
Empowerment in Youth Programming



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Gratitude

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Overview

- Introductions
- Empowerment Strategies
- Implementation Strategies
- Group Activity
- Wrap-Up



Objectives

- Identify why empowerment is important in youth programming
- List empowerment strategies to incorporate into your program
- Discuss ways to use strategies
- Practice skills learned throughout today's session



Brainstorm- What does Youth Empowerment Mean to You?



Empowerment Overview

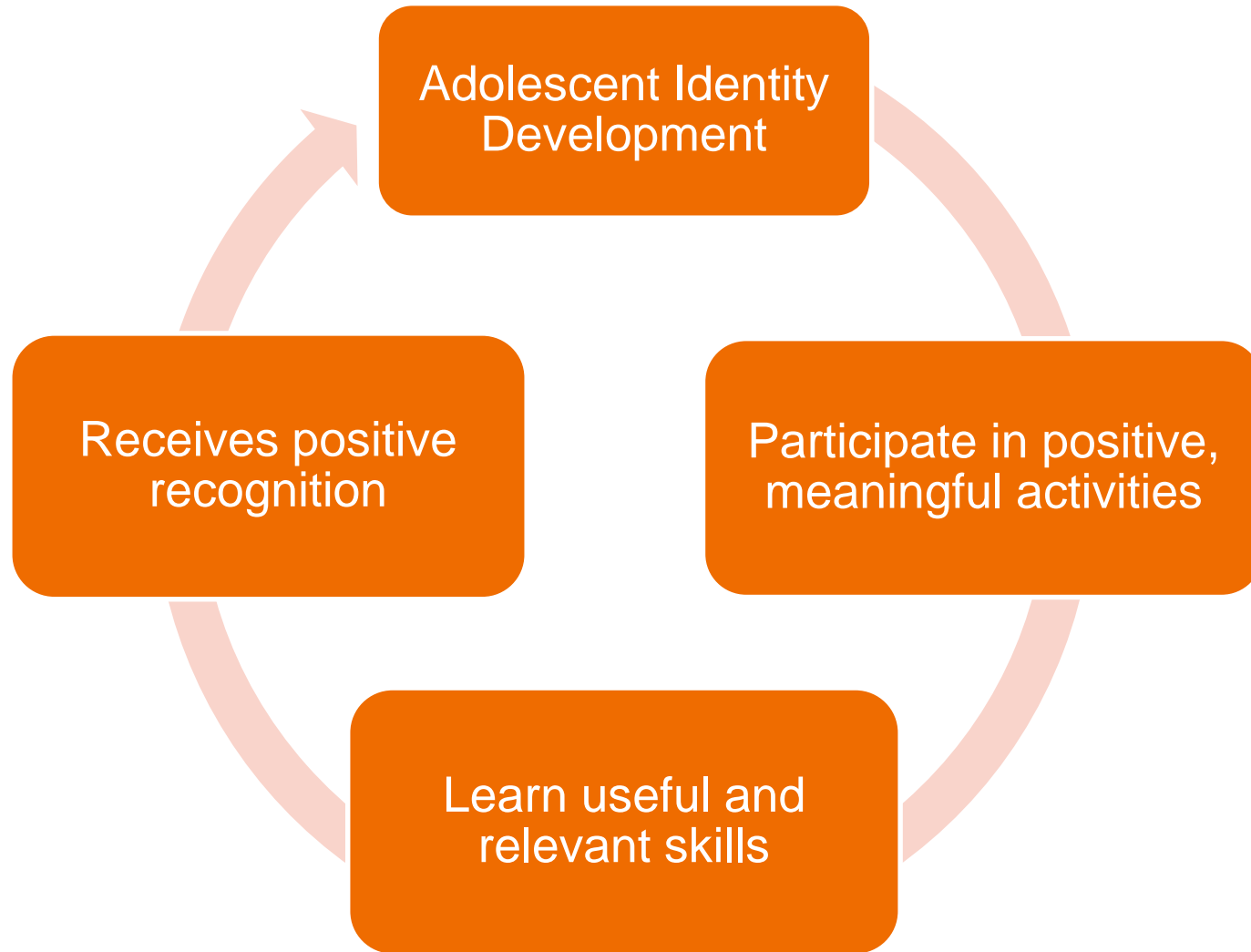
What is Youth Empowerment?

Youth empowerment has been described as the “process by which [adolescents] gain control over their lives”.



Cleary, T. J & Zimmerman, B. J. (2004). Self-Regulation empowerment program: a school based program to enhance self-regulated and self motivated cycles of student learning. *Psychology in the schools*, 41(5), 537-550.

