




Human Service Coordination:

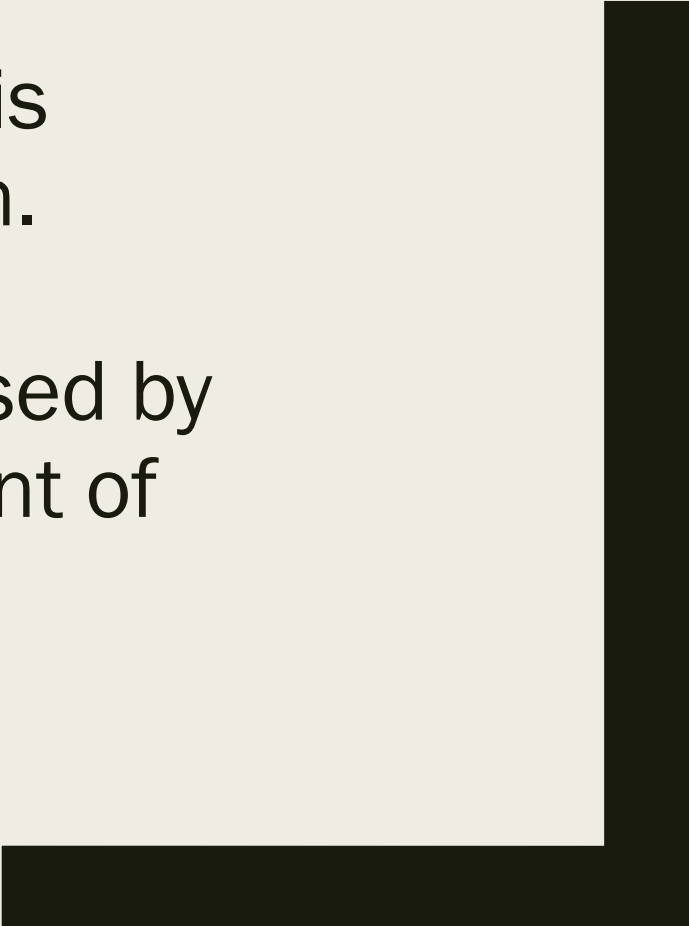
ENGAGING YOUNG ADULTS IN A HOPEFUL FUTURE

Sarah Golding, MPA
she/her/hers
Successfest 2025



The views reflected in this presentation are my own.

The information is not endorsed by EOHHS or by the Department of Mental Health.





Agenda



Building Blocks of
Effective
Engagement



Identifying Strengths

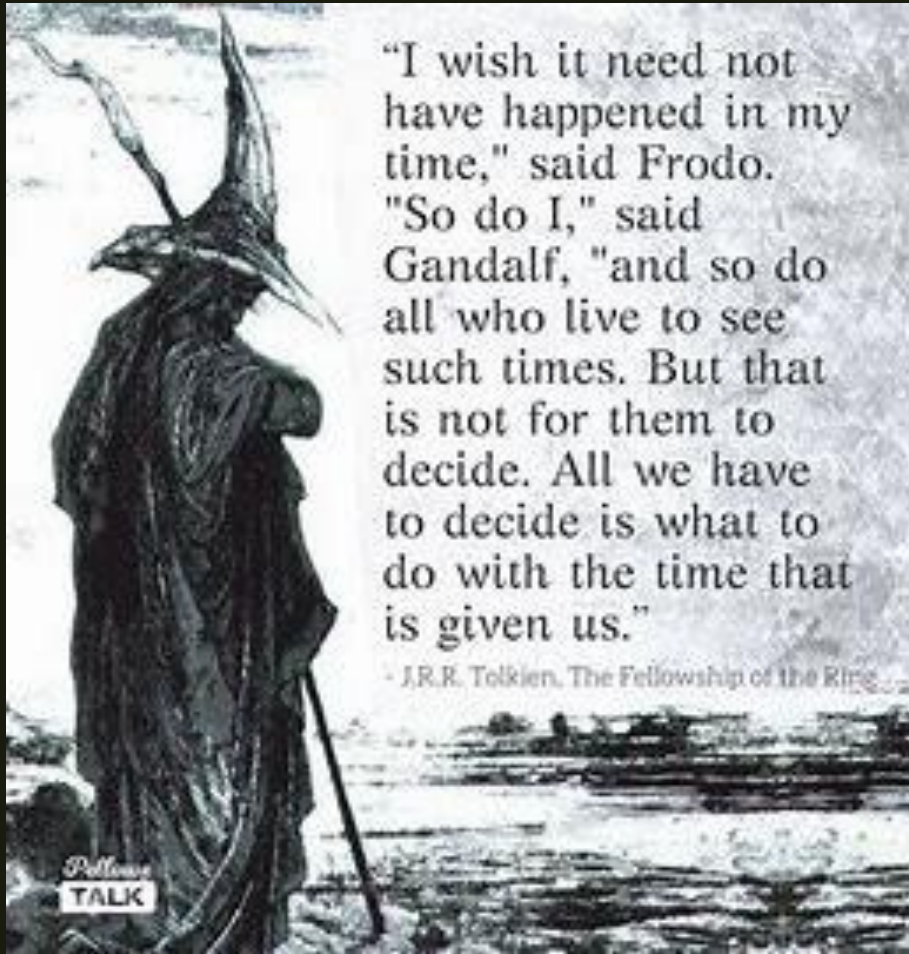


Elevating Youth
Voice



FIRST...





