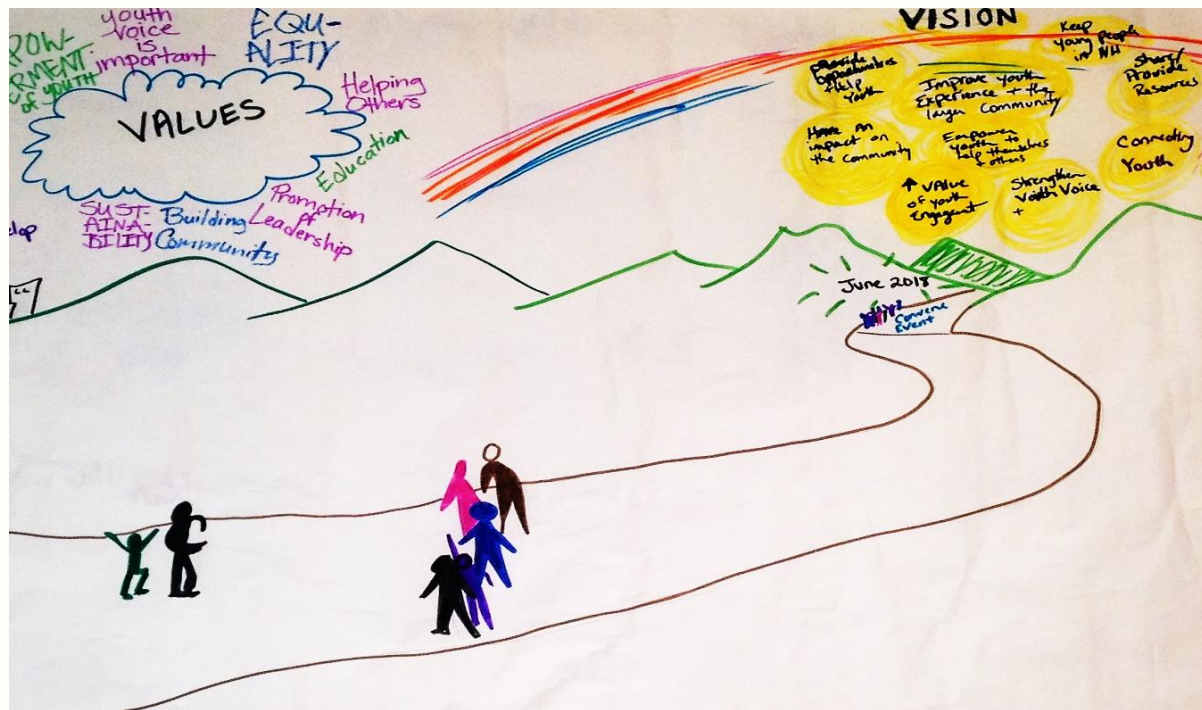


# NEW HAMPSHIRE'S YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



September 2018

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the youth-led organizations and adult allies that contributed to the development of this framework:

- Youth MOVE NH
- The Parent information Center YEAH Council
- Young Organizers United (Y.O.U.) of Granite State Organizing project
- Community Action for Safe Teens
- Youth Leadership Through Adventure (YLTA)
- NH Teen Institute
- PEMI Youth Center

With support from:

- Institute on Disability and Cooperative Extension at the University of New Hampshire
- The NH Children's Behavioral Health Collaborative
- The Endowment for Health
- The Bureau of Student Wellness at the NH Department of Education

*Illustrations by Heidi Cloutier*

## Background

In the summer of 2016, the Endowment for Health and the NH Department of Education's Bureau of Student Wellness (BSW) unveiled four White Papers that had been commissioned to identify the strengths and weaknesses of New Hampshire's family and youth engagement programs, and recommended best practices in family and youth engagement<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>. To put the recommendations of these background papers into action, the Institute on Disability, with support from the Endowment for Health and the NH Department of Education's Bureau of Student Wellness, invited youth-led organizations from all over New Hampshire to form a Youth Engagement Leadership Team beginning in 2017. The Team met monthly for a year, reviewed the white papers, created a youth engagement network, and created the framework for Youth Engagement presented here. This framework can be used as a guide for developing and measuring youth engagement or leadership programs, initiatives, and activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Davis, C. (2016). A 2016 Environmental Scan of Parent/Family and Youth/Young Adult Engagement Practices in New Hampshire. Endowment for Health, Concord.

