

# Youth-Adult Partnerships

“Youth-adult partnerships ... are youth and adults coming together in a positive, mutually respectful environment with the recognition that each group contributes unique strengths to the relationship.”

—UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## Practicing youth-adult partnerships...



### CREATES A SENSE OF BELONGING

Youth voices are heard, enhancing ownership and responsibility.



### BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS

Youth are seen as capable partners, taking active leadership roles working alongside volunteers and staff.



### EMPHASIZES LEARNING BY DOING

Youth and adults gain hands-on experience learning from each other.

## How to practice youth-adult partnerships

### Through communication

- Talk with all club members and families and understand their preferred communication mode. Some may not have email, text, or social media. Be sure whatever communication strategy(ies) you use are inclusive and everyone is included. You may need more than one communication strategy! Ask youth and adults for help!

### Through mentoring

- Pair new staff/volunteers with seasoned youth.
- Set measurable goals for mentorship.

### Through leadership

- Recruit youth to lead or co-facilitate group meetings and events.
- Host youth discussion panels at professional development trainings.

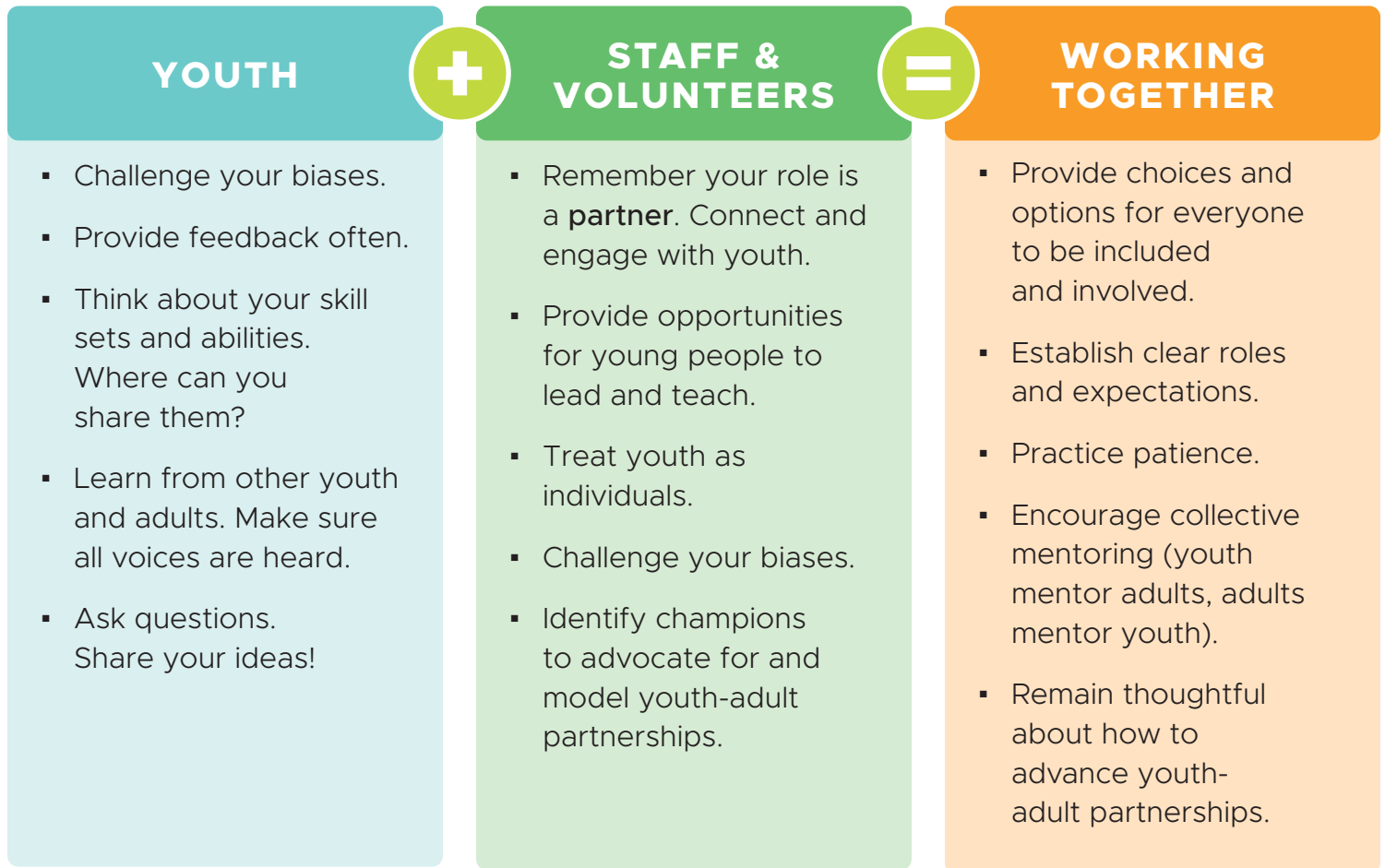


UW-MADISON EXTENSION



As part of UW-Madison Division of Extension, we provide knowledge and resources to engage people and their communities in positive change where they live and work. An AA/EEO employer, Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX and ADA requirements.

## How to implement youth-adult partnerships



## Strategies to implement youth-adult partnerships

- Host a youth-adult social to welcome new members and get re-acquainted with returning members.
- Conduct a brainstorming session to review goals of youth-adult partnerships and identify what it looks like in your group.
- Create a mission or vision statement that inspires and energizes the group to practice youth-adult partnerships.
- Have youth and adults write down skill sets and interests to assist with matching of mentors.
- Build on group strengths and abilities to identify projects that youth and adults can share in overseeing.
- Track progress with regular meetings to celebrate success stories and address challenges.



## Youth benefits

- Gain confidence, responsibility, and independence
- Build critical thinking, teamwork, public speaking, and leadership skills
- Strengthen commitment to community service into adulthood
- Enhance sense of belonging

## Staff and volunteer benefits

- Strengthen sense of community connectedness
- Enhance understanding of young people and their developmental needs
- Build skills in collaboration and teamwork

## Organization benefits

- Gain new energy, perspective, and ideas
- Become more connected and responsive to the needs of young people in the community
- Better enhance overall mission to better serve children and youth



## Resources

- Act for Youth  
[actforyouth.net/youth\\_development/engagement/partnerships.cfm](http://actforyouth.net/youth_development/engagement/partnerships.cfm)
- Advocates for Youth  
[advocatesforyouth.org/resources/fact-sheets/building-effective-youth-adult-partnerships](http://advocatesforyouth.org/resources/fact-sheets/building-effective-youth-adult-partnerships)
- Making it Work—A Guide to Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships  
<http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/2423.pdf>
- Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric  
[cerc.msu.edu/yaprubric](http://cerc.msu.edu/yaprubric)
- Youth-Adult Partnership for Youth Empowerment  
[fyi.uwex.edu/youthadultpartnership](http://fyi.uwex.edu/youthadultpartnership)

## Selected references

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- Zeldin, S., Camino, L., & Calvert, M. (2003). Toward an understanding of youth in governance: Policy priorities and research directions (Social Policy Report XVII). Ann Arbor, MI: Society for Research in Child Development.
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