

DARYL FOX: Good afternoon everyone and welcome to today's webinar, "OVC Materials for Child Victim and Witnesses Support," hosted by the Office for Victims of Crime. This time, it's my pleasure to introduce Sasha Rutizer, Chief of Staff with the Office for Victims of Crime for some welcoming remarks and introductions. Sasha?

SASHA RUTIZER: Thanks, Daryl. And thank you everyone for joining us for today's webinar on what is at least here in the District a very, very gloomy and rainy afternoon, but what turns out to be a perfect afternoon to talk about some really important resources.

So today as we all are this month recognizing Child Abuse Prevention Month. And we're pleased to have you all with us to talk about these very innovative resources that we're calling Child Victims and Witnesses Support Materials. As Daryl mentioned my name is Sasha Rutizer. I'm Chief of Staff here at the Office for Victims of Crime. I had the privilege of coming here and joining this team in the fall of last year. And almost 20 years of being a litigator including most recently with the Department of Justice and a section called Human Rights and Special Prosecutions where I prosecuted human rights violations, international violent crime, and transnational migrant smuggling. And before that, as a Senior Attorney at the National District Attorneys Association in the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse, and also as a former active duty Army Officer in the Judge Advocate General's Corps where I both prosecuted and defended sexual and other violent offenses. And all that time what I have learned is that a prepared witness is a better witness. And preparing children for what is probably the most grownup of settings is particularly challenging and uniquely important.

I'm looking forward to the remarks of our guests today. For starters, Chris Newlin from the National Children's Advocacy Center and Suamhirs Piraino-Guzman from King County Department of Community and Health and Human Services who will underscore the importance behind the Child Victims and Witnesses Support Materials. We're also going to hear from Bethany Case from the Office of Justice Programs and Kathryn Ford from the Center for Court Innovation about the process that led to the development of these important tools.

As you all know, children are some of the most vulnerable members of our society. They can be victims of or witnesses to violence, abuse and other crimes, including domestic violence, community violence, physical assault, sexual assault, partial sexual exploitation, and child maltreatment. According to the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence, 60% of children were reported to have experienced at least one direct victimization or witnessed violent victimization in the previous year. These

exposures to violence, crime, and abuse often require children to encounter and navigate the criminal justice and perhaps child welfare systems.

As you know, justice systems and—justice systems are generally adult-oriented, and children, as we know, are not little adults. These systems are neither tailored for the unique needs of children and adolescents nor are they often able to support children in a way that makes them feel respected and empowered. As a result, children may view the justice system as overwhelming and confusing and shut down. They may feel disregarded or flustered when decisions are made about their cases without their participation. Many may feel helpless and as those are forced to participate without a choice of voice for any agency. The system can also be incredibly intrusive and overwhelming. Balancing the constitutional rights of every defendant against the unique needs of young children requires care. Child victims and witnesses are often asked to recount the most sensitive, traumatizing experiences of their lives with multiple adult strangers and multiple times.

Justice system participation as a victim or witness can be distressing and even re-traumatizing at times. Research indicates that these effects can be mitigated if appropriate support and preparation is provided to the child. A prepared witness is a better witness. Twenty-five years ago OVC—excuse me. Twenty-five years ago OVC recognized this need and developed materials to prepare and support children going to federal court. Now some of you may remember possibly even use the materials called “B.J. Goes to Court.” In fact, you may be even using them today because that’s what we have available. But about five years ago, our communications team conducted an analysis of OVC’s most commonly requested publication. And even after 20 years, “B.J. Goes to Court” was still at the top of the list, because that’s what was available.

Bethany Case, who you’re going to hear from today, former colleague from OVC, approached OVC leadership with a proposal to update and expand these much used and much needed materials. Now, ultimately, a competitive award was made to the Center for Court Innovation to create support materials for child victims and witnesses that are trauma-informed and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for children, their caregivers, and the justice system personnel that supports them.

So on behalf of Kris Rose, the Director of OVC, I want to take a moment to recognize the contributions in leadership with Bethany, our colleague, also Lindsay Waldrop, who took the baton from Bethany once Bethany departed OVC. These products would not have come to fruition without their energy, expertise, and passion on this topic.

Now, based on the input of national experts and lived experience experts, the child victims and witness support materials we're highlighting today normalize and validate children's feelings and experiences. They teach healthy coping and resilience building skills. They explain the roles of the many justice system and child welfare practitioners with whom children may interact. They provide tips on how to deal with nerves when testifying and they inform children of their rights as crime victims or witnesses. The materials have been developed for three different age groups, ages two to six, seven through twelve, and thirteen through eighteen. And they use illustrative narratives between child and youth characters to explain how the justice and child welfare systems work in child friendly, developmentally appropriate ways. One of the priorities of OVC Director Kris Rose is access to justice. And we're very pleased that these materials have been translated into five additional languages. And in January, OVC published supplemental materials specific to the needs of young trafficking victims, all of which are already available for download on the OVC website. And perhaps you joined us for that release webinar.

We're so pleased that the response the original materials were published in June of 2021, and between June and September of 2021—between June and September of 2021, tweets relating to these materials garnered more than 17,000 impressions, Facebook posts received over 10,000 impressions, the OVC webpage where this information can be found received nearly 15,000 unique page views. So public interest for these critical needs/resources continues to grow and grow. And we're certain that after today we'll see those numbers increase. And what that tells us is that there's a critical need for resources developed for children and youth and trauma, not just about children and youth and trauma.

We hope that parents, caregivers, and justice system practitioners such as law enforcement, prosecutors, and defense attorneys, victim advocates, child welfare workers, and mental health professionals will use these materials to facilitate effective and trauma-informed support for child victims and witnesses involved in criminal and child welfare cases in various justice system settings. We appreciate the contributions of the Center for Court Innovation and the Center for Urban Pedagogy. In addition to the countless stakeholders, survivors, and families that worked with us to develop these materials. I thank you all again for your time and for all that you do.

So the first thing I'm going to do is introduce you all to Bethany Case, who I gave you just a brief introduction to. So Bethany is by training and background a social worker who hails from Louisiana, where she worked with children and families early in her career. She's been with DOJ for more than 13 years. She started with us in the Office for Victims of Crime where she led the charge to establish many of our materials and

programs that support young victims. She's now working in our Office of the Assistant Attorney General in support of DOJ's new Grants Management System, JustGrants. So with that, Bethany, I turn it over to you.

BETHANY CASE: Hi, Sasha. Thank you so much for that introduction. And I'm so pleased to be with all of you here today. I know we all share this passion for working with kids and families. And I just can't describe to you how excited I am. So my colleagues that know me know that when I get excited I go a little off the rails. So I'm going to be sticking very strictly to my talking points, I assure you, because we have some great speakers coming up here.

So as Sasha mentioned in her opening remarks, OVC has had a long-standing commitment to supporting our youngest victims. And the inspiration for this particular project came from a convergence of three of our OVC resources. So I want to highlight that, just go over that very quickly for you.

First are with our release of the "Through Our Eyes" public awareness series that includes videos, resource guides, and videos. When we released those—we were a bit taken aback by the demand for these and watched as the YouTube views grew every day. If you haven't seen them yet, please check them out.

