Meeting Youth “Where They Are” to Promote Healthy Relationships

Jessica Seberger
Community Health Educator, Nebraska Reproductive Health
Today’s Objectives

• Discuss the importance of providing youth with support to explore and navigate healthy relationships

• Discuss safe environments for the discussion of healthy relationships

• Discuss tools to use when having conversations with youth about healthy relationships

• Identify concepts to address when discussing healthy relationships with youth
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Five Essentials for Healthy Adolescents

• Positive connections with supportive people
• Safe and secure places to live, learn, and play
• Access to high-quality, teen-friendly health care
• Opportunities for teens to engage as learners, leaders, team members, and workers
• Coordinated adolescent- and family-centered services, as needed

From Office of Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow 2015 Playbook
www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/tag
Five Essentials for Healthy Adolescents

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From Office of Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow 2015 Playbook
www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/tag
Youth Development

• This is a natural process!
  • As we socialize youth, we encourage independence and growth

• Youth are generally healthy!
  • Challenges can sideline youth... behavioral and mental health problems, alcohol and drug misuse, injuries, violence, obesity, etc.
Youth Risk and Protective Factors

• Youth experiences can be influenced by peers, family, social networks, their community, etc.
• Risk and protective factors may influence youth development
  • These factors exist in five domains:
    • Youth
    • Family
    • Peer
    • Community
    • Society
• Growth, change, and development are a normal part of growing up

• Tool: [http://dhss.alaska.gov/dbh/Documents/Prevention/programs/spfsig/pdfs/IOM_Matrix_8%205x1_1_FINAL.pdf](http://dhss.alaska.gov/dbh/Documents/Prevention/programs/spfsig/pdfs/IOM_Matrix_8%205x1_1_FINAL.pdf)
Life Course Trajectories

• Youth’s experiences set them on a course for failure or success

• Depend on:
  • Life long development
  • Historical time and place
  • Timing
    • Sensitive periods
    • Transition periods
      • Getting a job
      • Going to college
      • Moving out
  • Human agency
    • Turning points
  • Linked lives

Source: http://altarum.org/health-policy-blog/direct-determinants-of-health-over-the-life-course
Positive Youth Development (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. The approach favors leadership and skill-building opportunities, such as Boys and Girls Clubs and 4-H. Unlike “deficit-based” programs that focus narrowly on issues like drug abuse and teen pregnancy prevention, PYD does not address youth primarily as problems to be solved, but rather assets to be developed.

• PYD involves 40 developmental “assets” that are provided from external and internal supports
• The “five Cs” are developed over the course of childhood and early adolescence: competence, connection, character, confidence, and caring/compassion.
PYD Resources

• Putting Positive Youth Development Into Practice: A Resource Guide
  • [http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/PosYthDevel.pdf](http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/PosYthDevel.pdf)

• General Youth Development

• (Free) Positive Youth Development Training Module

Positive youth development models can greatly increase the effectiveness and impact of work with adolescents. A suggested formula is:

Positive experiences + Positive relationships + Positive environments = Positive youth development.
Parent Report - Support in Nebraska

Youth Living in Supportive Neighborhoods

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<tr>
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Youth With 1+ Adult Mentor-Like Relationship in School, Neighborhood, or Community

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Data from: Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative
Bullying in Nebraska

Bullied on School Property in Past 12 Months

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<td>Male</td>
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Bullied Electronically in Past 12 Months

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<tr>
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Data from: 1991-2013 High School Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System
THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING ON LGBT YOUTH

Source: http://www.upworthy.com/no-student-should-have-to-deal-with-bullies-but-for-these-kids-its-especially-tough
81.9% of LGBT students have reported being verbally harassed, physically harassed, and physically assaulted at school because of their sexual orientation.

38.8% of LGBT students have reported being verbally harassed, physically harassed, and physically assaulted at school because of their gender expression.

18.3% of LGBT students have reported being verbally harassed, physically harassed, and physically assaulted at school because of their sexual orientation.

27.1% of LGBT students have reported being verbally harassed, physically harassed, and physically assaulted at school because of their gender expression.

63.9% of LGBT students have reported being verbally harassed, physically harassed, and physically assaulted at school because of their gender expression.

12.4% of LGBT students have reported being verbally harassed, physically harassed, and physically assaulted at school because of their sexual orientation.

Six out of ten LGBT students feel unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation.

Four out of ten LGBT students feel unsafe at school because of their gender expression.
Special Populations

- These youth may need special support and attention to their health and development.

- These circumstances also make having healthy relationships potentially challenging.

**Juvenile justice system.** There were about 1.5 million juvenile delinquency cases in 2009, and nearly 1.7 million youth between the ages 10-17 were arrested in 2010.