<sup>2</sup> Davis, C. (2016). Gap Analysis of New Hampshire Family and Youth Engagement Practices. Endowment for Health, Concord.

<sup>3</sup> Davis, C. (2016). A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development. Endowment for Health, Concord.

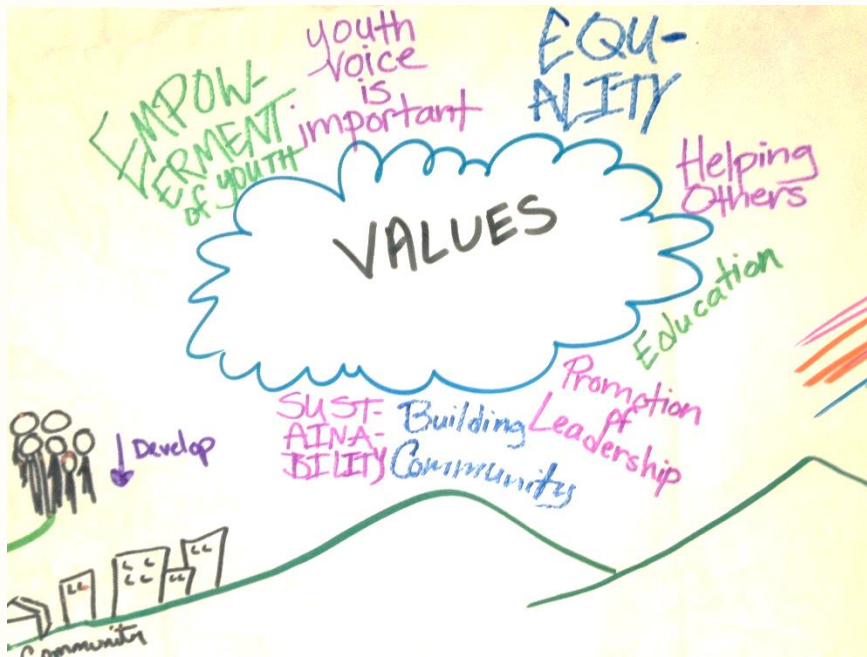
<sup>4</sup> Davis, C. (2016). A Study of Best Practices in Youth Engagement and Leadership Development. Endowment for Health, Concord.

## Section 1: Definition of Youth Engagement

“Youth engagement is a process when young people are involved in responsible, challenging actions to create positive social change. This means that youth drive the planning, decision making, and activities that affect themselves, others, and their communities.”

(Adapted from: Cornell University Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Services, 2018)

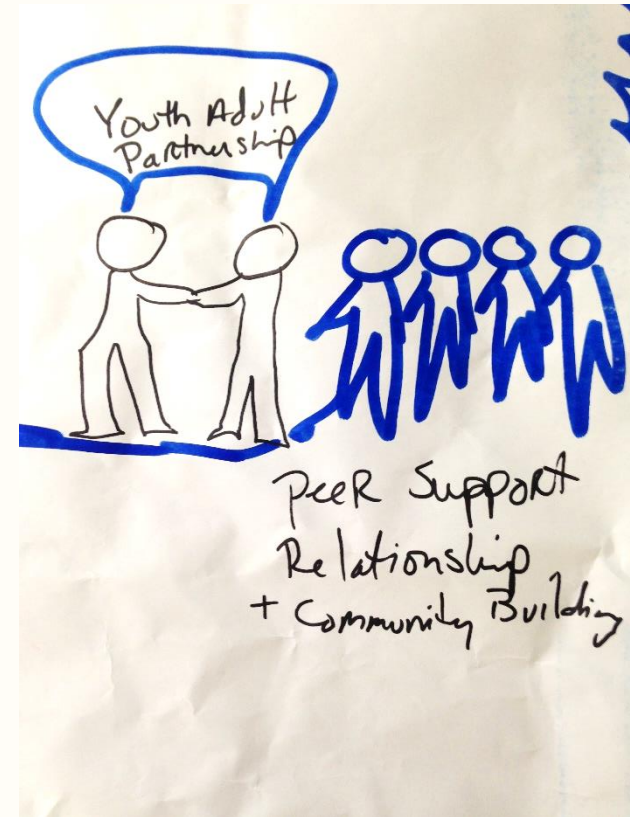
### Core Values of Youth Engagement



- Empowerment
- Education
- Equity
- Community
- Inclusion
- Sustainability
- Resilience

