This training manual was developed by the Arkansas Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health, ACTION for Kids, and Arkansas Family and Youth Assistance Network.
System of Care sites for Arkansas can utilize this resource to train and orient individuals providing support to families of children with behavioral health challenges. The information and examples in the manual are intended to be used as technical assistance tools for individuals who perform the variety of functions which are involved in supporting children and youth who are engaged in navigating multiple complex systems. The skills described are useful to help children and youth meet their behavioral health goals and remain in their homes as they function at their optimal level in their natural communities.

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INTRODUCTION:

Everyone benefits when young people are actively engaged in the decisions that directly affect their lives. Youth, families, adults, organizations, policymakers, and communities as a whole benefit when young people have a voice that is listened to, respected, and utilized.

Engaging youth in decision making is essential to their overall development. This is true for all youth, even youth with behavioral and emotional issues. All youth are developing; all youth have strengths; all youth have needs; all youth can contribute to their communities; all youth are valued.

Youth development or adolescent development is the process through which adolescents (alternately called youth or young adults) acquire the cognitive, social, and emotional skills and abilities required to navigate life. The experience of adolescence varies for every youth: culture, gender, and income level or socioeconomic class is important influences on development. This development occurs throughout a young person's life, including formal and informal settings such as home, church, or school; and similar relationships, such as peer friendships, work, parenting, teaching, or mentoring. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_development

Youth voice refers to the distinct ideas, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and actions of young people as a collective body. The term youth voice often groups together a diversity of perspectives and experiences, regardless of backgrounds, identities, and cultural differences. It is frequently associated with the successful application of a variety of youth development activities, including service learning, youth research, and leadership training. Additional research has shown that engaging youth voice is an essential element of effective organizational development among community and youth-serving organizations. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_voice


Youth are agents of their own development. They should be involved in every decision that will have an affect on their lives; however, this does not mean that young people shouldn’t have caring and positive adults standing in roles of support available to them at all times.

Involving youth in service planning and decision making would seem to be a no-brainer for practitioners that serve children and adolescents. However, many struggle with understanding that the right to self-determination should be afforded to all families and to youth based on their level of maturity.

It is important to remember that children and youth grow into adults and that, as they mature, the foundation for adulthood is being built. Youth must be allowed opportunities to develop. For young people with severe behavioral and emotional challenges, that foundation is built while he or she is also experiencing ongoing crisis, feelings of
mistrust, wanting to be “normal,” and the typical stressors most all youth experience during transition from childhood to adulthood.

Treatment Planning

Being the only young person in a wraparound team meeting may be intimidating. It is the responsibility of the adults involved to remain youth-guided, remembering that the young person is ultimately responsible for obtaining his/her goals. Team members must remain strengths-based throughout the entire engagement process. Meetings could be counterproductive if the youth feels as if everyone is against them. Remember to focus on the positive behaviors and address negative behaviors in a functional, non-degrading way.

Authentic involvement in treatment planning helps youth take personal responsibility for their treatment. Because young people are actively engaged and “own” their plans, the chances of successful outcomes in treatment are significantly improved.

Youth as Leaders

With strong adult and system support, a young person is able to develop new skills and knowledge that will allow him or her to participate in system building and to be of support to peers. In this manner, young people are able to reframe their personal identities from an “SED (seriously emotionally disturbed)/ problem kid” to a leader contributing positively in the community. Youth develop confidence and their involvement strengthens their sense of pride, identity, and self-esteem.

Adults who work with youth often have to work hard to overcome ingrained habits of “adultism”. Adultism is the assumption that adults are better (or more competent) than youth and should therefore act on behalf of young people without their agreement because youth lack life experience and are inferior. Adults should listen to and partner with young people by supporting them, not controlling them. Comments such as “You’re all kids to me”, and referring to youth projects or activities in ways that make them seem inferior to those of adults fosters the undervaluing of youth.

Youth Guided Definition

Youth Guided means that young people have the right to be empowered, educated, and given a decision making role in the care of their own lives, as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all youth in the community, state and nation. This includes giving young people a sustainable voice, listening to them, and focusing on creating a safe environment that will enable a young person to gain self sustainability in accordance to the cultures and beliefs by which they abide. Further, through the eyes of a youth guided approach, we are aware that there is a continuum of power that should be given to the young people based on their understanding and maturity in this strength based change process. Youth guided also means that this process should be fun and worthwhile.

Why and How to Engage Youth Support Providers
The following guide was developed by one of the first youth support provider programs in systems of care.

**Youth Advocates: What They Do and Why Your Wraparound Program Should Hire One**

*Our perspectives on youth advocacy have been shaped by our personal experiences as recipients of mental health and child welfare services, as well as our experiences as a Care Coordinator and as Youth Advocates within New York City’s system of care. We know first-hand how hard it is for youth to feel supported and heard as they make their way through the educational and service systems. We have also seen what a difference youth advocates can make in engaging youth and empowering them to be full partners in their own care. As an integral part of a wraparound team, youth advocates “keep it real” for their team members and serve as a continuous reminder of the importance of staying strength based and youth guided. For the youth who participate in wraparound, the presence of youth advocates provides concrete evidence that their care teams just might really mean what we say—that the youth’s voice matters.*

**Potential Roles of the Youth Advocate within the System of Care**

**Engagement:** Too often a youth’s strengths, voice and preferences remain unrecognized and unheard by their service providers. The past disappointments that youth have experienced with service providers, peers and family members can also leave youth feeling mistrustful, without hope and reluctant to engage in relationship-building with people on their care team. The opportunity to speak with another youth who has undergone similar experiences and who is a part of their wraparound team is often the first step in building trust and reducing the isolation that is typical for youth who struggle with mental health challenges.

**Support:** Perhaps the most important role for the youth advocate is providing peer support to the youth with whom they work. For a youth, just knowing that there is somebody there for them who understands, and who has “got their back”, can be the basis for creating a new sense of hope and possibility.
**Voice:** Through the time that the youth advocate spends with the youth, there is an opportunity to learn the youth’s strengths, interests, and needs from the youth’s perspective, and to coach and support the youth to voice their concerns and wants to their service providers and families.

When youth have difficulty in making their voices heard or wishes known in meetings, youth advocates can, by agreement, speak for a youth, and advocate on the youth’s behalf.

**Mentor:** Like a traditional Big Brother or Big Sister, the youth advocate is a role model for the youth. Youth advocates are able to share what has helped them in the past and to offer suggestions about alternative ways of handling situations that may arise with peers, parents, providers and others within the community. Youth advocates also have the flexibility to meet youth where they feel comfortable, and to participate in activities ranging from meeting for lunch or going shopping to meeting at family court or at the youth’s school.

**Bridge/Culture Broker:** The gulf between the youth and service providers can be large, both culturally and in terms of control. The youth advocate can act as a bridge between the two. Ideally, the youth advocate will be fluent in both the language of the youth culture as well as the language of the provider culture, and prevent the breakdown of communication between the two. This role is particularly important in settings such as hospitals and residential treatment facilities where the power differential between youth and adults is greatest. A young person who is trusted by both youth and adults in such a setting can help to improve the effects of the power differential.

**Group Facilitator:** Youth advocates can also play an important role in building and maintaining opportunities for youth to meet and socialize in a non-stigmatizing environment. In New York City, youth advocates facilitate several peer support, skill building and socialization groups for youth involved in the system of care.

**Systems Transformation:** Youth advocacy positions provide important opportunities for youth leadership development, creating a pool of well-informed youth who can provide a youth perspective on governance boards and planning and advisory bodies. In New York City, youth advocates also serve as part of the training team that delivers training on system of care
principles and values and the family network (wraparound) process. Youth advocates are also called upon to provide presentations on issues of concern to youth, families and providers such as gang involvement and youth engagement. Making a place for youth at all of these tables and involving youth at all levels of decision making is an important part of realizing our effort to create a youth guided system of care.

Who Are Youth Advocates?

Youth advocates are generally young adults from the ages of 18-25 who have had personal experience within child-and family-serving systems (mental health, special education, child welfare, juvenile justice), and who are interested in ensuring that their peers receive high quality services that are responsive to their needs. More often than not, youth advocates are motivated by their desire to create more positive experiences for youth within the system of care than the ones that they had. The opportunity to make a difference to other youth facing emotional and behavioral challenges can also make a positive difference in the youth advocate’s own recovery.

What to Look for When Hiring a Youth Advocate

In addition to the credibility that youth advocates have by virtue of their age and experience within the system of care, successful youth advocates are far enough along in their own recovery process that they can handle the stress of the job and serve as a positive role model for the youth with whom they work. The ideal candidate will be young, yet mature, and will have had experience within the child-and family-serving systems. Although as an organization we have employed youth advocates as young as 16, older youth more typically have the maturity it takes to balance the demands of the job with their personal life and self-care. Past experience working with children (working for the YMCA, as a camp counselor, etc.) or an interest in working in the helping professions can be a plus. However, for many youth advocates, it is important to remember that this may be their first job. Far more important than work experience or educational credentials is a willingness to learn, the ability to relate well to other youth from diverse backgrounds, the capacity to follow through and a willingness to share their own experiences with child-and family-serving systems.
Stigma is a factor that may influence a candidate’s willingness to speak openly about his or her mental health challenges in an interview situation. Remember, this is a process and the youth doesn’t really know how safe disclosure is. The presence of other youth advocates in the interview or a separate meeting with another youth advocate can create a safer environment in which to assess whether the youth will be comfortable enough acknowledging their own challenges to other youth when appropriate.

*How to Find the Ideal Candidate*

Using the same search practices as you would to find a qualified social worker is likely to yield few applicants. Personal referrals have led to some of our most productive hires. Another strategy is to meet the young people where the young people are. Find community organizations within systems of care where youth are likely to be, and post flyers in those locations. Use the Internet. Go onto My space or other social networking sites and post job announcements in public forums that are mental health related. Contact organizations of independent self-described youth advocates, or local chapters of advocacy organizations in your area. These are often filled with individuals who, with no profit to themselves, have already decided to organize to fight for youth rights and are likely to be good candidates for the job.

*Training and Supervision of Youth Advocates*

Experience as a recipient of services from mental health, special education, juvenile justice and/or the child welfare system is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to being successful as a youth advocate. Organizations that hire youth advocates have a great responsibility to provide training and supervision that will help youth advocates to feel valued and supported, and to develop skills, set appropriate boundaries and engage in self-care. Good training of youth advocates involves fostering the development of listening, engagement, collaboration, boundary setting and, last but not least, public speaking skills. Excellent listening skills play a major factor in the work of youth advocates. Because so many youth have not been included in planning for their own care and are turned off to services, the development of good engagement and listening skills is critically important.
Listening and engagement skills form the basis for discovering the youth’s needs and preferences and a starting place for giving voice to the youth’s concerns.

Specific skill training about system of care principles and values, community resources and collaboration across systems is also necessary. Other important areas for skill development include wraparound principles and processes, and group facilitation. Information about the cultures and language used by the various child and youth service systems is also needed to help youth advocates function effectively as culture brokers for the youth. The availability of coaching and help with public speaking is important for youth advocates, who are often called on to present a youth perspective in public forums and to make presentations about youth-related topics to other youth or providers within the community.

Close relationships between youth advocates and the youth with whom they work often develop. Individual supervision, opportunities to meet with other youth advocates and group supervision are important vehicles for providing the support needed so that advocates can safeguard their own well being and maintain appropriate limits and boundaries with the youth they serve.

*Accountability and Evaluation*

Since many organizations have never had youth advocates as staff members, it is especially important for the hiring organization to be very clear about the expectations for youth advocates and to revisit these expectations frequently as the organization and staff gain clarity about the role of youth advocates within their organization.

These expectations should be clearly communicated in job descriptions and as part of performance appraisals. Team meetings where all team members discuss how their work with youth is progressing provide a more informal means of ensuring that youth advocates are delivering quality services. Work with individual youth can be discussed and contact notes reviewed in the context of individual supervision meetings with all team members, including youth advocates.
Youth advocacy is still in its infancy. There is still much that remains to be defined about the role and the proper place of youth advocates. As with any new frontier in social service practice, there is worry about using an unknown variable in the treatment process. While there is a great deal of upside as we have described in involving peers within the wraparound team, there is also the concern that negative outcomes can occur when vulnerable youth are put in contact with someone whose perspective has been formed through negative experiences in child-and-family serving systems.

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDS AND APPLIES BASIC CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPALS COMBINED WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DYNAMICS.

The skills needed by the youth support provider in this area are to apply fundamentals of positive youth development, to understand ages and stages of child development and to be aware of trends and issues that affect children and youth.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Positive youth development, or PYD, is a newly-coined word that summarizes the intentional efforts of other youth, adults, communities, government agencies, and schools to provide opportunities for youth to enhance their interests, skills, and abilities into their adulthood. PYD is an increasingly popular policy, curricular, and programmatic approach that allows schools and youth organizations to infuse youth development principles throughout their programs, while supporting their educative or community development goals.

PYD looks toward creating supportive communities for all young people and at the same time, engaging youth to contribute to the well-being of the larger community. Organizations and communities that promote PYD give youth the chance to get involved and exercise leadership.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Positive_youth_development

What Is Positive Youth Development?

The Positive Youth Development approach suggests that helping young people to achieve their full potential is the best way to prevent them from engaging in risky behaviors. Organizations and communities that promote Positive Youth Development give youth the chance to exercise leadership, build skills, and get involved. The self-confidence, trust, and practical knowledge that young people gain from these opportunities help them grow into healthy, happy, self-sufficient adults.

The Evidence Is Growing

The research supporting the Positive Youth Development approach continues to build. Since 1997, when General Colin Powell issued a challenge to every community in the Nation to make Five Promises to all young people, cities and towns across the country have started to see results. Young people who have the Five Promises — Caring Adults, Safe Places, A Healthy Start, Effective Education, and Opportunities to Serve — do better in school, are more likely to pursue higher education and enjoy better relationships with their peers and families. They are less likely to engage in risky behaviors, and are 5 to 10 times more likely to become productive citizens in their communities.
Positive Thinking Leads to Positive Results

When community members and policymakers harness the positive energy and initiative of youth, GREAT things happen:

- Youth believe they can be successful instead of internalizing the negative stereotypes about them that often appear in the media.
- Youth engage in productive activities that build job and life skills and reinforce community-mindedness.
- Youth grow comfortable questioning and exploring their roles as citizens in a participatory democracy.

In addition, adults who work closely with youth—and therefore see their dedication, responsibility, and willingness to learn—tend to view youth positively.

Positive Youth Development Takes Many Forms

Organizations and communities put Positive Youth Development into practice by allowing young people to help make important decisions about their own lives, the organizations that serve them, and their communities.

You can put Positive Youth Development into practice by:

- Recruiting young people to volunteer for local grassroots organizations.
- Showing youth how to start their own newspapers or Web sites.
- Asking high school students to co-teach classes with their teachers.
- Teaching young people to conduct surveys on community and school resources.
- Encouraging local businesses to sponsor job fairs and job shadowing days.
- Inviting youth to serve on the board of a local nonprofit organization.
- Creating a youth board that advises state or local government on issues young people care about such as violence prevention, transportation, and afterschool activities.

Many local programs offer young people positive opportunities. The Boys & Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H Council, and YMCA of the USA, for example, are national organizations that promote the Positive Youth Development approach through their local program affiliates. Smaller organizations—such as local runaway shelters, afterschool centers, mentoring programs, and job training sites—promote Positive Youth Development, too.

A Role for Everyone

Though the concept may seem simple, Positive Youth Development requires an enormous community mobilization. Everyone has a role to play:

- Neighborhood leaders and community members can involve young people in measuring how well the community supports youth, and then work together to improve services.
• Policymakers can engage youth in discussions about policies that affect them.
• Business leaders can teach young people the skills they will need for successful employment.
• Youth service organizations can encourage youth participation in every aspect of their work.
• Members of the media can help give young people outlets for expressing their views.
• Treatment providers can engage adolescent treatment recipients in service to others, for instance, as peer educators.
• Teachers and school administrators can ensure that school policies, procedures, and teaching methods engage young people fully.
• Faith-based institutions can involve young people in community activities.
• Parents can strive to engage their children in positive activities that nurture their talents, skills, and interests.

http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/publications/ydfactsh.htm

While there is no limit to what youth activities which support PYD, the following listing of activities may be a good starting place:

Activities to Raise Awareness
  ⇒ Youth design posters for schools, libraries, youth centers, and community organizations and agencies. The posters can list myths and facts about mental illness, where to find help in the community, statistics, etc.
  ⇒ Design bookmarks to distribute at every library in your community - including school library - with information about youth and mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare, etc.
  ⇒ Create a PSA (public service announcement) for a local radio station or cable TV
  ⇒ Write press releases about Children's Mental Health Week for local newspapers and newsletters or other important mental health topics throughout the year
  ⇒ Provide a panel discussion with youth who have experienced the mental system educating providers, educators, general community, etc.
  ⇒ Stigma Busting or activities which inform the community about the positive contributions of youth who have been engaged in behavioral health systems

Activities to Reward and Improve Youth Involvement
  ⇒ Stipends for youth serving on committees/boards
  ⇒ Youth Conference
  ⇒ Youth Celebration
  ⇒ Youth Summit

Activities to Strengthen Community
  ⇒ Volunteering
  ⇒ Marketing/education campaigns
  ⇒ Trips to state/federal capitolis for policy work
  ⇒ Partnering with other groups to work together in community service activities (i.e. juvenile justice or runaway/homeless, etc.)
AGES AND STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Young children may be identified as needing services within a system of care. In fact, early childhood populations of focus have been identified in a number of systems of care sites across the county. Youth support for these young children is possible and developmentally appropriate activities will be discussed more fully in a later chapter. Knowledge of the ages and stages of child development is a basic skill needed by the youth support provider.

Developmental stages for children can be broken down into four categories: Infancy, Early Childhood, Middle Childhood and Adolescence. Although every child is uniquely different with their own strengths and abilities, each child faces their own social and emotional challenges in each stage of development. Below is a snapshot of each stage of development and important areas to consider within each stage:

I. **Infancy**
   a. Feeding
   b. Sleeping
   c. Crying and Comforting
   d. Discovering Self and Others
   e. Becoming a Family

II. **Early Childhood**
   a. Eating and Sleeping
   b. Self-Care and Toileting
   c. Developing the Self: Personality, Emotions and Independence
   d. Family
   e. Building Friendships

III. **Middle Childhood**
   a. The Emerging Self
   b. Growing and Changing
   c. Respecting Self and Others
   d. Family
   e. Building Friendships
   f. School Relationships

IV. **Adolescence**
   a. Feelings
   b. Friends and Family
   c. Preventing Injuries and Risky Behavior
   d. Body Image and Eating Behaviors
   e. Sex and Sexuality

Understanding symptoms and types of mental health disorders in children and adolescents

Many families begin their journey into seeking mental health treatment when they notice a change in their child’s behavior, attitude or mood. These changes are not only obvious to the parent; many times, other family members, teachers and peers bring up the changes they see in the child/youth. Some of the most common signs and symptoms that are cited include:
• Aggressiveness (verbal and physical)
• Academic difficulties
• Hyperactivity
• Impulsivity
• Poor social skills
• Sadness
• Frequent disobedience
• Risk-taking behavior
• Irritability or grumpiness
• A lack of interest in usually enjoyable activities
• Concerns about sexual identity
• Substance abuse
• Suicidal thoughts

Many times, the excessive and inappropriate use of professional jargon gets in the way of effective communication between the family and a health care professional. Below is a list of definitions revolving around many of the problem behaviors noted above and other terms associated with symptoms and behaviors.