**Foster care.** In 2012, about 44 percent of the nearly 400,000 children in foster care in the United States were between ages of 10-20.

**Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning adolescents.** Among adolescents ages 18-19, just under eight percent of females and just under three percent of males identified as homosexual or bisexual in 2008.

**Homeless.** In the 2010-2011 school year, about one million students between the ages 6-18 were homeless.

**Disabilities.** Among youth under the age of 18, adolescents ages 12-17 have the highest prevalence of special health care needs (18 percent). A higher percentage of males under the age of 18 are estimated to have special healthcare needs than females (17 percent versus 13 percent).
Dating and Sexual Behavior in Nebraska

**Ever Had Sexual Intercourse**

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Data from: 1991-2013 High School Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System
## Dating and Sexual Behavior in Nebraska

### Experienced Dating Violence in the Past 12 Months

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### Experienced Sexual Dating Violence in the Past 12 Months

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### Ever Physically Forced to have Sexual Intercourse

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<tr>
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Data from: 1991-2013 High School Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System
By Race/Ethnicity: Actual and Projected Percentages of Nebraska Public High School Graduates

Actual Percentages of Graduates: 2002–2003 Baseline
- White (non-Hispanic), 89.5%
- Hispanic, 4.0%
- Asian/Pacific Islander, 1.4%
- Black (non-Hispanic), 4.3%
- Native American, 0.8%

- White (non-Hispanic), 73.5%
- Hispanic, 14.3%
- Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.5%
- Black (non-Hispanic), 5.0%
- Native American, 1.0%
- Two or More Races*, 2.9%

Projected Percentages of Graduates: 2023–2024
- White (non-Hispanic), 70.0%
- Hispanic, 18.2%
- Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.3%
- Black (non-Hispanic), 7.3%
- Native American, 1.3%

Source:
Figure 1.1.a.7

Public High School 4-Year Grad Rates 2002-2003 through 2009-2010

- White (non-Hispanic): 89%, 93%
- Asian: 84%, 78%
- Native American: 59%, 62%
- Black (non-Hispanic): 56%, 61%
- Hispanic: 84%, 72%
- Two or More Races: 58%, 67%

Public High School Cohort 4-Year Grad Rates

- White (non-Hispanic): 87%, 89%
- Asian: 93%, 83%
- Native American: 75%, 78%
- Black (non-Hispanic): 75%, 81%
- Hispanic: 83%, 78%
- Two or More Races: 89%


Meeting Youth “Where They Are”

• Keep the impact of risk and protective factors in mind when working with youth

• Work in ways to increase the positive development of youth
  • Focus on things like:
    • Competence
    • Connection
    • Character
    • Confidence
    • Caring/compassion
“Society isn’t this or that, but rather, the whole collection of activities people engage in; because of that, we shouldn’t force young people into a false choice between society or their activities, but instead, teach them that their activities are actually our activities, as a whole, and that they’re not separate but together with all of us. Together.” – Adam Fletcher

http://adamfletcher.net/
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• Discuss the importance of providing youth with support to explore and navigate healthy relationships
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Ground Rules

• Context Matters
  • Where are these conversations taking place?
• Everyone needs to agree to these and be clear on their meaning

• Examples:
  • Only one person speaks at a time
  • Conversations are confidential/private – do not share them with people outside of the group
  • Everyone should have an equal chance to participate in the conversation
  • Everyone’s opinion must be respected – no put downs or criticism
Supporting Youth

• Trust and Communication
  • Start by telling them about you

• Provide Opportunities
  • Their experience matters
  • They can help create better systems
  • They are experts in their youth experience

• Confidence:
  • Young people need to understand their personal experience has value and is powerful — they are the expert in their field.
  • “Encourage the youth to own it” as that is what qualifies them to speak on the issue.

• Telling Their Story
  • When working with youth
    • Encourage them to develop an elevator speech on their topic or organization and to learn to tell their story.

• Empowerment
  • Be aware of ageist language and embedded perceptions
  • Acknowledge the young person as an equal partner and actively engage them in the dialogue
  • For more information I hope you attended the “Youth Development in Action: Strategies for Engaging and Supporting Older Youth with System-Involvement” session at THIS VERY CONFERENCE!
What is a “Healthy” Relationship?
What is a Healthy Relationship?

Worksheet: CHECK IT OUT! A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SURVEY

MY OWN RELATIONSHIP

Directions: For each of the items below, write the number that best describes what you think about a current or past relationship of yours. Total your points when you reach the end.

5 = Strongly Agree 3 = Not Sure/Somewhat 1 = Strongly Disagree

in this relationship, we...

