



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HEALTH

# Youth Engagement Matters: The Power of Youth Voice in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health  
Office of Population Affairs

March 2, 2020, 2-3 pm EST



# Introductory Webinars from OPA

- **Inspiration, Ideation, Implementation: The Power of Design Thinking in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Webinar**  
*Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 2:00-3:00 pm ET*
- **A Systems Thinking Approach to Teen Pregnancy Prevention Webinar**  
*Thursday, February 27, 2020, 2:00-3:00 pm ET*
- **Youth Engagement Matters: The Power of Youth Voice in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Webinar**  
*Monday, March 2, 2020, 2:00-3:00 pm ET*

More information about each webinar is available on the OPA website:  
[hhs.gov/ash/oah/grant-programs/funding-opportunities/index.html](https://hhs.gov/ash/oah/grant-programs/funding-opportunities/index.html)



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## Important Note:

- We will **not** answer any question related to open funding opportunity announcements during these webinars
- Any questions about open FOAs should be directed to OPA and/or OASH Office of Grants Management





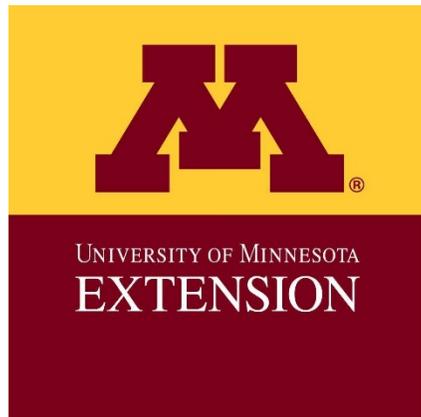
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# Youth Engagement Matters: The Power of Youth Voice in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

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University of Minnesota, Extension Center for Youth Development

March 2, 2020



# Agenda

- Overview & Objectives
- Quality Youth Programs
- Rings of Engagement
- Organizational Strategies
- Q&A

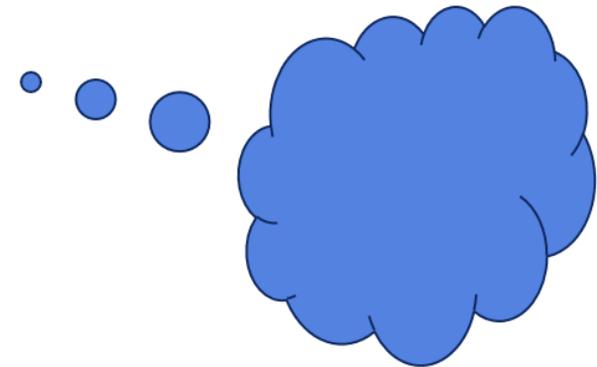
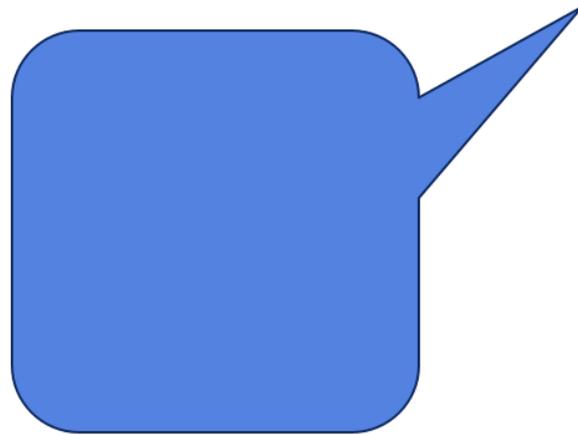


# Objective of Training

- Define quality youth programming and youth engagement
- Learn about and recognize Rings of Engagement in their programming
- Analyze current program with lens of YE
- How to apply youth voice for system change



# Envisioning Youth Engagement



# Youth Work Is:

“...the interactive practice of shared teaching and learning that organizes around the needs, interests, aspirations and well-being of young people.”

