

# Youth Participatory Action Research

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State of Arizona SNAP-Ed  
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# What are we doing together?

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1

Introduction to Youth Participatory Action Research  
YPAR in Action  
Youth-Adult Partnerships

2

Curriculum Walk-Through  
Evaluation  
Q&A

# What can you expect?

- Background for success
- Curriculum screenshots
- Examples
- Virtual trainings are different
- What else?





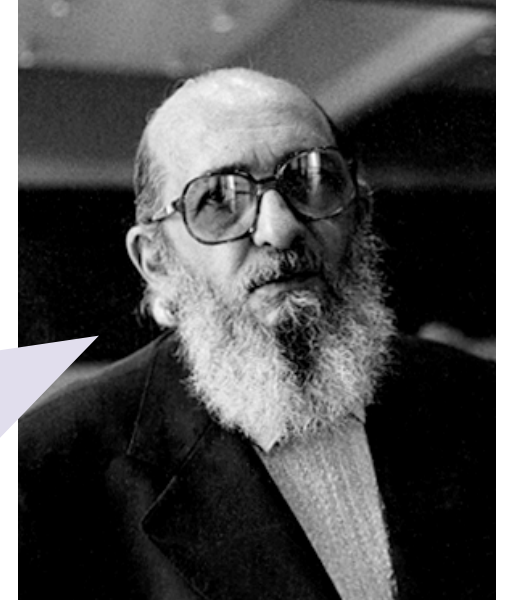
# What is participatory research?

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

Participatory Action Research (PAR)



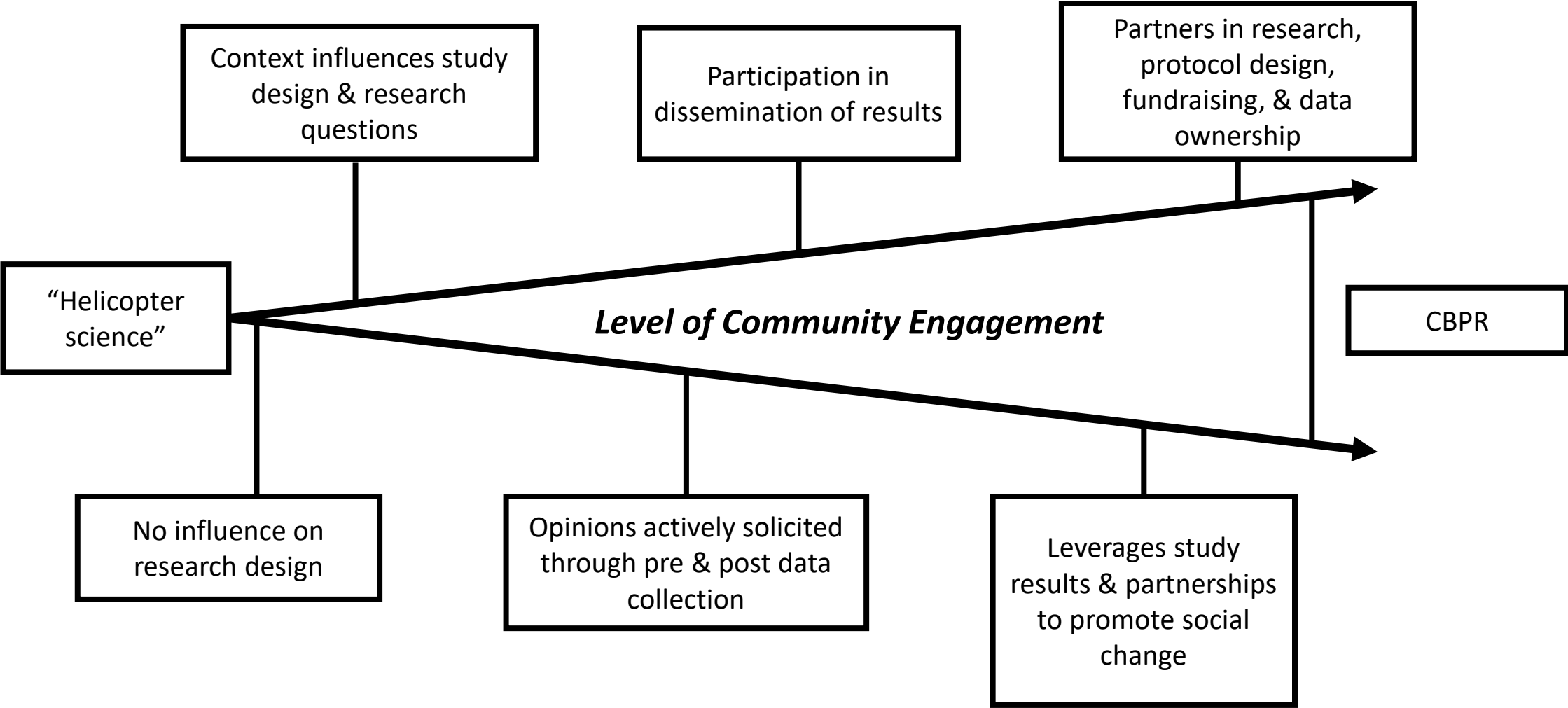
“You cannot understand a system until you try to change it.”



“Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.”

*From Study Participant...*

*...to Research Partner*

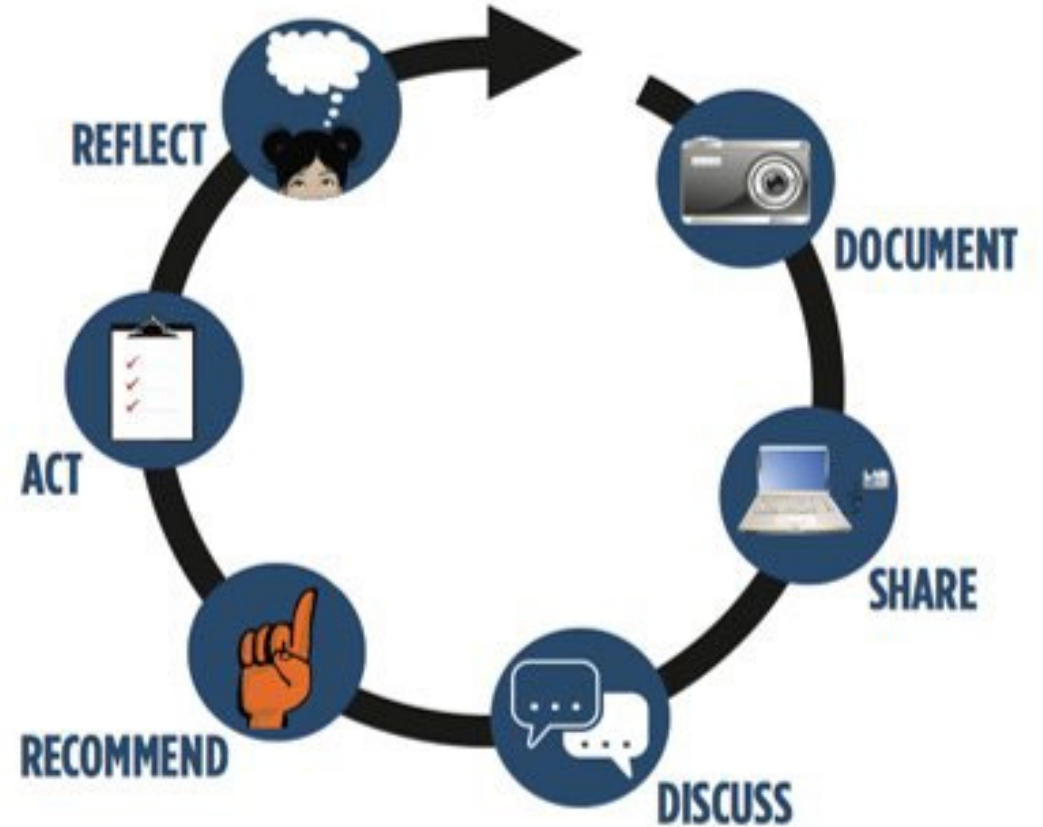


# What is YPAR?

Inquiry-based

Participatory

Transformative





Teens in Action



# What does it look like?

- Youth as researchers (supported by adults)
- Based on research, interviews and reflection; YPAR Teen Interns divided into 3 groups. Each group created a unique project:
  - Traveling Opioid Medicine Cabinet
  - 8th grade Health Class Curriculum
  - Fundraiser for Volunteers of America







# YA4-H!

Youth Advocates for Health  
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION  
YAH Youth Advocates for Health

Groups created posters addressing:

- Where to get lock boxes?
- What effects do opioids have on a person?
- What happens to the brain?
- Where can I get help?

