Three Semester Hours of University Credit are Available

Syllabus is online at **www.ReclaimingYouth.org/grad-credit**

Pathway to Purpose

Group Dynamics

Peer Helping Groups

Larry Brendtro
Beate Kreisle

PPC

Positive Peer Culture

Building Strengths in Youth

Total Teamwork

Ensuring Fidelity

Action Research

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Chapter 1
Pathway to Purpose

Positive Peer Culture in Action
Immigrant Youth in Europe
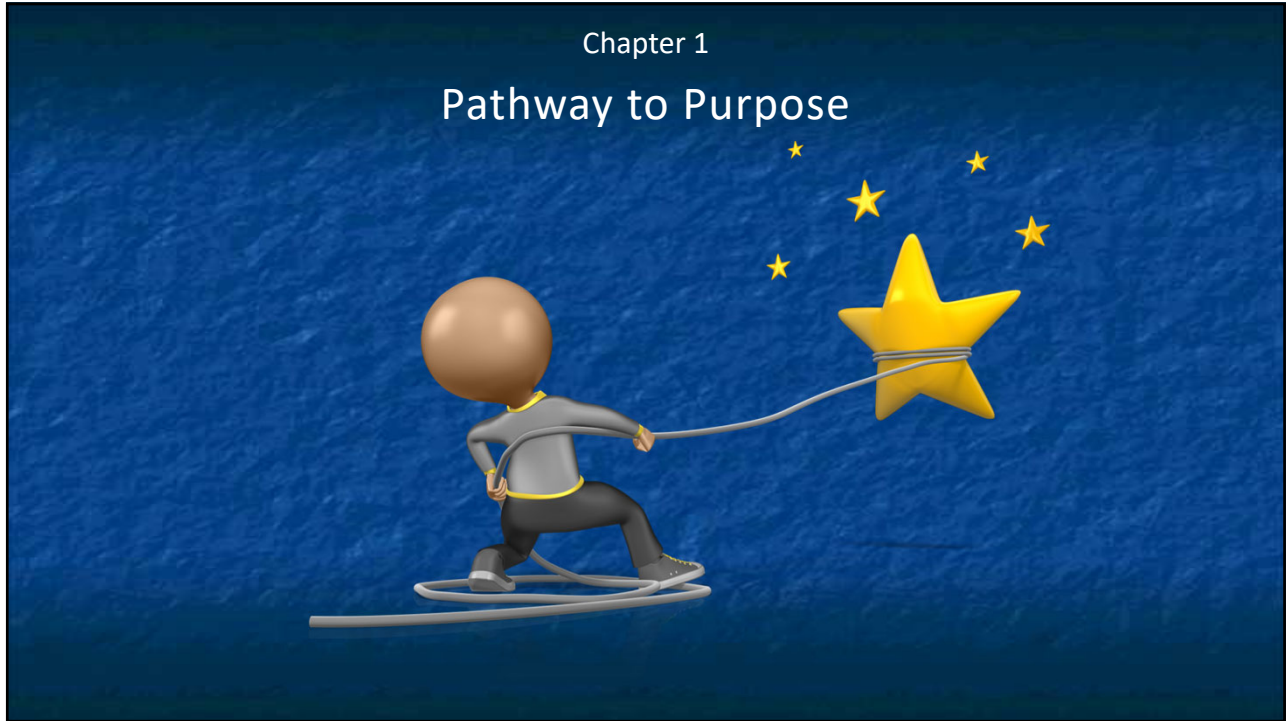
VOICES OF YOUTH

Positive Peer Culture Groups in Adelsheim, Germany

We treat each other with respect.

We help others if they have problems.

We reject all physical or psychological violence.

Violence includes humiliation and depreciation of the other person.

When we engage in violence, we want to make the other "small" and ourselves superior.

That stands in bold contrast to showing respect to one another.

YOUTH REFUGEES IN ADELSHEIM

We used to have fights every day, but now we never fight—we have learned to treat one another as human beings.

Youth in PPC Group

Many staff used to call in sick because of all the stress of this job—but now we enjoy coming to work.

Youth Supervisor

The Circle of Courage: Positive Peer Culture Goals
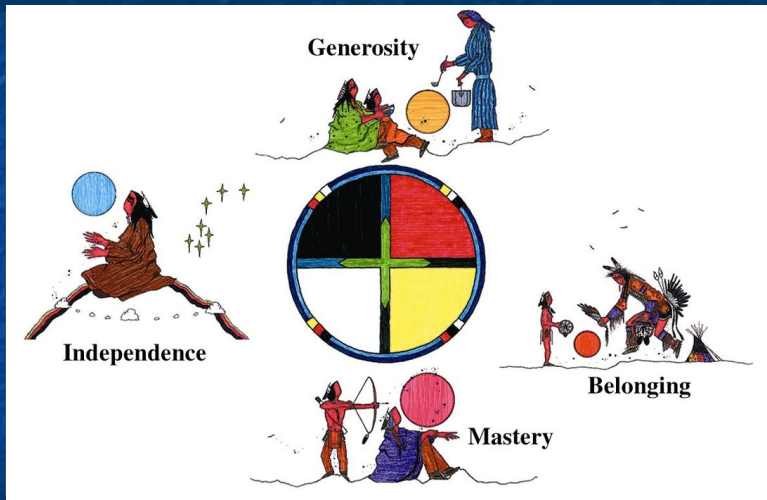
GEORGE BLUEBIRD
Lakota Artist

Belonging

We feel safe when connected with family, friends, our community, and nature.

Mastery

We gain skills to solve challenging problems and discover hidden talents.

Independence

Self-control and making responsible decisions build futures of promise.

Generosity

By showing care and concern for others we develop self-worth and purpose in life.

Mending Broken Circles

Most problems are attempts to satisfy deep, biologically-based needs.

To heal and grow, the focus should be on meeting these needs.

ABRAHAM MASLOW

BELONGING

Need Met	Need Unmet	Need Distorted
Trust Cooperation	Mistrust Conflict	Overly Familiar Gang Involvement

MASTERY

Need Met	Need Unmet	Need Distorted
Talent Social Skills	School Difficulty Social Difficulty	Manipulative Overly Friendly

INDEPENDENCE

Need Met	Need Unmet	Need Distorted
Self-Control Self-Confidence	Lacks Self-Control Lacks Self-Confidence	Inhibited Fronting

GENEROSITY

Need Met	Need Unmet	Need Distorted
Caring Respect	Self-Centered Disrespect	Self-Sacrifice Subjugation

Positive Peer Culture Principles

The Power of Peers

B
E
L
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N
G
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N
G

Strengths of Families

BELONGING

Relationships of Trust

BELONGING

Engaged in Learning

MASTERY

Problems as Opportunity

MASTERY

Overcoming Adversity

INDEPENDENCE

Positive Leadership

INDEPENDENCE

Service Learning

GENEROSITY

From Rules to Respect

GENEROSITY

Lives with Purpose

GENEROSITY

Chapter 2

Group Dynamics

The Power of Peers   Problems and Strengths

The Power of Peers

How many things which for our own sake would we never do, do we perform for the sake of our friends.

MARCUS CICERO

Changing Cultures

We are culturally taught how to see, look, and act. Changing these requires changing the culture.

KURT LEWIN

Cultures of Respect

Belonging—building trust

Mastery—cooperating to learn

Independence—sharing power

Generosity—showing concern

Cultures of Conflict

Exclusion—isolated and lonely

Superiority—winners and losers

Intimidation— mean and bullying

Selfishness — greedy and uncaring

Peer Relationships in Indigenous Cultures

I was taught that when I was the oldest in a group of children, it was my responsibility to protect and care for those younger than me.

MARTIN BROKENLEG

Peer Relationships in Western Cultures

I would be ashamed to be less vicious than they as they bragged of their beastly wickedness . . .

We delighted in doing ill, not only for the pleasure of the act, but even for a desire of praise.

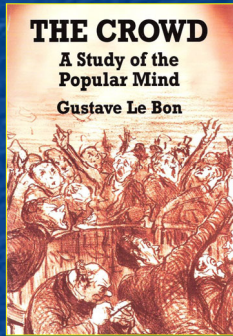CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE
circa 400 AD

Group delinquency is common in contemporary societies.

A large majority of male teens self-report committing delinquent acts.

MARTIN GOLD

Danger in Groups

The reasoning brain shuts down and the brainstem takes over.

Safety in Groups

In human evolution, survival has depended on acceptance in a group.

Dan McAdams

The Prosocial Gang offers camaraderie, pride, identity, support, excitement—normal adolescent goals.

ARNOLD GOLDSTEIN & BARRY GLICK

The Antisocial Gang also can meet needs:

Safety and Belonging
Economic Achievement
Power and Thrills
Loyalty to Friends

GREGORY ACEVEDO

Group Contagion
Joining in a group triggers genetic brain instructions
to surrender self-control to the call of the crowd.

Mirror Neurons
The brain equips us to model the behavior of others.
It is wired to make imitating those in our group rewarding.

Developing Teen Brains

Teens crave excitement but have not fully developed the capacity to weigh risks until the mid-twenties.

All stable cultures use adults and responsible peers to offset the impulsiveness of groups of teens.

For example, the US Army uses TEAMS of four—three junior soldiers and a mature non-commissioned officer.

Youth in traditional cultures never spent more than 10% of their time with same-age peers. But many youth today are socialized by their peers.
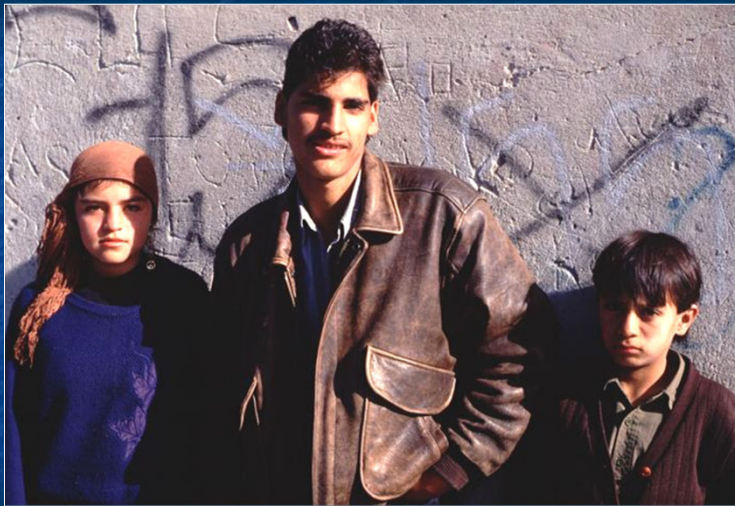
Peers Replace Elders

The loss of parents and adults in the lives of children is filled by an age-segregated peer group.

The need for belonging is at the whim of peers.

URIE BRONFENBRENNER

Voices of Youth

My Street Family

I like hanging out with others who are like me. I don't feel like an X-File. They always accept you for who you are. I had a tight little group and that became my family, something I never had.

Becky
Australian homeless youth

Simone Glasson

Negative Countercultures

COTTAGE SIX
The Social System of Delinquent Boys in Residential Treatment
HOWARD W. POLSKY

1962
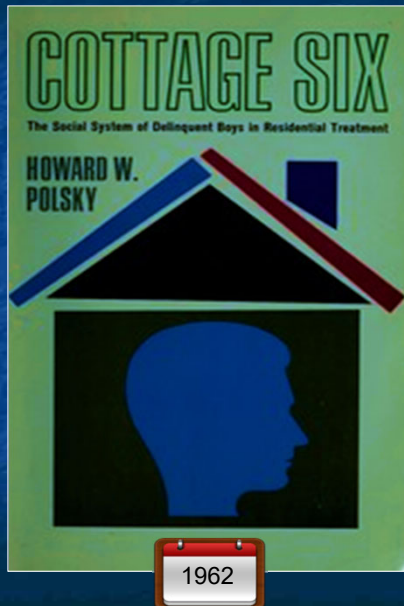
Polsky's Diamond:
A Culture of Violence

leaders
lieutenants
members
status seekers
scapegoats

Polsky's Solution:
A Culture of Respect

21
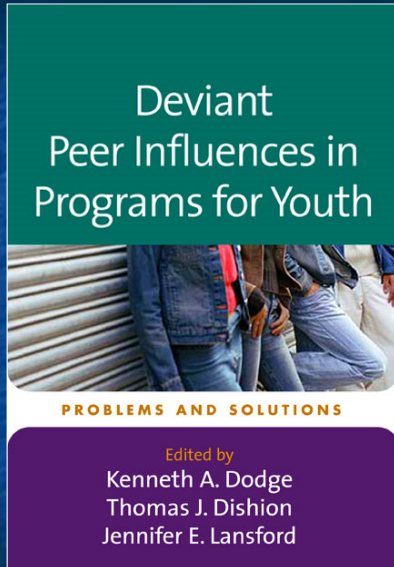
The authors argue that putting *"deviant"* youth together in school or treatment groups will result in *peer deviancy training*.
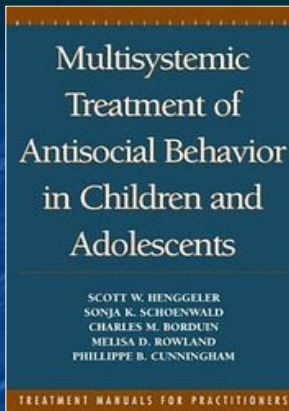
The Peer Deviancy Debates
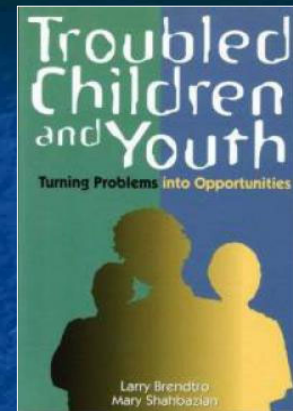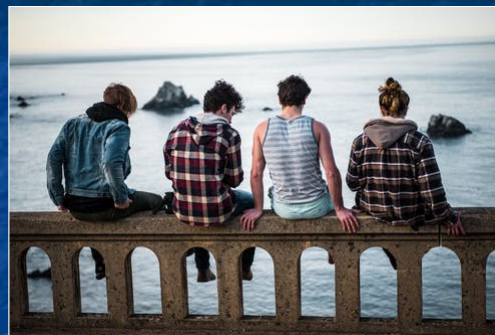
Peer Deviancy Mindset
It seems unreasonable to expect a group of youth with behavioral problems will somehow generate prosocial values and group norms.

Peer Strengths Mindset
With skilled guidance, youth can generate prosocial values and group norms. This requires viewing youth as resources instead of adversaries.

Peer Deviancy Training?   Or Elder Deficit Disorder

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Are Group Programs with Youth at Risk Harmful?

Researcher Joan McCord believed peer groups had "iatrogenic" effects.
After observing peer helping at Starr Commonwealth, she changed that view.

Joan McCord in Dialogue with Youth

Dr. McCord: So many teenagers I talk to say groups are harmful. It is clear that you people are all saying being in a group is helping you.

Youth: I think it is beneficial to be around teenagers with similar issues. I am more willing to listen because it is from someone my own age.

Youth: There are a lot of challenges if people are disrespectful. If you can overcome them here, it is a lot easier to overcome them in the community.

Youth: The group setting is so helpful because it teaches you to show empathy toward everybody.

JOAN MCCORD

YOUTH IN PPC GROUPS

The critical difference in peer group climates:

Peer Coercion
Groups ridicule, punish, and exclude unpopular youth.

Peer Concern
Youth help one another in a culture off respect.

VOICES OF YOUTH
Peer Pressure or Peer Respect

A lot of people really don't have the best mindset when they first come, maybe because they weren't taught respect. They are in a new place and don't know what to do.

They feel all alone and think they need to try to get relationships by giving in to peer pressure. In my group, we try not to have peer pressure. Respect is where everybody's mind is at.

Early 20th Century Experiments in Youth Self-Governance

Reformers organized schools as simulated small democracies.

Youth Republics

Commonwealths

Children's Villages

Boys and Girls Towns

A History of the Boys and Girls Republic

For the Good of the CHILDREN

GAY PITMAN ZIEGER
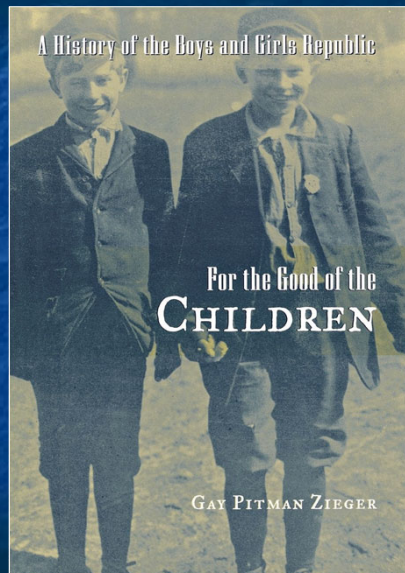
Young people were given the power to discipline their peers.

