

A JOURNEY WITH YOUTH AT THE CENTER

# An Approach to Caring for Young People

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# Agenda

1. Context of youth involvement
2. Overview of model
3. Opportunities for application
4. Questions and Answers

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [Art. 12]**

[www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention](http://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention)

Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child





“Participation is the process of sharing decisions which affect one’s life and the life of the community in which one lives.

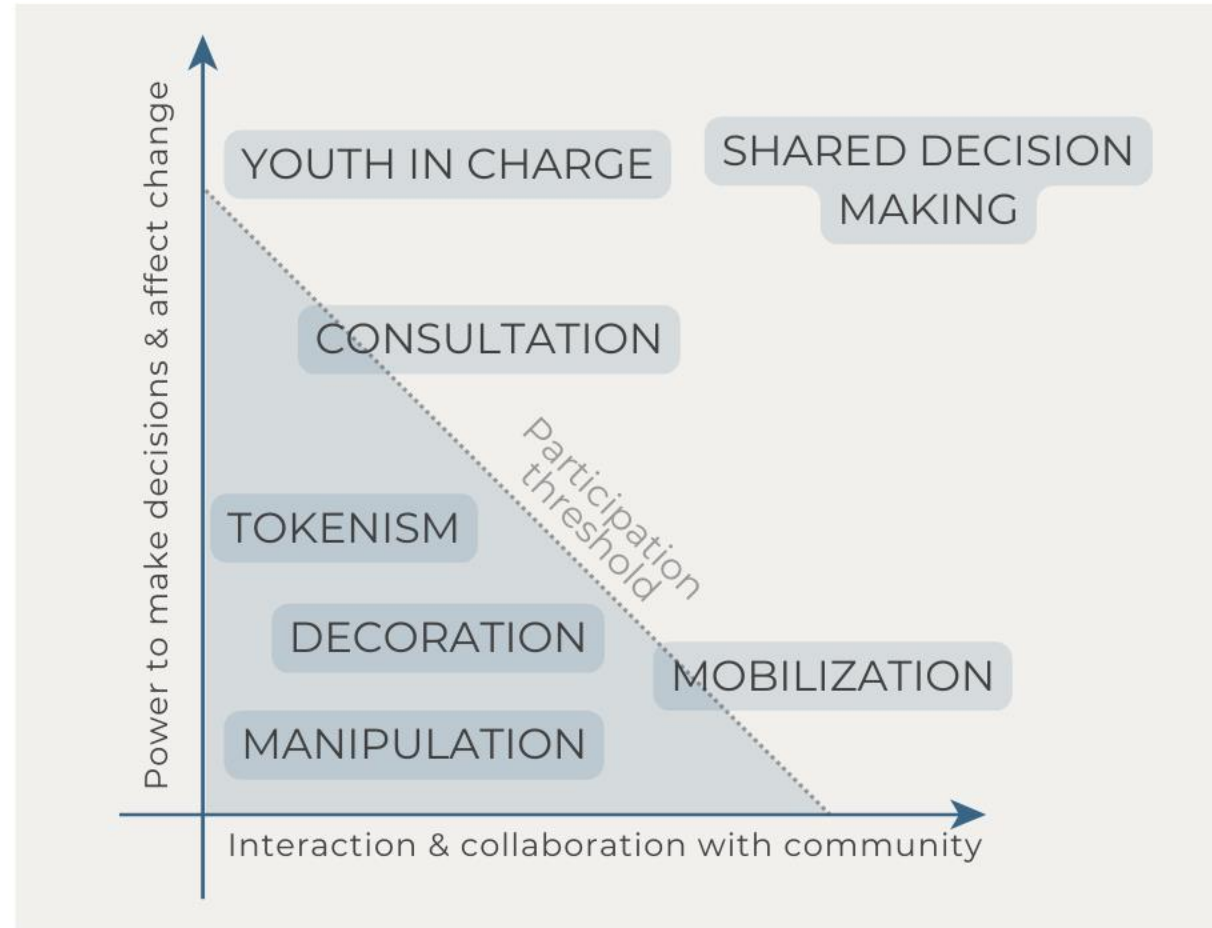
If young people do not at least partially design the goals themselves, they are unlikely to demonstrate the great competence they possess.

