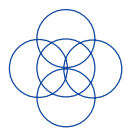


Wisconsin Healthy & Ready to Work:
A Series of Materials Supporting Youth with Special Health Care Needs

Youth as Partners

A Trainer's Guide



Waisman Center
University of Wisconsin–Madison
University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities



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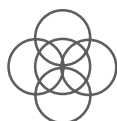
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Developed by Julie Sipchen



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-Julie Sipchen

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Introduction

This training guide is designed for adults who are interested in serving as allies to youth in order to promote meaningful youth involvement in all areas of community life. While it is designed to help adults understand how to work with youth who have special needs or disabilities, it is based on considerations that apply to all youth. After all, young people who have special needs are a part of their generation, just like all other kids.

This training guide is designed so that participants who go through the training will leave with:

- Knowledge about disability history and culture,
- A better understanding of the unique culture of youth,
- Knowledge about the importance of adult-youth partnerships,
- The tools necessary to forge youth/adult partnerships in a meaningful way,
- The ability to use those tools to apply what they've learned.

The modules will help adults learn ways in which they can be supportive allies in a meaningful, mutually beneficial way, while fulfilling their responsibilities. Youth are strongly encouraged to present or co-present the modules.

Everybody wins when youth and adults work as partners and all parties are motivated by the desire for increased involvement by youth. There are greater gains for both the adults and the youth, as well as for the organizations.

From here on out, the word “youth” refers to all young people. Note that all aspects of the training are mindful of what is necessary to help work with youth with special needs or disabilities. The first module provides a helpful history.

Overview: Youth as Partners

As adults who work with youth, we are used to thinking of them as recipients of services, as clients, or as consumers. Maybe we think of them as children. If you are using this training guide, you already realize the importance of considering youth as stakeholders in the activities we engage them in and the services we provide. If adults create opportunities for youth to participate and if we support their participation, we'll find they have a unique and valuable perspective to provide.

The premise of this training is that adults who form meaningful alliances with youth will have the most successful programs. Youth are becoming more and more involved in the decisions made about them as the field of youth development grows and clearly shows that youth involvement benefits both youth and adults. As youth challenge the conventional ways of decision-making, they break new ground in their relationships with adults. Young people want to find opportunities to be successful in their partnerships with adults.

TRAINER'S TIP:

Look over the Modules, check the subjects and the amount of time each takes. Given your particular needs and your available time, plan which modules to use and when.

The modules follow a progressive sequence, each building on the other. Depending on your audience, you may not need all the steps in the sequence. Modules 3 and 4 are particularly linked and central to the core information. Together these two modules can take up to two hours. Modules 2 and 5 share a worksheet, but as you'll see, they don't necessarily have to be paired.

Using this Guide

The training is composed of six modules, each of which covers an important aspect of successful partnerships between youth and adults. Within each module, you will find "Trainer's Tips," which will guide you through the practical steps that keep the presentation clear, organized, and moving forward.

Each module is structured to include activities and information that are supported by a number of handouts, worksheets, and other relevant material. You'll find the supportive materials in Appendix A, arranged to parallel the sequence of modules. You will want to use many of the supportive materials as handouts. Before starting each module, be sure to choose the handouts you will use and make the copies you need for your participants. Bring a flip chart or erasable board with you. You'll find lots of uses for it.

In the text of each module, there are experiential notes and anecdotes you can choose to share as you wish.

A Note on Responsibility, Flexibility and Outcomes

The trainer's primary responsibility is to know the audience and adjust the modules to match their needs. The trainer can tailor the training to match a youth-oriented group. The modules can be added to if the audience needs a little more background, or tailored to provide a little more personalized attention. This training is designed to be flexible.

You may present one or more of the modules, do your training in one session, or set up a series of sessions to cover all the modules you think would be appropriate. You may also eliminate some sections if you feel they are inappropriate or redundant for your audience.

Here is a summary of the six modules.

Module One:**Disability History and Disability Culture**

This module is designed to introduce the participants to disability history and to the concept of disability as a culture. This is an important foundation for those who may not typically work with people who have disabilities or special needs. This is also a helpful "refresher" for youth, as it may contain information not otherwise learned in school.

Approximate Length: 30 minutes (45 to 50 minutes with ice breakers)

Module Two:**Youth Culture**

This module takes the culture consideration one step further, sharing the concept of youth culture and how that impacts the relationships between youth and adults. Consider having a young person conduct or assist in the presentation.

Approximate Length: 20 minutes (30 to 40 minutes with ice breakers)

Module Three:**Being an Effective Adult Ally**

This module is designed as an introduction to the idea of “adults as allies.” Many adults behave in patterns that are patronizing to youth, often without noticing it. Through self-examination exercises and regular reflection, adults can “check” their mannerisms in order to be a more effective ally/partner.
Approximate Length: 50 minutes (65 minutes with ice breakers)

Module Four:**Key Components of a Successful Partnership**

How can youth and adult allies work together toward common goals? This module examines successful components of partnership from both the youth and the adult perspectives.
Approximate Length: 50 to 60 minutes (75 to 85 minutes with ice breakers)

Module Five:**Youth Leadership:****Meaningful Participation vs. Tokenism**

Involving youth requires more than making sure they are “at the table.” This module shows you how to make sure that youth are valued stakeholders and meaningfully involved in the discussions and decisions being made.
Approximate Length: 30 to 40 minutes (60 minutes with ice breakers)

Module Six:**Partnerships in Practice**

This module showcases positive partnerships at the local, state and national levels. It also covers ideas for getting started in your community. From baby steps to giant leaps, anyone can get started involving youth in activities. While this module is intended for adults, youth can also use the ideas to support their involvement.
Approximate Length: 40 minutes (60 to 70 minutes with ice breakers)

Module One:

Disability History and Disability Culture

Approximate Length: 30 minutes (45 to 50 minutes with ice breakers)

Welcome - A Topic Overview

People with disabilities have a rich history and culture, a culture that adds a dimension to young people's lives. The history of disability is not generally taught in schools and can benefit everyone, including people with disabilities, who will likely learn something new. All participants will gain a better understanding of the stereotypes that people in our society hold and that individuals with disabilities live with.

Disability history is just as important to the disability community as Black history or Native American history is to those communities. Keep in mind that what is presented here are just the "highlights." You may consider asking the participants if they have events to add to the timeline or stories to share about their own experiences.

The first section of this module on disability culture can be helpful for all participants. However, the main thrust of the module is for those with little or no understanding or experience working with people with disabilities - or for those who are experienced but appreciate a refresher. The information in this module can be amended based on the audience.

Suggested Ice Breaker

Materials Needed: Handouts 1:1 and 1:2, flip chart and markers

To understand culture as a whole, you must first understand and identify with your own culture. Have the group pair up with someone they do not know. Once everyone is paired up, the facilitator will ask the partners to share with each other where their parents and grandparents were born and what they know about the country where their parents and grandparents were born. Then have each person find a new partner. Once everyone has found a new partner, the facilitator will ask the partners to share their view on education and where they think that view came from. Have each person switch one more time and the facilitator will now ask the partners to share what their view on disability is and where they think that view came from. Discuss what the large group learned from each other and about themselves. Talk about how many people don't think they have a culture of their own and check with the group if they think that changed after doing the activity.

Activity: Word Association

This activity is meant to illustrate the danger of stereotypes and the tendency we have to apply false assumptions to people with disabilities. This activity is a good lead-in to the Disability History and Culture section.

- Ask participants to say what comes to mind when they think of the following words/phrases: **worker, citizen, student, productive, unemployed, chronically ill.**

TRAINER'S TIP:

The following handouts are designed for this module. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with them before the presentation.

Appendix A

1:1 Disability Awareness cartoon

1:2 "Common Myths and Stereotypes about People with Disabilities"

If you use these handouts, pass them out some time during the discussion part of the Word Association activity. Pass them out as you see fit to move the discussion along.

TRAINER'S TIP:

Use the following narrative as a guide to highlight history and culture. Aside from the facts, do not read it word for word. You'll want to have a good grasp on the material so you can deliver the history smoothly.

- Post the group brainstorm on a flip chart. Some typical responses may be:
 - worker: taxpayer, laborer, manual labor, provider, skilled
 - citizen: born here, community participant, involved
 - student: high school, learning, needs training, school, not working, young, inexperienced
 - productive: work, provider, produces materials, products
 - unemployed: poor, needy, looking for a job, unskilled
 - chronically ill: can't work, needs assistance from other people
- Use the phrases and words that came to mind to illustrate the "box" that people with disabilities are often put in by others because of their internalized attitudes and assumptions.
- Take some time to discuss what this "box" means for the advancement of people with disabilities, and the hopes and dreams of young people who are put into that "box."

A Brief History of Disability and Disability Culture¹**A few facts from the 2000 U.S. Census:**

- 49.7 million people (19.3% of the population) have some level of disability.
- 18.3 million people (8.6%) between 16 and 64 years have a disability that makes it difficult to go outside the home.
- 21.3 million people (11.9%) between 16 and 64 years have a disability that affects their ability to work.
- 2.6 million children and youth have a disability (5.8% of all children between the ages of 5 and 15).

According to the 23rd Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2001, youth with disabilities - and in particular, youth who also face ethnic discrimination and poverty - are often denied adequate opportunities for self-realization and positive experiences with peers from different backgrounds. abilities Education Act, 2001

Historically, the condition of having a disability has been viewed as tragic.

In pre-industrial times, when people with disabilities were often unable to support themselves or their families, they were seen as social dependents, objects of pity, or recipients of charity. Through ignorance and fear, people with disabilities were typically labeled beggars or indigents. The word "handicap" itself is said to derive from "cap in hand," a posture often associated with panhandling

¹ Beyond Affliction: The Disability History Project. (1998). Straight Ahead Pictures. Retrieved April 14, 2005 from www.npr.org/programs/disability/index.html

This is a four-hour documentary radio series about the shared experience of people with disabilities and their families since the beginning of the 19th century. The Web site includes excerpts from the shows as well as many of the primary source documents, extended interviews, images, and texts from which the on-air programs were developed.

By the 19th century in America, many in society assumed a paternalistic approach toward people with disabilities.

It was common for people with disabilities to be separated from society in asylums, hospitals, and state schools. People with disabilities were defined as patients or clients who needed curing. In these institutions, medical professionals and social workers were considered the primary decision-makers, rather than the people with disabilities themselves.

This system had the effect of excluding people with disabilities from the larger society.

While the assumption was that people with disabilities needed to be rehabilitated from their “problems,” great numbers of people with disabilities had conditions for which there was no cure. This perception implied that something was inherently and permanently wrong with them. It provided no room for integration, and later allowed for the perpetuation of myths regarding disability and inequality.

1930 - 1970: The medical perspective on disability.

The view that disability is primarily a medical condition contributed to the isolation of people with disabilities. People with disabilities were expected to “overcome” their disability, as Helen Keller and President Franklin Roosevelt were said to have done. Meanwhile, a movement of parents began in the 1950s to change the way society regarded mental retardation in particular. Consumer organizations like the United Cerebral Palsy, the Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and the American Cancer Society organized their members into sometimes competing lobbies, which divided up the charity and welfare dollars. A few leaders were beginning to see disability as a social and even a political problem as much as an individual one.

Here are some highlights from this period:

- Low expectations for people with disabilities tended to turn state “schools” into custodial warehouses. The National Association for Retarded Children (later The Arc) fought for recognition of the humanity of people labeled mentally retarded. At the state level, change began when special education programs were developed in public schools.
- Medical advances promised to eliminate much disability, and though this promise was overstated, there seemed to be fewer people with disabilities on the streets; many were warehoused in institutions, shunted to special schools, or kept out of sight at home. The streets and communities were physically inaccessible. There were few, if any, role models for people growing up with disabilities.
- Many people with disabilities look at the admission of Ed Roberts to the University of California at Berkeley in 1962 as a pivotal moment in the history of the disability movement. A quadriplegic paralyzed from

the neck down due to childhood polio, Roberts overcame opposition to achieve admission to Berkeley. A headline at the time announced: "Helpless Cripple Attends UC Classes." He was housed in the campus hospital.²

- Ed Roberts was soon joined on campus by other men and women with disabilities. Calling themselves the "Rolling Quads," they fought for services that would help them live independently away from the hospital. With a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, they started the independent living movement.³

1970 - Present

Two changes of perspective powered the creation of a disability community. First, all people with disabilities were recognized for sharing the experience of social stigma, isolation, and second-class citizenship. Second, new groups, such as the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, began to demand not just disability services, but basic human and civil rights - like the removal of architectural barriers and education to eliminate job discrimination.

Here are some highlights from this period:

- 1973: Rehabilitation Act - Section 504, a paragraph 42 words long, guaranteed access to all Federally-financed institutions - schools, hospitals, transportation systems, etc. It mobilized a generation of young disability activists. Their efforts led to ramps at the post office and universities, handicapped parking spaces, sign language interpreters, and independent living centers. This was a cultural and environmental transformation that provided the legal precedent and institutional experience paving the way for the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990).
- 1975: The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now referred to as IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act) was passed and began to be implemented in 1977. For the first time in the United States, children with disabilities began to go to school regularly with their same age peers. The hope continues that this investment will contribute to major progress in the opportunities for independence available to people with disabilities.
- 1990: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990. The ADA is wide-ranging legislation intended to make American society more accessible to people with disabilities and to make it possible for them to seek and hold jobs. The ADA is divided into five areas:
 - *Title I: Employment* - Reasonable accommodation at work. Employers are required to find techniques, devices, or process modifications to accommodate people with disabilities who are well qualified for the job but need reasonable adjustments to use their talents.

² The Disability Rights Movement: A Brief History (1999). Toward Inclusion: Meeting The Needs Of Persons With Disabilities In The U.S., U.S. Society and Values. January 1999. Retrieved April 14, 2005 from usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0199/ijse/toc.htm

³ Disability Cool and the Disability Cyberchicks (n.d.). Retrieved April 14, 2005 from www.geocities.com/HotSprings/7319/cultmain.htm

- *Title II: Services* - Public services must be accessible, including transportation.
- *Title III: Public Accommodations and Services* - All new construction and modifications must be accessible to individuals with disabilities, including restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, retail stores, etc., as well as privately owned transportation systems.
- *Title IV: Telecommunications* - Telecommunications companies offering telephone service to the general public must have telephone relay service for individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TTYs) or similar devices.
- *Title V: Miscellaneous* - Title V includes a provision prohibiting either (a) coercing or threatening or (b) retaliating against the person with a disability or those attempting to aid people with disabilities in asserting their rights under the ADA.