*Walker (2009)*



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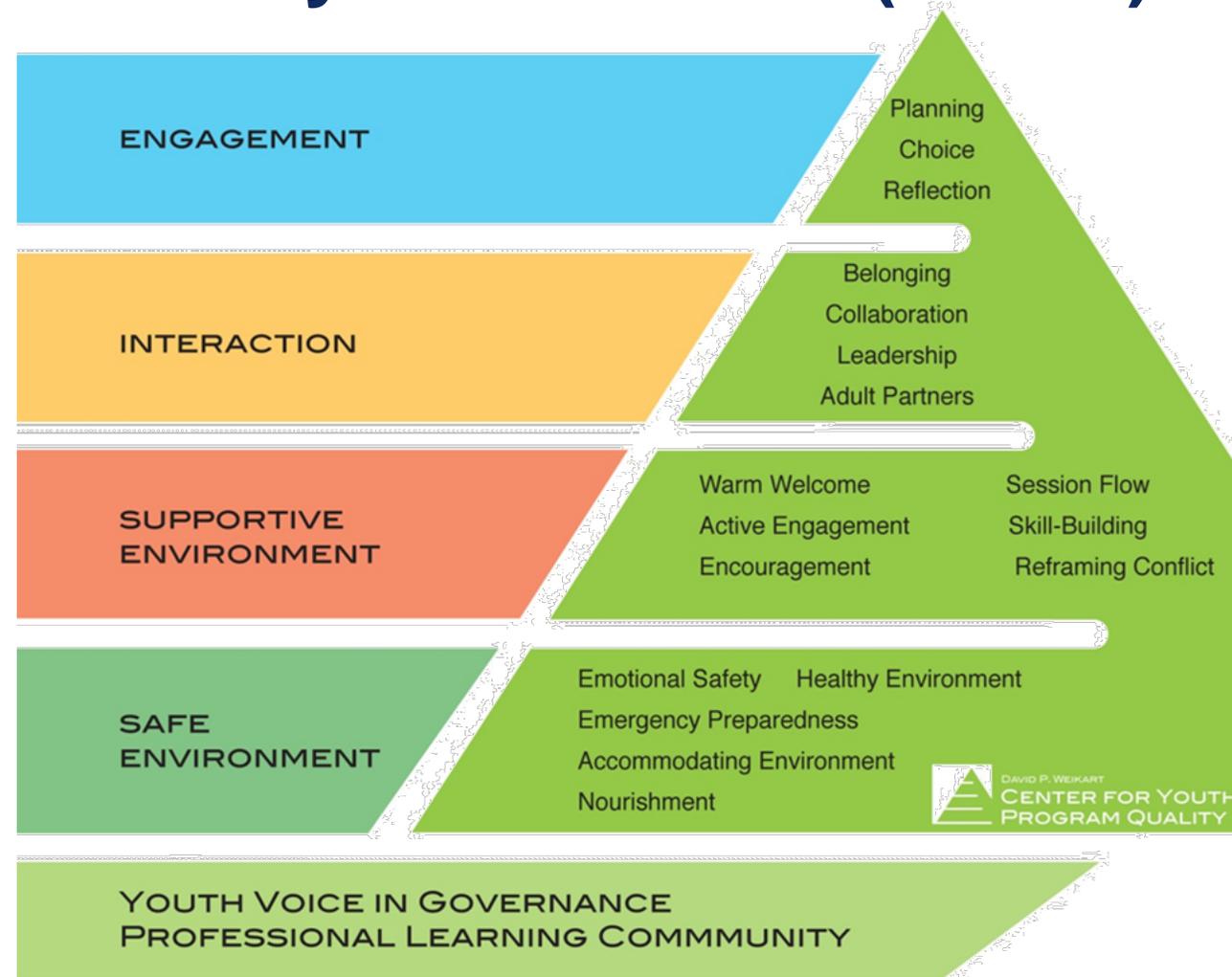


# Experienced Youth Serving Professionals:

- Recognize that learning happens through a partnership between the youth worker and a young person;
- Meet young people where they are and build from there;
- Are attentive to the identity, background and everyday *life* of young people



# Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)



# Quality Programs Offer:

- Physical and emotional safety
- Supportive relationships
- Opportunities to belong
- Positive social norms
- Support for efficacy and mattering
- Opportunities to build skills
- Integration of family, school and community efforts

*Source: National Research Council*



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# Quality Programs ALSO Offer:

- Intentional focus on a range of youth development outcomes
- Building connections and relationships
- Deliberate program structure, design and delivery
- Intensity of contact
- Support for continuous reflection and data-driven change.

