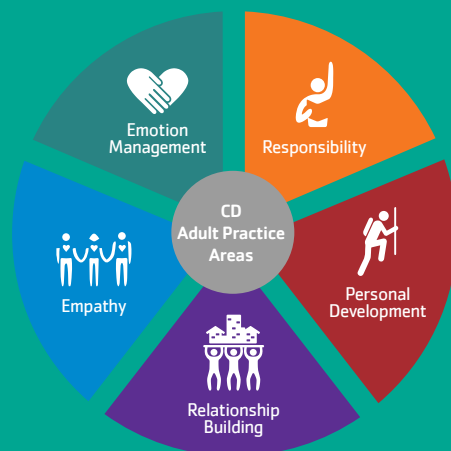




FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

BUILDING ON OUR CORE VALUES TO SUPPORT YOUTH CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Guidebook



YMCA OF THE USA



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear YMCA Professional:

We are pleased to provide this guidebook, which is a tangible outcome of the YMCA's renewed character development efforts. The Character Development Learning Institute (CDLI), a four-year project supported by the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, focused on building the character development skills and practices of youth development leaders who work with youth ages 5–18 in a variety of out-of-school time settings. Building on the core values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility, YMCAs across the country have committed to developing youth development leaders in five areas of practice: empathy, emotion management, responsibility, relationship building, and personal development.

This guidebook incorporates research in the out-of-school time field and recommended promising practices and strategies from the field for supporting youth to develop their character. It targets staff and volunteer youth development leaders as they model, scaffold, and create an environment where wellness and whole child development influences and impacts youth positively. Because the recommendations are program and curriculum agnostic, this guidebook offers a fit for adult and youth with a range of skill and will, and from all walks of life, who come to the youth development profession from the varied communities served by local YMCAs across the United States.

At the Y, we recognize that character can be taught and caught. We have also learned through the work of the CDLI that character development must be supported at all levels of Y operations, including the organization, programs, and youth development leaders. By using character development as a strategy for positive youth development, we can ensure that youth have the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to be whole and healthy in their 21st-century world.

Thank you for believing in youth and recognizing that character development is the Y's way forward. As leaders in the field of youth development, we know that when you know better, you not only do better but also support better. Let's continue to support our Movement and its membership to lead our cause.

Onward and upward,

Tasha F. Johnson

Tasha F. Johnson, PhD
Senior Director, Character Development Learning Institute

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In this guide, you will find the following:



Experience Journey

Ys can use this blueprint to guide, design, and implement the character development journey in youth-serving programs. This blueprint can be especially insightful for program- and practice-level professionals who desire to build or elevate character development in their youth-serving programs.



Making Meaning of Data for Program Improvement

The CDLI has fostered a data- supported culture of continuous improvement. Our Making Meaning of Data process offers a systematic means of using data in an environment of continuous improvement. YMCA professionals who evaluate programs, assess quality, and influence or make decisions about youth development programs may use this informative tool to foster a data-driven culture.



Our Way Forward

The YMCA's effort to understand how adults—staff and volunteers—cultivate and support character development in youth is groundbreaking to the field. "Our Way Forward" acknowledges and details the issues, challenges, research, and process taken to identify the five areas of practice and to include local Y professionals in co-constructing training material and experiences. Although many frameworks for social-emotional learning exist, the YMCA's work in character development has created a bridge to learn more about the

connections between character development and social-emotional learning. YMCA professionals can use "Our Way Forward" as a blueprint for replicating and translating learning happening at the local level.



Conceptual Framework

The Character Development Conceptual Framework brings character development to life. Cause-driven leaders at all levels of the organization can use the framework's high-level strategies, indicators, and tactics to design and implement high-quality programs. Youth development leaders can use the framework to identify specific, observable, and measurable behaviors and conditions that are characteristic of high-quality youth programs. Use this helpful framework to develop new programs to support character development

with youth or as an energizer to elevate character in existing youth programs.



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01

Character Development Experience Journey

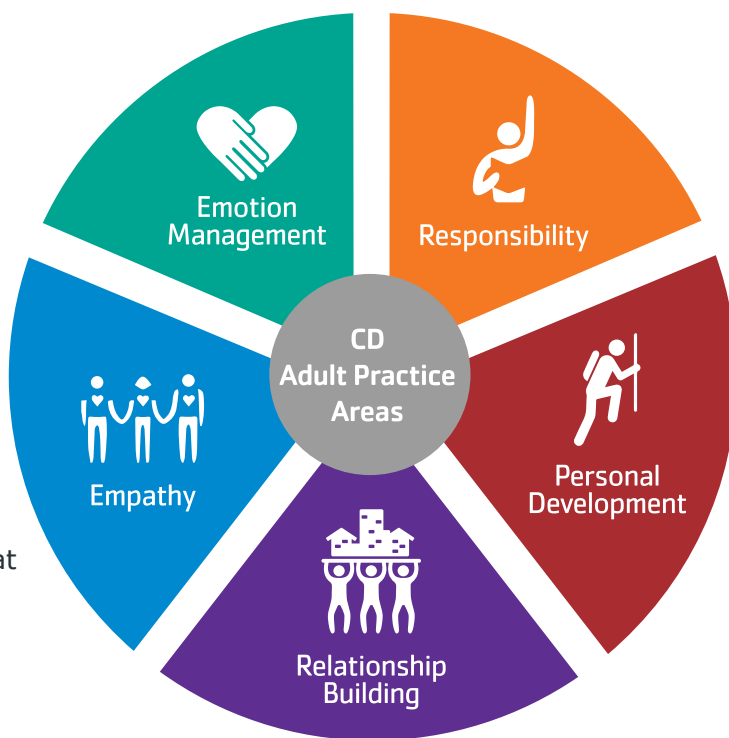
A blueprint to guide, design, and
implement the character development
journey in youth serving programs

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AT THE Y: OUR STORY

Welcome to the Character Development Learning Institute (CDLI) Experience. We are happy that your Y is ready to begin its journey to build on our core values through a commitment to character development. All adults in the Y have a critical role to play in creating experiences and environments that support and strengthen the social-emotional competencies of youth.

Our core values unite us in the Y Movement. Every day we embed, model, and foster our core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility in everything we do. To continue supporting all youth in cultivating these values so they reach their full potential, we must ensure that all adults in the Y are playing their role in creating experiences and environments that strengthen the social-emotional competencies of youth and support the development of character in youth.

As your YMCA begins this journey, your involvement in the CDLI Experience will help you to build and integrate improved organization-wide systems, structures and effective practices to support youth character development. Over the past two years, YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) has collaborated with 64 Ys across the Movement to verify five adult practice areas to support youth character development: Emotion Management, Empathy, Personal Development, Relationship Building and Responsibility. An intentional focus on character development is a means to realize a strong, rigorous youth development strategy. Character is a key element of the Y's approach to working with youth, and we have identified these five areas that Y leaders can elevate in their practice when interacting with young people, encouraging youth character development. With you, we are now scaling these practice areas Movement-wide.



CARING | HONESTY | RESPECT | RESPONSIBILITY

YOUR Y'S COMMITMENT AND WHAT TO EXPECT

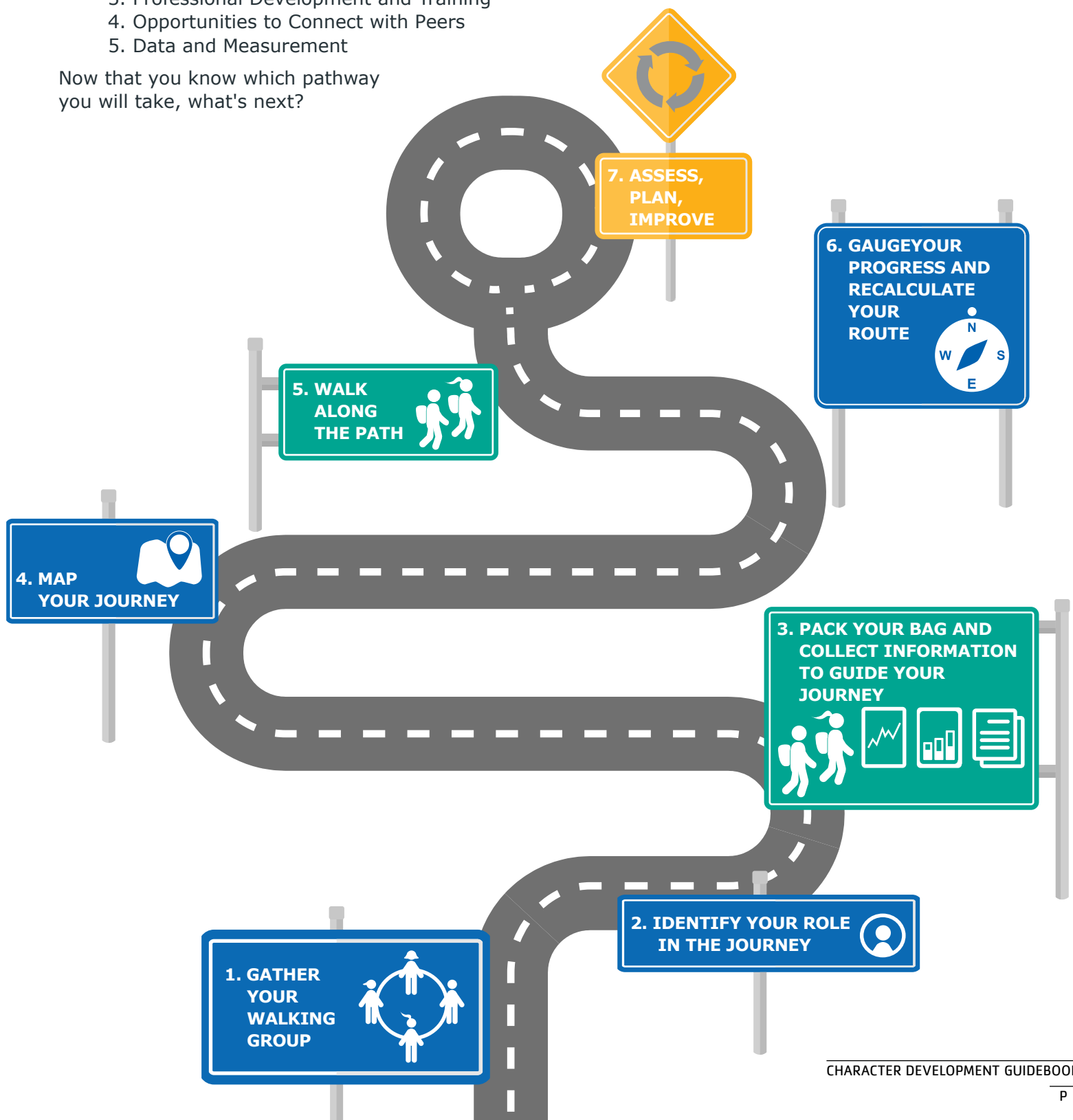
Thank you for completing the first step in your journey: pledging your commitment to character development.

STARTING ON THE PATH.

As we scale this work to more Ys across the Movement, we have invited your Y to follow a self-directed or a guided pathway. Both pathways include access to five CDLI supports:

1. Technical Assistance
2. Learning Resources
3. Professional Development and Training
4. Opportunities to Connect with Peers
5. Data and Measurement

Now that you know which pathway you will take, what's next?



1. GATHER YOUR WALKING GROUP



Think about the people who may make up your implementation team (refer to **Your Role in the Journey**). It is critical to engage the right staff and volunteers early and throughout the process to champion and lead your Y's character development journey. During the CDLI Experience, your implementation team members will develop a plan to implement new program practices or policies and use data to monitor progress and make course corrects as needed.

To better understand how your team will implement character development practices into your nominated program, use the series of CDLI orientations provided to participating Ys.

2. IDENTIFY YOUR ROLE IN THE JOURNEY



Now that you have learned what your journey will look like, review the chart below to identify your role in the journey.

