

Strategies for Practitioners Serving Youth and Young Adults Remotely

#LiveAtUrban

Housekeeping

- Event is being recorded and the recording will be posted online afterward.
- Hide captions or adjust settings with the Live Transcript button.
- All participants are muted.
- Type your **questions** or **comments** into the chat box at any time.



A woman with curly hair and glasses is sitting at a desk, working on a laptop. She is wearing a white sweater and has a white earbud in her ear. The background shows a home office with a shelf containing a clock, a plant, and other items. The lighting is warm and soft.

Strategies for Practitioners Serving Youth and Young Adults Remotely

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New resource guide published today, “Serving Youth Remotely: Strategies for Practitioners”

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Poll Question

Which of the following best describes your industry?

- Please submit your response in the poll

Context

- COVID-19 has forced many organizations to adapt to remote service delivery
- The pandemic has disproportionately impacted youth of color and youth from families with low incomes
- We spoke with staff members at 21 youth-serving organizations about lessons learned from delivering services to youth and young adults (ages 16-24) remotely

Potential Inequities in Remote Service Delivery

- BIPOC youth and youth from families with low incomes are more likely to face barriers to success in remote learning
- These barriers include a lack of technology, lower digital skills, challenging home learning environments, and material hardship
- Flawed societal and economic systems – such as structural racism and wealth inequality – reproduce inequitable outcomes

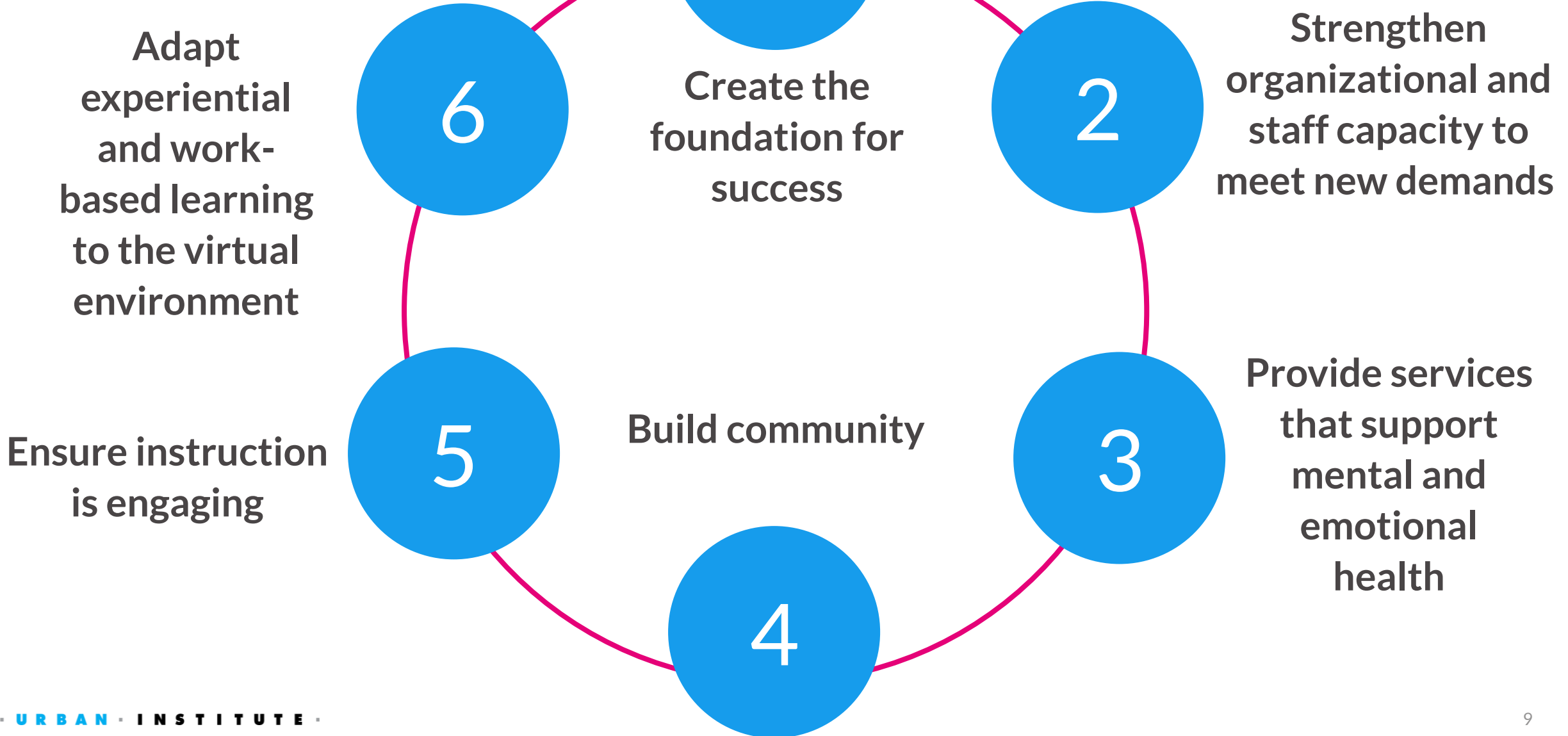
Opportunities for Advancing Equitable Outcomes

- Expanded access and greater flexibility for youth who have work commitments, are resource constrained, are parents, or face time/scheduling constraints
- Ability to more readily reach youth and access partners and experts across geographic regions
- The experiences of practitioners in this unique moment can inform program design and delivery moving forward

“ We at first thought [youth] were tech savvy because they’re always on their phones, but it’s not the same as scrolling through social media...There will be a shift in the job market because of COVID, and [youth] will need to be prepared to get employed remotely.

