Youth Engagement Matters:
The Power of Youth Voice in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health
Office of Population Affairs

March 2, 2020, 2-3 pm EST

Introductory Webinars from OPA

- **Inspiration, Ideation, Implementation: The Power of Design Thinking in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Webinar**

  Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 2:00-3:00 pm ET

- **A Systems Thinking Approach to Teen Pregnancy Prevention Webinar**
  Thursday, February 27, 2020, 2:00-3:00 pm ET

- **Youth Engagement Matters: The Power of Youth Voice in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Webinar**

  Monday, March 2, 2020, 2:00-3:00 pm ET

More information about each webinar is available on the OPA website:
hhs.gov/ash/oah/grant-programs/funding-opportunities/index.html

Important Note:

- We will **not** answer any question related to open funding opportunity announcements during these webinars

- Any questions about open FOAs should be directed to OPA and/or OASH Office of Grants Management

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HEALTH

Youth Engagement Matters: The Power of Youth Voice in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

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March 2, 2020

Agenda

- Overview & Objectives

- Quality Youth Programs

- Rings of Engagement
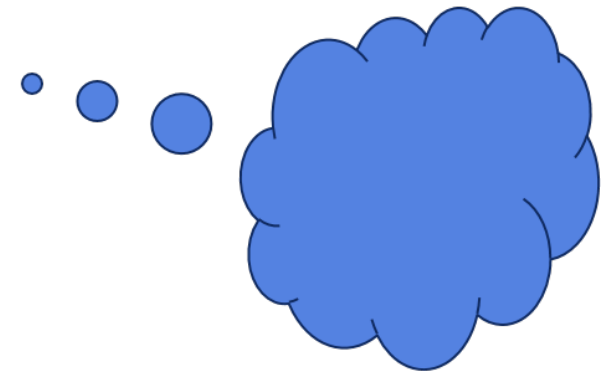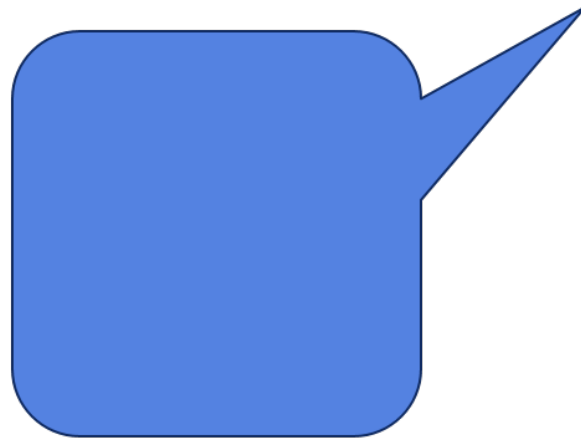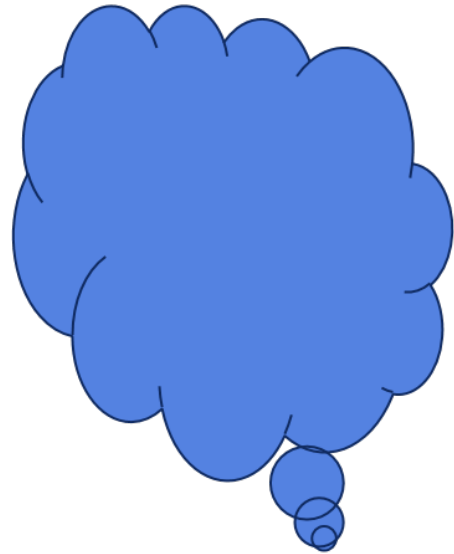
- Organizational Strategies

- Q&A

Objective of Training

- Define quality youth programming and youth engagement

- Learn about and recognize Rings of Engagement in their programming

- Analyze current program with lens of YE

- How to apply youth voice for system change

Envisioning Youth Engagement

Youth Work Is:

"…the interactive practice of shared teaching and learning that organizes around the needs, interests, aspirations and well-being of young people."
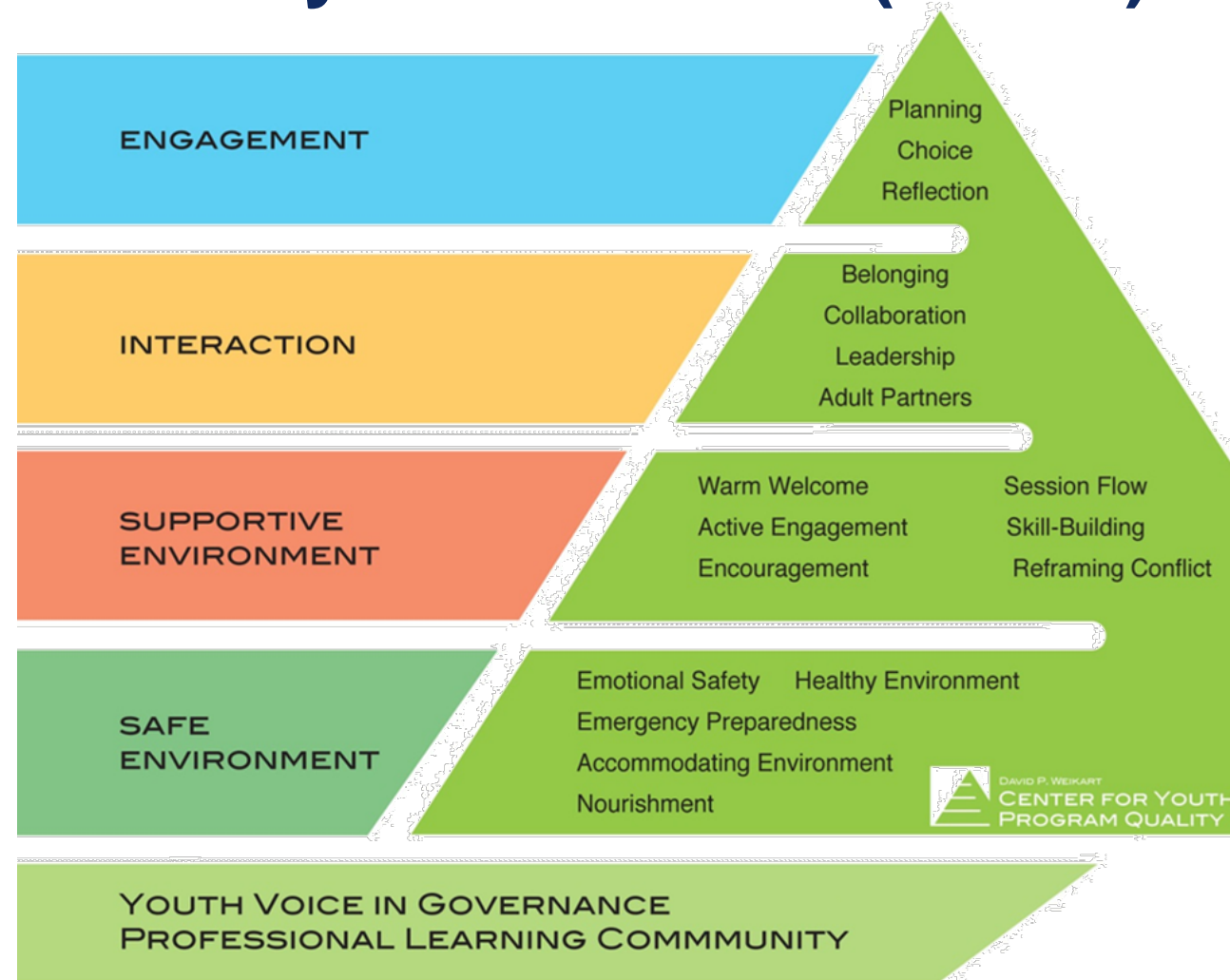
Walker (2009)

Experienced Youth Serving Professionals:

- Recognize that learning happens through a partnership between the youth worker and a young person;

- Meet young people where they are and build from there;

- Are attentive to the identity, background and everyday *life* of young people

Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)

Quality Programs Offer:

- Physical and emotional safety

- Supportive relationships

- Opportunities to belong

- Positive social norms

- Support for efficacy and mattering

- Opportunities to build skills

- Integration of family, school and community efforts

Source: National Research Council

Quality Programs ALSO Offer:

- Intentional focus on a range of youth development outcomes

- Building connections and relationships

- Deliberate program structure, design and delivery

- Intensity of contact

- Support for continuous reflection and data-driven change.

