

Positive Youth Development

The ongoing process in which all young people are engaged and invested, and in which young people seek ways to meet their basic physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs and to build competencies and connections they perceive as necessary for survival and success.

Source: Adapted from AED/Center for Youth Development and Policy Research Advancing Youth Development Curriculum. Copyright 1996

Developmental Youth Outcomes – Areas of Ability

* **Physical Health**

the ability and motivation to act in ways that best ensure current and future physical 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 emotions and surroundings, and to engage in leisure and fun

* **Intellectual Ability**

the ability and motivation to learn in school and in other settings, to gain the basic knowledge needed to graduate high school, to use critical thinking, to be creative, to use problem-solving and expressive skills, and to conduct independent study

* **Employability**

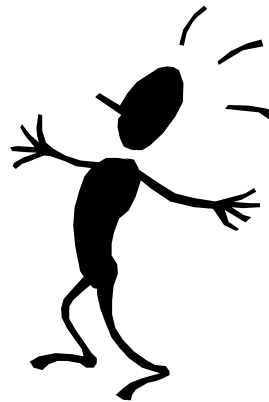
the ability and motivation to gain the functional and organizational skills necessary for employment, including an understanding of careers and options, and the steps necessary to reach goals.

* **Cultural Ability**

the ability and motivation to respect and affirmatively respond to difference among groups and individuals of diverse backgrounds, interests, and traditions

* **Civic and Social Ability**

the ability and motivation to work collaboratively with others for the larger good and to sustain caring friendships and relationships with others



Source: Adapted from AED/Center for Youth Development and Policy Research Advancing Youth Development Curriculum, Copyright 1996

Developmental Youth Outcomes – Aspects of Identity

* **Self-Worth**

A perception that one is a “good person” who contributes to self and other

* **Belonging/Membership**

A perception that one values, and is valued by, others in the family and in the community

* **Responsibility/Autonomy**

A perception that one has some control over daily events and is accountable for one’s own actions and consequences on others

* **Mastery/Future**

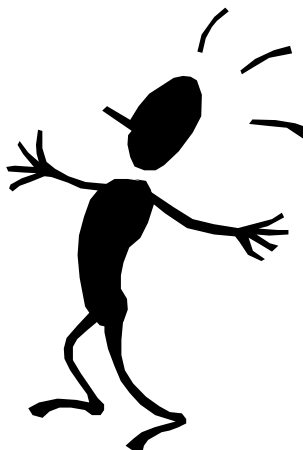
A perception that one is “making it” and will succeed in the future

* **Safety/Structure**

A perception that one is safe in the world and that daily events are somewhat predictable

* **Self-Awareness/Spirituality**

A perception that one is unique and is intimately attached to extended families, cultural groups, communities, higher deities and/or principles



Source: Adapted from AED/Center for Youth Development and Policy Research Advancing Youth Development Curriculum, Copyright 1996

Selected Indicators of Positive Youth Development¹

Domain	Indicators
Belonging and Membership	<p>Youth is connected to at least one other “pro-social” person</p> <p>Youth participates in school and/or community groups</p> <p>Youth demonstrates connection to family and community</p> <p>Youth has one or more close friends</p>
Safety and Structure	<p>Youth seems comfortable discussing interpersonal and intrapersonal issues</p> <p>Youth is able to express concerns about safety issues</p> <p>Youth’s environment maintains safety and respect for all, regardless of differences</p> <p>Youth appears to have a sense of predictability in daily life</p>
Self-Worth	<p>Youth is able to identify several things that s/he likes about self</p> <p>Youth seems to take pride in appearance</p> <p>Youth is able to articulate negative feelings about self</p> <p>Youth appears to feel liked and respected by others</p>
Mastery and Future	<p>Youth expresses optimism/enthusiasm about future</p> <p>Youth is willing to try new experiences</p> <p>Youth sets realistic goals that progressively become more difficult as competency increases</p> <p>Youth articulates interdependent living skills and areas needing improvement</p>
Responsibility and Autonomy	<p>Youth accepts new responsibilities</p> <p>Youth demonstrates follow-through on tasks</p> <p>Youth acknowledges personal contributions and responsibilities</p> <p>Youth appears to feel some control over daily events</p>

¹ Adapted from Jordan Institute for Families (2003). Interdependent Living Curriculum