Disability Culture

Many people with disabilities feel they are still a largely invisible minority.

Most of us have come to recognize the common assumptions our culture has held about gender and race, and most have tried to confront them. But as a nation we haven't examined the common attitudes we hold about people with disabilities.

The disability culture movement.

In recent years people with disabilities have mobilized. They've come together and begun to redefine for themselves how they and the experience of disability are perceived and understood by the public at large. Even though the ties between groups and generations remain, at times, fragile, this intentional gathering for political and social goals has created cross-disability coalitions, focusing on securing civil rights guarantees for people with disabilities.

The disability culture encourages pride in one's disability, creating positive self-images, and building a society that not only accepts but also celebrates difference. It rejects the historical models and embraces the person with a disability as a self-directed, autonomous individual.

The disability culture movement calls for the recovery of disability history, the establishment of "disability studies" in academia, and the support of artistic expressions of the disability experience through poetry, music, art, and dance.

People who are part of the disability culture share pride in being who they are and they translate their pride into changing the way media portrays people with disabilities and the way society at large views them.

The disability culture:

- Revels in sharing common experiences and enjoying the company of one another;
- Recognizes the role people with disabilities have as legitimate members of society and the value of their lives;
- Is proud of the history of the culture and of not feeling isolated.
- Encourages buying products with the symbol on it that indicates the product was developed and sold by other people with disabilities.
- Recognizes the common barriers and creative strategies appropriate to achieving full integration into society.

People with disabilities, like all other people, bring their own thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes to their experience.

It is important to acknowledge that people with disabilities relate on a variety of levels to the notion of a “disability culture.” Carol Gill, a psychologist who has studied disability culture at length, summarizes the disability movement, saying, “Gradually, people with disabilities are finding their history and cultural legacy. They are seeking support and validation in the community - the family - of other disabled people.”⁴

“Disability culture has its greatest influence when people with disabilities write their own books, do their own research, paint, draw, act in films, and express themselves through the use of language and image.”⁵

⁴ The Disability Rights Movement: A Brief History (1999). Toward Inclusion: Meeting The Needs Of Persons With Disabilities In The U.S., U.S. Society and Values. January 1999. Retrieved April 14, 2005 from usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0199/ijse/toc.htm

⁵ Disability Cool and the Disability Cyberchicks (n.d.). Retrieved April 14, 2005 from www.geocities.com/HotSprings/7319/cultmain.htm

Module Two: Youth Culture

Approximate Length: 20 minutes (30 to 40 minutes with ice breakers)

Welcome - A Topic Overview

Usually a young person with a disability identifies most strongly as a teen first, and then as someone with a disability. Youth with disabilities are part of the wider “youth culture” as well as the disability culture discussed in Module One. You, of course, know that any time you work with youth, you need to understand their culture. This module will give you a brief introduction to the youth culture and how it impacts the relationships between youth and adults.

Suggested Ice Breaker

Materials Needed: Handout 2:1, flip chart and markers, a lunch bag or handout, and small slips of paper for questions

When done with a mixture of youth and adults, adults can gain some insight into what youth are interested in today and vice versa. On individual pieces of paper, create a list of questions (a minimum of one question for each person in the group) and place the pieces of paper in a bag or hat. Have each person pick a question, read it out loud to the group, and then answer the question. Possible questions could include:

What is your favorite CD?

What is your favorite DVD?

What is your favorite TV show?

If you could have one wish what would it be?

Would you rather be rich, famous, or happy?

What would you do to improve your school?

If you could pass any law, what would it be?

What is your biggest pet peeve?

In what period of time would you choose to live in – past, present, future?

What makes you happy?

What makes you sad?

What do you do for fun with your friends?

What do you do for fun by yourself?

Adapted from *Tribes: A New Way of Learning and Being Together*
by Jeanne Gibbs

TRAINER'S TIP:

This module is best facilitated by a youth or young adult—someone who has “been there.” This would lend credibility to the information, and the presentation can be “peppered” with real life experiences.

Begin the module by taking your participants through the material presented in this module. Then do the activity using Handout 2:1 “Mapping Youth Participation.” When you get to the point in your presentation where this handout applies, a Trainer’s Tip will guide you on how to use it. Note that you and your participants will come back to this handout in Module Five.

The youth culture is a very broad and complex phenomenon. The material in this module is for guidance. It’s written in third person but if you have a young person presenting, it can easily be adapted to the first person. In any case it shouldn’t be read word for word. Encourage your young presenter to augment the material from his or her own knowledge and/or experience. If you are presenting, feel free to do the same.

TRAINER'S TIP:

Don't feel constrained by the specific references used by the Youth Activism Project, particularly in number 3 on the previous page. You get the idea - update it, make it relevant to your audience.

Youth culture is reflected everywhere. Discuss what your audience thinks about the youth culture before going on in your presentation.

A Brief Look at the Youth Culture¹**A few facts insights:**

About one quarter of the population (26%) in the U.S. is under the age of 18. Think about the significance of this fact in terms of the impact of this 26% segment of the population. According to the Youth Activism Project, 26%:

- Participate in school and community activities;
- Spend more than \$150 billion per year;
- Strongly care about the world in which they live;
- Cannot vote.

The Youth Activism Project offers that 26% of the people in the U.S. are supposed to be seen and not heard, except in how they spend. Further, it means 100% of those responsible for the future are typically not encouraged to exercise leadership.

That interpretation does correspond to how many young people feel. Here are three more basic insights from the Youth Activism Project:

1. For today's teens, email is as common as the telephone, and a favorite afterschool activity includes surfing the web.
2. Their environment is more multicultural than that of their parents and grandparents, and images of sex and violence surround them on a daily basis.
3. To some youth, the Vietnam War and the assassinations of John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X, Medgar Evers, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are ancient history. But they do know about the war on terrorism; the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon; and the school shooting tragedies across the country.

How do we see youth? What's really going on?

Historically, our culture tends to see groups of people in certain ways. This is certainly true of youth and youth culture. All of us can recite some of the negative perceptions, such as: impatience with parents, inexperience, tendency to follow a crowd, trendiness, flakiness...and all the consequences of "raging" hormones. But, like a lot of cultural stereotypes, these aren't exactly true. What is true is that youth experience a lot of changes throughout their teens and early adulthood which can be confusing and frustrating to adults. But it's not the youth's fault. We now know that considerable brain development takes place during adolescence and affects functions such as planning, impulse control and reasoning, as well as how youth process emotions.² The way adults choose to interact with youth can make a critical difference.

¹ Lesko, W., & Tsourounis, E. (1998). Youth! The 26% Solution. Kensington, MD: Youth Activism 2000 Project.

² National Institute of Mental Health. (2001). Teenage Brain: a Work in Progress. Retrieved April 14, 2005 from www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/teenbrain.cfm

So how do youth see themselves in relation to the world? Adults who partner with youth will discover that their values include:³

- **Self-idealism/Optimism** - Most youth believe they are special and can accomplish whatever they desire.
- **Activism** - Teens often play an active role in such issues as environmentalism and social responsibility. Teens are interested in working on a personal level to improve society.
- **Morality/Spirituality** - Today's teens tend to speak about the importance of spirituality and religion.
- **Authenticity** - Honesty is important to teens. They often perceive that the most authentic voices belong to those who have "been there and done that" and who have shared experiences similar to their own.
- **Self-Reliance** - Many of today's teens have been raised to be self-reliant and to believe in their own abilities.

Exclusion and Power ⁴

Youth in general have feelings of exclusion and powerlessness. This is an even bigger issue when youth have disabilities. It is important to recognize some of the challenges they have felt and experienced. They frequently feel marginalized in school and in program activities, excluded by other kids, and overly protected by adults.

It's up to those who are in powerful positions to encourage change without calling attention to youth with disabilities while doing it. Within any community, certain people control information, wealth and resources. They are able to make changes, as others work to encourage change. High school principals, mayors and corporate executives are good examples. You may be one of these people who are powerful. If so, use your power constructively.

Many times, teens with disabilities are excluded from activities because of perceived (vs. actual) obstacles to their participation. They may have trouble participating in afterschool activities because they do not have transportation. Other kids may not invite them to parties or outings because kids with disabilities are thought of as being "sick." Sometimes, parents of teens with disabilities inadvertently isolate their own kids because the parents are afraid of what might happen away from their watchful eye.

Activity: Mapping Youth Participation

- Using Handout 2:1, ask the adult participants to identify what their roles are in their work and in community activities that are about or for youth. They can draw a diagram or picture, or make a list. Encourage them to use whatever method is most comfortable. Then, ask them to consider those roles and identify where youth are also involved and not involved, especially when decisions about youth are being made.

Ask the youth participants to use the worksheet to identify their roles in their work and in community activities that are about or for youth. Then ask them to consider those roles and identify where youth are involved and not involved, especially when decisions about youth are being made.

³ Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. (2001). *Retrospective: A Parents Guide to Youth Culture*. Washington, D.C.: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

⁴ Dingerson, L., & Hay, S. (2001). *Co-motion - Guide to Youth-Led Social Change*. Washington, D.C.: Alliance for Justice.

TRAINER'S TIP:

After your discussion of power, turn to Handout 2:1 "Mapping Youth Participation." The handout will help the participants "map" their activities that are about youth, identify where youth are involved and where they are not involved. In Module Five, we will talk more about the quality of the roles that youth take in each of these situations. Now is the time to discuss where youth are, where they should be and how to get them where they are not.

Activity: Question for Discussion

- Question for group discussion/brainstorm: What have you done to successfully involve youth that has worked really well? What can you do to increase youth involvement where there historically hasn't been any? It may be helpful to write the responses on flip chart paper.

Module Three:

Being an Effective Adult Ally

Approximate Length: 50 minutes (65 minutes with ice breakers)

Welcome - A Topic Overview

It's difficult for some adults to understand that youth can be youth and still be partners and meaningful participants in a mutual undertaking. This module is to help participants empathize with young people in order to better serve as their ally. It encourages participants to remember what it's like to be young. It also provides information on adultism, what it is, how you can reduce it, and how you can become an ally to youth.

Adultism refers to all the behaviors and attitudes that flow from the assumption that adults are better than young people - they have more knowledge, more skills, more experience, more rights than youth - and are entitled to act on behalf of young people in many ways without their agreement. To work with young people successfully, it's necessary to tackle the pervasive existence of adultism.

Suggested Ice Breaker

Materials Needed: Handouts 3:1 and 3:2

As adults, it's important to be clear about our intentions and create a space and opportunity for youth to feel comfortable and respected. Adults can do this by being sure to always include more than one youth to be part of an activity or group, taking time to have a little fun, providing stress relievers or pipe cleaners to play with, recapping the accomplishments the youth have made so they understand their role is meaningful and valued.

For adults and youth to work together effectively, both have to trust each other. It helps to know that youth and adults do have many things in common. This activity will help youth and adults realize that they do have more in common than they might think. Have the large group break into small groups of 3 to 5 people each. Ask the small groups to find three things they have in common with each other. After each group has identified three things they have in common, have the large group get into different small groups of 3 to 5 people and repeat the activity. After each group has completed the activity again have the groups report what they found they had in common. Ask the group what they learned from each other by completing this activity. If youth and adults did this activity together ask if they felt like youth and adults had more or less in common than they thought.

Being an Effective Adult Ally

Working with youth as partners can be a challenge. In many cases, we are working against many years of traditional adult/youth interaction - that of parent/child, teacher/student, etc. where adults are in the position of authority. Youth are used to the power dynamic inherent in those relationships. Young people are often unsure of the intentions of an adult approaching them with a "partnership opportunity."

TRAINER'S TIP:

The following handouts are designed for this module. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with them before the presentation.

Appendix A

3:1 "Understanding and Supporting Young People"

3:2 "How Adults Can Stop Adultism"

Be sure to skip ahead and read the True Stories at the end of the module to see if you would like to incorporate any of them in your presentation to illustrate a point.

Before getting into the topic of adultism, do Activity 1. It will demonstrate how the mind frequently substitutes associations we have made in the past for the reality we are dealing with in the present - just as we often attach associations we've made in the past about youth to an interaction in the present.

TRAINER'S TIP:

Use the explanation of adultism that follows as guidance for presenting the topic. Consult the two handouts in Appendix A (3:1 "Understanding and Supporting Young People"; 3:2 "How Adults Can Stop Adultism"). Consider handing them out toward the end of this module when you are discussing positive steps for becoming an adult ally and countering adultism.

In presenting the material on adultism, don't read anything word for word. This material can be a little difficult for some adults to hear/think about. It's a new concept for most. People do not like to be "accused" of an "ism". This is not intended to be accusatory, just educational. People cannot change their behavior until they know that it is inappropriate.

Once you've presented the material, open a discussion. The goal is to educate participants in how (or if) they inadvertently practice adultism — and to motivate them toward a more open relationship with youth as partners.

As adults, it's important to be clear about our intentions and create a space and opportunity for youth to feel comfortable and respected. Being an effective adult ally is made easier if we remember that:

- Teenagers who want to participate in activist projects are highly motivated and inspired young people.
- If they seek your help or support, be honored and embrace the opportunity.
- The experiences that will confront you in working with youth will give you a new perspective on life and make you more hopeful about the future.

Adults play a key role in identifying, nurturing, educating, encouraging, counseling, advising and inspiring youth leaders. Youth often yearn for a relationship with an adult who can be trusted with confidential information - someone who can lend a hand, provide guidance and reassurance, and relieve adolescent angst with caring confidence. Adults who possess authority, give approval, and become real friends to young people can have an unexpected influence.

By being an adult ally, we are in a wonderful position to lead by example and to help nurture the leadership of the next generation.

Activity 1: Another Word Association

Do this as a quick group exercise. Follow these steps: have the group repeat the word below four times, getting louder each time, and then answer the question.