## Partnerships

- Dual Capacity Building – building knowledge among people we are trying to impact (systems, contribute, help them to understand)
- Help each youth to speak up, making a connection; strengths-based
- **Adult Allies** – Support to look to. “Silent ally.” Keep us on topic; guide and support; bailing youth out; make a space; clear the path that is determined by the youth.
  - Dealing with conflict – communication (private, ask questions).
  - Adults need to really listen to what the youth want. Challenging the youth.
  - Respect and trust and consistency




## Vision of New Hampshire's Youth Engagement Project



- Shared resources and collaboration
- Making connections
- Recognition for our youth leadership and development and
- People understand what youth engagement is
- The value of our work is recognized; partnerships
- We effect positive change and make a significant positive impact
- We adapt to what youth and communities need

## Section 2: From Individual to Community Engagement for Every Youth

Individual level	Own School/Agency	Community Systems	Region and State
			
Activities			
Building Self-Efficacy	Opportunities to Participate	Peer-to-Peer Supporters	Advocacy Skill Development
Individualized Peer-to-Peer Support	Educational Opportunities	Educational Opportunities	Leadership Development
Individualized Child and Family Teams	Leadership Development: School/Agency teams	Leadership Development: Community groups	Leadership Development: State Teams
Self-Advocacy	Self-Advocacy Group Advocacy	Self-Advocacy Group Advocacy	Group Advocacy
Dual Capacity Readiness	Dual Capacity Building <sup>5</sup>	Dual Capacity Building	Dual Capacity Building

<sup>5</sup> Mapp & Kuttner (2013). Partners in Education: A dual-capacity building framework for family-school partnerships. SEDL, Austin TX.

## Section 3: Core Activities of Youth Engagement

(Adapted from Youth MOVE National)

### Recreation & Peer Networking

Positive social outlets and opportunities for young adults to engage with their peers and safe spaces for young adults to come together to share resources, best practices, personal stories and to collaboratively discuss and hopefully find a resolution for common problems. The goal of recreation and Peer Networking groups is to strengthen the young adults' sense of self-efficacy, to expose them to new people, places, ways of life, and ideas, and to build upon individual supports as a means for achieving successful life outcomes.

#### Potential Outcomes:

- Get involved in something that has a personal meaning
- Identify and develop individual strengths
- Improve relationships and communication with professional allies and supportive adults
- Provide affordable access to recreational activities
- Develop a sense of self-worth
- Create and support a positive environment for peers to interact
- Develop informal peer supports
- Allow young adults exposure to peers who have diverse experiences and are a part of different demographic populations outside of their home community

#### Example Activities:

- Collaborate with other youth groups
- Plan and attend group trips
- Allow young adults to choose or design recreational events
- Promote peer to peer communication
- Attend conferences and community events
- Hold game nights
- Engage young adults in event planning and programming



## Community Involvement & Advocacy

Groups focused on community involvement and advocacy bring voices of experience to the wider community while also raising awareness about the causes that important to them. Advocacy happens on multiple levels and looks different for every individual, group, and initiative. Allowing for creativity in this process enables young adults to customize the message to address the individualized needs identified among their peers within their communities.

### Potential Outcomes:

- Build community partnerships
- Outreach to the community
- Young adults feel invested and have sense of ownership in community
- Help young adults to heal by sharing their story to educate others and further their cause
- Promote healthy peer-to-peer relationships
- Tackle stigmas placed on young adults by the larger community
- Strengthen personal leadership skills
- Provide an opportunity for young adults to give back

### Example Activities:

- Advocate on the local, state, and or national level
- Provide advocacy trainings
- Host mentoring programs
- Hold community service events
- Participate on advisory boards or committees
- Identify policy priorities
- Build partnerships with local organizations and businesses
- Sponsor community events

## Social Marketing & Awareness Building

Youth groups engaged in social marketing techniques will naturally spread awareness of a youth group's mission, vision, and values and build partnerships within the community.

