Making It Happen:
Youth Participation

CNYD

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On-line resources for professional development

Preface

Making It Happen: Youth Participation Training Materials

The use of these Materials

Making It Happen: Youth Participation was originally developed as part of a blended learning youth development training course. This curriculum which included ten hours of online training complemented by and two half-days of in-person training, focused on strengthening youth participation, one of the five youth development supports and opportunities that CNYD's *Youth Development Framework for Practice.* The course is intended to build the skills of adults working with young people, especially youth workers in community and afterschool settings.

Making It Happen: Youth Participation is broken down into five chapters. You can use it in its entirety to guide your professional development efforts or you can pull out the readings, activities or tools that work best as supplements to what you are already doing.

Courses were similarly developed for two other *Framework* supports and opportunities, Relationship Building and Skill Building. All three curriculums have since been edited and reformatted and are now available as an online training resource available in the public domain. It is the hope of CNYD that these materials can support the professional development efforts of afterschool programs and other youth serving organizations

Changes to the Copyright

The *Making It Happen: Youth Participation Training Materials* were originally developed as copyrighted materials of the Community Network for Youth Development. We are now making these materials available for educational use pursuant to the Creative Commons copyright license below. We intend for these materials to be used as broadly as possible to promote higher-quality programming and developmental support for young people. You are free to copy, transmit and distribute this work, and to adapt this work. However, you may not use this work for commercial purposes. We ask that when you do use CNYD's materials you acknowledge CNYD as the source.

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About CNYD

The Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD) functioned as a critical youth development intermediary organization from its founding in 1992 to its closing in 2013. Working deeply within Bay Area communities and statewide in California to institutionalize quality youth development practice, CNYD's focus on capacity-building was unique in its systems-wide approach to influencing change at policy, organizational and practitioner levels.

We are placing selected training materials and publications into the public domain with the hope that the knowledge and tools that were developed over two decades of work can continue to be a resource to the youth development field. These materials represent the best of what our many talented staff members learned about how to effectively train adults working with young people. We are grateful to the organizations that are making CNYD's resources available in the public domain and for keeping our work accessible and relevant.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Youth Participation

Welcome

Welcome to Chapter One of Youth Participation! This first chapter begins to explore the foundations of youth participation and guides you through an assessment of your current practice.

Goals and Objectives

This chapter is designed to introduce you to key concepts of youth participation through readings, assessments and exercises.

By the end of this chapter you'll be able to:

- Define the 3 dimensions of youth participation: belonging, leadership, input/ decision-making
- Relate the practice of youth participation to the other components of the framework
- Identify how youth participation practices support the creation of a learning environment for all program activities and outcomes.
- Articulate practical applications of the 3 dimensions of youth participation.

Assess and identify your current practice of youth participation

Instructions

Proceed sequentially through the topics and exercises in this chapter. Each section builds upon the next.

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Worksheet 1

1.1 Self-Reflection: Reflect on Your Own Experience

As youth workers, it is important to always keep in mind your own formative experiences as youth. These important experiences and perspectives inform the way that you do your job today, and the way that you approach youth participation. Given this, you will begin by reflecting on and sharing your own experiences with youth participation.

Think of one of the young people in your program. Now think back to when you were that age, and try to remember your experiences at school. Who were your teachers? What kinds of things did they say to you? What did the school look like? What did you wear?

Now think for a moment about how you **participated** in that setting.

1. What kinds of **choices** were available to you? What kinds of things did you and your peers get to **decide**? What choices and decisions were made for you?

2. What kinds of things could you do without adult direction? What kinds of things were you and your peers **responsible** for?

3. Did school, or parts of the school, feel like a place where you **belonged**? What made it feel like you belonged there or not?

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1.2 Concept Definition: Understand Youth Participation

Youth Participation

In order to successfully promote youth participation, it helps to have a strong understanding of this concept. Research has shown that meaningful youth participation occurs when young people have opportunities to:

1. Participate in decision-making
2. Develop and practice leadership
3. Experience a sense of belonging

These three areas are relevant to any program that promotes youth learning and development, whether it features academic instruction, enrichment, employment training, sports, recreation, the arts, and / or other program content.

These elements of youth participation are also developmentally relevant and important across the environments in which youth find themselves – at school or home, in peer gatherings and groups, and in extracurricular programs and activities.

The three dimensions of youth participation:

1. **<u>Decision-Making.</u>**

   What does **youth decision-making** look like in youth programs?

   Youth
   - **choose activities** to be involved in
   - participate in **program planning**
   - have input in establishing **program rules**
   - feel like **their ideas count**

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Decision-making in action:
"We're working to build more decision-making into the program," says Whitney Morris, Manager of Volunteers at Girls, Inc. of Alameda County. "We started small by asking the girls to do things like select the snack. Later on they selected their own representative for a public speaking engagement. Then we did a big project where they organized a scavenger hunt for the younger girls. They did everything—it took weeks! It would have been a lot easier for the staff to organize this ourselves, but we really let them do it. It was a lot of fun, and they felt successful."

Opportunities for decision-making exist at all levels of youth programs and organizations. While these opportunities take different forms depending on the age of the young people, the goal of fostering youth decision-making is appropriate for all ages.

2. Develop and practice leadership.

What does **youth leadership look like** in youth programs?

Youth

- **direct themselves** in activities;
- take significant **responsibility**;
- **support one another**;
- **plan and lead** projects;
- **solve** their own **problems**.

Youth leadership in action:
Destiny Arts Center in Oakland, CA, is a multi-age (3-18), multi-cultural program that promotes violence prevention with young people from the inner city through martial arts, dance, and youth leadership. Destiny develops youth leadership across age categories by providing logical "stepping stones". "We encourage lots of peer mentoring. We might ask a young person who has only been here for six months to lead a familiar part of the warm-up routine with adult supervision. Then they might move on to teaching a basic skill to a new member of the group. Later on they may lead a smaller group in practicing a specific skill. Teens (ages 12-18) can take part in a teacher training program, and then lead workshops in the community for youth and adults. We gauge a youth's development, and seize the moment to ask young people to step into a new leadership role."

3. Experience a sense of belonging.

What activities can support a **sense of belonging** in youth programs?

Youth

- experience a sense of **program ownership**;
- participate in **setting up** or decorating **program space**;

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· share **rituals** or chants;

· **name** their group;

· **act as mentors** for new youth entering the program;

· wear or carry **program identifying** clothing or articles such as badges or membership IDs.

Youth belonging in action:
At an after-school program in Richmond, CA, youth begin every meeting by taking a carpet square and setting up a check in circle. The room quiets as each young person sits cross-legged on their square. A designated youth brings the Amandala Awetu, a talking stick, to the circle and begins the check in with a call and response. “Amandala” the youth says. “Awetu” the group responds. Together everyone says, “The power is ours”.

While strategies to promote belonging may differ across ages and groups, **a sense of belonging is fundamental** for meaningful youth participation.

Environments that Support Youth Participation

Youth Participation is one of five interdependent Supports and Opportunities identified by the Youth Development Framework for Practice. These are the building blocks for creating an environment that fully supports youth development.

Creating an environment that truly promotes youth participation also requires the presence of the other Supports and Opportunities:

· a solid **relationship** between adults and young people that encourages trust;

· a sense of **safety** so that differences in opinion and making mistakes are okay;

· a set of **skills** that help youth in making decisions, becoming leaders and in creating a sense of belonging;

· opportunities to participate in **community** as leaders and decision-makers.

The youth development approach draws on a substantial body of research about young people’s developmental needs along with years of evidence from the field about what works in promoting young people’s healthy development and **learning**.

The practice of youth participation can promote young people’s active participation in the learning process, fostering resiliency and greater success in school. “There is much evidence that when children are given more opportunity to participate in decisions about schoolwork they miss school less, are more creative, put more time on task, and complete tasks in less time.” *(Phi Delta Kappan, Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Foundation, September 1993, 75 (1), p.12.)*

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1.3 Self-Assessment: Assess Youth Participation Practices

Survey for Adults:
Assess Youth Participation Practices

Listed below are eleven statements. Please circle the number that best represents your opinion about the statement.

1. If you asked the youth in my program, they would say that I always listen to and respect their ideas.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

2. There is a good balance of power between youth and adults in my program.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

3. Youth get to make decisions about the things they want to do in my program.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

4. I learn a lot from youth in my program.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

5. I always provide youth with different options for how they can take on leadership in my program.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

6. If you asked youth, they would say that I have high expectations for their success as leaders in the program.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

7. When a young person is having difficulty in a leadership role, I am skilled at providing the necessary types of support.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

8. I am quite skilled at helping youth develop the attitudes and skills that they need to be strong leaders.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

9. I am able to create a spirit of teamwork and belonging among the youth with whom I work.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

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10. I create an environment in my program in which youth feel listened to. .

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

11. If a young person is absent from my program, I follow up to see why they did not attend.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

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Worksheet 1
1.4 Case Study: Support Youth Participation

Instructions: The next few pages contain 3 scenarios from ABC Youth Center. Please respond to the question that follows each scenario.

ABC Youth Center:

- is located in a large city
- serves a diverse population of 200 youth annually.
- provides programs that include arts, academic support and youth employment offerings.
- serves youth ages 8 – 18 years of age.

Scenario 1:

Emilio runs the after-school tutoring program at ABC Youth Center. This program recruits volunteers from the local colleges to tutor elementary and middle school aged youth. Each day, tutors are available for 2 hours of tutoring. Typically, youth straggle in from school to the program, and Emilio assigns them to work with whatever tutor is available. Once students have finished their assigned homework, they can either participate in a daily enrichment activity, which Emilio designs and provides, or play ping-pong or pool in the recreation room next door to the tutoring room.

