Promoting Responsibility & Leadership

Participant Notebook

Name: _____

Improving & Aligning Policies

Planning and Partnering for Impact

Strengthening Practices and Programs

About the Forum

The Forum for Youth Investment provides products and services to help leaders improve partnerships, policies and practices to change the odds so all young people are ready for college, work and life. These products and services are based on best practices in youth development and on our experience working with hundreds of communities around the country since our founding in 1998.

About the Forum's Weikart Center

David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality is a leader in empowering education and human service leaders to adapt, implement and scale best-in-class, research-validated quality improvement systems to advance child and youth development. Training and technical assistance in quality improvement system design, effective performance data and lower stakes accountability has helped OST networks across the country be successful, scale-able and sustainable. The Weikart Center is a critical part of the Forum for Youth Investment's overall effort to build leadership capacity to advance readiness and equity.

Promoting Responsibility and Leadership

In this workshop, we explore how and why to promote responsibility and provide leadership opportunities to youth. *Preparing Youth to Thrive* identifies responsibility as one of six domains of SEL practices, and it is defined as "dispositions and abilities to reliably meet commitments and fulfill obligations of challenging roles."

RESPONSIBILITY	Dispositions and abilities to reliably meet commitments and fulfill obligations of challenging roles.
☺ ☑	**Key youth experiences** • Youth take on roles and obligations within program activities. • Youth encounter difficult demands. • Youth draw on resources to fulfill challenging roles and internalize accomplishment.	**Staff practices** • Staff provide structured but open-ended roles for youth. • Staff model and fulfill their own roles. • Staff promote high expectations, respect youth's ownership of their roles, and provide help only as needed.

Responsibility emerges when youth have opportunities to take on increasingly difficult social obligations. In doing so, they become *responsible for* carrying out tasks, roles, and demands and they become *responsible to* others who are depending on them do follow through on those obligations. As young people practice taking responsibility for meaningful aspects of group projects, they develop capacity for leadership, which involves assuming responsibility for moving groups forward on shared projects and goals.

The SEL Challenge programs provided a set of scaffolded conditions that assist youth through new and sometimes demanding situations. Read the examples below, reproduced from the *Thrive* guide, to draw insight into how these programs foster responsibility and leadership.

Youth Take on Roles and Obligations

An essential element of responsibility is that youth fully take on and invest in fulfilling the tasks and obligations of their role. A sense of ownership is enhanced when youth have agency in choosing or defining their roles. In some cases, staff create formal roles along with a structured process for youth choice.

ROLES: Youth take on roles and obligations within program activities.
(R1) Youth choose or accept roles and their obligations; in some cases they initiate the roles.

At **Youth on Board** (YOB), for example, they have a mix of both. Youth members run for official positions such as president, vice-president, secretary, and newspaper writer through an election process. For young people who are part of the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) at YOB, the process is more fluid. Youth work in teams on social justice projects throughout the district and at individual high schools. Staff lay out roles and structures to guide youth in thinking through their work, but it is up to youth to self-select roles and tasks as they come up.

Teena-Marie Johnson, education organizer at YOB, described this process:
"Staff say to the group 'Hey guys, there are lots of things that need to happen to move this campaign forward. Who wants to take on what role?' Then the young people say, 'All right, I'll do the public comment,' or 'I'll go to the meeting with the Mayor.' Everyone feels part of the process. Everyone does things they are interested in as much as possible."

DeVonne Bernard, director of the Teen Outreach Program at **Wyman**, described how having defined roles that youth choose themselves resulted in youth accepting the responsibilities of their roles without complaint:
"We didn't start out with roles or even identify them, but they felt it would go more smoothly if everybody had a place and identified roles. That came directly from the group. I'm excited that it has worked out since we transitioned into them choosing what they want to do. We don't have to worry about them being frustrated or mad: 'I didn't want to do that,' or 'You made me do that.' We don't have that, thank goodness."

For some youth at **YWCA Boston** (YW Boston), their roles within the group emerge as they begin to learn about each other and themselves. Julie Thayer, InIt program manager at YW Boston, described one particular group of youth:
"There were six of them, and they all had their strengths. Someone was really charismatic and got along with a lot of people. The students looked at him as a leader because of those skills, but quickly realized that he missed many meetings and wasn't very organized. So he ended up playing the role of getting other students to come to meetings. Whereas the quieter students who didn't view themselves as leaders realized, 'Wow, I can really play a role in writing a big proposal to carry out a project in our school.' Those individual roles emerge throughout the course of the projects."

