Summary

Youth work is a complex and dynamic practice that reflects a long tradition of engaging young people of all ages with adults in community-based opportunities to learn, practice and grow. Youth work promotes nonformal learning in parks, recreation centers, schools, and myriad other organizations focused on topics like the arts, sports, culture, faith-based learning, civic engagement, leadership, science, technology and the environment. Successful youth work intentionally builds on interpersonal relationships, mutual respect, personal choice, voluntary participation and quality learning experiences. Historically many youth programs viewed young people as clients or members dependent on and directed by adults in authority. This e-study explores how a "youth work lens" can offer new avenues of engagement among both youth and staff in youth-serving agencies. It advocates for policy and practice framed by a "lens of positive youth development" as reflected in the youthful plea to make "no decisions about us without us!" A youth work lens focuses on young people as active participants supported by power sharing, respect for basic rights and emphasis on equity. The three case studies demonstrate the power complexities of shared decision-making, appropriate support for young people involved in new roles, and the role of youth workers negotiating between the young people and the stance of the larger organizational.
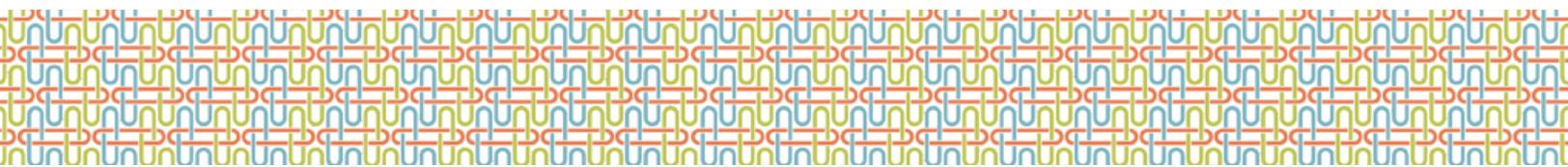
Background information

This e-study tells the story of three experienced youth workers who have embraced a youth work lens both in their work with young people and more broadly with peers and supervisees. During their year in the NorthStar Youth Worker Fellowship, they dug deep into readings and discussions of youth work, conducted action research and examined their own practices as well as the policies of youth organizations. The white papers which are at the heart of this e-study share their discoveries, obstacles, changes of perspective and recommendations. What emerges is the vital connection between the philosophy and values of practice and the community valuing of young people as visibly articulated in its public policies and organizational policies in regard to youth. This e-study invites people who work with and on behalf of youth to look critically at their own practices as well as the youth policy stances of the organization and community in which they work.

Learning Outcome(s)

The overall learning outcomes for this e-study are that the user will:

- See young people through a lens of positive youth development
- Recognize policies, daily practices and developmental principles that support learning of young people
- Explore how a high level of youth voice and engagement can apply to your own practice
- Explore ways to advance the presence, power and voice of young people within organizational systems as well as in local, national and international policy contexts.

Module	Learning Objectives
Intro: A Youth Work Lens on Human Development	● The opening video establishes the context and topic for the E-Study. One of the facilitators of the NorthStar Youth Worker Fellowship describes the practice of using a youth work lens and is followed by each fellow introducing their module topic. ● Youth workers, youth program leaders and professionals working on behalf of young people in the youth policy arena are the primary audience.
Module 1 NorthStar Overview	● E-study participants will understand the purpose of the NorthStar Youth Worker Fellowship to prepare youth workers to explore, lead and advocate for positive youth policy in organizational, systems and community settings. ● Establish the interdependency -- the critical link -- between practice and policy. ● Consider the many ways practitioners confront youth policy issues in their practice. ● Acknowledge the importance of youth policy in national and international settings.
Module 2 Phil	● Identify potential benefits and barriers to implementing a youth staff program ● Reflect on how adultism shapes expectations of teens and young adults in employment ● Gain knowledge and tools to support development of a youth staff program within their organization
Module 3 Angel	● Program leaders and policy-makers will understand the developmental needs of low paid youth workers in the workplace, and how deliberately youth worker oriented supervision can address those needs while modeling quality youth development practice. ● Consider the social justice implications of deliberately developmental youth worker supervision in marginalized communities. ● Acknowledge the positive impact on program quality by utilizing a deliberately developmental youth worker lens in supervision practice, especially in programs staffed by the lowest paid and least experienced workers.
Module 4 Shaina	● Participants will explore the concept of internal responsibility versus external accountability and its affects on youth work. ● Youth workers and their organizations will gain knowledge on how to develop a support system that increases their skills and abilities as youth workers. ● Funders, executive directors and policy-makers will gain an understanding of how using a process based approach to youth worker development can also be a component of a youth program accountability system.

