

Research that Supports Youth Development

There are three primary bodies of research and practice that have influenced the field of Positive Youth Development: Prevention, Resilience, and Thriving. **Prevention**, focused primarily on reducing and preventing problem behaviors, evolved as a dominant service approach in the 1960s and is still very influential in many youth organizations and programs today. In the 1980s, research into **resilience** enhanced the risk and protection framework by highlighting the power of protective factors in young people's lives. In the 1990s, the Search Institute developed a holistic approach focused on positive outcomes by identifying all the factors (or "assets") that young people need to **thrive**.

Prevention

Prevention science has begun to evolve from a focus on preventing problems to a more integrated approach, simultaneously preventing negative behaviors and promoting positive development. Communities That Care (CTC), for example, is a model that reflects a synthesis of prevention research. The CTC framework identifies risk and protective factors that are linked to five problematic outcomes (teen pregnancy, school drop-out, delinquency, substance abuse, and violence). Twenty risk factors are connected to the domains of community, school, family, peer, and individual. Protective factors include healthy beliefs, clear standards, bonding, and individual characteristics such as intelligence. Originally developed by Drs. Hawkins and Catalano of the University of Washington, CTC is a public health planning model that guides community partnerships through the development of a community action plan to implement best practice strategies. For more information:

- Communities that Care: www.communitiesthatcare.net

Resilience

Understanding risk and protective factors is central to the concept of resiliency. Risk factors are those aspects of life circumstance and individual traits that increase the probability of a negative outcome. Protective factors, on the other hand, help an individual overcome adversity or risk factors. Longitudinal studies and intensive case studies have identified several key protective factors, including those that are internal (social competence, problem solving skills, autonomy, sense of purpose, and belief in a bright future) and those that are external (caring adult relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for participation). Research findings indicate that protective factors have a more profound impact than any specific risk factor, and that resiliency is a dynamic, innate human capacity that can be learned and developed. For more information:

- Benard, Bonnie. (2004). *Resiliency: What we have learned*. San Francisco: WestEd.
- Resiliency in Action: www.resiliency.com
- Project Resilience: www.projectresilience.com

Thriving/Assets

Search Institute contributed the theoretical framework of 40 developmental assets: the factors young people need to thrive and develop to their full potential. Grounded in the current research on adolescent development, assets are the experiences, skills, opportunities, and values young people need to be healthy and productive. Assets are external (e.g., opportunities and supports provided by community, school, family, and peer group) as well as internal (e.g., values, commitment, competencies, and identity). Search Institute research has demonstrated that the more assets an individual possesses, the greater their chances for healthy growth and development. Youth survey findings show that 50% of high school students report 20 or more assets in the vast majority of communities they have surveyed. In response to these findings, Search Institute challenges communities to create and rally behind a positive, holistic vision of youth and engage all community sectors in building assets. For more information:

- Search Institute: www.search-institute.org

Stages of Adolescent Development	Early Adolescence (Approximately 10-14 years of age)	Middle Adolescence (Approximately 15-16 years of age)	Late Adolescence (Approximately 17-21 years of age)
Identity Development and Movement Toward Independence	Emerging identity shaped by in/external influences; moodiness; improved speech to express oneself; more likely to express feelings by action than by words (may be more true for males); close friendships gain importance; less attention shown to parents, with occasional rudeness; realization parents not perfect; identification of own faults; search for new people to love in addition to parents; tendency to return to childish behavior during times of stress; peer group influence on personal interests and clothing styles.	Self-involvement, alternating between unrealistically high expectations and worries about failure; complaints that parents interfere with independence; extremely concerned with appearance and body; feelings of strangeness about one's self and body; lowered opinion of and withdrawal from parents; effort to make new friends; strong emphasis on the new peer group; periods of sadness as the psychological loss of parents takes place; examination of inner experiences, which may include writing a diary.	Firm identity; ability to delay gratification; ability to think through ideas; ability to express ideas in words; more developed sense of humor; interests and emotions become more stable; ability to make independent decisions; ability to compromise; pride in one's work; self reliance; greater concern for others.
Future Interests and Cognitive Development	Increasing career interests; mostly interested in present and near future; greater ability to work.	Intellectual interests gain importance; some sexual and aggressive energies directed into creative and career interests; anxiety can emerge related to school and academic performance.	More defined work habits; higher level of concern for the future; thoughts about one's role in life.
Ethics and Self-Direction	Rule and limit testing; experimentation with cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol; capacity for abstract thought.	Development of ideals and selection of role models; more consistent evidence of conscience; greater goal setting capacity; interest in moral reasoning.	Useful insight; focus on personal dignity and self-esteem; ability to set goals and follow through; acceptance of social institutions and cultural traditions; self-regulation of self esteem.
Sexuality	Girls mature faster than boys; shyness, blushing, and modesty; more showing off; greater interest in privacy; experimentation with body (masturbation); worries about being normal.	Concerns about sexual attractiveness; frequently changing relationships; more clearly defined sexual orientation, with internal conflict often experienced by those who are not heterosexual; tenderness and fears shown toward opposite sex; feelings of love and passion.	Concerned with serious relationships; clear sexual identity; capacities for tender and sensual love.
Physical Changes	Gains in height and weight; growth of pubic/ underarm hair; increased perspiration, increased oil production of hair and skin. Girls: breast development and menstruation. Boys: growth of testicles and penis, nocturnal emissions (wet dreams), deepening of voice, facial hair.	Males show continued height and weight gains while female growth slows down (females grow only 1-2 inches after their first menstrual period).	Most young women are fully developed; young men continue to gain height, weight, muscle mass, body hair.



This chart is adapted from the ACT for Youth Center of Excellence publication **Stages of Adolescent Development** by Sedra Spano: <http://www.actforyouth.net/documents/fACT%20Sheet05043.pdf> (PDF: 538K)

Section 1: Resources & References

(2021 update)

Resources

Positive Youth Development

Principles of Youth Development. *ACT for Youth Center for Community Action.*

http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/development/

Positive Youth Development Resources Manual. *ACT for Youth.*

<http://www.actforyouth.net/publications/manual.cfm>

Adolescent Development

HealthyChildren.org: Ages & Stages. *American Academy of Pediatrics.*

<http://www.healthychildren.org/english/ages-stages/Pages/default.aspx>

Adolescent Development Toolkit. *ACT for Youth & Cornell Cooperative Extension Program Work Team (PWT): Risk and Thriving in Adolescence.*

<http://www.actforyouth.net/toolkit>

Brain Development in Teenagers (video). *Oxford Museum of Natural History.*

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

Identity Formation

Adolescent Identity Development. *ACT for Youth.*

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

Toolkit: Identity Development. *PWT Risk and Thriving in Adolescence & ACT for Youth.*

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

Risk Taking & Positive Risks

DoSomething.org: Explore Campaigns. (Take positive risks/get involved in a cause.)

<https://www.dosomething.org/campaigns>

WKCD.org: Resources for youth activism and civic engagement. *What Kids Can Do, Inc.*

<http://www.whatkidscando.org/resources/index.html>

Toolkit: Risk Taking. *PWT Risk and Thriving in Adolescence & ACT for Youth*.
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Adolescents and Social Media

Social Media, Social Life: Teen Reveal Their Experiences. *Common Sense Media*.
<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/social-media-social-life-infographic>

Teens, Social Media and Technology 2018. *Pew Research Center*.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>

Social Media & Teen Anxiety. *Harvard Graduate School of Education's Usable Knowledge*.
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Data, Demographics

Youth Statistics. *ACT for Youth*.
<http://www.actforyouth.net/adolescence/demographics/>

Youth Online (Youth Risk Behavior Survey). *CDC*.
<https://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Default.aspx>

Kids Count Data Center. *Annie E. Casey Foundation*.
<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/topics>

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Positive Youth Outcomes – 6 Cs

Competence

Having ability and motivation...

- **Civic and social:** To work collaboratively with others for the larger good, and to sustain caring friendships and relationships with others.
- **Cultural:** To respect and affirmatively respond to differences among groups and individuals of diverse backgrounds, interests, and traditions.
- **Physical health:** To act in ways that best ensure current and future physical health for self and others.
- **Emotional health:** To respond affirmatively and cope with positive and adverse situations, reflect on one's emotions and surroundings, and engage in leisure and fun.
- **Intellectual:** To learn in school and in other settings; gain basic knowledge needed to graduate from high school; use critical-thinking, creative, problem-solving, and expressive skills; and conduct independent study.
- **Employability:** To gain the functional and organizational skills necessary for employment, including an understanding of career options and the steps necessary to reach goals.

Confidence

- Having a sense of mastery and future: being aware of one's progress in life and having expectations of continued progress in the future.
- Having a sense of self-efficacy: being able to contribute and perceive one's contributions as meaningful.

Character

- Having a sense of responsibility and autonomy: accountability for one's conduct and obligations; independence and control over one's life.
- Having a sense of spirituality and self-awareness.
- Having an awareness of one's own personality or individuality.

Caring

- Having a sense of sympathy and empathy for others; commitment to social justice.

Connection

- **Membership and belonging:** being a participating member of a community, being involved in at least one lasting relationship with another person.
- **Having a sense of safety and structure:** being provided adequate food, shelter, clothing, and security, including protection from injury and loss.