1. Remember to call, and meet when we say we will.
2. Never push drinking or drugs on each other.
3. Like each other for exactly who we are.
4. Notice and celebrate special occasions.
5. Enjoy being together, just ourselves, even with no special plans.
6. Work through our disagreements without hurting each other.
7. Feel okay about each of us having other friends of either sex.
8. Tell each other the truth about what we feel and think.
9. Like to do many things together besides being physically affectionate.
10. Seldom embarrass each other, or put each other down.
11. Keep private what we have decided together to keep private.
12. Never cheat on each other.
13. Try not to control each other’s lives.
14. Act like the same person whether we are alone or with others.
15. Value our individual goals and interests as much as we value our relationship.
16. Decide together what we will do.
17. Respect each other’s decisions about sexual behaviors.

If we have sexual intercourse now, or in the future, we will...

18. Protect ourselves from pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
19. Discuss what we would do if we experienced a pregnancy or STI.
20. Tell each other about any sexual diseases, pregnancies, or children we have had.

TOTAL POINTS

- Where does this relationship fall on the continuum below?
- How do you feel about this relationship?

20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

* The higher the number, the healthier the relationship.

Worksheet: CHECK IT OUT! A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SURVEY

A FRIEND’S OR RELATIVE’S RELATIONSHIP

Directions: For each of the items below, write the number that best describes your best guess about a friend’s or relative’s current or past relationship. Total your points when you reach the end.

5 = Strongly Agree 3 = Not Sure/Somewhat 1 = Strongly Disagree

in this relationship, they...

1. Remember to call, and meet when they say they will.
2. Never push drinking or drugs on each other.
3. Like each other for exactly who they are.
4. Notice and celebrate special occasions.
5. Enjoy being together, just themselves, even with no special plans.
6. Work through their disagreements without hurting each other.
7. Feel okay about each of them having other friends of either sex.
8. Tell each other the truth about what they feel and think.
9. Like to do many things together besides being physically affectionate.
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- Where does this relationship fall on the continuum below?
- How do you feel about this relationship?

20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

* The higher the number, the healthier the relationship.
### HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

By the end of the 12th grade, students should be able to:

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<tr>
<td>Evaluate the potentially positive and negative roles of technology and social media in relationships</td>
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<td>Describe strategies to use social media safely, legally and respectfully HR.12.SM.2</td>
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<td>HR.12.CC.4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe characteristics of healthy and unhealthy romantic and/or sexual relationships</td>
<td>Explain how media can influence one's beliefs about what constitutes a healthy sexual relationship</td>
<td>Demonstrate how to access valid information and resources to help deal with relationships</td>
<td>Demonstrate effective strategies to avoid or end an unhealthy relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HR.12.IC.1</td>
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<td>HR.12.AI.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe a range of ways to express affection within healthy relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Define sexual consent and explain its implications for sexual decision-making</td>
<td>Analyze factors, including alcohol and other substances, that can affect the ability to give or perceive the provision of consent to sexual activity</td>
<td>Demonstrate effective ways to communicate personal boundaries as they relate to intimacy and sexual behavior</td>
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- Developed for National Sexuality Education Standards by the Future of Sex Education (FoSE)
Consent

- Discuss consent in ways that have nothing to do with sexuality
- Discuss youth’s right to speak up – their body and voice should be respected
- When to discuss “consent”?
  - National Sexuality Education Standards

Permission for something to happen or agreement to do something
Consent

• Discuss consent in ways that have nothing to do with sexuality

• Discuss youth’s right to speak up – their body and voice should be respected

• When to discuss “consent”?
  • [National Sexuality Education Standards](#)
Consent and Other “Touchy” Subjects

Get Creative!

Sex is like boxing. If one of the parties didn’t agree to participate, the other one is committing a crime.

Slate

This needs to be a poster plastered everywhere in all of the high schools and middle schools in America.

#speak #consent #rainn

89,295 notes

I’ve noticed that a lot of people struggle with understanding what consent means in the context of a poly relationship. Here’s something that might help!

Support Kimchi + get original artwork!
https://www.patreon.com/kimchicuddles
The Importance of Body Literacy

Biologically and Socially

CONSENT

It's simple as tea

Source: https://vimeo.com/128105683
**Worksheet: WARNING SIGNALS**

**Directions:** A healthy relationship is honest, equal, responsible, and respectful. Some people have identified the behaviors listed in the chart below as warning signs that a relationship is not honest, equal, responsible, and respectful. Check what you would probably do in each of the following situations.

