

SUPPORTING

**YOUTH LED
EVENTS**

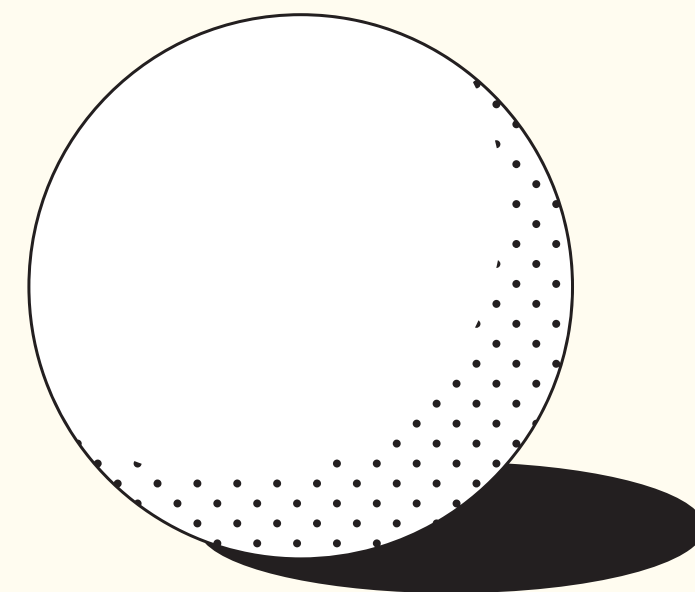
**MINI
GUIDEBOOK**



Recruitment Best Practices

know the purpose.

Before reaching out to the students, it is critical to define the purpose and intended outcomes of the event. Ensure that it aligns with the principles of student voice, equity, and promotes academic and social emotional development. This clarity will guide your recruitment efforts and demonstrate the value and impact of their participation.



Use a thoughtful & personalized approach.

Collaborate with educational liaison, school social workers, support staff to identify student participants. These professionals have existing relationships with students and can provide valuable guidance and insights.

Take the time to explain the project, discuss the benefit of participation, communicate how safety and privacy will be protected throughout the process, and address any concerns that they may have.

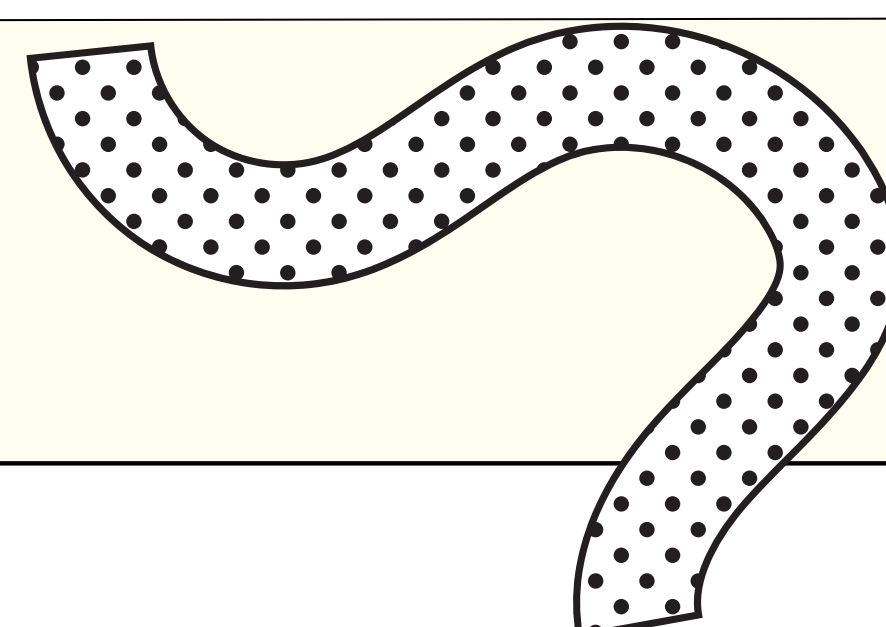
Incentivize it.

Youth voice is valuable. Compensate them. These incentives can demonstrate appreciation and provide tangible rewards for their involvement, encouraging their commitment to the project.

- Thank you cards
- W-9 Form
- Gift cards to restaurants, shopping stores, etc.
- Extra credit
- Certificates
- Services Hours
- Letter of recommendations
- Celebrate with an outing

Be an Ally.

- take time to understand their unique circumstances, challenges, and aspirations.
- avoid promises we can't keep
- prioritize active listening and recognize that the student is the expert in their own life.
- create space for them to teach us



be flexible.

some youth may not be able to make in-person meetings.

- Here are some ideas: Provide transportation (bus passes, uber gift cards etc.)
- Go virtual!
 - Host meetings on Zoom, Microsoft Team, or any similar platform.
- Send out surveys to collect more insight from students unable to attend..

Avoid Tokenism

As you plan events with students, it is essential to be mindful of potential pitfalls, such as tokenism and adultism, ensuring that our efforts truly reflect the voices and experiences of homeless students.

