

Session 6

Supports for Positive Youth Development

Facilitator Notes

Key Concepts

- Emotional, motivational and strategic supports contribute to positive youth development.
- Supports need to be individualized.
- There are identified strategies for workers to use to help youth in care increase relationships and resources for their support.
- Asserting the significance of youth in determining and involving meaningful persons and resources in their lives

Highlights

- Recalling how participants' significant adults supported their personal development as adolescents
- Identifying supports for youth in care with specialized needs
- Session video
- Developing strategies to identify and generate supports for youth in care

Challenges

- Helping participants understand their role in identifying, coordinating and encouraging key supports for youth in care
- Surfacing the diverse needs of individual youth which might challenge personal biases and fears of child welfare practitioners
- Stressing to participants the importance of supporting youth when youth opinions differ from their caregivers
- Facilitating a discussion about system policies and practices that encourage or inhibit the availability of important supports for 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 teach participants three types of support that youth need for positive development: emotional, motivational and strategic

Session Outline

- ❑ Activity 6.1
Welcome and Introduction (20 minutes)
 - ⌘ Introducing supports as key to positive youth development

- ❑ Activity 6.2
What Do Youth In Care Need To Be Successful? (60 minutes)
 - ⌘ Identifying internal resources and external supports needed by youth transitioning out of care

- ❑ Break (15 minutes)

- ❑ Activity 6.3
Session Video (30 minutes)
 - ⌘ Highlighting how youth in care view supports

- ❑ Activity 6.4
Promoting Supports for Development (45 minutes)
 - ⌘ Identifying support strategies for youth in care

- ❑ Activity 6.5
Session Wrap-up (10 minutes)

Session Handouts and Overheads

- 📄 Overcoming Challenges quote 6a

- 📄 Supports for Development 6b

- 📄 Promoting Positive Youth Development 6c

Session 6—Activity 6.1

Welcome and Introduction

Learning Objective

Participants will understand the value of supports for youth competency.

Materials

- Flip chart, markers and tape
- Half sheets of paper
- Handouts 6a and 6b

Time

20 minutes

Facilitator Preparation

- Write the following elements of supports on separate sheets and hang on the sticky wall:
 - Strategic
 - How to navigate the world
 - Emotional
 - Nurturing relationships
 - Motivational
 - High expectations and standards
- 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 6.
- Tell participants that this session will explore three types of support that are essential in promoting positive youth development.

Step 2

- Distribute **Handout 6a**.
- Make the following points in a discussion:
 - Research shows that two critical factors play important roles in helping youth overcome the challenges put before them: a positive, trusting relationship with an adult; and an external support system, such as connections with school, religious organizations or youth groups.
 - Studies have demonstrated that attachment to a supportive adult, related or unrelated, can be one of the key variables correlated with resiliency.
 - Research shows that even when young people grow up in high-risk environments, they are likely to have positive outcomes when they experience caring relationships with adults.

From *It's My Life*

Step 3

- Ask participants to recall the significant adult they identified in Session 1.
- Distribute half sheets of paper to participants and ask them to write how this adult supported them.
- Flip chart the following question:
 - “How did your significant adult support you in your personal development?”

Step 4

- ❑ Distribute **Handout 6b** and review key terms associated with providing supports.

Step 5

- ❑ Invite participants to introduce themselves and to place their half sheets under one of the three support areas on the sticky wall.

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
 - Session 5
 - Promoting application of worker knowledge and skills for positive youth development

Step 7

- ❑ Review Session 6 objective:
 - To teach participants three types of support that youth need for positive development: emotional, motivational and strategic

Session 6—Activity 6.2

What Do Youth In Care Need To Be Successful?

Learning Objective

Participants will be able to identify internal resources and external supports needed by youth transitioning out of care.

Materials

- Flip chart, markers and tape
- Half sheets of paper

Time

60 minutes

Procedure

Step 1

- Tape three flip chart pages together to form one large sheet.
- Ask a volunteer to lie on the paper and trace the outline of that person on the paper.
- Place the outline on the sticky wall and ask participants to think of it as a youth in care.
- Ask participants:
 - “What internal strengths do youth in care have?”
- Write responses on the inside of the outline.

Step 2

- Divide participants into four groups.

Step 3

- Ask participants to identify some of the differences among the youth in their caseloads (i.e., gender, age, race, culture, economic status, learning abilities, sexual orientation, health, etc.) and write identified areas on the flipchart.

