Recruiting and Retaining TPP Program Participants Virtually
February 25, 2021
Transcript

Slide 1

Megan Hiltner: Okay, well, hello everyone. I'm Megan Hiltner, I'm with the Reproductive Health National Training Center. I'm pleased to welcome you all to today's webinar and the panel presentation with peer sharing titled, Recruiting and Retaining Program Participants Virtually. I have a few announcements before we begin. During the panel portion of the webinar participants will be muted, given the large number of folks joining. We'll take time for questions for the panelists, following their remarks, but please keep in mind, you can ask your questions via the chat function at any point in time. Then, during our small group discussions, you'll be un-muted and we would really encourage you to share and speak with your peers and your small group, at that point in time. A recording of today's webinar, the slide deck and the transcripts will be available on rhntc.org within the next few days. This presentation is supported by the Office of Population Affairs and the Office on Women's Health. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the official views of OPA, OWH 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 programming to youth and their families. We admire your dedication to your participants and the critical mission of your program. Thank you.
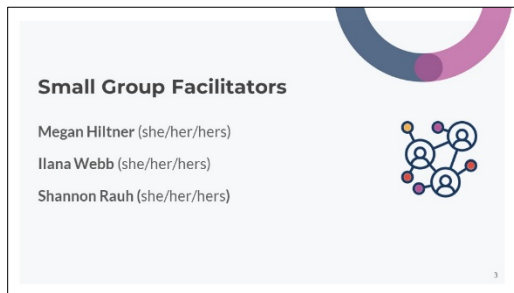
Slide 2

Megan Hiltner: Okay, so let's get started. The panel portion of the webinar will feature three TPP19, tier one grantees, who were spotlighted in the OPA evaluation TA tip sheet, titled, Strategies For Virtual implementation. The tip sheet was shared with you all prior to this webinar. I hope you had a chance to take a glance at it and read it. Because the panel will share an update since the spotlight, specific to our

panelists' virtual implementation efforts, including recruitment and retention strategies and lessons learned. Small group discussions and peer sharing will follow the panel and any insights and resources shared throughout the panel and the discussions will be captured. We will then share this back with the TPP network, following the event. I'd now like to introduce our esteemed panelists, first, Dr. Vicki Draeger, she's CEO and project director of Life Skills Empowerment and Development Services (LEADS), of St. Petersburg, Florida. Jill Gwilt, is the THINK Director of Mission West Virginia and Hurricane West Virginia. Kara Petrosky is director of Teen and Support Services at the Boys And Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania. They'll show them share more about themselves with you in a moment.
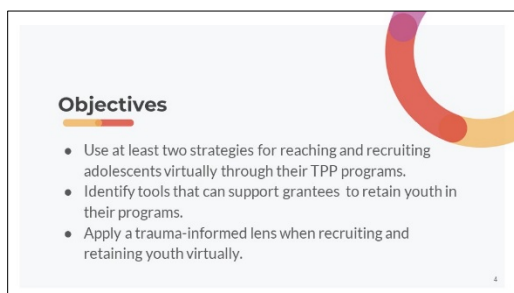
Slide 3

Megan Hiltner: Just so you have a point of reference, we have facilitators who are from the RHNTC, that will be part of the small group discussion. I'll be part of the small group discussion with Jill Gwilt from West Virginia. Ilana Webb, will be with Kara Petrosky from the Boys And Girls Club and Shannon Rauh will be with Vicki Draeger from LEADS.

Slide 4
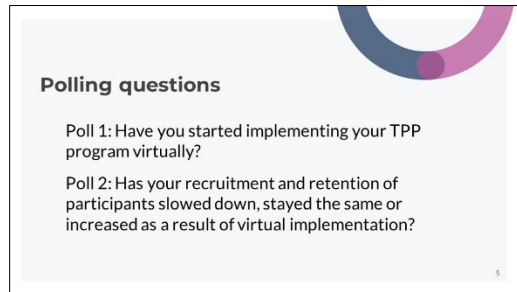
Megan Hiltner: At the end of this event, we hope that you'll be able to, first, use at least two strategies for reaching and recruiting adolescents virtually, through your TPP programs. We hope that you'll be able to identify tools that can support you to retain youth in your programs. We hope that you'll be able to apply trauma informed lens when recruiting and retraining youth virtually. Now, I'm going to turn it over to Shannon Rauh, who will facilitate the panel portion of the webinar. Shannon?

Slide 5

Shannon Rauh: Great. Thanks Megan. Greetings all. I am Shannon Rauh with RHNTC and thank you again for joining today's panel discussion and peer-to-peer sharing session. But before we begin, we want to get a sense of who is attending. We're going to do a poll. My colleague Nancy will call 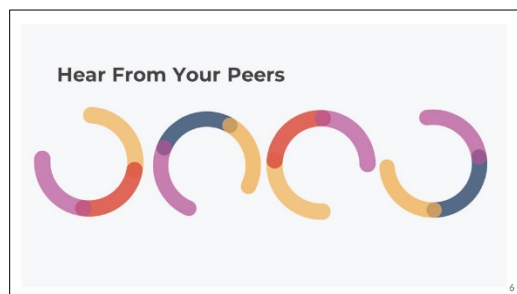up the poll and you'll see that there's two questions there. "Have you started implementing your TPP program virtually? Yes or no. And has your recruitment and retention of participants slowed down, stayed the same or increased as a result of virtual implementation?" Give you a moment to answer those questions and then just hit the submit button and then Nancy will share the results in a moment. Wow. Awesome. Okay. It looks like the folks that are on the phone is that at least 61% of you have already started implementation virtually. Excellent, great job. I know 39% of you haven't yet, but you probably are really thinking about how you're going to implement and how's that going to look virtually? So with both of these responses, I think that this session is really going to be beneficial, if you are already implementing and if you haven't started implementation. And then it also looks like about 52%, the recruitment and retention of participants have slowed down because it's virtual implementation. That totally makes sense. Then stayed the same is about 10% and actually some of you actually it's increased. I'm going to look forward to hearing from those folks on how your virtual implementation has been increased by recruiting and retaining youth throughout.

Slide 6

Shannon Rauh: I think with those responses, I really do feel like this session will be beneficial for all of you. Thank you for taking part in that poll. We all recognize that recruiting and retaining youth in a virtual implementation of an EBI can be challenging given how the program is integrated into the youth's daily lives. We really hope that by hearing from others in the field, on what strategies they have used, will spark your creativity on what could be possible. I want to welcome Vicki, Jill and Kara. Thank you again for joining this panel discussion. I will post a few questions and give each of you an opportunity to respond. Now, a reminder to all the other participants, we will take questions after the panel discussion. If you have a question during this time, feel free to enter it in the chat box and we will address it after all

panelists have had the opportunity to speak. Because we have a lot of folks on here that are with RHNTC, they're going to monitor that chat box.