"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Puffins
TALK

THE WORLD IS CHANGING FAST



PLEASE DO WHAT YOU NEED TO
TAKE CARE OF YOU; YOU MATTER



In this space:

BLACK LIVES MATTER

NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL

WE LOVE AND SUPPORT OUR LGBTQIA+
FRIENDS, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
MEMBERS

WOMENS RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

WE BELIEVE IN EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICES

Who am I?

Over 20 years working in youth mental health and human service coordination for non-profit and public sectors

Have been with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) for 13 years

Hold an undergrad in psychology and with Masters in Public Administration in Human Service Management

Specialize in engagement and service coordination for TAY, including those with significant risk history

Actively involved in race, equity and inclusion work at the Northeast Area DMH and site level



[Sarah Golding | UMass Lowell \(uml.edu\)](mailto:Sarah.Golding@uml.edu)

Who am I?

I enjoy traveling

I have four cats and a turtle (JK 5 cats now)

I grew up out in Western MA

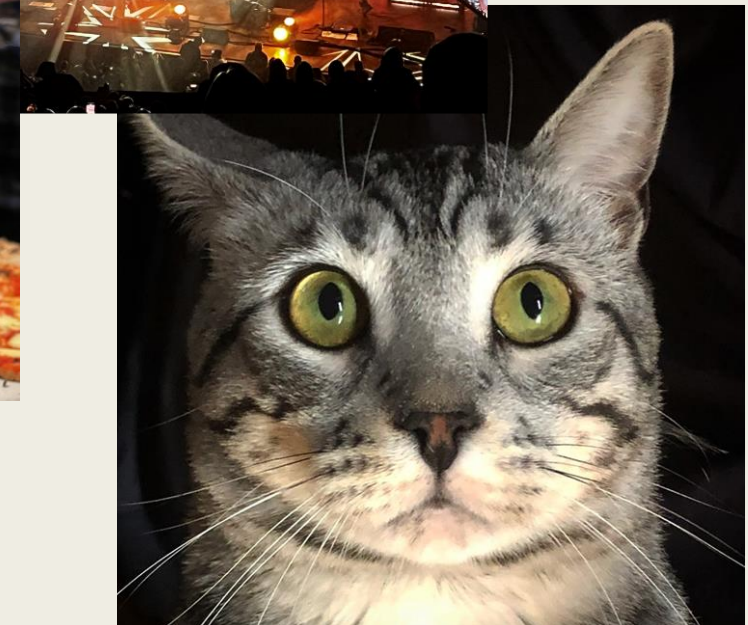
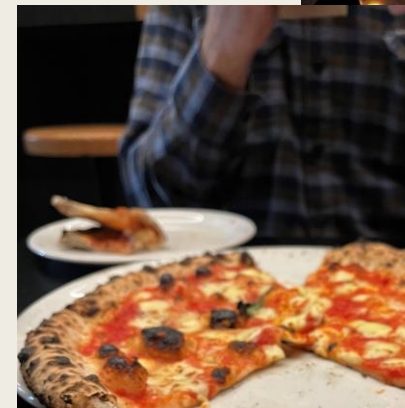
I like planting things in my garden

Love seeing live music and performing arts

Big fan of science fiction and fantasy themes in video games, books, tv and movies

