



Youth Engagement: *Involving Young People in our Work*

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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

TODAY'S GOAL:

To provide information and skills to help adults better understand youth, the youth development approach, and create environments for healthy youth/adult collaborations

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

- **Participants will be able to:**
 - **Define positive youth outcomes**
 - **Identify strategies for youth engagement and participation in program development, implementation and promotion.**
 - **Identify strategies for youth/adult collaboration.**
 - **Define barriers to youth engagement in communities and schools.**
 - **Highlight strategies for including and recruiting youth as partners.**

AGENDA

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Defining Youth Development**
- **Positive Youth Outcomes**
- **Youth Participation**
- **Adolescent Development and Adulthood**
- **Busting the Barriers**
- **Methods for Youth Involvement**

Understanding Youth Culture

Learn about youth culture:

- Ask questions
- Read magazines, web sites, books
- Understand social media:
 - Facebook
 - Texting
- Watch movies, music videos, TV
- Keep an open mind

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

What is Youth Development?¹

- Youth as resources not recipients
- The goal is not to fix youth, but to develop them
- Preventing problems does not by itself promote development
- Youth are at the table

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

Process by which all young people seek to meet their basic physical and social needs and build competencies (knowledge and skills) necessary to succeed in adolescence and into adulthood.

PRACTICAL DEFINITION

Process by which youth develop the personal, social, academic and citizenship competencies necessary for adolescence and adult life based on their capacities, strengths, and formative needs.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

MAJOR COMPONENTS

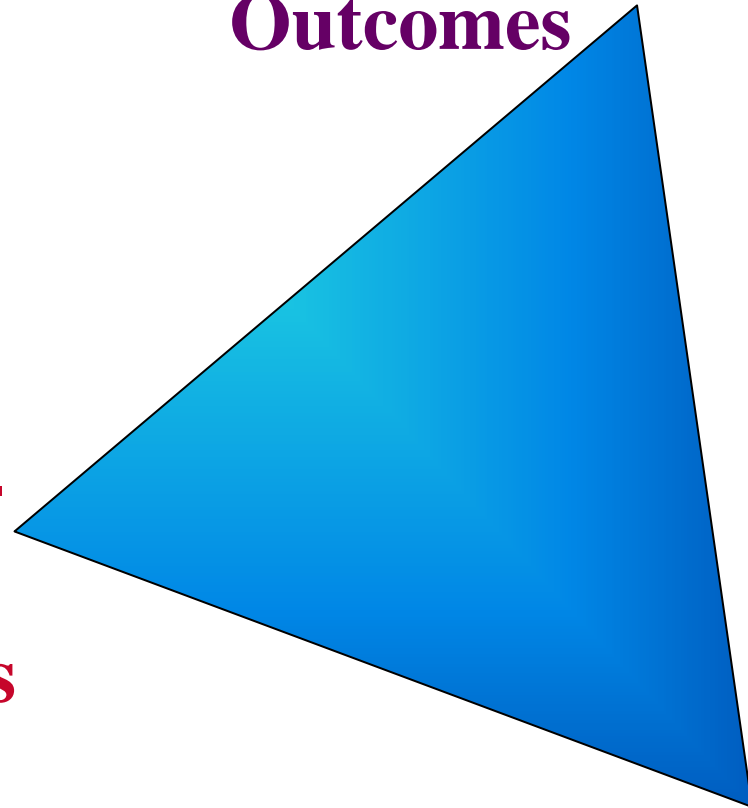
- Conceptual and Practical Definitions**
- Positive Youth Outcomes**
- Resiliency and Protective Factors**
- Adolescent Development**
- Cultural Competence**
- Youth Participation**

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

**POSITIVE
YOUTH
OUTCOMES**

**Achievement
Outcomes**

**Problem-
free
Outcomes**



**Developmental
Outcomes**

DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

Aspects of Identity: Young people demonstrate a positive identity when they have a sense of personal well-being and a sense of connection and commitment to others.