Second was OVC's blueprint for the field Vision 21 that declared that we should all be working towards a criminal justice system in which all victims feel empowered, or well-informed, are able to make informed decisions about their participation, and are treated with compassion and respect. So these got us thinking, what more could we do to support our youngest victims?

As we were having discussions and doing research, we learned of an older OVC resource. I myself had not been that familiar with it. Sasha used it in court, for preparing witnesses. But it's called "BJ Goes to Court." And we learned that still, as Sasha mentioned, after more than 20 years, our resource center continued to get requests for these materials. So it was at this point that we realized we have resources about young victims, for professionals who work with them. But we're overlooking resources for young victims themselves. Next slide, please.

So once we realized we really needed to focus on materials for children and youth, we began to recognize the timing was really opportune. Collectively, our systems responses to young victims have improved significantly over the recent decades. We now have this foundational recognition that we must ground our responses in a trauma-informed approach. And we've learned strategies to reduce re-traumatization and

reduce the overall stress that can accompany system involvement. We were presented with an opportunity to model what works, what helps, and what is responsive to the needs of children developmentally and emotionally. Next slide, please.

We also have the great opportunity to represent the diversity of victims so that children and youth could identify with the characters and these materials across ages, identities, races, ethnicities. Next slide, please.

And so we set out in 2016 with the Center for Court Innovation leading our larger project team. You'll hear from them a little bit later. Our approach was very intentional and methodical, because we were so committed to developing materials that really reflected the needs and experiences of young victims. Our approach at a high level as shown here on this slide, so on these six bullets, and I'm going to spend some time taking you through each of these very quickly. Very briefly. Next slide, please.

So the team formed a group of stakeholders to help speak on behalf of and represent all types of young victims. You can see here many of our stakeholders who represent local and national experts as well as lived experience. And this team was involved in every single stage of the project, which I know Chris Newlin can attest to. I believe that his organization was part of this group as well. Next slide, please.

So the team then conducted an extensive needs assessment to identify what resources already existed and where exactly gaps might exist. And we knew it was important to recognize and learn from all of the great work already out there at the local, state, and tribal levels. There was also an absence of materials that were more generalized and reflective of the needs of children and youth, no matter their victimization experiences or locality. Next slide, please.

Then we pivoted to the really fun part. At least I thought that was the—that was the really fun part, storyboarding and development of the actual content. And this was when some of the abstract conversations that we had been having really started to become more visual and concrete. It was both exciting and really challenging because it pushed us to explain the complexities of the criminal justice system in very basic and relatable ways. And it pushed us to experience these events as a child would and then be sure that the ways that we were conveying these and communicating these were on their level. Next slide, please.

So once the content was established, the team then sought feedback from the types of users who would be using these materials once completed, so children and youth of various ages, caregivers, and practitioners. Project partners and stakeholders also

provided ongoing review and feedback at every single stage. And then feedback was incorporated, of course, absolutely into revised materials. So once user—oh, next slide, please.

Once user feedback was incorporated into the materials, the project sought peer review by experts in various areas. These were individuals with a wealth of experience with children, youth and families. And many of these, most of them were still currently working directly with victims and witnesses every day. Next slide.

And once feedback and updates were reflected in materials, the team worked closely with DOJ to seek approvals and to publish the materials. And we were so thrilled to say that these are—these are published and these are online and accessible for free to you, and have been translated now into five different languages. It's just incredible the reach that we're able to have. And that brings us to where we are today. So I'm going to turn it back over to Sasha. So you can hear from our other great presenters. Thank you so much for having me.

SASHA RUTIZER: Thanks, Bethany. Thanks again for all the work that you've done on this. So it's my pleasure now to introduce Chris Newlin, the Executive Director of the National Children's Advocacy Center. He is responsible for providing leadership and management of the NCAC and participating at national and international training and leadership activities regarding the protection of children. The National Children's Advocacy Center was the first Children's Advocacy Center in the world and provides child abuse prevention and intervention services in Huntsville and Madison County, and also houses NCAC Training Center, the Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center, the NCAC Virtual Training Center, and the child abuse library online. Chris has more than 22 years of experience working in NCAC as a Forensic Interviewer, Victim Advocate, Therapist, Clinical Director, and Executive Director. He's provided diverse training related to the Children's Advocacy Center models, the multidisciplinary response to child abuse, the international development of Children's Advocacy Centers, forensic interviewing, best practices in child abuse intervention and response, and additional child maltreatment and exploitation topics in more than 30 countries throughout the world. He's worked in both urban and rural Children's Advocacy Centers, he received his master's in School of Psychology from the University of Central Arkansas. He's a licensed professional counselor and has completed coursework at the Harvard University Business School executive education program. Chris, it's up to you.

CHRIS NEWLIN: Thank you very much Sasha, I appreciate the opportunity to participate with all of you today. And it's an honor to be with colleagues who are of like mind looking out for the best interest of children. Before I share any comments about

the materials, I would like to let you know that—I'll just thank OVC for taking a leadership role in this work. You know, it's something that is definitely needed in my opinion. It's something that will have a returning value for lots of professionals that I'll be talking about in some of my comments, but these materials really do need to be updated. And I also want to applaud especially how the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion were very front and center in the development of these materials because all children need to be able to see themselves in these materials. These are not just for majority populations, these are for all children. And so I really appreciate the approach and the intent that OVC took on in that regards.

So working at a Children's Advocacy Center, I have my own kind of unique perspective on some of this work. You know, if you think about the entire Children's Advocacy Center model, it was developed with the concept that traditional methods of intervening in cases of child abuse were ineffective when we were talking about child victims. You know, we had unfortunate situations where children were re-traumatized by a system that should be there to care for them. And that's what led to the multidisciplinary response that we see at the—conducted at Children's Advocacy Centers. And that approach is about coordinating between the various professionals, making sure we're using trauma-informed approaches and materials, putting children in the best scenario where they can show their true capabilities for talking about what happened to them, being able to receive appropriate medical services and being able to receive evidence-based treatments so that they can heal from this experience, and recognizing that they're not the same.

Now Sasha used some words earlier in the webinar that I think are very, very important and Bud Cramer first shuttered those words back in the early 1980s. And that is that children are not little adults, they are children, and their developmental status does not prepare them to participate in the criminal justice system as many adults would. Further the—in the criminal justice system, or more broadly in the entire court system, because, you know, there's also civil court, that children oftentimes experience, we know that those systems were not designed with children's best interests in, you know, in mind, they were designed to assure that individuals had the rights, you know, that their rights were being protected, especially focusing on those who have been accused of a crime. But the children who may be witnesses in cases were not a fourth—a primary focus when developing our criminal justice system. And as Bud Cramer said, if we truly want to show that we're serious about addressing the issue of child sexual abuse or other forms of maltreatment, my edit, then we must redesign these systems that, you know, were—to better suit the needs of children and to provide them the support that they need.