Slide 7

Vicki Draeger, CEO/Project Director
Life-Skills, Empowerment & Development Services, Inc.
St. Petersburg, FL

Email: leadsfloridaorg@gmail.com

Shannon Rauh: Let's go ahead and get started. I'm going to start with Vicki. Vicki, since your spotlight, what has happened in regards to recruiting and retaining participants virtually? If you could speak specifically on what worked well? What would you do differently next time? What did you learn? Welcome Vicki.
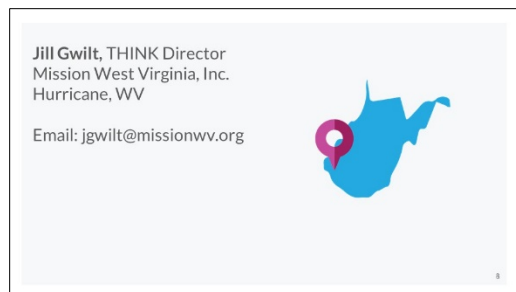
Vicki Draeger: Well, thank you. Good afternoon friends. I'm the CEO of Life Skills Empowerment and Development Services, and with a name that's that long, we just go by LEADS. We are implementing our services in South St. Petersburg to primarily African-American youth in high school. That's ages 14 through 18. We're implementing Love Notes SRA EBP, and our program is called Health Education and Relationship Training Services, so we go by HEARTS. And we have a nice little heart logo. Up until transitioning to virtual, we were using the model developed by Dr... What is her name? Anyway, the one that did the program in Kentucky. It's a two Saturday program and we were doing it from 10:00 to 5:00, and then COVID hit and we weren't able to do what we'd been doing. We had been giving the kids breakfast, giving them snacks, giving them lunch, giving them a lot of breakouts and socialization, so we could do seven hours. But then with COVID, we had to make a very rapid transition. We thought, how are we going to do this? It was February when we decided something's going to happen bad. We need to make a change or at least be ready for a change. What we decided to do, it was important to us. There's so many activities and craft activities and things involved in this that we wanted the kids to be able to have access to those things, which they couldn't get virtually. We got little swag bags, they're black, they have our logo on them. In those bags, we put our journal, the Love Notes Journal, we put Play-Doh and we put crayons and we put craft sticks. We also put little cereal boxes because we'd be giving them breakfast. We put in all different kinds of snacks. We put in Capri Suns. Then we have a staff member who actually takes these and puts them on the doorstep. She's wearing a mask, she goes to the car, gives them a phone call. They pick it up. So everybody has their little swag bags. And they also included our t-shirts, which were part of our incentives. We put all of our forms online for the kids. And that's the way we started. Now, what to do differently? Well, we've had some big lessons to learn. Number one, not all facilitators are TV personalities, is one thing we found out. We can have some really good facilitators for in-person, but they were not good with using technology. They didn't have the energy to engage those kids and hang on to them. We found those facilitators other positions in our agency, so we didn't have to let them go at all. And we raised up and trained facilitators that could really hold the kids' attention on Zoom. Also, we have two facilitators. That's important. Because when you have to be on all the time for as many hours as this is, it takes a lot. By having two, they can trade off.

That has worked well. Another way that has worked well is we can do breakout rooms. We only have 10 kids at a time. We have five in each breakout room. But we can have a facilitator in each breakout room because not to have an adult in a breakout room, is as bad as having a bunch of kids in a room without having a teacher there. It doesn't always go well. Another thing that we learned, is that sometimes we went to all this trouble in cost to give these swag bags, and then sometimes they would have registered, they got their bags and they don't show up for it. There's a big surprise too, not. Well one the thing we learned, we didn't put the t-shirts in after a while, because that was a cost. but we kind of felt okay about they got the book and they got the activities. Because it's my hope, my little probably naive hope, that they will look at the books and will still get something out of that. We also had to shorten it. We shortened it from, instead of doing 10:00 to 5:00, we're doing 9:30 to 3:30 and that's worked out well. As a result, we haven't our recruiting and our retention is the same as it was when it was in person. That's my story. I'm sticking to it. Now, to tell you what I've learned, we've learned that virtual is doable. We've learned that youth and parents need many reminders. Many reminders, because they're also overwhelmed. We learned that with the breaks, you want the kids to get up and move and do something. They can't just stay in front of the screen. You can do a little scavenger hunt. Find a white hairbrush or red toothpaste, a tomato, whatever, maybe six or seven things, have them come back with it. Then you say, who got six things, who got five, who got four and you'll have your winner. And you can do it for a couple of breaks and you put those winners into a hat, and then you pull the winner at the end and they can get an extra gift certificate or an extra incentive. We learned that you have to tell them they have to have their cameras on, because you want to see their faces and they should see one another. You have to tell them they have to be un-muted since we only have 10, we can have them all un-muted so they feel more like they're in discussions. We have to tell parents not to have younger siblings in the room, because some of the content is not appropriate for young siblings. Plus they can make a lot of racket. From our youth satisfaction surveys, we learned that they like our facilitators. Sometimes they just write in how much they liked the facilitators. They write in that they've enjoyed the activities. We learned that the facilitators have got to use humor, stories, and other engagement techniques. And one thing we learned was that, it's nice not to have to find sites. Because we're community-based, and we don't have to go looking for churches or rec centers or something, because we don't have to find sites. That works very well. That concludes my presentation. Thank you very much.

