

Young Adult Leadership Curriculum

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LEADERSHIP

A DIFFERENT LOOK AT LEADERSHIP

Leadership = Interaction between Leaders and Followers

Leaders acquire followers who accept their influence, guidance and direction by helping to satisfy the needs of those followers. Some examples of these needs are:

1. To survive, every person is engaged in a continuous struggle to satisfy needs and relieve tension.
2. Some means are required to satisfy a need – knowledge, tools, money, food, physical strength, etc.
3. Most needs of individuals are satisfied in relationships with people or groups, so people and groups become the means we rely on most heavily for the satisfaction of our needs. (Food, clothes, education, nurturing, etc.)
4. People actively seek out those relationships in which the other person is seen as having the means for satisfying their needs.
5. People join groups because they hope that membership will offer them the means for satisfying their needs. On the other hand, people leave groups when they no longer get their needs satisfied.
6. Group members accept influence and direction of a leader only if they regard him or her as a person through whose means they will get their needs satisfied. People follow (and permit their activities to be directed by) a leader whom they believe will get them what they need and want.

People will continue to expend energy doing things that benefit others only if they feel they are receiving “reciprocal benefits”. There is always a limit to one-way sharing of benefits in human relationships.

Leadership Types

Leadership type	Characteristics	Describes me	Characteristics	Describes me
Formal leader	Elected officer in an organization		Selected by peers to lead group	
Radical leader	Will confront others for a cause		Lead community demonstrations	
Reform leader	Lead systemic change		Have developed a plan to create change	
Systems leader	In a position to influence a system		Understand how to impact a system	
Opportunistic leader	Have seized an opportunity to lead others		Watch for chances to make a difference	
Diplomatic leader	Possess & use diplomacy skills		Others look to you for help in resolving conflicts / problems	
Respected leader	Others express confidence in you		People trust you and seek out your opinion	
Charismatic leader	Others naturally turn to you		People listen to what you have to say	
Intellectual leader	Able to understand complex issues		Others look to you for explanations	
Rhetorical leader	Can articulate messages well		Ability to explain, clarify or persuade	
Business leader	Spokesperson for business owners		Affiliations with business leaders offers inside track	
Designated leader	Assigned to lead thru employment or other position		Formally represent a constituency	

LEADERSHIP SELF ASSESSMENT

How does this statement apply to you?	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
You encourage open discussion and disagreement among people.				
You like to read to expand your experience and understanding of new areas.				
You ask many questions, never worrying about what other people will think.				
You look at things from a variety of viewpoints before you make a decision.				
You entertain new ideas with enthusiasm rather than skepticism.				
You are stimulated by complex problems that test your thinking.				
You enjoy being around people who promote a different point of view.				
You find innovative solutions to problems.				
You search for new and better ways of approaching things.				
Are you self focused when you interact with others, considering what's in it for you?				
Do you assume you know other people's expectations, needs and wants without discussing them?				
Do you expect other people to react the same way you would?				

Three Types of Leadership



MAINSTREAM LEADERSHIP

Leadership that reflects the values, norms and behaviors of the predominate group in power.

TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership that comes originally from within a cultural group and is not perceived to have power within the mainstream power structure.

CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership that is effective across two cultural groups. This type of leadership style maintains a certain level of influence and power within the mainstream power structure but also maintains credibility with the second cultural group. *People who possess cross-cultural leadership skills are sometimes called “**bridge builders**.”*

- **BRIDGE BUILDER:** An individual who successfully works and navigates between cultural groups. As a result, he/she is able to help build bridges and exchange resources between the groups.



SCENARIO EXAMPLES – YOUTH

Mainstream Leadership Scenario – Jane

Hi, I'm Jane, I'm the president of my school government. I'm glad I got into school government, since all my friends are in it. I've always wanted to be a leader. My parents know a lot of important people in our city, and have given me some tips on how to be a leader. So, I was really prepared when, in student government, we started learning the same stuff my parents had taught me about leadership! I get to keep meetings moving quickly, and make sure we complete all our responsibilities. Even though I'm in charge, we all get a vote so it's pretty equal. I want to make sure everyone gets to have a say, but I still want to end all our meetings on time!

Traditional Leadership Scenario – Asad

Hello, my name is Asad. I go to a pretty large high school, and have a small group of friends. We're really close. We have all known each other since our freshman year, two years ago. My friends and I are all from the same cultural background, and that's important to us in a high school where we don't really feel like we fit in.

Anyway, we steer clear of student government and the official clubs and stuff like that, but we've started making our own place at school lately. I came up with this idea, that we plan a cultural event the whole school can come to. I think we're going to do it. It's going to be great; our parents are helping too. It's so easy to plan with these guys. We listen to each other respectfully. We don't feel like the other kids in our classes listen to us.

Cross-Cultural Leadership Scenario (Bridge Builder) – Maria

My name is Maria. I am in high school. I was born in another country and came here when I was three years old. I live in a neighborhood with lots of other people from my native country. My parents do not speak English, so I often act as the main translator and help my family understand the way this country works. I often feel like I'm living in two different cultures.

I am easily able to adapt to mainstream leadership settings like high school government or planning for the drama club's play. However, when I am at home with my family, I am always careful to behave and follow our own way of making decisions, like letting elders speak first and taking more time to discuss things. I can fit in anywhere, but I still want to honor what my family taught me. I want to make it easier for people in my culture and people in the mainstream to relate to each other better – without feeling like I'm training in any pieces of who I am.

Mainstream Quote:

“The most important quality in a leader is that of being acknowledged as such.”

- Andre Maurois

Cross-Cultural Quote:

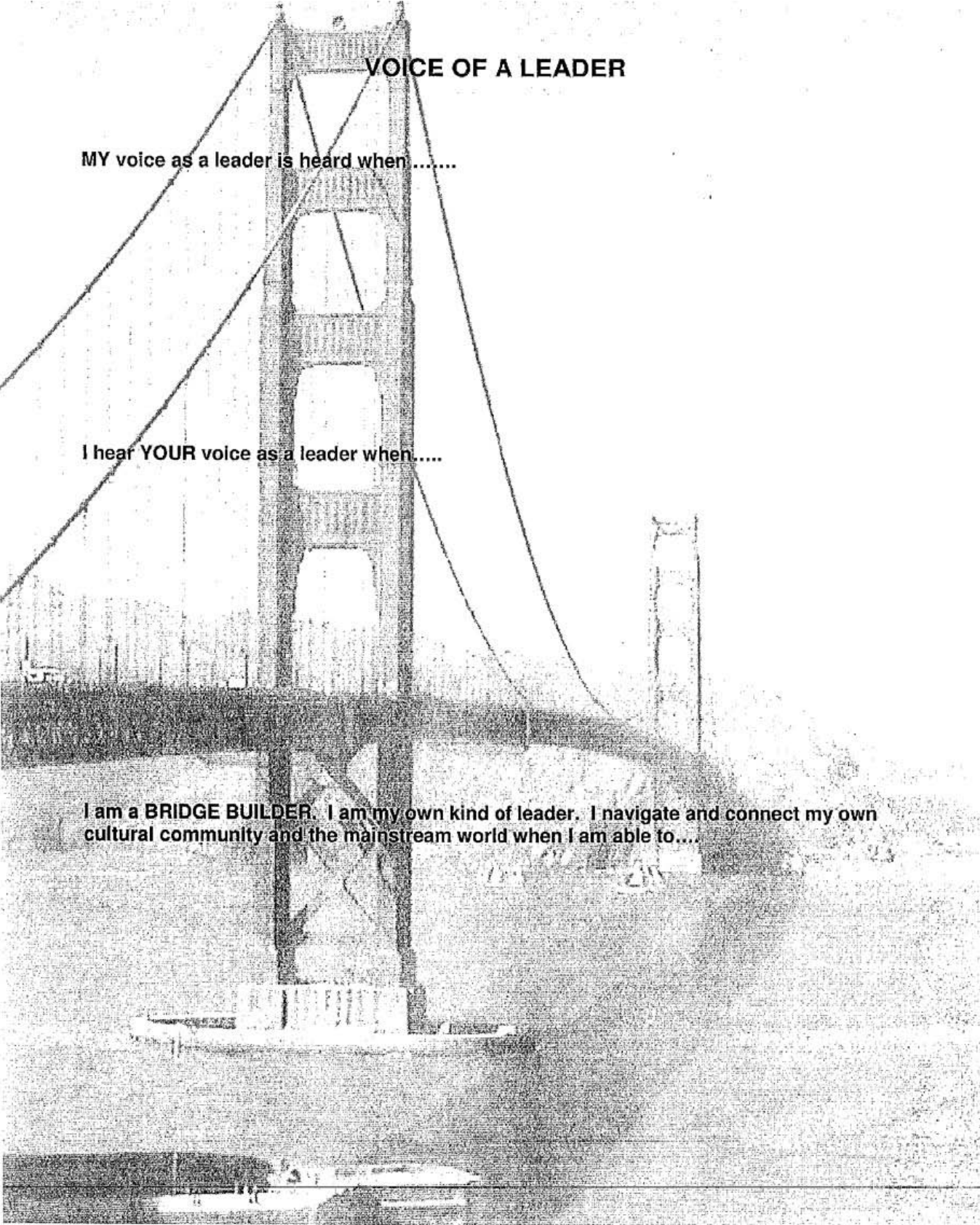
“The leader has to be practical and a realist, yet must talk the language of the visionary and the idealist.”

- Eric Hoffer

Traditional Quote:

“When the effective leader is finished with his work, the people will say it happened naturally.”

- Lao Tse



VOICE OF A LEADER

MY voice as a leader is heard when.....

I hear YOUR voice as a leader when.....

