



## Youth Inclusion Workshop Guide: Gathering Youth Input

**Workshop Description:** Youth Program Staff Workshop guides are meant to be lesson plans for Youth Program Managers to use during formal training of their staff. This guide contains estimates of preparation and instructional times, lists of required materials, background information, and workshop plans.

This workshop includes interactive activities that explore how to foster youth-adult partnerships, gather youth input, and use that youth input for further program development.

**Preparation Time:** The designated preparation time for this workshop is approximately 15 to 20 minutes. This time allocation takes into account the background reading on the Youth Inclusion Training website, the background information in this workshop guide, collecting materials, creating the sentence cards, and gathering any additional information you may need. Creating the sentence cards for the *Characteristics of Effective Adult-Youth Partnerships* activity entails cutting out construction paper into various shapes and writing a word or symbol on each of the cards. These words/symbols are listed under Resources.

**Instruction Time:** It will take approximately 45 to 50 minutes to complete all activities within this guide.

### Materials:

- Three large sheets of blank white paper or whiteboard space.
- Three to four sets of sentence cards to use for the youth-adult partnership activity:
  - Use brightly colored paper cut into different shapes and paste the 20 words listed in the activity on a sheet of paper.
- Markers or pens (three to four).

**Preparation Instructions:** You should read the content related to this topic on the Youth Inclusion Training website, specifically the content related to Youth Input, Direction, and Leadership. In addition, you should review the background information in this workshop guide and any others related to the topic (e.g., Building Relationships and Community Building). Finally, gather necessary materials and familiarize yourself with the workshop guide.

### Knowledge: Understanding Strategies for Gathering Youth Input

*Feedback Loops:* Feedback loops are one effective way of taking feedback from youth to modify, plan, and implement changes in a program. Feedback loops essentially take input information into consideration, enabling a system/program/organization to make adjustments.

*Adult-Youth Collaboration:* Adult-youth partnerships occur when adults and youth work together to address issues facing youth or youth programs and policies that affect youth. When youth are partnered with and take an active role in shaping programs, those programs are more sustainable and effective (Norman, 2001). A study conducted by the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development found that youth involved in decision-making exhibit certain characteristics that allow them to resist stress and negative situations (Norman, 2001). Among some of these characteristics are social



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competence, problem-solving skills, sense of identity, and sense of purpose and goals. In addition, being able to contribute to one's community has a plethora of positive outcomes.

Adult-youth partnerships also benefit the adults involved and the program or organization. Adults are able to feel more effective in relating to youth while reaching a wider range of people, share their knowledge while understanding the needs of youth, and gain a stronger connection to the community (Norman, 2001). The program also benefits by having youth clarify the program's mission and becoming more connected to the youth and the community as a whole (Norman, 2001).

### Objectives:

- Understand the characteristics of a positive adult – youth partnership.
- Understand how to use feedback loops to integrate youth input.

### Introduction (5 to 7 minutes)

- Describe the topic of youth input and its importance.
  - Facilitators can say “Today we are going to talk about how to use formal and informal strategies for getting youth input in order to make the program stronger and more appealing for youth. These input strategies will highlight the importance of adult-youth partnerships.”
- Transition into the Prior Knowledge activity.

### Prior Knowledge (5-7 minutes):

- Ask the staff what they think some of these input strategies might be? Write down staff responses on one of the sheets of blank white paper.
  - Questions can be phrased as follows: “What kind of strategies do you think can be used to gather youth input about a program?”
- Ask staff how they think adult-youth collaboration can benefit youth, adults, the program, and the community.
- Ask staff how they would go about explaining program decisions to youth. What should you include in the discussion and what should you not include?
- Ask the staff what they still want to know about this topic or if there is anything they need clarification on. Again, record responses on a large sheet of paper.

### Activities:

#### Activity: *Characteristics of Effective Adult-Youth Partnerships* (15-20 minutes)

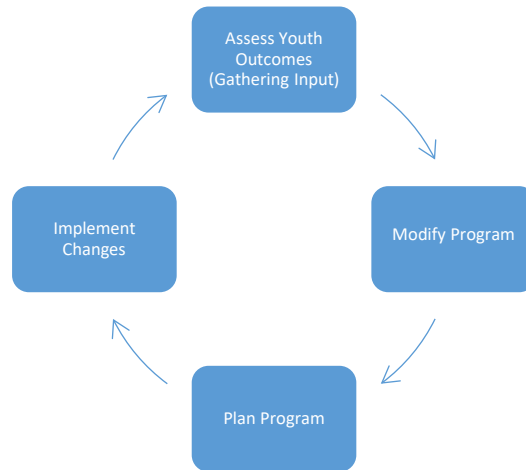
- Describe the *Characteristics of Effective Adult-Youth Partnerships* activity:
  - What to say: “We are going to do an activity now that will help you identify what makes an effective adult-youth partnership.”
- Lead the *Characteristics of Effective Adult-Youth Partnerships* activity



