RTI INTERNATIONAL

FYSB Family & Youth Services Bureau
Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program

ACF

Empower First, Educate Next:
Adopting an Empowerment Framework in Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE)

February 28, 2024
3:00–4:30 PM EST

Asari Offiong, PhD, MPH, & Zabryna Balén, MPH(c)
Child Trends

Youth Panelists
Sumaya Uthmaan, Angela Zhong,
Daiya Thompson, Jamiyah Getret, Victoria Durost

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Webinar Logistics

- Mute when not talking.
- Turn off video if you experience any connection issues.
- Type questions in the chat.
- Use time reserved for Question & Answer at the end.
- Take off "everyone" if you want to directly message with someone.
- Note that a transcript & recording will be available on *The Exchange*.

Presenters

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Meeting Norms

- **Participate and engage.** We want to hear from you, and we want you to hear your colleagues.

- **Be fully present.** Although sidebar conversations in the chat and cell phone use may be tempting, let's try to be present and maximize our time together.

- **Begin and end on time.**

Agenda

- Welcome & Overview
- Understanding Empowerment Frameworks
- Youth Panel: *Empowerment through a Youth Lens*
- Applying an Empowerment Framework
- Q&A
- Reflection & Wrap Up

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Objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants will be able to:

1 Define an empowerment framework that highlights agency, autonomy, and strengths-based framing.

2 Recognize the value of using an empowerment framework within SRAE programming.

3 Learn from youth perspectives the various ways to apply an empowerment framework in SRAE programming.

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Think back to when you were a teen…

Think back to when you were a teen, what were some things you were told NOT to do?

As a teen, what was your response or reaction when you were told NOT to do something?

- Freedom
- Confidence
- Depends.
- Got slightly frustrated
- Just observed how anxious my mom was talking about this
- Got frustrated
- Argue
- Sometimes do it, be curious
- Guilt, fear, self-blame
- Scared
- Felt they didn't understand
- I listened pretty well
- I'm not you

- Made me curious and want to break rules.
- Do it anyways
- Gonna do it
- Why?
- Curious
- Do it anyway!
- Felt like adults didn't understand me
- Rebel
- IDidIt

Understanding an Empowerment Framework

What words come to mind when you think of empowerment?

What is an Empowerment Framework?

An Empowerment Framework:

- Demonstrates that systemic power imbalances are core to disparities for marginalized communities/groups.

- Is based on the belief that everything possible should be done to restore power to marginalized groups through validation and celebration of their strengths.

- Works to identify and challenge the external conditions, promote resilience and center the individual's wants and needs (agency and autonomy).

(Simon, 1994; Úcar Martinez et al., 2017)

