ENGAGING YOUTH

> Training Script

Engaging Youth

Purpose:

Provide participants with the purpose and benefits of youth engagement in school health work and steps for achieving authentic youth engagement.

Objectives:

1. Define youth engagement and state its benefits

2. Identify your school's current level of youth engagement and authenticity

3. Share real-life examples of youth engagement

4. Distinguish next steps for improving youth engagement

Training Materials:

Handout Packet

    Handout #1: Youth Engagement Survey

    Handout #2: Levels of Youth Engagement

    Handout #3: "Don't Say No!" Challenge

    Handout #4: Engaging Youth — Next Steps

    Handout #5: Additional Resources

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Slide #	Time	Trainer Script and Directions	Resources Needed
1	1 minute	**WELCOME** STATE: Hello and welcome to Engaging Youth. My name is _____. Take a minute to read the quote on the slide ("Nothing about us without us is for us") and turn to your neighbor and share what it means to you. This is actually a slogan used for communicating the idea that no policy should be decided by any representative without the full and direct participation of members of the group(s) affected by that policy. As educators, what we do always revolves around students. Yet, do we ever stop to ask them what they need? Do we include them in decision-making that affects them, the school, and the community? If we do include them, how authentic is it? I want you to keep those questions in mind and be open to looking at your own practices. NOTE: Participants may introduce themselves during this time if they don't know each other and if time allows. Their introduction may include their name, position, and school/district/ organization.	
2	1 minute	**AGENDA** STATE: During this module, we'll cover essential components of youth engagement and effective ways to engage youth in school health. Today, we will: • assess where your school currently stands on youth engagement • explore real-life examples of youth engagement • take a "Don't Say No" challenge	
3	1 minute	**OBJECTIVES** STATE: By the end of this module, you will be able to: • define youth engagement and state its benefits • Identify your school's current level of youth engagement and authenticity • share real-life examples of youth engagement • distinguish next steps for improving youth engagement	

Slide #	Time	Trainer Script and Directions	Resources Needed
4	1 minute	**MATERIALS** STATE: Let's review the handouts you were given in the packet. You have several handouts: #1: Youth Engagement Survey #2: Levels of Youth Engagement #3: "Don't Say No!" Challenge #4: Engaging Youth — Next Steps #5: Additional Resources We will use these throughout the training.	Handout Packet: #1: Youth Engagement Survey #2: Levels of Youth Engagement #3: "Don't Say No!" Challenge #4: Engaging Youth — Next Steps #5: Additional Resources
5	1 minute	**WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD MODEL** STATE: The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model is a unified approach to learning and health with the child or adolescent at the center. It recognizes the need for school-wide engagement as well as community support and demonstrates the interconnectedness of the education and well-being of the child. The model also puts youth at the center, and this focus establishes that youth should be recognized as full partners in this work. When given safe space and support, youth can be engaged and can be agents of change rather than simply being the targets of programs and rules.	
6	2 minutes	**WHAT IS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT?** STATE: What is youth engagement? There are a few different definitions available. Take a minute to read these three definitions. *DO: Allow a minute to read the slide.* STATE: The first definition is from a researcher, the second from a second-grader, and the third from a high-schooler. ASK: What similarities do you see between these quotes? NOTE: Allow a few participants to share. STATE: Regardless of the various definitions, the central theme is: who has the power.	