Shannon Rauh: Wow. Well, thank you, Vicki. It's just amazing to hear all the things that you've already been doing around virtual implementation, especially around recruiting and retaining youth. I'm just going to highlight some of the things that you said, just to kind of make sure that everybody can kind of make a note of this. Of course, we are also taking notes and we're going to share all of these strategies with the TPP community. But I do want to just highlight some of the things that Vicki said. One of the things that I loved hearing was about the swag bag. That is awesome because Love Notes, like you said, has a lot of materials that around crafts. If you can put that swag back together beforehand, and when you're adding the actual Love Notes workbook, Vicki, they might look at it, they might not, but it's there. So they have it, which is great. So to be able to provide that beforehand and then hearing that you have staff. Your staff sounds amazing. They wear their masks, they drop off these swag bags to all hopefully the youth that will be attending the program. I think that is just a great way of making sure that youth get what they need, even if they don't attend. Absolutely. They've got things that they can use and definitely having that manual is key. I do like that, you talked about maybe doing it, given the t-shirts afterwards, so then you have these additional incentives to give youth that actually do participate into the program. I think you also mentioned, the incentive as far as like a gift card. I think it was like the pizza card that you give, whenever they've completed the program. That's another. We all know that youth, like all of us, like to get a little gift certificate that especially if there's money involved or food

involved or something else. And so great that you shared that as well. I do like how you talked about the facilitators. I think one of the things that have come up a lot with our TPP grantees, is really how can they monitor the engagement? How can they look at their youth to see if they're engaging in the program? So when you have two facilitators, it gives you more of that opportunity to do that. One can focus on actually delivering the program. The other one can ensure that the youth, do they seem engaged? Is it active? I really liked your idea as far as getting up and moving. Go find a toothbrush, go find this, go find that. Those are some great strategies that you mentioned. I also think that you mentioned about the youth survey. And one of the things that we know is a word of mouth. If the youth have enjoyed it, they're going to share it with other peers. So that also, is going to help with the recruitment. Again, thank you so much Vicki, and we will share some of those highlights, like I said, after the webinar.

Slide 8

Jill Gwilt, THINK Director
Mission West Virginia, Inc.
Hurricane, WV

Email: jgwilt@missionwv.org

Shannon Rauh: So now I'd like to go ahead and turn it over to Jill and have her address those same questions. Let's see. Oh, someone's just adding some comments. Okay. I'm going to turn it over to Jill. And Jill, same questions for you. What have you done since your spotlight and especially around recruiting and retaining youth virtually? Jill.

Jill Gwilt: Yes. Thank you. Hi, my name is Jill and I am the Teaching Health Instead of Nagging Kids director, which is also shortened to THINK. We are located at Mission West Virginia and Hurricane West Virginia. We have both TPP 19 and TPP 20, and I know we might have some of both grantees on here. We are actually in school settings. We don't do a lot of community settings. We are in middle schools and high schools. For high schools, we implement Love Notes, and for middle schools, we implement Draw The Line/Respect The Line. We are anywhere from 11 to 19 years of age. And with both of those grants, we serve over about 12,000 kids a year, a full curriculum. We are a pretty large program in the state of West Virginia, especially for how small West Virginia is. For kind of what worked well, first of all, when we're doing normal implementation and we are in health classes in our schools, so we actually go into the classroom and we're usually there straight days. For Love Notes we're there 13 days in a row and for Draw The Line/Respect The Line, we're there for seven days in a row. So when COVID hit, obviously that closed down all of our schools. One of the big issues in West Virginia is internet access. We're very rural. At the beginning, we couldn't implement at all because the schools couldn't even figure out how to implement virtually. That was a huge issue in our state and just getting the school systems to be able to set up for the teachers to teach was an issue. We kind of had to hold off, we offered some stuff to our teachers, like workbook pages and activities and things that they could do with the kids while they're trying to get stuff set up, so that some of the kids were still getting information, just not all the lessons. Once they were finally able to get most of the counties on the internet, we still

have some issues because of, like I said, very rural settings. And I'll actually talk about what we do with that situation. We incentivize a lot of our kids. We asked our team youth leadership councils, "What would get your peers to participate in something like this?" They said money. So of course, all teens want money. Then we asked them, "Okay, what type of gift cards would you like? Because we can't just give you cash." We chose the top three, which was, gas, Amazon, and then any type of food around their area. We kind of do this in different ways to keep them on their toes so they don't know what to expect for each lesson. Some days we might do a gift card for the most valuable participant, and we have the kids vote on who that is. The only rule is they can't do it for themselves. They have to vote for one of their students or for one of their classmates. Another thing we do is we might just do a random drawing so that they're actually in there that day, participating. we'll put their name in a hat, draw it out and they get the gift card for that day. Then for every lesson that we do, if they are in the lesson, participating, we add their name every day, to the list may attend. At the end we will draw three gift cards and they will be bigger amounts and they will win that. They have to complete the program to get the bigger gift card amounts. Those are kind of just some ways. We also do some smaller group settings, like kids in foster care or juvenile detention centers. We might do some gift bags or swag bags or whatever you want to call them, where we'll do some granola bars and water, we'll provide resources and some fun giveaways and things like that. Then handwritten notes from our educators to each student. So they feel like it's more personalized. We do that to get them to participate. This has definitely been a learning curve and we are still learning. We tried very, very hard to come up with solutions to any obstacles that we would encounter and still encountered obstacles. But one of the big things too, with getting youth engagement is you have to have a platform that lets you be really engaging. We use a website/app called Nearpod. And some of you may be a part of it, some of you maybe have it. But it's super engaging with the youth. For us, because we're in the school system, we can not make them turn on their camera. It is not allowed. To keep that engagement up and to know if they're actually participating, Nearpod is really good, because they they'll do polls and quizzes. We can do games. There's like a true and false game that we do, that's in Love Notes, but it's just a true and false question. But instead, we turn it into a game where they get to pick these fun characters like zombies. It's a theme, so they can pick zombies if it's Halloween. We did a Christmas one so they could pick like snowman or Santa Claus, stuff like that. Then they climbed the mountain and whoever wins gets a gift card to the true and false. They can also instead of the Play-Doh activity. We do a draw it function where they can actually draw healthy relationships. They can write poems in the draw function. They can pull images from Google. We ask them to keep it clean, obviously, and things like that. That's how we kind of keep engagement up, since we can't see them. Some of the things, like I said that we learned, is one, really engaged your youth beforehand. We did with the how to get them to participate, but not as much with what activities would engage them. Thankfully, we picked some really good ones. But I think it would probably even be better if we would've had them in the process of setting up the adaptations for virtual implementation. And asking them, "Hey, do you find this fun? Is it engaging? What would you fix? What wouldn't work?" And then also, a big thing to keep in mind is no matter how hard you try, how much money you offer, how many gifts you give them, you're going to have issues with virtual implementation and kids showing up. We have in our state, kids don't even show up for the school. They don't log in to do school work or to complete their schooling. That's a big issue. Just also remember, just because maybe you only taught six youth that day, they're probably telling their friends that information. You're actually reaching more youth by word of mouth than you think you are. Your message is spreading farther than you think it is. And then the last thing, I know that Vicki talked about online forms. We do Google Docs for our online forms. We also have QR codes that the kids can just scan from their computer. It will automatically take them to either resources or fillable forms. It takes them to a Google Doc to do anonymous questions. Because we do anonymous questions, so that way,

they can keep asking those and not do it in the chat function. I think that's pretty much it on those questions.