Contribution

- Being involved as active participant and decision maker in services, organizations, and community.

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Section 2: Resources & References

(2021 update)

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http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/communities/

Positive Youth Development Resources Manual. *ACT for Youth*.

<http://www.actforyouth.net/publications/manual.cfm>

Preventing Problems, Promoting Development, Encouraging Engagement. *Forum for Youth Investment*.

<http://dev.forumfyi.org/files/Preventing%20Problems,%20Promoting%20Development,%20Encouraging%20Engagement.pdf>

What is SEL? *Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)*.

<https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>

Strengths and “Sparks”

What is Your Spark? (video). *Williamsport Area School District*.

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Sparks and Thriving. *Search Institute*.

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Tedx Talk - Peter Benson. Sparks: How Youth Thrive.

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Insights & Evidence: Finding the Student Spark. *Search Institute*.

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Igniting Sparks: Youth Leader Guide, Out of School Time, Grades 3-12. *Search Institute Press*.

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Step-It-Up-2-Thrive Resource Center. *Thrive Foundation for Youth*.

<http://www.stepitup2thrive.org/>

Developmental Relationships

Developmental Relationships. *Search Institute*.

<https://searchinstitute.org/>

Positive Youth Development 101 – Handout

www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/manual.cfm

Relationship Resources Hub. *Search Institute*.

<https://searchinstitute.org/resources-hub>

The 4S's Interview. *Search Institute*.

<https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/4-Ss-Interview-download.pdf>

TEDx Talk - Kent Pekel. Getting Relationships Right.

https://www.ted.com/talks/kent_pekel_getting_relationships_right

Simple Interactions

<https://www.simpleinteractions.org/>

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Benson, P. L. (2006). *All Kids are Our Kids* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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<http://www.collab4youth.org/documents/NCYCommonOutcomes.pdf>

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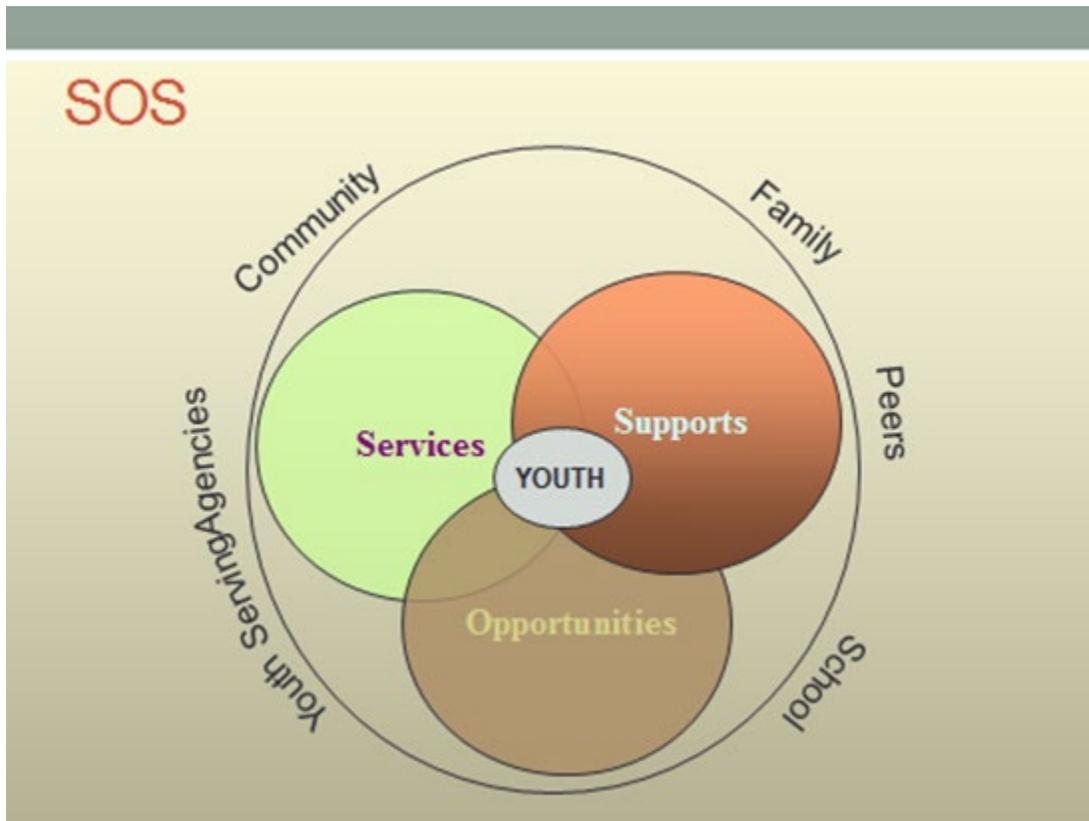
Search Institute. (2017). *Relationships First: Creating Connections that Help Young People Thrive*.

<https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/2017-Relationships-First-final.pdf>

STARR Commonwealth. *Circle of Courage*. <https://starr.org/circle-of-courage/>

Services, Opportunities, Supports – The SOS Framework

Karen Pittman created the SOS framework to articulate principles and practices that help communities foster optimal youth development.



SERVICES are those things done **TO or FOR** young people to enhance health, safety, performance, and other basic needs. These services are often the traditional primary, secondary, and, to some degree, tertiary prevention services provided by public health, school districts, and other social/recreational agencies. They are critical but when they stand alone they are inadequate for fostering well-being. Services meet needs such as:

- Adequate housing
- Safety from physical and psychological harm
- Specialized services, when necessary
- Food and nutrition
- Access to health care
- Instruction in reading, writing, and computing

Young people are **recipients** of services.

OPPORTUNITIES are done **BY** young people. Opportunities provide youth with the chances to explore, express, earn, belong, and influence.

Two main types of Opportunities are:

- Opportunities for informal instruction and active learning
- Opportunities for new meaningful, decision making roles and responsibilities

Young people are **actors** rather than recipients.

SUPPORTS are those things done **WITH** young people. Supports focus on interpersonal relationships and accessible resources (people and information) that allow a young person to take full advantage of existing services and opportunities.

There are three types of Support:

- Emotional (activities and conditions that facilitate a sense of safety, nurturing, and friendship)
- Motivational (positive expectations, guidance, and developmentally appropriate boundaries)
- Strategic (actions and conditions that facilitate access to needed resources and information)

Young people are **partners** in Supports.

Positive Youth Development is founded on the idea that when schools, youth-serving organizations, businesses, and other community groups intentionally provide services, opportunities, and/or supports to youth, individual young people will accrue enough SOS in the interactions of their daily life to support healthy development.

Reference

Pittman, K. J., Irby, M., Tolman, J., Yohalem, N., Ferber, T. (2003). *Preventing problems, promoting development, encouraging engagement: Competing priorities or inseparable goals?* Washington, DC: Forum for Youth Investment. <http://forumfyi.org/content/preventing-problems-pr>

Sparks Peer-to-Peer Interview

1. What is one of your sparks (passions, interests, talents)?
2. How did you discover that this is one of your sparks?
3. How do you feel when you are doing your spark?
4. Think of somebody who is really into their spark/passion. Describe what you see.
5. Do you have a spark champion (an adult who helps you explore and develop your skills)? If yes, describe how this person helps you.
6. Do you set goals and make plans to get better at your spark/talent? If yes, give me an example.

Strength-Based Information Gathering

Sample questions to elicit interests, goals, dreams, and strengths (generated by participants of previous workshops):

- What do you like to do on a sunny day?
- What do you do (or like to do) in your free time?
- What is your favorite subject in school?
- What is your favorite....?
- What is the nicest thing you have ever done?
- What do you watch on TV? Movies? Music? – What does it mean to you?
- Who do you admire?
- When do you feel at your best?
- Tell me something you could teach someone else.
- What do you think you will be doing in a year? Five years?
- What do you like best about yourself?
- How do you think your friends would describe you?
- What are you most proud of?
- Where would you like to go?
- If you could go on vacation, who would you bring?
- What do you like to do after school?
- What do you like to do to make you feel good about yourself?
- What do you want to do with your life?
- Which animal would you want to be? Why?
- Who do you look up to?
- Tell me three people you care about.
- Where do you want to go with school?

Use a conversational style – start a conversation on a topic such as movies or music, and keep it a two-way communication.

