A Mixed Method Feasibility Assessment of a Youth Participatory Action Research Program to Promote Physical Activity: Evaluating Implementation within two Pre-existing Aftercare Programs Serving Middle School Youth

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A Mixed Method Feasibility Assessment of a Youth Participatory Action Research Program to Promote Physical Activity: Evaluating Implementation within two Pre-existing Aftercare Programs Serving Middle School youth

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to my writing crew: Emily Mancil, Rebeca Castellanos, Allison Stafford, and Alex Golden. Without our coffee shop writing dates, I do not think I would have made progress as quickly as I did. I also dedicate my dissertation to my amazing cohort, especially the five fierce fowl. I am so glad we did this together. Finally, I dedicate my dissertation to my formal and informal mentors throughout my graduate career: Drs. Nicole Zarrett, Ryan Kilmer, Jim Cook, Abe Wandersman, and Bret Kloos. Thanks to Jim and Ryan for the great opportunities to learn about and begin to practice community psychology, and to Nicole, Abe, and Bret for promoting the continued growth of my interests in community research and practice.
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ABSTRACT

Obesity interventions to date have had small effects, which may be due to youth disengagement. In youth participatory action research (YPAR), youth become involved in research to make changes that impact their lives. Thus, integrating YPAR into a physical activity intervention, like we do in the current study, is a novel strategy to engage youth and increase empowerment for health behavior change. YPAR is typically implemented with high school youth, standalone, and within elective classrooms or focused after school programs; yet, YPAR can benefit all youth, so we expanded its reach into pre-existing aftercare programs. Participating youth were predominantly minority, low SES middle schoolers in two aftercare programs in the southeastern United States. Youth participated in a health focused YPAR curriculum with trained adult partners. A concurrent, mixed method triangulation design was used to analyze quantitative (youth empowerment survey, adult partner survey, observational tool) and qualitative (youth qualitative surveys, adult partner and youth journals) data to explore feasibility of implementation of YPAR. Convergence of data showed feasibility for the implementation of YPAR standalone in a pre-existing aftercare program and paired with a physical activity intervention with similar theoretical underpinnings. Trained raters successfully observed the essential elements in all sessions. Implementation in the YPAR + PA program achieved higher fidelity than the YPAR only program, and youth self-reported increases in empowerment, a critical mechanism for health behavior change. We hope to increase the impact of obesity interventions in future work.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Obesity is a public health crisis that impacts all age groups and communities (Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2014), with adolescents particularly vulnerable. Adolescent obesity rates have more than tripled in the past five decades (Ogden et al., 2014), and have continued to rise amidst declines in obesity prevalence in young children (Ogden et al., 2016). Adolescents from minority backgrounds are at greatest risk, as obesity prevalence is highest for African American and Hispanic youth (Ogden et al., 2014). Despite decades of research, interventions to decrease obesity with adolescents have only produced small effects when implemented in community and school settings (Baranowski & Stables, 2000b; Dobbins, Husson, DeCorby, & LaRocca, 2013; Kropski, Keckley, & Jensen, 2008). It has been especially difficult to obtain intervention effects with underserved adolescent youth, who are at greatest risk for obesity and related disease (Casey et al., 2014; Dewar et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2011). Small intervention effects are likely due, at least in part, to previous interventions failing to align with adolescents’ developmental needs, values, and interests.

During adolescence, youth develop their identities, have an increased need for autonomy, and seek relationships outside the home (Steinberg, 2014). They explore social roles in school/extracurricular activities (Barber et al., 2001) with nonfamilial
adults (Scales et al., 2000), and peers, while they create their identities (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Inclusion of a youth participatory action research (YPAR) framework in interventions can directly meet youths’ developmental needs and can make a critical contribution to increasing the effectiveness of adolescent obesity interventions.

Our health focused YPAR curriculum is influenced by positive youth development (PYD) theory and the typology of youth participation and empowerment (TYPE) (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005; Wong, Larson, & Brown, 2010). Our YPAR essential elements also align with the basic socio-emotional needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence found in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In YPAR, youth increase their empowerment through actively participating as co-researchers in scientific inquiry to promote their own health and well-being with autonomy promoting, pluralistic, power-sharing adult partners (Ozer, Newlan, Douglas, & Hubbard, 2013; Wong et al., 2010). Participation also leads to positive shifts in adolescent health related attitudes and values through relatedness; involvement in meaningful work with caring adults and positive peers (Lerner et al., 2005). Finally, youth feel competent and empowered to develop life-long health habits post participation (Branch & Chester, 2009).

In the past decade, there has been an increase in the implementation of YPAR (Jacquez, Vaughn, and Wagner, 2013; Ozer, Ritterman, & Wonis, 2010) and participatory methods to promote adolescent health (Vaughn, Wagner, and Jacquez, 2013). However, there are areas for improvement in measuring the impact of the YPAR essential elements on PYD and the processes that lead to them (Ozer & Schotland, 2011; Ozer & Douglas, 2013; 2015). YPAR is typically conducted with older adolescents and within social
change focused after school programs or elective classes in high schools (Ozer et al., 2010). We know little about the implementation of YPAR within preexisting aftercare programs, which decreases its ability to reach disadvantaged youth, who may benefit most. Measurement rigor has also lagged behind the growth in implementation of YPAR. The majority of YPAR studies to date have not measured/reported proposed mechanisms (e.g., empowerment) (Ozer & Schotland, 2011; Ozer & Douglas, 2013), nor have they evaluated the implementation of the YPAR essential elements, as they have only been systematically evaluated by trained raters in elective high school classrooms (Ozer & Douglas, 2015). There are also advancements to be made in using YPAR to increase the long-term impact of health interventions. In my comprehensive review of health focused YPAR, I found that researchers typically measure changes in systems or health behavior, while neglecting to measure the impact of YPAR on PYD outcomes, such as empowerment, a critical process linked to health (Benson et al., 1998; Hannay et al., 2013; Scales et al., 2000; Suleiman et al., 2006; Toussaint et al., 2011). Furthermore, health focused YPAR is typically implemented as a standalone curriculum or project (Vaughn et al., 2013), so we know little about the feasibility or effectiveness of YPAR as a critical component of a larger health-based intervention.

In the current study, we address gaps in the YPAR and adolescent obesity intervention literature. We implement YPAR within pre-existing aftercare programs serving middle school students to reach disadvantaged youth during a developmental stage conducive to changing health habits. We rigorously evaluate the implementation of YPAR as usual and YPAR integrated into a physical activity (PA) intervention to assess feasibility in different formats. We systematically measure fidelity of implementation to
YPAR essential elements within those programs, and we measure the impact of participation on youth empowerment. We use a mixed method concurrent triangulation design to understand the feasibility of using these novel approaches.

1.1 Obesity and its Detrimental Health Effects for Adolescents

Obesity remains a public health crisis and a significant problem impacting adolescents (Anderson & Butcher, 2006). During the past five decades, the obesity rate has more than tripled for youth ages 12 to 19 (from 4.6% to 20.5%) (Ogden, et al., 2014), and continues to rise in this age group, despite decreases for younger youth (Ogden et al., 2016). The prevalence rates are higher for African American and Hispanic youth than Caucasian and Asian youth (Ogden, et al., 2014). Obesity interventions have not been able to sustainably impact these negative trajectories for minority adolescents.

Adolescent obesity is associated with a variety of health concerns during adolescence and adulthood. It is linked to elevated risk for a variety of physical (e.g., Type II diabetes) (Ogden, Carroll, & Flegal, 2008) and mental health issues during adolescence (e.g., depression) (Centers for Disease Control, 2009b, Daniels, 2006; Mustillo et al., 2003; & Zametkin, et al., 2004) and adulthood (e.g., stroke) (Ogden et al., 2008). The increasing prevalence of obesity may be contributing to higher morbidity and mortality rates associated with chronic diseases (Bazzano, 2006). The small intervention effects leave adolescents at risk for negative health outcomes related to obesity.

To promote positive health behavior trajectories across the lifespan, it is pertinent to intervene prior to or during early adolescence, because health habits and behaviors that emerge in early adolescence (ages 10-14) are highly predictive of the habits/behaviors in
adulthood (Millstein & Litt, 1993). Obesity during adolescence significantly increases risk for inactivity (Wichstrom, von Soest, & Kvalem, 2012) and obesity in adulthood. Approximately 50% of obese adolescents become obese adults (Dietz, 1994). The early adolescent period is also characterized by major declines in positive health behaviors (Kelly et al., 2010; Wright, 2011). Physical activity (PA) decreases at a 2.7% yearly rate for males and 7.4% for females during school (Sallis, 1993) with the greatest declines occurring from early to late adolescence (3rd to 10th grade) and among girls and minorities (Bradley, McMurray, Harrell, & Deng, 2000; Dietz, 1994; Kelly et al., 2010). Intervention before or during this critical developmental period is crucial for the development of positive lifelong health habits.

In the current study, we address obesity prevention/intervention gaps through examining the feasibility of a novel approach with middle school youth. We integrate YPAR into a PA intervention with the aim to increase adolescents’ empowerment; the theoretical model can be found in figure two. We also hope that their healthy behavior will increase as a result of participating, though this is not examined in the current work. We hope this hypothesis generating feasibility trial can be a first step in finding new ways to increase the effectiveness of adolescent obesity interventions.

1.2 Health Focused YPAR and Adolescent Developmental Needs

Although negative trajectories in health behavior can emerge and accelerate during adolescence (Bradley et al., 2000, Kelly et al., 2010; Sallis, 1993; Wright, 2011) this is also a developmental period that provides an increased opportunity to develop lifelong health habits (Millstein & Litt, 1993) and prevent obesity (Branch & Chester,
Adolescence is characterized by increased malleability of self-concepts and behaviors as youth engage in identity exploration in their environments (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Steinberg, 2014). They have increased autonomy for self-care and seek relationships with nonparental adults and peers (Steinberg, 2014; Sullivan & Larson, 2010). Exploring participation in healthy activities with peers can solidify youth interests and habits into adulthood (Barber et al., 2001). These characteristics can increase youth receptivity to, and subsequent effectiveness of, health focused YPAR approaches.

Adolescents have an increased need for autonomy (Steinberg, 2014); they are vested and capable of taking control of their own health behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Increasing youths’ opportunities to have a say in decisions that impact their health (Suleiman, Soleimanpour, & London, 2006). can be one way to promote successful transition through this developmental stage and improve health behavior (Findholt, Michael, & Davis, 2010; McKinney et al., 2014; Scales et al., 2000). Yet, youth opportunities for choice typically decrease in their environments (e.g., schools) during this developmental period (Cammarto & Fine, 2008; Langhout & Thomas, 2010, Warrs & Flanagan, 2007; Wong et al., 2010), which creates a poor stage-environment fit (Eccles et al., 1996).

Participation in health focused YPAR can meet adolescents’ increased need for autonomy through opportunities to share leadership with supportive adults and have a voice in changes that impact their lives (Cammarto & Fine, 2008; Wong et al., 2010). As youth engage in health focused YPAR, and see that those that hold power over decisions in their lives value their input, they develop skills (Dworkin et al., 2003; Larson &
Angus, 2011; Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000) and feel empowered to make positive decisions in their lives, such as increasing PA and healthy food intake (Benson et al., 1998; Damon et al., 2003; Scales et al., 2000). Health focused YPAR is a good fit for adolescents’ developmental needs. The intervention also meets youths’ developmental needs. The theoretical model of the health focused YPAR only condition can be found in figure one.

During adolescence, youth are engaging in activities that promote identity development (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Barber et al., 2001; Steinberg, 2014; Youniss & Yates, 1997) For example, they become more autonomous in exploring relationships outside of their family (Sullivan & Larson, 2010; Wong et al., 2010) and explore their sense of self through a variety of hobbies and interests (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Through those relationships and activities, they may develop viewpoints and values divergent from their families’ (Steinberg, 2014).

Based on Erikson’s developmental framework, fostering relationships outside of the home during adolescence serve as a way for youth to experiment with behaviors as they shape their identities (Barber et al., 2001; Warrs & Flanigan, 2007; Wong et al., 2010) and evaluate their social beliefs (Youniss & Yates, 1997). The types of behavior and activities in which youths’ social circle engages impacts their own behaviors; therefore, involvement in prosocial behavior with supportive adults and peers in an autonomy supportive group environment can promote PYD and healthy behavior (Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998; Larson, Eccles, & Gootman, 2004; Lerner et al., 2005; Scales, Benson, & Mannes, 2006).
If youth participate in health focused YPAR during this critical time for identity development, they have the opportunity to engage with prosocial peers and power-sharing adults who have an interest in and value healthy behavior. Participation in these prosocial groups can also shape the development of youth values and identities (Youniss & Yates, 1997) through exposure to positive group norms for healthy behavior. Due to these group norms, participating youth may come to value health and integrate that attitude into their developing identities (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003). In addition, a sense of purpose, defined as the intent for youth to accomplish something for themselves that is also significant for the outside world, and efficacy developed through YPAR (Damon et al., 2003) can potentially contribute to perseverance in the health behavior change process, a consolidated identity, and a deeper sense of meaning in youths’ lives (Benson et al., 1998; Damon et al., 2003; Scales et al., 2000). Health focused values that form in adolescence are likely to carry over into adulthood, where they seek health promoting activities and relationships with others who have similar health related attitudes and values (Barber et al., 2001; Benson et al., 1998; Dworkin et al., 2003; Hansen, et al., 2003).

1.4 Gaps in the Literature

Adolescence is characterized by an increased need for autonomy, identity development, and forming relationships with nonfamilial adults and peers (Barber et al., 2001; Damon et al., 2003; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Sullivan & Larson, 2010; Youniss & Yates, 1997). These developmental needs can be met through health focused YPAR, which may increase youth engagement (Findholt et al., 2010; McKinney et al., 2014) and the overall effectiveness of health focused YPAR approaches. Unfortunately, most YPAR
projects are conducted with high school youth (Ozer et al., 2010), which may be too late to impact values that shape adult health behavior (Millstein & Litt, 1993). In the current study, we address this gap in the literature by implementing health focused YPAR with middle school youth.

There are gaps in the obesity prevention/intervention literature. Interventions that target obesity currently have small effects (Baranowski & Stables, 2000b; Kropski et al., 2008; Dobbins et al., 2013), especially those that target marginalized youth, who are at greatest risk for obesity and related disease (Casey et al., 2014; Dewar et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2011). One potential reason for the small effects is that these interventions were designed without youth, so youth may not view participation as relevant to their lives, and the essential elements of the intervention may not align with their values. We propose the integration of YPAR into health interventions as a novel way to address gaps in obesity intervention. We choose YPAR because youth are included in all stages of the research process (Cammarato & Fine, 2008; Ozer et al., 2010; Jacquez et al., 2013), and implement it in pre-existing aftercare programs, which addresses the youth inclusion gap in the adolescent obesity prevention/intervention literature.

1.5 YPAR Curriculum Development

We address gaps in the adolescent participatory obesity prevention literature through the development of a health-focused YPAR curriculum in the current study. YPAR, the guiding framework for the curriculum, is based in Freire (1993)’s praxis process, which has three components: critical and collective inquiry (i.e., asking
questions and engaging in research together), reflection (i.e., participating in discussions about the impacts of culture, context, and power), and action (i.e., youth plan for and use their research for advocacy) for transformational change (Cammarto & Fine, 2008). We integrate essential elements (i.e., identify community as a unit of identity, identify and report youth and community strengths, youth development of project idea, co-learning and capacity building, use of a dialogic and reflexive process, use of a cyclical and iterative process, power-sharing within a pluralistic partnership, discussion of power differentials, authentic analysis of social reality, youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results, and youth advocacy for social change) of participatory approaches (Balacazar et al., 2004; Israel, Eng, Schulz, & Parker, 2013) into this YPAR praxis process to create the curriculum in the current work. These essential elements of the YPAR process can be found in figures one and two as part of the larger theoretical model.

When modifying the YPAR curriculum, due to their theoretical alignment with PAR values, we used PYD theory as a framework (Lerner et al., 2005) and the Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment (TYPE) (Wong et al., 2010) to guide development of adult partner processes. PYD theory highlights youth strengths, viewing them as resources to be developed rather than problems to be managed (Langhout & Thomas, 2010; Warrs & Flanagan, 2007), and has positive expectations for the contributions youth can make both to society and their immediate environments (Durlak et al., 2007). According to PYD theory, when youths’ individual strengths and ecological assets are aligned in their lives, competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring/compassion evolve across development (Lerner et al., 2005). PYD theory frames
the current work through the infusion of youth and community strengths (Lerner et al., 2005) throughout the YPAR curriculum and youth participation in a photo voice research process within a supporting context (Larson et al., 2004). These strengths can be found in the theoretical model in figures one and two.

Under the overarching frame of PYD, we chose an empowerment framework for a Y-A partnership (i.e., TYPE) to guide curriculum and observational tool development because it aligns with PYD on enhancing wellness and strengths, and with broader empowerment theories’ emphasis on identifying sociopolitical influences on quality of life (Wallerstein, 1992; Wong et al., 2010; Zimmerman, 2000). One of the main factors that promotes PYD (Bronfenbrenner, 2001; Scales, Benson, & Mannes, 2006) and differentiates resilient from nonresilient youth (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998) is a relationship with a prosocial, non-familial adult. In TYPE, Wong et al. (2010) purport that pluralistic Y-A partnerships, in which power is shared between youth and adults, are optimally valuable for empowerment and PYD. Within these relationships, both youth and adults bring their own unique strengths to the partnership and tasks (Libby, Rosen, & Sedonaen, 2005). In the current study, we use TYPE to guide the adult partner training, to develop the power-sharing adult partner processes in the curriculum, and to create implementation criteria of the Y-A partnership for the observational rating tool. Power sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership is also categorized as a YPAR essential element and can be found in the theoretical model in figures one and two.

We enhance a general YPAR curriculum by including a health focus with essential elements that map directly onto adolescents’ developmental needs and Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the guiding theoretical model for the larger PA.
intervention. We integrate the health focused YPAR curriculum into the PA intervention, which is implemented in a pre-existing aftercare program. Based on SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2008), settings that promote empowerment and positive, goal directed behavior contain elements that target key social-emotional needs. They 1) provide experiences for youth to demonstrate competence with new skills (i.e., self-efficacy); 2) encourage social relationships in which youth feel supported and perceive themselves as valued members of a group (i.e., relatedness/social connection); 3) provide youth with opportunities to explore their identities and interests, and express opinions and ideas; 4) and allow youth to have opportunities to make choices (i.e., autonomy). These needs are essential elements of the PA intervention, and can be found in the theoretical model in figure two. These processes culminate in a positive social-emotional climate. A social-emotional climate encompasses the social norms of the setting, such as reinforcement of health behavior and staff/peer attitudes and behaviors. As evidence for our theoretical model in figure two, a positive social-emotional climate is linked to PYD (Larson et al., 2005) individual empowerment (Lerner et al., 2004; Wong et al., 2010), and increased intrinsic positive goal directed behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the latter of which is especially pertinent for health behavior change (Deci & Ryan, 2008). We infuse processes to promote SDT socio-emotional needs into our health focused YPAR curriculum and implementation observational tool in order for it to align theoretically with the larger PA intervention. See appendix C for a cross walk of the observational tool components with health focused YPAR essential elements and SDT.

These three guiding frames (i.e., PYD, TYPE, SDT) influence our overarching conceptual model. In our conceptual model of health focused YPAR, youth increase their...
individual level empowerment through 1) gains in leadership, public speaking, research and social skills, and advocacy competencies, 2) deepened connections with peers, staff, and the broader school community, and 3) autonomy promotion in a power-sharing Y-A partnership. The conceptual model of the YPAR only intervention can be found in figure one. We ultimately hope that, through participation in health focused YPAR paired with a PA intervention, students will increase their healthy behavior. The conceptual model for the YPAR + PA intervention can be found in figure two. We evaluate the implementation of health focused YPAR, the bolded portion of the conceptual model, in the current study. We test the feasibility of the implementation of health focused YPAR, standalone and paired with a PA intervention in two aftercare programs.

We conceptualize principles of participatory approaches (i.e., identify community as a unit of identity, identify and report youth and community strengths, youth development of project idea, co-learning and capacity building, use of a dialogic and reflexive process, use of a cyclical and iterative process, power-sharing within a pluralistic partnership, discussion of power differentials, authentic analysis of social reality, youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results, and youth advocacy for social change) (Balcazar et al., 2004; Israel et al., 2013) as essential elements, and we use them to evaluate our health focused YPAR curriculum during praxis (i.e., critical and collective inquiry, reflection, action) between adult partners and youth. The YPAR praxis process is comprised of the implementation of the essential elements, and meets youths’ socioemotional needs (e.g., relatedness, competence, autonomy) (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The health focused YPAR essential elements in the praxis process are outlined in the overview of the curriculum below. Within the YPAR praxis, the participatory action
research strategy we use is photo voice. Photo voice enables participants to 1) identify, capture, and visualize their community’s strengths and areas for improvement; 2) engage in critical dialogue about their community through group discussion of photographs; and (3) reach policy makers (Wang, 2006).

**Critical and Collective Inquiry.** Groups of five to ten youth are paired with one to two consistent adult partners, who collaborate with youth in critical and collective inquiry through the photo voice research process. Adult partners and youth work through a YPAR curriculum meant to build youth capacity in photo voice research skills. During the intervention time frame in the aftercare setting, adult partners train youth in how to take photos for social change. Then, youth participate in data collection with adult partners and program staff. The youth-adult partnerships are pluralistic and power sharing, a mechanism which increases youth sense of perceived control, a subdomain of empowerment. High perceived control means that youth perceive they are efficacious to make changes in their program or school community (Ozer & Schotland, 2011). Adult partners share power with youth in decision making about the research process as youth take pictures of barriers and promotors of PA in their programs and schools. Youth guide the research process as much as possible, while adult partners provide supports and their unique expertise upon request. Youth use their photos to brainstorm PA barriers or strengths to change during youth generation of the project idea. Youth use democratic processes within groups to finalize the selection of the PA focused change. Through a cyclical and iterative research process with adult collaborators, youth pictures guide the direction of the project. Youth analyze their pictures of assets and barriers to PA using the SHOWeD method (Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004). They employ sorting
methods to group the pictures according to themes, and choose pictures that best identify their themes for posters. The *cyclical and iterative process* of data collection of photos of PA strengths and challenges, SHOWeD processing, and brainstorming about PA change ideas is repeated to revise the area of focus based on youths’ emerging ideas as often as feasible. Youth increase their participatory behavior, a subdomain of empowerment, through mechanisms in the dialogic and reflexive praxis in this photo voice research process (Ozer & Schotland, 2011). Additionally, youth are involved in our *cyclical and iterative process* by noting their opinions on strengths and areas for improvement for future rounds of health focused YPAR post-intervention.

**Reflection.** Adult partners aim for a strengths-based reflection process within groups, with an emphasis on *the strengths of youth and their communities, programs, and schools*. Adult partners also remind youth to point out the strengths of others in a *co-learning process*. *Defining community as a unit of identity*, occurs as youth and adult partners discuss youths’ viewpoints on their school and program community, and explore similar and divergent values. Adult partners also use an *ecological perspective* to guide discussion. For example, youth discuss how family, peers, school, community, and larger society influence their health opinions and behaviors. Adult partners *promote local relevance* when they guide youth in exploring their opinions on the barriers and promotors of PA in their homes, neighborhoods, programs, and/or schools during discussion.

Through a developmentally appropriate *dialogic and reflexive process*, in small groups, adult partners prompt youth to analyze alternative points of view and potentially change their viewpoints based on new information. During *authentic analysis of youths’*
social reality, adult partners support a discussion around cultural influences, such as the media and advertising, and how they impact youth health. Adult partners promote a developmentally appropriate discussion during a dice roll game, in which youth learn facts about health, food deserts, green space, and the importance of walking trails/sidewalks, share opinions about PA and health, and give advice to other youth on health-related topics. Adult partners also support an authentic analysis of social reality as groups discuss culture surrounding health and PA. Discussion of power differentials also occurs within groups, such as how much say youth have in their health, and who holds the power to make decisions that impact their health. As youth gather photo data in their programs and schools, they begin to think more critically about what changes are feasible based on their knowledge of the power structure. Youth and adult partners brainstorm together to identify relevant stakeholders in their schools and programs. Adult partners aid youth in modifying their project idea through discussion about feasibility from the viewpoints of stakeholders whom hold power to make the changes happen. Youth develop sociopolitical skills, a subdomain of empowerment, through mechanisms of the reflection component in the YPAR praxis. They begin to understand the systemic factors impacting their health decisions, and learn how to work with other students and adults on issues important to them (Ozer & Schotland, 2011).

Action. Youth work collaboratively within their groups, supported by adult partners, to create a presentation to advocate for their PA related change idea. Adult partners assist youth in selecting their poster creation roles based on youth strengths. Youth craft a change message in order to advocate to relevant stakeholders in the program or school. Youth create a poster board presentation that includes their data (i.e.,
pictures), a catchy slogan, their proposed change idea, and quotes. Youth grow their public speaking skills by practicing with their peers and adult partners, in order to become health advocates by sharing their health messages both within and outside the program. They disseminate their data in a presentation at an aftercare parent night to parents, aftercare staff, school personnel, and community members. As part of advocacy to promote social action, some youth negotiate with stakeholders during the presentation about the feasibility of the change idea. Through mechanisms in the action component of the YPAR praxis, youth increase their motivation to influence, a subdomain of empowerment. Through successful advocacy efforts, youth gain additional motivation to be involved in making changes in their school or program (Ozer & Schotland, 2011).

Youth are involved in reporting and disseminating youth, group, and school/program strengths, processes involved in power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership, and any individual benefits they gained from participation post-implementation, which will be included in the publication.

1.5 Aftercare Programs as Empowering Settings

Participation in a health focused YPAR curriculum guided by SDT, TYPE, and PYD, such as the one outlined above, has the potential to promote positive developmental and health outcomes for all youth (Benson et al., 1998; Branch & Chester, 2009; Damon et al., 2003; Larson, et al., 2004; Lerner et al., 2005). The health focused YPAR curriculum can promote positive youth outcomes through power-sharing in relevant health decisions (Wong et al., 2010), and relationships and critical reflection with caring, non-familial adults (Bronfenbrenner, 2001; Scales et al., 2006) and supportive peers about larger influences on their health. Yet, YPAR does not reach most youth, as it has
been conducted mostly in elective high school classrooms (Ozer & Douglas 2013; 2015) and social change focused after school programs (Langhout & Fernandez, 2015), which youth have to opt into. Additionally, YPAR is usually conducted with high school youth, which may be too late to intervene in critical habits that impact adult health behavior (Millstein & Litt, 1993). According to the After-School Alliance website, typical aftercare programs serve a large number of youth (e.g., 10.2 million in the United States) in a wide range of grades. Implementing health focused YPAR in aftercare provides youth with the opportunity for involvement during critical developmental processes earlier in adolescence, when health behavior change is more malleable. Finally, typical aftercare programs are largely attended by disadvantaged youth, who may benefit most from the increased autonomy and support from prosocial peers and adults in YPAR. To expand its reach, we implement our health focused YPAR curriculum in a pre-existing aftercare setting serving disadvantaged middle school youth in the current study.

Health focused YPAR may also benefit the setting. Most aftercare programs have informal aims that share commonalities with PYD focused after school programs, such as the promotion of holistic development (e.g., educational achievement, healthy outcomes, spiritual gains, interpersonal connections, empowerment, and strengths) (Durlak et al., 2007; Langhout & Thomas, 2010; Larson, Eccles & Gootman, 2004; Lerner et al., 2005). Implementing YPAR in pre-existing aftercare programs can help the setting achieve their holistic aims through the YPAR essential elements (Balcazar et al., 2004; Israel et al., 2013). To explore this novel idea, in the current study, we assess the feasibility of implementing health focused YPAR and its impact on holistic development (i.e., participating youths’ empowerment) in a typical aftercare program.
1.6 Literature Review of the YPAR Praxis Essential Elements

The current study set out to address adolescent participatory obesity prevention gaps and gaps in the general YPAR literature. We first review the adolescent participatory obesity prevention literature to highlight strengths and areas for improvement in the implementation and evaluation of each of the essential elements contained in our health focused YPAR curriculum. We categorize the essential elements according to those applicable to the YPAR praxis (group process level) and the Campus-Community partnership (systems level). The group process level essential elements (i.e., identify community as a unit of identity, identify and report youth and community strengths, youth generation of project idea, use of a cyclical and iterative process, power-sharing in a Y-A partnership, use of a dialogic and reflexive process, co-learning and capacity building, authentic analysis of social reality, discussion of power differentials, youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results, youth involvement in advocacy for social action) are infused within a health focused YPAR praxis (i.e., critical and collective inquiry, reflection, and action) in the curriculum for the current work. These YPAR essential elements promote empowerment and its subdomains (i.e., sociopolitical skills, participatory behavior, perceived control, motivation to influence). I evaluate the group process level of analysis in the current study because I am examining the feasibility of piloting a health focused YPAR curriculum.

Some essential elements of participatory approaches apply to campus-community partnerships, such as those between researchers, community members, and other relevant stakeholders during the project planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. These elements are a balance between knowledge generation and intervention for equal
benefit and sustainability of the partnership and research. During design, implementation, and post-intervention, keeping these elements in mind can serve as a way to remind researchers to align their academic goals with the needs of the community, and to work towards systems change in addition to change at the individual level. I reflected on the campus-community partnership essential elements throughout project planning and implementation, but I do not systematically measure and evaluate the systems level in this study.

I found seventeen studies which implemented obesity prevention oriented participatory research with adolescents in my systematic review. Projects that were successful in implementing and/or reporting more YPAR essential elements engaged youth in leadership activities; either through conducting interviews/administering surveys (Perry & Hoffman, 2010), being a part of an advisory board which provided ideas for and feedback on the project (Necheles et al., 2007), or as peer leaders in promoting health-related change (Bogart et al., 2011; McKinney et al., 2014). Many of the exemplar projects already had a youth advisory council or were embedded in a larger study or a program in which garnering youth opinions would be easy to do, which likely streamlined the engagement process and secured continued funds for multiple project iterations.

The exemplar projects also led to long term, systems change in policy or the community/school, such as: addition of community PE program (Hannay et al., 2013), access to resources for PA, such as trails (Perry & Hoffman, 2010), and changes in school lunch policy/activities, such as nutritional signage and provision of cut fruit (Bogart et al., 2009). They also reported on youth personal gains as a result of the process, such as
qualitative reports of improved confidence in leadership, health behaviors, goals for the future, and empowerment (Hannay, Dudley, Milan, & Leibovitz; Toussaint et al., 2011).

Finally, the exemplars were culturally tailored, for example, using culturally adapted measurement methods (Perry & Hoffman, 2010), and took examination of cultural issues and their impact on the intervention seriously (McKinney et al., 2014). The positive effects spread beyond the core youth involved in the study; there was a radiating impact as they shared their newly gained health knowledge with community members (Bardwell et al., 2009), or made larger changes in their community. Though the authors of these exemplar studies referenced the YPAR essential elements, none of them formally measured or systematically assessed fidelity of implementation to them, which is a gap in the measurement of these essential elements.

In my review, I also discovered gaps in coverage of the essential elements. The most neglected essential element was power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership. Of the seventeen studies, none documented this essential element, and only six reported basic information about the Y-A relationship. Evaluation of the Y-A partnership is pertinent to understanding participatory processes, as the partnership is a driving mechanism for empowerment and PYD. For example, Necheles and colleagues (2007) spent time with youth for a year before they began their photo voice project to build relationships, but only referenced this process rather than measuring it. It is important to document the Y-A partnership processes in detail because the existence of a partnership is not enough to lead to positive outcomes; the partnership may be disempowering if adults do not allow youth to take on important roles in the process (Wong et al., 2010) or provide support when it is needed (Larson & Angus, 2011). Without systematic
documentation and evaluation of the Y-A praxis process, it is unclear whether youth are truly playing a pluralistic role.

In addition to lack of documentation of power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership, I uncovered another gap: measurement of intraindividual mechanisms for behavior change, such as empowerment, is neglected in the adolescent participatory obesity prevention literature. The authors instead mostly focused on measuring systems change; only four examined health behavior change (Bogart et al., 2011; Jackson et al., 2010; McKinney et al., 2014; Smith & Holloman, 2014) and none evaluated intraindividual processes. We add to the adolescent participant obesity prevention literature in the current study by using the YPAR essential elements to inform the development of the health focused YPAR curriculum. We then systematically measure its implementation with youth in pre-existing aftercare programs to explore feasibility.

**Power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership.** A relationship with a caring, nonfamilial adult has consistently resulted in positive developmental outcomes and PYD in the broader research literature (Bronfenbrenner, 2001; Scales et al., 2006). One way the Y-A partnership promotes PYD in YPAR is through youth working with adult allies in empowering settings (Cammarota & Fine, 2008: Larson et al., 2004). A Y-A partnership aims to promote empowerment through shared power in decision making, during which adults provide supervision, guidance, and social support (Wong et al., 2010). Through shared power in decision making and leadership alongside adults, youth increase their social capital (Sullivan & Larson, 2010) and build developmental assets such as mastery and competence (Zimmerman, 1995).
In my review, I discovered that the power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership is not evaluated in the adolescent participatory obesity prevention literature, and I only identified six studies which provided basic details about the Y-A partnership (Bardwell et al., 2009; Bogart et al., 2011; Findholt et al., 2011; Jackson et al., 2010; Lipman et al., 2010; Perry & Hoffman, 2010). They did not evaluate the relationship or document problem solving of difficulties. In Necheles and colleagues (2009) photo voice project that set the stage for the Snax intervention (Bogart et al., 2011), the researchers wrote a paragraph documenting how they spent a year getting to know the youth before they broached the idea of a research project. Furthermore, in a lessons learned paper about the project, the authors described, but did not evaluate, some aspects of the partnership.

Based on my review of the literature, power-sharing in a pluralistic partnership is an essential element that is rarely targeted in adolescent participatory obesity intervention. In the current work, we address this gap by building power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership into the health focused YPAR curriculum and the adult partner training. Adult partners receive handouts from other successful participatory projects with adolescents on collaborative Y-A partnerships, information from literature in clinical psychology on how to best engage adolescents, a few tools used in previous YPAR projects to promote democratic decision making, and an outline of their role and requirements. Adult partners role play activities from the curriculum in which they will engage in power-sharing with youth and troubleshoot any difficulties. In the YPAR curriculum, adult partners are instructed to provide opportunities for youth involvement in decision making in the research and group work through democratic processes. Adult
partners promote power-sharing within groups through allowing youth to guide discussion based on their interests within the topic area.

To address the measurement gap in the literature, in the current study, we examine the Y-A partnership essential element through the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data in a mixed method design. We collect information about the relationship from the adult partner perspective in journals. We systematically observe the implementation subcomponents of a pluralistic, power-sharing Y-A partnership using an observational tool during each session. We collect information about the relationship from the youth perspective in a photo and caption journal entry, a subscale which measures the quality of the relationship, and qualitative survey questions. We assess for significant increases in perceived control, a subdomain of youth empowerment.

Discussion of power differentials between youth and adults. Another essential component of the praxis process is the discussion of power differentials between youth and adults, how to manage them, and how differences in power can impact the success of the project. During YPAR, youth study the power structure (Cammarto & Fine, 2008), such as who holds power over health decision in their lives. Youth realize through critical dialogue with their peers and supportive adults how politics and socioeconomic position shape people’s life histories and health outcomes (Zimmerman, 2000), which exposes youth to diverse ways of thinking and conceptualizing societal problems (Wong et al., 2010). Sociopolitical development occurs when youth participate in the discussion of power differentials in YPAR (Cammarto & Fine, 2008; Ozer & Douglas, 2013; Wars & Flanagan, 2007). Sociopolitical development is an evolving, critical understanding of the political, economic, cultural, and other systemic forces that shape society and one’s
status in it, and the associated process of growth in relevant knowledge, analytical skills, and emotional faculties (Watts, Williams & Jagers, 2003). As youth learn to act upon and address social conditions through discussion and debate with supportive others, they begin to understand that they have a say in shaping their lives. This pulls them to be more proactive and empowered people in their communities (Cammarota & Fine, 2008).

Exemplar studies documenting this essential element can be found in the PE literature. Oliver and Hamzeh (2010) and Oliver, Hamzeh, and McCaughtry (2009) implemented YPAR work in schools to challenge sexist and cultural stereotypes about girls and PA. The authors were a model of the participatory process, as they described their work with youth in timeline activities, journals, and photography to guide their exploration of social and cultural barriers to PA. After each session, the authors debriefed, read transcriptions of field notes, reflected on what happened, went to girls for suggestions, and planned the next session collaboratively with them. They also were open about power struggles between themselves and the girls and when they discovered themselves asserting too much control.

In the adolescent participatory obesity intervention literature, I discovered that researchers rarely document or target the discussion of power differentials; only three studies explicitly documented issues of power between youth and adults (Bogart et al., 2011; Perry & Hoffman, 2010; Toussaint et al., 2011). In a lessons learned article about the Snax intervention (Bogart et al., 2011) development process, Uyeda, Bogart, Hawes-Dawson, and Schuster (2009) briefly touched on power differentials between youth and the other research partners. Toussaint and colleagues (2011) mentioned differences in power between adults and youth at the conclusion of their short paper. One well-
implemented and thoroughly documented example is a study conducted by Perry and Hoffman (2010). The researchers outlined in detail their process of developing an MOU and data sharing agreement with an American Indian tribe because the tribe was skeptical of participating due to a history of negative interactions with researchers.

Based on my review of the literature, few researchers have documented the discussion of power differentials between youth and adults in previous participatory adolescent obesity prevention efforts. In the current work, in the health focused YPAR curriculum, adult partners highlight the reality of power dynamics, such as who holds power to make decisions that impact youths’ health, and who makes health related rules at home, school, and in the community. Adult partners also provide feedback to youth on the feasibility of their change idea and assist with modifications to increase the likelihood of successful implementation. We model adult partner journal reflections on power differentials following each session on the PE literature. We measure power differentials during implementation of the health focused YPAR curriculum using the observational tool. We assess youth views on power differentials through qualitative survey responses. We measure youth sociopolitical skills, a subdomain of empowerment, in a quantitative survey at baseline and post intervention.

**Youth/community generation of project idea.** At the beginning of the YPAR process, youth work with peers and adults to identify a project idea (Ozer et al., 2010; Jacquez et al., 2013). Autonomy and shared leadership in decision making with adults and peers promotes empowerment and PYD (Hannay et al., 2013; Toussaint et al., 2011). For example, youth having a leadership role in the selection of a change idea that directly benefits them leads to changes in both youth and adults’ views about what youth are
capable of accomplishing (Warrs & Flanagan, 2007). The change in social beliefs (Youniss & Yates, 1997) and increases in empowerment that stem from the leadership role transform peer group interactions, social and personal identities (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Warrs & Flanagan, 2007), and lead to positive outcomes in young adulthood (Barber et al., 2001) and engagement as active citizens (Yoshida, Craypo, & Samuels, 2011).

I identified four adolescent participatory obesity prevention projects in which the authors documented implementation of the essential element youth or community generation of the project idea (Bardwell et al., 2009; Necheles et al., 2007; Findholt, Michael, & Davis, 2011, Linton et al., 2014, & Perry & Hoffman, 2010). Inclusion of youth in the development of the project idea is difficult to implement in its pure form, in which youth have total freedom, when an intervention is grant funded on a specific topic. It is important to provide a framework, but allow youth autonomy within the framework.

Two of the four studies I identified, in which youth helped determine the project idea, utilized photo voice as a research method (Findholt, et al., 2011; Necheles et al., 2007). Photo voice promotes youth leadership, the development of critical thinking skills, and interest in involvement with social change within an art-based format, which is more relevant for middle school youth. In a study conducted by Necheles and colleagues (2007), youth took pictures of facets of their school environment that influence their health. Youth presented the pictures to school stakeholders. As a result, the researchers and school administrators applied for a CBPR grant to meet the youths’ needs. They obtained one, and use it to co-create an intervention with youth to address their concerns. When using photo voice, it is important to follow through with social change (Delgado,
2015). Many studies end after the pictures are taken, and youth are left wondering about their purpose.

Based on my review of the literature, few researchers have documented the essential element youth generation of project idea in previous participatory adolescent obesity prevention efforts. In the current study curriculum, we provide a PA framework, but youth have total choice on their change topic within that theme. Youth decide if they want to address a PA strength or challenge through a photo voice picture taking process. They choose a PA focused change idea through democratic voting and decide if the change should occur in their program or school. Youth photos from this process are used as change advocacy tools in a final presentation to stakeholders. We measure the implementation of the essential element youth generation of project idea using an observational tool. We assess adult partner perspectives through journals and youth perspective via qualitative survey responses.

**Define community as a unit of identity.** When youth, adults, and other community partners are collaboratively working on obesity prevention efforts in a participatory process, one of the first steps is to define the community as a unit of identity (Israel et al., 2013). Defining the community together is important to be able to understand various stakeholder perspectives and integrate them into the conceptualization of community in the research (Israel et al., 2013). Collaborating on this definition benefits researchers by helping them learn the unique characteristics of the population, their ideas about community and identity, and how these elements influence their health behavior (Israel et al., 2013). The collaboration benefits community members in that their voices are heard, which leads them to feel more empowered for health behavior change.
Discussions about community values can also positively impact both community members and researchers. The interventions align with community identity and values, which has potential to improve its effectiveness.

Youth know the community influences on their lives best, and for interventions to be effective, they must target these unique domains (Branch & Chester, 2009). Using a more collaborative method to allow youth to define their community using their own perspective would demonstrate that adults value and respect their ideas (Cammarto & Fine, 2008). Including youth in the creation of the definition of community and discussions about the boundaries of their community is one of the first steps in youth realizing that they are a valued part of their community.

Fifteen of the seventeen articles I identified in my review contained descriptions, typically in the demographics section, of the broader community impacted by the research. However, I only identified four (Bardwell et al., 2009; Goh et al., 2009; Perry & Hoffman, 2010; Smith, Valenzuela, & Ludke, 2012) which explicitly included community members and their shared identity and values in the definition. Goh and colleagues (2009) defined community as, “individuals – including adolescents, parents, and other adults – with a common interest in eating and physical activity behaviors among middle school youth (p.492). Only one study explicitly documented youth defining the boundaries of their community (Pearce et al., 2009). Youth outlined them during a mapping activity and interpreted the word “local” during focus groups (Pearce et al., 2009).

Based on my review of the literature, few researchers have included youth and community members’ definition of community in previous participatory adolescent
obesity prevention efforts. In the current study, we incorporate the essential element community as a unit of identity into the YPAR curriculum. Adult partners promote the discussion of youths’ definitions of their school/program community, and shared and unique values in their peer community. We measure the implementation of this essential element via an observational tool by a trained rater in each session. We assess youth perspectives through qualitative survey questions and adult partner perspectives in weekly reflection journals.

**Identify and report youth and community strengths.** Participatory work aligns with PYD through the discussion of youth and community strengths (Larson et al., 2005; Lerner et al., 2004; Warrs & Flanagan, 2007) within the Y-A partnership (Wong et al., 2010) throughout the praxis process (Cammarto & Fine, 2008). Using a strengths based approach to YPAR also promotes PYD outcomes, such as a sense of responsibility, purpose, increased self-esteem, confidence, and efficacy (Benson et al., 2003; Damon et al., 2003; Dworkin et al., 2003; Lerner et al., 2005), especially in research (Langhout & Thomas, 2010; Ozer & Douglas, 2013).

Most (14/17) YPAR studies I identified in the literature highlighted youth strengths and resources or reported on youth implementation of an asset assessment conducted via photo voice or a participatory mapping technique. Bardwell and colleagues (2009) described adolescents as having abundant energy, enthusiasm, and motivation, and that they had the potential to be a “transformative workforce in the translation of clinical research to the community (p.340).” Hannay, Dudley, Milan, and Leibovitz (2013) described youth as demonstrating strong leadership and advocacy skills, which, coupled with a “natural idealism and optimism” was a good combination that led to their
successful change efforts (p. 221). Frerichs and colleagues (2012) assessed youths’ strengths and assigned them to roles (i.e., project coordinator, public relations, creative agency) that aligned with them.

Within the Y-A partnership, identification of community strengths by peers and adults is important because youths’ views of the effects of the built environment on their health are usually excluded in adult-centric research (Salmon & Timperio, 2007). Common ways youth document community strengths are through an asset assessment or a participatory mapping technique. Providing youth with the opportunity to identify community strengths through asset assessments aids in the identification of child-specific environmental determinants of health (Salmon & Timperio, 2007) and can lead them to increase their citizen participation (Benson et al., 1998) during the mapping process. Walia and Leipert (2012) and Findholt, Michael, and Davis (2010) engaged youth in photo voice to highlight facilitators and barriers to PA in rural communities. The youth took pictures of facilities, sports teams, and the natural environment as facilitators of PA, and youth in the Findholt and colleagues (2010) study also identified their environment as a facilitator to healthy eating. Pearce and colleagues (2009) instructed youth to take pictures of places that were important to them where they went to be physically active or obtain food. Children took pictures of school and neighborhood playgrounds, their homes, favorite stores/community restaurants, or places that were close in proximity.

While conducting asset assessments, youth have the opportunity to connect with adults and community members, potentially increasing feelings of social connectedness and sense of community (Bardwell et al., 2009; Branch & Chester, 2009). These community assessments of strengths and concerns enhances the local relevance of the
project (Bardwell et al., 2009; Branch & Chester, 2009; Hannay et al., 2013). Youths’ enhanced awareness of and connection to their local community can help them identify community programs, parks, and businesses that may provide them with additional health and development opportunities (Benson et al., 2006; Findholt et al., 2010; Pearce et al., 2009; Scales et al., 2006; Walia & Leipert, 2012). Building on youth strengths and community assets can help promote youth obesity prevention by increasing empowerment potential, community awareness, and long term citizen participation to become “clinical research investigators” as referred to by Branch and Chester (2009), cultural insiders motivated to disseminate health messages to others and change cultural norms (p.345).

In line with the literature, in the current study, a strengths focus is infused into all elements of the YPAR curriculum. For example, youth and adults are assigned YPAR project tasks based on their individual strength, and adult partners are reminded to identify the strengths of youth and their work each session. Adult partners are also evaluated on promoting a discussion of program, school, and/or community strengths during each session. Additionally, strengths of the program and school are captured by youth and discussed within groups during the photo voice process. In the final presentation, youth discuss the PA strengths of their school and program with stakeholders. Fidelity to the implementation of the essential element “identify and report youth and community strengths” is evaluated by a trained rater. In the qualitative post intervention survey questions, to capture youths’ perspectives on their strengths, they are prompted for individual and group strengths. To document youths’ perspectives on their
Maintaining local relevance and an ecological perspective. Ecological perspective and local relevance is a defining principle of participatory research (Israel et al., 2013). Using an ecological perspective is crucial for obesity prevention because there are determinants of health ranging from the individual to societal level (Goh et al., 2009; Vaughn, Jacquez, & McLinden, 2013). Demonstrating the local relevance of the intervention can improve buy-in, motivation, and potential for sustainability. Community and youth perspectives on what is relevant can differ, and their viewpoints may also be different from the researchers (Schulz, Krieger, & Galea, 2002). Integrating local perspectives is important, because if youth feel that the intervention is irrelevant to their lives, they are likely to not engage and maximally benefit (Suleiman et al., 2006). To improve the local relevance of studies, researchers can garner youth viewpoints through focus groups, interviews, photo voice, or open ended survey questions and use the information for program design, course corrections, and the publication.

All of the adolescent participatory obesity prevention studies I identified in my review included a description of this element. For example, in an ecological assessment, Goh and colleagues (2009) grouped student, parent, and stakeholder focus group responses into four domains: community, school, family, and individual. Vaughn and colleagues (2013) grouped concept mapping results according to social-ecological theory. Findings from the focus groups and concept maps were then used to guide intervention development.
Studies also had youth use ecological perspectives to guide their work. For example, youth in Necheles and colleagues (2007) photo voice study took an ecological perspective when they designed a project about the downfalls of the cultural norm that “bigger is better” and how marketing reinforces this norm. The youth in Toussaint and colleagues (2011) advocacy efforts changed their family’s eating behaviors based on their ecological perspectives on the knowledge of food labels and marketing. Additionally, knowledge of built environment barriers led to advocacy efforts and changes (Frerichs et al., 2012; Hannay et al., 2013; Linton et al., 2014, Perry & Hoffman, 2010; Yoshida et al., 2011). I also found studies that promoted local relevance. As one example, adolescents interviewed 998 people across the state of West Virginia to assess obesity prevalence. The high rates were alarming and locally relevant to youth, motivating them to action (Bardwell et al., 2009).

