



PROMOTE THE POSITIVE

LEAD EFFORTS TO ADVANCE
POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT,
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING, AND YOUTH
LEADERSHIP

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YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF GLOBAL CHANGE AND INNOVATION. EMPOWERED, THEY CAN BE KEY AGENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE. IF, HOWEVER, THEY ARE LEFT ON SOCIETY'S MARGINS, ALL OF US WILL BE IMPOVERISHED. LET US ENSURE THAT ALL YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE LIVES OF THEIR SOCIETIES.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 Introduction
- 03 Deeper Dive: Positive Youth Development
- 05 Deeper Dive: Social Emotional Learning
- 07 Deeper Dive: Youth Leadership
- 09 DYCD Frameworks



INTRODUCTION



TEEN Action

The Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) supports an array of programs for young people. While they vary in terms of specific activities offered, objectives and settings, all DYCD programs operate within a single framework shaped by three inter-related concepts: Positive Youth Development (PYD), Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and Youth Leadership.

The purpose of this Guide is to articulate DYCD's perspective and promote a shared understanding of these concepts by providing a common lens and language through which to view them. This, in turn, will enable community-based organizations (CBOs) that provide the services and DYCD managers who assess them to more easily identify program strengths and weaknesses, share best practices and work together to improve program quality.

Ultimately, a clearer understanding of DYCD's expectations regarding critical aspects of program implementation and continuous improvement will benefit all stakeholders.

The body of the Guide encapsulates DYCD's perspectives on PYD, SEL, and Youth Leadership and indicates how they should be embedded into practice. Below, each concept is briefly outlined, with illustrations showing how they intersect and overlap. In high quality youth programs, PYD, SEL and Youth Leadership aspects will be seamlessly integrated.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT [PYD]

PYD is an over-arching, assets-based approach that DYCD expects all CBOs to embrace, irrespective of program content and specifics. It provides the foundation on which to promote healthy youth development and resilience. To this end, PYD emphasizes the importance of a safe environment and a sense of belonging and providing authentic opportunities for youth to be heard and effect positive change in their communities.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING [SEL]

SEL is the process through which young people acquire SEL competencies (i.e., the knowledge, attitudes, and skills) that they need to thrive in school and beyond. These competencies, identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), are:

Self-awareness:
Ability to understand and manage emotions

Self-management:
Set and achieve positive goals

Social awareness:
Feel and show empathy for others

Relationship skills :
Establish and maintain positive relationships

Responsible decision-making

The SEL competencies are both integral to and significant goals and outcomes of PYD. CBOs must intentionally focus on SEL, since the SEL competencies are among the most significant benefits youth can gain from consistent participation in high quality programs.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Youth Leadership builds on PYD principles, with an emphasis on providing: (1) leadership opportunities within the program, organization, and community; (2) skill-building and capacity for making decisions and solving problems; (3) opportunities to deepen understanding of shared experiences and participate in community projects; and (4) strong youth-adult partnerships.

Youth Leadership is seen as having three critical components: skills (including SEL competencies, communication, active listening, and collaborative skills); action (stimulated by the desire and opportunity to acquire and master skills and effect change); and reflection (reinforcing what has been learned, feeding confidence, imparting lessons learned, and providing opportunities to identify and respond to new challenges). Both PYD approaches and SEL competencies support and sustain Youth Leadership skills which, in turn, reinforce the developmental gains nurtured by PYD and SEL, creating a continuing cycle of benefits.



TEEN Action

DEEPER DIVE



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT [PYD]

PYD is based on the belief that, given guidance and support from caring adults, all youth can grow up healthy and happy, making positive contributions to their families, schools, and communities.

DYCD highlights 8 Key factors and experiences that promote PYD

Check out the framework on page 9

PYD is an intentional, pro-social approach designed to:

- 1** Engage youth in productive and constructive ways in multiple domains - communities, schools, families, peer groups, organizations.
- 2** Recognize, utilize, and enhance youth strengths/assets.
- 3** Promote positive outcomes by fostering positive relationships and providing opportunities and supports that help youth build skills, gain mastery, and develop leadership skills.

Outcomes promoted by PYD include:

- Resilience, confidence, grit
- Social/communication skills
- Emotional competence
- Positive relationships with peers and adults
- Engagement in school and community
- Sense of belonging

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are the foundation that defines what is important for PYD to happen.