Sparks Interview Questions

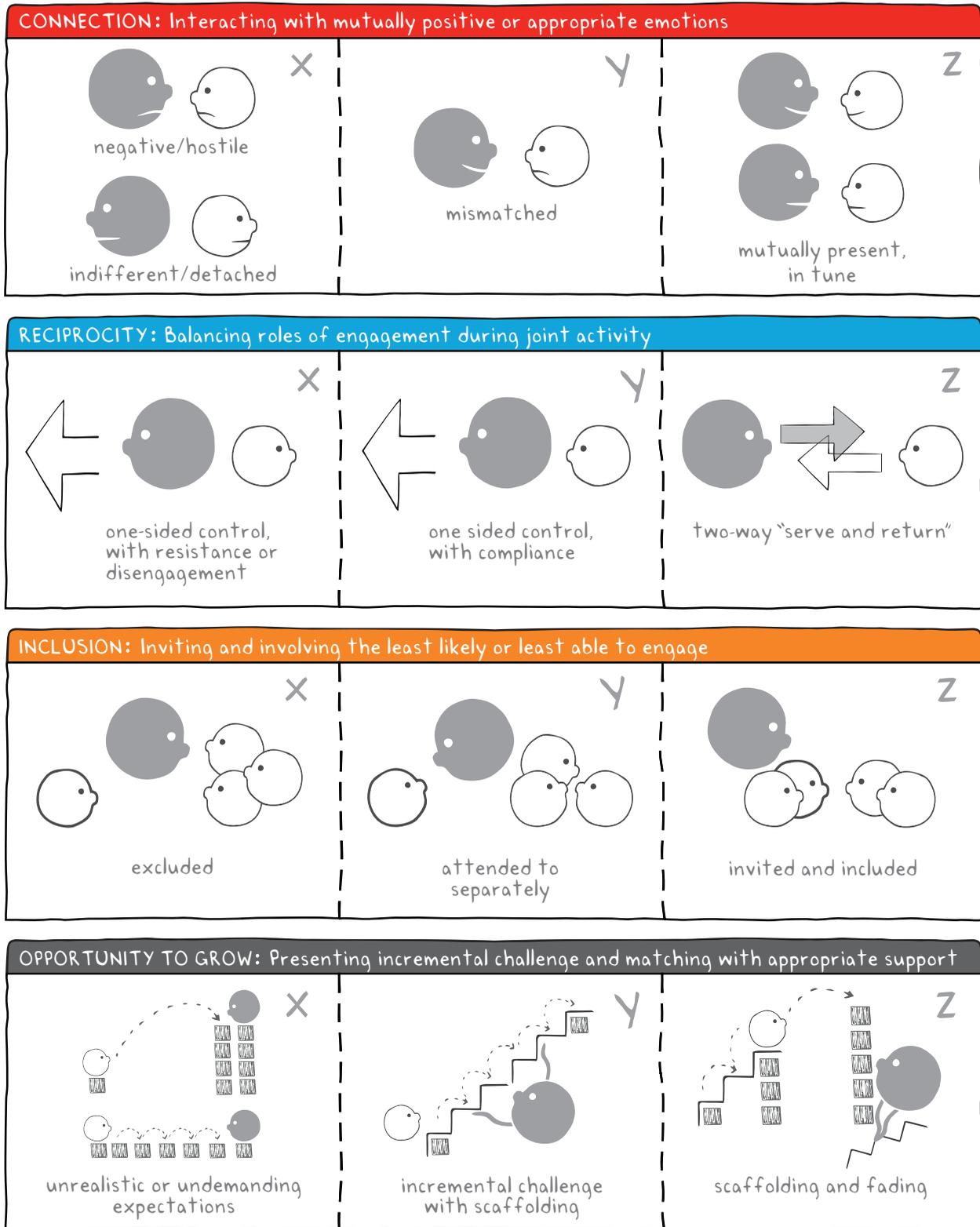
1. Did you know what your sparks (interests, passions) were as a teenager? What were they? (What were you excited about? How did you find your sparks?)

2. How did you work on your spark? What did you do to improve it? What skills did you learn along the way?

3. Who were your spark champions (people who supported your spark)? How did they help you?

SIMPLE INTERACTIONS TOOL

Noticing and Appreciating Human Interactions Across Developmental Settings



©Junlei Li, 2014. Updated with Tom Akiva and Dana Winters, 2018. Illustration updated by Kate Luchini.



DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Framework

Developmental relationships are the roots of thriving and resilience for young people, regardless of their background or circumstances. Through these relationships, young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Just as trees rely on a system of roots to support and nourish them, young people need to experience developmental relationships in their families, schools, programs, and communities. However, too many young people miss these opportunities due to bias, prejudice, and systemic exclusion based on their race, ethnicity, income, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, or other differences. Ensuring that every young person experiences the developmental relationships they need is a vital challenge for the 21st century.

The Developmental Relationships Framework was developed by Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN; 800-888-7828; www.searchinstitute.org.

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EXPRESS CARE

Show me that I matter to you.

Be dependable
Be someone I can trust

Be warm
Show me you enjoy being with me

Listen
Really pay attention when we are together

Encourage
Praise me for my efforts and achievements

Believe in me
Make me feel known and valued



CHALLENGE GROWTH

Push me to keep getting better.

Expect my best
Expect me to live up to my potential

Hold me accountable
Insist I take responsibility for my actions

Stretch
Push me to go further

Reflect on failures
Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks



PROVIDE SUPPORT

Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.

Navigate
Guide me through hard situations and systems

Advocate
Stand up for me when I need it

Empower
Build my confidence to take charge of my life

Set boundaries
Put limits in place that keep me on track



SHARE POWER

Treat me with respect and give me a say.

Respect me
Take me seriously and treat me fairly

Collaborate
Work with me to solve problems and reach goals

Include me
Involve me in decisions that affect me

Let me lead
Create opportunities for me to take action and lead



EXPAND POSSIBILITIES

Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.

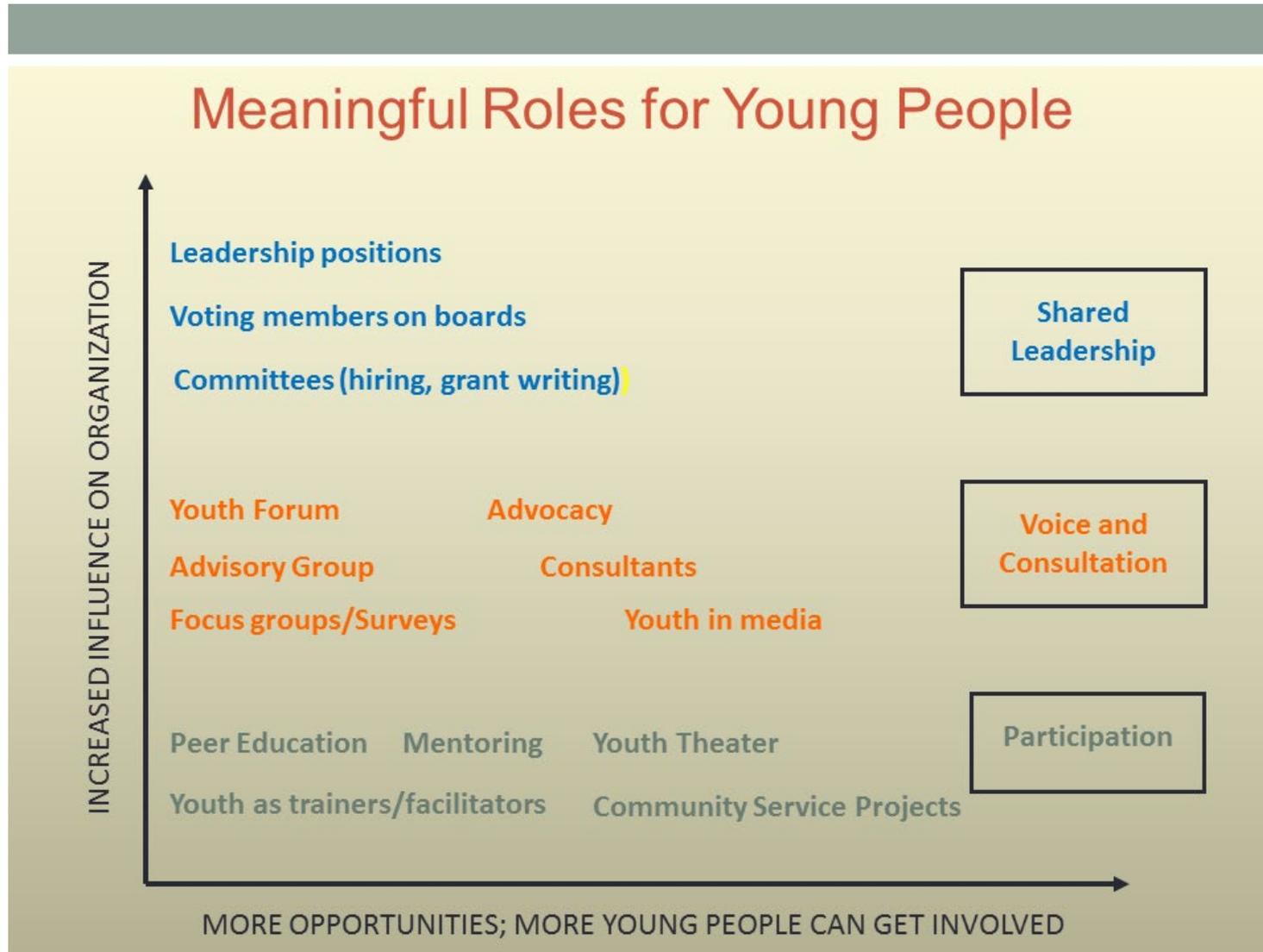
Inspire
Inspire me to see possibilities for my future

Connect
Introduce me to people who can help me grow

Broaden horizons
Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places

Meaningful Roles

Adapted from the Youth Commission in Hampton, Virginia.



Youth in Decision Making: A Study of the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations

In this study, the authors (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, 2000) concluded that while it does not happen all the time, when conditions are right, youth can have powerful and positive effects on adults and organizations.

