YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Principles and Practices in Out-of-School Time Settings

2nd Edition

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Editors

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Passion

Acknowledgments

This book was a labor of love and professional commitment on the part of many people. First, thanks go to the authors who contributed chapters to this effort. Their expertise has enabled the book to go well beyond what it could have been if "we," Peter and Linda, had tried to write all of the chapters ourselves. We appreciate the flexibility and willingness of the authors to partner with us to make this second edition a reality. It was a sincere pleasure to work with so many interesting and talented individuals.

We would also like to thank a group of individuals who were willing to review the first edition of the book and provide us with critical feedback that helped shape the content and focus of this second edition: Jason Bocarro, Mat Duerden, Ann Gillard, Barry Garst, and Karen Melton.

The team at Sagamore–Venture has been nothing short of amazing for its work on producing this book. In particular, we would like to thank Peter Bannon, who agreed to let us undertake a second edition, and Susan Davis, Director of Development and Production, who guided the book through the production process. We would also like to thank Marissa Willison, graphic designer, and Misti Gilles, director of sales and marketing, who also contributed greatly to facilitating the development of a quality product. We would also like to thank Geof Godbey and the original crew at Venture Publishing who commissioned the first edition of this book.

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Finally, we would like to thank all of the youth development professionals who have mentored and worked with us over the years, as well as all of those who make a difference in young people's lives. Linda particularly would like to acknowledge and thank Hildi Aspen, from the Monroeville, PA YMCA, who inspired and changed the lives of so many young people who were largely otherwise disenfranchised as they transitioned to adulthood. Peter would like to acknowledge the special contributions of Jerry Ringerman, a wonderful youth leader, who made such a meaningful difference in the lives of youth over his career.

We sincerely hope that you find yourself enriched by what you read in this volume, that you are encouraged to add to your existing arsenal of information that can inform practice, and that you extend your commitment to helping youth thrive.


ALL EYES ON

Preface

If you are reading this book, you must have an interest in youth, and in particular, the principles and practices associated with offering youth development programs in out-of-school time (OST) settings. The purpose of this book is to increase the capacity of students and professionals working with youth in OST contexts to more fully contribute to their development. Thus, our goal is to facilitate increased knowledge about who youth are, why they do what they do, and how to facilitate their development through OST programs and services. This is the second edition of a project we began in 2005. The original volume was called *Recreation and Youth Development*. Changes in the field and our own thinking led to the retitled and updated book you are reading today.

We hope you are challenged and inspired by what you read so that you undertake efforts to help youth thrive as they make their way through adolescence and, hopefully, move on successfully to young adulthood. Perhaps you will be confronted with new ideas and perspectives. We hope so. We also hope you will discuss and debate these ideas, perspectives, and issues with others. To facilitate these discussions, authors have included at the end of each chapter a set set of discussion questions and assignments that should enhance your learning experience.

Guiding Beliefs for this Book

We want to share some of the basic beliefs that guided the development of this book and its 2005 predecessor. These basic beliefs should be evident as you move through the book. Fundamentally, we believe the following:

- It necessary to take an ecological approach to conceptualizing and developing youth services.
- OST settings are powerful contexts for youth development.
- The diversity in the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and experiences, as well as ability levels, of young people must be understood and honored when developing programs and services.
- Adults can be powerful contributors to youth development.
- Youth can and must be meaningful contributors to their own development.
- A strategy based on promoting positive experiences through OST activities is more effective than an approach solely focused on reducing problems.
- Deliberate, well-planned programs based on achieving healthy developmental outcomes are essential.
- Youth need to be educated and guided in order to reap healthy developmental benefits through OST programs.
- We must move beyond simply counting the number of participants in programs to a fuller understanding of why programs work (or not), for whom they work, and under what conditions they work.

Who and Context

One of the challenges with a book where chapters are supplied by different authors is to try to bring coherence to the overall work. For example, authors used a variety of terms to refer to young people, including adolescents, youth and young people. You will also notice that there are several different labels that the authors used when referring to professionals who work with young people, including youth worker, recreation professional, youth development specialist or professional, and program specialist. In the end, we decided that the diversity of terms referring to "youth" and "professionals" reflects the reality of the different contexts through which supports, opportunities, programs, and services are available to youth. Thus, these various terms are used throughout the book.

Flow and Progression of Book

This book has a deliberate flow to it. In addition, we tried to relate the material in a chapter to ideas in other chapters. Because of this, there are at times some redundancies of basic ideas across chapters. In our editing, we worked to eliminate unnecessary redundancies, but left instances where we felt they might help the reader link ideas together and avoid the book becoming simply a series of disparate chapters written by different authors. Although we think that most readers will want to read the book in the current order of the chapters, some may choose to read only specific chapters of special interest. We would like to suggest, however, that the material in the first section of the book is essential groundwork and provides a context for grasping some of the nuances of information presented later in the book.

The book is divided into five sections:

- All About Youth
- Developing Youths' Potential
- Systematic Program Planning and Evaluation
- The Role of Adults in the Lives of Youth
- Diversity: Implications for Youth Development

Chapters in the first section combine to paint a picture of what youth development means, who youth are today, and the evolution and current status of youth organizations.

The second section contains chapters that describe some of the basic theoretical frameworks that examine youth development, the role of recreation as a context for youth development, and the specific role of youth sport, nature-based activities, and arts and creative activities as settings for youth development.

In the third section, authors present information about systematic programming and evaluation, including the importance of intentional programming and the use of logic models and program assessment and evaluation. Approaches to structuring what are called deep and impactful experiences for youth are also presented.

The chapters in the fourth section discuss the crucial role played by adults in the lives of youth, including families, youth leaders, and mentors.

In the fifth section, chapters include discussions of the necessity to consider the diversity of youth and the importance of context in the development of youths' potential. Issues of race and ethnicity are discussed, along with issues related to providing programs for immigrant youth and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. The final chapter in this section deals with the philosophy behind and design of programs for youth with differing abilities.

Finally, we end the book with a chapter about the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to become a skilled youth professional. Whether you are a student or a youth professional already in the field, we hope you will find the information enlightening and helpful as you create a plan for professional advancement. Even if you are already working in the field, we hope you find this material useful to your thought processes and for thinking about how the content might inform practice.

The Voices in the Book

When you read the bios of the authors, you will see that we were fortunate that individuals with a broad set of backgrounds and experiences were willing to contribute chapters or work with us as co-authors on chapters for the book. Thus, the material is enriched by the involvement of a number of different "voices." We owe a debt of gratitude to all of our partners who made this book possible, including the following: Lynn Anderson, Cheryl Baldwin, Jason Bocarro, Aishia Brown, Laurie Browne, Leslie Nicole Camarillo, Rachel Chamberlain, Mary Ann Devine, Michael Edwards, Gary Ellis, Andrea Ettekal, Patti Freeman, M. Gayle Gabriel, Barry Garst, Ann Gillard, Camilla Hodge, Gareth Jones, Andrew Lacanienta, Reed Larson, Nicole McAninch, Karen Melton, Denise Montgomery, Erika Olschewski, Corliss Outley, Daniel Perkins, Rebecca Saito, Sandra Simpkins, Monika Stodolska, Alex Sullins, Theresa Sullivan, Daniel Theriault, Kathrin Walker, and Elizabeth Weybright.

