SETH HODEREWSKI: Good morning, everybody.

How's everybody doing?

You have a great night?

I'm still feeling this altitude thing.

It's in my head somewhere.

I don't know what's going on, but we're doing all right.

We're going to talk to you about youth culture, youth outreach and youth involvement.

We thought what a super important topic to be talking about, especially as it relates to all of this and when it comes down to having youth involved almost at every part of all of this and how important that all is.

So we've got to go to slide four, because we mixed things up a little bit.

We're doing all right.

But for the goals for this part, we're going to talk about really creating the culture at your center and what that's really about.

That is something I know that we at Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living really focused on.

We feel that we've really created a culture at the CIL with all that we do.

We're going to talk about seeing the need.

We're going to talk about everybody being all in.

And we're going to talk about that youth culture piece and how the youth of today are so different than any other time period of anyone.

About being youth driven.

How do you find youth? And the wheres, the whens, the hows, and a little bit of everything else.

It should be interesting, I think.

We're going to cut this back down a little bit, too.

We're going to shorten this presentation a little bit so we can get into the meat of some of the other programs and some of the other things going on here.

Anything to add? SIERRA ROYSTER: No.

SETH HODEREWSKI: And we're going to go back to three.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Really quick, so I actually am going to go off script already.

I was sitting at breakfast this morning and you guys have had a lot of information.

You guys had all the regulation stuff and you were supposed to learn it by lunch yesterday.

And then you were supposed to hear all the programs really quick, and you were supposed to remember it.

And then you were supposed to do the strategic planning and understand that.

And that's a lot.

It's a lot to take in.

I know you're ready to jump into the hows and whys.

That's what we heard from the post-its.

But I almost want to caution you to stop.

Stop in this moment because it's great that you have the energy, and it's great that you have the passion to want to have youth involved, but, while you're hearing these things and you're going $3 million? I already have a good relationship with VR.

We can't stand VR.

Whatever the situation is, I know.

I'm from North Carolina.

And whatever that situation is, hear what they're doing because I want to go back to yesterday when I was talking about some of my previous experiences at the center.

I didn't have all those things when I came to these conferences.

I came to an ILRU conference one time and somebody was talking about like $36 million.

And I was like, that is not our center or ever going to be our center.

But I was able to take a tidbit of different things they were doing and come home and say that's how this would look here.

So don't think that you have to overwhelm yourself and recreate what they are doing.

Just take what interests you or as you're sitting here and you hear something that they're doing, there's nobody doing that in my area.

That's a need.

As we start talking about needs, you know the gaps that are in your area.

You know what's missing.

And so when you're hearing these things, think about how those ideas are something you want to catch on to and then go home and figure out how that works.

I guarantee you, I'm going to volunteer you guys, sorry.

What I did is I heard an idea, I thought about how it worked in my area, and I called the presenters back and said, Hey, I was there a year ago.

Can you tell me how you did that and maybe can you share some resources and tell me a little about that? And that's how I got stuff going.

Don't feel overwhelmed today.

Hear the need that you need to be looking for.

Maybe you know those gaps and you came here for that.

That's what I really think we want to focus on.

Don't overwhelm yourself to recreate.

Fill that need, but first you have to identify that need.

And so, I think that's the part that we're going to go over is how do you find that?

Maybe you're here and you don't know the need.

You have been here for a month and you have no clue what IL is.

You're not the only one.

Find out who is out there.

We talked a lot about that yesterday of what's your community talking about?

How are they saying we don't have this? Or when people are coming to your centers as individuals, what is that piece that they're talking about that they don't know how to do?

Maybe they work with VR but don't know how to transition to college but they really want to go to college and this keeps being a reoccurring theme.

Then start investigating that.

Find that need that's out there.

Pull some people together.

I know Mary talked about this a little yesterday.

Pull those people together.

And feedback from staff.

We talked about staff are great resources, but also see what they're dealing with, too.

We get caught up in so many consumers and so many things that sometimes we don't have the time to stop and think what is a reoccurring issue that we're all having to work on?

One thing at our center, we were all doing driver's Ed individually with consumers, which was eating up a lot of our time, and we realized driver's Ed was not being offered to students with disabilities.

They were not talking about adaptions and all of those different pieces that may affect your disability and driving.

And so, that is where we created a class out of that.

It did not happen because, ooh, I want to do this.

This will be fantastic.

It came from a lot of our consumers were coming to us individually as peer advocates and going how do we do that?

And so we maximized our time and dollars by putting it all together and learning it at the same time.

We talked about talking to teachers and school administrations yesterday.

Talk to the parents, we told you how to find parents.

I know Kings is going to talk a little bit later about parents and how important they can be in the process.

And see what everybody else is doing.

One thing that we did in North Carolina is we started a couple of people were doing youth programs, so we all jumped on the phone together not as CIL directors.