Shannon Rauh: Wow, thank you so much, Jill. I think you were going to... We're you going to also talk a little bit more about how you did start. You didn't actually do Notes since you're in a rural setting, there was some issues with internet.

Jill Gwilt: Oh, yeah.

Shannon Rauh: Do you want to speak on that?

Jill Gwilt: I'll try to be really quick. One of the big things here is live streaming. Live function takes a lot more internet broadband than doing something recorded. What we did in Nearpod, they have a student paced section. You can actually go and we recorded our program over our PowerPoint slides. Then they can actually click a link to take them to the Nearpod activity that doesn't require as much broadband. They could even do it on their cell phone, if they have cell service. And they complete the activity and the activity gets submitted back to us, so that we can then tell their teachers, "Hey, they did this or they didn't do this." And we can put deadlines on it. And they're also doing like office hours with these, for kids, so they can log on and ask questions or things like that.

Shannon Rauh: Great, thanks. That's a great adaptation that you did. Because you had to look at, you're in a rural area, the broadband is not working well. You're not able to really do live as far as live web, and so doing something different. And it's great that you actually made that adaptation. I really love a lot of the other adaptations that you made, especially to Love Notes like having them form different characters. I liked the zombie one, you mentioned climbing a mountain with the true false questions. That's part of Love Notes. And also, I'm glad that you mentioned the platform. Actually, someone did chat it in the box. Thank you so much, Nearpod, because you actually had to use that platform. You mentioned that the youth are not able to be on camera, so you made those additional adaptations based on what you can and can't do. So, I think some of the examples you gave were really beneficial, and I think they're going to be helpful for some of the other TPP grantees, especially those who work in rural areas. Some of the other things that I liked that you mentioned Jill, and we see a theme here, is those incentives, those gift cards. I love that you mentioned that they change depending on is it a VP? Are you going to give a gift card to the most valuable participant? Can't be themselves. They have to vote for someone else. I thought that was great. Just how you change it up. So, it really does probably keep them engaged because they don't know what's coming. I love that you actually had these different types of gift cards that you're offering to the youth that are participating. I think you mentioned that you use Google Docs as far as how are you are doing everything like your surveys and things like that. Thank you for sharing. I'm not sure if you mentioned this, but I know that you do care packages. I think that's great too, that you put things together for youth. Did you want to speak on that as well?

Jill Gwilt: Yeah, I think I briefly touched on that. We do a two different types. We'll do care packages with like granola bars and water and resources and fun giveaways. But then also, if the teacher lets us know that the kids that we're serving are very high risk and don't even have access to hygiene items, we'll provide shampoos and conditioners and lotions and all that along with some like granola bars and stuff like that. We reached out to the teachers to also see kind of what the kids might need and those smaller groups.

Shannon Rauh: Great. I also remember you speaking about really engaging with the youth at the beginning to ask them like, "What is it that we need to do? How can we engage youth effectively? What's working, what's not?" We want to have the youth voice throughout. So doing that at the beginning, it sounds like that you're trying to do that and to really hear from them from the beginning so that you can make those adaptations throughout. That's another great strategy that I heard you mention as well. Thank you, Jill.

Slide 9

Shannon Rauh: I'm going to now go ahead and go to our last panelist, is Kara. Kara, I'm going to turn it over to you. And the same questions that I addressed with Vicki and Jill, if you could answer those questions. Welcome.

Kara Petrosky: Hi, good afternoon, everyone. My name is Kara Petrosky. I'm from the Boys And Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania. We're located in Pittsburgh. We utilize the Wyman TOP or Teen Outreach Program Curriculum. This one is quite lenghty. In its full glory, it's nine months long, 25 weekly sessions, 12 to 15 curriculum sessions. The unique thing about it is that each of the young people do 20 hours of community service learning, where they design, develop and implement service learning projects. There's three developmental levels to it, building my skills, learning about myself and connecting with others. We operate in after-school programs, including our own afterschool programs with community partners. Our biggest reach is with our school-based partners. Since our spotlight, where we focused on using ed tech tools to increase student engagement and participation virtually, we highlighted Kahoot, Flipgrid, Pear Deck. We've learned a lot of lessons about recruitment and retention. Like I said, even though we're a community-based organization, our highest reach is with our school district. I'm going to focus on building those partnerships and involving stakeholders in the processes. The big thing for us was upfront with our school districts and partners. We offer them the ability to flex and pivot to be able to meet their needs and their restrictions. Whether it's virtual, hybrid, in person, if it changes from week to week, we were able to flex and pivot with them based off of what was going on. In a lot of instances, the students are in school, in person and we remote in virtually. With that said, offering that flexibility. It's also important to speak up when a solution may have not been heard well the first time or maybe not addressed recently. For example, one of our partners, they had a blanket policy from early on in the pandemic, that there was no outsider providers allowed in the building. We were working on a solution for our instructor to remote in and there were some tech issues with that, which we later resolved. But we talked to the principal and asked about the policy and they were able to reverse that policy and allow our instructor to come in person to the building. When speaking up, it's also important to speak up when it goes with your curriculum developers too. Early on in the pandemic, we were ready to shift and pivot virtually, but we needed our curriculum developer to also flex and pivot