# DID YOU KNOW?

Opioid Misuse Can Lead To...

Nausea

Vomiting

Dry Mouth

Depression

Constipation

Confusion

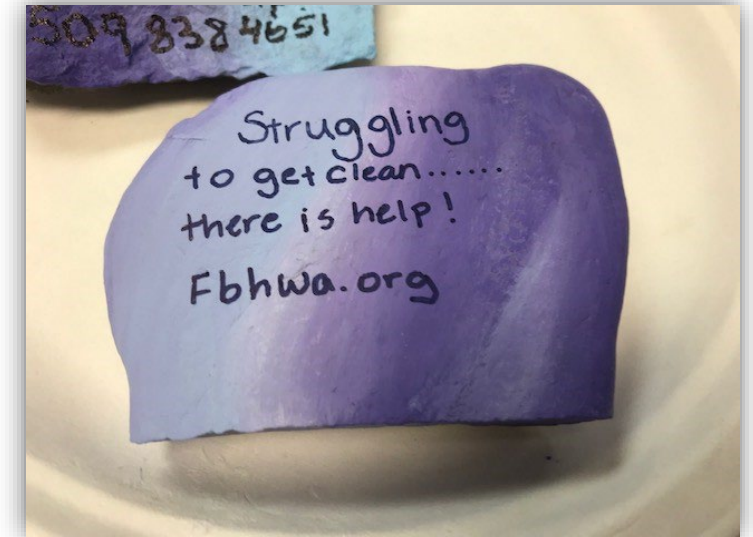
Drowsiness

And Death



**Opoids effect the brain by blocking the pain receptors and allowing the person to experience little to no pain causing the person to be addicted to them!**

Scan here for fun information



# Who benefits from YPAR?

## Researchers

- Provides “insider” perspective
- More accurate responses

## Community

- Valued by youth-serving organizations

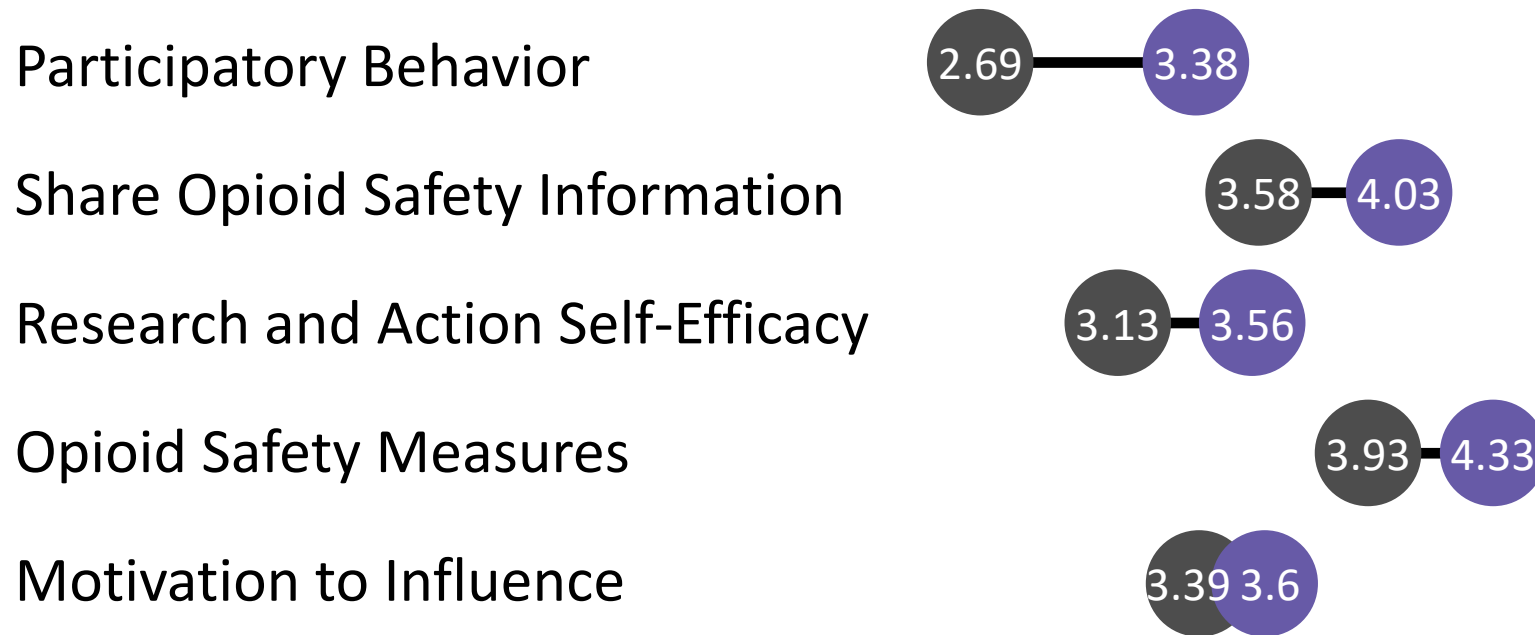
## Youth

- Psychological empowerment
- Motivation for change
- Decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Understanding of sociopolitical environment
- Sense of purpose
- Adult support
- Attitudes toward school

