

The YES! Youth Empowerment Model© (The Model) is comprised of three components—Skill Development, Critical Awareness, and Opportunities—and was created as a practical application of the theory of youth empowerment.

YES!'s definition of **youth empowerment** is when youth have the skills, critical awareness, and opportunities to positively impact their own lives and lives of other individuals, organizations, and communities. Youth empowerment is both a process and an outcome. Youth that are empowered using The Model continue to create community change throughout their lives.



- **Skill Development:** The process of strengthening skills and increasing knowledge to improve effective decision-making, productive peer and community interactions, and strategic advocacy.
- **Critical Awareness:** The ability to identify and analyze information and resources in order to have a deeper understanding of the “how” and “why” of positive change.
- **Opportunities:** The actions taken to create positive change.

YES!'s definition of youth empowerment at the **individual level** is exercising power over ones life by being skilled, critically aware, and active in creating community change.

YES!'s definition of youth empowerment at the **organizational level** is providing opportunities for people to gain control of their lives, develop policies, influence policy decisions, or offer alternatives for positive change.

YES!'s definition of youth empowerment at the **community level** is participating in efforts to improve the community, respond to threats to quality of life, and support citizen participation at the local, state, and national level.



Application of the YES! Youth Empowerment Model©

The YES! Youth Empowerment Model© (The Model) is a three-pronged approach that challenges youth to develop skills, gain critical awareness, and participate in opportunities that create community change. Please see below for practical ways to apply The Model.

Skill Development (“learning how”)

Presentations

- Public speaking
- Presentation development
- Research skills
- Facilitation techniques
- Email/Phone etiquette

Media

- Key messages
- Letter to the Editor
- Opinion Editorials
- Interview techniques
- Social media strategies

Action

- Informant interviews
- Surveys/Petitions
- Action planning
- Event planning
- Policy maker meeting

Critical Awareness (“the how and the why”)

Identify

- Best practices
- Research sources
- Systems (i.e. healthcare and food)
- Access issues and barriers
- Oppression and disparities
- How to ask the right questions

Analyze

- Environmental impact on health
- Zip code determining health outcomes
- How systems operate
- Decision-making process
- Understanding the “why”

Strategize

- Grasstops
- Grassroots
- Political climate
- How to leverage resources
- Determining the “how”

Opportunities (“the action”)

Individual

- Leading a team of peers
- Providing peer-to-peer training
- Designing a social media campaign
- Launching a petition

Organizational

- Serving on a board
- Compensating youth staff
- Sharing decision-making power
- Creating policies and procedures specific to youth

Community

- Gathering community support
- Conducting media interviews
- Presenting to decision-making bodies (local, state, national)