

New York City JJAC Project Update

**NYC Administration for Children's Services
Division of Youth & Family Justice**

Presented by
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Coordinator of Special Projects



YOUTH VOICES Collaborative



*Youth Voices was a project of the NYC Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC)
funded by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services.*

Project Basics:

NYC JJAC was funded to work across the local continuum in an effort to achieve a more gender affirming body of staff members and a system that is consistently promoting and integrating the authentic voice of the young people it serves into its policies and practices.

- **Youth Writing Workshops**

Face to face workshops were held in secured detention, CTH sites and at Passages Academy (Bronx Hope)

- **Summer (2020) Virtual Writing Project**

100 + youth in detention, placement, or community-based programming

- **Video Interviews**

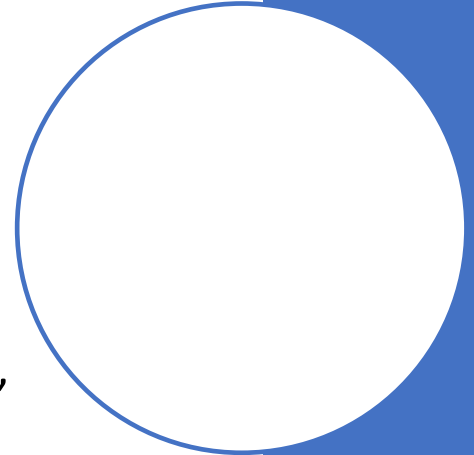
5 young adults with previous systems experience (Foster Care, RTCs, Detention, CTH, OCFS, Rikers)

- **Development of Training Materials**

Front line detention staff, foster care and CTH provider agencies

- **Recommendations/Themes for Systems Improvement**

Based on the thoughts, ideas and concerns presented by young people themselves



Youth voices are a secret ingredient for system improvement.

Goals for today:



EDUCATE: Why is youth engagement so important?



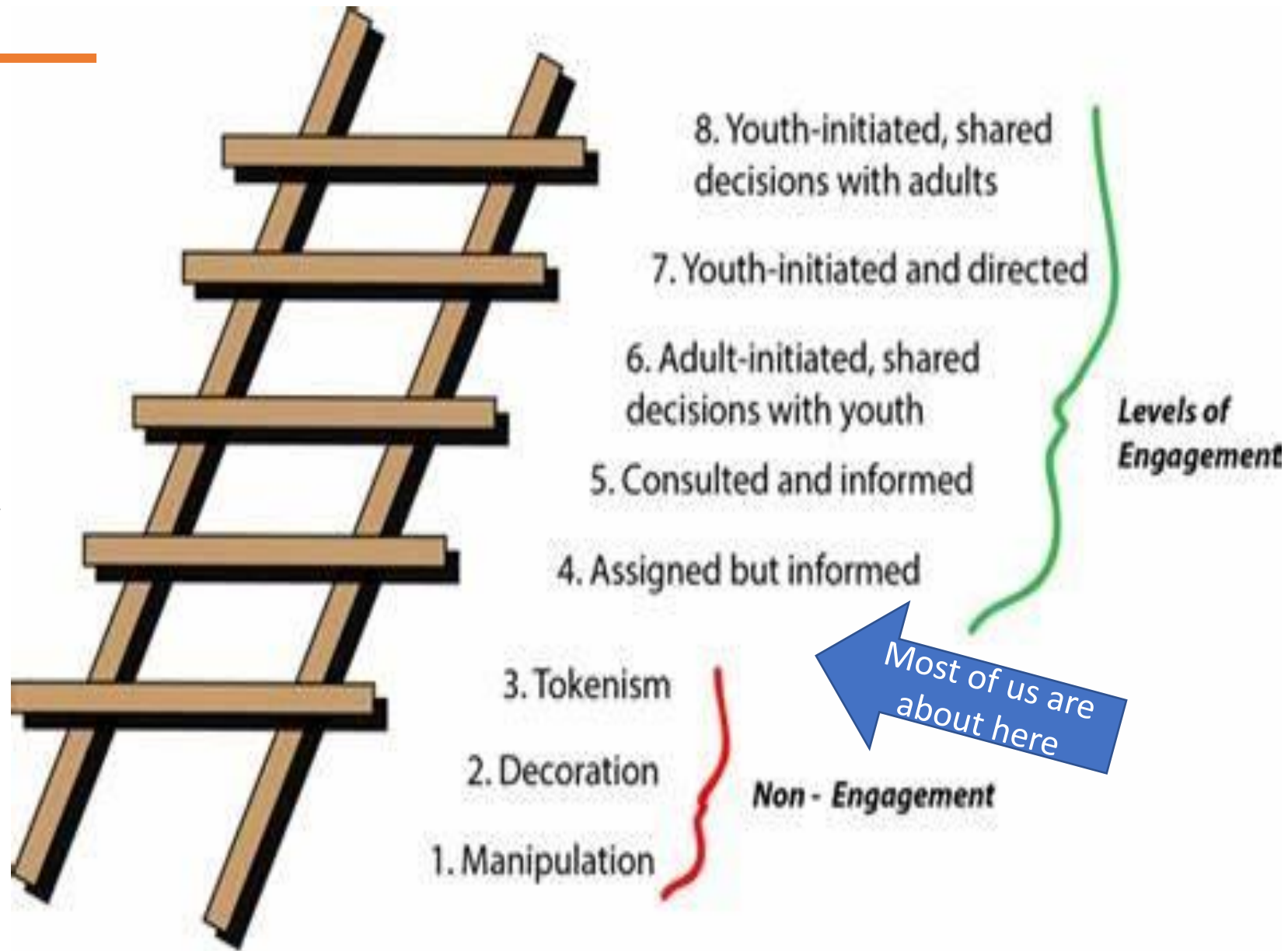
EVALUATE: Are we authentic in our current offerings?



EMPOWER: How can we support youth voice moving forward?



There are many efforts to actively engage young people in our processes... need to make sure the work is **authentic**.



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.



Being authentic in our efforts will help us get the answers to questions that we really to know if we are truly committed to positive outcomes for youth:

- How well do we know our target populations?
- Are we offering the programs and services that young people need the most?
- What kind of support do we give youth as they transition out of our system?



Who is the target population?



What communities do they come from?

What does "home" look like?

What are their triggers?

What resources are easy available to them?

What are their interests?



Are we offering programs and services that meet the young people's needs?



Why do we offer what we do?

What impact are we having?

How are we measuring success?

What positive outcomes can we report out?

What are the gaps in services/unmet needs?



What kind of support do we offer in transitioning out of our programs and beyond?



What is re-entry and who is it for?

How can youth access on-going support and resources?

What kind of longer term follow up happens regularly?

Why aren't we committed to the successful transition of our youth to adulthood?



Fostering Independence for Young People





How can we support youth voice moving forward?

Implement the report's recommendations into your practice

CHALLENGE: Start with something small...be consistent.



Current Effort: began October 1, 2021

Neighborhood Family Offense Response Project

includes both programmatic and policy-level tracks aimed at:

- Avoiding the exposure of youth to secure detention in the wake of family conflicts;
- Consistently engaging families as quickly as possible with local supports and services delivered by neighborhood-based agencies in their home community; and
- Partnering with all relevant City agencies and community partners to create safe alternatives to the traditional law enforcement-led approach to handling these cases.

If you would like more information
about these projects or to access to
Youth Voices materials, contact:

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