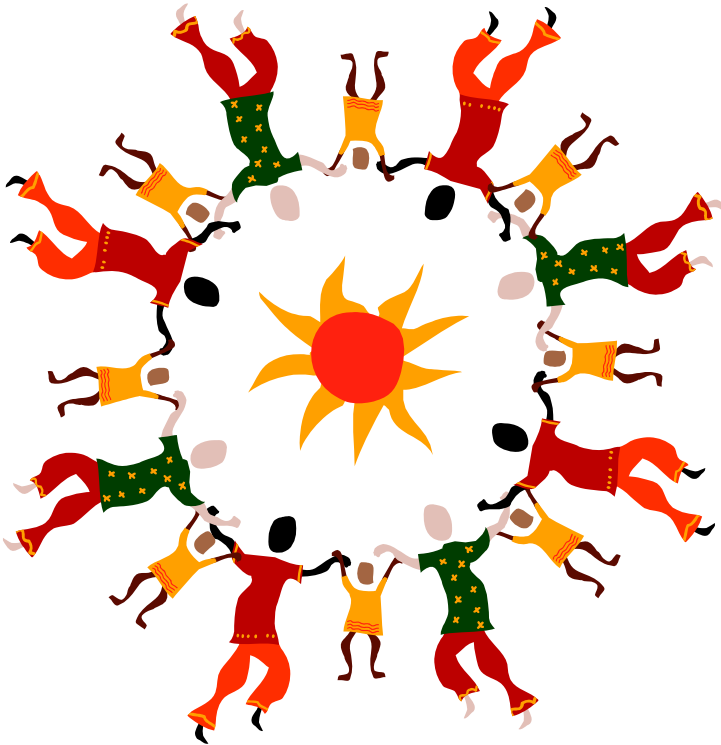


Learning Circle



Relate to youth as resources rather than just recipients of services in the child welfare system.

Preparation for Adulthood: Supervising for Success

Learning Circle: Relate to youth as resources rather than just recipients of services in the child welfare system.

Agenda

9:00 am	Welcome and Overview of Day
9:30 am	Review of Action Plans
10:00 am	Focus Questions
10:45 am	Break
11:00 am	Digital Story and Discussion
11:30 am	Presentation of Youth Development Concepts
12:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Youth as Resources
1:45 pm	Combating Adultism
2:30 pm	Promoting Youth/Adult Partnerships
3:15 pm	Final Activity and Debrief
4:00 pm	Creating Action Plans

Learning Circle: Relate to youth as resources rather than just recipients of services in the child welfare system.

Supervisory Competencies:

- Appreciates the differences between relating to young people as objects or recipients of service versus as resources.
- Knows and understands that a strength-based approach to working with youth is a key strategy for ensuring their successful preparation for adulthood.
- Knows and understands that training for both youth and adults is critical to the development of effective youth and adult partnerships.
- Knows how to support young people in creating their personal goal and transition plans.
- Knows how to plan for youth involvement in their program and agency
- Can and is able to create meaningful opportunities for young people and adults to build relationships and work together.
- Can and is able to work with diverse groups of youth and adults.

Guiding Principles:

- Program and policy are grounded in the philosophy of youth development
- Meaningful opportunities for shared decision-making, planning and program implementation are provided for youth.
- Youth are taught to drive discussions and weigh options in creating personal goal plans as well as transition plans with support from agency staff and families.
- Promotion of intentional youth/adult partnerships.

Practices:

- Involve youth fully in the service planning and transition planning process.
- Plan for how youth will be involved in your program. Don't just add a representative youth or two to the adult planning group.
- Encourage diversity of membership without regard to race, ethnicity, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Provide training to youth and adults around working in partnership.
- Facilitate meaningful opportunities for youth and adults to work in partnership.

Focus Questions:

How are young people viewed in the foster care system? How does this impact the opportunities that are available to them?

In your supervision, how do help your staff create opportunities for young people on their caseloads?

Definitions

Youth Development:

Youth Development is the natural process of growing up and developing one's capabilities. Positive youth development occurs from an intentional process that promotes positive outcomes for youth by providing support, relationships, and opportunities. Youth development takes place in families, peer groups, schools, in neighborhoods and communities, and prepares youth to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through coordinated, progressive research-based experiences that help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and intellectually competent. (The National Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century: Final Report)

Quality Services: Services in such areas as education, health, employment and child welfare which exhibit:

- relevant instruction and information
- challenging opportunities to express oneself, to take on new roles, and be part of a group
- Supportive adults and peers who provide respect, high standards and expectations, guidance and affirmation to young people.

Opportunities - chances for young people to learn how to act on the world around them. They are given opportunities to test out ideas and behaviors and experiment with different roles. The roles must be perceived as challenging and legitimate to young people. These are tasks that are taken on and done by the young person not things that are done to them.

