

The VR Youth Technical Assistance Center (Y-TAC)



Led by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)

in Partnership With:

- Cornell University's K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR);
- Boston University's School of Education; and,
- Key Subject Matter Experts (SME) from across the country.



Equip Leaders to Better Prepare Children & Youth for Postsecondary Education and Training, Rewarding Careers, & Civic and Community Engagement

The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) is a 55-year-old community-driven, equity-focused organization dedicated to catalyzing & building capacity at the intersection of leadership, education, & workforce development. We partner with under-resourced communities through initiatives strategically situated at grassroots, regional, & national levels.

IEL uses 3 strategies to eliminate systemic barriers and #RiseUpForEquity:

1. Prepare & support youth, parent, family, & community leaders
2. Mobilize to disrupt systemic inequity & discrimination
3. Innovate policy & program strategies in education, workforce development, & civic engagement

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VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION



YOUTH TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE CENTER

Engaging with Youth During These Virtual Times: Sharing Tips and Motivational Interviewing Techniques

Presented by Adene Karhan, LCSW

Cornell University, Yang-Tan Institute, Youth Technical Assistance
Center



Presenter



Adene Karhan, LCSW, Y-TAC, Yang Tan Institute, Cornell University
Contact: ak839@cornell.edu

Warm Up Activity



Think back to your own adolescence/young adulthood and the routines, rituals, rights of passage, etc., that you engaged in (prom, graduation, getting to experience “senior privileges” etc.). Which of these would have had the greatest negative impact if it had been interrupted by a pandemic such as COVID-19?



Objectives



As a result of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- Identify major impacts of COVID-19 on youth in the wake of COVID-19
- Understanding the unique nature of trauma (the individual's response to a collective trauma)
- Learn tips for engaging youth in new ways
- Identify motivational interviewing tools that can be utilized to engage youth in exploring employment, education, training goals.

