

# ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR GUIDE



## TRACK 2, MODULE 2.2: WELLNESS AND ADVOCACY FOR YOUNG LEADERS

#### **ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children and youth by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

#### **ABOUT THE CURRICULUM**

This curriculum was developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private, nonpartisan philanthropic organization. It is intended as an educational resource for young people with foster care experience and the adult supporters who work with them to improve services, systems and opportunities. In accordance with federal law and the Foundation's policy, this curriculum does not support or endorse specific legislation, political candidates or partisan viewpoints or encourage any lobbying activity.

Handouts, case scenarios and examples included in the Elevating Youth Engagement curriculum are provided as educational resources only and do not represent the views of the Foundation or its Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative® and its network site partners.

#### **©2025 THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**

Permission to copy, disseminate or otherwise use information from this series is granted with appropriate acknowledgment. For more information, visit [www.aecf.org/copyright](http://www.aecf.org/copyright).



#### Important Note Before Facilitating This Training

You will need to select and add to the presenter deck a check-in question and a checkout question. Sample check-in and check out questions are provided in this guide.

# ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR GUIDE

*Elevating Youth Engagement* is a training series for young adults and their adult partners to prepare for collaboration. **The trainings teach the philosophy and practice of authentically engaging young adults in partnerships that promote codesign and leadership development.** The approaches and best practices discussed can be applied to systems-change work, policy and practice advocacy, and other opportunities for young people with foster care experience to use their expertise to inspire change. It contains lessons developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative® and Cetera Inc.

The training is divided into three tracks. Each track contains a set of modules, and each module includes a slide deck, facilitator guide and handouts.

The *Elevating Youth Engagement* training series helps organizations adopt a tested approach for meaningful youth involvement, whether new to youth engagement work or looking to improve existing efforts. The training series also helps young leaders advance their advocacy skills and grow professionally.

Many adult-led organizations involve young people as advocates or partners. These trainings will provide fundamentals of codesign and help adult supporters engage and encourage young leaders as partners while acknowledging and addressing their professional aspirations and developmental needs.

*Elevating Youth Engagement* begins with the assumption that including young people who have experienced foster care in advocacy and systems-change efforts is necessary. Their ideas and perspectives lead to policy and practice improvements that ensure a better future for young people in foster care and transitioning from foster care into adulthood.

This guide is intended to help prepare facilitators to deliver the *Elevating Youth Engagement* training. The three tracks can be delivered as a comprehensive series or divided into smaller presentations by topic or audience. Facilitators are encouraged to use the materials in the way that best suits their needs and community.

## TO LEARN MORE


For more information about the *Elevating Youth Engagement* training series, please contact: [webmail@aecf.org](mailto:webmail@aecf.org).

# OVERVIEW OF ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TRAINING MODULES

## Track 1: Youth Engagement for Adult Supporters

<b>Module 1.1</b>	Foundations of Authentic Youth Engagement	This module focuses on the benefits of engaging young people and committing to actions that will increase authentic youth engagement.
<b>Module 1.2</b>	Coaching as a Youth Engagement Practice	This module focuses on a coaching approach to advance the professional and personal development of young people who have experienced foster care.

## Track 2: Youth Engagement for Young Leaders

<b>Module 2.1</b>	Youth Advocacy 101	This module focuses on building skills to advocate for oneself and others, understanding how child welfare policy and practices are developed and the types of advocacy, and using personal storytelling to influence and educate decision makers.
 <b>Module 2.2</b>	Wellness and Advocacy for Young Leaders	This module focuses on the connection between self-awareness, personal wellness and advocacy, and offers tools for young leaders to manage their well-being to minimize harm when advocating.

## Track 3: Youth Engagement for Adult Supporters and Young Leaders

<b>Module 3.1</b>	Values and Authentic Youth Engagement	This module focuses on how individual values contribute to self-identity, decision making, relating to others and determining team values.
<b>Module 3.2</b>	Youth-Adult Partnerships and Adolescent Brain Development	This module focuses on how the experience of foster care affects the adolescent brain and how to incorporate insights about adolescent brain development in youth engagement work.
<b>Module 3.3</b>	Authentic Youth Engagement: Partnership to Action	This module focuses on the elements of authentic youth engagement, practices that increase authentic youth engagement and tools to support young people's leadership development and advocacy skills.
<b>Module 3.4</b>	Action Planning for Authentic Youth Engagement	This module focuses on the Emergent Learning process, and how to inform a youth engagement strategy and develop an action plan.

## AUDIENCES FOR THE ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TRAINING SERIES

The Casey Foundation developed the *Elevating Youth Engagement* training series for the following audiences:

- Jim Casey Initiative sites and Jim Casey Initiative network partners;
- youth and young adults with experience in foster care;
- child welfare leaders and staff; and
- professionals, community leaders, mentors and advocates within organizations and other groups that influence or affect outcomes for youth who have experienced foster care, especially those who currently partner with young people in program, practice and policy-level systems-change efforts — or aspire to.

## OUTCOMES FOR THE ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TRAINING SERIES

This training series is intended to strengthen participants' technical knowledge and skills as well as increase their understanding of the importance of shared decision making.

### TECHNICAL LEARNING RESULTS

Participants will gain knowledge of:

- authentic youth engagement and its purpose, guiding values, principles and priorities;
- science related to adolescent brain development;
- the definition and characteristics of authentic youth engagement; and
- practices that increase authentic youth engagement in their work.

### ADAPTIVE LEARNING RESULTS

Participants will better understand:

- reasons to practice authentic youth engagement in all areas of their work;
- the ways that experiencing foster care can affect adolescent brain development;
- how authentic youth engagement provides opportunities for leadership development and policy advocacy;
- why it's important to manage well-being as an advocate; and
- how authentic youth-adult partnerships can advance goals to best serve young people with the greatest need within systems-change efforts.

## PREPARING FOR THE ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TRAININGS

### WHO SHOULD FACILITATE?

Facilitators should be comfortable and experienced speaking in front of groups and be willing and able to:

- describe and promote youth-adult partnerships as a critical strategy to improve older youth outcomes;
- use disaggregated data and provide local examples of youth-adult partnerships; and
- speak to all learning results of this training.

### Recommendations:

- Young adults and adult system partners should co-facilitate. Co-facilitation is an opportunity to model the philosophies and practices taught during the training in real time. Co-facilitation is also an excellent opportunity for young people to develop leadership skills and, if comfortable, give real-life examples to participants throughout the training.
- Read the brief *Authentic Youth Engagement: Youth-Adult Partnerships* in preparation for this training for background and literature on engaging youth in authentic, meaningful ways.
- Prepare anecdotal examples related to local demographics, policies and the state of child welfare, for relevance.

### TIME CONSIDERATIONS

Each *Elevating Youth Engagement* training module can take up to two hours to deliver. To maximize knowledge retention, facilitators are encouraged to offer one or two modules at a time in a session with a break in between. Some modules contain two parts and will need 60 to 90 minutes per part. If it's not feasible to deliver both parts of the training on the same day, it is recommended to deliver part two no more than a week after delivering part one to ensure participant retention.

Plan to take one to two breaks during each module to keep people engaged in the material. Facilitators are encouraged to use their best judgment in deciding break times.

**Note:** Sample discussion questions are provided in several modules to encourage audience engagement. Facilitators are welcome to include additional discussion questions relevant to the material throughout the training as deemed necessary. Adding discussion questions may increase the length of the training.

### Below are additional resources that can provide facilitators and participants with deeper context related to:

#### CASEY'S APPROACH TO YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP

- *A Framework for Effectively Partnering With Young People*
- *In-Depth Case Studies of Authentic Youth Engagement in Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Sites*

#### ADOLESCENT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- *The Road to Adulthood: Aligning Child Welfare Practice With Adolescent Brain Development*
- *Brain Frames: Short Tools for Positive Interactions With Youth in Foster Care*
- Video: *Why the Teenage Brain Has an Evolutionary Advantage*
- Video: *Promoting Brain Gains for Youth Emerging From Foster Care*
- Video: *The Stages of Adolescent Brain Development*

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR DELIVERING THE TRAINING IN PERSON

**Before the training:** Set the room to allow small and large group discussions. Avoid a setup with rows where all participants face the front and away from one another. A U-shape, square or several round tables can accomplish this.

**During the training:** Provide small fidget toys or snacks.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR DELIVERING THE TRAINING VIRTUALLY

**Before the training:** Provide participants with links or access to a folder that contains the handouts for the module.

**During the training:** Welcoming participants to the training should include providing training and tech logistics for Zoom or other virtual platforms, such as how to use “Raise Hand,” chat and mute and unmute features. Instruct participants to use a “Raise Hand” feature to ask questions or share during an activity. Participants may be instructed to drop their answers in the chat at the discretion of the facilitator.

**During the discussions:** Remember to present in gallery mode so that participation is more interactive.

### Facilitator Checklist of Materials for Wellness and Advocacy for Young Leaders

- ☒ Notebook (recommended: for facilitator notes)
- ☒ Journals (recommended: one per participant to complete reflections and take notes)
- ☒ Pens and pencils (recommended: several per participant table)
- ☒ Markers (recommended: several per participant table)
- ☒ Highlighters (recommended: several per participant table)
- ☒ Fidget toys
- ☒ Snacks
- ☒ Sticky note notepads (recommended: several per participant table)
- ☒ Flip chart and tape (recommended: several around the room for participant exercises)
- ☒ Chart paper for related questions and ideas to be captured.  
Often referred to as “Parking Lot” or a “Garden” board.
- ☒ Computer/projector (for presentation)
- ☒ Handouts to print in advance or email
  - ☒ Key Terms Glossary
  - ☒ The Four C’s of Resilience

# WELLNESS AND ADVOCACY FOR YOUNG LEADERS

## PRESENTATION SUMMARY

The sample agenda below is designed for a two-hour training, but facilitators should feel free to adjust time allotted based on their style, the group and breaks needed.

Activity	Topic	Time Estimate
Presentation	Welcome	 4 minutes
Presentation	Agenda	 2 minutes
Presentation	Module Results	 2 minutes
Discussion	Check In	 10 minutes
Presentation	Module Context	 2 minutes
Presentation	Defining Authentic Youth Engagement	 3 minutes
Presentation	The Characteristics of Authentic Youth Engagement	 3 minutes
Presentation	The Intersection Between Advocacy and Wellness	 3 minutes
Presentation	The Significance of Self-Awareness and Advocacy	 3 minutes
Presentation and Exercise	Self-Awareness Reflection	 5 minutes
Presentation	Personal Reflection and Wellness	 3 minutes
Presentation	Four Tips for Advocacy and Well-Being	 5 minutes
Presentation	Sometimes Advocating Comes With Risks	 4 minutes
Presentation	Prioritizing Wellness and Identity Shifts	 8 minutes
Presentation and Exercise	Stress Responses Reflection	 5 minutes
Presentation	The Four C's of Resilience	 5 minutes
Presentation	Coping	 5 minutes
Presentation	Competency	 5 minutes
Presentation	Control	 5 minutes
Presentation	Connections	 5 minutes
Discussion	Takeaways on Managing Well-Being	 10 minutes
Discussion	Check Out	 10 minutes
TOTAL TIME ESTIMATE		ABOUT 2 HOURS



## PRESENTATION: WELCOME

4 minutes

**Do:** Introduce yourself briefly — just your name and title or role — and provide any necessary, brief background about the training. Provide basic information necessary to ensure participants' comfort (food, parking, location of restrooms, breaks).

The sample talking points below are provided as a guide, but facilitators should feel free to add examples relevant to their work and express points in their own words.

### Talking Points:

- *Hello everyone! My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I have the joy of teaching you about the connection between advocacy and wellness and offer you tools for managing your well-being as an advocate. Welcome to Wellness and Advocacy for Young Leaders!*



## PRESENTATION: AGENDA

2 minutes

**Do:** Provide a high-level overview of the agenda and briefly describe the flow of the day.

### Talking Points:

- *Let's start with a review of results, check in and some context setting.*

### Agenda

- Review module results
- Check in
- Review of authentic youth engagement
- Wellness and self-awareness
- Personal reflection activity
- Advocacy and risks
- The Four Cs of Resilience
- Discussion
- Check out



## PRESENTATION: MODULE RESULTS

2 minutes

**Do:** Read results and hold space for any questions or clarity needed.

### Talking Points:

- *The results for this session are as follows:*
  - *Participants will explore the connection between self-awareness, personal wellness and advocacy;*
  - *Participants will reflect on personal experiences to help identify triggers and trauma; and*
  - *Participants will learn about tools for managing their well-being to minimize harm when advocating for themselves and others.*

### Module Results

Participants will:

- explore the connection between self-awareness, personal wellness and advocacy;
- reflect on personal experiences to help identify trauma triggers; and
- learn about tools for managing their well-being to minimize harm when advocating for themselves and others.





## DISCUSSION: CHECK IN

10 minutes

**Do:** Invite participants to introduce themselves and answer the check-in question. Choose whether you will call on participants or ask participants to speak and then call on another person.

**Before the Training:** You will need to add to the slide a check-in question related to the topic based on the level of understanding in the group.

Here are some examples of check-in questions:

- What is one way you take care of yourself when you are experiencing times of high stress?
- What is one thing that always brings you joy?
- What is a quote or mantra you go back to when you're having a hard time?
- What is the best compliment someone has ever given you?

### Talking Points:

- *We want to invite you to check in so we can all get to know one another a little better.*
- *When you introduce yourself, please say your name, where you're from (could be the state, city or community you live in or any organization you are associated with) and answer the check-in question. The question is... (State the check-in question.)*

### Check In

- Name
- City, state
- **NOTE TO FACILITATOR:**  
Insert relevant check-in question.



## PRESENTATION: MODULE CONTEXT

2 minutes

**Do:** Read the module context.

### Talking Points:

- *This module focuses on:*
  - *Self-awareness*
  - *Personal reflection*
  - *Setting boundaries*
  - *Wellness*
- *For this training, we are working from the assumption that all participants here today have a shared value that including young people who have experienced foster care is necessary to improve system policy and practice.*

### Module Context

#### FOCUS:

- Self-awareness
- Personal reflection
- Setting boundaries
- Wellness

#### ASSUMPTION:

- Participants agree that including young people who have experienced foster care is necessary to improve system policy and practice.

## PRESENTATION: DEFINING AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

3 minutes

**Do:** Read the definition of authentic youth engagement. This definition comes from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

### Talking Points:

- *Authentic youth engagement is an approach that values the wisdom and expertise of young people. It brings to life a philosophical and strategic approach built on the belief that policies and practices will be fundamentally better if we partner with young people who have experienced the foster care system.*

### Definition of Authentic Youth Engagement

- It is a philosophical and strategic approach to working with young people.
- Through this signature practice, young people use their individual and collective power and expertise in helping to shape a better future for those in and transitioning from foster care into adulthood.



## PRESENTATION: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

3 minutes

**Do:** Emphasize the impact of authentic youth engagement and review the characteristics.

### Talking Points:

- *Authentic youth engagement values young people's meaningful contribution and recognizes opportunities for professional development.*
- *In other words, authentic youth engagement means providing opportunities for meaningful contributions by young people and intentionally building their professional skills through their leadership and advocacy experiences.*
- *System reform efforts benefit from the ideas of young people, and the work benefits the personal and professional development of the youth.*
- *The characteristics of this type of work include:*
  - *As equal partners, young people build self-esteem and practice problem-solving and leadership skills they will need in adulthood.*
  - *Young people gain access to information, develop new skills and contribute to strategy development. Adults gain insights from the experience and expertise of those most affected and can make better decisions.*
  - *Young people and adults lead together.*

### Characteristics of Authentic Youth Engagement

This approach prioritizes young people's expertise and ability to help shape solutions. It also provides **meaningful opportunities** for **professional development**.





## PRESENTATION: THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN ADVOCACY AND WELLNESS

3 minutes

**Do:** Describe the connection between wellness and authentic youth engagement.

### Talking Points:

- *Let's start with what it means to be an advocate.*
- *When you advocate, you're speaking up about your needs and wants and the needs and wants of others. You're sharing your ideas for improving the services that will help you and others thrive and asking for your needs to be recognized and adequately met. For example, when you voice your needs in a meeting about your case plan, you are practicing self-advocacy.*
- *Often, we use stories, experiences and ideas as instruments for change.*
- *It's important to know how your story affects you in the current moment and have well-being practices ready before, during and after engaging in advocacy.*
- *Every time we share out stories, we allow the world to see some of the most beautiful, sacred and vulnerable parts of us! Your level of self-awareness can help you control how to respond if you end up in a situation where you don't feel safe enough to share, the opportunity has not gone well or you feel triggered.*
- *When we prioritize wellness, we thrive and can share our stories in powerful and effective ways.*

### The Intersection Between Advocacy and Wellness

- Advocacy is speaking up about your needs and wants and your ideas for improving services that affect you and other youth in foster care.
- In advocacy, we often use stories, experiences and ideas as instruments for change. This means, it is critical that we:
  - understand how our stories affect us in the moment; and
  - have well-being practices ready before, during and after engaging in advocacy.



## PRESENTATION: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SELF-AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

3 minutes

**Do:** Talk through the importance of self-awareness as it relates to developing your sense of self.

### Talking Points:

- *Self-awareness is key for impact, managing emotions and mastery.*
- *Getting caught up in the meticulous details of presentation prep is easy. You could lose sight of why you're excited to share your message in the first place. Developing keen self-awareness lets you more easily tap into who you are at your core and your driving values and beliefs.*
- *Self-awareness gives you mastery. Knowing your strengths and weaknesses is necessary for improvement. Developing your sense of self gives you invaluable insight into where you're the strongest.*
- *Emotions are what make people feel connected to your story. A strong sense of self will help you tap into your emotions and harness them to deliver a more compelling presentation.*

### The Significance of Self-Awareness and Advocacy

Being self-aware means you're able to accurately recognize your emotions, thoughts and values. It also means you understand how your emotions, thoughts and values affect your behavior.



## PRESENTATION AND EXERCISE: SELF-AWARENESS REFLECTION



5 minutes



**Do:** Invite participants to think about the way in which they view themselves.

You can tell participants that when they return, they won't be asked to share specifics. They can just share what resonated for them. Then, ask if anyone would like to share their reflections.



**Note (if presenting virtually):** Let participants know they are welcome to turn off their video and put themselves on mute for reflection time.



### Talking Points:

- *Now that we've learned about self-awareness and the significance of doing the inner work to assess who you are, let's take some time to reflect.*
- *Here are a few questions for you to answer on your own in a journal or on a sticky note or piece of paper:*
  - *How would you describe yourself in three words?*
  - *What qualities do you most admire in yourself?*
  - *What is your biggest weakness?*
  - *What is your biggest strength?*
  - *What things scare you?*
  - *What ignites you with excitement?*
- *Would anyone like to share their reflections? You don't have to go into the specifics of your reflection but share what you feel comfortable sharing about what resonated with you.*

### Self-Awareness Activity

#### PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Describe yourself in three words.
- What qualities do you most admire in yourself?
- What is your biggest weakness?
- What is your biggest strength?
- What things scare you?
- What excites you?



10

## PRESENTATION: PERSONAL REFLECTION AND WELLNESS



3 minutes



**Do:** Make the connection between self-awareness and the ability to make sense of your story.



### Talking Points:

- *Making sense of your story and reflecting on your experiences as a young person who has been in foster care are two of the most important things you can do to help yourself thrive as an advocate and practice self-care while advocating for systemic change.*
- *We've talked a lot about self-awareness, and for good reason. If you are an advocate and you are not aware of how a challenging or traumatic experience may still be affecting you as a person, advocacy can be scary and could set off stress responses.*

### Personal Reflection and Wellness

Personal reflection allows you to:

- use your story as a tool for change;
- avoid being trapped by situations or people that may have wounded you;
- be aware of how your experiences have shaped you; and
- advocate effectively, even in situations where there may be opposition.



11

- Stress responses are the natural things our body does to protect us in times of high stress. They can also be called 'fight-or-flight' responses. It is characterized by tensing muscles, rapid heartbeat, feeling hot or cold, sweating, or shaking. Responses can happen in an emotionally stressful situation because your body perceives that as physically dangerous, even though it is not. Being aware of your stress responses and developing some coping mechanisms for them can help keep you feeling safe and grounded when you share your story.
- We will talk more about the risks associated with advocacy in a little bit.

## PRESENTATION: FOUR TIPS FOR ADVOCACY AND WELL-BEING

5 minutes

**Do:** Make the connection between self-awareness and the ability to develop your narrative effectively.

### Talking Points:

- As an advocate, you have agency, and assessing the environment, risks and expectations that can come with advocating is always a good idea.
- As you think through your experiences, think about:
  - identifying experiences that align with popular advocacy themes such as housing, education, professional development and parenting;
  - elevating who and what has helped you thrive;
  - reflecting on tough experiences that may trigger you if speaking or presenting publicly; and
  - setting boundaries and communicating your comfort level with a particular topic as a safety measure when participating in opportunities.
- Here are some additional tips for ways to reflect:
  - Write down events, both good and bad, that have impacted you in your life.
  - Write down who was involved in these events.
  - Write down the way that you felt and how you feel now.

### Four Tips for Advocacy and Well-Being

- Think through your experiences that reflect popular advocacy themes, such as housing, education, professional development and parenting.
- Highlight who and what have helped you thrive.
- Reflect on tough experiences that may trigger you when speaking or presenting.
- Set boundaries and communicate your comfort level with certain topics as a safety measure when participating in advocacy opportunities.



## PRESENTATION: SOMETIMES ADVOCATING COMES WITH RISKS

4 minutes

**Do:** Review some of the risks associated with being an advocate. Make sure young people understand what stress responses are and how to recognize them.

### Talking Points:

- Sharing our story allows us to use our experiences as a tool to make an impact. When we share our stories with others, we allow them to see the parts of us we were once taught not to show — the complicated and imperfect parts of our lives.

### Sometimes Advocating Comes With Risks

- Trauma triggers
- Painful memories
- Oversharing
- Stress response
- Anxiousness
- Stage fright





- Because sharing so much about yourself can be tricky, self-awareness can help you control how to respond if you end up in a situation where you don't feel safe enough to share.
- On the last slide, we shared a few things to consider. Here are a few more:
  - Memories can be painful.
  - Bringing up certain memories can be traumatic or even bring up unresolved personal issues.
  - Sometimes, a young person may end up sharing more than they intended to or worry about what people may think of them afterward.
  - They may also end up feeling as if they were duped into sharing more than they meant to because it felt good to have someone listen.
- These risks are why it is important to have some coping skills ready. These skills will be different for everyone but can include deep breathing, tensing and releasing muscles, finding support from a friend, listening to music or going for a walk. We will talk more about coping skills in just a bit.
- When you reflect on this list, what's an important tip you'd like to share with the group?

## PRESENTATION: PRIORITIZING WELLNESS AND IDENTITY SHIFTS



8 minutes



**Do:** Review the values of setting boundaries as an advocate.



### Talking Points:

- You're familiar with the concept of self-awareness. When you are self-aware, you have agency; when you have agency, **YOU ARE POWERFUL!**
- Having agency means taking responsibility for how you take up space in life, which means better partnerships and advocacy.
- Having agency means when something doesn't feel quite right, don't ignore it. Exercise the discipline to stop, pay attention and work on finding a better path for yourself within the situation.
- Having agency means speaking out about inequities in practice when working with people in power.
- Having agency means you are clear about your boundaries and vocal about your needs regarding thriving in partnerships.

### Prioritizing Wellness and Identity Shifts

Identity shifts are normal for advocates. You may:

- become a parent;
- transition into formal job opportunities;
- reach an age where you feel like advocacy roles may not suit you; or
- start to feel that some adults you work with struggle to view you as a young professional.

These feelings are normal. **Just make sure that you:**

- Communicate what you need.
- Ask if there may be opportunities that are appropriate for you, such as becoming an adult supporter, consultant — or even a staff member. (Yes, see if you may be able to get a job.)

## PRESENTATION AND EXERCISE: STRESS RESPONSES REFLECTION



5 minutes



**Do:** Invite participants to reflect on stress responses. You can tell participants that when they return, they won't be asked to share specifics. They can just share what resonated for them. Then ask if anyone would like to share their reflections.



**Note (if presenting virtually):** Let participants know they are welcome to turn off their video and put themselves on mute for reflection time.



### Talking Points:

- *Here are a few questions for you to answer on your own in a journal or on a sticky note or piece of paper.*
- *Answer these questions:*
  - *How do your stress responses show up in your role as an advocate?*
  - *In what ways are you shifting from being a youth in foster care to being a young advocate or professional?*
- *Would anyone like to share their reflections? Again, you don't have to go into the specifics of your reflection but share what you feel comfortable sharing about what resonated with you.*

### Stress Responses Reflection

- How do your stress responses show up in your role as an advocate?
- In what ways are you shifting from being a youth in foster care to being a young advocate or professional?



11

## PRESENTATION: THE FOUR C'S OF RESILIENCE



5 minutes



**Handout:** Participants should receive a copy of The Four C's of Resilience.



**Do:** Preview the Four C's of Resilience.



### Talking Points:

- *Using the Four C's of Resilience along with improving your level of self-awareness makes you a powerful advocate.*
- *The Four C's of Resilience are:*
  - *coping;*
  - *competency;*
  - *control; and*
  - *connections.*
- *Let's look at each of the four components.*

### The Four C's of Resilience

Coping

Competency

Control

Connections

12





## PRESENTATION: COPING

5 minutes



**Do:** Review the connection between coping and well-being.



### Talking Points:

- *Coping skills as an advocate are a necessity! While advocacy is important for systemic change, sharing your experience can be mentally and emotionally taxing.*



### Ask:

- *What are some coping skills you use when advocating?*
- *How do you cope when an advocacy opportunity doesn't go well?*
- *How has developing coping skills helped you?*

### Coping

Coping is what people do to try to minimize stress.

- How do you cope when an advocacy opportunity doesn't go well?

#### Examples of coping skills

- Calling a mentor or friend
- Spending time processing through the trigger to reduce the chance of the trigger coming up again
- Having a good cry or getting a hug
- Writing in a journal

17



## PRESENTATION: COMPETENCY

5 minutes



**Do:** Review the significance between competence and wellness.



### Talking Points:

- *Competency is the ability to do something successfully or effectively.*
- *Competence also applies to understanding how participating in the opportunity might affect you.*
- *Here are some things to consider:*
  - *Will you be sharing a lot of your story?*
  - *Will there be people present who do not understand your experience, or who might disagree with what you are advocating for?*
  - *How have you assessed what is safe for you to share during an advocacy opportunity?*
- *As an advocate, competence applies to your understanding of the ways in which participating in the opportunity might affect you. Ask yourself:*
  - *Do I feel prepared to speak or share?*
  - *Is my advocacy aligned with the mission or theme of the opportunity?*

### Competency

Competency is the ability to do something successfully or effectively.

Competence also applies to understanding how participating in the opportunity might affect you.

- Will you be sharing a lot of your story?
- Will there be people present who do not understand that your experience could be oppositional?
- Is the opportunity safe?

As an advocate, competence applies to your understanding of the opportunity.

- Do you feel prepared to speak or share?
- Is your advocacy aligned with the mission or theme?

18



## PRESENTATION: CONTROL

5 minutes

**Do:** Make the connection between control and wellness as it relates to setting boundaries as an advocate.

### Talking Points:

- *Control is likely one of the most crucial steps for you as an advocate because this can be difficult.*
- *Control in the context of advocacy means you can act independently and make your own choices every time you participate in an advocacy opportunity.*
- *This may place you in what feels like awkward situations with adult supporters. It's hard telling someone no, especially someone who supports you.*
- *If it doesn't feel right, trust your gut and speak up.*

### (Optional) Ask:

- *What helps you to gain control or assert your boundaries?*

### Control

In the context of resilience, control means you have the capacity to act independently and make your own choices every time that you participate in an advocacy opportunity.

#### Minimizing re-traumatization

Following are examples of ways to exercise control when advocating:

- Set boundaries
- Know when to say no to opportunities
- Focus on emotional awareness

19



## PRESENTATION: CONNECTIONS

5 minutes

**Do:** Make the connection between supportive relationships and wellness.

### Talking Points:

- *Being connected to loving and supportive people helps you cope in a situation where advocacy could be triggering.*
- *People who feel more connected to others have lower levels of anxiety and depression.*
- *Moreover, studies show they also have higher self-esteem, greater empathy for others, are more trusting and cooperative, and, consequently, others are more open to trusting and cooperating with them.*

### Connections

- Connection is the state of being joined or linked to people, places or things.
- Being connected to loving and supportive people helps you cope if you are in a situation where you may feel triggered.

#### For advocates, being connected can mean having someone who:

- supports you by being an anchor in the audience when you are speaking or sharing your story;
- shares constructive feedback;
- helps you practice and prepare your remarks; or
- is an ally and advocates for you when you need support.

20



## DISCUSSION: TAKEAWAYS ON MANAGING WELL-BEING

10 minutes

**Do:** Invite participants to answer the discussion question. Choose whether you will call on participants or ask participants to speak and then call on another person.

**Ask:** *Given the conversations today, what is one way you plan to manage your well-being while advocating? What is one thing you'd like to focus on as an advocate moving forward?*

### Discussion

Based on today's conversation, what is one way you plan to manage your well-being while advocating?



21



## DISCUSSION: CHECKOUT

10 minutes

**Do:** Invite participants to answer the checkout question. Choose whether you will call on participants or ask participants to speak and then call on another person.

**Before the Training:** You will need to add to the slide a checkout question related to the topic based on the level of understanding in the group.

**Here are some example checkout questions:**

- What is one thing you're going to do to take care of yourself this week?
- What is one word about how you're feeling as we leave this time together?
- What is one exciting thing you are looking forward to (this summer, this weekend, this week)?

### Check Out

**NOTE TO FACILITATOR:**  
Insert checkout question here.



22