

ACHIEVING INTENTIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The Use of the Activating Intentional Youth Development Approach (AIYDA) in GRYD Prevention Programming.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The GRYD Research Brief Series highlights the accomplishments of the GRYD Office and its community partners as they implement the GRYD Comprehensive Strategy.¹ This research brief examines the recent adoption of an intentional youth development approach for use by GRYD Prevention providers. The Activating Intentional Youth Development Approach (AIYDA) approach brings together best practices in asset-based youth development and social emotional learning to provide a framework for effective youth programming. GRYD is committed to supplying providers with the tools they need to be effective. I want to thank the GRYD Prevention providers who worked with us to pilot the approach for their insight and creativity. We believe AIYDA equips providers with concrete tools to increase protective factors, build resiliency, and improve the overall well-being of the youth. Looking ahead, AIYDA also establishes a direct way to evaluate youth development activities and continuously improve services for the youth and families served by GRYD providers.

ANNE C. TREMBLAY, JD

GRYD DIRECTOR



GRYD Prevention services are delivered to youth between the ages of 10 and 15 who experience high levels of risk for gang joining and are intended to increase youth and family resiliency while reducing the impact of those risks.² Youth development activities play a central role in GRYD Prevention services. Between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2019, GRYD Prevention providers delivered 36,126 youth development activities to 3,378 young people resulting in 70,265 hours of youth engagement. Activities offered by GRYD providers included sports, arts and crafts, community service projects, theme park trips, and attendance of movies or related performances.

The level of GRYD youth development "dosage" is impressive and raises the question of what is being learned during these activities. Although GRYD Prevention youth development activities were originally intended to develop skills to enhance youth well-being GRYD providers received minimal training or tools to effectively guide this work. Consequently, it is unclear whether these youth development activities purposefully connected youth to skill building or if they provided prosocial opportunities that kept youth busy and happy without intentionally building critical competencies.

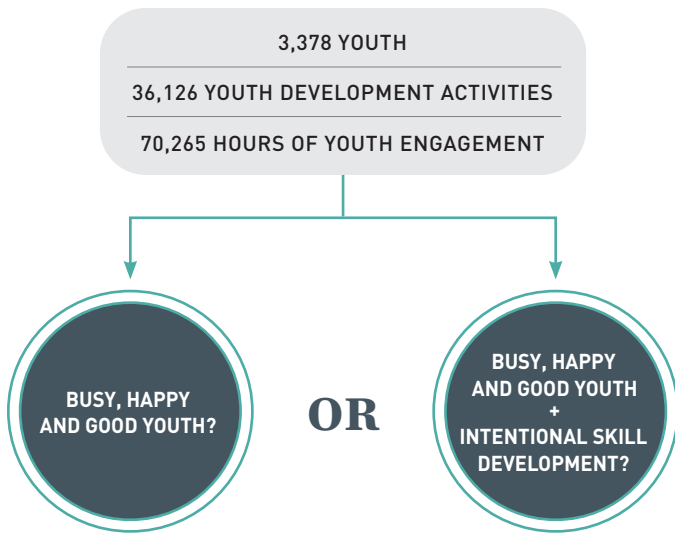


Figure 1: GRYD Prevention Youth Development Activities from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2019

To address this issue, GRYD adopted the Activating Intentional Youth Development Approach (AIYDA™). AIYDA offers GRYD providers the tools to ensure youth development activities engage young people and intentionally connect to learning social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills. The use of AIYDA was launched in 2018, and the first step in this process was to train a group of GRYD Prevention providers.* The purpose of this GRYD Research Brief is to provide a detailed description of AIYDA and summarize feedback from the first provider training.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND THE UNDERPINNINGS OF AIYDA

Effective youth development programming in the 21st Century is largely defined within the Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach. PYD is:

...an intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people's strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.³

PYD's emerged in the 1990s and its emphasis on building youth strengths and assets redefined the nature of youth development programming, which was historically focused on "fixing youth problems." PYD was an outgrowth of adolescent development research connecting the developmental plasticity of adolescence with the opportunity to foster assets (e.g., preventive, protective, and life-optimizing skills) that promote productive adulthood.⁴ Specifically, PYD refocused youth development programming from personal deficits to the cultivation of strengths, interests, and potential.^{4,5}

Although PYD's asset-based approach successfully reframed youth development programming from fixing youth deficits to building youth resiliency, this approach does not necessarily prescribe how to design and deliver specific youth development programming.⁶⁻⁸ The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) process fills this gap by providing a pathway to develop interrelated cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills tantamount to youth wellness and resiliency.⁹ SEL was developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning and is based on the five core competencies shown in Table 1.¹⁰⁻¹⁶

