

**WELCOME!**

**Engaging Youth in Challenging Times**  
*From Recruitment through Sustainability*



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**Eugene, OR**

# **OUR TRAIL TODAY...**

**Caterpillars..?**

**Youth, Stress, and Trauma**

**From “Education” to ENGAGEMENT**

**Adulthood, Myths, and Truths**

**Youth and Adult Roles in Youth Engagement**

**Do's and Don'ts of Youth Engagement**

**Our Next Steps**



We'll have chat time before the end!



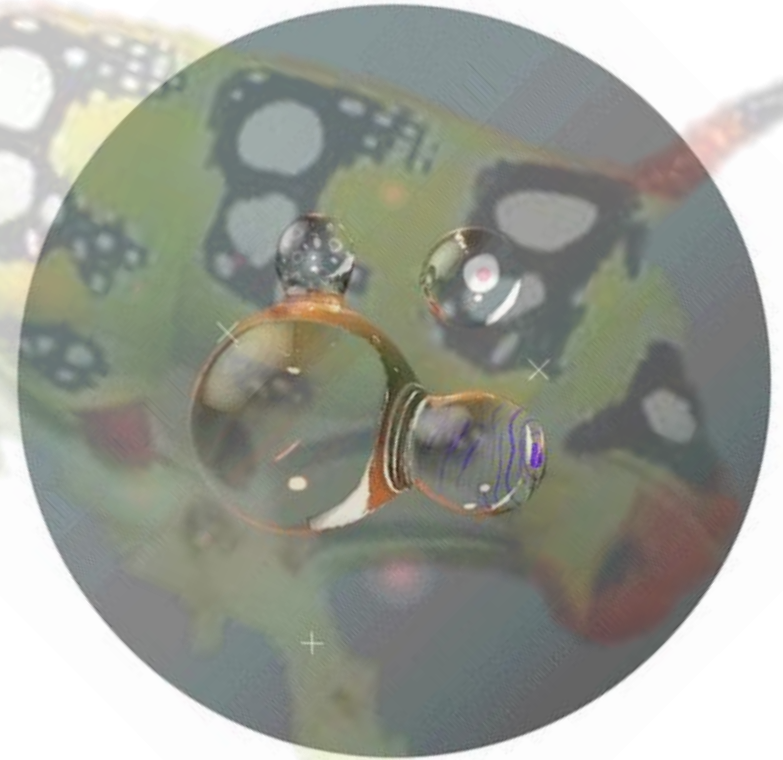
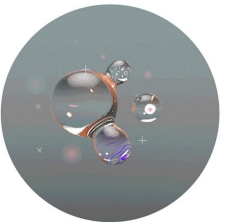
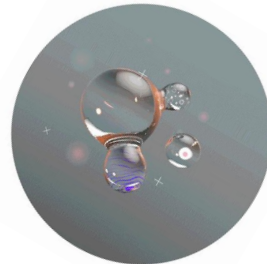
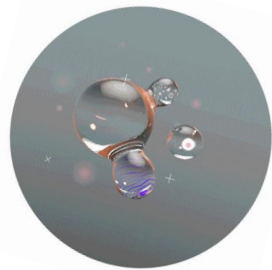
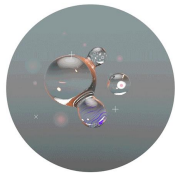
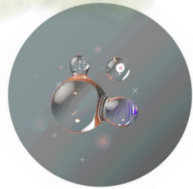
**POLL 1**

Let's begin... here

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# IMAGINAL CELLS





**It's DYING  
first so it  
can LIVE**








THESE ARE  
STRESSFUL  
TIMES



But millions of us young people are confused, scared, and feeling alone.



WE MAY LOOK LIKE WE'RE DOING FINE...



But what if I told you that my parents are drunk all the time and it's an ongoing trauma being stuck at home with them?