Adults were positively impacted by youth involvement in four main ways:

1. They experienced the competence of youth first hand and perceived them as critical to organizational improvement.
2. Working with youth enhanced their own commitment to and energy for the organization.
3. Adults felt more effective and confident in working with and relating to youth.
4. Adults gained a strong sense of connectedness with youth on the board and in the organization – they developed a sense of community.

Involving youth in decision making benefited organizations and community as well.

Organizational leaders found that:

1. Young people helped clarify and bring focus to the organization's mission.
2. Young people led the organization to reach out to the community in more diverse ways, including community advocacy, policy making, and service.
3. The adults and organization became more connected and responsive to youth in the community.
4. Organizations that involve youth in decision making were more appealing to potential funders.

Copies of the publication, *Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations*, are available online:

http://www.cpn.org/topics/youth/cyd/pdfs/youth_in_decision_making.pdf

Section 3: Resources & References

(2021 update)

Resources

Youth in Governance example:

- Rochester/Monroe County Youth Council
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Youth in Media/Education:

- Video PSA: Cyberlife. *More than Just Sex - Community Healthcare Network*.
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Worksheet: Framework for Understanding Adulthood

Manifestations of Adulthood	Youth Responses	Long-term Effect on Youth	Alternative Behavior
<p>Dysfunctional Rescuing – helping young people on the assumption that they cannot help themselves, or helping youth in a way that limits their ability to help themselves. <i>Example:</i></p>			
<p>Blaming the Victim – attributing the behavioral problems of young people solely to the youth themselves, without considering that many young people have grown up in poverty, in dangerous neighborhoods, in inferior schools, and among adults who don't care about them. <i>Example:</i></p>			
<p>Avoidance of Contact - lack of regular social or professional contact with young people, and lack of effort to learn about youth and the environments in which they live. <i>Example:</i></p>			
<p>Denial of Distinctiveness of Youth Culture - age and cultural differences are assumed to be merely superficial. Often associated with "age-blind" or "color-blind" approaches. <i>Example:</i></p>			
<p>Denial of Political Significance of Adulthood - lack of understanding or denial of the social, political, and economic realities of young people. <i>Example:</i></p>			

Source: Advancing Youth Development curriculum

Framework for Understanding Adulthood

Dysfunctional rescuing

We help young people because we assume that they cannot help themselves, or we help them in such a way that it limits their ability to help themselves. The result is that young people are ultimately set up to fail.

Young people are not given the chance to make important decisions or to take on responsibilities because we assume that they are not ready or we assume that it is too hard to keep them on track.

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

Blaming the victim

We assume that the behavioral problems of young people are solely their responsibility. We do not consider that many young people have grown up in poverty, in dangerous neighborhoods, in poor schools, and among adults who are unable to care for them. As a result young people do not get the adult support they need.

We might give up on young people with behavioral problems because we believe they don't want to act right or because we feel that they don't deserve help until they help themselves.

Example: In a work readiness program a young person is repeatedly missing sessions and appointments (he relies on his parents for transportation). The program coordinator sees the young person as irresponsible and unreliable and decides to drop him from the program.

Avoidance of contact

There is lack of regular social or professional contact with young people and a lack of effort to learn about youth and the environments they live in. This leads to adults creating programs based on their own needs, not on the needs and interests of young people.

Adults might say that they do not understand youth, but they don't try to gather information about youth and do not ask them for their ideas, preferences, or interests.

Example: An agency administrator uses new funding to start up an after-school program for teenagers. He develops the program to best fit the structure of programming in his agency. Trying to maximize space utilization, he puts the new program into a room originally designed for a nursery school.

Denial of cultural differences

This is often motivated by egalitarian ideals involving age-blind or color-blind approaches. Age and cultural differences are assumed to be superficial. As a result young people are denied the chance to express themselves, to bring their own skills, beliefs, or lifestyles into settings.

Adults might either treat youth just like adults or just like children, not respecting that young people have contributions to make.

Example: The agency decides to have young people on their board of directors. One young person is selected and asked to be on the board. The youth is expected to attend every board meeting. The board meets once a month from 7-9PM in the agency's main office downtown.

Denial of the political significance of adulthood

This indicates a lack of understanding or denial of the social, political, and economic realities of young people. It also involves discounting the fact that youth are not treated as equals or as real people in many of the settings where they live.

An adult might get frustrated when a young person continues to mess up after being given many chances to act responsibly. The adult does not acknowledge that other adults treat the same youth as a child.

Example: A group of young people is planning a teen center. Two group members are charged with investigating zoning regulations and related city policies. They decide to go directly to city hall to do the research. The receptionist initially ignores them; finally she asks what they are doing there. Asking to meet with a staff person at the planning department, they are told that staff does not have time to meet with them.

Adapted from the Advancing Youth Development curriculum

Adultism Scenarios

Scenario 1

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

How would the young people respond to this?

What are the long-term effects for young people if they have many similar experiences?

What would alternative adult behavior look like?

Scenario 2

In a work readiness program a young person is repeatedly missing sessions and appointments (he relies on his parents for transportation). The program coordinator sees the young person as irresponsible and unreliable and decides to drop him from the program.

How would the youth respond to this?

What are the long-term effects for young people if they have many similar experiences?

What would alternative adult behavior look like?

Scenario 3

An agency administrator uses new funding to start up an afterschool program for teenagers. He develops the program to best fit the structure of programming in his agency. Trying to maximize space utilization, he puts the new program into a room originally designed for a nursery school.

How would the youth respond to this?

What are the long-term effects for young people if they have many similar experiences?

What would alternative adult behavior look like?

Scenario 4

An agency decides to have young people on their board of directors. One young person is selected and asked to be on the board. The youth is expected to attend every board meeting. The board meets once a month from 7-9PM in the agency's main office downtown.

How would the youth respond to this?

What are the long-term effects for young people if they have many similar experiences?

What would alternative adult behavior look like?

Scenario 5

A group of young people is planning a teen center. Two group members are charged with investigating zoning regulations and related city policies. They decide to go directly to city hall to do the research. The receptionist initially ignores them; finally she asks what they are doing there. Asking to meet with a staff person at the planning department, they are told that staff does not have time to meet with them.

How would the youth respond to this?

What are the long-term effects for young people if they have many similar experiences?

What would alternative adult behavior look like?

Features of Positive Developmental Settings

	Descriptors	Opposite Poles
Physical and Psychological Safety	Safe and health-promoting facilities; practices that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions.	Physical and health dangers; fear; feeling of insecurity; sexual and physical harassment; verbal abuse.
Appropriate Structure	Limit setting; clear and consistent rules and expectations; firm-enough control; continuity and predictability; clear boundaries; age appropriate monitoring.	Chaotic; disorganized; laissez-faire; rigid; over controlled; autocratic.
Supportive Relationships	Warmth; closeness; connectedness; good communication; caring; support; guidance; secure attachment; responsiveness.	Cold, distant; over controlling; ambiguous support; untrustworthy; focused on winning; inattentive; unresponsive; rejecting.
Opportunities to Belong	Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of one's gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disabilities; social inclusion, social engagement, and integration; opportunities for sociocultural identity information; support for cultural and bicultural competence.	Exclusion, marginalization; inter-group conflict
Positive Social Norms	Rules of behavior; expectations; injunctions; ways of doing things; values and morals; and obligations for service.	Normlessness; anomie; laissez-faire practices; antisocial and amoral norms; norms that encourage violence; reckless behavior; consumerism; poor health practices; and conformity.
Support for Efficacy and Mattering	Youth-based; empowerment practices that support autonomy; making a real difference in one's community; being taken seriously. Practice that includes enabling, responsibility granting, and meaningful challenge. Practices that focus on improvement rather than on relative current performance levels.	Unchallenging; over controlling; disempowering, disabling. Practices that undermine motivation and desire to learn, such as excessive focus on current relative performance level rather than on improvement.
Opportunities for Skill Building	Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social skills; exposure to intentional learning experiences; opportunities to learn cultural literacies, media literacy, communication skills, and good habits of mind; preparation for adult employment; opportunities to develop social and cultural capital.	Practices that promote bad physical habits and habits of mind; and practices that undermine school and learning.
Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts	Concordance; coordination; synergy among family, school, and community.	Discordance; lack of communication; conflict.