During Scale Phase II, you will receive a variety of supports to deepen your understanding of character development and the five practice areas. Each implementation team member is critical to successfully implementing character development at your Y. To learn more about your individual experience in the CDLI and how your role will contribute to your Ys success, review the description in **My Role Within the Implementation Team** (page 13) that most closely aligns with your role.

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

"I work with youth."

- Front-line staff
- Front-line supervisors
- Site directors

"I support people who work with youth and design youth programs."


- Site-level supervisors
- Program directors

"I effect change at the organization level, work with the board and design the strategic plan."

- Association-level staff
- VP staff
- C-suite staff

"I am a community partner."

- Schools
- Community organizations
- Community groups
- Community volunteers



3. PACK YOUR BAG AND COLLECT INFORMATION TO GUIDE YOUR JOURNEY



To know where you are going, you have to understand where you are. To better understand the current state of your Y's capacity to support high-quality youth development programs, your team will complete a **capacity assessment**. A capacity assessment provides an opportunity to reflect on the systems, policies, and procedures your Y has in place organization-wide to deliver youth programs.

To better understand your current program design and adult behaviors through a character development lens, your implementation team will complete organization, program, and staff and volunteer reflections.

At this stage, invite your CDLI nominated program staff and volunteers to complete the **Self-Reflection Tool**; have program leaders complete the **Program Reflection Tool**; ask organization leaders to complete the **Organization Reflection Tool**. Reflection will provide you with more information to help you identify strengths and opportunities for growth when supporting character development in youth in your nominated program.

4. MAP YOUR JOURNEY

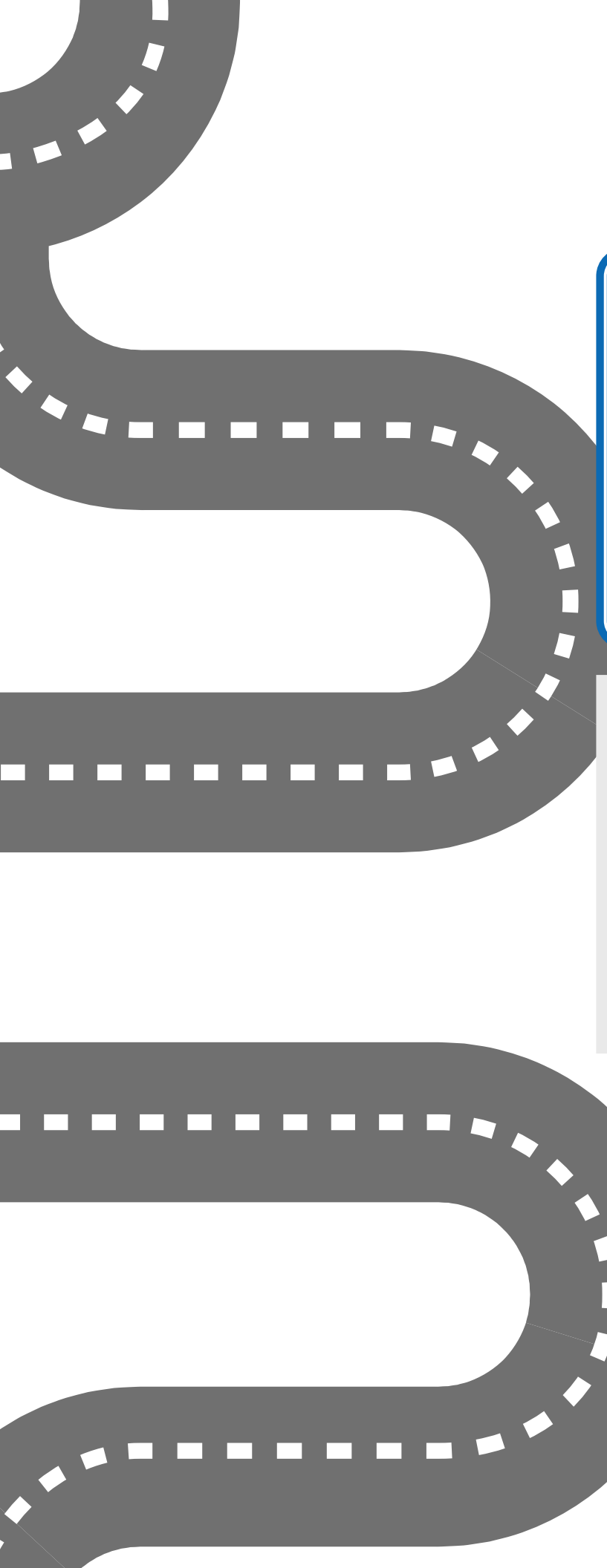


Now that you know where you are, you can better identify where you want to go. The capacity assessment, organization reflection, self-reflection, and program reflection tools give you a starting point. Using this data, plot your destination. Where do you see yourself at the end of this journey? What measurable changes do you want to see in your organization and in your program? What are the action steps it will take to get there? Use your **Program Implementation Plan (PIP)** and **Budget Template** to document your plan.

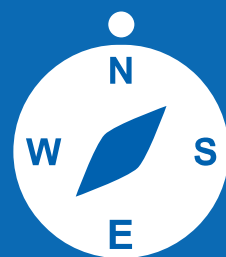
5. WALK ALONG THE PATH



The CDLI implementation team leads the initiatives outlined in the PIP and supports the program in reaching its goals. Your implementation team will have access to five kinds of support: technical assistance, learning resources, professional development and training, opportunities to connect with peers, and data and measurement. This support will help you build the knowledge and skills to strengthen adult behaviors that build character in youth.



6. GAUGE YOUR PROGRESS AND RECALCULATE YOUR ROUTE



How will you know whether your PIP is making a difference? In the CDLI, you have access to tools such as the **Social-Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA)**, **Algorhythm's adult and youth surveys**, and the **PEAR Institute's Holistic Student Assessment (HSA)**. You may already use other assessments; however, the tools available through the CDLI will help you decide whether to recalculate your route, change your destination, or continue to move forward on your current path.



7. ASSESS, PLAN, IMPROVE

Continuously observe and assess your program, collect and critically analyze data, and revise or develop a plan to improve the practices and policies in your nominated youth program. The CDLI implementation team will examine systems and supportive policies at the organizational level. At the program level, the team may look at policies and practices that support program goals. At the youth development leader level, this team may review specific behaviors, attitudes, and skills of staff and volunteers. This stage of the journey implements the assess-plan-improve cycle:

Assess. Collect information on your program. Assessments you may have access to during the CDLI Experience include the following:

- Capacity Assessment
- Self-Assessment
- Program Assessment
- Organization Assessment
- SEL PQA
- Algorhythm Adult Survey
- Algorhythm Youth Survey

Plan. Using the data and information you've collected about your program, make data-driven decisions on how to best support character development practices at the branch, throughout your organization, or both. These tools will support you in planning:

- Program Implementation Plan
- Budget Template
- Making Meaning of Data Guide

Improve. Throughout the CDLI Experience, you will have many opportunities to build your knowledge and skills. Some of these opportunities include the following:

- Professional learning communities
- Share-a-Paloozas
- Webinars
- eLearnings
- Virtual instructor-led trainings
- Site visits

MY ROLE WITHIN THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM:

"I WORK WITH YOUTH."

As a person who works directly with youth, you play a critical role in successfully implementing the five adult practice areas to support character development in youth at your Y.

Together with your implementation team, you will continuously execute an assess-plan-improve cycle to build improved organization-wide systems and effective practices to support character development in youth.

Through this process, you will have opportunities to identify areas within your nominated program to intentionally support character development. In this process, think about how you may accomplish the following:

1. Identify opportunities when and where you can have intentional interactions with youth to foster character development.
2. Facilitate intentional experiences for youth to practice character development skills.

"I SUPPORT PEOPLE WHO WORK WITH YOUTH AND DESIGN YOUTH PROGRAMS."

As a person who supports people who work with youth and design youth programs, you play a critical role in leading a change in your Y to integrate the five adult practice areas to support Character Development in youth.

You will lead your Implementation Team through the continuous execution of an 'Assess, Plan, Improve' cycle in order to build and improve organization-wide systems and effective practices to support character development in youth.

To begin this process, consider what opportunities exist in your nominated program to intentionally foster adult character development practices with the staff and volunteers who work directly with youth. In this process, think about how you may accomplish the following:

1. Identify program structures (routines, schedules, operational procedures, resources) needed to support character development in your program, and share challenges and strengths with leadership.
2. Create a coaching and training process that supports character development in staff and volunteers who work with youth and enhances their ability to support character development in youth.

"I EFFECT CHANGE AT THE ORGANIZATION-LEVEL, WORK WITH THE BOARD, AND DESIGN THE STRATEGIC PLAN."

As a person who influences change or makes decisions at the organizational level, works with the board, and designs the strategic plan, you play a critical role in supporting this work and leading an organization-wide change in your Y to integrate the five adult practice areas to support character development in youth.

You will support youth development and the CDLI implementation team as you support and influence an assess-plan-improve cycle to build improved organization-wide systems and effective practices to support character development in youth.

To begin this process, consider what opportunities exist organization-wide to intentionally foster adult character development practices in your Y. In this process, think about how you may accomplish the following:

1. Identify how character development fits into a larger organizational development strategy.
2. Convene an influential stakeholder group to create and share a clear vision of how character development practices and strategies support the Y's core values and mission.
3. Secure and allocate resources for support. How can your board and stakeholders assist you in achieving your goals? Securing your resources?

GLOSSARY

STARTING ON THE PATH

Character Development Learning Institute (CDLI). A virtual institute experience that allows Ys to learn the process of continuous implementation of character development.

character development. The process through which youth develop and integrate a set of values, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that allow them to operate successfully and responsibly in learning, work and life.

self-directed pathway. One of the two pathways for Ys on their character development learning journey. It includes on-demand technical assistance and targeted support from Hub Ys, as well as tailored access to regional meetings, recorded discussion-focused webinars, character development learning resources, and assessment activities.

guided pathway. One of the two pathways for Ys on their character development learning journey. It includes technical assistance and organized support driven by Y-USA Technical Advisors, as well as access to regional meetings, live discussion-focused webinars, character development learning resources, and assessment activities.

CDLI nominated program. When Ys apply to be a part of CDLI, they explicitly identify one or more youth development programs in which to initially focus character development efforts.

GATHER YOUR WALKING GROUP

implementation team. To advance and support a Y's organizational infrastructure, it's critical to engage the right staff early and throughout the process to champion the work to build capacity within the Y's infrastructure. The implementation team leads this process. The team is best when composed of key association leaders, program staff, volunteers, and frontline practitioners. They are the individuals who are responsible for developing character development plans to implement; supporting program design, practices, and policies; and using data to monitor progress and make course corrections as needed.

CDLI orientation. A series of webinars held via Skype to jump-start your CDLI journey.

character development (CD) practices. Intentional and evidence-based behaviors that promote social-emotional learning.

PACK YOUR BAG AND COLLECT INFORMATION TO GUIDE YOUR JOURNEY

Capacity Assessment (Y-CAP). An assessment in which Ys gauge their capacity to implement high-quality youth programs organizationally.

Program Reflection Tool. An assessment used by program directors ("I support people who work with youth and design youth programs") to observe and reflect on each CD practice within the nominated program.

Self-Reflection Tool. A guide for staff and volunteers ("I work with youth") to observe and reflect on each CD practice within the nominated program.

Organization Reflection Tool. An assessment used by association-level staff ("I effect change . . .") to observe and reflect on how the organization is supporting CD.

GLOSSARY (continued)

MAP YOUR JOURNEY

Budget Template. A standardized form for Ys to outline how they will carry out the Program Implementation Plan.

Program Implementation Plan (PIP). An individualized action plan for Ys to map how they plan to infuse and elevate the character development adult practice areas in their nominated program.