*I MIGHT SEEM LIKE I'M COPING REALLY WELL...*



**So What Do Our  
Young People  
NEED From Adults  
Right Now?**

**POLL 2**

6 KEY ACTIVE

# LISTENING SKILLS



1. PAY ATTENTION.



2. WITHHOLD  
JUDGEMENT.



3. REFLECT.



4. CLARIFY.

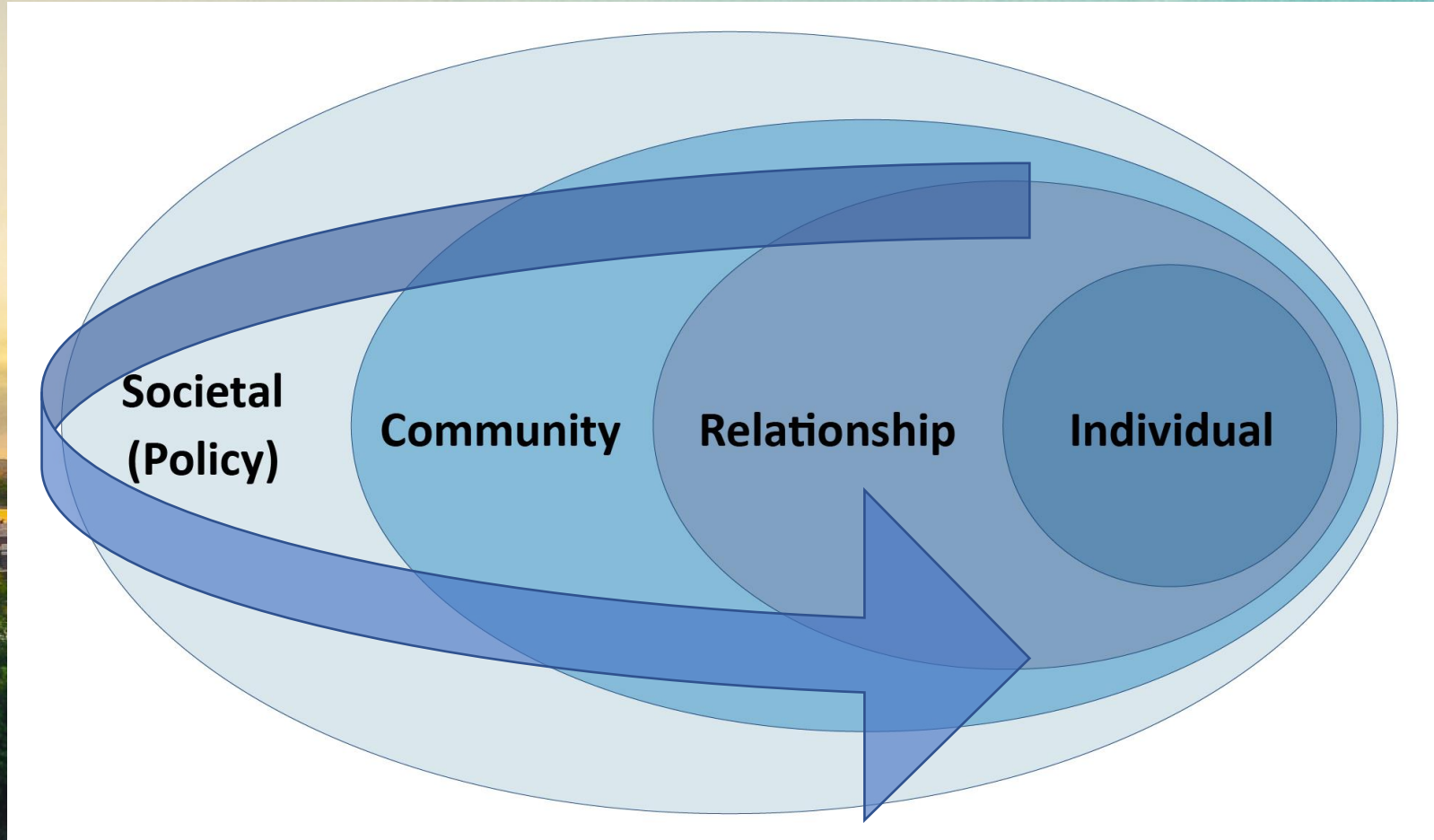


5. SUMMARIZE.



6. SHARE.

# But No One Lives in a Vacuum



**Youth Impact Their Environment; It Impacts Them**

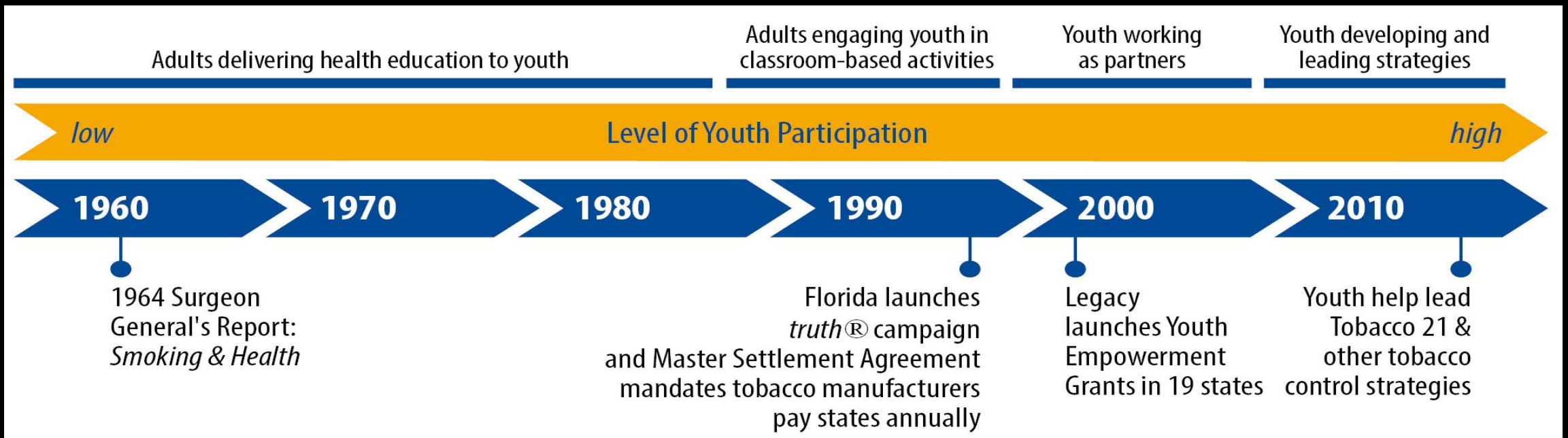
# This is Where Youth *Engagement* Comes In

- From education, to participation, to engagement
- Reaching out to youth
- Authentic roles for youth



