Welcome to the 2020 Annual Youth Work Intensive Conference

Wednesday, March 4th, 2020
Dear Youth Work Professional,

Welcome to the 2020 Youth Work Intensive Conference! For many years it has been our privilege to engage youth workers from all over New England and beyond in learning and networking. The Intensive aims to build skills for daily practice and we hope that you will take advantage of the exciting and engaging set of workshops available at today’s conference. We encourage you to think about the work you do with young people and what you need in order to improve. We also hope you will think about your own development, explore new areas of practice and learn from your peers and colleagues. Today is the day to meet other practitioners who work in programs similar to yours; ask them about their path, what their experiences are and what they gain from working with youth.

The BEST Initiative is a program of Health Resources in Action, a non-profit organization focused on advancing public health and medical research through policy, research, prevention and health promotion. The BEST (Building Exemplary Systems of Training for Youth Workers) Initiative was launched in 1999 as a local site of a national initiative aimed at professionalizing the field of youth work. The BEST Initiative offers a continuum of professional development opportunities to build the skills of youth work professionals at every level. Through training, technical assistance and consultation services, BEST works to strengthen individual’s skills and knowledge and organizational practices and policies. BEST works to support the development of the youth work profession through field building partnerships with youth-serving organizations, intermediaries, state agencies, institutes of higher education and other regional and national stakeholders. The goal of the BEST Initiative is to implement a professional development program which is accessible to all youth workers in order to enhance professional youth development work.

Collectively, we believe in youth work, we believe in youth and we believe in you!

Once again, welcome and happy learning.

Sincerely,

The BEST Initiative
Directions to Simmons

By Local Public Transportation:
Take MBTA green line E train (Heath Street) to Museum stop. Turn right onto Louis Prang Street. From here you can see Simmons’s green cupola. Walk past Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum on left. Simmons College, 300 The Fenway, will be on left. (See www.mbta.com for more information about the T.) There is a shuttle from Ruggles Orange Line Station to Simmons or you can walk from the Fenway Green Line Station.

By Car:
- Going west on Storrow Drive, look for the “Kenmore Square, Fenway, Route 1 South” sign and exit left, following the sign for “Fenway 1 South.” Do not take the Kenmore Square exit.
- Stay right at the light, following sign for “Boylston St. Outbound, Riverway 1.”
- Get in left lane and proceed to first the light.
- Turn left onto Park Drive and follow Park Drive to the light (there will be a gas station on your right).
- Continue straight, crossing Boylston Street and Brookline Avenue.
- Stay to the left, following the curve to the left to reverse direction (you will see signs for “Fenway”).
- At the next light, continue straight, crossing Brookline Avenue again. You will be on “The Fenway.”
- Turn right onto Avenue Louis Pasteur after Emmanuel College. Simmons’s library is on left. Passengers may be dropped off here.

** Parking is extremely limited! We encourage all participants to use public transportation. **
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Health Resources in Action

Use The YWI Conference OFFICIAL hashtag:
#2020YWI
AGENDA

Wednesday, March 4th, 2020

8:30 - 9:00 AM  Check-in/Breakfast (Main College)

9:00 - 9:30 AM  Opening Session & Networking

9:45 - 11:45 AM Morning Workshop Session

12:00 - 1:00 PM Lunch, Networking & Youthie Award

1:15 - 3:15 PM  Afternoon Workshop Session

3:30 - 4:30 PM  Networking & Closing
Morning Workshop Sessions (9:45-11:45 AM)

1. Working Upstream in the Trauma & Youth Context: Practicing Radical Compassion for Young People and Ourselves

Emily Wilson, Essex County Learning Community

In this workshop, we will build a holistic awareness of trauma, including but not limited to: how it impacts the learning brain, how it intersects with interlocking systems of oppression, the importance of self-care, and how to identify/address stress responses – including our own. Through hands-on activities, discussion, and resource sharing, we will explore strategies for promoting resilience that can be practiced among youth workers and those we serve. We will also dig deeper into core compassion, contemplative, and social justice principles that create resilient environments. Anyone who supports students in their work are welcome to attend. At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1) Describe trauma’s impact on health, development, and learning;
2) Identify key principles for creating trauma-informed, resilience-oriented youth development environments, including the importance of radical care and compassion; and
3) Describe examples of evidence-based strategies that can be applied in their own settings.

