Becoming An Ally For Youth: Tools for Achieving Equitable School Climate Improvement Driven By Youth-Voice

Empowering young people and their adult allies to act on their environments towards collaboration

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October 1, 2016
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WELCOME

What might this morning feel like?

Part 1: Introductions, warm up, grounding

Part 2: Language & paradigms

Part 3: Framing the conversation

Part 4: Continuum craze

Part 5: Assessing readiness

Part 6: Looking Ahead

Part 7: Close

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What do you need in order to arrive to this conversation?

Curiosity over analysis

Bravery in discomfort

Assume best intentions; intentions do not always equal impact

Beginner's mind; no one is born with critical consciousness

Confidentiality

Move in, move out

Call up and in, not out

Breathe before speaking

Expect and accept a lack of closure

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"

Why do you keep using that word?
I do not think it means
what you think it means.

— Inigo Montoya, The Princess Bride

Working definitions:

Youth-Adult Partnership

- *A partnership between older and younger leaders in identifying goals and accomplishing tasks that fulfills the mission and vision of an organization.*

Youth Development

- *A process or approach in which young people become competent or develop competencies necessary to be successful and meet challenges*

Youth Leadership

- *The ability to envision a goal or needed change, to take initiative or action to achieve the goal, to take responsibility for outcomes, and to work well with, relate to, and communicate effectively with others.*

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What is School Climate & Youth Voice Anyway?

Chalk Talk: An activity that involves no chalk and no talk

Around the room, there are several prompts.

Pick a marker. Offer an example, question, idea, issue, or resource.

GO WILD.

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Framing the Conversation

How might adult educators improve their alliance to young people's voice & leadership in their work to improve school climate?

• Student voice strategies **empower adults** in school settings **to partner with young people** to act on their environments, becoming agents of school climate change.

• Student voice strategies **do not replace, but rather compliment** Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies.

• This session adapts Marshall Gantz' theory of leadership that posits **leadership and organizational change as accepting responsibility for enabling youth to achieve purpose under conditions of uncertainty with the shared goal** of building positive school climates for wellness.

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Partnership Strengthens Learning & School Climate!

"Studies have shown that youth participation in service-learning...

Fewer behavioral challenges
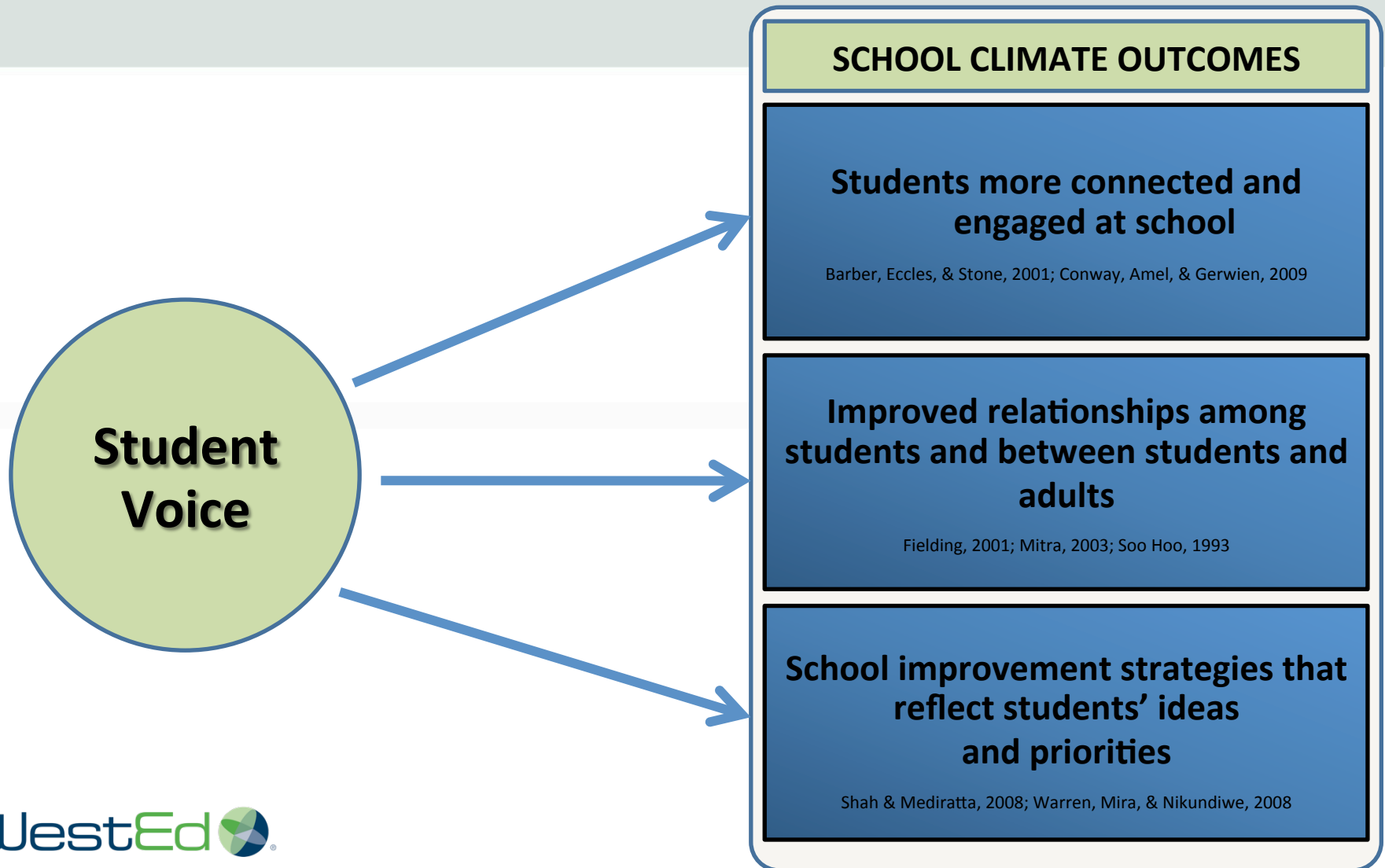
Increases grades and attendance