Youth elected leaders.

A legislature passed laws.

Violators were tried in courts.

Peers imposed punishments.

The Failure of Self-Governance

Over time, most programs became disorganized and punitive.
When charismatic founders departed, self-governance failed.

CLARA LIEPMANN, 1928

The Science of Group Dynamics
KURT LEWIN, 1938

Autocratic Leadership
Conflict and bullying 30 times greater

Democratic Leadership
Friendly, cooperative, productive

Permissive Leadership
Chaotic, unproductive groups

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From Self-Governance to Shared Responsibility

A.S. Neil's permissive Summerhill School

Early reformers abandoned adult authority and put pupils in power.

Most pseudo democracies led to anarchy or the tyranny of peers.

Self-governance systems were replaced by *shared responsibility*.

DAVID WILLS,
The Barns Experiment, 1945

The Reclaiming Youth Movement

1951
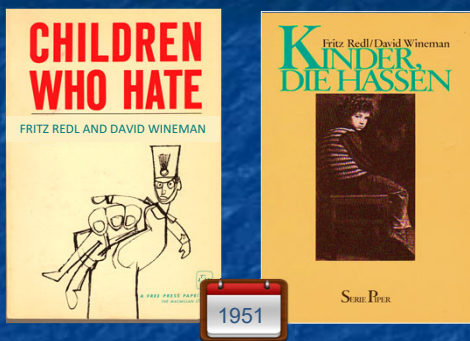
Fritz Redl and David Wineman developed therapeutic group milieus serving troubled and traumatized children and youth.

Across three decades, the University of Michigan Fresh Air Camp prepared hundreds of professionals in life-space methods for reclaiming youth at risk.

1958

The Highfields Story
Lloyd W. McCorkle, Albert Elias and F. Lovell Bixby
A unique experiment in the treatment of juvenile delinquents

YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS AT HIGHFIELDS
I. Ashley Weeks
An Evaluation of the Effects of the Short-Term Treatment of Delinquent Boys

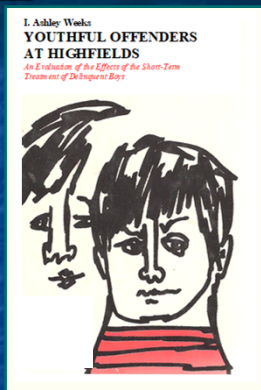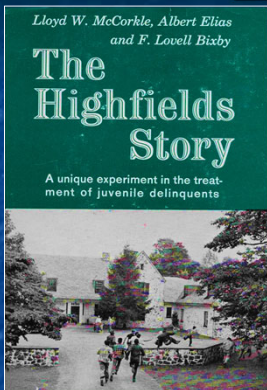Aviator Charles Lindbergh's child was kidnapped and murdered. The family donated their mansion, Highfields, for use as a children's home.

Peer group treatment research at Highfields in New Jersey sparked widespread interest in the Guided Group Interaction (GGI) approach.

HARRY VORRATH was a graduate intern at Highfields and started **Positive Peer Culture** programs for troubled youth in several states.
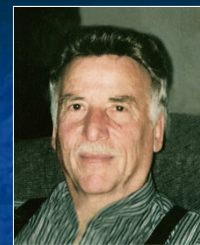
Creating Positive Peer Groups

LARRY BRENDTRO was on the University of Michigan Fresh Air Camp staff and brought these strength-based methods to Starr Commonwealth.

Vorrath and Brendtro authored *Positive Peer Culture* at Starr Commonwealth.
Starr became a laboratory for research on reclaiming youth at risk.

Building Positive Peer Cultures

Youth have powerful influence on one another and can be enlisted in peer helping.

Problems and Strengths

All problem solving starts with "felt difficulty."
We only think when confronting problems.

JOHN DEWEY

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Problem-Solving Vocabulary

Problems	Strengths
BELONGING	BELONGING
1. Mistrust	Trust
2. Conflict	Cooperation
MASTERY	MASTERY
3. School Difficulty	Talent
4. Social Difficulty	Social Skills
INDEPENDENCE	INDEPENDENCE
5. Lacks Self-Control	Self-Control
6. Lacks Self-Confidence	Self-Confidence
GENEROSITY	GENEROSITY
7. Self-Centered	Caring
8. Disrespect	Respect

BELONGING

Mistrust

- Few close bonds with adults or peers
- Is mistreated, bullied, or excluded
- Feels unsafe and relationship-wary

Conflict

- Hassles with authority, adults, or peers
- Hostility to persons seen as different
- Belongs to a negative gang or group

MASTERY

School Difficulty

- Fears failure in school or work
- Gives up when facing difficult challenges
- Not motivated to engage in learning

Social Difficulty

- Lacks skills for building relationships
- Seeks attention in inappropriate ways
- Behavior irritates or aggravates others

INDEPENDENCE

Lacks Self-Control

- Easily angered, upset, or discouraged
- Feels anxious, fearful, or helpless
- Acts impulsively without thinking

Lacks Self-Confidence

- Is easily misled or manipulated
- Feels powerless and acts helpless
- Lacks maturity and responsibility

GENEROSITY
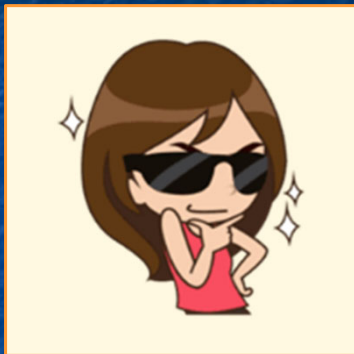
Self-Centered

- Selfish and lacks empathy for others
- Little concern for persons in need
- Acts superior and uses put-downs

Disrespect

- Inconsiderate of self or others
- Mistreats, bullies, or excludes others
- Uses power to hurt or mislead others

Keep Problem Solving Positive

Avoid expanding or stigmatizing this list with more problem labels.
Even serious problems can be discussed as examples of *Disrespect*:
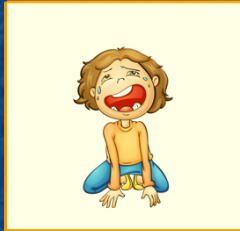
Disrespect of Self

Examples:
• Self-Harm
• Substance Abuse

Disrespect of Others

Examples:
• Acts of Racism
• Criminal Offenses

Demeaning Labels Assault Self Worth

Professional Deficit Labels

Deviant
Disabled
Deprived
Disturbed
Disruptive
Disordered
Disobedient
Disrespectful
Dysfunctional

VOICES OF YOUTH
I Don't Have Problems
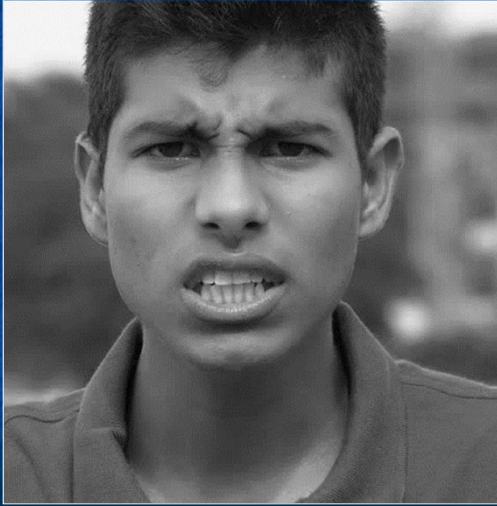
I knew I wasn't going to like it. I don't give a shit about problems. I didn't have any problems. I never heard of problems before. I didn't even know what a problem was.

I wasn't going to say anything in meetings. I was just going to sit there and do my time.

New student at Highfields
(McCorkle, Elias, & Bixby, 1958)

Thinking Clearly

PPC goes beyond problems to explore thinking and goals.

John Gibbs developed BAMMS, an easily understood vocabulary of common "thinking errors."

BAMMS is now widely used in PPC peer-helping groups.

BAMMS Thinking Errors
False Beliefs about Self and Others

Blaming
Self: It's all my fault.
Others: Teachers aren't fair.

Assuming the worst
Self: I will probably fail.
Others: I don't trust anyone.

Minimizing
Self: I'm not very smart.
Others: So I slapped her face.

Mislabeling
Self: I am such a *weirdo*.
Others: He is such a *wuss.*

Self-centered
Self: If I want it, I take it.
Others: Why should I help?

ALBERT BANDURA

Moral Disengagement
How People Do Harm and Live with Themselves
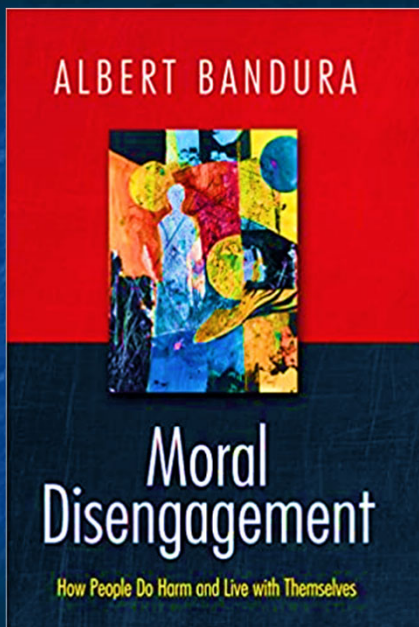
Those who hurt others *silence conscience*.

- *Blaming the victim* overrides empathy.
- *Dehumanizing labels* also block empathy.
- *The bystander effect* in a group can reduce responsibility to help a person in distress.

The Moral Development Ladder
John Gibbs

RESPECT

Just and caring
Shows concern, helps others, sticks to values

COOPERATION

Let's get along
Usually fair, seeks to please, can be misled

DEALS

What's in it for me?
Self-centered, shallow, needs external controls

POWER

Might makes right
Lacks empathy, hurts others, has little guilt

Adapting Interventions to Meet Individual Needs

The same warmth that wins one lad repels his brother.
Gordon Allport
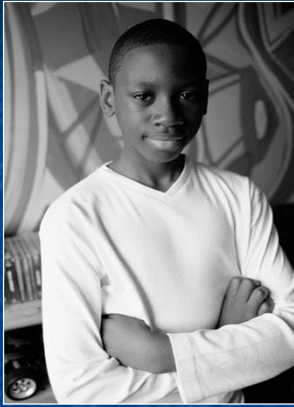
Troubling or Troubled?

Highfields built close bonds between staff and residents. This led to positive changes with two types of youth.

RICHARD JENKINS
1958
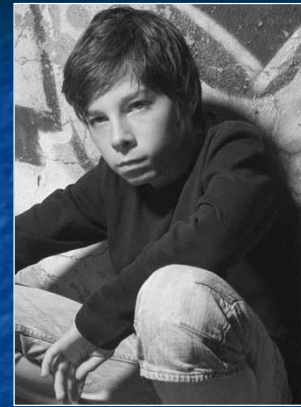
Adaptive Delinquency
These youth belong to antisocial groups. Peer helping builds positive values and behavior.

Maladaptive Delinquency
Youth have deep emotional wounds. Warm relationships reduced frustration and helped heal their trauma.

Michigan researchers labeled these two dimensions *Buoyant* and *Beset*.
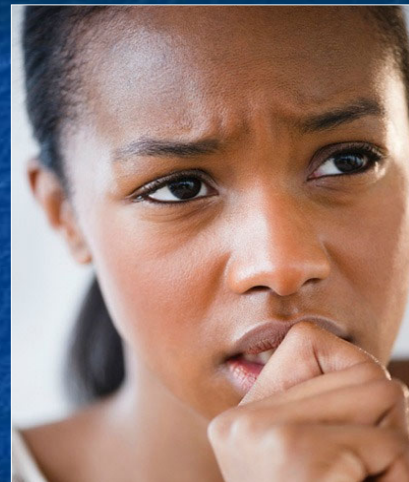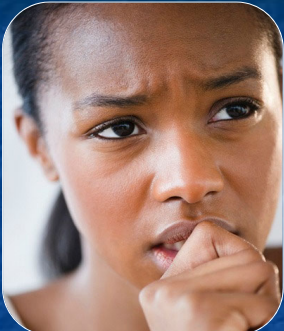
Buoyant

Beset

Buoyant

resilient
socialized

Beset

traumatized
distrustful

Buoyant youth can thrive in peer groups.

Beset youth also need caring adult bonds.

Positive peer groups help buoyant youth to abandon antisocial values.

Trauma-wise adults and peers help beset youth to become resilient.

Four Personality Dimensions

Buoyant
Socialized with Antisocial Peers

Beset
Traumatized and Distressed

Belligerent
Unsocialized Aggression

Immature
Lags in Social Development

Can you recall examples of these patterns in youth have known?

Differential Treatment

Buoyant: Socialized

Shows resilience and social skills. Seeks to belong in an antisocial peer group. *Needs positive role models and opportunities to build a prosocial identity.*

Belligerent: Unsocialized

Shallow relationships and limited empathy. Thinking errors silence conscience. *Needs both love and limits to develop prosocial values, thinking, and behavior.*

Beset: Traumatized

Disturbed, depressed, acts out. Distrusting of both peers and adults. *Needs bonds with adults and friends who show care and concern.*

Immature: Unskilled

Lags in social skills, attention, and language or cognitive development. *Needs targeted learning experiences to develop strengths and abilities.*

The Great Beer Heist
Who's Who?

Nicholas led the robbery and fled through a car wash

Nicky was caught but fought police when arrested.

Andy stayed in the car but turned self in to the police.

Buoyant
Connected to antisocial peers

Beset
Traumatized and distressed

Belligerent
Unsocialized aggression

Responding to Differences in Temperament

Jay Belsky

Low reactive youth are insulated from effects of stressful environments.

High reactive youth respond very poorly in stressful environments.

But with good caregiving, high reactive kids actually have superior outcomes.
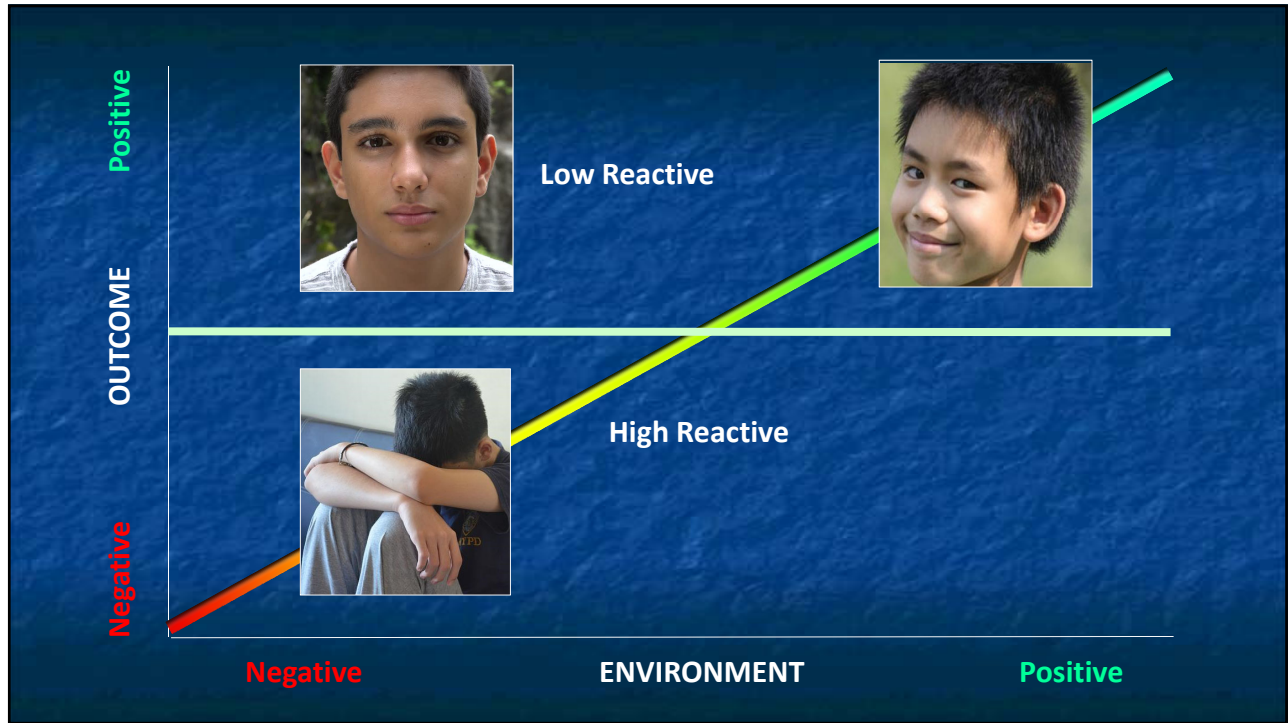
Reclaiming Challenging Youth

The effective program is distinguished not so much by the outcomes with the more favorable cases but with less favorable ones.