Social science research validates SEL's capacity to foster positive, life-optimizing outcomes. A recent meta-analysis of SEL programming evaluations showed a significant relationship between building SEL competencies and decreasing impulsivity, sensation-seeking, negative peer influence, antisocial tendencies, and delinquency.¹⁷⁻²³ Research findings further elucidate the significance of SEL competencies by identifying the relationship between desirable youth outcomes and more specific domains nested within the SEL competencies. The domains highlighted in evidence-based research include emotion management, empathy, teamwork, responsibility, initiative, and problem solving. The interrelated nature between SEL competencies and evidence-based domains is shown in Table 1.

Research on the delivery of best practices shows that SEL is most effective when it is delivered within the SAFE (Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit) framework.¹⁷ The SAFE framework ensures SEL skills are delivered in a context with (1) clear and consistent rules, expectations and structure; (2) opportunities for meaningful inclusion and belonging; (3) positive social norms; (4) support for efficacy and autonomy; and (5) positive, sustainable adult-youth relationships.^{18, 24-27}

* A small pilot of AIYDA was implemented in two GRYD Zones as part of a sports-based program called GRYD Iron. Lessons learned from this pilot were used to launch the current effort to integrate AIYDA into all youth development activities.

Table 1: The Relationship Between Social Emotional Competencies and Empirically Supported Domains

SEL COMPETENCIES	DESCRIPTION OF SEL COMPETENCY	SEL COMPETENCY-RELATED DOMAINS
Self-Awareness Skills	The ability to accurately recognize the relationship between emotions/ thoughts and behavior. An accurate assessment of strengths and a well-grounded sense of self.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotion management • Empathy
Self-Management Skills	The ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. The ability to control impulses, manage stress, and set and achieve personal goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotion management • Responsibility • Initiative
Responsible Decision-Making Skills	The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior based on an accurate evaluation of consequences of various actions on the well-being of self and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotion management • Responsibility • Initiative • Problem-Solving
Relationship Skills	The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships, which involves communicating, active listening, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking/offering help when needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Responsibility • Problem solving • Emotion management
Social Awareness Skills	The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others; to understand social and ethical norms for behavior; and to recognize resources and supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Responsibility • Initiative

SEQUENCED S	Coordinating and implementing activities that are broken down and sequenced to allow youth to learn, develop, connect to, and master a specific set of skills.
ACTIVE A	Employing teaching strategies that use active forms of learning and engage students in the learning process through hands-on exercises.
FOCUSED F	Focusing appropriate time and resources on student instruction and skill development.
EXPLICIT E	Developing clear and explicit learning goals that are relayed to youth in well-defined and specific terms.

Figure 2: The Four Practices of the SAFE Framework

Together, these practices outline the generalized principles and delivery features to align programming the contextual settings and experiences necessary to foster successful PYD outcomes.²⁸

GRYD AND THE ACTIVATING INTENTIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

AIDYA offers GRYD Prevention providers a critical tool to deliver youth development activities that not only keep youth “busy, happy, and good,” but also make sure they are learning the physical, emotional, and cognitive competencies they need to be resilient and healthy throughout adolescence and into adulthood. The inclusion of AIDYA also redirects GRYD Prevention youth development activities from a risk-based approach to an asset-based strategy to reduce risk by strengthening wellness. Previously, case plans and youth development activities were driven by how to reduce risk factors for gang membership with a parallel focus on youth strengths. By incorporating the Positive Youth Development (PYD) and the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) frameworks into GRYD services, AIDYA reengineers how GRYD providers reduce risk by moving the attention away from problem behaviors and focusing on the development of skills connected to life-long learning and personal success. As indicated in Figure 3, as the resiliency levels of youth rise via SEL competencies, GRYD anticipates the risk factor influences and problem behavior will decrease.**

To better understand how AIDYA facilitates this process, we turn next to a description of AIDYA.

** For more information on the role of risk factors and problem behavior identification in GRYD Prevention services please refer to GRYD Research Brief No. 1: *The City of Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Comprehensive Strategy*.