Behaviors and Symptoms:

• Aggression: Words and actions that are perceived to be threatening to others.
• Anxiety: Exaggerated or inappropriate responses to the perception of internal or external dangers. Also includes excessive apprehension toward new people, places or things; or in some cases, excessive apprehension toward people, places or things who or which they have previously encountered.
• Conduct Problems: Behaviors that are characterized by acting out. These behaviors range from annoying, minor oppositional behavior (yelling, temper tantrums) to more serious types of antisocial behavior (aggression, physical destruction, stealing).
• Depression: A type of mood disorder characterized by low or irritable mood or loss of interest or pleasure in almost all activities over a period of time.
• Emotional Health: The well-being and appropriate expressions of one’s emotions.
• Externalizing Disorder: Disorders that are expressed visibly to others and can be characterized by aggression, behavioral acting-out, hyperactivity, and conduct disorder.
• Hyperactivity: A disorder in which children are overactive and impulsive (acts without thinking).
• Inattention: Inability to focus and concentrate on a particular person or task.
• Internalizing Disorders: Disorders that are expressed within the individual and focus on clinically problematic affective and emotional states, such as anxiety or depression.
• Mental Health: How people look at themselves, their lives, and the other people in their lives; evaluate their challenges and problems; and explore choices. This includes handling stress, relating to other people, and making decisions.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A psychiatric illness that can occur following a traumatic event in which there was threat of injury or death to an individual or someone else. The main symptom associated with PTSD is anxiety and avoidance of anything or anyone associated with the event.
- Outcomes: The results of a specific mental health care service, usually phrased in terms of child and family gains (e.g., improved school performance, improved family communication).
- Prognosis: Prediction by a health professional regarding a person’s diagnosed condition and chances for recovery.

In Arkansas, the process by which a family and a mental health provider assess a child’s mental health is called a diagnostic assessment. A diagnostic assessment is an evaluation intended to collect more detailed information about a child, such as how the child functions at home, in school and the community. There are times when a screening would take place before a diagnostic assessment. This usually happens in an emergency situation or an unscheduled visit to a mental health provider. A screening is a shorter evaluation that gets right to the immediate concern and/or emergency. When/if concerns are identified; a more in-depth assessment will be done.

The diagnostic assessment sequence may occur as follows:
- Family decides to seek mental health care
- Family schedules EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment service) screening to include mental health
- Family obtains Primary Care Physician (PCP) referral to preferred mental health provider
- Family schedules initial diagnostic assessment

In a diagnostic assessment questions often revolve around the following areas:
- Mental health (history and current situation)
- Family relationships
- Family history
- Living arrangements
- School performance
- Community involvement
- Cultural strengths (faith preferences, family traditions and values)
- Substance use or abuse
- Physical health
- Financial factors
- Employment

In Arkansas, diagnostic assessments are provided by a licensed mental health professional that is trained in gathering relevant information pertaining to the mental and emotional health of a child.
After the assessment, the mental health professional should be able to provide the youth and family with a provisional diagnosis or diagnoses (the plural form of “diagnosis”). The mental health professional may need to refer the youth to a psychiatric evaluation. A psychiatric evaluation will be provided by a medical doctor, likely a psychiatrist. A psychiatric evaluation is very similar to the diagnostic assessment, but the diagnosis (or diagnoses) will have the backing of a board certified physician, which may be required by the child's reimbursement source. It is important for families to take the same stance with the physician as they did with the mental health professional and that is to view themselves as an equal partner in the process of determining the extent of their child’s mental and emotional health.

The psychiatric evaluation sequence may occur as follows:
- Family and child attend and participate in diagnostic assessment by mental health professional.
- Mental health professional explains the necessity of referring child for a psychiatric evaluation by a physician or psychiatrist.
- Family schedules psychiatric evaluation to occur within 45 days of having diagnostic assessment.

There are four main categories of diagnoses that are very common among children and youth who seek mental health treatment. Under each major category there are specific diagnoses that a child may have. They include the following:

I. Disruptive Behavior Disorders
- Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, NOS
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- Conduct Disorder
- Disruptive Behavior Disorder, NOS

II. Depressive Disorders
- Major Depression
- Depression, NOS
- Dysthymic Disorder
- Bipolar Disorders
- Mood Disorder, NOS

III. Anxiety Disorders
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Phobias
- Anxiety Disorder, NOS

IV. Pervasive Developmental Disorders
- Autistic Disorder
- Asperger's Disorder
- Pervasive Development Disorder, NOS
Not Otherwise Specified (NOS) is commonly used in the initial diagnosis of a child or adolescent. This category includes disorders with significant features of the diagnosis but the symptoms do not meet specific diagnostic criteria. This could be due to the duration of the symptoms or not having the certain number of behavioral symptoms to qualify for the diagnosis.

While not a disorder, there is emerging work on a variety of sexual identity conditions which are currently designated as LGBTQI2-S by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The acronym references the following categories:

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender (pre/post-operative)
- Questioning
- Intersexed
- Two-spirit

The categories are defined as follows:

- Lesbian: Females who are emotionally and sexually attracted to, and may partner with, females only.
- Gay: Males who are emotionally and sexually attracted to, and may partner with, males only. “Gay” is also an overarching term used to refer to a broad array of sexual orientation identities other than heterosexual.
- Bi-sexual: Individuals who are emotionally and sexually attracted to, and may partner with, both males and females.
- Transgender (pre/post-operative): Individuals who express a gender identity different from their birth-assigned gender.
- Questioning: Individuals who are uncertain about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- Inter-sexed: Individuals with medically defined biological attributes that are not exclusively male or female; frequently “assigned” a gender at birth, which may differ from their gender identity later in life.
- Two-spirit: A culture-specific general identity for Native Americans (American Indians and Alaska Natives) with homosexual or transgendered identities. Traditionally a role-based definition, two-spirit individuals are perceived to bridge different sectors of society (e.g., the male-female dichotomy, and the Spirit and natural worlds).

Other Terms: Youth also may use other terms to describe their sexual orientation and gender identity, such as homosexual, queer, gender queer, non-gendered, and asexual. Some youth may
not identify a word that describes their sexual orientation, and others may view their gender as fluid and even changing over time. Some youth may avoid gender specific pronouns.


For more information on these conditions and other mental health disorders please visit the following websites: http://www.apa.org/ and http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/

Another essential part of the diagnostic process that is critical to the family is the idea behind the term “Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED)”. This is a term introduced by the federal government in 1993 to describe psychiatric conditions severe enough to warrant public intervention through state block grants or other forms of public support. This term was expected to serve the same purpose as the term “Serious Mental Illness (SMI)” for adults. What is most important to remember about SED is that it is the key to access important mental health services in Arkansas. When discussing the term SED to the family, the best way to describe it is in terms of how the youth is functioning in all the youth’s life domains (home, school and community). It is critical to explain that the term SED is not tied to a specific diagnosis, but that the symptoms of his or her diagnosis substantially interfere with or limit the child from achieving or maintaining one or more developmentally appropriate social, behavioral, cognitive, communicative or adaptive skills.

Furthermore, children will often show symptoms of more than one disorder and may possibly be given more than one diagnosis. It is also important to understand that many of these disorders create other symptoms that do not warrant an entirely separate diagnosis. For instance, a child who has ADHD may often get sad because of the challenges he faces in consistently making friends at school; however, an additional diagnosis of depression may not be completely suitable. The sadness or depression would have to impact the child’s life in a way that would impair the child’s functioning at home and in the school before another diagnosis would be considered. It is important to keep in mind that the family must provide the health-care professional with all the information they can. He or she will let the family know whether or not these additional symptoms would call for a separate diagnosis.

In the case where a child is given two or more diagnoses, it is referred to as comorbidity. If the diagnoses involve a substance use or abuse disorder and a mental health disorder, it is referred to as co-occurring. If the diagnoses involve a developmental disability and a mental health disorder, it is referred to as dual diagnosis. Many older adolescents have multiple disorders at the same time, creating the need for a team of providers that understand how to treat all the conditions the child and family are facing.

**BE AWARE OF TRENDS AND ISSUES THAT AFFECT CHILDREN AND YOUTH.**

In each community, different challenges impacting youth will exist. Rural communities often lack organized activities for youth and transportation may be a serious issue. Urban
communities may have problems related to gang activity or areas of urban blight where crime is a factor. The youth support provider must engage in learning about what factors are present in their community and what groups or organizations are present with which they can partner to address the needs identified. Contacting individuals involved in recreational services within the local community may be a good first step to learning about issues and finding partners already engaged in the work of positive youth development.
CHAPTER 2: COMMUNICATES AND DEVELOPS POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUTH

The skills of communication necessary for this work include the ability to listen in a nonjudgmental way, to exhibit concern for the well being of youth, to have a true interest in their feelings and experiences, and to use the language of respect.

LISTENING

Listening is the most basic and important communication skill a youth support provider will need.

To be a good listener, you must:
- Pay close attention to what is being said.
- Really want to understand the speaker’s message.
- Portray an open attitude.

To be an active listener, you must:
- Give the speaker “feedback or a restatement of what you heard, for example “the coach seemed angry, is that right?” to indicate that you understand what is being said.
- Express your acceptance of the speaker’s feelings.
- Be aware of what is being non-verbally communicated.

To be an empathetic listener, you must:
- Try to see the situation through the speaker’s eyes.
- Set aside your own opinions and feelings.
- Accept the speaker’s feelings without making judgments.

In order to listen, you must stop talking. You put the youth at ease and encourage them to speak by being interested and showing it. Once you have established rapport or the feeling that you have connected with the youth, some other tips include:
- Ask appropriate questions. Avoid close ended questions that only require a yes or no answer. Give the youth the opportunity to fully express him/herself.
- Center around concerns of the youth, not your own. Empathize with the youth.
- Have a desire to be helpful and to hear what is being said.
- Show you understand feelings.
- Don’t let yourself be consumed emotionally, but have compassion.
- Put aside your own views. Be alert for your own negative feelings.
- Listen carefully until the youth is finished.
Tips to Communicate with Youth

- Take things slowly.
- Be a good listener, not an advice-giver.
- Allow the youth to express emotions and feelings freely.
- Be empathetic.
- Listen without making the problem yours.

When confronted with a problem situation:

- Listen openly and with empathy toward the other person.
- Judge the content, not the messenger or delivery; comprehend before you judge.
- Use multiple techniques to fully comprehend (ask, repeat, rephrase, etc.).
- Maintain an active body state; fight distractions.
- Ask the other person for as much detail as he/she can provide; paraphrase what the other is saying to make sure you understand it.
- Respond in an interested way that shows you understand the problem and the concern.
- Attend to non-verbal cues, body language, not just words; listen between the lines.
- Ask the other for his views or suggestions.
- State your position openly; be specific, not global.
- Communicate your feelings, but don't act them out (e.g. tell a person that his behavior really upsets you; don't get angry).
- Be descriptive, not evaluative-describe objectively, your reactions, and possible consequences.
- Be validating, not invalidating ("You wouldn't understand"); acknowledge other’s uniqueness, importance.
- Be conjunctive, not disjunctive (not "I want to discuss this regardless of what you want to discuss").
- Don't totally control conversation; acknowledge what was said.
- Own up: use "I", not "They"... not 'I've heard you are uncooperative".
- Don’t react to emotional words, but interpret their purpose.
- Practice supportive listening, not one way listening.

The following five steps of the problem solving process can be used when assisting youth:

**Step 1:** What is the problem? Use active listening and ask “how,” “what,” and “why” questions to help the speaker articulate the issue.
**Step 2:** Why do you think the problem exists? This helps bring out underlying issues and enables the person to provide a personal perspective on the problem.

**Step 3:** What have you tried? This helps determine what has already been done.

**Step 4:** Has it worked? What happens when you say (or do) that? This is an important follow-up question to Step 3.

**Step 5:** What are some other ways of solving the problem? Drawing on what has been discussed in Steps 3 and 4, you can help search for new, creative solutions.

*Parent to Parent of Arkansas FFCMH Training Manual. (Adapted by Ashley Rentz, certified Parent to Parent Trainer) 2006.*

A major source of problems in communication is defensiveness. Effective communicators are aware that defensiveness is a typical response in a tense situation, especially when negative information or criticism is involved. Be aware that defensiveness is common, particularly with people in a help-seeking position when they are dealing with a problem. Try to make adjustments to compensate for the likely defensiveness. Realize that when people feel threatened, they will try to protect themselves; this is natural. This defensiveness can take the form of aggression, anger, competitiveness, or avoidance, among other responses. A skillful listener is aware of the potential for defensiveness and makes needed adjustment. He or she is aware that self-protection is necessary and avoids making the other person spend energy defending him- or herself.

In addition, a supportive and effective listener does the following:

1. Stops talking: Asks the other person for as much detail as he/she can provide; asks for other's views and suggestions.
2. Looks at the person, listens openly and with empathy; is clear about his position; is patient.
3. Listens and responds in an interested way that shows they understand the problem and the other's concern.
4. Is validating, not invalidating ("You wouldn't understand"); acknowledges other's uniqueness, importance.
5. Checks for understanding; paraphrases; asks questions for clarification.
6. Doesn't control conversations; acknowledges what was said; lets the other finish before responding.
7. Focuses on the problem, not the person; is descriptive and specific, not evaluative; focuses on content, not delivery or emotion.
8. Attends to emotional as well as cognitive messages (e.g., anger); is aware of non-verbal cues, body language, etc.; listens between the lines.

9. Reacts to the message, not the person, delivery or emotion

10. Makes sure to comprehend before they judge; asks questions.

11. Uses many techniques to fully comprehend.

12. Stays in an active body state to aid listening.

13. Fights distractions.

14. Decides on specific follow-up actions and specific follow-up dates (If appropriate, takes notes).

**QUESTIONING**

Questions flow from the need to be an effective listener. Youth have many of the answers to their concerns within them, but may not be able to organize their thoughts to arrive at the right solution without support to get clarity.

There are two major categories for questions: closed-ended and open-ended. A closed-ended question is a form of question which can normally be answered using a simple "yes" or "no", a specific simple piece of information, or a selection from multiple choices. Example: “Do you have dinner with your family?” This type of question does not require the youth to go into great detail. Open-ended questions require more than a yes or no answer. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open-ended_question](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open-ended_question). They are used to help the speaker come up with his or her own answers so the speaker can broaden and clarify his or her message and the youth support provider can better understand it. Example: “What did you and your family have for dinner?” Open-ended questions require more details. Questioning skills help the support provider assist the youth in clarifying issues and narrowing options to arrive at their preferred solutions to the problems they may be facing. Support providers can also use clarifying questions to keep the youth talking. This type of question keeps them engaged in the conversation, focused on the topic being discussed, and allows them to clarify unclear statements. Some examples of those types question are:

- “Can you tell me more about that?”
- “What do you mean by __________?"  

Listening, remaining neutral and asking questions are all important to this process.
NONVERBAL SKILLS

Much of communication is conveyed by unspoken actions. Youth support providers can show they are listening through nonverbal communication, including certain body language signals. According to helpguide.org, nonverbal communication, information conveyed through facial expressions, body language, pace, intensity and tone of voice gives you a powerful means for self expression. Helpguide.org provides the following table that outlines the most important nonverbal cues:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonverbal Communication: The Most Important Nonverbal Cues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye contact</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facial expression</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tone of voice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Posture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Touch</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timing and pace</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sounds that convey understanding</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The body language of the support provider during conversations is also important. Youth support providers should practice having an open and inviting posture when speaking. With our own body language, we are constantly saying either, "Welcome, I'm open for business," or, "Go away, I'm closed for business." You may be showing that you are an opportunity or a threat; a friend or a foe; confident or uncomfortable; telling the truth or spouting lies. The following are a few examples of good body and bad body language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Body Language</th>
<th>Bad Body Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed appearance</td>
<td>Arms folded across chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>Avoiding eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaning forward</td>
<td>Body pushed back from table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodding your head</td>
<td>Twirling your hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erect posture</td>
<td>Slumped posture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INTEREST AND CONCERN**

During the initial meeting with support providers and people on the “outside”, youth are often wary and unwilling to disclose information. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, “trust” is defined as a charge or duty imposed in faith or confidence or as a condition of some relationship. Building trust takes time and does not happen overnight. Some of the activities that our writing team members suggested helped them build trust with their support providers were that they were consistent, showed them they were interested in helping them with their problems, and were honest and up front with them. They provided them with information and assisted with educating them about their conditions and services that are available to them.

Support providers also showed empathy. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, “empathy” is the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another, of either the past or present, without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner. Empathy can be shown in the form of nonverbal cues, such as nodding your head, or saying phrases, such as “I understand” or “I’ve been through that”. When building trust, remember that it takes time. Showing genuine interest in the youth's life and being empathetic are keys to providing support.


This is the point in the process where the sharing of personal experiences increases trust and shows the youth that their support provider can relate. It is important to make a clear distinction between the youth support provider's experience and that of the youth.

According to Mary Novak, Understanding Conflict: Communication Using “I” Statements, (learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/B3870-02.PDF), using “I” messages helps us take responsibility for
how we feel. When speaking about personal experiences or expressing one's self during an argument, it is important to begin each sentence with the word “I”. Novack states the anatomy of an “I” statement is comprised of three parts: the feeling, what happened, and why it matters. The following are examples of using the feeling component of using “I” messages:

- I am tired…
- I am happy…
- I am overwhelmed…

The next component of using “I” messages is to tell what happened. The following are examples of using the “what happened” component:

- …because I was working alone…
- …because I received an “A” on my report…
- …because the kids won’t go to sleep…

The third and final component of using “I” messages is to tell why it matters. The following are:

- …and it seemed that no one wanted to help me.
- …and I worked really hard on it.
- … and I need to get up early in the morning.

The following are all three components put together:

- I am tired because I was working alone and it seemed that no one wanted to help me.
- I am happy because I received an “A” on my report and I worked really hard on it.
- I am overwhelmed because the kids won’t go to sleep and I need to get up early in the morning.

These phrases allow the person/people that are listening to truly understand your point of view. It allows you to put what is happening to you into words and helps you learn how to assert yourself and your feelings that will ultimately get you the things you want and need.

**RESPECT**

The language of respect is the language of the youth with whom you are working. The level of literacy and turn of phrase, the accent and jargon of their community may be unfamiliar to you, but by taking the time to learn, to understand and communicate, the youth provider models acceptance and respect. We are all diverse; in our beliefs, in our lifestyles, in our opinions. It is important to realize that everyone will not believe what you believe, speak as you speak or have
the same point of view as you. Respecting others' points of view and differences is important when dealing with different types of youth. No two youth are alike. They may differ on cultural levels, education levels, income levels, and your role as the support provider is to respect those differences. *Respecting Other Beliefs* ([http://www.ehow.com/how_4675371_respect-other-peoples-beliefs.html date accessed 4/10/09](http://www.ehow.com/how_4675371_respect-other-peoples-beliefs.html)) from Ehow.com outlines the following six steps that will assist you in respecting others' beliefs and points of views.

Step 1: **Always think before speaking.** How often have we hurt others by the careless words we said? When talking to someone who obviously doesn’t share your point of view, be very careful in responding to him. Be polite in your conversation and maintain eye contact.

Step 2: **Empathize with the other person.** One of the best ways to show respect to others and their beliefs is to practice empathy. Put yourself in the other's shoes and for a while feel how it is to be the person to whom you are talking. Ask yourself the question, “How different would it be if I lived in this person’s world?” By doing that, you will be more sensitive to his or her feelings and will develop more understanding as to why the other person thinks and acts as he or she does.

Step 3: **Do not criticize other peoples' beliefs that are different from yours.** The fastest way to lose a friend is to criticize what he thinks is right or holds dear in his heart. This is also a sure way to gain enemies. When you tell someone that his religion is wrong or his idea about how to succeed is dumb, don’t expect the person to seek your company. Build bridges instead of walls by genuinely appreciating the good that you see in others and showing respect to their ideas, no matter how different their beliefs are from yours.

Step 4: **Don’t push your beliefs.** Sure, you can try to convince others what you think and believe in a particular area, but don’t expect them to be your follower. Show respect by letting them decide on their own. You will be respected in return and it will be more likely that they will reconsider what you shared with them.

Step 5: **Understand that everyone you meet is unique.** Individuals of the same culture don’t always share the same point of view and beliefs, so it is much more likely that those who hail from other cultures with different background, values, experiences, norms, environment, tradition, and religion will differ. Mix them together and what you have is a web of complicated personalities who want to let their beliefs be known and heard! Show respect to what others think by respecting who they are and where they came from.

