

Facilitation Strategies to Address Virtual Burnout Among Youth

April 21, 2021

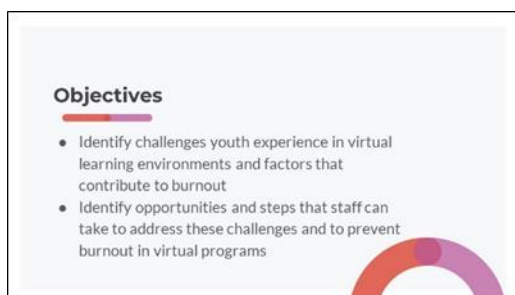
Transcript

Slide 1



Megan Hiltner: Hello, everyone. I'm Megan Hiltner with the Reproductive Health National Training Center. I'm pleased to welcome you all to today's presentation and peer sharing titled Facilitation Strategies to Address Virtual Burnout Among Youth. I have a few announcements before we begin. First, we will be recording this webinar. During the presentation portion of the webinar, participants will be muted due to the large number of folks that signed up. We will take time for questions after that presentation portion, and that will be done through the chat. But then, you all will be transported to small group discussions, where your lines will be unmuted. We invite you to share and talk and ask questions in that small group setting. We'll then come back together again in a big group and conclude the webinar. A recording of today's webinar, the slide deck, and a transcript will be available on rhntc.org within the next few days. We'll also be sharing back a summary of ideas generated in our small group discussions, so look out for that as well. This presentation is supported by the Office of Population Affairs, or OPA, and its content are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not reflect or represent the official views of OPA or HHS. Finally, as we begin, we want to acknowledge the many challenges that TPP programs have worked through in the past year and continue to work through, in order to provide high quality programs to youth and their families. We admire your dedication to your participants in the critical mission of your program. So thank you.

Slide 2



Megan Hiltner: Let's get started. During this webinar, we'll feature feedback directly from youth from a social media outreach campaign conducted by Healthy Teen Network regarding how frontline staff might go about preventing burnout among youth. Then we'll have small group discussions where y'all

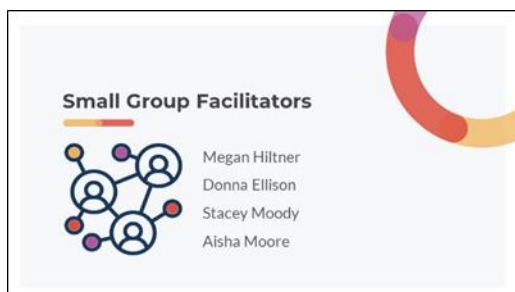
can discuss these findings. At the end of this event, we hope that you'll be able to identify challenges youth experience in virtual learning environments, factors that contribute to burnout, and identify opportunities and actionable steps to address challenges the frontline staff can apply to prevent burnout in virtual programs.

Slide 3



Megan Hiltner: I'd like to briefly introduce our wonderful speakers today from the Healthy Teen Network, Genevieve Martinez-Garcia and Valerie Sedivy. Genevieve currently serves as the Director of Innovation and Research at Healthy Teen Network. Her work is focused on developing tech-based products to engage youth in their sexual health. Valerie currently serves as the Director of Capacity Building and Evaluation at Healthy Teen Network, and for the past 10 years, a large part of her work has involved helping sex educators improve their facilitation skills.

Slide 4



Megan Hiltner: Let me also introduce our facilitators that will be taking part in supporting the small group discussions. Those folks are from the RHNTC. That'll be myself, Donna Ellison, Stacey Moody, and Aisha Moore. So with that, I'd like to turn it over to Genevieve to present the summary of the results from a social media outreach that they conducted with youth. In addition, they'll share tips they've gathered from their work. So over to you, Genevieve.