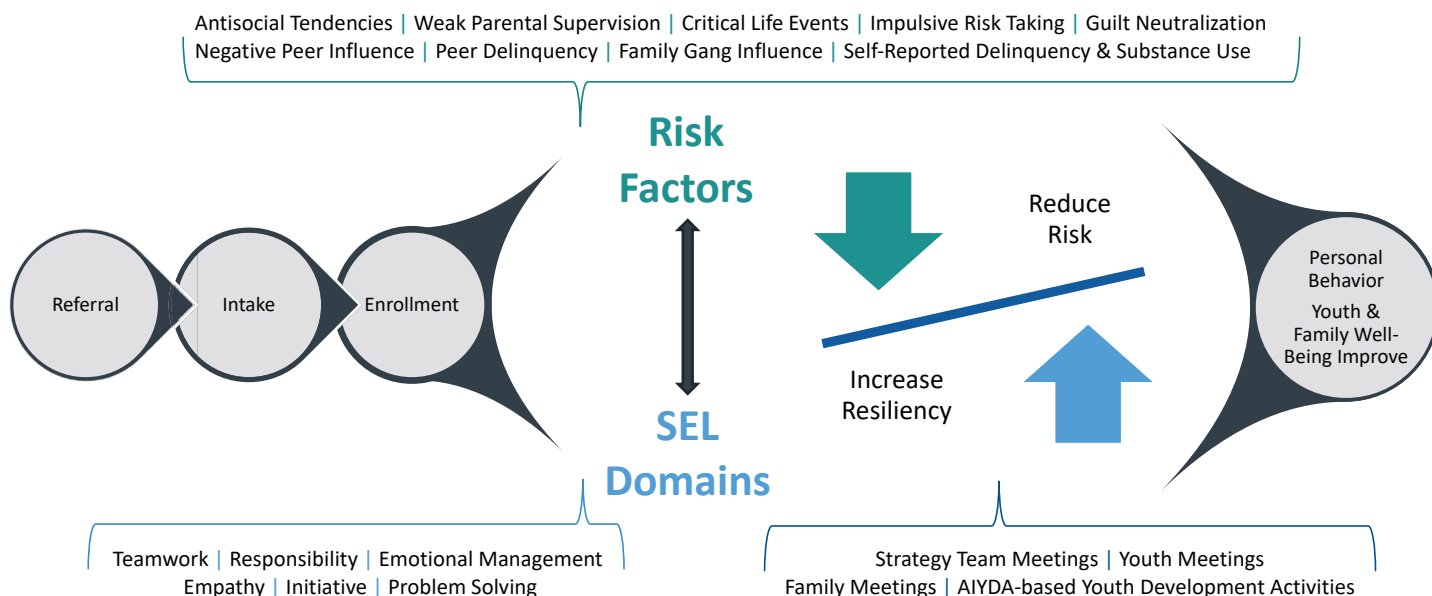


Figure 3: Reducing Risk by Targeting Resiliency in GRYD Prevention Programming

THE ACTIVATING INTENTIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH (AIYDA)

The Activating Intentional Youth Development Approach (AIYDA) forges a common language and a standardized process to develop and deliver purposeful youth development activities by integrating the core elements of the Positive Youth Development approach (PYD), the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) approach, and the Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit (SAFE) Framework. This approach, in turn, creates a valuable tool to deliver youth development in a meaningful and consistent way. In addition to integrating these best practice approaches, implementation of AIYDA is based on four fundamental principles:



Figure 4: The Four Fundamental Principles of the Activating Intentional Youth Development Approach (AIYDA)

These AIYDA principles are reflected in its three-fold intentionality framework for building and delivering youth development activities:

1. Designing purposeful youth development activities linked to SEL skill competencies
2. Structuring content in a fixed format to ensure the consistency of delivery
3. Using the "Tell-Show-Do-Encourage-Reflect" approach to engage all learning styles

DESIGNING PURPOSEFUL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Implementing purposeful youth development activities provides youth with opportunities to practice and ultimately master skills related to SEL competencies. Four interrelated steps guide the process to anchor activities with intentionality.

Step 1: Select and Operationalize a Domain

An intentional youth development activity focuses one of the following evidence-based domains drawn from SEL competency areas: emotion management, responsibility, empathy, teamwork, problem solving, and initiative. Once the domain is selected, it must be operationalized, or defined, for the purposes of increasing the likelihood of learning. Simply put, the operational definition of the domain standardizes the language that is used among staff and learners. The operational definition of the domain should be clear, concise, and simple to understand by staff supervising the activity and the learners. It should also be observable and measurable. As such, using operational definitions serves as quality assurance mechanism by ensuring that all programming that targets a particular SEL objective is repeatable and delivered with consistency.^{29,30} Table 2 illustrates this process, showing the selected SEL domain, emotion management, and its operational definition.