Domain	Indicators
Spirituality and Self-Awareness	<p>Youth appears to identify with family and cultural groups</p> <p>Youth can identify unique personal qualities</p> <p>Youth participates in some form of spiritual expression</p> <p>Youth seems to understand, appreciate, and reflect on emotions</p>
Physical Health	<p>You experiences low incidence of illness</p> <p>Youth's weight is proportional to height</p> <p>Youth abstains from drugs (tobacco, alcohol, other drugs)</p> <p>Youth either abstains from sex or uses contraception</p>
Mental Health	<p>Youth demonstrates coping skills</p> <p>Youth demonstrates emotional self-control</p> <p>Youth identifies and pursues constructive alternatives to stressful situations</p> <p>Youth is able to identify personal mental health needs</p>
Intellectual Ability	<p>Youth consistently attends academic or vocational training</p> <p>Youth communicates well orally</p> <p>Youth communicates well in writing</p> <p>Youth demonstrates critical thinking and problem-solving skills</p>
Employment	<p>Youth articulates aspiration to work and/or assume additional responsibilities</p> <p>Youth appears to be motivated to perform well at work and meet expectations</p> <p>Youth organizes daily life to be punctual and productive at work</p> <p>Youth is able to discuss person experiences in the work world</p>

Domain	Indicators
Civic and Social Ability	<p>Youth demonstrates ethical behaviors toward others</p> <p>Youth obeys laws</p> <p>Youth listens to, respects, responds to ideas of others</p> <p>Youth takes responsibility for own actions and consequences</p>
Cultural Ability	<p>Youth appears to identify with specific cultural groups</p> <p>Youth respects differences among individuals and groups</p> <p>Youth recognizes that family histories and connections are part of his/her uniqueness</p> <p>Youth has healthy coping skills when treated negatively on the basis of differences</p>

SAFETY – PERMANENCY -- WELL-BEING Handout

We looked at the 12 desired outcomes in a positive youth development framework. What does this have to do with the child welfare mandate? The three key outcomes in child welfare are: SAFETY - PERMANENCY – WELL-BEING. The definitions are:

Safety: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect. Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. *(Proposed definition for youth transitioning out of care: Youth are discharged to safe environments and with the skills and supports to keep themselves safe.)*

Permanency: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved.

Iowa DHS’s Draft Definition of Youth Permanency: Every child in Iowa’s child welfare and juvenile justice systems will have permanent relationships with one or more caring, capable and supportive adults.

Child and family well-being: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs. Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs. Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

How and where these 12 youth development outcomes fit within the structure of Iowa’s child welfare system? Think not only about the teen years in care but “fast forward” to the day the youth is discharged from care.

	Safety	Permanency	Well-being
Ability Outcomes			
Physical Health			
Mental health			
Intellectual ability			
Employability			
Civic and Social Ability			
Cultural ability			
Identity Outcomes			
Safety and Structure			
Self-Worth			
Mastery and Future			
Belonging and Membership			
Spirituality and Self-Awareness			
Responsibility and Autonomy			

Services, Opportunities and Supports

Services – providing resources, knowledge or goods to young people.

Services are done **TO OR FOR** the young person

Opportunities – offer youth chances to interact with the world in different ways and to take on different roles.

Opportunities are done **BY** the young person

Supports – the interpersonal relationships that guide young people as they prepare for adulthood.

Supports are done **WITH** the young person

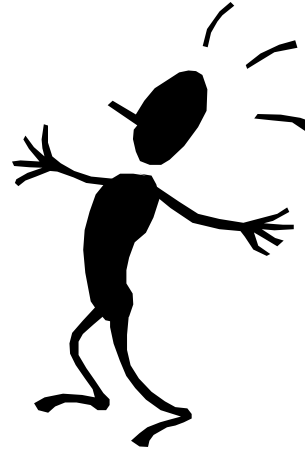
Opportunities for Youth Development

Exploration, Practice & Reflection:

The chance to actively learn and build skills and to critically test, explore, and discuss ideas and choices

Expression and Creativity:

The chance to express oneself through different mediums and different settings, and to engage in both learning and play



Group Membership:

The chance to be an integral group member (such as family, school, and youth organization, by fully taking on the responsibilities of membership

Contribution and Service:

The chance to have positive influences on others through active participation in formal and informal community- and family-based activities.

Part-Time Paid Employment:

The chance to earn income and be part of the work force within a safe and reasonably comfortable setting.

Source: Adapted from AED/Center for Youth Development and Policy Research Advancing Youth Development Curriculum. Copyright 1996

Supports for Youth Development

Nurturance and Friendship:

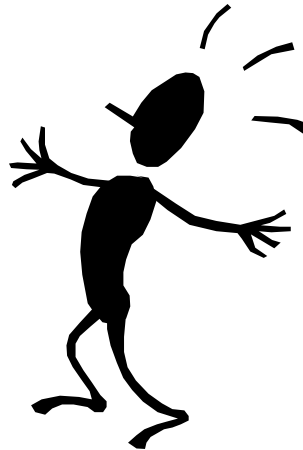
To receive love, friendship, and affirmation from others, and to be involved in caring relationships.

