Strategies for engaging and partnering with youth in school communities & state agencies

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Hello

Let’s break the ice...
Objectives

**Objective One:** Be able to differentiate between levels of youth engagement.

**Objective Two:** Be able to describe approaches for appropriately engaging youth (in groups or as representatives) in school and community settings.

**Objective Three:** Be able to discuss considerations for hiring Youth Advisors and developing the role.
Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation

1. Manipulation - adults use young people to support their own projects and pretend they are the result of young peoples’ inspiration
2. Decoration - young people help implement adults’ initiatives
3. Participation for show - young people have little or no influence on their activities
4. Young people are assigned tasks and informed how and why they are involved in a project
5. Adults make decisions, young people are consulted and informed
6. Adults’ initiative, joint decisions
7. Young people’s initiative and leadership
8. Young people’s initiative, decisions made in partnership with adults
Hart’s ladder self reflection Activity

On your own consider the following:

In the work I do currently, how much voice do youth have?

In the current agency I work for, how much voice do youth have?

In the systems that deliver services to youth, how much voice do they have?

What rung on Hart’s ladder am I currently working on and where would I like to be?
What is Youth Voice?

• Youth Voice is the concept that young people are respected for their ideas and opinions and are free to state them within an organization or program.

• Listening to student voice requires educators to intentionally, purposefully, and systematically elicit student viewpoints on a specific topic for school improvement purposes.
Silent Wisdom

Activity time!

No more training do you require.
What has 13 hearts, but no other organs?
I am the beginning of everything, the end of time and space, the beginning of every end, and the end of every place. What am I?
With pointed fangs I sit and wait; with piercing force I crunch out fate; grabbing victims, proclaiming might; physically joining with a single bite. What am I?
Win-win situation...

Benefits for Youth:
- Learning experience
- Practice behaviors & skills
- Adopt useful habits for adulthood

Benefits for Adults:
- Learn how to share power
- Working outside of your comfort zone
- Develop the skills to create a culture to welcome youth engagement
- Better understanding of being a youth in today’s world
Big question is:

- Expect no more and no less from a young person.
- Respect young people’s time & responsibilities
- Practice Patience-Take time to explain
- Provide some guidance & support
- Be consistent as an individual & as a organization
- Sustainability
- Celebrate achievements!
Wait...what?
This website incorporates a Positive Youth Development (PYD) tool that was developed to foster reflection, discussion, and continuous improvement for youth serving entities. [Learn more here.](https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/pydtool/)

Founded on existing literature and informed by communities, Colorado defines PYD uniquely as a universal approach with a practical lens that cuts across multiple risk factors and across all levels of prevention. PYD in Colorado is an evidence-based approach that guides communities and organizations in the way that they organize services, opportunities and supports so that all youth can be engaged and reach their full potential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PYD develops:</th>
<th>These skills, opportunities and authentic relationships are guided by the following 5 principles:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Skills</td>
<td>1. Strengths-Based</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Opportunities</td>
<td>2. Inclusive</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Authentic Relationships</td>
<td>3. Youth as Partners</td>
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<td>4. Collaborative</td>
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<td>5. Sustainable</td>
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This universal PYD approach allows for all youth-serving and supporting organizations to be...
Different Ways to Engage Youth & Where

What youth engagement looks like:

- Have youth co-facilitate/teach with you
- Get youth feedback on materials and imbed their recommendations
- Allow youth to inform how lessons are taught
- Engage youth as board members/decision makers
- Create Peer Leader/Youth Advisor positions
- Have youth do presentations of your organization

Opportunities for Youth Voice:

- Speaking Bureaus
- Art Exhibits
- Poetry contests
- Social Media
- Peer Mentors
- Youth Advisory Boards
- Student Government
- Campus Clubs
- Existing committees
Meet SYN United!

Minding the Gap
Lessons Learned

Define role and inclusion process

Understand and communicate need
- Full time/part time?
- Term limit

Prepare existing staff

Coaching and training
- Office culture, processes

Support
- Match other employee expectations for reimbursement/compensation
- Tuition assistance

Identify opportunities for continued involvement