Table 2: Step 1—Identifying and Defining the SEL Domain Emotion Management

Identify Domain	Create an Operational Definition
Emotion Management	Being able to identify and handle positive and negative emotions

Step 2: Identify and Operationalize an Activator

Once the domain for an AIYDA activity is selected, at least one activator (and no more than two) must be identified. Activators represent the progression of micro-behaviors needed to reach proficiency in the selected domain. These micro components, in turn, can be used to scaffold skill development for the intended SEL objective. Learning SEL skills according to activators facilitates progressive skill practice and increases the likelihood of youth learning. "Self-control," for example, is a critical activator for the domain emotion management (see Table 3). While it can be considered daunting to learn emotion management, practicing and learning self-control is more manageable and leads to mastering emotion management.

Table 3: Step 2—Identifying and Defining the Activators for Emotion Management

Identify Domain	Create an Operational Definition	Identify Activator	Create an Operational Definition
Emotion Management	Being able to identify and handle positive and negative emotions	Self-Control	Being able to react positively to a frustrating situation

SEL skill proficiency requires practicing skills according to their fundamental parts in a scaffolded way and facilitating the learner's motivation through the recognition of success.^{31,32} In other words, skill proficiency is reached by progressing in difficulty as learning occurs and then practicing full skill execution.³³ For example, swimming requires floating, kicking, breathing, and stroke patterns. Effective swimming instruction separates and progressively practices each part until mastery of all parts enables full stroke execution. Since learning a skill requires practice, learners need to exert effort across practice sessions to accomplish mastery. Recognizing one's own success is the primary motivator in sustaining effort during skill practice; thus, activities must be designed to progressively increase the likelihood that learners will recognize their success and sustain their motivation to continue in subsequent activity sessions.

As part of this process, the activator must be operationalized or defined. As mentioned above, an operational definition provides common language outlining the activator in order to align the activity and feedback. The operational definitions for the activator should be linked to the operational definition for the domain. Together, these definitions are used whenever the activity is described by staff to staff and participating youth in order to secure the activity's adherence to its intended purpose.

Step 3: Develop a Learning Objective

A learning objective states what learners will *know or be able to do* as a result of engaging in the activity session in an observable and measurable way. Developing learning objectives can be accomplished by completing the prompt "*Learners will be able to....*" The objective should clearly articulate the behavior to be observed (the *what*), the condition under which the behavior is to be demonstrated (the *how*), and the criteria for competency (the *measurable evidence*). Using the emotion management activity example, Table 4 displays how all five components are interconnected.

Table 4: Step 3—Developing a Learning Objective for the SEL Domain Emotion Management and Activator Self-Control

SEL Domain	Operational Definition for the Domain	Activator	Operational Definition for the Activator	Learning Objective
Emotion Management	Being able to identify and handle positive and negative emotions	Self-Control	Being able to react positively to a frustrating situation	Learners will be able to persist throwing a ball at different size targets without getting angry or frustrated during the throwing intervals

Step 4: Select the Activity

The final step to developing an intentional activity is to select the activity (or activities) that provides youth with the opportunity to practice the skill related to the learning objective. Activities should provide as much opportunity for skill practice as possible in order to increase the likelihood of learning. An example of an activity that facilitates our emotion management youth development activity is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Step 4—Select the Activity Related to the Learning Objective for the SEL Domain Emotion Management and Activator Self-Control

SEL Domain	Operational Definition for the Domain	Activator	Operational Definition for the Activator	Learning Objective	Activity
Emotion Management	Being able to identify and handle positive and negative emotions	Self-Control	Being able to react positively to a frustrating situation	Learners will be able to persist throwing a ball at different size targets without getting angry or frustrated during the throwing intervals	Learners will throw different sized balls at targets of differing sizes placed at different heights, during timed intervals of 2 minutes

STRUCTURING INTENTIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Once a youth development activity is intentionally defined using the steps above, effectiveness depends on the delivery or execution of the activity in the field. Aligning the delivery of an activity with field-accepted teaching protocol represents the second part of AIYDA's threefold intentionality framework.³⁴ Structural intentionality is accomplished by formatting youth development activities according to five elements shown to enhance the likelihood of learning.³⁴ The time allotment for each element described below is based on a 60-minute activity.

WARM-UP/INSTANT ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

The Warm-Up is also called the Instant Activity and its purpose is to engage youth immediately upon arriving to the activity. For example, as they enter the program area (e.g., classroom, gym, playground, etc.), youth are directed to an activity as a warm-up or preparation for a subsequent activity. This way, the youths' transition to the program session is intentional.

