Projects with Sources of Strength
Trained Youth

Facilitator Guide

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Introduction to Youth-led Communication Campaigns:

This curriculum and resource guide is designed to support communication campaigns following the Sources of Strength training. While it is helpful to have foundational knowledge in these topics, your role as a District Youth Coordinator will primarily focused on community engagement and project support in partnership with youth leaders. The resources included will provide facilitators with additional tips to support youth-driven, strengths-based communications campaigns.

Hope, Help, & Strength
The Sources of Strength training focuses on sharing Hope, Help, and Strength. Young people that complete this training are supported to be community ambassadors for these values. In this partnership with NAMI-Maine, District Youth Coordinators offer community and youth engagement expertise by building bridges, coordinating collaborative partnerships, and advocating for youth voice.

Young people are organizing and mobilizing to implement programs and projects that address challenges and destigmatize discussions around mental health. Prevailing social narratives in the United States have conditioned us not to talk about mental health. Organizations like NAMI Maine, Yellow Tulip Project, Seize the Awkward, and Mental Health America can be great starting points to grow your comfort discussing these topics in partnership with youth.

Supporting Mental Health Campaigns
Sources of Strengths offers an extensive list of campaign guides and examples on their website. Central to the tenets of Sources of Strength, these campaigns highlight Hope, Help, and Strength. District Youth Coordinators may be well positioned to focus on which existing community resources can support the projects’ success. This could include identifying and coordinating with stakeholders or addressing barriers to youth participation. There also may be a need to cultivate group resiliency through team building activities.

Engaging youth with a strengths-based approach is important when promoting wellness within a community. This process requires a shift in practice to center around four principals: Everyone has strengths, skills, and abilities; People grow and development from their strengths, skills, and abilities; People are not problems – the problem is the problem; When the strengths and assets of young people are appreciated by those around them they are better able to develop. When people are understood and appreciated, they are better able to learn and develop. Be

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prepared to integrate the strengths, skills, and diverse abilities of each group member during sessions and while supporting the communications campaign.

What will you find next?

**Facilitator Planning Guide:** Guiding questions for planning each project phase with youth groups as well as checklist tied to reporting outcomes are provided here. Each phase (Training, Action Planning, Implementation, and Project Completion) includes a series of guiding questions structured to support facilitator planning before and during each portion of a youth project. Journal responses to preserve for future reporting narratives or for your own edification. Similarly, leverage the checklist to orient the group work within reporting terminology, and take care to ensure youth-led group work ultimately dictates the direction of the project.

**Supplementary Session Plans:** This selection of activities may be helpful for groups transitioning into project-based work. Every group is unique; additional discussions, activities, and resources should be incorporated as needed. Find supporting activities within the MYAN Youth Engagement Modules, connect with the statewide team to discuss further.

**Force Field Barriers** reflects on the school community to identify places, people, or structures that promote mental wellness. The activity considers how existing practices might be shifted to reduce stigma and barriers associated with mental health. See Page 8.

**Find Your Good** targets the components of each young person’s life that bring them joy or promote well-being. The group is then encouraged to consider ways to share these experiences with the school community through a culture-building campaign. See Page 11.
Facilitator Planning:

Training: Group learning happens throughout the project, and the training phase dedicates space for any foundational content or skills that young people may need to think critically about community issues and avenues for change.

How diverse are the lived experiences of group members? Are there additional (school/youth) community perspectives that might be needed when considering mental health and resilience?

What key learning(s) from the Sources of Strength training resonated with the group? How does this learning inform group discussions?

What additional learning or skills might be helpful as the group begins identifying a communications campaign to promote hope, help and/or strength?

How does the group discuss mental wellness with each other and through their project? How can you support the group to navigate community or school stigma associated with mental health topics?

DID WE COMPLETE THIS PHASE?

☐ Connected with NAMI Staff facilitating Sources of Strength to attend and support training.

☐ Identified additional learning with group members.

☐ Engaged experts, including other youth in community, to better understand the root causes.

☐ Supported group to begin brainstorming projects to support community resilience.

☐ Utilized Sources of Strength & MYAN resources.
**Action Planning:** As the group narrows its focus, sets goals, and develops a plan for their project, facilitators are integral supports. Coaching the group to navigate difference while operating inclusively, encouraging the narrowing – or expanding – prospective impact of projects, and inviting individual members to step out of comfort zones are just a few of the many ways facilitators support group success during this phase.

