Webinar Series

How Child Welfare Professionals Access, Use, and Share Information

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Presenters: Elizabeth Kramer

         Christine Leicht

         Michael Long

         Sharika Bhattacharya

         Elizabeth Eaton

         Kim Dvorchak

Elizabeth Kramer: Hello, and thank you all for joining us. Today's webinar is hosted by Child Welfare Information Gateway, the information dissemination service for the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. My name is Elizabeth Kramer, and I am the senior manager for knowledge transfer and information management at Child Welfare Information Gateway.

         Just a few notes before we start. We are recording today's webinar and will be making this recording available on our website at www.childwelfare.gov. All participant phone lines are muted at this time and we ask that you submit questions using the Q&A box. We will answer questions at the end of the presentation. At the end of the webinar, you also--actually tomorrow, you will receive a link to a short survey. We ask that you please provide us with your feedback on this webinar.

         And now I'm very excited to introduce our session for today: "How Child Welfare Professionals Access, Use, and Share Information." Our speakers today are my colleagues and members of the evaluation team for

Child Welfare Information Gateway, led by Christine Leicht. Christie, at this time, I'd like to go ahead and turn it over to you.

Christine Leicht: Thanks, Elizabeth. I'm Christine Leicht, and I'm joined today by members of our Child Welfare Information Study team, including Mike Long and Sharika Bhattacharya, our co-principal investigators, and Elizabeth Eaton, our recruitment lead and study manager.

Before we get started, I wanted to share a quick overview of our agenda. During the session, we'll provide an overview of the study approach, share findings about the behaviors and preferences of current and future members of the child welfare workforce, and hear from all of you about what is most interesting and perhaps surprising about these findings and how we can use what we're learning to inform practice. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback throughout today's webinar. Feel free to type questions in the chat, and we're hopeful for a great discussion.

So, the study came about because of a variety of key issues in the field and mainly that to serve families well, current and future members of the child welfare workforce need access to useful and trusted information, resources, and services, but how child welfare and legal professionals consume information is rapidly changing all the time, and with so many options and so much information competing for limited time and attention, understanding what works best for folks and in what circumstances is really important.

Agencies, information clearinghouses, and T.A. providers have to be able to understand and respond to how those needs and preferences are changing and how those might evolve based on having such a diverse workforce and how those different folks use the information that they're asking for and trying to receive to help them better serve children and families.

So, the study was designed to help us understand what

the current landscape is regarding how child welfare professionals access and use information, and that could inform the design and dissemination approach for future resources and services. I do want to mention that this study occurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, so some of the findings may have evolved a bit since the data was collected.

So, our current research effort actually builds on findings from a short survey called the Media Consumption Survey that we conducted in 2016 over 200 child welfare professionals. Through the survey, respondents provided information about the devices they use to access information, their preferences for training and other types of T.A., and what sources of information they found most trustworthy.

This study provided a range of findings that can be useful to your efforts to disseminate information. For example, the study found that child welfare professionals vary widely in some respects, such as the extent to which they use mobile phones in their work, but that in other ways, their habits are more homogeneous. For example, professionals who spend a significant amount of time working outside their offices generally get information from the same sources as those who do not. While the study produced valuable information, it was intended to be a very limited research effort and it led to the national study that we're talking about today as well as understanding what's still left to learn.

So, this current study, we had 4 sets of professionals that we were most interested in understanding: child welfare professionals working in State, county, and private agencies; child welfare professionals working with Tribal organizations; legal professionals that work in child welfare; and BSW and MSW students planning to enter the child welfare workforce.

So, the team designed a phased approach that would be informed along the way by key stakeholders and critical literature. Phase 1 consisted of a review of market research to focus on organizations' use of "push" versus

"pull" communication strategies, and the literature review is not intended to comprehensively cover other fields, such as dissemination science, that have been covered elsewhere, but it was intended to help us prioritize and refine study research questions. Phase 2 included using these findings along with the feedback from key stakeholders to inform the refinement of our areas of inquiry. Phase 3 included development of study instruments, research methods, and recruitment of participants. Phase 4 included data collection through surveys and focus groups, and then Phase 5 included sharing findings and creating a publicly available data set so that communities and organizations can better understand and serve the child welfare workforce.

So, partnering with the key stakeholders throughout the study was critical to achieving our goals. So, current and former state and tribal child welfare administrators legal professionals, university faculty, and students have provided input into and feedback on the study design, instrument, and methods.

We organized 4 stakeholder groups, one for each of the target audiences, and a technical work group to focus more on the research and topical areas included. And I'm going to share with you just the names of the stakeholder group members, but I'm not going to read them all out. All the groups included federal and non-federal experts and representatives from relevant agencies and organizations, and we also received additional input from a variety of other reviewers listed on the second page, and we just wanted to say thank you to all the stakeholders and those that provided additional input and review. This study could never have been completed without them. They provided input into data collection methods, recruitment strategies, instrument development, and even the products resulting from the study. These folks were integral throughout the entire study process.