Not as management staff, as direct service staff that were working with youth consumers or wanted to work with youth consumers, and we shared ideas.

How are you doing that?

So we're finding out about other people in the state.

Sometimes that is a little bit more helpful than going across the country and finding something.

You can relate to the same programs or same issues.

And you may identify other nonprofits or organizations that are working with youth that you didn't know were in your state.

So reaching out to those around you.

We talked about surveying yesterday.

Ask.

You don't know until you ask.

And then host a transition-related forum.

Bring people together.

Get pizza donated like Mary said yesterday and ask them questions.

That's always the best way to kind of just ask.

SETH HODEREWSKI: And to hop on what Sierra said here, too, that's why we're all here.

We're here to learn from each other and our presenters are here to maybe help you talk through some of those types of things, too, and that's why we're here.

All right.

So one of the other big parts is making sure that everyone is all-in at your center.

And that's something that, you know, like, you kind of feel that everyone there needs to embrace what you're doing with the young adults.

Creating that thinking that creating that culture.

You know, your staff, all the staff in there should be all in.

They must embrace working with the young adults in some regard, you know?

We see this a lot, but especially with our core staff, you know?

They are ones that see the young adults, maybe the first time through I and R and you know, they are also really there in case there's any other type of need.

Like if a young adult is in one particular program, like a group or something like that, our information, our core services are always open to those young adults as well.

Having your board being fully embracing of what you plan to do as far as, you know, youth transition services and how important that is.

You know, that has to be supported on so many different levels, you know?

Like right down to, I know our board includes a lot of transition related people.

You know, we have professors who teach special education or we have teachers on our board that can really help to give that thinking when it comes to transition related work.

Right down to having young adults on your board.

Community partners being all in with you as well.

You know, we always look at, especially our core services as we need to know everything that's out there because it's all about our consumers, we may not have all the answers, and that's why we need to work with folks to help them get to where they want to be to do the things that they want to do.

That may not always be us, that may be our competitor, and maybe that's all right.

If it's ultimately about the consumer and what the consumer's looking to do, how can we help them get to where they want to be?

Funders, we're going to talk a whole lot about funding in the next big chunk of today and what that looks like and being involved in and working well with and doing things that your funder is looking to do through deliverables, through goals, whatever that may be.

And you know, like, you do good work, your funders are going to be there for you and they're going to be there again and again.

And you hear us talk a lot about relationships and how important that is.

That's something I know that we've been able to develop a lot of relationships, especially with VR to the point where I think they look to give us money to be able to provide services for young adults.

So developing and keeping the relationships, keeping them positive and being able to talk and advocate when you need to do that.

But at the same time, working with and doing things in a positive means for the consumers is what it's all about.

And then your consumers, you know? Having them be all in as well.

Understanding what their needs are.

What they need to do, what they need to be doing.

And ultimately in many cases they are very good outreach.

In many cases, our young adult groups, our young adults go out and help us present and be there talking about the programs that they're involved in.

And that, to us, is really the ultimate form of advertising.

We've actually decreased budgets in our advertising because our young adults were so good at getting other people involved.

So having everybody all in, super important.

SIERRA ROYSTER: I'm going to expand a little bit on staff members, because when we're talking about everybody, everybody at your center is valuable.

Everybody at your center is contributing in their own way and they have been, sometimes, for years.

Now we have this new thing that says you have to focus on a population.

And so then they either bring you on or they move you on to another position or add a different hat to your job and they say, you're going to do youth.

And we really need to focus on this and we need to start working on this and the center starts targeting that thing, and the rest of the staff are like, we're still working hard.

We still have these other services.

That's just one service, cause they had to come to the training so they don't understand all the differences that you are going to educate them about when you get back.

But they're going we're still working all of these different services; why are we so focused on youth?

I don't get it.

And that's because they don't understand.

We have to take a second to educate all staff about the value.

Go back and show some history videos.

Show where Judy Heumann, Ed Roberts, they were young people when this movement started.

They weren't the pictures we see all the time now.

They were those young people in the 504 sit-in.

Those are the types of things that we want to teach our other staff about.

That the movement can't just continue with people after they age out of high school.

That's not how it works.

In order to have a movement, you have to get the next generation involved and also remind some of those people that have been there for awhile that they might want to retire one day.

That might be something they desire to do.

If you have these young people carrying on all of that work that you've done, you can train them how to do that and all of the work you have done is not lost.

So don't also forget about the rest of the staff.

Because when you involve all of them in that planning process, then they're wanting to contribute, too.

Ask them how it works into their programs, how it adds to it.

Don't just say we're all on board with youth and we are going to get on board so get on or get out.

That's not going to work.

We care about all consumers regardless of their age.

Regardless of their education status is or not, or their eligibility for IEP and keep going on the list, right? We still work with everybody.

Make sure that the staff are respectful to that and understand it.

Don't force it on them.

