BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUTH

FACILITATOR GUIDE
The NCYC/NPJS Youth Care Curriculum Series is made up of a collection of modules designed to develop or enhance the skills and knowledge of those working with youth in secure settings. Modules in the series are designed to support individual professionals and the cultures in which they operate to embrace best practices in the field of juvenile justice.

Building Positive Relationships with Youth is one training module in this series. Because youth care work is a dynamic process, concepts from other topic areas, which are detailed elsewhere in the series, may be introduced in this module. Youth care workers may benefit from participation in all the training modules in the series.

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Course Description:
This program introduces staff to the concepts of Building Healthy Relationships with Youth and provides examples and practice in developing and facilitating those relationships. It also provides material for agency and program administrators to help support their staff in building relationships and to follow up after the learning experience to ensure staff practice what they learn on the job.

Total Course Time: Approx. 7-1/2 hours (6 hours of learning plus 1.5 hours for lunch and breaks)

Overall Curriculum Goals
• To help staff recognize how building healthy relationships with youth can improve youth outcomes while they are in the program and afterward
• To discuss how healthy relationship with youth in care can add to their capacity to maintain the safety and security of youth and staff
• To develop staff skills for building healthy relationships with youth

Learning Objectives
In this workshop, you will be able to:
• Identify the purpose and importance of each of the multiple roles youth care workers need to have with youth
• Practice active listening and other appropriate communication skills staff need in order to be an effective role model for youth
• Identify the skills youth need to develop to engage in healthy peer-to-peer relationships
• Identify the challenges staff face in promoting and encouraging supportive relationships with and among youth
• Develop a personal plan for building healthy relationships with youth
Building Healthy Relationship With Youth

Target Audience:
This learning experience is designed for Youth Care Workers – staff who work directly with youth in any facility, juvenile or adult, that holds youth in secure confinement.

Level of Training:
Intermediate

Recommended Content Areas Prior to taking this course:
- Understanding Adolescent Brain Development Through Current Research (2014), National Partnership for Juvenile Services, www.npjs.org or a similar training course covering current research on adolescent development and brain research
- Behavior Management (2014), National Partnership for Juvenile Services, www.npjs.org or a similar training course on managing youth behavior in a confinement setting

Required materials:
1. Printed Facilitators Guide
2. Participant Guide for each participant
3. PowerPoint slides
4. Laptop or computer
5. Projector or LCD Flip Chart and stand
6. Prepared newsprint charts, e.g., Ground Rules (see p. 21), etc. as needed
7. Flip chart Pad (Post-it type is recommended)
8. Markers (flip chart and dry erase)
9. Masking Tape
10. NPJSpeaks Hasan Davis, JD
    Segment # 1 – Lean on Me
    Segment #2 – The Value of Building Relationships with Youth
    Segment #3 – How do we do it?
    Segment #4 – When is it finally okay to give up?
    Segment #5 – What was your “Worthday?”

Other:
This is an interactive training session with frequent group discussion, small group activities and individual written assignments. The facilitator guide will provide anticipated responses and instructions for structured activities. In order to complete all the input, practice and processing of information, it will be necessary to stick to the timeline provided. Discussion is welcomed but should be guided by the facilitator as needed to accomplish this.
BEFORE the Learning Event:

Agency/program administrators should:

• Read *Supporting Staff in Building Healthy Relationships With Youth: A Guide for Administrators* below and follow the guidelines in that section to prepare supervisors, staff, youth and other stakeholders to focus on building relationships.

• Attend the beginning of each learning event to tell staff why this topic is important to your program and how they will be expected to use the concepts and skills they are learning in their work. [OPTION: Create a 3- to 5-minute video to be shown to staff at the beginning of each session.]

Facilitator should:

• Read the entire Facilitation Guide, prepare necessary materials and rehearse presentations and activities.

• Coordinate with the agency or program administrator to attend the beginning of each learning event, share the importance of this topic to the program and how staff will be expected to use the concepts and skills they are learning in their work. [OPTION: Work with the administrator to create a 3- to 5-minute video to be shown to staff at the beginning of each session.]

• Arrange for a room large enough to hold the expected number of participants at tables of 5-6 people each, with room to move around between the tables and chairs. You will also need a table for materials.

• Model in your facilitation style the kind of empowering strategies youth care workers could be using with youth. That is, encourage participants to ask questions, challenge the information and share opinions, even when they are not supportive of the content of this program. Encourage higher-level thinking and evaluation of their own attitudes and beliefs. Recognize risk-taking in trying out new ideas and behaviors. Support their learning efforts.

The following excerpt from *Adolescent & Youth Development Training Curriculum* by Sandra Escamilla (see Resources) provides useful guidance:

Learning means change. It means change in how we think and how we act. It involves altering our mental processes, expanding and adapting our repertoire of behaviors, and reviewing our habits. Using an interactive and experiential approach increases the likelihood that participants will consistently implement youth development approaches and skills in their workplace, community and personal lives. Participants bring with them the ideas, intuitions, and behaviors they have spent a lifetime building. Trainers have only a brief time in which to encourage effective learning and real and useful change.

How is this best achieved?

• **Identify Participants’ Current Views** – Help participants to recognize and clarify their current ideas and behaviors and assess the usefulness of these ideas in
working effectively with youth. This heightens their interest in learning effective alternative ideas and strategies.

- **Help Participants Construct Their Own Understandings** – Training isn’t about just giving people a new set of ideas. The ideas have to fit into a framework of what they already know. You activate the framework by discussing their current views and then helping them to make new links to the material you are presenting. New meanings are not transferences by the trainer; they are transformations by the learner.

- **Be Aware of Participants' Level of Readiness to Learn** – Participants in a course will be ready to learn if they are there voluntarily, and if they identify problems and their limitations in solving them. If participants are not yet "ready", it is not advisable to proceed too far. Instead, work on encouraging their commitment, identifying their needs, and helping them to recognize the weaknesses in their current ideas and behaviors.