- Tokenism is the superficial inclusion of students without genuinely valuing their contributions.
- Tokenism or window dressing may occur if students are included solely to showcase diversity and given superficial roles.
- Adultism is when adults dismiss or undermine the perspectives of K-12 homeless students.

Remain vigilant and ensure that tokenism and adultism do not hinder the creation of an inclusive and safe environment that values student voices and agency

Set a safe space.

- Implement fun icebreakers to open up planning meetings.
- Start a virtual meeting with music.
- Use emojis to evaluate concepts. Make it fun and enjoyable.
- Facilitate the process of setting mutually agreed group norms
- Offer templates or examples of project to kick off brainstorming ideas.
- Guide the process of a timeline and checklist.
- Have lunch, snacks, and/or drinks.

Promote Youth Decisions

- Vision of the event
- Theme of the event (i.e. names, color feel/vibe)
- Topics & Info covered in the events
- Day of hosting and MC duties
- Selection of Speakers
- Target Audience
- Activities
- Marketing / Sharing Media
- SWAG items (t-shirt designs, booklets, etc.)

Foster Youth Leadership

- Ideally, youth should be recommended for leadership development opportunities and adults should try to give them the responsibility for
- Leadership roles by offering assignments such as training, internships, or shadowing opportunities. This can mean starting out small, and gradually increasing responsibilities as this can be used as a tool to help develop youth leaders.
- This can also mean for the adult supporter to step back to help guide the youth to learn and grow.

Running Meetings

- It is important to inform members of upcoming meetings with flyers or keeping the time and location consistent (e.g., every 3rd Tuesday at lunch time in Counselor's office).
- There is also a free Remind App, called formerly Remind101, to send a quick meeting reminder to your students and adult supporters. You can visit at www.remind.com.

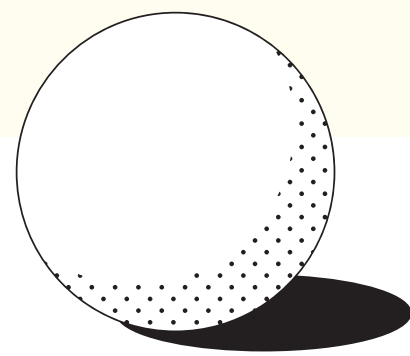
SAMPLE Agenda

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- Location: Have a safe space for students. (Virtual Option)
 - Time: Check-Ins: Starting on time with a fun activity gives everyone a chance to share their name and/or something interesting about themselves.
 - The Purpose and Intended Outcome of the meeting.
 - Run a game (model SEL, positive interactions, cooperation, encouragement)
 - Food or Snacks Available
 - Discuss and get feedback on a theme selected by the youth.
 - End meeting with a fun activity
 - Finish meeting on time.

Setting Up Student Speakers For Success

Preparing students who have experienced homelessness as keynote, workshop, and panel speakers in a sensitive and trauma-informed manner is essential to ensure their well-being and promote a safe and supportive environment for all participants involved in the youth-led conference.

Cultivate a Safe Space:



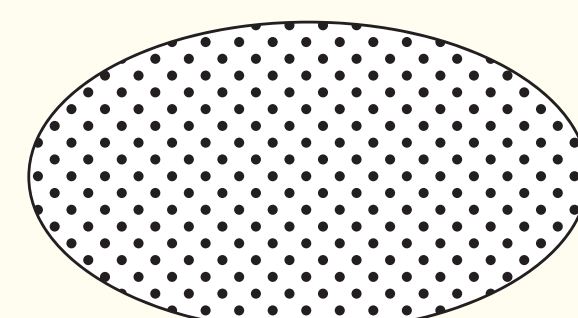
- Create a safe and non-judgmental space where speakers feel comfortable sharing their experiences.
- Respect speakers' autonomy in deciding what they want to share and their level of involvement.
- Prioritize confidentiality and assure them that their stories will be handled with sensitivity.
- Encourage the use of language that promotes understanding and avoids re-traumatization.
- Respect their choice of words when discussing their experiences.

Rehearsals & Feedback

- Conduct private rehearsals where speakers can practice in a safe space and receive constructive feedback. Ensure they feel comfortable making changes if necessary.