1. Ready, say "WHITE" — "WHITE" — "WHITE" — "WHITE!!!"
2. Now answer this question quickly "WHAT DO COWS DRINK?"

How many of you said milk? So did I the first time I tried this exercise. Actually, to be truthful, sometimes when I'm using this exercise I'll think 'milk' too. The reason you think and say milk is because your mind has set up an association between cows and milk. Even though you know that cows give milk but don't drink milk (unless it's a baby calf), your prior association fills in where you are not paying absolutely strict attention to the present.

These patterns of association are usually built on repetition. If you hear a message frequently enough, you will ultimately "store" it as a fact - frequently without even being aware that you're doing it! That's the principle employed by advertisers.

The remedy is to treat all encounters as if they are something brand new. To achieve that, we need to start asking questions of ourselves and each other so that negative stereotypes and myths about people can be zapped out of existence. Let's replace those stereotypes and myths with accurate information about who we really are, build new patterns of association, and - in the process - note that we really are more alike than different.

Adultism

“Adultism” is a new name for a not-so-new set of behaviors. Barry Checkoway describes these behaviors this way: “Except for prisoners and a few other institutionalized groups, young people’s lives are more controlled than those of any other group in society. In addition, adults may reserve the right to punish, threaten, hit, take away ‘privileges,’ and ostracize young people when they consider it beneficial in controlling them or ‘disciplining’ them. If this were a description of the way a group of adults were treated, society would quickly recognize it as a form of oppression.”¹

If you have chosen to work with youth as partners, it’s unlikely that you intentionally engage in adultism. But you may not be aware of it. Adults generally do not realize that their behavior can be seen as oppressive. If this is how we were treated as youth, however, the process may have become a set of internalized patterns of association. This way of thinking and acting becomes ingrained without us realizing it.

Adultism can take many forms

Adultism can reveal itself in types of behaviors.² It could be a questioning look or sharp words. Adults may assume that youth only know about issues concerning youth, or that they can only handle small or menial tasks. Youth may feel hurt or discounted when they hear comments like “Trust me, I have years of experience,” or “You’re so smart for a teen-ager!”

Adultism also reveals itself in:

- Stereotypes about young people: lazy, uneducated, not intelligent, angry, self-absorbed, silly.
- Young people being left out of decisions being made at home, in the classroom, on school boards, in community agencies, city councils, congressional chambers, etc. Often, those decisions directly affect young people!
- The failure to support young people’s development by supporting opportunities for them to learn through experience. Community-based learning often provides experiential learning for students, where they put class work into practice.
- The failure of adults to ask young people to reflect on the important connections between people, community institutions, and themselves. What does it mean to youth to be members of their neighborhoods, their faith communities, their school? How do adults help them reflect on these relationships?
- Traditional methods of teaching where a teacher or expert lectures (usually standing) to a classroom of students (usually sitting) can be a form of adultism. We recognize that at times large enrollment or class set-up necessitates the lecture approach; however, when the only method used to educate is the lecture, the approach becomes adultist. There are always other options that can help the lecturer become what some call the “guide on the side” rather than the “sage on the stage” - including rotating presenters in front of the class, requesting a change in rooms to facilitate smaller group discussions, providing incentives for students to communicate directly with the lecturer and with each other, etc.

¹ Checkoway, B. (1996). *Adults as Allies*. Ann Arbor, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, University of Michigan School of Social Work.

² Stoneman, D. (1988). *Handbook of Leadership Development*. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild, USA.

How does adultism influence youth?

A story: A youth group is planning a trip to Washington DC. The group's advisor thinks it would be best if the group does some fundraising projects to earn the money for the trip. At one of the group's meetings, the advisor tells the group that they will be selling magazine subscriptions and holding a bake sale to raise funds. "Since this is your trip," he tells them, "you need to plan the fundraising activities." However, he's already gotten the information needed for the magazine subscriptions and made arrangements for when and where the bake sale will be held. There isn't a lot of enthusiasm for the projects. He doesn't understand why, since these are both proven ways of raising money. When one of the youth suggests holding a dance as a fundraiser instead, he tells them that just won't raise enough money. "Trust me, this is a better way of doing it." He's surprised when most of the youth decide they can't go on the trip after all.

"But I don't intend to be adultist!"

Adults support adultism without knowing it when they fail to listen, are not good mentors, do not consider youth opinions, and rarely ask young people to be involved in community processes. To address adultism and stereotypes about young people, adults should ask themselves the following questions:³

- How do I communicate with young people? Do I "talk down" to them?
- Can I remember what it's like to be 8? 12? 17?
- Do I take the time to know many young people? What is important to them? What are they thinking about?
- Do I have different expectations for how youth behave, compared to what I accept from adults?
- Do I respect the ideas of people younger than I am?
- Would I put their ideas into practice?
- Am I willing to create time, space, and support for young people's ideas at home, at school, and in the community?

Activity 2: What was it like being 15 years old?⁴

- Tell group members that they will participate in an exercise to get acquainted and recall their own experiences as a young person.
- Ask group members to divide into pairs. One person in each pair will interview the other, using the questions below as guidelines. After 5-10 minutes, ask them to switch roles.
 - What was it like being 15 years old?
 - Where did you live?
 - What did you look like?
 - What made you different?
 - What were you thinking about?
 - How did you feel?
 - Who were the young people who participated in your community?

TRAINER'S TIP:

Activity 2 is meant to encourage "emotional recall" - you want participants to put themselves back into the state of mind they occupied as a 15 year old. Use it as a transition between the exploration of adultism and the section following the activity, which addresses what adults can do to defeat adultism.

³ Ibid. Stoneman, D. (1988). Handbook of Leadership Development. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild, USA.

⁴ Checkoway, B. (1996). Adults as Allies. Ann Arbor, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, University of Michigan School of Social Work.

- What were they like?
- What did they do?
- Did you participate actively in the community?
- If not,
 - * What kept you from participating more actively?
 - * What could you have done to participate more actively?
- If you did,
 - * How did you first actively participate in the community?
 - * What facilitated your active participation in the community?
- Who were the adults who worked well with young people?
- What were their qualities or characteristics?
- What could adults have done to help you participate? Or
- What did adults do that helped or encouraged you to participate?
- Ask the large group to share how they felt about answering those questions.
 - Did they remember what it was like to be 15 years old?
 - Did they come to any realizations after completing the activity about how they partner with youth?

“What can I do to defeat adultism?”

Adultism, like sexism, racism, and ageism, marginalizes groups of people and diminishes an individual’s capacity to reach her or his full potential. None of us willingly wants to be guilty of such unfair discrimination against youth. Equally important is the fact that youth can contribute to our communities and our world in important ways. We just can’t afford adultism if it means that the potential contributions of youth will be lost as a result.

In their article, *“Adultism is an ‘ism’ too,”* Candice Swiderski and Stacey Palma share some recommendations to help you purge adultism from your behavior.⁵

1. Treat young people as partners rather than clients.

When planning meetings, ask for their input on times, places and agendas. Be flexible and make sure that their concerns are being addressed.

2. Be willing to share power.

Allow youth to facilitate or co-facilitate meetings. Sharing power also means sharing responsibility. Let youth share in the meeting set up, activity implementation, logistics, correspondence, etc.

3. Adults managing an organization or program should share all budgets with teens.

This is a great learning experience for the teens and it holds the youth and the adults accountable for equitable spending. When budgets and spending choices are shared by the adult allies and youth leaders, everybody wins - the youth learn important budgeting skills and decision-making and the adults learn about what the youth identify as budget priorities.

⁵ Swiderski, C., & Palma, S. (1999). *Adultism is an “ism” too.* The Partnership Press. Retrieved April 14, 2005 from <http://www.ctassets.org/fall1999/voice.cfm>

4. **Be aware of the need for flexible schedules.**

For example, schedule meetings during non-school hours. This goes for conference calls and in-person meetings and activities. There's no "room" for compromise on this issue. Youth just cannot attend when they should be in school. Consult the school calendar to find days when the youth are not in school.

5. **Adults interested in joining a program must be interviewed by teens.**

This is another example of sharing leadership and responsibility. When youth are involved in the selection process, even if it is to screen volunteers, they learn about the process and they also have a "buy-in" to the proposed candidates. Simply allowing youth to help come up with interview questions and job requirements, and to have a part in the interviews, will help to "sell" the candidate to the rest of the group. Additionally, the proposed candidate will see, by example, how committed you are to youth leadership and partnership with youth. You are playing the role of an ally.

6. **Youth do not want to be the passive recipients of services or viewed as people who need to be fixed.**

Create opportunities that allow youth to solve problems and bring about change in their community. Help to draw out the gifts and strengths of each person and build on them.

7. **Eliminate patronizing and passive/aggressive language from conversations with teens.**

This may take practice. Throughout your interactions with youth, check in with yourself periodically and think about your language. Don't be overly critical or use terms like "children," or "boys and girls," when addressing teens. Maybe even find a trusted youth leader who you can work with - and who will create a way to signal you when your language or behavior may be offensive. Of course, you can also do the same with that youth leader when youth language and/or behavior may not be respectful to adult allies. Have periodic check-ins with the youth to make sure language is understandable and appropriate.

8. **Establish emotionally safe environments for teens by sharing some information about you and allowing youth to have fun.**

Most of the time, you will know a lot more about the youth you work with than they will know about you. It's helpful to build the trust needed to work well together if you can share a bit about yourself with them. This can be about your hobbies and life outside of work or even a little something about your personal experiences as a younger person, especially if you have had experiences they can particularly relate to or learn from.

9. **Look beyond appearances.**

Youth have always had some creative ways of expressing themselves. Sometimes it's very different from what we would choose for ourselves or for our own kids (piercing, tattoos, revealing clothes, etc.). It's important to keep reminding yourself that this is just that - kids expressing themselves. This should not hinder your relationship. There may be times when you have to have a discussion about appropriate dress and appearance for the sake of public meetings or presentations, but youth are still youth first.

Activity 3: Questions for Reflection

Use the following question for discussion: Based on the above nine recommendations to reduce adultism, what is one change you can make in your organization or agency right now? Ask yourself how you and your organization relate to these recommendations.

Youth are the best experts on the experiences and perspectives of youth. Do your relationships with them reflect this? If so, how have you been able to cultivate these relationships? If not, what can you do about it?

True Stories: Things I Have Learned

- ***Sometimes we have to be a little flexible.*** *One youth I work with, Paul, has Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Among other things, Paul has trouble sitting still for long periods of time. Our first time meeting face to face, there were ten young people and myself in a room set up for a board meeting - one long table with fancy chairs. About two hours into our meeting, I noticed Paul was appearing to lose focus. An hour later, Paul was up, walking around the room, looking out the window, taking pictures of the groups - all the while contributing to the discussion and making recommendations.*

After the meeting, Paul came up to me and asked me why I didn't "kick him out" of the meeting. I asked him why I would do that. He shrugged and walked away. Later that day, his dad came up to me and told me how excited Paul was that he was able to participate. He then explained why. It seems Paul was always getting kicked out of his classes for not sitting still. He had never really participated in a meeting like ours and was surprised that I didn't "make" him sit down. I had realized when Paul was wandering around the room that the rest of the youth were not bothered by it. It threw me off, but since it didn't bother them, I tried not to let it bother me. The point was he was better able to participate for having done that.

- ***If you leave them, they will work.*** *At one meeting, I had the agenda all planned out. We plugged along in the morning, getting some work done, certainly not at the pace I had envisioned. The other thing I had not planned was who would go get lunch! I decided I needed air anyway, and the agenda was shot, so I would just leave the youth to do a large group activity while I (briefly) ran out to get lunch. While I was walking to and from the lunch place, I thought about how I could move the group along so they were back on track (back on MY track, the pace I had set without their input). While I was gone (about 45 minutes), they were to brainstorm qualities/descriptors for what kind of group they wanted to be and what they wanted to do. Upon my return they had a fully complete and agreed upon Mission Statement! While I was gone, they decided among themselves (with no pre-discussion by me) that in order to focus on what they wanted to do, they needed to agree on their mission and come up with a statement. Those with experience told the others what a mission statement is and why one is important. Then, they wrote one. They got more done in those 45 minutes than we did all day. I revised my agenda for the next day.*

TRAINER'S TIP:

Wrap up this module with Activity 3. Since this is a thought exercise, you can recommend that participants write down the questions and think on them in the coming days. This is also a good time to distribute Handouts 3:1 and 3:2.

- **Youth need youth-time.** *When my youth-led group meets, I am right there with them. They have “trained” me to be there to give support and guidance, and to step in when situations get too sticky. But most of the time, youth act as facilitators (and referees!) and the group manages itself. At least once a day during our meetings, the youth get “youth time.” All adults leave the room so the youth can check in with each other. It is their time to agree that the adults are not “taking over” their conversations, that each participant understands what’s going on, that concerns get addressed and questions are answered. It’s their chance to have a safe, youth-only place to bring up their concerns.*

Then, we all meet up again and the facilitators or leaders present any concerns the youth have to the adults. As we go through this process, the concerns get fewer and fewer. Occasionally, when we have “new” adults at the meetings, it can be a little off-putting to be sent out of the room. But we have found it to be necessary to respect the rights of the youth to work things out among themselves before it comes to me, and likewise to respect the feelings of the adults. In a few cases, the youth have had to bring to our attention that the adults (or one adult) were monopolizing a discussion or speaking in language that was offensive to some youth. In this case, it is much easier to hear this from the youth leaders than from the offended youth or in the larger group. Everyone’s feelings are protected.

Module Four:

Key Components of a Successful Partnership

Approximate Length: 50 to 60 minutes (75 to 85 minutes with ice breakers)

Welcome - A Topic Overview

In Module Three, we discussed how to be an adult ally to young people. Now we build on that basic connection to achieve full partnership. This module offers participants a framework for approaching youth as partners. It offers a way to see the youth/adult relationship differently so that it's possible to work together, share power, and learn from each other.

Why Involve Youth As Partners?

In a partnership, the youth and adults share full and equal participation in group planning, leadership, and the carrying-out of activities. The result is youth who are more skilled and prepared for adult roles and leadership positions. Equally important is that the adults and the organizations benefit from the priceless input of youth. Engaging youth and preparing them to be the best of leaders is our responsibility as adults.