Supports - interpersonal relationships that allow the young person to take full advantage of existing services and opportunities. There are three types of supports; emotional, motivational, and strategic.

Emotional support provides a young person with caring individuals to help them meet their needs and discuss issues in a safe environment.

Motivational support provides high expectations, guidance and/or boundaries.

Strategic support helps young people access resources necessary to build competencies.

Supports take on various forms but they **must** be affirming and respectful, ongoing, and offered by a variety of people. Supports are done with young people rather than for them.

What is Meaningful Youth Engagement?

According to the *Center for Excellence for Youth Engagement*, meaningful youth engagement produces benefits to youth and communities in which they live. Through engagement, youth gain a sense of empowerment as individuals and make healthy connections to others; resulting in the reduction of risk behaviors and increases in positive activities. In addition to the social benefits of these behavioral changes, the community gains through the energy and ideas that youth bring to organizations, activities, and their relationships with adults.

What is Youth Voice?

Youth Voice is the vital contributions youth can and do make to child welfare community. It's about adults giving youth the opportunity to make these contributions. Youth Voice doesn't mean talking or shouting to be heard. It's not about drowning others out. Youth Voice is about considering the perspectives and ideas of youth, respecting what everyone has to say, taking risks, listening, sharing and working together. (*Source: Creating Youth/Adult Partnerships Curriculum*). As youth are involved in child welfare programs they grow more capable, effective and powerful.

Paradigm Shift

The youth development movement has caused a paradigm shift in the way we think about programming with young people. The following chart represents that shift from a risk or deficit focus to a resilience or promise focus:

	Risk	Resilience
Unit of Change	Individual	Environment
Focus	Deficits	Assets and Strengths
Goal	Problem Prevention	Healthy Development
Attitude Toward Youth	Youth-as-Problems	Youth-as-Resources
Attitude Toward Diversity	Eurocentric	Multicultural
Attitude Toward Learning	Mechanistic	Constructivist
Strategies Emphasize	Program and Content	People and Place
Locus of Control	External	Internal
Philosophy	Control	Connectedness
Whose needs are met?	Adults	Young People's

A Positive Youth Development Philosophy:

- **Values young people regardless of their situation**
- **Recognizes the strengths and potential of each youth**
- **Believes that our primary focus is promoting a young person's development rather than identifying and fixing their problems**

Source: Positive Youth Development and Independent Living: Building Staff Competency and System Capacity Curriculum, Child Welfare League of America, 2001.

Youth Development Programs Focus on Creating and Delivering Services, Supports and Opportunities for Young People to:

- **Feel safe**
- **Build relationships with caring adults**
- **Acquire knowledge and skills**
- **Engage in meaningful activities**

Source: Positive Youth Development and Independent Living: Building Staff Competency and System Capacity Curriculum, Child Welfare League of America, 2001.

Keys to Quality Youth Development

Youth Feel Physically and Emotionally Safe

Premise: Young people will learn better and participate more fully when they feel physically and emotionally safe. This environment encourages honesty, trust, and respect among all youth and adults.

Youth Experience Belonging and Ownership

Premise: Youth feel included and motivated. They have significant roles as participants and leaders

Youth Develop Self-Worth Through Meaningful Contribution

Premise: Young people feel free to contribute, their contribution is accepted, acknowledged and appreciated.

Youth Discover Self

Premise: Youth are encouraged to try new things and learn about themselves. As a result they discover and practice their interests and skills, test their independence, and take control of their lives.

Youth Develop Quality Relationships with Peers and Adults

Premise: Youth develop caring and trusting relationships. Youth and adults learn together to respect one another.

Youth Discuss Conflicting Values and Form Their Own

Premise: Youth have a safe place to talk with other youth and adults about values and topics that are important to them. All beliefs and questions are respected and taken seriously.

Youth Feel the Pride and Accountability that Comes with Mastery

Premise: Youth experience success by completing activities appropriate for their stage of development and preferred learning style. Youth set goals and celebrate accomplishments.

Youth Expand Their Capacity to Enjoy Life and Know the Success is Possible

Premise: Youth are offered new experiences and opportunities to enjoy life. They learn and grow from successes and failures.

Source: University of Minnesota Extension Service. 2005. www.extension.umn.edu.