To align with the literature, in the current study, we promote local relevance in the health focused YPAR curriculum. Youth participate in photo voice, in which they take pictures of PA strengths and challenges that impact their day-to-day lives. The curriculum has prompts for adult partners to emphasize local relevance and an ecological perspective during the SHOWeD process, a photo voice method in which participating youth discuss what the pictures mean to them and how they show what needs to change (Strack et al., 2004). Adult partners are also instructed to find ways to make the photo voice intervention relevant to youths’ lives, and to show interest in youths’ hobbies and circumstances outside of the program. Adult partners foster group discussions about ecological influences on their daily health activities during a warm up activity in which youth discuss PA in which they have participated with a friend or family member over
the past week. We assess youth perspectives on local relevance through open-ended survey questions and adult partner perspectives on this essential element through weekly journals.

**Co-learning and capacity building between youth and adults.** Co-learning between adult and youth researchers leads to a better understanding of youth values and interests and research activities that fit their developmental needs and desired change (Wong et al., 2010). During collaborative work with youth to promote obesity prevention, researchers gain insider information from youth about what obesity prevention efforts may be most effective for that community (Bardwell et al., 2009), and youth gain knowledge about health that they can share with others in their community (Bogart et al., 2009; Frerichs et al., 2012; Hannay et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2010; Lipman et al., 2011; Toussaint et al., 2011; Tanjasiri et al., 2011). When youth and adults learn from each other, adults realize that youth have unique talents, strengths, and knowledge and youth realize that adults value their opinions, which promotes increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and possibility of future collaboration (Cammarto & Fine, 2008). Youth learn research skills from adults, which they can utilize in other life domains (Bardwell et al., 2009; Branch & Chester, 2009), which leads to increases in empowerment and PYD.

YPAR builds a variety of skills in youth through the capacity building efforts of adult partners. Youth develop skills such as strategic thinking (Larson & Angus, 2011) leadership (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000), initiative, personal change strategies, and interpersonal skills (Dworkin et al., 2003). These skills can transfer to other contexts and promote PYD and empowerment related outcomes, such as thriving (Scales et al., 2000), emotion regulation, taking responsibility, time management, teamwork, problem
solving (Dworkin et al., 2003), academic achievement (Scales, Benson, Roehlkepartain, Sesma, & van Dulmen, 2006), continued community engagement (Lerner, 2004) into adulthood (Raymore, Barber, Eccles, & Godbey, 1999), and participation in community change efforts where youth can utilize their newly learned skills (Benson et al., 1998; Durlak et al., 2007; Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003). These skills can also transfer to increases in positive health behavior, like the intake of healthy food and participation in exercise (Benson et al., 1998; Scales et al., 2000).

All but one of the seventeen participatory obesity prevention studies that I identified in the literature involved youth in co-learning and capacity building. Eleven of these studies documented co-learning processes for both researchers and youth (Bardwell et al., 2009; Bogart et al., 2011; Findholt et al., 2011; Hannay et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2010; Linton et al., 2014; Lipman et al., 2011; McKinney et al., 2014; Tanjasiri et al., 2011; Yoshida, Crayo, & Samuels, 2013). Bardwell and colleagues (2009) were exemplars in documenting and implementing the co-learning process in which both researchers and youth gain knowledge. They helped youth develop interviewing skills to assess prevalence rates of obesity in their community. Youth also learned leadership and advocacy skills, as well as health information about diabetes, physical activity, and nutrition that they shared with others in their community (Bardwell et al., 2009; Toussaint et al., 2011). Adult researchers learned that community obesity prevalence rates were higher than CDC projections (Bardwell et al., 2009).

To align with the literature, in the current study, co-learning and capacity building is promoted through the health focused YPAR curriculum. Adult partners are evaluated using an observational tool on their ability to promote the sharing of learning
between adult partners and youth, and their ability to teach youth skills. They build youth capacity in a variety of skills that can lead to empowerment and PYD outcomes. For example, the activities are structured to build social and active listening skills through sharing ideas out loud within groups, and public speaking skills through engagement in photo voice. Youth are given opportunities to teach adult partners about their PA interests and change ideas and youth and adult partners share at the end of each session what they learn from each other, all of which facilitates co-learning and relatedness between peers and adult partners. Qualitative post-intervention surveys assess youths’ perspectives and weekly journals obtain adult partners’ viewpoints on this essential element.

**Inclusion of youth in the cyclical and iterative research process.** Inclusion in a cyclical and iterative research process can be defined as including youth voice in revisions in multiple phases of the research process. For adult researchers, use of a cyclical and iterative process is important for obesity prevention efforts because youth are community insiders who can provide input on the strategies that may be most effective in influencing health behavior change in their communities (Bardwell et al., 2009; Branch et al., 2009). Involving youth in the cyclical and iterative research process empowers youth to develop problem solving skills useful for their future (Benson et al., 2003; Dworkin et al., 2003). Involvement in troubleshooting and brainstorming helps youth understand multiple perspectives and participate in healthy debate (Larson & Angus, 2011). It is crucial that youths’ opinions are taken seriously during this process, because if they voice their opinions but no one acknowledges them or adults commit to following up but do not, youth may grow frustrated with the adults and the partnership and feel disempowered (Wong et al., 2010).
Most (12) of the seventeen adolescent participatory obesity studies that I identified included youth voice in at least one phase of the research process, yet only a few reported youths’ input in quotes in the publication (Bardwell et al., 2009; Goh et al., 2009; Necheles et al., 2007; Perry & Hoffman, 2010). Seven identified studies included youth voice or revisions in multiple phases of the research process (Bardwell et al., 2009; Bogart et al., 2011; Hannay et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2010; Lipman et al., 2010; Perry & Hoffman, 2010; Tanjasiri et al., 2011). For example, Lipman and colleagues (2011) included high school students in a cyclical and iterative process by allowing them to help design the intervention based on their knowledge of elementary students’ interests. Youth suggested that program activities needed to involve dance and snacks needed to be easy to prepare in order to engage elementary school youth (Lipman et al., 2011). In a study by Jackson and colleagues (2010), youth developed a play/performance that contained health information that resonated with their family and friends. McKinney and colleagues (2014) described the development of NuFIT through the adaptation of the EatFIT nutrition and fitness curriculum by a group of high school students and community members to meet the racial/ethnic and youth culture needs of Chicago Latino and African American high school youth. Student participants and teachers also provided input. Community board members reviewed the curriculum, observed peer-led classes, and proposed changes. This cyclical and iterative process led to a peer led curriculum that successfully changed student’s self-reported short term behaviors and attitudes about nutrition and fitness (McKinney et al., 2014). The youth-developed components helped the intervention better “fit” the community’s interests and culture, leading participants to be more likely to participate and buy into the message.
To build on the documentation of the cyclical and iterative process in the literature, in the current study, a cyclical and iterative process is promoted through the health focused YPAR curriculum. For example, adult partners involve youth in multiple rounds of action planning and data gathering during photo voice, which is evaluated using an observational tool by trained raters. We collect youth qualitative responses about themselves, their communities, and photo voice to include their voices in our research process. We also assess youths’ participatory behavior, a subdomain of empowerment and a critical mechanism proposed to change as a result of this iterative process, at baseline and post intervention.

**Promoting a dialogic and reflexive process within groups.** Promoting a dialogic and reflexive process gives youth and adults the opportunity to reflect together on the project. An inclusive, reflective discussion that promotes critical thinking has benefits for obesity prevention, with the goal that youth become empowered to make healthier choices as they become more aware of the systemic factors that impact their health (e.g., food labels, availability of healthy foods in supermarkets and safe places for PA, marketing strategies) (Benson et al., 1998). Learning about these larger influences and potentially changing youth viewpoints based on new information also promotes PYD because it moves the conversation away from a deficits focused, victim-blaming approach (Ryan, 1997) to health intervention.

Eleven of the adolescent participatory obesity prevention studies I identified at minimum had youth and adults critically reflect on data and results together with the goal of learning new information from each other and analyzing alternative viewpoints. An exemplar of the promotion of a dialogic and reflexive process can be found in the
research of Bardwell and colleagues (2009) and Branch and Chester (2009). In a medically underserved area, students learned research topics in a summer institute (e.g., HIPPA and Confidentiality, Treatment of Diabetes, Ethics) and researchers used the KNOW, WHAT, LEARNED, and HOW (KWLH) educational strategy to engage them. Using what they learned, youth then completed a project in partnership with teachers trained in CBPR over the school year. Students chose to examine the prevalence of obesity in their community through interviews and family trees. Youth discovered that the prevalence of diabetes in their community was higher than the CDC report, so again engaged with the researchers using the KWLH strategy. Youth then became motivated to make local change and created community diabetes education programs.

To expand on the documentation of promotion of a dialogic and reflexive process in the literature, in the current study, it is built into the health focused YPAR curriculum. Adult partners provide opportunities for positive peer interactions. They prompt youth to discuss various topics, provided feedback, and ask questions throughout the sessions. During group work and photo voice data collection and processing, adult partners prompt youth to learn more about each other and seek out new ways of thinking from each other. They also prompt youth to analyze alternative points of view and demonstrate an openness to modifying pre-existing views based on new information during that time. Adult partners are evaluated on the promotion of a dialogic and reflexive process within groups by trained raters using an observational tool. Youth perspectives are assessed through qualitative responses in a post intervention survey and adult partner viewpoints are documented in weekly journals.
**Authentic analysis of youths’ social reality.** An authentic analysis of social reality involves supportive group processes with adult partners and youth which promote reflection on youths’ cultural realities. The supportive relationships provide room for critical thinking, dialogue, and learning about the history and social context of obesity (Bardwell et al., 2009; Branch & Chester, 2009; Hannay et al., 2013). Involvement in YPAR praxis with health focused, prosocial adults and peers can lead youth to think more critically about systemic influences on their health (Necheles et al., 2007; Toussaint et al., 2011). Specifically, they can examine how systemic influences lead to negative health outcomes in their lives, and what, if anything, they are able to do to change these larger processes (Frerichs et al., 2012; Hannay et al., 2013; Linton et al., 2014 Perry & Hoffman, 2010; Yoshida et al., 2011). Positive group norms surrounding health that are established through this essential element can motivate youth to learn from each other’s experiences and serve as health mentors to each other and those in their communities beyond the project (Bardwell et al., 2009; Branch & Chester, 2009).

Gaining a greater understanding of youths’ social reality can potentially help make obesity prevention efforts more effective. Strategies can be tailored based on cultural preferences to make the prevention efforts more relevant and appealing to participants (Jackson et al., 2010; McKinney et al., 2014). Gaining this understanding also promotes PYD because, in contrast to the typical intervention development paradigm, youths’ social realities are seen as relevant and important (Cammarto & Fine, 2008).

Most adolescent participatory obesity prevention studies that I identified (15/17 studies) included a description of historical and cultural influences that promoted better
understanding of youths’ social reality. Hannay and colleagues (2013) wanted to understand reasons why more Latina girls were not attending their after-school obesity prevention program as well as participating in PA. In focus groups, the majority of Latina girls reported that their parents restricted their activities more than boys due to cultural attitudes about gender roles and were concerned about teen pregnancy, safety, and gang violence. Girls said they did not participate in PE because they did not want to mess their hair, change early in the day, or exercise in front of boys, and were bored with the traditional PE activities. As a result, a PE credit recovery program was created at the YWCA with appropriate supervision. Without the understanding of history and culture, ineffective engagement efforts may have been employed.

To build on the literature, with the health focused YPAR curriculum in the current study, adult partners are evaluated by trained observers on their abilities to promote the discussion of youths’ everyday realities. For example, youth participate in a game focused on root causes of health-related concerns, societal/local influences on their health, and their own histories and culture and its influence on their health and PA to promote critical thinking and deeper discussion within groups. Additionally, adult partners learn about youths’ cultural realities through discussions about the strengths of their program, school, and community and during the photo voice research process. Youth opinions are obtained through post-intervention qualitative survey responses and adult partners viewpoints are assessed through weekly journals.

**Inclusion of youth in reporting and dissemination of results.** Youth participation in the dissemination of results promotes PYD by improving public speaking and leadership skills (Bardwell et al., 2009; Hannay et al., 2013), and helping youth
understand community change processes (Frerichs et al., 2012). In addition, reporting results gives youth experience with writing and photography. It promotes obesity prevention and empowerment because youth develop a sense of purpose (Damon et al., 2003) and intrinsic motivation (Dawes & Larson, 2011) through their training to informally share results with their community long after the research process is over (Bardwell et al., 2009; Branch & Chester, 2009).

Most (13/17) adolescent participatory obesity prevention studies I found included youth in either reporting or dissemination of results. Six studies included youth in both (Bardwell et al., 2009; Findholt et al., 2011; Hannay et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2010; Perry & Hoffman, 2010; Toussaint et al., 2011). For example, Jackson and colleagues (2010) led youth in a theater-based intervention to promote healthy eating. The youth learned about nutrition, physical activity, and script writing each week. They created skits in collaboration with a registered dietician with a background in theater. Youth performed their final production for family and friends during a dinner theater performance. Excerpts from the skit and youth report of lessons learned were included in the journal article.

We advance the literature on youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results in the health focused YPAR curriculum of the current study. Adult partners are evaluated by trained observers on the support they provide in the poster creation and presentation building process. Youth create and present posters showcasing their change ideas related to PA at a parent night on the last day of the program. We examine increases in youth participatory behavior at baseline and post intervention. Adult partners also
reflect in journals about the process, and youth provide feedback in qualitative survey responses.

**Youth participation in advocacy for social action.** In YPAR, youth and community strengths can be leveraged for social action (Frerichs et al., 2012). Experience with positive social action promotes PYD because it sparks youths’ sense of purpose (Damon et al., 2003) and intrinsic motivation (Dawes & Larson, 2011). During this process, youth feel more empowered, intelligent, and capable, which leads to improved problem solving skills (Cammarota & Fine, 2008), cognitive and social development (Wong et al., 2010), and increased self-efficacy, social competence, self-confidence, self-esteem, and sense of purpose as youth use their own unique skill sets to collectively work towards change (Barber et al., 2001; Lerner et al., 2005; Wong et al., 2010; Wood, Larson, & Brown, 2009). Since youth seek out an identity that allows them to feel effective, successful, and connected in their everyday activities (Youniss, Yates, & Su, 1997), it is likely that their identities will develop to align with these experiences.

Over time, youth become committed to community health-related change. Through the time spent with health focused youth and peers in research and advocacy, health becomes a central part of youths’ developing identity (Barber et al., 2001; Vaughn et al., 2013). The gained knowledge and skills about health obtained from their interactions, as well as shifts in attitudes and values, leads to more healthful decision making (Suleiman, Soleimanpour, & London, 2006). The improved problem solving skills and self-esteem that develop are linked to empowerment to maintain better physical health across all racial/ethnic groups (Scales et al., 2000).
Even unsuccessful social action can help youth learn from disappointments and think strategically (Larkin & Angus, 2011), build problem solving skills (Benson et al., 2003; Dworkin et al., 2003) and increase sociopolitical development (Watts, Williams, & Jager 2003), such as learning about the societal factors that influence PA and food choices (Findholt et al., 2011; Necheles et al., 2008). Through the social action process, youth learn that they have the agency to produce changes in their lives and communities. Larger social change that occurs as a result of youths’ efforts reinforces that adults value and take their voice seriously, which acts as a corrective experience against the typical oppression of youth views in their everyday activities in society (Cammarto & Fine, 2008).

I identified twelve studies that involved youth in at least a minimal degree of social action; six engaged youth in large scale action projects (Bogart et al., 2009; Frerichs et al., 2012; Hannay et al., 2013; Linton et al., 2014; Perry & Offman, 2010; Yoshida et al., 2011), and two of those large scale action projects (Frerichs et al., 2012: Linton, Edwards, Woodruff, Millstein, & Moder, 2014) involved youth in advocacy efforts to make local change in their community alongside supportive adults. For example, Frerichs and colleagues (2012) described the youth creation of a Latino health movement SaludableOMAHA. Youth spread their health messages at fairs and dinners and then collaborated with other youth programs to create the GREEN IS GO initiative to advocate for low/no cost cafeteria changes to improve eating habits. Linton and colleagues (2014) evaluated Youth Engagement and Action for Health. Youth and adult mentors advocated collaboratively for PA and healthy eating neighborhood improvement opportunities. Youth engaged city council, parks and recreation, school principals, and
food service personnel. Their efforts achieved a school salad bar, exterior lights at a community center, and YMCA female only swim time. Participation in YPAR impacts youth empowerment and community health, because, after youth integrate health into their developing identities (Youniss & Yates, 1997), they will continue to be proactive in community-level support and change. Furthermore, built environment changes that promote PA and nutrition (Hannay et al., 2013; Linton et al., 2014; Perry & Hoffman, 2010; Yoshida et al., 2011) have an impact on community health behaviors.

In the health focused YPAR curriculum in the current study, we build on the literature targeting youth involvement in advocacy for social action. Adult partners are evaluated by trained raters on the support they provide youth in planning for and speaking with stakeholders about their change ideas during the final presentation. Youth attempt to convince stakeholders about the importance and feasibility of their PA focused change, and some stakeholders discuss next steps with youth. Youth reflect on their advocacy efforts in post intervention surveys and adult partners reflect on the parent night in their weekly adult partner journals. Finally, we assess changes in motivation to influence, a subdomain of empowerment, which we purport will increase for youth involved in successful PA change advocacy efforts.

1.7 YPAR Praxis Successful Measurement and Gaps

We address measurement gaps in the general and health focused YPAR literature in the current work. The fidelity of implementation of the essential elements of a general YPAR process has been systematically evaluated in elective high school classrooms (Ozer & Douglas, 2015). However, there has not been systematic observation of the fidelity of implementation of health focused YPAR, though there is some
description/documentation of the essential elements in the adolescent participatory obesity prevention literature outlined above. Though the essential elements in health focused YPAR have not been systematically evaluated, there has been measurement progress in the broader YPAR field. Ozer and Douglas (2015) developed an observational tool to evaluate the implementation of the YPAR essential elements in high school classrooms in which a general YPAR curriculum was implemented. To design the process evaluation, Ozer, Ritterman, & Wanis (2010) identified processes that were central to YPAR: iterative integration of research and action, training and practice of research skills, sharing of power with students in the research and action process, the practice of strategic thinking (e.g., discussion of root causes to social problems, information about how rules and policies are made, how to develop recommendations based on research, how to develop alliances with various stakeholders), and strategies for influencing change.

In the development of the observational tool, Ozer and colleagues (2010) also identified processes that promote a high-quality implementation of general YPAR but are not unique to it. One piece is social: expansion of the youth social network, opportunities and guidance for working in groups to achieve goals, and the development of skills to communicate with other youth and adult stakeholders. Other elements focus on the teachers/adult partners’ implementation efforts, such as: emphasis on student perspectives, flexibility regarding classroom projects and structure, and the engagement of the students in the activities. Ozer and colleagues (2010) integrated these general components into the process evaluation observational tool (Ozer & Douglas, 2015), to capture whether essential elements of the participatory process were being implemented.
with fidelity in YPAR classrooms. In the current study, we modify the observational tool to fit a health focused YPAR program and add elements of SDT to align with a larger PA intervention. To address measurement gaps in the literature, we use our revised tool to examine fidelity of implementation of the YPAR essential elements.

An additional measurement gap, which we address in the current work, is that researchers in this field typically measure systems or health behavior changes. They neglect to measure intraindividual processes, which are key mechanisms for health behavior change. Researchers in the general YPAR field also rarely target these processes (Ozer and Douglas, 2013). Despite these gaps, progress is being made in the broader YPAR field in the measurement of intraindividual benefits. Ozer and Schotland (2011) created a psychological empowerment scale and piloted it in high school settings with adolescents. Ozer and Douglas (2013) discovered that facets of empowerment, such as youth perceptions of control and efficacy, motivation to influence their schools or communities in constructive ways, understanding of the sociopolitical environment, and participatory behaviors, all can be positively impacted through participation in YPAR. They also documented improvements in youth decision-making and problem solving skills as a result of participation (Ozer & Douglas, 2013). In the current study, we pilot the Youth Empowerment Scale with middle school youth to make it developmentally appropriate. We examine changes in an intraindividual process, youth empowerment, within two aftercare programs.
1.8 Current Study

We have the long-term aim of increasing the impact of obesity interventions by integrating health focused YPAR into interventions to influence key intraindividual mechanisms. In the current work, we integrate health focused YPAR into a PA intervention to influence empowerment, which is illustrated in the theoretical model in figure two. We also aim to make health focused YPAR disseminable to a wider variety of youth settings, especially those serving disadvantaged youth. The YPAR only theoretical model can be found in figure one. Unexamined in this study but part of our larger theoretical model, we ultimately hope that students will increase their long term healthy behavior as a result of participation in health focused YPAR paired with a PA intervention. The current study is our first step in the health focused YPAR feasibility process. The examined components of the model for this first step are in bold in figures one and two.

Through participating in the health focused YPAR curriculum, we posit that youth will increase their individual level empowerment in the current work as a result of 1) gains in leadership, public speaking, research and social skills, and advocacy competencies, 2) deepened connections with peers, staff, and the broader school community, and 3) autonomy promotion in a power-sharing Y-A partnership. To assess quality of implementation, we systematically evaluate the essential elements of a health focused YPAR curriculum in two pre-existing aftercare programs. In the first program, we implement health focused YPAR as a stand-alone curriculum to assess feasibility of YPAR in a pre-existing program serving disadvantaged middle school youth. In the second program, we integrate health focused YPAR into a PA intervention to assess the
feasibility of pairing YPAR with a health intervention. YPAR is typically implemented alone, so its feasibility when combined with interventions is unknown.

Implementation in these settings moves us towards greater disseminability through understanding feasibility in aftercare programs which serve many youth, especially disadvantaged youth. We assess the feasibility of examining YPAR change mechanisms through systematically evaluating fidelity to the essential elements and examining changes in intraindividual processes (e.g., empowerment). These assessments are first steps to identify rigorous measurement strategies which are feasible. Rigorous measurement strategies are necessary to evaluate YPAR paired with an intervention to ultimately determine in future efforts if it makes obesity interventions more effective.

1.9 Project Objective

The purpose of this study is to address gaps in youth obesity prevention/intervention by testing the feasibility of implementing a health-focused YPAR curriculum within two pre-existing aftercare programs. We address several gaps in previous YPAR approaches. YPAR has not been implemented within pre-existing aftercare programs, nor has it been integrated as a critical approach into larger health intervention design. Participatory approaches are mostly conducted with high school youth, and the PAR field as a whole lacks rigorous measurement of implementation fidelity and changes in critical individual-level mechanisms critical for promoting long-term behavior change.

We use a mixed method concurrent triangulation design to rigorously evaluate the implementation of the essential elements of the health focused YPAR curriculum that we developed in both programs. Rigorous measurement is especially crucial when exploring
the feasibility of under documented essential elements in the participatory literature (i.e.,
power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership; discussion of power differentials). Our
chosen research design draws from multiple perspectives (i.e., adult partners, youth,
trained observers) and methods (i.e., qualitative journals and surveys, observational tool,
quantitative surveys) to gain a comprehensive assessment of feasibility.

YPAR is typically conducted with older adolescents, as a standalone curriculum
or project, and within social change focused after school programs or elective classes in
high schools (Jacquez et al., 2013; Ozer et al., 2010; Vaughn et al., 2013). Since the
current study is a novel approach to YPAR, in aim one, we describe the adaptations we
made to the YPAR curriculum to meet middle school youths’ developmental level, the
aftercare setting, and a physical activity intervention.

Implementation has not been systematically evaluated in health focused YPAR,
despite the importance of the measurement of fidelity of the implementation of essential
elements to feasibility. In the few rigorous evaluations that do exist, general YPAR has
been evaluated in elective high school classes during regular school hours (Ozer &
Douglas, 2015). In our second aim, we explore the strengths and challenges related to the
dose and fidelity of implementation of health focused YPAR essential elements within
pre-existing aftercare programs. We compare programs’ strengths and challenges to
highlight key similarities and differences in the implementation of the YPAR only
approach and the YPAR + PA approach. Furthermore, since YPAR is typically
conducted in classrooms or specialty after school programs, we do not know if it is
feasible for typical aftercare programs. With the aim of making YPAR more
disseminable, we assess the feasibility of implementing YPAR in a pre-existing aftercare
program. We explore unique strengths and challenges related to implementation within the program. Further, obesity prevention/interventions have had small effects (Baranowski & Stables, 2000b; Kropski et al., 2008; Dobbins et al., 2013), and one reason may be because youth lack voice in the process (Suleiman et al., 2006). YPAR has not been paired with a health intervention (Vaughn et al., 2013), and we believe doing so is one way researchers can include youth voice and values. We posit that pairing a YPAR curriculum with a PA intervention with similar theoretical underpinnings can potentially increase the impact of the PA intervention. We evaluate the feasibility of integrating YPAR into a larger PA intervention. We explore implementation strengths and challenges related to the integration within this program. To evaluate the second aim, trained observers use an IC-Map descriptive rating scale during each session to rate variations in quality of implementation by adult partners in both programs.

In my review, I discovered that health focused YPAR researchers typically measure systems and health behavior change, but neglect to measure changes at the intraindividual level. Yet, through the YPAR praxis process, individual growth in empowerment occurs (Cammarato & Fine, 2008). In aim three, we address this measurement gap by examining youth-reported gains in empowerment, as well as its subdomains (i.e., sociopolitical skills, participatory behavior, perceived control, and motivation to influence), in each program. In line with previous studies (Ozer & Douglas, 2013), we posit that the YPAR praxis processes lead to gains in empowerment.

Finally, in aim four, we triangulate the qualitative (i.e., youth and adult partner journals, youth survey responses) and quantitative (i.e., adult partner survey, youth empowerment survey, observational ratings) data to come to a rich understanding of the
feasibility of implementing YPAR standalone in a pre-existing aftercare program and YPAR paired with a PA intervention in a pre-existing aftercare program.

1. **10 Research Questions**

We set out to explore the feasibility of implementing the essential elements of health focused YPAR within pre-existing aftercare programs serving middle school youth. We examine feasibility through the application of a mixed method concurrent triangulation design with quantitative (youth empowerment survey, adult partner survey, rater observational tool) and qualitative (youth qualitative survey, youth and adult partner journals) data sources. The primary questions we sought to answer through this work, which all fall under the overarching umbrella of feasibility, are detailed below.

1. What adaptations were made (documented by researcher):
   
   a. To “fit” the developmental needs of middle school youth?
   
   b. To fit the pre-existing aftercare program context?
   
   c. To integrate the curriculum into a physical activity intervention?

2. What are feasibility strengths and challenges of implementing stand-alone YPAR and YPAR implemented within in a larger PA intervention in two pre-existing aftercare programs, as documented by trained observers using a modified version of a previously tested valid/reliable observational tool?
   
   a. What dose strengths and challenges emerge in the YPAR only program design and when the YPAR program is paired/embedded within a larger PA intervention (YPAR+PA)?
1. What similarities and differences emerge in implementation, based on the ratings of dose, between the YPAR-only design and the YPAR + PA design?

b. What fidelity strengths and challenges emerge in the YPAR only program design and the YPAR+PA design?

1. What similarities and differences emerge in implementation, based on the ratings of fidelity, between the YPAR-only design and the YPAR + PA design?

3. Did youth engagement in health focused YPAR praxis processes lead to significant baseline to post intervention gains in empowerment within each program?

a. What gains are there within programs in the subdomains of empowerment (e.g., sociopolitical skills, participatory behavior, perceived control, and motivation to influence)?

4. To what extent do the qualitative (i.e., youth survey questions, youth journal, adult partner journal) and quantitative (i.e., observational ratings, adult partner evaluation survey, youth empowerment survey) data converge, and what does its convergence tell us about feasibility?
Essential Elements to Promote
d
PYD in an Aftercare Setting :

Researcher/Systems
a
Essential Elements

Intervention

e

Empowerment
Positive CampusCommunity Partnership YPAR
Essential
b
Elements

Positive
Health
Behavior

Basic SocioEmotional
Needs (SDT)c

55
Note. Bolded components of the model were explored in this pilot. YPAR essential elements with a * had adequate dose; underlined elements had
acceptable fidelity. a= balance between knowledge generation and intervention for equal benefit, sustainability of the partnership and research;
b=identify community as a unit of identity*, identify and report youth* and community strengths*, local relevance and an ecological perspective*,
youth generation of project idea, use of a cyclical and iterative process*, power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership*, use of a dialogic and
reflexive process, co-learning and capacity building, authentic analysis of social reality*, discussion of power differentials, youth involvement in
reporting and dissemination of results*, youth involvement in advocacy for social action*; c=competence, relatedness, autonomy; d= supportive
relationships, opportunities for skill building, physical and psychological safety, clear and consistent structure/ appropriate supervision, opportunities to
belong, positive social norms, support for efficacy and mattering, integration of family, school, and community efforts (Lerner et al., 2004); e=
Sociopolitical Skills, Participatory Behavior, Perceived Control, Motivation to Influence.
Figure 1.1 Theoretical model of the YPAR only intervention.


Note. Model elements in bold text were explored in this pilot. YPAR essential elements with a * had adequate dose; underlined elements had acceptable fidelity. a= balance between knowledge generation and intervention for equal benefit, sustainability of the partnership and research; b= identify community as a unit of identity, identify and report youth* and community strengths, local relevance and an ecological perspective, youth generation of project idea*, use of a cyclical and iterative process, power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership*, use of a dialogic and reflexive process, co-learning and capacity building, authentic analysis of social reality, discussion of power differentials, youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results*, youth involvement in advocacy for social action*; c= competence, relatedness, autonomy; d= Moral, emotional, social goal oriented support, collaborative, cooperative play, equal treatment and access, inclusive and engaging; e= supportive relationships, opportunities for skill building, physical and psychological safety, clear and consistent structure/ appropriate supervision, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, support for efficacy and mattering, integration of family, school, and community efforts (Lerner et al., 2004); f= Sociopolitical Skills, Participatory Behavior, Perceived Control, Motivation to Influence. The filled in arrow indicates that elements of the intervention led to significant increases in empowerment. * indicates subcomponents of empowerment with significant change from baseline to post intervention.

Figure 1.2 Theoretical model of the YPAR + PA intervention.
2.1 Participants

We implemented YPAR in two typical aftercare programs in Columbia, South Carolina. We implemented YPAR as usual (YPAR only) in one aftercare program, and implemented YPAR alongside a PA intervention (YPAR + PA) in the other aftercare program. We allowed all students who attended the aftercare programs (YPAR only N = 65; YPAR + PA N = 50) to participate in the activities, but only those with consent completed measurement. We obtained parental consent and youth assent from 64 male (N=23) and female (N=41) sixth – eighth grade youth aged 11-15 (M = 12.38, SD = 1.05) who attended the aftercare programs from March 2016-May 2016 (YPAR + PA N = 43; YPAR only N = 20). See tables 3.1 and 3.3 for demographic information of the full sample of youth. Of the students with consent, 21 students from the YPAR + PA program and 14 students from the YPAR only program completed full baseline and post intervention youth empowerment surveys.

In the full sample, the majority of participants identified as non-Hispanic Black/African American (93.8%). Two participants identified as bi-racial and an additional two as White. The majority of students reported that they qualified for free/reduced lunch (75%). Eleven participants (17%) responded that they did not know
their lunch status and five reported that they did not receive their lunch at a free/reduced price. Based on chi square tests of independence, there were no significant differences between the YPAR + PA and the YPAR only program participants with consent on gender ($\chi^2 (1, N=64) = 1.51, p = .22$), race ($\chi^2 (1, N=64) = .94, p = .33$), and lunch status ($\chi^2 (1, N=53) = .48, p = .49$). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated a significant difference in youth age between programs ($F (1,62) = 5.11, p = .027$); students in the YPAR only program were younger ($M = 11.95, SD = .76$), on average, than students in the YPAR + PA program ($M = 12.57, SD = 1.11$). See tables one and three for descriptive information for the total sample. See tables 3.2 and 3.4 for descriptive information for the sample used in the Youth Empowerment Survey analysis.

### 2.2 Description of the Setting

The two aftercare programs were recruited from widely accessible national and state-based youth programming organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Club) by the principal investigator (PI; Nicole Zarrett) for the larger intervention. Prior to the intervention, the PI and research staff developed a community partnership with the Boys and Girls Club. They also fostered strong relationships with program directors and staff at each site. As part of the process evaluation of the larger intervention, the research team also conducted systematic observations of each site (Zarrett, Sorenson, & Cook, 2015) every day of the two weeks prior to the start of the intervention, which also helped with relationship building and familiarity in the settings.
Both after care programs were considered low-resourced sites (e.g., less resourced facilities and equipment, no enrollment fees, attended by an underserved youth population defined by minority status and low socioeconomic status) and were located in urban areas. The programs had similar enrollment rates and youth attendance was available each school day throughout the school year. The programs also had a relatively consistent daily schedule (i.e., snack/dinner, homework time, time for free play), and served the purpose of general after school care rather than a narrower focus on one domain, such as social change, or skill development for a specific club or sport.

**YPAR Only School (School One)**

In 2016, school one had 326 students in grades 6-8. The student to teacher ratio was nine to one. School one is 51% female and has 100% minority enrollment; 98% of youth identify as African American and 2% as bi/multi-racial. School one is classified as a Title I school, which means that at least 60% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch. In 2016, school one’s percent poverty index was 96.4%, based on national data.

School one has grown in innovative programming over the past decade. It obtained a school of aerospace in 2008. The focus on the science behind flight led to a natural transition to a STEM school in 2011. School one transitioned to a STEAM (i.e., science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) school in 2015, which means that students can choose an art focus in addition to either an aerospace, engineering, health sciences, or technology specialty. In the curriculum of core subject areas, teachers implement project based learning. The focus on science and innovative learning in the broader school aligns well with the research element of YPAR.
School one also has some PYD oriented youth programming. There is a character coaching program, in which coaches teach students interpersonal and life skills. School one also implements Ripple Effects, a social emotional learning software program. The school also has some clubs and teams, such as basketball and track teams, and a science and dance club. Overall, the school has many opportunities for the promotion of PYD both during the school day and during after school time.

**YPAR Only Program**

I visited the setting to observe, meet staff, increase my familiarity with the typical program schedule and activities, and introduce the curriculum during structured program time (i.e., 4:30-6) on two consecutive Friday’s prior to implementation. The aftercare program takes place in school one, which is situated within a neighborhood in an urban area. There were stray dogs running around the parking lot during both visits. Most students walk, ride bicycles, or are bussed to school. Since students are bussed home from the program, there is less of a parent presence during after school hours when compared to the YPAR + PA program.

The aftercare program uses the school’s cafeteria as a home base. The students eat dinner there, and then disperse throughout the school for different clubs and activities Monday to Thursday. After that, they are allowed to participate in free play; most students go to the gym to play basketball. The Friday structure is different, and a staff member provided background on the typical structure of the day on Friday during my conversation with her: “They get out of school at 4, and then they eat dinner. The boys had a mentoring group before this today. Today is their choice day and so they come in
here and can choose to do what they want, but if we have something planned for that day we can have them do what is planned, we can make that happen. They are in the program until 6:30.”

Based on our discussion, I learned that Fridays are choice days, which means that youth can participate in free play after dinner. During free play, the students typically do not go outside. There is an outside basketball court, but the court ground is broken apart and the stand is missing a hoop. In both visits, I observed mostly male youth playing basketball in the gym for the total time I was there. Girls sat on the bleachers talking to their friends and using laptops and/or phones for the majority of the time; few joined the basketball game.

There are approximately ten staff that supervise the students. During the typical program, some are off task, others assist students with homework or other seated activities, and a few participate in PA with the youth. During my visits, I observed all staff present in the gym participating in the basketball game with the youth at some point, though some were more involved than others. One staff played the whole game, while others just took a few shots on the side or cheered on the youth. It was very apparent that one staff member in particular had highly invested in the program youth. For example, even though it was not a requirement, she said: “I do home visits with all of the families throughout the year to get to know them and their background, where they come from. That helps me know how they communicate in their family and what to expect from them.” Her investment appeared to have paid off, as most youth hugged her and asked for her advice about something school or family related while I was there. Additionally, two
altercations occurred during our conversation, and she was able to de-escalate the situation quickly, likely due to her time investment and mutual respect.

Staff members participating in basketball with the youth also appeared invested in their character development. For example, though it was not a focus of the aftercare program, the invested staff member referenced teaching youth life skills and communication strategies informally during program time. For example, she said “We really want to make them active citizens and give them a voice, give them some power. Learn critical thinking skills – conflict resolution.” and “When they do something inappropriate, I have them walk through it again, and ask them why I said this and that and what they should do instead. I have them replay what they should do, and take the other person’s perspective.” My observations aligned with this statement; when youth were disrespectful to her, she had them try again and demonstrate a more respectful way of interacting. The youth seemed to really respect her, and she was definitely a champion of their program. Based on this conversation, it seemed that YPAR aligned nicely with the focus on shared power, critical thinking, and active citizenship.

I spoke with the champion staff member about YPAR during my visits and emailed the curriculum at her request, with the goal of modifying the intervention to best fit the preferences and structure of the program. Originally, in addition to taking photos at school, the intervention plan included youth taking the tablets home to capture how they are active with their families and friends in their communities. The program champion said that she did not think that was a good idea because she was unsure if the students would bring them back, and also did not think it was respectful to families to be documenting their home lives. As one example of a modification, to fit the preferences of
program staff, we pared down the project idea to include only changes at the program or school, and youth only used the tablets on school grounds.

**YPAR + PA School (School 2)**

The YPAR + PA school serves 1210 students in grades 6-8. It is the school with the largest student body in its district. In 2016, 53.6% of students were eligible for free or discounted lunch. The student to teacher ratio was 14 to 1 and 51% of the students were female. Listing the three highest percentages, racial make-up was 59.7% African American, 22.6% White, and 9.1% Hispanic.

School two also has some innovative programming which allows students to tailor their education based on their interests and skills. Students have the option to enroll in the Fine Arts and Media Enrichment Program, in which they select an art specialty. School two also has a gifted and talented program. School two regularly highlights students’ work on its website. It appears that school staff are open to having student work on display to the community, which fits with the final YPAR project.

School two also has programming to promote PYD during school and after school. Students receive media literacy education in their social studies classes. School two has a wider variety of sports than school one, such as basketball, football, cheerleading, volleyball, and soccer. They also have a more clubs, including student council and a student run literary magazine.

**YPAR + PA Program**

I did not have the opportunity to interview staff in this program prior to implementation. Therefore, my reflections below are based on my observations of regular
program activities during the process evaluation for the broader PA intervention. I conducted those observations during the two weeks prior to implementation.

The aftercare program takes place between three to 6:30 with a home base in the school cafeteria. Students left the program at varying times, depending on when their caregivers arrived to pick them up. The students had structured time for homework, a snack, and then they were allowed to participate in free play, in which they were permitted to go outside and play on the green space around the school or use the computer lab. During free play, some boys played soccer and/or football outside with and without program staff. In contrast, girls walked around the inside and outside of the school, played games on computers/tablets, talked with friends, or were on cell phones during the majority of free play time.

There were four paid program staff present in the aftercare program each day; one program director, one staff responsible for managing the sign out sheet and conversing with parents, and two other staff who helped implement daily programming. There were a few college age volunteers who also supervised and participated in activities with the youth. Staff usually did not participate in PA with youth during the typical programming. Staff mainly observed/supervised basketball in the gym, communicated with arriving parents, and managed misbehavior. Sometimes, one staff member played football with some male youth outside.

2.3 Procedure

To be eligible for participation, middle school youth were required to: 1) be enrolled at the school during the study months, 2) regularly attend the after-school
program, 3) have parental consent and youth assent to participate, and 4) be available for baseline and post-intervention measurement. Adolescents were excluded from participation if they 1) had a medical condition that would interfere with the prescribed intervention plan, 2) demonstrated behavioral symptoms that precluded safe participation or, 3) parents requested that they not participate. No youth were excluded from participating in the YPAR component.

The YPAR curriculum was adapted from YPAR modules available online (http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/), which have been used with high school youth in a variety of projects. We adapted the modules for middle school youth, which included shortening the amount of time students are engaged in seated discussion. We made additional modifications to fit the aftercare setting and time frame. We opted to use only the photo voice method instead of exposing youth to additional research methods. The original full YPAR curriculum, before I modified it due to time constraints and logistical barriers in the programs (e.g., not being able to take tablets home) can be found in Appendix E.

In photo voice, individuals are provided with cameras so they can document examples of their day-to-day realities and they then use the images to advocate for systems and policy change (Wang, 2006). Photo voice was selected for an aftercare setting because it is an art-based research method. Youth learn with prosocial peers and impact change through participation in a creative research process. Photo voice typically follows a nine step protocol: 1) select and recruit a target audience of policy makers or community leaders; 2) recruit a group of photo voice participants; 3) introduce the photo voice methodology to participants, and facilitate a group discussion about cameras, power, and ethics; 4) obtain informed consent; 5) pose initial theme(s) for taking pictures;
6) distribute cameras and review how to use them; 7) provide time for participants to take pictures; 8) meet to discuss photographs and identify themes using the SHOWeD method; 9) plan with participants a format to share photographs and stories with policy makers or community leaders (Wang, 2006). Steps one and two are interchangeable, as sometimes it is best to first form the group and then decide who to target based on participant’s change ideas. To hold youths’ attention in a distracting environment, we modified the SHOWeD method of picture analysis and processing to be more flexible, informal, and shorter.

**Small Group Adult Partner Training.** Once the curriculum was finalized, I trained graduate and undergraduate research team members on behavior management and engagement skills, implementing effective group processes, use of the tablets, and the background, purpose, essential elements, and implementation process of YPAR and photo voice. I provided the Wang (2006) photo voice article, along with example daily protocols and worksheets. I taught the group a social skills activity, we practiced addressing various behavioral concerns, and we role played the module on the implementation of the SHOWeD photo voice process, because I predicted this module would be most difficult to implement with middle school youth in aftercare programs. I also prepared folders for adult partners with handouts on engagement, group processes, project essential elements, the timeline, and behavioral management suggestions to reference throughout the intervention. Adult partners who attended gained increased skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy in the following topics:

1. Implementation of a tailored YPAR curriculum
2. Benefits of YPAR for students and the broader community
3. Using the available multi-media for the project
4. Optimal implementation of program core components
5. Acceptable modifications to program protocol
6. Problem solving on ways to address challenging behaviors
7. Facilitating cooperative and inclusive group work with middle school youth
8. Breaking complex tasks into smaller teachable components
9. Motivating students
10. Monitoring students to ensure comfort and ability to complete activities

Following the training, undergraduate and graduate students from the University of South Carolina served as small group adult partners to the youth, and led them in a YPAR praxis group process. We chose a student led structure instead of a staff led structure because the study is a pilot assessing feasibility of the implementation of the essential elements of YPAR by trained intervention staff in an aftercare program as usual and within a larger intervention. As part of the YPAR curriculum, youth, in groups with other students and adult partners, participated in photo voice. Photo voice adapted for the current project involved youth taking pictures of facilitators and barriers to physical activity, analyzing the photos using SHOWeD, making a poster, and advocating for their change idea through presenting it to school and program stakeholders.

Youths’ participation in photo voice involves collecting data in picture format. Youth use the pictures to promote discussion, learn from each other and adult partners, and advocate for their change; however, the photos will not be analyzed in the current work. Youth complete qualitative measurement; youth, in groups, participate in one photo and caption journal entry about the Y-A partnership during the second portion of the intervention time period, and individually complete qualitative questions post-
intervention. Adult partners participate in qualitative measurement through a required journal entry after every session. They are prompted to reflect on the Y-A partnership, youth and after school program strengths, power differentials, and areas for improvement. Youth also complete quantitative measurement; one subscale of the Mentor-Youth Alliance scale (Zand et al., 2009) at mid-point and post, and the Youth Empowerment Survey (Ozer & Schotland, 2011) at baseline and post-intervention. Since the same youth were not present at the program each day, baseline and post-intervention survey data collection is staggered across a time span of approximately two weeks in order to capture most participating youth, and youth that attended the program often were prioritized for measurement. We record the date each survey was completed. See Appendix B for study measures.

**Observer Training.** I trained two research team members on the YPAR observational tool. In advance of the training, I sent the team members an exemplary article to provide background (i.e., Wang, 2006) on photo voice, and the Ozer and Douglas (2015) article, which describes the piloting of the original version of the tool. During the 2-hour training, I provided a comprehensive review of the YPAR essential elements and their ideal implementation. I also outlined variability in implementation fidelity that I expected would occur. I provided examples of the session curriculum and we practiced the rating process in order to work through any discrepancies in conceptualization, implementation, and ratings of the YPAR essential elements.

The trained observers evaluated each YPAR session to document the feasibility of the implementation of the essential elements of YPAR in a pre-existing aftercare setting by trained intervention staff.
School 1 YPAR Only

YPAR was implemented as usual in the aftercare program of school 1. The original eight-week curriculum had to be reduced to fit the aftercare program’s schedule, since it commenced in April, rather than the end of the school year. The final curriculum contained four 75 minute sessions with a poster showcase as the last session. There were four groups containing a range of 6-15 students. Approximately three adult partners were observed by trained raters in their small groups each session, due to the length of the session (i.e., 75 minutes); therefore, not every adult partner was observed each session.

School 2 YPAR + PA

In the aftercare program of School 2, YPAR was nestled within the “Get to Know You” portion of a larger intervention (YPAR + PA) that aims to influence the social-emotional climate surrounding physical activity in the program. The full intervention targeted multiple parts of the after-school program context including staff and peer behaviors, program structure, and the physical environment. Essential elements identified by the principal investigator were: 1) moral, emotional, and social goal-oriented support and skill development (e.g., friendship-building skills) 2) collaborative, cooperative play centered on friendship and informal-fun; 3) equal treatment and access, and; 4) inclusive and engaging for both youth and staff. The primary components of the study included: 1) “Get-to-Know-You” sessions aimed specifically at providing youth guided social opportunities to foster friendship building skills, and to promote acceptance, cooperation, and friendship affiliation, as well as build sense of efficacy and motivation to influence health-related change in their community, and; 2) infusing a novel socially-oriented PA curriculum within after-school program free play sessions. The curriculum for the PA
intervention was developed using SDT as a guiding framework, which aligns with the empowerment and PYD focus of the YPAR curriculum.

The “Get-to-Know-You” small group sessions were designed to increase friendship building skills and promote autonomy through small (staff-assigned) groups. In previous iterations of the intervention, staff challenged youth with fun team building activities and icebreakers, encouraged them to share personal stories about PA, and youth taught each other their favorite activities. The “Get-to-Know-You” component was modified into YPAR in the current project in order to test the feasibility of implementing YPAR alongside a PA intervention guided by a similar theoretical framework.

In order to integrate YPAR into “Get-to-Know-You” portion of the intervention, I modified the curriculum so it could be implemented in 20 minute segments to fit within the larger intervention. We implemented the curriculum on Wednesdays between 4-5pm for seven sessions; the last session was the showcase. There were seven groups of 3-7 students each. The same two adult partners worked with all groups in 20 - 30 minute increments for an hour, so each adult partner was observed at least once per session. The intervention ended in mid-May, due to the more traditional aftercare program schedule in school 2.

2.4 Measures

Aim One. Our first aim is to describe the adaptations we made to a YPAR photo voice curriculum to fit the aftercare program, the PA intervention, and the developmental level of middle school youth. I use my reflections from the curriculum design process to discuss the changes we made. We modified the curriculum based on the current literature and consultation with colleagues and program staff.
**Aim Two.** To evaluate our second aim, which was to explore the strengths and challenges related to the dose and fidelity of implementation of the critical YPAR processes within pre-existing aftercare programs, especially those understudied in the current literature (i.e., power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership; discussion of power differentials), we modified an observational tool created by Ozer and Douglas (2015) to fit aftercare programs serving middle school youth. For example, we excluded the evaluation of research processes that would take longer than the intervention time frame to implement. We also dropped the evaluation of youth networking opportunities, since the intervention was contained within an ACP. We then crosswalked the items from the revised tool with the items from the observational process evaluation for the larger PA intervention. We added additional items from the larger process evaluation tool to fill gaps in coverage of the core social-emotional needs based in SDT theory, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. We organized the revised observational tool into an innovation-configuration (IC) map (Hall & Hord, 2011), with descriptions of variations in the quality of implementation on rating scales of zero to three for each item. IC maps capture variations in the quality of implementation of the components of an innovation, in contrast to just noting when components are present versus absent. The revised observational tool can be found in Appendix A.