And so I really see this project, in many ways is a continuation of the Children's Advocacy Center model, where we provide a child-friendly setting, you know, for children to have forensic interviews, and victim advocacy, and evidence based therapy, and medical services. But when those cases actually go to court, whether they'd be an—a juvenile or family court where Child Protective Services may be having a case reviewed by a judge, or in the event that they are in a criminal court, these materials are comprehensive and have application in both of those settings. And across—as Sasha mentioned, various ages and various ethnicity. So we really can utilize the materials that will really work for each individual child and make sure that we're doing our best to prepare them.

Now, I've worked in Children's Advocacy Centers for a long, long time. And having worked with lots, and lots, and lots of families, I can tell you from my direct experience, that one of the things that is the scariest for them, once there's the initial allegation, once they're overwhelmed by being so completely surprised that maybe something happened to my child, and not knowing what to do and coming into the system, once that has happened, and they understand that something has happened, and that we're going to provide these comprehensive services to help them heal, the next big focus comes—or concern for them is really about, is this going to go to court? What's going to happen to court? When's it going to go to court? And you know, a lot of people are not really fully prepared for this, they may just think all—they don't know the difference between grand jury and trial and, you know, preliminary hearings and all that, to them it's just court. And being able to help explain these things is a critical role.

In fact, oftentimes in a lot of our mental health services that we're providing for kids are not only are we addressing the abuse, and any anxiety, and trauma symptoms that they experience as a result of the abuse, we're also preparing them. And if you know anything about trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy, you know, the first step is about psychoeducation. Well, we have that same role, it's about preparing them for court, it's this looming thing, the next thing that's going to happen, how are they going to be treated, and it's a novel situation for kids and families. A lot of our kids and families have never been in a courtroom, they've never seen a courtroom, they don't know what to expect. And, of course, we'll do trial, you know, preparation before they go to court. But what is even better is as they're having any anxiety, we can start introducing and utilizing these materials to help educate them and expose them to it. So the first time they go to the actual courthouse, they have an idea of what to expect, what to predict and who better to be able to provide some of this support to children and families than a therapist that they're working with on a regular basis. They've developed a relationship, they have a, you know, a degree of trust and that person can be a real sense of support

for the children and families as they are pursuing this whole experience in the criminal justice system.

You know, this is about trauma-informed care. And I think that without utilizing materials such as this, we are really not necessarily setting our kids up for the best experience that they may have in this very trying and difficult environment. In fact, one of our local prosecutors that we work with is very clear in recognizing that I can tell the children who have actually received evidence-based mental health services at the Children's Advocacy Center because they are much better prepared to participate as witness, they're much more capable of talking about this. And if we really care about children and reducing their trauma symptoms, being able to help prepare them for testifying in court is going to be really, really important because that can really drive a lot of their concerns.

And I want to reiterate that one of the really valuable things here, and I know we've talked about the criminal justice system, is that these materials have been developed, there's a diversity of materials that not only focus on criminal cases where children may be testifying, but also on the civil side and Child Protective Services cases. So any child in any kind of court situation is going to—there's going to be materials that are relevant, and will be impactful, and what a great resource for therapists to not have to try to describe this all on their own, but to be able to use it as part of this whole system of materials that are available.

And I think also, that if we are truly partnering with all of our multidisciplinary partners, the therapists can actually play a very important and pivotal role in collaboration with Victim Service officers at the—in the Prosecutor's Office, and with prosecutors, because the therapist will have much more of a relationship with the child and the family having been working with them for quite some time. And being able to help serve as a bridge is another trauma-informed approach that we're implementing by utilizing materials and our relationships that we have to help that transition and to help children be able to demonstrate their fullest capabilities when asked to testify in what may be an intimidating and overwhelming setting.

So I just want to thank the Office for Victims of Crime for being able to do this. I see these materials as having application all over the United States. And it was a great pleasure to work with the folks at the Center for Court Innovation and all the other partners. It truly was a multidisciplinary effort to come up with materials that would meet the needs of the diverse children that may benefit from these materials.

And I also want to share with you one final comment I know Sasha is ready to kick me, but is that we've focused on a lot on children, but are—the children's parents are also oftentimes woefully unprepared for what may have happened in court and what to expect in court, and just like with a lot of evidence-based treatment, we're spending a lot of time with the parents, these materials, although they're written and directed for children, do provide the basic information to help parents be prepared, and working with parents with these materials, not just with kids, but also with parents, allows parents to help their children be able to be more prepared as they have daily interactions at their—in their home environment. We can't expect children just only get this for us, so we need to all be on the same page and communicating about this the—you know, what the children may experience.

And I do believe finally that these materials are hopeful, they are optimistic. They're not saying this is going to be the worst thing in the world, I know you're—you—we hope you survive. They are written in such a way that children are projecting success as they go through what may be a challenging process that it turns out and it will be okay. And I think that's important that we give them that hope. So, Sasha, Bethany, Lindsay, everybody else, thank you very much for allowing me to participate—us to participate in this project and also to talk about this during Child Abuse Prevention Month. So thank you very much.

SASHA RUTIZER: Thanks, Chris. And thanks for everything you did to help make these materials actually happen. So it is now my distinct privilege to introduce you all to Suamhirs Piraino-Guzman. Suamhirs is the Partnerships Manager in King County, Washington, the Department of Community and Human Health Services. So Suamhirs oversees King County's largest publicly funded behavioral health initiative, the mental health illness and drug dependency tax fund at the King County Department of Community and Health Services. Suamhirs was the Senior Program Coordinator at the International Rescue Committee. He led the Washington internet, he—excuse me, he led the Washington Anti-trafficking Response Network and the Seattle Washington Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking Task Force also known as WashACT. He graduated from the University of California San Diego with a master's in psychology. He has years of experience developing curriculum and providing training, a trauma-informed care, mental health, human trafficking, evidence-based practices, and more to child welfare systems and non-profit organizations across 38 states.

Suamhirs's professional experience also includes direct services to vulnerable youth, program management, policy advocacy around foster care and human trafficking and co-coordination of the national survivor network. As a male survivor and an expert in behavioral psychology Suamhirs has been an active consultant for the Department of

Justice Office for Victims of Crime, a subject matter expert consultant for the Department of Health and Human Services, National Human Trafficking, Training and Technical Assistance Center, and the International Association of Human Trafficking Investigators, and is a member of the National Council for Community Behavioral Health. He was appointed by President Barack Obama to the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, and has worked with the United Nations and Vital Voice of—Vital Voices International to develop curriculum and training on engaging men and gender-based violence initiatives. In 2020 Suamhirs was appointed by the U.N. Attorney General to the U.N. Voluntary Fund for Victims of Contemporary Forms of Slavery and Trafficking, and serves at the pleasure of the U.N. Human Rights Council, a Special Rapporteur on the Labor and Sexual Exploitation of Children, especially boys. So again, it's my pleasure to introduce you all to Suamhirs.

SUAMHIRS PIRAINO-GUZMAN: Sasha, thank you so very much for the introduction. Chris and all the—Bethany, thank you for your interventions and for your hard work for—to making sure that survivors of trafficking are well-informed, educated, and are—know what are the rights and make informed decisions.

