

Keeping it Short: The Youth Engagement Short Course



RAISE Summit 2026
Development, Design & What's Next

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The NTACT:C Short Course Model

Why Short Courses?

Transition professionals report feeling underprepared and uncertain — yet traditional PD often falls short. Research shows effective PD must be:

- Ongoing and collaborative
- Modeled, practiced, and reflected upon
- Immediately relevant to the job

(Bruno, Scott & Thoma, 2021; Morningstar et al., 2018)

Course Format



4–8 Weeks

Flexible, self-paced online format



Active Learning

Discussion boards, KWL+Action, scavenger hunts



Resource-Rich

Video presentations, curriculum reviews, tools



Team-Based

Peer learning, collaborative application

Short Course Topics

Growing a suite of courses that meet professionals where they are:

01

Transition Planning 101

Creating quality,
student-centered IEPs
and measurable
postsecondary goals.

02

Transition Assessment

Identifying key steps,
building
multidisciplinary teams,
and supporting student-
led exploration.

03

Work-Based Learning

Integrating Pre-ETS,
collaborative planning
among schools, VR, and
employers.

04



Youth Engagement ♦ NEW

Centering youth with
disabilities as active
community members —
with original community
embeddedness framing.

Participants: 150+ across all courses | 20+ states represented | Educators, VR professionals, administrators

Why Short Courses Work

Content

- Relevant & practical
- Aligned with needs
- Consistent across formats

Active Learning

- 4–8 weeks, self-paced
- Resource-rich
- Discussion & application

Team-Based

- Peer learning
- Discussion boards
- Solution-focused

Coaching

- Modeled examples
- KWL + Action
- Constructive feedback

Results So Far

150+

Participants
across all courses

20+

States
represented

90%+

Agreed content was
relevant & applicable

Self-Efficacy Growth

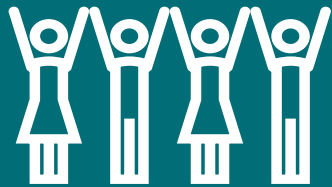
- Confidence & Motivation → Person-Centered Practices
- Integrative Thinking → Holistic Understanding
- Resource Competence → Navigation & Application
- Outcome Orientation → Greater Sense of Agency

Participant Voices

"I have already used several of the strategies to make student-led planning more meaningful."

"This was more than a reflection — it became my action plan moving forward."

"The modules were concise, well-structured, and easy to follow. Each one built on the previous in a meaningful way."



Introducing: Youth Engagement

A new short course built differently — from the ground up.

What Makes This Course Different



Youth & Young Adults at the Center

Built around the experiences, voices, and expertise of young people with disabilities — not just about them.



Original Community Embeddedness Framework

An original framing that positions youth as active, contributing members of their communities — not passive service recipients.



Better Tools & Learner Experience

Upgraded interactivity, accessible design, and richer multimedia — setting a new standard for future short courses.



Integrated Across Four Units

Youth Identity & Culture → Reverence of Youth → Community Embeddedness → Growing Capacity for Sustained Engagement.

Each unit opens with accessible, learner-friendly objectives — framed as invitations rather than formal competency statements.

UNIT 1

Who Are We Engaging? Youth Identity, Culture, and the Foundations of Engagement

In this unit, you will...

01

Explore identity & belonging

Think about how race, culture, gender, and community shape how young people with disabilities see themselves.

02

Shift the narrative

Move away from viewing youth as passive recipients — start seeing them as active community members.

03

Look at your own context

Reflect on what's opening doors for youth in your organization — and what's getting in the way.

Content intro slides orient learners to each section — framing the 'why' before the 'what.' The numbered topic cards serve as a visual roadmap.

Foundations of Youth Engagement

What do we mean by youth engagement?

Youth engagement is more than participation — it's about creating conditions where young people with disabilities have real power to shape the decisions, programs, and systems that affect their lives.

01 What is Youth Engagement?

02 The Youth Engagement Continuum

03 Hart's Ladder of Participation

04 Moving from Services to Partnership

The course grounds learners in two key frameworks — with additional resources for deeper exploration.

Youth Engagement Continuum

- 1 Youth Services
- 2 Youth Development
- 3 Youth Leadership
- 4 Youth Empowerment
- 5 Youth Collective Empowerment

 [RAISE Center — Full Continuum](#)

Hart's Ladder of Participation

- 8 Youth-initiated, shared decisions
- 7 Youth-initiated and directed
- 6 Adult-initiated, shared decisions
- 5 Consulted and informed
- 4 Assigned but informed
- 3 Tokenism
- 2 Decoration

 [YEN Tools & Resources — yen.transitionta.org](#)

Learners explore three conditions for meaningful youth engagement — grounded in youth voice from YEN/NTACT:C.

What Helps Youth Feel Engaged?



1. Safety

Youth feel physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe.



2. Roles & Opportunities

Youth have meaningful ways to participate, contribute, and influence decisions.



3. Being Valued

Youth know they are respected for who they are, not just for what they accomplish.

What's Next: Improving the Short Courses

The Youth Engagement course sets a new standard. Here's what we're carrying forward:

01

Center the People Being Served

Future courses will follow the Youth Engagement model — building from the lived experiences of the communities they're designed to support.

02

Better Interactivity & UX

Upgraded learner tools, accessible design, and richer multimedia will carry forward as a new baseline across all short courses.

03

Original Frameworks

The community embeddedness framing developed for Youth Engagement is a model for how future courses can bring fresh, theoretically-grounded perspectives.

04

Your Input Shapes What's Next

What topics should we tackle? What does your community need? We want to hear from you.

Thank You!

For more information:

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NTACT:C Short Courses | transitionta.org/short-courses