Developing a variety of social avenues of expression allows your message utilized in multiple systems, breaking down barriers associated with those systems and captivating a larger audience.

### Potential Outcomes:

- Allow a group's message to be heard both within and beyond its immediate community
- Educate young adults who are interested in safely sharing their story
- Create opportunities for creativity and self-expression
- Build an audience to support and share the group's message
- Learn effective strategies that have been effective in other communities
- Identify partners who believe in the group's message
- Bring community and national attention to the group's presence

### Example Activities:

- Advocate on the local, state, and or national level
- Provide advocacy trainings
- Host mentoring programs
- Hold community service events
- Participate on advisory boards or committees
- Identify policy priorities
- Build partnerships with local organizations & businesses
- Sponsor community events

## Youth Voice Development & Leadership

Groups that promote youth voice and are strongly committed to youth development often provide young adults with political education, training in educating policy makers, writing and storytelling strategies, and professional skills training.

### Potential Outcomes:

- Develop a youth-driven MOVEment
- Build future leaders
- Affect local, state, and/or national policy changes
- Improve outcomes of service delivery
- Build on skills of young adults through various trainings
- Create and model authentic youth engagement
- Improve professional and youth relationships and partnerships
- Build and model positive peer relationships
- Allow opportunities for trained and paid peer support roles

### Example Activities:

- Provide opportunities and support for young adults to lead meetings
- Assist young adults in co-creating organizational programming
- Model authentic youth engagement by allowing young leaders to develop organizational by-laws
- Implement policy change
- Incorporate young adults as “experts” in planning at all levels
- Train youth on how to participate on boards and advisory panels
- Provide youth with Strategic Sharing, advocacy, spokesperson, and leadership training

## Personal Development & Empowerment

Youth development is the ongoing growth process that engages youth while striving to meet their basic personal and social needs to be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful and be spiritually grounded. A group that seeks to enhance the personal development and empowerment of young adults helps to build skills and competencies that allow young adults to function and contribute in daily life. Goal setting is one of the essential skills for young adults to develop. Providing young adults with the opportunity to set and achieve goals by participating in chapter programming encourages them to think about the future.

### Potential Outcomes:

- Ability to apply what is learned in a group to the rest of life
- Develop confidence, commitment and self-worth
- Help young adults reach their fullest potential
- Provide young adults with the ability to identify accomplishments through participation
- Develop self-advocacy skills
- Build resiliency
- Individual skill development
- Place past trauma and current behaviors in context

### Example Activities:

- Offer resume writing, interview and life skills trainings
- Provide creative expression activities
- Teach SMART goal setting
- Promote vision boards
- Encourage healthy relationship building
- Offer personal trainings based on individual needs

## Peer Service Delivery

Peer-delivered services embrace a philosophy of “nothing about us, without us” and that there should be dignity, equity and empathy in all helping relationships. Peer services, whether formal or informal, are proving to be an asset in bettering outcomes for young adults.

### Potential Outcomes:

- Support from youth leaders to providers
- Youth group support staff
- Youth Engagement Specialist positions
- Improved engagement of young adults in programming
- Relationships built on trust
- Modeling professional youth leadership
- Youth-driven programming

### Example Activities:

- Offer youth peer to peer services
- Incorporate services at drop-in centers
- Facilitate Wraparound meetings
- Hire young adults
- Provide mentoring
- Partner with providers to improve services
- Hold support groups

## Section 4: Key Elements of Youth Engagement Programs

### Youth Engagement: Practice Elements

(Adapted from “Positive Youth Development Practice Rubric: A Tool to Foster Reflection, Discussion & Continuous Improvement.”  
CREED Connection, 2015 and the Cornell University Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Services, 2018)

Developed by the members of NH’s Youth Engagement Project (YEP) (2018)

**Our Definition of Youth Engagement:** Youth engagement is a process when young people are involved in responsible and challenging actions to create positive social change. This means that youth drive the planning, decision-making, and activities that affect themselves, others, and their communities.

**Youth Engagement** Provides support and engages youth to develop their strengths, resiliency, positive identity, and skills so they can participate as meaningful partners in their schools, communities to make positive change.

The purpose of a practice profile is to help individuals and organizations understand how to create programs that promote high quality positive youth development and civic, social, and community engagement among youth.

