



Youth Peer Specialist Training

Missouri Credentialing
Board

***Day
Two***





Review

Day 1

What is Cultural Humility?

“How would you define “cultural humility?”



When Working With Young People, YPSs Must:

- ▶ **Respect norms, rituals, and values as they relate to the young person's religious, familial, ethnic, or group culture.**

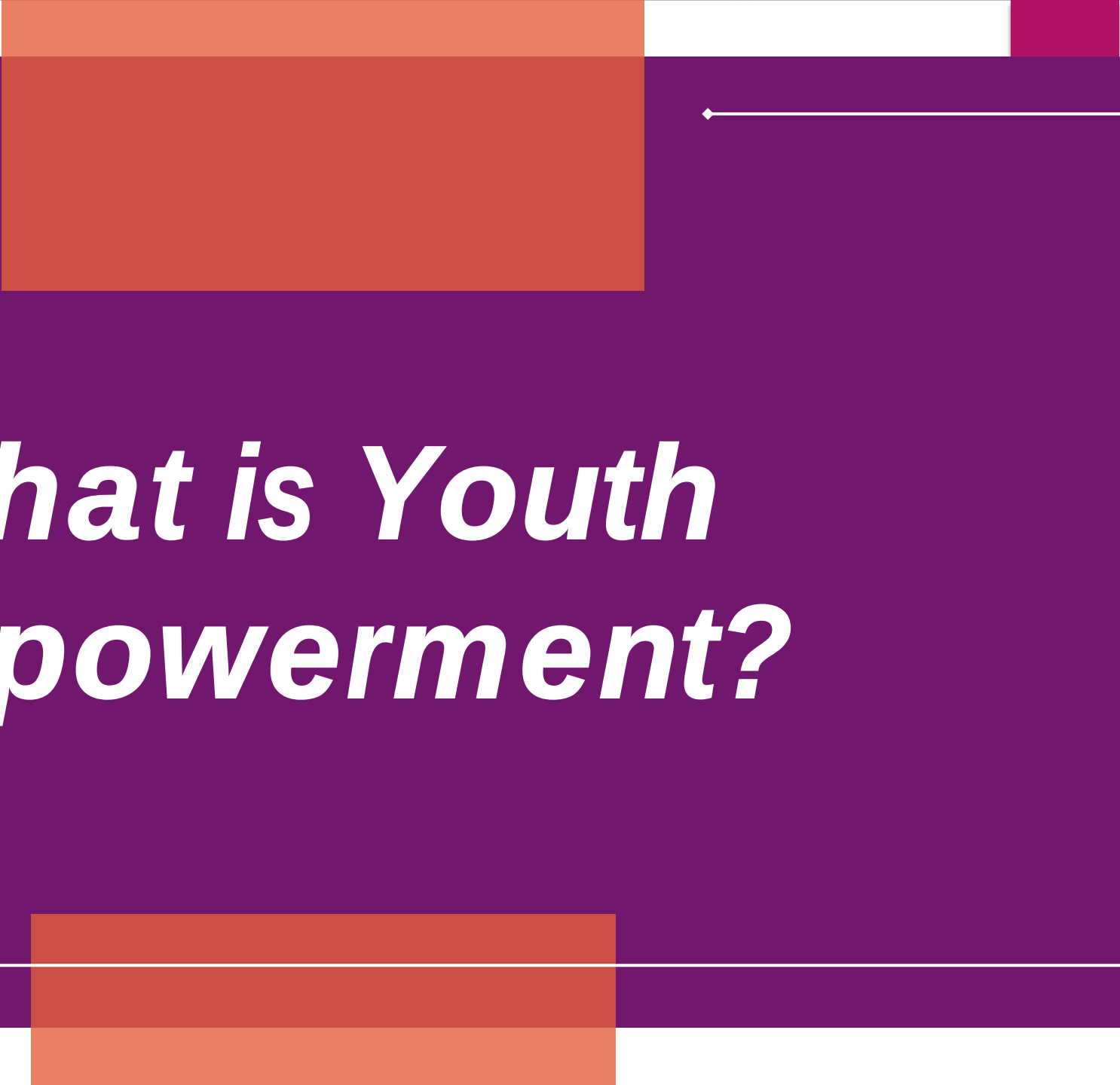


Questions?

- *What are some examples of how your rituals, values, and norms have impacted your relationships/interactions?*
- *How can you support a youth if they have different beliefs than you?*

Review Questions

- ▶ **When working with young people, YPS must —Respect_____, _____ and _____ as they relate to the young person's religious, familial, ethnic, or group culture.**



What is Youth Empowerment?



Discussion Questions

- What does empowerment look like?
- How can we help youth empower themselves?
- What are the benefits of empowerment?

What do Youth Need to Empower Themselves?

- What resources do youth need to empower themselves?
- What opportunities do they need?

What do Youth Need to Empower Themselves?

- Experience increased self-confidence
- Take on more responsibility
- Follow through with their goals
- Develop their voice and are able to speak for themselves
- Experience personal power and are able to act
- Can honestly express their opinions and emotions



Review Questions

- ▶ **True or False: Youth empowerment describes the process of supporting youth to use their full abilities to enhance their capacity to make informed choices and transform their lives into ones they desire.**
 - ▶ **Youth who are empowered —**
-



PYD vs. Youth Empowerment

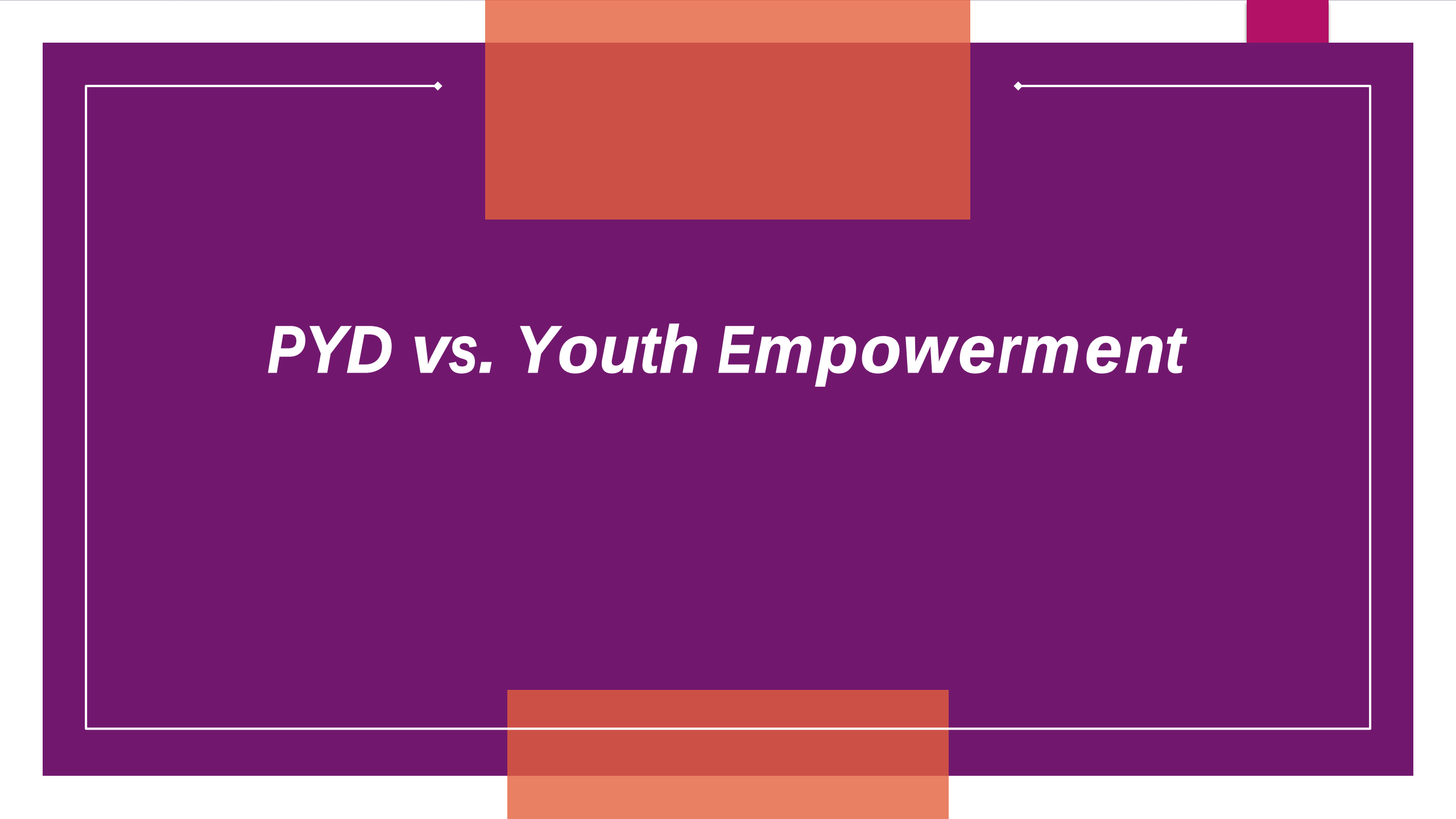
Positive Youth Development (PYD) describes the intentional efforts of youth, adults, communities, agencies, organizations, and schools to optimize developmental progress by providing young people with opportunities to enhance their skills and abilities. Unlike other approaches that aim to correct what is “wrong” with youth, PYD practitioners seek to empathize with young people before educating and engaging them in productive activities.