The best time to encourage growth toward leadership is when you are working on projects or activities for and about youth. At those times you should view youth as partners. Here are some good reasons for doing so:

- Young people want to help; they develop a sense of worth by helping others.
- Youth who see themselves as competent develop more self-confidence.
- When youth are allowed to take an active part in the leadership roles within a group, it provides practical training for valuable leadership skills. Youth learn best when they can learn by doing.
- When youth are engaged in activities or projects, the quality of the programs and the product is much better and more reflective of what youth value.
- When adults accept youth as partners, mutual respect and trust for one another will be enhanced. Adults learn to value youth and utilize their potential to help the community.
- Youth who are involved in their community gain appreciation for their efforts, and may in turn feel more committed to promoting the well-being of that community.

The Spectrum of Attitudes

If we are going to work in true partnership with young people, we need to work differently than most adults did when they worked with us as youths. We need to look at where our attitudes toward partnership with young people came from, what attitudes underlie our actions and think about how that needs to change or stay the same. The attitudes adults hold toward young people often determine the degree to which they involve them as significant partners in decision making.

TRAINER'S TIP:

You will take up much of the 50 to 60 minutes of this module with two activities: "Practicing Adult - Youth Interactions" and "Tips for Adults and Youth Working Together."

The following handouts are designed for this module. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with them before the presentation.

Appendix A

4:1 "Tips & Tricks for Working with Adults as Partners"

4:2 "Tips & Tricks for Working with Youth as Partners"

4:3 "Practicing Adult - Youth Interactions" which includes three scenarios.

First discuss the information under "Why Involve Youth as Partners," then explain "The Spectrum of Attitudes." After that, do the two activities and discuss each.

As you proceed, occasionally remind yourself and your participants that traditionally, youth and adult roles have been defined by the parent/child relationship or the teacher/student relationship. Learning to be an ally and form a full partnership takes time.

William Lofquist (1989)¹ has developed and popularized a “Spectrum of Attitudes” that highlights three different approaches adults take toward dealing with young people.

- **Youth As Objects**

In this approach, the attitude is that young people have little to contribute. Adults may truly believe that they need to protect young people from ‘suffering’ from their mistakes. However, we know that involvement in meaningful roles is essential to positive growth and development of successful young adults. The “youth as objects” approach means that things are being done to and for youth.

Example: The adult decides on the fundraiser and tells the youth how to sell the magazines to raise funds.

- **Youth As Recipients**

In this approach, the attitude is that young people need to be guided through their participation in adult society. This attitude is characterized by adults “allowing” young people to take part in decision-making. The adults believe the experience will be “good for them” and an excellent opportunity for the youth to practice for when they become “real people.”

Consequently, responsibilities and tasks often delegated to young people are either trivial (it won't matter if they mess up) or those which adults don't want to do. The result? Youth realize that their role remains trivial and that adults are retaining the position of authority and much of the responsibility.

The “youth as recipients” approach is often confusing. Many adults think they have gotten youth involved or are partners with youth when the youth are really recipients. Services are provided for them and decisions are made for them. Again, they are having things done to and for them, not with and by them.

Example: Youth are delegated responsibilities such as cleaning up after an event or handing out flyers instead of co-facilitating the event and designing flyers.

- **Youth As Partners**

(or Youth as Resources, as Lofquist originally described this approach)

In this approach, the attitude is that the contributions of young people are welcomed and valued. Adults feel that young people are critical to the success of a program. Adults who view young people as partners are comfortable working with groups that have equal members of youth and adults. As full partners, both youth and adults bring strengths to the table and work in an equitable relationship.

Example: The adult asks questions such as “What do you think?” “How should we do this?” The answers are seriously discussed and jointly decided.

¹ Lofquist, W.L. (Fall, 1989). The Spectrum of Attitudes: Building a Theory of Youth Development. New Designs for Youth Development. Tucson, AZ: Associates for Youth Development, Inc.

Suggested Ice Breaker

Materials Needed: Handouts 4:1, 4:2, 4:3, flip chart paper and markers, index cards.

Successful partnerships mean working well together. Brainstorming is a great activity to get youth and adults working together. It is best to do this activity in groups of five to seven. Have each group assign a recorder for the group. Give each group a topic--start with a fun topic to get the groups warmed up (i.e. what's your ideal amusement park). The recorder writes the topic and the group's ideas on flip chart paper. Give the groups five minutes to brainstorm. After five minutes, have the groups share what they came up with. Then, give each group another topic. Choose a topic that is relevant to what you are working on. For example, what is the best way to help youth transition from pediatric to adult health care or what supports do youth need to become leaders. It may be helpful to set some ground rules before starting. For example, every answer has value, don't discuss each answer--just get the ideas down, be creative, etc. The results of this brainstorming activity can be used for future projects for the group to work on.

Activity 1: Three Scenarios Practicing Adult-Youth Interactions ²

Divide the participants into three or more groups. Give each group one of the scenarios to discuss. Ask them to come up with an approach for the assigned "attitudes." After about ten minutes, bring participants back to the large group for discussion.

Go through each scenario one at a time, allowing all the groups that had a particular scenario to talk about their approaches.

The following are possible ways to address the three attitudes in each of this activity's scenarios. This is just a guide, and is not intended as the "right" answers.

Scenario #1

Sally is involved in a community project. She has skills in writing letters. She volunteers to write a letter to the Mayor asking for permission to do the group project. It's time for the letter to be written. What do you say or do?

Youth as Objects approach:

Have Sally sit down and tell her exactly what she should write. "I'll tell you what to write because I've done this before and I know the Mayor, so just do what I say. I know more about what we want from the Mayor than you do. And I know what the Mayor will respond to."

Youth as Recipients approach:

"I could write this letter, but it will be a good learning experience for you to write a letter to the Mayor. If I help you do it this time, you'll know how to do it next time."

Youth as Partners approach:

"What do you think should go into the letter? What do you want the Mayor to do? If you don't know the administrative procedure that the Mayor needs to follow, I could help you find that out. How else can I be helpful to you?"

TRAINER'S TIP:

The "Youth As Partners Activity" introduces participants to the "spectrum of attitudes" to help them recognize the impact of different approaches when working with youth. This training is best done in small groups of 3-4 people.

The following handouts are designed for this module. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with them before the presentation.

Appendix A

4:3 "Practicing Adult-Youth Interactions" with three scenarios. Make copies of each scenario and pass them out one at a time.

The trainer's guide to the three scenarios that's included in the text offers a sample of how to deal with the three scenarios. That's for your use so you can see how filling out the worksheets can be done. You'll also find suggestions for discussion listed after your guide to the three scenarios.

² Used with permission from the Innovation Center, Chevy Chase, MD. www.theinnovationcenter.org

Case studies were originally described in *Partners in Community Leadership: Youth and Adults Working Together for Better Communities* (1993). Iowa State University.

TRAINER'S TIP:

Present guidelines for making the transition from objects and recipients to partners as the wrap up of Activity 1. You could write the main points on your flip chart or erasable board.

Then present the list of tips learned from young people. You can read and use the explanations as you think appropriate. You might write each point (not the explanations) on your flip chart or erasable board. The text blocks that appear below some items are anecdotes and observations about adult allies working with youth. Your participants should feel free to interject their own experiences and stories. At the end of the list, you'll find Activity 2 and instructions on how to conduct it.

Scenario #2

You are an adult advisor to a group of teens planning a party. The group has scheduled a planning meeting. You are the only adult and they are looking to you to get the meeting started. What do you say or do?

Youth as Objects approach:

The adult chairs the meeting. The adult has all the ideas and suggestions. The adult says or implies to the youth that they don't have experience doing this so they are not capable of doing it.

Youth as Recipients approach:

The adult puts the agenda on the board, and then goes through each agenda item asking for ideas from the youth. The adult puts some parameters on the kind of things that can be done (for example, no rap music).

Youth as Partners approach:

"How would you like to plan this party? What do you like to do? How should we pay for this party? In planning events, I have found it helpful to use a guide in planning. Would you like to use it or see it? How would you like to divide up the responsibilities? How can I help?"

Scenario #3

Your group is meeting to work on the project it has selected. Instead of getting down to business, the teens are flirting and laughing. You don't perceive that business is getting done. A youth is chair of the committee and is not doing anything about the situation. What do you say or do?

Youth as Objects approach:

The adult yells out above the noise of the group, tells everyone to quiet down and get to work or it will never get done. The youth chair is ignored and specific directions for doing the task are given to the other youth.

Youth as Recipients approach:

The adult talks to the chair and tells her/him what to do to get the group back to work. The adult makes a list of what the group should be doing, tells the teens how to do it, and assigns committees to show how the work can be accomplished.

Youth as Partners approach:

The adult and the teen chair have a short session to decide how to get the group back on track. They then involve the group in a planning process, setting goals, dates, responsibilities, etc. so everyone is in agreement about the next steps. The responsibility for accomplishment is shared by all of the group members. The adult works with the group, but does not continually "check up" on how well everyone is carrying out their role.

Questions for discussion:

- What were you thinking while you were doing this activity?
- What was the most important thing for you about doing this?
- What does this say about your role with young people?
- How might you use what you have heard and thought about today?

Making the Transition from Objects and Recipients to Partners (or Resources)

Let's say an adult has identified a group of youth to work with on a particular project. Here are some basic guidelines that make it easier for the adult to act as a partner rather than a giver to young people, who are then put in the role of the objects or recipients.

1. Discuss expectations in regard to meetings and seek a consensus on frequency, length, and location. Remember, one of your first responsibilities when working with youth is to be consistent and reliable.
2. Listen to the youths' ideas and proposals but resist making judgments initially. Maintain a distance from the projects to allow youth ownership, but continually help direct students on paths that will lead them to success.
3. Help youth locate valid and constructive resources and prompt them to discuss issues at hand in detail before diving into a project.
4. After they identify a project focus and review research and articles, youth can conduct fact-finding missions (surveys or interviews with school officials, for example) to find out what others already know regarding the issue, what experiences they may have had, and how they feel about it. Encourage them to get feedback and ideas from their community and peers at the outset and all along the way.
5. Have students identify other allies who would be willing to assist in their efforts.
6. Be clear and honest in your communication. Use language that the youth you are working with will understand.
7. Let youth make mistakes. Then resist the urge to fix things. You can support their efforts to learn from mistakes and go on, without making it a defeating experience.

Tips Learned from Young People³

In case some of us are wondering what young people would recommend that adults do to partner with youth, here are suggestions put together in consultation with youth. It offers a good deal of food for thought and discussion on what young people advise.

- **Play and laugh a lot.** You can get business done and have fun at the same time. Plan to have games and include hang-out times in your meetings. Business will get done much faster if you add playtime.

I always make it a point to have small toys, stickers, fun things and snacks at my meetings. In fact, I even bring them to my meetings with adults only! It lightens the mood and helps participants focus. It also demonstrates to the youth that you know how to have fun and can appreciate that it is sometimes difficult to sit - without moving or talking - for a whole meeting, no matter how long or short the meeting is. Having things that can occupy your hands sometimes helps your brain focus on the tasks your doing. Think of how many times you have doodled while on a conference call or in a meeting. That doesn't mean you were listening any less, but that you needed an outlet for physical energy while you were listening.

³ Adapted and used with permission of Youth on Board, Somerville, MA. www.youthonboard.org
Sazama, J. (2001). Tips from Young People on Good Adult Youth Relationships. Somerville, MA: Youth on Board.

- **Learn from young people.** People have varying amounts of information, but each person has her own unique perspective, and each experiences life in her own unique way. Young people have excellent opinions and thoughts about many different subjects, and they especially know what's best for young people. Value what they have to say.

I find it most helpful to run ideas by a small trusted group of youth allies. I find that although I like to think I am very in tune with young people, sometimes I am not. It helps to run my ideas and thoughts by the small group, who I trust to be honest with me so when I present my ideas to the bigger group, the small group can support me and I can feel confident in representing several perspectives.

- **Never believe that youth do not have an opinion about something.** You might have to ask them to express their ideas at least ten different times and you may have to ask in ten different ways. When given the information and time to think - offered with the expectation that "of course they know" - young people will come up with brilliant opinions and solutions for almost ANY situation.
- **Go to their space on their turf.** Reverse the power dynamic so you show respect and value for their world, and trust will come more easily. Go where they are and get to know their culture.
- **Speak to young people with utmost respect.** Our tone of voice might get funny without our knowing it. Young people will notice this. If you show them you respect their thinking, will listen carefully, and take seriously what they have to say, you and they will both feel empowered. It's especially important to remember this when using email to communicate. Remember that we cannot sense the tone of an email like we would in a conversation. So we have to take extra effort to make sure our words are not likely to be misinterpreted.
- **Let young people be in charge.** Let them have a say in when you meet and what you will do. Find things they can teach you. Resist the urge to guide the direction you want them to go. If they see you are willing to "give" them power, they will see you more as the partner you want to be.
- **Let young people feel discouraged.** They have to figure things out for themselves. Be confident they will find solutions. We all need a place to talk about how frustrated we are with the world without having someone try to convince us that everything is going to be fine. This is a learning experience.

This can be particularly difficult for many of us. We hate to see people we care about fail or get discouraged. But allowing disappointments is an effective learning tool - within reason, of course.

In 2000, I convened a meeting of youth leaders with special health care needs and/or disabilities in Chicago. There were about ten youth from all over the country and most of them had brought a parent or personal assistant with them. The meeting was over a weekend and I had planned a big Saturday night outing for us, with a movie and dinner. I had made arrangements with the main cab company in Chicago long in advance, to make sure we had at least one that could accommodate power wheelchairs. I verified our order the day before

and the morning of our planned outing. We waited outside the hotel for the cabs to come. We waited for over two hours, during which I made frantic calls to the cab dispatcher.

The cabs never came. I lost it. I was so disappointed and felt like I had let the group down. The youth rose to the occasion and taught me a lesson that night. They were disappointed too, but took the opportunity to be together and decided to order pizza and spend the evening in the hotel playing charades. They said they actually had more fun than they thought they would have had at the movie. [Post script: We filed a complaint with the City of Chicago, Office of Consumer Affairs, which contributed to the improvement of services for people who use wheelchairs and cabs in Chicago.]