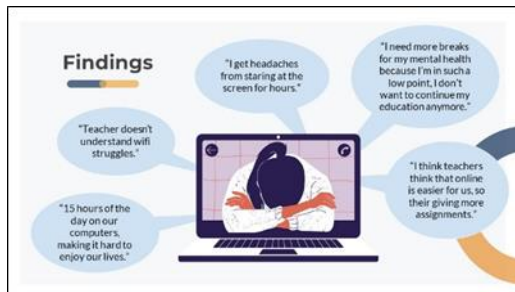
Slide 5



Genevieve Martinez-García: Thank you so much, Megan. It is an honor to be with you today. Megan, if you can just move it to the next slide. Great. Thank you so much. So as Megan said, we wanted to incorporate the youth today, and for many reasons, we were not able to have youth with us today so we can hear straight from their experience. But we did the next best thing that we could do, which is to ask them directly. We did that by reaching through social media, especially through Facebook and Instagram. We asked them, "What don't you like about virtual learning or what we're calling Zoom classes? What makes you so fatigued?" We did this by deploying ads in diverse cities and towns all across the continental and non-continental United States. We don't know exactly where our ads were being seen or where the comments were coming from, however, we know that we were able to reach a nice cross section of the United States. We received numerous comments. You can see on the slides, these are actual comments verbatim. We did not edit their comments. This really expressed some of the frustration that some of the youth may face. One said, "It hurts my eyes." "It was fun at the beginning, but it went downhill from there." "Too much virtual stuff." So according to the youth, when we compiled all these comments together, we know that virtual learning is not exciting anymore. You could see on the screen comments was that it was fun in the beginning, but it went downhill. It was the novelty of being at home and having all these changes, but then it just gets repetitive and boring. Once the thrill of staying at home and going virtual passed, students were not very excited about continuing virtual education for a long time. Even if they have been doing this for a year, it's incredible that it has been a year already, there are persistent problems that really arose from the experience, such as connectivity issues, which was really big, both on the teacher and students side. When teachers get disconnected, one of our youths commented, "The students take over and they kind of like party in class when teacher gets disconnected because there's no one monitoring." But according to a lot of youth, teachers don't understand when the students are the ones having connectivity issues, and then they expect the same level of engagement, even when they're not able to connect. So a year into this mode of learning, so not only the thrill is over, but it's very hard to keep them engaged. So staying engaged was the second really strong theme that emerged from their comments. So according to them, the lack of engagement is for many reasons. Several youth mentioned that classes were just boring. It was hard to stay committed and motivated with a lack of human contact and when they mentioned human contact, it was both contact with teachers, but also contact with their friends. Another barrier was a level of distractions. As you can see from one of the comments, they say, "It's really hard to pay attention to your class when your phone is right next to you." We all live that as adults, even in webinars or presentations, it's hard to stay totally focused if you have your email sending you notifications all the time. So I think we can totally relate and empathize with their experience. Now, the third theme was the high level of expectations and we have already heard this. The pressure and this high level of expectations that teachers put on youth has become very stressful for the students. One of them was saying that they feel that they are being more pressured now, and they're going through more content now than they did in a face-to-face class. One of the youth commented, "I wish teachers would allow us to hand in work by the end of the marking period and have flexible deadlines." This really speaks to the students that have multiple responsibilities at home, and they don't have that protected space of school to finish the work, but just

as us adults, we are managing our virtual work or learning with the other responsibilities that we have to juggle in our own home. So that flexibility was really important for them.