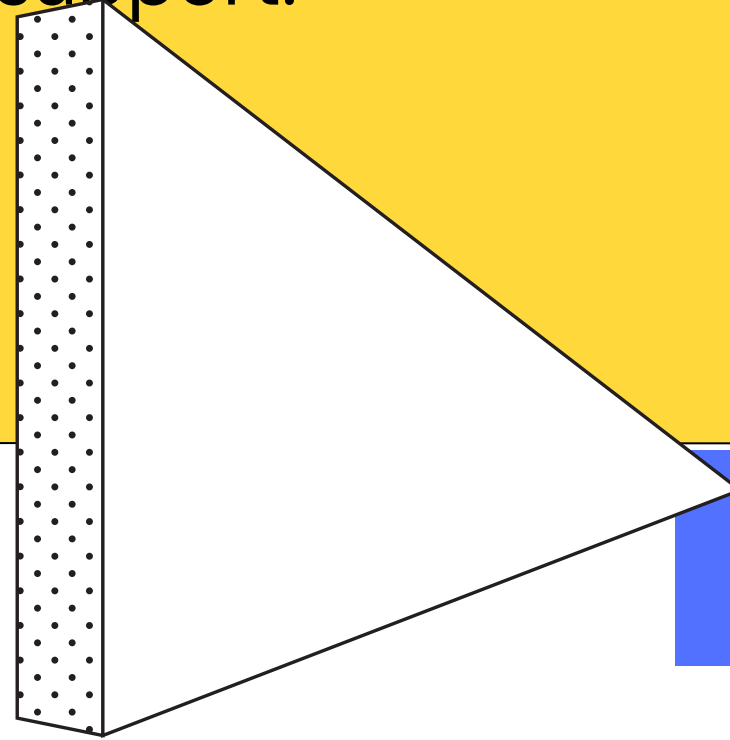
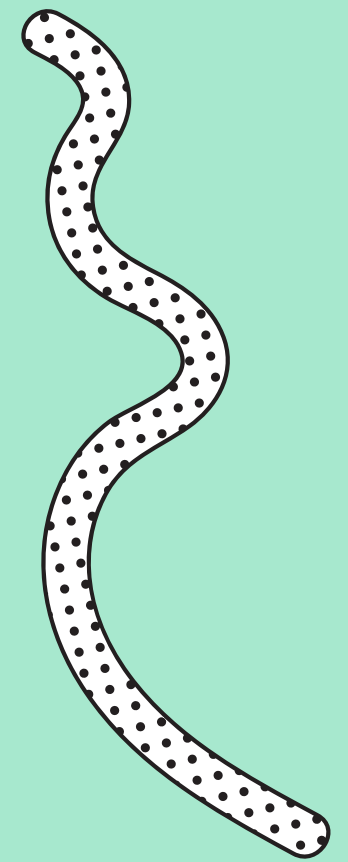
Provide ongoing support

- Offer individualized support and training to each speaker throughout the preparation process.
- Connect them with mentors, counselors, or support staff who can address their specific needs.
- Guide speakers in crafting their narratives with an emphasis on resilience, growth, and positive aspects of their experiences.
- Encourage them to share at their own pace and comfort level.
- Provide information on self-care techniques and resources available to speakers before and after their presentations.



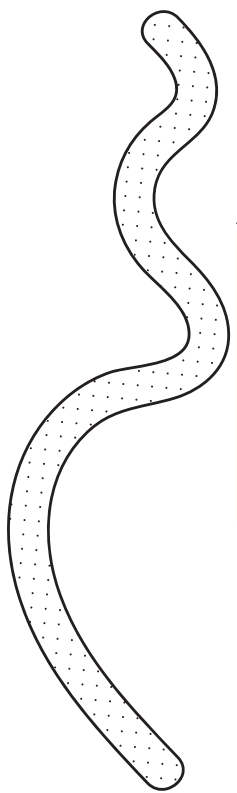
Precommunication

- Reach out to the speakers before the conference to discuss the event details (schedule, format, audience) and clarify expectations.
- Inquire about specific topics or questions that might be triggering for the speaker based on their experiences.
- This helps in setting boundaries and avoiding sensitive areas during the conference.
- Check in with the speakers periodically leading up to the conference to answer any further questions they may have and provide ongoing support.



Remove the Barriers

- Coordinate transportation arrangements for homeless students to ensure they can attend the conference without facing financial or logistical hurdles. assist with child care. If feasible, arrange shuttle services to pick up and drop off students, ensuring they can attend the event conveniently and safely.
- For students traveling from a distance, cover travel expenses such as public transportation fares or gas reimbursement for those driving.
- Offer a stipend to compensate homeless students for their time and expertise as speakers, acknowledging the value they bring to the conference.



Establish Boundaries

- Set clear boundaries and guidelines for audience interaction during Q&A sessions to avoid potentially triggering or insensitive questions.
- Offer them language they can use to reject questions from audience they do not want to answer ("Thank you for your question. I appreciate your interest in my story. However, there are certain personal aspects that I'm not comfortable sharing at this time.")

Emotional Support at Conference

- Arrange for emotional support during the conference, such as access to counselors or mental health professionals who can be available to youth speakers if needed.
- Pair student speakers with a supportive conference attendee who can assist with navigating the event and provide additional encouragement.
- Have a self-care caddy on stage – notebook, water, snacks, fidget toys, and tissues. Ask the youth if they would like anything else

Post Conference Follow-Up

- Check in with speakers after the conference to see how they are doing and offer further support if necessary.