- **Intentional, proactive process.** PYD programs purposefully seek to develop protective factors and complement efforts designed to prevent/reduce risky or negative behaviors and attitudes.
- **Acknowledgment and utilization of youth assets.** PYD represents an investment in young people that assumes youth have the capacity for positive growth and development. They are viewed not just as recipients of services but active agents who can use their assets to work productively in partnership with adults.
- **PYD enables youth to thrive and flourish.** PYD programs provide the opportunities and supports to enable youth to grow resilient, confident and competent.
- **Youth leadership.** Development of leadership skills is part of PYD but youth are not required to lead: they can attend programs, actively participate, contribute, or assume leadership roles.
- **Civic engagement.** Youth are provided with opportunities to contribute to their communities through service.

Features of PYD Programs

- **Focus on youth strengths and protective factors.** Program designs take account of underlying risk and protective factors in planning and providing services and offer evidence-informed interventions that purposefully promote resilience.
- **Ensure basic youth needs are met and earn their trust.** Programs build trusting relationships by ensuring that youth are connected to appropriate resources to meet their needs.
- **Engage youth as active agents in an ongoing assessment and planning process.**
- **Continuously monitor program effectiveness** and make improvements on ongoing basis.

LEARN MORE

Section

How does PYD differ from traditional youth services?

PYD represents a shift in how we look at and provide youth services. It moves us from fixing problems to building on strengths; from reacting to risky behavior to proactively building positive outcomes; from targeting troubled youth to engaging all youth; and from regarding youth as recipients of services to treating youth as resources and active partners. With PYD, youth development is no longer just about programs and interventions – it is about relationships.

What are strengths or assets?

Assets are often called protective factors or characteristics of the individual and aspects of the environment that help buffer a person's reaction to risk factors and thus, result in resilience. The Search Institute uses the term "building blocks" or assets of positive youth development that cover eight important areas of human development. **Click here** to learn more about the 40 developmental assets for adolescents.

How do you know if you are offering opportunities for youth?

Have you build in opportunities or chances for youth to practice, fine-tune, and advance the skills they have learned, as well as belonging and occasions for leadership and contribution through youth voice, participation, and engagement? We want to see youth actively engaged. What does this look like? Check out the Youth Voice rubric created by Freechild Project. **Click here.**

What kind of supports should we see?

Supports are the mentors, caring adults, and youth workers who offer guidance and positive relationships with young people. Additional supports are clear expectations, boundaries, and structured settings as well as access to information and resources.

Check out this video:

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING [SEL]

The SEL competencies are both integral to and significant goals and outcomes of PYD.

DYCD highlights CASEL's 5 SEL Core Competencies
Check out details on page 10



Work Learn Grow

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which young people acquire SEL competencies (i.e., the knowledge, attitudes, and skills) that they need to thrive in school and beyond. These competencies, identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), are: (1) self-management; (2) self-awareness; (3) responsible decision-making; (4) relationship skills; and (5) social awareness.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to:

- Understand and manage emotions,
- Set and achieve positive goals,
- Feel and show empathy for others,
- Establish and maintain positive relationships, and
- Make responsible decisions.

Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student, citizen, and worker. SEL skills are developed in safe and supportive learning environments such as schools, after-school programs, the family, and the community where individuals feel valued and respected. SEL skills are fundamental to social and emotional development and effective life functioning, and have a critical impact on mental health, ethical development, motivation, and academic achievement.

SEL, as such, is not a program. However, many programs provide youth with instruction in and opportunities to practice, apply, and be recognized for using SEL skills in appropriate ways. Effective instructional methods for teaching SEL skills involve active and engaging learning approaches.



SONYC

Staffing and SEL

To promote SEL, program staff need to:

- Be SEL **role models**
- **Provide opportunities** for participants to practice and apply the SEL skills they have been taught
- Use **participatory instructional methods** that draw on participants' experience to engage them in learning
- **Emphasize** participants' strengths before addressing areas where there is room for improvement
- **Partner** with participants' families and schools to promote SEL, when this is relevant and suitable
- Give participants **choices** and help them identify the pros and cons of alternative solutions to problems
- **Make sure** that inappropriate behavior is handled with fairness and consistency
- **Encourage** participation in community service projects
- **Encourage** participants to discuss how they or other people may or may not express understanding of the feelings of others or make use of problem-solving skills

What does SEL look like?

Watch this video

What more information?

Check out CASEL's website for additional videos and resources. Click **here**.

LEARN MORE

Section

How can programs promote positive SEL outcomes?

Despite which framework or approach you take, researchers have identified common features of programs that promote positive SEL outcomes. Best practice programs are **"SAFE"**:

Sequential: skills are taught through sequenced activities

Active: youth have opportunities to actively practice skills

Focused: focused time is set aside for skill development

Explicit: programs explicitly target specific skills

What are participatory methods?