I am calling in from Vienna, Austria. I am actually at the—at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for something, my first report as the Special Rapporteur on sexual and labor exploitation of children, especially boys, the first position around the world to look at the victimization of males, especially labor and sexual trafficking. I'm presenting my first report on how conflict in work creates the conditions that foster human trafficking and puts children especially children at risk—a higher risk of human trafficking, and bringing the message from you, from a different part of the world that's being impacted by trauma and challenges. And we are here to talk about trauma and understanding that we're talking about children and that we cannot afford—we cannot afford another generation of children who have experienced trauma, who have lived their trauma, and who have grown up with trauma and [INAUDIBLE] trauma.

One of the most—one of—the most—the biggest strength about these materials to me as a survivor of trafficking was the fact that gave me even 10, 15 years after my trafficking experience a different way to look at my victimization, to look at—to look at what happened to me, to look at how to talk about what happened to me, the uncomfortableness there was to answer all these questions about sexual assault, sexual violence. And the fact that at that time in 2004 when I experienced my trafficking situation in San Diego, California, there wasn't materials to—or there wasn't yet a large understanding of how human trafficking impacts children, especially boys. We have

traditionally not focused or make, I guess, extreme efforts to reach—and strategically reach male survivors of trafficking.

And this publication, I saw that opportunity that people looked like me and spoke like me, even though they were—they were written works I felt them, I understood them. I knew who there were. My son is named Malik, and is one of the names that was used in one of—in these publications and really spoke highly to me, as it relates to my experience. But also, it did something that I think that is the biggest value of this publication, it's helping young children, people in general, to make informed decisions on how to participate and how to engage in their process. We must—we must understand and really fully absorb the fact that this is children's process that they're—seeking justice has to be the children's process. And this publication really informs the child with the ability to say who are these people? What are their roles? What are—who are they to me? What is my role in court? It really creates buying and in the process of going through court and being the witness and talking about what happened to us. Understanding in having buy-in to the process really, really increases our ability to not only engage in the process, but also to sustain long term behavioral change, but also long-term understanding of myself or my place in society.

Understanding the witness support or talking—this publication does something far beyond than just giving children an illustration. But I think it's also the first—one of the first publications and the first sign that we did—we have a criminal justice system, we don't have a victim justice system. And for the first time, we're taken aback in really providing a victim justice system with the ability for them to provide—to understand the process, understand its concept, and really engage with the process. This publication really provided an insight perhaps of a process that often for children whether if they are in foster care, whether if they're in probation, or whatever system they're involved in, often we are—we are forced to be in court but often we are not in court. In creating and understanding my role and who's the judge, and who's the attorneys, what's the—who are all these people really provides us with a—with a unique opportunity to understand our place in that room. Often survivors of trafficking struggle to understand their place in society, understand the place in our—in our country, in our—in our—in court and the services that we provide often given—the fact that we often not see ourselves as victims, but also it takes a long, long time for survivors of trafficking to often really assimilate their trauma and speak their truth.

The biggest strength for me as a male survivor of trafficking is also to start to giving a visual representation to trafficking that does not only impact female identifying bodies, but also that impacts me as a male survivor, and impact other male—boys—impacts boys and male victims all over the world and the United States is no exception.

This publication, my face, my heart, and my language, my understanding of my situation, and giving it a new meaning really came present. Yesterday here in Vienna, we saw the publication of another survivor leader named Laurent Sinclair here in Vienna, where he—where he talked about his process of creating art after really experiencing his trauma and really—finally putting—being able to understand what happened to him and put it in pictures. Some of those pictures were dark, some of them pictures were loud, some of these pictures were happy, some of them are really, really sad. But at the end of the day, Laurent told his story, and he did not need any words. He allowed his story to talk through images and through experiences, and often created a lot more connection between the viewer and the—and the experience of a survivor by really having visual representation. They take us and they put us right in the center, right on the front page, and that shows us the male trafficking, male victims are also have a place in the court system, shows us that male survivors of trafficking are also believed and are also are going to be allowed to be given the space within the court system to seek justice, heal, and recover.

I ask to all of our partners throughout the country, please use this—use these materials. These materials are—you have seen the wonderful people who have put this together with amazing, amazing skills and experiences, but also they were reviewed by survivors, including me, who provided additional contact information and additional perspective to really allow the content to stick. I believe it's truly my experience survivors of trafficking will make informed decisions to participate in that process, participate in their process and seek justice, heal, and recover. This solicitation is the first step to really assimilating the full spectrum of what can happen when we provide education and information to young people. Often we think that we believe that because they are young people, that as adults we know best, that we have lived more than them. The reality, folks, is that we may be experts on resources, but young people, the people in front of you are the experts on their lives. They kept themselves alive without you, without me, without anybody. That type of strength must be celebrated, must be encouraged. And this solicitation is the first step to get us there, to really encourage us to speak our truth, to say what we need to say, in our language that we need to say and say our feelings. And yet be part of the process that we traditionally have kept survivors out of it, or forced them either by engaging in practices that are not appropriate whether, in my case, I was told that if I testify against my trafficker I will be sent back home. Obviously, that didn't happen. I am fortunate, though, to have—to have become a U.S. citizen and have the opportunity I have today. But at that time, what I really needed was my mother, was my family, and that system of support. The publication really brings it back to me in understanding that my mother, even though she was far away, was also part of this process. And to me, I—understanding this through this publication, honestly,

was almost a healing—was a healing situation. Really—I really started to understand kind of her own response to what happened to me. Like Chris mentioned, you know, these resources focus on our experience and young people and our participation in court. Yet, we also need to make—strive to make sure that we are also supporting the family nucleus. We take—we have—we must take an ecological, eco-social—ecological system, or I think it's actual social system. So really looking at the whole community as a whole, really we must provide information education to young people in the court systems, but also we must provide education information before survivors, before people become—experience trafficking, particularly at a time of being at risk over or engage in a risk behaviors or being—or being experienced the system in multiple layers.

Lastly, I would like to share this isn't—this publication, it's an opportunity, not on—not on—not an opportunity to teach young people about their process, but an opportunity to engage people—young people in their process for the first time in a way that is trauma-informed, person-centered, and will lead into long-term behavior modification, but really allowing young people to educate themselves. Truly, truly believe that education and information are the key to helping young people make those informed decisions.

As a provider, as a service provider myself and the work with victims of trafficking, I tend to always try to model positive relationships and positive ways on how can people who have experienced trafficking can reintegrate to our community and participate and fully enjoy the benefits of being part of our community. This publication is the first step through that. It creates also bonding in the relationship between—that's far beyond what a social worker case manager be, but also helps the law—the lawyers on the other side of the table, the judge, the court personnel, and the people who may be sitting in this—in the court to understand the particularly challenges children face when they are experiencing trafficking and they're going through the criminal justice system when they are—when they are told to share their truth and to be witness to their case. Thank you all very much for the opportunity to be here with you all. Please use the publications. This publication really will allow us to do something that have yet to be done, but also puts the faces—all the faces that needs to be—that needs to be shown that potentially could end up in the court—in the court systems. Thank you very much.

