



**Nia West-Bey**  
Senior Policy Analyst

# Improving Mental Well-being Among Young People through Collaboration and Partnership

Young Minds Matter: Communities Connecting for Well-Being  
October 23, 2019

# About CLASP

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advancing policy solutions for low-income people. For 50 years we have remained committed to advancing policy solutions that work for people who are low-income.



**CLASP**

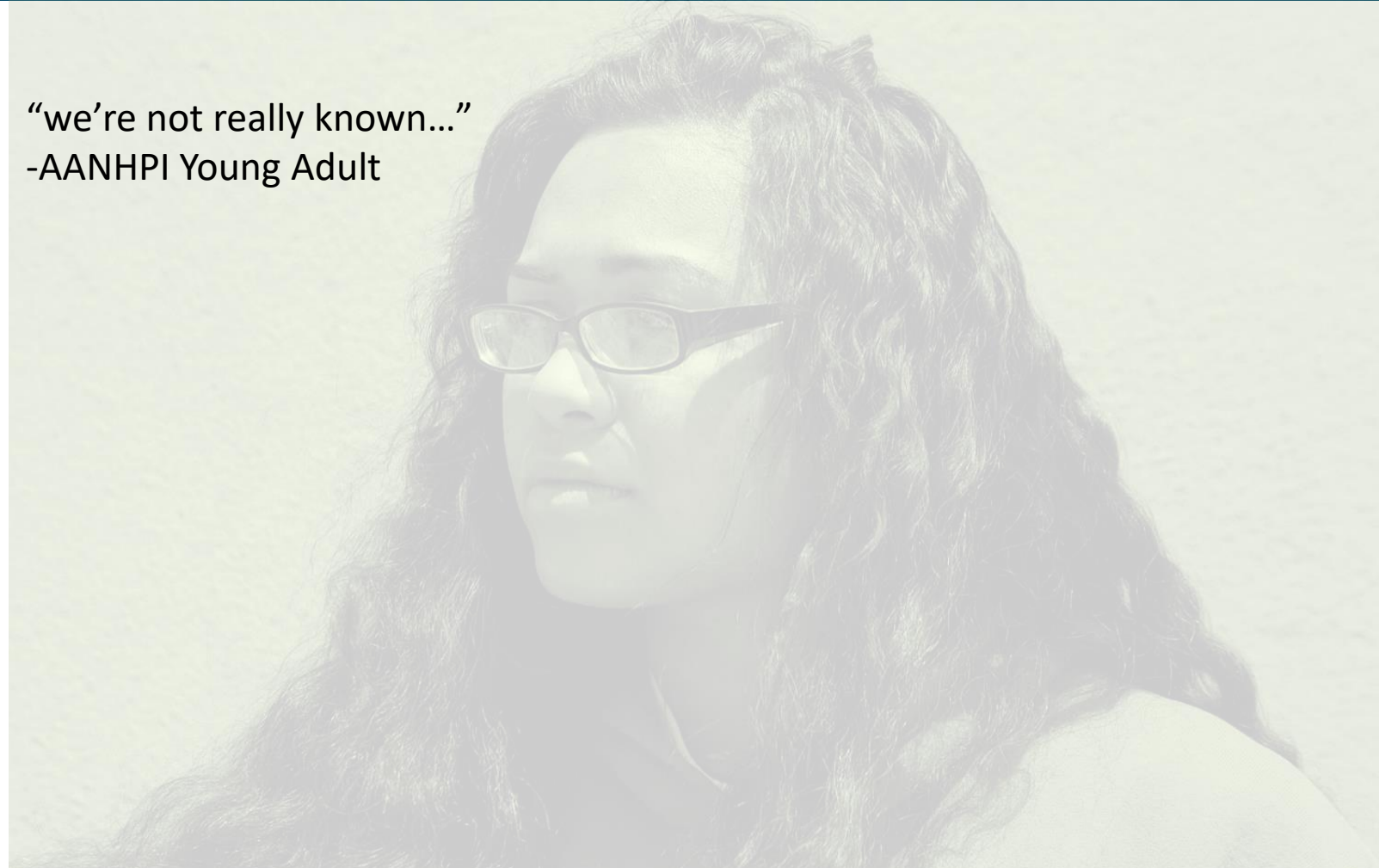
Policy solutions that work for low-income people

# Agenda

- Name-Home-Ancestor
- Overview: Behind the Asterisk\*
  - Historical and Cultural Trauma
  - The role of Cultural Supports
- Policy for Transformed Lives
  - Framework
  - Examples
- Partnership Implications
- Questions
- Final Reflection

