

The PILOT Assessment: A Guide to Integrating Positive Youth Development into Workforce Training Settings

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Growing evidence suggests that Positive Youth Development (PYD), a holistic approach to developing assets and competencies, can help prepare young people for success in adulthood, including success in the workplace. At its core, PYD focuses on creating a supportive, developmentally appropriate learning setting by emphasizing positive relationships; supporting youth to improve academic, soft, and technical skills; creating linkages that support young adults across schools, family, work, and community; providing opportunities to give back to one's community or program; and investing in the creation of trustworthy, safe spaces.

As part of its Generation Work initiative, the Annie E. Casey Foundation is working with local partners in five cities and a network of national organizations to understand how practitioners in workforce training settings can use PYD strategies to prepare young people—especially low-income young people of color—for employment in several high-growth industries. Each industry was chosen based on its competitiveness in each of the five cities. Employment training represents a new setting for PYD, and this brief highlights some of the first evidence for how to incorporate PYD approaches into such training settings.

The assessment instrument provided here, known as the *PILOT* tool, was developed by Child Trends to facilitate the application of PYD in youth and young adult training, education, and employment programs. It is rooted in research and in the experiences of the five Generation Work local partnerships. The tool provides an overview of both lessons learned and challenges encountered by these partnerships during the early implementation phases of the Generation Work initiative. We hope that the *PILOT* tool and the partnership lessons will be useful to other training providers and youth-serving organizations in the workforce field.

Generation Work Initiative

Launched in 2015, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's **Generation Work** initiative aims to **change the way public and private systems prepare young Americans, particularly young people of color from low-income families, for jobs and careers**. Partners in five cities—Cleveland, Hartford, Indianapolis, Philadelphia, and Seattle—are implementing demand-driven strategies that identify the needs of local employers, build relationships with businesses, and prioritize youth development with mentoring, on-the-job learning, and more.

Through the efforts of its local partnerships and a network of national organizations, Generation Work is **creating more cohesive training and education pathways to meet local employment needs and help young people build long-term careers**.

Positive Youth Development in a Workforce Setting

Employers in growing industries across the nation—including technology, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and insurance—are experiencing difficulty filling “middle skill” jobs—that is, positions that require education beyond high school but less than a four-year college degree.^{i,iii,iii} At the same time, young people, particularly young people of color, are experiencing high rates of unemployment.^{iv} One reason for this gap is that many young people lack the education, training, credentials, and soft skills needed to obtain and be successful in these jobs. Providing young people with opportunities to develop these varied skills is critical to ensuring that employers have access to skilled workers and that young people have access to jobs that provide a living wage.^v

The integration of PYD into job training settings for young adults represents one possible solution to preparing young people for success in a changing labor market. A PYD approach focuses on fostering the social, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive skills that employers seek.^{vi} Using a PYD approach in youth programs has been identified as a strategy for addressing racial inequity^{vii} and has been found to have positive effects on substance abuse,^{viii} teen pregnancy,^{ix} violence,^{viii} and academic outcomes.ⁱ Researchers expect that this approach will also be successful across education and workforce settings due to improved participant engagement and retention and positive, mentoring relationships between youth and adults that help them set educational and career goals for themselves.^x

Integrating PYD approaches into workforce training programs has the potential to increase the effectiveness of such programs by creating opportunities for young adults to learn, succeed, and enhance their soft skills (e.g., persistence and effective communication), and by providing role models for further soft skill development and career growth.

What is the *PILOT* Tool?

Child Trends developed the *PILOT* tool to facilitate integration of PYD into workforce training programs. It was designed to provide concrete examples of how practitioners can implement five specific PYD strategies. As an acronym, *PILOT* identifies the five strategies for advancing positive youth development listed below (see the textbox for descriptions of these strategies):

Positive Relationships

Improved Skills

Linkages across Schools, Work, Families, and Communities

Opportunities to Contribute and Belong

Trustworthy and Safe Settings

PILOT

- **Positive Relationships:** Foster positive, respectful, and supportive relationships with and among participants that provide guidance, effective communication, and social support.
- **Improved Skills:** Provide opportunities for participants to learn technical, intellectual, emotional, and social skills and prepare for jobs and further education.
- **Linkages Across Schools, Work, Families, and Communities:** Recognize and support positive linkages among participants, schools, workplaces, families, and communities.
- **Opportunities to Contribute and Belong:** Provide opportunities for meaningful inclusion of *all* participants and encourage them to give back by making meaningful contributions to their workplaces and communities.
- **Trustworthy and Safe Settings:** Provide settings that guarantee physical and emotional safety for all.