- Safety and Structure: a perception that one is safe in the world and that daily events are somewhat predictable.
- Self-Worth: a perception that one is a "good person" who contributes to self and others.
- Mastery and Future: a perception that one is "making it" and will succeed in the future.

DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

(Aspects of Identity continued)

- **Belonging and Membership**: a perception that one values and is valued by others in the family and in the community.
- **Responsibility and Autonomy**: a perception that one has some control over daily events and is accountable for one's own actions and for the consequences on others.
- **Self-Awareness and Spirituality**: a perception that one is unique and is intimately attached to extended families, cultural groups, communities, higher deities and/or principles.

DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

Areas of Ability: Young people demonstrate ability when they gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for adulthood.

- **Physical Health:** the ability and motivation to act in ways that best ensure current and future health for self and for others.
- **Mental Health:** the ability and motivation to respond affirmatively to and cope with positive and adverse situations, to reflect on one's own emotions and surroundings, and to engage in leisure and fun.

DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

(Areas of Ability continued)

- **Intellectual Ability**: the ability and motivation to learn in school and in other settings, to gain the basic knowledge needed to graduate from high school, to use critical thinking, to be creative, to use problem-solving and expressive skills, and to conduct independent study.
- **Employability**: the ability and motivation to gain the functional and organizational skills necessary for employment, including an understanding of careers and options, and the steps necessary to reach goals.

DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

(Areas of Ability continued)

- **Civic and Social Ability**: the ability and motivations to work collaboratively with others for the larger good and to sustain caring friendships and relationships with others.
- **Cultural Ability**: the ability and motivation to respect and affirmatively respond to differences among groups and individuals of diverse backgrounds, interests and traditions.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Forms

– **Choosing**

- Young people can choose which activities they wish to participate in and how they wish to participate.

– **Decision Making**

- Young people can meet on a regular basis to discuss and modify existing program rules and regulations.

– **Planning**

- Young people can meet regularly to plan future programs or community activities.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Forms (continued)

– **Assessing**

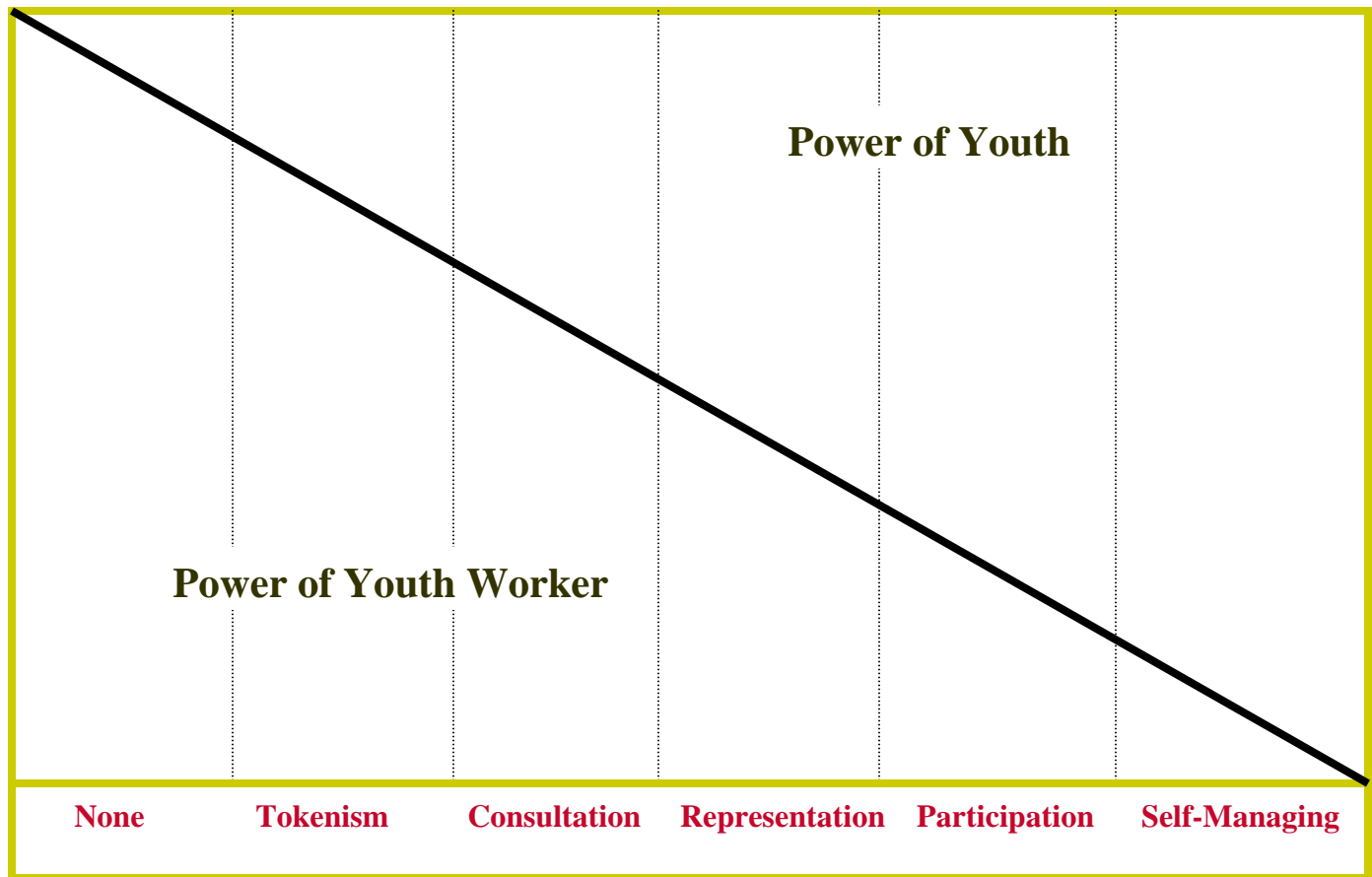
- Young people can map their communities and/or engage in program evaluation activities

