.
>
> Handouts of local services for families and youth
>
> Any information and resources would be helpful!
>
> Resource list of providers that specifically serve LGBTQ+ youth, trauma.
>
> Better list of counseling, housing and recreational programs for LGBTQ youth

Attendees also requested more concrete examples or practice in **how to start conversations** about sexual orientation and gender identity with youth.

> Discussing examples of conversations with LGBTQ+ youth. How to start conversations.
>
> Good overview of project but I look forward to learning strategies and techniques.
>
> Demonstrate/role play how to ask gender identity, etc. in a social service setting.

Additionally, ensure that all data and examples provided during the training are as local as possible. Using King County, or even statewide, data in smaller, rural communities may not appear to make the problem feel relevant to professionals working there.

Bring youth and local referral resources to the trainings.

Adding in a **youth perspective** would help some attendees feel more engaged in the topic.

> Would be great if we had young adults speak to staff about their experiences. What would have made those [experiences] better?
>
> Would love to include LGBTQ youth who have been in the system to be included in discussion.
>
> I always think panels that include LGBTQ youth are helpful for us to understand their circumstances/isolation/stats on youth.

Professionals would like to **meet potential service providers** before referring youth. They report that they are more likely to refer a youth when they have met the other service provider and know they will be a safe person.

> [Additional training/resource request] Maybe going onsite to a facility that directly supports LGBTQ+ youth to see first hand. This may help me describe the environment to a kid without that experience.
>
> Meet and greet with nearby agencies/resources in community.

Recommendations

Professionals said

We've started a conversation, but **where are we going from here**? How do we continue the conversation and address disproportionality and provide appropriate services? – *King County Juvenile Court Core Team*

Formalize the eQuality Project "program" for replication at other agencies.

Encourage all agencies to create a multi-unit Core Team comprised of leadership and line staff.

At the two agencies where professionals showed the most growth in skill and willingness to engage with the eQuality Project, leadership in the organization had created a strong internal Core Team. The Core Teams were comprised of both leadership and front-line staff who were able to communicate with their peers and create safe spaces for staff to share their discomfort. The teams were all staffed by professionals from different units within the agency to ensure that ideas were being generated from different perspectives and that considerations were made for how work was done in different units.

Provide internal Core Teams with tangible ideas for implementation.

The Core Teams are comprised of professionals interested in making changes to better serve LGBTQ youth, but it can be challenging to come up with tangible practices in which to engage their peers. CCYJ could provide Core Teams with a short list of ideas to kick off their work.

- Have staff members identify all known LGBTQ kids on their case load and double-check that they have been referred to appropriate services.
- Set up a lunch and learn with a local service provider who works with LGBTQ youth.
- Provide an opportunity for professionals to role play asking youth about their SOGIE in a safe space.

Work with local Core Teams to create resources for professionals to use.

CCYJ is already underway with creating resource directories for King and Spokane counties. As the program expands to new areas, work to create these as soon as possible. Ideally resource directories would be available to professionals at initial trainings.

Additionally, consider creating a local policy directory in each community. Such a directory could contain language or links to LGBTQ-related policies in local school districts, at other relevant partners such as child welfare, juvenile justice or housing providers, and within the local government. Professionals reported relatively low confidence in their understanding of the laws and policies protecting LGBTQ youth, and a directory such as this could enhance that confidence and provide professionals with a tool to do their work.

Improve the SOGIE questionnaire and support more effective use.

Update the SOGIE questionnaire and provide a vocab sheet for professionals.

Feedback from professionals and data from the questionnaire indicate that youth, and the professionals completing the form with them, are having trouble understanding what is meant by "gender expression." Consider engaging a small group of professionals to pilot new language for this question with youth they are working with. If there continues to be a high number of "Don't Know" responses or professionals continue to report youth confusion, consider removing the question from the questionnaire.

In order to support professionals who may not be as familiar with the SOGIE language, provide a vocabulary sheet with the questionnaire. This vocabulary sheet could include sample verbiage for explaining terms to youth, as well as recommendations for other sources, such as The Williams Institute, to look at if they still have questions.

Help agencies create internal policies and practices for collecting SOGIE data.

New and existing agencies in the eQuality initiative need to establish clear policies and practices for collecting SOGIE data, whether through the questionnaire used in this pilot or through another method. Each agency's Core Team may be able to provide insight and advice on how best to incorporate SOGIE data collection in to existing processes with youth.

When a policy is established, ensure all staff are appropriately trained on how to ask youth questions about their SOGIE and provide a cheat sheet of definitions and terms that professionals can use when they don't have the answers themselves.