This Guide outlines “gold standard” youth engagement practice in 5 large topic areas or values:

1. **Strengths-based**
2. **Inclusive of and accessible to everyone (Social, Physical, Emotional, Socioeconomic, Spiritual)**
3. **Youth as meaningful partners**
4. **Builds resiliency**
5. **Sustainable**

There are individual elements listed under each topic, including descriptions (indicators) of what it looks like when the practice is new, when it’s getting better, and when it is the best it can be:

1. **Planting:** Beginning or minimal implementation,
2. **Budding/Growing:** Showing signs of improved practice and easier adoption of values and principles
3. **Blossoming:** The practice is of high quality and consistently delivered equivalent to full implementation.

Describing the elements and indicators in very concrete terms can help the young people, their adult allies, providers, and practitioners to know what they are doing well and what they can work on to make their youth engagement better.

1. Strengths-based				
Key Elements of Youth Engagement Practice	Planting: New implementers (1)	Budding/Growing: Gaining new skills (2)	Blossoming: Experienced & can lead others (3)	How are we doing?
Levels of Implementation				
<p><i>Strengths Exploration:</i> Youth have opportunities to explore, discover, develop, recognize, and celebrate their strengths, passions, and ideas in order to develop a positive self-view.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths language is consistently used</li> <li>• Activities focus on helping youth discover their strengths</li> <li>• Youth have chances to be exposed to and experience a variety of new roles</li> <li>• Adults provide opportunities for youth to discover their strengths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The activities reflect youth culture and current interests of participants.</li> <li>• Youth have the opportunity to take on new and diverse roles.</li> <li>• There is time and space for individual processing and group feedback that supports youth's growth.</li> <li>• Youth encourage each other on their journey towards growth and accomplishment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth have the opportunity and help each other to try out a diverse range of new tasks, roles, and responsibilities and connect their interests/ strengths to life goals, including career pathways.</li> <li>• Programming intentionally enhances youths' strengths.</li> <li>• Youth encourage each other.</li> <li>• Youth connect with resources that build on their strengths.</li> <li>• Youth work together on activities that use their strengths</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Skills Development:</i> Youth have opportunities to develop, practice, and use the skills they have learned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff provide experiential learning strategies – hands-on and project-based.</li> <li>• Staff and youth participants supported to engage in reflective feedback process that allows each youth to learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff holds high expectations of all youth and their capacity to grow and learn while also individualizing support and encouragement based on where each youth is currently performing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have skills in and support youth in goal setting and skill development as evidenced by co-created plans that identify clear roles, specific objectives, and step-by-step instructions so that youth know what they are learning.</li> <li>• Youth encourage each other to identify areas for growth and</li> </ul>	

	<p>from successes and failures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth have opportunities to teach one another.</li> <li>• Adults support youth in strategizing and problem solving.</li> </ul>	<p>tailor programming to intentionally build those skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth and staff have opportunities to learn from one another</li> <li>• Youth and adults work together on all aspects of programming in order to develop youth’s knowledge and skills in their area of interest within the organization.</li> <li>• Many aspects of programming are youth-led to support their individual skill development based on their interests/ strengths.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Whole Person Approach:</i> An approach that includes all aspects of health and wellness, including emotional, social, physical, intellectual, personal, environmental, and occupational wellness and family, community, and culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff understand youth as unique individuals with unique sets of circumstances, needs, and opportunities.</li> <li>• Organization prioritizes youth’s basic needs – shelter, food, and physical and emotional safety – before program goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff use strength-based, trauma-informed approaches and language when working with youth.</li> <li>• Staff considers warning signs or obstacles in the way of youth’s growth or ability to access support, and help to address them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and organization address systemic barriers to youth development (e.g., advocates for policy/culture changes; convenes community trainings or conversations about broad issues).</li> <li>• Staff and organization supports youth to understand all dimensions of wellness (mind, body, spirit)</li> <li>• Youth feel a connectedness to the greater whole.</li> </ul>	



