



Community of Practice in Youth Driven Spaces (YDS) November 2023 - May 2024

Objective

The Community of Practice (CoP) in [Youth Driven Spaces](#) (YDS) is a unique partnership between the Michigan Afterschool Partnership and the Neutral Zone. The aim is to serve a cohort of youth-service professionals across Michigan and equip them with the necessary skills and supports to grow high quality programs for adolescents that center youth voice and decision making and youth-adult partnerships.

Communities of Practice (CoPs) consist of a group of people who share a common interest in a topic and who come together to fulfill both individual and group goals, learning and problem solving together around that topic. Communities of practice often focus on sharing best practices and creating new knowledge to advance a domain of professional practice. Interaction on an ongoing basis is an important part of this model.

This CoP program will support 24 community-based practitioners to develop their capacities in Youth Driven Spaces (YDS) by engaging in intensive training and practice-based opportunities to develop their skills as practitioners of YDS theory, content, and strategies to mentor others. Participants will work to strengthen YDS practices in their own programs and organizations.

Overview

For the past 13 years the Neutral Zone has developed the Youth-Driven Space (YDS) intervention. YDS is based on a simple innovation—involving youth in running their own programs. A “youth driven space” is an environment in which teens are involved in program and organizational decisions – specifically in the context of an afterschool or community-based youth program for older youth. In a youth driven space, adults provide opportunities for youth to lead activities, establish and run advisory boards, and to be involved in decisions about the physical space, activities offered, field trips, how money is spent, organizational policy and even staff hiring.

In this CoP program, participants will engage in two, in-person full-day sessions and seven, half-day virtual sessions, scheduled between November 2023 and May 2024. See the section below for dates and objectives for each session.

The 2023-24 Community of Practice in YDS Schedule

An application process will be used to select 24 community-based leaders to participate in the CoP. The qualities of a good candidate include having a minimum 3-5 years in the youth-serving field, working in a program serving adolescents, hold a position with program or agency leadership, commitment to youth voice and youth-adult partnerships in your youth work, eagerness to learn and collaborate with colleagues, able to commit to all activities. People who identify from historically marginalized communities (LGBTQAI+, Black, Indigenous, people of color, disabled, are/have been system-impacted, are immigrants) are encouraged to apply.



The following dates and content are scheduled for the CoP :

Stage	Topic	Date & Time	Location
Stage 1	YDS theory & Community Building	November 10, 2023 9:30am - 5pm	Lansing, MI
Stage 2	YDS Theory (continued) & Practice	December 13, 2023 9:30am - 12:30pm	Virtual
Stage 3	YDS Practice	January 24, 2024 9:30am - 12:30pm	Virtual
Stage 4	Youth Advisory Councils - A Vehicle for Youth Voice	February 14, 2023 9:30am - 12:30pm	Virtual
Stage 5	Introduction to Restorative Practices	March 22, 2023 9:30am - 5pm	Lansing, MI
Stage 6	Participant case studies, examples and content sharing	April 17, 2024 9:30am - 12:30pm	Virtual
Stage 7	Participant case studies, examples and content sharing	April 24, 2024 9:30am - 12:30pm	Virtual
Stage 8	Participant case studies, examples and content sharing	May 8, 2024 9:30am - 12:30pm	Virtual
Stage 9	Wrap-up: Reflection on year	May 22, 2024 9:30am - 12:30pm	Virtual

Costs/Commitment

Registration for this program runs \$250/participant and is due by November 30th (the actual value of this training program is \$1,500). Meals will be provided at both in-person training programs. Participants are expected to cover all travel costs for the in-person workshops on November 10 and March 22.

The expectation is that participants **commit to attending all 9 stages**, with 2-4 hours of homework in between sessions. Participants will also be asked to provide a written commitment from their organizational leadership for release time to fully engage in this program.

If travel or registration fees for this program are a financial hardship, scholarships are available through MASP. For information about scholarships contact Ashley Frampton (Ashley.Frampton@uwmich.org) .



Benefits

Benefits for participating in this initiative include:

- 30 hours of professional development in Youth Driven Spaces and restorative practices
- Coaching support for application of new youth voice practice in agency programming
- Access to YDS curricula for use in your organization
- Neutral Zone Guidebooks (*Community Building, Teen Advisory Councils, Circles, Restorative Practices, Youth Voice Tool Kit*)
- *Participation in professional learning community cohort of other youth-serving progressions from across Michigan*
- Certificate of Completion from MASP
- Participants will receive credit in MiRegistry

What's Next?

If you are interested in applying for this program and you are able to fulfill all of the commitments, please complete the application [at this link](#) no later than 12 p.m. on October 18, 2023.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact John Weiss, Director of Strategic Initiatives at weiss@neutral-zone.org