# Behind the Asterisk

“we’re not really known...”  
-AANHPI Young Adult



# Overview

- Small communities are those whose numbers are too small in nationally representative data samples to be considered reliable, and therefore often go unreported
- Hard-to-reach communities are those that are likely to be undercounted by conventional sampling methods

# Overview

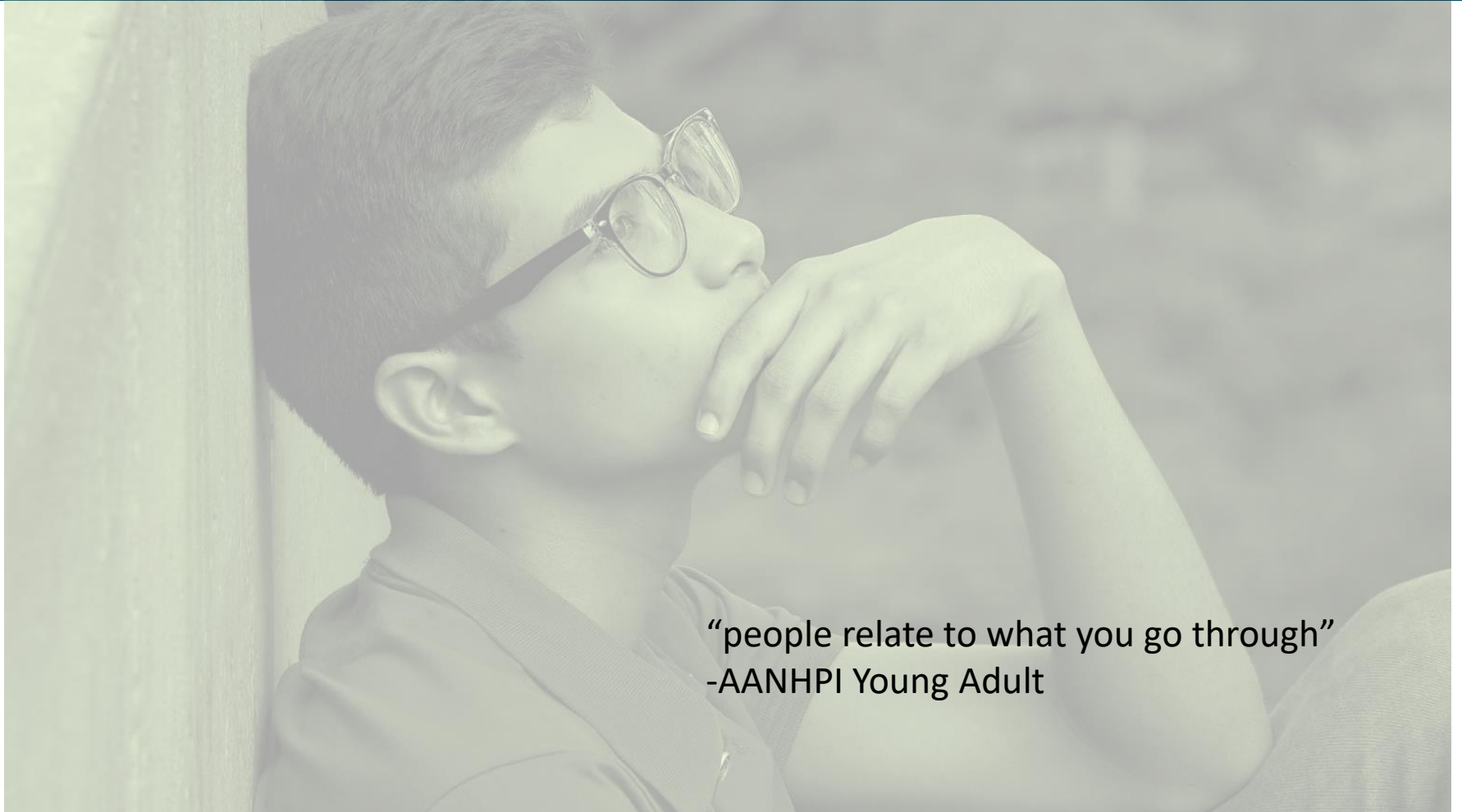
This report includes five main sections:

- **Go throughs, too:** Threats to mental health and perspectives on effective and ineffective supports that align with findings from our earlier work
- **Unique perspectives:** Additional threats to mental health and valued supports uniquely identified by “small and hard to reach” communities.
- **The role of health insurance:** Young adults’ understanding of health insurance and its interaction with mental health care.
- **The meaning of mental health:** Young people’s understanding of mental health and the implications of that meaning.
- **Policy implications and recommendations:** Opportunities to achieve positive, inclusive, and equitable change.