Resources: NRC Features of Positive Developmental Settings

<p>Physical and Psychological Safety</p>	<p>Safe and health-promoting facilities; practices that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions.</p>	<p>NYS Network for Youth Success: Quality Self-Assessment Tool https://networkforyouthsuccess.org/qa/</p> <p>Child Trends, 2009: Assessing Bullying http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=assessing-bullying-a-guide-for-out-of-school-time-program-practitioners</p> <p>Child Trends, 2012: Assessing Peer Relations http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=assessing-peer-relations-a-guide-for-out-of-school-time-program-practitioners-2</p> <p>Child Trends, 2009: Assessing Peer Conflict and Aggressive Behavior http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=assessing-peer-conflict-and-aggressive-behaviors-a-guide-for-out-of-school-time-program-practitioners</p> <p>Child Trends, 2010: Assessing Self-Regulation http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=assessing-self-regulation-a-guide-for-out-of-school-time-program-practitioners</p>
<p>Appropriate Structure</p>	<p>Limit setting, clear and consistent rules and expectations, firm-enough control, continuity and predictability, clear boundaries, and age appropriate monitoring.</p>	<p>NYS Network for Youth Success: Quality Self-Assessment Tool https://networkforyouthsuccess.org/qa/</p> <p>Child Trends, 2010: Assessing Stress in Children and Youth http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=assessing-stress-in-children-and-youth-a-guide-for-out-of-school-time-program-practitioners</p>
<p>Supportive Relationships</p>	<p>Warmth, closeness, connectedness, good communication, caring, support, guidance, secure attachment, and responsiveness.</p>	<p>Child Trends, 2010: Assessing Staff Relationships... http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=assessing-staff-relationships-among-out-of-school-time-program-practitioners</p> <p>Child Trends, 2007: How Program Administrators Can Support OST Staff http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=how-program-administrators-can-support-out-of-school-time-staff</p> <p>Search Institute: Developmental Relationships http://www.search-institute.org/what-we-study/developmental-relationships</p> <p>Simple Interactions Framework and Tool https://www.simpleinteractions.org/the-si-tool.html</p>

		<p>Child Trends, 2013: Caring Adults http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/2013-54CaringAdults.pdf</p>
<p>Opportunities to Belong</p>	<p>Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of one’s gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disabilities; social inclusion, social engagement, and integration; opportunities for sociocultural identity information; and support for cultural and bicultural competence.</p>	<p>ACT for Youth: Creating Inclusive Program Environments for Youth with Different Abilities http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/inclusive-environments.cfm</p> <p>Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) http://glsen.org/educate/resources</p> <p>Child Trends, 2007: Enhancing Cultural Competence in OST Programs http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=enhancing-cultural-competence-in-out-of-school-time-programs-what-is-it-and-why-is-it-important</p> <p>Child Trends, 2011: Children of Latino Immigrants http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=children-of-latino-immigrants-and-out-of-school-time-programs-2</p> <p>Child Trends, 2011: What Works for African American Children and Youth http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=what-works-for-african-american-children-adolescents-lessons-from-experimental-evaluations-of-programs-and-interventions</p> <p>National Center for Cultural Competence http://nccc.georgetown.edu/</p>
<p>Positive Social Norms</p>	<p>Rules of behavior, expectations, injunctions, ways of doing things, values and morals, and obligations for service.</p>	<p>See inclusion resources above.</p> <p>Child Trends, 2011. What works for promoting and enhancing positive social skills http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/child_trends_2011_03_02_RB_WWSocialSkills.pdf</p>
<p>Support for Efficacy and Mattering</p>	<p>Youth-based; empowerment practices that support autonomy; making a real difference in one’s community; being taken seriously. Practice that includes enabling, responsibility granting, and meaningful challenge. Practices that focus on improvement rather than on relative current performance levels.</p>	<p>ACT for Youth: Youth Engagement http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/engagement/</p> <p>See “Section 3: Resources & References” handout in PYD 101 curriculum www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/manual.cfm</p>

Opportunities for Skill Building	<p>Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social skills; exposure to intentional learning experiences; opportunities to learn cultural literacies, media literacy, communication skills, and good habits of mind; preparation for adult employment; and opportunities to develop social and cultural capital.</p>	<p>National Youth Leadership Council: Service Learning https://www.nylc.org/</p> <p>ACT for Youth: Building Skills for Adulthood http://www.actforyouth.net/health_sexuality/sexual_health/community/adulthood/</p> <p>ACT for Youth: Social and Emotional Learning Toolkit http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/sel/</p> <p>Center on the Developing Child: Activities Guide https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/activities-guide-enhancing-and-practicing-executive-function-skills-with-children-from-infancy-to-adolescence/</p>
Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts	<p>Concordance; coordination; and synergy among family, school, and community</p>	<p>Child Trends, 2008: Building Community Partnerships http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=building-community-partnerships-tips-for-out-of-school-time-programs</p> <p>Child Trends, 2007: Building, Engaging and Supporting Family and Parental Involvement http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=building-engaging-and-supporting-family-and-parental-involvement-in-out-of-school-time-programs</p> <p>Child Trends, 2011: Bringing Family to the Table http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=bringing-family-to-the-table-tips-and-techniques-for-effective-family-engagement</p>

Agency Climate Bingo

Without using the same person twice, find others in the room who experience the following conditions in their workplace. Ask them to give an example and sign the appropriate square.

Décor (especially pictures & posters) is culturally diverse and representative of community	Agency clearly communicates positive behavior expectations	Agency is open at times convenient to youth and families (evenings, weekends)	Agency is easily accessible to individuals with disabilities	Translation services are provided for non-English speaking families
Agency is accessible by public transportation	Staff engage youth in a range of skill building activities	Staff use everyday language (non-technical, inclusive)	Staff are easily identified by name badges/t-shirts, etc.	Agency provides space for community events/groups
Has a well-publicized grievance/complaint procedure for youth/families	Offices are easily identified by signage	Youth/family message board for improvements & feedback	Reception area is welcoming; comfortable chairs, access to restroom and water	Program activities lead to tangible products/performances that reflect ideas of youth
Staff deal with conflicts and negative behavior in a non-threatening way (calm, stop hurtful actions, acknowledges youth's feelings)	Agency mission and goals are clearly posted	Staff seeks input from youth in order to determine cause and solutions to conflict	Effective, small staff-youth ratio	Open door policy (easy access to administration, board)
Outdoor spaces invite social & recreational use (benches, flower boxes, murals, play areas)	Youth take on meaningful roles in the agency	Agency invites community regularly (open house, etc.)	Phone system is user friendly	Agency is clean, well-lit, and well-maintained, indoors and outdoors

Scaffolding Overview

“Scaffolding” is a teaching strategy that engages young people collaboratively in tasks that they would not be able to complete on their own. Initially, the instructor provides extensive support, or scaffolding, gradually fading out the support as the youth learns the new content or behavior. The support is given temporarily, until the youth masters the content and/or process and can control the task independently.

Successful scaffolding builds on the student’s existing skills in order to expand his/her skill set. An initial assessment of the youth is critical. In addition the instructor needs to continuously assess the youth’s learning and skill development to match the level of support with the youth’s learning. Successful scaffolding also requires that the goal is set within the reach of the student’s ability, thus guaranteeing success.

Scaffolding involves four main components:

Break down skills into small units

Many independent living and social interaction skills are really complex skill sets requiring behavioral, decision making, and cognitive skills. Breaking these skills into smaller units makes teaching and acquiring skills more manageable. It makes the task less overwhelming.

Assess the youth’s learning zone

By identifying where the youth is in regard to his/her skill development, the worker can gauge how high to set the goal, what level of support and guidance is needed, and how to keep the youth motivated to learn.

An accurate assessment relies on behavior observations but also on conversations with the youth to identify his/her skill level, experiences, interests, and strengths related to the task.

Provide guidance and support

Scaffolding distinguishes several different strategies for providing guidance and support. These strategies can be integrated or used individually depending on the task or the material to be taught. Modeling is usually used first. Offering explanations is another important strategy in the beginning, so that the learner knows what they are learning and why.

- 1) **Modeling:** Demonstrating how one should feel, think, or act in a given situation by:
 - **Thinking aloud:** Verbalizing every step of the task sequence
 - **Talking aloud:** Demonstrating the task physically plus verbalizing the thought process or problem-solving strategy
 - **Performance modeling:** Simply demonstrating the task

- 2) **Offering explanations:** Describing what is being learned, why it is being learned, and how to apply it.
 - **Prompts or key words:** As the youth gains more experience, explanations can be shortened to reminders or key words.
 - **Memory aids** (examples: a rhyme, jingle, or visual)

- 3) **Inviting youth to contribute to the process:** Asking young people to add their ideas or suggestions. This will engage them and provide them with ownership of the learning experience.
 - Example: *Introduce a new step, then invite student to suggest the next step.*
- 4) **Verifying and clarifying the young person's understanding:** Offering affirmative feedback or corrective feedback.

Ensure a Successful Outcome

Making the learning experience a successful one is essential to keep young people motivated in learning. Success is linked to feasible, reachable goals. Knowing the youth's learning zone and engaging the youth in setting the goal are helpful strategies.

It might be difficult at times to set the learning goals just right. Generally, it is better to set goals lower than to set them too high. Practicing skills they already possess can be engaging, whereas young people tend to withdraw and give up if the goal is set too high, creating an experience of failure.

Making learning a successful experience also depends on the young person's motivation. It will be helpful to assess and discuss how important the learning objective (skill set) is to the youth, as well as the youth's feelings about being able to achieve the objective and any links to an emotional response (positive or negative) due to past experience.

Positive and Corrective Feedback

Feedback is a behavior-specific description of a young person's actions or performance intended to guide future behavior. It does not judge behavior. By giving feedback, we help young people assess their own actions and identify areas where they are right on target, and we provide tips on what they can do better in the future.

Feedback is different from praise, which often provides very general, positive verbal rewards such as "great job." Praise is not behavior-specific and does not provide any guidance for future actions.

Positive feedback - describing specific behavior emphasizing the youth's strengths and demonstrated competencies.

Corrective feedback – describing the behavior and offering or eliciting an alternative action, asking what s/he could have done differently.

Examples:

1. Billy has spent several hours working on a very complex geometric design. He shows you his drawing.

Praise: *Good job, Billy!*

Positive feedback: *I like the detail you put into the drawing, the patterns and shapes. It shows that you did a lot of work on it.*

2. You are teaching Carmen to do the laundry. She has collected all the laundry and started stuffing it all in the washing machine, mixing white and colored clothing.