Emilio's challenges:

- **Attendance** at the program is not great. Only 30% of the total caseload of youth attend more than once a week.
- Student **grades** have not been significantly improved by participation in the program.
- Emilio feels like he is constantly **recruiting** for the program, since participant retention is very low.
- Youth complain that the program is "**boring**", and report that they only participate because their parents or teachers make them.
- There is a great deal of **turnover** amongst the tutors, and great differences in their skills in working with young people as tutors.
- While Emilio designs enrichment activities to be interesting and inspiring to the youth participants, most youth prefer to just play ping pong or pool instead, which makes Emilio wonder if the enrichment activities are even worth all of the effort he puts into them.

Question:

What advice would you offer Emilio as to what steps he might take to try to overcome the challenges he faces and **increase youth belonging** in his program?

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Scenario 2:
Cynthia is the 16 year-old president of the small **youth leadership group** at ABC Youth Center. She started the leadership group the previous year to address youth issues in the community. She works closely with James, the staff person assigned to the program.

Cynthia and James' challenges:

- They notice that participants have a lot of **great ideas** and are really good at **brainstorming** issues of concern to them. Issues they have discussed include school reform, violence in the community (by youth and police), drug use, lack of safe spaces for youth activities, and rising housing costs. However, the group hasn't been able to **follow-through** on their plans to tackle any of the issues, leaving Cynthia and James feeling frustrated.
- Only a **few** youth participate in the group, most of them Cynthia's friends.
- Cynthia and James feel that most of the youth do not have the **skills** for key leadership activities such as group facilitation, conflict resolution, project-management and giving presentations to peers and others. So Cynthia ends up taking on most of these tasks herself.
- James receives a limited **budget** from ABC Youth Center for youth leadership projects and most of the ideas the youth have are beyond the possibilities of the budget.

Question;
What advice would you offer Cynthia and James as to what steps they might take to overcome the challenges they face and increase **youth leadership** in this program?

Scenario 3: Alisha was recently hired to staff a new program to **promote girls' participation in sports**. She has a lot of freedom to design the program in the manner that she wants, provided that she works with girls aged 10 – 18 in providing after-school sports opportunities.

Alisha's challenges:

- She is uncertain how to include youth participation in a brand new program but wants to establish a program that includes a great deal of **youth decision-making** from the start of the program.
- She **doesn't know what the youth want** in terms of sports opportunities.

Question:
What advice would you give Alisha as to how to overcome the challenges she faces and set up a program that supports youth **decision-making** from the very beginning?

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Worksheet 3

1.5 Activity with Youth: Explore Youth Leadership

Throughout the process of discussing youth participation, it is critical to involve the opinions and insights of youth. This activity provides you an opportunity to do just that, in discussing one of the central concepts of youth participation: youth leadership.

Instructions: Complete Step 1 on this worksheet. Conduct a group discussion with your youth about youth leadership. Complete the reflection questions at the bottom of this page**.**

Step 1: Self-Reflection

1) What makes a good youth leader? For example, what are the characteristics and skills that support youth leadership?

2) What is your role in supporting youth leadership?

Step 2: Talk with Youth

Select between 3 to 5 youth and engage them in a group conversation about youth leadership for about 15 minutes. Orient the conversation toward two questions: 1) What is a leader? 2) What makes a good leader? 3) Are you a leader? In what settings? 4) What are the best and worst leadership experiences that you have had?

Step 3: Self-Reflection

1) What did you learn from youth that you had not thought about before holding the group conv*ersation?*

2) Did your perception change in talking to your youth about this concept?

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Chapter 2: Role of Adults

Welcome

Welcome to Chapter Two of Youth Participation! In this chapter you will look at adult roles in supporting youth participation. You will begin by considering some of your own personal assumptions about youth, and the extent to which these beliefs are reflected in the level of youth participation in your program. You will also familiarize yourself with the different phases of child development and begin to think about the intersection of development and youth leadership.

Goals and Objectives

This chapter is designed to articulate the roles adult allies play in supporting youth participation.

By the end of this chapter you'll be able to:

- Define "adultism" and "adult ally."
- Articulate strategies and identify opportunities for acting as an adult ally to youth.
- Assess personal assumptions about the capabilities of young people and readiness for promoting youth participation.
- Understand the different phases of child development and begin to apply that to appropriate youth participation practices.
-

Instructions

Proceed sequentially through the topics and exercises in this chapter. Each section builds upon the next.

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Worksheet 1

2.1 Self-Reflection: Explore Beliefs and Practice

Survey for Adults: Explore Beliefs and Practice

Instructions: Complete the following survey about the youth at your own program or site.

1. The youth in this program demonstrate a capacity for leadership.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

2. The youth have leadership roles in this program.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

3. The youth in this program are able to mentor and/ or train younger or newer program youth.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

4. The youth in this program have structured opportunities to mentor and/ or train younger or newer program youth.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

5. The youth in this program are able to represent the program to visitors and community stakeholders (describe the program adequately, give a program tour, make age-appropriate presentations about the program, etc.).

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

6. The youth in this program play a key role in representing the program to visitors and community stakeholders (giving program tours, describing the program, making age-appropriate presentations, etc.)

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

7. The youth in this program are able to plan and facilitate group activities.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

8. The youth in this program have adequate opportunities to plan and facilitate group activities.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

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9. The youth in this program are able to interview and select staff members.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

10. The youth in this program play a key role in interviewing and selecting staff members.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

11. The youth in this program are able to initiate ideas about future program improvements.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

12. The youth in this program play a key role in planning for program design changes.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

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Worksheet 2
2.2 Concept Exploration: Unravel Adultism

What is Adultism?

Adultism is a prevalent cultural attitude that stands in the way of the development of true youth participation in programs.

Adultism is a set of behaviors and attitudes based on the belief that adults are better than young people and may act upon them without their agreement.

These behaviors and attitudes can be found at all levels of society:

- In schools
- In families
- At church
- In youth organizations.

Mistreatment of young people lays the foundation for them to learn and use other forms of mistreatment and may lead to racism, homophobia and sexism.

Before you proceed to the next section, please take a moment to read this on-line material adultism: http://freechild.org/SNAYR/adultism.htm

Questions:

1) We know that an important first step in erasing adultism is recognizing adultist tendencies in ourselves and others. Take a few moments now to think of a time when you were a youth at the same age as the youth you currently serve.

Can you remember a time when adults took away your ability to make choices? What did that feel like for you/ how did that impact you? How did you respond?

2) Reflect on yourself in the position you hold now. Are you aware of restricting access to information or limiting choices a young person can make? How do your youth react?

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2.3 Concept Exploration: Define Adult Ally

What is an Adult Ally?

"Fresh ideas, new perspectives, creativity and energy are popular terms tossed around by adults who embrace the philosophy that young people have a lot to offer. Of course, young people don't just open up and reveal everything they know and imagine. Depending on the individuals involved, asking for reactions to proposed services and policies may only elicit a compliant nod of approval. It takes time to gain trust, especially with young people who are conditioned to wait to be called on by adults and rarely encouraged to think outside the box." (The Youth Activism Newsletter May 2004

It is important youth workers recognize opportunities to engage young people more fully in our programs and to support them in developing the skills they need to participate in more meaningful ways. In taking on this role, you act as adult ally to your youth. Being an adult ally to an elementary age youth may take a different form than if you work with teenagers, but your belief in a young person's ability and your role in establishing structures that support their development are the same.

Adults as Allies: What is the Role?

The following passage is taken from Adults as Allies by Barry Checkoway, School of Social Work, the University of Michigan.
Adapted with permission from Dorothy Stoneman, Leadership Development, 1988.

"The adult organizer must **genuinely respect the ideas and abilities of the teenagers,** and must make this constantly clear. In meetings, the role is to **draw out the ideas of every member** of the group, **take them utterly seriously, compliment them,** and **let them make the decisions** themselves. In action, the role is to **stand back, let the young people do the work** and **make the decisions,** but provide essential information as needed so they can make informed decisions.

This is not easy for most adults. Most adults fall into authority roles without even noticing it. They consider their opinions and mode of operation to be automatically superior to those of teenagers. The adult organizer must be an exception to this pattern."

Adult Ally Resources:

Access this and other great adult ally resources at The Freechild Project website.

Further advice for adult allies is available at the Youth Activism Project website.

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2.4 Concept Exploration: Adults as Allies

Listen to Youth:
Directions to Adults on How to be an Ally from Youth:

Below is a list of examples generated by youth of how adults can be allies:

- ✓ Treat young people as partners rather than clients.
- ✓ Take risks to interrupt racism, sexism and homophobia when you see them.
- ✓ Adults must be willing to share power.
- ✓ Create opportunities that allow us to solve problems and bring about change in our community.
- ✓ Eliminate patronizing and aggressive language from your conversations with us.
- ✓ Look beyond how we look.
- ✓ Listen to us.
- ✓ Pay attention, believe in and respect young people.
- ✓ Keep your word, makes yourself available.
- ✓ Help open doors. Help us to explore options, resources and support. Provide us with useful information and share your resources and connections.
- ✓ Take chances – even if you are afraid you might say the wrong thing. An ally is bold. They take a chance and reach out.

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2.5 Worksheet
Case Study: Consider Adult Roles

Instructions: The next few pages contain 4 scenarios from ABC After School Program. Please respond thoughtfully to the questions that follow each scenario.