Educate them.

Just like we would do anybody else when we're talking about an advocacy issue.

And sometimes you have staff that are like, I don't know what to do with youth.

Maybe I could be an information or referral.

That's probably the best way I could And ask where their strengths are.

Is it that they come and help out with a group because they really love that kind of stuff?

Or is it that they are really good at Social Security and when they need that, let that go to them because they're the expert.

So involvement of all of the center.

A lot of times we see young people that come into the center and they get attached to the youth person and that's great.

They're involved in your center and they're doing stuff.

But what happens when they turn 25 or 30 which is for APRIL?

What happens when they start getting a little older?

They don't know anybody else in your center.

They don't want to come anymore.

You're kicking them out of this, what?

Introduce them to those other people along the way.

Don't let them just feel comfortable with you, let them feel comfortable in your center.

That's what you want them to feel comfortable with.

And when you're talking to youth, don't talk at them.

They get talked at all the time.

Ask them, have a conversation.

So when you're talking about the CSR and that eligibility.

Don't go, did you have an IEP?

Did you have a 504?

Okay, tell me about your school.

Tell me about what you did in school.

What could have helped you in school.

Would this accommodation.

You don't know what an accommodation is, lets talk about that.

Have a conversation with them.

Don't talk at them.

Cause they are going to shut down and go nope.

Don't like you.

You don't care what I say.

And this one is really hard.

Are we ready?

Let them fail.

I know.

We were actually just talking about it, and I have a really hard time with this.

Kind of a control freak.

You gotta give them the dignity of risk.

Just like any other consumer, and I see this with young people, their parents are like no, no, no, I am getting a guardianship over their money because they don't know how to do it and they will blow all of their money.

Oh no, no.

I planned all of her meals when she moved out because she is not goin to eat healthy and gain lots of weight and be unhealthy.

I gained lots of weight when I moved out.

I blew a lot of money and it wasn't mine.

And then I learned I didn't have more money.

So then I could not do that again.

I learned I really didn't want to be big and then I decided I would cut back kinda on my desserts.

That's a learning process for anybody, disability or without.

And youth with disability need to learn that more than anything because a lot of times they have been sheltered and carried and they don't know what it's like to fail.

But that is where a center is fantastic for teaching.

Because once you let them fail and you can see it coming, you don't just go, well, whatever.

Your choice.

You educate them.

These are your options.

You can go and blow all of your money on that new TV you want.

Or, yes, the game is $30 to buy and you have $25 and you're going to use the extra $5 in savings, which is your grocery money, that is your options.

But what are you going to do for food?

And then they go buy the game and have no more money for food?

Guess who they're coming back to? You.

Don't go I told you and now you have to figure it out.

No.

That's what our parents did and you hated it.

Then you go, Now what do you do?

You don't have any money for food?

Where do we go from here?

What are your options?

And then once they figure out their options for how to eat, what are you going to do next month?

Did we learn anything?

And you know what, I have had a lot of people who did not learn anything.

It took six months.

They were broke every month, and we wrote the new budget every month.

And then somebody else came behind them that they were friends with and they blew their money and they go no, no, no.

You should don't that.

And taught that other person how to budget, and he still was, had no money.

But he learned something.

I am happy to say that he budgets now.

He is independent and can budget.

Those are the kind of things that they have to fail.

Everybody in here has had something that we failed at.

And that helped us learn.

But we've got to be that person to help them learn, because I guarantee you that parent is right there ready to say -- not all times, but sometimes ready to say I told you they were going to fail.

I told you, now they don't need to do that.

You then have to educate the support system around that young person.

So, that is a hard one.

If you're working with young people, don't criticize them.

When we mess up, we know we messed up, right?

Y'all had some of those questions on there.

When was a time you did something wrong and you knew it?

That was a question.

You knew you were doing something wrong.

You knew you weren't doing it right.

It was probably just salt in the wound for somebody to go, you didn't do that right, and you know that.

Talk to them.

Be constructive.

Figure out how to offer that solution.

Brainstorm those things.

Equality and respect.

Some of you guys have kids.

Some of you guys have grandkids.

These are not your kids.

Even if they're young, don't call them kids.

I know, and I slipped into it yesterday.

That is funny, I am going to talk about it and I just did it.

It's one of those things that, you know, they want to be seen as equal.

You know?

A young person.

Maybe they just want to be called by Susan, their name.

Or the classroom, the students, you know?

Try to avoid that.

It's really demeaning to sometimes, especially to a teenager and you're saying that, that kind of puts a position in their mind that you think they're already young.

Young and dumb, you don't know anything.

That's not what we want them to perceive and sometimes we don't realize our words can do that.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Kiddos sent shivers through my spine.

Every time I hear someone say that.

SIERRA ROYSTER: A group of kiddos are going bowling tonight.

Oh really, how old are they?

20.

Oh.

That's weird.