Great acceptance of cultural differences

Increases classroom participation

Increases positive & respectful relationships with peers and teachers

Student Voice & School Climate

Student Voice

SCHOOL CLIMATE OUTCOMES

Students more connected and engaged at school

Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Conway, Amel, & Gerwien, 2009

Improved relationships among students and between students and adults

Fielding, 2001; Mitra, 2003; Soo Hoo, 1993

School improvement strategies that reflect students' ideas and priorities

Shah & Mediratta, 2008; Warren, Mira, & Nikundiwe, 2008

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Youth Thrive Framework (2014)

(a) the strengths-based perspective,

(b) the biology of stress,

(c) resilience theory,

(d) the Positive Youth Development perspective,

(e) a focus on well-being, and

(f) the nature of risk, protective, and promotive factors.
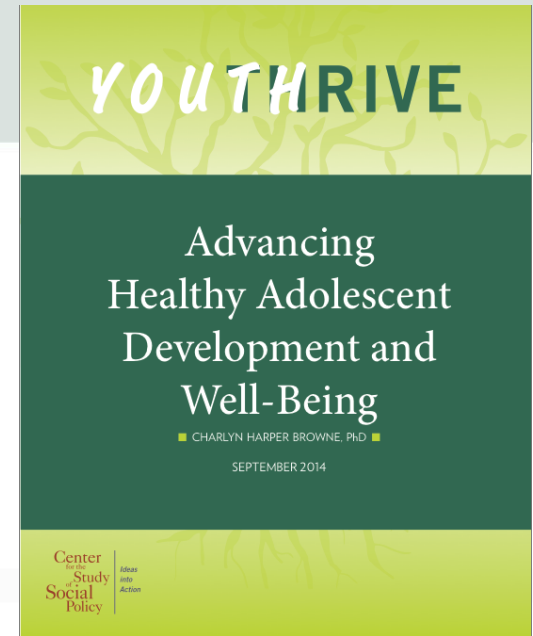
Belief Systems of People Living under Toxic Stress

People will eventually leave me

I'm not safe

I'm stupid

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Realms of Trauma Informed Care

Self

Services

Structures

Systems

Principles of Trauma Informed Care

Consistency – Predictability

Choice-Agency

Attachment-Significant relationships

Safety – Holding Space, listening & hearing

Competency-opportunities to build worth (HOPE)

Celebration of historical resilience (across race, gender, class, and sexuality lines)

Models of positive youth development

Models of Positive Youth Development

The 5Cs Model of Positive Youth Development

Competence — Enhancing participants' social, academic, cognitive, and vocational competencies.

Confidence — Improving adolescents' self-esteem, self-concept, self-efficacy, identity, and belief in the future.

Connections — Building and strengthening adolescents' relationships with other people and institutions, such as school.

Character — Increasing self-control, decreasing engagement in health-compromising (problem) behaviors, developing respect for cultural or societal rules and standards, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and spirituality.

Caring and Compassion — Improving youths' empathy and identification with others.

Source: Adapted from Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg (2000).

Very Different Perspectives

	Traditional Justice	**Positive Youth Justice**
Target	Youth deficits	Youth strengths
Goal	Control	Attachment
Strategy	Deter and provide treatment	Connect and engage
Tactics	▪ Sanctions ▪ Supervision ▪ Services	▪ Re-establish youth bonds with community ▪ Connect youth and family with pro-social activities ▪ Build on youth assets and interests

Positive Youth Justice model

		ASSETS	
		Learning/Doing	**Attaching/Belonging**
DOMAINS	**Work**	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes
	Education	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes
	Relationships	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes
	Community	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes
	Health	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes
	Creativity	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes

Source: Butts, Bazemore, and Meroe (2010)

THE EIGHT CATEGORIES OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS MEASURED IN THE DAP

External Assets

SUPPORT
Young people need to be surrounded by people who love, care for, appreciate, and accept them.