We worked with each of the chapter authors in an effort to create material that related to the overall themes of the book. Thus, all of the chapters were edited and underwent several rounds of revisions, including the ones we were involved in as authors. We hope this improved the readability of the overall book.

You will notice in the book that when it is necessary to refer to the authors, the term "we" was used. The use of "we" made it easier for the book to have a common voice. This does not mean, however, that all authors are collectively responsible for any failings of the book. It would be fair to say that all the individual strengths of the book are due to the expertise of our contributors and all of the areas needing improvement or clarification are on us, Peter and Linda.

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Linda L. Caldwell

Linda L. Caldwell is a distinguished professor emerita in the Departments of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management and Human Development and Family Studies at The Pennsylvania State University. Linda also serves as an "extraordinary professor" at the University of the Western Cape and North West University, both in South Africa, and as a guest professor at the University of Iceland. Her research focuses on interventions that develop youth competencies, promote healthy lifestyles, and reduce risky leisure behavior. She is the co-developer of two interventions that focus on preventing adolescent risk behavior through the positive use of free time: *TimeWise: Taking Charge of Leisure Time,* and *HealthWise South Africa: Life Skills for Young Adults.*

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Chapter 1

Ten Principles of Youth Development

Linda L. Caldwell and Peter A. Witt

This book was written to help you (a) understand how youth develop through their out-of-school time (OST) experiences and (b) structure and provide the necessary supports, opportunities, programs, and services (SOPS) to promote optimal youth development in OST settings. The goal of this chapter is to set the stage for the rest of the chapters in this book by providing a set of general principles to guide youth development. These principles have evolved over the last 45-plus years as practitioners, researchers, and young people have defined the basic SOPS necessary to enable youth to develop fully from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. All of the chapters in the book relate in some way to these principles.

Simply speaking, a youth development approach is "rooted in a commitment to enabling all young people to thrive" (Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004, p. 3). Note the use of the word *all*. Thus, one overarching ideal of a youth development approach is universality or inclusiveness; no matter the background and circumstances, all youth are in need of SOPS that promote positive youth development. A second overarching ideal is youth development work focuses on providing SOPS so that youth can thrive. The 10 principles in this chapter are based on these two ideals.

Thriving

Thriving is an exciting concept for youth workers interested in the value of OST activities. There are numerous facets to the concept, but essentially,

> Thriving entails the *engagement of one's unique talents, interests, and/or aspirations*. In this lies the assumption of one's self-awareness of his or her uniquenesses and the opportunities to purposefully manifest them. Through such engagement, one might be thought of as actively working toward fulfilling his or her full potential. (Bundick, Yeager, King, & Damon, 2010, p. 892)

Unpacking this statement is important to understanding the role youth workers in OST contexts play in promoting thriving among youth. Thriving happens when young people work with purpose to achieve their full potential. All young people can thrive, but those who have the requisite SOPS are more likely to *fully* thrive. Thriving is forward momentum that, over time, contributes to youth realizing their optimal development. Thus, thriving is not just being "okay" or avoiding negative outcomes, but rather a trajectory toward achieving one's full potential.

Benson and Scales (2009) coined the term *sparks* to describe the reciprocal interaction between youth and SOPS that enable youth to (a) recognize their talents and interests and (b) develop strong intrinsic motivation to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue their passions. Passions can include anything. For one person it may be pursuing a favorite activity (e.g., art, sports, outdoor activities); for someone else it may be wanting to grow up and make a difference in the lives of others; and for someone else it may be a passion for new knowledge. In all of these endeavors, having a strong sense of purpose and a mind-set focused on personal growth are key.

Sparks are facilitated by having caring adults in one's life to support and guide one's choices and help identify resources and pathways to achieve desired outcomes (Search Institute, 2017). That is, youth workers have strong potential to ignite sparks through OST programs. Furthermore, as you will read in Chapter 4, youths' brains are particularly amenable to being sparked!

Supports, Opportunities, Programs, and Services

Understanding the terms *supports, opportunities,* and *programs* will help you articulate and better grasp the essential nature of youth development goals and practices (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2003). These SOPS are discussed below.

Supports

Supports provide affirmation that youth matter and are valued. Supports also facilitate youth setting and accomplishing goals. Supports can take many different forms, including those that are motivational, emotional, and strategic. According to Pittman and colleagues (2003), supports include the following:

- Healthy relationships through nurturance and friendship
- Role models, resources, and networks that provide planning skills, help access resources (e.g., financial, social)
- High expectations and clear standards through guidance and monitoring

All people need supports that are affirming, respectful, and ongoing in order to succeed in life. Supports are most powerful when offered by a variety of people who are involved in the lives of youth, such as parents and close relatives, community social networks, teachers, youth workers, employers, health providers, and peers.

Opportunities

Young people need opportunities to learn how to act in the world around them, and to explore, express, learn, belong, and contribute. Opportunities give young people the chance to test ideas and behaviors and to experiment with different roles. It is important to stress that young people, just like adults, learn best through active participation and that learning occurs in all types of settings and situations. Opportunities include the following:

- Quality instruction and opportunities for informal learning through skill building, exploration and reflection, expression and creativity, and leisure and play
- Challenging roles and responsibilities through employment and earned income, opportunities for having influence and being an advocate, and opportunities for belonging to something larger than oneself (e.g., membership)

Programs and Services

Programs and services offered by a variety of organizations are essential to promoting positive youth development. These organizations or agencies provide access to human services in a wide variety of domains, including education, recreation, physical and mental health, employment, social networking, and juvenile justice. They should also provide access to the following:

- Appropriate and maintained infrastructure such as transportation, roads, housing, and retail and healthy food choices
- Stable places such as homes, neighborhoods, and community meeting places

Programs and services should adhere to a set of standards in areas of administration, management, and service delivery (Council on Accreditation, n.d.). These programs and services should be available to all youth (inclusive of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.) and not just those with problems. In other words, all youth benefit from the chance to be involved in youth development opportunities. Agencies and organizations, including those that are publicly funded; privately funded; and provided by nonprofit, quasi-public organizations, offer a wide range of programs and services.

Historically, SOPS stemmed from an underlying philosophy that youth had many problems and that adolescence was a period of "storm and stress." Initially, therefore, SOPS were often geared toward fixing problems or providing opportunities so that youth could avoid trouble or negative behaviors (read more in Chapters 5 and 6). Fortunately, a new perspective evolved that considers youth to be largely responsible, caring, and concerned individuals who are learning to navigate the world, trying to figure out who they are, and learning how they fit into society. SOPS are means for helping young people thrive as they make their way through adolescence into young adulthood and beyond. Based on this perspective, we present and discuss a set of 10 principles for enabling youth to thrive as they progress through adolescence into adulthood.

Ten Principles of Youth Development

Based on a review of literature, we developed a set of 10 principles for providing the necessary supports, opportunities, programs, and services in OST contexts that will enable youth to thrive. The principles are not mutually exclusive from one another, nor is the list exhaustive, but we hope they offer a good foundation for providing the SOPS necessary to promote youth development. The list of principles follows.