And let's remember, we did that activity as more so you can start remembering what it's like to be a teenager.

Yes, I will say that when I was 17, I knew everything when I was 17 and you could not tell me any different because I was so smart.

We know they have a lot to learn.

But when you tell them that, did you want to hear that you have a lot more to learn?

You just don't understand yet.

Those were the people you said uh-huh.

Yeah, I know everything.

And you did not listen to them.

You want them to listen to you.

Take time to work with them.

Don't tell them they don't understand yet.

Show them what they don't understand.

And then they'll learn it.

The real world?

A lot of times you hear in high school, you're going to leave high school and go into the real world.

Are you ready for the real world?

Unless it's on MTV, and it's not real, when we talk about the "real world," don't make it such a big foreign thing.

They live in the world, and it's real to them.

Again, go back to educate them where they don't understand.

Don't tell them what they don't understand, just educate them.

Throw it in as a-hey, did you know about money management?

Hey, did you know about this?

Cause then they're wanting to learn.

And remember acronyms? We fall into it.

Clearly, we had to write them down for you guys.

So you lose youth as soon as we start talking about acronyms because they don't care about alphabet soup.

If it's not a text-ready shorthand, they don't know it and so don't expect them to.

So we are going to skip this.

I want you all, this is your homework.

I want you all to go home because we want to get to the hows and whens faster.

And take this.

It is a test on all the up-to-date slang words.

When you think that you know everything about youth, that will put you back down to size.

And I will be honest, I had to maybe text my niece in high school and say I don't know what these mean, can you teach me this.

Because by the time you learn those they're going to change.

But it's good for you to at least catch up with that generation.

My point is don't come in using slang terms and trying to be cool.

Be you.

They can spot a fraud a mile away.

You know, if you're in your 50s or 60s, own it.

Own it! You know, be real to them.

Really quick story.

Sorry I'm kinda long-winded.

Remember, I was cool.

I was the youth in my center.

And I went into a classroom and they told me to kick rocks.

I was like we're inside.

There are no rocks.

In case you didn't know, that's a saying like get out of here.

He was like kick rocks and fall back.

I was like there ain't no rocks in here and I am not falling, I am just sitting down.

And he was like oh my gosh.

Oh my gosh, no.

Like you didn't get that at all.

I was like all right, well, I won't try to be cool and use that again.

And I did the ultimate like old person thing at the end of class.

I was like you kick rocks and fall back and they were like mind blown.

Sometimes they know you're not using that and you throw it in there, it can be funny.

But be real and ask them.

I didn't know what it meant.

I should have said I don't know what that means, so can you explain that and make me youthful minded?

You'll actually be surprised what you learn from them.

You know, give them time to talk.

Even though you don't understand the kick rocks and fall back language, it means something to them, and that's how they talk.

And if you can understand that, you can connect.

SETH HODEREWSKI: And I am not cool.

I get my chops busted constantly by the group of young adults I work with, but there's such a back and forth with all of that that helps us really relate to things.

It's that approach, you know, that you take with them.

And it is so cool.

Just to piggyback a little bit more, on what Sierra said, looking at that whole youth culture thing, it's really recognizing that the youth of today have their own culture, you know?

And they're growing up in a world that uses cell phones and devices and everything that I still don't understand fully, you know?

Like there's, they have an approach, a way about things that they're doing.

You know, I do my best to relate to all of that.

I have a 16-year-old son that kind of helps me out with some of that stuff a little bit.

It's definitely recognizing that culture and the fact that it is different.

I could get away with it and trying to be, you know, not cool or whatever, they know that approach definitely helps with this.

But it comes down to that whole realistic portion of things and really not dream squashing.

We don't look to be the squasher of dreams.

That might, is that your nickname?

That's Joe's nickname.

But trying to be real at the same time and helping feel find what they're interested in and trying to do and accomplish, and looking at the youth culture of today and really what the, maybe those requirements are of society, right?

Do young folks know a world where they're not on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram at work and is that okay?

Is that something to think about and work through for a young adult?

And really coming down to the fact that it's really all about that approach.

Treating, like Sierra said, the young adults not like children.

I, one of the classic stories that we often talk about is we were in a certain city in Pennsylvania talking to a number of teachers and, you know, the teachers had their part of the training during the day and the young adults had their part of the training during the day.

The young adult part was awesome.

A lot of great things at the end of the day.

Everyone was all excited.

They wanted to take pictures because they wanted to put it on Instagram and they enjoyed everything and the teacher came up behind them and was like we have got to head back-to-school now.

Who needs to use the potty? And these are 17, 18, and 19-year-olds.

My 9-year-old would have a fit if I asked him if he needed to use the potty.

How important is language?

Language is so important when you are working with young adults.

You want to show them respect and the fact that they are young adults, and treat them as such.

Dressing for your audience and how important that can be.