EMPOWERMENT
Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS
Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences for breaking rules, and encouragement to do their best.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME
Young people need opportunities—outside of school—to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youth and adults.

Internal Assets

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING
Young people need a sense of the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.

POSITIVE VALUES
Young people need to develop strong guiding values or principles to help them make healthy life choices, including responsibility, empathy, and self-control.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES
Young people need the skills to interact effectively with others, to make difficult decisions, and to cope with new situations.

POSITIVE IDENTITY
Young people need to believe in their own self-worth and to feel that they have control over the things that happen to them.

THE FIVE ASSET-BUILDING CONTEXTS MEASURED IN THE DAP

Context	Description
Personal assets	Internal strengths that shape the character of young people, including their self-concept, values, attitudes, and capabilities.
Social assets	Social assets are experienced through personal relationships with others, particularly their friends.
Family assets	Assets experienced in the family.
School assets	Assets experienced in school.
Community assets	Assets experienced in community settings other than school.

What is at the center of it all?
A sense of agency and empowerment for students.

"The power to understand, act on, and effect positive change in one's personal and social contexts; **embodying the sense of hope and possibility (grounded in an understanding of social reality)** that one can make a difference in one's own life, family, school, and local community and in the broader national and global community."

Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University (2000, p.2)

"Moving from **destructive risk-taking** to **nurtured risk-taking** will require an integrated approach to social change, one that transforms us as human beings as much as it transforms the system. We must craft an approach that combines healing and transformational work with work to empower young people to transform the systems and institutions that perpetuate harm and inequality."

On "Healing-Centered Youth Organizing," Nicole Lee for the Urban Peace Movement (2014, p12)

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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT CONTINUUMS:

VOICE, INVOLVEMENT, AND ATTITUDE

Youth-Adult Relationship (Hart's Ladder)	Spectrum of Youth Leadership (Movement Strategy Center)	Spectrum of Student Voice (Students at the Hub)
Student-initiated, shared decisions with adults	Youth Led	Leadership
Student-initiated, student-led decisions	Youth Run	Activism
Adult initiated, shared decisions with students	Youth Driven	Partnership
Students informed & consulted	Youth Involvement	Participation
Students informed and assigned	Youth Participation	Consultation
Students tokenized	Youth as Clients	Expression
Students are decoration		
Students are manipulated		

3:

Continuum of Voice

By Barbara Bray @bbray27
&
Kathleen McClaskey @khmmc

EXPRESSION
- offers opinions & answers questions
- creates Personal Learner Profile (PLP) on how they learn best

CONSULTATION
SURVEY
- takes surveys
- provides input and feedback
- shares PLP and works on PLPlan with teacher

PARTICIPATION
- attends activities with role in decision making
- articulates action steps to meet learning goals

PARTNERSHIP
- collaborates with teachers and learners
- contributes to design of lessons, projects and assignments

ACTIVISM
TIME for CHANGE
- identifies problems and generates solutions
- advocates for change in and outside of school

LEADERSHIP
- guides group as leader of change
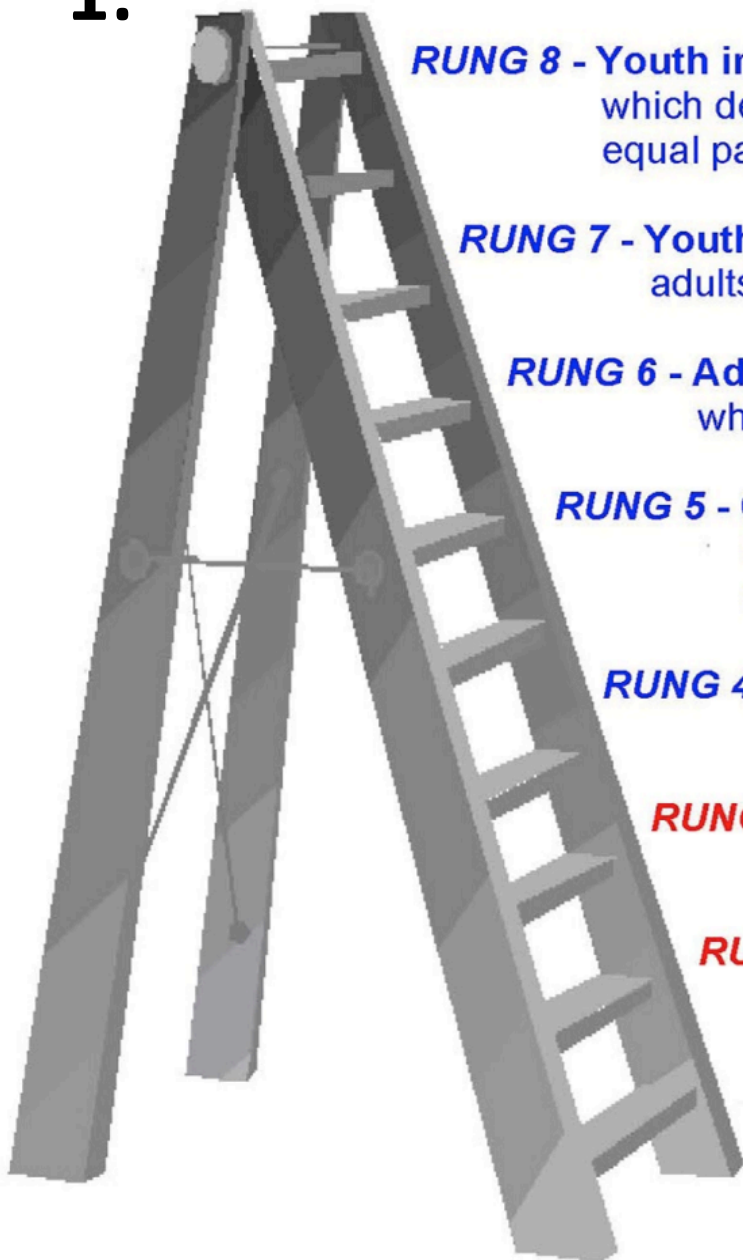- co-plans and makes decisions
- accepts responsibility for outcomes