*Source: National Research Council*



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# Youth Engagement...

- Tends to be Experiential, Project-based learning
- Attends to THEIR interests & developmental needs
- Recognizes young people's unique strengths
- Opportunities for youth to make a difference



# Youth Engagement Myths

- YE is accomplished by placing one youth on a board or committee.
- YE means that adults surrender their roles as guides and educators.
- Adults are ready for youth engagement.
- Youth are ready for adult engagement.

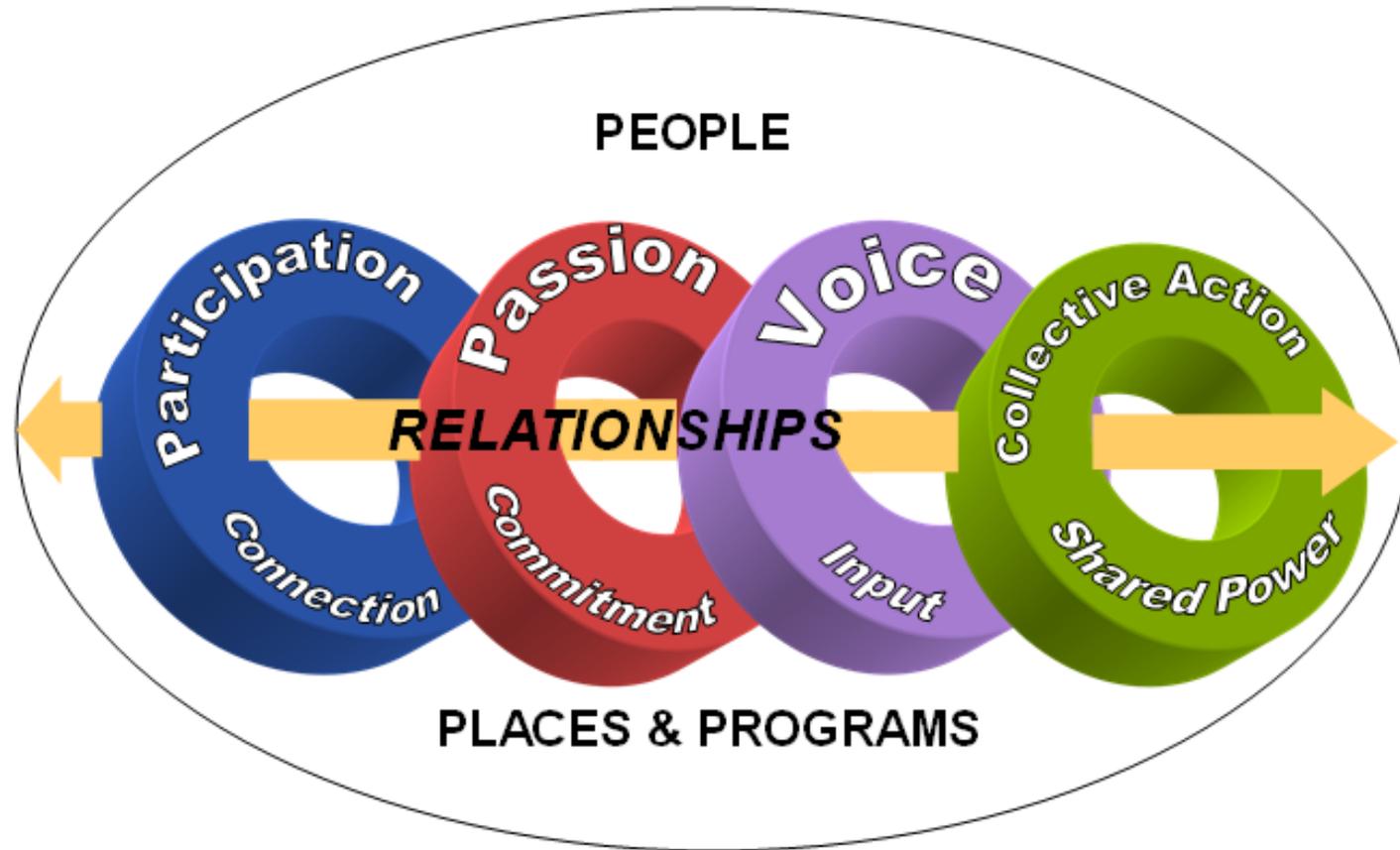
*(Modified from Wheeler, 2003)*