Spectrum of Attitudes

The Spectrum of Attitudes developed by Associates for Youth Development (AYD) in the *Technology of Prevention Workbook* suggest that young people can be viewed in one of three ways:

1. Young people as objects.

- ◆ adults know what is best for young people and see young people as the objects of their good intentions
- ◆ there is little room for consideration of what young people think about the design of the program or opportunity
- ◆ the responsibility of the young person is to take advantage of the program or opportunity designed by the adult

2. Young people as recipients.

- ◆ emphasis is on young people as the recipients of the benefits of the program or opportunity
- ◆ may include youth participation in the design of the opportunity
- ◆ primary emphasis of this attitude by controlling adult(s) is on how the young person will benefit from participation and not on what the young person has to offer to the design process
- ◆ adult is still well in control of the conditions under which the young person participates, but allows youth participation because of the value of the experience to the young person
- ◆ attitude is also based upon the notion that adults know what is best for young people, and may lead on cautiously to begin to open the door to youth participation on adult terms
- ◆ relationship between youth and adult cannot reasonably be described as an adult/youth partnership, though there is some opportunity for building of a sense of youth ownership in the outcome of decisions made
- ◆ demonstrates a concern for preparing young people for the future as responsible decision makers.

3. Young people as resources.

- ◆ Based upon respect for the contribution young people can make to the planning operation, and evaluation of a youth-focused organization (or family or community) in the present
- ◆ Acknowledges that any leadership and decision-making roles involved can be shared by adults and young people
- ◆ Both young people and adults need to learn the skills and attitudes necessary for shared decision making
- ◆ Policies and administrative practices within the organization reflect the full participation of youth in the organization

Adapted from the "Spectrum of Attitudes" as it appears in Associate for Youth Development's *Technology of Prevention Workbook*

Definition of an “Ism”

“ISM” = PREJUDICE plus Social Power

Prejudice is a set of negative beliefs about an entire group of people.

Social Power occurs when a group of people have access to the resources it needs to get What it wants and influence people.

Examples could include “adultism” where a group of adults have a negative view of young people, as well as having control over what the young people are able to do, or “sexism”, where discrimination is based on gender.

Adapted from the Panel of American, Inc., *No Dissin' Allowed*

Broad Strategies for Addressing All “Isms”

Cultural awareness involves learning about how people are different from and similar to you.

Cultural sensitivity involves developing supportive attitudes, feelings, values, and/or beliefs about other people. Differences between people are not right or wrong, better or worse, more or less intelligent. They are simply differences.

Cultural Competency involves a lifelong process of learning. This process includes developing skills to understand and appreciate differences and similarities within, among, and between groups.

Adapted from the Association for the Advancement of Health Education's *Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity: Guidelines for Health Educators* and the National Network for Youth's cultural competency training materials.

Specific Steps for Addressing “Isms”

Become More Culturally Aware:

The goal is to learn as much about different people as you possibly can. Learn about their likes and dislikes, the languages they speak, where they're from, their values, the clothes they wear, their traditions, their hobbies, the foods they like to eat, their beliefs, their interest, etc.

Ways to become more culturally aware include asking questions, reading different books and newspapers, traveling and exploring your own neighborhood, going to the movies, going to museums, watching the news on TV, listening to different kinds of music, etc.

Become More Culturally Sensitive:

The goal is to be as sensitive as you can possibly when interacting with people different from yourself. Communicate respect, interest, and encouragement. Learn how your own values impact your interactions; be flexible, non-judgmental and empathetic.

In order to become more culturally sensitive, it is important to listen, think, and communicate actively with other people.

Become More Culturally Competent:

The goal is to learn about, be sensitive to, and develop skills for working with people different from yourself.

The process of becoming more culturally competent includes working hard, being patient, and trying to understand as much as possible. Many barriers to cultural competence are created by our own fear, anger, ignorance, or other kinds of resistance.

Strategies for Combating Adulthood

(Note: The following list is not exhaustive. Brainstorming of strategies appropriate for your own situations is recommended)

ISM	ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIOR	STRATEGIES
Dysfunctional Rescuing	Functional Helping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Resist doing things for people that they can do for themselves ◆ Provide clear and constructive feedback that notes positive behaviors as well as areas for improvement ◆ Engage people as partners in formulating plans for improvement of their lives or behaviors
Blaming the Victim	Taking Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Take responsibility for determining your own group's standards ◆ Define how your own thoughts & behaviors contribute to a situation ◆ Do not degrade the concerns or issues of any peoples ◆ Do not assess other groups by using the standards of your own group
Avoiding Contact	Making Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Make an effort to learn about the lives and concerns of people who are different from yourself ◆ Make an effort to get to know and interact personally with people who are different from yourself ◆ Be willing to change your perceptions to fit your new experiences

Source: Center for Youth Development and Policy Research.

Problems vs. Outcomes

Part I

Our perspective can effect the way we think, feel and react when working with children, youth and families. Consider a situation that you are struggling with now. With a partner, focus on the problem created by this situation. Ask each other the questions below.

