

# **Training Session #5**

## **Youth Development & Youth Leadership**

### **MISSION**

**To ensure that youth with disabilities are provided full access to high quality services in integrated settings in order to maximize their opportunity for employment and independent living**

### **COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS**

- **Center for Workforce Development, the Institute for Educational Leadership**
- **Disability Studies & Services Center, the Academy for Educational Development**
- **National Conference of State Legislatures**
  
- **National Youth Employment Coalition**
- **National Association of Workforce Boards**
- **National Center on Secondary Education & Transition, the University of Minnesota**
- **TransCen, Inc.**

### **TYPES OF PRODUCTS AND RESOURCES**

- **How to Guides**
- **Information and Policy Briefs**
- **Backgrounders**
- **Hot Topics Syntheses**
- **Funding Sources**
- **Training Materials**

### **Why this session?**

- **All effective youth programs have youth development at their core**
- **Effective youth initiatives focus on a wide range of developmental needs**
- **Youth development encompasses youth leadership**
- **Effective youth leadership programs build on youth development principles and objectives**

### **What will you find in this session?**

- **Defining Youth Development & Youth Leadership**

- Importance of Youth Policy & Programming
- Importance of Youth Development & Youth Leadership
- Youth Development Programming Areas & Components
- Resources/Handouts

## **Definition of Youth Development**

- Adapted from National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) and NCWD/Y
- **Youth development** is a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent.

## **Definition of Youth Leadership**

- **Youth leadership** is (1) “The ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinion and behavior of other people, and show the way by going in advance” (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998); and

## **Definition of Youth Leadership, con’t**

- 2) the ability to analyze one's own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem to carry them out.
  - This includes the ability to identify community resources and use them, not only to live independently, but also to establish support networks to participate in community life and to effect positive social change

### **Youth Development Program Outcomes**

- Increased self esteem, popularity, and sense of personal control
- Increased development of leadership, communication, and decision-making skills
- Increased dependability and job responsibility
- Increased communication in the family
- Decreased psychosocial problems (i.e., loneliness, shyness)

### **Youth Development Program Outcomes**

- Increased academic achievement
- Increased motivation to succeed
- Increased positive health decisions
- Increased social skills
- Decreased involvement in risky behaviors (i.e., tobacco, alcohol and

drug use)

## **Why is Leadership Programming Important to Youth with Disabilities?**

- Assists young people to become self-sufficient and productive members of society
- Assists in the development of advocacy (self-determination) skills
- Fosters making informed choices
- Exposes youth to role models and leaders with and without disabilities

## **Effective Program Components for All Youth**

- Activities that are challenging, interesting and related to everyday life
- Opportunities to participate in decision-making relating to things youth care about
- Relationships with emotionally supportive adults
- Academic-focused programs with recreational activities

## **Effective Program Components for All Youth**

- Opportunities for skill-building
- Integration of family, school and community efforts
- Physical and psychological safety
- Opportunities to belong
- Positive social norms

## **Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Youth Development**

- Youth development/leadership are important components of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998
- WIA youth provisions require 10 program elements, one of which is “leadership development activities”

## **Youth Development and Youth with Disabilities**

- When necessary adapt youth development principles to make them equally effective for youth with disabilities
- Advocacy groups (such as the NYLN) can ensure equal access to the benefits of the youth provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) for youth with disabilities

## **Youth Development for Youth with Disabilities (Continued)**

- It is important to support a formal network of youth leaders with disabilities who have a voice in policymaking at the federal level and encourage youth leadership in the disability community

### **Youth Development Programming Areas**

- Five basic youth development areas comprise many youth development programs:
  - Working
  - Learning
  - Thriving
  - Connecting
  - Leading

### **Working**

- To develop positive attitudes, skills and behaviors around occupational and career direction
- Some activities supporting Working:
  - Job shadowing
  - Internships
  - Entrepreneurships
  - Site tours

### **More Activities that Support “Working”**

- Visiting education and/or training programs
- Completing a mock job-search and interview process
- Writing a resume
- Interviewing representatives from specific industries
- Attending workplace behavior workshops
- Developing a forum for networking