**“Positive Youth
Development”?**

Positive Youth Development

An intentional, strength-based approach that promotes protective factors by engaging youth and young adults in their peer groups, schools, families, and communities



PYD vs. Youth Empowerment



Examples

PYD grew out of the prevention field which focused on preventing individual challenges before they surfaced in youth.

EXAMPLES:

- ☐ Teen pregnancy
- ☐ Substance use
- ☐ Suicide

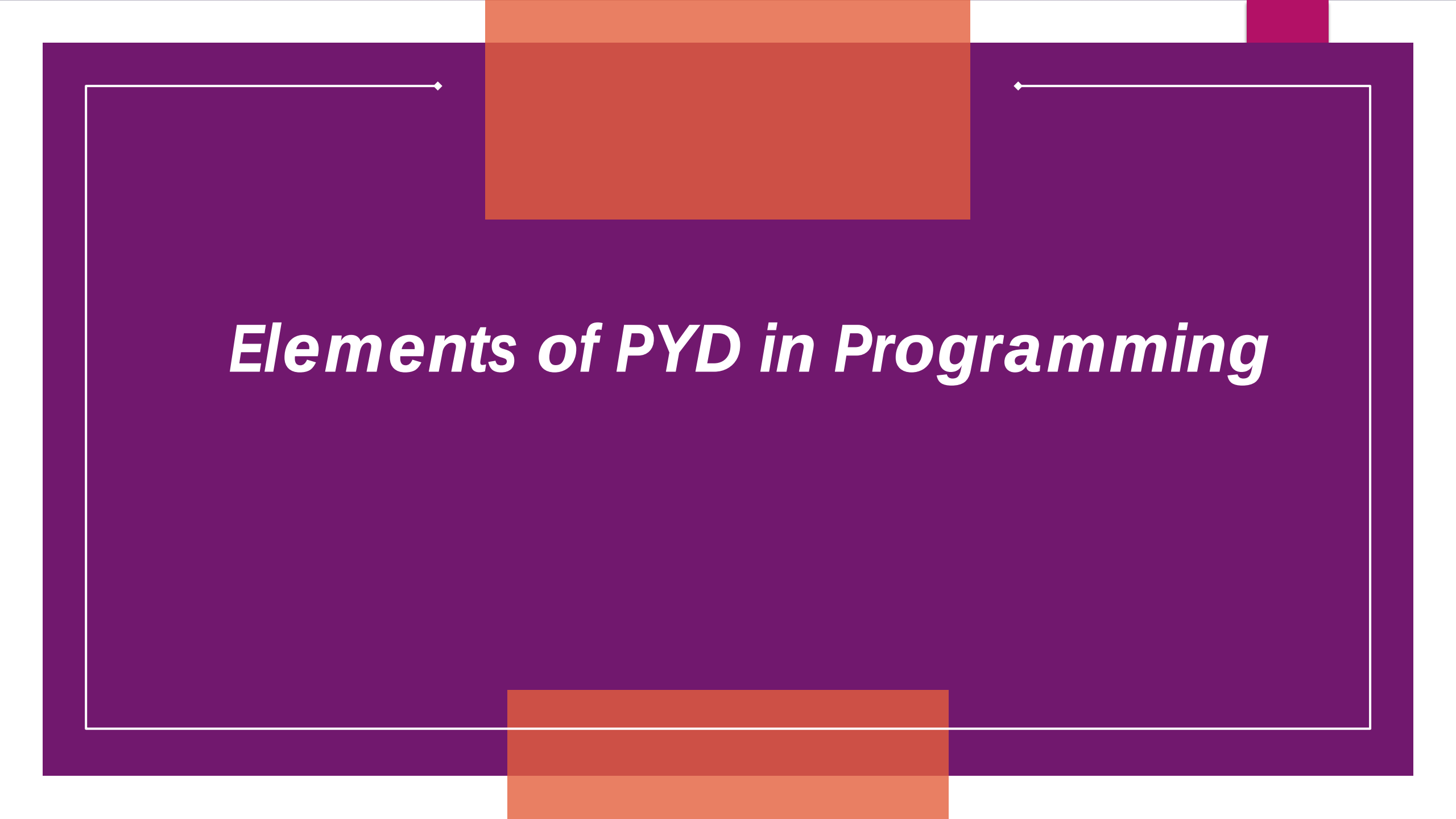


Can You Name Some Protective Factors?



Examples

- Family support
- Relationships with caring adults
- Positive peer groups
 - Sense of self
 - Confidence
 - Future goals
- Community and school engagement

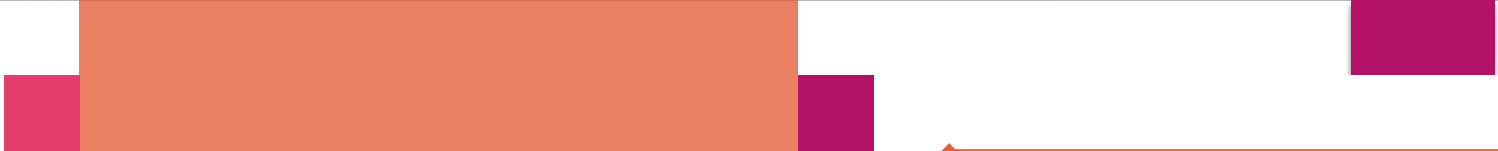


Elements of PYD in Programming

Review Questions

- ▶ 1. PYD grew out of the _____ which focused on preventing individual challenges like unintended pregnancy, substance use, and suicide before they surface in youth.
- ▶ 2. True or False: Programs hoping to foster Positive Youth Development must be able to provide physical and psychological safety and structure, access to supportive relationships, and opportunities to serve as equal partners.