- **Use a Variety of Interactive Approaches** – Learning occurs by engaging the participant actively in the process. Use lots of questions. Questions hook the mind. Encourage a debate and discussion within the confines of your time limits. This will be most fruitful if your questions do not require the "right" answer. Try to treat all answers as a contribution to the group's understanding. When people are assured that they won’t be made "wrong" they are far more likely to contribute actively. The attitude shifts and understandings you are working towards can usually be elicited from the group, by astute questioning. They are more likely to become part of the person's behavioral repertoire if they can say "I thought of that myself". People love stories. Tell personal anecdotes that illustrate a point. Keep them short and relevant to the group's purpose. With the same provisos encourage participants to personalize the materials with their own stories. Wherever possible, work on current challenges experienced by participants. This heightens the significance of the example. Active investigations and practical experiences are especially valuable because they engage participants in moving repeatedly between mental concepts and actual behaviors.

- **Be Precise** – People also need to be reminded of what they have learned and what they are about to learn. Use introductions, summaries, and chart key points to focus and reinforce learning. This manual will help you be precise about the teaching points you are getting across. Muddled thinking does not promote change. Sharp clarity does.

- **Use Language Appropriately** – Ideas are made and shared using language. Where the vocabulary and syntax is precise and engaging (without being pedantic and over-blown), ideas can more clearly be expressed, recognized and adapted to the uses of the participants.

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**At the BEGINNING of the learning event:**

**Facilitator should:**

- Make sure the room is arranged in table groups of 5-6 people and that no seats have their backs to the front of the room so everyone will easily be able to see you and the visuals.
• Greet each participant as they arrive and welcome him/her to the workshop
• Pass around a sign-in sheet for names and emails for follow up

AFTER the learning event:

Facilitator should:
• Review the feedback forms for any patterns.
• Consider alterations and adjustments to the workshop design in response to the feedback.
• After 60-90 days, follow up with the participants to determine whether they have used any of the things they learned in the workshop. Also, follow up with administrators to determine whether they have seen any changes as a result of the workshop.

References and Resources:

The following were used as sources of information for this training:


Werner and Smith, 1989

Benard, 2004

Carnegie Task Force on Youth Development and Community Programs Adolescents, 1992


National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004
Supporting Staff in

Building Healthy Relationships With Youth

A Guide for Administrators

Resiliency is the quality that allows young people to "bounce back" – to recover from negative experiences or overcome obstacles and risk factors in their lives. Research on childhood resiliency has shown that a caring relationship with a committed and encouraging adult “who believes in me and my future” is an essential ingredient for most youth who succeed and become healthy and productive adults despite economic adversity or other risk factors. (Werner & Smith, 1989)

Adolescents are able to change, grow and develop in settings where they form quality relationships, believe others take an interest and have high expectations for them, and where they have opportunities for participation in the system. There is evidence that these characteristics are more important than the kinds of programming and treatment we offer in juvenile justice and educational settings (Benard, 2004). It’s especially true of teenagers that they “don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

1 Figure 26 is from Benard, Bonnie and S. Slade. Listening to Students: Moving from Resilience Research to Youth Development Practice and School Connectedness in Handbook of Positive Psychology, Chapter 26 (forthcoming).
Yet in American society, developmental supports and opportunities for participation (e.g., in the family, school, community) for adolescents has been decreasing (Carnegie Task Force on Youth Development and Community Programs Adolescents, 1992; Commission on Children at Risk, 2003; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004).

In addition, positive, supportive relationships between staff and youth in your programs can reduce negative behavior by youth (e.g., incidents, injuries, repeat offenses) and may lead to increases in academic achievement, family support for the program, etc.

• Evaluations show that youth who participate in relationships with adult mentors... report improvements in self-efficacy and social competence as well as measureable reductions in problem behavior.
• Youth reporting a positive connection with at least one supportive adult engage in fewer risky behaviors, including substance abuse and delinquency. (Aspy et al., 2004; Oman et al., 2004)

Those things in turn may save some resources (e.g., costs of litigation, staff turnover, etc.), leaving more to improve programming options.

Finally, Section 223 (a)(K) under Title II of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) of 1974, reauthorized in 2008, urges state advisory groups and state agencies to provide direction and support for:

“...programs for positive youth development that assist delinquent and other at-risk youth in obtaining: (1) a sense of safety and structure; (2) a sense of belonging and membership; (3) a sense of self-worth and social contribution; (4) a sense of independence and control over one’s life; and (5) a sense of closeness in interpersonal relationships.”

We urge you to measure relevant data before and after implementing this approach to see for yourselves the impact of Building Healthy Relationships with Youth on staff, youth, families, other stakeholders and the program itself. This can be done using existing PBIS and PBS data points you’re already collecting.

Adopting A Relationship-Based Approach

Here are some considerations for moving your programs toward supporting staff in building more positive relationships with youth in care:

Agency/Facility Leadership:
• Must believe in and support a habilitative/rehabilitative philosophy of youth work
• Must convey the expectation that staff will build responsible, helpful adult relationships with youth, BOTH for security/safety and youth development purposes
• Must provide and support a clear, consistent behavior management system that works in conjunction with staff efforts and programs to focus youths’ learning and development
• Must support staff/youth relationships, clarify boundary issues
• Must support development of healthy peer relationships among youth in program
• Must recognize that how they treat staff will affect how staff treat youth
• Must review this curriculum and identify/adjust any parts that are in conflict with their expectations of staff

The School Adoption Model depicted below shows how faculty of a school adopts innovations, but the model applies to many organizational groups. In any such group, people tend to fall into one of five categories, according to how readily they take on the new approach.