WALK ALONG THE PATH

technical assistance. One of the five major supports for Ys from CDLI. It includes coaching about character development design and delivery from either Y-USA Technical Advisors (TA) or Hub Ys.

HUB Ys. Selected Y associations with expert knowledge that provide character development technical assistance to Ys on the self-directed pathway.

Conceptual Framework (also known as the placemat). A framework that applies the theory and practice for character development that includes detailed information on how youth development leaders can defines at the indicator, tactical and strategic levels evidence of the implementation of CD adult practices. The “placemat” threads together the “what” and “how” for typical roles in youth programs.

CD Toolkit. A go-to character development toolkit showcasing definitions, best practices, and examples. It incorporates subject matter expertise and was developed with local Ys, and integrates adult learning principles.

CD practice area videos. A set of two- to three-minute videos that show each practice area in action. Use the videos with staff and volunteers to begin the conversation about how Ys can infuse character development into their program structures and adult behaviors.

professional development and training. One of the five major supports for Ys from CDLI. It includes activities such as CDLI orientations from Y-USA, Hub Ys, and external partners to deliver content to all CDLI Ys.

opportunities to connect with peers. One of the five major supports for Ys from CDLI. These opportunities include a web community, regional in-person meetings, and weekly live or recorded discussion-focused webinars.

professional learning communities (PLC). Learning spaces (virtual in nature) for Ys to come together and exchange ideas, discuss current issues and challenges from the field, collectively solve problems, and highlight research applicable to implementing CD with youth. Discussions can be live or recorded.

Link character development community. A Y-USA online community that provides a document archive as well as a place to share experiences with other Ys and pose questions to TAs. These interactions make it a professional learning community.

Share-A-Palooza. Discussion-focused live or recorded webinars based on specific practice areas within particular types of programs (e.g., camp, out-of-school time academics, sports, community development, aquatics, or youth and teen development).

data and measurement. One of the five major supports for Ys from CDLI, it provides information about program implementation and outcomes that have been systematically collected from standardized tools.

GAUGE YOUR PROGRESS AND RECALCULATE YOUR ROUTE

Weikart Social-Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA). The SEL PQA assesses the quality of youth programs by measuring the implementation of adult behaviors that support social-emotional learning in youth. Use this observation-based tool to identify staff and volunteer training needs.

Algorhythm adult surveys. The adult surveys measure adults' confidence to develop character in youth and any changes in that confidence while participating in a CDLI nominated program. The adult pre- and post-program surveys are administered online. The same adults who take the pre-program survey should take the post-program survey. Use the data for continuous program improvement.

Algorhythm youth surveys. The youth surveys measure youth character competencies and any changes in those competencies while participating in a CDLI nominated program. The youth pre- and post-program surveys are administered online. The same youth who take the pre-program survey should take the post-program survey.

assess-plan-improve (API) cycle. Used to establish a support system for continuous improvement. The cycle includes assessment to understand strengths and areas for growth, team-based planning with data for improvement, and carrying out the plan using targeted opportunities for improvement.

QUICK GUIDE TO CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT TOOLS AND TRAININGS

Use this guide, which is organized by CDLI implementation team roles, to identify the tools and Learning & Career Development Center (LCDC) courses that will best support your character development journey.

BUILD AND SUSTAIN A CAUSE-DRIVEN CULTURE

	"I work with youth . . ."	"I support people . . ."	"I effect change . . ."
Intro to the Y's Cause and Culture eLearning	✓		
Intro to Listen First eLearning	✓		
Listen First Institute		✓	
Engaging Families vILT	✓		
Leading & Coaching Others		✓	
Implementing Change with Frontline Staff vILT		✓	
Leading Change Institute			✓
CD Capacity Assessment Tool		✓	✓

THE Y'S APPROACH TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND HOW IT CONNECTS TO CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

	"I work with youth . . ."	"I support people . . ."	"I effect change . . ."
Principles of Youth Development eLearning	✓		
Intro to Character Development eLearning	✓	✓	✓
The Basics of Program Management eLearning		✓	
Effective Program Management vILT		✓	
Youth Development Companion: Supervisor's Toolkit		✓	
CDLI Executive Summary			✓
Making the Case for Character Development			✓

HOW TO INTEGRATE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES INTO YOUR WORK

	"I work with youth . . ."	"I support people . . ."	"I effect change . . ."
CD Practice Area Videos (5)	✓	✓	✓
CD Program Implementation Plan		✓	
CDLI Toolkit: Self-Reflection Tool	✓		
CDLI Toolkit: Program Reflection Tool		✓	
CDLI Toolkit: Organization Reflection Tool			✓



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02

Making Meaning of Data for Program Improvement

A systematic means of using data in an
environment of continuous improvement

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MAKING MEANING OF DATA INTRODUCTION

A systematic way of using data for continuous improvement.



WHAT IS MAKING MEANING OF DATA?

It is a process. The Making Meaning of Data (MMOD) process is about making data understandable, useful, and actionable, especially when engaging in a continuous program-improvement cycle. MMOD provides us with an opportunity to examine data from our programs and explore what we can change to support youth development. The goal for using data is to measure progress toward our mission and to support continuous improvement in the service and delivery of youth development work.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO MAKE MEANING OF DATA?

Research shows that positive outcomes from youth development programs are contingent on youth attending high-quality programs and building strong, caring relationships with adults. To ensure that we are providing young people with these experiences, we need to understand how we are doing and what we could be doing better.

Programs collect extensive data—administrative, performance, and outcome—that provides insight into process, strategies, and participant experiences. Data can tell us who attends our programs, what they are learning, and how they are changing. Alone, data are only numbers and words. For the numbers and words to support telling the story of our programs, we need to understand what the data is telling us, what it means for us, and how to use the data to help us determine what to celebrate and where we can grow.



WHEN CAN WE MAKE MEANING OF DATA?

Using your data and making decisions and improvements based on it is essential to enhancing the quality of your program and to the continuous improvement process. Make MMOD a regular practice, integrating the process as part of your efforts for continuous improvement. Whether you use the assess-plan-improve cycle or the plan-do-study-act cycle, the ultimate goal is to set intentional and planned opportunities to learn from what you are doing and make changes based on what you learn from your data. When you collect data, set an expectation to use that data to develop a plan to improve your program or practice.



WHERE CAN WE MAKE MEANING OF DATA?

When thinking about where you could make meaning of data, your team will need to consider the data you have access to and which level it applies to.

It is important to think about how each data source is related to the others to fully understand the program or practice you are implementing. As you consider each data source, think about where the data tools tell you similar things and where they are different so you can prioritize your goals. When making meaning of data at any level, remember that your goal is to ensure a more comprehensive view of your program and to make decisions, and therefore improvements, based on all of the data.



WHO CAN MAKE MEANING OF DATA?

The MMOD process is most effective with a team-based approach. Each team member has a role to play when making meaning of data. Their perspectives will support interpreting the data and provide a more sustainable pathway to make data-based changes in your program. Participating in the MMOD process will also build their evaluative thinking skills and empower them to feel that they can support the youth with whom they work.

Your program lead will have to take ownership of the process, preparing for and facilitating meetings, but it is vital to involve youth development leaders when we make meaning of data. The plans created from the process need to reflect the items that they care about and that they have some ability to influence or control. Every youth development leader has a role to play.



HOW DO WE MAKE MEANING OF DATA?

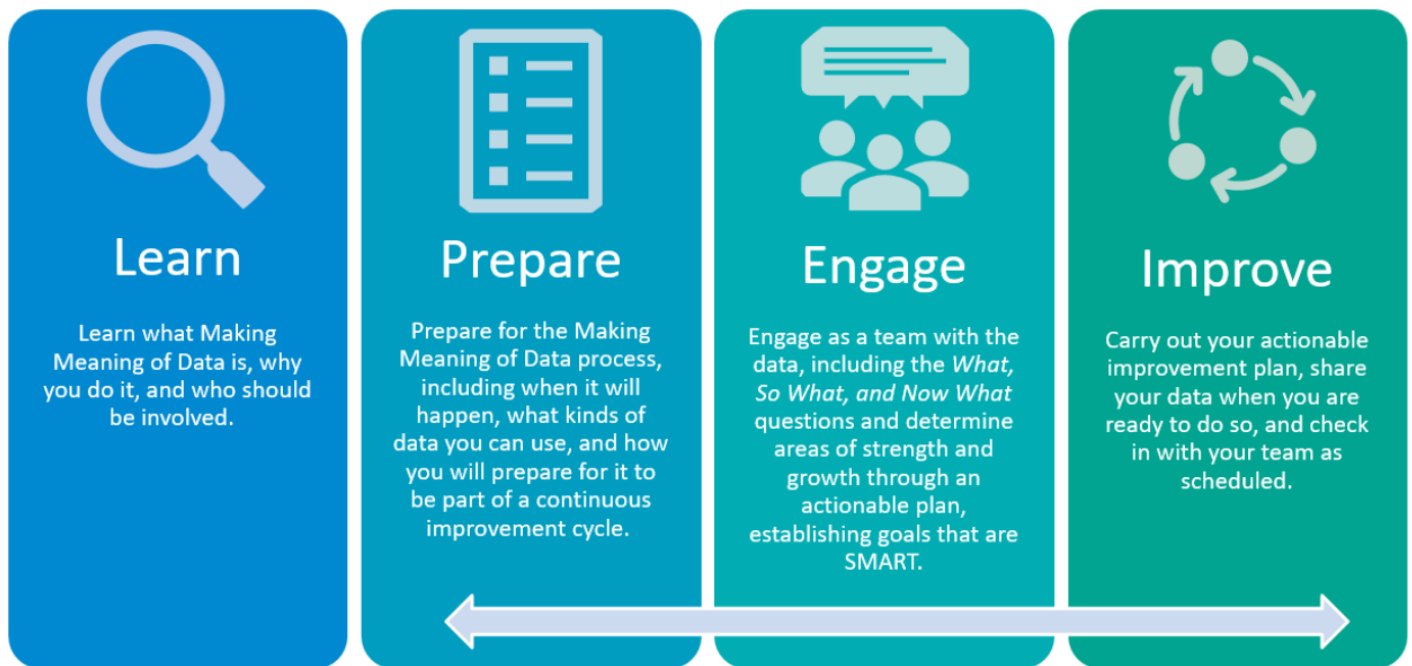
The MMOD process requires understanding why you're doing it, preparing to do it, reviewing and reflecting on your data, and planning and acting based on your review of the data.

For every piece of data you have, your program team needs to ask three key questions: What? So what? and Now what? In other words, "What does the data tell us?" "What are we learning and how can we use it for improvement?" and "How do we act on our data and what do we do next?" These three questions are key to making meaning of data.

THE PROCESS TO SUCCESSFULLY MAKE MEANING OF DATA

To do it well, your team must understand the process.

Before you begin to make meaning of data and ask yourselves those very important questions, give careful attention and time to the process. The **process** steps will ensure that the MMOD process is done well. These steps are grounded in best practices in implementation science and in youth development research.