RICHARD JENKINS

Positive Peer Culture is specifically designed for challenging youth and embraces those excluded from other approaches.

MASSUD HOGHUGHI

Chapter 3
Peer Helping Groups
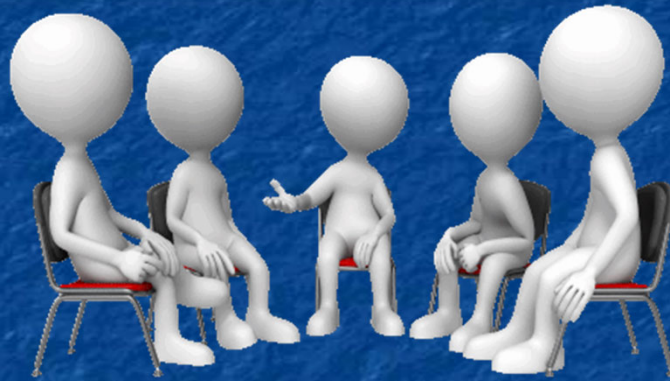
The Helping Circle   95   *Positive Cultures*

The Helping Circle

He drew a circle that shut me out —
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

EDWIN MARKHAM

VOICES OF YOUTH

People used to say, *that boy's bad*. As I thought about it, I can't be too bad because others are always trying to help me.

So I began to express myself and found out it feels a lot better to be open and honest. If you're not helping, you're hurting.

Antidotes to Alienation

Involve adults directly in the life space of youth rather than let peer groups dominate development.

Involve youth in finding solutions to problems rather than growing up without contributing to others.

URIE BRONFENBRENNER
Making Human Beings Human

VOICES OF YOUTH
One of my staff told me that helping is not an incident, it's a lifestyle.

Universality: You are not alone.

Welcome to the human race – there is no human deed
or thought that is fully outside the experience of other people.

IRVIN YALOM

VOICES OF YOUTH

You're not the only person who had this issue. If you mess up, they're not jumping on your back. They tell you what's best for you and that makes me feel like being honest.

Peer conflict in *Lord of the Flies*
WILLIAM GOLDING

Chaos in Unstructured Groups

Group discussions of problems with youth can become very unpredictable and may deteriorate into conflict and resistance.

Positive Peer Culture Groups

We have needed a group process which is relevant to professional and lay worker alike. It must be explicit so that all can understand. It must involve the youth themselves.

WILLIAM C. MORSE

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Agenda for Peer-Helping Meetings

Ritual and order give safety.

NICHOLAS HOBBS

1. Reporting Problems

Members check in with peers to take the pulse of the group.

2. Awarding Meetings

The group decides who is to receive help in this meeting.

3. Problem Solving

The group connects, clarifies challenges, and builds strengths.

4. Leader Feedback

Reflecting on a group meeting equips peers with helping skills.

Post list so all learn these terms.

Problems	Strengths
BELONGING	**BELONGING**
1. Mistrust	Trust
2. Conflict	Cooperation
MASTERY	**MASTERY**
3. School Difficulty	Talent
4. Social Difficulty	Social Skills
INDEPENDENCE	**INDEPENDENCE**
5. Lacks Self-Control	Self-Control
6. Lacks Self-Confidence	Self-Confidence
GENEROSITY	**GENEROSITY**
7. Self-Centered	Caring
8. Disrespect	Respect

1. Reporting Problems

Youth 1: *I had <u>conflict</u> with authority when the teacher corrected me.*

Youth 2: *I <u>lacked self control</u> and got easily angered in the soccer game.*

Youth 3: *I didn't have any problems.*

[If a youth fails to report a problem, the group can "remind" the person which motivates self-reporting.]

Problems with Problems

● Trivialization: Dwelling on mini- problems that do no harm.

● Poly-problems: Giving multiple labels for a problem.

● Fake Problems: Inventing problems to avoid real issues.

● Rigged Meetings: -Group conspires to hide real problems.

2. Awarding Meetings

Go around the circle so members can either ask for the meeting or propose who should receive help.

Discussion continues until the group reaches consensus on who gets the meeting. This is not a majority vote as all must be committed to helping.

Some groups may waste time by arguing and refusing to compromise. They are challenged to help each other instead of being self-centered.

3. Problem Solving
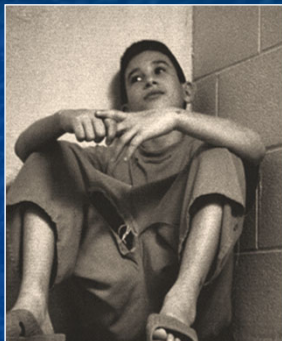
CONNECT for Support

Create safety and trust so that the person is open to receiving help.

CLARIFY Challenges

Reflect on how actions affect self and others and find new coping strategies.

RESTORE Respect

Strengthen belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.

We don't learn from experience but by reflecting on experience.

JOHN DEWEY

4. Leader Feedback

Equip members with helping skills.

Calm emotions after a tense meeting.

Inspire members to build a great group.

Encourage helping beyond the meeting.
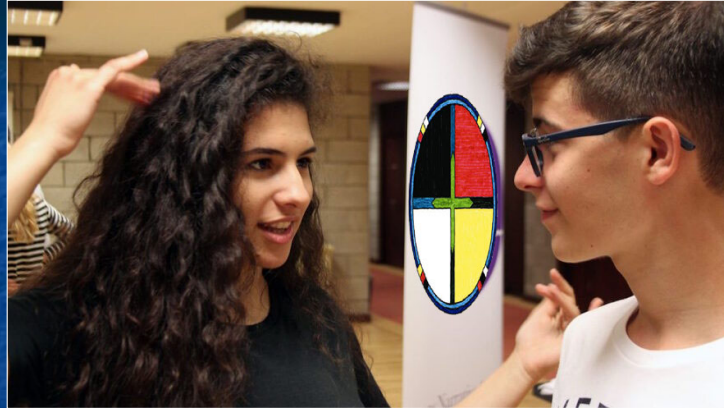
What's Your Story?
The brain's primary means of making meaning is by stories.
Stories explore past events, current conflicts, and the future.
Stories encourage us to explore other person's point of view.

Denis Dutton
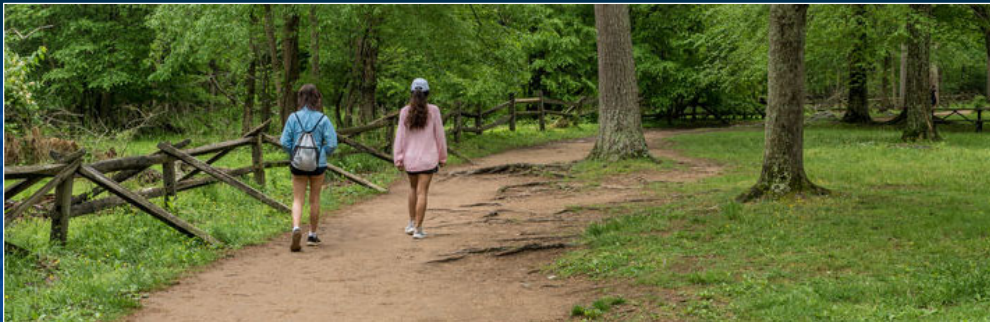
Life Story Meetings

This is a personal history seen through the eyes of the youth. Group members first share their own background. When ready, the new student recounts relationships and key life events including problems as well as successes. While building trust, the group avoids criticism. The life story gives a window on needs and goals of the new member so peers can be effective helpers.

Ask, Don't Tell

By posing questions, mentors model reflective thinking.

But young people are profiling us and only learn from those persons they trust.

PAUL HARRIS
Trusting what You're Told
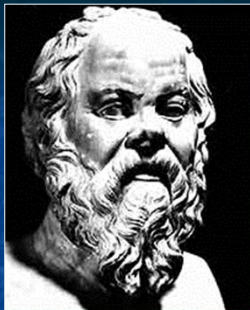
Socratic Questioning

To solve a problem,
break it down into questions.

SOCRATES
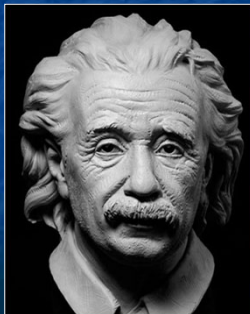
The important thing
is not to stop questioning.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Respectful questions encourage youth to discover answers themselves.

Guidance by Questions

Members all talk at once drowning out a comment by a youth. The leader asks: "*Who heard what Carla just said?*"

One person dominates the meeting: "*How many members are in the group?*"

A group is reluctant to challenge a bully: "*Does Tom know what the group thinks when he tries to push them around?*"

Groups use reflective questions to help their peers think clearly.

Can you tell us what you were thinking when you decided to hurt him?

What do you suppose she was feeling when you made fun of her?

How would you want others to treat you?

VOICES OF YOUTH
Negative Leaders

I was a negative influence all the time. I just thought people were meant to be used to my advantage.

But my peers and staff started teaching me that it makes you feel better to help others.

I began looking at my thinking and looking at my heart and tried to find the real love for people cause it's still there; you're just hiding it.

8

Acting Tough for Peers

Many youth mistakenly believe their peers support negative behavior. Thus, they protect themselves against attack or ridicule by acting tough. Peers in a group "unwittingly conspire to alter-cast one another into the delinquent role."

GOLD & OSGOOD

Negative Influence Leaders (NIL)

Manipulate or intimidate others

Gain status among their peers.

Wield power with "lieutenants."

Confronting can give more status.

Reclaiming Negative Leaders

1. <u>Hold lieutenants responsible for NIL.</u>
● Privately challenge the lieutenants.
● Make theme responsible to help NIL:
   If you really care, you will want to help.
● Keep making NIL's problems their own.

2. <u>Neutralize the negative leader's power.</u>
● Lieutenants are confused and in a bind.
● In this confusion, NIL is losing support.
● This is disrupting NIL's leadership.

3. <u>Provide a positive leadership role.</u>
● The path to power is helping others.
● NIL tries out being a positive leader.
● This new role becomes self-rewarding.

Bursting the Myth of Badness

Peer helping meetings counter peer deviance. Youth can express opinions without fear of ridicule or punishment. They "collectively examine and contemplate their life situations and potentials."

STEPHENSON & SCARPITTI

Fighting to Survive
Carin Ness with Girls in PPC

Outwitting Adults

Fight: I acted violent and mean until they kicked me out.

Flight: I ran away when they started getting close to my problems.

Fool: I hugged my staff and promised to change to get them off my back.

Positive Peer Culture

I didn't want to face my problems.

My group didn't give up on me, even when I kept rejecting them.

They believed in me, even when I didn't believe in myself.

Voices of Youth
Positive Leadership

I had a lot of friends but was influencing them in negative ways. Staff would say, "You can get all these people to do this, but why don't you change it around in a positive way, helping those kids.

People looked up to me. With situations I've been in, drugs and stuff, I can really help them out and change their view on things. It makes me feel great because I can do something for someone else and not just think about myself.

Positive Cultures

The very qualities of sagacity and daring that formerly rendered them a terror to the community, will push them forward in their new career of virtue, honor, and usefulness.

S. D. BROOKS
New York State Training School
1850

Stages in Developing Positive Peer Cultures

Positive
Peer Culture

Group Cohesion

casing

+ polarization -

testing

Respectful Relationships
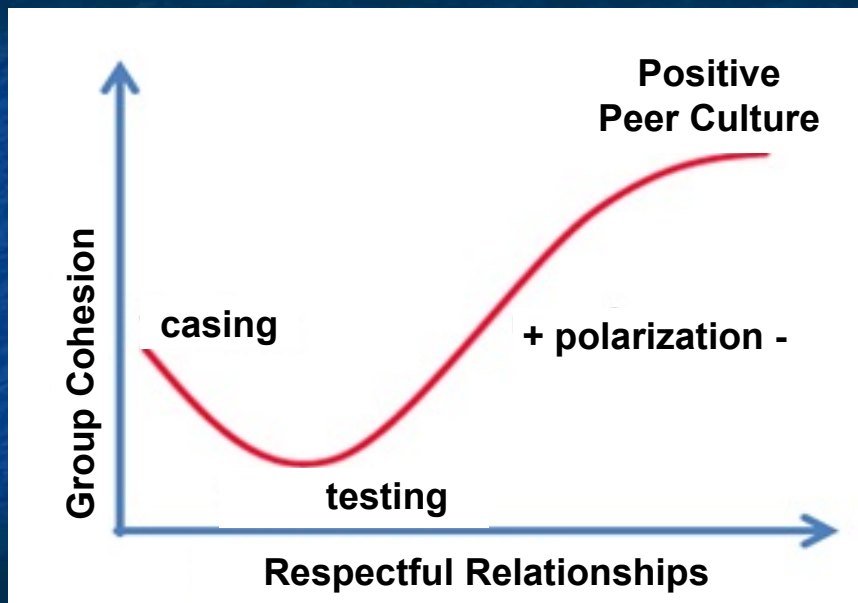
Stage 1: Casing

Students are not yet connected. They are guarded about revealing self but hyper-alert for social cues.

Role of Mentors

Foster belonging and highlight strengths. Respond to challenges with respect instead of superiority.

Stage 2: Limit Testing

Students check out the power structure. They do not trust peers which prevents group cohesion.

Role of Mentors

Youth may blame others and want to quit. Reverse problems and show confidence this will be a great group.

Stage 3: Polarization

Group is divided. Some students want to build a positive group while others resist participation.

Role of Mentors

Group can highlight helpful actions. Increase positive expectations but avoid attacking negative leaders.

Stage 4: Positive Peer Culture

A cohesive group shows care and concern. Positive peer leaders are skilled in problem solving.

Role of Mentors

Help group refine problem-solving skills. Strengthen group pride and morale. Model strong concern.

Group Composition

- Gender
- Diversity
- Sophistication
- Personality

Younger or Immature Youth in PPC meetings.

- Can be distracted or bored
- Need more adult guidance
- Need support of mature peers
- Using RAP builds self-control

Student Roles in Group Meetings

Opp, Unger, & Teichmann

Quiet Learners
are reserved in meetings. These vicarious learners are interested in discussions and gain a sense of belonging.

Active Talkers
make more than their share of comments in group meetings. Talking relieves their stress but they need to learn to listen.

Problem Solvers
willingly work on problems, take responsibility for their behavior, and apply solutions.

Natural Leaders
keep the group tone positive and protect vulnerable peers. They need to be encouraged to develop leadership in their peers.
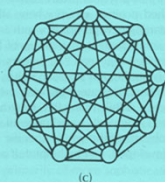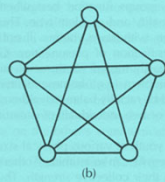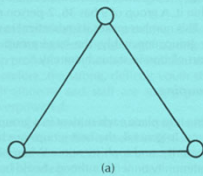
Group Size

Complexity increases as group size expands:
(a) A group of three has three relationships.
(b) A group of five has ten relationships
(c) A group of nine has 36 relationships.
(d) A group of twelve has 66 relationships.

Dosage of Group Help

Larger groups limit individual attention.
Fewer meetings limit time for helping.
Shorter meetings limit impact of helping.

Evaluating Seating Options

The Tone of the Meeting

Setting   Schedule   Sanctuary

95

Language Shapes Culture

Settings have different norms about profanity. How would you handle these kinds of profanity.?