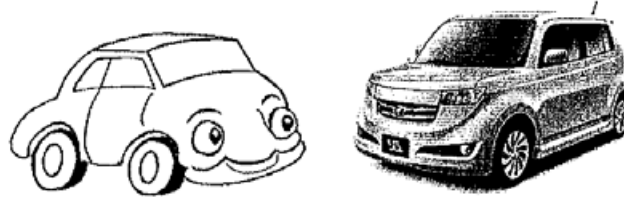
I am a BRIDGE BUILDER. I am my own kind of leader. I navigate and connect my own cultural community and the mainstream world when I am able to....

How is CULTURE like a CAR?

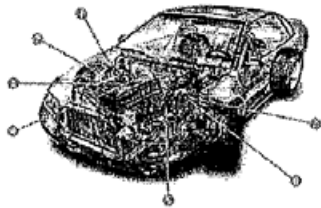
Culture is like a car. How?

CARS

You can learn some things about cars by looking at them on the **surface** but cars are really **complex** when you look **deeper**.



There are a lot of parts that make up a car. Many parts are visible by looking at the outside (body, paint color, wheels, headlights, windows, windshield, seats...). All of these things help make a car what it is, and make it somewhat unique.



However, those visible parts aren't the main things that make a car run. Cars also have hundreds of hard-to-see, complex and intricate little parts *inside* that do most of the work of making them run.

There are more complicated, below-the-surface parts of a car than visible ones.

CULTURE

Culture is like this too – complex below the surface. Our cultures have some parts that are **visible and obvious** on the surface and many parts that are **less visible, more complex and subtle** – even things we may have to think about to realize they're part of our own cultures.

What are some of the visible, obvious, and big ingredients of culture?

(Things like language, clothing, food, religion, cities, buildings, art...)

What are some of the less visible ingredients of culture? As a group or as groups of two or three, talk about some subtle things that make up culture.

(Things like communication style, gender roles, and views about conflict).

Explain: These **less visible** things are often about **how we interact with one another** and **how we see ourselves in the world**. Interaction and our views about ourselves affect how we express leadership. *Can you think of examples of how your culture tells you to interact with other people?*

We also make **choices** about our cultures, to some extent. Just as we might choose some things about a car, we sometimes choose what aspects of our culture we wish to express, and in what way. Culture shapes us, and we shape culture.



Sure, you can tell just by looking that my culture's traditional cuisine involves carrots. But did you know that my culture also values avoiding conflict? Or that it places strong importance on education?

Communication

How To Say What You Really Mean

CONSIDER THESE TIPS TO HELP YOU BE MORE RELAXED ABOUT SAYING WHAT YOU REALLY MEAN – AND AT THE SAME TIME RESPECTING OTHERS”

- ◆ Your real self is your most valuable resource.
- ◆ If others believe in you, they will believe in what you have to say.
- ◆ To be truly effective you need to be sincere, authentic and let others see what you are really like.
- ◆ Inventing or creating in image does not work. Phony actions, insincere smiles, superficial eye contact and such can make an individual seem detached, fake, aloof or even worse.
- ◆ A person who is real and respectful can be trusted.
- ◆ Tension is the greatest barrier to being real. Tension interferes with concentration and stops the natural flow of your senses.
- ◆ Relieve mental tension by:
 - Clearing your mind of distractions
 - Concentrating on the present moment
 - Breathing slow and deep
 - Repeating positive messages or affirmations
- ◆ When you encounter an unexpected situation (laughter, embarrassment, hurt, or criticism for example) be honest and flexible and try to put the situation into perspective (will this really matter one year from now?).
- ◆ To influence people you will need to reach out to them in some way but you also need to stay in touch with yourself.
- ◆ If you have sincere deep feeling and emotions about something your message will come across powerfully to others.
- ◆ Don't take it personally if your view is rejected.
- ◆ Even if you have no control over a situation you still have control over your reaction.

COMMUNICATION THOUGHT TEST

1. Good listening skills are something that is natural and cannot be developed.
TRUE FALSE
2. Because many people are poor listeners, it is important to speak distinctly but rapidly to maintain the other person's interest and attention.
TRUE FALSE
3. It can be hard to detect how another person is feeling or reacting to you over the phone.
TRUE FALSE
4. Asking questions is a listening skill.
TRUE FALSE
5. Some people find that their voice image is improved by smiling.
TRUE FALSE
6. Body language and speech content never conflict.
TRUE FALSE
7. As the sender of information, you convey your message through which of the following:
____ words body language
____ eye contact how you dress
____ your tone of voice all of the above
8. As a receiver of information your role is to:
____ take in the message
____ acknowledge the message
____ understand the message
____ evaluate the message
____ all of the above
9. We respond to people:
VERBALLY NON-VERBALLY BOTH
10. Communication barriers can apply to:
THE SENDER THE RECEIVER BOTH

Leading A Meeting

Leading A Meeting

****If time permits take time after this section to practice leading a meeting.

Make it fun, lighthearted and short so everyone gets a turn.*****

Meeting Methods Spectrum

Circle Methods that you have experienced, What did you like and why?

<u>Atmosphere:</u>	formal	informal	upbeat	negative
<u>Preparation:</u>	no preparation participants prepared / not prepared	receive agenda at meeting	agenda sent out prior to the meeting	
<u>Agenda format:</u>	none agenda outlining content of the meeting and timeline	mental agenda	very specific agenda	flexible
<u>Agenda development:</u>	none everyone	chairperson does it alone the group and not the chair	chair get input	
<u>Role of Chairperson:</u>	not present runs meetings and participates monopolizes the meeting	runs meetings but doesn't participate doesn't run the meeting but participates lets others take over		
<u>Facilitator:</u>	none	outside facilitator	rotates in group	facilitates and participates
<u>Role of recorder:</u>	none secretary is recorder	someone records who is not part of the group a participant is the recorder	rotated in group	
<u>Ways work is recorded:</u>	none group is expected to remember	note pads	secretary does it items listed on blackboard	flip chart taped
<u>Minutes:</u>	none	formal minutes	action items	group memo group memory
<u>Seating arrangements:</u>	circle around table	circle	semi circle	U shaped table arrangement
<u>Meeting size:</u>	3 to 6	7 to 15	16 to 30	above 30
<u>Meeting type:</u>	information sharing presentations	problem solving feedback	planning discussion but not much action	decision making
<u>Decision making process:</u>	lose / lose	win / lose	win / win	group indecisive
<u>Final decision making:</u>	another group or individual does it		executive decision	majority
<u>Responsibility for success:</u>	no one	meeting leader	group members	everyone
<u>Presentations:</u>	spontaneous guests	verbal	handouts	verbal/visual
<u>Meeting location:</u>	same place each time	rotation	neutral turf	unknown
<u>Time:</u>	5 to 15 minutes	1 hour	1 to 3 hours	more than 3 hours

Leading a Meeting Effectively

Before the Meeting

- ❖ Send an agenda in advance so members will be prepared to consider all discussion items.
- ❖ Inform anyone who will be asked to give a report.
- ❖ Prepare any support information, documentation or reports needed to make decisions.
- ❖ Arrive early so you can greet others as they arrive.

Getting Started

- ❖ Start on time!
- ❖ Announce the opening of the meeting with a confident smile and wait for order.
- ❖ When the group is quiet, start by stating the objective of the meeting.
- ❖ Assign time keepers and state your intention to allow limited time for each agenda item

During the Meeting

- ❖ Follow the agenda.
- ❖ Remember only one person should be talking at a time.
- ❖ Encourage participation. Remember that most of the people will be silent most of the time. People will be quiet for many reasons including: agreement with what is already being said, nothing important to contribute, need to hear more before they speak, diffidence, hostility, etc.
- ❖ Ways to make others feel comfortable taking part in the discussion include: encouragement, provide positive reinforcement, summarize the general attitude of the group from time to time, reiterate facts and restate conclusions.
- ❖ When one person talks too much it makes everyone feel uncomfortable. Silence the overly talkative through these techniques: state that there is much to be covered in a limited time and comments need to be brief, stop the person by interrupting and repeating a statement he or she just made and passing that statement along to someone else in the room for confirmation or comment, avoid looking in the direction of the person who is monopolizing the discussion, specifically ask someone else a question.
- ❖ If someone becomes too negative others will restrict their comments to avoid being challenged or criticized. Ask the negative thinker to suggest a better idea. Another approach is to ask "What DO you like about the other recommendations?" Refer to facts so that opinions are minimized. If there is broad based dissatisfaction and you cannot readily determine the cause, simply listen to the feelings being expressed and then move on.
- ❖ Seek a consensus on action items.

Concluding the Meeting

- ❖ For effective group process the leader may need to review, summarize, restate and reinforce.
- ❖ End the meeting on time. (Meetings that last too long keep people from attending.)
- ❖ Ask the secretary if he or she has any questions about what to include in the minutes.
- ❖ Make yourself available for members who need to clarify assignments or ask questions.

Techniques in Making Your Council Successful

As you run your councils and follow the leadership topics in the manual, there are some different techniques that can be used to make the Council meetings interesting and successful (always let the group know that they are free to “pass” on any question or activity).

Ice Breaker

Have each member of the group go around the room and tell something unique or special about themselves or their likes and dislikes. Having each member of the group share what kind of ice cream they like, or their hobby, can be a casual and fun way to get to know one another. This can lead the way to other topics such as “What are the qualities of an effective leader?” or “What are effective ways to communicate?”

Expectations

Ask the group members to share what their expectations are of the group and the project. This will help you know the needs and expectations of the group.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming and “Normal Group Process” (in the Group Dynamic section of this manual) allow for uninhibited discussion of ideas by a group without formal evaluation of ideas. The purpose is to generate creative ideas by the group. Any ideas are acceptable and written down as part of the “brainstorming” process.