What does the group hope to communicate to their community? How are the experiences of those most impacted by issues incorporated into the group’s vision?

How does the campaign promote hope, strength, and/or help?

How will the strengths of each group member contribute to the project plan? What supports would promote inclusive planning?

What additional resources or community connections might be helpful to the group?

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**DID WE COMPLETE THIS PHASE?**

- Guided youth to identify project goals that are clear, attainable, and time specific.
- Supported group to develop a timeline of tasks and assigned roles to all members.
- Leveraged Sources of Strength resources to develop a communication campaign.
- Shared plans with MYAN staff & accessed additional tools as needed.
Implementation: This phase includes the span of time between drafting a plan and realizing a completed project. Facilitators frequently focus on supporting logistics, managing group fatigue, and coaching youth resilience through the inevitable hurdles of project work.

How can adult stakeholders be engaged as partners with the group’s work? What additional supports may be needed to support a successful partnership?

What hurdles are likely to arise during this phase? What will resilience coaching look like for the group and/or individual youth members?

As an emotional leader of the group, how will you offer a balance of inspiration and fun to pair with the tasks and potential fatigue often present in group work?

DID WE COMPLETE THIS PHASE?

☐ Supported the group members to complete tasks and coordinate logistics.

☐ Coached group members to promote resiliency and navigate hurdles.

☐ Connected group members with resources and adult stakeholders, including NAMI trainers as needed.
**Project Completion:** Congratulations! Celebrate the group work and individual contributions of each member, reflect on the learning together, connect young people to future opportunities, and memorialize the work.

How does the group want to celebrate their work? What opportunities exist for recognizing everyone’s (individual) contributions as well?

How can you support the group to “tell the story” of their process and reflect on the learnings? Where can members access connections to other leadership opportunities in the community – or for future work with this group?

What methods work best to capture the group project? How does their work align with reporting outcomes (practice environmental change, knowledge environmental change, policy change, presentation, or combination)?

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**DID WE COMPLETE THIS PHASE?**

- [ ] Celebrated the project with group members.
- [ ] Reflected with youth group about the process of the project.
- [ ] Captured the work with pictures, testimonials, interviews etc.
- [ ] Coordinated with MYAN staff to create a “success story” describing the project.
- [ ] Completed reporting, including project outcomes!
# Session 1: Force Field Barriers

## Facilitator Goals:
- Examine the social structures that either encourage or inhibit youth to discuss mental health.
- Consider the impact of stigma on school culture.
- Discuss ways the group can help other young people to navigate talking mental health and stigma.

## Materials/Handouts
- Flip charts
- Markers
- Two different colored sticky notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>What you are doing and brief script (Activity, discussion, etc.)</th>
<th>Facilitator Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Introductions:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Names, Pronouns, Check-ins</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Question of the Day: What is something that is true for you that most people may not realize?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Be prepared for young people to offer vulnerable shares, this is okay, but may need additional care for strong emotions that may arise. This may include after group check-ins, space to debrief the check in question or modeling responses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Framing the Conversation:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Today we will be considering the different components of the school culture and structure that either support or prevent students to discuss mental health and wellness. Part of developing campaigns to support Hope, Help, and Strength is making space to discuss the potential barriers like stigma.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Activity:</strong></td>
<td>← think about specific examples from their school space</td>
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<td></td>
<td>This activity invites youth members to identify the components of school systems or the culture of the community that may encourage or inhibit discussion mental health.</td>
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<td><strong>Paraphrase:</strong> In a moment I am going to invite you to take some to time to individually reflect on the school and community structures and culture that either promote or inhibit discussing mental health. For example, the guidance counselor’s office has windows so students can see who is in their office OR Health Class includes a whole section on mental wellness. After individual reflections you will have the opportunity to join small groups before graduating to a large group discussion.</td>
<td>← if time is tight or small numbers, skip small groups</td>
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<td>• For younger groups, consider assigning specific elements of the school structure/culture</td>
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<td>During the individual and group reflection, post the following questions on flip chart paper or white board</td>
<td>← select one color post-it to be ‘promote discussing’ and another to be ‘inhibit discussing’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Where do you feel most encouraged to think and talk about your mental health?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How does the school promote individual wellness?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Begin the activity by writing write ‘talking about mental health’ in the middle of flip chart paper, a white board or on Google Slide. Hand out</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
two different colored sticky notes. Invite the group to write down their reflections on the sticky notes, name that they will be asked to stick their post-it notes to the board.