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<th>IMAGINE YOUR PARTNER:</th>
<th>YOU WOULD PROBABLY:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Makes negative comments about your clothes, body, or hair.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Turns out to be much older — or younger — than s/he told you s/he was.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Always decides where you will go together.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Makes you hide things from your friends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Puts you down in public.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Accuses you of fooling around with someone when you are not.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Calls and turns up unexpectedly in order to check up on you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Ignores what you want to do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Lays a guilt trip on you when you go out with friends or family.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Keeps you away from your family.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Hits you and then apologizes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Refuses to use a condom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Will not let you get or use protection.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Demands you have intercourse when you do not want to.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Refuses to get tested for a sexually transmitted infection.</td>
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Unequal Partners: Teaching About Power and Consent in Adult-Teens and Other Relationships

Paperback – March 1, 2007
by Sue Montfort (Author), Peggy Brick (Author)

Be the first to review this item

Paperback
$65.07

This manual helps educate young people to make healthy decisions about relationships, especially those involving the power imbalances that can occur when there are significant age differences.

It includes 30 interactive lessons for use with young people ages 10-17 to help them:
* Identify characteristics of relationships which are honest, equal and responsible
* Rehearse skills for asserting their relationship rights practice responding to a variety of situations

FREE Shipping.

Only 4 left in stock (more on the way).
Ships from and sold by Amazon.com.
Gift-wrap available.

Add to Cart

Books with Buzz
Discover the latest buzz-worthy books, from mysteries and romance to humor and...
Meeting Youth “Where They Are”

• When youth are in unhealthy relationships we can...
  • Get engaged in their world
    • Drugs
    • Alcohol
    • Video games
    • Older boyfriend/girlfriend
    • Gangs
    • Rock n roll
  • Work to understand their point of view
  • Use peers/activities to discuss what a healthy relationship is and challenge their misconceptions
  • Acknowledge and encourage opportunities available to youth
    • Learning, teaching, and leadership opportunities
  • Mentor students
Today’s Objectives

• Discuss the **importance of providing youth with support to explore and navigate** healthy relationships

• Discuss **safe environments** for the discussion of healthy relationships

• **Discuss tools to use when having conversations with youth about healthy relationships**

• Identify **concepts to address** when discussing healthy relationships with youth
Tools for Discussing Healthy Relationships

  - Info for practitioners, parents, effective mentoring, etc.
Healthy Relationships

During adolescence, young people learn how to form safe and healthy relationships with friends, parents, teachers, and romantic partners. Both boys and girls often try on different identities and roles during this time, and relationships contribute to their development. Peers, in particular, play a big role in identity formation, but relationships with caring adults—including parents, mentors or coaches—are also important for adolescent development. Often, the parent-adolescent relationship is the one relationship that informs how a young person handles other relationships.

RESOURCES
A Practitioner’s Resource Guide: Helping Families to Support Their LGBT Children
Download PDF

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS IN THE STATES

ADOLESCENT HEALTH TOPICS
Reproductive Health
Mental Health
Tools for Discussing Healthy Relationships

• The Consensual Project - http://www.theconsensualproject.com/vision

• Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power and Consent in Adult-Teen and Other Relationships by Sue Montfort and Peggy Brick

• The Date Safe Project - http://www.datesafeproject.org/
Tools for Discussing Healthy Relationships

• Utilize your local resources
  • Local after school programs
  • School nurses
  • Local clubs, organizations, etc.
  • Church facilities
  • Volunteer organizations
  • Local clinics
    • Family planning clinics
    • Local doctor’s offices

• BUILD your own local resources
• Network with others
Practical Relevance

How can YOU use these tools and strategies in your current role?

How can you work with teens to encourage healthy relationships?
Today’s Objectives

• Discuss the **importance of providing youth with support to explore and navigate** healthy relationships

• Discuss **safe environments** for the discussion of healthy relationships

• Discuss **tools to use** when having conversations with youth about healthy relationships

• **Identify concepts to address** when discussing healthy relationships with youth
<table>
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<th>Concepts to Discuss with Youth Regarding Healthy Relationships</th>
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<td>• Bullying</td>
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<td>• LGBTQ and Sexual Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consent</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Drugs/Alcohol</td>
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<td>• Long Term Goals</td>
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<td>• Families</td>
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<td>• Expectations from Family</td>
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<td>• Expectations for Future Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Age Differences (Sex and Laws)</td>
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<td>• Social Media</td>
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<td>• Technology</td>
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<td>• Dating Violence</td>
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<td>• Peers</td>
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<td>• Asking for Help</td>
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Framing Discussions with Youth

• Youth are not problems to be fixed
• Choices are not made in a vacuum
• Youth have agency and power
  • If you dream it, you can do it!
• Context matters
Questions & Comments?

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