**Aim Three.** We use the Youth Empowerment Scale to evaluate our third aim, that the Y-A partnership and the YPAR praxis processes promote gains in youth reported empowerment, as well as its subdomains. The youth empowerment scale is a 26-item questionnaire on a 4 point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) that measures sociopolitical skills, motivation to influence, participatory behavior, and
perceived control as subcomponents of the larger construct of youth empowerment. The measure has shown acceptable reliability and validity for high-school age adolescents, across multiple race/ethnic backgrounds. For example, the sociopolitical skills (eight items, $\alpha = .81$), motivation to influence (four items, $\alpha = .80$), participatory behavior (eight items, $\alpha = .83$), and perceived control (six items, $\alpha = .80$) subscales all demonstrated good reliability. Each of the four subscales also demonstrated convergent validity with measures that assessed research and action self-efficacy, self-esteem, caring relationships with adults at school, and social support from students at school (Ozer & Schotland, 2011).

In the current study, I piloted the measure with middle school youth uninvolved in the study. I made modifications to language and sentence structure based on middle school youth feedback. The students said they did not comprehend the words “confront” and “effectively,” and suggested revising them. I replaced those words with developmentally appropriate synonyms with permission from the measure developers. I also modified the measure to fit the after-school program setting and study aims. For example, the word “city” was replaced with “community.” The final version of the overall scale demonstrated excellent reliability ($\alpha = .92$). The sociopolitical skills (nine items, $\alpha = .78$), participatory behavior (eight items, $\alpha = .86$), and perceived control (six items, $\alpha = .86$) subscales all demonstrated good reliability. The motivation to influence subscale demonstrated poor reliability (four items, $\alpha = .67$), which means the youth participants did not respond consistently to these items. In the current sample, the motivation to influence subscale may not provide a consistent measure of the construct, so the results of that subscale’s analysis should be interpreted with caution.
**Aim Four**: In goal four, we aim to converge the qualitative (i.e., youth and adult partner journals, youth survey responses) and quantitative (i.e., adult partner survey, youth empowerment survey, observational ratings) data to come to a rich understanding of the feasibility of implementing YPAR both in a typical aftercare program and an aftercare program with a congruent PA intervention. Adult partners journaled about the Y-A partnership, power sharing, strengths, areas for improvement, and general reflections about youth and their communities. The adult partners were required to respond to the same journal prompts at the end of each week to reflect on that week’s session. Youth answered qualitative survey questions post-intervention to provide additional youth perspective on the YPAR essential elements. They provided self-report on youth and community strengths, what they liked about the project, how they benefited from it, and provided suggestions for future iterations. The qualitative survey questions can be found in Appendix B.

To have a rigorous assessment of the feasibility of the implementation of YPAR essential elements with coverage gaps in the literature, we added additional assessment of the essential elements of the Y-A partnership. The Mentor-Youth Alliance total scale contains ten items that assess youths’ level of feeling comfortable and supported by their mentors and youth perceptions of their mentors’ caring attitude. We use the five item Acceptance subscale. The scale is rated on a Likert scale of 1 (Completely False) to 5 (Completely True). Reliability coefficients were .85 for the full scale and .83 for the Acceptance subscale. Concurrent validity was also demonstrated with the Adult Relationship Scale, a measure of youth attachment to adults (Zand et al., 2009). In the current study, the subscale demonstrated adequate reliability with a coefficient of .82.
Youth were also required to complete one photo journal as a group about their relationship with their adult partner(s). We provided them with worksheets to guide the journaling process. Within the Y-A partnership, the entry assessed power sharing, strengths, and areas for improvement with two pictures and brief captions.

We compare and contrast strengths and areas for improvement by converging data. We converge data from the observational tool, youth empowerment survey, the adult partner and youth journals, youth qualitative survey responses, and the mentor youth alliance scale, along with my own notes and reflections. We implement this convergence process in order to achieve a rich triangulation of the feasibility of the implementation of YPAR in a typical aftercare program and an aftercare program with a concurrent PA intervention. Through our exploration of feasibility, we aim to generate hypotheses about YPAR in typical after care settings and paired with a PA intervention, and hope to generate new hypotheses in this area. See Appendix three for a crosswalk of measurement methods and the YPAR essential elements.

2.5 Analytic Approach

Our hypothesis generating feasibility trial used a mixed method one-phase concurrent triangulation design with equal weighting (i.e., QUAN + QUAL) to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic (i.e., the feasibility of the implementation of the essential elements of YPAR) in order to better explain it. A triangulation design is used when a researcher wants to directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings or to validate or expand quantitative results with qualitative data. A one-phase concurrent design means that data was collected during the same intervention time period. Finally, in a triangulation design,
the quantitative and qualitative research processes are given equal weight, rather than prioritizing one over the other like in other mixed method designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), validity should be defined within the mixed method approach as “the ability of the researcher to draw meaningful and accurate conclusions from all of the data in the study (p.146)” and triangulation validity can be attained if the researcher draws evidence from different datasets and shows that they provide better results than either dataset alone. To begin this process, it is important to provide reliability and validity information for both the quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). I attempted to address validity and reliability concerns in the current study. I drew from previous research and I piloted and modified the youth empowerment measure with middle school students, since it had only been piloted on high school students. I also conducted reliability analyses on the survey responses in the current sample. They were all acceptable, except the motivation to influence subscale of the youth empowerment scale; those results should be interpreted with caution. For the qualitative data, I explored validity through a triangulation process. The data came in several forms and from several sources, and I built evidence for feasibility based on their convergence. Another way to assess validity with qualitative data is through member checking, which is when researchers present their results back to the participants to see if they also reach similar conclusions. Though ideal, it was not feasible to implement member checking in this study. YPAR was completed at the end of the academic school year, and so by the time I completed analyses, many students have left the program for other activities or transitioned to high school.
There are several potential threats to validity in data collection and analysis in a concurrent, triangulation mixed method research design, which we address to increase the validity of the study. The first issue researchers encounter is when a different set of study participants provide the qualitative data and the quantitative data, and the second is an unequal sample size between datasets. We minimize these threats, since most participants in the current study completed both the qualitative and quantitative measures. A third concern is when researchers do not follow up on contradictory results, which we address in the current study through in depth reflection in the discussion. The fourth data collection issue is introducing potential bias through data collection. In the current study, data collection was mostly blended into the implementation of YPAR, though some measurement was still collected at separate times, so social desirability cannot be completely ruled out. Triangulation of data from multiple sources on the same essential element does partly address the issue.

In data analysis, there are also potential validity issues that we aimed to minimize. The first is inadequate approaches to converging the data, which we minimize through convergence in an in-depth discussion using data from various methods and sources. The second is that researchers fail to address validity issues, which we work to address outright in the current work. The last issue arises when the two sets of data do not address the same question. In the current study, the different types of data do address the overarching question of feasibility (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

**Aim One.** I describe the adaptations we made to the YPAR photo voice curriculum to fit middle school youths’ developmental level, the aftercare setting, and a physical activity intervention. Our study design is unique, as YPAR is typically
implemented with high school students, as a standalone curriculum or project, and within PYD focused programs or elective classes.

**Aim Two.** In aim two, we explore strengths and challenges related to the dose and fidelity of implementation of the critical YPAR processes within pre-existing aftercare programs, especially those understudied in the current literature (i.e., power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership; discussion of power differentials). The YPAR essential elements were evaluated in real time with the observational tool by trained raters. I then used the IC Map rating scale information to determine the dose and fidelity of the critical processes of the essential elements. Each essential element had a different number of subcomponents used to evaluate it. The number of subcomponents ranged from one in “define community as a unit of identity” to fifteen in “co-learning and capacity building.” Subcomponents were typically shared across essential elements; therefore, the implementation of one subcomponent typically affected the dose and fidelity of multiple essential elements, which shows some overlap in the operationalization and implementation of the participatory principles used as essential elements for YPAR.

I first calculated the dose for each YPAR session. A YPAR session met adequate dose if there were no essential element subcomponent ratings of zero across all adult partners who led that session. I then calculated the overall dose and fidelity of YPAR essential elements separately for each program. Adequate dose was achieved if 75% or more sessions had adequate dose. I calculated fidelity by totaling all observer ratings of essential element subcomponents, and divided them by the maximum possible rating for that element. I then classified YPAR essential elements as having acceptable fidelity if
the actual rating divided by the total possible rating was between 75-84.99% and high fidelity if 85% or more.

**Aim Three.** In aim three, we evaluate whether the YPAR praxis process promotes youth self-reported gains in empowerment and its subdomains (i.e., sociopolitical skills, participatory behavior, perceived control, and motivation to influence) within programs. First, the relationship between demographics and the outcome were tested using one way ANOVAs in order to determine whether they should be included in the analyses as covariates. Gender, race, lunch status, and age were not significantly related to any of the subscales or the total empowerment scale, and so are not included in analyses. Since the covariates did not have differential effects on the outcomes, a paired sample t-test was used to examine baseline and post program change.

**Aim Four:** In aim four, we triangulate all of the data for a rich understanding of the feasibility of implementing YPAR in a typical aftercare program and an aftercare program with a congruent PA intervention. We triangulate the quantitative and quantitative data using a convergence model to obtain a more valid and substantiated conclusion (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) on the feasibility of implementation of YPAR versus what could be concluding using only one method. I compare and contrast quantitative and qualitative data that I collected separately on the same topic (i.e., implementation of the YPAR essential elements) during interpretation. To preserve the richness of the feasibility strengths and challenges during data analysis, I compare quantitative and qualitative data in a discussion. I quantitatively analyze youth survey responses and the observational data (i.e., t-tests and frequency counts/percentages). I qualitatively analyze the youth and adult partner responses using the directed manifest
content analysis strategy (Berg, 2009). My strategy is directed because I use principles from CBPR and PAR (Balcazar et al., 2004; Israel et al., 2013) (i.e., YPAR essential elements) as categories, and it is manifest because the content for the categories is physically present and countable in the data. I group youth journal and survey quotes into the predetermined concepts: the YPAR essential element categories. I then converge the categorized quotes with the quantitative findings and compare and contrast during interpretation, to provide a rich description of feasibility in both programs.
CHAPTER 3
RESULTS

3.1 Process Descriptives

Reach. In the YPAR only program, 34 youth participated in the photo voice project. Of those, 16 youth participated that did not have consent, and therefore, no measurement was collected on them. However, they did provide some written feedback on the program, without identifying information, which is included in the qualitative sections. In the YPAR + PA program, 37 total youth participated in photo voice. Of those youth, three participated that did not have parental consent, and so did not complete measurement. They also provided some written feedback on the program, without identifying information, which is included in the qualitative section. In this program, all youth that completed measurement participated in at least one YPAR session during the intervention, though some youth participated in more sessions than others.

Dose of Program Structure for Each Session. Dose of the program structure was operationalized as adequate if the component was implemented in 75% of sessions. In the YPAR only program, three full sessions occurred, and a half fourth session with a presentation. All sessions were completed with 100% dose for the basic program structure, except “an agreement to implement project change ideas occurred after the poster presentation,” which was not observed as implemented in the last session.

At the YPAR + PA program, six full sessions occurred, and a half session with a presentation. Dose criteria for session seven only included “an agreement to implement
project change ideas occurred after the poster presentation,” due to the focus on the presentation; this was implemented with 100% dose. Reminding youth of the ground rules (66.67%), using an energizing or refocusing strategy (50%), summarizing the session (66.67%), and stating the plan for next session (50%) did not meet adequate dose across all sessions. Having time for the session and asking for youths’ questions were implemented with adequate dose (83.33%). Providing an overview, answering questions, implementing the session as planned, providing an explanation of tasks, promoting PYD skill development, adult partner collaboration with youth, reminding of the final project, and final project is related to PA all had 100% dose across sessions.

3.2 Research Question 1: What adaptations were made (documented by researcher) to the YPAR curriculum?

YPAR is typically implemented in a standalone curriculum with high school youth in elective classrooms and change oriented after school programming. To address this gap in the literature, we made adaptations to a YPAR photo voice curriculum to meet the developmental needs of middle school youth, to fit the schedule of the aftercare program, and to integrate YPAR into a PA intervention.

Sub question a: to “fit” the developmental needs of middle school youth?

We adapted the modules for middle school youth, which included shortening the amount of time students were engaged in seated discussion. When groups were scheduled to engage in seated discussion, I provided minimum dosage requirements for adult partners in the curriculum, such as, “each youth should briefly say one positive thing about another youths’ picture.” I also provided discussion scripts for adult partners in the
curriculum with short sentences and developmentally appropriate words. Adult partners were advised in the curriculum to talk less than youth as often as possible. I did include additional prompts in the curriculum for adult partners to expand on critical thinking and dialogue in discussion if group dynamics and time allowed. The continuum of depth in the curriculum gave adult partners options to fit sessions to their groups’ needs, while still implementing the YPAR essential elements. Providing minimum dosage requirements along with suggestions to improve quality of implementation helped us discover what components of YPAR were feasible to implement with this age group.

I also made a mid-implementation course correction to the curriculum based on middle school youths’ developmental level after receiving feedback from adult partners in the YPAR only program. They reflected that brainstorming and discussions were more productive and inclusive when youth were also engaged in other activities, such as walking around to take pictures or playing a game. Further, the adult partners of the male group reported that the students in their group were ONLY able to brainstorm while walking and talking versus sitting in a classroom-like environment; youth really disengaged, complained, and misbehaved when activities were implemented in that format. Based on this discovery by adult partners, I modified the curriculum for the rest of the program to include discussions during other activities. For example, I modified the part of the curriculum with “SHOWeD,” a key photo voice process, so it would be implemented while youth were in the process of creating the posters, instead of sitting attentively in a circle as originally planned. Though this adaptation did not allow time for an in-depth discussion of each photo, each youth was able to participate in the process, and the group was able to remain relatively attentive during that short time period.
Sub question b: to fit the pre-existing aftercare program context?

One of the biggest challenges we faced in implementing YPAR in a pre-existing aftercare program was keeping youth engaged in the midst of other distractions and options. Typically, youth have the options of working on schoolwork, being on tablets, talking with friends, or playing. Especially with the more seated format of the curriculum in the beginning of the intervention, it was difficult to find ways to make YPAR more appealing than other options and to keep youth from being distracted from YPAR tasks by talking to friends outside of the group or discussing the other activities going on around them. To attempt to meet fidelity for the strategic thinking components of the curriculum, which I thought would be most difficult to implement in a typical aftercare setting, I adapted a “game” format to engage youth in discussion about ecological and systemic influences on health. That style of implementation to promote critical dialogue had been previously shown to be effective in increasing knowledge of health behavior in disadvantaged youth (Crave & Igras, 2015). I also interspersed reminders in the curriculum for adult partners to balance activities with discussion. They received a separate packet of social skills games and ice breakers that they could utilize at their discretion to change up the activity if youth seemed bored, disengaged, or did not understand the proposed activity. Each session, I also provided adult partners with short strategies to re-engage youth and to promote youth choice in a fun way, such as dot voting and popcorn, a strategy to obtain youth feedback where each youth writes a suggestion on a piece of paper, one yells popcorn, and they throw them in the air and then pick up a different one to read.
We also had to be more flexible than is typical in planned, structured interventions in order to fit the typical aftercare setting. For example, I had to revise the curriculum from six down to four sessions halfway through YPAR implementation due to new information about the schedule of the program. In the original curriculum, youth were scheduled to take pictures over two sessions to give them time to revise their change idea and take more pictures based on emerging ideas that occurred organically. I unfortunately had to cut the cyclical and iterative research process in half in the YPAR only program in order for them to have time to make posters. Due to the revision, youth only had pictures they took during one session to use for their change presentation. Some youth found it difficult to match those photos to their change idea, especially if they had modified it in the time since they took the pictures. Youth also liked the picture taking portion of photo voice the best, and so expressed annoyance that they were not able to do another round like we had originally planned.

Sub question c: to integrate the curriculum into a physical activity intervention?

YPAR projects usually last for a minimum of six months, in order to build relationships, teach youth the research methods, promote in depth discussions, and involve youth in all stages of the research process. I modified the YPAR and photo voice process to meet the typical length of a health intervention. I originally designed the curriculum to be implemented over ten weeks, and then shortened it to eight and then six. To create a shorter curriculum, I cut the portions related to teaching youth about and how to implement all of the research methods available (e.g., focus groups, surveys, interviews, photo voice) and then letting them choose one. I instead chose photo voice as the method, because of its art-based and community focus.
I also modified the curriculum to fit youth rotating into YPAR for 20-30 minute increments during the concurrent PA intervention once a week. YPAR typically has more social bonding activities during each session. I was able to integrate two into the YPAR only program due to the 75 minute sessions, but, after the first session in the YPAR + PA program, I could only implement one short, five-minute social bonding activity in the beginning of each session in order to be able to cover the rest of the photo voice curriculum during the rotation time. An additional modification to the curriculum was that some activities planned for the previous week carried over into the next week of implementation due to the session length. The photo voice processes of taking pictures, creating a poster, and planning the presentation all took longer than their originally scheduled time allotments, and so the curriculum had to be slightly modified each week to adjust for the carryover of these essential elements of photo voice in YPAR.

Finally, I modified the curriculum to fit the PA focus of the intervention. YPAR projects typically allow youth to choose their own domain of interest to make a change, giving them more control over the work. Due to the grant-funded nature of the current work to increase PA, we modified photo voice to focus on PA related changes. Youth still had choice within the PA domain. They were able to choose the PA topic using democratic group processes. They were able to decide to focus on improving a PA challenge or making a PA strength even better, and whether the change should be implemented in the program or school. I also modified the discussion portions of the curriculum that aligns with the YPAR essential elements to focus on systemic influences on health, rather than youths’ lives more generally. Though this modification to focus on PA does not allow for the implementation of a pure “PAR” approach, it does promote the
integration of YPAR processes into a pre-existing health intervention, which may ultimately make the intervention more effective.

Overall, I determined photo voice is a feasible method to sustain youth engagement in an aftercare environment with competing options. Of the research methods that can be conducted with middle school age youth in YPAR projects, we recommend using photo voice in aftercare programs with similar structures to the ones in the current study. Most youth reported enjoyment of some aspect of the photo voice process in their qualitative survey answers. For example, many reported that what they liked most about the project was walking around the school with friends to take pictures. Academic, classroom-style after school programs or programs geared specifically toward social change may be able to have youth implement other methods (i.e., focus groups, surveys). Based on youth and adult partner feedback, we believe that youth would have complained it was too much like school if we also provided choice to use those methods in the current study. Overall, the adaptations made to the photo voice YPAR curriculum allowed the method to better fit middle school youth and within the aftercare context and a health intervention.

3.3 Research Question 2: What are feasibility strengths and challenges of implementing stand-alone YPAR and YPAR implemented within in a larger PA intervention in two pre-existing aftercare programs, as documented by trained
observers using a modified version of a previously tested valid/reliable observational tool?

Adolescent participatory obesity prevention studies do not systematically measure their implementation, and general YPAR has only been systematically assessed in elective high school classrooms (Ozer & Douglas, 2015). We evaluate the dose and fidelity of implementation of health focused YPAR essential elements in the YPAR only design and the YPAR + PA design to address this measurement gap. See table 3.8 for a description of the dose results, table 3.9 for a description of the fidelity results, and table 3.10 for dose and fidelity totals for all essential elements.

**Sub question a: What dose strengths and challenges emerge in the YPAR only program design and when the YPAR program is paired/embedded within a larger PA intervention (YPAR+PA)?**

**Define community as a unit of identity.** To achieve adequate dose for the “define community as a unit of identity” essential element, adult partners needed to, at minimum, briefly discuss youth and community values at a surface level during 75% of total sessions. In the YPAR only program (75%), adult partners achieved adequate dose for the essential element. In the YPAR + PA program (71.4%), adult partner implementation approached, but did not meet, adequate dosage of this element. In one YPAR only program session and two YPAR + PA program sessions, adult partners did not meet the minimum dosage requirements.

**Highlight and report youth and program/school strengths.** To achieve adequate dose, adult partners needed to, at minimum, list the strengths of the youth and
program or school at least once during all the sessions, and also list the strengths of the youth and program or school during photo voice activities. Both the YPAR + PA (100%) and the YPAR only (100%) program adult partners implemented the essential element “highlighting youth strengths” with adequate dose across all sessions. “Highlighting program/school strengths” was implemented less consistently by adult partners between programs. In the YPAR only (75%) program, this element was implemented with adequate dose. In contrast, in the YPAR + PA (42.9%) program, some subcomponents of this element did not reach adequate dose. Adult partners in the YPAR only program listed program and school strengths in more sessions than the adult partners in the YPAR + PA program. Adult partners in the YPAR + PA program did not generate themselves, or ask youth to generate, school and program strengths during the first, third, fifth, and sixth sessions.

**Project ideas are youth generated.** To meet minimum dosage requirements for this element, adult partners had to implement all youth guided activities that were in the photo voice curriculum. The dose of implementation of the “youth development of project ideas” essential element varied across programs. Youth in both programs received adequate dosage in the portion of the curriculum related to youth development of the PA change recommendations and posters. In the YPAR + PA (100%) program it was implemented with adequate dose by adult partners. In contrast, it was not implemented with adequate dose in the YPAR only (50%) program. Adult partners did not implement the portion of the curriculum in which youth are scheduled to generate a detailed plan for the successful implementation of their change strategy. They also did not implement a
brainstorming process with youth about how to develop the plan to make the change occur (e.g., who they needed to talk to, what resources they needed).

**Promoting local relevance and an ecological perspective.** To achieve adequate dose on this essential element, during all stages of the photo voice research process, adult partners needed to lead youth in brief discussion of how the project is relevant to their lives. Implementation of the “promote local relevance and an ecological perspective” essential element varied across programs. In the YPAR only (75%) program, this element was implemented with adequate dose by adult partners across sessions. In the YPAR + PA (42.9%) program, this element was not implemented with adequate dose across sessions. In the YPAR + PA program, youth did not receive adequate dose in sessions three, four, and five on the subcomponent “relevance – usefulness and connection to current life.” Therefore, adult partners did not discuss with youth why the project is of value to them or how it relates to their lives. Adult partners also did not promote a minimal discussion of ecological impacts or youth/community perspectives during photo taking and picture processing across at least 75% of sessions of which these activities were scheduled to occur.

**Power sharing within a pluralistic Y-A partnership.** In order to meet adequate dose for this essential element, adult partners need to provide youth with opportunities to participate in decision making related to the project and group work, though adults could ultimately make the final decision. Also, adult partners needed to ask youth questions during group discussions and teach them how to tackle goals in small steps. “Power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership” was implemented with adequate dose in both the YPAR + PA (85.71%) and the YPAR only (75%) programs.
Adult partners in both programs (YPAR only: 100%; YPAR + PA: 85.71%) also achieved adequate dose of implementation in promoting positive group processes. For example, adult partners consistently maintained positive relationships between themselves and youth, and promoted positive relationships within youth in the groups. As one exception, in only the first session of the YPAR + PA program, an adult partner did not implement the subcomponent “promoting productive group processes” with adequate dose. The observed group was off task and engaged in discussion unrelated to the assignment most of the time.

**Promotion of co-learning and capacity building.** In order to meet adequate dose for this essential element, adult partners had to share with youth what they learned from them during each session. Adult partners also had to teach youth frameworks for photo voice research when scheduled. Neither the YPAR + PA (28.6%) program nor the YPAR only (50%) program adult partners implemented the essential element “promotion of co-learning and capacity building” with adequate dose. During the first and sixth sessions, youth did not receive adequate dose on “adult partners and youth share what they learned from each other” while working together. In session five, youth did not receive adequate dose in having a discussion around who makes rules that affect youth health in the school, after school program, or community. In the sixth session, youth did not learn frameworks for photo voice research from adult partners.

**Use of a dialogic and reflexive process.** To meet adequate dose for this essential element, adult partners had to attempt to initiate discussions in which youth learn from each other and learn about different perspectives than their own during the general
program session. Neither the YPAR + PA (28.6%) nor the YPAR only (50%) program youth received adequate dose in “use of a dialogic and reflexive process.”

In both programs, adult partners struggled with promotion of strategic thinking. In the YPAR only program, and adult partner in the third and fourth session did not achieve adequate dose in helping youth identify or analyze alternative points of view and demonstrating an openness to modifying pre-existing views based on new information. This was the only subcategory that was not implemented with adequate dose in the YPAR only program. In contrast, in the YPAR + PA program, adult partners did not achieve adequate dose in guiding youth to actively seek out ways to learn more about each other and new ways of thinking from each other. Adult partners only implemented this subcomponent with adequate dose in sessions two and seven.

**Authentic analysis of social reality.** To meet adequate dose for this essential element, adult partners had to, at minimum, lead one brief discussion of social/local or history/culture and its influence on health/PA during a dice roll game and within photo processing. The YPAR only (75%) program adult partners met criteria for adequate dose. In contrast, the YPAR + PA (57.1%) program adult partners did not achieve adequate dose.

**Use of a cyclical and iterative process.** To meet criteria for adequate dose, at minimum, adult partners needed to involve youth in all of the scheduled rounds of the picture taking and photo processing parts of photo voice. In the YPAR only (75%) program, “use of a cyclical and iterative process” was implemented by adult partners with adequate dose. In the YPAR + PA (71.4%) program, the implementation of this essential
element approached adequate dose. As one example, in the sixth session of the YAR + PA program, the adult partner did not implement “take pictures of PA strengths and challenges” and “picture processing during photo voice” within groups; the picture taking would have been the third round and picture processing the second round.

**Discussion of power differentials.** To achieve adequate dose in this essential element, adult partners had, to attempt to initiate a discussion with their groups about sociopolitical influences. Youth did not receive adequate dose of this essential element in neither the YPAR + PA (66.7%) nor the YPAR only (66.7%) programs. Both the YPAR + PA and the YPAR only program adult partners struggled to promote discussion of who makes the rules in the program and school that impact youths’ health. Specifically, in the YPAR + PA program, in session five, youth did not receive adequate dosage in participating in discussions about sociopolitical influences, who as who holds power to make decisions about adolescents’ health.

**Youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results.** To achieve adequate dose in this essential element, at minimum, all youth groups had to complete their poster, and each person in the group needed to have a speaking part prepared. Adult partners in the YPAR only and the YPAR + PA program both achieved 100% dose of implementation across all sessions in which “youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results” was scheduled. All youth groups in both programs created and presented posters with a PA topic.

**Youth involvement in advocacy for social action.** To achieve adequate dose for this essential element, at minimum, all youth groups had to present their posters at the
parent night. All groups in both programs presented their posters to stakeholders during the last session. Therefore, youth in both programs received 100% dose of the “youth involvement in advocacy for social action” essential element.

**Sub question a sub question 1: What similarities and differences emerge in implementation, based on the ratings of dose, between the YPAR-only design and the YPAR + PA design?**

Adult partners in both programs had similarities in their implementation of the YPAR essential elements. For example, they implemented all subcomponents of “identify and report youth strengths,” “power-sharing within a pluralistic Y-A partnership,” “youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results,” and “youth advocacy for social action” with adequate dose. Adult partners in the YPAR only program were able to meet dosage requirements for more YPAR curriculum essential elements than the adult partners in the YPAR + PA program. For example, adult partners in the YPAR only program achieved adequate dosage in “use of a cyclical and iterative process,” “identify and report community strengths,” “promote an authentic analysis of social reality,” “identify community as a unit of identity,” and “promote local relevance and an ecological perspective.” In contrast to adult partners in the YPAR only program, those in the YPAR + PA program were able to implement the essential element “youth development of project idea” with adequate dose. The YPAR essential elements “use of a dialogic and reflexive process,” “co-learning and capacity building,” and “discussion of power differentials” were not implemented with adequate dose in either program.
Sub question b: What fidelity strengths and challenges emerge in the YPAR only program design and the YPAR+PA design?

Define community as a unit of identity. To achieve high fidelity for the “define community as a unit of identity” essential element, adult partners needed to discuss in more detail the community of youth and their values, and the larger school community across all sessions. Neither the YPAR + PA (50%) nor the YPAR only (63.33%) program met criteria for adequate fidelity. Adult partners typically led discussions about the youths’ community or the school community, but not both. Adult partners in the YPAR only program were able to have discussions with youth about their values and the values of their communities with higher fidelity of implementation than those the YPAR + PA program.

Highlight and report youth and community/program strengths. To achieve high fidelity to this essential element, adult partners needed to point out youth and program/school strengths either multiple times or in detail once, both during regular group work and during the photo voice processes. For the youth strengths portion, they also needed to assign project tasks based on youth and adult partner strengths. “Highlighting youth strengths” had adequate fidelity in both programs (75%). Adult partners implemented “pointing out youth strengths either multiple times or in detail once” with highest fidelity. Adult partners implemented “project tasks were assigned based on youth strengths” with lower fidelity; tasks tended to match youth strengths, though it just worked out that way versus being explicitly planned between adult partners and youth.
The essential element “highlight community strengths” approached adequate fidelity in the YPAR only program (73.81%). In the YPAR + PA program, adult partners did not implement it with adequate fidelity (65.22%). Adult partners in both programs did implement with adequate fidelity the subcomponent: “take pictures of physical activity strengths and challenges in their program or school” during the research process. Overall, however, adult partners tended to briefly mention some strengths of the program or community while talking with youth, rather than leading a more in depth discussion of those topics with youth in their groups. More adult partners in the YPAR only program were able to promote detailed discussions about community strengths across sessions when compared to the YPAR + PA adult partners.

**Project ideas are youth generated.** To achieve high fidelity to this essential element, adult partners should explicitly promote youth leadership in all youth guided activities that were in the photo voice curriculum. Adult partners implemented the essential element “youth development of project idea” with adequate fidelity in both the YPAR only (81.25%) and the YPAR + PA (83.33%) program. The subcomponents “youth work together on the project” and “youth develop change ideas to present to stakeholders” had high fidelity in both programs. High fidelity means that youth clearly identified a change they wanted to have happen at school and worked toward a finished product that clearly communicated the need. Youth also talked with each other about how to best present their pictures on the poster and how to generate change recommendations for their school/program related to their idea.

**Promoting local relevance and an ecological perspective.** To achieve high fidelity to this essential element, there needed to be frequent indications that the adult
partner was genuinely interested in students’ activities and experiences outside of the program. Additionally, adult partners are able to build in discussion of local relevance and ecological perspectives during the picture taking, poster making, and brainstorming group processes. In the YPAR only (76.97%) program, this essential element was implemented with adequate fidelity by adult partners. In contrast, in the YPAR + PA (67.11%) program, adult partner implementation of the essential element did not meet criteria for adequate fidelity. Adult partners in the YPAR only program were able to implement these two key processes in more sessions with high fidelity when compared to the YPAR + PA program.

**Power sharing within a pluralistic Y-A partnership.** To achieve high fidelity of implementation to this essential element, adult partners need to provide youth with opportunities to participate in decision making related to the project and group work, and include youth in democratic voting processes to make the final decision. Also, youth needed to lead most discussions and plan problem solving for the project with the support of an adult partner, as requested by the youth. Adult partners implemented this power-sharing process with acceptable fidelity in the YPAR only (76.12%) and the YPAR + PA (81.88%) programs. Adult partners were able to implement the subcomponents, “provide opportunities for decision making” and “promote power sharing in group processes” with high fidelity. Adults consistently provided opportunities for meaningful student input, decision-making, and leadership, and when decisions needed to be made, democratic processes like voting were used. Adult partners allowed youth to lead discussions and also provided them with choice in the structure of the sessions. Adult partners achieved high fidelity in positive group processes in both the YPAR only (84.19%) and the YPAR
+ PA (86.45%) programs. Specifically, the adult partners in both programs were able to consistently keep the majority of youth on task in their group for the whole session, they enforced discipline strategies fairly, and promoted positive peer interactions within each session.

**Promotion of co-learning and capacity building.** To achieve high fidelity to this essential element, adult partners needed to promote skill building (e.g., social, research, and public speaking skills) and discuss who makes the rules that impact youths’ health when they were scheduled to occur. They also needed to share learnings between youth and adults during each session. The “promote co-learning and capacity building” essential element was implemented with adequate fidelity in the YPAR only (77.68%) program by adult partners. Its implementation approached adequate fidelity in the YPAR + PA program (72.69%). Subcomponents that were implemented with high fidelity in both programs were: teaching youth about the photo voice process and then letting them guide the direction, and adult partners sharing with youth what they learned from them during the session. Additionally, adult partners in both programs promoted the growth of social skills, such as sharing each other’s strengths with the group and what they learned from each other. Adult partners had difficulty beginning discussions with youth about who makes the rules that influence youths’ health in the school and after school program.

**Use of a dialogic and reflexive process.** To achieve high fidelity for this essential element, adult partners guided in depth discussions during each session in which youth seek out ways to learn from each other, analyze alternative points of view, and potentially change their own perspective based on the information. Adult partners implemented “use of a dialogic and reflexive process” with adequate fidelity in both the
YPAR only (74.47%) and the YPAR + PA (75%) programs. Most youth asked each other questions about their opinions or how they came to a solution, in order to learn more about each other and new ways of thinking from each other. Students identifying or analyzing alternative points of view was implemented with lower fidelity. Youth often listened to other people’s perspectives, but did not typically demonstrate openness to modifying their view.

**Authentic analysis of social reality.** To achieve high fidelity to this essential element, adult partners needed to promote multiple discussions around social/local, or history/culture and influence on health/PA or one in-depth discussion on the topic during the dice roll game and photo processing. The YPAR only (73.40%) program adult partners approached adequate fidelity for this essential element, while the YPAR + PA (69.64%) program adult partners did not achieve adequate fidelity for this element. In the YPAR only program, adult partners implemented with quality “photo processing during photo voice,” and “discuss root causes of health related concerns, societal/local influences on their health, and/or their own histories and culture and its influence on their health/PA.” In the YPAR + PA program, adult partners struggled to implement these two components with high quality.

**Use of a cyclical and iterative process.** To meet criteria for high fidelity, adult partners needed to highly engage most youth in all of the scheduled rounds of the picture taking and photo processing parts of photo voice. Adult partners achieved adequate fidelity to the essential element “use of a cyclical and iterative process” in the YPAR only (77.27%) program and high fidelity in the YPAR + PA (85.25%) program. In both programs, adult partners implemented “use of a cyclical and iterative research” process
with fidelity during the photography portion of photo voice, as they allowed for multiple rounds of picture taking and the modifying of change topics depending on new ideas generated in groups during and across sessions. In the YPAR only program, due to its short nature, the first round of pictures was the only round, and their first change idea that everyone in the group agreed upon was typically the one that was utilized for the project. In both programs, as part of the photo voice research cycle, adult partners allowed youth to lead the brainstorming of change ideas, the development of change recommendations, and next steps for the project. There was more opportunity for multiple rounds of this cycle (i.e., picture taking through generation of project idea) in the YPAR + PA program due to the longer length.

**Discussion of power differentials.** To implement this essential element with high fidelity, adult partners needed to promote multiple discussion about who makes health decisions in the school/community or have one in-depth discussion on the topic. Adult partner implementation of the essential element “discussion of power differentials” approached adequate fidelity in the YPAR only (73.68%) program, but not the YPAR + PA (61.11%) program. In the YPAR only program, the adult partners were able to capitalize on more opportunities to discuss powerful stakeholders and root causes of health issues than adult partners in the YPAR + PA program.

**Youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results.** To achieve high fidelity of implementation to this essential element, youth needed to clearly identify a change they wanted to have happen at school and finish a poster that clearly explained that need. In the YPAR + PA program, adult partners achieved 100% fidelity. In the YPAR only program, the element was implemented with adequate fidelity (83.33%) by
adult partners. All groups in the YPAR + PA and YPAR only program created and presented a poster to stakeholders; however, some of the posters in the YPAR only program only showcased PA strengths or activities youth liked to do to be active with friends.

**Youth involvement in advocacy for social action.** To achieve high fidelity to this essential element, all youth groups needed to present their poster at the parent night. Stakeholders should be present from the school and program. At least one stakeholder should speak to youth about making the proposed changes. The YPAR + PA program achieved high (100%) fidelity to the essential element “youth involvement in advocacy for social action.” The YPAR only program did not meet adequate fidelity (50%) for this element. In the YPAR only program, youth presented only to the after-school program staff, research staff, and program youth. In the YPAR + PA program, the presentation was made to the Boys and Girls Club staff, director, assistant principal of the school, and parents.

Successful advocacy efforts occurred in the YPAR + PA program, which had more systems level supports in place at the program and school levels to promote the involvement of additional stakeholders during the last session. For example, the YPAR + PA program was linked to the Boy’s and Girl’s Club, and so the director attended the presentation along with the lead of the after-school program and all of its staff. Additionally, the assistant principal attended, as well as approximately fifteen parents, one adult partner, and graduate and undergraduate students that assisted with the physical activity portion of the intervention. One of the girl dance groups’ presentations was particularly memorable, as they discussed inequity in physical activity in after school; the
boys always had opportunities and choices to do activities they liked, but the girls did not get the same opportunities to do the activities that they liked, which was why they wanted a dance team. Another group put together a dance routine to present to the audience completely on their own, and surprised everyone with it. It was apparent that youth took the presentations very seriously.

In addition to the high quality of the posters and presentations, both the director and the assistant principal made statements to the youth about their proposed change ideas. The assistant principal was particularly alarmed about the change idea “all students deserve a break.” She stated that teachers were supposed to be giving students stretch breaks throughout the school day, and would make sure that they were implementing this. Additionally, she also said that improvement plans were already underway for the high ropes course area, and providing the youth with water and water bottles would be easy. The Boy’s and Girl’s club director stated that the dance team presentation was great, and plans would be in place soon to continue dance in the program.

The YPAR only program had logistical supports that positively assisted families with transportation of their children, but may have led to less parental engagement in the program. For example, the youth in the YPAR only program either walked or were bussed home at 6:30 when after-school ended. Furthermore, research staff were not able to meet parents at proposed parent nights at the beginning of the project to have them sign consent forms; the lead of the after-school program took care of that piece instead. Due to both of these logistics, and the inability of the research staff to access parent’s phone numbers, it was almost impossible to engage with parents to tell them about the presentations that their children were doing at the school during program time. The
research staff provided the after-school staff with fliers to give to families, but since they do not pick up their children, it is unclear if they reached many families.

Additionally, the lead adult partner for the YPAR only program reached out to community organizations by phone to ask them to attend the youth presentations, telling them that they focused on areas for improvement in the after-school program and school. The agencies all reported that they would attend if the projects were related to something that they wanted implemented in the local community, but not if they had to do with school grounds (which they did). Two organizations also reported shock that the research staff ever got access to the school at all; they said that they had never gotten in touch with the principal, even though one program had bike racks for the past year to provide to the school for free. In addition to this feedback about the school from community organizations, the research P.I. also was never able to schedule an in person or phone meeting with the principal of this school. Perhaps due to lack of buy-in, schedule restrictions, or other unknown factors, neither the principal nor teachers attended the youth presentations in the YPAR only school. The only adults in attendance were the usual after school staff, the P.I. and some of the adult partners. The other students in the after-school program that did not participate in the project and the adults in attendance watched the youth presentations in the auditorium.

The students in this program were less organized in their presentations, and for some of the groups, it was unclear what their change idea was. Some youth just discussed things they liked to do to be active and things that got in the way of being active. The clearest and most actionable change proposal was getting a new hoop for the outside basketball court so that it could be put to use. However, following the presentations, the
after-school program staff did not speak formally to the youth about their change ideas, nor did they discuss next steps about making the changes that they proposed happen.

Sub question b sub question 1: What similarities and differences emerge in implementation, based on the ratings of fidelity, between the YPAR-only design and the YPAR + PA design?

Adult partners across both programs were able to implement some YPAR essential elements with adequate fidelity. For example, the essential elements, “project ideas are youth generated,” “highlight and report youth strengths,” “use of a dialogic and reflexive process,” “use of a cyclical and iterative process,” and “power-sharing within a pluralistic Y-A partnership,” were implemented with adequate fidelity in both programs. “Positive group processes” were also monitored, because though they are not a YPAR specific essential element, they are necessary for effective group work. Positive group processes were implemented with adequate fidelity as well. “Youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results” was implemented with high fidelity in both programs.

In the YPAR only program, adult partners were able to implement “co-learning and capacity building” and “promote local relevance and an ecological perspective” with adequate fidelity; adult partners were not able to achieve this level of fidelity in the YPAR + PA program. In contrast, in the YPAR + PA program, adult partners were able to implement the principle “youth advocacy for social change” with high fidelity; it was not implemented with fidelity in the YPAR only program. Adult partners in the YPAR + PA program were also able to implement “use of a cyclical and iterative process” and
“power sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership” with slightly higher fidelity than the
YPAR only program. There were some YPAR essential elements in the curriculum that
did not meet fidelity criteria in either program. “Identify community as a unit of identity,”
“identify and report community strengths,” “authentic analysis of social reality,” and
“discussion of power differentials” were not implemented with fidelity by adult partners
in the YPAR + PA program and the YPAR only program.

3.4 Research Question 3: Did youth engagement in health focused YPAR praxis
processes lead to significant baseline to post intervention gains in empowerment
within each program?

Adolescent participatory obesity prevention studies have not measured
intraindividual processes, like empowerment, which are key mechanisms for health
behavior change, and only four studies in the broader YPAR literature measure these
mechanisms (Ozer & Douglas, 2013). To address this gap in measurement, we assess
changes in youth self-reported empowerment from baseline to post-intervention within
each program. See table 3.5 for the baseline to post intervention youth empowerment
survey t-test results for both programs.

A t-test for paired samples showed a significant increase/improvement in youth
empowerment from baseline (M=2.87, SD 52) to post (M=3.19, SD=40) for students in
the YPAR+PA (school 2) program. For the YPAR-only intervention (School 1), a t-test
for paired samples showed no observed differences from baseline (M = 3.27, SD = 41) to
post (M = 3.22, SD = .56) in youth empowerment \( t (12) = .43; p = .68 \); students in the
YPAR only intervention program did not increase their mean ratings of empowerment between baseline and post-intervention.

**Sub question a: What gains are there within programs in the subdomains of empowerment (e.g., sociopolitical skills, participatory behavior, perceived control, and motivation to influence)?**

Students in the YPAR + PA intervention program had significantly higher self-rated mean sociopolitical skills ($t (20) = 3.33; p = .003$), participatory behavior ($t (20) = 3.19; p = .005$), and perceived control ($t (20) = 2.33; p = .03$) at post intervention when compared to baseline means. The difference in means from baseline to post intervention for the motivation to influence subscale was not significant ($t (20) = .52; p = .61$). T-tests for paired samples were also conducted on empowerment subdomains in the YPAR only program. Youth-reported sociopolitical skills ($t (12) = .21; p = .84$), participatory behavior ($t (12) = .71; p = .49$), perceived control ($t (12) = .25; p = .81$), and motivation to influence ($t (12) = .27; p = .79$) did not make any significant baseline to post intervention gains in the YPAR only program.

**3.5. To what extent do the qualitative (i.e., youth survey questions, youth journal, adult partner journal), observational, and quantitative (i.e., adult partner evaluation survey, youth empowerment survey) data converge, and what does its convergence tell us about feasibility?**

We explore the feasibility of implementing and systematically measuring a health focused YPAR curriculum in aftercare standalone to reach more youth and YPAR paired with a PA intervention as a novel approach to adolescent obesity prevention. We converge mixed method data to examine strengths and limitations in the feasibility of
each of the YPAR essential elements. See table 3.11 for an evaluation of the level of quality quantitative and qualitative evidence for the quality implementation of each of the essential elements.

**Identify Community as a Unit of Identity.** There was evidence of youth reflecting on strengths and areas for improvement in their after-school program and school communities in their survey responses. Specifically, questions asked them to describe positive aspects of themselves and their school/community (see qualitative survey questions in the Appendix B). In the YPAR + PA program, students focused on their after-school program more so than their school or community; 19 responses focused on the after-school program while only four centered on their experiences at school. Youths’ responses about their school included having high quality teachers, not liking the school lunch, and options for physical activity at school. For example, one student wrote, “*not good lunch, good teachers.*” Another student reflected, “*The school has students that like to be active, but only some games keep them interested and the games are diverse for boys and girls.*” Youth described a sense of community and connection with their after-school program. For example, one youth wrote, “*our after-school program cares about the students in it and how they thrive individually.*” Another noted, “*That we are all diverse but come together as one. That we are all a big family.*” Another student appreciated adults caring about students’ perspectives, reflecting, “*That my community and after school program are helpful and listen to my point of view.*” Another student focused on how the after-school program staff meet students’ needs, “*They are good at getting us what we want and need and if we need help with homework they'll help us.*”
Adult partners implemented this principle with inadequate dose and fidelity in the YPAR + PA program.

In the YPAR only program, youths’ responses were more general and vague, and focused more on the school environment rather than the after-school program; nine responses were about their school and three focused on the after-school program. Youth comments about their school community were focused on the quality of their teachers. For example, one student noted, “they are helpful, kind, and thoughtful, my school community” and another student wrote “the teachers.” Other students reflected on the abilities of the students in the school; for example, “they have brilliant students” and “(name of school) has the best students in the world!” When reflecting on their after-school program, students described it as “organized,” “nice,” “cool,” and “active.”

Adult partners implemented this principle with adequate dose but unacceptable fidelity in the YPAR only program. Adult partners were able to generate brief discussions about the school or community, but had difficulty going into detail, though they were more successful in accomplishing this, based on observational data, in the YPAR only program. In the adult partner journals, when adult partners reflected on an aspect of the after-school program or the community, they mainly focused on the youths’ change ideas. One adult partner also reflected about the youths’ perspective on the barriers to PA in youths’ broader community and aftercare program, which were unrelated to their change idea, “A few students mentioned that their neighborhoods did not have adequate locations for physical activity, such as parks or playgrounds. The students definitely showed a willingness to exercise but lamented the lack of opportunities to do so. Many students were frustrated by their usual after-school activities, which appeared to include
sitting in the cafeteria and completing homework related tasks.” Overall, adult partner reflections indicated that students were frustrated with their lack of opportunities for healthy food at school and physical activity in after school, the school day, and in the community.

Highlight and report youth and community/program strengths. Youth in both programs were able to identify some of their strengths in their qualitative survey responses, though they tended to highlight their individual strengths versus the strengths of their groups. The most frequently listed youth strengths in the YPAR + PA program were nice (N=6), helpful (N=5), smart (N=5), leader (N=4), cool (N=4), kind (N=3), and fun (N=3). The most frequently youth generated strengths in the YPAR only program were nice (N=3), fun (N=2), funny (N=2), and self-confident (N=2). See table 3.6 for a complete list of the youth generated strengths.

Based on the observational data, adult partners in both programs achieved adequate dose and fidelity; they were able to point out youth strengths either multiple times or in detail once across all sessions. Congruent with this finding, though adult partners were not specifically promoted to list youth strengths, a few adult partners highlighted some in their journals. One wrote, “Their minds are everywhere and they love to talk and do hair and dance.” The other adult partner from the same group commented on the group’s ability to share, “I was actually really surprised to see that the girls started sharing the tablets on their own after the first few times we prompted them to share!!” One adult partner reflected on allowing youth to choose their poster making tasks based on their strengths and skills. He wrote “I asked the students to determine
what skills they could bring to creating the poster (e.g. drawing, organizing, writing) and letting them utilize their skills.”

Youth in both the YPAR + PA program and the YPAR only program did highlight strengths of their school and after school program community in their qualitative responses, though adult partners did not achieve adequate dose and fidelity for this principle in the YPAR + PA program. Specifically, adult partners did not highlight and discuss school and program strengths within their groups during the first, third, fifth, and sixth sessions. Youth in the YPAR + PA program mainly highlighted strengths of their after-school program; youth in the YPAR only program focused on broad strengths of their school. The most frequently listed after-school program strengths by youth in the YPAR + PA program were fun (N=9), like going to the gym/playing sports/being active (N=5), and helpful staff (N=2). The most frequently listed school strength in the YPAR only program was that the “school had the best kids in the world/has brilliant students” (N=2). See table 3.7 for all the youth generated program and school strengths.