Research indicates that time and energy spent inviting and supporting Early Adopters is critical to effectiveness of the change. (Innovators will usually be at the forefront but may not be as influential with others as the larger group of Early Adopters who follow them.) Inviting the informal leaders among your staff to take part in planning the change and being the ones to try it out pays off in their buy-in and engagement.

When the Early Majority begins to move toward the desired changes, too, you achieve “critical mass” and are assured the change will take hold. Spending time trying to convince the Laggards to join up is wasteful. At some point, they’ll be the only ones not going along and they usually give in in the end.
About CNYD

This training program is based on *Making It Happen: Relationship Building*, a training course developed by the Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD), which they have generously made available for educational use pursuant to a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License.

The Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD) functioned as a critical youth development intermediary organization from its founding in 1992 to its closing in 2013. Working deeply within Bay Area communities and statewide in California to institutionalize quality youth development practice, CNYD's focus on capacity-building was unique in its systems-wide approach to influencing change at policy, organizational and practitioner levels.

We are placing selected training materials and publications into the public domain with the hope that the knowledge and tools that were developed over two decades of work can continue to be a resource to the youth development field. These materials represent the best of what our many talented staff members learned about how to effectively train adults working with young people. We are grateful to the organizations that are making CNYD's resources available in the public domain and for keeping our work accessible and relevant.

Resources

This curriculum and the accompanying Participant Guide provide most of the information you might need to familiarize yourself with Building Healthy Relationships with Youth ideas and information. The bibliography provides some articles and references as well.

The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS - [www.npjs.org](http://www.npjs.org)) would be happy to provide additional support and guidance.

You may also be interested in the Using Positive Youth Development Strategies curriculum available through NPJS.
FACILITATION GUIDE

Anticipatory Set: SUPPORTIVE ADULTS (35 minutes)

**SAY:** Welcome to this learning event on Building Healthy Relationships with Youth.

**DO:** Have the agency or program administrator provide an introduction to this learning event. This may be “live” or on video.

When s/he is finished, thank him/her and introduce yourself.

**EXERCISE**

**SAY:** Before I have you introduce yourselves, I’d like you to take a look at the story called ‘Mr. Marino’ on page 2 of your Participant Guide and answer the questions at the bottom of the page.

**DO:** Give them 3-5 minutes to read the story and answer the questions. When nearly everyone appears to be finished, go on.
**Introductory Phrases**

**Say:** Now I’d like each of you to [introduce yourselves and] tell us briefly about one adult you listed, one characteristic they had, and one specific example of how they helped you.

**Do:** Have each person respond in turn. Keep each person to one example, to keep the process moving. Capture the characteristics of supportive adults on a chart as people identify them.

Thank them for sharing their stories. Tell them today’s workshop will help us all develop more of those characteristics that make us more influential with the youth we serve.

**Say:** On the slide and page 3 of your Guide you will find the Agenda for today, with the topics we’re going to cover.

**Do:** Review the course topics. Ask if there are particular things anyone would like to get from this workshop. Record any expectations/wants on a chart for reference and let them know if any cannot be covered in this workshop.

Review logistics for the workshop (e.g., breaks, lunch, restroom locations, etc.) and review/create ground rules.

Ask what questions they might have about the workshop.
SAY: During the remainder of this training, I’ll be showing you clips from a video that was made especially for this training program. It features Hasan Davis, a Juvenile Justice Reform Advocate and champion for youth and those who work with and for them.

Let’s listen as Hasan shares with us some of his early life experiences, what he has accomplished since that period in his life, and why he believes relationships are so critical for youth at risk.

Hasan Davis: Segment 1 – “Lean on Me”

[USE THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS FOLLOWING THE VIDEO CLIP]

SAY: Perhaps the most powerful role you can play is that of an ally to young people. You can advocate on behalf of youth to other adults, or like Dr. Lorraine Wilson, you may have more flexibility to be a guide and mentor unlike other adults who often have a range of agendas for a young person. You can seek to empower young people by working with them to discover new ideas and find their own solutions.

Your role also depends on the age of the youth in your program. With younger children you may need to be more directive in your approach. With teenagers you may take a more advisory role. Once you develop rapport and earn the trust of the youth, you may have a big influence over their behavior and choices. You can help youth make healthy decisions and offer emotional support as they deal with the challenges of their pre-adolescent and teen years.

WHAT ARE HEALTHY ADULT/YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS? (10 minutes)

SAY: I’d like you to think about the various roles you play in your life.

How many of you are parents?
DO: Have them raise their hands.

*How many of you are partners or spouses in committed relationships?*

DO: Have them raise their hands.

*How many of you are active in your community or social group in some role?*

DO: Have them raise their hands.

*SAY: In each of these roles, you may have different purposes or goals, and you may behave differently according to the role(s) you are in. For example, if you’re identified as a leader in a group, you may feel quite comfortable making plans or decisions for the group.*

*In your position as youth care worker, you also have more than one role.*

*For example, if I ask you, “Are you going to be warm enough in that jacket?” what role am I acting in?*

DO: Get a couple of responses.

**ROLES OF YOUTH CARE WORKERS** (15 minutes)

**EXERCISE**

*SAY: Please turn to page 5 in your Participant Guide. There are four dialogues here, numbered 1-4 on pages 5-8. Read each dialogue and identify the role Person A is in with Person B, who is a youth.*

[NOTE: The dialogues are included on pages 15-17 of this Guide, with possible responses.]
DO: Give them 10 minutes to read the dialogues, identify the role(s) and answer the questions below each dialogue.

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**Dialogues**

1. **Saturday Night**

   **Person B:** Can you change the channel on the TV? We want to watch the basketball tournament.

   **Person A:** As I read the behavior sheets, you haven’t got the points you need to stay up for the game. You have an early bedtime tonight. I believe Mr. Jones told you that before he left.