Hart, R. (1992). *Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship*. UNICEF





# DIMENSIONS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION



Adapted from Driskell, D. (2017). Young people's participation. In *Creating better cities with children and youth: A manual for participation*. Routledge.



# PARTICIPATION

# IS A RIGHT

SPACE

AUDIENCE

INFLUENCE

VOICE



Lundy, L. (2007). Voice is not enough: Conceptualizing Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(6), 927-942.



TRAINING  
GROUNDS

## Our Aim

- Integration of critical priorities and themes
- Acknowledgment of best practices
- Space for honoring culture and identity
- Emphasis on youth and family-friendly language
- Easily understandable, accessible, and applicable

“Traditional evidence-informed practices may be valuable in certain circumstances.

But must be understood in the context of relevant sources of practice-based evidence such as lived experiences, ethnographic accounts, cultural observations, and reports from youth and families.

See Green & Nasser, 2018; Green & Allegrante, 2020





A journey with youth at the center,  
supported by relationships they value,  
empowered within the context of their lives  
to connect, heal, develop, and thrive.

**A journey with youth at the center,**  
supported by relationships they value,  
empowered within the context of their lives  
to connect, heal, develop, and thrive.

A journey with me at the center,  
supported by relationships I value,  
empowered within the context of my life  
to connect, heal, develop, and thrive.



A journey with me at the center  
Supported by relationships I value  
Empowered within the context of my life  
To connect, heal, develop, and thrive



# A journey with youth at the center...



Self-determination

Culture

Identity

Interests

Strengths

...supported by relationships  
they value...



## **Family**

Birth and chosen

## **Friends**

Existing and new

## **Caregivers**

Resource family,  
relatives, care team,  
etc.

## **Natural Supports**

Teachers, coaches,  
neighbors, etc.



...empowered within the  
context of their lives...



### **Cultural Context**

Connecting to  
generational and  
cultural histories

### **Environmental Context**

Experiencing home as  
safe, welcoming, and  
affirming

### **Social Context**

Building social context  
and access to  
community

...to connect, heal, develop,  
and thrive.



Interrelated phases  
which require:

### **Flexibility**

Openness to a unique and  
evolving journey

### **Presence**

Willingness to face difficulty  
together and recognize  
signs of growth

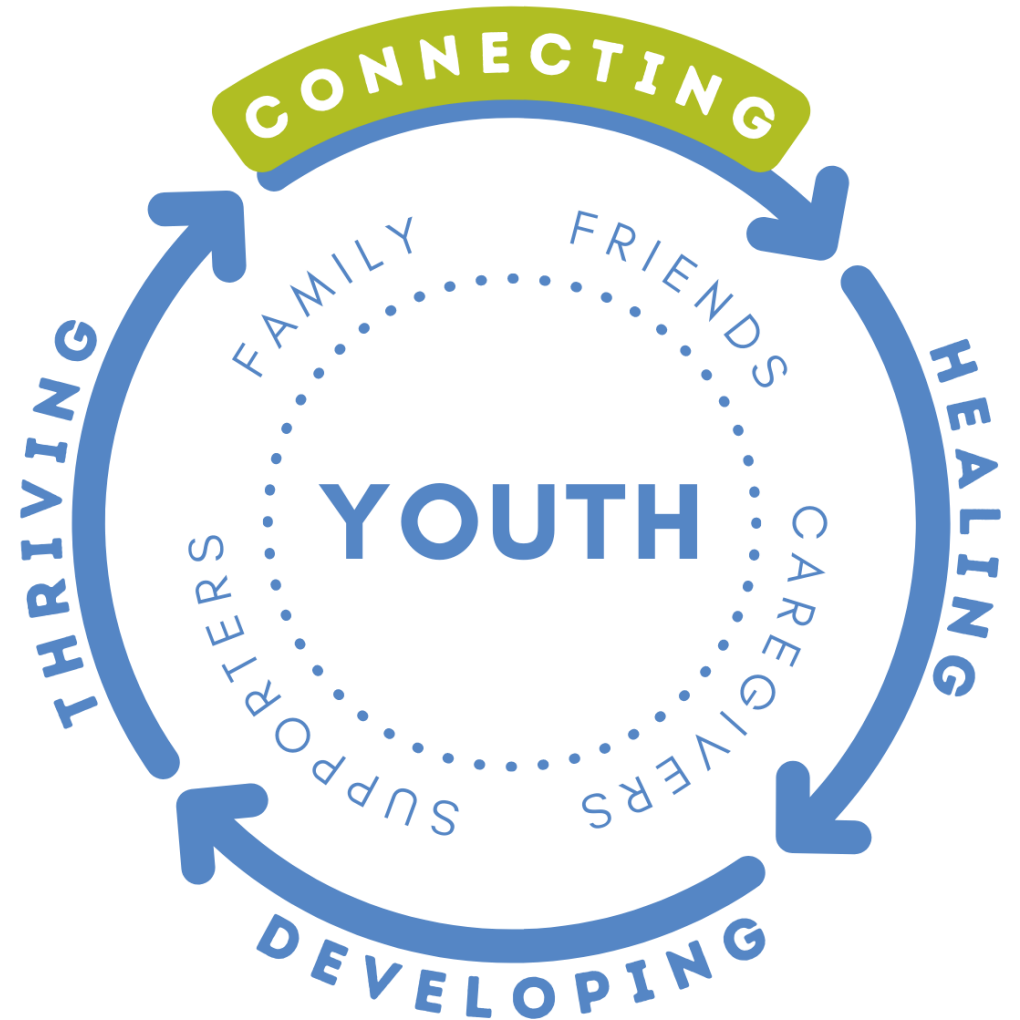
### **Commitment**

Patience and humility to  
notice our impact and learn  
through times of discomfort

# 1 CONNECTING

CONNECTING with people who matter is critical to supporting permanency and stability. Our role as family and care providers is to help young people connect in meaningful ways with people who are important to them at the present time and those who will be there for them over the long-term.

**Experiences and Opportunities:** Building and experiencing trust, Expressing feelings and needs, Repairing relationships, Setting healthy boundaries