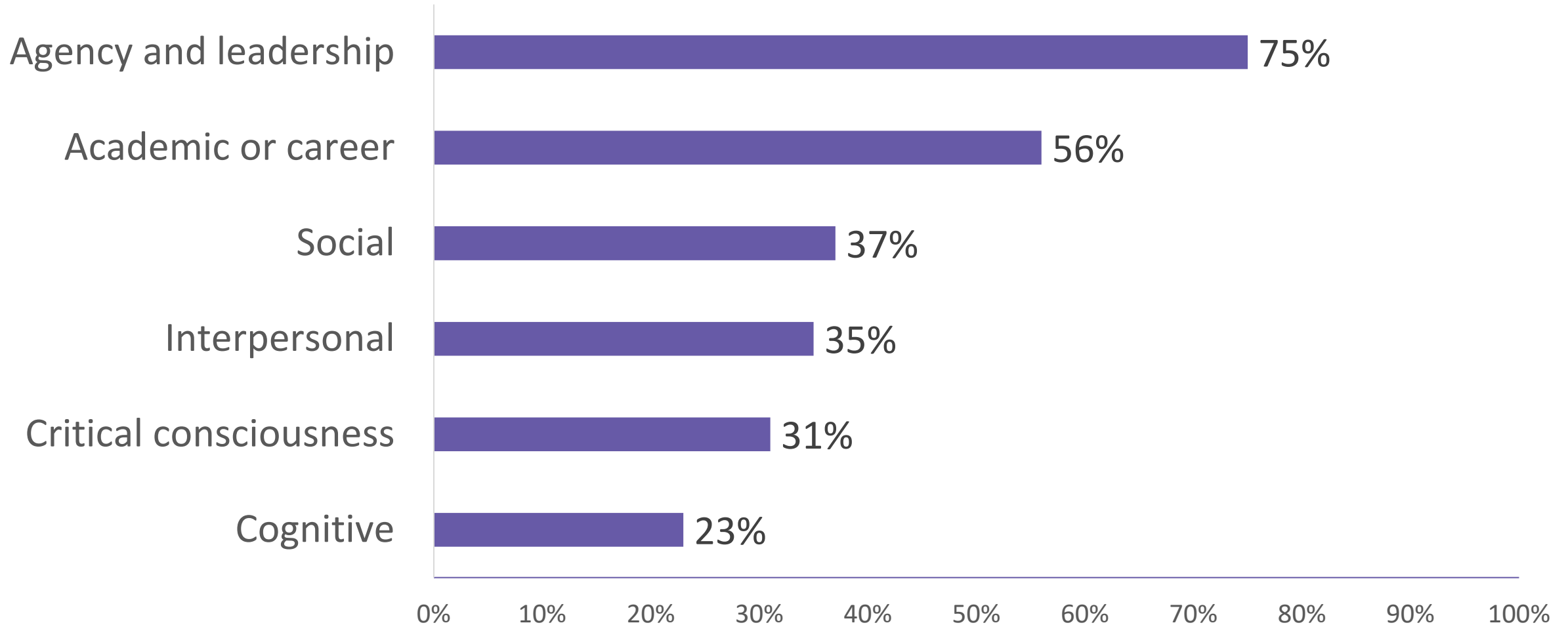


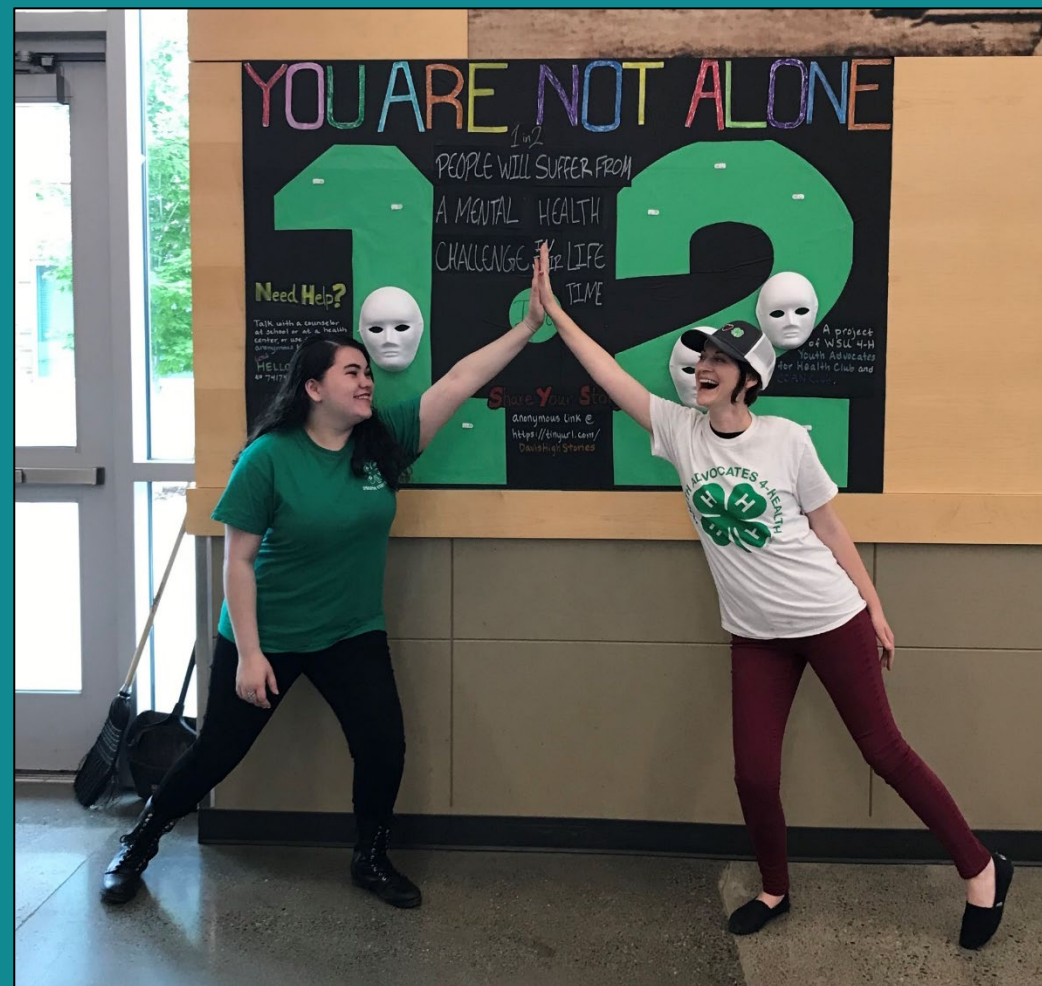
# What changes do we see in youth?

Teens reported **significant** increases between **pretest** and **posttest** in all areas except motivation to influence. Largest gains were seen in participatory behavior.



# What skills do youth develop?





Teens in Action





## What does it look like?

- 15 youth, 4 adult mentors
- 6 months, weekly sessions + independent & team assignments
- Teens spent 487 hours working & learning together
- Approx. 2,505 contacts via a 5-part outreach project:
  - Social Media
  - Posters
  - Stories
  - Resource Website
  - Podcast

# What do youth do?

## Teens reported:

- talking to family members about the dangers of opioids
- encouraging family to seek other pain management options when offered opioids
- translating warning label information for Spanish-speaking parents