Step 4

- Invite participants to share how they learn to understand and support these unique differences.

Step 5

- Explain to participants that the next activity will challenge them to search for particular supports that a specific youth might need for interdependence.
 - While many youth have similar internal strengths, some have had different opportunities and life experiences.

Step 6

- Assign each group a youth with a special need.
 - Examples include a bi-racial youth, a gay youth, a developmentally delayed youth, or an HIV-infected youth.

Step 7

- Ask participants to answer the following question specific to their assigned youth:
 - “What external supports does _____ (youth in care) need to be healthy and successful?”

Step 8

- Ask participants to place their responses on half sheets.
- Direct participants to write only one idea per half sheet.
- Remind participants to address the three support areas in their responses.

Note: Distribute different color half sheets to each group.

Step 9

- Invite a representative from each group to place their half sheets next to the youth outline.
- Following each presentation, ask the large group to discuss their impressions of the identified supports and to add anything else.

Step 10

- Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:
 - “Where is the foster care system most successful in providing individualized supports for youth in care?”
 - “Where is improvement needed to provide individualized supports?”
 - “Where are you most challenged in providing necessary supports?”
 - “How can youth serve as resources in identifying supports?”
 - “How do our views influence our approaches in identifying supports for youth who are different from ourselves?”
 - “How can we overcome resistance from involved adults who have issues with differences?”

Adapted From *Tools of the trade curriculum*

- Invite participants to identify how workers might access external resources and information to address individual youth needs and issues. (Remember, a youth should be a resource and partner in this process.)

Session 6—Activity 6.3

Session Video

Learning Objective

Participants will understand how youth in care view supports.

Materials

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

Time

30 minutes

Facilitator Preparation

- Write the questions asked of youth in the video on flip chart paper:
 - “How can/do workers support youth to be on their own?”
 - “What supports are needed to be healthy and successful after youth leave care?”

Procedure

Step 1

- Invite participants to share youth responses to the interview questions that they were assigned in Session 5:
 - “How can/do workers support youth to be on their own?”
 - “What supports are needed to be healthy and successful after youth leave care?”
- 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
 - What supports do youth need after they leave care?
 - Foster care is most successful with which supports?
 - Foster care is least successful with which supports?

Step 4

- Show Session 6 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

- ❑ Following the discussion of the four focus areas, ask participants:
 - “How can you facilitate necessary supports for youth in care?”
- ❑ Remind participants of specific supports identified in Session 5 about the roles of child welfare practitioners (coach, networker, and advocate).
- ❑ Remind participants that while youth may expect many of these supports from individual workers, ultimately support can come from a variety of places.
 - This notion raises the importance of practitioners’ roles as networkers and advocates in connecting youth with others for support.

Step 7

- ❑ Stress that the *Interdependent Living Curriculum* emphasizes that relationships are key to human development.
 - It is important that those around us provide us with various supports during our personal development.
 - As mentioned in earlier sessions, we are interdependent upon others to be successful in life.
 - Whether we realize it or not, we continue to rely on relationships to support us in our personal goals and individual development.

Session 6—Activity 6.4

Providing Supports for Development

Learning Objective

Participants will be able to develop strategies for supporting youth in care.

Materials Needed

- Flip chart, markers and tape
- Handout 6c

Time

45 minutes

Facilitator Preparation

- Prepare the example in Step 3 on flip chart paper in the format of **Handout 6b**.

Procedure

Step 1

- Discuss how adults sometimes assume that adolescents are more interested in maintaining relationships with peers than with adults.
 - Research indicates that not only do youth benefit from healthy relationships with adults but they also want them.
 - Some studies suggest that youth alienated from conventional groups (i.e., family and school) often establish strong social bonds with anti-social peer groups.
 - It is particularly important to support and promote healthy relationships between youth in care and adults.
 - As identified in Session 5, practitioners best meet the needs of youth transitioning out of care by fulfilling multiple roles—coach, networker and advocate.
 - One of these roles is advocating for and promoting relationships to support youth as they transition out of care and beyond.

Step 2

- Distribute **Handout 6c**.
- Tell participants that they will be completing the handout based on the youth in care whom they identified in Session 1.

Step 3

- Instruct participants to identify the youth's development needs and to think of two specific goals to write on the handout.
 - Then each participant should identify activities that promote development in the identified area(s).