**Project ideas are youth generated.** Evidence for “youth development of project ideas” was present in youth qualitative survey responses at the YPAR + PA program. For example, in response to the prompt “List some things you liked about working together with the students from USC,” one youth wrote “complete creative control” and another youth noted “...I liked how we get to do it without adults telling us what to do.” These findings are consistent with the observational ratings, as adult partners achieved adequate dose and fidelity in the YPAR + PA program. The subcomponents “youth work together on the project” and “youth develop change ideas to present to stakeholders” had high fidelity in both programs.
In contrast, in the YPAR only program, no youth highlighted their control of the project as something they enjoyed. Their responses focused more generally on enjoying their relationship with their adult partner; for example, youth wrote “they were fun” and “they listened.” The youth response most related to “youth development of project ideas” was “letting us express ourselves.” Adult partners did not achieve adequate dose in the YPAR only program, though they did achieve adequate fidelity for those subcomponents of the essential element that they did implement. Adult partners were not able to meet adequate dose in helping youth generate a detailed change strategy to present to stakeholders. Adult partners did not implement a brainstorming process with youth on how to make the change occur (e.g., who they needed to talk to, what resources they needed).

The adult partner journals from the YPAR only program may promote a better understanding of the processes related to this essential element. All adult partners reflected on the need to balance youth choice with meeting the objectives of the program in such a short time frame. One adult partner reflected on this balance in her power-sharing section, noting “we were on time and that the objectives were done, however we allowed the group to share opinions, and gave them choices on what they would’ve liked to do next.” Another adult partner wrote about struggling with giving youth space to lead within the time limit because she really tried to adhere to the curriculum as closely as possible, and implement every component as written. She wrote, “the youth had some shared power on Friday in terms of what they wrote and how the poster looked but we definitely restricted them. First of all, because time was limited as we allowed the girls to play a game and had to get the poster complete and second, because what was written on
the poster had to be appropriate.” The style of strict adherence to the curriculum without much flexibility/adaptation is a strength in terms of fidelity, but also a challenge in that some of the more natural process of the relationship and brainstorming may be lost.

Most of the youth direction in the YPAR only program happened during picture taking and deciding where to go to take them. For example, one adult partner reflected “...We also allowed them to make choices on what they wanted to do or where they wanted to go for the pictures as well as in discussion.” Adult partners in the YPAR only program struggled more than those in the YPAR + PA program in the implementation of the subcomponent developing a change idea through the picture taking process. The male group at the YPAR only program was especially large (twelve students), and so making sure everyone’s voice was included and that they had a role in the process was especially challenging. One adult partner with that group reflected on how he managed that, focusing on giving each student an opportunity: “I asked each youth in the group their ideas about where to go to take pictures. During the "Around the World" activity I got each youth to expand upon their contributions. I allowed each student to take a picture while completing photo voice.” Many examples provided in this section also provide evidence for implementation “power sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership.”

**Promoting local relevance and an ecological perspective.** There was evidence of the YPAR essential element “promoting local relevance and an ecological perspective” in youths’ qualitative survey responses in the YPAR + PA program, despite it not being implemented with adequate dose or fidelity based on observational data. For example, in response to the question, “Has working on this project and with students at USC helped
you in any way? If so, how?” one student reflected “I learned that there is always a bigger picture to everything” and another wrote “it helped me learn about something we need in the school.” In response to the prompt, “List some things you liked about working together with the students from USC” a student reflected, “It was fun, I got to hang out with my friends, I got to talk about things that were helpful in my community.”

In contrast with the qualitative responses, adult partners did not meet adequate dosage in sessions three, four, and five on the subcomponent “relevance – usefulness and connection to current life,” which meant that, in some sessions, they were not observed discussing with youth why the project is of value to them or how it relates to their lives and perspectives. They were able to make the picture taking and change selection process relevant to youths’ lives.

In the YPAR only program, this essential element was implemented with adequate dose and fidelity by adult partners, yet only three youth wrote responses that vaguely fit this essential element category. For example, one youth wrote “it helped me a lot because this project can help people in this community improve” and another student noted “we should make a change and keep working on the basketball goal.” The majority of adult partners were able to “show interest in student’s lives,” which meant that there were frequent indications that the adult partner was genuinely interested in students’ activities and experiences outside of the program.

The observational data also shows that the adult partners were able to build in discussion of local relevance and ecological perspectives during the picture taking, poster making, and brainstorming group processes, which is also evident in the YPAR only adult partner journal reflections. Comments related to this essential element mainly
focused on areas for improvement in the school and community that youth mentioned while working together. For example, adult partners in two different groups reflected on youth discussions about not having access to healthy options or palatable food at lunch. Adult partners from two groups also reflected that youth said they did not have enough opportunities for PA at their school and during their aftercare program. For example, one adult partner reflected “The girls said that they do not get any kind of physical activity during the school day. I don’t know whether this is the case, but that was surprising to me!” On the same topic, another adult partner wrote “Many students mentioned that they like to run, but were not allowed out on the track, so they sprinted down the halls. Students mentioned that they did not have recess.” Related to physical activity in aftercare, one adult partner reflected, “Many students were frustrated by their usual after-school activities, which appeared to include sitting in the cafeteria and completing homework related tasks.” Adult partners from two groups also reflected on the discussion of safety concerns that interfere with youth being able to participate in physical activity in parks in their neighborhoods. For example, one adult partner noted, “Students mentioned that their neighborhoods did not have adequate locations for physical activity, such as parks or playgrounds” and another wrote “The students are aware of safety concerns in their area.”

**Power sharing within a pluralistic Y-A partnership.** There was evidence for the YPAR essential element “power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership” in youths’ qualitative survey responses. Their responses indicated that youth generally had positive relationships with their adult partners. For example, in the YPAR + PA program, in response to the prompt “List some things you liked about working together with students
from USC” one student wrote “we could talk about anything. We could be completely honest,” another noted “1) the fun we had 2) how our ideas were considered 3) how nice and caring the instructors were,” and a third reflected “All of them were REALLY nice and even when we didn't want to play, they were always encouraging.” In the YPAR only program, there were similar youth reflections. One youth wrote, “They listened to us. They were fun when we did our work. Inspiring” and another noted “They’re fun, exciting!”

In the YPAR only program, youth described adult partners as “fun” and wrote they liked talking to them more frequently than youth in the YPAR + PA program, as youth in the YPAR + PA program’s comments focused more on creative control, being nice/supportive, and honesty. There was quantitative evidence for a positive Y-A partnership in both programs as well; on average, youth in both programs agreed that their relationship with their adult partner was positive (an average rating of four on a five-point Likert scale). Additionally, in the youth journals evaluating the adult partner, youth in one group in the YPAR + PA program wrote that they liked that, “they’re always happy, smiling; a good listener, nice, positive.” In the YPAR only program, one group wrote, “we laugh a lot and have fun” and their picture caption read, “having fun til we drop.” Members of the boy group wrote “we feel happy when they take us outside” but another boy in the group noted wanting more outside time, as he wrote, “barely let us outside.”

There was some evidence from the youth evaluation journals of the adult partner in both programs that they desired more power in project decision making and programming. For example, in response to a prompt about how the adult partner can
improve, one group in the YPAR + PA program wrote, “be more creative with posters, allow for more creativity, we got it! let us have more control.” In the YPAR only program, one group suggested their adult partners could improve on challenging them. Reflecting on their picture that they took to represent the answer to what their adult partner could improve, they wrote, “It shows that things are too easy; Too easy question, harden up!” Additionally, youth in the YPAR only program had complaints that they were not able to play basketball or be active during the photo voice project. One group member wrote, “They don't be hard on us and they don't play no fun games like basketball. Or go outside and have races with everyone.” In a different group, they also wrote that they desired more physical activity options, “we wish we could choose more activities, like dance.” In the boy group, youth wrote that they often felt “bored” and “lazy” with their adult partners.

Based on observational data, essential element “power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership” was implemented with adequate dose and fidelity in both programs. Adult partners were able to “provide opportunities for decision making” and “promote power sharing in group processes” with high fidelity. Adults consistently provided opportunities for meaningful student input, decision-making, and leadership, and when decisions needed to be made, democratic processes like voting were used. Adult partners allowed youth to lead discussions and also provided them with choice in the structure of the sessions. Additionally, the adult partners were rated highly in giving youth space to guide the photo voice process, from picture taking to creating the presentations. These ratings align with the additional evidence for the principle “power sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership” in the adult partner journals.
In each journal, every adult partner said that they shared power with youth in some way, and did not push their own agenda during the majority of the session. One adult partner reflected on how she shared power through promoting choice and reflection within the activities, “I always tried to mention a game and if they felt like they wanted to give it a try and if they enjoyed the game at the end.” Another adult partner similarly reflected, “There was a good mix of choice from the students in regards to picking activities and choosing a team name” and “when we stepped outside of the classroom, the youth took the lead in scouting out locations.”

Adult partners also recognized instances where they could have probably given the youth more power, but were restricted by time, the lesson plan, or the number of youth present. For example, one adult partner commented on structure and the lesson outline, “I never felt like I was pushing my own agenda but tried to adhere to the detailed schedule provided in terms of time allowed for certain parts of the session.” Another adult partner struggled with logistics in decision making and leadership, “In our group of 4 we sometimes found two voting yes and two voting no. So sometimes (the other adult partner) and I had to make an executive decision or say, “we’ll do this and then do this” and “we did try to give shared power by letting the girls choose whenever there were options present. I think that we could have given them more power to steer the selected activities during those times, though (e.g., lead a fire hoola-hoop game – I “led” this because the girls wanted me to time them).” Another adult partner reflected on how he was able to get the youth to move forward with poster creation while still using their own ideas, “As time got short when creating the poster, I had to push for ideas and captions, since some of the students were struggling to come up with ideas. Some students were
struggling to stay on task, so I suggested ideas based on some of the snippets previously given by the students.”

Positive group processes were also implemented with adequate dose and fidelity in both programs. Specifically, the adult partners in both programs were able to keep youth on task, enforce discipline strategies fairly, and promote positive peer interactions. There was also evidence in the adult partner journals that they made efforts to get to know the youth personally. For example, one adult partner reflected after the first session, “I also started to get to know them by asking them just general questions about themselves” and another one noted “The kids shared their personal desires with me as well, and so I really got to know each and every one of them personally.” Though there was evidence of positive relationships, two adult partners struggled to maintain a balance between mentor and friend, for example, one reflected “I need to improve on controlling the group. I need to find an effective balance between being an authoritative figure and a friend/mentor” and the other noted “I can improve on my control of the children, I let them have a little more freedom, but I see that isn’t the best strategy for now. With time I can see giving them some freedom will be okay but for now structure and maintenance of order has to be number one.” Another struggled with being flexible, “I think I should be a little more patient with the students and allow a little more freedom” but by the end, ultimately felt like she found a balance “I think that I worked well with the kids and was their friend but also an authority figure. I think they liked getting to hang out with older people and not having to do homework.” Overall, a common theme among the adult partner responses was that youth appreciated spending time with invested adults, “We gave them choices wherever we could this week. I think they like that. The girls also
really seem to enjoy spending time with caring adults” and another wrote, “Overall, I believe that we made a personal connection with the students and they appreciated the time that we spent with them. It appeared that the students looked forward to our arrival each week.”

There was also evidence from the observational tool of positive affect and nonverbal interactions between adult partners and youth, and between peers. Despite this, adult partners did struggle in some areas, such as maintaining positive group processes and positive interactions throughout the total duration of a session. Also, some youth were more engaged and positive than others within the same group. Despite these differences, adult partners were able to re-direct and generally manage rifts in their groups. There was one example in the adult partner journal in which an adult partner wished she handled a behavioral problem differently in her group, “We had a LOT of behavioral issues (particularly with one girl) on Friday and it really damaged the group dynamic. I wish I had handled that differently by pulling the girl out and talking to her one-on-one.” The other adult partner from that group also reflected on managing difficult group processes. Following the first session, she reflected, “Also they are sassy to each other and I really would like to neutralize that” and then after the second session, she noted “if any teasing was occurring I would make sure to cut that out” which is evidence that she was able to meet her group process improvement goal.

**Promotion of co-learning and capacity building.** There was evidence for the essential element “promote co-learning and capacity building” within youth qualitative survey responses. Youth learned how to use photos for research purposes, and ten youth in the YPAR only program and 21 youth in the YPAR + PA program responded “taking
pictures” was what they enjoyed most about the project/what should be kept in the project in a future iteration. The qualitative responses align with the observational data; adult partners were able to successfully teach youth about the photo voice process and then let them guide the direction. Adult partners also shared with youth what they learned from them during sessions.

Two youth in the YPAR only program and seven in the YPAR + PA program wrote that the project built capacity for new friendships, which aligns with observational data that shows adult partners in both programs achieving high fidelity in promoting the growth of social skills. They practiced through sharing each other’s strengths with the group and what they learned from each other. Adult partners also prompted students to brainstorm problem solving steps with each other, while providing support as necessary, which also aligns with the qualitative data. One youth in the YPAR only and two in the YPAR + PA program specifically referenced learning to collaborate/cooperate more. Participation in the project also built capacity for PA; seven youth in the YPAR only program and three in the YPAR + PA program shared that working together helped them learn new ways to be active. In the YPAR only program, additional capacities were that one youth noted learning manners, and two wrote participating helped prepare them for success/the future. In the YPAR + PA program, additional capacities were that four students reported that participating helped them build confidence, and one listed gaining public speaking skills. Based on the quantitative survey results, youth in the YPAR + PA program also built capacity in sociopolitical skills, as mean youth reported levels of this skill significantly increased from baseline to post intervention.
The essential element was not implemented with adequate dose, but was implemented with adequate fidelity in the YPAR only program. In that program, adult partners did report “co-learning and capacity building” in their journals, as they reflected on learning about themselves through the process of working with the youth, specifically in the areas of leadership and group dynamics. For example, one adult partner reflected that her strategies she used while managing youth on a swim team in the past were not working with this group, and looked forward to using new ways to effectively work with adolescents. For example, she wrote, “I think I need to improve on being more of a mediator with children at this age. (The other adult partner in my group) did an amazing job at keeping calm and it is apparent that she has had more clinical training allowing her to be able to handle the situation. I am used to coaching a group of 40 girls and with this kind of environment being a mediator is not the best approach. This experience has allowed me to see another approach and hopefully apply it to future experiences.” Another reflected on learning potential gender differences in promoting youth engagement in activities in the project setting, “I felt that I got to know some of the kids triggers in terms of what gets them off task, but also I found that the boys need a bonding based or team based activity to engage in that is somewhat competitive.”

Other adult partners reflected on growth in knowing how to balance the structured adult role and the fun, mentor role throughout the process. One adult partner continued to struggle with that throughout the project, and his co-partner ended up taking on the more authoritative role, while he focused on fun. He wrote, “I definitely need help establishing seriousness in the room. I don’t believe I will have much luck because the kids see me as this fun adult” and “I liked that we grouped two leaders together. It allows for bigger
groups, which means more fun for the kids. It also allows for one leader to be seen as the “authority” while the other can take on a different role.”

The adult partners also reflected on areas for improvement in the school and community that they learned about through their interactions with the youth, such as the quality of food in the cafeteria, not having recess, safety issues in their neighborhoods, having limited sports to participate in through their school, and not having many physical activity options in after-school due to the academic focus. These comments were already referenced in detail in the “promote local relevance and ecological perspective” section. The adult partners did not reflect on learning anything about the youth personally nor did they reflect on the youth teaching them new skills.

**Use of a dialogic and reflexive process.** There is some evidence that the essential element “use of a dialogic and reflexive process” occurred in group work in youths’ qualitative responses. For example, in the YPAR only program, youth provided evidence that discussions occurred within groups, noting, “they listened to us,” and “liked taking the pictures, talking to them, dancing around.” Another youth noted “it taught me to work together” and other youth wrote “listening to others” and “letting us express ourselves.” In the YPAR + PA program, youth also reported that they enjoyed the discussions and the ability to be themselves and state their opinions. For example, in response to the question, “If we did the project again in the future, what parts of the project do you think we should keep?” one student wrote “How anyone could come up with an idea that they value or have a strong opinion on” and another student shared a similar sentiment on adult partner and group acceptance of new ideas, “I liked how we all shared our ideas and agreed on them with no argument.” As previously mentioned, two
other youth wrote about how they enjoyed being able to be honest within their groups. Another youth reported liking the process of “working together and learning something” and another student reflected “students that wouldn’t normally be in group with me, became closer friends.” There is also evidence in the YPAR + PA program that some youth learned how to take new perspectives through the group work. For example, one youth reported liking “that it showed me a different part of pictures” and another student wrote “I learned that there is always a bigger picture to everything.” Though the observational data points to adult partners in the YPAR + PA program as missing some dose of the implementation of photo processing across sessions, youth survey responses indicate that some youth did report learning that would come from a photo processing activity.

In both programs, adult partners struggled with “promoting strategic thinking.” In the YPAR only program, adult partners struggled the most in helping students identify or analyze alternative points of view and demonstrate an openness to modifying pre-existing views based on new information. In the fourth session of the YPAR only program, it was difficult for a dialogic and reflexive process to occur due to the nature of the session. Completing the posters was prioritized over in-depth processing of the pictures, since the presentations were occurring during that session. Also, not all adult partners were present, so some adult partners worked with multiple groups and groups they had not worked with previously, which made in-depth processing difficult. In the YPAR + PA program, adult partners had more difficulty in helping youth seek out new perspectives and new ways of thinking and learning from each other.
There was some evidence of the essential element “use of a dialogic and reflexive process” in youths’ adult partner process evaluation journal entries in the YPAR + PA program. For example, one group reported that what they liked about working with their adult partner was “working together as a team” and another group wrote, “got to work together with friends; helped build friendships.” In the adult partner journals, there was also evidence of this principle. For example, one adult partner reflected on their group process, “Our group would allow each other to speak freely w/o being interrupted and if any of the students struggled to find ideas (the other adult partner) or I would kind of guide them so they could find their way.” Another adult partner reflected, “all (the other adult partner) and I did was facilitate the program and really listened to what the kids had to say!” Another adult partner noted, “They really seem to appreciate being heard. We tried really hard to make sure everyone had multiple opportunities to answer questions, use the tablets, etc.”

Depth of understanding and reflection was not present in the YPAR only program youth qualitative survey responses, despite fidelity of implementation to the essential element and photo processing subcomponent in that program in the observational data. Adult partner reflections can provide more detail on these processes in the YPAR only program. They reflected on areas for improvement for themselves in promoting dialogue and reflection with youth, specifically in the areas of managing disagreements about values and piquing youths’ continued interest in the discussion. For example, one adult partner reflected on difficulties promoting dialogue in which she disagreed with the youths’ opinions, and how she managed balancing her voice and opinions with theirs, “I think we did do a little bit of pushing our agenda during the Q&A game. We were talking
about healthy/unhealthy foods and also littering, and the girls were only mentioning unhealthy items when talking about healthy snacks to recommend to a friend. At this time, (the other adult partner) and I both mentioned healthy snacks that we like. Also, all the girls (with the exception of one) seemed to think that littering is okay. I think we tried to challenge this in a friendly way, but I don’t think we changed any opinions so it may have felt like we were pushing our own agendas. Littering is something that really frustrates me so I probably spoke up more than needed here!” A different adult partner noted some difficulty with switching to the discussion of more serious topics with a large group of boys, “Transitioning from activities to more serious events, such as the survey was a bit challenging” and he reported that he could improve upon “Facilitating discussion during brainstorming activities. Keeping students focused during prolonged periods of serious discussion.” These comments are line with the observational data, as the difficulty with implementation of this principle in the YPAR only program in session three occurred in the boy group, which was also the largest group. Based on adult partner and youth journals, the boy group preferred to go outside and take pictures or be in the gym playing basketball. Another adult partner reflected on how she managed the brainstorming and discussion facilitation well, “we shared time with the students and allowed them to discuss and bounce ideas off and used ourselves more as a fence to stay in the boundary of discussion.”

**Authentic analysis of social reality.** There is evidence within the youth qualitative survey responses that an “authentic analysis of social reality” occurred. The evidence mainly comes from the YPAR + PA program, as they reflected on gaining a new perspective on the world around them. For example, one youth wrote that working
together has helped by, “looking at the world differently” and another noted “there is always a bigger picture to everything.” Another youth wrote “it has taught me if I believe in something then I can make a difference.” There were no reflections of this nature in the YPAR only program. Additionally, youth in the YPAR + PA program and the YPAR only program wrote that participation helped them see problems that need to be solved in their schools, after school program, and community that they had not noticed before, which demonstrates evidence for deeper reflections on their social worlds and contexts. For example, one student in the YPAR + PA program wrote, “the project made me realize that the community around us needs work” and another noted, “it helped me learn about something we need in the school.” In the YPAR only program, only one student reflected on noticing issues, “it showed me the problems.” In both programs, adult partners were able to integrate some social analysis during the picture taking and poster creation process, which may be when the youth referenced learnings occurred. In contrast to the quantity of qualitative comments in this domain, adult partners achieved acceptable dose of implementation of this essential element in the YPAR only program, but not in the YPAR + PA program.

There is evidence in the adult partner journals that an “authentic analysis of social reality” occurred. Reflections from their journals can shed some light on why there is fidelity for this essential element in the YPAR only program from the adult partner implementation perspective, but the youth do not report on it. The adult partners reflected that youth may have had a difficult time understanding and remembering the purpose of the project during the short time frame in which it was implemented. For example, one reflected, “The girls really enjoyed taking pictures and I know our program was cut short
this semester however, I really suggest keeping the duration of the original program. Also, some of the kids don’t really understand what exactly they are doing. They understand the general idea, however not completely. When we are all together in the gym the kids are not giving the adult their full position, so making sure that at the beginning of the sessions each group adult leader emphasize again what we are doing it and why. Perhaps even have them explain to you what is being asked of them.” The same adult partner continued to reflect in a similar vein following the last session, “Again some of the students do not truly fully understand why they are doing this and also don’t believe their opinions matters or that change will actually occur. They also struggle to think critically at this age and so the adults have to at first guide them in order for them to begin thinking critically and gathering their own ideas.” The other adult partner from that group had a similar reflection, “I think the curriculum is great. However, I’m still not sure the girls in our group really understand the value of physical activity, eating healthy, etc. I don’t think they see physical activity as rewarding, either. Even though we ask them why we are taking the pictures and they can mostly respond with the correct answer, it seems to me that an internalized connection is not quite there.”

The adult partners of the boy groups reflected on the difficulties in getting the boys to take the poster creation and picture analysis portion seriously, “The boys did not at all seem interested in brainstorming ideas for the poster, or completing the poster at all. The boys were more focused on going outside or going to the gym. Perhaps incorporating more active techniques for the more introspective brainstorming would be helpful.” In line with this gender difference, in the YPAR + PA program, when asked what should be done differently in future iterations of the project, the boys suggested
removing the words from the posters, while the girls did not suggest this change; for example, one boy wrote “not add words to the poster” and another suggested removing “our meaning of the pictures.” Despite the gender differences in the enjoyment and participation in the social analysis portion of the project, the improvement in empowerment in the YPAR + PA program had a similar effect on boys and girls.

**Use of a cyclical and iterative process.** There is evidence from the youth surveys that adult partners included them in “a cyclical and iterative research process.” For example, many youth reported liking multiple aspects of the research process, such as walking around the school, taking pictures, making the poster, or giving the presentation, which demonstrates that at least one full cycle of the research process occurred. For example, one youth at the YPAR + PA program noted liking “*taking the pictures, going around the school, making the poster*” another wrote “*looking at the pictures,*” and a third reflected “*I liked that we worked really hard on the poster. We added a lot of pretty stuff to it.*” Another youth wrote that “*teamwork*” was most enjoyed. In contrast, in the YPAR only program, youth only listed some components of the research process as enjoyable. Youth reported enjoying taking pictures, walking around outside, and talking with each other; they did not mention the poster creation or presentation.

The youth qualitative survey responses align with the adult partner observations, as dose and fidelity were relatively good in both programs, though dose was higher in the YPAR only program and fidelity higher in the YPAR + PA program. In both programs, adult partners implemented with quality the photography portion of photo voice and brainstorming change ideas, next steps for the project, and change recommendations.
There was more opportunity for multiple rounds of the research cycle in the YPAR + PA program due to the longer length.

There is quantitative evidence for the implementation of this essential element in the YPAR + PA program. In the YPAR + PA program, but not in the YPAR only program, youths’ mean rating of their participatory behavior increased from baseline to post intervention. As previously mentioned in one adult partner journal, youth did not seem to understand the purpose of the project as well as the youth in the YPAR + PA program. The difference may be due to the shortened curriculum or youth difficulty in understanding abstract constructs.

There is evidence for the “use of a cyclical and iterative process” by adult partners in managing the groups in the YPAR only program adult partner journals. For example, one adult partner noted figuring out a process that best helped boys in his group brainstorm, “When coming up with locations to take pictures for the photo voice, many of the kids had trouble staying on topic while in the classroom. However, while walking around, the kids were good at scouting out and suggesting locations where they could take pictures.” Observational data aligns with this, as YPAR only program adult partners were better able to implement with fidelity the subcomponent “provide opportunities for decision making” within the project when compared to the YPAR + PA adult partner ratings.

A troubleshooting process also occurred with the general program structure, such as group size, location of the activity, and single gender versus mixed gender groups, in order to find a method that worked best. An adult partner reflected on trouble shooting
the best location to implement the group process, and some ideas for deeper engagement of the youth, “I think we should separate some of the groups instead of having them all in one big area. The gym created a lot of noise and it just created this "it is noisy let me speak louder" notion. It also didn’t allow the students to really immerse themselves in the activity since they were easily distracted by what the other kids were doing. I also think giving the kids the ability to go outside will be nice for them too. However, it should be a small group with an adult since these kids are high in energy and run around everywhere!! A lot of the girls enjoy to dance and so maybe getting an activity that involves dancing might get them really involved too? Or they really enjoyed hula hooping so being able to let them do that and play music at the same time might be fun for them. I agree with whoever mentioned doing some gender specific activities, bc at this age I think that they are really into what a "girl" should do or what a "boy" should do. However, I don’t think we should restrict some boy activities from girls. Sometimes little girls don't want to go out of the norms, even though they enjoy the activity.” Another adult partner reflected on the change in group functioning as a result of switching locations and changing to single gender groups, “I believe that breaking up the large amount of students into smaller groups really assisted with manageability. Sorting by gender also seemed to make things run smoothly.”

In the YPAR + PA program, only during session one, elements related to trouble shooting program structure may have led to the rating of zero for the subcomponent “provide opportunities for decision making” within groups, such as decision-making in activity choices and the ability to play a leadership role. Troubleshooting was still occurring as to the best method to use to manage and implement the groups. Specific
groups were not yet formed, and so youth rotated by choice through the YPAR station that day, which led to some group sizes being much larger than others within the hour time frame. Overall, in the YPAR + PA program during the first session, figuring out how to manage misbehavior, achieve youths’ attention, and promote positive group processes and belonging may have been difficult, and may have taken precedence over providing opportunities for decision making during the group time.

**Discussion of power differentials.** There was no evidence for the “discussion of power differentials” (i.e., who holds power in making decisions about their health) principle in the youth qualitative survey responses. There was evidence of this essential element in one adult partner journal entry. She reflected on the power differential between adults and youth and how it relates to youth driven change, “Again some of the students do not truly fully understand why they are doing this and also don’t believe their opinions matters or that change will actually occur.” The adult partner got the impression that the girls in her group did not think that the adults in their program would take their ideas seriously and make the changes they proposed. In contrast, in the YPAR + PA program, there was evidence in the quantitative empowerment survey of an increase in feelings of self-efficacy in having the power to make changes, as youths’ average rating of perceived control increased from baseline to post implementation.

Observational data can shed some light on implementation. In both programs, though the essential element approached adequate dose in both programs and adequate fidelity in the YPAR only program, it did not meet the threshold of quality implementation for any of them. Adult partners in the YPAR + PA program struggled with the subcomponent related to promotion of discussion about sociopolitical influences,
such as who holds power in decisions that impact adolescents’ health and with whom students would need to talk about making their change in order to increase the likelihood of it occurring. They also had difficulty with the subcomponent related to beginning discussions about who makes the rules in the school and after school program. These findings demonstrate that this essential element may be more difficult to implement than others with middle school youth in pre-existing aftercare programs.

**Youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results.** The adult partners in both programs implemented this essential element with adequate dose and fidelity; all groups created and presented a poster to stakeholders. Youth in the YPAR + PA program, but not the YPAR only program, reported that the poster creation and presentation portion of the project was something that they really enjoyed. Specifically, eight youth in the YPAR + PA program noted that they enjoyed creating the poster and/or presenting it to others. For example, one youth wrote, “I liked making the poster and presenting it” and another youth reflected that the project should continue to have, “the poster and having to create an actual meaning for the poster.” Other youth wrote about how reporting and disseminating the results helped them. One noted, “It helped me with my public speaking skills” and another reflected, “I’m sometimes shy, but I did it! Helped me build my confidence in speaking in front of other people.”

There was additional evidence for the implementation of this essential element in the YPAR only program adult partner journals, as most adult partners reflected on the poster creation part of the collaborative research process. For example, one of the adult partners for the boy group in the YPAR only program wrote about what he did well during the research process, “I gave each of the students a chance to place a picture on
the poster and write a caption that was meaningful to them. I asked the students to determine what skills they could bring to creating the poster (e.g. drawing, organizing, writing) and letting them utilize their skills’” and another adult partner noted “They got the posters done and my group's is on subject and looks good.”.

Youth involvement in advocacy for social action. Adult partners in the YPAR + PA program achieved 100% dose and fidelity for this essential element. All groups presented to the Boys and Girls Club staff, director, assistant principal of the school, and parents. The youth generated proposed changes that were presented were: giving all students a break to exercise during the school day, having water available for students during after-school time, creating an after-school dance team, fixing the high ropes course, having healthy snacks available during the after-school program, and using the outdoor fields for active activities in addition to sports teams’ practices and games.

In the YPAR only program, adult partners only met criteria for dose. The presentation was only given to the after-school and research staff that were present. The youth generated proposed changes were: fixing the outdoor basketball court, allowing for physical activity breaks during the school day, having more physical activity/sports options, including dance, having recess, and providing healthier food options at lunch.

Youth qualitative survey responses provided evidence for youths’ piqued interest in participating in advocacy for the good of the school and community. The majority of the students (N=24) in the YPAR + PA program and all of the students in the YPAR only program replied “yes” when asked if they wanted to keep working together to help make the changes they proposed. Additionally, eight youth in the YPAR + PA program and
three youth in the YPAR only program suggested a social action idea for future work or provided details about the personal meaning of their action ideas. For example, students in the YPAR + PA program suggested, “we can do more research and present to the school board,” another shared “I would love to keep working for the dance team,” and one noted “yes, and include all grades.” Another student proposed a change recommendation that also relates to power sharing between adults and youth, “Yes, I think we could encourage the teachers to try and understand the students POV more often.” Other students emphasized the importance of the work, “I would say yes because what we did is very important and everything everyone did,” “Yes, so everyone can actually enjoy or do what we fought so hard to make happen for everyone,” and “I even wanted to change the community more than it is now.”

Youth in the YPAR only program also referenced working together for social action, though their comments were broader. For example, youth noted, “We should make a change and keep working on the basketball goal,” “yes, because it’s important and fun,” and “yes, I want to make a lot of changes.” Though there is evidence in some youths’ qualitative responses that they are now motivated to make changes in their school, program, and/or community, there was no evidence of a significant increase in this motivation (i.e., motivation to influence) in the youth empowerment survey. Motivation to influence did not significantly increase from baseline to post intervention in either the YPAR only or the YPAR + PA program.

Adult partner journals also contained reflections on school and community improvement ideas youth generated during the group sessions. For example, the boy group in the YPAR only school’s change idea focused on fixing the outdoor basketball
court so that they could play basketball outside in addition to inside. The adult partner reflected on numerous change ideas that the youth discussed, before deciding on one, “Youth mentioned the dilapidated Basketball Court outside. Many students mentioned that they like to run, but were not allowed out on the track, so they sprinted down the halls. Students mentioned that they did not have recess. Playing basketball seems to be a popular choice for the kids.” An adult partner of one of the girl groups also reflected on their potential changes ideas, “The girls really want to have a dedicated recess or some type of movement/activity break during the day. That was the focus of their poster and I think it is a really great (and achievable) target outcome. They also talk a lot about how bad the cafeteria food is and how the cafeteria does not make it easy to eat healthy. I am not sure what the state of the cafeteria food really is, but making a change like having a basket of apples or carrot sticks or something available at lunch may also be an achievable outcome.” Another group had the cafeteria in mind for change efforts as well. Their adult partner reflected, “One thing that was a major theme was the health the students could achieve while eating lunch at the school. It was concluded that the food was gross, unhealthy, uncooked, and old. I really want to capture this through our program and focus on this idea, with the agreement of the kids of course.”

**Triangulation Summary.** Based on the triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative data, many YPAR essential elements can be implemented in pre-existing aftercare programs, with middle school youth, and within a PA intervention, though with varying levels of quality in this pilot. Determined through examining multiple data sources, it is feasible to develop and maintain a pluralistic, power-sharing Y-A partnership during a four-week period while implementing YPAR in a typical aftercare
program, and during a seven-week period while implementing YPAR with a PA intervention. Previously, this is rarely documented in the literature. It is also feasible for adult partners to highlight youth strengths with quality during each session.

Promoting the discussion of power differentials and an authentic analysis of social reality may not be as feasible during typical aftercare with middle school youth during a shortened timeframe with other competing options. It is even more difficult to implement within a 20-30-minute segment of a PA intervention. Adult partners attempted to implement these essential elements during a game and within the SHOWeD process, but still had problems with dose and fidelity. It is promising that youth-reported positive changes in empowerment occurred in the YPAR + PA program, even with less opportunity for reflection and discussion, the shortened time period, and a competing intervention.

Reflecting on the systems level, adult partners were outsiders and only worked in the school for a brief period of time with the youth. That likely led to their difficulty discussing school, program, and community strengths with quality and also promoting discussions around who makes the rules at school that can impact youth health. Perhaps, staff within the program could help with that piece of YPAR to make it more feasible to implement with quality over a short time period. Based on the quantitative and qualitative evidence from these two programs, effective advocacy for the implementation of a youth chosen idea may only be feasible in aftercare programs with broader staff and school support. Overall, the convergence of quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources shows promise for the feasibility of implementing YPAR with middle school youth in pre-existing aftercare programs and YPAR paired with a PA intervention.
Table 3.1 Frequency Counts by Program for the Total Sample

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<th>Variable</th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>YPAR Only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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*Note: LunchStat = Lunch Status; Free/reduc = Free/reduced; DK = don’t know*
### Table 3.2 Frequency Counts by Program for Participants with Both Baseline and Post Youth Empowerment Survey Data

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<th>Variable</th>
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<td>Age (mean)</td>
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*Note: LunchStat = Lunch Status; Free/reduc = Free/reduced; DK = don’t know*
Table 3.3 Psychometric Properties of the Youth Empowerment SCALE by Program for the Total Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
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<td>Skew</td>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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Note. SD = N = number of participants; standard deviation; Sociopol = Sociopolitical subscale; MotToInfl = Motivation to Influence subscale; PartBehav = Participatory Behavior subscale; PerControl = Perceived Control subscale; TotEmpo = Total Youth Empowerment Scale.
Table 3.4 Psychometric Properties of the Youth Empowerment Survey by Program for Participants with Both Baseline and Post Survey Data

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*Note. N = number of participants; SD = standard deviation; Sociopol = Sociopolitical subscale; MotToInfl = Motivation to Influence subscale; PartBehav = Participatory Behavior subscale; PerControl = Perceived Control subscale; TotEmpo = Total Youth Empowerment Scale.*
Table 3.5 Paired Samples T-Test Results of YPAR Only and YPAR + PA Groups

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<td>.43</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PartBehav</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.005*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PerControl</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TotEmpo</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = number of participants; SD = standard deviation; Sociopol = Sociopolitical subscale; MotToInfl = Motivation to Influence subscale; PartBehav = Participatory Behavior subscale; PerControl = Perceived Control subscale; TotEmpo = Total Youth Empowerment Scale.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>YPAR Only (N)</th>
<th>YPAR + PA (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>X (2)</td>
<td>X (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Player</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chill</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crazy</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceited</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader/Person who has a say so in what goes on</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Along Well in Group</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>X (3)</td>
<td>X (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart/intelligent</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active/playing sports/stepping</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great artist</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role model</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humble</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard working/Give lots of effort</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative/creative leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring/Concerned student who cares about the school/Looking for change in my school</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventurous</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>X (2)</td>
<td>X (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>YPAR Only (N)</td>
<td>YPAR + PA (N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands on</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playful</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awesome</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confident</td>
<td>X (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to go outside and play games</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fascinating</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = number of participants; Responses are youth quotes.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>YPAR Only (N)</th>
<th>YPAR + PA (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lit</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like family</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cares about students</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are all diverse but come together as one.</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy each other’s company</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good teachers</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to my POV</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school program teachers love us.</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kid friendly</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like sports/going to the gym/playing actively</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good at getting us what we want/need.</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with homework.</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has salad bar.</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My school is a great influence.</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School has best kids in the world/has brilliant students</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>X (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help us improve our grades.</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are helpful, kind, and thoughtful, my school community.</td>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are nice.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A good school.</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>YPAR Only (N)</td>
<td>YPAR + PA (N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We always have fun in class.</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We all want more sports. Most of everybody here wants sports.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = number of participants; Responses are youth quotes.*
Table 3.8 Quality of the implemented dosage of the essential elements in the YPAR only and YPAR + PA programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YPAR Essential Element</th>
<th>YPAR Only</th>
<th>YPAR + PA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogic &amp; Reflexive Process</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-learning &amp; Capacity Building</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a Cyclical &amp; Iterative Process</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Approached adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powering Sharing in a Pluralistic Y-A Partnership</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify &amp; Report Youth Strengths</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Relevance &amp; Ecological Perspective</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Community as a Unit of Identity</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Approached adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Analysis of Social Reality</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify &amp; Report Community Strengths</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of Power Differentials</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Generated Project Idea</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting &amp; Dissemination of Results</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy for Social Action</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Group Processes</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. * indicates that adult partner implementation of that essential element met minimum criteria for adequate dosage in that program.*
Table 3.9 Fidelity of adult partner implementation of the YPAR essential elements in the YPAR only and YPAR + PA programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YPAR Essential Element</th>
<th>YPAR Only</th>
<th>YPAR + PA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogic &amp; Reflexive Process</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-learning &amp; Capacity Building</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Approached adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a Cyclical &amp; Iterative Process</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powering Sharing in a Pluralistic Y-A Partnership</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify &amp; Report Youth Strengths</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Relevance &amp; an Ecological Perspective</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Community as a Unit of Identity</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Analysis of Social Reality</td>
<td>Approached adequate</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify &amp; Report Community Strengths</td>
<td>Approached adequate</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of Power Differentials</td>
<td>Approached adequate</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Generated Project Idea</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting &amp; Dissemination of Results</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy for Social Action</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Group Processes</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
<td>Adequate*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicates that adult partner implementation of that essential element met minimum criteria for acceptable fidelity in that program.
Table 3.10 Total dose and fidelity across all sessions for the YPAR only and YPAR + PA programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YPAR Essential Element</th>
<th>YPAR Only</th>
<th></th>
<th>YPAR + PA</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dose</td>
<td>Fidelity</td>
<td>Dose</td>
<td>Fidelity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogic &amp; Reflexive Process</td>
<td>2/4 (50%)</td>
<td>70/94 (74.47%)*</td>
<td>3/7 (42.90%)</td>
<td>75/100 (75%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-learning &amp; Capacity Building</td>
<td>2/4 (50%)</td>
<td>174/224 (77.68%)*</td>
<td>2/7 (28.60%)</td>
<td>173/238 (72.69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a Cyclical &amp; Iterative Process</td>
<td>3/4 (75%)*</td>
<td>85/110 (77.27%)*</td>
<td>5/7 (71.40%)</td>
<td>104/122 (85.25%)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powering Sharing in a Pluralistic Y-A Partnership</td>
<td>3/4 (75%)*</td>
<td>102/134 (76.12%)*</td>
<td>6/7 (85.71%)**</td>
<td>113/138 (81.88%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify &amp; Report Youth Strengths</td>
<td>4/4 (100%)**</td>
<td>45/60 (75%)*</td>
<td>7/7 (100%)**</td>
<td>45/60 (75%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Relevance &amp; an Ecological Perspective</td>
<td>3/4 (75%)*</td>
<td>117/152 (76.97%)*</td>
<td>3/7 (42.90%)</td>
<td>102/152 (67.11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Community as a Unit of Identity</td>
<td>3/4 (75%)*</td>
<td>19/30 (63.33%)</td>
<td>5/7 (71.40%)</td>
<td>15/30 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Analysis of Social Reality</td>
<td>3/4 (75%)*</td>
<td>69/94 (73.40%)</td>
<td>4/7 (57.10%)</td>
<td>78/112 (69.64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify &amp; Report Community Strengths</td>
<td>3/4(75%)*</td>
<td>31/42 (73.81%)</td>
<td>3/7 (49.20%)</td>
<td>30/46 (65.22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of Power Differentials</td>
<td>2/3 (66.70%)</td>
<td>28/38 (73.68%)</td>
<td>2/3 (66.70%)</td>
<td>22/36 (61.11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR Essential Element</td>
<td>YPAR Only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dose</td>
<td>Fidelity</td>
<td>Dose</td>
<td>Fidelity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Generated Project Idea</td>
<td>1/2 (50%)</td>
<td>13/16 (81.25%)*</td>
<td>3/3 (100%)*</td>
<td>15/18 (83.33%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting &amp; Dissemination of Results</td>
<td>2/2 (100%)**</td>
<td>5/6 (83.33%)*</td>
<td>2/2 (100%)**</td>
<td>10/10 (100%)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy for Social Action</td>
<td>1/1 (100%)**</td>
<td>1/2 (50%)</td>
<td>1/1 (100%)**</td>
<td>2/2 (100%)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Group Processes</td>
<td>4/4 (100%)**</td>
<td>261/310 (84.19%)*</td>
<td>6/7 (85.71%)**</td>
<td>268/310 (86.45%)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Positive group processes is not a YPAR essential element, but is important for implementation of the curriculum and the relationship between the adult partners and youth and youth with each other. A YPAR session met adequate dose if there were no essential element subcomponent ratings of zero across all adult partners who led that session. Overall adequate dose was achieved if 75% or more sessions had adequate dose. To calculate fidelity, all observer ratings of the essential element subcomponents were totaled, and divided by the maximum possible rating for that essential element. Essential elements were classified as having acceptable fidelity if the actual rating/total possible rating was 75% or greater, and high fidelity if it was 85% or greater. Acceptable dose/fidelity is denoted by * and high dose/fidelity is denoted by **.*
Table 3.11 Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data using the observer, youth, and adult partner perspectives

**Presence of Supporting Conditions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>YPAR Operationalization</th>
<th>Quality of Evidence of Quality Implementation of the Essential Element</th>
<th>Observational Tool</th>
<th>For Raters</th>
<th>For Youth</th>
<th>For Adult Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YPAR only</td>
<td>Youth are included in defining community as a unit of identity.</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Adequate dose Unacceptable fidelity</td>
<td>In the YPAR only program, youths’ responses were more general and vague. Youth comments about their school focused on their teachers and students’ abilities. Students described their aftercare program as “organized,” “nice,”</td>
<td>Students were frustrated with their lack of opportunities for healthy food at school and physical activity in aftercare, the school day, and in the community. One adult partner reflected on barriers to PA in the community and program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*YPAR Essential Element: Define community as a unit of identity.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YPAR + PA</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Inadequate dose Unacceptable fidelity</th>
<th>“cool,” and “active.”</th>
<th>No data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth described a sense of community and connection with their aftercare program. Students appreciated adults caring about students’ perspectives. A few students said the aftercare staff met their needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Type</td>
<td>YPAR Operationalization</td>
<td>Quality of Evidence of Quality Implementation of the Essential Element</td>
<td>Observational Tool</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR only</td>
<td>Youth strengths are identified during the research process by adult partners and their peers. Their strengths are used to guide task involvement. Youth strengths are reported in their own words in publications.</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>Three adult partners noted youths’ strengths in their journals without being prompted. One wrote that they love to talk, do hair, and dance. Another commented on their ability to share without being prompted. The third adult partners wrote about allowing students to choose tasks based on their strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR + PA</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>The most frequently listed youth strengths were nice (N=6), helpful (N=5), smart (N=5), leader (N=4), cool (N=4), kind (N=3), and fun (N=3).</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Type</td>
<td>YPAR Operationalization</td>
<td>Quality of Evidence of Quality Implementation of the Essential Element</td>
<td>Observational Tool</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR only</td>
<td>Youth and adult partners discuss and/or take pictures of community strengths. Adult partners continue to point out these strengths, and to identify more, throughout their work with the youth.</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Adequate dose Unacceptable fidelity</td>
<td>Youth focused on broad strengths of their school. The most frequently listed school strength was that the “school had the best kids in the world/has brilliant students” (N=2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR + PA</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Inadequate dose Unacceptable fidelity</td>
<td>Youth mainly highlighted strengths of their aftercare program. The most frequently listed aftercare program strengths were fun (N=9), like going to the gym/playing sports/being active (N=5), and helpful staff (N=2).</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Type</td>
<td>YPAR Operationalization</td>
<td>Quality of Evidence of Quality Implementation of the Essential Element</td>
<td>Observational Tool</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>YPAR only</td>
<td>Near the beginning of the YPAR process, youth work with peers and adults to identify a project idea. The project direction is ideally based on the youth’s decision, but sometimes it is a choice from options that adults provide.</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Inadequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>No youth highlighted their control of the project as something they enjoyed. The youth response most related to “youth development of project idea” was “letting us express ourselves.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR + PA</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>One youth wrote “complete creative control” and another “...I liked how we get to do it without adults telling us what to do.”</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Type</td>
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<tr>
<td>YPAR only</td>
<td>Youth participate in cycles of photo voice to identify and revise their change idea.</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>Youth reported enjoying taking pictures, walking around outside, and talking with each other; they did not mention the poster creation or presentation. Youths’ mean rating of their participatory behavior did not significantly increase from baseline to post intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR + PA</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>Many youth reported liking multiple aspects of the research process, such as walking around the school, taking pictures, making the poster, or giving the presentation.</td>
<td>No data</td>
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</table>
One youth noted liking “taking the pictures, going around the school, making the poster” another wrote “looking at the pictures,” and a third reflected “I liked that we worked really hard on the poster. We added a lot of pretty stuff to it.”

Youths’ average rating of their participatory behavior increased from baseline to post intervention.
<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YPAR only</strong></td>
<td>Youth and adults discuss what they have learned from each other. Adult partners teach youth skills that promote PYD.</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Inadequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>Youth learned how to use photos for research purposes. Two youth wrote that the project built capacity for new friendships. One youth specifically referenced learning to collaborate/cooperate more. Seven youth shared that working together helped them learn new ways to be active. Additional capacities were that one youth noted learning manners, and two wrote participating helped prepare them for success/the future.</td>
<td>Adult partners reflected on learning about themselves through the process of working with the youth, specifically in the areas of leadership, difficulties navigating being a friend versus a mentor/adult partner, and group dynamics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*YPAR Essential Element: Foster co-learning and capacity building between adult partners and youth.*
<p>| YPAR + PA | Fair | Inadequate dose Unacceptable fidelity | Youth learned how to use photos for research purposes. Seven youth wrote that the project built capacity for new friendships. Two youth specifically referenced learning to collaborate/cooperate more. Three youth shared that working together helped them learn new ways to be active. Additional capacities were that four students reported that participating helped them build confidence, and one listed gaining public speaking skills. | No data |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YPAR only</td>
<td>Youth and adults reflect together in shared group discussions about various YPAR related topics.</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Inadequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>Youth provided evidence that discussions occurred within groups: “they listened to us,” and “liked taking the pictures, talking to them, dancing around.” Another youth noted “it taught me to work together” and other youth wrote “listening to others” and “letting us express ourselves.”</td>
<td>The majority of the adult partners reflected on their group processes and wrote that they found ways to manage it well and promote youth voice/leadership within their groups. Adult partners reflected on areas for improvement for themselves in promoting dialogue and reflection with youth, especially in pushing their agenda when youth opinions did not align with their values (e.g., littering behavior). A different adult partner noted some difficulty with switching to the discussion of more serious topics with a large group of boys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR + PA</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Inadequate dose</td>
<td>Acceptable fidelity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth reported that they enjoyed the discussions and the ability to be themselves and state their opinions: “How anyone could come up with an idea that they value or have a strong opinion on” Another student shared a similar sentiment on adult partner and group acceptance of new ideas, “I liked how we all shared our ideas and agreed on them with no argument.” Two other youth wrote about how they enjoyed being able to be honest within their groups. Another youth reported liking the process of “working together and learning something” and another student reflected “students that wouldn’t normally be in</td>
<td>Youth Photo Journals: One group reported that what they liked about working with their adult partner was “working together as a team” and another group wrote, “got to work together with friends; helped build friendships.”</td>
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group with me, became closer friends."

