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Mental Health and Self Care Workshops

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SELF CARE WORKSHOPS

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City of Watsonville Parks and Community Services

Collaborative Health & Human Services

California State University Monterey Bay

May 8, 2023

Appendices

Scope of Work

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines
Create a Workshop Schedule	Using a google doc form and sharing it with my mentor	Submit to my mentor by January 25
Approval from Mentor of the project (Workshop)	Meeting with mentor to go over the workshop and topics	Have it approved by Feb 2nd
Speak to the Youth about what we will be doing those following days	Get in a small circle 8-10 youth or more if possible	February 10
Create a Day 1 presentation and put together the activity	Using google slides and put in the information that will be presented and activity we will be doing	Feb 15
Send presentation and activities to mentor for review and get approval	My mentor to get and overview about what I will be doing with the youth	Feb 17
Create a Day 2 presentation and put together the activity	Using google slides and put in the information that will be presented and activity we will be doing	Feb 18
Work on Day 3 Presentation and activity	Using google slides and put in the information that will be presented and activity we will be doing	Feb 21
Work on Day 4 presentation and activity	Using google slides and put in the information that will be presented and activity we will be doing	Feb 24
Work on Day 5 presentation and activity	Using google slides and put in the information that will be presented and activity we will be doing	Feb 28
Work on Day 6 presentation and last activity	Using google slides and put in the information that will be presented and activity we will	March 3

	be doing	
Present Workshop to the youth and introduce them to what Activities we will be doing with the youth	Informing youth about what we will be working on for the 3 weeks ahead of us	Start by March 3
Day 1: Stress Management and Self-Care	1st Presentation that will be delivered to the youth	March 3
Day 2: Mood Disorders		March 17
Day 3: Something About Me worksheet	Activities with the youth using a worksheet	March 17
Day 4: Mindfulness / Services open to the youth	Activity with the youth and Research about local services for the youth	March 24
Day 5: Self care box with an overall presentation and survey	A self care box will be created by youth. Survey will be made with the help of my mentor	March 31

Pre and Post Surveys

Mental Health & Self Care Workshop

Post Survey

[Sign in to Google](#) to save your progress.
[Learn more](#)

1. I can tell when I am feeling stressed out.

strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neutral
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

2. I understand what mood disorders can look like for myself and how it can affect others

Strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neutral

3. I know what to do to make myself feel less stressed.

strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neutral
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

4. I know who I can talk to if I ever feel anxious, depressed, or thinking of self-harming.

Strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neutral
 Agree
 Strongly agree

5. I know what resources I can reach out to for support

Strongly agree

5. I know what resources I can reach out to for support.

Strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neutral
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

6. What is something you learned throughout this workshop?

Your answer _____

Submit [Clear form](#)

Abstract

The Watsonville Parks and Community Services Department is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to decreasing teenage criminality, supports youth and collaborates with the Watsonville Police Department to guide youth and actively build positive relationships within the community. Youth are in the developmental stage where they are more likely to take risks and make poor decisions. During March 2023 a five day mental health workshop for middle school and high school students was implemented , which aimed to normalize discussions on self care and mental health among youth. The workshop covered a variety of topics, including stress management, mental health disorders, self-image, and self-esteem. There was an increase after the workshops of mental health and self care showing ninety percent of youth learned something new about mental health and how they can apply it in their everyday lives. It was intended that the participants would become familiar with these concepts and learn effective coping mechanisms for handling stress, mental health crises, and self-doubt.

Keywords: mental health, youth, coping mechanism

Agency/Community Served:

The Watsonville Parks and Community Services Department is a non-profit organization that is funded by donations, grants, and community sponsors such as Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance (PVPSA), Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD), Community Health Trust, Santa Cruz Arts Council, and Watsonville Police Department. It has succeeded in forming bonds among police officers, community leaders, program leaders, youth, and their families through their services, community outreach, and neighborhood events. The Watsonville Parks and Community Services Department has two locations in Watsonville that collaborate with the City of Watsonville and the Watsonville Police Department to provide all youth prevention crime opportunities or programs that can help better themselves in life and more focus in school to be successful. It provides a variety of programs that allow youth to discover new interests and stay involved in the organization, such as kickboxing, martial arts, soccer, and numerous team-building opportunities. It directly serves youth in elementary and middle school and assists agricultural families who do not have other resources to help their children.

