



Youth Peer Specialist Training

Missouri Credentialing
Board

Day One





Welcome!

- ▶ **Name**
- ▶ **Where you work**
- ▶ **What do you hope to get from this training?**
- ▶ **Super Power?**



Questions?



House Keeping Items

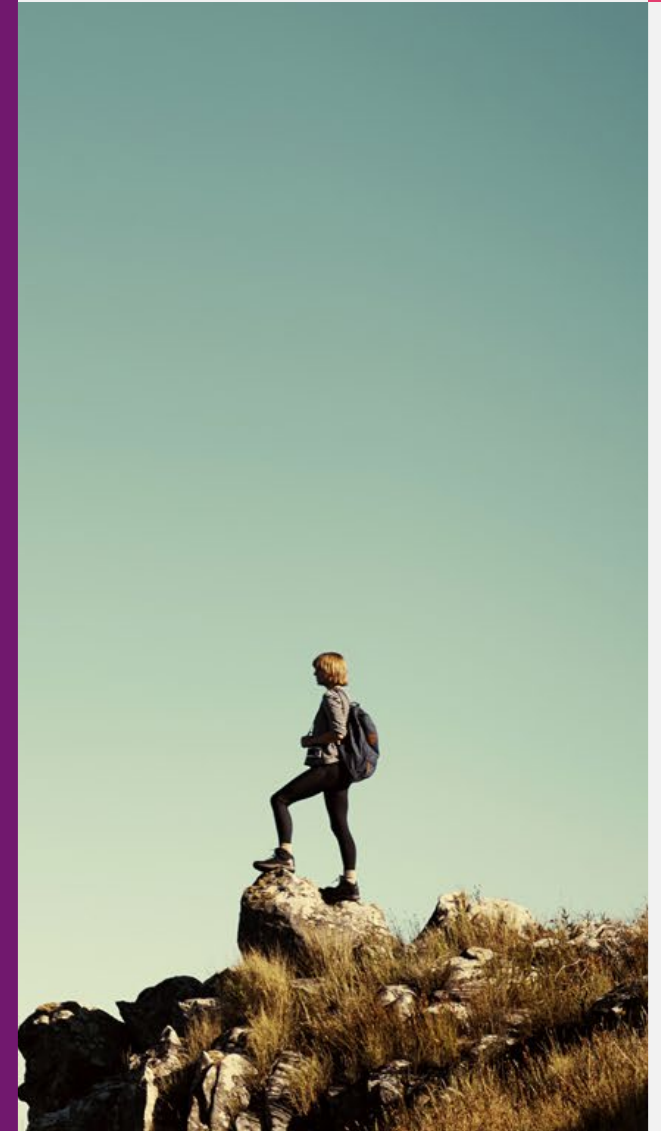
WIFI

Frequent Breaks

Lunch

**Name on your video
feed**

**Emergency
absences only**



ICEBREAKER



Two Truths



One False



Group Agreements

Setting group agreements is a collaborative exercise designed to help groups of people agree on how to work together, respect one another, and show each other support. Typically, people will be more likely to adhere to “rules” if they have a say in making them. Having the trainees work together to establish group agreements is far more empowering than if the trainer were to decide what they can and can’t do. YPS working in drop-in centers and other youth-centered spaces will often use this as a tool for empowerment by assisting youth and young adults as they set the expectations for their behavior.





Components of Group Agreements

- ▶ **Confidentiality** – It is essential that we maintain an atmosphere of complete openness. To do so, we must ensure that the personal stories shared will not be discussed with anyone outside of the training.
 - ▶ **Participation** – It's okay to be nervous, but it's necessary to use this opportunity to practice new skills; please participate (to the best of your ability) in all discussions and activities.
 - ▶ **Self-care** – It's important that you do whatever you need to take care of yourself and that you encourage your fellow trainees to do the same. This training covers tough topics, and everyone's mental health is a priority.
-

Ideas for Discussion

- *How can we be respectful to each other during this training?*
- *What can your fellow trainees and I do to make you feel comfortable?*
- *Should we have agreements about stepping away from your camera?*

What Do You Hope to Learn?

This exercise will give you a sense of which subjects most interest the trainees and help you adjust the curriculum to emphasize those topics. This activity also helps you understand where the group is at. If the curriculum already covers one of the topics mentioned, look into adding additional elements like discussions and activities. If a topic isn't included but applies to YPS, prepare some content/materials that you can incorporate if time permits. If a subject isn't applicable, you can research other training opportunities for the trainees to explore.

Heads Up! (Content Warnings)

- ▶ **Content warnings (CWs) alert the viewer, reader, listener to the fact that what they are about to see, read, or hear contains potentially distressing material. CWs (also known as “trigger warnings”) aren’t a way to avoid disagreements or debate; they also don’t censor what is about to be said or shown. They merely function as an alert about content that may prompt traumatic memories or other physical or mental health symptoms. When appropriately used, CWs are potentially life-saving for those who have dealt with traumas like sexual assault, hate crimes, or other acts of violence.**

If You Need to Leave The Room



Everything is Good!



Everything is okay



**I'm Not Okay, I Need
Support**

Have You Heard?

- ▶ **Have any of you heard the phrase “not about us, without us!?”**



Organizations Focused On:

- **Leadership training for youth/young adults to participate in advisory, policy and decision-making tables.**
- **Amplifying youth voice at the local, state, and national level**
- **Promoting the formation of local chapters of YMN**

Why is it important to understand the history of Youth Peer Support?



Review Questions

- ▶ It is the coined phrase in the family movement but has been used worldwide to communicate the idea that no decision should be made without the full and intentional participation of those who will be affected by that decision.
- ▶ This sentiment was a driving force behind the _____ — the children from the family movement grew up and developed their own voices, skills and desires for change.
- ▶ The youth movement focused on —

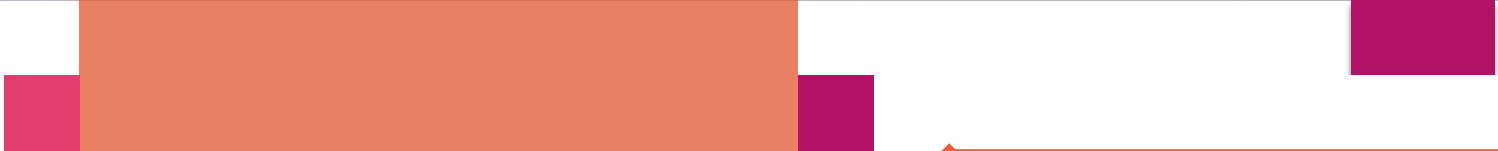


HEADS UP!

In the next several sections we will be talking about the challenges we've faced in our lives. These discussions may include content that is distressing. If at any point, you'd like to step out and take a break, please feel free to do so.

What is Lived Experience?

“Lived Experience” refers to “a young person’s journey through systems, trauma, and/or other life challenges.”



YPS take the knowledge they gain from their lived experience and transform it into the skill of supporting others to achieve their goals and lead happy, healthy, and successful adult lives.