GROUP HUDDLE (5 MINUTES)

The Group Huddle immediately follows the Warm-Up/Instant Activity. The purpose of the Group Huddle is for activity leaders to present the session's learning objective and operational definitions to participating youth. The descriptions should be easy to understand and include examples, as well as quick methods to verify participant understanding. For example:

Our focus today is on teamwork. Teamwork is working together as a group to achieve a common goal. Who can share an example of when they showed teamwork in this way? Our activities today are going to help you practice working together to succeed as a group. Please show thumbs up if you understand or show thumbs down if you have questions.

The precise language crafted in the operational definitions and learning objective needs to be reinforced throughout the Group Huddle and continued throughout the activity. Adherence to using a common language is essential to the activity's intentionality and ultimate success. The Group Huddle concludes with a segue to the session's main activity.

MAIN ACTIVITY (35 MINUTES)

The Main Activity facilitates skill practice to foster the participant's learning. Leaders use the intentional communication model described in the next section to introduce the activity. During the activity, leaders encourage participants regularly and provide corrective feedback when needed.

GROUP REWIND (5 MINUTES)

The group unites all participants after the conclusion of the main activity to "rewind" what occurred. During the Group Rewind, leaders briefly review the learning objective, recap notable occurrences during the activity, and elicit feedback from participants about their experiences. Participant reflection and expression is critical to the Group Rewind because it provides a shared discussion of what was learned and the success of the activity.

REFLECTION/JOURNALING (5 MINUTES)

Building on participant feedback in the Group Rewind, the AIYDA activity concludes with participants responding to three or four writing prompts specific to the session's learning objective. Journal responses are read by leaders prior to the next activity session to identify and positively respond (through written feedback) to any evidence of self-reflection and learning. Journaling benefits both the participant and the leaders of the activity. For participants, journaling offers a space to reflect and recognize how the activity brought them new awareness about themselves and/or others. For leaders, journaling provides insight about participant capacities and experiences, which in turn informs an assessment of the activity for future consideration. Equally valuable, journaling creates a way for leaders to deepen their understanding of and relationships with participants and provides a source of data to evaluate the effectiveness of AIYDA activities over time.

USING INTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION TO ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS

The third factor of intentionality is delivering content according to an intentional communication model that accounts for diverse learning styles and perceptual strengths and optimizes engagement in the learning process (i.e., encouragement and corrective feedback). The “Tell-Show-Do-Encourage-Reflect” approach prescribes the mode of communication for instructing, managing, and interacting with youth. This approach, shown in Figure 5, is derived from best practices for increasing the likelihood of learning and enabling sustained engagement during the learning activity.³³⁻⁴²

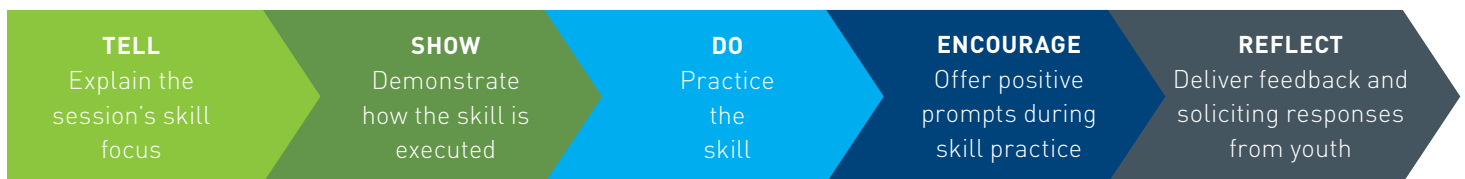


Figure 5: The Tell-Show-Do-Encourage-Reflect Approach to Teaching and Learning

TELL-SHOW-DO:

Skill practice triggers the development of skill proficiency, but during the learning process some youth respond best to hearing instructions about how to execute a skill (auditory learning), while others do better with seeing a skill demonstration (visual learning) or by engaging in the execution of the skill (kinesthetic learning).³⁵⁻³⁹ Intentional communication accounts for the spectrum of learning styles by including verbal explanation and demonstration during each episode of skill instruction delivered, followed by activities that enable skill practice. For example, during the Group Huddle, leaders explain the session's targeted skill and demonstrate how to perform the skill before engaging youth to practice said skill on their own.



