

Partnering with Youth for Healthy Communities

Now Is the Time Conference

September 6, 2017

Dr. Matthew Calvert

University of Wisconsin-Extension 4-H Youth
Development

Intro: Which Resonates?

Except for prisoners and a few institutionalized groups, young people are more controlled than any other group in society. (John Bell, "A Key to Developing Positive Youth-Adult Partnerships" *Humanics* - Spring 1996, p. 7)

Young people can create change. (p. 7 - *Adults as Allies* created by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation)

Partnership arrangements are distinguished from mentorships. Partnerships are about sharing information and ideas, not about an older, wiser person bestowing wisdom on a younger one. Mentoring implies a leader and a follower. (p. 14 - *Younger Voices, Better Choices*)

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success. Unknown (p. 55 - *Younger Voices, Better Choices*)

There is no institution, community or organization that can not find a meaningful role for young people. (youthACTION! An initiative of the Alameda County Public Health Department)

The adult organizer must genuinely respect the ideas and abilities of the teenagers, and must make this constantly clear.

In a youth/adult partnership, adults should let young people fail. (p. 75 - *Younger Voices, Better Choices*)

Adults are just as uncertain as youth; they have just learned to disguise it more. (p. 64 - *Younger Voices, Better Choices*)

I am committed to creating partnerships because I believe that young people are resources for today, rather than in some distant future. (p. 32 - *Younger Voices, Better Choices*)

Young people take adults very seriously. (p. 49 - *Younger Voices, Better Choices*)

Social institutions are often sicker than the people they are trying to help. (Bill Lofquist)

Goals

- Understand benefits to youth from partnerships with adults
- Consider roles for youth and adults
- Apply positive youth development principles to your contexts
- Learn about curriculum and resources to support work

Why Engage Youth And Young Adults?

Youth-Adult Partnerships promote positive youth development

When young people are actively engaged in meaningful volunteer service, and work in close collaboration with adults, they are likely to show better school performance, more positive self-concept, better relationships with peers, increased social contacts, a greater sense of responsibility, and higher rates of college graduation. They are also more likely to have lower levels of alcohol and drug use, later onset of sexual activity, lower levels of delinquency, and reduced levels of depression.

Impacts on Youth Development

Safety and Belonging: Youth feel accepted, supported and respected within the organization. They experience a strong sense of collective identity and pride in membership.

Efficacy and Empowerment: Youth increase confidence in their ability to effect change within their settings. They come to “own” their expertise and accomplishments as leaders.

Sociopolitical Awareness and Civic Competence: Youth learn how to critically analyze the relationship between their own lived experience and larger social, economic and political structures. Youth also gain the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to participate as civic actors.

Community Connections: Youth gain a deep understanding of their community and a closer connection to their peers. Adults connect youth with professional networks and opportunities.

Why Engage Youth And Young Adults?

Impacts on Adult Staff and Community Leaders

Confidence and Competence: Adults develop skills and attitudes they need to effectively share power and responsibility with youth on an on-going basis.

Generativity: Adults experience satisfaction in passing along their experience to a new generation.

Reflect on Negative Stereotypes: Adults recognize and address their assumptions about young people. They develop a new respect for youth competence and expertise.

Advocate for Youth Participation: Adults commit to making youth-adult partnership part of their own practice and use the power of their position to promote youth engagement in new settings.

Why Engage Youth And Young Adults?

Resource: Y-AP Savvy

(<http://fyi.uwex.edu/youthadultpartnership/files/2011/02/YAP-Savvy12.pdf>)