You know, like we have our certain dress codes for the CIL.

We try to maintain a professional appearance at all times whenever we're doing whatever we need to be doing.

But, when we're doing group work and some of the other things, we're dressing down a little bit, you know?

When we're doing our job coaching and things, we're dressing for where we need to be.

So if we're in a stable shoveling stuff, we're dressing for that.

But if we're going to meetings, we're dressing for that.

If we're doing a young adult meeting in the evening and there's not much going on, we're dressing for that.

The term that we use a lot in Pennsylvania, and I don't know if people use it in other places, but it's about being an adult ally and not a boss.

Being an adult ally in itself is a whole, we could probably spend a ton of time.

It's a whole presentation on itself.

Just because there's a certain mindset that you have when you're working with the young adults and how you kind of approach it.

And it really is something that is so important.

For a CIL and people who work in a CIL, and get that thinking anyway, it's similar to that kind of thinking.

But we wanted to take a minute here to ask people, first of all, we've done research around Pennsylvania asking young adults what they thought about what youth say about adults.

And there's some quotes and I'm going to read them to you.

I think they're really interesting.

We do a presentation about this back home.

But one of the comments was how can I advocate for myself when I'm given no power?

Are my ideas even considered?

I always feel yes'd at.

And when I speak at a meeting, everything stops, then starts back up like nothing happens.

So those are coming directly to young adults where we have taken those quotes from.

Those are pretty powerful.

You know you start thinking about youth engagement, youth involvement and leadership and all of that type of stuff, and this is the kind of things they're thinking.

We wanted to ask and throw this out and take a couple minutes to ask people what they think being an adult ally is.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Calm down.

Not all hands at once.

We got one in the back, Tim.

PARTICIPANT: For me, it's being honest, letting them know where I'm from and where I'm at and establishing that trust.

PARTICIPANT: A good listener.

PARTICIPANT: Don't use the generation millennial called a spoiled brat or anything else.

Or the generation ADA.

Is that what you said? PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: Being open-minded to just whatever they want to talk about.

PARTICIPANT: Not being a parent.

SETH HODEREWSKI: There you go.

SIERRA ROYSTER: A lot of times they have more than two, five of those.

PARTICIPANT: Being realistic without being condescending.

PARTICIPANT: Build a relationship with the youth.

PARTICIPANT: Meeting them at their level.

PARTICIPANT: I feel like humor is important, too.

Being able to laugh and joke around with the kids and being able to get on their level and feel like every thing is not so structured.

SETH HODEREWSKI: I totally agree with that.

Absolutely.

PARTICIPANT: Trauma informed.

PARTICIPANT: It's a term.

PARTICIPANT: I think it's also to be willing to acknowledge when you make a mistake or that you were wrong.

SETH HODEREWSKI: And they let you know it.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Mary, will you take it back to him? Somebody wants the trauma informed definition.

If you could share with us what that means.

PARTICIPANT: So something that's happening in Colorado that's starting to spread throughout the country is something called trauma informed care, and it basically means that the people, the staff that we work with have an understanding of what's happening with this person.

So instead of having the person re-traumatized and telling the same situation over and over again, the staff is trauma informed so that people know what's happening with a particular individual.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Nothing frustrates anybody, we are not just talking about young people, anybody, to go through your whole entire story and then go okay, well you probably would be great to meet with this person, and then they start it over.

That's great.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Anybody else?

PARTICIPANT: What I like to do is listen for the dreams and try to help make them happen.

I work with a young gal who wants to do public speaking, and she wanted to go to North Korea to start.

We had to pare that down a little bit, but it's great to do that.

PARTICIPANT: Transparency.

PARTICIPANT: Encouragement.

TIM FUCHS: Good one.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Those are all great.

SIERRA ROYSTER: One more.

Respect.

Yeah.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Awesome.

Those are all.

SIERRA ROYSTER: One more.

PARTICIPANT: Don't be afraid to say, I don't know the answer.

Let's figure it out together.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Good one.

SIERRA ROYSTER: That's a great learning lesson from them that you can have.

Instead of you may be teaching them, you learn from them.

All right.

So I think we've covered is.

You guys seem to be experts on it.

So I think you'll know everything about what not to do now.

SETH HODEREWSKI: What is not an adult ally?

SIERRA ROYSTER: Up front? PARTICIPANT: Baby talk or generational talk.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Go to the potty.

Don't say I told you so.

PARTICIPANT: Tell them that their dreams aren't realistic.

SIERRA ROYSTER: One of my biggest fights that I had right in front of the class one time, when a teacher told them that they couldn't be those things they wanted to be like a chef or fashion designer and so the next class I came back and showed them a chart on how they could accomplish all of that with the degrees that they were getting because I was so angry and they kept saying realistic.

PARTICIPANT: You're not the boss or the parent.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Don't be the boss or the parent.

PARTICIPANT: Don't make them feel dumb or below you.

