



Not waiting for the future... Youth empowerment now.

Kim Spurzem, MSW

Intro to Me!



Kim Spurzem [Her, She]

- 20 years working with youth to create systemic changes in their schools and communities

Most recently:

- Evaluation of social emotional curriculum
 - PAX Good Behavior Game
 - Power Up, Speak Out!
- Other partner projects with:
 - Addictive and Mental Disorders Division
 - Child and Family Services Division
 - Children's Mental Health Bureau
 - Family and Community Health Bureau
 - Headwaters Foundation

Outline.

“

The views expressed by Me are in no way endorsed by CBS any of its allied companies or in fact Me.

”

– Craig Ferguson

Objectives

To increase...

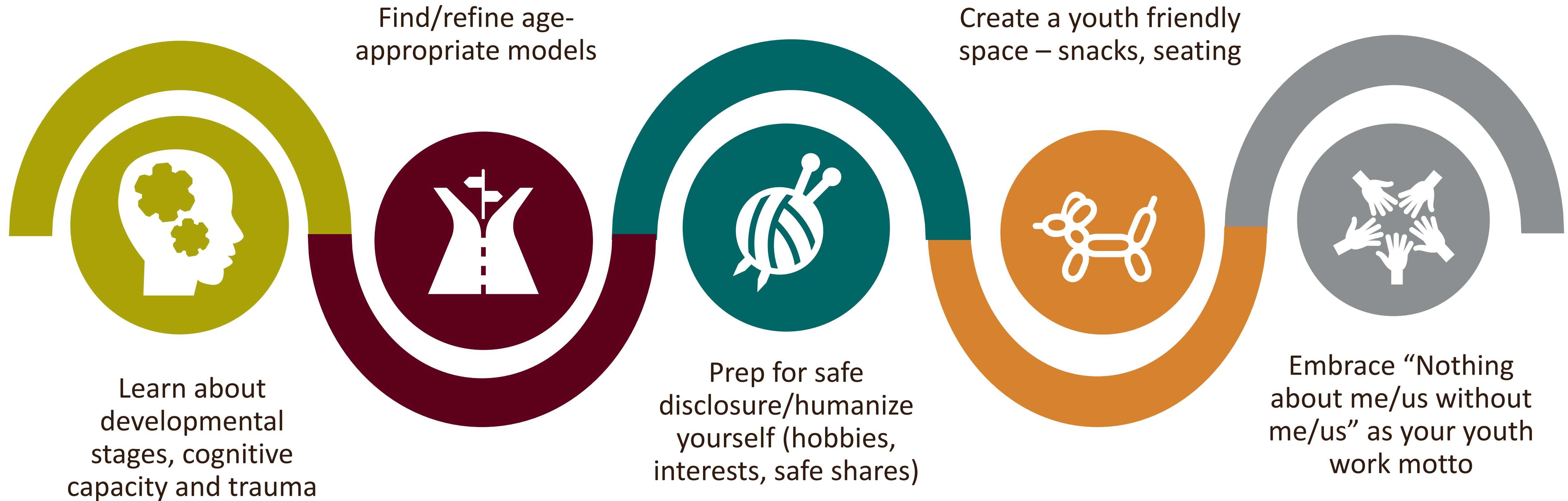
- Ability to define youth engagement
- Identification of adult patterns that silence youth
- Knowledge of techniques for youth engagement

Virtual Intros

In the chat post any of the following:

- Name,
- Agency,
- A word or phrase that describes yourself as a young person

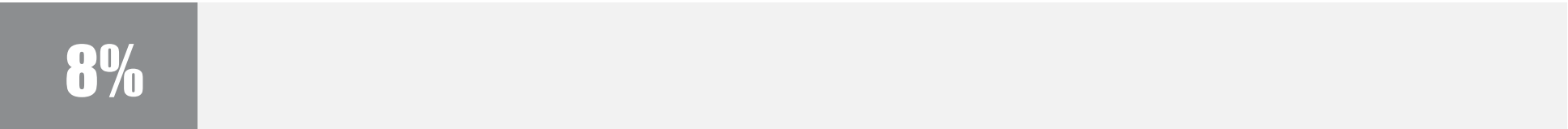
Prep work. (you've probably already done this!)



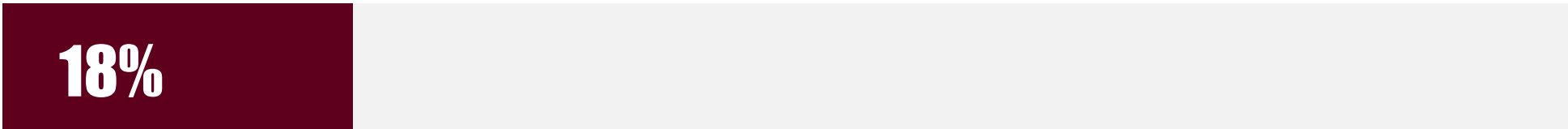
Reimagining the narrative.