1. Adopt a positive perspective to promote thriving
2. Thriving emerges from a foundation of strengths-based models
3. Thriving requires knowledge, skills, and behaviors
4. Thriving is a journey, and it is complex
5. It takes a village to foster thriving
6. Youth voice and choice promote thriving
7. One size may not fit all—but sometimes it does
8. It's not magic: Youth development by design and evaluation
9. Consider fit, quality, and dosage of SOPS
10. Work toward sustainability

Principle 1. Adopt a Positive Perspective to Promote Thriving

When reading, viewing, or listening to the news, it is easy to get the impression that many young people are problems in their homes, at their schools, and in their communities. "Teen Arrested for Convenience Store Robbery," "Boy Carrying Gun Detained at School," and "Teen Pregnancy a Local Issue" are examples of headlines that appear in local media outlets, very often on the front page. These headlines lead many adults to assume there is a crisis among young people, that the behavior of adolescents is out of control, and that swift remedial and punitive actions are necessary to eliminate negative behaviors and protect society. Stories about the good things that adolescents are doing (e.g., going to and doing well in school, volunteering in their communities, participating in community activities, and starting nonprofit efforts to contribute to identified societal needs) are less often told. Consequently, young people are too often seen as liabilities to be controlled rather than assets to be nurtured.

Even adolescents who get into trouble have strengths and positive attributes that need to be recognized, nurtured, and rewarded.

Clearly, some youth do get in trouble. Caldwell and Weybright note in Chapter 4 that part of the reason youth get into trouble is due to changes in the teen brain. The combination of impulsivity and sensation seeking lead some youth to engage in risky behaviors. These youth require extra attention and remedial intervention to help them navigate adolescence and thrive. However, it is important to emphasize that the vast majority of young people are able to steer a smooth course through adolescence with the assistance and support of parents, schools, community members, and organizations. In addition, even adolescents who get into trouble have strengths and positive attributes that need to be recognized, nurtured, and rewarded.

Understanding the current and future potential of adolescents is essential to developing appropriate SOPS to facilitate their positive development. As suggested previously, "When supports and opportunities are plentiful, young people can and do *thrive*; when their environments are deficient or depleted, youth tend not to grow and progress" (Gambone & Arbreton, 1997, pp. 1–2). Thus, working from a positive perspective provides youth workers with the openness and perspective to recognize youths' strengths, helps reduce the likelihood or impact of negative life experiences, and promotes healthy development and well-being (often called resiliency, see Chapter 8). Principle 1 leads directly to Principle 2.

Principle 2. Thriving Emerges from a Foundation of Strengths-Based Models

Using and/or developing asset-based (strengths-based) models, rather than deficit-based models, is essential to the enhancement of SOPS to support the development of young people. Deficit-based models assume that the main goal of youth work is

to help young people be problem free. For example, some people might consider the goal of youth work is to provide the SOPS necessary to enable young people to avoid using drugs, become involved in a gang, drop out of school, and/or become pregnant. Although young people definitely need programs that serve to prevent problem behaviors or minimize their effects, these programs should be combined with approaches that focus on maximizing a young person's strengths and assets. Historically, preventing risky behaviors usually focused on teaching youth about the consequences of negative behaviors and encouraging them to "just say no." The contemporary view of what are currently referred to as *prevention programs* includes an orientation toward promoting healthy behaviors that build on each youth's strengths, interests, passions, and sparks, as well as available personal and community resources (e.g., OST programs).

This expanded view of prevention stems from the understanding that even when young people are *problem free* they may not necessarily develop the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors necessary to be fully prepared to successfully function as adults. Thus, enabling a young person to be problem free is only part of the story. Efforts also are needed to promote development beyond problem reduction. Pittman and colleagues (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2000) encapsulated these ideas in their seminal statement: *Problem free is not fully prepared.* This perspective "emphasizes the manifest potentialities rather than the supposed incapacities of young people" (Damon, 2004, p. 15). Furthermore, youth respond more positively to programs that focus on their strengths and take a positive approach than to programs that focus on problems (as explained in Chapter 4).

Problem free is not fully prepared. And fully prepared is not fully engaged (Pittman et al., 2000).

Moreover, even if young people develop the requisite knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors, they might not choose to put them into action. Thus, Pittman further argued that: *Fully prepared is not fully engaged.* Young people can be fully prepared but not have the motivation or resources to use their knowledge and skills to practice pro-social and productive behaviors. Thus, it is possible to be problem free and still not grow up to thrive as an adult; it is also possible to be fully prepared and not use the skills and abilities one has in a positive manner. Thus, OST programs are important vehicles for providing SOPS for youth to be engaged in a variety of positive activities and reap developmental benefits.

This formulation of the need for both preparation and engagement is similar to the evolution of the health field after World War II. Prior to 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as the "absence of illness or disease." In 1948, WHO adopted the perspective that health is "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1958). This shift in perspective eventually ushered in the health promotion perspective in the 1980s. During this time, WHO again revised the definition of health to be "the extent to which an individual or group is able to realize aspirations and satisfy needs and to change or cope with the environment. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of

living; it is a positive concept, emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities" (WHO, 1984). The evolving perspective on health spawned the field of prevention science, which has twin goals of preventing health risk behaviors and promoting healthy lifestyles. Chapter 2 provides a number of health related statistics on various indicators of the health of youth, some of which are goals of the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's *Healthy People: 2020*.

Positive youth development and the notion of thriving clearly fit into this lifestyle and strengths-based perspective. Efforts such as America's Promise (www.americaspromise.org) and the Search Institute's Development Assets Model (www.search-institute.org) have emerged from the desire to move beyond deficit reduction and identify the competences one must develop to fully function and thrive in society.

America's Promise proposes a series of five promises that society should make to young people. According to America's Promise, society should provide the following:

- Opportunities for ongoing relationships with caring adults—parents, mentors, tutors, or coaches—to support, care about, and guide youth
- Safe places with structured activities during non-school hours for both physical and emotional safety for youth
- Adequate nutrition, exercise, and health care to pave the way for healthy bodies, healthy minds, and smart habits for adulthood
- Marketable skills through effective education to help youth navigate the transition from school to work successfully
- Opportunities to give back through community service to enhance self-esteem, boost confidence, and heighten a sense of responsibility to the community

Keeping these promises is critical to positive youth development; consequently, families, schools, and community organizations need to define their role in meeting the five promises.

The Developmental Assets model, championed by the Search Institute, provides a powerful tool for identifying and building 40 assets (20 internal and 20 external) deemed necessary for youth to move along the pathway to thriving and adulthood. The assets model is based on research about both protective factors that inhibit high-risk behaviors and resilience factors that increase young people's ability to function positively and even perhaps thrive in the face of adversity. For example, a strong, positive adult role model in a youth program may help the individual be resilient even though positive adult role models are lacking in the home. In addition, learning yoga, mindfulness, and/or stress reduction skills can provide a resilience mechanism for an individual who is living in poverty in an area fraught with gang activity. In Chapter 8, you will learn more about the concept of resilience.

In the Developmental Assets model, the 20 external assets are grouped into four areas:

- Support from family, neighborhood, schools, and other adults
- Actions to empower youth
- Establishment of boundaries and expectations
- Provision of opportunities for the constructive use of time

The 20 internal assets (the attitudes and behaviors that are necessary for youth to grow up to navigate their adolescent years and function successfully as adults) are grouped into four areas:

- Making a commitment to learning
- Developing positive values
- Developing social competencies
- Creating a positive identity

You may also wish to go to the Search Institute website (www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18). This website contains a detailed description of each asset and offers an interactive table that shows the reader how to take action on each asset.