Source: National Research Council

Youth Engagement…

- Tends to be Experiential, Project-based learning

- Attends to THEIR interests & developmental needs

- Recognizes young people's unique strengths

- Opportunities for youth to make a difference

Youth Engagement Myths

- YE is accomplished by placing one youth on a board or committee.

- YE means that adults surrender their roles as guides and educators.

- Adults are ready for youth engagement.
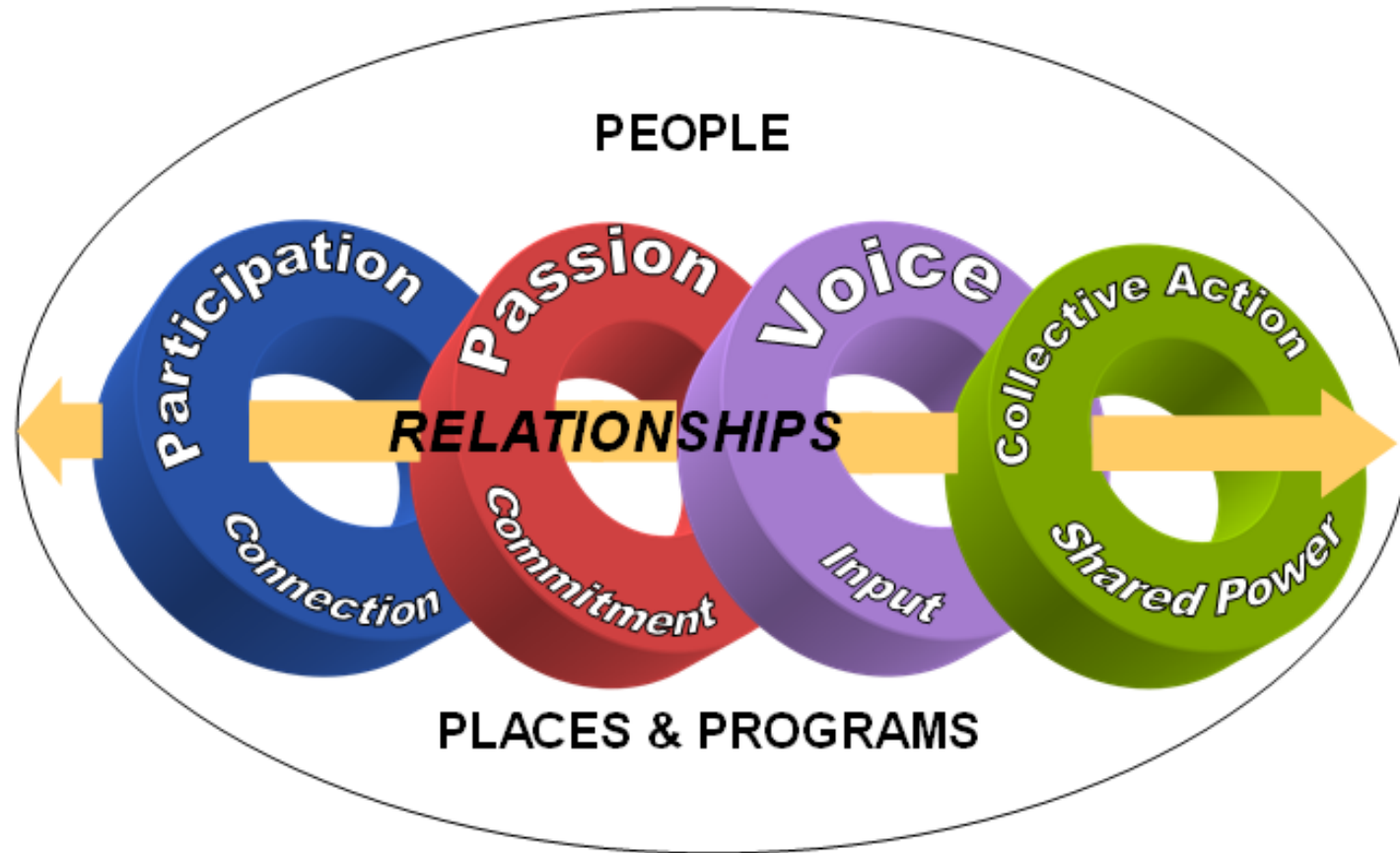
- Youth are ready for adult engagement.

