

Unlocking the Mystery: Keys to Positive Youth Development



APRIL 22, 2017

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Welcome!



- **Get Ready to Engage!**

- This is a participatory keynote! 😊

- **Use the Handouts!**

- There's a box on the handout that tells you where you can get a clean copy and copies of this PowerPoint and more!

Who's Here?



Caboodle Cards!

You're using the question in the TOP LEFT corner.

Positive Youth Development



- An approach for working with youth that focuses on building the positive attributes young people need in order to be successful
- Emphasizes supports and services
- Focuses on youths' strengths

“Problem-free is not fully prepared”

Three Keys of Positive Youth Development



- 1. Sparks:** Youth's deepest passions and interests
- 2. Relationships:** To provide opportunities for and support growth
- 3. Youth Voice:** Youth's confidence, skills and opportunities to influence things that matter to them

What do these quotes have in common?



Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success. When you do a thing, do it with all your might. Put your whole soul into it. Stamp it with your own personality. Be active, be energetic and faithful, and you will accomplish your object. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

What do these quotes have in common?



Without work, all life goes rotten. But when work is soulless, life stifles and dies.

--Albert Camus

Anything that gets your blood racing is probably worth doing. --Hunter S. Thompson

The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.

--Mark Twain

Sparks



- A spark is something that gives one's life meaning and purpose. It's an interest, a passion, or a gift.
- Sparks are the hidden flames in young people's lives that excite them and tap into their true passions.
- Sparks come from the gut. They motivate and inspire. They're authentic passions, talents, assets, skills, and dreams.

Sparks



- Sparks can be musical, athletic, intellectual, academic, relational, etc.
- Sparks can ignite a lifelong vocation or career, or balance other activities to create an emotionally satisfying, enriched life.
- Sparks get young people going on a positive path, away from the conflicts and negative issues.

My Spark Worksheet



In the center circle, list your spark

In the other 4 circles, list:

- One way in which spark was fueled in your life
- A person or relationship that played a part in igniting this spark or keeping it lit
- A space or place that played an important role in igniting this spark or keeping it lit
- The most important factor in discovering / revealing your spark

For example...

My Spark

SOMETHING THAT FUELED MY SPARK

Opportunity
to take
classes

AN IMPORTANT FACTOR

The
accessibility
of art
supplies

MY SPARK

PAINTING

PLACE

The town
that I grew
up in was an
art colony

PERSON

High school
teacher

Categories of Sparks



- Music
- Art (for example, visual arts, dramatic arts, etc.)
- Culinary
- Athletic
- Technological
- Relational (for example, being a mentor or working with the elderly)
- Intellectual or academic
- Service-oriented (for example, volunteering in various capacities)
- Other

Sparks Group Discussion



Discuss the following questions with your people:

- **What is your first and earliest memory of your spark?**
- **Who was influential in helping you to discover your spark? What qualities in this person or relationship were important in influencing your spark?**
- **How has having this spark shaped or impacted you? How does this spark influence your life?**

Research Shows...



Young people who identify their sparks and get support in developing them from caring adults:

- **Have higher grades in school**
- **Are more likely to be socially competent**
- **Are more likely to be physically healthy**

Research Shows...



Young people who identify their sparks and get support in developing them from caring adults:

- Are more likely to volunteer to help other people
- Are more likely to be good stewards of the earth and its resources
- Are more likely to have a sense of purpose

Relationships



Through meaningful relationships, youth discover their passions, feel safe in taking on new opportunities, and receive support and encouragement.

Commonality



Commonality is the key ingredient in all important relationships in our lives.

- You share something/ have something in common with the meaningful people in your life.
- It can include shared interests, passions, viewpoints, perspectives, needs, communication styles, etc.

Commonality



Commonality is the cornerstone of all positive relationships:

- Relationships between staff members
- Relationships between youth
- Relationships between staff and youth

The more opportunities that we *intentionally* create for the people in your program to connect in a real way, the more positive relationships we foster.

Strategies for Creating Commonality



Do you....

- Have a youth and/or staff welcome/orientation team for new members
- Engage staff or youth in icebreakers and team-building exercises on a regular basis;
- Give youth choices on a daily basis (start with discrete options then move to open-ended; many youth don't know the possibilities)
- Notice what youth are doing well and give positive, specific, timely feedback

Strategies for Creating Commonality



- Look for non-verbal cues that youth are disengaged and disconnected from programming
- Employ the 1, 2, 3 rule: be able to name 1 spark that each youth has, 2 sparks that each of your colleagues has, and 3 strengths that each youth has
- Integrate opportunities for self-expression (the creation of art, music, dance, etc.) in program areas where you would not expect them
- Introduce parents to one another; do icebreakers at events that involve parents

Strategies for Creating Commonality



- **Intentionally group kids who wouldn't otherwise select to be with one another in activities**
- **Use experiences as a gateway to open-ended discussion (think 50/50 rule)**
- **Incorporate youth-led activities regularly**
- **Ask open-ended questions**
- **Make 'relationship-building' part of the job description and performance review**

Commonality WIBYT



Brainstorm two strategies that you could use immediately to help the identified people in your program find commonalities.

- Numbers 1-18: Staff – Staff
- Numbers 19-37: Youth – Youth
- Numbers 38-56: Staff – Youth

Youth Voice



Includes the perspectives, ideas, experiences, knowledge, and actions of young people.

Means working ***with*** young people as active and equitable partners in the programming that impacts them.

Youth Voice



If you had a problem in the Black community, and you brought in a group of White people to discuss how to solve it, almost nobody would take that panel seriously. In fact, there'd probably be a public outcry. It would be the same for women's issues or gay issues. But every day, in local arenas all the way to the White House, adults sit around and decide what problems youth have and what youth need, without ever consulting us.

--Jason, 17 years old, Youth Force Member

Youth Voice



How are you incorporating Youth Voice into your programming?

What opportunities and supports do you give youth to provide input and ideas?

Research Shows...



- Youth with high levels of **sparks, voice and relationships** do better on every academic, psychological, social-emotional and behavioral outcome.
- More than 1/3 of 15-year-olds do not score high on any of the strengths.
- Only 7 percent experience high levels of all three strengths.

Research Shows...



- Teens need positive, sustained and meaningful **relationships** with extended family members, teachers, mentors, grandparents, neighbors and other caring adults.
- Only 19% of 15-year-olds had a significant relationship with a caring adult outside of the family.

Positive Youth Development



- An approach for working with youth that focuses on building the positive attributes young people need in order to be successful
- Emphasizes supports and services
- Focuses on youths' strengths
- Sparks + Positive Relationships + Youth Voice = PYD

“Problem-free is not fully prepared”

What's the Key?



Today, in each session, I want you to identify what's "key" for you.

What is your main takeaway?

What's an idea you have for what you can do differently based on your new or reaffirmed knowledge?

Place these on your handout – and collect your colorful key – as a reminder of these important pieces of the day.

What's the Key?



You've added to your handout, or at least collected colorful keys today.

So...what's key?