***The 40
Developmental
Assets®***



The 40 Developmental Assets®

A list of identified research-based skills, relationships, behaviors, and experiences that influence the development of youth and young adults and help them to become contributing successful adults

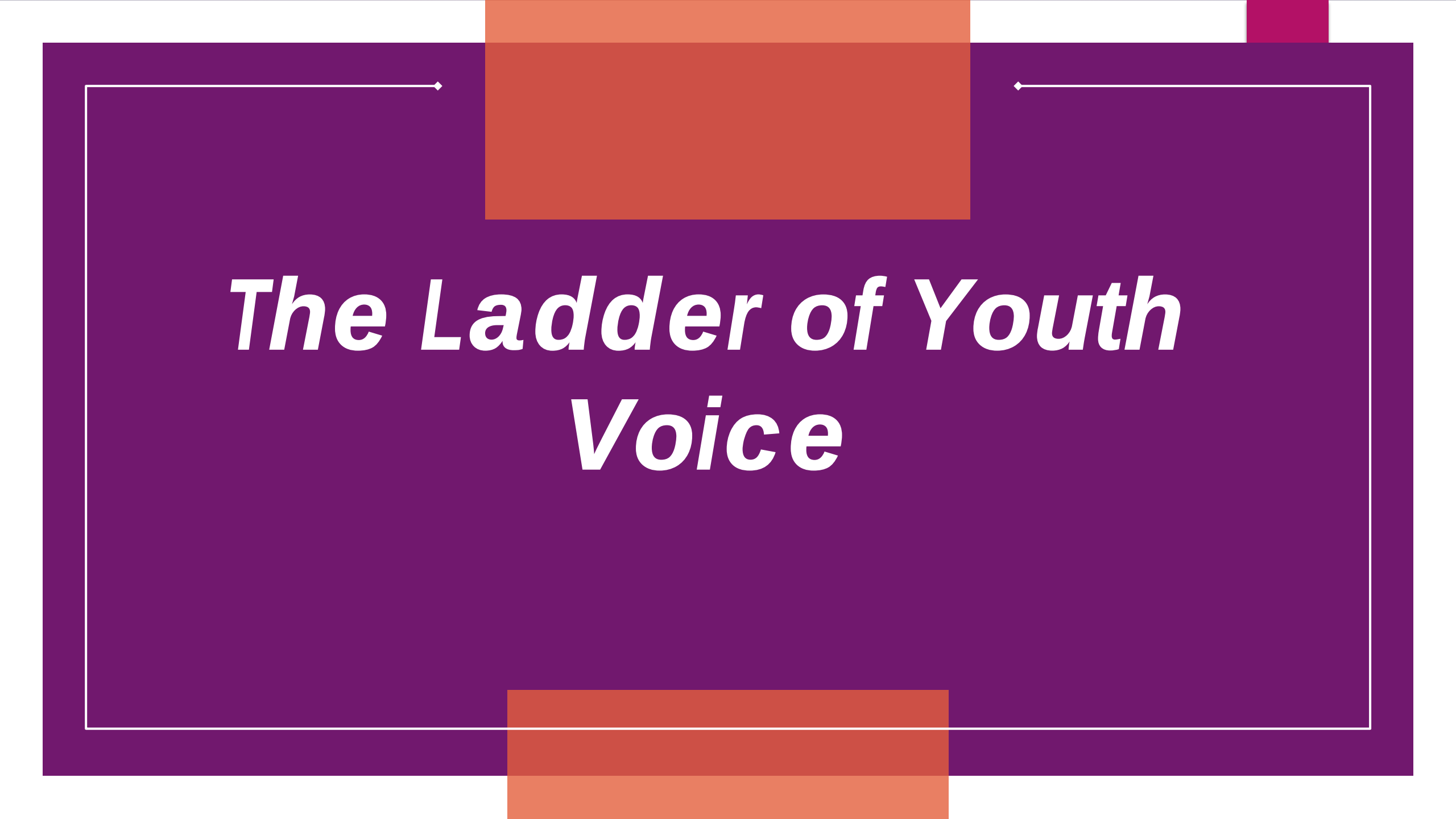




The Asset Process

Review Questions

- ▶ 1. 1. Research shows that the more _____ a young person has, the more success they will achieve in their life.
- ▶ 2. True or False: The Asset Process is important because it provides the YPS with an understanding of where the youth is at and what areas should be supported.



The Ladder of Youth Voice



Ladder of Youth Voice (or “Hart’s Ladder”) is an assessment tool designed to encourage service providers and other youth development professionals to think about why and how young people participate in their communities.





The 7/8 Debate

Review Questions

- 1. The _____ (Hart's Ladder) is an assessment tool designed to encourage service providers and other youth development professionals to think about why and how young people participate in their communities.**



What is Advocacy?

What is It?

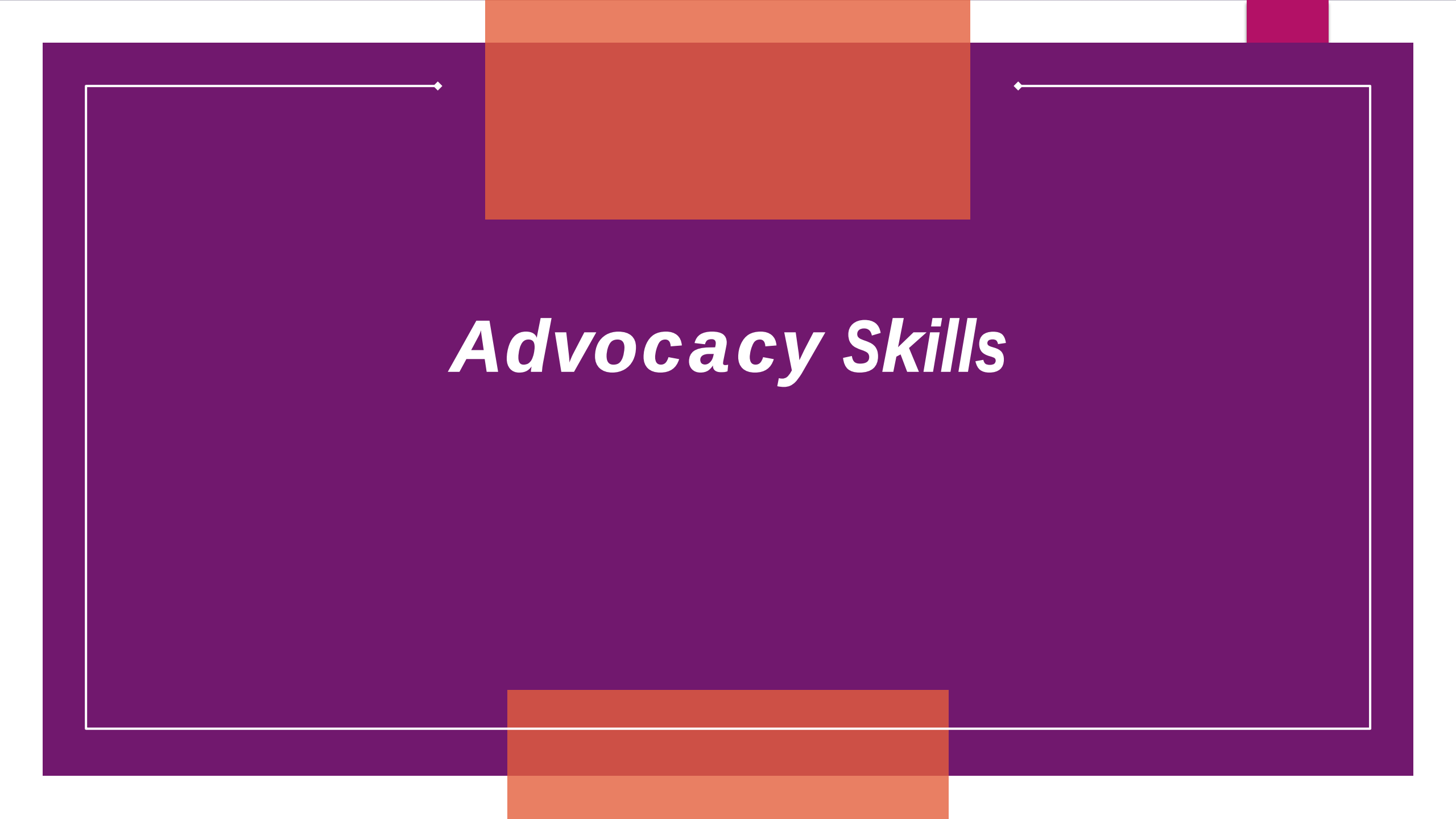
Advocacy: the intentional support shown to a particular person, issue, or establishment.”