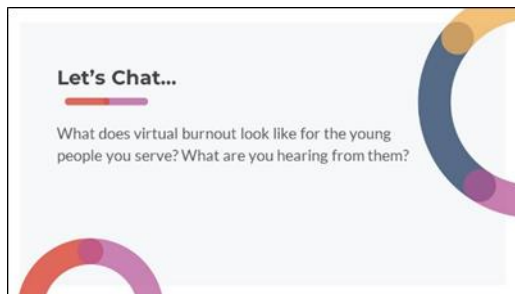
Slide 6



Genevieve Martinez-García: Maybe we can change, move to the next slide so we can see more comments. Oh, the previous one, please. There you go. Thank you. So here we continue kind of like those same themes of being tired, of the lack of motivation, the expectation and the physical exhaustion. One person said that they have physical pain in their eyes. They get headaches from staring at the screen for more hours and that they need breaks for their physical, but also to their mental health. This was one of the comments that we see on the screen, I find it particularly moving, "I need more breaks for my mental health because I'm in such a low point. I don't want to continue my education anymore." When I read that, I was really touched because when you're moving students to the point that they just don't want to get educated and they want to drop out because of that physical and emotional exhaustion, that is really compelling and that really moves us to find ways that we can do better as educators and facilitators. But all the research that you see here, yes, it comes directly from youth, but youth are not the only ones experiencing this. So I think it's really important once we identify solutions is that we empathize with the youth and we can reflect on our own experience. How are we feeling, as professionals, that have been, most of us have been working remotely for a year? There has been a lot of research done, over the last couple of years, but more so over the last year on how people are feeling with remote work and the findings really reflect what the youth are saying. First of all, when we are in gallery view, sometimes like right now in Zoom, you have like all the little faces of people, the screen is cluttered with multiple webcams and that's what we call the constant gaze fatigue. You're not focusing on a speaker, but you're probably focusing right now on my face and you're focusing on the screen and you're focusing on all the little squares of people in the screen. That is really stressful and really fatiguing for the eyes because you're trying to look for ways to focus and it's really hard for our brains to really focus on one thing when there's so much stimuli staring back at you. So our brain becomes overwhelmed with the excessive stimuli while trying to decode nonverbal cues because everybody's moving or they're having different positions, you have all the background noise of all the things that are behind me right now that I have blurred, and all of that cause us stress. It's not about the presenter, it's about everything else that is going on in the screen. Second, reading the nonverbal communication becomes extremely hard when we are in this virtual environment. Researchers at Stanford found that people tend to send extra cues when they're in the virtual environment. So for example, if you're in a classroom, you might just be sitting there and just passively reacting to the content, but they have done research, observing people in the real life environment and they notice that people, when they speak, they tend to speak a little bit louder. They tend to nod a little bit more so their non-verbal cues are a little bit harder, but the person receiving that, they're also receiving that enhanced non-verbal cues. So for both the sender and the receiver, it makes us all very tired. So at the

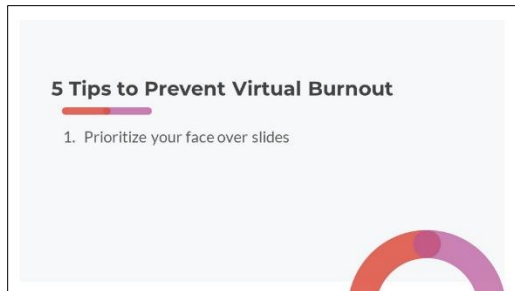
end of the day, there's just a lot of stimuli. There's just a lot of information, verbal and non-verbal, that our brain is trying to decode, that makes us tired, and then you add the level of the physical fatigue. Your eyes are strained. Your body is just stuck to the chair. We don't have the freedom of going to a different meeting room with walking up and down the stairs to move around, just as the students are not having the chance of even just walking down the hallway to change into a different class. So all of those components are making people tired, anxious and increasingly stressed. It happens to us. It happens to them. So I'm going to turn it over to Valerie to continue the discussion and what we can do to support the students in their virtual learning.

Slide 7



Valerie Sedivy: Thank you so much, Genevieve. So hi everyone. I'm Valerie with Healthy Teen Network and what I would like to do is I'm going to start by asking us to use the chat function. There are a lot of us in this webinar, and clearly this is a topic that resonates with us. We've heard all the reasons why we found that young people are burned out, but we know that there are other things that you're finding in your own settings. I would love for you to just now take a minute, use the chat and tell us something about what virtual burnout is looking like for the young people that you serve. What are you hearing from young people? Or what are you observing? So maybe just in a few words, if you can share in the chat, what some of the things are that you're finding. It's set to everyone so hopefully we should all get, yes. Thanks Harriet for kicking us off here. They're overwhelmed, feeling lonely and isolated, like so many of us, as adults. Yep. Closed cameras, checking out. I'm seeing time, irritability. Yes. Lack of motivation. Absolutely. So many of these things are things that I know that Genevieve has highlighted, but it's interesting to see that many of you are echoing some of the things that we've already found. Yes, to say they log in, but then they're walking away from their computer. I'm seeing a lot of motivation, attention, unengaged. Yes, absolutely. I know many of us are, as I said, feeling a lot of the same things. So not wanting their families to overhear or watch, absolutely. Distracted. Yes, that's right. When we're all at home, school life blends right into personal life. So, yes, thank you, Nicole, for bringing up this issue about being a bit self-conscious about your body and not wanting to necessarily see yourself. That's a really unusual thing that we're finding is that we're talking in this virtual environment, we don't typically see ourselves and when we're talking in an in-person environment. So that is a different thing entirely. We're going to talk a little bit about ways to manage some of these in a moment. So I'm going to go ahead and start by next, by sharing a few things that have come up for us. We really started this journey of virtual learning ourselves, as trainers, about this time last year.