(Modified from Wheeler, 2003)

Rings of Engagement
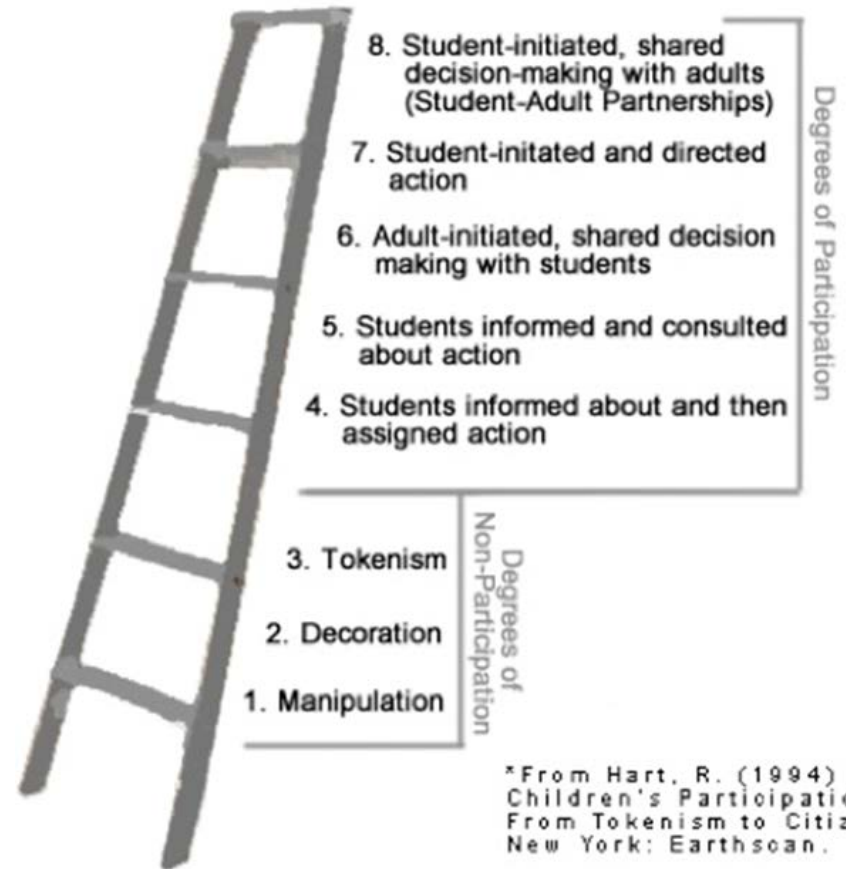
Youth Engagement as Participation

- WHO DECIDES what they will do changes as they get older

- WHAT YOUTH ARE INTERESTED IN change as they get older

- Developmental Ladders of Leadership

  - Opportunities to practice leadership, voice

  - Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation

The Ladder of Student Involvement in School

The Ladder of Student Involvement in School
Adapted by Adam Fletcher from the work of Roger Hart*

Degrees of Participation

8. Student-initiated, shared decision-making with adults (Student-Adult Partnerships)
7. Student-initated and directed action
6. Adult-initiated, shared decision making with students
5. Students informed and consulted about action
4. Students informed about and then assigned action

Degrees of Non-Participation

3. Tokenism
2. Decoration
1. Manipulation

*From Hart, R. (1994) Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship. New York: Earthscan.