Our Lived Experience

(Break out)

Debrief Exercise

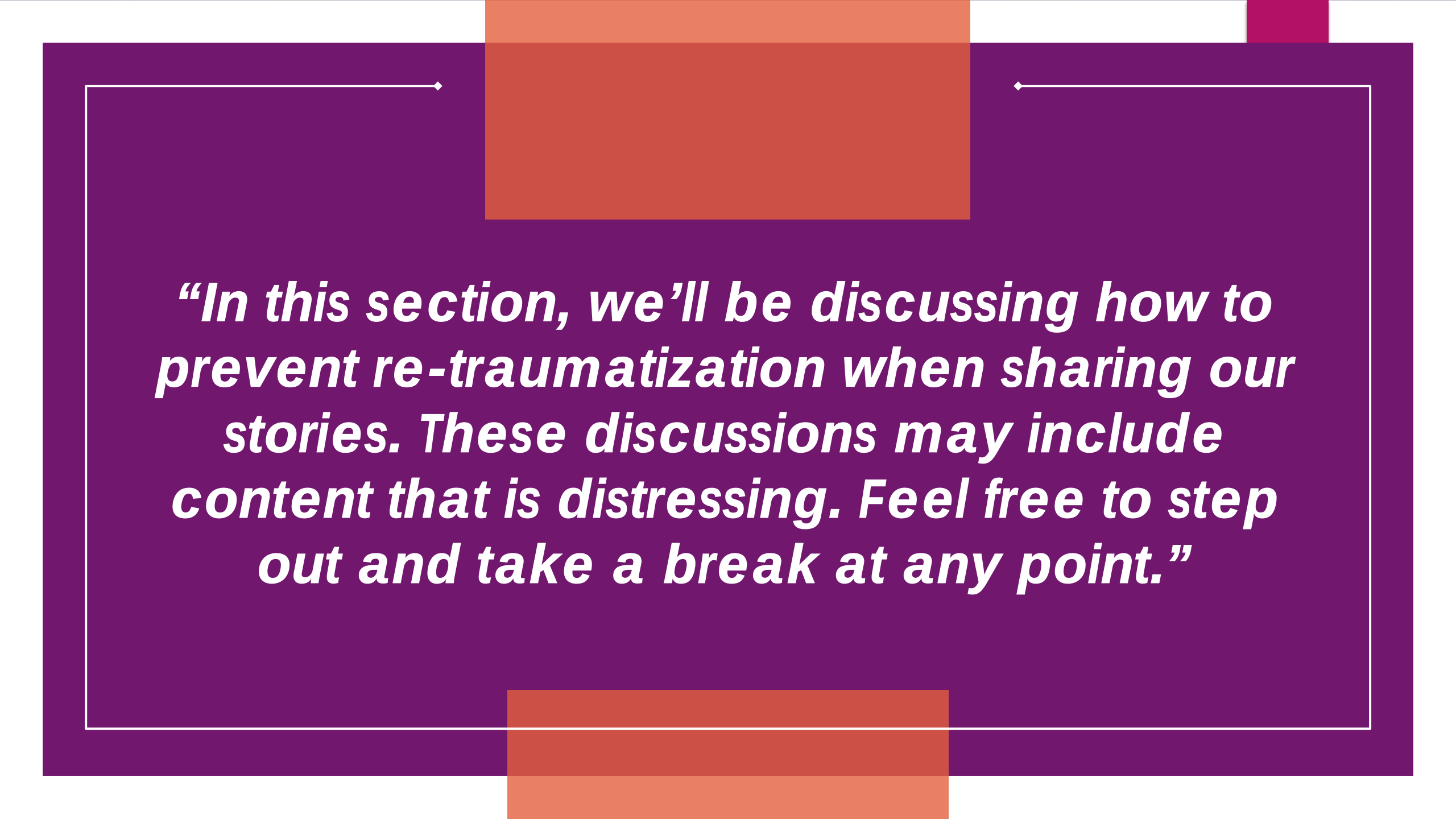
Raise your hand if you would feel comfortable sharing the things you posted with youth?

> What about with professionals?

> Were there experiences that you didn't write down or feel comfortable putting up on the poster?

Review Questions

- ▶ YPS assert their legitimacy in youth services not only through traditional education but through the knowledge they gain from their _____.
- ▶ Lived experience refers to a young person's journey through systems, trauma, and/or other life challenges. Some examples can be...



“In this section, we’ll be discussing how to prevent re-traumatization when sharing our stories. These discussions may include content that is distressing. Feel free to step out and take a break at any point.”



Strategic Sharing Dos and Don'ts

Question: If what we are sharing is honest and well-intentioned, why does it matter how we share?



Discuss

- ▶ *What do you think about these guidelines?*
 - ▶ *Do you want us to clarify any of them?*
 - ▶ *Is there anything you would add to this list?*
-

Sharing Your Experience Practice



Review Questions

- ▶ Strategic sharing is a method for safely and effectively sharing relevant lived experience in a manner that keeps all parties safe from _____ and achieves a specific goal.
- ▶ True or False: You are the owner of your story. It is your right to do with it what you want. If and when you decide to share your story with a young person, you should be careful about it.