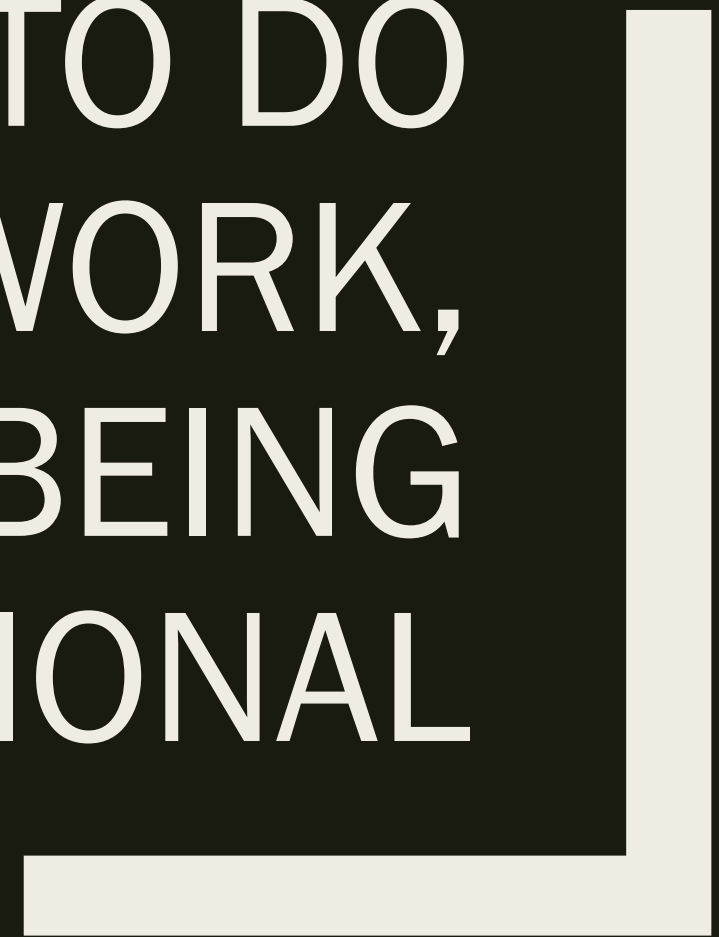
Like to explore new restaurants and foods

Volunteer with Girl Scouts



WHY AM I
STARTING WITH
THIS?

THE BEST WAY TO DO
THIS WORK,
IS BY BEING
MULTIDIMENSIONAL



Your name



Your reason for
attending today



Something that
replenishes, renews
or rebuilds your
empathy stamina

TAKE A
MOMENT
AND
INTRODUCE
YOURSELF
TO ONE OF
YOUR
NEIGHBORS



Here is the catch...

90 seconds per person

Listen to HEAR, not to RESPOND

Your name



Your reason for attending today



Something that replenishes, renews or rebuilds your empathy stamina

HOW DID THAT FEEL?