Possible response: *Stop, Carmen, you are doing it wrong!*

Corrective feedback: *Carmen, you are putting white and colored clothing together into the washing machine. How about separating the white and colored clothing? They need different temperatures to wash and, if washed together, the colored clothing might bleed onto the white clothes.*

What would you say? Practice...

During a cooking class Maggie is spending a lot of time helping her classmate Jenny review the cooking instructions, prepare the ingredients, and get started with the first cooking steps.

Positive feedback: _____

You are working with Sam on his phone skills. One of his practice calls is to the local library to inquire about its weekend hours. He explains to the person on the phone why he is calling and what information he is looking for. After he listens to the answer he hangs up the phone.

Corrective feedback: _____

Five Reasons to Stop Saying "Good Job!"

By Alfie Kohn

NOTE: An abridged version of this article was published in Parents magazine in May 2000 with the title "Hooked on Praise." For a more detailed look at the issues discussed here -- as well as a comprehensive list of citations to relevant research -- please see the books [Punished by Rewards](#) and [Unconditional Parenting](#).

Para leer este artículo en Español, haga clic [aquí](#).

Hang out at a playground, visit a school, or show up at a child's birthday party, and there's one phrase you can count on hearing repeatedly: "Good job!" Even tiny infants are praised for smacking their hands together ("Good clapping!"). Many of us blurt out these judgments of our children to the point that it has become almost a verbal tic.

Plenty of books and articles advise us against relying on punishment, from spanking to forcible isolation ("time out"). Occasionally someone will even ask us to rethink the practice of bribing children with stickers or food. But you'll have to look awfully hard to find a discouraging word about what is euphemistically called positive reinforcement.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, the point here is not to call into question the importance of supporting and encouraging children, the need to love them and hug them and help them feel good about themselves. Praise, however, is a different story entirely. Here's why.

1. Manipulating children. Suppose you offer a verbal reward to reinforce the behavior of a two-year-old who eats without spilling, or a five-year-old who cleans up her art supplies. Who benefits from this? Is it possible that telling kids they've done a good job may have less to do with their emotional needs than with our convenience?

Rheta DeVries, a professor of education at the University of Northern Iowa, refers to this as "sugar-coated control." Very much like tangible rewards – or, for that matter, punishments – it's a way of doing something *to* children to get them to comply with our wishes. It may be effective at producing this result (at least for a while), but it's very different from working *with* kids – for example, by engaging them in conversation about what makes a classroom (or family) function smoothly, or how other people are affected by what we have done -- or failed to do. The latter approach

is not only more respectful but more likely to help kids become thoughtful people.

The reason praise can work in the short run is that young children are hungry for our approval. But we have a responsibility not to exploit that dependence for our own convenience. A "Good job!" to reinforce something that makes our lives a little easier can be an example of taking advantage of children's dependence. Kids may also come to feel manipulated by this, even if they can't quite explain why.

2. Creating praise junkies. To be sure, not every use of praise is a calculated tactic to control children's behavior. Sometimes we compliment kids just because we're genuinely pleased by what they've done. Even then, however, it's worth looking more closely. Rather than bolstering a child's self-esteem, praise may increase kids' dependence on us. The more we say, "I like the way you..." or "Good _____ing," the more kids come to rely on *our* evaluations, *our* decisions about what's good and bad, rather than learning to form their own judgments. It leads them to measure their worth in terms of what will lead *us* to smile and dole out some more approval.

Mary Budd Rowe, a researcher at the University of Florida, discovered that students who were praised lavishly by their teachers were more tentative in their responses, more apt to answer in a questioning tone of voice ("Um, seven?"). They tended to back off from an idea they had proposed as soon as an adult disagreed with them. And they were less likely to persist with difficult tasks or share their ideas with other students.

In short, "Good job!" doesn't reassure children; ultimately, it makes them feel less secure. It may even create a vicious circle such that the more we slather on the praise, the more kids seem to need it, so we praise them some more. Sadly, some of these kids will grow into adults who continue to need someone else to pat them on the head and tell them whether what they did was OK. Surely this is not what we want for our daughters and sons.

3. Stealing a child's pleasure. Apart from the issue of dependence, a child deserves to take delight in her accomplishments, to feel pride in what she's learned how to do. She also deserves to decide when to feel that way. Every time we say, "Good job!", though, we're telling a child how to feel.

To be sure, there are times when our evaluations are appropriate and our guidance is necessary -- especially with toddlers and preschoolers. But a constant stream of value judgments is neither necessary nor useful for children's development. Unfortunately, we may not have realized that "Good job!" is just as much an evaluation as "Bad job!" The most notable feature of a positive judgment isn't that it's positive, but that it's a judgment. And people, including kids, don't like being judged.

I cherish the occasions when my daughter manages to do something for the first time, or does something better than she's ever done it before. But I try to resist the knee-jerk tendency to say, "Good job!" because I don't want to dilute her joy. I want her to share her pleasure with me, not look to me for a verdict. I want her to exclaim, "I did

it!" (which she often does) instead of asking me uncertainly, "Was that good?"

4. Losing interest. "Good painting!" may get children to keep painting for as long as we keep watching and praising. But, warns Lilian Katz, one of the country's leading authorities on early childhood education, "once attention is withdrawn, many kids won't touch the activity again." Indeed, an impressive body of scientific research has shown that the more we reward people for doing something, the more they tend to lose interest in whatever they had to do to get the reward. Now the point isn't to draw, to read, to think, to create – the point is to get the goody, whether it's an ice cream, a sticker, or a "Good job!"

In a troubling study conducted by Joan Grusec at the University of Toronto, young children who were frequently praised for displays of generosity tended to be slightly *less* generous on an everyday basis than other children were. Every time they had heard "Good sharing!" or "I'm so proud of you for helping," they became a little less interested in sharing or helping. Those actions came to be seen not as something valuable in their own right but as something they had to do to get that reaction again from an adult. Generosity became a means to an end.

Does praise motivate kids? Sure. It motivates kids to get praise. Alas, that's often at the expense of commitment to whatever they were doing that prompted the praise.

5. Reducing achievement. As if it weren't bad enough that "Good job!" can undermine independence, pleasure, and interest, it can also interfere with how good a job children actually do. Researchers keep finding that kids who are praised for doing well at a creative task tend to stumble at the next task – and they don't do as well as children who weren't praised to begin with.

Why does this happen? Partly because the praise creates pressure to "keep up the good work" that gets in the way of doing so. Partly because their *interest* in what they're doing may have declined. Partly because they become less likely to take risks – a prerequisite for creativity – once they start thinking about how to keep those positive comments coming.

More generally, "Good job!" is a remnant of an approach to psychology that reduces all of human life to behaviors that can be seen and measured. Unfortunately, this ignores the thoughts, feelings, and values that lie behind behaviors. For example, a child may share a snack with a friend as a way of attracting praise, or as a way of making sure the other child has enough to eat. Praise for sharing ignores these different motives. Worse, it actually promotes the less desirable motive by making children more likely to fish for praise in the future.

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Once you start to see praise for what it is – and what it does – these constant little evaluative eruptions from adults start to produce the same effect as fingernails being dragged down a blackboard. You begin to root for a child to give his teachers or parents a taste of their own treacle by turning around to them and saying (in the same

saccharine tone of voice), "Good praising!"

Still, it's not an easy habit to break. It can seem strange, at least at first, to stop praising; it can feel as though you're being chilly or withholding something. But that, it soon becomes clear, suggests that *we praise more because we need to say it than because children need to hear it*. Whenever that's true, it's time to rethink what we're doing.

What kids do need is unconditional support, love with no strings attached. That's not just different from praise – it's the *opposite* of praise. "Good job!" is conditional. It means we're offering attention and acknowledgement and approval for jumping through our hoops, for doing things that please us.

This point, you'll notice, is very different from a criticism that some people offer to the effect that we give kids too much approval, or give it too easily. They recommend that we become more miserly with our praise and demand that kids "earn" it. But the real problem isn't that children expect to be praised for everything they do these days. It's that *we're* tempted to take shortcuts, to manipulate kids with rewards instead of explaining and helping them to develop needed skills and good values.

So what's the alternative? That depends on the situation, but whatever we decide to say instead has to be offered in the context of genuine affection and love for who kids are rather than for what they've done. When unconditional support is present, "Good job!" isn't necessary; when it's absent, "Good job!" won't help.

If we're praising positive actions as a way of discouraging misbehavior, this is unlikely to be effective for long. Even when it works, we can't really say the child is now "behaving himself"; it would be more accurate to say the praise is behaving him. The alternative is to work *with* the child, to figure out the reasons he's acting that way. We may have to reconsider our own requests rather than just looking for a way to get kids to obey. (Instead of using "Good job!" to get a four-year-old to sit quietly through a long class meeting or family dinner, perhaps we should ask whether it's reasonable to expect a child to do so.)

We also need to bring kids in on the process of making decisions. If a child is doing something that disturbs others, then sitting down with her later and asking, "What do you think we can do to solve this problem?" will likely be more effective than bribes or threats. It also helps a child learn how to solve problems and teaches that her ideas and feelings are important. Of course, this process takes time and talent, care and courage. Tossing off a "Good job!" when the child acts in the way we deem appropriate takes none of those things, which helps to explain why "doing to" strategies are a lot more popular than "working with" strategies.

