

## Youth-Driven Spaces (YDS): Agency Self Readiness and Capacity Assessment

### Overview

The concept of “youth-driven” as it applies to programs for older youth is based on a simple innovation: involving young people in running their own initiatives. A “youth-driven space” for high school age youth is a setting in which youth participants are involved in program and organizational decisions. In a youth-driven space, adults provide opportunities for youth to lead activities, establish and run youth advisory boards, and help make decisions about the physical space, activities offered, field trips, how money is spent, organizational policy, and even staff hiring. In a school setting, youth-driven participation can contribute to curricular decisions, improving school climate, and making policy changes. *Additional introductory information is attached in the YDS Overview and FAQ.*

### Self-Assessment Survey

The following self-assessment survey is meant to help agencies explore their readiness and capacity for engaging in the adoption of YDS practices. *Readiness* is defined as the “perceptions of need for the action, feasibility of the action, and value of the action/intervention”. *Capacity* is defined as the “skills, knowledge, resources, connections, and policies that support the action/intervention”.

A review of the readiness and capacity helps agencies recognize the strengths and challenges for adopting YDS practice. It also provides a tool for conversations both within the agency and with YDS training service providers. It is recommended that agency level Executive Director or Program Director work to complete this survey, based both on knowledge of current programming and through anecdotal evidence. Furthermore agencies seriously considering YDS intervention may also want to engage stakeholders (administrative staff, program staff, youth, other community stakeholders) in a short focus group to help provide scoring on these items.

### Survey Items:

#### **I. Philosophy**

*Feel that an approach like YDS is needed and has value for the organization and programs:*

	Strongly disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5		
Youth:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Program Staff:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Administration:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Board:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure

*Feel that working together, over a sustained period (at least one year) significant YDS practices and policies can be achieved, such as youth planning and leading programs, serving in organizational or governance roles.*

	Strongly disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Youth:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Program Staff:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Administration:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Board:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure

*Stakeholders feel adults and youth should be full partners in program and organization-level decision-making*

	Strongly disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Youth:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Program Staff:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Administration:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure
Board:	1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure

**II. Staffing**

*Personnel sufficient to implement YDS, including staff who can meet regularly with youth and provide them support on youth ideas.*

Strongly disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		
1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure

*Staff are trained in a positive youth development framework, have strong facilitation skills, and are consistently able to engage youth in programming*

Not present at all		Present		Strongly Present		
1	2	3	4	5		Not Sure

**III. Administrative staff interest and support**

*Board and administrative support for YDS*

Not present at all		Present		Strongly Present	
1	2	3	4	5	Not Sure

*Program staff interest*

Not present at all		Present		Strongly Present	
1	2	3	4	5	Not Sure

**IV. Other**

Our agency is a “learning organization” with a culture/climate of openness to learning, willingness to try new things, and flexibility

Strongly disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Not Sure

We have community support from other organizations/stakeholders (partners, schools, parents) for engaging in a new initiative like YDS

Strongly disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Not Sure

We have a ready group of youth who are interested in leadership and who are able to meet at a regularly scheduled times weekly or bi-weekly

Strongly disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Not Sure

#### **IV. Summary**

Reflecting on your response to the above items, how ready do you feel your agency is to engage in an intensive YDS program of training and coaching?

Not ready at All		Somewhat Ready		Very Ready	
1	2	3	4	5	N

Now that you've reflected on your readiness and capacity:

1. Describe your agency's capacity, interest and commitment to supporting a YDS intervention in your setting, including administrative, staff and youth support.
2. What things do you think must be done before committing to participating in an intensive YDS program in order to help ensure its success?

**For More Information:** To learn more about the YDS training/coaching model contact:

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