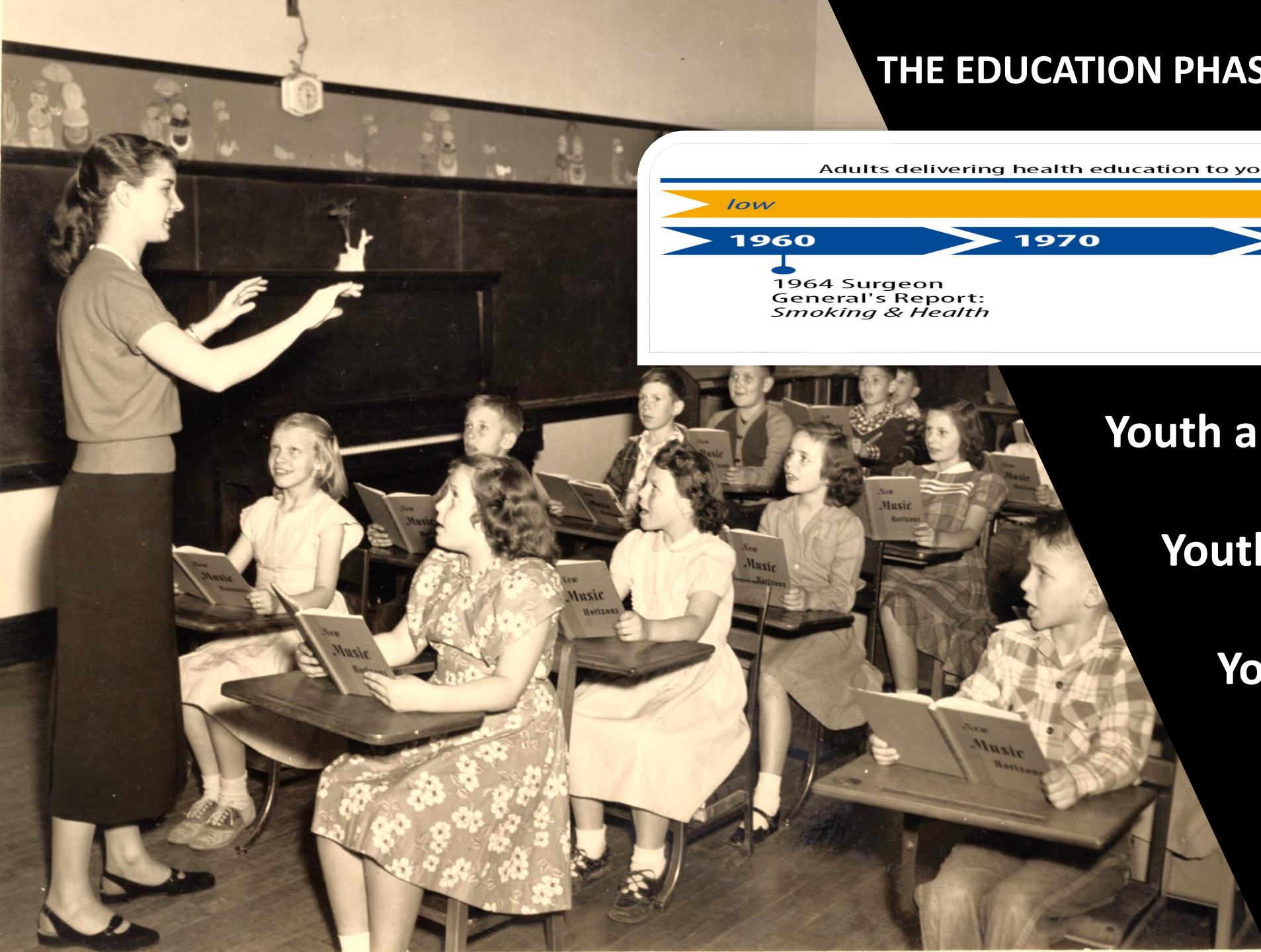


# From Education To Involvement To Engagement



## Tobacco Control Provides a Great Example

# THE EDUCATION PHASE: 1950'S – 1980'S

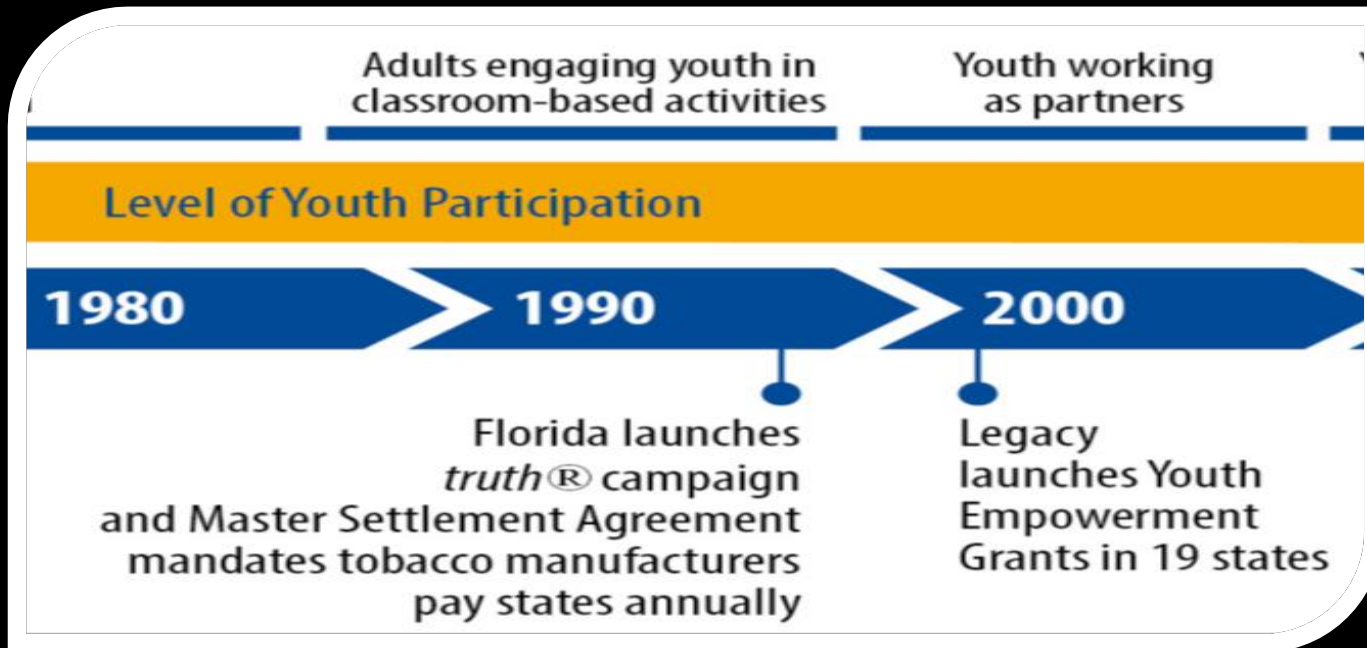


Youth are “the problem”