   **B:** That’s so unfair! He just doesn't like me. I did everything I was supposed to do and he still didn’t give me my points.

   **A:** You have 15 minutes before early bedtime. Would you like to look at the places you didn’t earn points? Maybe I can help you figure out what you need to do to earn enough points tomorrow. The tournament continues tomorrow night and maybe you won’t have to miss it.

**Questions:**

What is the relationship between Person A and Person B? How do you know?
[Disciplinarian, coach/helper]

When and why do you take on the role of Person A with youth?

2. **At the Game**

   **Person A:** Let’s go, people! I want to see you hustle!

   **Person B:** Put me in! Come on, put me in for the win!

   **A:** Last time you played, you fouled the other team every time you were in and we lost the game on foul shots.

   **B:** Okay, but you haven’t let me play for two games. I won’t let the team down, I promise!

   **A:** If I see you going for the foul, I’ll pull you out so fast you won’t know what happened, AND you’ll get written up for poor sportsmanship this time.

   **B:** Okay. I got it.

   **A:** I want you to be the role model for teamwork.

   **B:** I will!

   **A:** Okay, go out there and show me what you’ve got.

**Questions:**
What is the relationship between Person A and Person B? How do you know?

[Coach; giving feedback]

When and why do you take on the role of Person A with youth?

3. I Need To Talk To You

**Person A:** Are you okay? I don’t see your usual smile.

**Person B:** I’m okay.

A: I don’t think so. Want to sit down and talk?

B: Yeah, okay.

A: So what’s going on?

B: I talked to my father and he told me my brother was shot. He’s in the hospital and I can’t go see him or do anything about it.

A: Oh man, that’s bad. Did you father say if he’s going to be okay?

B: I guess he got hit in his shoulder and he might not be able to use his arm. They won’t know for a while.

A: Do you know what hospital? Do you want to try calling him?

B: Can I? I just want him to know I’m thinking about him.

**Questions:**

What is the relationship between Person A and Person B? How do you know?

[Counselor; Active listener]

When and why do you take on the role of Person A with youth?

4. What Happened?

**Person A:** So what happened in the day room just now?

**Person B:** We got in a fight because Jason called me a *&%$#!

A: So he called you a name you didn’t like and then what did you do?

B: I hit him in his face! I’m not going let him say stuff like that to me in front of everybody!

A: So is that what bothered you – that other people heard him and you wanted to save face?

B: Yes! He does that all the time, and I just went off!

A: Do you think there’s a chance Jason calls you names in front of everyone because he wants to get a reaction from you?

B: Well it works! He really makes me mad.

A: What would happen if you didn’t react, or if you just laughed when he says those things?

B: Hmm… I guess he’d say something else and keep trying to make me mad.

A: And if you still didn’t get mad, do you think he might get bored and quit doing it?

B: I don’t know. Maybe. I don’t know if I can do that, though. He’s such a weasel.
A: Well, one thing I do with people who do things I don't like is, I picture dumping a bowl of spaghetti and sauce over their head and seeing it drip down their face. It makes me want to laugh instead of get angry. Would that work for you?
B: I don’t know. Maybe I can try it.
A: Meanwhile, you and Jason both have some pretty serious consequences to deal with from the fight. I hope you can do better next time he says something to you.

Questions:

What is the relationship between Person A and Person B? How do you know?  
[Counselor; coach; guide; teacher]

When and why do you take on the role of Person A with youth?

DO: When most participants are finished reading the dialogues and answering the questions, ask for volunteers to identify the role of Person A in dialogue #1. Ask others to say if they saw the role differently. Then facilitate discussion of when and why they might use that role of disciplinarian, coach, or other role with youth.

Repeat the process with dialogues 2, 3 & 4.

SAY: How many of you think it’s possible to be both a disciplinarian and a counselor/teacher/coach with the same youths?

DO: Call on a few people who have their hands up to say more about being able to do both things.

Then call on a few who didn’t raise their hands and ask them to say why they think it’s not possible to play both roles with youth.

SAY: We believe an effective youth care worker needs to include both of these roles, just as a parent needs to be able to do both things well. If your only role is to enforce rules, you may not be helping the youth learn ways to improve their behavior.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS (30 minutes)

SAY: Relationship building is the development of caring, supportive relationships between adults and young people, and young people and their peers. It means that youth care workers spend time with young people… getting to know them and developing trust. In successful… programs, adults respect young people and treat them with courtesy and care. Staff members know that building positive trusting relationships with young people is not a separate part of their work, rather an integral part of every activity and interaction.
As you discovered in the dialogues exercise, you get to play many roles when working with youth. You'll need to set boundaries and limits like a parent and tend to physical and emotional hurts like a doctor or counselor. Sometimes you’re a teacher, helping youth to build new skills. The role you assume is dependent on the guidance of your program, the situation at hand and the needs of your youth. But by virtue of job status, you are not a peer, even though you may be just a few years older than your youth – and you may even know them from the community.

**SAY:** This workshop is about building healthy relationships with youth and we consider both sets of characteristics – being an effective, fair disciplinarian and being a caring or concerned counselor/teacher/coach – as important in building these relationships.

So let’s see where these roles take us.

**BREAK (15 minutes)**

**HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS (cont’d – 45 minutes)**

**SAY:** On page 9 of your Guide you will find a list of Universal Youth Needs. These seven characteristics have been identified by the Search Institute as being essential to young people having a sense of personal well being and a sense of connection and commitment to others.

You’ll see that number 6 is a “Close, lasting relationship with at least one adult.” It makes sense that to be able to form healthy relationships as adults, we have to have experienced one or more such relationships as a child and/or youth.

**ASK:** Which other of these Universal Needs do we generally try to address in our programs?

**DO:** Get several responses.
[For example, Safety & Structure – we can offer a sense of safety from harm and predictable schedule of events each day. We generally DON’T contribute to their sense of Independence and Control Over One’s Life due to their incarceration, though some programs do work on helping youth develop this while in program.]