- Profanity as Pain
- Profanity as Attack
- Profanity as a Front
- Colloquial Profanity
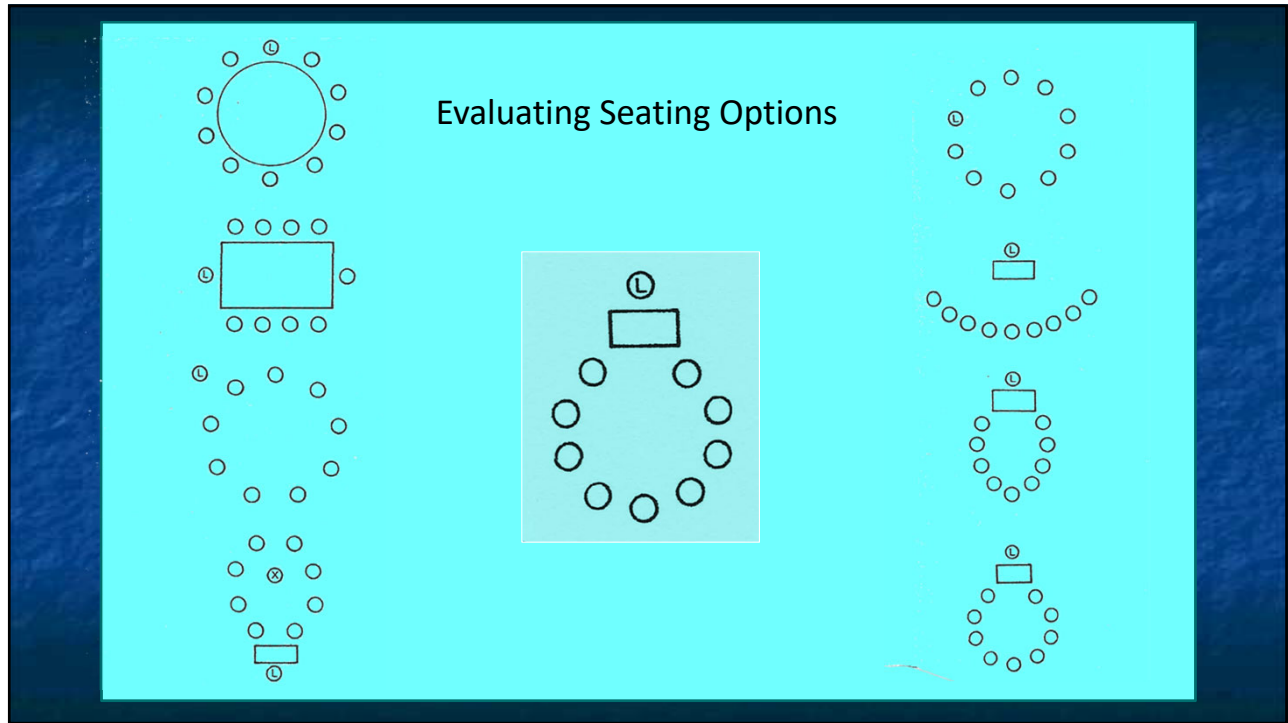
The view of one student:

People who have to swear to put someone down or puff themselves up need to find better ways to express their feelings.

The Impact of Pronouns

"I" puts the adult in charge.

I am disappointed.

What does the group think?

"We" makes the adult a peer.

We aren't helping.

Why are some not helping?

"You" is a two-way talk.

You don't even try.

What can the group do?

Scripts for Staff

The effective leader will learn many ways of using brief, simple questions or comments to stimulate the group toward the solution of problems.

HARRY VORRATH

1. Group Meeting Scripts: General

Set a serious tone and avoid distracting interactions before meetings:
Student: "Yo, dude, what's happening?"

Openness and honesty in meetings is not being an informant.
Student: "I don't snitch on my friends."
Staff: "Helping persons solve problems is not snitching."

Policies on visitors in group meeting. (Supervisory staff are not visitors).
Staff: "If the person getting help is uncomfortable, the visitor will leave ."

Content of meetings is only broadly shared with teams, not in detail.
Student: "Are other staff told what we talk about in group meetings?"
Staff: "The team is told what is needed to know how to help students."

Boycotts are rare but what if a group conspires to skip the meeting?
Leader stays in room working on other tasks; this is the group's problem.
Other staff make the group uncomfortable refusing to help one another.
Staff: "If nobody wants to help; nobody makes progress, so a day is wasted."

2. Challenges in Reporting Problems

Failure to report problems becomes a group responsibility.
Staff: "Does anyone recall what problem Tony was showing in school?"

Avoid debate if a person keeps denying a problem.
Staff: "If the group sees the problem, they can go on to next student."

Blaming others in reporting problems is a way to avoid getting help.
Student: "I was easily angered because Tony was acting like a jerk."
Staff or Student: "Is the group discussing Tony's problem now?"

Vague reporting does not include a clear statement of the problem.
Staff or Student: "Did the group get an example of the problem?"

Avoid mini-meetings that turn reporting into time-wasting discussions.
Staff: "Does the group want to keep discussing Mary's problem?"

Profusion of problem labels creates confusion and frustration.
Staff: "Can the group focus on one problem that seems important?"

3. Challenges in Awarding the Meeting

The group leader doesn't decide for this is the group's task.
Student: "Mr. B., who do you think should get the meeting?"
Staff: "The group knows one another and can make a good decision

If a group bogs down, subtle questions may guide decision meeting.
Staff: "Who needs the meeting most?"
Staff: "How long has it been since this person had a meeting?"
Staff: "Perhaps the group can help one person outside the meeting."

If some members refuse to compromise, they are not ready to help.
Staff: "If the group won't come together, somebody is getting hurt."

A consensus decision is needed to give the meeting to a student.
Student: "Can we vote on this?"
Staff: "The group will need all members committed to join in helping."

4. Challenges in Problem Solving

Minimal participation with only a few who are contributing.
Staff: "How many members are there in this group?"

A non-participant or silent member is common in most groups.
Staff: "Some group members are afraid they will say something wrong."

Students miss window words that invite further exploration.
Staff: "What does Susan mean when she says she is *damaged goods*?"

Students who dwell on the past may need to be guided to **here and now.**
Staff: "Kerry can't change the past, but she can tackle today's problems."

Student shifts focus from self by bringing up problems of others.
Staff: "Is Mike trying to give the meeting to someone else?"

Mechanical talk is a sign genuine helping is not occurring.
Staff: "Does Johnny think the group is really concerned with him?"

Preaching leads to resistance instead of responsibility.
Staff: "Perhaps the group can help Katy without preaching at her."

5. Coaching Scripts for Leader Feedback

The leader sets the topic but may involve students with focused questions.
Staff: "Even though Melissa refuses to accept help, did the group give up?"
Staff: "Tim didn't get the meeting today; can the group help him tonight?"

Calm emotions after a frustrating meeting.
Staff: "When the group knows John better, they will be able to offer help."
Staff: "When John learns to trust the group, they can better support him."
Staff: "While John refused help, the group showed amazing patience."

Withhold closure to motivate the group for future helping.
Staff: "Now that the group knows Janna has been thinking of running away, one wonders if the group will care enough to keep her from hurting herself."

Leave on a positive note that the group is—or can be—a helping team.
Staff: "Good Meeting" or "Fine, that's all" or "Have a great day!"

Provide support to individuals outside of the group meeting.
Staff: "John, can we talk for a minute?"

6. Engaging Challenging Students

A guarded student is unable or unwilling to be open with the group.
Staff: "The group will build trust, so Kim has the courage to share."

"**I don't need help**" says a student who resists asking for the meeting.
Staff: "Jenard is not ready to get help, so he can work on helping others."

A dominating member monopolizes the meeting.
Staff: "How many members are there in this group?"
Staff: "Perhaps others in the group will speak up and share their ideas."

War stories can reinforce the attractiveness of antisocial behavior.
Staff: "Is Victor trying to make his troubles sound exciting?"

Playing the clown allows the group member to hide behind a mask.
Staff: "Does the group know why John tries to make everything a joke?"

A **bully** who intimidates peers is not being challenged by group members.
Staff: "Why does the group let one member push them around?"

7. Keeping Clarity in Staff Role

Group leaders are lured into taking over the group's responsibility.
Student: "You are a counselor, Miss S., what should we do?"
Staff: "Staff coach the group so *youth* become great problem solvers."

Control of meeting by group leader makes the group property of staff.
Staff pontificating: "Let me explain how I would handle this problem."

Students shift attention to supposed problems of staff.
Student to staff: "I bet you used drugs when you were a kid."
Staff: "The group is here to help with John's problem."

Group leader defuses hostility with a bland response.
Student: "You are the worst group leader in the world." Staff: "Could be."

An intrusive or confrontive question may not merit a response.
Staff sits silently while Tony tries mobilize the group against the leader.
After a time, staff asks: "What did Tony just do?" or "Smooth move, Tony."

8. Preventing Toxic Meetings

Conflict cycles between the group and a resistant member escalate.
Staff: "Group, what is happening right now?"

Protect members by preventing disclosure that could hurt the person.
Staff caution: "Tony can wait until he is sure the group can be trusted."
Staff changing topic: "This is a good time to discuss problems in school."

Rigged meetings are elaborate schemes by a group counterculture.
Watch for "make believe" acting or nonverbal cues that this is a sham.

An attempt to perform for peers is an example of negative leadership.
For example, Ron made several intentionally disruptive comments:
Student: "I can fuck up the meeting. Give Davey the meeting to Davey because he is an asshole. Let's help Adrian because he is a mental case. The group leader really needs help."
Staff to group: "What is Ron trying to accomplish?"
Or Staff keeps low key: "Seems like Ron is not ready to work on problems."
Or Staff shows care: "Does Ron think the group and staff will give up on him?"

Voices of Youth

To me, helping is more of a prevention process. Rather than seeing somebody making mistakes, you prevent it from happening.

You know the triggers, the warning signs, what causes them to act the way they act. That's where you should step in and help— showing care and concern while they're going through their problem.

Building Group Spirit

Recreation
Games and activities develop camaraderie and creativity.

Work
Youth develop attitudes and habits for responsibility.

Service Learning
Contributing to the community strengthens prosocial values.

Caring in the Community

A group of youth from a Minnesota Positive Peer Culture program volunteer in an elementary classroom.
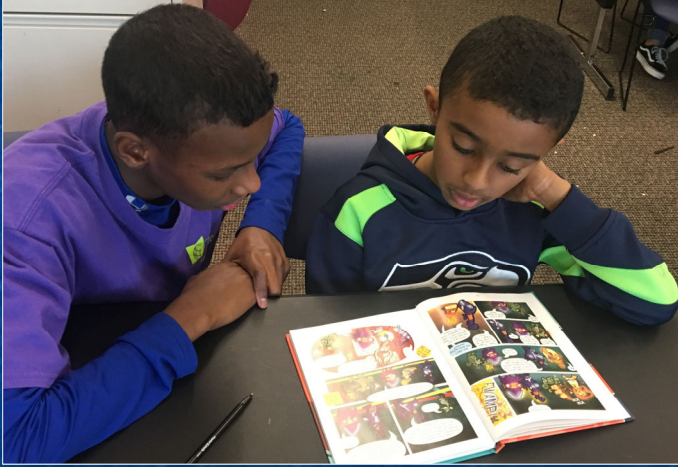
Cross-generational Bonds

Students in a PPC group at Starr Commonwealth in Michigan "adopt" a grandmother in a nursing home. She is celebrating her 100th birthday.

Work is love made visible: Kahlil Gibran

Projekt Chance was a Positive Peer Culture Program in Creglingen, Germany. Teens resided in an 800-year-old abbey they were restoring for the community.

Voices of Youth

The one thing I really enjoy about being in a peer group is that I can take what I have learned and help other people to apply it to their lives, sort of like everybody helps each other out.

Chapter 4
Total Teamwork

Team Building   Leadership

Team Building

Reclaiming organizations have a unifying theme of core values and are organized to meet the needs of young people.

MARTIN WOLINS & YOCHANAN WOZNER
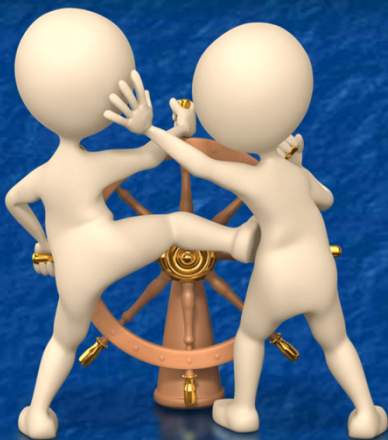
Tel Aviv University

Sustaining positive group cultures requires a cohesive team of stakeholders, not just a powerful charismatic leader.

Lack of a Unifying Theme

Organizational Bedlam

**Depersonalization.** People in bureaucratic organizations do not feel they matter.

Staff in conflict. Tension among staff and leadership causes burn-out and low morale.

Youth in conflict. Negative youth subcultures fuel scapegoating, absenteeism, dropping out.

Communication breakdown. Messages are lost in layers of management and turf-tending.

HOWARD GARNER

Two Types of Conflict
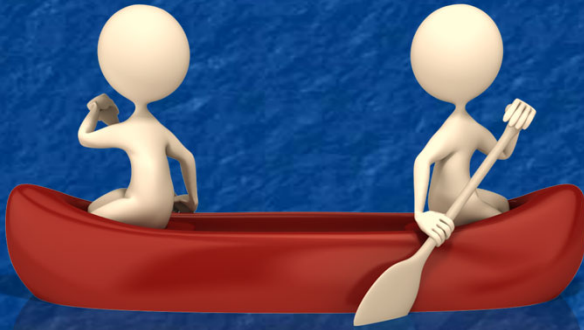
Relationship-based conflict
Teams with high personality conflict become ineffective.

Task-based conflict
In cohesive groups, conflict about how to best perform tasks can be constructive.

Driskell, Salas, & Driskell

Principles for Practice

Teams can be more effective than the sum of individual members.

Cohesive teams with strong bonds perform better and stay together.

Teams can complete more tasks with less error than individuals.

Participative leaders have more influence than autocratic leaders.

The Impact of Teams

Michigan researchers studied 45 groups that were all nominally using Positive Peer Culture:

The implementation of that program varied substantially from group to group…. these differences were due largely to differences among staff teams.

GOLD AND OSGOOD

Positive Staff Teams Produce Positive Youth Cultures

Teams that respect and empower young people
have the most positive peer group cultures.

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Effective Teams

1. Team cohesion

2. Team involvement

3. Belief in program success

4. Optimism on youth success

Teamwork Checklist

☐ Teams include all staff regularly serving a group of students.

☐ Teams give all members responsibility and authority.

☐ Status is minimized so all have opportunity for full participation.

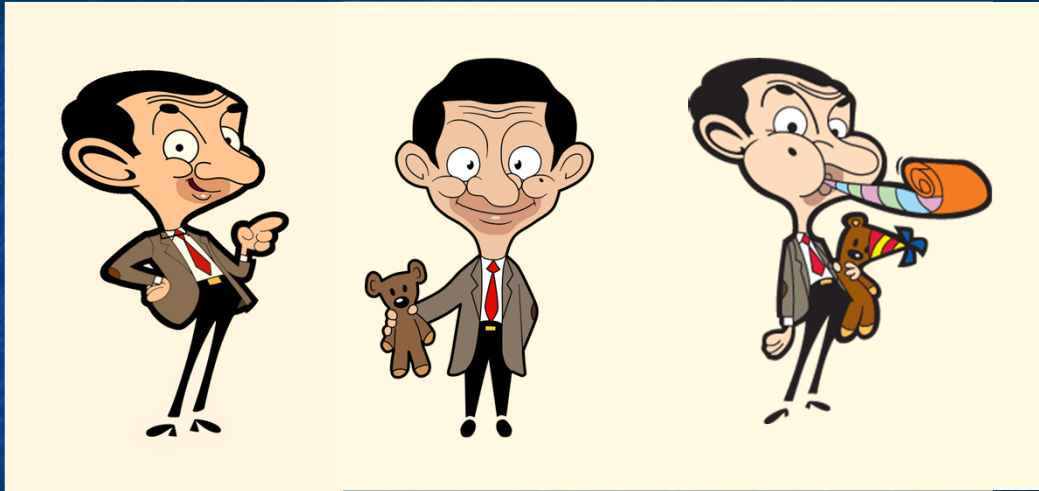☐ Teams meet regularly to provide time for full communication.

