


Youth Resiliency: Reaching Teens

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Session Objectives

- Learn to focus on the positive as a youth development professional.
- Learn to empower youth to take control of their decisions.
- Learn how to promote courage to youth so they can stand by healthy decisions.
- Learn how we can help youth deal with friendship and peers.
- Learn how we can take care of ourselves as we take care of others.



**“Problems free isn’t fully
prepared and fully prepared
isn’t fully engaged.”
- Karen Pittman**



At-Risk or At-Opportunity?

- Differentiate between being at-risk and experiencing risk.
- Identify and support protective factors.
- Derive strength from adversity.
- Develop resilience from fostering a connection with at least one caring, competent adult.



Health Environment + Healthy Person



Incorporating a Strengths-Based Approach



- Focus on the strengths of a child into everyday practices.
- Communicate your expectations to all youth.
- Youth live UP to expectations.



Core Principals of PYD

- Believe in youth unconditionally while holding them to high expectations.
- Accept youth as they are and be dependable in their lives.
- High expectations are bout character, integrity, and honesty.



Core Principals of PYD

- Youth are the best role models for other youth.
- Adults should be instructive and supportive while youth carry out activities as independently as possible.
- Helping youth develop healthy coping mechanisms will lead to healthier lifestyles.



7 C's of Resilience

- Confidence
- Competence
- Connection
- Character
- Contribution
- Coping
- Control



Empowering Youth: Making Wise Decisions and Healthier Choices

- “ Making positive decisions can be overwhelming and elusive.
- “ Youth need techniques to visualize manageable steps to making decisions.
- “ Techniques are available to help youth approach adversities.



The Ladder Technique

1. Explain all people get overwhelmed and have moments that they can't imagine taking steps forward to improve the situation.
2. Tell the youth to think about where you are presently. Draw that present state at the base of the ladder diagram.
3. Explain to the youth that you don't have all the answers right this moment but that s/he is able find them.



The Ladder Technique Cont'd

4. After listening, let them know there are alternatives to the present situation. Write them at the top end of two separate ladders leading to two distant but real destinations. One is a the positive and the other is the future they hope to avoid.
5. Repeat that, while you don't have the solutions, you do know that each ladder has several rungs all the way, and that everyone climbs a ladder one step at a time before they reach the top.



The Ladder Technique Cont'd

6. Ask the youth to brainstorm what steps will lead to the less desirable end. Because s/he's feeling overwhelmed and helpless, he may know precisely which steps lead to negative outcome. Unfortunately, s/he may feel he has those decisions and actions.
7. Challenge him to visualize even the first step on the positive path and ideally help him achieve mastery over that first step.



The Ladder Technique Cont.

8. As the youth attempts to write steps toward the positive endpoint, remind him how much easier it is to divide difficult tasks into many small steps. Guide him to keep his eye on the future dream to stay motivated, but focus on only one step at a time.



Smooth Sailing Ahead?

How to Navigate Friends and Peers

- “ Youth are constantly learning to manage conflict and get along with friends and peers.
- “ Parents and professionals equipped with a better understanding of peer culture and how to guide youth in navigating peer relations will be positioned to support both safe behaviors and growing independence.

Supporting Healthy Friendships



- Risks are often proxy markers for maturity that youth use to show others that they want to be seen as a young adult.
- Children at different ages require more support.
- Know the crowds that your youth are in and what their role is.
- Teens develop social skills by hanging out with friends.
- Encourage teens to talk.
- Don't talk down to teens



Strategies to Navigate Tough Situations

“ What strategies do you teach your Club kids to navigate tough situations?

- ☐ Role play using prompts that involve difficult situations that youth face?
- ☐ Encourage open communication to share experiences and how others overcame those experiences?
- ☐ Positive peer mentoring?



Self-Care of a Caretaker

- Youth development professionals need to take care of self to continue positively impacting youth.
- 4 Strategies to Self-Care:
 1. Cultivate awareness/mindfulness.
 2. Be aware of your energy (or lack thereof).
 3. Find meaning in what you do.
 4. Be compassionate toward yourself.



Wrapping Up

- At-Opportunity- Focus on the positive!
- Healthy environments lead to healthy people.
- A strengths based approach can implemented, cost free, through reframing current practices.
- Empower youth to make wise decisions/healthy choices through specific techniques.
- Have clear expectations for youth and encourage open communication.
- Take care of yourself as you take care of others!



Learn more at...

<http://www.fosteringresilience.com/about.php>

Special Note:

This presentation was created using content from the curriculum entitled *Reaching Teens: Strengths-Based Communications Strategies to Build Resilience and Support Healthy Adolescence Development* authored by Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg and Dr. Sara Kinsman.