International Labour Organization Findings

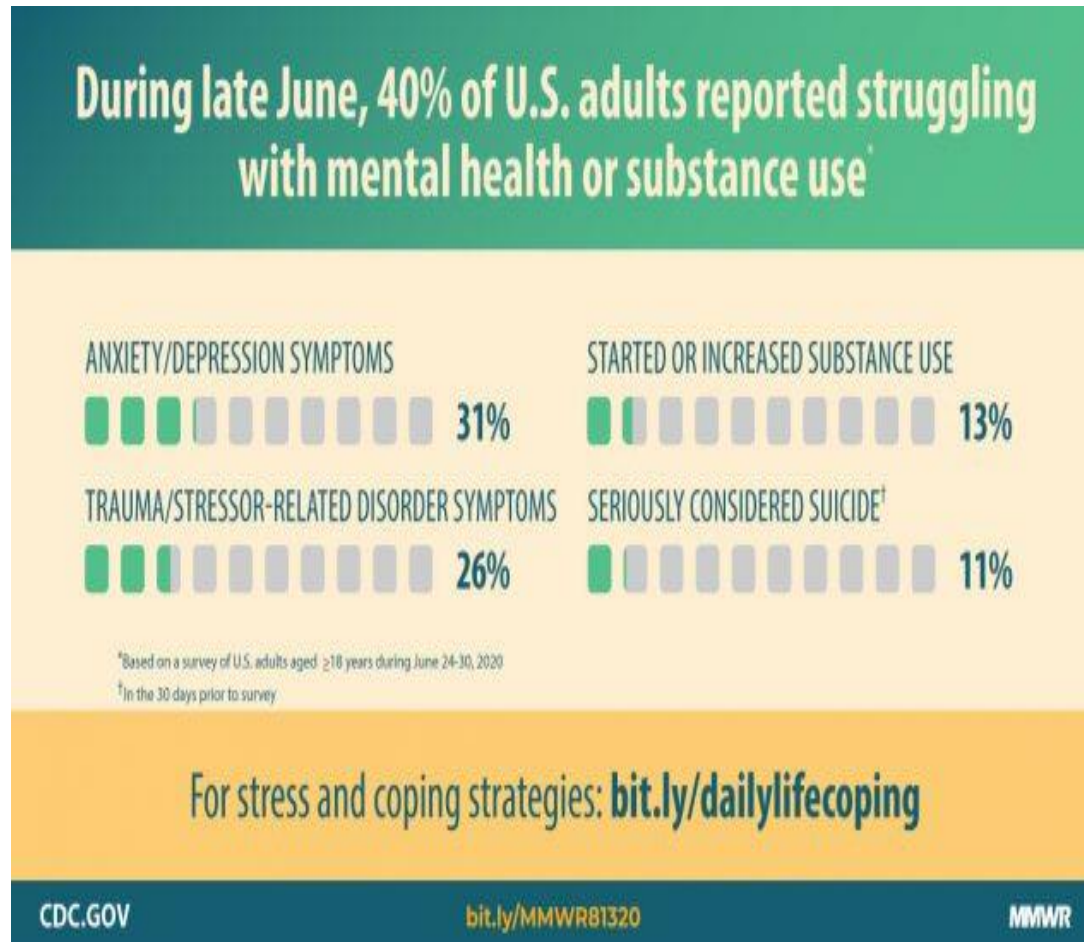


- Global study conducted April-May 2020, over 12,000 responses, 112 countries
- Young adults ages 18-34 (with 18-19 being referred to as “young people”)

Major Findings Related to COVID-19:

- 13% were unable to access education or training
- 23.1% of youth ages 18-24 who had been working stopped working.
- Those whose education or work was either disrupted or had stopped completely were almost twice as likely to be “probably” affected by anxiety or depression as those whose who stayed on track.

CDC Data on Mental Health Impact



- 25.5% of respondents ages 18-24 reported seriously considering suicide in the previous 30 days.
- 74.9% of youth ages 18-24 reported at least 1 adverse mental or behavioral health symptom.

Distorted Time Perception



Distorted Time Perception:

- Feeling like time has stopped or everything is in slow motion
- Experiencing a sense of timelessness
- Confusing the order of time and days
- Perceiving a foreshortened future
- Impairment of sequential thinking



Prior to COVID	After COVID
The future is knowable, controllable, and guaranteed	The future feels unsafe and uncertain

Framework for Understanding Trauma



Event

- By definition, trauma requires an event
- There is a wide discrepancy in what events are considered “traumatic”

Experience

- How an individual reacts to the event
- Will vary with individuals and over time within the same individual

Effects

- Tremendous variation in the way that an individual responds to trauma and the ways it impacts the mind and body.
- Some individuals recover from trauma without a significant long-term effects (resilience)

Chat Box Activity



What are youth that you work with (or that you know elsewhere) saying about how they have been most impacted by the pandemic? What are they feeling?

Responding to Youth Using Core Communication Skills from MI



All of these techniques still apply in the virtual meeting space.

Asking open questions

Affirming

Reflective Listening

Summarizing

O
A
R
S

Negotiating the Virtual Meeting Space



- Assess whether the youth has the availability, skills, and comfort level to utilize the format that you are engaging in together.
- Ask directly whether the youth needs any support with learning how to use a particular type of technology.
- Consider creating some norms that you review together at the beginning of each meeting to set expectations (e.g., need for a quiet space, whether the camera has to be on, etc.)



Tips for Virtual Engagement of Youth



- Prioritize youth preferences and ease of access to virtual format over your own preferences.
- Mix hands-on activities with virtual (e.g., sending activity worksheets in the mail for the youth prior to the meeting)
- Be aware of potential triggers that may occur in the virtual environment (e.g., in some cases video may have been used with sexual exploitation)
- Discuss preferences for maintaining on-going communication (e.g., many youth are much more comfortable texting than talking on the phone)
- Learn to use emojis, memes, GIFs, and other digital enhancements

For more tips, visit the Youth Collaborative website: <https://youthcollaboratory.org/Engaging-Young-People-Virtually> or <https://www.mentoring.org/coronavirus-resources/>

Changes in the Helping Relationship in the Midst of COVID-19



- Discuss shifts in career plans of fallback options related to COVID-19
- Consider the transition back to work/school following COVID-19
- All time/space for processing emotions related to changes brought about by COVID-19
- Connect youth to other resources as needed

(Employment and Training Administration, US Department of Labor, 2020)

Agenda Mapping Tool



**Physical
Health**

Work

**Legal
Problems**

Finances

**College/
Trade
school**

Housing

EPE Technique



Elicit

- Ask permission to share info
- Clarify information needs and gaps
- “Would you like to know about...”*
- “Is there information I can help you with?”*

Provide

- Prioritize
- Respect autonomy
- Avoid jargon
- Present what you know without interpreting meaning
- Offer small amounts of info at a time
- Avoid soapboxing

Elicit

- Ask for consumer’s interpretation, understanding or response to info
- Ask open questions
- Reflect reactions that you see

Readiness Ruler



The ruler: “On a scale of 0-10 (define “0” and “10”) how would you rate”... importance of change, desire to change, fears about change, progress towards change, etc.