Teens Who Felt Unsafe at School



Teens Who Engaged in Binge Drinking



VS.

Teens Who Felt Safe at School



Teens Who Are Drinking Moderately or Not At All



One-on-One: Common ADULT behaviors.



Lecture youth
about their choices
or use shame



Define the solution
before understanding
the problem



Lean on past
work with youth
so we are experts

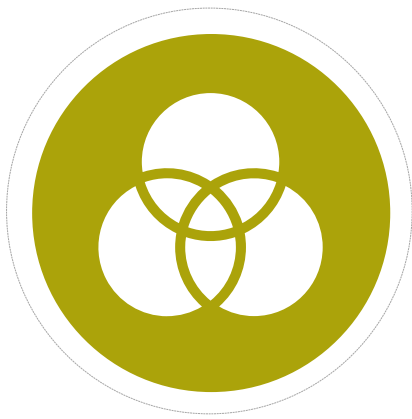


Youth Engagement



Be open and honest

Share confidentiality, disclosure and mandated reporting policies



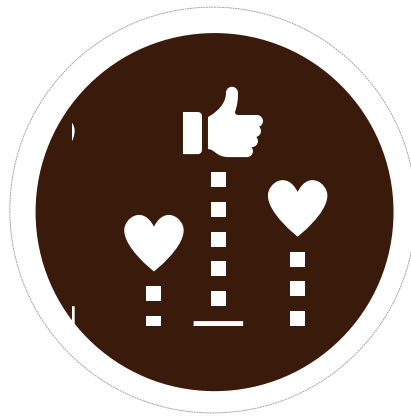
Shared-decisions

Shared creation of (measurable) goals and treatment paths – consider shared documentation to track progress.



Strengths first

Youth know their gaps– create a counter narrative



Genuine empathy

Resistance and difficult behaviors should be expected – especially around setbacks, youth defined failures



Make space

Youth allowed to share what is important to them

Team Meetings: Common ADULT behaviors.



Don't invite youth because we feel uncomfortable or cruel having honest dialogues about them



Speak about or around youth as if they are not present



Assume silence is defiance or disengagement



Change decisions in "adult-only" meetings

Design-Implement-Monitor Youth Engagement



“NAMWM”/“NAUWU”

Youth invited to the entire meeting – and most importantly for decision-making.

Accountability

Spaces to empower youth through partnership.

Ownership/“My Plan”

Youth should be in a leadership role developing goals/defining success.

Host pre-meeting

Support youth to formulate their own agenda. And prep for any existing agenda.

Topics for pre-meeting

Negative emotions
Tips for staying focused
Self-advocacy tools (rehearse, notes)
Plan for advocacy support

Youth Assessment: Common ADULT behaviors.



Assume youth are
satisfied with our
services



Give no thought about
needing to assess our
youth services



Be defensive to
critical feedback
from youth



Hire an org to
provide youth
technical assistance



Continue to learn
and grow through
prof. development



Volunteer with
youth in your
community



Create youth
feedback loops to
improve services



Use validated
treatment/program
assessment tools

Just a few tips for Leveraging Youth Voices

Youth Voice





THANK YOU

For more info, contact kim.spurzem@umontana.edu

Visit us on the web (health.umd.edu/ccfwd)

Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

References

Akiva, T., Cortina, K., & Smith, C. (2014). Involving Youth in Program Decision-Making: How Common and What Might it Do for Youth? *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43(11), 1844-1860.

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. (2012). Youth Voice Tip Sheet. Communication Between Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist & Youth: 10 Tips to Improve the Conversation. Retrieved from https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/youth_resources/misc/Youth_Voice_Tip_Sheet_2012.pdf

Building Bridges for Youth. (2012). Promoting Youth Engagement in Residential Settings: Suggestions from Youth with Lived Experience. <https://www.buildingbridges4youth.org/sites/default/files/Promoting%20Youth%20Engagement%20in%20Residential%20Settings%20-%20%20Suggestions%20from%20Youth.pdf>

Goldenring, J., & Rosen, D. (2004). Getting into adolescent heads: An essential update. *Contemporary Pediatrics (Montvale, N.J.)*, 21(1), 64.

Ross, L., & Connors, L. (2018). Improving Youth Access to Mental Health Support through a Youth–Adult Partnership. *Journal of Youth Development (Online)*, 13(3), 24-42.

Walking the Talk. (2016). Importance of youth engagement. Retrieved September 07, 2021, from <http://www.yetoolkit.ca/content/importance-youth-engagement>