



Promoting Positive Youth Development in Your State

Resources and Ideas for State Adolescent Health Coordinators, June 2021

Introduction

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an essential philosophy and approach to policies and programs that serve young people predicated on the understanding that all young people need support, guidance, and opportunities during adolescence, a time of rapid growth and change.ⁱ Research and practice shows young people need the following to be healthy and thrive:ⁱⁱ

1. Relationships with caring adults
2. Supportive relationships with parents/caregivers
3. Supportive peer network
4. Positive connections to school
5. Supportive communities
6. Opportunities to experiment in healthy ways
7. Opportunities to participate, give back, belong
8. Opportunities to find and explore their “spark.”

Over the past few decades, research on PYD has expanded greatly and there are numerous commonly cited and used resources and guidance documents on PYD, including Healthy People 2020 which identifies

PYD as a major approach for adolescent health interventions, describing it as “the intentional process of providing all youth with the support, relationships, experiences, resources, and opportunities needed to become successful and competent adults.”ⁱⁱⁱ

What does promoting PYD look like at the state level?

“Operationalizing” PYD can be challenging, especially for state level agencies as PYD is often thought of as a community level idea that engages youth directly. However, there are examples of and resources for state directed initiatives to promote and infuse a PYD approach into adolescent focused initiatives. This brief overview reflects examples informed by a series of regional discussions with State Adolescent Health Coordinators (SAHCs), hosted by the National Network of State Adolescent Health Coordinators (NNSAHC). A companion compilation of ideas and resources is housed in a shareable Google Drive to help SAHCs and other state level staff focused on adolescent health conceptualize what PYD means to them (in their state, in their programs) and how a PYD approach can inform their work.

Strategy Ideas	Related Resources in the PYD Google Drive :
<p>Train people who work with or make decisions about youth (e.g. state agency colleagues, your grantees) on adolescent development, the importance of building strong relationship with youth, how to listen to youth and engaging youth in meaningful ways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PYD 101 Curriculum for Youth Working Professionals, ACT for Youth ▪ How to be an adult ally for youth engagement ▪ Top 12 things to DO when working with youth and young adults (tips for adult employees working with youth advisors at state agency level)
<p>Connect programs that work directly with young people (partner programs, grantee programs) with resources and ideas for supporting strong bonds between youth and caring adults. Young people need healthy relationships with a circle of caring, supportive, responsible adults (including parents, family members, teachers and other adults) who listen, provide high expectations, support and guidance, and provide positive role models.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relationships that Matter: 5 Keys to Helping Your Child Succeed (A Family Engagement Program from the Search Institute – English and Spanish) ▪ CDC School Connectedness fact sheets (for administrators, teachers and parents; school staff development guide and PowerPoint presentations) ▪ Youth-adult partnership training manuals and guides
<p>Encourage opportunities for youth to be engaged in their own health decisions, such as encouraging health literacy curricula and programs among programs and grantees that work directly with youth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health Memes Created by Young People (New Mexico) ▪ New Mexico Youth Health Literacy Toolkit

Strategy Ideas	Related Resources in the PYD Google Drive :
<p>Provide opportunities for meaningful youth participation state agency level programming. <i>Through these opportunities youth learn valuable skills, develop a sense of mastery, and gain validation that they belong and can make a difference. And state agencies benefit from youth voice to direct programming directed toward youth.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 8 steps for engaging youth in health promotion projects ▪ Youth Participatory Action Research curriculum ▪ Youth Alliance for Healthy Alaska ▪ How to Hire a Youth Advisor (Colorado)
<p>Establish dedicated days, weeks or other opportunities to promote PYD among partners and grantees, other state stakeholders (including applying a PYD lens to existing adolescent health observances, working with organizations with strong PYD foundations such as 4-H to capitalize on their local initiatives and campaigns).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International Adolescent Health Week (March) toolkits and examples ▪ State and local level proclamations ▪ Minnesota Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month Toolkit ▪ Florida Global Teen Health Week – state level staff activities examples ▪ National Peer Helpers Appreciation Week Toolkit ▪ A Checklist for Putting PYD Characteristics into Action in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs ▪ 4 H Day at the Capitol (Virginia)

The accompanying Google Drive of resources is outlined for easy navigation, and includes:

Research & Frameworks: Commonly cited and used research and guidance documents on PYD such as the 40 Developmental Assets, the 5 C’s and the Fundamental Requirements of Healthy Youth Development.

Youth & Health Observances: Resources related to adolescent health observances, applying a PYD Lens to teen pregnancy prevention, the Minnesota Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month Toolkit and examples of observing Teen Health Week from Florida.

Toolkits & Guidance: Youth Advisors, Councils and Leadership tools, resources and examples for specific populations, schools/education, youth peer educators, tips and guides for adults on partnerships with youth, tools for communities and organizations, and examples state PYD frameworks from AK and CO.

Downloadable samples of:

- Proclamations & Legislation examples
- Posters & Handouts examples
- Health Memes created by youth (NM)
- PYD related Activities/Icebreakers

[Click here](#) to access the Promoting PYD Google Drive.

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ⁱ A Conceptual Framework for Adolescent Health (2005) A Collaborative Project of the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs and the National Network of State Adolescent Health Coordinators, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Washington, DC.

ⁱⁱ Adapted by the State Adolescent Health Resource Center at the University of Minnesota, from Konopka, G. Requirements for healthy development of adolescent youth, *Adolescence* 8(31), 2-25, 1973.

ⁱⁱⁱ Healthy People 2020 – Adolescent Health, accessed at: <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Adolescent-Health>