A hand-drawn graphic with the words "Youth Advocacy" in a green, cursive script and "& RIGHTS" in a pink ampersand and white, outlined, block letters. The graphic is positioned to the right of the definition text.

Youth Advocacy
& RIGHTS

Discuss

- ☐ Describe a time when you had to advocate for yourself.
- ☐ What strategies did you use and why?
- ☐ What did you learn from the experience?
- ☐ How did you feel before and after?
- ☐ Describe a time that you advocated for someone else.
- ☐ What strategies did you use and why?
- ☐ How was the experience different from advocating for yourself?
- ☐ Did you learn anything from the experience?
- ☐ How did it make you feel?



Advocacy Skills



Assertive advocates:

- ☐ **Practice clear communication**
 - ☐ **Prepare solid, concise arguments to support their ideas**
 - ☐ **Are unafraid to disagree with authority**
 - ☐ **Avoid aggressive, rude, demeaning, or threatening behavior**
-



Organized advocates:

- ☐ **Maintain thorough meeting and research notes**
 - ☐ **Record meetings and the people they met with/spoke to in a detailed calendar**
 - ☐ **Utilize a to-do list with deadlines and goals**
-



Collaborative Advocates:

- ☐ **Collaborate with system partners and agencies**
 - ☐ **Identify allies that they can learn from and work well with**
 - ☐ **Reach out to other organizations for help**
-



Persistent advocates:

- ☐ **Commit to their goals and fight for what they believe in**
 - ☐ **Are able to move past frustration periods with greater ease and accomplish more than most**
-



Advocates Who Practice Active Listening:

- ☐ **Seek the perspectives of others**
 - ☐ **Listen to collaborators and dissenters to strengthen or alter their arguments**
-



Open-Minded Advocates:

- ☐ **Learn from others by keeping an open mind**
 - ☐ **Understand that dissenters bring unique value to the table and generate more effective advocacy**☐
-



Resilient Advocates:

- ☐ **Overcome challenges**
 - ☐ **Focus on solutions, not just problems**
 - ☐ **Adapt to changing circumstances and settings**
-



Advocates With a Strong Sense of Self-Efficacy:

- ☐ **Believe in themselves and their abilities**
 - ☐ **Have control over the motivation, behavior, and environment**
-

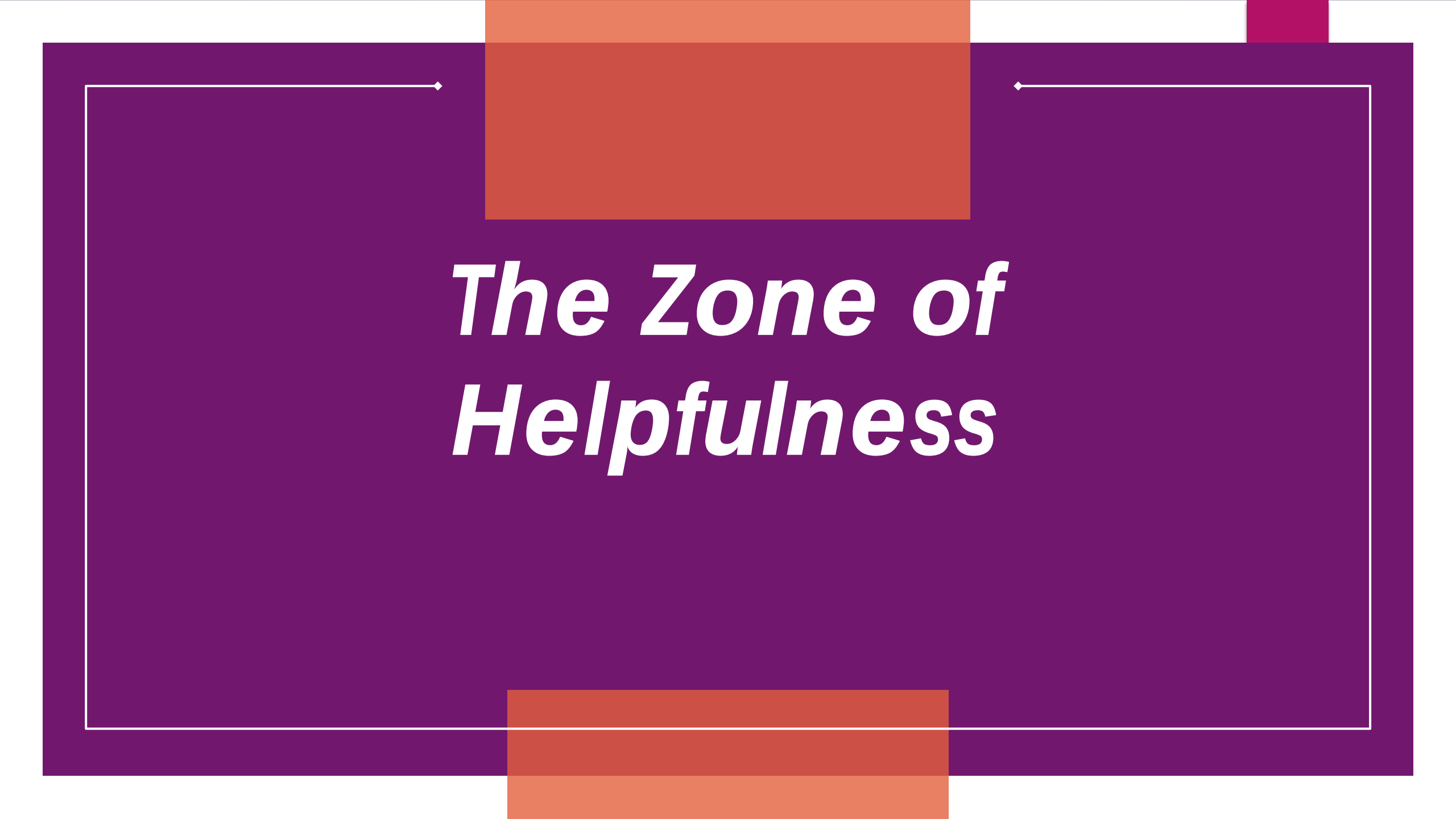


Why Do Young People Need Advocates?



Potential Responses:

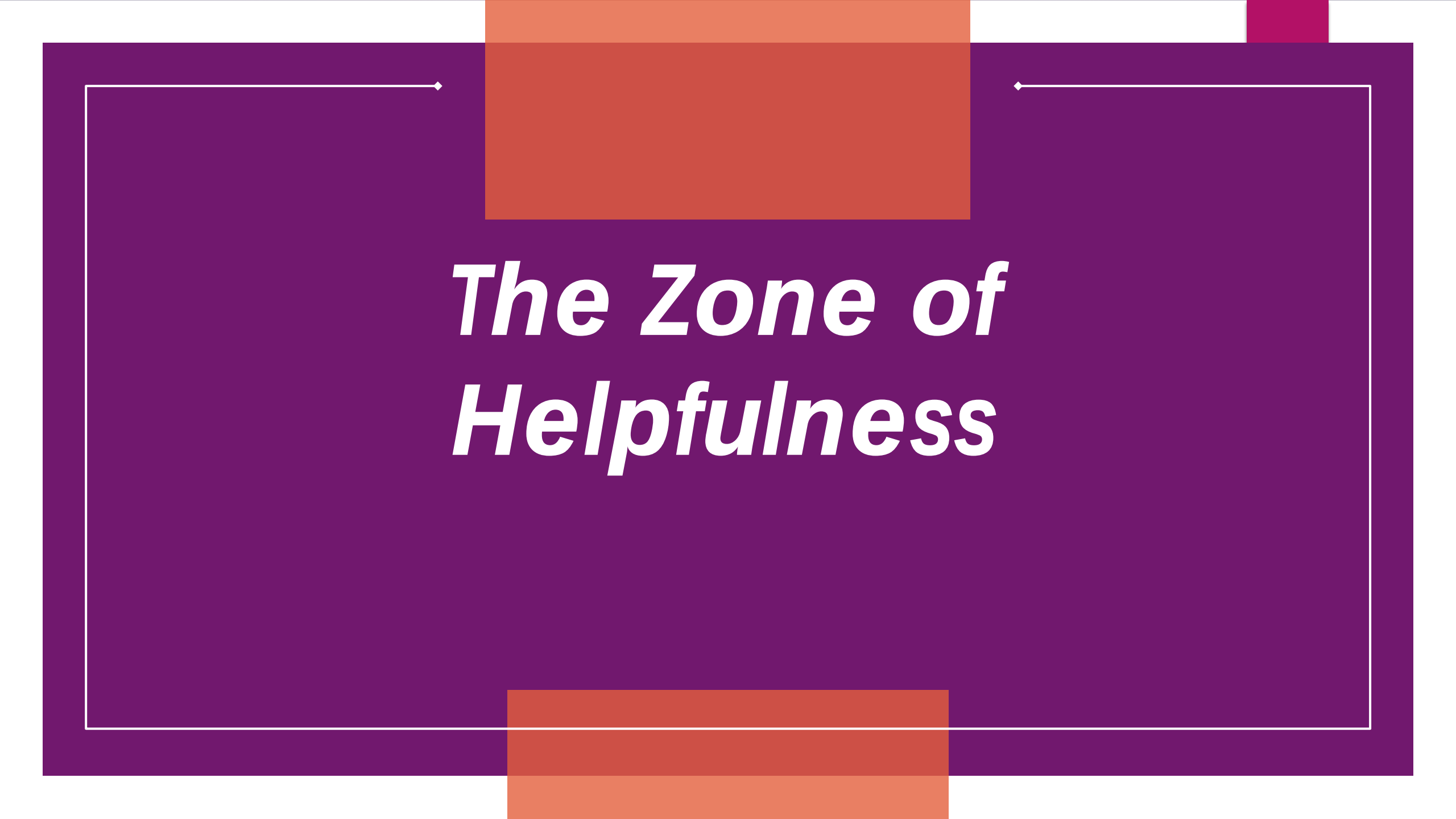
- > *Young people may feel shy or uncomfortable in certain settings*
- > *Some youth have lagging internal Assets that make it difficult for them to speak up for themselves*
- > *Youth and young adults are not taken seriously by professional agencies, in clinical or other adult-dominated settings, or within their teams*



The Zone of Helpfulness

Review Questions

- ▶ ***True or False: It is critical for the YPS to solicit the youth/young adult's voice in conversations with system partners, caregivers, and gatekeepers, especially when they have expressed a need or desire for the YPS to act as their advocate.***
- ▶ ***True or False: It is impossible for advocates to become over-involved in their role of supporting youths.***



The Zone of Helpfulness

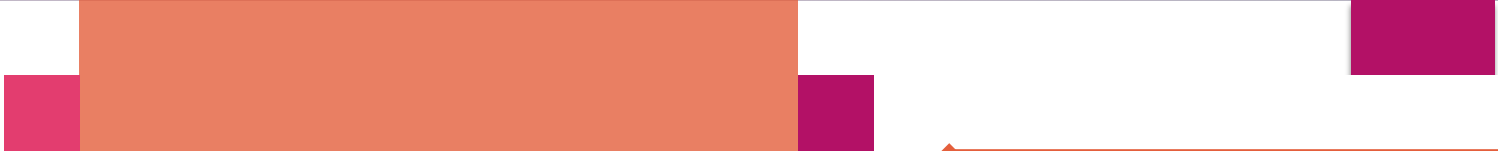


strong communication skills directly enhance our ability to:

- ☐ **Build rapport with the youth we support**
 - ☐ **Assist youth in creating their own goals & dreams**
 - ☐ **Assess strengths and needs**
 - ☐ **Provide emotional support and guidance**
 - ☐ **Advocate for youth needs or amplify youth voice**
 - ☐ **Motivate youth to create positive change**
 - ☐ **Ensure that team members are informed and on the same page**
 - ☐ **Role model positive coping skills and inspire hope**
-



Preparing



Tips for Communicating with Youth Nonverbally:

- ☐ **Maintain a relaxed posture and face the person you are speaking to**
 - ☐ **Nod your head (but not too often) to indicate that you are listening**
 - ☐ **Maintain appropriate eye contact and a friendly expression**
 - ☐ **Try to avoid fiddling with objects or tapping your feet**
 - ☐ **Use a neutral, confident, and relaxed tone of voice**
- 



Listening



***Have any of you heard
the term “active
listening?”***

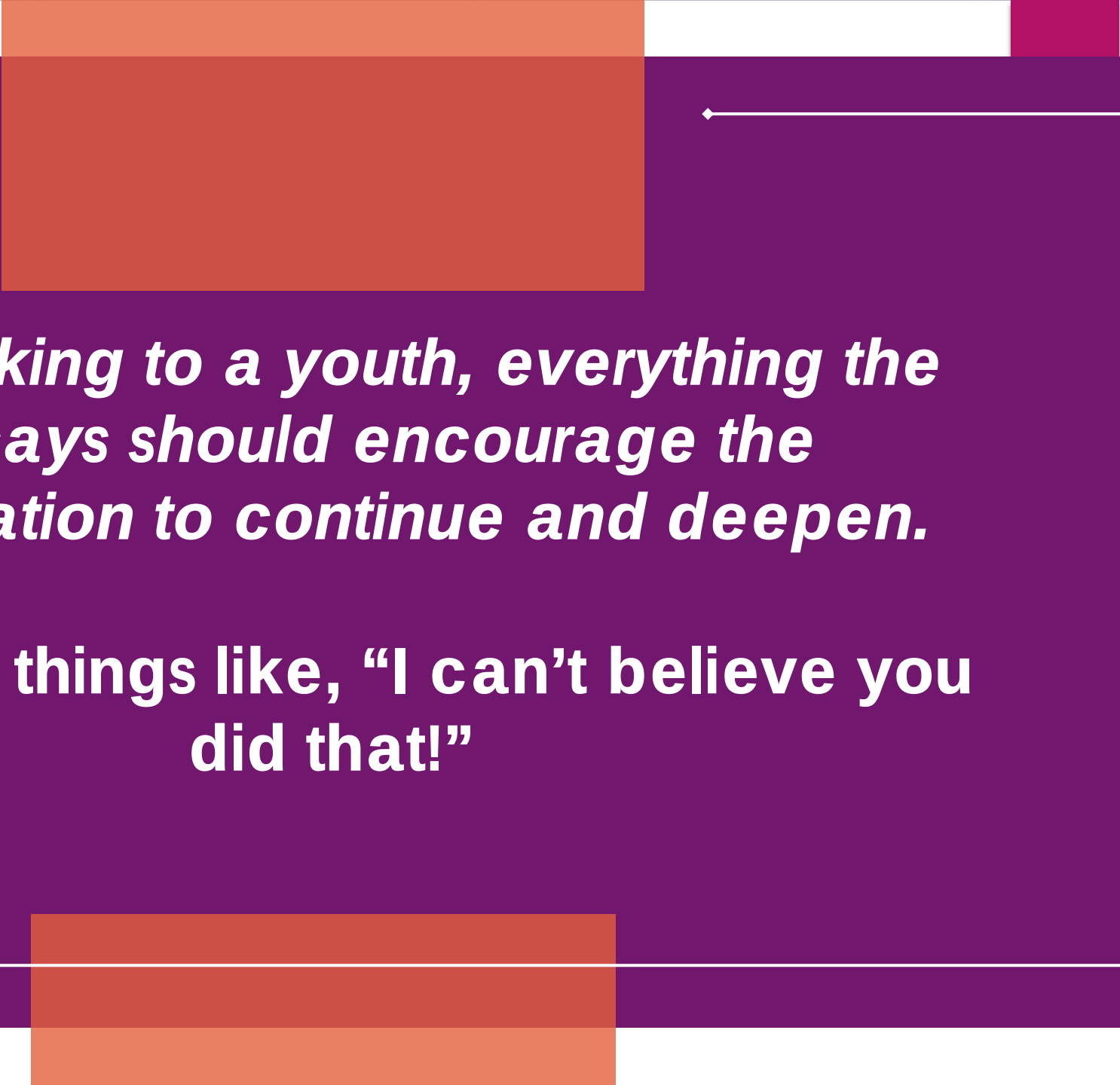
***> How is active
listening different from
just hearing?***