ABC After School Program:

ABC Youth Center:

- is located in a large city
- serves a diverse population of 200 youth annually.
- provides programs that include arts, academic support and youth employment offerings.
- serves youth ages 8 – 18 years of age.

Scenario 1:

Jules is a sixteen-year-old participant in an employment program. He reports that students in one of his classes at school have been making homophobic remarks during class time, and that the teacher allows the comments and occasionally even joins in laughing at the jokes. Jules asks that you talk to the teacher about this behavior.

Jules' request:

- Could you talk to the teacher about this behavior?

Question:

How would you respond to Jules' request?

Scenario 2

Nora is a 10 year-old youth who recently immigrated from Guatemala and is learning English. She participates in an after-school arts program in which most students most comfortably communicate in Cantonese, and most peer-to-peer interaction takes place in Cantonese. She tells you that she feels left out by the other students.

Nora's request:

- Can you create a rule that requires everyone in the class to speak English at all times, so that she can participate in these conversations?

Question:

How would you respond to Nora's request?

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Scenario 3
Marlene is a 14 year-old participant in the youth leadership group. While the others in the group are discussing plans for a series of dances to provide youth with recreational activities, she argues passionately for the group's efforts to focus on a "more serious campaign" such as a community environmental clean-up. The group votes to do the dances instead.

Marlene's response:

- She storms out of the room.

Question:

How would you respond to this situation, supporting Marlene and the youth leadership group?

Scenario 4:

Nico is an eight- year-old boy who participates in many programs at the organization. He confides to you that he wants to be in the soccer program but he can't because the soccer coach "doesn't like me". He asks you to solve the problem for him.

Nico's request:

- Help me solve this problem, I want to play soccer!

Question:

How would you respond to Nico's request?

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2.6 Concept Exploration: Understand Ages & Stages of Development

In understanding your role as an adult in supporting youth, it is helpful to be aware of the stages of development of your youth participants. With this information in hand, you can incorporate decision-making, leadership and belonging in ways that are responsive to the developmental needs and assets of your youth participants.

Six Through Eight Year-Olds (Grades 1-3)

Six, seven, and eight-year-olds build on the important developments of the first six years of life and seem to settle down to a steadier pace of growing and learning. Young school-age children are interested in real life tasks and activities, and pretend and fantasy lessen considerably. School-agers want to make "real" jewelry, take "real" photographs, and create "real" collections.

School-age children have longer attention spans. They are more likely to stick with things until the project is finished, the problem solved, or the argument resolved. Doing things together with friends, teamwork, and following rules become very important. This age group is fascinated by rules and can develop games with extensive rules and rituals.

Social And Emotional Development From 6 -8

* being with friends becomes increasingly important
* interested in rules and rituals
* girls want to play more with girls; boys with boys
* may have a best friend and an enemy
* strong desire to perform well, do things right
* begins to see things from another child's point of view, but still very self-centered
* finds criticism or failure difficult to handle
* views things as black and white, right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with very little middle ground
* seeks a sense of security in groups, organized play, and clubs
* generally enjoys caring for and playing with younger children
* may become upset when behavior or school-work is ignored

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Physical Development From 6 -8

* skilled at using scissors and small tools
* development of permanent teeth
* enjoys testing muscle strength and skills
* good sense of balance
* can catch small balls
* can tie shoelaces
* enjoys copying designs and shapes, letters and numbers
* can print name
* long arms and legs may give gawky awkward appearance

Intellectual Development From 6 -8

* may reverse printed letters (b/d)
* enjoys planning and building
* doubles speaking and listening vocabularies
* reading may become a major interest
* increased problem-solving ability
* interested in magic and tricks
* longer attention span
* enjoys creating elaborate collections
* able to learn difference between left and right
* can begin to understand time and the days of the week

Ideas For Caregivers

* Provide opportunities for active play. Throwing at targets, running, jumping rope, tumbling, and aerobics may be of interest.
* Provide opportunities to develop an understanding of rules by playing simple table games: cards, dominoes, tic-tac-toe, etc.
* Provide opportunities for children to do non-competitive team activities such as working a jigsaw puzzle or planting a garden.
* Encourage children's sense of accomplishment by providing opportunities to build models, cook, make crafts, practice music, or work with wood.
* Encourage children's collections by allowing them to make special boxes or books in which to store their collections.
* Encourage reading and writing by allowing children to produce stories with scripts, create music for plays and puppet shows, produce a newspaper, record events, go on field trips, or conduct experiments.
* Help children explore their world by taking field trips to museums, work places, and other neighborhoods. Invite community helpers to your home.

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Nine Through Eleven Year-Olds (Grades 4-6)

Materials from: http://www.nncc.org/Child.Dev/ages.stages.9y.11y.html

Materials from: http://www.nncc.org/Child.Dev/ages.stages.9y.11y.html

Reprinted with permission from National Network for Child Care - NNCC. Oesterreich, L. (1995). Ages & stages - nine through eleven-year-olds. In L. Oesterreich, B. Holt, & S. Karas, *Iowa family child care handbook* [Pm 1541] (pp. 202-204). Ames, IA: Iowa State University Extension.

Children of this age develop a sense of self and find it important to gain social acceptance and experience achievement. Friends become increasingly important. Secret codes, shared word meanings and made up languages, passwords and elaborate rituals are important ways to strengthen the bonds of friendship. Close friends are almost always of the same sex, although children in this age group are usually increasingly interested in peers of the opposite sex.

Be prepared to use all your "patience" skills if caring for children this age, as they tend to think that they do not need any adult care or supervision. Yet, when they are left to care for themselves, they are lonely, unhappy, and sometimes frightened.

Social And Emotional Development From 9-11

* begins to see parents and authority figures as fallible human beings
* rituals, rules, secret codes, and made-up languages are common
* enjoys being a member of a club
* increased interest in competitive sports
* outbursts of anger are less frequent
* may belittle or defy adult authority

Physical Development From 9-11

* girls are generally as much as 2 years ahead of boys in physical maturity
* girls may begin to menstruate
* increases body strength and hand dexterity
* improves coordination and reaction time

Intellectual Development From 9-11

* interested in reading fictional stories, magazines, and how-to project books
* may develop special interest in collections or hobbies
* may be very interested in discussing a future career
* fantasizes and daydreams about the future
* capable of understanding concepts without having direct hands-on experience

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Ideas For Caregivers

* Provide opportunities for older school-agers to help out with real skills. Cooking, sewing, and designing dramatic play props are useful ways to utilize their skills.
* Provide time and space for an older child to be alone. Time to read, daydream, or do school work uninterrupted will be appreciated.
* Encourage children to participate in an organized club or youth group. Many groups encourage skill development with projects or activities than can be worked on in your child care program.
* Encourage older children to help you with younger children, but don't overdo. Avoid burdening older children with too many adult responsibilities. Allow time for play and relaxation.
* Provide opportunities for older children to play games of strategy. Checkers, chess, and monopoly are favorites.
* Remember to provide plenty of food. Older children have larger appetites than younger children and will need to eat more.

Twelve Through Eighteen Year-Olds (Grades 6-12)

This material from: http://www.ncfy.com/supporti.htm

Adolescence is a time for young people to define their place in the family, peer groups, and the larger community. During this stage of their lives, youth struggle with the transition from childhood to adulthood. During childhood, they depended mainly on their parents for economic and emotional support and direction. In adulthood, though, they will be expected to achieve independence and make choices about school, work, and personal relationships that will affect every aspect of their future.

Without question, adolescence is a difficult time for many young people. During this period, they must contend with physical changes, pressure to conform to current social trends and peer behaviors, and increased expectations from family members, teachers, and other adults. Adolescents also must deal with sometimes conflicting messages from parents, peers, or the media. They struggle with an increasing need to feel as if they "belong." Young people also feel pressure to perform academically or socially.

For some young people, the usual challenges of adolescence are compounded by difficult family situations, overcrowded classrooms, disintegrating neighborhoods, or exposure to alcohol or other drugs. Without support and guidance, these young people may fall victim to behaviors that place them, and others, at risk. In our society, those behaviors include dropping out of school, running away from home, joining gangs, and using alcohol or drugs or becoming involved in other law-breaking behaviors. Some youth may become despondent, leading to academic problems, social isolation, or self-destructive behavior.

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Movement Towards Independence

- Struggle with sense of identity
- Feeling awkward or strange about one's self and one's body
- Focus on self, alternating between high expectations and poor self- concept
- Interests and clothing style influenced by peer group
- Moodiness
- Improved ability to use speech to express one's self
- Realization that parents are not perfect; identification of their faults
- Less overt affection shown to parents, with occasional rudeness
- Complaints that parents interfere with independence
- Tendency to return to childish behavior, particularly when stressed

Future Interests and Cognitive Changes

- Mostly interested in present, limited thoughts of future
- Intellectual interests expand and gain in importance
- Greater ability to do work (physical, mental, emotional)

Sexuality

- Display shyness, blushing, and modesty
- Girls develop physically sooner than boys
- Increased interest in the opposite sex
- Movement toward heterosexuality with fears of homosexuality
- Concerns regarding physical and sexual attractiveness to others
- Frequently changing relationships
- Worries about being normal

Morals, Values, and Self-Direction

- Rule and limit testing
- Capacity for abstract thought
- Development of ideals and selection of role models
- More consistent evidence of conscience
- Experimentation with sex and drugs (cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana)

Ideas For Caregivers

- Provide time and space for an older child to be alone. Time to read, daydream, or do school work uninterrupted will be appreciated.
- Ask questions to engage in dialogue about what is most pressing for adolescents: i.e. peer groups, music, movies, injustice, etc.
- Encourage youth to identify their skills and ways they can apply those skills to problems they identify in their communities.
- Allow time for play and relaxation.
- Encourage responsible decision making
- Provide multiple opportunities for practicing leadership

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Worksheet 4

2.6.1 Concept Exploration: Understand Ages & Stages of Development

1) 1st-3rd Grade

Jessica is an eight year old girl. Based on the information above, what specific activities can you undertake to support her leadership, decision-making, and sense of belonging?