Step 6: **Listen to what others have to say, even if you don’t agree.** The best way to show respect to others' beliefs is to listen to what they share. You will be surprised what new things you’ll learn from them. Likewise, you will not only get better in your listening skills, you will also gain their trust and respect!

Following these six steps will assist you in being able to help youth to the best of your ability. You will become approachable to them and they will learn to trust you and respect your input and assistance in their lives.
CHAPTER 3: ADAPTS, FACILITATES AND EVALUATES AGE APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES WITH AND FOR THE GROUP

The skills required in this area are the ability to relate to and engage a group, being able to initiate group interactions and relations through completion of projects or activities, modeling effective problem solving and conflict negotiation, and guiding group behavior in an age and developmentally appropriate manner.

AGE & DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

How you group youth by age will be a key factor in your planning, affecting everything, including how you schedule the activities you choose to pursue with youth. Although you always want to offer youth high expectations for achievement in order to build their skills and self-esteem, nothing will be more frustrating or demoralizing than setting goals that are beyond them developmentally.

Developmentally appropriate programming can be expressed as:

_Taking into account everything you know about how children develop and learn, and matching that to the content and strategies planned for them in programs._

Knowledge about child development and learning encompasses recognizing common developmental threads among all children and understanding significant variations across cultures; however, youth support providers must see children as individuals, not as a group. Support providers need to make decisions that require them to see each child as distinct from all others.

Youth support providers must weigh such variables as the child/youth's experiences, knowledge and skills, age, and level of comprehension. Environmental factors, physical resources and the amount of time available must also be a part of the evaluation in planning for groups.

Treating youth/children with respect by recognizing their changing capabilities, and viewing them in the context of their family, culture, and community, and their past experience and current circumstances is a part of the planning process.

Respect involves having faith in a child and youth’s ability to eventually learn the information, behavior, and skills they will need to constructively function on their own. Having respect implies believing children are capable of changing their behavior and of making self-judgments. Youth providers manifest respect when they allow children to think for themselves, make decisions, work toward their own solutions to problems, and communicate their ideas. Out of respect, allow children to make choices about activities or where to sit at the lunch table; encourage toddlers to pour their own juice, preschoolers to become actively engaged in clean-up, and school-age children to help determine the activities for the day. Respect for children's increasing competence involves allowing them to experience accomplishments and recognizes
that self-control is an emerging skill that children achieve over time, given adequate support and guidance.

http://www.ericdigests.org/1993/programs.htm

Different age groups reach milestones at different times. Most physical competencies are achieved in the early ages, and most of the basic "hardwiring" of adult logic and thinking skills begin to appear around age 12. Match your skills components accordingly. One particular challenge for youth workers in underserved communities is that children may be lagging in one or more domains. Observe your children with an open mind and see where their specific needs and strengths lie. Also, remember that other factors, such as gender, nutrition and home environment, influence the age at which kids master certain skills.

Most importantly, an understanding of child development will help you think about each child's strengths, resources and challenges; the expectations you should have; and how you can best help them. Kids mature in three domains of growth: cognitive, physical and socio-emotional.

The cognitive domain includes intellectual and academic skills, such as math, language and science; the physical domain involves factors such as dexterity and being comfortable with one's body as it changes and matures; and the socio-emotional domain is the realm of emotions, psychology and social skills.

It's important that your program take a "whole child" approach, incorporating age-appropriate learning in all three domains. For example, if you are doing a project on dance, don't just study it in books or watch a video—get the kids up and moving. For the socio-emotional domain, try having them talk about how they danced in a way that reinforces positive interaction.

- At ages 5 to 7, skills in all domains are emerging.
- At ages 6 to 8, kids are beginning to consolidate their growth in all domains. They're still learning fundamental communication, math and problem-solving skills, and their social and community awareness is expanding.
- At ages 9 to 11, kids are well coordinated in large and fine motor skills and they now have an increased attention span. Their developing self esteem requires positive reinforcement and it is important for them to be part of a group.
- At ages 12 to 14, kids start looking at art and music more seriously. They are more sophisticated at conceptualization and abstract thinking, and they start making the shift from learning to read to reading to learn.

www.youthlearn.org/learning/planning/ages.asp

INITIATION OF ACTIVITIES

The activities for the youth group will depend on the community resources and the resources available to the system in which a youth support provider is engaged. The importance of creating opportunities for youth to engage in service to their communities cannot be understated. These activities can generate positive attention for the program and opportunity for stigma
reduction for the youth, as well as building positive relationships between and among the youth themselves. The following is an example of the type and scope of activities generated from a youth group working in partnership with Habitat for Humanities in Los Angeles.

http://www.habitatla.org/filebox/Activities_Youth.pdf

Age-appropriate Activities for Youth

*Off-site Activities for Youth:*

- Decorate the studs with blessings or messages to the partner family.
- Design and oversee a Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles Youth United Facebook or MySpace page!
- Fold newsletters or stuff envelopes for mailings.
- Paint doors and baseboards.
- Build birdhouses, flower boxes, key chains or simple picture frames. All these things can be made with scraps from the work site.
- Speak to your schoolmates or your youth group about the mission of Habitat For Humanity and bring along a partner family to talk about their experience.
- Serve lunch or snacks at the work site. Have the youth bag cookies or make sandwiches.
- Work with the Youth Coordinator to hold a Habitat for Humanity T-shirt, Christmas card or thank-you card designing contest.
- Clean up a donated lot before construction begins. Partner with a local environmental group and recycle as much as you can while cleaning.
- Landscape after the house is finished.
- Educate your peers about the overall picture of poverty housing by taking a tour of a substandard home or apartment. Have a partner family talk to your group about how Habitat has impacted them. Then, write about your experience and publish one of your reflections.

*With the Partner Family*

- Gather housewarming items (cleaning supplies, plants, etc.) and present it to a partner family at their house dedication.
- Decorate pots for houseplants to be given to a partner family at the house dedication.
- Design and sew a quilt for a partner family.
- Decorate a stone or rock for a partner family’s yard; if this is being done at a vacation Bible school, you can draw a blessing on the rock for the partner family’s garden.

*Fund Raising*

- Have a craft fair or silent auction for items that youth make.
- Sponsor a bowl-a-thon.
- Hold a "Hike for Habitat" event.
• Build birdhouses, playhouses, mailboxes, dollhouses, flower boxes, etc., to sell at a local Habitat Home Improvement Store. We will label each item with the creator’s name, age and the organization you represent. When your item sells, we will mail the tag back to you so you know how much additional money was donated to Youth United through the sale.
• Sell homemade baked goods and snacks at school, a religious institution, or in your community.
• Challenge your peers at your school or organization to donate money according to their shoe size (for example, size 8=$8).
• Challenge an elementary school to collect pennies for Habitat and have each grade present their pennies at an assembly. The group with the most pennies can get a prize like, a pizza party or extra time at recess.
• If you belong to a religious organization, use collection time to collect money for Habitat for Humanity.
• Host a Legos™ house-building competition. Display the houses and have people vote on the best ones by putting money in a jar in front of each house.

Appropriate Activities by Age Group

These age-appropriate activities are broken into general age categories for easy reference. However, many of these ideas will be useful and appropriate for multiple age ranges or can be used in a modified form.

Ages 5-7

• Make a welcome basket for the homeowner family and sing a song at the dedication.
• Stock the pantry for the homeowner family.
• Draw or color greeting cards to be sold at a Youth United fund-raiser or design thank-you notes to be used for the Youth United house.
• Construct house banks for distribution at churches and schools as a fund-raising tool for Youth United.
• Have a coloring sheet contest and put entries in the local paper.

Ages 7-10

• Make blocks or bricks that can be used to build homes or as fund-raising items.
• Landscape the Youth United house.
• Coordinate a birthday gift project for partner family children.
• Tour the work site and learn about sweat equity from a homeowner.

Ages 10-12

• Speak to classmates about the mission of Habitat and Youth United with the help of a local campus chapter or homeowner family.
• Construct and paint flower boxes to be used as housewarming gifts or as fund-raising items.
• Help clear the construction site of debris before or after construction.
• Design a T-shirt to be sold at a Youth United event.
• Help fold or stuff Youth United newsletters or mailings or write thank-you notes.

Ages 12-14
• Design a Youth United Web page or newsletter.
• Register volunteers at the construction site information table.
• Paint doors and baseboards off site before they are installed in the house.
• Work with an audio-visual teacher or class to design and produce a Youth United video.

Ages 15-17
• Build picnic or lunch tables for the work site or the Youth United house.
• Tutor younger partner family children.
• Provide baby-sitting for children of partner families or volunteers.
• Clean the Youth United house before the dedication.
• Talk to a partner family about how Habitat has impacted them. Write about their experience and publish one of their reflections in a newsletter or online.
• Organize and serve meals to volunteers on the work site.
• Shovel gravel into a foundation.

NEGOTIATION

Negotiation is an excellent skill for a youth support provider to have. Whenever there is a difference between what the youth chooses and what the system they are working with is willing to provide, the opportunity for negotiation arises. Linda Tillman outlines the following seven steps that can be used in successful negotiation:

1. **Identify the problem.** Each person states what seems to be the problem using “I Statements”. There may need to be some additional discussion on what the problem is so all parties are on the same page.

2. **Listen Assertively.** In this step, each person states their opinion. It is important to have the other person reflect or restate the person’s opinion. This does not mean that you agree with them; restating gives the other person the opportunity to be sure they heard the person correctly and clearly.

3. **Brainstorm ideas for the solution.** During this step, each person throws out ideas. During this idea gathering session, the youth support provider should write down the ideas from all parties. Some ideas may work and some may not. It is essential that everyone respects all ideas and does not pass judgment, even if they do not agree with them.
4. **Pick a solution.** Once the brainstorming session is complete and you have run out of ideas, it is now time to discuss each suggestion and pick one of those suggestions together. Tell what is liked and not liked about each suggestion until one appears to be the solution.

5. **Make a contract.** Contract is another term for a written agreement. It states clearly the solution and makes sure all parties are on the same page. By writing it down, the youth support provider will have a document that they will be able to refer back to if the situation arises again. It can be as simple as Johnny will play baseball on Mondays and Wednesdays and play football on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

6. **Try out the solution.** The try out time should be LIMITED.

7. **Look for problems in the contract.** Both parties need to give their view on the way the contract worked. What was GOOD about the contract and what needs CHANGING? Redo the process from the beginning, if necessary.


This process allows for everyone at the table to have a voice in coming up with a solution to the problem at hand. Negotiation does not define a definite winner or loser, but will allow both parties to feel that they compromised and came up with the best solution for them and their situation.

**PROBLEM SOLVING**

When helping youth gather information to clarify issues or find alternatives, the following questions should be asked and answered:

- What is the problem?
- Who has the power to resolve the problem?
- What is the chain of command in the organization/agency?
- How could this problem be resolved?

The same five step process used in Chapter 2 of this manual is useful in resolving group problems when all the youth engaged in the conflict participate. The following five steps of the problem solving process can be used when assisting the youth to arrive at possible solutions:

**Step 1:** What is the problem? Use active listening and ask “how,” “what,” and “why” questions to help the speaker articulate the issue.

**Step 2:** Why do you think the problem exists? This helps bring out underlying issues and enables the person to provide a personal perspective on the problem.
**Step 3:** What have you tried? This helps determine what has already been done.

**Step 4:** Has it worked? What happens when you say (or do) that? This is an important follow-up question to Step 3.

**Step 5:** What are some other ways of solving the problem? Drawing on what has been discussed in Steps 3 and 4, you can help search for new, creative solutions.

CHAPTER 4: RESPECTS AND HONORS CULTURAL AND HUMAN DIVERSITY

The skills needed in this area are an awareness of commonalities and differences (such as gender, race, age, culture, ethnicity, class, religion, disability) among youth of diverse backgrounds; the ability to show respect for those of different talents, abilities, sexual orientation and faith; the ability to build on diversity among and between individuals to strengthen the program community and the community at large; and the ability to serve as a role model for the principles of inclusion and tolerance.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

Youth team member Nekiel Jackson provides the following passage arising from her experiences and information learned as a counselor in a local Freedom School and training as a member of our Cultural and Linguistic Competence board:

Culture may be defined as:

"the quality in a person or society that arises from a concern for what is regarded as excellence in arts, letters, manners, scholarly pursuits, and understanding development or improvement of the mind by education and training."

This definition is what is in play when you describe someone as a “cultured person”.

"Culture entails the external behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group or people used to express gratitude, love, community connection and the appreciation and knowledge of one’s culture engendering self-worth and the ability to live in a society with others."

This definition is what is used to refer to a grouping of people such as “Latino” or “African American”.

"Cultural diversity is the sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. It is transmitted through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art, from one generation to the next."

Culture and community conditions directly influence a child’s growing and learning process. Appreciation of your culture is essential to personal empowerment and civic responsibility.

Learning about culture through community systems that offer a sense of safety, love, caring and personal power is needed for transformative behavioral health rehabilitation and education. The inclusion of parents in this process as crucial partners is essential for the development of children and youth mentally, emotionally and psychologically.
In communities and societies where there is a prevalence of the children dealing with issues such as low self-esteem, depression, anger and grief, creating a positive atmosphere through cultural development where children and youth are strengthened is most needed.

Culture is not just ethnicity, race or religion. Culture is seen in any group that shares a history and belief system that affects how they function. It is important to distinguish “societal culture” and “home culture”. Societal culture is made up of the things in society that express the group’s value system (educational systems, medical systems, political systems, religious systems, the media, etc.). Home culture is made up of the values of the immediate family.

Sometimes, “home culture” can conflict with the “societal culture”. It can be hard for families to maintain their home culture with their children (e.g., values, behaviors, ceremonies), while also combining them with the society around them (e.g., schools, doctors, and clubs). The process of combining and balancing the two cultures can be hard for families who are coming in contact with new agencies and value systems.

Cultural values can usually be divided into “independence” or “interdependence”. The U.S. culture commonly stresses values of “independence”, while non-Western cultures focus more on “interdependence”. The idea of independence/interdependence has to do with how the member is situated within the larger group. Independents are able to survive on their own if separated from the larger group. Interdependents are specialized with respect to their position within the group. They rely on other members to fill in the needs that they aren't able to satisfy on their own.

http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20090425102953AAEUwsd

Culture affects all parts of family life – how family members respond to each other and those outside of their family; how families receive information and assistance from agencies; how families communicate with those outside of their family.

**AWARENESS OF COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES (SUCH AS GENDER, RACE, AGE, CULTURE, ETHNICITY, CLASS, RELIGION, DISABILITY) AMONG YOUTH OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS**

Can you even measure something like cultural competence? In an attempt to offer solutions for developing cultural competence, Diversity Training University International (DTUI) isolated four cognitive components: (a) Awareness, (b) Attitude, (c) Knowledge, and (d) Skills.

**Awareness.** Awareness is consciousness of one's personal reactions to people who are different. A police officer who recognizes that he profiles people who look like they are from Mexico as “illegal aliens” has cultural awareness of his reactions to this group of people.

**Attitude.** Paul Pedersen, Ph.D., a renowned expert in cross cultural competence, has developed a multicultural competence model that emphasized three components: awareness, knowledge and skills. DTUI added the attitude component in order to emphasize the difference between training that increases awareness of cultural bias and beliefs in general and training that has participants carefully examine their own beliefs and values about cultural differences.
Knowledge. Social science research indicates that our values and beliefs about equality may be inconsistent with our behaviors, and we ironically may be unaware of it. Social psychologist Patricia Devine and her colleagues, for example, showed in their research that many people who score low on a prejudice test tend to do things in cross cultural encounters that exemplify prejudice (e.g., using out-dated labels such as “illegal aliens”, “colored”, and “homosexual”). This makes the knowledge component an important part of cultural competence development.

Regardless of whether our attitude towards cultural differences matches our behaviors, we can all benefit by improving our cross-cultural effectiveness. One common goal of diversity professionals is to create inclusive systems that allow members to work at maximum productivity levels.

Skills. The skills component focuses on practicing cultural competence to perfection. Communication is the fundamental tool by which people interact in organizations. This includes gestures and other non-verbal communication that tend to vary from culture to culture.


The definition set out above makes it clear that the first part of awareness for the youth support provider is about recognizing your own reactions to youth who are different from you. This requires self assessment and an exploration of your own culture as a first step toward performing this work. A number of individual or self assessments are available, or the system in which you are working may have resources to support this activity. The resource cited below provides an analysis of why a family support provider should engage in self assessment to improve the quality of service they provide. The rational for self assessment applies equally to youth support providers as to family support providers engaging in system of care development. http://www.tapartnership.org/docs/clcRoleofSelfAssessment.pdf

An introductory self test developed by Tawara Goode, now the director of the National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown, may be found at http://www.hogg.utexas.edu/programs_cai_tools.html.

The second part of awareness is to develop intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is the ability to successfully communicate with people of other cultures. A person who is interculturally competent captures and understands, in interaction with people from foreign cultures, their specific concepts in perception, thinking, feeling and acting. Earlier experiences are considered free from prejudices; there is an interest and motivation to continue learning. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence

Learning about the culture of the youth with whom you are working is most successfully done when you talk with the youth. This allows learning about the societal and the home culture on the individual level, supporting individualization in plans and activities for the youth with full cultural knowledge. There are also a number of web resources which provide general information about culture from the group perspective and detailed information on enhancing
cultural competence available from the Technical Assistance Partnership for Children’s Mental Health which supports system of care development.  http://www.tapartnership.org/

The final step in this process of awareness is the development of attitudes and behaviors which allow you to explore cultural differences in a positive and proactive way. The following 13 steps will facilitate this work:

1. **Be nonjudgmental.** This means shutting down the tendency to view another person in a negative light or viewing them with disfavor.

2. **Be flexible.** This means readjusting quickly and effectively to changing situations.

3. **Be resourceful.** Know how to quickly get the things you need to respond well to any situation.

4. **Personalize observations.** Express your personal feelings, thoughts, ideas, and beliefs in a warmly personal way, whether or not they are the same as someone else's. Use "I-messages" rather than "you-messages" (e.g. "I disagree" rather than "You're wrong."). Repeat back what you are hearing in conversation ("Am I hearing you say?"). Listen actively by giving verbal indicators regularly while in conversation ("Uh huh" or "yes.").

5. **Pay attention to your feelings.** Take your feelings seriously and keep in touch with how you feel about what the other person is saying in conversation. You put yourself in better charge of yourself and in better command of the interpersonal situation.

6. **Listen carefully and observe attentively.** This helps increase sensitivity to the whole message and not just what is being said in words.

7. **Assume complexity.** Recognize in an ongoing way that in a culturally diverse environment, perspectives and outcomes are multiple.

8. **Tolerate the stress of uncertainty.** Avoid showing irritation or annoyance in a culturally diverse situation.

9. **Have patience.** It's a positive way to respond to stress.

10. **Manage personal biases.** Look beyond your personal view so that you can treat the person with you as an individual.

11. **Keep a sense of humor.** Cultivate an awareness of the absurdity that often is part of differences converging. Avoid taking yourself so seriously that you can't laugh at yourself.

12. **Show respect.** Go out of your way to express in a genuine manner your understanding, honor, and esteem of the person with whom you are dealing.
13. *Show empathy.* Put yourself in the other person's shoes. This is critical in the culturally diverse encounter. [http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_tools_1176.htm](http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_tools_1176.htm)

**ABILITY TO SHOW RESPECT FOR THOSE OF DIFFERENT TALENTS, ABILITIES, SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND FAITH**

Show respect. Go out of your way to express in a genuine manner your understanding, honor, and esteem of the person with whom you are dealing. The verbal expression of respect and understanding is not sufficient to demonstrate the truth of your assertion. Taking active steps to ensure inclusion of those who are different in all activities and in true leadership roles at all times; addressing activities which raise issues of intolerance by engaging all parties in dialogues about enhancing their own cultural competence; teaching about different cultures as a routine part of any teaching activities; and keeping an open and active conversation going about how things are going with the youth of culture are some of the ways you show true respect.