SASHA RUTIZER: Thank you, Suamhirs. And thank you so much for reinforcing that trafficking is a form of child abuse. And I just want to mention in the chat that if it's not there already, it will be here in a moment. But we have—in addition to this general child abuse materials that we're covering today, we do have materials specific to trafficking that we recently did put out in coordination and in works with the CCI who Kathryn is about to talk here in a minute. So that's actually a perfect segue to that. So you'll see

that in the chat and you can link on those. And so with that I'm going to introduce you all to Kathryn Ford who's the Director of Child Witness Initiatives at the Center for Court Innovation. The Center for Court Innovation is a nonprofit organization that works to create a fair, effective, and humane justice system through research, training and technical assistance, and implementing and evaluating—and evaluation of—technical—sorry. Through research, training and technical assistance, and implementation and evaluation of innovative justice system and community building practices through dozens of operating programs. The center's Child Witness Materials Project, which is funded by a cooperative agreement with the Office for Victims of Crime, seeks to empower and support child victims and witnesses as they navigate the justice system through the creation of developmentally-appropriate, trauma-informed educational materials about the criminal, legal, and child welfare system. As I mentioned, Kathryn Ford is the Director of Child Witness Initiatives at the Center and oversees the Child Witness Materials Project. So Kathryn is going to talk to us and be our last speaker. And then if you have questions, feel free to drop those in the Q&A, and at the end, I will send those out to the appropriate person to make that response. Thanks. Kathryn.

KATHRYN FORD: Thank you, Sasha, for that introduction. It's wonderful to be with you all today. And I want to thank my fellow speakers and panelists today. It's been a pleasure to learn from your powerful remarks today, and to collaborate with many of you over the course of this project. So Sasha provided a little information about the center. Next slide please.

And as she mentioned, there are three main buckets of our work, and I'm representing a couple of them today. So we have a very robust research team that does justice system and victimization-related research all over the United States, as well as evaluates our operating programs, which number in the dozens. They're mostly throughout the New York City area, but we also have programs in Newark, New Jersey, and in Upstate New York. And some of the most relevant operating programs that we have, one of them is called the Bronx Child Trauma Support Program. And I actually worked there myself for about nine years. It's located at the Bronx District Attorney's Office, so in a prosecutor's office, and provides trauma-focused psychotherapy services—psycho—psychotherapy services, crisis intervention, and court preparation and support for children and adolescents who've—who had experienced violence and victimization, including many of the types of violence and victimization that had been mentioned such as sexual abuse, sexual assault, physical abuse, exposure to intimate partner violence, and witnessing and losing a loved one to homicide. So our work at Bronx Child Trauma Support has really been foundational to the origin story from our—from our end of the Child Witness Materials Project because we've learned so much continually from our partners through that program, our collaborations, and especially from the children and

young people and parents and caregivers that we worked with very closely, sometimes for years at a time, and supporting them in navigating the criminal legal system.

So, in addition, we also have the Strong Starts Court Initiative, which works with babies and toddlers. And family court, they've also assisted with this project, and we have some other operating programs as well that had provided support. In addition, we are a national training and technical assistance provider on a wide range of topics with justice system practitioners from state systems and tribal justice systems, including on violence against women, sexual violence, sex trafficking, child welfare, and family court reform, and crimes against children. So a lot of these elements of our work are really come to—coming together and being represented through this project. Next slide please.

So Bethany provided a really wonderful orientation to the Child Witness Materials Project and to this initiative generally in talking about really the origin story how this whole thing came about. And it was really our honor and pleasure, really one of the biggest honors and pleasures of my career and actually of my life, to take this vision of Bethany and OVC to create these materials and really shepherd the process. Folks at the Center, on my team, and all of our collaborating organizations, as well as with OVC who we collaborated with very closely, shepherding that entire group of folks through these many stages of the process that Bethany outlined earlier to create materials that we really feel very strongly about. And everyone who was involved with this process was very—is very committed to really making sure that we got this right because the need is so acute. And as we've been talking about, these kids and teens are so vulnerable. They've already been through so much. And it's just so important and really a moral imperative that we not cause additional harm through their interaction with these systems, but instead inform them and empower them and support them and validate their feelings throughout that process.

So as a result of the extensive needs assessment that we did, which Bethany talked about, as well as the pilot testing process in our many rounds of consultation and engagement with our partners and stakeholders, we ended up with the package of materials that we have today.

So, of course, we try to be very deliberately—developmentally-appropriate in the materials that we've created. And that means that we've created materials for three age groups, which are ages two to six, ages seven to twelve, and ages thirteen to eighteen. And for each of those age groups, we have a package of materials about the criminal legal system and a package of materials about the child welfare system. And I'll be showing you some examples of illustrations and different components of the materials on my subsequent slides, but just to note that all the illustrations that you've been

seeing throughout the webinar today have been pulled directly from the materials. And that reflect us—folks, have mentioned that we are also very deliberate in terms of diversity and representation of the characters across identities, across race and ethnicity, portraying folks with disabilities, folks who are deaf and hard of hearing, et cetera, throughout, because it was so important that, as was mentioned, all children and families be able to see themselves, their experiences, and their identities reflected in the materials and that they find them relatable.

Speaking of which, the materials are in a narrative style, so, of course, it wouldn't be developmentally-appropriate or effective to portray all this information about these systems in kind of a didactic way or a lecture-based way, so instead we've created stories. We use storytelling, using relatable characters to convey the information. And you'll see that throughout the examples that I provide. And we've taken pains to be developmentally-appropriate and always. So, in terms of the illustrations, the amount and level of detail and text that's provided, even how we're talking about the emotions that a child may experience and how they're interacting with the system and that kind of thing. We've also taken pains to ensure that the materials are trauma-informed in a couple of ways. The materials do not provide any details or descriptions of potentially traumatic events because we certainly wanted to lessen the possibility to the extent possible that a child will be triggered or distressed by the materials, but also we needed to ensure that the stories will be relatable to a child who had experienced any type of violence or victimization. That was really important as well. And as has been mentioned throughout our conversation today, we wanted to make sure that the materials depict—depicted a wide range of feelings and thoughts that children may have about the situation, about their interactions with the justice system, which can be very wide ranging, because we feel like it's really important to validate children's feelings and experiences. And that's really one of the first steps in terms of providing emotional support to children.

And in terms of the topics that we've covered in the materials, and again you'll see this in the examples that I'll be showing you shortly, one of the things that we consistently heard in the needs assessment was that there are just so many adults, there are so many practitioners that suddenly become involved in children's lives, in families' lives, and it's very confusing and overwhelming. And often they don't understand who all these people are, and how they work together, and who shares information with who, and what are the consequences of sharing a certain part of the story with a certain practitioner and not another and that kind of thing. And so one of the really important things to cover is very clear, kid-friendly explanations of who all those practitioners are.

We also cover the rights of child victims and witnesses both in—as a victim witness on a criminal case and as well as their rights when they're interacting with the child welfare system. Again, really thinking about wanting to empower children so they don't feel like the system response is yet another thing that's happening to them or being done to them and they don't understand what's going on, which of course increase—increases their anxiety, and distress, and overwhelm, and the potential for being triggered. So we were very clear about talking about the rights of child victims and witnesses when they're interacting with these systems, again, so they can make informed decisions about their participation and know what kinds of questions to ask, be able to advocate for themselves in terms of what they need, whether it's more information, whether it's specialized supports or services in the community, anything like that.

