



# A FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH COLLECTIVE EMPOWERMENT

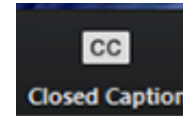
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A RAISE Webinar

Presented by Ali Hrasok, MA

# Using Closed Captioning

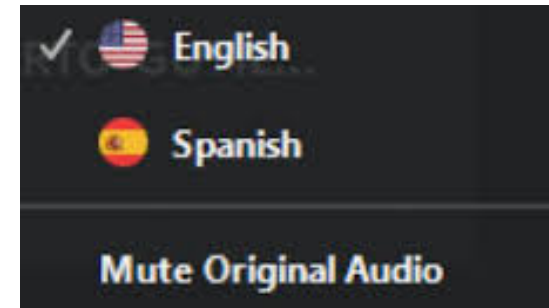
- To start using CC, click the caption button



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# Uso de la interpretación de idiomas

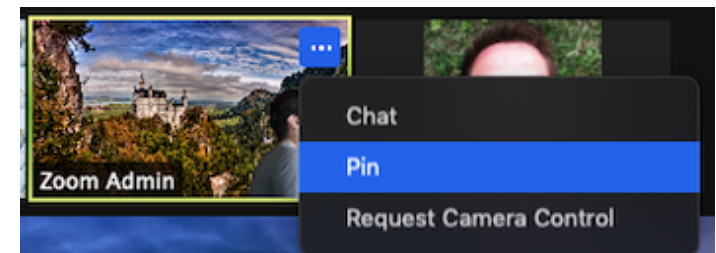
- Hagan clic en el icono de interpretación
- Seleccionen "Spanish"
- Después de seleccionar "español", opriman donde dice "Mute Original Audio"



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# Using ASL

- To pin the interpreter, hover over the video of the participant you want to pin and click ...
- From the menu, click Pin.





# INTRODUCTION

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# RAISE and the Toolkit Series

## RAISE

- Who we are
- What we do

This leads us to our Toolkit Series

- To support Parent Center professionals in creating programming that is centered in youth development
- So far...
  - Youth Engagement
  - Youth Development
  - Youth Leadership



# What about all of you?

**Chat:** What role you most identify with?

Parent

Professional

Parent Center Representative

Other

**Chat:** Who has utilized our other toolkits?



# GOALS

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# Our Goals Today

- 1. Provide context and relevance**
- 2. Discuss structure of toolkit**
- 3. Provide content-level examples**

## **Overarching goal:**

Leave this webinar with a tool to use as you continue to engage youth and support their development.



# THE IMPORTANCE

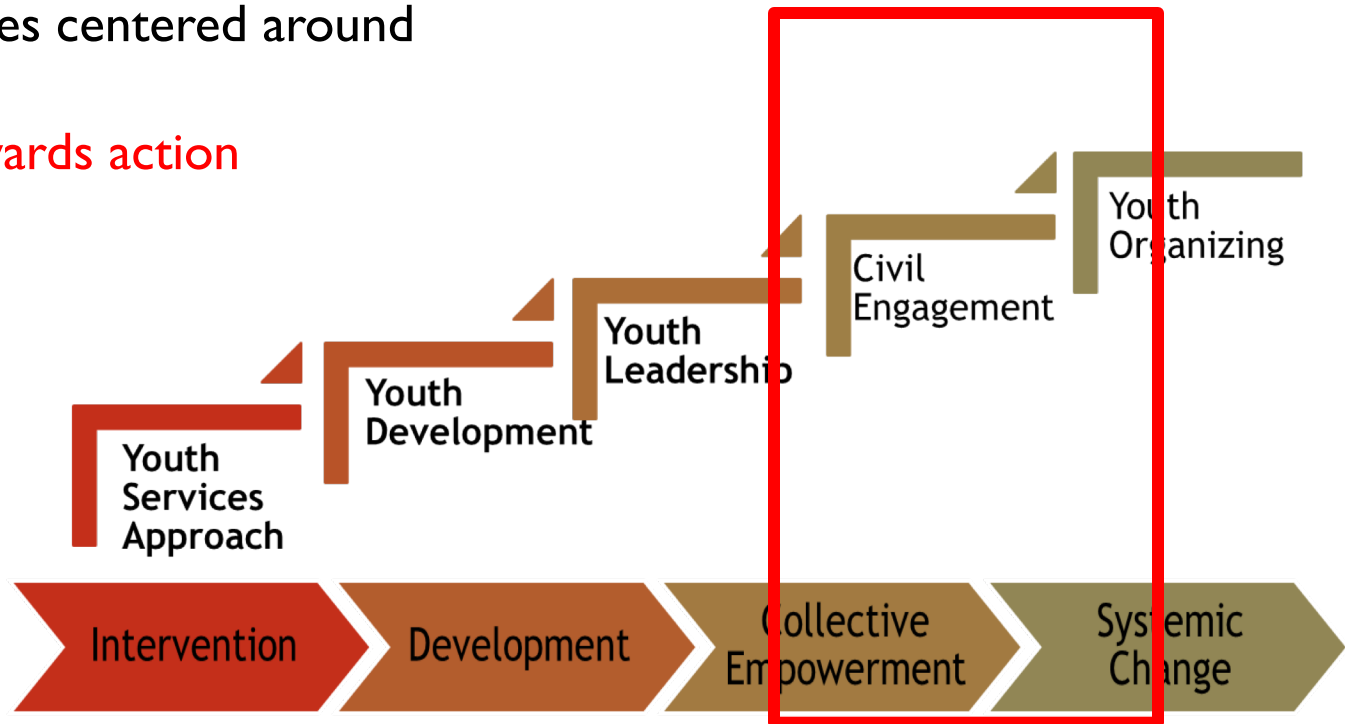
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# Revisiting the Youth Engagement Continuum