Youth Engagement as Passion
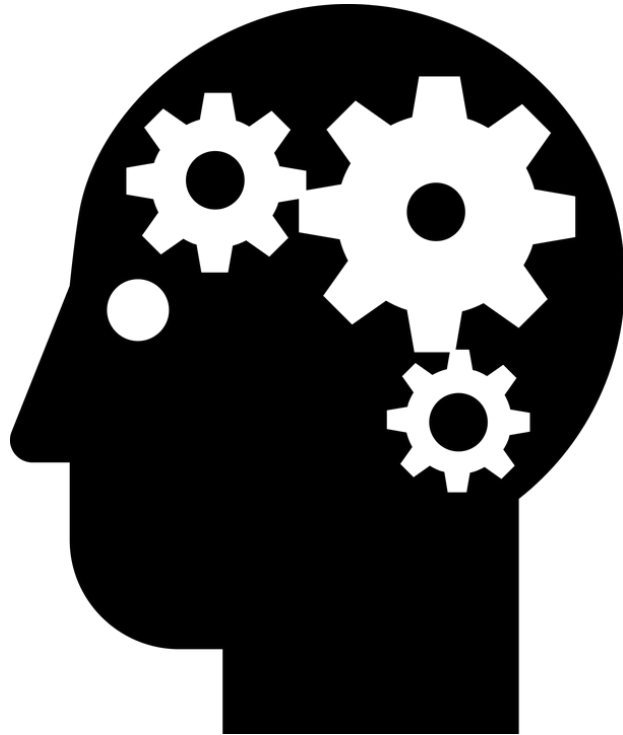
- Exposing youth to many different ideas, opportunities, relationships, experiences.

- Find something they're really into and will work hard at.

Youth Engagement as Voice = Input into Decisions

Opportunities to voice ideas must be:
- Authentic
- Ongoing
- Inclusive
- Visible

Youth & adults need to develop capacities for:
- Inviting and responding to opportunities for informal conversation
- Inviting and offering input through formal structures
- Effectively facilitating dialogue
- Active listening, and applying new learning
- Understanding and appreciating each other's strengths, perspectives

Youth Engagement as Collective Action

Youth and adults partner to achieve common goals, ***sharing power*** and authority to make decisions along the way.

- Sharing decision making power ***within*** current systems

- Sharing power to create new programs and/or ***change*** systems

Collective Action

Keys to Creating It:

- Openness to new ideas about youth/adult roles

- Skills to facilitate collaborative processes

- Transparency about power

Collective Action (con't)

To *change* organizations, communities:

- Identify issues of deep concern

- Learn about root causes of issues

- Stay with it for the long haul

Benefits of Collective Action

- Way for alienated youth to help *create* a community in which they want to engage

- Develop critical social consciousness

- Skills for *collaboration, co-construction of ideas*

- Develop a sense of *collective* identity, efficacy & agency

- Try out new roles in/with community

- Learn to negotiate balance between individual and collective values and beliefs

- Build relationships based in mutual respect

A Foundation for Getting There

- An awareness of the public value of youth

- Understanding of organizational history and goals

- Conducting SOAR analysis or other evaluation of programs

- Ensure shared YE goals within organizational structure

Norms and Practices Supporting Youth Engagement

- Defining "youth"

- "Participation" vs. "Engagement" – What do we really mean?

- Future Citizens vs. Citizens NOW

- Youth Decision-Making

Program Evaluation

Shared Youth Engagement Goals

- Providing a full range of youth engagement opportunities in the community.

- Creating shared mechanisms to recruit youth and adult participants.

- Providing training/coaching for youth and adult participants

- Research and evaluation

- Identifying, creating and accessing funding sources

- Communication efforts to expand and deepen support for youth engagement in the community

(Kellogg, 2007; Pittman, Martin & Williams, 2007; Zeldin, Camino & Calvert, 2007)

