

# Session 5

# Opportunities for Positive Youth Development

## Facilitator Notes

### Key Concepts

- Meaningful opportunities and experiences contribute to positive youth development.
- Youth workers play powerful roles as coaches, networkers and advocates in promoting positive youth development.
- Skilled workers involve youth, family members and other stakeholders in providing opportunities to encourage positive youth development.
- Being aware of surfacing negative thoughts about different youth

### Highlights

- Describing behaviors that indicate youth are achieving personal development
- Identifying behaviors and skills youth workers need to promote positive youth development
- Session video
- Recognizing the development stages of adolescents
- Developing strategies that promote opportunities for positive youth development

### Challenges

- Working with participants to understand their roles as coaches, networkers and advocates
- Addressing how differences between youth and workers influence the roles of advocate and networker (i.e., culture, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation)
- Supporting participants to acknowledge differences in youth based upon development stages
- Asserting the importance of individualizing work with youth in care

### Materials

- Quotes for Practitioners
- Sticky wall
- Half sheets of paper of various colors
- Handouts and overheads
- Flip chart, markers and tape
- ILC video
- Journal



# Session Objective

To promote application of worker knowledge and skills for positive youth development

## Session Outline

- ❑ Activity 5.1  
Welcome and Introduction (40 minutes)
  - ⌘ Teaching how to use opportunities as a strategy for competency
  
- ❑ Activity 5.2  
Roles Promoting Positive Development of Youth in Care (30 minutes)
  - ⌘ Identifying worker roles in promoting youth development
  
- ❑ Activity 5.3  
Session Video (15 minutes)
  - ⌘ Highlighting how youth in care view opportunities for development
  
- ❑ Break (15 minutes)
  
- ❑ Activity 5.4  
What We Know about Youth Development (35 minutes)
  - ⌘ Highlighting information about developmental stages
  
- ❑ Activity 5.5  
Promoting Opportunities for Development (35 minutes)
  - ⌘ Identifying strategies that promote opportunities for positive youth development
  
- ❑ Activity 5.6  
Session Wrap-up (10 minutes)

## Session Handouts and Overheads

- 📄 Transformational Experiences quote . . . . . 5a
  
- 📄 Opportunities are Pathways quote . . . . . 5b
  
- 📄 Building Blocks for Youth Transitioning Out of Care . . . . . 5c
  
- 📄 Roles of Child Welfare Practitioners . . . . . 5d
  
- 📄 Stages and Components of Adolescent Development . . . . . 5e
  
- 📄 Case Scenarios . . . . . 5f



# Session 5—Activity 5.1

## Welcome and Introduction

### Learning Objective

Participants will be able to understand opportunities as a strategy for competency.

### Materials

- Flip chart, markers and tape
- Half sheets of paper of various colors
- Handouts 5a, 5b and 5c

### Time

40 minutes

### Facilitator Preparation

- Write the following on separate sheets of paper and hang in the room:
  - Engagement – Challenging experiences
  - Participation—Opportunities for meaningful involvement and contribution
  - Preparation—High quality instruction and training
  - Support—Positive relationships and networks
- Write “Transformational Experiences” on the flip chart with “Opportunities to learn, practice and contribute” underneath.
- Identify group norms, if this is a stand-alone session.
- Hang Quotes for Practitioners from **Introduction Handout b**—printed on separate sheets of card stock paper—around the room.

### Procedure

#### Step 1

- Welcome participants to Session 5.
- Tell participants that this session will explore what is meant by transformational experiences or, more simply stated, opportunities for development.

#### Step 2

- Ask participants to recall a specific time during their adolescent years when they participated in an experience that left a lasting impression or taught them an important life lesson.
- Explain to participants that youth development researcher and author Karen Pittman (September 2001) identifies some of these opportunities as “transformational experiences.”
- Explain that transformational experiences can be both positive and negative.

#### Step 3

- Distribute half sheets of paper to participants and ask them to write the experience they identified.
- Ask participants to identify which youth development outcome area(s) this experience contributed to and to write that outcome area at the bottom of the half sheet.