# Overview

- 26 low-income youth and young adults, ages 16-25
- Five focus groups
  - predominantly white rural community;
  - AANHPI participants (2)
  - Native young people living in an urban area
  - racially diverse group of youth experiencing homelessness (four Latino participants, four white participants, one African-American participant)
  - Young people who self-identified as LGBTQ+ were part of two of the five focus groups.
- Eight young women and eighteen young men
- Recruited in partnership with a youth homeless services organization, a workforce development program, youth serving community health center programs, and a youth lead advocacy organization.

# Go-throughs Too



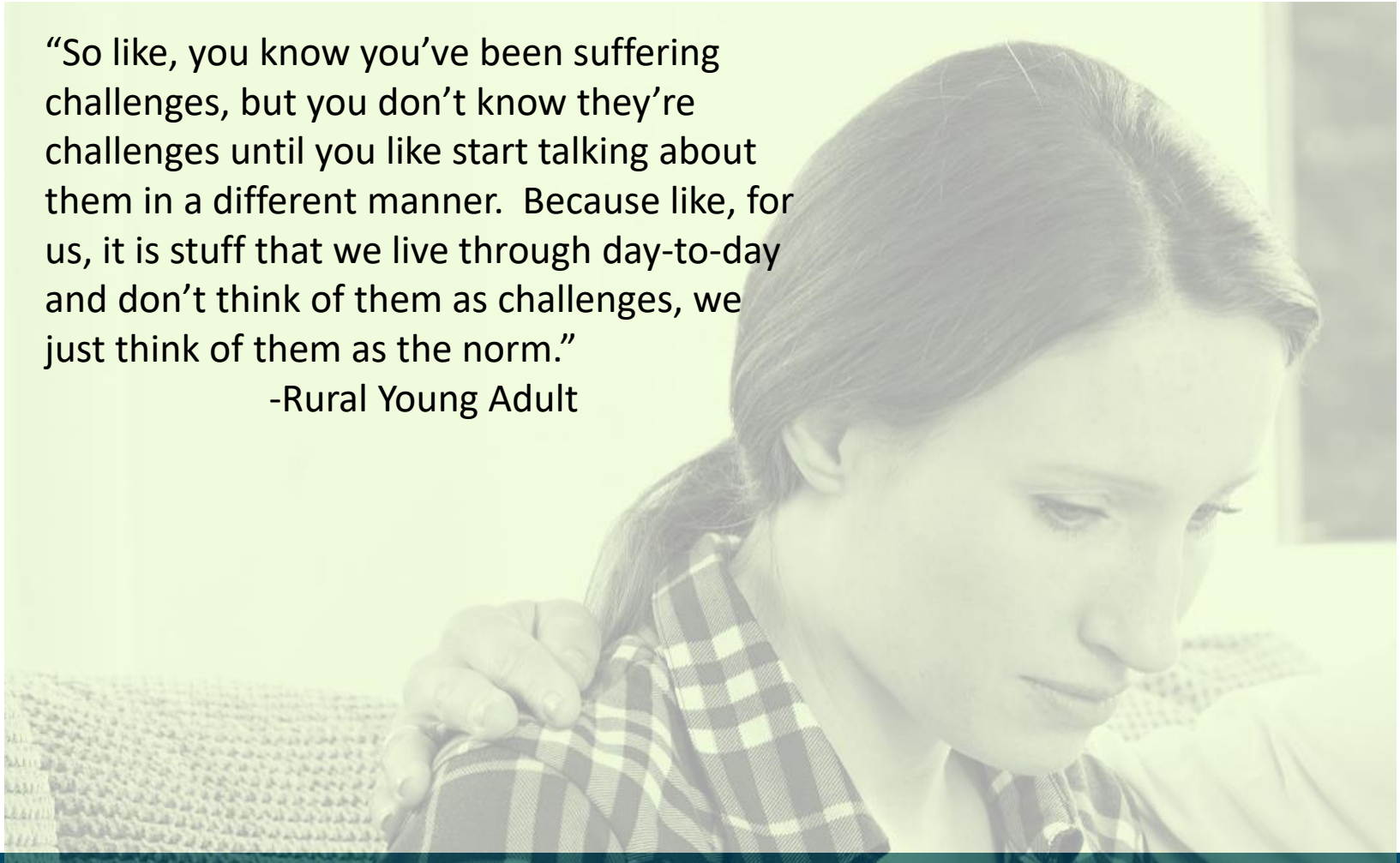
“people relate to what you go through”  
-AANHPI Young Adult



# Unique Perspectives

“So like, you know you’ve been suffering challenges, but you don’t know they’re challenges until you like start talking about them in a different manner. Because like, for us, it is stuff that we live through day-to-day and don’t think of them as challenges, we just think of them as the norm.”

