

Participatory Methods and Narrative Tools: Fostering Youth-Led Social & Emotional Learning at One Orange County Boys & Girls Club

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Abstract

This empirical study describes a youth-led participatory action research project that engaged a majority Black student population facing adverse childhood experiences, including economic inequities, within their Florida communities. In 2019, one Orange County Boys & Girls Club (B&GC) surveyed its 1,400 members to assess their overall club experience. The needs assessment indicated that club members, ages 9–12 years old, reported more challenges than other age groups relating to emotional safety, physical safety, impulse control, teamwork, and conflict resolution. The B&GC director requested university partners to collaborate with older club leaders, ages 15–19 years old, to develop a means of addressing such concerns. Project results were two-fold: (a) the development of an innovative social and emotional curriculum consisting of skill-building and digital-storytelling for younger youth members, and (b) the elevation of voices and experiences of multiply-marginalized youth to spark club transformation through intergenerational mentoring.

Keywords: minoritized youth, youth mentoring, youth participatory action research, social emotional learning, adverse childhood experiences

Introduction

In the state of Florida, over 25% of youth under the age of 18 face adverse childhood experiences (ACEs; Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative [CAHMI], 2018). The rates of ACEs are higher for Black youth, at just over 32% (CAHMI, 2018). Exposure to ACEs can negatively impact the social, emotional, and cognitive development of youth; this may lead to challenges in educational and other settings (Souers & Hall, 2016). Additionally, teachers, who often mislabel the behavior of ACEs-impacted youth as acts of oppositional defiance, contribute to young people's inequitable treatment (Terrasi & de Galarce, 2017). Consequently, school personnel and other youth-serving practitioners should be equipped with the necessary tools to address the social and emotional (SE) needs of vulnerable youth. Such tools should be a source of culturally-relevant SE support to help youth cope with the effects of adverse experiences on their learning and development (Plumb et al., 2016). There is considerable research on identifying and developing social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies for youth (Greenberg et al., 2003;

Payton et al., 2000; Zins et al., 2007). While it is important to address the SE needs of youth exposed to adverse experiences, it is also important to provide them with safe spaces to be empowered and spaces in which their perspectives are integrated and valued (Bulanda & Johnson, 2016).

An avenue of SE development that is not fully explored in the professional literature involves young people sharing life lessons learned from navigating adolescence as a lever for younger children to better develop their SE competencies. Consequently, this study uses youth-led participatory action research (YPAR) to learn from, as well as unearth and empower, adolescent leaders of color to impact the SE strengths and needs of younger multiply-marginalized¹ youth of color within a local Boys & Girls Club (B&GC). The study is situated at a B&GC located in a majority minoritized urban area of concentrated poverty referred to as “The Vicinity.” The median household income is approximately \$15,000 and the child poverty rate is 73%. Approximately 41% of children who live in The Vicinity have chronic health problems. The crime index of The Vicinity is more than twice as high as the city’s crime index (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Our inquiry is guided by the central research question: How does the process of YPAR with older students in a local B&GC afterschool program shape intergenerational mentoring and learning with younger students? We begin by framing the conceptions of SEL and mentoring as areas for intergenerational youth development.

Social and Emotional Learning with Youth

Historically ignored due to the myopic focus on academic instruction and achievement (Elbertson et al., 2010), SEL continues to (re)emerge as an important lever for youth development. The continuous emphasis on SEL within the school context is likely due to the understanding that the development of SEL skills contributes to the holistic wellbeing of youth, including a positive influence on academics (Elbertson et al., 2010). Defined more than two decades ago by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL is the “process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (“What is SEL?”, n.d.). The five core competencies of CASEL’s SEL framework include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Self-awareness describes one’s familiarity with their thoughts and emotions and with their capabilities. Self-management is how one can manage their thoughts, feelings, and actions within various situations. The social awareness competency describes one’s ability to understand the diverse cultural differences within society and engage in perspective-taking with empathy towards others. Relationship skills reflect the establishment and maintenance of healthy relationships with others. Responsible decision-making consists of making healthy personal choices while considering associated risks and the impact on self or others (“Core SEL Competencies”, n.d.).

