



outreach

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**YOUTH
LEADERSHIP
TOOLKIT**

public speak

strategic sharing

The University of Oklahoma, National Resource Center for Youth Development's (NRCYD) is a service of the Department of Health and Human Services Children's Bureau and a member of the TTA Network.

NRCYD's overall goal is to build the capacity of States and Tribes to provide high quality services to their youth in out of home placements, former foster youth and other youth in at-risk situations.

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welcome

to the Youth Leadership Toolkit(NRCYD)

A service of the Children's Bureau • A member of the T/TA Network

NRCYD

**National Resource Center
for Youth Development**

The National Resource Center for Youth Development believes that youth should be involved in the design and implementation of programs, policies, and practices which impact their lives. In the United States, youth participate on conference planning committees, serve on youth panels, present workshops, and co-facilitate discussions at conferences and meetings. They also sit on organizational advisory boards, run their own youth boards, participate in community/agency strategic planning, conduct surveys, write reports, design forms, and develop websites. Regardless of the activity in which youth are involved, best practice suggests both youth and adults need preparation for participation in whatever roles they are to play.

At NRCYD we work with the philosophy that youth engagement is a powerful way for organizations to include the young people they serve, in moving their work forward to better serve youth. The Youth Leadership Toolkits provides the fundamentals of meaningful youth engagement strategies.

THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT IS A PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, FUNDED BY THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES CHILDREN'S BUREAU, IN COLLABORATION WITH FOSTERCLUB, THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOSTER CARE.



foster club
the national
network for
young people
in foster care



Why is Youth Leadership Development important?

In order for youth to be prepared to work in partnership with adults, they need to develop and/or enhance their leadership skills. Leadership training prepares youth to manage time, work as a team, set goals, start conversations, facilitate meetings, and make effective presentations. Promoting youth leadership development is a great way to promote positive life skills learning.

To fully participate with adults, youth also need to be informed about the adult perspective of the problem, challenge or issue being discussed: the jargon that adults use to describe their work; and strategies for approaching the work. In other words, we need to be sure the field is level for all of the players.

How do we prepare for Youth Leadership Development?

As with any of the topical areas related to Youth Engagement, Youth Leadership Development requires preparation and planning. It is important that the organization and adults have a firm grounding in the Positive Youth Development philosophy. In addition, the purpose of the group must be clearly defined, youth and adults must be recruited and trained, and sustainability plans must be developed. NRCYD offers training and technical assistance in youth leadership development to address these issues and many others.

What are some challenges to Youth Leadership Development?

Some of the reasons that youth leadership development can be a challenge due to:

- Organizations and adults often do not think young people are capable of demonstrating leadership
- Goals and roles are not clearly defined
- Youth leadership development requires time and resources
- Youth leaders move on – sustainability and succession planning strategies are not well developed

Positive Youth Development (PYD): Why is it important?

All young people need supports and opportunities to make a successful transition to adulthood. The focus of the positive youth development approach is to help youth acquire the knowledge and skills they need to become healthy and productive adults. PYD builds on young people's strengths and recognizes their unique contributions.

How do we prepare for Positive Youth Development?

Implementing the PYD approach requires preparation of the organization, adults, and youth. Policy and practice must be reviewed to ensure that they support the PYD philosophy. If they contain barriers, they need to be revised. Adults must examine their views of young people and work to see them as "resources" rather than "problems to be fixed." Training, such as NRCYD's Youth Development: The Vital Link, can assist in this process. Young people also need preparation to be able

to fully participate in the opportunities provided to them.

What are some challenges to implementing a PYD approach?

Implementation of the Positive Youth Development approach can be challenging for several reasons:

- Organizational and cultural resistance to empowering young people
- Many adults have difficulty stepping back and letting youth lead
- Young people may have doubts that they are really being listened to or that their input can impact the system
- Logistical issues – time, compensation, transportation, and scheduling – often do not support youth involvement

Youth/Adult Partnerships: Why do they matter?

Young people and adults can work together to solve real problems and real issues.

Youth/Adult Partnerships are relationships in which all parties have equal opportunities to contribute, make decisions, use their skills, and learn from each other. The key to Youth/Adult Partnerships is mutuality.

How do we prepare for youth/adult partnerships?

Successful youth/adult partnerships don't just happen. They require preparation and planning. Adopting a Positive Youth Development approach to working with young people is an important aspect of the process. Additionally, youth and adults may need coaching and training to develop the skills and competencies necessary to

insure that everyone's ideas, decisions, contributions and strengths are listened to and valued. The goals and roles of the partnerships must also be developed with input from both youth and adults included from the beginning. What are some challenges to creating youth/adult partnerships?

Youth and adults must overcome the stereotypes they have of each other

Expectations, goals, roles, and responsibilities are not clear.

Only the "stars" are invited to participate, limiting the diversity and perspectives of the group.

Lack of planning for sustainability



Youth Engagement



A service of the Children's Bureau - A member of the ITIA Network

NRCYD

**National Resource Center
for Youth Development**

from the **Youth Leadership Toolkit** by NRCYD

Youth Engagement

Youth are valuable participants in the planning and implementation of programs which effect them—after all, who knows better what youth need than youth!

Youth engagement teaches life skills, provides opportunities to practice those skills, and offers a variety of leadership experiences. Young people need a variety of opportunities and meaningful roles to contribute to their world, through relationships with adults.

CULTURAL acknowledgement

Culture plays an important role in youth engagement. Culture determines the roles that children, youth, adults, and elders play in society. In order for youth engagement to occur, youth engagement must become a part of the culture's expectation. If youth engagement and involvement is not part of the culture's current expectation, then it becomes important to review the barriers that may be preventing it from happening. For example, in some cultures, a youth must receive approval from an elder before he/she can speak in a group. How will approval be given? When does the youth know it is okay to speak?

It is also important to acknowledge youth have their own culture. Often times, young people's language, communication style, dress, music, etc. are different than those of the adults with whom they are engaging. These differences can cause youth and adults to stereotype each other and react to the stereotype rather than engaging the person. It is essential that we recognize this behavior as a barrier to an effective working relationship and continually remind ourselves to value diversity.

CULTURE defined

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development defines culture as "a constantly changing, learned pattern of customs, beliefs, values, and behaviors, which are socially acquired and transmitted through symbols, rituals, and events, and convey widely shared meanings among its members. Culture includes everything about people including food, traditions, celebrations, relationships, ideas, and various choices we make in life. Gaining cultural competence is a long-term process of expanding horizons, thinking critically about the issues of power and oppression, and acting appropriately. Culturally competent individuals have a mixture of beliefs and attitudes, knowledge, and skills that help them establish trust and communicate with others (Advocates for Youth)."

WHEN TO INCLUDE youth in meetings and events

The National Resource Center for Youth Development believes that youth should be involved in the design and implementation of programs, policies, and practices which impact their lives. In the United States, youth participate on conference planning committees,

serve on youth panels, present workshops, and co-facilitate discussions at conferences and meetings. They also sit on organizational advisory boards, run their own youth boards, participate in community/agency strategic planning, conduct surveys, write

reports, design forms, and develop websites. Regardless of the activity in which youth are involved, best practice suggests both youth and adults need preparation for participation in whatever roles they are to play.

PREPARATION of youth and adults prior to event

Consider a briefing for youth: Though policies and good practice indicate that youth should be included in the proceedings, many may not feel comfortable talking in front of adults. When youth are addressed in a “youth only” setting it serves to make them feel more at ease and more willing to participate.

At the briefing: Describe the purpose of the event and ensure that youth understand the importance of their role in the event in which they will be participating. All too often, youth are invited to a meeting but not made aware of the purpose of their inclusion. Youth might just see it as a nice trip. If youth

are not told that they have a voice, they may not know that they have a right to use it. Not informing them of the power of their voice and importance of their participation is equal to not bringing them.

Address young people appropriately: In the United States, we avoid referring to adolescents as children or kids. Instead we refer to them as youth, young adults, or young people.

Wide DEVELOPMENT range

Youth aged 12 are not on the same developmental or cognitive level as youth aged 17; therefore, we suggest engaging the youth in developmentally appropriate activities. For example, if

youth ages 12-17 are to serve on a youth panel, make sure that the questions being asked are appropriate to the youth's development.

Aim for INTERACTION

Conduct workshops and activities that facilitate interaction between youth and adults: If youth and adults are to work in partnership, they may need practice working together. Activities that are physical in nature or those that

use technology tend to level the playing field. “New games” provide good opportunities for youth and adults to learn how to communicate and problem solve together.

DURING the meeting/event

- ✔ Address the entire group with all stakeholders present, and provide expectations and guidelines for the entire group, including the youth. Youth will be more apt to participate if they know what is expected of them, and adults will be more receptive to youth input if adults clearly understand the youth role in the meeting.
- ✔ Ensure that youth understand what they are there for: expertise that only their firsthand experience can bring. Their insight will help to improve services not only for them but for others who come after them.
- ✔ Emphasize the expertise that youth bring to the adults in the room. Adults may be more apt to accept information from youth if this credibility is established up front.
- ✔ Make sure to let youth know that it's okay and expected for them to speak up, as their expertise really is the most valuable input that can come from the meeting.
- ✔ It is important to note that youth may need a little prompting. Just because they don't immediately volunteer information doesn't mean they have nothing to say; youth can be very intimidated, or may not know exactly which part of their experience would be most useful. The more experience a youth has with a particular type of event, the less guidance they will need.
- ✔ Adults may need to have questions available to prompt the youth and to make sure youth fully understand the process and what is happening in the meeting. Questions and presentations need to be developmentally appropriate. Fifteen to seventeen year olds may have more experience and better understanding of the system than twelve to fourteen year olds, but they both bring valuable perspectives as they are at different stages of the process of going through care.
- ✔ Stop and check with the youth while presenting new information. Ask youth, "do you understand what is going on in the meeting?" Ask a youth to reiterate the information given, and they can possibly relay it in more youth friendly terms to ensure that all youth are on board. At times, especially for youth who are not used to being seen as partners when working with adults, this can seem condescending to the youth. However, a great remedy for this situation is to have a youth co-facilitator during the entire meeting. Youth co-facilitators can relay questions and information back and forth from the youth to the adults and visa versa to ensure that both parties are benefitting from youth perspective. [Please see next section on "Why use youth as co-facilitators?"]
- ✔ Consider using "youth panels." Essentially, youth are customers of the services and their perspectives can paint the best picture. Youth panels are a good way for youth to talk about services they have received.
- ✔ With every new topic, stop and check in with the youth to ensure they are still on board, and if there is anything they would like to add.
- ✔ When brainstorming new topics or new ideas for systems improvement, make sure to ask youth directly "What do you think?" "What are your ideas?" Or "Would ABC idea have worked well in your situation?" Or, "If you had received XYZ service, do you feel your outcomes would have turned out differently?" These can also be asked in response to adults' ideas.
- ✔ If breaking up into small groups, be sure to allot time for youth to speak. As a facilitator of the meeting, walk around to each small group and either listen in or ask questions to ensure youth participation.

WHY USE YOUTH as co-facilitators?

Youth can not only be an incredibly valuable resource for input, but can also serve as very skilled co-facilitators. There are many compelling reasons for utilizing youth experience in this way:

- ✓ Youth are more familiar with youth culture and lingo.
- ✓ Youth participants are likely to relate better to someone they view as their 'peer,' even if that youth is older.
- ✓ Youth participants will feel less intimidated knowing that there is a youth leader in the room. When youth feel it is a safe environment, they will be willing to be more open and share more. Youth are taking a chance and sharing what can be some of the worst and most tragic moments of their lives, and it is important to have an appropriate, comfortable setting in which to do so.
- ✓ Youth co-facilitators can act as a 'translator,' not only to translate to the youth participants what the adults in the room are saying, but can also turn what the youth participants share as experiences into useable information for adults.
- ✓ Co-facilitation with youth shows the adults in the room that the agency is modeling youth engagement in practice, not just in policy. Also, youth are able to see that adults care about youth input.
- ✓ A youth facilitator can also help streamline the information gained from a youth. At times young people have not been trained on strategic sharing, or may just need to be heard somewhere, especially if they feel they are not heard by their workers in their case planning. A skilled youth co-facilitator allows the youth to share, while still gathering the valuable information needed by adults. Youth participants may also be more receptive to a youth leader 'limiting their sharing time' as opposed to an adult who may inadvertently recreate those feeling of "not being heard."
- ✓ Youth in the room may gain a better understanding of what type of information is needed from them if a youth co-facilitator is able to model sharing experiences in the beginning.



(continued next page)

- ✓ Youth co-facilitators have likely been youth participants and can empathize with the youths' position. This prior experience allows for youth co-facilitators to gain necessary information from the youth.
- ✓ Seeing a youth on an equal playing field with adults can inspire younger youth to become leaders as well.
- ✓ The youth co-facilitator can gain valuable experience by facilitating and co-leading the meeting.
- ✓ Adults can see the youth-adult partnership modeled in the facilitation of the meeting. This can allow for adults to have a more open view and a better understanding of how to work with youth after their experience at the meeting ends. For example, after participating in such a meeting as described above, a program director included several youth on the review board of his organization to ensure the best possible services were delivered to youth in the program.



AFTER the meeting/event

- ✓ Debrief with the youth after the event.
- ✓ Keep youth informed on follow-up activities or results that come from the event. Youth will benefit from feedback on their participation.
- ✓ Through this experience, youth will learn important skills that will help make them better citizens and will be better prepared to participate in future events. Adults will walk away with a different perspective on the positive effects of working with youth.

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Strategic Sharing



A service of the Children's Bureau - A member of the T/TA Network

NRCYD

**National Resource Center
for Youth Development**

from the **Youth Leadership Toolkit** by NRCYD

Strategic Sharing

Your story is **PRECIOUS**
and **HARD-EARNED**.
Protect yourself
and others by using
strategic sharing!

what is strategic sharing?

As a young person with experience in foster care, you may want to tell someone certain details about your personal story or just answer a question about your past. You might be called on to share your story with a group. You may even want to write about your experiences online. Whatever the situation, it's a good idea to learn strategic sharing strategies.

Strategic sharing means you need to be clear about what you will say. Your first goal is to protect yourself, other people who might be involved in your story, your audience, and your personal story. You'll want a plan. You'll want control about what parts of your story you want to let out and what to hold back.

why is it important?