**2. Inclusive of and Accessible to Everyone (Social, Physical, Emotional, Socioeconomic, Spiritual)**

Key Elements of Youth Engagement Practice	Planting: New implementers (1)	Budding/Growing: Gaining new skills (2)	Blossoming: Experienced & can lead others (3)	How are we doing?
<b>Levels of Implementation</b>				
<p><i>Accessibility:</i> Youth have opportunities and engage in activities designed with intentional consideration of what the youth want while being mindful of barriers and accessibility for all youth who want to participate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of outreach strategies are used (e.g., school news, social media, flyers around the community, word-of-mouth) to reach youth.</li> <li>• The needs of youth participants are acknowledged and accommodated, including language, abilities, gender identification, timing, transportation, nutrition (e.g., allergies and provision), and physical and mental health.</li> <li>• Meetings and programs are located in places that youth already are (e.g., school, clubs) and/or want to be at (e.g., parks, community events) and at times that work for them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth, families, and community are consulted on how the organization can break down barriers to engagement.</li> <li>• There is an intentional process for problem-solving when many youth are not engaged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are individualized expectations for attendance and participation, recognizing youth have multiple responsibilities and obligations.</li> <li>• Programs consider possible stigma associated with participation and, thus, have multiple entry points for youth to sign up.</li> <li>• Mileage and/or travel reimbursement are provided to participants.</li> </ul>	

<p><i>Safety-Space:</i> Activities are planned with thoughtful consideration of the physical, emotional, and social safety needs of all participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization secures adequate space for youth to participate in activities comfortably.</li> <li>• The space and equipment are clean and working properly.</li> <li>• The space is inclusive (gender-neutral bathrooms, for example).</li> <li>• Food preparation regulations are adhered to when food is provided.</li> <li>• First-aid materials and fire extinguishers are readily available.</li> <li>• Every staff member has had a background check before joining the organization; a clear policy on the frequency and criteria for determining unemployable offenses from background checks is in place. A similar process is in place for volunteers.</li> <li>• Organization sets a minimum staff-to-youth ratio that ensures adequate supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency preparedness plans are comprehensive (prevention, mitigation, protection, response, and recovery) and coordination is communicated to partners.</li> <li>• Emergency procedures are posted for everyone to see.</li> <li>• Youth understand what it means that all staff are mandatory reporters.</li> <li>• All staff and volunteers are trained in mental health, CPR, First Aid, suicide awareness,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization connects youth to CPR/First-Aid/mental health first aid/suicide awareness and prevention training.</li> <li>• Adults support youth in developing emergency and safety plans to mitigate violence throughout their lives.</li> <li>• Staff support plans for safe travel between program, school and home.</li> </ul>	
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	<p>while on site and on field trips.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization’s insurance policy is comprehensive and current.</li> <li>• Maximum occupancy regulations are heeded.</li> <li>• All staff and volunteers are trained in emergency preparedness plan and what it means to be a mandatory reporter.</li> </ul>			
<p><i>Social/Emotional Safety:</i> There is a safe, caring, and supportive environment for youth to feel valued, and comfortable to be themselves and to express their concerns, fears, and feelings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff use trauma-informed practices for relating with youth; activities are carefully planned and trauma-informed.</li> <li>• There is administrative buy-in for all aspects of the program.</li> <li>• Structure and boundaries are provided to create a space for youth’s feelings, experiences, ideas, and innovations to be heard.</li> <li>• All staff and youth respectfully listen, participate, question, and share, including the allowance for long</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a clear process for responding to bullying/social exclusion, including a protocol for coming to a resolution.</li> <li>• There are guidelines for use of social media and how information is shared</li> <li>• Adults and youth practice respectful behavior and honor each other’s privacy about personal issues (e.g., relationships, gender/sexuality development, medications).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A shared, participatory process is utilized by all to proactively build trust, active listening, conflict diffusion, and resolution skills.</li> <li>• Youth hold each other and adults accountable to shared behavior expectations and norms.</li> <li>• Programming starts and ends with check-ins and/or debrief circles about feelings to establish a safe place for vulnerability.</li> <li>• Staff models and engages in their own self-care and teaches youth to engage in self-care.</li> </ul>	