with us and help us provide and create resources and tools, especially when it came to delivering the surveys for the curriculum. We formed a little cohort with other TPP 19 grantees who use TOP. We brought in our project officer and we brought in a representative of Wyman to have very open and honest conversations about what our needs were to best serve our youth. In regards to initial meetings, setting up with partners involving more stakeholders in the beginning, we've learned is very important. In particular, classroom teachers or staff, whoever might be in that space with you while you're delivering the curriculum. The teachers definitely bought into the program, but it took a little bit longer because we didn't involve them earlier on in the process. When the teachers are engaged, the students are more engaged and participate more. We find with some teachers just kind of like hanging out in the background, the students aren't as excited and participate as much. So teacher buy-in or staff buy-in is huge. Involve them earlier on in the process. Be creative, think a little bit outside the box. With our school districts, we push into health classes, that's kind of a normal thing. Social studies classes, advisory. And this year we're actually even pushing into an English class. Think a little bit outside the box on that front. In one school, we'd actually created a class that the students can sign up for as an elective, which combines TOP and robotics. Twice a week, they get TOP, twice a week, they get robotics. I want to emphasize that, because especially now, it's so important to really focus on the social, emotional learning skills and the development and the connecting. That in and of itself is just as if not more important than the content knowledge. That's also reflected in a comment that we got from one of our students, who's actually in our Boys And Girls Clubs, Career Works Program. It's an after-school career development program where we infuse TOP. She said, "Learning about your career and talking about your feelings is a good balance to help you figure out what you want in life. Career Works is finding about your career and talk club helps you talk about life and makes it less stressful." That skill and social emotional combination is really, really important, combining that with content. We also do an afterschool program with one of our school districts and it's actually a four year program. We get to see the young people over the course of four years. My point is, think a little bit outside the box, as far as like creating classes, going into different courses like English or creating one on your own. With TOP, there are those three developmental levels that I talked about. Moving forward, as far as retention, we're working currently with our school district to implement grade wide at three different grade levels. Seventh, ninth, 11th grade. Think about ways that you can serve schools or your partners, over a series of years. Whether it's also bringing in other programs or resources that your organization may offer. We are, at Boys And Girls Clubs, very much focused on equity and inclusion. The pandemic has absolutely brought to the forefront and highlighted the inequities in our country with racial inequities, inequities within the justice system and in the education system. We knew that a lot of communities, a lot of schools in our area, really needed support to serve the youth the best during this time. We began a new partnership with a new school district in August in the middle of a pandemic, where we know that they needed us the most. This particular school district, prior to the pandemic, only had a 50% attendance rate. I say this because, I don't fear, as far as like meeting your attendance numbers or your reach or your goal numbers. We had a very honest conversation about our project officer with that. We said to her like, "Hey, look, this community needs us. We're probably going to not meet our attendance school, but this is where we need to be. We want to continue and grow this partnership." This particular school, we have a very detailed incentive plan involving gift cards. Right now, the instructor is putting together 150 gift bags to hand deliver to the students. We bought the students all earbuds in the school district to help the virtual implementation. With technology, just a small little piece about that, when you're forming your relationships to know beforehand, ask more questions about the schools or the partners resources to virtually connect and connect with the school or partners tech person to assist with any troubleshooting or getting the right equipment. One of our instructors had to get set up with a school email to be able to communicate with the kids. The last little piece that I want to touch on is engaging

families. We wanted to bring families more into the equation. We developed an e-newsletter that we send out quarterly to our families, to let them know what we're doing with what their students are doing. The service learning projects. We involved in our focus groups and surveys as well. But the cool thing is we started doing family trivia nights, where it's an opportunity for families, all those siblings and parents to come. We use Kahoot. It's a fun and interactive game. They get to have fun, learn more about the program and they get to win gift cards on that front as well. We've had three of those so far, and each time we get more and more participants. Those are the strategies that we've been using to really get more students in the program, get more people involved and plan for the future as well.

Shannon Rauh: Wow. Thank you so much, Kara. That is just amazing. Just hearing from you and Vicki and Jill of all these strategies that you have implemented with going virtually, it's just amazing. I like to highlight some of the things that you mentioned. One, I love that you said speak up and you said it several times like. Things can change and especially like working with schools. You mentioned that they weren't allowing any outside folks in to engage with youth. You met with administration and talked about some solutions and made that happen. That's amazing. That's great. I liked that you mentioned that several times to speak up. And also working with the curriculum developer. We all know with all these EBIs is that we have to adapt every one of them because we are virtual. Having those discussions, and you mentioned the open discussions that you had with the developer, and I love that you have a cohort of other TPP grantees, who are also implementing TOP to really have these discussions being honest and communicative and transparent, so that we all can make change happen and make sure that we are giving youth what they need. I really think it's great. I love that you mentioned being creative with the different classrooms, either with the English class or with another type of class. But I love that there's the class that you have created with TOP and robotics. That is amazing. Kudos to you with being that creative and making that happen. Again, mentioning Boys And Girls Club, and really focus on equity and inclusion. I think it's great that you reached out to your community and the youth that you serve. Right, you might not be able to meet the numbers, but you are reaching the community that is needed. I really appreciate that you mentioned that and how you're working with another school district and that you did it in August during the pandemic. So again, thank you for sharing that. You've all mentioned gift cards, you've mentioned other swag bags, you've mentioned other incentives, as far as really recruiting the youth, but then really figuring out ways to engage with them effectively. Thank you so much, Kara for providing that information. Again, we're making notes of all of these amazing strategies. And you can see that a lot of these things are gonna work in community-based organizations, that they're going to work in schools, that they're going to work in rural areas. Hopefully a lot of these strategies you can think about even adapting to your own setting as well.

Slide 10

How have you applied trauma-informed practices to virtual engagement?

Shannon Rauh: I have one more question for the panelists, before we open it up to a full discussion. The last question for all of you is, how have you applied trauma informed practices into recruitment and retention of youth virtually? I'll start with Vicki.

John Karikas: Vicki, you're on mute right now.

Vicki Draeger: That's too bad cause I was being so brilliant. I want to say that one of the first things for a trauma informed approach is that they have to feel safe. I want to add when I said that we really try to encourage the kids to have their cameras on, we don't make them have their cameras on. We can't make them have their cameras on, and we're certainly not going to kick them off if they don't want to put their cameras on. But we encourage it. That's part of feeling safe that they have the choice to have their camera on or to have it off. But that's one of the first principles of trauma-informed care. We want them to feel safe and we want them to feel confident and we do this by letting them know upfront, that they can send us private chats and they can even call us after sessions if necessary. When we were face-to-face they have a little suggestion box, they could put things in. But now they can't do that. Our facilitators are open, honest, and transparent with the youth. That's very important to set up a climate of trustworthiness. Because we are hardly in schools, every now and then there'll be a little small private school that we will be in of primarily African-Americans, but no big public schools in Pinellas County. They just won't let us do it. Because the youth are referred to us by churches or other nonprofits, we already get a little bit of trustworthiness because people they know have referred them to us. And we encourage peer support during our sessions. And the youth satisfaction surveys that we do, show that they really enjoyed the discussions. Because we keep it small, only 10 kids in a group, in a cohort, that facilitates this discussion. We try to empower the youth in our sessions, giving them a voice and encourage them to speak up on issues that are important to them. Again, that's the training of the facilitators that they know how to draw things out. They know what questions and open-ended questions, so the kids don't feel like they're on the spot with a question that they have to have only one answer to. Also, they can learn from one another. And above all our facilitators have been trained to be totally non-judgemental. There's an area on our form where the kids can put in the things that they like and they actually recognize. Sometimes write in there, "We like that it's not judgmental." Ta-da. There you go. Thank you.