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# Rings of Engagement



# Youth Engagement as Participation

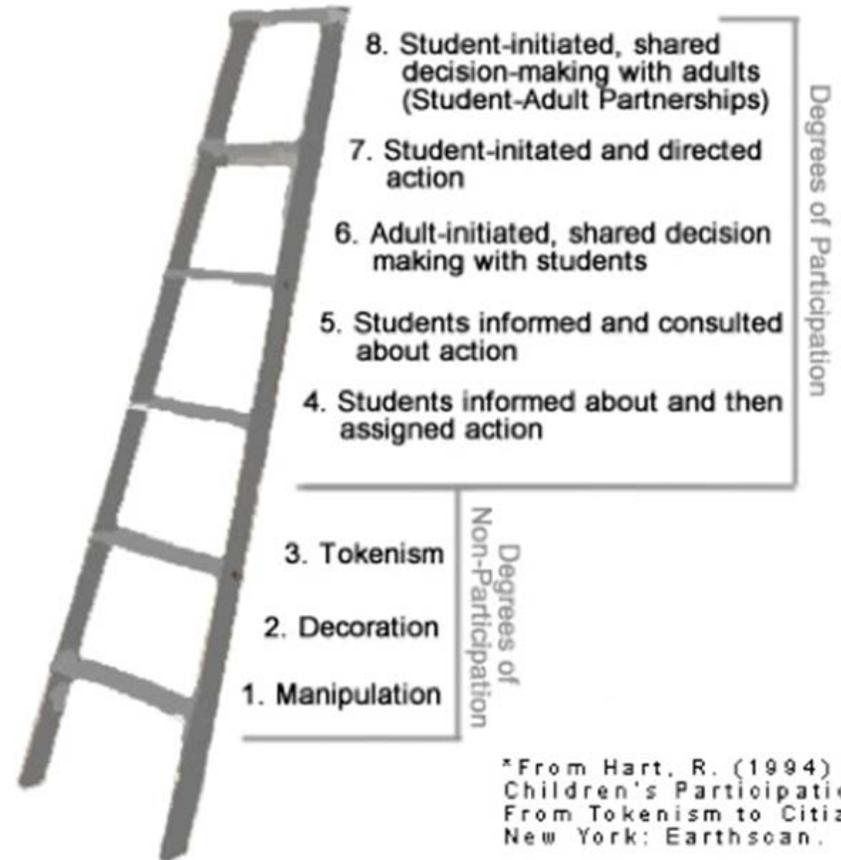
- WHO DECIDES what they will do changes as they get older
- WHAT YOUTH ARE INTERESTED IN change as they get older
- Developmental Ladders of Leadership
  - Opportunities to practice leadership, voice
  - Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



# The Ladder of Student Involvement in School

## The Ladder of Student Involvement in School

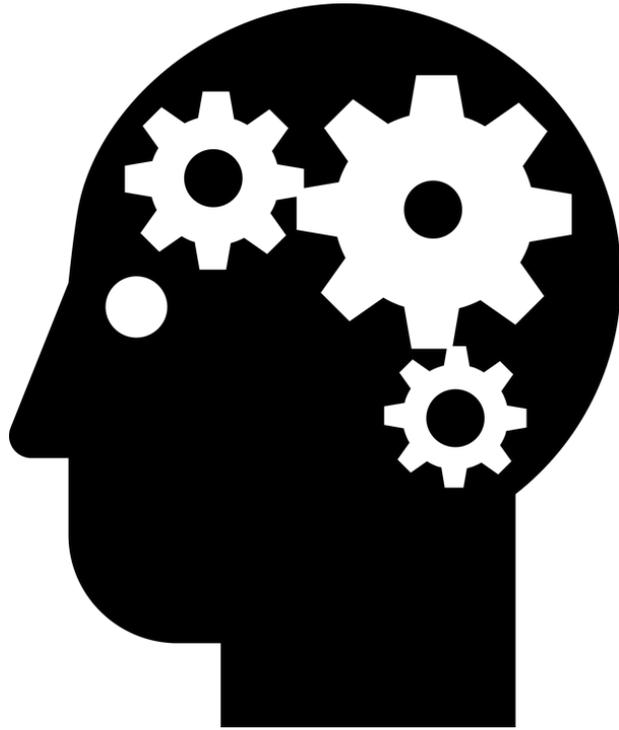
Adapted by Adam Fletcher from the work of Roger Hart\*