- **Appreciate young people.** Simple appreciations make a huge difference. We all want our wonderful human qualities to be noticed.

It doesn't have to be much - a thank-you note after they have represented you at a meeting or a conference, a card to show you remember their birthday, or homemade treats at your next meeting. A little goes a long way.
- **Be open about yourself.** Share good things that happen. Share struggles. It helps to build their trust if they can feel like they matter in your life.
- **Build one-on-one relationships.** One-on-one relationships push us to notice things about each other that we wouldn't in other situations. If you think back to your childhood, probably the people who made the biggest impression on your life were willing to give to you in some way.
- **Be consistent and be committed.** Keep your commitments. Make meeting times as regular as possible so there won't be any confusion about getting together. Young people have a lot of inconsistency in their lives and it will mean a lot to them to follow through.

This is incredibly important. It's probably the number one pet peeve I hear from youth about the adults they have worked with - inconsistency. Be there. Young people not only deal with a lot of inconsistency, they have a lot going on. Having regular, pre-arranged meetings and places will help them be organized and responsible. Also, if you say you are going to do something - do it.
- **Be persistent.** When young people don't show up or call, keep trying - let them know that you want them, that they are important, that it makes a difference to you that you get to know them, and you want to know about their lives.

Sometimes young people need an extra effort to show them that you really are interested in their participation, not just fulfilling a requirement. Also, with all that may be going on in their lives, consider that they do not have a secretary to remind them of their appointments. Your calls to their house may never have gotten to them. Keep trying.
- **Show concern.** Be careful with this. Youth need to know you care about their lives. If you know of something going on that may endanger the youth, his or her family, and/or other youth in your program, do something. Otherwise, use caution about how involved you get in their "other" lives.

- **Involve and appreciate young people's parents.** Get to know parents. Tell them what an important and wonderful job they are doing.
If parents don't feel safe about what their children are participating in, they will not let them do it. Let the young person know you are going to be talking to her or his parents. Reassure him or her that you are not breaking confidences. Maintain and support the independence of the young person while allowing their parents to feel confident in all of you.
- **Train other allies.** There are others like you. There is enough work to go around. Think about what would be missing from your life if you did not work with young people. Bring other adults into our world.
- **Back each other.** There is no work in the world that is more valuable than what we are doing. This means that we are going to need to get together as allies to young people and organize for respect, recognition, better pay and benefits, and better resources.
- **Make mistakes.** Consider this an experiment in progress. Be willing to be the first one to take risks, to be uncool, and to show that you care. Don't try to cover up mistakes. Admit them, explain them, apologize and move on.

I worked with a group of youth facilitators, supporting them in doing trainings for other youth. I think the biggest lesson I learned was to let them make mistakes. If they debriefed an exercise and forgot something or struggled with it, they would often discuss it in our feedback session following the workshop. By doing that, they were able to teach themselves new skills and how to get support from their peers by asking if anyone had anything to add, before moving on to a new exercise. By letting go of my need to have the workshop always run perfectly, by not stepping in, and by trusting the youth, I was supporting them to do the best they could. We all came out of the experience a closer, more effective group.

- **Make sure that they have the opportunity to actually get real work done.** No matter how big or how small, it's important that there are real goals and that something gets done. It's often said that no one likes to go to a meeting just to have a meeting. We all want to feel like we're doing something meaningful.

Activity 2: Tips for Adults and Youth Working Together

In Activity 2, participants will be creating tips for adults and youth working together. Divide participants into small groups. Explain that by using their expertise, each group of adults should come up with five tips for young people on how to work with adults. If there are youth in the room as well, have them come up with tips for working with youth. Once the groups are finished, or as time demands it, have them come back into the large group to share their tips. Write the tips on a flip chart.

Use the following questions for discussion following the activity:

- How hard was it to come up with tips?
- What tip speaks to you the most?
- Which tip might you go back and try right away?

Things to Think About When Creating Youth/Adult Partnerships⁴

Jonna Justinianno and Cynthia Scherer from the Points of Light Foundation offer these suggestions.

Look Inward. When youth and adults work together, they need to assess their own attitudes and behaviors and some key questions need to be addressed individually: Do I appreciate different perspectives? What stereotypes do I have about others? Why should I be open to working with youth/adults? Adults and young people must be willing to honestly recognize and discuss their stereotypes and preconceptions in order to work together effectively.

Open the Door to Communication. Often times, both young people and adults avoid genuinely communicating with one another. Communication can be a stumbling block in youth/adult partnerships. Young people must take a stand for positive social change and demand that their voices be heard. In the process, adults should take a step back in order to listen - really listen - to the concerns of young people. In the same light, young people should also step back and hear the concerns of adults.

Create Opportunities. Almost all people want to feel they are included and are contributing to their communities. Adults can help young people achieve this by creating opportunities that are meaningful, challenging, and appropriate to each youth's individual ability and interest.

Reflect. Both youth and adults should reflect on the strengths, weaknesses and personal practice they observe through their partnership. Reflection can be facilitated through on-going discussions about the following questions: What have we learned through this interaction? Should anything be changed? What are some areas in which I can improve? What have we gained? How can we do things better?

Spread the Word. When involved in decision-making, young people can become more empowered, responsible, and trusting of adults. In return, adults can be energized by young people's creativity and insight. Adults and youth who recognize the benefits of working together are great ambassadors to their respective peer groups.

Outline Expectations and Commitments. Both youth and adults should be honest about the expectations they have of each other and the level of commitment they are able to contribute to the partnership. Working together may go very well at first, but over long periods of time youth and adults may lose interest in their partnership. To keep youth involved, adults should look at ways to help youth explore their interests and demonstrate the value of youth input.

In addition to these ideas, youth may need support in ways that you may not expect. Youth often have limited resources. Also, adults often ask youth to participate in leadership opportunities as a learning experience, not for compensation. Sometimes youth forgo a part-time job or other money-making opportunities in order to participate. Because of these reasons, and others, consider that some youth may need money to attend a conference, transportation to or from a meeting, or a calling card for phone calls.

TRAINER'S TIP:

There is a lot of material in this module, and much of it is meant for long-range reflection. With the remaining time, use the list of "Things to Think About..." to help participants leave with ideas on where to go from here. One way to share the following information is to pass out index cards to six members of the group. Each card can have one of the following ideas on it. Each person with a card can take a turn reading it aloud to the group. Then the group can reflect on what that idea means and how to put it into practice.

⁴ Justinianno, J., & Scherer, C. (2001). *Youth Voice: A Guide for Engaging Youth in Leadership and Decision-Making in Service-Learning Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Points of Light Foundation and Corporation for National and Community Service.

Module Five:

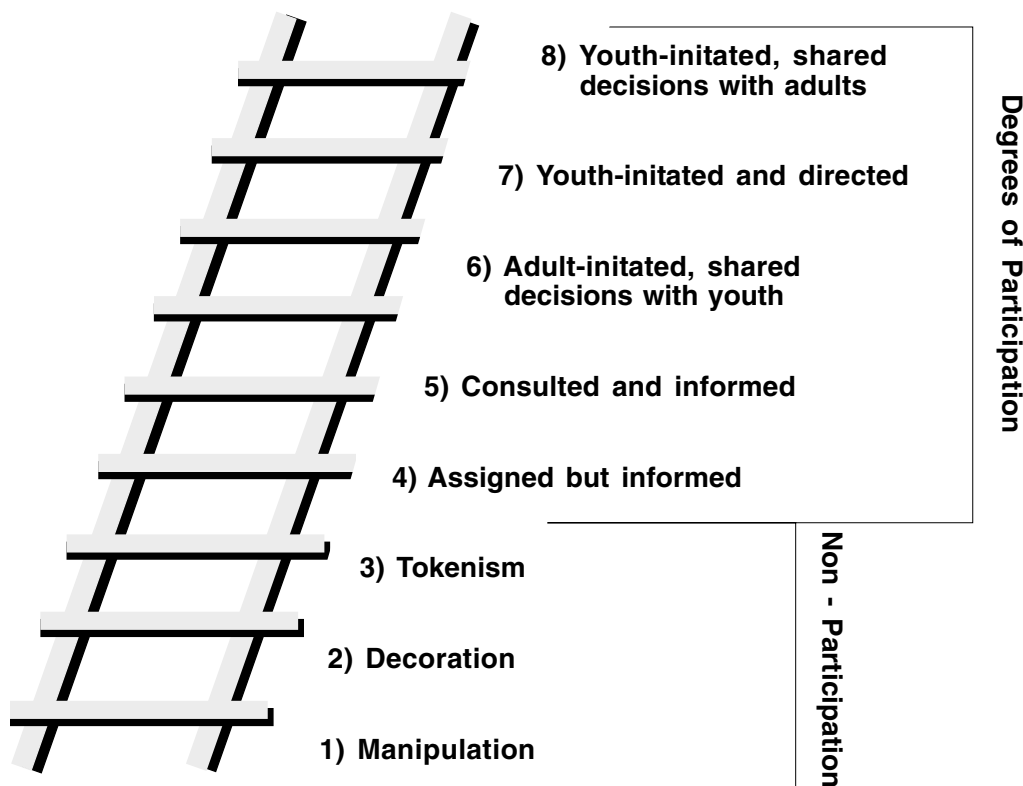
Youth Leadership: Meaningful Participation VS. Tokenism

Approximate Length: 30 to 40 minutes (60 minutes with ice breaker)

Welcome - A Topic Overview

In the previous module, we moved from adults as allies to youth as partners and learned about the spectrum of attitudes expressed when adults work with youth. In this module, we examine what true, meaningful participation is. You'll work with a model that defines the variety of ways youth are involved when they are invited to participate. They can be manipulated, used as decoration, or included as a token. These are actually non-participatory roles. But there are other roles of true participation.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation model¹ offers a hierarchy of stages leading all the way to youth-led, youth-centered participation. While not every project can be youth-led, no projects about youth should be non-participatory and most should work toward youth leadership.



TRAINER'S TIP:

This module is built around the "Ladder of Participation." You'll find Handout 5:1 "Successful Youth Participation." Make copies, and once your presentation gets past preliminary greetings, distribute them. Look over Handout 2:1 "Mapping Youth Participation," used in Module Two, and make copies if your participants didn't do this one during Module Two. You will distribute this when you come to the activity. A Trainer's Tip will give you more guidance at that point.

Use the text to help explain the rungs of the "ladder." The bottom three rungs - Manipulation, Decoration and Tokenism - describe youth involvement that is not true participation, whereas the top five rungs describe true participation. Do the activity following the explanation.

At the end of the module, you can use Handout 5:2 "Involving Youth with Significant Disabilities." Leave time to discuss the material and how it supports true participation.

¹ Adapted from: Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship. Innocenti Essays No.4 New York: UNICEF

Suggested Ice Breaker

Materials Needed: Handout 5:1, 2:1, 5:2, one ball of yarn.

In order to have equal and meaningful participation from youth, youth and adults must work together. The spider web activity that follows is a wonderful visual expression of how each person's role is vital for the best possible outcome. Have the group get in one large circle facing each other. Have one person start the activity by asking a question of someone opposite from them in the circle. After asking the question, the person holds on to the end of the yarn and rolls the ball of yarn to the person who will answer the question. After that person answers the question, (s)he will ask another question and hold on to a piece of the yarn and roll the rest of the ball of yarn to someone else in the circle, and so on. In some cases, it may be easier to think of the questions beforehand or have the group answer the same question. After everyone has answered a question, there should be a big spider web in the middle of the circle. To symbolize the importance of teamwork, ask a few people to let go of their piece of yarn. Follow up questions could include: What happened to the spider web when a few people let go of the yarn? Why is it important for everyone to participate? What did you learn about yourself and about each other from this activity?

Adapted from *Tribes: A New Way of Learning and Being Together* by Jeanne Gibbs

Non-Participation - the Bottom of the Ladder

Manipulation

This happens when adults use youth to support causes and pretend that the causes are inspired by them, while in actual fact the youth have no understanding of the issues and hence do not understand their actions. This is one form of manipulation. Another form is to consult young people but not provide them with any feedback at all, so they don't know how or if their ideas were used.

Example: A large government agency is criticized for not involving youth in their youth initiatives. The agency creates a "youth council" and uses the youth on the council to provide feedback on agency plans and ideas. The agency also uses the creation of the "youth council" as an opportunity to tout their progressiveness. The youth have no say about how or when they meet, or even if they meet. The agency is always going to the youth and the youth need to respond to the agency. The youth are not given the opportunity to lead or initiate projects or activities. The products and reports that are written from the ideas and suggestions of the youth are credited to the agency. While the youth are not paid to participate, all the adults work on these activities as part of their paying jobs.

Decoration

This happens when young people are used to help or “bolster” a cause in a relatively indirect way, although adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by youth. The youth have little idea about what the cause is all about and no say in the organizing of the event. The youth may be asked to perform in some way but since they have no real buy-in, they attend for the participation “perks” rather than for the cause.

Example: A mayor announces the opening of a new youth recreation center. The center was designed and paid for by city workers and city funds. Youth were not consulted or otherwise involved in deciding what equipment will be at the center or what classes or activities may be offered. The Mayor invites youth to the press conference and asks them to play on the new equipment and to mill around him at the podium. They are a decoration at a photo opportunity.

Tokenism

This happens when young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate. Commonly, adults justify this by believing the projects are in the best interests of youth.

Example: An organization of adults is interested in expanding their current activities to include youth. They invite a youth to sit on their Board of Directors with the idea that this youth can help them create youth opportunities. Because the youth is under 18, she is not allowed to vote on organizational business (an organizational rule), but she can contribute to discussions. She is also not in a position to propose new business to the group. So she is invited to meetings (at pre-set times) and is able to comment on ideas brought up by the others on the board. Unless there is clear evidence that her comments become part of a real interchange and have an effect on the ideas, she is a token.

True Participation - the Top of the Ladder

The next three rungs of the ladder are: assigned but informed; consulted and informed; and adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people. These three are pretty self-explanatory. As you move up the ladder, youth are being involved in more and more complex ways and gradually assume more of a decision-making role.

