

A curriculum for  
youth work professionals

# Positive Youth Development 101

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**Jutta Dotterweich**

ACT for Youth Center for Community Action  
Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research  
College of Human Ecology  
Cornell University

*2021 edition*

# Positive Youth Development 101: A Curriculum for Youth Work Professionals

*by Jutta Dotterweich*

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ACT for Youth Center for Community Action  
Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York  
act4youth@cornell.edu

Manual, slides, and handouts available for download at:  
<https://actforyouth.net/pro-resources/trainings/pyd101-manual.cfm>

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## Acknowledgements

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## Development Team

### **Jutta Dotterweich**

*Director of Training and Technical Assistance*

ACT for Youth Center for Community Action

Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research (BCTR)

Cornell University

[jd81@cornell.edu](mailto:jd81@cornell.edu)

### **Joan Bickweat**

*Youth Development Consultant*

Rochester, NY

### **Jerome Christie**

*4-H Youth Development Issue Leader*

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Orange County

### **Eduardo González**

*State Diversity, Research Partnership Development,  
and Youth Development Specialist*

Cornell University Cooperative Extension - NYC

### **Phyllis Morena**

*Consultant & AYD Lead Trainer*

Rockland County

### **Karen Schantz**

*Clearinghouse Director*

ACT for Youth Center for Community Action  
BCTR, Cornell University

### **Melissa Schroeder**

*Youth and Family Development Team  
Coordinator*

CCE Schuyler County

## Risk and Thriving in Adolescence Program Work Team

Chairs: Jutta Dotterweich, BCTR and Melissa Schroeder, CCE Schuyler

Megan Tift, CCE Tompkins

Jacqueline Davis-Manigaulte, CCE NYC

Jessica Spence, CCE Yates

Rachel Williams, CCE Seneca

Autumn Lavine, CCE Tioga

Stephanie Graf, CCE Jefferson County

Nigel Gannon, NYS 4-H

June Mead, CCE Broome County

Mary Fairley, CCE Saratoga County

Cindy Dort, CCE Saratoga County

Julie Triplett, CCE Cortland County

Jerome Christie, CCE Orange

Janis Whitlock, BCTR

Marnie Annese, Onondaga County Youth Bureau

JoAnn Fratarcangelo, Schuyler County DSS & YB

Ellen Lazarek, Oswego County Opportunities

Toni Ross, Oswego County Opportunities

Sally Schwartzbach, Learning Web

## Curriculum Overview

### Purpose

The Positive Youth Development 101 curriculum aims to provide an orientation to the youth development approach for professionals new to the field of youth work. While maintaining core concepts of positive youth development that were promoted by the NYS Advancing Youth Development (AYD) curricula, this training includes new activities, resources, and research findings.

The goals are to:

- Increase knowledge and skills of new youth work professionals
- Establish a common language among youth work professionals
- Advance a youth development network in New York State

### Intended Audience

This curriculum is designed for professionals who work directly with youth in late childhood and adolescence in a wide range of educational, recreational, or residential programs. It is especially appropriate for newly hired 4-H or community educators within the Cornell Cooperative Extension network. The training or its components can also be used with supervisors, administrators, community volunteers, and funders interested in learning about the positive youth development framework.

### Development Process

The first phase of curriculum development consisted of a literature review and series of meetings to reflect on lessons learned from past youth development training initiatives such as the AYD Partnership. This led to a first-draft curriculum structured as a 10-hour training organized in five sections. The draft curriculum was pilot tested in three Upstate locations and in New York City. Participants included Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) 4-H educators and other CCE community educators working with youth, as well as other community-based youth work professionals. In NYC most participants worked in after-school programs or intervention programs for high need youth. All pilot trainings involved professionals with no prior youth development training together with individuals who had some experience with the youth development approach. During each pilot training, participants provided extensive feedback on the activities and materials used in each of the five sections. Pre- and post-tests demonstrated an increase in knowledge of youth development concepts and strategies.

New activities, research, and resources were added to the curriculum in 2021.

### Curriculum Design

Based on input from the field, the curriculum was designed in distinct sections that can be delivered as stand-alone workshops. There are five sections:

1. **Positive Youth Development (PYD):** Overview of the theoretical underpinnings and key principles of PYD and a brief review of adolescent development

2. **Positive Youth Outcomes:** Definition of positive outcomes and discussion of strategies to build these outcomes
3. **Youth Voice and Engagement:** Discussion of ways to give young people opportunities for meaningful engagement and overcome the barrier of adultism
4. **Youth Development Programming:** Review of features of effective youth development settings and youth-centered learning approaches
5. **Youth Worker Competencies:** Discussion of competency frameworks, boundaries, and ethical dilemmas

Drawing on an experiential learning model, the curriculum uses a range of small and large group activities to allow for active participation, discussion, and reflection, in combination with short lectures, informative handouts, and web-based resources.

## Implementation

The curriculum is structured in five distinct sections, each of which takes roughly 2 - 2½ hours to deliver. The full curriculum requires roughly 12 hours of training time. It can be presented in two full days, several half days, or shorter sections delivered over several weeks.

The recommended group size is 14-20 participants. The training includes many small group activities; spacious training spaces will work best for these. Free wall space is needed for displaying newsprint and larger pieces of paper. For room set-up, tables arranged in a banquet, classroom, or “U” shape style are recommended.

Facilitators should have youth work experience and be very familiar with the theory and concepts of positive youth development. Skills in teaching and group facilitation are required.

If the training is being offered in full days, a team of two facilitators is highly recommended.

## Equipment/Supplies

- Laptop/projector/speakers/screen (or room with built in AV equipment)
- Internet access
- Easel/newsprint/markers/pens
- Butcher paper (paper roll)/scissors
- Masking tape
- Handouts (binders optional)
- Name tags

## Evaluation

A pre- and post-test is recommended and included in the manual. In case the curriculum is being delivered in sections over a period of time, a general participant feedback form is included that can be offered after each section.



## Section 1: Positive Youth Development

### 1.1 Introduction and Overview

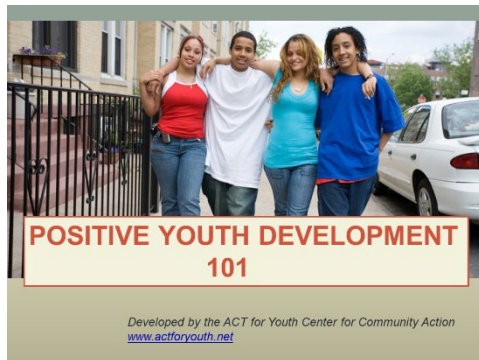
Objectives: Participants will be able to describe the training objectives  
Participants will begin to get to know each other

Material: newsprint, marker, slide

Time: 40 min

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#### *Slide 1: Welcome*



Welcome to the training “Positive Youth Development 101.” This is a training for youth workers. We consider any professional or paraprofessional who works directly with young people a youth worker.

Our goals are to make you familiar with positive youth development as an approach or philosophy of working with young people. We will explore its core concepts and underlying theoretical frameworks, the research that supports it, and its practical application. Finally, we will provide you with many resources.

We will spend much time together – about 12 hours. Let’s start with some introductions and a little warm-up activity to start the process of getting to know each other.

*Trainers introduce themselves.*

#### **Warm-up Activity: Mingle, Mingle - Huddle, Huddle (15 min)**

Let’s get you started with a little game called “mingle, mingle - huddle, huddle.”

Here are the rules: We will all get up and gather in the free space over there. When I say “mingle, mingle,” walk around and introduce yourself to people you have not met yet. Just like a cocktail party. Introduce yourself, say where you are from, and move on to the next person.

When I say “huddle, huddle,” quickly form a group of four with the people around you. Once you all are in groups I will give you a topic to talk about. OK? Start mingling.

*After a couple of minutes, say “huddle, huddle.”  
Once they are all in groups ask them to share  
with each other.*

Here is your first topic: Go back in time...think about your time in high school. What were some of the high points you experienced in high school?

*Give groups 3-4 minutes to share during the huddle time.*

*Initiate another round of mingle, mingle. Topic for the next huddle period:*

What were some of the low points you experienced during high school? And what helped you get through them?

*Ask for volunteers to share first high points, then low points, then coping strategies. Summarize:*

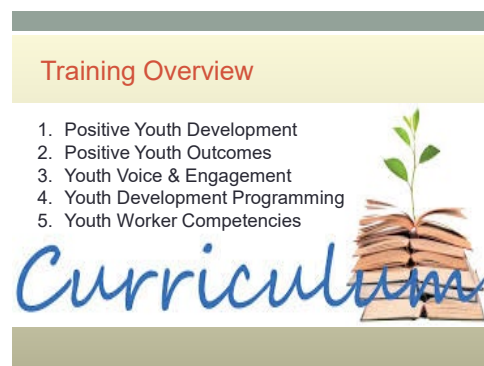
Adolescence can be a challenging time with lots of excitement and pressures, and the need for external support. Give me a show of hands: how many of you would like to go back to adolescence, if that were possible?

*Ask them to take their seats.*

### **Introductions and Expectations; Overview of Training (20 min)**

*Follow up with a round of introductions: name, organization, and their expectations for the training.  
Record expectations on flip chart.*

#### *Slide 2: Training Overview*



- *Review training layout, sections, and agenda for the day.*
- *Review expectations (on flip chart) and how they match up with the training agenda. Entertain a few questions.*
- *Review housekeeping details.*

## 1.2 What is Positive Youth Development?

Objective: Participants will be able to name core concepts of positive youth development

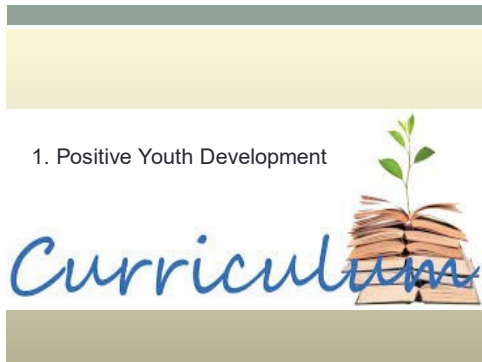
Material: 8-10 small foam balls, slides

Handout: "Research That Supports Youth Development"

Time: 20-25 min

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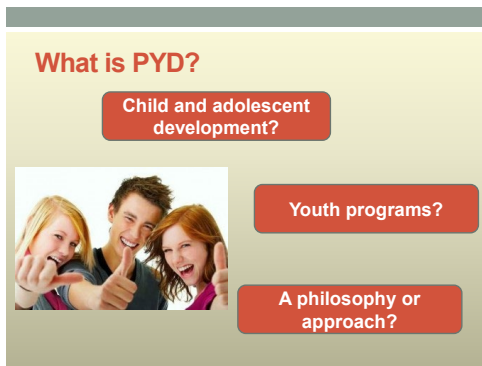
*Slide 3: Section 1*



When you hear the term "Positive Youth Development," what comes to mind?

*Entertain a few comments from the audience.*

*Slide 4: What is PYD?*

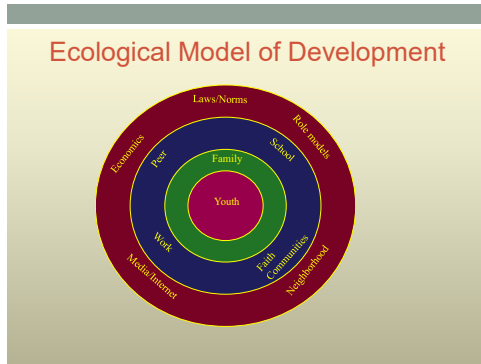


Text:

The term "positive youth development" often generates several different responses. Most commonly people hear "youth development" and think of child and adolescent development, meaning biological, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Or they think of youth services, all the programming and services communities provide to young people to address their needs and foster their growth. Or they might think of a distinct approach or philosophy of interacting and working with young people, one that informs programming and promotes adolescent development.

We understand positive youth development as an approach or philosophy that guides communities in the way they organize services, supports, and opportunities so that all young people can develop to their full potential.

*Slide 5: Ecological Model of Development*



Text:

Let's take a brief look at the theoretical foundation for positive youth development. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) pioneered an ecological framework of human development. Bronfenbrenner noted that child and adolescent development occurs in interaction with a set of social systems. Young people grow up in families, peer groups, school, work settings, neighborhoods, and within societal structures and norms. And now with the Internet we can add a global dimension. It is through interaction with various social groups or systems that young people develop competencies and values.

Bronfenbrenner also stated that the interaction between young people and their environment is reciprocal. This means that development does not just happen to children and adolescents. They are actively involved in shaping their own development. Youth are participants, not just recipients. He used the term "agency" to denote the ability to direct or influence events. This is an important concept that we will revisit when we talk about youth voice and engagement.

*Slide 6: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*



Text:

Another important theory embedded in positive youth development is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Abraham Maslow (1943) was concerned with the question of what individuals need in order to thrive or do well.

Maslow showed that for healthy development to occur, human beings need to meet foundational needs such as basic physiological needs (food, water, and shelter) and safety. If these are not met, human beings are preoccupied with survival and not directed toward healthy development. Beyond this, human beings thrive when they feel:

- loved and part of a larger group,
- competent and capable,
- able to understand and meet the basic requirements of their environment,
- capable of finding symmetry, order, and beauty in their environment, and
- self-actualization and transcendence.

He defined this last need, self-actualization, as the perception that one has realized their potential and achieved a high level of personal growth and awareness. Maslow indicated that not all individuals reach the highest level, and that healthy development can occur without this need being met.

We know from research that children and youth who don't have their foundational needs met – and brain research now indicates that belonging is another foundational or essential need – are preoccupied with survival and unable to focus on learning or engage in other social interactions (Garbarino, 1995; Scales & Leffert, 1999).

### *Slide 7: Social Toxicity*



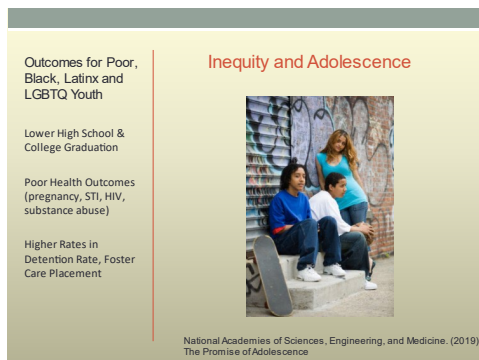
Text:

James Garbarino (1995) coined the phrase "social toxicity" to describe the social factors that interfere with young people's healthy development. Although some of these social issues have improved over the years, they still have impact on the lives of young people.

*Most of them are well known. Read off a few, and make some key points:*

- **Racism:** leads to a gap in academic performance (African American and Latinx children do less well); youth of color are overrepresented in special education classes and in the justice system.
- **Poverty:** leads to fewer opportunities and less support; youth who grow up in poverty often face additional problems such as violence and disrupted family relationships.
- **Sexual exploitation:** refers to the increasingly over-sexualized representation of young children and youth in the media, social media, and commercial marketing.
- **Health threats:** Exposure to drugs and alcohol leads to early experimentation with substances, potentially resulting in substance abuse and violent behavior.
- **Lack of benevolent adult authority:** Garbarino has pointed out that many young people lack role models who promote positive social and moral values. Many celebrities, who youth may consider role models, promote wealth and materialism.

*Slide 8: Inequity and Adolescence*



Text:

Social toxicity produces serious inequities for our youth. The 2019 National Academy report “The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth” documents negative trends in several outcome areas for Black and Latinx youth, LGBTQ+ youth, and young people with income below the poverty threshold. Among these groups of young people, high school graduation and college attendance rates are lower than those of white and middle class youth. Teen pregnancy, STI and HIV infection, and substance abuse rates are higher. The chances of being placed in foster care or detained are also higher.

*Slide 9: Supportive Research: Prevention, Resiliency, and Youth Development*



The diagram is titled "Supportive Research" in red. It lists three categories of research: "Prevention Research" (What predicts and prevents poor health outcomes?), "Resiliency Research" (What explains success despite the odds?), and "Youth Development Research" (What predicts and promotes thriving?).