Conceptual Framework

The E-Study has four modules--an overview of the NorthStar Youth Worker Fellowship. followed by three case studies built upon the white papers of three North Star fellows. The Introductory Video and Module 1 present views on why a youth work lens is a valuable perspective that strengthens positive youth development and positions young people to be full participants in their own learning and leadership. Modules 2-4 begin with
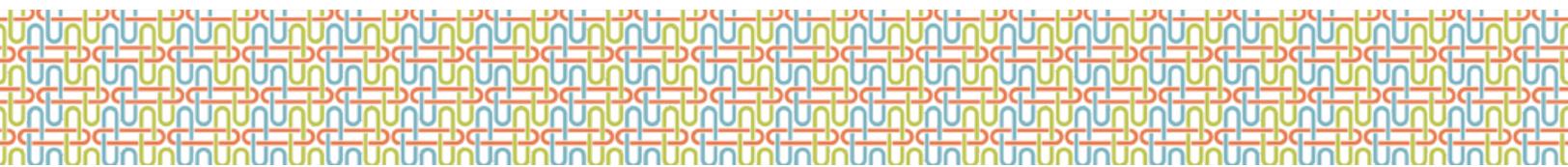
advocacy for a youth as staff model in after school programs, transition to strategies that engage and empower professional youth workers through intentional supervision practices, and advocacy for a new model of accountability that harnesses the internal motivation of youth workers through reflection circles. Youth workers, program leaders and youth policy advocates will gain new perspectives and ideas on assessing their own work and appreciating the dilemmas that adults in practice face in their daily work when supportive youth policies are absent. The case studies demonstrate how the presence of well articulated positive youth policies in personal, organizational and society are essential to strong, effective youth work practice.

Runtime

Approximately 6.5 hours depending on how many recommended resources are added. Breakdown of approximate time for each module:

    Introduction: 10 minutes

    Module 1: 60 minutes (including 10 min. for Introductory Video)

    Module 2: 120 minutes

    Module 3: 90 minutes

    Module 4: 110 minutes

Suggested Uses

E-Study Intro - A Youth Work Lens on Youth Development

- **Use #1: Reflecting on Introductory Video**
    - **Estimated time - 10 minutes**
    - **Students prepare by watching introductory video at least once**
    - **Suggested materials to create while watching video:**
        - Jot down 3-5 keywords or phrases used by fellowship leaders to describe the reasons the concept of "a youth work lens" is important for both young people and the adults with whom they interact.
        - Note anything that's said which made you think, "Yes!"
        - Note anything said that makes you uncomfortable or raises questions
        - Watch the video again to test out your initial reactions
    - **Suggested tasks:** Read the United Nations Charter for the Rights of Children version for Kids linked on page 3 of Module 1