Slide 8



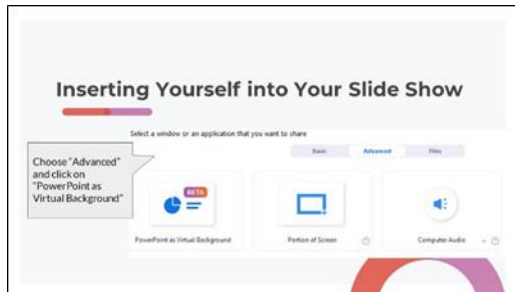
Valerie Sedivy: We've learned a little bit about some of the things that we can do to try to make virtual training, a little bit less painful for everyone. So I'm going to share this first tip here, and this is to prioritize your face over slides. I know that this might seem a little bit contradictory to what we just heard about how tiring it can be to look at faces for a long time, but I would say that the other piece we are aware of is that we need to balance that out with the brain's need for variety. We know that there's lots of stimuli that we're competing with, but at the same time, where we sit in the educational world is that we're often coming at the end of a long school day. Young people who are learning online all day are usually looking at slide presentations and a lot of times they will have their cameras off, perhaps the whole day. So you can create a little variety for them by turning your slides off from time-to-time, to maximize human contact. Depending on the size of the group, that might work less well or better. So a smaller group, often having that group all on camera together can be really helpful. So mixing it up, really, is also a way of changing the energy and it prompts people to pay attention. We take notice when something changes. If you've ever been part of a call on hold, if you've ever been on hold for a long time with an automated service, you'll hear them come on from time to time and say, "We appreciate your patience." They're doing that because that's keeping our attention. So that's something that we can do as well. We're paying attention when things change. Another fun way to kind of mix it up is to use your own PowerPoint slides as a virtual background, so that your face actually appears in the slide presentation. This is just a tiny little thing, but for some reason, it seems to really be fun for people. I'm going to just demonstrate this now by I'm sharing my screen, and then I'm going to walk you through what I'm doing. So actually what I'm going to do is I'm going to walk you through it first, if you can, just... John, have you stopped sharing the screen? Okay. Then I'll just go ahead and show it to you first. So what I'm doing is I'm going to share my screen as a virtual background. I'm going to appear in it. So I've just got to pull that up and so... You all can see now, I'm in the slide. If I had a funny slide, a picture of a cow or a goat or some strange thing, I could be holding up the cow or the goat. It's a small little thing, but it's something that can be entertaining and just change the energy for a moment. So I will ask John to go back to his screen and I'm going to stop sharing, and I'm just going to walk you through how I did that.

Slide 9



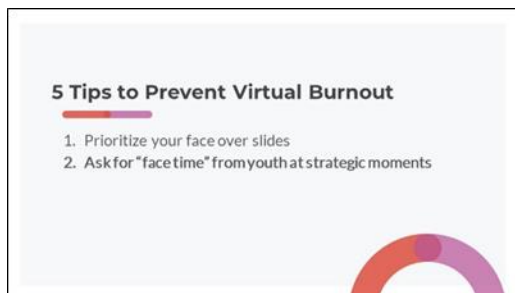
Valerie Sedivy: So what I did, and if you can go onto the next slide, it says, "Inserting Yourself into Your Slideshow." You'll see here that the first thing that I will do to do that is to click on the Share Screen option, at the bottom of the screen. Then you go to the next slide.

