



SAFE SPACES TRAINING: BEST PRACTICES FOR POSITIVE YOUTH OUTCOMES

7.5 HOURS OF INSTRUCTION OVER TWO DAYS (CREDITS VARY)

This training builds participant knowledge and practical understanding of how social messages, assumptions, and widely held narratives shape young people's experiences of safety, belonging, opportunity, and well-being. Participants examine how personal and cultural beliefs influence professional relationships, service delivery, and youth outcomes, and practice developmentally appropriate, relationship-centered strategies that strengthen trust, engagement, and positive youth experiences.

The training develops concrete skills to support responsive, belonging-focused environments within youth development programs, One Circle Foundation's (OCF) program models – *Girls Circle*®, *The Council for Boys and Young Men*® and *Unity Circle*®. Participants across youth-serving sectors learn foundational principles and applied strategies that promote fair, reflective, and effective practices in communication, engagement, and support for youth with varied life experiences.

Through interactive activities and real-world examples, participants strengthen professional accountability and reflective practice while learning to implement thoughtful and intentional approaches that enhance organizational culture, youth education and services, and desired outcomes. Training content integrates current research, data, youth perspectives, and evidence-based youth development approaches.

This experiential and interactive training utilizes lecture, role play, demonstration, video, small-group discussion, activities, brainstorming, and goal setting to support participant learning and skill development. Trainers model strengths-based, relationship-focused techniques and best practices that foster a safe and positive adult learning environment.

The subject matter aligns with the scope of practice for educators, program directors, and service providers across *education; behavioral health, including mental health and public health; juvenile justice; substance use services; child welfare; and community-based services.*

Training Objectives

As a result of this training, participants will be able to:

1. **Describe** the relational-cultural framework that guides One Circle Foundation's program models and best practices.
2. **Define** key concepts related to professional awareness and action for positive youth outcomes, including unexamined assumptions, biases and perceptions, and welcoming, developmentally appropriate and youth-centered best practices.
3. **Explain** how different social, cultural, and historical experiences influence access to resources and opportunities, expectations, and experiences of youth with varied identities.
4. **List** two ways in which adverse child experiences and multiple life factors impact the relationships, life trajectories and opportunities of young people.
5. **Analyze** how unexamined or entrenched assumptions and narratives shape professional culture and impede positive youth outcomes.
6. **Apply** one or more consistent evidence-based, age-appropriate strategies to program design, communication, engagement, and youth support.
7. **Identify and practice** two or more relationship-centered approaches that maximize trust, connection, and meaningful youth engagement.
8. **Develop** two or more actionable goals to strengthen professional awareness and accountability, fairness, and supportive practices in working with youth.
9. **Demonstrate** two or more strategies that promote safety, respect, and belonging for all youth and staff.

Agenda

Welcome, Introductions & Community Agreements

Set expectations and create shared agreements that support learning, participation, respectful dialogue, and professional reflection.

Purpose of Training & Professional Awareness Overview

Explore how personal experiences, perspectives, and adult-youth interactions shape youth experiences, and why professional self-awareness is essential in youth-serving environments.

Foundations of OCF Models & Best Practices

Gain an understanding of the relational, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and strengths-based frameworks that guide OCF program models and best practices.

Video Reflection & Discussion: How Perceptions Are Formed

Reflect on how perceptions show up in adult behavior, and influence youth-adult connection and decision-making. By increasing awareness of personal perspectives, how they show up in practice and impact outcomes, participants strengthen their ability to respond thoughtfully and with accountability to the varied needs of youth.

Interactive Group Activity: Assumptions & Decision-Making in Practice

Identify real-world examples of assumptions, examine common patterns, and discuss how unexamined beliefs influence professional judgment, interactions, and decisions affecting youth.

Video & Group Discussion: Decision- Making in School Settings

Engage in an interactive game and video case study to further explore and recognize how one's perceptions and expectations can influence outcomes and access to support for youth.

Interactive Game & Role Play: Examining Common Narratives

Practice identifying limiting or oversimplified narratives about youth and explore developmentally-based strategies and skills that center youth needs and strengths.

Understanding Youth Experiences Across Life Factors

Explore how personal, social, and environmental circumstances shape youth decisions, relationships, and access to opportunities.

***Video Case Example:
Bullying, Stress, and
Youth Well-Being***

Reflect on youth voices showing how bullying, lack of support, and unsafe environments contribute to stress, trauma, and long-term effects.

***ACEs, Trauma &
Barriers to Healthy
Youth Development***

Understand how early stress, trauma, and environmental factors influence youth behavior, brain development, and engagement.

***Interactive Game &
Video Case Example:
Risk Factors & Youth
System Pathways***

Examine how certain adult expectations, underlying perceptions, rigid norms, and decision-making practices not aligned with current best practices contribute to risk factors and pathways into systems.

***Video & Group
Discussion: Decision-
Making in Juvenile
Justice***

Explore how historical context, societal perceptions and personal opinions directly impact youth experiences with adults and systems.

***Moving Toward
Supportive &
Trauma Responsive
Professional Practices***

Learn and practice strategies that validate youth experiences, promote safety, and support positive youth development.

***Action Planning:
Creating Fair and
Effective Practices***

Develop practical strategies to improve informed decision-making, strengthen trust and connection, and enhance supportive engagement with youth.

***Interactive Game &
Role Play: Examining
Common Narratives***

Practice identifying limiting or oversimplified narratives about youth and explore developmentally-based strategies and skills that center youth needs and strengths.

Closing Reflections

Share key takeaways, commitments, and next steps for applying learning in professional roles and interactions with youth.