Youth are audiences

Youth are passive

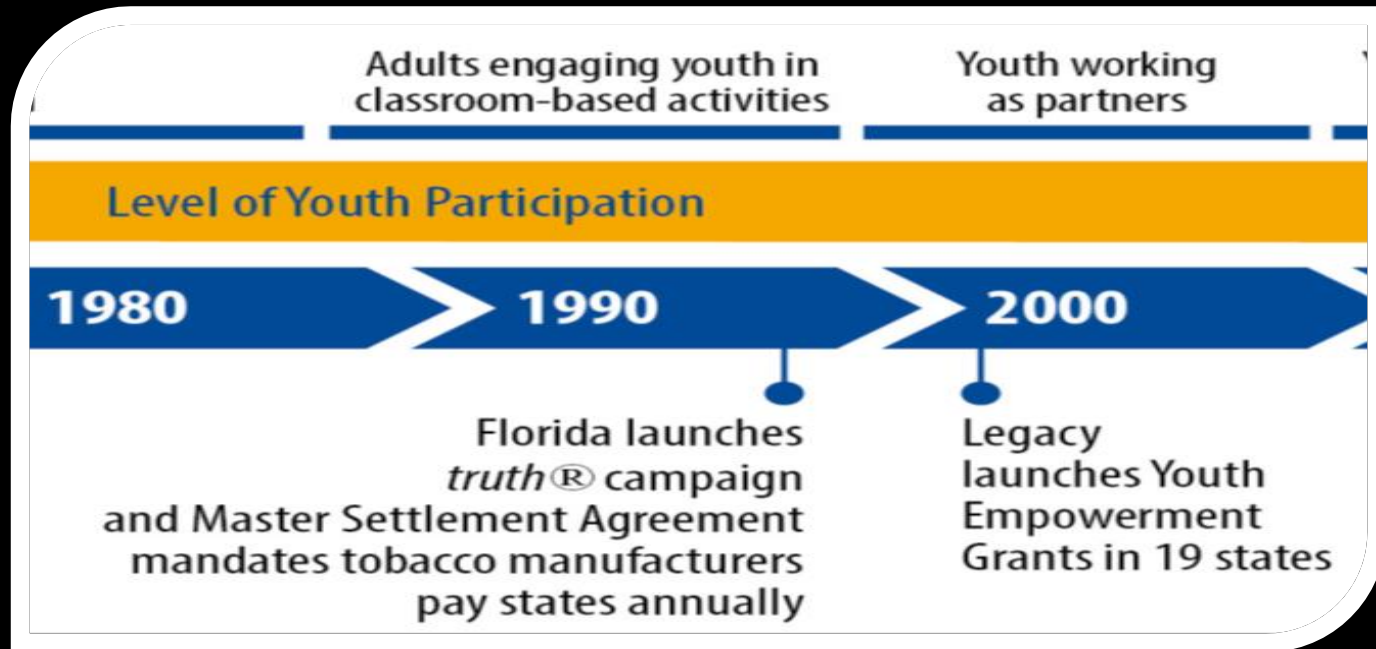
## THE INVOLVEMENT PHASE: 1980'S – 2000'S



**Youth are vehicles for adult agendas**

**Youth begin to have a voice, but is often scripted by adults**





**Youth are vehicles for adult agendas**

**Youth begin to have a voice**

**But that voice is often scripted by adults**



# PROBLEMS WITH INVOLVEMENT

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Youth are still given “adults know best” message, but their peers are saying it



# PROBLEMS WITH INVOLVEMENT

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Youth are given a superficial sense of their value to a cause or a coalition