“California’s agricultural community is made up of multigenerational farming families” (*The Value of Farming and Ranching*, n.d.). These programs also assist youth in becoming better community members. Its mission statement states, “We, as police officers, know that we must do everything we can to get to children before they get involved with drugs or gangs” (P.A.L 2021).

Problem:***Students are experiencing mental health issues without support***

Mental health is an important part of children’s overall health and well-being. Mental health includes children’s mental, emotional, and behavioral well-being. It impacts a young person’s thinking, emotions, and mood such that it interferes with his or her daily functioning at

home and school. It has become a major issue among children in the United States and is relatively common, and amenable to treatment or intervention. “Approximately one in six school-aged youth experiences impairments in life functioning due to a mental illness, and the number of young people experiencing mental illness increases as young people grow older” (Perou R, 2013). Youth might struggle with receiving treatment due to not wanting to speak up or have a hard time talking to their parents. According to new research 59.8% of youth with major depression do not receive any mental health treatment (*The State of Mental Health in America*, n.d.).

Contributing Factors:

ACES

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic situations children face, such as violence at home or divorce, parents who are separated/divorced, a household member who is incarcerated, etc. Growing up in a stressful home environment or being abused by a parent or relative can raise the likelihood of developing depression, anxiety or any mental health issue. Approximately 15% of children in California experience ACES . Children suffering from any type of mental illness can have long-term negative effects on their health and well-being, whether in childhood or later in life. Youth experiencing these situations at home can cause stress reactions, including feelings of intense fear, terror, and helplessness leading to mental health challenges. Parents should be aware that their behavior in front of their children can have an impact on their child's mental health and lead to mental health disorders.

Mental Health issues not discussed at home

Mental health has become a major social issue; however, it primarily affects youth, and most are unsure how to deal with it. This is because mental health is not valued or being treated

at home. Discussing mental health at home can spark an emotional wellness revolution and assist individuals with personal issues. Youths are receiving mental health treatment, but this is not being taught to them. Youth or young adults can be diagnosed with it or have a mental illness, and their parents are unaware of it.

Bullying and Self- Esteem Issues.

Health issues include eating disorders, social phobia, attention deficit disorder, substance misuse, and depression and anxiety may all be correlated with low self-esteem. Perhaps due to higher levels of self-efficacy and more effective coping mechanisms, having high self-esteem appears to be protective against the emergence of poor mental health. Being bullied at school or by friends can affect students and with time they grow and they start developing low self esteem issues. Cyberbullying has now become the “best” way to bully someone; it has also become a global and cross cultural problem. Students think it is okay to make fun of other students online or post offensive comments/pictures to hurt others. With time this starts creating a mental problem for that student. “A national study in the United States revealed that 9.1% of adolescents aged 12 to 18 years old have experienced cyberbullying victimization (Payne & Hutzell, 2017).

Consequences:

Low academic performance

Having a mental health issue can lead students to not have any motivation in school or to continue. “Strings of absences, falling grades, disruptive outbursts, and eventual dropouts plague many students suffering from mental health disorders” (McCullough, 2022). Youth sometimes insult others about their academic performance, but don’t realize what the person is going through. There are numerous methods for finding students with mental health issues at school, such as tracking referrals for office disciplinary actions and teacher recommendations. These

initiatives demand little time, but they frequently spot students who have serious behavioral issues while frequently omitting those who are dealing with internalizing emotions like worry or despair. The insufficient focus deprives their ability to expand and succeed through their personal and professional growth.

Substance use

Although many youth are strong and healthy, many have developed mental health issues that have increased their behaviors. “A teen with anxiety might start by smoking marijuana to calm down before social events, and soon find himself smoking every morning just to get to school” (Miller & Taskiran, 2022). It’s important to know that substance use can disrupt a young person’s life even if he is not technically dependent on the drug.