Youth Encounter Demands

Many of the responsibilities in youth's roles involve obligations to the group or to other people and involve issues of integrity, trust, and safety. To have significant responsibility means that not meeting the requirements and obligations of roles will adversely affect others. Youth realize others are counting on them as they carry out the responsibilities of their roles.

DEMANDS: Youth encounter difficult demands.
(R2) As youth get into the roles, they encounter demands, requirements, and obligations; they understand that their actions in response to these demands will impact self, peers, or others.

Elizabeth Howard, artistic director of the Afterschool Program at **The Possibility Project** (TPP), described this process:
"No one's ever cast in their own part; they're cast in a story that is representing one of their cast member's stories. There is deep responsibility to tell that story in the best way they can, and the responsibility to not let people down because if you don't show up, we can't build stuff. They feel that, and they enforce that in each other. I don't have to enforce that. I give them skills and I say it a lot, but they are doing that for each other. That kind of responsibility to their friends or their cast members or to something bigger than themselves, I think it's a huge thing that they learn. How you can't just feel that, but you have to act on it. Your actions have to represent what you say you feel in that context."

At **Voyageur Outward Bound School** (VOBS), youth can easily see how the performance of their roles affects the expedition. Elizabeth "Poppy" Potter, director of operations, explained: *"On the expeditions, there are specific roles for each day and each person. For example, one role is the navigator, who is responsible for using the map and compass to track the group's travel and ensuring they are traveling in the right direction. They learn from the instructors the goal for miles in the day. In another role, a student is leader of the day. This person ensures all things are functioning well and pays attention to the group's energy to decide about breaks, eating, and where someone might need help. This person works with the group to make these decisions and together they make it happen. Our students own these roles. They own their success and failure in them and, in both cases, instructors support the group in processing the experience."*

Responsibility is honed and tested when youth are weary or overwhelmed or are presented with competing interests and desires. When warm weather entices them away from the demands of rehearsing, will they remain committed to rehearsals? Will they show up to do their part? How do they respond when the role suddenly becomes bigger and more demanding than they ever realized or just boring and less exciting than they thought?

Youth Draw on Resources and Internalize Accomplishment

Youth must draw on resources to fortify their resolve in the face of hardship. Some youth draw on inner strength: 'I'm not a quitter,' or 'My mom taught me to always finish everything I start.' Many youth are influenced by their sense of accountability to their peers, the staff, or the people they are serving. As youth become collaborators and friends with peers in the program, discovery of new feelings of solidarity with and accountability to peers becomes an important force. Youth are motivated to complete their role and do it well to help peers.

ACCOMPLISHMENT: Youth draw on resources to fulfill challenging roles and internalize accomplishment.
(R3) Youth draw on resources to successfully fulfill roles and obligations. Resources include drawing on inner strength, commitment, or newfound resolve; a sense of obligation to their peers and the program goals; and/or leaders' support and encouragement.
(R4) Youth succeed in their roles and internalize the experience of having fulfilled valued roles.

Youth from PWBF and YOB described how commitment to the rest of the team provided the impetus to keep going when the burden of responsibility was heavy:

At **Philadelphia Wooden Boat Factory** youth teams work alternate nights on the same boat, so their performance of nightly goals impacts the workload of their teammates the following night.
"I have a responsibility not only to myself but to everyone else because I agreed to do this as my part of the team and finish it. The responsibility of it is what really got to me. The independence they gave me was like, 'This is what you have to do. If you need help, we're going to help you, but this is your thing. Do it.' The freedom of it and the responsibility that came with it was really life changing."

"Knowing that other people are relying on you to show up at a certain meeting or to write up a specific thing, that's definitely helped with [responsibility]."

Over time, youth internalize the obligations of their roles within the program. They step up, take pride, and take ownership of the program. One example is from Jennifer Freed, co-executive director at **AHA!**:

"We don't have to recruit people anymore because the kids themselves own this AHA! thing. They bring people in because they know how to do it. At least twice we weren't able to be at a session because something happened to staff and [the kids] said, 'Okay, we'll just do it in the park ourselves.'"

