

Culture By Design: Building an Environment Where Youth Thrive

Self-Reflection and Evaluation Tool

This questionnaire helps OST professionals assess how well their programs create belonging. Reflect and identify areas for improvements. Answer the observation questions to evaluate your current practices.

Reflection

Which area do you feel your program does best at creating belonging?

- Youth see themselves reflected in the program.
- Youth hear validation and inclusion when in the program.
- Youth feel physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe while in the program.
- Youth experience their potential through opportunities for leadership and decision-making.
- Youth sense authenticity from the program and the adults working in the program.

Which area represents your biggest opportunity for improvement?"

- Youth see themselves reflected in the program.
- Youth hear validation and inclusion when in the program.
- Youth feel physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe while in the program.
- Youth experience their potential through opportunities for leadership and decision-making.
- Youth sense authenticity from the program and the adults working in the program.

How confident are you in making changes to strengthen belonging in your program?

- Very confident - I have specific ideas ready to implement
- Confident- I have a general idea of what I need and want to do
- Somewhat confident - I need to think through the details
- Not very confident - I need more support and resources
- Unsure - I'm not sure where to start

Program Observation

What Youth See	
What do youth see when they first enter your program space?	
Whose faces, cultures, and interests are reflected in your materials and displays?	
What does your body language and eye contact communicate to youth?	
What Youth Hear	
How do youth typically hear their names used in your program?	
What's the most common tone of voice youth hear from adults?	
What do youth conversations sound like during your programs?	
What Youth Feel Emotionally	
How do youth know they're remembered and cared about as individuals?	
What helps youth feel emotionally safe to be authentic?	
When do youth seem most relaxed and least guarded?	
What Youth Experience	
What opportunities do youth have to lead or make decisions?	

How do youth experience their own potential and success?	
What new roles or responsibilities can youth try out safely?	
What Youth Sense	
What would youth say about the "vibe" when they walk into your space?	
How do youth know whether adults genuinely care?	
What makes youth feel they can be authentic and vulnerable?	