	<p>pauses (e.g., adequate wait time) and opting out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior expectations and norms are co-created, posted, and frequently reinforced to ensure that all youth treat one another with respect and feel safe.</li> <li>• Boundaries around confidentiality are clear and maintained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization promotes exploration of, and commitment to, individual self-care with youth and adults.</li> </ul>		
<p><i>Equity:</i> All participants (youth and adults) are treated with equity regardless of who they are, or of their abilities, experiences, or backgrounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and programming foster awareness and promote activities around differences and similarities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth learn how to be respectful toward diverse cultures, learn about life experiences other than their own, and are exposed to individuals from a variety of backgrounds (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, cognitive or developmental abilities, socio-economic status, language ability, geographic location, life history, among others).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are specific curriculum and activities that promote cultural and linguistic competency, social justice for all individuals, including how to work effectively in diverse groups.</li> <li>• The schedule allows for full participation of all youth who are interested in participating, and sensitive to the many obligations youth may have.</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are opportunities for youth to use their diverse voices and dialogue with people in the community, at home and in school.</li> </ul>		
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<b>3. Youth as Meaningful Partners</b>				
<b>Key Elements of Youth Engagement Practice</b>	<b>Planting: New implementers (1)</b>	<b>Budding/Growing: Gaining new skills (2)</b>	<b>Blossoming: Experienced &amp; can lead others (3)</b>	<b>How are we doing?</b>
	<b>Levels of Implementation</b>			
<i>Youth Input and Shared Decision Making:</i> Youth are meaningful partners and share decision making in the design, plan development, implementation, and evaluation of all engagement activities and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are given opportunities to begin to shape the program’s engagement activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth learn decision-making skills and have formal and informal training in and opportunities to share in making decisions about the program’s youth engagement activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth share responsibility for the design, plan development, implementation and evaluation of all engagement activities and programs with supportive adults</li> </ul>	
<i>Authentic Relationships:</i> Youth are intentionally given opportunities to foster connections and positive relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth feel they belong and have positive connections with others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth and adults communicate effectively and learn from each other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth have reciprocal, respectful relationships with adults and other youth, and a shared sense of purpose.</li> </ul>	

with adults and peers, and to develop a sense of belonging.				
<p><i>Targeted Work:</i> Youth are supported to use data (community, school, health, etc.) to identify priorities related to youth health and wellness, and then develop action items.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff help youth identify and review community and school data</li> <li>• Staff assist youth to identify and choose issues to work on.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth have opportunities to identify community and school data points and learn how to assess critical community issues that involve youth.</li> <li>• Youth work with staff to identify priority areas and develop an action plan.</li> <li>• Youth are part of progress reviews and assessing outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth help to design activities and collect community and school data</li> <li>• Staff support youth to analyze community data.</li> <li>• Staff support youth through a structured decision-making and planning process to identify priority area(s) and produce a written action plan.</li> <li>• Staff support youth to assess their progress in following the action plan, and adjusting the plan when indicated.</li> <li>• Staff support youth to assess outcomes.</li> </ul>	

<b>4. Builds Resiliency and Positive Youth Development – Helping Youth to Bounce Back from Challenges</b>				
<b>Key Elements of Youth Engagement Practice</b>	<b>Planting: New implementers (1)</b>	<b>Budding/Growing: Gaining new skills (2)</b>	<b>Blossoming: Experienced and can lead others (3)</b>	<b>How are we doing?</b>
	<b>Levels of Implementation</b>			
<p><i>Focus on Resiliency and Positive Development:</i> The programs and activities build skills that help youth to deal with</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services and programs offered to youth are directly related to building skills and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are given information and empowered to get help and build their skills to address challenges (i.e.,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth use their skills and work together to address real-life, difficult situations and challenges at the individual, family, and</li> </ul>	

challenges and to find help when they need it (uses a positive, asset-development conceptual model) <sup>6</sup>	supports (i.e., asset development)	asset development and resiliency-building at the individual, family, and community levels)	community levels (asset development and resiliency-building activities). Youth reflect on what they have learned, and what working/not working is.	
<i>Focus on the Positive:</i> Activities are designed to build positive skills and experiences for every youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an emphasis on positive skills building and experiences, while considering the needs of each youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are given information and opportunities to use their strengths and have positive experiences (at the individual, family, and community level).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth encourage one another, use their strengths, and work together to attain their goals at the individual, family, and community levels (positive youth development). Youth reflect on what they have learned, and what is working/not working.</li> </ul>	
<i>Caring Adults:</i> There are intentional efforts made to ensure that youth participants have caring adults in their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization and staff help foster positive relationships with others, including adults.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth learn about positive role models and learn ways to make connections with supportive adults.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are able to identify and positively engage with adults who are positive sources of support for them.</li> </ul>	
<i>Youth are actively involved in and valued by the community:</i> Offers opportunities for youth to develop intentional, strong connections with community resources and contribute to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are aware of opportunities and resources in the community.</li> <li>• Youth join and participate in community activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are connected to opportunities and resources in their community.</li> <li>• Youth engage in activities that are valuable to and visible within their communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth choose, create, identify, plan, and participate in positive community-based activities and projects.</li> <li>• Youth design and implement activities that build resilience among other youth and adults allies.</li> </ul>	

