

Youth Power Building and Organizing in the Health Justice Movement

ABOUT US



We're a national organization dedicated to building the power of people to create a health system rooted in race equity and health justice and a society where health is a right for all. Together with partners, we're building a powerful, united movement with a shared vision of and strategy for a health system accountable to all people.

300+

Partner organizations at
the local and state level

45+

States where
we do our work

9

States where we've incubated
health advocacy organizations



Introduction



Objectives

By the end of this session participants will:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the health justice movement and recognize the power of including youth in driving positive change.
- Refine leadership skills and enhance youth's ability to effectively advocate for health justice.
- Identify opportunities for youth-led initiatives and organizations in the health justice field.
- Explore strategies for engaging young people in youth-adult partnerships.
- Harness the potential of technology and digital platforms for youth activism in health justice.



Agenda

- Introduction
- Understanding Health Justice
- Youth Power Building and Leadership
- Community Organizing and Mobilization
- Technology and Digital Activism
- Conclusion and Reflection



Your Speakers



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Icebreaker - Word Cloud

What words come to mind when you think of youth power building in the health justice movement?

Follow this link to fill in your answers

<https://app.sli.do/event/4m6T8AxvfQ4y12s9ZxvYJM>



Word Cloud from Youth Working with Community Catalyst



Understanding Health Justice



Essentials to Health Justice - Community Organizing

Community organizing motivates and prepares community members to identify shared problems and to work collectively toward solutions.

- For both **ethical** (e.g., “nothing about me without me”) and **practical** (e.g., communities have essential knowledge and assets not available from outside experts) reasons



Essentials to Health Justice - Youth Organizing

“Youth organizing is a process for developing within a neighborhood or community a base of young people committed to altering power relationships and creating meaningful institutional change” (Sullivan et. al., 2003)

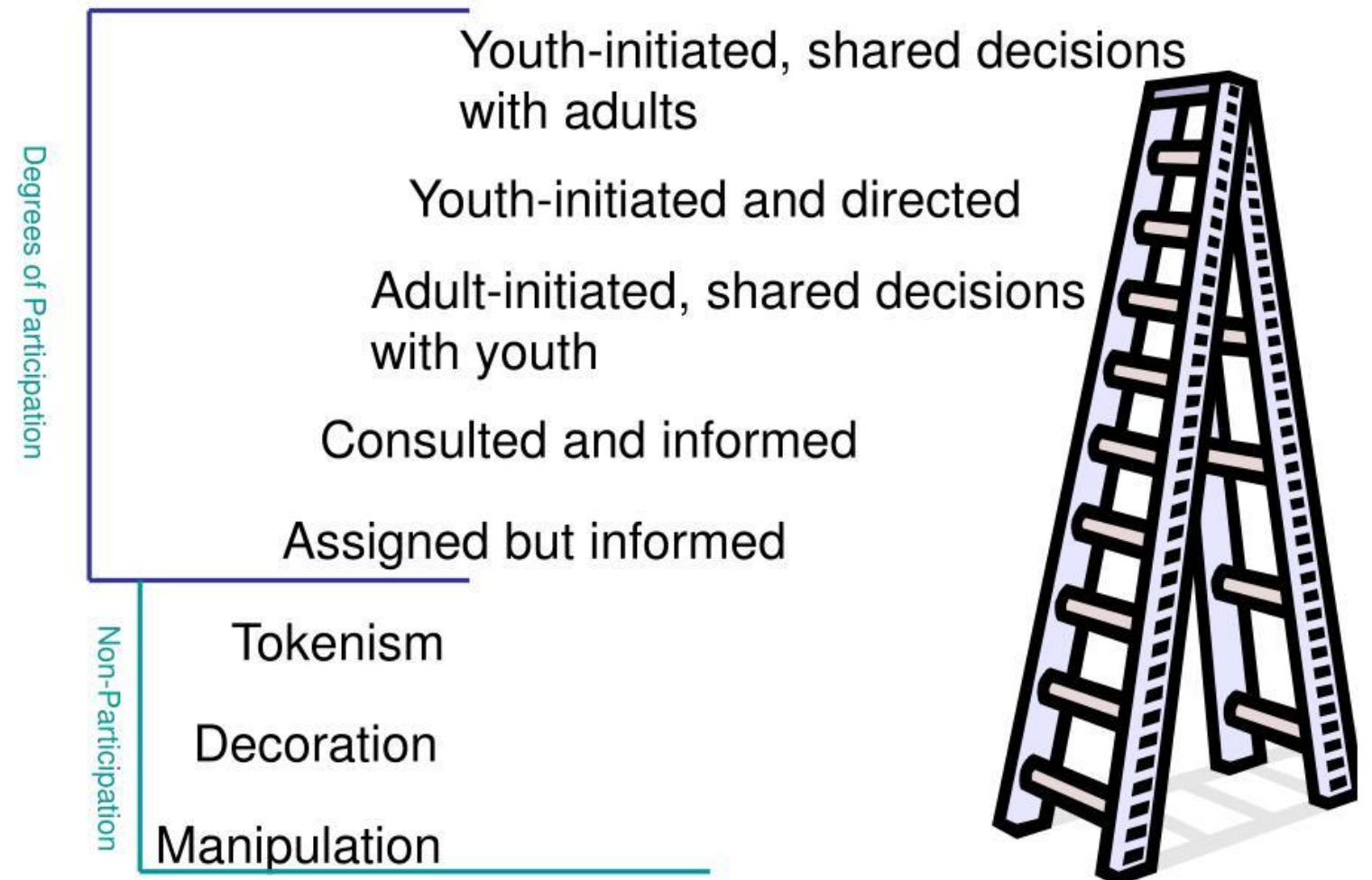


Why is youth involvement in the health justice movement important?

Until young people understand how power and systems work, it is easy for self-blame and frustration to be untoward outcomes.

Preparing youth for authentic involvement in community health improvement efforts is a strategy that serves both short and longer-term outcomes.

Ladder of Youth Participation



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.



Youth organizing alumni are

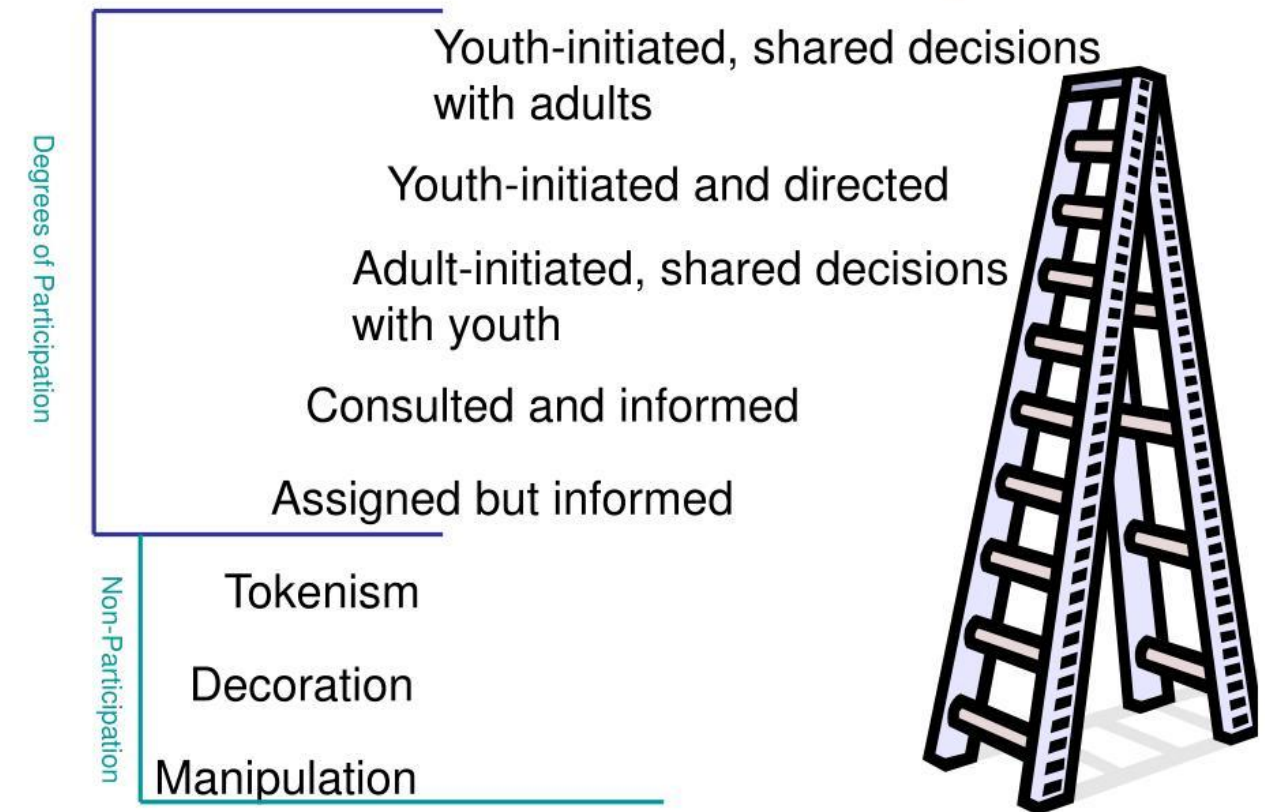
5x

more likely than uninvolved youth to remain committed as young adults to civic involvement.

3x

more likely to be employed and/or going to college.

Ladder of Youth Participation

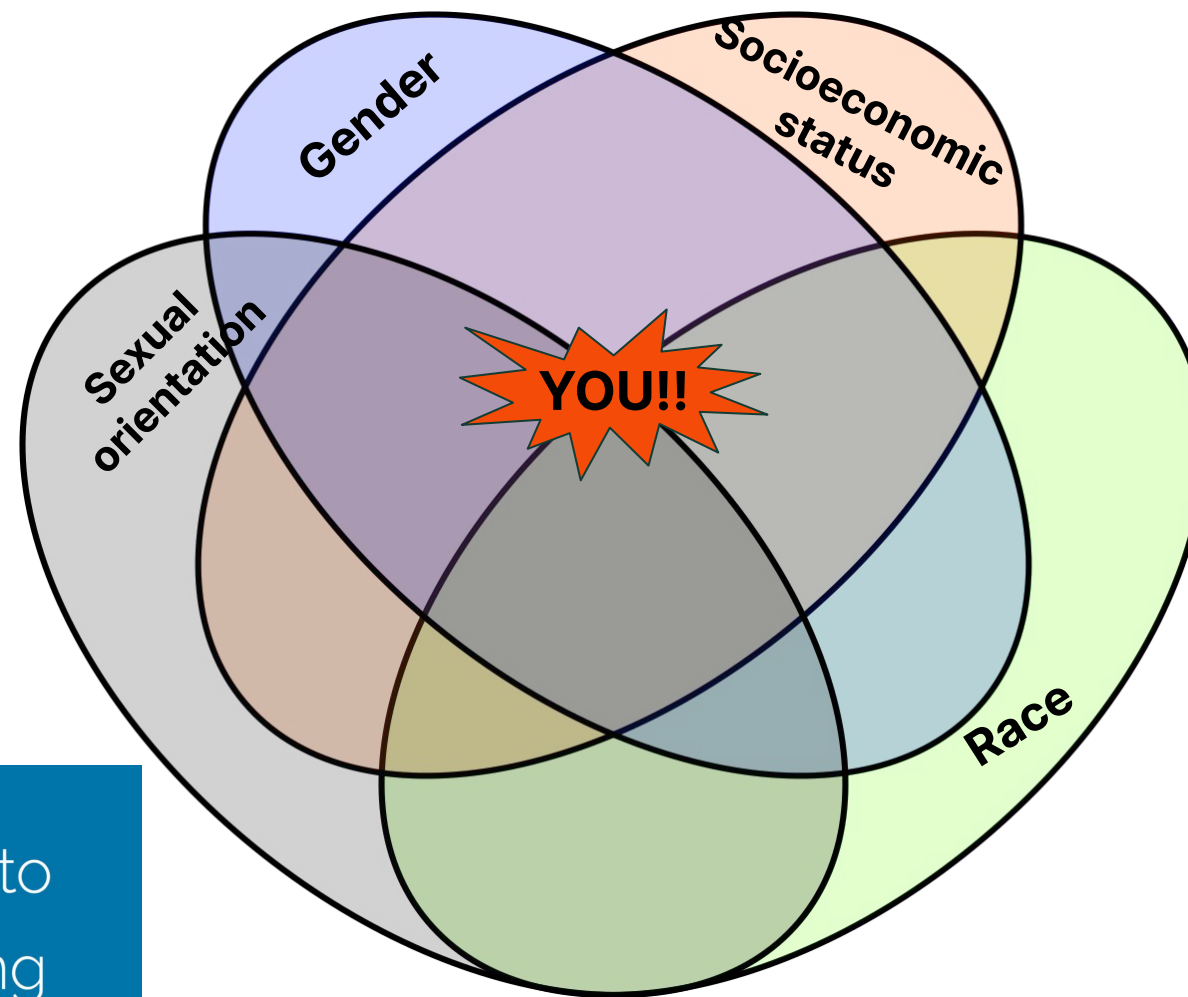


Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

(Rogers and Terriquez, 2013)



Understanding the importance of identity & intersectionality



*You have more circles that intersect to make you uniquely you:

- **Age**
- Ethnicity
- Ability
- Belief (political & religious)
- Nationality
- Education
- Culture
- Spirituality
- Language
- Location
-

Diversity is being invited to the party; ***inclusion*** is being asked to dance."

— VERNĀ MYERS



Why is youth involvement in the health justice movement necessary?



- Youth are...
 - Experts, lived experience is powerful knowledge
 - More likely to listen to other youth
- Youth already have power, but it is in this oppressive system they are taught to diminish it
 - Youth deserve a space to be inspired that they have a say in their future
- Youth leadership advances equity through personal development and constructive civic action, changing the conditions for improved population health to occur both long term and short term



Insights from Experts - Community Catalyst's Youth Policy Advisors

Why did you get involved with health justice work?

Where has this journey taken you now?



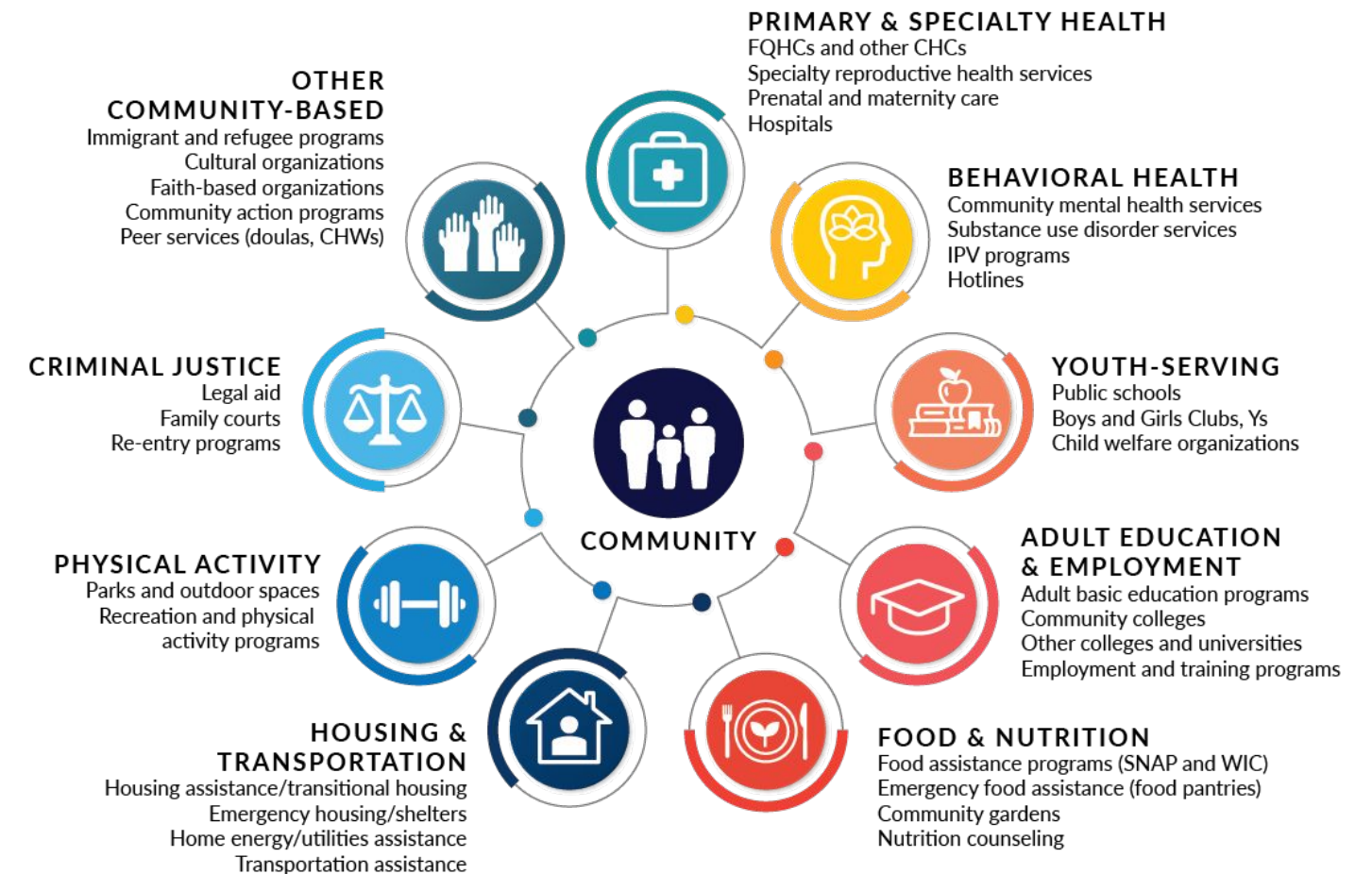
Youth Power Building and Leadership

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Empowering youth through leadership development

What can adults do?

- Create an environment where young people feel comfortable utilizing their lived experience
- Make youth feel like they are actively being listened to
- Interactive activities enhance leadership skills and self-reflection
- Youth need to be fairly compensated for their work
- Demonstrate empathy and understanding



What are some of the leadership skills and qualities necessary for effective advocacy?


- Teaching youth how to tell their story - and doing it well
 - Why does storytelling work?
- Willingness to learn from both your successes and mistakes
- Stamina can be encouraged with the help of others
- Fostering collaboration skills
- Instilling a desire to teach others



YAB Example: Sharing Stories on the Storybanking App

Latest Questions

All Questions >



Can you afford life-saving preventative care?

RECORD YOUR VIDEO NOW >

How do you feel about losing access to life-saving preventative care?

[Save No-Cost Care](#)

On March 30, 2023 a U.S. District Court judge struck down a major provision in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that provides no-cost preventive care for a range of services. What difference will it make in your life to pay for life-saving preventative care? Will you still elect to receive preventative care if your insurance won't help you pay for it?



What is at risk from financial barriers to pre- and postnatal care?

RECORD YOUR VIDEO NOW >

Have you benefited from pre- and postnatal care?

[Save No-Cost Care](#)




Can insurers afford it?

RECORD YOUR VIDEO NOW >

Can health insurance companies afford to cover your copays for preventative care?


[Save No-Cost Care](#)



RECORD YOUR VIDEO NOW >

Religion is being used to justify the refusal of care. How do you feel about that?

[Access to Care](#)



Four in ten adults have some kind of medical debt in this country. Share your story.

RECORD YOUR VIDEO NOW >

Paint us a picture of life without medical debt

[End Medical Debt](#)



Community Organizing and Mobilization



Why is community organization and mobilization important?

The priority of community organizing is to engage as many advocates within the community as possible. This way they can effectively promote their agenda and begin action.

- ★ Members of the community are the ones that understand it the best. They understand issues their community faces and care to confront them because they experience it firsthand
- ★ One of the strengths of community mobilization is its domino effect. One person alone can encourage an endless amount of people. Many people lack awareness of the movements in their community and just need to be introduced. There is not a lack of interest but instead a lack of awareness.

“ The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members”

- Coretta Scott King

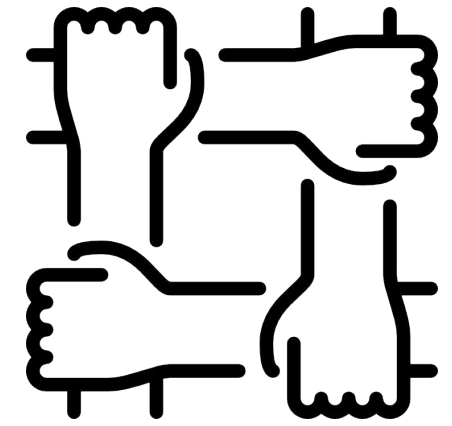


Which advocates are most effective?

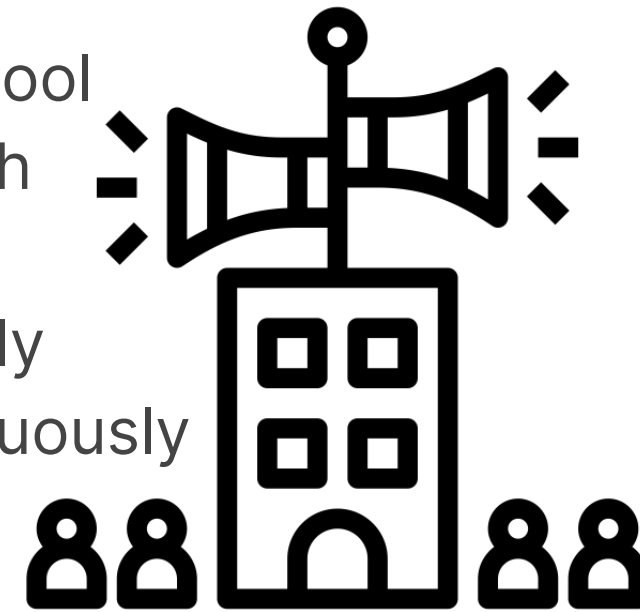
- When dealing with youth, it is important these advocates are trustworthy. Research reflects that only 25% of parents feel as though their child would certainly reach out to them regarding mental health (Clark et al. 2022)
- In addition to trust, youth are more likely to listen to those who share similar lived experiences
 - Those who are of the same race or gender, or were raised in similar socio-economic environments as them
 - Not only will youth feel more comfortable with familiar advocates, but advocates will be better equipped to advise on situations they have experienced personally



Steps to Community Organizing and Mobilization



1. The first step is to specify your main goals. This means clarifying exactly what you are focusing on. Whether it's mental health advocacy, substance abuse resources or other health justice disparities. You should also be reaching out to the community for help on identifying specific issues within these topics.
2. Recruit people from the community to help spread information, identify positive leadership roles who can take initiative
3. Begin to strategize how you can put this into action (reach out to after school programs, build relationships between school counselors and youth, launch youth-faced programs)
4. Follow up often to maintain accuracy and relevancy. The world is constantly developing and problems develop with it. Evaluate your methods to continuously improve

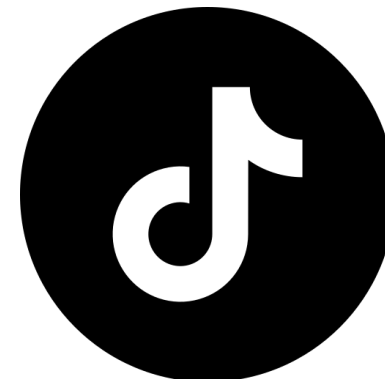
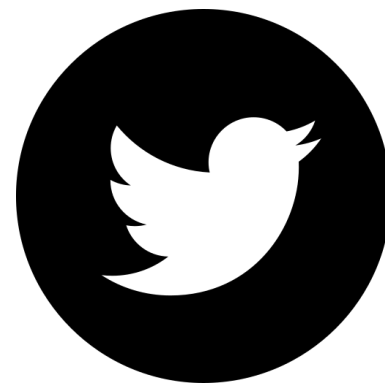
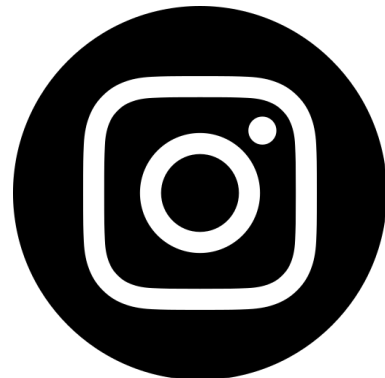


Technology and Digital Activism

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Technology and Digital Activism

- Our goal is to maintain engagement with youth, this is easiest by utilizing the apps most popular to them
- Apps such as Tik Tok, Instagram and Snapchat are well known and widely used amongst younger populations
- Creating hashtags can help spread information and allow for a much larger group to be reached, this invites experiences from various demographics



★ Youth are more likely to share their experiences with other youth! It is common for them to relate to each other and feel more comfortable sharing with someone their age



Why is social media necessary?

- ★ The most common form of communication within younger generations is technology, specifically social media
- ★ Social media is fast paced, which means lots of information reaches large amounts of people almost immediately
 - It is especially important to keep up with trends to ensure we reach peak engagement. We want our posts seen, but more importantly interacted with. Posts that are heavily liked and commented on provide insight and feedback from our community, also followers show relationships being formed between youth and advocacy
- ★ Oftentimes young people fear judgement or disapproval that they might face from adults in their life, this leads to them reaching out for help on the internet. We cannot ensure that they will contact a trusted adult first, but we can improve the quality of the information they're receiving online
 - Up to 87% of teenagers go online for various types of health information, whether its regarding mental health, sexual health or nutrition. (Rideout and Fox, 2018)



Examples of Social Media Advocacy

Many organizations use social media to invite youth to advocacy events...



...spread information...



...or make a trendy video to keep youth interested!



Conclusion and Reflection



“

Health justice issues intersect with other social justice issues like racial justice, gender equity, and economic fairness. Connect these dots in your organizing efforts.

–Youth organizer, 2023

“

People working in this field should know that without the youth power-building and organizing their efforts run the risk of slowing down to a halt. The next generation are some of the many advocates who will benefit the most from the work that they do. Organizing the youth and strengthening relationships with the work will create a lasting impact and lead to agents of change.

–J (he/him) from Virginia, 2023



After spending time with us, how do you plan to incorporate youth voice into your health justice efforts?

Let us know in the chat!



Questions for us?

Unmute or chat!



You can find these slides on the Convening website to reference and/or share with your network!

Thank you!

If you have any questions, concerns, and/or feedback, please email:

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