Options Assessment & Planning:

To receive assistance in assessing one's options and to be involved in relationships characterized by coaching, feedback, and discussion.

High Expectations:

To receive high expectations from others, including the opportunities, encouragement, and rewards necessary to meet high expectations.



Standards and Boundaries:

To receive clear messages regarding rules, norms, and discipline, and to be involved in discussion and modifying the boundaries as appropriate.

Access to Resources:

To receive assistance in gaining access to current and future resources through involvement and connections to people and information.

Source: Adapted from AED/Center for Youth Development and Policy Research
Advancing Youth Development Curriculum, Copyright 1996

What Iowa youth had to say about their experiences in foster care

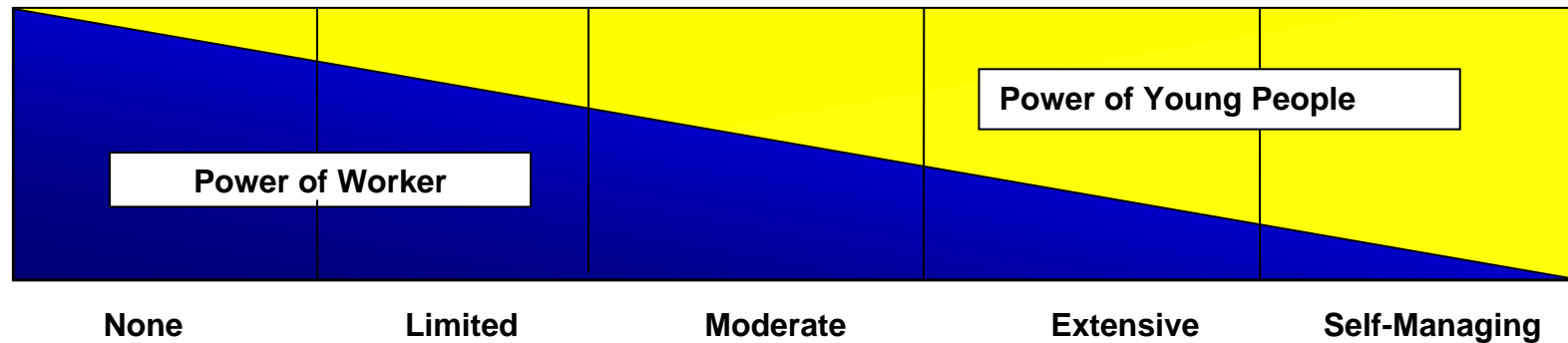
- They were “afraid” of the people running the meetings because they knew the authority (power) that they had and the youth felt like they had none
- We understand they have high caseloads. But when they don’t return calls it’s like we’re not good enough for them. They will only talk to our providers.
- Talk to us about our issues and get our input. Don’t make decisions about our lives without our input.
- Youth should have active voice in the plan and be able to choose the person that can help them and bring this person to meetings with them
- Help us make a back-up plan with lots of resources. Teach us realistic problem-solving and how to approach tough situations
- If the youth don’t like what is going on, they need to speak up – but then you get told to be quiet. Youth felt that were not listened to
- Two things important - getting your education and having a job
- Workers negatively label youth. We get condescending tones from workers—a lot.
- His worker was very supportive and made a huge difference – credited them with helping him stay in school and graduate
- Caseworkers have a critical role – they have the power
- After being in the “system” so long – get used to terms being used that youth don’t understand – just try to figure out what it means to them
- Help youth identify other people – adults and older youth – that could help once ‘case closed’

Youth Participation

All youth will take responsibility and contribute if they are given legitimate opportunities and ongoing support to do so. If we provide young people with sufficient background information to help them prepare for the process of participation and provide them with legitimate opportunities for participation – to have a voice, to make choices, to contribute, to make decisions -- we have begun to practice effective youth participation.

Source: Adapted from AED/Center for Youth Development and Policy Research Advancing Youth Development Curriculum, Copyright 1996

A Model for Understanding Youth Participation in Decision-Making



None: Adults have unchallenged and complete authority.

Limited: Youth may share ideas, but adults maintain control and ultimate decision-making power.

- Youth may be consulted, but their views not included.
- Youth are consulted, but limited options (choices) are controlled by the adult.
- Youth are present where and when decisions are made, but have not been prepared and therefore their involvement is limited or ineffective.

Moderate: Youth are present, have been prepared, and work with adults to problem solve, review options and make decisions.

Extensive: Youth set agenda, decide on issues, and have joint accountability with adult(s).