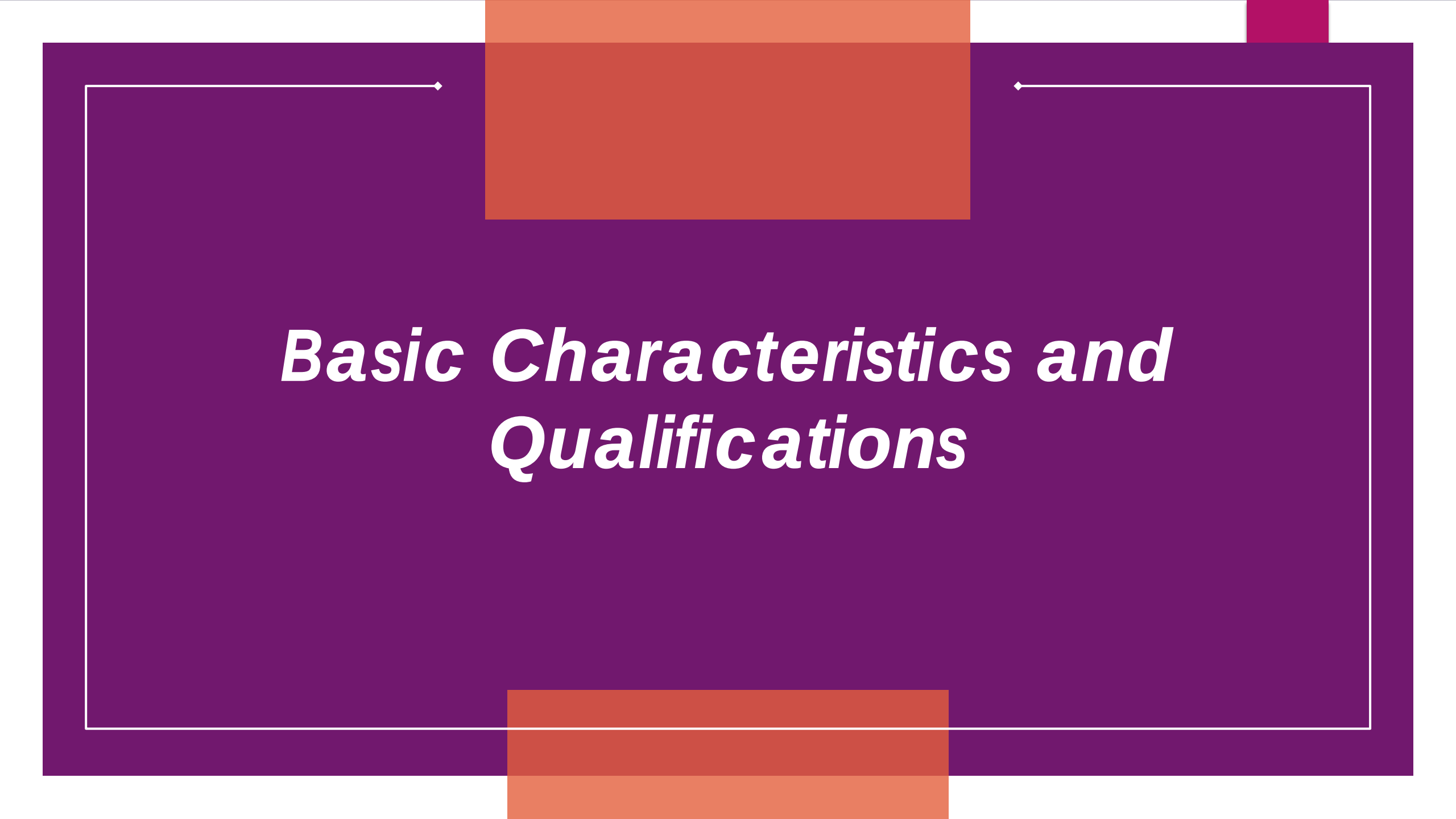


Who Are Youth Peer Supports?



“YPS Responsibilities”

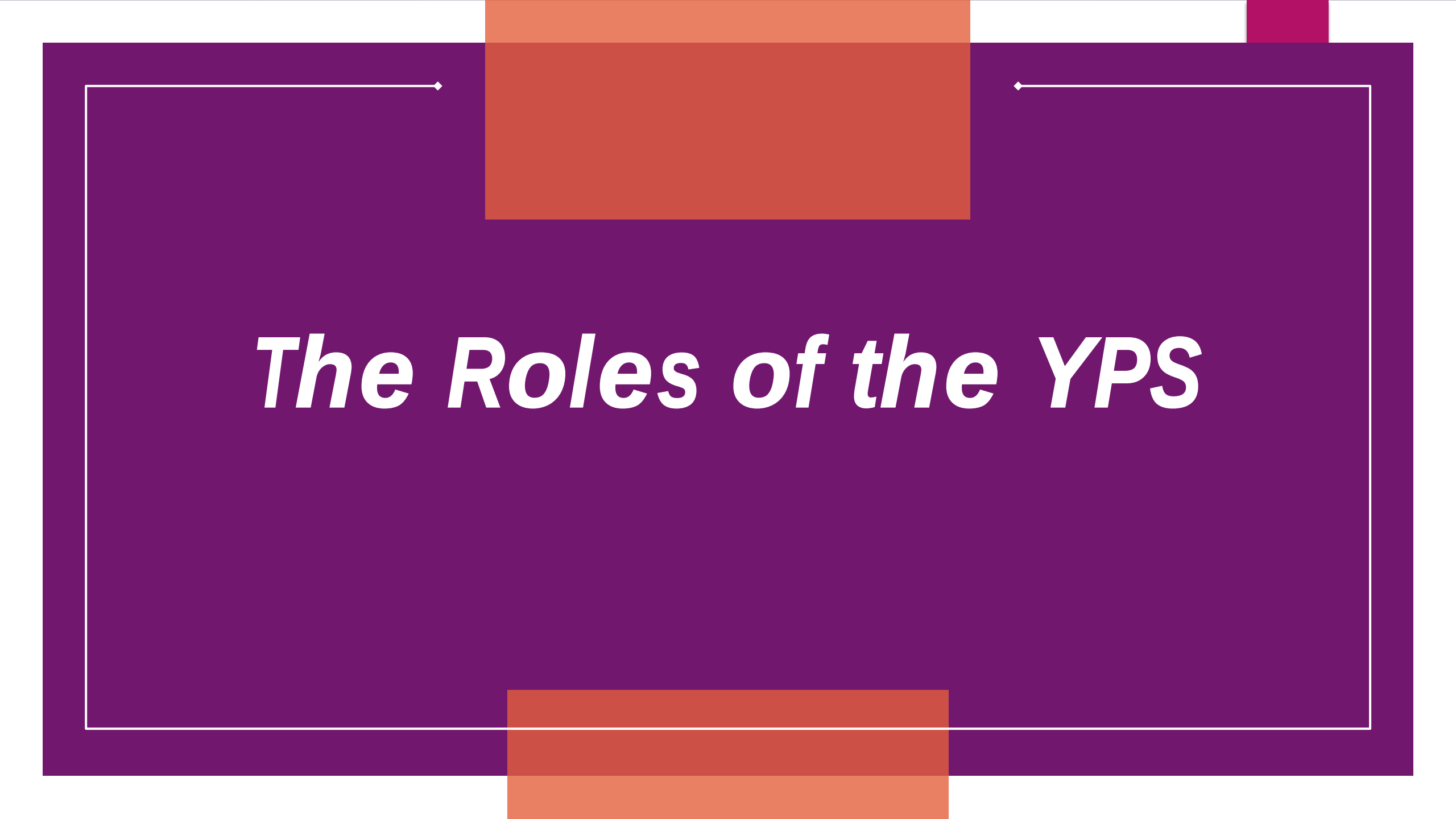
- ***What responsibilities might a YPS have?***
 - ***In what ways can YPS help support youth?***
- 



Basic Characteristics and Qualifications



- *Passion and enthusiasm for their work*
- *A willingness to listen to and learn from peers*
- *Empathy and compassion for youth and young adults*
- *The ability to be flexible and willing to adapt to the changing needs/circumstances of young people*
- *Effective communication and problem-solving skills*
- *Ever-expanding knowledge and willingness to share what they know*



The Roles of the YPS



In a youth's team meeting, a YPS may need to:

- ▶ **Provide the youth with one-on-one peer support before the meeting**
 - ▶ **Advocate for the youth's perspective during the meeting**
 - ▶ **Explain the value of evidence-based practices as a professional**
-



***Why Do
We Do It?***

Review Questions

- ▶ True or False: Youth Peer Supports are young adults who provide support, encouragement, and assistance to youth and young adults as they transition into adulthood.
- ▶ They will take the role of _____—arguing for or publicly supporting a cause or policy. They will take the role of _____—connected to a profession and usually considered an expert.
- ▶ True or False: YPS play the same roles in different situations — often multiple roles in the same situations!