Studies undertaken by the Search Institute provide evidence of the relationship between the number of assets young people have and their problem or positive behaviors and attitudes. For example, 44% of young people who indicate they have 0 to 10 of the 40 assets are likely to engage in problem alcohol use, as opposed to only 2% of young people with 31 to 40 assets. The same relationship holds true for being involved in violence, illicit drug use, and sexual activity (Figure 1.1). Conversely, 59% of young people with 31 to 40 assets succeed in school, while only 8% of those with 0 to 10 assets do so (Figure 1.2). Similar percentages are found for other positive or thriving behavior attitudes such as exhibiting leadership, maintaining good health, and valuing diversity (Benson, Scales, & Roehlkepartain, 2011).

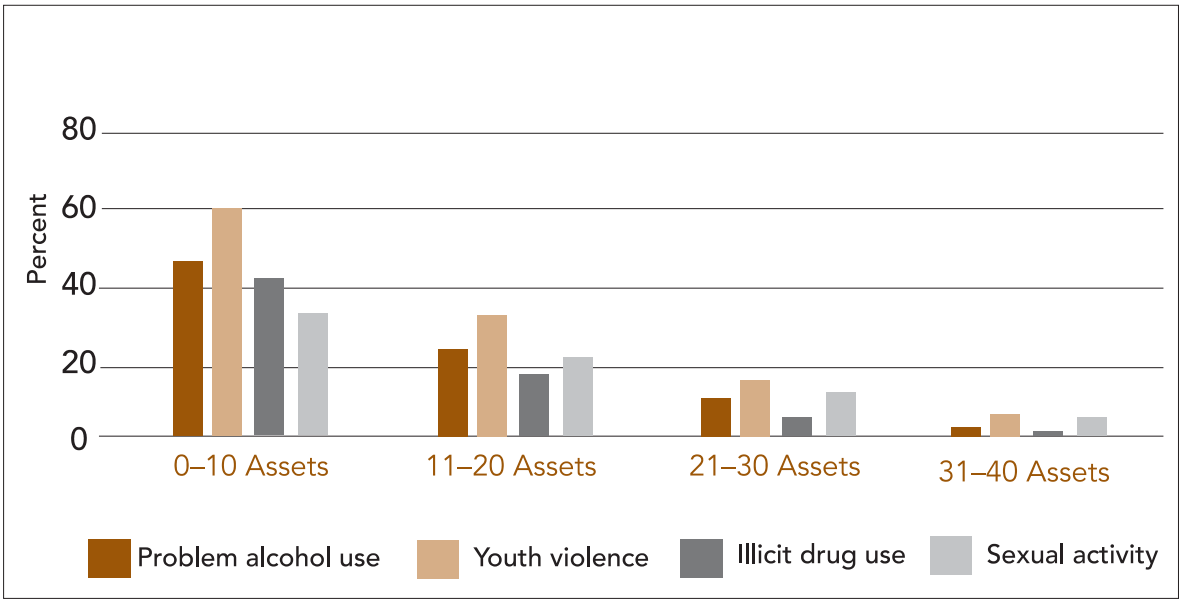

Figure 1.1. Relationship between Assets and Negative Behaviors

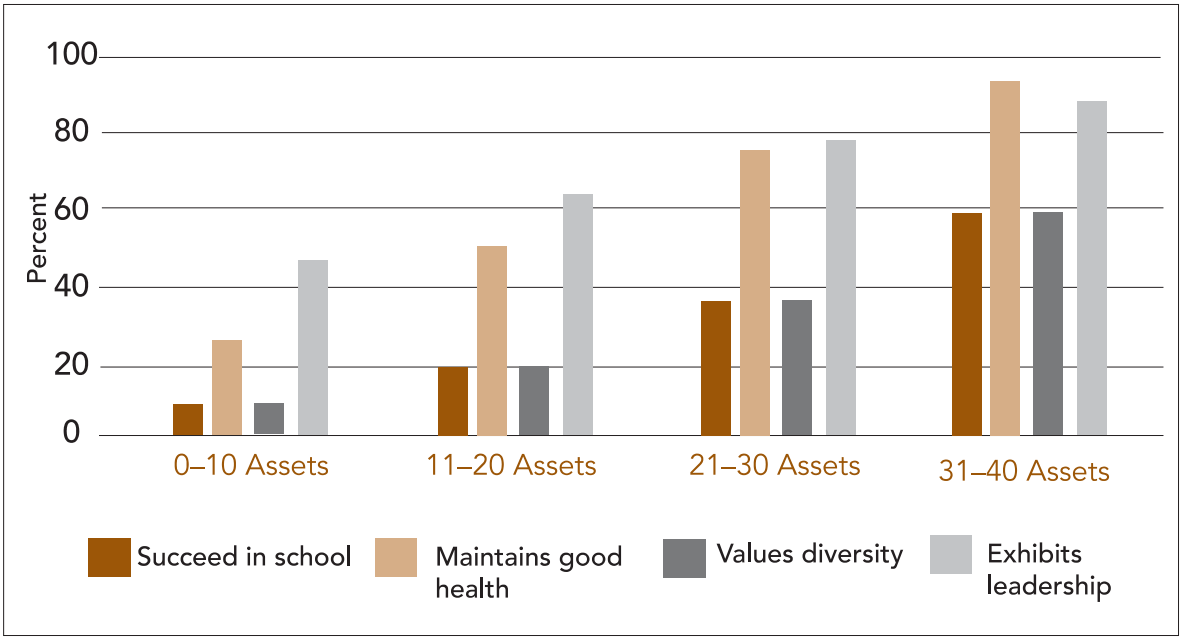

Figure 1.2. Relationship between Assets and Negative Behaviors

Principle 3. Thriving Requires Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviors

The goal of providing SOPS for young people should be more than simply providing ways to keep youth off the streets, entertained, and out of trouble. This means moving beyond simply supplying "fun and games" to a purposeful strategy of helping young people develop the foundation they will need to thrive during their adolescent years and have a chance to achieve positive characteristics as adults. This includes enabling individuals to maximize their educational potential; helping individuals develop a positive identity, personal sense of well-being and self-efficacy; and enabling individuals to develop habits associated with good citizenship (e.g., making positive contributions to one's community). SOPS must be available to develop the full range of knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for youth to successfully thrive and transition to adulthood. Young people need to achieve vocational, physical, emotional, civic, social, cultural, and spiritual competence.

As noted in Chapter 4, understanding the developing brain helps youth workers provide SOPS that promote self-regulation and social-emotional competence. SOPS that provide opportunities for experiential learning, in both structured and unstructured programs with the right mix of adult guidance and youth leadership, are important. Participation in experiential activities will promote learning across several domains such as personal (e.g., identity development), social (e.g., developing close relationships with peers, as well as relationships with caring adults), and behavioral (e.g., developing initiative and persistence). Chapters 9 through 12 contain a wealth of information about specific programs that promote development of knowledge, skills, and behaviors in OST activities such as sports, nature, and the arts. Chapter 15 focuses on structuring these and other activities so that youth will experience deep engagement in what they do.