SEL competencies and domains are often promoted in youth through systematic programs integrated into educational settings. Therefore, educators must understand how to best execute such programs to ensure successful promotion of SEL skills for youth (Payton et al., 2000). Key components of successful youth SEL programs in educational settings are the design, coordination, educator preparation and support, and evaluation (Elbertson et al., 2010; Payton et al., 2000). Program design encompasses a clarity in rationale for the program, quality SEL lesson plans, and the promotion of an effective teaching strategy. Elbertson and colleagues (2010) recommend that an internal assessment should include securing stakeholder commitment and a

¹ The term “multiply-marginalized” has been used in critical studies when discussing students of color who are at the intersections of various oppressions. This could be the intersection of race, socioeconomic status, dis/ability, and other identity markers (see Annamma & Morrison, 2018).

contingency plan before the implementation phase. Program coordination includes establishing family-community partnerships as well as the facilitation of the SEL instruction at large. Educator preparation and support refer to the necessary technical training offered to staff. Lastly, an evaluation with fidelity ensures that participants' SEL development is being properly assessed; for instance, understanding what the program is designed to impact, be it participants' attitudes toward school or actual improvement in academic performance (Zins et al., 2007). The evaluation can also assess if costs are being controlled (Elbertson et al., 2010; Payton et al., 2000).

In general, research underscores how SEL is integral for positive youth development, and has identified specific skills that can be reliably assessed by educators and caregivers. However, what is less clear are youth perspectives on SEL and the competencies therein, as their voices are often lacking, particularly regarding youth-led research initiatives. This gap can be addressed through YPAR where youth are directly involved in selecting, planning, directing, implementing, and analyzing (Ozer, 2016). YPAR can address public health and safety concerns related to youth such as bullying, harassment, and emotional well-being (Connolly et al., 2015; Meade et al., 2008). Utilizing YPAR also promotes students' autonomy and enhances student-adult relationships in secondary schools in urban communities (Ozer & Wright, 2012). The integration of YPAR in out-of-school settings, such as afterschool programs serving marginalized youth, also promotes youth autonomy (Bulanda et al., 2013). For instance, Bulanda and colleagues (2013) describe an initiative in which youth participants in an afterschool leadership program engaged in a participatory action program evaluation process. The YPAR approach provided youth a space to feel empowered to share feedback regarding the program to be later incorporated as a service model for enhancing overall engagement of youth in the afterschool program (Bulanda et al., 2013). This youth-led process can be applied to SEL programming development. Applying a youth-led approach presents a viable avenue for engaging in intergenerational mentoring processes where youth are consulted and lead the selection, design, planning phases, and delivery of the SEL programming for other youth.

Youth Mentoring

Peer mentoring programs refer to a type of support system that seeks to match an individual with someone in a similar age bracket who is viewed by the individual as a peer (Karcher et al., 2006). In a traditional youth mentorship model, there is a matching of an individual, usually older, with a younger youth to establish a role-model type relationship (Anastasia et al., 2012). Mentors often hold a similar overall objective to provide short- and/or long-term support for youth that acts as a "corrective" experience that can help transform one's behaviors or decisions (Matz, 2014, p. 85). These experiences can be for various purposes, such as avoiding high-risk behaviors (Karcher et al., 2006), eschewing juvenile delinquency (DuBois et al., 2011), or providing academic supports. In youth mentorship, facilitated mentoring has an extensive history (Murray, 2001); thus, there is a wealth of research that seeks to identify the best practices for implementing peer and youth mentoring programs (see Anastasia et al., 2012; DuBois et al., 2002; Karcher et al., 2006; Matz, 2014).

Three theories that provide context regarding the efficacy of youth mentoring include attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), social support theory (Drennon-Gala, 1995), and sociomotivational theory (Britner et al., 2006). In brief, attachment theory posits that establishing close quality interactions for youth helps form more positive relationships as youth grow up. Similarly, social support theory highlights the importance of positive social relationships that ultimately provide resources for individuals involved. Lastly, based on the advice provided by a role model, sociomotivational theory suggests that youth are reliant on mentors to provide guidance, but also autonomy. Here the mentor provides an opportunity for youth to engage with their community through informed decision-making. If the bond is strong and the mentor provides consistent

support, it is theorized the youth will experience positive outcomes and become more trusting of other community resources (Matz, 2014). Each theory illuminates the positive value placed on genuine, caring relationships during youth mentoring.

