Using YPQI for Continuous Improvement
Alisha G. Flores, Rasheedah Azeez, Dylan Genest
Family Focus
- Let’s get to know each other!

  - Name/organization/role
  - Favorite song to dance to
  - What you like best about your work
  - Fun fact about yourself
Objectives

Participants will learn about:

- The stages of change and how to engage staff in conversation about continuous improvement
- Using YPQI for continuous improvement
- How Family Focus has built program structures and supports to deepen YPQI work
- Next steps to implement YPQI at your organization
Agenda

- Stages of Change
- YPQI Overview and the Assess-Plan-Improve Process
- Family Focus Implementation of YPQI
  - History and Capacity Building
  - Culture, Curriculum, and Professional Development
  - Program Supports, Tools, and Goals
- Next Steps
The Stages of Behavior Change

1. **Precontemplation** (unaware of the problem)
2. **Contemplation** (aware of the problem and of the desired behavior change)
3. **Preparation** (intends to take action)
4. **Action** (practices the desired behavior)
5. **Maintenance** (works to sustain the behavior change)

Sources: Grimley 1997 (75) and Prochaska 1992 (148)
Supporting Data-Driven Change

- Resistance
  - “There are many reasons why this won’t work.”
- Survival
  - “This is just something I need to do, so let’s make the best of it.”
  - “If I keep to myself, no one will call me out.”
- Compliance
  - “We will do the bare minimum to get through, and that’s all.”
- Engagement
  - “I see the value of this change, and I’m committed to taking advantage of this opportunity.”

@2007 High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, youth.highschope.org
Managing Complex Change
(Ambrose 1987)

Vision  Skills  Incentives  Resources  Action Plan  CHANGE

Vision  Skills  Incentives  Resources  Action Plan  Confusion

Vision  Skills  Incentives  Resources  Action Plan  Anxiety

Vision  Skills  Resources  Action Plan  Gradual Change

Vision  Skills  Incentives  Action Plan  Frustration

Vision  Skills  Incentives  Resources  False Starts
Youth PQA History

- Youth PQA-originated out of experiences in a summer camp for teens.
- Former HighScope Youth Development Group extracted best practices, developed training & then the Youth PQA.
- Youth PQA is similar to Preschool PQA which was rooted in the Perry Preschool Research Study done by HighScope.
What is the PQA?

1. A **validated** instrument designed to assess the quality of youth programs and identify staff training needs.

2. A set of items that measures youth access to **key developmental experiences**.

3. A tool which produces scores that can be used for comparison and assessment of **progress over time**.
Quality Construct: 
The Pyramid of Program Quality

- **Engagement**: Planning, Choice, Reflection
- **Interaction**: Belonging, Collaboration, Leadership, Adult Partners
- **Supportive Environment**: Warm Welcome, Active Engagement, Encouragement
- **Safe Environment**: Emotional Safety, Healthy Environment, Emergency Preparedness, Accommodating Environment, Nourishment

**Youth Voice in Governance** - Professional Learning Community
THE YPQI PROCESS

ASSESS
Collect data about your program.

PLAN
Create an improvement plan based on data.

IMPROVE
Carry out your plan. Train and coach staff.
Assess

The PQA allows you to observe what actually goes on in your youth programs.

How often do you have the time or energy to simply observe a program led by another staff?

How often do you rely on what you think happens in your programs?
Plan

Looking at the results of your assessment gives you a chance to make concrete plans.

What are your program strengths?

What do you want to improve?
Improve

During the improve phase you will implement your plans.

Targeted trainings.

Additional resources as needed.

Possible changes to the curriculum.
Why are we here? We already agree...

- instructional quality matters.
- continuous improvement is important.

If you aren’t a believer in the model, your staff will not follow.
Cycle of Program Improvement

Lower Stakes Accountability (Policy)

Higher Stakes Accountabilities

Objective Data

Meaningful Information

Action/Expertise

Improved Outcomes

Interpretive Community
- Team Self Assessment
- Review external scores

Team Planning and Implementing
- Improvement planning
- Performance coaching

Lower Stakes Accountabilities
Lessons Learned

- YPQI has to be a collaborative, bottom-up approach
- Timing and presentation is important
- Complex change requires many components
YPQI and Capacity Building

- **Things to consider:**
  - Past forms of evaluation
  - How it’s presented, who’s involved
  - Leadership support
  - Creating/changing structures and program supports for continuous improvement

- **Building capacity:**
  - Leadership meetings
  - Timeline (training, deadlines, compliance, partners, etc.)
  - Grant reporting
  - Staff PD & committees
  - Program structure and policies
Where does change happen? – Theory of YPQI

Policy Context

Network Leaders

Managers

Organizational Setting

Staff

Instructional Setting

Youth

Where do you fit within this framework?

What setting(s) do you interact with?

How can you be an active change agent from your vantage point?
A Rose, a Bud, and a Thorn

- Thinking about your organization…
  - Thorn: one thing that will be a challenge
  - Bud: a new idea/something you are excited about
  - Rose: something you are already doing that you are proud of
Culture

Staff Level
- Staff meetings
- Timeline
- Stakeholders/Partnerships
- Community Building
- Feedback

Youth Level
- Welcoming Environment
- Non-evaluative Praise
- Conflict Resolution
- Community Building
- Feedback
Curriculum

- Learning goal or focus in each session
- Engaging and Divergent Activities
- Connections and Application
- Small Group Opportunities
- Planning and Reflection
Professional Development

- Staff onboarding
- YPQI trainings
- Staff development
Program supports and tools

- Site Visits
- External Assessments

Documentation:
- Compliance Form
- PD Tracking
- Scores Reporter
Using YPQI in Local Evaluations

- **Local Objective**: The YPQI tool will be used to improve the quality of youth development and implement continuous improvement practices.
Next steps...things to consider

- It’s always a good time to revisit goals and integrate new language to support YPQI.
- Keep organizational leadership, partners and funders aware of improvements and the work.
- Think long-term about funding supports to keep the work going.
- Shared leadership and training ensures YPQI continues with staff turnover.
- Partner with other organizations and their leaders doing the work to learn best practices!
Resources

- www.cypq.org
- YPQI Roadmap Webinar Series for Network leaders
- Ravi Ramaswamy
  Portfolio Manager of Emerging Sectors and Training, Field Services
  The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality
  301 W. Michigan Avenue, Suite 200
  Ypsilanti, MI 48197
  Direct Line: 202-250-3151
  Fax: 734.961.6904
  Email: ravi@cypq.org

- Alisha G. Flores
  Director of Community Schools and Youth Initiatives
  Family Focus
  alisha.flores@family-focus.org