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Impact of Teamwork

● Reduce Conflict

● Increase Accountability

● Meet Student Needs
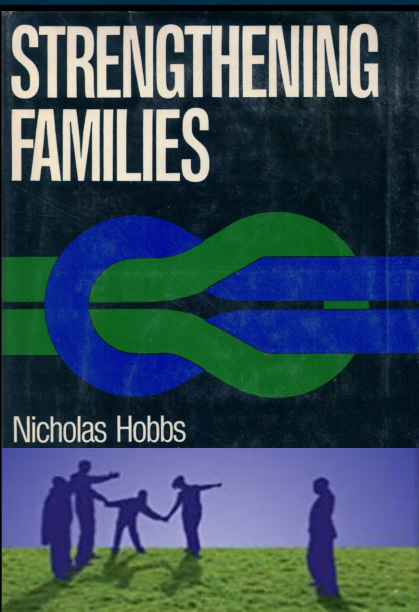
● Meet Staff Needs

Complementary Personalities of Staff

Demander   *Soother*   *Stimulator*

Our goal is to develop strong families in caring communities, families rich in the qualities needed to nurture healthy and competent people.

NICHOLAS HOBBS

Programs that assist the most provide support similar to an extended family.

EMMY WERNER & RUTH SMITH

Families as Lifespan Experts

Parents know more about their child's development than any other informants.

THOMAS ACHENBACH

Parents as Team Members
Few professionals have the skill to work with parents as team members.
Our methods are frequently demeaning and insulting with the tendency to blame parents.
WILLIAM C. MORSE

The Paradigm Shift
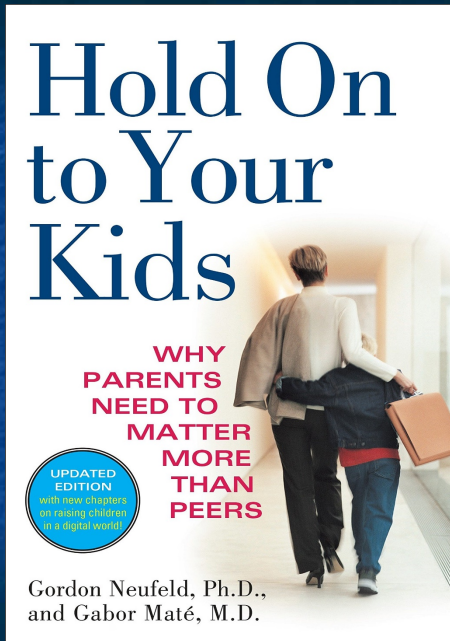
Viewing families as the problem	Viewing families as the solution
Diagnosing deficits of the parents	Utilizing the strengths of families
Treating supposed flaws of families	Partnering to meet needs of children

Hold On to Your Kids

WHY PARENTS NEED TO MATTER MORE THAN PEERS

UPDATED EDITION with new chapters on raising children in a digital world

Gordon Neufeld, Ph.D., and Gabor Maté, M.D.

- Families look for opportunities for friendly and fun engagement.
- Parents give evidence of warmth including physical expressions.
- Dependence builds independence. Youth need adult support to thrive.
- As youth mature, the parent is still a compass and wise guide.

GORDON NEUFELD & GABOR MATÉ

CLEAR Teamwork Agenda
developing supports and strengths

Challenge   Logic   Emotions   Actions   Results
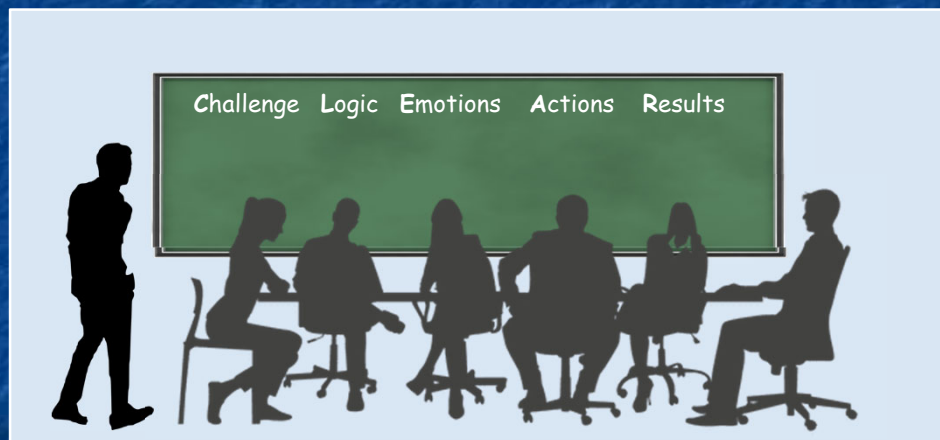
VIKKI HENNARD

Principles of Care are Imbedded in the Organization

Positive Peer Culture
Congruence at All Levels

Contractual Level: Funding body

Managerial Level: Executive tasks

Supervisory Level: Develop teams

Direct Care Level: Service delivery

Youth and Families: Clients served

ANNALEY CLARKE
Pathways Australia

Measuring Treatment Environments

Treatment Factors

● **Staff Effectiveness**
Staff know what they are doing.
Staff help students solve problems.

● **Treatment Effectiveness**
Group meetings help students.
Students learn to solve problems

● **Intimidation (eliminate)**
Students pick on other students.
Students are afraid of each other.

● **Counter-Culture (eliminate)**
Students keep problems secret.
Groups put on a front for staff.

Relationship Factors

● **Student-Staff Relationships**
Staff know students personally.
Staff respect students.

● **Communication**
Staff listen to what students say.
Students openly express feelings.

● **Staff Involvement**
Staff are involved in activities.
Staff work with students on projects.

● **Valuing Families**
Staff treat families as important.
Staff help strengthen families.

VOICES OF YOUTH

We Can Tell Who Cares

You can tell the staff here really like their jobs because they want to help kids. They constantly are thinking about us – how to meet our needs, how this can be a better place to make us successful.
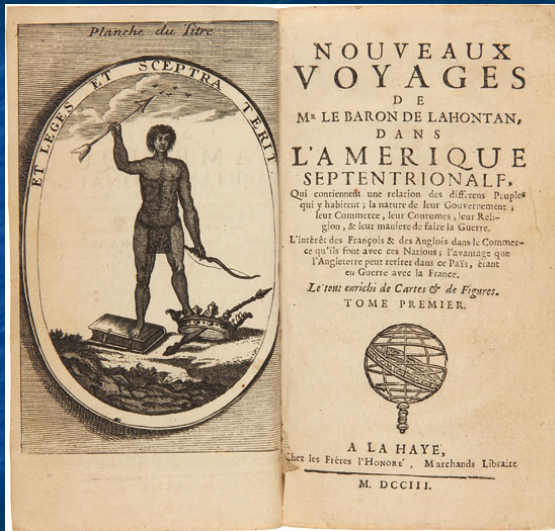
Leadership

A good leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Democratic Leadership

Baron de La Hontan studied Native Americans in the 17th Century.

He was amazed to discover tribal leaders did not exercise authoritarian control but had progressive concepts of leadership:

● Power should be shared with all.

● Power was temporary for a specific task.

● Power gave no right to control others.

The Disengaged Leader

Some group leaders confuse democracy with anarchy.

They won't answer legitimate questions from group members. But refusing to share knowledge with the group is *autocratic*.

And withholding expertise one possesses shows a *lack of respect*. Social equality requires humility but not hiding one's wisdom.

RUDOLPH DREIKURS

TYPE X LEADERS

TYPE Y LEADERS

DOUGLAS MCGREGOR

People will try to avoid work and need to be controlled.	People work well if committed to the organization's goals.
People need to be closely monitored and directed.	People are capable of self-control and responsibility.
Economic incentives and coercion foster productivity.	Meeting intrinsic needs is the most powerful motivation.

Servant-Leaders must first and foremost meet the needs of others.

ROBERT K. GREENLEAF

A band of travelers is on a journey to the East to meet a great leader of a spiritual Order. They are joined by Leo who does their chores and lifts their morale with his positive spirit and his singing. He is the glue that holds the group together.

The journey goes well until one day Leo disappears. Without Leo, the group falls apart and the journey is abandoned.

One traveler goes looking for Leo, and eventually finds him. Leo who had been the servant is the great and noble leader of the Order that inspired the journey.
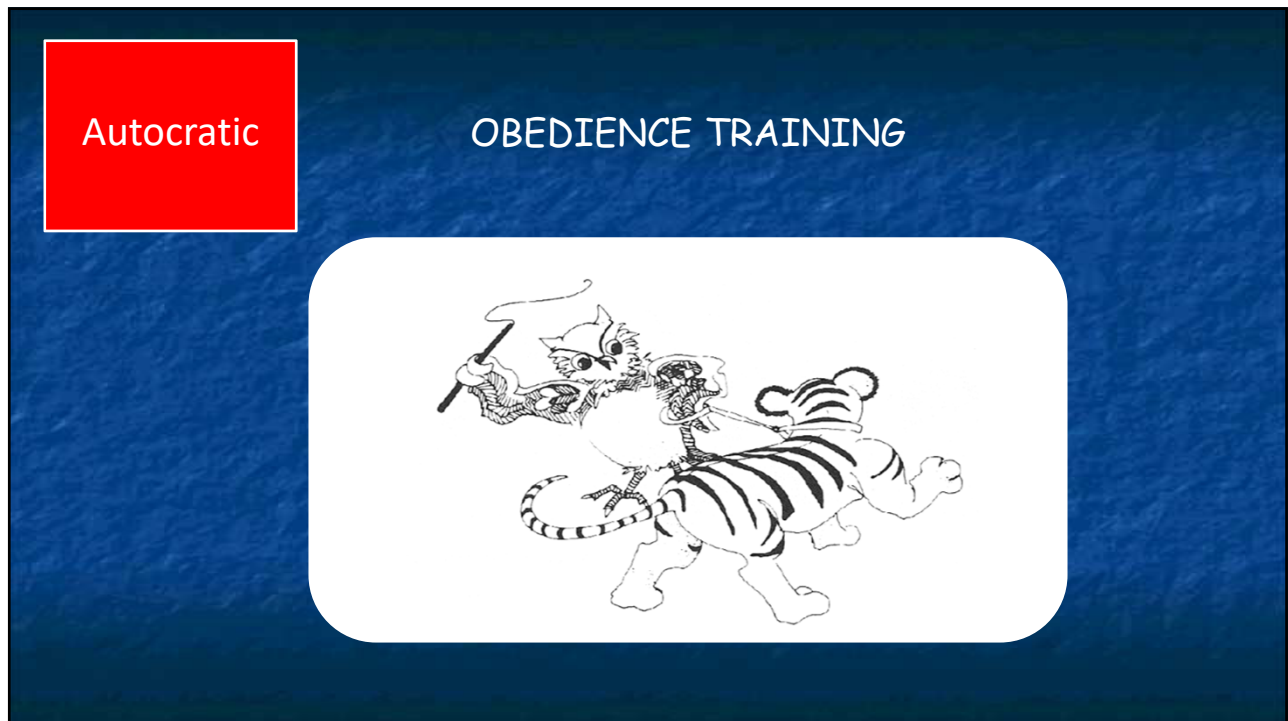
VOICES OF PIONEERS

Service is the very purpose of life. It is the rent we pay for living on the planet.

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

Leadership Styles should match education or treatment model.

Only staff who are empowered can empower young people.

Leadership Styles

	weak RELATIONSHIPS strong
strong **I N F L U E N C E** **weak**	Autocratic / Respectful / Disengaged / Permissive

Autocratic

OBEDIENCE TRAINING
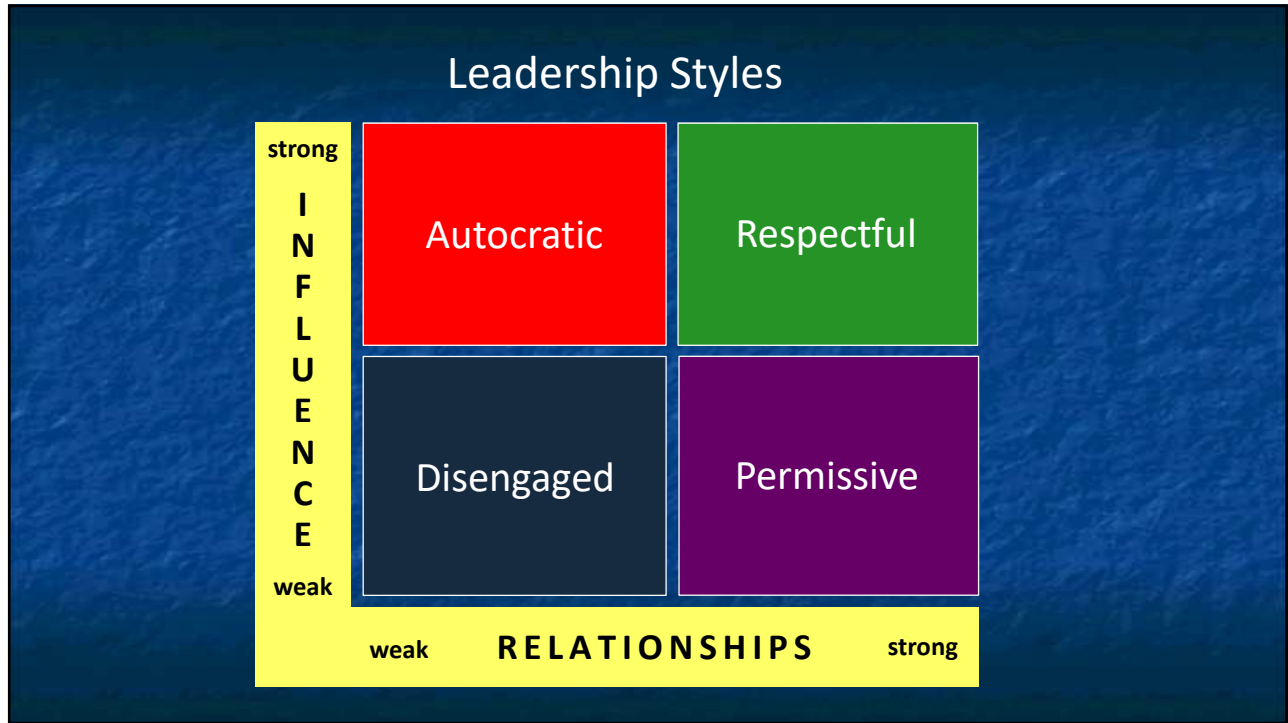
Autocratic

POWER STRUGGLES

Autocratic

FLAW FIXING

Permissive — PAMPER
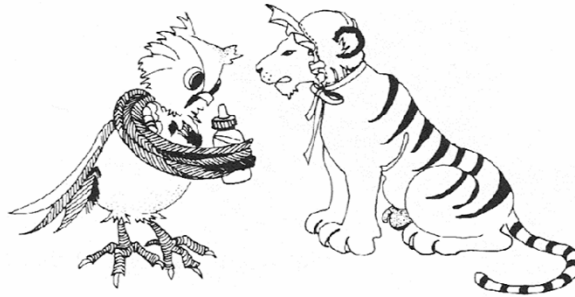
Permissive — RESCUE
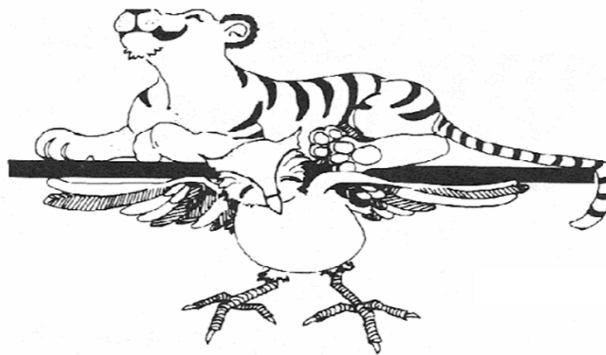
Permissive

BECOME ONE OF THEM

Disengaged

NEGLECT
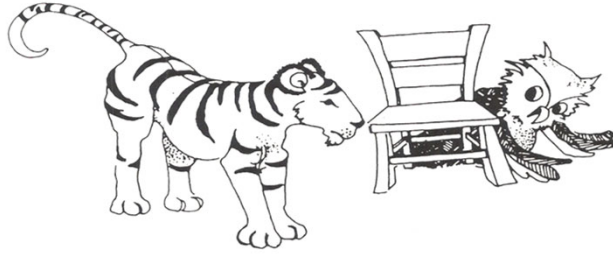
Respectful

CONNECT

Respectful

CLARIFY
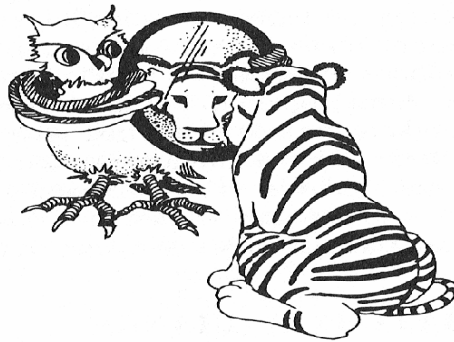
Respectful

RESTORE
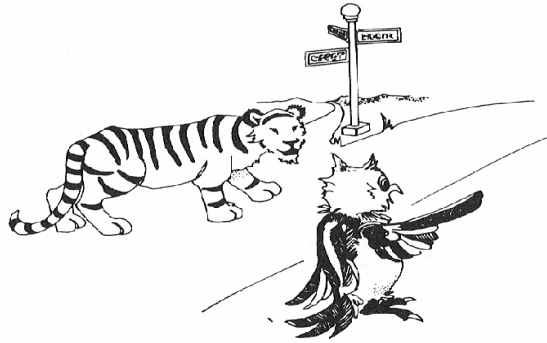
A Servant Leader

Colonel Joshua Chamberlain at the Battle of Gettysburg

Chapter 5
Ensuring Fidelity

First Do No Harm   *Implementing Change*

First Do No Harm

Physicians take the Hippocratic oath of *primum non nocere* which is Latin for "first do no harm."
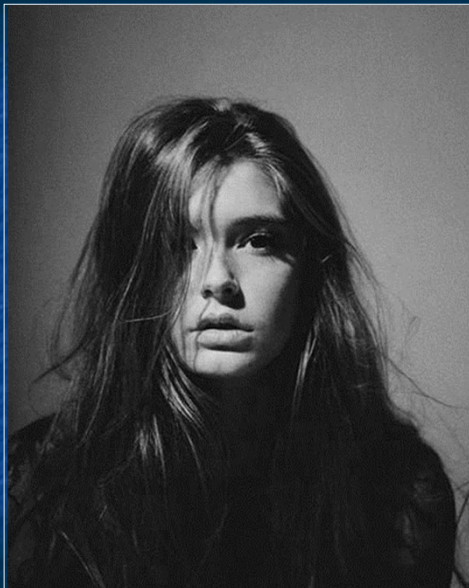
VOICES OF YOUTH
Fearful of Peers

I was scared shitless. I thought I was going to have to fight every boy here.

