

the handbook of

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SAMPLE PAGES

Second Edition



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Positive Youth Outcomes

Dear Friend:

When young people participate in our programs, we strive to provide the best supports and opportunities possible. We learn best practices, train ourselves and our staff and continually aim for effective, quality youth programs. We all have expectations for our youth and youth have expectations for themselves. But what are the positive outcomes for young people who participate in youth development programs?

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Youth development programs assist young people in developing competencies that will enable them to grow, develop their skills and become healthy, responsible and caring youth and adults. As youth agencies, we know that we cannot do it alone. Youth development is a shared responsibility. Many factors affect young people's lives. Youth agencies must work in partnership with families, schools and communities as they contribute to the positive growth of youth. In addition, youth agencies need to work with each other – to share insights and to tap into each other's expertise.

Networks for Youth Development has combined research, discussion and practical experience in articulating the best practices of youth development. We have done similar work in delineating those outcomes that we believe young people involved in effective youth development programs achieve. We have divided these outcomes into areas of competence.

6 The competency areas identified are ones in which we, through our programs, are making a difference. We hold ourselves accountable for joining with others so that all youth attain demonstrable outcomes in these areas:

Originality (*Creative Competency*)

Understanding ourselves and others (*Personal Competency*)

Thinking and reasoning (*Cognitive Competency*)

Civic competency

Our bodies (*Physical Health Competency*)

Mental health competency

Employability competency

Social competency

We have also regrouped these outcomes into skill areas and tracked their development in young people within our programs. If you reverse this booklet, and read from back to front, you will see these same



development outcomes clustered across competency areas and reflecting skills we all need in our work, educational, social, and personal lives.

The lists in this handbook are interactive. An indication of just how interconnected they are is the fact that similar words can be found in more than one area (i.e., relationships, reflection, communication, etc.) The lists in this handbook are not exhaustive. They are not meant as checklists – if a young person does not meet an element, this in no way means he or she is a failure. In addition, all young people will not demonstrate these competencies in the same way. These are progressive competencies. Youth will develop them at different rates.

We also want to stress that standard measures will not suffice to demonstrate all of these outcomes. No one will be able to look at a single activity and see all of these competencies developing. These are the



overall results of programs operating within a youth development framework. Most important, this handbook is meant to illustrate the impact of positive youth development.

We hope you enjoy this handbook and find it useful in helping to define, structure and evaluate your work with young people.

Alianza Dominicana

Children's Aid Society

Chinatown YMCA

The Door

Fund for the City of New York

Good Shepherd Services

Phipps Community Development Center

Project Reach Youth

Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center

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