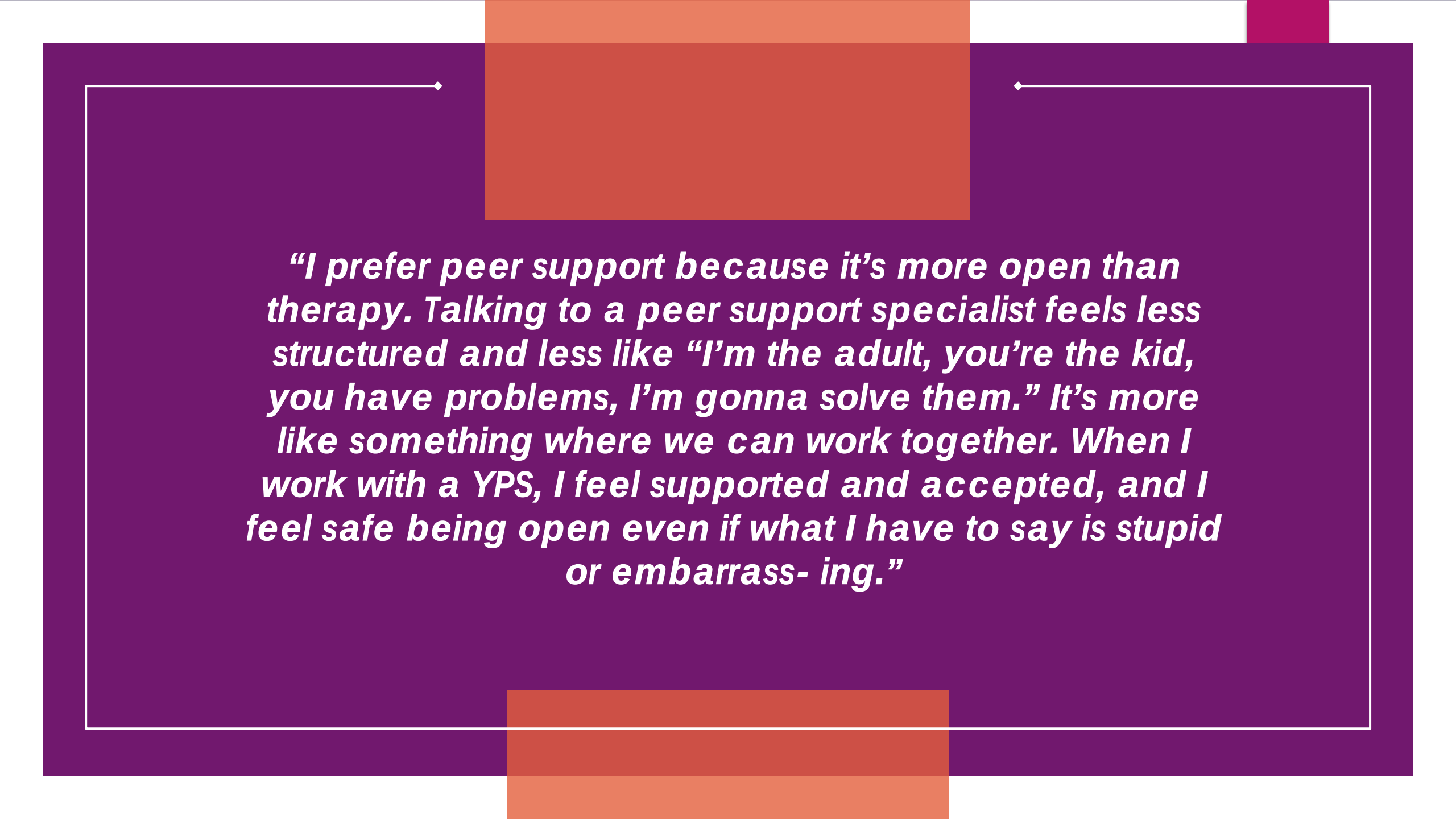
What is Peer Support?



Peer Support Strategies



What Do Youth Say?



“I prefer peer support because it’s more open than therapy. Talking to a peer support specialist feels less structured and less like “I’m the adult, you’re the kid, you have problems, I’m gonna solve them.” It’s more like something where we can work together. When I work with a YPS, I feel supported and accepted, and I feel safe being open even if what I have to say is stupid or embarrass- ing.”



“Peer support has improved my life in more ways that I know how to express. Working with my Peer Support Specialist has reduced my depression and anxiety levels, improved my relationships, and given me the drive, ambition, and motivation I didn’t have before. Peer support helped me find love when I thought I was unlovable. It has saved my life.”



“Peer support helps me interact with others and seek guidance when I need it. Now, I can learn and receive support from people who are my age that have experienced the same things as me. Having a good role model and support system has helped me achieve success in all areas of life.”



“Peer support has helped me find myself. Having someone who understands where I am coming from and is willing to listen, really helps. Having the Drop for support has played a huge part in my life and where I want to go in the future. The staff encouraged me to pursue my dream job at a summer camp and apply for college. I am so grateful for that support.”



Exercise

Why do you think Youth Peer Support is necessary?

Why not a youth mentor?

Why not an adult peer supporter?



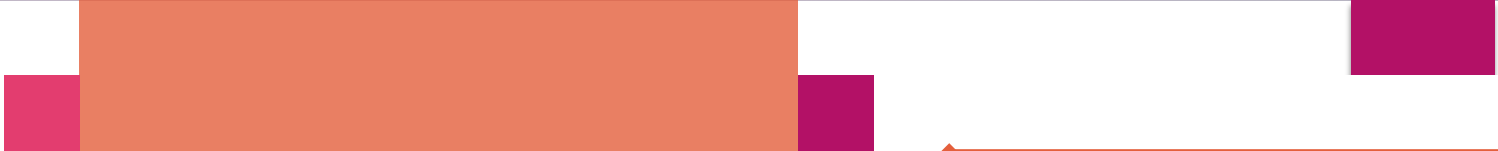
Review Questions

- ▶ True or False: Peer support is a clinical service wherein peers who have faced similar situations or circumstances offer and receive support to others who are currently in those situations based on respect, shared understanding, and mutual empowerment.
- ▶ Peer services can include _____.
- ▶ Peer support...