Mini-Lecture

The purpose of the mini-lecture is to deliver technical information in 5-10 minutes.

Role-Playing

Role playing is a dramatization of a problem or situation, followed by discussion. Members can volunteer to play a certain role or a script of a certain situation can be provided.

Handouts

Handouts in this manual can be copied (or other handouts prepared) to provide the participants information.

Visual Aids

Visual aids can make a presentation more interesting. Posters, powerpoint presentations, or videos can provide effective visual aids for a presentation.

Reference: Utah State PTA, 2006. “Leadership Handbook, Tips and References.”

Conflict Resolution

When people or groups of people gather to work on a project, it is possible that conflicts may arise that may cause disunity or discord between individuals or within the group as a whole. Conflicts occur because of a perceived feeling of insult or injury. A leader must be able to assist in effectively resolving conflicts. To enable conflict resolution, the involved parties must be able to discuss the issues without emotion and be willing to find solutions.

To avoid conflict, group members must communicate openly, honestly and respectfully with one another. Discussion that takes place about concerns or frustrations with other parties and not with those involved can be destructive and hurtful. Conflicts can only be resolved with those parties involved and in a constructive manner.

To conduct a discussion on conflict resolution, see the other information in this section.

In this section:

- Successful Negotiating
- Paradigms
- Negotiation Styles
- Comparison of Methods of Dispute Resolution
- Dealing with Anger Creative
- Problem Solving Resolving
- Conflicts
- How Do You Usually Handle Conflicts
- Working it Out with Difficult People
- Peace/Conflict
- Building of Differences: Quotes to Remember

Steps the facilitator can take include:

- Do not agree with either side or give your opinion.
- Remind the participants of the goals and rules set and the purpose of the meeting.
- When possible go to the next item on the agenda.
- Agree to meet with each party separately after the meeting to get their ideas on the topic and a report will be given to all of the members during the next meeting.
- If the decision must be made by the end of the current meeting, remind the members of the type of majority agreement determined in the rules of engagement.

Troubleshooting Guide

Unclear Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat purpose at start of meeting • Decide and communicate to all attendees before meeting
Attendees routinely show up late	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start on time • Have group create a tardy policy • Remind latecomers of group agreements • Offer food for early arrivers
Side conversations occurring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind group of agreements • Change seating arrangement • Take a break • Ask repeat offenders to leave
Meeting feels disorganized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set agenda and prepare in advance • Keep visible record of progress
Time taken to update latecomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep running record of main points that can be read any time • Wait to update after meeting • If possible let them read minutes later
Everything takes too long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep to time limits • Increase time allotment for meetings • Decrease agenda items • Eliminate unnecessary decisions or discussions
Meeting dominators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce time limits for speaking • Have participants raise their hands to speak • Ask other attendees if they have anything to share
Participants get tired of raising their hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number participants wanting to speak and call on them by number
Arguments/Disagreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit all sides to speak • Record all points of view to avoid repetition • Postpone less important decisions to allow involved participants time to think, calm down, and discuss on their own • Ask opposing sides to meet together outside the meeting to discuss and co-present a solution at next meeting
Interruptions from people outside meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange meeting in a more private location • Arrange meeting in a quieter timeframe for participants • Hang a sign outside the meeting stating "Meeting in Progress"

CONSENSUS

CONSENSUS is:

1. An accepted, informal process whereby a group can decide together
2. Total group involvement
3. Compromise
4. Everyone agreeing that they can at least “live with” or accept the decision

CONSENSUS is not:

1. Voting
2. Flipping a coin
3. Anything less than total involvement
4. The group giving in to one person’s position

Steps to reaching a **CONSENSUS**:

1. State the issue clearly
2. Discuss and evaluate all possible alternatives
3. Find out where each member stands on the issue
4. Decide together on the best solution or answer (discuss compromises)

Important points to remember about **CONSENSUS**:

1. This is a valuable decision making process to be used in many situations
2. It is most valuable when used with small groups
3. Everyone must be involved in the decision making process
4. Members must be aware of non-verbal signals from other members of the group and bring their points or concerns into the discussion
5. If there are individuals who will not move from their position then another process for making a decision may be needed.

RIGHTS - RESPONSIBILITIES - EMOTIONS

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

1. Ask for what you want
2. Set limits
3. Change your mind
4. Be less than perfect
5. Have privacy
6. Have a choice
7. Challenge others opinions
8. Embrace truth

YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

1. Determine how your life turns out
2. Shape your attitude
3. Treat others fairly
4. Seek out and get what you need
5. Set appropriate limits
6. Respect boundaries
7. Communicate with others
8. Be honest

YOUR EMOTIONS WILL BE MORE EASILY MANAGED IF YOU:

1. Spend more time in imagination than in memory
2. Don't confuse your past with your potential
3. Be willing to let go for now if it will make a difference in the long run
4. Challenge your unnecessary, self imposed limitations
5. Stop facing life like a starving person at a buffet
6. Realize that external validation may not always come when you need it
7. Spend some time in solitude so you are not privacy deprived

Qualities That Build Up a Team

1. Open mindedness
2. Following through with plans made together
3. Dependability
4. Listening to each other
5. Cooperation at all levels
6. Shared decisions
7. Patience
8. Development of leadership skills
9. Setting priorities
10. Respecting other's feelings
11. Fun Times!
12. Opportunities to learn new things about each other
13. Helping others with their duties or responsibilities
14. Tolerance
15. Appreciation
16. Humor
17. Willingness to be inconvenienced
18. Smiling
19. Everyone feels important
20. Generosity
21. Evaluating progress toward goals
22. Accepting differences in one another
23. Spending time together
24. Sharing ideas, thoughts, dreams, and philosophies
25. Everyone knows the purpose of the team
26. Looking for alternatives and solutions
27. People say what they mean

Qualities That Tear Down a Team

1. Criticism and blaming
2. Procrastinating fulfilling other's needs
3. Impatience
4. Impulsiveness
5. Inattention at meetings
6. Problems left to fester
7. Everyone tries to talk at once
8. Cliques
9. Back biting
10. Being overworked or over scheduled
11. Flaring tempers
12. Resistance to differing opinions
13. Monopolizing conversations
14. Pettiness, judgment and rejection
15. Negative body language
16. Stirring up ill feelings
17. Not taking the time to be together
18. Not knowing each other very well – shallow relationships
19. Antagonistic attitude
20. Egomania
21. I win and you lose philosophy
22. Crisis management

"No individual can live alone, no nation can live alone, and anyone who feels that he can live alone is sleeping through a revolution. The world in which we live is geographically one. The challenge that we face today is to make it one in terms of brotherhood. We must all learn to live together as brothers, or we will all perish together as fools."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"The deliberate cultivation of the gift of putting yourself in another's place is the beginning of wisdom in human relations."

Arnold Bennett

"Never judge another man until you have walked a mile in his moccasins."

North American Indian saying

"Whoever seeks to set one race against another seeks to enslave all races."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

"A man bleeds, suffers, despairs not as an American or a Russian or a Chinese, but in his innermost being as a member of a single human race."

Adlai Stevenson

"Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency."

Mahatma Gandhi

"Communication is not easy. It is one of the most difficult things we ever accomplish. And the trouble is that it doesn't stop demanding something of us once we have broken through to the other • it requires constant effort. We ought to bear in mind always the alternative to communication - death. That's right. None of us is worth anything alone. We need other people. They are extensions of us. When we decide it isn't worth the trouble, we are saying we are not worth it. Marriages die. Corporations die. Individuals die."

John R. Killinger

"It is never too late to give up your prejudices."

Henry David Thoreau

Resolving Conflicts

Conflicts happen. People have different backgrounds, experiences, points of view and perspectives.

How we handle differences and conflicts is important to what we want to accomplish for ourselves, others and what we are working for.

These questions will help you to clarify the point of view. (These questions can be asked of yourself or are useful to help others clarify a conflict.)

1. What happened?
2. How did you feel about the situation?
3. What did you do?
4. What were you thinking at the time?
5. How long has the problem existed?
6. What are you doing now about the situation?
7. How has the conflict changed relationships?

These questions will help you to focus on "interests" or what you, or the person you are helping, want the outcome to be.

1. What do you really want?
2. How do you want things to change?
3. What will you need to do to get what you want?
4. What might happen if you don't reach agreement?
5. How would you feel if you were in the other person's shoes?
6. What do you both have in common that you both want?
7. What is the bottom line?
8. Why has the other person not done what you wanted?



WORKING IT OUT WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Five primary needs motivate most behavior in people:

PHYSICAL SURVIVAL - We need to survive physically.

WORTH/VALUE - We need to feel worthwhile, valuable and lovable.

COMPETENCE - We need to feel capable and adequate.

BELONGING - We need to belong, to know that we are accepted and not alone.

MEANING / PURPOSE - We need to have meaning and purpose in our lives.

Effective negotiators are people who have learned to listen on two levels:

THE OBVIOUS LEVEL - The actual content or focus of the discussion.

THE INSIGHT LEVEL - The underlying needs of the other party.

The care of effectively working it out with others is our ability to understand and accept ourselves and others; to understand what we need and what the other person needs.

1. Plan, gather facts, identify needs and interests and create solutions.
2. See the whole picture and how it all interrelates.
3. Analyze the problem by looking at elements separately and defining their causes.
4. Think deductively.
5. Think consistently.
6. Understand the other person's perceptions.
7. Make others feel understood.
8. Adapt an objective, third person perspective to observe the process.
9. Accurately assess your own and other's power.
10. Maintain self discipline; don't be overwhelmed by your emotions.
11. Understand that negotiating is a search for mutually beneficial solutions.



