

# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

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Support and Opportunities for Youth Success

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# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN TOBACCO CONTROL

Authentic and meaningful youth engagement in the tobacco control movement begins when adults have an understanding of the **support** and **opportunities** youth need to succeed. Youth development provides a framework for building a strong, community-based movement where youth show up, feel connected and act as leaders for policy change.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

Supports and Opportunities for Youth Success



The supports and opportunities framework displays 5 critical components incorporated into youth engagement in tobacco control. (Alberti Gambone, 2002).

## SO, WHAT EXACTLY IS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT?

The field of youth development emerged as a response to the prevailing paradigm in research, policies, and programs that viewed youth as “problems to be solved.” “Delinquency prevention,” “zero tolerance” and “Just Say No” are examples of policies and programs that exemplify the “youth as problems” model. Other than “preventing youth problems,” little attention was paid to youth. This was the predominant paradigm for much of the 20th century.

The goal of the youth development movement is to “flip this script” by changing the way society views and treats youth. Rather than focusing on problems, youth development seeks to understand and provide the positive supports and opportunities that all youth need to thrive. Youth development believes that youth aren’t “problems to be solved,” but rather critical partners that contribute to community well-being and change.

A robust field of research supports youth development (e.g. Benson 2007; Bernard 1991). In fact, there are so many research-based youth development frameworks, such as the 5Cs, the 40 assets, and resiliency theory, it can get a little overwhelming. For tobacco control work, the support and opportunities framework is relevant because it emphasizes youth participation, community involvement and skill building—all of which are critical for sustaining youth engagement in local tobacco control work (Alberti Gambone, 2002).

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES A CRITICAL SHIFT IN FOCUS

Building a tobacco control program that uses youth development as a framework requires adults embrace critical shifts in focus and practice. These shifts are outlined to the right.

\*Adapted from the Center for Disease Control Prevention (2010).

FROM:	TO:
Focus on problems	Focus on strengths
Youth as service recipients	Youth as resources
Assign blame	Claim responsibility
Rely on professional opinions	Everyone has a role
Short-term interventions	Long-term support
Adults as guides	Adults as allies
Goal of education	Goal of policy change
Fighting against smoking	Fighting pro-tobacco influences

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATIONS:

# SAFETY

Physical \* Cultural \* Emotional

## SAFETY IS THE FOUNDATION TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT. A SAFE ENVIRONMENT CREATES THE CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR YOUTH TO ENGAGE, TAKE RISKS AND GROW.

In schools and communities, safety is often viewed through a very narrow lens. Safety is characterized as protected from physical harm and prepared for an emergency. While these characteristics are important, youth development uses a more expansive view to include 3 components of safety. In youth development, safety is defined in three ways:

1. **Physical safety:** youth are safe from physical harm.
2. **Emotional safety:** youth feel secure and accepted by the group. Youth are able to be vulnerable and express themselves without fear of being criticized or bullied.
3. **Cultural safety:** youth's language, religious, cultural beliefs, practices and customs are respected and valued.

### AGREEMENTS CREATE A FOUNDATION OF SAFETY

Safe environments are created when groups have a common understanding of what physical, emotional and cultural safety look like, sound like and feel like. Adults can facilitate a discussion with youth to define these terms and develop a set of positive agreements to assure that all members of the group feel safe all the time. These collaboratively developed agreements will become the foundation of your youth engagement efforts.

There are many ways to create agreements. Small group discussions and sharing, drawing, acting out what it looks like when agreements are upheld and not upheld are all options for creating group-led agreements. The most important aspect of agreements is that they are created by the youth. The result of the activity should have a list of 5-10 positively stated agreements written on a large sheet of paper that can be seen by everyone, all of the time. Youth and adults can also sign the paper to show their commitment to upholding agreements.