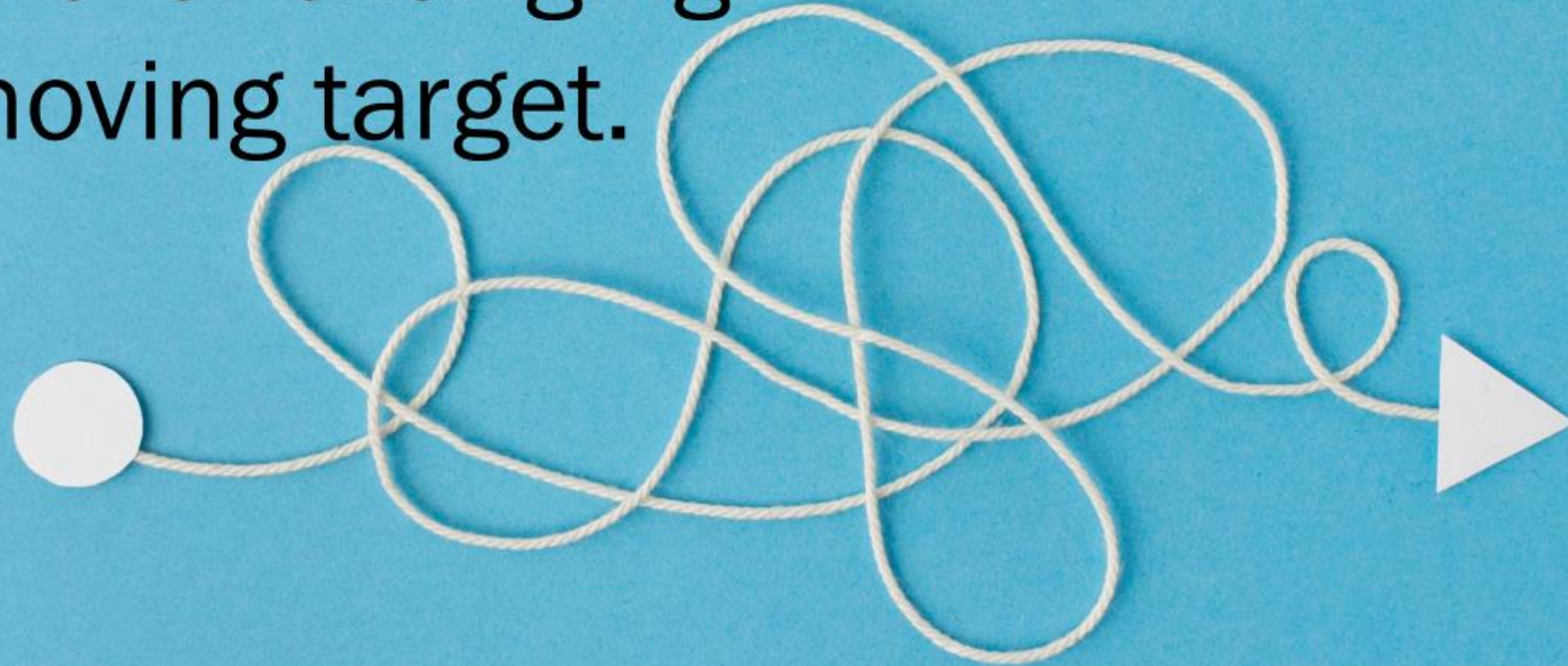


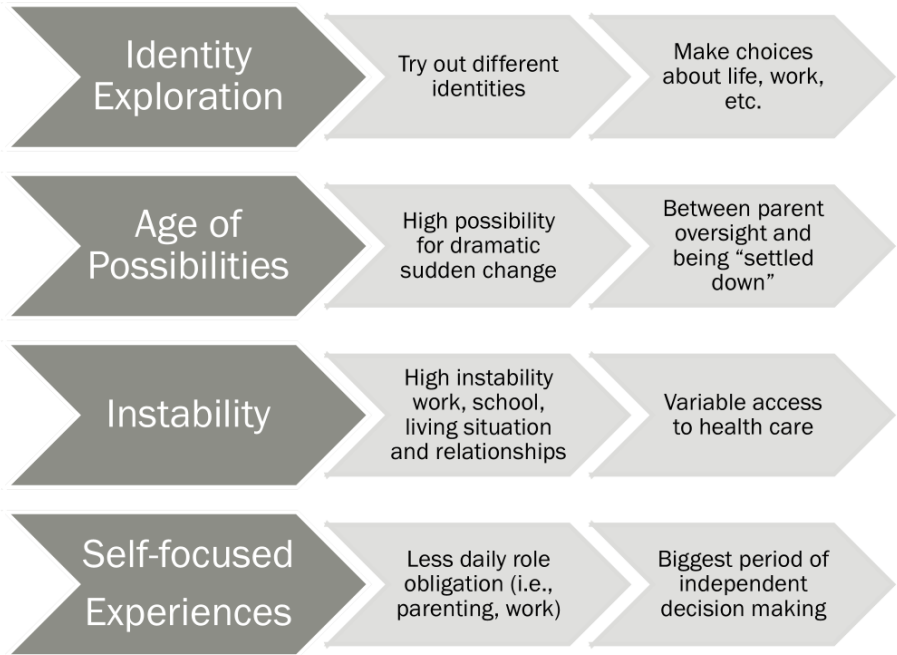
YOUNG ADULthood IS
A COMPLEX TIME






TAY is not a linear progression forward.
It is ever changing.
A moving target.





Arnett, 2004

IT IS
NORMAL TO
NOT HAVE IT
FIGURED
OUT



WE BEGIN WITH INTRODUCTIONS

First impressions create lasting impacts

Yes, names, pronouns, and language REALLY do matter!!

Do you have a favorite book, song, movie or videogame?
When did you first start experiencing symptoms?
What do you like about it?

What do you do for fun?
When was the last time you had suicidal ideation?
When was the last time you did that?

What are you currently interested in? Is there a project you want to learn more about?

Who is this?
(Excited to point to cat, dog, hamster, snake, etc...)



What are your goals for working with this service?