2) 4th-6th Grade

You work with a group of 11 year olds. Based on the information above, what specific activities could you use to support this groups experience of leadership, decision-making and belonging?

Skill Building: Develop Personal and Program Priorities

3) 6th-12th Grade

You work with a group of 14-16 year olds. Based on the information above, what specific activities could you use to support this groups experience of leadership, decision-making and belonging?

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Worksheet 5
2.7 Concept Exploration: Match Assets To Opportunities

Developing leadership isn't only about the development of skills, it also requires the ability to identify or create opportunities for youth to participate in leadership. This experience allows youth to experience the full experience of leadership, and promotes their development in an authentic context. Therefore, promoting youth participation requires the ability to identify the unique strengths of youth and, subsequently, to create leadership opportunities that match those strengths. The purpose of this activity is to help you practice this assessment and matching process for two youth.

1. Think of a youth in your program who DOES NOT currently demonstrate a high degree of program participation, including leadership or decision-making, and answer the following questions regarding that youth:

Who is this youth? What are the experiences, skills and interests of this youth that would allow him/her to contribute to program leadership? Given this set of qualifications, what age-appropriate opportunities or activities could you provide to promote increased youth participation (leadership, decision-making and belonging)? Describe existing and new opportunities that you could identify or create.

2. Think of a youth in your program who DOES currently demonstrate a high degree of program participation, including leadership or decision-making, and answer the following questions regarding that youth:

Who is this youth? What are the experiences, skills and interests that allows him/ her to contribute to program leadership? Given this set of qualifications, what would be the "next" age-appropriate opportunities or activities that would be most appropriate for this youth (consider existing and new opportunities.

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Chapter 3: Facilitation and Leadership

Welcome

Welcome to Chapter 3 of Youth Participation! In this chapter you will examine skills and styles of leadership that successfully promote youth participation.

Goals and Objectives

By the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- Assess personal leadership style.
- Identify when to apply different styles.
- Define the roles and skills of a good leader, youth or adult.
- Identify strategies for supporting the development of leadership skills in youth.
- Practice facilitation strategies to strengthen democratic leadership.

Instructions

Proceed sequentially through the topics and exercises in this chapter. Each section builds upon the next.

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3.1 Concept Exploration: Define Leadership

Information reprinted with permission from: Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow:Leadership Project Book IV Skills Leading Groups Cooperative Extension Service College of Agriculture University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. (Bold emphasis and content in italics added by CNYD.)

- **-What is leadership?**
- **-Assumptions about leadership**
- **-Leadership behaviors**
- **-Situational leadership**

What is leadership?

Having a good understanding of leadership is an important step in becoming a strong leader, both for yourself and for the youth with whom you work.

Leadership is helping people achieve goals. It involves getting things done. Leaders guide and influence others actions, as individuals or in groups.

People require a variety of skills to be effective leaders. These leadership skills are developed and expanded throughout a lifetime. They can be used in a variety of ways depending on the situation. The leadership skills are related to understanding self, communicating, getting along with others, learning to learn, making decisions, managing and working with groups.

Leaders need to start with a good understanding of and confidence in themselves and what's important to them. To work well with others they need to understand those they work with and to communicate with them. Influencing others involves helping them learn and change. Leaders also need to help people make individual and group decisions and use good human and material resources to accomplish their goals. When leaders work with people in groups, they must integrate all these skills needed to help the people in a group function together as a unit.

Assumptions about Leadership

These assumptions about leadership inform the way we conceptualize leadership and approach its development. You may want to explore this list with youth and / or develop your own list.

There are several accepted assumptions about leadership that make its study both possible and useful. These assumptions are:

- Leadership can be learned.
- Leadership can be broken down into component skills that can be practiced.
- Leadership is learned through experience.
- Leadership is helping others.
- Leadership is shared among members of the group.
- Leadership is a relationship between people.
- Leadership styles are determined by the situation.

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Leadership Behaviors

This information is relevant in that it helps us to think about the types of leadership we use in different situations. A complex understanding of the different behaviors of leaders can help you in your facilitation of youth and can also be a tool for youth in better understanding their own leadership

There are various behavior styles a leader can use in working with others. “Directive leaders” make the decisions and give specific directions for carrying out the tasks needed to reach goals, monitoring progress carefully. “Democratic leaders” involve others in the process of deciding what to do and how to do it, but they provide support and encouragement throughout the process. “Laissez-faire leaders” allow others to take the lead in decisions about what to do and how to do it, and they provide little support.

Each of these leadership styles is useful in some situations. Which style the leaders should use in guiding groups depends on the conditions in which they are working. Leaders must assess the goal that the group needs to accomplish and the abilities of the group members to do the job. They have to decide how to help the group work effectively by determining how much direction to give and how to support relationships between themselves and group members and among group members.

Situational Leadership

This model of leadership helps to identify the situations in which the types of leadership behaviors described above are best utilized. This model can help inform your work with youth, to help you to better identify and apply the appropriate type of leadership in different situations. It is also highly relevant to youth leaders who also need to have this same ability in order to lead others effectively.

Paul Hershey and Kenneth Blanchard* have outlined a model leaders can use to help them assess the situation and decide what style of leadership is appropriate. They call it “situational leadership”. Situational leaders decide what level of skills group members have for doing the tasks needed and how much relationship (involvement and leader support) they need in the process. These relationships are broken down into the four categories illustrated below.

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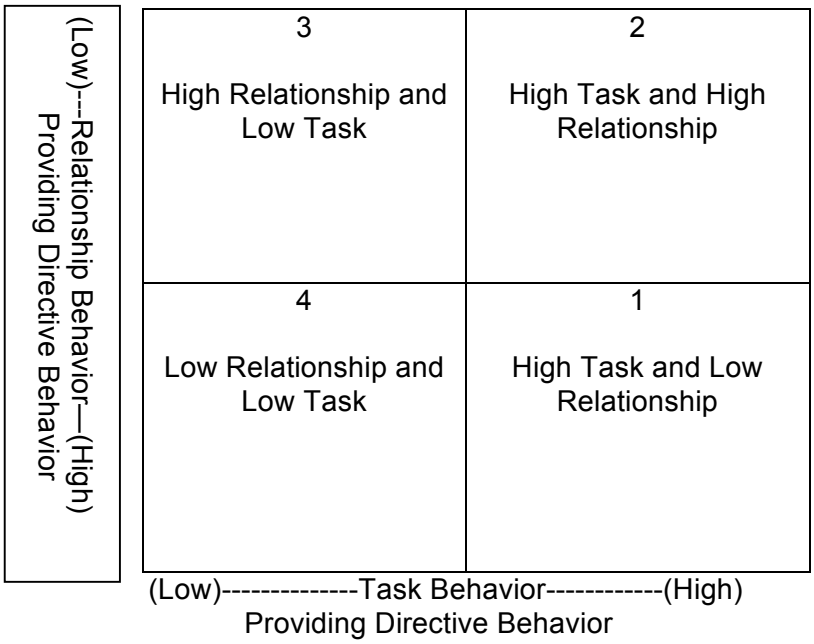

As the diagram indicates, when it's important to get the tasks done and the need for encouragement is low (square 1), directive leadership is called for. An example of this situation would be during a fire alarm. The goal is to get everyone out of the building as quickly and orderly as possible (high emphasis on task). There is little need for group involvement in the decision or individual encouragement to participate (low relationship).

In square 2 the situation of high task and high goal needs is illustrated. An example of this is a person needing to use a computer who is afraid of it. In this case the leader needs to give a lot of direction because the person doesn't know how to use the computer and also lots of support because the person needs encouragement to overcome the fear of the new technology.

In square 3 we find a situation where the need for help with the task is low, but the need for support is high. Here democratic or supportive leadership is called for. An example would be a group of teens with the task of cleaning up the fairgrounds. This is a job everyone has the skills to do, but some group members may need a lot of encouragement to keep at the task. Directive leadership would likely be unsuccessful.

Square 4 describes the leadership situation where the need for task guidance and encouragement are both low. Here a low involvement leadership style (laissez-faire) is called for. The group knows how to do the job and is motivated to do it. An example might be a volunteer committee planning the annual Christmas party. Members volunteered because they wanted to plan the party and had the ideas and experience to plan it. Very little help is needed from the leader.

In leadership roles working with youth and adults, each of these leadership styles is appropriate and useful in some situations. Which style to use depends upon the nature of the task, and the skill and motivation of the group being led:

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Directive facilitation might be called for in the following type of situation:

- Facilitation might be called for in the following type of situation leadership styles is appropriate and useful in some
- Facilitation might be called for in the following type of se accomplished

Democratic facilitation would be called for in the following type of situation:

- Facilitation would be called for in the following type of situation: shed styles is appropriate and useful in some situations. Which style
- Facilitation won of a difficult problem or issue that impacts the entire group and will need all members to participate in its solution

Laissez-Faire facilitation would be called for in the following type of situation:

- Facilitation would be called for in the following can successfully complete without adult assistance
- Facilitation would be called for in the following can successfully complete without adult assistance

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Worksheet 1
3.2 Case Study: Identify Leadership Styles

Instructions: Please read and respond to the following scenarios from ABC Youth Center.