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Empowerment Definitions

- **Health Empowerment**
  - "...one's belief that they have a significant influence over health outcomes, including the ability to address personal health issues and feel in control over factors that can impact health outcomes" (Jiang et al., 2022).
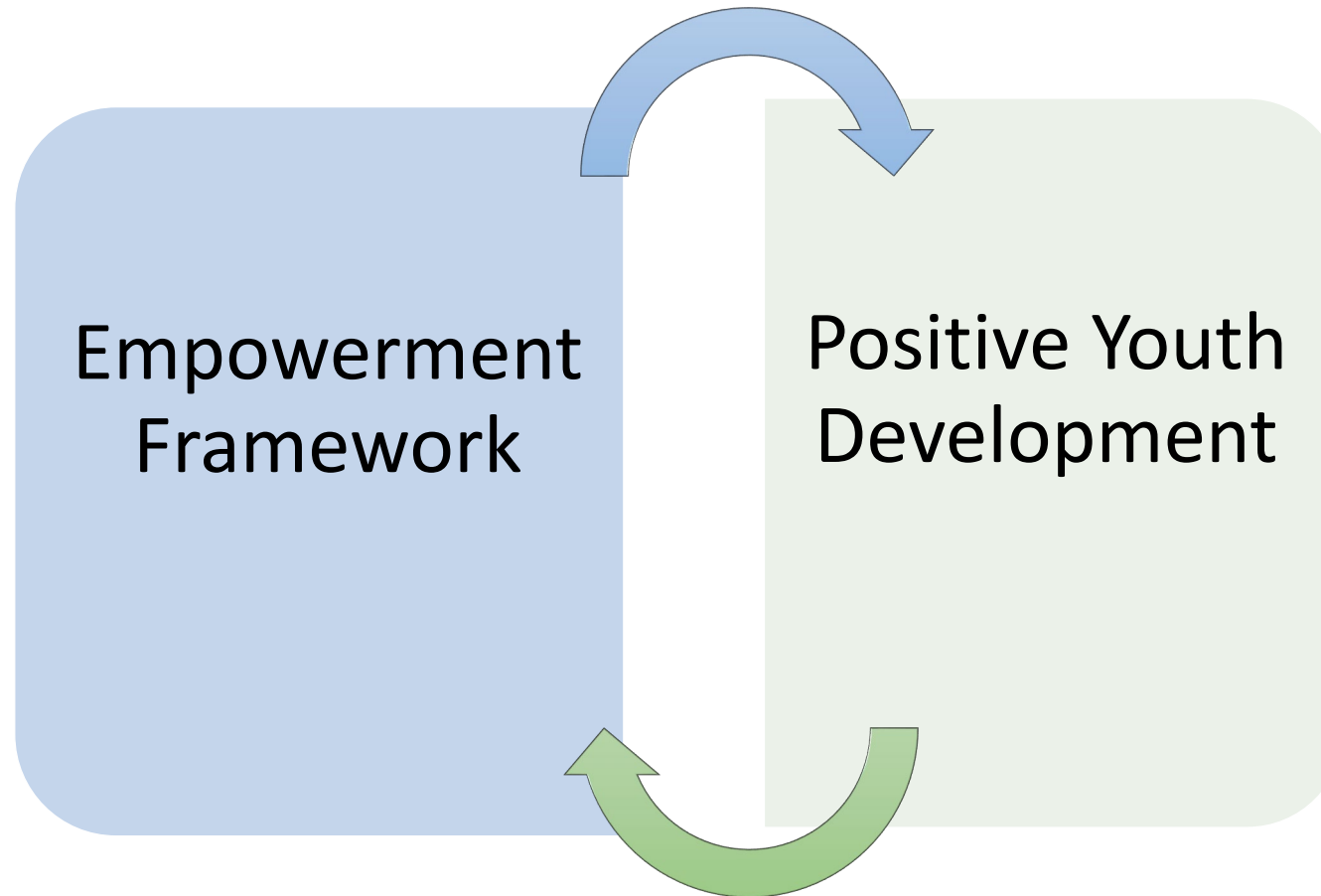
- **Youth Empowerment**
  - "...while complex, its dimensions are associated with growth and well-being, relational, educational, political, transformative and emancipative" (Úcar Martínez et al., 2016).
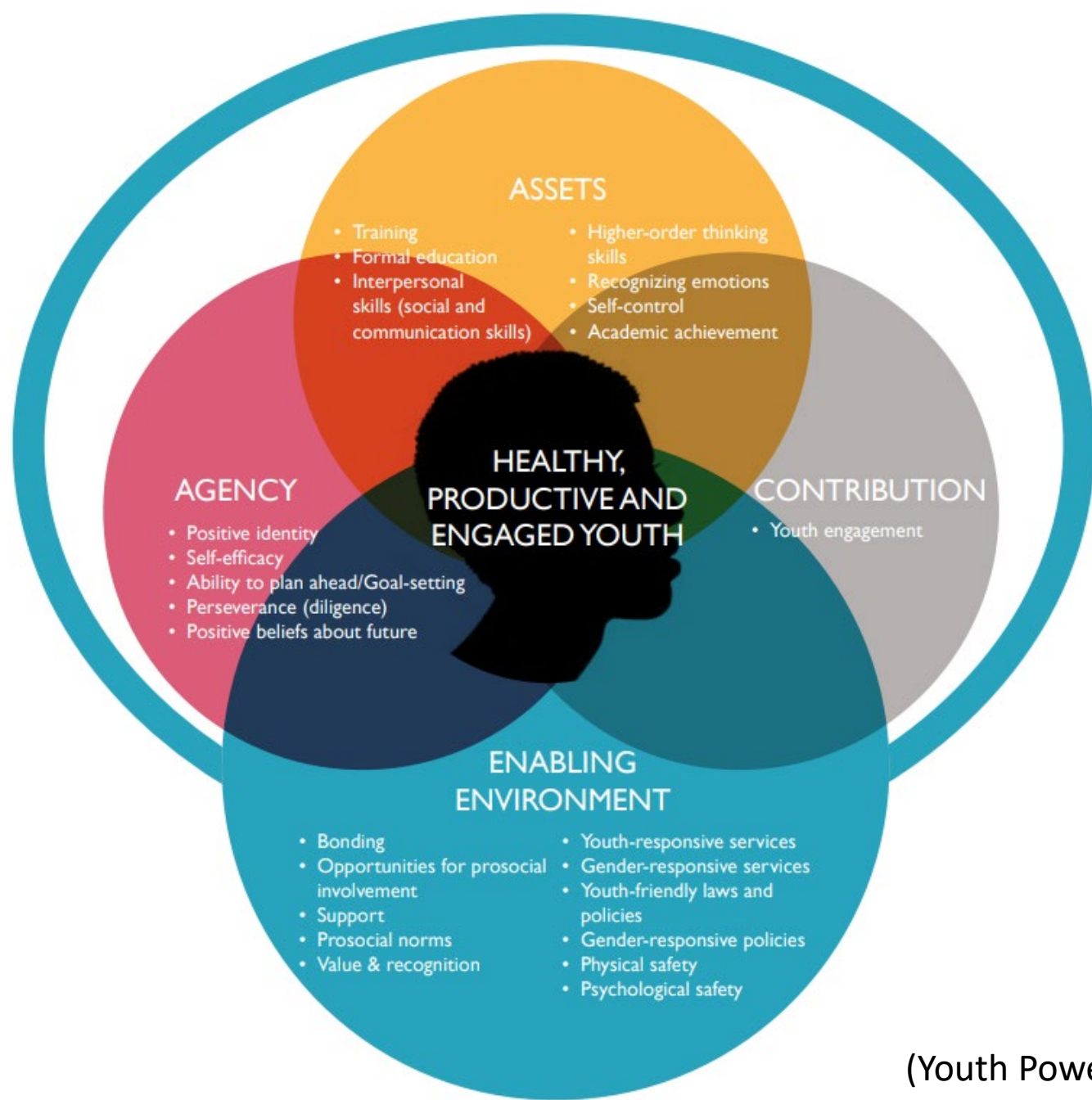
Autonomy