And then lastly, I wanted to thank all of the study team members who dedicated countless hours to making this work happen, and I also want to acknowledge Brian Deakins, who spearheaded this work and created this

opportunity. Without the folks on this slide and the two previous slides, we would not be where we are today.

So, now I'm going to turn it over to Mike Long to talk about the results of the literature review.

Michael Long:

Thanks, Christie. So, as Christie said, our literature review focused on push versus pull strategies and it was focused on commercial market research literature. And for people who aren't familiar with them, a push marketing strategy refers to a situation where a marketer or disseminator of products pushes information about their products out to end users. So, an example would be a television advertisement, right? A television advertisement puts the information out there in front of people's eyes whether or not they asked for it, whether or not they were actually looking for it. You sort of take it and shove it in front of people's faces in the hopes that they will find it helpful. A pull strategy, on the other hand, tries to pull in and attract end users who are already interested in looking for your resources. So, a good example there would be search engine optimization. You know that there's somebody out there who's looking for a particular kind of material and you would use a pull strategy like search engine optimization to make sure that when they looked, they would end up coming to you, as opposed to coming to somebody else that offered a similar sort of thing.

So, just wanted to touch on a few key findings from the literature review. The first was that it is becoming harder and harder to use push strategies because there's so much noise. It's hard to break through. People get so much information pushed on them, whether it's through email or listservs or social media, that it's very difficult to get their attention if all you're doing is putting the information out there. And what commercial market researchers have found and which is applicable to child welfare as well is the only way those are going to work is if you really understand your target audiences, to understand what exactly it is that they want and what kinds of messages are going to be most relevant to them.

Another key finding is that push and pull strategies really are only effective when they're used--or most effective when they're used in combination rather than just choosing one or the other. So, an example would be you could use pull marketing strategies to attract end users that are already interested in your resources. While you're interacting with them, you could then learn a lot from them about their preferences--what they like, what they don't like, what they find relevant, what they don't find relevant. Then you can use that information to then better target the push strategies that you use to try to broaden awareness of your materials.

And then finally, there's a theme that goes through the market research literature that is applicable to child welfare disseminators also, which is you can't assume that just because you get your materials in front of somebody, they are going to find them helpful and they're going to find them--they're going to immediately see the value in them. I think there's a tendency sometimes to think, you know, well, our resources are really great. Once we can just get them in somebody's mailbox or get them in front of somebody's eyes, of course they're going to use them and they're either going to see them and start using them, and that's really not the case. Really, if people don't--aren't aware and don't see the intrinsic value in the materials that you're disseminating to them, it's not likely to take hold. It's not--even if you get them in front of their eyes, you're not likely to necessarily be successful.

So, following the literature review, we put together the research questions. We finalized the research questions for the information study. And you see those here. Really, research questions focused around what-- how do child welfare professionals, in all the audiences that Christie talked about earlier, get information and use information in their jobs? What factors make them more likely to use newer technologies like mobile devices and social media as part of their information strategies? How do their information habits and preferences vary, based on factors such as the role they play in their organizations, the type of organization they work with, or the service areas where they work?

And then finally, to what extent can we make any predictions about how information habits might change in the future? So, in other words, to what extent can we make predictions if we were to do this same survey in 3 to 5 years? How might people's responses be different? So, those were the things we were trying to address through the information study.

Now I'm going to hand it back to Christie, who's going to talk a little bit about the mechanics of how we actually carried it out.

Christine Leicht:

Thanks, Mike. As he mentioned, I'm going to talk a little bit about the methodology. And as I mentioned, one of the key aspects of the study was that our stakeholders were extremely involved in thinking through the approach and our data collection effort and recruitment efforts. So, for the survey, there were very--many, many concepts of interest, way more than we could ever include, and we had to really balance the amount of specificity we needed versus trying to get a big-picture understanding of folks' needs and preferences. And we ended up finalizing a list of constructs to address and then landed on a mix, including some very specific questions, but then we had to let a lot of questions go in order to keep the survey to no longer than 20 minutes.

We also added 3 open-ended questions to address some of the challenges with narrowing the survey down, and we created parallel survey versions for each audience and then also conducted cognitive testing to ensure that the survey was valid. For our focus groups and interviews, participants could volunteer through the survey and provide their contact information. The groups were separated by the 4 target audiences and, in some cases, roles, depending on what was going on, and if it worked for scheduling, and then we ended up doing a lot more individual interviews than we expected and we had a lot of recruitment challenges with just finalizing, scheduling, and all of that.