And we also convey through the narratives the stories as well as through additional sections of the materials, how these systems work. Because even for adults, we know that these systems are very, very confusing and overwhelming. There's often a tremendous amount of misinformation, sometimes from media. So it's really important to provide clear, again, kid-friendly, lay-language explanations for how these systems work, what are the different stages or steps in the process, how long might things take—take so kids know what to expect and again can feel less anxious, and there's a greater sense of predictability which is really helpful especially when one is traumatized.

And, lastly, as you've been seeing in the illustrations, we've incorporated examples of healthy coping strategies throughout the materials because we know that, again, these are children who are likely traumatized, may be very distressed and overwhelmed. So the coping strategies are really critical in teaching additional tools that they can utilize on their own or in collaboration with a caregiver or a practitioner in order to feel more of a sense of control and to feel—help themselves feel better. And the coping strategies also provide natural breaking points in the narratives, when a practitioner or a caregiver can take a break, take a pause, and check in with the child about how they're feeling, answer their questions, and help connect the stories to the child's experience. Next slide please.

So I'm going to provide some examples now from the materials for the different age groups, and again from both the child welfare materials and the criminal legal system materials. So this example is for ages two to six from our booklet for children who are involved with the child welfare system, which is called “Brave Maya.”

A couple important notes here. In addition to the narrative about Maya and her family and their experience of the child welfare system, there is a separate piece that complements the narrative, that talks about children's rights in relation to the child

welfare system and provides the practitioner role information and there is a separate booklet that specifically focuses on removal of children from their family of origin and placement in foster care. We pulled that out to be a separate booklet because many children do not have that experience, and especially for the young children, we didn't want to cause undue distress and fear that that might happen to them if that wasn't part of their experience of the child welfare system. But it's important for everyone to know that that is available so that you can use it with children who are in foster care.

And you'll see on the left, this is a panel from that narrative that shows Maya and her mother going to court to meet with the judge. And on the right, that piece is from the rights and roles booklet and explains the role of a court reporter in child-friendly language. Next slide please.

This piece is from the middle age group, which is ages seven to twelve. This piece is called "I am Isabella." Again, this is from the child welfare materials. And you'll see in terms of developmental appropriateness, that there is more text here, there's greater level of detail, because older children are able to manage that. So the little—for the little kids, the format is like a picture book format, and then for this middle age group, it's more of a comic book format. And then for the teenagers, as you'll see in a moment, it's more of a graphic novel format. And you'll see that the level of detail increases with the increased age of the target audience.

However, an important note is that as you all are aware surely, children's developmental age may be different than their chronological age so practitioners should feel comfortable using whichever materials they feel are the best fit for a given child's needs and their developmental age.

So in this—in these illustrations, you see some of the reflection of the emotional experience of interacting with these systems. You see Isabella's frustration on the left and then her kind of feeling of resignation or perhaps hopelessness in that bottom panel. You also see her engaging in some healthy coping strategies like listening to music and also utilizing folks in her support system. I believe that's her counselor on the bottom in the middle. And on the right is an example of one of the healthy coping strategies, which here we've called the breathing trick, which is teaching a controlled breathing activity, providing step by step instructions. And, again, we encourage that the materials are utilized by children side by side with a supportive adult rather than just being handed to them to use on their own, in order to ensure that appropriate emotional support is available, but also because, as Suamhirs has mentioned, it's just so important in terms of bonding and creating a shared experience and conveying support, as well as kind of modeling use of these health—healthy coping strategies for children by saying

that, "I'm an adult. I may be a prosecutor or a therapist but this still helps me as well."  
Next slide please.

And this is from the materials for teens, ages 13 to 18, which is called "There's More to Me." And the reason there isn't a character name in this publication name is because for the teenagers, we were able to include the stories of multiple characters, which was really nice because we could show different identities and also different types of experiences of interactions with the justice system through the different characters. So that was really great. And you'll see here on the left, the character is talking with a practitioner who's validating her feelings, and then there's a segue into them doing a healthy coping activity together. Next slide please.

And then in terms of accessing the materials, as has been mentioned, it was our great honor for OVC to publish these materials under their banner, and they're all now available through OVC's website. These general materials, as we call them, were published in June 2021. And you'll see on the left that there's a menu where you can easily access whatever pieces you need to support a given child. So you can go to the family and dependency court which is the child welfare section. And then you'll see the different age groups there, as well as the criminal legal system section and the different age groups. And has been mentioned, in January of this year, we were able to publish again under OVC's banner specialized materials for young people who have experienced trafficking, and I'll talk more about those in a moment. But you'll see as well that there is a place to click on Practitioner and Parent Caregiver Guides for each set of materials. So those are brief guides, two to three pages, that explain to both practitioners and to caregivers, what the materials are and how to use them with the child that they are supporting. And that also provides some tips for how to support children who have experienced violence and victimization, whatever their role is in relation to that child.

And all the materials are available for free download. They can be printed on your office printer. And there are also instructions for how to get them professionally printed through Staples or another provider. And they can also be viewed on a screen, so on your computer screen or on a tablet screen, anything like that. Next slide please.

And as was mentioned as well, it's just so important in terms of accessibility and representation that the materials have been translated into five additional languages, which you see here on the screen. And you've seen examples of the illustrations and the writing in the different languages, which are Arabic, simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Vietnamese. And these languages were identified by fairly extensive research on limited English proficiency children and families in the United

States, so that we could ensure that we were selecting the five languages that would have the greatest positive impact in terms of access to the materials. And all those translations have recently been finished and they're all also available at the same website. Next slide please.

As was mentioned as well by Suamhirs and by myself a moment ago, we were very fortunate that, as a result of our very extensive general needs assessment, OVC provided us with additional funding through a cooperative agreement to create specialized materials for young survivors of trafficking, and these were published in January 2022. There are three narratives as part of those materials, two that address sex trafficking and one that addresses labor trafficking. And there's also a very extensive rights and roles booklet that talks about young people's rights not only as a victim witness but also potentially as a defendant on a criminal case, as well as their rights and resources related to the immigration system as some young people may be foreign nationals. And, as well, that guide provides information about general resources for young people who have experienced trafficking. And, again, those are available on the same OVC website.

In addition, we're in the final stages of publicizing—of publishing a pretty extensive package of materials specifically for Native American child victims and witnesses and their families, and those will have the same three age groups as the general materials, and also there are materials about the criminal legal system and the child welfare system again. And so we've worked with an additional set of stakeholders and partners, and both of those sets have specialized materials, and we're hoping that those materials for Native American child victims and witnesses will be available and published later this year.