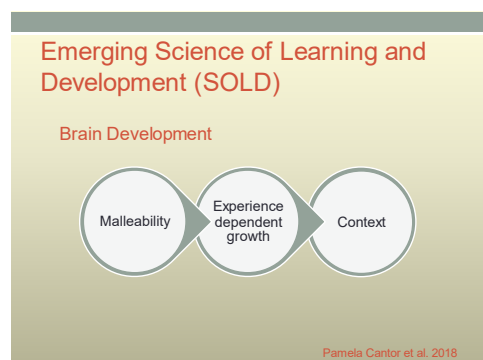
Text:

There are three bodies of research that have supported the positive youth development approach and its theoretical foundation.

- **Prevention science** has investigated the question: How can we predict and prevent negative behaviors? By identifying **risk factors** – conditions that increase the likelihood of negative outcomes – and **protective factors**, which buffer against these negative effects, prevention science has informed many interventions and programs.
- **Resiliency research** has shifted to the question: Why do many young people do well despite the negative environment in which they live – the risk factors they have to face? Much of this research is based on longitudinal studies that have followed groups of individuals over years from childhood to adulthood.
- Another body of research has taken a different direction and has investigated the question: What makes young people do well or thrive? Peter Benson and his colleagues at the Search Institute synthesized the research on adolescent development and identified 40 assets or building blocks that young people need to thrive – to become successful, productive adults. We refer to this as **youth development research**.

*Refer to handout “Research that Supports Youth Development” for additional information.*

*Slide 10: Emerging Science of Learning and Development (SOLD)*



The diagram is titled "Emerging Science of Learning and Development (SOLD)" in red. Below the title is the subtitle "Brain Development". The main content is a flow diagram with three circles: "Malleability" on the left, "Experience dependent growth" in the middle, and "Context" on the right. Arrows point from Malleability to Experience dependent growth, and from Experience dependent growth to Context. At the bottom right, it says "Pamela Cantor et al. 2018".

Text:

Additional supportive research is coming from the emerging field of learning, development, and brain science. The old debate of nature versus nurture has been decided. The brain is highly malleable and plastic. It can wire and rewire in interaction with the environment. This makes us very adaptable. We learn and grow through experience, through interacting with our environments. And this happens in social context, in relationships. Development is less about genes and more about nurturing and relationships. This new research supports the Bronfenbrenner model of human ecology that we discussed earlier.

**Activity: PYD in Action (15 min)**

*(See below for an alternative activity)*

I would like to do a brief activity to demonstrate some of the theoretical concepts we've discussed. I need a volunteer who appreciates the opportunity to go back in time and be 14 again. *Ask volunteer for their name.* I need a second volunteer who will be the parent. *Ask volunteer for their name.*

*Ask the group – quickly:* What are the challenges that young people face today, in this society?

*Each participant who names a challenge will be handed a light foam ball. Stop at eight. Challenges should include drugs, violence, early sex/teen pregnancy, school dropout/failure, depression, gangs, etc. Ask those eight participants to come forward, and line them up a yard or two from the teenager and the parent.*

*To the "parent":* Here are all the challenges your teen is facing. Your charge as a parent is to protect your child. Prepare yourself to protect [name]. When I count to three and say "go," the challenges over there will come your way. They will throw everything they have at you.

*Make sure everybody understands the charge.*

*After they throw the balls, ask the volunteer "teen" how they felt about it. Did they feel safe?*

*Gather the balls and give them back to the eight volunteers.*

*Ask the youth:* Who else can we call on to help? What other people and adults in the community can we call in? *(Helpers can be a neighbor, teacher, religious leader, youth program leader, coach, member of the extended family, etc.).*

*Once the "youth" identifies an adult, ask if anybody in the group plays that role. Ask them to come up. Identify and gather six or seven people.*

You are all supporters and protectors of [name of teen]. Your charge is to help the parent protect [name]. Take a minute to come up with a plan, and then you'll face the challenges one more time.

*Ask the volunteers representing challenges to line up again. On "go" they will throw their balls again. Afterwards ask [name] how it felt this time.*

*Debrief activity.*



### Alternative to “PYD in Action” ball activity (5-10 min)

*Material: 10 pencils, strong rubber band*

I would like to do a brief activity to demonstrate some of the theoretical concepts we discussed.

*Take a pencil and hold it up.*

Just assume for a second that this pencil is a young person right now attending high school (*name youth*). What type of pressures and challenges might this young person face?

*Encourage group to name several challenges – drugs, alcohol, violent/dangerous neighborhood, unprotected sex, abusive boyfriend or girlfriend, emotional stress...*

What might happen if this young person faces all these issues alone? *Audience response...*

*Snap the pencil in half.* Right, they might snap and not be able to handle the stress.

Now let's assume that the young person has supportive adults in their life. Who could that be?

*Each time the group mentions an adult (parent, family member, coach, teacher, neighbor, religious leader, 4H leader, supervisor at work...), take a pencil and add it to the first pencil, hold them up vertically and form a tight bunch. Put the rubber band around them.*

*Hold up the bunch of pencils.* Do you think that this young person will break easily given all the supports they have?

*Try to break the bunch.* This is impossible to do. Try it out yourselves. *Send the pencil bunch around.*

*Debrief.*

## Slide 11: Defining Positive Youth Development

### Defining Positive Youth Development

A philosophy or approach that guides communities in the way they organize programs, supports and opportunities so that young people can develop to their full potential.

- Focus on building positive outcomes
- Youth voice and engagement
- Long-term involvement/Developmentally appropriate
- Universal/Inclusive
- Community-based/Collaborative

Text:

We defined positive youth development as an approach or philosophy that guides communities in the way they organize services, supports, and opportunities so that all young people can develop to their full potential. There are several key, research-based principles underlying this approach:

- **Focus on positive outcomes:** We shift from preventing or fixing problems to creating positive outcomes such as competencies, connections and caring relationships, positive values and expectations, and meaningful participation. This also means that we use a strength-based approach.
- **Youth voice/engagement:** We work with young people, not for them. We engage young people as partners, create youth-adult partnerships, and listen to their expertise and perspective. This usually requires that we as adults become aware of and control the negative assumptions and stereotypes we might have of young people. (We call this negative posture “adulthood.”)
- **Long-term, developmentally appropriate involvement:** As a community we seek to support young people throughout their development – about 20 years – while adjusting to their changing developmental needs. A 12-year-old needs different support and opportunities than a 16-year-old. We also know that young people need extended exposure to programs and supportive adults to thrive; short-term programs and opportunities are not as effective.
- **Universal/inclusive:** As a community we need to provide support and opportunities to all young people, not just to the “high risk,” targeted groups or the high achieving group. This does not mean, however, that we cannot provide additional support to young people who face extra challenges. In addition, research tells us that universal strategies are often very effective for high risk or high need youth.
- **Community-based/collaborative:** As we discussed earlier, young people interact with a variety of social environments. For a positive youth development approach to succeed, non-traditional community sectors such as businesses, faith communities, or civic organizations need to be involved. And this implies that we have to work together collaboratively.

## Slide 12: Paradigm Shift

Paradigm Shift	
Traditional Youth Services	Positive Youth Development
■ Fixing Problems	■ Building on strengths
■ Reactive	■ Pro-active
■ Troubled Youth	■ All youth
■ Youth as Recipients	■ Youth as Participants/Resources
■ Programs	■ Relationships
■ Professional Work	■ Everyone's Work

Adapted from Search Institute, 2001.  
Old Attitudes/New Attitudes: Speaking of Developmental Assets.

Text:

Positive Youth Development changes how we look at and provide youth services.

*Click through each line.*

- We move from fixing problems to building on strengths.
- Instead of reacting to problem behavior, we are pro-active, building positive outcomes.
- Instead of targeting troubled youth we engage all youth.
- We move from looking at youth as recipients of services to youth as resources and active participants.
- Traditionally we have focused on programs and interventions, now we focus on relationships.
- Through this emphasis on the importance of relationships, young people become not just the business of professionals, but of everyone in the community.

*Recap: Q & A.*

### 1.3 A Quick Overview of Adolescent Development

Objectives: Participants will be able to describe core tasks of adolescent development  
Participants will be able to identify implications for program development

Material: markers, slides, AV equipment  
3 large sheets of newsprint prepared with headings “Elementary School,”  
“Middle School,” and “High School”  
blank white paper, pens

Handouts: “Stages of Adolescent Development”  
“Section 1: Resources & References”

Time: 60 min

---

Before we delve into core concepts of positive youth development, let’s take a brief look at the youth we are working with. What do we know about adolescent development? What is going on regarding physical/sexual, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development? Although many of you have taken a course in child and adolescent development, a brief refresher might be helpful.

When does adolescence start and end?

*Entertain some comments.*

This is not an easy question, is it? Generally, adolescence is considered to begin with the onset of puberty. The average age for girls is 10-12 (though some enter puberty as early as 8), and for boys the age is 12-14 (some as early as 10), so we can say roughly around 10. There is less agreement about the end of adolescence. In the past, age 19 was commonly seen as the end of adolescence; with findings in adolescent brain development, there is some push to lengthen adolescence to age 25. For now let’s go with the age range 10-19.

*Slide 13: Adolescent Development*



#### **Activity: Timeline of Adolescent Development (30 min)**

*(Three stations, prepared newsprint)*

I would like to invite you to test your understanding of adolescent development – the common milestones, events, and tasks that young people have to develop or cope with at certain ages. Let’s divide you into three groups. One group will investigate elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. We included elementary school since puberty and adolescence start there for some youth.

In your group, think about the development that happens during that time – physically, socially, emotionally, cognitively, and morally. What skills and competencies are they developing? Also, think about the challenges they face during that time: major events or changes that might influence their behavior and development.

Work on it collectively as a group. You can use words or symbols or pictures to record your events and tasks.

*Debrief: Have groups report out, starting with elementary school. Ask after each group report if others have questions or want to add something. Add important tasks and events if they are missing.*

*Thank the groups for doing a good job.*

*Refer to handout “Stages of Adolescent Development” as a reference. Also highlight the additional resource “Teen Years Explained,” a comprehensive publication by the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health which is available for free download (listed on the “Section 1: Resources & References” handout).*

Keep in mind that developmental psychologists are moving away from the use of milestones to describe adolescent development. Young people often do not progress through milestones; their development tends to jump up and down in these charts. However, developmental charts can still be useful as a general guide while working with youth and when developing program activities.

### *Slide 14: Tasks of Adolescence*

**Tasks of Adolescence**

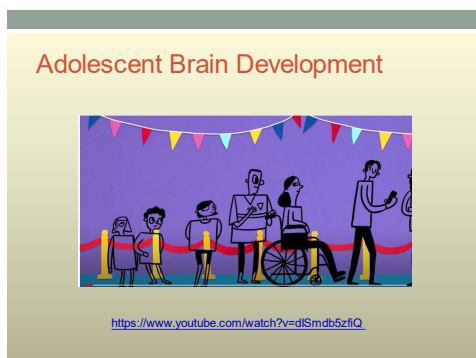
- Adjust to maturing bodies and feelings
- Develop/apply abstract thinking skills
- Develop/apply more complex perspective taking
- Renegotiate relationship with adults
- Take on increasingly mature roles and responsibilities
- Develop/apply new coping skills
- Develop identity (different aspects)
- Form friendships that are close and supportive
- Identify moral standards, values, and beliefs
- Understand/express more complex emotional experiences

Text: *(click through the topics)*

Reviewing adolescent development as we just did, we realize that adolescents face many tasks and challenges during this time. Here is a brief summary:

- They need to adjust to bodies that nearly double in size and acquire sexual characteristics. This also includes establishing a sexual identity and developing the skills for romantic relationships.
- Their cognitive skills change gradually but profoundly, allowing abstract and hypothetical thinking.
- They acquire the ability to see things from another person's perspective, increasing their ability to resolve problems and conflicts in social situations and relationships.
- As they confront and handle all the changes that are occurring, adolescents acquire new abilities to cope with risk, stress, and conflict.
- They develop a more complex, personal, and moral belief system that will guide their decisions and behavior.
- They develop more competent and sophisticated ways to understand and handle emotions.
- The quality of their friendships changes; the focus shifts from interests and activities to feelings and understanding.
- They explore and form a stable sense of self. Core roles that are explored are gender, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity.
- They take on the roles and responsibilities of adulthood with respect to work, family, community, and citizenship.
- They negotiate a new relationship with parents and adults, balancing independence and ongoing connection.

*Slide 15: Adolescent Brain Development*



Text:

We hear much about the adolescent brain. Advances in technology have shed light on brain functioning and development. We now realize that adolescent brains are not fully developed. The brain centers that are responsible for rational decision making and emotional regulation follow different developmental timelines.

### **Activity: Video - Brain Development in Teenagers (5 min)**

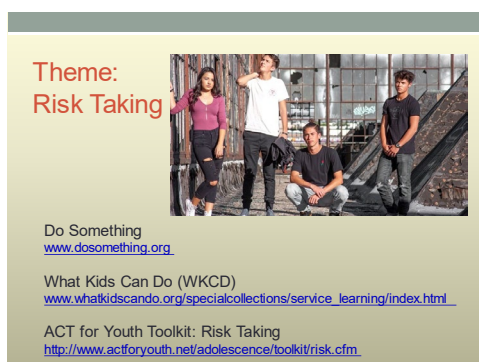
Let's watch a brief video that explains what we know about adolescent brains. *Play video - "Brain Development in Teenagers," Oxford University's Brain Diaries Exhibition, 2017. (2:16 minutes.)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dISmdb5zfiQ>

*Debrief video.*

We would like to end this section with a few important themes of adolescence that we need to understand and pay attention to.

### *Slide 16: Theme: Risk Taking*



Text:


As we have seen in the video, risk taking is part of normal adolescent development. It attracts a lot of attention because of the potential harm it can cause (accidents, injuries, substance abuse, etc.). We would like to highlight a few resources through which you can learn more about the dynamics of risk taking and strategies to channel the need for excitement and daring activities to positive outlets.

*Briefly open websites:*

- **DoSomething.Org** (click on "Causes") – This is a resource that helps young people explore issues or causes and become activists. This will provide them with opportunities to take positive risks and challenge themselves.  
<https://www.dosomething.org/us>
- **WKCD: Service Learning** – This is another youth-focused, resource-rich web site. The pages on service learning list many youth-led projects, providing additional examples of positive risk taking for youth.  
[http://www.whatkidscando.org/specialcollections/service\\_learning/index.html](http://www.whatkidscando.org/specialcollections/service_learning/index.html)
- **ACT for Youth Toolkit: Risk Taking** – If you are interested in learning more about what the research says about risk taking, this link connects you to resources on adolescent risk taking. Part of the Adolescent Development Toolkit, it includes fact sheets, videos, and presentations.  
<https://www.actforyouth.net/adolescence/brain.cfm>

*Slide 17: Theme: Identity Formation*

**Theme: Identity Formation**



Self-identity is how you **see yourself**

Social identity is how **others see you**.

A Process of *Exploration and Commitment*

Resource: <http://www.actforyouth.net/adolescence/identity.cfm>


Text:

One key theme of adolescent development is identity formation. The process of figuring out who you are and how you fit in begins in childhood but gains great importance during adolescence. We don't have time to go into depth here, but there are great resources on the ACT for Youth website about identity.

<https://www.actforyouth.net/adolescence/identity.cfm>

*Slide 18: Social Identities Activity*

**Multiple Social Identities**



Text:

This is a good time to think back to your adolescence – your middle and high school years. And think about the hats you wore, the social identities others recognized in you. We all have many dimensions that identify us.

Thinking back about my adolescence I see...

*Add your own social identities.*

**Activity: Reflect on your own multiple identities during adolescence (15 min)**

I would like to invite you to think about your high school years and the social identities you explored. Take a piece of blank paper and draw a large circle on it. Then mark the circle with 5 or 6 social characteristics other people most likely identified with you.



Take a couple of minutes to do that.