YPS Code of Ethics

- 
- YPS will be guided by the principles of self-determination for all. The primary responsibility of peer support is to help individuals achieve their own needs, wants and goals. (S)
 - YPS will maintain high standards of personal conduct, modeling accountable relationships, and fostering wellness and self-care along with their own recovery. (VS/ES)
 - YPS will share with peers and colleagues their recovery stories and will likewise be able to identify and describe the supports that promote their own recovery. (S)
 - YPS will respect the privacy and confidentiality of private information shared by individuals utilizing peer support services or other related professional services at the organization. Unless necessary for supervision, required by law, or otherwise consented to by the individual personally, no confidential information will be revealed to anyone. (S/VS/ES)
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- YPS will at all times, respect the rights and dignity of those they serve. (S/VS)
 - YPS will keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery and share this knowledge with their colleagues and those they serve. (S)
 - YPS will never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, physical force or verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals they serve. (VS/ES)
 - YPS will not engage in romantic or sexual intimacies with the people utilizing peer support services in the organization where the YPS is providing services. YPS will not engage in romantic or sexual intimacies with an individual the YPS has provided peer services to for a period of 5 years after the peer relationship has been terminated. YPS does not provide peer support services to anyone with whom they've had romantic or sexual intimacies in the past. (ES)
 - A YPS shall not initiate or cultivate a personal relationship once the professional peer relationship has ended with a former peer for a period of five years. This may include, but is not limited to: familial, social, romantic/sexual, financial, business or other types of close personal relationships with former peers. (VS/ES)
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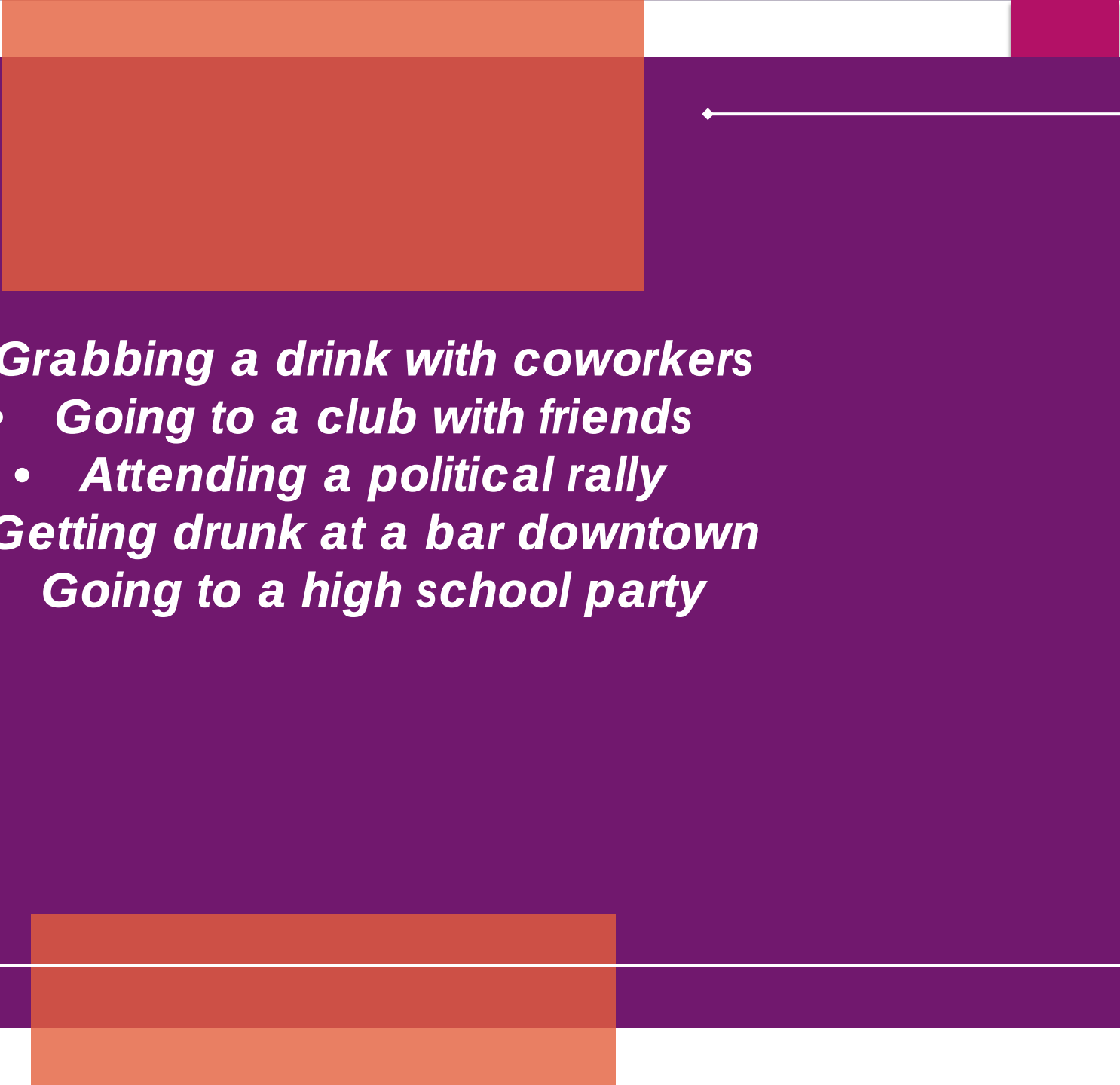
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- YPS will practice unconditional positive regard connected to ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical disability, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or state. (S/VS)
 - YPS will advocate for those they serve that they may make their own decisions in all matters, including when dealing with other professionals. (S/VS)
 - YPS will advocate for the full integration of individuals into the communities of their choice and will promote the inherent value of these individuals to those communities. YPS will be directed by the knowledge that all individuals have the right to live in the least restrictive and least intrusive environment. (S/VS)
 - YPS will strive to avoid dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those they serve. When a dual relationship or conflict can't be avoided, the YPS informs a supervisor of the relationship or conflict and strives to ensure the individual is not exploited in any way. (ES)
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- YPS will not exchange gifts of significant monetary value with those they serve. (S/VS/ES)
 - YPS will take responsibility for maintaining the integrity and quality of job performance. This includes using work time to the advantage of the peers and always giving the best effort on the job. (S/VS)
 - YPS will strive through words and actions to create a professional atmosphere in the work environment. YPS will use people first language and avoid stigmatizing language. YPS will not use derogatory language in their communications, whether written or verbal. YPS will avoid negative criticism of colleagues. (VS/ES)
 - YPS will fairly and accurately represent themselves and their capabilities to the peers and the community. (S/VS)
 - YPS will maintain a safe and healthy work environment. (S/VS)
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- YPS will not use illegal substances under any circumstance. YPS will not use a prescribed medication in a non-prescribed way and will only use over the counter medication for its intended use. (ES)
 - YPS will not use relationships with individuals utilizing peer support services for financial gain or put the individual at risk of exploitation or harm. (ES)
 - YPS shall report any felony or misdemeanor conviction to the Missouri Credentialing Board within 30 days of the date of conviction. (VS/ES)
 - YPS will report to the MCB any violation of an MCB Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct whether this violation was a self-violation or a violation by another credentialed professional (VS/ES).
-



Scenarios

- 
- *Grabbing a drink with coworkers*
 - *Going to a club with friends*
 - *Attending a political rally*
 - *Getting drunk at a bar downtown*
 - *Going to a high school party*