The goal of participatory instructional methods is to help participants understand the social, historical, or cultural forces that affects their lives, and then to help participants take action and make decisions in order to gain control over their lives (See Paulo Freire).

Examples:

Use content relevant to participants' lives

Embed problem-solving and reflection in activity design and allow for the capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem-solving

Provide opportunities for participants to evaluate themselves or self-assess

Encourage participants to use their knowledge to act in the society

Teach communication and language skills to prompt action for change

Encourage participants to create their own materials as text for others

Recognize that knowledge becomes a tool to help participants find a voice

Provide opportunity to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources

Provide participants the ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information

Provide the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content

YOUTH LEADERSHIP [YL]

Youth Leadership builds on PYD principles, with an emphasis on providing: (1) leadership opportunities within the program, organization, and community; (2) skill-building and capacity for making decisions and solving problems; (3) opportunities to deepen understanding of shared experiences and participate in community projects; and (4) strong youth-adult partnerships.

DYCD's Youth Leadership Framework
Check out framework on page 11



Youth leadership development has the potential to solve community problems, enhance civic participation, and promote direct benefits for adults, organizations, and communities through stronger connections to young people in the community. Since 2007, DYCD has supported youth leadership efforts with its Teen ACTION (Achieving Change Together in Our Neighborhoods) and Youth Councils, funded as part of the Beacon and Cornerstone programs. More recently, youth leadership development was included as a requirement for middle school programs as part of the 2008 OST RFP and the SONYC expansion.

The purpose of the DYCD Youth Leadership Development Framework is to promote a common language for youth leadership development and to help providers map out and design quality youth leadership programming; it was designed to answer the question: “What is youth leadership development?”

The Youth Leadership framework is comprised of three critical components: skills (including SEL competencies, communication, active listening, and collaborative skills); action (stimulated by the desire and opportunity to acquire and master skills and effect change); and reflection (reinforcing what has been learned, feeding confidence, imparting lessons learned, and providing opportunities to identify and respond to new challenges). Both PYD approaches and SEL competencies support and sustain Youth Leadership skills which, in turn, reinforce the developmental gains nurtured by PYD and SEL, creating a continuing cycle of benefits.

Supports for Youth Leadership Development

In addition to the core components, programs must also have critical supports in place to ensure youth can engage fully in skill building, action, and reflection. First, programs must provide a **supportive environment** (safety, positive relationships, sense of belonging). Next, programs should offer **intentionally designed program activities** and experiences that use sound strategies for utilizing aligned **curriculum and instructional strategies**.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Young people can become leaders when they feel safe and supported. When the environment is a safe community for all youth, then they are able to take on challenges, risk possible failure, and step into leadership roles that promote learning. In a program where activities and experiences promote a safe and supportive environment, key environmental factors for youth leadership support (e.g., youth voice/choice, welcoming atmosphere, positive youth interactions, and opportunities for growth) are in place and demonstrated most of the time.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND STRATEGIES

Intentional Design. When developing and implementing program activities, program staff first should consider whether and how they are being intentional in the design of those experiences. This planning phase is a critical first step that sets a foundation for other curricular and instructional strategies.

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES

Activities that foster leadership should incorporate practices and processes that result in youth-centered programming that is deliberately focused on developing key leadership skills and creating a systemwide youth leadership culture within its environment. Activities may include (but are not limited to) community volunteerism; debate participation; training to be a peer mediator; participation in a youth advisory committee with the program, school, or community; learning activities about leadership principles and styles; mentoring relationship; resource-mapping activities that allow youth to take the lead in planning and carrying out a search of community resources or service learning; and developing a personal plan with goals, action steps, and deadlines. Throughout the program activities and experiences, there should be consistent and clear evidence of opportunity for youth skill building in self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills, collaboration, and communication. Moreover, youth and adults should work in partnership through a formal system, ensuring youth decision making and leadership with supportive adult input.

LEARN MORE Section

Where can I find more information about intentional activity design?

For more information about intentional activity design, refer to out-of-school time resources such as *Beyond the Bell: A Toolkit for Creating Effective Afterschool and Expanded Learning Programs*, or the online *Afterschool Training Toolkit*.

Planning for youth leadership?