New student entering Highfields

Guided Group Interaction at Highfields was based on caring relationships.

But many other GGI programs used peer confrontation for behavior modification.

Peer Group Intervention

Provo GGI Program
Resistance led to ridicule or attack. Group sanctions included derision, detention, and exclusion.

Collegefields
Students were humiliated, forced to kneel and confess infractions.

GARY GOTTFREDSON

Cultures of Coercion

A suffocating thought-police system was created with hundreds of daily confrontations from staff and peers for violating "norms."

HOWARD POLSKY
& RONI BERGER

Research on Casualties in "Encounter Groups"
IRVIN YALOM & MORTON LIEBERMAN

Attack by the leader

Attack by group members

Rejection by leader or group

Inability to meet deep emotional needs

Unable to meet group demands for disclosure

Emotional crisis or psychosis from intensity of group experience

Toxic Groups: Failure of Facilitators

Safe Groups
avoid extreme pressure, respond to needs, and protect against harm.

Casualties came from leadership style rather than any of ten types of group models.

Dominating, charismatic leaders forced all to conform but did not build helping skills.

Failure of fidelity can have disruptive outcomes.

Implementation Fidelity Errors

Failure to focus on the active ingredient

Failure to deliver the proper dosage

Quality of delivery of program

Intervention becomes too complex

Low staff commitment to the program

Lack of participant responsiveness

Implementation Science (Carroll et al.)

Failure of EQUIP in the Netherlands

EQUIP meetings override peer helping

Skip half of meetings, run for 45 minutes

Constant change of staff running meetings

Trying to run four types of group meetings

Staff poorly trained and not invested

Participants are bored and resist meetings
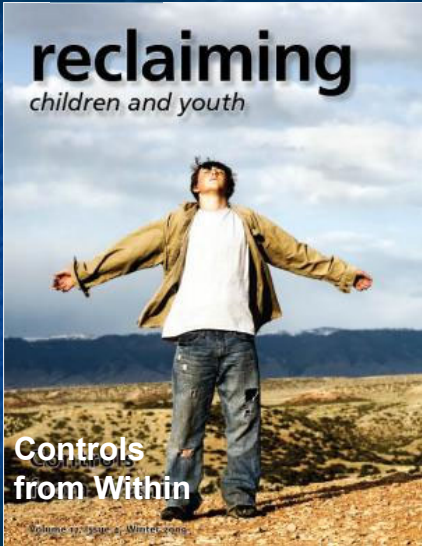
Psychology, Crime, & Law (Helmond, et al.)

Adaptations to Peer Group Models

Changes that Disrupt

Clashing Models

Evidence-Based Trivia

Autocratic Drift

Complexity

Changes that Enhance

Family and School Engagement

A Relationship-based Climate

Individual Assessment & Therapy

A Trauma-Sensitive Ecology

OLD   NEW

Be stalwart as a pine on principles
and flexible as a willow on details.

Ancient Chinese Saying

Disrupts Peer Helping

Suspension and exclusion for school discipline

Punitive models in schools and juvenile justice

Crisis management using restraint and seclusion

Shame-based treatment of sexually-reactive youth

Supports Peer Helping

Social and Emotional Learning and a positive school climate

Restorative discipline models in schools and juvenile justice

Crisis prevention providing support and problem-solving

Strength-based treatment of sexually-reactive youth

Positive Peer Culture and Level Systems

reclaiming *children and youth*

Controls from Within

PPC and level systems were compared in the same treatment setting. PPC resulted in fewer serious behavioral incidents and a smoother, less traumatic program.

MITCHELL & COCKRUM

When challenged to replace their point and level systems with more constructive approaches, people often lament, "But then what can we do?" *Controls from Within* offers a response.

KAREN VANDERVEN

VOICES OF YOUTH
Rethinking Rewards and Punishments

Circle of Courage Values: Preventing Harm

Belonging
Respect prevents ranking or rejection.

Mastery
Cooperative problem-solving builds strengths.

Independence
Gaining self-confidence prevents being misled.

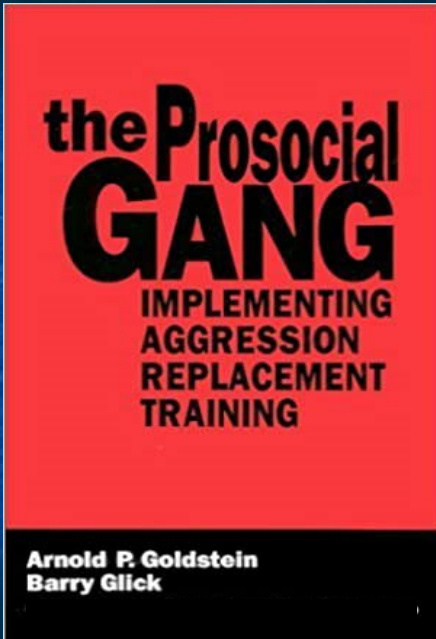Generosity
Care and concern builds a strong positive group.

DEREK ALLEN

Implementing Change

Without careful management, the most positive treatment philosophy can mutate into malpractice.

WILLIAM WASMUND

the Prosocial GANG

IMPLEMENTING AGGRESSION REPLACEMENT TRAINING

Arnold P. Goldstein
Barry Glick

Why Group Interventions Fail

Program Integrity	Lack of fidelity to model
Program Intensity	Lack of adequate dosage
Limited Methods	Lack of differential treatment
Relationship Bonds	Lack of positive mentors

GISELA KONOPKA

TRABAJO TERAPÉUTICO GRUPAL CON NIÑOS Y JÓVENES

RE-EDUCATING TROUBLED YOUTH

Larry K. Brendtro and Arlin E. Ness
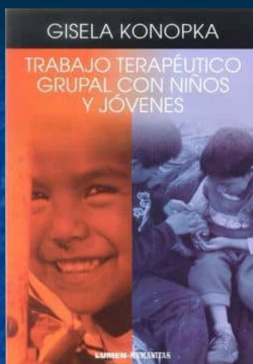
Program Fidelity Research

Gisela Konopka who pioneered therapeutic group work called for research on fidelity standards to prevent abuses of peer treatment.
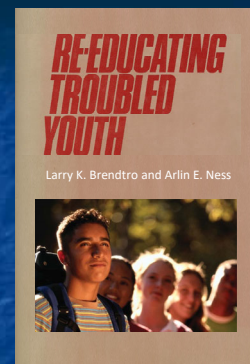
This manual documented research on best practices and identified implementation errors in peer group treatment programs.

Misuse of Peer Groups

Interviews with Staff
in PPC Programs

Two Public Schools
Two Alternative Schools
Two Group Homes
Two Private Treatment Centers
Two State Training Schools

Ten Fidelity Errors

1. Abuse of confrontation
2. Mechanical verbalizations
3. Family estrangement
4. Poor listening skills
5. Lack of individualization
6. Distant staff relationships
7. Staff abuse of control
8. Inadequate training
9. Group leader domination
10. Purist rigidity

1. Abuse of Confrontation

The group is given a license to care but uses its power to punish.

2. Mechanical Verbalizations
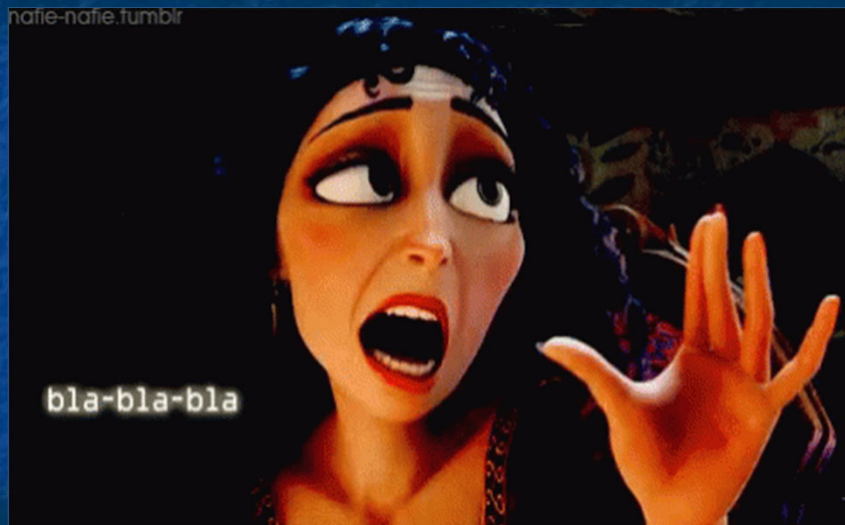
Spouting therapeutic jargon impedes authentic communication.

3. Family Estrangement

Family involvement predicts success in education and treatment.

4. Poor Listening Skills

Both peers and adults find it easier to preach than listen.
Feeling really heard is the motivation for change.

5. Lack of Individualization
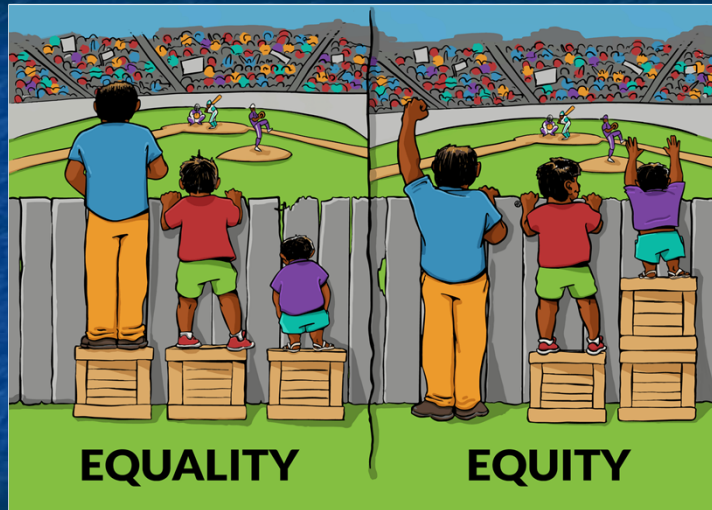
We can't meet individual needs by treating everybody the same.

6. Depersonalized Adult-Youth Relationships
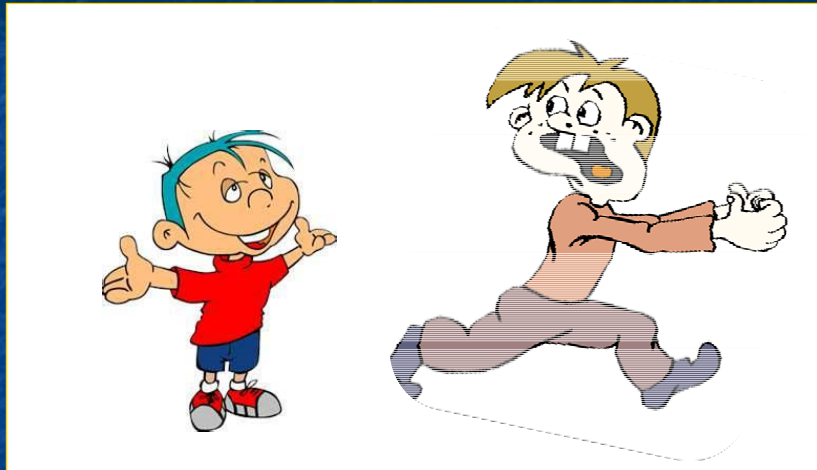
Strong adult and peer relationships are essential to respectful alliances.
Professional distance renders adults powerless to impact young lives.

7. Staff Abuse of Group Control

Using the group to discipline peers becomes adult-sanctioned bullying.

8. Poor Staff Training

Without learning opportunities, staff resort to naïve and harmful tactics.

9. Group Leader Superiority

Autocratic leaders cannot create respectful staff or group cultures.

10. Purist Rigidity

Habit if not resisted soon becomes necessity.
SAINT AUGUSTINE

Cultures of Respect

1. *Replacing coercion with concern*. All use their power to help and protect, treating one another with respect and dignity.

2. *Establishing genuine communication*. Relationships are authentic as adults and youth listen and respond to needs.

3. *Providing private time and space*. Group program should allow opportunities for individual interests and relationships.

4. *Honoring the family*. Parents are full partners, and the goal is to strengthen relationships of a youth with family.

5. *Developing total competence*. The talents of youth and adults are cultivated so all can contribute to the community.

Overcoming Hurdles to Change

budgets   competing values   loss of power

regulations   rigid beliefs   fear of change

leadership

Kurt Lewin's Three Stages of Change

UNFREEZE
Enlist support to change established structures, polices, and practices.

CHANGE
Provide new skills and mindsets. Reflect on and celebrate success.

REFREEZE
Insure fidelity with staff development, policies, and resources.
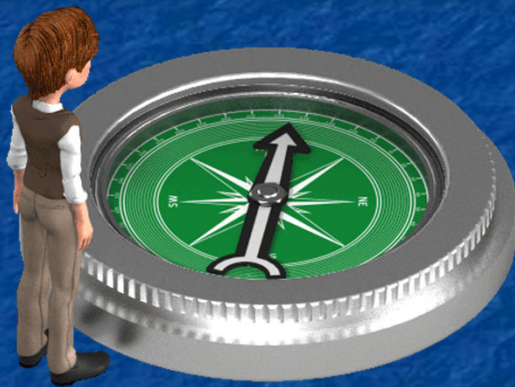
Leadership for Change

Change requires the courage to persevere as the environment is temporarily unsettled while new skills and beliefs are implemented.

THOMAS TATE
RANDALL COPAS

Challenges Faced by Schools
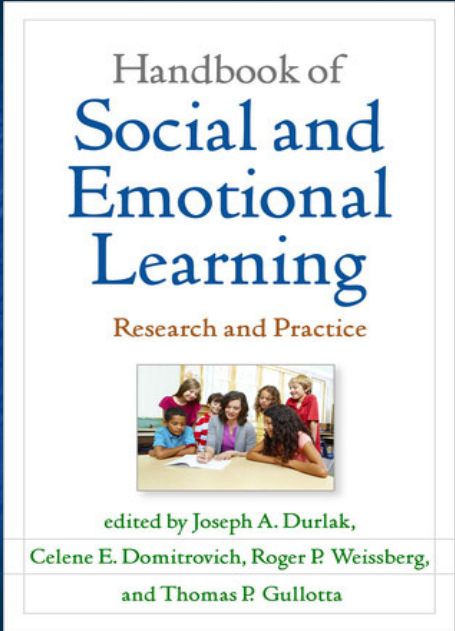
Schools are expected to serve students with, trauma, learning and behavior disabilities, neurological challenges, and lack of motivation or self-control.