At **EMU's Bright Futures**, an External Assessor noted staff practices (R3) and (R4) in action: *"We have a ritual called snaps if children want to applaud what their peers did. They state why their peers deserved snaps and then everyone acknowledges and snaps. We were tracking and tallying shout outs on a giant white board which I think also increased motivation. So like Monday you saw that a particular child got snaps and by Thursday if you notice that the same child got snaps each day then the other kids are like 'Wow!!---got shout outs every single day and he is new.' You get to know that the child felt confident and motivated at the point."*

Preparing Youth to Thrive

Responsibility Standards and Practice Indicators (p.83)

KEY YOUTH EXPERIENCES `YE`

ROLES. Youth take on roles and obligations within program activities.

(R1) Youth choose or accept roles and their obligations; in some cases they initiate the roles.

DEMANDS. Youth encounter difficult demands.

(R2) As youth get into the roles, they encounter demands, requirements, and obligations; they understand that their actions in response to these demands will impact self, peers, or others.

ACCOMPLISHMENT. Youth draw on resources to fulfill challenging roles and internalize accomplishment.

(R3) Youth draw on resources to successfully fulfill roles and obligations. Resources include drawing on inner strength, commitment, or newfound resolve; a sense of obligation to their peers and the program goals; and/or leaders' support and encouragement.
(R4) Youth succeed in their roles and internalize the experience of having fulfilled valued roles.

STAFF PRACTICES `SP`

STRUCTURE. Staff provide structured but open-ended roles for youth.

(R5) The program design and the staff help create a variety of roles for youth that:
   a) have clear expectations and requirements; and
   b) have sufficient flexibility to allow youth initiative and ownership and accommodate youth's growing skills.
(R6) Staff help fit individual youth to roles appropriate to their interests and capacities.

MODELING. Staff model and fulfill their own roles.

(R7) Staff model and fulfill their own roles in the program, defining and discussing them with youth.

COACHING. Staff promote high expectations, respect youth's ownership of their roles, and provide help only as needed.

(R8) Staff articulate, encourage, and enforce high accountability for youth living up to roles and obligations.
(R9) Staff vigorously support youth's ownership, empowerment, and latitude for decision-making within their roles, providing assistance only as necessary.

A free digital download of *Preparing Youth to Thrive* is available at selpractices.org

Notes and Doodles

Youth at the Center

For each of the scenarios below, brainstorm ways to center the experience on your youth and provide opportunities for leadership and responsibility. For each, think about specific ways you can structure, model, and coach to support the youth in these situations.

1. Each quarter, you come up with a list of clubs and activities for the youth to do in your program based on what you've heard them say they like.

2. You want your space to feel welcoming and friendly to youth, so you go to the teacher store and get tons of fun posters to post around your room.

3. You have some older youth in the program, but mostly really young youth. The older youth feel like everything you do is too "babyish."

4. Your students never seem to write down their homework, so you regularly connect with their school-day teacher to find out what they need to do each night.

Taking it Back

Structure	Modeling	Coaching
• Create a variety of roles for youth that: have clear expectations and requirements and have sufficient flexibility to allow youth initiative and ownership and accommodate youth's growing skills. • Help fit individual youth to roles appropriate to their interest and capacities.	• Model and fulfill their own roles in the program, defining and discussing them with youth.	• Articulate, encourage, and enforce high accountability for youth living up to roles and obligations. • Support youth's ownership, empowerment, and latitude for decision-making within their roles, providing assistance only as necessary.

1. Choose one staff practice indicator that you would like to work on in your program.

2. How would you implement this practice indicator into your program setting? Indicate a potential timeline and how you would measure your progress.