#### Step 4

- Invite participants to introduce themselves and place their half sheets on the sticky wall.

#### Step 5

- Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:
  - “Why was this experience important for you?”

- “As you look across the identified experiences, what stands out for you?”
- “How can we ensure that youth in care have transformational experiences?”

### Step 6

- Review the highlights from the previous sessions:
  - Session 1
    - Importance of healthy youth/adult relationships
    - Importance of promoting interdependence
    - Attitudes which inhibit and promote positive youth development
  - Session 2
    - Development goals in working with youth in care
    - Existing services, resources and strategies
  - Session 3
    - Characteristics of youth culture
    - Barriers to youth input and participation
  - Session 4
    - Engaging youth as participants and resources

### Step 7

- Distribute **Handout 5a** and mention that “vulnerable youth don’t just need transitional programs, they need transformational experiences.”

**From** *Powerful Pathways: Framing Options and Opportunities for Vulnerable Youth*

### Step 8

- Distribute **Handout 5b** and review the definition:
  - “Opportunities (within the context of youth development) are pathways that offer the basic things young people need: opportunities to learn, work and contribute in ways that are relevant to them and to others.”

**From** *Unfinished Business*

### Step 9 (Optional activity)

- Invite participants to recall another transformational experience which contributed to their development when they were adolescents.
- Ask participants to write their experiences on slips of paper. Collect these pieces of paper from all participants.
- Invite participants to draw one slip and read it aloud.
- Ask participants to guess to whom the experience belongs.

*Note: Draw slips of paper throughout the remaining session(s) before and after breaks as a way to energize the group.*

### Step 10

- Distribute **Handout 5c** and review key elements:
  - Engagement – Challenging experiences
  - Participation—Opportunities for meaningful involvement and contribution
  - Preparation—High quality instruction and training
  - Support—Positive relationships and networks

### Step 11

- Remind participants that in an earlier session we identified attitudes and approaches that engage youth.
- Explain that the remaining sessions will focus on the roles of child welfare practitioners in promoting positive youth development.
  - According to research conducted at the Institute for Public Sector Innovation, Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Services at the University of Southern Maine (Bernotavicz, et al., 2001), child welfare practitioners

working with youth transitioning out of care conduct their business within three role areas:

- Coach
- Networker
- Advocate

### Step 12

- Review Session 5 objective:
  - To promote application of worker knowledge and skills for positive youth development



# Session 5—Activity 5.2

## Roles Promoting Positive Development of Youth in Care

### Learning Objective

Participants will be able to identify worker roles that promote positive youth development.

### Materials

- Flip chart, markers and tape
- Handout 5d

### Time

30 minutes

### Procedure

#### Step 1

- Review the three roles—coach, networker, advocate—(**Handout 5d**) that have been identified by the University of Southern Maine as the roles of successful practitioners working with youth transitioning out of care.
- Write the roles on separate half sheets and place them on the sticky wall.
- Invite participants to share some of their job duties that are associated with one or more of the roles.

#### Step 2

- Ask participants to divide into three groups.
- Provide each group with flip chart paper and a variety of markers.
- Ask each group to draw a very simple outline of a worker. (Omit clothes, hair and facial features.)

#### Step 3

- Assign each group one of the three roles on which to focus.
- Direct each group to respond to the following question:
  - “What are the goals of your assigned role?”
- Ask participants to write their responses around the **edges** of the flip chart paper.
- Ask the following question:
  - “What are the internal attributes and knowledge necessary to be successful in the role?”
- Ask participants to write their responses **inside** the outline of the worker.
- Ask the following question:
  - “What are the external behaviors and skills necessary to be successful in the role?”
- Ask participants to write their responses **outside** the outline of the worker.
- Remind participants that **Handouts 1g and 2b** might help them in some of their responses.
- For additional visual clarity, ask participants to use different colors on the flip chart responses for:
  - Goals
  - Internal attributes and knowledge
  - External behaviors and skills

#### Step 4

- Invite each group to hang their child welfare practitioner outline on the sticky wall and present responses to each question.