Rungs seven and eight are: youth-initiated and directed; and youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults. There is some debate regarding which of these two levels of participation is most meaningful. Some believe that youth are more empowered when adults are not part of the decision-making, but are around to provide support. Others believe that youth and adults sharing the decision-making leads to more meaningful participation and opportunities for youth and adults to learn from each other. Both of these perspectives are valuable. In any case, it’s important to think about what’s right for your group.

TRAINER'S TIP:

Divide into groups of two. Have the participants use Handout 2:1 "Mapping Youth Participation" completed in Module Two - or do that worksheet now if you did not use it in Module Two.

Close out this section by offering the list of suggestions for how to get to the top of the ladder. You can list them on your flip chart or just present them informally. You can also have the group brainstorm ways to move up the ladder, as you record them on your flip chart.

Use Handout 5:2 to generate discussion about how to support meaningful participation for youth with significant disabilities.

Activity 1: More Mapping of Youth Participation

Participants should review the ways they currently work with youth in their activities. The idea is to use the handout to identify whether each item on the list is "tokenism" or "meaningful participation" or "other." Participants should strategize in small groups about ways they can improve the list both in terms of increased youth involvement and working towards meaningful participation.

Getting to the Top of the Ladder — Meaningful Youth Involvement

Here are a few tips on how to get to the top of the ladder!

- Start talking to young people as early as possible in the process.
- Tell them your ideas and then ask them about and be open to theirs.
- Be honest with them about your expectations AND limitations.
- Develop roles and responsibilities together.
- Delegate tasks realistically, giving everyone involved an opportunity to feel ownership, take responsibility and hold each other accountable.
- Follow up! Let the young people know what was done with their input and what they can expect to happen next. Also, ask them what they got out of their experience.

Module Six:

Partnerships in Practice

Approximate Length: 40 minutes (60 to 70 minutes with ice breaker)

Welcome - A Topic Overview

This final module explores different ways of utilizing the expertise and unique experiences of youth. It asks participants to come up with ideas for using what we learned in other modules and putting it into practice. You would only use this module in conjunction with at least one or two of the other modules.

Suggested Ice Breakers

Materials Needed: Handouts 6:1, 6:2, 6:3, and 6:4 and index cards.

A quick way to get to know each other and share personal information is the Truth, Truth, Lie game. Each person writes down on an index card two things that are true about themselves and one thing that is not true. Each person will take a turn reading their two truths and a lie. The rest of the group must guess which one is the lie. After they have guessed, give the person a chance to tell the stories behind the truths. This is an excellent opportunity for the group to get to know each other.

Adapted from Tribes: *A New Way of Learning and Being Together* by Jeanne Gibbs

Activity 1: Youth Leadership

There are a number of ways to engage youth in leadership and decision-making in your community. There is no one way. Justinianno and Scherer present eight Youth Voice models.¹ Briefly review Handout 6:1 “Engaging Youth in Leadership.” Then, divide participants into groups of three or four. Give the groups about 15 minutes to brainstorm, then about 15 minutes to share with the full group. Each small group should go through all the models, but only present one to the large group, so assign one model for each group. You probably won’t have enough groups to do all eight, so decide which models you want covered in the session.

Below you’ll find a sample of steps that can be taken to implement the models. That’s for your use so you can see how filling out the worksheet can be done. You may want to stress the key ideas that have been discussed in past modules.

1. Youth as Planners

Young people can help plan and implement projects. By having young people help develop the projects, they are “invested” and are more likely to encourage other youth to participate. They are involved in creating the vision and setting the goals and objectives. They can help identify community needs, develop action plans and timelines, recruit volunteers, conduct community outreach, and evaluate outcomes. Working with program staff to design and implement a project gives young people a sense of ownership and accomplishment.

¹ Justinianno, J., & Scherer, C. (2001). *Youth Voice: a guide for Engaging Youth in Leadership and Decision-Making in Service-Learning Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Points of Light Foundation and Corporation for National and Community Service.

TRAINER’S TIP:

The following handouts are designed for this module. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with them before the presentation.

Appendix A

- 6:1 “Engaging Youth in Leadership and Decision-Making”
- 6:2 “50 Things Adults Can Do with Youth”
- 6:3 “My Promises to Youth in My Community” and
- 6:4 an Evaluation form.

Begin with Activity 1 - “Youth Leadership.” After it’s completed, ask the participants to do Activity 2 - “My Promises.”

After completing all the activities and discussion in the other modules, participants should be able to reflect back and create a plan to take home. Then ask them to fill out the evaluation.

What steps can you take to implement this model?

- Ask young people whom you have identified as willing to get involved in the planning process.
- Clarify the role of youth.
- Define expectations and responsibilities.
- Address logistical details: transportation, communication, access to supplies and equipment, schedules, etc.
- Involve youth to be active in the planning process.
- Integrate tips about youth/adult partnerships.

2. Youth as Trainers

Young people who are properly trained and supported can determine training needs, design a training program, and train both youth and adults - as well as provide the needed training and orientation to a project. Youth learn best from other youth and using youth as trainers for adults also models the trust you have in youth.

What steps can you take to implement this model?

- Provide training and orientation.
- Provide youth or adult partners. (If you have youth, find adults. If you have adults, find youth.)
- Rehearse and provide feedback on training.
- Engage multiple youth in training.
- Be prepared.
- Integrate tips about youth/adult partnerships.

3. Youth as Evaluators

Young people can help assess program effectiveness by being involved in the evaluation process. They can develop and implement tools and document findings. These activities help youth develop and refine skills they have learned. They also help programs and organizations understand if they are meeting their goals and objectives.

What steps can you take to implement this model?

- Identify young people.
- Determine evaluation methods (focus groups, written forms, etc.).
- Develop a plan.
- Provide database or other evaluation method/tool.
- Involve youth in the design of the evaluation tool(s).
- Build a relationship.
- Practice interviews with peers.
- Integrate tips about youth/adult partnerships.

4. Youth Summits

A youth summit is a meeting that brings young people together around a specific issue. They provide young people an opportunity to voice their concerns, develop possible solutions, work with other youth, learn from each other, and gain support from shared struggles and achievements. Youth Summits also offer an opportunity for youth and adults to gain a better understanding of each other's viewpoints.

What steps can you take to implement this model?

- Create a planning committee.
- Identify resources.
- Develop event goals and agenda.
- Develop a budget.
- Conduct outreach.
- Publicize the event.
- Document the event and conduct an evaluation.
- Identify next steps.
- Integrate tips about youth/adult partnerships.

5. Youth Advisory/Action Councils

A youth advisory or action council is a group of young people who work with an existing organization to assure that youth are involved in achieving the overall mission, goal, or project.

What steps can you take to implement this model?

- Assess organization and adult readiness.
- Build a framework. Decide how this Council fits into the larger organization/group.
- Find the resources.
- Identify an adult ally.
- Define roles and responsibilities.
- Recruit broadly.
- Provide orientation and training.
- Develop and implement an action plan.
- Provide opportunities for reflection/evaluation.
- Recognize members.
- Integrate tips about youth/adult partnerships.

6. Youth as Funders

This refers to the involvement of young people in philanthropy or the raising and giving of money. Young people can raise money, develop requests for proposals, participate in the grant review process, and determine who gets the money. This can be especially helpful when it comes to youth-driven or youth-oriented projects.

What steps can you take to implement this model?

- Define purpose and structure.
- Define roles of youth and adults.
- Secure a funding source.
- Offer training.
- Conduct outreach.
- Conduct grant review and select grantees.
- Offer grantee support.
- Conduct evaluation.
- Provide recognition.
- Integrate tips about youth/adult partnerships.

7. Youth Governance/Youth on Boards

When you combine the idea of young people as resources with honoring their voices within organizations, it can result in their participation in organization governance. Specifically, young people can serve as full voting members on an organization's board or governing structure. Young people can be equal stakeholders in decisions related to budget, staff, and strategic planning of an organization or project. Youth governance not only provides learning experiences for youth, it benefits the organization as well.

What steps can you take to implement this model?

- Identify motivations for engaging youth.
- Gain support from organizational leadership.
- Make structural changes.
- Identify resources.
- Identify young people.
- Engage more than one young person.
- Provide clear expectations and roles.
- Provide orientation and training.
- Construct meetings and work differently.
- Provide on-going support.
- Integrate tips about youth/adult partnerships.

8. Youth as Policy Makers

Engaging youth as policy makers can help young people take their service efforts one more step toward meaningful change. Engaging youth as policy makers can also affect the policies that govern an organization or community.

What steps can you take to implement this model?

- Invite local officials to your activities.
- Involve the media in your activities.
- Offer school credit for service.
- Organize a debate, town hall meeting or youth forum.
- Map community issues and assets.
- Register youth to vote.
- Integrate tips about youth/adult partnerships.

Activity 2: My Promises

Ask participants to complete Handout 6:3, “My Promises to Youth in My Community” in class. Provide the handout along with a self-addressed envelope to you, the presenter. Explain that you will mail these back in one month.

Here are three questions to help them stimulate their thoughts about their promises.

1. **Within the next month, I will do the following to increase youth participation as decision-makers (vs. recipients of services) within my program:** What model(s) of youth involvement makes sense for my program? Can youth be involved as planners? As funders? As policy-makers? What can be done in the next month to increase youth participation in my program?
2. **Three specific things I can do in the next six months to increase youth leadership, opportunities for leadership, and participation in my program:** Remember to be specific! These are things that can be checked off a “to-do” list. For example, contact four youth about volunteering on a committee, or talk with staff about ways to involve youth.
3. **Two things I can do within the next year to increase youth leadership and meaningful participation by youth who aren’t currently represented in my program:** These may be the kind of things that may take a little more time to implement, such as developing training for youth on advocacy.

Whatever participants choose to do, remind them that youth can be involved in planning and implementing any or all of these promises!

Finally, have the group discuss how the lives of youth in their communities could change as a result of implementing these strategies.

Closing

Pass out Handout 6:2, "Fifty Things Adults Can Do With Youth" for their information, and then pass out Handout 6:4, "the Evaluation form." Ask them to fill it out and return it to you before leaving.

This concludes the six-part Youth as Partners training. Please see the attached appendices for accompanying handouts and additional useful resources for meaningfully involving youth.

Appendix A

Handouts

- 1:1 Cartoon by Mike Brown
- 1:2 Common Myths and Stereotypes about People with Disabilities (just to name a FEW!)
- 2:1 Mapping Youth Participation
- 3:1 Understanding and Supporting Young People
- 3:2 How Adults Can Stop Adultism
- 4:1 Tips and Tricks for Working with Adults as Partners
- 4:2 Tips and Tricks for Working with Youth as Partners
- 4:3 Practicing Adult-Youth Interactions Scenario 1
- 4:3 Practicing Adult-Youth Interactions Scenario 2
- 4:3 Practicing Adult-Youth Interactions Scenario 3
- 5:1 Successful Youth Participation
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- 6:2 50 Things Adults Can Do With Youth
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- 6:4 Leading the Way Together: Youth/Adult Partnerships



DISABILITY AWARENESS

Handout 1:2

Common Myths and Stereotypes about People with Disabilities (just to name a FEW!)

MYTH: A person with a disability is sick, or has something wrong with them.

FACT: Disability is a natural part of the human experience, and it is not the same as being sick. Individuals with disabilities have varying degrees of need, and are sometimes sick, just as people without disabilities are sometimes sick. Mistaking a disability for sickness not only fails to respond to a person's needs, it perpetuates a negative stereotype and an assumption that the person can and should be cured.

MYTH: People with disabilities have a poor quality of life.

FACT: This is one of the most common and damaging stereotypes, because it discourages social interactions and the development of mature relationships. People with disabilities have needs just like those who do not have disabilities, and they strive for a high degree of quality of life, as do other individuals. Society handicaps individuals by building inaccessible schools, theaters, homes, buses, etc. The attitude that disability is a bad thing and that disability means a poor quality of life is often viewed as more disabling than the disability itself.

MYTH: People with disabilities are inspirational, brave, and courageous for living successfully with their disability.

FACT: A person with a disability is simply carrying out normal activities of living when they drive to work, go shopping, pay their bills, or compete in athletic events. Access to community-based, long-term service (such as attendant care, access to buildings, public transportation, sidewalks, etc.) to quality health care, and to necessary equipment enables them to carry on the same as people without disabilities.

MYTH: People with disabilities always need expensive and high-tech assistive devices or services.

FACT: Simple inexpensive devices are often the most critical in helping people with a disability live independently. Assistive devices can be as affordable as an eating utensil or Velcro strap.

MYTH: People with severe disabilities need to live in nursing homes or rehabilitation hospitals or under constant supervision so that they do not hurt themselves.

FACT: Unfortunately, this myth has created a system of long-term care in our nation that relies on institutions such as nursing homes and other facilities. Even those with the most severe disabilities could live in their own home given adequate community-based services, and at the very least, they should be given that choice.

Handout 2:1

Mapping Youth Participation

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for mapping youth participation. It occupies the central portion of the page.

Directions:

- 1. Identify your roles in your work and community activities that are about and for youth.**
- 2. Consider these roles and identify where youth are also involved or not involved, especially where decisions about youth are made.**

Understanding and Supporting Young People*

- Being an adult ally
 - As adult allies, we care deeply for young people. We often work long hours on their behalf and feel like we would do anything for them. We put aside our own struggles for significant periods of time in order to pay attention to, assist and support young people. Parents, in particular, make this decision repeatedly.
 - As adults, we can offer young people a perspective that is outside their experience.
 - We can remember that they are brilliant.
 - We can use the “privilege” of adulthood to help young people (access to resources, raising money for projects, transportation, etc.).
 - We can remember to keep learning from young people.
 - We can become good at hanging out, spending relaxed time with young people.
 - We can create situations in which young people are given the opportunity to learn and advocate for themselves.
 - We can model for young people a different picture of adulthood than the rigid one they’re usually offered.
 - We were young once. We therefore have lots of experiences to refer to.
 - We can be excellent allies to parents. It is a critical part of our work to support young people and parents in their relationships with each other.