Impacts on Organizations and Communities

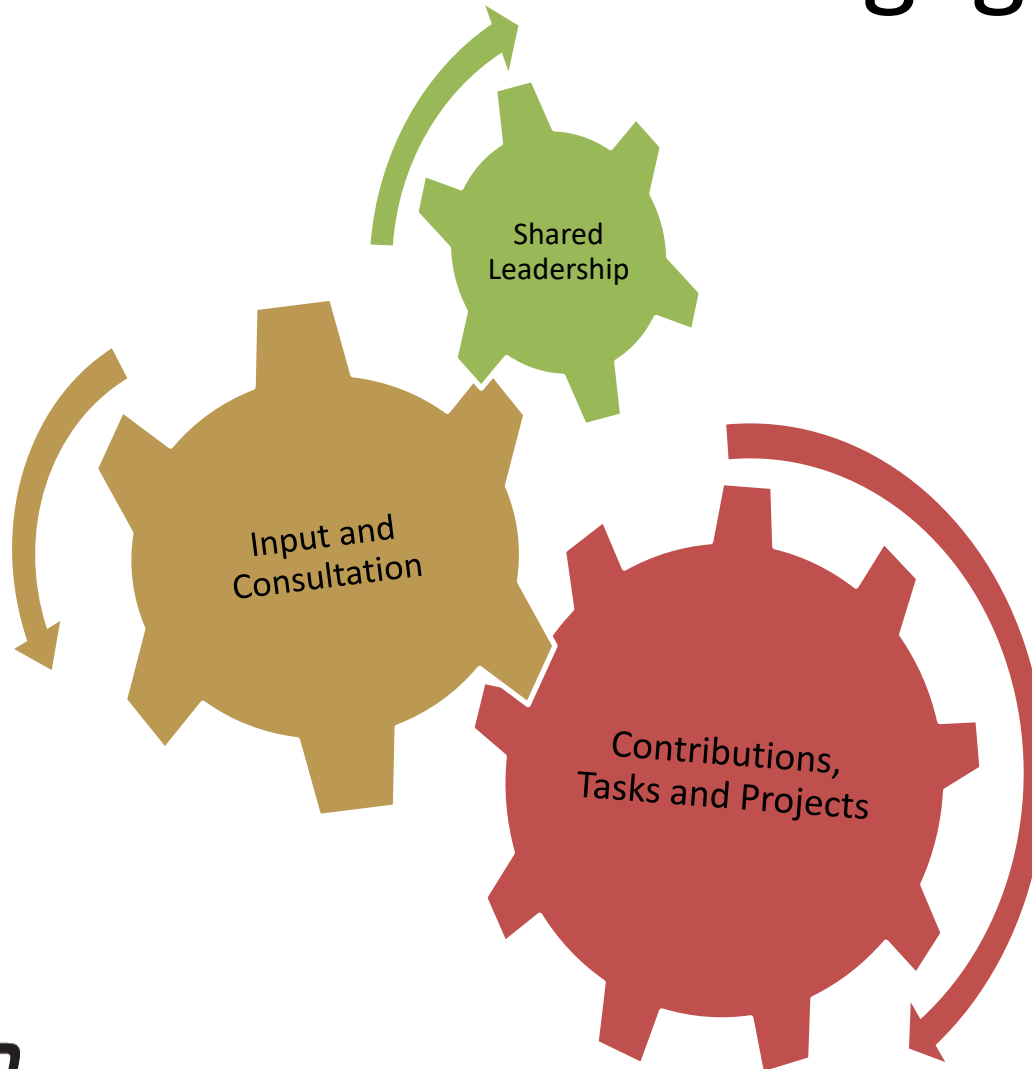
Institutionalized Expectations of Youth Participation: Norms and traditions change as youth become a standard part of community decision making.

Civic Agendas Reflect Youth Voice: The types of issues addressed by decision-making bodies reflect the critical interests, concerns and priorities of young people.