Akin to successful traditional youth mentoring programs, peer-to-peer mentoring programs require four primary characteristics (Anastasia et al., 2012; Matz, 2014): formal structure, clear expectations, ongoing support, and organizational monitoring. A formal structure refers to established policies and procedures that help foster efficiency and subsequently effectiveness, by streamlining stakeholders' decision-making. Traditionally, clear expectations refer to staff knowing what they are supposed to do in practice as well as ensuring that there are established protocols, like recruitment and retention (Anastasia et al., 2012). Ongoing support is the organization's technical assistance and training dedicated to the individual serving as the mentor. Best practices require mentors to be supported with routine training to ensure their behavior reflects organizational goals and responsibilities. Organizational monitoring refers to internal procedures like annual staff evaluations and external assessments that track barriers to the mentoring program's success (Anastasia et al., 2012).

Similar to the traditional classroom experience (see Anyon, 2005; Noguera, 2008), students' voices and perspectives often have little to no role in shaping mentoring programs. Young people, especially those facing multiple marginalization, often have limited exposure to opportunities to formulate and express their opinions and interests (McAlister, 2018). Acknowledging the value of youth voice, the current study adds to the literature by describing a youth-led intergenerational mentoring program emphasizing SEL in an out-of-school program. Older youth at a local B&GC were provided with their local B&GC survey results highlighting the younger club members' needs and consequently developed a mentoring program to address identified concerns.

Current Study

The Orange County (OC) B&GC conducts a quarterly and yearly assessment of the clubhouse that is relevant to the Great Futures 2025 national strategic action plan for B&GCs. The assessments are compiled using surveys to ascertain the service quality of each clubhouse affiliated with Great Futures (Great Futures, 2017). The survey assesses youth members' overall club experience, sense of belonging, overall safety, emotional safety, physical safety, fun, adult connections to youth, staff expectations, impulse control, recognition, teamwork, leadership, integrity, goal pursuit, concern for others and community, and conflict resolution skills. Based upon youth responses, a clubhouse can be rated as doing "great," "fine," or "in need of improvement." At the OC B&GC, 1,400 youth were given the 2019–20 survey, and 80% completed the survey. Organizational data provided by the OC B&GC administration revealed that the club experience could be improved for members, ages 9–12 years old, in the areas of emotional safety, physical safety, impulse control, teamwork, and conflict resolution. These five areas aligned with SEL competencies and guided the development of the intergenerational mentoring program.

Method

We used a YPAR approach (Ozer, 2016) consisting of B&GC older youth collaborating with us (university-affiliated adults) over a five-month period as a means of creating a youth-adult partnership (Y-AP). Y-AP involves youth and adults working together in a sustained relationship to promote social justice, address issues that impact youths' lives (Irizarry, 2009), and question power differentials. Y-APs have a long history of benefits associated with positive youth development and civic engagement, both shown to foster school and community engagement (Mitra, 2009).

Participants

The university partners met weekly with youth leaders to design an innovative SE curriculum consisting of role-playing and digital-storytelling for elementary-aged students. The older youth ($N = 15$) were Black ($n = 13$) and Latinx ($n = 2$) and resided in economically under-resourced communities (see Table 1). Participants' (females = 6, males = 9) mean age was sixteen years old ($SD = 1.397$). Apart from one participant who was a college freshman, the youth leaders were nearly evenly distributed between the 9th, 10th, and 12th grades.

Table 1. Youth Leader Participants

Pseudonyms	Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Age
Larry	College Freshman	Black	Male	19
Kelcy	12	Black	Male	18
Stephen	10	Black	Male	16
Hunter	9	Black	Male	15
Michelle	10	Black	Female	16
Stephanie	10	Black	Female	15
Joy	10	Black	Female	15
Octavia	9	Black	Female	15
Rachelle	12	Black	Male	18
Tracy	10	Latina	Female	16
Sebastian	9	Latino	Male	15
Tye	12	Black	Male	18
Justin	10	Black	Male	17
Kim	12	Black	Female	17
Malachi	9	Black	Male	15

YPAR Process

Introduction & Presenting Survey Data

The B&GC director requested university partners to collaborate with older club members, ages 15–19 years old, to develop a means of addressing SEL challenges for club members, ages 9–12 years old, regarding emotional safety, physical safety, impulse control, teamwork, and conflict resolution. The director indicated how youth who attended the B&GC historically experienced several ACEs including violence and crime, substance abuse, and poverty. Such exposure to adversity often contributed to problems with SEL at the club.