Get started by checking out the provider youth leadership self-reflection tool.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

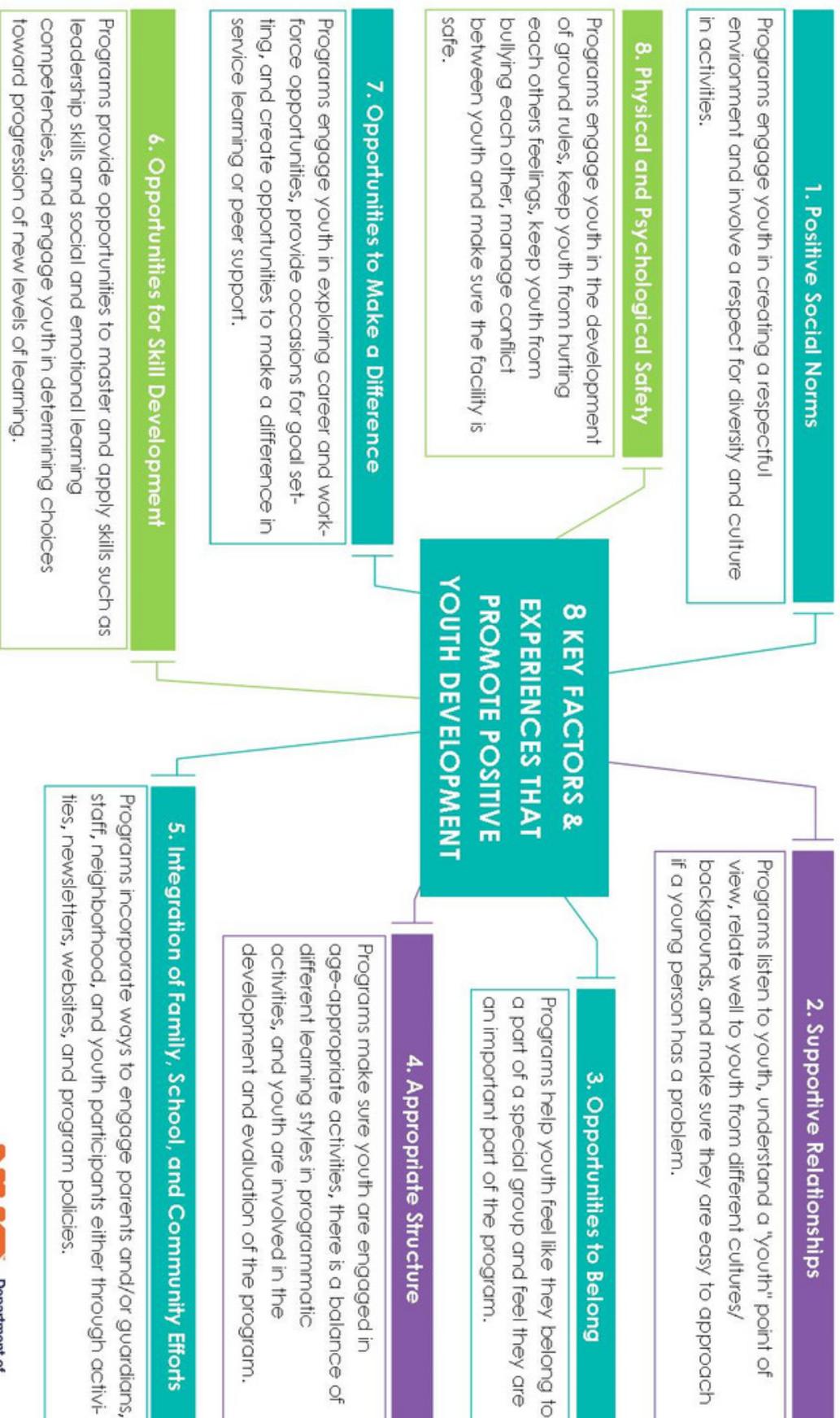
The tools and methods that staff members use to impart information and facilitate an activity will vary from program to program. Some programs may opt to adopt a formal curriculum; others may have a homegrown curriculum specific to their mission and goals.

Ultimately, we suggest that you ensure the curriculum and instructional strategies are designed for your setting, and that you and your colleagues are prepared to deliver the curriculum or modify as needed.

In addition to having a curriculum that provides the tools and resources that staff members need to plan an activity, program staff also need to consider the method of activity delivery. Research has shown that skill development is effective when activities explicitly target specific skills and outcomes.

Because we know that youth learn best when they are engaged in what they are learning and have the opportunity to explore concepts and skills through a variety of formats, we suggest incorporating both explicit and embedded strategies for skill development throughout leadership development activities.

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an intentional, pro-social approach designed to: **ENGAGE** youth in productive and constructive ways in multiple domains such as communities, schools, families, peer groups, organizations; **RECOGNIZE, UTILIZE, AND ENHANCE** youth strengths/assets; and **PROMOTE POSITIVE OUTCOMES** by fostering positive relationships and providing opportunities and supports that help youth build skills, gain mastery, and develop leadership skills.