- This process can be replicated on Google Slides if you group is meeting virtually. If youth members are calling in or on their phone invite them to PM you if they don’t want to share their answers with the larger group.

Invite the group to begin writing down their thoughts, give them ~5 minutes. Invite partner conversations as needed.

As members begin to slow down with their individual reflection invite them to mix into small groups. In their small groups ask them to take a moment to share their answers with the group and begin to identify any patterns they may notice. Ask/post the following discussion questions:

- What do you notice about other group members answers?
- How does this compare to your answers?
- What other perspectives might be missing in the collective answers? Provide ~5-10 minutes.

Return to the large group. Capture small group responses on the poster paper or google slide. Work as a group to color code the responses as something that is ‘promoting’ vs. ‘inhibiting’ discussing mental health in the school community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15 minutes</th>
<th><strong>Debrief:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Look for young people to return to the concept of stigma in this debrief. Although their communication campaign will ultimately be strengths-based, knowing the spaces that stigma exists may help the group to think critically about how best to reach their peers and/or adults within the school community.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- How was that experience?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What did you notice about your own process for identifying things that either promote or inhibit discussions about mental wellness?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Why is it important to identify these different structures?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- How do we use these to support our project?</td>
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Session 2: Find Your Good

Facilitator Goals:

- Invite youth members to generate messages that promote mental wellness.
- Discuss opportunities to include other school community members.
- Plan to implement a communication campaign.

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<td>• Names, Pronouns, Check-ins</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Question of the Day: How do you communicate about things that bring you joy?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Framing the Conversation:</strong></td>
<td>For more information and resources on the Find your Good campaign check out this link, share this with your group if it will help</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Today we have some time to consider the things that bring us joy and happiness. To do this we are using trying to answer the question ‘What’s your good?’ This will help us figure out what kind of communication campaign we might want to run with the broader community!</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Activity:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>This activity invites youth members to identify and share the positive outlets that support their own mental wellness. For student leaders working to care for others’ well-being, this session steps back to re-center their own mental health needs and wellness strategies.</td>
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<td>Explain to the group that when we do not feel well, all of us reach for an outlet to relieve that feeling. (Babies cry, for example, as a way of letting their folks know they need relief.) In this group, as we work to promote mental wellness for the whole school community, it can be easy to lose sight of our own well-being and the positive activities we use to care for ourselves.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>One way we learn new wellness strategies and connect as a community is by sharing where we “find our good.” Today we will reflect on what is our good and discuss how we might communicate that with others.</td>
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<td>Invite the group to take a moment to journal, draw or ‘show and tell’ in response to the question:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is your good?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>After a moment go around the room (or virtual meeting) and invite anyone who may want to share their good and offer some explanation on why they chose that specifically. Name that you will go around a second time.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Open the space up for a brief discussion by asking:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How did it feel to share your ‘good’ with the group?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Materials/Handouts

- Flip charts
- Markers
What did you learn about each other or yourselves?
What other questions your thoughts came up for you?

As the conversation winds, name that in a moment the group will be split into smaller discussion groups to brainstorm ideas for ‘spreading their good.’ The goal of these groups is to think of a process for the group to include the broader school community in their ‘good’ experience. As you invite youth into break out group, share these guiding questions:

- What message might resonate most with your peers and other school community members?
- How do we engage the school community?
- What other perspectives may be important to consider as we work on this project?

Invite the group back to the large space and provide 1-2 minutes for each group to share out.

10 minutes **Debrief:**
This session is both about individual resiliency and wellness for student leaders in the group as well as larger themes of stigma and effective messaging to their school community. Consider these questions to support reflection as individuals and as leaders within the larger student community.

- What surprised you about these activities?
- We often think of “stigma” around accessing mental health supports. How do we also navigate stigma in sharing our positive outlets or mental wellness strategies?
- What commitments can we make to each other in supporting everyone’s “good” as we continue with this work together?
- How do the activities and discussions from today support our efforts to promote mental wellness for everyone in the school community?
- What ideas do you want to hold for our next session as a group?