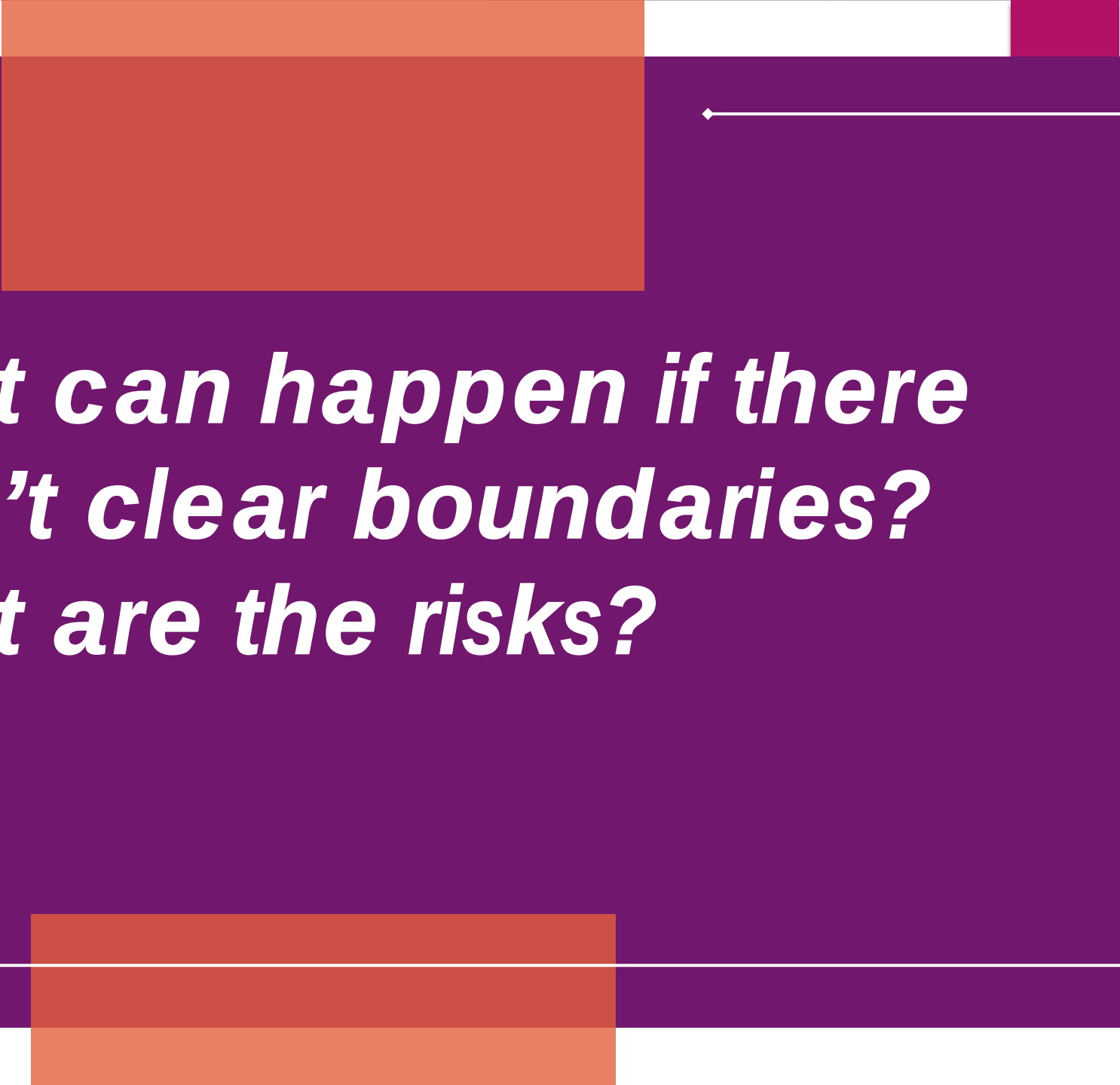
Unclear Boundaries

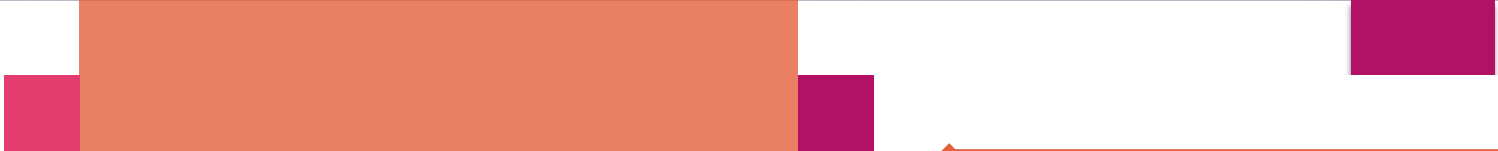
- **What are “boundaries?”**
 - **Why are boundaries important within the context of peer support?**
-



Discuss

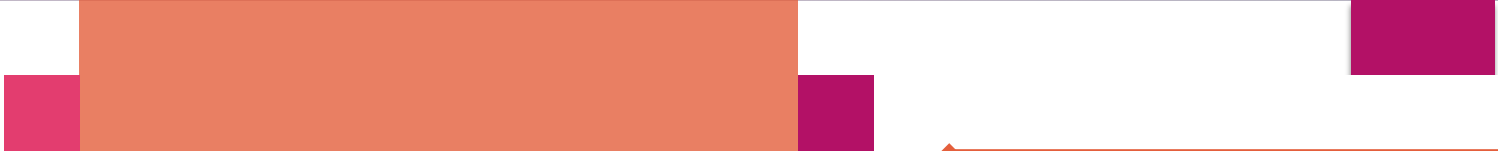
- **Support youth without becoming youth**
 - **Be friendly but not friends with youth**
 - **Understand the limits of their role as a peer support provider**
 - **Role model effective communication and professionalism**
 - **Avoid the rescuer role**
 - **Stay focused on helping youth meet their needs**
 - **Avoid burnout (compassion fatigue)**
 - **Maintain their physical and emotional safety**
-

- 
- ***What can happen if there aren't clear boundaries?***
 - ***What are the risks?***



Establishing Boundaries

- ***Why do you think this is?***
 - ***How might a psychologist's boundary expectations differ from that of a YPS?***
- 



Intimacy Continuum

- ☐ **Zone of Safety** - these actions are always okay
 - ☐ **Zone of Vulnerability** - these actions are sometimes okay and sometimes not
 - ☐ **Zone of Abuse** - these actions are never okay
- 



***When
Helping is
Harmful***

Review Questions

- ▶ To investigate a decision, you are trying to make, you should ask yourself the following three questions:
- ▶ As an YPS, you are responsible for knowing the YPS Code of Ethics. There will be questions on your exam taken directly from the YPS Code.
- ▶ True or False: The most helpful thing you can do as a YPS is to support the youth you serve to move toward positive development and encourage them to believe in their ability to do things for themselves.

Dress Code for Peer Supporters

What are some of the job duties a YPS can have that would determine their dress?





***Why is it important
for YPS to present
a professional
image to the
public and other
system partners?***

Dress Code Pitfalls!

- Pajamas
- Clothing with drug references
- Clothing with sexual references
- Clothing with racist remarks



Prepared and Dressed Appropriately

- **Look at your schedule**
- **Who are you meeting?**
- **Where are you meeting?**
- **What is the purpose of the meeting?**
- **Will there be professionals present?**
- **Are you traveling?**
- **Do you need a change of clothes?**
- **Pack a go-bag to prepare for unexpected events**
- **A professional outfit**
- **A casual outfit**