ABC Youth Center:

- is located in a large city
- serves a diverse population of 200 youth annually.
- provides programs that include arts, academic support and youth employment offerings.
- serves youth ages 8 – 18 years of age.

Scenario 1

Three youth become involved in a heated debate during a group planning meeting. While the debate is on an important topic, it has been going on, in your mind, for way too long. About half of the other members of the group are becoming either bored or anxious, and appear to becoming disengaged from the planning process. The other half appear to be listening, but are not verbally participating.

Question:

What facilitation style would you use to respond to this scenario and why? How would you handle the situation?

Scenario 2. You are the chair of a hiring committee for your program. The committee consists of 4 youth and 4 staff. The program has established procedures for hiring. These procedures have worked well in the past, in your opinion. During the first meeting, the youth "rebel," and argue that the current procedures are antiquated. They want to change the procedures before moving on, even though the group must make a decision quickly.

Question:

What facilitation style would you use to respond to this scenario and why? How would you handle the situation?

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3.3 Self Assessment: Assess Your Leadership

Survey For Adults
Assess Your Leadership

While directive, facilitative and laissez-faire leadership are each useful in different situations, most people have a preferred style. That is, you are likely better equipped – in terms of personal comfort and ability – to use one leadership style more than the others. In this self-assessment you will reflect on your own ability with each of these three styles.

Please assess your overall ability with each leadership style by circling the number that best represents your ability.

A. Directive

very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very high ability

B. Laissez-Faire

very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very high ability

C. Democratic

very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very high ability

What leadership style do you feel would be most beneficial for you to develop/ strengthen? Why?

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3.4 Concept Exploration: Explore Leadership Skills

Information reprinted with permission from: Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow:Leadership Project Book IV Skills Leading Groups Cooperative Extension Service , College of Agriculture. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. (Bold emphasis in content added by CNYD.)

Leadership Skills
All young people have the potential to be leaders, and can develop this potential if provided the right environment that supports building the following skills:

1) Understanding Self
Developing leadership relies heavily on the inner strengths of the group leader. You and those you are helping learn leadership need to feel confident and self-assured to be effective leading others.

You (and those you work with) need to know what is important to you because it will influence most of the decisions you'll make. Research has shown that being able to identify your values and define clearly their relative importance is essential for mental health goal setting, disclosing your feelings and stress management will help you build personal strengths and skills.

2) Communicating
The best leaders are excellent listeners, careful observers of non-verbal communication, skilled conversing informally in small groups and on the telephone, able to obtain feedback from others and skilled at writing.

3) Getting Along with Others
Understanding and appreciating the people you meet is vital to success in leading groups. As a leader you (and those you work with) will need to gain the trust and support of the individuals in the group. Skills in meeting, accepting, caring and trusting are basic to building teamwork.

4) Learning to Learn
Helping people make changes is what leadership is all about. Learning how to learn is learning how to make desired changes. You make changes in attitudes, the way you do things and in the information you know. The things you know are applied in new and creative ways.

5) Making Decisions
Helping groups make decisions requires you to help them work through the decision making process every time a decision must be made. Group members must work together to define the problem and issues, gather information about it, list alternative solutions, weigh the consequences of each, decide on an action, follow through with the action, and evaluate the results.

6) Managing
To help groups use the resources available to achieve goals, careful planning is required. Goal setting, project plans, resource allocation, and prioritizing are all skills involved in managing.

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7) Working with Groups

As a leader, you will have opportunities to examine how groups work. You can explore how the leader's behavior influences the group's behavior by analyzing and exploring leadership styles and learn when to use them.

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3.5 Self-Assessment

Assess Leadership Skills

In this assessment, you will consider the extent to which you and the average youth in your program currently possess the seven leadership skills identified in the previous activity. This survey will guide you towards considering areas for personal growth and for supporting the development of the group of youth in your program.

Instructions: For each of the leadership skills below, rate your OWN skill level and the skill level of the AVERAGE youth in your program.

Understanding Self (inner strength, confidence, values)

1. MY skill level is: excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

Communicating

1. MY skill level is: excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

Getting Along with Others (gaining trust, appreciating others, caring)

1. MY skill level is: excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

Learning to Learn (making changes in attitudes, process, information)

1. MY skill level is: excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

Making Decisions (strong decision making process)

1. MY skill level is: excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

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Managing (goal setting, project planning, resource allocation, prioritizing)

1. MY skill level is: excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

Working with Groups (using different leadership styles)

1. MY skill level is: excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

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3.6 Concept Exploration: Build Youth Leadership

Activities that Build Youth Leadership

As an adult interested in creating an environment in which youth are leaders and / or are prepared for future leadership, your role includes being able to design and facilitate learning activities that build youth skills in the seven areas identified in the previous activities. This is a challenging task for many reasons. Youth are individuals with different learning styles and interests, existing skills and previous experiences. Also, the seven skills necessary for leadership are extremely complex.

Initially, you should probably approach this task as a facilitative leader. In other words, you should work to actively involve youth in their own skill development (as opposed to a directive approach) and also provide a good degree of support and guidance throughout the process (as opposed to a laissez-faire approach). Depending on the age and developmental stage of the youth in your program, over time you may fade into the role of a laissez-faire leader as youth become more adept at guiding their own development and the development of others.

Some ideas for <u>designing</u> activities to build the seven leadership skills:

- Surface individual and group interests before partnering with youth to design activities
- Consider the developmental appropriateness and group readiness for different types of activities (explored in Activity 2.5)
- Design activities that engage learners with different learning styles and skill levels
- Provide and/or encourage youth to identify authentic and interesting opportunities to practice leadership
- Be explicit with youth about the seven skills for leadership they are developing
- Guide youth in reflecting on their own progress as individuals and groups
- Help developing youth leaders to understand the 3 styles of leadership they can employ
- Begin with simple activities and opportunities to develop skills while ensuring youth success. Over time, activities and opportunities should become more challenging and complex.

Some ideas for <u>facilitating</u> activities to build the seven leadership skills:

- Model skills and styles of leadership in your own behavior.
- Celebrate accomplishments large and small
- Create an environment in which mistakes are valued as a key part of growth

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Chapter 4: Partnering with Youth

Welcome

Welcome to Chapter 4 of Youth Participation! In this chapter you will learn about the different levels of youth participation, and assess your current personal and program practice of youth participation.

Goals and Objectives

By the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- Define the 5 Levels of Youth Participation
- Assess the current state of youth participation in your program
- Identify a range of ways to prepare your program to increase youth participation

Begin to identify strategies for strengthening youth participation

Instructions

Proceed sequentially through the topics and exercises in this chapter. Each section builds upon the next.

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4.1 Concept Definition: Understand Levels of Youth Involvement

5 Levels or Categories of Youth Participation

A. Youth Led: In this type of participation, youth lead the decision-making and implementation processes. Adults serve as facilitators, advisors, and consultants, and typically take on key administrative roles. Youth have the final say in key decisions.

B. Youth-Adult Partnership: In this type of participation, youth and adults work collaboratively to make and implement decisions. Sometimes the adults take the lead role, and sometimes youth take the lead role, but the final decision is shared by all.

C. Adult Managed with Youth Input: In this type of participation, youth serve as advisors and consultants to adult staff. Adult staff make the final decision, but listen to the voices of youth before making the decision. Adults supervise implementation of the decision.

D. Adult Directed: In this type of participation, adults make all the decisions in this area. Youth do not participate in decision-making or implementation, and the program is not trying to involve youth.

E. Tokenism: In this type of participation, youth are typically invited to give input to decision-making and implementation groups, but the ideas of youth are not listened to or taken seriously by adults.

The first four types of participation are valid in different types of situations depending on circumstances and conditions. However, it is harder to imagine situations where "tokenism" is desirable.

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4.2 Self-Assessment

Survey for Adults:
Reflect on Youth Involvement in My Program

Listed below are some basic program functions. Please identify the way that youth are most commonly involved in each function in your program, using the following scale:

(a) Adult-Managed
(b) Youth-Adult Partnership
(c) Youth-Managed
(d) No Involvement
(e) Tokenism.

Circle your answer: What type of youth participation is present in…

1)	a b c d e	Setting program direction annually
2)	a b c d e	Hiring staff
3)	a b c d e	Training staff
4)	a b c d e	Setting program policies and rules
5)	a b c d e	Sitting on the board of directors or advisory board
6)	a b c d e	Facilitating group activities
7)	a b c d e	Fund Raising
8)	a b c d e	Evaluating program effectiveness
9)	a b c d e	Implementing programs
10)	a b c d e	Budget decision-making
11)	a b c d e	Mentoring new program youth
12)	a b c d e	Planning activities for program youth
13)	a b c d e	Taking responsibility for program space
14)	a b c d e	Name another function important to you:
15)	a b c d e	Name another function important to you:

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Worksheet 1
4.3 Case Study: Increase Youth Involvement

Instructions: Read the case study below and respond by the question that follows.

ABC After School Program:

· is located in a large city

· runs programs at both an elementary and middle school

· serves a diverse population of 300 youth annually.

· provides programs that include arts, academic support, sports, and service learning.

· serves youth ages 7 – 14 years of age.