Reflections



As a result of reviewing the self assessment ask yourself the following questions:

1. What are my strengths?
2. What thoughts or ideas have I had as a result of evaluating my leadership skills?
3. What areas do I want to work on?
Right now:

Within the next six months:

Within the next year:

Other reflections:

Advocacy

Before starting this section, go over the definition of advocacy & well known advocates for different rights and purposes.

Advocacy Activity

What is something you feel passionate about? (It doesn't have to be serious)

Why is it important to you?

How does it affect your life?

How would your life be different without it?

Talk about these questions and the answers each person gave, and then explain this is why people choose to advocate. This section is how to properly advocate for yourself and different issues.

Advocacy Types

Advocacy type	Characteristics	Describes me	Characteristics	Describes me
Study & Research Advocate	Research issues on the Internet or at the library		Prefer gathering information and organizing facts	
Direct contact Advocate	Talk to policy makers face to face		Prefer to educate others in person	
Supportive Advocate	Participate as part of a group		Prefer to let others take the lead	
Tenacious Advocate	Keep trying even if it takes years		Willing to deliver message over & over	
Phone tree Advocate	Able to call other advocates from home or office		Prefer generation support by phone	
Corresponding Advocate	Write letter to express a point of view or opinion		Better able to correspond than attend meetings	
Organizing Advocate	Organize others around an issue or a cause		See the bigger picture and what it takes to get carry out a plan	
Passionate Advocate	Speak out because life has been touched by issue		Have personal story to tell and am willing to share it	
Monitoring Advocate	Attend meetings to track status of issues or bills		Prefer to be part of tracking process and pass on information	
Target Advocate	Associated with one particular issue		Approached by others as a source of information or expert	
Grassroots Advocate	Represent a specific community		Serve as an information link	
Process Advocate	Make contacts to analysts & others when it will help move an issue		Understand the legislative process and all the points of contact & key players	
Mentoring Advocate	Share experience with others		Prefer helping others learn to advocate	
Mobilizing Advocate	Identify and bring together others		Ability to access groups with common concerns	
Connected Advocate	Develop important relationships		Decision makers will listen to you	

Influencing Change As An Advocate

Change comes about as a result of individuals and groups transmitting their ideas to others.

Social scientists call the process of spreading an idea "diffusion" and research suggests that the process moves through five stages: AWARENESS, INTEREST, EVALUATION, TRIAL and ACCEPTANCE.

For mental health advocates this means: *We will increase the acceptance of individuals suffering from mental illness and increase the numbers of people who seek help by sharing our ideas and knowledge with others, openly and consistently. Individuals need to go through a process of hearing what we say, thinking about how it affects them, evaluating what they can do, talking to others and then changing their way of thinking and acting.*

"Further Progress in the difficult field of mental illness and mental health will come only when millions of Americans KNOW ENOUGH, CARE ENOUGH, and are willing to WORK TOGETHER HARD ENOUGH to make it come."

William Menniger M.D.

"Good ideas are not adopted automatically. They must be driven into practice with courageous patience."

Admiral Hyman Rickover

"When one door closes, another opens, but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us"

Alexander Graham Bell

Advocacy That Works – You Can Do It!

An advocate communicates with a public official for the purpose of influencing the passage, defeat, amendment or postponement of legislative or executive action. This can be through written or oral contact with policy makers or their staffs.....
Public policy advocates can do effective lobbying and bring to bear important influence for critical issues.

- ✦ Know your issue, do your homework and have your facts. The best way to influence someone is by enlightening them with good, well organized information.
- ✦ Know how the legislative process works. There are information sheets on how a bill becomes a law and other helpful insights.
- ✦ Know something about the legislator you plan to communicate with; target specific legislators who may be supportive.
- ✦ Guard your credibility carefully. Be straightforward and honest and openly admit it when you don't know something.
- ✦ Be specific about what you want an elected official to do. If there is pending legislation, refer to it by name and mention the provisions you agree with or disagree with and offer an alternative solution.
- ✦ Remember, you don't have to agree with someone on everything to be allies on a particular issue. Don't be partisan or rigid.
- ✦ Start early. Preliminary work, hearings and research occurs before the session begins. An early start will allow you to be proactive and responsive. Things generally take longer than you expect them to.
- ✦ Stay informed and aware of changing circumstances that may affect issues of interest. Federal changes, revenue forecasts and other conditions may create an entirely different situation.
- ✦ Be respectful and appreciative. Letters of appreciation are as important as letters making requests.
- ✦ Be flexible and be willing to negotiate. If a compromise will jeopardize the intent of the issue, stand strong.
- ✦ Avoid criticizing those who disagree with you, arguing with opponents or insulting legislators. Common sense people skills are important in this arena just as they are anywhere else.

Speech Template Guide

There are many reasons as to why you might want to give a speech. Maybe you want to share your story with policy makers and encourage them to make changes in legislation, or maybe you are giving a presentation to inform others of pertinent issues. Whatever your reason is, it is important that your speech be well prepared. A speech should have at least three sections: Introduction, Body and Conclusion. Breaking up your speech into these three sections will help you develop a flow to your speech and enable you to maintain consistency. Utilize this guide to help you as you prepare for your speaking engagement. The format below can be used for most speaking engagements.

Introduction:

The first section of a speech should accomplish three things:

- 1) Catch the audience's attention.
 - a. Use statistics, facts, quotes, and expert testimony to support the point you're trying to make or the information you are presenting.
 - b. Try opening your speech with humor using a joke, interesting fact, or metaphor.
 - c. You can also use drama to set the tone and gain your audience's attention.
 - d. Continue to use appropriate culturally sensitive humor throughout your speech to keep the audience engaged and interested in what you have to say.
 - e. Use a quotation that is relevant to your speech and that is something interesting.
 - f. Use transition sentences that hints to or alludes to your next point.
- 2) Establish your credibility.
 - a. Very briefly state your credentials or life experiences that relate to the topic of your speech.
- 1) The second section will contain the next major point that you had included in your introduction or that you wanted to make. can be any education or work experience that you have had that is relevant to your topic.
 - a. Again, use the same tactics that you did in the first section.
 - c. Remember your personal experiences do make you an expert. Utilize these experiences to obtain the audience's respect and to show them why it's important to listen to you.
- 2) Any additional points you wanted to make would follow the same format outlined above.
- 3) State it's also important to remember how much time you have during your speech to make your points. If you have too many points you could begin to lose your focus and the audience.
 - a. Give a brief summary of the topic that you're going to be discussing.
 - b. List out the main points of your speech (these main points will be the subjects of your body). A good speech will contain at least three main points.

Conclusion:

The conclusion is just as important as the opening. The conclusion should accomplish three things:

Body:

The body of a speech contains the information around the main points that you pointed out in the introduction. As you write out your main points remember to include pauses, ask questions, and continue to incorporate humor or drama to keep your audience's attention. Also break your body up into different sections. Remember you want to have a least three main points

- 1) Restate your purpose.
 - a. Simply explain to the audience the purpose of your speech or presentation like you did in the introduction.
- 2) Summarize your main points.
 - a. Briefly summarize the major points that you made in the body of your speech in a new or original way so it doesn't sound like you're repeating the same sentence as before.
 - b. If necessary, state a couple of the facts that you used to prove or support the points that you wanted to make but keep them brief.
- 3) Give your audience something to do.
 - a. At the very least, encourage your audience to think about what you had to say. This tactic is usually used in an informative speech.
 - b. Make a call for action. Ask that your audience takes the information that you have given them and use it to do something.
 - c. If time permits, include an activity in which the audience writes or shares their call to action items and ideas.

Follow this basic guide and you will have a great start in preparing for any speaking engagement that you might be doing. Also, don't forget to practice often and to really think about what information you are sharing. Be aware that anything that you decide to share about your personal life experiences can become public knowledge. Talk to a trusted adult if you feel at all uncertain about sharing personal information and experiences.

HOW TO CALL, TESTIFY, VISIT OR WRITE POLICYMAKERS

CALLING

Policymakers pay attention when citizens take the trouble to call and convey their views. Calling is a good task for the politically shy because as often as not, calls are answered by a receptionist or machine. Either way, callers only need to leave their name, message, address or phone number. Here are some recommendations for making telephone calls to your legislators:

1. Identify yourself by name, address and if you are a constituent.
2. Be brief, informed, and polite.
3. Identify the issue, bill, or budget item you want to talk about.
4. State your purpose for calling and what your position is. Give one or more reasons for your position.

TESTIFYING

In addition to expressing your personal opinion, you can also influence decision makers by testifying before boards and committees. Testimony provides a written record of the various views of an issue. It offers a legitimate way to educate the public and policymakers on an issue. Testimony forces groups to clarify their views and present a unified position of support or opposition. The following guidelines will help if you are planning to present or testify on an issue:

1. Find out what procedures are used: How you get on the agenda, how you address the committee, how the meeting is ran, and rules you need to follow. If possible, observe a prior meeting.
2. Gather your facts, prepare your statement, and type a copy (double spaced) so it is easy to read. Keep it short. Display objectivity. Practice your statement and time it to make

sure it is not too long.

3. Prepare a short written statement of your testimony to hand out.
4. If more than one person is testifying, coordinate testimony prior to the hearing to avoid duplication.
5. Find out where the hearing will be held and arrive ten minutes early.

6. Dress and act appropriately.
7. Give the basic facts, including your name, who you represent, and your involvement in the issue. Address the committee members by “Mr. of Madam Chairman and members of the committee.”
8. Be brief. No more than three minutes.
9. Give a clear statement of your points of agreement or disagreement with what is being discussed.
10. Give real examples of people who will be affected by the matter being discussed, and how changes can be made.
11. Always thank the committee.
12. Be prepared to answer question from the committee. Don’t panic if you don’t know the answer; there are individuals in the presentation or audience who do know and can answer the question.
13. Attend the whole meeting. Do not clap, boo, cheer or disrupt the hearing.