Module 1: NorthStar

- **Use #1: Make the Connection Between Youth Work as a Practice and the Concept of a "Youth Work Lens" which Serves to Shape Perspectives and Clarify a Stance Toward Young People**
    - **Estimated time - 60 minutes**
    - **Students prepare by completing Module 1 with special attention to the links of page 2 which focus on details of the fellowship.**
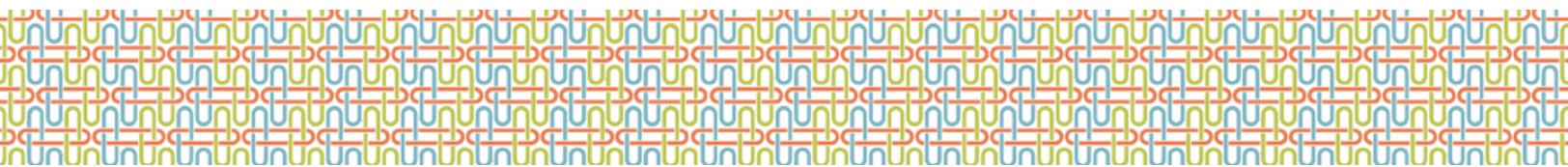
- o **Suggested Reading:** Konopka, G. (1973) Requirements for the Healthy Development of Adolescents. Link found on page 4 under resources. This thoughtful essay makes the connection between youth work motivated to promote the healthy development of young people and the concept of a situational lens that focuses attention on respect for basic rights, expression of authentic voice, power sharing, and the need to take risks, ask hard questions, challenge the status quo and try new things.
- o **Suggested Alternative Tasks:**
    - ▪ Watch video on page 1 to hear the perspectives of fellows on the policy implications of using a "youth work lens".
    - · Share a discussion (or write a short paper) articulating your professional lens on youth work. Discuss how having a basic stance toward adolescents in general shapes your thinking about possibilities for both everyday practice and larger policy issues. What does having a "youth work lens" mean for youth policy in the United States?

Module 2: Phil
- ● **Use #1: Explore how to incorporate a youth staff model into a youth development program**
    - o **Estimated time**
        - · 120mins
    - o **How should students prepare?**
        - · Complete Module 2. Review program benefits from page 2 and logic model from page 4. Complete both handouts based on your own organizational context.
    - o **Suggested materials to be used:**
        - · Read "From Membership to Leadership," the Youth Development Institute study on the NYC Beacons Program http://ostrc.org/doclibrary/documents/MembershiptoLeadership.pdf
        - · Read "Honoring the Experience: Towards a Youth Staff Model for Youth Programs". https://hubert.hhh.umn.edu/NorthStar17PDF/M2HonoringExperienceRooney.pdf
    - o **Suggested tasks:**
        - · Have a facilitated conversation based on guiding questions handout on page 3.
- ● **Use #2: Reflect on the role of young people in youth programs and society**
    - o **Estimated time**
        - · 90mins
    - o **How should students prepare?**
        - · Write down your initial expectations or assumptions for what a teen employee could accomplish in your work setting.
    - o **Suggested materials to be used:**
        - · Read "Understanding Adultism" by John Bell.
   - o **Suggested tasks:**
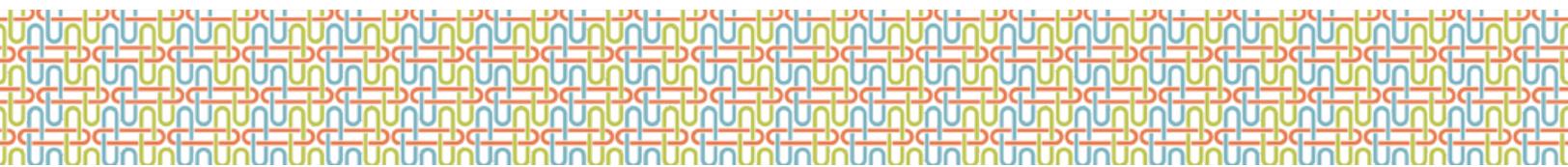
- Hold a reflective discussion space based on personal experiences with diminished expectations and responsibility due to age, regardless of capacity.
- Identify rights and responsibilities that are withheld within society based on age.
  - o **Alternative tasks/assignments:**
    - Read the "Evolving Capacities of the Child" by Gerison Lansdown. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/evolving-eng.pdf
    - Read UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx

Module 3: Angel

- **Use #1: Make the connection between features of the deliberately developmental supervision approach (such as reflective practice) and its impact on equity in marginalized communities.**
  - o **Estimated time 90 minutes**
  - o **How should students prepare?**
    - Listen to audio file on first slide at least once.
  - o **Suggested materials to be created while listening to audio:**
    - Jot down 3-5 keywords or phrases that identify why this topic is a social justice issue.
    - Note anything that's said which made you think, "Yes!"
    - Note anything said that makes you question or uncomfortable.
    - Listen again to test out your initial reactions.
  - o **Suggested tasks:**
    - Read: Making Business Personal, from the April 2014 issue of the Harvard Business Review, located in the usage notes file.
      - Write or discuss: How does the positive youth development approach align with and differ from the concepts outlined in this article? How could the adoption of the deliberately developmental organization approach bring more equitable youth services to marginalized communities?
    - Read: Peluso, A. (2017). Practice What We Preach: Supervisory Practice for Youth Worker Professional Development. *Journal of Youth Development*, *12*(1), 18-29. doi:https://doi.org/10.5195/jyd.2017.481
      - Write or discuss: What were some of the challenges addressed by this supervisory approach? What stood out as unique to this approach over more traditional models of management, and how might this approach be better aligned with positive youth development?
  - o **Alternative tasks/assignments:**
    - Read and discuss: Bonello, Kristina, "Youth Workers' Perceptions of Their Career Choice and Helping Ability in Relationship with Their Own Lived Experiences" (2012). *Master of Social Work Clinical Research Papers.* Paper 5. Http://sophia.stkate.edu/msw_papers/5
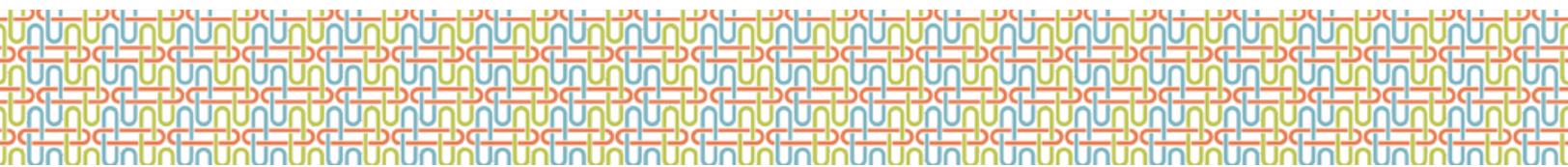
● Discussion questions: What additional considerations might be made for youth workers' professional development based on their common backgrounds? How could a deliberately developmental organizational environment strengthen the effectiveness of youth workers who have experienced trauma?

Module 4: Shaina

- **Use #1: Conceptualizing how to create an alternative accountability system within a community or network.**
    - **Estimated time**
        - 50 minutes
    - **How should students prepare?**
        - Read or listen to the paper on slide 1, paying close attention to the following sections: Internal Responsibility, An Alternate Accountability Approach, Anticipated Results
    - **Suggested materials to be used:**
        - Slides 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and their handouts
    - **Suggested tasks:**
        - Slide 1: Review topic
        - Slide 2: Have small group discussions or personal reflection on linked handout (Accountability vs Responsibility in YW), how does this apply to your work, have you seen an instances like these or others that relate to feeling connected to your work?
        - Slide 3: Review, if unfamiliar with the role of reflection in youth work.
        - Slides 4 & 5: Review the attached Logic Model (slide 4) and Stakeholder Roles (slide 5), could you create a system in your network to support youth workers internal responsibility using a similar model? How would it work? What would be the challenges? What are some additional benefits / outcomes not suggested?
        - Slide 6: Review Policy Implications handout. How would these results influence and impact the field of youth work, could they lead to stronger communities? How can you help make this happen?
    - **Alternative tasks/assignments:**
        - Review accountability systems in schools and their impact on teacher motivation and student learning. (Suggested article, Do Accountability Policy Sanctions Influence Teacher Motivation? https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kara_Finnigan/publication/240801899_Do_Accountability_Policy_Sanctions_Influence_Teacher_Motivation_Lessons_From_Chicago%27s_Low-Performing_Schools/links/553d55650cf2c415bb0f5b26/Do-Accountability-Policy-Sanctions-Influence-Teacher-Motivation-Lessons-From-Chicagos-Low-Performing-Schools.pdf)