***“What’s
That?”***

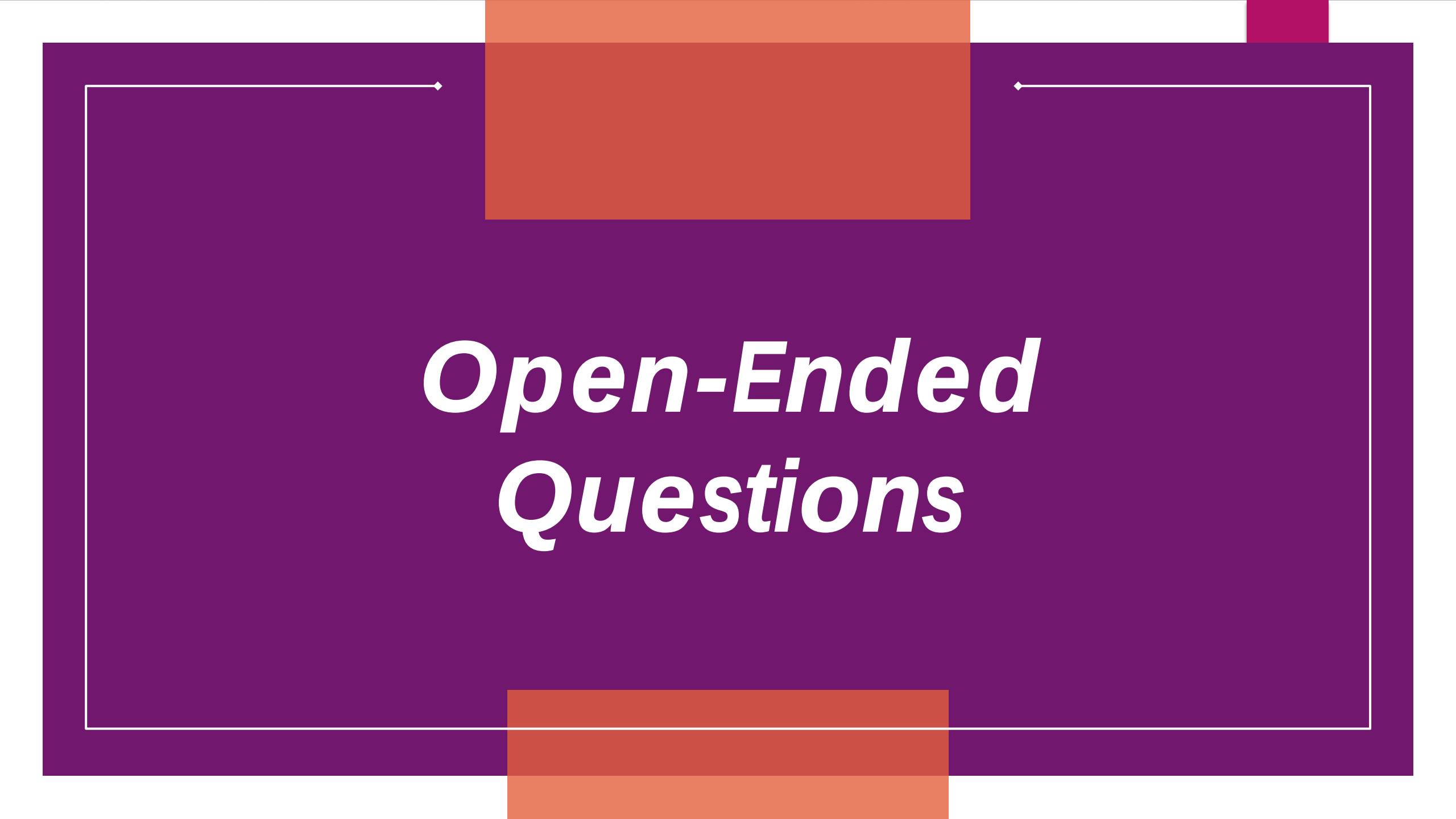


Speaking



***When talking to a youth, everything the
YPS says should encourage the
conversation to continue and deepen.***

**Don't say things like, "I can't believe you
did that!"**



Open-Ended Questions

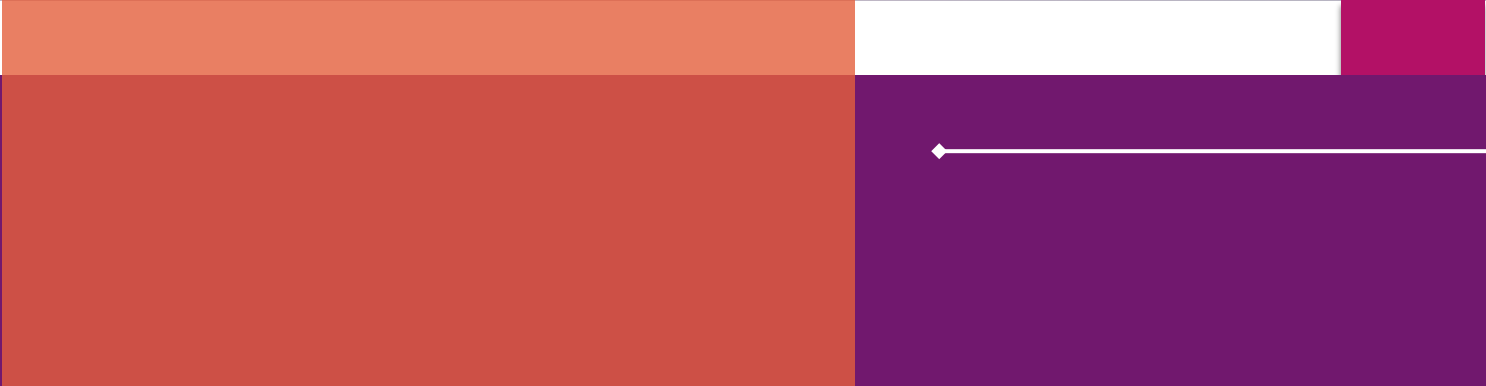
Open Ended Questions typically begin with “What,” “How,” “When,” or “Where”.

Closed question examples:

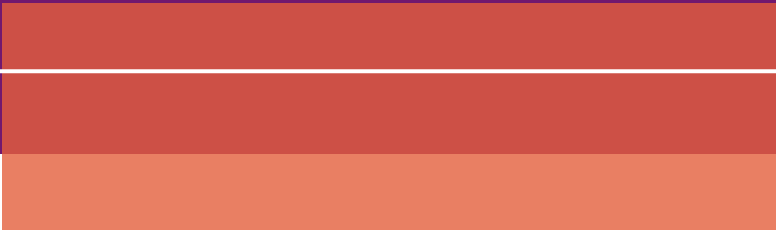
- > “*Are you in pain?*”**
- > “*How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?*”**
- > “*Don’t you want to move to a safer place?*”**

Open-ended question examples:

- > “*How do you feel?*”**
- > “*How do cigarettes play a role in your life?*”**
- > “*What are the advantages that you see in moving?*”**



Reflective Listening

- > Have you ever heard the term
“reflective listening?”**
 - > What do you think it means?**
- 

What are some factors that influence communication?

- ☐ Perceptions
 - ☐ Worldview
 - ☐ Lifestyle
 - ☐ Value system
- ☐ Educational background
 - ☐ Language
- ☐ Family background
- ☐ Geographical influences
 - ☐ Socioeconomic status
 - ☐ Health considerations



Trauma Informed Care Respect and Safety



What Is Trauma

Trauma is rooted in a sense of loss.