ENCOURAGE

Once instruction is delivered and the youth are practicing, leaders demonstrate the “encourage” feature of intentional communication by moving around youth engaged in the skill and offering positive and corrective feedback. Encouragement and positive feedback from leader motivates and inspires youth to sustain their effort during skill practice because it messages the feasibility of success (i.e., learning).^{32, 44, 45} Similarly, corrective feedback during practice helps learners understand how their skill execution should be modified to improve form and function. Learners respond positively to corrective feedback because it connects to an innate interest for self-improvement and supports their ability to master the skill.

A critical aspect of the “encourage” feature of intentional communication is to plan the feedback that will be delivered. Just as planning the learning activity is essential to ensuring the activity is purposeful to the targeted objective, planning feedback ensures the responses from leaders to youth are also purposeful. This is critical because what is reinforced by leaders through feedback tends to be what is learned by youth. Thus, purposeful feedback aligns the interaction between the activity leader, the learner, and the activity's learning objective.

REFLECT

The “reflect” feature occurs at the end of a session whereby leaders encourage youth to reflect about the activity and what they learned. Reflecting on their experiences during the session further reinforces learning for the learner and provides feedback to the leader of the activity. As described above, the strategy of journaling is a primary vehicle to elicit reflection from the youth.

The features of “Tell-Show-Do-Encourage-Reflect” play a critical role in the mastery of skills and overall learning because it connects the leader’s instruction delivery with behavior management and interaction with those participating in the activity across all stages of delivering an intentional activity session.

SUMMARY

AIYDA features a threefold intentionality framework for building and delivering youth development activities in alignment with best practices for youth development and key principles of learning. AIYDA helps practitioners deliver youth development programming that is intentional towards youth learning the skills empirically correlated with productive lives and optimum life quality. Without intentionally targeting skill development, it is unlikely that learning will occur or be sustained through behavior change beyond the activity itself. AIYDA’s framework for purposeful planning also creates a foundation from which quality assurance of youth development activities can be assessed on a regular basis and evaluation of programming is possible.



IMPLEMENTING AIYDA IN GRYD PREVENTION SERVICES: A TRAINING COURSE FOR GRYD PROVIDERS

AIYDA offers GRYD providers a valuable tool to build participant SEL competency skills and reduce the impact of risks they experience. To introduce AIYDA into GRYD Prevention programming, a training course was piloted with GRYD staff (i.e., GRYD Regional Program Coordinators-RPCs) and GRYD prevention provider staff and supervisors from seven GRYD contracted prevention agencies (one half of all GRYD Prevention providers). In total, the class was delivered to 34 participants: 27 agency staff providing direct services, four agency supervisors or directors, and three GRYD RPCs.

The training was a 16-hour class, delivered in two hour blocks every week for eight weeks.

The cohort was evenly split among genders (at all program staff levels) and included a diverse representation of Hispanic, African American, Caucasian, and Asian American participants. Participants received a Certificate of Completion from the College of Professional and Global Education (PaGE) at California State University, Los Angeles. Course learning outcomes were focused on fostering professional competencies to deliver AIYDA across agencies. Upon completion of the training, participants were able to:

- Articulate core youth development domains, activators, and operational definitions
- Design effective programming to foster youth development gains
- Deliver effective feedback aligned to youth development learning
- Use systematic reflection to assess youth development learning activities
- Use core youth development tenets to measure/evaluate progress – and use the results to inform program modification.

Class sessions were organized using a step-build approach and content was delivered using active learning strategies. The step-build approach progressively scaffolds content according to a specified format aligned with the AIYDA threefold intentionality framework. The course began with an overview of youth development principles and an in-depth explanation of the steps involved in developing intentional youth development sessions according to AIYDA. Participants were introduced to the *AIYDA Planner* as the tool to use to intentionally develop activity sessions. They practiced each step of the activity development process by completing the respective components while receiving feedback from peers and the instructor. Then, participants used the *AIYDA Planner* to step-build an intentional youth development activity for delivery at their agency.

Participant learning culminated into the completion of a capstone project. The capstone project required participants to implement the intentional youth development activity they built, reflect on its effectiveness to foster learning, and modify the activity based on lessons learned. Participants prepared posters of their AIYDA activities and presented the activity and reflections to the entire class. Capstone presentations afforded participants the opportunity to demonstrate their competency with developing and delivering AIYDA programming, and it stimulated learning community discussions across agencies about their relative experiences.

CAPSTONE PROJECTS: A CASE EXAMPLE

The following capstone poster illustrates AIYDA's intentionality elements in the design of a youth development activity.