So, to recruit the child welfare professionals from our state, local, and private group, we sampled 6 states based on a set of characteristics to ensure diversity and

balance in our sample, and these included characteristics such as the ACF region, the population levels, the privatization amount within the state, county-versus state-administered systems, and urbanicity. And then we started by meeting with the CB regional office staff for each state and sending a study invitation to the state director from the children's bureau. We then worked with directors and staff to identify key areas of interest, and we actually offered to add questions specific to their needs since we were asking them if we could survey their entire workforce. We also provided each state with a state-specific report for their own workforce. And then, for our tribal and legal professionals, we took a very different approach based on our input from the stakeholder groups. We partnered with the stakeholder groups and national organizations, TA providers, and regionally based organizations to disseminate the survey in all ways possible, including listservs, social media. One organization held a webinar for folks that might be interested, and another organization created their own information video to help with disseminating and recruiting for the study. And then, for students, we took a completely different approach and we worked through the universities and our stakeholder group to identify contacts at social work programs. We held a webinar to recruit study partners at different universities, and then the study partners distributed the survey through their own contact methods, such as email, texting, using their learning management systems, and social media, and we did not access personally identifiable information for any of our survey recruitment for any of the groups. We did have a variety of lessons learned as a result of our recruitment and dissemination methods that informed our perspective on our study findings as well.

In the end, we had 4,134 survey respondents, including 3,191 state, county, or private agency professionals; 450 students; 371 legal professionals; and 122 child welfare professionals working in Tribal organizations. We also had a total of 82 people participate in focus groups and interviews.

So, now I'm going to turn it over to Mike Long and

Sharika to discuss the findings.

Sharika Bhattacharya: Hey, thank you, Christie. We can go ahead to the next slide. Before we get into the findings, I wanted to describe the survey in a little bit more detail, which, as Christie mentioned, was developed with input from our stakeholder groups. The questions were grouped into several general topic areas, and most of the questions were the same for all 4 of our audiences. But some questions were tailored to individual audiences to more closely reflect their work or their school context. The general topics covered by the survey are listed here and include general information, habits, and preferences, including how people access information in their personal lives, whether they have a mobile device and how they use it, whether they use social media, perceived access to child welfare information, as well as perceived gaps in information access or barriers to information access.

So, basically, do respondents feel that they have the information they need for their jobs? What types of child welfare information do respondents search for and how they search for what they need, the frequency with which respondents received child welfare information that they haven't necessarily searched for and the formats they prefer for this information, the frequency with which respondents share child welfare information with colleagues and how they typically share this information.

Then preferences for training format and content and how respondents learn about trainings and professional development available to them. And then finally, use of mobile devices and social media specifically to access child welfare information, so specifically for purposes related to their work.

All right. So, as we start talking about the findings, I wanted to know that our main focus for this presentation is on the largest group of respondents we had, which are the child welfare professionals group. We do highlight some findings later on about professionals working with tribes, the legal professionals and students,

but unless we specify otherwise, we're mainly talking about our child welfare professionals audience for the next several slides.

So, we found that 90% of child welfare professionals have reliable access to the internet at least most of the time during the workday, and the graphic here shows how the percentage breaks down across the different answer options on this item, and this percentage is relatively high for all subsets of respondents, including frontline workers and those who work with rural populations. Just about 2/3 of child welfare professionals responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that they have enough access to child welfare information to do their work effectively.

Some of the main topic areas where child welfare professionals felt they needed more information included information about community or local services for children and families, information about child welfare laws and policies, and access to learning opportunities like conferences and workshops. And this was in response to an open-ended question, so the responses were grouped into thematic areas, and these were some of the main topics that people raised in their responses.

Right. So, now moving on to searching for information. What we have in this table here reflects the percentages of child welfare professionals who search for these types of information at least several times a week. We found that 40% of child welfare professionals indicated they search for information and resources to share with clients at least several times a week. If we look at legal professionals, they were more often searching for information on laws and policies and research on child welfare, so they were less frequently searching for information to share with clients.

One finding that came from the focus groups related to searching for child welfare information is that in general, focus group participants said that they often felt overwhelmed by the amount of information generated during a search. They find it difficult to search through

everything to find what they need. And some also said they struggle with determining which resources are most trustworthy.

Right. When child welfare professionals were asked how they search for information, most respondents said they search online. Just under half said that they search on the internet, either using search engines or visiting specific websites, and some specific websites that were mentioned included the Child Welfare Information Gateway, Casey Foundation, National Indian Child Welfare Association, and the Capacity Building Center for Tribes. Over 1/4 said that they go directly to their organization's website or intranet as a starting point when searching.

Some interesting differences in how child welfare professionals typically search for information. As you saw on the previous slide, a smaller percentage of respondents went directly to a colleague when they needed information. Frontline workers were more likely than other professionals to search for information by asking a colleague. This was about 30% for frontline workers versus 10% of directors and administrators. Younger professionals were also more likely to search for information by asking their colleagues, and this was a pattern that appeared to be independent of role.

All right, so, and now let's talk about receiving information. So, this is about child welfare professionals getting information they were not specifically seeking out. And you can see several information formats listed on the graph here. About 1/3 of child welfare professionals overall indicated that they prefer PowerPoint presentations. Respondents' preferences on information format vary to some extent by role. Frontline workers preferred videos and pamphlets to a greater extent than directors and administrators. Directors and administrators were more likely to prefer a briefing document. And legal professionals were also more likely to prefer briefing documents and less likely to prefer PowerPoint presentations, videos, or pamphlets. So, their responses were sort of

similar to child welfare professionals who are directors and administrators.