### CREATING A POSITIVE CULTURE

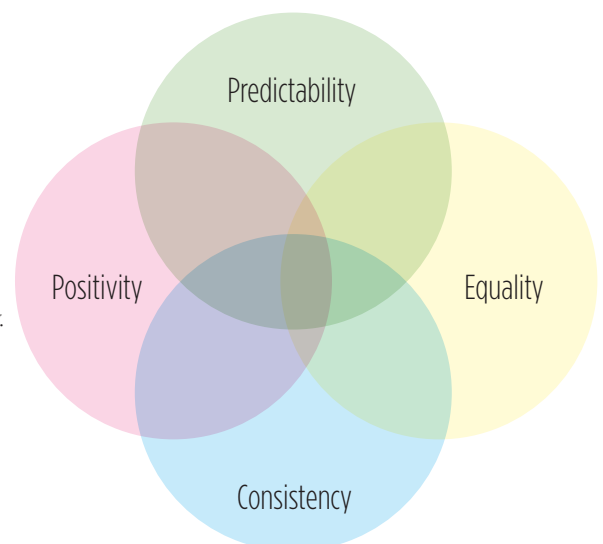
The way adults speak, act and structure an environment helps youth uphold agreements. Environments that feel safe for youth embody 4 core features: predictability, consistency, positivity and equality.

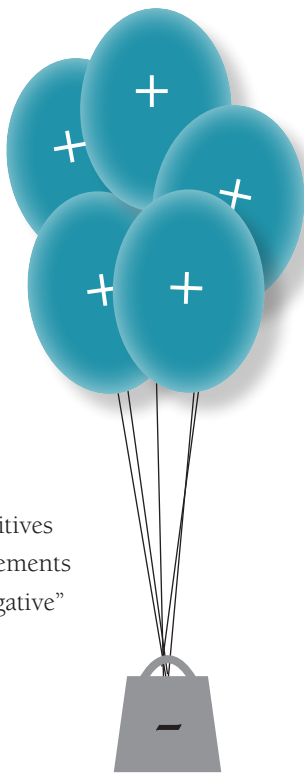
**PREDICTABILITY:** Youth feel like they know what is going to happen.

**CONSISTENCY:** Youth are all held to the same expectations.

**POSITIVITY:** Rules and expectations are stated and reinforced positively.

**EQUALITY:** All youth are treated fairly and with respect.





“5 positives  
reinforcements  
to 1 negative”

## AGENDAS

Develop an agenda and meeting structure and use it every time you meet. This creates a sense of **predictability** and **consistency** for youth, because they generally feel like they know what is going to happen and why they are there.

## POSITIVE PRAISE

has the power to create a positive environment and change the behaviors of youth. While terms like “awesome job” and “you rock” help to create a positive atmosphere, behavior-specific praise helps create a safe environment by reinforcing and acknowledging the values and agreements the youth create. Behavior specific praise names both the behavior and the value or agreement that it relates to.

“Hey Sammy. Thank you for **picking up Malia’s book**. That was very **helpful**.”

The statement articulates a specific behavior “picking up a book” and links this behavior to the agreement or value of being “helpful.” Adults should aim for **5 positives reinforcements to 1 negative or behavior correction** when working with youth in order to encourage and reinforce positive behavior.

## TODAY’S AGENDA

### PURPOSE:

What are we going to achieve? This section of the agenda let’s youth know why they are here. Always review the agenda before starting the meeting and have a visible agenda on display at all times.

### CHECK-INS (5 MINUTES):

Check-ins are short, personal questions that allow the group to understand how each person is feeling on a given day. Check-ins help the group to be fully present and engage in the meeting.

### TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES):

This could be an ice-breaker, brief energizer or any team building activity that can be used anytime during a youth meeting. Activities help you stay engaged and learn to work as a team. Activities also give youth a break when doing intellectually challenging work like strategizing.

### AGENDA ITEMS (TBD):

Make sure to outline all other activities and times that will be completed during the meeting.