Being asked to tell your story or even share a detail about your past can be flattering. It promises understanding and empathy from other people. But sharing details about your life without strategic sharing can backfire. You could make a mistake and tell things you wanted to keep private. You might awaken painful emotions that you aren't prepared to handle, like sadness and fear and regret. You could risk being emotionally traumatized all over again.

When it comes to your story, you are the expert. Your story is something you earned, and an asset that only you have. It's important to treat your personal story with the respect it deserves. This

includes making intentional and thoughtful decisions about when to use your story, for what you are willing to lend your story, how much you wish to share, who you want to allow to hear your story, and what types of preparation and supports you'll need to do the best job possible.

Without strategic sharing, you risk revealing hurtful facts about the people in your life. You'll want to plan and practice not using names when telling details of your past, like honoring a sister's wish not to tell that she is in foster care. Even if your biological family has made mistakes, broadcasting those mistakes could hurt family members. You also risk revealing

private information about another person who would be upset that their information was made public.

Another reason for strategic sharing is to protect your audience or the person you are speaking with. Sharing too much can make them feel uncomfortable and can traumatize. Certain life facts may not be appropriate at certain times and for certain people or groups.

Once your story is written or recorded, it may be difficult or impossible to take back. What you share is potentially public forever and could possibly show up years later.

sharing CIRCLES...

Strategic sharing begins with a look at the relationships you have in your life. In the Sharing Circle, you are the center of the Circle. And all the people in your life and people you meet are organized in circles surrounding you. The Sharing Circle shows that not all your relationships are equal, so not all your sharing is equal, either. It means that the closer the circle is to you, the more life facts you can feel good

about sharing. Those strangers and acquaintances don't have a right to the same information about you as friends, right? Each circle getting closer to you represents the people more and more in your support system. The closer they are, the better you feel about sharing the details of

your life. And don't forget, there may be certain secrets that are better guarded and left unsaid because they are very, very personal.



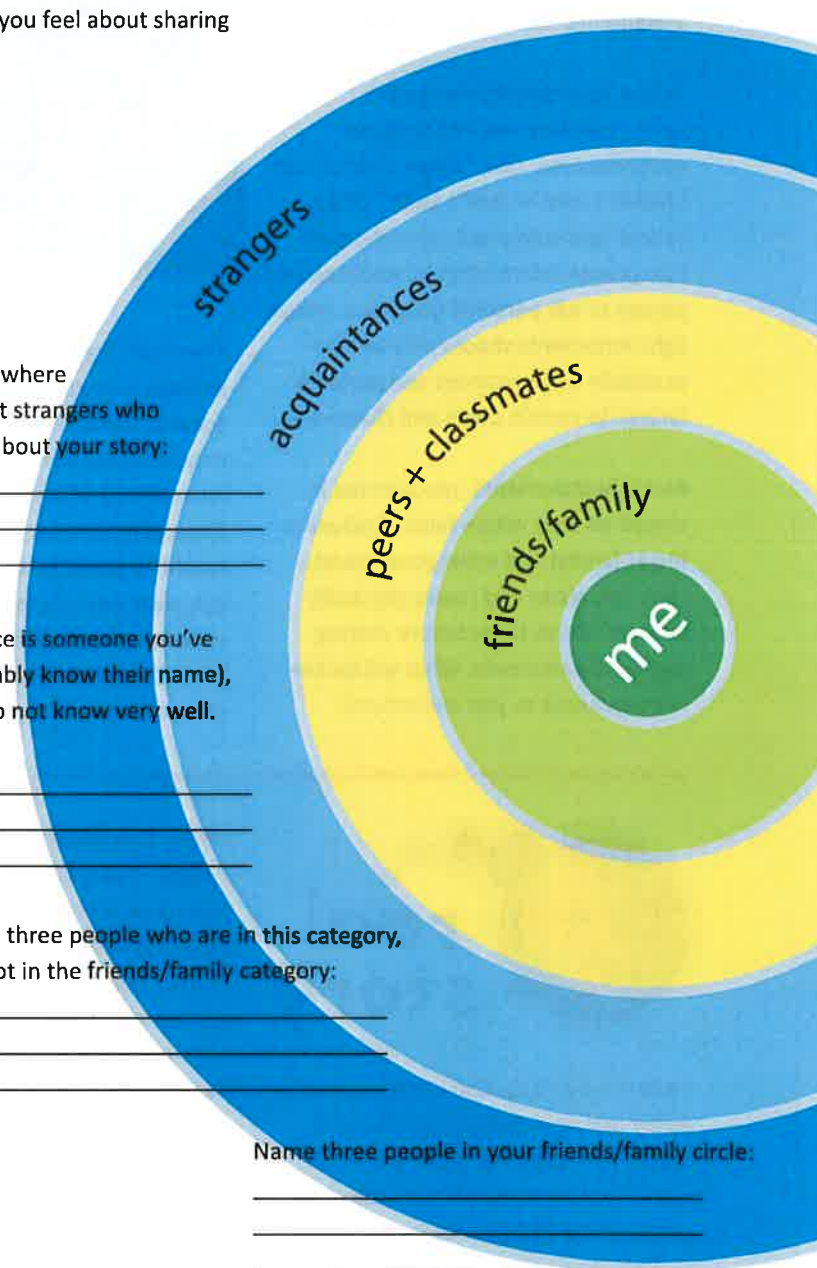
A former FosterClub All-Star was once asked to do an article about homelessness in a major magazine. After the article was released he was contacted by a man offering him a place to stay, a car, and a job. The All-Star came to FosterClub very excited about what he thought was a great opportunity. Caution was stressed and after some discussion, it was decided a supportive adult in his area would go to the first meeting to make sure everything was safe. Turns out that the man had bad intentions for the young person and was planning to take advantage of his vulnerable position. If you are asked to tell your story publicly, it is critical that you partner with an adult supporter to keep yourself safe.

Name 3 places where you might meet strangers who ask questions about your story:

An acquaintance is someone you've met (and probably know their name), but who you do not know very well. Name three:

Name three people who are in this category, but not in the friends/family category:

Name three people in your friends/family circle:

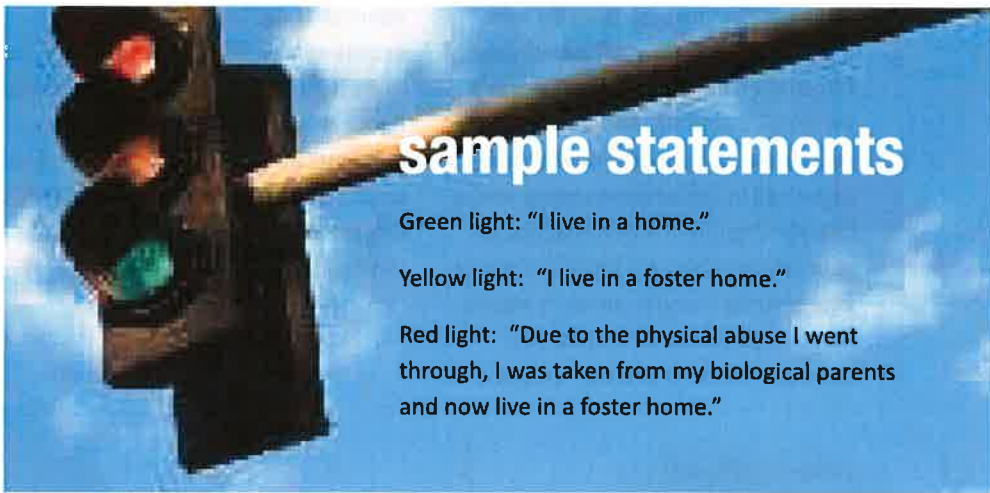


RED light, YELLOW light, GREEN light strategy

The red light, yellow light, green light strategy is a strategic sharing tool to help figure out what is okay to say and what is not okay to say in the sharing circles. Some statements can be made to anyone at any time and are green light “go” statements. Like, “I have a sister.”

Yellow light statements require us to slow down and think about consequences. Like, “I have a sister that I haven’t seen in over a year.” Often yellow light statements give glimpses into private information or would cause a person to ask personal questions. Yellow light statements should only be said in certain circumstances and probably limited to certain peers and classmates.

Red light statements, you guessed it, should be kept within family (including foster family) and a few good friends. Like, “My sister and I were physically abused.” Think twice before sharing Red light statements. What will be the consequences to you and others?



One more “red light, green light” strategy is to know your audience. In some circumstances, for example, you may be asked to share your story with an audience of case workers (strangers). Depending on your comfort level, it would be green light to talk about why you were put into foster care and how your experience with case workers has been. This is not information you would share with just any group of strangers,

but it would be okay with this specialized audience.

If you are unsure of what is red, green, or yellow, share your story with your group and or adult supporter before speaking.



FosterClub All Star Dan Knapp was once asked and agreed to do an interview with *Time* magazine. After the article came out, many people read the piece, even people Dan did not know. In the

article, Dan talked about his adoptive mother. Guess what? His mother read the article, and took very personally what Dan had said, causing some stress on their relationship. This goes to show you the importance of strategic sharing!

“In agreeing to an interview with *Time* magazine, I knew I had to consider how the things I would say could impact my family members. But, I also had to consider how sharing personal

information about my life could impact my relationships with friends, colleagues, even people who didn’t know me very well. It bothers me when I see interviews with youth and it is apparent that no one helped them think through what they would say publicly.”

— Daniel Knapp, New York

What's your ESCAPE HATCH?

Using the sharing circles and the lights as tools are great ways to control what you say, but what about those times when you meet someone or do a speaking gig and you get asked questions that would require you to respond with red light statements you are not comfortable with? Some real questions that get asked include:

- “What was the abuse like?”
- “What did you do to get into foster care?”
- “Aren't foster parents in it just for the money?”

Generally, people ask these questions because they are curious or uninformed, not because they are trying to hurt you. But wouldn't it be nice if you had some ready to give response in your back pocket that you could just whip out anytime you got asked one of these questions? That's exactly what an escape hatch is all about. It provides you with a way to step out of the question, and can provide a way to educate the person doing the asking.

A note about confidentiality:

In foster care, there is a legal requirement that certain information is kept private. Check with your caseworker, attorney, or other knowledgeable adult to make sure the story you tell does not break confidentiality. You also can play it safe by not using people's real names.



For example, when asked a personal question that you don't want to answer directly, try redirecting the conversation to a more general topic. Here are some lines you can use to get your answer started:

- “Many youth in foster care feel...”
- “There are some things I am not able to discuss.”
- “It is a common stereotype that foster youth...”
- “Not all youth in foster care...”
- “Many child welfare professionals...”

Let's take a look at how we could answer the earlier questions using this strategy:

- 1) What was the abuse like?
“Foster youth usually enter foster care due to neglect, not physical or sexual abuse.”
- 2) What did you do to get into foster care?
“It is a common stereotype that foster youth have done something to put themselves into care, but this is just not true. Most children in foster care are due to the parents' inability to provide care and safety for the child.”
- 3) Do you have a bad caseworker?
“Many child welfare professionals have a very large caseload that can lead to them having to focus on the youth that need assistance right now.”

The one all answering escape hatch that is perfectly okay to use if you are asked a question you don't feel comfortable with is this:

“I don't feel comfortable answering that question.”

Don't think you have to answer every question you are asked. It's YOUR unique story. Honor it. Guard it. Respect yourself.

time for DEBRIEF...

Sharing your story provides lots of opportunities for personal growth. If you plan to share your story publicly, the best way to make sure that you grow and improve is to build in time to reflect after each experience.

Just like great athletes or performers work with a coach or trainer to review their performances, working with a supportive adult you trust is key to ensuring that you have the support you need to effectively share your story and improve your public speaking skills.

As you've learned, sharing your story can also carry with it the chance for negative repercussions. Harsh feedback from others, stirred up memories, and mixed emotions can all come with sharing your story with others. Debriefing with a

supportive adult provides an opportunity to explore any issues that arise. It also ensures that you have someone who will understand where you're coming from should any issues come up later. It's not unusual to have 'aha' moments or feelings that arise days, or even weeks, after sharing your story.

If you share your story in a group - such as within a youth panel - your 'team' might choose to debrief with your 'coach' or supportive adult as a group or 1-on-1 or both. You might discuss what you thought worked well during your sharing session and opportunities for growth. You might also explore your feelings about what was said (either by you, other panelists, or by the audience through a question and answer session).



Aaron Weaver, 2006 All Star, was asked for the first time ever to share his story in front of a group of people. He had never done anything like this before, and did not know what to expect. What was worse is that no one coached him through how to share his story. Even though he wrote out what he wanted to say, due to lack of practice and support, his first public speaking opportunity led to learning some hard lessons through a very emotional breakdown in front of many people.

"While I believe those who asked me to speak had good intentions, the truth is that I was ill-equipped for this experience which would result in excavating traumatic experiences from my past. No one had helped me to prepare, no one had warned me about the resurfacing emotions (hurt, pain, fear, insecurity, unworthiness, feeling small and unimportant in my own life), and no one had coached me through this process. I had a general outline but no real point to what I wanted to say. My mighty mission was to improve foster care, but I was like a soldier going into battle without any training or protection."
— Aaron Weaver, foster care alumnus, Nebraska

tips for SUPPORTIVE ADULTS...

If you are a supportive adult who is working with youth preparing to share their story publicly, it is your duty to ensure the youth is ready and trained for their big moment. This includes making sure they have practiced, understand the concepts of strategic sharing, know who their audience is, and have support during and after their presentation.

Support for a young person doesn't end when the event is over. Often, speaking publicly and answering questions brings old issues to the surface. Be sure to debrief with your young person after they have shared their story.

It can be difficult for young people to negotiate the terms of a speaking engagement on their own behalf — even adults have agents to help them negotiate deals. Youth often have difficulties saying no to an event, even if it interferes with school or work. As a supporter, you can help negotiate stipends, expenses, and ensure that the opportunity is in the best interest of the youth.

As a supportive adult, it's important to ensure the safety of a young person, particularly when their story is shared with the media. Prepare and support the youth in the event they receive feedback or offers from strangers who hear their story.

what now? how do I USE MY STORY?

There are lots of chances to use your unique story and your voice to make a difference in the foster care system. Listed below are some of the ways you can use your voice.

Youth panels – You talk about your story along with other people who can be either youth or child welfare professionals or parents. You are adding your story to others in order to educate.

Committees and advisory boards – Many states have youth boards and committees for youth who want to be involved. Here you would use your voice for a variety of causes, most times to influence state or organizational policy. Visit www.fosterclub.com or www.nrcyd.ou.edu to find listings of youth boards in your state.