All right. Under the category of receiving information, we asked some questions about electronic subscription lists. We found that just under 1/3 of child welfare professionals said that they subscribe to an email listserv, electronic newsletter, or other type of subscription list through which they receive child welfare information. There were some differences here by role. Over 2/3 of directors and administrators said that they subscribe to listservs and newsletters compared to only 19% of frontline workers. On this topic, again, we see some similarities with higher-level child welfare professionals and legal professionals. So, as I said, you know, there was about 2/3 of directors and administrators said that they subscribe to listservs and newsletters. And we also found that almost 3/4 of legal professionals said they receive child welfare information through a listserv, newsletter, or subscription list.

When asked what characteristics make listservs most useful, survey respondents mentioned the extent to which content is concise, up-to-date, and immediately relevant for their work. And some suggestions were made in focus groups when participants were asked what recommendations they would have for technical assistance providers communicating through listservs, and what was suggested included putting information in a list format for easier reading, using hyperlinks, adding photos and infographics, making sure that newsletters are mobile-friendly, and using consistent formatting so readers know where to go.

All right, and survey respondents were asked to choose their top 3 most frequently used methods of communication for sharing information about child welfare. The most popular response options were face-to-face conversations at 70%, and then email and at-agency organization meetings. I will note again here that these data were collected prior to the current public health situation, so it would be interesting to see how the nature of child welfare professionals' interactions related to sharing information may have

changed or adapted to the common context.

A few differences among subgroups. Frontline workers are more likely than others to share child welfare information through face-to-face interactions, and higher-level professionals were more likely than others to share information through email and meetings compared to frontline workers. And legal professionals also share more often through email than face-to-face. So, again, we're seeing some more similarities between higher-level child welfare professionals and legal professionals and their responses.

Now I'll be turning it over to Mike to talk through the next few slides on findings.

Michael Long: Thanks, Sharika. So, one of the topics that we asked about were people's use of mobile devices. So, whether they have mobile devices, whether they use it in their general lives, and then, more specifically, whether they use it in a child welfare context.

So, the answer to the first question is yes. Ownership of mobile devices is practically ubiquitous within all the populations that we looked at. Among everybody, 98% have a mobile device, and that number really got--didn't get any lower than sort of 95% no matter how we, you know, what subpopulation we looked at. About 1/3 of people said that they use their mobile device to search for, access, or share child welfare information at least several times a week. So, that's a chunk of people to whom mobile devices really represent a significant part of their work information lives.

There is also a significant chunk--17%--who say that they never use their mobile devices to get any information for child welfare. So, that's important, too, is there are some people for whom their mobile device is separate from their work lives. On the right-hand side of the screen, you'll see a graphic that shows some of the activities that people most frequently used mobile devices for. At the top of the list, you'll see some activities that are mostly related to communication, so things like checking email or communicating with colleagues or clients. In

the middle, there are some activities related to finding information, so looking up policies or researching information to share with clients. Then lower down, some of the activities that people do less frequently have to do with professional development, so learning about promising practices or actually accessing professional development activities.

So, you go to the next slide. We also asked people what potential barriers prevent them from using their mobile devices more often as part of their work. As you can see, the--of the 4 barriers that we asked about, the one that was most frequently identified as a barrier was a lack of relevant mobile applications. About 53% of people said that that is a barrier. Slightly fewer people said that workplace rules or limited access to Wi-Fi is a barrier to using mobile devices at their work. And then fewer, only about 20 people, said that their own technology skills are a potential barrier to using mobile devices. And some other things more generally that came up when we asked about barriers to information access were a lack of time to search for information, a lack of access, so, for example, lack of access to specific databases, and just not knowing where to search if they wanted something, not having a sense of what the best place to go is.

When we talk about technology skills on the next slide, there were a few subgroups of people that reported technology skills were--a little more likely to report that technology skills were a challenge in terms of using mobile devices. Those groups who are professionals who work with tribes, older professionals over the age of 50, and legal professionals all were slightly more likely to report technology skills as a barrier. Legal professionals also were less likely to say that access to Wi-Fi or workplace rules were a barrier to mobile device use. So, those were--those barriers were less relevant in the legal context than they were for child welfare professionals who work for, you know, state, county, private, or tribal agencies.

So, in the next slide, we also asked about people's use of social media, again, both in general and specifically for

child welfare purposes. About half of people said that they at least occasionally use social media to search for access or share information about child welfare. Of course, that means half of people also said that they never do it, that social media is not a tool at all they use for child welfare informational purposes. Perhaps unsurprisingly, younger professionals were more likely to say that they use social media for child welfare purposes. But even there, even among the groups that were higher users of social media, the frequency was relatively low.