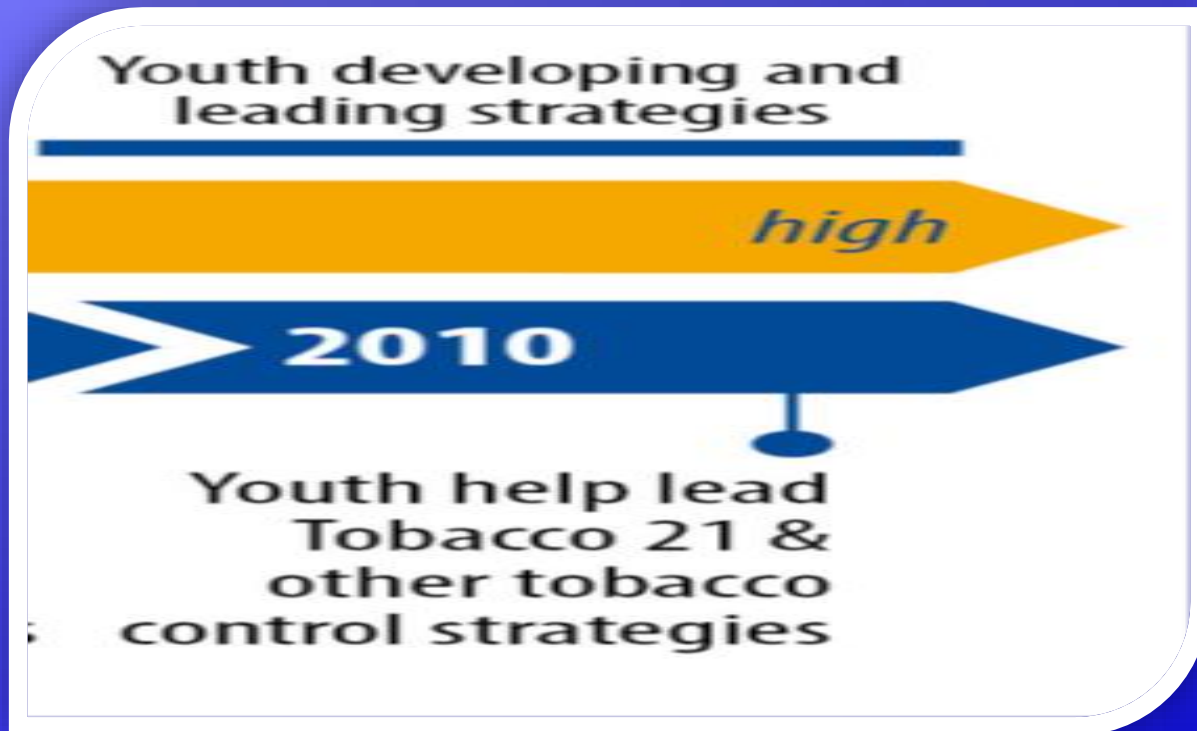
# PROBLEMS WITH INVOLVEMENT

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Only “superstar” youth who fit a desired mold are cultivated and given opportunities



# THE ENGAGEMENT PHASE







## EXAMPLES OF *ENGAGEMENT*

Young people having equal input into what they are going to say publicly on behalf of their coalition



## EXAMPLES OF *ENGAGEMENT*

**Youth collaborating with adults on drafting policies and setting strategic objectives (based on evidence)**



## EXAMPLES OF *ENGAGEMENT*

**Youth and adults carrying equal responsibility and sharing in equal credit and accountability for meeting objectives and goals**



# Youth Involvement Vs. Youth Engagement



## TYPICAL YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

## ROLES OF YOUNG PEOPLE:

- Youth are participants
- Youth receive information
- Youth are “helpers” to adults



## ACTIVE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

### ROLES OF YOUNG PEOPLE:

- Youth are partners
- Youth and adults share equally in providing information
- Youth and adults help one another



## TYPICAL YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

## DECISION-MAKING:

- Adults make unilateral decisions
- Youth input is minimal and tokenistic
- “Need to know basis” is used to exclude young people from decisions



## ACTIVE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

## DECISION-MAKING:

- Decisions are collaborative
- Youth and adults have equal input and equal accountability
- Decision-making is transparent





# Reaching Out to Youth

*Adulthood, Misconceptions  
and Realities*



# The Pitfall of Adultism

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**Adultism:**

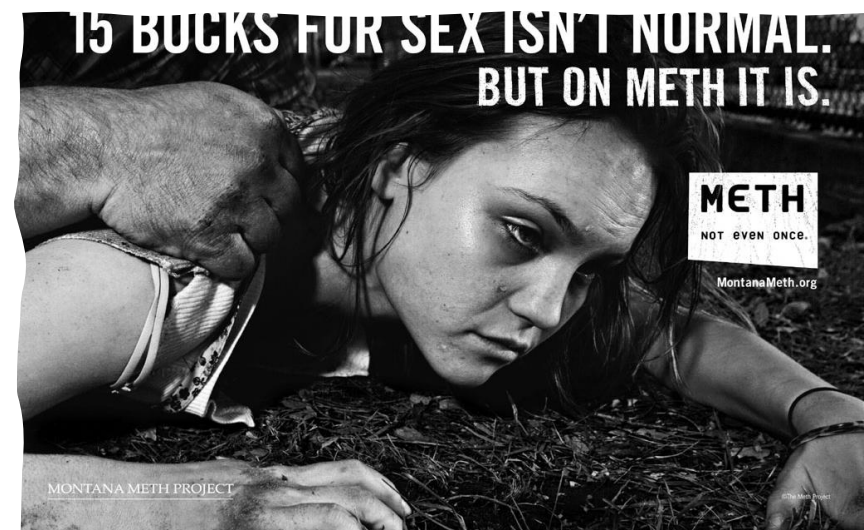
The belief that adults are *better* than young people, and are entitled to act upon young people *without permission or consent*.

**WARNING: HARSH CONTENT**

# Adultism in Prevention

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- Fear-based messages from authority figures
- Threats of punishment
- Shame-based ads and PSA's



# The Language of Adultism

*“You’re too young to understand...”*

*“This is for your own good...”*

*“When you’re older, you’ll understand...”*

*“Young people today have it so easy...”*

*“You’re the most spoiled generation ever...”*



# What Is a Misconception?

**A view or opinion that is incorrect because it is based on faulty thinking or understanding**



# “Youth Have Short Attention Spans”

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- Reason: Adults expect youth to pay attention to boring content and boring adults.
- Truth: Most young people will focus on anything that is relevant, interesting or exciting.





## **“Youth Only Care About Themselves”**

- **Reason: Adulthood typically carries more responsibility for others.**
- **Truth: Rates of youth volunteering are higher than they were 30 years ago.**
- **(Nonprofit Quarterly)**

# “Youth Don’t Understand Complex Issues”

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- Reason: Adults often don’t give young people the opportunity to engage with complex issues.
- Truth: CADCA and other organizations have engaged tens of thousands of youth in policy work for over 20 years.





“Adults have to be  
‘youthy’ to engage  
youth”

Never mind the reasons.  
Just DON'T DO IT!

Yuk...