- ▶ Trauma can be the result of what has been done to us, what we have done to ourselves and others, and/or what we fail to do.
 - ▶ Discussion: What are some experiences or events that can be traumatic to someone?
-

- 
- ▶ • Trauma refers to intense and overwhelming experiences that involve serious loss, threat or harm to a person's physical and/or emotional well-being.
 - ▶ • These experiences may occur at any time in a person's life. They may involve a single event or may be repeated events over many years.
 - ▶ • Any trauma experiences that overwhelm the person's coping resources can often lead the person to find a way of surviving that may work in the short term, but may cause serious harm later in life.

Traumatization occurs when internal and external resources are not enough to cope with a real or perceived threat (van der Kolk, 1989).



The impacts of Trauma

- Trauma damages our sense of control, understanding, and purpose
 - Trauma affects physical, social, and emotional health and wellbeing over the lifetime
 - Trauma shapes neuro-physiological development
- 



Trauma Informed

- ▶ It is important to remember that Trauma does not excuse behaviors! It helps us understand the behaviors and our own reactions.

- ▶ So what do we do?

We need to presume that people have a history of traumatic stress and exercise universal precautions by providing services that are compassionate.

- ▶ As Youth Peer Specialists our job is to provide Trauma Informed Care. It is not our job to try to fix the trauma- that's what trauma specific treatment is for.





Trauma-Informed Care

- ▶ The **How**: compassionate service delivery
- ▶ Sensitive practices that can be implemented anywhere by anyone

▶ Trauma-Specific Treatment

- ▶ The **What**: specific clinical services
 - ▶ Therapeutic interventions implemented by trained clinicians
-



Safety: Ensure physical and emotional safety, recognizing and responding to how traumatic events may impact safety across the lifespan.

Domains of Safety

- Physical: free from injury to the body; environment that evokes ease

In the following domains, safety is fostered through the experience of connection and belonging.

- Social: free from bullying and peer isolation; connected to people/belonging
 - Moral: free from persecution for belief; Individuality is celebrated
 - Psychological: free from emotional distress, fear, anxiety, shame; compassion is a practice and mindfulness is promoted
- 



Trusworthiness:

Foster genuine relationships and practices that build trust, making tasks clear, maintaining appropriate boundaries and creating norms for interaction that promote reconciliation and healing. Understand and respond to ways in which power can affect the development of trusting relationships.





Choice

Maximize choice, addressing trauma and the experiences surrounding it impact both perceptions about and ability to act upon choice.





Collaboration

Honor transparency and self-determination, and seek to minimize the impact of power differentials while maximizing collaboration and sharing responsibility for making meaningful decisions.



Empowerment

Encouraging self-efficacy, identifying strengths and building skills which leads to individual pathways for healing while recognizing and responding to the impact of historical trauma and oppression.





Putting principles
into practice

Safety

- Use a respectful and compassionate manner to support belonging
- Speak in a calm, caring tone
- Take time to familiarize the person with the surroundings and available resources & supports
- Actively listen without judgment
- Ensure treatment for everyone

Trustworthiness

- Ask the person how you can help them
- Listen to understand the perspective and experience of the person
- Tell the person what to expect and how long it will take
- Explain all instructions in terms the person can understand
- Do what you say you are going to do; apologize if you are not able to or if you made a mistake

Choice

- Allow the person to decide where to sit / stand in the room
- Give choice for where difficult conversations will be held
- Provide as many choices without compromising safety
- Seek consent and explain rationale for actions and instructions
- Make sure you can follow through with choices provided

Collaboration

- Be open in sharing information
- Listen to understand and not necessarily respond or “fix”
- Allow the person to problem-solve independently, offering support when needed
- Provide opportunities to take on leadership roles
- Acknowledge individual and shared responsibilities

Empowerment

- Ask “What happened to you” rather than “What is wrong with you?”
- Pay attention to body cues; many survivors have been conditioned to be passive and defer to authority and so may not disclose distress
- Take time with the person so they feel genuinely heard
- Ask the person what they need to meet their goals
- Model and build self-confidence, celebrating all accomplishments, large or small



Ways Beliefs/values Can Influence Communication:

Language: We live in a multifaceted world and a country of different beliefs/values, and English is not always a person's primary or preferred language.

Greetings: Some people greet others by hugging and/or kissing them, others shake hands, and some use no physical contact whatsoever.

Expressiveness: Some people will talk openly with anyone, display a wide range of facial expressions, and use their hands to illustrate their points. Others may be reluctant to speak with strangers and may appear guarded or shy.

Physical Space: Some people prefer to sit or stand close to the person they are talking to when having a conversation. Others prefer to keep their distance.

Eye Contact: In some backgrounds, making direct eye contact is considered part of social etiquette. In others, making eye contact is considered disrespectful.





Health Considerations

A Person's Health Status May Affect Their Ability To:

- ☐ **Pay attention**
- ☐ **Concentrate**
- ☐ **Perceive a situation realistically**
- ☐ **Sit or stand for long periods**
- ☐ **Make eye contact**



Review Questions

- ▶ **True or False: Open-ended questions are those that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.”**
- ▶ **Reflective listening (also known as _____) is one of the most effective communication strategies YPS can practice. This is the process of seeking to understand what someone is saying, then repeating (or paraphrasing) what you’ve heard, to make certain the message was heard correctly.**
- ▶ **True or False: It is also important to be aware of any stigma a youth may have faced due to their personal health status or any other reason.**



Seeing Strengths in Others

- The strength-based approach is a way of viewing youth and young adults as capable and resilient in the face of adversity.



DEBRIEF

- **How was that for everyone?**
- **Was it difficult to talk about your strengths?**
- > **Was it nice to hear someone describe your strengths? Was it uncomfortable?**





Guiding Principles of Strength-Based

- All young people have the potential to lead the lives they desire
 - What we focus on becomes our reality
 - The language we use creates our reality
 - All youth want to succeed
 - Positive change happens in the context of authentic relationships
 - Youth values must drive the change process
 - Young people have more confidence in their ability to succeed when they are invited to start with what they already know
 - Change must be a collaborative, engaging, and participatory process
-



From Deficits to Strengths

- > What does it mean to be “deficit-based”?*
 - > What would a deficit-based approach look like?*
-

- **What do you think about this approach?**
- **How might this impact youth?**





How Can We Be Strength-Based?

- > Asking “what is right?” with youth instead of “what is wrong?”**
 - > Shifting focus from labels and diagnoses to overall well-being**
 - > Believing that young people have the strength they need to reach their goals**
 - > Serving as collaborators rather than experts in the change process**
 - > Using strength-based language**
 - > Helping youth identify strengths within themselves and within their peers**
-



Alex is a 16-year-old who was recently suspended from school for talking back to her teacher. She has problems with authority and has been disciplined accordingly.

She spends the majority of her free time with peers who drink and smoke marijuana regularly. She recently was arrested and checks in with her probation officer weekly. When she attends school, she gets A's and B's but has not been attending due to her suspension and is frequently truant. She is currently couch surfing due to conflict at home. Her mother reports that she is "impossible" and is thinking about having her live with a friend or relative permanently.



What is your first impression of Alex?

Is it negative or positive?

Based on this paragraph, how would you describe her as a person?