Thinking About Change										
What change(s) are you considering?										
How important is it that you make this change?										
How confident are you that you are able to make this change?										
How ready are you to make this change?										

Readiness Ruler

Not at all										Very
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Using the MI Measurement Tool



Not at all
confident

Extremely
confident

0

1

2

3

4

5

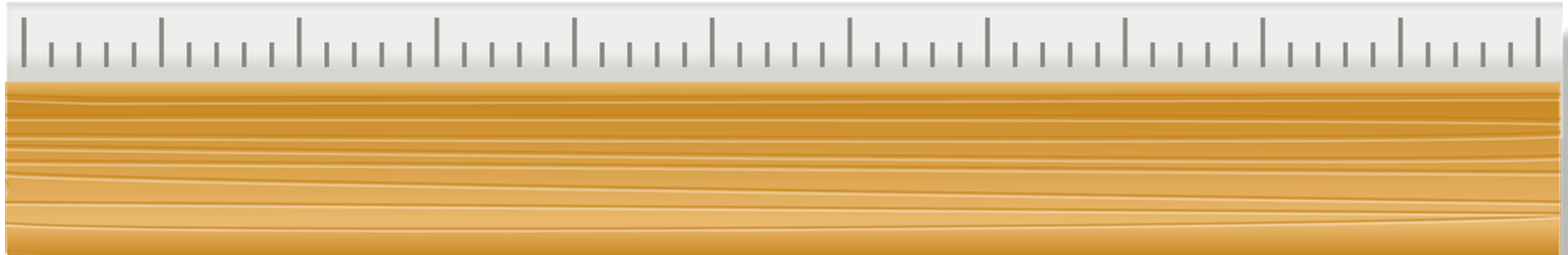
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10



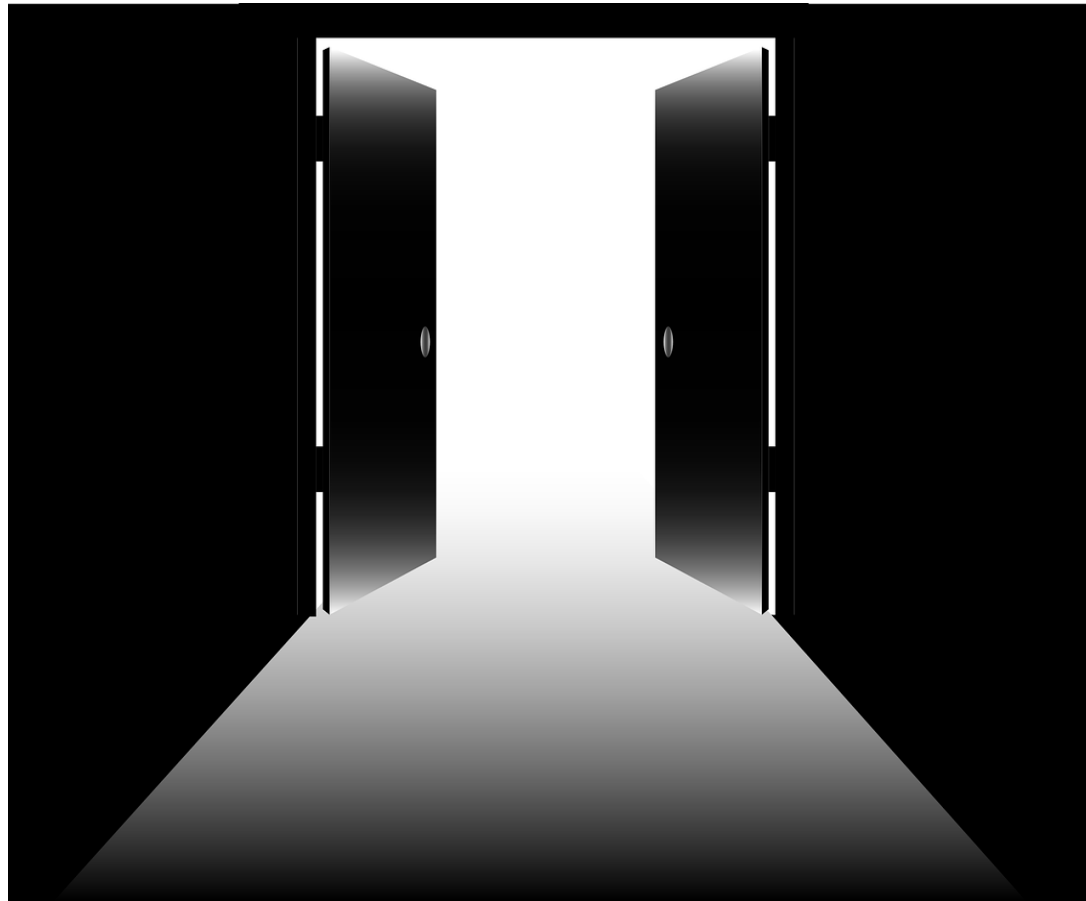
Rate your confidence level in engaging with youth virtually in the midst of COVID-19