There is also evidence that some youth learned how to take new perspectives through the group work. "That it showed me a different part of pictures," and another student wrote, "I learned that there is always a bigger picture to everything."
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</table>
| YPAR only    | Adult partners explicitly set aside time to learn from youth about aspects of youth culture and history, which helps provide a better understanding of the youths’ reality. Youth and adult partners also discuss the history of youth engagement in health initiatives, and how this influences their lives currently. | Fair                                                               | Adequate dose Unacceptable fidelity | Only one student reflected on noticing issues, “it showed me the problems.”  
Depth of understanding and reflection was not present in the youth qualitative survey responses.                                              | The adult partners reflected that youth may have had a difficult time understanding, thinking critically, and remembering the purpose of the project during the short time frame in which it was implemented and due to their level of development.  
The same adult partners reflected that they heard youth say that they do not believe their opinions matter or that change will happen.  
The adult partners of the boy groups reflected on the difficulties in getting the boys to take the poster creation and picture analysis portion seriously. |
<p>| YPAR + PA | Fair | Inadequate dose Unacceptable fidelity | Youth reflected on gaining a new perspective on the world around them. “looking at the world differently” and another noted “there is always a bigger picture to everything.” Another youth wrote “it has taught me if I believe in something then I can make a difference.” Youth wrote that participation helped them see problems that need to be solved in their schools, aftercare program, and community that they had not noticed before. “the project made me realize that the community around us needs work” and another noted, “it helped me learn about something we need in the school.” | No data |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Surveys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YPAR only</td>
<td>Youth are involved in the reporting and dissemination of results through presentations at the parent night, and their responses are included in publications.</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>Youth did not note enjoyment of the poster creation or presentation portion of the research process.</td>
<td>Most adult partners reflected on the poster creation part of the collaborative research process and how they involved youth in their groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR + PA</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>Eight youth noted that they enjoyed creating the poster and/or presenting it to others. “I liked making the poster and presenting it” another youth reflected that the project should continue to have, “the poster and having to create an actual meaning for the poster.” Other youth wrote about how reporting and disseminating the results helped them. One noted,</td>
<td></td>
<td>No data</td>
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*YPAR Essential Element: Youth are included in the reporting and dissemination of research findings.*
“It helped me with my public speaking skills” and another reflected, “I’m sometimes shy, but I did it! Helped me build my confidence in speaking in front of other people.”
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YPAR only</td>
<td>Youth presentations to stakeholders advocate for social/systems change. The action should benefit youth and promote PYD outcomes through the advocacy process.</td>
<td>YPAR Essential Element: Youth involvement in advocacy for social action.</td>
<td>Adequate dose Unacceptable fidelity</td>
<td>All students replied “yes” when asked if they wanted to keep working together to make changes. Three youth suggested an action idea for future work or listed personal meaning of their action. “We should make a change and keep working on the basketball goal,” “yes, because it’s important and fun,” and “yes, I want to make a lot of changes.” Youth reported motivation to influence did not significantly increase from baseline to post intervention.</td>
<td>All adult partners reflected in their journals about youth’s change ideas. One group wanted to change the “dilapidated Basketball Court outside.” Others reflected that students wanted recess and/or movement breaks throughout the day. They want to run but are not able to use the track and so run down the halls after school. Other adult partners noted that youth wanted more healthy/palatable cafeteria food.</td>
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### YPAR + PA

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<tr>
<th>YPAR + PA</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</th>
<th>Most students (N=24) replied “yes” when asked if they wanted to keep working together.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>Eight youth suggested an action idea for future work or listed personal meaning of their action: “we can do more research and present to the school board,” “I would love to keep working for the dance team,” “yes, and include all grades, “yes, I think we could encourage the teachers to understand students POV more often,” “I would say yes what we did is very important and everything everyone did,” “Yes, so everyone can actually enjoy or do what we fought so hard to make happen for everyone,” and “I even wanted to change the community more than it is now.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No data</td>
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<td>Youth reported motivation to influence did not significantly increase from baseline to post intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Quality of Evidence of Quality Implementation of the Essential Element</td>
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<tr>
<td>YPAR only</td>
<td>The youth-adult partnership is viewed as a catalyst for change. It serves as a corrective experience from the typical youth-adult relationships in society. Adults use their strengths to complement youths. The youth-adult partnership promotes PYD, youth empowerment, and positive, goal directed health behavior through a power sharing, supportive praxis process.</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
</tr>
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</table>
active during the photo voice project: “They don’t be hard on us and they don’t play no fun games like basketball. Or go outside and have races with everyone.”

In a different group, they also wrote that they desired more physical activity options, “we wish we could choose more activities, like dance.”

In the boy group, youth wrote that they often felt “bored” and “lazy” with their adult partners.

Adult Partner Journal: In each journal, every adult partner said that they shared power with youth in some way, and did not push their own agenda during the majority of the session.

Adult partners also reflected instances where they could have given the youth more power, but were restricted by
<p>| YPAR + PA | Excellent | Adequate dose | On average, youth agreed that their relationship with their adult partner was positive. One student wrote “we could talk about anything. We could be completely honest,” another noted “1) the fun we had 2) how our ideas were considered 3) how nice and caring the instructors were,” and a third wrote “All of them were REALLY nice and even when we didn't want to play, they were always encouraging.” Youth reported perceived control did significantly increase from baseline to post intervention. | Youth Photo Journals: Strengths of adult partners: “they’re always happy, smiling; a good listener, nice, positive.” How the adult partner can improve: “be more creative with posters, allow for more creativity, we got it! let us have more control.” | time, the lesson plan, or number of youth present. Another adult partner reflected on how he was able to get the youth to move forward with poster creation while using their own ideas. |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>YPAR only</td>
<td>A power-sharing process is made explicit through the discussion of power and how it may influence youths’ relationships with adults, both within the research project and outside of it. Youth and adult partners discuss who holds power over their health, and the acceptance of youth using their voices in society.</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Inadequate dose Unacceptable fidelity</td>
<td>There was no evidence for this essential element in the youth qualitative survey responses. Youths’ report of their average sociopolitical skills did not significantly increase from baseline to post intervention.</td>
<td>There was evidence of this essential element in one adult partner journal entry. She reflected on the power differential between adults and youth and how it relates to youth driven change. She wrote that some youth did not believe adults would take them seriously and make the changes they propose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR + PA</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Inadequate dose Unacceptable fidelity</td>
<td>There was no evidence for this essential element in the youth qualitative survey responses. Youths’ report of their average sociopolitical skills significantly increased from baseline to post intervention.</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Type</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YPAR only</strong></td>
<td>Youth define what is most important to them and most relevant to their local health context. Adult partners “fit” the intervention to make it relevant, and use an ecological framework that takes into account individual, school, family, community, and societal influences on health.</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Adequate dose Acceptable fidelity</td>
<td>One youth wrote “it helped me a lot because this project can help people in this community improve” and another student noted “we should make a change and keep working on the basketball goal.”</td>
<td>Comments related to this essential element mainly focused on areas for improvement in the school and community that youth mentioned while working together. Youth said that they wished after school focused less on homework. They also said they wish they could be more active regularly. Adult partners from two groups also reflected on the discussion of safety concerns that interfere with youth being able to participate in physical activity in parks in their neighborhoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR + PA</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Inadequate dose Unacceptable fidelity</td>
<td>One student reflected “I learned that there is always a bigger picture to everything” and another wrote “it helped me learn about something we need in the school.” “It was fun, I got to talk about things that were helpful in my community.”</td>
<td>No data</td>
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CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

We sought to address gaps in the general YPAR and adolescent obesity intervention literature through the implementation of the bolded components of the theoretical model found in figures one and two. YPAR is typically conducted with older adolescents, as a standalone curriculum or project, and within social change focused after school programs or elective classes in high schools (Jacquez et al., 2013; Ozer et al., 2010; Vaughn et al; 2013). Yet, middle school is an opportune time to intervene to change health behavior (Benson et al., 1998; Millstein & Litt, 1993; Scales et al., 2000), and integrating YPAR into a PA intervention in pre-existing aftercare programs increases reach to underserved at-risk youth and aligns the intervention with youth values and interests (Cammarto & Fine, 2008), which can improve intervention effectiveness. To address gaps in research, we implemented YPAR as usual and YPAR alongside a PA intervention with middle school students within two pre-existing aftercare programs. We successfully adapted general YPAR and photo voice methods for implementation with middle school youth, within aftercare programs, and alongside a PA intervention.

Fidelity to YPAR essential elements has been examined in elective high school classrooms implementing general YPAR (Ozer & Douglas, 2015), but the fidelity of health focused YPAR has not been evaluated. Adolescent participatory obesity prevention literature typically measures health behavior or systems level outcomes, but
neglects to measure intraindividual processes, such as empowerment, that are critical mechanisms in health behavior change (Damon et al., 2003, Suleiman et al., 2006). To address these measurement gaps, we set out to design and explore the feasibility of implementing health focused YPAR. We systematically measured fidelity of implementation to health focused YPAR essential elements within those programs using the modified observational tool that can be found in Appendix A, and we measured the impact of participation on youth empowerment using the measure from Appendix B.

Trained raters successfully documented the implementation of the YPAR essential elements in both programs. Adult partners in the YPAR only program achieved adequate dose on more essential elements than adult partners in the YPAR + PA program. In contrast, adult partners in the YPAR + PA program achieved adequate fidelity on more YPAR essential elements than adult partners in the YPAR only program, and youth in this program reported increased empowerment between baseline and post intervention. The essential elements of both programs that were implemented with adequate dose and acceptable fidelity are underlined and starred in the note section in figures one and two. Although there were unique implementation challenges identified in both settings, through a concurrent, mixed method triangulation design integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, we determined that it is feasible to implement and evaluate health focused YPAR within a pre-existing aftercare program, and integrated within a PA intervention in a pre-existing aftercare program. A summary and evaluation of the triangulation results are also displayed in table 3.11. In the current work, we aimed to 1) fit YPAR to middle school youth, aftercare, and a PA intervention, 2) examine the dose and fidelity of implementation of the YPAR essential elements and
compare/contrast differences between the YPAR only design and the YPAR + PA design, 3) examine the impact of YPAR on youth reported empowerment, and 4) explore triangulation to generate hypotheses about the feasibility of this new approach. I reflect on the achievement of the aims in detail in the following sections.

4.1 Reflections on developmental processes and YPAR

As part of aim one, YPAR was modified to fit middle school youth, aftercare settings, and a PA intervention. The development of the health focused YPAR curriculum was guided by PYD (Lerner et al., 2005), TYPE (Wong et al., 2010), and SDT. SDT proposes that individuals have basic socioemotional needs (i.e., relatedness, competence, autonomy) which become increasingly important during adolescence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). We infused the basic socio-emotional needs of SDT into the health focused YPAR curriculum to align with the guiding framework of the larger PA intervention. The promotion of relatedness, autonomy, and competence within a PA intervention in a pre-existing aftercare program can create a socio-emotional climate that fosters youths’ intrinsic motivation for positive, goal directed behavior (Damon et al., 2003; Sullivan & Larson, 2010; Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Adult partners implemented with quality the components of the curriculum that align with socioemotional needs (i.e., relatedness, autonomy, competence) of SDT (Ryan & Deco, 2000). For example, “highlight youth strengths” and “show interest in youths’ lives outside the program” were implemented with quality by adult partners in every session. To meet the socioemotional need for relatedness with peers, relationships that are increasingly important during adolescence (Steinberg, 2014) adult partners reminded youth to point out the strengths of each other and their work. The research process also
aligned with youths’ need for relatedness. Youth worked collaboratively with peers throughout the research process. Youth qualitative responses indicate fulfillment of the need for relatedness through YPAR. Many youth in both programs shared that the part of the program they liked the most was walking around and taking pictures with their friends, and that their friendships were enhanced through involvement.

In addition to fulfilling youths’ needs for relatedness, adult partners promoted autonomy through the power-sharing Y-A partnership. They provided opportunities for youth to take leadership roles and be involved in decision making about the overall project and the general group processes. Power-sharing processes occurred within groups, in which youth talked more than adult partners and group discussions centered on youth ideas. The research process was also autonomy promoting. Youth had choices within the larger PA focus, such as the location of pictures within school grounds, whether to change a PA strength or challenge, and whether to make a change in the program or school. Some youth qualitative survey responses provide evidence for adult partner promotion of autonomy. For example, youth in the YPAR + PA program noted that they enjoyed having creative control in the project and that they were able to take the lead.

Growth in youths’ competence occurred while working with adult partners and peers in a cyclical and iterative photo voice research process. For example, youth learned a research method that they can utilize to advocate for change that benefits them. In their qualitative responses, youth listed a variety of skills that they gained through involvement in YPAR. Skill building is one component of fulfilling youths’ socio-emotional need for competence.
The health focused YPAR essential elements aligned with the basic-socioemotional needs from SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000) the guiding framework that informed the development and implementation of the larger PA intervention. In the current study, we determined that health focused YPAR can be successfully implemented and increase youth empowerment within an intervention with similar theoretical grounding. Future work should examine whether health focused YPAR is feasible to implement in health interventions with different theoretical underpinnings, such as behavioral or cognitive focused adolescent obesity interventions.

Health focused YPAR was designed to meet adolescents’ socio-emotional needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, and it also can support developmental processes that emerge during adolescence. Youth gain behavioral autonomy during psychosocial development in early to middle adolescence. Behavioral autonomy is the capacity to make independent decisions and follow through with them. These changes improve youths’ abilities to simultaneously hold multiple viewpoints in their minds, which allows them to compare perspectives. Enhanced role-taking capabilities permit them to consider someone else’s perspective. Adolescents become able to think in hypothetical terms, which improves their abilities to weigh long-term consequences of choosing one course of action over another (Steinberg, 2014). Value autonomy, conceptions of moral, political, ideological, and religious issues, or ideas of what is right or wrong, also develops during adolescence. It typically occurs later (i.e., between the ages of 18 to 20), following the development of emotional and behavioral independence. Growth in value autonomy allows adolescents to become increasingly abstract in the way they think. Furthermore, their beliefs become rooted in general principles that have an

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ideological basis, and begin to be founded in their own value system rather than ones passed on by parents or authority figures (Steinberg, 2014).

Observational ratings of dose and fidelity of the YPAR essential elements are consistent with the developmental literature on behavioral and value autonomy. Adult partners were able to implement elements of the YPAR curriculum that related to behavioral autonomy with higher dose and fidelity than elements that may have required psychosocial processes of value autonomy. For example, youth received adequate dose and fidelity across programs on subcomponents of essential elements related to strategic thinking, such as planning for next steps in the project, project tasks being guided by youths’ strengths, democratically deciding on a change area, and working together to follow through on poster completion. Adult partners were not able to implement other elements of strategic thinking of adequate dose and fidelity across programs, however. Adult partners in the YPAR + PA program struggled to support youth in asking questions of each other and learning new ways of thinking from each other, while adult partners in the YPAR only program had difficulty guiding youth in analyzing alternative points of view and youth potentially changing their perspective based on new information. The essential elements related to value autonomy, such as “authentic analysis of social reality” and “discussion of power differentials,” were not implemented by adult partners with adequate dose and fidelity in both programs.

Processes related to the development of behavioral and value autonomy may partially explain why discussions of abstract concepts, such as cultural influences on health and who holds power to make health decisions that impact youths’ lives, were difficult to initiate and sustain within groups. Since the growth of value autonomy occurs
later in adolescence, youth in the current study may not yet have developed the cognitive abilities to abstractly reflect on the societal, historical, and cultural influences on their health, and how power differentials between youth and adults impact their health (Steinberg, 2014). Evidence in an adult partner journal aligns with this hypothesis. She reflected that youth in her group could state that being healthy was important and list reasons why when asked. However, she noted that they did not seem to have an intrinsic understanding of the concepts, the desire to make positive health behavior change, or the knowledge of how the project related to their lives. An alternative explanation is also possible; Youth may have had the ability, but perhaps the length and structure of sessions, or the strategies we used to promote discussion, did not align with this sample of youths’ needs. Since other studies have had some success in helping younger youth reflect on these areas together (Langhout & Fernandez, 2015; Langhout & Thomas, 2010) examining other strategies for doing this that have been effective with elementary and middle school youth will be fruitful for future work.

Participatory projects in the empowerment evaluation and YPAR literature have been successfully implemented with elementary school students. As one example, in an empowerment evaluation focusing on empowerment capacity building, fourth and fifth grade students in an after-school program engaged in effective evaluation research cycles to improve their school using photo voice, focus groups, and other research methods. The authors mapped each phase of the project onto the ten empowerment evaluation principles (Langhout & Fernandez, 2015), similar to the mapping of the participatory research principles in the current study. However, the authors did not systematically evaluate implementation of the empowerment evaluation principles, nor did they examine
the essential elements of “authentic analysis of youths’ social reality” and “discussion of power differentials.” Based on these differences from the current study, Langhout and Fernandez (2015) likely focused on the critical and collective inquiry and action components of YPAR praxis rather than reflection. There may be evidence that younger youth can participate in these cognitive processes, though perhaps through more action or research oriented procedures, and likely not in the same way as older adolescents.

Despite similarities between the current project and Langhout and Fernandez’ (2015), there are capacity differences that make implementation of the critical reasoning components of the YPAR methods perhaps more feasible in the empowerment evaluation project. Langhout and Fernandez’ (2015) after-school program lasts for two years, so youth are involved in the project for a much longer time. Additional time allows adults to teach youth reflection processes in groups, critical analysis of power and systems level impacts, and a variety of research methods at an appropriate developmental level, and to modify the teaching style and information to fit youths’ needs. Unlike the current study, Langhout and Fernandez (2015) did not “fit” their project within a larger, pre-existing aftercare program; their after-school program was created by their community research team at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Due to its upkeep by a research team, essential processes that work in their program may not be feasible in general aftercare programs serving underresourced youth. The social change focus of their program likely led to the engagement of students already interested in the topic, which is a selection effect. Additionally, youth may have had previous experience with volunteering or social action, and been accustomed to discussions of more abstract topics. In contrast, in the current study, all students participated that were present in aftercare, regardless of stated
interest, in order to promote inclusion. Due to the inclusive nature of the work, youths’ interest, abilities, and opinions about the feasibility of health focused social change ranged on a wide continuum in the aftercare programs.

There are other alternative explanations for the difficulty adult partners had with engaging youth in discussions related to power in larger systems in pre-existing after care programs in the current work. For example, two adult partners from the YPAR only program reflected in their journals that youth did not feel that their voices mattered at their school and that people in power would listen to their change ideas and take them seriously. Therefore, youth attitudes, perceived understanding, and level of engagement in the health focused YPAR curriculum can also be impacted by the values and norms of settings, such as the aftercare program, school and neighborhood contexts in youths’ day-to-day lives.

4.2 Reflections on differences in dose of implementation in each program

In addition to the impact of the broader systems, the structure of the design can also impact the feasibility of the implementation of the health focused YPAR curriculum. I reflect on implementation differences between programs that could impact dose as part of aim two. The YPAR only program implementation occurred for 75 minutes once a week, compared to 20-30 minute sessions in the YPAR + PA program. The additional 30-45 minutes that the adult partners in the YPAR only program had each session likely provided more opportunities for dosage: to get to know the youth and their perspectives on their communities on a deeper level, promote critical dialogue, and trouble shoot and try different methods for reflection on a multitude of topics. Additionally, having more
time together each session promotes a natural “cyclical and iterative process,” as there is additional opportunity for idea generation, research, and revisions based on youth feedback.

Though there were more sessions in the YPAR + PA program when compared to the YPAR only program, the sessions were shorter in length and groups rotated through YPAR, so each adult partner ran multiple groups on the same topic during an hour time frame. Perhaps due to the structure, adult partners in the YPAR + PA program had difficulty achieving adequate dosage in some sessions on the subcomponents of essential elements that required a deeper level of analysis or depth of connection. Specifically, the subcomponents that were implemented with inadequate dose by adult partners in the YPAR + PA program are related to information that is easier to obtain the more time individuals spend together. Due to the fast pace of the group session, and the shorter time, it may have been difficult to find ways to promote discussion of program strengths or youth views on their communities. If it was difficult for adult partners to find ways to obtain this information in discussions during the first and second sessions, then they lacked a solid base of information from youth about their program and school which they could expand on within each group in future sessions.

The YPAR + PA program groups had only one adult partner, which made it difficult to achieve a deeper connection while balancing the basic implementation of the curriculum and group order. In contrast, in the YPAR only program, there were two adult partners per group, one which seemed to organically take on the role to promote order and monitor the curriculum to ensure the group stayed on task, with the other focused on relationships and getting to know youth in depth. Adult partners splitting tasks in this
way in the YPAR only program may have assisted them in more closely adhering to the dosage of the curriculum as developed. As evidence, one adult partner reflected in his journal that in his group, it worked well to have one person focus on the implementation of the curriculum, maintaining group order, and adherence to the group generated rules, while the other focused more on bonding, getting to know the youth, pointing out their strengths, and making the process fun and engaging. Furthermore, adult partners in the YPAR only program found ways to integrate the discussion of school and program strengths, and how the photo voice project is relevant to youths’ lives during the picture taking process and small group activities. In contrast, in the YPAR + PA program, adult partners did not capitalize on using the picture taking and poster making time during sessions three through six to expand discussion on program and school strengths or how the project is relevant to youths’ lives.

The lack of expansion in the YPAR + PA program may be because the adult partners led the groups alone versus in pairs like in the YPAR only program, and so may have been focused on more basic group processes. In the YPAR + PA program, maintaining order and keeping youth on task, while also attempting to implement all components of the curriculum for the day, may have taken precedence over in depth discussion or high quality of implementation for these adult partners. Two adult partners may be necessary for adequate dose and quality of implementation when conducting photo voice projects with groups of middle school youth in pre-existing after care programs paired with an intervention in order to effectively promote critical, in depth discussion of more complex topics during a shorter time period.
In future iterations, it may be helpful for adult partners to journal about youth and program/school strengths immediately following each session, and review before implementation each week, in order to achieve higher fidelity for the discussion of program/school strengths when health focused YPAR is paired with an intervention. Typically, adult partners took the transition time at the end of the session to tell the youth what they learned from them and ask them what they learned from each other, which was an important subcomponent of the co-learning essential element. Sometimes, the transition between group rotations was rushed, which may have led to the inadequate dose in this subcomponent in the YPAR + PA program. Even with a detailed outline and a summary outline with reminders, it was still difficult to implement all essential elements with adequate dose with one adult partner leading in a shorter time frame. In future iterations, it may be helpful to make a short reminder sheet specifically of the subcomponents of the essential elements that are more difficult to implement/more likely to be cut in a time crunch. Adult partners may also have worried that it would take some of the bonding and relationship component away if they were frequently referencing the materials. Perhaps more role play in additional trainings or more review before each session would improve implementation of these subcomponents during a fast-paced style of implementation.

Unlike the YPAR only program, the YPAR + PA adult partners did achieve adequate dose on “youth generation of project idea,” which may be because youth had more sessions to take multiple rounds of pictures (e.g., youth in the YPAR only program only had one session to take pictures). The multiple rounds of picture taking seemed to promote organic brainstorming of physical activity strengths and challenges. Groups
developed multiple change ideas and then had time to narrow them down over sessions and use democratic processes to choose the final one for their group. In future iterations of health focused YPAR, it will be fruitful to have at least six to seven sessions in order to obtain full coverage of all aspects of the curriculum. The essential elements of both programs that were implemented with adequate dose are starred in the note sections of figures one and two.

4.3 Reflections on fidelity of implementation in each program

In the previous section, I reflected on implementation differences that could have impacted dose. Next, as an additional part of aim two, I reflect on implementation differences that could impact fidelity. The YPAR + PA program contained seven sessions 20-30 minutes in length, while the YPAR only program consisted of four sessions which were 75 minutes in length. In the YPAR + PA program, adult partners had more sessions in which they could work together to build and revise their project change idea and therefore promote high quality implementation of the essential element “use of a cyclical and iterative process.” In the YPAR only program, due to its short nature, the first round of pictures was the only round, and their first change idea that everyone in the group agreed upon was typically the one that was utilized for the project. The additional sessions and the flexibility that comes with additional time for revisions may have also contributed to higher fidelity to the essential element “power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership” in the YPAR + PA program. For example, adult partners in the YPAR only program reflected in their journals that they tried not to push their own agenda and felt like they shared power with the youth. However, they recognized that when time got short, they sometimes had to make executive decisions about the change idea, pictures,
captions on the poster, and the plan for the presentation. In contrast, adult partners did not make any project change idea decisions or picture inclusion decisions for youth in the YPAR + PA program. Overall, there was less fidelity to power-sharing process in the YPAR only program when short on time.

In addition to the time crunch, there were other logistical barriers that occurred during the YPAR only program which made planning for a quality final presentation difficult. Originally, the implementation in both programs was planned to be the same span of weeks. However, two sessions in, I discovered that the after-school program ended about a month before the regular school year ended, and I had to shorten the curriculum to reflect that. Shortening the curriculum mid-implementation led to aspects of the curriculum being cut which youth were excited about, like being able to participate in another round of picture taking. There was also difficulty with navigating the communication channels between myself and the aftercare program staff in regards to scheduling, which led youth to also receive mixed messages about next steps with the process and the parent night. The lack of youth inclusion in decision making in these larger project and structural processes is not ideal for promotion of a power-sharing, pluralistic Y-A partnership. Fidelity of implementation of the power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A can be negatively impacted by time and program structure barriers. The essential elements of both programs that were implemented with acceptable fidelity are underlined in the note sections of figures one and two.

4.4 Reflections on the power-sharing, pluralistic Y-A partnership
We expected that trained raters would be able to document the implementation of all of the YPAR essential elements, but due to the gaps in the participatory adolescent obesity prevention literature in the assessment of the essential element “power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership,” we posited this process would be more difficult to implement and evaluate. We added additional measurement to thoroughly assess this essential element and address gaps in the literature. Based on the triangulation of data from multiple methods and sources, adult partners in both programs were able to implement this principle with acceptable dose and fidelity, which is also highlighted in the note sections of figures one and two. In studies with the main aim of impacting adolescent obesity through participatory methods, without the aim of furthering the literature on the Y-A partnership, authors may neglect to describe and evaluate both effective and ineffective Y-A relationship processes. Documenting these processes in participatory research with adults and youth, regardless of the study aim, is important.

Documenting the Y-A partnership process is fruitful because there is still some debate in the literature related to how much control over the research process is truly beneficial for the positive development of involved youth (Wong et al., 2010). Wong and colleagues (2010) conceptualize this debate in the TYPE pyramid, which classifies three domains of Y-A partnerships: adult driven, shared (pluralistic), and youth driven. The literature is approaching consensus that the most beneficial balance of power in Y-A collaborative research is a pluralistic partnership which is posited to maximize PYD and empowerment through power sharing relationships with adults who can allow them to gain access to resources, funds, and adult talents while still having major voice in contributing to a project that is important to them (Wong et al., 2010). Furthermore, the
level of involvement and power sharing that adults allow for youth in the research process in a health focused intervention can affect whether they will continue to participate in school and community improvement efforts (Bardwell et al., 2009; Branch & Chester, 2009; Benson et al., 1998; Lerner, 2004), become engaged citizens (Branch & Chester, Yoshida et al., 2011), and feel empowered to make healthy decisions (Damon et al., 2003; Dawes & Larson, 2011; Hannay et al., 2013; Raymore et al., 1999; Scales et al., 2000; Toussaint et al., 2011). We added additional measurement for the documentation and evaluation of the essential element “power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership” in the current study, due its low documentation in the adolescent participatory obesity prevention literature.

By documenting the Y-A partnership process in the current study, there is evidence from multiple sources to demonstrate the feasibility of implementing a power-sharing pluralistic Y-A partnership in health focused YPAR in a pre-existing aftercare program and within a larger PA intervention. Adult partners implemented the YPAR essential element “power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership” with adequate dose and fidelity in both programs, which means that, in each session, they were deliberate in letting youth lead and minimized the times when they pushed their own agenda. Adult partners also met adequate dose and fidelity for positive group processes, and on a rating scale, on average, groups of youth agreed that they had a positive relationship with their adult partners. Youth qualitative journal responses provided evidence for positive relationships with adult partners, and some youth also commented on enjoying leading the processes and knowing their input mattered, which are core processes of effective YPA.
4.5 Reflections on Empowerment

Youth involvement in YPAR, which includes youth in all stages of a research process Jacquez et al., 2013) and power-sharing in decision making with adults, promotes empowerment (Cammarto & Fine, 2008). Consistent with theory and the general YPAR literature, in aim three, we expected increases in empowerment in both aftercare programs at the conclusion of YPAR (Ozer & Douglas, 2013). The current work is the first health focused YPAR study to date that has evaluated youth changes in empowerment. Empowerment is a critical mechanism to demonstrate feasibility of the YPAR curriculum in the current study and for health behavior change (Benson et al., 1998; Hannay et al., 2013; Scales et al., 2000; Toussaint et al., 2011). We posited that youth empowerment would be especially likely to increase in programs in which the YPAR essential elements were implemented with acceptable dose and fidelity. Though adult partners in the YPAR + PA program did not achieve adequate dose in as many essential elements as the YPAR only program, they did implement more essential elements with acceptable fidelity. The significant increase in empowerment only in the YPAR + PA program, then, may demonstrate that quality implementation of the YPAR essential elements may be more important for empowerment versus more coverage of the essential elements but with lower fidelity. The significant findings are illustrated in figure two with the bolded arrow. Evaluation of project essential elements is important to be able to assess implementation failure as one possible explanation for differences in process outcomes.

There are a variety of possible explanations for the increases in empowerment in the YPAR + PA program, but not the YPAR only program. Adult partners implemented
“youth involvement in reporting and dissemination of results,” “power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership, and “advocacy for social action” YPAR essential elements with higher fidelity in the YPAR + PA program. These strong ratings mean that youth were highly involved in decision making in the project and group discussions/activities, and took the lead in all stages of the photo voice process, which are processes that promote empowerment (Wang, 2006; Wong et al., 2010). Further, youth participation in a combination of health focused YPAR and the PA intervention that share the same SDT framework/approaches may have reinforced the development of youth empowerment (Ozer & Douglas, 2013; 2015; Deci & Ryan, 2008). Perhaps youth participation in fun, non-competitive PA with friends in the PA intervention led youth to change their attitudes and values surrounding PA and therefore invest more in the photo voice project to make a PA focused change.

There is qualitative evidence for youth investment and enjoyment of the photo voice process in the YPAR + PA program. Youth noted enjoyment of all stages of the photo voice research process, which was not the case in the YPAR only program. Additionally, youth in the YPAR + PA program could have been more likely to feel that program stakeholders would take their PA change suggestions seriously. Adults allowed choice in PA activities during the intervention, so youth may have had some preliminary evidence and confidence that adults would listen to what they had to say. Youth qualitative responses in the YPAR + PA program provide some evidence for youth noticing that their viewpoints were valued. Some youth reflected enjoyment that their voices were heard and liked that they were able to take the lead, which was not mirrored in the YPAR only program. The triangulation of data shows that pairing health focused
YPAR with a PA intervention with similar theoretical underpinnings was feasible in the current study. Mixed method findings point to an increased intraindividual benefit (i.e., empowerment) of participation in a combination intervention containing PA promoted through SDT and health focused YPAR. Empowerment is a critical process linked to health behavior (Suleiman et al., 2006).

Though the similar theoretical underpinnings of health focused YPAR and the PA intervention may explain the empowerment findings, there could be a broader, systems level explanation as well, which was not assessed in the current work. In health interventions, both systems level and individual level change are posited to occur, and the interplay between both can be important for intervention success (Ozer et al., 2013; Vaughn et al., 2013). There was greater involvement of school stakeholders and staff interest and involvement in the photo voice project in the YPAR + PA program, which could have impacted youth self-reported empowerment. One staff member in the YPAR + PA program participated with youth in the photo taking process, and most staff commented on youths’ progress on the photo voice project during each session.

Furthermore, the staff in the YPAR + PA program were also present in the areas of the program in which the youth were completing the projects and showed some level of encouragement and support. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, in the YPAR + PA program, there was a larger and more diverse stakeholder turnout for the final youth presentation, which led to the high fidelity in the “youth advocacy for social action” essential element in that program. The engaged stakeholders also spoke to some youth following their presentations about their change ideas and how they could come to fruition. A few months later, research staff discovered that all of the changes were in the
process of being implemented in the YPAR + PA program, which further underscores stakeholder investment in youths’ ideas. The actual implementation of the changes did not impact the increases in youth empowerment in the current study; however. The post intervention surveys were administered directly following the presentations in the YPAR only program, and during the week following the intervention in the YPAR + PA program, before the proposed changes occurred.

Implementation in the YPAR + PA program achieved higher fidelity and significant changes in youth empowerment, while also having more systems level stakeholder support for youths’ work. Based on these findings, health focused YPAR projects may be most effective in promoting PYD in typical aftercare programs in which there are close ties and open channels of communication between aftercare program and school staff (Lerner et al., 2004). These connections can provide integrated support for youth across systems, and greater program and school stakeholder engagement can show youth that adults are interested in their ideas, perhaps contrary to some of their beliefs (Cammarato & Fine, 2008). For example, there was evidence from adult partner journals in the YPAR only program that youth did not believe that adults would take their ideas seriously. Due to these beliefs, perhaps in the YPAR only program, the discussion of power differentials in groups with their adult partners, in which most youth said that adults did not care about what they had to say, was reinforced both by school personnel’s low turnout for the final presentation and absence of a discussion with program staff surrounding feasibility and next steps for their proposed changes. The absence of school stakeholders and low engagement of aftercare staff that could support their change efforts may have confirmed their beliefs about their level of control in larger systems that
influence their lives and health. For optimal feasibility of health focused YPAR projects, it will be beneficial to recruit programs with effective links between school and program staff (Lerner et al., 2004), and ensure stakeholders show an openness to inclusion of youth in important change processes (Cammarto & Fine, 2008).

The current work was the first study to implement YPAR standalone within pre-existing aftercare programs and alongside a PA intervention, but YPAR projects on a broad array of youth chosen topics have been implemented effectively in elective classes within high schools (Ozer & Douglas, 2013; 2015). The school environment has strengths that makes implementation of YPAR content more feasible. For example, it is easier to implement lessons about systemic influences and power in a classroom environment. In classes, youth generally are expecting to be sedentary, learning, prepared for a discussion, and involved in the class material for at least a semester. Due to structure, norms, and expectations, youth can be more open to engagement in prolonged critical thinking related activities in classroom environments. Furthermore, since YPAR is implemented in a class that already exists in the school, there is at least some level of buy-in for YPAR and valuing youth voices in the administration. There are some limitations of the within the school day, elective option, however. Students opt in, which may lead to a selection effect, in which youth already feeling empowered or high on prosocial behavior may sign up, and those that could potentially benefit most may not.

4.6 Study Strengths

Currently, YPAR is effectively implemented and evaluated in elective high school classrooms during the school day, and youth increase their empowerment and gain PYD
benefits through participation (Ozer & Douglas, 2013; 2015). Expansion of YPAR from school classrooms to aftercare is a logical next step to increase the reach of YPAR, which was one focus of our study. We examined the feasibility of implementing a health focused YPAR curriculum standalone in a pre-existing aftercare program (YPAR Only), and in an aftercare program alongside a PA intervention (YPAR + PA).

Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data in the current study provided evidence for the feasibility of implementation of the YPAR only and YPAR + PA designs as evidenced in table 3.11 and the note sections of figures one and two. Participation in the YPAR + PA program led to youth-reported increases in empowerment, a critical process for health behavior change (Benson et al., 1998; Hannay et al., 2013; Scales et al., 2000; Toussaint et al., 2011), which is designated in figure two. The improvement in self-reported empowerment and acceptable fidelity of adult partner implementation shows some preliminary evidence that YPAR essential elements can be implemented effectively: a) in a shorter time frame than typically is recommended in the participatory literature, b) with middle school youth, c) within pre-existing aftercare programs, and d) alongside a PA intervention.

YPAR has typically been implemented in high school elective classes or focused after school programs (Langhout & Fernandez, 2015; Ozer & Douglas 2013, 2015), so the broad and inclusive scope of the current program is a strength. The design allowed health focused YPAR to be integrated into pre-existing aftercare programs. The integration expanded reach to middle school youth, including disadvantaged youth, whom have less access to PYD focused programming, yet benefit most from involvement in impactful decision making (Durlak et al., 2007; Dworken et al., 2003; Larson &
Angus, 2011) and the relationships with prosocial peers and adults (Benson et al., 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 2001; Damon et al., 2003; Dworken et al., 2003; Larson et al., 2004; Lerner et al., 2005; Scales et al., 2000; Scales et al., 2006; Wong et al., 2010) that health focused YPAR provides (Hannay et al., 2013; Toussaint et al., 2011). Programs across the country would benefit from implementing YPAR in aftercare, because it allows for more youth exposure to a program that facilitates youth voice, and promotes empowerment and social change (Benson et al., 1998; Cammarato & Fine, 2008; Durlak et al., 2007; Eccles et al., 2003; Ozer & Douglas, 2013). Facilitation of programs that promote youth voice in aftercare programming seems necessary, as youth in the YPAR only aftercare program in the current project shared that they did not think adults would listen to what they have to say or take their change ideas seriously, which aligns with current society’s broader paradigm about what youth are capable of accomplishing (Cammarato & Fine, 2008). In contrast, in the YPAR + PA program, there was greater engagement of program staff during the implementation of the curriculum, and parents, program, and school stakeholders in the final presentation. Youth increased their self-reported empowerment in this program, but not the YPAR only program, which may point to the necessity of having staff support for youth voice and involvement in change to have a positive impact (Lerner et al., 2005; Larson et al., 2004; Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005; Sullivan & Larson, 2010). Working to increase staff buy-in is a next step, as the current study demonstrates feasibility of the health-focused YPAR curriculum in aftercare. To improve staffs’ buy-in for implementation, and to align health focused YPAR even more with youth interests and values, it will be fruitful to include program
staff and youth in the research process through curriculum development and revision (Hacker, 2013; Jacquez et al., 2013; Vaughn et al., 2013).

Evidence for the feasibility of the curriculum in two pre-existing aftercare programs shows that the current study also has many measurement strengths. We addressed gaps in measurement in the general YPAR and adolescent participatory obesity prevention literature, as we successfully measured project mechanisms, such as dose and fidelity of implementation and youth reported empowerment. The measurement of each of the YPAR essential elements in all sessions by a trained observer allowed for an assessment of their feasibility, which has not been assessed systematically in past health focused YPAR efforts. The mixed method design with measurement from multiple respondents allowed opportunities to find triangulation validity for the implementation of YPAR. The pre-post measurement design allowed for the assessment of change in self-reported youth empowerment within programs. The difference in length (i.e., 20-30 minutes versus 75 minutes), time frame (i.e., four sessions versus seven sessions), and design (i.e., YPAR only versus YPAR + PA) of YPAR also helped us evaluate the feasibility of different formats.

Implementation and systematic evaluation in pre-existing aftercare programs allows for the assessment of feasibility of health focused YPAR alongside a PA intervention, which is a unique addition to the literature, as YPAR is typically implemented standalone (Jacquez et al., 2013; Ozer et al., 2010; Vaughn et al., 2013). There is potential for YPAR to improve the impact of health interventions for youth (Benson et al., 1998; Hannay et al., 2013; Scales et al., 2000; Suleiman et al., 2006; Toussaint et al., 2011) because of increased buy-in and closer alignment with youth
values/interests (Schulz et al., 2002), and the larger health intervention might increase
effectiveness of YPAR. We are the first researchers to systematically pair YPAR with a
grant funded PA intervention as an initial step, with the long-term goal of impacting the
size and sustainability of effects in the obesity prevention/intervention literature. In the
current project, despite only having a seven-week time frame in the YPAR + PA design,
and implementation challenges related to embeddedness within a pre-existing aftercare
program without an explicit participatory/empowerment vision, youths’ self-reported
mean levels of empowerment did increase from baseline to post intervention, and adult
partners implemented the curriculum with fidelity. In our pilot, these findings
demonstrate initial promise for the feasibility of paring health-focused YPAR with a PA
intervention with similar theoretical underpinnings.

4.7 Study Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the numerous strengths of the current study, there were also limitations
related to design, measurement, training, and alignment with the broader participatory
literature. The current study was a pilot, and like other pilots, there was the limitation of a
small sample size and a non-representative sample of youth. The empowerment survey
sample size in the YPAR only school was especially small. Many youth that consistently
participated in the intervention in the YPAR only school did not complete it due to
absence of consent for measurement. Also, the findings only generalize to similar middle
school youth enrolled in public aftercare programs in South Carolina. Despite these
limitations, our sample population was ideal for our specific aim to bring a health focused
YPAR program to underserved youth who are at greatest risk for obesity and
marginalization. A pilot is a first step in determining feasibility. As next steps, it will be
useful to recruit more programs to obtain a larger sample size and a more representative sample of youth.

Since YPAR was implemented in pre-existing aftercare programs, we tried to identify ones that were similar in structure. However, there were still some key differences between programs that were threats to internal validity and may have impacted effects. In the YPAR + PA program, there was variability in dosage for youth within each session, as they were picked up by caregivers at different times. In contrast, in the YPAR only program, most youth remained in the program until 6:30, because they were bussed home, so they stayed in the groups for the full duration of the session. We are unable to know if the differences in program structure contributed to the effects. There was also variability with dosage between sessions, which was a limitation for both programs, as youth did not attend if they had other obligations or their caregivers did not have work that day. Missed full program days were documented using attendance sheets, but the adult partners did not track which youth left the program during the implementation of the day’s session. For example, due to both the planned and unplanned differences in program implementation between conditions, we are unable to determine if dose/fidelity was responsible for the significant increase in youth reported empowerment, or if the impact stemmed from pairing with the PA intervention. The subtle and more apparent pre-existing differences in aftercare program structure highlight the importance of interventions being designed and implemented in a flexible manner to tailor the intervention to the setting. Future directions may be to conduct comparisons between a YPAR as usual program versus YPAR integrated into an intervention, in programs with larger samples and similar time frames, in order to formally test differences in effects.
between programs. Even if the program structures were identical, systems level differences in staff and school buy in and climate between programs could affect outcomes.

The implementation in pre-existing aftercare programs is actually a strength for external validity, and feasibility is more important for pilots, as internal validity is typically tested later in the program design process during efficacy trials. Ideally, to achieve better internal validity, in future work, youth can receive different levels of the intervention within the same aftercare program. For example, we can randomize youth into the YPAR + PA, YPAR only, and program as usual. The current study design values inclusion and youth choice, and so this type of measurement design was not possible. If youth were assigned to groups, the choice component would no longer be present. Not having a pure control group is also a limitation, as we do not know if aftercare programs operating as usual would also lead to increases in youth reported empowerment. Having a comparison group is a next step in our research process.

Our aim in this pilot was to explore the feasibility of research staff implementing YPAR as a first step in the research process. Though staff provided feedback on the curriculum and we made critical changes based on their feedback, youth did not take part in the curriculum design or feedback process, which is an essential part of power-sharing in YPAR (Jacquez et al., 2013; Wong et al., 2010). To align more closely with participatory values, next steps are to include youth and staff in the design of the curriculum and project (Hacker, 2013; Jacquez et al., 2013). It may be interesting to compare a staff implemented curriculum that was developed by a research team to a curriculum informed by program staff and youth. Staff and youth involvement in
planning and design may lead to increased buy-in and follow through on youths’ change ideas. If staff buy-in long term, they could routinize YPAR into their aftercare program, which would create a consistent feedback loop for youths’ opinions on program improvement. Changes could also occur in the way that program staff and other adults in youths’ lives think about their abilities. They may continue to include them in decision making processes and realize youths’ capacities, which may eventually lead to a paradigm shift in what youth are capable of accomplishing (Cammarto & Fine, 2008).

There are some future directions related to the observational tool. First, assessment of inter-coder reliability will be helpful to process differences in interpretation of the current operationalization (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) of the implementation of the YPAR essential elements. A reliability process such as this may promote the combination of elements or removal of overlap, which could help shorten the observational tool. It may also be fruitful to consolidate the essential elements that were identified in the literature, as there was significant overlap when implemented in practice. Ideally, we would only include the core components necessary for this work in the observational rating tool, which would make the rating process less cumbersome and potentially allow for more efficient evaluation of all of the YPAR critical processes within a shorter time period.

In addition to decreasing complexity of the tool, there are areas for improvement in the observational tool procedures. We only had the capacity to have one trained observer for each session. Therefore, in the YPAR only program, due to the number of groups, all adult partners were not observed each session. Additionally, in both programs, the entire session was not observed from start to finish for any group, since the observer
rotated between groups. Adult partners may have implemented YPAR essential elements that were unobserved, or increased their quality of implementation later in the session. Adult partners may have implemented a higher dose and fidelity than was actually captured. In future iterations of this work, each YPAR group could have a trained rater conduct observations during each session, for the full session, to thoroughly document implementation. It would be even more ideal for each group to have two observers per session to assess inter-rater reliability. Use of this measurement strategy would double the number of research staff volunteers needed for the intervention; however, which impacts feasibility depending on research team capacity.

There are limitations and future directions for observational rater and adult partner training on data collection. Despite having spots for notes and being instructed to do so, trained observers did not take many notes during observations. It would have been helpful to have specific documentation of what the adult partners did in the study to meet criteria for implementation of the essential element beyond the I-C map description. In future work, it will important to check that trained observers have documented live examples of each of the YPAR essential elements, so that real world examples can be used to provide further evidence for implementation in the study write up.

Adult partners, like trained observers, also did not complete some pieces of measurement with quality. It was difficult to get some adult partners to buy in to the reflection process and so journals were not completed following each session as planned. Due to this measurement challenge, qualitative documentation of some components of the Y-A partnership and power sharing were likely missed. Furthermore, the adult partner in the YPAR + PA program did not complete the journal, even after multiple promptings,
and so triangulation could not occur with adult partner data from the YPAR + PA program. Having a contract or requirement form that adult partners sign may be helpful in the future to provide more accountability for these essential roles. Additionally, the observers and adult partners were volunteers. If we paid them, they might be more obliged to thoroughly complete these tasks with quality.

Future directions for the training of adult partners can be more explicitly geared towards dose and fidelity of implementation of the essential elements. It will be critical to uncover the minimum amount of training and knowledge that is necessary to implement YPAR well, and translate those findings to the eventual training and collaboration with aftercare staff. Assessing adult partner/staff knowledge and skills before implementation will be important to have a baseline knowledge of their abilities in order to assess increased knowledge and skills post training and throughout the intervention. Targeted trainings will be especially useful for the YPAR essential elements that are more difficult to implement with acceptable dose and fidelity outside of a school classroom setting, such as authentic analysis of social reality. During the YPAR timeframe, it will be helpful to obtain adult partner strengths and areas for improvement on implementation of each of the essential elements, and then tailor booster training and assistance during the intervention to meet their individualized needs. During the current study, adult partners did respond to a journal prompt which prompted them to reflect on areas that they could use assistance from me. They typically asked for advice on how to manage misbehavior and general group processes; however, rather than implementation of essential elements of the curriculum. It will also be helpful to have an even more role play oriented training in productive group processes, in order to learn activities to engage youth and keep them
on task and interested in a distracting environment. Obtaining additional curriculum materials and games from other successful participatory projects will also be critical, especially ones that simplify some of the essential elements that were difficult to implement with fidelity in the current work. Placing games, handouts, and curriculum in a common bank, like the YPAR hub, is helpful so that all YPAR researchers can share resources and have access to useful information and tools.

There are also some limitations of the project related to the nature of participatory, community engaged research. The current project was projected to be ten weeks, with two weeks of data collection. It occurred mostly as planned in the YPAR + PA program, but was shortened in the YPAR only program due to the aftercare program schedule that was out our control. Due to the shortened YPAR only program, there was not as much time to build strong relationships with adult partners, practice the various skills, and get engrossed in the projects. Ideally, PAR occurs over a longer time frame, in order for relationships to be built and for participants to have a voice in all stages of the process (Balcazar et al., 2004; Hacker, 2013; Israel et al., 2013; Langhout & Thomas, 2010). The extended time period could increase the chances for sustainable PYD benefits that stem from taking leadership roles in adult relationships, being able to work together as a team, and using public speaking skills to advocate for change in communities (Benson et al., 1998; Dworkin et al., 2003; Durlak et al., 2007; Eccles et al., 2003; Larson & Angus, 2011; Lerner, 2004; Scales et al., 2000; Scales et al., 2006; Sullivan & Larson, 2010; Warrs & Flanagan, 2007). Due to the typical long term nature of PAR projects, it is promising that there were increases in self-reported youth empowerment during a seven-week intervention period. The findings provide preliminary evidence for the benefit of
including YPAR methods in health interventions, as increased empowerment is a critical process for improvements in health behavior (Benson et al., 1998; Hannay et al., 2013; Scales et al., 2000; Suleiman et al., 2006; Toussaint et al., 2011).