And, in addition, we've created a package of materials for practitioners, which was something that we heard from them repeatedly that they need—they needed materials and information to strengthen their own practice with child victims and witnesses. So we've created 10 pieces, which are currently being formatted and should be available to the field soon, and these include system maps and glossaries for both the child welfare system and the criminal legal system in child-friendly language, and a variety of tip sheets. So there's one on children and trauma, and what that looks like, and ways that practitioners can support young children who are traumatized. There's one about different stages of child development and how to communicate and support children of different ages and developmental stages. There is one—there is a piece on working with and supporting children's parents and caregivers. As was mentioned, that's just so critically important, because the parents, the caregivers are really the most important person in these children's lives, so whatever we can do to support and inform them, it

really supports their children very much. As well, there's a tip sheet on working with Native American children and families. There's one on working with young people who have experienced trafficking. And there's also a checklist for how to prepare children for going to court to testify that can be used by practitioners in a variety of roles. So, again, those practitioner guides and materials should be coming out within the next month or two and will be available on the same website, through OVC. And that comes to the end of my section of our presentation today, although, I do want to encourage everyone to please reach out to me and the center anytime.

We'd be very happy to hear from you and provide any support that would be helpful in terms of utilizing the materials, implementing them. We also encourage everyone to disseminate the materials as widely as you can. Our vision, our goal is that every child who's experienced violence and victimization and is interacting with these systems has access to these materials. And, obviously, that's a very daunting goal but we're really hopeful that we can get there with the collaboration and support of all of you talking about the materials, sharing them with your colleagues, distributing them through your networks, and that kind of thing, posting them on your websites. And, as well, we're happy to provide training on how to utilize the materials and support child victims and witnesses. So, again, my email address is here on the slide, and we'd be happy to hear from you anytime. And with that, I'm going to turn it back over to Sasha, for the Q&A.

SASHA RUTIZER: Thanks, Kathryn. You know, what I—one of the things I really appreciate about all the materials that are created is that they make children and youth where they are, both culturally, and in the words that are chosen. And I think what is most important is that—getting access to information. And sometimes children and youth don't want to read paper pamphlets and stuff. So the fact that they can be read on tablets and phones and in the privacy of a group of people, because that's where they are, I think is really incredible. And so that—all of these different formats are available and everybody can go and reach them now. It's great.

So I have two questions that are in the—in the Q&A. If you have a question, please type that in the Q&A and I will ask that—what those questions to our panelists. So the first question that I have, Bethany, is for you. And that question comes from Susan and it reads, "Are any of the materials for children appropriate for victims of terrorism or are there any plans to create such materials, even though these are rare cases? What do you think about that?"

BETHANY CASE: Thanks, Sasha. Great question, Susan. So I pulled up the website and was kind of looking through, perusing a little bit to be able to respond fast. One of the—one of the most important kind of foundational, I guess, principles that we had

about developing these materials was to make them as generalizable as possible, so across the experiences. So these materials didn't really talk specifically about certain types of victimization. They're more about, "Hey, if you are developmentally kind of in this age range, here are some here's a story or stories about some kids that may have experienced something, also experienced something. And you're not alone, and it's not your fault. And let's talk about this kid's experience," and then kind of walking that path alongside that kid, and having those opportunities to kind of teach them healthy coping strategies and do those practices with them, as well as like I'm looking at right now, the criminal court materials for ages two to six, for example. And, you know, if this is a case that's going to be going to court, there is a booklet about what's your job in criminal court and kind of shows all the different players. So I absolutely think that these are generalizable enough for any type of victimization, any type of jurisdiction.

SASHA RUTIZER: Yeah. Great. Thanks, Bethany. I appreciate that. And I think that makes a lot of sense. The next question, Kathryn, is—if you don't mind, I'm going to send this to you. I will—I'll read it here. "What kind of materials do you have for children who cannot speak—or have poor speaking skills or cannot say their name or give any information about them in the child welfare system?"

KATHRYN FORD: Thank you, Sasha. Yeah, that's...

SASHA RUTIZER: Let me.

KATHRYN FORD: Oh, sorry. That's...

SASHA RUTIZER: I was going to repeat it if you needed me to.

KATHRYN FORD: Sure. I think I've got it. Thank you. I think that's certainly a very challenging situation and I would defer to the child welfare investigative experts, among them folks on this call, in terms of the investigative aspects. But I think in terms of these materials, I think they can certainly still be utilized because even if a child is nonverbal or maybe has had a developmental regression, maybe they've lost some of their verbal skills because of traumatization, they can still be read to. And those of us who have and know young children, know that they really enjoy being read to and they can often communicate in other means besides verbally. So I think you really could still utilize the materials to inform them and to reduce their levels of stress and distress. But that's a good example actually of potentially adapting the materials and just building on what Bethany mentioned before. Yes, the materials are designed to be relatable, hopefully, to children who have experienced any type of violence or victimization and also who are interacting with a tribal justice system, state justice system, federal justice system,

right? But as well you can think about, as a practitioner, are there ways that you can adapt what's there to your specific community. There may be a different language that's used in your local system, for example. So you may have to explain that, as a practitioner, to say, "In this book, they call it a prosecutor but in our community, we call it a DA," or something like as an example, or to talk about differences in the process or whatever that may be, and to use language that may be more familiar to the child and more reflective of their experience and the local system. And to also just make the connections between the story, like how does this relate to what you've been through or what you've experienced? What are the things that are similar and what are the things that may be different?

SASHA RUTIZER: Thanks, Kathryn. And I'll open it up to anybody else. Does anybody else on the panel want to respond to that? I thought—you did tell me. I could see your face.

SUAMHIRS PIRANO-GUZMAN: Yeah. You know, I—that question hits me right there, because I—you know, I recently became disabled myself, and understanding the physical—my mobile disability and understanding kind of how that sets me—kind of make—puts me in a very unique, interesting—give us a very unique equitable, equal opportunity, right? When we think about equity, we will often think about race, ethnicity, language, and all these things, but, often, we also need to include—equity also includes people with disability, whether people—or people who uses other forms of communication. I agree with that question. I do encourage the OVC TTAC to—OVC to really look in at expanding these materials to use in Braille and other forms of communications, because it does enhances our ability to engage and to really be present. So I think that there are—there is a slow movement to get us there, with the realization that—you know, the communication is more than that that we speak. Then—there is also that that we can sense or we can feel and touch. So I guess an invitation for us to expand our—what our ability of communication really is and in the way that—the way that we want to—the way that we want to communicate this message to young people who uses a different way of communication. So just props for that question and an invitation for OVC to expand that knowledge into really—even for victim services in general. Understanding that specific complexity on how will these equitable needs—equity needs kind of puts people, a victim—in victim situations at higher risk of revictimization or not necessarily wanting to engage in the process. So communicating to people, talking to people in the best language they understand and the best communication possible often creates the best possible relationship.

In my experience, I remember the first person that spoke to me in Spanish, it was like it clicked. He became my mentor. He became my person. He became just a person who

until today is still a part of my life even though I met him 17 years ago in foster care. So thank you all.

SASHA RUTIZER: Thanks, Suamhirs. And you actually segued into a question that we got today and a question that we got when we released the human trafficking graphic novels, and that is what other languages might you release these in and the embedded question there in is why did you pick these ones? And so I'll do my best to answer that. The ones that we ultimately picked are the ones based on what we learned from data is the most required of the situation. And so, for instance, the ones that were chosen for human trafficking are not these exact languages, if I—if I am correct. For the human trafficking ones, they're coming also in Spanish, in Mandarin Chinese, and the French—African local version of French and Portuguese, but—Brazilian Portuguese and Vietnamese, which is different than what you see here. And so we do get questions about will there be more. There will be more based on need for more. And so I—we at OVC welcome requests for additional languages, and if there is a demand for those additional languages, then of course we'll do our very best to make those available. So the next question that I have is, "Can the materials be used for children with ADHD or any kind of learning disabilities?"