Although these pathways are supported by theory and research, the approach has not yet been evaluated with young adults in employment training settings, making this a groundbreaking initiative that seeks to define PYD in these new workforce training settings. We look forward to being able to evaluate the response from both trainers and young adults to such an approach. This testing will allow practitioners in the field to better understand how PYD strategies can be effectively used by programs in the future.

The *PILOT* tool can be used in a number of ways. First, it can be used by key program stakeholders (such as staff, leaders, funders, and participants) to generate conversations about work progress, and to reflect on program approaches to the work on their programs. The *PILOT* tool was developed to be flexible for use by a diverse group of stakeholders, even those who may not have a direct role in implementing PYD. For example, the tool can help program staff reflect on how to build PYD practices into their interactions with young adult participants. It may also help program leaders communicate with partners, funders, or potential employers about their PYD approaches. The *PILOT* tool can also be shared and discussed with program participants. For example, young adult participants can discuss the sections on staff practices and programming and weigh in on staff fidelity to stated practices. Finally, it can also be useful for funders by helping them encourage their partner (and future partner) organizations to integrate the PYD approach into programming. The tool should not be used to audit or formally evaluate programs on their implementation of a PYD approach, as it has not yet been formally validated.

How was the PILOT Tool Developed?

Building on the knowledge bases of adolescent development, PYD, and workforce development research, Child Trends identified five elements of PYD relevant to workforce development programming. Child Trends then developed the *PILOT* tool by identifying concrete examples of each element in workforce development settings for the Generation Work initiative, with input from colleagues at the Aspen Institute's Workforce Strategies Initiative. Within each of the five core elements, the *PILOT* tool details how PYD approaches can be applied to program practices (such as organizational policies and staff interactions with participants) and staff training.

Child Trends piloted the tool with the five Generation Work local partnerships in Cleveland, OH; Hartford, CT; Indianapolis, IN; Philadelphia, PA; and Seattle, WA through the summer and fall of 2016. To better understand how the five elements of *PILOT* might look in practice, we asked site leaders and frontline staff to fill out the checklist and mark how regularly they completed each task outlined in the tool. We then held focus groups with organizational leaders, direct service staff, and young adult program participants to learn:

1. Whether organizational leaders and key frontline staff who filled out the checklist felt that the practices were appropriate for young adults
2. Whether staff felt that the items in the *PILOT* tool were relevant to their day-to-day work, and helpful for communicating a common approach to PYD within and outside the organization
3. Whether the PYD approaches in *PILOT* aligned with the practices they find effective
4. Whether young adults felt that these practices were already happening in their interactions with staff members

Focus group participants and staff had very positive impressions about the *PILOT* tool, but provided suggestions to streamline and clarify it. Based on these conversations and other input, the *PILOT* tool was revised; the revision is shared in this document. This brief provides some of the first evidence of how to incorporate PYD approaches into workforce training settings.

P **Positive Relationships** means that programs focus on fostering respectful, supportive relationships between staff and participants, as well as among participants themselves. Positive, reliable, and respectful relationships provide both physical and emotional safe spaces that enable young adults to seek guidance, learn to communicate effectively, gain specific technical skills, and get the social support and mentorship they need to be successful.

Learnings from Local Partnerships

For many young people, having a relationship with a non-family member adult can be essential to engaging, motivating, and retaining them in a program and ultimately helping them reach their goals—especially if that adult is reliable, caring, helpful, supportive, fun, and available during challenging times. Young adults participating in workforce training programs through the Generation Work initiative stated that staff members in these programs were some of the first supportive, consistent adult role models that they had ever had in their lives. The presence of such adults differentiated these settings from other spaces that the participants had previously experienced, such as high schools or other job training programs.