- Encourage a colleague to review the e-study, discuss what you could do to implement or encourage more support for youth workers in the field through reflection.
- **Use #2: Using reflection circles within your organization.**
  - **Estimated time**
    - **60 minutes**
  - **How should students prepare?**
    - Read or listen to the paper on slide 1
  - **Suggested materials to be used:**
    - Slides 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
  - **Suggested tasks:**
    - Slide 1: Review concept.
    - Slide 2: Have small group discussions or personal reflection on linked handout (Accountability vs Responsibility in YW), do you see these instances play out in your work, what motivates you to come to work everyday, who holds you accountable?
    - Slide 3: Review slide, how do you incorporate reflection in your daily work with youth or as a supervisor / administrator of youth work programs? Is the time spent reflecting adequate for the work you are doing or asking others to do? How do you know if you are reflecting enough? Could you or should you change your approach to reflection at work?
    - Slide 4: After reviewing the logic model, how could you alter the plan to still have a significant impact on your organization's results, without losing the integrity of the plan? For example, how would you support reflection circles for your organization without support from an intermediary to provide a facilitator?
    - Slide 5: If you were trying to create a system for your organization, what would your stakeholders map look like?
  - **Alternative tasks/assignments:**
    - Review slide 6, ask how you as an organization could create your own system of reflection circles with some of your closest program partners? Who could you work with, why them, and what resources would it take?
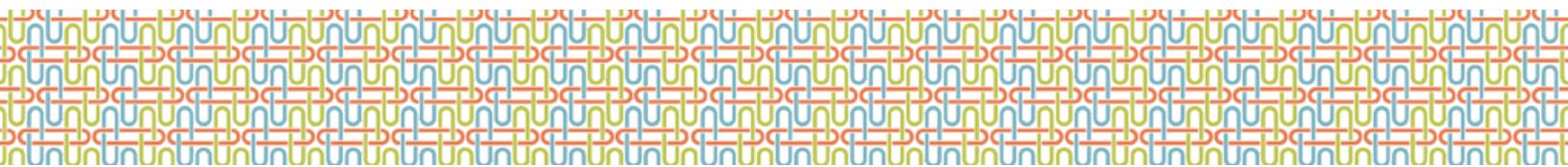
Additional Resources
Module 1: NorthStar

- See Resource Section in e-study

Module 2: Phil

- See Resource Section in e-study

Module 3: Angel

- See Resource Section in e-study

Module 4: Shaina

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Module 1: NorthStar
Module 2: Phil

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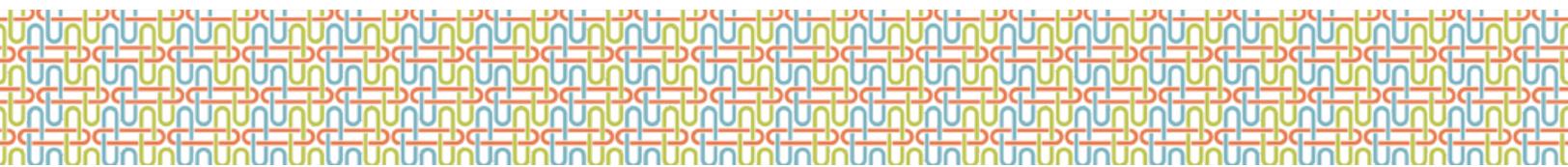
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