Indicator Framework

8 Qualities to Promote Youth Engagement

Program Indicators	Benchmark 1: Unfreezing	Benchmark 2: Catalyzing	Benchmark 3: Internalizing	Benchmark 4: Institutionalizing
Physical and psychological safety	Discussions about safety are informal and take place as the need arises. Conditions, situations, locations and processes that may be threatening, alienating or unsafe for youth are identified.	Processes and practices for improving safety are shared with stakeholders (e.g. community building, group guidelines, safe transportation, etc.). Youth help to identify what makes them feel safe.	Youth and adults set and routinely revisit shared group guidelines and values. Youth and adults are positive role models and have supportive youth-adult relationships.	Safety policies include procedures, processes and practices that address safety for all youth. Mechanisms for youth to provide feedback are available. Regular evaluations include assessments of young people's perceptions of safety.
Appropriate structure	Existing structure is informally assessed for flexibility and responsiveness. For example, staff reflect and evaluate programming to see if it is meeting all participant's needs.	Activities are intentionally linked to shared objectives and principles, and are flexible to change.	Stakeholders routinely implement a balance of flexible structured and less-structured components in their practice that are responsive to youth (e.g. developmentally and culturally appropriate activities).	Formal and informal structures (e.g. inquiry processes, regular times/spaces for less-structured socializing) are embedded into programs and initiatives.
Supportive relationships	Stakeholders are aware of the benefits of reciprocity, caring and support in youth-adult relationships.	Adult role models demonstrate caring and supportive relationships with youth.	Adults routinely demonstrate their support and caring for young people on a regular basis.	Regular monitoring is conducted to ensure that each young person is connected to at least one caring adult.
Opportunities to belong	Stakeholders are aware of social or systemic factors that affect youth belonging (e.g. class, gender, age, race etc.).	Stakeholders have opportunities to develop cultural competencies and practices that are inclusive. For example, discussions, workshops, or experiences that explore diversity and different perspectives.	Stakeholders routinely incorporate meaningful roles, community building, physical representations of diversity, and appreciation for contributions. For example, name games at the beginning of class/workshops; visual images of diverse ethnicities/cultures/subcultures; activities that draw on different strengths.	Diversity is embedded as a value in organizational policy. Programs are monitored regularly to prevent or address barriers to inclusion.

Positive social norms	Stakeholders are reflective about social norms in their context.	Stakeholders identify their shared values to use as the basis for social norms.	Stakeholders hold one another accountable for maintaining positive social norms. Stakeholders take positive risks and routinely revisit shared guidelines and expectations.	Positive social norms are embedded in policy and communication. For example, positive social norms are part of the organization's image/brand
Support for efficacy and mattering	Stakeholders are aware of examples of youth contributing meaningfully to their communities.	Youth have opportunities to build capacity to achieve their goals.	Youth-driven goals and youth voice are routinely prioritized.	Mechanisms to respond to youth voice are developed. They are implemented in a timely fashion.
Opportunities for skill building	Stakeholders recognize the value of life-skills such as teamwork, problem solving and communication skills.	Youth and adults identify and acknowledge skills they are learning informally.	Stakeholders have regular informal and formal opportunities to learn new skills in diverse, accessible ways.	Skill-building opportunities are financially accessible.
Integration of family, school and community efforts	Stakeholders are aware of the many contexts that are important in the lives of youth.	"Champions" communicate about youth engagement and contribution with organizational and community partners.	There are regular opportunities for stakeholders (e.g. family, school and community) to connect. Young people have opportunities to extend their engagement and contribute to other contexts/organizations.	School-community partnerships are formalized. There are ongoing shared projects/programs; community presence within schools, and policy that enables these different spheres to collaborate.