At the introductory meeting, university partners presented the survey results from the 2019 OC B&GC assessment of its 1,400 members to 15 older youth members to gain their perspectives on the five SEL areas for improvement for the younger youth. This initial meeting introduced the university partners and provided an opportunity to collect feedback concerning older youths' perceptions of the club's survey data. Some of the older youth also shared their childhood experiences relative to the SEL areas. After the introductory meeting, the older youth were recruited and asked whether they wanted to participate in a youth-led initiative that would enable

them to work collaboratively with university partners to collectively improve the younger youth's SEL skills.

Initial Planning Meeting

During the initial planning meeting, a group brainstorming activity was initiated to capture the older youth's ideas about how younger youth at the clubhouse could improve within the five SEL areas. The 15 older youth decided that peer mentoring was the way forward in providing opportunities for younger youth at the B&GC to develop in the focus areas, and that they, the older youth, as long-time members, could serve as the mentors. The older youth were encouraged to reflect on their childhood experiences regarding "advice they would give to their younger selves" with the different SEL areas. At the conclusion of the meeting, the older youth decided upon the project name "Young Achiever" (YA), and the university partners began to refer to the older youth as YA leaders. Additionally, the older youth were asked what product they wanted to develop for the mentoring program. They agreed upon a SE curriculum consisting of skill-building and digital storytelling. Digital storytelling provides a multimedia means of enhancing the narrative process. Creating digital stories helps young people develop autonomy and a sense of control and ownership over their finished product (i.e., movie) as they take on the role of author, narrator, director, and editor. The technical process is user-friendly; both youth and adults often catch on quickly (Davis & Weinshenker, 2012).

Weekly Planning Meetings and Agenda

Each 90-minute weekly meeting focused on one of the five identified SEL topic areas (see Appendix for an outline of the youth-centered activities). Each session began with an overview of the content areas in which university partners provided information on the topic, and then guided dialogue regarding how the curriculum topic could be developed for the mentoring program. This process involved an amalgamation of YA leaders and university-partner ideas. Once YA leaders finalized their topic focus, the remainder of the session was dedicated to developing and videoing their skill-building activities. Each session concluded with university partners conducting semi-structured focus group interview panels to record YA leaders discussing the SEL topic of the day and how the skill-building activities related to what we framed as "what advice would you give to your younger-self." Attendance fluctuated during sessions; some YA leaders would arrive on time while others needed to leave early due to school-sponsored activities. However, once we incentivized attendance by providing dinners, their participation was full and consistent.

Data Collection and Analysis

Using Creswell's (2013) steps for interviewing, which include (a) determining the open-ended questions that will be answered, (b) identifying interviewees who can best answer these questions based on purposeful sampling procedures, and (c) determining which style of interview (e.g., focus group, one-on-one) is practical and will net the most useful information, focus groups with the YA leaders were implemented. Each week, after YA leaders participated in activities to demonstrate the weekly SEL competency, YA leaders were formally interviewed using focus group panels. Specifically, YA leaders sat facing the university partners and answered questions. Over the six-week period, five panels were conducted for approximately 15 minutes each. For instance, after engaging in the conflict resolution activities with YA leaders, students shared responses to the panel questions, such as:

- What is conflict?
- What is conflict resolution?
- Think back to the skit of the two students bumping into each other in the hallway, what was the issue, why was there a conflict?

The raw video files of students' role-playing skits and the interview panels were loaded on to a secure computer with secure access and then transferred to a password-protected cloud storage system. Then we analyzed the YPAR process data consisting of weekly recorded SEL activities and role-playing videos. For instance, the analysis addressed what participation look likes, and how the participants handle power and/or powerlessness. The outcome data analysis included video-recorded focus group panel interviews and students' reflections on advice to their younger selves. For example, the panel videos explicated what youth learned about the SEL skills, and the advice videos to a younger self explicated what the youth would do differently based on their strengthened SEL competencies.