2. What are you pouring into yourself?: The Burn out is REAL

Priscilla "Dzidzor" Azaglo, Dzidzor

Are you burnt out? Do you love your youth but find yourself becoming frustrated with the system, administration or the environment? Admit it. This can happen to anyone, so let’s begin with you are not lazy, you are not inconsiderate, you are not wrong for feeling these things. In this workshop, participants will explore what arises within their own bodies and learn to identify key tools that will guide us in the midst of feeling burnt out or frustrated with the system, administration and our youth’s baggage. Participants will learn:

1) How to begin conversations with yourself that avoid burnout and make room for order in life.
2) How to create a healthy relationship with self to understand boundaries and what capacity can be completed.
3) Lastly, how to cultivate a fruitful relationship with purpose and the work that is being done and allow room to grow and be challenged in your work.
3. Authentic Youth Partnerships

Nick Pippin, Boston Youth Advisory Board

What is authentic youth partnership? How are authentic youth partnerships important for systems change? What are barriers to authentic youth partnership? How does trust play into authentic youth partnership? Participants will learn about authentic youth partnership, participate in activities to help them engage in and reflect on authentic youth partnership, and learn about and practice tools to move towards authentic youth partnership in their organizations. Participants will:

1) Understand what authentic youth partnership is, the benefits to participants organizations, and why it is important
2) Leave with 3 specific steps to take to move participant’s organizations towards authentic youth partnership
3) Know how to use specific strategies to effectively authentically partner with youth.

4. Empower Youth: The Changing Landscape of College Admission and Access

Cicily Shaw, College Possible, LLC

As youth workers, we wear many hats and play several key roles in the lives of young people. We are counselors, mentors, and confidants. With the changing landscape of college admission and access, we need to continue to find ways to effectively empower our youth. College admission policies change each year and this workshop provides participants with the knowledge and resources needed to successfully guide students through the process. Whether it be partnering with schools, colleges, or community-based organizations, or knowing applicant rights and understanding college debt; this interactive and hands-on workshop is designed for youth workers who want to offer support and help make college access attainable for their students while focusing on the major challenges our youth face throughout the process. Learning Objectives:

1) Understand the recent changes and challenges facing youth during the college process
2) Tools for understanding the college process
3) Best practices for youth workers when supporting students during the college process and how to effectively partner with secondary schools, colleges, and universities.
7. Sex Positive approach to Teen Dating
Violence Prevention and Porn Literacy

Teakia Brown, Boston Public Health Commission

Starting conversations with young people about sex and relationships can feel overwhelming, scary, and uncomfortable. This workshop provides youth workers with the tools and foundation to start conversations about their young people’s relationships. Specifically, this workshop will examine how teens encounter sexually explicit media content (Porn) and the impact it has on their relationships, development, and attitudes towards sex.

Learning Objectives:

1) Participants will understand adolescent brain development
2) Participants will understand sexually explicit media’s impact on relationships and intimacy
3) Participants will learn best practices for starting conversations around sexually explicit media with young people.

8. Helping Adolescents Practice and Understand Self-Regulation and Distress Tolerance

Danielle Smith, Boston Public Health Commission

Sometimes, small adjustments can have a significant impact on how adolescents respond to challenging situations. This workshop will use interactive activities to explore effective techniques that will empower adolescents with the ability to regulate their behaviors and emotions as well as identify and utilize protective factors and supports. By the end of this workshop participants will walk with tools and skills to:

1) Help teens manage stress in a healthy way.
2) Help teens develop skills to better manage distressing situations
3) Assist teens with emotion regulation to help manage their feelings to better cope with the situation that they are in.
4) Assist teens in assessing how frequently they are engaging in various self-care activities.

9. Ingredients to Youth Work- What’s Your Secret Sauce?

Matthew Parker, Mistah Parker Presents

If you think the recipe to connecting to today’s youth has to have to have sauce, then this is for you. Initially, participants will have time to reflect on their approaches (recipes) to youth work in formal and informal spaces. Next, take time to name language/competencies (ingredients). Then in groups and as individuals, finding what is your way of connecting with youth, what strategies (secret sauce) do you employ as a way to build equity with the young people that is personal and unique. We may end session creating our own visual recipe page of youth work-with our sauce. Learning objectives:

1) Shared best practices = peer learning.
2) Reflection time: gives serious thought and consideration to previous professional experiences.
3) Creating visuals: another tool to cement the learning and using art to promote honesty and deeper connection.
Co-design is an inclusive, collaborative process that is growing in popularity. Between youth and educators/youth workers, co-design has the potential to increase empathy as well as create more innovative designs. Yet, co-design processes have their challenges - co-design takes time and patience and can be impacted by implicit biases and power dynamics. As with any design work between diverse team members, co-design can even generate tensions and conflict, requiring skills to mediate disagreements and navigate conflict-resolution processes. This workshop aims to provide some tools and resources to support anyone who wishes to facilitate effective, equitable co-design projects between youth and youth workers. During the workshop, we will try out a few interactive activities and resources adapted from the MIT D-Lab Co-Creation Toolkit, Stanford school courses, Harvard negotiation courses, the Social Justice Mediation Institute (SJMI) certification program, and other relevant trainings. These activities are meant to help spark a useful discussion about how to leverage existing resources and adapt them to our work, to better equip us to avoid perpetuating social injustices and equip us to lead beneficial collaborations between youth and educators. At the end of the workshop, we hope participants will leave with an appreciation of the power of truly collaborative co-design between youth and educators, some useful tools and frameworks to be more intentional when attempting to facilitate positive co-design experiences, and a cohort of new colleagues with whom we can trade lessons learned when it comes to facilitating co-design with youth.

1) Participants will become familiar with more potential benefits and consequences of facilitating co-design between youth and educators/youth workers
2) Participants will be able to access more resources to facilitate more equitable co-design between youth and educators/youth workers
3) Participants will gain more confidence in their abilities as co-design facilitators
11. Breaking the Silence: How to Build Bridges Not Walls

Bernadine Desanges, *Know Your Truths. Speak Your Truths.*

Conditioned to live by the expectations and standards set by social norms, the ability to be truly authentic in all spaces one occupies is sometimes more figurative than literal. As a result, many push each other away, rather than build intentional community. This workshop will teach participants how to turn experiences encountered navigating through cultural expectations, persisting through trauma, exhibiting grit in the face of defeat into meaningful opportunities for collaboration and engagement in difficult dialogues as one turns pain to power as a professional and active community influencer leading change. Microaggressions, implicit biases, racial battle fatigue, impostor syndrome, and intersectionality are at the helm of professional development and growth for all—whether you exhibit it or are on the receiving end of it. What are you going to do with it and about it? This workshop will provide participants with the platform to transparently speak diverse lessons they’ve learned in life in an inviting yet challenging space while receiving tools to navigate growth professionally and personally to ensure that one recognizes the power they have in unapologetically owning oneself and narrative in all spaces. Are you equipped for the journey? Attendees will walk away with the ability to do the following:

1) Feel more confident about unapologetically owning their own narrative in various professional and personal spaces.
2) Better understand the importance of diversity, inclusion, and equity beyond common buzzwords, but in intentional practice and implementation.
3) How to start and engage in a difficult conversation centered around diversity, inclusion, and equity with peers, students, and supervisors.
13. Activating and Supporting Creative Expressions in Young People

Tu Phan, The Food Project

Every story and experience matters. As youth workers, our mission is to guide young people to uphold a safer space and environment so that they are able to achieve success in the programs we are running. A major part of the work is to unlock everyone’s gifts, talents, capacities, and assets so that they can share with the group as they build trust and relationships with each other. Self-expression is a very accessible tool that can be activated in many ways. This workshop will give you tools to facilitate simple activities that can activate each person’s expression and personality. The flow: a basic writing activity, a vocal exercise, body expressions, and creative collaboration and performance. Words are powerful and when spoken or activated, they can inspire a spectrum of creativity and fun. Learning Objectives:

1) Create and uphold a safer and supportive space and environment for self-expression and creative thinking
2) Facilitate basic creative writing and performance activities that allow for cultural sharing and storytelling
3) Building trust with young people by encouraging them to be outside their own comfort zone to inspire others to do the same

15. Addressing Cannabis with Youth: Reframing the Conversation

Dishon Laing, City of Boston Recovery Services

Cannabis poses unique health risks to young people regardless of how it is used. This training provides an in-depth look at creating an environment and conversation in speaking with teens and young people about cannabis. Discover some of the health considerations, why some teens choose to use cannabis and learn about signs of a potential use disorder. This training provides resources and takeaways. Learning Objectives:

1) Establish a baseline understanding of marijuana facts (effects of use, routes of use, perception of risk)
2) Review current laws around recreational cannabis use in MA
3) Practice how to engage youth around substance use using a youth development approach
16. Alphabet Soup-port: The Intersections of Adultism & Queerphobia

Eziah Blake & True Colors, The Theater Offensive

Ever heard the phrase alphabet soup? Oftentimes, members of the LGBTQIAA+ community say that in place of all of the many letters within our acronym because it’s certainly a mouth full. With the language evolving as young queer folks are coming out earlier and earlier, understandably it can be hard for adults to grasp it all. This can lead to an inability to adequately support queer youth. In this workshop using theater technique and games we will begin to scratch the surface and the complexities of the LGBTQIAA+ community, the evolving language and how to best support LGBTQ youth. Learning Objectives:

1) LGBTQ Vocab
2) Understanding the intersection of adultism and bi/trans/homo/queerphobia
3) How to be support LGBTQ youth

17. Weaving Collaborative Practice into Everyday Work with Youth and Families

William Madsen, Family-Centered Services Project (FCSP)

Our field is increasingly embracing more collaborative approaches to working with youth and families. This workshop will examine concrete ways in which practitioners can bring a spirit of respect, connection, curiosity and hope into their work with youth and families. We’ll explore ways in which asking transformative questions rather than trying to provide answers to people in need can completely change our work and I will offer a simple practice map designed to help practitioners think their way through complex problems and guide conversations with youth and families about challenging issues. This map will be illustrated with examples across multiple contexts and participants will be offered practical guidance in the use of this map. Participants will be able to:

1) Describe their understanding of collaborative approaches and what makes that personally relevant to them.
2) Discuss their understanding of a Collaborative Map and its usefulness in their own practice.
3) Begin to apply a Collaborative Helping Map to daily practice.
18. Shifting systems of practice to better serve LGBTQ youth

Noemi Lasalandra and Jena Duncan, Community Action Pioneer Valley

LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning) youth are a rapidly growing demographic. They experience a number of risk factors that lead them to access services supporting their health, employment, and basic needs. As LGBTQ youth interact with these services, they present unique challenges to the typical practices of our organizations. This activity-rich, data-informed workshop will help attendees explore changes they can make to their systems of practice to better support LGBTQ youth. We will begin by reviewing a foundational understanding of LGBTQ youth and their needs. Then we will look at recent guidance for accommodating LGBTQ youth within our services. We will discuss challenges that our systems pose to LGBTQ youth. We will consider these challenges from three perspectives – administrative, social, and physical – and think about how change can happen from each of these perspectives. There will be ample time for attendees to assess the opportunities for improvement at their organizations and to create plans for standardizing LGBTQ-inclusive practices in their work. Typical problematic systems that attendees might consider include group norms, intake forms, data collection/entry, making effective referrals, handling name and gender changes, pronoun use/visibility, bathroom policies, identification documents, selective service registration, teaching curriculum, staff training, and nondiscrimination policies. No prior knowledge or experience with LGBTQ youth is required; a brief overview of terms and context, with ample supporting materials, will be supplied. Attendees will:

1) Select three policies or practices to change and determine who can authorize and who can implement those changes;
2) Know two community supports that can help them continue growing their LGBTQ-inclusive practices; and
3) Identify one long-term “roadblock” that requires a workaround to better serve LGBTQ youth.
19. Engaging Young People in Evaluation

Erika Gaitan and Valerie Polletta, Health Resources in Action

There is a greater emphasis than ever for programs to collect data on activities and outcomes. Engaging youth in the evaluation process can help programs obtain reliable data, as well as provide youth with important skills and a sense of ownership over the process. This workshop will discuss approaches and skills for engaging youth in evaluation while also balancing the need for rigorous methods. This session will provide an overview of how to engage young people in program evaluation through various methods including photo voice, focus groups, and survey administration. Upon completion of the workshop, participants will be able to identify different types of evaluation including assessment, process, and outcome evaluations. Examples from the field that have effectively engaged youth will be presented and discussed. Workshop participants will have an opportunity to engage with their colleagues to brainstorm potential challenges and opportunities when engaging young people in evaluation.

Learning Objectives:

1) Describe strategies for engaging youth in evaluation
2) Identify examples from the field that have effectively engaged youth in evaluation
3) Brainstorm potential challenges and opportunities in engaging youth in evaluation

20. Media Production and Literacy as Tools for Positive Youth Development

Heather McCormack, Somerville Media Center

Young people today are inundated with multiple types of media from all angles. While youth consumption of media is at an all-time high, youth are rarely given access to the tools, support, and space to develop and tell their own stories through creative media production. Learn from Somerville Media Center Youth Media Program Director Heather McCormack as she uses case studies from her work to illustrate the transformative power of media production and media literacy programming for youth age 8-18. Develop your own media programs regardless of budget or experience that will allow your youth to feel that their voices matter through a variety of hands-on, collaborative project-based curricula. Podcasting, filmmaking, graphic design, photography and animation will be covered as strategies for creative and collaborative media production programming that will build youth self-esteem, help them develop tangible technological skills, and allow them to have fun while sharing their stories and passions with the world. Participants will be empowered to:

1) Integrate different types of media into their youth programming.
2) Understand the value of media education as it relates to positive youth development.
3) Leave with a tangible plan for implementing youth media education programming at their sites.
21. Aware to Enrolled: Outreach, warm hand-offs, and individualized coaching strategies for opportunity youth in subsidized housing

Sam Zito, Launch at United Way of Mass Bay and Merrimack Valley

Launch is an initiative focused on connecting 18 to 24 year-olds living in state subsidized housing with individualized coaching and support to achieve their goals. Our outreach and coaching team work collaboratively across partners to provide opportunity youth with education, employment, and training opportunities based on client interest and need.

In this session we will focus on asset-based coaching for a population that is often disconnected and/or under-resourced. We will discuss how to best support clients in building crucial and transferrable life skills, from interview etiquette to navigating post-secondary while undocumented. This interactive session will take participants through role-playing scenarios, with exercises in centering youth voice in the coaching experience, engaging external community resources, and how to find “best fit” placements.

23. Engaging High School Students as Peer Leaders in OST Programming

Allyson Shifley, Health Resources in Action

High school students are powerful leaders and programs can utilize their strong opinions, voice, and insight to create lasting change in the youth’s lives and in their communities. This workshop focuses on how to harness the interests of and increase the career and college readiness of high school aged youth who participate in out-of-school time (OST) programs. With a peer leadership model, OST programs serving youth can not only see them as recipients of programming, but also partners in delivering programming where elementary school students are also present. In this session participants will:

1) Establish goals of a peer leadership program
2) Identify components of successful peer leadership programs
3) Identify strategies for meaningful youth engagement
4) Brainstorm potential benefits and challenges to utilizing the model
5) Share best practices/lessons learned from implementing peer leadership program models
6) Hear from youth participants in a peer leadership program

Finally, participants will brainstorm concrete “next steps” to take to begin peer leadership model implementation in their own programs (i.e. budget considerations, staffing, developing a flyer to advertise etc.)
In the wake of the repetitive acts of violence all over the world, our youth are confused and scared. They are confused about who they are and where they belong and they are scared to reveal their identity and endure bigotry and intolerance. Struck by false rhetoric and stereotypes, many of our youth are anxious and feeling more threatened than ever and unfortunately, parents and educators are not always able to offer the right explanation and provide the needed comfort. Youth nowadays are all the more in need of education about how to respond to incidents of hateful words and actions and furthermore, feel welcome, supported and valued regardless of their background, color and beliefs. "All Against Hate" is a workshop that aims to help youth work through prejudices and see our common humanity. Its goal is to teach our children how to overcome differences and find common ground and forge close friendships. Instead of simply watching hatred rises on the scent of the latest eruptions of hate-inspired violence, we need to encourage our youth from all different backgrounds and beliefs to embrace their differences and promote understanding and tolerance and strive for equal protection for all, united against hate, bigotry and racism. Learning Objectives:

1) How to examine & root out biases and barriers: Everyone, regardless of race, background or beliefs can have unconscious racial bias. Be willing to examine your own bias and the ways you may be privileged or unaware.
2) Encourage Self-expression, Engage, Don’t Avoid: Bigotry is perpetuated by silence—and silence is complicity. Be willing to lead the uncomfortable conversations and turn them into moments of learning. Learn to break through your own discomfort to embrace the tensions and unknowns. Encourage discussions to identify and appreciate points of connection, as well as differences.
3) Model your values and vision: Practice equity, inclusion, empathy and respect with others. Your actions, more than your words, will have the greatest impact.
Health Resources in Action

Health Resources in Action (HRiA) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help people build healthier lives and healthier communities through prevention, health promotion and research. For 50 years, HRiA has worked with other nonprofit organizations, medical research institutions, community coalitions and neighborhood groups to advance public health and medical research. Whether it is working to reduce youth access to tobacco or supporting new discoveries in cancer research, Health Resources in Action is consistently at the forefront of efforts to improve the health of individuals and communities in the Greater Boston area and throughout the country.

www.hria.org

Simmons College

For more than 100 years, Simmons has put the needs of our students first. Through an education that combines intellectual leadership with professional preparation, we help students lead meaningful lives and build successful careers for the 21st Century.

With today’s dynamic community of more than 4,500 students, Simmons University continues to move forward. Our commitment to the success of our students guides our vision and is clear in our values.

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2020 Annual Youth Work Intensive Conference

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