Young adults often used the words “consistency” and “honesty” to describe why they felt the staff in these programs were effective. They noted that these qualities were essential building blocks for creating positive relationships. Another word that arose often was “available”—staff from several programs described making themselves available for phone calls from participants after hours, and long after participants had completed the program. Extending staff availability beyond standard program hours acknowledges that crises do not always happen between 9 and 5, and demonstrates the program’s willingness to help participants solve any problems that represent barriers to success.

Participants expressed their desire to be respected and treated as adults. They wanted staff to think positively of them and not let their past failures—such as dropping out of high school—define their life and career possibilities. Relationships based on respect are essential to facilitating young adults’ buy-in to programs and generating the self-confidence they need to succeed.

Challenges

Developing positive relationships can be particularly challenging in programs of brief duration. Policy and funding environments shape programs, and long-term support may not be feasible given funding constraints. Additionally, traditional job training programs have often shown a zero-tolerance approach to errors—focusing explicitly on participants’ individual responsibilities rather than recognizing challenges that arise from their environments. For example, traditional programs discipline participants for tardiness, late assignments, or inappropriate dress for a work setting. Taking a PYD approach instead can require big culture shifts in workplace training settings, which are challenging to initiate and manage while still allowing staff to feel supported.

Staff often lack the time or authority to invest in understanding why a participant may not abide by the rules. Furthermore, staff may not have the time or resources to problem-solve about preventing future violations. This rigid structure is often perceived, and described to participants, as necessary to prepare them for job settings where no one will have extra patience

or flexibility for them. It would be worthwhile to invest the time and resources required to create fundamentally different approaches that positively support participant growth, communication with employers, and positive relationships—approaches such as those employed by Generation Work programs.

The items below represent practices that staff can use to develop **positive, supportive relationships with young adult participants**.

P Positive Relationships

These items assess the degree to which an organization creates positive, consistent, reliable, and supportive relationships with participants—relationships that provide individualized guidance, positive communication, recognition of diversity and inclusion, and social support as young adults work to reach their goals.

PYD Characteristics	True All of the Time	True Most of the Time	True Some of the Time	True None of the Time
Staff Practices and Programming for Young Adults				
Staff interact with all participants in a supportive, affirming, reliable, and caring manner while maintaining professional boundaries.				
Staff model how to ask and respond to questions in a respectful and nonjudgmental manner.				
The program has a system in place to identify staff members who are not creating positive, reliable relationships.				
Expectations in the program are explained clearly at the beginning of program participation and enforced consistently.				
Staff show respect for each young adult’s culture, religion, race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.				
Staff are aware of, and avoid using, language and practices that are insensitive to participants’ culture, religion, race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.				
Staff encourage participants to communicate regularly with supervisors in their jobs.				
Staff model healthy professional relationships with others and support participants to do the same.				
Staff Training				
Staff are trained to proactively engage in a positive manner with participants who are acting out, disruptive, or withdrawn, without singling anyone out or using public humiliation strategies or threats.				
Staff are trained to not make promises they cannot fulfill or set false expectations.				
Staff are trained to make participants feel comfortable, supported, and safe.				
Staff are encouraged to ask participants to speak up if they do not feel supported.				

Improved Skills means that programs focus on development of both hard and soft skills.

Participants need a variety of skills to be successful in employment settings, including soft skills (such as communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and relationship management), sector-specific skills (such as knowledge about patient care procedures, how to operate machinery, or insurance claim guidelines), professional skills (such as resume writing, interviewing for jobs, networking, or cover letter writing), and, sometimes, academic skills in math, English, or writing.

Learnings from Local Partnerships

To improve on all four types of skills mentioned above, program staff must set high expectations, provide opportunities for participants to practice new skills, and recognize the contexts and previous experiences with which participants enter a program. Many young adults in job training programs have failed in previous training settings—whether in public schools, alternative schools, colleges, or other jobs. Setting low expectations for participants based on their past failures can once again set them up for failure and undermine their self-concept. Thus, it is essential to motivate them to develop, and feel proud of, the skills necessary to succeed. Additionally, because many of these skills are new to participants, programs must create opportunities to regularly practice each new skill in as real a setting as possible. Putting technical skills to use, practicing interviewing, or walking through the scenario of conflict with a colleague allow young adults to envision themselves in professional settings.