Homelessness

Homelessness can have a significant negative impact on a young person's future development. Children who experience homelessness have much higher rates of emotional, behavioral, and short- and long-term health issues. They frequently suffer with self-esteem, which puts them at risk for abusing drugs and having other undesirable effects. “Youth under the age of 18 and young adults from the ages of 18 to 24 years old (TAY) are experiencing homelessness and living without a parent or legal guardian” (*Resolving Homelessness Together*, 2022). It can cause children to experience homelessness due to not getting the services they need to get help and children decide to give up. “A 2019 study of homeless residents in Santa Cruz County suggested that raised rents, evictions and family problems helped lead to homelessness” (Riley, 2022).

Possible Capstone Project

Mental health awareness is always a must, especially around children. A mental health lesson plan in which the word “mental health” is projected to all the students and they will understand the meaning of speaking what they feel or think. I will go to my internship site at least 1 time a week (friday) for 4 weeks. Each day I will do a mini presentation and group discussion/activity that is related to mental health. After each presentation youth will take a mini-survey (it will be anonymous) and they will write about what feelings they go through in their daily lives and what they do for self-care for their mental health.

Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
- Mental health Issues not discussed at home	Youth are experiencing mental health issues without support	- Low Academic Performance
- ACES		- Substance Abuse
- Self - esteem		- Homelessness

Project Implementation

The project is to implement it through a PowerPoint presentation and creating a workshop for the youth. One of the first steps before creating a workshop was gathering information and going over it with the mentor of the agency and getting the approval. Something very important through the process was to get to know the youth a bit more and interact with them. This gives a better understanding of each student to try to gather ideas and information to see what would get the student's attention to cause an impression so they can take into consideration the topic. On day 1: I started with an ice breaker and continued with doing a pre

workshop survey with the youth about stress management and self-care. Following the survey I did a presentation and had a small discussion that focused on stress management and self care. Day 2 and 3 I did a mental health workshop and had a group discussion with the youth about Mood disorders and Self Image involving an activity of “A to Z Amazing Me”. This activity allowed the youth to come up with positive words that describe themselves. Day 4: Informed youth what services they can reach out to and how they can properly communicate with their parents about their mental health. Day 5: I created an overall presentation of what we learned in the 5 days we did the workshops and the youth took the post survey which allowed me to see if I made a difference in teaching the youth about mental health.

Scope of work:

I created a workshop using google docs that explained what I will be doing for the 5 days in the month of March when working with youth. I expected it to be submitted to my mentor by January 25, 2023. I then needed to get the workshops approved by my mentor and expected it to be approved by the date of February 2, 2023. I then spoke to the youth about what we will be doing those days. I expected it to be done by February 10th, 2023. After I spoke to the youth I started to create presentations and activities together for them. The first presentation I expected to be done by February 15 and then get the presentation and activity approved by my mentor by February 17. I then created a Day 2 presentation and put together the activity by February 18 and sent it out to my mentor to get it approved as well as all other days. By February 21st, 2023 I started working on Day 3 presentation and by February 24, 2023 I worked on Day 4 presentation and activity. On February 28, 2023 I started working on Day 5 presentation and activity following along until March 3rd to work on Day 5 (last day) presentation, activity and post survey.

I planned to have all my google slides, presentations, activities and surveys I will be doing with the youth by the last week of February to be ready to go by the first week of March. I started with my first workshop and introduced the activities I did with the youth on March 3rd, 2023. On March 3, 2023 I presented about Stress Management and Self- Care and did an activity where they had to write at least ten different ways about self care. On March 17, I presented to youth day 2 and 3 about mood disorders and self image. Following the presentation I did an activity “A-Z Amazing Me” this activity allowed the youth to write various words that describe themselves. On March 24 I presented to the youth about Services open to the youth. At the end of the presentation I had each participant say a service they learned about and what they provide. On March 31 I presented an overall presentation of the workshops we learned and gave them the post survey.

Project purpose

The purpose of this project is to raise awareness on mental health among all young people in a manner that they can comprehend and take into account. For instance, this workshop could teach the students how to approach their families or parents with problems and reach out to services. Teaching youth how to communicate can help them become better parents, students, and people outside the home. This helps young people who are going through a mental process build their self-esteem and gain knowledge about mental health, including when it is safe to talk about it before it worsens their situation.