”

Six Key Principles for **1** Serving Youth Remotely





Create the foundation for success

“You can focus all you want on developing new flashy online programming, but if you haven’t made sure every young person has the ability to connect and be present and has other needs taken care of, then those things have to come first.”

Promising Practices: *Create the foundation for success*

- Provide technology, Wi-Fi access, and basic needs assistance by leveraging internal and public/private funding
- Designate safe spaces for students
- Help young people understand how to use new technologies



Strengthen organizational and staff capacity to meet new demands

“In a virtual setting, lines can be very blurred – [you feel] like you’re constantly online or on calls and never taking a break. We try ensuring staff are mentally and emotionally okay [and are] pouring into themselves what they’re pouring into young people.”

Promising Practices:

Strengthen organizational and staff capacity to meet new demands

- Pivot staff responsibilities and redistribute work to increase capacity
- Create supports for staff wellbeing
- Exchange ideas and strategies through internal and external networks
- Digitize and virtualize administrative processes as much as possible

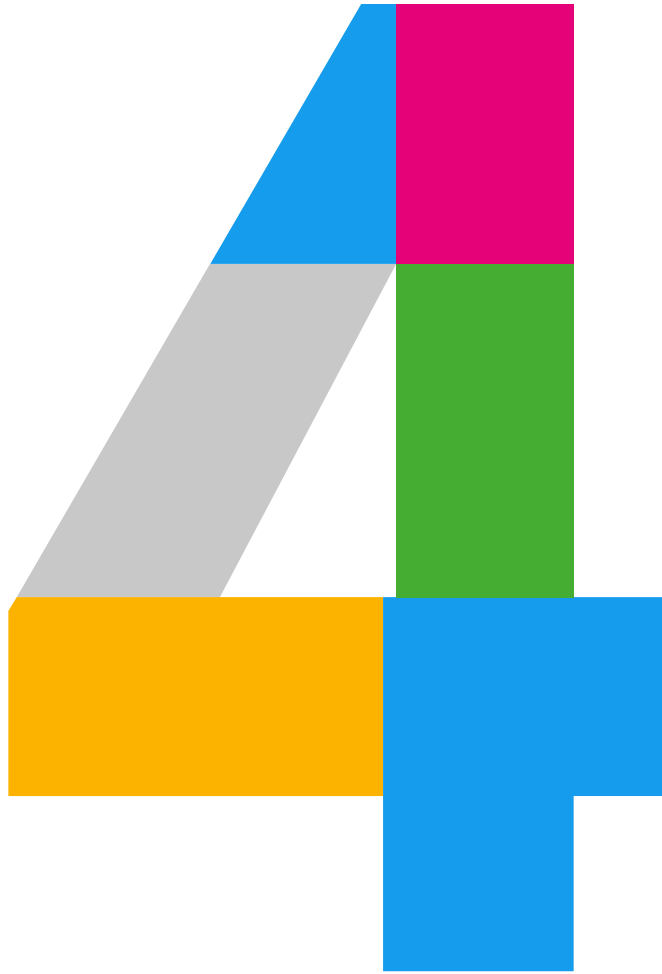


Provide services that support mental and emotional health

“Seeking mental health support seemed very complicated or was never been normalized before... Mental health support has become a lot more accessible for young people.”

Promising Practices: *Provide services that support mental and emotional health*

- Partner with or hire mental health professionals
- Provide options for youth to join virtual group and one-on-one sessions
- Offer e-mentorship programs to ensure youth are regularly able to connect with a consistent, trusted adult
- Identify appropriate technology that protects privacy



Build community

“Many youth would prefer to be in-person. They really thrive on getting another person’s energy...and they have definitely said they [aren’t as] comfortable sharing things in the large classroom Zoom, for instance.”

Promising Practices: *Build community*

- Develop thoughtful onboarding for youth new to a program
- Engage in intentional and active communication through individual phone conversations and check-ins with participants
- Organize team-building activities that allow for small group work
- Find ways to make the virtual space fun



Ensure instruction is engaging

“If you’re in person...you can engage people in a variety of ways. A lot of our young people really know themselves well and say, ‘I’m a visual learner!’ or ‘I learn by doing!’ But when it’s through the computer or phone, you might be using different techniques [that] require your engagement in this one way.”

Promising Practices: *Ensure instruction is engaging*

- Shorten, stagger, and reduce class/cohort size
- Online curricula should be interactive and intentionally designed
- Consider the instruction format that best fits the population served
- Embed flexibility and balance into programming
- Involve youth in decision-making processes so that tools, services, and supports reflect their needs and interests



Adapt experiential and work-based learning to the virtual environment

“Post-secondary readiness and workforce development is all about transitioning to going to work – how do you virtualize that? We had to reimagine virtual spaces that at least gave...the opportunity to build... workforce skills virtually.”

Promising Practices: *Adapt experiential and work-based learning to the virtual environment*

- Pay youth for participating in remote career readiness training
- Connect youth with hands-on/work experiences aligned with in-demand occupations that can be done remotely
- Offer support for employers in making the transition to virtual work
- Create additional opportunities for career exposure for youth

Implications

Organizations should consider:

- Equity-centered services that prioritize basic and developmental needs of youth
- Programming shaped around (and by) young people's needs and interests
- Different content delivery approaches to reap benefits of virtual and in-person services

Investments are needed to support:

- Digital skills training and technology for youth-serving organizations and schools
- Workforce programs outside the public education system
- Staff development and training in online modalities and service delivery
- Accessible and affordable internet and computer access
- Improved user experiences when accessing public services through digital tools

PANELISTS



Kevin Hickey – Jewish Vocational Service



Sandee Kastrul – i.c.stars



Jessica Mott – Baltimore’s Promise

Audience Q&A

Please submit questions in the chat

Thank You!

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