Staff emphasized the importance of “meeting participants where they are.” To staff, this means recognizing that each participant exists within a personal context and comes with their own experiences that affect what resources or supports they need to be successful. Programs cannot assume that all participants start from the same point, and must avoid taking a “cookie-cutter” approach. Instead, programs must work to develop individualized plans for each participant. Many young adults will need multiple opportunities to learn and practice new skills, and should receive continuous feedback (including praise) so that they can improve their skills. A recognition that young adults may need extra supports to reach their goals is realistic, and not contradictory to setting high expectations. Ignoring the need for extra supports or setting the bar too low will set participants up for disappointment and failure.

An explicit focus on soft skills is also necessary. Staff report that employers help employees with on-the-job development of the technical skills needed in their industry/occupation, but less so with soft skills. Therefore, while most job training programs emphasize technical skill development, they also need an explicit focus on soft skill development: conflict management, development of professional relationships, communication, and self-motivation. Staff can describe to young adults how showing up late to a job can keep a sick patient waiting or shut down a production line. Contextualizing these soft skills to situations young adults might experience in their careers can help them more highly prioritize practicing such skills.

Challenges

It can be difficult for staff to focus on both technical skill development and soft skills while helping each participant reach their own goals. Staff may also find it challenging to address participants who have different needs and challenges, come from different backgrounds, or have different knowledge or experience levels. Continuous communication with other staff and with case managers about participants’ needs and ways to support them is essential. In many ways, the “I” in *PILOT* builds on the “P” because positive, supportive relationships are needed to develop skills.

The items below represent positive practices that staff can use to help participants **improve skills**.

Improved Skills

These items assess the degree to which an organization provides opportunities for technical, intellectual, emotional, and social skill development for all participants.

PYD Characteristics	True All of the Time	True Most of the Time	True Some of the Time	True None of the Time
Staff Practices and Programming for Young Adults				
Staff engage participants in identifying positive goals and the skills needed to achieve those goals.				
Opportunities for developing skills are made available within the organization or with referrals.				
Staff help participants achieve their goals through college/career fairs, scholarships, practice with job interviews, and application support.				
Participants are provided with opportunities to work collaboratively to accomplish a goal or activity.				
Training and job development staff communicate regularly to link current training opportunities with available jobs.				
Staff encourage participants to make connections between the skills they learn and workplace success.				
Staff encourage participants to develop skills regardless of their race/ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.				
Staff are aware of and address destructive stereotypes that limit aspirations and skill-building.				
Staff Training				
Staff are trained to help young adults identify their goals, providing both autonomy and positive guidance.				
Program staff are trained to communicate with job development staff to incorporate employers' skill development goals.				
Staff are trained to identify opportunities for participants to learn and apply skills to real-life settings.				
Staff are trained to assess hard/technical skill development as well as soft skill development.				
Staff are encouraged to support participants to think strategically about internships, job-shadowing, or short-term placements that provide professional skills and connections.				
Workplace communication skills are taught and modeled by staff and participants.				

L A recognition of the importance of supporting positive **linkages among participants and across their schools, workplaces, families, and communities** is essential for young adults to be successful. This includes helping participants to:

- Access needed resources like TANF, SNAP, childcare, or health insurance
- Host information sessions for their family, friends, and partners to learn about the program
- Celebrate success by holding graduation parties for themselves and their family and friends

Learnings from Local Partnerships

Many young people who arrive at job training programs have needs that extend beyond training. They may be hungry, living in unstable housing, navigating the justice system, or in need of childcare; and they may have experienced trauma or acute or chronic healthcare needs. These issues can create barriers to participants' success in training programs (and ultimately their future careers) because they often manifest as behaviors considered unacceptable by employers (such as showing up late at work, falling asleep on the job, or being unable to focus). To be successful, training programs must identify participants' needs and provide concrete assistance.

All programs observed by Child Trends worked to link participants with resources to help them address various challenges. However, the method and the extent to which this was done varied. Staff from one program described being "huge on referrals," while staff from other programs walked participants through an online portal to apply for benefits. Others directly met participants' needs around transportation, food, and child care. Several staff members explained that simply making a participant aware of a resource was not enough; there must be follow-through to ensure that the participant takes advantage of resources. Many felt that addressing participants' needs on the spot freed up time and mental energy for participants to better engage in their program.