Teamwork is the **targeted SEL domain** and the **operational definition** for teamwork is *working together to achieve a common goal*. Communication and prosocial behavior are the designated **activators** and the **operational definition** for each activator, respectively, is *verbally sharing information to complete a task, and using truthful and helpful language*. The **learning objective** for this activity is (Youth will be able to) *contribute to team success by effectively communicating cues to advance the activity*.

The **Warm-Up/Instant Activity** is directly aligned to the main learning activity by providing youth the opportunity to use a sequence of teamwork actions.

The **Huddle** dictates how the session will be introduced and how the learning objective will be presented. During this Huddle, the session's learning objective and corresponding operational definitions are presented, the Main Activity is explained, and the positioning for the Taxi Cab activity is demonstrated. The Huddle concludes with a check for understanding to ensure the participants comprehend the objectives, operational definitions, and rules.

The **Main Activity** offers frequent opportunities for youth to practice teamwork by way of communication and prosocial behavior activators. Briefly, Taxi Cab is an improvisational, role-playing activity where the person in the driver seat takes on different personalities (e.g. one in a great rush, one wanting to enjoy the ride) and all the cab passengers must mimic the driver's personality. This requires youth to behave in a manner they are unaccustomed to and/or try something new through the assistance of teamwork (as activated through communication, active listening, and prosocial behavior) to achieve group synergy. **Feedback prompts** remind practitioners what to respond to and how to respond as participants engage in the activity. Learning is reinforced by providing targeted feedback to recognize and reward participants' overt engagement in teamwork, communication, active listening, and prosocial behavior.

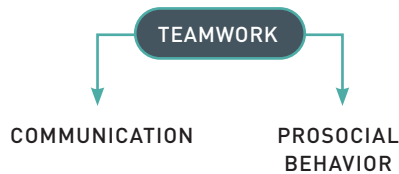
Rewind prompts the youth to share responses about their experiences during the session specific to the objectives. The Rewind for this activity focuses on discussing the challenges they faced when role-playing and how teamwork contributed to their success.

To close the learning loop, three **Journal Questions** offer youth additional opportunities to further reflect about their learning during the session. The three journal questions for this activity prompt participants to think about how they experienced role playing as an example of teamwork and why they think this worked.

AIYDA

Activating Intentional Youth Development Approach

DOMAIN AND ACTIVATORS



OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

TEAMWORK Working together to achieve a common goal.

COMMUNICATION Verbally sharing information to complete a task.

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR Using a truthful and helpful language.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

YOUTH WILL BE ABLE TO...

Contribute to team success by effectively communicating cues to advance the activity.

WARM-UP/INSTANT ACTIVITY

1. Circle-up youth and count off "1, 2, 3"
2. Replace numbers with actions (1=snap, 2=clap, 3=stomp)
3. Youth will follow a progressive sequence of actions
4. If the sequence is disrupted, the entire team performs "correct sequence to support each other."

GROUP HUDDLE

Present communication, active listening and prosocial behavior with examples. Check for understanding. Present the main activity — Taxi Cab. Check for understanding of the activity's roles: the driver and passenger are in the front directing the passengers in the back. Conclude huddle with a 'taxi!' on three

MAIN ACTIVITY: TAXI CAB



FEEDBACK PROMPTS

- Reinforce all verbal and non-verbal communication that is specific to the activity's roles and supportive of others' roles.
- Reinforce instances of active listening and truthful and helpful language.

GROUP REWIND

PROMPT YOUTH TO COMMENT ON:

- How they liked the different roles
- The challenges the passengers faced
- How communication supported the passengers and led to team success.

Conclude rewind with an affirmation and team cheer.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

1. What was the most challenging role for you? Why?
2. Who was the most helpful team member? Why?
3. How did you help the team succeed?

This youth development activity was designed by GRYD provider staff from El Nido Family Centers as a capstone project for the AIYDA training course.

PROVIDER REFLECTIONS ON THE AIYDA COURSE

To assess the impact of the class, a link to an online survey consisting of eight open-ended questions was provided to all participants after the last class. The primary intent was to capture their perspectives about the effectiveness of the class, particularly the key youth development takeaways upon being introduced to AIYDA. The secondary intent was to solicit suggestions for subsequent training that could strengthen the process for adopting AIYDA across the GRYD network.

The findings indicated that the participants found the class useful, particularly for introducing AIYDA as the means to reframe and improve their youth development activities. Participant responses highlighted the value of the AIYDA training in two particular ways: (1) Understanding how intentionality facilitates learning and (2) building the professional competencies to deliver intentional youth development activities. Responses related to these two themes are summarized below.