Child and Family Service Reviews – This is where the Federal government comes in to assess how well states are doing in

making sure foster youth are succeeding and getting their needs met. This is a great way to make your voice heard.

National Youth in Transition Database – This is a national effort to collect information about youth as they transition from care. You'll be asked to complete a survey at the ages of 17, 19, and 21. The information you provide will help to determine what the state needs to improve. So when you get the message that they want you to take a survey, use your voice and make a difference. Contact your State Independent Living Coordinator to get involved.

Here's a final suggestion. Accept as your personal mission to do what you can to make foster care better. Now that you understand STRATEGIC SHARING, use your unique personal story to advocate for other youth in the foster care system.



"Youth in foster care have already been through so much — if they are going to be put out there to share their stories publicly, it's important they receive the training and support they need to protect themselves from harm or humiliation while doing it."

— Lupe T, foster care alumna

Lupe's story took place while she was in college, and was asked to be interviewed about her foster care experience. She had only a few pictures of herself from a young age, and she was promised the article and pictures would be small ones. The next day her pictures were on the front cover and very large; Lupe had just been outed about her being in foster care in a very noticeable and public way. Luckily, however, she had been properly trained.

"I remember practicing responses to people if they asked about it but at that point I had been coached on strategic sharing which helped a lot."



FosterClub All-Star
Christopher Andrade shares
his story for a video project

Where it started...

The concept of strategic sharing was originated by Maria Garin Jones and foster care alumni Terry Harrak for the National Foster Youth Advisory Council, a project of the Child Welfare League Of America, in 2000. Over the years, additional concepts have been added the original concept of strategic sharing.

quiz YOURSELF...

Use this step-by-step guide to begin developing your own story.

Step 1: Define your purpose for sharing. This could be to 'educate social workers on how youth think things should be done' or 'tell judges why youth need to be in court' or 'advocate for change in certain legislative policies.'

What's your escape hatch? How would you answer these questions from a nosy stranger, using the escape hatch technique?

- 1) What was the abuse like?
- 2) What did you do to get into foster care?
- 3) Do you have a bad caseworker?

If and when you get to a point in your story where you can feel emotions coming up that you haven't prepared for, you can simply say "that's all I would like to share at this point" and then be sure to talk to a trusted adult about this and the next part of your story. Once you have processed this, you will be able to share these 'new' parts of your story during your next speaking engagement which can lead to being an even more effective youth leader.

Step 2: Decide what you would you like to share. Be sure to keep in mind tips mentioned before. Reflect on specific aspects of your story and how it would relate to the audience (Ex: if for a court panel, focus more on your experience in court, for workers focus on your experience you had with your worker(s). Be sure to include solutions to the problems and point out what was helpful in each situation.

Step 3: Write it down. This provides a great back up if you go blank while speaking. Some people work best if they have every detail of their story written out, others work better when they speak from bullet points. Of course, use extra paper if necessary.

Step 4: Share it with your youth leadership group as if you were sharing with your audience. If there is more than one speaker, this will help to ensure there is little overlap on stories and you can focus on unique experiences which will provide a better overview for the audience. This helps to make sure you stay in your allotted time frame. Also, emotions can come up during speaking, especially if it is an area of your story that you have not spoken much about before or if there are currently things going on with that part of your story. Sharing with your group will allow you to work out these feelings in a safe environment prior to speaking.

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Public Speaking



A service of the Children's Bureau - A member of the T/TA Network

NRCYD

**National Resource Center
for Youth Development**

from the **Youth Leadership Toolkit** by NRCYD

Public Speaking

Why **PUBLIC SPEAKING**?

The purpose of this guide is to assist experienced youth leaders or supportive adults in preparing youth for speaking engagements. This can include trainings, youth panels, workshops, conference plenary sessions, etc.

It is essential for all public speakers to have a good understanding of the audience to which they will be presenting. Begin by briefing the youth on the group requesting the presentation and exploring the youth's general thoughts/experience on the subject. Before beginning the steps below, it is helpful to have the youth share their level of experience with speaking/strategic sharing so that you can tailor these steps to the level of experience of the youth.

The following steps are written to address the youth.

A Guide on How to Help Youth Prepare for Speaking Engagements

STEP 1:

define your **PURPOSE** for sharing

This could be to 'educate social workers on how youth think things should be done' or 'tell judges why youth need to be in court' or 'advocate for change

in certain legislative policies.' What is the end result you would like to see happen as a result of you speaking to the audience today?

STEP 2:

THINK about what you would like to share

Reflect on specific aspects of your story and how it would relate to the audience. Ask for examples from your youth leaders or supportive adults if you are not sure. Ex: If speaking at a court panel, focus more on your experience in court; for workers, focus on your experience you had with your worker(s) and what could be done to improve that relationship. Be sure to keep in mind tips mentioned in this

document. It is more helpful to focus on solutions to the problems and point out what was helpful in each situation.

[Note to Youth Leaders or Supportive Adults: It may be helpful in this step to include a list of questions to direct the parts of the stories that youth share. Please see the list of suggested questions by topic to assist the audience if necessary.]

STEP 3:

WRITE it down

as you would like to say it. This helps to prepare for the overall direction you want your speech to take. You don't need to read it during the presentation, in fact it is suggested to only take an index card or

an outline with key points of your speech to help jog your memory if you slip up. As you do more speaking engagements, you will learn what approach you are most comfortable with.

It is important to remember that the purpose of speaking engagements is not for individual therapy. Youth should understand that the purpose of a speaking event is not the time to process their emotions. This should not be done on stage, but rather with a trusted adult or counselor after the speaking engagement is over.

STEP 4:

SHARE it

with your youth leadership group as if you were sharing with your audience. If there is more than one speaker, this will help to ensure there is little overlap on stories and you can focus on unique experiences, which will more effectively educate the audience. Sharing helps to make sure you stay in your allotted time frame. Also, emotions can come up during speaking, especially if it is an area of your story that you have not spoken much about before or if there are currently things going on with that part of your story. Sharing with your group will allow you to work out these feelings in a safe environment prior to speaking.

If and when you get to a point in your story where you can feel emotions coming up that you haven't prepared for, you can simply say "that's all I would like to share at this point" and then be sure to talk to a trusted adult about this and the next part of your story after the speaking engagement is over. Once you have processed this with your supportive adult, you will be able to share these 'new' parts of your story during your next speaking engagement which can lead to being an even more effective youth speaker.



STEP 5:

GO FOR IT!

Here's your time to deliver. For some people it is helpful to have an outline of points you want to make; others prefer to keep the entire thing written out. Keep in mind: It doesn't have to be perfect! If you lose your place, no worries. Most audience members simply appreciate you sharing your views. Just take a moment to find your place and pick up where you left off.

Here are some helpful tips to remember during the presentation:

- **Keep track of time.** Know ahead of time how much of the presentation should be allotted for question and answers and when you have five minutes left.
- **Smile and breathe.** It's okay to be nervous. Public speaking is feared by most Americans, and you're not only up in front of people, you're sharing your life story. Pause and take a deep breath occasionally if you need to. It sounds a little silly, but it works!

STEP 6:

DEBRIEF it

after the speaking engagement. Discuss with your peers and supportive adults on what everyone thought went well, and what could be improved for next time. If there were any areas that brought up unresolved emotions, be sure to get with a trusted adult to work through these.

TIPS FOR YOUTH PANELS

- ✓ The main job of the facilitator is to ensure the most relevant information gets out to the audience so that they can walk out not only being inspired, but more educated on how to best serve other youth.
- ✓ If you only have a short time, Question and Answer (Q&A) portions are the most effective to help direct learning. Sometimes speakers will feel the need to speak on a particular part of their story that may not necessarily be relevant because they want to be heard. It is important to validate that the youth needs to share that information, but always try to bring the focus back to the topic at hand as this can detract from the message that the group is trying to get across. If this does happen during a presentation, the youth should be positively redirected during the debriefing and encouraged to speak with a trusted adult about that part of their story.
- ✓ Everyone on the panel does not need to answer every question. Always remember the purpose of the panel is to educate. You may have a part of your story that is relevant to the question asked, but you should get a turn to speak. If it's not adding new information, provide your unique experience to another question.
- ✓ It is also important to educate youth on self awareness. For example some youth may desire to advocate for adoption, or post custody services, or even prevention services. It is good for youth to know what their own agenda is and when it is appropriate to share that desire as well as differences between their own story and the collective story seen through statistics. A good way to address this is to mention the part of the youth's story that is relevant, but then follow up with a comment regarding what generally occurs. For example, "I was fortunate enough to have one home, though I know that's not the case for most youth" or "I very much knew that I wanted to be adopted at age 13 and wanted TPR (Termination of Parental Rights) done on my case immediately; however, this is not what all youth would want and it is important to ask each youth on a case by case basis."

List of suggested questions by audience in developing an outline for speaking engagements:

General questions

- How long have you been in care? How old were you when you came in? Are you still in care? How old when you aged out?
- How many placements were you in? Schools? Did you see brothers and sisters? Were you placed with them?
- What has been the best thing about being in foster care? The worst?

Court

- Did you have a guardian ad litem (GAL) or volunteer? How often did you meet with that person? Did you have an attorney? Did you know what their role was in your case? Did you have a CASA?
- Do you know what a court hearing is? Do you know that you had a court hearing in your case? Did anyone tell you about them? Who?
- Did you ever attend your court hearings? Did you speak in court? Did you ever speak with or write to the judge?
- Did you feel like anyone asked you what you wanted to happen in your case? Where you wanted to live? Whether you wanted to see your parents/siblings?

Foster parents

- What was your experience with foster parents? How many/what type of placements?
- What qualities did your caregiver have that helped you or that you appreciated?
- What do you feel caregivers need to know about youth?
- If you could say one thing to caregivers/foster parents to make it better for youth, what would it be?
- What can caregivers/foster parents do to help you?

Community

- Were there/are there people in your community that are important to you?
- Are you/were you involved with social clubs in your community? Ex: boys and girls club, YMCA, arts centers, sports leagues, churches, jobs, etc? What impact did they have on your life?
- What connections did you have before you were taken into care that you wish you would have been able to keep after going into care?
- Why is it important that your relationship with these people and places be maintained?

Workers

- How many workers did you have during your case? Did you have regular contact with them?
- What were some characteristics of your worker that you appreciated? What did they do that was helpful to you?
- What would you like workers to know about youth? What advice would you give to a worker who wants to learn how to better work with youth?

Youth

- What does being a youth leader mean to you?
- Describe a time when you advocated for yourself or someone else. What was that like?
- Who was a supportive person in your life and why?
- Describe a time that you had a struggle in care and what you did to overcome it.
- Did you see the people in your life that you wanted to see (friends, bio-family, siblings, etc.)? How did you deal with it if you couldn't?
- What advice would you give to other youth who are just coming into the system? What advice would you give to youth who are getting ready to age out?
- What inspires you?

Questions and comments youth should be prepared to respond to from the audience

The following questions are not necessary for youth to answer if they are not comfortable with the question. But it is important that youth are prepared to respond when these questions come up. Chances are, they will come up at some point. However, if youth are comfortable and can answer these questions in a professional manner during the preparation session, they can certainly provide a better understanding for the audience of the 'life of foster care' and can actually help to dispel myths people might have about foster youth.

- What did you do to get into care?
- What was the reason you were taken into care?
- Were you abused? What was that like?



- What was it like to not see your siblings? Your family?
- Youth need to be told what to do—it's stupid to let youth make their own decisions.
- Did you ever try to commit suicide?
- Because of what you've been through, is it hard to open up in other relationships?

As always, which questions the youth actually answer should ALWAYS be those the youth are comfortable with answering. It is helpful to go through this list with youth beforehand, and have them practice how they would respond to each question. It is okay to respond with some version of "Thank you for your question, but I don't wish to respond at this time."

Closing

Once you come to the end of your speech, always thank the audience for taking the time to listen and for the work that they do with youth.

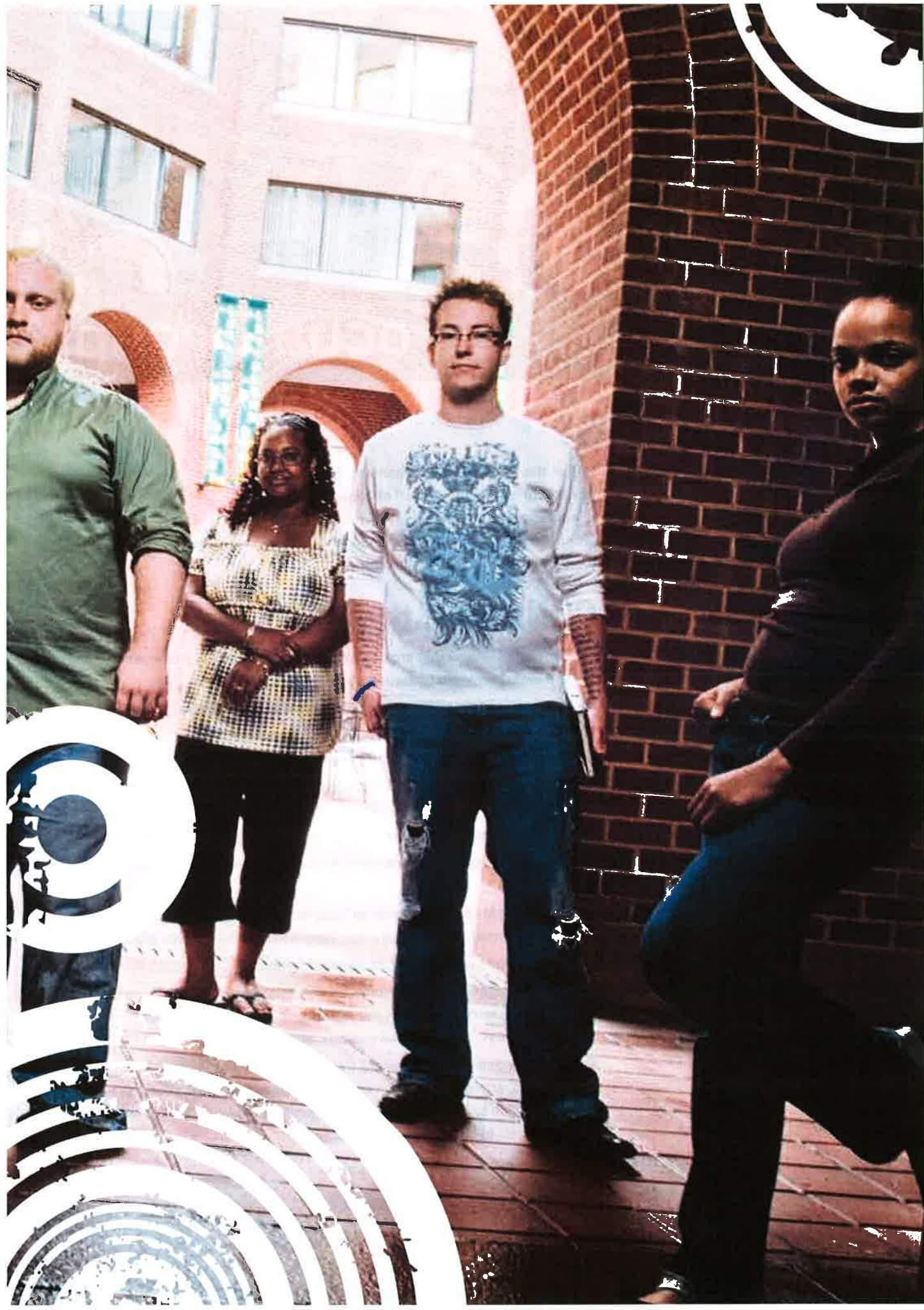
Public speaking can be scary, but it can also be a really great opportunity for youth to build self-confidence and influence change in a larger system. If youth are prepared adequately, this can help take some of the 'scariness' out of



public speaking and turn it into a great learning opportunity for all involved.