Slide 10



Valerie Sedivy: Once I do that, you're going to see there are three tabs, they're a little bit small here, but they say Basic, Advanced and Files. So if you choose the Advanced tab, then click on that, you'll see one of the choices is to use your PowerPoint as a virtual background. That says Beta there. That means it's being kind of piloted or tested. So that's what you would do. You would just choose the PowerPoint as the virtual background, and then once you select the file, you'll be able to just be inserted into your slide. Just a quick note, that this will only work right now, if it's a PowerPoint slide, not for Google slides, but it's really easy to just download your Google slides as PowerPoint slides, if you have PowerPoint. So, like I said, this is just a small little thing, but it's kind of a fun way to gain people's attention and sometimes inject a little humor, depending on what's on the back of your slide. So I'm going to ask you to go to the second, the next slide.

Slide 11



Valerie Sedivy: So the second tip that we have is to see if you can increase video participation by just asking people to pop in at a few strategic times. So we know that people don't necessarily want to keep their camera on the whole time, but also just a whole session with just you on the screen can be monotonous for folks as well. So by just asking them to come in at a few strategic times, it's reducing the burden for them, and you can make this fun. So I'm going to just demonstrate this now, and I want you to feel free to play along. So John, I'm hoping you can allow everybody's camera to be seen. If you want to turn on your camera, I want to at least a few of you to turn on your camera and I want you to take 10 seconds to find an object that you can reach and make it a hat, wear it as a hat. The winner is the first person to show me their hat. We have a second winner, and that winner is the person who has the most unusual hat. So John, if you are able to change it so that we can see others' screens as well as others' videos. I'm only seeing myself, let's see. Oh, there we go. Oh yes. Excellent, Ms. Amy's got something really fun going on there. Harriet's got a piece of paper, we've got a whole range of things. They're a

little hard to see. I like Genevieve is, you're not allowed to use your arm. No, no. It has to be balanced. I'm sorry. Got a few rule breakers, but that's typical of this crowd. Well, it's hard to pick a winner because there are so many winners. Aisha, I'm liking that. That's an actual hat. All right. Okay. Well, you see my idea here is that, you can do a really quick little energizer, get yourself in the game, if that's a time that might motivate people to turn on their cameras for just a moment. So I'm going to move on to the third tip.

Slide 12



Valerie Sedivy: The third tip is to give people choices in how to interact. This might seem kind of intuitive, and we've already heard that they're potentially finding it exhausting to keep their cameras on, but just recognizing that they may or may not be comfortable speaking aloud. So it doesn't mean they're not engaged, but they may just not be able to speak out loud. Maybe there are people around them. There may be some privacy issues. So maybe using the chat. They may be able to participate in the chat, always giving people a range of ways to interact and not necessarily forcing people to either speak or be on video, but just kind of mixing that up. With that said, that if you are going to be asking people to participate in the chat, the really important thing is to make sure that you've set up your screen in such a way that you can monitor the chat, or you can have a co-host or your co-facilitator monitor that for you, because it's really frustrating if you put something important in the chat and it doesn't get acknowledged by the facilitator. So just, it's a quick note to say, to really mix up the ways that you ask people to contribute. It's another way of providing that variety that our brains crave. So maybe one minute you ask folks to try and put something in the chat and another time, you might ask people to put their videos on and raise their hands or do something like that, that's giving that kind of that variety. So the other just little tip I have is to, if your program has the budget to provide young people with earbuds, it might help young people feel more comfortable participating because that means that others who may be around them are not necessarily hearing the discussion. So that is the third tip.

Slide 13



Valerie Sedivy: Let's move on to the fourth tip. The fourth tip is to show your participants how to change their virtual background and use video filters and then incorporate some activities that allow them to

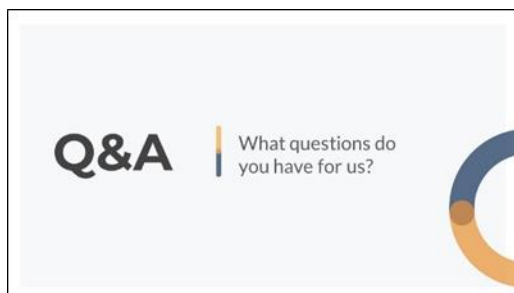
Valerie Sedivy: So I'm feeling a little like a deer today. I think this is a deer. So that's the filter that I'm sharing, but you can play around. Again, you don't have to get too wild with this, but it's a fun way of maybe just changing the energy and encouraging people to put on their cameras for a moment and let people have a little bit of fun. So the more fun they have, the more likely they are to feel engaged and it's a way of just alleviating that burnout, just for about that moment, at least.