-Rural Young Adult



# Unique Perspectives

- Isolation
- Suicide
- Military/Law Enforcement
- Historical and Cultural Trauma
- The Role of Cultural Supports

# Unique Perspectives

- Historical and Cultural Trauma

“And immediately thought about like, how like the Japanese, and the Americans. Came over to Chuuk, Micronesia and had like a war, and how like a lot of Americans died. A lot of Japanese died. But they forgot about how much of our people died. All the bystanders. How like -- my grandma told me this one story about like how her cousin was kicked out of -- like her cousins and her people were kicked out of the island, so they could use the island for like military use...a base. So that kind of triggered me.”

- **AANHPI young adult**

# Unique Perspectives

- Historical and Cultural Trauma



# Discussion

---

- How do Historical and Cultural Trauma show up in this community?
- What does that mean for collaboration and partnership?

# Unique Perspectives

- The Role of Cultural Supports
  - Arts
  - Cultural Ceremony
  - Youth Culture

# Arts

“And what keeps me, things that distract me from my feelings, you know? It’s me playing my games and creating music. All that is just the only thing. The things that I’m doing is just making me stronger right now. It’s stopped me from like breaking down and crying because of what’s going on with my issue of being homeless.”

-Young Adult Experiencing Homelessness

# Unique Perspectives

- The Role of Cultural Supports
  - Arts
  - Cultural Ceremony
  - Youth Culture



# Cultural Ceremony

“I came here every Thursday. We did culture class, we did dancin’ and they also have activities here for the little kids like making dream catchers, everything like. Just you know, putting Native stuff so they can know their culture.”

-Urban Native Young Adult

“...while we were doing name, home, ancestor, usually we do this in our space with the kids. Part of it is to remember who we are, where we come from.”

-AANHPI Young Adult

# Unique Perspectives

- The Role of Cultural Supports
  - Arts
  - Cultural Ceremony
  - Youth Culture

# Youth Culture

“For me, it’s access to the Internet and the freedom of information that happens because of that, which is why I would say I understand why I am so different than the people around me and like terms to define what exactly I am. And it’s led me to have a bunch of great friends and people I can truly care about, that lives in many different places of the world and have different struggles locally to where they are, but also realize that on a national level we struggle with a lot of the same things.”

- **Rural young adult**

# Discussion

---

- What cultural supports are available to young people in this community?
- How might cultural supports be a part of building collaboration and partnership?

# Policy for Transformed Lives

## Policy for Transformed Lives

Check out  
our new  
report series:

[clasp.org/PTL](https://clasp.org/PTL)

**CLASP**

Policy solutions that work for low-income people



# Project Overview

- Guiding question: **One in five** young adults ages 18-25 living in poverty report serious psychological distress in the past year. What are states and localities across the country doing to support the mental health of these young adults?
- We interviewed over 125 key stakeholders including advocates and staff in Medicaid, Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare, Homelessness, etc in 7 states and localities: NM, MI, OR, MD, Los Angeles, New York City, and Louisville.