- Empowerment to make informed choices over one's own life in the present and future.

- Adolescents stand to make truly autonomous decisions if they are provided with the **right information**, at the **right time**, at the **right place,** by the **right persons**, and in the **right way**.

(United Nations Population Fund, 2021)

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In the case of youth…

Empowerment Framework

Positive Youth Development

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Positive Youth Development Framework
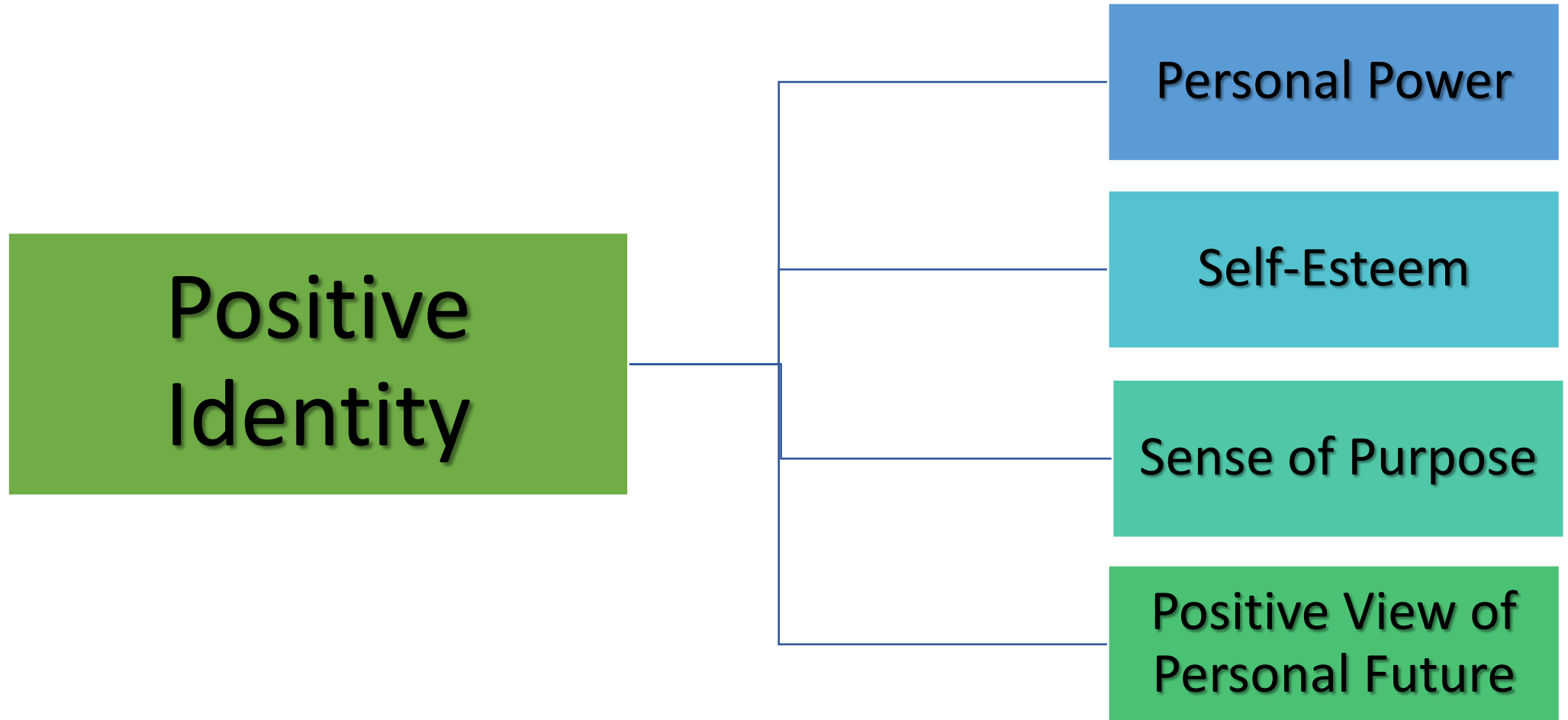

(Youth Power et al., 2016)

Agency

- "The personal capability to act and make free and informed choices to pursue a specific goal" (UNICEF, n.d.).

- "A person's agency in a brief episode of interaction is, in part, whether he or she initiates an idea; agrees with, elaborates on, questions, or disagrees with what someone else initiated; or refrains from responding" (Gresalfi et al., 2009).

- Context dependent, occurs in social practice (Nagaoka et al., 2015).

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(Search Institute, 1997; Youth Power, 2016)

Agency: Positive Identity

Positive Identity

- Personal Power
- Self-Esteem
- Sense of Purpose
- Positive View of Personal Future

(Search Institute, 1997; Youth Power, 2016)

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Agency: Self Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to a young person's belief and/or capacity to behave and act in ways that reach _their_ desired goals.

(Carey & Forsyth, 2009; Youth Power, 2016)

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Agency: Ability to Plan Ahead/ Set Goals

Setting goals can help young people

Achieve their desired outcomes

Increase self-confidence

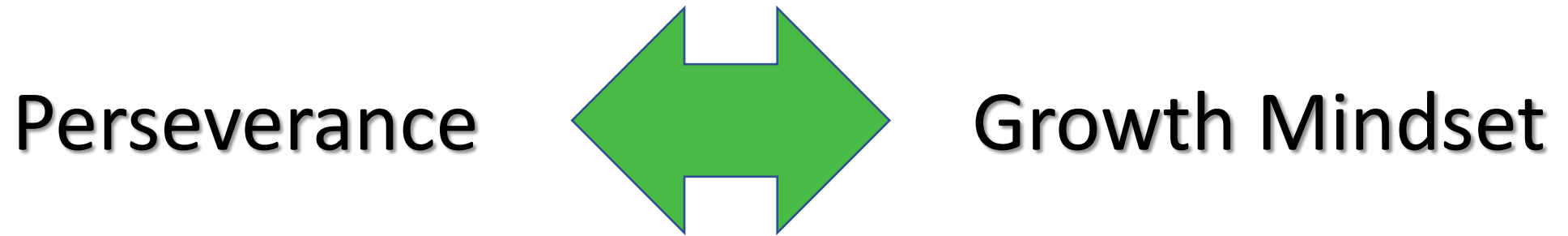Develop work ethic

Understand their internal motivations

Build perseverance

Learn when to ask for help

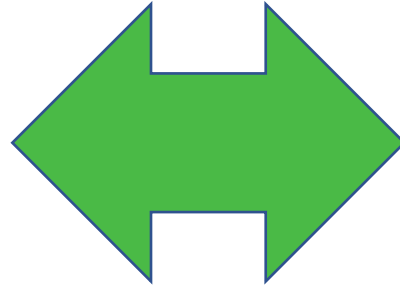(Boys & Girls Club of America, 2022; Youth Power, 2016)

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Agency: Perseverance

Perseverance ⬌ Growth Mindset

When youth build their perseverance, we see shifts in their growth mindset.