# How Do We End Adultism and Misconceptions?

- Realize every adult is “infected”
- Call them out when we see them:
  - *In our coalitions*
  - *In our schools*
  - *In our families*
- *Offer youth meaningful opportunities for leadership and equity*

**POLL 3**

# HOW DO YOUTH ADD VALUE TO OUR PREVENTION WORK?

- **By building support among the public for prevention and health promotion**
- **By enhancing credibility among funders**
- **By becoming the next generation of leaders**



**TOBACCO 21: Policy  
Evaluation for Comprehensive  
Tobacco Control Programs**

# HOW DO YOUTH ADD VALUE TO OUR PREVENTION WORK?

- By mobilizing and leading their peers
- By bringing unique skills and experience
- By increasing adults' commitment to tobacco control and involvement in public health



**TOBACCO 21: Policy  
Evaluation for Comprehensive  
Tobacco Control Programs**



Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention  
National Center for Chronic  
Disease Prevention and  
Health Promotion



## WHAT ABOUT BENEFITS TO YOUTH THEMSELVES?

- Youth engagement builds self-confidence
- Youth engagement builds autonomy
- Youth engagement connects young people to their communities


# WHAT ABOUT BENEFITS TO YOUTH THEMSELVES?

- Youth engagement builds leadership skills
  - Youth engagement builds problem-solving and organizational skills
- 
- Youth engagement builds public presentation skills





# PREPARING TO ENGAGE YOUTH

- 
1. Why engage youth in the first place?
2. What do we want from them?
3. What strengths do we have to help us engage youth?
4. Who in our community can support our efforts?
5. Where will we recruit?
- 

# ASSESSING OUR CAPACITIES





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# Messages to share with leaders

Communicate *why* we want to engage them

- Benefits to the work
- Benefits to youth
- Benefits to the community

# Messages to share with leaders

Communicate how the program will benefit from youth being engaged

- Credibility benefits
- Funding benefits
- Sustainability benefits





# Example: Youth as Researchers



- **Youth can conduct community assessments**
- **Youth can survey attitudes about vape, tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, kratom, etc**



Youth can research price and promotion policies.



Youth can research outlet density and practices.



Tobacco  
Education

& Prevention  
Coalition  
for Porter County



Youth can gather data about the effectiveness of current retail policies.



Youth can assess community support for changing policy around any substance.



# Adults Play *Supporting* Roles

Guiding youth in  
selecting evidence-  
based strategies



# Adults Play *Supporting* Roles

Organizing ongoing  
training opportunities  
for professional  
development

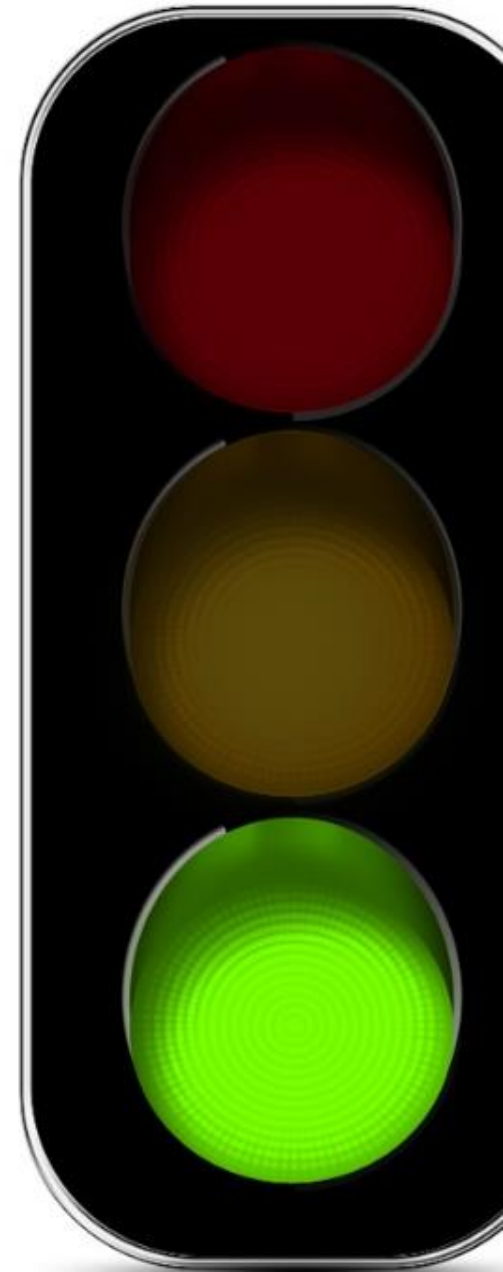
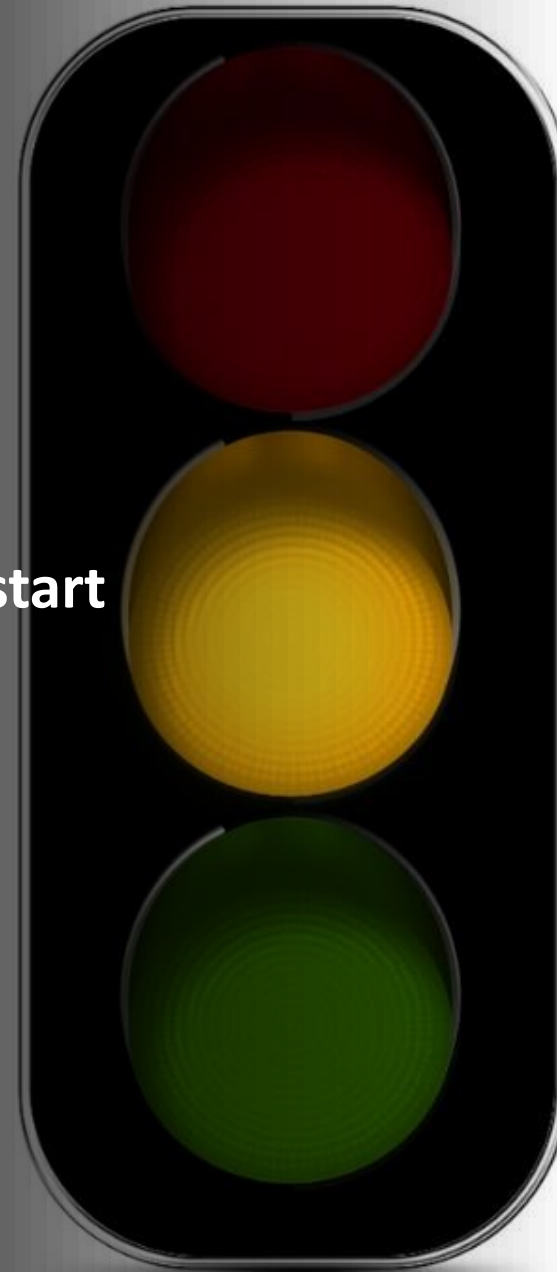