Bringing It Back Home to Community

- Provide a safe space for identity exploration

- Explore neighborhoods as a backdrop for cultural identity formation

- Acknowledge and address barriers in urban settings

- Recognize and respect survival strategies

- Get elders' perspectives on YE & youth-adult partnerships

- Understand from various ecological levels
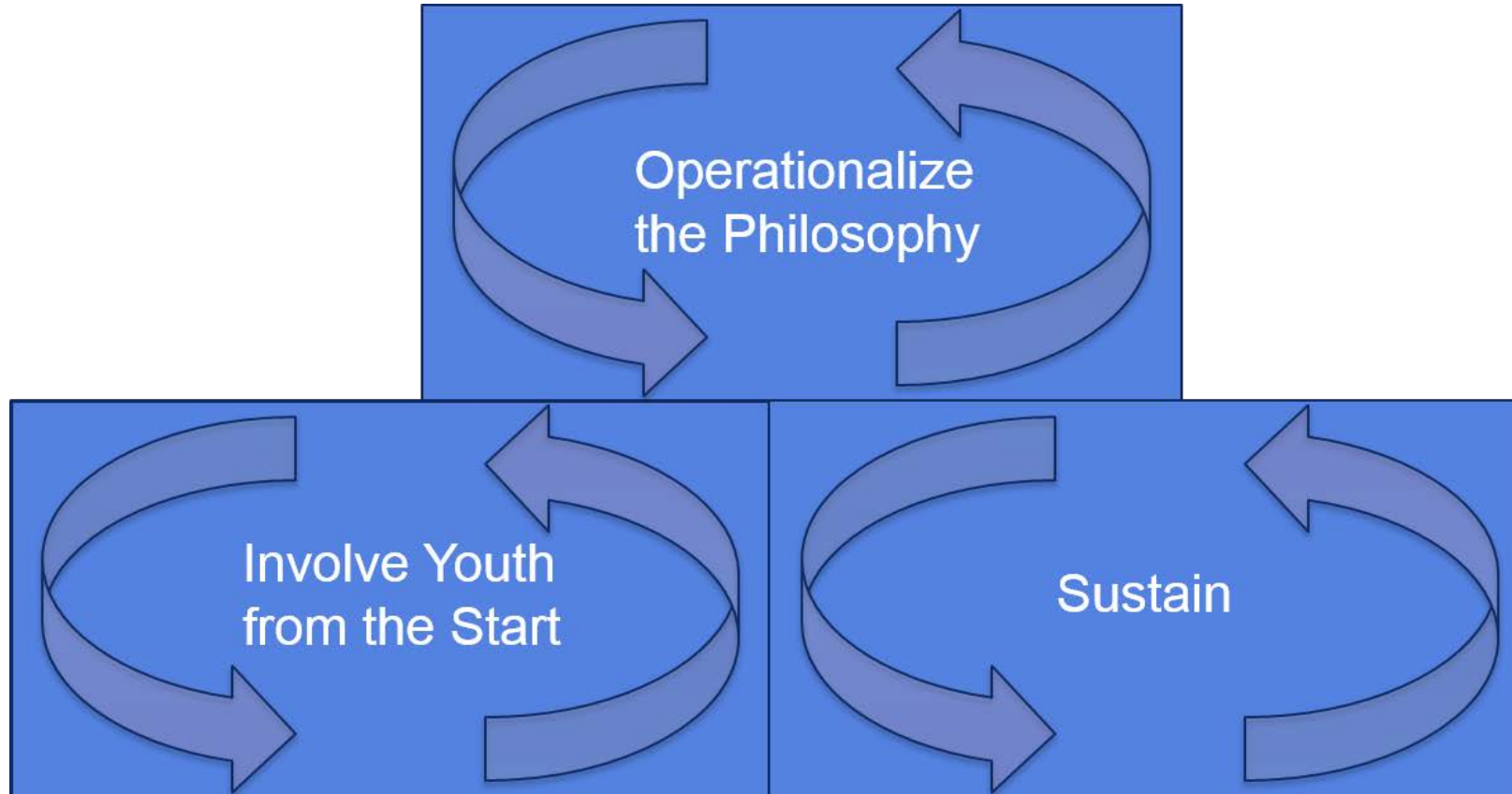
(Villarruel, 2002)

