

# Tips for Youth when Working with Adult Allies

A youth-adult partnership (YAP) is one in which young people work in full partnership with adults on issues facing youth and/or on programs and policies affecting youth. The YAP framework uplifts youth experiences and encourages young people to be at the table when programs or policies that impact youth are designed, implemented and evaluated.

## NINE TIPS FOR YOUTH WORKING WITH ADULTS

- 1. Communicate openly.** It is okay to say what you feel and think when talking to adults. Your opinions and doubts are helpful for adults to understand.
- 2. Be honest.** Adults should be there to support and guide you whenever needed. They should never push you past your limits. Recognize when challenges arise and address the issues as soon as possible with an adult you trust or feel safe expressing it to.
- 3. Establish clear and tangible goals.** No one knows better about youth needs than youth themselves! Discuss project goals that would make the difference you want to see in your community and the world.
- 4. Understand where adults are coming from.** Some adults might not have worked with youth or could be new to youth-adult partnerships. Try to have an open mind for their allyship.
- 5. Challenge the idea and not the person.** When adults discuss ideas, strategies, or thoughts that you disagree with, have conversations to understand each other better.
- 6. Ask questions.** There is no such thing as a ridiculous question. Do not be afraid to reach out whenever possible, even for clarification if needed.
- 7. Acknowledge your capacity.** Sometimes it can be difficult to say no, but do not ever be afraid to say it. It is easy to overfill your schedule with different tasks and responsibilities. To prevent burnout, recognize what is doable for the permitted time, and let someone know your capacity to avoid burnout and unnecessary stress.
- 8. Remember that there are always lessons to be learned.** When working with adults, it is important to share successes and failures. Successes and failures are not dependent on any one person; celebrate the wins and learn from the setbacks together.
- 9. Offer skills. Everyone has their strengths.** Youth have many different knowledge and skills that will be useful to the process. Examples include deep understanding of social media platforms and youth engagement, technology, graphic design, popular culture, and more.