Scenario:
Staff at the ABC After School Program recognized the extent to which their annual program planning process was completely adult directed. In an attempt to incorporate youth voice, they decided to meet with a representative group of youth to get their opinions about the coming year's program. The staff facilitator opened the meeting by asking the youth for any ideas for next year's program. One youth requested more free time, but the staff facilitator let them know that this idea wasn't possible given limited program time. Youth also requested different snacks and a field trip, and these ideas were recorded on chart paper. After that it became obvious the youth had no other ideas to offer, so the staff facilitator thanked and dismissed the youth. Then the staff sat down to create a whole new program design for the coming year.

Question:

How could this staff team move from the tokenistic youth involvement described above to true youth participation in their program planning process?

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4.4 Concept Exploration: Examine Readiness For Youth Participation

While many people believe that meaningful youth participation has significant impact on young people, few programs succeed in engaging them in a significant way. Why is this the case? First, engaging young people in this way is not easy, and requires a great deal of thought and planning. Second, adult staff may find it difficult to shift from a directive role.

Readiness for Youth Participation

Adults who intend to incorporate youth participation more fully into their programs need to deeply consider their own readiness. Making the shift to more actively engaging young people requires not only a deep commitment to the young people in your program, but a strong belief that meaningful youth participation offers many benefits. Adult staff need to be prepared for the difficulties and trade-offs of youth participation. One key trade-off to consider is that the active participation of youth as leaders and decision-makers is not always efficient. The activity or product may at first be of a lesser quality or have a different outcome than ifs adult staff maintained full control. However, the process of involving young people helps them learn new skills and gives them a sense of ownership.

The level of participation possible also depends on the experience and skills of both adult staff and young people involved. Important skills for adults include active listening, group facilitation, techniques for building consensus, project planning and conflict resolution. Children and youth need to learn skills for greater self-reliance and to take on leadership roles in age-appropriate ways, while adults need to embrace the role of adult ally.

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4.5 Self Assessment

Identify Potential Areas For Improvement

1. Please list a few areas of **personal strengths** in providing opportunities and developing skills for youth participation (decision-making, leadership and belonging).

2. Please list a few areas for **personal improvement** in providing opportunities and developing skills for youth participation.

3. Please list a few areas of **program strengths** in providing opportunities and developing skills for youth participation (decision-making, leadership and belonging).

4. Please list a few areas for **program improvement** in youth participation.

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Chapter 5: Making It Happen

Welcome

Welcome to Chapter 5 of Youth Participation! You've had opportunities to reflect on, read about and discuss the many issues and dimensions of youth participation from a Youth Development perspective. You've assessed many of your skills and strengths in applying youth participation practices in your program. You've also begun to apply some new skills and concepts through facilitating activities with your colleagues and youth.

In this final chapter you'll continue the process of gathering information from your colleagues and from youth and begin formulating ideas for program and personal change.

Goals and Objectives

By the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- Identify the importance of assessment
- Understand the concept of continuous improvement
- Guide both peers and youth through a range of assessments
- Based on results of assessment, create action plan for personal and program development that supports youth participation
- Implement a youth participation plan to increase opportunities for youth participation in your program

Instructions

Proceed sequentially through the topics and exercises in this chapter. Each section builds upon the next.

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5.1 Concept Definition: Understand Assessment

Why Assessment?

The functions of assessment are continuous learning and program improvement. Assessment activities are designed toward three goals:

- Personal Development: To help advance your own understanding and application of youth development practices.

- Program Improvement: To help you strengthen the quality of programming in your organization.

- Shared Learning: To help you promote networking and collective leadership among staff and youth within your program.

All of the assessment activities in this training are grounded in the real work that you do in your programs. They ask you to review and reflect on the practice of youth development in your program. The assessment activities are of three types:

1. Some activities ask you to identify the strengths and weaknesses in your own interactions with youth.

2. Some activities ask you to assess the capacity of your program to meet its objectives.

3. Some activities ask you to brainstorm the practical implications of your assessments with your colleagues and with the youth in your program.

Completing these assessments challenges you to improve your work. All of us learn by doing, by reflecting on our work, and by engaging with others in continuous improvement.

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5.2 On-the-Job-Practice: Teach About Youth Participation

Shared Learning

Instructions: Read and follow the steps below to conduct a discussion with colleagues about youth participation.

Step 1: Begin this activity by reflecting on what you have learned (or re-learned) about youth participation over the past few weeks. Consider:

1. What has been most surprising to you?
2. What was it that made "a light bulb" go off?
3. What would be most useful to share with your colleagues?

Jot down some brief notes to yourself to share in your conversation with colleagues.

Step 2: Choose a group of colleagues (between 2 and 5 persons) for the focused conversation. Or, better yet, schedule yourself to do this activity at a staff or project meeting.

Step 3: Give a short presentation to your colleagues, sharing things that you identified in Step 1. When you are done with the presentation, encourage the group to ask questions, to share their views. End the session with a quick brainstorm about how youth participation could be strengthened in the program. This session should take about 45 minutes,

Conversation Starters for the Focused Discussion:

What ideas or pictures came to mind when hearing my presentation?

What came through as most important when hearing my presentation?

What do you think is important for us to support youth participation in our program?

Now that we have talked for a while, what ideas are most significant for our future work?

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5.3 Activity With Youth: Complete Program Assessment

Youth Survey: Opinions About My Program

We want to know your opinions about the level of youth participation and leadership in our program. Please fill out this survey to help us gather some information about your experiences and ideas. Do not put your name on the survey. All answers are confidential.

Instructions: Listed below are 11 questions. For each question, please indicate your opinion by circling the number which best represents your opinion.

1. The staff in this program always listen to and respect my ideas.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. Youth and staff in this program make important program decisions together.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I get to make decisions about the things I want to do in this program.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I learn a lot from the other youth in my program.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. There are many different ways that I can take on leadership in this program.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. This program supports me in developing the skills I need to be a leader.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. When I'm having trouble being a leader, the adults are there to help me out.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I am learning the attitudes and skills that I need to increase my leadership abilities.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. The youth and adults in this program share a spirit of teamwork and belonging.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I feel a sense of ownership and responsibility towards this program.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. If I am absent from the program, someone checks to see why I didn't attend.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

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5.4 Assessment: Analyze and Interpret Youth Data

When you have finished surveying your youth, you are ready to analyze and interpret the results. The purpose of this activity is to make sense of the youth data, with the aim being to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program, from the perspective of the young people.

To analyze the data, you will need a pencil and a calculator.

- **Record** how many youth completed the survey. That is your "response number."
- For each question, add up and total the scores for each person taking the survey.
- Then, divide the total for each question by the response number.
- For example: Eight youth completed the survey, so your response number is 8. For Question 1 ("The staff in this program always listen to and respect my ideas"), youth answered the following: 1,1,6,4,2,1,2,7. The total is 24. Divide 24 by the response number and this gives you an average score of 3.
- **Record** the average score for each of the 12 questions on the survey.

To interpret the data, all you need is a quiet space and a little time.

- Consider the average scores for each of the 12 questions. Overall, are the assessments favorable (average scores between 1 and 3) or unfavorable (average scores between 5 and 7)? What scores are particularly favorable? Unfavorable?
- Jot down notes in response to the following questions: How did the scores confirm what you expected? How did the scores surprise you? How do these scores provide insight into the relative strengths and limitations of youth participation in your program?

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Analyze and Interpret Youth Data

A. Data Analysis

Response Number: _____

Average Score	Question
	1. The staff in this program always listen to and respect my ideas.
	2. Youth and staff in this program make important program decisions together.
	3. I get to make decisions about the things I want to do in this program.
	4. I learn a lot from the other youth in my program.
	5. There are lots of different ways that I can take on leadership in this program.
	6. This program supports me in developing the skills I need to be a leader.
	7. When I'm having trouble being a leader, the adults are there to help me out.
	8. I am learning the attitudes and skills that I need to increase my leadership abilities.
	9. The youth and adults in this program share a spirit of teamwork and belonging.
	10. I feel a sense of ownership and responsibility towards this program.
	11. If I am absent from the program, someone checks to see why I didn't attend.

Key:
Questions 1 to 4 assess input and **decision-making**, Questions 5 to 8 assess opportunities for **leadership**, Questions 9 to 11 assess promoting a sense of **belonging**.

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B. Data Interpretation:

1. Consider the average scores for each of the 12 questions. Overall, are the assessments favorable (average scores between 1 and 3) or unfavorable (average scores between 5 and 7)?

What scores are particularly favorable?

Unfavorable?

2. How did the scores confirm what you expected?

3. How did the scores surprise you?

4. How do these scores provide insight into the relative strengths and limitations of youth participation in your program?

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5.5 Activity with Youth: Conduct Focus Group

With data in hand, you are ready to talk with your youth about the results of the survey and brainstorm possible future changes to respond to the data. Conducting this focus group will also give you a time to practice your group facilitation skills.

Instructions: Follow instructions below to conduct a focus group with youth to discuss the data that you just analyzed and interpreted. Please **post the list of recommendations generated by the focus group to the comments section** on this page to share with your peers and trainer.

Step 1: Select six or so youth for your focus group. Choose a diverse range of youth, but select only those young people who have an interest in discussing youth participation for the purpose of strengthening the program. The focus group will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Step 2: Begin the focus group by presenting data from the Youth Survey (as derived from Assessment Activity 5.3).

Step 3: Engage the youth in a focused conversation, by asking and answering three types of questions.

- Ask some "what" questions. For example, what do the survey results tell us? What are the findings that stand out the most?

- Ask some "gut" questions. For example, how does this information make you feel? Does anyone doubt whether the data represent everybody's opinions?