For the youth reading this in preparation for a speaking engagement, best of luck on your speaking engagement!

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Focus Groups



A service of the Children's Bureau - A member of the T/TA Network

NRCYD

**National Resource Center
for Youth Development**

Focus Groups

from the **Youth Leadership Toolkit** by NRCYD

why **FOCUS GROUPS**?

Focus groups are another way to include youth in review processes and may be conducted as a follow-up to a survey or as the sole means of soliciting youth input. Focus groups usually involve six to ten youth.

Within this small group environment, it is possible to obtain a great deal of information in a short period of time. Proper planning is required to conduct productive focus groups with youth.

Although young people only spend one or two hours together, they will be contributing to a much larger perspective that can make a difference for all children, youth, and families in the child welfare system.

CONSIDER the following:

1. Schedule sessions that are one to two hours in length at a time when youth are available. Avoid times near holidays or school exams.
2. In advance of the session, create five or six focus questions.
3. Hold sessions in a space that offers few distractions. A community conference room or library meeting room is ideal.
4. Recruit youth who have had a range of experiences while in foster care and who have achieved or who plan to achieve a variety of outcomes.
5. Develop a transportation plan for those attending.
6. Provide refreshments, particularly if youth are coming from school to participate.
7. Provide "table toys" for youth to "play with" during the session. Pipe cleaners, plastic Slinkys, and other inexpensive manipulatives work great.
8. Provide name tags to facilitate communication.
9. Create an agenda which includes the following items: welcome, review of agenda, review of goal of the meeting, review of ground rules, introductions, questions and answers, and wrap up.
10. Determine how you will record the session. If a co-facilitator is not available, arrange for audio recording. If you audio record, you have to also make a plan to have the recording transcribed. (Remember, you may need permission to audio record youth.)

Most youth will welcome participating in a focus group that will ultimately lead to better services for youth in foster care. Emphasize that, although they will only be spending one or two hours together, they will be contributing to

a much larger perspective that can make a difference for all children, youth, and families in the child welfare system. Several samples of focus group questions are included.

Questions about YOUTH ADVISORY BOARDS

There was heightened interest in the creation of YABs during the Child and Family Service Reviews, specifically that through the second round of CFSRs that older youth were a key stakeholder whose participation was lacking in this process, and thus brought about the further development of Youth Advisory Boards. Some items that YABs in other states have accomplished, including tuition waivers for all

foster youth, Medicaid extensions, legislation requiring sibling visits, development of worker visitation forms, mentoring programs, policy review and implementation, community service projects, driver's license and insurance laws, speakers and training bureaus, etc.

The following diagram is a model of suggested State and Regional Youth Advisory Board interaction:



What barriers do you see in maintaining an effective Regional YAB?

What solutions do you suggest to address these barriers?

What level of involvement in youth advisory boards (YAB) have you previously had?

What are your expectations of this meeting, or of the advisory board?

What is in it for you, personally? Or what is in it for youth?

What benefits do you see by having a YAB, internally for youth and adults, and from a state agency or private organization standpoint?

(to youth) What do you need in place to successfully develop and maintain a YAB (both Regional and State)?

Questions about CHAFEE

1. What is the best service/program you received to help you prepare for leaving care?

2. What scares you the most about leaving care?

3. In what ways have you been involved in your case planning? (be specific)

4. How can the State involve you more in your case planning?

5. Do you have someone you can call with problems (or something you are really proud of) after you leave care?

Is that person:

- Relative
- Foster parent
- Facility staff
- Teacher
- Other (list)

6. What could help you have a great school year this year? What worries you most about school?

7. What do you plan to do after high school?

8. Are you aware of the ETV?

9. If the State could do one new thing to help youth prepare to leave care, what should it be?

10. What didn't we ask that we should have?

Chafee

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program was created in 1999 to address concern for youth who were not likely to achieve permanency before leaving foster care. The Chafee Program increased funding to states by awarding each state at least \$500,000 to provide services to older youth in foster care. Chafee allows states and tribe establish eligibility criteria for their participation in Chafee services, provide room and board for youth who leave care at 18, and can extend Medicaid services.



Questions about CFSR

1. Does your caseworker include you in making case plan decisions? (deciding where you will live, your permanency goal, what services you need and will receive, your contact with your family members, evaluating how things are going for you)

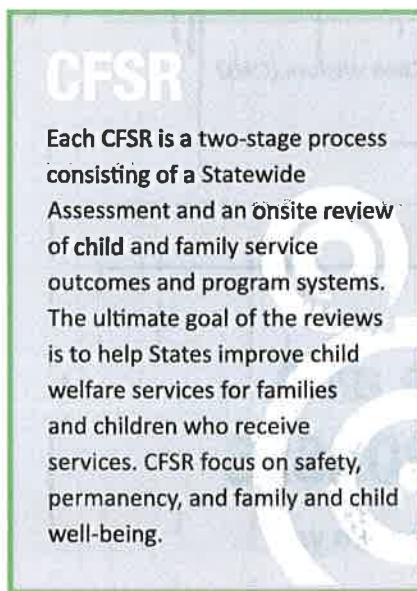
- * Does your caseworker encourage you to discuss the issues described above?
- * Do you get a copy of your case plan?
- * Does your case plan help you to understand what to expect from your caseworker, what your caseworker expects from you and others involved in your case?

2. Do you have an independent living case plan?

- * Who helped you develop the independent living plan?
- * What suggestions do you have to improve the case planning process or the case plan itself?

3. How often do you see your caseworker?

- * Do you feel like you have enough contact with your caseworker?
- * Are the meetings with your caseworker helpful? Suggest ways that these meetings are helpful or might be improved.



4. Have you been given the opportunity to participate in services that will help you achieve your goals? Elaborate.

- * Which services have been the most helpful in assisting you to achieve your goal of returning to your family or to achieve independence?
- * Which services have been the most helpful to your family?

5. Do you see your siblings and/or your family? What suggestions or comments would you make about having visits with your siblings and/or family members?

6. What do you think a caseworker could do to prevent youth from having to move to multiple placements?

7. In what ways are you included in policy development with your state agency?

Youth Systemic INTERVIEWS

Please answer the following.

Age _____

Race(s) _____

Male _____ Female _____

Placement _____

Number of placements you have had _____

How long have you been involved with Child Welfare (CW)?

How many workers have you had? _____

What is your case plan goal? _____

Questions to use as A GUIDE FOR RESPONSES

How does your program prepare you for discharge?

How is community involvement encouraged?

How does your program allow you to take ownership of your treatment plan?

How are family and adult relations encouraged?

How are your strengths identified?

How are negative stereotypes dispelled?

(continued on the next page)

Top ten things that you would change about the CW system.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)
- 10)

Top ten things you like about the CW system.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)
- 10)

(continued from previous page)

What are you successful at?

What resources are available to help you pursue your goals?

What supports do you need to help you be successful?

Who do you credit for helping you reach your goals?

How is the treatment plan right for you?

How has the program helped you develop lasting relationships?

Describe your permanency plan.

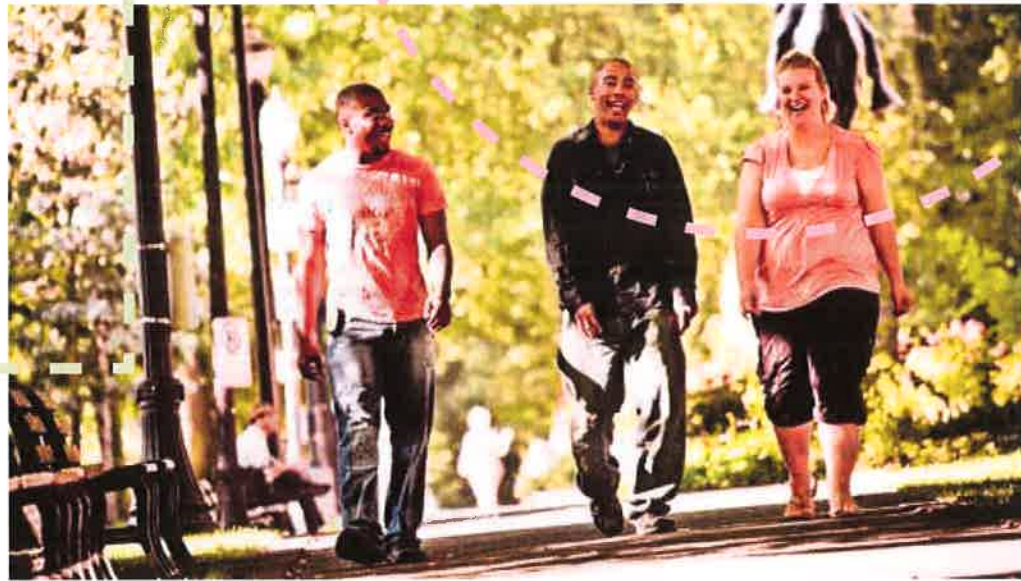
Do you know how you got it?

What would you change?

How much have you participated in creating it?

What does your permanency plan mean to you?

Do you agree with your permanency plan?



What advice would you give to adults about creating relationships with you?

What emotional support do you need?

What is important to you today?

How do your goals become part of your treatment plan?

How are you able to pursue your personal goals?

What community support do you need?

DEBRIEFING the Meeting

Use this form to debrief your focus group meeting:

Let us know about your experience at the Focus Group Meeting.

1. Did you have enough information in advance of the meeting to fully participate? Yes No
2. Did you have an opportunity to express your ideas, concerns, and opinions? Yes No
3. Did you feel that your ideas and opinions were taken seriously? Yes No
4. Did you learn something about yourself as a result of this experience? Yes No
5. What was the most interesting part of this meeting?
6. What could have made this a better meeting?
7. Would you be interested in participating in other meetings like this? Yes No
8. Would you be interested in learning more about getting involved in improving the system? Yes No

If yes, please provide contact information:

Name: _____

Cell: _____ text? Yes No

Facebook: _____

Email: _____

Social Worker's Name: _____

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Member Outreach



A service of the Children's Bureau - A member of the TTA Network

NRCYD

**National Resource Center
for Youth Development**

from the Youth Leadership Toolkit by NRCYD

Member Outreach

What is OUTREACH?

Your group has an important overall mission or purpose. You can see that members are experiencing personal growth. Now you want to expand and get more youth in care to join. You know that you need to build and strengthen your group and recruit new members, young people in care and supportive adults who have shared beliefs, experiences and values. How will you find these new members? How can you get them to join? The answer is OUTREACH, marketing to a select group of people to convince them to join your cause.

**Power your efforts
with a strong
outreach plan!**

Why is it IMPORTANT?

It's exciting to be part of a growing group of young people with a common cause or interest. New members inject new ideas and viewpoints to keep your discussions fresh and lively and your goals more realistic. If your organization doesn't grow, members may get bored and drop off, or simply "age-out" of your group. New members can press your group's "go" button.

Also, new members are spirit builders. They expand the support and boost the confidence of each person in the group. It is also important to

continuously recruit new members so that your organization will sustain overtime.

Finally, as membership grows, your group's skill and knowledge pool gets wider and deeper and you'll see many more of your goals accomplished. Achieving goals is a little like building a house. Doing all the work yourself can take forever. Putting up a building with help of a lot of people with different skills and knowledge can get that house finished in turbo time.

OUTREACH delivers!

understanding DEMOGRAPHICS

Outreach and member recruitment is an ongoing process — not a one time effort — to engage youth and supportive adults.

The outreach or marketing you do to attract new group members must consider the “demographics” of your target group. “Demographics” are characteristics like age, gender, education, interests, habits, etc. of the young people you are trying to interest. Outreach takes time, effort, and often money. So, it is important to know exactly who you want to attract. If you want to invite some younger members because 80% of your group is 17-18

years old, age might impact where you recruit and what your messages are.

Challenge question: What are the demographics of your group?

Challenge question: If your group is made up of foster care youth and 80% of your members are girls, how might this impact your recruitment efforts? Where might you recruit? What sort of messages would appeal?

what's your GOAL?

Before you begin your outreach, or recruitment strategy, your core team needs to outline the purpose and goals of your group. In the future, young people with similar goals will want to join in.

As a group, you should identify some of the following: What are the overall

needs we want to address? What problems can we help fix in the coming years? What do we want to accomplish next month, this year? How will new members help our group achieve its purpose? What do we want to be known for? Will you need an application process?

As the leader or core team, it's up to you to define roles and communicate them so members can feel empowered to participate in meaningful ways. Leadership roles, committees, speaking opportunities, community outreach: these are all ways to give members a sense of accomplishment.

what's the INCENTIVE?

Outreach includes inviting new recruits to a group meeting. You can offer incentives like food, raffles, social outings like camping trips or movie nights, or “bring a friend” nights. At your meeting, provide an upbeat, inviting social atmosphere, but one that takes your group's goals seriously. New attendees should feel that there is something special happening at your meetings. You may want to put on community activities like collecting school supplies for children in care or

mentoring younger children. These offer inspiration to potential members. Invite newcomers to join in.

Challenge question: Think about some of the groups you belong to. Why did you join?

Challenge question: Brainstorm a list of non-monetary incentives for joining a group (for example, making friends, learning life skills).