*After a few minutes ask participants to form small groups of three.*

Please share in your group your reflections and how you felt at the time. How did you experience this time? Any pride, confusion, struggles, or conflicts? Take 5 minutes in your groups.

*Debrief; ask a few volunteers to share their experiences with the full group.*

*Slide 19: Multiple Social Identities (wheel)*

**Multiple Social Identities**

Adolescent population is increasingly diverse

LGBTQ Youth come out earlier; identities continue to evolve

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). The Promise of Adolescence

Diversity Wheel as used at Johns Hopkins University

Text:

Identity is multidimensional, and the adolescent population is increasingly diverse. Beliefs about how individual ethnic and racial backgrounds relate to each person’s self-definition are very personal. This is more complex for immigrant youth, who are negotiating their home culture with the existing cultures in a new country. Research shows that young people with cross-racial friendships do better with differences, social and emotional competence, and wellness.

LGBTQ youth are expressing their identities earlier; they are also experimenting with new identities.

Adolescence may be a prime time to expose youth to differences; it is a time for transforming social cognition.

*Slide 20: A Sense of Self*

**Sense of Self**

A cohesive, congruent sense of self is linked to:

- Self-esteem
- Goal-setting
- Emotional well-being

How can you support young people in their exploration of identity?

Text:

A sense of self is linked to self-esteem, goal setting, and emotional well-being. Let's take a couple of minutes and reflect on some strategies you have used to support a positive sense of self in the youth you work with. How can you support young people in their exploration of identity? Call out some ideas.

*Slide 21: Theme: The New Digital World*

Theme: The New Digital World

The infographic shows that 99% of teens own a smartphone, up from 36% in 2012. It also shows that American teens, ages 13 to 18, used entertainment screen media for an average of seven hours and 22 minutes each day in 2019.

<https://www.common sense media.org/social-media-social-life-infographic>

Text:

Adolescents are leaders in adapting to the new digital world. Recent reports indicate that close to 90% of adolescents have access to smart phones. Now, driven by the pandemic, it may have reached 100%.

And they are spending a lot of time online. What are the implications for adolescent development?

*Slide 22: What is the Impact?*

What is the Impact?

- Research ambiguous
  - Youth with low social and emotional stability more likely to experience negative impact
- Changes in:
  - Connection
  - Focus
  - Rest

Christine Carter, 2020

Text:

The research about the impact of screen time and online engagement on mental health is still unclear. While research has not established that digital engagement harms mental health, some studies have shown correlations between high levels of screen time and poorer psychological well-being. In her 2020 book "The New Adolescents," Christine Carter discussed certain areas of concern:

- **Connection:** Comparing themselves to people online, many teens report loneliness, exclusion, and feeling pressured.
- **Focus** – Many teens experience a decrease in deep learning.
- **Rest** - Cognitive overload leads to sleep deprivation. Adolescents need 9 hours of sleep. Many youth simply do not get enough sleep. In turn, lack of sleep can lead to depression, anxiety, and problems with daily functioning.

*Transition:*

Using a positive youth development approach, we can work with youth to create the developmental opportunities that foster well-being. The first step is to turn our focus to positive outcomes.



## Section 2: Positive Youth Outcomes

### 2.1 Building Positive Youth Outcomes

**Objectives:** Participants will be able to name core competencies young people need to succeed  
Participants will be able to outline a series of strategies to build these competencies

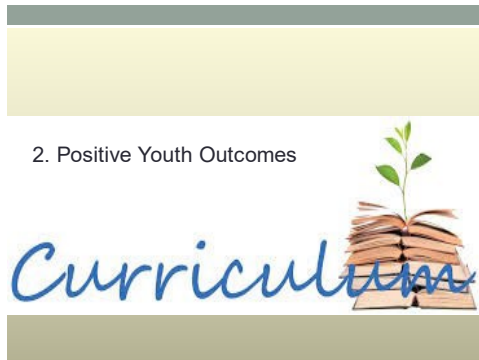
**Material:** slides, markers  
6 sheets of newsprint prepared with titles: Competence, Confidence, Caring, Connection, Contribution, Character

**Handouts:** “Positive Youth Outcomes – 6 Cs”  
“Section 2: Resources & References”

**Time:** 40 minutes

---

*Slide 23: Section 2*



One of the core principles of PYD is a focus on building positive outcomes. Instead of preventing or fixing problems we aim to build skills and competencies.

Karen Pittman, founder of the national youth development initiative Ready by 21, framed it this way: “Problem free is not fully prepared.” She later added “Fully prepared is not fully engaged.” Young people need a set of skills and competencies to successfully transition into adulthood, and they need to engage in their communities to become active citizens.

Let’s start to explore and unpack this concept. Can we think about this in very concrete terms?

#### **Activity: Large Group Brainstorm (5 min)**

What are the competencies, attitudes, character, and values we want to see?

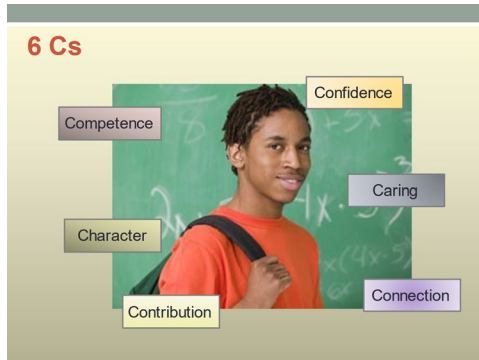
*Write down suggestions on newsprint. If possible, try to organize by competencies, attributes, prevention outcomes (maybe divide the newsprint into 3 sections).*

*Summarize comments.*

There is a lot of agreement about what young people need to learn to become productive adults and citizens. Over the past 20 plus years, several frameworks have been developed and promoted. Although the language is different, they all address very similar skills and qualities.

In his book “The Good Teen,” Richard Lerner describes his framework: the 6 Cs.

*Slide 24: 6 Cs*



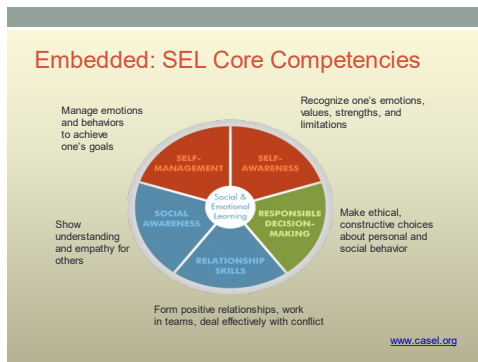
Text:

The Cs emerged in the 1990s with contributions from many researchers and practitioners. Based on research, this framework provides us with a vocabulary to describe what young people need to succeed:

- **Competence** – the ability to act effectively in school, social situations, and at work. This includes academic, cognitive, social, emotional, and vocational competencies.
- **Confidence** – a sense of overall self-worth and efficacy.
- **Connection** – a sense of belonging, positive bonds with people and social institutions.
- **Character** – respect for society and cultural rules, an inner moral compass.
- **Caring** – a sense of sympathy and empathy for others, a commitment to social justice.
- **Contribution** – active participation and leadership, giving of oneself to bring about change in social and civic life.

*Refer to handout “Positive Youth Outcomes –6 Cs.”*

Slide 25: Embedded: SEL Core Competencies



Text:

The social and emotional learning field as represented by CASEL – the Collaboration of Academic, Social and Emotional Learning – has identified core competencies that we all need to navigate to do well in this world. The CASEL list helps flesh out the social emotional competencies mentioned in the 6 Cs.

- **Self-management** – the ability to manage emotions and behaviors to achieve one’s goals
- **Self-awareness** – the ability to recognize one’s emotions, values, strengths, and limitations
- **Responsible decision making** – the ability to male ethical and constructive choices about personal and social behavior
- **Relationship skills** – the ability to form relationships, work in teams, and deal effectively with conflict
- **Social awareness** – the ability to show understanding and empathy for others

ACT for Youth developed a social and emotional learning toolkit that provides a wide range of resources to build and strengthen these core competencies. Refer to “Section 2: Resources and References” handout.

Slide 26: Other Outcome Models

**Other Outcome Models**

**4-H – Essential Elements**

- Belonging:** Positive relationship with being able to include and be included in a safe environment
- Mastery:** Engagement in learning Opportunity for mastery
- Independence:** Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future Opportunity for self-determination
- Generosity:** Opportunity to give and practice service for others

**A SHARED VISION FOR YOUTH**

**External Assets**

**What Teens Need to Succeed**

**Internal Assets**

**CIRCLE OF COURAGE®**

Text:

There are several other models of positive youth outcomes that touch on the same concepts but use different language. Some are probably very familiar to you.

*Click to move from one model to the next:*

- **Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development** is an outcome model that builds on the Circle of Courage: Mastery, Independence, Generosity, and Belonging.
- **40 Developmental Assets** is a popular model developed by the Search Institute.
- **Ready by 21**, Karen Pittman’s organization, promotes a shared vision of outcomes and indicators: “healthy and safe, connected and productive in life, school, and work.”
- **Circle of Courage** merges educational theory and practice with “the cultural wisdom of tribal peoples.”

We don’t have time to review these models here, but your “Section 2: Resources & References” handout includes resources on all of them.

Knowing what young people need to succeed is the first step. Next, we have to think about how we build these desired outcomes. How do we support young people in developing the skills, character, and attitudes they need? There are many different strategies and approaches we can take. You are all working with young people, so you are already using many of those techniques.

### **Activity: Bump it Up (25 min)**

Using the 6 Cs model, we have six newsprint sheets – one for each C. We will split you into six small groups and each group will brainstorm approaches and activities to build young people’s capacity in this area. You will have only a few minutes. Next we will “bump up” every group’s worksheet clockwise to the group next to them. Each group can add strategies to the list generated by the earlier group. After a few minutes we will bump it up one more time. Ready? Any questions?

*Arrange six small groups, hand out prepared newsprint and markers. When everybody is settled, ask the groups to start. Allow four minutes for the first, and three minutes for the next two rounds.*

*Debrief. Have each group present. Ask after each group presentation if there are additional ideas. Summarize key strategies and approaches.*

This activity made it clear that activities are not the only way to nurture and build positive outcomes. Relationships, recognition, organizational supports, boundaries and expectations, and supportive environments are all important strategies and mechanisms that help young people grow.

*Transition:*

Karen Pittman introduced a helpful framework to summarize these elements: Services – Opportunities – Supports.



## 2.2 Services – Opportunities – Supports

Objectives: Participants will identify services, opportunities, and supports for youth in the community

Material: slides, pens, paper

Handout: “Services, Opportunities, Supports: The SOS Framework”

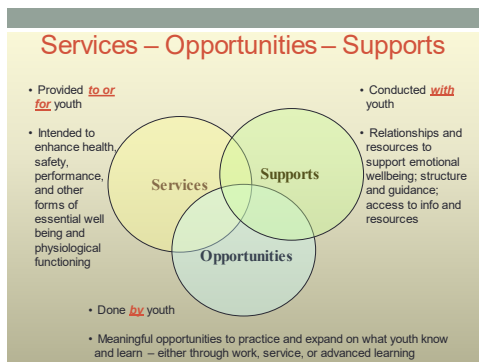
Time: 20 min

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Let’s take a look at Karen Pittman’s framework of Services – Opportunities – Supports.

Thinking back to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, this model incorporates the reality that young people might have needs that must be addressed before they can learn and thrive. It also reflects a core principle of youth development: Youth development is community-based. Young people grow up and develop in interaction with various social groups and institutions within a community, not just in programs.

*Slide 27: Services – Opportunities – Supports*

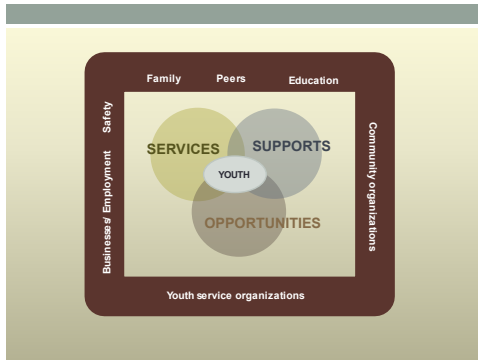


Text:

- **Services:** Services are the efforts done to or for youth in order to enhance health, safety, performance, and other forms of essential well-being and physiological functioning (going back to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs). These are the traditional services provided by public health systems, school districts, and other providers.
- **Supports:** Supports include processes and strategies undertaken with young people that facilitate access to interpersonal relationships and resources. Taken as a whole, supports promote a positive climate within which development occurs. Pittman identified three different categories of support: **Emotional support** facilitates a sense of safety, nurturing, and friendship. **Motivational support** provides positive expectations, guidance, and developmentally appropriate boundaries. **Strategic support** facilitates access to needed resources and information.

- **Opportunities:** In this model, opportunities are done by young people. It is within the realm of opportunities that youth become actors rather than recipients. Youth are provided meaningful and real opportunities to practice and expand on what they know and learn – either through work, service, or advanced learning. Opportunities in which youth are encouraged to exercise meaningful decision-making roles ultimately demand and foster the greatest number of competencies in young people.

*Slide 28: SOS*



Text:

It is not the responsibility of one agency to provide all the services, opportunities, and supports a young person needs to grow. Using an ecological approach we understand that all social groups and institutions a young person is connected with will participate in providing needed services, supports, and opportunities. Going back to the paradigm shift we discussed in Section 1, we are all responsible for the youth in our community. Youth development is everybody’s business.

**Activity: Using the SOS Framework (15 min)**

*Divide into groups of three.*

In your groups think about young people you have worked with, young people who needed extra support — support that your agency or program could not supply. What community services and supports have you reached out to or worked with to help a young person? Think about the web of services available in communities. Discuss and write down the agencies you have referred to and worked with.

*After 5 minutes:* Let’s think about the web of community services a bit differently. In your work you want to provide young people with lots of different opportunities to learn, find their passions, lead, and expand their horizons. Your agency might not be able to offer a wide range of opportunities. Think about opportunities you wanted to create for young people and how you collaborated with other agencies or community groups to make it happen. Discuss this in your group and write down some of these scenarios and agencies/groups you worked with.

*After 5 more minutes: debrief. Ask for volunteers to share observations and comments. Highlight that meeting needs is part of paving the road to positive outcomes. Emphasize that building positive outcomes is community-based. There are many players and settings involved in developing youth.*

*Refer to handout: "Services, Opportunities, Supports: The SOS Framework."*

*Transition:*

To identify opportunities that are meaningful and engaging for youth we need to find out what the youth we are working with care about – what motivates them. We need to find and build on their interests and strengths.

## 2.3 Strengths and “Sparks”

Objectives: Participants will be able to describe a strength-based approach  
Participants will be able to use sparks/strengths to build skills

Material: video/AV equipment, slides, pens, markers, newsprint

Handouts: “Sparks Peer-to-Peer Interview”  
“Strength-based Information Gathering”

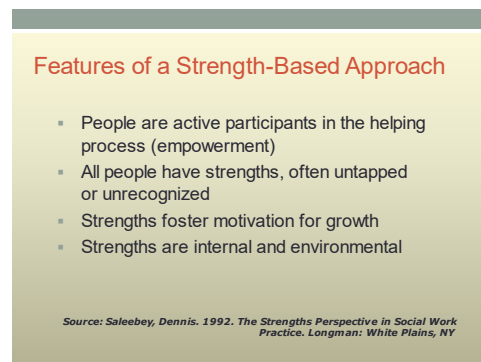
Activity sheet: “Sparks Interview Questions”

Time: 60 min

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We stated in the beginning that positive youth development is an approach that is strength based. It shifts youth work from a problem focus to building positive outcomes and building on strengths. What do we mean by “building on strengths” or “using a strength-based approach”?

*Slide 29: Features of a Strength-Based Approach*



Text:

Emerging from the field of social work and supported by resiliency research, a strength-based approach is a powerful set of ideas, assumptions, and techniques:

- People are not recipients but active participants in the helping process, which is very empowering. Let’s remember Bronfenbrenner as well who stated that young people are agents in their development.
- All people have strengths, but often they are not used or even recognized. As all of you have probably experienced, if you ask young people what their strengths are, they don’t know what to say.
- Being able to use your strengths creates motivation to grow and learn. The converse is also true: We all know that it is not very motivating to focus on your weaknesses and work on improving your weak spots.