Involving family, friends, partners, and other community members in the program can motivate participants to succeed. It is important to include friends and partners in addition to families because many young adults lack strong family ties; as young adults, it is developmentally appropriate for them to rely on friends and partners for support. This can be done by encouraging participants to invite family and friends to a graduation ceremony or another celebratory event, or by inviting them to "community nights" to learn more about the program. This can create buy-in from family members and friends who may otherwise be a roadblock to a participant's success in the program.

Challenges

It can be time-consuming (to provide referrals and engage families, friends, and partners) and resource-intensive (to cover staff time or provide other resources) to support linkages among young people and their schools, workplaces, and communities. However, investing in participants by making these connections can pay off in the long term, as participants are less likely to drop out of services. Another challenge is that negative influences can be introduced to participants through an emphasis on peers. However, by integrating peers, programs can generate their buy-in and support or help participants set boundaries.

The items below represent practices that staff can use to provide **linkages across schools, work, families, and communities**.

L Linkages Across Schools, Work, Families, and Communities

These items assess the degree to which an organization emphasizes coordination and collaboration with school, work, family, and community partners, recognizing that participants' lives take place in several important spaces.

PYD Characteristics	True All of the Time	True Most of the Time	True Some of the Time	True None of the Time
Staff Practices and Programming for Young Adults				
Staff help participants learn about professional networking, expectations, and professional relationships.				
Staff support participants to create relationships with peers that are both emotionally and professionally supportive.				
Staff work to link participants to other services such as health care, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), childcare, and financial institutions.				
Staff recognize competing obligations and time commitments, such as GED or college courses, children, and families.				
Family members are engaged with activities, childcare, newsletters, websites, or celebrations for program completion.				
Spouses, children, and family members are welcomed so that they value the program and understand how to be supportive.				
Participants learn questions to ask supervisors about job scheduling, hours, eligibility for benefits, insurance, and leave.				
Participants learn about labor standards and laws and can be linked to other agencies if there are issues with pay or safety.				
Staff link participants to mentors who share their experiences and backgrounds.				
Staff know about and celebrate community holidays.				
Staff Training				
Staff are trained to help participants whose family members are not supportive or who play a disruptive role.				
Staff have professional development opportunities to learn to engage with families, schools, and community partners.				
Staff know transportation needs and support participants to get to and from training and work in a timely manner.				
Staff are trained to work with schools and colleges to facilitate transitions to work.				



Opportunities for meaningful inclusion of all participants and encouraging participants to give back by making meaningful contributions to their workplaces and communities can be beneficial:

- Participants feel more connected to the program.
- Participants' sense of efficacy, worth, and leadership is strengthened.
- Participants become more committed to succeeding in the program.

Learnings from Local Partnerships

Explicitly inclusive language and engagement are critical components of all programs. Many programs have clearly defined ways to offer feedback, create relationships built on trust, and allow participants to feel safe sharing feedback and asking for help from staff members. Some of these strategies included engaging young adults in a formal program advisory council, training them in civic engagement and self-advocacy, and offering opportunities to mentor new program participants. Giving participants a mechanism to provide feedback and input on the program is critical, as it allows youths' voices to shape a program in important ways. This, in turn, allows them to feel more ownership, connection, and respect for the program.

Efforts to brand programs and create a strong program identity can also help build participants' sense of belonging in the program and provide them with something positive to identify with. One program provided participants with program-branded shirts to wear during certain activities. A participant articulated how it made him feel, saying, *"We all look like a unit ... we're one."* Some programs have a strong community identity and participants feel proud to represent it outside the program. Child Trends visited many programs that were intentional about having posters, literature, and staff who reflect the diversity of program participants. Other staff wanted to focus on making the physical space feel more welcoming so that participants would feel part of something bigger and special. Given that many young people reported being proud of their participation, strong brands can further increase their sense of belonging. However, branding can also make participants stand out in negative ways—as people who did not complete high school, for instance—and must be carefully navigated with input from participants.