# Youth Engagement - DO

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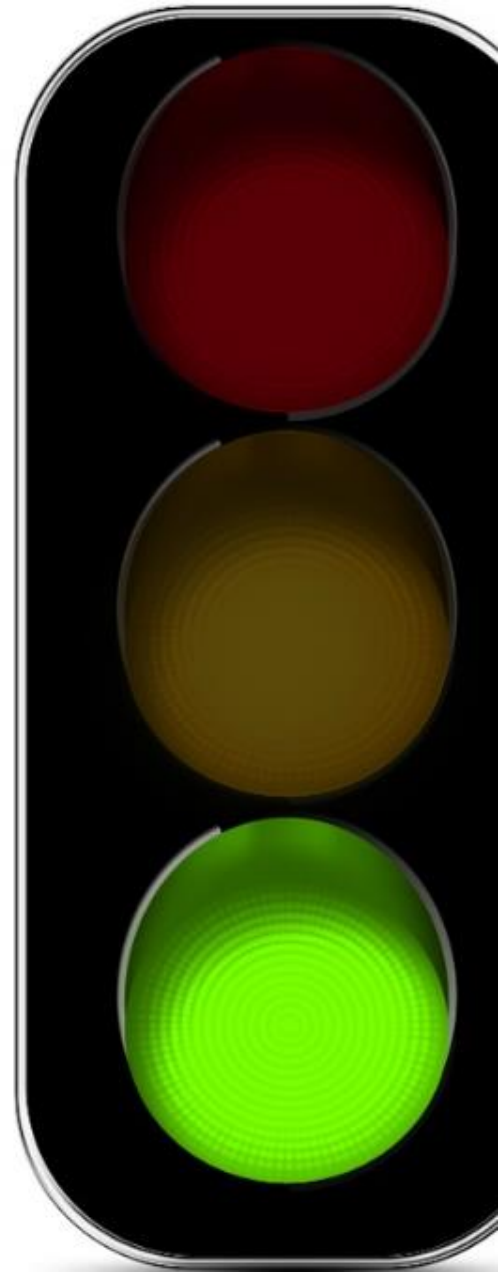
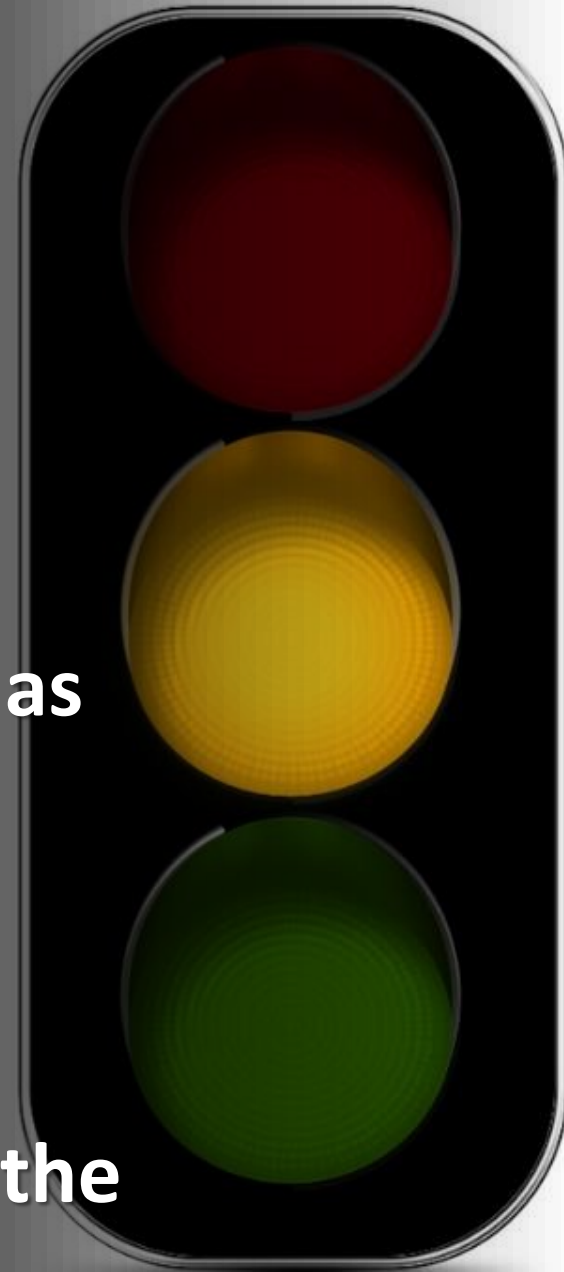
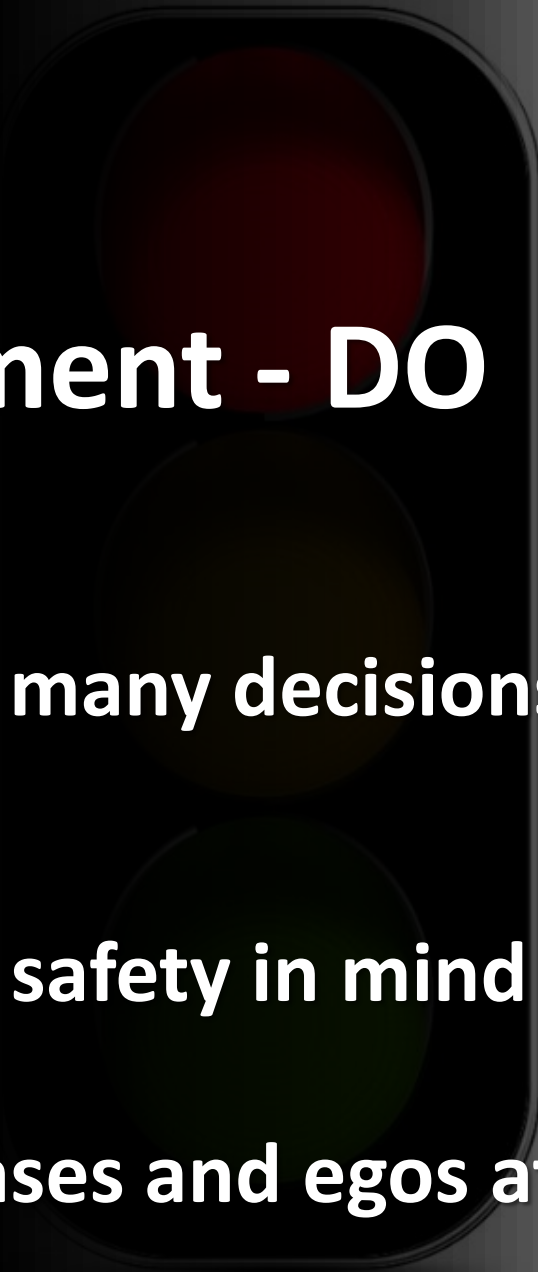
- **Involve and inform parents/guardians from the start**
- **Assume youth can handle complex issues and responsibilities**
- **Develop actionable plans for:**
  - *Outreach and recruitment*
  - *Retention & Sustainability*
  - *Strategic planning (based on evidence)*