Validate

Praise for
BEING vs.
praise for
DOING

Be
present in
the
moment

Use
reflections

FOCUS ON
THE
EXPERIENCE
OF THE
YOUTH

AVOID TOXIC POSITIVITY



Small actions have big impacts



Be consistent, flexible, patient and respectful



Watch your unintended signals



Drive safely – use crosswalks



A word about appearance



TELEVIDEO & TEXT

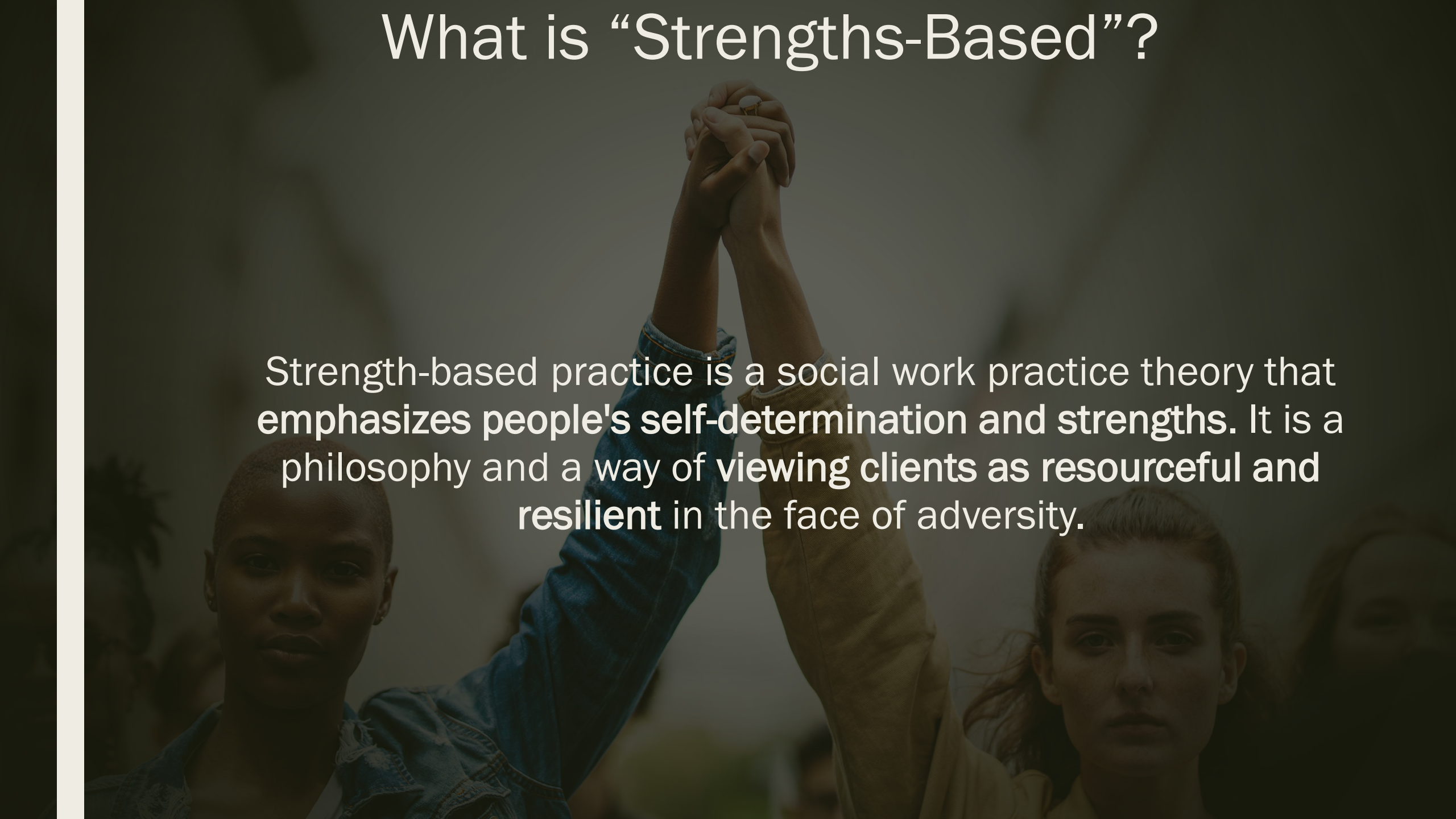
- Camera on
- Background appropriate; Preference for “real” background
- Never televideo while driving
- Text like an adult, but know certain “text rules” for youth
- Always offer to text to confirm/remind for appointments; Working with TAY often means more reminders, more transportation, and more coordination
- Specify crisis and resource options that offer texting



PRESENT
DELIBERATE
AUTHENTICITY

What is “Strengths-Based”?

Strength-based practice is a social work practice theory that **emphasizes people's self-determination and strengths**. It is a philosophy and a way of **viewing clients as resourceful and resilient** in the face of adversity.

A dark, low-key photograph of a group of people holding hands in a circle, symbolizing support and strength. The image is dimly lit, with the hands and forearms being the primary focus against a dark background.

Mental health
services
historically
have used a
“deficit-
based”
approach

Fictitious Documentation or Treatment
Meeting Dialogue Example:

“Jane has been **non-compliant** with medication. She often **splits** floor staff in an attempt to **seek attention**. She **uses threats** of self injury to **manipulate** the unit to give her a one to one so that she can always have a staff person present.”

Work to incorporate strength-based thinking into your daily practice

Strength-Based Thinking	Deficit-Based Thinking
What's working?	What's wrong?
Sustainable solutions	Short term solutions
Discover and adapt	Predict and control
Emphasizing possibilities	Overcoming weakness
Engage	Intervene
Empower	Control
Process focused	Behavior focused

7 Principals to a Strengths-Based Approach

Focus on

strengths, abilities & potential

Recognize

the strengths and expertise of the young adult

Involve

young adults in decision making

Lietz, C. A. (2007). Strengths-Based Group Practice: Three Case Studies. *Social Work with Groups*, 30(2), 73-87. doi: 10.1300/J009v30n02_07

Malekoff, A. (2014). *Group Work with Adolescents: Principles and Practice* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Publications.

Pollio, D. E., McDonald, S. M., & North, C. S. (1997). Combining a Strengths-Based Approach and Feminist Theory in Group Work with Persons 'On the Streets'. *Social Work with Groups*, 19(3-4), 5-20. doi: 10.1300/J009v19n03_02

7 Principals to a Strengths-Based Approach

Focus

on the whole person and recognize their *social context*

Language

should *always* be non-judgmental, inclusive and future oriented

Lietz, C. A. (2007). Strengths-Based Group Practice: Three Case Studies. *Social Work with Groups*, 30(2), 73-87. doi: 10.1300/J009v30n02_07

Malekoff, A. (2014). *Group Work with Adolescents: Principles and Practice* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Publications.