Source: The above summary is based primarily on common language on positive youth development produced by a Federal interagency workgroup.



WHAT ARE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL CORE COMPETENCIES?

Self-Management

- Regulating one's emotions
- Managing stress
- Controlling impulses
- Self-motivation
- Setting and achieving positive goals

Self-Awareness

- Ability to understand and manage emotions
- Labeling one's emotions
- Relating feelings and thoughts to behavior
- Accurate self-assessment of strengths and challenges
- Well-grounded sense of confidence
- Optimism

Responsible Decision-Making

- Considering wellbeing of self and others
- Recognizing one's responsibility to behave ethically
- Basing decision on safety, social and ethical considerations
- Evaluating realistic consequences
- Making constructive, safe choices

Relationship Skills

- Establish and maintain positive relationships
- Building relationships with diverse individuals and groups
- Communicating clearly
- Working cooperatively
- Resolving conflicts
- Seeking help

Social awareness

- Feel and show empathy for others
- Perspective taking
- Empathy
- Respecting diversity
- Understanding social and ethical norms of behavior
- Recognizing family, school, and community supports



WHAT IS YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT?

FOCUS ON KEY LEADERSHIP ATTITUDES & SKILLS

Inner Self Characteristics

Motivated: Goal-oriented and having high standards

Self-awareness: Describing how you are feeling; awareness of how moods affect how you treat other people; admitting mistakes; knowing what skills to improve on

Persistence: Following through on promises; focusing on goals despite difficulties; refusing to give up easily

Communication

Inspirational: Having a positive attitude; showing appreciation or giving praise; motivating others; helping others

Confidence: Believing in oneself; disagreeing openly and constructively; feeling comfortable talking in a group or to authority figures

Active listening: Ability to listen and ask questions to understand; listening carefully; paying attention when others are talking

Communicating effectively: Getting along with others who are different; disagreeing effectively without starting an argument

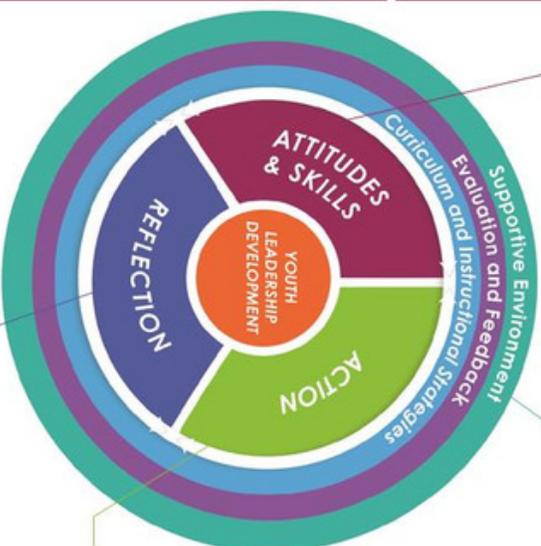
Ability to persuade: Changing the opinions of others by talking to them and persuading others to agree; gaining support from peers; actions that show others what you want from them

Collaboration

Having a shared purpose: Including others who have been "left out"; creating collaborative relationships among others; working toward a common goal

Converter: Bringing people together; listening to others when making decisions; seen as a "role model" by others

Delegating and organizing people: Respecting the ways in which people are different; assigning the right person to the right job during group tasks; understanding the emotions of others



CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Authentic opportunity: Youth voice and choice, participation on all levels with varied and progressive leadership roles, having the opportunity to give beyond oneself

Safe environment: physically safe, emotionally and psychologically safe, welcoming atmosphere, inclusive and diverse, and appropriate program space

Community building: Create opportunity for youth to feel part of a group

Mentor Access: youth-adult partnerships and relationships

Ask-listen-encourage: Ability of staff to carry out positive, purposeful interactions with youth

Reframing conflict: Role of staff in a conflict situation and ability of staff to turn a conflict situation into an opportunity for growth

LEARN BY DOING LEADERSHIP

Motivate: Role modeling, motivating others and inspiring

Mastery: Skill mastery, persistence and ability to learn from mistakes and commitment

Engage school and/or community: Service learning, civic engagement, youth council, counselor or leader in training, etc.

REFLECT ON ACTION

Continuous: Ongoing component, happening before, during, and after an activity or action

Connection: Consider how feelings connect to action and connect action to ideas about how the world works

Challenge: Refine understanding, deepen learning, engage in critical thinking

Contextualize: Evaluate action, ensure action is appropriate and meaningful to the experiences of young people

Recognize accomplishments

Make new plans