There are several factors to consider in determining how and when a professional should gather this information from a youth:

- **Privacy:** Youth may not be comfortable discussing their SOGIE in front of their parents or other caregivers. Where possible, SOGIE conversations should happen when the professional and youth are able to meet independently.
- **Trust-building:** Many youth are unlikely to reveal information that feels vulnerable to a new adult the first time they meet. Where possible, allow for this information to be collected after the professional has had the opportunity to build rapport with the youth.
- **Developmental and language appropriateness:** Some professionals expressed concern about using the SOGIE form with developmentally disabled youth, or those who don't speak English well.
- **Duplication:** By determining where in the intake or on-boarding process a youth provides information about their SOGIE, duplication will not be a challenge. If it remains unclear who is responsible for gathering this information from a youth, there are opportunities for duplication.
- **Changing responses:** Collecting SOGIE information from youth in their case files will allow subsequent staff who work with the youth to update their SOGIE as necessary. Youth may change their identification as they age or may feel more comfortable revealing their identity as they develop relationships with professionals.

You **can ask all these questions as a conversation** and then check the boxes, but some people are just reading the forms in a monotone voice. – *Spokane County*

- **Paperwork burden:** Professionals are already doing large volumes of other paperwork and assessments with youth. Figure out a way to incorporate SOGIE questions with other assessments such as the monthly health and safety checks that Children's Administration conducts.

Provide Core Teams with materials for conducting SOGIE questionnaire training with their peers.

Of all the areas in which professionals were asked to indicate their knowledge, skills and attitudes, they were most likely to report lower confidence and comfort in asking youth about their sexual orientation and gender. Additional training and practice would likely increase confidence and comfort.

The Spokane County Juvenile Court Core Team provided an additional training for their peers that included an opportunity to role play administering the questionnaire. To make things simpler for those participating, they provided scripts to use and volunteered themselves as partners to practice with. Other Core Teams could replicate this internal training in their own organizations.

Expand the reach of the eQuality Project.

Consider organizational openness to changing practices when selecting sites for expansion.

Start the change in the counties who see the need and it will spread. – *Spokane County Juvenile Court*

With limited resources to expand across Washington state, CCYJ should to consider focusing the eQuality efforts on agencies that are most likely to embrace changes in policies and practices. The agencies in which professionals showed the most growth over the course of the project were those in which leadership was clearly bought in and there was a willingness to try new practices in line with already existing policies to serve marginalized youth.

Create a more accessible version of the Protocol for Safe and Affirming Care.

Professionals report rarely using the Protocol. CCYJ could work with Core Team members from around the state to develop a version of the Protocol that could feel like more of a living resources for professionals. This could be a website, a series of short videos or some other format.

Provide training opportunities for other key constituencies.

Maybe doing a training for **foster parents** who have LGBTQ+ youth in their care. – *Spokane Children's Administration*

More training with **out-of-home care givers**, not just foster parents, but also group care. – *Spokane Children's Administration*

Children's Administration professionals brought up foster parents and Juvenile Court professionals brought up community-based mentoring programs as other groups who would benefit from training about working with LGBTQ youth. Professionals at all the agencies brought up the confusion that may exist because most youth work with people in several systems or agencies, and not all these groups have the same practices regarding using a youth's preferred name and pronoun or other policies. Having key partners be a part of the project would create more consistency of service to youth.

Conclusion

The eQuality Project pilot phase demonstrated early success and opportunities for growth in the future.

The eQuality Project was perceived and implemented to varying degrees in different agencies.

The goal of the eQuality Project is to improve the experiences of LGBTQ youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems in Washington state. CCYJ hopes to initiate change through working directly with professionals in those systems and provide them with training and tools to provide safe and affirming care to LGBTQ youth.

However, the scope of the eQuality Project was seen as more limited by professionals involved in the project. The primary goal of the project was perceived to be collecting data about the sexual orientation and gender of youth, rather than making changes in how these youth are served.

Agencies that took ownership of the project and created a strong internal Core Team to work with CCYJ and their peers were more likely to report changes in how work was done in their organization.

Professionals at the pilot agencies reported growth in knowledge, attitude and skills related to serving LGBTQ youth.

Overall, professionals reported increases in knowledge and skills at the end of the eQuality briefings and trainings, and over the course of the project. Variations were apparent between agencies; those agencies that took greater ownership of their involvement in the eQuality Project and demonstrated an openness to doing their work in a new way showed greater increases among their professionals. Professionals at the Spokane County Juvenile Court reported the most growth in knowledge and skills from the beginning of the project to the end of the pilot phase.