– **Communicating**

- Young people can regularly present the program to outsiders: tours, talks to community audiences, presentations to funders

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Levels of Youth Participation



STAGES OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

- **Physical**
- **Emotional/Mental**
- **Social**
- **Spiritual**

WHAT YOUTH HEAR...

Oh, its only puppy love.

You're not old enough.
You're so clumsy.

You're so smart for fifteen.

Go to your room.

Don't touch that, you'll break it.

When are you going to grow up?



Oh, its only puppy love.

You're not old enough.

You're so clumsy.

ADULTISM

Go to your room.

Don't touch that, you'll break it.

When are you going to grow up?

ADULTISM

Adultism are the behaviors and attitudes that flow from the assumption that adults are better than youth and children. This -ism operates in a way that adults are entitled to act upon youth and children in a myriad ways without their agreement or consent.

- John Bell, YouthBuild

ADULTISM

Forms of Adultism

- **Dysfunctional Helping**
- **Blaming the Victim**
- **Avoidance of Contact**
- **Denial of Cultural Differences**
- **Denial of Political Significance of Adultism**



**BUSTING THE
BARRIERS TO
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUTH

- **Provide structures for one-to-one interaction**
- **Provide food**
- **Allow time for team-building**
- **Allow time to get to know them and listen**
- **Allow time for their creativity to blossom, sometimes outside the box**
- **Allow room for mistakes**
- **Have fun and laugh with each other!**

STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- Involve youth in planning
 - From the beginning of the project
 - Engage a youth-adult leadership team
 - Engage a youth advisory committee
- Involve youth in implementing
 - Train youth to lead and facilitate
 - Allow youth to lead and facilitate
- Involve youth in evaluating
 - Ask them what works and what doesn't
 - Train youth in assessment work

Strategies for State Entities

- **Hire youth interns/staff**
 - Create an intern program with local high schools and/or universities
- **Provide training and information for staff on youth development**
- **Create a Youth Advisory Board**
- **Use youth focus group for every major project**
- **Visit the schools and community groups**
 - Survey and/or interview youth

CONTACT INFORMATION

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¹Youth Development Approach- adapted from Advancing Youth Development, Academy for Educational Development, 1998.