\*From Hart, R. (1994)  
Children's Participation:  
From Tokenism to Citizenship.  
New York: Earthscan.



# Youth Engagement as Passion



- Exposing youth to many different ideas, opportunities, relationships, experiences.
- Find something they're really into and will work hard at.



# Youth Engagement as Voice = Input into Decisions

Opportunities to voice ideas must be:

- Authentic
- Ongoing
- Inclusive
- Visible

Youth & adults need to develop capacities for:

- Inviting and responding to opportunities for informal conversation
- Inviting and offering input through formal structures
- Effectively facilitating dialogue
- Active listening, and applying new learning
- Understanding and appreciating each other's strengths, perspectives



# Youth Engagement as Collective Action

Youth and adults partner to achieve common goals, ***sharing power*** and authority to make decisions along the way.

- Sharing decision making power ***within*** current systems
- Sharing power to create new programs and/or ***change systems***



# Collective Action

## Keys to Creating It:

- Openness to new ideas about youth/adult roles
- Skills to facilitate collaborative processes
- Transparency about power



# Collective Action (con't)

## To *change* organizations, communities:

- Identify issues of deep concern
- Learn about root causes of issues
- Stay with it for the long haul



# Benefits of Collective Action

- Way for alienated youth to help *create* a community in which they want to engage
- Develop critical social consciousness
- Skills for *collaboration, co-construction of ideas*
- Develop a sense of *collective* identity, efficacy & agency
- Try out new roles in/with community
- Learn to negotiate balance between individual and collective values and beliefs
- Build relationships based in mutual respect



# A Foundation for Getting There

- An awareness of the public value of youth
- Understanding of organizational history and goals
- Conducting SOAR analysis or other evaluation of programs
- Ensure shared YE goals within organizational structure



# Norms and Practices Supporting Youth Engagement

- Defining “youth”
- “Participation” vs. “Engagement” – What do we really mean?
- Future Citizens vs. Citizens NOW
- Youth Decision-Making



# Program Evaluation



# Shared Youth Engagement Goals

- Providing a full range of youth engagement opportunities in the community.
- Creating shared mechanisms to recruit youth and adult participants.
- Providing training/coaching for youth and adult participants
- Research and evaluation
- Identifying, creating and accessing funding sources
- Communication efforts to expand and deepen support for youth engagement in the community

*(Kellogg, 2007; Pittman, Martin & Williams, 2007; Zeldin, Camino & Calvert, 2007)*



