

Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship Curriculum

Overview

The YDPA course is a competency-based curriculum. Modules and learning activities are designed to help apprentices develop core skills in nine competency domains. Each domain focuses on 3-4 essential competencies, identified by analyzing job descriptions, job responsibilities and common tasks, demographics of youth served by apprentice organizations, and the field of youth development more broadly (trends, emerging practices, technology use, etc.).

While modules are designed to be taught in the sequence recommended above, there is flexibility. For example, an apprentice may have a local opportunity aligned to a module topic. In this case, the apprentice, with instructor permission, could work on the independent learning activities in a module and join the Group Workshops in the recommended module sequence

Structure

- 165 hours
- 9 modules with 18 sessions
- Recommended completion within 10 months

Course Overview & Modules Map

Course Orientation

Participants will be introduced to the YDPA course through a 4 hour course orientation group workshop. Participants will review the apprenticeship materials before the start of module 1.

Module 1: Positive Youth Development and Relationships

Participants will be introduced to the foundational concepts of PYD.

Topic	Time	Notes
Module 1 Kick Off - Group Workshop	75 mins	Session 1
Competency 1.1: Understand adolescent development and build an effective relationship with each young person using positive youth development principles that help young people foster resilience, build on strengths, and increase their own sense of agency.	5 hours	
Competency 1.2: Work effectively with young people and adult supporters from diverse backgrounds; understand personal limitations and biases.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 1.3: Understand the impact of adverse childhood experiences and inequality play in the lives of youth and use youth development practices to empower youth.	5 hours	
Competency 1.4: Create safe, youth-friendly, inclusive spaces for young people.	5 hours	OJL Component
Module 1 Check for Understanding	30 mins	
Module 1 Wrap Up - Group Workshop	60 mins	Session 2

Module 2: Coaching & Counseling Strategies

Participants build a strong foundation of strong coaching skills, familiarity with adolescent mental health, and conflict resolution and de-escalation strategies.

Topic	Time	Notes
Module 2 Kick Off - Group Workshop	75 mins	Session 3
Competency 2.1: Use strong coaching skills to support a young person's growth (e.g., flow theory, active listening, collaborative problem solving, motivational interviewing) to help youth stay engaged, grow, and learn to advocate for what they need.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 2.2: Demonstrate a basic familiarity with adolescent mental health challenges and common therapeutic counseling interventions.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 2.3: Use effective strategies to support a young person in crisis, resolve conflict, or de-escalate a situation.	5 hours	OJL Component
Module 2 Check for Understanding	30 mins	
Module 2 Wrap Up - Group Workshop	60 mins	Session 4
Cornerstone Task: Motivational Coaching Session	6 hours	OJL Component

Module 3: Planning & Youth Development Opportunities

Participants learn to identify strengths and growth opportunities in participants, utilize youth resources, and help youth build support networks.

Topic	Time	Notes
Module 3 Kick Off – Group Workshop	75 mins	Session 5
Competency 3.1: Identify each young person’s interests, strengths, growth opportunities and challenges and help youth develop a plan to achieve personal development, education, and/or employment goals	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 3.2: Understand the landscape of internal and external youth resources and engage young people in positive youth development opportunities and supportive services	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 3.3: Help youth build a support network, including family members, critical adult allies, community connections, career network, etc.	5 hours	OJL Component
Module 3 Check for Understanding	30 mins	
Module 3 Wrap Up – Group Workshop	60 mins	Session 6
Cornerstone Task: Individualized Plan	6 Hours	OJL Component

Module 4: Facilitation

Participants learn the facilitation of youth activities.

Topic	Time	Notes
Module 4 Kick Off – Group Workshop	75 mins	Session 7
Competency 4.1: Effectively design and facilitate youth-centered and youth-led activities.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 4.2: Adapt facilitation skills to suit a variety of purposes (youth activity, workshop, meeting, remote support, etc.).	5 hours	OJL Component
Module 4 Check for Understanding	30 mins	
Module 4 Wrap Up – Group Workshop	60 mins	Session 8
Cornerstone Task: Facilitated Workshop with Youth	8 Hours	OJL Component

Module 5: Career Pathways

Participants learn to assist youth with their career skills and interests.