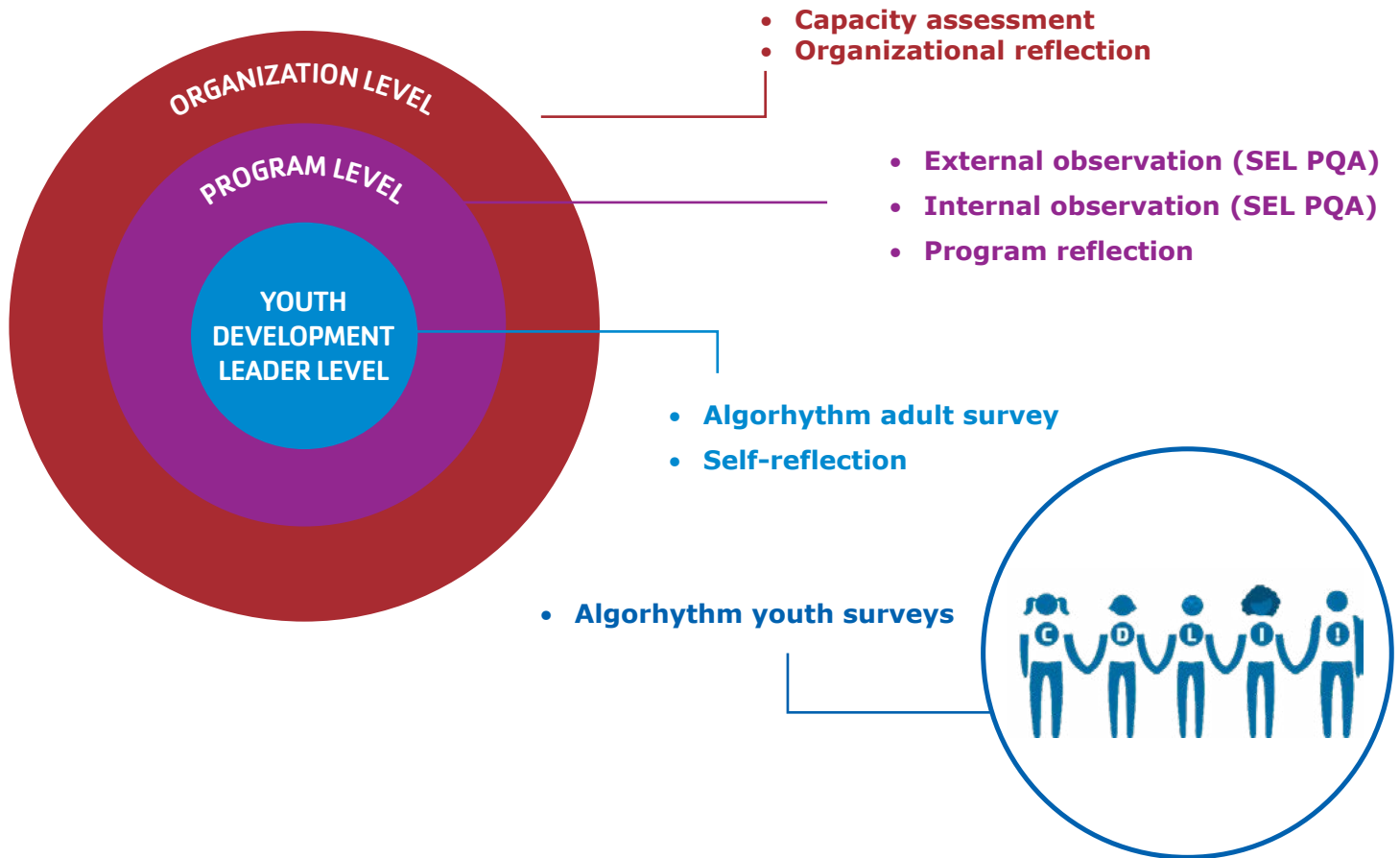


WHAT CAN I DO NOW TO PREPARE FOR THE MMOD PROCESS?

1. Familiarize yourself with the different CDLI assessment tools (page 23).
2. Start thinking about what you hope to learn from your data. What questions are you hoping the data can answer?
3. Make sure all members of the implementation team read Making Meaning of Data Introduction (page 20) so you are all ready when the time comes to host the session! Guiding questions like these will help you prepare:
 - Why is it important to look at data for your nominated program?
 - What data do you already collect? What new data would you like to collect? (Keep in mind question 2 above.)
 - Which CDLI assessment tools are you familiar with? Which are brand new to you?
4. To learn more about using data, check out the Using Data in Your Decision Making eLearning found in [LCDRC](#). Here is a class description:
 - **Using Data in your Decision Making.** This eLearning will introduce you to common best practices in decision-making using data. It guides you through how data can support both your mission and margin, whether at a member, program, or organizational level. It defines the different types of data, and walks through the steps needed to start using data to inform your decisions. (Approximately 30 minutes.)

UNDERSTANDING AND USING CDLI ASSESSMENT TOOLS

CDLI supports Ys in collecting data to measure progress at all levels of the organization: the youth participant level, the youth development leader level, the program level, and the organization level. It is important to remember that your program may not collect all of the data referenced here.



Each assessment tool collects data to support a different outcome level. An important part of making meaning of data is to understand each tool and the data it provides. Below you will find guidance on how to understand and use each CDLI assessment tool using the **What? So what? Now what?** format.

What: What does the data tell us?

- What does the tool measure? What is being assessed? Which outcome level does it help measure?

So What: What are we learning?

- What do the numbers mean? Identify strengths and opportunities.
- What else is important to highlight from each report?
- How does knowledge this support your program goals and desired outcomes?

Now What: How do we act on the data?

- How can we use this data to inform, refine, or revise our current program goals?

Each tool uses unique language and frameworks to explain social-emotional learning. The CDL Crosswalk (below) can guide you in comparing language for each tool.

Although not exact, the Practice Areas generally align with the names given in other tools and frameworks.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT ADULT PRACTICE AREAS CROSSWALK

	RESPONSIBILITY	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	EMPATHY	EMOTION MANAGEMENT
Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality SEL PQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session Flow Responsibility Leadership Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill Building Active Learning Choice Encouragement Collaboration Leadership Planning Problem Solving Reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm Welcome Interactions with Adults Encouragement Belonging Collaboration Leadership Empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm Welcome Empathy Belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional Safety Emotion Coaching Mindfulness
Algorhythm, Hello Insight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution Academic Self-Efficacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution Positive Identity Self-Management Academic Self-Efficacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Skills Contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Management
The PEAR Institute HSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Perseverance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth Mindset Optimism Action Orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust Communication Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotion Control Assertiveness
Aperture Education DESSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Awareness Goal Directed Behavior Optimistic Thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Management Self-Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Responsibility Decision-Making
CASEL Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Awareness Self-Management

Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality SEL PQA. The Social-Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment is an observation tool focused on instructional practices to support SEL skills.

Algorhythm, Hello Insight. Hello Insight is an assessment, planning, and evaluation youth survey tool for programs that integrate SEL.

The PEAR Institute HSA. The Holistic Student Assessment (HSA) is a data-driven survey tool to promote social-emotional development in young people in school and afterschool settings.

Aperture Education DESSA. The Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) is a standardized, strength-based observation measure of the SEL competencies of children

CASEL Framework. CASEL's integrated framework promotes interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive competence.

CAPACITY BUILDING COMPANION GUIDE

Capacity Building Objectives

- ✓ Understand the need for organizational capacity to effectively deliver, strengthen, and sustain high-impact processes and practices around youth development.
- ✓ Identify the essential capacities necessary to deliver, measure, grow, and sustain processes and practices over time.
- ✓ Assess your Y's strengths and opportunities around capacity building efforts.
- ✓ Develop specific strategies using SMART goals to build or strengthen your Y's organizational capacity.

Capacity Building Overview

What is Capacity Building?

Capacity Building is the process of developing and strengthening a Y's organizational infrastructure to effectively deliver, measure, grow, and sustain high-quality youth development programs and practices over time.

Why is Capacity Building important?

Capacity building is an investment in the effectiveness and future sustainability of an organization to be best positioned to implement and deliver programs and practices with the greatest impact on a community.

What are the essential organizational capacities?

The essential organizational capacities are common agenda, backbone support, continuous improvement through measurement, collaborative action, and investment and sustainability.¹

Common agenda. All key stakeholders have a shared vision for youth development that aligns with strategic plans, youth development programming, and staff roles.

Backbone support. Achieve sustainable impact through a strong operational infrastructure, implementation expertise, and staff and volunteers with specific skill sets to serve as the "backbone" for the organization's efforts.

Continuous improvement through measurement. Consistently collect data, measure results, and make decisions based on those results.

Collaborative action. Use relationships with schools and other youth-serving organizations in the community as well as involvement in any community-wide initiatives to expand and accelerate impact.

Investment and sustainability. Provide a long-term view and commitment to sustaining programs through resource allocation, financial development, and advocacy.

(Two additional components will be reviewed in late 2019: equity and youth development programming.)

¹ Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. 2011, "Collective Impact: Creating Large-Scale Impact." Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved 10/10/19 from www.fsg.org/publications/collective-impact

Assessing Capacity

What is the Y-CAP (YMCA Capacity Assessment)?

The Y-CAP is a broad-based organizational development tool created by Y-USA. More than 200 YMCA associations developed, tested, and are currently validating the Y-CAP. It addresses the organization as a whole and focuses on essential capacities that support youth development organizations to successfully prioritize, implement, and sustain high-quality operations. The tool provides a starting point for a capacity building process plus suggested activities to assist your organization's continuous improvement. In addition, it provides Ys and staff a way to identify and measure capacity building progress over time.

How do we think about capacity?

Building capacity requires reflection and discussion about organizational infrastructure at all staff levels. The Y-CAP provides the framework for meaningful and thoughtful discussions around each essential capacity. The tool is intended to address organizational and youth development programmatic capacity at youth development organizations.

How does capacity building relate to the CDLI adult practice areas?

Youth development leaders interact with youth in programs, and those programs exist within a broader organizational context. Organizations are an important system in supporting positive youth development. Youth development within organizations requires that the adults working on the front lines with youth have the knowledge and skills to implement high-quality youth development opportunities. We see youth development programs as a medium through which youth can develop character. Our capacity goals are to engage adults who work with youth in a process that builds upon their knowledge of character development, to increase the capacity of individuals and organizations to intentionally apply that knowledge, and, ultimately, to develop positive character among youth.

What are we learning?

Reflecting on your Y's capacity to support youth character development, as well as other out-of-school opportunities for youth, is a useful process in elevating quality and impact and ensuring sustainability. Consider these questions when reviewing your assessment:

- How does the capacity assessment reflect the good work the organization is doing in the core support areas?
- What can the team do (or stop doing) to support these strengths?
- What are some areas for potential improvement?
- Which capacity areas can be further developed?
- What strategies and resources can we use to strengthen, maintain, and sustain the core supports?

How do we act on the data?

Using a systematic approach such as assess-plan-improve, you will do the following:

- Develop an action plan using SMART goals.
- Review a data set (i.e., Algorhythm adult survey data) looking closely at the organization supports sections. What connections do you see between these two reports? Is your team's data like your staff and volunteer data?

PROMISING PRACTICES

	Key Components	Promising Practices
Common Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared vision • Leadership commitment • Effective leadership • Communication of the vision and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives or statements in the strategic plan are related to youth development. • Communicate the strategic plan to all staff. • Identify youth development as a priority. • Develop a common goal that is clearly communicated to all stakeholders. • Communicate mission, vision, and priorities at all staff levels.
Backbone Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational infrastructure • Program and service implementation expertise • Staff and volunteer capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire staff based on expertise in content, structure, and youth age group. • Provide enough staff to deliver high-quality programming. • Conduct performance reviews at least once a year. • Provide staff development opportunities. • Develop policies and procedures that are aligned with practices. • Build credibility with community partners. • Instill a collaborative effort and spirit.
Continuous Improvement through Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to collect and analyze data • Evidence-based decision-making • Commitment to high quality • Collecting and measuring data and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate sufficient resources for program monitoring and evaluation. • Collect data aligned to program goals. • Give staff access to data. • Actively seek feedback to improve programs and strategies. • Develop a structure and system to collect and analyze data. • Understand the value of data and how it drives continuous improvement. • Use data to collect, measure, and improve practices. • Show accountability to funders.
Collaborative Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with other youth-serving organizations • Community collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a written communication plan with outside youth organizations. • Identify a shared vision of what will be accomplished. • Establish reciprocal resource sharing with community organizations. • Support community initiatives. • Understand the needs of the community. • Know that the Y does not have to lead or own the project or service. • Build and maintain trust.
Investment and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource allocation • Financial development • Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate resources in alignment to long-term goals. • Write a sustainability plan. • Provide leadership with financial reports. • Leadership ensures a reasonable alignment of costs and revenues. • Leverage resources and partnerships. • Develop a sustainability plan. • Demonstrate measurable impact. • Understand community needs and gaps.