So, for example, only—even among younger professionals, only 10% of respondents said that they use social media at least several times a week for this purpose. So, again, no matter what population you're looking at, use of social media as part of--in child welfare work is still a relatively uncommon--relatively uncommon. On the right, you can see a graphic that shows that Facebook is by far the platform that is most often used by professionals to--for child welfare purposes. And then, when we ask people what they use social media for, there were really two themes that came out of that. One was that they use it to share interesting articles with colleagues about child welfare. And the other is that professionals use social media to locate the clients with whom they're working. So, the children, parents, or families with whom they are-- they're working.

So, you can go to the next slide. We want to talk a little bit about subpopulations. So, as Sharika said, most of the numbers we're talking about here, we're looking at the general population of child welfare professionals who work in state, county, private, and Tribal organizations, but over the next few slides, we wanted to hone in on just a few subpopulations. So, when we look at just professionals who work with Tribal organizations, the main pattern that we see is that they tend to be more active in terms of their information use. So, they search for, receive, and share information generally more frequently than other professionals do. They typically have less experience in the child welfare field, even though, on average, they're actually older.

And interestingly, they report slightly more consistent access to the Internet, but at the same time, slightly less satisfaction with the amount of access they have to child welfare information. So, they're a little less likely to agree that they have enough access to information to do their job. And that may be--one explanation of that pattern may be that their demands are higher, they're looking for more information, and that's why they're less satisfied. As I said, they're more likely to search for most kinds of child welfare information. They're also more likely to cite their technology skills as a potential barrier to using mobile devices, and they're more likely to use social media for child welfare purposes, although, like everybody else, they do so relatively infrequently. Even this group does it relatively infrequently.

So, on the next slide, we'll talk about professionals who work in the legal setting. They are more likely than other respondents to agree that they have enough access to information about child welfare, and along the same vein, they are also more likely to report reliable access to the Internet, and they're less likely to cite limited access to Wi-Fi as a potential barrier. So, in general, they tend to be--the access does not tend to be as much of an issue for them as some of the other groups that we'd looked at. Legal professionals are more likely to use Internet-based methods to search for, receive, or share information, so they're more likely to use, for example, Google searches. They're more likely to use listservs. They're more likely to use email. They are less likely to rely on face-to-face discussions or telephone calls to search for, receive, or share information. And in that way, legal professionals are more like managers and administrators in child welfare agencies, whereas, as Sharika said, frontline professionals tend to use a lot of interpersonal, directly interpersonal strategies for sharing information. Both legal professionals and people in management and administrative roles in child welfare agencies tend to rely less on those interpersonal relationships and more on what we're calling Internet-based, broader methods.

On the next slide, we also looked at--surveyed BSW and MSW students. Now, because the context in which

students work is so different than people who are in the workforce, it's a little harder to make direct apples-to-apples comparisons here, but some things that we did learn about students. First of all, they have very reliable access to the internet and Wi-Fi, so that access is not at all a problem for them. They are more likely--they tend to share information with peers through face-to-face conversations, in-person or online discussions, and social media. Less likely, for example, to use email than current professionals are. They largely prefer, about 2/3 of them say that they prefer in-person educational activities over virtual activities. And again, just again to make the point, this was taken before the COVID pandemic. And about 2/3 use social media to search for, access, or share child welfare information, and again, it's hard to make apples-to-apples comparisons with current professionals, but that is the highest percentage of any population that we looked at, we saw about BSW and MSW students.

So, on the next slide, most of what we've been talking about are what we call descriptive statistics. So, basically, just this is how various groups answered these various questions. You know, this is the information that we derive from their information habits and preferences based on their survey responses. But if you remember the fourth research question that I talked about earlier, had to do with to what extent can we try to make predictions about what might change in the future. And in order to do that, we defined a group of respondents that we called future child welfare professionals. And future child welfare professionals, as we defined it, were current BSW and MSW students that had never worked in the child welfare workforce before. So, when they came out and when they entered the workforce, they'll be new. And we compared their responses to current frontline professionals on the theory that that's likely where future professionals would end up in the next few years. And we use that comparison to try to identify so what might change? As these professionals enter the workforce, how might things change over the next few years?

So, I just wanted to say a little bit about that before I hand it off. We found that future professionals are more

active in general at using mobile devices just in their regular, everyday life than current professionals are. Currently, they're less likely to use it--to use mobile devices for child welfare purposes, but we suspect that--again, that's hard to make an apples-to-apples comparison. That could well just be because of the nature of the work that they're doing. Notably, they're among the groups that have the least technology skills, so they're certainly able to use their mobile devices. They certainly use it in their regular, everyday life, even if right now they are not doing it as much in the child welfare context.

