AGES 11–23

Supporting staff to:

SHARE POWER

Share Power is a young person's experience with an adult who ensures that their voices and opinions matter.

Sharing power involves supporting young people to feel connected, engaged, and included as true contributing members of their programs, teams, groups, communities, and society.

WHAT DOES SHARING POWER LOOK LIKE AS A PART OF OUR PROGRAM?

Sharing Power involves specific actions such as showing mutual respect, giving young people a voice in decisions, collaborating in solving problems, and creating leadership opportunities for young people (Search 2020). It requires that adults provide space for young people to explore increasingly more complex leadership roles, stepping back and allowing them to fully assume these new responsibilities. Some activities that promote power sharing include Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) and Evaluation (YPE), youth councils and committees, as well as youth organizing and activism.

Intergenerational communication about power and adultism are essential when sharing power. Adults need to understand their own biases about young people, and young people need to identify any biases they have about adults before a genuine partnership can occur.

RESEARCH-BASED EXPERIENCES

[ONE]
Create opportunities for young people to make choices and have a voice in the classroom.
Give young people opportunities to decide for themselves what they want to do or work on. Be there to support them and offer guidance, but let their curiosity take charge. These opportunities can be planned into the program or expressed through informal interactions.

[TWO]
Collaborate with young people to develop group agreements for how you will work together.
Brainstorm a list of agreements with young people on the first day. This list will determine how young people and adults will work together during the program.

[THREE]
Create opportunities for young people to work on group projects that they have defined.
During projects allow young people to lead the planning, decision making, facilitation, reflection and evaluation of a project that matters to them. Help them collaborate with one another to create the goals, themes, timelines, and name of the project.

[FOUR]
Step back and make space for young people to lead. Invite them to try out new roles and to take on responsibilities for leading program activities, teaching peers, or mentoring those younger than them. Make sure that these leadership opportunities are authentic and meaningful, allowing young people to truly contribute to the work.

WHY IS SHARING POWER IMPORTANT?

Sharing Power has been shown to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion both in the classroom and society (Zeldin, S, et al., 2000; Sabo-Flores, 2013; Ginwright, S. & James, T., 2002). It also enhances problem solving skills, builds effective communication skills, increases critical consciousness, and ignites a sense of contribution and civic engagement (Sabo Flores, K., 2013; Ginwright, S. & James T., 2002; Zeldin, Z. et al., 2000).

Sharing Power is based upon global recognition that young people have a right to be heard and participate in all decisions that affect them (United Nations 2009). Sharing Power can result in young people clarifying or improving a program or organization's mission. In order to ensure they benefit young people from diverse backgrounds, programs often become more responsive to young people, and they often place greater value on inclusion and representation (Zelding S., et al., 2000).

DISCOVERIES FROM HELLO INSIGHT

Young people are dynamic and full of promise, with many different pathways to success. Every year Hello Insight mines our growing dataset of more than 125,000 young people, participating in more than 1,500 programs nation-wide, so that we can continue to learn what works for each and every young person.

* Sharing power is particularly important for girls and Latinx young people predicting significant SEL growth. Sharing power works well when combined with efforts to engage authentically, expand young people's interests, and help them manage personal and group goals.

HOW HAVE OTHER PROGRAMS INCORPORATED SHARING POWER?

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

PROGRAM EXAMPLES

At the Educational Video Center (EVC), young film producers take ownership of all aspects of projects, from developing the storyline to narration, music, acting, sound, and video.

As young producers, artists, and intellectuals debate, discuss, and create together in small groups and pairs, EVC works hard to create a professional atmosphere. The space even looks and feels like a professional media production company, with carpet, rolling chairs, tables, video equipment, and editing stations.

At Queens Community House's Access for Young Women, staff relate to the young women as active leaders in their lives and community.

Girls share their personal experiences and stories. They talk about what they know, what they don't know, and what they want to learn. These discussion topics fuel community workshops that the girls design and lead. Through frank discussions, staff help girls craft workshops that reflect what matters to them and speaks to their unique journeys.

At Khmer Girls In Action, adults are considered allies, rather than teachers or instructors.

The understanding is that both adults and young people will learn and grow together. Adults see and relate to young people as capable, setting high expectations for them. Adults encourage young people to take on increasing responsibility as they step into greater leadership roles within the program and organization itself as well as in campaigns and community projects.

HOW CAN OUR PROGRAM BEST SUPPORT STAFF TO SHARE POWER?

Use this reflection guide with your staff to explore "bright spots" — practices that you already do, highlight potential "accelerators" — practices that you could easily incorporate into your work, and "challenges" — things that might make this practice difficult.

PRACTICES	BRIGHT SPOTS	ACCELERATORS	CHALLENGES
Ways to share power	Examples of what the program already does	Ways you could easily incorporate this practice	What might make this practices difficult to do
Create opportunities for young people to make choices and have a voice in the program/classroom.			
Collaborate with young people to develop group agreements for how you will work together.			
Create opportunities for young people to work on group projects that they have defined.			
Step back and make space for young people to lead.			

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**

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