## Step 5

- Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:
  - “What were some of the challenges in working on your role in the group?”
  - “What stands out for you when you look across the three roles?”
  - “What challenges do you experience in these roles?”
  - “How do these roles best serve youth transitioning out of care?”
  - “How do these roles differ from the role of a parent?”
  - “To what extent do your values and experiences shape your ability to assume the roles in working with a youth who is different from you?”
  - “How might your role as advocate and networker be compromised in working with a youth who is different from you?”

# Session 5—Activity 5.3

## Session Video

### Learning Objective

Participants will understand how youth in care view opportunities for their development.

### Materials

- Video
- Flip chart, markers and tape
- Half sheets of paper
- Sticky wall

### Time

15 minutes

### Facilitator Preparation

- Write the questions asked of youth in the video on flip chart paper:
  - “Why is it important for youth in care to have real life experiences?”
  - “What opportunities are necessary for youth to learn to become self-sufficient?”

### Procedure

#### Step 1

- Invite participants to share youth responses to the interview questions that they were assigned in the last session:
  - “Why is it important for youth in care to have real life experiences?”
  - “What opportunities are necessary for youth to learn to become self-sufficient?”
- Distribute half sheets and ask participants to write what youth reported in their dialogue assignment from the last session.
- Ask participants to write one idea per half sheet.
- Place the half sheets on the sticky wall to compare with the responses of youth in the video.

#### Step 2

- Introduce the video by acknowledging that the *Interdependent Living Curriculum* video was produced by young people and showcases youth in care.
- Mention that youth were behind and in front of the camera.
- Underscore that it is important to recognize that youth in care are “experts” on foster care since they are living the experience.

#### Step 3

- Before showing the video, assign table groups one of the following focus areas for which to pay particular attention:
  - Key words and phrases
  - Why is it important to have real life experiences?
  - What opportunities are important?
  - How can workers provide youth with opportunities?

#### Step 4

- Show Session 5 video.

### Step 5

- Facilitate a discussion by asking each group to share their observations of the video.
- Review youth interview responses to identify similarities and differences.

### Step 6

- Stress that the *Interdependent Living Curriculum* emphasizes that relationships are key to human development.
  - It is important to have opportunities to learn and to contribute.
  - As mentioned in earlier sessions, we are all interdependent—on the job, in relationships, in neighborhoods, in communities.
  - Whether we realize it or not, we learn about ourselves, and the world, through interactions with others.

# Session 5—Activity 5.4

## What We Know About Youth Development

### Learning Objective

Participants will be able to describe the stages of adolescent development.

### Materials

- Flip chart, markers and tape
- Handout 5e

### Time

35 minutes

### Procedure

#### Step 1

- Ask participants to recall a time when they were adolescents and they noticed developmental differences between themselves and their peers.
- Invite participants to share some of those differences.

#### Step 2

- Remind participants how awkward and self-conscious they felt about these differences and to imagine what it must be like for youth in care.

#### Step 3

- Distribute **Handout 5e**.
- Emphasize that adolescent development is an individual process influenced by many factors.
  - While working to promote positive youth development, practitioners need to remember and use the development stages and their components.

#### Step 4

- Review **Handout 5e** and underscore the following points:
  - The three stages of adolescent development (early, middle, late) refer to the age of the adolescent
  - Physical development—the development of the adolescent’s physical body
  - Cognitive development—the development of the adolescent’s thought process
  - Social/Emotional development—the development of the adolescent’s ability to form relationships and develop emotional maturity

*Note: Tie overview into stories shared by participants in Step 1.*

#### Step 5

- Ask participants if they have any questions.

#### Step 6

- Divide participants into three groups and assign a stage (early, middle, late) to each group.

#### Step 7

- Direct each group to prepare a presentation on what their assigned development stage looks like.
  - Groups can use a skit, song, drawing, story or anything that highlights the stage.

### Step 8

- ❑ Ask the groups to present their development stage starting with the early stage then moving to the middle and late stages.