Slide #	Time	Trainer Script and Directions	Resources Needed
7	3 minutes	**WHY IS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?** STATE: So why is youth engagement important? First and foremost, youth are experts of their own experiences. They can help provide perspectives that adults may be missing. STATE: When youth are intentionally invited to participate and are invested in their school and their own health and education, they are able to gain real-world skills, confidence, and hands-on knowledge and to feel a spirit of connectedness. School staff learn from youth, build their skills and capacity to better serve youth, and usually gain a renewed energy in purpose. Schools and organizations become more effective in serving youth. Communities also send a strong message to their younger generations about their value in the community. Communities are also better able to coordinate youth services and embrace diversity, including youth. Are there any other benefits that you can think of for engaging youth? *DO: Facilitate a brief sharing of ideas.*	
No Slide. Stay on Slide7 for this activity	10 minutes	**YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SURVEY** STATE: Using Handout #1: Youth Engagement Survey, assess where your school stands on engaging youth in decision-making and programs. Let's take 3 minutes to assess. Be ready to share with the group. *DO: Give participants 2 minutes to consider their responses. Bring the group back together and ask a few of the following questions.* 1. Do you feel your score reflects the amount of youth engagement going on in your school/organization? Why or why not? 2. Did you have any trouble answering any of the questions? If yes, which ones and why? 3. For any of the statements to which you responded yes, provide an example of how the particular engagement is happening. 4. Did the survey provide you with any new ideas for youth engagement? If so, what? NOTE: After asking a question, pause to allow participants time to formulate their verbal answers and volunteer to share.	Handout #1: Youth Engagement Survey

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8	5 minutes	**AUTHENTICITY LEVELS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT** STATE: The degrees of youth engagement range from youth being used as "decoration" to youth "organizing and governing." In the survey you just took, you looked at whether or not youth are engaged in school health. Now we want to look at the level of engagement. Take a moment to think again about your survey responses and review Handout #2: Levels of Youth Engagement and determine 1. At what level of youth engagement does your school or organization currently operate for various programs and/or policies. 2. Which level will you strive to achieve if your goal is to engage youth? Put a ✔ by your school's current level of youth engagement. Then, * your goal or what level you would like your school to be with youth engagement. *DO: Allow participants to assess current levels of youth engagement.*	Handout #2: Levels of Youth Engagement
9	8 minutes	**PROCESSING** STATE: Okay, let's divide into groups based on your current school's level and discuss the following: • why did you select your level? What specific examples of youth engagement can you share that support the level? • what level do you aspire to? What steps would you take to get there? STATE: Thank you for sharing. Hopefully you heard of some different youth engagement activities that others are using.	
10	1 minute	**EQUITY** STATE: As we look at authentic opportunities for engaging youth, we must also consider equity. But what do we mean by equity? Equity means providing people with fair opportunities to attain their full potential. On this slide, you can see two examples of equity — all people have what they need to be successful. In youth engagement, equity means fair and inclusion. It means removing barriers that limit youth who want to join, participate, and/or lead. It means ensuring that typically silenced youth voices will be heard and included.	

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11	1 minute	**WHAT WORKS: EFFECTIVELY ENGAGING YOUTH IN SCHOOL HEALTH WORK** STATE: When thinking about equity, it is important to realize that youth of ALL ages can be engaged in school health work. Kids are brilliant; they are the experts in their lived experiences. So as adults, we need to take time to ask, listen, provide support, help identify resources, and advocate for and with them. In Cherokee County School District in South Carolina, students of all ages are engaged in school health efforts through a project called Fit2gether. Students are empowered to take the lead in building a culture of health in their school and communities. In the next few slides, we will explore how this district has engaged youth from all school levels in school health efforts. In these examples, you will see that the students had a voice in what their school needed or what they perceived as gaps. You will also see that the needs were not the same across the schools.	
12	1 minute	At the elementary level (K–5) . . . • Blacksburg Primary Change Agents (K–2) created the "Healthy Cats" Market, based on their school health mascot to provide healthy snacks and more fruits and veggies outside of the cafeteria. They used the funds for other health/wellness initiatives. • Limestone Central Elementary and Northwest Elementary advocated for more recess to help academics and behavior. • B.D. Lee Elementary designed and advocated for a morning exercise program called B.D. Lee KickStart.	
13	1 minute	At the middle school level . . . • Gaffney Middle chose equipment for students to use at recess to be more active. • Ewing Middle piloted a school garden initiative. • Blacksburg Middle made physical activity in the classroom a priority.	
14	1 minute	At the high school level . . . • the FIT2gether district-wide project was actually the brainchild of Gaffney High anatomy students in response to a discussion about racial and economic disparities in local childhood obesity data in 2013. • Gaffney High and Institute for Innovation students will have a healthy store available to students and staff. • Blacksburg High students partnered with Food Services to overhaul the lunch menu.	