THE VALUE OF INTENTIONALITY TO FACILITATE LEARNING

Following the completion of the course, participants expressed a better understanding of the role intentionality plays in the learning process:

"Before the class I did not fully grasp and implement the concept of intentionality. After the class it became clear that the more intentional the youth development programming, the more effective the outcome."

"I know what intentional youth development is now, and before the class youth development to me was just a time used to see the kids interact with each other with no purpose."

"You need to go into programming with a clear plan, so the kids are not just having fun, they are actually learning."

"Every experience must be a learning experience."

Participants also noted that intentionality enhances youth engagement, which results in better learning outcomes.

"Youth vote with their feet; and, therefore are more likely to be excited about intentional, purpose-driven programming, which in turn can lead to more engagement and overall learning."

The adaptability of intentionality was surprising and appreciated by participants. They saw AIYDA as a neutral platform that could be applied to various types of activities, ranging from sports to the arts to field trips to community engagement projects.

"YD can be developed in sports activities but ALSO in social and emotional activities."

"I now have the ability to link any activity to an ability/strength possessed by a youth."

THE VALUE OF BUILDING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES TO DELIVER INTENTIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Participant responses unanimously indicated that the class fostered the acquisition of professional competencies required to design and deliver *intentional* youth development programming. This suggests that the participants were able to discriminate the skill set difference between delivering an intentional activity from delivering an activity in which youth are simply occupied.

"I can now apply intentional youth groups instead of just providing youth with an activity."

"Since the class, my programming has been much richer and more robust."

"The class gave me the tools that I was looking for to provide a successful experience to our program youth."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE AIYDA TRAINING

Participants also offered input on what was needed to sustain and build upon the experience they had in this training. Overall, participants indicated the importance of having:

- booster training sessions to build on newly acquired skills
- a forum to practice writing learning objectives and operational definitions
- a matrix of activities specific to each SEL domain
- site visits to get feedback on the model's delivery as it occurs at the different GRYD agencies

Each of these suggestions were incorporated in planning the next phase of training to support the use of AIYDA for all youth development activities delivered by GRYD providers in the future.

MOVING FORWARD

GRYD adopted AIYDA to structurally ensure the intentionality of all youth development activities toward fostering social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills among youth. The first step in this process was to deliver an 8-week training program to GRYD Prevention providers. Based on the experiences and feedback of this training, GRYD has designed a phased-in approach for incorporating AIYDA into the delivery of all youth development activities offered by GRYD providers. The steps in this process are described below.

1. Train all GRYD Prevention and Intervention Providers: The initial training was a pilot and only included half of all GRYD Prevention providers. The next step is to deliver the initial training to all remaining GRYD Prevention providers and expand the use of AIYDA into the GRYD Intervention Family Case Management Program.
2. Field Observations: After initial training, an AIYDA instructor will conduct on-site observations at the GRYD provider agencies to support the adoption of AIYDA by addressing agency-specific challenges and discussing how AIYDA can be customized to align to the particular mission of each agency.
3. Delivering Booster and Intensive Trainings: Providing additional and on-going training is important to support and sustain the fidelity of AIYDA in its implementation. At least, three types of training programs will be delivered to providers.
 - a. AIYDA: The Basics, The Boost, The Build, which delivers the core principles, framework, and mechanics of AIYDA

- b. AIYDA Live, which includes delivering AIYDA-developed intentional activities to youth during the training, thus enabling practitioners to experience the approach firsthand.
- c. AIYDA Deep-Dives, which includes SEL domain-focused concentrations of learning objectives, operational definitions, and learning activities.

4. Maintaining an AIYDA Activity Library: Using the step-build process described above, GRYD providers will develop and submit AIYDA activities to the GRYD Office. Each activity will be reviewed according to specific criteria for approval. Approved activities will be added to the AIYDA Activity Library, which will be accessible to all GRYD providers.
5. Creating an AIYDA Online Learning Community Forum: This AIYDA instructor-led forum will support GRYD providers throughout the development and implementation process. The forum will be a place for providers to seek solutions to youth development programming challenges, announce successes, and exchange ideas.
6. Evaluate the Impact of AIYDA: Data will be collected on AIYDA through the GRYD Database. These data will allow researchers to examine the impact of the AIYDA developed activities on the reduction of risk factors and facilitating positive behavior change. Findings from this research will be incorporated into GRYD Data Feedback Loop Training to continuously improve the role of intentional youth development activities in GRYD services.

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