Pollio, D. E., McDonald, S. M., & North, C. S. (1997). Combining a Strengths-Based Approach and Feminist Theory in Group Work with Persons 'On the Streets'. *Social Work with Groups*, 19(3-4), 5-20. doi: 10.1300/J009v19n03_02

7 Principals to a Strengths-Based Approach

Encourage

experiences where young adults can be successful

Recognize
Complexity

Don't abandon or shame young adults because they are making their own choices.

Lietz, C. A. (2007). Strengths-Based Group Practice: Three Case Studies. *Social Work with Groups*, 30(2), 73-87. doi: 10.1300/J009v30n02_07

Malekoff, A. (2014). *Group Work with Adolescents: Principles and Practice* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Publications.

Pollio, D. E., McDonald, S. M., & North, C. S. (1997). Combining a Strengths-Based Approach and Feminist Theory in Group Work with Persons 'On the Streets'. *Social Work with Groups*, 19(3-4), 5-20. doi: 10.1300/J009v19n03_02

Set aside judgement about goals: See them as opportunities to learn

TAY: “I want to be a basketball star”

HSC: “Very few people become professional athletes, is there anything else you want to do?”

TAY: “I want to be basketball star– I have great basketball skills”

HSC: “Can we think of more realistic career goals?”

TAY:

TAY: “I want to be a basketball star”

HSC: “Tell me more, why are you interested in that?”

TAY: “I think I have good basketball skills”

HSC: “You definitely have a great jump shot. What other type of skills do you think you would need?”

TAY: “I think I would need to be good at working with others”

HSC: “Yeah, that sounds important. Any ideas on how we should build that skill?”

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT
SOMEONE IS TRULY
CAPABLE OF