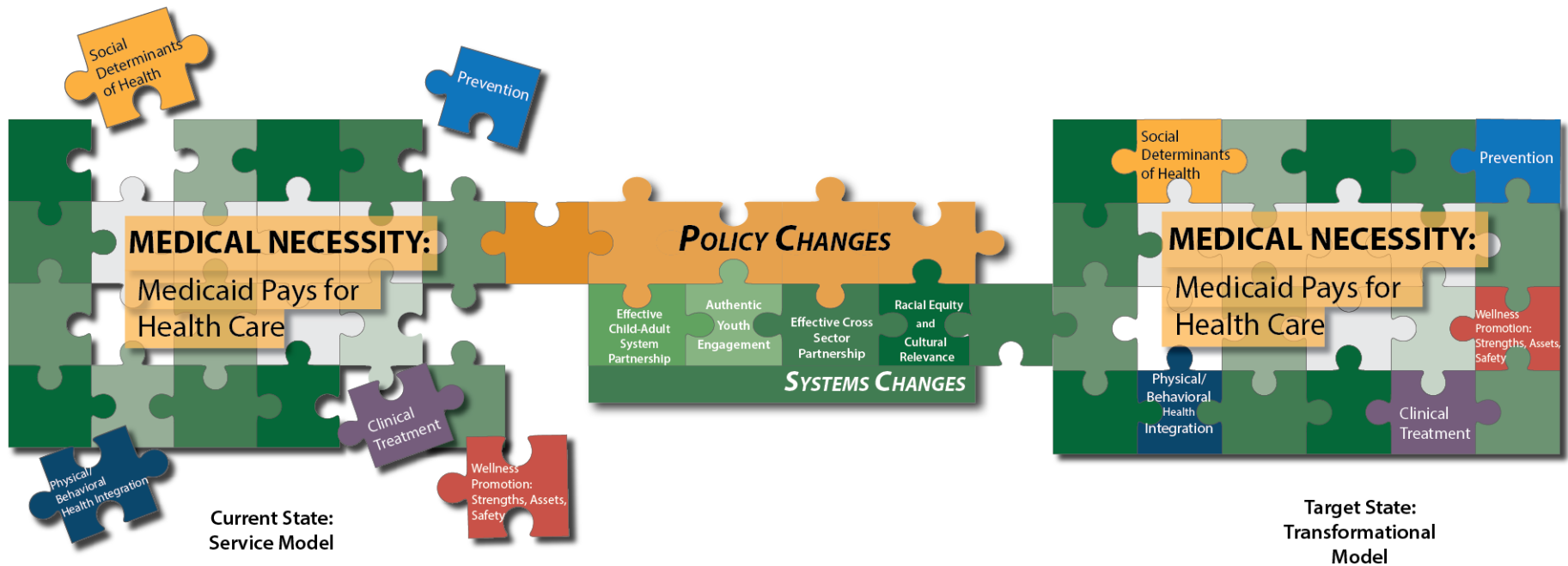
# Quote from Louisville

“Are we a service industry? Or a transformational industry? A service industry is kind of like McDonald’s. How many burgers can we sell, as efficiently as possible, provide a quality product so people keep coming back. You know, when you have a line at the cashier, how do you move them quickly and efficiently through. And you’re really measuring your success by the number of burgers you sell. Or whatever you want to sell. We do a lot of that, out of necessity. We have to bill for services, so we capture time, we bill in increments of 15 minutes. We capture services. Whether it’s an individual service, or a family-based service, or a group therapy service, or in Kentucky we do collateral services which are with teachers and so forth. And then we capture all of that and we measure it ... All that’s great for service industries. **But how would we have to change if we were in the business of transforming lives?** Cause that’s what we really signed up for.”

-Ron Van Treuren, Louisville

# Guiding Framework

## Guiding Framework: Youth/Young Adult Mental Health



**Transformational Goal:** Push the boundaries of how healthcare is defined to include innovative frameworks that are critical to supporting youth/young adults with low incomes.



# Opportunities

- Policy change that expands the boundaries of healthcare
  - Integrated physical and behavioral health
  - Social determinants of health (SDOH)
  - Prevention, at both the individual and community level
  - Wellness promotion focused on strengths, assets, and safety

# Wellness: Strengths, Assets, Safety

## Mental Health *Defined*

Go-Throughs to Get Through: Low-Income Young Adults and Mental Health

CLASP

#GoThroughs2GetThrough

### How do young adults define mental health?

Mental health is defined by strengths, not problems. Young adults shared an affirmative vision of wellness that includes positive attributes, behaviors, and values.