Project justification

YMHS Education says “A sharp focus on promoting wellbeing, building resilience and good mental health will improve outcomes for children and young people. We all benefit when we identify ways to support each other” (YMHS Education, Para.3). This shows that by teaching

and highly focusing on a mental health topic youth can benefit and learn something new that can help them if they are going through something or are thinking of harming themselves.

“Workshops are designed to bring in the top talent in a given field to provide a hands-on learning experience” (Ferreria, 2019). Not only this but, people that teach this are also benefiting themselves by teaching and seeing positive outcomes. By spreading awareness of preventing mental health among youth their lives can improve so much more. With activities being involved in the workshop they are able to interact with other students and be able to understand the meaning of each activity and what is for.

Expected outcomes

The project's goal is to give children a basic understanding of mental health so they can be able to make connections between the information being presented and their own experiences. Teaching young students how to communicate with their parents at home when they have a problem that could harm them is the project's intended outcome. The goal is for the activity to be successful for the majority of the group members and for them to properly acquire the information needed to take it home. By the end of the workshop , 55% of the participants will be able to identify who they can reach out to if they ever feel anxious, depressed, or thinking of self-harming. We expect that the youth will increase their ability to notice when they are stressed by 11%.

Assessment plan

The effectiveness of this project will be measured via pre-and post-surveys. These pre-and post-surveys are to be completed by all participants at the beginning and end of the workshop. The surveys were formulated to assess participants' recognition of stress, stress management methods, mood disorders, who they can talk to if they ever feel self-harming ,

self-esteem levels, and pride in their ethnic identity. These pre- and post-surveys were analyzed to determine if the expected outcomes for the program were met.

Project outcomes

My workshop was designed to offer a safe space where youth could speak openly and honestly about mental health. For some of the participants, this was their first time having a full conversation about mental health and self care while for others it might not have been. My intention was that by talking about this at the workshop and in future discussions in various social and educational contexts, the issue of mental health would be brought up more frequently. By making mental health reasonable, it becomes more likely that someone can reach out for help, tell others about it, seek therapy, or even acknowledge how important it is.

The greatest anticipated outcome was an improvement in mental health awareness. Additionally, it was planned that participants would exit the program understanding how stigmatized mental illness still affects local communities in particular. An explanation of what the terms self-care, stress management, mental health stigmas, self-esteem, and self-image mean as well as a deeper understanding of each. The ability to tell between good and harmful methods of coping as well as the variety of emotions that can be felt in response to different life situations was expected of the participants.

Project activities

Pre- and post-surveys were used to measure the effectiveness of the workshop. On Day 1 the youth took a pre-survey to get a better understanding of what they know about mental health and self care then I continued with presenting them about stress management and had an activity for them. The activity was about getting with a partner and writing down as many things they know about self care; emotionally, physically and spiritually. This will help them learn how they

can manage their stress in the 3 stages of their body. On Day 2, I combined both day 2 and day 3 presentations. I gave them a presentation about self image and mood disorder. Then the youth did an activity on having to describe themselves using positive words with the first letter of the alphabet. On day 4 I presented a presentation on Mindfulness with no activity. On Day 5 I gave them an overall presentation of the workshops and gave them a post-survey. The post survey was for me too see how much information they gain

Findings/results

Surveying youth was the method used to gather the data. Through surveys, we were able to assess our progress toward the desired result and have a deeper knowledge of what the youth were able to gain from the workshop sessions. We conducted a pre-survey that youth were required to complete. We then conducted a post-survey to evaluate the success of the project once all of the 5 sessions were finished. On the first day of the workshop on the pre survey as you can see on Figure 1, 33% of youth stated that they disagreed with “I can tell when I am feeling stressed out” however 44% agreed to it. For the post survey there was a decrease, 11% of the youth disagreed with it and there was a big decrease 66% agreed to it. In the pre-survey, shown on Figure 2, 44% of the participants said they could agree when they can detect what mood disorders like depression and anxiety could look like for themselves and others and 22% stated that they can't. In the post survey 44% of the participants stayed the same stated they agreed and 22% disagreed on it. Shown on Figure 3, 33% of the participants disagreed that they know how to distress themselves and 22% detected that they do. During the post survey there was an increase in the youth learning what activities they can do to distress themselves 55% participants agreed to it. During the pre survey shown on Figure 4, 22% participants disagreed on who they can talk to and reach out to when feeling anxious, depressed or thinking of self

harming and 4 agreed to it. During the post survey it remained the same for 22% of the participants but there was an increase of 55% participants in learning who they can talk to when feeling those emotions. Last final question shown on Figure 5, “I know what resources I can reach out to and in the pre survey only 44% participants knew and 22% didn’t. During the post survey there was an increase to 66% of the participants learning what resources they can reach out to.