Some programs featured more traditional service learning opportunities. Program staff indicated that these opportunities helped young adults build their leadership skills and self-image. As one staff member said, *"We went out and cleaned a playground ... we create leadership roles but also opportunities for [participants] to reflect on their characters and leading and influencing those around them."*

Challenges

As with creating linkages, the skills required for staff to develop participants' sense of belonging and contribution are not always those that staff have been equipped with in terms of their own job training. Often staff are focused on the development of concrete skills or linkages, and creating a sense of belonging may require them to have opportunities for professional development and practice. As programs grow, it is important that staff understand the value of service learning, participant voice, a participant advisory council, leadership opportunities, and regular ways for participants to give program feedback.

The items below represent practices that staff can use to develop **opportunities for young adult participants to contribute to the program and gain a sense of belonging.**

Opportunities to Contribute and Belong

These items assess the degree to which an organization supports participants to take on leadership roles in their communities, workforce development programs, and workplaces; and the degree to which it makes a concerted effort to include all participants, support diversity and inclusion, and encourage participants to give back to their communities.

PYD Characteristics	True All of the Time	True Most of the Time	True Some of the Time	True None of the Time
Staff Practices and Programming for Young Adults				
Staff use inclusive language; materials such as posters displayed at the site represent the population served.				
Participants are encouraged to feel proud of themselves for their efforts to find successful employment.				
The program is branded to help participants feel like they are a part of something special.				
Participants think critically about what influences their lives and decisions, such as the media, family, values, culture, or gender.				
Staff create meaningful opportunities for leadership and initiative for participants.				
Participant voice, such as an advisory committee, is a formal part of the program.				
Participants can give feedback to the program in both structured and unstructured ways.				
Participants contribute to program development (opportunities to make suggestions in structured and unstructured forums).				
Staff Training				
Staff receive training in diversity and inclusion, particularly as it relates to race/ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation.				
Staff receive training and supervision on providing participants with leadership opportunities.				
Staff are instructed to urge participants to learn about their employer and coworkers, once they are employed.				
Staff are taught to encourage participants to help their coworkers in settings where help is appropriate, once they are employed.				
Staff are taught to support participants to be engaged in their communities and make linkages to their professional development.				



Trustworthy settings that guarantee both physical and emotional safety for participants are essential. This can be done by:

- Developing and enforcing norms against harassment and abuse
- Taking a restorative justice approach to conflict resolution
- Ensuring physical safety
- Following through on promises made to participants

Learnings from Local Partnerships

Prevention of bullying, harassment, violence, and sexual abuse is critical to creating productive learning environments and workplaces. In addition, many participants will work in industries where physical safety in the workplace is critical. Participants spoke about the importance of knowing OSHA regulations, safely and appropriately using expensive and sometimes dangerous machinery, and having the opportunity to obtain safety certifications that would be marketable in job applications.

Staff noted the importance of using clear, consistent language throughout training. In one site, consistent vocabulary seemed so common that senior and frontline staff described their processes using the exact same words in different interviews. The repetition of key words and phrases throughout a program can reinforce important concepts and ensure that everyone understands processes and practices that can be used regularly. This reinforces ideas and concepts, and allows participants to gain comfort in their skillsets and feel safe in their understanding of expectations. Employing a common language also led to fewer instances of miscommunication and more efficient and trustworthy interactions.

In addition to ensuring participants' physical safety, program staff also helped create an environment that felt positive, emotionally safe, motivating, and productive. By creating this safe and welcoming setting, they set a tone for the program that participants notice. One participant said that as soon as he walked in to the program space he knew it was different than what he had previously experienced in other programs. Staff also serve as mentors who provide emotional support and connections. Participants noted that positive relationships with staff were a key part of retaining them in the program. These roles are filled by staff at all levels and throughout the program—not just instructors. Many participants reported being unsure about whether they would be successful or happy when they first entered the program. This feeling changed, however, as they realized that staff members were dependable, honest, supportive, and consistent. Participants also commented on programs being “*safe places to fail*,” meaning that the program provided a place where they could leave their comfort zone and take on new challenges—without having to worry about the consequences of failure.