PARTICIPANT: I know what's better for you.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Yes.

We're so smart.

We're the experts on their disability.

Kind of goes back a little bit to the philosophy of the center of what Mary was sharing this morning.

PARTICIPANT: I think sometimes we have to be conscious of also our tone of voice, and not just the words we say but kinda how we say them.

I would also like to throw in empowerment.

SIERRA ROYSTER: And really quick about what you had just mentioned with tone, body language, those kind of go together.

If you're busy and that young person's trying to talk to you, stop.

Stop what you're doing and actually take that moment.

That sometimes they don't ever get from somebody.

PARTICIPANT: The attitude.

You've got to watch your attitude with them.

PARTICIPANT: Don't assume that they know what you're talking about.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Yeah.

We live in this world of disability issues and relations and laws and policy, a lot of people don't.

So don't assume that they know it.

PARTICIPANT: I think going along with don't assume is to not assume just because they're in a particular age bracket or fit in your particular demographic that they're interested in the same things that other students you worked with.

Work with each person on their individual concerns and ask what those are.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: I think really trying to get to know them and making them feel important, and developing more of like a friendship with them.

Where they feel like they can trust you.

And finding out what they like and what they do on their down time.

And so of course, that really builds a lot of personal, where they feel like they have a friend.

And so therefore they open up a lot more.

SIERRA ROYSTER: I agree with that.

Young people want to make that connection with somebody.

And if they can make that at the center, I do want to throw in there, though, that it's healthy to have boundaries, though.

Because sometimes youth don't know that.

I say that because I started a Facebook page because everybody wants to be my friend.

To them, they are, because you are friending somebody.

So they sometimes don't understand the difference between the friend at school or the friend at work versus you.

And that you maybe get off at 8:00 or 5:00 and that you're not available at 2:00 a.m.

But here are some people and supports that are.

Just make sure you develop healthy boundaries with them, too.

They'll respect you for that and you're also teaching them to put boundaries within their relationships too, which is very healthy.

SETH HODEREWSKI: There's a time for friend friendly and a time for work in all those things.

PARTICIPANT: Not minimizing.

So not saying, Oh, you're just being a typical teenager, moody, hormonal or whatever.

And also, that's not a real problem, because it is a real problem.

PARTICIPANT: Don't discredit their experience and what they do know.

MARY OLSON: I would just add to that.

Don't discredit their experience.

And leaving space for a young person to be able to share their own experience.

So being comfortable with the uncomfortable, you know? Youth are used to being in a room full of experts all the time.

Teachers, parents, counselors who are always telling them what to do.

So then we sit down with them and say, okay.

You're the boss.

You tell me what you want.

And they're like uh huh?

If you give them enough time, they will answer.

PARTICIPANT: Also, taking the time to explain process.

I've been in meetings where the youth are not, they're not engaged in the process because they don't understand the process.

So I think we need to make sure that they're understanding what my role is, what I do, why I'm writing things down, you know, whatever detail needs to happen in order for them to be engaged in the process.

SIERRA ROYSTER: I have a funny story.

We had a youth that worked with us and was new.

We came to a staff meeting and they were talking about, so the Part C funds are going here and the Part B funds will come from the SILC and then they will go here and will be used on this program.

And the youth was like, whatever.

And she didn't realize that those funds were coming to her program.

Like that was actually benefitting her.

And so I spent some time and we created like a high school chart on where the cool kids are, you know?

You have the principals and teachers, and so ACL was the principal and you had these teachers who divvied out your money and you have the teacher assistant, which was the CIL and you're the student so you get to go and do what you want with that.

And she was like oh!

That makes so much more sense.

Why didn't they just say that?

And I'm like I know.

So we started teaching it that way to everybody, because it makes no sense of where our funding streams come from.

And so we put it in a concept that they can understand.

Definitely explain those processes.

Don't let them get lost because how will they care and want to be involved? Because the next meeting, when they tried to change our Part B, she was like wait a minute, our Part B money, she looked at me and she was like those are the teachers? Yeah, yeah, you are right.

Wait, we need the funds from the teachers.

How can we go talk to them.

She needs the funds from the SILC.

And that is what that means.

But she was able to advocate for it.

Because she felt empowered with the knowledge of what was going on.

Don't ever miss those opportunities.

PARTICIPANT: Can I add to the is, someone who is consistent and reliable?

SETH HODEREWSKI: Yes.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Yes, follow through is key.

I think this will be our last one.

PARTICIPANT: Another thing I noticed is that working with youth and doing the process part of things, whether it's filling out information or getting to know them is taking a hands on approach.

I use a giant light board in my office, and sometimes if they don't understand something that we're filling out and even with explaining it to them, when they've already been in class for a good portion of the day.

They don't want to try to like learn something new from us just talking to them and whatever.

I'll throw something on a light board and be like, well, let's look at short-term goal and long-term goal.