3. How would you partner with a colleague within your organization to implement this practice indicator? You can also include an activity presented in the application activity.
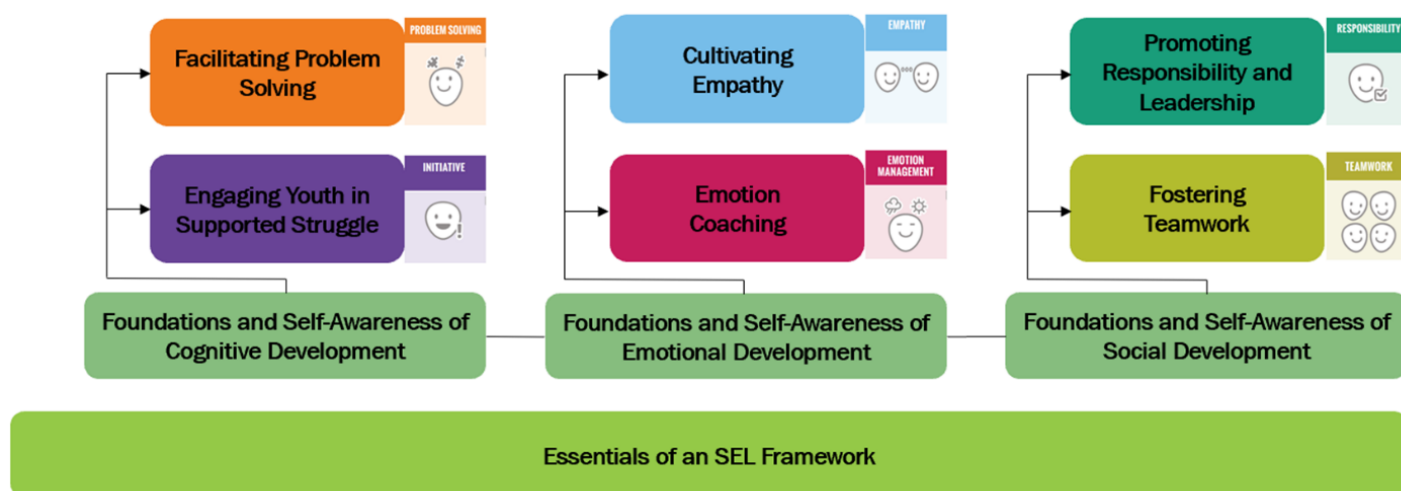
Reflection Questions

1. Something I learned or realized during the Reconstruct the Unseen activity is...
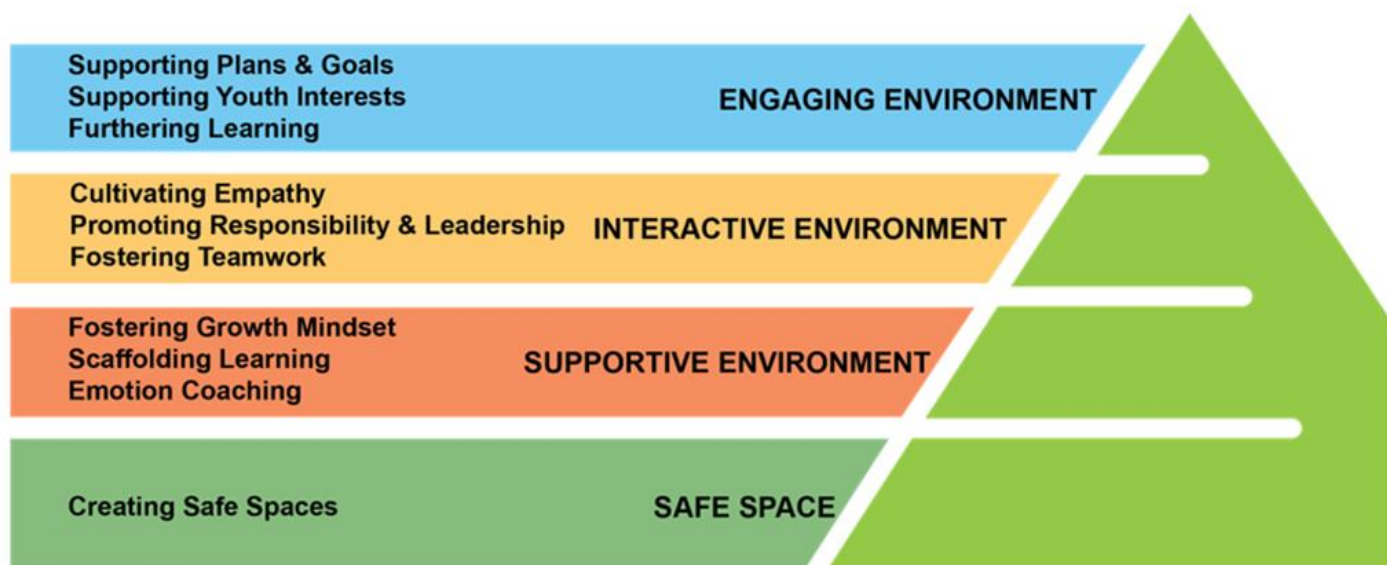
2. What is at least one way you already are successfully implementing leadership and responsibility in your program?