- Finally, we know from resiliency research that we have internal strengths such as abilities and talents, and external strengths such as relationships and opportunities to matter, to be responsible for something.

*Slide 30: Identify and Nurture Individual Strengths*

Social Competence	Problem Solving	Autonomy	Sense of Purpose & Belief in the Future
-Responsiveness -Communication skills -Could recruit support -Empathy and caring -Compassion and forgiveness -Pro-social behavior	-Ability to plan -Flexibility -Insight -Critical thinking -Resourcefulness	-Positive Identity -Internal locus of control -Mastery and self efficacy -Adaptive distancing and resistance -Self-awareness and mindfulness -Humor	-Goal direction, achievement motivation and educational aspirations -Special interest, creativity, imagination -Optimism and hope -Faith, spirituality and sense of meaning

Bonnie Benard, 2004

Text:

The first step is to look for and identify young people’s internal resiliencies. Using findings from resiliency research, Bonnie Benard created this breakdown of internal resiliencies or protective factors. Young people may not demonstrate all these traits and skills but will exhibit some of them. This is a great framework to keep in mind to help us identify internal resiliencies and help young recognize their own strengths. As we just discussed, often young people do not know or recognize their own strengths. It is our role to make them aware of the strengths they have.

*Review a few examples on slide.*

*Slide 31: Build on Internal Strengths*

Build on Internal Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You believe that young people have strengths (attitude)</li> <li>• You identify personal strengths (you look beyond the problems)</li> <li>• You teach them that they have strengths (name them, show them how they are being used, suggest how they can use them in the future)</li> <li>• You give it time – you persist</li> </ul>

Nan Henderson  
Home - Resiliency in Action | Nan Henderson, M.S.W., Ph.D.

Text:

How do we build on the strengths we see in young people? Nan Henderson, a national expert on resiliency, described the simple strategies you see on the slide.

Believing that young people have strengths is especially important when working with young people who are struggling and who may be very negative and self-defeating. They may never have heard anybody, especially any adult, say that they have skills and strengths.

If you are working with young people in the juvenile justice system or foster care you are looking at them with a bifocal lens. They are often described and identified by their problems, so it is important see beyond that and look at their resiliencies and strengths.

Here is another approach to unlock internal resiliencies and strengths. The late Peter Benson from Search Institute coined the term “sparks,” bringing concrete meaning to this concept of strengths (2008).

### *Slide 32: Sparks*



Text:

Peter Benson called a special quality, skill, or interest that we are passionate about a “spark.” Sparks originate from inside a person. When we express it, we feel alive, useful. Life has a purpose.

All young people have one or more sparks. Sparks are more than just things we like to do. They’re a prime source of meaning, self-directed action, and purpose.

If the word “sparks” doesn’t work for the youth you are working with, you can talk to them about their strengths, interests, passions, or purpose.

Let’s hear directly from several young people what their sparks are.

### **Activity: Video - What is Your Spark (5 min)**

*Play video - Williamsport Area School District “What is Your Spark?” (3:16 minutes).*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YFw8oif\\_qU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YFw8oif_qU)

*Debrief.*

How do you see sparks playing a role in our efforts to build positive youth outcomes? Why is it important for us to identify sparks?

*Entertain a few comments.* Yes, sparks are great motivators.

Research conducted for the Search Institute reveals that only about 50% of youth recognize and identify sparks. *(For additional information, refer to “Section 2: Resources & References” handout, which includes a research report by the Search Institute).* So there is our charge. We need to help young people identify and develop their sparks.

### **Activity: Spark Interview (20 min)**

*Distribute “Sparks Interview Questions” activity worksheet. Have participants work in teams; ask them to partner with somebody they don’t work with.*

Hearing about other people’s sparks might help you learn about your own. Interviewing adults or peers can be a useful exploratory strategy for young people. We will adapt this technique to give you a chance to explore the idea of sparks, purpose, and passions. Please team up with a partner – somebody you don’t work with – and give yourselves some space.

Partner A goes first – who is partner A? Please raise your hand. Great! You have 5 minutes to do the interview. After that Partner B will take over.

*Adult interview questions:*

1. Did you know what your sparks (interests, passions) were as a teenager? What were they? What were you excited about? How did you find your sparks?
2. How did you work on your spark? What did you do to improve it? What skills did you learn along the way?
3. Who were your spark champions (people who supported your spark)? How did they help you?

*Debrief.* Ask volunteers to share what they have learned about themselves and about sparks. Refer to handouts “Sparks Peer-to-Peer Interview” and “Strength-Based Information Gathering” and explain there are other ways to assess strengths or sparks.

### **Activity: Brief Discussion and Brainstorm (5-10 min)**

Once you identify young people’s strengths or sparks, how can you use this to inform your programming? How might you use it to engage young people in skill-building activities?

*Write down ideas on newsprint. Highlight additional resources on their “Section 2: Resources & References” handout – in particular the Search Institute and Step-It-Up-2-Thrive websites.*

## 2.4 Developmental Relationships

Objective: Participants will identify key features of developmental relationships

Material: slides, pens, paper

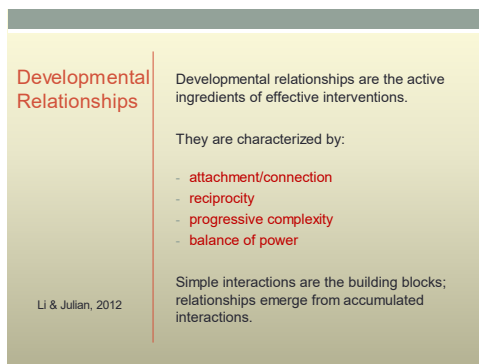
Handouts: Simple Interactions Tool  
Search Institute's Developmental Relationship Framework

Time: 30 minutes

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We have known for a long time that relationships are critical in youth work. Through our relationships we engage youth and help them grow. We also know now from brain science that positive relationships can counter adversity and stress. There has been less clarity about what positive relationships look like. We would like to explore two research-based approaches that describe developmental relationships by breaking them down into behaviors and characteristics. Both approaches provide us with tools to reflect on our own relationships with young people. And we'll discuss how we would use them in our work.

### *Slide 33: Developmental Relationships*



Text:

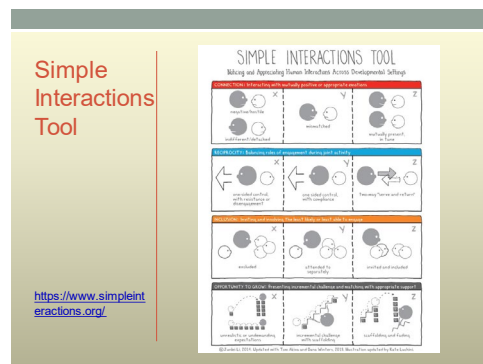
Li and Julian see developmental relationships as the active ingredients of effective intervention. They looked at how adults interacted with children and youth and identified several types of interactions that are critical:

- Interactions that create connection.
- Interactions are initiated by both people, not just by the adult with the young person following. (There is reciprocity in the relationship.)
- Interactions that challenge youth to learn skills, to grow.
- Interactions that promote inclusion. (They refer to that as balance of power.)

Simple interactions are the building blocks; relationships emerge from these interactions.



Slide 34: Simple Interactions



Text:

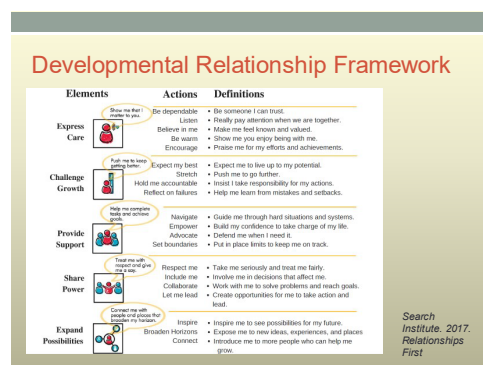
Based on their research, Li, Julian, and colleagues developed a very simple tool that can be used to observe and/or reflect on your interactions with young people. The focus is on helping staff identify what they are doing well and then reinforcing these positive behaviors. The tool helps to guide very concrete, behavior-specific feedback. You have a copy of the tool in your handouts.

Go to the website, open the tool and open each scale. Use the brief animations to describe each scale. Ask if there are any questions or observations.

Ask participants to turn to their neighbor on the right and take a few minutes to discuss how they could use and apply this tool in their workplace.

After 5 minutes, ask for volunteers to share what they discussed.

Slide 35: Developmental Relationship Framework



Text:

The Search Institute built on Li and Julian’s research and developed a broader stroke framework that looks at 5 dimensions of a developmental relationship (ask participants to pull out the handout: Search Institute’s Developmental Relationship Framework):

- Expressing care
- Challenging growth

- Providing support
- Sharing power
- Expanding possibilities

In their research they surveyed thousands of young people, finding that roughly 50% of youth report being in one relationship that rates highly in these dimensions. They also compare parents, siblings, teachers, youth program staff – young people experience these dimensions differently with different groups. Research reports and a self-assessment are available on the Search website.

*Ask if there are any questions or comments.*

### *Slide 36: Building Developmental Relationships*



Text:

Search offers a different strategy for intentionally building developmental relationships. They developed an interview guide that programs can use when they start working with youth – for example, youth who just came into an afterschool program. The guide incorporates what we discussed when we talked about strengths and sparks. In a roughly 15-minute interview or conversation you ask young people:

- What are their talents and passions?
- What are their abilities and values?
- What keeps them up at night?
- What are their supports: places and people?

On the slide you see links for the guide and a TED talk explaining developmental relationships and the 4Ss interview. The links are also in your Section 2 Resources handout.

*Ask if there are any questions.*

*Ask participants to turn to their neighbor on the left and discuss how they would use the framework, tools in their workplace.*

*After 5 minutes ask for volunteers to share their discussion points.*

## Section 3: Youth Voice and Engagement

### 3.1 What Do We Mean by Youth Engagement?

Objectives: Participants will be able to define youth engagement and types of engagement

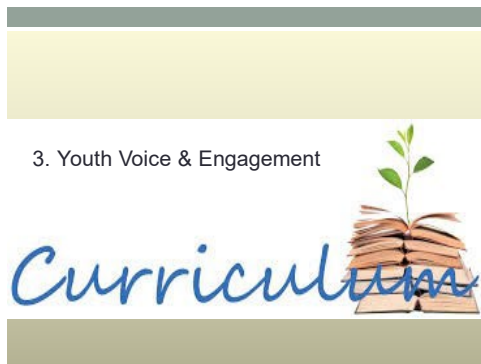
Material: slides, AV equipment

Handout: “Meaningful Roles”

Time: 20 min

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*Slide 37: Section 3*



Over the next couple of hours we would like to explore with you one of the most important principles of positive youth development – youth engagement. When we started our youth development conversation we briefly talked about Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development. Remember? We described development as a reciprocal process. In their interaction with various social groups and institutions, young people are influenced and directed by them; at the same time, young people have an impact on these social environments. Agency is an important factor in development.

Youth engagement is really all about engaging young people in meaningful ways. That means creating opportunities for youth to make decisions, take on responsibilities, and contribute to improving outcomes for themselves and others.

#### **Activity: Partner Reflection (7 min)**

Let’s start by giving you a chance to reflect and talk about how you have involved young people in decision making and meaningful roles at your work (present or past). Discuss with your partner what roles and responsibilities you have given young people. Take two or three minutes.

*Debrief. Ask volunteers to share what they talked about. Summarize and highlight common themes. Categorize examples by:*

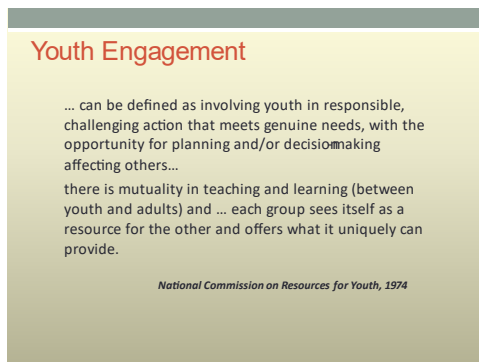
- Choice (mainly affecting young people themselves/younger youth)

- Voice (perspective/opinion)
- Participation (making contributions to / taking on responsibilities in carrying out projects)
- Governance (leadership, decision making at higher organizational levels)

You identified many ways young people can be actively engaged and empowered to influence projects, programs, and organizations. There are many expressions of youth engagement, and there are different levels of influence. And it usually happens in collaboration with adults. Typically, youth engagement requires us to grant youth power they did not have before.

Defining youth engagement can be challenging. Within the field of youth work there are several definitions emphasizing different aspects: youth in governance, youth voice, and youth participation.

*Slide 38: Youth Engagement*



Text:

We use an older definition of youth engagement that goes back to the National Commission on Resources for Youth in 1974.

They defined youth engagement as “...involving youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with the opportunity for planning and/or decision-making affecting others...there is mutuality in teaching and learning [between youth and adults] and ... each group sees itself as a resource for the other and offers what it uniquely can provide.”

We promote this definition because it highlights youth and adults collaborating and acting together to effect change. This is different from simply handing over all decision making to youth – a common misinterpretation of youth engagement. By working together and sharing their expertise and unique perspectives, both youth and adults benefit and learn from each other.

### Slide 39: Examples of Youth Engagement

**Examples of Youth Engagement**


**Youth in Governance**

**Youth Voice One Vision**  
(City of Rochester Mayor's Youth Advisory Council)  
<https://www.cityofrochester.gov/yvov/>

**Forum for Youth Investment: Building Effective Youth Councils.**  
<http://www.readyby21.org/resources/building-effective-youth-councils>

**Social Activism**

Akiva, T., et al. (2017). **Reasons youth engage in activism programs: Social justice or sanctuary?** *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 53.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320107376\\_Reasons\\_youth\\_engage\\_in\\_activism\\_programs\\_Social\\_justice\\_or\\_sanctuary](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320107376_Reasons_youth_engage_in_activism_programs_Social_justice_or_sanctuary)



Text:

Here are some examples of youth engagement in governance and social justice efforts.

- The first one represents the youth council: Youth Voice One Vision, supported by the City of Rochester, New York. Through this council, young people have been involved in making decisions about youth services and issues in the City.  
<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/yvov>
- The second link is a resource – a report by the Forum for Youth Investment on city or statewide youth councils across the country. It provides examples, scope of work, best practices, and other resources.  
<http://www.readyby21.org/resources/building-effective-youth-councils>
- The third item is an article that discusses young people's engagement in social activism and justice.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320107376\\_Reasons\\_youth\\_engage\\_in\\_activism\\_programs\\_Social\\_justice\\_or\\_sanctuary](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320107376_Reasons_youth_engage_in_activism_programs_Social_justice_or_sanctuary)

### Slide 40: Youth in Media/Education

**Youth in Media/Education**



- Video PSA: The Accidental Bully  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97de0hsC7xI&list=ULUSS0AF2Eg9Bbb4QcmjasMw>
- How Youth Learn: Ned's GR8  
[http://www.whatkidscando.org/features/stories/2013/01/how\\_youth\\_learn/index.html](http://www.whatkidscando.org/features/stories/2013/01/how_youth_learn/index.html)

Text:

Given young people’s typically easy grasp of digital technologies, we want to highlight a few examples of how young people can be involved in meaningful ways to advocate or educate using new technology.

The first example is a video public service announcement put together by young people in NYC to educate youth about the use of social media. The second example is a brief, narrated animation that young people helped develop to educate adults about how teens learn. We will see that one later on.