## Big picture

- Youth engagement continuum<sup>1</sup>
- Process that requires increased opportunities centered around youth.
- Moving towards action





# STRUCTURE OF TOOLKIT

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# A Structural Guide

## 5 key components

- Background
  - Literature-based explanation of components
- Framework
  - General translations of components to your work with youth
  - Provides a starting point to individualize at your agency



# CONTENT

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Youth Collective Empowerment



# 5 Key Components

## **Team Building**

Working and thinking collaboratively

## **Collective Thinking**

Ability to brainstorm, problem-solve, and reflect as a group

## **Blending Individual Skills**

Combining individual strengths for the greater good of the group

## **Building Community**

Establishing relationships with the world around them

## **Group Evolution**

Many stages groups routinely go through



# Team Building

- Deliberate actions that work towards group cohesion
  - Clear line from action → group goals
- Four components of team building:
  - Goal Setting
  - Interpersonal Relationships
  - Role Clarification
  - Problem Solving

# A Framework: Team Building



## Set-up

### Understanding your role

- In previous toolkits we discuss ideas such as dignity of risk and becoming an adult ally. To set up your team for success, you have to make the conscious decision to commit to the idea that each individual's contribution towards team objectives is more important than any one contribution on its own.

### Criteria for membership

- Take time to consider the work your group will be doing. Individuals should be added to the group if they will be able to meaningfully participate in your goals. Building a cohesive team often means being upfront about what will be required.



## Develop

### Keep it inclusive

- Now that you have brought members into the group, make sure it is structured in a way to have equal and meaningful participation. Keep in mind this does not mean that *all* members must be *the* leader, but rather all should have access to important responsibilities.

### Add in socialization

- Create moments for non-work-related time. Build in extra time before meetings to check in with group members. Becoming invested in each other's lives will help the team dynamic.
- Utilize more traditional team building activities. Make it a routine to do a silly icebreaker or establish meet-ups from time to time.



## Maintain

### Long-term strategies

- Integrate the four components listed above: goal setting, interpersonal relationships, role clarification, and problem solving.
- Use this toolkit to find ways to work together to set goals and problem solve, build relationships amongst themselves and their community members, blend individual skills for collective progress, and evolve as a unit towards their mission.



# Collective Thinking

- Consider collective goals
- Recognize diversity of individuals and avoid groupthink
- Scenarios to avoid:
  - Rationalization
  - Peer Pressure
  - Complacency
  - Moral High Grounds
  - Censorship

## A Framework: Collective Thinking

### Group Brainstorming

Just as with individuals, there are many different ways to brainstorm. Depending on the group, you may want to try different techniques that are more visual, verbal, tactile, or digital. Here are some examples:

- **Round-Robin** – take turns expressing ideas without discussion in between.
- **Brain-writing or Brain-mapping** – Instead of shouting ideas in a group, encourage members to write down or draw as many ideas as possible, then post them to a centralized location before discussing collectively.
- **Online Brainstorming** – using many of the shareable, cloud-based systems, you can set up online documents for groups to add to as they have ideas.

#### Preparation

This step is all about the environment. Make sure you not only have all of the physical tools you need, but you have also set the stage for judgement-free collaboration.

STEP  
01



STEP  
02

#### Clear Understanding

Make sure that the task or problem is very clearly defined, and objectives are well-outlined. Build in time for group members to ask questions about the goals of their time together.

#### Guided Discussion

Using one or more of the group brainstorming techniques above, help the group work through different ideas. Be sure to spend most of your energy making sure all ideas are heard, discussed, and explored.

STEP  
03



### Group Reflections

These are questions the group can ask themselves as ways to process their decision-making as well as what work they have accomplished.