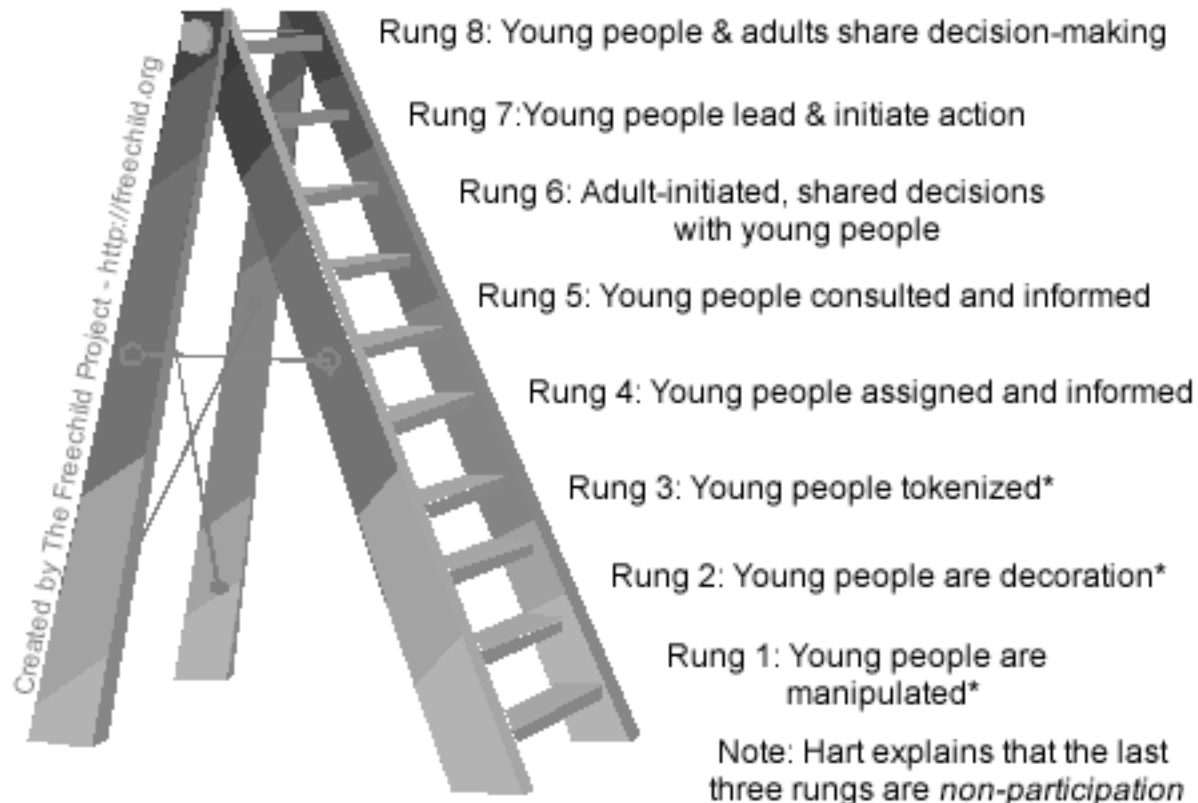
New Community Coalitions Emerge: Youth organizers reach out beyond the youth development field to engage a wide range of community partners in order to address these complex issues.

Responsive Public Institutions: Public institutions respond with resources, policies and programs that better serve youth and communities.