Teacher-Centered • Learner-Centered • Learner-Driven
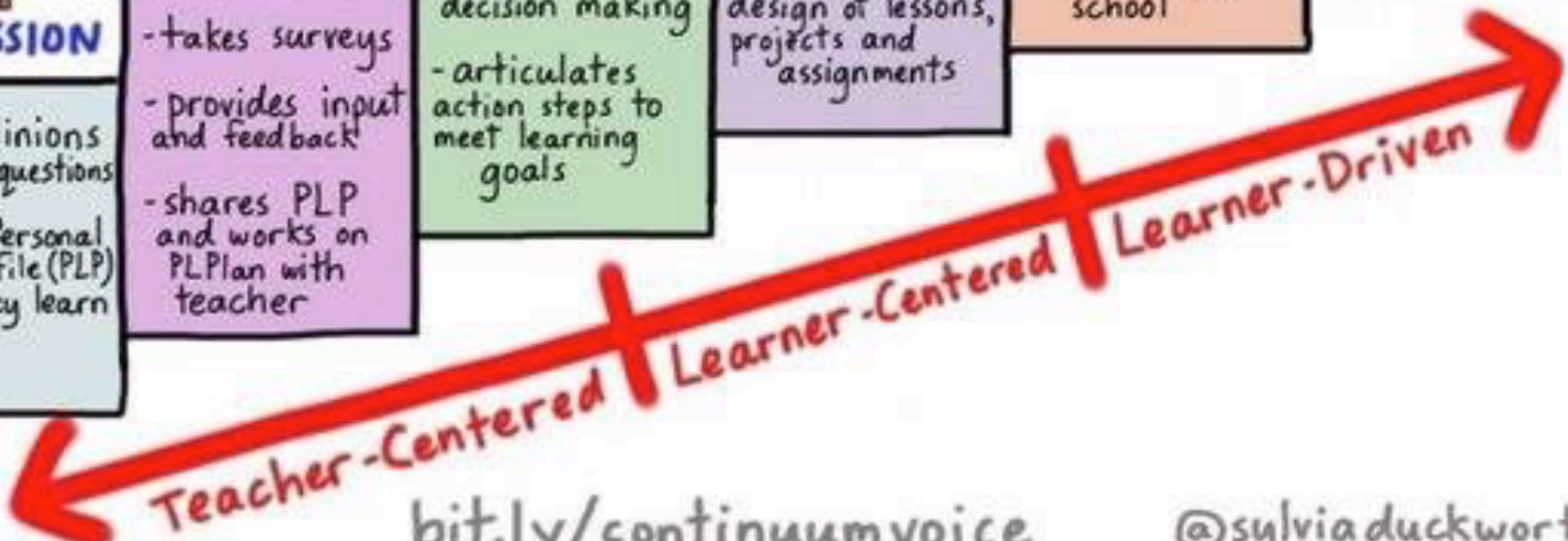
bit.ly/continuumvoice   @sylviaduckworth

ROGER HART'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

1:

RUNG 8 - Youth initiated shared decisions with adults: Youth-led activities, in which decision making is shared between youth and adults working as equal partners.

RUNG 7 - Youth initiated and directed: Youth-led activities with little input from adults.

RUNG 6 - Adult initiated shared decisions with youth: Adult-led activities, in which **decision** making is shared with youth.
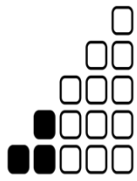
RUNG 5 - Consulted and informed: Adult-led activities, in which youth are consulted and informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of adult decisions.

RUNG 4 - Assigned, but informed: Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, decision-making process, and have a role

RUNG 3 - Tokenism: Adult-led activities, in which youth may be consulted with minimal opportunities for feedback.

RUNG 2 - Decoration: Adult-led activities, in which youth understan purpose, but have no input in how they are planned.
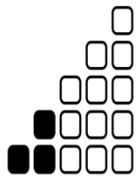
RUNG 1 - Manipulation: Adult-led activities, in which youth do a directed without understanding of the purpose for the activities.