(Kirk, 2021; Youth Power, 2016)

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Agency: Perseverance

Perseverance ⬌ Growth Mindset

When youth build their perseverance, we see shifts in their growth mindset.

From:

"I'm not good at this!" ➡

"I give up!" ➡

To:

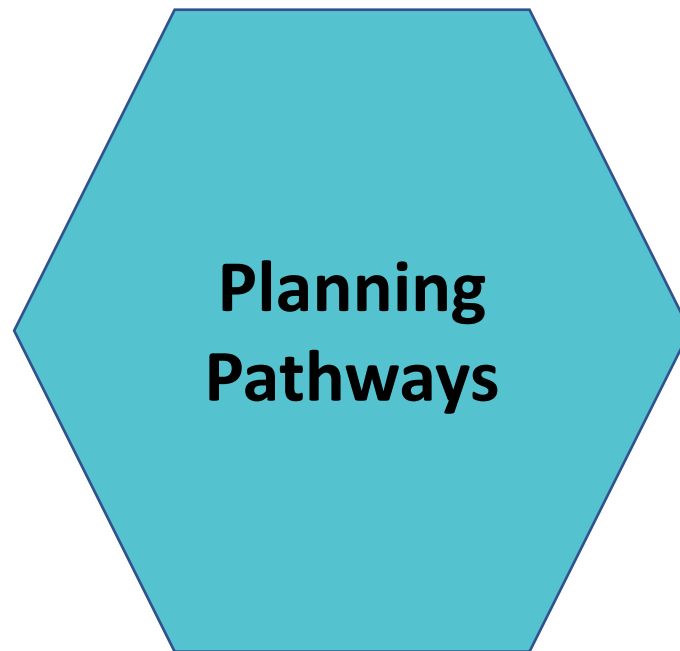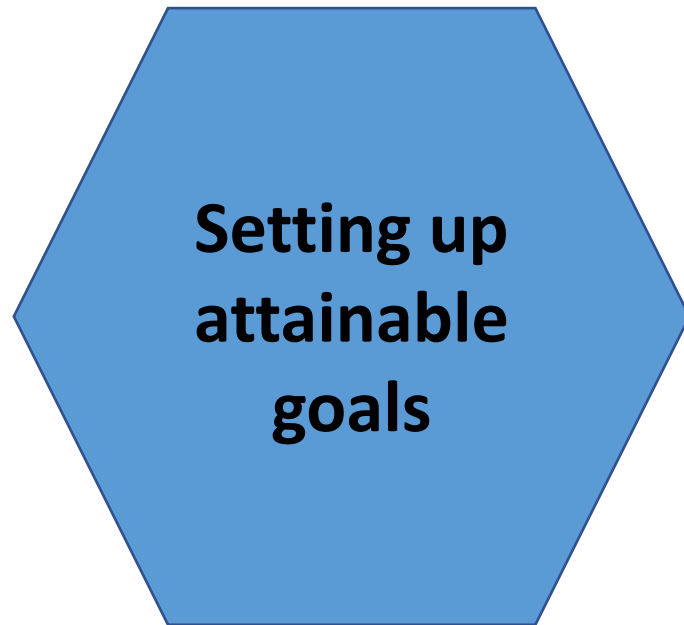"I'm not good at this, YET!"

"What went wrong? So, I can fix it next time!"

(Kirk, 2021; Youth Power, 2016)

Agency: Positive Beliefs about the Future

These beliefs are shaped by goal-directed thoughts and motivation:

Setting up attainable goals

Planning Pathways

Maintaining self-confidence

(Youth Power, 2016)

Why is this important?