Authentic Youth Engagement

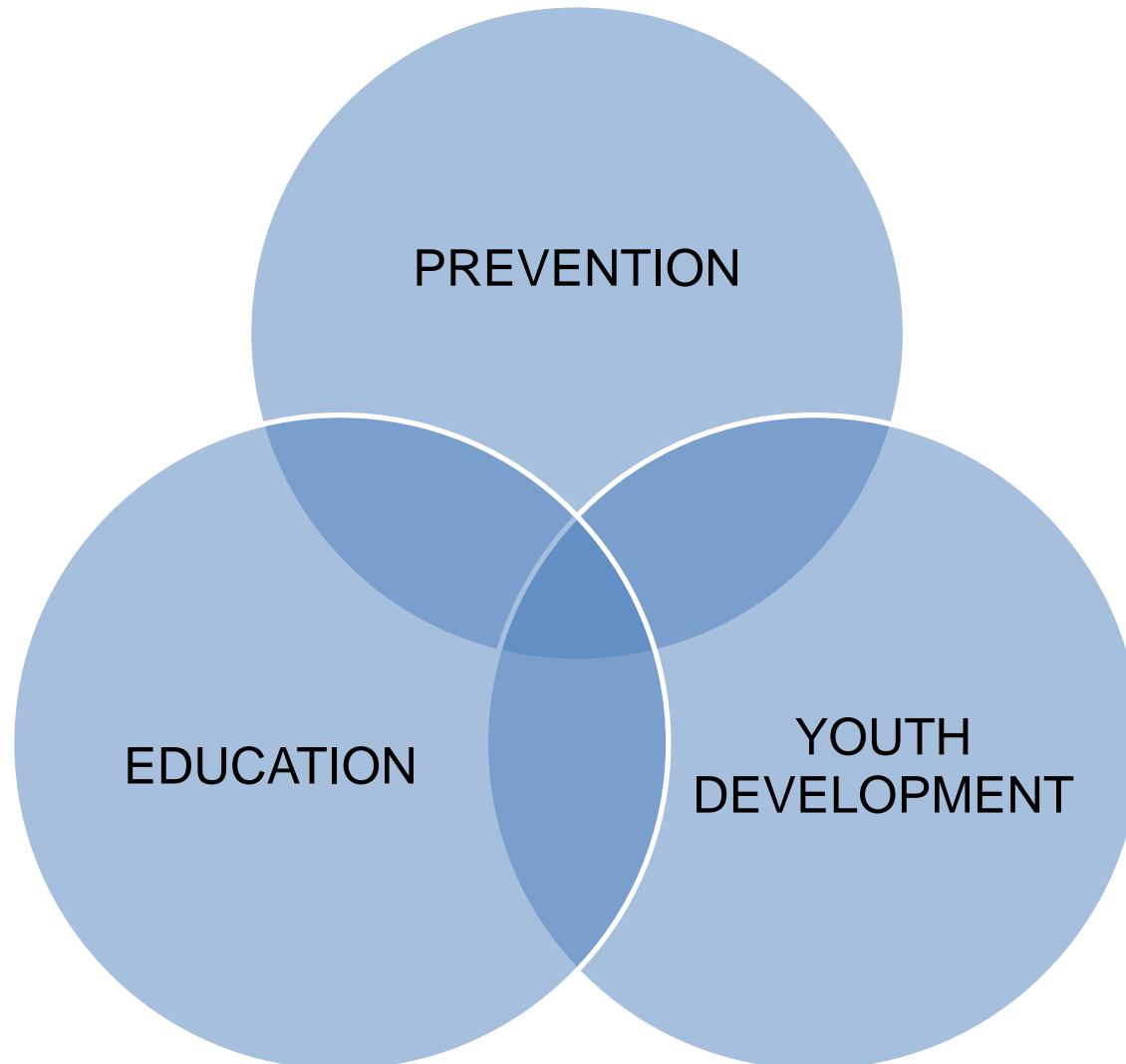


Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Approaches to 4-H Youth Development



Approach: Prevention

- Focus: Risks & Risk Factors
- Target: Social Norms & Communities
- Service-Based
- Goal: ?
- Outcomes: ?

Approach: Prevention

- Focus: Risks & Risk Factors
- Target: Social Norms & Communities
- Service-Based
- Goal: Eliminating or Reducing Problems
- Outcomes: Fewer Problems

Approach: Education

- Focus: Competencies
- Target: Individual Learners
- Support-Based
- Goal: ?
- Outcomes: ?

Approach: Education

- Focus: Competencies
- Target: Individual Learners
- Support-Based
- Goal: Bringing about Change (Knowledge, Skill, etc.)
- Outcomes: Life Skills

Approach: Youth Development

- Focus: Needs
- Target: Environmental Conditions –
the contexts for youth
- Opportunity-Based
- Goal: ?
- Outcomes: ?

