

PROJECT SUMMARY

Implementation Grants to Develop A Model Intervention for Youth/Young Adults With Child Welfare Involvement At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH 2)



PROJECT TITLE

The BraveLife Intervention

GRANTEE

Westchester County
Department of Social Services

**GEOGRAPHIC AREA(S)
SERVED**

Westchester County, NY

POPULATION APPLICABILITY

Youth in or transitioning out of
foster care

GRANT PERIOD ENDING

September 30, 2020*

PROJECT DIRECTOR

Tara Linh Leaman, J.D.
Tll2@westchestergov.com

LEAD EVALUATOR

Janna Heyman, Ph.D.,
L.M.S.W.
heyman@fordham.edu

FEDERAL PROJECT OFFICER

Catherine Heath
Catherine.Heath@acf.hhs.gov

LEARN MORE

For more information on YARH 2 or to learn about other Children's Bureau discretionary grants, please visit [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#).

Project Description

The Westchester County Department of Social Services partnered with the Children's Village and the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service's Ravazzin Center to develop the BraveLife Intervention (BLI). BLI is a youth-centered, strength-based initiative that uses peer-to-peer (P2P) navigators to support youth in achieving their goals. P2P navigators are employed and trained young professionals with lived experience in the foster care system. Based on data from its early development, BLI is an evidenced-informed practice. The goal of BLI is for P2P navigators to help increase youth's ability to articulate and work toward their goals, interact with professionals, and be able to initiate connections to resources on their own.

Intervention

BLI uses a three-phased model to reach at-risk youth:

1. **Engagement:** BLI begins with a P2P navigator reaching out to and building positive healing relationships with at-risk youth. The P2P navigator can build an empathetic and trusting relationship with an at-risk youth based on the understanding that they have walked in the same shoes as the youth who is in or has been in foster care.
2. **Empowerment:** The empowerment process is strength-based and youth-driven, with P2P navigators listening to the youth's priorities and focusing on building and strengthening the skills they need to work on. During this phase, the P2P navigators help model behaviors with the youth through role play and positive reinforcement to prepare them for meetings with professionals and family members that help the youth achieve their goals.
3. **Connections:** During this phase, the youth will make a connection on their own to appropriate individuals and organizations in the community that have resources that correspond with the youth's goals. A youth may be active in BLI for a year or longer depending on if they are able to implement the connections on their own.

*Project services will continue after grant funding ends.