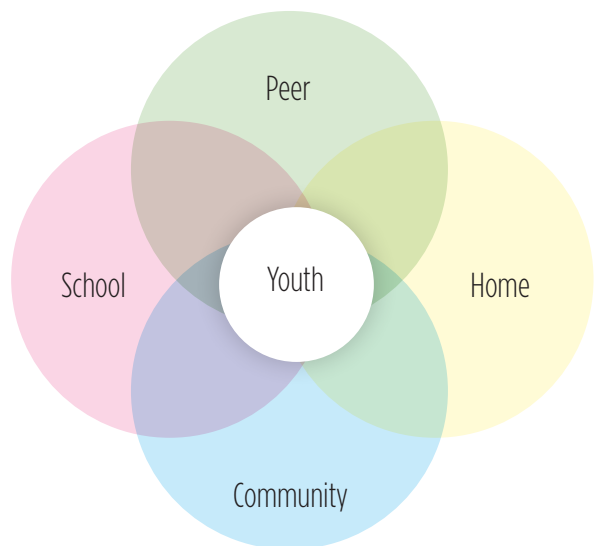
### CHECK OUT (5-10 MINUTES):

Check-outs help youth evaluate themselves after a meeting is finished. Here are some sample check-out activities:

- **Fist to Five.** Ask the group to rate how well they upheld their norms and agreements on a scale of 0-5. You vote by holding up 0-5 fingers.
- **Whip around.** Ask the group for one word that describes how they felt about the outcomes of the meeting.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATIONS: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Research has shown that relationships have a protective impact on youth. When youth experience positive, caring relationships in their home and school, amongst their peers and within the community, they develop resiliency or the internal strength needed to overcome obstacles and grow into healthy, successful adults.



Yet, in California, only 6 out of every 10 youth can identify an adult in the community who really cares about them.

*This means 40% of our youth cannot name an adult, other than their parents or teachers, that cares about them.*

Through youth engagement, tobacco control coalitions have the ability to build relationships with youth in two of these four critical areas. Youth engagement in a tobacco coalition can help connect youth to positive adult role models in the community and can also help build positive peer relationships. The first steps in authentic youth engagement is learning how to build relationships with young people.

### RELATIONSHIP BUILDING IS EMBEDDED IN ALL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND IS BUILT ON 3 CRITICAL THINGS:

1. Youth must know that you **care**. Youth need practical and emotional support from adults.
2. Youth must be given opportunities to **participate**. Listening and providing a space for youth to speak gives youth the opportunity to participate in relationships.
3. Youth must know that adults believe in them. Setting **high expectations** is how youth know adults believe in them.

CARING  
RELATIONSHIPS

HIGH  
EXPECTATIONS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
PARTICIPATION

These assets are the building blocks of positive youth and adult relationships.

These three critical components (caring, setting high expectations and providing opportunities to participate) work together to build the foundation of a strong relationship. The table below outlines some sample conversations an adult might have with a youth. The conversation frames demonstrate how these three critical assets work together.

Asset	Application	Outcome for Youth
Caring relationships	“Johnny, look both ways when you cross the street. I don’t want you to get hit by a car.”	Youth knows an adult cares about him, because s/he wants him to be safe.
High expectations	“Sammy, I believe you can get your PhD in physics. “	Physics is hard. Sammy knows that someone believes she could succeed in physics.
Opportunities to participate	“What do you want to have for lunch team?”	Team has the opportunity to participate in the decision about their dining facilities.
Caring relationship + High Expectation without an opportunity to participate	“I want the best for you son. I believe you are smart enough to be a doctor just like me.”	Youth knows his parent cares and believes in him, but he doesn’t have a say his own life goals.
High expectations + Opportunity to participate without a caring relationship.	“You can do anything you put your mind to!”	Youth is given an opportunity to “dream big,” but doesn’t necessarily have the support s/he needs to achieve those goals.
Caring relationships+ High Expectations+ Opportunity to participate	“Lila, I believe you can do anything you want to do. I see your talents and gifts everyday. I am always here to help you realize your goals.”	Youth knows an adult cares about her. Adult validates youth by naming her talents. Adult encourages youth to pursue her dreams without defining these dreams for her.

## HOW DO YOUTH KNOW WHEN ADULTS REALLY CARE ABOUT THEM? WHAT DO ADULTS SAY AND DO?

- They remember my name.
- Mrs. Smith cares about me, because she actually asks me how I am doing.
- Dr. Keith always notices when I am not around. He asks me about where I have been.
- My Dad tells me when I do a good job.
- They ask about other stuff, not just homework or school or grades. They ask me like what I am interested in.
- They bring us good food!

