



### **Our Journey Beyond Sight: Taking a Peek into the Lives of Youth in Foster Care**

*As you attend this workshop today, we would like you to keep some key points in mind for when you are working with youth.*

#### **Intercommunication**

1. Be respectful of youths' feelings, interests, and thoughts with your words and actions.
2. Be sensitive to how youth learn and the ways you communicate your message to them.
3. Take time to listen to what youth have to say and show a genuine interest in their point of view.
4. Encourage and support youth in pursuing their interests and goals.
5. Be engaged and invested in the conversation. Find the connection in the conversation and focus on ways you can work together for a common purpose.

#### **Permanency**

1. Remember that a youth's placement is not permanent. It is a temporary residence, and this can cause emotional confusion.
2. A lack of placement stability can influence a youth's decision to open up and connect with adults.
3. Remember that there are important people in the youth's life. Help to maintain the existing connections with important family, friends, and adults in their lives.
4. Finding a way to help youth stay connected with important people in their lives may help youth to feel confident and comfortable emotionally investing in new relationships.
5. "Permanency is a state of mind and not a placement"

#### **Resources and Support**

1. The NYTD website ([www.nytdstayconnected.com](http://www.nytdstayconnected.com)) provides a lot of great information to help older youth as they prepare for adulthood. There is information about scholarships, resumes, EMPOWER cards, and SCDSS IL youth groups across the state!
2. The SCDSS Independent Living Guidelines Booklet of Services lets youth know about services that are available to them. These services include, but are not limited to, graduation funds, driver's education, tutoring, interview clothing, housing support, car repairs, and more!
3. Be considerate in the way you speak with youth. It's not necessarily what you say but how you say it. Take our handout with you and learn how to "Talk that Talk"!
4. Be in the know about what a transition plan is, how to help prepare youth for a transition plan, and ensuring that a transition plan takes place at least 90 days after a youth's 17th birthday and within 90 days before a youth's 18th birthday. Read "Why is a Transition Plan Important?" and "What You Need to Know about My Transition!" to be in the know!
5. Do your homework on the youth groups and state youth advisory boards in South Carolina. Youth groups give youth an opportunity to voice their opinions on foster care, to learn about what services and resources are available to help them, and to connect with other youth who are in foster care.