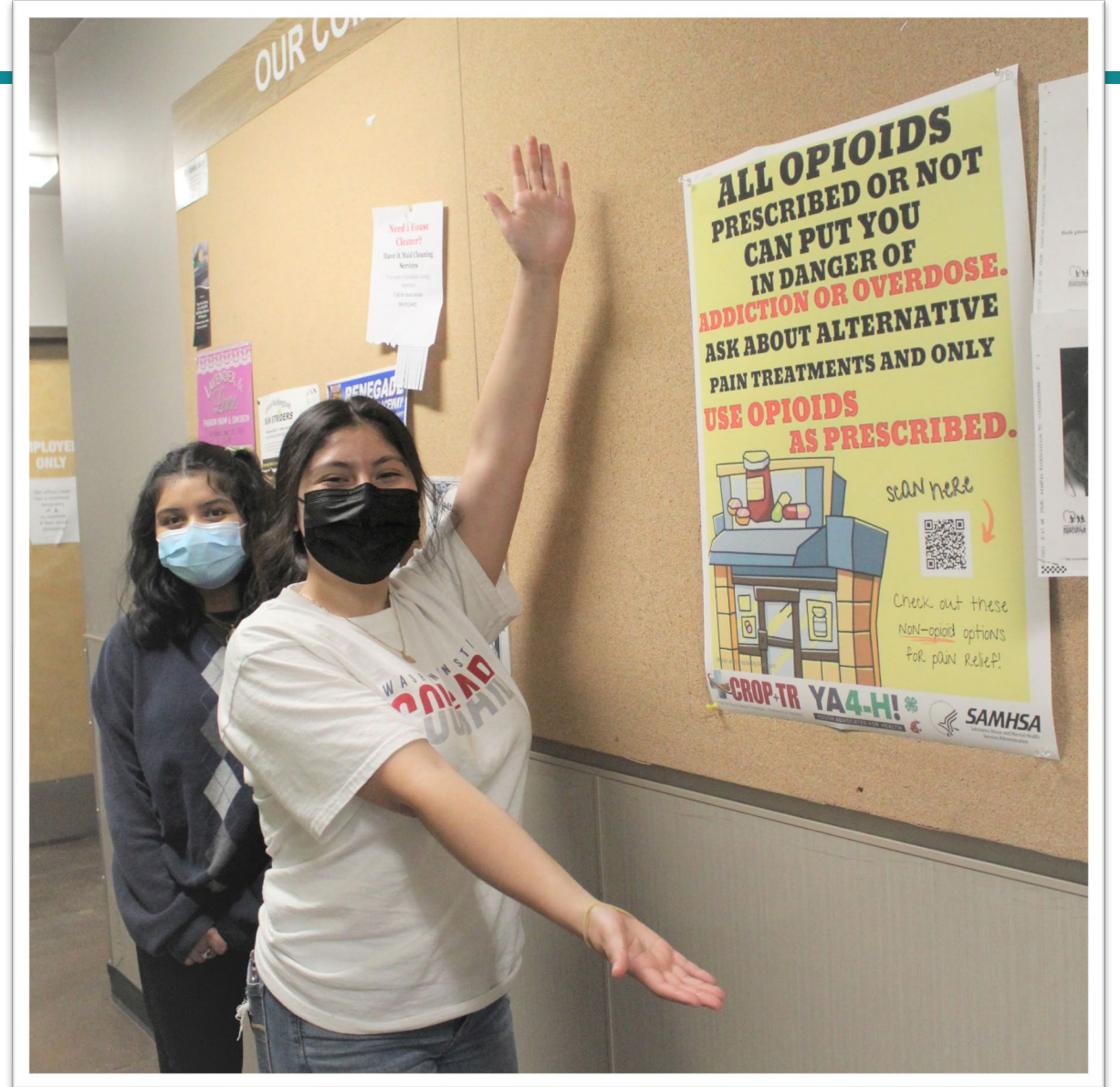




# What do youth say?

“People turn a blind eye to addiction. They feel they can’t help because they don’t know how. Making people aware is the most impactful way to help others.”

“I never realized how hard recovery is. This project helped us all realize that this is not a simple issue—it’s extremely complicated. I’m going to keep doing my part by helping people learn be more compassionate and give that helping hand.”





# What are the core components?

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Iterative integration of research and action

Training and practice of research skills

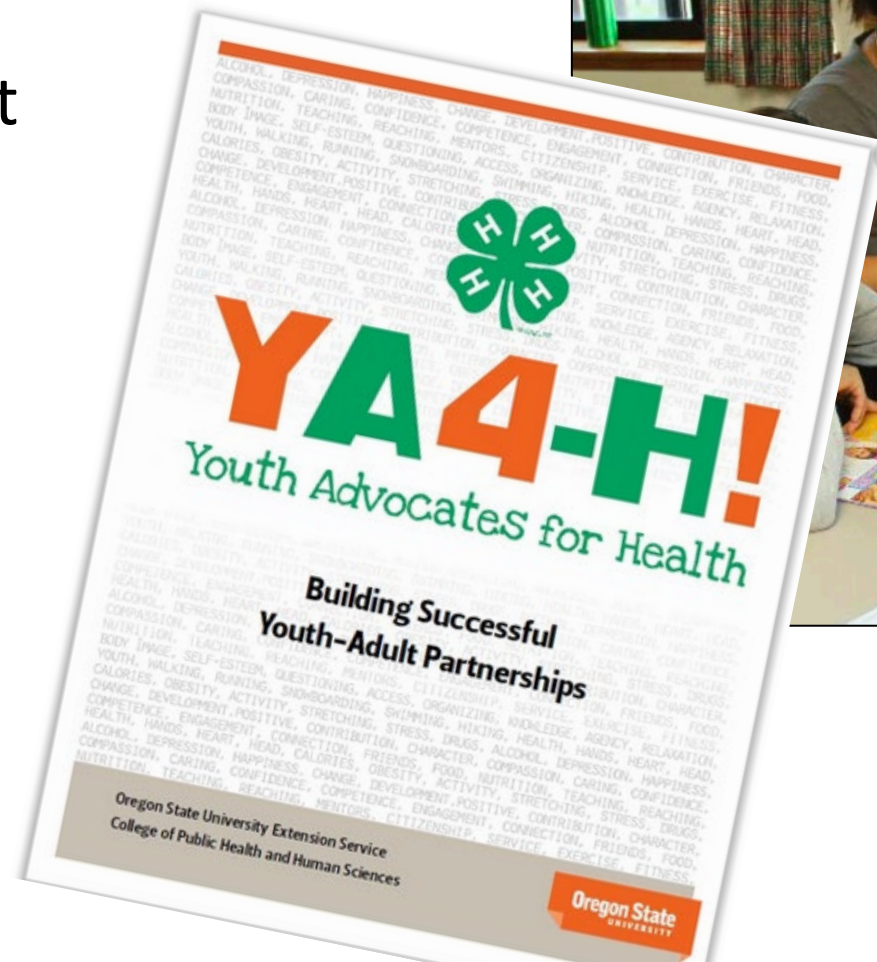
Practice of strategic thinking and discussing strategies for influencing change