<sup>6</sup> Such as the YoungMINDS framework: [https://youngminds.org.uk/media/1486/interactive\\_resilience\\_framework-002.pdf](https://youngminds.org.uk/media/1486/interactive_resilience_framework-002.pdf) or SEARCH Institute: <https://www.search-institute.org/where-to-start/youth-programs/> or the YouthPOWER network <http://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development-pyd-framework>

community projects and activities.			• Youth engage in activities that help other youth link to community resources.	
<i>Empowering Youth:</i> Organization and staff actively work to help youth build and model positive values and identity for themselves (skills such as self-esteem, confidence, responsibility, and character)	• Youth have opportunities to learn about positive role models and values.	• Youth have the opportunity to spend time with adults and role models to help them develop positive identities.	• Youth are supported to actively seek opportunities and build skills to develop self-efficacy, self-esteem, confidence and responsibility.	

5. Sustainable				
Key Elements of Youth Engagement Practice	Planting: New implementers (1)	Budding/Growing: Gaining new skills (2)	Blossoming: Experienced and can lead others (3)	How are we doing?
	<b>Levels of Implementation</b>			
<i>Youth are Meaningful Partners:</i> ...In the development of a sustainability plan for the organization	• Youth are invited to take part in organizational management and planning meetings.	• Youth are prepared to and attend organizational management and planning meetings by supportive staff in the organization.	• Youth have support to engage in genuine decision making and facilitation, and have responsibility for organizational operations and the sustainability plan.	



<p><i>Evaluation for Continuous Improvement:</i> There is a process for gathering feedback from youth and collecting data to ensure that the program is meeting the needs of the youth being served.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth provide informal feedback about programming and organizational management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are given multiple ways to provide formal feedback on programming and organizational management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and regular feedback is solicited from youth and used to make improvements on programming and organizational management.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>The work is meaningful to the Youth and Community:</i> Youth identify and are supported to pursue causes that are important to them and their community (such as school violence, gun violence, substance abuse, bullying, racism, suicide, mental health awareness).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization's staff ask youth informally about causes that are important to them, and work to create opportunities around those causes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization has and follows a protocol for formally collecting youth input about causes they identify as important and supports youth to work on those causes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth drive the process of identifying causes that are important to them and design the programming to reflect those causes.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Fostering Continuous Leadership:</i> Provides intentional opportunities for youth members to grow and take on new leadership roles and ongoing membership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are invited to be a part of the organization's leadership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff support youth to play a meaningful leadership role within the organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple youth hold meaningful leadership roles within the organization and are considered equal partners.</li> </ul>	

<p><i>Qualities of Staff:</i> The staff and allies who work with the youth have the skills and knowledge in positive youth development, leadership, resilience, and building protective factors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have and are continuously gaining knowledge on working with youth using strengths-based strategies.</li> <li>• Staff consistently use respectful language and model respectful behavior, using the group's behavioral expectations and norms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have experience and consistently demonstrate the skills to support youth using strengths-based, trauma-informed, and resiliency-building strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have experience and consistently demonstrate the skills to empower youth to be leaders and reach their fullest potential.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Meeting Organization:</i> The meeting facilitators use structured, best practices for structuring and leading meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every meeting has an agenda, norms (posted) and clear roles. Youth learn about and help develop all of the meeting structures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every meeting is structured and youth are supported to take on meeting facilitation roles (such as facilitator, note taker, timekeeper).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every meeting is planned and facilitated by youth. Youth take on all meeting facilitation roles and support other youth to try new roles and lead meetings.</li> </ul>	