**ABILITY TO BUILD ON DIVERSITY AMONG AND BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS TO STRENGTHEN THE PROGRAM COMMUNITY, AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE**

One of the best ways to build on and celebrate the diversity of your group is to incorporate cultural celebrations into your programming. Find out what the diverse cultural youth consider celebratory times. Allow them to lead activities to recognize and honor these times. Create opportunities for all youth to identify and present information about their heroes and role models to the rest of the group and engage in discussion about their choices, leading to discussions about diversity.

**ABILITY TO SERVE AS A ROLE MODEL FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION AND TOLERANCE.**

The activities set out above will show the youth support provider is sincerely dedicated to inclusion and tolerance, as well as increase the competency level of the youth in your group. Keep in mind the internal bias which you may have discovered in your own self assessment and pay particular attention to your actions with those groups. Remember that cultural competence is a journey and know that you will make mistakes. The mistake will provide an opportunity for verbal acknowledgment of the error and provide a new opportunity for dialogue. Recognize that this permits the group to learn that no one is perfect and what to do when you make a mistake.
CHAPTER 5: INVOLVES AND EMPOWERS YOUTH

The skills needed in this area are the ability to consult with and encourage youth to contribute to the program and to facilitate youth leadership activities.

WHY INVOLVE YOUTH

The first action the youth support provider needs to undertake is building the support base for involving and empowering youth. This requires a clear understanding and commitment from the organization of the benefits of youth engagement, as well as the necessary preconditions to engaging and empowering youth.

An organization with a long history and extensive experience with youth involvement provides these 14 points to how and why to begin youth involvement:

1. **Why You Should Involve Young People**

   It’s a civil rights issue: Nowhere in the U. S. Declaration of Independence is there a stipulation concerning age. ’All men are created equal’ and all are entitled to ‘certain unalienable rights.’ So, why is it that in this country, decisions that affect a significant segment of the population continue to be made by others? In far too many situations, young people are not being heard! Their rights are being disregarded or violated, and adults do not seem to hear or care about it. We want to change this. A shift is needed in our communities to allow young people’s concerns to be heard and taken seriously. Young people have the same right as adults to voice their hopes, ideas, and fears.

   It’s a long-term growth issue: Educating youth about the ideals of the nonprofit sector and community service plants the seeds of social responsibility. Similarly, youth provide a new generation of leadership. Often, organizations experience an aging of staff in decision-making positions. Adding young people to the governance of an aging organization ushers in a new generation of leadership.

   You’ll develop clearer goals and objectives: When determining goals and objectives, addressing the issue of youth governance fosters discussion about how decisions are made. Defining these objectives is a great way to create a benchmark for your group. This benchmark allows you to measure the effect youth in governance has on your organization.

2. **Assess Your Readiness for Youth in Governance**

   Conduct an organizational assessment: You’ll need to determine what is required in order for youth to be successfully integrated into your governance structure. Are you already strong in most areas related to supporting youth involvement, or do you have specific areas for major growth? An organizational assessment will help answer these questions.
Invest your board and staff in the idea: Assembling a board committee to research and help prepare for youth involvement is an excellent way to invest your board in this idea. Adding individual conversations with all board members to make sure they understand and support youth involvement is a tactic that works well, too.

Your staff can be the cornerstone that makes this project a long-standing effort! In many organizations, staff members rally around and support new young members by helping them prepare for meetings or by providing transportation. This kind of undertaking is a great way to foster a deeper relationship between your staff and board, as well as between the organization and young people.

Investing young people: Recruiting for new youth members is a great chance to educate young people in your program about the role of your governing body. It is important that this audience understands what the group does and know that they play an integral role.

3. **Determine Your Organization's Model for Youth Involvement**

You want to think about involving young people in all areas of your organization. Two general approaches are:

- Involving young people directly in an existing adult governing body. The drawback is that turnover can be high. For example, several youth positions can be added to an existing board, church council, community task force, city commission, or advisory board.
- Creating an all-youth or youth-run adjunct body. This approach is great to allow young people to feel like they are part of a group and can also set up a situation where young people’s ideas are validated. A youth-only group can serve as a feeder when youth board members are needed.

4. **Identify Organizational Barriers**

Institutionalize youth in governance: Organizations need to move past youth in governance as a ‘good idea’ and build it into their structure. Many governance bodies involving youth (such as the Girl Scouts and National 4-H Council) have written into their bylaws that a certain number of members must be young people.

If you are in the process of creating a youth advisory group, ensure that it is a permanent structure, and not one that will disappear with a change in administration.

Determinate if there is a conflict of interest: Many organizations recruit among youth currently involved with their programs. Often, it is a real asset to both the governing body and a youth member if she or he is already familiar with the program. You may, however, encounter concerns about conflict of interest, such as when program participants are also board members. In those cases, they might not be afforded voting privileges. Program cuts and personnel issues are items that also directly affect them. Your group should establish clear conflict of interest guidelines and apply these to any potential new youth, as you would adult members.
Budget and staff considerations: If involving youth in decision-making is an idea that appeals to your organization, budget concerns should be addressed before embarking on a program. Do you have the staff time, transportation funds, and the petty cash for such things as reimbursements and refreshments at evening meetings? Planning a budget for a youth governance program in advance is always a good idea.

5. **Overcome Attitudinal Barriers**

Adults must overcome their own stereotypes about young people: We all have stereotypes, good or bad about young people. To work well with young people, we must put aside our own assumptions and learn to share real authority with this new generation.

Youth need to know that they deserve to have a say: Young people deserve to have their voices heard! Recognizing this isn’t always easy for youth or for adults—often, youth don’t have the forum to make their views public. With your help, youth will recognize the value of their opinions.

Speak a common language: Most professional settings utilize a very “adult” language, using jargon, abbreviations, and references to the organizations commonly known only to the adult staff. When young people are involved, ideas need to be presented in a way that allows everyone to understand. Think about how advanced the vocabulary of engaged youth may be and try to use laymen’s terms which are understood by everyone. The greatest input will come from this common ground.

6. **Address Legal Issues**

Legality of young people serving on boards:
Because laws differ in each state, you need to see what the laws are pertaining to youth governance in your state. For the most part, you will find three different kinds of state rulings.

- A law that says it is legal for youth to serve as directors with age constraints;
- A law stating that it is not legal for young people to vote on boards if they are under a certain age; and
- No law on the issue at all.

Contract considerations: Though many boards do not often enter into legal contracts, it is important to note age-specific contract laws exist. Your board should research the contract laws in your state.

7. **Recruit Young People**

Be clear about what you want: As with any strong team, a governing body should reflect an even balance of interest, skills, and diversity among its members. There are some characteristics that are important for every member of your governing body to possess
and some skills that only a few members need to have. Before selecting new members, consider creating a governing body profile, that is, a simple list of characteristics already found in the group, as well as those skills you hope new members will possess.

Choose motivated and committed youth: You will want to choose a youth member just as you would any other governance body member. Consider what individual strengths this person brings ‘to the table’. Be sure the person you select has the commitment, motivation, and time to make his or her involvement work. Never select a young person just because you think it would be a good experience for her or him, or just because they are ‘young’.

Consider two or more young people (or consider 25% youth representatives): Adding more than one young person to an adult governing body offers more support to youth in governance positions. It is important that young people not feel alone or isolated in your group.

8. Create a Strong Orientation Process

New member orientation: Your orientation program for new decision-making members should clearly outline the basics of your organization’s mission, programs, structure, and history, as well as a clear and forthright description of the relationships between your staff, board, and funders. This orientation also needs to review the roles and responsibilities of your governing body.

Letter of agreement: All new members should receive a detailed letter of agreement that describes their term and responsibilities. This agreement clarifies expectations for all parties and solidifies commitment.

Parental orientation: Parents play a very important role in the success of your young board members (Their support with transportation and in assisting the young people fulfill their commitments to the organization will increase their success potential). In addition to conducting an in-depth orientation with young people, it is important to help their parents or guardians feel comfortable with your organization, as well. It’s important that parents or guardians know at least one individual from your group, so establish a point of contact for every young person involved.

9. Train Young People for Their Roles

Training for young people: Often, this experience is the first time a young person has worked with a budget and/or a committee. Young people will need skills training that covers reading budgets, working on committees, and other bits of governance-related knowledge. Many groups go as far as setting up a buddy system, pairing a seasoned member with each new member for questions, advice, and general support.

Training for adults: Many adults have never carefully considered the assumptions they hold about young people. Before bringing youth into the governance of your
organization, your governance environment needs to be inviting to them. For your adult members, this means learning to be good allies for young people. (Allies are people who support when asked but respect the abilities and rights of youth to proceed as they choose in performing their work.)

Be innovative: The idea of training often invokes images of endless lectures and textbooks. Learning can be, and should be, much more interactive and experimental. There are scores of people, places, activities, books, and films from which we can learn. For example, movies can provide training examples for leadership styles or conflict resolution.

10. **Conduct Intergenerational Training**

Intergenerational training: Once young people are in decision-making positions, you will need to continue training the whole group. Training sessions are a wonderful way to foster interpersonal relationships among your members and further diminish any tensions that may exist because of age. The focus of intergenerational training is to bridge the gap between adults and young people so they can work more effectively together.

Keep it fun: Don’t underestimate how important it can be for people to laugh together. Topics that should be freely discussed in intergenerational training include how youth really view adults, as well how adults view youth. Laughing allows everyone the freedom to let go of his or her inhibitions for a little while, and build camaraderie and team spirit.

Listening is key: Getting youth and adults to really listen to each other is the key to making this effort work. You shouldn't worry as much about getting through an agenda as you should about creating space for participants to open up to hear what each other is saying.

11. **Make Meetings Work**

Meeting times: Flexibility, especially in meeting times, is important when committing to youth participation. Be aware that your meeting times may conflict with young people’s schedules. While young people do not have teleconferences to keep them from meetings, they do have basketball games, school play rehearsals, and family engagements. They, in fact, have less control over their time than most adults do.

Enact interactive agendas: Everyone appreciates an engaging meeting! A few small changes to your meeting structure can help everyone be involved, especially young people. Ideas to make meetings more interactive include enacting small group time where everyone has a chance to speak, going around the group and asking each person to give feedback, asking people to work in pairs, and always making sure there is plenty of opportunity to ask questions.

Show appreciation: How often does it happen that you are plugging away at work, not getting much done, and maybe even feeling a little hopeless about how much more you
have to do? Then, someone walks by and says, “Hey! You’re doing a really good job. Thanks!” You return to your work, but the load feels a little lighter. This is the power of appreciation. We suggest that you create a regular structured time for appreciation during meetings to show both youth and adult members their work is valued.

12. **Develop a Mentoring Plan**

Mentoring for new members: When joining a group, new members of all ages appreciate the advice of a buddy who already ‘knows the ropes’. Young people are unique in this regard because they seldom have prior professional experience.

Mentors, whether they are experienced adult or young group members, provide critical support to young people by helping them learn new terms, understand organizational culture, and build confidence to act as full partners in the group.

Know your responsibilities: In order for mentoring to work, mentors should know what’s expected of them. There is a range of responsibilities that a good mentor should have, but most importantly, mentors should make sure that new members attend meetings, have the support they need, and are well oriented to the organization they have joined.

Tips for new young members: Young people should know that their mentors are there to help them. In order for this relationship to run smoothly, mentors need to encourage young people to, among other things: trust their mentor; ask lots of questions; and speak up when they have an opinion.

13. **Build Youth/Adult Relationships**

Relationships are of primary importance: Strong relationships are the key to all successful programs and social change movements. From local community efforts to international movements, a solid network of committed people tends to create social change. This human caring is where deep, permanent transformation comes from. These reasons show why having strong relationships with youth members is important.

Adults, go easy on yourselves: Adults tend to have a bad habit of being hard on themselves. They often feel like they don’t do enough or that they should have it all figured out by now. Blaming yourself or other adults is never an effective path to change. We need to recognize that anything we understand about working with young people is worthwhile.

Remember the importance of involving parents: It is vital to include parents’ right from the start. Get to know them. Share information with them. Answer their questions. Invite them to events. Appreciate them and the work that their child is doing for your group. Convey to them your enthusiasm for the work you’re doing.

In addition, let young people know that you are going to be talking to their
parents’. Let them know that you are not checking up on them or breaking any confidentiality, but that talking with their parents will ensure that they know how important young people are to your organization from the start.

14. Create Support Networks

Connect young leaders with each other: As adults work to forge strong relationships with young people, they must be mindful of the relationships that youth build with each other. Young people on boards of directors, city councils, or in other leadership positions can be excellent support for one another. By being networked with other youth leaders, young people see that they are not alone in their work and that other youth care about the same issues.

Adults, support each other: Adults need support, too. As adults working with youth, we tend to put our own personal growth on the back burner. Just as youth need the support of other youth, allies to young people need opportunities to talk with one another about their experiences and share what they have learned.

http://www.atthetable.org/resources.asp

ABILITY TO CONSULT WITH AND ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROGRAM

Consultation with youth is a simple activity, but requires that the youth support provider remember to provide the youth with the opportunity to input to the discussions before providing solutions or options from other sources. Provide the youth with a description of the task or goal and ensure that they are clear in their understanding about the desired outcome. Resist providing your method of getting to the goal before asking the group to share their ideas in a brainstorming fashion. Get the youth invested and solution focused. Listen to their ideas without being critical or judgmental and record their suggestions on flip charts so the group can debate each idea at the end of the brainstorm. Encourage each youth to fully develop their ideas and then offer whatever alternatives you as the support provider may have to the collection. Permit the group to select the solution from the collection of ideas, giving their options equal consideration in the process and providing information about system barriers to implementation of their ideas so that they can consider altering their suggestions to fit the system requirement. In developing the implementation plan for whatever solution is chosen, pay attention to the other ideas which were discussed and incorporate as many of those in the plan as possible.

FACILITATE YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

The process of consulting as set out above leads to opportunities for youth to take the lead in activity development. As their ideas are used, they are provided with an opportunity to be the lead in that part of the implementation of the plan.

The next way to facilitate youth leadership is to ensure that youth are trained in leadership. Defining and helping youth understand how to see themselves as leaders is always the objective
of the training, but empowerment is a byproduct of sharing the information. A basic leadership training model for youth may be accessed at [http://downloads.cas.psu.edu/leadership/pdf/leadershipbasics.pdf](http://downloads.cas.psu.edu/leadership/pdf/leadershipbasics.pdf).

Finally, as you get to know youth in your group, the youth support provider should be able to learn the areas of interest for each youth and seek out opportunities to design activities which fit those interest areas. As the youth support provider develops the activity, it should naturally flow that the youth with a high interest in the area be encouraged to step up into the leadership role. The key is to encourage, not to assign the activity as a task.

In our youth writing team meetings, a discussion arose about youth being willing to share their stories to illustrate certain points of this manual. A youth team member, Ashley Solis, left the meeting and immediately provided her story as a resource the very next day. This story and the process of a youth stepping up to the task is a prime example of youth leadership.

*Foster Care is always going to be a life changing experience. People everyday walk around thinking it will not ever happen to them only to others. Children are put in care for many reasons. For some children foster care is a way out of what they thought was a dream but come to find out its all real life. Children can have good experiences and sometimes bad.*

*I was put in care in 2001, I was eight years old. I was placed with my sister who was only two years older. The couple we were placed with were an elderly couple. They were so sweet and had such huge hearts. They didn’t treat us like we were in care, they treated us as if we were one of their own. We always had supper together every night. I remember my sister asking Why? I remember it was around Christmas and me and my sister did not believe in Santa. Well come Christmas morning we woke up to a view of snow and we ran out the door. I went to the front door my sister to the back door. It was amazing how it all happened. There in front of me were two brand new bicycles and bags of toys. On the bikes were letter’s from Santa. It was all so exciting to know he wrote to us. Ann and Tom gave us an experience of a life time. I still remember Ann’s smile and Tom’s laugh.*

*You would think a parent would learn their lesson the first time but for some it just doesn’t stick. My siblings and I were put in care again in 2007. This time it was a lot harder on me and my family. Our case has been one of the longest. We are going on two years. It hasn’t been a really good experience this time I will have to admit. I been bounced around to five different foster homes. In one home it just didn’t feel safe to me. In another I didn’t see my brothers or sisters for nearly seven whole months. Never heard a thing about them. I didn’t know what was going on. DHS said I would have visits once a week and that never happened. I was in a Children’s Home and they weren’t giving me*
ANY ANSWERS EITHER. ALL THEY EVER SAID WAS WE WILL HANDLE IT AND THEY NEVER DID. IT FELT LIKE THEY JUST DROPPED ME OFF AT THIS HOME AND EXPECTED ME TO BE ALRIGHT. I WAS TOLD I WAS PROBABLY LOST IN THE SYSTEM. I DIDN’T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANT, BUT SIMPLY HEARING THE WORD "LOST" IT BROKE MY HEART. I HATED DHS FOR DOING THIS TO ME, AND TO THIS DAY I STILL HOLD IT AGAINST THEM.

I AM FINALLY LIVING WITH A VERY GOOD FAMILY. I ACTUALLY MET HER IN GRADE SCHOOL. MAMMA DORA HAS HELPED ME FIGURE OUT WHO I AM. SHE HAS TAUGHT ME NOT TO LET PEOPLE PUT ME DOWN. I USE TO ALWAYS GO ABOUT MY WAY AS LONG AS I MADE MY MOTHER HAPPY. I WOULD HURT PEOPLE JUST CAUSE I WAS HURTING INSIDE AND I WANTED OTHERS TO KNOW WHAT IT FELT LIKE. I HAVE GROWN A LOT THROUGH THE SYSTEM. I LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE REFLECTION LOOKING BACK IS REALLY ME.

THE SYSTEM CAN TEACH ONE SINGLE CHILD A LOT OF THINGS ABOUT LIFE. YOU CAN HAVE GOOD EXPERIENCES AND YOU CAN HAVE BAD. BUT THROUGH IT ALL YOU GROW AND LEARN TO BE A MUCH STRONGER YOU. THIS EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN WELL HOW TO PUT IT...HARD. BUT IN THE END YOU FIND OUT WHO YOU REALLY ARE, YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF DOING THINGS YOU WERE ALWAYS TOLD YOU WERE NEVER GOING TO BE ABLE TO DO....SUCH AS COLLEGE, MAKING THE HONOR ROLL, MAKING REAL FRIENDS. LIKE I SAID THERE ARE GOOD AND BAD EXPERIENCES...BUT IT’S ALL HOW YOU HANDLE IT.
CHAPTER 6: IDENTIFIES POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS IN A PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT AND TAKES MEASURES TO REDUCE THOSE RISKS

The skills required in this area are the ability to identify basic risk and protective factors in youth development; the ability to design and monitor safe program environments, interactions and activities for youth and intervene when safety demands; and to identify potential issues (and possible signs and symptoms) with youth that require intervention or referral.

adolescent risk factors & problem behaviors

There are generally well known problem behaviors which the youth support provider should expect to see in any group of youth, including youth experiencing behavioral health challenges. Some of these include substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout and violence.

Risk factors are personal characteristics or environmental conditions that predict the onset, continuity, or escalation of problem behaviors.

Certain conditions and circumstances make an adolescent more at risk for antisocial and/or self-destructive behaviors. Some circumstances are more predictive of problematic behavior if they occur in early or mid-adolescence as opposed to pre-adolescence or childhood.

http://www.4troubledteens.com/risk-factors.html

Risk factors vary for different problem behaviors.

Risk Factors for...