### Step 9

- ❑ Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:
  - “What were some similarities between the stages?”
  - “What are the obvious differences?”
  - “What behaviors do you associate with each stage?”
  - “Which stage do you find most challenging when working with youth in care?”

### Step 10

- ❑ Following this discussion, tell participants that there are special circumstances that might promote or detract from development opportunities for youth in care.
- ❑ Remind participants that it is important to meet youth where they are developmentally.
  - Often, youth services are designed for an age group without consideration of individual differences and circumstances.
- ❑ Tell participants that the next activity will give them an opportunity to identify development opportunities for a specific youth in care.

# Session 5—Activity 5.5

## Promoting Opportunities for Positive Development

### Learning Objective

Participants will be able to identify strategies that promote opportunities for positive youth development.

### Materials

- Flip chart, markers and tape
- Colored half sheets of paper (three different colors)
- Handout 5f

### Time

35 minutes

### Procedure

#### Step 1

- Invite participants to recall information from previous sessions about ways to shape youth development opportunities.
  - Responses should include:
    - Youth should participate as a resource for engagement and meaning
    - Our objective is to help youth move toward self-managing in one or more development areas

#### Step 2

- Ask participants to get back into the three groups from the previous activity and distribute **Handout 5f**.

#### Step 3

- Assign each group one of the scenarios and ask them to identify two or three opportunities for helping youth achieve development goals.
- Remind participants of the development outcomes outlined in **Handout 2b**.
- Give groups 15 minutes to complete this step.

#### Step 4

- Distribute half sheets to each group and ask them to write the following information on the sheets:
  - Development goal
  - Opportunities to meet development goal
  - Opportunities for youth participation

#### Step 5

- Invite each group to present their information to the large group.

#### Step 6

- Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:
  - “What was difficult about this activity?”
  - “Where do you anticipate challenges in providing opportunities for youth?”
  - “How will this help move youth toward self-managing their life?”

### Step 7

- ❑ Ask participants to complete box 3 on **Handout 1c**.

### Step 8

- ❑ Remind participants that identifying and providing opportunities for positive youth development should be a joint effort involving youth, family members and other stakeholders.
  - Relationships are key to supporting youth in the opportunities they encounter.
  - Sessions 6 and 7 focus on how various relationships support and promote success through youth development opportunities.

# Session 5—Activity 5.6

## Wrap-up

### Learning Objective

Participants will be able to recall session information and learning.

### Materials

- Flip chart, markers and tape
- Journal

### Time

10 minutes

### Facilitator Preparation

- Write words and phrases that capture the essence of this session on the flip chart. Some words or phrases include:
  - Pathways
  - Quality instruction, training and formal learning
  - Challenging roles and responsibilities
  - Opportunities to learn and practice
  - Stages of adolescent development
    - physical
    - cognitive
    - social/emotional
  - Individualized approach

### Procedure

#### Step 1

- Invite participants to recall what stood out for them in Session 5 and its relevance to their work.

#### Step 2

- Review highlights of the session by referring to words and phrases written on the flip chart.
- Relate the session to learning from previous sessions and discuss how this session leads to the next one on emotional, motivational and strategic support.
- Review comments made during this session (or contained within project survey information) regarding the importance of providing youth meaningful opportunities for development.
- Mention that youth are more likely to be successful when they have various supports around them.

#### Step 3

- Direct participants to ask 3–4 youth the following questions from **Introduction Handout a** before Session 6:
  - “How can/do workers support youth to be on their own?”
  - “What supports are needed to be healthy and successful after youth leave care?”

#### Step 4

- Invite participants to complete Session 5 of their journals.

#### Step 5

- Remind participants of the next training date and time, to complete their interview questions and to bring handout materials with them to the next training.



# Session 5—Handout 5a

**“Vulnerable youth don’t need transitional programs, they need transformational experiences.”**

**From**

Yohalem, N., & Pittman, K. (2001, October). *Powerful pathways: Framing options and opportunities for vulnerable youth*. Takoma Park, MD: Forum for Youth Investment.