## WAYS TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:

- Plan for one on one time with youth
- Set aside free time to socialize
- Be open, vulnerable and also set boundaries with youth
- Develop a conflict resolution process

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATIONS:

# YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Meaningful youth participation is when youth are able to participate in the decision-making that influences the work of a tobacco control coalition, develop leadership skills and exercise self-determination. Meaningful youth participation in tobacco control work is mutually beneficial. When youth are given the opportunity to participate in meaningful ways, they feel a sense of belonging and ownership within the coalition's work. Tobacco control work benefits from authentic youth participation because it strengthens prevention efforts and creates an opportunity where coalitions can harness the passion, strengths, talents and skills of youth.

In the tobacco control movement, the need for youth participation is widely accepted; exactly how to make youth participation meaningful and authentic remains a challenge for many tobacco-free coalitions. Well-intentioned adults often engage in practices that prevent youth from fully participating in advocacy efforts. As a result, youth become tokens or decorations on the periphery of the movement rather than leaders guiding the work. Understanding the factors that enable and prohibit meaningful participation can help tobacco control coalitions engage youth in meaningful ways

One of leading factors that inhibits participation is the implicit assumptions adults make regarding the capabilities of youth. These biases are known as “adultism” or belief that adults know better than youth and they inhibit their ability to participate in meaningful ways. The following statements are examples of adultism:

- “You are so smart for a 15 year old.”
- “When will you grow up?”
- “You won’t understand until you are older.”
- “As long as you are in my house, you’ll do it.”
- “It just a stage. You’ll grow out of it.”

## REMEMBERING

Remembering and reflecting is a way that adults in your coalition and community (and society in general) can become aware of and move past bias. Start by asking adults in your coalition and community question like these: What was it like to be 15? Where did you live? What were your interests? Which adults treated you with respect? Which didn't? What did these adults say and do that made you feel that way? Share these reflections with the group and generate a list of ways the coalition can empower youth to participate fully in advocacy efforts.

## HERE ARE WAYS COALITIONS CAN EMPOWER YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN TOBACCO CONTROL EFFORTS:

- Create leadership positions and pay youth for their time and service
- Elect youth representatives to serve on your coalition
- Let youth plan activities. Do not write specific activities into LLA plans. Focus on process and skill building instead.
- Use participatory research methods to engage youth in work around coalition's policy objectives.  
(see: <http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/>)

## ADULTISM:

All of the attitude and behaviors that come from the belief that adults are better than young people.





**Hart's Ladder of Participation**

	Definition	Example
Youth and adults share decision-making.	Youth have the ideas and set up the project and invite adults to join them in the decision making throughout the project. There is equity in decision-making and mutual respect.	A group of youth decides that they need a cessation counselor in their community. They partner with adults from different organizations and together they lobby their local government for resources.
Youth lead and initiate action.	Youth have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Adults are available as needed and trust in the leadership of youth.	A group of students get permission from their principal to run a "Smoke Out" event on their campus. The students make decisions about the event and the school provides support.
Adult-initiated, shared decision making with youth.	Adults have the initial idea, and youth are involved in decision-making, planning and implementation.	A coalition coordinator asks youth for event ideas for an upcoming advocacy campaign. The youth suggest having a dance party to get the word out about the campaign. The coordinator and youth work together to make decisions and gather resources to make the event happen.
Youth are consulted and informed.	Adults design and facilitate the project, and young people's opinions are given weight in decision-making. Young people receive feedback about their opinions.	A local tobacco control program coordinates several focus groups to get youth opinions about their upcoming e-cigarette education campaign. The program provides feedback to the young people about how their views impacted the program's decision making.
Youth informed and assigned.	Adults make decisions and inform youth about their role in a project. Youth understand the project and adults respect their views.	A conference creates positions for two youth on a panel of speakers. The youth decide how to select their representatives and work with adults to understand their role.
Tokenism	Youth are given limited voice and choice about what they say and how they communicate.	A youth is asked by adults to be on a panel regarding the impacts of tobacco on the local community. The youth is not given the opportunity to understand the role or consult with peers.
Decoration	Youth are assigned roles, have no decision-making power and limited capacity.	Adults write a report about youth perspectives on e-cigarettes. Adults use youth's drawings and photographs in the publication without talking to young people.
Manipulation	Adults have complete and unchallenged authority and abuse their power. They use youth ideas for their benefit.	A county tobacco control program is hosting it's annual "Kick Butts" conference and wants to incorporate youth voice into this year's agenda. The coalition writes a script and has a youth read it during opening remarks.