Inductive, open coding (Saldaña, 2015) of the videos was the first step in the analysis of the YPAR process. The first four authors (university researchers) collectively identified open codes that emerged from the data across the five development SEL areas and determined the frequency of the code. We then debriefed to discuss commonalities and differences among codes. After reaching a consensus on ascribed codes, we collectively merged initial codes into final codes to answer the research question. This debriefing and merging of the codes helped to enhance interrater reliability and the rigor of the data analysis (Creswell, 2013; Saldaña, 2015).

For YPAR outcome results, deductive codes based on competencies from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning framework were used (Dusenbury et al., 2011). The first four authors collaboratively created a preliminary codebook consisting of both open codes and CASEL-inspired parent codes (and child codes, when applicable), descriptions of codes, direct examples from the data (e.g., videos, observations) that referenced the code, and a section for reflection. After multiple views of the videos and several iterative readings of the transcripts of the advice to younger self videos, we implemented axial coding to identify relationships and patterns within and between each category to determine thematic relationships.

Findings

This section presents findings regarding the ways in which participants were impacted through the YPAR project within the B&GC. A salient tenet of the YPAR design is ensuring that participating youth are empowered throughout the entire research process, from choosing topics important to them to being involved with data collection, the analysis², and eventual solution implementation. Two YPAR process-related themes emerged: valuing localized knowledge and elevating youth voice through group decision-making. Localized knowledge is defined as the use of contextual information (e.g., terminology, insider insight) that the YA leaders leveraged during the weekly sessions. Regarding YPAR outcomes, YA leaders strengthened their own SEL competencies and began to embody intergenerational mentorship.

YPAR Process: Valuing Localized Knowledge

The YA leaders used background knowledge to navigate everyday social contexts to design role-plays/skits for younger children at the B&GC. YA leaders' interactions and observations shaped scenarios and activities that were age appropriate and culturally relevant for the B&GC. For instance, during the week of examining "conflict resolution," YA participants determined that while "conflict" between older students often manifests during transitions within hallways at school, for younger students within their local B&GC, conflict often erupted while playing video

² While the YA leaders were active in choosing topics that were important to them as well as being involved with data collection, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the closure of the local B&GC afterschool program, their participation in the final analysis was limited.

games. Unbeknownst to the university partners, conflict among young boys was prevalent while playing video games at the B&GC.

YA leaders offered additional insights during the impulse control session. University partners began with an activity using a water bottle filled to half its capacity that became a metaphor for how people can perceive situations. That is, people's views can be either half-empty or half-full. The group discussed how perception can determine emotions and subsequent behavior. When one of the university adults shared an experience about two coworkers not accepting her invitation to lunch, but instead ate together without her, YA leaders were asked how they would have handled the situation using the "half-empty" concept. "They fake," one student said. He continued, "I would go up to them and ask what happened." When the university adult posed to the YA leader what he would do if he perceived the situation as "half-full," that is, "if they [the coworkers] were meeting because they had to work together on something?" There was little change. "They could have texted me or something," he said, shaking his head. Other YA leaders agreed. Hunter replied, "If they don't want to eat with me, I would take my food and go...I would be happy [alone]." Kim agreed. "I would ignore them," she said. YA leaders' responses questioned the university partner's dichotomy of either/or concerning impulse control and offered a more nuanced explication that included assertiveness, self-love, and nonchalance.

The session with YA leaders on emotional safety also revealed the importance of relevant localized funds of knowledge (González et al., 2006), as they were asked to imagine if they were leaders of a sports team for younger B&GC students, what ideals would be established. With little guidance from the university partners, YA participants agreed that the B&GC youth should "be supportive, be cooperative, and always try to have courage." Collectively these represented YA leaders' localized views, and they presented these ideals to 9–12-year-old youth in the form of motivational posters that were displayed on clubhouse doors for students to see. One motivational poster stated, "Be kind, polite and courteous to others. #Think before you speak. #Talk to me nice. #Always smile." The motivation presented in the posters encourages a sense of emotional safety, collaboration, and empowerment, which are common protective factors for the well-being of individuals with ACEs (Kimberg & Wheeler, 2019). Therefore, in addition to reflecting localized knowledge, the youth-led activities also aligned with addressing the SE needs of younger youth in the B&GC.