*"Things gonna get better. You feel me?"*

*-Rural Focus Group Participant*



Urban and Rural



Urban



Rural



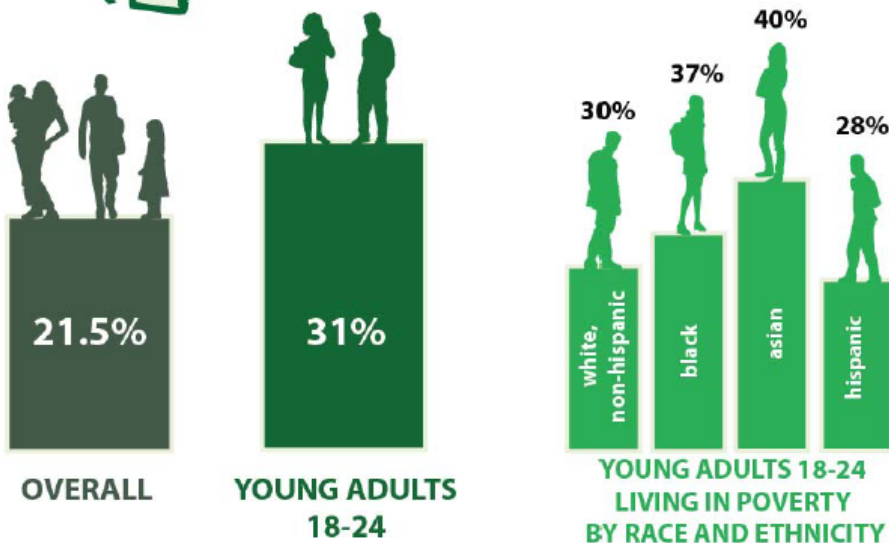


LOS ANGELES

# Los Angeles, CA



## Poverty rates in Los Angeles, CA



### Local Context

Los Angeles has a long history of providing mental health services to the underinsured and uninsured by drawing on public-private partnerships and innovative funding streams:

- California received CMS approval to begin early Medicaid expansion in 2010. The state created a county-based coverage expansion program, the Low-Income Health Program (LIHP). In Los Angeles County, 129,813 new individuals enrolled in LIHP by the end of 2013. When ACA coverage expansion began in 2014, those covered through LIHP were auto-enrolled in Medi-Cal or transferred to Covered California, the state's ACA health care marketplace.
- Los Angeles County is considered a "provider" county, as it directly owns and operates inpatient hospitals and clinics, and provides health care coverage to a much broader group of people than is required. It also relies heavily on contracted clinics, particularly for individuals under 21. The Los Angeles County Department of Health is the second largest municipal health system in the nation, with 19 health centers, four hospitals, and partnerships with many community-based clinics.



LOS ANGELES

# Los Angeles, CA



- GRYD supports positive activities that build leadership skills and community pride
- Young people fundraise, manage, and plan an annual youth festival along with engaging in service projects focused on improving the community
- Ensuring young people's safety and connecting them to positive activities is viewed as a central component of GRYD's work

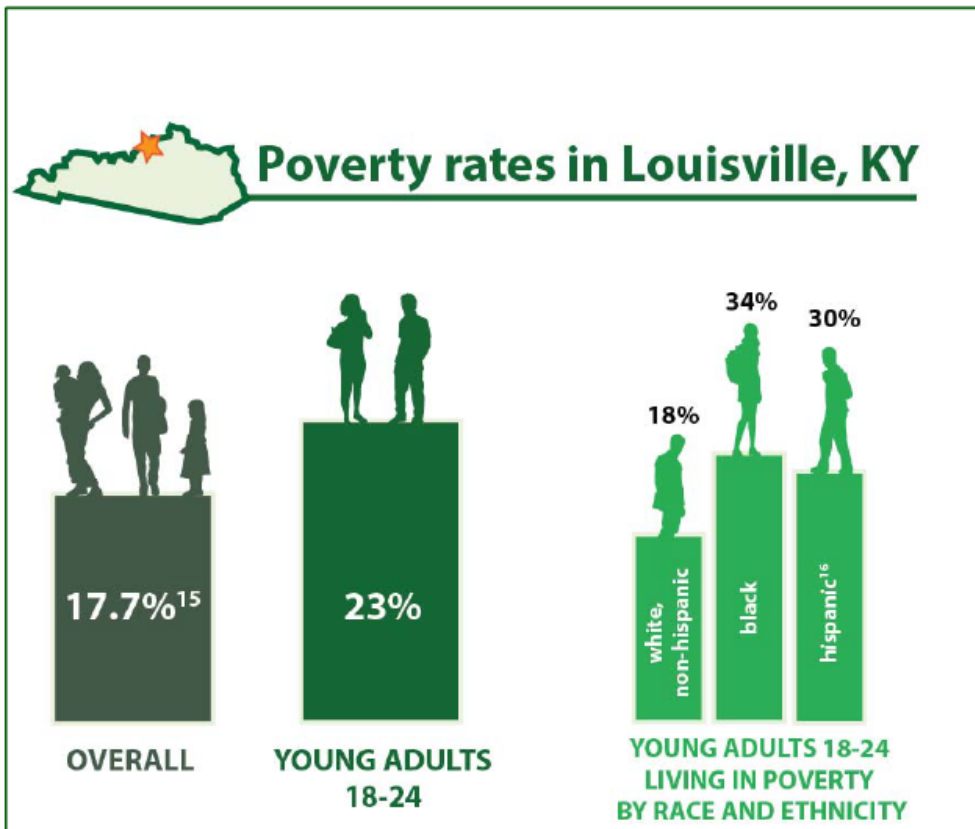
# Opportunities

- Essential Systems Change Strategies
  - Authentically engage young people as partners
  - Effectively partner across sectors
  - Effectively partner across adult and child serving systems
  - Apply a racial equity and culturally responsive lens