Shannon Rauh: Excellent. Thank you, Vicki. Let's go ahead and hear from Jill and then Kara, and then we'll wrap up this piece. Thank you.

Jill Gwilt: Sure. Kind of the same as Vicki was talking, we also really train our educators in trauma informed care. That's probably one of our biggest trainings is trauma informed care. We've done it so much and are so in depth with it that now we actually train on it with some of our school personnel. Not only what does it mean, but how to deescalate situations. How to not re trigger situations or cause more harm, when talking. Because especially Love Notes, for those of you that use it, they do have, it's a lot of great information and I love Love Notes. I'm not trying to sell it to anybody, but it has a lot of information that can cause triggers for a lot of students. Kind of going into that and just using Love Notes for so long. What we did and it helps virtually too is we created a, we don't call them trigger warnings anymore, because we've noticed that even using the word trigger can cause a trigger. Because of the world today. So we just put disclaimers, we don't call them disclaimers, we just literally put statements on the slide and we do a one in the very beginning that just talks about what we're going to be talking about. All the things that we're going to be going through, so they know upfront and aren't surprised by any of the information that we are giving. And let them know that we are here, our

educators are here to talk to them after class. There'll be a chance to do anonymous questions. We also virtually with Nearpod, you can take the student's name away and they can just be a number. We actually ask them in the chat, if they would prefer for their name to be taken away and just be a number so that when they participate, we will know, but their classmates won't know who that is. So it's kind of like anonymous participation to their classmates. The educator can see because they are as the administrator. Thank you. They are the administrator. They can see the names. So we know who to participate and if there's issues we can talk to the teacher. I said, we stay after class. One thing too, is we have someone on staff, she has a degree in counseling and she is our youth resource coordinator. She has little business cards and we just do a QR code or we put up her business card information, her email address. She is actually someone who reaches out to the youth and talks to them one-on-one, so we let them know if they are experiencing any type of trigger. We try not to use that word anymore, but I can't think of another word currently. But any type of trauma for what we say, or they just need to talk to someone and they don't feel comfortable talking to the educator for any reason, we give them, her name's Autumn and we give them her contact information and they can immediately either, email her for right now. She will be getting a Google Number where they can call her as well and reach out to her. And she will do basically risk assessment with them and make sure they get the help that they need. That's kind of how we stay trauma informed. Especially where we can't see the students, it's been a lot harder cause you can read body language and we can't do that. We just try to put a lot of statements and disclaimers on there and let them talk in the chat or we provide resources after every presentation as well. So general health blogs and things like that.

Kara Petrosky: All right. In regards to trauma informed care, what I want to focus on is, our programs, they are not only now providing the necessary support and skill development that our youth need, but it's a time and space for them to connect. Right now that connection is so important. Our young people want to be able to connect with each other and they want to be heard. We focus on elevating youth voice and choice. The youth create their ropes or the guidelines by each cohort at the beginning of each lesson. They have a choice in what lessons that they can do. We do team led sessions. We've created a teen influencer council that helps with program planning and recruitment and marketing. Elevating youth voice, our young people want to be heard. That is so huge in helping them navigate through this difficult time. Going along with what everyone said, creating that safe environment, where they feel open to talk about issues and talk about things and recognizing that sometimes they need a break from talking about those difficult conversations. Talking about COVID, talking about social justice issues. Yes, they want to talk about and have those conversations, but sometimes they need to take a step back from that as well. I want to let you know, it's okay to pause a lesson, if the students need something, want to talk about something else or there's something that happened in the community that they want to address. It's okay to take that time and it's important to take that time. That's how you build those relationships, those trusting relationships and create that safe environment. One thing I want to mention a little an anecdote here from one of our instructors. She was in the middle of a lesson and one of her young people made a comment that she kind of addressed in the lesson, but she reached out to that individual afterward. She wrote an email and she said, "Hi, I just want to make sure that I didn't pass over your comment today too quickly. I agree with you that in this pandemic, having a major impact on people, especially young people who are in the midst of developing themselves and their identity. I mean it, when I say that your school and TOP are here for you as well, if there's anything that you need. The fact that you can identify and share these thoughts and feelings is huge, and I really appreciate your willingness to put yourself out there. I know we don't know each other very well, but I'm extremely impressed by your thoughtfulness and insightful comments. Thank you and have a great week." The young lady responded with one line. She said, "Thank you. It is easy to talk when someone is

willing to listen." So, just listening to our young people, hearing them, letting them know that they are heard and that they are important, is a huge piece and tying all the pieces together in this difficult time.

Shannon Rauh: Wow, thank you, Kara and Jill and Vicki. I love that you gave that anecdote towards the end, Kara. It's easy to talk to someone when they are listening. And all three of you covered those six core principles of trauma-informed care. We all know, as Kara and Jill and Vicki have mentioned, really incorporating those principles in your programs, is going to allow the staff to create that environment in which all you feel safe and supported while attending these TPP programs. Using the words elevate, youth voice, listening to them, actively listening. We know that the word safe is the key. Once a youth feel safe, then all of those other principles can be addressed. Then it gives the opportunity just like the youth did. They were able to reach out, ask questions and the facilitator was able to respond. I want us to actually take that quote, Kara and I'd love to actually get that specific quote from you, because I think it really ties in everything that we're talking about as far as this pandemic and really ensuring that youth voices are heard. So thank you to all three of you.

Slide 11
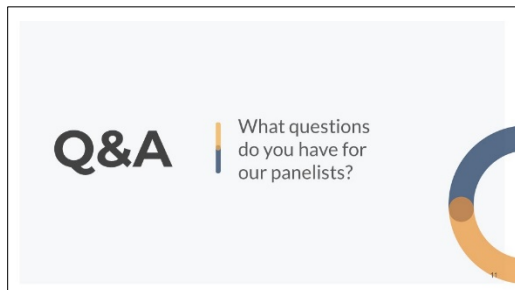
Shannon Rauh: What we're going to do now, is I do want to open it up to questions from all the other participants, before we go into the breakout rooms. I know some questions have come up, so I'm just going to take a moment to see where they are. I'm just going to go through.

Megan Hiltner: Shannon, I've been scanning and I can-

Shannon Rauh: Oh, good. Thank you, Megan.

Megan Hiltner: ... pose this to you and you can share them.

Shannon Rauh: Absolutely.