Learning is rewarding for adolescents if the learning sparks passions and interests. Developing feelings of competence is also rewarding for adolescents. People tend to take action when they believe they have some level of competence. Youth development practitioners need to promote opportunities for youth to learn to take actions that lead to positive outcomes. Becoming competent in different skills, as well as being able to self-regulate emotions, depends not only on opportunities, but on adults who are able to challenge growth by expecting the best and holding youth accountable, but also helping youth reflect on failure.

Principle 4. Thriving is a Journey, and it is Complex

The Search Institute (2017) suggests thriving is not a destination but a journey. According to the bioecological systems theory (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 2001), the journey is influenced by reciprocal interactions among a multitude of factors that influence behavior and individual development. The work of Benson and Saito (2000) and Lerner (e.g., Lerner, 2006), among others, points to the importance of understanding the dynamic nature of the interactions between individuals and the contexts within which they live, learn, and interact with others. Specifically, according to the bioecological systems theory, personal characteristics (e.g., biological and psychological), the social environment (e.g., family, friends, teachers, etc.), "things" in the environment (e.g., a school system or social service system), and cultural context (e.g., resource rich or resource poor) are important factors that influence, and are influenced by individuals' behavior.

From a developmental perspective, these reciprocal interactions occur across time and result in numerous changes and growth in individuals and communities. As noted by Lerner (2006):

> A competent, confident, and caring adolescent, who is positively connected to other people, and who interacts with them with character and integrity, will become an adult who is morally, spiritually, and civically engaged with his or her world. Our adolescents will become adults who contribute to themselves, to their families, to their communities, and ultimately to social justice and civil society. (p. 3)

Lerner and colleagues (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015) proposed a relational, developmental systems model of the individual →← context relations involved in PYD. At the core of this model is a set of *five Cs* achieved by youth that result when individual and contextual elements interact positively. These five Cs are competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. When a youth manifests the first five Cs, a 6th C, contribution, emerges (Geldhof et al., 2014; Lerner et al., 2005). See The Six Cs sidebar for a definition of each of the Cs. Combined, these six Cs provide a foundation for a long-term view for how to help youth develop an orientation toward thriving. Development and maintenance of the six Cs takes time and sustained energy on the part of youth and youth workers.

THE SIX Cs

- **Competence** is a "positive view of one's actions in specific areas, including social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational" (Lerner & Lerner, 2011, p. 6).
- **Confidence** is a "sense of self-worth and mastery; having a sense of self-efficacy (belief in one's capacity to succeed)" (Act Youth Center of Excellence, 2016, p. 1).
- **Connection** refers to "positive bonds with people and institutions," including family, school, peers, and community (Conway, Heary, & Michael, 2015, p. 2).
- **Character** is an "indication of an individual's respect for societal and cultural rules" (Conway, Heary, & Michael, 2015, p. 2).
- **Caring/Compassion** is an "indication of a person's sense of sympathy and empathy for others" (Conway, Heary, & Hogan, 2015, p. 2).
- **Contribution** refers to being involved as an active participant in decision making in services, organizations, and community (Lerner & Lerner, 2011).

Figure 1.3 is adapted from Lerner and colleagues' relational, developmental systems model (2015). The figure shows the relationship between assets, the six Cs, and thriving and risk reduction. Other chapters in this book will delve into many issues and processes related to the thriving journey.

Principle 5. It Takes a Village to Foster Thriving

An African proverb reminds us that "It takes a village to raise a child." In keeping with the proverb, it takes a community of adults, families, agencies, and organizations to provide SOPS to youth. The bioecological systems theory, along with work by many other researchers, suggests that the development of internal and external assets requires the meaningful involvement of adults. In addition, there is substantial evidence that "resilient children, the ones who thrive despite obstacles, typically have caring adults present and active in their lives" (Walker & White, 1998, p. 14).

Adults play critical roles in youth development through supporting young people in their efforts to navigate the pathways to adulthood, while still enabling youth to have real voice, choice, and power in planning, organizing, and leading programs and activities. Caring adults can be youth program or school staff, volunteers from the community, and/or parents. In all cases, the adults are most effective when they "work in partnership with young people, who see themselves as supportive friends and advocates in contrast to adults motivated to save, reform, or rescue young people from their circumstances" (Walker & White, 1998, p. 15).

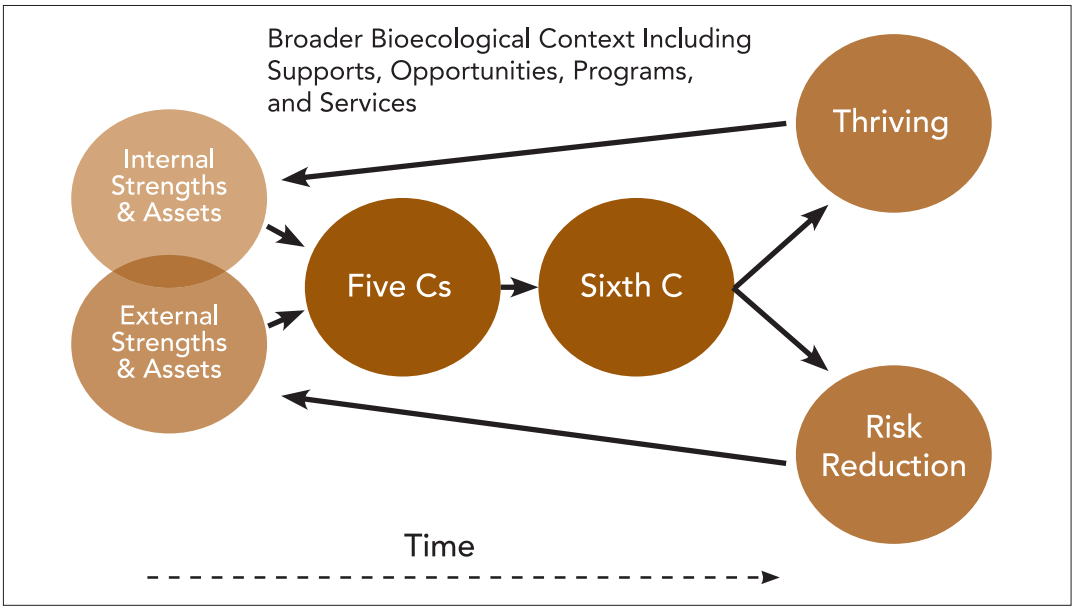

Figure 1.3. Systems model depicting journey toward thriving. Adapted from Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof (2015)

Search Institute promotes a *relationships-first* approach to helping youth develop the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive. In addition to *challenging youth to grow,* this approach is based on adults who do the following:

- **Demonstrate caring** and are trustworthy
- **Provide support** by helping youth navigate challenges and complex situations, empower youth, and set boundaries
- **Share power** by respecting and collaborating with youth and letting them lead
- **Expand possibilities** by inspiring youth and connecting them to resources that expose youth to new ideas and possibilities

Chapter 16 expands on the importance of relationship-based programming.