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, as cited in

Non-Participation
Manipulation and
Tokenism
Young people's
contributions are:
- Co-opted by adults

- Solicited only to
satisfy a mandate
or ideal

- Not meaningful,
but used to
promote the
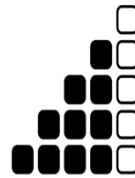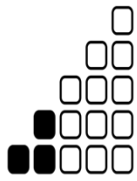project (i.e. a
photo opportunity)

Non-Participation
Manipulation and Tokenism

Young people's contributions are:

- Co-opted by adults

- Solicited only to satisfy a mandate or ideal

- Not meaningful, but used to promote the project (i.e. a photo opportunity)

Simple Participation
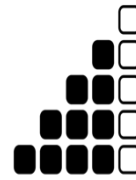### Contributors and Informants

Young people are:

- Surveyed or asked for opinions

- Engaged in only small components of a program

- Asked to contribute to youth-focused initiatives

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Manipulation and Tokenism

Young people's contributions are:

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Simple Participation
Contributors and Informants

Young people are:

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- Asked to contribute to youth-focused initiatives

Advanced Participation
Collaborators and Decision Makers

Young People are:

- Active members of program committees

- Asked to create and define projects that impact youth and adults

A Continuum Of Youth Involvement

Youth–*Guided*

Means That Youth and Adults are aware and engaged as they explore the ideas and skills of youth leadership and begin to value youth experience as integral to the decision-making process.

Youth–*Directed*

Youth begin to make recommendations and fill steady, meaningful roles in decision-making bodies. Youth and adults collaborate to create and prioritize goals and develop strategies for positive change.

Youth–*Driven*

Youth have self-awareness and skills to initiate change, as well as the intrinsic motivation and sense of purpose necessary to follow through. Youth have a mutually respectful relationship with adults and other youth in the community as they part-ner for the change desired by the youth.

A Continuum Of Youth Involvement

"Youth are/have..."

	Youth–*Guided*	Youth–*Directed*	Youth–*Driven*
Individual Level	Engaged in the idea Feel safe, valued Training	Forming relationships Making decisions with team Understanding processes	Takes responsibility Communicates visions Sets goals Gives presentations Become mentors
Community Level	Involving other youth Safe space to work/talk Compensated	Positions and voting power Increased representation Compensated	Community buy-in Forming and facilitating Compensated Provide training
Policy Level	Invited to meetings Involved as advisors Have a mentor Compensated	Understanding of policy Equal partnership Feel safe and valued Trained Compensated	Calling meetings/agendas Facilitate trainings Lead efforts Compensated

# What could this look like contextualized for wellness & support systems?

Quality of Participation or Consent	Rungs of Youth Voice[ii]	Wellness & Support Systems
Young people and adults share decision-making	Young people have the ideas, set up the project and invite adults to join them in making decisions throughout the project. They are equitable[iii] partners.	Young people actively identify their own wellness and support system needs, approaches, and services[iv] and invite adults to partner with them throughout the process. Any adult action is youth-centered and responsive.
Young people lead and initiate action	Young people have the initial idea and decide on how the project is to be carried out. Adults are available and trust in the leadership of young people.	Young people initially identify a/their wellness and support system need(s) and then determine which services and approaches they would like to access.
Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people	Adults have the initial idea, and young people are involved in making decisions, planning and implementing the project.	Adults initially identify the wellness and support system need(s) of young people, and young people are involved in making decisions around the response to those needs.
Young people are consulted and informed	Adults design and facilitate the project and young people's opinions are given weight in decision-making. Young people receive feedback about their opinions.	Adults design and facilitate the referral pathways[v], processes and policies related to young people's wellness and support systems. Young people are asked for their opinions based on their lived experiences; they receive feedback about their lived experiences (validating or invalidating their opinions).
Young people assigned but informed	Adults decide on the project and young people volunteer for it. Young people understand the project and adults respect their views.	Adults design and facilitate the referral pathways, processes, and policies related to young people's wellness and support systems and young people volunteer to participate in some or all of the steps of the processes and policies. Adults ensure that there are structured opportunities to check for youth [and their families'] understanding of the process, policies, and pathways in place regarding youth wellness and support systems. Adults create and drive a wellness and support system reform initiative or project; adults select [which] young people [should be] to be a part of the implementation.

Participation (left margin)

Consent (right margin)

	Quality of Participation or Consent	Rungs of Youth Voice[vi]	Wellness & Support Systems	
Non-participation	Tokenism	Young people are given a limited voice and little choice about what they say and how they can communicate.	Young people are given limited voice and choice about how they experience awareness and access of wellness and support system services and approaches. There are few opportunities to communicate their lived experiences to adults. Adults only refer or invite young people to share their wellness and support system needs when they are required to.	Non-Consent
	Decoration	Young people can take part in an event in a very limited capacity and have no role in decision-making	[Only youth with the awareness of services] can access wellness and support system services based on a referral from an adult; they do not have decision-making power in if or how they receive services.	
	Manipulation	Adults have complete and unchallenged authority to abuse their power. They use young people's ideas and voices for their own gain.	Adults have complete and unchallenged authority to abuse their power in forcing or coercing young people to receive services. Any ideas youth offer about their experiences of support systems and wellness services are used for adult gain. Adults share young people's wellness and support system needs & information without permission.	