Tobacco coalitions can use **HART'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION** to assess how youth are participating in the coalition's work and strategize about how to increase the levels of participation. This tool should be used for reflection and growth and not as a way to criticize past or present youth engagement efforts. If youth are currently engaged in ways that could be considered tokenism, the coalition can use this tool to raise awareness and build more authentic and meaningful youth participation.

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The opportunity to connect, get involved, and be of service to the community is a critical component of youth development. Community involvement means offering youth activities that increase their knowledge of a community and their sense of belonging to it (CNYD, 2001). Community involvement gives youth the opportunity to feel like they matter, can make a contribution, and that they belong to a people and place.

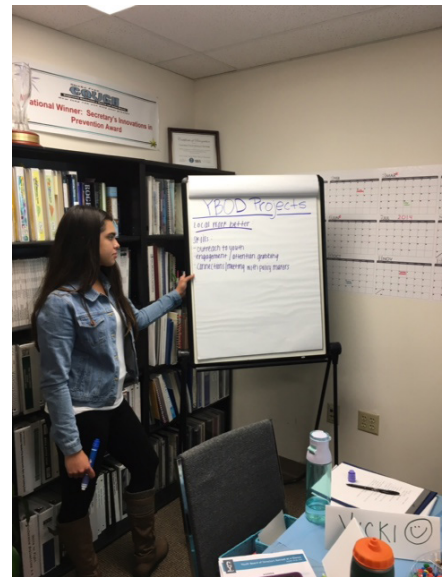
*“Young people should be involved in community development because they live in and belong to their community. Involving young people in the development of their communities encourages them to become stakeholders in their communities and to care about them.”* - Karen Pittman, the director for the Center for Youth Development

Research has shown that when youth are involved in their community and have the opportunity to be of services, these activities increase their inner strength, self-esteem, enhanced moral development, increased political engagement and their ability to maintain complex interpersonal relationships.

## HOW CAN TOBACCO CONTROL INITIATIVES PROMOTE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT?

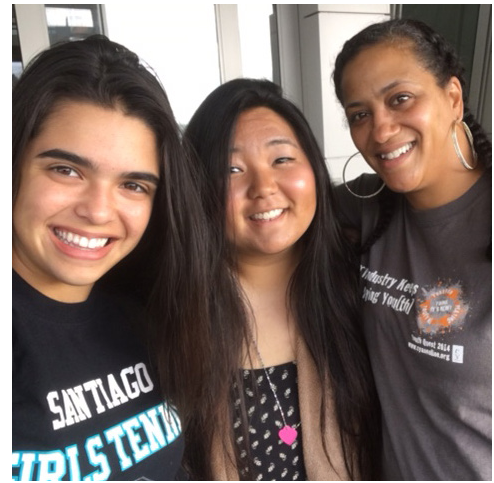
Effective tobacco control work also requires coalition’s to have a deep knowledge of their community. A common definition and understanding of community coupled with the sense of urgency and need for action around tobacco-related issues creates the conditions that inspire youth to want to get involved and create change. The first step in promoting community involvement is working with the youth coalition to define their community.

**Defining our community:** Assess what youth already know about their community.



Have youth identify the geographic boundaries of the community in order to create a common sense of place.	➔	Consider the diverse cultural backgrounds and histories that make up your community. Make sure the boundaries are inclusive of all groups.
Make a list of the cultural groups, teams, clubs, recreational activities and place where youth already feel a sense of belonging.	➔	Ask coalition members the same question about their community. Compare youth and adult responses.
Using a large wall map, define the areas in the community youth already know about.	➔	Where do youth hang out? Go to school?
What are the resources that exist the community? Where are they located?	➔	Consider both formal and informal resources. A recreation center might be an example of a formal resource whereas a deli that serves an amazing slice of pizza might be another.
Incorporate information about tobacco use, retail and other issues into the community mapping process.	➔	Consider asking the youth coalition where cigarettes are sold and where they are likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke.