Adolescence as an Opportunity



- While 95% of brain development takes place before the age of 5, a second wave of brain development takes place in the brain **between the approximate ages of 11 and 24.**
- Brain becomes more *plastic*.
- **Plasticity**- ability of the brain to modify its connections, to change and modify in reaction to the environment, or re-wire itself.
- Plasticity=vulnerability to toxins, but also window for healing.

Reimagining Work with Youth



Now is the Time To:

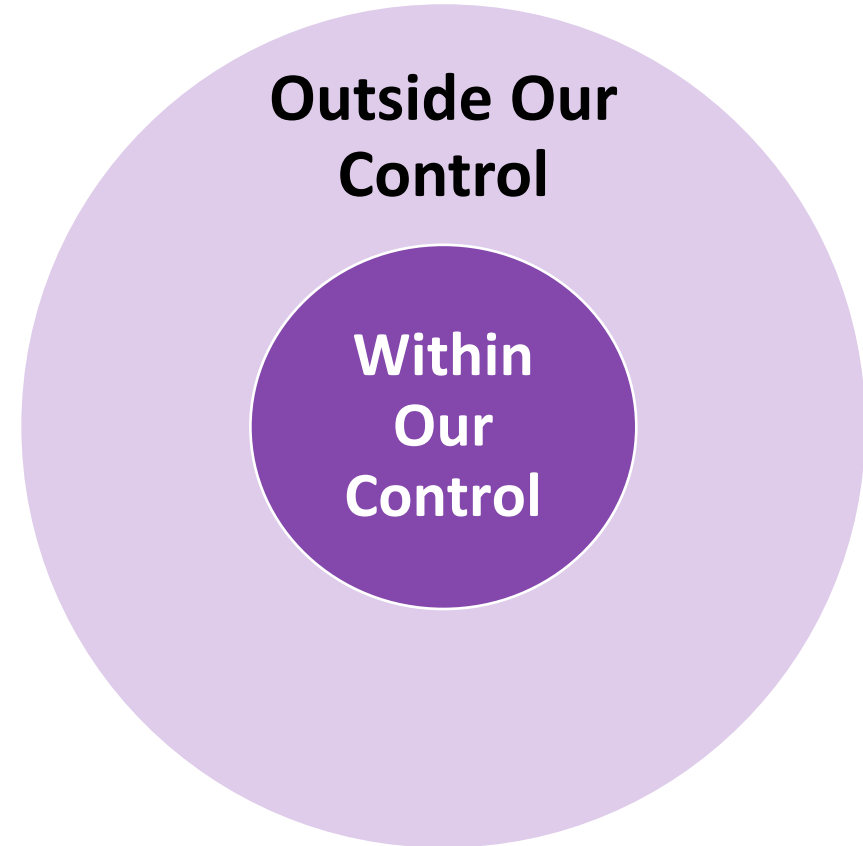
1. Think Differently
2. See Differently
3. Act differently

(Charge from The Readiness Project Partners)

What is Learned Hopefulness?



- Requires us to be grounded in reality, while still maintaining a hope that, despite everything working against us, we can do something that will help make the situation better.
- It's looking past what "is" and envisioning what "can be".



TIP: This diagram can be used as a hands-on activity to help youth focus on small changes they can make to experience a feeling of control over their life.