- Conclude the focus group with some "so what?" questions. For example, what needs to change about our program or the way we work? How can we make changes, and who will take the lead? Try to brainstorm no more than **three priorities for future action**.

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Worksheet 1
5.6 Action Planning: Consider Goals

This final self-study activity gives you an opportunity to begin to consider your priorities for changes for the future.

Step 1: Learning Highlights
Consider your own learning about youth development. Please identify three topics or issues that are most important to you in terms of learning how to improve your ability to promote youth participation.

1.

2.

3.

Step 2: Personal Changes: Youth Participation
Please list three personal goals that you have in terms of your own ability to support youth participation in your program that you might choose to focus on in your action plan.

1.

2.

3.

Step 3: Program Changes- Youth Participation
Please list three potential areas in which you could help your program or organization better support youth participation.

1.

2.

3.

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5.7 Skill Development: Consider Goal Setting Process

Setting goals and creating action plans are powerful tools for making positive changes and moving your personal practice and program forward. They help to clarify and prioritize what's important and focus your activities and decisions. The following is offered as an overview the goal setting process.

It's first important to understand what a goal is and is not. Goals are more than intentions which are often ill-defined and fuzzy. Goal-setting is the process of translating intent into specific statements that can motivate us and provide direction for future change. A goal is like a destination – it specifies exactly where you will end up. With a destination or goal you know specifically where you are going and can plan your journey and actions accordingly.

Goals are*:*

- Clear, concise statements that define what you want to achieve and when
- Based on a larger vision or mission (e.g. increase relationship building opportunities in my program)
- Realistic and attainable

To formulate and write clear goals:

- Review your areas for improvement
- Pick an idea you want to work towards immediately (remember to pick something realistic and attainable – build upon your existing knowledge, skills, and capacity)
- Write your goal as an affirmative statement on the your worksheet, for example: I will (develop / improve / learn, etc.) _____ by _____.

After writing your goals, you need to write action steps (or objectives) to make sure you can achieve your goals. Goals without action steps is like deciding to go somewhere without having a vehicle or form of transportation. You probably won't get to where you want to go!

Action Steps:

- Specific tasks that support achievement of your goal (also called objectives)
- Descriptions of what you will do and when you will do it
- Measurable (what demonstrates that I've accomplished this action step?)

Important: Always identify <u>who</u> is responsible for completing each task in your program plan (or for coordinating the activities of others.) Accountability is important to the success of any action plan.

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To formulate and write your action steps: (*using Action Plan template)*

- Review your goal
- Brainstorm specific tasks necessary to achieve the goal
- Write and sequence action steps, making sure each includes a verb
- Check off which tasks are short term and can be done immediately (within the next month)
- Check off which tasks are long term and need more time and resources
- Set a target date for the completion of each task.
- Identify person(s) responsible and/or who can provide support (program plan)
- Identify resource(s) needed for any tasks (people, technical, financial)

Goal setting does not have to be an arduous process. Setting goals and planning for change can be exciting and fun!

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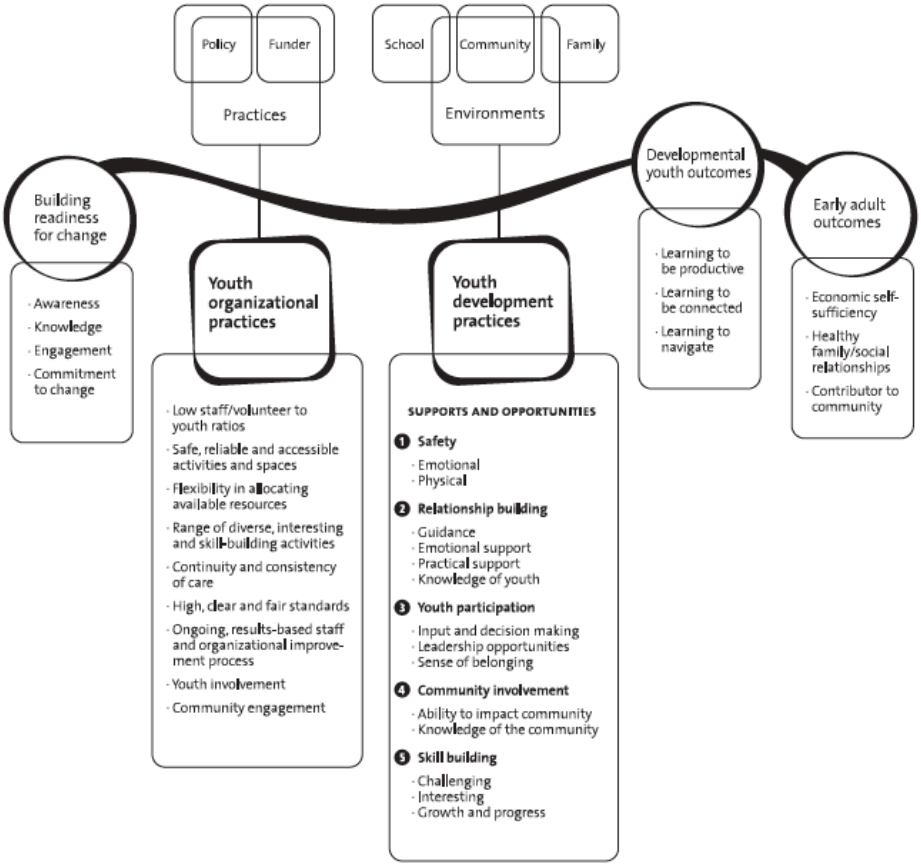
Youth Development Framework for Practice



CNYD

Developed by CNYD in collaboration with Michelle A. Gambone (YDSI) and James P. Connell (IRRE)
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5.8 Personal Action Plan — Example

This activity gives you an opportunity to reflect on this course and create a personal action plan for the future.

Strengths: *Please list or describe your strongest personal abilities in terms of promoting youth participation in your day-to-day work with youth.*
Good listener, respect youth, engage youth when leading activities

Goal: *Please describe one personal skill or ability that you would like to strengthen in support of youth participation.*
Develop my skills as a democratic leader and youth ally.

ACTION STEPS	Short Term	Longer Term	Target Date	Youth Role	Support Needed	Resources Needed
1. Pro-actively seek opportunities to be an ally • Carefully assess situations where youth have difficulties • Validate youth's feelings/perspective • Make myself accessible and approachable	 √ √ √		 10/30	Get feedback from youth to see if they see my actions as supporting them.	Feedback from a colleague and time to check in.	Staff Time; space to meet with youth, flexible time during program
2. Set up opportunities to practice my democratic facilitation skills • Open discussions • Community meetings • Staff conversations	 √ √	 √	 10/15 10/30 1/1/05	Let youth know I am practicing these skills, pointing out my techniques. Get feedback on impact to group.	An observer to give me feedback	Staff Time, meeting space, chart paper and markers
3. Examine program design and list opportunities for youth to take more control: • Responsible for equipment • Lead group transitions • Lead activities		 √ √	 10/30 2/1/05 2/1/05	Meet with interested youth to get ideas.	Work with site staff to create attitude of readiness. Examine what skills need to be developed for youth or adults	Staff and program time; trainers and training time
4. Schedule practice sessions to discuss and practice democratic leadership skills with colleagues		√	5/05	Let youth know what I am working on; use YP training tools to assess and target skills	Meet 3 times over year	Staff time, meeting space; Youth Participation Workbook

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Personal Action Plan:

This activity gives you an opportunity to reflect on this course and create a personal action plan for the future.

Strengths: *Please list or describe your strongest personal abilities in terms of promoting youth participation in your day-to-day work with youth.*
Goal: *Please describe one personal skill or ability that you would like to strengthen in support of youth participation.*

ACTION STEPS	Short Term	Longer Term	Target Date	Youth Role	Support Needed	Resources Needed
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						

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ACTION STEPS	Short Term	Longer Term	Target Date	Youth Role	Support Needed	Resources Needed
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						

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Program Action Plan Example

This activity gives you an opportunity to reflect on this course and create a program action plan for the future.

Strengths: *Please list or describe what your program does really well to promote youth participation*.
We give youth choice in selecting enrichment activities. We have a youth leadership council in place.

Goal: *Please describe one aspect of your program that could use some improvement. Write a goal statement using the handout provided.*
Improvement: Leadership council has low attendance and support. Youth are not empowered to make real decisions.
Goal: Transform the leadership council into a vital governing body that is empowered to make decisions and impact program change. Target date: February 1st.

ACTION STEPS	Short Term	Longer Term	Target Date	Person Responsible	Youth Role	Support Needed	Resources Needed
1. Meet with program staff and administrators to their get buy-in for transforming the leadership council. Brainstorm reasons why a empowered leadership council will help program planning and ongoing assessment efforts.	√		10/1	Me	Invite two members of existing council to attend staff meeting.	Find a peer ally for this process and to co-facilitate the meeting	Staff time: Mary? Conference room, chart pads and markers
2. Meet with existing leadership council members to create a plan for strengthening council. Address empowerment issues of recruitment, decision-making, training. etc. (Note: may need to meet a few times to complete plan)	√		10/6	Me	Ask council to plan their next meeting for this purpose or schedule a special meeting. Ask for a volunteer to co-facilitate meeting.	Ask someone to coach me and provide feedback on my facilitation skills	Conference room, chart pads and markers Staff time: Julie?
3. Plan and facilitate a leadership skills training for the members of the leadership council.		√	12/1	Me	Ask a member of the leadership council to partner with me in planning this training.	Support and coaching from someone more experienced in leadership training	Meeting room, training materials, chart pads, refreshments Staff time: Matt?