# Louisville, KY

## Louisville, KY



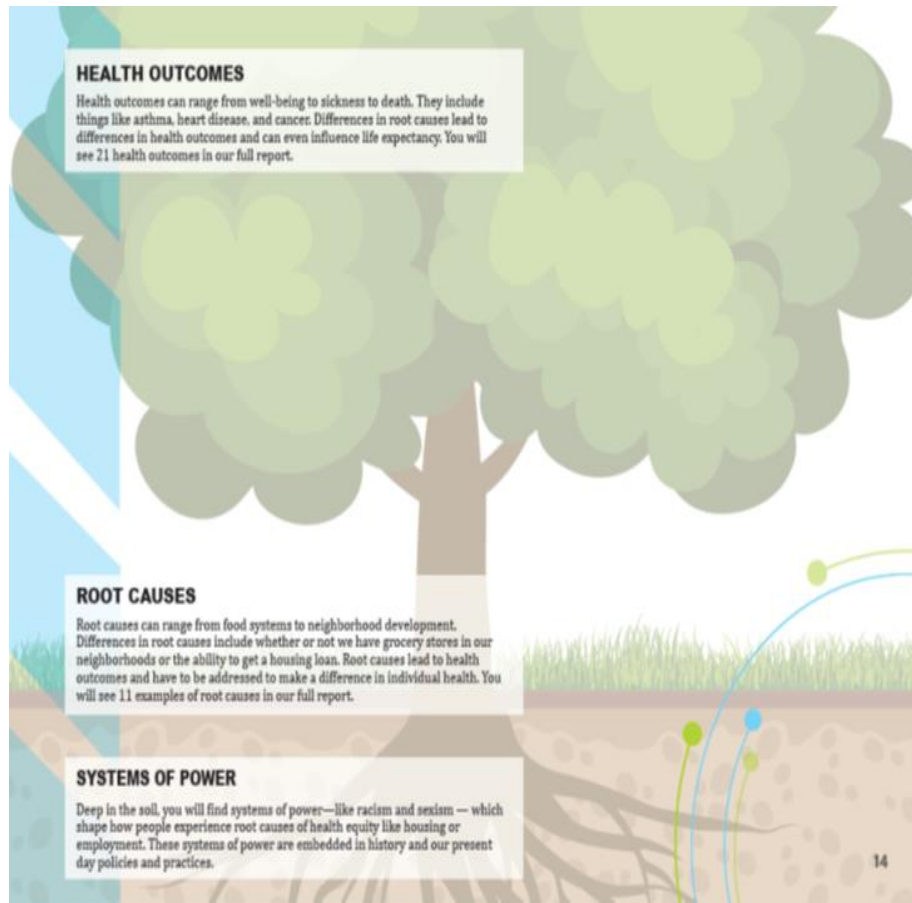
### Local Context

Louisville's history of commitment to health equity, strong leadership, and collaboration across youth-serving systems has helped to create a meaningful system of supports for youth and young adults that draw on the strengths of a range of partners.

- Louisville is home to the nation's oldest municipal-level Health Equity Agency
- Medicaid expansion significantly increased coverage and reduced emergency room use
- While CMS approved Kentucky's statewide 1115 waiver permitting work requirements for adults receiving Medicaid, the waiver was blocked on June 29, 2018 by a federal judge.



