YOUTH ARE THE FUTURE: LESSONS LEARNED FROM YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING TO IMPROVE SCHOOL CULTURE & CLIMATE

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Be able to share 3 strategies to foster youth leadership in your school or community

Explain why it’s important to recruit a diverse group of youth

State 3 ways to create safe, welcoming environments for youth to share

Define shared leadership
AGENDA

- Introductions
- Small group discussion
- Youth Leadership Quiz
- Lessons learned
- Resources
- Questions
WHO’S HERE?

- Educators?
- Mental Health Professional?
- Youth or Family Member?
- Private Providers?
- Higher Education/ Research?
- Other?
What are you doing now or could do to foster youth leadership and voice?

- Within your school or organization;
- Personally;
- How do you prepare youth to participate?
POP QUIZ
-POINT TO THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROOM IF THE ANSWER IS TRUE, POINT LEFT IF FALSE

Research on youth development found positive outcomes for youth involved in youth development activities in the following areas:

- Social acceptance and popularity
- Safety
- Health decisions
- Decreased loneliness/shyness
- Self esteem,
- Moral reasoning,
- Attitudes towards community service and involvement,
- Problem solving
- Motivation and assertiveness,
- Self control,
- A sense of personal control and enhanced identity development
- Communication with their family and parental trust,
- Self efficacy,
- Development of life skills such as leadership, speaking in public, decision making, dependability and job responsibility,
- Decreased juvenile justice involvement
- Fewer psychosocial problems such as hopelessness, depression
- Decreased involvement in risky behaviors such as drug, alcohol and tobacco use¹
Not all leadership experiences are created equal in effectiveness. Research consistently points to two characteristics of effective Youth Leadership Programs:

- Youth groups which are homogenous; and
- Offer opportunities to discuss their feelings and values.

- Opportunities which offer a variety of challenging situations to solve and choices to make under risky conditions; and
- Offer a supportive environment with positive role models who can mentor and provide support to youth.

(²Lambrecht, Hopkins, Moss, Finch, Crane & Bruce 1997)
Youth who participate in voluntary youth organizations are more likely to:

- Be employed
- Report higher incomes
- Attain higher education levels;
- Be involved in civic and community services

BENSON AND SAITO (2001)
Leadership skills for many youth are developed through participation in structured extra curricular activities such as Sports; Clubs; Fine arts, & Service organizations.

HOWEVER few youth with disabilities participate in these activities
LESSONS LEARNED FROM TRAINING 203 YOUTH LEADERS IN NH OVER 8 YEARS

- NH Annual conference on Positive School Culture and Climate
- Year 1 = token youth, individual opportunities to meet with state Leaders
- Took a few years to learn what shared leadership is
- Co develop, Co-present Leadership curricula
- Moving towards Youth led, Adult supported

Youth Participants
LESSONS LEARNED FROM 7 YEARS OF YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN NH

- Create a safe welcoming environment for youth to share
- Recruit a diverse group of youth
- Shared leadership
- Have a plan
- Plan strategies for managing stress
- Breaks/ downtime
- Paper evaluations
- Supplies are critical
CREATING A SAFE WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH TO SHARE

• Greeting youth/ having lunch/ breaktime with them
• Ice Breakers/ experiential activities
• Reward participation
• Breaking up cliques- challenge by choice
• Giving options
• Setting and enforcing ground rules with youth
RECRUIT A DIVERSE GROUP OF YOUTH
SHARED LEADERSHIP
ALL MEANS ALL: UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY
CREATE

Funding
PLAN STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS
BREAKS / DOWNTIME
EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP
SUPPLIES ARE CRITICAL
QUESTIONS
• YOUTH in YOUR School/Community

• RENEW.unh.edu

• National Alliance for Secondary Transition

RESOURCES
THANKS!

- Like us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/IOD.RENEW
- Follow us on Twitter: https://twitter.com/RENEW_IOD
- RENEW website: www.renew.unh.edu
- For further questions please contact us at iod.renew@unh.edu

Ginwright, S. (2010). Building A Pipeline for Justice: Understanding Youth Organizing and the