[New] ROLES for Youth
(The Movement Strategy Center)
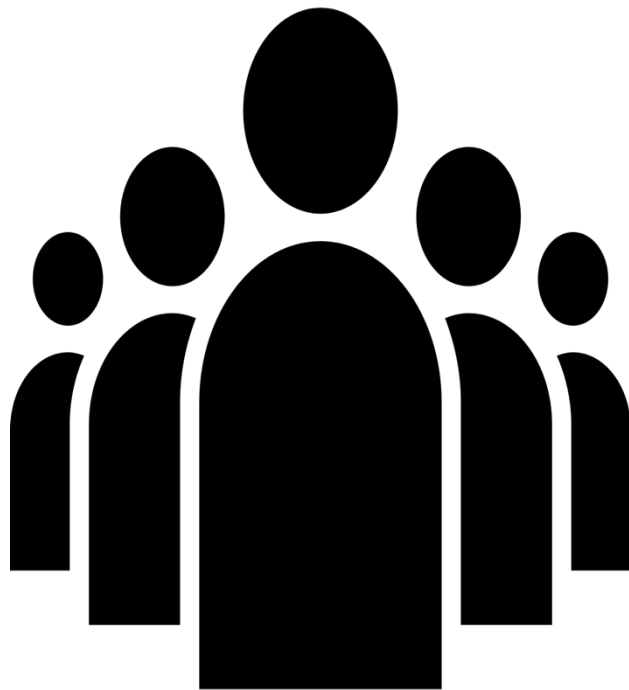
- Youth as Facilitators
- Youth as Researchers
- Youth as Planners
- Youth as Organizers
- Youth as Decision-Makers
- Youth as Evaluators
- Youth as Specialists

We approach mental health, trauma & resilience, wellness-all of it- through our own lenses

"Trauma and the meaning making process of it is **socio-culturally bound**, meaning that while many might suggest schools and the learning environment to be a place for a young person to make meaning of his or her own living context, **the way in which teachers might expect him or her to do so is culturally charged**."

de Jong, J. T. V. M. (2007). Traumascape: an ecological–cultural–historical model for extreme stress. In D. Bhugra & K. Bhui (Eds.), *Textbook of Cultural Psychiatry (pp. 347-363). Cambridge University Press.*

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So, what is your lens?

- **How do you define "trauma," "mental health," "healing," "voice," "leadership"? for yourself, in your own life?**

- **What might have supported you through a experience/time where there were challenges / adversity?**

- **How have you accessed opportunities to explore resilience?**

Where Are We, and Where Do We Want to Go?

Assessing Readiness
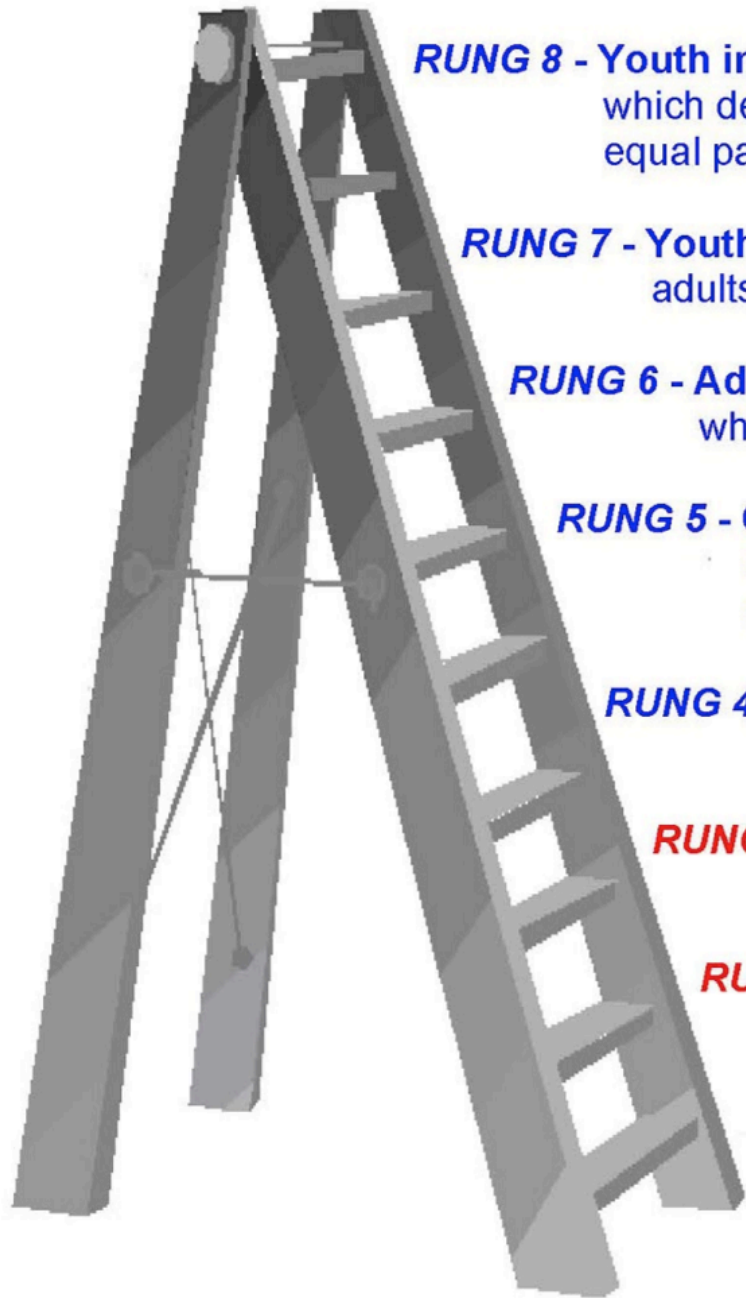
Independent think:
Reflecting on youth voice