# Louisville, KY



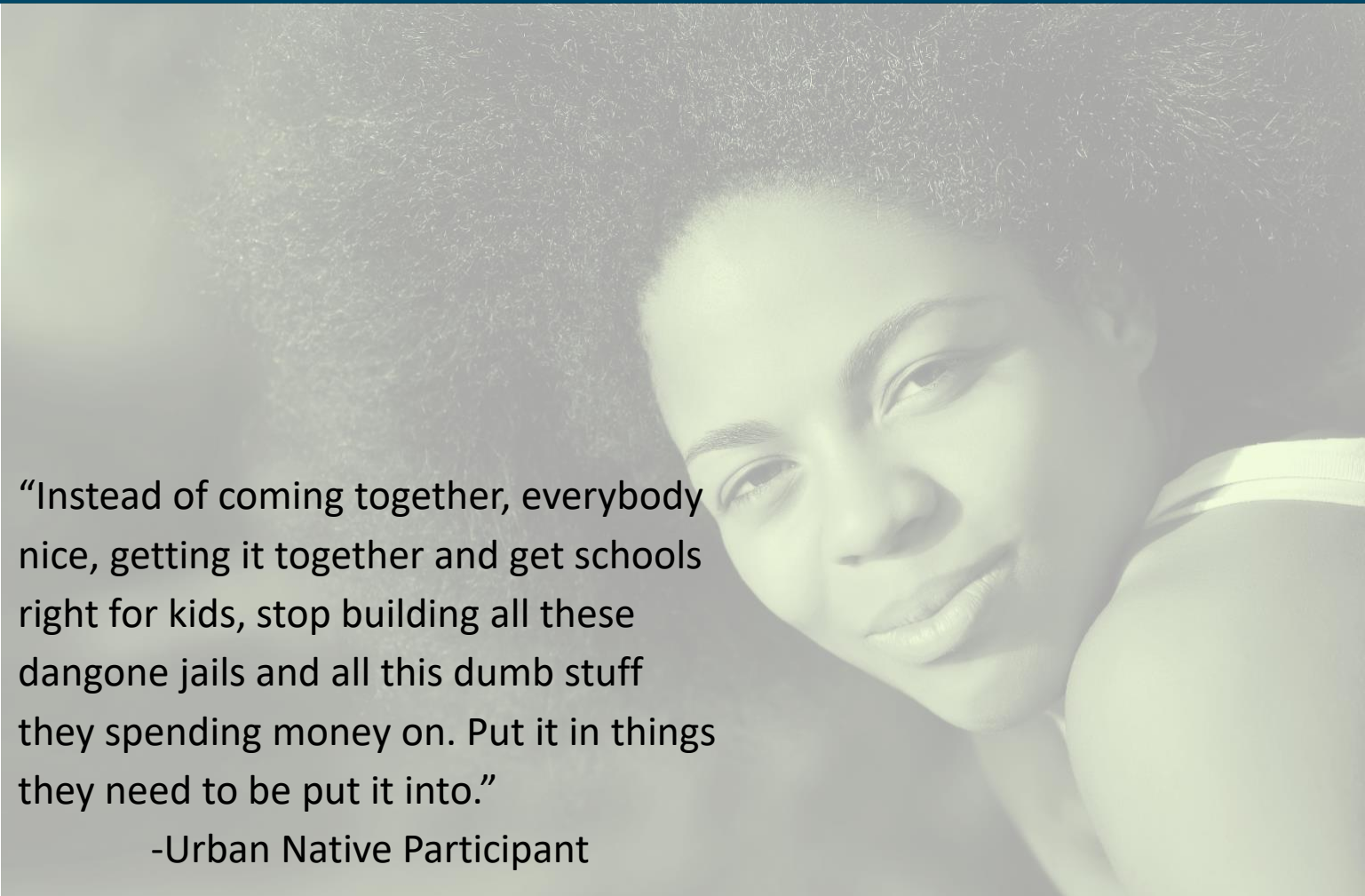
- This tree metaphor shows how the links between health outcomes like heart disease like food systems and neighborhood development to larger ‘isms’ and systems of power.
- This use of the social determinants of health guides the cities approaches to fighting inequity.

# Discussion

- Who is working intentionally to build young people's strengths, assets, and safety in this community?
- Who are some new partners that you could connect with to bring together a focus on wellness and a focus on racial equity?



# Implications



“Instead of coming together, everybody nice, getting it together and get schools right for kids, stop building all these dangone jails and all this dumb stuff they spending money on. Put it in things they need to be put it into.”

-Urban Native Participant

# Partnership Implications

- Collaborations must include impacted populations including people from communities of color, low-income communities, young people, etc. at every stage of the planning and implementation process to disrupt patterns of inequity.

# Partnership Implications

---

- To achieve equity, partners must explicitly consider the unique histories, needs, and experiences of “small and hard to reach” communities in collaborations focused on mental health.

# Questions



(i) Poll is full and no longer accepting responses

# What is one idea that you will carry with you into your partnerships and collaborations to support youth well-being?



 Poll Everywhere

When poll is active, respond at [PollEv.com/niawestbey309](https://PollEv.com/niawestbey309)

Text **NIAWESTBEY309** to **22333** once to join

# What is one idea that you will carry with you into your partnerships and collaborations to support youth well-being?



# Contact Us

---

Nia West-Bey: [nwestbey@clasp.org](mailto:nwestbey@clasp.org)