

Please join us for the 2017 Annual Youth Speak Out!



Who: Present and Former Youth in Foster Care and Supportive Adults

When: August 15th, 2017 from 9:30 AM (registration begins) to 4:00 PM

Where: The Queensbury Hotel – 88 Ridge Street Glens Falls, NY

Why: To Have Your Voice Heard and Speak Up for Youth in Foster Care!

Designed and Developed by Youth in Care

So, How Do We Sign Up?

- (1) Read the Speak Out Overview..... Page 1
- (2) Check Out the Agenda..... Page 2
- (3) Decide on Your Speak Out Team..... Pages 3 - 4
- (3) Fill out the Registration Form..... Page 5**
- (4) Would You Like to be A Youth Leaders?..... Page 6
- (5) Do you have Artwork, Poetry or Stories to Share? Page 6
- (6) Get Inspired by the Example Speak Outs..... Page 7
- (7) Create Your Own Speak Out!..... Pages 8 - 11

(8) Send it all in by the Registration Deadline of August 8, 2017:

Email: gloria.moran@ocfs.ny.gov **Fax:** 518-442-6648

Mail: Adolescent Services Training, Professional Development Program,
Rockefeller College, University at Albany,
4 Tower Place-4th Floor, Albany, NY 12203

YIP



Annual Youth Speak Out- August 15th, 2017

Speak Out Overview

We're Switching It Up a Bit! 😊

You spoke out and we listened! Based off the evaluations from last year, and feedback we got from YIP (Youth in Progress) meetings, we've made some creative changes to this year's Speak Out. For Example:

- ✓ The most common concerns were, "I didn't know what I was supposed to do." and "I wish I had time to prepare." Not to fear! This year we are sending you the Speak Out brainstorming tool and agenda for you to prepare ahead of time. AND we will be forming Speak Out Teams, based on pre-chosen Speak Out topics, to support each other and practice at the actual event.
- ✓ Something else we hear a lot, "What's the point of me going if I'm not speaking out?" Everyone has an important role on their Speak Out Team! Speak Out teams will brainstorm together what to Speak Out about, ensuring that everyone's voice and ideas are heard. Everyone will help to improve the Speak Outs to ensure its on fleek! There will be official team cheerers and other roles to be had!
- ✓ We also got a lot of mixed reviews on the Round Table Discussions: "They made me talk when I didn't want to.", "It was just another IL group." Or 'I really liked the resources I got from the round tables.'" There are no official round tables this year and no one will make you talk! Instead, the Speak Out Teams will have resources available related to their team's topic to share when brainstorming their Speak Outs. In addition, we will have Important Stuff Tables with tons of resources for you to check out!

If you have any questions, contact Gloria Moran:

Region 4 Youth Engagement Specialist (YES)

E-mail: gloria.moran@ocfs.ny.gov or Phone: (518) 486-5184

* For a speedy response, it's best to contact by email.





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Speak Out Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	What does this look like?
9:30 – 10:30	Welcome	9:30 - 10:10 Registration, Breakfast and Important Stuff Tables 10:10 - 10:30 Program Introduction and Key Note Speakers *We ask that everyone be registered and seated by 10:10
10:30 - 12:00	Speak-Out Team Formation	Create a Team Name and Chant; Public Speaking Tips; What to do if you get nervous?; What's TMI?; How to Make a Killer Speak Out; Speak Out Practice and More!
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch	12:00 - 12:45 Lunch and Important Stuff Table 12:45 - 1:00 Speak Out Overview
1:00 – 1:15	Speak Out Team Rallies	15 minutes to get ready and pumped up!
1:15 – 2:30	The Speak Out	Your team's opportunity to have your voices heard by a panel of policy makers, judges, and agency directors.
2:30 – 3:00	Speak Out Team Celebrations	A panel member (or two) will provide Speak Out certificates and provide an opportunity for feedback. Followed by A LOT of clapping, cheering and maybe even some dancing!
3:00 – 4:00	Closing	As you head out, please feel free to check out Important Stuff Tables, network with panel members, and grab a to-go snack!

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Speak Out Teams

The youth quotes below can help you figure out what team calls to you. You may resonate with several teams, but please pick just one team for the Speak Out.