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ACTION STEPS	Short Term	Longer Term	Target Date	Person Responsible	Youth Role	Support Needed	Resources Needed
4. Youth to present their plan for transforming leadership council at a staff meeting.	√		11/1	Chair of leadership council	Plan, present	Me and at least one other staff member	Staff time. Chart pads and handouts (created by youth)

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Program Action Plan

This activity gives you an opportunity to reflect on this course and create a program action plan for the future.

Strengths: *Please list or describe what your program does really well to promote youth participation.*
Goal: *Please describe one aspect of your program that could use some improvement. Write a goal statement using the handout provided.*

ACTION STEPS	Short Term	Longer Term	Target Date	Person Responsible	Youth Role	Support Needed	Resources Needed
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

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ACTION STEPS	Short Term	Longer Term	Target Date	Person Responsible	Youth Role	Support Needed	Resources Needed
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							

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1.3 Self-Assessment

Survey for Adults:
Assess Youth Participation Practices

Listed below are eleven statements. Please circle the number that best represents your opinion about the statement.

1. If you asked the youth in my program, they would say that I always listen to and respect their ideas.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

2. There is a good balance of power between youth and adults in my program.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

3. Youth get to make decisions about the things they want to do in my program.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

4. I learn a lot from youth in my program.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

5. I always provide youth with different options for how they can take on leadership in my program.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

6. If you asked youth, they would say that I have high expectations for their success as leaders in the program.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

7. When a young person is having difficulty in a leadership role, I am skilled at providing the necessary types of support.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

8. I am quite skilled at helping youth develop the attitudes and skills that they need to be strong leaders.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

9. I am able to create a spirit of teamwork and belonging among the youth with whom I work.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

10. I create an environment in my program in which youth feel listened to. .
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

11. If a young person is absent from my program, I follow up to see why they did not attend.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

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3.3 Self Assessment

Survey For Adults
Assess Your Leadership

While directive, facilitative and laissez-faire leadership are each useful in different situations, most people have a preferred style. That is, you are likely better equipped – in terms of personal comfort and ability – to use one leadership style more than the others. In this self-assessment you will reflect on your own ability with each of these three styles.

Please assess your overall ability with each leadership style by circling the number that best represents your ability.

A. Directive

very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very high ability

B. Laissez-Faire

very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very high ability

C. Democratic

very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very high ability

What leadership style do you feel would be most beneficial for you to develop/ strengthen? Why?

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3.5 Self-Assessment

Assess Leadership Skills

In this assessment, you will consider the extent to which you and the average youth in your program currently possess the seven leadership skills identified in the previous activity. This survey will guide you towards considering areas for personal growth and for supporting the development of the group of youth in your program.

Instructions: For each of the leadership skills below, rate your OWN skill level and the skill level of the AVERAGE youth in your program.

Understanding Self (inner strength, confidence, values)

1. My skill level is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

Communicating

1. My skill level is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

Getting Along with Others (gaining trust, appreciating others, caring)

1. My skill level is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

Learning to Learn (making changes in attitudes, process, information)

1. My skill level is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

Making Decisions (strong decision making process)

1. My skill level is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:
   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

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Managing (goal setting, project planning, resource allocation, prioritizing)

1. My skill level is:

   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:

   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

Working with Groups (using different leadership styles)

1. My skill level is:

   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

2. Skill level of average youth in my program is:

   excellent good proficient needs some improvement weak

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4.2 Self-Assessment

Survey for Adults:
Reflect on Youth Involvement in My Program

Listed below are some basic program functions. Please identify the way that youth are most commonly involved in each function in your program, using the following scale:

(f) Adult-Managed
(g) Youth-Adult Partnership
(h) Youth-Managed
(i) No Involvement
(j) Tokenism.

Circle your answer: What type of youth participation is present in…

1)	a b c d e	Setting program direction annually
2)	a b c d e	Hiring staff
3)	a b c d e	Training staff
4)	a b c d e	Setting program policies and rules
5)	a b c d e	Sitting on the board of directors or advisory board
6)	a b c d e	Facilitating group activities
7)	a b c d e	Fund Raising
8)	a b c d e	Evaluating program effectiveness
9)	a b c d e	Implementing programs
10)	a b c d e	Budget decision-making
11)	a b c d e	Mentoring new program youth
12)	a b c d e	Planning activities for program youth
13)	a b c d e	Taking responsibility for program space
14)	a b c d e	Name another function important to you:
15)	a b c d e	Name another function important to you:

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4.5 Self Assessment

Identify Potential Areas For Improvement

1. Please list a few areas of **personal strengths** in providing opportunities and developing skills for youth participation (decision-making, leadership and belonging).

2. Please list a few areas for **personal improvement** in providing opportunities and developing skills for youth participation.

3. Please list a few areas of **program strengths** in providing opportunities and developing skills for youth participation (decision-making, leadership and belonging).

4. Please list a few areas for **program improvement** in youth participation.

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5.3 Assessment

Youth Survey: Opinions About My Program

We want to know your opinions about the level of youth participation and leadership in our program. Please fill out this survey to help us gather some information about your experiences and ideas. Do not put your name on the survey. All answers are confidential.

Instructions: Listed below are 11 questions. For each question, please indicate your opinion by circling the number which best represents your opinion.

1. The staff in this program always listen to and respect my ideas.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. Youth and staff in this program make important program decisions together.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I get to make decisions about the things I want to do in this program.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I learn a lot from the other youth in my program.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. There are many different ways that I can take on leadership in this program.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. This program supports me in developing the skills I need to be a leader.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. When I'm having trouble being a leader, the adults are there to help me out.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I am learning the attitudes and skills that I need to increase my leadership abilities.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. The youth and adults in this program share a spirit of teamwork and belonging.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I feel a sense of ownership and responsibility towards this program.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. If I am absent from the program, someone checks to see why I didn't attend.
Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

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5.4 Assessment: Analyze and Interpret Youth Data

When you have finished surveying your youth, you are ready to analyze and interpret the results. The purpose of this activity is to make sense of the youth data, with the aim being to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program, from the perspective of the young people.

To analyze the data, you will need a pencil and a calculator.

- **Record** how many youth completed the survey. That is your "response number."
- For each question, add up and total the scores for each person taking the survey.
- Then, divide the total for each question by the response number.
- For example: Eight youth completed the survey, so your response number is 8. For Question 1 ("The staff in this program always listen to and respect my ideas"), youth answered the following: 1,1,6,4,2,1,2,7. The total is 24. Divide 24 by the response number and this gives you an average score of 3.
- **Record** the average score for each of the 12 questions on the survey.

To interpret the data, all you need is a quiet space and a little time.

- Consider the average scores for each of the 12 questions. Overall, are the assessments favorable (average scores between 1 and 3) or unfavorable (average scores between 5 and 7)? What scores are particularly favorable? Unfavorable?
- Jot down notes in response to the following questions: How did the scores confirm what you expected? How did the scores surprise you? How do these scores provide insight into the relative strengths and limitations of youth participation in your program?

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Analyze and Interpret Youth Data

A. Data Analysis

Response Number: _____

Average Score	Question
	1. The staff in this program always listen to and respect my ideas.
	2. Youth and staff in this program make important program decisions together.
	3. I get to make decisions about the things I want to do in this program.
	4. I learn a lot from the other youth in my program.
	5. There are lots of different ways that I can take on leadership in this program.
	6. This program supports me in developing the skills I need to be a leader.
	7. When I'm having trouble being a leader, the adults are there to help me out.
	8. I am learning the attitudes and skills that I need to increase my leadership abilities.
	9. The youth and adults in this program share a spirit of teamwork and belonging.
	10. I feel a sense of ownership and responsibility towards this program.
	11. If I am absent from the program, someone checks to see why I didn't attend.

Key:
Questions 1 to 4 assess input and **decision-making**, Questions 5 to 8 assess opportunities for **leadership**, Questions 9 to 11 assess promoting a sense of **belonging**.

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B. Data Interpretation:

1. Consider the average scores for each of the 12 questions. Overall, are the assessments favorable (average scores between 1 and 3) or unfavorable (average scores between 5 and 7)?

What scores are particularly favorable?

Unfavorable?

2. How did the scores confirm what you expected?

3. How did the scores surprise you?

4. How do these scores provide insight into the relative strengths and limitations of youth participation in your program?

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5.5 Activity with Youth: Conduct Focus Group

With data in hand, you are ready to talk with your youth about the results of the survey and brainstorm possible future changes to respond to the data. Conducting this focus group will also give you a time to practice your group facilitation skills.

Instructions: Follow instructions below to conduct a focus group with youth to discuss the data that you just analyzed and interpreted. Please **post the list of recommendations generated by the focus group to the comments section** on this page to share with your peers and trainer.

Step 1: Select six or so youth for your focus group. Choose a diverse range of youth, but select only those young people who have an interest in discussing youth participation for the purpose of strengthening the program. The focus group will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Step 2: Begin the focus group by presenting data from the Youth Survey (as derived from Assessment Activity 5.3).

Step 3: Engage the youth in a focused conversation, by asking and answering three types of questions.

- Ask some "what" questions. For example, what do the survey results tell us? What are the findings that stand out the most?

- Ask some "gut" questions. For example, how does this information make you feel? Does anyone doubt whether the data represent everybody's opinions?

- Conclude the focus group with some "so what?" questions. For example, what needs to change about our program or the way we work? How can we make changes, and who will take the lead? Try to brainstorm no more than **three priorities for future action**.

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