The questions and activities outlined encourage youth to get curious and define their community identity. This community identity allows the youth to reflect on what they know and don't know about their hometown and helps to inform tobacco control action planning.



## PRACTICES YOUTH TOBACCO COALITIONS CAN USE TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

On the surface, youth participating in a tobacco control coalition may seem like community involvement. However, showing up at a youth tobacco control coalition meeting is only the first step. Below are some ideas that coalitions can do that help youth get engaged and connected to their community.

Practice	Application to youth tobacco control coalition
Mentorship	Having youth coalition members and adults interview each other about the community strengths and challenges can create a sense of identity and connection to community.
	Exchange phone numbers and encourage member organizations to reach out to youth.
Service Learning	Service learning combines the goals of the tobacco control coalition with community services in ways that create opportunities for growth and learning.
Community Assessments	Youth participants define community strengths and liabilities, and develop action plans to improve the community.
	Youth develop a sense of their communities identity which can contribute to the positive development.
Internships	Providing youth with the opportunity for short-term internships at organizations.
Collaboration with other agencies	Collaborating with organizations that provide service to the community helps expand youth's knowledge of services and leaders in the community.
	Encourage youth to attend other organizations meetings.
Resident engagement	Have local residents and advocates present to the youth about the history of the community and their work in the community.
	Have youth interview residents regarding a tobacco use issue.
Data profile	Publicly available data helps your tobacco control coalition define the strengths and challenges a community faces.
	Use the Kids Data website ( <a href="http://kidsdata.org">kidsdata.org</a> ) to create a data profile of your community. Share data about your local community. Think of basic questions that can be answered with data. Who lives here? What's the median age? How many schools exist in this community?

# SKILL BUILDING

Youth have an innate desire to want to develop mastery, grow, and build new skills. This inherent desire can manifest in both positive and negative ways depending on the opportunities and supports provided by their family, school, or community.

For example, a youth with a desire to develop leadership skills might run for student council president if she is given the opportunity and support needed. On the other hand, when youth do not have a positive opportunity and support to fulfill the inner desire to build skills, they might be lured to engage in riskier behaviors such as joining a gang.

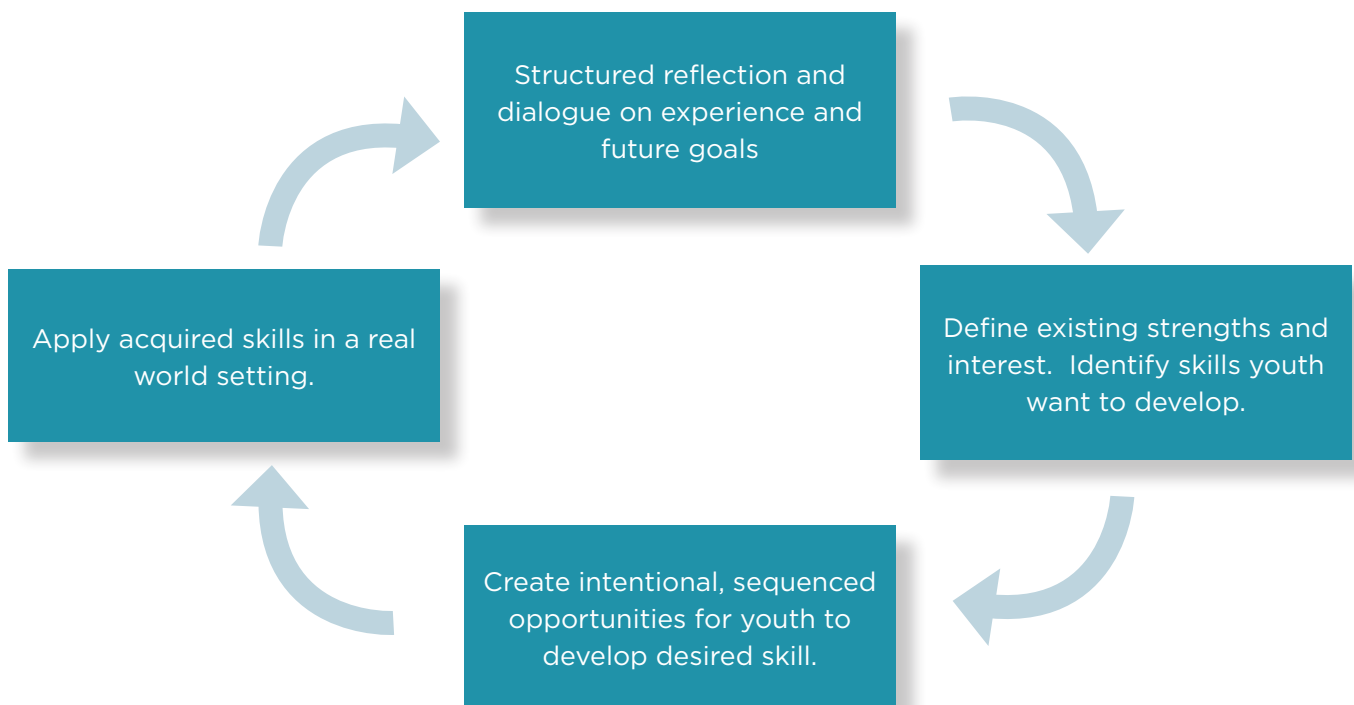
Tobacco control coalitions have the opportunity to build positive, pro-social opportunities for youth to develop and use skills through youth engagement efforts. Participating in a youth tobacco control coalition is an excellent opportunity for youth to develop skills. Youth coalitions must be structured in ways that promote skill building in order to engage, retain and provide opportunities for youth to learn and grow.

