Hi hello insight



AGES 11-23

Supporting staff to:

FOSTER LEADERSHIP

Foster Leadership is a young person's experience with an adult who creates meaningful opportunities for them to take on leadership roles within activities, the classroom, or a community.

Leadership is fostered when young people are engaged in roles with authentic responsibilities and given autonomous decision-making power.











DOES FOSTERING LEADERSHIP LOOK LIKE AS A PART OF OUR PROGRAM?

Fostering Leadership requires that adults support young people to take on multiple leadership roles and responsibilities in the program, during activities, and in the community. Young people should be involved in planning for and facilitating meetings and decision-making processes, especially related to issues that matter to them and to their communities. To accomplish this, adults need to recognize their own power and how it affects young people.



RESEARCH-BASED EXPERIENCES



Support young people to take on multiple leadership roles and responsibilities. Ensure that leadership roles are meaningful and authentic. For example: be sure that young people are making decisions about issues that matter to them, they are informed about, and that they can influence.

Provide regular opportunities for youth to participate in decision making. Make sure that young people have regular opportunities to engage in decision-making, giving them meaningful roles and responsibilities during meetings, planning sessions, research, and evaluations. Ensure that adults recognize their own power and how it affects young people's ability to act as leaders. Check in with young people to ensure they feel safe and supported to engage in dialogue, debate, and reflection during decision-making processes.

Engage young people in the planning and facilitation of meetings. Create opportunities for young people to identify the purpose of meetings, develop agendas, lead discussions, and delegate responsibilities. Youth-led meetings provide an opportunity for young people to lift up their own issues and concerns in ways that are often more engaging and sensitive to youth culture.

Encourage young people to conduct outreach in their communities. Support young people to lead intentional outreach to community members and peers about the program, campaigns, or actions on which they are working. As young people take on these public-facing responsibilities, they are seen and related to as leaders within the community.





IS FOSTERING LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?

Leadership skills are not just necessary for leaders — these skills are needed for success in today's world (MacNeil, 2000). Young leaders demonstrate higher career aspirations, increased self-esteem, strong problem solving skills, improved high school completion rates, and increased civic participation (Bloomberg, et al., 2003; O'Brien & Kohlmeier, 2003).

As young people begin to lead, they not only strengthen their sociopolitical awareness, but they also experience gains in psychological empowerment, both of which contribute to civic and political participation (Christens and Kirshner 2011; Larson and Hansen 2005; Watts and Flanagan 2007). Additionally, youth participation in group decision making has been found to facilitate mastery, skill development, confidence, identity exploration, initiative, and emotional wellbeing (Dworkin, Larsen, and Hansen 2003; Mitra 2004; Youniss et al., 1997; Zeldin 2004; Zeldin, et al., 2012).



DISCOVERIES FROM HELLO INSIGHT



Hello Insight has found that Foster Leadership is a Focused experience that increases young people's likelihood to take action. Taking Action encapsulates Advocating for Change, Confidence to Mobilize, and Sociopolitical participation, three interdependent capacities that are related to young people's disposition to take action. Young people who are inclined to take action in their communities have self-confidence, understand their social and political environment, and are more apt to become civically engaged.





HAVE OTHER PROGRAMS INCORPORATED FOSTERING LEADERSHIP?

PYD, including Fostering Leadership, is not a curriculum, it is a way of working with young people that has been proven to promote SEL. You can incorporate Fostering Leadership in a wide variety of interventions and programs. Here is how some Hello Insight members have integrated this practice into their programs.



PROGRAM EXAMPLES

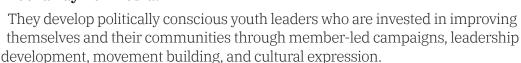




Khmer Girls In Action is led by young Southeast Asian women and invests in and empowers Southeast Asian youth to become leaders in their community and their lives.

They do this by equipping young people with the tools and skills to harness their power and create change. Khmer girls are engaged in multiple community projects that focus on creating systemic change to achieve equity and justice.

The Rockaway Youth Task Force (RYTF) is a grassroots youth-led organization principally comprised of young women of color within the Rockaway Peninsula.





Youth On Board's (YOB) Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) provides a safe space for students through a bi-monthly peer support group,

offering young people the opportunity to learn peer counseling techniques, and to work through their concerns and frustrations with each other, as well as the institutional barriers they face.





CAN OUR PROGRAM BEST SUPPORT STAFF TO FOSTER LEADERSHIP?

Use this reflection guide with your staff to explore "bright spots"—practices that you already use to Foster Leadership highlight potential "accelerators"—practices that could be easily incorporated into your work, and "challenges"—things that might make Fostering Leadership difficult.

PRACTICES

Ways to support young people

BRIGHT SPOTS

Examples of what the program already does

ACCELERATORS

Ways you could easily incorporate this practice

CHALLENGES

What might make this practices difficult to do

Support young people to take on multiple leadership roles and responsibilities

Provide regular opportunities for youth to participate in decision making

Engage young people in the planning and facilitation of meetings

Encourage young people to conduct outreach in their communities



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This guide is part of a set meant to help youth-serving programs incorporate PYD. Visit www.ins.gt/pyd-exp to learn more.

View a full list of citations at www.ins.gt/citations