**SAY:** Let’s hear from Hasan Davis again as he talks about why we need to build relationships with young people.

*Hasan Davis: Segment 2 – The Value of Building Relationships with Youth (7:06-12:26)*

[USE THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS FOLLOWING THE VIDEO CLIP]*

**SAY:** As Hasan talked about:

- *Research has provided overwhelming evidence that building healthy relationships with adults is one of the most critical factors in the healthy development of young people.* (Search Institute 2007; Protective Factors)

- *The benefits of relationship building are many. As mutual respect and trust increases between program staff and youth, discipline problems often diminish. Young people are more likely to voice their ideas and opinions and a sense of group membership is fostered.*

- *Youth care workers report that their job satisfaction increases when they develop and foster meaningful relationships within their programs.*
SAY: Here are a few more important points:

- Youth reporting a positive connection with at least one supportive adult engage in fewer risky behaviors, including substance abuse and delinquency. (Aspy et al., 2004; Oman et al., 2004)

- Evaluations show that youth who participate in relationships with adult mentors... report improvements in self-efficacy and social competence as well as measureable reductions in problem behavior.

SAY: These Universal Needs and the sense of well being they help provide, build our ability to be resilient.

Resilience is...

‘the power or ability to return to the original form, position, etc., after being bent, compressed, or stretched; elasticity.’

Source: Dictionary.com

In people, it is the ability to overcome challenges of all kinds – trauma, tragedy, personal crises, life problems – and bounce back stronger, wiser and more personally powerful.

2 Dictionary.com
In people, it is the ability to overcome challenges of all kinds – trauma, tragedy, personal crises, life problems – and bounce back stronger, wiser and more personally powerful.

You will find this definition on page 10 of your Participant guide.

The characteristic of being resilient helps us recover more quickly and more effectively from sad or stressful events in our lives. We know many or even most of the youth we work with have had their share of traumatic experiences in their young lives. Having healthy relationships with healthy adults may be one factor in helping them deal with their experiences better.

**EXERCISE**

**SAY:** Most of you have probably been told there are kinds of relationships that are not permitted between youth care workers and youth in custody. Now we’re talking about having healthy relationships with youth, so let’s define the differences.

![Healthy Relationships?](image)

On page 11 of your Participant Guide, there is a list of staff behaviors. In your table groups, decide whether each behavior goes under the heading of ‘Healthy Relationships’ or ‘Unhealthy Relationships.’ If you finish categorizing the 17 items in this list, you can add specific behaviors you think are or should be included in either list in the blank spaces at the bottom of the page.

You have 10 minutes to discuss the list and decide as a group.

**DO:** Give the groups ten minutes to talk about the items on the list and place a check mark under the column they agree it belongs in.

After ten minutes, go through each adult behavior and have a group spokesperson raise their hands if they placed it under Healthy Relationships, then under Unhealthy
Relationships. Where there is disagreement, ask spokespersons from two groups that disagree to explain their positions.

Our suggested answers are marked in the table, below.

Ask if any groups added behaviors to their lists. If so, what were they and where did they place them?

**NOTE:** If the participants come from more than one program, it is not necessary to come to complete consensus, because some programs may prohibit behaviors that are permitted elsewhere.
## Building Healthy Relationships With Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Behaviors:</th>
<th>Healthy Relationships</th>
<th>Unhealthy Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Care about the youth’s future</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tell a youth about your personal issues</td>
<td></td>
<td>X - May not be advisable for privacy and role modeling reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Spend time listening to what individual youth want to talk about</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Keep in touch with youth after they leave the program</td>
<td></td>
<td>? – May be okay within program guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Trust that everything a youth tells you is true</td>
<td></td>
<td>X – Youth have many good reasons not to tell the truth at all times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Get to know each youth over time</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Select youths you like for special activities and rewards</td>
<td></td>
<td>X – Favoritism is discouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Answer youths’ questions about health and sexuality</td>
<td>X – Answer factually, if known. Separate your personal values from facts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Uphold your program’s values</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Treat youth with respect and courtesy</td>
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<td>11. Maintain firm boundaries for sharing information with youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Discourage youths from complaining about the program or staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>X – Youths’ feelings and feedback should be acknowledged and considered</td>
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<td>13. Provide information about resources in the program and/or community that youths can use</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Encourage each youth to learn and grow</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Encourage each youth to do better each day</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Create a safe environment for youths</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Encourage youths to speak to you about what’s bothering them</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Ask youth to do personal errands for you.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X – Could be exploitive, punitive or seen as favoritism</td>
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<td>19.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
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ASK:  Why are some of these behaviors prohibited?

DO:  Emphasize the importance of safety and security, and talk about why some activities and behaviors, while they may support youth development, may not be appropriate in a youth confinement setting (see notes in the table).

ASK:  Which ones do you use to build appropriate adult relationships with youth?

DO:  Have a few volunteers identify behaviors they use to develop healthy relationships with youth with whom they work.

EXERCISE

SAY:  On page 12 of your Participant Guide there is a form you may use to develop a Self Development Plan. Please complete item #1 by identifying a healthy relationship behavior, either from the table on page 11 or another behavior we’ve discussed. Then write what you will do specifically to work on it. (Make certain participants understand they are to complete on item #1 and that they will continue to work on answering the other questions during the remainder of the training.)

DO:  Give the participants 3-5 minutes to think and write.

Ask for 2-3 volunteers to tell the group what they want to work on, how they will do this. Thank those volunteers for their willingness to share their thoughts on this.
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AMONG YOUTH (45 minutes)

SAY: We’ve identified some behaviors that adults might exhibit as they build healthy relationships with youth. But pre-adolescents and adolescents also need to be able to build healthy relationships with their peers. Some of the youths you work with aren’t very good at this, and may have failed at making friends or just getting along with others in their age group in the past. They may have formed exploitive or unhealthy relationships with peers. Part of what we do as adults in our programs is help youth learn the behaviors they need in order to be in healthy peer relationships.