If you go to the next slide, we looked at social media as well, and what we found is sort of similar, that future professionals are less likely to share information right now through email or telephone and they are more likely to share information, including child welfare information, through social media. So, if you go to the final slide, we tried to draw some conclusions from this and the potential implication, I think, is that both mobile devices and social media may potentially become more important channels as these future professionals enter the workforce over the next, you know, 3 to 5 years. It's hard to predict what's going to happen because you can imagine two different trends happening. One would be that these future professionals, as they enter the workforce, their own habits and preferences may have to change to fit what's happening in the workforce. So, for example, a lot of communication in child welfare agencies just happens by email. And so, even if these students aren't using email much now, that may have to change in order for them to do their job when they enter the workforce. But at the same time, there may be another trend, which is that the workforce has to shift to meet them if they arrive with sort of new expectations and demands about access on mobile devices or what's available on social media or other things. It may be that the workforce is going to have to change and sort of meet them halfway, so to speak. So, that seemed to us to be a really interesting trend that the child welfare workforce may have to address and grapple with in the next few years.

So, now I'm going to hand it off to Elizabeth, who's going to talk a little bit about the resources that are available.

Elizabeth Eaton: Thanks so much, Mike, and hi, everyone. I'm Elizabeth Eaton with the Child Welfare Information Study team, and I just wanted to let you know about some of the resources available through the study in case you are interested in learning more.

So, we have a number of resources now available, including the study report and executive summary, which are both available on the Children's Bureau website. The study report includes some of the findings that Mike and Sharika walked us through today, but it also includes profiles of the information needs and preferences of child welfare professionals, including frontline workers, managers and supervisors, directors and administrators, and those child welfare professionals working with tribes, and these profiles may be helpful for better understanding each of these different audiences and what communication strategies, formats, technologies, and sources are likely to reach them.

So, for example, say you're considering the creation of a podcast series to get information to frontline workers about evidence-based prevention services and thinking about how to make them aware of the series. You may review the profile included in the report to better understand how frontline workers prefer to receive this information as you shape your dissemination strategy.

In addition to the report, the accompanying Executive Summary distills some of the findings from the study and it was developed specifically for child welfare professionals to help these stakeholders formulate strategies and policies that make it easier for the child welfare workforce to access and use information.

And then, additionally, this study data set is now available through the national data archive on child abuse and neglect. The data may be useful to technical assistance providers seeking to disseminate information

to child welfare professionals, those responsible for managing and directing child welfare organizations, and other researchers who can use the data for additional exploration on these topics.

So, links to these resources are included in today's presentation for your reference. We're also planning some additional resources to help apply the learnings from the study to your work, including several tip sheets and an infographic. And we're excited about these resources and we'll let you know as soon as they become available.

So, our study team has shared a lot of information, and now we want to hear from all of you and see what questions you might have and also think through how we can use and apply the findings from the study to your work. So, we've been collecting some questions in the chat, and please feel free to use the Q&A pod to ask other questions, but before diving into the discussion, I just wanted to take a minute to ask Kim Dvorchak, the executive director of the National Association of Counsel for Children and a key study recruitment partner and stakeholder, to share just a few words about her participation in the study and how the findings can be used to help inform and improve the design and reach of resources and services specifically for legal professionals working in child welfare. Kim, are you there?

Kim Dvorchak: Yes. Yes. Thank you, Elizabeth, and thank you to the Child Welfare Information Gateway and the Children's Bureau for conducting this study, which could not be more timely, I think, in this age of information overload.

I would like to note thanks to NACC's director of certification, sales, and technology Daniel Trujillo, who participated in the stakeholder group that led up to this study. And as a disseminator of information, NACC was eager to participate, and we collaborated on survey dissemination, distributing the survey, and really trying to get people to take the time to participate in the survey so that we could learn how to better serve them moving forward. I think one of the biggest challenges

and perhaps one of the biggest surprises is just the vastly different ways that people communicate and receive information based on their roles. There's also a disconnect between what people receive, what information is coming at them, and then what resources they use. You know, for example, we have a high volume of email. There's a lot of--push marketing is described. We're sending out newsletters, we're sending out listserv postings, but then, when people need information, they're going to Google or another search engine, and so, how do we--think we need to figure out how do we organize, catalogue, index information so that it is searchable on some of these, you know, private search engines, like--or public search engines, actually, like Google. You know, there's a disconnect. There's a gap between the private industry and the platforms that people are using in their day-to-day lives and then the technology that a lot of us in the child welfare field have on hand. You know, we're using very traditional means to try to reach people and serve people, and we need to think differently about our dissemination tactics, about mobile devices.

And one thing I think is really important to note that is indicated in the larger report regarding the legal community respondents is that the overwhelming majority of the respondents were over the age of 40 and they were white and they had a lot of experience in the field. And I think as a field, as the National Association of Counsel for Children and others are really working to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, we don't want to completely tailor our work to these specific findings because we are trying to reach a wider audience and to reach those future professionals that are being discussed, and so we want to think about how do we both serve the community we have now while building to serve the community for the future.

So, I think we would welcome collaborations with the Child Welfare Information Gateway, you know, on technology, on ways that we can share information together, collaborate on resource hubs or other methods to make it easier for people to kind of one-stop shop for the information that they're looking for.