And what can we say when kids just do something impressive? Consider three possible responses:

* **Say nothing.** Some people insist a helpful act must be "reinforced" because,

secretly or unconsciously, they believe it was a fluke. If children are basically evil, then they have to be given an artificial reason for being nice (namely, to get a verbal reward). But if that cynicism is unfounded – and a lot of research suggests that it is – then praise may not be necessary.

* **Say what you saw.** A simple, evaluation-free statement ("You put your shoes on by yourself" or even just "You did it") tells your child that you noticed. It also lets her take pride in what she did. In other cases, a more elaborate description may make sense. If your child draws a picture, you might provide feedback – not judgment – about what you noticed: "This mountain is huge!" "Boy, you sure used a lot of purple today!"

If a child does something caring or generous, you might gently draw his attention to the effect of his action *on the other person*: "Look at Abigail's face! She seems pretty happy now that you gave her some of your snack." This is completely different from praise, where the emphasis is on how *you* feel about her sharing

* **Talk less, ask more.** Even better than descriptions are questions. Why tell him what part of his drawing impressed *you* when you can ask him what *he* likes best about it? Asking "What was the hardest part to draw?" or "How did you figure out how to make the feet the right size?" is likely to nourish his interest in drawing. Saying "Good job!", as we've seen, may have exactly the opposite effect.

This doesn't mean that all compliments, all thank-you's, all expressions of delight are harmful. We need to consider our *motives* for what we say (a genuine expression of enthusiasm is better than a desire to manipulate the child's future behavior) as well as the actual *effects* of doing so. Are our reactions helping the child to feel a sense of control over her life -- or to constantly look to us for approval? Are they helping her to become more excited about what she's doing in its own right – or turning it into something she just wants to get through in order to receive a pat on the head

It's not a matter of memorizing a new script, but of keeping in mind our long-term goals for our children and watching for the effects of what we say. The bad news is that the use of positive reinforcement really isn't so positive. The good news is that you don't have to evaluate in order to encourage.

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(2021 update)

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Engaging Youth: Planning Activities

Brainstorming

Provide a prompt or question to engage young people in brainstorming ideas. To make it more interactive provide large sticky notes or recycled sheets of paper and have them write down ideas with markers; one idea per sticky note/paper. Ask them to post them on a wall. If you use recycled paper, provide painter tape to post the papers. Once all the ideas are up on the wall, participants can organize them in themes or priorities.

Action Planning

If planning an event or project, ask young people to describe the desired outcome or goal. Participants can brainstorm action steps, organize action teams, and develop a time line. Use a sticky wall (thin nylon fabric) or a large sheet of butcher paper, 3 by 7 feet or more, treated with temporary adhesive spray. The advantage of the sticky wall/paper is that posted papers can be easily moved around and organized in different ways. It allows the planning process to be inclusive and interactive and provides good visuals as well. See a detailed description of this activity in the “Consensus and Action Planning” handout.

SWOT

The SWOT is a well-known planning method to assess and analyze the feasibility of a project. The group identifies:

S – Strengths: What are our strengths? What are we good at? What resources do we have?

W – Weaknesses: What are our weaknesses? What don't we do well? What don't we have?

O – Opportunities: What are opportunities around us we can use? Who and what can help us?

T – Threats: What is happening around us that can be a threat or obstacle in our way?

The SWOT can be done as a group discussion with one person writing ideas on a large sheet of paper that is divided into four quadrants. Or, to make it more interactive, post four large sheets of newsprint on a wall (with space between them), each labeled with one of the SWOT steps. Young people can break into small teams and rotate through the stations, adding their ideas to each SWOT category. Once the SWOT is done, participants can identify themes, gaps, and resources needed, and adjust project goal and scope.

Draw a Picture

Post a large sheet of paper or butcher paper (3 by 6 feet or larger) on the wall and invite young people to draw what they would like to see happen in the future, e.g., the type of community they would like to live in. Ask them to dream and think big. Debrief the activity by asking youth to compare their future vision to their current community. Discuss what they have already and what is missing.

Consensus – Action Planning: Working out the Details

To make planning very interactive and inclusive so that all young people and adults participate, use a sticky wall, recycled paper and markers. Write concrete ideas on paper, one idea per paper, and use the sticky wall to organize them.

Action Steps	Cluster or Group	Work Teams	Time Table	Coordinate	Affirm and Celebrate
<p>Think about all the things we need to do – concrete actions.</p> <p>List one action step on one sheet of paper.</p> <p>Examples: -Research facts about soda. -Develop student survey about soda use. -Contact dance studios looking for volunteer instructor.</p>	<p>Post action steps on sticky wall. Take out duplications.</p> <p>Organize them by commonalities – group them.</p> <p>Give the cluster/ group a name – identify the theme.</p>	<p>Review groups or clusters. Form work teams for each group.</p> <p>Identify volunteers for each group – write names next to cluster.</p>	<p>Each team will think about a start-up event and additional action steps.</p> <p>Think about the timeline and organize action steps in a time sequence.: What needs to be done first, next, etc.?</p>	<p>The teams will bring their timelines together and create one full time table. Review and modify.</p> <p>Where do you need to coordinate with other teams?</p> <p>Discuss how you will make decisions.</p> <p>Consider communication between teams.</p>	<p>Review process – celebrate everybody’s involvement.</p> <p>Affirm commitment by creating a catchy slogan or visual.</p> <p>GET STARTED</p>

Engaging Youth: Reflection Activities

Where Am I?

This is a good activity to help you gauge how young people feel about the contents, issues, and process of the group. Create three signs: Comfortable – Feeling stretched – Uncertain. Post them on the wall in different areas of the room.

Give young people reflection statements such as “How do you rate your ability to use the new skill you just learned?” Ask young people to take a minute to think about it and walk to the sign that best reflects their experience. Have them talk to the other youth who rate their experiences similarly. Feeling stretched is good place to be in. That is where learning is occurring.

One on One

Young people can interview each other about a group experience or a project completed. It is best to start this activity by brainstorming questions to ask. Put young people into teams and have them interview each other. After a few minutes they can report back to the larger group about their findings. To make it more interesting, they can use cell phones to record the interview.

Scale 1 to 10

This is a quick way to reflect on an activity or group session. Form a circle and ask each youth to reflect on the activity or session, rating it on a scale from 1 (boring/did not do anything for me/poor) to 10 (exciting/learned a lot/outstanding). Ask them to share what would make it better as well.

Modes of Transportation

Draw different modes of transportation on a sheet of paper or use an appropriate picture: UFO, train, bus, car, bicycle, skateboard (one form of transportation per paper). Post drawings or pictures around the room. Ask young people to look at those forms of transportation and think about which one best represents how they felt about the recent session, group work, workshop, field trip, etc. Have them choose one and stand next to the picture. Ask them to explain why they picked this one.

Experiential Education & the Experiential Learning Cycle

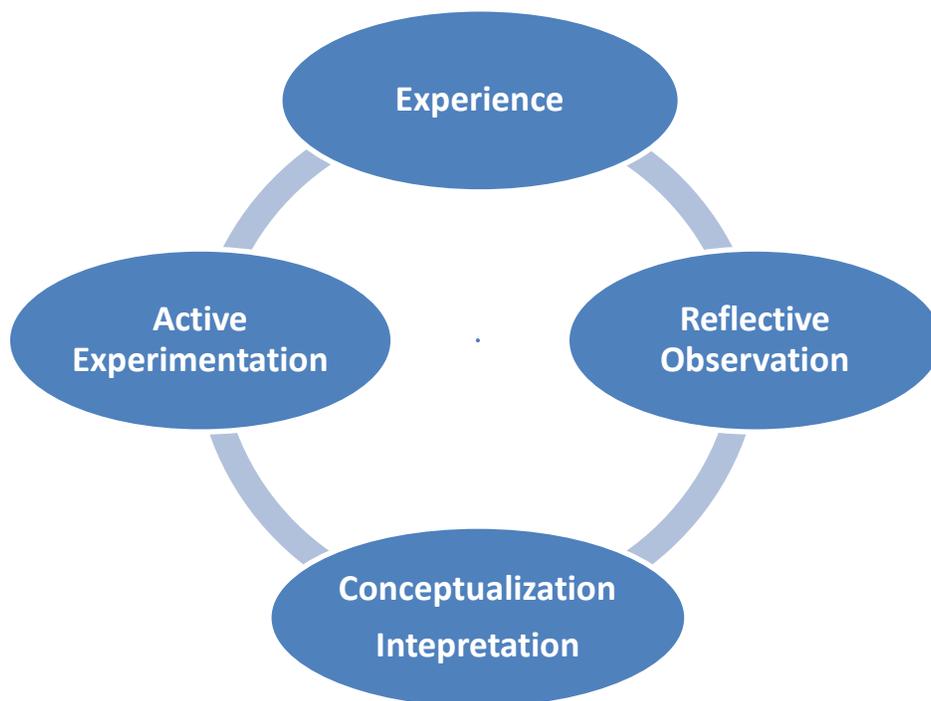
The tie between youth development and experiential education:

- Youth become actively involved.
- Youth have the ability to take leadership roles and make decisions.
- Youth have the opportunity to practice and apply newly learned skills/knowledge.