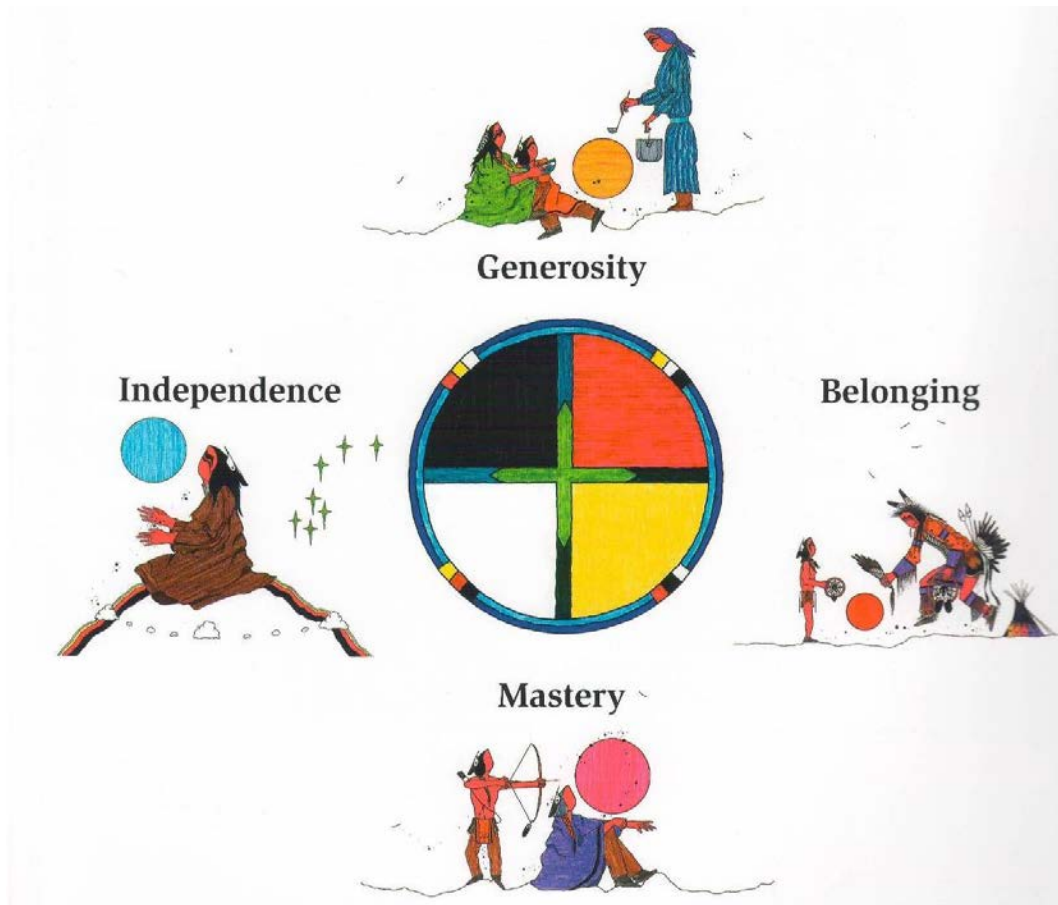
Approach: Youth Development

- Focus: Needs
- Target: Environmental Conditions –
the contexts for youth
- Opportunity-Based
- Goal: Development of Potential, **Maturity**
- Outcomes: Maturity & Individual Potential

Shifting the focus to a Youth Development Approach

- Importance of environment and creating opportunities.
- Available to all young people.
- Youth as central actors in their own development.

Positive Youth Development creates opportunities for youth to experience:



Circle of Courage

Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern, Reclaiming Youth at Risk (1990)

INDEPENDENCE

- Youth need to know that they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action.
 - By exercising independence through leadership opportunities, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility, learn to better understand themselves and become independent thinkers.



BELONGING

- Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group.
 - Youth need the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group.
 - Current research emphasizes the importance for youth to have opportunities for long-term consistent relationships with adults other than parents.
 - This research suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient we can add into the lives of children and youth.



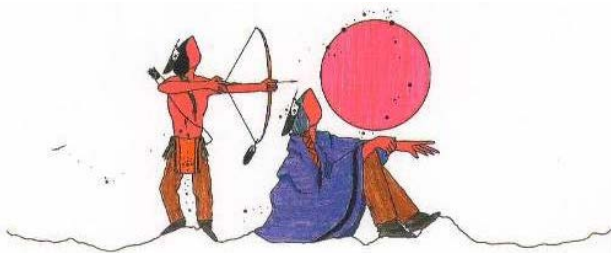
GENEROSITY

- Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose.
 - By participating in community service and citizenship activities, youth can connect to communities and learn to give back to others.
 - In helping others, youth create their own proof of worthiness: they make a positive contribution to another human life.



MASTERY

- In order to develop self-confidence youth need to feel and believe they are capable and they must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges.
- Additionally, youth need to have a safe environment for making mistakes and getting feedback, not just through competition but also as an ongoing element of participation.
- Youth need the breadth and depth of topics that allow them to pursue their own interests.



What motivates youth engagement?

It depends—some emerging research (Akiva et al, under review):

| All Youth Programs | Youth Activism Programs |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Relationships with Adults and Peers2. Content (Fun, learning)3. Opportunity to Improve as a Person | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Social Justice2. Sanctuary3. Relationships with Adults and Peers |