- A Program of action for adult allies to young people
 - Take pride in being an adult—reclaim full adult humanness and lead a full life, no limits. Reclaim playing with young people as well as with adults. Reclaim openly liking and enjoying all people.
 - Review and carefully consider our own childhood and young adult years, especially on all the details of the young people’s lives that we experienced and internalized. Look at our own experiences as young people and reflect on how we were treated. Review good memories and “hard times.” Look at when you decided to become a young adult and what was going on at the time. Also look at when you decided to become an adult.
 - Notice that young people’s oppression is over for us as adults. We are not victimized by it anymore. We are seen as “adults” and as having access to the resources and privileges of adults.
 - Understand the big picture of age oppression.
 - Young adults are seen as too young to be respected but too old to be asking for support.
 - Adults are supposed to be settled in their lives.
 - Adults are not encouraged to be close to people beyond select circles of friends, family members and partners.
 - Adults are supposed to put our work first and measure ourselves by our successes at work.

*Adapted from *Understanding and Supporting Young People* Jenny Sazama, available from Rational Island Publishers, PO Box 2091, Main Office Station, Seattle, WA 98111

- Become an active ally by leading other adults
 - Appreciate the work that other allies do and the work that we do.
 - Support families and parents.
 - Build committed and connected relationships with adults.
 - Set an example for effective partnerships with youth for other adults to follow.
- Become an active ally by supporting young people
 - Listen to young people. Ask them questions about their lives and listen to them carefully.
 - Assume that at all times adult allies are wanted and needed by young people.
 - Build relationships based on genuine respect and interest.
 - Expect young people to take themselves seriously.

How Adults Can Stop Adulthoodism

- **Be an Ally.**
Young people need to see us as strong, reliable, and completely on their side while knowing that we trust them, respect them, and will tell them the truth.
- **Tell the truth about power.**
Young people need us to tell them about how power is used and abused in this society – to be informed, clear, and firm about how racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, adulthoodism, and other “isms” work. We must be ready to share that information openly and in clear, direct language that does not fault them for lacking information.
- **Tell the truth about violence.**
We also must help them identify the social violence directed at them because they have a disability, are women, people of color, gay and lesbian, poor, or young. Confirming this reality for them can help them to begin to take power to stop the violence.
- **Support healing.**
We need to let them know that it is not their fault that they have been demeaned, assaulted, or discriminated against and that it happens to many of us. We need to pass on skills to them for avoiding further violence in their lives.
- **Interrupt adulthoodism.**
It is always appropriate to intervene supportively where young people’s rights or due respect are being denied by adults.
- **Interrupt internalized adulthoodism.**
It is always appropriate to intervene supportively when one young person puts down or devalues another or her/himself.
- **Promote true history.**
Young people need information about their struggles and achievements as young people, so they can take pride in and build upon them. This directs them to think of themselves as a community responsible for one another’s well being.
- **Be a partner.**
Young people need us to be willing to share the power and work with them.
- **Make mistakes openly and without self-deprecation.**
Adults, of course, are never supposed to make mistakes. This can mean we never take the chance to reach that young person who is hardest to get to. Go ahead. Try anyway. And when you make a mistake, it’s OK. Just fix it, and try again.

Handout 3:2

- **Don't do it alone.**

Take other adults with you and train them to support you when your own issues come up, when you feel you've made a mistake, and so forth. The flip side of the mistreatment of young people is the isolation of adults. Getting support from other adults will help decrease the possibility of taking out your hurt on young people or trying to enlist support from them when they shouldn't have to be in a position to give it.

- **Trust them to be powerful.**

Young people are strong and have convictions and experience about what is right and what is wrong. Support and expect them to make their own decisions. Nothing will change until they do.

- **Celebrate their successes.**

Every day each teen makes dozens of choices to value their own thinking, relationships, preferences, desires, etc. Every teen finds ways to communicate that the oppression is hurting them, and every teen finds ways to express love even to those adults passing on the oppression. Every young person finds ways to get attention. These are all victories. Young people also often have to choose between limited options. Their choices are the exercise of will to minimize the oppression. They deserve adult allies who notice and point out these acts of self-determination and celebrate them.

We can be strong and powerful adult allies to young people if we can shift our emphasis from raising their self-esteem to increasing their power. That, in turn, will allow the exuberance, insight, and creativity of young people to contribute to bettering all our lives.

Handout 4:1

Tips and Tricks for Working for Youth Working with Adults as Partners

Criticism doesn't necessarily equate with condescension.

Sometimes when adults critique a youth's ideas, they are just treating the youth the same way they would a colleague. Try to remember that adults are used to critiquing each other's ideas. Just because they don't agree with you, doesn't mean that they are dismissing you.

Adults may not be aware of how capable you are.

Maybe they don't know any youth your age, so they just don't know what to expect. You can enlighten them by showing them that you are capable of handling mature situations. You can tell them a hundred times that you are mature, but showing them is the best way to make your case.

Adults will feel responsible for the success or failure of the project.

This is what makes it hard for them to share authority over it. They need your reassurance that you are willing to share in both the successes and the failures. It also may help to remind them that every project doesn't have to be done perfectly the first time. Having a good time and working as a team can be just as important "outcomes" as a perfectly run event.

Adults are just as uncertain as youths; they have just learned to disguise it more.

"I have positive interactions with youth on a regular basis," insisted one survey respondent. "Or maybe I delude myself." Adults aren't as likely to admit when they are stuck or need help in group situations. Just because adults have strong opinions does not mean they have all the answers.

Handout 4:2

Tips and Tricks for Working with Youth as Partners

Don't expect more from the youths than you would from another adult.

When a young person shows up 15 minutes late for a meeting, adults may think, "Ah hah, a slacker. Irresponsible kid." When a fellow adult shows up 15 minutes late, the same person may think, "That's understandable. They've got deadlines and pressures and schedules." So do young people.

Make sure that you don't hold the young person to a stricter standard than the adults.

No, they may not hold down full-time jobs, but they have other commitments and pressures and schedules that cry for their attention. And they will agonize more over their performance than an adult. In dealing with any new relationship, there is a caution or tentativeness. You both watch closely for signs that this might not work out. Don't exaggerate this tendency and expect the youth's performance to exceed that of adult's.

Conversely, don't excuse all indiscretions just because you are dealing with a youth.

When asked to recount the dumbest thing a youth has ever said to you, one respondent claims, "I realize I am much more gracious with young people than adults. I can't think of something I would classify as dumb from a youth, but I can think of several from adults." Sometimes adults tend not to expect enough from young people.

Treat youths as individuals; don't make one youth represent all youths.

Young people will put enough pressure on themselves. They understand that adults may carry negative images of young people and may generalize from the behavior of a few. Don't add to it by making them feel they must speak for or represent all youths. You wouldn't do that for another adult. Assure young people that you are interested in their individual opinions and don't expect them to embody an entire population.

Be careful about interrupting.

Kids get discouraged easily. Let them finish their ideas. For the partnership to work, young people must feel that they are valued and respected by adults. In many of their outside relationships, this respect is lacking and they are inherently wary of adults. When interrupted by an adult, they will tend to stop talking (sometimes permanently). To prevent this and create an environment that fosters equal participation, adults need to be hypersensitive about interrupting a young person, and young people need to be encouraged to persevere with their point despite adult interruptions. Both parties need to respect others in their right to voice opinions without criticism or censure.

Remember that your role in a partnership is not to parent.

While being a parent may be the most important role that any adult can play, the purpose of youth/adult partnerships is to give young people a different way to relate to adults.

Don't move too fast.

Remember that this is all new for the young people. Don't move too fast without explaining the reasons for actions taken. Rushing through meetings can be a sign that adults are still trying to control the actions of the group.

Taken from *Younger Voices, Stronger Choices* Kansas City, Promise Project, a Joint Effort of the Junior League of Kansas City, MO, Inc. and Kansas City Consensus, 1997.

Used with permission from Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development.

www.theinnovationcenter.org

National 4-H Council

Handout 4:3

Practicing Adult-Youth Interactions

Scenario 1

Sally is involved in a community project. She has skills in writing letters. She volunteers to write a letter to the Mayor asking for permission to do the group project. It's time for the letter to be written. What do you say or do?

Youth as Objects:

Youth as Recipients:

Youth as Partners:

Handout 4:3

Practicing Adult-Youth Interactions Scenario 2

You are an adult advisor to a group of teens planning a party. The group has scheduled a planning meeting. You are the only adult and they are looking to you to get the meeting started.

What do you say or do?

Youth as Objects:

Youth as Recipients:

Youth as Partners:

Handout 4:3

Practicing Adult-Youth Interactions Scenario 3

Your group is meeting to work on the project that has been selected. Instead of getting down to business, the teens are flirting and laughing. You don't perceive that as business getting done. A youth is chair of the committee and is not doing anything about the situation. What do you say or do?

Youth as Objects:

Youth as Recipients:

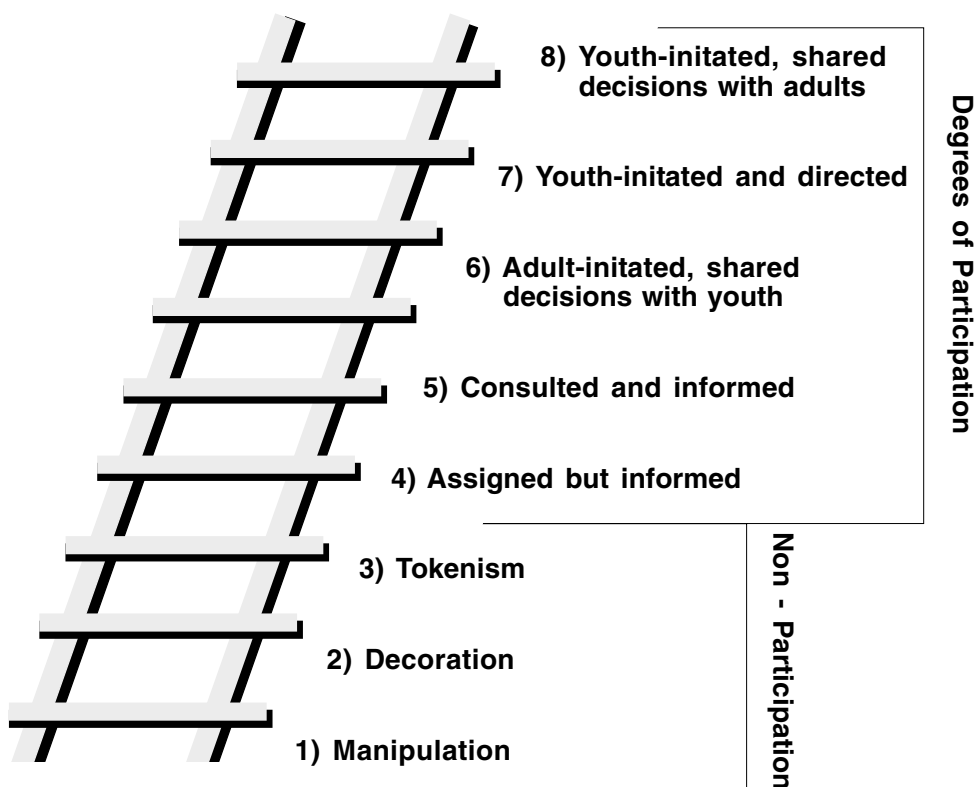
Youth as Partners:

Handout 5:1

Successful Youth Participation

Successful youth participation includes shared decision-making and collaboration with adults who can serve as resources and mentors for youth. The “*Ladder of Participation*,” developed by Roger Hart, describes various levels of youth participation with a steady progression to meaningful shared decision-making between adults and youth.

Ladder of Participation*



Features of Successful Youth Participation Include:

Respect

Skills and tools

Models that work

Things to do (tasks)

Variety of expression

Support

Challenges to Meaningful Youth Participation Include:

Tokenism

Definition of youth (varies greatly from 13-19 to 12-25 up to 30 depending on who you ask)

Lack of support (i.e. financial, mentoring, resources)

Turnover and fluctuating membership

Shortage of meaningful opportunities

*Adapted from: Hart, R. (1992). Children's participation: from tokenism to citizenship. Innocenti Essays No.4. New York: UNICEF

Handout 5:2

Involving Youth with “Significant Disabilities” Strategies & Accommodations

This list is not exhaustive; it is merely to get folks started in thinking about ways that all youth can be included in activities and leadership opportunities. Add your own experiences and ideas to this list.

First, what are “Significant Disabilities”? For our purposes, this refers to youth who are living with any disability or special health care need that significantly inhibits their ability to communicate, to move, or to understand in traditional ways. Also, we include any youth who has limitations on social interactions or on other activities with young people because of their chronic health condition or other “invisible” disability.

- **Inhibited Communication:** This can include youth with cerebral palsy, youth who are Deaf and youth who have other physical barriers to “normal” speech and written communication. These youth may use alternative ways to communicate: sign language, computer software and other technology, white or communication boards, interpreters, captioning devices, or other such devices.
- **Inhibited Mobility:** This can include youth with any kind of disability or special health care needs that may require additional equipment (e.g. a wheelchair, walker, cane, dog) or assistance. This includes a person who is visually impaired, a person with limited control over their motor skills, etc.
- **Inhibited Understanding:** This can include youth with varying degrees of cognitive or developmental disabilities, youth for whom spoken or written English is not their first language, and youth who may not be familiar with the subject matter you are discussing and others.

Why include youth with “significant disabilities”?

Why not? Let’s not forget that each of us brings a unique perspective and “flavor” to a conversation and activity. We should always strive to have as many perspectives included in our activities as we can, making a special effort to include those who are traditionally NOT included.

Things to think about when involving youth with significant disabilities.

- **Where you meet**
 - **Location:** Is the place where you are meeting wheelchair accessible? Do not wait until a participant who uses a wheelchair wants to come and requests it. Sometimes, just knowing the activity is planned for a location that is traditionally inaccessible will prevent people (especially youth) from asking for an accommodation. Where you choose to have your activity says as much about your intent to include as anything. Are buildings, parking areas, workspaces, and communication systems accessible to persons with disabilities? Can those who do not transport themselves get there via public transportation or ride share? Accessible facilities and services are more useful for everybody.
- **When you meet**
 - The day and time you meet should also be considered. Is this a time when youth are in school? If so, you will want to reconsider. It is not fair to expect or request students to take time off school to attend a routine meeting when you are getting paid to be there. In addition to sensitivity to the schedules of students, meeting length should also be considered. Some youth with disabilities have trouble with long meetings, maintaining stamina and strength. Keep meetings short and to the point.
 - If you are meeting during or through a mealtime, make sure you feed attendees. If you are eating, make sure youth who need assistance to eat or drink have what they need – their attendants, a straw, a special meal.