We were not insiders in the community or school, and were following an intervention schedule, so the design of the YPAR project may not have best matched the needs of the programs like it would if community members, program staff, and youth were involved in the study design (Bogart et al., 2009; Hacker, 2013; Israel et al., 2009; Ozer et al., 2010; Necheles et al., 2009). In the future, it will be important for us to assess how the context (e.g., staff, school administration) not just the youth, responds to our intervention. In doing so, we would be able to better understand more systemic factors affecting implementation and be able to compare whether systems differed in their responses. Another way of assessing the context could be to assess the readiness of aftercare programs for the implementation and adoption of YPAR. Understanding the contexts’ response is critical to understanding the intervention, since implementation does not occur in a vacuum.

Acceptance from the context (e.g., staff, school administration) of this work is important, especially since we did not have the opportunity for continued connection with youth and implementation of the change ideas following the end of the intervention time frame. We did check in with program facilitators and school administrators to ensure that their ideas were moving forward where possible. Ideally, feedback loops would be routinized for youth to voice their opinions and contribute to changes in their aftercare programs and schools (Ozer et al., 2013). One way of creating feedback loops would be for all schools to have YPAR classes. In a cyclical and iterative process each semester,
youth could identify areas for improvement in their schools. They then could communicate the rationale for the need to school staff, and participate in YPAR to make the change a reality (Ozer et al., 2013). YPAR in all schools would create a better stage-environment fit for youth education (Cammarato & Fine, 2008; Eccles et al., 1996) and would promote empowerment (Wallerstein, 1992; Zimmerman, 2000) through meeting adolescents’ developmental (Barber et al., 2001; Damon et al., 2003; Eccles et al., 1996; Scales et al., 2000; Scales et al., 2006; Sullivan & Larson, 2010; Wong et al., 2010 and socio emotional needs (i.e., autonomy, relatedness, and competence) (Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2008)

A final limitation is that the researcher came in with a project idea in mind due to grant funding and the intervention design. The processes had to promote social skills and the presentation had to focus on PA. Therefore, the project is not a pure participatory approach; participatory research can be conceptualized on a continuum (Balcazar et al., 2004; Hacker, 2013). We did utilize the Y-A partnership literature when creating the curriculum, which recognizes the benefit of having both adults and youth lead at different times in order to capitalize on their unique strengths and to optimize project success. The adult partners achieved acceptable dose and fidelity for the essential element “power sharing within a pluralistic Y-A partnership,” in both programs, and achieved acceptable dose and fidelity for the element “change idea is youth generated” in the YPAR + PA program, which illustrates some success in implementing power-sharing and choice within pre-existing programs. Also, youth did have choice in selecting their change focus within the topic area of PA, and deciding on whether it should occur in the program or
school, and none voiced issues with the PA focus, as all agreed that there were PA areas for improvement in their programs and schools.

In order to understand the obesity epidemic that is greatly impacting many youth today, it is pertinent to listen to the young people most affected (Findholt, et al., 2010; McKinney et al., 2014). It would benefit the adolescent obesity prevention/intervention literature to include youth voice in program design and implementation (Suleiman et al., 2006). Youth can provide insight into social/environmental conditions that affect their food choices and physical activity, as well as cultural factors and interests that may influence participation (Hannay et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2010). Including youth voice in interventions captures aspects of their lives that solely top down approaches miss, which can increase engagement in programming and promote larger, sustained effects (Schulz et al., 2002). If more researchers systematically integrate participatory processes into standard health interventions and document benefits, it can shift the paradigm in obesity prevention research toward a continuum of youth involvement (Jacquez et al., 2013; Vaughn et al., 2013). A next step in building the case for this novel approach to obesity prevention/intervention is to determine if participation in YPAR is linked to positive health outcomes, and if intraindividual processes, such as empowerment, mediate the effects.

Adolescence is an important time period for the development of identity (Barber et al., 2001), lifelong health habits (Benson et al., 1998; Millstein & Litt, 1993; Scales et al., 2000), and increased need for autonomy (Scales et al., 2006), yet most activities that youth participate in during school have a poor stage-environment fit (Eccles et al., 1996). Components of a YPAR curriculum align (Jacques et al., 2013; Ozer & Douglas, 2015)
with these developmental needs and can be beneficial for all youth, yet, most YPAR is conducted in high school elective classes or social change focused after school programs in which youth opt in (Ozer et al., 2010; Ozer & Douglas, 2013; 2015; Vaughn et al., 2013). Pre-existing aftercare programs are open to all youth, and especially serve disadvantaged youth, whom may most benefit from participation.

In order to meet key developmental needs, intervene during a critical time to impact health behavior, and reach more youth, especially disadvantaged youth, we integrated a health focused YPAR praxis into pre-existing aftercare programs serving middle school youth. Our approach demonstrated feasibility for implementing health focused YPAR in pre-existing aftercare programs. Our study also addressed measurement gaps in the adolescent participatory obesity prevention and general YPAR literature. Critical processes in health focused YPAR research had not been previously evaluated, such as implementation fidelity and intraindividual mechanisms (i.e., empowerment) critical for changes in health behavior (Benson et al., 1998; Hannay et al., 2013; Scales et al., 2000; Suleiman et al., 2006; Toussaint et al., 2011). Trained raters successfully documented the implementation of the YPAR essential elements in both programs. Finally, we integrated health focused YPAR into a PA intervention with a similar theoretical framework to test feasibility. Adult partners in the YPAR + PA design implemented the essential elements with higher fidelity than adult partners in the YPAR only design and positive change occurred in youth self-reported empowerment over a seven-week time frame. These findings show that integrating YPAR into a health intervention with similar theoretical underpinnings can lead to increases in empowerment, a critical process in changing health behavior (Benson et al., 1998;
Hannay et al., 2013; Scales et al., 2000; Suleiman et al., 2006; Toussaint et al., 2011). In summary, although there were unique implementation challenges identified in both settings, we determined that it is feasible to implement health focused YPAR within pre-existing aftercare standalone, and within pre-existing aftercare alongside a theoretically aligned PA intervention, and urge other adolescent health oriented researchers to explore this novel approach as well.
REFERENCES


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**APPENDIX A**

**OBSERVATIONAL TOOL**

Session start time ________  Session end time_______  
Number of youth in attendance at beginning of session_______  
Number of youth in attendance at end of session _________  

**Note:** N/A should only be marked for those items that have a line for N/A. The other items should occur each session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM STRUCTURE DOSE</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Session Elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate time allotted for session (e.g., students don’t seem rushed to finish, the majority of the planned lesson completed).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult partner provided overview of session to all youth.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult partners asked if youth had questions after the overview of session was explained.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult partner adequately answered youths’ question, or said would find out the answer (mark N/A if no questions).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground rules were developed/reviewed.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The adult partners implemented the planned session for that day (check schedule).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one social skills/group bonding break activity occurred.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An energizing or refocusing strategy occurred.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure/skills necessary to complete the activities were explained/demonstrated by adult partners in large group or small groups.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session activities promoted at least one PYD related skill (e.g., leadership, social, teamwork, presentation, problem solving)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult partner collaborated with specific youth in a small group activity.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The final project/goal (e.g., student dissemination of results via pictures, presentation, or advocacy efforts) was mentioned.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects chosen are related to physical activity (mark N/A if projects are not chosen yet).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large group summary/closure.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed plan for next session.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOTAL FIDELITY TO GROUP WORK

There is scheduled opportunity for students to work in groups -- includes time where discussion is student led and students are working independent from the adult partner, as well as when adult partners and students are collaboratively working together in a power sharing relationship (This is independent of the quality of work produced or level of group participation).

Please circle approximate score:

Group work took up approximately:
0- no group work present during session
1- a quarter of the total time
2- half of the total time
3- most of the total time
GENERAL CURRICULUM RATINGS

Each session, observe the overall speaker introducing the session activities for the day and the closing. Also observe each adult partner interacting with their group during the small group work for a total time of 30 minutes each. If you do not observe an adult partner during one session, complete that partner’s observation first the next session.

Name of Adult partner observed (all should be USC staff): ____________________

Afterschool Program staff are:

1. Assisting/Paired with USC staff to run the activity

2. Not assisting USC staff in the activity (observing from far away, engaged in another task, do not seem to be a participating member of the activity or its instruction)

YPAR Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation Start time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation End time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content/Summary – what did they do today?
**Promoting strategic thinking**
This category assesses the extent to which youth are thinking critically, working to understand perspectives different than their own, and learning new things from each other. Also included in this category is the adult partner modeling how to break down large tasks into manageable steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth actively seek out ways to learn more about one another and new ways of thinking from each other.</th>
<th>Overall Score</th>
<th>Explanation/Justification for ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-Youth do not appear interested in learning more about each other, and do not ask each other questions.</td>
<td>1- Only some youth ask each other questions (e.g., their opinions, how they came to a solution, or more background/info on why they are thinking about a topic a certain way), and it requires multiple prompts from the adult partner.</td>
<td>2-The majority of youth ask each other questions (e.g., their opinions, how they came to a solution, or more background/information on why they are thinking about a topic a certain way).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students identify or analyze alternative points of view and demonstrate openness to modifying pre-existing views based on new information.</th>
<th>Overall Score</th>
<th>Explanation/Justification for ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-Youth state that their people’s perspectives in their group are incorrect, and theirs is the only correct one. Youth are not open to hearing other people’s perspectives.</td>
<td>1-Youth listen to other people’s perspectives, but do not demonstrate openness to modifying their own view (e.g., don’t say, hmm I’ve never thought of it like that before, maybe I should do that too, that’s a good idea, etc.)</td>
<td>2-Youth willingly listen and discuss alternative points of view in their small groups. They demonstrate willingness to modify their pre-existing views based on new information (e.g., say, that’s a good idea, I think I’ll try it, I like your perspective I think I feel...).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult partner prompts students to problem solve and provides support as necessary.</td>
<td>0-The adult partner does not provide any guidance to youth surrounding the activity/task steps.</td>
<td>1-The adult partner tells students how to break down activities into smaller concrete steps. The partner does not allow youth to brainstorm their own ideas first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other examples of strategic thinking</td>
<td>No rate necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Group work – opportunities and guidance**
(This section concentrates on when and how students engage with their peers. Students take leadership roles, work collaboratively, or work independent of the adult partner to complete tasks/activities or move toward a common goal. Both the amount and the quality of student group work are considered).

**Students engage in productive group processes**
Please circle the score in each row that best fits what you observe in each groups’ 30 minute observation segment. Please write the total score that best represents the overall engagement level of the group you are observing in the rating column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N/A - No time was spent in group work</th>
<th>Overall Score</th>
<th>Explanation/justification for ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0- Students did not demonstrate productive group processes. Group was off task and engaged in discussions unrelated to the assignment and/or did not complete the task at hand.</td>
<td>1- Students were infrequently engaged in productive group processes. Group discussions were often off task, a small proportion of students did most of the work without consulting group members, students did not take turns in discussion and/or multiple students were not engaged in the discussion at all.</td>
<td>2- Students were engaged in productive group processes the majority of the time with most students participating in discussion, sharing group responsibilities and staying on task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult partners encouraged all students to participate and included all students (unless there are extenuating circumstances).</strong></td>
<td>0 - Adult partner did not encourage all students to participate, and some youth were left out of activities/discussion.</td>
<td>1 - Adult partner encouraged all students to participate at least once, though some youth still did not engage in activities/discussion. The tone of the encouragement may be neutral and short in nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Names were used during group process time and in the overall program.</strong></td>
<td>0 - Adult partner and youth did not call youth by name.</td>
<td>1 - Adult partner sometimes used youths’ names, but other times did not. It was unclear whether all youth knew each other in the group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Communication Skills**

This section focuses on the development of communication skills through presentations and open communication during small and large discussions. The extent to which students provide positive comments to each other and point out the strengths of each other’s work is an important aspect of this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Students practice sharing ideas and perspectives out loud</strong> (The extent to which students respond to each other’s ideas and comment in a constructive way is also important to note in the examples section).</th>
<th><strong>Overall Score</strong></th>
<th><strong>Explanation/Justification for ranking:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - The majority of students are silent during group discussion, and they have to be prompted multiple times to participate.</td>
<td>1 - Some students share ideas during group discussion, but their sharing is brief in nature.</td>
<td>2 - Students demonstrate a willingness to share their ideas and alternative points of view aloud either multiple times during session briefly, or in depth once. This can occur during a larger discussion or between students in small groups. This may be demonstrated as students brainstorm project ideas, while thinking about various solutions to PA challenges, or when process other small group activities in discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Students and adult partners point out the strengths of each other’s work during discussion.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Overall Score</strong></th>
<th><strong>Explanation/Justification for ranking:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - Students and adult partners do not point out strengths of each other’s pictures,</td>
<td>1 - Adult partners point out strengths of youths’ pictures, contributions, discussion points, and/or</td>
<td>2 - Both adult partners and youth point out their strengths of each other’s pictures, contributions,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
contributions, discussion points, and/or ideas.

ideas, at least briefly. Youth are prompted to discuss each other’s strengths by adult partners, but may not do it.

discussion points, and/or ideas either briefly multiple times or one time in depth.

| Adult partners model and prompt active listening skills (e.g., turn taking, eye contact) in youth discussions. | 0-Adult partners do not appear like they are actively listening during the majority of group discussion. | 1-Adult partners discuss what active listening is and/or model active listening throughout the majority of session. | 2-Adult partners descriptively praise youth for using active listening skills during discussion or adult partner may ask other youth to comment on what they did well when listening to each other. |
**PROGRAM AND GROUP WORK DIMENSIONS**

**Adult partner shares power with students during process of making major decisions**

This scale captures the degree to which youth are making the decisions or have some influence over the major decisions in research and action as opposed to the adults making the decisions. Some examples include: challenge and setting selection, change ideas based on photos and how to present the photos/change ideas. For non-research activities, code relevant to the major decisions in that session’s activities.

*Please enter N/A in score box if no time is devoted to working on or making a major project specific decision.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Score:</th>
<th>Explanation/Justification for ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Opportunities for Decision-making**

*Please enter N/A in score box if no time is devoted to working on or making a major decision regarding the research project or action***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students are provided no opportunity to make the major decisions regarding their action research or other program activities. Decisions regarding the project are clearly made by the adults either during or outside session without showing much interest in or trying to elicit student input. If changes to the project idea are necessary, youth voice does not contribute to the</th>
<th>Adults sometimes seek or attend to student ideas and opinions on the major decisions which influence the course of projects but may not closely follow the students' ideas and end up making the final decision themselves. When students do not agree about the decision that should be made, the adult decides for the group rather than allowing students to come to a consensus.</th>
<th>Adult partners clearly provide opportunities for students to share power in making the major decisions regarding projects. Adult partners advise and discuss with students decisions to be made but give the final decision making power to the youth through voting or other democratic methods. If changes or adaptations need to be made to the project idea, youth voice is included via a vote or other democratic process. Note – score 3 if use voting process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>changes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Adult partner shares power with students regarding session structure and activities**

This scale captures the degree to which the adults and youth share decision making power over the general structure or activities for the day; the overall session climate. Examples may include: to what extent the adult partners respond to students' resistance to activities with flexibility/options, how much input students gave related to activity choices, flexibility in activity structure based on youth feedback, etc. It also captures whether a power-sharing process occurs in which both youth and adult partner’s unique skills are utilized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Score:</th>
<th>Explanation/Justification for ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities for Decision-making</strong></td>
<td>0-Adults provide all structure for sessions and groups with no chance for student input and decision-making. If sessions need to be modified, youth are not included in the decision. Youth are not asked for their opinions about and satisfaction with the session in paper or verbal format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-Adults provide structure for the session/small groups, but also provide some opportunities for student input and decision-making. If sessions need to be modified, adult partners ask for youth input but the adult ultimately decides for the group rather than basing the final decision on student input. OR Youth are asked for their opinions about and satisfaction with the session in paper and verbal format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-Adults consistently provide opportunities for meaningful student input, decision-making, and/or leadership. If changes need to be made to the session content or structure, adult partners ask youth for opinions and make a decision based on voting or another democratic process. Youth are asked for their opinions about and satisfaction with the session in paper and verbal format.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Group processes were power sharing in nature.** | 0-The adult partner dominated the conversation in small groups and did not ask youth questions or provide them with options. The adult partner may ask if the youth have questions. | 1-The adult partner dominated the conversation in small groups, but did ask youth questions or provided them with options. | 2, 3-The adult leader spoke equally or less than youth in small groups, allowing them to lead some discussion. During discussions post activities, adult partner asked youth what they wanted to discuss first, and then jumped into structured questions once they talked about their ideas OR Adult partner asked youth questions and provided them with at least one opportunity to choose between multiple options.  
*Note* – score 3 if both |
| **Tasks completed in groups were based on adult partners’ and youths’ unique strengths.** | 0-Activities and planning that took place in groups was haphazard/disorganized, and it was clear that the tasks assigned did not capitalize on youth or adult partner strengths/expertise. | 1-Activities and planning in groups was organized, and both youth and adult partners completed tasks that seemed to fit their strengths/expertise, though it seemed to just work out that way rather than be explicitly planned. | 2-Adult partners performed tasks in which they had expertise (e.g., managing the printer issues, contacting the project coordinator, looking up research in journals). Youth were assigned tasks based on their expertise/strengths (e.g., selecting an issue to address in their school/program, technology tasks, and social media skills). |
Regard for Adolescent Perspectives
This scale focuses on the extent to which the adult partners are able to meet and capitalize upon the social and developmental needs and goals of adolescents. Opportunities for students to make decisions and assume leadership roles and the extent to which content is made useful and relevant to adolescents are the primary areas of focus. Also considered are the extent to which student ideas and opinions are valued, as well as opportunities for meaningful interaction with peers and opportunities for physical activity. Please give one overall score taking into account all subcategories listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Score:</th>
<th>Explanation/Justification for ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities for Decision-making</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Already scored above, combine here with other dimensions</em></td>
<td>0-Adults provide all structure for sessions and groups with no chance for student input and decision-making. If sessions need to be modified, youth are not included in the decision. Youth are not asked for their opinions about and satisfaction with the session in paper or verbal format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-Adults provide structure for the session/small groups, but also provide some opportunities for student input and decision-making. If sessions need to be modified, adult partners ask for youth input but the adult ultimately decides for the group rather than basing the final decision on student input. OR Youth are asked for their opinions about and satisfaction with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-Adults consistently provide opportunities for meaningful student input, decision-making, and/or leadership. If changes need to be made to the session content or structure, adult partners ask youth for opinions and make a decision based on voting or another democratic process. Youth are asked for their opinions about and satisfaction with the session in paper and verbal format.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Relevance- Usefulness and Connection to Current Life | 0-Adults implement session with no effort to make clear how or why it is of value to students and with no effort to draw links to adolescent perspectives. | 1-Adults implement session with some effort to make clear how or why it is of value to students and make an attempt to draw links to adolescent perspectives (e.g., ask how it relates to their lives, include examples from TV shows, music, commercials, news, etc.). They may provide examples that they think are relevant to youth, but youth may not agree or youth may not share how they think it is relevant to their lives. | 2-Adults consistently frame material to make salient how or why it is of value to students and draw links to adolescent perspectives (e.g., ask how it relates to their lives, include examples from TV shows, music, commercials, news, etc.). |}

<p>| Adult Partners Integrate Youth Definition/Perspective on Community into Discussion | 0-Adults do not facilitate any discussion about the community of youth and their values or their larger school community during session. | 1-Adults briefly discuss either the community of youth and their values or the school community, but at a surface level. Adults may describe youths’ school community for them. | 2, 3-Adults discuss in more detail the community of youth and their values or the larger school community. Adults should not define youths’ community or the broader school community for them and instead should continue to prompt for their ideas to gain a better understanding of their perspectives. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School or after school program</th>
<th>Strengths are highlighted.</th>
<th>0-Adults and youth do not discuss the strengths of their school community or after school program.</th>
<th>1-Adults and/or youth discuss the strengths of the school/after school program community, but it is either glossed over or adult lists them without asking for youth feedback.</th>
<th>2-Adults and youth discuss the strengths of the school/after school program community. Adult prompts for youth feedback and input on strengths.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention to Student Ideas and Opinions</td>
<td>0-Adults do not seek or attend to student ideas or opinions other than in right-wrong, brief structured question/answer format.</td>
<td>1-Adults sometimes seek or attend to student ideas and opinions, but at times provides vague or cursory reactions to what's offered (e.g., move on quickly, don't ask follow up questions).</td>
<td>2-Adults clearly hear and take into account what students say, value their ideas and opinions, and are flexible and capitalize on &quot;teachable moments&quot; allowing for the deepening of communication of some topics based on student ideas, opinions, and interests.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful Peer Interactions</td>
<td>0-Adult partners make little to no effort to engage students in peer-peer interactions that are meaningful within the context of the small group work. They do not prompt youth to discuss with each other or ask questions of each other.</td>
<td>1-Adult partners provide some opportunities for peer-peer interactions, but they are somewhat mechanized in nature (e.g., only having youth ask each other structured questions from a hand out and writing down their responses).</td>
<td>2-Adult partners provide extensive opportunities for peer-peer interactions that are meaningful and serve an integral role within the small group work (e.g., prompt youth to discuss various topics, provide feedback, and ask questions of each other) multiple times throughout the session.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities provide an opportunity to exercise social skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0, 1- All or the majority of session time is focused on students</td>
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<td>completing worksheets individually or listening to lectures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note – mark 0 if all, 1 if majority</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-About half of session time is spent with students participating in</td>
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<td>activities that promote social skills (e.g., taking turns and listening; teamwork in the activity and/or planning for the larger project).</td>
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<td>3-The activities consistently provide opportunities for students to</td>
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<td>take turns and listen, and focus on team work in the activity and/or</td>
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<tr>
<td>planning for the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Physical Activity Options are provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-Adults structure sessions such that students sit, take notes, or do</td>
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<td>other busy work, without any opportunity for movement breaks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-Adults structure sessions such that students have the opportunity</td>
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<td>to engage in some physical activity, but it may be of a rudimentary or unstructured nature (e.g., getting up to do jumping jacks, take a walking break).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-Adults utilize physical activity in a controlled but interesting and meaningful way by having them participate in at least one structured light to moderate interactive group physical activity in each session.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In small and/or large groups, youth and adult partners discuss what</td>
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<tr>
<td>they learned from each other in session.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-Neither small nor large group discussion includes what youth or</td>
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<tr>
<td>adults have learned from each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1- Small or large group discussion includes either what youth have</td>
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<tr>
<td>learned from adults or what adults have learned from youth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-Small or large group discussion includes what both youth and adult partners learned from each other in session.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Positive Climate
Positive Climate reflects the overall emotional tone of the session and the connections among adult partners and students. The warmth of the adults’ interactions with students and the adults’ display of enjoyment and respect of students during group work as well as social conversations are included in this rating. Student affect and the warmth of peer interactions also should be considered in this rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Score:</th>
<th>Explanation/Justification for ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>0, 1 -There are few, if any, indications that the adult partners enjoy warm, supportive, and respectful relationships with students (listen to what youth have to say, call them by name). Note – mark 0 if none, 1 if rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-There are many indications that the adult partners enjoy warm, supportive, and respectful relationships with students (listen to what youth have to say, call them by name).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonverbal interactions between adult partners and youth.</td>
<td>0, 1 -There are no or few displays of positive nonverbal interactions between adult partners and youth (e.g., positive tone of voice, good eye contact, appropriate affect, listening silently while student talks). Note – mark 0 if none, 1 if few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive affect with adults</td>
<td>0, 1 -There are no or few displays of joint laughter or smiles, positive expectations, genuine praise, or physical/verbal affection between adult partners and students. Note – mark 0 if none, 1 if few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Strengths are highlighted.</td>
<td>0-Adults and youth do not discuss the strengths of each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive affect with peers</td>
<td>0,1-There are no or few displays of joint laughter or smiles, attending body language, positive expectations, genuine praise, or physical/verbal affection among students. Note – mark 0 if none, 1 if few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive peer interactions</td>
<td>0,1-Students rarely, if ever, engage in positive interactions with one another. Note – mark 0 if none, 1 if rare</td>
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<td></td>
<td>There is an underlying positive tone to their interactions.</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest in students' lives</strong></td>
<td>0,1-There are no or only a few extremely brief indications that the adult partners are interested in students' activities and experiences outside of the program. <em>Note</em> – mark 0 if none, 1 if few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive discipline</strong></td>
<td>0-Adults enforce ground rules inconsistently and have harsh/more restrictive discipline for specific individuals. Adult partners punish their whole group for the behavior of a few individuals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Student Engagement**
This scale is intended to capture the degree to which all students in the session are focused and participating in the activity presented or facilitated by the adult partner. The difference between passive engagement and active engagement is of note in this rating. Please give one overall score taking into account all subcategories listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Score:</th>
<th>Explanation/Justification for ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active vs. passive engagement</strong></td>
<td>0, 1-All or the majority of students appear distracted or disengaged. <em>Note</em> – mark 0 if all, 1 if majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective engagement</td>
<td>0, 1-All or the majority of students do not appear (e.g., facial expressions, tone, movement, words) excited or enthusiastic throughout most of session. <em>Note</em> – mark 0 if all, 1 if majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained engagement</td>
<td>0-Low engagement levels are sustained over activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Training and Practice of Research Skills**

**Students learn about and/or practice data collection (taking photos).**

0-Did not implement

1-students learn about taking photos, but did not implement this session.

2-students learn about and take photos in session.

**Students learn about and/or practice data processing (discussion of photos).**

0-Did not implement

1-students learn about processing their photos via discussion with their group, but did not implement this session.

2- Students learn about and process photos in the groups.

**Students identify PA strengths, challenges, and/or action areas (Issue selection).**

0-Did not implement

1-Students identify either PA strengths or challenges, and their discussion of them is vague.

2 – Students identify PA strengths and challenges, and discuss them in a developmentally appropriate level of detail.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provides examples (pictures/videos) or models (SHOWeD framework) that promote a basic understanding of how research can be used for action.</th>
<th>0-Did not implement</th>
<th>1-Adult partners tell students about the SHOWeD framework, but they are not able to finish a full SHOWeD.</th>
<th>2-Students learn about the SHOWeD process and complete one full SHOWeD together.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Promoting Strategic Thinking**

| Small and/or large group discusses root causes of health related concerns, societal/local influences on their health, and/or their own histories and culture and its influence on their health/PA. | 0-No discussion of system influences on health or history/culture and influence on health are present. | 1-There is only 1 brief observed discussion of social/local or history/culture and its influence on health/PA. | 2-Multiple discussions occur around social/local or history/culture and influence on health/PA OR one in-depth discussion occurs on this topic. |
| Students discuss or demonstrate an understanding of socio-political environment (discuss who holds power among their peers, adults, leaders, etc.; discuss project stakeholders). | 0-No discussion of who holds power/is in charge at a systems level. | 1-There is only 1 brief observed discussion about who holds power (e.g., political leader, principal). | 2-Multiple discussions occur around who makes health decisions in the school/community OR one in-depth discussion occurs on this topic. |
| Information or experiences about how rules or policies are made in school, community, etc. are shared. | 0-No discussion occurs about rules and polices in the community, school, or program. | 1-Students ask about rules and policies or attempt to discuss them, but adult partners are unsure about the answers to youths’ questions or how rules and policies are made in the youths’ area of inquiry. | 2- Adults and/or students share information or personal experience about how they understand rules or policies to be made in their program, school, or community. These discussions and insights may be unprompted or |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students discuss at least one strategy about how to make their groups’ change in the school or program.</strong></td>
<td>No discussion of how to make the groups’ change effort a reality at school or in the program.</td>
<td>Students and adult partners discuss how to make the change happen, but the discussion is vague.</td>
<td>Adult allies ask specific questions about making the change (e.g., what is realistic, who they need to talk with, what resources are needed) and/or students discuss amongst themselves specifics about how to make the change happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develop change recommendations based on youths’ photo research and/or discuss how to share these recommendations with others in the community/stakeholders.</strong></td>
<td>There is no discussion during the creation of the poster about how to present their pictures nor is their discussion of what recommendations youth have for change.</td>
<td>Youth talk with each other about how to best present their pictures on the poster.</td>
<td>Youth talk with each other about how to best present their pictures on the poster and also generate change recommendations for their school/program related to their idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students analyze how to develop alliances and communicate effectively with various stakeholders.</strong></td>
<td>There is no discussion about how to communicate effectively with stakeholders.</td>
<td>There is discussion about communication and public speaking skills, but the discussion does not specifically target project stakeholders.</td>
<td>A discussion occurs that focuses on at least one of the following as it relates to stakeholders: how to talk to the identified stakeholders, what language is appropriate, public speaking skills, what kind of agenda should be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students identify or work on their chosen project that focuses on action in their after school program/school.</td>
<td>0-Students to do not work on their project when it is listed on the agenda.</td>
<td>1-Youth work on projects, but they do not focus on action/change; they focus on PA strengths and challenges more generally.</td>
<td>2-Youth clearly identify a change they want to have happen at school and work on a finished product that clearly communicates the need.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students discuss a future course of action regarding next steps (students may brainstorm tasks that need to be completed, delegate roles and organize the tasks themselves, anticipate and prepare for advocacy situations/public speaking about the project or discuss the desired end result of the project).</td>
<td>0-Students do not plan for future work together regarding the project during session.</td>
<td>1-Adult partners ask youth what their next steps are, assign them project tasks, or talk to them about the future of their project.</td>
<td>2-On their own, youth begin to work together to delegate and organize future tasks related to the poster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Students practice formal presentations related to their idea for change.</strong></td>
<td><strong>0-Students do not get the opportunity to practice their formal project presentation.</strong></td>
<td><strong>1-Students practice final project formal presentations, but the presentations do not focus on advocating for a change.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Students practice public speaking as part of the session activity, but it is not in the form of practicing a formal presentation.</strong></td>
<td><strong>0-Despite it being on the agenda, students do not practice public speaking during a session activity.</strong></td>
<td><strong>1-Some students practice public speaking in the activity, but other students do not participate.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B
STUDY MEASURES

BASELINE

1. ID number:

2. What school do you go to?

3. Gender
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female

4. Ethnicity
   - [ ] Hispanic/Latino
   - [ ] Not Hispanic/Latino

5. Race
   - [ ] Black or African American
   - [ ] Asian
   - [ ] Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   - [ ] White
   - [ ] Other (please specify):

6. When is your birthday?

7. What is your age?

8. Are you able to get your school lunch for free or a reduced price?
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Yes
Youth Empowerment Scale (Ozer & Schotland, 2011)

Please circle how much you agree with each of the following statements.

Scale: 1(Strongly Disagree) to 4(Strongly Agree)

Strongly Disagree  Slightly Disagree  Slightly Agree  Strongly Agree

I feel like I have a pretty good understanding of the important health issues which affect our community.
I am often a leader in groups.
I can usually figure out how to get an adult to see my point of view, even if they don’t agree with me.
If I want to improve a problem in my school, I can work well with other students on this issue.

If I want to improve a problem at my school, I know how to gather useful data about the issue.
I know how school rules and policies are made at my school.
If I want to improve a problem in my community, I know how to gather useful data about the issue.
If I want to improve a problem in my community, I can work well with other students on this issue.
I know how community rules and policies are made.

It is important for youth to try to improve our community even if we can’t always make the changes we want.
I want to have as much say as possible in making decisions in my community.
I want to have as much say as possible in making decisions in my school.
Students should work to improve our school even if we can’t always make the changes we want.

I have led a group of young people working on an issue we care about.
I have made a presentation to a group of people I don’t know.
I have spoken with adults in my school about issues that I want to improve at the school.
I have interviewed an adult to learn their perspectives about an issue.
I have spoken with students about issues that I want to improve at the school.
If issues come up that affect students at my school, we do something about it.
If issues come up that affect youth in my community, we do something about it.
I have spoken with youth about issues that I want to improve in the community.

There is a student group here that gets to decide on some really important things.
There are plenty of ways for students like me to have a say in what our school does.
Students have a say in what happens at this school.
Students at this school get to help plan special activities and events.
There are ways for young people like me to have a say in what our community does.
Youth have a say in what happens in this community.
WEEKLY BY ADULT PARTNERS

1. What went well Friday that we should keep doing?

2. What should we change/what suggestions do you have based on Friday's experience?

3. What do you think you did well with the kids?

4. What do you think you need to improve on or need some help with?

5. Do you think you shared power with the youth Friday (worked collaboratively, gave them choice, let them lead some things, asked for their opinions, etc.)? If so, why? If not, why not?

6. Please note any times were you felt like you were pushing your own agenda instead of letting the youth guide the activity, if there were any.

7. Please list any quotes or summaries of things students said that could be useful for the project below.

8. Do you want to meet in person to role play any group activities, troubleshoot any issues, or discuss engagement strategies before next Friday?
YOUTH MIDPOINT MEASUREMENT

Mentor-Youth Alliance Scale (Zand et al., 2009)

Scale: 1(Completely False) to 5(Completely True)

(Completely False, False Much of the Time, Sometimes True Sometimes False, True Much of the Time, Completely True)

Acceptance Subscale:

I look forward to the time I spend with our adult group partner.

My relationship with our adult group partner is important to me.

I enjoy talking with our adult group partner.

I trust our adult group partner.

I feel comfortable with our adult group partner.
Youth-Adult Partner Journal

Within your groups, please take a picture of something that represents what you all like about your adult partners. It can be a picture of a hand, because they lend a helping hand, for example. Also, please take a picture of something that you wish your adult partners would do differently. Finally, write a caption below each photo.
POST-INTERVENTION

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

1. ID number:

2. What school do you go to?

3. Gender
   - Male
   - Female

4. Ethnicity
   - Hispanic/Latino
   - Not Hispanic/Latino

5. Race
   - Black or African American
   - Asian
   - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   - White
   - Other (please specify):

6. When is your birthday?
   
   Example: December 15, 2012

7. What is your age?

8. Are you able to get your school lunch for free or a reduced price?
   - No
   - Yes
   - I don’t know
Youth Empowerment Scale (Ozer & Schotland, 2011)

Please circle how much you agree with each of the following statements.

Scale: 1(Strongly Disagree) to 4(Strongly Agree)

Strongly Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Strongly Agree

I feel like I have a pretty good understanding of the important health issues which affect our community.
I am often a leader in groups.
I can usually figure out how to get an adult to see my point of view, even if they don’t agree with me.
If I want to improve a problem in my school, I can work well with other students on this issue.

If I want to improve a problem at my school, I know how to gather useful data about the issue.
I know how school rules and policies are made at my school.
If I want to improve a problem in my community, I know how to gather useful data about the issue.
If I want to improve a problem in my community, I can work well with other students on this issue.
I know how community rules and policies are made.

It is important for youth to try to improve our community even if we can’t always make the changes we want.
I want to have as much say as possible in making decisions in my community.
I want to have as much say as possible in making decisions in my school.
Students should work to improve our school even if we can’t always make the changes we want.

I have led a group of young people working on an issue we care about.
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If issues come up that affect students at my school, we do something about it.
If issues come up that affect youth in my community, we do something about it.
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There are plenty of ways for students like me to have a say in what our school does.
Students have a say in what happens at this school.
Students at this school get to help plan special activities and events.
There are ways for young people like me to have a say in what our community does.
Youth have a say in what happens in this community.
Mentor-Youth Alliance Scale (Zand et al., 2009)

Scale: 1(Completely False) to 5(Completely True)

(Completely False, False Much of the Time, Sometimes True Sometimes False, True Much of the Time, Completely True)

**Acceptance** Subscale:

I look forward to the time I spend with our adult group partner.

My relationship with our adult group partner is important to me.

I enjoy talking with our adult group partner.

I trust our adult group partner.

I feel comfortable with our adult group partner.
## Qualitative Questions

**ID ________________**

1. If we wrote an article about this project for others to see, what would you want us to say about you and the other students as a group? How do you want us to describe you?

2. If we wrote an article about the project, what are some good things you would want us to say about your school community?

3. List some things you liked about working together with the students from USC.

4. Has working on this project and with students at USC helped you in any way? If so, how?

5. If we did the project again in the future, what parts of the project do you think we should keep?

6. If we did the project again in the future, what parts of the project do you think we should take out? What should we do differently?

7. Do you want to keep working together to try to make the changes at your school that you are asking for today.
APPENDIX C

CROSSWALK OF THE OBSERVATIONAL TOOL WITH THE YPAR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS AND SDT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Evaluation Components</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Strategic Thinking</td>
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<td>Youth actively seek out ways to learn more about one another and new ways of thinking from each other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students identify or analyze alternative points of view and demonstrate openness to modifying pre-existing views based on new information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult partner prompts students to problem solve and provides support as necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small and/or large group discusses root causes of health related concerns, societal/local influences on their health, and/or their own histories and culture and its influence on their health/physical activity.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students discuss or demonstrate an understanding of socio-political environment (discuss who holds power among their peers, adults, leaders, etc.; discuss project stakeholders).</td>
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<td>Information or experiences are shared about how rules or policies are made in the school, community or program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students discuss at least one strategy about how to make their groups’ change in the school or program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop change recommendations based on youths’ photo research and/or discuss how to share</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students analyze how to develop alliances and communicate effectively with various stakeholders.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students identify or work on their chosen project that focuses on action in their after school</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>program/school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students discuss a future course of action regarding project next steps.</td>
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</table>

**Group Work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students engage in productive group processes.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult partners encouraged all students to participate and included all students (unless there are</td>
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<td>extenuating circumstances).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Names were used by adult partners during group time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth knew the other youth in the group (e.g., called each other by name, knew</td>
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<tr>
<td>about events in each other’s lives.</td>
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<td><strong>Communication Skills</strong></td>
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<td><strong>General</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students practice sharing ideas and perspectives out loud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult partners point out the strengths of students’ and their work during discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students point out the strengths of each other’s work during discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult partners model and prompt active listening skills (e.g., turn taking, eye contact) in youth discussions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YPAR Method Specific</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students practice formal presentations related to their idea for change.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students present posters and change ideas to program, school, and/or community stakeholders.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

263
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Sharing in Research</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Students are provided opportunities to make the major decisions regarding their action research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Sharing in Group Work</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
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<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Adults consistently provide opportunities for meaningful student input, decision-making, and/or leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group processes were power sharing in nature.</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Tasks completed in groups were assigned to youth and adult partners based on their unique strengths.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regard for Adolescent Perspectives</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
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</table>

Relevance- Usefulness and Connection of the Session Content to Youths’ Lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Partners Integrate Youth Perspective on Community into Discussion</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School or after school program Strengths are highlighted.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attention to Student Ideas and Opinions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaningful Peer Interactions in group work.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities provide an opportunity to exercise social skills.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>In small groups, youth and adult partners discuss what they learned from each other in session.</td>
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</table>

**Positive Climate**

| Evidence of Warm, supportive Relationships. | X | X | | |
| There are positive nonverbal interactions between adult partners and youth. | X | X | | |
| Youth show positive affect during their interactions with adults. | X | X | | |
| Youth overall personal strengths are highlighted. | X | X | | |
| Youth display positive affect in peer interactions. |   |   | X | X |
| There are visible signs of positive peer interaction. |   |   | X | X |
| Adult partner shows genuine interest in students’ lives outside the program. | X |   | X | X |
| Adult partners implement positive discipline when necessary. |   |   |   |   |

**Student Engagement**

| Active vs. passive engagement in group activities. |   |   |   |   |   | X |
| Affective engagement in group activities. |   |   |   |   |   | X |
| Sustained engagement in group activities. |   |   |   |   |   | X |

**Training and Practice of Research Skills**

<p>| Students learn and/or practice data collection. |   |   |   |   | X | X | X |   |
| Students learn about and/or practice data processing (discussion of photos). | X | X |   |   | X | X | X | X | X |
| Students identify physical | X | X |   |   |   | X | X | X | X |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>activity strengths and challenges (research planning).</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students decide on a change idea/area for action (Issue selection).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides examples (pictures/videos) or models (SHOWeD) that promote a basic understanding of how research can be used for action.</td>
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Note. 1=Define community as a unit of identity; 2=generation of project idea; 3=identify and report youth and community strengths; 4=promote local relevance and an ecological perspective; 5=power-sharing in a pluralistic Y-A partnership; 6=Discussion of power differentials; 7=authentic analysis of social reality; 8=use of a dialogic, reflexive process; 9=use of a cyclical and iterative process; 10=foster co-learning and capacity building; 11=involvement in reporting and dissemination of results; 12=involvement in advocacy for social action; 13=relatedness; 14=autonomy; 15=competence; 16=youth voice/opinions; 17=Ozer process eval.
## APPENDIX D

### CROSSWALK OF THE YPAR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS AND MEASUREMENT METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YPAR Essential Element</th>
<th>YPAR Operationalization</th>
<th>Observational Tool</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
<th>Journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define community as a unit of identity.</td>
<td>Youth are included in defining community as a unit of identity. Characteristics of involved youth are highlighted beyond a general description of the broader community. (This could be elements of youth culture).</td>
<td>See Appendix C.</td>
<td><em>Youth Qualitative Survey:</em> If we wrote an article about this project for others to see, what would you want us to say about you and the other students? How do you want us to describe you? If we wrote an article about the</td>
<td><em>Adult Partner Journal:</em> Please describe anything that would be useful for me to know about the youths’ community, school, strengths, perspectives, needs, challenges, etc. that you heard them discuss that would</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult partners and youth identify and report youth strengths.</td>
<td>Youth strengths are identified during the research process by adult partners and their peers. Conversations stay as strengths focused as possible. Their strengths are used to guide task involvement. Youth strengths are reported in their own words in publications.</td>
<td>See Appendix C.</td>
<td>Adult Partner Journal: Please describe anything that would be useful for me to know about the youths’ community, school, strengths, perspectives, needs, challenges, etc. that you heard them discuss that would be helpful for me to know when I am writing up this project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult partners and youth Identify and highlight community/school/program strengths.</td>
<td>Youth and adult partners discuss and/or take pictures of community strengths. Adult partners continue to point out these strengths, and to</td>
<td>See Appendix C.</td>
<td>Adult Partner Journal: Please describe anything that would be useful for me to know about the youths’ community, school, strengths, perspectives, needs, challenges, etc. that you heard them discuss that would be helpful for me to know when I am writing up this project.</td>
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</table>
| Youth generation of project idea. | Near the beginning of the YPAR process, youth work with peers and adults within the Y-A partnership to identify a project idea. The project direction is ideally based on the youth’s decision, but sometimes it is a choice from options that adults provide. | See Appendix C. | Youth Qualitative Surveys
If we did the project again in the future, what parts of the project do | Adult Partner Journal: What do you think you did well with the kids? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foster co-learning and capacity building between adult partners and youth.</th>
<th>Youth and adults believe they both learn things from each other, and they discuss what they have learned from each other. Adult partners teach youth skills that promote PYD.</th>
<th>See Appendix C.</th>
<th>Particpatory Behavior subscale of the Youth Empowerment Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of a dialogic, reflexive process during praxis with adult partners and youth.</td>
<td>Youth and adults reflect together on systemic influences on health, their</td>
<td>See Appendix C.</td>
<td>Adult Partner Journal: Please describe anything that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authentic analysis of social reality during praxis between adult partners and youth.</strong></td>
<td>Adult partners explicitly set aside time to learn from youth about aspects of youth culture and history, which then influences the research process and helps provide a better understanding of the youths’ reality. Youth and adult partners also discuss the history of youth.</td>
<td>See Appendix C.</td>
<td>Adult Partner Journal: Please describe anything that would be useful for me to know about the youths’ community, school, strengths, perspectives, needs, challenges, etc. that you heard them discuss that would be helpful for me to know when I am writing up this project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Engagement in health initiatives, and how this influences their perspectives.

Youth are included in the reporting and dissemination of research findings.

Youth are involved in the reporting and dissemination of results through presentations at the parent night, and their responses are involved in publications.

See Appendix C.

Youth Qualitative Surveys:
If we wrote an article about this project for others to see, what would you want us to say about you and the other students? How do you want us to describe you?

If we wrote an article about the project, what are some good things you would want us to say about your school community?

Participatory Behavior subscale of the Youth Empowerment Scale.

Adult Partner Journal:
Please list any quotes or summaries of things students said that could be useful for the project below.

Youth involvement in Youth presentations

See Appendix C.

Motivation to
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>advocacy for social action.</th>
<th>to stakeholders advocate for social/systems change. The action should benefit youth and promote PYD outcomes through the advocacy process.</th>
<th>Influence Subscale of the Youth Empowerment Scale.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power-sharing in a pluralistic youth-adult partnership</td>
<td>The youth-adult partnership is viewed as a catalyst for change and competency building. It serves as a corrective experience from the typical youth-adult relationships in society. Adults use their strengths, such as community connections, to complement youths.’ The youth-adult partnership promotes PYD, youth empowerment, and positive, goal directed health.</td>
<td>See Appendix C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptance Subscale of the Mentor-Youth Alliance Scale</td>
<td>Perceived Control Subscale of Youth Empowerment Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth Qualitative Surveys List some things you liked about working together with the students from USC.</td>
<td>Adult Partner Journal: Do you think you shared power with the youth today (worked collaboratively, gave them choice, let them lead some things, asked for their opinions, etc.)? If so, why? If not, why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth Photo Journal: Using the picture taking exercise from today as an</td>
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</table>

| Discussion with youth on the impact of power differentials between adults and youth, and broader society. | A power-sharing process is made explicit through the discussion of power and how it may influence youths’ relationships with adults, both within the research project and outside of it. Youth and adult partners discuss who holds power | See Appendix C. | Sociopolitical Skills Subscale of the Youth Empowerment Scale | example, take a picture of something that represents what you like about your adult partner or that your adult partner does well. Also, take a picture of something that represents what your adult partner could do differently, improve, or do more. |
| **Promote local relevance and an ecological perspective.** | Youth define what is most important to them and most relevant to their local health context. Researchers “fit” the intervention to make it relevant, and use an ecological framework that takes into account individual, school, family, community, and societal influences on health when planning, implementing, and evaluating the research. | See Appendix C. | **Youth Qualitative Survey:** If we wrote an article about the project, what are some good things you would want us to say about your school community? | **Adult Partner Journal:** Please describe anything that would be useful for me to know about the youths’ community, school, strengths, perspectives, needs, challenges, etc. that you heard them discuss that would be helpful for me to know when I am writing up this project. |
APPENDIX E
YPAR CURRICULUM
YPAR ADAPTED DISSERTATION CURRICULUM DRAFT

- Ice breakers/social skills activities will be used to start each session.
- Students will also get at least two 10 minute wiggle/ice breaker breaks during each session.

For the most part, the specific ice breaker/other break activities are not currently listed in the module timeline (there may be a few listed). They will be interchangeable from a large available pool and will be up to the discretion of the adult partner to choose for the group and once the youth are familiar with them, they can choose.

Ice Breakers/Social Games

ADD ON NAME GAME
Equipment: None
Grade: 4-9

1. Have the students stand in a circle facing each other. Pick one person to start the game.
2. The student that starts the game will say his/her name and add a short movement to be associated with their name (e.g., jump, snap fingers, wiggle hips, wave hand in air).
3. The person to his/her right will say the first person’s name and do their movement and then add on his/her name and movement onto it.
4. You go to the next person on the right and he/she will say the first person’s name/movement, the second person’s name/movement, and then add on his/her name and movement, etc.
5. Go around the circle twice!
6. When the students have tried a few times and are getting them correct, have the students mix up the order in which they are sitting.

QUESTION GAME (5 MINUTES)
The group must sit or stand in a circle. Have someone volunteer to start by asking a question (any question, just not personal or derogatory) to the person to their left or right.
The person DOES NOT ANSWER, but asks another question. Whoever is asked a question must then ask the person to their left or right another question. If someone repeats a question or hesitates with his or her question, that person is disqualified. The goal is to keep going with new questions. The questions don’t need to make sense – they just need to be questions!

**STORY TELLER (10 MINUTES)**

Ask one participant to begin to tell a story. After 30 seconds, have another participant stand up and summarize the story thus far and then continue it for another 30 seconds. Repeat this process until the story is over. Note to the group how the story changed as each person summarized. Focus on the importance of listening and cooperation.