It can become easy to begin to rely solely on the same group of reliable, capable young leaders. Life happens and these leaders will eventually grow up and move on. Help your group stay focused on the need to do continuous outreach.

TARGETING your outreach efforts...

Your outreach includes spreading the word about your great youth group. Everyone is familiar with TV and billboard messaging, but the cost of this kind of sweeping advertising is way too expensive for youth boards with limited funds. There are many more effective and much less expensive ways to let your community know about your group.

Word of Mouth

Just by telling someone who then tells more people, and those people tell more of their friends, you can really reach a lot of people. This is called grass roots outreach. The internet and cell phones can make spreading the word even easier and faster. Are you more likely to believe something your friend tells you is really making a difference or something you hear on the radio?

1:1 Outreach

What do we mean by 1-to-1 outreach? It is simply people talking to people about your group's cause. This can be done face-to-face, by phone, through email, on social networking sites like Facebook, and also through regular mail.

Targeted Marketing

While sending a mailing to the entire general population might not be cost effective, you could use that same mailing to target specific people and you could have a winning strategy. For example, maybe your local foster care agency could provide a list of foster and group homes in the area, and you could send fliers to each one, inviting young people to join your group.

Leveraging Supportive Adults

The truth is that supportive adults can help move your youth group towards its goals. With the benefit of experience, adults bring a complementary kind of expertise to your activities. They can help with financial matters, safety, ethical or legal concerns, organizational details, and a lot of important community networking. Adults associated with your group can also provide important mentoring for members.

Include Adults

Within a positive youth/adult partnership adults can help support youth goals. Have youth participate or co-facilitate trainings and events. Let youth talk about the group, its cause, and what adults can do to assist the group.

Think about the different organizations that you could link to recruit members for your group.



RETENTION matters

Retaining your existing and new members should be a big part of your game plan for growing your group and building support for your cause. Most people would consider a recruitment rate of five new members per month for a youth board to be highly successful. But imagine if you were to recruit five new members each month only to have seven members walk away from the group because they lose interest or no longer feel engaged. All of your focus and attention on the recruitment end could still leave

you with a shrinking group. As you recruit new people, it's important to consistently focus on member retention.

For people to want to be a part of your group, they need to feel as though what they are saying and doing are really making a difference. Be consistent in offering opportunities for members to become involved. Be sure to keep the members of your group involved and feeling like they matter!

Challenge question: What is the retention rate for your group? For example, what percentage of your members are still active after six months? How about after one year?

Challenge question: Does your group have an expected attrition rate? For example, do you expect to lose a certain number of people each year because they become too old to participate?



COMMUNICATION is key

Once you've made an investment in outreach and attracted new people to your group, it's critical to have a communication plan to keep them engaged.

Look for natural opportunities to communicate, like birthdays and holidays. It's always nice to have someone remember you - and recognizing your members offers a nice opportunity to make them feel part of the group.

Someone in your group will need to maintain an updated member list. The list may include lots of personal information about the members of your group, so it is a big responsibility to keep that information safe. Just as you would not want someone sharing your personal information without your approval, so it is critical to keep everyone's information protected. Consider asking for help from

a supportive adult in keeping member information confidential.

New technology makes it possible to communicate in lots of different ways: e-mail, Facebook, Google groups, texting, twitter. But remember, you can use technology in combination with other communication strategies: mail, phones, fliers.

Challenge question: Who keeps your group's information currently? What would happen if that person unexpectedly became unable to fill this role? Does someone else have access? Would the information stay safe?

Challenge question: What ways are working for you now to stay in touch? What is not working so well? What can be done to address what is not working?

leveraging TECHNOLOGY

Your group's outreach efforts can use technology very effectively. Naturally you will use technology to communicate with members, but it's also a great tool to recruit new members to your group. You can email, make phone calls and also use social networks or other web-based programs that can help with information sharing. Check out some possibilities below:

Facebook – Social networking sites like Facebook are great ways to communicate. You can send messages, and you can create a page specifically for your group. You can even set up a way for people to make donations to support your activities!

Website - Create a presence on the internet for your group. Google Applications like Sites and Blogger can help your group get on the internet fast and for free. The Calendar application lets you post your upcoming activities for all to see. For a nominal amount, you can buy your group's domain name.

FosterClub – Youth groups can now join the FosterClub Network and gain access to a whole lineup of benefits (it's free to join). Build a website for your group hosted on FosterClub.com, which includes social networking features and the ability to have a public and private members-only area. In addition, you'll have access to leadership training webinars, fundraising tools, and more. www.fosterclub.com.

Basecamp – This is a place where you can store files and information and have other members have access to those files. This is a great way to keep track of what is going on and keeping track of who is doing what. You can set milestones and assign those tasks to certain people. You can also choose who gets access to what parts of your organization's Basecamp. www.basecampHQ.com

Google Apps – With Google Applications you can share spreadsheets and information with large quantities of people. There is a calendar function where everyone can update their schedules and give everyone access to see who could be available for different opportunities. www.googleapps.com

Free conference call lines, Skype, GoToMeeting, and Adobe Connect – are great ways to conduct meetings if your group's members are spread over long distances. Virtual meetings, like on Adobe Connect (which carries a fee), allows group members to video chat. You can also IM, share files, and document notes LIVE through a virtual meeting hosted through Adobe Connect (there are many other products available, too). Check online for one of the many sites that offer free conference call lines.

Great resources from the National Resource Center for Youth Development:

Visit www.nrcyd.ou.edu and check out:

The state-by-state pages list Youth Advisory Boards. Make sure your information is updated.

Youth Leadership Listserv - sign up to keep up-to-date with the latest resources, conferences, trainings, and youth and adult dialogue.

For more information about services available through the National Resource Center for Youth Development, e-mail nrcyd@ou.edu

build your **OUTREACH PLAN**

“To me being a Youth Leader means setting an example for others to follow. I feel that as a youth leader it is my responsibility to develop younger members to become more effective advocates, and keep youth voice strong. It also means developing and working effectively with community partners to achieve positive outcomes and create positive changes in foster care.”

— Eric, TN

Photos in this publication are Copyright © 2011 FosterClub, the national network of young people in foster care. www.fosterclub.org.

How will outreach benefit your group or cause?

What are your current demographics?

Who are you targeting with your outreach? Is this consistent with your group’s membership requirements and guidelines?

Why would someone want to join your group or cause? What will they get out of it? How does this tie-in with your mission statement?

Rate your current retention effort or plan. How could you improve?

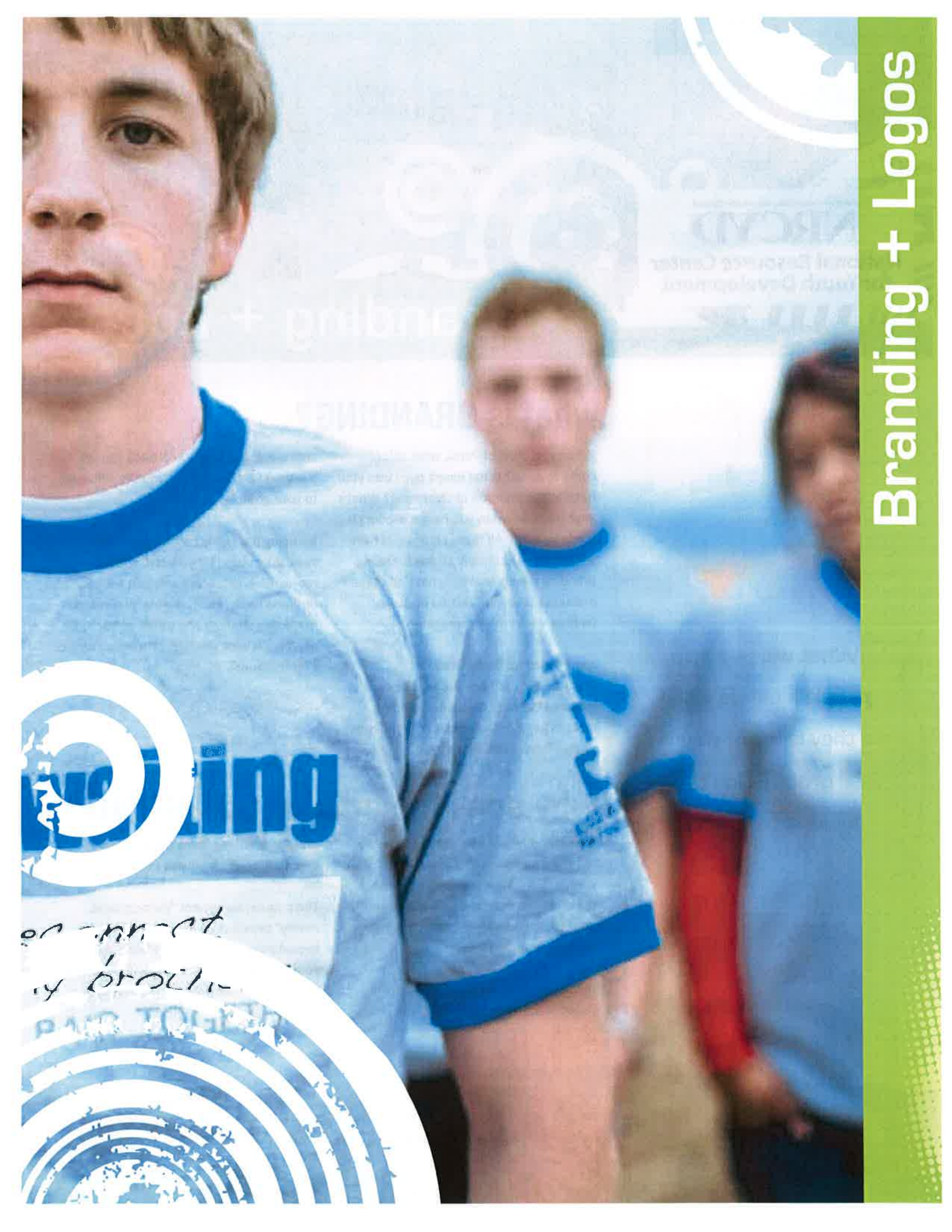
Do you have a recruitment announcement? A member application? Do you have other tools your group needs to produce to help with recruitment?

What are some cost-effective ways to recruit members for your group? Remember to list ideas that are financially smart and cost effective!

Next steps... based on what you’ve discovered, what are the three most important action items to improve your outreach strategy?

NOTES





Branding + Logos



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y brock

RAE TOGETHER

embling +
BRANDING

ARCADY
and Resource Center
and Development





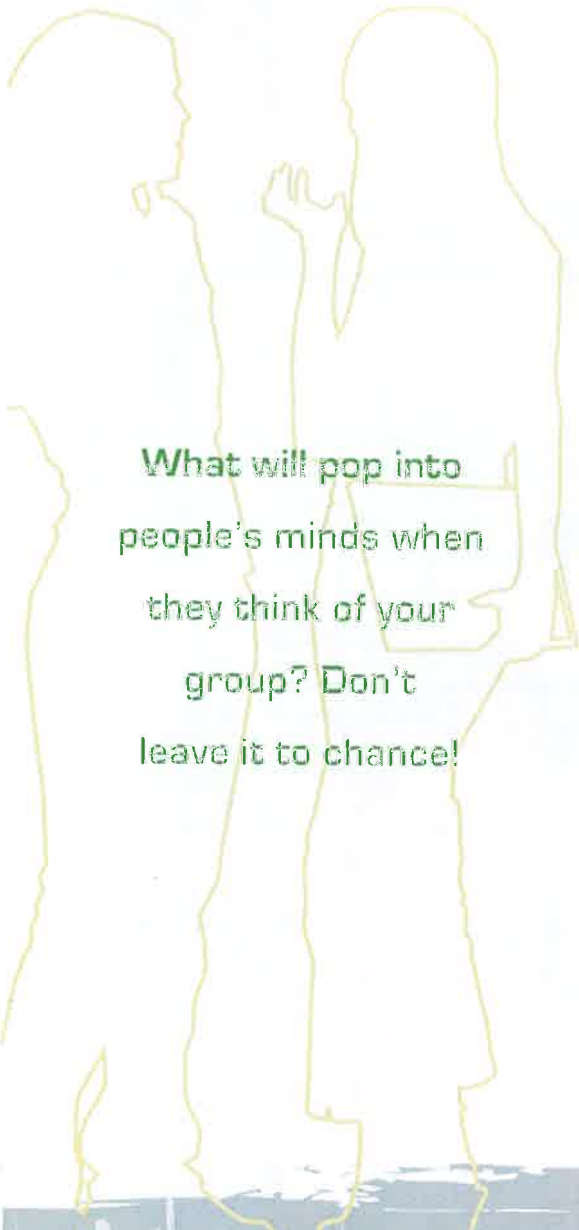
A service of the Children's Bureau • A member of the TTA Network

NRCYD

**National Resource Center
for Youth Development**

from the **Youth Leadership Toolkit** by NRCYD

Branding + Logos



What will pop into people's minds when they think of your group? Don't leave it to chance!

what is **BRANDING**?

When you think of Pepsi, what colors come to mind? What image pops into your head at the mention of Livestrong? What's your reaction when you hear a product is made by Nike? All these companies have something in common: strong branding. Branding means that they have all shaped messages to inspire certain positive feelings about their companies.

As a successful Youth Group or Organization, you can shape your own message by using the same branding tools as large organizations. Your identity starts with your goals and your mission

statement, but your **BRANDING** can set the tone for how the community will react to your group.

Branding has many parts: logo (Nike's swoosh), colors (Target's red. Pepsi's red-white-blue), brochures and t-shirts, business cards, etc. Branding also includes marketing strategy and public relations (in person, on your website, or through other presentations).

why does it matter to **OUR GROUP**?

Your branding will attract the attention of future members and of key adult stakeholders. Your branding will attract the attention from not only fellow youth as potential members, but from adults in your community as well.

You'll also want to draw interest from donors, sponsors, legislators, and policy

makers. Branding helps explain your organization or activity to others.

The popular statement "perception is reality" provides an indication about the importance of what people think about your group. Good branding will allow you to take some control over the way others view your group.

KEYS to creating a brand

Be simple.

You want to make it easy for your audience to remember your group. Get to the point in your name and message. A good test: can you describe your group or it's project and what it does in 30 seconds?

Be unique.

What is your 'only' element? Are you the only group to help this cause? Or do you offer a unique program which addresses an issue in a new way? Whatever it may be, find what makes you stand out and special. Think about the unique perspective that your group offers. Think about what you want your group to do or to become.