One excellent example of building a relationships first approach is the development of youth-adult partnerships. Zeldin, Christens, and Powers (2013) define youth-adult partnerships (Y-APs) as:

> The practice of (a) multiple youth and multiple adults deliberating and acting together; (b) in a collective [democratic] fashion; (c) over a sustained period of time; (d) through shared work; (e) intended to promote social justice, strengthen an organization, and/or affirmatively address a community issue. (p. 388)

Y-APs have four core elements:

- **Authentic decision-making** refers to the idea that more important than just being heard (such as a token voice), youth should be involved in making meaningful decisions and their participation is sought, valued and listened to.
- **Natural mentoring** includes the notion that youth develop different types of relationships with non-familial adults. Natural mentors more typically occur outside of structured programs; therefore, they tend to be more neutral and can offer independent observations and guidance. Youth see these mentors as very helpful in developing social networks and visioning their future.
- **Reciprocity** is central to the idea of a partnership in which both adults and youth have mutual influence on each other and the activity or environment. Reciprocity is built on the notions of co-learning and co-creation.
- **Community connectedness** fosters feelings of meaning and belonging to something bigger than themselves. Participating in authentic decision-making with reciprocity, and being supported by natural mentors, promotes community connectedness.

Another way adults across a variety of settings contribute to youth development is by setting boundaries and high expectations. Adults in youth-serving organizations must clearly define rules, monitor youths' behavior, and set consequences for not following the rules. A relationships-first approach facilitates the ability of adults to set high expectations and ability of youth to be receptive toward and strive to meet those expectations.

In addition to adults youth encounter in OST settings, parents are critical in helping guide their children in making appropriate choices, providing opportunities for family activities, and modeling appropriate behaviors. Chapter 17 focuses on families as sources of youth development.

Principle 6. Youth Voice and Choice Promote Thriving

Too often youth feel that adults plan *for* them, rather than *with* them. When this happens, the result is often that the programming is not relevant because what adults think youth want or need is not based on the realities as seen by youth. This is illustrated by another African proverb that suggests if the lion told the story, it would be very different from the one told by the hunter. That is, the lion's perspective would no doubt interpret the hunt differently. Although unlikely, imagine if the lion and hunter cooperated on the story. Supporting youth in telling their own stories refers to the notion that youth should have voice in their own development and that adults should not "do development" to them. Thus, Principle 6 suggests that when possible, adults should work *with* young people, as opposed to always initiating, planning, and directing youth activities.

A related issue is youth sometimes feel that even though adults seek their opinions, they do not authentically consider their input, leaving youth feeling the process was only an exercise. Youth workers often forget that genuinely involving youth and

honoring their opinions and input is just as important and rewarding as participation in the activity itself. Thus, in many youth development programs, adult leaders are undertaking considerable efforts to empower youth to take ownership and responsibility for developing and sustaining programs, in addition to moving away from centralized top-down decision-making by youth professionals to more decentralized, youth-centered decision-making, with the support of adults (see Chapter 18).

Young people have a basic need for *autonomy, agency,* and *self-determination*. Consequently, preserving choice and initiative is critical to helping youth fully engage in their surroundings. On the other hand, when individuals are over-regulated or opportunities to self-determine behavior are thwarted (i.e., doing *for* them rather than *with* them), young people may have a tendency to become externally rather than internally motivated, resulting in a lack of interest and full engagement, dependency, and apathy (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The key to adult involvement in promoting decision-making and leadership development is to provide young people with the *scaffolding* necessary to enable growth and development (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2000). Youth, like an emerging building, need support ("training wheels") during their development (i.e., "construction."). Scaffolding refers to the framework of temporary supports provided by adults as youth develop new knowledge, skills, and behaviors. As skill development increases, the scaffolding is gradually reduced (called fading) until youth no longer need the scaffolding. Providing the right level of scaffolding, however, is critical. Adults should not stifle youth by too much support or offer too little support, which may contribute to failure. Scaffolding is a dynamic process where the adult assesses youths' ability to get to the next rung,

the help needed to get there, and when to discontinue help when youth have already mastered or gained a particular level of knowledge, skill, or behavior.

An example of the right level of scaffolding focuses on the benefits of, and difference between, adult-driven versus youth-driven programs. As an example, Larson, Walker, and Pearce (2005) interviewed high-school youth and adult advisors who participated in four different high-quality programs, such as planning a day camp for younger children (a youth-driven program) and putting on a play (an adult-driven program). They observed the programs in action to discern any differences in youths' experiences. The researchers' conclusion was that both types of programs have merit in terms of skill and talent development, as well as boosting self-confidence of the high school students. However, they also concluded that it was important for adults to find the right balance of letting youth make their own mistakes and perhaps getting off track, while also adopting a more directive approach when it is necessary to keep things task oriented and keep youth from floundering due to inexperience and lack of knowledge.

Principle 7. One Size May Not Fit All—But Sometimes it Does

One of the themes in a number of chapters in the book is "For whom and under what conditions?" does something apply. For example, understanding the way social media affect adolescents depends on their access to social media (see Chapter 3). On the other hand, chapters also provide information about some general commonalities that are applicable to the majority of adolescents (e.g., similarities due to having a generational perspective). The principle of inclusivity requires that youth workers be sensitive to asking "for whom and under what conditions" will program X or service Z be applicable, while also recognizing that there are general principles that are universally effective in most instances. Confused? It is complex.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide some background regarding this complexity. For example, as noted in Chapter 2, the sociodemographic profile of youth in the U.S. is becoming more diverse, a trend that will continue into the near future. The material in Chapters 2 and 3 also suggests that access to many of society's SOPS depends on race and ethnicity, ability, social class, and gender. Differences in access means that when youth workers are providing SOPS to adolescents they should understand not only how to make sure all youth have equal access, but also when, and if, differential services are needed based on race/ethnicity, ability, social class, and gender (or other distinguishing characteristics). Some questions that might arise are as follows:

- Should youth workers provide gender segregated programs (including transgender youth)? That is, will some programs be more powerful if they are just for girls, or just for boys, or just for gender fluid, transgender, or questioning youth?
- Does the race, ethnicity, or gender of a leader need to be matched to the characteristics of the youth being served?
- Is it better to segregate youth who have exhibited a proclivity to negative risk behaviors or integrate them with those who do not?
- Is it better to provide inclusive or separate services to youth with differing abilities?

Not surprisingly, there are no clear answers to these questions, and determining the right course of action for a given situation becomes a critical challenge for youth workers. Several chapters in this book should help youth workers meet these challenges. For example, Chapter 19 suggests that ethnic and racial minority youth who are dealing with aspects of racism or struggling with their identity as a member of a racial or ethnic minority group may need tailored services and programs. Chapter 3 suggests that males who exhibit strong traits associated with the "Boy Code or Man Box" may need tailored services. Chapters 20–23 continue these discussions as well.

In Principle 2, we introduced the idea that a prevention approach includes both a focus on reducing deficits (e.g., substance abuse) and on promoting developmental assets. The prevention approach avoids the "either/or" trap that many SOPS fall into, and suggests that the answers to the above questions are not either/or but should include approaches built on the principles of *problem free* and *fully prepared.* In this way, youth development practices fall on a continuum, with positive youth development services at one end and social control or incarceration at the other (Quinn, 1999).

Pittman and her colleagues at the Forum for Youth Investment provide other examples of where the *and* approach is needed and superior. Each of these can be applied to the issue of inclusivity. Thus, there is a need for the following:

- Quickly turning around negative behaviors *and* developing long-term supports for positive development
- Promoting both basic services targeted to a single issue or area of the community *and* at the same time promoting efforts to strategically plan a system of services in our communities
- Utilizing youth professionals to lead and plan activities *and* ensuring that youth, their parents, and other stakeholders in the community are fully engaged and involved
- Developing new ideas into pilot programs *and* making concerted efforts to develop long-term programs with solid funding streams (Pittman et al., 2000)

The *and* approach is important for OST providers to adopt from a bioecological perspective because it suggests that models of collaboration with a variety of services such as health agencies, schools, and quasi-public agencies (e.g., YM/YWCA) are important in working toward the ideal of inclusivity. In addition, adopting an *and* approach reduces territoriality and promotes keeping the focus on youths' needs and positive development.