Adolescent Empowerment Cycle



Chinman, M.J., & Linney, J. A. (1998). Toward a model of adolescent empowerment: theoretical and empirical evidence. *The Journal of Primary Prevention, 18*(4), 393-413.

Empowerment to Promote Adolescent Development

- Better academic achievement
- Better problem solving skills
- Improved critical thinking skills
- Better self-regulation
- Increased Self confidence & Self acceptance
- Increased Responsibility
- Helps prepare adolescents for adulthood
- Increased community connectedness and social relationships



Davis, H.S. (2013). Discussion as a bridge: strategies that enhance adolescent and adult learning styles in the postsecondary classroom. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 13(1), 68-76.

Chinman, M.J., & Linney, J. A. (1998). Toward a model of adolescent empowerment: theoretical and empirical evidence. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 18(4), 393-413

Successful Youth Empowerment Programs:

1. Utilize active participation
2. Have a collaborative process
3. Build on participant strengths
4. Are individualized
5. Are inclusive
6. Increase participants' awareness of the world or community



Empowerment Strategies

Empowerment Strategies

1. Incorporate social interactions
2. Offer choices
3. Discussions
4. Use relevant & related information
5. Positive reinforcement
6. Active listening



#1- Incorporate Social Interactions

- Social nature of youth
- Peer approval
- Peer support
- Group work and activities



Chinman, M.J., & Linney, J. A. (1998). Toward a model of adolescent empowerment: theoretical and empirical evidence. *The Journal of Primary Prevention, 18*(4), 393-413

Mathers, B. G., & Stern, A. (2012). Café culture: promoting empowerment & pleasure adolescent literacy learning. *Reading Horizons, 51*(4), 259-278.

#2- Offer Choices

- Autonomy in adolescence
- Advocacy and organizing
- Limited and reasonable
- Freedom within parameters



Anselema, M., Chinapaw, M., & Altenburg, T. (2020). "Not only adults can make good decisions, we as children can do that as well" Evaluating the process of the youth-led participatory action research 'Kids in action'. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17, 625-647

#3- Discussions

- Expand adolescent critical thinking
- Provide open ended questions
- Clarify guidelines
 - No “right” answer
 - Do not take over the lead in the discussion
 - Do not offer comments until all ideas are shared
 - Allow enough time (some youth will take longer to process)



#4- Relevant & Related Information

- Real, meaningful contributions
- Culturally aware
- Applicable to participants' lives



Zimmerman, M.A., Stewart, S.E., Morrel-Samuels, S., Franzen, S., & Reischl, T. M. (2011). Youth empowerment solutions for peaceful communities: Combining theory and practice prevention curriculum. *Health Promotion Practice* 12(3), 425-439.

#5- Positive Reinforcement

- Increases self-efficacy and self-esteem
- Specific positive attention
 - “That is a great idea!”
 - “I appreciate all of your hard work!”
 - “Good job working together!”



#6- Active Listening

- Eye contact
- Paraphrase
- Ask open ended questions
- Express empathy
- Watch non-verbal cues
- Avoid Judgement
- Avoid giving advice



#6 Active Listening Starters

“So, you feel ...”

“You think ...”

“It sounds like you ...”

“As I understand it, you felt that ...”

“To me it seems like you are saying ...”

“Maybe you are feeling ...”

“Could it be that ...”

“It seems to me that ...”

“You’re sort of saying that ...”

“I get the impression that ...”

“Let me see if I get what you are saying ...”

Let's Practice



Debrief

- How did that feel?
- Is that how you typically interact with your program participants or youth?
- What was different or uncomfortable?
- What did you like or notice about your interactions?



Implementing Strategies

Implementation- Youth Feedback

- Fewer handouts
- More creative outlets
- More movement
- Youth talk more, listen less
- More culturally relevant



Cooper, A., Nazzari, V., King, J. K.K., Pettigrew, A., (2013). Speaking rights: Youth Empowerment through a participatory approach. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 3(1), 489-501.

Brainstorm-
**What ideas do you have to implement identity expression
or youth buy-in?**



Other ideas for Implementation

- Active engagement
- Art expression
- Brainstorming
- Taking photographs
- Incorporate time for informal interactions
- Community service projects (optimally chosen by the youth)



Other ideas for Implementation

- Use of technology
- Poetry/writing activities
- Utilizing music
- Use of youth language & slang? – maybe
- Age appropriate leadership roles
- Create a Youth Council



Questions