**WARM UP: STORY (10 MINUTES)**

Ask everyone to sit in a circle. In this activity, the group will tell a story – but each person can only add one word at a time! Ask for a volunteer to start the story by saying one word. The next person builds on the sentence by saying another word. Continue until the group has at least formed a sentence or two. Debrief: How does this activity relate to teamwork?

**WARM UP: WORDS OF APPRECIATION (5 MINUTES)**

With everyone seated in a circle, pass out a piece of paper and pen or pencil to each youth and staff. Ask everyone to write their name at the top of the paper. Once everyone is done, pass the papers to the left. Each person should write one quality or trait that they appreciate about the person whose name is at the top of the paper. Have them fold the paper over so no one can see what they wrote, then pass the paper to the next person. Keep the papers going until everyone has added something to every person’s sheet, and everyone has their own. Ask youth to avoid focusing on physical traits and to stay positive. Encourage people to be as specific as possible. Specifics will make it more meaningful.

**WARM UP: OBJECT OF INTEREST (15 MINUTES)**

Pass out an index card to each participant, and ask them to think back to elementary school and “show and tell” activities. Ask them to think of an object that is personally significant to them and then to imagine that they are bringing this object for a “show and tell” in this group. Have youth silently write down what the object is, and why it is important to them. Share out in a circle. Remind youth that they can choose whether or not to share out (they can pass). Debrief: Ask youth what they noticed. Were there patterns in the sorts of things people chose? Any surprises? Point out that we all place importance on different sorts of things and have different priorities. There needs to be safety and respect in order for everyone to best express and share what they care about and think.
CATEGORIES (15 MINUTES)
Participants sit in a circle and clap to a beat. One participant chooses a topic (e.g., musical artists). While everyone is clapping to the same beat, one participant starts the group off by saying something in that category (e.g., a music artist’s name). The beat can’t stop, and one by one in a clockwise order, each participant says something in that category (e.g., a music artist’s name). Items cannot be repeated (e.g., if someone says Michael Jackson, no one else can say his name). You can then move onto other topics (e.g., fruits, cities, colors).

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE (10 MINUTES)
Each person has to think of three statements to share with the group about him or herself, two of which are true and one of which is a lie. Everyone else in the group tries to guess which statement is the lie after each person shares the three statements. Hint: Hand out index cards or scrap paper and have participants take a few minutes before beginning the activity to think about what they are going to say. This will keep the truths and lies varied and will help the activity to move more smoothly.

SCRIBBLE DRAWING (10 MINUTES)
Give participants a piece of paper and marker and tell them to scribble until you say to stop (about 5-10 seconds). Next, have them trade papers and try to create a picture out of someone else’s scribble. Debrief by discussing how each one of them used their own perspectives and creativity to create a positive change. Stress the need for creative thinking and how something that is initially nothing special (or a problem) can be transformed into something interesting, useful, or even beautiful.

COMMUNITY BUILDER: CANDY GAME (10 MINUTES)
Pass around a bowl of small, multi-colored candies and instruct each person to take two to five of the candies (they choose the number). Once everyone has picked their candy, group members must tell one unique fact about themselves for each candy in their hands – they can’t eat them to reduce facts needed! Variation: Each color is associated with a different question or statement that requires response. For example: Red: Something you don’t like or try to avoid. Orange: Name something that motivates you. Yellow: If you were ruler of the universe for a day, what is the first thing you would do? Green: If you could have any job, what would it be? Blue: What is your favorite dream about your future? Pink: Something daring you have done.

COMMUNITY BUILDER (15 MINUTES)
Place signs saying “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” on opposite walls. Emphasize that there is no right or wrong answer. Have students stand in the center of the room and read a list of statements. Tell the students to line up against the sign they most
agree with – they can also stand in the middle. Begin with simple questions, such as, “Pizza is my favorite food,” or “I think grades are important for my future.” Gradually move to deeper topics by using questions like, “I feel safe walking home after dark,” or “I think school rules are enforced fairly.” Debrief: Talk about different perspectives on the issues. Discuss how this learning experience could be helpful in working together as a team.

**COMMUNITY BUILDER: BACK TO BACK DRAWING (15 MINUTES)**

This activity highlights the importance of clear directions and active listening. Give each person two blank pieces of paper and a marker or pen. Ask everyone to find a partner and to sit down back to back. Ask everyone to draw a picture on one of the sheets of paper. After all youth have drawn a picture (make sure they don’t let their partner see!), have each pair designate one person as the drawer and the other person as the instructor. Continuing to sit back to back (and therefore unable to see the other person’s sheet of paper), the instructor gives directions to the drawer, with the goal of creating a copy of the instructor’s picture. Directions must be given without using the name of the object (For example, if the instructor drew a big happy face, the directions might include; “Draw a circle that takes up most of your paper. In the center of the top left quadrant of the circle draw another small circle.”) This exercise requires very clear directions! Switch roles, so each person in the pair has a chance to be the drawer and the instructor. Debrief: Discuss the experience and compare the original drawings with the instructed drawings. What was difficult about this activity?

**WHO ELSE? (10 MINUTES)**

Begin by making a circle of chairs. There should be one less chair than the total number of people playing. One person starts by standing in the middle of the circle and saying something about themselves and ending with “Who else?” Example: “I love chocolate. Who else loves chocolate?” All the group members who love chocolate must get up and switch places without selecting the chairs directly on either side of them. The person left without a chair goes to the center of the circle and makes the next statement. This game can be light hearted or serious, depending on the content and the group.

**THE HUMAN KNOT (10 MINUTES)**

Ask everyone to stand in a tight circle and extend their hands into the center. Ask everyone to grab one person’s hand (across the circle) with their right hand, and another person’s hand with their left. Explain that the group now needs to work together to get themselves untangled without ever letting go of hands. Depending on the size of your group, you may break into two smaller groups.

**MIRROR IMAGE (15 MINUTES)**

Start with a demonstration. Invite a volunteer to stand facing you about two to three feet away. Instruct the volunteer to “mirror” as exactly as possible, everything that you do as
if a real reflection. Make your movements interesting and slow enough for the other person to follow. Be silly, or include a task like brushing your teeth. The demonstration helps to loosen up conceptions and inhibitions. After participants understand the activity, ask them to get into pairs and take turns mirroring the actions and movements of the other person.

**GROUP SCULPTURES (15 MINUTES)**

Have participants walk freely in the center of the room until the facilitator says stop. Participants must quickly make groups of three or four. Each small group then has three minutes to select an object and devise a plan to create the object using the bodies of all group members. For example: Participants can make a telephone by having two people on their knees with their hands out as the numbers, another person as the receiver; the final member can “make a call.” Each group has a chance to show their object to the other teams, and everyone tries to guess what they are. Repeat the process for two or three rounds as time allows.

**Alternatives:** Participants stay in the same group while the facilitator names specific categories (e.g., common household items, appliances, something you would find at an amusement park, a type of food).

**Debrief:** What were the different approaches taken by different groups to decide which object to create? How did you decide what role each group member would take? Did the decision-making process change from round to round?

**TRUST WALK (10 MINUTES)**

This activity focuses on understanding aspects of effective communication. Before session, prepare a clear, safe area for this activity and gather objects for participants to collect (e.g., lollipops, pencils, water bottles). Place participants in pairs or small groups, and have one member put on a blindfold. Once a member of every pair or group is blindfolded, place the objects randomly around the area. The blindfolded person must gather as many objects as possible, solely based on the verbal instructions provided by his or her partner(s). “Seeing” partners cannot touch the blindfolded person or the objects and can only communicate verbally.

**Variation:** Take away the verbal communication – the seeing partners can no longer talk but can make sounds.

**Debrief:** Stress the importance of safety while also taking positive risks. After participants complete the activity, discuss why they did or did not trust their partner when they were being led. What would have made them trust each other more? What communication methods worked and what didn’t for the group? What was difficult for the individual who had to complete the task? What was difficult for the group? What aspects of communication did this exercise demonstrate?

**TARP FLIP OVER (15 MINUTES)**

**Equipment:** Tarp
This activity requires working together in close physical proximity to solve a practical problem. It tends to emphasize group communication, cooperation, patience, and problem-solving strategy, as well as issues related to physical self and physical proximity.

With a group standing on a tarp, challenge them to turn the tarp over without anyone touching the ground in the process.

1. 6-8 students stand on a tarp (5’x8’).
2. All students must remain on the tarp at all times.
3. Mark one side of each tarp with a large X.
4. To start, they must start with the X on top and then, without touching at body part to the floor, they must turn the tarp over and end up with the X on the bottom.
5. The second challenge is to fold the tarp into quarters.
6. The third challenge is to unfold it.

Cautions: Obviously people are going to need to feel physically comfortable in order to get physically close and be supportive of one another. Make sure people are warmed up and preferably have removed excessive jewelry, watches, and other loose objects.

**WHO AM I? (15 MINUTES)**

Write the names of common famous people or characters on individual pieces of paper. The names may be of real or fictional characters, living or dead. Don’t let the group see the names ahead of time. Tape one paper on the back of each participant. You can either have the participants pair up, or let people mingle around the group and ask each other questions to try to figure out “Who am I?” Participants can only ask questions that have yes or no answers such as “Am I a real person?”; “Am I a woman?”; or “Am I on television?”

**SPIDER’S WEB**

**Equipment:** Ball of string

1. Participants form a circle, with the leader in the circle holding a ball of string.
2. Start by tossing the ball to a participant, holding onto the end of the string as you throw it.
3. State something you appreciate about that person participating in your shared work. The appreciation can be about something that recently happened or about the other person in general.
4. The ball then travels across the circle to each player with everyone holding onto a piece of the string once the ball is tossed.
5. Have everyone unwind the string by crawling through.

**HULA HOOPLA**

**Equipment:** 1 hula-hoop for each group

**Grades:** 2-9

**Video:** [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11LNy8IOg8Y&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11LNy8IOg8Y&feature=related)
1. Ask the kids to stand in a big circle, slip a hula-hoop onto one child's arm, and have them all join hands.
2. Students must find a way to move the hula-hoop all the way around the circle without letting go of each other's hands.
3. Players must keep holding hands.
4. To make the game more difficult, try playing with two hoops.

**FIRE ESCAPE**

*Equipment:* 2 large hula-hoops

*Objective:* Get the entire group through the hoop as quickly as possible without touching the hoop.

1. Designate one participant as the “hoop holder.” This is the only participant that can touch the hoop.
2. The objective is to get the whole group through the hoop without touching it.
3. Each person must remain physically in contact the people next to them the entire time.
4. Hoop holders must remain in contact with both the class and the hoop. If anyone touches the hoop, the group must start over.

**TRAFFIC JAM**

*Equipment:* Tape, dry erase marker, or sidewalk chalk to draw a circle or square OR beanbags or plates with one more than the number of participants (10 participants=11 squares or circles).

*Objective:* To have two groups of at least four students exchange positions on a line of squares.

1. Squares should be placed in a line an easy step from each other, and the two groups should be placed on the square opposing each other, leaving the middle square open.
2. Using the following moves, students from left side must end up on the right side and visa-versa.
   a. A person may step forward into an empty square.
   b. A person may step around a person who is facing them into an empty square.
   c. No person can step backwards or turn around.
   d. No person can step around a person facing the same way.
   e. Only one person can move at a time.
3. When the group arrives at a solution they should be asked to work through it for time (perhaps competing against a nebulous world record).
BIRD’S NEST

Equipment: Small balls (3 per team)

1. Participants work in groups of 3. Each group has 3 similar objects (same colored balls, etc.) spread out in an open area beyond a designated line.
2. One person per group assumes one of the following roles:
   a. Gatherer – this person is blindfolded, non-verbal and the only member allowed across the designated line to gather the group’s objects.
   b. Instructor – this person is blindfolded as well but the only person in the group that can speak. It is their job to give directions to the “gatherer.”
   c. Spotter - this person can see but not talk. It is his/her responsibility to visually locate the group’s objects and give non-verbal directions to the “instructor” in order for the “gatherer” to locate the objects.
3. Once blindfolded, the gatherer will move through the open area (bumpers up) attempting to locate and gather their objects.
4. The “instructor” should be seated behind the designated line and the spotter should stand directly behind them.
5. The challenge is for the gatherer to collect the group’s objects and place them in the basket with the help of the “instructors” directions.
6. Allow participants to change roles after each object is found.
Session 1: 4:30-6:30

1st 10 min. segment

GET STARTED: YPAR BASICS: SETTING GROUND RULES

OBJECTIVES
To create a space that allows participants to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, beliefs, and experiences

MATERIALS
Butcher paper/flip chart paper
Markers
Tape
Poster board to hang rules on wall

PREPARE BEFORE
N/A

WARM UP
Ask participants to share why they think having ground rules is important.
“A few students tell me why having ground rules is important?”

EXPERIENCE
Setting and agreeing on ground rules that will guide the group is a first step to creating a safe space; it is recommended at the first meeting.

First ask youth for their ideas of rules that can make the group work a safe, inclusive, respectful, friendly place.

“What rules can you all think of that can make the work we do together safe, inclusive, respectful, and friendly?

If they have difficulty generating important rules, add these suggestions.

- There are no stupid questions.
- Do not interrupt or talk over others when they are speaking – share the spotlight.
- Avoid side conversations when someone is speaking to the group.
- Use “I” statements when speaking.
- Be willing to share your ideas and experiences with others, even though you may feel your ideas are different.
- Be accountable to the team — if you say you will do something, do it.
- Give each other the benefit of the doubt.
- If a peer asks you to keep something private within the group, please respect that request.

**REFLECT**
Briefly ask students how these ground rules will create a safe, respectful, friendly space.
“How will these ground rules create a safe, respectful, and friendly place?”

**DO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COMMENT WALL HERE – HAVE THEM CRUMPLE UP THE NEGATIVE COMMENT WALL**

**SUMMARIZE**
State that it is important to follow the rules and also hold each other accountable.
“It is important to follow the rules, and also to hold each other accountable. We are going to decide on a code (e.g., snapping fingers) that indicates when someone is not adhering to our rules that we decided on together. When someone performs the code movement, we will know a rule is not being followed and be able to work through the concern.”

Generate a common “code” (e.g., snapping fingers, clapping etc.) that signals that someone in the group is breaking a rule and needs some one-on-one attention to work out what is going on.

**DEMONSTRATE**
Post the rules and remind participants to look at them.
20 min segment:

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

1) Introduce participants to the project (Provide them with handout as well)
   a) Introductory VIDEO- show one project video from YPAR website
   b) Discuss the project’s purpose, timeline, and end goal
      a. Going to be working in small groups
      b. Work together to advocate for a change in your school/community related to PA
      c. Do fun activities, practice skills, and learn from each other
   c) Explain that participants will explore this topic by taking pictures of things that help them to be physically active in their school or community and things that make it difficult.
      a. Present photos together at family night at end of the year

Sample Script:
“We are going to be in the program spending time and having fun with you all on Fridays from 4:30-6 until the end of your school year. One adult partner is going to be paired with a group of 4-5 students to work together. You are going to take some pictures of your after school program, school, or community. The pictures will be of things that help you be physically active as well as challenges to being active. You all will then work together in your group to come up with something you think is most important to change in your school or community, and then communicate to leaders the importance of that change. You will use the pictures you take to communicate the importance of the issue. You will also present these pictures at the end of the year fair to your families and any school or community members in attendance. We will be trying to make a serious change, but our time together won’t always be serious. We will do fun activities, practice skills, and learn from each other while building and deepening friendships.”

d) Do “Defining an advocate” exercise
   a. Show clips of politicians, social figures, and other influential individuals that worked for an important social justice cause and have students discuss what strategies/what they do well to get their message across.
   b. Discuss how a recent example is the removal of the confederate flag at the State House
   c. Have students discuss people that are influential to them whom have made positive change
   d. Tell students that they will also be advocates for change in their school and/or community as they work on this project.
20 minute wiggle break

Form groups – give youth the choice to form groups based on common interests.

2nd 30 min. segment

Group Bonding/ Social Activities

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE (10 MINUTES)
Each person has to think of three statements to share with the group about him or herself, two of which are true and one of which is a lie. Everyone else in the group tries to guess which statement is the lie after each person shares the three statements.
Hint: Hand out index cards or scrap paper and have participants take a few minutes before beginning the activity to think about what they are going to say. This will keep the truths and lies varied and will help the activity to move more smoothly.

COMMUNITY BUILDER: CANDY GAME (10 MINUTES)
Pass around a bowl of small, multi-colored candies (use Welch’s fruit 100% vitamin C gummies instead) and instruct each person to take two to five of the candies (they choose the number). Once everyone has picked their candy, group members must tell one unique fact about themselves for each candy in their hands – they can’t eat them to reduce facts needed! Variation: Each color is associated with a different question or statement that requires response. For example: Red: Something you don’t like or try to avoid. Orange: Name something that motivates you. Yellow: If you were ruler of the universe for a day, what is the first thing you would do? Green: If you could have any job, what would it be? Blue: What is your favorite dream about your future? Pink: Something daring you have done.

Discuss how decisions in groups will be made:

"Think back to a time recently when you needed to make a decision with your friends (like what to do after school, what movie to see, or where to sit at lunch). How was it decided what you would do?

Now think about a time in one of your classes when there was a decision about what activity you would do. How was it decided what you would do?

When the city needs to decide whether or not to build a new park, how is it decided what will happen?

Who decides in your family what you eat for dinner or whether or not you go to church?"
In our groups, we will use a form of decision making called democratic decision making. In this style, everyone’s voice matters, and we take a vote to decide on what we will do, with majority ruling.”

Note to adult partners: In any of the group work, if your group finishes early and it is an activity where the next step is to share the answers with the larger group, then build in some form of PA or ice breaker while the group is waiting – always have options to keep them occupied.
15 min. segment:

OBJECTIVES

CAMERA ETHICS

To understand different ethical situations in taking pictures of people.
To develop a standard procedure and form for getting consent.

MATERIALS

Tablet Lease Form
Picture Consent Form
Ethics Tips Handout
Ethics Questions Handout
Permission Script Handout

PREPARE BEFORE

In this lesson, will distribute consent forms for taking pictures, so will need to have enough copies printed.

WARM UP:
How many of you have ever been photographed when you didn’t want to be? (Ask for show of hands from large group).

We are now going to talk in our groups about ways that we can prevent ourselves from taking pictures of others when they do not want to be photographed.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Discuss camera ethics with the small groups.

DISCUSS SAFETY ISSUES

Discuss briefly in small group: When would you not want to have your picture taken?
Some of students’ responses might be:
In a fight with someone
In a hurry
if they are sharing a private moment, like a hug or kiss
not having a good hair day
leaving a doctor’s office
in a bad mood
Have 1-2 students in group: Describe a time when someone you know took a picture of you when you did not want them to.
Prompt with 1-2 follow up questions if student did not answer these in original answer:
What was the situation?
How did you feel?
What did you do? Did you say anything to that person? Tell anyone about it?

How would you feel if a stranger was taking your picture?
Students may say if you don’t know the person, you may feel creeped out, scared, confused, taken advantage of, used.
Say – Right – It does not feel good, so we want to make sure to not make others feel that way, even if unintentionally.

Discuss - Don’t photograph people who don’t want to be photographed.
“Think about how you felt when you were photographed when you did not want to be. We do not want to do this same thing that you did not like to others. If they do not want to be photographed, not taking their picture is a sign of respect for them. We want to treat others the way we want to be treated.”

What to do if someone becomes angry you took their photograph
What are some ideas about what we should do if someone gets angry that we took their photo?
Apologize.
Explain why you took the photo – you are doing a project on the strengths of being physically active, and thought they would be a good person to represent an idea for this project.
Tell them that we will delete it, and show them that we have.

How can you make people feel most comfortable when you are taking their pictures?
Ask for permission.
Show them the picture if they ask, and delete or re-take if they request.
Tell them what the picture is being used for.

Practice asking permission
When to ask: if you can tell who the person is, you need permission

Discuss how to use the consent forms – if you are taking a picture of a person and you can see their face/recognize who they are, you need to have them sign a consent form.

How to ask: Practice
Hi, I am doing a project on being active in our school/community. I think it would be helpful if a picture of you and what you are doing is a part of my project. Are you okay with me taking your picture right now?
If yes: Great! Please sign this form – it is our way of documenting that we received permission from you.
If no: No problem, thanks for considering it! Have a great day.

**Briefly Discuss Other Safety Concerns:**
Always go with someone else/ preferably an adult if you are taking pictures out in your neighborhood/community in a place where your family does not let you go alone. Follow your family’s rules about hanging out in your neighborhood. Tell your caregivers when you are going out to take pictures and where you are going.
*Don’t photograph illegal activities.*
(Such as people selling or using drugs, or anyone under 21 using alcohol or under 18 smoking cigarettes).
*If there are people in your photos, make sure that they are wearing clothes that would be appropriate to wear to school.*

**DEMONSTRATE**

Adult allies should act out one scenario for the larger group to demonstrate how this works in real life – a time when it is done incorrectly and correctly.

Incorrectly – Scenario: two adult allies are hugging and you run up and take a picture and run away without asking.

Correctly – Scenario: See a girl using the gym floor space to stretch; briefly describe project and ask if you can take picture.

**SUMMARIZE**

“*Establishing our own sense of ethics for our project is very important. People must be able to trust us with their image and with their story. Also, we should not take advantage even if they have given permission. We want to be respectful and only show pictures of people that we would be okay with if they were taken of us.*”

**PHOTOGRAPHY SKILL BUILDING & PRACTICE**

In small groups, distribute the tablets to the students so that they can familiarize themselves with them.

Note to adult partners: make sure the printer app and anything else necessary is already on the tablet before today.

Discuss responsibility of using the tablet – what if lost/stolen/damaged?

Give Tablet Release Form to students to sign while using the tablet during program time.
Discuss what makes a good picture (Some samples will be shown to illustrate the concepts)  
*If any students brought photos from home that they think are good, have them describe why they think it is a good picture.*  
Get close enough to show any important details  
Can hold camera horizontally or vertically  
Hold camera still and level; be careful not to move the camera when you take a picture  
Avoid bad lighting (night, dark rooms); Discuss when to use flash  
If the photo is important to you, take several (different) shots  
Go over mechanics of the camera on the tablet (focus, flash, zoom)  

*Don’t need wiggle break because will be walking around to practice taking pictures next.*
When do I need to get permission to take a picture?
I need to get permission if I can see the person’s face and can identify who he or she is. If I cannot see his or her face, then I do not need to get permission.

Why do I need to ask for permission?
It is important to respect others and act in an ethical manner, and asking for permission is a sign that we respect other people’s space and wishes.

How do I ask for permission?
Below is an example of a way you can ask for permission:
“Hi, I am doing a project on being active in our school/community. I think it would be helpful if a picture of you is a part of my project. Are you okay with me taking your picture right now?
If yes: Great! Please sign this form – it is our way of documenting that we received permission from you.
If no: No problem, thanks for considering it! Have a great day.”

Why do I need to have them sign a form?
They need to sign a form to show proof that they gave permission. Otherwise, it is just their word.

How can I make people the most comfortable when I am taking their picture?
You can make them feel comfortable by asking for permission, showing them the picture if they ask to see it, and explaining the purpose of the project so they know why you are taking it.

What do I need to remember when I am taking pictures?
You should make sure that you have your relative’s permission if you are taking pictures in your neighborhood. Only go places that you are allowed to go and obey your family’s supervision rules. If you are taking pictures at school, do not take them during class time when the teacher is teaching.

Is there anything I should not include in a picture?
You should not include any pictures of illegal activities like underage drug or alcohol use. You should also only take pictures of people wearing clothes that are appropriate to wear to school. Do not include people in pictures if they say they do not want to be photographed.
Questions to Help You Take Pictures in an Ethical Way Handout

Do I have permission to take this picture?

IF NO, GET CONSENT

Am I respecting this person?

IF NO, DON’T TAKE THAT PICTURE – ASK, HOW CAN I TAKE A PICTURE THAT WILL RESPECT THIS PERSON?

If I put myself in the person’s place, how would I feel?

What am I saying with this picture?

What are the risks in taking this picture?

What are the benefits of taking this picture?

What can I influence with this picture?
Script to ask for Permission to take a Photo Handout

If you are taking a picture of a person and you can see their face/recognize who they are, you need to have them sign a consent form.

How to ask:
“Hi, I am doing a project on being active in our school/community. I think it would be helpful if a picture of you and what you are doing is a part of my project. Are you okay with me taking your picture right now?
If yes: Great! Please sign this form – it is our way of documenting that we received permission from you.
If no: No problem, thanks for considering it! Have a great day.”
TABLET LEASE AGREEMENT

I agree to return the tablet to the University of South Carolina Research Team in the condition that I received it. I will not break, take, or modify the tablet in any way beyond the project tasks.

I have read and fully understand the terms of this release.

Name: 

Address: 

Street

City State Zip

Phone: 

Signature: Date: 

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18):

Date: 

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30 min. segment

Have the groups do the below throughout the whole project – decide in groups if want to have a designated group photographer, or if want to rotate each week.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Include photographs when telling your story. Take photos when the project begins, when progress is under way, and when the project is completed. These photos might be used by the newspaper, school publications, or reporting. Photographs are also important to provide evidence of the impact the project has made on the community.

PRACTICING PHOTOGRAPHY

Objectives
To practice taking photos
To creatively depict different attributes of a place

Materials
Tablets (2 per group)
“Scavenger Hunt Worksheet” handouts (1 per participant)
Copies of photo releases
Projector
Picture of an object relevant to the youths’ lives
Poster board to display camera ethics
Poster board with rules

Warm Up

In the small group, show a picture of an object or landscape with no people in the picture. (Bring easy ones, like ocean, mountains, flower, etc.)

Ask students:
What are the first words that come to mind? What feelings does this remind you of?
Other things this picture might represent? [For instance, a picture of a flower might be about growth, beauty, new life, the seasons, global warming, photosynthesis.]

Experience
Note: (Think we should do this in groups to better monitor them throughout the school vs. pairs – won’t be enough staff to monitor pairs)

“Now we are going to be practicing taking photos and finding ways to take photos of ideas or concepts.
Everyone will be in together in our group. In your group, you will have 15 minutes to take pictures of these concepts. Please take turns taking pictures and making decisions in your group. Be creative — you might not be able to take a literal picture of this concept, but you can take a picture that could symbolize it. If you have time, you may take additional pictures for each word, so that you can choose the best picture.”

Briefly review main points of ethics from last session. “If the people in it are identifiable and outside of our after school program group, they need to get a photo release. Pictures with people where the faces aren’t seen or are obscured do not need a photo release. Photos of people should show respect for those people.”

Let participants know if there are any places that are out of bounds.

The group should have at least 2 tablets, a “Scavenger Hunt Worksheet” handout for each person, and copies of photo releases.

Say, “when you are done we are going to use the app to send your photos to the printer and also save in google drive so we can use them in the future. Hold on to your scavenger sheet since we will discuss them together.”
Scavenger Sheet Handout

Names:

Please choose 6 words below. Please circle the words that you choose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friendship</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Teamwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Talent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Self</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You now have 15 minutes to take pictures around the after school program and school of people, places, or things that represent those words. Follow our guidelines for getting a photo release and for ethical behavior. Take turns taking photos. For each photo write where you took it and why it symbolizes that word. Good luck!

Word #1:

What is it a picture of?

Where was this picture taken?

How does this picture show this word?

Word #2:

What is it a picture of?

Where was this picture taken?

How does this picture show this word?
Word #3:
What is it a picture of?
Where was this picture taken?
How does this picture show this word?

Word #4:
What is it a picture of?
Where was this picture taken?
How does this picture show this word?

Word #5:
What is it a picture of?
Where was this picture taken?
How does this picture show this word?

Word #6:
What is it a picture of?
Where was this picture taken?
How does this picture show this word?
Reflect
Facilitate a discussion with the following reflection questions:
   a) What was the hardest word to photograph?
   b) What was the easiest?
   c) Is there a photo you are particularly proud of? Why?

Summarize
“This is an opportunity to see familiar surroundings in a new way and to see which parts of the after school program can represent different concepts if we think critically about them from a new perspective.”

Demonstrate
Vote on 3 words to discuss in more detail per group.
“We are now going to vote on 3 words that we will discuss in more detail with our small groups.”
Photographers should explain why they chose that photo, how it shows that word, and where they took the picture.
“When you show your photo, please explain why you chose it, how the picture shows the word, and where the picture was taken.”
Bring out the different ways people showed that concept.
“Did you pick common locations? Are there parts of our after school program, school grounds, or the area around our school that are typically that word?”

Adult partner should emphasize strengths of the group of youth. Adult partner should prompt for positive comments/strengths of each other’s pictures.
**30 min. segment**

**Review with the larger group:**
Have each group choose one photo about one concept to display and discuss with the large group. Let each group choose the concept – even if there are duplicate concepts between groups (e.g., all groups chose to display happy), can then compare and contrast.

“Now we are going to choose one picture per group to share with the larger group. First, let’s decide what concept we want to share. Now that we have decided on the concept, which picture do we want to share with the larger group that represents that concept?”

Discuss with the larger group:
“*What are similar things you all did when going about taking these photos? What are some differences?*”
“*What did you learn from someone else’s photo that you would like to try in the future?*”

**Summarize strengths of the activity together.**

**Summary**
“Next session, we will begin brainstorming strengths related to participating in PA in our after school program/school/community. We will also begin taking pictures about these ideas in the after school program/school/community surrounding the school.”
HEALTH INFLUENCES DICE ROLL GAME

Agree or Disagree Dice-Roll Game
Participate in this game in the groups of 5. Using three piles of cards and a colored die, the youth rolls the die, and chooses a card from the pile with the same color as the rolled die. The youth or the adult partner reads the question.

Objective
Provide an activity-based way to have young people discuss their opinions and learn facts.

Uses:
• Assess middle school students’ knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about the influences on their health.

Materials Needed: 1 die per group with colored-faces (3 colors), index cards (3 colors, one for each type of card – opinion, advice, facts).

Steps for designing the die roll game:

1. Prepare the die using the same colors as used for the index cards. It takes a bit of time to construct. (You might want to use masking tape to hold the dice sides together. The size of the dice can be large, up to 4 inches square. You could paint the faces of regular-size die, but adolescents like rolling the large die.)

2. Prepare the game cards, writing or pasting the questions and statements on the correctly-colored index cards.

Steps for facilitating the die roll game:

1. Adult leaders have two options: they can select 2 cards from each category to use while playing the game with their group, or can place all cards down knowing that not all cards will get used since each youth only goes once.
2. Set up the game: Put three piles of cards face down on the floor or on a tabletop. Give the respondent a die and explain how to do the activity (see below).
3. Tell youth in your group “This game will help us to begin thinking about the different influences on our health behavior and what we can do about them.”
4. One youth rolls the die and the face color indicates which color card should be selected. The youth pulls the card from the top of the pile. He/she reads the selected card out loud to the adult partner, or the adult partner reads the card to the youth.
5. The youth answers and then the adult partner may ask others in the group to positively comment or add to the respondent’s answer.

6. The die roll then goes to the next youth in the circle, and the same procedure continues until each youth has answered one question.

QUESTIONS TO PUT ON CARDS

**ADVICE:**
Where would you tell another student to go if they said they wanted to find a safe place to be active in the community?
What physical activity or exercise would you recommend to a student that currently is inactive, but wants to get started?
If a community political leader asked you what health related change your community needs most, what would you suggest?
If a school administrator asked you what health related change your school needs most, what would you suggest?
What advice would you give another student who is at the grocery store and wants to choose a tasty and also healthy snack?

**FACT:**
T/F - Physical activity produces chemicals in your body that can improve your mood.
T/F – All youth have equal access to physical activity opportunities.
   As youth talk about this question, prompt discussion about systemic barriers, such as underresourced schools cutting extracurriculars, needing more time for preparing for testing so cutting PE & recess, some communities not having sidewalks/parks, public transportation difficulties.
T/F – I am the only person that influences my ability to be physically active.
   As youth talk about this question, prompt for peer, parent, school, and societal influences.
T/F – Adults make policies that affect how active students can be in certain situations.
   What is a food desert? – definitely use this
   Follow up questions to ask: What are the names of stores in your neighborhood? How close are they to your house? Who controls this?
   What is green space? – definitely use this
   How green would you say your neighborhood is? School? Who controls this?

**OPINION:**
Why is physical activity important?
What physical activity or exercise is your favorite to participate in with your friends?
What people, places, or things may get in the way of youth being physically active daily?
How do you think being physically active has changed since when your parents or program leaders were your age?
Which category do you think has the biggest impact on middle school students’ physical activity? You, friends, family, teachers, school, the media, your neighborhood, laws/government?

What is your favorite healthy snack?

What celebrity do you think is a healthy role model?

What are some things that, if present in a community, make it easier to be active/walk around?

What are some things that, if present in a school, make it easier to be active?

SMALL GROUP:

Point out youth strengths in the activity – praise all youth for their response and/or participating, point out how they work well together.

Have a discussion in the small group. Ask the youth to:

“name one thing you’ve learned from this game.
Name one thing someone said that you liked or something that someone suggested that you want to try.
Is there anything you all would like to talk about related to any of these topics in our small group?”

LARGE GROUP:

Have a large group discussion to the same questions-
What are some things you learned in your groups?
What are some things you liked that you want to try yourself?
What do you want to share about your group experience?

Comment on group cohesiveness/strengths of working together.

SUMMARY:

There are a variety of influences on our health behaviors. There are ourselves, our peers, family, school, community. This activity hopefully got us all thinking about these different influences on our health, and what being healthy means to us.
3rd 30 min. segment

IMAGINING OUR DREAM HEALTHY SETTING

Objectives

- To visualize your group’s ideal healthy community/school

Materials

- flip chart paper (12 pieces – 2 per group)
- Markers
- Tape

Prepare Before

Set out large paper for each group and, write the following questions:

1. What physical things do you see?
2. How does it feel to be a part of this place?
3. What sounds do you hear and what does it smell like?
4. What kinds of things happen here?
5. What does a typical day look like?

Set up:

Have youth get into groups of 4-5 that they will stay in throughout the project. Youth can decide to focus on an ideal healthy community or school. Reference youths’ answers from the dice roll game to aid with deciding on the setting of focus if they are having difficulty. Let the youth in the group vote on the context. They then answer the questions on the large sheets and share with the larger group at the end, discussing any similarities and differences.

Say: “To further our thinking about health, we are going to work in groups to imagine our ideal healthy place. We’re going to create together a vision of a healthy school/community where its members can be physically active whenever they want/are able to. In this setting, everyone receives the support they need to be healthy. We are doing to do this by answering the questions on these papers.”

Note to adult partner: If youth choose to focus on their community, work together with the youth to define what community means to them. These prompts can be used as examples: What is your community? How should we define it? Is it their neighborhood, block, city? Is community a place? Where does it start and where does it end?
Groups work together to answer each question. Students can write words or draw images on the paper. When finished, each person in each group will read one section out loud to the larger group.

If some groups finish before others, they can use the answers to the questions to begin to create a large detailed picture or writing of a paragraph or two that describes their ideal healthy setting.

Reflect

All groups will participate in a discussion with the larger group:

What were similarities and differences between the healthy places the groups created?

Was it hard or easy for you to imagine a healthy place?

Is there a specific place on TV, in a song, or nearby that you used as a model?

Why is it sometimes hard to imagine something different?

What might need to happen to make this healthy place a reality? What would your friends, family, school, neighborhood, government need to do?

Summary

The project leader talks to the larger group about what will happen next Friday.

“Next Friday, we will be talking about safe ways to use cameras and methods for taking quality photos, and will begin to practice taking photos. Today’s activity hopefully helped get you thinking about your own school/community and some strengths it already has in getting people PA, as well as challenges to being active. These ideas will help guide the development of your creative work around the change your group desires.”

Optional Assignment

If you have some, please bring pictures that you think are of high quality to next session, and please write a few sentences about why you think it is a good picture.

End by pointing out the strengths of the groups working together, and any other positive things that occurred.
2nd 30 min. segment

Have the groups do the below throughout the whole project – decide in groups if want to have a designated group photographer, or if want to rotate each week.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Include photographs when telling your story. Take photos when the project begins, when progress is under way, and when the project is completed. These photos might be used by the newspaper, school publications, or reporting. Photographs are also important to provide evidence of the impact the project has made on the community.

PRACTICING PHOTOGRAPHY

Objectives
To practice taking photos
To creatively depict different attributes of a place

Materials
Tablets or phone cameras (1 per every other participant)
“Scavenger Hunt Worksheet” handouts (1 per participant)
Copies of photo releases
Projector
Picture of an object or landscape
Poster board to display camera ethics
Poster board with rules

Warm Up

In the small group, show a picture of an object or landscape with no people in the picture. (Bring easy ones, like ocean, mountains, flower, etc.)

Ask students:
What are the first words that come to mind? What feelings does this remind you of? Other things this picture might represent? [For instance, a picture of a flower might be about growth, beauty, new life, the seasons, global warming, photosynthesis.]

Experience
“Now we are going to be practicing taking photos and finding ways to take photos of particular ideas or concepts.
Everyone will be in pairs. In your pair, you will have today’s session to take pictures of these concepts. Be creative — you might not be able to take a literal picture of this concept, but you can take a picture that could symbolize it. You will have only today’s
session to take pictures. If you have time, you may take additional pictures for each word, so that you can choose the best picture.”

Briefly review main points of ethics from last session. “If the people in it are identifiable, they need to get a photo release. Pictures with people where the faces aren’t seen or are obscured do not need a photo release. Photos of people should show respect for those people.”

Let participants know if there are any places that are out of bounds.

Pair people off. Everyone should have a camera, a “Scavenger Hunt Worksheet” handout, and copies of photo releases.

Say, “when you are done use the app to send your photos to the printer and also save in google drive so we can use them in the future. Hold on to your scavenger sheet since we will discuss them together.”

**Note to leader:** Later in this lesson, you will project the photos, or bring them up on a computer screen in a classroom ideally with all the photos for each word in a row or in a quick PowerPoint following each other, or just pull up one at a time. If do this, just need to send to google drive. If want to print, then instead have students print their pictures and they can either pass them around/hold them up.
Scavenger Sheet Handout

Names:

Please choose 6 words below. Please circle the words that you choose.

Friendship   Community   Active   Teamwork
Strength

Health      Play      Happy      Talent
Learning

Future Self  Leadership

You now have 20 minutes to take pictures around the after school program and school of people, places, or things that represent those words. Follow our guidelines for getting a photo release and for ethical behavior. Take turns taking photos. For each photo write where you took it and why it symbolizes that word. Good luck!

Word #1:

What is it a picture of?

Where was this picture taken?

How does this picture show this word?

Word #2:

What is it a picture of?

Where was this picture taken?

How does this picture show this word?
Word #3:
What is it a picture of?
Where was this picture taken?
How does this picture show this word?

Word #4:
What is it a picture of?
Where was this picture taken?
How does this picture show this word?

Word #5:
What is it a picture of?
Where was this picture taken?
How does this picture show this word?

Word #6:
What is it a picture of?
Where was this picture taken?
How does this picture show this word?
Reflect
Have the pairs come back into their small groups of 4-5. Facilitate a discussion with the following reflection questions:

\[ d) \text{ What was the hardest word to photograph?} \]
\[ e) \text{ What was the easiest?} \]
\[ f) \text{ Is there a photo you are particularly proud of? Why?} \]

Summarize
“This is an opportunity to see familiar surroundings in a new way and to see which parts of the after school program can represent different concepts if we think critically about them from a new perspective.”

Demonstrate
Vote on 2 words to discuss in more detail per group and then have each pair show the photos for each of those 2 words with the small group.

“We are now going to vote on 2 words that we will discuss in more detail with our small groups.”

Photographers should explain why they chose that photo, how it shows that word, and where they took the picture.

“When you show your photo, please explain why you chose it, how the picture shows the word, and where the picture was taken.”

Bring out the different ways people showed that concept.

“Did you pick common locations? Are there parts of our after school program, school grounds, or the area around our school that are typically that word?”

Adult partner should emphasize strengths of the group of youth. Adult partner should prompt for positive comments/strengths of each other’s pictures.
3rd 30 min. segment

Review with the larger group:
Have each group choose one photo about one concept to display and discuss with the large group. Let each group choose the concept – even if there are duplicate concepts between groups (e.g., all groups chose to display happy), can then compare and contrast. “Now we are going to choose one picture per group to share with the larger group. First, let’s decide what concept we want to share. Now that we have decided on the concept, which picture do we want to share with the larger group that represents that concept?”

Discuss with the larger group:
“What are similar things you all did when going about taking these photos? What are some differences?”
“What did you learn from someone else’s photo that you would like to try in the future?”

Summarize strengths of the activity together.

Summary
“Next session, we will begin brainstorming strengths and challenges related to participating in PA in our after school program/school/community. We will also begin practicing taking pictures about these ideas in the after school program.”
Session 3

1st 30 min. segment:

Introduction to Photo voice method

Say:
“We are moving into the stage of our project when we are looking at the strengths (people, places, and things that help you be PA) and challenges (people, places, and things that make it difficult to be active).

“Together in the small groups, we are going to use a digital camera, tablet, or phone to take 2 pictures that capture things (people, places, objects) that help you be PA or make it easier to be PA and 2 pictures that capture challenges to PA in the after school program/school. This will help you prepare to take pictures outside of the program in a future session.”

These can be ideas that you generated with your group or other ideas that come to your mind as you walk around. You will have 15 minutes to take these pictures. When you are done, send your pictures to the printer using the app and then come back to your table. One person from the group should volunteer to go get the pictures from the printer.”

Review photo guidelines:
“If the people in it are identifiable and not a part of the project, they need to get permission. Pictures with people where the faces can’t be seen do not need a photo release. Photos of people should show respect for those people.”

Let participants know if there are any places in the school or surrounding area that are out of bounds.

When done, back at table:

“Free write by yourself in your journal for one minute about the strengths and then one minute about the challenges of being PA in your program/school. You will share these writings with the group.”

“And share your writings with the group. Together, create a caption for each picture that you all think would help the larger group understand your experiences. These captions, when putting the pictures in order, should tell a story about the pictures. You will have 10 minutes to complete this.”

Praise positive group dynamics, problem solving, working together, and the creativity behind creating the captions and generating their stories via picture.
REFLECT

In the small groups, ask:

*What is it about those pictures that tells your groups’ story? Is there any one picture that does it particularly well?*
*What parts of the story are unclear? Is there another picture or image you would have added to make the story or feeling clearer?*
*How do you think the strengths got there? What about the challenges? What would it take to improve them?*

Have each group share with the larger group. Keep a list of the strengths and challenges of PA in the program on flip chart paper so that all youth can see it.

**Point out the strengths of the groups working together and the helpfulness of the barriers and promoters of PA that they captured.**

SUMMARIZE

“There are multiple ways to tell a story. When you are using pictures, notice the things they make you feel and what they remind you of. Use those feelings and reminders to guide you when you are taking pictures to help your group make a change. Next session, we will work with photos in more detail.”
Introduction to Photo voice Method Scavenger Hunt Handout

For the next 15 minutes, in your group, please walk around the after school program and/or school, and take pictures of:

1. something that helps you be physically active.
2. one area of your school/program in which you are very active.
3. something that makes it difficult for you to be active.
4. one place where you are rarely active.

When you are done taking the pictures, please send the photos to the printer. Please tape each of the 4 photos below, and in 10 minutes, briefly describe each one, and write a caption for each picture with your group.

Photo 1 (something that helps you be physically active):

(briefly describe the picture)

Caption 1:
Photo 2 (are of your school/program in which you are very active):

(briefly describe the picture)

Caption 2:
Photo 3 (something that makes it difficult for you to be active):

(briefly describe the picture)

Caption 3
Photo 4 (one place where you are rarely active):

(briefly describe the picture)

Caption 4:
2nd 30 min. segment

WHO AM I? (15 MINUTES)
Write the names of common famous people or characters on individual pieces of paper. The names may be of real or fictional characters, living or dead. Don’t let the group see the names ahead of time. Tape one paper on the back of each participant. You can either have the participants pair up, or let people mingle around the group and ask each other questions to try to figure out “Who am I?” Participants can only ask questions that have yes or no answers such as “Am I a real person?”; “Am I a woman?”; or “Am I on television?”

Have youth get into their small groups.

IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES AND ASSETS

Objectives
To identify key physical activity related challenges and assets in the school/community

Materials
flip chart paper
Tape
Markers
Paper
Pens or pencils
“Telling Your Story Through Photos” Assignment Handout
Paper to get a list of students’ email addresses for reminders

Prepare Before
Have one flip chart piece of paper with the word school and one with community. Also have 2 printer pieces of paper for each group with these words written on them as well. So need 12 or so pieces of notebook paper.
Experience

Now give each group a piece of paper and pens.

First, say,

We started with the after school program in the last activity, and now we will use some of those ideas to get us thinking of larger settings: strengths and challenges to being PA in your school and community. Over the next few sessions, we will be taking photos as research to capture these strengths and challenges to determine what our actions will be. As a next step, to get us thinking about the school/community, together in our groups we will brainstorm some strengths and challenges for a setting (school/community) of your groups’ choosing.”

“So again, we are going to work together in groups to generate strengths and challenges of PA. We have the choice to do this either for the school or community. Please decide in your group which one interests you all most.”

If have difficulty deciding, take a vote. If they say they don’t care, dig deeper with follow up questions.

Once they decide, have them create two columns on the paper; label one with strengths and the other challenges.

IDENTIFYING ASSETS

Tell the small group about the concept of assets: “Assets are positive things or strengths. An asset can be a skill, a quality, or a resource (e.g., money, a building, a program).”

STEP 1: Under the strengths heading, have participants write assets (e.g., people, places, programs) that help them be healthy/physically active in the setting the group selected.

Give them 5 minutes to brainstorm PA assets.

If they are stuck, perhaps ask: “What helps your friends be physically active? Your family? Your neighbors? What do you see in your neighborhood that helps the community be active? Are there any programs that promote physical activity in your community or school? Are there things you believe, feel, or say to each other that help you be active?

Praise positive communication and decision making strategies in the group. Point out strengths of youth in determining the PA assets.
IDENTIFYING ISSUES (identical process as above):

STEP 2: Say, “Now, brainstorm as many barriers to being healthy/physically active that can that exist in this setting in the other column. What really bugs you, and if you could change something, what would you change?”

Give them 5 minutes to brainstorm barriers to PA.

If they are stuck, perhaps ask: “What activities and things get in the way of your friends being active? Your family? Your neighbors? What do you see in your neighborhood that might get in the way of being active? Are there things you believe or feel that get in the way? Is there anything that happens during the day that makes it difficult to be active? Do any programs take up time that you could otherwise use for physical activity?

**Praise positive communication and decision making strategies in the group. Point out strengths of youth in determining the PA assets.**

STEP 3: Share back to the full group by getting volunteers from the groups of youth to write the assets and challenges on the large flip chart paper.

**What are some PA assets that you learned about in this activity that you did not know about before? Any that you had forgotten about?** – point out assets that more youth can use that they did not know about previously.

Ask: “what are some common challenges? What are some unique ones that you did not realize before now?”

**Reflect**

Say: “Take 3 minutes to write in your journals.

Choose one issue from the large flip chart list and write down why this particular issue bothers you. Write why you think this issue exists.

Choose one asset from the large flip chart list and write down why you think this asset is particularly important. Why do you think this asset exists?

Write down 1-2 experiences you have had with these challenges and assets that led you to feel this way.”

Give 3 minutes, then:

“Share your journal entry with your small group. Talk about similarities and differences and start to brainstorm change ideas for your school/community. How can we overcome these challenges?”

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Summarize

“Brainstorming challenges and strengths together can help us share new ideas and discover the challenges that are most important to our groups. It also can get us thinking about why these challenges and assets came to be, and knowing that may help us advocate for our change. The challenges identified through this process are going to guide our change advocacy efforts. Again, next session we are going to work with photos in more detail.”

Reflect on the strengths of the youth and the youths’ group work today.

Say “Now, we would like to end session with each group saying something that they appreciate/like about their school/after school program.”
Session 4

1st 30 min. segment

INVESTIGATE: PRACTICING PHOTOVOICE: CREATING A STORYLINE WITH PICTURES BASED ON OWN PHOTOS

Objectives

To practice “reading” pictures
To learn how to use own pictures to tell a story

Materials

Printed pictures that students sent (print these in advance)
Photo printer (for students that forgot to email pictures)

Prepare Before

Need to get projector.

EXPERIENCE

Say: “When we talk about other people’s photos, we want to make sure that we focus on the strengths of the person’s story or of their photographs. What are some examples of pointing out strengths/positive things? What are some things that would not be helpful to say?"