Based on the results on the pre- and post-surveys, overall the workshop was effective because the amount (9) of participants’ agreement on the given statements increased. The statements were written to be reflective of the workshop topics discussed. The project saw an increase in the participants’ agreements on all statements and showed whether or not there was a change. The post-survey results were good as we expected them to be, the workshop was effective in the following topics: stress, stress management, discernment of mood disorders, and recognizing who to talk to if ever in a mental health crisis. The youth were also able to recognize what resources they can reach out to when they need the support. A table chart of participants’ results in the pre- and post-surveys are shown below.

Figure 1.

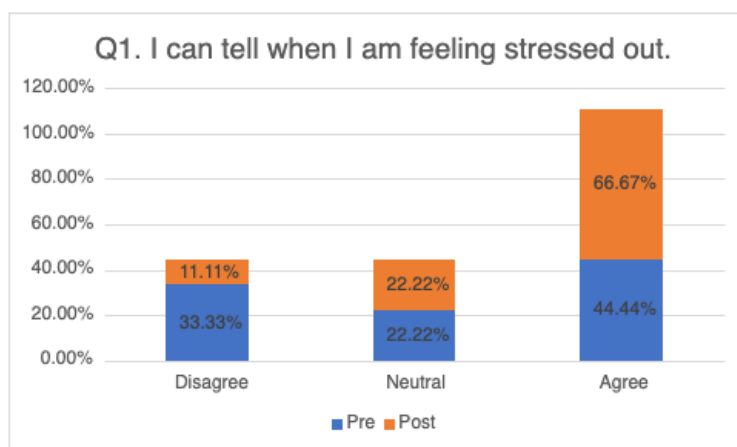


Figure 2.

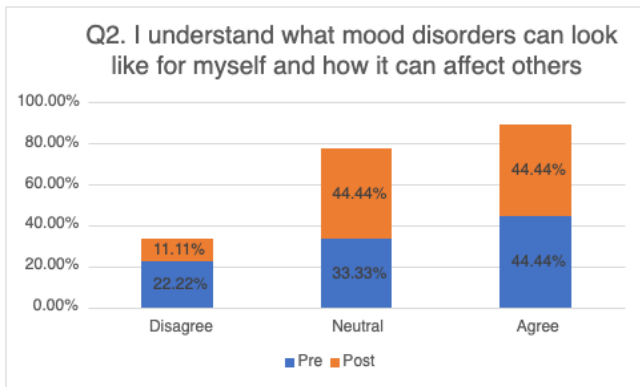


Figure 3.

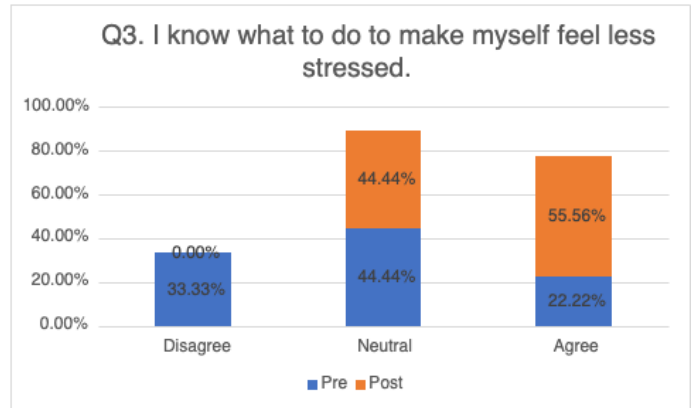


Figure 4.