PROBLEM PERSPECTIVE

1. What is the problem?

2. Why do you have it?

3. Who or what is keeping your
from getting what you want?

4. How does this failure reflect on
you and/or the situation?

Adapted from Lucy Freedman, Personal and Organization Empowerment, Syntax Communication and Modeling Corporation.

Problems vs. Outcomes

Part II

Consider your situation again. Only this time, focus with your partner on the possible outcomes. Ask each other the following questions. Does a positive perspective create difference feelings?

OUTCOME PERSPECTIVE

1. What outcome do you want in this situation?

2. How can you achieve it?

3. What/who can help you achieve what you want?

4. How will you know when you have achieved it?

Adapted from Lucy Freedman, Personal and Organization Empowerment, Syntax Communication and Modeling Corporation.

Critical Components of Youth/Adult Partnerships

Meaningful Involvement

Assign meaningful roles to youth, not just token opportunities. The young person is meant to learn from the experience, as they contribute a unique and valuable perspective to the process. You must be committed to integrating their suggestions and following up on some ideas.

Support and Empowerment

All people need to feel that they are contributing to their communities. Adults can help young people by creating meaningful and challenging opportunities. You must provide young people the skills they need to meaningfully participate. Remember this may be their first experience on a task force or in a meeting. Help them understand what is going to happen and how they can participate. Debrief experiences after they happen. Make sure you have more than one young person involved so that they don't feel isolated.

Flexible Schedules

Youth have different schedules and priorities than adults. Their school schedules need to take priority. They may also be involved in many other activities that are equally important such as sports, clubs, jobs, etc. Meetings should be regularly scheduled but need to be flexible to allow time for school, family and friends. Follow up with the young person if they do not attend a meeting. Youth appreciate knowing they were missed and may need encouragement to continue participation.

Reflection, Evaluation and Celebration

Be clear of the expectations of the young person, as well as what they can expect of you. Check in regularly and make adjustments as needed. Make sure the young person has tangible projects to work on. It is important for them to see the impact of their involvement. Celebrate successes and address challenges. Meetings that are fun, that involve food and are respectful of all participants will encourage youth – and adult participation.

Youth / Adult Partnerships: Self – Assessment Tool

This is not a test! Rate yourself on a scale from 1- 5, “one” being a beginner in this area. In the first column, put where you see yourself now. In the second column, put where you would like to be.

Where I am now.	Where I would like to be:	
_____	_____	Familiar with resources about youth participation and adult partnerships (e.g. technical assistance, books, etc.)
_____	_____	Affirm and support people’s feelings and ideas.
_____	_____	Treat all group members with respect.
_____	_____	Appreciate and incorporate the strength of similarities and difference among people (gender, spiritual, class, etc.).
_____	_____	Resist the urge to take over.
_____	_____	Careful about interrupting people of all ages.
_____	_____	Provide opportunities to have youth reflect and learn.
_____	_____	Believe in the potential and empowerment of all youth.
_____	_____	Trust youth to be powerful.
_____	_____	Ability to identify positive possibilities in difficult situations.
_____	_____	Listen carefully to people of all ages.
_____	_____	Get involved and provide support when a person puts down or devalues another or her / himself.
_____	_____	Seek to learn from people.
_____	_____	Expect youth to make their own decisions.
_____	_____	Say something where young people’s rights and due to respect are being denied or violated.
_____	_____	Celebrate people’s success.
_____	_____	Advocate for improvement of youth / adult partnerships in teams, organizations, and communities.

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Bios of Young People

Bio One

Gender: Male
Age: 16
Ethnicity: Hispanic
Other Information: Runs away frequently from kinship foster home
Has helped to care for younger siblings
Single parent family
Is bilingual
School dropout

Bio Two

Gender: Male
Age: 17
Ethnicity: White
Other Information: In foster care
Has many friends
Depressed
Athletic
Self-Identified as a gay person

Bio three

Gender: Female
Age: 18
Ethnicity: African American
Other Information: Aged out of foster care three months ago
Volunteers in Community
Articulate
Can't keep a job
Completed her GED
Lives in an overcrowded household

Bio Four

Gender: Female

Age: 17

Ethnicity: Hispanic

Other Information: Pregnant

Held a job for a year at a convenience store
Parents have threatened to kick out of home
School attendance low
Has never used alcohol or other drugs

Bio Five

Gender: Male

Age: 16

Ethnicity: African American

Other Information: Brother has Cerebral Palsy and in congregate care

Recently started attending school again
Gets easily frustrated
Smart
Started drinking alcohol

Bio Six

Gender: Female

Age: 16

Ethnicity: African-American

Other Information: Just placed in the foster care system

Relocated to new school, community, foster family
Gets in frequent confrontations with new family
Writes well/ likes poetry
Average Student
Wants to be a lawyer