Elizabeth Eaton:	Thanks so much for sharing, Kim, and thank you again for your support of the study.
Kim Dvorchak:	You're welcome.
Elizabeth Eaton:	So now let's dive into some questions. Elizabeth Kramer, I know that you've been monitoring some of the comments that have been coming in in the chat and in the Q&A pod. I wonder if there's a question included for the team that we could raise here.
Elizabeth Kramer:	There are many questions that have come in throughout the discussion. So, I know that you will address this to some in the Q&A, but I just want to make sure the--all of our audience hears. One of the very first questions that we got, and we got several times, was asking about whether or not line workers were included in our stakeholder groups.
Elizabeth Eaton:	That's a great question. Christie? Do you want to take that one?
Christine Leicht:	Sure. So, what we, in order to capitalize on trying to get as many organizations included as possible, we did not actually include a current frontline worker in the stakeholder group, but we included folks who had worked as a frontline worker. Now, I would say if we were going to do this again, we absolutely would have included a frontline worker. So, it is a little bit of a gap to me.
Elizabeth Eaton:	OK. And we also got several questions in kind of a similar theme, different examples, but really, how much did you all look at how professionals looked or searched for case-specific information? So, several of the examples given were like finding a current address for a grandparent or one comment about young people, going back to try to get some of their information or to get their housing voucher and running into issues because systems aren't quite interoperable. To what degree was that kind of information search part of the scope of this study?

Christine Leicht:	This is Christie. We do not specify whether it was case-specific information they were looking for or any other sorts of information. I think what we included was tools or sources of information. That included technical assistance resources, journal articles, laws and regulations, mobile apps, podcasts that you might access and use as part of your job. So, we do not specify case-specific information in the questions. But I think that's definitely of interest.
	And like I said in the beginning, we had to cut a lot of questions. So, we really had to narrow it down to keep it to 20 minutes. We had so much that folks wanted to learn about and we had to make some hard choices.
Elizabeth Eaton:	I know how that can be, trying to balance sort of the need to keep a study within a length that people will complete but also having, you know, sort of a million questions you'd love to ask. You had mentioned or one of the panelists had mentioned briefing documents.
	And could you just give us a little bit more of a definition of what that would be or what would be included in that category?
Christine Leicht:	So I think that's one of the questions I might have answered in writing and what we--and it said briefing document/executive summary as a response choice. We did not provide a definition for briefing document. But the other response choices included PowerPoint presentation, video, briefing document/executive summary, news article, report, peer-reviewed journal, pamphlet, podcast, and other. So, that was just to give folks some way to distinguish what that might be versus other things, and you can find all of that in great detail in the report if you're interested.
Elizabeth Eaton:	Fantastic. And then, when--since we're on the subject, when you talk about receiving information by PowerPoint, do you--did that include or was that included through a training or a webinar or would that just be like a pdf of the PowerPoint presentation?
Michael Long:	This is Mike. I actually just sent a written answer to that

as well. But the question was asked, how do you like to receive information that you were not specifically looking for? So, that was the context. It was really focused more on receiving a PowerPoint presentation, you know, through email or something like that, not as part of a training that you are already attending.

And one other note I would make, I know somebody had asked a question about training and whether there were other--any other questions in the survey about training. There were several questions, I think, 3 or 4 questions about people's training preferences. I made reference to one about whether they prefer in-person or virtual training, but we also had questions about how they prefer to be contacted about training, things like that, so, that--we didn't have time to go through all of that again, but if you are involved in training and you want more information specifically on that topic, I would refer you to the report. There's a lot of detail.

Elizabeth Eaton: OK, and we do have links further up in the chat to the report that Michael mentioned, and we also will include those in the email that will go out tomorrow.

So, for those of you who are a bit late joining us, there will be an email sent to all participants tomorrow that will include a short survey that we would ask/beg for you to complete. Especially since this is a group of researchers doing the webinar, they'd really love for us to get some good survey results on it. It also will include these slides and links to some additional resources on this.

Oh, and so I'm seeing from rush, it actually won't be tomorrow, it will go out right after this call, so you should receive it just as the webinar is ending.

So, another question we've gotten, are you guys going to publish or have you published an article?

Christine Leicht: That's a great question. We have published the report and we are hoping to publish an article shortly. We're submitting one in the next couple of weeks. So, we'll see. Maybe. Hopefully.

Elizabeth Eaton: OK. Fingers crossed for an article in 2021.

Christine Leicht: Fingers crossed.

Elizabeth Eaton: Yeah. So, I just have one additional question. So, if anyone in our audience has questions they've been thinking of, please go ahead and put those into the Q&A box now so that we can get to them.

Are--when we--when you looked at legal professionals, did you get a sense of whether they might be more likely to have support staff who might do research for them or were they, you know, kind of doing their own research? What was your sense of that, if any?

Michael Long: So, this is Mike again. I--it's interesting. I'm not sure we know necessarily all that much about that. I think it's certainly a possibility. The way the survey was disseminated, I suspect we would have captured both people who had people to do the research for them, people in more senior positions, but also some of those people that actually would have been doing the research. So, one of the emphases, the emphases for this study was really to make sure we were getting, in all the audiences we looked at, sort of a representative profile from everywhere from directors and high-level administrators way down to the people who are actually doing the work on the front line. So, I think the answer is we don't necessarily know that, but hopefully we would have captured everybody sort of along that spectrum.