(1) Money and Jobs

- "Please I'll take any job, just let me make some money!"
- "Getting a job not just at your agency."
- "Real money, real jobs and responsibility over my own money."
- "There is no way I'm going to get a good job when I get out of here."
- "The store manager wouldn't even shake my hand."
- "Other kids get more clothing allowance than I do."
- "I've only had hand-me-down clothes. I don't think I get money for clothes."
- "I'm not allowed to have a bank account."
- "I can't use the banking app or see my account because it's not in my name."

(2) My Education

- "We need more individualized and supported education."
- "High school sucks and you are not making it any easier."
- "I have no idea how to pay for college."
- "I don't think I could pass my classes in college."
- "My judge doesn't listen to me about my education plan."
- "No one thinks I will do well so I don't try."
- "I don't want to not know anyone if I go to college."
- "Let me stay in my school district and graduate with my friends."

(3) Activity & Food Options

- "Playing in real sport teams."
- "More activities – especially outdoors!"
- "Support in getting a driver's license."
- "I need driver education classes."
- "Unhealthy and bad tasting food – yuck!"
- "Not listening to me when I say I don't eat meat"
- "Please just let me be outside if I want to be outside. Look at how pale I am!"
- "Don't just tell me I'm fat and control how much I eat. Work with me to make a diet plan. Otherwise, I'm not going to listen to what you tell me to do."





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Speak Out Teams

(4) Socializing and Social Media

- "I want to hang with my friends"
- "Meeting others outside your agency."
- "Using Facebook, Instagram, snapchat a, IM and all that stuff."
- "Having and using my phone"
- "Privacy issues – try trusting me first!"
- "My foster parents not allowing me to hang with friends when their 'real' child can."
- "Not being allowed to go on Facebook."
- "Having no way to stay in contact with my friends and siblings."

(5) Making Decisions About My Life

- "Freedom to make my own decisions"
- "The right to speak at my court hearings – and be heard"
- "Respecting my birth parents and if I want to see them."
- "Staying close to my siblings"
- "Judges listening to ME and not just my foster parents"
- "Not staying with foster parents who don't accept who you are."
- "A plan for leaving care that I actually want."
- "Talking about me when I'm standing right there. Try including me in the conversation."
- "If I say I like my placement and want to stay, let me stay."

(6) Privacy and Personal Space

- "The right to not be judged by my past."
- "Personal space please!"
- "Sharing information about my sexual orientation."
- "Respecting and listening to my triggers and what makes me uncomfortable."
- "My own room."
- "Not stalking my social media pages and judging me for it."
- "Letting me have space when I say I REALLY need it."
- "Stop probing me about my past and asking me why."





Registration Form

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Annual Youth Speak Out- August 15th, 2017

Registration Deadline: August 8, 2017

Agency/ County: _____

Address: _____

Contact Person: _____ Phone #: _____

Every event participant will be a member of a Speak Out Team, themed on common topics identified during Youth In Progress (YIP) meetings. Whether or not a youth chooses to perform a Speak Out, they still have an important role within their Speak Out Team. Every youth has something valuable to add! **Please pick 1 of the following team topics per group:** (a) Privacy & Personal Space, (b) Money & Jobs, (c) Educational Options, (d) Activity & Food Services, (e) Socializing and Social Media, and (f) Making Decisions About My Life. The team topic should align with what the youth wishes to Speak Out about.

Please Note: One adult must attend for every 4 youth participating.

Group 1: Agency Staff/ Foster Parent Full Name: _____

Agency Staff Email: _____

Speak Out Team: _____

Youth Names:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

Group 1: Agency Staff/ Foster Parent Full Name: _____

Agency Staff Email: _____

Speak Out Team: _____

Youth Names:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

Group 1: Agency Staff/ Foster Parent Full Name: _____

Agency Staff Email: _____

Speak Out Team: _____

Youth Names:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

Group 1: Agency Staff/ Foster Parent Full Name: _____

Agency Staff Email: _____

Speak Out Team: _____

Youth Names:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

Please return completed forms by August 8th to:

Adolescent Services Training, Professional Development Program

4 Tower Place-4th Floor, Albany, NY 12203

Fax: 518-442-6648 Email: gloria.moran@ocfs.ny.gov

Professional Development Program
Rockefeller College, University at Albany



**Office of Children
and Family Services**





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A Call for Youth Leaders!