Self-Managing: Youth have personal responsibility and is accountable for self while being interdependent with others for personal success.

Source: Adapted from Youth Council of Northern Ireland

Youth Power: Case Examples

Interaction 1

Celia, age 17, was picked up by the police while she was on the run. She left her foster home two days ago, after being confronted for having marijuana in her room. She was picked up at the mall and was intoxicated. She said she had stayed with some friends but wouldn't give names. Her foster parents readily took her back, but she would be grounded for two weeks and have to provide a urine sample. Another run would mean expulsion, they warned.

What level of personal power does Celia have in determining the conditions under which she returned to the foster home?

Interaction 2

Randy, age 17, is on the highest level of freedom at his residential treatment center (RTC). He has liberal use of the phone and can stay out until 11 with friends on Pass Night. If he is going to be more than 10 minutes late, he needs to call and have a good explanation. Randy decides he wants to stay the weekend with his uncle, who is approved by the Agency for visits. Randy has told the RTC counselor that he wants to stay with his uncle from Friday at 6 p.m. until Sunday at 2 p.m., and that he plans to go with friends to a concert Saturday night and return home at 2 a.m. The RTC and his uncle discuss and approve this. Randy is to wake up his uncle when he returns so that the uncle can be sure he is home and check him for signs of drug use. Also, Randy cannot go to any raves. Randy agrees.

What level of personal power does Randy have in achieving his goal of going to the concert on Saturday night?

Interaction 3

Daniel, 16, is unhappy. After being stopped for a cracked headlight while driving a friend's car, a traffic court judge ordered him into community service and driver's education. Daniel does not have a license because neither the group home nor his Agency will allow him to drive. Daniel grew up on a farm and says he has been driving since he was ten. He believes he is a good driver and there is no contrary evidence. He simply has no license. The caseworker asked Daniel what kind of community service he would prefer-although the judge may or may not be willing to consider the caseworker's opinion.

What level of personal power does Daniel have in determining what kind of community service he will have to perform?

None Limited Moderate Extensive Self-Managing

Source: Interdependent Living Curriculum, Jordan Institute for Families, March 2003

**ADULT APPROACHES TO YOUTH
OBJECT/RECIPIENT/RESOURCE-PARTNER**

Youth Approached as **Object**:

The adult knows what is best for the youth. The adults believe it is the responsibility of the youth to take advantage of the program or opportunity that as been created by adults. These judgments are based not on the youth's individual strengths and needs, but on the basis on the youth's membership in a group – a young person, an abused child, youth with oppositional-defiant diagnosis, etc.

“Decisions based on category or class, not individuality”

Youth Approached as a **Recipient**:

The adult believes they know what is best for the youth and that the youth will benefit from participation in the program or opportunity. The adult is still in control, but they may *allow* the youth to participate, primarily in order to persuade them to “buy in”. Even if they don't buy in, however, the adult presumes the youth will receive some benefit .

“Persuade the youth to accept what the adult has to give.”

Youth Approached as a **Resource/Partner**:

The adult respects and works in partnership with the youth and what they can contribute to the current situation – insights, options, skills, talents, problem solving ability. The adult recognizes the youth's contribution as something that will be part of the solution for the present and future preparation and planning.

“Work in partnership with youth as their own greatest resource in planning.”

Adapted from Lofquist, W. (1989) *The Technology of Prevention*. Tucson, AZ: Associates for Youth Development

Object/Recipient/Partner Dialogue Script*

Dialogue 1

Worker

Tell me about what happened- Mrs. Kroeger said you got pretty angry last night but she doesn't know what about.

Youth

I hate it when they lay all their stupid rules on me; I am NOT their kid, they are NOT my parents, I have my own ways of doing things. Pisses me off.

Worker

Yeah, it is hard coming to live with people who have their own ways. What happened?

Youth

I am a night person. I told you all that a million times. I can't go to sleep at 11 so there is no sense in turning the friggin lights off! It's stupid!

Worker

I know, it doesn't make much sense, but it's their way to make sure you get enough sleep and you just got to go along with this one.

Youth

That sucks.

Dialogue 2

Youth

I want a damn job! How much do I need to say this? Who is going to listen to me? What do I need to do to get some money? You want me holding up liquor stores?

Worker

Yeah, I know you want a job. Your PO called to say that he is recommending in court tomorrow that you be allowed to get one since you haven't had any violations.

Youth

Well, finally. Damn.

Worker

So, let's talk about this. What's on your mind for going about getting a job?

*Source: Interdependent Living Curriculum, Jordan Institute for Families, March 2003

Youth

I want to work in a music store, like Cheapo Discs.

Worker

What do you like about that?