VISITING

One of the most effective ways to influence policymakers is in face-to-face visits with them. Often you will only get a few minutes to make your point, so it helps to have ready a short, 90-second version first, followed by more details if there is time.

1. Ask for an appointment, and set the meeting far enough in advance so that the policymaker can conveniently fit it into his or her schedule.
2. Be on time for your appointment. But don’t expect the policymaker to always be on time; they

often have meetings they cannot anticipate and are not able to leave.

3. Before the appointment, practice a three-minute statement of all the information you want to present.
4. Visit your policymaker in small groups; going together gives each of you support. Be brief; never plan on staying more than 10-15 minutes.
5. Let your policymaker know who you are; and any group you might represent.
6. Identify your issue.
7. Be clear on what you want your policymaker to do. What you want them to vote for, or what budget items to support.
8. Avoid jargon, technical terms, or initials. Be prepared to go over the basics if necessary.
9. Have a short written fact sheet with the outlines of your basic message, plus your name and telephone number for more information.
10. Be courteous. Never let a disagreement lead to harsh or personal remarks. Be persuasive but not argumentative.
11. Give real examples of people who will be affected by the matter being discussed. Tell your own story, and how changes can be made.
12. Always thank them for their time or any of their recent actions of which you approve.

WRITING

Policymakers pay attention to their mail. Responding to concerned citizens is good politics and crucial to survival. Yet, “feeling the pulse”, as one local official said, “is often accidental.” Unless citizens tell them, they don’t know what people think. Every letter counts, but a personal letter is more effective than a form letter or petition. You don’t have to be an expert on the issues in order to write. These tips will help sharpen the impact:

1. DO think about what you are going to say and organize your letter.
2. DO make your letter a page or less.
3. DO make your letter legible; typed if

you can. If you write by hand make sure it is neat and easy to read.

4. DO state your purpose in the first paragraph.
5. DO cite the issue by name.
6. DO cover one subject only. If you have a second argument, start a new paragraph.
7. DO write simply and clearly. Keep your sentences short and to the point.
8. DO say whether you support or oppose it, and why. Give reasons for your position.
9. DO get your facts straight. Make sure that they are accurate.
10. DO state your position in human terms and cite your own experiences and observations.
11. DO ask for a reply. Ask for their views on the issue or bill.
12. DO be sure to include your name, address and telephone number. Make it easy for the policymaker to respond.
13. DON'T send anonymous letters.
14. DON'T be abusive and threatening.
15. DON'T put it off!

Legislative Advocacy

NAMI is recognized as the preeminent voice in Utah for the thousands of Utahans living with serious mental illness. NAMI advocates have fought for policy changes that raise the bar on mental illness care and promote treatment and research on par with other illnesses. NAMI's advocacy provides a unique voice for people who live with mental illness and their families in state and federal public and private-sector policies that facilitate research, end discrimination, reduce barriers to successful life in the community and promote timely, comprehensive and effective mental health services and supports. NAMI Utah works steadily to influence critical state policy debates as they unfold.

Sign up for E-news and receive updates on the work of NAMIUtah (see the sign-up box to the right).

How To Be a Good Advocate

An effective advocate is in large measure determined by how well one can communicate his or her issue or position with policy makers. There are numerous communication techniques that are available, but there is no one best method to achieve your goals. This information provides some hints on how you can improve your effectiveness as an advocate.

- Develop a relationship with your legislator
- Identify proposed policy
- Analyze intent/impact of proposed policy
- Establishing your position
- Develop an issue management strategy

Develop a Relationship with Your Legislator

It is not only necessary to understand the legislative process, but also desirable to establish a personal relationship with your legislator, if you do not know who your legislator is, call your county clerk's office, give them your address and they will give you the name of your state senator, House Member Representative and congressman/congresswoman. You will receive name address and home phone number, work number and capitol building phone and fax numbers. Do not be fearful of making contact. An elected official wants to hear from his/her constituents.

Try to find something about your legislator that shows you are interested in him/her. Log on to <http://www.le.state.ut.us> - all of the legislators are listed there. You can find out a few personal things like profession, party affiliation etc. This can help you to be sensitive to some important things in his/her life.

Write down some items that you would like to discuss with him/her and make that call. Call when the legislature is not in session - this is a getting to know you call. One of the keys to becoming an effective advocate is to maintain an ongoing relationship that creates an open channel of communication with your legislator. It is as important to legislators to feel free to contact you for your comment on an issue as it is for you to contact them to express your view. Try to: attend Town Hall meetings, personal short visits to get acquainted, attend open official functions, invite him/her to your open support groups or other meetings, find opportunities to honor your legislator for his/her service to the community. Always be grateful even if you don't agree on an issue.

Identification on Proposed Policy

During a legislative session, several hundred bills are introduced. In Utah we have as many as 900 bills during one session. This magnitude is overwhelming. Therefore, it is important to focus your efforts on only the bills that pertain to your issue. Know your message, be concise, be respectful, understand the consequences of the bill, know what your opposition is saying, use facts to back you up, but your personal experience is critical. Decide what points or your story are the most important as you do not have much time (2 minutes) to spend with a legislator at the capitol or even on the phone during the session.

Analysis of Intent/Impact of Proposed Policy

Information is a powerful tool in the legislative process. Success depends on it and the effective advocate will be the one who is most familiar with it.

Understanding the Bill

To establish a position for yourself or organization, you must make sure that you understand the details of the bill and its legislative intent. There are 2 primary resources for bill policy analysis.

- **Sponsor** - a legislator who believes in the cause/issue will sponsor a bill. The legislator or those who did the research on the bill can provide a great analysis.
- **Author** - the sponsor is not always the author. The author is the very best source for bill analysis.

Establish Your Position

Research will provide the necessary information for you or your group to establish a position - either supporting or opposing a piece of legislation. Know your position and make statements that send a clear message in support of or opposing a bill.

Strategy

Many tools are available to gather support for your issues. However, the first step is to form a plan to organize, coordinate and mobilize resources. Here is a check list:

- **Phone Campaign:** organizing a mass telephone campaigns to put pressure on a legislator is the least effective strategy. Messages are canned and without substance. A personal phone call that expresses your personal view with a well thought out rationale is much more effective.
- **Letter/email:** letters and email messages are taken seriously. All legislators have email and most read them. The individual grassroots approach is most effective. Mass produced photocopies letters or emails are generally
- **Legislative Visits:** appointments can be made for you to see your legislator during the session via his/her staff. Be prepared with written materials to educate your legislator on your issue. Go over briefly the documents and let him/her know that if they have any questions once they read the material they can call you.
- **Committee Meeting Testimony:** this is a key access point to anyone who wishes to express a viewpoint; prepare and rehearse your presentation; present your testimony try not to read it word for word. Summarize your major points - some emotion is very effective but try very hard to keep it somewhat controlled.
- **Collaborate** with other organizations to make your point/voice stronger.

Youth in Public Policy

Involving Youth in Public Policy

Policymakers, advocates, and community members are recognizing that youth can play a critical role in the development of public policy. Youth involvement is essential for the creation of policies that effectively support healthy adolescent development. Youth have creative perspectives and invaluable firsthand knowledge of their school, home, community, and work environments that must be considered when developing youth-related policy. Moreover, youth involvement in public policy is essential to the preparation of the next generation of citizens and civic leaders. Participation in decision-making is one of the cornerstones of youth development approaches that seek to support youth in becoming healthy, successful adults. The infusion of youth throughout the community in meaningful decision-making roles provides an important foundation for a citizenry that is empowered and engaged in the policy process.

The elements of youth involvement in public policy parallel the roles of adults in the policy process. Youth can be involved from within, as participants in policymaking or advisory bodies, or they can exert outside pressure on the public systems as advocates. The National 4-H Council refers to these as “participation” and “change” approaches. In addition, training of both youth and adults is essential to allow youth to participate fully in policy development. Accordingly, this policy brief describes three approaches to youth involvement in public policy:

-Youth as participants and advisors

-Youth as advocates

-Youth in training

Descriptions and examples of these approaches are presented below, followed by a discussion of issues to consider in implementing them.

Youth as Participants and Advisors

The involvement of youth as participants in public policy settings frequently takes place through youth commissions, councils, and advisory boards. These approaches are built on the premise that youth should be incorporated into the development of public policy in an ongoing way through participation in formal decision-making bodies. While individual youth move in and out of a council or commission the structure for youth participation is, ideally, institutionalized and ongoing.

Youth commissions and councils are groups of youth who meet regularly and have some connection to an adult policymaking body such as a city council or county board of supervisors. These groups of youth vary in size roughly 7 to as many as 30. Meetings generally take place after school one to two times a month at the local government building, though some, like the West Sacramento Youth Commission. Choose to locate at least a few of their meetings at a local school. Participants usually volunteer their time, which can range from 4 to 20 hours a month. Some commissions actively research

policy issues affecting youth, in which case the time commitment may increase. Most commissions or advisory boards have an adult coordinator who is responsible for recruitment, training, and ongoing support of the youth. The coordinator may also serve as a liaison between the commission and other public groups. Youth commissions/councils generally report to their adult policymaking counterparts periodically to share their policy recommendations. Some youth commissions write resolutions to be approved by the county board of supervisors or city council. The Marin County youth Commission submitted a resolution asking the Board of Supervisors to officially take a stand against proposition 21, a controversial juvenile crime initiative on the March, 200 state ballot. The resolution was approved, making Marin one of the first counties in California to oppose the proposition.