- Acknowledges youth experiences and context
- Destigmatizes behaviors or decisions that youth may encounter
- Makes content relatable and relevant
- Keeps youth engaged
- Has immediate and long-term impacts on youth
- Shifts away from right/wrong or moral compass to "what is best for you"

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Empowerment Through A Youth Lens (Youth Panel)

Facilitated by: Asari Offiong
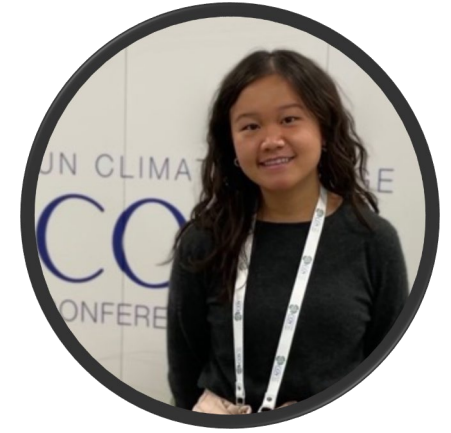
Youth Panelists

Daiya Thompson

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Scenario #1

A facilitator is preparing for a session focused on teen pregnancy, and they are aware that one of the students in the class is a young father. The session focuses on all the reasons why teens should avoid pregnancy. What should the facilitator consider to avoid being stigmatizing?

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Scenario #2

An after-school counselor tells a facilitator that some of the 7th graders have been engaging in inappropriate behaviors. They want the facilitator to address it. What thoughts do you have for how the facilitator could follow-up with youth to learn more about the situation and address the behaviors?

Scenario #3

Some community members are pushing back on the program because they have heard misinformation about the program and that it is spreading inappropriate messages to youth. What suggestions do you have for how the program can engage their youth to help educate the community about the program and its benefits?

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What tips do you have for organizations that want to take a more empowering approach?

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Applying an Empowerment Framework

Check Yourself!

Are these addressed or included in our programming/messaging?

- ✓ *Bodily esteem, awareness, and autonomy*
- ✓ *Youth voice*
- ✓ *Self-efficacy*
- ✓ *Social support*
- ✓ *Future orientation*
- ✓ *Safety/protection*

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Checkpoint #1:
Bodily Esteem, Awareness, and Autonomy

Prioritizes one's physical self

Has bodily awareness and esteem

Has information or know where to access information

Has knowledge of basic human rights

Have youth design their own preamble

Adapted from Upadhyay et al. (2021)

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Checkpoint #2: Youth Voice

Is comfortable expressing opinions to adults, peers

Can voice opinions or speak out even when in the minority

Can resist pressure from others when they want to

Engage youth in curriculum selections or review

Adapted from Upadhyay et al. (2021)

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Checkpoint #3: Self-efficacy

Feels able to choose if and what they want in their life

Has the freedom to determine, choose actions

Has the ability to contribute to decisions about one's own life

Develop a program motto: Set goals, not limits

Adapted from Upadhyay et al. (2021)

Checkpoint #4: Social Support

Has trusted adults/peers to lean on

Has judgement-free support system

Has someone to talk to about developmental changes and SRH

Host trainings or activities for trusted adults that coincide with what youth are learning

Adapted from Upadhyay et al. (2021)

Checkpoint #5:
Future Orientation

Has ideas/vision of their future life

Has role models/mentors

Has thought about (timing of) future reproduction

Connect youth to other programs, people or places that expands beyond the traditional success sequence

Adapted from Upadhyay et al. (2021)

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Checkpoint #6: Safety/Protection

Feels safe in one's environment (home, neighborhood, school)

Feels safe in one's daily activities

Add developing a safety plan as a core activity

Adapted from Upadhyay et al. (2021)

Questions & Answers

Highlighted Resources

Building On Strengths: The Role of Positive Youth Development in Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Programming

https://teenpregnancy.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/building-on-strengths.pdf

Empowering Personal Agency Through Creativity

https://teenpregnancy.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/SRAE_TTA_Empowering%20Personal%20Agency_508%20%281%29.pdf

Field Talk: Empowering Personal Agency Toward Healthy Decision-making and Thriving

https://teenpregnancy.acf.hhs.gov/resources/field-talk-empowering-personal-agency-toward-healthy-decision-making-and-thriving

Activate:

https://activatecollective.org/resource-explorer/

Center for Interdisciplinary Inquiry and Innovation in Sexual and Reproductive Health (Ci3)

https://ci3.uchicago.edu/

Thank you!

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