Basic premises of experiential education in a youth development environment:

- Youth are partners in the learning process; rather than being lectured at, they become engaged participants.
- The role of the adult is to guide the process and create a learning environment.

David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle



For additional information on Kolb's model:

<http://infed.org/mobi/david-a-kolb-on-experiential-learning/>

Reflective Group Conversation

Topic/Issue:
Observation:

Objective Level:

Describe the facts using all your senses.

What did you hear? What did people say about this topic?

What scenes, images do you remember?

What happened?



Reflective Level:

What are your internal responses to this? Emotions and memories?

What was your first response? How did it make you feel? Name your emotion.

Which part surprised you? What delighted you?

What other experiences did this remind you of?

What other situations did this remind you of?



Decisional Level:

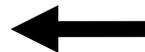
Where do we go from here? Implications for the future?

What would you say about this to somebody who did not see this?

How would you summarize your learning?

How does this affect what you are going to do?

What are your/our next steps?



Interpretive Level:

What do you think about it? What does it mean?

What is this really about? What is significant about what happened?

How was this important to you? What are your key takeaways?

What do we need to do differently?

What are we learning from this?

What is the insight?

Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions are questions that encourage people to talk about whatever is important to them. They help to establish rapport, gather information, and increase understanding. They are the opposite of closed-ended questions that typically require a simple, brief response such “yes” or “no.”

Open-ended questions invite others to “tell their story” in their own words. They do not lead people in a specific direction. Open-ended questions should be used frequently, though not exclusively, in conversation. When asking open-ended questions one must be ready and willing to listen to the response.

Examples of open-ended questions:

- Would you tell me more about ___?
- Could you help me understand ___?
- What are the good things and the less good things about ___?
- What do you think you will lose if you give up ___?
- What have you tried before?
- How do you feel now about ___?
- How do you see things changing?
- What do you want to do next?
- What is more important for you now?
- What would it be like?
- What do you imagine ___?
- What would happen if ___?
- What would you do ___?
- How can we ___?
- What is that like?
- Where would you like to begin?

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

See <http://multipleintelligencesoasis.org/> for more on multiple intelligences theory.

Verbal-linguistic learners

- Have highly developed auditory (listening) skills
- Enjoy reading and writing
- Like to play word games
- Have a good memory for names, dates, and places
- Are good at getting their point across

Logical-mathematical learners

- Like to explore patterns and relationships
- Enjoy doing activities in sequential order
- Are likely to enjoy mathematics and to experiment with things they don't understand
- Enjoy the challenge of solving problems with logical reasoning

Visual-spatial learners

- Tend to feel at home with visual arts, maps, charts, and diagrams
- Often think in images and pictures
- Can visualize clear images of things
- Often can complete jigsaw puzzles easily

Musical-rhythmic learners

- Are sensitive to the sounds in their environment
- Enjoy music and may prefer listening to music when they study or read
- Appreciate pitch and rhythm
- Probably like singing to themselves

Bodily-kinesthetic learners

- Process knowledge through bodily sensations
- Use the body in skilled ways
- Have good balance and coordination
- Are good with their hands
- Are able to manipulate objects with finesse
- Need opportunities to move and act things out
- Tend to respond best in classrooms that provide physical activities and hands-on learning

Intrapersonal learners

- Prefer their own inner world
- Like to be alone
- Are aware of their own strengths, weaknesses, and feelings
- Tend to think creatively and independently
- Like to reflect on ideas
- Often possess independence, self-confidence, determination, and high motivation
- Often prefer working independently rather than in groups
- May respond with strong opinions when controversial topics are discussed

Interpersonal learners

- Enjoy being around people
- Have many friends and engage in social activities
- Learn best by relating, sharing, and participating in cooperative group environments

Collaborative Learning

Source: Cornell University Center for Teaching Excellence

<http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/engaging-students/collaborative-learning.html>

Collaborative learning is based on the view that social interaction facilitates learning. Students will learn from each other as much as from the instructor.

Sample Group Activities

Stump your partner

- Students take a minute to create a challenging question based on the content delivered up to that point.
- Students pose the question to the person sitting next to them.

Think-pair-share / Write-pair-share

- The facilitator poses a question or challenge that demands analysis and reflection.
- Students take a few minutes to think through an appropriate response.
- Students turn to a partner (or small groups) and share their responses. Take this a step further by asking students to find someone who arrived at an answer different from their own and convince their partner to change their mind.
- Student responses are shared within the full group during the follow-up discussion.

Fishbowl debate

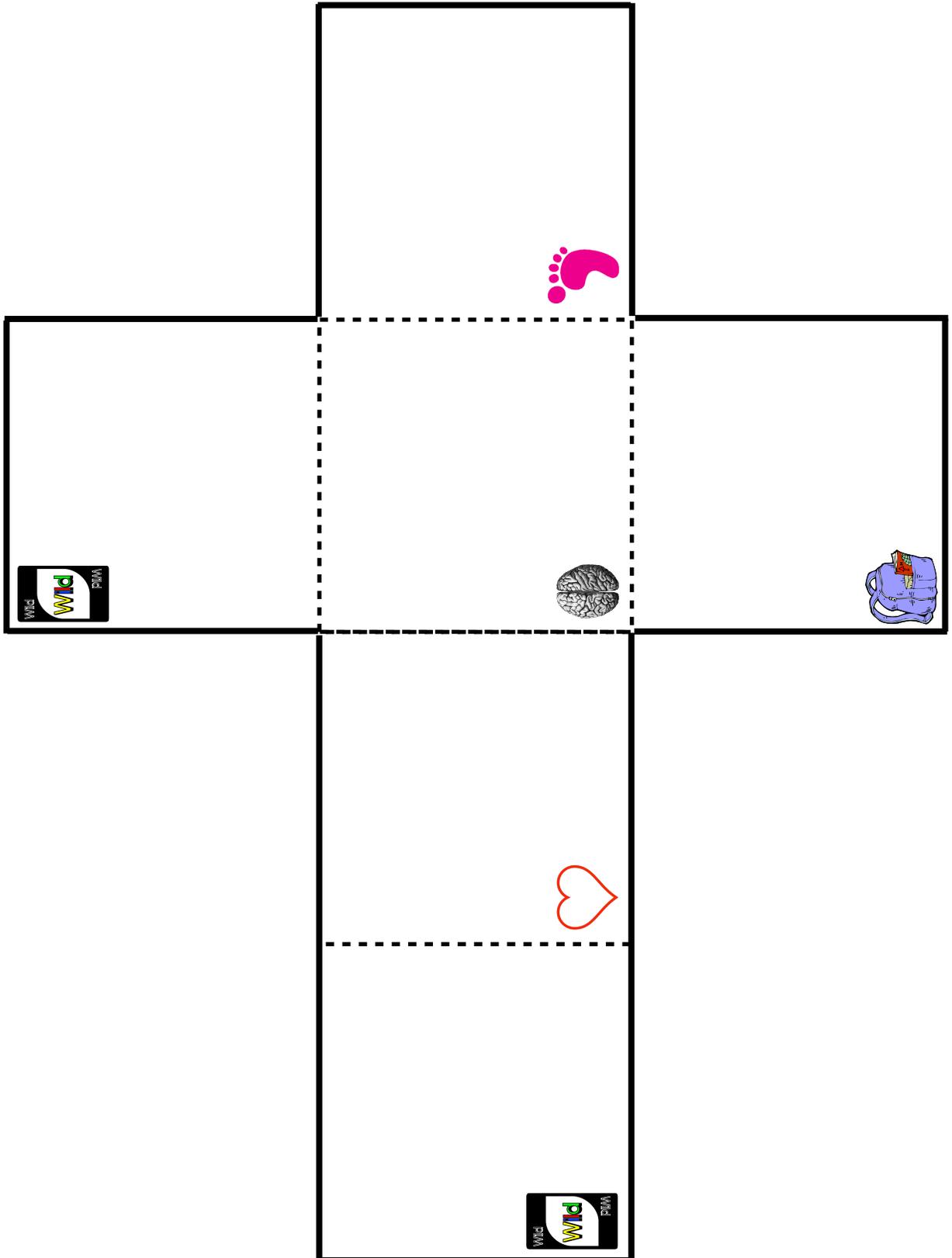
- Ask students to sit in groups of three.
- Assign roles. For example, the person on left takes one position on a topic for debate, the person on right takes the opposite position, and the person in the middle takes notes and decides which side is the most convincing and provides an argument for his or her choice.
- Debrief by calling on a few groups to summarize their discussions.

Facilitation Tips

Establish and use group rules: Collaboratively developed rules or agreements will support a safe learning environment.

Use effective questions: Open-ended questions that probe and elicit expanded thinking and processing of information will involve students in deeper learning.

Reflection Cube



STEP-IT-UP-2-THRIVE

Section 5: Resources & References

(2021 update)

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Dilemma: Youth in charge, but falling behind

High school-aged youth in a leadership program were in charge of planning a 2 two-day summer day camp for fourth graders. The same young people had worked side-by-side with Mr. Miller, the advisor, in planning the day camp in prior years, so he decided they were ready to take control over development of the camp this year. He told them it would be “their camp” – and the youth relished the challenge. In the first stage, they were very excited as they generated ideas.

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

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