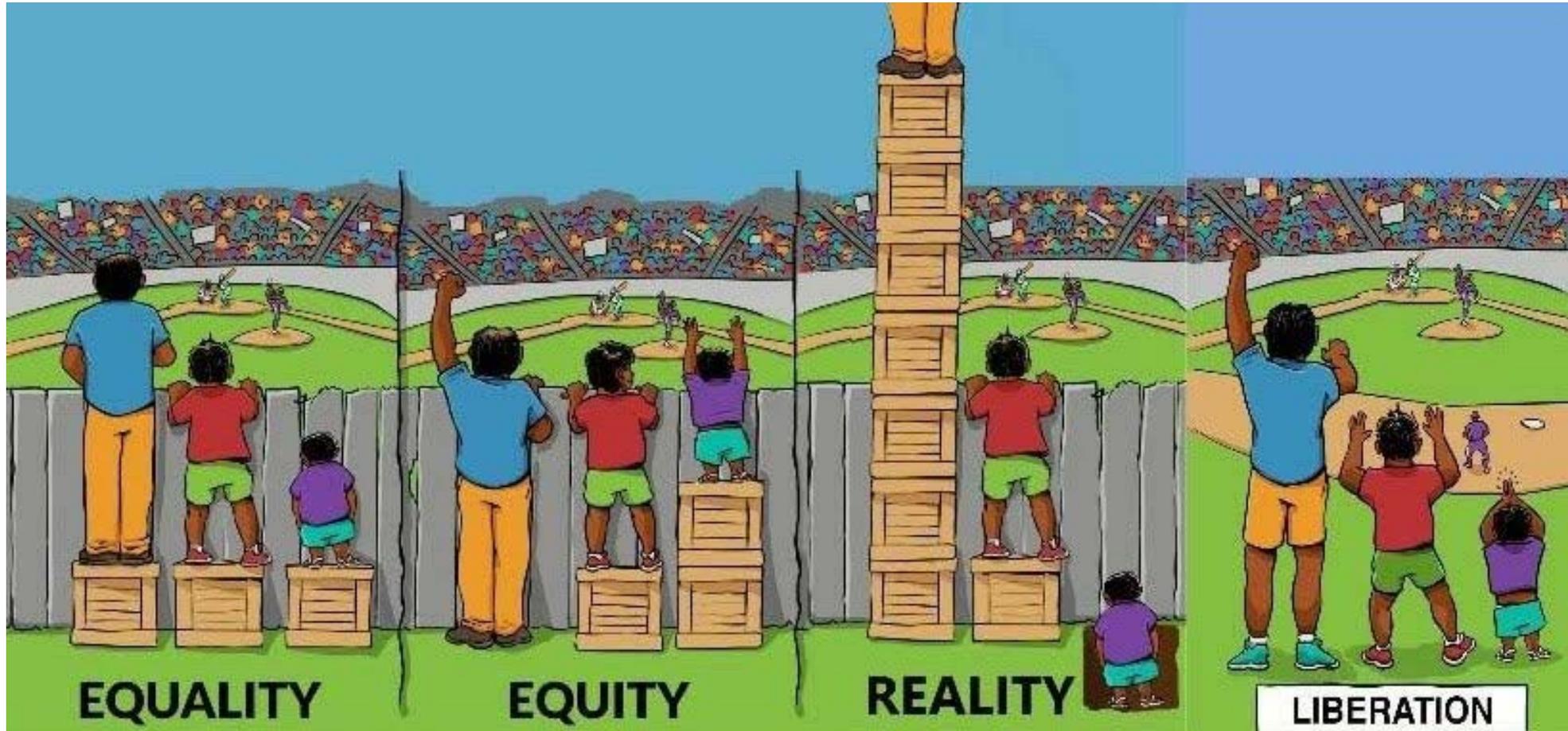
# Bringing It Back Home to Community

- Provide a safe space for identity exploration
- Explore neighborhoods as a backdrop for cultural identity formation
- Acknowledge and address barriers in urban settings
- Recognize and respect survival strategies
- Get elders' perspectives on YE & youth-adult partnerships
- Understand from various ecological levels