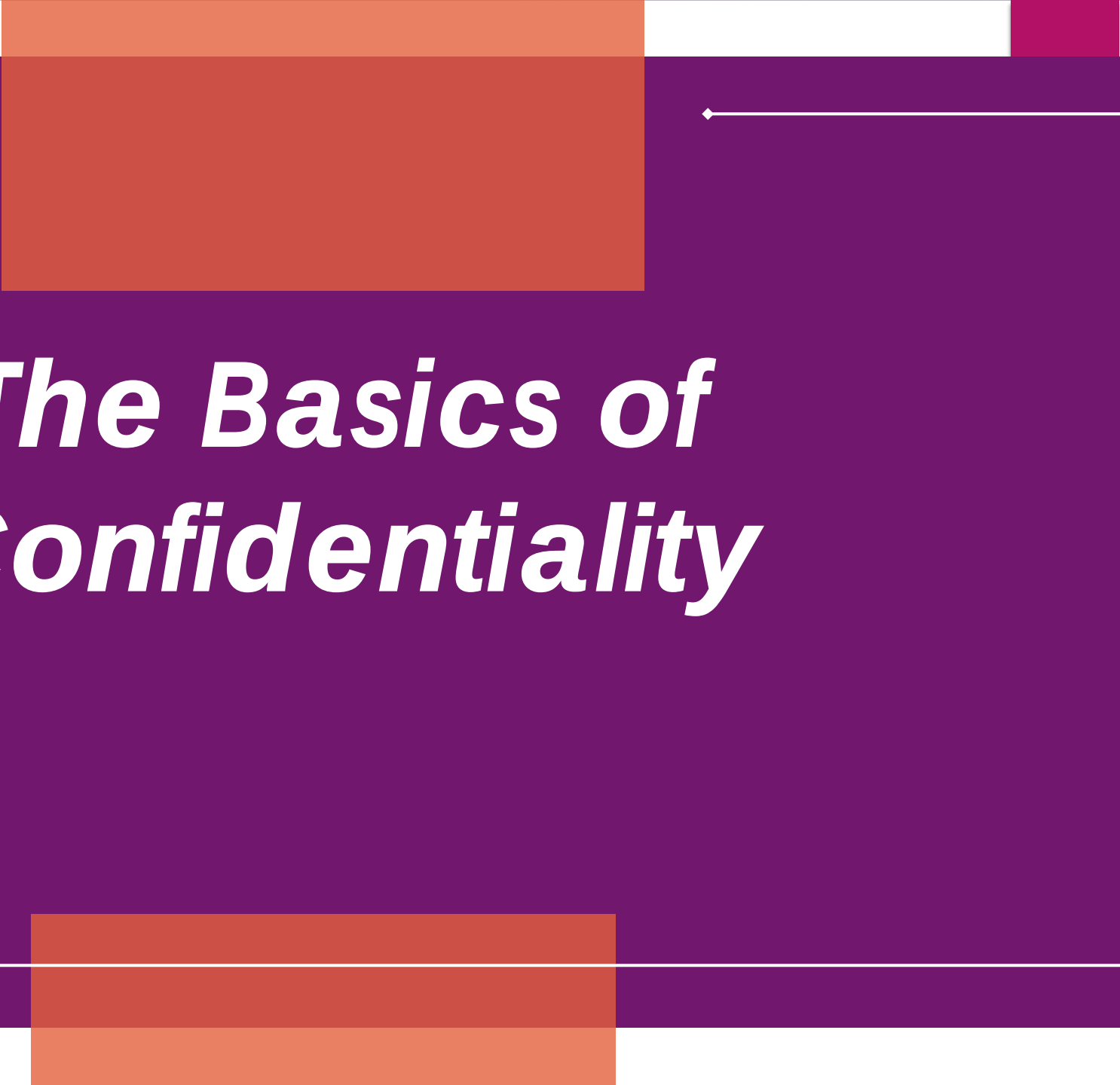
Professional vs. Youth Language

- Professional language: avoid using slang or cursing
- Youth language: avoid overly-academic language



Review Questions

- ▶ **As a YPS, you perform a wide variety of job functions. The dress codes they follow are widely variable and often flexible. Some of the potential job duties you may have include —**
- ▶ **True or False: Dressing in a more casual and youth-friendly manner makes it easier for YPS to build rapport and develop trusting peer relationships with the youth they support.**



The Basics of Confidentiality

***What does it
mean to keep
something
confidential?***



Questions

- *“Can I share this with a family member?”*
- *“What should I say to this police officer?”*
- *“Do I need to report this?”*





Protected Health Information

What are some examples of Protected Health Information?

**A young person's past, present, or future mental or physical health
Treatment, care, or services provided to a young person
Past, present, or future identifying information**

EXAMPLES:

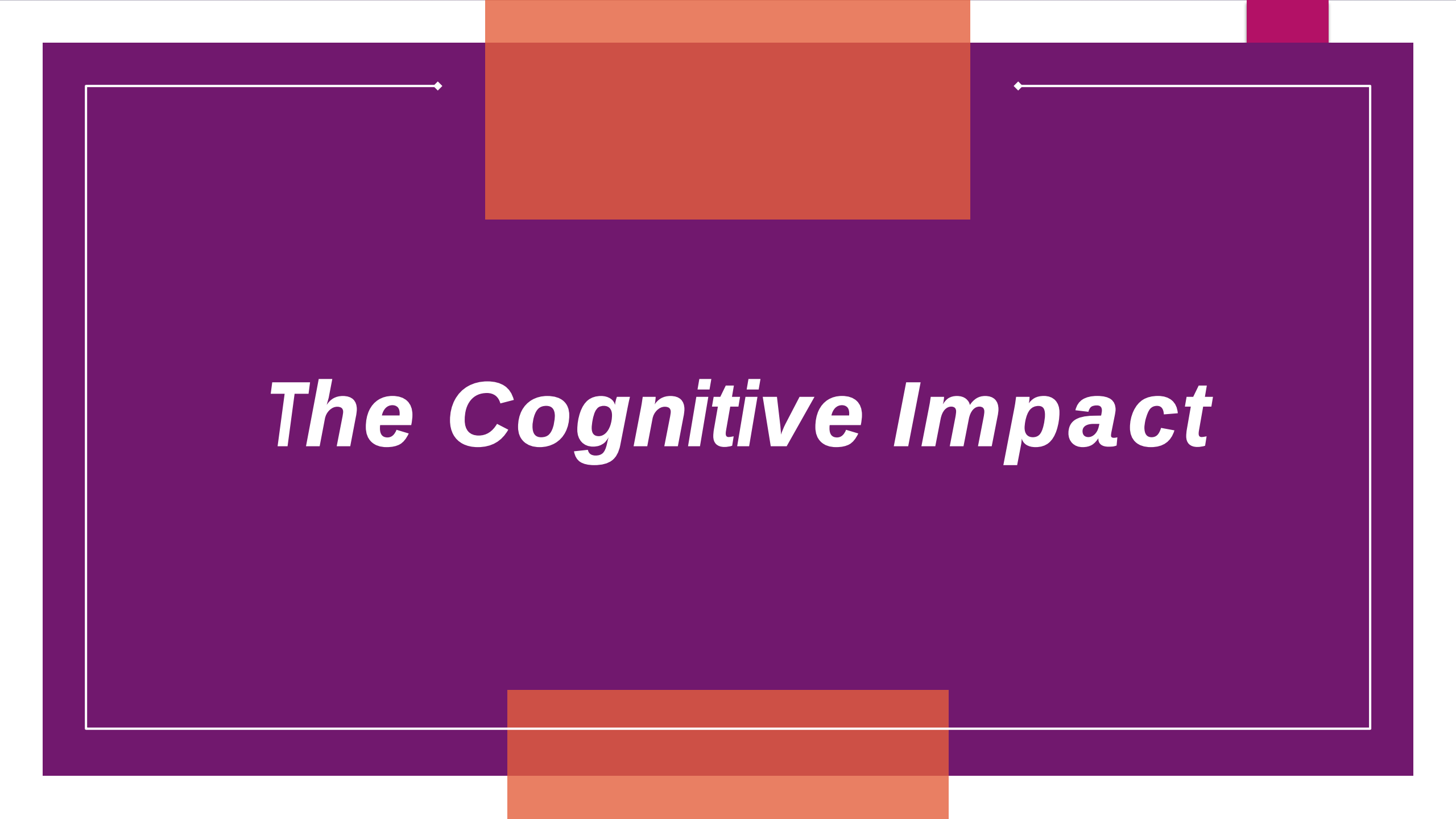
- > Name**
- > Address**
- > Date of birth**
- > Social Security number**
- > Phone number**
- > Photographs**