Youth

Cuz I know music. It would be cool to be in a music store all day, helping people, playing stuff that I like.

Worker

Ok, what are you going to do to get started getting a job like that?

Youth

Go down there and talk to that guy Barry who runs the place. Fill out their application. Mostly I want him to see that I know a lot about music.

Worker

What do you think Barry will ask you?

Youth

He'll quiz me big time on what's up in music, like the old stuff; a lot of people into 70's music go in there.

Worker

Yeah, I think you are right. And other things to...?

Youth

Like what?

Worker

Well, like working a cash register, handling money, treating the customers well. He might want to know about whether you have been in trouble with the law before.

Youth

Damn. That sucks.

Worker

Would you like to practice some questions with me that Barry might ask?

Youth

Yeah, I guess so. Damn.

Worker

I bet you can answer them well. Practice helps. Ok, let's try some.

*Source: Interdependent Living Curriculum, Jordan Institute for Families, March 2003

Dialogue 3

Worker

Ah, Tamika, you need to listen up here! I know you are getting bored with this, but we have to finish writing up this IL plan for you today. It's due really soon.

Youth

Ahhhh! You people put so much pressure on me! I hate it!

Worker

Yeah, I know it's a lot. But you gotta have a written plan for learning stuff that you will need to live on your own. Look here - see, we've got several categories to plan for. Learning to shop. Managing your money. Cleaning your own clothes. Cooking. These are what you need to learn.

Youth

Whatever.

Dialogue 4

Worker

I am really impressed with what you are trying to do, to stay in touch with your mom. I know it's hard.

Youth

Yeah, I can't ever count on her really. But I decided I don't want to just forget about her. Like never see her again. I am pissed at her, but I think I'd feel really bad if I lost track of her.

Worker

I think that is a good insight on your part. I think there are a number of things to be aware of though: she might not make it easy to stay in touch with her and she might put you off. You need to be prepared for that. I think you ought to talk to Betty, your counselor, before you see your mom. She can really help you. It would be good for you to prepare for your visit with your mom so you aren't disappointed.

Dialogue 5

Youth

I just don't know how I am going to make it here. I mean I am Puerto Rican and everybody, ALL the girls and ALL the counselors, they are either white or black. I feel really different than them.

*Source: Interdependent Living Curriculum, Jordan Institute for Families, March 2003

Worker

It can be hard when other people of your own culture aren't around. Are there some things you could do to feel less alone?

Youth

I don't know. Maybe I should talk to my counselor about it.

Worker

Yeah, that might help. What could you say?

Youth

Just tell her how I feel I guess.

Worker

I bet she and other staff can find some ways to help you feel more a part of things. I wonder if there are some things that you could do to feel a part of things at the group home and not give up what it means to be Puerto Rican.

Youth

I wish I could watch Spanish TV for one thing.

Worker

That's a good idea. You can bring that up to your counselor. If you would like me to talk to her too just let me know.

Dialogue 6

Worker

Well, Jody, I think you've done a great job on reaching these goals listed under "education". You passed all three of these classes just like you said you would.

Youth

Yeah, it was a lot of work but I did it.

Worker

And congratulations- it really is terrific what you accomplished. We need to focus today on your goals in the area of employment, getting ready for work.

Youth

Well, you know I want to get a job.

Worker

Yes, I do and that's what we are here to talk about today. So I've got the want ads here.

*Source: Interdependent Living Curriculum, Jordan Institute for Families, March 2003

Youth

OK- but can't I just go down to mall and start applying?

Worker

No, we're not going to the mall because we always start with the want ads. That's what I do with all of the other youth I work with and I've found it works best.

Dialogue 7

Worker

I want to talk with you about some options you have for continuing to receive help after you turn 18. The program is called Aftercare.

Youth

I don't want anything to do with any more programs after I turn 18. I'm sick of being in foster care, sick of DHS, sick of it all. I turn 18 and, believe me, I'm out of here.

Worker

I understand. Turning 18 is a really important milestone. I'm sure you are ready for your independence. But I'm wondering how you intend to pay for your apartment, food, gas money, clothes, etc. without additional resources?

Youth

I'll work, I'll figure it out. Lots of people are on their own at my age.

Worker

Yes, but what you have to think about is what happens if you run into some trouble, for example if you get into an accident, or have some unexpected bills, then what?

Youth

I don't want to think about this anymore.

(Dialogue 7 written by NRC)

*Source: Interdependent Living Curriculum, Jordan Institute for Families, March 2003

Dialogue Score Sheet

Select the worker approach that BEST reflects the scenario by marking an X in the column.