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15	5 minutes	STATE: So how was the work in the Cherokee County School District so successful? They employed a number of strategies. #1 Inclusion — Ensuring the voice or perspective of all groups of students is heard. This means engaging the disengaged. Each school has students who are not invited to be in clubs, may not perform well academically, have chronic discipline or attendance issues, and/or just don't like school. These are often the students whose voices we do not hear and whose voices are important. Students bring many different experiences and barriers to health and learning. That is why it is important to make space for all perspectives. #2 Validation — Another important strategy is making the experiences safe — assuring students know that their feelings and ideas are valid and needed. Giving students official titles, letting them determine how meetings or gatherings are run, giving students credit for their contributions, and showing them how their contributions benefit the school are all examples of validation. #3 Participation — Engaging students in real work and decision-making is important, but it is also important to make the work fun and challenging. In Cherokee County, students participate in the School Health Index assessment, a comprehensive assessment of school health policy and practices. This leads to a more relevant and accurate representation of the school since students are the greatest stakeholders. Scaffolding reading levels, or partnering youth with adults on an assessment like the School Health Index may be necessary if working with younger students. Students are also members of the school health team or committee. #4 Training — Students and adults often need guidance on how to work together. Students need guidance on how to work with adults whom they typically see as authority or power figures. Adults need guidance on facilitating not leading. Establishing a clear set of guidelines and expectations for working together is important to do from the beginning. Creating a safe space for youth to share is critical for accurate and honest representation and contributions. This is vital in building trust between youth and adults. It is also vital for adults to really listen and support youth ideas. #5 Connecting — Connecting the school health work to classroom learning is also an effective strategy. #6 Recognition – Celebrate and recognize students' contributions and achievements. Promote their work to the community to build awareness of youth power, potential, and credibility. These are elements of success that you need to consider when engaging youth.	

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16	10 minutes	**"DON'T SAY NO!" CHALLENGE ACTIVITY:** STATE: When working with youth, the quickest way to break trust is to shut down their ideas. Turn to Handout #3 — "Don't Say No!" Challenge. These are real ideas presented by students in response to data from their school needs assessments. For this activity, read each scenario. The challenge is to formulate a response to the student's idea without telling the student "no." Take 5 minutes to complete the handout in guiding students to scale their ideas without losing the focus of their ideas. After 5 minutes, we will share. *DO: Give participants 5 minutes to complete the handout.* STATE: Let's see what you came up with. *DO: Have a volunteer read the scenario and tell how they would respond. Continue through all three scenarios, if time allows.*	Handout #3: "Don't Say No!" Challenge
17	5 minutes	**REVIEW and NEXT STEPS** STATE: We covered several components you can incorporate into effectively engaging youth: • what youth engagement is and why it is important • levels of youth engagement and authenticity • real-life examples • strategies for success • next steps STATE: Turn to Handout #4: Engaging Youth — Next Steps and answer the three questions. Be prepared to share your ideas in 3 minutes.	Handout #4: Engaging Youth – Next Steps
18	1 minute	**THANK YOU** STATE: Thank you for sharing! I know your most important stakeholders — your students — can transform policy and practice and be active participants in their education and communities! Be sure to check out Handout #5 with some additional resources you may find helpful as you continue your youth engagement work. My contact information is listed on this last slide should you have any questions. Please complete the training evaluation. Thank you!	Handout #5: Additional Resources

TIME RECOMMENDATIONS:
It is not recommended that this module be shortened.

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