Strengths and weaknesses.

And once you apply that.

They are writing it out themselves and it's like take what you put on the board and now we put it on paper.

Really creating the hands-on approach.

Cause sometimes after a long day of being in class, they don't want to just keep writing on a piece of paper.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Absolutely.

Great point.

Thank you.

So much to being an adult ally.

And I think you can kind of see where it goes along with the CIL philosophy, right?

It's the same thinking that goes along with it.

I think for us working in this field, working with people, we all want to be, we all want to help, right?

We all want to be there to help out and do and all that kind of thing.

But you know, taking that little bit of time to take the step back to, you know, go through the process with the young adult or helping them understand why it's beneficial for them to do it, I think, is so important.

That's a great list.

Thank you folks.

So then, looking at being youth-driven in so many of the different things that we do, youth tend to follow other youth.

And so much can be learned.

I love when our young adult groups get together and there's so much to be learned from them being cross-disability.

And there's so much to be learned from the experiences that each one has gone through.

And there's so much that young adults can share to one another.

And to be honest, they really don't even want to hear from me.

Like they want to hear and will take the information better from the other young adults than myself or the other, you know, other staff and that type of thing.

I hear that so much.

That's why we typically like to have young adults go with us whenever we go anywhere because those young adults can use what we call positive peer pressure.

Someone came in and I just got a job at Dorney Park and it was so much fun and you wouldn't believe that I'm doing this and this and this and I'm getting a paycheck and I'm buying this.

And like, that sounds really cool.

Maybe I want to do that, too.

Or someone comes in and tells the story about how they spoke up at their IEP meeting and they did this and got this and you know, you get to thinking, well yeah.

That's probably what I should be doing.

I want to do that, too.

So we see that positive peer pressure as something so valuable and so, having the young adult speak up and talk about the things that they're doing, the positive stories that can be used are so very motivating for the young adults and for the parents, too.

The parents really get a lot out of hearing those things.

Because they think about, well maybe my young adult can do that, too.

SIERRA ROYSTER: I just want to jump in real quick here.

When you talk about empowering, your goal for a group should never be we're going to give them empowerment.

You can't give anybody empowerment.

They have to become empowered on their own by their experience.

When you're thinking about those opportunities, think about what empowered you.

Think about when you stepped into that center and you said oh, I've got to do that.

When was the last time we were passionate about something?

What started that passion for you?

And then try to recreate that, that same experience, you know?

Was it another person?

Kimberly talked about yesterday, when she saw another person with a disability for the first time, as a professional, successful person, those experiences are what empower.

Don't ever go in and say, you're going to be empowered today.

Because they're not.

That's going to shut it down completely.

Think about yourselves.

You guys are your own teachers.

Think about your own self and how you became empowered or motivated in the movement and try to create that experience with what you're doing and maybe share some of that.

That can be empowering in itself.

And just to follow up, June Hermansen in Montana is a perfect example.

She does not go to a meeting without a young person.

Ever.

From what I understand, conferences, anything, she always goes with a young person.

We can't say that you're important and that you are equal if we say, well you can, you can come to our youth group, but I'm going to this conference.

It's about youth.

Yeah yeah yeah.

I'm going to a youth training.

Why can't I go?

Maybe they don't even know what it is.

Bring them.

Tell them.

That can be their empowering moment.

So bring those youth along.

If you're going to a meeting and it's boring, give them tips through the meeting of what's going on.

Be that mentor right beside them to help them want to learn in those experiences.

SETH HODEREWSKI: And to even understand that meetings are boring.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Yep.

That's part of the world.

Yep.

Sorry.

I wanted to go back.

That space that Mary was talking about, it's going to feel real awkward, because we don't like silence.

We hate silence.

And we want to fill it with stuff to say when they don't.

But somebody will eventually talk.

Time it in your head.

If you ask them a question and they're just not really responsive, give it 30 seconds.

That's really hard.

I don't know if you have counted to 30 quietly before, but that is a long time if somebody just stares at you.

If we had 30 seconds, I would make you do it now.

But don't fill a silence.

Let them fill it.

It might be the first time they have ever been given the opportunity to speak.

And so if you give them that space, then they can learn how to use it.

You can be that teacher with that opportunity.

We talked about this a little bit yesterday.

Youth programs are when youth are available.

That's nights and weekends.

It doesn't mean that you, you know, you can flex your hours.

Maybe some centers, they have staff that only work like 12 to 9 or whatever the hours are.

They don't come in in the morning.

Or maybe they get to take off Monday.

I'd love to take off a Monday.

Can I do that Mary?

Work on weekends?

How welcoming is your center for noise?

Youth talk.

They want to have fun.

There might be laughter.

So preparing, that goes back to everyone's all in.

Let them know it's okay to have fun here.

It's okay.

There's appropriate places in your center to do that and maybe not so appropriate.

