Engage with Intention

HPR in Action!

An 11-week curriculum to help trusted adults build intentional, health-promoting relationships (HPR) with youth ages 11-18

Curriculum Components

Weekly Learning Modules

Trusted Adult Activities

Youth Activities

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ADAPT
A Division for Advancing Prevention & Treatment
CULTIVATING PREVENTION

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HPR CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Purpose of the HPR Curriculum

To equip trusted adults with the mindset, knowledge, and practical skills to build intentional health-promoting relationships that cultivate five core protective beliefs and promote well-being in youth ages 11-18 and others.

Guiding Principle

Health-promoting relationships are built with intention through a *way of being* that cultivates protective beliefs and enables youth to thrive.

PART 1: Foundations (Weeks 1-4)

- Week 1 – Trusted Adults, Health-Promoting Relationships (HPR) & the HPR Mindset
- Week 2 – The HPR 5 Five Core Protective Beliefs
- Week 3 – The HPR Way of Being
- Week 4 – Alignment with Relationship Values

PART 2: The Four HPR *Way of Being* Strategies (Weeks 5-8)

- Week 5 – Create the environment.
- Week 6 – Facilitate connection.
- Week 7 – Engage micro-skills.
- Week 8 – Grow youth abilities.

PART 3: Integration & Application (Weeks 9-11)

- Week 9 – Building Health-Promoting Relationships in the Context of Relational Challenges
- Week 10 – Weaving a Village of Trusted Adults Around Every Youth
- Week 11 – The Simple, Quiet Truths of Health-Promoting Relationships

Access the full HPR curriculum at www.hidta.org/adapt/hpr/.

HOW TO USE THE HPR CURRICULUM

The HPR curriculum illuminates specific HPR topics, strategies, and practices unfolded in a logical sequence to promote understanding and application. The weekly learning modules are designed in a way that they can be used independently or synthesized into a clear learning pathway that demonstrates how foundational concepts, application strategies, and ongoing practice fit together as a complete approach to building health-promoting relationships.

The full HPR curriculum can be used as:

- A personal reference to revisit key concepts and deepen your practice
- A training roadmap for teams, organizations, or community partners
- A tool to introduce the HPR paradigm to others who are ready to engage with greater intention
- A foundation for ongoing professional development or coaching
- Conversation starters for team meetings
- Exercises adults/youth complete and discuss together in comfortable ways
- A tool for mentoring or advisory relationships
- Content for peer leadership or peer mentoring programs
- Support for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), health, or advisory classes
- A framework for school-wide culture and relationship-building efforts
- A shared resource between schools and families to create greater alignment at home and at school
- Any other ways you can think of!

The curriculum and a variety of **RESOURCES** to support your journey with health-promoting relationships can be accessed at www.hidta.org/adapt/hpr/.

1. The Health-Promoting Relationships Paradigm Toolkit
2. Posters of the 5 HPR Core Protective Beliefs in pdf format for printing
3. HPR *Way of Being* Quick Reference Guide (1 page)
4. Overview of HPR (2 pages)
5. Self-Assessments for the Facilitators of Connection and Micro-Skills
6. Organization Self-Reflection and Planning Tool

Importantly, while many of the concepts do build on each other, immense benefit can be found in simply spending time with the concepts that are of most interest to you at any given time. The HPR *way of being* is dynamic in nature and comes to life best with fluid approaches where the distractions of rigidity or perfection are pushed aside for a more natural, organic, intentional process of growth. **Engage with the material in any way that makes sense to you at any time.**

WEEK 1: Trusted Adults, HPR, & the HPR Mindset

- What is a trusted adult?
- How does a health-promoting relationship differ from other relationships?
- What type of mindset creates the conditions for health-promoting relationships?
- **TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:** HPR MINDSET SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR TRUSTED ADULTS
- **YOUTH ACTIVITY:** QUALITIES OF A TRUSTED ADULT

WHAT IS A TRUSTED ADULT?

Trusted adults are one of the greatest gifts in a young person's life. They boost youth development, protection, and well-being — all for free! In fact, many factors that prevent harmful behaviors and promote flourishing in youth can be cultivated through relationships with trusted adults. Having adults who take genuine interest in the life of a youth is a positive childhood experience that can support resilience, reduce risky behaviors, and mitigate risks such as mental and physical health challenges following adversity.

Trusted adults are **chosen** by youth as safe figures that listen without judgment, agenda, or expectation, and support and encourage positivity within a youth's life. They can be **anyone** - parent or caregiver, teacher, coach, mentor, neighbor, healthcare professional, or even a family friend.

What makes them trusted? Qualities like being nonjudgmental, a good listener, honest, reliable, vulnerable when appropriate, and consistent in how they show up. Believe it or not, youth also rely on trusted adults to offer clear boundaries and help them exercise their own agency and work through challenges in their own way. **Youth choose to trust adults when they feel a genuine and meaningful connection with them, and that can be achieved when relationships with youth are built with intention.**

Which youth in your life have already chosen YOU as a trusted adult?

What other youth could you also be available for as a trusted adult?

Adapted from the H**ealth-Promoting Relationships Paradigm Toolkit:**
https://www.hidta.org/adapt/prevention-intervention-resource-center/

HOW DOES A HEALTH-PROMOTING RELATIONSHIP DIFFER FROM OTHER RELATIONSHIPS?

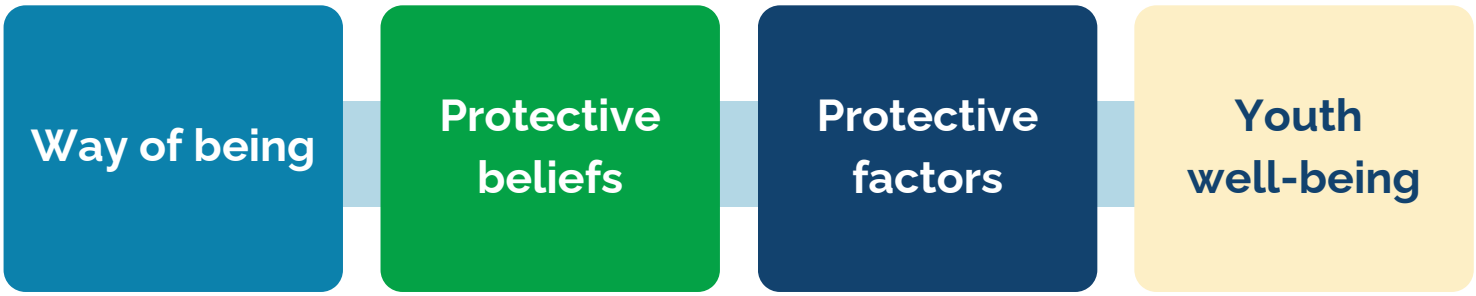
A relationship is a way of connecting with others that can be positive, neutral, negative, and everything in between. We all have a variety of relationships in our lives beginning at birth with our parents, then siblings, friends, teachers, colleagues, spouses, and others. We come to realize as we age that we also have another very important relationship to consider - a relationship with self.

The **Engage with Intention: HPR in Action!** campaign is focused on illuminating a very specific type of positive relationship, a **health-promoting relationship**, which is more than just "being nice" or spending time together. It is a specific ***way of being*** with youth that *enables* their healthy development and well-being by intentionally cultivating core **protective beliefs** (such as "I am seen and loved," "I matter," "I can influence my life," and more) that build **protective factors** such as resilience, connectedness, hope, and self-esteem.

This approach is:

- **Intentional** — focused on outcomes of health and well-being.
- **Purposeful** — it enables, or gives youth the means, to be well.

Health-promoting relationships serve as both a powerful intervention in themselves and the foundation that makes other supports and programs more effective.



Over the course of the campaign we will bring these concepts to life in concrete ways to facilitate your ability to "engage with intention" and build health-promoting relationships with youth (and others!). **It begins with us!**

HPR YOUTH ACTIVITY: QUALITIES OF A TRUSTED ADULT

DISCUSSION WITH FOLLOW-UP

Begin exploring the power of positive relationships with youth in your life with a simple, meaningful **HPR Youth Activity**. The purpose of this week's activity is to 1) get youth thinking about the qualities they value in trusted adults and 2) help you better understand what youth are looking for in trusted adults. Ideas for a 3-part activity are provided below:

1. **Initiate discussion with youth:** "Did you know that the relationships in your life can play an important role in your ability to be well, or feeling good about your physical health, your mental health, and your social health?" "I'm curious….When you think about the relationships in your life that you feel good about, can you please share a little bit about the people, what they do, what they say, and how they make you feel?" (Ask or break apart questions in whatever way feels most natural to you in the moment.)

2. **Once youth have answered**: "As you go throughout the week I wonder if you could pay attention to the things that people do or say that make you feel good or well. Capture what you notice in a way that make sense to you - maybe as notes on your phone or in a notebook. What you capture really matters to me and others (*and this group, if applicable*), and I/we look forward to learning more about what is important to you in a trusted adult."

3. **Next time you meet with the youth, consider asking the questions below and recording their answers somewhere where everyone can see for further discussion (e.g., whiteboard, or large sticky on the wall):**

- **"**What was it like for you to pay attention to the things people say that help you trust them and want to be with them?"
- "What did the experience help you realize about your preferences for qualities in trusted adults in your life?"
- "Would anyone like to share what they noticed?"
- "Looking at this list of valued qualities you've described in trusted adults in your lives, is there anything missing that you wished trusted adults would say or do?"

Tips for a Successful Discussion: 1) Be fully present. 2) Actively listen. 3) Focus on the youth's words and description, not yourself or what you are thinking. 4) Refrain from giving advice or judgment of anything shared.

WHAT TYPE OF MINDSET CREATES THE CONDITIONS FOR HEALTH-PROMOTING RELATIONSHIPS?

At the heart of building these relationships is the HPR Mindset - the "fertile soil" from which health-promoting relationships grow. When we approach relationships with this mindset, we create the conditions for youth to feel safe, seen, and supported - exactly what helps them thrive.

Values
Health-Promoting Relationships

Growth-Oriented
Humble, Honest, Self-Connected

Recognizes the Hard Work & Benefits of HPR
Committed to building health-promoting relationships for youth well-being

Stretches with Purpose
Works on one's self for the purpose of building health-promoting relationships

Seizes Opportunities
Available, able, motivated, and willing to engage the HPR *way of being* in moments with youth

HPR MINDSET SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR TRUSTED ADULTS

Score the following statements using the scale below based on the frequency with which you perform the described behavior (1 = never, 5 = always) with youth in your life. Be honest. Reflecting on your mindset can help you recognize both your strengths and areas for growth.

1-Never **2-Rarely** **3-Sometimes** **4-Frequently** **5-Always**

1. _____ **I approach my relationships with youth from a growth perspective.**
2. _____ **I practice humility, honesty, and self-awareness in my relationships with youth.**
3. _____ **I notice the effort it takes to build health-promoting relatinoships along with the benefits once I have put forth the effort (or can imagine)?**
4. _____ **I am committed to the HPR *way of being* (including creating a positive environment, facilitating meaningful connection, using positive words and actions, and growing abilities in youth).**
5. _____ **I work on myself to support building health-promoting relationships with youth.**
6. _____ **I am available, able, motivated, and willing to build health-promoting relationships in both planned and spontaneous moments**
7. _____ **I value health-promoting relationships and act in alignment with that value.**

What do you do most often (items with scores of 4 or 5)? _____

What do you do less often (items with scores of 1, 2, or 3)? _____

What did you not connect as being important for engaging in health-promoting relationships with youth? _____

SMALL DAILY PRACTICE

What small, daily practice could you commit to this week to advance your HPR mindset?

_____

_____

WEEK 2: The HPR 5 Core Protective Beliefs

- How are beliefs formed?
- Why do beliefs matter so much for prevention of risks and promotion of flourishing in youth?
- What are 5 beliefs youth need to be well?
- **TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:** HPR BELIEFS SELF-ASSESSMENT
- **YOUTH ACTIVITY:** HPR BELIEFS SELF-ASSESSMENT

HOW ARE BELIEFS FORMED?

If you knew that your everyday interactions with youth were quietly shaping the core beliefs that will guide them in life, would you show up differently? Beliefs are what we hold to be true. They are not usually formed through logic, facts, or formal teaching. Instead, they are shaped primarily through our repeated experiences and relationships, especially with the people we love and trust.

> *"For some of our most important beliefs we have no evidence at all, except that people we love and trust hold these beliefs."*
> *- Daniel Kahneman*

What happens in the brain? Every day youth receive all kinds of messages through their senses about who they are and what they're capable of (e.g. what they *hear, see, and feel* from others). Their brain tries to make sense of the messages by searching for meaning, which is informed by past experiences, emotions, and current beliefs. **New or infrequent messages have a difficult time becoming a new belief.**

A village of trusted adults

The more trusted adults that intentionally connect with youth using words and actions that build or reinforce positive, protective beliefs, **the stronger the positive beliefs become, and the harder it is for negative beliefs to take root or remain**. You don't have to be perfect, just purposeful and consistent. Every youth can benefit from a village of trusted adults in their lives shaping their positive beliefs.

Let's Practice!

Scenario: You talk with a discouraged youth after a tough day at school.

	You say	→	Potential beliefs
✗	"You'll be fine. Just toughen up."		• I'm alone. • I'm not strong enough.
✓	"Today was hard, and you kept going even when it felt heavy. How can I help right now?"		• I can overcome hard things. • I have support.

WHY DO BELIEFS MATTER SO MUCH FOR PREVENTION OF RISKS AND PROMOTION OF FLOURISHING IN YOUTH?

Our beliefs directly influence our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. In youth, limiting or negative beliefs often fuel painful emotions like depression, anxiety, shame, and hopelessness, which can lead to harmful behaviors such as substance use, violence, isolation, or giving up when things get difficult. On the other hand, strong positive beliefs foster hope, self-worth, belonging, and confidence, which can lead to healthier choices, stronger relationships, greater resilience, and a greater sense of purpose. In other words, **beliefs are one of the strongest predictors of whether a youth will struggle or thrive along with other personal, relational, and environmental factors**.

Sometimes it can be helpful to ask yourself the following in any moment you have with youth:

What belief am I cultivating in this youth in this moment?

- Am I building or reinforcing a protective belief?
- Am I doing nothing and missing an opportunity?
- Am I potentially building or reinforcing a negative or harmful belief?

WHAT ARE 5 BELIEFS YOUTH NEED TO BE WELL?

I am seen and loved. | **I matter.** | **I can influence my life.** | **I can overcome hard things.** | **I have support.**

These five core protective beliefs serve as part of the internal foundation youth need to prevent serious risks and truly thrive. When strong, beliefs such as “I am seen and loved” and “I matter” protect against depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-harm, and substance use, while “I can influence my life,” “I can overcome hard things,” and “I have support” reduce the likelihood of turning to violence or risky behaviors during stress or peer pressure. At the same time, these beliefs promote flourishing by building hope, self-worth, resilience, and purpose, leading youth to form strong relationships, stay engaged in school, pursue meaningful goals, and bounce back from setbacks. These beliefs yield healthier emotions and more constructive behaviors, which further strengthen the beliefs themselves.

TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:
HPR BELIEFS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Purpose of Activity: To give you, a trusted adult in the lives of youth, an opportunity to pause and honestly reflect on the current strength of your own five core beliefs. This exercise supports greater self-awareness and helps you better understand how your beliefs shape the way you show up with youth in your life.

Why is it important to assess your own beliefs first?

The science is clear: **We cannot effectively transmit beliefs we do not genuinely hold ourselves.** Just like you can't pour from an empty cup, your ability to help strengthen the five core beliefs in youth is deeply connected to your own conviction of them.

Youth learn beliefs primarily through observation and emulation of trusted adults. When you strongly believe "I matter" or "I can overcome hard things," your actions, tone of voice, body language, and emotional presence naturally communicate those beliefs, which youth pick up on far more powerfully in that way than from words alone. Adults with strong protective beliefs are better able to offer steady presence, consistent empathy, unconditional positive regard, a hopeful perspective, and maintain good boundaries - all of which help regulate a youth's nervous system and help protective beliefs take root.[1,2]

HPR Truth: The stronger your own five core beliefs are, the more naturally and consistently you can model, affirm, and co-create them with youth. This doesn't mean you need to be at a 10/10 in every belief. It means that awareness + intentional growth in your own beliefs directly increases your effectiveness as a trusted adult.

Taking time to reflect on your beliefs helps you identify areas for growth, **model the very process of self-reflection and growth** you hope to encourage in youth, and prepare you to seize opportunities to promote these core beliefs in youth and others.

1. **Complete the HPR Beliefs Self-Assessment.**

2. **Reflect on the following questions:**
   - How might my own beliefs affect the way I show up for the youth in my life?
   - Are there any insights that come up for me that could inform some next steps to help me strengthen certain beliefs (e.g. healing, forgiveness, self-compassion)?
   - How might strengthening these core positive beliefs make me more effective at strengthening the same beliefs in others?

1. Bandura A. 1977. Social Learning Theory. Prentice Hall.
2. Rogers CR. The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. Journal of Consulting Psychology. 1957;21(2):95-103. doi:10.1037/h0045357

YOUTH ACTIVITY:
HPR BELIEFS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Estimated Time: 15-20 mins

Purpose of Activity: To help youth reflect on the strength of their five core protective beliefs across different areas of life (home, school, peers, and overall). This builds self-awareness and opens the door for meaningful conversations with trusted adults.

1. Begin by introducing the activity to youth:

"Today we're going to look at five important core beliefs that help us feel good about ourselves and give us the confidence and strength to pursue life goals and manage challenges. We're going to rate **how strong** each belief feels for us right now in different parts of our lives - at home, at school, with friends or peers, and overall."

2. Introduce and explain the 5 beliefs in a simple way.

- **I am seen and loved** – People really see me and care about me.
- **I matter** – I am important, valued, and contribute to this world.
- **I can influence my life** – I have control over what happens in my life.
- **I can overcome hard things** – I can get through tough situations.
- **I have support** – I have people who look out for me and help me.

3. Print copies of the HPR Beliefs Self-Assessment on the next page, and ask youth to complete.

4. Invite youth to share their responses to the following questions if you and they feel comfortable.

- Which belief feels the strongest right now?
- What or who do you think has built that belief in you?
- Which belief(s) do you want to be stronger?
- For any beliefs you rated between a 3 and 6, why did you not rate them lower?
- In what ways can I help to strengthen the beliefs you need most right now?
- What do you think you can do help build a belief you need to be strengthened?

Facilitation Tips:

1) Reassure youth there are no right or wrong answers.
2) Emphasize this is about honest self-reflection.
3) Listen more than you speak and validate what they share.

HPR BELIEFS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Rate **HOW STRONG** each of the beliefs feels for you right now in different parts of your life according to the scale below.

0		5		10
Very Weak	Weak	Moderately Strong	Strong	Very Strong

Core Belief	At Home	At School/Work	With Peers	OVERALL
I am seen and loved.				
I matter.				
I can influence my life.				
I can overcome hard things.				
I have support.				

SMALL DAILY PRACTICE

This week start to notice more intentionally when others make you feel like you matter. Think about what they said or did to make you feel that way and share it with them. Be as specific as possible with the details. This will help them to believe they matter, too!

WEEK 3: The HPR *Way of Being*

- What is a *way of being*?
- What drives our *way of being* with others?
- How can our *way of being* support protection and flourishing in youth?
- How can I build protective beliefs through the HPR w*ay of being*?
- What "way of thinking" supports engagement of the HPR w*ay of being*?
- **TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:** HPR *WAY OF BEING* SELF-ASSESSMENT
- **YOUTH ACTIVITY:** INSIDE OUT - MY WAY OF BEING

WHAT IS A *WAY OF BEING*?

A *way of being* is defined as how we approach life and relationships within any given moment or context. It includes our **mindset** (core values, beliefs, attitudes, and goals), the **quality of our presence** (awareness, openness, availability, engagement, and connection), and our **choice of words, tone, and actions**. It is our fundamental and habitual way of thinking, and it shapes the emotional and relational space we create with others. "Being" and "doing" are deeply interconnected, as our values, beliefs, and emotions naturally flow into what we say and how we show up.

WHAT DRIVES OUR *WAY OF BEING* WITH OTHERS?

Our *way of being* emerges from a mix of deeply ingrained (often unconscious) patterns and habits we can change. Early life experiences, especially with caregivers, create automatic ways of thinking, feeling, and responding that often run in the background. While these patterns can subtle, vary in benefit, and take time to recognize, they do not define our future.[1,2] Research underscores that human beings have tremendous capacity for growth and rewiring across the lifespan. We can intentionally strengthen our *way of being* through three empowering pathways:

- **Self-awareness:** noticing our automatic beliefs and reactions
- **New positive relationships:** experiencing healthy connections that help reshape old patterns
- **Deliberate practice:** consistently using more positive ways of relating.[3,4]

HPR Truth

Promoting well-being in others through our relationships with them requires an honest process of reflection, self-awareness, and growth to transform who we are (our being) rather than simply trying to change our external behaviors.

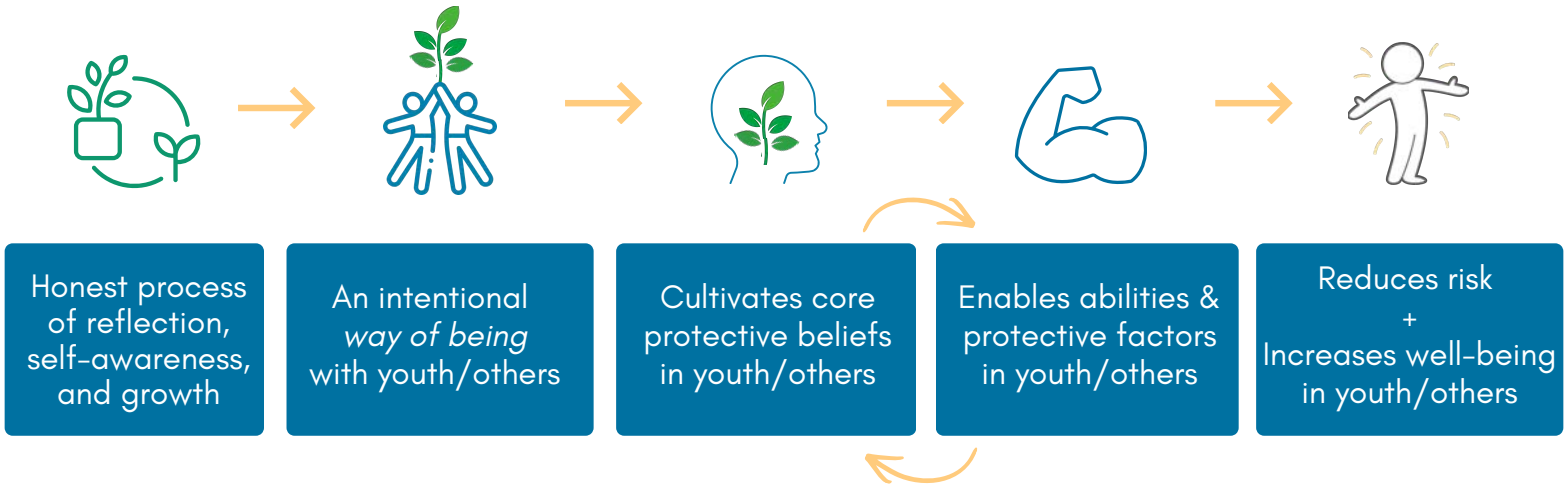
HOW CAN OUR *WAY OF BEING* SUPPORT PROTECTION AND FLOURISHING IN YOUTH?

The potential impact of a *way of being* in relationships is grounded in decades of meaningful research in psychology and youth development. Carl Rogers, a psychologist who studied what helps humans thrive and live meaningful lives, found that a genuine *way of being* marked by authenticity, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding creates a profound sense of psychological and emotional safety in others.[1]

Research also has confirmed that how adults show up and engage in relationships is one of the most powerful influences on youth lives. When trusted adults connect with intention, offering presence, nonjudgment, affirmation, curiosity, and genuine support, youth feel truly seen, accepted, and deeply valued for who they are. In that safe, nurturing space, the five core protective beliefs are more likely to be cultivated and strengthened. Stronger protective beliefs have an impact by reducing risky behaviors such as substance use, isolation, and self-harm, while nurturing protective factors and abilities such as resilience, hope, healthy and wise choices, and meaningful connections.[2-6]

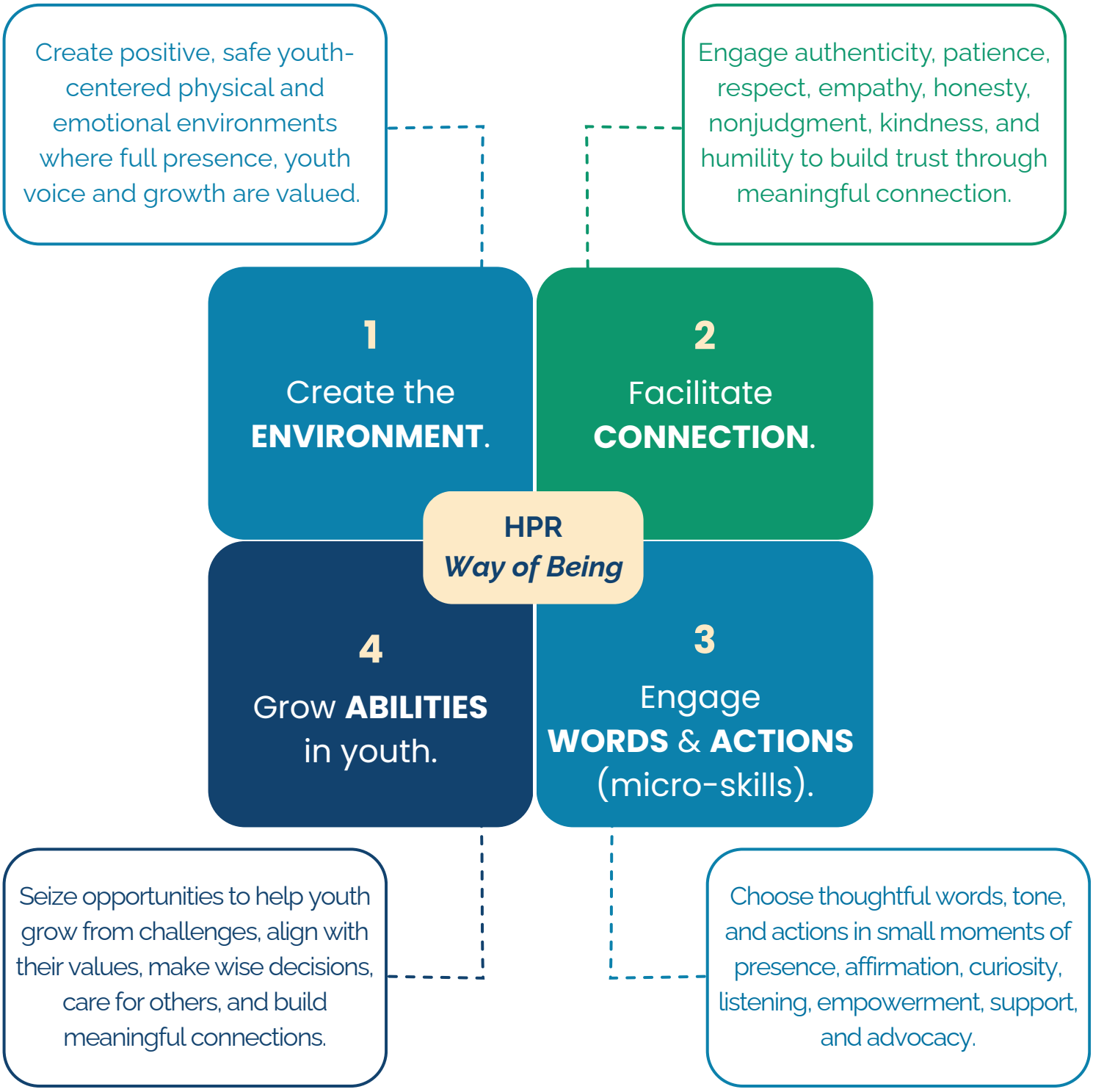
Drawing from our understanding of relationships and the HPR Paradigm, the HPR theory of change begins with intention. Trusted adults first turn inward with honesty and vulnerability to grow themselves, then apply four intentional strategies in their way of being with youth.

Theory of Change for the HPR *Way of Being*



HOW CAN I BUILD HEALTH-PROMOTING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH THE HPR *WAY OF BEING*?

Four intentional strategies can be used to build health-promoting relationships. Together, these four strategies comprise the HPR *way of being* with youth. When we prioritize youth well-being in our moments with them, our HPR *way of being* (mindset, presence, words, tone, and actions) becomes a powerful vehicle for building trust and cultivating protective beliefs. (All four strategies will be covered in more detail over the next few weeks of the campaign.)



WHAT WAY OF THINKING SUPPORTS ENGAGEMENT OF THE HPR *WAY OF BEING*?

While the HPR *way of being* represents our deepest intention, translating that intention into consistent, everyday practice can be challenging amid busy lives and distractions. This is where a "way of thinking" can be helpful in supporting engagement of the HPR *way of being*. It offers a set of simple, reflective questions that create a brief pause before we meet with a youth or between stimulus and response, allowing us to move with intention into a moment or transition from autopilot to purposeful presence.

IN THIS MOMENT...

What belief am I cultivating in this person?

What type of **ENVIRONMENT** am I creating?

What facilitators of **CONNECTION** are most important?

HPR ***Way of Being***

What **ABILITIES** can I help them grow?

What **WORDS, TONE, & ACTIONS** are most important?

By regularly asking ourselves the questions above, we build the self-awareness and mindfulness needed to align our inner values and priorities with our outer behavior so we can show up and engage with youth in a way that is consistent with what is important to us and turns good intentions into meaningful impact.

HPR *WAY OF BEING* SELF-ASSESSMENT

Purpose: To help you, as a trusted adult, reflect on both how they show up with youth and the deeper drivers influencing their way of being.

Instructions: Take a few quiet moments to honestly reflect on how you typically show up for the young people in your life. For each of the four strategies below, rate how consistently you currently demonstrate this aspect of the HPR w*ay of being* using the scale below and reflect on the questions that follow.

- **Often:** This is a natural strength for me. I do this regularly and intentionally.
- **Sometimes:** I do this occasionally, but it's inconsistent or depends on the situation.
- **Rarely:** This is an area I don't do very often or struggle with.

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY
Create the Environment I intentionally shape safe, respectful, and growth-oriented physical and emotional spaces for youth.			
Facilitate Connection I show up with authenticity, full presence, empathy, nonjudgment, patience, and humility to build trust.			
Engage Micro-Skills I use my words, tone, and actions to affirm strengths, be curious, mirror feelings, activate agency, and support youth through challenges.			
Grow Abilities in Youth I consciously help youth build important abilities (growth mindset, agency, coping skills, self-alignment, etc.).			

- **What helps me show up in my fullest *way of being*?** (e.g., good sleep, personal values, past positive experiences, feeling safe myself)
- **What gets in the way of me engaging the HPR *way of being strategies*?** (e.g., stress, busyness, insecurities, pain, fear of vulnerability, old habits, emotional burnout)
- **What beliefs do I hold that influence how I show up?** (e.g., "They won't respect me if I'm too soft.", "I don't have time for deep connection.", "I don't have much to offer.")

SMALL DAILY PRACTICE

What is one small, realistic shift I will make this week in my *way of being* with others?

YOUTH ACTIVITY:
INSIDE OUT: MY *WAY OF BEING*

Estimated Time: 15-20 mins

Purpose of Activity: To help youth understand the three key parts of a *way of being* with others (mindset, presence, and words/tone/actions) and how they affect relationships.

1. Introduce the three parts of a *way of being*.

"Every time we interact with someone, we bring a Way of Being. It has three main parts:

- Mindset - What we're thinking and believing in the moment
- Presence - How focused, open, and emotionally available we are
- Words, Tone, and Actions - What we actually say and do

Today we'll explore how these three parts work together. First, I'm going to go through an example from my life so you can see what I mean by each of these three parts and also so you have an idea of how to do this activity."

2. Ask youth to think about a recent interaction with an adult in their life where they left feeling positive or negative and write down answers to the following questions:

- What values, beliefs, atittudes, or goals for the conversation did they seem to have? (Mindset)
- How fully "there" did they feel with you? Were they paying close attention, distracted, actively listening, calm, tense? (Presence)
- What did they say or do? What type of reaction did their tone and body language create in you? (Words/Tone/Actions)

3. Ask the youth:

- What did they do that had the biggest impact on how you felt in that moment and then later on that day?
- What did they do that made you safe, respected, or valued?
- If you could give one piece of advice to adults on how to improve their *way of being* with youth, what would it be?
- What thoughts come to mind about your own *way of being* with others?
- What is one small thing YOU want to practice in your own *way of being* over the next week?

Facilitation Tips:

1) Model it first. Share your own honest example that helps to teach youth the way of being before asking youth to share.
2) Stay curious and nonjudgmental.
3) Keep it light but real. Maintain a relaxed, conversational tone. Respond with empathy and presence if something heavy is shared.

REFERENCES

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WEEK 4: Alignment with Relationship Values

- What are values, and why do they matter in our *way of being* with others?
- What does it mean to live in alignment with our values, and why is this so important?
- How do values strengthen the four HPR *way of being* strategies?
- How can we navigate differences in values and support youth well-being?
- **TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:** RELATIONSHIP VALUES EXERCISE (ADULT)
- **YOUTH ACTIVITY:** RELATIONSHIP VALUES EXERCISE (YOUTH)
- **GROUP ACTIVITY:** RELATIONSHIP VALUES EXERCISE (GROUP/FAMILY)

WHAT ARE VALUES, AND WHY DO THEY MATTER IN OUR *WAY OF BEING* WITH OTHERS?

A value is something we believe is really important to live by, a guiding principle or quality that reflects what matters most to us. Identifying our values helps us better understand ourselves, make thoughtful decisions, navigate challenges more effectively, and align our words and actions with what truly matters.

In the context of relationships, our relationship values define how we want to *be* with others and the kind of connections we want to create. Relationship values answer important questions such as: *How do I want to treat people I care about? What qualities do I want to bring into my relationships? How do I want others to feel when they are with me? How do I want to be treated by others?* This includes both our individual values and shared values within a group (ex: family, sports team, or youth coalition). **Ultimately, our values guide the kind of person or the kind of group we want to be.**

In health-promoting relationships, values are a grounding part of our mindset. They shape how we as trusted adults think, how we show up, and how we interact with youth. When we are clear about our values, and strive to live in alignment with them, we are being more intentional about creating more authentic and meaningful connections. When we consistently show up and role model for youth a commitment to living our values, youth feel seen and respected, believe they matter, AND grow their ability to understand and live their own values.

Common relationship values include:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE IN ALIGNMENT WITH OUR VALUES?

Living in alignment with our values means our daily actions, words, tone, and decisions actually match what we say is most important to us, both in our individual relationships and within groups. It's the consistency between what we believe deep down and how we actually show up in everyday moments.

This is so important because young people are incredibly perceptive. They notice when we are trying to act in a way that we want to be versus in a reactive or distracted manner. When we live in alignment, we build genuine trust, create emotional safety, and role model integrity. When there's a gap, even a small one, it can leave them feeling uncertain or less secure in the relationship.

Alignment isn't about being perfect. It's about gentle self-awareness and the willingness to make small course corrections over time.

SCENARIO: You value respect and patience and meet with a youth who is upset and talking quickly.	You take a slow breath, set aside your own agenda, and truly listen instead of jumping in with advice or correction. Without speaking any words, that small, intentional choice communicates to the youth "You matter, and I'm here with you."

HOW DO VALUES STRENGTHEN THE 4 HPR *WAY OF BEING* STRATEGIES?

Values are not meant to stay abstract. We bring them to life with intention in our everyday moments. They give meaning and direction to the four key strategies in the HPR *Way of Being*:

- **Create the Environment:** Our values shape the emotional tone, norms, and culture we build. For example, if we value growth and respect, we create spaces where youth feel safe to make mistakes, share ideas, and have a real voice.
- **Facilitate Connection:** Values such as authenticity, empathy, humility, and kindness guide how we build trust with youth.
- **Engage Micro-Skills:** Our values influence how we listen, affirm strengths, ask curious questions, and advocate for youth.
- **Grow Abilities in Youth:** When we model our values, we help young people develop their own self-alignment, agency, growth mindset, and ability to make healthy choices.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

SCENARIO: You value respect and growth in your relationships. You meet with a youth who makes a poor choice and feels discouraged.

You **create an environment** where mistakes are treated as learning opportunities rather than sources of shame.

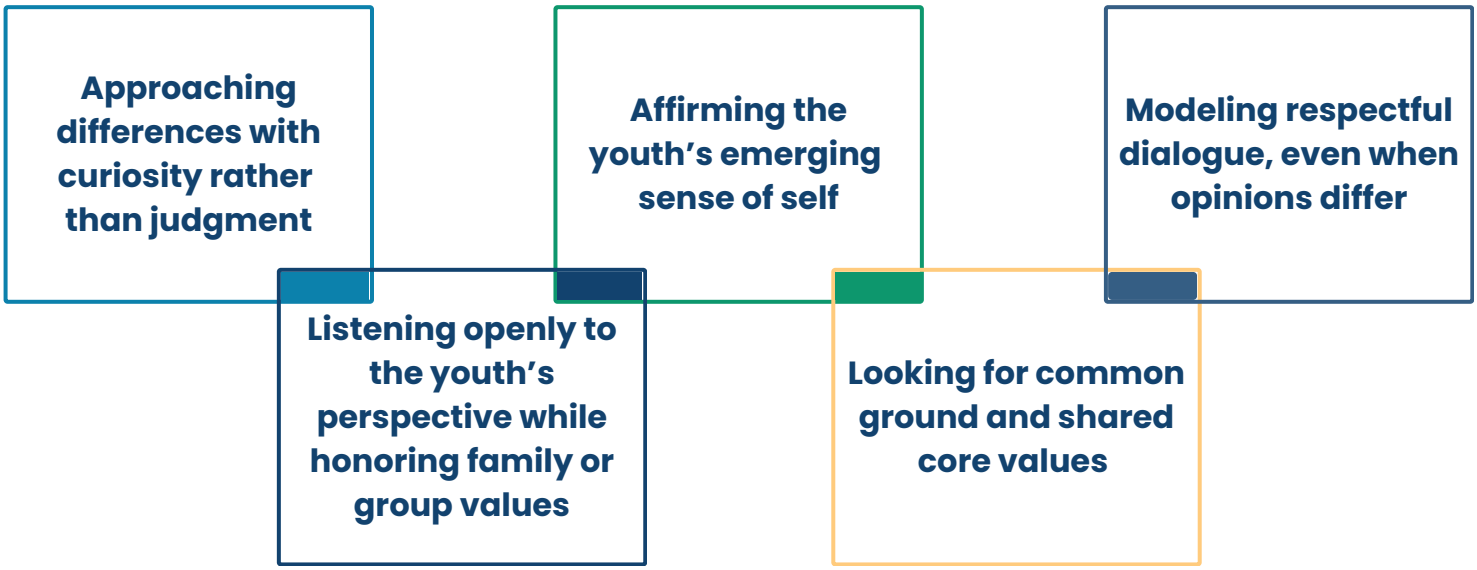
You **facilitate connection** through calm presence and care, even though you're tired.

You **engage curiosity and affirmations as micro-skills** and 1) ask thoughtful questions like "What do you think led to this?" and "What might you do differently next time?" and 2) affirm the youth's effort and strengths.

You resist the urge to fix things for the youth and instead support them in **growing their ability to make healthy and wise decisions** by reflecting, deciding on their own next steps, and owning the outcome.

HOW CAN I NAVIGATE DIFFERENCES IN VALUES AND SUPPORT YOUTH WELL-BEING?

As youth move through adolescence, they naturally begin forming their own values and sense of identity. Sometimes this leads to differences with family, cultural, or generational values. **These differences do not have to create distance.** In fact, trusted adults can convey acceptance of a youth's values without communicating agreement. Healthy navigation of differences can become **opportunities** to strengthen relationships when approached thoughtfully using the strategies below:



When we navigate these differences thoughtfully, we help youth feel accepted for who they are becoming, respected in their individuality, and supported by trusted adults, family, or other groups. This directly strengthens protective beliefs like "I am seen and loved," "I matter," and "I have support."

SCENARIO: A youth strongly values independence and being able to navigate situations on their own. The youth's parents/caregivers value protection, guidance, and preventing unnecessary setbacks for their children. They notice potential challenges to the youth's approach.

Parents/caregivers choose to pause, create a safe space for an honest conversation, and express a desire and willingness to be a sounding board for the youth. They ask the youth if they are open to any input and honor the youth's response. They share with the youth that they care about them and value being able to support them.

Together they acknowledge the family's value of being there for each other. Thoughtful navigation of the difference in values helps the youth feel seen and respected, reduces conflict, and models how to hold differing values with care and mutual respect.

RELATIONSHIP VALUES EXERCISE

(TRUSTED ADULT)

Estimated Time: 20 mins

Purpose: To help trusted adults increase self-awareness of their core values (and what drives them) in relationships, honestly reflect on how well they are living their values in their relationships, and take small steps toward greater alignment.

STEP 1: What is important to me in my relationships? (Self-Awareness)

A value is something we believe is really important to live by. Identifying our values can be a powerful way to build self-awareness, guide decision-making, boost resilience, and align our actions with what matters most to us. Values guide our choices and the kind of person we want to be. (Sample Values: Honesty, Family, Creativity, Service, Faith, Loyalty, Kindness, Love)

Answer the following on a sheet of paper to help identify what you value in relationships:

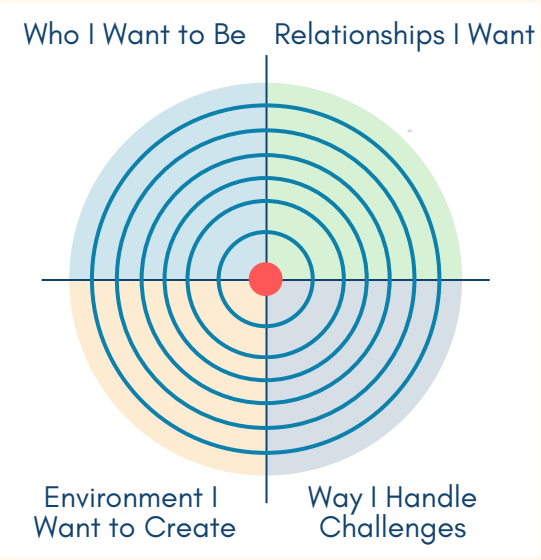
- **The Person I Want to Be:** What kind of person do I want to be in my relationships?
- **The Relationships I Want:** What qualities in a relationship make it feel like a good fit for me?
- **The Way I Handle Challenges:** When things get tough, what qualities do I want to show?
- **The Environment I Want to Create:** What environment do I want for those I care about?

STEP 2: How fully am I living my relationship values right now with youth? (Self-Acceptance)

Review the values you identified in Step 1. On the dart board below place one X in each section (four Xs total) to show how closely your actions match your values in that area of life today. There are no right or wrong answers—just mark where you feel you are today.

Where do I put the X?

- An X in the center Bull's Eye means you are living very consistently with your values in that area.
- An X farther from the Bull's Eye means your actions are less aligned with your values in that area.



Reflect on the following:

1. Who/What has an impact on the values I choose? (ex: family, friends, faith, culture)
2. In recent interactions, were my values clearly visible in my words and actions?
3. What values did I struggle with showing?
4. What barriers (ex: busyness, stress, hunger) seem to get in the way of not living my values?

STEP 3: What small, specific actions will I take this week to live more in alignment with my values? (Self-Alignment) (Ex: I value patience, so when I feel impatient with a youth, I will pause and be curious about how they see the situation instead of jumping to advice.)

1.

2.

Reference: Lundgren, T., Luoma, J. B., Dahl, J., Strosahl, K., & Melin, L. (2012). The Bull's-Eye Values Survey: A psychometric evaluation. Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 19(4), 518-526.

RELATIONSHIP VALUES EXERCISE

(YOUTH)

Estimated Time: 20 mins

Purpose: To help young people discover what matters most to them in relationships, understand what influences their values, and practice living in ways that feel true to the kind of person they want to be.

STEP 1: What matters to me in my relationships with others? (Self-Awareness)

A value is something we believe is really important to live by. Identifying the values we want to live by in our relationships can be a powerful way to build self-awareness, guide decision-making, boost resilience, and match our actions with what matters most to us. Values guide our choices and the kind of person we want to be. (Sample Values: Honesty, Family, Kindness)

Answer the following on a sheet of paper to help identify what you value in relationships:

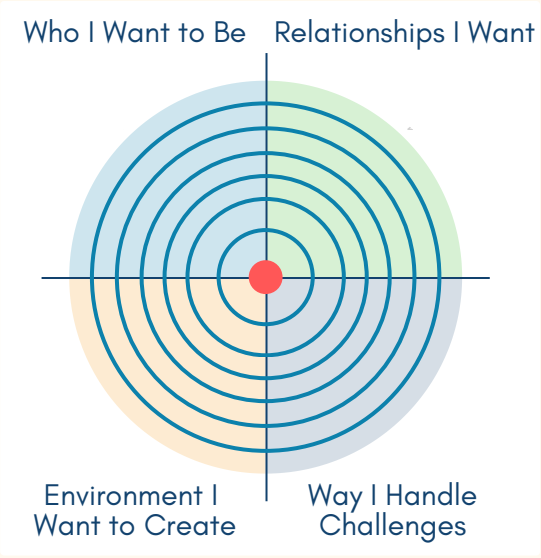
1. **The Person I Want to Be:** What kind of person do I want to be in my relationships?
2. **The Relationships I Want:** What do others do that make me like them and trust them?
3. **The Way I Handle Challenges:** When things get tough, how do I want to handle it?
4. **The Environment I Want to Create:** The environment is what surrounds us. It can be physical like a home or also a feeling. What environment do I want for those I care about?

STEP 2: How well am I living my values right now with others? (Self-Acceptance)

Review the values you identified in Step 1. On the dart board below place one **X** in each section (four Xs total) to show how closely your daily words and actions match your values in that area of life right now. There are no right or wrong answers - Mark where you feel you are today.

Where do I put the X?

- An **X** close to the center Bull's Eye means you are doing a GREAT job being the person you want to be in that area.
- **X**s farther from the Bull's Eye mean you do not feel as good about your actions and want to do a better job living your values in those areas.



Reflect on the following:

1. Who/What has an impact on the values I choose? (ex: family, friends, faith, culture)
2. In recent interactions, were my values clearly visible in my words and actions?
3. What values did I struggle with showing?
4. What barriers (ex: busyness, stress, hunger) seem to get in the way of not living my values?

STEP 3: What small, specific actions will I take this week to be more of the person I want to be with others in my life? (Self-Alignment) (Ex: Because I value my family, I will thank my parents or caregivers for the little things they do for me this week (drive me to sports, make dinners...).

1.

2.

Reference: Lundgren, T., Luoma, J. B., Dahl, J., Strosahl, K., & Melin, L. (2012). The Bull's-Eye Values Survey: A psychometric evaluation. Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 19(4), 518-526. (Adapted for youth)

RELATIONSHIP VALUES EXERCISE

(GROUP/FAMILY)

***Important note for families on next page.**

Estimated Time: 45 mins

Purpose: To help groups or families explore our individual and shared values in relationships, understand what influences them, navigate any differences respectfully, and make commitments that support stronger, healthier relationships.

STEP 1: What matters to us in our relationships?

A value is something we believe is really important to live by. Identifying our values can be a powerful way to build self-awareness, guide decision-making, boost resilience, and match our actions with what matters most to us. Values guide our choices and the kind of people we want to be with each other. (Sample Values: Honesty, Respect, Kindness, Humor, Compassion)

Privately reflect on the following and write down your answer on a piece of paper:

1. **How I Want to Be in My Group/Family:** What kind of person do I want to be with my family?
2. **Important Group/Family Qualities:** How do I want to be treated by my group/family?
3. **The Way We Handle Challenges:** When things get tough, how do we want to handle it as a group/family?
4. **The Way Our Setting/Home Feels:** How do I want our space to feel for ourselves & others?

STEP 2: What are our shared values as a group/family?

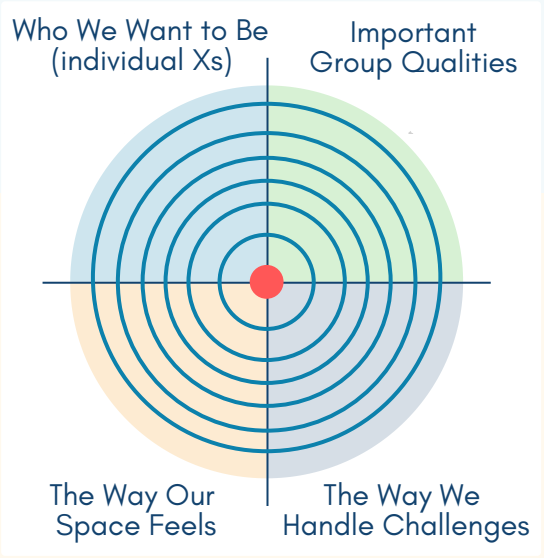
- As a group, ask each member to share their responses to the questions above.
- Capture the ones everyone seems to agree on as they are mentioned on a sheet of paper visible to all group/family members.
- Below the list of shared values, write any unique ones from individuals next to their name so they are noted.
- As a group, discuss what influenced the selection of shared values (culture, faith, other…)

Our Shared Values

- …
- …

STEP 3: How are we doing as a group living these shared values with one another?

- On the dart board place **individual Xs** in the "Who We Want to Be" section and **one family X** in the other sections to show how closely your words and actions match your values in those areas recently.
- An **X** close to the center Bull's Eye means you are doing a GREAT job being who you want to be while an **X** farther out means you do not feel as good and want to do better.



STEP 4: What small, specific actions do each of us agree to take this week to express our group/family values more fully? (We value Respect and will speak calmly to one another.)

1.

2.

Reference: Lundgren, T., Luoma, J. B., Dahl, J., Strosahl, K., & Melin, L. (2012). The Bull's-Eye Values Survey: A psychometric evaluation. Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 19(4), 518-526. (Adapted for family)

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR FAMILIES
REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP VALUES EXERCISE

Please use this exercise at a time when your family is calm, open to hearing each other, and when each member is willing to focus on how they can contribute to strengthening family relationships.

It is not recommended that this tool be used when families are experiencing high conflict or stress or are navigating a crisis. Families should seek the appropriate supports as needed in those times.

Guidelines for families using the activity include:

1. Establish shared norms like no interrupting, take turns, assume good intent, and refrain from criticisms or negative judgments.
2. Offer appreciations of each other.
3. Only speak for yourself.
4. Accept that there may be differences in opinions or values and that is ok.

WEEK 5: Create the environment.

- What does it mean to "create the environment" in health-promoting relationships, and why does it matter so much?
- How do our values shape the environments we create?
- What practical steps can I take to intentionally shape positive environments for youth?
- **TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:** ENVIRONMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT
- **YOUTH ACTIVITY:** CO-CREATING OUR ENVIRONMENT EXERCISE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "CREATE THE ENVIRONMENT" IN HEALTH-PROMOTING RELATIONSHIPS?

The HPR *way of being* consists of four key strategies beginning with **"Create the environment."** as the foundation. This strategy represents intentionally shaping the physical, emotional, and cultural spaces around youth so they feel valued, respected, safe, encouraged, and empowered to grow. Teaming with youth to co-create the environment is critical and a great opportunity for them to advocate for themselves and peers. This is an active, ongoing process that includes paying attention to 3 specific types of environments:

Physical Environment: The tangible spaces where interactions happen such as arranging seating in a circle or side-by-side to encourage connection rather than rows; minimizing distractions such as phones; displaying youth artwork or shared values or goals visibly; creating comfortable, welcoming spots like a hangout space; or having food available.

Emotional Environment: The tone and feeling you create such as bringing warmth, calm presence, and consistency; starting interactions with genuine interest or appreciation; and responding to setbacks with patience and encouragement rather than frustration. Your own emotional regulation and full presence help set this climate.

Cultural Environment: The shared values, norms and standards that define the kind of culture you intentionally build together. It includes co-creating simple group agreements like "We value respect, kindness, and empathy", "We listen to understand," or "Mistakes are opportunities to learn," and consistently role modeling this way of being while celebrating effort and maintaining fair boundaries.

WHY DOES IT MATTER SO MUCH?

The environment around us communicates what is valued and what is possible. Supportive environments reduce stress, activate positive social engagement, and make it easier for youth to develop protective beliefs and skills. **It is evident in the physical, emotional, and cultural aspects of the environment that youth matter.** Environments that foster connection, safety, and supportive norms are key protective factors that promote resilience, better mental health, and reduced risk behaviors such as substance use. Positive school and relational climates, in particular, are associated with lower levels of emotional distress, conduct problems, and improved well-being in youth over time. Chaotic, dismissive, or overly rigid environments, on the other hand, can undermine even the most caring words and actions. By thoughtfully shaping these three environmental dimensions, trusted adults strengthen every other HPR *way of being* strategy and help youth thrive.

HOW DO OUR VALUES SHAPE THE ENVIRONMENT WE CREATE?

Our values (such as respect, empathy, honesty, and growth) serve as a compass. If you value respect and voice, you might ask youth how they prefer to sit during a group discussion (physical), respond with curiosity instead of interrupting (emotional), and co-create norms like "Everyone gets a chance to share their thoughts" (cultural). If you value growth and resilience, you intentionally role model learning from mistakes openly and establish standards that treat setbacks as normal and valuable. When values shape the environment, youth experience consistency between what we say and how we show up and interact with them. This congruence builds trust and helps them internalize those same values.

WHAT PRACTICAL STEPS CAN I TAKE TO INTENTIONALLY SHAPE POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR YOUTH?

Shape the physical environment with purpose.

- Co-create space with youth.
- Display youth-centered visuals (photos, shared goals)
- Integrate decor that reflects community identity & calm.
- Make the space predictable. Offer food.

Establish a positive emotional tone.

- Show genuine interest in youth and acknowledge them warmly: "I'm glad you're here!"
- Express belief in youth's efforts and capabilities.
- Celebrate small wins publicly to build shared sense of pride.

Role model & reinforce values in everyday interactions.

- Role model empathy and self-regulation under stress.
- Frame mistakes as opportunities for growth.
- Model emotional honesty, apology, & self-compassion.
- Reflect group values in interactions.

Foster a culture of voice, choice, & contribution.

- Invite youth into decision-making about projects/goals.
- Offer choices that matter to the youth.
- Recognize acts of leadership, creativity, & kindness.
- Celebrate youth influence.

Create norms & standards that promote growth & positive choices.

- Use language that communicates "This is hard, AND I know you can do it."
- Establish standards that emphasize effort and curiosity.
- Normalize setbacks as part of growth.

Embed support into everyday interactions.

- Be present and observant.
- Notice small changes.
- Create rituals of connection.
- Encourage youth to recognize one another's efforts.
- Follow-up after difficult moments.

ENVIRONMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

(TRUSTED ADULT)

Estimated Time: 10 mins

Purpose: Increase awareness of the type of environment you currently create and identify one or two small improvements.

Think about a regular setting where you interact with youth (home, classroom, practice, mentoring, etc.). **Rate the following on a scale of 1–5 from never true to always true):**

1-Never **2-Rarely** **3-Sometimes** **4-Frequently** **5-Always**

1. _____ **The physical space supports connection and focus and tells youth that they matter and belong here.**
2. _____ **The emotional tone feels warm, encouraging, safe, and positive.**
3. _____ **Youth consistently feel they have real voice and choice.**
4. _____ **Norms and standards reinforce respect, a growth mindset, learning from mistakes, and mutual support.**
5. _____ **I consistently model the values and presence I want to see in youth.**

Reflection Questions:

1. What are you doing well?
2. What one or two changes could make a big impact?

SMALL DAILY PRACTICE

What 2 concrete actions will you take this week to enhance the environments you are creating for youth?

_____

_____

YOUTH ACTIVITY:
CO-CREATING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Estimated Time: 15-20 mins

Purpose of Activity: To empower youth to contribute to the environments they're in, building agency, belonging, and ownership while modeling collaboration.

1. Discuss

- What makes a space (home, team, classroom, group) feel good/safe/supportive vs. stressful or unwelcoming?
- Please share examples.

2. Brainstorm together.

- What would an ideal environment look like here? (Physical setup, emotional tone, norms and standards, routines.)

3. Co-create norms and standards.

- As a group (or 1:1), agree on 3–5 simple, positive norms and standards (e.g., "We listen to understand," "We celebrate effort," "We support each other").
- Write them down where they can be seen by all.

4. Try it and reflect.

- Implement for a short period.
- Check in: "How is this working? What should we adjust?"

Facilitation Tips:

1. **Listen to learn!** Stay curious and nonjudgmental.
2. Affirm youth ideas. ("Hmm. I hadn't thought about it that way. Thank you for sharing that with me.")
3. Tie back to values and protective beliefs. ("This is something we all value and will help everyone feel like they matter.")
4. Allow the conversation to organically evolve and adapt in any way that makes sense at the time based on the responses of the youth.

WEEK 6: Facilitate connection.

- What is meaningful connection, and how does it support youth well-being?
- What are facilitators of connection in the HPR *way of being*?
- How can I strengthen my ability to meaningfully connect with youth and others?
- **TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:** FACILITATORS OF CONNECTION SELF-ASSESSMENT
- **YOUTH ACTIVITY:** WHAT MAKES ME FEEL CONNECTED?

WHAT IS MEANINGFUL CONNECTION, AND HOW DOES IT SUPPORT YOUTH WELL-BEING?

Meaningful connection is the experience of being seen, valued, understood, and supported in a relationship that builds **trust** and emotional safety. In health-promoting relationships, connection (and environment) **lay the foundation** for cultivating the five core protective beliefs in youth: "I am seen and loved," "I matter," "I can influence my life," "I can overcome hard things," and "I have support."

But...not all connection is equal.

Casual, transactional, or superficial interactions (e.g., quick instructions or purely task-focused exchanges) do not produce the same benefits. Meaningful connection characterized by quality, depth, consistency, and the presence of facilitators such as full presence, empathy, and authenticity is what drives the documented health outcomes.[1]

> *"We need to prioritize our social relationships like our life depends on it, because it does."*
> - Julianna Holt-Lunstad

Strong evidence from research, including meta-analyses by Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad, shows that meaningful social connections significantly affect health and longevity. Individuals with robust, high-quality social connection have approximately a 50% increased likelihood of survival compared to those with weaker connections with an effect size comparable to quitting smoking! Social disconnection raises risks of premature mortality (26–32%), cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, depression, and anxiety across all ages, genders, and backgrounds.[1-2]

For youth ages 11–18, meaningful connection with trusted adults is a powerful protective factor against mental health challenges (e.g., depression, anxiety), behavioral health risks (e.g., substance use), violence-related outcomes, and suicide, while supporting resilience, academic success, and long-term flourishing.

1. Holt-Lunstad J. Social connection as a critical factor for mental and physical health: evidence, trends, challenges, and future implications. World Psychiatry. 2024;23(3):312-332. doi:10.1002/wps.21224
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Connecting the Dots: Connecting multiple forms of violence. Accessed June 13, 2026. https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/connecting-the-dots/connect/

WHAT ARE FACILITATORS OF CONNECTION IN THE HPR *WAY OF BEING*?

The second HPR *way of being* strategy includes 16 Facilitators of Connection, core personal qualities that foster meaningful connection with others. Many also serve as relationship values for both adults and youth and build directly upon the first strategy of creating the environment. The table on the following pages provides a simple definition, focused reflection question, and one immediate action for each facilitator. The 7 facilitators highlighted in **yellow** were identified by youth and trusted adults as particularly important and serve as excellent starting points. As always, remember the HPR way of thinking when considering which facilitators to engage.

In this moment, what facilitators of connection are most important?

Facilitator	Definition	Reflection	Quick Start
Authenticity	Showing up as your real self by aligning your words & actions with what you truly believe and value.	How might I show up more genuinely with youth so they experience the real me and build deeper trust?	Pick one value that matters to you and demonstrate it in a conversation with a youth this week.
Care	Looking out for a youth's well-being through consistent, respectful actions that support and protect them.	How can my actions more clearly show youth that I truly care about their well-being, beyond just my words?	Remember and follow up on one specific thing a youth shared last time — show it mattered.
Empathy	Actively understanding and sharing in a youth's feelings and perspective so they feel truly seen.	How can I better see situations through the youth's eyes before responding, so they feel deeply understood?	Ask one open-ended question ("What was that like for you?") and reflect back the emotions or meaning you heard with compassion and without fixing it.
Full Presence	Being completely focused and engaged in the moment with a youth — body, mind, and attention fully there.	If nothing was pulling at my attention—no tasks, worries, or distractions—how might I show up differently with this youth, and what impact could that have?	Put away all distractions for one full conversation this week and notice the difference.

FACILITATORS OF CONNECTION (CONT.)

Facilitator	Definition	Reflection	Quick Start
Honesty	Being truthful and sincere, even when it's uncomfortable, while keeping trust and respect intact.	How can I practice honest communication with youth in ways that strengthen trust and respect?	Share one small, appropriate honest comment or admission this week.
Humility	Having an accurate view of yourself — open to learning, admitting mistakes, and putting the youth's needs first.	How might I model humility so youth see it's okay to learn, grow, and admit mistakes?	Identify a way you could have shown up differently with a youth. Apologize to the youth for what you did or missed.
Kindness	Treating youth with genuine warmth, generosity, and consideration, especially under stress.	How can I show kindness consistently, even on tough days, so youth feel valued and supported?	Before an interaction, reset your stress and offer one intentional kind word or small helpful action.
Love	Deeply wanting the best for a youth; investing in their growth, happiness, and well-being over time.	How can I invest more intentionally in this youth's long-term well-being so they feel genuinely cared for?	Make a short list of what you appreciate about one youth and act on one item (extra time, encouragement, support).
Non-judgment	Suspending quick judgments so youth feel safe to share without fear of criticism.	How can I approach youth with more openness and curiosity instead of quick judgments so they feel safe to share?	When you catch yourself judging, pause and ask: "What compassionate explanation might there be?"
Nurturance	Actively supporting and encouraging a youth's growth, especially through challenges and mistakes.	How can I better support youth as they grow through challenges and mistakes?	Offer validation and emotional support the next time a youth faces a setback.

FACILITATORS OF CONNECTION (CONT.)

Facilitator	Definition	Reflection	Quick Start
Patience	Staying calm and steady when things feel frustrating or slow, giving youth space to process.	If I wasn't rushing to get to the outcome, how would I think, speak, or act differently in this moment with the youth?	Notice rising impatience within you, name it to yourself, then choose a calmer response.
Respect	Treating youth with dignity, valuing their feelings, opinions, and rights even when you disagree.	How can I show respect in different ways so youth clearly feel their perspective and contributions are valued by me?	Actively listen and acknowledge their opinion, even (especially) when you see it differently.
Self-Awareness	Clearly noticing your own thoughts, emotions, triggers, and patterns in real time.	How can greater self-awareness help me respond more effectively as a trusted adult with youth?	After an interaction, quickly reflect on what you felt, what triggered it, and how you responded.
Self-Acceptance	Fully accepting yourself (strengths, flaws, and all) without harsh self-criticism.	How can I practice greater self-acceptance so I can model a healthy self-view for youth?	Reframe one negative self-thought and spend time noticing and focusing on a strength.
Self-Alignment	Acting in ways that match your values, beliefs, and what you say matters most.	How can I better align my actions with my values when interacting with youth?	Pause once a day and ask: "Is how I'm showing up right now aligned with my values?"
Vulnerability	Choosing to be open and real about your own struggles or mistakes (when appropriate) to build deeper trust.	How can I appropriately model vulnerability so youth see it's okay to be real and build stronger connections?	Practice one small, safe act of vulnerability this week (e.g., "I've struggled with that too").

HOW CAN I STRENGTHEN MY ABILITY TO CONNECT WITH YOUTH AND OTHERS?

Strengthening your ability to connect with others begins with strengthening your ability to connect with self. As with so many concepts presented in the HPR paradigm, **connection is fundamentally an inside-out process**. Self-connection was first defined in 2022 as the subjective experience of being aware of oneself, accepting oneself based on that awareness, and aligning one's behavior with that awareness. Greater self-connection predicts greater well-being, authenticity in relationships, and the capacity to form deeper connection with others.[3]

Practical Steps

1. **Build Self-Connection:** Begin by increasing self-awareness of your thoughts, emotions, and patterns during interactions with youth. Practice self-acceptance by approaching your imperfections with compassion rather than judgment. Then work toward self-alignment, ensuring your actions with youth match your values and intentions. This internal foundation makes your expression of the facilitators of connection far more authentic and sustainable.

2. **Complete the Facilitators of Connection Self-Assessment** (on the next page)**:** Rate yourself on each facilitator (Strong / Needs Work) in your interactions with youth.

3. **Deliberate Practice of Specific Facilitators:** The ability to connect with others through patience, respect, and other facilitators is not a "soft" skill. As a matter of fact, intentional and consistent practice is essential to learning the breadth and depth of each facilitator across contexts and strengthening your ability to connect. Choose two facilitators from the table and practice them consistently in real moments this week.

4. **Regular Reflection and Adjustment:** Use the table on the previous pages for daily focus. Reflect on your interactions and adjust based on what you notice or what is shared with you.

3. Klussman K, Curtin N, Langer J, Nichols AL. The importance of awareness, acceptance, and alignment with the self: a framework for understanding self-connection. Eur J Psychol. 2022;18(1):120-131. doi:10.5964/ejop.3665

TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:

FACILITATORS OF CONNECTION SELF-ASSESSMENT

Estimated Time: 15 mins

Purpose: To help trusted adults honestly evaluate your current strengths and growth areas in the 16 facilitators of connection. By increasing your self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-alignment (self-connection), you will be better equipped to build deeper, more meaningful relationships with youth.

Instructions: Rate how often you demonstrate each facilitator in the context of your relationships with youth ages 11–18. Be honest and compassionate with yourself.

1: Almost Never **2:** Rarely **3:** Sometimes **4:** Often **5:** Almost Always

Facilitator	Rating	Recent Example	Action Step for This Week
Authenticity			
Care			
Empathy			
Full Presence			
Honesty			
Humility			
Kindness			
Love			
Nonjudgment			
Nurturance			
Patience			
Respect			
Self-Awareness			
Self-Acceptance			
Self-Alignment			
Vulnerability			

YOUTH ACTIVITY:
WHAT MAKES ME FEEL CONNECTED?

Estimated Time: 20 mins

Purpose of Activity: This activity helps you explore what connection qualities make your relationships feel positive, safe, and supportive. Understanding these qualities (called "Facilitators of Connection") helps you recognize good connections in your life and even ask for what you need from trusted adults if you are not receiving it.

Instructions for Youth: Think about the adults or friends in your life that are important to you. Rate how often you experience each of the following qualities. Take your time. Be honest - there are no right or wrong answers.

1: Almost Never **2:** Rarely **3:** Sometimes **4:** Often **5:** Almost Always

Quality	Rating	Quality	Rating
Authenticity: They act like their real selves around me.		**Nonjudgment:** They don't judge or shame me when I make mistakes.	
Care: They genuinely care about how I'm doing and what happens to me.		**Nurturance:** They encourage and help me grow through hard times.	
Empathy: They try to hard to understand how I feel.		**Patience:** They stay calm and give me time to figure things out.	
Full Presence: They give me their full attention and are not distracted.		**Respect:** They treat me with dignity and value my thoughts and feelings.	
Honesty: They tell me the truth, even when it's hard or uncomfortable.		**Self-Awareness:** They notice their feelings/reactions & grow from them.	
Humility: They admit when they're wrong or don't know something.		**Self-Acceptance:** They are okay with their own imperfections.	
Kindness: They are warm, generous, and kind to me.		**Self-Alignment:** They actually do what they say is important to them.	
Love: They truly want the best for me and show it through their actions.		**Vulnerability:** They share their own struggles or mistakes (if appropriate).	

Reflection Questions:

- Which qualities do you experience from others the most? How does it impact you?
- Which ones do you wish you experienced more often? Why?
- How would you advise trusted adults to help you feel more connected?
- What is one quality you can bring into your own relationships this week?

WEEK 7: Engage micro-skills.

- What are micro-skills within relationships, and how are they important to youth well-being?
- What are seven micro-skills used in health-promoting relationships as part of the HPR *way of being*?
- How can I intentionally engage the HPR micro-skills in everyday moments with youth?
- **TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:** MICRO-SKILLS BRIEF SELF-ASSESSMENT
- **YOUTH ACTIVITY:** EVERYDAY WORDS & ACTIONS

WHAT ARE MICRO-SKILLS WITHIN RELATIONSHIPS, AND HOW ARE THEY IMPORTANT TO YOUTH WELL-BEING?

Micro-skills are the specific, moment-to-moment words, actions, tones, facial expressions, body language, and ways of responding we use in our interactions with others. They are the small, everyday behaviors that shape the quality of relationships - for better or for worse. **Our choice of words and actions are never neutral.** The specific language we use, our tone of voice, the questions we ask (or don't ask), moments of full presence (or distraction), warm eye contact or closed posture, and how we respond to a youth's joy, struggle, or silence all shape the emotional climate and how a youth thinks and feels about themselves, their abilities, and the decisions they make.

Many of us overlook or underestimate the cumulative impact of our tone, body language, and seemingly small word choices in daily interactions. **Being intentional and thoughtful in these moments allows each interaction to reach its full potential and turn ordinary exchanges into opportunities to build trust, affirm worth, and strengthen protective beliefs.**[1]

Neuroscience and developmental research show that consistent, responsive micro-interactions help wire the brain for trust, emotional regulation, and resilience, while dismissive or distracted ones can have the opposite effect.[2] Strong evidence from relationship science, developmental psychology, and prevention research shows they are linked to better mental health, lower risk of substance use and other behavioral challenges, stronger academic engagement, and greater long-term flourishing. In contrast, low-quality micro-interactions (e.g., distracted listening, generic responses, or overly directive fixing) can weaken connection and protective factors.[3]

1. Holt-Lunstad J. Social connection as a critical factor for mental and physical health: evidence, trends, challenges, and future implications. World Psychiatry. 2024;23(3):312-332. doi:10.1002/wps.21224
2. National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. Serve and Return Interaction Shapes Brain Circuitry. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University; 2023.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Connecting the Dots: Connecting multiple forms of violence. Accessed June 13, 2026.

WHAT ARE SEVEN MICRO-SKILLS USED IN THE HPR *WAY OF BEING*?

The HPR *way of being* includes seven core micro-skills that trusted adults can intentionally practice in everyday moments. These skills help create a positive environment and facilitate connection with youth to strengthen the five core protective beliefs.

1	**Be fully present and notice.**	Giving undivided attention and observing both verbal and nonverbal cues without distraction or agenda.
2	**Be meaningfully curious.**	Asking open-ended questions to understand the youth's perspective, feelings, goals, values, purpose, or ideas without judgment or leading.
3	**Affirm youth strengths, values, contributions, and how much they are needed.**	Specifically naming and describing the importance of positive qualities, efforts, impacts, or inherent worth in youth.
4	**Mirror and reflect back to youth.**	Paraphrasing or summarizing what you heard (content and emotion) to show understanding and help the youth feel truly seen.
5	**Activate agency.**	Helping youth recognize and activate their own power, choices, and capacity to influence situations and solve problems.
6	**Support youth in navigating challenges.**	Walking alongside during difficulties with co-regulation, perspective, or resources, without rescuing or minimizing.
7	**Advocate for youth.**	Standing up for or amplifying the youth's needs, voice, and best interests when appropriate.

HOW CAN I INTENTIONALLY ENGAGE THE HPR MICRO-SKILLS IN EVERYDAY MOMENTS WITH YOUTH?

The first three micro-skills (Be fully present and notice. Be meaningfully curious. Affirm youth strengths, values, contributions, and how much they are needed.) are important foundational micro-skills. The true power emerges when we intentionally practice them and engage them together with the facilitators of connection. The most impactful responses weave these elements together in meaningful ways that address the specific context and the youth's needs and are guided by the HPR way of thinking:

In this moment, what words and actions are most important?

- How can I engage the micro-skills to cultivate the protective beliefs **in this unique context** with a youth or group of youth?
- How can I **create a positive emotional environment** using my words and actions?
- How can I **facilitate meaningful connection** using my words and actions?
- (Next week we will explore how these micro-skills also support growing abilities in youth.)

Practical Guidance for Intentional Use

- **Start small and build consistency.** Pick 1–2 micro-skills to focus on this week (see the Trusted Adult Activity). Even brief, purposeful use in ordinary moments (a car ride, touchpoint in the hallway, post-game debrief, homework check-in, or text reply) can make a big difference over time.
- **Stay authentic.** Adapt the skills to your own style and the unique relationship while remaining grounded in presence, respect, and genuine care.
- **Combine them naturally.** For example, full presence + curiosity + reflection + activating agency often work beautifully together in one short interaction.
- **Reflect regularly.** After a moment with a youth, quickly consider: Which micro-skills did I use? How did the youth respond? Which protective belief might this have strengthened? What felt natural or stretched me?

Micro-Skills in Action

The following table offers practical examples of each micro-skill in everyday interactions to help bring the micro-skills to life. Use these examples to generate more ideas for your own unique application of the micro-skills with youth.

Be fully present and notice.	**Scenario:** A 13-year-old comes home from school unusually withdrawn. **In Action:** The trusted adult puts down their phone, turns toward the youth with warm eye contact and open posture, and says, "I notice you seem quieter than usual today. I'm here if you want to talk—or we can just sit together for a bit."
Be meaningfully curious.	**Scenario:** The youth mentions a conflict with friends, a tough decision, or something they're excited about. **In Action:** The trusted adult listens first, then asks with genuine interest, "What matters most to you in this situation?" Invite the youth to explore their own thoughts, feelings, values, and goals.
Affirm youth strengths, values, contributions...	**Scenario:** The youth helped a sibling, showed kindness to a friend, or persisted through a challenge. **In Action:** The trusted adult says, "The kind of thoughtfulness you showed by stepping in to help your sister/team is exactly who you are, and it really matters to our family/team."
Mirror and reflect back to youth.	**Scenario:** The youth vents about a hard day or feeling overwhelmed. **In Action:** The trusted adult listens, then reflects: "Today was really overwhelming with the test and the drama with your friends. You felt pulled in a lot of directions and that's exhausting. Did I get that right?"
Activate agency.	**Scenario:** The youth feels stuck on a problem, decision, or setback (e.g., school conflict or personal goal). **In Action:** The trusted adult says, "You've got some real options here. Thinking about your values and what is important to you, what do you think might be a good next step for you?"
Support youth in navigating challenges.	**Scenario:** The youth is anxious about a presentation/hard conversation. **In Action:** The trusted adult says, "How are you feeling about this? I'm here with you. Want to practice together, take a few breaths, or talk through what's worrying you most? I have confidence you can get through this."
Advocate for youth.	**Scenario:** The youth is struggling with a teacher, coach, or system and feels their voice isn't being heard. **In Action:** The trusted adult says, "Would it help if I went with you, or we practiced what you want to say? Your needs matter here."

TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:

MICRO-SKILLS BRIEF SELF-ASSESSMENT

Estimated Time: 10 mins

Purpose: To help you as trusted adults build self-awareness of current micro-skill habits and purposefully grow in them this week to strengthen your HPR *way of being*.

Instructions: Rate how often you demonstrate each micro-skill's set of activities in the context of your relationships with youth ages 11–18 on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Almost Never", 3 "Sometimes", and 5 "Almost Always". **Circle the micro-skills you score 3 or below in and commit to practicing those micro-skills more intentionally this week.**

		Rating (1-5)
Be fully present and notice.	1. I let go of competing priorities and am fully in the moment. 2. I relax the urge to teach, fix, or remind. 3. I notice the youth in a way that communicates back I care.	
Be meaningfully curious.	1. I draw out youths' perspectives, feelings, values and goals. 2. I put aside my schemas, assumptions, and past experiences to increase my readiness and ability to be curious. 3. I ask deep and purposeful open-ended questions.	
Affirm youth strengths, values, contributions...	1. I listen for strengths within youth that may be expressed as attitudes, knowledge, values, feelings, goals, and values. 2. I keep affirmations all about the youth vs. inserting myself. 3. I ground affirmations in what is authentic and true.	
Mirror and reflect back to youth.	1. I listen and observe deeply with full presence to understand the true essence of what youth are expressing and sharing. 2. I choose what to reflect with the purpose of youth feeling seen. 3. I convey acceptance and nonjudgment when reflecting back.	
Activate agency.	1. I empower youths' sense of their strengths and skills. 2. I ask youth for their thoughts, ideas, solutions, and next steps. 3. I create opportunities for youth to lead & exercise their freedom.	
Support youth in navigating challenges.	1. I increase youths' understanding of what the challenge is and how it is affecting them. 2. I partner with youth to support them to identify their own solutions. 3. I normalize having problems and navigating them is not easy.	
Advocate for youth.	1. I explore and honor youths' thoughts, ideas, and wishes for support and advocacy. 2. I invite youth to offer feedback after advocating on their behalf. 3. I connect youth with people, places, resources, and/or opportunities that will support their goals and ability to thrive.	

YOUTH ACTIVITY:
EVERYDAY WORDS & ACTIONS

Estimated Time: 30 mins

Purpose of Activity: To help you (youth) NOTICE what trusted adults do that makes you feel seen, supported, valued, loved, and capable and REFLECT on words and actions YOU would like to use in your own relationships.

Instructions for Youth (NOTICING WORDS & ACTIONS):

- Think about 2-3 positive moments you have had with trusted adults over the past few weeks in which you felt seen, supported, valued, loved, and/or capable.
- Consider the following questions and write down your responses:
  - What **words** or **statements** did the trusted adult say that meant something to me? (Be specific.)
  - What **actions** (e.g. was fully present, made eye contact, gave a hug, etc.) did the trusted adult do (or avoid - e.g. not judging) that meant something to me?
  - What **feelings** or **thoughts** did those words and actions create in me?
  - Which **belief(s)** did those words and actions strengthen in me?
- Discuss your responses as a group (to the degree you feel comfortable sharing) with a trusted adult facilitator.

I am seen and loved.
I matter.
I can influence my life.
I can overcome hard things.
I have support.

Instructions for Youth (MY OWN WORDS & ACTIONS):

- Consider the following questions and write down your responses:
  - What is most important to me about the way I treat others? (Review your responses to the *Relationships Values* activity in Week 3 if completed.)
  - Which beliefs are important to me to build in my friends? Or how do I want my friends to feel about themselves?
  - What types of words or statements can I use over the next week that represent my values?
  - What actions (e.g., handshakes, smiling at others, paying attention to my friends when they're talking, waiting for others so they don't feel left out, etc.) can I engage in over the next week to live more of my values?
- Discuss your responses as a group (to the degree you feel comfortable sharing) with a trusted adult facilitator.

WEEK 8: Grow youth abilities.

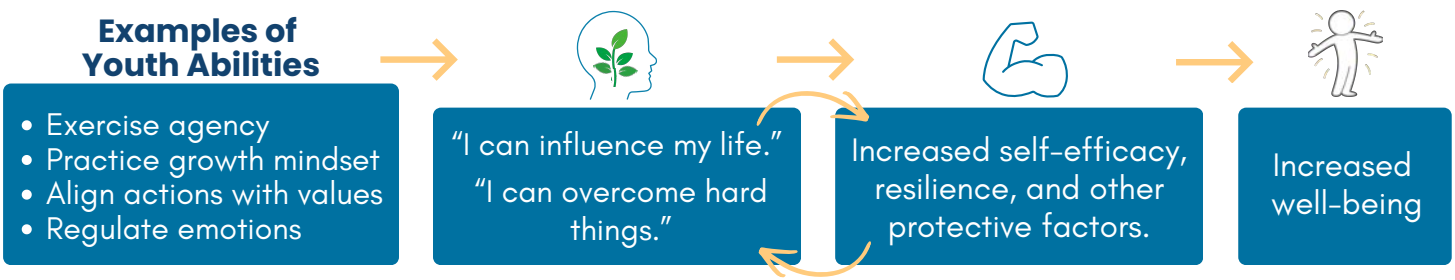
- How do youth abilities influence youth beliefs?
- What specific youth abilities strengthen the five HPR core protective beliefs?
- How can trusted adults engage the HPR *way of being* (environment, connection, & micro-skills) to grow youth abilities?
- **TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:** GROWING MY OWN ABILITIES
- **YOUTH ACTIVITY:** MY STRENGTHS & GROWTH PLAN

HOW DO YOUTH ABILITIES INFLUENCE YOUTH BELIEFS?

An ability is a learned and developed capacity or competence that enables a person to do something well or effectively. In the context of youth development, abilities enable youth to respond positively and resourcefully to the expectations and challenges of everyday life. They strengthen as they are applied by youth across a variety of meaningful contexts. Trusted adults with an HPR mindset are available, able, motivated, and willing to support youth in growing their abilities.

Abilities directly influence beliefs young people hold about themselves and their world. The way it works is through experience and mindset: when youth are given opportunities to repeatedly practice abilities in environments where both missteps and successes are considered learning opportunities, they can grow and strengthen the evidence supporting their protective beliefs. Over time, these experiences shape cognitive and emotional patterns, making the beliefs more stable and accessible.

For example, the repeated experience of achieving a desired outcome through one's own growth mindset, decisions, actions, and emotional regulation builds the beliefs "I can influence my life." and "I can overcome hard things." Research in positive youth development and self-determination theory supports that growing these abilities builds self-efficacy, resilience, positive self-beliefs, and better life outcomes, including overall well-being.[1-3]



1. Ryan RM, Deci EL. Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. Am Psychol. 2000;55(1):68-78.
2. Lerner RM, Lerner JV, Murry VM, et al. Positive youth development in 2020: Theory, research, programs, and the promotion of social justice. J Res Adolesc. 2021;31(4):1115-1134.
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WHAT SPECIFIC YOUTH ABILITIES STRENGTHEN THE HPR CORE PROTECTIVE BELIEFS?

Growing youth abilities is the fourth and ongoing strategy in the HPR *way of being*. While the first three strategies (creating the environment, facilitating connection, and engaging micro-skills) are primarily implemented by trusted adults, growing abilities is a strategy youth can carry forward themselves and continue to engage in throughout their lives to actively strengthen and maintain the five core protective beliefs. This is why it is so important for trusted adults to **seize and provide as many meaningful opportunities as possible** for youth to practice and apply these abilities in real life.

Trusted adults implementing the HPR *way of being* focus on **growth of seven key youth abilities** to strengthen the five core protective beliefs:

1	**Practice self-alignment.**	Supports youth to behave in ways that align with their values, goals, & priorities.	• **I am seen & loved.** • **I matter.**
2	**Practice a growth mindset.**	Encourages youth to view challenges or setbacks as opportunities to grow.	• **I can influence my life.** • **I can overcome hard things.**
3	**Exercise agency.**	Helps youth build capacity to make their own choices and take purposeful action.	• **I can influence my life.**
4	**Make healthy & wise choices.**	Supports youth in positive decision-making and discernment.	• **I can influence my life.** • **I can overcome hard things.**
5	**Engage strategies to be well.**	Helps youth use tools to manage emotions and stress and be well.	• **I can influence my life.** • **I can overcome hard things.** • **I have support.**
6	**Care about others.**	Helps youth build empathy, humility, and service towards those around them.	• **I am seen and loved.** • **I matter.** • **I have support.**
7	**Connect with others & community.**	Fosters in youth a sense of belonging, communication capabilities, and meaningful relationship development.	• **I am seen & loved.** • **I matter.** • **I have support.**

HOW CAN TRUSTED ADULTS ENGAGE THE ENVIRONMENT, CONNECTION, & MICRO-SKILLS TO GROW YOUTH ABILITIES?

Remember - the HPR way of thinking guides the HPR *way of being*. Trusted adults intentionally use the first three strategies of the HPR *way of being* to create the conditions and opportunities for youth to be able to grow their abilities in everyday moments with trusted adult support and affirmation.

In this moment, what abilities can I help them grow?

- How can I **create a positive and safe emotional environment and opportunities** for youth to practice their abilities?
- How can I **facilitate meaningful connection** using my words and actions?
- How can I **engage my words and actions** to affirm and support youth in growing their abilities?

EXAMPLE 1
Exercise Agency & Make Wise Decision

A 14 y.o. is deciding whether to try out for a sports team with a huge commitment.

Environment: Create a calm, distraction-free space. Promote youth's voice and choice in the decision.

Connection: Offer full presence and empathy. Maintain warm eye contact.

Micro-skills: Offer support, be meaningful curious, and activate agency.
-"What kind of support would be most helpful from me?"
-"I can see you want to make a thoughtful decision. I'm here with you and trust your ability to weigh what's right for you."
-"What matters most to you about this decision?"
-"What are the pros and cons from your perspective?"

EXAMPLE 2
Practice Growth Mindset & Strategies to Be Well

A 15-year old is feeling overwhelmed and discouraged after doing poorly on an important test.

Environment: Create an emotionally safe space with calm presence.

Connection: Offer empathy, authenticity, care and nonjudgment.

Micro-skills: Reflect, activate agency, & support emotional regulation.
-"That test result really stung, and it makes sense you're discouraged. It sounds like you're feeling disappointed and worried about what this means for your grade."
-"What small step feels managable right now? Reviewing the test together, making a new study plan, or just taking a break first?"

EXAMPLE 3
Practice Self-Alignment & Make a Wise Decision

A 16-year old gets caught vaping at school and doesn't want to miss upcoming games with his soccer team.

Environment: Create a safe and confidential space. Promote openness and a matter-of-fact approach.

Connection: Offer authenticity, empathy, and non-judgment.

Micro-skills: Be fully present, curious, affirm, and reflect.
-"What do you like about vaping? What are the downsides of vaping?"
-"What would it mean to you to not be able to play?"
-"It is important to you to be out there with your team."
-"Knowing how important this is, what are your next steps?"

TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:
GROWING MY OWN ABILITIES

Estimated Time: 15 mins

Purpose: To help you reflect on the strength of their own abilities and consider what personal work or growth might help you better support the young people in your life in developing those same abilities.

Instructions: Review the brief descriptions of the HPR abilities in this week's content and answer the questions below. Be honest and compassionate with yourself. The goal is increased self-awareness and intentional growth as a trusted adult.

1. **Practice self-alignment.**
2. **Practice a growth mindset.**
3. **Exercise agency.**
4. **Make healthy & wise choices.**
5. **Engage strategies to be well.**
6. **Care about others.**
7. **Connect with others and community.**

1. **Which of these abilities am I strongest in?**

   What evidence from my life supports my response?

2. **Which abilities do I find more challenging or know I am still growing in myself?**

   What evidence from my life supports my response?

   What gets in the way or makes them difficult for me?

   How are these abilities connected to the presence of the core beliefs (I am seen and loved. I matter. I can influence my life. I can overcome hard things. I have support.) in myself?

3. **How do my own strengths and challenges in these abilities affect my ability to grow them in youth?**

4. **Among the abilities I find more challenging, what small steps of growth could I focus on this week?**

YOUTH ACTIVITY:
MY STRENGTHS & GROWTH PLAN

Estimated Time: 30 mins

Purpose of Activity: To help you (youth) notice your own strengths in different abilities that support a protective belief system, reflect on the abilities you want to grow, and create a simple plan to practice them in your everyday life.

Instructions for Youth:

Step 1. Reflect on the importance of the following seven HPR abilities in your life:

- **Practice self-alignment:** I accept who I am today, know the kind of person I want to be, and live in a way that matches my values and what's important.
- **Practice a growth mindset:** I believe I can improve with every effort and see challenges as an opportunity to learn.
- **Exercise agency:** I make my own choices and take action to influence what happens in my life.
- **Make healthy & wise choices:** I thoughtfully make decisions that are good and wise for my body, mind, and future and incorporate supportive influences on those decisions such as perspectives of trusted adults or my faith.
- **Engage strategies to be well:** I use tools like deep breathing, exercise, talking to someone, or taking a break when things get hard or to keep myself well.
- **Care about others:** I show kindness, empathy, and concern for the people around me and seek to understand their needs and perspectives.
- **Connect with others and community:** I build and maintain meaningful relationships and serve my community.

Step 2. Answer the following questions on a sheet of paper or in a journal:

- Which abilities am I strong at? How do I know?
- Which abilities are more challenging for me?
- What abilities would I like to grow that may not be listed here?

Step 3. Develop a growth plan.

- Which 1-2 abilities would I like to get stronger in this week?
- What is one small way I can practice these abilities this week?
- Who can support me or who can I talk to about it?
- How will I know I am making progress?

Step 4. Discuss your responses as an individual or group (to the degree you feel comfortable sharing) with a trusted adult facilitator.

WEEK 9: Building HPR within Relational Challenges

- What considerations are important when building relationships with youth experiencing relational challenges such as previous trauma, mental health conditions, or justice involvement?
- How can trusted adults prepare themselves to build relationships with youth in these contexts?
- How can the HPR *way of being* be intentionally engaged to rebuild trust and strengthen relationships in these contexts
- **TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:** GROWTH PLANNING FOR RELATIONAL CHALLENGES
- **YOUTH ACTIVITY:** EXPLORING TRUST AND THE SUPPORT I NEED

WHAT CONSIDERATIONS ARE IMPORTANT WHEN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUTH EXPERIENCING RELATIONAL CHALLENGES?

This week explores how to apply the HPR way of being when trust has been tested or when additional challenges such as relational trauma, mental health conditions, or justice involvement make relationships more difficult. Building health-promoting relationships with youth in these contexts requires intentional, trauma-informed, and evidence-based approaches. The literature consistently highlights several key **foundational practices** to consider.

1	**Prioritize safety, consistency, and trustworthiness.**	Youth with relational trauma often have heightened sensitivity to perceived threats or inconsistency. Consistent, predictable, patient, transparent, & non-punitive interactions help establish a sense of safety & trust - required for building protective beliefs."[1,2]
2	**Apply trauma-informed principles.**	Safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment (SAMHSA framework) improve engagement, reduce the risk of re-traumatization, and create conditions for long-term well-being and stronger protective beliefs.[3]
3	**Emphasize repair, nonjudgment, accountability, and strengths-based interactions.**	Quick, sincere repair of ruptures that includes trusted adults conveying nonjudgment and taking accountability, if applicable, models healthy relationships. Full presence and genuine affirmation of strengths (even small ones) help rebuild the protective beliefs "I matter" and "I can overcome hard things," - both often weakened by previous relational distrust.[4]
4	**Practice cultural humility and self-awareness.**	Examine your own biases, assumptions, and power dynamics. Remain open to learning from the youth. Ask youth directly what support looks like for them. This approach strengthens trust, prevents unintended harm, and models respect.[5]
5	**Focus on agency and protective belief cultivation**	Help youth experience small successes, voice their needs, and regain a sense of control. This directly supports the protective beliefs "I can influence my life" and "I can overcome hard things," which are often eroded by trauma, justice involvement, or mental health challenges.[6,7]

Special Considerations

While foundational practices provide universal starting points, the following tailored considerations highlight common patterns and can further strengthen relationships with specific populations. While these considerations require us to be flexible and allow grace, it important to hold to supportive accountability and to ensure that acceptance does not communicate agreement with any negative behaviors.

- **Relational Trauma:** Prioritize co-regulation (helping youth manage emotions in your presence), predictability in routines/responses, and gradual opportunities for safe vulnerability. Avoid power struggles or sudden changes to avoid fear. Focus on consistent, calm presence to rebuild safety and the belief "I have support."[1,2]
- **Justice Involvement:** Acknowledge potential mistrust of systems and adults in authority. Prioritize voice, choice, and future-oriented conversations that emphasize strengths and possibilities. Address stigma directly and focus on rebuilding agency and hope ("I can influence my life").[3]
- **Depression and Anxiety:** Be patient with withdrawal, low energy, avoidance, or irritability. Use gentle, non-pressuring curiosity, convey acceptance and non-judgment and celebrate small efforts of participation. Help connect emotions to coping strategies that support self-efficacy and "I can overcome hard things."[4]

Resources

Topic	Resource

Trauma-Informed Care	• **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**
	  ◦ Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/ebp/trauma-informed-care
	• **National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)**
	  ◦ Creating Trauma-Informed Systems and youth-serving adult guides. https://www.nctsn.org/

Justice-Involved Youth	• **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)**
	  ◦ Positive Youth Development Literature Review and resources on relational approaches. https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/model-programs-guide/literature-reviews/positive_youth_development.pdf
	  ◦ Trauma-informed care in juvenile justice: https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/taxonomy/term/trauma-informed-care

Youth Mental Health	• **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)**.
	  ◦ Practice parameters and family resources for anxiety and depression. https://www.aacap.org/
	• **Search Institute.**
	  ◦ Developmental Relationships Framework. https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships-framework/

Positive Childhood Experiences	• **Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI)** ◦ Positive Childhood Experiences resources. https://www.cahmi.org/

HOW CAN TRUSTED ADULTS PREPARE THEMSELVES TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUTH IN THESE CONTEXTS?

Trusted adults play a powerful role in helping youth rebuild trust and protective beliefs after relational trauma or during difficult challenges such as mental health struggles or justice involvement. Showing up effectively requires intentional preparation. This preparation involves an ongoing process of self-work, learning, and building your own capacity to be a steady, safe presence. Small, consistent efforts in preparation can make a big difference in how well you connect with youth and support their well-being.

1. Cultivate Self-Awareness and Cultural Humility

Cultural humility means being willing to learn from the youth, checking your own biases or assumptions, and remembering that you are not the expert on their life experiences. It also means respecting their perspective and treating them as the expert on what they need. Be aware of how your own ego could affect your response to a given youth or situation. Regular self-reflection helps you avoid unintentional harm and build real trust.[5]

2. Build Knowledge of Trauma, Mental Health, and Justice Involvement

Learn the common impacts of relational trauma (e.g., hypervigilance, difficulty with trust), depression/anxiety (e.g., withdrawal, low motivation, irritability), and justice system experiences (e.g., stigma, mistrust of authority). Use credible resources while recognizing every youth's experience is unique. Knowledge increases empathy and reduces frustration.[1,3]

3. Strengthen Your Own Emotional Regulation and Resilience

Practice your own coping strategies and seek support when needed to stay calm or manage stress (peer consultation, supervision, or personal care). A steady, regulated adult is better able to co-regulate with youth and maintain consistent presence.[2]

4. Adopt a Growth Mindset and Commitment to Repair

Accept that mistakes will happen. Be ready to apologize sincerely and learn from mistakes. View challenges as opportunities to model "I can overcome hard things."

5. Seek Consultation and Collaboration

Connect with colleagues, mentors, or specialists experienced in trauma, justice, or mental health. Team approaches often provide better support for complex needs.

Practical First Steps

- Complete the TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY at the end of this section to reflect and identify areas for growth.
- Identify one resource or training to build areas of knowledge related to impacts of these experiences on youth and how to better prepare yourself to navigate them.
- Commit to taking steps to build one identified area of growth over the next month.

HOW CAN THE HPR *WAY OF BEING* BE ENGAGED TO SUPPORT TRUST AND RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT?

The HPR *way of being* provides a clear, practical framework for rebuilding trust and strengthening relationships with youth facing relational trauma, mental health challenges, or justice involvement. Here's how the four strategies can be intentionally applied:

Establish predictable routines, clear expectations, and emotionally safe spaces. Reduce unnecessary chaos, surprises, or power struggles. Youth who have experienced relational harm especially need consistency and reliability to feel safe enough to lower their defenses and begin to trust again.

Lead with full presence, genuine nonjudgment, patience, and empathy. Stay calm and steady even when youth test boundaries or withdraw. Small, consistent acts of reliability (following through on what you say, remembering details they share) often matter more than big gestures for rebuilding trust.

Support youth in developing self-awareness (recognizing emotions and triggers), healthy coping strategies for stress or difficult emotions, problem-solving skills, and the confidence to voice their needs and set boundaries. Rebuilding their sense of agency and hope is especially important.

Use meaningful curiosity ("What helps you feel safe or understood?"), consistent affirmation of strengths (even small ones), active listening and reflection, and quick, sincere repair when misunderstandings occur. These micro-skills help youth feel seen, valued, and safe to take relational risks.

TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:
GROWTH PLANNING FOR RELATIONAL CHALLENGES

Estimated Time: 15 mins

Purpose of Activity: To 1) reflect on your current ability to practice the HPR *way of being* with youth who may be emotionally dysregulated or have different capacities or preferences for connection, 2) identify personal challenges to using the HPR *way of being* in these contexts, and 3) develop a preliminary growth strategy to support future encounters with youth experiencing relational challenges.

REFLECT

- **What youth in my life are currently experiencing relational challenges, emotional dysregulation, or difficulty connecting with me or others?**
- **How am I currently showing up for them using the HPR *way of being*?** (1. Create the environment. 2. Facilitate connection. 3. Engage micro-skills. 4. Grow youth abilities.)
- **How am I currently reacting and responding to unexpected emotions or situations?** (e.g. angry outbursts, disrespect, silence, aggression)
- **How aligned is the way I show up and respond to unexpected situations with youth aligned with my values, the person I want to be, and what the science suggests is most helpful?**

RECOGNIZE

- **What emotions, words, or behaviors in youth (if any) may prevent me from engaging the HPR *way of being* with them?** (e.g., disrespectful words, yelling, personal attacks, lying, silence)
- **Why might those things bother me?** (e.g., Did I experience them from others in the past? Am I too tired or overstimulated to manage them in the way I want to? Are they activating beliefs I may hold about myself or how youth should treat adults and vice versa that might be creating discomfort or affecting my approach?)
- **What might I need to do to improve my ability to interact with youth in these contexts?** (e.g., Learn more about the impacts of trauma, mental health, justice involvement or similar challenges on youth behavior. Spend time practicing the way I want to handle myself when I'm feeling reactive to a youth. Reach out to a counselor to discuss what I'm experiencing and my goals for my interactions with youth.)

GROW

- **What action(s) will I take this week to address personal challenges to my ability to interact with youth with relational challenges?** (e.g., Excuse myself for a few minutes when feeling overstimulated. Process new insights related to my discomfort with a confidant or counselor. Write down any beliefs I hold about myself that may need some attention due to their influence on being the person I want to be for youth."
- **In what way(s) will I strengthen the way I show up for youth experiencing relational challenges in my life?**

YOUTH ACTIVITY:
EXPLORING TRUST & THE SUPPORT I NEED

Estimated Time: 15 mins

Purpose of Activity: To help youth reflect on what trust and support look like for them in the context of challenges and practice expressing their needs to trusted adults.

REFLECT

If it helps, think about a relationship in your life in which you feel (or felt) safe and that you can trust that individual. Consider what they do to help you to feel that way when answering the following questions.

Reflect on the following questions and capture your responses somewhere.

- What makes a relationship feel safe to me?
- What qualities in an adult make me feel like I can trust them in the moment and over time?
- What makes it hard for me to trust or open up to adults?
- When I'm struggling with hard emotions or situations, what kinds of support do I need most from trusted adults in my life?

ARTICULATE

Considering your responses to the reflection questions above, begin putting language to your trust and support needs by answering the questions below.

- One thing that makes me feel safe with adults is_____.
- I can build trust more easily with adults when_____.
- When I am struggling or not acting like myself, the support I need at that time looks like _____.

EXPRESS

As you feel comfortable, practice sharing your responses with individual trusted adults in your life or in a group discussion led by trusted adult facilitator. Remember: You may have similar or different needs as others, and all responses are OK. Sharing your needs with trusted adults is a sign of strength and should be done only as you feel ready. It can help both of you build a stronger relationship by them knowing how to support you better.

Facilitation Tips:

- Create a safe, non-judgmental space. Emphasize there are no right or wrong answers.
- Offer options: journaling, drawing, or private thinking.
- Be comfortable with silence and respect if youth choose not to share.
- Model vulnerability if appropriate (e.g., "One thing that helps me feel supported is…").
- Validate all responses. Gently connect back to protective beliefs when natural.

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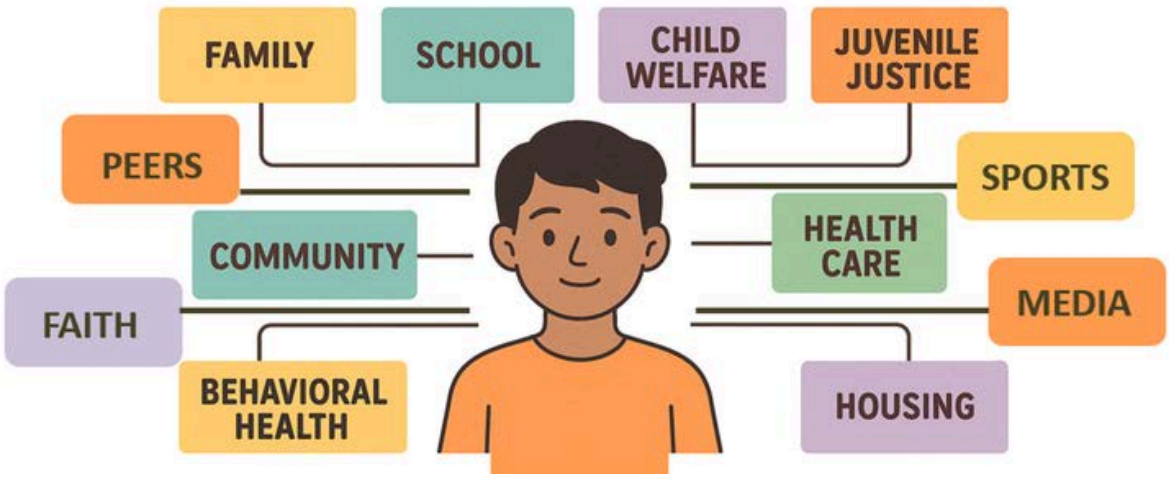
WEEK 10

Weaving a Village of Trusted Adults Around Every Youth

- What kind of impact can a village of trusted adults have on a young person's life?
- What does it look like when multiple trusted adults show up for one young person across the course of a day?
- What can I do to promote building villages of trusted adults around the young people in my community?
- **TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:** VILLAGE MAPPING & ACTIVATION
- **YOUTH ACTIVITY:** VILLAGE MAPPING & PARTICIPATION

WHAT KIND OF IMPACT CAN A VILLAGE OF TRUSTED ADULTS HAVE ON A YOUNG PERSON'S LIFE?

Every young person is surrounded by a village of adults - some obvious, others less visible - parents, teachers, coaches, bus drivers, school resource officers, youth program leaders, neighbors, healthcare providers, and more.



Decades of research show that both the number and quality of caring adult relationships powerfully shape young people's development. Young people who experience strong developmental relationships with multiple adults, including having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely cared about them, demonstrate greater resilience, self-efficacy, social-emotional skills, and better long-term mental and relational health outcomes, even when facing adversity.[1–3]

Importantly, these benefits are not limited to one or two close relationships. Research shows a clear dose-response effect: the more strong, supportive adult relationships a young person experiences across home, school, community, and programs, the greater their well-being and thriving.[4,5] Even brief, everyday interactions with a wider circle of adults can cumulatively reinforce core protective beliefs such as "I am seen and loved," "I matter," "I can influence my life," "I can overcome hard things," and "I have support."

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE WHEN MULTIPLE ADULTS SHOW UP FOR A YOUNG PERSON ACROSS THE COURSE OF A DAY?

A Day in the Life of Jordan's Trusted Adult Village

To illuminate the power of a village of trusted adults in the life of a young person, let's walk through an ordinary day with 15-year-old Jordan and meet some of the trusted adults who cross his path. As you read each moment, consider:

- How different roles are naturally positioned to cultivate certain beliefs and abilities
- How even short interactions can communicate mattering, support, and belief in a young person
- Where you might already be showing up in similar ways and where you could become more available
- How to adapt the *way of being* strategies for your own contexts or responses.

7:15 a.m. HOME | Parent/Guardian

Jordan came downstairs while his mom was rushing to leave for work, coffee in one hand and her bag in the other. She set her things down, greeted him with a warm smile, and said, "I have a few minutes. Can I make you some eggs?" She started cooking and asked how he was feeling about the day. When he mentioned a test he was nervous about, she looked at him and said, "I've seen how you've been taking breaks by putting your headphones on and taking a walk to manage the stress of that class. I admire that in you. Will you text me to let me know how it goes?"

HPR *Way of Being* Strategies Used

Environment: Calm & attentive presence despite a busy morning
Connection: Caring, fully present, empathetic
Micro-Skills: Notice, affirm, be meaningfully curious, activate agency
Abilities Grown: Engage strategies to be well. Practice self-alignment.
Beliefs Strengthened: I am seen and loved. I can overcome hard things. I have support.

7:45 a.m. BUS | Bus Driver

As Jordan stepped onto the bus, the driver looked up, smiled, and said, "Morning, Jordan! Good to see you." He paused for a second, then added, "Hope you have a good one today." Jordan responded with a smile. It was quick, but the driver used his name and made eye contact like he cared.

Even in those few seconds, Jordan felt noticed. The moment quietly reinforced that there are adults outside his family who see him and are rooting for him.

HPR *Way of Being* Strategies Used

Environment: Warm, consistent presence on the bus
Connection: Caring, fully present, affirming
Micro-Skills: Notice, affirm
Abilities Grown: Connect with others and community.
Beliefs Strengthened: I matter. I have support.

10:30 a.m. SCHOOL | Teacher

During class, Jordan raised his hand and shared a thoughtful answer to a question. His teacher smiled, nodded, and said, "That's a really good point, Jordan. I appreciate you sharing your thinking." A few minutes later, as students were packing up, she added quietly, "Keep bringing ideas like that. It helps the whole class."

Jordan left the room standing a little taller. The moment gave him a quiet boost of confidence in his ability to contribute.

HPR *Way of Being* Strategies Used

Environment: Supportive, encouraging classroom climate
Connection: Authentic, caring, affirming, honest, fully present
Micro-Skills: Notice, affirm, activate agency
Abilities Grown: Practice a growth mindset.
Beliefs Strengthened: I matter. I can influence my life.

2:15 p.m. SCHOOL | School Resource Officer

Jordan was walking down the hallway looking tense and distracted heading into his exam. Officer Johnson, who was standing near the main office, noticed and gently said, "Hey Jordan, you doing alright?" When Jordan gave a small shrug, the officer added in a calm, soft voice, "If you need a minute, you know where my office is. No pressure." He didn't push for more, just offered the option and kept moving so Jordan didn't feel singled out. Jordan appreciated that someone noticed without making a scene.

HPR *Way of Being* Strategies Used

Environment: Calm, approachable, low-pressure presence
Connection: Caring, fully present, nonjudgmental
Micro-Skills: Notice, support youth in navigating challenges
Abilities Grown: Engage strategies to be well.
Beliefs Strengthened: I have support.

5:00 p.m. FIELD | Sports Coach

Practice had started, but Jordan was clearly distracted. He wasn't sure how he did on the test and needed a good score to pass the class. He kept missing easy passes and seemed to be going through the motions. After one drill, Coach pulled him aside and said, "You're not here today. What's going on?" Jordan hesitated, then said he was worried about how he did on an exam. Coach nodded and said, "Got it. Grades can definitely weigh heavy on our minds. Hmm. Your team is counting on you as well today, and I know you value giving them your best. I wonder if you could approach practice as a way to give your mind a break so you show up for the team the way you want to. Or maybe you need a minute to yourself? You have options and know yourself well. I trust your judgment on this." Jordan took a breath, said "Thanks, Coach." and then decided to run back on the field to join the team.

HPR *Way of Being* Strategies Used

Environment: Team culture where players are seen as whole people
Connection: Caring, nonjudgmental
Micro-Skills: Notice, affirm, be meaningfully curious, support youth in navigating challenges, activate agency
Abilities: Practice self-alignment. Exercise agency. Care about others.
Beliefs Strengthened: I matter. I have support.

7:00 p.m. YARD - HOME | Neighbor

Jordan was walking home when his friend Daniel's mom, Mrs. Rivera, looked up from her porch. "Hey Jordan," she said with a warm smile. "Haven't seen you out in the yard much lately. Everything okay?" She walked down to the sidewalk, wiping her hands on her jeans. "Daniel was just asking when you could come over again. You should come by sometime - even if it's just to grab a snack and say hi." Jordan gave a small nod and kept walking, but the comment stuck with him. It felt good that someone had noticed he hadn't been around as much and wanted to spend some time with him.

HPR *Way of Being* Strategies Used

Environment: Warm, low-pressure neighborhood presence
Connection: Caring, nonjudgmental
Micro-Skills: Notice, affirm, be meaningfully curious
Abilities Grown: Connect with others and community.
Beliefs Strengthened: I matter. I have support.

7:10 p.m. HOME | Father

Jordan walked through the door later than usual. His dad was in the kitchen putting away dishes but didn't immediately ask about his day. Instead, he said, "Hey. Mom left you some leftovers in the fridge if you're hungry." He kept moving around the kitchen, giving Jordan space. After a few minutes he added, "You don't have to talk if you don't want to. But I'm here if you do. Mom mentioned you had an important test today that had alot riding on it."Jordan sat at the counter and ate quietly. He didn't say much, but the fact that his dad wasn't pushing made it easier to just be there. Before Jordan went upstairs, his dad said, "I'm proud of you for getting through today. Whatever happened, we'll figure it out together." Jordan went to his room feeling more hopeful that things would be OK no matter what.

HPR *Way of Being* Strategies Used

Environment: Calm space, norm that family solves problems together without judgment
Connection: Caring, patient, fully present
Micro-Skills: Notice, affirm, support youth in navigating challenges
Abilities Grown: Engage strategies to be well.
Beliefs Strengthened: I am seen and loved. I can overcome hard things. I have support.

Themes from "A Day in the Life of Jordan's Trusted Adult Village"

Trusted adults made themselves **available** for Jordan and were **fully present, calm,** and **patient** in their interactions.

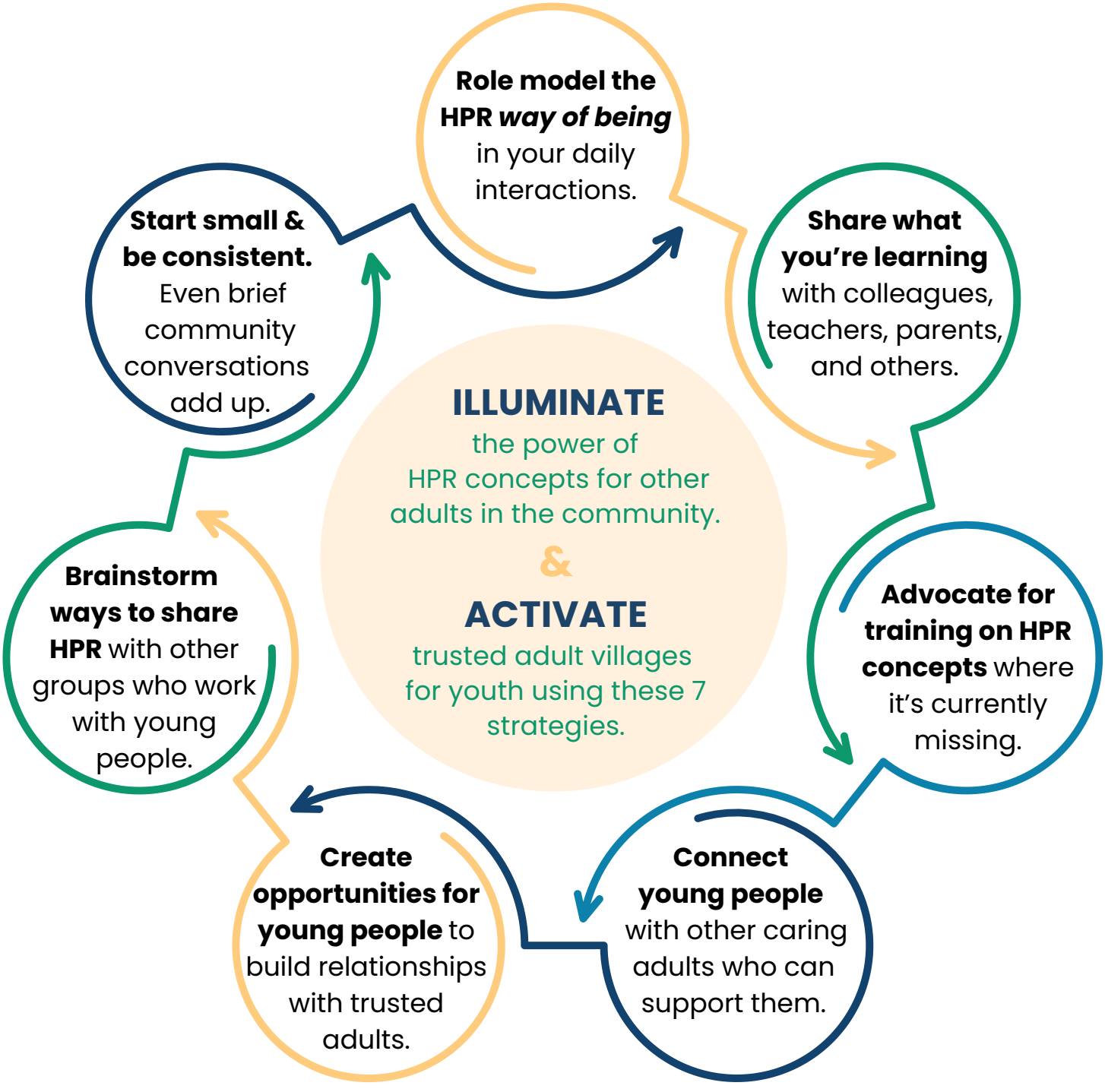
Trusted adults **noticed** Jordan's presence, strengths, words, and behaviors, including differences from his norm, and engaged **meaningful curiosity** to help Jordan recognize and **align with his values**.

Trusted adults demonstrated **care, respect,** and **nonjudgment** for Jordan, spoke the truth, and **activated his agency** in their forms of **support.**

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROMOTE BUILDING VILLAGES OF TRUSTED ADULTS AROUND THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN MY COMMUNITY?

The most effective way to weave and strengthen a village of trusted adults for individual youth is for the trusted adults in those villages to **become more intentional** about how they are engaging with the youth. Beyond what can be achieved in one-on-one moments, you can contribute to community activation of trusted adult villages for youth in a variety of different ways. Below are some practical ideas to get you started:

Community Activation Strategies



TRUSTED ADULT ACTIVITY:
VILLAGE MAPPING & ACTIVATION

Estimated Time: 20 mins

Purpose of Activity: To help you become more aware of the different youth villages you already serve in and identify ways you can promote development of trusted adult villages for other youth in the community.

1. **List the different individual youth villages you are currently part of.** (Examples: your own children, students in a class or program, players on a sports team, youth group, neighborhood kids, youth you mentor, etc.)
2. **For each village, reflect on the following questions:**
   - How many young people are in this group?
   - What is my primary role with them?
   - How many of these young people do I actually engage with, and how?
   - How consistently available am I to these young people?
   - What protective beliefs do I most naturally strengthen in these youth?
   - Where am I strong in how I show up?
   - Where could I be more intentional or available?
3. **After reviewing your villages, consider:**
   - Which village feels most connected right now?
   - Which one feels under-supported or under-prioritized by me?
   - Where do I have the greatest opportunity to make a bigger difference?
4. **Consider moments within these villages where you have observed adults using words and actions inconsistent with the HPR *way of being*?**
   - What was your initial reaction?
   - What thoughts and emotions came up for you?
   - What do you think was the resulting impact on the youth?
   - What could have been done differently to engage the HPR *way of being* more effectively?
   - What missed opportunities were observed in other trusted adults in that youth's village?
5. **Considering the 7 community activation strategies on the previous page, identify 3 specific actions you will take in the next 7 days to promote building villages of trusted adults around the young people in your community.**

YOUTH ACTIVITY:
VILLAGE MAPPING & PARTICIPATION

Estimated Time: 15 mins

Purpose: To help young people recognize the adults who already support them and strengthen their sense that they are seen, valued, and not alone.

REFLECTION: Who is part of my village of trusted adults?

Facilitator Instructions:

1. **Ask the individual or group of youth to write down their responses to:**
   - "Who are the adults in your life who really see you, believe in you, or help you when things get hard?" Help them create a simple list of 4–6 adults. This can include family, teachers, coaches, neighbors, mentors, faith leaders, etc.
   - "How do each of these people help or support you? Be specific."
   - "What beliefs do they seem to strengthen in you? (I am seen and loved. I matter. I can influence my life. I can overcome hard things. I have support.)"
2. **(Optional but encouraged) Invite the young person to send a short thank-you text, note, or message to one of these adults this week.**

ACTION: How can I strengthen my village of trusted adults?

Facilitator Instructions:

1. **Share with youth:** "Now that you've identified the village of trusted adults in your life and the many ways they support you, let's think through a few ways **you** can also contribute to those relationships and strengthen them."
2. **Ask the youth to write down their response(s) to:**
   - "How can you express to them how much they and their support matter to you using **words** or **actions**?" (Highlight the short thank you note they considered sharing above as one example of both words and an action.)
   - "Common ways youth **strengthen trust** with adults is by giving them their full attention, asking thoughtful questions, being honest, sharing feelings in a respectful way, showing interest in what they have to say, and accepting differences in opinion. What ways of strengthening trust with your village come to mind for you?"
3. **Invite youth to share any meaningful thoughts related to the activity.**

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WEEK 11

The Simple, Quiet Truths of Health-Promoting Relationships

SIMPLE, QUIET TRUTHS OF HEALTH-PROMOTING RELATIONSHIPS

Simple, quiet truths are the foundational principles of relationships we innately know to be good, right, and true. They're the deep realities of what truly supports human connection, growth, and well-being. Yet these truths are often unspoken, easily overlooked, or set aside amid the distractions, stresses, pressures, and expectations of daily life. They may also be quietly avoided because honoring them calls us to do important inner work, which may include healing from pain or trauma in past relationships, acknowledging aspects of ourselves we are not proud of, or simply spending time in honest reflection about who we are and who we want to become.

When we choose to bring these truths forward and live by them, they become the steady ground on which we relate to youth. They restore clarity in moments of uncertainty, invite deeper authenticity in our connections, and create the kind of emotional safety that allows protective beliefs to take root and flourish. In doing so, they strengthen the young people in our lives while also gently transforming us, helping us become the kind of trusted adults we most want to be. The HPR paradigm and the truths it represents offer us a way to remember, think about, and bring these truths to life in our own unique ways, one intentional moment at a time.

Over the next few pages we will expand upon the following seven simple, quiet truths of HPR and offer trusted adults and youth opportunities for reflection and discussion (if comfortable) related to each truth.

- **We must pay attention to the function and quality of our relationships.**
- **Our environment and presence always speak first.**
- **Our *way of being* is never neutral.**
- **Meaningful connection is multi-dimensional.**
- **Small moments add up.**
- **Work within ourselves enables both us and others to thrive.**
- **We never outgrow the need for the 5 HPR core beliefs.**

HPR Truth

1

We must pay attention to the function and quality of our relationships.

Why?

Relationships are the foundation of well-being and require attention towards their purpose and quality.

Common Misconception

As long as we are spending time with them, the quality of the relationship will take care of itself.

In the busyness of daily life, it is easy to go on autopilot and forget that relationships can be purpose-driven and function as catalysts for youth well-being. We tell ourselves that as long as we are making sure a youth's basic needs are being met, and that we are fulfilling our role's primary function (e.g. classroom instruction if a teacher, developing athletic skills if a coach), or we are spending time with them, we are doing enough. Yet intentional, health-promoting relationships are essential for well-being. They provide the consistent, intentional connection that nurtures protection, resilience, and flourishing in youth, and in ourselves. A village of adults engaging youth with intention to cultivate the five HPR core beliefs (I am seen and loved. I matter. I can influence my life. I can overcome hard things. I have support.) multiplies hope, possibility, and lasting impact across generations.

The common misconception often comes from the pressures of modern life, including packed schedules, work demands, digital distractions, and a cultural emphasis on productivity and achievement. We convince ourselves that "being there" is the same as being fully present and intentional. The Health-Promoting Relationships Paradigm invites us to challenge this assumption and remember that relationships must be prioritized and invested in for greatest benefit.

Reflection for Adults

- In what ways have I been letting busyness push relationships to the background?
- What would prioritizing one relationship look like for me this week?
- When have I felt the difference between "being there" and truly paying attention?

Reflection for Youth

- What is one way an adult has shown you that your relationship with them matters to them?
- What is one way **you** have shown someone else that their relationship with you matters to you?
- This week, how can you show someone you care for that their relationship with you is a priority to you?

HPR Truth

2

Our environment and presence always speak first.

Why?

Before any words, the space we create and the quality of our presence either open the door to trust or quiety close it.

Consideration

We are often task-oriented. We prioritize getting the task done and struggle to focus on how we show up.

Youth are watching us long before we speak. They are constantly observing and learning from how we enter a space, how we transition from one task to another, and how we make room for them in our attention. They are attuned to not only whether we want to be with them in that moment, but also how we create the conditions for warmth, safety, and connection, even when initially distracted. A calm tone, open posture, thoughtful arrangement of space, and grounded presence send the powerful unspoken message: "You matter to me and are welcome and safe here." When youth experience focused presence and care from the beginning, it opens the door for deeper connection and protective belief cultivation.

We experience numerous pressures within our worlds as adults. Our natural focus in relationships with youth sometimes is on content such as how to express expectations, what advice to give, etc. In reality, the environment and presence set the stage for everything else. We underestimate how much young people absorb from our non-verbal cues, the atmosphere we create, and ultimately how we make them feel. When our environment and presence suggest they are important to us, the words that follow have far more of an impact.

Reflection for Adults

- What does my body language, presence, and greeting typically communicate to youth I encounter?
- How might distractions and competing pressures be influencing my ability to shape my environment and presence into something more welcoming for youth?
- What is one small adjustment I can make to my presence or environment to help youth feel important?

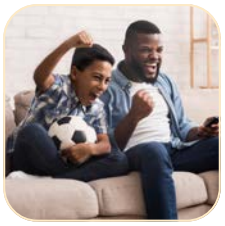
Reflection for Youth

- What types of things do adults do that make you feel welcome and important to them before they even speak?
- Consider how you typically show up for your family, friends, and others. In what ways do you let them know they are important to you before saying a word?
- How can you show someone in your life they matter to you before you say anything next time you see them?

HPR Truth

3

Our *way of being* is never neutral.



Why?

Every interaction quietly builds, reinforces, misses an opportunity, or undermines protective beliefs.

Common Misconception

As long as I'm not actively treating them in a negative way and/or because my time with them is so limited, my everyday *way of being* doesn't have much of an impact.

Our tone of voice, level of patience, quality of attention, body language, emotional availability, and word choice all quietly build, reinforce, miss, or undermine the protective beliefs that shape a young person's sense of self and their place in the world. Youth are constantly absorbing these subtle or direct signals, often without us realizing it. A patient pause, a warm glance, a calm response to frustration, words of encouragement, support in discernment, or a distracted sigh all send messages about their value and whether they are worthy of time and respect. Over time, these everyday moments influence the invisible architecture of their inner beliefs that inform how they feel about themselves and how they behave.

The common misconception often comes from the ideas that bigger or lengthier, more obvious moments and/or strong or intense verbal expressions have lasting power. We may think that as long as we're not yelling or being overtly negative, we're doing no harm. In reality, the everyday environment, tone, words, actions, and support we bring have a profound, cumulative effect, even in the briefest of moments. Every day offers new and fresh opportunities to engage with intention in the HPR *way of being* to strengthen protective beliefs and support youth well-being.

Reflection for Adults

- In what ways do I notice and pay attention to the impact my *way of being* has on youth?
- What do "missed opportunities" look like for me in my encounters with youth?
- What one small change could I make today to seize opportunities with youth to strengthen their protective beliefs?

Reflection for Youth

Think about a time when you wanted to say something to someone to let them know you care and you didn't.

- What do you think stopped you from saying it? (e.g. fear, not having the words,
- If you could share it now, what would you say?

HPR Truth

4

Meaningful connection is multi-dimensional.

Why?

It begins with self-connection and is then built through a rich set of relational qualities and practices.

Common Misconception

Connecting meaningfully with others is simple to do.

Meaningful connection with others begins with the inner work of self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-alignment of our thoughts, words, and actions with nourishing relational values, often informed by spiritual connection (a sense of meaning, purpose, or belonging to something larger). Meaningful connection can then be facilitated by engaging qualities like authenticity, empathy, humility, vulnerability, patience, nonjudgment, respect, and kindness. The synergy of these dimensions, even though imperfect at times, results in young people experiencing deeper and more meaningful connection that goes far beyond surface-level interaction. They feel able to show up as they are, share what matters to them, and thrive within the relationship.

The common misconception comes from underestimating the breadth and depth of connection. Meaningful connection with others is simple to understand but not simple to do. It requires intention, purpose, inner work, putting the other person first, genuine and meaningful curiosity, apologies, forgiveness, and commitment. When we do these things, we create health-promoting relationships that stand the test of time.

Reflection for Adults

- What dimensions of meaningful connection have I maybe overlooked?
- In what ways do I prepare for meaningful connection with others?
- Who will I try to connect with more meaningfully this week?

Reflection for Youth

- What does meaningful connection mean to me?
- How do I feel when someone tries to connect in a more real way with me?
- How do I naturally move beyond superficial connection with someone? (e.g., I try to learn more about them. I consider their needs. I focus just on them when we're together and don't get distracted.)

HPR Truth

5

Small moments add up.

Why?

Consistent engagement of the HPR *way of being* builds trust with youth, providing the soil for protective beliefs to take root and strengthen.

Common Misconception

Only big, memorable moments or grand gestures really make a difference in a young person's life.

Consistency transforms small moments from isolated events into a reliable pattern that youth can count on. This dependability fosters trust which is foundational. Through these repeated moments we create healthy norms of engagement that youth can expect and thrive within. What feels small and ordinary to us can become foundational and life-shaping for them. Over time, this steady repetition strengthens neural pathways associated with the five core protective beliefs, making them more stable and resilient. The brain begins to internalize the messages that "I am seen and loved," "I matter," and "I have support" not because of one big moment, but because the evidence has been quietly accumulating day after day. Similarly, if trusted adults seize opportunities to activate youth agency and support them in navigating challenges with consistent emotional regulation, affirmation, nonjudgment, and presence, youth will believe "I can influence my life and I can overcome hard things." with greater conviction.

The common misconception comes from believing ocasional large efforts or dramatic conversations are what count. In reality, it is the steady accumulation of small, consistent acts of care and attention that build lasting trust and shape beliefs.

Reflection for Adults

- In what ways have I been consistent with small acts like noticing, affirming, or curiosity?
- Where can I focus more consistently on engaging the HPR *way of being*?
- Ask a youth in your life to give you honest feedback on how you can more consistently show up for them. Listen with nonjudgment. Thank them.

Reflection for Youth

- What adults in your life consistently make you feel that you matter even if you see them for only a few minutes?
- When you have a brief moment with someone, what do they do that makes you smile or feel important?
- In what ways can you offer similar love, support, and/or kindness consistently in small moments with others in your life?

HPR Truth

6

Work within ourselves enables both us and others to thrive.

Why?

Engaging in an honest process of daily self-awareness, healing, and growth strengthens our capacity to influence our own lives and the lives of others.

Common Misconception

As long as we focus on helping the youth, our own personal growth and struggles don't really matter.

Perhaps the most important thing youth can observe in us is a vulnerable and transparent process of understanding our values and working daily to align our lives more closely with the person we strive to be when we are with them. Humility plays a vital role in this process by allowing us to become more self-aware, acknowledge our imperfections or brokenness openly, and role model what it looks like to learn, accept, grow, and try again with vulnerability, non-judgment and grace. Role modeling what healthy and honest growth looks like from all angles empowers everyone benefitting from that growth to do the same.

The common misconception often stems from the belief that adults should have it all together, or appear as if they have it all together, before they can effectively support youth. We may feel pressure to appear strong, put together, or perfect, believing that our own ongoing growth process is a distraction or even a weakness. In reality, our willingness to engage in honest inner work creates authenticity in the relationship and shows youth that making mistakes and growing from them is normal and part of being human - it is a universal, shared experience. Youth are not alone AND they can always learn, always grow, and always change.

Reflection for Adults

- What is one area of my own growth or healing that I have been avoiding or putting off?
- How might doing inner work in that area help me show up more fully for the young people in my life?
- When have I seen my own growth positively affect a relationship with a youth?

Reflection for Youth

Think about an adult in your life that is trying to learn and/or change something about themselves.

- What do you notice or appreciate about their effort?
- How does it make you feel when an adult shows they are still growing?
- What is something you are working on or would like to get better at in your relationships?

HPR Truth

7

We never outgrow the need for the 5 HPR core beliefs.

Why?

No matter our age or circumstances, we all need quality relationships that cultivate the five core beliefs to be well.

Common Misconception

As we age we become stronger and more independent and don't need our relationships to influence our beliefs.

The five core protective beliefs (I am seen and loved. I matter. I can influence my life. I can overcome hard things. I have support.) remain essential across all developmental stages. For younger youth, they provide the foundation for building identity and how they see the world. For adolescents, they support the search for independence and trying things out with a safe and supportive belief system to keep them resilient even in the context of failures. For older teens and young adults navigating bigger challenges, these beliefs offer hope even when life feels overwhelming. These beliefs are not something we outgrow. Instead, they evolve with us and continue to anchor our well-being throughout life. The HPR *way of being* is nimble and can be adapted in new and creative ways in response to each individual's circumstance.

The common misconception often comes from the idea that as we get older or face bigger challenges, we no longer need basic relational supports. We may not need them to *survive*, but we do always need them to *thrive*. We may think nourishing these beliefs reflects weakness, but in reality, we are keeping ourselves well.

Reflection for Adults

- Which of the five beliefs are strongest for me right now?
- Which of the five beliefs are less stable in me right now?
- In what ways can I strengthen the less stable beliefs through my relationships, self-work, or by addressing any areas of my life that are challenging those beliefs?

Reflection for Youth

- Which of the beliefs are strongest and weakest for me right now?
- Which beliefs change for me in different contexts such as school vs home? Why?
- In what ways can I strengthen the weaker beliefs through my relationships or by doing something for myself?

Final Reflections
&
Carrying HPR Forward

A FINAL MESSAGE

Dear Trusted Adults Across the Nation,

Thank you for accepting the challenge to **"Engage with Intention"** and demonstrate **"HPR in Action"**! I hope it has been meaningful to build self-awareness, transform your *way of being* with youth and others, and experience the joy from enabling those you care so much about to be well.

But...the work of building health-promoting relationships does not end with this curriculum. It continues on as we wake up each day and choose to intentionally refine our *way of being* in ordinary moments. Developing this curriculum was a labor of love. We believe in the HPR paradigm, and we believe in your ability to live it in ways that make sense for you.

One of the most meaningful parts of this curriculum for me is the Youth Activities. Young people are invited into a parallel process of reflection and growth with us! Completing the Trusted Adult Activities alongside youth creates opportunities to grow together, be authentic with one another, and share insights. What a gift for both of us!

Before you carry HPR forward beyond this curriculum, please join me in pausing to reflect one last time:

1 - What about the curriculum content and experience was most meaningful to you?

2 - Which personal insights or practices do you most want to protect and continue?

3 - Where do you still want to stretch to show up in ways that are important to you?

HPR is not something we do perfectly or alone. It is an honest process of becoming who we want to be with youth and others. *Pay attention to the stirring deep within, act on it, and let yourself be changed.*

I want to sincerely thank **Dr. Jody Kamon** from the Center for Behavioral Health Integration for her partnership in illuminating the most salient messages for the curriculum content. Her insights were essential.

Walking this path with you,

Lora Peppard

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