# Youth Engagement - DO

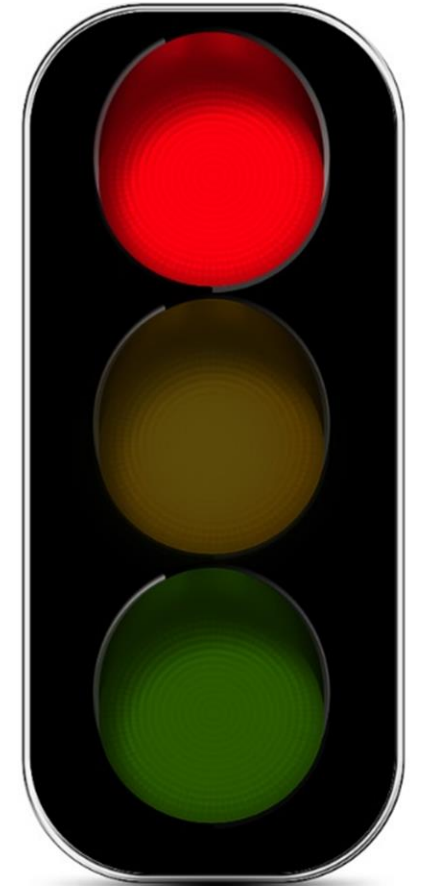
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- **Involve youth in as many decisions as possible – stretch!**
- **Always keep youth safety in mind**
- **Check our adult biases and egos at the door**



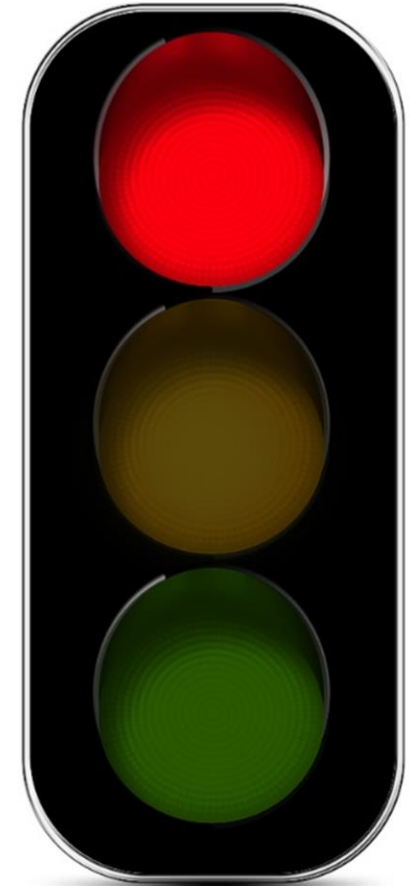
# Youth Engagement – **DON'T**

- Assume you understand the needs of young people without asking
- Stick only to recruiting youth that fit a preconceived identity
- Lose sight of your role as a guide and mentor (not a youth yourself)



# Youth Engagement – **DON'T**

- Hold onto roles and responsibilities as an adult simply because “It’s easier”
- Stop examining and challenging your own learned adultism and other biases (Again, we all have them...)
- Ever give up – It IS worth it!



# Where Are You In YOUR Youth Engagement Efforts?

## PHASE ONE

**Youth are primarily audiences**

**Adults make the decisions, and youth follow adult direction**

**Youth may have “helper” roles, but no autonomy in their work or in defining their roles**

## PHASE TWO

Youth are presenters to audiences, but with roles scripted by adults

Youth have limited decision-making authority (“Cheese or sausage, but it’s still gonna be pizza”)

Youth have some autonomy in guiding their work

## PHASE THREE

Youth determine messages and oversee campaigns

Youth and adults have equity in decision-making

Youth define their own roles, with adults acting as guides and mentors

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### TO MOVE AHEAD

- **ASK** your youth what they need, and respond
- **FOLLOW** Best Practices for authentic youth engagement
- **REMEMBER** that it's a process, and it's okay if it takes time

# POLL 4

their work or in defining their roles

gonna be pizza")

Youth have some autonomy in guiding their work

roles, with adults acting as guides and mentors





If we can all get  
through this...

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We can  
become this!





# THANK YOU!

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