Hand out students’ photos.

Have students choose one of their pictures to discuss in more detail in the small group.

“Choose one picture to talk about in more detail with our group – perhaps one that best represents your story.”

Ask the below questions for each person’s picture, one at a time.

Picture 1: Ask the group: “What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you look at this photo?

Say, “Now look closely at the photo and notice the details.” Let them do it for about 20 seconds. Ask questions based on the “Point of View” handout and have one of the students volunteer to take notes on flip chart paper.
If there is a person, what do you imagine the person or persons are thinking?

When might you have felt that way?

If there is not a person, what is this picture about?

What does this picture make you think about?

What does this picture make you feel?

Next, notice similarities and differences between the pictures with the group.

What did the pictures have in common?

What was different?

Finally,

“You will have 5 minutes to put your printed photos in an order that tells the story of your physically active life.

When everyone has brainstormed their story on their own, in each small group, each person will show their story.

Ask the members of the group to point out a strength of either the person’s story or pictures.

After each person finishes presenting their story, ask the following questions:

- How easy or hard was it to take pictures that fit your theme?
- If you could add another picture to your story, what picture would you want to take?
- What would you add to make your story clearer?

SUMMARIZE

Say,

“We are learning a framework for how to look at pictures, called SHOWeD. This exercise took us through the first three questions in the process.

S: What’s the first thing you notice about this picture? What do you See?

H: What story do you imagine the picture is telling? What’s Happening?

O: How does it make you feel or what does it make you think about?”

Take a picture of each person holding up their story.
15 min. wiggle break

MIRROR IMAGE (15 MINUTES)
Start with a demonstration. Invite a volunteer to stand facing you about two to three feet away. Instruct the volunteer to “mirror” as exactly as possible, everything that you do as if a real reflection. Make your movements interesting and slow enough for the other person to follow. Be silly, or include a task like brushing your teeth. The demonstration helps to loosen up conceptions and inhibitions. After participants understand the activity, ask them to get into pairs and take turns mirroring the actions and movements of the other person.

Point of View Handout to Guide Adult Partner Discussion
What is the first thing you notice about this picture?
If there are people in the picture,
What do you imagine the person (or people) are thinking?
When might you have felt this way?
If there is not a person…
What is this picture about?
What does this picture make you think about? What does this picture make you feel?
2nd 40 Min Segment:

INVESTIGATE: PRACTICING PHOTOVoice AND PUBLIC SPEAKING

OBJECTIVES

To improve public speaking skills
To try out new public speaking tactics

MATERIALS

Paper (4 pieces)
Markers
Index cards
Phone cameras/tablets (1 per participant)
List of strengths from previous session

Prepare Before

Make 4 signs: Volume/Diction, Body Language, Tone, & Speed. Place a sign at 4 different tables in the room to create 4 stations. Write one emotion per each index card (e.g., happy, sad, angry, scared, terrified, overjoyed, nervous, irritated). Place these emotion cards at the Tone station.

Warm Up

“Who here has ever felt like they did not have a voice about an issue, no one was listening to them, or that they could not be heard?” (Ask for show of hands)
Say “Sometimes, adults do not listen to youth voices by accident, and other times it is intentional. “Why might adults sometimes ignore, or not ask for, youths’ input?”

Get answers, then say:

“People are more likely to listen if we communicate in a specific way that gets our points across clearly. We also should be respectful and calm. We will practice this today, which can hopefully improve your communication patterns with adults, though they must be willing to listen as well.”

“How do you feel when you hear you have to speak in public? Confident? Awkward? Nervous? Calm?”

Get responses, then say:

“Regardless of how you feel about it, practicing can help you feel more prepared, calm, and confident, so today we are practicing important parts of public speaking. This will come in handy when we talk to adults that can help us make the changes that we want in a few weeks. We are going to practice sharing parts of our photo stories out loud with each other.”
Note to adult partner: They also have the option to share their strengths and challenges journal entry from the previous session as an alternate – can do that if they did not complete the assignment at home.

That journal assignment is pasted below as a reminder.

Choose one issue from the large flip chart list and write down why this particular issue bothers you.

Choose one asset from the large flip chart list and write down why you think this asset is particularly important.

Write down any experiences you have had that may have caused you to feel this way.”

Give 3 minutes, then:

“Share your journal entry with your small group. Talk about similarities and differences and start to brainstorm change ideas for your school/community. How can we overcome these challenges?”

“There are four stations around the room. Get into your small groups. Your group will spend ten minutes at each station. Everyone should get at least one turn. At some stations, you will be able to practice many times.”

STATION 1: Volume/Diction

At this station, everyone should be in two lines, facing each other, about 10 feet apart. Student #1 says one sentence from his or her story or journal entry, loud enough and clear enough that student #2 can hear it. Student #2 has to repeat the phrase back so that student #1 can hear it. Then they go to the back of the line.

STATION 2: Body Language

Everyone at the station pairs up and faces each other. Decide who will speak first. The first person will talk, and the second person will mirror back every detail of their body language (e.g., any facial expressions and movements).

First topic: Tell your picture story about how you are active or read your journal entry to your partner.

Second topic: Describe the last time you were active and it was fun. Give as much detail as possible.
STATION 3: Tone

One person takes an emotion card without telling their teammates what the card says. They will read a few sentences from the journal entry or their photo story in that emotion. Although they may use non-verbal gestures, try to use voice as much as possible to convey the emotion.

STATION 4: Speed

Each person will read their journal or photo story. The next person in line will “control” their speed by telling them “faster” or “slower” several times. Give the speaker time to experience each stage before changing the speed. The group will tell the speaker when they have found the right speed where they can easily understand the speaker.

Reflect
Adult allies, facilitate a discussion with the following reflection questions in the small groups:

“Which station was the hardest for you? Which was the easiest? Which technique do you use already when you speak (i.e., volume, tone, body language, speed)?”

Summarize
“*When we speak, most people respond to our body language and how we say our words much more than what we are saying. If we want people to hear what we say, we have to practice and focus on tone, speed, body language, and volume. All of these are tools that you can use to your advantage in your everyday life and also when you are spreading your message to others about the change you want to have happen.*”
STATION 1 Instructions Handout: Volume/Diction

At this station, everyone should be in two lines, facing each other, about 10 feet apart. Student #1 says one sentence from his or her story or journal entry, loud enough and clear enough that student #2 can hear it. Student #2 has to repeat the phrase back so that student #1 can hear it. Then they go to the back of the line.
STATION 2 Instructions Handout: Body Language

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STATION 4 Instructions Handout: Speed

Each person will read their journal or photo story. The next person in line will “control” their speed by telling them “faster” or “slower” several times. Give the speaker time to experience each stage before changing the speed. The group will tell the speaker when they have found the right speed where they can easily understand the speaker.
10 min. Wiggle break

GROUP SCULPTURES (15 MINUTES)

Have participants walk freely in the center of the room until the facilitator says stop. Participants must quickly make groups of three or four. Each small group then has three minutes to select an object and devise a plan to create the object using the bodies of all group members. For example: Participants can make a telephone by having two people on their knees with their hands out as the numbers, another person as the receiver; the final member can “make a call.” Each group has a chance to show their object to the other teams, and everyone tries to guess what they are. Repeat the process for two or three rounds as time allows.

Alternatives: Participants stay in the same group while the facilitator names specific categories (e.g., common household items, appliances, something you would find at an amusement park, a type of food).

Debrief: What were the different approaches taken by different groups to decide which object to create? How did you decide what role each group member would take? Did the decision-making process change from round to round?

3rd 30 min. segment

Demonstrate

Now we are going to discuss the pictures you took in pairs.

“Take a look at your pictures. Choose one picture that best represents your story about being active that would tell your partner something about who you are and what you value. In 1-2 minutes, write your answers to the following questions:

Why did you choose this photo?

What does this photo say about you as a person?”

“Next, come up with a few sentences to say out loud while holding up your picture about why physical activity is important to you. Make sure to focus on your tone, volume, diction, speed, and nonverbals. When you are done, pause to get feedback from your partner. Partner, please focus on the strengths of the speaker and the speakers’ message, as well as what you like about the photo. Then you will switch turns.”

Note to adult partner:
Feedback from the student should focus on strengths of the speaker and the speaker’s message. The adult ally can provide some constructive criticism on these skills and might include things like speak more slowly, enunciate, speak with even more emotion, notice your nonverbal body language, but the students should focus on strengths.
Pause to have your partner take a picture of you posing in your confident speaking posture or displaying a positive nonverbal stance.

Next, using your partner’s feedback, you will then talk about your photo again while holding the picture and being recorded.

NOTE: If seem short on time, may skip video recording here since do it elsewhere in the project.

Then partners will switch.
My Active Life Discussion Photo Discussion Handout

Take a look at your pictures. Choose one picture that will best tell your partner something about who you are and what you value. In 1-2 minutes, write your answers to the following questions:

Why did you choose this photo?

What does this photo say about you as a person?

Next, come up with a few sentences to say out loud while holding up your picture about why physical activity is important to you. Make sure to focus on your tone, volume, diction, speed, and nonverbals. When you are done, pause to get feedback from your partner. Partner, please focus on the strengths of the speaker and the speakers’ message, as well as what you like about the photo.

Pause to have your partner take a picture of you posing in your confident speaking posture or displaying a positive nonverbal stance.

Next, using your partner’s feedback, you will then talk about your photo again while holding the picture and being recorded.

Then you will switch turns.
Physical Activity Strengths Handout

Over the next week, you will go out and take pictures in your school or community. Please only take pictures in the setting your group decided on (school or community). The theme is “Being active in our school/community.” You will take pictures of people, places, and things that make it easier to be physically active in your school/community and people, places, and things that help you be physically active. You can also take pictures of strengths that you appreciate, that you value, or that you want to see more of at the school or in the community related to physical activity. These can be things, activities, or qualities related to PA.

You can take as many pictures as you want, but please choose only your top 3 to send and use next time.

When you have taken them, please email them to this email address (projectpromotingplay@gmail.com) or save them in the google drive app on your tablet.

Please complete the pictures by Thursday morning so that we can have time to print them for the Friday session. Next Friday, be prepared to explain what the picture is of and how it is related to the theme.

Before you go out and take pictures, review the rules to keep yourself safe. Ask for permission, follow your family’s rules, don’t take pictures of illegal activities or people that do not want to be photographed, and respect others.
Session 5

1st 30 min segment:

IDENTIFYING & PHOTOGRAPHING ASSETS USING THE SHOWED PROCESS

Objectives

To use SHOWeD process for asset pictures

Materials needed:

Asset pictures that students sent

Photo printer to print students’ photos if they forgot to send.

Challenges to PA list from a previous session

Asset SHOWed worksheet

Experience

Say to large group: “Today we are going to go in depth with the strengths pictures that you took over the previous week.

“First, we will each choose one picture we brought to analyze further.”

“Each of you choose one picture from your set – you might choose it because it best represents your strengths or is your favorite picture. Please complete the “SHOWeD Assets” worksheet about that picture and also write a caption for the photo. For this exercise the caption should look like: “Word: 1-2 sentences that describes it.” For example, “Love: Friends are the people who make the time to stop and hug you in the hallway between classes. You will have 10 minutes to complete the worksheet and write the caption.”

“Now share your picture and caption with the group.”

Prompt students to point out positive qualities of the picture and/or the caption idea.

The adult partner should lead analysis of the pictures by following the prompts on the “SHOWeD Asset” worksheet for one picture per person.

Note to adult partner: Really emphasize the “W” as systemic influences – so a policy helped this happen, or tax dollars were allocated for that, people voted on it, etc. Want to promote simple understanding of ecological impact on their health behavior.
The adult partner should next lead the group in analysis of the photo based on the SHOWed asset prompts. The group should do this together, with the person that took the picture not contributing to the initial discussion of their picture.

Once the group SHOWed is complete, then the youth that took the picture should compare the group’s answers to the SHOWed questions to his or her own.

Ask:

*what are the similarities between your responses and the group’s? What are some differences?*

**Reflect**

Lead a group discussion about the pictures.

*How was it to complete a SHOWed for your photo? What questions were challenging?*  
*Is it okay if the people that did not take the picture have a different interpretation of the picture than the photographer? What are some strengths of leaving the picture up for interpretation?*  
*Is there anything you would like to discuss?*  

*Based on what we have seen, what are some areas of the school/community where people enjoy PA a lot? Who are some people that get youth really active? What are some activities in the pictures that get youth active? What are some things that help youth be active? Which of these are really important to you? Which of these do you value/care about? Do you think other middle schoolers at your school would agree?*

**10 minute wiggle break**
SHOWeD Assets Handout

Choose one picture from your set – you might choose it because it best represents your strengths or is your favorite picture. Please complete a SHOWeD on this worksheet about that picture. When you get to the O, W, and D sections, you can choose just one question to answer if you would like. Also please write a caption for the photo. For this exercise the caption should look like: “Word: 1-2 sentences that describes it.” For example, “Love: Friends are the people who make the time to stop and hug you in the hallway between classes. You will have 10 minutes to complete the worksheet and write the caption. When you are done, you will share your picture and caption with the group.

Please write your caption here:

S: What is the first thing you notice about this picture?

H: What story do you imagine the photo is telling?

O: How does this story affect our lives? How does it make you feel or what does it make you think about? How does it make other people feel or what might it make other people think about?

W: Where did this asset come from? How did it get to be here? What are some things we can do to better understand this asset?

D: What are some things we can do to make this asset even better? What are some things we can do so that more people can know about this asset or benefit from it?
**2nd 30 min. segment**

Next, have students put all their pictures together in a pile and sort them by themes. Give them 10 minutes to do this.

"Please put your 3 pictures in the middle of the table. Let’s work together and move pictures into similar piles based on the image or what it makes us think of. We can talk through any disagreements. Once we agree on the piles, let’s make a title for each pile, in other words, an overall theme to describe it."

Use the question prompts below to help with this theme development.

"Let’s think about how these strength pictures are similar and different. Do we see any similarities between them?"
Group those that are similar into a theme – provide suggestions/hints if having trouble.

"What about the ones that are different – are any of those similar to each other/can be grouped together?"
If yes, make another theme, if not, ok to have some that stand alone.

Note to adult partner: Have a group member document the themes and number the back of the pictures, so it is known to the group what pictures go into what theme (1 number per theme – e.g., pictures of a park, playground all get the number 1, as outdoor places to play). So on the sheet, put number 1, then outdoor places to play, and then the backs of the pictures of the parks, playgrounds etc. all have 1’s on them.

**Troubleshooting**

Also use this time to troubleshoot issues in picture taking, clarify any misconceptions on what they were supposed to do, etc. Students may need to take pictures again once things are clarified. Please report how well your group understood the task and whether they will need to take pictures again to the project coordinator.

**Summary/Sharing**

"Each group will now choose one photo to share with the larger group. Some suggestions: choose a picture that best represents the PA strengths identified by the group, the theme with the most pictures/the most prominent theme, or the groups’ favorite picture. (Please facilitate a vote in your group on the picture to display). Please come to the front and project it. The group should state the caption and theme. They should also ask the SHOWeD questions of the larger group with only allowing one response per question due to time. Each person should talk.”
Note to adult partners: Can prompt for similarities and differences between individual, group, and large group SHOWeD. What does this tell us about pictures and using pictures to illustrate ideas? What does this tell us about the perspectives of others?

**Prompt for strengths about the pictures from other students. Prompt for strengths of the community. Point out the group’s collaboration strategies, teamwork, and leadership skills.**

**Conclusion/Assignment**

Review the PA challenges youth brainstormed from a few sessions ago. *Are there any more to add?*

“We are trying to see what we can communicate with pictures and what we can’t. We all did a great job communicating assets in our school/community related to PA. Now, over the next week, we will take pictures again in the same settings. We will take pictures of challenges to PA in our school/community. A challenge is something that prevents, gets in the way, or makes it harder for you to be PA. It could also be the absence of something that promotes PA, such as an abandoned lot where it would be helpful to have a park or playground. You can take pictures of objects (e.g., a clock to represent lack of time), activities (e.g., sitting throughout all of class without a stretch break), or qualities (e.g., lack of trust to play outside). Do not include specific people as challenges. Their behavior, attitudes, or beliefs might be an issue, but not the particular person.

You can take as many pictures as you want, but of those pictures, please choose 3 to use for the project. Please send the 3 pictures to (enter email address or google drive path) by Thursday morning so that we can print them. Next session, you will explain what the picture is of and how it is related to the theme.”

Review the rules to keep yourself safe when taking pictures:

Ask for consent, follow your family’s rules, don’t take pictures of illegal activities, and respect others.

Review photo guidelines. They cannot interrupt class to take a picture. If the people in it are identifiable, they need to get a photo release. Pictures with people where the faces aren’t seen or are obscured do not need a photo release.

Let participants know if there are any places in the school or community that are out of bounds.
Physical Activity Challenges Handout

Over the next week, take pictures again in the same settings of challenges to PA in the school or community. Please only take pictures in the setting your group decided on (school or community). A challenge is something that prevents, gets in the way, or makes it harder for you to be physically active. It could also be the absence of something that promotes physical activity, such as an abandoned lot where it would be helpful to have a park or playground. You can take pictures of objects (e.g., a clock to represent lack of time), activities (e.g., sitting throughout all of class without a stretch break), or qualities (e.g., lack of trust to play outside). Do not include specific people as challenges. Their behavior, attitudes, or beliefs might be an issue, but not the particular person.

You can take as many pictures as you want, but please choose only your top 3 to send and use next time.

When you have taken them, please email them to this email address (projectpromotingplay@gmail.com) or save them in the google drive app on your tablet.

Please complete the pictures by Thursday morning so that we can have time to print them for the Friday session. Next Friday, be prepared to explain what the picture is of and how it is related to the theme.

Before you go out and take pictures, review the rules to keep yourself safe. Ask for permission, follow your family’s rules, don’t take pictures of illegal activities or people that do not want to be photographed, and respect others.
Session 6

1st 30 min. segment

IDENTIFYING & PHOTOGRAPHING CHALLENGES USING THE SHOWED PROCESS

Objectives

To use SHOWed process for challenge pictures

Materials needed:

Challenge pictures that students sent

Photo printer to print students’ photos if some forgot to send.

Challenge SHOWed worksheet

Experience

Say to large group: “Today we are going to go in depth with the PA challenges pictures that you took using the same process we used for the strengths pictures last week. Can anyone tell me what you all did last week with the pictures in your group?

“We will each choose one picture we brought to analyze further.”

“Each of you choose one picture– you might choose it because it best represents the challenge or is your favorite picture. Please complete the “SHOWed Challenges” worksheet about that picture and also write a caption for the photo. You will have 10 minutes to do this.

“Now, share your picture and caption with the group.”

Prompt students to point out positive qualities of the picture and/or the caption idea.

The adult partner should lead analysis of the pictures by following the prompts on the “SHOWed challenge” worksheet for one picture per person.

Note to adult partner: Really emphasize the “W” as systemic influences – lack of funds, underresourced, etc. Want to promote simple understanding of ecological impact on their health behavior.
The adult partner should next lead the group in analysis of the photo based on the SHOWeD challenge prompts. The group should do this together, with the person that took the picture not contributing to the initial discussion of their picture.

Once the group SHOWeD is complete, then the youth that took the picture should compare the group’s answers to the SHOWed questions to his or her own.

Ask:

“What are the similarities between your responses and the group’s? What are some differences?”

Reflect

Lead a group discussion about the pictures.

How was it to complete a SHOWeD for your photo?

What questions were challenging?

Anything you want to discuss?

Is it okay if the people that did not take the picture have a different interpretation of the picture than the photographer? What are some strengths of leaving the picture up for interpretation?

Based on the pictures we have viewed,

What are some examples of things that are PA challenges?

What are examples of activities that are PA challenges?

What are examples of places that are PA challenges?

OR

What are some places in the school/community where it is difficult to be PA? What are some activities that get in the way of PA? What are some things that make it difficult to be PA? Which of these are really important to you? Which of these do you value/care about? Do you think other middle schoolers at your school would agree? What about community members? People in government/policy makers?

10 minute wiggle break
SHOWeD Challenges Handout

Choose one picture from your set – you might choose it because it best represents your challenges or is your favorite picture. Please complete a SHOWeD on this worksheet about that picture. When you get to the O and W sections, you can choose just one question to answer if you would like. Also please write a caption for the photo. For this exercise the caption should look like: “Word: 1-2 sentences that describes it.” For example, “Love: Friends are the people who make the time to stop and hug you in the hallway between classes. You will have 10 minutes to complete the worksheet and write the caption. When you are done, you will share your picture and caption with the group.

Please write your caption here:

S: What is the first thing you notice about this picture?

H: What story do you imagine the picture is telling?

O: How does this story affect our lives? How does it make you feel or what does it make you think about? How does it make other people feel or what might it make other people think about?

W: Where did this Challenge come from? What caused this Challenge? What are some things we can do to better understand this challenge?

E: How can this photo educate people?

D: What are some things we can do to eliminate or minimize this challenge?
2nd 30 min. segment

Have students share their pictures with the group and sort them by themes, in a similar way that they did for the strengths exercise. Give them 10 minutes to do this.

“Please put your 3 pictures in the middle of the table. Let’s work together and move pictures into similar piles based on the image or what it makes us think of. We can talk through any disagreements. Once we agree on the piles, let’s make a title for each pile, in other words, an overall theme to describe it.”

Use the question prompts below to help with this theme development.

“Let’s think about how these challenge pictures are similar and different. Do we see any similarities between them?”
Group those that are similar into a theme – provide suggestions/hints if having trouble.

“What about the ones that are different – are any of those similar to each other/can be grouped together?”
If yes, make another theme, if not, ok to have some that stand alone.

Note to adult partner: Have a group member document the themes and number the back of the pictures, so it is known to the group what pictures go into what theme (1 number per theme – e.g., pictures of a park, playground all get the number 1, as outdoor places to play). So on the sheet, put number 1, then outdoor places to play, and then the backs of the pictures of the parks, playgrounds etc. all have 1’s on them.

Troubleshooting

Use this time to troubleshoot issues in picture taking, clarify any misconceptions on what they were supposed to do, etc. Students may need to take pictures again once things are clarified. Please report how well your group understood the task and whether they will need to take pictures again to the project coordinator.

Summary/Sharing

“Each group will now choose one photo to share with the larger group. Some suggestions: choose a picture that best represents the PA challenges identified by the group, the theme with the most pictures/the most prominent theme, or the groups’ favorite picture. (Please facilitate a vote in your group on the picture to display). Please come to the front and project it. The group should state the caption and theme.
They should also ask the SHOWeD questions of the larger group with only allowing one response per question due to time. Each person should talk.”

Note to adult partners: Can prompt for similarities and differences between individual, group, and large group SHOWeD. What does this tell us about pictures and using pictures to illustrate ideas? What does this tell us about the perspectives of others?

Prompt for strengths about the pictures from other students. Prompt for strengths of the community. Point out the group’s collaboration strategies, teamwork, and leadership skills.

10 min. wiggle break

Assemble participants into a circle (facing in). Ask for a volunteer to be the guesser. This person will then step out of the room and out of earshot. Once that person is outside, pick someone in the group to be the leader. Her or his role is to lead the group without the guesser figuring out that he or she is the leader. Have the leader start a motion that everyone else must follow (e.g., clapping hands, waving, rubbing belly). Once everyone is doing the motion, ask the guesser to come back in and stand in the middle of the circle by the guesser, and try to guess who is initiating the motions. The leader must change motions when they think that they are unobserved. The rest of the group tries to follow as quickly as possible to make it harder to guess who is leading. Once the person in the middle guesses correctly, repeat the process with a new guesser and leader.

Debrief: What does this say about leadership? Is it always easy to tell who is leading?
3rd 30 min. segment:

CHOOSING A SPECIFIC CHALLENGE FOR ACTION

Planning

“Get back into your small groups and talk about the challenges in the school/community that you identified with each other. In collaboration with your adult partner, please choose one of the challenges that you think would be possible to change/improve. If there are multiple ideas, please vote on them. Together with your group, please choose a few pictures that represent that challenge.”

“What do you think is the main cause of the challenge that you’ve chosen as a group? Why do you think that is true?

How would we know if the physical activity challenge has changed? What would it being addressed/fixed look like? What would be different about your school/community?

Note to adult leader: Point out youth strengths, good communication strategies and decision making within the group.

Experience

Together, the group should come up with a caption for the photos that best illustrate the challenge. For this exercise, the caption should look like: “Challenge Name: (1-2 sentences that describes it).”

Have each group share their challenge they are going to advocate to change and the pictures/captions that represent the challenge to the larger group.

Reflect

What do you notice?

What challenges did we mention the most?

Are there locations within our after school program/school/community that have “challenge clusters”?

Are there places within our after school program/school/community that have few or no challenges?

What are some common things or activities that are challenges?

Are there any challenges that exist but we did not take pictures of? If yes, add those to the list.
Going Deeper

Name of Challenge:

Where we found this challenge in our school/community:

O How does this challenge impact Our lives? How does it make you feel? What does it make you think?

W Why are things this way? (Why does this exist?) Is there a reason why this challenge is in our school/community? What helps maintain this challenge? What makes it easy for this challenge to occur?

E How could this photo Educate people?

D What can we Do about it? (What are ways to reduce or eliminate this challenge?)
Session 7

1st 30 min. segment:

PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THE CHALLENGE: MAKING MEDIA

“In order to effectively create change you must thoroughly understand the challenge you are addressing — this requires research. There are many ways to research. Personal history/experience is one way to research.

First, write in your journal for 3 minutes about your connection to the strengths and challenge that your small group is going to help with.

- What are the physical activity strengths and why are they important to you?
- How does that challenge affect your life?
- Why is it important to you?
- Why should it be changed?
- Write one story about encountering that challenge and strength.
- How can we overcome the challenge, both as a group and individuals?

When they are done, say, “We want to make a video that accurately reflects how you are feeling about this issue.”

Video Taping Activity

“Now is the chance to create your own media. Let’s talk about the strengths and challenges we’ve discussed as well as what makes quality public speaking.

Prompt students to share some parts of their journal entry.

Ask: “What is the major message you want to send?

How do you want the viewer to feel after viewing this video?

Video the youth individually speaking about their journal entry and what they discussed with their group in the above activity. Give them 15 minutes to create.

After each performance, talk about strengths of each person’s ideas.

Summarize

Note to adult partner: Point out public speaking skills strengths and other positive things you observe.
“We are all connected to the challenges chosen in some way or another. As we work on changing this challenge, it is important to remember how we all benefit from the proposed changes, both individually and as a group.”

“Let’s now brainstorm in our small groups a name for our change effort.”

Have youth groups share their project names with the larger group.

10 min. wiggle break
2nd 30 min. segment

TACTICS BEHIND PICTURES

Objectives
To practice thinking critically about the media
To understand change tactics

Materials
Whiteboard
Dry erase markers
Index cards with the advertising tactics written on them
Copies of ads from magazines to match with the tactics
Paper
Pens or pencils
Glue or tape
Flip chart paper

Prepare Before
Need to get projector.
Need to buy 1-2 relevant teen magazines in which to find ads.
Need to have copies of magazine ads and 6 sets of index cards with tactics written on them.

Demonstrate
“We are going to practice thinking critically about media messages related to health. Do you think the media and advertisers always tell the truth? Do you think they have people’s best interests and health in mind?”

Discuss hooks:

Show a video of a hook
This is an example of what is known in the advertising world as a hook. Other examples are: “Find out who won a million dollars at 11pm on Channel 2,” or, “These teens couldn’t believe what they found in their backyard” or “Learn how to lose 10 pounds in a week without changing your diet.”

Why would someone want to use a hook?
Answers might be: Grab people’s attention, reel people in, want to interest people, want to get people to watch, want to get people to want to hear more.

Hooks are just one example of an advertising tactic that the media can use to get us to buy or do healthy/unhealthy things. Next, you will play a game to learn about other tactics that advertisers commonly use to convince us to buy products.

GROUP ACTIVITY:

Have each group do a matching game about the tactics with advertisements cut out from magazines – each group gets the same ones, and they guess and match the tactics with the ad. They will complete a worksheet and put the number of the ad next to the tactic.

“Scare tactics: are things advertisers do to frighten you into purchasing/doing something (picture of anti-smoking ad).

Research: this is when advertisers state facts cited by research in the ad to try to convince you. They may also use statistics/numbers to get their point across (use picture of Verizon ad).

Expert opinion: this usually takes the form of doctors or other professionals saying they support the product during the ad. (use picture of Proactiv). An example of this is a doctor promoting a weight loss product or a dermatologist an acne treatment product.

Testimonials: (in a picture this could be a “regular person/person on the street”) This is when advertisers get every day people to say they like the product and that it worked for them (Use ______ testimonial ad). This also usually happens with weight loss products or beauty care products.

Special Events: This is when advertisers appeal to certain events you may have coming up, such as prom (Find car ad or skin care ad). They might say, to get yourself glowing skin for prom, you should buy this product.

Famous People: This is when advertisers have well known people in the ad to say that they like/buy/use the product (Perfume ad from ulta?).

Appeal to emotions: (e.g., pride, fear, love, rebelliousness) This is when advertisers try to get you to feel something when you see their product (find teen ad that embodies a feeling) – they hope that this feeling will make you want to buy the product.
**Appeal to intelligence:** This is when advertisers try to convince you that smart people buy their product, or only unintelligent people don’t buy it (find teen add that does this).

**Appeal to material success:** This is when advertisers show images of people that look successful or wealthy happily using the product (Find car, watch, or music ad). They hope that if you value success/wealth, that you will want to buy the product so that you can be like successful/wealthy people.
Media Matching Handout

Scare Tactic: ___________
Research: ___________
Expert Opinion: ___________
Testimonial: ___________
Special Event: ___________
Famous People: ___________
Appeal to Emotions: ___________
Appeal to Intelligence: ___________
Appeal to Material Success: ___________
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Have any of you seen these? Do you think this would work on you?” “Why/Why not?”
“Do you think advertisers use different strategies on males versus females? If yes, why?”
“What does it usually take to get you to buy something/want to do something that is advertised?”

“Now that we’ve identified these common tactics, what have you seen advertisers do most often to grab your attention and try to convince you to purchase healthy/unhealthy things?” “What are they advertising?”

“What are some issues related to health and wellness that students your age face?” Do you think they are represented in these ads? Have one student in the group write down the responses.

Are magazines and media accurately reflecting the issues you are facing?

If yes, which issues?

If no, what issues are the ads missing?”

SAY TO LARGE GROUP:

“Adults, advertisers, and the media sometimes think they have youths’ best interests in mind, but they sometimes get wrong what is important to them. That’s why it is so important to hear from you all what is important to you, so that we can plan things that you really value/are important to you.”

“Thinking critically about advertising tactics can help us craft our message about our change. When we are planning to present the change idea, we can choose some of these tactics to convince people in charge that our youth PA related issue is important.”

10 min. wiggle break
3rd 30 min. segment

Say to large group:
“Now we are going to brainstorm how we can use hooks and other advertising tactics to advocate for our change to important people that can make the change happen. In your small groups, please come up with two hooks and two tactics that you can use either on a poster or say verbally to convince people that the change idea is important.”

“How could we use hooks to get our audience interested or involved?

In small groups, adult partners discuss with group:

Hooks are great tools to use at the beginning of a presentation to grab people’s attention. For public speaking, here are some examples of hooks:

Describe an incident
Ask for a show of hands
Ask a question
Make a promise
Get them laughing
Make a provocative statement
Cite an unusual or shocking statistic
Use a visual aid or prop
Demonstrate

Have the youth brainstorm two hooks to use for the project.

Adult partners pull out the advertising tactic index cards and ask:
“What tactics do you think will work best to convince important people in power that our change idea should happen?”

Have the youth select two tactics to use for the project.

“What other ideas do you have based on what we’ve learned together that we could use in the presentation/poster? What about other ideas that you think would work that we have not discussed during our time together?”

Praise them for creativity, using democratic decision making strategies, working together, etc.

LARGE GROUP:

Now each group will share one tactic or hook that they will use when advocating for their change.

Prompt for strengths of the tactics/hooks.
Summarize

Today, you worked together to come up with phrases that will help people join your team and support your change. Next time, we will work together in more detail to understand the people in power that are important to convince that our challenges are important. These are people that can help make our change ideas a reality.
Convincing People that our Change Idea is Important Handout

Hooks are great tools to use at the beginning of a presentation to grab people’s attention. Below are some examples of hooks:
Describe an incident
Ask for a show of hands
Ask a question
Make a promise
Get them laughing
Make a provocative statement
Cite an unusual or shocking statistic
Use a visual aid or prop
Demonstrate.

Please come up with two hooks in your group that you think will gain interest about your project. Please write them below.

1. 

2. 

Circle two tactics your group thinks will work best to convince important people in power that your change idea should happen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scare Tactic</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Expert Opinion</th>
<th>Testimonial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Event</td>
<td>Famous People</td>
<td>Appeal to Emotions</td>
<td>Appeal to Intelligence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ap pfal to Material Success

Please write a way your group can use each tactic in your presentation below.

1. 

2. 
What other ideas do you have based on what we’ve learned together that we could use in the presentation/poster?

What about other ideas that you think would work that we have not discussed during our time together?
Session 8

1st 30 min. segment

ELEVATOR SPEECHES AND SPEAKING TO POWERFUL PEOPLE

Objectives
To practice elevator speeches and speaking and negotiating with people in positions of power

Materials
Flipchart paper
Markers
“Scenarios” handout (4+ copies)
Tips handouts
Whiteboard
Dry erase markers
Pens
Paper
Straws

Prepare Before
N/A

Warm Up
As youth enter the program, adult partners lobby them to take a straw. Use varying tactics to get them to take what you are offering.

Experience
We were just lobbying for you to start liking straws. Did anyone want a straw after they saw me with it? Did anyone want a straw after others started to ask for one? Why do you think that seeing others with something makes us want it?
Have the participants try out lobbying for themselves. Have them use the tactics and hooks they’ve learned to lobby for the statement on the card. The goal of each person is to try to convince others to agree with their topic. Say to students: “Don’t be afraid to leave your cause if someone else convinces you. If we all stand alone with our causes, none of us may ever accomplish what we want – we need others on our side.”

ROUND 1: For the first 3 minutes, everyone should try to lobby for their opinion to as many people in the room as you can. You MUST give reasons why they should agree with you.

ROUND 2: In this round, if you are convinced (or you were convinced before) by someone’s advocacy, you can JOIN their cause and lobby with them. If you are convinced by someone else, you have to abandon your cause to support theirs. If you are NOT convinced, continue to lobby for your issue.

Have participants continue this for 5 minutes or until some core groups emerge.

**Reflect**

What arguments were convincing to you?

Was it hard to talk about your issue with others?

What tactics/hooks worked?

Did anyone try a negative method (e.g., bribery, trickery, force)? How successful was it?

What did you learn from this activity?
### Scenarios for Experience Handout

Cut up scenarios and distribute to students (or make up your own).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potatoes are fruit</th>
<th>Tomatoes are tastiest when black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The sky is secretly red</td>
<td>My friend can fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing isn’t necessary</td>
<td>Reading makes you happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snakes are really dogs</td>
<td>Carrot soup is the best soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone should have a pet iguana</td>
<td>Ice cream is good for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My birthday is everyday</td>
<td>Basketball should not be a sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flip flops should be the only shoes allowed</td>
<td>Birds can talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today is the best day</td>
<td>All people should wear make-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am the greatest woman of all time</td>
<td>I am the greatest man of all time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rats make great pets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We should have dinner food for breakfast and breakfast food for dinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ask the LARGE GROUP:

“What is power? What are specific example of people with power in this society, in your community, in your school, in your after school program? Who are the people who have power with our chosen challenges?”

Lead a brief discussion on how adults also have power, and it can sometimes be difficulty for youth to communicate their needs clearly in a way that adults will listen, and it can also sometimes be difficult for adults to take the time to listen to youth voice.

Experience

“We are going to practice how to speak to and negotiate with people who have positions of power. First, before we do that, we are going to learn about a type of speech that may be useful to use when talking to someone in a position of power.

Have youth and adult partners get into their small groups and discuss elevator speeches.

“Something that may be useful is an elevator pitch. Imagine you get into an elevator and only have the time in the elevator to explain your project and why you are doing it. There are times when we know we are going to give pitches and times when it happens unexpectedly. We should be ready for both situations to talk about our change ideas.”

An elevator pitch should:

Have a quick and easy explanation (1-2 sentences)
Be enthusiastic and interesting (but not overly enthusiastic)
Use a hook that feels natural
Tell them how they can help – have a call to action
You have their attention – use it to get what you need.

“There are many times we might want to do an elevator pitch: When we are trying to build a movement – we don’t want to be the only people who care about this issue or the only ones who are trying to change it. When we might want people to write a letter, to talk to their friends, to attend a meeting, or to join/support our cause in some other way.”

Today, we are going to focus on giving an elevator pitch to a powerful person, like the principal of your school. Brainstorm some tips you should follow.”

Adult partner should add the tips to a flip chart.

If these are not included, cover these tips that are on the 2nd handout:

Act confidently.
Sit up straight.
Have a firm handshake.
Don’t assume they will be mean/wont’ listen.

Be nice, engaging, and kind when you speak.

Treat the person with respect, even if you don’t like them or if they don’t help you.

Stay calm, and don’t lose your cool.

State your questions and your demands firmly.

Set next steps, and get them in writing if needed.

Thank them for their time.

Note to adult partner: Have the youth in groups volunteer to share one tip with the larger group – write on a flip chart to keep visible.

*10 min. wiggle break*
Imagine you get into an elevator and only have the time in the elevator to explain your project and why you are doing it. There are times when we know we are going to give pitches and times when it happens unexpectedly. We should be ready for both situations to talk about our change ideas.

An elevator pitch should:
- Have a quick and easy explanation (1-2 sentences)
- Be enthusiastic and interesting (but not overly enthusiastic)
- Use a hook that feels natural
- Tell them how they can help – have a call to action
- You have their attention – use it to get what you need.

There are many times we might want to do an elevator pitch: When we are trying to build a movement – we don’t want to be the only people who care about this issue or the only ones who are trying to change it. When we might want people to write a letter, to talk to their friends, to attend a meeting, or to join/support our cause in some other way.

Today, we are going to focus on giving an elevator pitch to a powerful person, like the principal of your school, about your change idea. Brainstorm some tips you should follow to make your elevator pitch successful.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Now, come up with an elevator speech about the challenge that you want addressed that you think will convince the person in power that it is important. Also come up with 1 question for the person in power. You will have five minutes to prepare.
Tips for Speaking to Powerful People Handout

Act confidently.

Sit up straight.

Have a firm handshake.

Don’t assume they will be mean/won’t listen.

Be nice, engaging, and kind when you speak.

Treat the person with respect, even if you don’t like them or if they don’t help you.

Stay calm, and don’t lose your cool.

State your questions and your demands firmly.

Set next steps, and get them in writing if needed.

Thank them for their time.
2nd 30 min. segment

“We are going to practice these with some potential situations in your groups. Each group will generate a convincing elevator speech about the challenge you want to address, along with 1 question for the person in power. You will have five minutes to prepare.”

Have each group give their elevator speech within their group and ask the question.

Have the adult ally of the group play the person in power. Consider roleplaying these different archetypes of people in power so youth can be prepared for potential disappointment (choose one difficult one per group and one that goes well):

Person who is not paying attention/too busy (e.g., checking email or answering phone, running late, seems distracted).

Person who is too nice (e.g., seems very interested but doesn’t really agree to or offer anything).

Person on the defense (e.g., your response is always, “Yes, but… here is why that won’t work”).

Person who totally agrees with the participants/organizers but is under pressure and can’t do anything (e.g., “My boss won’t let me”).

Reflect

Ask:

“What do you think you did well as a group? What do you think you can improve?”

Point out the strengths of their elevator speech – the good public speaking skills they used and any tactics or hooks.

Also ask:

How did you feel?

What was challenging?

Did you get what you needed?

Did it seem that the person in power wanted to help you/wanted to listen?

What would you do differently?
LARGE GROUP:

“How did your adult partner react? Was every reaction positive? What were some examples of negative/disinterested responses? How did that affect your response? What can we do if people do not want to help us or are not interested?”

Summarize

“This conversation can be very difficult. It’s important to practice what you say and to anticipate what they might say. When figuring out a negotiation, it’s important to imagine things from their situation and to try to guess what is important to them in your situation. If you can answer how your issue matters to them, it will help you to craft a strategy for talking to people in power.”

10 min wiggle break
3rd 30 min. segment

Demonstrate

Return to your original groups. Brainstorm one situation in your group about your own project where you might be speaking to people in power. Brainstorm things that might be challenging about talking with that person. Put yourself in that person’s shoes and think about what is probably most important to him or her.

Make a list of who needs to be involved in or informed about this challenge. As you brainstorm, make sure they include people who are at the school, people in the community and decision-makers—who within the City or the School District might need to know about your project?

Once they have made their list, in their small groups, start to fill in details for the following categories on large flip chart paper. Maybe have a person from each group work on a section on the flip chart paper, and then share what they came up with in the small group and then add to it together:

Who: Who specifically do you need support from?


When: When might you need something from them?

How: What is your method? Email, phone call, presentation, conversation. Who will do this?

Why: Why should they be interested? How does addressing the challenge help them? What selling points do you think they might respond to?
Ally Handout

WHO: who specifically do you need support from?


WHEN: When might you need something from them?

HOW: what is your method? Email, phone call, presentation, conversation? Who will do this?

WHY: why should they be interested? How does addressing your challenge help them? What selling points do you think they might respond to?
Summarize

“Being an advocate is a challenging task. You’ll come up against people who don’t want to have anything to do with what you’re doing. You may not change their mind about your topic. When doing a project in a school/neighborhood, you must find allies. These allies are the ones who will help you get your goals accomplished. There are some people who you MUST get support from because of who they are and how they can help you.”
Session 9: 4:30-6

1st 30 min. segment

PREPARING TO PRESENT PHOTOS AT THE GALLERY WALK

Objectives

To determine which pictures will be best for the presentations

Materials

The groups’ pictures they have chosen to represent their challenge that they want to address.

Projector

Thick poster/presentation board that isn’t flimsy

Glitter, markers, glue, scissors, construction paper

Prepare Before

Have photos printed on nice paper

Also have projector, just in case

Opening

“There are many ways to impact people and to get them thinking deeply about these challenges related to PA. We have primarily used the SHOWed method, but we can display that information in many ways. For the end of the year fair, we will create poster presentations and give elevator speeches/use hooks related to the challenges we would like to see changed and the physical activity strengths. We will work on these poster presentations today.”

Reflect

Talk in small groups:

“What pictures have we chosen to understand our challenge? Our strengths?

What captions have we used to describe our challenge? Our strengths?
What stories have we told?"

Why do we think these pictures/captions/stories will get people to listen and support our cause?

Will these help people who may not know anything about this challenge understand it better? How?

10 min. wiggle break
Presentation Creation Handout

There are many ways to impact people and to get them thinking deeply about these strengths challenges related to physical activity. We have primarily used the SHOWeD method, but we can display that information in many ways. For the end of the year fair, we will create poster presentations and give elevator speeches/use hooks related to the challenges we would like to see changed as well as the physical activity strengths.

What pictures will we use to display our challenge? The strengths?

What captions will we use to describe our challenge? The strengths?

What story can we tell through the pictures and captions and with our voices?

What hooks and tactics can we use to reel people in to listen to our story?

Why do we think these specific pictures/captions/stories will get people to listen and support our cause?
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2nd 30 min. segment

Say: “Now that you have the basic tools to tell your stories, you can now develop a plan to get your change idea to a broader audience.”

Lead a discussion with the group about social media usage, and which one they think will be the most useful in spreading the message about their social action project. Take a vote in the group on which one they want to use.

“What social media do you all use?”

“What one do you think would be best to communicate the challenge that you are trying to change?

Who do you think you’ll reach through this platform?”

Then, create a plan for how they can get the word out about their social action via the social platform of their choosing. After about 10 minutes, have the small groups share back to the larger group their plan.

Reflect

After participants share their plans, create a timeline as a group for getting the information onto social media before the parent night.

Summarize

Tell students: “Publicity is vital to community projects. It helps build community support from parents, school officials, business leaders, and local government officials. Publicity also encourages other young people in your town to get involved in worthwhile projects, including the work you and your team members are doing. And publicity gives your group the credit you deserve for improving the community.”

Encourage them to work closely with the adult leaders and use their own creativity to spread the word about the incredible work they have been doing.

10 min. wiggle break
3rd 30 min. segment

Action

Spend the rest of the time working on the picture posters for the gallery walk at the parent night.

Demonstrate

Have each student agree to a task in their small group that s/he will do in the next week to share their project as well as information about their upcoming gallery walk with the community, either via social media or some other mechanism.
Using Social Media to Tell Your Story Handout

Social media can be extraordinarily powerful. Social media, as a tool, allows your group to build relationships, share information, and move work to address the challenge you identified forward. It is a two-way street for communicating. Your group is able to share information about events with the public. Perhaps you and your group will choose to use social media as a platform to raise questions and initiate conversations. With no upfront cost to your group, social media can help you start building relationships with potential community partners. Sharing ideas via social media is a great way to publicize your group’s activities. Below is a list of social media outlets and brief summaries of how they can be used.

**Twitter:** Twitter is a website that can be used to promote your group online and drive traffic to your website. Twitter uses “tweets,” 140-character (maximum) messages posted to your Twitter profile, to share what you are doing at any moment. Twitter’s system of shortened links and hashtags makes it easy to find people or businesses posting tweets. Hashtags are hyperlinked keywords that have been embedded into tweets. Any word can be turned into a hashtag by adding the “#” sign before the word in the body of your tweet. Twitter’s “@Mention” system allows you to contact any other Twitter user, regardless of whether or not they follow you, by placing an “@” symbol in front of the Twitter username in the body of your tweet.

Example: “We want change! #changeispossible”

**Facebook:** Facebook is a widely used, global online social networking platform. Individuals can share photographs, written posts, event invitations, and locations. Similar to Twitter, users can use hashtags and can also link their posts to other individuals or entities in their network.

Example: “We are putting our leadership into action to help people be more active in our communities!”

**Foursquare:** Foursquare is a location-based social networking website for mobile devices such as smartphones. Individuals share where they are and tell others about the places they have been. The process is called a “check-in.” Users check-in using a mobile website, text messaging, or device-specific application by selecting from a list of venues the application locates nearby. Users are also able to offer feedback or general comments about places and events they have attended. Create a check-in for your community project site!

Example: “This is where we are active.”
**Instagram**: Instagram is a popular photo-sharing service app for smart-phones and Facebook. It is simple and accessible to everyone. Use it to share important moments in your group’s effort.

Example: (A picture of our progress).

**YouTube**: YouTube is a free video sharing website that makes it easy to watch online videos. You can even create and upload your own videos to share with others. It's all about user-generated content. Instead of videos from major TV networks and movie studios, you'll find amazing and creative videos made by people just like you. And YouTube isn't a one-way street—you can jump in, record and share your own videos, and become a part of the community.

Example: (A video of our group discussing our challenge and why it is important to address).
Session 10: Parent Night

Students will present their ideas to the after-school program/school stakeholders.

Groups will hold their posters and use an elevator speech or a hook to describe them to attendees, as well as tell stakeholders about their change ideas and answer any questions attendees have. Groups will be able to present in whatever way they think is best (e.g., a rap, dance, etc.).

**Background:**

This process uses photos or other visual representations to introduce issues or situations. Participants use their own perception or voice to frame the need or context.

**Objectives:**

- Have participants analyze a situation according to their own lens and voice
- Illustrate complex situations without written words

**Uses:**

- Assess peoples' perceptions of their environment or situation.
- Identify factors that contribute to health.
- Data analysis
- A beginning step in solving problems.
- Present information to stakeholders, decision-makers in a visual and meaningful way.

**Target Audience:** parents, community members, and stakeholders.

**Materials Needed:** Groups’ posters.

**Estimated Time:** 10 minutes per group.

**Potential Group Discussion Questions:**

- Is what you see in this picture typical? Unusual? Why do you think this is so?
- Is this a strength or challenge? Does it need to be improved? What will happen if the situation does not change and stays the same?
- Looking at all of these pictures together, what can we say about our school/community?
Potential Group Discussion Questions:

- Is what you see in this picture typical? Unusual? Why do you think this is so?
- What did you learn about the school? Community?
- What can we conclude?
- What needs are there?
- Is this a strength or challenge? Does it need to be improved? What will happen if the situation does not change and stays the same?
- Looking at all of these pictures together, what can we say about our school/community?
- How can we begin to make this change?