The *and* approach also suggests the need for providers to partner with other organizations that offer complementary services. For example, youth professionals are often skilled at the *promotive* aspect of services (e.g., skill development, competence, and fun), but might not focus on overcoming deficits. Thus, if youth workers partner with other organizations who might be more focused on risk reduction, an ideal situation is created for overall youth development to occur.

Principle 8. It's not Magic: Youth Development by Design and Evaluation

In the past, the main goal of most OST programs for children and youth was to provide fun opportunities to keep youth busy and off the streets (see Chapter 5). Thus,

youth program providers mainly provided a place for young people to go and things to do when they got there. However, in concert with the youth development movement and the related quest to promote thriving, it is increasingly critical for programmers and service providers to move beyond causal approaches focused on how many youth showed up at a program (i.e., attendance counts) to deliberate approaches that emphasize planning and leading on an *intentional* basis (McLaughlin, 2000; Walker, 2006). Employing intentionality requires answering the questions: "What do we want to happen?," "How are we going to make it happen?," and "How will we know if it actually happened due to our program or service?" Consciously planning and implementing programs leads to creating effective SOPS for development. Furthermore, youth workers who follow good programming design principles (see Chapter 13) also follow good evaluation principles (see Chapter 14).

To practice intentionality, youth workers utilize a comprehensive planning model—one that moves from assessing needs, to setting goals, to developing programs to meet goals, to assessing whether goals have been met, to identifying needed changes in future program development. In some cases, this planning process needs to occur at the micro-level and focus on the needs of a particular group of youth in a particular setting (e.g., immigrant youth from Pakistan attending an after-school program offered by a local nonprofit organization). In other cases, the process is at the macro-level, which might include efforts to think broadly about community needs and the kinds of actions required to meet those needs (e.g., developing a community-wide approach to addressing the needs of all immigrant youth).

Practicing intentional programming requires an understanding of basic developmental processes (see Chapter 7) as well as the dimensions of activities that can help youth thrive and make the transition to adulthood more likely to succeed. Two major reports on youth development by the National Academy of Sciences (2001) and the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002) list basic elements that characterize quality youth programs (see Table 1.1). These elements are the building blocks of quality youth development programs. Changing the way we think about the design and delivery of programs can help achieve development beyond problem prevention.

Table 1.1
Characteristics of Environments that Promote Positive Youth Development

- Physical and psychological safety
- Structure that is developmentally appropriate
- Supportive relationships
- Opportunities to belong and be valued
- Positive social norms
- Support for efficacy and mattering
- Opportunities for skill building and mastery
- Integration of family, school, and community efforts
- Opportunities to make a contribution to one's community

Adapted from National Academy of Sciences (2001) and National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002)

Another resource that addresses the issue of youth development by design is Communities that Care (CTC). CTC (www.communitiesthatcarecoalition.org/) is a prevention system that gives communities tools to address adolescent health and behavior problems using a risk and protective factors framework. CTC provides a structure that guides community stakeholders (youth, parents, schools, community agencies, and local government) in establishing a shared community vision, setting measurable goals, and deciding on appropriate evidence-based programs through a menu of choices.

Principle 9. Consider Fit, Quality, and Dosage of SOPS

Organizations need to offer SOPS at an appropriate level of scale and saturation to make an impact on young people's lives. Creating SOPS at appropriate levels of scale and saturation means that SOPS have to be appropriate for the target audience, be delivered with a level of *quality*, and in enough *dosage* to have the desired short-term and longer-term effects.

As noted in the discussion of Principle 8, Communities that Care (CTC) is a system that helps community leaders work together to form a vision of a comprehensive approach to community-wide youth development programs to reach appropriate target audiences. CTC works on the premise that *evidence-based programs* (EBPs) are superior to ones that lack evidence regarding their effectiveness. EBPs have been evaluated using rigorous research methods, are based on theory, and have demonstrated effectiveness in addressing a desired outcome (e.g., reducing substance use or promoting autonomy development). Youth workers who wish to implement EBPs can consult websites/organizations such as The Afterschool Alliance (2014; www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Deeper_Dive_into_Afterschool.pdf), Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development (www.blueprintsprograms.com/), or CTC for guidance.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to demonstrate program effectiveness on a large scale (i.e., for programs that have reached many youth across time). For example, Blueprints reviewed over 1,400 youth development programs, with only about 5% meeting their criteria for designation as an EBP. Programs that have been evaluated and shown positive results, but have not met criteria to be called evidence-based, are often called *promising practices*.

When choosing programs, youth workers understand that not all evidence-based or promising practices fit their needs. Likewise, all EBPs and promising programs have limitations. Thus, program selection depends on careful consideration of the needs of the community, the target audience of youth to be served, and the ease of implementation. All of these factors influence the likelihood that the program will be implemented as intended. For further information, you may wish to consult a document created by The Family and Youth Services Bureau (2012a) that provides guidance for selecting evidence-based programs.

EBPs and promising programs have strong logic models that demonstrate intentional programming linked with inputs, desired outcomes, and evaluation (see Chapters 13 and 14). In particular, EBPs and promising programs have the following traits:

- Appropriate content, such as addressing knowledge, attitudes, and skills
- A strong pedagogical foundation, including active participation and engagement of youth and appropriate sequencing of material
- Good implementation, which includes fidelity, adaptation, appropriate dosage, quality staff, and effective community partners

When providing any program, and in particular evidence-based and promising practice-based programs, consideration of implementation issues is critical. *Fidelity* means that the program was delivered the way the developers intended for the program to be delivered. In order for youth workers to achieve the same outcomes as reported by the research associated with a program, the program has to use the same content in the same sequence, and the same methods. It also has to be delivered with the same level of dosage.

Dosage is concerned with how much of the planned SOPS youth need in order to make a difference in their development as well as how much of the SOPS youth actually get. This is a complex issue, especially for OST activities and programs that have fluid attendance, which makes it difficult to know how much of a particular program or service youth actually received. Youth workers measure dosage by metrics that measure intensity, duration, and breadth (Dietel, 2009). *Intensity* is the amount of time youth attend a program, such as number of hours or number of lessons. Youth workers measure intensity by percentage of lessons delivered (e.g., five out of six lessons were given, or 75% of lesson two was given). *Duration* of the program is the amount of time in weeks, months, or years the program was offered (e.g., program is six lessons over six weeks). *Breadth* refers to the variety of activities to which youth are exposed (e.g., sports, the arts, and leisure education programs).

Often youth workers feel the need to adapt a program. Adaptations may be necessary if the program will be delivered to youth who have different ethnic/racial, ability, or other characteristics than those for whom the original SOPS was developed. For example, many programs are school-based and often provided in majority White schools. If these programs are offered for immigrant youth, they may need to be adapted. Although adaptations are important to make sure programs fit the needs of the target group of youth, youth workers should not necessarily expect the same outcomes to be derived when program elements are changed. On the other hand, often youth workers are able to make adaptations that do not compromise the fidelity and integrity of the program. The Family and Youth Services Bureau (2012b) provides a helpful guide on adapting evidence-based programs.