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

In reflecting on the **services my institution provides**, how much voice do youth have?

What are **my personal goals / intended outcomes for youth involvement** in my school community?

Do I know what my **school's goals / intended outcomes around youth involvement** are?

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And, it's messy.
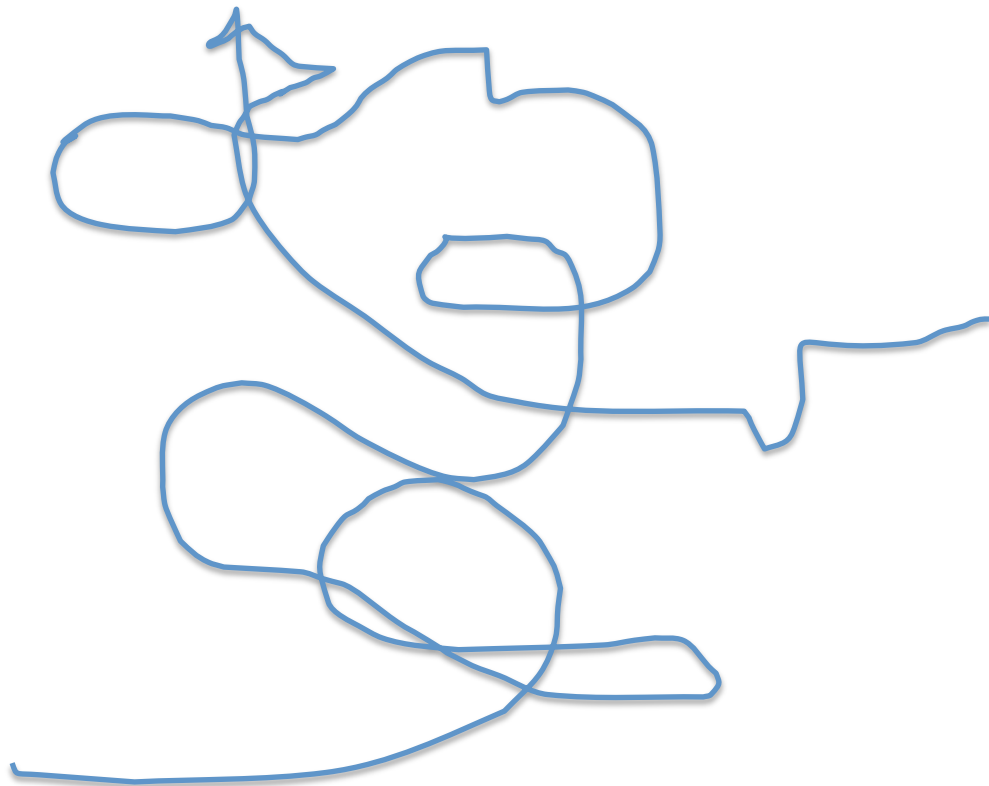
Team Think:

1 Consider the **Ladder of Youth Participation and Wellness Schema chart** (handout).

2 **Discuss:**

- **Which level of the ladder is our project/program/ activity/practice/interaction on, and why? Who benefits? Who loses?**

- **Which level of the ladder should our project be on, and why? Who benefits? Who loses?**

- **If we want to move to another rung of the ladder so that it meets our theory of action and outcomes, what do we need to do?**

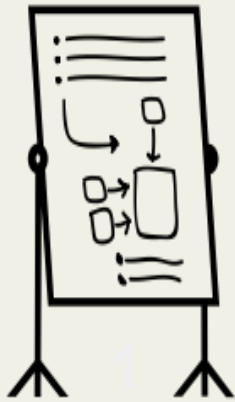3 Be prepared to **share your discussion**.