## WHAT IS SKILL BUILDING?

Skill building is any intentional learning opportunity to develop and master new concepts and skills that will help youth be successful in school, in their personal lives, and in future careers. Youth tobacco control coalitions can provide an opportunity for youth to develop skills such as:

- Research
- Public speaking
- Teamwork
- Critical thinking
- Knowledge of policy process
- Community organizing

Skill building doesn't happen by accident. It's an intentional process that is embedded into all the activities the youth coalition undertakes. Skill building focuses on youth strengths. The diagram below illustrates the skill building process:



## PUTTING SKILL BUILDING INTO PRACTICE WITH YOUR YOUTH COALITION

Skill	Ways to implement in youth coalition
Leadership	Create positions and elect members to serve on within your youth coalition.
Personal leadership	Develop a process for youth to resolve personal conflicts with the coalition.
Public speaking	Create opportunities for youth to develop public speaking skills such as presenting at a school board or city council meeting.
Writing	Train youth on how to write compelling letters to the editor.
Critical thinking	Implement a PhotoVoice project and facilitate dialogue with youth around the impacts of tobacco on their community.
Teamwork	Have youth implement a strengths assessment in order to understand their leadership style. Work with youth to best utilize their leadership strengths within the coalition to strengthen teamwork.

## HOW ADULTS CAN PROMOTE SKILL BUILDING

### PROMOTE LEARNING BY DOING

Practice skills early and often. If youth want to develop a skill, provide lots of low risk opportunities for youth to practice new skills. As youth gain comfort and confidence in their ability, create new opportunities for youth to use skills.

### FAILURE AND PRAISE

Mistakes are also great learning opportunities for youth. Using a reflective process where youth are able to identify what went wrong and create solutions helps youth learn and grow from their mistakes. Consistent positive praise helps youth bounce back and keep trying.

### COMMUNICATE, SET GOALS, AND CREATE PLANS WITH YOUTH

Deliberately communicate about the skills being developed through a specific activity. Develop a plan with concrete action steps and opportunities for youth to build skills.

### COLLABORATE WITH ORGANIZATIONS THAT OFFER ADVANCED TRAINING FOR YOUTH

Provide youth with the opportunity to develop skills through specific trainings and learning opportunities such as a youth leadership conference.

### TALK ABOUT YOUR OWN CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING NEW SKILLS

Talk to youth about the embarrassing, difficult, or challenges experiences you have when trying to develop new skills.