The eQuality pilot phase generated lessons for replication and expansion across Washington state.

From a strong pilot phase, CCYJ has an opportunity improve on the eQuality Project model in other communities. While the briefings and trainings were rated positively, there are opportunities to continue to make those stronger, such as by adding youth perspective and even further localizing the information provided. CCYJ should continue to support the development of internal Core Teams at agencies who engage in the project and provide these Core Teams with ideas and tools to drive the change within their own agencies.

Appendix A: eQuality Project Logic Model

CENTER FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH JUSTICE
eQuality Project

The eQuality Project is a statewide effort, led by CCYJ, to document the experiences of LGBTQ youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems in Washington state, and implement policies and practices that will improve experiences and outcomes for LGBTQ youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

PARTICIPANTS (audience)	ACTIVITIES (what we do)	OUTCOMES (short-term)	OUTCOMES (intermediate)	IMPACTS (long-term)
Professionals working with youth in juvenile justice and child welfare systems Juvenile Probation Counselors Child Welfare Case Workers Managers in Juvenile Court and Children's Admin. Organizational leadership in Juvenile Court and Children's Admin.	**Foundational training** for JJ and CA staff **Advanced training** for project point staff **Ongoing training** opportunities **Follow-up support** after training **Visual indicators** of safe and affirming spaces	**Attitudes** Professionals will believe that it is critical to create safe and affirming environments for LGBTQ+ youth. **Knowledge** Professionals will have increased understanding of laws and policies that protect LGBTQ+ youth. Professionals will have increased knowledge of resources/referrals specifically for LGBTQ youth. **Skills** Professionals will have the skills to collect SOGIE data from youth. Professionals will have the skills to provide safe and affirming care to LGBTQ youth.	**Practice** Professionals provide safe and affirming care to LGBTQ youth. Professionals will connect LGBTQ youth to appropriate resources. **Data** Professionals collect SOGIE data from youth.	**Improved System Experience** LGBTQ youth will be better served by the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. **Increased Stability** Fewer system-involved LGBTQ youth experience homelessness. **Increased Identification** Unique needs of LGBTQ youth will be recognized and resources made available.

Partners: Spokane County Juvenile Court; King County Juvenile Court; Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration, Spokane County

Project Funders: Raikes Foundation, Pride Foundation, Seattle Goodwill, QLaw and individual donors

Appendix B: SOGIE Questionnaire: Let's Talk About Who You Are

The following is a list of optional questions about who you are. While you may choose not to answer, your responses can help us make sure you and all other youth get the services you need. Please answer as many as you are comfortable with. It is okay to answer some questions and not others.

Your responses will be shared with an organization called the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ), but will not be connected to your name or identity. CCYJ will use the information to try to improve child welfare and juvenile justice for all youth. Otherwise, the person with whom you're completing this form will not share this information without your permission.

1. I am _____ years old.

2. I identify as: *(check all that apply)*

- ☐ African American/Black
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native
- ☐ Caucasian/White
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic, Latino or Spanish
- ☐ Not listed above (please write in): _____
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

3. I consider myself to be: *(check all that apply)*

- ☐ Straight
- ☐ Gay or lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Not listed above (please write in): _____
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

4. I see myself as: *(check all that apply)*

- ☐ Boy/Man
- ☐ Girl/Woman
- ☐ Trans male/Trans man
- ☐ Trans female/Trans woman
- ☐ Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
- ☐ Not listed above (please write in): _____
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

5. Others see me as (in terms of appearance, style, dress)**:** *(check all that apply)*

- ☐ More masculine
- ☐ Equally masculine and feminine
- ☐ More feminine
- ☐ Not listed above (please write in): _____
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

6. On my original birth certificate, I was assigned: *(check one)*   ☐ Male   ☐ Female

Additionally, please indicate if you identify/were identified as intersex: *(check one)*   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

7. Have you ever not had a stable place to live (couch surfing, in an unsafe place with a friend or family member, in a car or tent, etc) **or been homeless?** *(check all that apply)*

- ☐ Yes, with my family when I was a younger kid.
- ☐ Yes, on my own in the last few years.
- ☐ No.
- ☐ Other (please describe briefly): _____

8. When thinking about your experience with juvenile justice and/or child welfare, how comfortable have you felt to be yourself? *(check one)*

- ☐ Not at all comfortable
- ☐ Somewhat comfortable
- ☐ Mostly comfortable
- ☐ Very comfortable

9. Are there any particular services or resources to which you would like to be connected?