What’s this session about?

This session will highlight OnCare’s Youth Leadership Academy, a supportive and skills-based bi-weekly group for young people with mental wellness needs involved in the juvenile justice system.
Presenters

• Anthony Parker Clark- Youth

• Winter Rhines- Young Adult

• Monica Bacote- Youth Peer Engagement Specialist

• Kahari Benton- Youth Peer Engagement Specialist
OnCare

A System of Care for
Onondaga County, NY

Provides mental health related services and supports for young people involved in the justice system.
Ice Breaker

Getting to know you
What is the Youth Leadership Academy?

• Group that meets every other week
• Covers topics like: mental health, substance abuse, safe relationships, leadership
• Youth choose what they want to learn about and what skills they want to develop
• Youth receive stipends for participating
Premise of YLA

Youth who feel empowered, resourceful and confident will be able to take the information and skills learned and...

• Lead the YLA
• Return and share their knowledge and growth with other youth
• Make changes in the mental health and justice system
Youth Role

• To use their voice to design a program that works for them.

Staff Role

• To follow the leadership and direction of youth
The Youth Leadership Academy started as a summer pilot program.
And then…

We looked at feedback from the pilot.
What did YLA youth want to learn more about?

- Anger management
- Conflict resolution
- Hygiene
- Race and culture
- Mental health
- Substance use/self-medicating
- Self-esteem: be yourself, don’t follow trends
- Social media safety and responsibility
- Sex trafficking
- Social activism/community involvement
- Safety planning
- Walk through of courts

#LEADINGCHANGE
What was missing from YLA?

Opportunities to volunteer
AND...

Hearing from others with lived experience.
And we continue to make sure YLA is youth-driven by

• Highlighting topics chosen by youth
• Having youth determine the schedule
• Encouraging youth to make funding decisions
How else do we decide on leadership topics?

40 Developmental Assets
Let’s take a look at your assets

What can we do to improve them?
Opportunities to highlight leadership skills
### System Evaluation - Onondaga County

**Outcome**: All youth successfully transition to adulthood

**Indicator**: High school graduation rate (Syracuse City School District)*

*Source: data.nysed.gov

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
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**What are the top factors contributing to this indicator?**

- Things going on at home: family issues
OnCare Project Evaluation

• Participated in focus group meant to find out what parts of OnCare were helpful.

• Youth input helped project shift focus to peer support, which included an increase in funding for youth peer support
Evaluation Question 1

What components of the project are perceived by youth and families as most helpful?

Caregivers, youth, and OnCare and Probation staff expressed that Family Navigation, Youth Advocacy, and the Leadership Academy are the most helpful elements of the program.
OnCare Evaluation

What did they say about YLA?

• Different speakers (Vera House, coping with stress, speakers who have been through similar things who have “bettered themselves”)

• “Gives me something to do instead of being stuck at the house, fighting, stealing, in the streets doing something stupid.”

• “The money helps… I’d be out there boosting.”
Youth Leadership Academy Evaluation
My leadership skills have: decreased stayed the same increased.
My knowledge of mental health has: decreased stayed the same increased.
My connection to other young people has: decreased stayed the same increased.
My ability to speak up for myself has: decreased stayed the same increased.
My mental health has: decreased stayed the same improved.
My ability to regulate or control my behavior has: decreased stayed the same increased.
My decision-making skills have: decreased stayed the same increased.
My connection to the community has: decreased stayed the same increased.

Please indicate your ability to:
Choose topics for the YLA: A lot Somewhat Not at all
Design the YLA: A lot Somewhat Not at all
Share ideas about YLA: A lot Somewhat Not at all
Lead YLA sessions: A lot Somewhat Not at all

What are 3 topics you learned the most from? ________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What did you like best about the Youth Leadership Academy? ___________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Name 2 ways the YLA be improved? _______________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your feedback! It will help make the next session of YLA even better!
Outcomes

Youth reported getting arrested less often, having better mental health outcomes, and having an increase in leadership skills.

See for yourself…
YOUTH SUCCESS STORIES
Successes of the Youth Leadership Academy

- Program Development!
- Youth making the community better for other youth!
- Program Expansion - Academy got bigger!
- Active Participation!
- Community Collaborations!
What are some steps your community can take to create a similar academy?

Does something similar already exist within your community?

What do you need to get started?

Who should be included?

What funding is available?

Who can you reach out to in your community?

What barriers are there in your community?
Some actionable steps you can take to create your own Academy

• Find the target population that can benefit

• Reach out to system partners- schools, mental health, courts, juvenile justice, child welfare

• Find ways to create incentives to get the targeted population involved such as stipends, gift cards, and food

• Raise money through fund raisers such as car washes, bake sales and even a lemonade stand

• Listen to youth!
Barriers of The Youth Leadership Academy

• Transportation

• Finding the right location

• The YLA is voluntary
Group Activity:

Help us come up with ideas to address our barriers

- Transportation
- Location
- Encouraging all youth to participate
- Opening YLA up to other youth
The Painting Poet
Wellness Walk

#LeadingChange
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