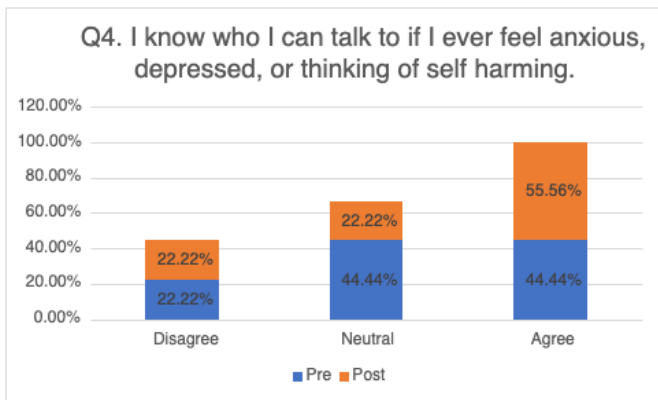
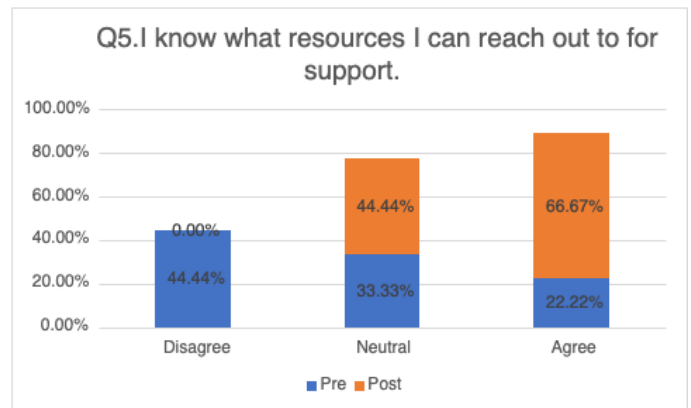


Figure 5



Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results of the pre and post surveys I can conclude that youth were able to learn something new from my workshops. Even though there was a small amount of participants each day they gained new information and resources they didn't know that were open to them. It's also likely that the participants had little to no change in their responses throughout the workshop since they had already taken part in a mental health program at school or in their communities, and so were already familiar with the topics of mental health covered. Based on my research and results the objective was achieved. My goal is for this project to continue because it would allow youth to gain more knowledge on the importance of mental health. I

think doing 2 workshops every month with a few activities will allow youth to have a greater impact. Something that could have been done differently to improve my project was to get guest speakers from different resources in the area that is open for youth when they are struggling with their mental health. I believe having guest speakers will allow them to feel more comfortable knowing they learn what services they provide.

Personal reflection

During the process of implementing, running and organizing this project, I came to the realization what the significance of mental health awareness is for the youth. Some strengths and successes during my workshop was Youth being engaged with activities and interested in them. Another success was making an impact on youth about mental health and improving their knowledge. At the end of every workshop presentation about 2-3 participants had questions and I was able to provide the answers for them. Seeing the successes and strengths made me realize that mental health is not a topic that is discussed everyday in today's society. One of the challenges I had during my workshops is attendance being consistent. In the first workshop I started with around 12 participants but only 9 were able to do the pre survey due to others not having access to technology. On day 2 there were about 6 participants. Some didn't attend the first workshop so I had to introduce what I was going to be doing with them. Day 3 and 4 there were around 10 participants and by Day 5 there were only 9 participants. As the attendance kept changing it was hard to stay consistent with them. My goal is intended to help normalize the conversation around mental health in today's society. The City of Watsonville Parks and Services Department has never specifically discussed mental health, so I decided that a workshop on the subject seemed to be a much-needed activity. The workshop featured a variety of icebreaker games, open-ended conversation topics, and extra materials to keep the participants involved and

informed through various methods. Organizations like these for the youth in Watsonville, CA exist to offer young people a variety of opportunities, with a focus on sporting, educational, and recreational activities that encourage crime prevention and community growth. Children and teenagers in these "at-risk" locations will live healthier lives and be more in general good health if they have alternatives to gang membership, drug and alcohol use, and juvenile delinquency.

For future interns the best advice I will give is to not be embarrassed by your failures, learn from them and start again. Also, be ready to learn new experiences when working with youth. It might not always be positive when working with them, but you will learn so many new skills. Don't be afraid.

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