Dialogue #	Object	Recipient	Partner
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

Source: Interdependent Living Curriculum, Jordan Institute for Families, March 2003

Trainer's Notes*

Dialogue 1 Recipient

- While this worker is empathic, there is no room for problem solving other than going along with the rule.
- The youth is able to express his/her frustration but is being treated like a recipient
- It would be helpful to ask the youth for some possible alternatives, e.g., explore with the Kroegers other ways this youth can have a later bedtime and still get the sleep they need.
- Likely the Kroegers don't want a hassle in the morning with grumpy, sleepy kids.
- Perhaps a trial period of keeping the lights on later could be institutes.
- The youth could make commitments about good behavior in the morning and they could evaluate it.

Dialogue 2 Resource/ Partner

- While this youth is pretty cocky, the worker continues to treat him as a resource.
- The youth really hasn't thought much about the reality of getting a job at the music store and could be in for a big disappointment without getting prepared.
- The worker treats him as a resource by asking him for his opinion, by suggesting topics but not forcing them and by suggesting rather than expecting a rehearsal.

Dialogue 3 Object

- While this worker is friendly and well meaning, she is telling Tamika what is going to happen.
- When the worker uses "we" it appears to be the imperial use of the work.
- The worker is in charge and on a roll.
- Tamika is being treated like an object, and her last word reflects this.

Note: Be sure to read this dialogue in a way that conveys the worker's empathy and respect for the youth. You want to differentiate between these - it is common to treat youth with empathy and yet still treat them as objects. Being treated as an object isn't synonymous with being disrespectful.

Dialogue 4 Recipient/ Partner

- This worker conveys respect and support for what the youth wants to accomplish but she tells her exactly what the issues are and what she should do, instead of asking her opinions about this.

Dialogue 5 Resource

- This worker supports this youth in generating her own solutions.
- The worker offers to help her implement them if needed.

Dialogue 6 Object

- Again, we've got a friendly caring worker but one who tells the youth what to do.
- There is no attempt to involve the youth in generating ideas.
- The youth is expected to carry out the plan developed by the worker.
- This seems particularly unnecessary because of the youth's accomplishments with regard to education.

Dialogue 7 Recipient

- The worker phrases her concerns as questions but they are really arguments for aftercare.
- The number of concerns raised at once overwhelms the youth and shuts the youth down.

Adapted from: Interdependent Living Curriculum: Training for Child Welfare Practitioners Working with Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care; Jordan Institute for Families; University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; North Carolina; 2003

Youth Participation Objects, Recipients and Partners

Below are examples of comments that reflect the different approaches to youth:

Object

- Let's schedule you for life skills class.
- The case plan says this is what we are going to do next.
- Department policy prohibits youth solely determining which family members they can maintain contact with.
- All foster youth must attend house meetings
- You are not allowed to set your own curfew due to group homes rules
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-
-

Recipient

- It will be good for you to attend.
- Counseling will help you see that you can not live with your mother.
- The court order says you need counseling before making a home visit.
- That was a good lesson for you to learn.
- Our daily house schedule will help you learn responsibility and cooperation.
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-
-

Partner

- What is your opinion on the situation?
- I would like for you to talk with your roommate about decorating your room.
- What do you need to have a successful home visit?
- Would you be willing to facilitate our next house meeting?
- Please share your ideas on how we can better meet your needs.
- How do you plan to get your chores done while holding down a full-time job?
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-

Adapted from: Interdependent Living Curriculum: Training for Child Welfare Practitioners Working with Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care; Jordan Institute for Families; University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; North Carolina; 2003

Three Types of People Support that are Essential in Promoting Positive Youth Development

Strategic

- **How to navigate the world**

Emotional

- **Nurturing relationships**
- **“Soft landing” place**

Motivational

- **Help youth identify goals/rewards they value**
- **Promote youth’s sense of self-efficacy, i.e., a belief that their successful efforts will result in goal/reward attainment**
- **Help youth set standards for achievement that are realistic and stretching**
- **Help youth believe that they have the ability to reach the goal**
 - **Help youth develop vision of “possible selves”**
 - **Help youth identify past successes/strengths**
 - **Communicate adult’s high expectations, and firm belief in the youth**

Youth Centered Team Meetings

- **Teen-Centered**

The teen must be present for the meetings and actively involved in their pre-planning. The teen's plan is developed from what the teen identifies as hopes and wishes for the future. It is planning genuinely done *with* adolescents, not *for* them or *to* them.

- **Personalized**

This is not a cookie cutter approach. The process must be adapted to each teen's unique needs and circumstances. It is a culturally sensitive process, such that the style of meeting, communication patterns, refreshments, location, and outcomes are reflective of the teen's culture. This can best be accomplished by involving the teen in pre-planning.