Slide 17



Valerie Sedivy: Okay, so what I want to do next is talk about the fifth tip and that is to think about incentives. So we wrote here provide incentives and I wrote strategically. So it's really a good idea, we found, to ask your participants for their ideas about ways to make their virtual life more fun and incentives that might make their participation more rewarding. You might think well all they want is money, maybe that isn't part of it. Maybe you can mix up giving out prizes with having contests, like being able to choose a song that fits the theme of the presentation for the next time or having the winner lead a dance break. It can be a good way again, to change the energy during a virtual session and to get participants up and moving. So again, I recognize that not everybody has a budget for incentives, but if you do, you can ask participants to share what they would most appreciate. Some facilitators have had good luck giving out things like Amazon gift cards or Target gift cards, or maybe even a temporary subscription to a channel like Disney+. So those are some things that we've heard from people that they have used and that have been successful for them. So with all of that, I am going to turn it back over to Megan for a moment to see if we have any Q & A questions and then we'll move on from there.

Slide 18



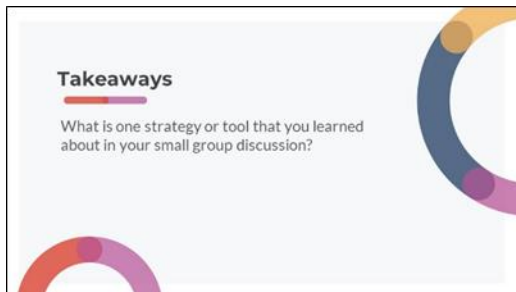
Megan Hiltner: Thank you so much, Valerie and Genevieve. What great tips and ideas and sharing and ideas. Folks, we'll take just a couple of questions here if you have specific questions for Valerie or Genevieve, before we move into breakouts. So chat those into the chat box if you want. I am going to chat out a link for a tip sheet from our last RHNTC webinar, where some ideas around recruiting and retaining youth, specifically some resources around incentives were shared, so I will chat that out, but again, that's on the website as well. I'm not seeing any questions right now and so I'm thinking without further ado, I think we should let folks talk and share and discuss.

Slide 19



Megan Hiltner: So I think let's transition to our small group discussions. Again, huge thank you, Valerie and Genevieve, for getting us started with some of these ideas. Right now, folks, you're going to be transported into a small group discussion where you'll be able to, your microphones will be un-muted and you'll be able to share and discuss. We're going to come back here after about 25 minutes and debrief, and then close up the webinar. So just stay tuned and we'll look forward to seeing you back here after about 25 minutes.

Slide 20



Megan Hiltner: Hi folks, welcome back. As Valerie comes back in the room, she is going to lead us in a debrief quick of what we learned, but just note that the mural board findings are going to be shared back, so you're going to have a lot of great ideas and strategies to follow up on. So I don't know if Valerie is back in the, from her small group or not yet. I know we're nearing the end of things here.

Valerie Sedivy: I think we're all back, Megan.

Megan Hiltner: Okay. All right. So over to you, Valerie.

Valerie Sedivy: So thank you all for participating in these small groups. I know we had a really rich discussion, not knowing necessarily, we don't have all the answers, but we have some good questions and a few tips that we've tried. So what I would love for you to do now is take a minute and just think about one thing you picked up, one strategy or one tool that you learned about that you think you might want to try, based on either the small group discussion, or it could be a tip you heard that we talked about earlier, but I want you to put it in the chat but don't hit enter yet. So I would like you to put this in the chat. This is your one little assignment. I'd like everyone to do and then what we're going to do is we're all going to hit enter at the same time and it's going to be a waterfall. So if you can take a couple minutes now and then when I say go, we're all going to enter it. Okay so I'm going to give you just a

couple more seconds. Don't think too hard about this. Think about one strategy, one tool, one tip that you're going to take away. Okay.

Megan Hiltner: Oh, oh. I hit my enter. I hit it too soon.

Valerie Sedivy: Megan. Some people just cannot follow the rules, I'll tell you guys. Okay, so, and Kathy you're forgiven. Megan-

Megan Hiltner: I'm not.