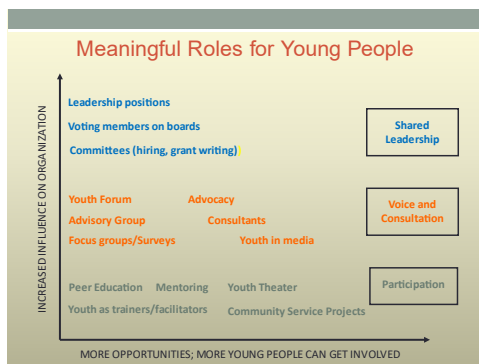
**Activity: Video - Accidental Bully (5 min)**

Let’s watch the video PSA: Accidental Bully (*More Than Just Sex; 2:37 min*).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97de0hsC7xl&list=UUSS0AF2Eg9Bbbq4QpmjasMw>

*Discuss using media for youth voice.*

*Slide 41: Meaningful Roles for Young People*



Text:

As we have already seen, there are many ways young people can be actively involved in decision making – taking on responsibilities that impact other people and organizations. We would like to introduce the model of youth engagement shown here, adapted from the Youth Commission in Hampton, Virginia.

There are more opportunities for young people in the bottom level, **Participation**. In this category young people learn to plan, make decisions, implement, and evaluate on an action-oriented and concrete level. Usually projects have a clear timetable and results can be seen quickly. The overall scope of projects is typically set by adults.

The second level, **Voice and Consultation**, highlights youth opinions, as youth are encouraged to express their perspectives on an issue. Young people are the experts here and take on the role of consultants. This role requires different skills from those used to complete tasks, projects, and service training. Results might not be apparent right away.

The third level, **Shared Leadership**, requires many skills and youth motivation. It is more abstract and less action-oriented than other roles, and results might be long-term. Fewer young people are likely to

be interested and skilled enough to move into these positions. This is also true for adults – fewer adults have the motivation and skills to be in leadership positions. Recruiting young people to the Board of Directors to establish youth voice in the agency might be tempting, but it is typically not successful without extensive preparation and support efforts for youth and adults.

We use this model because it shows that there are many opportunities for young people to get involved according to their interests and skills. The model also provides a path for growth and future opportunities. Young people are more likely to get started with concrete, action-oriented projects that provide them with skill-building opportunities. As they get to know the agency as well as their own potential and interests, they can move up to different positions and responsibilities at higher levels of impact.

*Entertain questions about this model, refer to “Meaningful Roles” handout.*

*Transition:*

In the next section we will test the model and explore how feasible and easy it is to create meaningful youth engagement in your agency.

## 3.2 The Benefits and Challenges of Youth Engagement

Objectives: Participants will understand the benefits of and resistance to establishing youth engagement

Material: sheets of paper, pens, slides

Handout: "Youth in Decision Making"

Time: 40 min

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Let's assume you have been successfully involving young people in various projects such as a community event, an educational program for younger children, or co-facilitating a workshop for other youth agencies. Youth have been involved in planning, directing, and evaluating the projects.

### **Activity: Take a Stand (30 min)**

Now you want to step it up and bring young people onto the hiring committee for youth workers. You want them to be part of the hiring process from beginning to end: reviewing the job description, recruitment materials, and applications, as well as interviewing and decision making. To do this right, you need to get buy-in from the administration as well as your co-workers and supervisors. Let's put it to the test.

Can I have a few volunteers – maybe four – please join me here in front of the group? (*Set up four chairs. Divide volunteers into two teams of two.*) We'll have two teams.

- One team will be promoting this idea and will present the benefits of involving youth in the hiring process.
- The other team will take a stand against it. They will identify all the challenges and disadvantages.
- Everybody else will pretend to be administrators and supervisors that need to be convinced that this is a good idea. We will vote on it after hearing both sides.

*Assign teams. Offer sheets of paper and pens to write down talking points for their presentations. Both teams have 5 minutes to prepare their arguments and presentation. The presentations will be 2-3 minutes.*

*Ask the "pro" team to do their presentation. Give the administrators a chance to ask clarification questions. Then ask the "con" team to do their presentation. Ask if there are any clarification questions.*

*Ask the administrators to vote "pro" or "con." Thank everybody.*

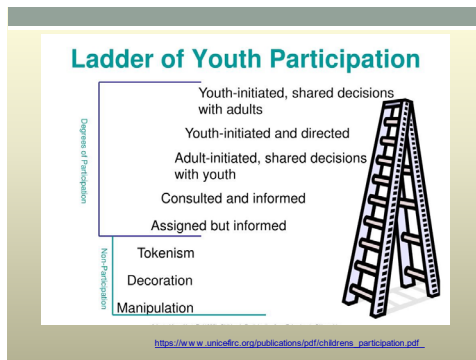
*Debrief. Ask for impressions and observations. Several questions might be interesting:*

- Were there any surprises? Why?



- How realistic was the scenario and the outcome?
- Did it compare to your experiences?
- What do you see as the biggest challenges?
- What strategies have been successful?

*Slide 42: Ladder of Youth Participation*



Text:

Often adults have trouble sharing control with young people and consciously or unconsciously jeopardize a real partnership. Roger Hart’s ladder of youth participation may illuminate the difficulties we have establishing equitable youth-adult partnerships. Hart introduced this ladder of youth participation or engagement many years ago. Drawing from his international youth work, he published this model in 1992.

The bottom three steps are non-participation. Sometimes adults ask young people to the table, but they don’t really take them seriously. The adults want to create the image of youth engagement, but it is only decoration or a token gesture.

The other steps are different ways of engaging youth in decision making. They reflect different degrees of providing support and sharing control.

The ladder may be a helpful tool to gauge where your program or agency is regarding youth engagement. It can help us avoid tokenism, decoration, and manipulation.

### Slide 43: Benefits for Youth



**Benefits for Youth**


- Civic Development (skills, attitudes, awareness)
- Social/Emotional Development (belonging, efficacy)
- Vocational Development (skills, social capital)

Text:

Since we know that establishing youth engagement in your program or agency might be a challenging task, it will be helpful if you have supportive research that backs you up and provides you with some extra ammunition to make your case. What are the benefits for young people?

Research tells us that they will gain competence in civic engagement, skills, and knowledge. They will enhance their social and emotional skills and develop greater sense of efficacy and belonging. And they will learn skills that promote their vocational development as well as knowledge of the community and its social institutions.

### Slide 44: Benefits for Adults, Organizations, and Communities



**Benefits for Adults, Organizations, and Communities**

- Professional Development (skills, confidence)
- Social/Emotional Development (connectedness)
- Organizations reflect & respond to youth concerns
- Organizations are more appealing to potential funders
- Public policies/programs are more effective & equitable
- New coalitions emerge to address issues

Text:

*Review slide. Refer to Shep Zeldin's monograph, summarized in the "Youth in Decision-Making" handout. Stress that youth engagement is beneficial for youth organizations; it gives them authenticity and credibility as youth service organizations.*

From experience we know that efforts to establish meaningful roles in organizations often encounter resistance and skepticism. By knowing the benefits for youth, adults, and organizations, you can make a strong argument to co-workers and administrators for creating these roles.

### 3.3 Adulthood – Obstacle to Youth Engagement

Objective: Participants will be able to articulate the concept of adulthood and its implications for youth work

Material: slides, pens

Handouts: “Section 3: Resources & References”  
“Worksheet: Framework for Understanding Adulthood”  
“Framework for Understanding Adulthood”

Activity sheets: “Adulthood Scenarios”

Time: 40 min

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We have heard some compelling reasons for engaging young people in meaningful roles, but even with this knowledge we will face resistance and challenges along the way. A key issue is that we as adults have a hard time taking young people seriously, partly because we have a lot more life and professional experience, and partly because youth culture is ever changing and increasingly foreign to us.

#### **Activity: When You Were a Teen... (10 min)**

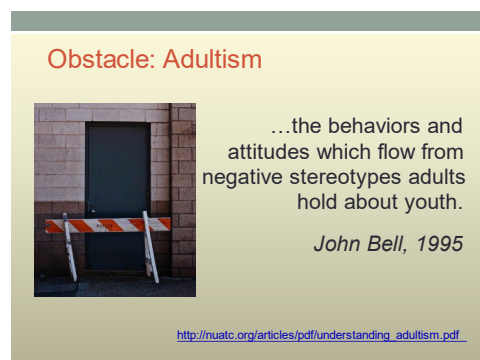
A good way to understand this adult resistance is to remember what it feels like when you are at the receiving end. Let’s go back in time to when you were a teenager. Think back to times in your teen life when you experienced unfair treatment because of your age. What were some of the negative things adults in your life said to you? And how did it make you feel – what was the impact?

*Give a couple of personal examples.*

Form small groups of three and share your experiences. Take a few minutes to do this.

*Debrief. Ask volunteers to share experiences and emotions. Stress that self-reflection is a good strategy for becoming aware of and beginning to address negative attitudes they might have toward youth.*

#### *Slide 45: Adulthood*



**Obstacle: Adulthood**

...the behaviors and attitudes which flow from negative stereotypes adults hold about youth.

*John Bell, 1995*

[http://nuato.org/articles/pdf/understanding\\_adulthood.pdf](http://nuato.org/articles/pdf/understanding_adulthood.pdf)

Text:

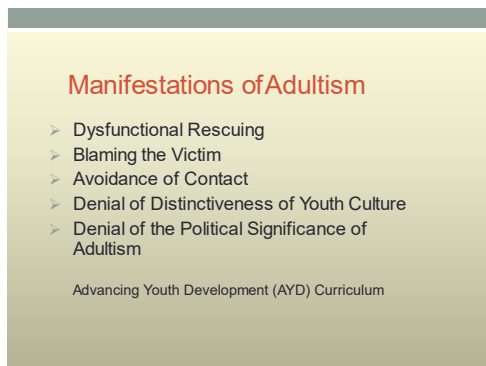
We call this attitude “adultism”: our negative assumptions, behaviors, and attitudes towards young people. Adultism is a powerful issue that is strongly embedded in society and manifests in different ways.

Parents sometimes react negatively to the concept of adultism. We recognize that in highly stressed communities, adults may need to maintain a strongly authoritative role in order to keep young people safe. Strict rules that are explained and enforced respectfully do not fall into the category of “adultism.”

*Refer to John Bell’s article “Understanding Adultism,” listed on the “Section 3: Resources & References” handout.*

### **Activity: Adultism Scenarios (30 min)**

*Slide 46: Manifestations of Adultism*



Text:

To make the impact of adultism clear, we will now introduce you to a framework first developed for the Advancing Youth Development curriculum in the early 1990s. This framework helps identify and address subtle forms of adultism. Adultism is an important issue to discuss in depth, since when working with young people it is essential to be authentic and non-judgmental. As we will see, sometimes we are not aware that we are making or acting on assumptions, and we might then be interpreted as judgmental.

*Use the handout “Framework for Understanding Adultism” as a guide to introduce these concepts:*

- **Dysfunctional rescuing:** We assume that young people are not able or ready to do the task, so we take over and do it for them.
- **Blaming the victim:** We assume that behavior problems are solely the responsibility of young people themselves; we might not consider the circumstances and conditions that influence their behavior.
- **Avoidance of contact:** We assume that we know their needs, but due to lack of contact and communication we might create programs that address our needs more than the needs of young people.

- **Denial of distinctiveness of youth culture:** We assume that there are no cultural differences, leading to an age-blind approach.
- **Denial of the political significance of adultism:** We ignore the social, political, and economic realities of young people, resulting in false expectations.

Let's explore how these expressions of adultism can look in youth work situations. We will introduce five different scenarios for you to work with. We will form five groups, and each group will discuss one scenario.

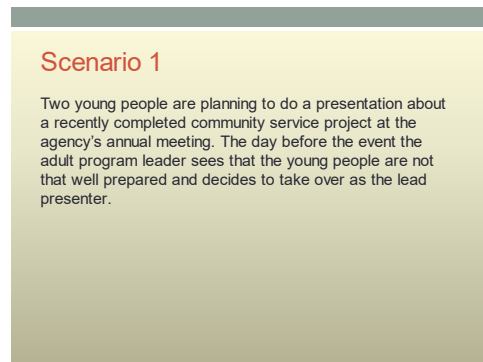
*Form five groups. Hand out the five different "Adultism Scenarios" activity worksheets.*

In your group review your scenario and discuss it. Address these questions:

- How would young people react to this situation? How would they feel about it?
- What would be the long-term consequences if they are repeatedly treated like this?
- What could you as the adult do differently? What would be an alternative adult response?

*Debrief each scenario while showing the appropriate slide.*

*Slides 47-51: Scenarios*



**Scenario 1**

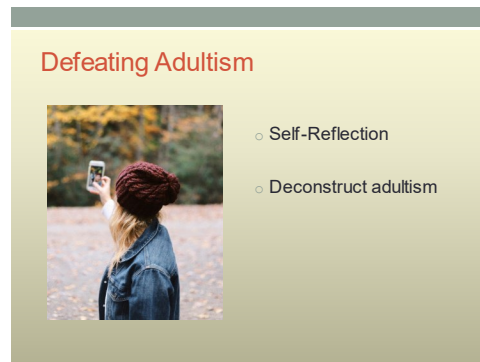
Two young people are planning to do a presentation about a recently completed community service project at the agency's annual meeting. The day before the event the adult program leader sees that the young people are not that well prepared and decides to take over as the lead presenter.

*Have each group report out. Give time for clarification questions, discussion, and additional strategies.*

*Invite the other groups to comment. Ask the participants if they have experienced similar situations at their workplace.*

*Debrief the scenarios activity: insights, observations, application to their work.*

### Slide 52: Defeating Adulthood



**Defeating Adulthood**

- Self-Reflection
- Deconstruct adulthood

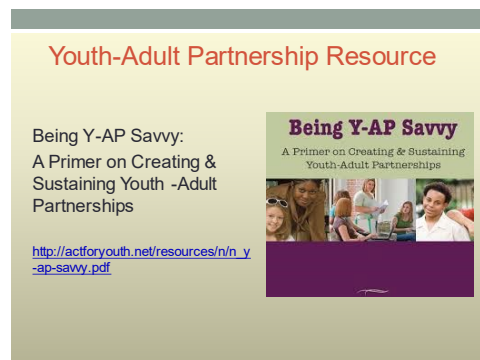
Text:

Here are a couple of strategies that help break down adulthood.

Start with self-reflection. As we did in the beginning, think back to your teen years – how you were treated by adults and how it made you feel. Remember that!

Secondly, use the adulthood worksheet (*handout: “Worksheet: Framework for Understanding Adulthood”*) or work with scenarios like the ones we did with your team or staff to deconstruct potential adultist attitudes at your workplace.

### Slide 53: Youth-Adult Partnership Resource



**Youth-Adult Partnership Resource**

Being Y-AP Savvy:  
A Primer on Creating & Sustaining Youth -Adult Partnerships

[http://actforyouth.net/resources/n/n\\_y-ap-savvy.pdf](http://actforyouth.net/resources/n/n_y-ap-savvy.pdf)

Text:

We would like to share with you a great resource: “Being Y-AP Savvy: A Primer on Creating & Sustaining Youth-Adult Partnerships.” Developed by Shep Zeldin and his colleagues at the University of Wisconsin, this is a step-by-step manual for investigating whether it would be feasible to create a youth-adult partnership at your organization. The manual helps you identify benefits and challenges, and it provides planning steps and assessment tools. It is available online.

[https://actforyouth.net/resources/n/n\\_y-ap-savvy.pdf](https://actforyouth.net/resources/n/n_y-ap-savvy.pdf)

*Slide 54: Youth-Adult Partnership Tools*



Text:

A good starting point may be a youth-adult partnership self-assessment. There are several assessment tools available online.

- The **YALPE** includes an assessment of youth voice in an agency, along with several other tools. The assessments are done by youth and adult teams.
- The **youth-adult partnership rubric** is an online assessment. Given its design as a rubric it may provide some guidance on how to improve what's going on in the agency. It can be done online.

Let's take a quick look.