Topic	Time	Notes
Module 5 Kick Off – Group Workshop	75 mins	Session 9
Competency 5.1: Help youth assess their career interests and employment readiness skills.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 5.2: Connect young people to career pathway opportunities	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 5.3: Teach youth critical career pathway persistence skills and help them problem-solve barriers that stand in the way of career development success.	5 hours	OJL Component
Module 5 Check for Understanding	30 mins	
Module 5 Wrap Up – Group Workshop	60 mins	Session 10

Module 6: Case Management

Participants learn the necessary skills in case management.

Topic	Time	Notes
Module 6 Kick Off – Group Workshop	75 mins	Session 11
Competency 6.1: Gather, analyze, and use information from a variety of sources, with the level of privacy and confidentiality needed. Maintain high quality, timely case files and case management system records.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 6.2: Maintain strong relationships with and across service providers, families and communities; coordinate services, monitor effectiveness, and problem-solve collaboratively.	5 hours	
Competency 6.3: Provide individual and program level updates to supervisors, including information on youth progress, trends, and potential service, program or partnership development needs.	5 hours	OJL Component
Module 6 Check for Understanding	30 mins	
Module 6 Wrap Up – Group Workshop	60 mins	Session 12
Cornerstone Task: Case Management Meeting	6 Hours	OJL Component

Module 7: Leveraging Technology

Participants learn how to use technology to their advantage in youth services work.

Topic	Time	Notes
Module 7 Kick Off – Group Workshop	75 mins	Session 13
Competency 7.1: Use productivity, communication and social media tools to promote youth success.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 7.2: Integrate technology into programming as a way to engage youth and build their skills; for example; videos, photo journals, digital art galleries, virtual services, etc.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 7.3: Manages all aspects of information technology as it relates to program management and evaluation.	5 hours	OJL Component
Module 7 Check for Understanding	30 mins	
Module 7 Wrap Up – Group Workshop	60 mins	Session 14

Module 8: Understanding How Youth Organizations Work

Participants develop an understanding of how youth organizations work.

Topic	Time	Notes
Module 8 Kick Off – Group Workshop	75 mins	Session 15
Competency 8.1: Demonstrate a basic understanding of how youth-serving organizations and agencies work (how they are funded, managed, and governed; how partnerships, programs and services are developed and evaluated).	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 8.2: Analyze a youth program/organization budget; create and manage a budget; identifies new and recurring funding while ensuring accountability with existing funding systems.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 8.3: Use current role to support organizational development and institutional change in accordance with strategic plan (program design and evaluation, race/equity/inclusion work, partnership development, resource development, advocacy, etc.).	5 hours	OJL Component
Module 8 Check for Understanding	30 mins	
Module 8 Wrap Up – Group Workshop	60 mins	Session 16
Cornerstone Task: Program or Organization Improvement Proposal	8 Hours	OJL Component

Module 9: Professionalism, Professional Development & Self Care

Participants learn how to manage the demands of youth work, the opportunity for professional growth, and the triggers they may face on the job.

Topic	Time	Notes
Module 9 Kick Off - Group Workshop	90 mins	Session 17
Competency 9.1: Work ethically and in compliance with privacy, mandated reporting, youth labor, and other regulations.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 9.2: Manage the demands of youth work and your own well-being using strong self-care practices, balancing accessibility with appropriate boundaries, and developing coping skills for job-related triggers; exhibit professionalism and model it for young people.	5 hours	OJL Component
Competency 9.3: Identify opportunities to grow professionally for life-long learning in the current role and in the career field; use the youth development apprenticeship as a springboard to other positions.	5 hours	OJL Component
Module 9 Check for Understanding	30 mins	
Module 9 Wrap Up - Group Workshop	2 hours	Session 18
Cornerstone Task: Professional Development Plan	8 Hours	OJL Component