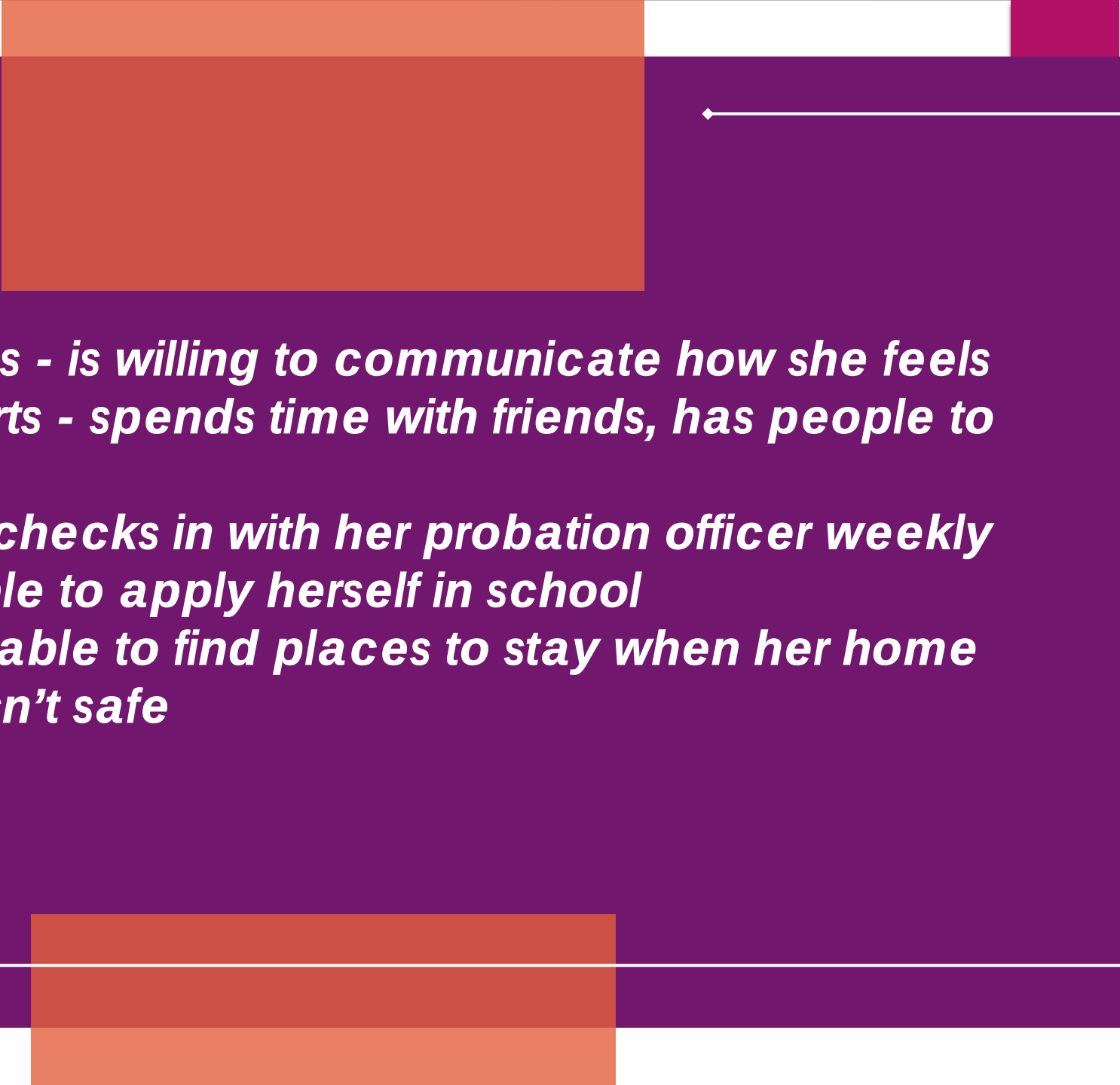


The Strengths Based Approach Teaches Us:

- ☐ **Challenge the way we look at youth and their world**
 - ☐ **Identify each person's unique strengths**
 - ☐ **Find ways to help people use their strengths to meet their needs**
-

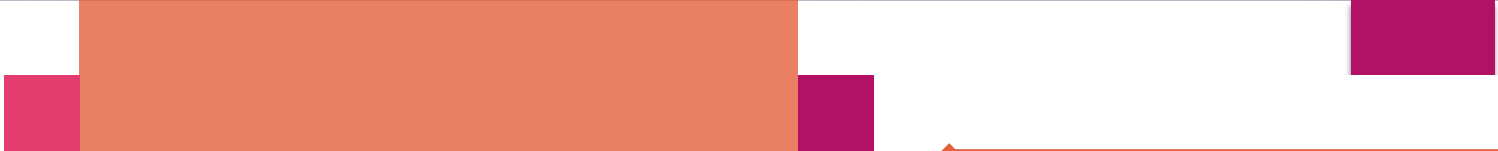


Alex is a 16-year-old who was recently suspended from school for talking back to her teacher(1). She has problems with authority and has been disciplined accordingly. She spends the majority of her free time with peers(2) who drink and smoke marijuana regularly. She recently was arrested and checks in with her probation officer weekly(3). When she attends school, she gets A's and B's(4) but has not been attending due to her suspension and is frequently truant. She is currently couch surfing due to conflict at home(2, 5). Her mother reports that she is "impossible" and is thinking about having her live with a friend or relative permanently.

- 
- ***Communicates*** - is willing to communicate how she feels
 - ***Natural supports*** - spends time with friends, has people to stay with
 - ***Responsible*** - checks in with her probation officer weekly
 - ***Intelligent*** - able to apply herself in school
 - ***Resourceful*** - able to find places to stay when her home environment isn't safe



Helping Youth Identify Their Strengths



The Desired Outcome

What is the desired outcome of the strength-based approach?

Review Questions

1. True or False: When a young person dwells on their weaknesses, it can have a profound effect on their self-esteem and leave them feeling hopeless.

2. _____ is the desired outcome of the strength-based approach.

Being resilient means that you are able to overcome and recover quickly from difficult circumstances or situations.



What Are Needs?

Why is it Important For Us to Understand Each Youth's Needs?





Extracting Needs From Unwanted Behaviors

What is the unwanted behavior or unmet need?

What is the young person's goal or ideal outcome?

What message is the youth is trying to send with their behavior?

What is the theme or driving force behind the unwanted behavior?





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***Now let's consider
the needs of the
other people in
Alex's life, what
might
Alex's mom
need?***

Example

- >To know that Alex is safe*
- >For Alex to get an education*
- >To believe that Alex is on a good path*
- >What about her probation officer?*





Review Questions

True or False: Every person's needs will be different, but our job is always to make sure that the young person's voice is what is driving the process.



Elevator Speech

- Why might YPS use an elevator speech?
- Who would they deliver one to?



Where to Use

- **Conferences**
- **Community meetings**
- **Decision-making bodies**
- **Schools**
- **Community events**
- **Wraparound meetings**



Elements of an Elevator Speech

**Your name, title, and the organization/agency
you work for**

**“My position is unique because of my shared lived
experience with the youth I support. I have
experience with the mental health system, and I
grew up in the foster care system.”**

Tips for Delivering an Elevator Speech

Be brief but don't rush - an effective elevator speech should take no longer than a minute! Focus on what matters; if you try to jam as much information as you can into your elevator pitch, you risk them not being able to understand you.

Be persuasive - your goal for each interaction won't always be the same, but you should always aim to spark the listener's interest so that they'll remember you down the line.

Avoid deficit language - remember that your goal is to spark hope in your listener. Focus on resilience and strengths, rather than deficits.

Make it accessible - avoid jargon and other terms that people who are unfamiliar with peer support wouldn't know

Practice - the best way to get comfortable sharing your elevator speech is to practice; eventually, it should come naturally!

Develop Your Own Speech!

- ☐ Name
- ☐ Title
- ☐ The organization/agency they work for
- ☐ What makes their work unique
- ☐ Goals for the future / inspire hope





Review Questions

- ▶ **True or False: Elevator speeches are typically used for networking purposes or as a job searching tool, but for YPS the purpose is slightly different.**
 - ▶ **A great elevator speech typically includes the following elements —**
-



Final Review and Next Steps

Next Steps

- Take and Pass the YPS Exam
- Complete the YPS Application at www.missouricb.com
- Contact the Missouri Credentialing Board (MCB) directly if you have any questions—573-616-2300.