*Open it up and show a couple of scales.*

*Transition:*

Now we have a better understanding of meaningful roles for young people – which happen in collaboration with adults – and we've discussed the underlying adult resistance to working with young people as partners. Clearly we have to work with adults to prepare them for these partnerships. But we need to prepare young people as well.

### 3.4 The “Y” in Youth-Adult Partnerships

Objective: Participants will identify strategies to prepare young people for youth-adult partnerships

Material: butcher block paper (roughly 3 feet by 8 feet) taped to wall, markers, slide

Time: 20 min

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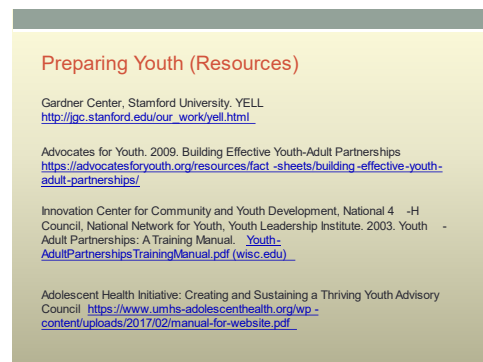
We’ve spent time discussing the challenges of involving adults in effective youth engagement, which ideally takes the form of a youth-adult partnership. It has been our experience that both youth and adults need to be prepared for youth-adult partnerships. Let’s now focus on young people. What can we do to prepare youth for a partnership with adults, and how can young people help us get adults into the right frame of mind?

#### **Activity: Graffiti Wall (10 min)**

This is a creative brainstorm activity. Please grab a marker and go to the paper on the wall. Using words, symbols, or pictures, write down how you have prepared young people to work in alliance with adults. Some of you might have used different words such as leadership training or youth-adult teamwork.

*Debrief. Have a couple of volunteers read of the strategies. Highlight themes.*

#### *Slide 55: Preparing Youth Leaders*



Text:

There are many ways to prepare young people to work in partnership with adults. Here are a few resources that are available online for free. Briefly review resources.

- Gardner Center, Stamford University: YELL. [http://jgc.stanford.edu/our\\_work/yell.html](http://jgc.stanford.edu/our_work/yell.html)
- Advocates for Youth: Building Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships. <https://advocatesforyouth.org/resources/fact-sheets/building-effective-youth-adult-partnerships/>



- Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development: Youth-Adult Partnerships: A Training Manual. <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/youthadultpartnership/files/2015/03/Youth-AdultPartnershipsTrainingManual.pdf>
- Adolescent Health Initiative: Creating and Sustaining a Thriving Youth Advisory Council. <https://www.umhs-adolescenthealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/manual-for-website.pdf>



## Section 4: Youth Development Programming

### 4.1 Effective Youth Development Programming

Objectives: Participants will be able to identify key components of effective programming  
Participants will identify strategies to enhance programming

Material: sheets of newsprint, prepared index cards, markers, tape, slides, pens

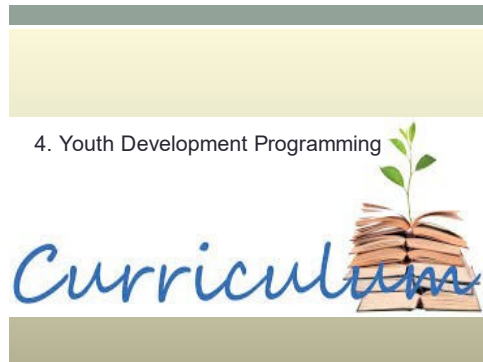
Handouts: “Features of Positive Developmental Settings”  
“Resources: NRC Features of Positive Developmental Settings”

Activity sheets: “Agency Climate Bingo”

Time: 40 min

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*Slide 56: Section 4*



We’ve talked about core concepts of youth development mostly in the larger community context. As youth workers we mainly interact with young people on the program level. How do we apply these concepts to programming? And how do we know that we are doing this well, with quality? Over the past 20 years a body of research has focused on quality youth development programming. We will take a look at the findings, but first let’s think about what young people are looking for in youth programs.

#### **Activity: 30-30 (15 min)**

*Divide participants into an even number of small groups (about four per group). Assign groups to different corners of the room with a lot of space between them. There will be two different assignments; groups with the same assignments should not be next to each other.*

I would like to give you a challenge and a little competition. Each group has five minutes to generate and discuss 30 ideas. Write them down on the newsprint. We have two different assignments, so half of the groups will work on assignment one and the rest of the groups will work on assignment two. Are we ready? I will give each group the assignment and when I say “go” you’ll get started.

*Hand each group their assignment on index card.*

Assignment 1 – Why do young people join youth programs?

Assignment 2 – Why do young people join gangs?

*Give them three minutes. Set up a prize for the winner (optional).*

*Debrief. Ask each group to bring their newsprint to the front and hang them up next to each other, grouped by assignment. Ask them to read over the lists of reasons why young people join programs and gangs. (Or ask two volunteers to read aloud the lists). Debrief surprises, similarities, and differences.*

*Summarize: Young people have similar reasons for joining programs and gangs, thus gangs represent real competition for youth programs. Let's take this challenge and make an extra effort to provide exciting, quality youth programming.*

*Slide 57: Features of Positive Developmental Settings*



Text:

What does the research say about effective youth programming? In 2002, the National Research Council published an important book: “Community Programs to Promote Youth Development.” They reviewed well-evaluated community-based programs for young people age 10-18, programs that had been shown to achieve positive outcomes for youth. Through the review they identified eight features of successful youth development programs. Many of you have probably heard about them. Currently, these eight features serve as a measuring tool or standard for effective programming. Let’s take a closer look...

*Refer to “Features of Positive Developmental Settings” handout and review each feature. Q & A.*

**Activity: Agency Climate Bingo (10 min)**

Let’s do a little test and see how your agencies and programs are doing in some of these categories. I would like to invite you to play bingo: Agency Climate Bingo.

*Distribute “Agency Climate Bingo” activity worksheets.*

Please review the bingo sheet. Take a couple of minutes. When everybody is ready, take a pen and the paper and find people in this group who can sign off on one of these categories. Make sure to ask how they implement this particular feature. Each person can sign off only once on your sheet. Let's see if you can get the first bingo – when you have five in a row, call out “Bingo!”

*Optional: have a small prize available for the winner.*

*Debrief. Ask which categories were surprising, easy, or tough? Any observations? Implications?*

*Wrap up by handing out and reviewing the “NRC Features of Positive Developmental Settings: Resources” handout.*

## 4.2 Creating an Inclusive Program Environment

**Objectives:** Participants will identify and demonstrate key components of a trauma informed approach

**Material:** AV equipment, slides, thin markers, 4-5 pads of large sticky notes

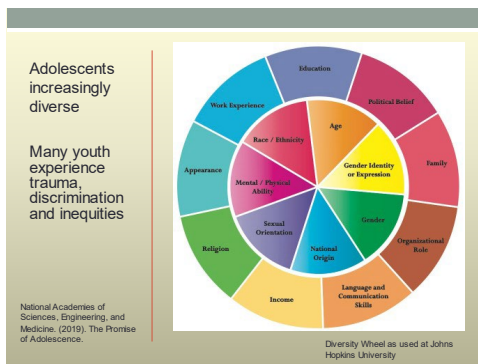
Prepared in advance: 6 sheets of newsprint, each labeled with one of the 6 principles of a trauma-informed approach

Time: 30 minutes

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When we started the training we discussed the changing demographics of adolescents and the fact that many young people experience and live with trauma and toxic stress. The NRC report on developmental settings discusses the need for cultural sensitivity and creating a sense of belonging but does not include trauma and toxic stress. We would like to stress the urgency of intentionally developing inclusive program environments by integrating a trauma-informed approach.

### *Slide 58: Adolescents Increasingly Diverse*



Text:

Just a brief reminder: the 2019 report “The Promise of Adolescence” highlights the increasing diversity of adolescents and also notes that many young people experience or live with trauma, discrimination, and inequities.

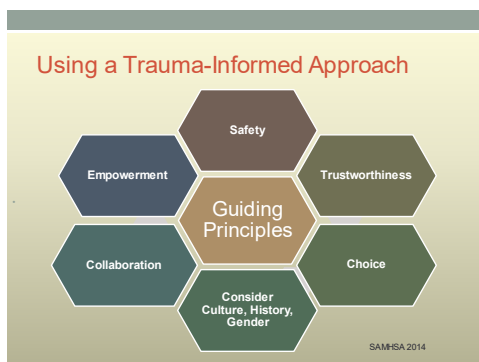
*Slide 59: Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts*



Text:

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) studies has shown that child abuse and neglect and other risk factors in early childhood can have a lasting impact on development, health, and well-being. The more risk factors, the stronger the impact. The study also taught us it is far more common for people to experience adverse and toxic stress during childhood than we ever thought. More recent CDC surveillance data show that Black, Latinx, and LGBTQ youth, as well as youth with household incomes below the poverty line, are more likely to be exposed to trauma and toxic stress.

*Slide 60: Using a Trauma-Informed Approach*



Text:

Since we are more aware of young people living with trauma, programs and agencies need to adopt a trauma-informed approach. What does this mean? SAMHSA outlines six guiding principles:

- **Safety:** Ensuring physical and emotional safety; checking in with young people to see if they feel safe in your program setting.
- **Trustworthiness:** Being clear and transparent about the program and your position, how things are done in the agency. Being clear about expectations and program structure.
- **Choice:** Allowing individuals to take part in decision-making regarding their level of participation; giving them choices in programming.

- **Empowerment:** Ensuring that individuals have a voice during programming; building on their strengths.
- **Collaboration:** Communicating respect for young people’s life experience; communicating that they are the experts on their own lives; working together.
- **Cultural, Historical, and Gender issues:** Acknowledging the role culture, history, and gender can play in trauma; actively moving past cultural stereotypes and biases; understanding the healing value of traditional cultural connections.

*Ask if there are any questions.*

**Activity: Using a Trauma-Informed Approach (30 min)**

Let’s think about how we can bring these principles to our work with young people. I am sure that many of you have used strategies to make programs inclusive and safe that follow some of these principles.

*Divide participants into groups of 4 or 5. Give each group a pad of large sticky notes and thin markers.*

In your groups, discuss strategies you have used or can think of that address each of these themes. Take 10-15 minutes to discuss your ideas. Write down the strategies – one idea or strategy per sticky note. When I say: “time is up,” please post the sticky notes on the newsprint on the wall. There is a sheet of newsprint for each principle.

*Once the groups posted their sticky notes, ask volunteers to read off the list of strategies for each principle. Debrief observations, comments, and takeaways.*

*Slide 61: Resource*



Text:

For additional ideas, strategies, and activities to intentionally make program environments inclusive check out this resource. We developed the training manual “Creating Inclusive Program Environments for Youth with Different Abilities” with trauma in mind.



### 4.3 Scaffolding: A Universal Teaching Strategy

Objectives: Participants will identify and demonstrate key elements of a common teaching strategy

Material: AV equipment, slides, newsprint, markers

Handouts: “Scaffolding Overview”  
“Positive and Corrective Feedback”  
“Five Reasons to Stop Saying Good Job”  
“Section 4: Resources and References”

Time: 40 minutes

---

Effective programming provides opportunities for skill building. We would like to introduce you to an instructional technique that is common in education, though less so in the youth services field. “Scaffolding” is a teaching strategy that can be tailored to youth of any age in different settings. Many of the embedded techniques you know already – as we will see right now.

#### **Activity: Teach a Skill (20 min)**

*Ask participants to come together in an open space in the training room. Have them partner up with another person they do not work with.*

Here is your charge. You have two minutes to teach each other a skill, a skill that your partner does not have at this point. Make it a simple skill, but it has to be new or unfamiliar to your partner. For example, teach a dance step, or a yoga move, or a phrase in a different language. You have a couple of minutes.

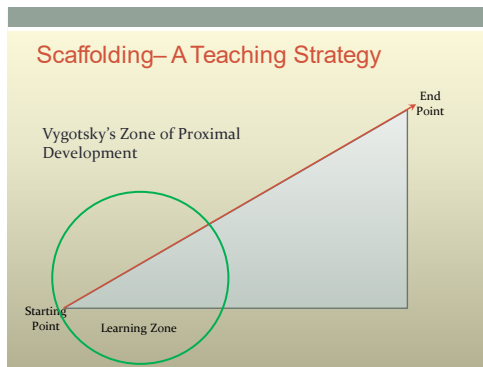
*Check in with each team and keep them focused on a simple skill. Monitor time and give them a warning after two minutes to start wrapping up. Have each team briefly present the skills they learned.*

*Ask participants what techniques they used to teach the skills (modeling/demonstrating, rehearsing, coaching, praise, breaking skill into smaller steps...). Write comments down on newsprint.*

*Have participants go back to their seats.*

Scaffolding uses many of the techniques you have just demonstrated. Scaffolding evolved out of a learning theory originally proposed by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky in the 1930s.

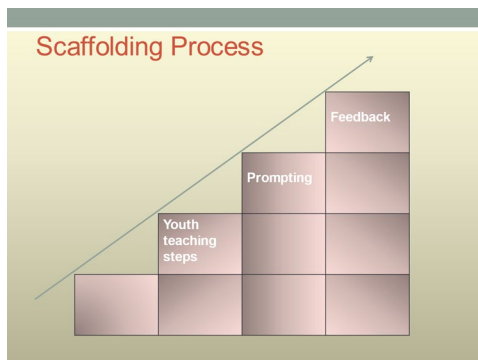
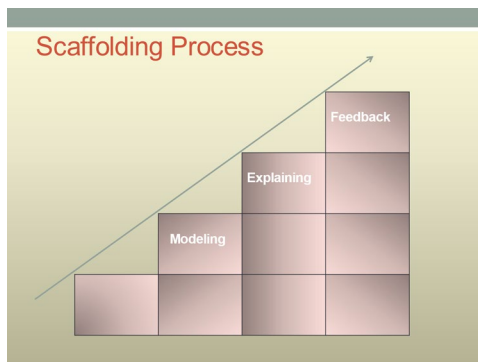
Slide 62: Scaffolding – A Teaching Strategy



Text:

The optimal place or time for learning occurs when a student can build on skills or knowledge he or she already has to successfully advance to a new level. The student can't do it alone, though; he or she needs the support and guidance of a more knowledgeable person such as a teacher. This is what Vygotsky calls "the proximal zone of development." We might also call it the optimal learning zone.

Slides 63 & 64 (animated): Scaffolding Process



*Click once to get the slide started. The scaffold will build itself; when ready (see below), click twice for the second slide and the scaffold will be taken down gradually.*

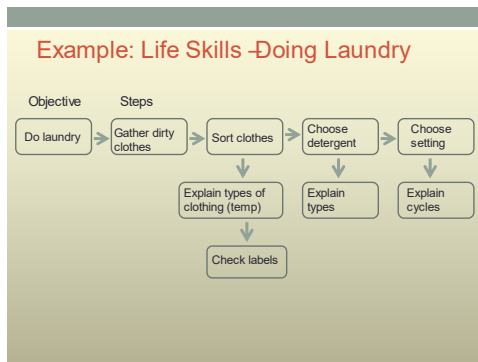
Text:

How do you help young people experience their optimal learning zone? You do it by engaging them from the beginning. You assess with them where they are: what do they know, what are their strengths, and what are their goals moving forward? This will increase their motivation to engage and learn. It involves breaking down the task into smaller steps.

*(Click first "Scaffolding Process" slide.)* You provide guidance and support, working side by side with them and monitoring their progress. The guidance can take different forms, from modeling, explaining steps, and giving feedback to encouraging a young person to teach another youth.

*(Click twice to move to and launch next slide.)* Just like using scaffolding when you work on houses, you continue to build the scaffolding as needed, and take it down when the work is done and you don't need the scaffold any more.