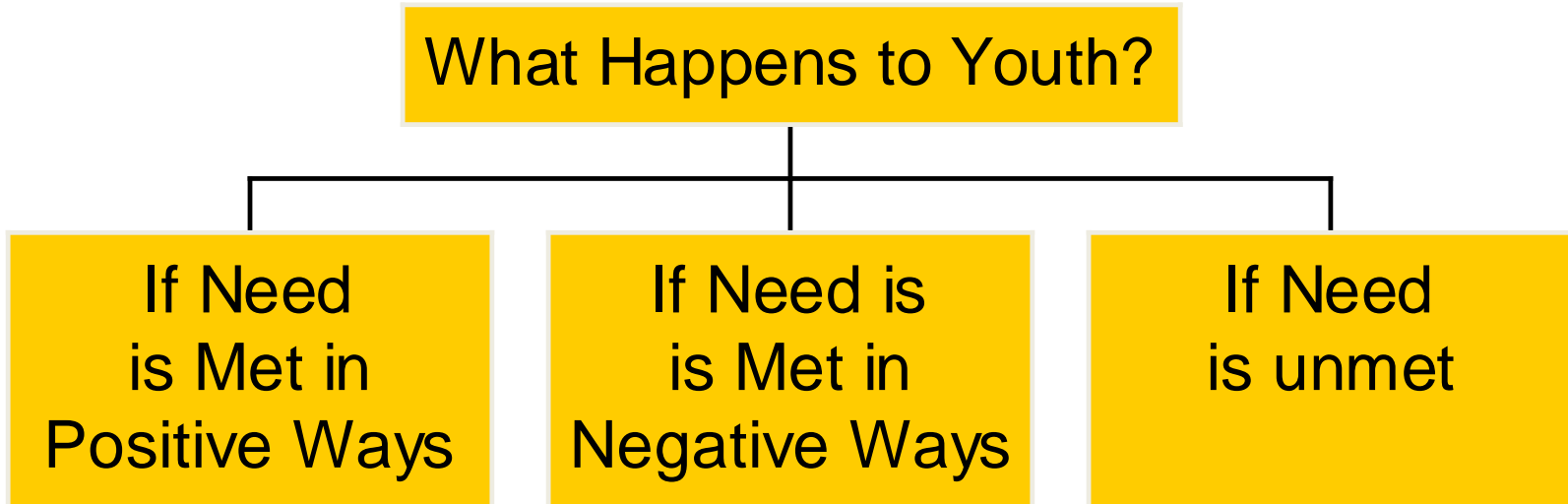
All Youth will find ways to:

- 1) Meet their basic needs
- 2) Build skills and values
- 3) Use their skills, talents, energies and time in ways that make them feel good and powerful.

All Youth need:

- To know they are cared about by others
(Attachment → Belonging)
- To feel and believe they are capable and successful
(Achievement → Mastery)
- To know they are able to influence people and events
(Autonomy/Power → Independence)
- To practice helping others through their own generosity
(Altruism/Purpose → Generosity)
- Fun and Stimulation

Why is Meeting Youth Needs so Important?



If Youth Needs are met in Positive Ways:

Youth develop characteristics most of us relate to character...

Belonging

Attached

Loving

Friendly

Intimate

Social

Cooperative

Trusting

Mastery

Achieving

Successful

Creative

Problem-solver

Motivated

Persistent

Competent

Power

Autonomous

Confident

Assertive

Responsible

Inner Control

Self-Disciplined

Leadership

Generosity

Altruistic

Caring

Sharing

Loyal

Empathic

Pro-social

Supportive

If Youth Needs are met in Negative Ways:

Unmet needs can become defining factors in the lives of youth...

Belonging

Gang Loyalty
Craves
Affection
& Acceptance
Promiscuous
Clinging
Overly-
Dependent

Mastery

Overachiever
Arrogant
Risk-seeker
Cheater
Workaholic
Perseveres
Delinquent
Skills

Power

Dictatorial
Reckless
Bully
Sexual Prowess
Manipulative
Rebellious
Defies
Authority

Generosity

Overinvolved
Plays Martyr
Co-dependent
"Noblesse
Oblige"

If Need is Unmet:

Some youth retreat or give up on getting needs met...

Belonging

Unattached
Guarded
Rejecting
Lonely
Aloof
Isolated
Distrustful

Mastery

Nonachiever
Avoids Risk
Fears
Challenges
Unmotivated
Gives Up Easily

Power

Submissive
Lacks
Confidence
Irresponsible
Helplessness
Undisciplined
Easily
Influenced

Generosity

Selfish
Narcissistic
Hardened
Anti-social
Exploitative

Resources

- Being Y-AP Savvy:
<http://fyi.uwex.edu/youthadultpartnership/files/2011/02/YAP-Savvy12.pdf>
- Circle of Courage:
<https://www.starr.org/training/youth/aboutcircleofcourage>
- Creating Youth-Adult Partnerships: Training Curricula for Youth, Adults and Youth-Adult Teams
- Youth-Adult Partnerships: A Training Manual
- Building Community: A Tool Kit for Youth and Adults in Charting Assets and Creating Change.
All from: <http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/catalog/toolkits/resources>