Assume that I can...so maybe I will



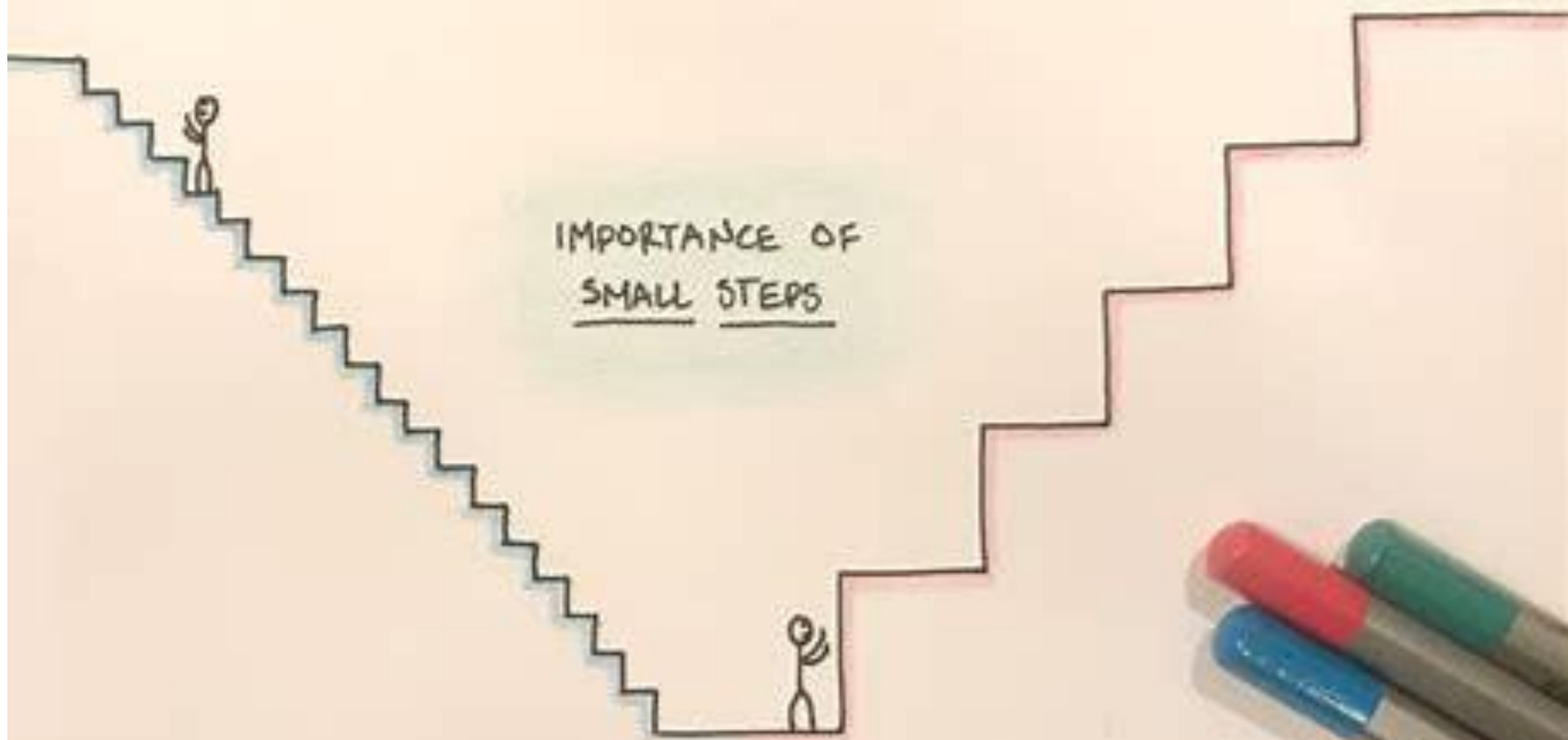


IMPRESSIONS?



ELEVATING AND EMPOWERING
YOUTH VOICE:
SKILLS, PREPARTION, AND LEANING
BACK

IMPORTANCE OF
SMALL STEPS





SKILLS TRAINING



Success occurs when
opportunity meets preparation.