### *Slide 65: Life Skills Example – Doing Laundry*



Text:

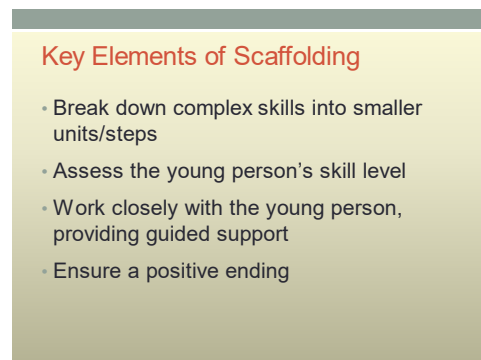
Let's use a concrete example: doing laundry, a life skill.

First we break it down into smaller steps:

- Gather dirty clothes
- Sort clothes, explaining what each type of clothing needs: white, colored, delicate, need for different temperatures
- Check labels in clothes
- Review use of detergent, softener, stain remover
- Review washing cycles (cold, warm, hot)
- Load clothes
- Set washing cycle according to type of clothing
- Add appropriate detergent, etc.
- Activate washer

Besides the action steps we have several cognitive steps such as retrieving information/knowledge, categorizing, and decision making. These are essential since they explain why certain steps have to be done in a certain order. Breaking complex skills down into smaller steps will also help you assess where the young person is at. They might know certain steps but not others, so the scaffolding can start where they need assistance.

*Slide 66: Key Elements of Scaffolding*



Text:

Key elements of scaffolding are:

- Breaking down complex skills into smaller tasks or steps.
- Assessing the young person's existing skill level: identifying where they are with respect to the skill, their strengths, interests, etc.
- Working closely with the youth to provide guided support; using techniques such as modeling, verbal rehearsing and talking through, prompting, providing feedback, etc.
- Ensure a successful ending: You want to set a goal that is challenging but also attainable to make it a positive experience. This can be part of the initial assessment process and should be done jointly with the young person.

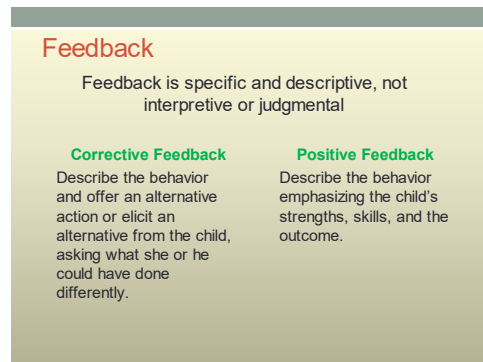
*Refer to handout "Scaffolding Overview."*

How would you apply this technique? Would this approach change what you are currently doing?

*Debrief. Stress that they are probably using many of these techniques. This exercise might encourage them to be more intentional about using scaffolding.*

Before we move on, we would like to highlight one facilitation tip. Providing feedback is part of the scaffolding process. The ability to provide accurate feedback is an important skill for any teacher or facilitator.

## Slide 67: Feedback



**Feedback**

Feedback is specific and descriptive, not interpretive or judgmental

**Corrective Feedback**  
Describe the behavior and offer an alternative action or elicit an alternative from the child, asking what she or he could have done differently.

**Positive Feedback**  
Describe the behavior emphasizing the child's strengths, skills, and the outcome.

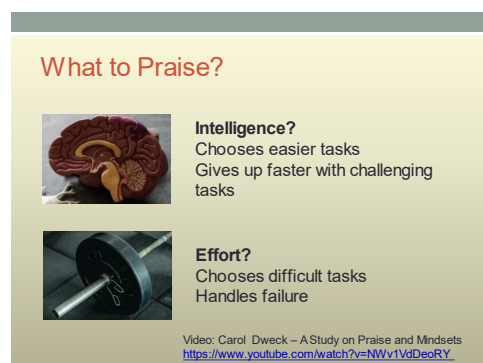
Text:

There is more to feedback than saying “good job” or “not that way.” Feedback needs to be concrete, descriptive, and behavior specific. The focus is on the behavior, not the person.

*Review slide.* This is sometimes hard to do. We often find ourselves saying quickly and often without thinking: “good job” or “you are so smart.” This sounds more like a judgment, and it does not provide young people (or adults) with any information about their performance. For young people to learn and improve their skills, concrete feedback – positive and corrective – is critical.

Two of your handouts will help you practice this. One, called “Positive and Corrective Feedback,” gives you a few examples. The second one is called “Five Reasons to Stop Saying Good Job,” and it is a short article that explores the negative effect of relying on statements such as “good job” or “great.”

## Slide 68: What to Praise?



**What to Praise?**

**Intelligence?**  
Chooses easier tasks  
Gives up faster with challenging tasks

**Effort?**  
Chooses difficult tasks  
Handles failure

Video: Carol Dweck – A Study on Praise and Mindsets  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWv1VdDeoRY>

Text:

Providing praise can actually be harmful. Be intentional about what you praise.

Carol Dweck, a researcher at Stanford University, has done extensive work on the question of what motivates children to learn. Her research demonstrates that there is a huge difference between saying “you are so smart” (praising intelligence) and “you worked hard” (praising effort). Children who were praised for their intelligence chose easier problems and gave up faster; children who were praised for

effort chose harder problems and showed less frustration with failure. In her book “Mindset,” Dweck develops the concept of fixed versus growth mindsets based on this research.

Think about how you use praise with young people or your own children. How often have we said “you are smart ... you can do this”? Praise is good, but let’s be intentional about using praise effectively.

**Activity: Video – Praise and Mindsets (7 min)**

*Show video: Carol Dweck – A Study on Praise and Mindsets (4:51)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWv1VdDeoRY>

*Debrief video and refer to additional resources on the “Section 4: Resources and References” handout.*

## 4.4 Active Learning

Objective: Participants will be able to identify strategies for engaging young people

Material: AV equipment, prepared newsprint, markers, slides, tape, pens

Handouts: “Engaging Youth: Planning Activities”  
“Consensus - Action Planning”  
“Engaging Youth: Reflection Activities”  
“Experiential Education & the Experiential Learning Cycle”  
“Reflective Group Conversation”  
“Open-Ended Questions”  
“Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences”  
“Collaborative Learning”

Activity sheet: prepared Reflection Cubes - download from Step It Up To Thrive:  
[http://www.stepitup2thrive.org/downloads/lessons/gps/3\\_GG\\_ReflectionCube.pdf](http://www.stepitup2thrive.org/downloads/lessons/gps/3_GG_ReflectionCube.pdf)  
Print on cardstock (one per participant) and cut out

Time: 40 min

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We started this session on programming by reflecting on why young people join programs and gangs. Let’s go back full circle and ask again: What motivates young people to participate in a program? What type of programming engages them?

### **Activity: Video - How Youth Learn (20 min)**

*Slide 69: Active Learning*



We will explore this question with Ned’s help. Developed with the young people of What Kids Can Do, this video will give us some good ideas.

*Show the video How Youth Learn: Ned’s GR8 8 (6:12 min)*

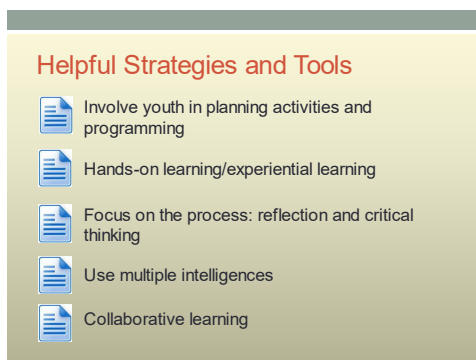
[http://www.whatkidscando.org/featurestories/2013/01\\_how\\_youth\\_learn](http://www.whatkidscando.org/featurestories/2013/01_how_youth_learn)

*Debrief; ask what they take away from the video.*

*As you listen to volunteers report takeaways, reinforce Ned's points when they come up.*

1. I need to feel OK (not hungry, etc., not worried or stressed)
2. It matters – real world stuff, my passions, I can pick my assignment
3. It's active – fun, hands-on, collaborative learning
4. It stretches me – doable, but taken to a new level
5. I need a coach – access to help, time to make mistakes
6. I have to use it – use it or lose it, pop quiz works
7. Thinking back on it – I grow, reflect on it
8. I plan next steps – how to use it

*Slide 70: Helpful Strategies and Tools*



Text:

Ned used humor to highlight several core strategies. One was to build on what youth are interested in, what matters to them. We've already discussed building on strengths and passions. In addition, we have put together several handouts and resources that will help you engage youth in the program activities you are offering.

*Briefly review the "Engaging Youth: Planning Activities," "Consensus - Action Planning," and "Engaging Youth: Reflection Activities," "Experiential Education," "Reflective Group Conversation," "Open-ended Questions," "Gardner's Multiple Intelligences," and "Collaborative Learning" handouts.*

*Refer to the "Social and Emotional Toolkit" on the "Section 4: Resources and References" handout for additional strategies and activities.*



### **Reflection Activity (20 min)**

We've covered a lot of ground in this section. We talked about what the research tells us works in youth development programming. We talked about scaffolding, feedback, and praise. Finally, we discussed strategies for active learning that engages young people.

Let's practice one of the strategies – reflection. And we'll do it in an active and fun way.

*Distribute the reflection cube cut-outs and pens.*

Think about what you have learned in this section. Use the cube and its symbols to write down your takeaways.

*Review symbols with the help of prepared newsprint:*

- Brain – Something that made you think.
- Heart – Something you took to heart.
- Backpack – Something you will take away from this.
- Foot – Some action you want to take when you leave here.
- Wildcard – Additional takeaways.

You can use words or drawing or images to do this. When you are done, fold the cube and tape it together.

*Pass tape around. When they are done, ask the group to take their cube and come to the middle or an empty space in the room. Form a circle. Ask them to roll their cubes into the middle, then pick up a cube from another person. Go through all categories and ask volunteers to read out a few of the comments and reflections under each category. Debrief the reflection activity.*

**Facilitation note:** *There is a short homework assignment that participants should complete prior to Section 5.2. See description in Section 5.2.*



## Section 5: Youth Worker Competencies

### 5.1 What Does a Competent Youth Worker Look Like?

**Objectives:** Participants will be able to describe core competencies for youth workers  
Participants will be able to identify strategies and local resources to develop competencies

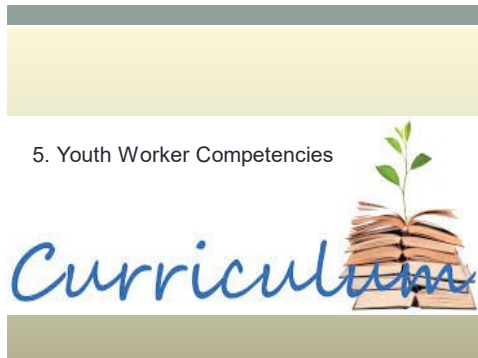
**Material:** large sheets of newsprint, markers, tape, slides, paper, pens

**Handout:** “Section 5: Resources & References”

**Time:** 45 min

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*Slide 71: Section 5*



There are many professional titles and education tracks for people who work with young people, such as teachers, childcare workers, counselors, youth advocates, etc. Most of them are not called “youth workers.” Although there have been efforts to develop career tracks and college degrees for youth workers across the country, there is no clearly defined youth work profession with agreed-upon educational requirements and professional standards.

The former Advancing Youth Development (AYD) Curriculum and Training Project tried to provide professional development and the unifying language of youth development to the youth work field. We hope to do the same with this training. We want youth workers to use a youth development approach in their work with young people. What does it take to do that? What qualities do we want to see in a youth worker? Let’s start out by looking at knowledge, skills, and personal attributes.

#### **Activity: Draw a Youth Worker (30 min)**

*Divide participants into small groups of five. Provide each group with a large piece of newsprint and a set of markers. Instruct them to draw an outline of a person, then fill it with symbols, drawings, and words to illustrate the knowledge, skills, and attributes of an effective and competent youth worker.*

After 10 minutes each group will present their “youth worker.”

Debrief activity by discussing the distribution of skills, knowledge, and attributes. Summarize themes and topics that emerged. Highlight:

A youth worker is not just somebody who has the gift to connect with young people (as in “you have it” or “you don’t”). There are skills and knowledge areas that can be learned and improved.

Slide 72: Competencies: Content Areas



Text:

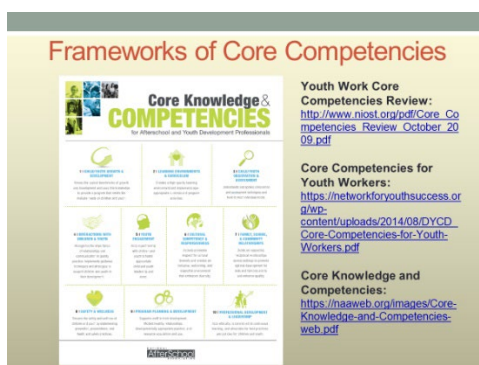
Here is one model of youth worker competencies from the National Afterschool Association. These ten competency areas are fairly common and reflected in most other frameworks. *Briefly review the list.*

*Click:* With the exploding field of digital communication and online learning we should add digital learning and digital literacy – these are important skills to help young people navigate the digital world.

We also need to add trauma-informed youth work since we have learned that many young people are living with trauma and toxic stress. As we've seen, youth workers need to be aware of the impact trauma has on young people and master ways to provide a supportive, safe, and inclusive program environment.

Refer to the handout: “Section 5: Resources and References” for training resources.

Slide 73: Frameworks of Core Competencies



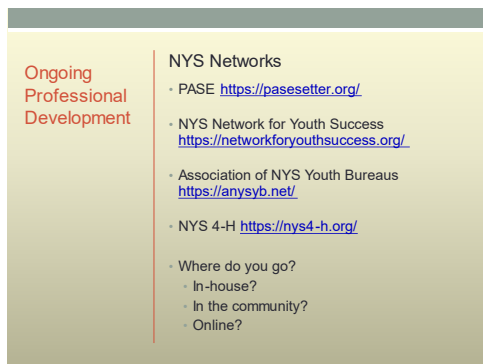
Text:

Several frameworks for core competencies and professional standards of youth workers have been developed. This 2009 report from the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition provides a good overview of other core competency models. The other two resources were developed after the review. You'll find these links in your "Section 5: Resources and References" handout.

### **Activity: Large Group Brainstorm (15 min)**

Looking at these lists of competencies, we all realize that ongoing development and training is needed. Even entering a youth work position with extensive professional development and education would not necessarily provide you with all these competencies.

#### *Slide 74: Ongoing Professional Development*



Text:

Let's take a minute to think about what you can do to increase your knowledge and expertise in some of these areas. Where can youth work professionals go to learn more?

On the slide you see a list of New York State youth networks.

Where else can you go for further professional development?

*Facilitate brainstorm. Write or have a volunteer write suggestions, especially for online sources, on newsprint.*

- In-house?
- In the community?
- Online? (Example: ACT for Youth - <https://actforyouth.net/pyd/professionals/>)

*Summarize:* There are many local and online sources for professional development. And with continuous changes in our fast-moving world we need to be committed to ongoing professional development and learning.

## 5.2 Deconstructing Biases

Objectives: Participants will increase their awareness of unconscious biases  
Participants will identify strategies to address unconscious biases

Material: AV equipment, slides

Handout: "Section 5: Resources and References"

PRE-SESSION Homework: Complete Implicit Attitude Test (IAT)  
Prior to the training day invite participants to complete one or more of Harvard's Implicit Attitude Tests (IAT). Explain that is surprising how much we all absorb societal stereotypes about groups in society (groups identified by race, age, sexual orientation, gender, weight, disability, etc.) without being aware of them. As youth work professionals working with an increasingly diverse youth population it is important to be aware of our hidden biases. The test is done online and does not take more than about 10 minutes. They can pick a category, do one test or several tests; results are provided right after completing the test. Explain that we will discuss hidden biases, their impact, and ways to address them in the upcoming training. IAT:  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Time: 40 min

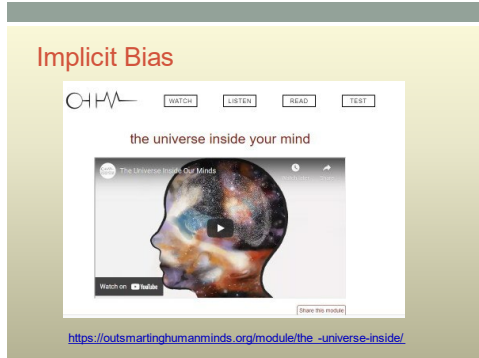
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As we have discussed throughout the training, adolescent demographics are changing. Young people are increasingly diverse. We also know that we all have unconscious or implicit biases against people who are not in our social group. Biases reflect societal prejudices, stereotypes, and assumptions about groups of people. They are transmitted via culture and media. Since biases will influence our behavior and the way we interact with others, it is important to become aware of our biases and find ways to address them.

