



# Positive Youth Development Language Framework

## Definition of Positive Youth Development:

**Positive Youth Development** refers to intentional efforts by everyone in a community to provide opportunities for youth to enhance their interests, skills, and abilities into their adulthood.

## Principles of Positive Youth Development:

- 1 Positive relationships with adults**  
A positive relationship with adults refers to relationships with parents, extended family members, teachers and other adults in the community.
- 2 Youth participation and involvement**  
Youth have a voice, are supported to make decisions for themselves, and have opportunities to be involved in decision-making in their community. Youth are engaged in community discussions and decisions.
- 3 Positive environments and safe and structured places**  
Adults and leaders act deliberately to ensure youth feel safe, welcome and respected in all environments.
- 4 Skill Building**  
Youth have both structured and unstructured opportunities to learn and are encouraged to engage in goal setting.
- 5 Opportunities to help others**  
Youth have the opportunity to make a difference through meaningful involvement in their community and their contributions are recognized.

## What youth need to succeed: The 5 Cs<sup>1</sup>

- Caring**  
Youth have sympathy and empathy for others.
- Character**  
Youth have respect for social and cultural rules.  
Youth have a personal standard for good behaviour and a sense of right and wrong.
- Connection**  
Youth have positive relationships with people, schools and community organizations.
- Competence**  
Youth feel positive about their abilities in specific areas such as school, afterschool activities, social situations and current or future jobs.
- Confidence**  
Youth believe in themselves, their future and their ability to succeed.



<sup>1</sup> The Positive Development of Youth: Report of the Findings from the First Seven Years of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J.V., et al. 2011

## Caring

### What can you do?

Treat youth respectfully in a way that you would like to be treated.

Recognize, respond and acknowledge the feelings of youth you have relationships with.

Display emotions and vulnerability.

### What can your family do?

Discuss important figures in social justice and how they've made an impact on the world.

Discuss the way in which people in groups behave.

### What can your school do?

Include world events in lesson plans.

Celebrate caring between students. For example, do a Random Acts of Kindness Activity as a class or school.

### What can your community do?

Recognize and respect the diversity in the community (inclusion).

## Character

### What can you do?

Reflect on and define your personal values.

Model behaviour you would like to see in youth.

### What can your family do?

Discuss family guidelines for behaviour.

Encourage desired behaviours by providing positive feedback.

### What can your school do?

Define and display expectations for student behaviour.

### What can your community do?

Recognize and honour the contributions of individuals to the community.

Discuss negative outcomes of risky behaviours and possible consequences. For example, share the health, social and legal impacts of substance abuse.

## Connection

### What can you do?

Say hi and smile when you encounter a young person.

Engage young people in conversations and ask about their lives.

### What can your family do?

Include youth in conversations and decisions about family matters.

Spend quality time together as a family. For example, cook and eat supper as a family.

### What can your school do?

Include all students in conversations and decisions about school matters.

Expect staff to learn and greet students by name.

### What can your community do?

Include activities for teenagers in community events.

## Competence

### What can you do?

Ask young people about their skills and strengths.

Mentor and encourage youth to take leadership roles.

### What can your family do?

Put youth in charge of planning a family event.

Encourage youth to spend time with and mentor younger siblings.

### What can your school do?

Display student accomplishments in the hallways and on the school website.

Establish a peer tutoring program.

### What can your community do?

Provide clear opportunities for youth to contribute to the community, such as volunteer or employment.

## Confidence

### What can you do?

Acknowledge and compliment the effort of a young person who completed a difficult task.

Assist a young person in setting goals and making a plan to achieve them.

### What can your family do?

Provide a safe and supportive environment where positive risk taking is encouraged.

### What can your school do?

Encourage individuality.

Acknowledge and reward effort and improvement.

### What can your community do?

Regularly spotlight community youth.



Building Vibrant Youth



Northern Healthy Communities Partnership