- **Inclusive**

Anyone the teen would like to invite can be involved, with input and guidance from professionals. In addition to professional service providers, this may include current and former caregivers, birth family (including non-custodial fathers and paternal relatives), teachers, coaches, neighbors, clergy, and others from the community. Each person receives a personal letter or invitation, often written and signed by the teen.

- **Integrates youth's needs for permanency, development of life skills and personal goal attainment**

This process considers the teen's strengths and needs in all life domains, as identified by the teen and the adults who are involved. Primary concerns are permanent family connections and support for the youth in developing life skills and achieving transition goals, but other areas may receive attention as well. For instance, one teen may excel academically and need assistance in applying to college; another would benefit from a part-time job. A teen might need one or two caring adults to share quality time, while another may need transportation to activities. If a permanent family is not identified among those present, participants may agree to help recruit a family or to be a permanent connection. If a permanent family is identified, others may commit to provide support for that family. The worker or other professionals provide information about formal resources as well.

- **Ongoing**

Teen-Centered Planning requires several meetings and may evolve into an informal support network that stays together indefinitely. The first meeting identifies hopes, strengths and needs. Participants begin the process of responding as individuals or collaborators. Subsequent meetings provide for follow-up and development of next steps.

- **Accountable**

This approach builds in accountability to the teen and to the other persons involved in the teen's plan. Each meeting ends with the identification of specific next steps and personal commitments to a piece of the effort. At times, people may choose accountability partners with whom they will check in to ensure that progress is being made toward goals.

(Adapted From *Adolescents and Families for Life: A Toolkit for Supervisors* by Robert G. Lewis and Maureen Heffernan, used with permission)

Ways Workers and Service Providers Can Facilitate Decision Making Partnerships With Youth

A. During the engagement process, the youth and the worker share decision making regarding:

- How much time is spent in chit-chat.
- The time between the youth's request for services phone calls and the worker's availability.
- The length of the first session and who will be present.
- The topics for discussion during the first session and whether the most delicate subjects will be raised.
- Where the youth sits and where the worker sits.
- Whether refreshments are shared.
- Whether the worker will solicit the youth's reaction after each statement.
- Whether the youth will give input into each worker decision and whether the worker will inform the youth of each decision.

B. During the assessment process, the youth and the worker share decision making regarding:

- What values will guide the partnership and the intervention.
- What goals will be pursued.
- In what order the goals will be pursued.
- How youth resources and strengths will be acknowledged and utilized.

C. During the treatment and planning processes, the youth and the worker/ service provider share decision making regarding:

- The pros and cons of working towards various goals.
- The overall energy to be devoted toward working toward various goals.
- What strategies will be used, and in what order, to pursue what goals.
- How progress will be evaluated.
- Which portion will be the responsibility of the youth, which will be the responsibility of the worker, and which will be the responsibility of others.

D. At time of discharge of foster care, the youth and the worker share decision making regarding:

- How and when the discharge will occur.
- What, if any, contact may occur between the worker and the youth after the formal ending of the services.
- What goals the youth will choose to continue to pursue and how he or she will pursue them.

Adapted From: Beyond the Buzzwords: [Key Principles in Effective Frontline Practice](#), by Jill Kinney, K. Strand, M. Hagerup, & C. Bruner, (1994). National Center for Service Integration and the National Resource Center for Family Support Programs.

Questions for Supervising Case Practice with Older Youth in Care

Questions to ask workers about all youth by age 12-14:

What are this youth's strengths?

What are this youth's hopes and wishes for the future?

In what youth development areas is this youth progressing?

Identity

Safety/Structure
Self Worth
Belonging/Membership
Responsibility/Autonomy
Mastery/Future
Self Awareness/Spirituality

Ability

Physical Health
Mental Health
Civic and Social Ability
Cultural Ability
Employability
Intellectual Ability

Who and what are the youth's current sources/types of support? What is the quality/consistency of this support? Gaps? Ideas for enhancing support?

Persons

- Emotional
- Motivational
- Strategic

Types of Support

- Nurturance and Friendships
- Standards and Boundaries
- High Expectations
- Options Assessment and Planning
- Access to Resources

What is the youth interested in? What opportunities is this youth participating in?

Expression and Creativity
Exploration, Practice and Reflection

Contribution and Service
Group Membership

Are there any additional services that would enable the youth to take better advantage of opportunities and supports for his or her development?

Are there any additional considerations regarding this youth's physical and emotional development?

Who is talking to the youth about culture and identity? Where is the youth in terms of development of racial and ethnic identity?

Relationships important to this youth? Who is this youth important to?

What is being done to maintain these relationships?

What is being done to assure permanency or permanent connections for this youth?
What else could you try?