Serving as Meaning Making Partners

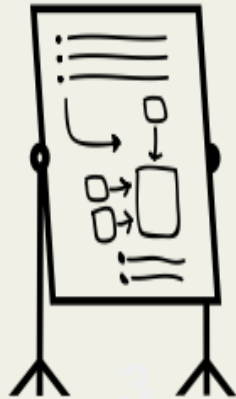## Stepping into the Role of
Positive Youth Development Advocate

"You move into discomfort so that I can move out of pain and we can meet in the middle."

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Holding Space

1) How do adults view young people?

"Four Corners"
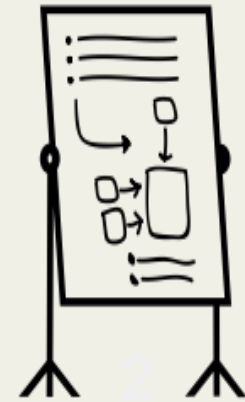
1. **Let's establish groups**

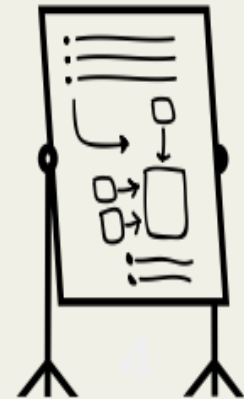2. **Go to your number stations**

3. **3 minutes per question**

4. **Rotate**

5. **Wrap Up - walk around**

6. **Discussion**

2) How do adults think young people view *them*?

3) What behaviors have you experienced in intergenerational meetings that would not be helpful in building healthy partnerships?

4) What behaviors have you seen that help build strong intergenerational partnerships?

Common Challenges Related to Youth Voice & Leadership

(From: "Youth Voice: A Guide for Engaging Youth in Leadership and Decision- Making in Service-Learning Programs," Points of Light Foundation, 2001)

Issue	Challenge	Recommendation
Sharing power	Some adults have difficulty relinquishing power to youth during the planning and decision-making process. At the same time, some youth may be un- comfortable with taking on the responsibility that comes with having power.	Work towards sharing power by distributing responsibility and decision-making at levels in which adult and youth participants are comfortable. Provide opportunities to discuss power issues openly.
Stereotypes	Adults often have stereotypes of young people. As a result it may be easier to engage youth who have already been identified as leaders. Many adults reach out to youth that they think will act and perform like adults. Young people also have stereotypes of adults. This may lead to lack of trust, or skepticism from young people about adults' willingness to support and partner with them.	Don't make assumptions about the abilities of youth or adults. Instead, build off of the strengths of each individual youth and adult. Provide ways for them to grow in their weak areas. Take risks and be surprised by what young people and adults can do once given the proper skills and tools.
Viewing youth as recipients	Many adults and young people have difficulty seeing youth as leaders or resources in the community. Some don't believe that youth could offer something valuable.	Provide examples of what young people have accomplished. Provide clear roles, realistic expectations and support for those involved. Provide proper orientation and training. This should help provide adults and youth with a better sense of what young people can do as leaders.

Looking ahead

Green, yellow, red lights

_ _ _

What are some of the challenges we face? In our own practices and belief systems? What needs to be disrupted?

Now after our learning, **what might we need to be more intentional** about when it comes to engaging youth?

What should we keep doing? Start doing? **What excites us?**

- Student wellness / Climate Youth Summits

- Student Listening Circles & Facilitator Training

- School mental health consulting & technical assistance

- Wellness & Support for Youth Serving Adults

- Youth Participatory Action Research

- Youth Positive Development, Trauma-Informed Care and Resilience Oriented School Practice

- School Climate Surveys, Evaluation & Data Driven Coaching

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For more information, contact:

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Thank you!

Our Website: https://www.wested.org/program/health-human-development-program/

For the Trauma & Schools Webinar Series: https://relwest.wested.org/events/329

-Trauma & Resilience 101

-Youth Leadership as a Trauma Informed Cornerstone

-Self & Collective Care for Youth Serving Adults

Handouts

Action Planning (for partnering with youth)

Harts Ladder Reflection

Youth Efficacy & Empowerment Scale-Mental Health (R&TC Portland)

Youth Involvement Checklist (THRIVE)

Youth Voice & Wellness (WestEd)

Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric (Students at the Hub)
http://studentsatthecenterhub.org/toolkit/authentic-youth-engagement/

References

Student Listening Circles (WestEd)

Speak Out Listen Up! (WestEd Toolkit, 2014)

Advancing Healthy Adolescent Development and Well-Being (Youth THRIVE, 2014)

Authentic Youth Engagement (Jim Casey, 2012)
http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/areas-of-expertise/161/authentic-youth-engagement

Student Wellness Guide (Leora Wolf-Prusan, WestEd, 2016)

Student Voice & Engagement in School Improvement (WestEd)

Youth & Young Adult Peer Support-Mental Health (SAMHSA, 2015)

"Sacramento's LGBTQ Youth: Youth-Led Participatory Action Research for Mental Health Justice with Youth In Focus" (FOCAL POiNT Research, Policy, and Practice in Children's Mental Health, 2009)