Do you have a strong voice? Want to work on your leadership skills? Volunteer? Advocate for other youth in care? Then we are looking for you! We need youth leaders to help us with the event. You can be “behind the scenes” helping with registrations and logistics to make sure everything runs smoothly or “in the scenes” helping to facilitate break out groups, give example Speak Outs and help to MC the event! **If you would like to help, please contact:**

Gloria Moran
 Region 4 Youth Engagement Specialist (YES)
 E-mail: gloria.moran@ocfs.ny.gov or Phone: (518) 486-5184
 * For a speedy response, it's best to contact by email.

A Call for Artists and Writers!

Do you draw? Paint? Sculpt? Write stories? Poetry? Essays? Please share them with us! We want to show case your work at the Speak Out. Your work can either include your name or be anonymous, either way, we want to showcase your talent. Speaking Out takes many forms, art and writing are a great way to express yourself. **If you are interested in showcasing your artwork at the event, please contact:**

Gloria Moran
 Region 4 Youth Engagement Specialist (YES)
 E-mail: gloria.moran@ocfs.ny.gov or Phone: (518) 486-5184
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Example Speak Outs

The Issue: I've had two different judges. One was cool and one was not at all. I've had both, so I know what it's like to be listened to and to be completely ignored. They would talk about me when I was standing right there, like I wasn't even there. If they had let me talk, not just answer their questions, they would have learned a lot. For instance, my foster parents telling me I can't be bisexual in their house. I didn't trust any of them enough to tell them that.

The Change: Maybe we could have some type of training for judges to listen better. We need an advocate. Our caseworker or lawyer should take time to listen to us and know us better than some checklist of questions. Then they can help advocate and help me use my voice at court. Also, it would help if another kid who has been through it could be there for me and help coach me through it. I'd do that for new foster kids if I was asked.

The Benefit: The benefit would be placements that last. That are safe and let us grow up as close to normal as we can. I've been in 6 different placements, 3 foster homes and 3 group homes, all of which didn't last. I finally have good foster parents now. I have two Dad's and they want to adopt me. They listen to me. I think I would have found a good match sooner and not be so messed up if people just got know me from the beginning and listened to what was going on and what I needed.

The Issue: I can't go on Facebook or snapchat to talk with my friends. Even if I could, I'm not allowed to have a phone. What 16-year-old is not allowed to go on Facebook and have a phone? And it's because they don't trust me. Or what they say is it's not me but "not everyone can be trusted."

The Change: I want a chance to show that I can be responsible and not based on what the other people in my unit do. If I can't just have the right unless I prove I can't be trusted, then I want a way to earn that trust. And I need it to be clear. Like do these things for a couple weeks and you can start having a cell phone.

The Benefit: My caseworker keeps talking about needing permanent connections and people I can trust and call when I leave care. Having a phone and being able to go online and Facebook, would let me stay close to people. I get overwhelmed and frustrated a lot. Snapchat gives me a place to turn it off and feel like I'm with my friend even when I'm not. And it would give me a chance to show I'm responsible and can make my own decisions.





Speak Out Brainstorming Tool

Speak Out Team Topic:

Brainstorm Issues Related to Your Team Topic: An issue is a problem or concern about something that is important to you. Identifying issues often starts with that gut feeling you get when you're not feeling happy about a situation.

Identify Your Most Important Issue: Out of the issues you brainstormed, which of them sticks out to you? Which is most important to take action on and change? Pick one issue, describe it in the space below, and say why it is important to you.



What could be changed? What are some things that can be done to help you and others dealing with this issue? Try to think both of small steps that can help and larger steps that could maybe fix the entire issue. Ask around for ideas!

**Smaller
Steps**

**Bigger
Steps**



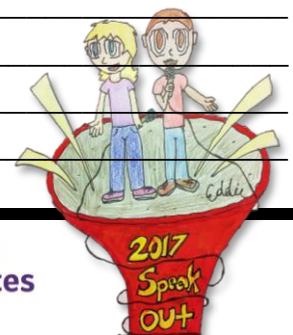
What's the benefit? How would this change make you and other youth in care better off? What might be the immediate benefits and what might happen in the long run because of this?

**Short
Term**

**Long
Term**

NOW PUT IT ALL TOGETHER!

In the space below, summarize everything you wrote in the blue brainstorming boxes. This summary can be the piece you use for your Speak Out! [What's the issue? How can it be changed? And how will this change benefit youth in care?]



Awesome!

We can't wait to hear it!