Megan Hiltner: Thanks to Deb Chilcoat for firing up the chat box. It's awesome. There were some questions about webcams and the back and forth, but I feel like the panel is definitely shared on that and we can discuss in the small group. There was some sharing and clarifying of what the link for Nearpod. That was put in the chat. We'll include that in our follow-up. Here's a question. Oh, I also feel like you addressed the in-person versus virtual attendance. I feel like each panel is kind of shared on that, how things were going. Deb mentioned, she's hearing mixed messages about QR codes. "Some days I'm told it's old-school and not the cool way." What most folks think about QR codes?

Shannon Rauh: And Jill, I think you're the one that spoke about the QR codes?

Jill Gwilt: Yeah.

Shannon Rauh: Go ahead.

Jill Gwilt: I don't know if they're cool or not, honestly. We haven't had any complaints. But it's also just a very simple way of them just holding their phone up and getting the information, whether they happen to click a link or type in something. So I'll have to ask my educators to keep their ears open, to see if they hear kids making fun of us for using QR codes. Maybe we're in West Virginia, we're a little behind the times. We kind of do things a little slower here. I'll have to have our educators listen because I'm not really sure. Like I said, it's just an easy way for us to get information out to the kids in a quick and easy manner. But that's funny. Old school. I didn't think I'd hear that so soon.

Megan Hiltner: And QR codes are used now in restaurants and other places as well. So, Vicki or Kara, do you have anything else to say about QR codes or have you used them?

Vicki Draeger: I haven't used them.

Kara Petrosky: I added it in the chat box. If it works for your population, use them whether they're cool or not.

Shannon Rauh: Exactly. Great. Excellent. Go ahead Megan.

Megan Hiltner: Sorry, Shannon. Here's another question. I feel like Kara, you touched on whether you started implementation with a new partner during COVID. You talked about that new school. But here's a question, "For the grantees that are distributing electronic gift cards, how are you meeting the audit requirements? We'd love to offer e-gift cards as it's much easier and much more efficient, but our finance team needs more info about the audit trail." Anybody want to kind of share what they've learned, tips, anything like that?

Kara Petrosky: From our end at Boys And Girls Clubs, we have an online electronic form that the youth will sign electronically and they have to sign the form before we give them the gift card. It can be done through DocuSign. Sometimes we use Google Docs as well, where you can insert a drawing of a signature. But we email them the form, they sign it, and until we get that signed form back, then they'll get the gift card. And trust me, they will sign it pretty quickly. We've had help from the teachers if we're coming in remote, just reminding to help out with that. We get the signed form first and that works for our auditors.

Shannon Rauh: Great. Megan, I think we have time for maybe one more question.

Megan Hiltner: One more question. All right. Let's do this last one up here regarding developers. "What's been the experience getting the virtual materials or content from them? Have you started from scratch?"

Kara Petrosky: I can answer that question too, because I talked a little bit about working with developers. At the very beginning, there was pushback from the developers. Granted their research has

been for in-person implementation. That was the research. There was some pushback on that. We had to use our voice, right? We had to speak up a little bit. And once we all kind of banded together that our curriculum developer was more on board. They started creating virtual lessons and putting them on our database or our Wyman Connect database for us to be able to use. We had already been implementing virtual lessons on our own, so we shared some of our lessons learned from virtual implementation as they were creating lessons. They also created a mail merge system so that we didn't have to email each individual participant with their ID number to do the surveys. It took a couple of conversations to let them know that this is what we need from you. And then they started on their end, starting developing and posting lessons for virtual implementation.

Shannon Rauh: Great. Jill or Vicki. Do you have anything else to add? And we'll have one more question before we go into our breakout rooms.

Vicki Draeger: Well, I would just say the Dibble Institute with Love Notes, was right on top of working with a virtual. Since the curriculum is delivered primarily through a PowerPoint that worked out really well with screen-sharing. We did not have any problem with Dibble. In fact, they hosted a number of webinars on how to use it virtually.

Jill Gwilt: Same for us with Love Notes and Dibble, they were amazing. Now with our middle school curriculum, not as amazing. They don't really have any virtual tools for Draw The Line. So we created our own PowerPoints and created our own adaptations and just was really open with our project officer and just said, "Hey, there's nothing for them to provide us. They don't have virtual workbooks. This isn't on digital format at all right now." And just was really open with her and showed her our adaptations really aren't too much different from what we'd actually teach. She was okay with what we did and the PowerPoints followed the curriculum.

Shannon Rauh: Right. Well, that's great Jill, because you're still keeping the core components, even though Draw The Line/Respect The Line has not gone it has not done anything virtually yet and just taking it and adapting it, but definitely keeping those core components is key. That's what you've done. Thank you for sharing that. Megan, do you want to ask one more question?

Megan Hiltner: Sure. Last one here, "Do any of you have a formal MOU with Autumn, which is a mental health provider?"

Jill Gwilt: That's me. I just actually answered her. But just for anybody else who's wondering. Autumn is our mental youth resource coordinator that talks one-on-ones to the kids who really need one-on-one services. We do not have any MOU because she actually works for Mission West Virginia and is a THINK employee. We actually wrote her into our grants. She is a part of all of our grants that we have. What we do though, or what Autumn does, is have tons of forms to keep track. But she also has the kids sign a consent to receive services. That's where we kind of get that consent information from, but she's employed for us.

Shannon Rauh: Great. Thank you Jill, for providing that information.

Slide 12
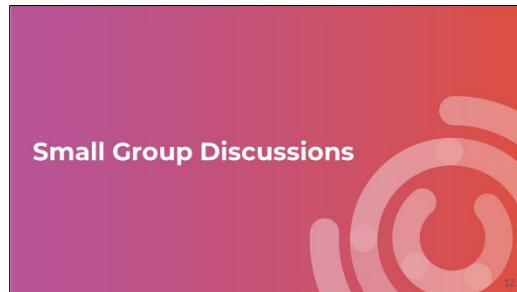
Shannon Rauh: We're on top of the hour, so we just want to be mindful of everyone's time. We want to definitely go into the breakout rooms. We definitely also want to come back as a full group. We're going to actually do around 20, 25 minutes. John, I know you'll monitor that for us. But through the magic transportation powers of Zoom, we are now all going to go into these three breakout rooms and we'll have small group discussions. It's going to give you even more of an opportunity in smaller groups, to ask more questions around recruiting and retaining youth virtually. I'll hand it over to John and he'll put us into these different breakout rooms and we'll see you in about 20, 25 minutes. Thanks everyone.