### **Learning**

- To develop positive basic and applied academic attitudes, skills, and behavior
- To develop higher aptitude for academic skill, and the ability to approach endeavors with a strategy to achieve
- Some activities supporting Learning:
  - Formal and informal skills assessment
  - Identification of learning styles and difficulties
  - Peer tutoring

### **Activities that Support “Learning”**

- Participating in peer tutoring activities
- Accessing testing preparation classes
- Joining group problem-solving activities
- Developing a formal learning plan
- Being accountable for grades
- Showcasing work highlighting a learning experience
- Participating in service-learning projects

## **Thriving**

- To develop attitudes, skills and behaviors demonstrated by maintaining optimal physical and emotional well-being
- Some activities supporting Thriving:
  - Counseling
  - Community resource mapping
  - Conflict management skill-building
  - Social activities

## **Activities that Support “Thriving”**

- Health-related workshops
- Role-playing activities
- Personal and peer counseling
- Meal planning/preparation activities
- Social activities requiring communication

## **Connecting**

- To develop and maintain positive social behaviors, skills and attitudes through relationships with elders, family, peers, supervisors, and community members
- Some activities supporting Connecting:
  - Mentoring
  - Tutoring
  - Building community networks
  - Accessing community resources

## **More Activities that Support “Connecting”**

- Researching community resources and leaders
- Writing letters and creating videos for friends and family
- Attending job and trade fairs
- Role-playing interviews
- Participating in team-building activities

## **Leading**

- To develop positive skills, attitudes, and behaviors around civic/public involvement and personal goal setting
- Some activities supporting Leading:
  - Registering to vote

- Volunteering
- Peer mediation activities
- Youth advisory committees

### **More Activities that Support “Leading”**

- Developing a personal plan
- Creating a map of local youth resources
- Participating in town meetings
- Participating in a local issue debate
- Being a peer mediator
- Participating in a letter writing campaign
- Meeting with local officials

### **Organizational Components**

- Common youth development programs can be divided into organizational and programmatic components
- Organizational Components:
  - Clear mission, vision, and goal
  - Staff trained in youth development
  - Connections to the community
  - Relationships with other youth-serving groups

### **Youth Development Programmatic Components**

- Varied hands-on and experiential learning
- Youth involved in developing and implementing activities
- Opportunities for youth to succeed
- Opportunities to take on various roles
- Family involvement
- Interaction with mentors and role models

### **12 Principles of Effective Youth Leadership Programs**

- Help youth learn specific knowledge and skills related to leadership
- Enable youth to understand the history, values and beliefs of their society
- Facilitate the development of individual strengths and leadership styles
- Facilitate the development of ethics, values and ethical reasoning

### **12 Principles of Effective Youth Leadership Programs**

- Promote awareness, understanding and tolerance of other people, cultures and societies
- Embody high expectations of, confidence in, and respect for youth served

- Emphasize experiential learning and provide opportunities for genuine leadership
- Involve youth in service to others

## **12 Principles of Effective Youth Leadership Programs**

- Facilitate self-reflection and the individual and cooperative learning processes
- Involve youth in collaborative, teamwork, and networking experiences with peers
- Involve youth in significant relationships with mentors, positive role models and other nurturing adults
- Be developed around stated purposes and goals

### **Disability Focus**

- Additional program components may be included in youth programming for youth with disabilities such as:
  - History and culture of disability
  - Knowledge of laws/policies/practices
  - Role modeling and mentoring by persons with disabilities
  - Knowledge building of community-specific resources for persons with disabilities
  - Ongoing assessments for independent living

### **Measuring Program Outcomes**

- Tracking and measuring the outcomes of youth participants is important for showing that a program is meeting its goals
- It typically takes a long time for youth to achieve some of the desired outcomes when looking at the broad development needs among youth participants
- Many efforts are underway to create tools that measure youth development outcomes
- Few tools or efforts exist to assess youth leadership programs

## **Contact NCWD/Youth**

**1-877-871-0744 (toll free)**

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***ANY QUESTIONS?????***