Challenges

One challenge associated with this item is its breadth; safety involves many components and multiple skillsets. Most program sites understand the importance of physical safety and preventing harassment. However, creating emotionally safe places can be more difficult, and many staff struggled to define exactly what goes into creating such a space. Staff members in

several sites noted that internal motivation and commitment were essential for their own success, and aimed to help participants feel the same. This was associated with two challenges: first, it is important to understand and know one’s participants well, which requires time; second, it can be difficult to find motivated, committed staff.

The items below represent practices that staff can use to develop **trusting and safe settings for young adult participants**.

T Trustworthy and Safe Settings

These items assess the degree to which a local partnership creates trustworthy and safe physical and emotional settings for participants, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Settings are both relational spaces and physical facilities and spaces to accept challenges that promote growth.

PYD Characteristics	True All of the Time	True Most of the Time	True Some of the Time	True None of the Time
Staff Practices and Programming for Young Adults				
Staff model respectful and constructive interactions when discussing workplace conflict, expectations, and criticism.				
Staff encourage all participants to ask questions and seek help when needed.				
The programs provide opportunities for all participants to interact positively and professionally with one another.				
Staff model appropriate work behavior, such as wearing suitable clothes, showing up on time, and managing time.				
All racial and ethnic, religious, gender, and sexual orientation groups are treated with respect.				
Participants practice telling their supervisor if they need more support or have concerns about emotional or physical safety.				
Staff Training				
Background checks are conducted on staff members.				
Policies and training indicate that physical and sexual harassment, violence, discrimination, and bullying are not tolerated.				
Staff are trained to respect privacy, keeping information confidential as needed.				
Staff are trained to provide explanations for rules so that participants can understand their rationale.				
Potential employers are screened for safe spaces and interactions.				
Staff are trained to encourage participants to know workforce physical and sexual harassment and violence policies.				
Lessons about workplace safety laws and avenues for reporting problems are discussed during training sessions.				

Conclusion

During the first year of the Generation Work initiative, Child Trends concluded the following: First, **each of the five local partnerships was already implementing many, if not most, of the PYD practices** described in the PILOT tool. In many ways, this was not surprising: these five local partnerships applied to this project and were chosen by the Annie E. Casey Foundation partially because of their use of—and inclination toward—a PYD approach. However, this finding demonstrates that the PILOT tool is useful to programs, and that its practices are reasonable expectations for implementation by other workforce training programs.

Second, **while the *PILOT* tool can be used to motivate internal conversations between staff, it can also be useful for discussions with people outside of an organization.** For example, the tool can focus conversations with funders or with new potential partners to more concretely explain the concept of PYD and how a given organization might prioritize PYD implementation in its programs. The specificity of the items allows programs to use the tool to explain their approach to other stakeholders.

Third, although PYD has the potential to improve the outcomes of particularly vulnerable participants—particularly those who have never had positive, developmentally appropriate educational experiences—a **PYD intervention must be done with intention, respect, and cultural awareness.** At one site, a staff member discussed his efforts to best support a young man after a potential employer told him he would have to cut off his dreadlocks in order to be hired. Training in active listening and cultural competence are required for programs to support some of the most vulnerable young adults.

Finally, **many organizations already practice many of these approaches; they have realized, out of necessity, that such practices boost their effectiveness. However, this type of PYD work often happens outside of key deliverables that are required by and reported to funders.** While practitioners are held to employment outcomes by funders, they often have to meet many other client needs to successfully reach employment targets. These efforts often go unrecognized or unfunded. For example, some programs have developed systems that help young mothers meet their child care needs by creating daycare programs on site, linking women participants to affordable daycare options, or finding public resources to support child care. However, these programs are rarely evaluated on meeting a woman's specific needs, but rather on her ultimate success in obtaining employment. If the program is not also being held to these nonemployment outcomes, it can be very challenging to find the funding and time to truly support participants and meet their various needs.

In the next phase of Generation Work, Child Trends will work with at least three of the five sites to better understand how PYD approaches become more systematized across multiple organizations and stakeholders. Essentially, how do funders, policymakers, government entities, and practitioners all reach a common understanding of PYD? How can implementation become more consistent, scalable, and reliable—perhaps through the use of a common vocabulary (such as PILOT)? Answers to these questions will help us guide other programs that also seek to successfully implement and scale a PYD approach to improving education and job training programs. Such guidance will improve the lives of individuals, their families, and their communities.

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