YPAR Process: Elevating Youth Voice Through Group Decision-Making

YA leaders had autonomy concerning YPAR processes and were encouraged to suggest ideas and solutions. During the week of exploring teamwork, YA participants were involved in the human knot activity—an activity where individuals face inward and after grabbing each other's hands, are entangled with the collective goal of unthreading their bodies without letting go of each other's hands. After one of the university adults led the instructions, eight YA leaders participated without much success. Afterward, Tye, a YA leader, suggested to the group, "Let's do four people and let's see how they do it first." He offered that starting with a smaller number may give some insight about how to successfully detangle the human knot. While one of the university adults encouraged the use of five students, Tye replied, "Five is an odd number, let's start with four [leaders] and then stretch it out." His peers stood to participate, to support in solidarity. Tye then facilitated their precise bodily movements to detangle the knot.

YA leaders also shared decision-making during the production of videos where they rotated between camera operator, actor, and director leading fellow peers and university adults. "Stand right there," Joy would often repeat, as she directed her peers away from the glare of the window while recording the impulse control scenarios. The actors, too, were able to guide decisions for the group. During an impulse control skit that illuminated the importance of perspective-taking,

YA leaders were asked what roles they wanted to play. As several youth wanted to play the same character, without prompting, a member suggested adding roles to the skit so everyone could participate. YA leaders were able to make real-time decisions that impacted the learning processes.

YPAR Outcome: Strengthened SE Competencies and Intergenerational Mentoring

YA leaders' introspective video content and panel discussions exhibited the SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making presented in CASEL's framework. For example, Larry, our oldest YA leader, demonstrated growth in self-awareness by describing how his self-confidence had developed. He recounted, "I would have told my younger self to be more confident. I wasn't as confident as I am now. I didn't believe in anything I could do, until I actually tried it later on, knowing that I could have done it back then." As Larry acknowledges his own hesitancy, he also encourages youth to be bold and push themselves to explore their strengths.

Other participants considered self-management skills that they possessed and/or wished they had demonstrated to help younger children learn to manage emotions and stressors. While some recommendations included solitary activities, like listening to music and doing yoga, Malachi offered communicating with peers. He demonstrated an understanding of social awareness and relationship skills, particularly within the context of schools. He suggested, "Talk to one of your close friends, one of your peers so that you know what's going on in each other's lives because that's somebody you can trust with your word." Malachi's advice not only advocates for younger youth to build social capital through positive interpersonal relationships, but also encourages youth to develop a level of vulnerability with peers. His focus on interdependence to overcome challenges magnifies his understanding of social awareness and relationship skills.

Participants also advised on responsible decision-making. In a panel discussion concerning physical altercations and safety, Joy said she would instruct younger youth that "the choices they make can have a good consequence or a bad consequence." Octavia, too, reflected on previous ACEs in her life that shaped her behavior:

When I was younger, I wish like, I had told myself that violence wasn't the answer to everything. That it would be ok soon and I just wish that I could like understand what was going on around me. Because if I did, then maybe I'd like, not always be fighting and stuff.

As YA leaders made meaning from their lived experiences, some more adverse than others, and identified the lessons learned, they became better positioned to share these lessons with younger B&GC youth. As evidenced in their weekly focus group panel reflections and videos of advice to a younger self, YA leaders can model SEL skills to their younger peers when faced with challenging situations. Further, while YA leaders did not explicitly articulate SE competencies, their instructions to a younger self demonstrate alignment with an established SEL framework.

Discussion

This study provides evidence of how participatory methods and narrative tools, like video reflections and digital storytelling, can be used in an afterschool setting to learn from and uplift youth who may face ACEs. Youth were provided an authentic space to step into leadership, (re)strengthen and develop new SE skills, and exercise voice. YA leaders made specific connections between YPAR processes and SEL techniques they learned and were enthusiastic about the potential to be intergenerational mentors. The B&GC has begun to orchestrate a youth-

led training model through skilled SEL development, carefully constructed cycles of youth-adult partnership, and detailed attention to youth voice.