HOWARD BATH
The Three Pillars of Traumawise Care

Restorative Practices

Traditional schools are not designed to include social and emotional learning such as this restorative circle.
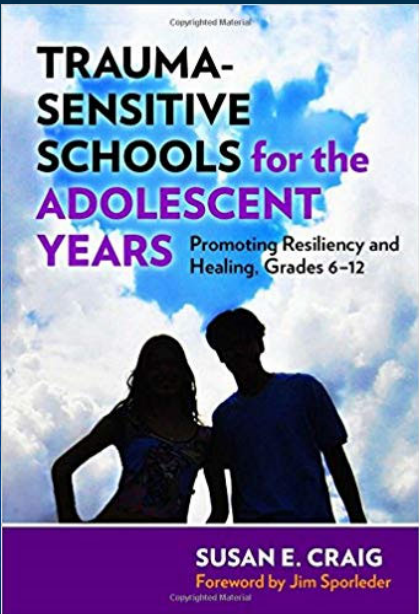
The Circle of Courage:
Presaging Positive Youth Development

MAURICE ELIAS

Positive Peer Cultures in Schools

• Peer support counters peer coercion.

• Problem solving builds the executive brain.

• Students discover their strengths and greatness.

• Students treat others with empathy and respect.

SUSAN CRAIG
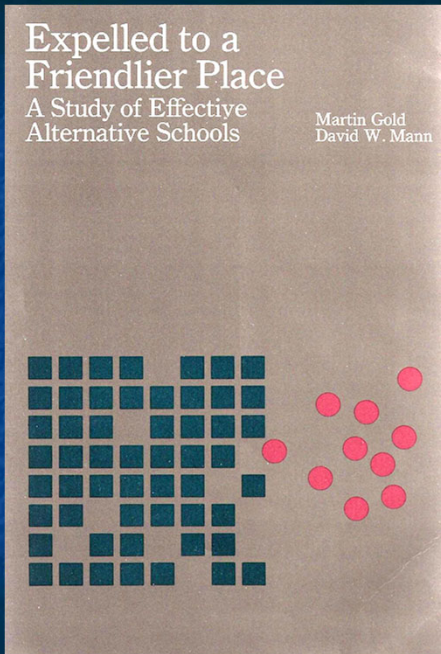
Effective alternative schools have the flexibility to adopt relationship-based approaches which build a welcoming school climate for all.

PPC group meetings in educational settings can be offered as for-credit *Youth Leadership* courses and in after-school programs.

Groups on the Go

These spontaneously formed school-based mutual helping groups make peer support available when a student is in distress.

ANDREW MALEKOFF

Emotional First Aid on the Spot

A student was having a melt-down during the lunch period, bleeding from slamming a fist into the wall.

Three youth went to offer help and found the student was upset about a family crisis.

After a few minutes of calm conversation, the youth said: *Thanks for being here. I don't need to be alone at times like this.*

Positive RELATIONAL Support

PRO Assessment

RAP Problem Solving

Circle of Courage Needs
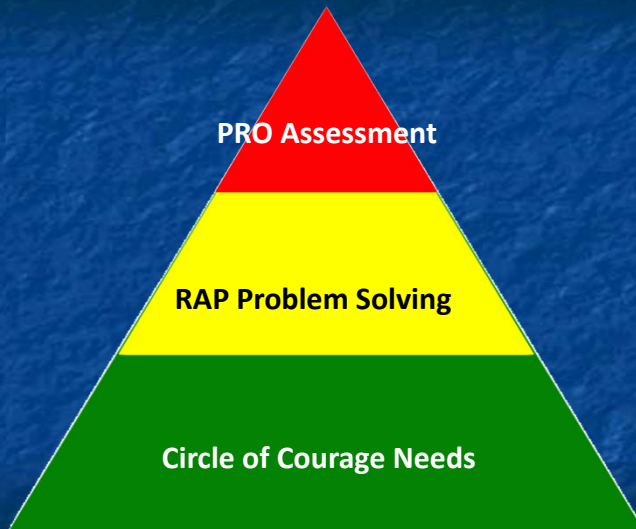
High Needs Students
Create a comprehensive reclaiming plan.

Students at Risk
Staff and youth provide targeted supports.

Universal Support
Positive organizational or school climate.

Changing School Climates

From Conflict to Cooperation
Respect among adults and students.

From Alienation to Connection
A positive bond with at least one adult.

From Peer Harassment to Helping
Supporting fellow students in distress.

From Code of Silence to Openness
Able to share concerns with adults.

From Coercion to Problem Solving
Discipline without shame or retribution.

US Department of Education and US Secret Service

Challenges Faced by Youth Justice

Youth in the justice system bring extreme histories of relational trauma, mental health problems, antisocial values, and lack of self-regulation.

DAVID ROUSH
National Juvenile Detention Association

Changing Coercive Environments

STEVEN LISS
No Place for Children

Punishing Problems

Problems are abnormal—ignorance, immorality, or mental disorder.

Acknowledging you have a problem shows weakness.

If problems arise, there must be consequences for bad behavior.
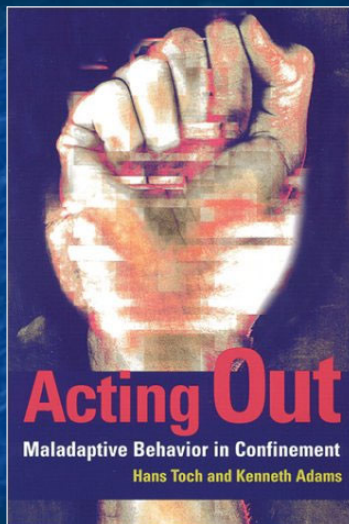
Solving Problems

Problems are a normal part of life. Solving problems builds resilience.

Acknowledging you have a problem shows strength.

When problems arise, others help the person find better ways to cope.

Reforming Juvenile Justice
A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES
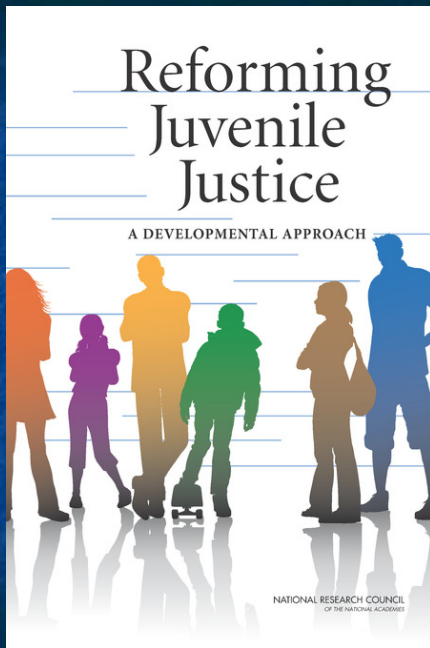
The New Wave

The Science and Practice of

Positive Youth Development

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

JUVENILE

SCHOOL BUS

Goals of Juvenile Justice Reform

• Resources to recruit and retain quality direct care staff

• Training that equips staff to meet complex needs of youth

• Viewing direct care as more than an unskilled entry-level position

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR JUVENILE SERVICES

Challenges in Treatment

The Deficit Model

Widely used diagnostic systems frame problems as mental disorders.

Interventions often involve medication or behavior modification.

Psychiatrists Critique Medical Model

Emotional and behavior problems are described as diseases with symptoms. But most childhood difficulties are developmental or adjustment problems.

JON MCCLELLAN
University of Washington

JOHN WERRY
University of Auckland

Girl Interrupted

The Medical Model

An account based on memoirs of a teen in psychiatric treatment

The Resilience Model

Discovering and cultivating strengths in all young people.

The Circle of Courage offers a strength-based, trauma-sensitive, resilience-focused approach for treatment and healthy development.

BARBARA FRANKOWSKI
University of Vermont College of Medicine

Youth Art
Adolescent Forensic Center,
Manchester, UK

Strength-Based Assessment

Each child draws on internal strengths and external supports in order to cope with challenges and meet biosocial needs. Growth planning requires transformational change to unleash the hidden potential of all children.

MARK FREADO

Searching for Strengths

The focus on "disorders" makes medications the treatment of choice— voices of youth are often unheard.

The focus on the quality of relationships empowers youth as partners in their own healing.

ROBERT FOLTZ
Chicago School of Professional Psychology

VOICES OF PIONEERS

If you aren't happy with where you have been, and you are not so sure about where you are going, the only thing to do is to set off in a new direction.

MAYA ANGELOU
and Starr Commonwealth student

Chapter 6

Action Research

Essential Evidence   *The Real Experts*

Essential Evidence

Instead of long lists of risks and protective factors, we should focus on a smaller number of elements that foster resilience and growth.

ANN MASTEN
University of Minnesota

Focus on Developmental Needs

ABRAHAM MASLOW

Prevention
Humans thrive if needs are met.
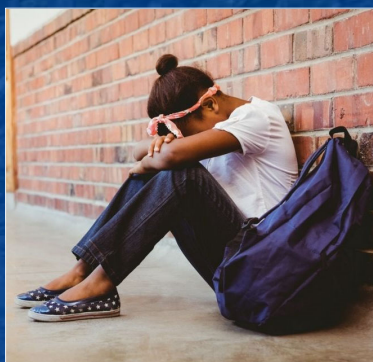
Maladjustment
Problems result from unmet needs.

Reclaiming
Healing comes from nurturing needs.

Slide 1

DEEP BRAIN LEARNING

Larry K. Brendtro   Martin L. Mitchell

evidence-based essentials
in education, treatment, and youth development
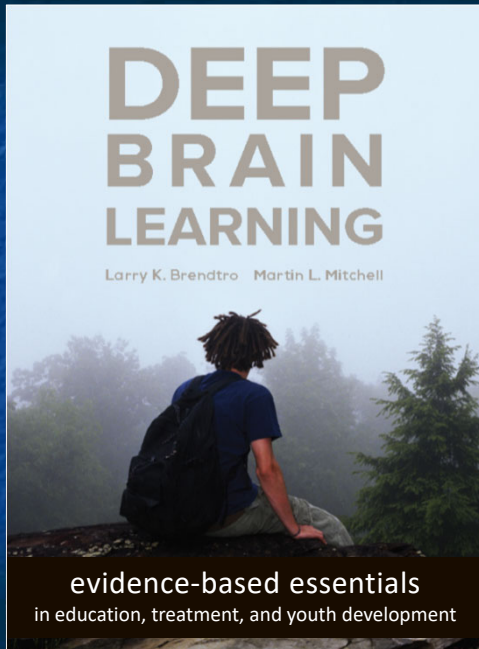
These are the evidence-based essentials of effective programs:

Attachment: Strengthen Belonging

Achievement: Strengthen Mastery

Autonomy: Strengthen Independence

Altruism: Strengthen Generosity

Slide 2

JUNLEI LI & MEGAN JULIAN:

*What is the **Active Ingredient** for success with children and youth at risk in any setting?*
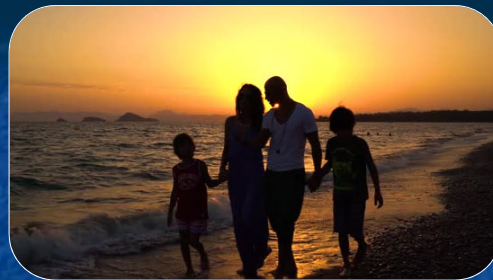
Developmental Relationships

1. A strong, caring bond
2. Increasingly complex tasks
3. Shifting power to the learner
4. Relationships of reciprocity

Meet Developmental Needs

Belonging

Mastery

Independence

Generosity

Consilience of Research on Universal Needs

Biosocial Needs	Attachment	Achievement	Autonomy	Altruism
Circle of Courage	Belonging	Mastery	Independence	Generosity
Hierarchy of Needs Maslow (1943)	Belongingness	Esteem	Self-Actualization	Self-Transcendence
Self Esteem Coopersmith (1967)	Significance	Competence	Power	Virtue
Positive Peer Culture Vorrath & Brendtro (1974)	Trust	Problem Solving	Responsibility	Care and Concern
Resilience Research Bernard (2004)	Social Competence	Problem Solving	Autonomy	Purpose
Resilient Brains Masten (2014)	Attachment	Mastery Motivation	Self-Efficacy	Spirituality/Purpose

Action Research
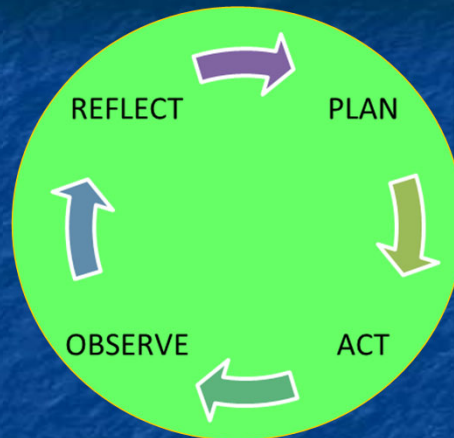
There is nothing as practical as a good theory.

KURT LEWIN
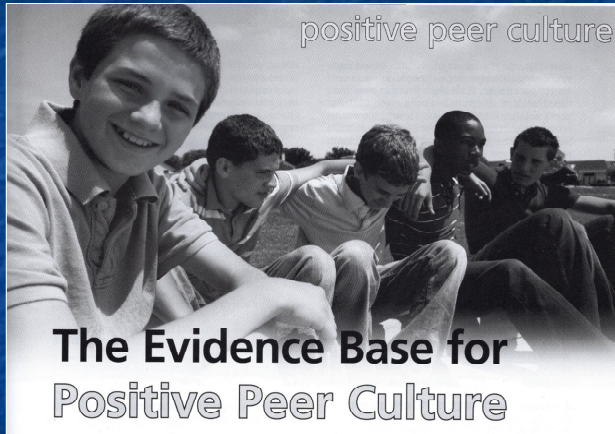
Key Research Outcomes

1. Student and staff safety
2. Close adult and peer bonds
3. Problem-solving abilities
4. Lower incidence of crisis
5. Internal locus of control
6. Increased self-worth
7. Prosocial behavior and values
8. School engagement
9. School achievement
10. Lower recidivism

ERIK LAURSEN

The Evidence Base for
Positive Peer Culture

35-38

Positive Peer Culture (PPC)

Scientific Rating 2: Supported by research evidence.

Target Population: High-risk youth in public, private, and alternative schools, and in residential settings, including juvenile corrections. For children/adolescents ages 11-22.

Program Overview: PPC is a peer-helping model designed to improve social competence and cultivate strengths in youth. Care and concern for others is the defining element of PPC. Rather than demanding obedience to authority or peers, PPC demands responsibility, empowering youth to discover their greatness. Caring is made fashionable and any hurting behavior totally unacceptable. PPC assumes that as group members learn to trust, respect, and take responsibility for the actions of others, norms can be established. These norms not only extinguish antisocial conduct, but more importantly reinforce prosocial attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Positive values and behavioral change are achieved through the peer-helping process. Helping others increases self-worth. As individuals become more committed to caring for others, they abandon hurting behaviors.

SIGRID JAMES,
University of Kassel, Germany

CEBC
THE CALIFORNIA EVIDENCE-BASED
CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR CHILD WELFARE

The Michigan Peer Influence Project

Funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, this extensive multi-year study tracked 45 PPC residential treatment groups and their staff teams.

MARTIN GOLD & D. WAYNE OSGOOD
Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan

Safety: The Basic Need

Evidence-Based Essentials

Safety is a basic need for all humans and essential in healing trauma.

Peer Influence Research

While many other programs for youth at risk develop negative peer subcultures, PPC researchers found youth viewed their environments as safe.

Attachment and Belonging

Evidence-Based Essentials

Belonging is essential to growth. But disconnected youth withdraw or seek substitute belongings in gangs or marginal groups.

Peer Influence Research

Seriously troubled youth need close personal relationships to reconstruct their lives. Youth who bond to staff and peers are more prosocial in the program and community.

The Power of Social Bonds

Attachments matter whether with caregivers, peers, teachers, or the community. If we forge these prosocial bonds, we help youth to become contributing members of the community.