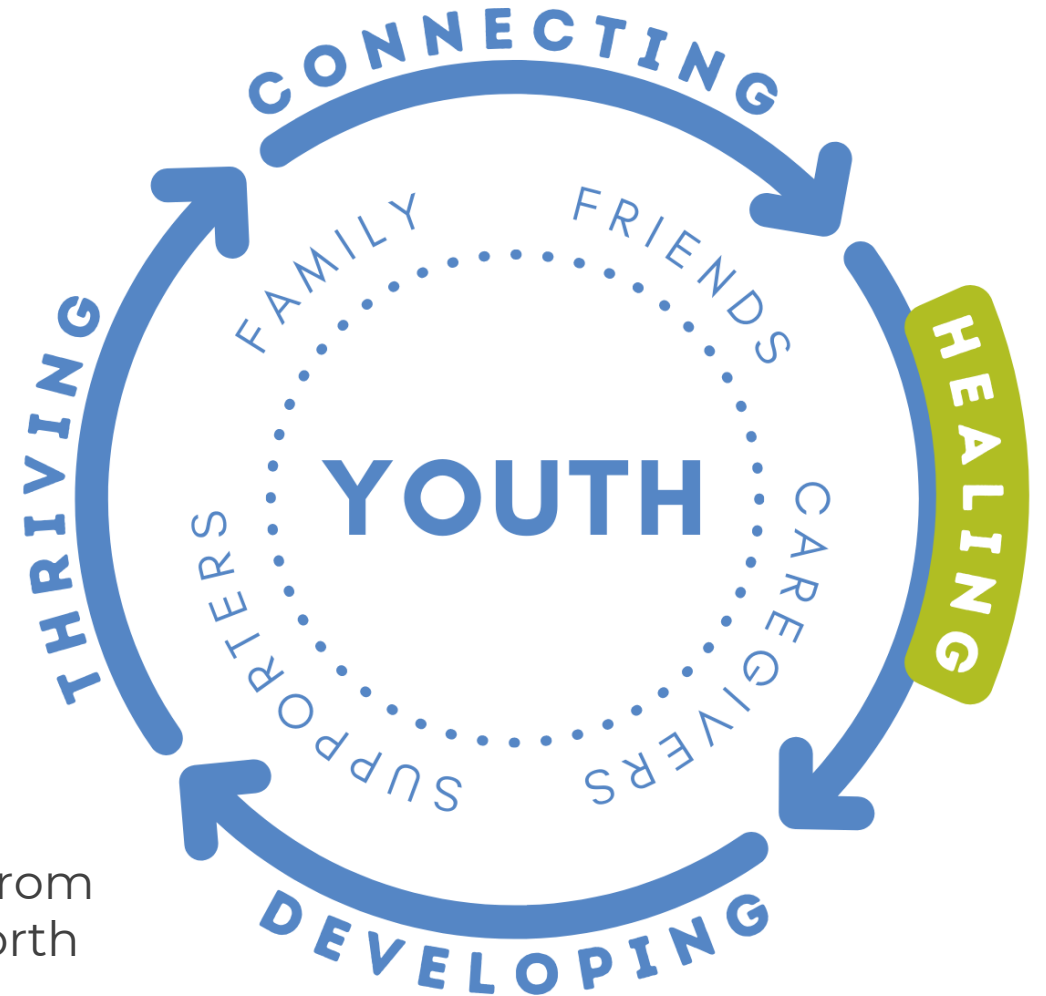




## 2 HEALING

HEALING requires an environment where each person feels safe. We must be aware of the effects of past experiences and create space for others to be themselves without being retraumatized. It also requires that we notice our own struggles and growth in order to be authentically present in the daily life of others.

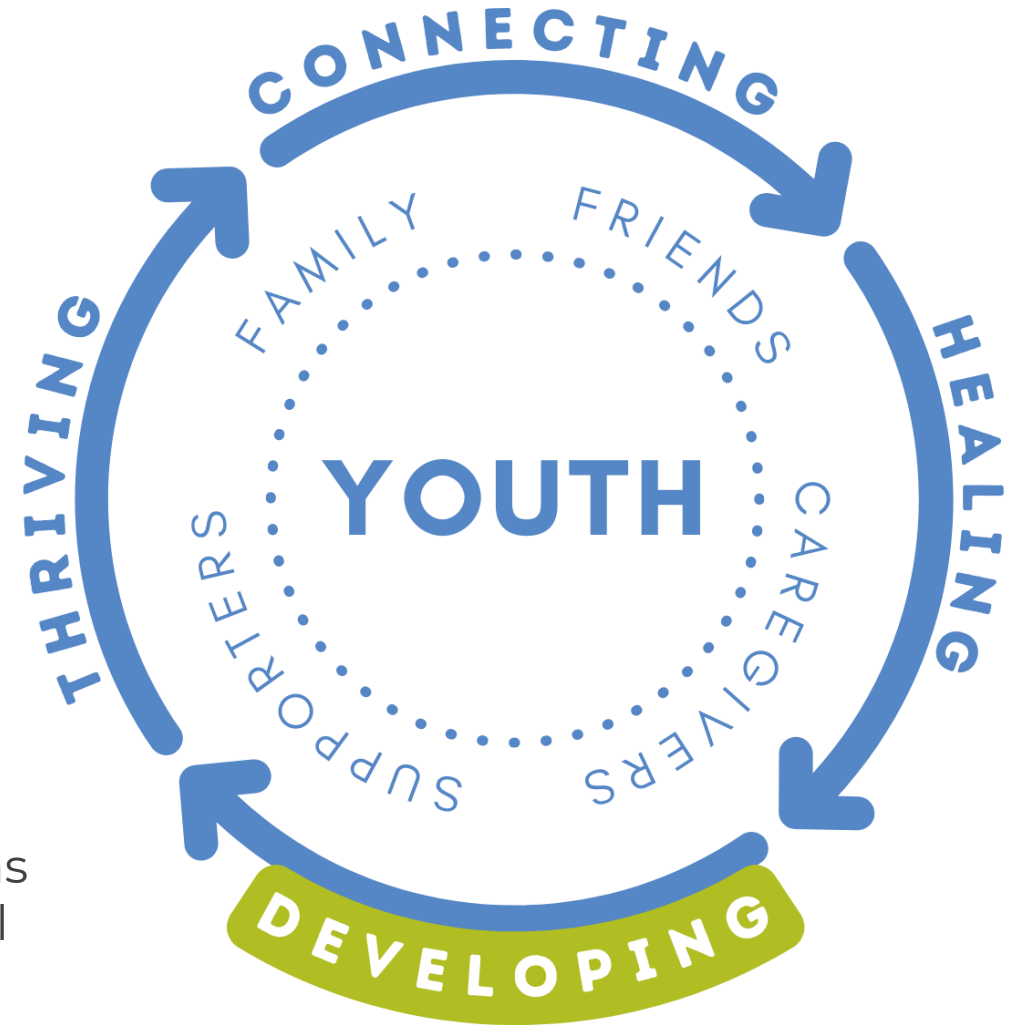
**Experiences and Opportunities:** Self-awareness, Self-care, Acceptance, Reflection, Drawing strength from past experiences, Reclaiming a sense of hope and worth



### 3 DEVELOPING

DEVELOPING involves learning from the past and preparing for the future. Often new ways of living and experiencing life are needed. For some this includes learning skills related to independence, social and career-related skills, or accessing hobbies and activities that are enjoyable and fun.

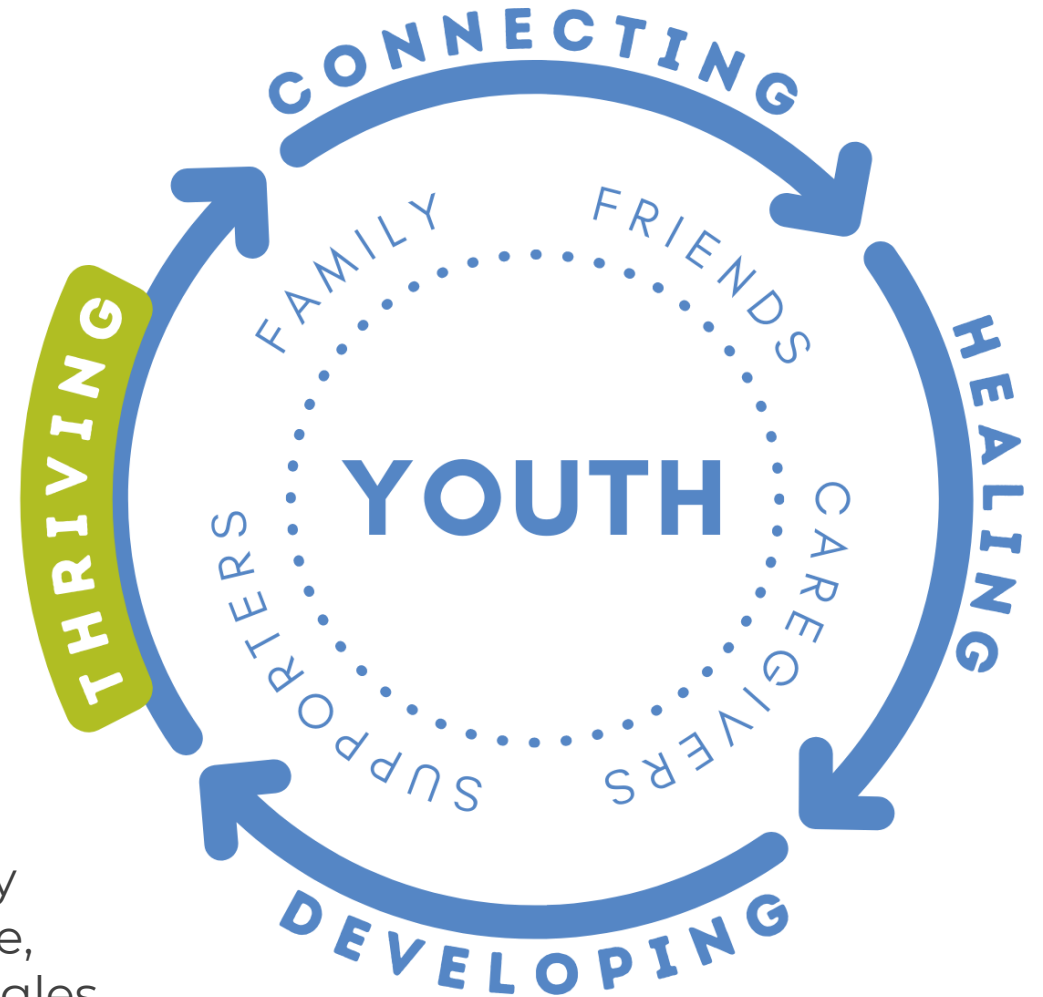
**Experiences and Opportunities:** Identity and self-expression, Learning to notice and work through feelings, Independent living skills, Exploring strengths and gifts, Building job skills, Enjoying hobbies, Virtual access and responsibility to community

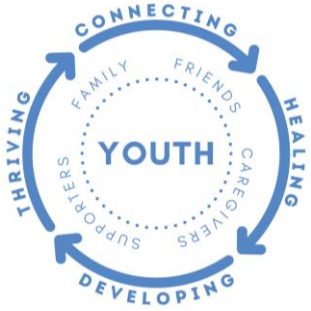


## 4 THRIVING

THRIVING emerges as a result of connecting, healing, and growing. It's the small steps toward a hopeful future with natural supports in place and experiences of joy in life. Struggles will still be present yet there is a growing stability and markers of success that can be found in the journey.

**Experiences and Opportunities:** Maintaining healthy relationships, Finding enjoyment and meaning in life, Holding space for myself, Persistence through struggles, Asking for help, Helping others





# RELATED PRACTICES & SUPPORTS

## CONNECTING

Permanency-  
focused  
connection

Family finding and  
engagement

## HEALING

Psychotherapy

Therapeutic  
supports

Caring for  
caregivers

Safety planning

Harm reduction

## DEVELOPING

Life skills  
development

School  
engagement

Continuing  
education plans

Job skills

## THRIVING

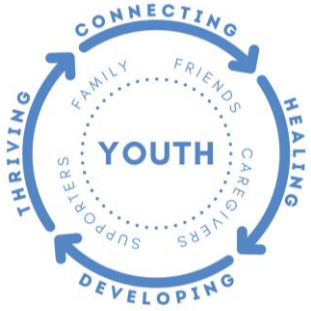
Food & housing  
stability

Income security

Access to health  
care

Mental health  
supports





# LANGUAGE/CHOOSING OUR WORDS

## Circle of Support

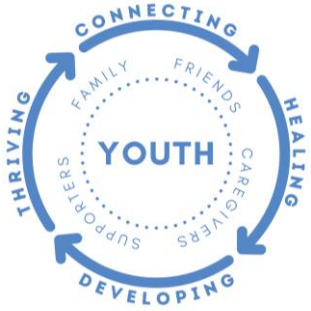
Family  
Friends  
Caregiver  
Supporters

## Elements of the Journey

Connecting  
Healing  
Developing  
Thriving

## Our Commitments

Permanency-Focused  
Trauma-Responsive  
Growth-Oriented  
Hope-Centered



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR APPLICATION

Self-Reflection

Youth Engagement

Family/Caregiver Engagement

Supervision

Organizational Assessment



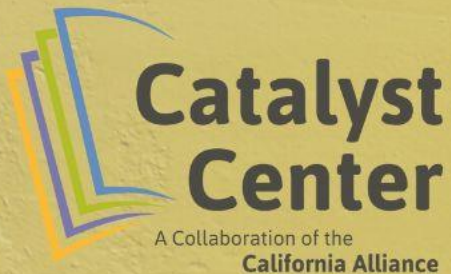
# QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

How might we empower youth to contribute to decisions that affect them?

As individuals and groups? At local and national levels?

What are the benefits? What are the barriers?

Why is it important for us to understand our own intentions?



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