- Divide the participants into small groups of three to four people and provide each group with a set of sentence cards. These sentence cards contain one word or symbol per card (see Handout: *Characteristics of Effective Adult-Youth Partnerships*). The format of these cards is located in the resources section of this workshop guide.
- Write the following on one of the remaining large sheets of paper and tack it to the wall:
  - “Effective adult-youth partnerships...”
- Then ask each group to rearrange its word cards to answer the statement using all of their sentence cards. Once a sentence has been made, have one member of the each group act as a scribe and write down the sentence under the statement on the large sheet of paper.
- Once all the groups are finished, ask one person from each group to present their group’s sentence.
- Come together as a large group and ask the staff the following questions:
  - “What common themes do you see? How would many of you describe an effective adult-youth partnership/relationship?”
  - “What should you be mindful of as you work in adult-youth partnerships? Specifically, what adjectives would you use to describe these partnerships (these can be adjectives that were on the sentence cards or any others that staff can think of)? What do you think of when you hear adult-youth partnership? How would you define the role of the adult in this partnership? How would you define the role of the youth? Do both individuals benefit? How do the adult and youth benefit differently?”
- Transition into the *Feedback Loops* activity.

### **Activity: *Feedback Loops* (20-30 minutes)**

- Describe the *Feedback Loops* activity:
  - Introduce this portion by summarizing the background information about feedback loops. Define them briefly, saying “Feedback loops can be used by taking youth input and feedback into consideration and then making adjustments and modifications to achieve a desired outcome.”
- Lead the *Feedback Loops* activity:
  - Show the staff an example of a feedback loop by drawing or printing out the example found in the Resources section of this workshop guide.



- Separate staff into smaller groups of two to three and have them come up with a scenario where a youth comes to them with a criticism or suggestion.
- Ask each group to walk through the feedback loop (i.e. first describe how they would modify the program, then plan the program, then implement the change, and then assess youth outcomes) based on the scenario the group imagined.
- Groups will share scenario and steps with the larger group.
  - Allow 10 to 15 minutes for staff to create their feedback loops.
- Share and discuss as a large group.

### Reflection and Recap (5 minutes):

- Return to the staff's responses from the Prior Knowledge exercise completed at the beginning of the workshop. Ask staff what they learned during the course of the workshop and record the information in the same paper or on a new blank page if there is no room. Draw attention to topics that were on the list generated earlier, new topics, and questions that were answered.
- Ask follow-up questions, such as "What part of the activity made you realize that?"

### Resources:

Handout: *Feedback Loop Graphic*

### Sources:

Norman, J. (2001). Building effective youth-adult partnerships. *Advocates for Youth*, 14(1). Retrieved from <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/publications-a-z/672-building-effective-youth-adult-partnerships>.

The *Characteristics of Effective Adult-Youth Partnerships* activity adapted from Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. (2003). Youth-adult partnerships: A training manual. Retrieved August 18, 2018, from <http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/files/Youth-AdultPartnershipsTrainingManual.pdf>

The *Feedback Loop* activity adapted from Sam Houston State University. (n.d.). Continuous Feedback Loop. Retrieved August 18, 2018, from <http://www.shsu.edu/academics/education/center-for-assessment-and-accreditation/assessment-data/continuous-feedback-loop.html>



## Youth Inclusion Handout: Characteristics of Effective Adult-Youth Partnerships

**Directions:** Write each of following words and symbols onto brightly colored paper (one word per card) and cut into shapes such as circles, triangles, or squares. The types and number of shapes are up to your discretion.

<b>A</b>	<b>creativity</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>the</b>
<b>Adult</b>	<b>community</b>	<b>include</b>	<b>to</b>
<b>And</b>	<b>expanding</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>together</b>
<b>Are</b>	<b>harnessing</b>	<b>partnership</b>	<b>youth</b>
<b>Bigger</b>	<b>healthy</b>	<b>talent</b>	<b>!</b>



## Youth Inclusion Handout: Feedback Loop Graphic