- What are our goals for this project?
- Are there any other ways we can get this work accomplished?
- Why do we think this is the best way to solve this problem?
- Did we think of this from all perspectives?
- Does anyone have any other ideas?
- How will this decision impact other people?
- What can we do if this does not solve our problem?
- Did I do everything I could to help the group?
- Did we use everyone's skills effectively?



# Blending Individual Skills

- Utilizing individual skills to the group's advantage
- Understand group growth and dynamics as a means of individual development **WITHIN** the group context
  - Forming
  - Storming
  - Norming
  - Performing
  - Adjourning

# A Framework: Blending Individual Skills

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## During the storming stage:

- Work with youth to communicate skills and interests with the entire group.
- Encourage members to work through differences, acknowledging that this is a normal part of group development.
- Support inclusive processes that fit all styles. Help the group to see the many strategies they can use to complete tasks and solve problems.



## During the norming stage:

- Support diversifying roles within the group. This can be a critical time when roles develop.
- Think of various positive roles people could fill<sup>10</sup>:
  - **Initiator** – Suggests new ideas
  - **Elaborator** – Provides examples and builds upon other ideas
  - **Coordinator** – Brings everything together
  - **Evaluator** – Thinks of potential problems and provides feedback
  - **Recorder** – keeps track of information
- As they begin to develop naturally, help the group to explicitly recognize rules and structure that the group abides by. This may include administrative tasks, communication, and general interaction.

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## During the performing stage:

- Reinforce roles developed in the norming stage. If there is overlap in roles, support ways to rotate responsibilities.
- Normalize the evaluation process. Help the group identify things that worked and did not work and how they could be utilizing each other's skills in ways that are more effective.
- Circle back to earlier stages if necessary. Continue to create opportunities for members to learn more about one another.





# Building Community

- Increasing engagement with community benefits youth and the community
  - Inclusivity and Diversity
  - Social Justice
  - Globalization

Enhanced capacity for social change!

# A Framework: Building Community



## Caring Friends and Adults

- ✓ These are individuals closest to the youth.
- ✓ Establishes perspective and influences their responses to new relationships.
- ✓ Building stronger close relationships supports the youth's capacity to step beyond the inner circle and establish broader networks.



## Near-Peers and Role Models

- ✓ These are individuals connected to youth through direct or indirect means.
- ✓ Provides a direct representation to learn from and model themselves after.
- ✓ Increases youth capacity to accelerate individual and group growth.



## Mentors and Coaches

- ✓ These are individuals that directly support youth in either a formal or informal capacity.
- ✓ Establishes youth-adult relationships that are resourceful.
- ✓ Strengthening these relationships helps youth begin to navigate various barriers and challenges.



## Networks and Weak Ties

- ✓ These are individuals outside of the "bonded relationships" or otherwise in loosely connected groups.
- ✓ Forces a network orientation that allows for help-seeking.
- ✓ Establishing these relationships can expand the resources of marginalized groups.



## Resources and Connectors

- ✓ These are individuals that can connect youth to resources within their own social networks.
- ✓ Creates an understanding of the social balance of reciprocity.
- ✓ Establishing these relationships help to empower youth to learn and advance towards their goals.



# Group Evolution

- Supporting groups in recognizing their stage and working through it
- Revisiting the group lifecycle
  - Forming – making connections
  - Storming – simply goals and tasks
  - Norming – keep momentum going
  - Performing – solidify group's togetherness
  - Adjourning – provide closure and stability

Repeat and evaluate often!



# A Framework: Group Evolution



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**Think about:**

- Who the individuals are that make up the group.
- What the group does and how you do it. This may include answering this for your role in the larger organization.

**Identify:**

- What makes your group unique and the best fit for what you do.
  - How the group is currently sustained.
- 

**Think about:**

- The group's history including past members and activities.
- What the community and environment around the group is.

**Identify:**

- Any competitors or potential collaborators for what you do.
  - What has and has not worked for the group in the past.
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**Think about:**

- Current trends and initiatives in the organization and field.
- Big picture ideas and dreams of the group.

**Identify:**

- Realistic goals based on these dreams.
  - Any potential barriers your group may face and how you will overcome them.
- 

**Think about:**

- What current resources are available to you and what resources might you need.
- How you will evaluate your progress and success.

**Identify:**

- Sustainability measures including funding and membership growth.
  - Step by step strategies for achieving your goals.
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# References

<sup>1</sup> "An Emerging Model for Working with Youth," Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing. Retrieved June 26, 2020,

[https://fcyo.org/uploads/resources/8141\\_Papers\\_no1\\_v4.qxd.pdf](https://fcyo.org/uploads/resources/8141_Papers_no1_v4.qxd.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Youth MOVE National & Regional Research Institute, Portland State University. (2016). Assessment of Youth/Young Adult Voice at the Agency Level (Y-VAL).



# QUESTIONS?

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# Contact Information

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