Source: Konia, J. & Kramer, M. (Winter 2001). "Collective Impact," Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

PLAN WITH YOUR DATA

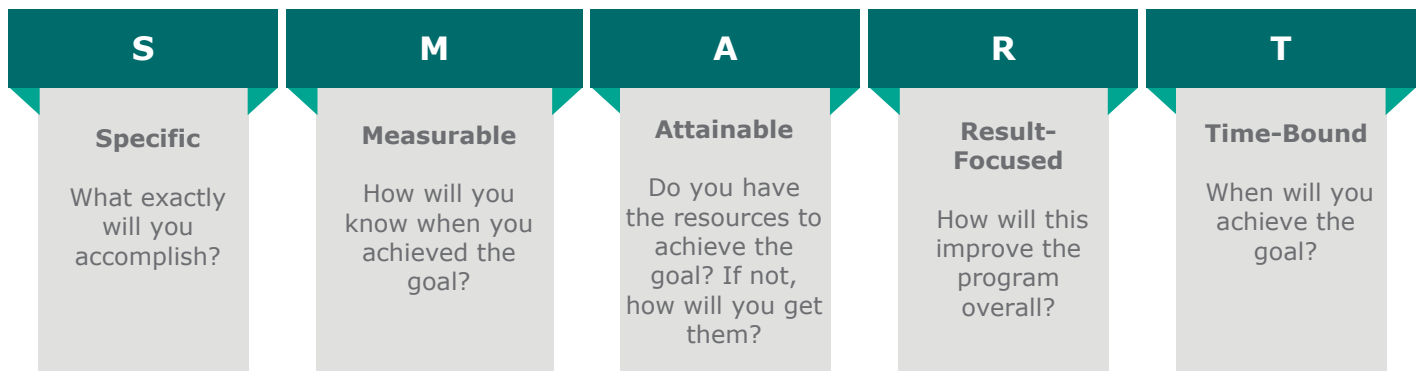
Review and reflect on your data to identify areas of growth you would like to focus on to implement your SMART goals. Once you have determined the practice area (or areas) in which you want to grow based on your review, use the data to create an action plan and begin to measure growth.

You will have to identify and establish the time, resources, and other supports you will need to meet your goals.

Create or Modify an Action Plan

Think of your Program Implementation Plan (PIP) as an action plan. Your team will create a PIP or modify an existing one. If you are developing a PIP, create actionable, measurable goals and plans. Divide the team into small groups—perhaps pairs—to work on one goal at a time.

If you are modifying a PIP, take this opportunity to take another look at your goals to ensure they accurately reflect the areas you want to focus on based on your additional data. Depending on which data source you are using, you may modify your youth development, program, or organization SMART goals.



Review Plan Goals

Review the goals in your PIP as a large group once you have created or modified them. Ensure that you are able to answer the questions in this section.

Designate a person from your implementation team to be responsible for tracking and updating goals in the PIP, and set up frequent check-ins to discuss successes and challenges on accomplishing the goals.

GOAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

- ✓ Are the goals SMART?
- ✓ Do they focus on implementing new procedures to support the youth development leader in developing character in youth?
- ✓ Will they lead to an improved experience for young people?
- ✓ Have we considered challenges and resources?

SMART GOALS

We all have long term goals we want to achieve, both personally and professionally. To make reaching these long-term goals easier, it is important to make small changes by setting short-term SMART goals. A SMART goal helps you succeed for these reasons:

It's Specific. Do not be ambiguous! Make your goal as clear as possible.

It's Measurable. Set a goal that you can evaluated based on an attribute that can be measured (e.g., two times, every day, etc.).

It's Attainable. Set a goal that you have the ability to reach. Make sure it is something you can actually control the outcome of!

It's Result-Focused. Set yourself up for success by setting goals that measure outcomes, not activities.

It's Time-Bound. Associate a finite amount of time with your SMART goal. Make sure you have a deadline!



Create your SMART goal!

Specific: What exactly will you accomplish?

Measurable: How will you know when you have achieved the goal?

Attainable: Do you have the resources to achieve the goal?
If not, how will you get them?

Result-Focused: How will this goal improve the program overall?

Time-Bound: When will you achieve the goal?

This goal is important because:

Potential obstacles and solutions:

Who else needs to be involved?

Goal:

03

Our Way Forward

Building on our core values
to develop character in youth

LOCAL Y VOICES

Local Ys offered immensely helpful feedback about the CDLI to Y-USA, feedback that was then used to refine the technical assistance; identify measurement supports; identify high-impact training, development, and opportunities for peer learning; and create learning resources that focused on character development.

WE HEARD FROM YOU!

During Scale, Y-USA heard from Y Cause-Drive Leaders in some of the following ways:

- ✓ 119 capacity assessments
- ✓ 901 monthly surveys
- ✓ 147 midpoint check-in surveys
- ✓ 209 regional meeting satisfaction surveys
- ✓ 10 toolkit testing interviews
- ✓ 38 program reflections
- ✓ 82 staff and volunteer self-reflections
- ✓ 939 Algorhythm staff and volunteer surveys
- ✓ 229 external SEL PQA assessments

Thank you for supporting character development and continuous improvement with your reflections, advice, insights, and responses.

THANK YOU!

We as a Y Movement know that cause-driven leaders like you are critical to shaping values, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that encourage youth to flourish in learning, in work, and in life. Because of you, cause-driven leaders are building on our core values to develop character in youth.

We had an amazing experience supporting character development in the Movement. The CDLI began with 32 Ys, a number that grew to 208 in 2019–2020, representing 26% of the Y Movement. Given these numbers, we can confidently claim intentionality in implementing personal development, empathy, responsibility, relationship building, and emotion management into these Ys' youth development programs. During Scale Phase I, we reached 3,301 staff, 3,877 volunteers, and 85,723 youth in 207 youth development programs across the nation. Ys identified 1,011 goals for character development in their specific programs, 314 people attended professional trainings around data collection and use, and implementation teams across joined us at one of four regional meetings in Boston and New Orleans.

WHAT WE LEARNED

From Scale Phase I, we learned that Ys have a deep appreciation for the value of character development and their work within the CDLI. We know that Ys are strongest in the empathy and relationship building practice areas; however, early findings suggest that most Ys improved in their implementation of all five practice areas over time.

As we move into Scale Phase II and toward dissemination, it is important to note that our initial discoveries indicate that self-directed and guided Ys experienced similar outcomes during their CDLI process

WHAT'S NEXT?

During Scale Phase II, we plan to expand the work by opening up the opportunity to build capacity with "character curious" Ys and make the resources universally available to ALL Ys on Link.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

04

The Placemat and Conceptual Framework

Character Development – A process for cultivating the values, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors that prepare youth to thrive in learning, in work, and in life

FOSTERING CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

When the entire organization commits to character development, youth development leaders have the support they need to nurture the potential of all youth.

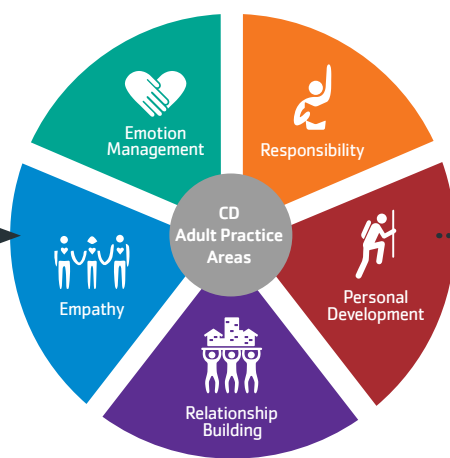
The entire organization commits to character development.



ORGANIZATION - WIDE SUPPORTS FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Organization-wide commitment leads to integrating character development at the organizational level, program level, and youth development leader level.

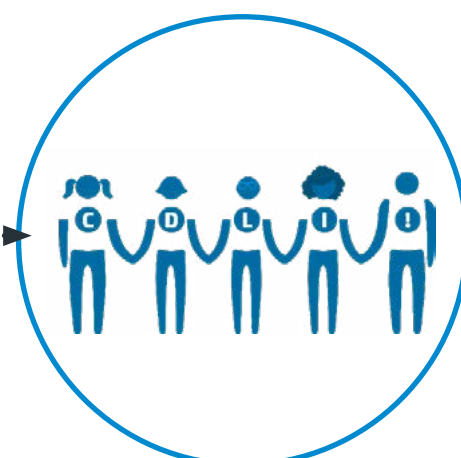
Youth development leaders intentionally interact with youth in five areas.



YD LEADERS FOCUS ON FIVE AREAS

Integrated supports promote high-quality youth programs. Youth development leaders can then intentionally focus on five areas of character development.

Youth have opportunities to engage in high- quality programming.



HIGHER RATES OF SUCCESS FOR YOUTH

Intentional focus on five areas encourages youth to develop and integrate a set of values, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that allow them to operate successfully and responsibly in learning, work, and life.

THE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Character is the habit of mind and disposition that assists young people to flourish. Character Development is the process for cultivating the values, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors that prepare youth to thrive in learning, in work, and in life. An intentional focus on the character development of youth represents an opportunity to develop, coach towards, and evaluate effective behaviors of the adults who work directly with youth and to engage organizational leaders in supporting and sustaining character development as a strategy to promote positive youth development.

The CDLI approach to embedding character development into youth programming has been co-constructed by and for Ys. The relevance, need, and expertise of the Y Movement has been integral to creating tools and professional development experiences and implementing youth character development to fulfill our shared cause.

One such tool is the Character Development Conceptual Framework, an organizing document that can be used throughout a Y at the organizational level, at the program level, and at the youth development leader level.

A FOCUS ON ADULT PRACTICE AREAS

The Y's cause-driven leaders are best able to effect positive character development outcomes in youth when they have support from the organization, the program, and frontline youth development leaders. At the organizational level, this means that Ys have an infrastructure in place to implement youth development principals, strategies, and supports. At the program level, this means youth programming is high quality. At the youth development leader level, this means Y adults intentionally focus their practice in five areas when interacting with youth:

- **Emotion management.** Adults support youth to be aware of and constructively handle both positive and challenging emotions.
- **Empathy.** Adults work with youth to relate to others with acceptance, understanding, and a sensitivity to diverse perspective and experiences.
- **Relationship building.** Adults foster experiences where youth plan, collaborate, and coordinate action with others.
- **Responsibility.** Adults develop youth to be reliable and committed, and to fulfill obligations and challenging roles.
- **Personal development.** Adults encourage youth to act, persist, and initiate goals and outcomes even through the ups and downs of difficult situations and challenges.

Several frameworks and tools adopted in the out-of-school time field are applicable and adaptable to Y settings. Y-USA cross-referenced and verified the five selected adult practice areas with other well-known character development resources, including the Weikart Social-Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA), CASEL's integrated framework of core social and emotional learning competencies, the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), and Algorhythm's staff surveys and Hello Insight youth surveys.

Although sometimes called something different, the five adult practice areas addressed in the framework generally align with other research-informed frameworks and tools related to social-emotional learning and can be implemented within a variety of youth development programs at Ys. The five adult practice areas selected for the framework meet these criteria:

- They are supported by research and expert feedback.
- They are scalable.
- Their implementation and outcomes can be measured.

Character can be taught and caught. Every adult—staff and volunteers, from the membership clerk to the C-suite executive—is responsible for successfully supporting the development of character in youth. Intentional actions by adults, referred to as youth development leaders, along with specific shifts in the program and organizational structures, form the basis of character development as a mechanism for positive youth development.