The second mechanism through which youth are most commonly involved as participants in public policy setting is through advisory boards. An advisory board that includes youth can be formed for any agency, department, or program, such as health and social service programs, parks and recreation departments, transit authorities, and school boards. There are two common approaches for involving youth in an advisory capacity: integration of a small number of youth members into a standing adult advisory board and the formations of a separate youth-only advisory group. The first approach is used by the workforce Investment board youth councils established in both Los Angeles and Alameda Counties with a mixture of community leaders, youth advocates, and youth themselves. Like the adult members, youth have full voting rights. By having meetings in the afternoon, sending out council information through emails, and paying youth a stipend to attend the meetings, these council demonstrate a commitment to including youth as full members.

While youth commissions, councils, and advisory boards enable a small number of youth to participate directly in the policy process, they can also serve to bring other youth into the public policy process as advocates. For example, the Oakland Youth Advisory Commission spearheaded a successful grassroots campaign to mobilize other Oakland youth to protest a proposed curfew. The Commission has also invited Oakland youth-serving organizations to attend their trainings, thereby empowering the broader Oakland youth community and developing a wider network of youth partners.

The advantage of involving youth as members of public commissions and boards is that it puts youth directly in contact with the adult policymakers. This approach requires a basic level of acceptance of youth involvement on the part of the adults involved in these settings. Although in some respects, being part of a public board or commission may lack the excitement of participating in the grassroots advocacy campaign, it does provide youth with a realistic view of the way policy is actually made. It also provides an ongoing forum for youth to have direct input into policy decisions.

Youth as Advocates

Youth advocacy efforts are focused on changing public systems and policies by exerting pressure from outside. Whereas the inclusion of youth on commissions or advisory boards creates a place for youth within existing decision-making structures, youth advocacy groups function as outside change agents. Many youth become involved in advocacy projects because they feel a deep connection to an

issue or are seeking ways to improve their own communities. Most recently, a number of youth movements emerged with little involvement of adults in response to Proposition 21, a juvenile crime initiative that many youth believed was punitive and unfair. In many cases, various levels of youth involvement emerge with a core group of youth involved in planning and strategy and a much larger turning out for actions or events.

Affiliation with an established “parent” agency can facilitate youth advocacy groups and increase the likelihood that they will outlive the involvement of individual members. Youth advocacy activities can be organized by schools, community-based advocacy organizations, and state wide or national organizations. Some organizations facilitate discrete youth-directed advocacy projects, whereas other integrates youth into their overall activities and operations.

The connections to a parent agency provide an opportunity for youth and adults to work side- by- side and to capitalize on the strengths of both groups. Youth contribute energy, creativity, and firsthand experience with youth issues, while adults bring experiences and valuable connections to the partnership. Adult coordinators or “allies” often train youth in organizing, advocacy tactics, team building, and policy analysis. In some cases, they facilitate the involvement of youth by managing tasks such as report writing or administration, thereby enabling youth to take the lead on active tasks that have more immediate rewards. These tasks might include mass mobilizations for rallies and protests or community education and outreach. For example, the Schools Group, a youth environmental organization in Palo Alto, led a youth mobilization to support a slow growth campaign spearheaded by its parent organization, Bay Area Action.

Although adults may facilitate and provide guidance, most strive to allow youth the space to make independent decisions and set priorities. The California center for civic participation and Youth Development provides each of their Youth Action Leagues with a project budget that they decide how to spend. This practice reinforces independent decision-making and teaches budgeting skills.

Successful advocacy rest of strong research and planning, and youth advocacy is no exception. Collecting background information about an issue, identifying stakeholders, and/or conducting community needs assessments, asset mapping, interviews, and surveys are critical to youth advocacy. Like adults, youth must be prepared to defend a well-grounded position, as youth are particularly powerful advocates when they are not perceived as “puppets” of an adult organization.

The advantage of engaging youth in advocacy is that it requires no official sanction and can be spearheaded by anyone willing to organize. By working on policy issues from an advocacy perspective, youth have the opportunity to learn about power dynamics and the practice of community activism. Moreover, involvement in advocacy allows youth to follow their passion without constraints imposed by formal participation in public systems.

Youth in Training

A third element of youth involvement in public policy is education and training Policy training programs focus on increasing youth’s knowledge of current policy issues and on enhancing their understand of the policy process. These programs operate on the premise that exposing youth to

public policy and providing them with the pertinent skills will prepare them for future involvement in policy. Through programs that contain lectures, conferences, research/analysis, and experiential learning, youth practice in environments designed to facilitate learning. Specific activities may include writing mock bills, analyzing and debating policy issues, formulating positions or recommendations, or running for office. Most programs offer a core, skill-building curriculum that remains fairly consistent over time.

Policy training programs range from those that last for an entire school year, to those that offer an intensive experience over a few days. The Chicano Latino youth leadership project, for example, holds an annual weeklong conference in the summer focused on providing Latino youth with the skills they need to become leaders in their communities. The conference covers the legislative process and policy issues of particular concerns to Chicano/Latino youth. Other programs such as Coro's exploring leadership are intensive, spanning the summer months between school years. Some programs include annual or semi-annual conferences that offer youth the chance to build their skills by connecting with youth from other area and by participating in activities uniquely suited to large group gatherings.

Although the primary emphasis in policy training programs is creating a learning experience for youth, many create a bridge between "mock" policymaking and real public policy by incorporating current policy issues into their curricula or inviting policy makers to participate in hearings in presentations made by the youth participants.

Training is an important component of other approaches to involving youth in policy. Most youth commissions and advisory groups participate in some form of training although the nature and intensity vary. Often these programs send their youth to trainings conducted by organizations that specialize in this field.

The greatest advantage of involving youth in public policy through training and education is that youth experiences can be planned and controlled to a much greater extent than the other two approaches. Thus, training programs do not encounter some of the challenges often seen in youth commissions or advocacy groups. Contact with adults can be more carefully managed, and issues of responsibilities, relationships and control vis-à-vis the adults are less likely to arise. Although youth in training programs may not have an immediate impact on policy, they will, at minimum, be exposed to useful policy information.

Considerations for Getting Started

Although good intentions, enthusiasm, and commitment can go a long way to successfully involving youth in public policy, careful consideration should be given to a number of issues to ensure that the experience is positive and productive for everyone involved.

Attitudes and Interaction

The development of meaningful roles for youth in public policy depends largely on adult attitudes and willingness to create a place for youth in the process. Motivation on the part of adult members to resolve structural and logistical issues is critical. Moreover, on a more subtle level, the process requires that adults

truly value the opinions of youth and see them as integral to creative good public policy. The attitudinal shift may not come easily to some adults but can be facilitated through good preparation and training of both youth and adults.

On the other hand, youth often need to modify their attitudes to work effectively with adults. Youth can become frustrated with the slow pace of change and their lack of ability to have an immediate impact on policy. In some cases, this situation may be due to their role as youth members, but in others; it is simply the nature of the policy process. Youth may also feel that they are compromising their ideals in order to work within the boundaries of the public system. Ways to address this tension include a strong training component and structuring youth involvement so that youth participate with adults but also have control over an activity of their own.

Recruitment and representation

Careful thought should be given to recruitment and publicity for opportunities to participate in policy-related activities. Although it may not be difficult to recruit a sufficient number of youth, it is important to cast a wide net so as to reach youth who may not ordinarily have leadership experiences. Their participation may be hindered by a range of issues such as lack of transportation, family issues, poor academic performance, or language barriers, requiring active outreach and problem-solving to facilitate their participation.

Another set of issues arises when youth are representing a larger group or community of youth. In these cases, consideration should be given to involving the “constituent” group in the selection of youth representatives. Good publicity and a fair, open process are important to achieving legitimate representation.

Roles and Structure

Issues of roles and structure are most evident when youth are involved as advisors and participants in the policy process. The establishment that deserves a high level of recognition. However, even as these basic structures are institutionalized, refining them so that youth can play a meaningful role and have a real impact can remain a challenge. For example, a youth commission to a city council may be established, but without the coordination of the youth commission’s activities with the council and the development of procedures to require the council to act on youth recommendations, the commission can become a token body with little real impact on city policy. It is important that adults reach a clear consensus about the role and structure of youth participation so that youth are not given mixed messages or false expectations. Because adolescence is a time of rapid transition, youths’ interests and circumstances are changing. Youth may drop out of any advocacy group in their interest change, they take on a job, they move to attend college, or any number of other events. In many cases, youth are easily mobilized for high profile events but may not have sustained the interest necessary for long-term work on an issue. Structures must be created that take these realities into consideration.

Training

Training is an essential component in all aspects of involving youth in the policy process. Good training maximizes the likelihood that the experience is positive and productive for both youth and adults. Training of youth is critical to provide the background information and skills they need to make informed recommendations and to act as reliable, responsible members of a group. When youth sit on adult boards, designating an adult member to support them often works well. Too often, youth members are invited to participate in an adult setting but are not provided with the necessary training and support to make a meaningful contribution. They also may not understand the norms of behavior in adult's settings. These situations can be frustrating and disappointing for the youth and can create a perception on the part of adults that youth have little to contribute. By the same token, adults should also be trained for the process to work well. The training of adults can provide them with a better understanding of the youths' perspective and with the skills to interact productively with youth.

Support

Support for youth involved in policy work is critical to a successful experience. One of the challenges that organizations encounter is appropriately balancing adult guidance and mentoring with youth leadership and initiative. It is critical for adults to support youth in defining their own agendas and implementing their own activities without taking control of the process themselves. Playing this supportive role requires the development of organizational structures that foster youth leadership it also requires the hiring and training of adult staff to facilitate the process and provide the appropriate mentoring and supervision. Adult facilitators must also be prepared to address mundane, but important logistical issues such as scheduling, transportation, and follow-up with the youth.