Achievement and Mastery

Evidence-Based Essentials

Without mastery, young people retreat from challenges and fail to develop social and academic competence. Perpetual failure causes frustration, lack of motivation, and a sense of futility.

Peer Influence Research

School failure sparks antisocial behavior. Successful teachers give "uncommonly warm emotional support" and foster achievement. Students who develop interest in school have better life outcomes.

Engaged in Learning

Even youth with disastrous academic histories can develop an interest in school. This directly influences adjustment in the community.

Individualizing Learning
Conventional criteria for assessing performance are abandoned. Instead,
students are encouraged with frequent feedback about progress they are making.

MARTIN GOLD & WAYNE OSGOOD

The Widening Gap

Only .65 Grade Gain per year in school.

Expected Achievement

1000 Students referred to PPC

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

YEARS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL

Closing the Gap

1.5 to 2.0 Grade Gain per year in PPC groups

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

YEARS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL
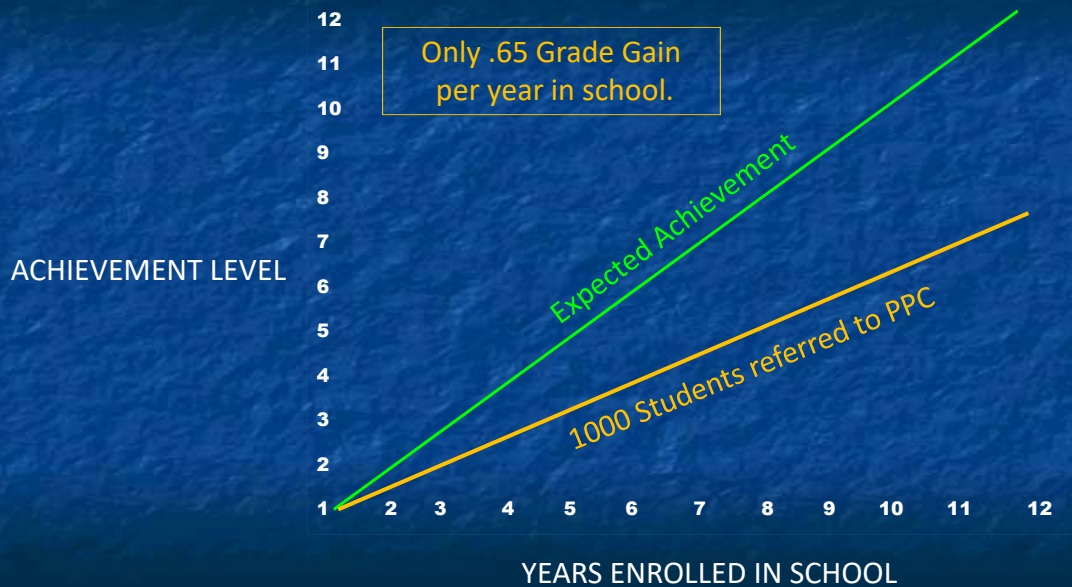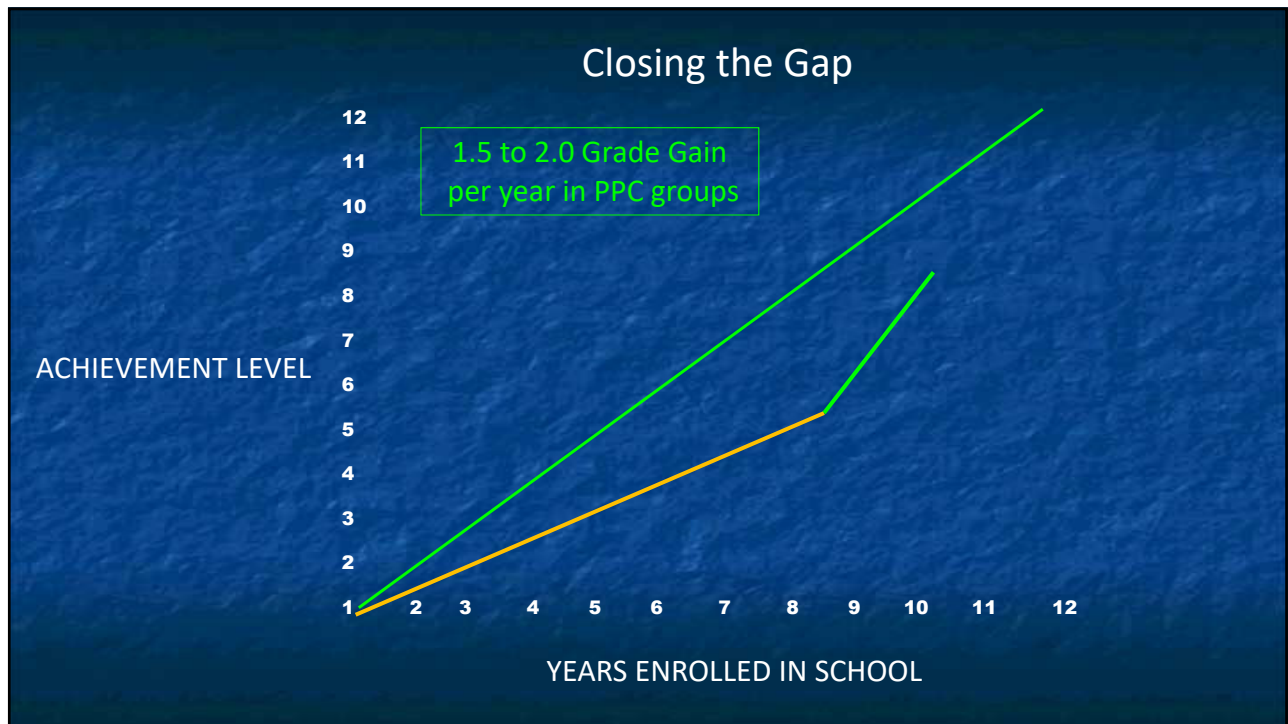
Success with Students at Risk

- Teachers who can connect with students who distrust teachers.
- Teachers who can help struggling students succeed.

33

Autonomy and Independence

Evidence-Based Essentials

Independence involves self-control, self-confidence, and responsible leadership. Youth who feel powerless are easily misled or seek counterfeit power by bullying peers or defying adult authority.

Peer Influence Research

Treating youth with respect builds autonomy and prosocial behavior. Coercive controls fuel negative peer subcultures and antisocial values.

Shared Responsibility

Formal decision making does not build autonomy and resist making trivial decisions.

Autonomy is a result of informal, respectful relationships rather than abdicating adult influence. Youth have a voice but are not always in control.

Autonomy as Mutual Respect

Formal decision making does not build autonomy. Autonomy is a result of informal, respectful relationships. Youth have a voice – but are not in control.

Altruism and Generosity

He's not heavy, he's my brother.

Evidence-Based Essentials

Being of value to others is the ultimate proof of one's worth. Without a spirit of generosity, youth are inconsiderate of others, self-indulgent, and devoid of real purpose for living.

Peer Influence Research

The spirit of generosity and concern for others is the core value in positive peer cultures. Peer helping and service learning achieve a role reversal as self-centered individuals become engaged in helping.

Prosocial Values

Youth who report positive relationships with a parent or teacher are less likely to embrace delinquent values or antisocial peer groups.

Teaching Generosity to Orphans

Children, the neighboring town of Altdorf has burned down and there are children without shelter, without food, without clothes. Do you want to bring 20 of these children to our house?

I can see their emotion: "*Oh yes, oh my god yes!*" But you will get less to eat and will even share your clothes with these children. But they stayed firm: "*Yes, even if we get less to eat and share our clothes with them, we will be happy if they come.*"

JOHANN PESTALOZZI
Zurich, Switzerland, 1799
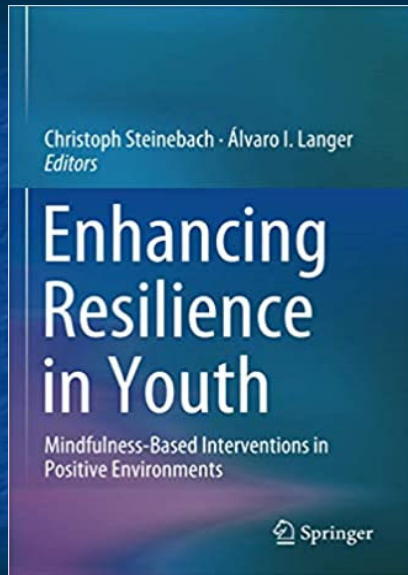
Generosity and Resilience

Positive Peer Culture research at the Zurich University of Applied Science show that generosity is a key factor in resilience and self-efficacy.

CHRISTOPH STEINEBACH
Zurich, Switzerland, 2019

Christoph Steinebach · Álvaro I. Langer
Editors

Enhancing Resilience in Youth

Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Positive Environments

Springer

German-Language Publications

PPC im Jugend-Kolleg am See

Hier läuft alles irgendwie anders

Beate Kreisle

Christoph Steinebach | Andreas Schrenk |
Ursula Steinebach | Larry K. Brendtro

Positive Peer Culture

Ein Manual für
starke Gruppengespräche

Günther Opp/Nicola Unger
Kinder stärken Kinder
Positive Peer Culture in der Praxis

Studien zur Schul- und Bildungsforschung
Ariane Otto
Positive Peerkultur aus Schülersicht
Herausforderungen (sonder-)pädagogischer Praxis

ZSB   Springer VS

The Real Experts

This work is dedicated to the true founders of Positive Peer Culture, those strong and noble young people who comprehend the power of caring.

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST PPC BOOK

VOICES OF YOUTH

Other schools try to get you to do the right thing by making you afraid of the consequence.

Here you learn to make the right decisions because it is the right thing to do.

Youth are Experts
Self-judgments by young people are valid and reliable.

THOMAS ACHENBACH

Youth are Deceptive
Deviant individuals are often the most unreliable informants.

ROLF LOEBER

PARTNERS IN EMPOWERMENT
Thomas F. Tate, Randall L. Copas, and William C. Wasmund
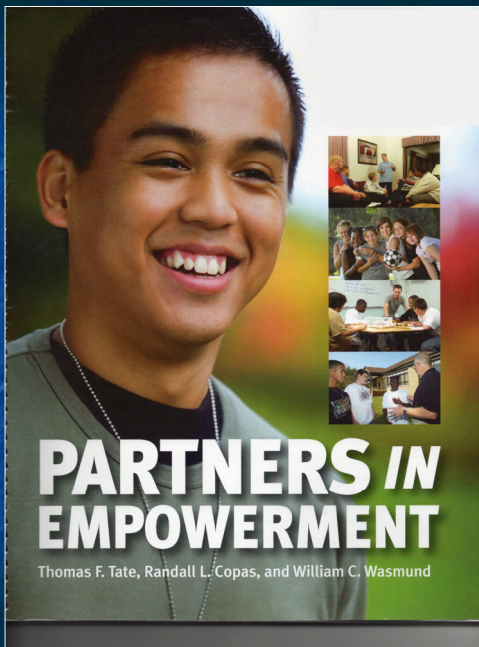
Ladder of Youth Participation
Adapted from Roger Hart

Full Participation

Giving youth a voice

Consulting with youth

Informing young people

Token youth involvement

Adult designs "interventions"
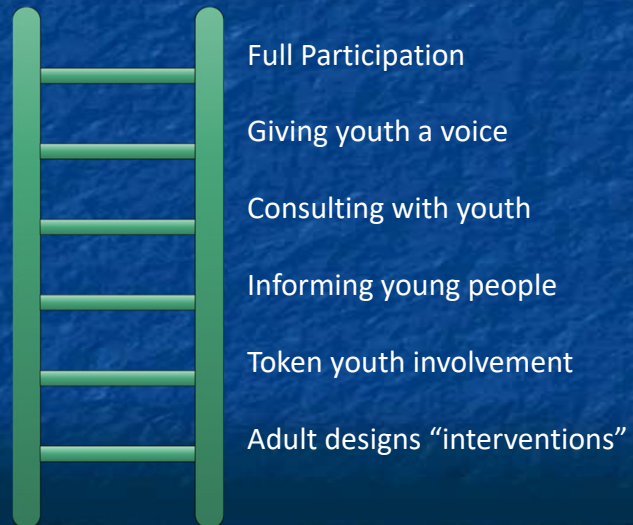
Helping 101

In formal group sessions, youth become expert at giving and receiving help— skills rare among most other youth. They apply these abilities in natural relationships with friends, family, and community.

Problem Youths or Problem Solvers?

WILLIAM WASMUND & RANDY COPAS

Youth as Experts

These young people were members of different PPC groups and most had multiple prior placements. Here they share perspectives on peer helping.

What got you into this program?

● Doing what I wanted to do. Running with gangs because I wanted to fit in.

● Not listening to my parents, running away, selling drugs, doing drugs, getting involved with gang activities.

● Not able to cope with my feelings, manipulating my family to get what I wanted.

How does PPC prepare you to be successful?

● It teaches you responsibility and how to care for other people.

● The program prepares you to deal with things you did in the past through exploring different solutions and points of view.

What motivates you to want to succeed?

● When a person is doing real well, you use them as an example: "I'm going to do what they did."

● The staff are people I can look up to and be like, to succeed like they have succeeded.

● Helping others in the group gives you so much encouragement for doing the right thing. It really makes you feel good.

How does PPC compare with other programs?

● You do time, but they don't teach you how to think about other people or to look at what you are doing wrong.

● A lot of programs work on level systems and all you have to do is "be good." Here they challenge your thinking and get down to the root of the problem. You figure out how to change it instead of just making it look good on the surface.

Can you fake your way out of the program?

● You can only fake for so long, and it's always going to break at some time.

● Peers have been through the same thing. You can't get away with things you might with some older people.

● I don't think anyone can fake their way out of the program, because they deal more with your thinking here and the group is aware of how you think about things.

What have you changed about yourself?

● I've learned how my actions affect other people.

● My group helped me feel comfortable being myself instead of having to be somebody I'm not.

● PPC helps develop our problem-solving skills so when those situations come up again, we will be able to deal with them and make ourselves more successful instead of giving up.

Do other kids really care about you?

● They go out of their way to help you. They talk to you when you're feeling down and they help you change so that you'll be a better person.

● Some show they do, and some just say they do. It basically goes by actions.

● To some degree everyone cares, but sometimes the selfishness that brought them here gets in the way.

Can kids really help other kids?

● Yes, kids can help other kids to change. They know better than psychologists what there is to deal with in life, and that's better than anything.

● I think youth can help other youth more effectively than older people can. They relate more to people their age and are more ready to believe them.

What happens in group meetings?

● Group meetings allow every individual to identify the problems that brought them here and that they have had throughout the day.

● We help one person each meeting, exploring their thinking. We try to show them the right way to do things so that a change can come about.

Do you become too dependent on your group?

● At first you depend on your group. Then as you take their advice and start becoming a leader, you are the person teaching others and being there for them.

● As you keep practicing these things, it becomes more natural and you're no longer dependent on the group. You can use yourself.

Doesn't PPC make it okay to bully other kids?

● Everybody in the group is considered equal. People prevent that problem from happening.

● In every group you always have a person who will prevent anything that allows somebody to get hurt.

What do you do if someone won't cooperate?

● We try our best as a group to help them out. We take care of their responsibilities, and when they calm down, we work through what happened.

● We work with them when they are not upset, because that's the time they are going to get the most help.

Wouldn't it be better if you could punish?

● You help the person so the problem won't happen again. If you punish, it's not helping.

● Punishment doesn't give a chance to learn from what they've done or how they've hurt people. That's not really promoting change or showing them how to be better.

● If everyone were punished for their problems, everyone would be in jail.

How do you know if a person is ready to leave?

● By their actions and their thinking.

● I've taken responsibility for the things I have done. I do my best to help even if it means taking up my own time. I play a leadership role.

● I try to have a relationship with everyone in the group so they feel they could come to me and ask me for help and not be scared or feel inferior.

Does helping others change you?

● Helping others helps you by building relationships and teaching you not to be selfish.

● Community service helps us practice our communication and social skills. It gives us a chance to make other people happy.

● Helping other people by giving advice, you remember that when you are having the same problem. It provides a chance for you to take your own advice.

Freedom Writers

Voices for Change

Our challenge is to advocate for policies and practices that will impact the positive futures of children.

ELIZABETH CAREY

Never doubt that a small group of persons can change the world. This is the only thing that ever has.

MARGARET MEADE