*(Villarruel, 2002)*



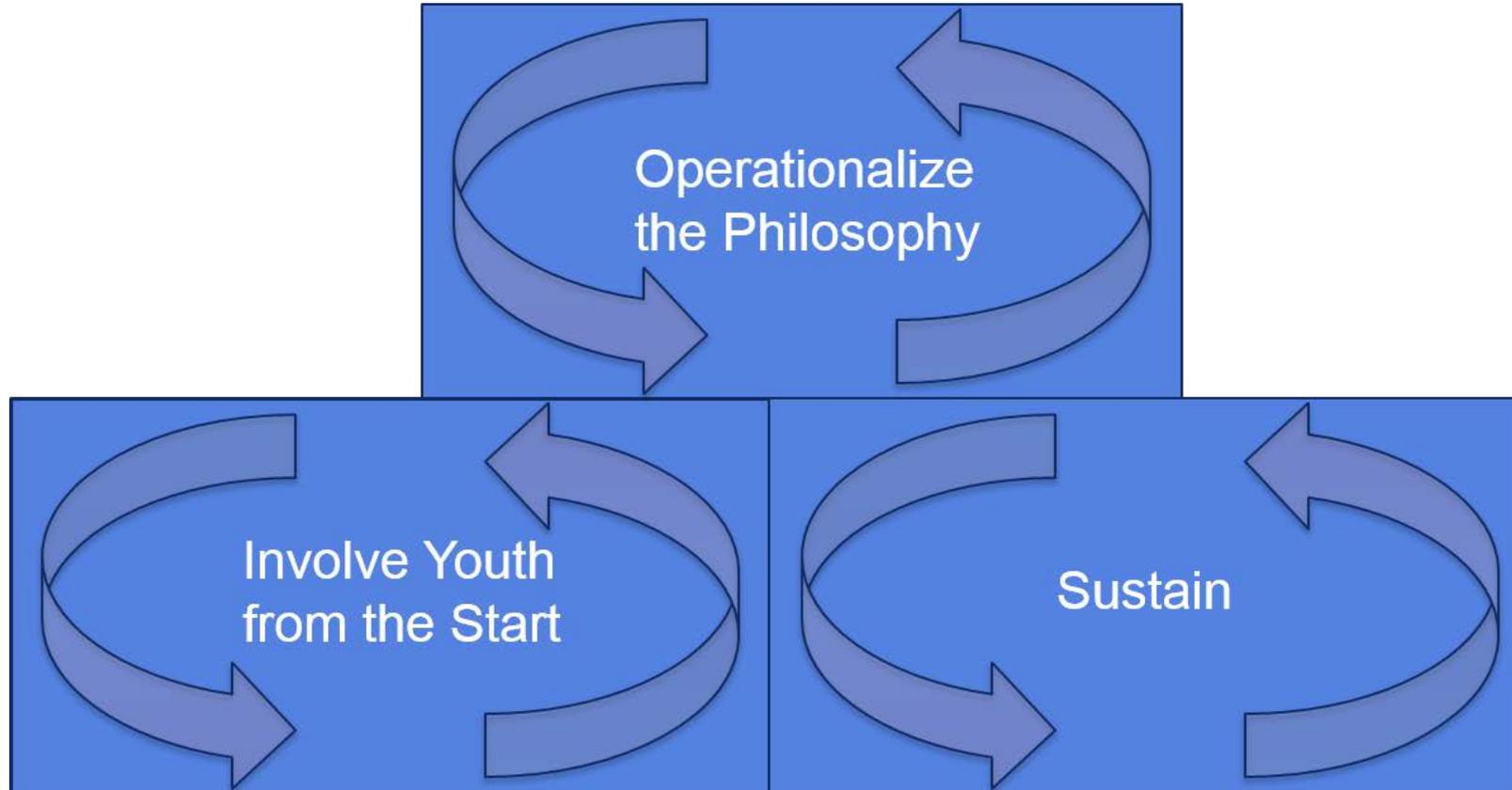
# Equity to Liberation



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# Building Organizational Infrastructure



# Organizational Infrastructure

## Operationalize the philosophy

- Small groups collaborate, create, come together around opportunities
- Develop processes and tools for engagement
  - training and on-going coaching for youth and adult leaders
  - process-based support to help participants evaluate and improve practice as they go
  - opportunities to share learning and celebrate success across the organization

## Sustain

- Ongoing recruitment and development opportunities – built-in
  - Range of roles for youth to grow into/shape
  - “Near-peer” mentors



# Current OPA Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs)

- Optimally Changing the Map of Teen Pregnancy through Replication of Programs Proven Effective (Tier 1) (AH-TP1-20-001)
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention (Tier 2) - Phase II Rigorous Evaluation of Promising Interventions (AH-TP2-20-001)
- Innovation and Impact Network Grants (Tier 2) – Achieving Optimal Health and Preventing Teen Pregnancy in Key Priority Areas (AH-TP2-20-002)

Find FOAs and FAQs at: [hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/webinars.html](https://hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/webinars.html)



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