Public Relations

Although the involvement of youth in advocacy and grassroots movements may be perceived positively by some segments of society, it can also feed negative images and stereotypes of youth that are fairly pervasive. Advocacy involves speaking out, being visible, making noise, and sometimes being confrontational or disruptive. These activities can result in "bad press" and may alienate some adults. Youth of color are particularly aware of the difficulty of gaining the respect of adults. Collaboration with recognized adult organizations, guidance from experienced adult advocates, and training on working with the media can help youth avoid negative public relations and overcome stereotypes.

Resources

Any successful approach to involving youth in public policy requires significant resources. In addition to incurring everyday expenses (printing, supplies, rent, etc) youth involvement requires adult staff time to train, mentor, and coordinate youth efforts. Training of youth necessitates staff time for curriculum development, program coordination, instruction and supervision of youth. With large groups, covering the cost of facilities and meals can be a challenge for nonprofit organizations. Further, there is an

increasing trend toward respecting the value of youth's time by compensating them financially if possible. Budget permitting, many agencies provides youth participants with an hourly wage or monthly stipend. Program coordinators report that providing youth with paid work increases their commitment and increases the diversity of youth activists by enabling low-income youth participants to cover costs, although most provide low-income youth with scholarships. Thus, although bringing together a group of youth to address policy issues may appear to be a low-cost activity, to do so successfully generally require some dedicated funding.

Logistics

To successfully involve youth as participants in public policy settings, there are logistical issues that need to be addressed. Because youth are in school during the day, it can be difficult for youth to meet with adult policy making bodies such as subcommittees or workgroups. When youth are included as members of an adult board or commission, the adults must commit to holding all meetings in the late afternoon or evening to enable the youth to participate fully. Meeting location is also an important consideration. Because many youth do not drive or have regular access to a car, meetings must be held in locations that can be reached by public transportation. Logistical issues such as these can generally be resolved, but adults must be willing to make compromises.

Time

Even when adults are committed to creating a schedule that works for youth, many policy-related activities inevitably take place during the day, requiring youth to leave school to participate. However, student time has become more precious, especially as high-stakes educational testing in California makes both students and schools reluctant to give up class time for topics that are not included on the tests. Pulling students out for multi-day trips or participation in full-day conferences often meets with resistance from school boards and school staff. While weekend and summer programs are viable alternatives for some types of policy involvement, some activities linked to legislative or administrative decision-making process are best accomplished during the academic year.

Conclusion

Youth can become involved in public policy in a multitude of ways. This brief defines three approaches that are distinct but, in practice, frequently overlap. For example, training is a n important component of both participatory and advocacy-oriented activities; and even as members of an officially-sanctioned board or commission, youth may find themselves adopting advocacy approaches to call attention to the issues of concern to them. All three approaches can be successfully initiated by adults who have a commitment to bringing youth into the public policy process. However, as discussed above, there are a number of challenges associated with each approach. Before attempting to implement any of these approaches it is essential to secure the necessary resources, energy, and commitment to make the process work and to avoid negative experiences.

Sharing your Story



A service of the Children's Bureau • A member of the T/TA Network
NRCYD
National Resource Center
for Youth Development

Strategic Sharing

from the Youth Leadership Toolkit by NRCYD

Your story is **PRECIOUS**
and **HARD-EARNED**.
Protect yourself
and others by using
strategic sharing!

why is it important?

Being asked to tell your story or even share a detail about your past can be flattering. It promises understanding and empathy from other people. But sharing details about your life without strategic sharing can backfire. You could make a mistake and tell things you wanted to keep private. You might awaken painful emotions that you aren't prepared to handle, like sadness and fear and regret. You could risk being emotionally traumatized all over again.

When it comes to your story, you are the expert. Your story is something you earned, and an asset that only you have. It's important to treat your personal story with the respect it deserves. This

what is strategic sharing?

As a young person with experience in foster care, you may want to tell someone certain details about your personal story or just answer a question about your past. You might be called on to share your story with a group. You may even want to write about your experiences online. Whatever the situation, it's a good idea to learn strategic sharing strategies.

Strategic sharing means you need to be clear about what you will say. Your first goal is to protect yourself, other people who might be involved in your story, your audience, and your personal story. You'll want a plan. You'll want control about what parts of your story you want to let out and what to hold back.

includes making intentional and thoughtful decisions about when to use your story, for what you are willing to lend your story, how much you wish to share, who you want to allow to hear your story, and what types of preparation and supports you'll need to do the best job possible.

Without strategic sharing, you risk revealing hurtful facts about the people in your life. You'll want to plan and practice not using names when telling details of your past, like honoring a sister's wish not to tell that she is in foster care. Even if your biological family has made mistakes, broadcasting those mistakes could hurt family members. You also risk revealing

private information about another person who would be upset that their information was made public.

Another reason for strategic sharing is to protect your audience or the person you are speaking with. Sharing too much can make them feel uncomfortable and can traumatize. Certain life facts may not be appropriate at certain times and for certain people or groups.

Once your story is written or recorded, it may be difficult or impossible to take back. What you share is potentially public forever and could possibly show up years later.

sharing CIRCLES...

Strategic sharing begins with a look at the relationships you have in your life. In the Sharing Circle, you are the center of the Circle. And all the people in your life and people you meet are organized in circles surrounding you. The Sharing Circle shows that not all your relationships are equal, so not all your sharing is equal, either. It means that the closer the circle is to you, the more life facts you can feel good

about sharing. Those strangers and acquaintances don't have a right to the same information about you as friends, right? Each circle getting closer to you represents the people more and more in your support system. The closer they are, the better you feel about sharing the details of

your life. And don't forget, there may be certain secrets that are better guarded and left unsaid because they are very, very personal.



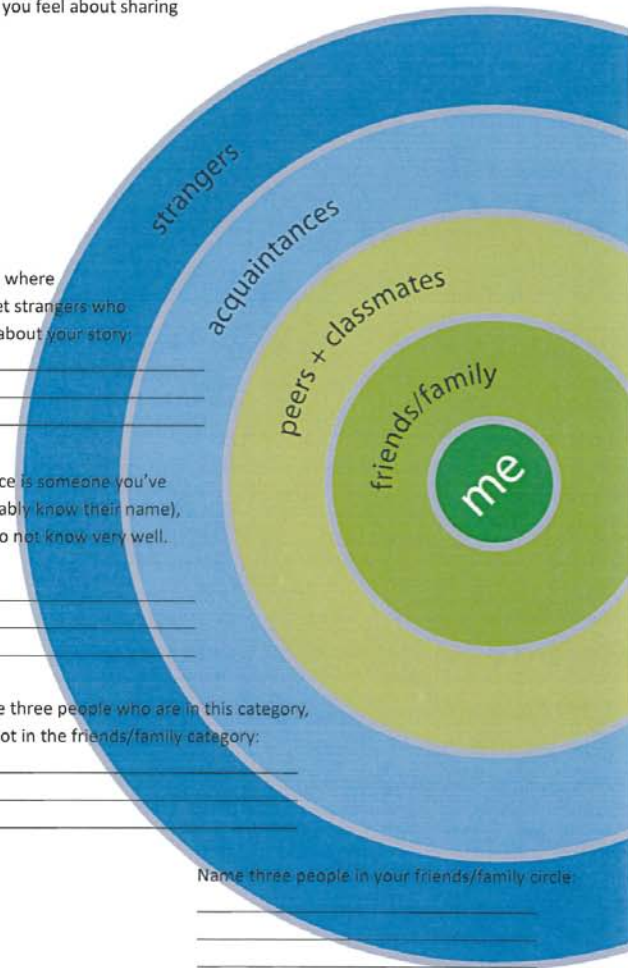
A former FosterClub All-Star was once asked to do an article about homelessness in a major magazine. After the article was released he was contacted by a man offering him a place to stay, a car, and a job. The All-Star came to FosterClub very excited about what he thought was a great opportunity. Caution was stressed and after some discussion, it was decided a supportive adult in his area would go to the first meeting to make sure everything was safe. Turns out that the man had bad intentions for the young person and was planning to take advantage of his vulnerable position. If you are asked to tell your story publicly, it is critical that you partner with an adult supporter to keep yourself safe.

Name 3 places where you might meet strangers who ask questions about your story:

An acquaintance is someone you've met (and probably know their name), but who you do not know very well. Name three:

Name three people who are in this category, but not in the friends/family category:

Name three people in your friends/family circle:

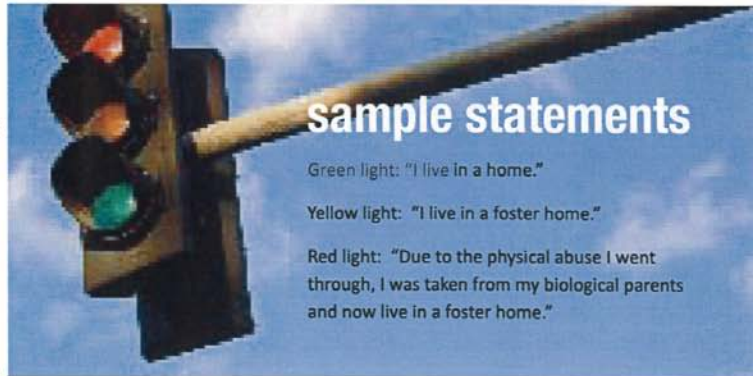


RED light, YELLOW light, GREEN light strategy

The red light, yellow light, green light strategy is a strategic sharing tool to help figure out what is okay to say and what is not okay to say in the sharing circles. Some statements can be made to anyone at any time and are green light “go” statements. Like, “I have a sister.”

Yellow light statements require us to slow down and think about consequences. Like, “I have a sister that I haven’t seen in over a year.” Often yellow light statements give glimpses into private information or would cause a person to ask personal questions. Yellow light statements should only be said in certain circumstances and probably limited to certain peers and classmates.