Building of supportive networks in community

Adult's sharing of power with youth in the research and action process

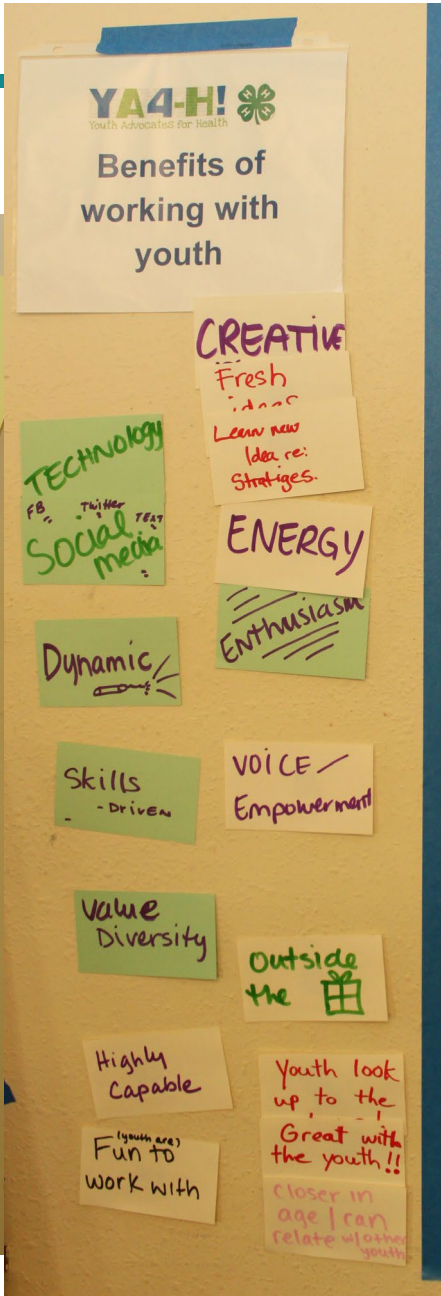
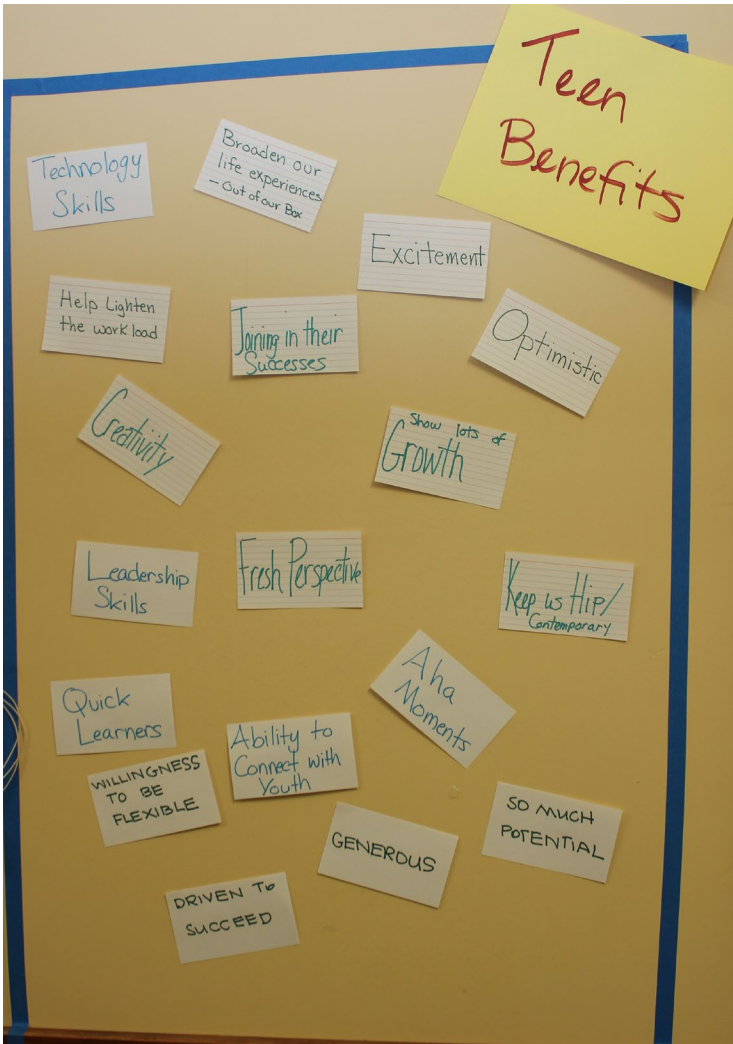
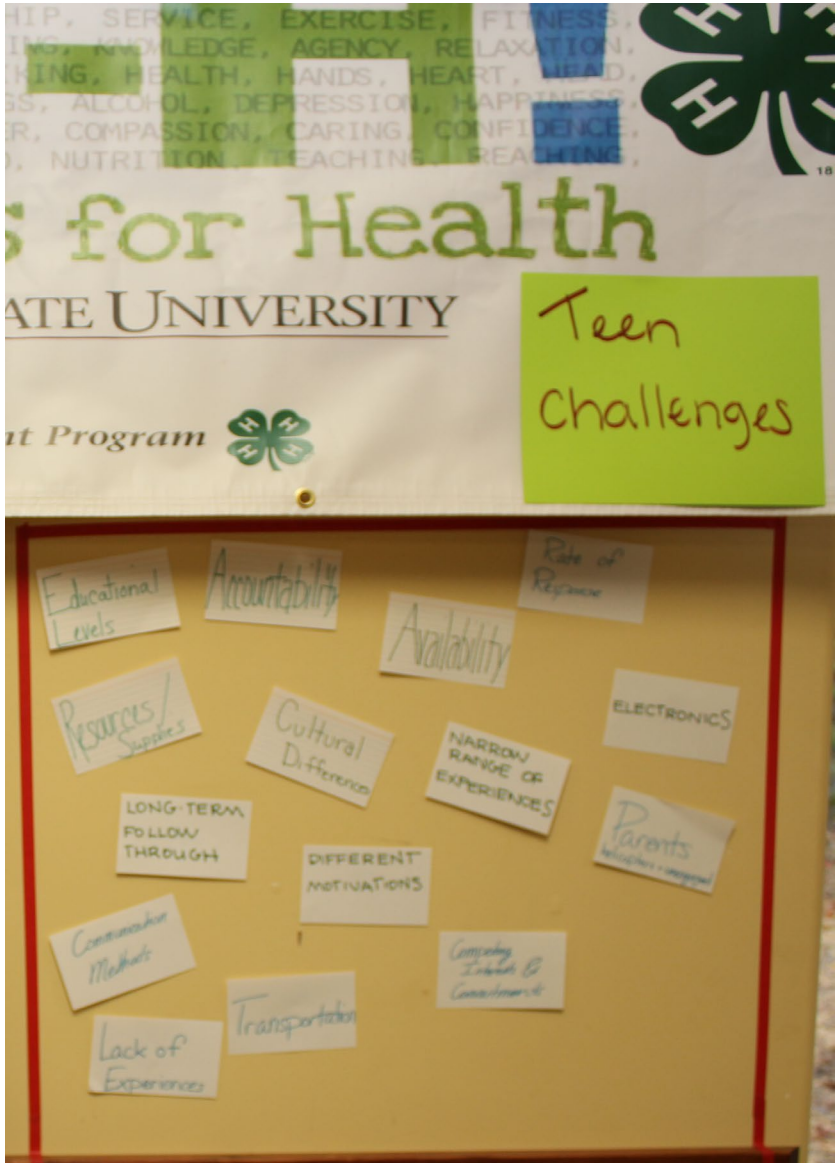
# How do you best share power with youth?

- Need to have a foundation of youth-adult partnership
  1. Youth voice
  2. Supportive adult



(Arnold & Gifford, 2015)

# What do adults say?





# What do youth say?

YA4-H!  
Youth Advocates for Health

Challenges of working with adults

age barrier

technology barrier

Not Allowing Youth to take initiative

Voicing Your Opinion

Considering Other Points of Views

Working With Others Schedules

Don't listen often

Adults accepting Changes

Thinks there is one way to do something

Different thought processes

having similar interests

youth know more about kids these days.

harder to explain things to.

Youth Advocates for Health  
WASHINGTON EXTENSION  
4-H Youth Development

Adult Challenges

Too high of expectations

Don't give us opportunities to show our abilities

Don't realize we experience the same experience they did

helicoptering

Assume we're not responsible

Assume we don't know as much

PUT STRESS ON US!!!  
(unintentional/intentional)

Miscommunication

Undermine Youth

Technology Gap

Access

Takes Control of Situations

Unintentionally Treating us like kids

Transportation

Adults ~BENEFITS~

Share Experiences

Create a positive environment

Push us to do better

HELP ORGANIZE EVENTS

They're Fun!!!

Sympathize & Empathize!

Willingness to ask for help

Give new ideas

Financial Aid

Guidelines

Letters of recommendation

Carpooling

mentorship

Encouragement

forgiving

YA4-H!  
Youth Advocates for Health

Benefits of working with adults

adults are COOL!!!

Transportation

There for us.

more authority

he help make a sense of things.

been around longer more insight on situations

more experience w/ curriculum

Backbone

They make the important calls

Push us to be the best we can be.

Nice to know they're there to help.

They're Realistic!