3. What is one simple way you can promote more responsibility and leadership in your program?

Social Emotional Learning Methods Sequence
with *Preparing Youth to Thrive* Domains

Facilitating Problem Solving — PROBLEM SOLVING	**Cultivating Empathy** — EMPATHY	**Promoting Responsibility and Leadership** — RESPONSIBILITY
Engaging Youth in Supported Struggle — INITIATIVE	**Emotion Coaching** — EMOTION MANAGEMENT	**Fostering Teamwork** — TEAMWORK
Foundations and Self-Awareness of Cognitive Development	Foundations and Self-Awareness of Emotional Development	Foundations and Self-Awareness of Social Development

Essentials of an SEL Framework

Social Emotional Learning Pyramid of Program Quality
with SEL PQA Scales

Supporting Plans & Goals
Supporting Youth Interests
Furthering Learning — **ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT**

Cultivating Empathy
Promoting Responsibility & Leadership — **INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENT**
Fostering Teamwork

Fostering Growth Mindset
Scaffolding Learning — **SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**
Emotion Coaching

Creating Safe Spaces — **SAFE SPACE**

Crosswalk of Weikart Center's SEL Resources and Supports

Preparing Youth to Thrive	Youth Work Methods	SEL Methods	SEL PQA
			ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT
Problem Solving	Active Learning	Facilitating Problem Solving	**Furthering Learning**
			Support connections to previous knowledge
			Link examples to principles
			Encourage extending knowledge
			Encourage logical reasoning
			Guide discovery
Initiative	Youth Voice		**Supporting Youth Interests**
			Provide open-ended choice
			Provide multiple opportunities for choice
			Support creativity
Problem Solving, Initiative	Planning and Reflection	Facilitating Problem Solving	**Supporting Plans and Goals**
			Set up planning opportunities
			Ensure young people record or represent plans
			Facilitate monitoring progress toward goal
			Support problem-solving alternatives
			INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENT
Teamwork	Cooperative Learning	Fostering Teamwork	**Fostering Teamwork**
			Promote active collaboration
			Establish shared goals
			Provide group-process opportunities
Responsibility	Youth Voice	Promoting Responsibility & Leadership	**Promoting Responsibility and Leadership**
			Assign responsibility for tasks
			Support carrying out responsibilities independently
			Provide mentoring opportunities
			Provide leadership opportunities
			Provide opportunities to present
Empathy	Building Community	Cultivating Empathy	**Cultivating Empathy**
			Structure activity for sharing and listening
			Encourage understanding other's emotions
			Structure activities for showing kindness
			Support valuing of differences
			SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT
Management Safe Space (Curriculum Feature)	Reframing Conflict	Emotion Coaching	**Emotion Coaching**
			Acknowledge emotions
			Support young people to name emotions
			Discuss constructive handling
			Discuss emotion causes
Responsibility	Active Learning, Intro to Active Participatory Approach	Engaging Youth in Supported Struggle	**Scaffolding Learning**
			Break task into steps
			Model skills
			Encourage young people to improve performance
			Monitor challenge level
Initiative	Ask-Listen-Encourage	Engaging Youth in Supported Struggle	**Fostering Growth Mindset**
			Guide young people to self-correct
			Use non-evaluative language
			Attribute achievement to effort
Safe Space (Curriculum Features)			**Creating Safe Spaces**
	Building Community, Reframing Conflict	Fostering Teamwork	Foster positive emotional climate
	Building Community,	Fostering Teamwork Cultivating Empathy	Convey warmth and respect
			Provide support for safe space
	Structure & Clear Limits Reframing Conflict		Demonstrate positive group management style
			Demonstrate mutual accountability
	Building Community	Cultivating Empathy	Show active inclusion

SEL PQA Item Reflection

Below is a list of items with their level 5 indicator from the Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA) that are related to promoting leadership and responsibility in program spaces. Use the space below each to reflect on how this was demonstrated during today's workshop and how you can adapt what you experienced today to promote these practices in your own setting.

Interactive Environment: Promoting Responsibility and Leadership: Staff provide young people opportunities to grow in responsibility and leadership.

- Staff provide all young people with opportunities to be responsible for assigned tasks or activities (e.g., taking attendance, handing out snacks, leading an opening activity).

- Staff never take over or intervene intrusively in assigned tasks or activities, supporting young people to carry out roles or responsibilities as independently as possible.

- Staff provide more than one young person an opportunity to mentor an individual (e.g., young people teach or coach another).

- Staff provide more than one young person an opportunity to lead a group (e.g., teach others; lead a discussion, song, project, event, outing or other activity).

- Staff provide more than one young person with an opportunity to share their ideas or work with the entire group (e.g., report results of their small group activity to a large group; describe their individual project to the whole group; share ideas in partnership with adults).

A free digital download of the SEL PQA is available at www.cypq.org/downloadpqa