Be relevant.

It's important to make sure that what you are selling — whether it's a product or your entire organization — offers something people are looking for. Ask yourself these questions:

- Who is your target audience?
- Who will your product or group benefit?
- What need is your group or product meeting in your community?
- How is your group in a position to do something to meet the need?
- What other resources already exist that you can build on?

Be truthful.

People will ask about outcomes for your organization or programs. Let people know that you are getting things done, but be honest. Talk about the benefits of your work and make sure you can prove it. It is helpful to keep a running list of accomplishments and a portfolio on hand

when discussing your group with new people. These can be gathered from your group's strategic plan.

Be consistent.

A common mistake is to change the logo too frequently. A good logo should last at least 10 years. Colors, logos, mission statements, and tag lines should stay fairly consistent — it takes time for each of these to build up in your audiences' mind.

Make sure that everything you create for your group stays "on message." All of your BRANDING should be clear about your group's image and to be true to your group's purpose.

Keep your mission statement in mind with everything you develop. It may be helpful to post it on a wall while developing your brand and refer to it several times throughout the process.



STEP 1:

determine your brand's PERSONALITY

What do you want people to think about when they think of your organization or program? Take some time to brainstorm a list of key words

that would best describe your brand's personality. As you develop your logo and outreach materials, keep these words in mind.

STEP 2:

create a **LOGO**

Do your research. Look at the logos of other youth groups and organizations. Do they use solid, conservative images, or flashy graphics and type? Think about images that reflect your group's mission.

Focus on the message. What do you want your logo to say about your organization or program? Serious or lighthearted? The best logos make an immediate statement with a very simple picture or illustration, not words (think about Nike's swoosh or Target's target).

Make it clean and functional. Your logo should work as well on a business card as on the side of a truck. A good logo should be easy to reproduce, memorable, and distinctive.

Stay away from using complex illustrations or photographs, which may not reproduce well if enlarged (like a poster) or reduced (like a business card). And be sure to create a logo that will work in black and white OR color, so that it can be faxed,

photocopied, or used in black-and-white marketing materials (like ads in the newspaper).

Beware of using too many colors. Your five-color logo may be gorgeous, but once it comes time to produce it on stationery, the price won't be so attractive. Nor will it work in mediums that only allow one or two colors. Try not to exceed three colors unless you decide it's absolutely necessary.

Don't use clip art. However tempting it may be, clip art can be copied too easily. Not only will original art make a more impressive statement about your company, but it'll set your group apart from others. Be sure to utilize your best resource: Youth! Not all logos have to be computer based. Have a contest at a youth conference, or solicit submissions through a newsletter. For example, youth created several of the logos for the National Youth in Transition Database. Check out these examples at nrcyd.ou.edu.

STEP 3:

select a **TAGLINE**

Can you convey the idea of your organization or project in just a few words or a very short sentence? Browse the web to research taglines for other groups, then challenge your group to come up with your own!



Foster Care Alumni of America has developed a couple of effective taglines, including:
"Connect today... transform tomorrow"
"Nothing about us without us."

a quick study



Can you name this logo? Notice that Apple breaks the rule of using lots of colors on its logo, but they made sure they had a logo that could also be reproduced in black and white or a single color.



The Nike brand is one of the most well-known in the world. The "swoosh" of the logo is so well known that it is often used by itself (without the name of the company).



These are some of the best-known logos for non-profit organizations. Why do you think they stand out?



STEP 4:

opt for **COLOR**

Selecting one strong color to represent your organization is a great (and inexpensive!) way to build your brand. A single color, when used consistently, can help your group stand out at an event and make all of your materials look coordinated.

When selecting a color, you may want to research whether or not you can

purchase t-shirts, folders, and other promotional items (like frisbees or pens) in your selected color. Costs will rise drastically if you have to order custom-printed or odd-colored items.

When choosing a color, keep in mind your members: will everyone want to wear lavender? Will all ages want to wear neon green?



FosterClub, the national network for young people in foster care, has branded its organization in gold. Young leaders represent the organization by wearing gold polos (top), and FosterClub's logo (above) and website (below) make bold statements in gold.



The collection above shows how, by grouping easily-found, inexpensive items all of the same color, you can create a recognizable brand using color. Build an even stronger brand by using stickers, iron-on decals, or even permanent markers to add your group's logo to the items.



should we hire a **DESIGNER?**

While brainstorming logo ideas by yourself is a crucial step in creating your brand, trying to create a useful logo completely on your own can be difficult. A professional design firm might charge anywhere from \$4,000 to \$15,000 for a logo design, but there are also less expensive options.

So how can you get some professional assistance without the professional price tag? Here are some ideas:

- A member of your group may have art and design skills and can sketch out some logo samples. You can take these sketches to a local professional designer who can advise you and provide final artwork. Talk to the professional about your need to economically use the logo in print, on signs, on business cards, on t-shirts, etc. Talk to your designer about the fees they charge. Independent designers can be hired for \$15 to \$150 per hour.
- Another option is to contact your local college and seek help from a student in the graphic design program. You could even suggest to the instructor that your logo design become a class project, which could yield multiple designs for you to select from.
- Approach a design firm about providing free services (also referred to as “pro-bono” services). Many

design and marketing agencies donate their services to non-profits that serve causes they are interested in supporting. Your group’s supportive adults can help you talk to designers and develop a letter of request to achieve your goal.

Your logo is the foundation of all your promotional materials, so this is one area where spending a little more now can really pay off later.



Elevate is the Youth Leadership Board of Iowa. Design of their logo was provided by professional designer.

should we **ADVERTISE?**

Enthusiastic about your goals and programs, with a great logo and tagline to brag about, your group members may be picturing big billboard and newspaper advertising, great radio and TV ads to spread the word. But mass media advertising is usually off-limits for most non-profit groups like yours because of the very expensive costs.

There is a way to get your money and time’s worth: target marketing. This type of advertising aims to pin point only your key stakeholders instead of spending money and time to distribute your message to a lot of people who aren’t interested. Target marketing reaches a small number of people who are most likely to respond or who you think most need to hear your message.

For example, if you have \$100 to spend on printing for advertising to potential donors, which would be more effective?

Send 200 copies of a flier to people picked out of a phone book for your city, or

Send 20 info packets to people who have contacted your group about helping foster youth.

At first look, it might seem like you could produce better results by reaching out to more people. But marketing pros will agree that you are more likely to yield better results if you target a group of people who are already interested in your issue.

inexpensive ways to BUILD YOUR BRAND

STICKERS.

Investing in printing your logo on stickers can go a long way in promoting your brand. Stick 'em on folders (for presentations), paper and envelopes (for letterhead), or simply pass them out for a inexpensive give-away at conferences and other youth events.

T-SHIRTS.

The members of your group can provide the best branding. Help your group stand out and be identifiable by creating matching t-shirts to wear at presentations and events.

E-MAIL & MESSAGE TAGLINES.

How many messages do you send out each day? Now multiply that by the number of people in your group. That's the number of opportunities you have to make an impression each and every day. Consider asking members to add your group's tagline to all e-mails.

SOCIAL NETWORKING.

Develop your online strategy... build a group site on FosterClub.com, Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter and let people know about your organization, program, or activity. Every time you create a new post you'll be building your brand.

TESTIMONIALS.

The best way to promote your brand is by word-of-mouth. Make sure that the members of your group understand your brand's personality and know your tagline by memory. Collect testimonials (great reviews about the work you do) and post them to your website.

FosterClub partnered with the Pew Charitable Trusts for the youth-powered "I Am Waiting" campaign, which relied on heavy branding for it's effectiveness.



a few FAVES...

We've collected some of our favorite resources to help you build your brand:

Design inspiration. Take a look at the tutorials at Before and After Magazine, along with images of great design.
www.bamagazine.com

Printing. Vista Print offers good deals on low-quantity business cards (you can even get a free set if you don't mind their logo being on it). They also have a logo-building engine... try it out!
www.vistaprint.com

Photos and illustrations. iStock features a great selection of inexpensive royalty-free photos and art (which means once you purchase it, you can use it as much as you want). www.istock.com

Websites. FosterClub provides youth boards with a free website that includes social networking features (build your own avatar!).
www.fosterclub.org or 503-717-1552.

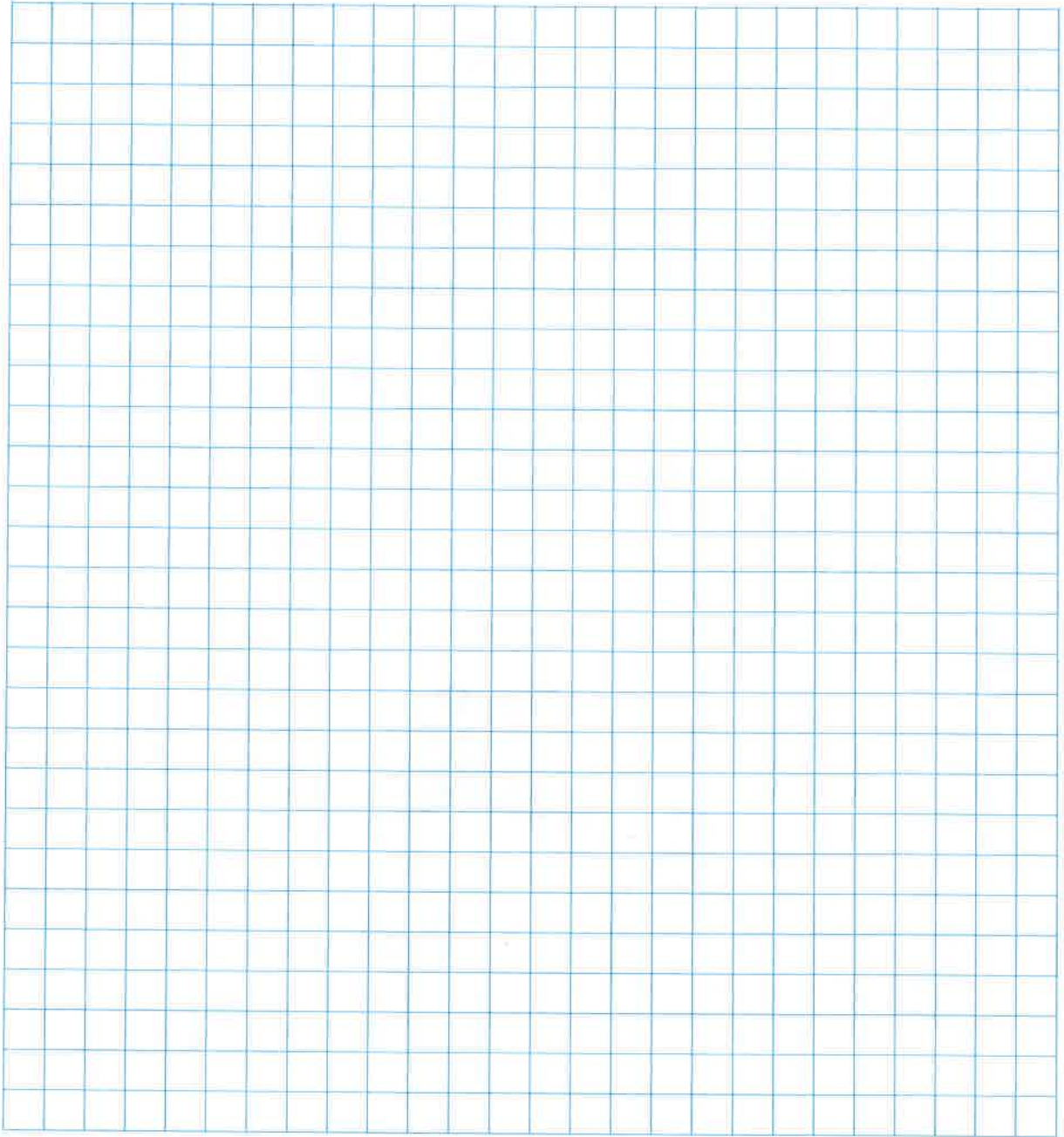
Logo merchandise. At Cafepress, you can order a single item with your logo or graphic on it. Lots of selection, t-shirts to mugs. www.cafepress.com

Blog. Start communicating today by setting up your own Wordpress account.
www.wordpress.com

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DESIGN PAGE





Travel Guide

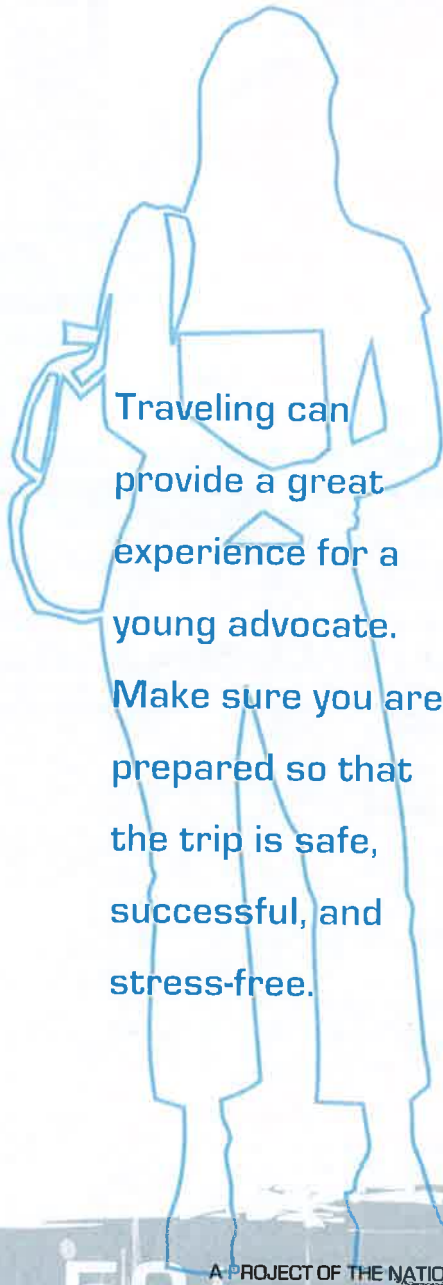
A service of the Children's Bureau • A member of the T/TA Network

NRCYD

**National Resource Center
for Youth Development**

from the Youth Leadership Toolkit by NRCYD

Travel Guide



Traveling can provide a great experience for a young advocate. Make sure you are prepared so that the trip is safe, successful, and stress-free.

preparing to GO

Traveling is exciting, but if you are not prepared, travel can also be stressful. Do you know how to pack for airport security? Do you have the right travel documents? Here is information to help with everything you need to know—from packing and flying to spending money to earning credit - with travel tips, packing lists and more. Being prepared will make your travel experience memorable.

how are you GETTING THERE

Choosing whether to drive, or travel by train, bus, or air depends on your destination and your budget.