Elizabeth Eaton: So, I just had a couple other questions, and I don't know if these are things that you looked at or not. As regards Slack, would that have been something you all would have counted as social media, and did you ask at all about use of Slack or hear or gain any perspectives on folks using Slack as an information source?

Michael Long: So, that's interesting. The--when we asked about social media, we deliberately didn't try to define it. We didn't try to define exactly what is social media and what isn't, just because that sort of turned out to be sort of

problematic and very subjective. So, I think it is very possible that people would have considered Slack when they're talking about social media. You know, I think it's also possible that Slack would have played in when people talk about, you know, some of those interpersonal.

One of the questions, you know, we ask is when you're looking for information, where do you go, what do you do, and people said, well, I reach out to a colleague. That may be another place where Slack, you know, came in. That, you know, that could have been turning to the person in the cubicle next to you and asking, or sending an email or getting them on the phone and, you know, or Slack. That's what I think we're--another place where that would have come through. But it's a long way around to saying no, we didn't ask specifically. We didn't have any specific questions about Slack.

Elizabeth Eaton: Sure. Next question, and this--this is--they've all been excellent questions, but I particularly love this one. Since we know that child--the child welfare workforce frequently turns over, especially in terms of frontline staff, what do you think are the major takeaways for how to capture those newer workers who are hungry for reputable information?

Michael Long: So, if I'm interpreting that question to mean if you're trying to get information out to those newer workers so they're arriving in the workforce really looking for reputable information, if you are somebody who is trying to get reputable information to them, what's the best way to reach them? I think that really potentially gets to that future professionals analysis that I looked at. And again, I hate to keep saying this, but in the report, we go into a lot more depth. I think looking at it, I think the key is really looking at that subpopulation, right, not sort of treating them like everybody else, but acknowledging the fact that newer workers who would come to the field probably have different information habits and preferences than other people, and being able to cater to those preferences is going to make you much more effective in reaching them. And I think looking at that future professionals analysis might be

really informative.

Elizabeth Eaton:	OK, perfect. And would one of you mind just--I have a vague sense of what it is, but I don't think I can do it concisely. Can one of you all just cover quickly what Slack is?
Michael Long:	[Chuckles] I'll try. I will say I'm the wrong person to do it, but everybody else is quiet. Slack is, it's a platform that's used often in workplaces, sort of like instant messaging, a platform that allows people to communicate in a sort of streamless way. You know, message with either individuals or groups the same way you would similar to a chat or again, instant messaging or Skype or things like that. But it's sort of a newer platform and one that I think many people consider very easy to use, and that's why it's becoming more and more prevalent.
Elizabeth Eaton:	And this question, I think, has been answered in writing, but again, I think it's a good one for sort of everyone to hear. Were there any groups of professionals that you all wish you had included in the study that you--if you had it to go back and do again or if you get to do a second iteration?
Christine Leicht:	This is Christie, and I think we kept our groups relatively broad, and I think there's probably a variety of different groups that we probably could have included and, you know, been able to articulate within those broad categories, but I'm curious to hear what groups folks are thinking we may have missed because I'm sure there are many. I just--I'm not sure specifically what folks might be thinking of or who folks might be thinking of. I don't know if others from the study team want to chime in.
Elizabeth Kramer:	If you do, if whoever had asked the question or anyone in the audience, if you have ideas of professional groups, please feel free to go ahead and put them in the chat or in the Q&A. I'm going to go ahead and keep those open for just another minute or two, but we are right at time, and so I do, you know, want to be respectful of everybody's time and just take this opportunity to thank all of you today. I think this is really a fascinating piece of

work that you've done and I'm so thrilled that we were able to share it with an audience in this way. So, thank you all very much. I just would like to invite you if you have any closing sort of words or remarks.

Elizabeth Eaton: Thank you so much for this opportunity, Elizabeth, and thank you all for participating today and for all of the work that you do on behalf of children and families.

Elizabeth Kramer: All right, wonderful. Well, thanks, everyone. Please do be keeping an eye out for a couple of emails from us. First, shortly after the webinar ends, you will get the email requesting that you take just a few minutes--I promise it's a short study--to give us some feedback on this webinar. That email also will contain a pdf of the slide presentation and links to additional resources.

We did record today's webinar, and we will be posting it on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website, which is www.childwelfare.gov. It will take approximately two weeks for us to go ahead and make this file 508-compliant and get it posted, but when we do, we will be sending you an email with a specific link to where you can find it in case you want to watch parts of it again, or we would love it if you would share it with your colleagues who might find it interesting.

So, thank you all very much for your time today. I really enjoyed learning more about the study. I hope you all have found it beneficial as well, and we hope to see you all in the new year. Thank you.