Patience

Adults help put ideas into action

Give us Direction

Enforce Rules

they didn't use tech while growing up

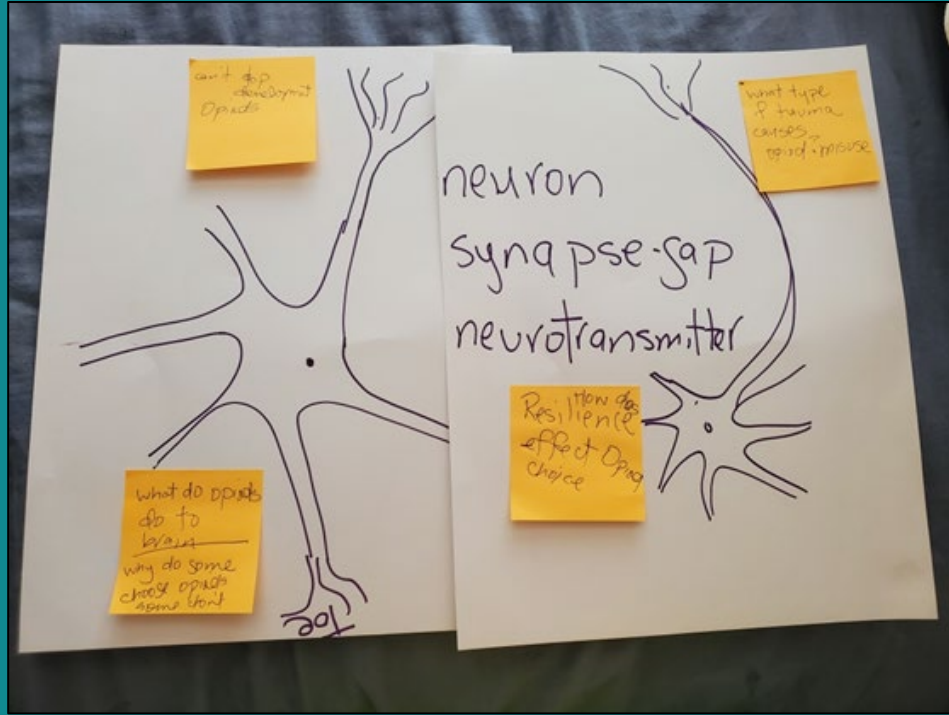
if they know how to deal with kids since they might treat them

Understand that you're busy

They're D

Give us Direction



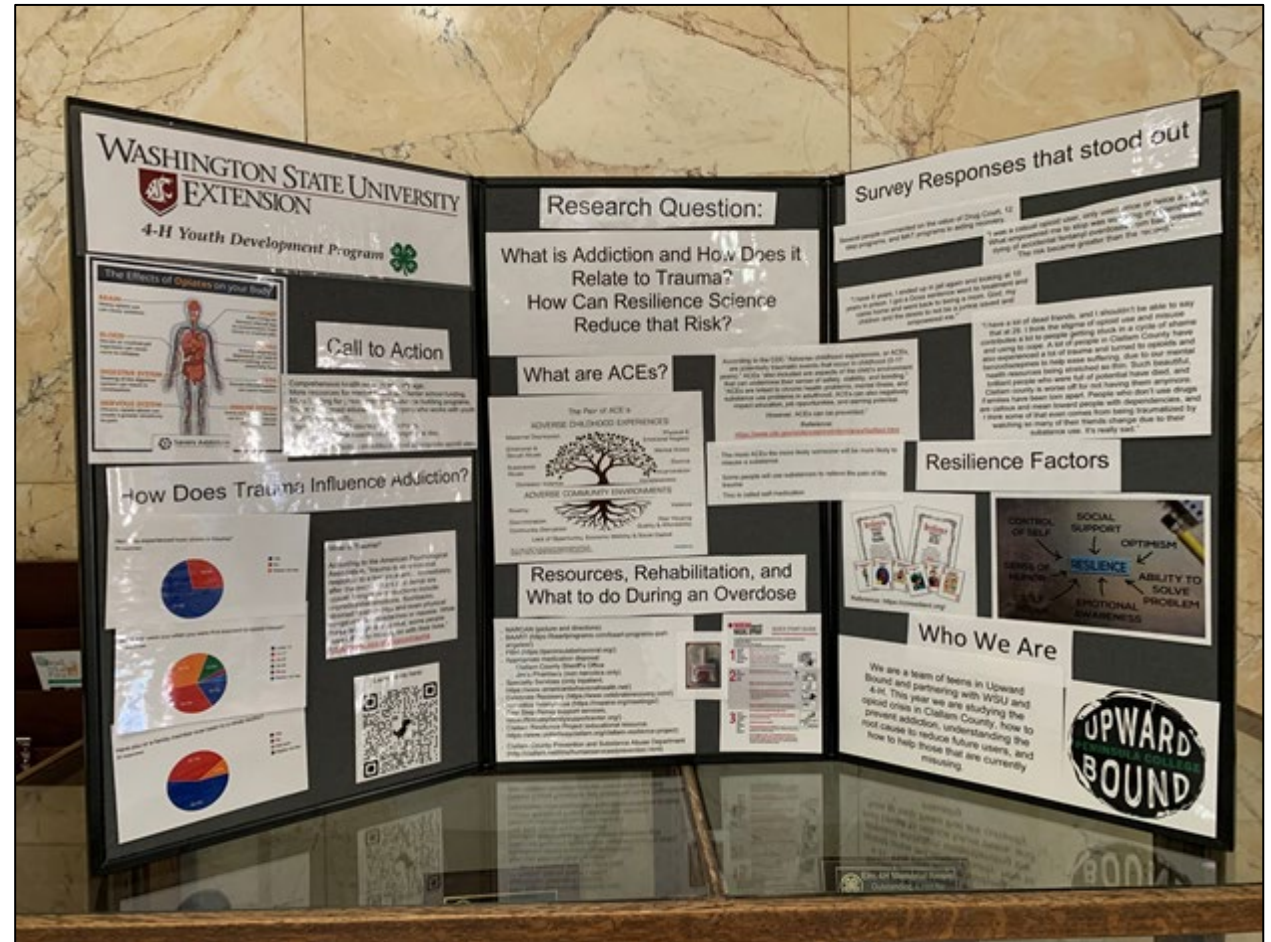


# Teens in Action

# What does it look like?

## Call to Action

- Comprehensive health education from an early age
- More resources for mental health
- More funding for prevention and resilience building programs
- Trauma informed education for those working with youth
- Education on what healthy relationships look like
- Education for doctors on addiction and appropriate opioid uses



See the whole slideshow here:

<https://extension.wsu.edu/clallam/4h/youth-advocates-for-health-ya4-h/>

# What are the levels of youth engagement?

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Organizing and  
Governing

Youth-initiated  
Leadership

Youth-initiated  
Partnership

Adult-initiated,  
Shared  
Decision-  
making

Informed  
Dialogue

Assigned but  
Informed



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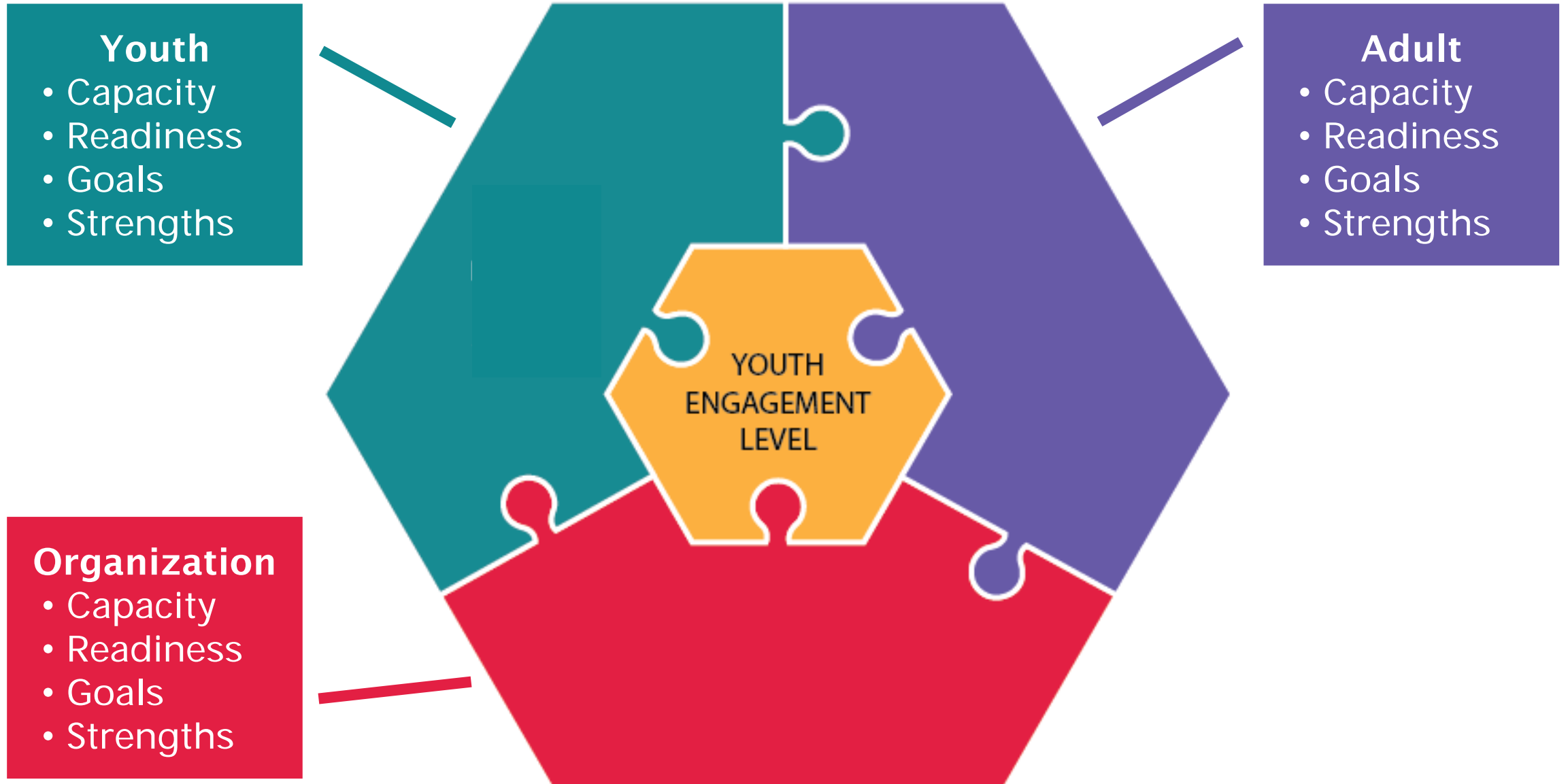
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# How do I know I'm/we're ready?



# How do I know I'm/we're ready?



## Youth

- Capacity
- Readiness
- Goals
- Strengths

Youth voices are shared and valued.  
Youth have key leadership roles or responsibilities.

Adults understand youth development.  
Adults support youth with appropriate boundaries.

## Adult

- Capacity
- Readiness
- Goals
- Strengths

## Organization

- Capacity
- Readiness
- Goals
- Strengths

The organization has youth engagement policies.  
The organization provides services tailored to meet the needs of youth.

# Show me the guide!



<https://doi.org/10.7273/000005214>

<https://bit.ly/WSU-YERG>



**Suggested Citation:** Weybright E., White A., Greer M., Fees J., & Watters C. (2023). *Youth Engagement Resource Guide*. Washington State University Extension. doi: [10.7273/000005214](https://doi.org/10.7273/000005214)

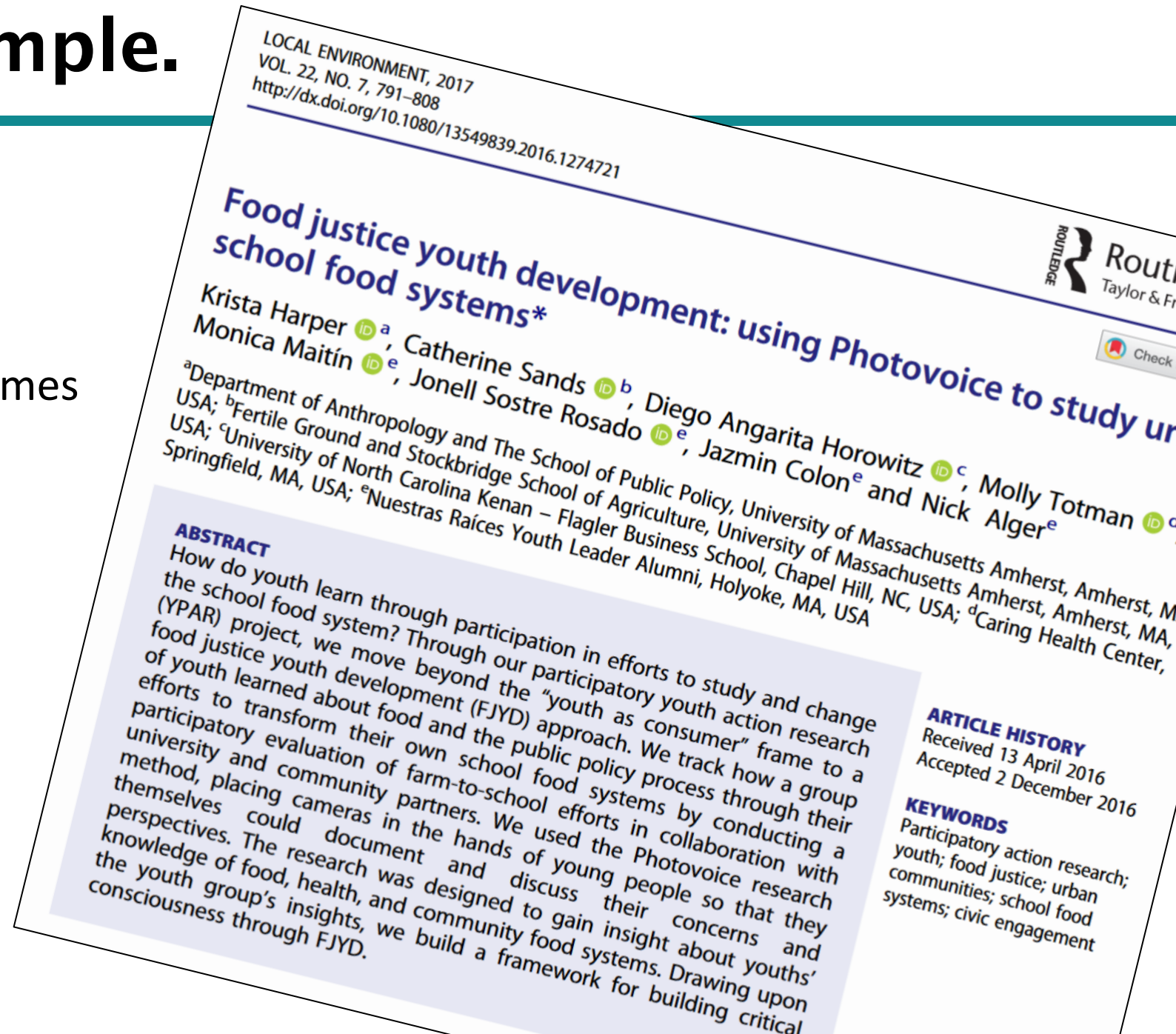
**Contact:** Elizabeth Weybright, PhD; Associate Professor & Adolescent Extension Specialist; Washington State University; [elizabeth.weybright@wsu.edu](mailto:elizabeth.weybright@wsu.edu); 509-335-2130