KATHRYN FORD: I'll take that one, Sasha.

SASHA RUTIZER: So—thanks. I appreciate that, Kathryn.

KATHRYN FORD: Sure. The answer is yes. Definitely. You may need to adapt a little bit in terms of how you're utilizing the materials, for example, taking more frequent breaks and maybe checking in with the child more frequently in terms of their understanding of the content and the information that is provided, but you can certainly use the materials with them.

SASHA RUTIZER: Thanks, Kathryn. All right. So one just came in. So I'm going to read it aloud, although you may be able to see it in the—it's in the chat. So this is related to—in the Philippines, in Manila, we have hundreds of minors facing criminal charges, mostly drug-related as couriers, others for thefts, pickpocketing tourists, others were arrested for homicide. Obviously, many of them have been in and out of Manila Youth Reception Center and this has become a vicious cycle. What form of rehabilitation would you recommend for these minors who speak different dialects, languages as we are a country of more than 7,100 Islands of diverse cultures, customs, and traditions? Is there anybody who would like to take that question?

KATHRYN FORD: I can take it in a sense that—acknowledging it's a huge question and that we could probably do days of training on kind of juvenile justice response, including kind of what are called crossover youth commonly, which are young people who are child welfare involved and then become defendants in juvenile proceedings and/or adult criminal proceedings. So that's a whole additional area of training and research. And I'm happy to—if you reach out to me, I'm happy to connect you with folks who have expertise and can provide resources in that area.

SASHA RUTIZER: Thanks, Kathryn. Thanks for that. Bethany?

BETHANY CASE: Sasha, can I just...

SASHA RUTIZER: Yes.

BETHANY CASE: Kind of a more overarching response as well is just to—children are individuals just as we are, and so they learn differently, respond differently, consume information differently, have preferred ways of communicating, and these materials are really just a starting point for conversations for anyone to have with a kid. So you don't have to be a professional to be able to use these to help facilitate a conversation with a kid. And it's not a—it's definitely not intended to be a material that you—for the younger kids especially, just kind of hand it over to them and say, "Here you go," and then expect that, you know, okay, checkbox. You know, pace the content. Pace it to meet their needs. It may—you know, if you're a therapist, for example, this may—you know, after you get to know the client that you're working with, you may decide it's going to take us about six sessions just to kind of go through these and that'll help us kind of establish some rapport and help me learn about the child and help us to kind of establish these healthy coping strategies. So I would just encourage everyone—emphatically, yes, these are able to be used with any child, any abilities, anything. But just—you know, just remember, it's a response to be grounded on—in what they need as an individual.

SASHA RUTIZER: Okay. So I think this is going to Kathryn. Kathryn, can you make a recommendation about translating the tribal materials into indigenous languages? I have to disagree with the generalizable method as indigenous people have unique needs. Our children need to have materials that they can relate to on a cultural basis. Also, it would help to make some of the materials using some indigenous languages. Do you have any comments on that?

KATHRYN FORD: Sure. That's another very complicated question, and hopefully we'll have another one of these launch events when those materials are available and we

can talk about that in a lot more detail in terms of the process whereby those materials were created and some of the partners and stakeholders that participated in that process. But those included many native folks from many different tribal communities from the—throughout the United States, and, as well, the writers and illustrators of all those materials are indigenous. So we really try to be very thoughtful in terms of helping them, having them be relatable and culturally-specific enough that it was identifiable but not specific to any one tribal culture or context or even region of the country which was quite a challenge, let me tell you. But we did our best. And we did—similar to these general materials, we did a very extensive needs assessment and we did pilot test those materials with children and practitioners and caregivers from around the United States, including to elicit their feedback on cultural representation and language used throughout the materials to make sure that they did feel relatable and accurate and not kind of exclusive towards any one group.

In terms of publishing them in indigenous languages, that was something that we considered but we determined through our needs assessment that tribal justice systems generally, as you know, they conduct their business in English, and that, unfortunately, because of the long context of genocide of which I'm sure you're aware, many folks do not speak indigenous languages in the United States, at least not as their primary language. So for those reasons, we decided to publish them in English. So that was a very complicated question and I try to provide a reasonably concise response. But thank you for bringing those concerns and questions.

SASHA RUTIZER: Kathryn, this one also goes to you but I'm going to ask Chris Newlin to also come in on this because he, of course, participated in reviewing these materials. So this one just talks about, specifically in the materials, "How in-depth do they go into the role of victim advocates and general expectations and legal systems?"

CHRIS NEWLIN: Well, I—I'm happy to jump in, but, Kathryn, you know, you are the expert on these materials. I don't know of anybody who spent more time with them—these materials than you. I think the materials do go into a fair amount of a story. You know, there's a pathway that this child, you know, goes on. And, you know, those pathways, as we have indicated on this call, even between various states, we may have children facing similar circumstances who have slightly different pathways. So the challenge for everybody was to create the content that was malleable enough to meet the needs of different communities and how they necessarily operate but also provide enough, you know, specificity.

So I can't—I can't reinforce enough how important it is to have someone who's necessarily able to—this is not a, "Hey, here's everything that will happen at the

children's advocacy center." That's really not the intent or the focus of this. So the role of victim advocates is somewhat limited. You know, they are mentioned in the in the court system but not so much the ones that you may experience at a children's advocacy center. So, I mean, I'd be interested what Kathryn's thoughts are. But, you know, different jurisdictions, different ways. We have extremely rural jurisdictions that may not have a victim service officer. We have other jurisdictions, you know, they may have a bunch and they may actually see different people. So it really is about the application. But, Kathryn, your thoughts?

KATHRYN FORD: Yeah. Thanks, Chris. I agree. The materials aren't specific to sexual abuse or to child advocacy centers, but they definitely portray and talk about victim advocates throughout. So that's both in the practitioner role section. This kind of—it's usually called like what is my job? So it will describe what a victim advocate does and portray them really as a resource in terms of information, and advocacy, and emotional support throughout the process. And then, as well, victim advocates are depicted in the narratives supporting specific character. So I'd say those are the two main ways that we portray advocates.

SASHA RUTIZER: Thanks, Chris, and thanks, Kathryn. So with that, we've reached the end of time. Well over 300 of you signed on and took the time out of your day to participate. I worked for a boss who used to have a saying, "Do all the things you can in all the ways you can for all the people you can," and every one of you embody that every day, and I am uniquely grateful for everything you do. And I thank you to my friends and colleagues who are at the top of the screen, Kathryn, Suamhirs, Chris, Bethany, Lindsay. Thank you for everything you did to make these materials happen and to get in the hands of children and those who care about them and to practitioners in the field. So, everybody, thank you so much. Please go to the website, download, and access those materials and put them in the hands of those who need them most. Have a wonderful day. Thank you.