Zig Ziglar

WE NEED TO NOT
ONLY CREATE
OPPORTUNITY,
BUT ALSO BUILD
CONFIDENCE
THROUGH
PREPARATION

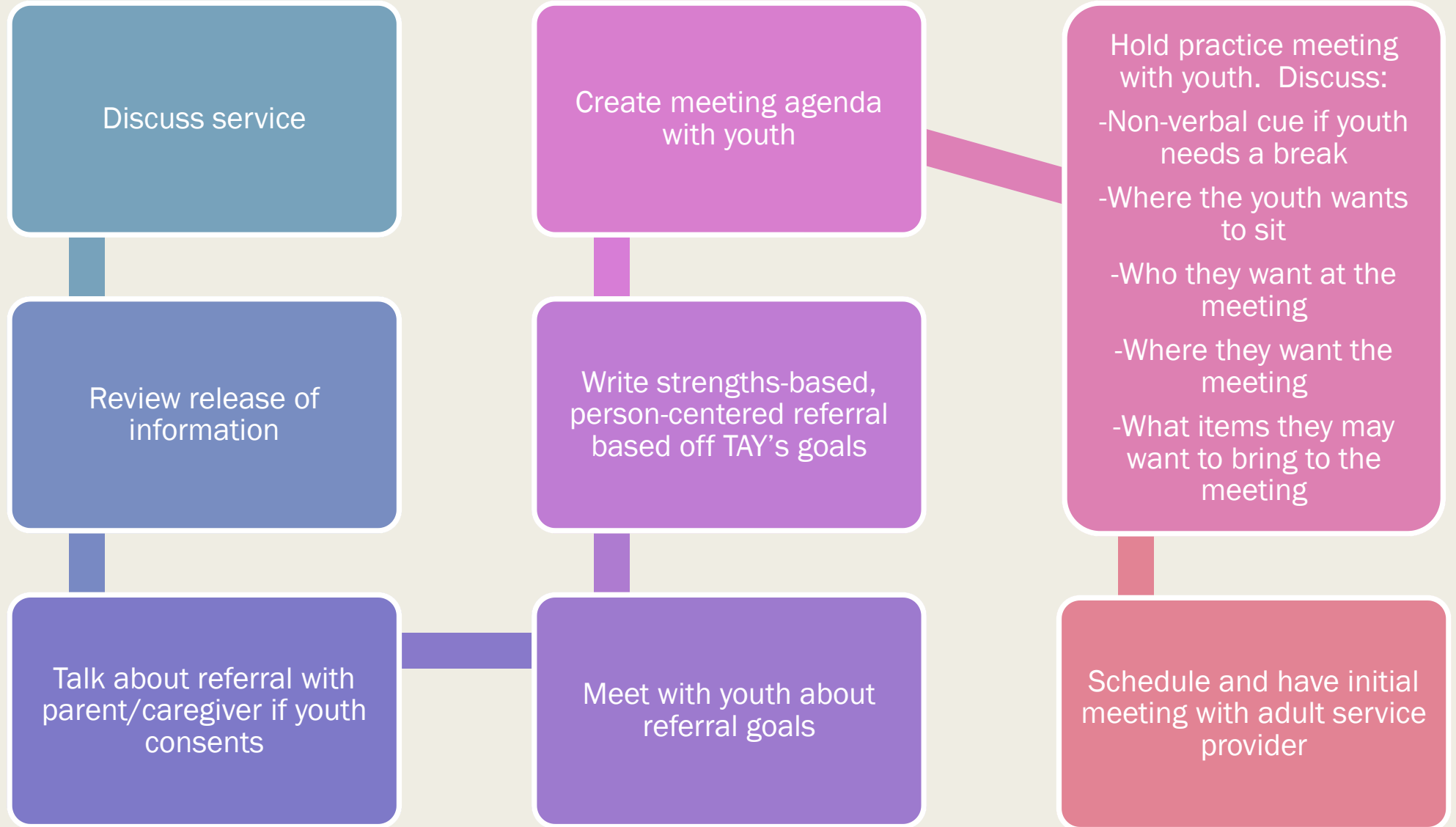
TAKE THE TIME TO DO THE WORK

Discuss service and
obtain release of
information

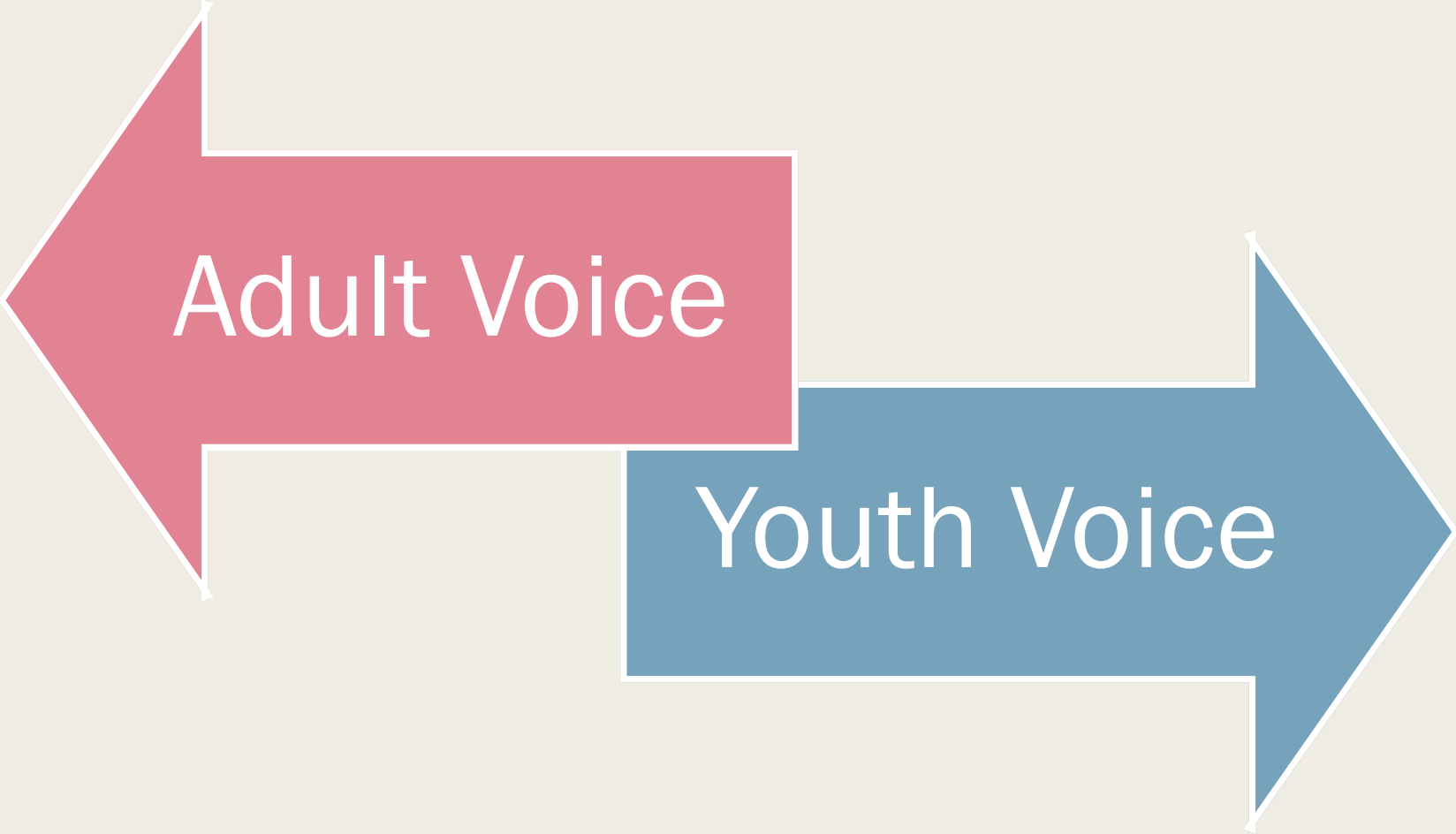
Write referral

Schedule and have
initial meeting with
adult service provider

TAKE THE TIME TO DO THE WORK



FADING BACK:
CALL BACK TO OUR INTRO





LinkedIn



QUESTIONS

Sarah.golding@mass.gov

Cell: 617.721.5847

Sarah Golding, MPA

Transitional Age Human Services

Coordinator II Supervisor

Department of Mental Health

She/Her/Hers

178 Albion St, Suite 410

Wakefield, MA 01880