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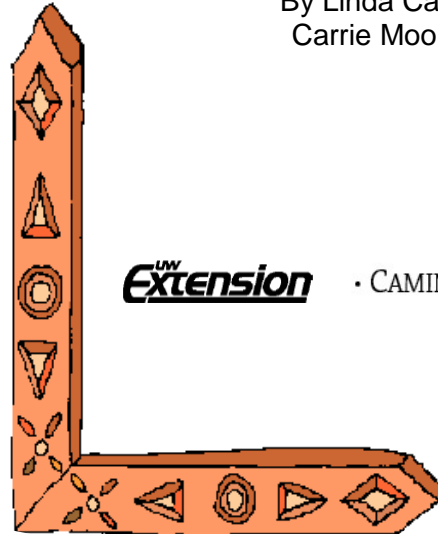
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Youth and Adult Leaders for Program Excellence

A Practical Guide for Program Assessment and Action Planning

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Extension

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The *Youth and Adult Leaders for Program Excellence: A Practical Guide for Program Assessment*, is designed to help adults and youth:

- * Strengthen the quality of youth-adult partnerships and youth voice in program decision-making, and
- * Strengthen the quality of developmental opportunities, relationships, and emotional supports offered to program participants.

Organizations can focus on some or all of these aspects of program quality, depending on their interest and need. Staff and youth can also adapt the assessment process to explore additional issues.

Youth and Adult Leaders for Program Excellence is a comprehensive resource kit for those who work with, and on the behalf of, young people and for young people themselves. It is based on youth development research and practice. The kit is designed for groups that are seeking to promote positive youth development through strategies of youth participation, youth activism, youth voice and youth-adult partnership.

Across the country, young people are taking leadership roles in policy decisions and program implementation. Success does not occur overnight, however. Programs often require assistance in assessment and reflection about how they are actively supporting and engaging youth. Also, programs are being asked to provide account-

ability to diverse stakeholders, like boards, councils, and funders. The *Youth and Adult Leaders for Program Excellence: A Practical Guide for Program Assessment and Action Planning* (the resource kit) is designed to provide that assistance. The resource kit is designed to help youth-serving organizations enhance the quality of their programs.

The methods in this resource kit are designed for staff and youth across a full range of contexts, from after-school programs, to community-based organizations, to residential settings. The tools and methods are grounded in research on youth development and are user-friendly for both youth and adults. The kit is most appropriate for programs that are actively seeking to improve their services, and which perceive youth as being key actors/partners in that process.

This resource kit guides staff and youth through five phases of assessment and program improvement:

Phase 1

Planning and preparing to conduct a program assessment

Phase 2

Collecting and compiling data

Phase 3

Analyzing and understanding the data

Phase 4

Sharing results with the group

Phase 5

Action planning and finalizing the report

The Appendix of the Resource Kit includes 4 sets of assessment tools, and templates which enable user-friendly data entry, data analyses and report writing procedures.

There are four research and practice-based assessment tools included with the resource kit. Three include both youth (ages 13-18) and adult versions. One tool is for youth ages 12 and younger. All are easy to fill out and analyze.

- **YET**, which stands for “Youth Engagement Tool,” assesses the degree to which youth have legitimate chances to be heard, respected and taken seriously during program design and implementation. It also examines the outcomes that youth derive from their participation.
- **ORG-YET**, which stands for “Organizational-Youth Engagement Tool,” assesses the extent to which youth are involved in decision-making forums and the degree to which the organization creates structures to support youth engagement over the long term. It also examines the outcomes that the program derives from youth engagement.
- **PAAT**, which stands for “Program and Activity Assessment Tool,” assesses the developmental opportunities and supports provided to youth in the program. Opportunities include the chance to explore new things, be creative, gain membership in a group, and contribute to others. Supports include nurturance, emotional safety, high expectations, standards and boundaries, and strategic support through transitions.
- **kidPAAT**, which stands for “Program and Activity Assessment Tool (for Younger Participants),” assesses similar opportunities and supports as PAAT, but in a more simplified format. We recommend using the kid-PAAT for children under the age of 12; 12-year-olds may need assistance to complete the full PAAT, but may feel they are too old for a smiley-face survey.

The key principles of *Youth and Adult Leaders for Program Excellence* are learning, reflection, and action planning using objective tools and participatory processes. Designed for youth and adults to work as partners, it provides a structured, easy-to-use strategy for organizations to conduct a rigorous assessment of their programs. Equally important, the resource kit guides organizations through the process of using the results of the assessment for program planning and improvement. And finally, the resource kit details ways that organizations can use the findings to help gain support from key constituencies, such as funders and community leaders.

Nowadays, youth development programs are being asked to provide accountability to a diverse array of stakeholders. *Youth and Adult Leaders for Program Excellence* can strongly contribute to addressing the accountability needs and expectations of various stakeholder groups. A variety of applications is possible. For example, the kit may be used for self assessment or peer review of a program. The kit is also helpful in program planning efforts and priority setting. Alternatively, the resource kit can assist in fostering productive discussion and learning among volunteers, councils, boards, or community coalitions and partnerships. Included are templates for analysis and reporting, and guidelines for youth-adult facilitation of group discussions, and action planning.