Another dosage-related issue is *saturation*. Saturation involves finding ways to offer a critical mass of services to a critical mass of young people. Thus, efforts are needed to ensure that a sufficient quantity of quality SOPS are provided so that more young people in more neighborhoods can be served more of the time (Pittman et al., 2000). Even when an appropriate community-wide system is designed, however, SOPS often serve only a limited number of the young people who

Saturation involves finding ways to offer a critical mass of services to a critical mass of young people.

could benefit from involvement. For example, sometimes youth living in the highest risk environments are targeted for services, ignoring other youth who could have also benefited from attention. Unfortunately, agencies are often so poorly under-resourced that choices about whom to serve are necessary. Another issue is that some parents who are better off financially suggest that services for their children are lacking because providers assume either parents can take care of their youth's needs, or that services are not necessary for youth from higher income households. In either case, needed SOPS may be limited in their application.

Despite the benefits of using EBPs and promising programs, it is unlikely that all SOPS provided by an organization or agency will be evidence-based or promising. For a variety of reasons, youth workers often create their own programs for use at the local level. While there is nothing wrong with this approach, and locally developed programs can be powerful, programs should still be intentionally developed and evaluated (Chapters 13 and 14).

Principle 10. Work Toward Sustainability

The preceding principles all serve to promote program sustainability, which is critical to program success and gaining the trust and involvement of youth. Discontinuing a successful program after a few months, or even one or two years, can be unsettling for youth, parents, and staff. At the same time, failure to terminate ineffective programs can be equally damaging. Program discontinuation often happens. In addition, sporadic funding from foundation and government grants can lead to an ever-rotating series of service system components. For example, pilot project and short-term grant funds are only available for a specified time period. Furthermore, grants often come with the expectation that the receiving organization will make efforts to raise the necessary funds from other sources to continue programs after the initial grant period ends. Although staff are sometimes successful in finding the funds to maintain programs, it is a challenging task that most personnel are not trained to do, and in some cases funds for sustaining programs may not be available.

In addition to issues with funding, there are a number of reasons to avoid one-shot or short-term programs. First, achieving a quality program in the first few months or even the first year can be difficult. It usually takes at least a complete program cycle for program staff to identify appropriate personnel and stabilize their service model. For young people, this may mean that the service system designed to meet their needs is a matrix of ever-changing programs and personnel. Thus, young people may find it difficult to commit to being involved if they have had past experience with programs and staff they have grown to trust but who have moved on to the next funded priority when current funding ends.

Another reason short-term programs should be avoided is that youth development is ongoing. Continued involvement in a program allows youth to develop skills and competence and leads to initiative. One-shot/short-term programs can generate participants but not necessarily meaningful youth development. Finally, it is almost impossible to evaluate properly the effectiveness of short-term programs, especially if the goal is to achieve longer-term objectives.

Sustainability issues also apply to personnel. To realize the full power of adults in the lives of youth, organizations must hire, train, reward, and retain quality adult leaders. However, this is not always easy to accomplish. Many youth-serving organizations hire individuals who are too young and/or have too many issues themselves to be strong resources in the lives of youth. In addition, too often organizations hire leaders for a short period based on programming needs, thus undermining the value of creating longer-term, meaningful relationships and/or partnerships between adults and youth. In many cases, a system is not in place to develop leaders who understand the principles of youth development and know how to translate these principles into meaningful practice. Finally, low wages may prevent youth workers from applying for jobs, let alone remaining in them. These situations result in entrusting responsibility for youth development to low paid individuals who turnover far too quickly (Chapter 24 focuses on the skills required for those seeking to become a youth professional.)

One of the results of hiring "short-timers" is that youth miss the advantages of developing longer-term, sustainable relationships with adults. Young people often have difficulty investing in a relationship they know is only temporary. For young people from families where divorce has taken place, leading to limited access of a parent, or where they cannot depend on adults to "be there" for them, transient relationships can lead to a lack of involvement of caring adults in their lives. Developing trust and respect takes time and requires some stability in adult–youth relationships. In some cases, young people develop relationships with adults who by leaving might be perceived as breaking their promise to be there for the young person, thus undermining the future willingness of the young person to invest in developing meaningful relationships.

In sum, to be most effective, youth development efforts must begin early, be sustained throughout the adolescent years, and allow for skill development through participation in various levels of challenge. Programs should be comprehensive, addressing many aspects of youth development. Youth workers need to be adequately trained, compensated, and retained. Finally, it is important to develop a system of services that are ongoing and inclusive of the variety of services necessary to meet youths' needs.

Final Thoughts

Youth development advocates maintain that efforts are needed to create organizations and communities that enable youth to thrive and move along the pathways to adulthood by supplying the supports, opportunities, programs, and services (SOPS) beyond simple problem prevention. These approaches do not eliminate the need to target specific individuals with high risk factors for attention, but clearly, efforts should not be restricted only to youth from high-risk environments or only focus on problem remediation. Central to this thinking is the idea that development for young people is dependent on a range of SOPS coming from their families, the community, and other institutions that have the potential to influence them positively. When SOPS are plentiful, young people can and do thrive; when their environments are deficient or depleted, youth tend not to grow and progress.

The principles and understandings discussed in this chapter represent exciting changes in the evolution of the philosophy of youth development. Unfortunately, in a number of cases, youth-serving agencies have adopted "the youth development language," but have in reality made few changes in their service priorities and approaches. Thus, the purpose of this book is to help provide the necessary information about how to not only "talk the talk" but also "walk the walk" of youth development.

Possibly the most exciting takeaway from these principles is the fact that youth workers who provide OST-related SOPS have enormous power and responsibility to provide opportunities for sparks that will ignite youth on the pathway to thriving, not only in adolescence but throughout adulthood. Each of the subsequent chapters in this book addresses one or more of these principles in more detail and provides information that will prepare you for well-grounded work with young people using a youth development approach.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss which of the 10 principles you think will be most difficult to follow or implement, and why.
2. The following questions were raised in the discussion of Principle 7. Please discuss them.
   a. Should youth workers provide gender-segregated programs (including transgender youth)? That is, will some programs be more powerful if they are just for girls; just for boys; or just for gender fluid, transgender, or questioning youth? What do you think, and why?
   b. Does the race, ethnicity, and/or gender of a leader need to be matched to the characteristics of the youth being served? Again, what has been your own experience with the background of youth leaders compared to the groups they are leading? How important do you think this matching process is to the success of youth development programs? Explain your response.
   c. Is it better to segregate youth who have exhibited a proclivity to negative risk behaviors or integrate them with those who do not? Why or why not?
   d. Is it better to provide inclusive or separate services to youth with differing abilities? Again, why or why not?

Assignments

1. Write about one of your sparks. How did you develop that spark? What SOPS enabled you to become exposed to, interested in, and participate in your spark? What other SOPS would have further enhanced your pursuit of your spark?
2. Go to Search Institute's page describing the 40 Developmental Assets: www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18.

Identify the assets you found to be most helpful in your own life. Write a paragraph about specific ways five of the assets on your list helped you thrive.

3. Write a poem, compose a song, or develop a piece of art depicting the concept of youth thriving.

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