EXERCISE

SAY: In your groups, brainstorm a list of things youth need to do to get along with their peers, such as handle “friendly” teasing, find things in common, or speak up for others who need support.

DO: Have the groups brainstorm their lists on chart paper and hang them on the wall or easel near their table. Then invite the groups to walk around the room and read other groups’ lists.

When they have seen the other lists, ask volunteers to identify:

- Things they found in common or similar on the lists
- The most unusual or interesting ideas they found
- Other comments they have about the list of peer relationship skills

DO: Ask each group to select (or assign each group) 1-2 of the common skills and think through how they can be taught and reinforced with youth in care.

[e.g., Listening skills can be taught/enhanced by asking a youth (in group or class or one-on-one conversations) to repeat or restate what they just heard someone else say, or to say what they think the person meant until the other person agrees with their statements.]
Handling teasing may be managed by helping youths remind themselves the other person isn’t being mean and may not know another way to get attention, etc.

DO: Give the groups ten minutes to work (longer if needed).

After ten minutes, have a group spokesperson report on the behavior(s) they worked on and how they would teach/coach and reinforce it with youths.

Add ideas and comments as necessary. Thank them for their work.

SAY: On page 13 is an observation worksheet you can use to observe the youth you work with to determine the peer relationship skills they already have, and those they need to work on. You can add skills from this activity in the blank spaces at the bottom of the worksheet.

Your observations can help you identify what each youth might need and then develop coaching relationships with several youths who are interested in making friends or reducing problems they have with other youth. This serves at least two purposes—youth you observe may feel a greater sense of connection with you because you are taking an interest in them, and your observations and conversations may help you work more effectively with those youth.

What thoughts do you have about doing this kind of observation?

DO: Get several comments and discuss briefly.

SAY: How would this kind of observation fit into your facility’s program and mission?

DO: Get several comments and discuss briefly.

SAY: The topic of peer relationships is also something that might be the focus of group sessions with youth. They might be asked to identify the behaviors and characteristics they look for in a friend. They might also complete ratings of one another, anonymously or face-to-face, on several of these behaviors, and each youth would get feedback on his/her peer skills.

DO: Get several comments on this and discuss briefly.

SAY: Some adults may never have figured out what others expect from them and are at a loss about how to form and keep peer relationships. Providing youth with feedback and coaching of this kind is a valuable service we can provide while they are with us. Even if they don’t appear to appreciate it immediately, they make take the feedback to heart and make an effort to change some of their behaviors.
SAY: Go back to page 12 of your Participant Guide – the Self Development Plan. Please complete item #2 by writing down what you will do specifically to help youths you work with improve their peer relationships.

DO: Give the participants 3-5 minutes to think and write.

Ask for 2-3 volunteers to tell the group what they want to work on and how. Thank those volunteers for their willingness to share their thoughts on this.

LUNCH (60 minutes)

YOU AS A ROLE MODEL (50 minutes)

SAY: Let’s listen this time to what Hasan has to say about how we do this work.

Hasan Davis: Segment 3 – “How do we do it?”
[USE THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS AFTER THE VIDEO]

SAY: So we just heard Hasan talk about youth workers as role models. Here is some of what we know about the importance and value of adults as role models for youth:

○ Role models serve a critical function in the lives of youth. They can be teachers, parents, friends, siblings, celebrities, athletes, etc. – anyone who sets a good example for young people. Mentoring research validates the importance of role models in lives of youth (Benson, 1998; McGill, 1997).

○ As young people grow and develop, they look at the adults and peers around them to see who they want to be and what choices they want to make. Role models provide youth with means of identification and offer guidelines for behaviors and actions. Youth see possibilities for their futures especially when they see what adults “like them” have accomplished. Of course not all role models are “positive”. Some lead youth to make unhealthy decisions. Positive role models are conscious of how their behavior impacts young people – and exhibit only behaviors that they want to see imitated.

○ Young people are astute in their ability to look at the actions of adults around them and determine if they are ethical, just, appropriate, etc. As a youth care worker ALL your actions and choices provide a model for how young people behave and shape their beliefs, whether you intend it or not.

○ It’s also important for you to take time to seek knowledge and invest in your own growth and development. Seek out training and/or coaching in group development, facilitation and communication skills.

DO: Share a brief personal story about serving as a positive role model for a youth or youths, either intentionally or unintentionally. (For example, have you had a youth imitate something appropriate you say or do?)

SAY: Who else can share a story about being a role model?

EXERCISE

SAY: On pages 14 & 15 of your Guide are four scenarios.

DO: Assign each group one scenario to which they will respond.
$SAY$: Please read the scenario your group has been assigned and answer the question that follows.

$DO$: Give them 10 minutes to discuss and answer the question in their groups

Then have a spokesperson for each group read the scenario and share the group’s response to the question.

Facilitate brief discussions on each scenario as needed to identify the impression the youth care worker might be making on the youths.

$SAY$: How challenging do you find it to know you are always a role model to the youths with whom you work?

$DO$: Get several responses, both from those who find it challenging and those that don’t.

Facilitate a discussion about challenges – for example, it may be more difficult under stress to stay positive and focused and set a good example. Making sure you get sufficient rest and get away from work when you leave can help reduce stress.

$SAY$: Go back to page 12 of your Participant Guide – the Self Development Plan. Please complete item #3 by writing down what you will do specifically as a role model with youths.
DO: Give the participants 3-5 minutes to think and write.

Ask for 2-3 volunteers to tell the group what they want to work on and how. Thank those volunteers for their willingness to share their thoughts on this.