Review Questions

- ▶ True or False: YPS serve as mandatory reporters 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Reports must be made as soon as possible regardless of if you observe the abuse or neglect during work hours or on personal time.
- ▶ At the same time, YPS must also recognize that their responsibility extends not only to the youth they support, but to society at large. This means that there are certain circumstances wherein the information shared necessitates disclosure to protect vulnerable individuals (including the youth themselves) from harm. Examples of this include —
- ▶ 3. True or False: While YPS are required to report observed and suspected cases of abuse and neglect, they are not required to, and should in no circumstances, serve as investigators. There is no reason to ask youth unnecessary questions or try to get to the bottom of the suspected abuse/neglect.
- ▶ 4. True or False: Effective peer support depends on an atmosphere of trust, confidence and in certain rare instances secrecy in which the participant is willing and able to disclose facts, memories, emotions, and fears.
- ▶ 5. For peer support, PHI describes any information that is created or received by a YPS that relates to —



The Value of Early Intervention



The Cognitive Impact

Review Questions

- ▶ **True or False: When intervention occurs at the time that these early signs occurs, it is possible to reduce, delay, or possibly prevent the onset of psychosis.**
- ▶ **Early signs and symptoms can include cognitive changes affecting areas such as:**



What is Recovery?

- 
- ▶ **What does recovery look like?**
 - ▶ **How have you experienced recovery in your life?**
 - ▶ **What does it take to reach recovery?**
-

Examples:

- **Disordered eating**
- **Self-harm**
- **Gambling**



SAMHSA's Working Definition of "Recovery"

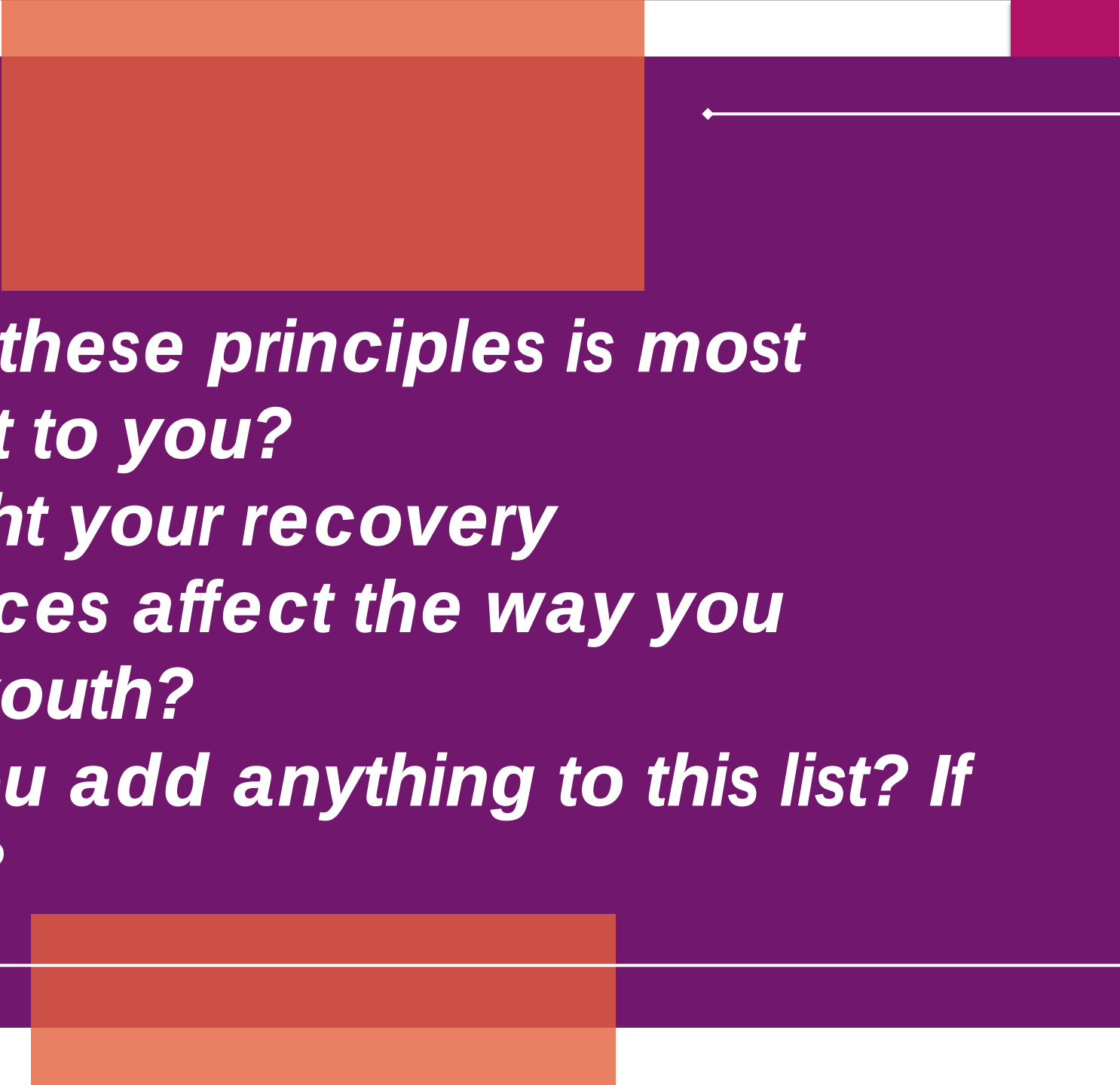
- ▶ **A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life and strive to reach their full potential.**





10 Guiding Principles of Recovery

- ▶ Recovery emerges from hope
 - ▶ Recovery is person-driven
 - ▶ Recovery occurs via many pathways
 - ▶ Recovery is holistic
 - ▶ Recovery is supported by peers, advocates, and champions
 - ▶ Recovery is supported through relationship and social networks
 - ▶ Recovery is individually-based and influenced
 - ▶ Recovery is supported by addressing trauma
 - ▶ Recovery involves individual, family, and community strengths and responsibility
 - ▶ Recovery is based on respect
-

- 
- *Which of these principles is most important to you?*
 - *How might your recovery experiences affect the way you support youth?*
 - *Would you add anything to this list? If so, what?*



Dimensions That Support Recovery

***The Need for Patience,
Understanding, and
Hope***

Review Questions

- ▶ **1. The four major dimensions support life in successful recovery are:**
- ▶ **2. True or False: Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life and strive to reach their full potential. It should also be noted that recovery isn't just about addiction — it can be viewed using a much wider lens.**