Slide 13
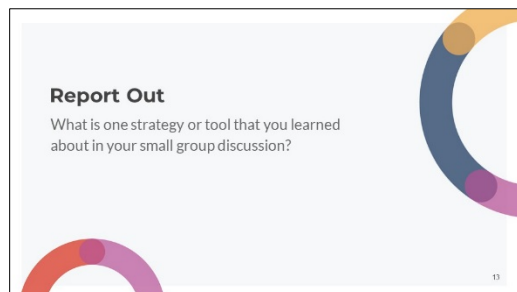
Shannon Rauh: Just waiting for everybody to return.

John Karikas: That should be everyone, Shannon.

Shannon Rauh: Okay, great. Excellent. Wow. Well our breakout group was great. Was very fruitful as far as sharing some ideas and strategies. I'm hoping that the other two breakout rooms, small group discussions, hopefully you were able to get more strategies and tools as far as implementing virtually and especially around recruitment and retention. What I'd like for us to do, so get ready, is that we're we want to hear from all of you, so you're going to use your chat box, but don't hit enter yet. We want all of you to share at least one strategy or tool that you learned, in your small group discussion. I'm going to give everybody about a minute to just type in your response, don't hit enter. When I tell you to hit enter, we'll be able to see all these responses coming in together. The waterfall effect is what it's called. But I'll get everybody about a minute to think about a strategy or tool that you learned in your small group discussion. (silence) All right, I'm going to count down by five, four, three, two, one. Everybody hit enter. Great. Excellent. We see a lot of things popping up. Swag bag, stream, short video, local TV stations, feed, teacher incentives, using Jamboard on Google as another tech tool. I am a fan Jamboards. Ask youth how they prefer to engage and what would help engage others. Food, gift cards, swag, parent Zoom meetings, teacher incentives, and classroom supplies. Someone actually called out

someone, Tracy Atkin, shared information on her tool to capture information on incentive gift cards to youth. Using an elective or programming, absolutely. Public television commercials, Nearpod and family trivia night. Using Jamboard came up again, Group agreements, question boxes, excellent. Using YouTube to reach students. Good using social media. Great way to recruit youth. Learn about being flexible matters and Jamboard. Those are some great, excellent strategies and tools. Thank you for everyone for sharing those. Again, like I said, we're collecting all of this information and we are going to put it all together. Probably like a tip sheet for all of our TPP network, so that folks that were unable to attend today's session, they also will have these resources going forward. One other thing that I just wanted to share is really for retaining young people and promoting active program engagement. We know a lot of the recent research that's been done is that it consistently stresses the importance of positive, respectful, and supportive relationships between youth and staff. We already talked about trauma informed care and using those principles. You can see what the three panelists, Jill, Kara, and Vicki, how passionate they are and how they're positive and respectful and supportive of their youth. I know that even in my breakout room, I saw that with the other participants that attended.

Slide 14

Shannon Rauh: I just want to share some other resources. This will be like at the end of the webinar, like I said, we're going to provide that tip sheet. But we'll also have some additional resources for you and they're here. You'll see it on the slide. All of these, actually, are on max.gov. Some of you have access to max.gov and so you could actually access the resources there as well. But they're just additional, excellent resources that can help you as you're working to implement your programs virtually. I'm going to turn it over to Megan to close this out. I just want to say thank you for everyone and especially thank you for the panelists for this discussion. Over to you, Megan.

Slide 15
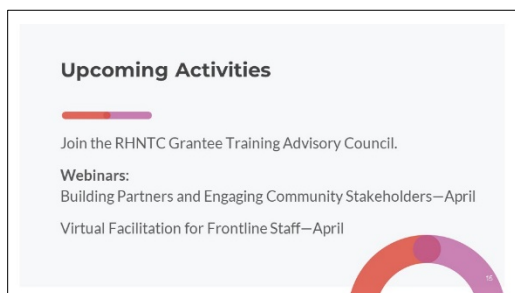
Megan Hiltner: Thanks, Shannon. All right y'all, just a few upcoming reminders of activities we wanted to bring to your attention through the RHNTC. You have one more day to apply, if you want to be on the RHNTC Grantee Training Advisory Council. That application is on rhntc.org. If you're interested in providing support in an advisory role to us and helping us guide our work, we welcome your application there. You can read about the commitment on that site as well. There's a couple of upcoming webinars to look out for. Registration isn't up yet. We're still in the process of figuring those last details out, but there's one going to be on building partnerships and engaging community stakeholders and another in our sort of virtual engagement series, more for frontline staff and around facilitation.

Slide 16
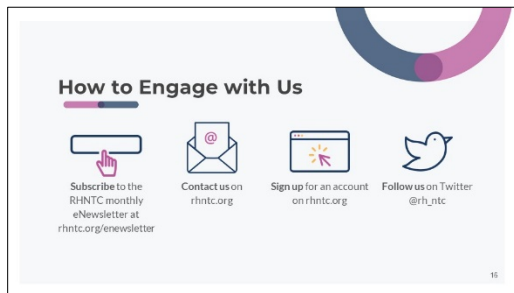
Megan Hiltner: If you are looking for ways to engage with us, you can do that in a few ways. You can subscribe to our newsletter. You can send us an email. You can sign up for an account on rhntc.org, and you can follow us on Twitter, if that's your thing.

Slide 17
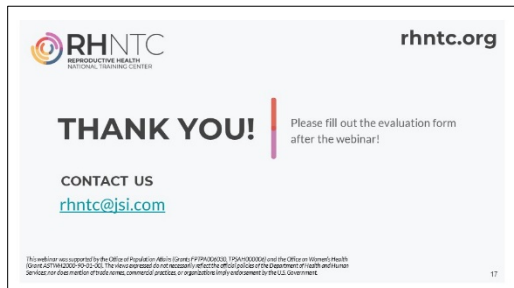
Megan Hiltner: Then lastly, we just want to thank you all for carving out time in your busy schedules to join for this conversation. Again, want to thank our panelists for sharing. We'll have this information available to you in the next few days with slides and recording and stuff, and then we'll be pulling together the tip sheet that may take a little bit longer. If you have an additional question for RHNTC on this topic, please don't hesitate to email us at rhntc@jsi.com and please complete the evaluation we'll be sending out. Hey, thanks Katie May for sending your email address.

Shannon Rauh: And Megan?

Megan Hiltner: Yes.

Shannon Rauh: I'm sorry, Megan, the evaluation link is in the chat box as well.

Megan Hiltner: Oh, awesome. Thank you, Shannon. So yes, evaluation link in the chat box. We really want your feedback. If you take a minute or two and fill that out and give us some feedback, it really informs our future sessions. Just thanks for joining us today. This will conclude our session. Bye everyone.