Violence

- Victim of physical or sexual abuse
- Brain injury
- History of violent acts
- Exposure to violence in the community
- Exposure to violence in the home
- Firearms in the home
- Socioeconomic stresses
- Antisocial attitudes/beliefs
- Family attitude toward violence
- Behavioral: restlessness, difficulty concentrating, risk taking
- Hostility toward authority
- Gang affiliation
- Weak social ties
- Intense anger, low frustration level
Alcohol/Drug Use

- Social influences
- Parents/Peers attitude toward use
- Education regarding health issues
- Mood disorder
- Parent with substance problem
- Genetic factors

Suicide

- Mood disorder (bipolar especially)
- Substance abuse
- Family history
- Previous threats, attempts
- Suicide of a friend

http://www.4troubledteens.com/risk-factors.html

The degree of research on behavior problems varies. For instance, alcohol abuse risk factors and the risks associated with alcohol abuse have been extensively studied.

Risk Factors for Adolescent Alcohol Use, Abuse, and Dependence:

Genetic Risk Factors. Animal studies and studies of twins and adoptees demonstrate that genetic factors influence an individual's vulnerability to alcoholism. Children of alcoholics are significantly more likely than children of non-alcoholics to initiate drinking during adolescence and to develop alcoholism, but the relative influences of environment and genetics have not been determined and vary among people.

Biological Markers. Brain waves elicited in response to specific stimuli (e.g., a light or sound) provide measures of brain activity that predict risk for alcoholism. P300, a wave that occurs about 300 milliseconds after a stimulus, is most frequently used in this research. A low P300 amplitude has been demonstrated in individuals with increased risk for alcoholism, especially sons of alcoholic fathers. P300 measures among 36 preadolescent boys were able to predict alcohol and other drug (AOD) use 4 years later, at an average age of 16.

Childhood Behavior. Children classified as "under controlled" (i.e., impulsive, restless, and distractible) at age 3 were twice as likely as those who were "inhibited" or "well-adjusted" to be diagnosed with alcohol dependence at age 21. Aggressiveness in children as young as ages 5-10 has been found to predict alcohol or other drug use in adolescence. Childhood antisocial behavior is associated with alcohol-related problems in adolescence and alcohol abuse or dependence in adulthood.
Psychiatric Disorders. Among 12- to 16-year-olds, regular alcohol use has been significantly associated with conduct disorder; in one study, adolescents who reported higher levels of drinking were more likely to have conduct disorder.

Six-year-old to seventeen-year-old boys with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) who were also found to have weak social relationships had significantly higher rates of alcohol abuse and dependence 4 years later, compared with ADHD boys without social deficiencies and boys without ADHD.

Whether anxiety and depression lead to or are consequences of alcohol abuse is unresolved. In a study of college freshmen, a Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – Third Edition (DSM-III) diagnosis of alcohol abuse or dependence was twice as likely among those with anxiety disorder as those without this disorder. In another study, college students diagnosed with alcohol abuse were almost four times as likely as students without alcohol abuse to have a major depressive disorder. In most of these cases, depression preceded alcohol abuse. In a study of adolescents in residential treatment for alcohol or other drug dependence, 25 percent met the DSM-III-R criteria for depression, three times the rate reported for controls. In 43 percent of these cases, the onset of alcohol or other drug dependence preceded the depression; in 35 percent, the depression occurred first; and in 22 percent, the disorders occurred simultaneously.

Suicidal Behavior. Alcohol use among adolescents has been associated with considering, planning, attempting, and completing suicide. In one study, 37 percent of eighth-grade females who drank heavily reported attempting suicide, compared with 11 percent who did not drink. Research does not indicate whether drinking causes suicidal behavior, only that the two behaviors are correlated.

Psychosocial Risk Factors:

Parenting, Family Environment, and Peers. Parents' drinking behavior and favorable attitudes about drinking have been positively associated with adolescents' initiating and continuing drinking. Early initiation of drinking has been identified as an important risk factor for later alcohol-related problems. Children who were warned about alcohol by their parents and children who reported being closer to their parents were less likely to start drinking.

Lack of parental support, monitoring, and communication have been significantly related to frequency of drinking, heavy drinking, and drunkenness among adolescents. Harsh, inconsistent discipline and hostility or rejection toward children has also been found to significantly predict adolescent drinking and alcohol-related problems.

Peer drinking and peer acceptance of drinking have been associated with adolescent drinking. While both peer influences and parental influences are important, their relative impact on adolescent drinking is unclear.

Expectancies. Positive alcohol-related expectancies have been identified as risk factors for adolescent drinking. Positive expectancies about alcohol have been found to increase with age and to predict the onset of drinking and problem drinking among adolescents.
**Trauma.** Child abuse and other traumas have been proposed as risk factors for subsequent alcohol problems. Adolescents in treatment for alcohol abuse or dependence reported higher rates of physical abuse, sexual abuse, violent victimization, witnessing violence, and other traumas compared with controls. The adolescents in treatment were at least 6 times more likely than controls to have ever been abused physically and at least 18 times more likely to have ever been abused sexually. In most cases, the physical or sexual abuse preceded the alcohol use. Thirteen percent of the alcohol dependent adolescents had experienced post traumatic stress disorder, compared with 10 percent of those who abused alcohol and 1 percent of controls.

**Advertising.** Research on the effects of alcohol advertising on adolescent alcohol-related beliefs and behaviors has been limited. While earlier studies measured the effects of exposure to advertising, more recent research has assessed the effects of alcohol advertising awareness on intentions to drink. In a study of fifth- and sixth-grade students' awareness, measured by the ability to identify products in commercials with the product name blocked out, awareness had a small, but statistically significant relationship to positive expectancies about alcohol and to intention to drink as adults. This suggests that alcohol advertising may influence adolescents to be more favorably predisposed to drinking.

http://alcoholism.about.com/cs/alerts/l/blnaa37.htm

Most of the research has come about as prevention efforts are being designed or tested. One fact which the youth support provider should keep in mind is that while the research has amassed evidence for the risk factors discussed to provide a basis for prevention programs, there is little research evidence to show a strict cause-and-effect relationship for most of them. This means that the youth support provider should not immediately conclude that the youth who has parents who may abuse alcohol is him- or herself abusing alcohol.

Also important to understand is that most of the risk factors identified do not appear to have a strong biological basis. Instead, it is theorized, they result from social learning or the combination of social learning and biological processes. This means that violent youths who have violent parents are far more likely to have modeled their behavior on their parents’ behavior—to have learned violent behavior from them—than simply to have inherited it from them. Likewise, society’s differing expectations of boys and girls—expecting boys to be more aggressive, for example—can result in learned behaviors that increase or decrease the risk of violence.

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Protective factors are characteristics or conditions that interact with risk factors to reduce their influence. For example, low family socioeconomic status is a risk factor for violence, and a warm, supportive relationship with a parent may be a protective factor. The warm relationship does not improve the child’s economic status, but it does buffer the child from some of the adverse effects of poverty.

The concept of protective factors is familiar in public health. Wearing seat belts, for example, reduces the risk of serious injury or death in a car crash. Identifying and measuring the effects of
protective factors is a new area of research, and information about these factors is limited. Because they buffer the effect of risk factors, protective factors are an important tool in prevention.

Like risk factors, proposed protective factors are grouped into individual, family, school, peer group, and community categories. They may differ at various stages of development, they may interact, and they may exert cumulative effects. Just as risk factors do not necessarily cause an individual child or young person to become violent, protective factors do not guarantee that an individual child or young person will not become violent. They reduce the probability that groups of young people facing a risk factor or factors will become involved in violence.

Other major protective factors:

School connectedness—the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals—is an important protective factor. Research has shown that young people who feel connected to their school are less likely to engage in many risk behaviors, including:

- Tobacco use
- Alcohol and drug use
- Violence and gang involvement
- Early sexual initiation

http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/adolescenthealth/connectedness.htm


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<th>Family Factors</th>
<th>Parental Supervision</th>
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<td>Child's Attachment to Parent</td>
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<td>Parent's Attachment to Child</td>
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<td>Parent's Involvement in Child's Activities</td>
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<td>Parent's Positive Evaluation of Peers</td>
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<td>Child's Involvement in Religious Activities</td>
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<td>Child's Involvement in Prosocial Activities</td>
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<td>Child Is Close to an Adult Outside the Family</td>
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Proven Protective Factors

Individual

- High individual expectations
- Perception of social support from adults and peers
- Positive/Resilient temperament
- Positive expectations/Optimism for the future
- Self-efficacy
- Social competencies and problem-solving skills

Family

- Effective parenting
- Good relationships with parents/Bonding or attachment to family
- Having a stable family
- Healthy/Conventional beliefs and clear standards
- High family expectations
- Opportunities for prosocial family involvement
- Presence and involvement of caring, supportive adults
- Religiosity/Involvement in organized religious activities
- Rewards for prosocial family involvement

School

- Above average academic achievement/Reading and math skills
- High expectations of students
- High-quality schools/Clear standards and rules
- Opportunities for prosocial school involvement
- Presence and involvement of caring, supportive adults
- Rewards for prosocial school involvement
- Strong school motivation/Positive attitude toward school
- Student bonding (attachment to teachers, belief, commitment)

Peer

- Good relationship with peers
- Involvement with positive peer group activities
- Parental approval of friends

Community

- Clear social norms/Policies with sanctions for violations and rewards for compliance
- High community expectations
- Nondisadvantaged neighborhood
• Prosocial opportunities for participation/Availability of neighborhood resources
• Rewards for prosocial community involvement
• Safe environment/Low neighborhood crime


ABILITY TO DESIGN AND MONITOR SAFE PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTS, INTERACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH AND INTERVENE WHEN SAFETY DEMANDS

The youth support provider selection process will influence the activities which occur in this skill area. Familiarity with the local community will give the support provider insight into the best areas of the community for youth gatherings, the accessibility to the location via public transportation or the need for transportation support and assistance. Familiarity with the community will help the youth support provider know the viability of the site based on youth preferences. The availability of resources to rent space, the extent of collaboration to obtain access to donated space and the degree to which stigma impacts choice of locations are all a part of the system supports the youth provider will have to learn about or develop.

Once the activity sites are chosen, the youth support provider will need to learn the appropriate safety codes and processes. They must become familiar with occupancy limits, fire code requirements, locations for emergency alert systems and the system processes for the organization with which they are working in the case of emergencies.

The next step requires learning about and obtaining appropriate consent and authorization for both participation in activities and for emergency medical care.

Where groups are larger than one person is able to supervise, a decision which will depend on the nature of the activity and the ages and stages of the participants in the activity, recruiting and training an appropriate number of chaperons or mentors should occur. Each of these individuals should have the same level of knowledge about emergency protocol and safety processes as the youth support provider leading the activity. Additionally, information sharing concerning the youth in their supervisory group, which may have an impact on their safety or well being, should occur. Even with this level of information, the youth support provider should remain available during the entire activity to support chaperons/mentors and their youth. The youth support provider should be proactive and check in frequently to ensure that the activity is proceeding as planned and all youth are safe and engaged.

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ISSUES (AND POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS)

The ability to identify potential issues with your youth group will grow as your familiarity with the individual youth grows. Changes in normal behavior can be observed or significant events which may occur will be shared.

Youth support providers are generally assigned a supervisor and a reporting process for that supervision. During this process, it is important for the youth provider to establish a clear
understanding of how to raise concerns about the youth being served and the proper process for seeking help when concerns about a youth arise. In system of care programs, youth will generally have a care coordinator or wraparound facilitator and the youth provider should also establish a process for bringing concerns to this person’s attention. When a youth makes a request beyond the youth support provider's knowledge, verbalizes serious distress or symptoms connected with their behavioral health needs, engages in actions disruptive to the group and beyond the support provider's ability to control, or engages in behavior which seems self destructive, the support provider must take his or her concerns to the supervisory personnel available and request referral or intervention.

Reliable information is available about a variety of warning signs for potential problems through web-based resources and information may also be a part of professional development in any system of care project. Two of the most common problems which may arise are presented below.

Behavioral and Physical Signs of Drug and Alcohol Use

If you notice a change in a teen's normal activities or behavior, and you cannot explain it as due to the typical issues of adolescence, it may be a sign of alcohol or substance abuse. Pay attention to changes in appearance, friends and peer group, ways of expressing him or herself, school performance, extracurricular activities or hobbies, and overall behavior.

If the teen now refuses to do chores, misses curfew regularly, creates a chaotic and hostile environment, and frequently appears to be depressed, agitated, or "sleepy," you should investigate further, maintain clear channels of communication, and set clear boundaries and rules.

For more information on Adolescent Substance Abuse, visit ASK, the Adolescent Substance Abuse Knowledge Base site.

Specific Signs to Note:

- Change in sleeping patterns
- Locked doors
- Bloodshot eyes
- Change in friends or peer group
- Slurred or agitated speech
- Change in clothing, appearance
- Changes in grades
- Unusual smell on clothing or breath
- Complaints from teachers
- Emotional instability
- Missing school
- Hyperactive or hyper-aggressive
- Furtive or secretive behavior
- Depressed

http://www.4troubledteens.com/drug-use-behavior.html
Risks and Signs of Suicidal Behavior

*from Focus on the Family*

Red flags:

- A previous suicide attempt. This is considered the most significant predictor of a future suicide; more than 40 percent of adolescents who commit suicide have attempted it at least once in the past.
- A family history of suicide. Compared to their peers, teenagers who kill themselves are five times more likely than their peers to have a history of a family member who has committed suicide.
- Expressions of intense guilt or hopelessness.
- Threatening, talking or joking about suicide. It is important to have a heart-to-heart conversation with any child or adolescent who makes comments such as "I would be better off dead" or "Nothing matters anymore." Find out what is going on in his life and how he is feeling, and make it clear that you are committed to obtaining whatever help he might need to work through his problems. Broaching the subject of suicide does not encourage it, but rather increases the likelihood that a successful intervention can be started.
- "Cleaning house." You should be very concerned and should investigate immediately if a child or adolescent begins to give away favorite possessions, clothing, entire CD or tape collections, etc. This is a common behavior among young people who are planning suicide.
- A gun in the home. Among young people, more suicides are carried out using firearms than by any other method. If anyone in a family — especially a teenager — is having a problem with depression, remove all guns from the home and keep them out.
- Alcohol or drug abuse. One frightening aspect of substance abuse is that it can trigger erratic, self-destructive behavior for which little or no warning was given. A mild depression can suddenly plummet to suicidal intensity with the help of drugs or alcohol. Because of the unpredictable actions of chemicals on the system, a number of deaths occur among youngsters who did not intend to hurt themselves.
- Suicide among other adolescents in the community. Occasionally one or more suicides in a community or school will precipitate a disastrous "cluster" of self-destructive behavior among local teens.
- A sudden, major loss or humiliation. All of the stressful life events that were listed earlier in this section — death of a loved one, parental separation, failing an important test, etc. — not only can provoke a depressive episode but can also precipitate an unexpected suicide attempt.

http://www.troubledwith.com/ParentingTeens/A000001105.cfm?topic=parenting%20teens%3A%20depression%20and%20suicide
CHAPTER 7: CARES FOR, INVOLVES AND WORKS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

The skills needed by the youth support provider in this area include the ability to understand and care about youth and their families, the ability to engage family members in programs and community initiatives, the ability to understand the greater community context in which the youth and families live, and the ability to communicate effectively with youth and their families in one to one and group settings.

UNDERSTANDS AND CARES ABOUT YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

Why should a youth support provider care about the family? Effectively working with the youth in system of care programs requires a youth support provider to work effectively with their families. The youth needs the support of the family to achieve their goals. Understanding principles of family support and empowerment is a first step to effective work with families.

Family support in systems of care has its roots in the family support movement which began years before the first family and youth support projects were developed in system of care sites. Family Support America, (FSA), published Guidelines for Family Support Practice in Chicago in 1996. According to FSA, where they exist, family support programs are non-stigmatizing – services are available to all families in a community, not just families identified as “at risk.” This recognizes that parenting is a difficult job and seeking help is a sign of strength and intelligence – not weakness or failure. Thus, family support programs provide a nurturing system of support when and where families need it. In this respect, family support mimics extended families and informal neighborhood networks. Family support programs share the goal of empowering and strengthening adults in their roles as parents, nurturers and providers.


The key family support principle for the youth support provider to recognize is as follows; families are empowered when they have access to information and other resources and take action to improve the well-being of their children and their communities. Equitable access to resources in the community—including up-to-date information and high-quality services that address health, educational and other basic needs—enables families to develop high quality environments for all members. Meaningful experiences of participating in programs and influencing policies strengthen existing capabilities and promote the development of new competencies in families, including the ability to advocate on their own behalf and that of their child.

All of this means that participation in youth support programs is part of the process of helping the family enhance their advocacy for and on behalf of the youth.

Including families also provides a protective factor for the youth. As discussed in Chapter 6 of this manual protective factors lower the risk of problem behavior for the youth.
ACTIVELY ENGAGES FAMILY MEMBERS IN PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES.

The engagement of family members as chaperons during activities or mentors for youth (not their own child) in your programs; as participants in support roles in youth activities (transportation; cooking for bake sales; soliciting donations of time, money and human capital for projects from co-workers, from their faith institutions or civic groups); engaging siblings of the target youth in the process and activities implemented; and utilizing the families as resources for the program are all ways to practice this skill. Many parents of the youth in your program are not just parents, they have jobs. Knowing where a parent is employed may provide access to untapped resources or access to people with authority who may be able and willing to support and enhance your work.

Another important engagement opportunity is to celebrate the youth. Where opportunities for recognition of youth present themselves, extra effort to include the family of the youth in the celebration is required. Both youth and family benefit.

Recognize also that family engagement is necessary for your success. Youth team member, Kendrick Done, contributed the following story to illustrate the point.

Say you have a kid with an anger issue who rarely gets out/ or just doesn’t have any positive activities that he/she does. You want something positive and fun for the youth to do but don’t know any activities in town. That’s where the youth coordinator and family come together to help.

-a youth coordinator would get to know the youth better and figure out what activities he/she likes to do and also maybe broaden the youth's interests so that they are willing to try new/different activities.

-then the youth coordinator would find different activities near by, and if the activity doesn’t already exist in your town he/she will work with the family group to get the desired activity/program up and running in your town.
UNDERSTANDS THE GREATER COMMUNITY CONTEXT IN WHICH YOUTH AND FAMILIES LIVE.

The youth support provider selected from the community in which the youth lives will understand the demographics, socio-economic variables, resources available and community norms. A provider from outside that community will need to perform an environmental scan to acquire this same knowledge.

This knowledge is necessary for programming decisions, such as selection of sites for activities in a safe environment and an environment where the youth will feel comfortable and accepted. Youth from the “hood” are unlikely to attend activities regularly scheduled “uptown”. The absence or availability of public transportation will have an impact on the ability of youth to participate without family support for transportation or access to resources to obtain transportation assistance.

This knowledge also provides insight into the level of acculturation of minority populations, a critical component for working with minority youth. The youth support provider will also gain insight into the level of political power or the degree of oppression experienced by the youth and family. Exposure to violence, crime, drugs, gangs, extent of poverty or affluence in the community are among the factors needed to understand the risk factors to which the youth has been exposed so that the youth provider can select appropriate prevention programming.

When this knowledge reveals a need for culturally competent programming and reduction of discrimination, the youth support provider needs to understand the ability to work with youth in a competent manner. The following passage adapted from an article called, Teaching "Diversity": A Place to Begin”, provides guidance.

http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3499

Inevitably, situations arise when a youth support provider will strongly disagree with a family's practice even after he or she understands its roots. When this happens, it's important to keep in mind that different ways of doing things aren't necessarily bad or harmful in and of themselves. Youth are resilient, they adapt and thrive and are able to appreciate that care, comfort, and love come in different forms, in different contexts, and from different people. But if the differences are not met with acceptance, respect, and understanding by the adults involved, it can lead to difficulties and misunderstandings. Culturally sensitive care can make a difference as to whether or not a youth is able to remain firmly rooted in his/her own culture and become a part of other cultures as well; that is, to become truly bicultural. If the right balance isn't found, a youth may feel forced to choose one culture and give up the other-- or flounder between cultures without a sense of belonging. Some youth may have a difficult time developing a sense of who they are and where they belong when our interactions are quite different from those of their parents and family. Others adapt more easily. It's always important to consider the parents' goals as well as the youth's personality-and to adjust our decisions by observing how the youth responds. Upon careful exploration, if you believe that a particular practice is harmful to a child, it's important to help parents understand the implications. Most situations do not approach the point where a child is in danger. Probably the most important element in bridging worlds is for the adults who care
for them to feel comfortable and accepting of their differences. When adults are uncomfortable, afraid, or judgmental, they can't be supportive of youth. That's why open, respectful dialogue about cultural practices is essential. At the same time, be careful not to give messages, either spoken or unspoken, that what we think is superior to their home culture. Otherwise, youth may develop a negative view of themselves and their families.