Equity to Liberation
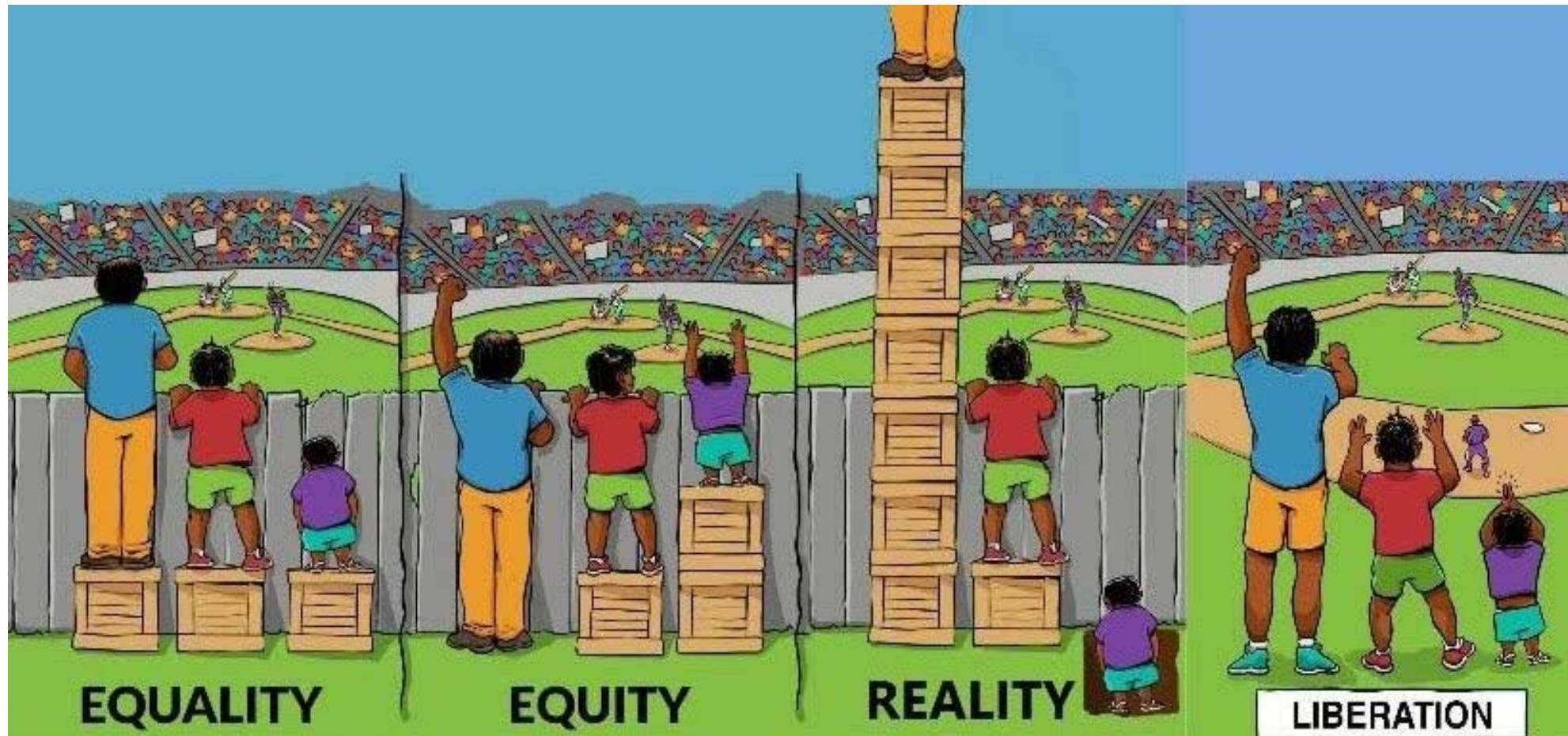
Building Organizational Infrastructure

Organizational Infrastructure

Operationalize the philosophy

- Small groups collaborate, create, come together around opportunities
- Develop processes and tools for engagement
    - training and on-going coaching for youth and adult leaders
    - process-based support to help participants evaluate and improve practice as they go
    - opportunities to share learning and celebrate success across the organization

Sustain

- Ongoing recruitment and development opportunities – built-in
    - Range of roles for youth to grow into/shape
    - "Near-peer" mentors

Current OPA Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs)

- Optimally Changing the Map of Teen Pregnancy through Replication of Programs Proven Effective (Tier 1) (AH-TP1-20-001)

- Teen Pregnancy Prevention (Tier 2) - Phase II Rigorous Evaluation of Promising Interventions (AH-TP2-20-001)

- Innovation and Impact Network Grants (Tier 2) – Achieving Optimal Health and Preventing Teen Pregnancy in Key Priority Areas (AH-TP2-20-002)

Find FOAs and FAQS at: hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/webinars.html

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