

Project GPS Evaluation

We would very much like to thank you for collaborating with us at IARYD to evaluate these materials.

The purpose of the Project GPS evaluation is to see how different groups implement these tools within their programs and whether using the tools will relate to changes in young peoples' positive development and goal-directed skills. You are already doing great work with youth, and we would like to see if these tools are helpful to your program.

Participating in implementing and evaluating these tools could benefit your organization, staff, and youth you serve in a number of ways. Participation will provide

1. Measurable evidence of your organization's impact on the youth with whom you work.
2. The means to identify program areas of strength and areas that might need more attention.
3. The ability to contribute to the development of materials that will be used in youth-serving organizations across the country.
4. Empirically-based information on youth development in a user-friendly and accessible manner.
5. Activities and videos that offer engaging and practical ways to complement and extend your efforts.
6. A great opportunity to sit down with the youth and ask about their goals and achievements for the past year and the year to come.
7. The means to identify youth's areas of strength and areas in the young person's life that might need more attention
8. Youth with a well-thought out plan to reach their goals, the motivation to pursue those goals, and the life skills critical to successfully achieving those goals.

How does the Project GPS Evaluation Work?

First, consent should be obtained from all mentors and parents of mentees who are interested in taking part in the evaluation. This may already have been done. Please be sure all youth participating in this evaluation have their parent or guardian's consent to participate. If not, please contact Dr. Edmond Bowers at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University ((617) 627-4489; edmond.bowers@tufts.edu) to receive a consent form if you do not already have one.

Decisions on how, when, and how many activities and videos you might use in your program or mentoring relationship is completely up to you or your program. As noted above, one of the goals of Project GPS is to figure out how these tools work in the reality of diverse youth-serving programs, so we expect the possibility that some programs and/or mentors may use the tools sparingly, if at all. Throughout the second section of the manual (The GPS Tools) we provide a number of suggestions about how you might introduce and use the tools in your program or relationship, but you may use as many or as few of these suggestions and/or

activities or videos as you see fit. **You could decide to use all, some, or none of the activities and videos.** We understand that programs may already have activities they like to use to build goal-directed skills, have specific purposes, or have a full plate of events to plan around so we designed these materials to be flexible to the varying needs and structures of organizations.

As part of the evaluation of Project GPS, we would just want to find out whether you have been using the activities and how you have been using them. In the same way, we would want to find out if and how you use the videos of the GPS exemplars. We think the activities and videos are helpful, interesting, and engaging, and we would hope you would use them, but you may or may not. **Again, as part of the evaluation, we just want to find out if and how you use the activities and videos.**

The only requirement for groups participating in the evaluation of Project GPS is to use the rubrics in the context of our evaluation (as the rubrics are the fundamental tool that we are interested in). Use of the rubrics would require introducing and explaining the rubrics to young people so that the mentor and young person could then complete online versions of the rubrics (and some other questions) at three evaluation data collection time points. Chapter 8 of this manual includes guidance and ideas for how to introduce and explain the rubrics to the young people with whom you work.

How do I meet the requirements to participate in the evaluation of Project GPS?

By the middle of February, 2011, we will ask mentors to go online and complete surveys about the young people with whom they work at three (3) times over the course of the evaluation. These surveys will include electronic versions of the GPS and PYD rubrics. We will also ask mentees to complete online surveys that include youth-versions of the rubrics at about the same times. These time points have been set according to your program's structure with the idea of fitting them on a six- or nine-month timeline. Usually, programs that end when the academic year ends (in May or June) will complete the evaluation on a six-month plan while programs that run all year long will complete the evaluation following a nine-month schedule. Again, the decision on how long you and your program will participate in the evaluation has more than likely already been decided. If you are unsure of the plan for your program or organization, please contact Dr. Edmond Bowers at Tufts or an administrator in your program.

In, short, we would ask mentors and youth to complete online versions of the GPS and PYD rubrics:

1. after introducing the rubrics but before using the activities and videos;
2. at the end of the evaluation; and
3. about midway between these two times.

The surveys mentors complete at these three time points will include online versions of the rubrics, as well as questions about their relationship with their mentees, the programs they work in, and how they used the tools. We will also ask the young people to answer a few other questions about themselves after they complete the online rubrics. It should take the youth about 40 minutes to complete the survey about themselves and the mentors about 20 minutes to

complete the survey about each youth. The links for these surveys will be emailed to participants after we have received their consent forms and assigned them an identification number to preserve confidentiality. Mentors and youth need both mentor and youth identification numbers available when completing the surveys online.

We ask that mentors and youth to complete the rubrics online so that we can quickly and easily collect the data from across the country. (Please contact Dr. Bowers at Tufts if you cannot access the internet and need hard copies of the surveys to complete and mail to IAYRD.) We will then analyze the data, and see whether there are relationships among how the tools were used and young people's changes in GPS skills and PYD. We will also provide site reports to organizations so that they can gauge where the youth in their programs stand in terms of GPS skills, PYD, and several other variables, and whether they change over time in relation to the program and the use of the tools. These site reports will be available to programs with at least five youth participating to preserve confidentiality.