# Session 5—Handout 5b

“Opportunities are pathways that offer the basic things young people need: opportunities to learn, work and contribute in ways that are relevant to them and to others.”

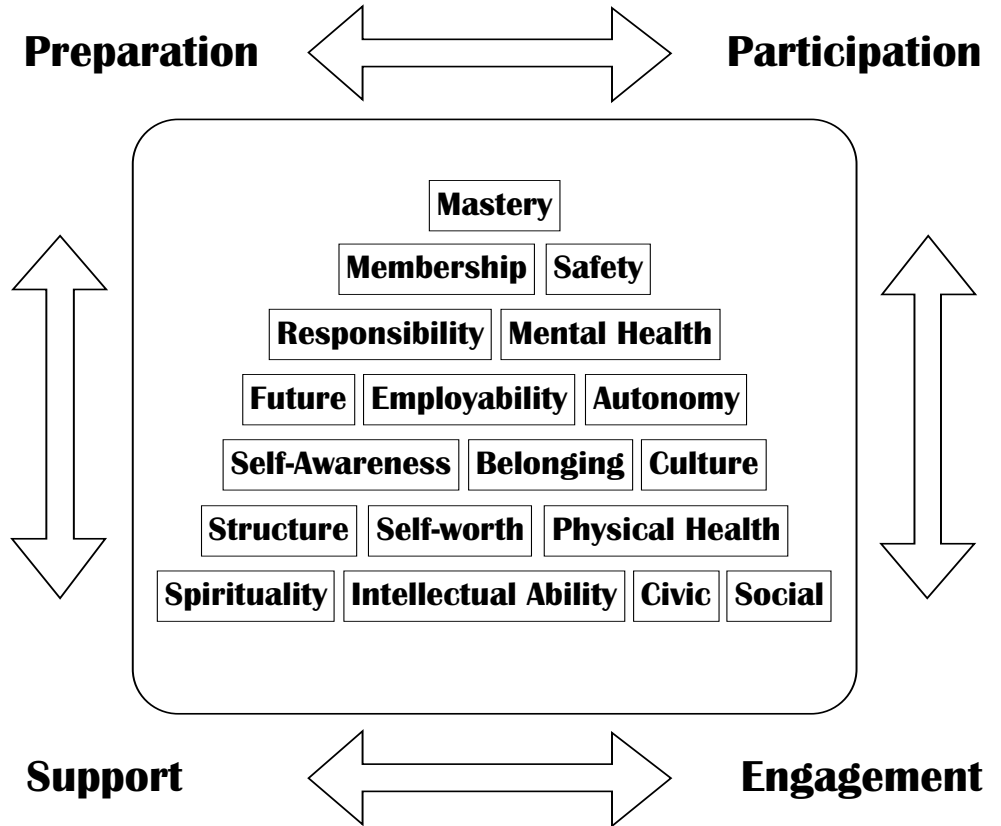
**From**

Ferber, T., Pittman, K., & Irby, M. (2001). *Unfinished business: Further reflections on a decade of promoting youth development*. Takoma Park, MD: Forum for Youth Investment.



# Session 5—Handout 5c

## Building Blocks for Youth Transitioning Out of Care



### Adapted From

Yohalem, N., & Pittman, K. (2001, October). *Powerful pathways: Framing options and opportunities for vulnerable youth*. Takoma Park, MD: Forum for Youth Investment.



# Session 5—Handout 5d

## Roles of Child Welfare Practitioners

Below are some examples of behaviors associated with the three roles of child welfare practitioners. Many of the identified behaviors have relevances for all three roles.

### Coach

Listen  
Understand  
Encourage  
Practice  
Reflect—Process  
Plan—Set goals  
Provide experiences

### Networker

Introduce  
Solicit  
Broker resources  
Nurture relationships  
Connect—Interact  
Empower

### Advocate

Champion  
Involve  
Promote  
Open doors  
Assert



### From

Bernotavicz, F., Barthelman, P. A. J., & Zanghi, M. (2001). *A competency model for adolescent caseworkers: Partnering with youth as they transition to independence*. Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine, Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Services, Institute for Public Sector Innovation.