Red light statements, you guessed it, should be kept within family (including foster family) and a few good friends. Like, “My sister and I were physically abused.” Think twice before sharing Red light statements. What will be the consequences to you and others?



One more “red light, green light” strategy is to know your audience. In some circumstances, for example, you may be asked to share your story with an audience of case workers (strangers). Depending on your comfort level, it would be green light to talk about why you were put into foster care and how your experience with case workers has been. This is not information you would share with just any group of strangers,

but it would be okay with this specialized audience.

If you are unsure of what is red, green, or yellow, share your story with your group and or adult supporter before speaking.



FosterClub All Star Dan Knapp was once asked and agreed to do an interview with *Time* magazine. After the article came out, many people read the piece, even people Dan did not know. In the

article, Dan talked about his adoptive mother. Guess what? His mother read the article, and took very personally what Dan had said, causing some stress on their relationship. This goes to show you the importance of strategic sharing!

“In agreeing to an interview with *Time* magazine, I knew I had to consider how the things I would say could impact my family members. But, I also had to consider how sharing personal

information about my life could impact my relationships with friends, colleagues, even people who didn’t know me very well. It bothers me when I see interviews with youth and it is apparent that no one helped them think through what they would say publicly.”

— Daniel Knapp, New York

what's your ESCAPE HATCH?

Using the sharing circles and the lights as tools are great ways to control what you say, but what about those times when you meet someone or do a speaking gig and you get asked questions that would require you to respond with red light statements you are not comfortable with? Some real questions that get asked include:

“What was the abuse like?”

“What did you do to get into foster care?”

“Aren't foster parents in it just for the money?”

Generally, people ask these questions because they are curious or uninformed, not because they are trying to hurt you. But wouldn't it be nice if you had some ready to give response in your back pocket that you could just whip out anytime you got asked one of these questions? That's exactly what an escape hatch is all about. It provides you with a way to step out of the question, and can provide a way to educate the person doing the asking.

A note about confidentiality:

In foster care, there is a legal requirement that certain information is kept private. Check with your caseworker, attorney, or other knowledgeable adult to make sure the story you tell does not break confidentiality. You also can play it safe by not using people's real names.



For example, when asked a personal question that you don't want to answer directly, try redirecting the conversation to a more general topic. Here are some lines you can use to get your answer started:

“Many youth in foster care feel...”

“There are some things I am not able to discuss.”

“It is a common stereotype that foster youth...”

“Not all youth in foster care...”

“Many child welfare professionals...”

Let's take a look at how we could answer the earlier questions using this strategy:

1) What was the abuse like?

“Foster youth usually enter foster care due to neglect, not physical or sexual abuse.”

2) What did you do to get into foster care?

“It is a common stereotype that foster youth have done something to put themselves into care, but this is just not true. Most children are in foster care are due to the parents' inability to provide care and safety for the child.”

3) Do you have a bad caseworker?

“Many child welfare professionals have a very large caseload that can lead to them having to focus on the youth that need assistance right now.”

The one all answering escape hatch that is perfectly okay to use if you are asked a question you don't feel comfortable with is this:

“I don't feel comfortable answering that question.”

Don't think you have to answer every question you are asked. It's YOUR unique story. Honor it. Guard it. Respect yourself.

time for DEBRIEF...

Sharing your story provides lots of opportunities for personal growth. If you plan to share your story publicly, the best way to make sure that you grow and improve is to build in time to reflect after each experience.

Just like great athletes or performers work with a coach or trainer to review their performances, working with a supportive adult you trust is key to ensuring that you have the support you need to effectively share your story and improve your public speaking skills.

As you've learned, sharing your story can also carry with it the chance for negative repercussions. Harsh feedback from others, stirred up memories, and mixed emotions can all come with sharing your story with others. Debriefing with a

supportive adult provides an opportunity to explore any issues that arise. It also ensures that you have someone who will understand where you're coming from should any issues come up later. It's not unusual to have 'aha' moments or feelings that arise days, or even weeks, after sharing your story.

If you share your story in a group - such as within a youth panel - your 'team' might choose to debrief with your 'coach' or supportive adult as a group or 1-on-1 or both. You might discuss what you thought worked well during your sharing session and opportunities for growth. You might also explore your feelings about what was said (either by you, other panelists, or by the audience through a question and answer session).



Aaron Weaver, 2006 All Star, was asked for the first time ever to share his story in front of a group of people. He had never done anything like this before, and did not know what to expect. What was worse is that no one coached him through how to share his story. Even though he wrote out what he wanted to say, due to lack of practice and support, his first public speaking opportunity led to learning some hard lessons through a very emotional breakdown in front of many people.

"While I believe those who asked me to speak had good intentions, the truth is that I was ill-equipped for this experience which would result in excavating traumatic experiences from my past. No one had helped me to prepare, no one had warned me about the resurfacing emotions (hurt, pain, fear, insecurity, unworthiness, feeling small and unimportant in my own life), and no one had coached me through this process. I had a general outline but no real point to what I wanted to say. My mighty mission was to improve foster care, but I was like a soldier going into battle without any training or protection."
— Aaron Weaver, foster care alumnus, Nebraska

tips for SUPPORTIVE ADULTS...

If you are a supportive adult who is working with youth preparing to share their story publicly, it is your duty to ensure the youth is ready and trained for their big moment. This includes making sure they have practiced, understand the concepts of strategic sharing, know who their audience is, and have support during and after their presentation.

Support for a young person doesn't end when the event is over. Often, speaking publicly and answering questions brings old issues to the surface. Be sure to debrief with your young person after they have shared their story.

It can be difficult for young people to negotiate the terms of a speaking engagement on their own behalf — even adults have agents to help them negotiate deals. Youth often have difficulties saying no to an event, even if it interferes with school or work. As a supporter, you can help negotiate stipends, expenses, and ensure that the opportunity is in the best interest of the youth.

As a supportive adult, it's important to ensure the safety of a young person, particularly when their story is shared with the media. Prepare and support the youth in the event they receive feedback or offers from strangers who hear their story.

what now? how do I USE MY STORY?

There are lots of chances to use your unique story and your voice to make a difference in the foster care system. Listed below are some of the ways you can use your voice.

Youth panels – You talk about your story along with other people who can be either youth or child welfare professionals or parents. You are adding your story to others in order to educate.

Committees and advisory boards – Many states have youth boards and committees for youth who want to be involved. Here you would use your voice for a variety of causes, most times to influence state or organizational policy. Visit www.fosterclub.com or www.nrcyd.ou.edu to find listings of youth boards in your state.

Child and Family Service Reviews – This is where the Federal government comes in to assess how well states are doing in

making sure foster youth are succeeding and getting their needs met. This is a great way to make your voice heard.

National Youth in Transition Database

– This is a national effort to collect information about youth as they transition from care. You'll be asked to complete a survey at the ages of 17, 19, and 21. The information you provide will help to determine what the state needs to improve. So when you get the message that they want you to take a survey, use your voice and make a difference. Contact your State Independent Living Coordinator to get involved.

Here's a final suggestion. Accept as your personal mission to do what you can to make foster care better. Now that you understand STRATEGIC SHARING, use your unique personal story to advocate for other youth in the foster care system.



"Youth in foster care have already been through so much — if they are going to be put out there to share their stories publicly, it's important they receive the training and support they need to protect themselves from harm or humiliation while doing it."

— Lupe T, foster care alumna

Lupe's story took place while she was in college, and was asked to be interviewed about her foster care experience. She had only a few pictures of herself from a young age, and she was promised the article and pictures would be small ones. The next day her pictures were on the front cover and very large; Lupe had just been outed about her being in foster care in a very noticeable and public way. Luckily, however, she had been properly trained.

"I remember practicing responses to people if they asked about it but at that point I had been coached on strategic sharing which helped a lot."



FosterClub All-Star
Christopher Andrade shares
his story for a video project

Where it started...

The concept of strategic sharing was originated by Maria Garin Jones and foster care alumni Terry Harrak for the National Foster Youth Advisory Council, a project of the Child Welfare League Of America, in 2000. Over the years, additional concepts have been added the original concept of strategic sharing.

quiz YOURSELF...

Use this step-by-step guide to begin developing your own story.

Step 1: Define your purpose for sharing. This could be to 'educate social workers on how youth think things should be done' or 'tell judges why youth need to be in court' or 'advocate for change in certain legislative policies.'

What's your escape hatch? How would you answer these questions from a nosy stranger, using the escape hatch technique?

- 1) What was the abuse like?
- 2) What did you do to get into foster care?
- 3) Do you have a bad caseworker?

If and when you get to a point in your story where you can feel emotions coming up that you haven't prepared for, you can simply say "that's all I would like to share at this point" and then be sure to talk to a trusted adult about this and the next part of your story. Once you have processed this, you will be able to share these 'new' parts of your story during your next speaking engagement which can lead to being an even more effective youth leader.

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Step 2: Decide what you would like to share. Be sure to keep in mind tips mentioned before. Reflect on specific aspects of your story and how it would relate to the audience (Ex: if for a court panel, focus more on your experience in court, for workers focus on your experience you had with your worker(s). Be sure to include solutions to the problems and point out what was helpful in each situation.

Step 3: Write it down. This provides a great back up if you go blank while speaking. Some people work best if they have every detail of their story written out, others work better when they speak from bullet points. Of course, use extra paper if necessary.

Step 4: Share it with your youth leadership group as if you were sharing with your audience. If there is more than one speaker, this will help to ensure there is little overlap on stories and you can focus on unique experiences which will provide a better overview for the audience. This helps to make sure you stay in your allotted time frame. Also, emotions can come up during speaking, especially if it is an area of your story that you have not spoken much about before or if there are currently things going on with that part of your story. Sharing with your group will allow you to work out these feelings in a safe environment prior to speaking.