The cost of gas, hotels, and car maintenance may make it more economical to fly. This is especially true

if you are able to shop around for a ticket with a travel agency or discount websites. Some places don't have public airports, or they are so far away that you could end up having to travel a long distance to your destination after your plane lands.

**If you don't know what a word means, check out the glossary section at the end of the Travel Guide.*

IDENTIFICATION

Don't forget to bring a government issued ID if you are over 18 (State ID, driver's license, and/or a passport work best), or a school ID and birth certificate if you are under 18. This is VERY important because you WILL NOT be able to travel without them. Learn more here: http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/acceptable_documents.shtm.

getting a TICKET

You may be responsible for making your own travel arrangements or someone else may be in charge of this for you. It is important to know the dates of travel to and from the event, and the name of the airport of your arrival and departure. Some cities have more than one airport, so find out which is more compatible with your plans; for instance, know where an event is hosted and which airport is closer to that venue before searching for flights. Know your home airport.

If someone else is making your travel arrangements, check with them to make sure you know the proper procedures to get this done; some organizations have their own travel agent or approve only certain agencies or airlines.

Whatever your mode of transportation, there are some general rules to keep in mind.

Buy your ticket as early as possible. Ticket prices go up the closer the purchase day gets to the actual travel day.

Always check and double check your date of travel. It's easy to get a little too relaxed and stop paying attention to days. Often, especially if you are buying a discounted ticket, they are nonrefundable, so you might be stuck

with a ticket on the wrong day. Check the cancellation/change policies of the ticket before you buy it. Can you cancel your ticket? If something happens, is it refundable? Can you make changes to the ticket? If so, how much will it cost?

Print off the ticket and/or confirmation number and store them in a safe place. Your cell phone is one suggestion. You might also want to give a trusted friend or family member a copy of this. These tips can be helpful if you misplace the ticket, or if there's a problem when you get to the station or airport to check in.

If you are buying a plane ticket, make sure to shop around for the best prices. Websites like www.orbitz.com, www.expedia.com, and www.travelocity.com generally offer discounted tickets, or at least review a large number of airlines at the same time to find the cheapest ticket. Some websites offer cheaper tickets for students, or those under a certain age, such as www.studentuniverse.com and www.statravel.com. Be sure to check the airline sites as well; often times they will match rates that you can find on other sites and you may earn airline credits for miles traveled that you can redeem in the future for tickets purchased directly from airlines.

When buying a bus or train ticket, two of the more widely used sites are www.greyhound.com or www.amtrak.com. They often offer discounts for students, AAA members, or people in the military. Be sure to check the website for any discounts, and pay attention to the requirements for receiving that discount.

PACKING

Once your date of departure is approaching, it's time to pack. There are a few things you need to consider before you begin to pack:

Weather. Use a website like www.weather.com to check the weather of your destination. You don't want to bring only pants and sweatshirts to a

activities

Think about what you'll be doing. If necessary, get a copy of the event's agenda in advance, or ask an adult sponsor/host about expected activities. Dress accordingly. Talking to Congress members requires very different attire than hiking through woods or doing a ropes course. Consider bringing a swimsuit if you're going to be staying at a hotel.

Where you'll be staying. For example, if you're staying at a hotel, there's no reason to bring your own towels, as those are provided. (You might still want to bring your own pillow if you

destination with 90 degree weather anymore than you would want to bring shorts and tank tops to one with single digit degree weather. Knowing the weather can also prevent over packing, which can help you avoid heavy baggage charges on airlines.

have a special one, or if you don't like the idea of sleeping on pillows on which strangers have slept, or bring your own pillow case.) Most hotels also provide lotion, body soap, shampoo, and conditioner; some provide hair dryers. Often, hotel front desks will provide you with forgotten essentials, such as razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc. If an iron is not provided in your room, once you're checked in, you can request one from the hotel housekeeping services. If you're not staying at a hotel, ask your adult sponsor, or the person hosting you if you should provide your own towels, pillows, blankets, or sleeping bag.

length of stay

A weekend trip requires a very different packing strategy from a one-week or a three-month stay.

For shorter trips, try and pack only what you'll need. Planning outfits, as opposed to a random number of tops and bottoms, can cut down on what you pack. It can also cut down on time spent getting ready in the morning.

For longer trips, consider that there will probably be laundry facilities, so you don't need to pack something to wear every day. Pack items that can be mixed and matched. For example pants can often be worn more than once when combined with a different top and shoes. Especially consider this tip if you are needing to wear several business professional outfits. Jackets can be worn with different pants to expand your number of outfits without having to expand your suitcase.

If you are packing a large amount of clothing, it is also helpful to use space-saving bags. These shrink the space your clothing will take up and can help reduce the total number of suitcases you have to take which can help to cut down on cost. These bags are available at Target, Wal-Mart, or online at www.spacebag.com. Also, use your space creatively. You can pack underwear or socks inside shoes to save space. Also, something as simple as neatly folding your clothes before packing can save more room than stuffing unfolded clothes into your suitcase. This can also save morning preparation time.



airport/TSA rules and regulations

Recently, many airlines have begun charging for checked bags. There is also a charge for bags that are heavier than the weight limit (usually 50 lb). Currently, there are rules that prevent you from having more than (1) carry-on (small suitcase) and (1) personal item (a purse, or briefcase) as carry-ons. If you are taking a carry-on, check www.tsa.gov for the latest travel regulations. All liquids and pastes must be in a 3 oz. container or smaller, and they all must be contained in a clear quart-sized zip sealed bag (a sandwich-sized Ziploc bag will work). Learn more here: <http://www.tsa.gov/311/index.shtm>.

pack smart

If you can pack solely in a carry-on, do it. If your trip will prevent you from packing more than just a carry-on, pack at least one change of clothes in your carry-on (in the event that your checked baggage is delayed or lost). You can bring one carry-on and one personal item. A "carry-on" is a small suitcase designed to fit in the overhead compartment of a plane. The dimensions of a typical carry-on are 24" x 17" x 10". A personal item is one that can fit under the seat in front of you and is a briefcase, backpack, or a purse.

snack packs

It is also helpful to pack dry snacks, such as fruit, cookies, granola bars, etc. in your carry-on for your travel. Airports have several food options available, but they are typically much more expensive than outside of the airport. Having your own snacks is especially helpful if you have long layovers or flights that last several hours. Drinks can be purchased inside security and carried onto the plane. Most airlines have free beverage services on flights; however, some airlines are now charging for chips and peanuts, and even soft drinks.



buying stuff while you're there

Make sure you have enough space in your suitcase if you want to purchase anything on your trip. Be sure to keep in mind airline restrictions on items (especially liquid) if you are planning to carry-on your luggage on your return trip.

HOTEL reservations

After making your flight reservations, it is helpful to make a hotel reservation. For some organizations, this may already be done for you on a master bill, but be sure to check with your contact first. If it is not covered, contact the hotel where the training will occur. If the training is offsite, check www.hotels.com to find a hotel close to where you will be traveling to and the price ranges of the hotels.

A credit card will be needed to make the reservation. If you book a room with hotels.com or another booking agency, you will need to pay the cost of the

hotel up front. If you book a reservation directly with a hotel, the card will be needed to simply reserve the room and will not be charged until arrival. **If you are using a debit card, most hotels will place a hold on the funds in your personal checking account for the entire amount of the hotel stay plus deposit, which can tie up funds in your checking account for up to a couple of weeks.

Also, age limits may apply in some states, so check to ensure that you will be able to reserve and stay in a room without an adult.

Getting to & from the STATION/AIRPORT

In the weeks before you travel, begin to plan and arrange your travel to the airport/station. There are a number of options:

Driving yourself and parking at the station/airport. Remember that most airports require you to pay to park at the airport. The cost fluctuates depending on where you park, how long you plan to stay, and different airports. Remember to look this up before you leave, and plan for the cost in your budget.

Having a friend/family member drop you off. When choosing this person, make sure they are reliable enough to pick you up and get you to the station/airport on time. If not, it might be easier (and cheaper) to take a taxi when compared to the cost of missing your flight.

Taxi. Call a local taxi company a few days before your flight leaves. Have them quote a price from your address to the airport. If the cost seems excessive, consider other options. If it seems acceptable, reserve a taxi for your date of travel. Remember to leave enough time for error.

Airport Shuttle. Look online or in a local phone book under "shuttles" or "airport shuttles." Often, if you live too far from an airport for a taxi to be economical, an airport shuttle is the next option. For a set fee, the shuttle will pick you up at your house and deliver you to the airport. If you are able to plan ahead, buying a roundtrip ticket (to the airport and back) might earn you a discounted price.

Public Transit Systems. This is always an important option if you live in an area with public transportation.

Make sure to leave with enough time to get to the airport AT LEAST an hour before your flight leaves. This time can fluctuate depending on your airport and the time you are traveling. Boarding the airplane begins 30 minutes prior to the scheduled time listed on your ticket, and you will need to leave enough time to get through security and get to your assigned gate before this time.

TIPPING and miscellaneous cash

Having a small sum of cash can be helpful. You can use this to pay and tip cab drivers, baggage handlers, etc. or for emergencies. It is generally expected to give a shuttle driver \$1 per bag if they help put your bag into the shuttle and a 10-20% tip to cab drivers.

Check out the following links for hints on being a good traveler:

www.cheapflights.com/travel-tips/airplane-etiquette/

www.wikihow.com/Practice-Airplane-Etiquette

www.practicaletiquette.com/airplane-etiquette.html

TICKETING

Once you arrive at the airport, go to the ticketing counter for your airline. Depending on your airport, sometimes these can be in different terminals which can be very far apart, so make sure to pay special attention to the terminal signs when you are arriving at the airport. You will need to show your ID to the ticketing agent to get your boarding pass(es). These are important to keep track of until you leave the airport at your final destination, as these have the information you will need for travel, including your gate number and seating assignment. You will have to present these to get through security and again to the gate agent to be allowed onto the plane. If you misplace these, go to a ticketing or gate agent to get them reprinted.

Today, most airports have a self-service station (kiosk) to expedite the travel

process. You'll need your confirmation code from your e-ticket, your awards member number, or a credit card. Walk up to the kiosk and input either of the codes, or swipe a credit card (issued in the name of the traveler). Credit cards are not charged at this point, and will pull up any listed reservation in the cardholder's name.

According to Wikipedia, an electronic ticket or e-ticket is used to represent the purchase of a seat on a passenger airline, usually through a website or by telephone although purchase through airline ticket offices or travel agencies can also get you an e-ticket. Once a reservation is made, an e-ticket exists only as a digital record in the airline computers. Customers usually print out a copy of their receipt which contains the record locator or reservation number and the e-ticket number.

checking in your LUGGAGE

If you are checking a bag, take your bag you are wanting to check to the ticketing agent. They will weigh your bag and put a tag on it so that airline employees know where the bag is supposed to go. This is also where you will pay for your bag (if applicable). Try and make sure your bag does not weigh over 50 pounds, or there may be an additional 'overweight' fee.

Though weight requirements vary by airlines and country of destination, typically, bags that weigh over 50 lbs will cost extra. Before packing, check your carrier's weight requirements, and if possible, weigh the bag before you leave your house.

If you get stranded:

On the off chance that you get stranded in the middle of your travel, remain calm. Stressing out, getting angry, or panicking will not be helpful to your circumstance. Take a deep breath and head for a gate agent or a ticketing counter. If you can, pick the one with the shortest line. You don't have to be at your own gate to get rebooked. When getting rebooked, ask for a confirmation on a later flight, so that you don't continuously get placed on standby. While you are in line, call your airline. Sometimes, you can get rebooked faster that way, or at the very least, you have nothing to lose while you're standing in line.

traveling by AIR

security

Bring your boarding passes and your ID to the appropriate security entrance. Follow the signs that match up with your gate number to make sure you are going through the correct security checkpoint. Present your ID and boarding pass to the security agent. They will check your ID and boarding pass and then point you to the security gate. The security gate is where the security officers will examine your carry-on items to make sure that it is safe for all passengers to fly. Here are the steps you will have to take to get through security:

Grab a plastic bin at the beginning of the security line. Take off your shoes, belt, jacket, hat, watch, etc. and place them in the bin with your clear quart size bag with your travel liquids.

If you have a laptop, place it alone in a separate bin by itself.

getting to your gate

While you are at the airport, you might have to wait around a lot. Bring several activities to help you keep from getting bored (see 'Packing Checklist'). You will have to carry all of your items with you at all times, so only bring what you want to carry around with you at the airport. Make sure to pay special attention to your gates and flight times. These should be printed on your

Make sure to place all of your bags on the belt to go through the x-ray machine.

Hang on to your boarding passes as some security agents will check this as you go through the metal detector.

Wait for the security agent to motion for you to walk through the metal detector. Sometimes you may be selected for additional screening. If this happens, simply follow the instructions of the security agent.

After getting cleared, you will be able to get your belongings that you sent through the x-ray machine. If there is a long line behind you, grab your bags and plastic bins with your stuff and go to the sitting area near security to put back on your shoes, jackets, etc.

You are now ready to head to your gate!

boarding pass, but gates can change frequently. You will also want to check the TV monitors where all the flights are listed and listen to announcements to make sure you don't miss it if your plane changes gates. Some airlines also have texting or email services to notify you of any updates to your flight. Check on the airline's website for these options.

boarding

The boarding process will begin 30 minutes before your flight is scheduled to leave. Make sure you stay close to your gate area 15-20 minutes within your boarding time. If you need food, drink, restroom break etc, make sure to do these well in advance of your boarding time which should be printed on your boarding pass. Listen to the gate agent to know when you are supposed to board. Airlines will go by group number or status to board. This information should also be included on your boarding pass so you know when to board. Once your group is called, make sure you have all your belongings and hand your boarding pass to the gate agent. They will swipe it and hand it back to you.