# Session 5—Handout 5e

## Stages and Components of Adolescent Development

	EARLY 12–14	MIDDLE 15–17	LATE 18–21
<b>Physical Component</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth of bones, muscles, and other body tissues</li> <li>• Hormonal changes</li> <li>• Sex organs and secondary sex characteristics develop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued growth and development</li> <li>• Increased hormonal changes</li> <li>• Sex organs and secondary sex characteristics develop further</li> <li>• Body image develops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth slows down</li> <li>• Body achieves more definition</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive Component</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal operational thinking</li> <li>• Think in logical terms</li> <li>• Reluctant to accept advice or criticism</li> <li>• Disregard hobbies which tie them to childhood</li> <li>• May observe fall in school grades</li> <li>• Engage in “testing out” behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think hypothetically—able to consider and calculate the consequences of thoughts, actions, events, or behaviors without ever actually performing them</li> <li>• May try to prove they are fearless, powerful, and sexy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend time thinking about who they are</li> <li>• Able to understand own and other people’s feelings and motivations</li> <li>• Understand how personal behaviors affect other people</li> <li>• Understand how others’ behaviors affect them</li> <li>• Planning/problem-solving</li> </ul>
<b>Social/Emotional Component</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychologically distant from family, especially parents</li> <li>• Strong identification with peers</li> <li>• Social status related to group membership</li> <li>• Social acceptance depends upon conformity to observable traits or to roles that group members value</li> <li>• Independent from parents and other adults</li> <li>• Ambivalent about sexuality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one friendships with same and opposite sex peers, based on understanding, loyalty and intimacy</li> <li>• Strong peer group alliance</li> <li>• Able to consider different points of view</li> <li>• Deal with similarities and differences versus compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-revelation</li> <li>• Intimacy</li> <li>• Develop expectations for loyalty from friends and adults</li> <li>• Open to adults who do not lecture or take authoritative posture</li> <li>• Accept adult responsibilities</li> <li>• Make independent decisions</li> </ul>

### From

Professional Development Center and Tallahassee Community College. (2001, October). *Independent living: Caregivers assisting youth in transition curriculum*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Children & Families, Office of Family Safety.



# Session 5—Handout 5f

## Case Scenarios

### John

John is a 12-year-old male who was removed from his home due to severe neglect by his father. John's mother passed away when he was 8 years old. John lived with his alcoholic father and two younger siblings until he was placed in custody when he was 9 years old.

John is emotionally immature and has a history of being truant from school. He has difficulty with his peers due to his emotional immaturity and visual impairment. He has a history of becoming dependent upon his caregivers and expresses fear when change occurs.

### Pat

Pat is a 16-year-old male who was recently placed in foster care after his parents died in an automobile accident. Pat expresses anger toward authority figures and is mistrustful of most adults. Prior to the death of his parents, he was an average student who was involved in sports and activities at his previous school.

Pat has recently started to associate with a peer group that has negative influences on him especially around following rules and respecting others. His only remaining family is an uncle who lives out of the area but is willing to be involved in Pat's life.

### Tricia

Tricia is an 18 year-old female who has been in care for 5 years due to abuse by her stepfather. While in care, Tricia has been responsible and cooperative. She is known to be a loner and quietly co-exists with peers in the foster home. She has not bonded with her workers or foster families and expresses eagerness to get out on her own.

Tricia has a strong relationship with her grandmother with whom she is in contact regularly. Her interests are playing the piano, gardening, church and reading. She has a difficult time making friends and expressing her thoughts and feelings. She describes herself as shy.

## Safety and Structure

### Goal

To feel safe to participate in school academics and activities.

How will John participate?

## Belonging and Membership

### Goal

To connect with positive groups of peers and adults.

How will Pat participate?

## Self-worth

### Goal

To increase self-esteem and self-concept as a member of the household.

How will Tricia participate?