ENERGIZER: Listening (30 min.)

**SAY:** In the work we do, on a scale of one to ten, how important is effective communication (with one being not important and ten being most important)?

**DO:** Get a few responses or count hands of those who gave it a number between 8 & 10.

**SAY:** Serious consequences can come from poor communication. And good relationships often start with good conversations. So we’re going to practice one aspect of communication and that is listening. When we listen well, we hold up our end of a communication.

*What’s the difference between ‘hearing’ and ‘listening’?*

**DO:** Get a few responses (such as, *Just hearing something doesn’t mean you’re paying attention or thinking about what the other person said.*)

**SAY:** *And how can you tell when someone is listening to you?*

**DO:** Get a few responses (such as, ‘They make eye contact.’ ‘They don’t interrupt.’ ‘They do what you ask them to do.’) Capture these responses on newsprint and hang the list somewhere in the room.

**SAY:** Now I’m going to have you pair up with someone else in the room. Move your chairs so you are facing one another.

**DO:** Give them a moment to do so.

**SAY:** In your pairs, decide who will be partner A and who will be B.
DO: Give them a moment to do so.

SAY: *I'd like you each to think of something you can talk about for a full minute. It might be your favorite food, favorite pastime, a vacation you’ve taken, etc.*

DO: Give them a moment to do so.

SAY: *Partner A will speak first for one minute. Partner B, I want you to do everything you can to demonstrate that you are not listening to the other person. I will time this for 60 seconds. Are there any questions?*

DO: Answer any questions about the activity. Then tell them to start. Time them for 60 seconds. Then stop the activity.

SAY: *Partner A, what was it like for you to be talking and know the other person was not listening?*

DO: Get several responses about the experience and record comments on newsprint. Ask follow up questions: What behaviors did the Partner B’s use to show they weren’t listening? Did people stop talking or keep on going?

SAY: *And Partner B, what was it like for you to intentionally not listen to your partner?*

DO: Get several responses about the experience and records comments on newsprint.

SAY: *Okay, now we’re going to do the same activity with Partner A speaking again, but Partner B will use non-verbal active listening skills. We mentioned earlier some of the behaviors that demonstrate active listening. What were they?*

DO: Get several responses. (Make eye contact. Don’t interrupt. Nod to show you understand or agree. Be sure your facial expression is appropriate to the speaker’s meaning, e.g., smile or laugh when the speaker is intending to be funny.) Let them know they can make notes about active listening on page 16 in their Guide.

SAY: *Once again I’ll time you for 60 seconds. You can start now.*

DO: Time them for 60 seconds. Then stop the activity.

SAY: *Partner A, what was it like for you to be listened to this time?*

DO: Get several responses about the experience and records comments on newsprint. Ask follow up questions: What behaviors did the Partner B’s use to show they were listening? Did you want to keep on going when 60 seconds was up?

SAY: *And Partner B, what was it like for you to intentionally listen to your partner?*
DO: Get several responses about the experience and records comments on newsprint.

DO: Have the partners switch roles and repeat both exercises, so Partner B is speaking and Partner A is not listening, then listening actively. Debrief after each experience.

SAY: What can we learn about listening from this brief experience?

DO: Facilitate a brief discussion about the skill of active listening. Ask how often they think they really listen actively to family members, friends and coworkers. Ask with whom they will practice the skill in the next week.

SAY: Active listening is a social skill that the youth we work with can learn and use. Young people who use this skill with parents, teachers, probation officers, judges, etc. often benefit from the interactions. Youth who don’t demonstrate listening skills are often considered disrespectful, rude, incorrigible, etc. and may have poor outcomes in interactions with authority figures.

Is this an exercise you might try with some of the youth you work with? Are there variations you might try with them?

DO: Facilitate a brief discussion of listening and communication type exercises and games they might use with youth. There are a number of websites where you may find active listening exercises to use with youth in your facility, i.e., buzzle.com, actforyouth.net, etc.

BREAK (15 minutes)

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUTH (30 minutes)

SAY: Building strong relationships with youth requires that we have strong communication abilities. We’re going to look at five core communication skills: active listening, establishing trust, empathy, being present, and providing feedback.

Most youth workers have a preferred style. That is, we are better equipped – in terms of personal comfort and ability – to use one or more communication skills as compared to others. The purpose of this activity is to help you identify your preferred communication style when working with (a) individual youth and (b) groups of youth.
**EXERCISE:**

**Assess Your Communication Skills**

- Turn to page 16 and assess your communication skills.
- For each behavior in the first column, check your skill level from 1 to 4.

**SAY:** I'd like you to turn to page 16 in your Participant Guide and assess your communication skills. For each behavior in the first column, check what you believe is your skill level from 1 to 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicating With Individual Youth</th>
<th>(1) Low</th>
<th>(2) Somewhat Low</th>
<th>(3) Somewhat High</th>
<th>(4) High</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Being an Active Listener (e.g., seeking to hear what the youth is really trying to communicate to you)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Establishing Trust (e.g., demonstrating that the youth can have confidence and depend on you)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Being Empathetic (e.g., demonstrating that you genuinely care about the young person)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Being Present (e.g., demonstrating that you are in the moment, and not distracted, when relating to the young person)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Providing Feedback (e.g., responding in ways that explicitly address the concerns of the youth)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Communicating With Groups of Youth</th>
<th>(1) Low</th>
<th>(2) Somewhat Low</th>
<th>(3) Somewhat High</th>
<th>(4) High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Being an Active Listener (e.g., seeking to hear what the youth is really trying to communicate to you)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Establishing Trust (e.g., demonstrating that the youth</td>
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Building Healthy Relationship With Youth

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Being Empathetic (e.g., demonstrating that you genuinely care about the young person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Being Present (e.g., demonstrating that you are in the moment, and not distracted, when relating to the young person).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Providing Feedback (e.g., responding in ways that explicitly address the concerns of the youth)</td>
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**SAY:** How did you do? Which behaviors are challenging for you?