When you get on the plane, check your boarding pass for your seat assignment. Once you reach your assigned seat, place your carry-on (if you have one) into the overhead bins above your seat, and your personal item underneath the seat in front of you. If you want to have your iPod, laptop, etc. out or books to read, you should get them out while everyone is boarding so that you can have them ready when they are allowed for use.

landing and baggage claim

Once the plane lands, make sure you get all of your belongings. After de-boarding the plane, follow the signs through the airport to baggage claim if you checked luggage, or to ground transportation if you have to catch a shuttle. You may need to contact the hotel to schedule a pick up (see Travel Information sheet).

getting TO & FROM the hotel

There are a variety of ways to get from your flight to your hotel. Some of these are the same as getting to the airport, but there are a few additions.

hotel shuttle

Some hotels offer a free (or inexpensive) hotel shuttle service to and from the airport and local attractions. Look at the hotel's website, or give them a call, before you travel.

shuttle services

Most destinations have shuttle companies that you can utilize to get from the airport to where you need to go. These can be reserved online or by calling ahead. An online search should provide several options, depending on where you are going; www.supershuttle.com is one example of a national shuttle service.

taxi

Get a price quote before you leave the airport. Also be aware that most cabdrivers charge per piece for luggage, as well as per piece of luggage that they have to handle. Note: there is sometimes an airport surcharge for taxis waiting at the airport.

rental cars

For youth who are over 21, this can be an option once you arrive at your destination. This option can be very costly, but sometimes it may be the only option. Generally, it is beneficial to reserve these online well in advance of your trip. Be sure to shop around for the best deals. If you are reserving online, a search for coupon codes for this company can get you a discount as well. For most companies, there is an additional charge (usually \$25/day) for drivers under 25. Most will request, and some require, that you purchase insurance (price per day varies by company). Many companies will also require a hold on the car for the duration of the rental. These holds can be up to \$350, so it is important to make sure you have this plus the entire cost of the rental available, in addition to the other expenses of your trip. Some companies, however, will waive the deposit if you use your debit card and show that you have a round-trip ticket (for example, Alamo.com).

If you choose this option, once you get off the plane, proceed to the rental car counter (signs should be visible in the airport). Some airports will require that you take a shuttle to the rental car counter. Provide the salesperson with your name and reservation number. You

will have to present valid driver's license and credit or debit card at this time. The attendant will give you several options for refueling: the least expensive option is usually to refill the tank yourself. They will give you the keys, and then you will go find the car they have assigned you. (Attendants should give you directions to find the car, but if you are unsure, always ask before assuming.) Once you find the car, make sure to inspect the inside and the outside of the car before leaving the lot, and make note of any scratches or damage that you see. If this has not been previously documented with the company, you could be held liable for this damage even if you are not the one responsible for it, so this step is very important. Next, drive the car to the exit, and give your paperwork to the attendant. They will make sure everything is correct before you leave the rental car lot. Make sure to get out your directions to where you are needing to go so that you have them easily available while driving. Make note of any gas stations that are close to the airport when you are leaving, as you will need to stop and refuel before returning the car to the airport. Be sure to keep your receipt from refueling as this will likely be needed for reimbursement purposes.

What happens **AT THE HOTEL?**

check-in

Most hotels require a credit card on arrival for what they call incidentals (any extra expenses charged to your room, such as movies). Check with your adult sponsor to see if you will need a card for this or if it can be covered another way. Also, if you are using a debit card to check in, most hotels will place a hold for the entire amount of the hotel stay, plus

a deposit which can tie up funds in your checking account for up to a couple of weeks. Leave a copy of all your travel information at home in case someone needs to get in touch with you. And when you arrive at the hotel, ask the front desk to be sure your name is on your room so your family can be connected to the right room if they call you.

in the room

Once you get to your room, look around to make sure everything is clean and in order. Many hotels have personal care items (including shampoo, conditioner, lotion, soap, other personal care items, etc.). If you forget something, you can call the front desk to see if they offer complimentary (no cost) items. Coffee that is placed in the rooms generally does not cost. Be aware that many hotels will place water bottles, food, etc. in the rooms and will charge your room for any of these items that are used. It is suggested to purchase snacks at an off-site location once you reach the hotel as hotel items can be much

more expensive. Same goes for pay-per-view movies on TV-if you feel that this is an appropriate expense for you, then check with an adult supporter to make sure the purchase is okay. These charges will show up on your hotel bill, so don't charge anything you wouldn't want adults to know you're watching!

There are also many safety concerns to be aware of in your room. Make sure to lock your door while in your room, and always check to make sure you know the person knocking before opening your door.



checkout

Look around the room before leaving and check the bathroom to make sure you have all of your belongings. Then take your keys or cards to the front desk and tell the clerk you need to check out. If you have to pay for your room up front, make sure to get a copy of your bill with your name, dates of stay, and a zero balance when checking out.

forms

You should be in contact with your adult supporter to find out the process for reimbursement of expenses. Sometimes you will need to keep your receipts for anything purchased, including meals. Make sure to check in with your adult supporter before going on the trip to understand what will be necessary for you to get reimbursed later.

checklist

You might find the checklist below helpful. It is not comprehensive, but a great place to start.

- Government issued picture ID (driver's license, non driver's ID, military ID, passport, etc.).
- Credit card if needed for hotel.
- Cash.
- Dry food and snacks (no liquids).
- \$25-\$50 per checked bag, each way if needed (check with your airline).
- Appropriate clothing for the weather where you are traveling.
- Dress clothes, if you plan on presenting. If you are unsure what is appropriate dress, be sure to ask an adult sponsor. Most airlines have a place to hang garment bags if you choose to carry on your dress clothes.
- Bathing suits (check if the hotel has a pool)
- Appropriate shoes (for walking or working out if there are activities outside of the hotel).
- Activities for down time (for example, iPods, video games, books, magazines, writing or drawing materials, card games, hand-held). Be careful! You are responsible for your own property.
- Chargers for electronics (iPod, phone, laptop, etc).
- Toiletries (for example, toothpaste and brush, hair supplies, cologne, perfume, deodorant, shaving supplies, makeup, shampoo, and conditioner—if you don't like what the hotel provides).
- Contacts, glasses, or other eye-care-related items.
- Medications, with labels (Make sure to pack these in your carry-on bag in case your checked luggage is delayed).

DO NOT PACK the following in your carry-on luggage: scissors, nail clippers, nail files, tweezers, razors, knives, any sharp object, mace, pepper spray, lighters, and strike-anywhere matches. These will be thrown away at security if you attempt to bring them in your carry-on.

my travel information sheet

Fill out this sheet to take with you before you travel!

My flight # is _____ on _____ airline.

I will get to the airport/train station by _____.

I need to be ready to leave by this time: _____.

I am getting to from the airport/train station by _____.

My travel confirmation # is _____.

Name of Hotel: _____.

Address of Hotel: _____.

Confirmation # for hotel: _____.

Phone # and Room # of hotel are _____.

My supportive adult phone # and room # are _____.

My Emergency contact person and phone # are _____.

Medications I am taking: _____.

I need to take these medications on the following days/times: _____.

Additional information I need to know: _____.

Glossary

Boarding (to board) - The process of getting onto the plane.

Boarding pass - A paper that will have your name and flight information. You will get this at the ticketing counter when you first get to the airport and will have to show it to get through security and onto the plane.

Checked baggage - Usually larger luggage that you will give to the ticketing agent when you check in. This luggage will be transferred automatically to your other flights and you will pick it up at baggage claim after you arrive at your destination. Some airlines charge \$25-\$50 per checked bag, and most airlines have fees if your bag weighs too much.

Checking out (hotel) - Letting the front desk at the hotel know that you are finished with your stay. Most hotels will need you to check out by noon.

Carry-on baggage - Bags you can take with you on the plane. Must be small enough to fit in the overhead compartment. Ask a supportive adult if you need help determining this.

Gate - The doorway to get from the terminal to your plane. You will need to know your gate number (on your boarding pass or TV monitors in the airport) to make sure you are getting on the right plane.

Gate agent - The person at the gate who checks your boarding pass and lets you onto the plane.

Layover - Time at the airport in between flights.

Rebooked - Taking a different flight. This usually happens when flights have been cancelled or delayed. Go to a gate agent if you have questions or are unsure if you are rebooked.

Security agent - People who check your carry-on belongings and you to make sure everyone stays safe.

Security checkpoint - The place you have to go through to get your belongings checked out before you can go to your gate.

Standby - Being placed on a 'waitlist' to get a seat on an different flight. This is not a guaranteed seat.

Terminal - The building (usually labeled with letters) that tells you where you will be flying out of. Pay attention to which airline you are flying, because some airports have different airlines in different terminals that don't connect.

Ticketing Agent - Person at the ticketing counter that will check you in, check your baggage, and give you boarding passes.

Ticketing Counter - The first place you go when you get to the airport. This is where you get your boarding passes and check-in for your flight.



Checklist for Adults: Preparing Youth to Go

It is important that youth know what, where, when and why they are traveling. Not only does it help them prepare but it is a learning experience. If they know the details up-front, they may be able to be responsible for carrying out some of the research and planning that goes along with the trip.

Give information on travel and transportation

This includes dates, times, flights, how, and when arrangements and reservations need to be made. Youth should have as much detail about the trip and itinerary as you. If something should happen to the adult, the youth should still be able to travel and make the engagement based on the information that was provided ahead of time.

Share contact information

Exchange cell phone numbers with everyone in the group. Everyone should have each other's number for emergency, planning, and in case of change of events. Also check to see if your phone has texting capabilities. Some youth are a lot easier to reach through these means.

What if you or the youth gets stranded or lost?

A plan should be discussed as to what happens if one or the other gets lost, stranded, or separated from each other or the group traveling. Panic is not an option. If cell phone numbers are exchanged, meeting times and places are discussed, and plans are discussed ahead of time this should eliminate the moment of panic for everyone involved.

In case of emergency

Emergency contact information should be exchanged for and with everyone that is traveling. Emergencies don't just happen to youth nor do they only happen to one person. Think about food related sickness, if you are traveling with a group chances are the group has eaten at the same place. If one gets ill due to food, chances are the others will too. Sharing emergency contacts with each other and having this printed information for everyone once again is a way to share the responsibility with the group.

Provide and discuss dos and don'ts for travel and hotel stays

As the adult, if there is certain things that will not be tolerated by you or the agency, this information needs to be relayed to the youth prior to the departure rather than just expecting the youth "should know." Whether the young person is an experienced traveler or this is their first time, they should know the guidelines of the trip well ahead of the trip so they can agree, negotiate, or decide they don't want to go. Rules should be very few and made based on safety issues.

Safety guidelines

It is helpful to review safety guidelines for travel and staying in hotels. It is not uncommon for youth that are or have been in care to trust people they don't know very well; they have been placed in stranger's homes, they have been in groups they don't know real well, and they have been transported by people they don't know...why is talking to strangers in airports, bus depots, subways, or hotels any different? The fact that they are in unfamiliar and potential dangerous environments should be explained to them openly and clearly without scaring them.

Do they have luggage?

Many youth in care do not have their own luggage. They have been moved from place to place by utilizing boxes, shopping bags, and garbage bags. Make sure that the youth that are traveling have appropriate luggage, backpacks, and carry-on bags so that they are comfortable with their travels and are not embarrassed or stand out from the other travelers.

Appropriate attire

“What to wear and when to wear it” should be discussed for a couple reasons. One, so the youth can be prepared to dress like others in the meeting, presentation, or function that they are attending. Two, so that as the adult responsible, you can be sure they have the appropriate items of clothing and shoes for the event. It is one issue for the youth to know they need a shirt and tie or a formal dress but it is another issue to make sure they have the items or a means of purchasing the items.

Spending money

Be sure that the young people you are traveling with have some spending money for incidentals and things they may want or need. None of us like to travel without any cash on hand, a young person feels better and a little more responsible with a little “walking around money.”

Up-front expenses

Ensure that youth know what and how much the up-front expenses are going to be. If they are going to have to cover the cost of part of their trip or hotel, they need to be prepared to do so. If they are going to have to submit receipts for reimbursement, they need to know that prior to taking the trip. Many youth do not have the extra cash or credit established to cover large expenses or reimbursements that can take 6-8 weeks. It is also good to know if the young person has a checking account or a means of cashing a check and assisting them with this process in advance if necessary. It is recommended to provide per diem in advance of the trip and then provide the honorarium or stipend upon arrival to the event and to cover hotel expenses with a master bill whenever possible.

Who should be in their rooms?

As a general rule, no one should be in another person’s room unless they are sharing rooms. This policy saves trouble in the long run by preventing incidence or allegations. Adults should never share the room with youth, unless there is a risk of safety. Shared rooms by youth and adults create a huge liability; it is worth the cost of two rooms to avoid this. If the youth is not responsible enough to have their own room, they probably are not responsible enough for the trip in general.

Traveling with youth in care

Be sure to follow your agency guidelines when traveling with youth who are still in care. If you are traveling out of state, you may need to get special permissions from the state office or the judge on the case. Be sure that paperwork and requests are done early so that does not become the reason a youth cannot attend.

Insurance / medical cards

Be sure that you and the youth you are traveling with have copies of insurance/medical cards. Keep the originals together in a location that several individuals have access to just in case something happens to you and you are not available or do not have access to this information.

Medications

Be aware of the medications that the youth is taking, the instructions for taking the medications, and side effects. Try to keep to the medication schedule as close as possible. Do not pack medication in checked baggage; this should be packed in your carry on so that it is with you or the youth at all times. Bring a couple days of extra medication in case of delays or schedule changes.

Age

It is preferential to travel with youth at least 18 years of age, but if you are traveling with youth younger than 18, remember that your level of responsibility and supervision are increased greatly. You may also have to get additional permissions in advance as youth under 18 cannot sign or make legal decisions. In some areas of the country, anyone under the age of 18 are not allowed to have a hotel room without adult supervision. Be sure to check with your hotel site well in advance of the trip to ensure these situations do not arise during travel.

Compensation

Remember that youths' time and expertise is just as valuable as ours. Youth need to be compensated for their time; they are missing school, work, and their normal routine to travel and participate in whatever event is going on and they need to be compensated for such. This does not necessarily mean payment in cash; it could be additional credit for school, earning a professional recommendation or reference from you and can provide new opportunities for the youth to learn and experience.

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NOTES





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NRCYD

**National Resource Center
for Youth Development**

The National Resource Center for Youth Development believes that youth should be involved in the design and implementation of programs, policies, and practices which impact their lives. In the United States, youth participate on conference planning committees, serve on youth panels, present workshops, and co-facilitate discussions at conferences and meetings. They also sit on organizational advisory boards, run their own youth boards, participate in community/agency strategic planning, conduct surveys, write reports, design forms, and develop websites. Regardless of the activity in which youth are involved, best practice suggests both youth and adults need preparation for participation in whatever roles they are to play.

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NRCYD

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for Youth Development**