*Note: Encourage participants to use **Handout 2b** in identifying possible development opportunities.*

- Provide participants with the following example:
 - John has a development need to better manage his money. He has an opportunity to purchase clothes and supplies for school with money he has saved from a part-time job. John has a history of impulsive spending and will need support in preparing for this shopping opportunity. John's foster mother can provide strategic support by asking John to prepare a list of the things he needs for school. Once the list is developed, John's foster mother

can then work with John to prioritize the items. John's foster mother can provide motivational support by allowing John to negotiate what he wants and to purchase some things that are not a priority. John might take one of his foster care siblings on the shopping trip for emotional support to avoid impulse buying.

Step 4

- Once completed, invite groups to present their case and strategies to the larger group.

Step 5

- Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:
 - “Is there an area of support that youth in care experience regularly?”
 - “Is there an area of support where additional emphasis is needed?”
 - “What challenges do you face in securing relationships and resources to support youth?”
 - “In what ways can we ensure that youth in care receive the necessary supports?”

Step 6

- Ask participants to complete box 4 of **Handout 1c**.

Session 6—Activity 6.5

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:
 - Internal strengths
 - External supports
 - Strategic
 - Motivational
 - Emotional

Procedure

Step 1

- Invite participants to recall what stood out for them in Session 6 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 connecting youth with relationships and resources that promote positive development.
- Review comments made during this session (or contained within project survey information) regarding the importance of supports for youth.

Step 3

- Mention that youth are more likely to be successful in using opportunities for positive growth when they have various supports.

Step 4

- Direct participants to ask 3–4 youth the following questions from **Introduction Handout a** before Session 7:
 - “Who is part of the family that you have created to support you once you leave care?”
 - “Why is a support system important for you to be successful on your own?”

Step 5

- Invite participants to complete Session 6 of their journals.

Step 6

- 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 6—Handout 6a

“Research shows that two critical factors play important roles in helping youth overcome the challenges put before them: a positive, trusting relationship with an adult, and an external support system, such as connections with school, religious organizations or youth groups.”

From

Casey Family Programs. (2001, September). *It's my life: A framework for youth transitioning from foster care to successful adulthood*. Seattle, Washington: Author.

Session 6—Handout 6b

Supports for Development

According to the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, supports are interpersonal relationships and accessible resources—people and information—that allow a young person to take advantage of existing services and opportunities.

Although the three types of support—emotional, motivational and strategic—are equally important, they meet different needs.

Emotional support

- Fulfills the basic needs for nurturing and friendship

Motivational support

- Provides high expectations, standards and boundaries

Strategic support

- Helps young people understand the world and the options available

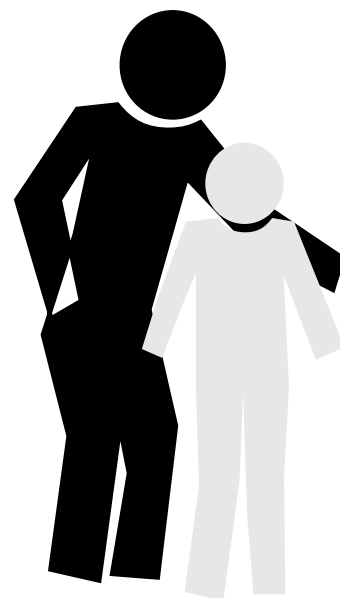
What does support look like?

Emotional	Motivational	Strategic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurturance • Friendship • Love • Compassion • Empathy • Affirmation • Caring relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations • Boundaries • Encouragement • Incentives • Acknowledge most of strengths • Recognition • Celebration of accomplishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing options • Coaching • Providing feedback • Discussing • Planning • Informing • Teaching consequences

Supports can take many different forms

But they must be:

- Affirming and respectful
- Ongoing
- Offered by a variety of people



From

Zeldin, S. (1996). *Advancing youth development curriculum*. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development/Center for Youth Development and Policy Research.

Session 6—Handout 6c

Promoting Positive Youth Development

Youth Name: _____

Development Area	Identified Goal	Activities	Support: Individuals & Resources		
			Emotional	Motiva- tional	Strategic
Safety and Structure					
Self-worth					
Mastery and Future					
Belonging and Membership					
Responsibility and Autonomy					
Spirituality and Self-awareness					

Development Area	Identified Goal	Activities	Support: Individuals & Resources
			Emotional Motiva- tional Strategic
Physical Health			
Mental Health			
Intellectual Ability			
Employability			
Civic and Social Ability			
Cultural Ability			