

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

An Introduction

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What is Positive Youth Development?

Positive youth development (PYD) is an approach that guides communities in the way they organize services, supports, and opportunities so all young people can develop to their full potential

What are the Underlying Principles?

There are several key, research-based principles:

- Focus on positive outcomes
- Youth voice and engagement
- Long-term, developmentally appropriate involvement
- Universal and inclusive
- Community-based collaborative

Focus on Positive Outcomes

Shift from preventing or fixing problems to creating positive outcomes such as competencies, connections, positive values, and meaningful participation

Youth Voice and Engagement

Work *with* youth, not *for* youth. Engage young people as partners and listen to their expertise and perspective

Long-term involvement

Support young people through their development while adjusting to their changing developmental needs. Twelve year olds need different support than sixteen year olds

Universal and Inclusive

As a community we need to provide support and opportunities to all young people, not just the “high risk”, targeted groups, or the high achieving groups

Community-Based Collaboration

For positive youth development to succeed, non-traditional community sectors such as businesses, faith communities, or civic organizations need to be involved

The Positive Youth Development Shift

Positive youth development changes how we look at and provide youth services

- Move from fixing problems to building on strengths
- Instead of reacting to problems we are proactive to build positive outcomes
- Youth are no longer recipients of service and become resources and active participants

Strength-Based Approach

A strength-based approach is a powerful set of ideas, assumptions, and techniques:

- People are active in the helping process
- All people have strengths
- Strengths foster motivation for growth
- Strengths are internal and environmental

Features of Positive Development Settings

Successful youth development includes:

- Physical and psychological safety
- Supportive relationships
- Opportunities to belong
- Positive social norms
- Opportunities for skill building