How is the youth's permanency team involved? How could they be involved?

If the youth has entered puberty:

Has the youth received comprehensive sexuality education?

Does the youth have access to reproductive health services?

Is the youth sexually active? If so, does he or she plan on becoming a parent in the next year? If not, does he or she need assistance in securing a means to prevent pregnancy? Is he or she familiar with safer sex practices?

What are the youth's educational/career aspirations and plans?

- What educational supports are being provided to support realization of these plans?

Other:

Age 14-16 (add the following questions)

Additional opportunities: part-time paid employment? career exploration?

Does the youth have opportunities for learning skills for independent living?

How do you assess the youth's communication skills?

Other:

Age 16-18 (add the following questions):

What does the youth say about how prepared he/she feels for living on his/her own? What are your ideas/concerns?

What supports/services are in place to assist the youth in learning skills for living on her/his own? Are we missing anything? Is there anyone else who could teach/model?

Does the youth know about the options for remaining in care past his or her 18th birthday? What does the youth say about post-discharge resource options? Are they considering aftercare? If not, what might we do to encourage their further exploration of aftercare/ETV/etc.?

What are the youth's housing plans and how are we facilitating them? What about temporary housing or friends/family for breaks/leaves/holidays?

If youth is college bound, who is helping with college apps? financial aid? Has the youth reconnected with birth family? How is it going? What supports are needed to help the youth negotiate healthy adult relationships with birth family?

Who has gone over the ACLSA with the youth? What goals were created as a result of the assessment results? When will the assessment be taking again?

How Youth Use Help A Youth Development Perspective

Youth use help in learning and achieving when:

1. They are involved in planning and decision-making
2. There is a mentoring relationship in which they feel supported and cared about
3. Both the experiences for learning and the perspectives held by the adults are *normalizing* for the youth
4. They feel like they are being treated with respect
5. They feel they are being listened to
6. There are opportunities to practice and learn (sometimes involving a manageable level of risk)
7. There are “if-then” rehearsals (thinking through the likely consequences of various actions and planning with this in mind)
8. Key resources are available
9. Setbacks are seen as learning opportunities
10. The youth has opportunities for new roles and responsibilities
11. There is opportunity for peer support
12. They are guided to build on their strengths
13. Incremental progress is acknowledged and valued

Source: Institute for Families at the University of Denver, Promoting Youth as Problem Solvers, September 2003

Tips for Talking With Teens

(from National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development's
Life Long Connections Curriculum)

- Do not take it personally. The things that are said are generally not meant as a personal attack on you. Sometimes this is just the reaction of the youth for an unknown reason. The initial reaction from most adolescents in care to any idea is negative.
- Ask youth how they feel about having a family or support rather than asking about being adopted.
- Ask non-accusatory questions - be careful that youth don't place blame on what or how we have stated something.
- Reassure youth that they will have choices in the process and that they will not have to proceed any further or faster than what they are willing to do.
- Be careful with "why" questions - instead, ask "what happened?" to avoid making the youth defensive.
- Be clear and straightforward about what is required and what is optional.
- Ask open-ended questions - avoid 'yes' and 'no' answers, because that is all you will get.
- Avoid making judgments, assumptions - ask clarifying questions if need be.
- Be optimistic, but realistic with the youth, don't over-promise.
- Be careful about the language you use - talk at a level youth understand and avoid acronyms.
- Meet the youth halfway - explain things, don't assume that they know what you are talking about. Be willing to say "I was wrong."
- Encourage open dialogue and answer the youth's questions to the best of your ability. Don't be afraid to say 'I don't know' but then get an answer.
- Develop a relationship -- you can learn a lot more when youth trust you.

Source: Life Long Connections: Permanency for Older Youth
National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development, 01/11/06

GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORY OBSERVATION

Pre-Observation

- Explore with worker which of the required skills (e.g. interview, presentation) they feel most confident about and which they feel most uncertain about.

Notes: _____

- Ask worker what concerns they have about being observed and whether there is anything that will help make them feel more comfortable.

Notes: _____

- Ask worker what problem s/he might anticipate as the observed event proceeds.

Notes: _____

- Ask worker what skill objectives s/he wants to practice during the observation and what specific procedures, skills, or issues they would like feedback about (write in skills list below)

Other Notes: _____

During the Observation

Observe whether the worker was able to utilize skill(s) you list below:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Notes: _____

Post-Observation

What does the worker see as strengths about what they did during the process?

Notes: _____

What does the worker think caused them difficulty?

Notes: _____

What would the worker do differently?

Notes: _____

What new goals or objectives will the worker try to work on in future sessions?

Notes: _____