UNDERSTANDING THE FRAMEWORK LAYOUT

The framework addresses the practice areas one at a time, first at the youth development leader level and then at the program and organizational level (levels are denoted in the headers). Within each practice area, the rows address these key features that bolster high-quality youth development programming:

Appropriate structure. The organization has the appropriate leadership and staffing model to support youth development outcomes.

Supportive relationships. Adults and youth have an open line of communication, deliberately collaborate, problem solve together, and engage in positive interactions (i.e., apprenticeships, mentoring).

Opportunities to belong. Adults and youth appreciate one another by creating an inclusive culture

Positive social norms. Adults act as role models and provide support for youth to set positive goals.

Support for efficacy and mattering. Adults intentionally foster with youth a sense of worth, respect, and belonging.

Opportunity for skill building. Adults provide opportunities for youth to gain new knowledge and skills.

Integration for family engagement. Adults recognize and actively include the family and the community as partners in positive youth development.

The columns address these components for each key feature:

- **Youth development competency.** Our YMCA Cause-Driven Leadership frames the thoughtful behaviors youth development leaders use to influence and impact youth development. In the Character Development Conceptual Framework, youth development competencies contextualize the primary proficiencies in each area of practice.
- **Strategy.** The strategy to support the key feature can be an informative means for the C-suite executive to identify the appropriate resources (people, time, and money) to influence and impact essential decisions related to youth development.
- **Indicator.** The indicators denote evidence of strategies in action. Y leadership (C-suite, program staff, and lead volunteers) can use these indicators to measure the degree to which what is planned with the youth development leader and the youth program is actually taking place.
- **Behavior.** Behaviors represent what the practice area should look and sound like in action in a youth program. Program leaders and lead volunteers can use these behaviors to pinpoint training topics, identify coaching goals, and inform recruitment strategies for youth development staff and volunteers.
- **Examples.** Examples exemplify culturally, contextually, and developmentally appropriate and practical methods to implement each area of practice. Program staff and volunteers can learn from, build on, or elevate how they might apply these tactics in a real-world situation.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEADER LEVEL

EMOTION MANAGEMENT: Adults support youth to be aware of and constructively handle both positive and challenging emotions.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Appropriate Structure and Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Self & Others Functional Expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders create and adjust program activities to accommodate youth's processing of emotion. Youth development leaders regularly assess their own feelings, strengths, and limitations and relate them to how their emotions impact relationships with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Youth development leaders structure meetings and activities that can accommodate expressing and processing a range of positive and challenging emotions in a safe space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders create time, space, or rituals within program activities for youth to process and learn from emotions. When speaking with a group or an individual, adults use language that communicates their emotions honestly, empathetically, inclusively and clearly while respectfully acknowledging and validating emotions in others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders facilitate "Roses and Thorns" check-in and reflection exercise after an activity. Small groups participate in a daily ice breaker where staff present typical scenarios the age groups would experience and engage youth in discussions about how to best handle them. Youth development leaders encourages youth to journal, reflecting on and writing about their experiences and emotions. (Note: Themes can be modified to adapt to younger and older age groups.)
Supportive Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Self & Others Communication & Influence Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders create opportunities to develop emotion management skills by modeling and engaging in meaningful interactions that build trust, respect, and shared commitments. Youth development leaders recognize the emotional needs of others by their choice of words, tone of voice, expressions, and other nonverbal behaviors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders become role models and mentors through personal sharing. Youth program participants use the core value of respect as a description of their relationship with the adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders model healthy strategies for dealing with emotions in a caring, age-appropriate, and respectful context. Youth development leaders uses effective listening and verbal skills, including positive body language and tone of voice, to encourage an open exchange of ideas. Youth development leaders regularly name, acknowledge, and validate emotions of youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders organize "getting acquainted" mixers. Adults and youth address each other by name. Adults engage in culturally relevant and inclusive social conversations around personal, age-appropriate, and high-interest youth topics. Staff respond to youth needs by getting down on the same level (physical proximity) while listening to youth share aloud and reflect. Youth development leaders work with youth to create ways for youth to express their feelings, improve upon their ability to communicate their needs, and resolve problems. For example, aquatics staff can say, "I know it can feel scary to get into the water for the first time- most people are scared. I'm here to keep you safe. Let me know when you're ready."
Opportunity for Skill Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication & Influence Developing Self & Others Functional Expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders coach and support youth to manage and learn from their emotional experiences. Youth development leaders guide youth to use self-direction and self-management strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders use active listening, de-escalation techniques, and problem-solving methods during tense or challenging situations. Youth development leaders coach youth to express emotions in a clear and productive manner, using positive or affirming language. Youth development leaders promote critical thinking habits that develop youth's decision making and coping skills. Youth development leaders connect youth to other youth and adults who display an ability to manage their emotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders apply strategies to help youth in learning to express emotions in positive ways. Youth development leaders ask youth to describe their emotion or identify the intensity of emotions they are experiencing. Youth development leaders discuss with youth constructive ways to handle emotions. Adults support youth to distinguish between feelings and actions, and identify ways to self-regulate. Youth development leaders ask youth about causes or consequences of their emotions. Youth development leaders encourage, support, and provide structured opportunities for positive peer-to-peer relationships among youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders include explicit emphasis on emotion management skills by incorporating yoga, meditation, and other mindfulness activities for youth. Youth development leaders show youth how to use mindful techniques such as breathing exercises to help manage their emotions. For example, when youth enter the program space, the Youth Development Leader can use chimes or other instruments to signal a "mindful moment" prompting mindfulness. During swim lessons staff help youth identify emotions and strategies for coping with uncomfortable emotions such as "If you start feeling scared when you are putting your face in the water, what can you do to stay calm? Can you give this a try?" Youth development leaders match youth with a peer or near peer who displays a positive attitude, controls of his/her emotions, and expresses him/herself clearly.

PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION LEVEL

EMOTION MANAGEMENT: Adults support youth to be aware of and constructively handle both positive and challenging emotions.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples (Not exclusive or applicable to all ages)
Appropriate Structure and Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional Expertise Program/Project Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults assess the youth's emotional readiness and adjust and engage in response to the data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ys use research-based valid assessment tools such as youth surveys (e.g., HSA from PEAR, Algorhythm youth surveys) to measure youth stakeholder input. The Y adopts and uses a research-based character development curriculum. Y leadership creates accountability metrics for staff and volunteers to deepen one-to-one relationships with youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The youth development leader recognizes the social-emotional, cognitive, and physical milestones youth experience during their journey from birth to career. Youth program staff and Leaders actively implement regular evaluations of program goals, the program environmental quality, and program outcomes. The Y uses data to highlight youth achievement and progress to key stakeholders and community partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff conduct an annual needs assessment of the condition and types of equipment available to youth. If adjustments are needed, Y association leadership reallocates resources or raises funds. Ys include a quick survey for campers' parents and caregivers to complete as a part of the camper application. Afterward, counselors create a personalized youth engagement plan for each camper. Ys conduct a SEL PQA (self and external) and discuss the outcomes as a team.
Supportive Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration Functional Expertise Developing Self & Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The physical environment nurtures appropriate cognitive, physical, and, social youth development. Youth development leaders recognize that all youth have individual needs, temperaments, characteristics, and abilities and develop at their own rate. Leadership promotes and provides systems for staff well-being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials and resources are made available to staff to help identify and maintain their own emotional well-being. Adults encourage a culture where youth can appropriately opt out of program activities. Y leadership creates accountability metrics for staff to deepen one-to-one relationships with youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults create safe spaces for youth to retreat and have appropriate, personalized reflection time. A system is in place for youth to regularly monitor and express their individual emotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program spaces are accommodating to meet youth needs (e.g., flexible furniture, appropriately sized furniture, comfortable furniture). Youth have options to move freely through the program space at appropriate times. An emoji chart is available and displayed to help youth express their emotions. Multiple signs around the teen center that encourage mental wellness and reflection (e.g., How will you make the most of today?, the golden rule, and LGBT Safe Zone).
Opportunity for Skill Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Self & Others Functional Expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership creates a plan for intentional recruitment, onboarding, and orientation activities with the adults responsible for character development. Y leadership provides ongoing Youth Development training opportunities for emotion management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership establishes a recruitment pipeline for staff and volunteers from internal and local community organizations. Y leadership establishes professional development and career path opportunities for staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership schedules regular training to review and learn healthy strategies and behaviors for supporting youth to deal with their emotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing and new staff receive training on emotion management techniques. Staff are given time once a week, or at the end of the program time, to reflect and get support from other staff to address any youth issues they have identified. Staff communicate with each other and share best practices for interacting with youth. Staff receive Listen First training.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEADER LEVEL

EMPATHY: Adults work with youth to relate to others with acceptance, understanding, and a sensitive to diverse perspectives and experiences.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Appropriate Structure and Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Communication & Influence • Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders create a safe space that promotes feelings of mutual respect, acceptance and appreciation among youth and leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff model and apply cultural competency and global awareness in youth development work. • Youth development leaders create positive rapport and shared interest with all youth. • Youth development leaders create protocols that allow youth to reflect, provide feedback, and be empathic while listening to the experiences, perspectives, and narratives of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders use warm, inclusive and respectful tone of voice and positive body language to intentionally create a welcoming atmosphere. • Youth development leaders use effective listening and verbal skills, including positive body language and tone of voice to create a positive rapport with all youth. • Youth development leaders promote feelings of mutual respect, acceptance, and appreciation among youth and adults. • Youth development leaders create a mechanism for youth to confidentially convey information about their experiences, concerns, and suggestions for program improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders engage with youth in inclusive, empathetic, and friendly conversations making intentional efforts to know their interests. • During discussions, a talking stick (or alternate tool) is used to provide equal opportunities and respect for youth to share and to participate. • Staff meetings include a problem of practice protocol for reviewing youth needs and experiences in programs. • Staff take Y-USA eLearnings such as Advancing Equity: Understanding My Biases; Youth Reflection: Asking Open-Ended Questions; and Youth Affirmations: Distinguishing Between Praise and Encouragement.
Opportunities to Belong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication & Influence • Program/Project Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders provide opportunities for youth to appreciate or show kindness to others. • Youth voice and perspective are reflected within the youth program. • Youth development leaders provide opportunities for youth to develop their voice and perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders provide structured opportunities for youth to get to know each other during each program session. • Youth development leaders offer authentic choice within activities. • Organized opportunities are provided for youth to discover, explore, and discuss what's going on in their community and lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth explore effects of stereotypes, discrimination, and social structures. • Youth develop and share their own personal stories and attentively and emphatically listen to the experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives of others. • Youth development leaders use affirmations and pay attention to youth when they communicate about things that matter to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth write get-well cards and encouraging notes to peers who are ill or have been absent for a period of time. • After a game, youth share with each other the strengths they appreciate in teammates and competitors. • Students in the Youth Advisory Council meet every Friday to help create the following week's program activity schedule. • Youth use literacy (poetry writing, storytelling) to share something personal about themselves.
Opportunity for Skill Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Communication & Influence • Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders model and apply cultural sensitivity, compassion, and global awareness to exemplify and advance inclusive practice skills with youth. • Youth development leaders provide formal opportunities to learn about and value differences among each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders recognize that all youth have individual needs, temperaments, characteristic, and abilities and develop at their own rate. • Youth development leaders introduce youth to diverse cultures, careers, individual life experiences, and alternate perspectives on current events and topics relevant to their generation. • Youth development leaders apply strategies to assist youth in learning to express emotions in positive ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth practice identifying, understanding, and managing judgments and demonstrate care when others reveal or share emotional experiences. • Youth development leaders express affirmation, care, and curiosity, and pay attention to youth when they communicate about things that matter to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders create authentic interactions where youth experience new foods, friends, music, and field experiences. • Youth development leaders organize activities for youth to make new friends and learn new information about them. • Youth discuss the stereotypical portrayal of Native Americans in movies and how such portrayals might influence their views, as well as how those portrayals may influence Native American youth in the community. • Youth volunteer with other members (youth and adult) who are from different generations, countries, or backgrounds. • Staff organize youth volunteers to participate in service activities.

PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION LEVEL

EMPATHY: Adults work with youth to relate to others with acceptance, understanding, and sensitivity to diverse perspectives and experiences.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Appropriate Structure and Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion Communication & Influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program physical environment is a culturally sensitive safe place. Y leadership structures intentional recruitment, onboarding, and orientation activities with adults responsible for character development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership secures resources (people, time, and money) for materials to be displayed in the Y that reflect the diversity of its members, including different ethnicities, languages, genders, cultures, and races. Y leadership organize volunteers and hire staff and assign them to programs who reflect the composition and interest of the local Y community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multicultural materials are accessible and visible that reflect the diversity of people including different ethnicities, languages, genders, cultures, and races. Collateral materials include messages on the Y's websites and social media channels that highlight diversity, inclusion, and global work. Behavioral-based questions are embedded in the recruitment and hiring process to screen candidates for empathy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flags from member-represented countries around the world are displayed in the program space. A word wall displays <i>hello</i> in different languages. Staff sets up a "peace corner" to provide youth with the tools and resources to help understand other's perspectives. Y leadership practices strategic recruitment for volunteers and program staff from local organizations (high schools, colleges/universities) with youth development experience. Diverse community members are invited as guest speakers to youth programs, highlighting and exposing youth to diverse and global learning experiences. The onboarding includes Y-USA Listen First training for all youth development leaders. Listen First Discussion Guides are used in follow-up conversations with staff and volunteers.
Opportunity for Skill Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Self & Others Functional Expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership create systems that provide youth development leaders with ongoing training, support, and regular feedback on their facilitation and group management skills to maintain respect, acceptance and care for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff meetings include high-quality examples of what a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive program environment looks like. Staff have scheduled training (onboarding, professional development) on the subject of safe, trusting, and inclusive environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership provides ongoing training and resources in support of healthy strategies and behaviors for dealing with emotions. Y leadership actively implements regular evaluation of program goals, environment and outcomes. Y leadership uses data to highlight youth achievement and progress to key stakeholders and continuous improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership uses program quality assessments and other continuous improvement measures to monitor program environments, they share results and make decisions that are informed by data. Staff are provided with an "empathy tool kit" to use with participants. Youth development leaders take Y-USA Dimensions of Diversity and Cultural Lenses workshops.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEADER LEVEL

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING: Adults foster experiences where youth plan, collaborate, and coordinate action with others.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Appropriate Structure and Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration Developing Self & Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Development leaders provide structured opportunities for youth to build positive relationships with one another. Youth Development leaders create a positive rapport and shared interest with all youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Development leaders encourage, support, and provide structured opportunities for positive peer-to-peer relationships among youth. Youth Development leaders create norms and routines for effective group work. Time is dedicated to support adults in managing unproductive conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Development leaders ensures time is designated for Ice Breakers, Team Building, or get to know you activities. Youth Development leaders provide opportunities for youth to lead, problem-solve, and make decisions. Youth Development leaders facilitate youth-led groups that work together towards shared goals. Youth Development leaders intervene as needed to support positive group dynamics through one-on-one conversations, problem solving, and reflection of group norms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Development leaders serve as advisors to youth created clubs and groups. The program environment has many examples of flipcharts, quote cards, graffiti walls and youth-created art to document youth input. group discussions.
Supportive Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration Communication & Influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Development leaders engage with youth in positive, inclusive, and nurturing manner. Youth Development leaders create opportunities for youth and families to connect during and outside of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Development leaders initiate opportunities to get to know youth better or to show interest in their lives. Youth Development leaders use effective listening and verbal skills, including positive body language and tone of voice. Youth Development leaders work with parents, caregivers, and families to identify shared goals for youth and support youth in reaching those goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Development leaders give a formal opening and closing at the beginning and end of every program session. Youth Development leaders engage youth in conversation using open-ended questions and listens and responds, when appropriate, to their responses. Youth Development leaders encourage feedback from youth and caregivers and provides stakeholder driven choices within youth programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Development leaders create a "Welcome Back" bulletin board that acknowledges new and returning program participants. End-of-session swim lessons events bring parents, youth, and staff together, allowing everyone to deepen relationships that have been created during the swim session. When speaking with youth, the Youth Development leader lowers their body in order for his/her body to match the youth, where appropriate.
Opportunities to Belong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Self & Others Program/Project Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders ensure opportunities for youth to develop a sense of belonging. Youth development leaders encourage youth to manage group dynamics and define a group's accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders promote feelings of mutual respect, acceptance, and appreciation among youth and adults. Youth development leaders work with youth to create a vision and define outcomes for a youth group. Youth development leaders hold youth and themselves accountable to an agreed upon set of rules, behavior expectations, and consequences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders work with youth to develop program rules and related positive and negative consequences. Group norms and values are posted in the program space and are referenced by youth and adults frequently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Club and group meeting and activities are scheduled and accompanied by participant contracts that outline agreed upon norms, expectations, behaviors, and responsibilities. Youth development leaders work with youth to learn how to write a mission and vision statement. In the class, adults and youth review the Y's mission and vision and practice writing a mission statement for a group or club in which they are a part.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEADER LEVEL

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING: Adults foster experiences where youth plan, collaborate, and coordinate action with others.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Support for Efficacy and Mattering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Self & Others Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders use an inclusive youth-centered approach to address and respond to youth's developmental needs and identities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Teachable moments" are frequently used to address dilemmas, situations, and issues across youth groups and between individual youth. Youth development leaders refer to youth as "leaders", work side-by-side with them, and provide youth control over how their roles and responsibilities are developed and executed in teams and groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders employ positive behavior guidance strategies that provide youth with increased self-awareness and self-control. Lesson plans and the program environment document visible methods of recording youth voice, input, and ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders coach youth to use mindfulness and breathing practices to help youth stay calm and focused during practice and games. Youth development leaders urge youth to "call a friend" or "ask three before me" to encourage youth to initially ask questions of a peer before asking an adult.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING: Adults foster experiences where youth plan, collaborate, and coordinate action with others.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Appropriate Structure and Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Communication & Influence • Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders cultivate partnerships among staff, parents, and caregivers, and community organizations to maximize program impact level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders become spokespeople for youth to organizations (local school system, state/local government, rec) that partner with the Y on youth development initiatives. • Staff and volunteers have sufficient access to technology to convene meetings with internal and external stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders utilize existing parent observation space as a place for parents to connect and build relationships with other parents and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y Leadership and staff participate on community and organizational Boards advocating and inform youth development initiatives. • In addition to classrooms, where appropriate, youth can use on-site meeting space and age appropriate software and technological devices to develop ideas, meet with each other, and complete projects. • A slide show of pictures from the day's activities are displayed on a TV at the parent table during sign-out.
Opportunity for Skill Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Self & Others • Functional Expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y leadership provides ongoing training and resources on youth development techniques and strategies for adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders are given time for continuing education on topics of youth development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During training, youth development leaders role play with each other taking different approaches to engaging various youth personalities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders participate in frequent retreats and "step backs" that include topics such as managing conflict, eliminating cyberbullying, and building trust with and empathy for youth who've experienced trauma. • Y-USA's Youth Affirmations training is provided to all Youth Development Leaders.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEADER LEVEL

RESPONSIBILITY: Adults develop youth to be reliable and committed, and to fulfill obligations and challenging roles.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Support for Efficacy and Mattering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Self & Others Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders train, provide adults support, and then gradually release youth to take ownership and accountability for their growth and development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In youth development programs, adults create situations in which youth must produce a finished product. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults create lessons that require youth to master multiple steps with varying difficulty. Youth development leaders provide all youth with opportunities to be responsible for specific activities or routine tasks. Youth development leaders support and encourage youth to be successful with their responsibilities by coaching youth on follow-through. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders encourage youth to try new skills and provide support and guidance through the learning process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders encourage, support and provide structured opportunities for positive peer to peer relationships among youth. Youth development leaders respect youth's ownership and decision making within their roles while providing support as youth encounter the demands, requirements, and obligations of their roles and understand that their actions will impact self, peers, or others. As youth succeed in their roles, Youth Development Leaders help youth internalize the experience of having fulfilled valued roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Y uses a Leaders In Training program to develop youth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults stage a "Jobs for Teens" workshop focusing on the Core value of "Responsibility"; this workshop should include a career panel, mock interviews, and resume writing session. Youth development leaders provide the necessary materials and supplies for youth to prepare snack time to include selecting snacks, organizing the distribution of snacks, and cleaning up. During basketball practice, youth are assigned roles such as equipment manager, time keeper, and sportscaster.
Opportunity for Skill Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Self & Others Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders, in partnership with youth, develop entrepreneurial activities for generating commerce to support a cause at the local Y and/or within the surrounding community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders establish partnerships with surrounding businesses to provide materials, venues, and supplies for youth projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders work with youth on a cause-driven, age appropriate project. Youth development leaders develop financial literacy through age appropriate projects with youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders acknowledge youth through specific observations, appreciations of their efforts, and accomplishments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders develop partnerships among staff, families, caregivers, and community organizations, (schools, youth programs, etc.) to maximize program impact. Youth development leaders encourage youth to try new skills and provides support and guidance through the learning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth grow and sell potted plants to raise money to purchase and care for a classroom pet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth create and sell art work to donate funds to contribute towards a Y Campaign. The local Y showcases youth projects during special events such as a "Community Dance-Off" for Breast Cancer Awareness or "Story Squad" and open mic events as a part of the Youth Safety and Violence Prevention project. Youth organize a "Family Fun Run" to educate each other and the community on healthy living habits. Youth practice swimming techniques they learned by performing the skill with or without the assistance of flotation devices. Youth explore social justice issues of interest through program activities and volunteer work that help youth understand their own community while empowering them to make change in the community.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEADER LEVEL

RESPONSIBILITY: Adults develop youth to be reliable and committed, and to fulfill obligations and challenging roles.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Integration fro Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication & Influence • Inclusion • Collaboration 	Youth development leaders intentionally connect with families and members of the community to identify and develop youth interests, manage any issues, and address youth concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders communicate with families frequently and in a language that is accessible to them. • Youth development leaders collaborate to plan projects for youth that prioritize youth issues, interests, and curiosities. • Youth development leaders organize projects that establish a connection between the local community and the Y Association. 	<p>A. Youth development leaders develop and maintains open, friendly, cooperative, and respectful relationships with families and community partners.</p> <p>B. Youth development leaders help youth or families with unique experiences or points of view so families can share their perspectives with others.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During the season of a youth program, youth development leaders communicate in print and in person with families; this may include email, newsletters, via text, as well as face to face meetings. 2. Youth development leaders work with youth to create a social media venue to highlight youth events, causes and projects. 3. Youth development leaders create service learning and internship opportunities for youth to serve as translators and interpreters where necessary. 4. Led by the Core Value, "Responsibility", the Y staff and volunteers work with multi- age groups to clean up litter on the Y grounds and immediate vicinity; afterwards, youth create signage with slogans that encourage "good neighbor" practices. 5. Youth development leaders provide caregivers youth progress reports that contributes to youth self-confidence, challenges, and ways caregivers and family can enlist support.

PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION LEVEL

RESPONSIBILITY: Adults develop youth to be reliable and committed, and to fulfill obligations and challenging roles.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples (Not exclusive or applicable to all ages)
Appropriate Structure and Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Communication & Influence • Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program design includes embedded opportunities for youth to be responsible for specific activities or routine tasks. • Youth development leaders use a youth-centered approach to address and respond to developmental needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Y Association has age appropriate furniture, program materials and supplies that are accessible to youth participants. • Y leadership engages in continuous improvement to ensure youth development programs support innovative approaches to learning and develop next generation skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The youth development leaders ensure all staff model and apply cultural competency and global awareness in youth development work. • Youth development leaders have clear roles and responsibilities within the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth are encouraged and taught how to use technology and social media appropriately to communicate with each other and with adults. • Youth development leaders provide ample waste and recycling receptacles for youth's program use. • Signs around the program promote the importance of individual responsibility and respect for program space and others. • Youth development leaders support youth to take turns preparing meals and cleaning camp grounds.
Integration for Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion • Developing Self & Others 	<p>Youth development leaders intentionally connect with families and members of the community to identify and develop youth interest; manage any issues and address youth concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families have access to the building and staff where and when appropriate. • Family and community engagement are written into the Association's strategic plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders create a safe environment that helps all youth feel welcome and respected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y leadership and staff establish office hours and telephone and email access to families that outlines in writing appropriate response time. • Family engagement responsibilities are part of the job duties of at least one full time youth development position. • Youth development leaders maintain and update the community wall where resources, employment opportunities, and local business are highlighted.
Opportunity for Skill Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Self & Others • Functional Expertise 	<p>Youth development leaders have professional development opportunities to support their facilitation of meaningful roles in the program for youth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During staff meetings, the agenda includes high quality examples of meaningful youth roles and how staff can support youth in those roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y leadership provides ongoing training and resources around youth development techniques for working with youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders attend training on technology use, blended learning, and virtual platforms into lesson planning and instructional delivery. • Youth development leaders provide positive and constructive feedback to youth. Feedback that encourages youth to be responsible, affirmed, and supported.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEADER LEVEL

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: Adults encourage youth to act, persist, and initiate goals and outcomes..

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Appropriate Structure and Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Developing Self & Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders work with youth to develop and monitor personal goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders retreat with youth to discover personal motivation and interests. • Y leadership implements regular evaluation of program goals, environment and outcomes. • Youth development leaders provide opportunities for youth to have authentic choices during program activities based on their interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders ask questions to learn about what motivates and interest youth in my program. • Youth development leaders facilitates regular opportunities for youth to reflect on and respond to their experience (plans, feeding, etc.) • Youth choice is embedded in program structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In camp settings, camp counselors spend time during fireside chats with campers to review the Core Values; youth will identify one value that they will focus on throughout the duration of camp and begin journaling using the topic, "Building a Better Me". • Youth development leaders will query using a youth survey or other tool to learn more about youth confidence, fears, concerns, and cares.
Integration for Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Communication & Influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders will make explicit connections between youth goals and family and community expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders schedule events for families to attend youth showcases. • Youth development leaders work with families and caregivers to teach them how to integrate the Core Values into a youth's homelife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders develop partnerships among staff, parents, and caregivers and community organization to maximize program impact. • Youth development leaders acknowledge and affirm the contribution of youth to their parents and caregivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders organize celebrations and end of program events to highlight youth accomplishments and developments. • Youth development leaders will provide parents and caregivers a toolkit of motivational words and developmentally appropriate actions that can support Character Development in the home.
Support for Efficacy and Mattering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Communication & Influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults coach youth to persevere through challenging work by acknowledging effort, celebrating success, and appropriately responding to youth failure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff choose curricula that is rigorous and stretches youth to perform, think and create outside of their comfort zone. • Adults arrange opportunities for youth to reflect on and share their feelings about wins, losses, successes, failures, and future goals. • Adults provide specific affirmation (not generic praise) how their efforts lead to positive results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders encourage, support and provides\ structured opportunities for peer to peer relationships among youth. • Adults use appropriate, S.A.F.E.(Sequences, Active, Focused and Explicit) and fun activities based on participant age, ability and interest. • Youth development leaders facilitate daily opportunities for youth to reflect ton and respond to their experiences (plan, feeling, etc.) • Youth development leaders create opportunities for the celebration of youth's efforts and accomplishments with one another and with their families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth development leaders organize snack and lunch buddies between youth and association staff and members as an opportunity to coach youth on perseverance, resilience, and grit. • After a competitive event, youth development leaders schedule time for youth to speak with each other and them about how they feel, identify what was successful and areas for improvement in the future.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEADER LEVEL

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: Adults encourage youth to act, persist, and initiate goals and outcomes.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Support for Efficacy and Mattering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion Developing Self & Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders mentor youth who struggle to make friends, have poor attendance, or do not enthusiastically participate in program activities and events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders identify individual youth who attend the youth development program less than 90% of the time and know their reasons for poor attendance. Youth development leaders work closely with youth who display a disinterest or boredom with the program by challenging and encouraging them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders create a safe environment that helps all youth feel welcome and respected. Youth development leaders employ positive behavior guidance strategies that provide youth with increased self-awareness and self-control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders practice with youth to ask for quiet or alone time to process emotions and practice, when ready, appropriately re-engaging with others. Youth development leaders coach youth to turn difficult personal situations into advocacy for others; for example, where youth experience personal tragedies involving trauma, abuse and violence, adults work with youth to engage in service or create public service announcements around the issue. Youth development leaders will work with youth to select a high interest project and age-appropriate mechanisms such as journals, avatars, and daily checklists for youth to use to record their progress on a task or project.

PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION LEVEL

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: Adults encourage youth to act, persist, and initiate goals and outcomes.

Key Feature	Youth Development Competency	Strategy	Indicator	Behavior	Examples
Appropriate Structure and Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional Expertise Program/Project Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program structure ensures youth engage in activities that have a clear focus and a skill building component. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth choice is embedded in program structure. Youth goal setting is embedded in program structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed goal setting into staff training and provide support for staff on how to develop goals with youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth were asked to identify how high they intended to climb on the climbing wall and other youth were encouraged to plan and build a shelter. Youth were given freedom to decide how their final video project will look and feel. As a consequence of this autonomy, youth are faced with many challenges for which they must identify and execute solutions. These opportunities help youth develop the skills to set goals and persevere in achieving those goals.
Opportunity for Skill Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Self & Others Functional Expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership provides ongoing training and resources on youth development techniques and strategies for adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders are given time and access to continued professional development. Youth development leaders receive training on using data to inform and guide program decisions. Youth development leaders review data and other sources of research to better understand the current state of youth in their community (neighborhood, city, state, nation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders have scheduled training on working with youth to develop goals. In meetings, youth development leaders practice how to talk youth through challenging situation while encouraging perseverance and goal achievement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders will be a member of or have access to at least one journal or magazine that focuses on youth development (i.e. New Directions for Youth Development, Journal of Youth Development, Parks & Rec Business, Youth Connections Magazine). Youth development leaders will access databases such as Kids Count and research from the Afterschool Alliance while planning youth development programs. Y-USA's Introduction to S.A.F.E. training has been provided to all youth development leaders.
Integration for Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership will remove or minimize financial and cultural barriers that may prevent youth and families from participating in character development programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth development leaders will work together to raise funds for financial assistance for fee-based youth development programs. Y leadership partner with community and citywide organizations to serve as a community resource. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership ensures all staff model and apply cultural competency and global awareness in youth development work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y leadership commission a working group to identify the number of families who were interested in a youth program but did not apply because of its cost; in response, as a part of its annual campaign, Y staff and volunteers organize and launch a community wide fundraising event – i.e. sidewalk sale, bake sale, etc. The association/branch offers GED classes, the use of a computer lab, and English classes on site and at no cost.

SOURCES

PRACTICE AREA SELECTION

- 1) Research:** Bradley, M., and K. Andrews. 2017. "Literature Review on Adult Practices that Nurture Character Development in Youth." Prepared for YMCA of the USA as a part of the Character Development Leadership Institute. Washington, DC: Child Trends. Research cited in this literature review includes Beatty, A. 2017. "Approaches to the Development of Character: Proceedings of a Workshop." Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; Catalano, R. F., Berglund, M. L., Ryan, J. A. M., Lonczak, H. S., and J. D. Hawkins. 2004. "Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research Findings on Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591(98), 98–124; Hanover Research. 2015. "Supporting Character Development in Youth and Children." Prepared for YMCA of the USA. Arlington, VA: Hanover Research; Hansen, D. M., Larson, R. W., and J. B. Dworkin. 2003. "What Adolescents Learn in Organized Youth Activities: A survey of Self-Reported Developmental Experiences." *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 13(1), 25–55; Levings, J., Moroney, D., and B. Garcia. 2016. "YMCA: Examining Best Practices to Promote Youth Character Development." Chicago: American Institutes for Research; Lickona, T., Schaps, E., and C. Lewis. 1995. "The Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education: A Guide for Schools and Districts." Washington, DC: Character.org; Lickona, T. 1996. "Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education." *Journal of Moral Education*, 25(1), 93; Lickona, T. 2004. *Character Matters: How to Help Our Children Develop Good Judgment, Integrity, and Other Essential Virtues*. New York: Simon & Schuster; Park, N. 2009. "Building Strengths of Character: Keys to Positive Youth Development." *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 18(2), 42–47; Smith, C., McGovern, G., Peck, S. C., Larson, R., Hillaker, B., and L. Roy. 2016. "Preparing Youth to Thrive: Methodology and Findings from the Social and Emotional Learning Challenge." Washington, DC: Forum for Youth Investment.
- (2) Expert feedback:** Child Trends. 2017. "Identifying and Categorizing Adult Practices to Support Character Development in Programs for Children and Youth: Findings from a Delphi Survey." Prepared for YMCA of the USA as part of the Character Development Leadership Institute. Washington, DC: Child Trends.
- (3) Scalable:** Levings, J., Moroney, D., and B. Garcia. 2016. "YMCA: Examining Best Practices to Promote Youth Character Development." Chicago: American Institutes for Research. Through a national selection process in 2016, three Y associations—The Granite YMCA, Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center, and YMCA of Silicon Valley—were nominated as character Bright Spots and participated in this examination of best practices embedded within the Y Movement.
- (4) Measurable:** YMCA of the USA. 2018. "Character Development Crosswalk of SEL Terms." Chicago: YMCA of the USA; Yohalem, N. and A. Wilson-Ahlstrom. 2010. "Inside the Black Box: Assessing and Improving Quality in Youth Programs." *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 45 (3-4):350–7.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Youth development at the Y requires that adults at the Y, from C-suite to frontline youth development leaders, have the knowledge and skills to implement high-quality opportunities for youth. Youth development programs are a medium through which youth can develop their character. At a Y association, this means that the organization has the capacity to engage Y staff and volunteers in a process to build upon their knowledge of character development, increase the capacity of individuals and organizations to intentionally apply that knowledge, enhance the implementation of character in our Movement, and, ultimately, develop positive character among youth. In 2015, the Y-USA Capacity Building Team identified five core supports that a Y association needs to effectively deliver, measure, grow, and sustain high-quality youth development programming over time. The core supports are common agenda, backbone support, continuous improvement through measurement, investment and sustainability, and collaborative action.

DEFINITION OF HIGH-QUALITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

According to the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council (2002), eight fundamental features bolster high-quality youth development programming ("Community Programs to Promote Youth Development," Washington, DC: National Academy Press):

Physical and psychological safety. The site is physically safe and encourages psychologically safe youth interaction.

Appropriate structure. The organization has the appropriate leadership and staffing model to support youth development outcomes.

Supportive relationships. Adults and youth have an open line of communication, deliberately collaborate, problem solve together, and engage in positive interactions (i.e., apprenticeships, mentoring).

Opportunities to belong. Adults and youth appreciate one another by creating an inclusive culture where youth can explore and express their identities in meaningful and authentic ways.

Positive social norms. Adults act as role models and provide support for youth to set positive goals.

Support for efficacy and mattering. Adults intentionally foster with youth a sense of worth, respect, and belonging.

Opportunity for skill building. Adults provide opportunities for youth to gain new knowledge and skills.

Integration for family engagement. Adults recognize and actively include the family and the community as partners in positive youth development.