Building Characteristics of Hope



Individuals with high hopes:

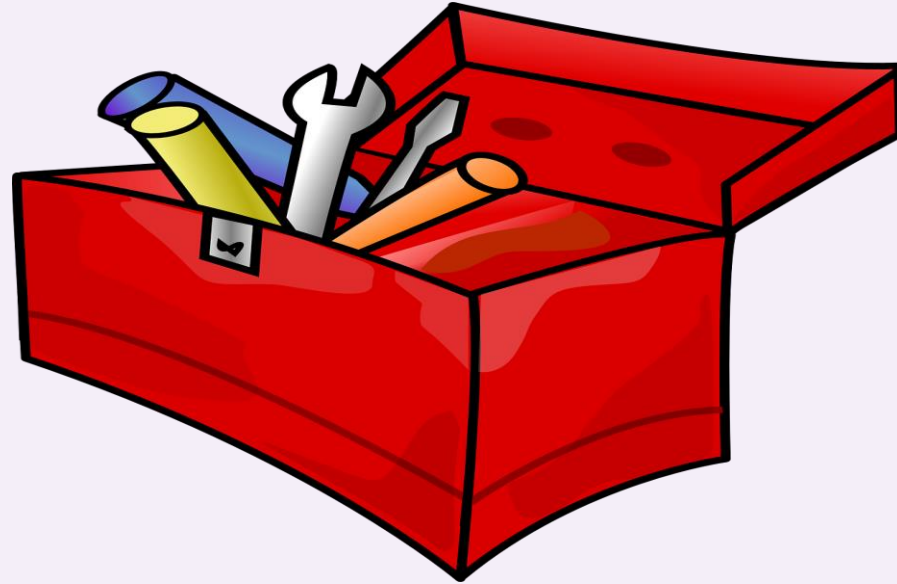
- Generate multiple goals so that they have a new goal readily available if original goal is unreachable.
- Develop alternate pathways when they run into barriers in the original pathway.
- Develop positive and affirming self-talk to help motivate and sustain action
- Tap into emotions from positive past experiences in meeting goals in order to sustain motivation.
- Engage in on-going learning and skill development.
- Call on friends and family when they encounter stressors.

Qualities of Trauma-Informed Environments



1. **Safety:** Both physical and emotional
2. **Trustworthiness:** Consistency, interpersonal boundaries
3. **Choice:** Offers a sense of control
4. **Collaboration:** Sharing power
5. **Empowerment:** Recognizes strengths





Additional Take-Away Tools

Self-Assessment for MI Skills



Stage	Reflection Questions
Engaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-How comfortable is the person talking to me? (Observe verbal & non-verbal)-How comfortable do I feel?-How supportive and helpful am I being?
Focusing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-What goals for change does this person have?-Do I have different goals?-Am I utilizing active listening?-Does this feel like dancing or wrestling?
Evoking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-What are the person's own reasons for change?-Is the righting reflex pulling me to be the one arguing for change?
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-What would be a reasonable next step toward change?-Am I remembering to evoke rather than prescribe a plan?

Using the Decisional Balance Tool to Address Ambivalence



Advantages of maintaining status quo/not changing (not working)	Advantages of making change (getting a job)
Disadvantages of maintaining the status quo/not changing (remaining unemployed)	Disadvantages of making change (getting a job)

Additional tools to use when applying MI to VR work: Larson, J. E. (2008). User-friendly motivational interviewing and evidence-based supported employment tools for practitioners. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 74(4), 18-30.

DARN: MI Questions to Inspire Change



D- Desire Questions: Include verbs such as want, wish, and like

How would you like things to change?

What are you looking for from VR?

A- Ability Questions: Ask what person can do, is able to do, or what they could do.

If you really decided to try get a job, how would you go about it?

Of the options we discussed, which do you feel most able to do?

R- Reasons: Explore if....then reasons for considering change.

What would make it worth your while to..?

What might be the good things about getting a job?

N- Need for Change: (May also evoke reasons)

What needs to happen?

How serious or urgent does this feel to you?

Resources



- Checklist from The Search Institute on ways to build healthy relationship development with youth: <https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-checklist.pdf>
- Tips for Engaging Youth Virtually from Youth Collaboratory : <https://youthcollaboratory.org/Engaging-Young-People-Virtually>
- For a journal article with suggested MI tools for employment practitioners, look up: Larson, J. E. (2008). User-friendly motivational interviewing and evidence-based supported employment tools for practitioners. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 74(4), 18-30.

Q & A



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Adene's Contact Information



Adene Karhan, LCSW
Cornell University, Yang-Tan Institute

ak839@cornell.edu

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