The following suggestions are designed to help you teach youth and children to not only value diversity, but also to resist prejudice and discrimination.

- Teach youth to be critical thinkers, specifically about prejudice and discrimination. Critical thinking is when we strive to understand issues through examining and questioning. Young children can begin to develop these skills, to know when a word or an image is unfair or hurtful.
- Respond to the youth's questions and comments about differences, even if you're not sure what to say. Youth often interpret a lack of response to mean that it's not acceptable to talk about differences. If you're unsure about what to say, try: "I need to think about your question and talk to you later." Or, you can always go back to a youth and say: "Yesterday you asked me a question about... Let's talk about it." Another useful response: "I don't really like what I told you this morning. I've given it some more thought, and here's what I really should have said."
- Listen carefully to what youth are saying. Ask a few questions before answering to get a clearer idea of what they really want to know and the ideas they already have on the subject.
- Shape your response to the child's age and personality. Generally, children want to know why people are different, what this means, and how those differences relate to them. Remember that children's questions and comments are a way for them to gather information about aspects of their identity and usually do not stem from bias or prejudice.
- Share ideas for responding to children's questions with families and colleagues. You'll gain new ideas and insights as you exchange experiences, and you can clarify what works best for you and your children.
- If children are nonverbal, observe and respond to their curiosity. For example, if a child is staring at or patting the head of a child whose hair is very different from hers, you can say, "He has straight hair, and you have curly hair."
- Model the behaviors and attitudes you want children to develop. Pay particular attention to situations that can either promote prejudice or inhibit a child's openness to diversity. Make sure your program reflects diversity in books, magazines, dolls, puzzles, paintings, music, and so on.
- Don't let racist and prejudicial remarks go by without intervening. It's important to let children know from a very early age that name-calling of any kind, whether it's about someone's religion, race, ethnic background, or sexual orientation, is hurtful and wrong.
- Try to create opportunities for children to interact and make friends with people who are different from them. As you know, children learn best from concrete experiences.
- Involve families in sharing their traditions. In fact, instead of deciding yourself which tradition you would like to expose children to, ask families what they would like to share.
- Try to expose children to role models from their own culture, as well as to those from other cultures. Remember: Seeing adults developing positive relationships with people...
who are different offers an important model and teaches children to value such relationships.

COMMUNICATES EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES – ONE-TO-ONE COMMUNICATIONS AS WELL AS IN GROUP SETTINGS

Chapter 2 of this manual discusses many aspects of communication in great detail, but youth support providers need to model two of the skills most effectively. The first, communicating using “I” messages, and second, listening. The importance of nonverbal communication also bears repeating.

According to Mary Novak, Understanding Conflict: Communication Using “I” Statements. learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/B3870-02.PDF, using “I” messages helps us take responsibility for how we feel. When speaking about personal experiences or expressing one’s self during an argument, it is important to begin each sentence with the word “I”. Novack also states the anatomy of an “I” statement is comprised of three parts: the feeling, what happened, and why it matters. The following are examples of using the feeling component of using “I” messages:

- I am tired…
- I am happy…
- I am overwhelmed…

The next component of using “I” messages is to tell what happened. The following are examples of using the “what happened” component:
  - …because I was working alone…
  - …because I received an “A” on my report…
  - ….because the kids won’t go to sleep…

The third and final component of using “I” messages is to tell why it matters. The following are examples of using the “why it matters” component:
  - …and it seemed that no one wanted to help me.
  - …and I worked really hard on it.
  - … and I need to get up early in the morning.

The following are all three components put together:
- I am tired because I was working alone and it seemed that no one wanted to help me.
- I am happy because I received an “A” my report and I worked really hard on it.
- I am overwhelmed because the kids won’t go to sleep and I need to get up early in the morning.
These phrases allow the person/people that are listening to truly understand your point of view. It allows you to put what is happening to you into words and helps you learn how to assert yourself and your feelings that will ultimately get you the things you want and need.

A supportive and effective listener does the following:

- Stops talking: Asks the other person for as much detail as he/she can provide; asks for other's views and suggestions.

- Looks at the person, listens openly and with empathy; is clear about his position; is patient.

- Listens and responds in an interested way that shows they understand the problem and the other's concern.

- Is validating, not invalidating ("You wouldn't understand"); acknowledges other's uniqueness, importance.

- Checks for understanding; paraphrases; asks questions for clarification.

- Doesn't control conversations; acknowledges what was said; lets the other finish before responding.

- Focuses on the problem, not the person; is descriptive and specific, not evaluative; focuses on content, not delivery or emotion.

- Attends to emotional as well as cognitive messages (e.g., anger); is aware of non-verbal cues, body language, etc.; listens between the lines.

- Reacts to the message, not the person, delivery or emotion.

- Makes sure to comprehend before they judge; asks questions.

- Uses many techniques to fully comprehend.

- Stays in an active body state to aid listening.

- Fights distractions.

- Decides on specific follow-up actions and specific follow-up dates (If appropriate, takes notes).

Much of communication is conveyed by unspoken actions. Youth support providers can show they are listening through nonverbal communication, including certain body language signals. According to helpguide.org, nonverbal communication, information conveyed through facial
expressions, body language, pace, intensity and tone of voice, gives you a powerful means for self expression. Helpguide.org provides the following table that outlines the most important nonverbal cues:

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<th>Nonverbal Communication: The Most Important Nonverbal Cues</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eye contact</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The visual sense is dominant for most people, and therefore especially important in nonverbal communication. Is this source of contact missing, too intense or just right?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Facial expression</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Universal facial expressions signify anger, fear, sadness, joy and disgust. What is the face you show? Is it mask-like and unexpressive, or emotionally present and filled with interest?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tone of voice</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The sound of your voice conveys your moment to moment emotional experience. What is the resonant sound of your voice? Does your voice project warmth, confidence and delight, or is it strained and blocked?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Posture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your posture—including the pose, stance and bearing of the way you sit, slouch, stand, lean, bend, hold and move your body in space—affects the way people perceive you. Does your body look stiff and immobile, or relaxed? Are shoulders tense and raised, or slightly sloped? Is your abdomen tight, or is there a little roundness to your belly that indicates your breathing is relaxed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Touch</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finger pressure, grip and hugs should feel good to you and the other person. What “feels good” is relative; some prefer strong pressure, others prefer light pressure. Do you know the difference between what you like, and what other people like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A reflection of the amount of energy you project is considered your intensity. Again, this has as much to do with what feels good to the other person as what you personally prefer. Are you flat or so cool you seem disinterested, or are you over the top and melodramatic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timing and pace</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your ability to be a good listener and communicate interest and involvement is impacted by timing and pace. What happens when someone you care about makes an important statement? Does a response – not necessarily verbal – come too quickly, or too slowly? Is there an easy flow of information back and forth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sounds that convey understanding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds such as “ahhh, ummm, ohhh,” uttered with congruent eye and facial gestures, communicate understanding and emotional connection. More than words, these sounds are the language of interest, understanding and compassion. Do you indicate with sincere utterances that you are attending to the other person?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


http://www.helpguide.org/mental/eq6_nonverbal_communication.htm
CHAPTER 8: WORKS AS PART OF A TEAM AND SHOWS PROFESSIONALISM

The skills required in this area are the ability to articulate a personal “vision” of youth development work (to co-workers, volunteers, and participants); the ability to adhere to ethical conduct and professionalism at all times (confidentiality, honoring appropriate boundaries); the ability to act in a timely, appropriate and responsible manner; the ability to be accountable through work in teams and independently by accepting and delegating responsibility; and the ability to display commitment to the mission of the agency.

ABILITY TO ARTICULATE A PERSONAL “VISION”

To articulate a personal vision about your work as a youth support provider, you must first develop your vision for your life, then relate as much of that as you can to the work. In Creating or Revising Your Personal Vision, Dr. Linda Phillips-Jones writes:

Numerous experts on leadership and personal development emphasize how vital it is for you to craft your own personal vision for your life. Warren Bennis, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge, and others point out that a powerful vision can help you succeed far beyond where you'd be without one. That vision can propel you and inspire those around you to reach their own dreams. I've learned in my own life and in working as a psychologist that if you don't identify your vision, others will plan and direct your life for you. I've worked with too many individuals who late in their lives said, "If only..." You don't have to be one of them.

Senge defines vision as what you want to create of yourself and the world around you. What does your vision include? Making a vital change in an area such as health, technology, or the environment? Raising happy, well-adjusted children? Writing a book? Owning your own business? Living on a beach? Being very fit and healthy? Visiting every continent? Helping others with their spiritual development? What are you good at? What do you love to do? What aren't you good at now, but you'd like to be? All of these important questions are part of identifying your personal vision.

Use this Tool #1 below to think through and start to craft your personal vision. It's adapted from many sources and should prompt you to think and dream. Find a place without distractions such as a quiet table at a restaurant. Answer as many of the questions as possible, and discuss your responses with someone you trust. http://www.mentoringgroup.com/personalv1.html
### Personal Vision Tool #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things I Really Enjoy Doing</th>
<th>What Brings Me Happiness/Joy</th>
<th>The Two Best Moments of My Past Week</th>
<th>Three Things I'd Do If I Won the Lottery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues or Causes I Care Deeply About</th>
<th>My Most Important Values (Circle)</th>
<th>Things I Can Do at the Good-to-Excellent Level</th>
<th>What I’d Like to Stop Doing or Do as Little as Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having integrity</td>
<td>Having integrity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving/pleasing God</td>
<td>Having a nice home and belongings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being fit and healthy</td>
<td>Leaving the world a better place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having fun</td>
<td>Having fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and improving myself</td>
<td>Learning and improving myself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making others' lives easier or more pleasant</td>
<td>Making others' lives easier or more pleasant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying my family</td>
<td>Enjoying my family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others? (Add)</td>
<td>Others? (Add)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### What is a vision statement?

The Community Tool Box describes your vision as your dream. It's what your organization believes are the ideal conditions for your community; that is, how things would look if the issue important to you were completely, perfectly addressed. It might be a world without war, or a community in which all people are treated as equals, regardless of gender or racial background.

Whatever your organization's dream is, it may be well articulated by one or more vision statements. Vision statements are short phrases or sentences that convey your community's hopes for the future. By developing a vision statement or statements, your organization clarifies the beliefs and governing principles of your organization, first for yourselves, and then for the greater community.

There are certain characteristics that most vision statements have in common. In general, vision statements should be:
Understood and shared by members of the community.
Broad enough to include a diverse variety of local perspectives.
Inspiring and uplifting to everyone involved in your effort.
Easy to communicate - for example, they are generally short enough to fit on a T-shirt.

Here are some examples of vision statements that meet the above criteria:

- Caring communities
- Healthy children
- Safe streets, safe neighborhoods
- Every house a home
- Education for all
- Peace on earth

http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1086.htm

As a youth support provider, opportunities to articulate your vision for your program will continually arise and become a basic part of your social marketing strategy as you outreach to co-workers, community, families and youth. When you engage with your youth, let them hear your vision for the work and always ask them what they would like to see occur in the future, then include their vision within yours. This creates a shared vision for the work and increases their investment and commitment to the program. Make the vision exercise a part of their program and help them develop their vision for themselves.

ADHERE TO ETHICAL CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONALISM

Ethics is defined as a system of moral principles, for example, the ethics of a culture; the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group, culture, etc., for example medical ethics; moral principles, as of an individual, for example, ethics forbade or prohibits betrayal of a confidence; that branch of philosophy dealing with values relating to human conduct, with respect to the rightness and wrongness of certain actions and to the goodness and badness of the motives and ends of such actions.

http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ethics

Why should a youth support worker in a system of care be concerned with ethics?

Teenslagers lie. They cheat and steal, too. And they are doing it more often and more easily than ever.

That is the conclusion of the latest “Report Card on the Ethics of American Youth”, released this week by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, a partnership of educational and youth organizations. The institute conducted a random survey of 29,760 high school students earlier this year (as they have every two years since 1992) and found that the next generation of leaders have a somewhat casual relationship with the truth.
About a third of the boys and a quarter of the girls in the survey admit to having stolen something from a store within the past year, a slightly higher rate than was found when the Institute asked the same question in 2006.

Nearly a quarter said they had stolen something from a parent or relative in the past year, and 20 percent had stolen something from a friend. Boys were almost twice as likely to do this as girls (26 percent to 14 percent).

And they lie even more than they steal. Forty-two percent say they have lied to save money (compared with 39 percent in 2006), and 83 percent said they lied to their parents about something significant.

Cheating is on the increase, too. Sixty-four percent said they cheated on a test during the past year (up from 60 percent two years before), and 38 percent had cheated more than once. They are cheating on take-home assignments also — 36 percent said they used the Internet to plagiarize.

But the two most jarring bits of data from this survey, I think, are the following: Ninety-three percent said they were “satisfied with their personal ethics and character.” And 26 percent said they lied on at least one or two questions on the survey about lying. Your Lying, Cheating, Stealing Teens, by Lisa Belkin in the New York Times, December 3, 2008

http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/12/03/dirty-rotten-teenage-scoundrels/?hp

Youth support workers in a system of care are powerful role models for children and youth experiencing behavioral health challenges. The children and youth not only listen to what you say; they watch and learn from what you do. Having an ethical code and performing in an ethical manner are essential components of the work and the role. While the role is fairly new in systems of care, the foundation for ethical work with youth has been laid in the broader world of positive youth development. The most fully developed Code of Ethics for youth workers provides:

**Code of Ethics**

**Prologue**

Youth workers exist because of young people’s exclusion from full membership of the common wealth, in the struggle by young people for survival and recognition on the one hand and the struggle by society for order and control on the other. The core of youth work practice lies in the relationship with the young person as the primary client, expressed through a commitment to advocacy and healing in their work with the young person and the wider society. The following principles are informed by this core position.
1. Primary client

The primary client of the youth worker is the young person with whom they engage. Where conflict exists between obligations to one young person and another, it is resolved in ways that avoid harm and continue to support the person least advantaged by the resolution.

2. Ecology

Youth workers recognize the impact of ecological and structural forces on young people. Their work is not limited to facilitating change within the individual young person, but extends to the social context in which the young person lives.

3. Non-discrimination

Youth workers' practice will be equitable.

4. Empowerment

The youth worker seeks to enhance the power of the young person by making power relations open and clear; by holding power-holders accountable; by facilitating their disengagement from the youth work relationship; and by supporting the young person in the pursuit of their legitimate claims. Youth workers presume that young people are competent in assessing and acting on their interests.

5. Non-corruption

Youth workers and youth agencies will not advance themselves at the expense of young people.

6. Transparency

The contract established with the young person, and the resulting relationship, will be open and truthful. The interests of other stakeholders will not be hidden from them.

7. Confidentiality

Information provided by young people will not be used against them, nor will it be shared with others who may use it against them. Young people should be made aware of the contextual limits to confidentiality, and their permission sought for disclosure. Until this happens, the presumption of confidentiality must apply.

8. Cooperation

Youth workers will recognize the limits of their role. Youth workers, in consultation with young people, seek to cooperate with others in order to secure the best possible outcomes for young people.
9. **Knowledge**

Youth workers have a responsibility to keep up to date with the information, resources, knowledge and practices needed to meet their obligations to young people.

10. **Self-awareness**

Youth workers are conscious of their own values and interests, and approach difference in those with whom they work with respect.

11. **Boundaries**

The youth work relationship is a professional relationship, intentionally limited to protect the young person. Youth workers will maintain the integrity of these limits, especially with respect to sexuality. Youth workers will not sexualize their clients.

12. **Self-care**

Ethical youth work practice is consistent with preserving the health of youth workers.


In addition to the confidentiality language set out above, each system will have rules and regulations regarding specific confidentiality processes and procedure requirements. The youth support provider must proactively seek out the information and make themselves familiar with all requirements. As the language in the code of ethics also indicates, the youth support worker should make the limits imposed by the rules and regulations very clear to the youth and families with whom they are working in the beginning of that work so no violations of trust occur.

**PROFESSIONALISM**

Youth support workers in systems of care will often be young persons who may be in their first professional engagement. The work with youth may be familiar, but the navigation of a new workplace both daunting and challenging. This article, though designed for parents new to the workplace, is instructive for the youth worker.

http://www.parentleadership.com/print/worksavvyprint.html

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. <strong>PROFESSIONALISM &amp; WORKPLACE SAVVY</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BY JAMES B. STENSON</strong></td>
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</table>

**NOTE: THE ITEMS BELOW ARE THE SORT OF IDEALISTIC AND PRACTICAL WORK-RELATED LESSONS THAT EFFECTIVE PARENTS TEACH THEIR ADOLESCENT CHILDREN TO PREPARE THEM FOR ENTERING THE WORLD OF WORK.**

**PROFESSIONALISM**
(1) **Professionalism isn’t just a set of appearances -- neatness, good grooming, “shop talk” and the like. Nor is it just technical skill; many technically skilled people are not really professional. Professionalism is, rather, a set of internalized character strengths and values directed toward high quality service to others through one’s work. In their daily work, whatever it may be, real professionals show these inner strengths and attitudes -- sound judgment, know-how, business savvy, mature responsibility, problem-solving perseverance and ingenuity, along with what people call ”class.” This is as true for hair-dressers, carpenters, machinists, police officers, and barbers as it is for lawyers, physicians, and engineers. Any honest work can be done professionally.

(2) **Professionals show self-respect in their work. They’re conscious that their work reflects their inner character. Their work is, among other things, a statement of their personal commitment to excellence of performance. They don’t see work as just a job to be done or merely a source of ”spending money.”

(3) **They see work as service to others. They labor toward the betterment of other people, directly or indirectly: clients, customers, employers, colleagues. Thus they’re both task-oriented and people-oriented.

(4) **Professionals have respect for experience. They have an ongoing need to learn and improve, to master traditional approaches and then try to improve on them. Among professionals there’s a teaching tradition; people teach and learn by word and example. Professionals also respect the experience of others; they have high regard for professionalism in other lines of work. Moreover, they know how to use the powers of other professionals (lawyers, accountants, consultants) to strengthen their own performance. They seek out sound advice and generally follow it.

(5) **They tend to see problems as challenges and opportunities, not burdensome ”hassles” to be avoided. They have a long-term habit of approaching problems confidently and optimistically. They don’t let indecision or fear of failure lead to paralysis. They do the best they can with what they have.

(6) **They have a high level of personal responsibility and respect for others’ rights. They have a clear sense of the limits to their authority and rights of operation. They don’t meddle in others’ affairs or criticize in areas where they have neither rights nor expertise. So, professionals are unafraid to say, ”That’s none of my business” or ”I don’t know anything about that....” They tend to have an intense dislike for gossip or otherwise uninformed criticism.

(7) **They make efficient use of resources, especially time. They know how to concentrate mind and will on the tasks before them. They work quickly but not hurriedly. They’re careful but not slow.
THEY compartmentalize work responsibilities from leisure and personal interests. Work hours are devoted exclusively to job performance; leisure and personal affairs wait until the job is done. Responsibilities to clients and employers come ahead of self-interested concerns and pleasures. They know that leisure is most enjoyable when it’s been earned through hard work. They can do their best work no matter how poorly they feel at the moment.

Even off the job, professionals demonstrate admirable character: good judgment, good taste, good manners, a respect for quality in general. Their personality shows tasteful self-restraint combined with concern for others and love of life -- in a word, "class."

The character and values of professionalism are built up first in childhood and then strengthened in adulthood through study, training, and work experience. This means that young people, even teenagers, can mark themselves as professionals -- earn the respect of all who work with them -- during the first few weeks of their first job.

