

THE CHALLENGE

Puerto Rico's child welfare workforce and foster youth are in need of support that leverages lived experience and significantly improves outcomes for youth, child welfare program services and leadership.

Recent legislation regards foster care as traumatic.

2K+

young people in Puerto Rico receive foster care services each year. This is a problem we can solve.

25%

of youth in the system are considered older youth and at higher risk of poverty, incarceration homelessness and mental health conditions.

Why OCA

OverComing Adversities is a 501 (c)(3) organization founded by foster youth, for foster youth. We are the only nonprofit in Puerto Rico dedicated to catalyzing personal and professional growth for young adults with foster care experience.

MISSION

Provide informed, urgent and transformative learning opportunities that prepare young adults with foster care experience to successfully navigate their circumstances and achieve professional and personal life satisfaction.

VISION

All youth deserve a fair opportunity to learn to be who they want to be.

We help youth cultivate essential skills to be better prepared to overcome adversity. Our programs aim to address the lack of learning alternatives and improve outcomes of youth in the system.

OUR SOLUTIONS



PEER MENTORING

Youth should be prepared to effectively communicate and build relationships with others throughout different roles and situations. Mentoring creates environments where youth can learn by doing with the guidance of a friend.



POSITIVE INTERACTIONS & NEW INFORMATION

These environments are empowering, social-learning spaces that expose youth to new, diverse activities and perspectives they can learn from. We focus on the value of healthy thoughts, interpersonal relationships and self-worth for transformational change general well-being.



THINKING & LEARNING STRATEGIES

We integrate information about how humans work and use "alternative thinking" as an approach to healing, decision-making and navigating thoughts and emotions. We promote the intentional development of strategies for self-management and communication.

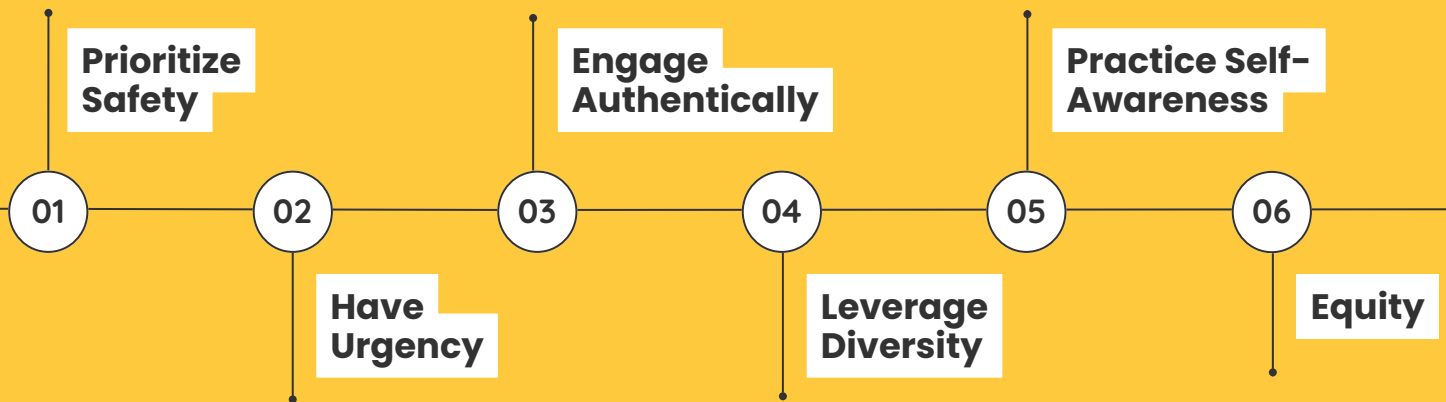


ACCESS TO PEOPLE & RESOURCES

Foster youth need access to social capital and support in retaining it. We share our ecosystem of local entrepreneurs, universities, national and local organizations, friends and other community members to help youth learn to interact with and develop relationships with different people and support systems.

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Our Values



Founding Story

Yalanis Vélez and her sisters experienced the contrast of living in a middle class, working family home, to living in group homes and becoming part of the foster care system in Puerto Rico. When they felt the criminalization of youth and lack of urgency for providing effective support to youth in the system, they had to do something about it. Since they had experience-based knowledge of the impact of mental health, social capital and learning opportunities in life outcomes, Yalanis created OCA to help social workers, care givers and youth have better programs and experiences with the foster care system.

Yalanis believes youth need access to people, safe spaces and tools that allow them to heal and learn to think and act in ways that lead them to be who they want to be.



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