That's why we invited you to do a bit of homework and test yourself by signing on to one or more of the implicit attitude tests of Project Implicit.

## **Activity: Video - The Universe Inside Your Minds (15 min)**

### *Slide 75: Implicit Bias*



Text:

Mahzarin Banaji, one of the developers of the Harvard Implicit Attitude Test, has insight into what is going on in our minds. Let's take a look at this short video.

*Open the link on the slide and show video "Outsmarting Human Minds" from Harvard (3:45min)*

<https://outsmartinghumanminds.org/module/the-universe-inside/>

*Debrief video. Ask for impressions and responses. Ask for volunteers to describe their test experience and takeaways.*

### *Slide 76: Impact of Biases*



Text:

Unconscious biases will impact our work. Microaggressions are one example. Microaggressions are negative, often hurtful comments reflecting our biases against a group of people.

Let's take a look at a few examples in the classroom.

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/illustration-microaggressions-in-the-classroom>

Open the link, click on the image, and scroll over several of the black dots that appear on the web page. Each dot opens a brief scenario/comment of the teacher and the underlying assumption.

Facilitate a brainstorm: How else can implicit biases interfere with our work?

Summarize points made and stress importance of being aware of your own biases.

### **Activity: What can we do to address our biases? (25 min)**

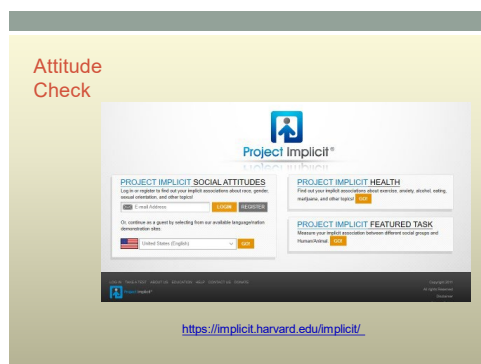
Ask participants to get into groups of 4 or 5.

In your group, take 15 minutes to discuss what we as youth professionals can do to become aware of our own biases and ways to address them. Think about ways to intentionally create safe and inclusive program environments.

Ask groups to share their findings. Answers may include:

- Become aware – do the test
- Question your decisions/assumptions/first impressions
- Be mindful how you engage with young people: whom you engage with more often, how you feel when you engage with young people
- Create a sense of belonging in program groups
- Build in empathy activities
- Assess your program environment/create inclusive environments

### *Slide 77: Attitude Check*



Text:

The first step is to increase awareness of your own biases. Do the test.

Project Implicit is an ongoing research project at Harvard University. Millions of people have participated in this project here in the US and all over the world. You can sign on to the project and check your biases



in several dimensions – age, gender, race, sexuality, weight, disability – and new dimensions are added periodically.

*Slide 78: Outsmarting Human Mind*



Text:

Mahzarin Banaji and her team at Harvard has put together this great website for additional information, research, and strategies on countering unconscious biases. This website is well-named: Outsmarting Human Minds.

I highly recommend spending some time exploring the resources: articles, podcasts, videos, etc.

*Refer to Handout: "Section 5: Resources and References" for additional resources.*

### 5.3 Personal Boundaries: Where to Draw the Line?

Objectives: Participants will be able to identify personal and professional boundaries  
Participants will be able to identify strategies and resources to maintain boundaries

Material: newsprint, markers, slide, cards prepared with scenarios (bulleted below)

Time: 40 minutes

---

Core competencies are critical and important to develop, but there are other ingredients that make for good youth work, and they are harder to prepare for. Working with young people can be challenging. It requires constant decision making, doesn't it? And why is that?

#### **Activity: What Would You Do? (30 min)**

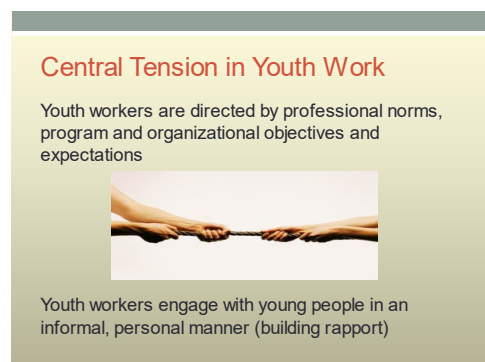
*Hand out prepared cards randomly to participants. Ask each card holder to read the scenario. Ask first the reader and then the group how they would handle the situation.*

Scenarios:

- Anthony asks you for a ride home in your car.
- Alex has not been asked by anybody to go to the prom. They ask you to go with them.
- Dion invites you to his birthday celebration.
- Jordan asks you to write an excuse why she has to miss school tomorrow afternoon.
- Kayla tells you about relationship troubles with her girlfriend. She asks you what to do.
- Ben asks you for \$10. He promises to give it back next week.
- Sofia asks you to be her friend on Facebook.


*Optional: Ask if anybody would like to share another request young people made that was challenging to respond to. Debrief activity.*

*Slide 79: Central Tension in Youth Work*



**Central Tension in Youth Work**

Youth workers are directed by professional norms, program and organizational objectives and expectations



Youth workers engage with young people in an informal, personal manner (building rapport)

Text:

We all recognize that we have to set boundaries working with young people. But we must also realize that there is an underlying dynamic that can make this difficult at times. On one hand we have program and organizational goals and expectations. We also have professional norms and standards. On the other hand we want to establish a relationship with the young person we are working with so we want to be personable, informal, and trustworthy. We want to be something close to a friend, right? Because of this central tension, setting and maintaining clear boundaries can be challenging.

It is important to be aware of professional boundaries and professional responsibilities. For new youth workers, in particular, this might be an area that requires special attention and supervision.

**Activity: Boundaries Brainstorm (5 min)**

How can you help a new youth worker recognize professional boundaries? What helped you set clear boundaries for yourself?

*Write strategies on newsprint. Strategies should include:*

- Know agency's policies, especially around transportation and liability
- Agency's standards on professional conduct
- Mandatory reporting
- Confidentiality rules
- Legal rights of adolescents
- Social media policies / information about social media privacy issues

*Refer to resources on the "Section 5: Resources & References" handout.*

## 5.4 Experience Matters

Objectives: Participants will be able to describe common dilemmas in youth work  
Participants will learn and practice a process on how to address dilemmas in program situations

Material: pens, slides

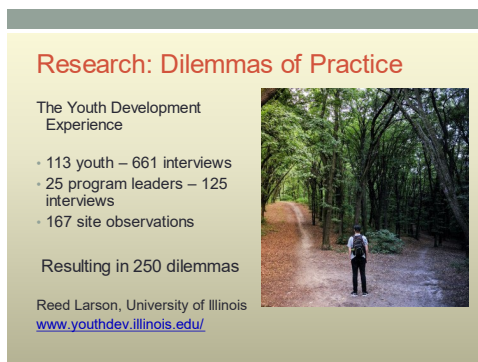
Activity sheet: "Dilemma: Youth in charge, but falling behind"

Time: 40 minutes

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We discussed that maintaining personal and professional boundaries can make youth work challenging. And why are boundaries constantly pushed? Young people come into the program from many different living situations, bringing with them always-changing experiences, stressors, and emotions. This can lead to many dilemmas or situations that require some good decision making and strategizing.

*Slide 80: Research: Dilemmas of Practice*



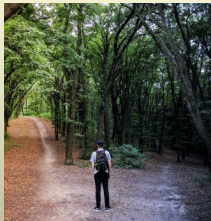
**Research: Dilemmas of Practice**

The Youth Development Experience

- 113 youth – 661 interviews
- 25 program leaders – 125 interviews
- 167 site observations

Resulting in 250 dilemmas

Reed Larson, University of Illinois  
[www.youthdev.illinois.edu/](http://www.youthdev.illinois.edu/)



Text:

Reed Larson at the University of Illinois has done interesting research on dilemmas of youth work practice. His team interviewed young people and program leaders, and conducted many site observations as well, to identify dilemmas and categories of dilemmas. They defined dilemmas as challenges or situations that require deliberation on the part of program leaders. Also, there's not one answer – different leaders respond in different ways to dilemmas. His team identified 250 different dilemmas. This tells us that facing dilemmas is very common. Working with young people requires constant deliberation about situations, possible outcomes, and next steps.

Dilemmas often come about when youth voice and culture collide or do not align with program and organizational norms, practices, and policies. For example, young people developed a video PSA that uses street language; the agency administration does not approve of the language used. Other dilemmas reflect a conflict between youth program activities and the cultural and real-world settings young people come from. For example, youth might not be able to consistently attend programming due to family demands (household duties, babysitting, etc.).

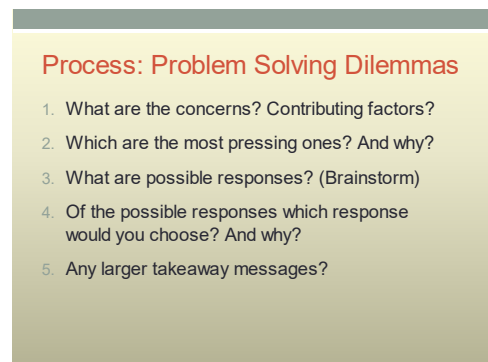
Refer to references on “Section 5: Resources & References” handout for additional information; highlight the Forum for Youth Investment brief: “Unpacking Youth Work” (2008).

### **Activity: How Do You Handle Dilemmas? (30 min)**

Being aware of and recognizing dilemmas are first steps. How do we handle these dilemmas? Reed Larson and his colleagues investigated this as well. They learned that experience matters. They found that experienced program leaders consistently and effectively used two main strategies. For one, they approached the issue from a very youth-centered perspective: they engaged young people in the problem-solving process, made them part of the solution, and generally turned the incident into a learning opportunity. Secondly, they looked at the situation as complex, balancing many different considerations (affecting youth, workers, agencies, etc.).

We would like to give you a process that you can use, ideally in staff meetings with experienced staff, to debrief dilemmas and learn how to handle them.

#### *Slide 81: Process: Problem Solving Dilemmas*



Text:

This problem-solving process has five steps:

1. Review the situation (dilemma/conflict): Start by identifying the concerns and contributing factors. Consider effects on youth, staff, program, and organization.
2. Identify the most pressing issues, and why they are the most important.
3. List all possible responses. Do not evaluate yet.
4. After weighing all the information you gathered, select a response. Determine why you are choosing this response. Does this response consider outcomes for youth, staff, program, and agency?
5. Finally, are there any takeaways that could inform changes for the program or organization?

*Ask if there are any questions.*

As a final activity we would like to practice this process. We will introduce a short scenario. In small groups, use these steps to analyze and resolve the dilemma we laid out in this case study.

*Divide participants into four small groups, mixing them up. Hand out activity sheet “Dilemma: Youth in charge, but falling behind.”*

*Read the dilemma aloud:*

Youth in Charge, but Falling Behind

High school-aged youth in a leadership program were in charge of planning a two-day summer day camp for fourth graders. The same young people had worked side-by-side with Mr. Miller, the advisor, in planning the day camp in prior years, so he decided they were ready to take control over development of the camp this year. He told them it would be “their camp” – and the youth relished the challenge. In the first stage, they were very excited as they generated ideas.

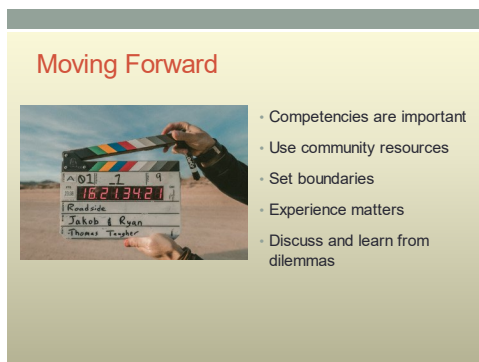
However, once the topics to be covered with the children were chosen, many youth acted as though the task of planning the day camp was done. Some lost interest as the work of preparation turned out to be less fun than spinning out ideas. The group seemed unable to take things to the next step of planning out specific activities. When some youth suggested specific ideas, conflicts emerged.

The fourth graders were registered and the dates for the day camp were approaching. Up until now, Mr. Baker had tried to let youth work through things on their own, but he could see that there were many details of the day camp that youth had not thought through.

*Ask if there are any questions. Give them 10 minutes to process the dilemma.*

*Ask one group (volunteer) to share their discussion. Debrief activity, process, and its application in their workplaces.*

*Slide 82: Moving Forward*



**Moving Forward**

- Competencies are important
- Use community resources
- Set boundaries
- Experience matters
- Discuss and learn from dilemmas

Text:

What have we learned? And how do we move forward?

- Professional competencies and standards are important, but there is more to youth work than having expertise in certain areas.
- We need to expand our competencies by utilizing resources available in our communities. This affects professional development and setting development goals with new youth workers.
- We need to reflect on our own boundaries, and we need to help new youth workers identify boundaries. This means reviewing agency policies and state-wide regulations concerning rights of young people.
- And we need to be aware of the complexity of program situations and provide opportunities for staff to discuss and learn from dilemmas. This can happen within agencies (in staff meetings and through supervision), but also within youth work networks in the community.

**Activity: Wrapping It Up (10 min)**

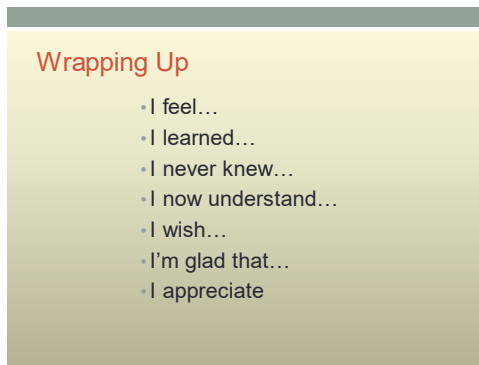
We have come to the end of the PYD 101 training. Over the past \_\_\_\_ (*days or weeks*) we have discussed many concepts and ideas. We started with the theories and the research that fed into the Positive Youth Development approach. We talked about Bronfenbrenner’s model of human ecology and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. We discussed PYD as a broad, bigger picture, community-based approach for creating the services, opportunities, and supports that young people need to develop to their potential. We talked about identifying young people’s strengths and sparks and nurturing developmental relationships to help youth build all the positive outcomes – remember the 6 Cs – they need to succeed. We moved on to youth voice and a model of meaningful youth engagement, thinking broadly about roles and responsibilities young people can take on in a youth service organization. And we discussed adultism, often expressing itself in very subtle ways, as a major hurdle in creating opportunities for young people to engage in a meaningful way. Then we went on to apply youth development concepts to programming, discussing effective features of programming and effective, youth-centered, trauma-informed teaching and engagement strategies. Finally, we explored what it takes to be an effective youth worker: building competencies, addressing our own biases, and setting clear boundaries to help us handle the complex interactions young people engage us in on a daily basis.

We provided you with many resources, in hard copy and online, which we hope you will explore. Additional resources are available on the ACT for Youth website ([www.actforyouth.net](http://www.actforyouth.net)).

Let’s close with a brief reflection and wrap-up activity. Please join in this free area here.

*Ask participants to form a circle. Have a light ball available.*

*Slide 83: Wrapping Up*



Text:

We'll pass the ball around so each of you has a chance to reflect on the training experience. The slide gives you a few prompts to think about your takeaways.

*Call one participant by name and throw the ball to them. Participate in the reflection activity.*

*Thank all participants for attending the training.*

*When they are seated again, hand out the post test and ask them to complete it.*



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