(over)

Handout 5:2

- **How you meet**

- If you are convening a meeting with youth for youth, it is important NOT to have parents in the meeting room. However, when you include youth with health care needs or concerns, you should have easy access to someone who is familiar with and can tend to their health care needs. This can be administering medicine, catheterizing, feeding (if necessary), etc. Parents (or other assistants) should be nearby and/or have a method for communicating with the youth in a way that respects independence, but does not challenge health.

It's all in the details—Be aware of general meeting behaviors that can be a problem for some people who have disabilities or special health care needs. This does not mean you cannot employ any of these methods, but you should be aware of the need to alter or modify.

- **Visual Cues:** The following may be troublesome for people who have limited eyesight and limited reading skills: name tags & table tents, flip charts, using raised hands to indicate interest.
- **Language:** When working with any youth, we must be careful about the language we use. Stay away from jargon and acronyms, using simple and clear words and phrases. Try to avoid using metaphors or other abstract language.
- **Space:** Use a meeting room that has plenty of space to move around. Youth, like many adults, get restless after a long time of sitting around. It will likely enhance their participation and retention if they can walk or move around while they are listening. If this option is not available, youth may feel like they have to leave the room to stretch their legs or get some air, and the group will lose some valuable contributions. This is especially important when including youth who have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD or ADHD/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and others with limited attention spans or who have trouble focusing without preoccupation. This is also an issue for youth who use wheelchairs, as they have to be able to move in and around the room.
- **Technology:** Using PowerPoint, overheads, videos, etc. can be problematic for those with visual limitations, cognitive disabilities, sensory integration issues, and more. Make sure that there are translations available—on disk, on audiotape—so those who cannot access the information at the meeting can do so before or after.
- **Others:** Always ask ALL participants, not just those you *know* have health care needs or disabilities, if they have needs, accommodations or other special concerns for the meeting. You may find that:
 - * someone coming cannot be in the room with fragrances (participants should be asked to refrain from wearing perfume or scented lotion)
 - * that someone is allergic to latex (cancel that balloon order!)
 - * There are dietary issues to consider when ordering lunch or any other food for the meeting

Attitude

- **Be patient**
- **Talk directly to the person, not to the helper**
- **Be open to trying new ideas and suggestions**
- **Admit mistakes**
- **Have fun**

Handout 6:1

Engaging Youth in Leadership Decision Making

Youth as Planners

Young people can help plan and implement projects. By having young people help develop the projects, they are invested and are more likely to encourage other youth to participate. They are involved in creating the vision and setting the goals and objectives. They can help identify community needs, develop action plans and timelines, recruit volunteers, conduct community outreach and evaluate outcomes. Working with program staff to design and implement a project gives young people a sense of ownership and accomplishment.

What steps can you take to involve youth as planners?

Youth as Trainers

Young people who are properly trained and supported can determine training needs, design a training program and train both youth and adults, as well as provide the needed training and orientation to a project. Youth learn best from other youth and using youth as trainers for adults also models the trust you have in youth.

What steps can you take to involve youth as trainer?

Youth as Evaluators

Young people can help assess program effectiveness by being involved in the evaluation process. They can develop and implement tools and document findings. These activities help youth develop and refine skills they have learned. It also helps programs and organizations understand if they are meeting their goals and objectives.

What steps can you take to involve youth as evaluators?

Youth Summits

A youth summit is a meeting that brings young people together around a specific issue. A summit provides young people an opportunity to voice their concerns and develop possible solutions. It offers youth the opportunity to work with other youth, learn from each other and gain support from a shared struggle and achievement. It also offers an opportunity for youth and adults to gain a better understanding of each other's viewpoints.

What steps can you take to organize a youth summit?

(over)

Handout 6:1

Youth Advisory/Action Councils

A youth advisory or action council is a group of young people that work with an existing organization to assure that youth are involved in achieving the overall mission or other organization or project.

What steps can you take to create youth advisory/action council?

Youth as Funders

This refers to the involvement of young people in philanthropy or the raising and giving of money. Young people can raise money, develop requests for proposals, participate in the grant review process and determine who gets the money. This can be especially helpful when it comes to youth-driven or youth-oriented projects.

What steps can you take to involve youth as fund raising?

Youth Governance/Youth on Boards

When you combine the idea of young people as resources and honor their voices within organizations, it can result in their participation in organization governance. Specifically, youth can serve as full voting members on an organization's board or governing structure. Young people can be equal stakeholders in decisions related to budget, staff and strategic planning of an organization or project. Youth governance not only provides learning experience for youth, it benefits the organization as well.

What steps can you take to involve youth in governance or youth boards?

Youth as Policy Makers

Engaging youth as policy makers can help young people take their service efforts one more step toward meaningful change. Engaging youth as policy makers can also affect the policies that govern an organization or community.

What steps can you take to engage youth as Policy Makers?

Handout 6:2

50 Things Adults Can Do With Youth

1. Have a real conversation with a young person. Ask young people what they want to do and how you can help make that happen.
2. Support community organizations that involve young people in meaningful roles.
3. Start a branch resource library of videos and printed materials on youth involvement in your community.
4. Financially and personally support community organizations that train young people and adults to work together.
5. Develop a mutual mentorship program between adults and young people.
6. Co-create or support along with young people a community center or place for young people and adults to gather and do constructive things together.
7. Listen to young people express their concerns and perspectives about community issues and help them to take action.
8. Be an advocate for youth by making sure they're at the table when you are discussing them.
9. Help with positive activities for youth such as sports teams, hobby clubs, music, drama, scouts, etc.
10. Make the concerns of young people visible in your community by helping young people get in the door.
11. Write a letter to the editor with a young person about youth issues.
12. Respect young people as you would a peer.
13. Work with young people to plan a community service project.
14. Take an active role in schools by listening to students who have first-hand knowledge and find out how to best help them.
15. Invite young people over to dinner.
16. Involve interested young people as consultants, interns, apprentices, and staff.
17. Be consistent and clear about your expectations of youth and adults in your home.
18. Team up with youth and youth-led groups to have a town meeting on a vision for youth in your community.
19. Identify and network with youth in your community who are concerned about young people and/or other community issues.
20. Connect with other adult allies.
21. Provide transportation to young people who would not otherwise be able to participate in community activities.
22. Team up with young people to support candidates for local, state, and national office who make listening to and working with young people a priority.
23. Help arrange for a radio station to sponsor a call-in show led by youth that allows them to talk about their concerns.
24. Help arrange for concerned youth to have an audience with the mayor and the city council to highlight their concerns and recommendations.
25. Talk with others about the importance of having a community vision for community-youth development.

(over)

Handout 6:2

26. Serve on an advisory council for a youth-led effort.
27. Only go to meetings where youth are invited or you can bring young people with you.
28. Be a friend to a young person.
29. Advocate for youth-led experiences in the schools so students can learn through hands-on experience.
30. Make your home a comfortable, safe, and affirming place where young people can “hang out.”
31. Help young people create a newsletter for your community on youth and other community issues.
32. Help young people create a listing of all opportunities for youth involvement in your community. Post it in your local library and schools. Have realtors give it to new families in town.
33. Advocate, along with students, for strong, comprehensive sexuality and drug education curricula in your schools.
34. Connect with young people who are knowledgeable about the Internet. Learn together by surfing the Web.
35. Sponsor a support group for youth who face particular difficulties such as parents' divorce, violence, etc.
36. Raise funds for a youth-led organization.
37. Actively support youth-led organizations in your community.
38. Join (or form) with young people a community task force to address youth issues and coordinate responses.
39. Provide opportunities for young people to have meaningful roles at home, at school, at work, and in the community.
40. Cancel a meeting or engagement so you can spend time with a young person in your family or neighborhood.
41. Confide in a young person. Ask their advice on issues that you are struggling with.
42. Be an advocate for youth/adult partnerships in your workplace.
43. Start a parent support group to share ideas, concerns, and ways to listen better to children.
44. Value young people's work and pay them for their work. Don't assume that just because someone is young, that person is a volunteer. Hire youth.
45. Include youth on committees in your schools, faith-based environments, and community.
46. Attend events in the area where young people are actively engaged.
47. Write a short note of support to adult allies.
48. Treat youth as individuals; don't make one youth represent all young people.
49. Avoid interrupting young people.
50. DO involve youth from the beginning with program events all the way to the end with evaluation of events.

Handout 6:3

My Promises to Youth in My Community:

Leading the Way Together: Youth/Adult Partnerships

One of the outcomes of this training is to help participants find ways to take what they've learned during our time together back to their home communities. That means you should be able to complete this Promise form.

Within the next month I will do the following to increase youth participation as decision makers (vs. recipients of services) within my program:

Three specific things I can do in the next six months to increase youth leadership, opportunities for leadership, and participation in my program are:

1.

2.

3.

Two things I can do within the next year to increase youth leadership and meaningful participation by youth who aren't currently represented in my program are:

1.

2.

How might the lives of youth in your community change as a result of implementing these strategies?

Handout 6:4

Leading the Way Together: Youth/Adult Partnerships

Location:

What I liked about this session...

What I think I'll remember most is...

The activity/aspect of this session that was the most effective for me as a learner was...

This is what I would suggest for improving this session...

What I would like to see if this topic were presented again...

Here's something else I would like you to know...

Appendix B

Written Resources

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Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities	83
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Written Resources

Disability History and Culture

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Key Organizations/Programs

The following is a list of organizations and programs that focus on youth leadership. They represent only a small subset of those around the country. The descriptions listed below are taken from the websites of these organizations and programs.

Community Network for Youth Development

The purpose of our organization is to shape a world where all young people thrive supported by communities that help them develop their full potential. CNYD does this by strengthening the youth development field through community capacity building and policy alignment. All of our work is youth-centered and strives for the highest possible quality. We bring a developmental approach and a community-wide perspective to everything we do.

657 Mission Street, Suite #410
San Francisco, CA 94105
e-mail: info@cnyd.org
phone: 415.495.0622
fax: 415.495.0666

<http://www.cnyd.org/home/index.php>

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development

The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development unleashes the potential of youth, adults, organizations, and communities to engage together in creating a just and equitable society.

INNOVATE is a lively e-mail discussion group where young leaders and youth workers can share resources, ideas, and opinions about positive youth development and community development

6930 Carroll Avenue
Suite 502
Takoma Park, MD 20912-4423
301-270-1700

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

Kids As Self-Advocates (KASA)

Kids As Self-Advocates is an organization created by youth with disabilities for youth to educate society about issues concerning youth with a wide spectrum of disabilities and special health care needs. KASA believes in supporting self-determination, creating support networks and proactive advocacy for all youth with disabilities in our society.

1400 West Devon, #423
Chicago, IL 60660
phone: 773/465-3200
fax 773/465-3696

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

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/Youth

NCWD/Youth is your source for information about employment and youth with disabilities. Our partners — experts in disability, education, employment, and workforce development — strive to ensure you will be provided with the highest quality, most relevant information available.

NCWD/Youth | c/o Institute for Educational Leadership
4455 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 310 | Washington, DC 20008
phone: 1-877-871-0744 (Toll Free)
TTY: 877-871-0665 (Toll Free)

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>

National Youth Leadership Network

The National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN) is dedicated to advancing the next generation of disability leaders.

The NYLN:

- Promotes leadership development, education, employment, independent living, and health and wellness among young leaders representing the diversity of race, ethnicity and disability in the United States.
- Fosters the inclusion of young leaders with disabilities into all aspects of society at national, state and local levels.
- Communicates about issues important to youth with disabilities and the policies and practices that affect their lives.

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

Youth Leadership Forum for Students With Disabilities

The Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities (YLF) is a unique career leadership training program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. By serving as delegates from their communities at a four-day event, young people with disabilities cultivate leadership, citizenship, and social skills. The YLF is implemented at the state level by state and local partners.

Office of Disability Employment Policy

1331 F Street, NW

Washington, DC 20004

phone: (202)693-7880

fax: (202)693-7888

e-mail: Alicia Epstein .

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/programs/ylf.htm>

Youth on Board

Youth on Board helps young people and adults think differently about each other so that they can work together to change society. Youth on Board envisions a world where young people are fully respected, and treated as valued and active members of their families, communities, and society. To reach that end, we work to:

- Change attitudes and strengthen relationships among youth, and between young people and adults;
- Prepare young people to be leaders and decision makers in all aspects of their lives; and
- Ensure that policies, practices, and laws reflect young people's role as full and valued members of their communities.

58 Day Street Somerville, MA 02144

info@youthonboard.org

phone: 617-623-9900 x1242

fax: 617-623-4359

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

About the Author

Julie Sipchen draws on her vast experiences as a young person who was the “token” youth voice at many “adult” meetings in her younger years. She works with youth and young adults formally as project director for the Kids As Self Advocates Project, Family Voices. She also works with youth and young adults informally in her community. She has a degree in journalism and a degree in public policy. She resides in Chicago with her husband and two children.

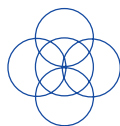
The Reviewer

Susan R. Allen
Wisconsin Positive Youth Development Initiative, Inc.

Sue Allen is a skilled leadership trainer and community organizer with nearly 30 years of experience in youth development. She has been the Executive Director of Wisconsin Positive Youth Development since 1988, a national trainer for the Search Institute since 1998, and a certified prevention professional with the State of Wisconsin since 1997. She also works locally with teenagers and adults on prevention and youth development efforts as the co-coordinator of Healthy Communities, Healthy Youth Marquette County.



Photos taken by Jessica Kliet
Front cover includes photos taken at Wisconsin Public Radio and Refuge Farms, Inc., home of “Horses Helping.”



Waisman Center
University of Wisconsin–Madison
University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities