

Prepping and Debriefing

Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Engagement



Young people’s expertise is critical for ending youth and young adult homelessness, and we need to give them all the tools they need for their genius to shine! That means making sure young people participating in ACI work have the information they need to feel prepared and confident in contributing to conversations, and that we take time to debrief and gather feedback after meetings. This guide covers some of the important considerations for prepping and debriefing with young people!

Getting yourself ready for a prep meeting

Does the YYA have access to the technology? (i.e. WiFi, Cell Service, Computer Access, Transportation)

If they do not,

- How can you get them access?
- How can you make the experience more accessible?

Can you clearly define the expectations and requirements of YYA engagement on your team?

You should be able to answer questions like:

- “How much of a time commitment is this for me?”
- “What are these meetings about?”
- “Will people have to listen to me?”

Do you, the person doing prep with young people, have all the information you need to answer young people’s questions about the content?

If so, who has those answers? How can you make hard information more digestible for folx (i.e. young people) who are not in the know about things like BNL (By Name List) and HMIS (Homelessness Management Information Systems)

Do you know what this meeting is about and have access to the full agenda and other resources?

If you do not, who does? How can you normalize sending agendas and powerpoints before meetings to promote inclusion and transparency?

Now that that's out of the way, let's jump into prepping:

- If you are the creator of the meeting, best practice is to build the meeting agenda and presentation with young people in mind.
 - This can look like creating the agenda with the two young people on the core team.
- Find a time to meet, preferably a week before the meeting, to go over:
 - What is the main goal of the meeting?
 - The powerpoint, agenda, support materials, etc.
 - Talk about how the young person during the meeting wants you to support them during the meeting.
 - If there is any content that might be triggering, let them know!
- Send out the meeting agenda, powerpoint and any other supporting documents so young people can vet the material for problematic/adultist language/ideas.
- Work with YYA to create talking points or ideas before the meeting so they can participate authentically.
- Double check that YYA knows time, location, and how they are getting to meeting.

During the Meeting:

- If young people are expected to facilitate, check in with them to see if they are ready to go and/or what needs to happen so that they feel comfortable doing their part.
 - Things change in our lives just like things change in their lives so if they back out last minute, ALWAYS be prepared to step in/have a back up plan.
- If young people have questions during the meeting, create a system where they can ask you or someone else if they do not feel comfortable asking the entire group.
- If young people seem disengaged (i.e. not speaking up) or not being prompted to speak (i.e. not having an agenda item/not actively being asked questions) you should interrupt to get their feedback.

Remember:

We do this work centering youth and young adults expertise of going through this system. They are as much, and sometimes even more, the most informed on these subjects. Give them space to let their knowledge shine as much as possible!

Debriefing

Always make space to talk about the meeting afterwards! Incorporating this outside of YYA engagement is highly encouraged but required to make sure YYA are feeling supported throughout this process. Debriefing also gives space to learn boundaries and triggers that could potentially cause harm to YYA participants and build relationships of trust as new young people are brought into the work.

Getting ready to Debrief

- Collaborate with YYA to create a process that works for them and create group agreements together (eg: using I statements).
- Figure out when debrief should be: Some folks like right after the meeting, some folks need a couple of days to process, so flexibility is key!
- Decide what check-in system will you be using.
 - Examples: Plus/Delta, Rose Bud Thorn, we love brainstorming these with you!

The Debrief Session

- Talk about what went well and what didn't.
- Unpack any topics that young folks are still processing, that may have been hard to hear or may have been triggering.
- Create space for feedback in both directions.