WORKPLACE SAVVY

There’s such a thing as a professional vocation. It’s some passionate love that directs your powers to the welfare of others and earns you a living. While growing up, you should search long and wide to find some line of work that appeals to your heart -- some labor that gives you the joy you knew in childhood, when work and play were one. Few pleasures in life are more delightful than a job we really enjoy.

One word of caution, though. You may love music or drama or sports so much that you think of these fields as potential careers. Fine, but anchor yourself in reality. The worlds of entertainment and sports bring delight to millions, so a few hundred-thousand youngsters aspire to work in them -- and everyone in this vast throng is competing against you. To succeed, you need to be exceptionally talented, extremely hard-working, single-mindedly ambitious, well connected with influential people, and (to be frank about it) very, very lucky. No matter how you look at it, the odds are hugely against you. Remember, no matter what you later do for a living, you can always enjoy these pursuits as recreational pastimes.

When leaning toward a career, ask yourself: "What can I be an expert in?" Then work to become that expert.

Rely on family and friends to tell you what you’re really good at. When we’re good at something, we’re usually among the last to know it. Others notice our talent before we do, because to us the gift seems natural, easy, almost effortless. So pay attention when people close to you all say the same thing: You have some talent that you should develop.
SUCCESS IN ONE’S CAREER DOESN’T NECESSARILY MEAN GREAT FAME AND BIG MONEY.
REAL SUCCESS IN WORK AND LIFE MEANS SEVERAL THINGS:

-- BEING ABLE TO SUPPORT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY COMFORTABLY
-- WAKING UP IN THE MORNING AND LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DAY’S WORK
-- EARNING THE RESPECT OF EVERYONE WHO KNOWS YOU: FAMILY, FRIENDS, BOSSES, SUBORDINATES, CLIENTS, CUSTOMERS, NEIGHBORS
-- SEEING YOUR POWERS AND SKILLS WORK TOWARD THE BETTERMENT OF OTHERS
-- ENJOYING LEISURE PURSUITS THOROUGHLY BECAUSE YOU’VE EARNED THEM.

THROUGHOUT HUMAN HISTORY, FINDING A GOOD JOB HAS ALWAYS BEEN A MATTER OF WHOM YOU KNOW. CREDENTIALS, EXPERIENCE, COLD CALLS, MASS MAILINGS OF RÉSUMÉS -- NONE OF THESE THINGS BEATS CONNECTIONS THROUGH FRIENDS. YOUR FRIENDS WON’T HAVE A JOB FOR YOU, BUT THEIR FRIENDS MIGHT. IN OTHER WORDS, WE GET A JOB MOST QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY THROUGH THE FRIENDS OF OUR FRIENDS. FOR THIS REASON ALONE, IT PAYS TO HAVE MANY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES. (RELATED PIECE OF ADVICE: MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE. WORK AT MAKING THEM FRIENDS FOR LIFE.)

IN YOUR FIRST COUPLE OF JOBS, TRY TO WORK FOR A GOOD BOSS, SOMEONE WHO’LL CHALLENGE YOUR POWERS, CORRECT YOU, AND HELP YOU LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES. A GOOD BOSS WILL TEACH YOU MORE IN ONE YEAR THAN YOU’LL LEARN IN FOUR YEARS OF COLLEGE.

NOTICE THAT SUCCESSFUL BOSSES HAVE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS: THEY’RE ATTENTIVE LISTENERS AND CLEAR EXPLAINERS. THEY LEARN FROM PEOPLE, INCLUDING THEIR EMPLOYEES. THEY LEAD THEIR PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT’S IMPORTANT.

ARROGANT, TYRANNICAL EGOMANIACS SOMETIMES MAKE IT TO THE TOP OF A BUSINESS, LARGELY BECAUSE OF THEIR PYROTECHNIC ENERGY -- BUT EVENTUALLY THEY GET INTO TROUBLE. OFTEN BIG TROUBLE. THEY BLUNDER BECAUSE OF EGOCENTRIC MISJUDGMENTS; THEY CUT CORNERS WITH THE LAW; THEY DRIVE AWAY GOOD EMPLOYEES; THEIR ARROGANCE AFFRONT CLIENTS, CUSTOMERS, OR -- FINALLY AND FATALLY -- BOARD DIRECTORS. THEIR SPECTACULAR SACKING MAKES HEADLINES. MORAL: IN THE LONG RUN, IT PAYS TO BE A CONSIDERATE, RESPONSIBLE TEAM LEADER. AN EFFECTIVE BOSS REMOVES OBSTACLES FROM PEOPLE’S PERFORMANCE; HE DOESN’T CREATE THEM.

WORK IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU MAKE YOUR BOSS LOOK GOOD.

GENERALLY SPEAKING, WHEN A COMPANY IS DOWNSIZING, THE FIRST PEOPLE TO GO ARE THE ONES WHO MADE FEW FRIENDS IN THE ORGANIZATION. BUT THOSE PEOPLE WITH A LOT OF FRIENDS TEND TO REMAIN. ALL OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, BOSSES PREFER TO RETAIN COMPETENT PEOPLE WHOM THEY ALSO LIKE AND RESPECT.

DRESS FOR THE JOB YOU WANT, NOT THE ONE YOU HAVE. LET YOUR DRESS AND GROOMING REFLECT YOUR SELF-RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM. PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO YOUR SHOES AND SHIRTS. YOUR BOSSES WILL NOTICE.
(13) Get in good physical shape and work to stay that way. Generally speaking, conspicuously overweight people suffer a competitive disadvantage in the workplace. Unless they’re exceptionally skilled in some technical area, they get passed over in favor of healthier looking competitors, especially if their jobs involve personal contact with the public. This is, of course, often unfair -- but much of life is unfair, and we have to come to terms with reality.

(14) Personal integrity is crucially important in business. Tell nothing but the truth and always keep your word. Bosses and clients can forgive isolated, well intentioned mistakes and even blunders -- but if you lie, you’re through.

(15) Mind your own business. The top of someone’s desk isn’t a bulletin board, so don’t read what’s on other people’s desks or computer monitors. If bosses or co-workers find you snooping, they won’t trust you.

(16) Similarly, don’t make critical comments about matters that lie outside your areas of responsibility. Stick to your own business. Don’t get a reputation as a busybody. Every responsible professional knows that loose-talking meddlers are also either slackers or control freaks. In either case, nobody trusts them.

(17) Don’t talk negatively about people behind their backs. If you gossip, people won’t confide in you. Besides, office gossip has a way, mysteriously, of making its way to the gossipee. Here, as in so many other areas, keep your mouth shut and you’ll stay out of trouble.

(18) If there’s a lot of badmouth gossip in your office, especially about management, then start looking for another job. Poor morale nearly always arises from crummy management, and a company rife with gossip is on the verge of business collapse.

(19) Don’t whisper with people in hallways or other public places. This looks sneaky and conspiratorial. Step into a room or out of people’s earshot and then talk in a normal voice.

(20) Before you use anyone’s name for a reference, be sure to get that person’s permission. Since good professionals always check references, your failure to secure prior permission makes your reference worse than useless. Remember, all bosses detest unpleasant surprises.

(21) No matter what it takes, be on time for all business appointments. If possible, arrive a few minutes early. No matter how late you work, get to your job on time.

(22) Strive your best to keep a deadline, especially one you’ve promised. If you clearly cannot meet it, then apologize and ask for an extension. (People won’t remember that work was a little late, but they’ll remember if it was crummy.) Once
YOU’VE GOTTEN AN EXTENSION, THEN THAT’S IT. DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY -- STAY UP LATE, CALL IN OUTSIDE HELP -- TO TURN IN GOOD WORK ON TIME.

(23) IF SOMEONE DOES A SPECIAL FAVOR FOR YOU (FOR EXAMPLE, GIVES TIME FOR A JOB INTERVIEW), SEND A PERSONAL THANK-YOU NOTE WITHIN TWO DAYS. KEEP A SUPPLY OF GOOD-QUALITY THANK-YOU NOTECARDS OR "MONARCH" STATIONERY FOR THIS PURPOSE.

(24) WHEN YOU DEAL WITH PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE SOCIALLY (ESPECIALLY PHYSICIANS, ACCOUNTANTS, AND ATTORNEYS), DON’T ASK FOR PROFESSIONAL ADVICE OR OTHERWISE TALK SHOP.

(25) WHEN YOU ATTEND SOCIAL OCCASIONS, ALWAYS CARRY A COUPLE OF YOUR BUSINESS CARDS. BUT DON’T OFFER ONE TO SOMEONE UNTIL THE VERY END OF A CONVERSATION, WHEN YOU’RE PARTING, AND ONLY IF IT’S CLEAR THAT THE NEW ACQUAINTANCE MIGHT LIKE TO MEET WITH YOU AGAIN SOMETIME. PASSING OUT CARDS GRATUITOUSLY LOOKS PUShy AND AMATEURISH.

(26) IF YOU’RE HAVING A BUSINESS LUNCH, DON’T START TALKING BUSINESS UNTIL EVERYONE HAS ORDERED FOOD AND DRINK. MAKE SMALL TALK UNTIL ORDERS ARE TAKEN.

(27) GENERALLY SPEAKING, IT’S BETTER TO AVOID ALCOHOL WITH LUNCH. A GLASS OF WINE IS OK WITH THE MEAL, BUT STAY AWAY FROM PRE-LUNCH COCKTAILS, ESPECIALLY STRONG ONES. HAVE A TOMATO JUICE OR SIMILAR CONCOCTION INSTEAD. EVEN MODERATE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION, LIKE EXCESSIVE EATING CAN TAKE THE EDGE OFF WORK PERFORMANCE IN THE AFTERNOON. THINGS GET BLURRY, AND PEOPLE NOTICE.

(28) DON’T USE FOUL LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE. IF YOU DO, PEOPLE LOSE RESPECT FOR YOU.

(29) CONSCIOUSLY OR OTHERWISE, PEOPLE ASSOCIATE HABITUAL FOUL-MOUTHED SPEECH WITH CHILDISH SELF-CENTEREDNESS OR FUNDAMENTAL LACK OF SELF-CONTROL. GRATUITOUS VULGARITY, MOREOVER, OFTEN SIGNALS THAT SOMEONE IS BURDENED WITH AN ADDICTIVE PERSONALITY. THAT IS, IF YOU SEARCHED MORE CLOSELY, YOU’D FIND SOME OTHER AREAS OF LIFE BARELY UNDER CONTROL, OR ALTOGETHER OUT OF CONTROL.

(30) SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A VERY REAL AND SERIOUS PROBLEM IN THE WORKPLACE. WOMEN PROFESSIONALS DEEPLY RESENT IT AND RIGHTLY FIGHT AGAINST IT. CURRENT MEASURES TO ERADICATE IT IN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING LEGAL PROCEEDINGS, ARE DEADLY SERIOUS AND LONG OVERDUE. ALWAYS TREAT WOMEN CO-WORKERS WITH RESPECT AND PROFESSIONAL COURTESY.

(31) FOLLOW RULES FOR TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE:
-- SPEAK WITH A NORMAL, PLEASANT, COURTEOUS VOICE, ESPECIALLY WHEN ANSWERING.
-- WHEN CALLING SOMEONE YOU DON’T KNOW, IDENTIFY YOURSELF.
-- ALWAYS ASK IF THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO TALK.
-- IF YOU FORESEE THAT YOU'LL HAVE TO LEAVE A MESSAGE ON VOICE MAIL, HAVE A BRIEF, CLEAR MESSAGE REHEARSED, ONE THAT DOESN'T SOUND NERVOUSLY IMPROVISED.
-- RETURN ALL PHONE CALLS PROMPTLY.
-- LIMIT PERSONAL CALLS TO IMPORTANT MATTERS ONLY, AND BE BRIEF.

(32) DON'T TAKE THINGS PERSONALLY. IF SOME PEOPLE ARE ILL-TEMPERED OR RUB YOU THE WRONG WAY, THAT'S THEIR PROBLEM, USUALLY SOMETHING IN THEIR PRIVATE LIVES OFF THE JOB. DON'T LET THEIR PROBLEM BECOME YOURS. JUST SHRUG IT OFF AND STICK TO YOUR JOB.

(33) RELATED TO THIS, IF YOU MUST CORRECT SOMEONE, DON'T GET PERSONAL ABOUT IT. CORRECT THE FAULT, NOT THE PERSON. MAKE THE CORRECTION PRIVATELY, NEVER IN FRONT OF OTHERS.

(34) GIVE PRAISE ONLY WHEN IT'S DESERVED, AND MAKE IT SINCERE. IN SOME WAYS, INSINCERE PRAISE IS WORSE THAN NONE AT ALL.

(35) TAKE CARE OF THE COMPANY'S RESOURCES -- MONEY, CARS, OFFICE SUPPLIES, TRAVEL ACCOMMODATIONS, COMPUTERS -- AS IF THEY WERE YOUR OWN. THAT IS, DON'T ABUSE THEM AND DON'T PILFER ANYTHING.

(36) DON'T TAKE PROBLEMS TO YOUR BOSS UNLESS YOU ALSO PROPOSE SOME CONSIDERED SOLUTIONS. BOSSES DON'T NEED ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS; THEY HAVE ENOUGH AS IT IS. WHAT THEY NEED AND WANT ARE SOLUTIONS.

(37) UNLESS YOU'RE THE BOSS, IT'S NOT YOUR JOB TO CHANGE COMPANY POLICIES. IF YOU FIND POLICIES OR ONGOING PRACTICES VERY HARD TO LIVE WITH, DON'T COMPLAIN. JUST LOOK FOR ANOTHER JOB AND TRY TO LEAVE ON GOOD TERMS. WHEN YOU GET ANOTHER JOB, DON'T BADMOUTH YOUR PREVIOUS COMPANY OR ITS MANAGEMENT. REMEMBER, BOSSES TEND TO SYMPATHIZE WITH EACH OTHER AS A CLASS. YOUR (PERCEIVED) DISLOYALTY TO FORMER EMPLOYERS WOULD LEAVE A BAD TASTE AND AROUSE MISTRUST.

(38) SOMETIMES PEOPLE WILL PESTER YOU WITH COMPLAINTS AND PERCEIVED PROBLEMS, AND IT'S CLEAR THEY JUST WANT TO TALK AND TALK. YOU CAN CUT THIS ANNOYANCE SHORT BY ASKING, REPEATEDLY IF NECESSARY, "SO, HOW CAN I HELP YOU?"

(39) A BUSINESS MEETING SHOULD OPTIMALLY HAVE A CLEAR, PURPOSEFUL AGENDA THAT EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS BEFOREHAND. STICK TO THE POINT; A MEETING SHOULD IMPROVE PEOPLE'S PERFORMANCE, NOT GET IN ITS WAY. AT THE END OF A MEETING, EVERYONE SHOULD CLEARLY UNDERSTAND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT, AND BY WHOM.

(40) EVERY FEW MONTHS, TAKE A COUPLE OF HOURS TO THINK DEEPLY ABOUT YOUR CAREER AND YOUR FUTURE. HOW ARE THINGS GOING? WHERE AM I HEADED? WHAT OPPORTUNITIES MIGHT I BE OVERLOOKING? WHERE DO I WANT TO BE FIVE YEARS DOWN THE ROAD? -- HAVE A FILE WHERE YOU KEEP NOTES ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO UPDATE YOUR RÉSUMÉ, AND DO THIS AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR.
AN UPDATED RÉSUMÉ IS LIKE A FIRST-AID KIT: IF YOU NEED IT AT ALL, YOU USUALLY NEED IT IN A HURRY.

(41) AS YOU MOVE ALONG PLAN A OF YOUR CAREER, MAINTAIN A PLAN B AS WELL -- AN ALTERNATIVE CAREER COURSE TO RELY ON IF YOU SUDDENLY MUST. IF SOMEONE LOSES A JOB, HE OR SHE QUICKLY NEEDS TO UNDERTAKE THINKING, PLANNING, NETWORKING, AND ACTION. MAINTAINING A PLAN B MEANS DOING YOUR THINKING, PLANNING, AND NETWORKING AHEAD OF TIME, LONG BEFORE THE EMERGENCY, SO YOU CAN MOVE SWIFTLY INTO ACTION. BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING.

(42) CONDUCT YOURSELF ALL YOUR LIFE WITH THE STANDARDS OF RIGHT AND WRONG THAT YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER TAUGHT YOU SINCE CHILDHOOD. DON'T DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD BETRAY YOUR PARENTS' PRINCIPLES OR BRING THEM SHAME.

(43) ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT THE SECRET OF SUCCESS IS PASSION. SO THINK BIG. WE TEND TO BECOME WHAT WE THINK ABOUT. IF YOU HAVE HIGH AMBITIONS OF SERVICE TO PEOPLE, STARTING WITH YOUR FAMILY, YOU'LL BE HONORED AS AN OUTSTANDING MAN AND A GREAT PROFESSIONAL.

ACT IN A TIMELY, APPROPRIATE AND RESPONSIBLE MANNER; BE ACCOUNTABLE THROUGH WORK IN TEAMS AND INDEPENDENTLY BY ACCEPTING AND DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY, ABILITY TO DISPLAY COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION OF THE AGENCY.

The youth support provider in a system of care will demonstrate these characteristics through work in a wraparound team process. The wraparound process involves a team approach to developing a plan driven by the family and guided by the youth to address both the strengths and needs they bring to the wraparound table. The process has been studied by a broad collaborative of experts with extensive history and experience in the development of systems of care. The work of these family, youth and professional experts has resulted in a consensus document, Walker, J. S., Bruns, E. J., VanDenBerg, J. D., Rast, J., Osher, T. W., Miles, P., Adams, J., & National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group (2004). Phases and activities of the wraparound process. Portland, OR: National Wraparound Initiative, Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children’s Mental Health, Portland State University., which provides guidance to anyone seeking to develop a system of care using a wraparound process.

As the youth support worker position in teams is new, there is not yet a fully developed role description, but the phases and activities of the process will provide opportunities for the worker to be a fully engaged participant.

Phases and Activities of the Wraparound Process

**PHASE 1: Engagement and team preparation**
During this phase, the groundwork for trust and shared vision among the family and wraparound team members is established, so people are prepared to come to meetings and collaborate. The tone is set for teamwork and team interactions that are consistent with the wraparound principles, particularly through the initial conversations about strengths, needs, and culture. In addition, this phase provides an opportunity to begin to shift the family’s orientation to one in which they understand they are an integral part of the process and their preferences are prioritized. The activities of this phase should be completed relatively quickly (within 1-2 weeks if possible), so that the team can begin meeting and establish ownership of the process as quickly as possible.

PHASE 2: Initial plan development
During this phase, team trust and mutual respect are built while the team creates an initial plan of care using a high-quality planning process that reflects the wraparound principles. In particular, youth and family should feel, during this phase, that they are heard, that the needs chosen are ones they want to work on, and that the options chosen have a reasonable chance of helping them meet these needs. This phase should be completed during one or two meetings that take place within 1-2 weeks; a rapid time frame intended to promote team cohesion and shared responsibility toward achieving the team’s mission or overarching goal.

PHASE 3: Implementation
During this phase, the initial wraparound plan is implemented, progress and successes are continually reviewed, and changes are made to the plan and then implemented, all while maintaining or building team cohesiveness and mutual respect. The activities of this phase are repeated until the team’s mission is achieved and formal wraparound is no longer needed.

Phase 4: Transition
During this phase, plans are made for a purposeful transition out of formal wraparound to a mix of formal and natural supports in the community (and, if appropriate, to services and supports in the adult system). The focus on transition is continual during the wraparound process, and the preparation for transition is apparent, even during the initial engagement activities.

The youth support provider role is as a support to the youth in any way that the youth desires, a spokesperson, a support by just being there or a resource for development of goals unique to the youth. Bringing the youth perspective to the wraparound table, educating team members about respecting and honoring the youth voice and ensuring that the individual needs and concerns of the target youth are incorporated into the plan in a way that engages the youth in their own recovery is the goal.
CHAPTER 9: DEMONSTRATES THE ATTRIBUTES AND QUALITIES OF A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL AND INTERACTS WITH AND RELATES TO YOUTH IN WAYS THAT SUPPORT ASSET BUILDING.

