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DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION
Board on Children, Youth, and Families

Shaping Policy to Reduce Inequalities Among LGBTQ Youth Webinar
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Abby Frank is a junior at Community High School in Ann Arbor. She joined the MyVoice team in May of 2020, and hopes to become a physician, focusing on emergent care in rural communities and public health initiatives surrounding LGBTQ+ youth. In her free time she loves to enjoy nature, read, cook, and spend time with her family and friends.



Kezia Gilyard is a non-binary educator, facilitator, and curriculum creator who uses they/them pronouns. Currently, they serve as the Director of Regional Prism Alliances for Teach For America. Their areas of specialization include facilitating conversations and building courses which allow participants to examine the experiences of students who have been marginalized by various and intersecting systems of oppression. Kezia has trained both pre-K-12 and post-secondary educators across the country about the importance of approaching queer and trans equity through an intersectional lens. They've spent nearly a decade providing guidance, mentorship, and leadership opportunities for queer and trans youth in South Florida and beyond. Kezia was recently selected as one of South Florida Gay News' "Out 50", a distinguished list recognizing openly LGBTQ individuals who make an impact in South Florida. Kezia is also a recipient of the Bishop S.F. Makalani-Mahee award for Trans Equality for their

work supporting transgender youth and was a finalist for GLSEN's Educator of the Year award in 2020. Kezia believes that all educators have a role in liberating students.



Stephen T Russell is Priscilla Pond Flawn Regents Professor in Child Development, chair of the Department of Human Development and Family Sciences, and Director of the School of Human Ecology at the University of Texas at Austin. He is an expert in adolescent and young adult health, with a focus on sexual orientation and gender identity. He began his career with population studies of adolescent sexual and reproductive health; during the last decade his work has focused on adolescent health disparities, especially the health and well-being of sexual minorities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth). He published a series of papers that were the first nationally representative studies to document significant health risk among sexual minority adolescents using the Add Health Study. Since then, he has studied health risk and resilience among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth and young

adults, with an emphasis on gender and race/ethnic/cultural difference in sexual minority health. Much of his research is guided by a commitment to create social change to support healthy adolescent development. He has served on the governing boards of the Society for Research in Child Development, the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), National Council on Family Relations (he was elected fellow), the Society for Research on Adolescence (President, 2012-2014)."

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Jama Shelton are a researcher who focuses on LGBTQ+ youth homelessness, structural inequity, and cis-genderism in social services and social work education. In particular, they are interested in identifying and addressing systemic barriers rooted in hetero/cis-genderism and the binary gender system that frequently constrain the successful transition into stable housing for transgender, non-binary and gender expansive youth and young adults. Shelton is co-editor of two books, *Social Work Practice with Transgender and Gender Expansive Youth* and *Where am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Addressing LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in the U.S. and Canada*.



Park Szachta is a student at the University of Michigan who loves math and computer science! He intends to major in Computer Science and Statistics, and is a member of the residential Michigan Research and Discovery Scholars (MRADS) program as well. He works on the MyVoice National Poll of Youth research project, where he analyzes results to policy-relevant surveys sent to 14- to 24-year olds across the United States. He works on the Natural Language Processing (NLP) team as part of this research, too! In high school, he pursued a wide array of experiences, such as being the Business/Media Subteam Captain of the first Robotics Competition team and helped start his school's Math Club. For his final project of an online Harvard computer science course, completed in high school, he created a mood tracker website that adapts to user inputs. In the future, he hopes to create a website spreading mental health resources to those who need it.



Joanna Lee Williams, Ph.D. is an associate professor in the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. Her scholarship focuses on understanding the role of race and ethnicity in individual and interpersonal contexts during adolescence. This includes research on racial-ethnic identity, racial-ethnic diversity in adolescent friendship networks, and social network equity in diverse middle school classrooms. Dr. Williams is also involved in efforts to translate the science of adolescent development into useful recommendations and practices for parents, educators, and policymakers. She is co-Director of the National Scientific Council on Adolescence and a member of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine's Board on Children, Youth, and Families. She is also a faculty affiliate of Youth-Nex: The UVA Center to Promote Effective Youth Development, and the Center for Parent and Teen Communication at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

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