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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.

WHY

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.

HOW 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.

They develop politically conscious youth leaders who are invested in improving themselves and their communities through member-led campaigns, leadership development, movement building, and cultural expression.



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.

HOW 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			



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

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