Where are those places that they can.

As youth staff are creating programs, it was a fun experience, and we would get in trouble a lot for being loud, and we were actually working.

But that's just part of it.

Embrace that.

That's an energy to your center that sometimes isn't there.

That other consumers are like, all right.

Who's all here?

I got a party happening here.

It's a good feeling.

It's a good energy in the room.

Make sure it's in the right place, though.

Do you have time where staff volunteers and consumers can mingle and be more informal?

The staff that are not familiar with young people or how to work with them, have somebody donate a meal for lunch.

Have somebody come together.

Maybe those mingling times, let them talk to each other.

Have stuff for them to do.

Don't make them just sit there.

Have slinkies or Play-Doh or G.I. Joes or cars.

Anything for them not to have to sit there and watch you.

Let them move.

We even had balls one time where people were rolling around on balls as we were doing different things.

Let them get up and move.

It's okay.

And then think about your space.

Do you have the art that's on your wall, is it youthful?

Are there youth on there?

The brochures, are they all like senior brochures for people that need assistance once they turn 80?

That's good to have, but throw other stuff in there.

The magazines, is it interesting?

Are young people going to find that?

Those are easy things to just add in quickly.

So as soon as they walk in.

SETH HODEREWSKI: So where, when, and how to find youth.

So I know when I was first able to help start our S2L group, that is our young adult group at LVCIL.

I went anywhere and everywhere at any time anybody that wanted me to speak if it was one person or a group of people, I went and talked about the CIL, core services, everything that they could be involved in.

And I did as much outreach as possible.

I was so worried going into our first summer program that I would have 15 young adults to take part in that program.

And fortunately enough, we were 15 plus, and from there it just exploded because word of mouth happened.

And incorporating young adults into that outreach.

Parents, no parents.

Like so many of the young adults that I get to work with on a regular basis, are doing a whole bunch of other things together, too, like other sports and activities.

People know people.

So there's so much of that type of outreach that goes on when you're doing this.

And if you're doing it well, you know, like the word will spread.

Getting out to, I went to every community partner that I could think of, any school that would let me talk, any county office, transition councils, VR, you name it.

Really talked about all the good stuff and all the positive stories.

Having those young adults talk about their successes and just the CIL philosophy itself and how empowering that is.

In many cases, parents had never heard of those types of things.

I remember being at a school and it was, they told me, the parents told me it was the first time that anyone has ever told them that they were the experts on their kids, on their young adults.

They had never heard that before from teachers and administrators from years and years of that type of thing.

It just hit home to me.

But it's creating that buzz, you know, and that excitement around it.

Like a lot of the people that I've met here today and a lot of the staff have that really positive energy that people are drawn to.

I love that.

That's just a natural thing for a young adult, I think we see and I think we see a lot of that in the people in this room.

I know our presenters have that energy that just draws people in.

And social media.

Where do young adults go and how do they connect?

Today it's on social media.

I sat in on a meeting with a principal at one of our local high schools, and he told us that social media was not a way to engage youth.

And we just kind of laughed at him.

Sorry, sir, but we totally do not agree with that.

I still don't know where he was coming from on that one.

But like Sierra said, where and when you have to meet the young adults where they are, when they want to be doing things.

Our group meets on a Friday night because that's what young adults do.

They want to hang out on a Friday night and eat pizza and do fun things.

And you know, like we said yesterday and Sierra said a little bit here, I had someone make the comment to me, how do I do youth programming and not work evenings and weekends.

And like everyone here, the answer is, you don't.

That is not a possibility.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Really quick about the social media piece.

How many of you know how to operate all of the social media pieces? Yeah that's what I thought.

Not a lot.

Guess who do? PARTICIPANT: The youth.

SIERRA ROYSTER: Yeah, isn't that amazing.

So bring them in and have them do a training with you and they can teach you, and you maybe want to pay them or maybe it's an opportunity for them to lead.

Use each other.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Absolutely.

SIERRA ROYSTER: So we are going to give you extra time for the next presentation.

Just remember that this is the foundation.

When you walk into your center Friday or Monday, go in and say, does this look youth-friendly? And then look at the staff.

Does this seem, is everybody on board.

Where are some of those gaps?

Where are some of the needs? Before you start finding all those youth, make sure your center's ready.

And these are some of the ways that you can do that.

And I know we have a lot of the when where and hows on how all of those things happen, but you can peruse through those.

Seth and Joe are here, and we can go through those individually if you have questions about how that works.

Did you have anything you want to add?

SETH HODEREWSKI: I think we're good.

It's about the engaging of the youth, even when you're starting to develop, you want to engage the youth.

Have a young adult that can help you think through some of these things and how they might approach it or language they might use.

You can't say enough about that youth culture, that youth engagement, that youth-led, youth-driven thinking, which is just so important.

TIM: Thanks so much you all.