**DO:** Get several comments and discuss briefly.

**SAY:** Sometimes we see ourselves as better at listening than our friends and family think we are. It might be informative to have someone close to you complete this assessment of you. That kind of feedback can be very valuable in developing our relationship skills.

On page 17 is some information from studies done on adult relationships with youth in schools. It might be informative or reaffirming to read what young people say is important to them in relationships with adults. Take a few minutes to read it now.

**DO:** Give them 5 minutes to read page 17.

**SAY:** What comments do you have on this information? Was anything surprising to you?

**DO:** Get several comments and discuss briefly.

**SAY:** Go back to page 12 of your Participant Guide – the Self Development Plan. Please complete item #4 by writing down what you will do specifically to improve your communication with youths.

**DO:** Give the participants 3-5 minutes to think and write.
Ask for 2-3 volunteers to tell the group what they want to work on and how. Thank those volunteers for their willingness to share their thoughts on this.

IDENTIFYING KEY CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS (minutes)

SAY:  We’ve been talking today about what healthy adult/youth relationships look like, and practicing some of the skills involved.

Now let’s look at some of the challenges:

What gets in the way of forming close and trusting relationships with young people at work?

DO:  Get several comments and discuss briefly.

What challenges do you face in promoting and encouraging supportive relationships between young people?

DO:  Get several comments and discuss briefly.

SAY:  Let’s hear again from Hasan Davis as he talks about youth care workers “doing our best.”

Hasan Davis: Segment 4 – “When is it finally okay to give up?”

[USE THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS FOLLOWING THE VIDEO]
Building Healthy Relationship With Youth

- Hasan shared a quote from Winston Churchill, “Sometimes it is not enough that we do our best, sometimes we have to do what is required.” Things we are required to do include:

  o **Setting Boundaries and Expectations:** It’s important to set clear limits with young people to let them know what you can and cannot do or share as a youth care worker. Boundaries set the parameters for appropriate emotional and practical support. Knowing your limits does not mean that you are distant and aloof. Young people appreciate adults who are “real” with them. As a role model, you are also helping youth learn how to set appropriate boundaries for themselves.

  o **Promoting Cross-Cultural Interactions:** Learning to reach out and interact appropriately with people different from you is important in building relationships in diverse groups. As a youth care worker you can model openness, respect and interest in other cultures and encourage youth to get to know youth outside their group. Engaging in cross-cultural interactions enriches your life – and also requires risk-taking and good communications skills.

  o **Facilitating Positive Group Interactions:** In the context of relationship building, facilitation involves the ability to nurture healthy group process and support youth to build relationships with each other. As a facilitator, creating a safe and democratic environment where all voices are heard encourages development of positive relationships. In your role as a youth care worker you can model accountability, fairness and sensitivity. And the more you know all young people in your program, the more you can support each individual to participate and contribute in their own way.

    - Trusting relationships between individuals and groups cannot be forced and take time to develop. Practice patience with yourself and with your youth on this journey.
    - When introducing group building activities, make sure that personal revelations are low risk. It is important to let trust develop before you ask youth, especially adolescents to do anything that makes them feel silly or vulnerable.

SELF-REFLECTION (10 minutes)
Take a look back at the Self Development Plan you’ve been creating on page 12. What do you see as your strengths in building healthy relationships with youth? What are your challenges? What specifically do you plan to do to build stronger relationships with youth in the future?

These plans are for you alone. Take a few moments to add any reflections and notes to your Plan.

You can share them with someone else if you like but you don’t have to.

COURSE CLOSURE AND EVALUATION (20 min.)

How are you feeling at this point about building healthy relationships with youth at work?

Encourage participants to share where they are with what they have heard so far.

All of you are likely already doing some things that reflect a positive, supportive attitude and strategy for working with young people. We hope this program has helped you see some additional ways in which you can have an impact on these young people’s lives. We believe that because of the positive relationships you’ll be building with the youth, these strategies will make their stay in your program/facility more productive, and your work more rewarding and somewhat easier to do.

Trying new activities and behaviors can be challenging without support from others. Since you have gone through this workshop together and talked with one another about what you plan to do with the ideas, I wonder if you’d like to set up some ways of keeping in touch and helping one another.
Building Healthy Relationship With Youth

DO: Get a few responses to judge the level of interest. If there is some interest, suggest a few ideas:

- Identify a partner and commit to check in with each other in two weeks to discuss how practicing Building Healthy Relationships With Youth is going.
- Make an appointment to report to your supervisor on what you learned.
- Share with your co-workers.
- Choose a resource to review and comment on, then email to everyone.
- Create a Facebook or LinkedIn group and invite other participants to share ideas.

Ask the group for their ideas on ways to support one another. Make sure someone takes the lead for each task and sets a deadline for completing the assignment. Write these tasks down on newsprint with the name of the lead person for each task and the date each will be completed. Email the list to the group within 24 hours after the workshop.

SAY: Let’s listen one last time to Hasan Davis as he talks about us, as youth care workers, “doing our best.”

Hasan Davis: Segment 4 – “What was your ‘worth day’?”

SAY: Question you may want to ask yourself:

“What do I or can I do to make the lives of the youth I work with better?”
“What do I do to create possibilities and opportunities for youth?”
“What do I or can I do to help youth see their value and worth?”

To do any of these things, we must be in relationship with the young people we serve!

SAY: Thank you for your decision to be a youth care worker and for your participation in today’s training event.
Now we’d like your feedback on how we can improve this workshop. Please complete the feedback form we are distributing, and leave it facedown in a pile on the front table as you leave.

Thank you so much for your active participation. We have enjoyed working with you.