The skills needed in the area are the ability to model and demonstrate positive values like caring, honesty, respect and responsibility; the ability to incorporate wellness practice into personal lifestyle and practice stress management and stress reduction; the ability to challenge and develop values and attitudes of youth in a supportive manner; and to design program activities, structure and collaborations that show evidence of asset building.

Writing team member, Maobe Obwacha, contributes this introduction:

“A good role model should provide encouragement and insight to the people he/she works with. They should be careful in their actions, speech, and gestures. They should be the type of person to set the standard high, and fully inspire others to reach said standard. An effective and good youth coordinator should be exactly like said type of role model, in that they would always encourage and inspire their youth to do better. Furthermore, youth coordinators should interact with the youth in a manner that supports and enhances their current and dormant qualities as well as discovering new qualities. For example, he/she could encourage the youth in their talents, or advise a new activity or sport.

A youth coordinator must understand that he/she spends quite a lot of time with their youth. It may even be more time than the youth spends with friends in daily life. With that being known, it isn’t unnatural for the youth to gain a certain respect for their youth coordinator. A proper youth coordinator should know this and set positive examples for the youth at all times. The youth coordinator should first show patience. No matter how dire a situation gets, he/she must remain calm and find the proper solution. Secondly, remain positive and caring. If something goes wrong, try to rectify the situation while maintaining a good attitude and showing care about what is going on. Lastly, always conduct oneself in a professional manner. An individual, who is looked up to, is usually done so because they are proper in attitude and speech. Therefore since a role model has these qualities, so should a youth coordinator.”

ABILITY TO MODEL AND DEMONSTRATE POSITIVE VALUES AND CHALLENGE YOUTH TO DEVELOP THEIR VALUES

The personal values developed earlier in this manual, plus the values which will be a part of the system in which you are working, will comprise your values list. When our writing team of youth and families got together, they brainstormed on a set of values they thought were important from the family and youth perspective. Those values are:
Honesty
Integrity
Competency
Efficiency
Loyalty
Patience
Dedication
Inner harmony (balance)
Respectful of others
Involvement
Growth
Creativity
Resourcefulness

Whatever the list, the process for modeling and demonstrating those values is simple, live them. These following four steps will help the youth support provider keep their behavior consistent with their values:

Step 1

The first way our values are passed to children/youth is by what they see us doing, saying and our attitudes. If they see us being honest and living honestly, they will learn honesty. When we speak to our children/youth with love and respect, they learn how to love and respect.

Step 2

The second way our values are passed to children/youth is by what they experience when relating to us; how we react to them and others, how we treat them and others. If we lose our temper and throw tantrums when things don't go our way, our children/youth will do the same. When the store clerk give us a $10 bill back in change and it should have been a $1 bill, if we give the money back, our children/youth learn integrity along with honesty.
Step 3

Our children/youth soak up everything they see and hear. The good, the bad and the ugly. If we are negative, they will learn to be negative. If we are positive and show compassion, they will learn compassion.

Step 4

Our children/youth have minds of their own and they like to exert their independence and do their own thinking. When we force our beliefs on them or try to force them to do things, they rebel and do the opposite.


In the same way, a youth support provider must live their values and they must address situations where youth engage in behavior contrary to the program’s values. In order to address these situations, the youth support provider must have shared the values and expectations concerning those values with the group and have provided them with the opportunity to discuss and agree to the values. Where there is an opportunity, the values should be reinforced and posted in visible areas where programs occur. When addressing a situation where a value has been violated, the youth support provider may then remind the youth of the agreement and begin to address the violation.

WELLNESS PRACTICE AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Wellness practice is a concept which arose directly from the Healthy People 2010 initiative. This initiative provides a framework for prevention for the Nation. It is a statement of national health objectives designed to identify the most significant preventable threats to health and to establish national goals to reduce these threats. The 28 focus areas of Healthy People 2010 were developed by leading Federal agencies with the most relevant scientific expertise. The development process was informed by the Healthy People Consortium—an alliance of more than 350 national membership organizations and 250 State health, mental health, substance abuse, and environmental agencies. Additionally, through a series of regional and national meetings and an interactive Web site, more than 11,000 public comments on the draft objectives were received. The Secretary's Council on National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives for 2010 also provided leadership and advice in the development of national health objectives. http://www.healthypeople.gov/About/developed.htm

The first goal of Healthy People 2010 is to help individuals of all ages increase life expectancy and improve their quality of life. The second goal of Healthy People 2010 is to eliminate health disparities among different segments of the population. One of the secondary focus area's goals provides:

6. Disability and Secondary Conditions
Promote the health of people with disabilities, prevent secondary conditions, and eliminate disparities between people with and without disabilities in the U.S. population.
Described below are ways to promote the health of people with disabilities:

- Address public health issues among at risk populations, including people with disabilities using national and state health survey data to identify population of people with disabilities, high priority health issues, and associated risk factors.

- Use the ICF Model (established in 2001 International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health, http://www.who.int); helps understand why two people with the same diagnosed condition have different health outcomes or experiences. The ICF can be used to assess health status outside of the disabling condition; how the environment hinders assistive technology or helps personal activities; and participation and inclusion in society as a critical part of one's health) to assess health determinants or changes in a person's functioning, disability and health.

- Read about current disability science and health policy in publications.

- Obtain information from national resources to create healthier lifestyles for people with disabilities that involves their families and health professionals.

- Implement various accessibility guidelines to ensure accessible health venues, such as health-care facilities, recreation facilities, health conferences and meetings, news media, publications, and emergency evacuation settings.

- Conduct studies at research- oriented universities and community-based organizations.

- Adopt public health interventions that hold promise for reducing secondary conditions, promoting health, and reducing disparities among children and adults with disabilities through state, territory, and tribal disability and health activities.

- Establish community-based efforts to achieve the national health goals for people with disabilities as described in Healthy People 2010.

http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dh/default.htm

A youth support provider will have opportunities to work on a number of issues included in the wellness practices which are identified, but should base his or her choice on the needs of the youth in their working group. If the issue which seems important is lack of regular exercise, establishing a workout process for the youth accomplishes this goal. Are youth exposed to or using tobacco? Then tobacco cessation efforts accomplish this goal.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

There are many different ways to manage stress at both the workplace and in your personal life. Engaging in some or all of the techniques and encouraging the youth you work with to adopt some stress management techniques will enhance the wellness practice and help the youth support provider take care of him or herself. It is important for a youth support provider to know that some stress is necessary to support change efforts and knowing when you reach a point where the stress if too high depends on your personal tolerance.
If you want to lower your stress level in a matter of minutes, these techniques are all relatively fast-acting. Use them as needed to feel better quickly; practice them regularly over time and gain even greater benefits.

- Breathing Exercises
- Meditation
- Reframing With a Sense of Humor
- Music
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)
- Yoga
- Exercise
- Guided Imagery / Visualizations
- Journaling
- Cognitive Restructuring: Finding Perspective

Take Care of Yourself

When we're stressed, we don't always take care of our bodies, which can lead to even more stress. Here are some important ways to take care of yourself and keep stress levels lower.

- Healthy Eating
- Better Sleep
- Exercise
- Hobbies
- Good Nutrition

Maintain the Right Attitude

Much of your experience of stress has to do with your attitude and the way you perceive your life's events. Here are some links to resources to help you maintain a stress-relieving attitude. Simply click on the word to access each site.

- Optimism
- Being In Control
- Overcoming Perfectionism
- Maintaining a Sense of Humor
- Mindfulness and Stress Relief
- Letting Go of Stressful Thoughts
- Letting Go of Anger

Create the Right Atmosphere

Your physical and emotional surroundings can impact your stress levels in subtle, but significant ways. Here are several things you can use or engage in to help you change your atmosphere and lessen your stress.
ASSET BUILDING
Positive youth development (PYD) is an approach toward all youth that builds on their assets and their potential and helps counter the problems that may affect them. Set out below are some of the developmental assets which every youth should acquire to have the best chances for successful growth.

1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.
7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.
11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person’s whereabouts.
12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior.
14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. Positive peer influence—Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior.
16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.
17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week.
21. Achievement Motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. School Engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school.
25. Reading for Pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
26. Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. Honesty—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”
30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. Cultural Competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”
40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

http://www.search-institute.org/assets/

As youth support providers get to know each new youth, keen attention should be paid to finding where a youth may be lacking in an asset and plans and programs designed to build or enhance the asset. All youth with your program will have some area where asset building activities will be possible.
GLOSSARY

A

Abilify - antipsychotic used to treat schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and agitation
ADHD - Attention Deficits/Hyperactivity Disorder
Adderall - stimulant used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Advocate - 1: one that pleads the cause of another; specifically: one that pleads the cause of another before a tribunal or judicial court  
2: one that defends or maintains a cause or proposal  
3: one that supports or promotes the interests of another
Aggression - Words and action that are deemed to be threatening to others.
Ambien - used as a sleep aid
Ameliorate - to make better or more tolerable
Antabuse - used to treat alcohol addiction
Anxiety - Exaggerated or inappropriate responses to the perception of internal or external dangers. Also includes excessive apprehension toward new people, places or things; or in some cases excessive apprehension toward people, places or things in which they have previously encountered.
Assessment - 1: the action or an instance of assessing : APPRAISAL  
2: the amount assessed
Aricept - used to slow the progression of dementia
Ativan - an anti-anxiety medication of the benzodiazepine class often used to help with panic attacks or during detoxification from alcohol or other drugs

B

BuSpar - an anti-anxiety medication

C

Case Manager - An individual who organizes and coordinates services and supports for children with mental health problems and their families. (Alternate terms: care coordinator, advocate, and facilitator.) This person is not a mental health professional and therefore cannot perform a diagnostic assessment.
Conduct Problems - Behaviors that are characterized by acting out, ranging from annoying, minor oppositional behavior (yelling, temper tantrums) to more serious types of antisocial behavior (agression, physical destruction, stealing).
Celexa - an antidepressant of the SSRI class (Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor
Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) website (www.chadd.org).
Clozaril - an antipsychotic
**Collaborative**-1: to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor
2: to cooperate with or willingly assist an enemy of one's country and especially an occupying force
3: to cooperate with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected

**Cognitive**-1: of, relating to, being, or involving conscious thinking, reasoning, or remembering) <cognitive impairment>intellectual activity (as thinking, reasoning, or remembering) <cognitive impairment>

**Concerta** - used to treat ADD/ADHD

**Cultural competence** - Help that is sensitive and responsive to cultural differences. Caregivers are aware of the impact of culture and possess skills to help provide services that respond appropriately to a person's unique cultural differences, including race and ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or physical disability. They also adapt their skills to fit a family's values and customs

**Cymbalta** - an antidepressant of the SSNRI (Selective Serotonin and Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitor) class, similar to Effexor

**DBHS**- Arkansas Department of Behavioral Health

**Depression** - A type of mood disorder characterized by low or irritable mood or loss of interest or pleasure in almost all activities over a period of time.

**Depakote** - a mood stabilizer used to treat bipolar disorder, sometimes called an antimanic depression.

**DSM-IV** *(Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition):* An official manual of mental health problems developed by the American Psychiatric Association. Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and other health and mental health care providers use this reference book to understand and diagnose mental health problems. Insurance companies and health care providers also use the terms and explanations in this book when discussing mental health problems.

**Emotional Health** - The well-being and appropriate expressions of one’s emotions.

**Externalizing Disorder** - Disorders that are expressed visibly to others and can be characterized by aggression, behavioral acting-out, hyperactivity, and conduct disorder.

**EPSDT**- Early and Periodic Screening Diagnostic and Treatment

**Effexor** - an antidepressant of the SSNRI (or SNRI) class

**Elavil** - a tricyclic antidepressant (TCA), less commonly used these days

**Empathy**- the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner
Empower - 1: to give official authority or legal power to <empowered> her attorney to act on her behalf.

Evidence Based Practice (also known as “EBP”) - Following the definition offered by the Institute of Medicine (2001), evidence-based practice is the blending of the best research evidence with clinical expertise and consumer values. It can also be thought of as service approaches, interventions or practices that have consistent scientific evidence showing that they improve consumer outcomes.

Facilitator - one that facilitates; especially: one that helps to bring about an outcome (as learning, productivity, or communication) by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance, or supervision.

Family-centered services - Help designed to meet the specific needs of each individual child and family. Children and families should not be expected to fit into services that do not meet their needs. Also see appropriate services, coordinated services, wraparound services, and cultural competence.

Family support services - Help designed to keep the family together, while coping with mental health problems that affect them. These services may include consumer information workshops, in-home supports, family therapy, parenting training, crisis services, and respite care.

Family Support Worker - The role of a family support provider in a system of care is often all consuming. The family support provider becomes the “go-to” person when families need more information, someone to act as a sounding board and someone to provide support throughout the phases of the help seeking process.

Fidelity Index or Instrument - A fidelity index for clinical programs is a measuring device that identifies whether the essential elements of a treatment intervention are being accurately implemented according to the pre-specified guidelines or model. A fidelity index also helps to arrange essential program elements in a concise and organized manner that allows treatment providers to acquire a basic understanding of the components and processes within a treatment program. The relatively simple structure of a fidelity index can be particularly useful to help guide implementation planning and used to monitor program changes over time. Fidelity measures have been used informally to help staff and program managers assess themselves, and can be used in conjunction with clinical outcomes as a measure of a program’s progress.

Gabitril - a mood stabilizer

Geodon - an antipsychotic

Haldol - an antipsychotic

Hyperactivity - A disorder in which children are overactive and impulsive (acts without thinking).
I

**Inattention** - Inability to focus and concentrate on a particular person or task.

**Internalizing Disorders** - Disorders expressed within the individual and focused on clinically problematic affective and emotional state, such as anxiety or depression.

**Imipramine** - a tricyclic antidepressant (TCA) which is sometimes used to treat bulimia, panic disorder, or related disorders

**Impulsivity** - arising from an impulse *<an impulsive decision>* b: prone to act on impulse *<an impulsive young man>*

**Inderal** - a beta blocker alternatively known as propranolol used for acute anxiety

**Intervention** - to come in or between by way of hindrance or modification *<intervene to stop a fight>* b: to interfere with the outcome or course especially of a condition or process (as to prevent harm or improve functioning)

K

**Keppra** - an anticonvulsant drug which is sometimes used as a mood stabilizer

**Klonopin** - anti-anxiety medication of the benzodiazepine class

L

**Licensed Master Social Worker** (LMSW): The same as a LCSW without at least 2 years post-graduate experience, 2000 hours of clinical supervision with a LCSW and the passing of the LCSW Exam.

**Licensed Professional Counselor** (LPC): A person with an advanced degree in mental health or other social services charged with assessment and treatment of mental health.

**Licensed Associate Counselor** (LAC): Same as a LPC.

**Lamictal** - a mood stabilizer of the anticonvulsant class

**Lexapro** - an antidepressant

**Librium** - anxiety medication of the benzodiazepine class

**Lithobid** - a type of Lithium, which is a mood stabilizer used to treat bipolar disorder

**Loxitane** - an antipsychotic, today rarely used

**Lunesta** - a sleep aid

**Luvox** - an antidepressant of the SSRI class, often used to treat Obsessive-compulsive disorder

M

**Mellaril** - an antipsychotic, today rarely used

**Mental health** - How a person thinks, feels, and acts when faced with life's situations. *Mental health* is how people look at themselves, their lives, and the other people in their lives; evaluate their challenges and problems; and explores choices. This includes handling stress, relating to other people, and making decisions.
Mental health problems - Mental health problems are real. They affect one's thoughts, body, feelings, and behavior. Mental health problems are not just a passing phase. They can be severe, seriously interfere with a person's life, and even cause a person to become disabled. Mental health problems include depression, bipolar disorder (manic-depressive illness), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, schizophrenia, and conduct disorder.

Mental disorders - Another term used for mental health problems.

Mental illnesses - This term is usually used to refer to severe mental health problems in adults.

N

NAMI- National Alliance on Mental Illness.
NFFCMH- National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health
NOS - Not Otherwise Specified
Navane - an antipsychotic, today rarely used
Neurontin - an anticonvulsant (anti-seizure medication) which is sometimes used as a mood stabilizer or to treat chronic pain, particularly diabetic neuropathy

O

Outcomes - The results of a specific mental health care service, usually phrased in terms of child and family gains (e.g., improved school performance, improved family communication).

P

Plan of care - A treatment plan especially designed for each child and family, based on individual strengths and needs. The caregiver(s) develop(s) the plan with input from the family. The plan establishes goals and details appropriate treatment and services to meet the special needs of the child and family.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - A psychiatric illness that can occur following a traumatic event in which there was threat of injury or death to you or someone else. The main symptom associated with PTSD is anxiety and avoidance of anything or anyone associated with the event.

Prognosis - Prediction by a health professional regarding a person’s diagnosed condition and chances for recovery.

Psychiatrist (MD) - A physician who completed both medical school and training in psychiatry and is a specialist in diagnosing and treating mental illness.

Psychologist (PhD or PsyD) - A professional with a doctoral degree in psychology who specializes in psychological testing, assessment and therapy.

PTSD - anxiety and avoidance of anything or anyone associated with the event.

PCP - Primary Care Physician

Paxil - an SSRI antidepressant, used frequently to treat depression and anxiety disorders
**Prolixin** - an antipsychotic

**Prozac** - an SSRI antidepressant, benzodiazepine class

**R**

**Remeron** - an antidepressant which is often used as a sleep aid

**Reminyl** - used to slow the progression of Alzheimer's Dementia

Residential treatment centers - Facilities that provide treatment 24 hours a day and can usually serve more than 12 young people at a time. Children with serious emotional disturbances receive constant supervision and care. Treatment may include individual, group, and family therapy; behavior therapy; special education; recreation therapy; and medical services. Residential treatment is usually more long-term than inpatient hospitalization. Centers are also known as therapeutic group homes.

**Respite care** - A service that provides a break for parents who have a child with a *serious emotional disturbance*. Trained parents or counselors take care of the child for a brief period of time to give families relief from the strain of caring for the child. This type of care can be provided in the home or in another location. Some parents may need this help every week.

**Restoril** - a sleep aid of the benzodiazepine class

**ReVia** - alternatively known as Naltrexone

**Risperdal** - an antipsychotic

**Ritalin** - a stimulant used to treat ADHD/ADD

**S**

**SED- Serious Emotional Disturbance- youth** - Diagnosable disorders in children and adolescents that severely disrupt their daily functioning in the home, school, or community. Serious emotional disturbances affect one in 10 young people. These disorders include depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity, anxiety disorders, conduct disorder, and eating disorders.

**SMI- Serious Mental Illness-adult**

**Serax** - anti-anxiety medication of the benzodiazepine class, often used to help during detoxification from alcohol or other drugs of abuse

**Seroquel** - an antipsychotic, sometimes is used as a sleep aid

**SCHIP - State** Children’s Health Insurance Program

**Stelazine** - an older antipsychotic, today rarely used

**Strattera** - a non-stimulant medication used to treat ADD/ADHD

**T**

**TFC** - therapeutic foster care

**Topamax** - a mood stabilizer, also used for migraine headaches

**Thorazine** - an older antipsychotic, today rarely used because of the high occurrence of serious side effects
**Trazodone** - a tricyclic antidepressant (TCA), most typically used now as a sleep aid

**Trileptal** - a mood stabilizer used to treat bipolar disorder

**Vistaril** - an antihistamine for the treatment of itches and irritations, an antiemetic, as a weak analgesic, an opioid potentiator, and as an anxiolytic.

**Wellbutrin** - an antidepressant of the NDRI class Norepinephrine and Dopamine Reuptake Inhibitor, structurally identical to Zyban, a stop-smoking aid

**Xanax** - an anti-anxiety medication of the benzodiazepine class

**Zoloft** - an antidepressant in the treatment of schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder an antidepressant of the SSRI class.

SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/child