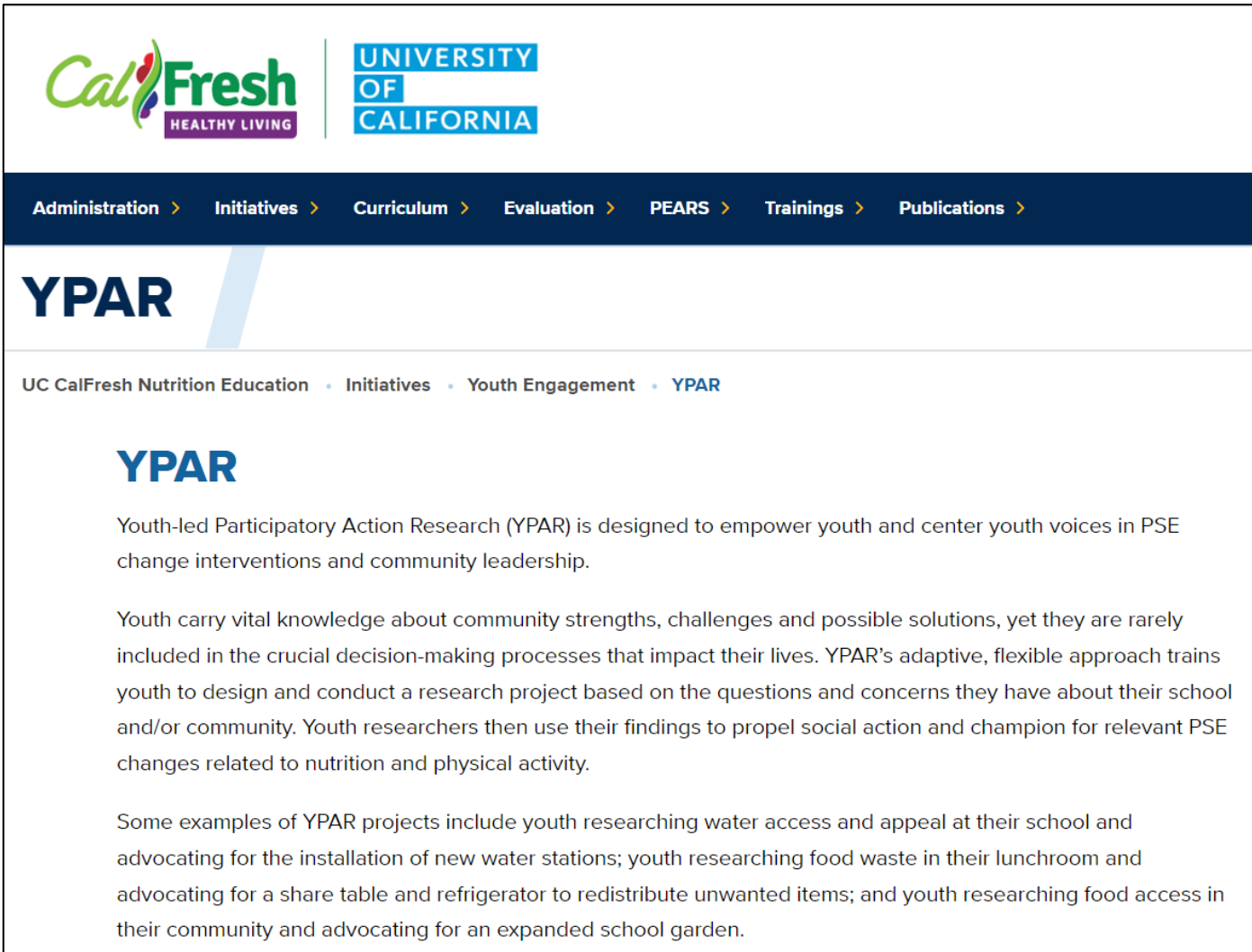


# Just one more example.

- Youth:
  - Developed new awareness
  - Took action
  - Achieved social justice outcomes



# Why haven't we gotten to the curriculum yet?



The screenshot shows the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education website. At the top, there are logos for CalFresh Healthy Living and the University of California. Below these is a navigation bar with links: Administration > Initiatives > Curriculum > Evaluation > PEARS > Trainings > Publications >. The main content area has a large 'YPAR' heading. Below this, a breadcrumb trail reads: UC CalFresh Nutrition Education • Initiatives • Youth Engagement • YPAR. The YPAR section is titled 'YPAR' and contains the following text:

Youth-led Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is designed to empower youth and center youth voices in PSE change interventions and community leadership.

Youth carry vital knowledge about community strengths, challenges and possible solutions, yet they are rarely included in the crucial decision-making processes that impact their lives. YPAR's adaptive, flexible approach trains youth to design and conduct a research project based on the questions and concerns they have about their school and/or community. Youth researchers then use their findings to propel social action and champion for relevant PSE changes related to nutrition and physical activity.

Some examples of YPAR projects include youth researching water access and appeal at their school and advocating for the installation of new water stations; youth researching food waste in their lunchroom and advocating for a share table and refrigerator to redistribute unwanted items; and youth researching food access in their community and advocating for an expanded school garden.

## Findings

- Importance of youth development background
- Need for YPAR background
- Ongoing support from supervisors

<https://uccalfresh.ucdavis.edu/initiatives/ye/ypar>

(Johnson et al., 2020)

# Why haven't we gotten to the curriculum?



[Administration](#) > [Initiatives](#) > [Curriculum](#) > [Evaluation](#) > [PEARS](#) > [Trainings](#) > [Publications](#)

## YPAR

[UC CalFresh Nutrition Education](#) • [Initiatives](#) • [Youth Engagement](#) • [YPAR](#)

### YPAR

Youth-led Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is designed to empower youth and center change interventions and community leadership.

Youth carry vital knowledge about community strengths, challenges and possible solutions included in the crucial decision-making processes that impact their lives. YPAR's adaptive approach empowers youth to design and conduct a research project based on the questions and concerns they and/or community. Youth researchers then use their findings to propel social action and changes related to nutrition and physical activity.

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[STORIES & IMPACTS](#) | [LIVE WELL](#) | [Q](#)

[HOME](#) [ADMINISTRATION](#) [REGIONAL CONNECTIONS](#) [EVALUATION](#) [CURRICULUM & TRAINING](#) [FARMERS MARKET \(WSFMA\)](#) [RESOURCES](#)

## YOUTH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS (YPAR)

[Home](#) » [Curriculum Information & Resources](#) » [Youth Participatory Action Research Projects \(YPAR\)](#)

### Introduction to the Curriculum

Youth Participatory Action Research Projects (YPAR) engage middle and high school youth (ages 12-18) in projects that address and promote nutrition and physical activity issues in their community. YPAR aims to empower youth and achieve environmental changes related to health and nutrition. An adult ally works with the youth to help mentor, support, and facilitate the youth team. Through YPAR, youth engage in leadership, critical thinking, problem solving, strategizing skills, and learn how to address their target issue related to nutrition and physical activity.

YPAR projects consist of a project coordinator, adult ally and youth team. Due to the nature of the approach, no two YPAR projects will look the same.

YPAR is based on a variety of social learning, popular education, health promotion, and youth development theories. Key principles of the approach include:

# What are we doing on Thursday?

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1

Introduction to Youth Participatory Action Research  
YPAR in Action  
Youth-Adult Partnerships

2

Curriculum Walk-Through  
Evaluation  
Q&A



*Thank you!*

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