Valerie Sedivy: Goodness gracious. Okay. Ready? Go. Let's all hit enter. Here's our waterfall. Virtual gift cards. Five minute walks.

Megan Hiltner: Oh.

Valerie Sedivy: Some of these, I don't know what these are, but 20-20-20 sounds interesting. Maybe it's mixing up 20 minutes of lecture with 20 minutes of activities. I'm excited to find out because, and I also just want to share that you will be getting more information about all the other small group discussions, that will all be coming back to you so don't think that the only things you're taking away are from your own small group discussion.

Valerie Sedivy: Maybe Megan's going to talk a little bit more about that in a moment.

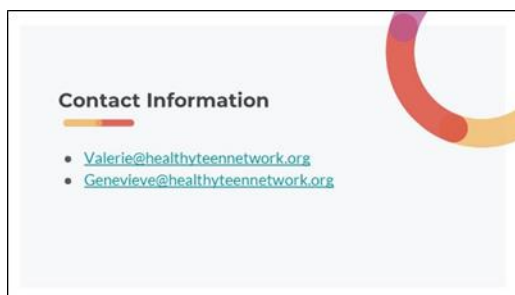
Megan Hiltner: Yeah.

Valerie Sedivy: Yes and explain 20-20-20. We all need to know. Just tell us that one.

Aisha Moore: I can explain it. It was from my group. So we were actually talking about a couple of times, things that we use that maybe we should use with the youth. So someone was sharing that if you're in a session where they're staring at a screen for a long time, every 20 minutes, you should find something that is at least 20 feet away and stare at it for 20 seconds, just to give your eyes a break.

Valerie Sedivy: Thank you. Excellent. We all are intrigued by that and very important for all of us, adults and young people. Okay. I'm going to turn it back over to Megan. So thank you all so much for participating in that.

Slide 21



Megan Hiltner: Well, so in the last 30 or so seconds here, I'm just going to kind of run through some followups. Huge, huge, thank you to you, Valerie and Genevieve for sharing such, such great tips and getting conversations started. I know we've put your email addresses here. We'll share this back if folks have questions, you can contact those folks.

Slide 22



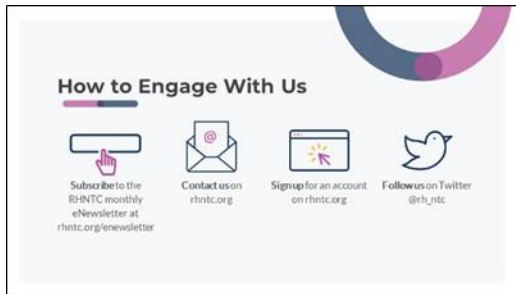
Megan Hiltner: We also have put up some resources here on the next slide that are on max.gov and on the RHNTC website that you can go to for more tips on this. We'll be sharing back the mural board so, there's going to be a lot on this that you can go through.

Slide 23



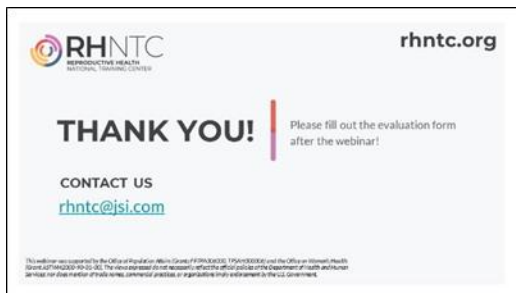
Megan Hiltner: We do have some upcoming activities, just wanted to give you a heads up on. We have a Trauma-Informed Approaches in Adolescent Health: Team Meeting Series that we'll be sharing bit more at the grantee meeting in May on, but those will be team meeting packages that will be posted. Also look out for a couple of Job Aids that we're doing around building partnerships and a Systems Thinking Toolkit that will be coming out too.

Slide 24



Megan Hiltner: So just to conclude, at RHNTC, we want you to reach out to us. If you have questions, subscribe to the e-news, you can email us, follow us on Twitter. You can sign up for an account and just thank you for carving out time in your day, and engaging virtually with us and trying to share ideas on this hard subject. Again, please join me in thanking our presenters today. If you would complete that evaluation, we greatly appreciate your feedback because they inform future activities as well.

Slide 25



Megan Hiltner: So thanks and this concludes our webinar for today.