The study findings are consistent with previous literature that has considered YPAR a viable method for engaging youth in an afterschool setting (Bulanda et al., 2013) and promoting the autonomy of youth (Ozer & Wright, 2012). Further, the findings illustrate that integrating YPAR into an afterschool setting not only elevates the voices of youth, as they are not often provided with the opportunity to have their voices shared in meaningful ways (McAlister, 2018), but also provides avenues for youth's localized knowledge to be valued and shaped into a communal learning experience (Gay, 2002). This is an experience that is genuinely student-centered and culturally-responsive.

Through this study, the university partners explore the intersectionality of YPAR, SEL development for vulnerable youth, and peer mentoring. YA leaders' responses about what advice they would tell their younger selves after completing the B&GC SEL program reveal youth voice in SEL developmental approaches. For instance, when the older youth reflect about self-confidence, trust for others, and rethinking decisions, particularly as it relates to ACEs, their responses suggest that they have a better awareness of their SE needs, which could help younger youth to overcome similar challenges. According to sociomotivational theory (Britner et al., 2006), youth can learn how to overcome similar adverse situations that they may face in their community by following peers' advice. Equipping youth to approach SEL development through an intergenerational mentoring framework could be a key factor in facilitating healthy and positive development of youth who may have faced ACEs.

Limitations

As university adult partners, we met with participants weekly, but due to extracurricular and work schedules, YA leaders' attendance varied from 3 to 15 students. Once meals were provided at the end of each session, we had an average of 14 students attend each week. Also, due to COVID-19, the authors were unable to disseminate the final videos to YA leaders to gather their feedback. Further, sharing the videos with younger B&GC members has not happened yet. However, we have been in communication with the OC B&GC leadership and are planning a virtual presentation.

Implications and Conclusion

Agency is defined psychologically as "the initiation of relatively autonomous acts governed by our intentional states—our wishes, desires, beliefs, and expectancies" (Bruner, 1994, p. 41). The impact of structural inequality and violence exposure places minoritized adolescents at risk for mental health problems, behavioral difficulties, and educational struggles (McCoy & Bowen, 2015). Such challenges impact the identity stories that lower-income, minoritized youth develop, thereby restricting how they view their capacities, potential, and life possibilities. Therefore, initiatives that create space and perspective toward fostering agency in multiply-marginalized youth are necessary, as in the case of this study (Hull & Katz, 2006).

While the analysis of this study is focused on one B&GC, its findings have possible implications for preparing other multiply-marginalized youth to serve as intergenerational mentors to learn, strengthen, and implement SEL competencies. The process and findings of this study illustrate the benefits of engaging in university-community partnerships to aid in the assessment of a community's needs. Specifically, the process and findings provide a guide for how youth-serving practitioners and afterschool administrators may work with university partners to serve youth with ACEs and cultivate spaces where student voices are heard, learned from, and incorporated into youth programming. Thus, future research might analyze the five SEL outcomes that

younger youth needed to develop after viewing the youth-led videos. Future research might also include integrating the youth-led training model across B&GCs in Florida and adapting curriculum to the SEL needs of the local clubhouse.

Positive youth development is an umbrella term for a conceptual framework that underscores contexts and processes that lead to well-being among young people (Christens & Peterson, 2012). A positive youth development framework underscores the possibilities, rather than the shortcomings of youth, especially multiply-marginalized youth with adverse life circumstances. YA leaders' perspectives revealed how incorporating student voice in afterschool programming and curriculum development can be an empowering way to support the SEL needs of youth being served. The study revealed that as youth voices are heard, and their SEL needs are met in afterschool settings, there is an opportunity to create spaces that contribute to youth's healthy and positive development. By incorporating youth as the leading voices, this study demonstrates a transformative way to break down oppressive barriers that traditionally exist within youth-adult partnerships.

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Appendix

Weekly Training Curriculum

Week	SEL Focus Area	Youth-centered Activity	SEL Skill Acquired/Strengthened
1	Teamwork	Human knot activity Panel discussion on teamwork	Relationship skills
2	Conflict resolution	Skits on conflicts (and resolutions) within school environments and the clubhouse Panel discussion on conflict	Self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making
3	Impulse control	Student perception activity Panel discussion on perceptions and impulse control	Self-awareness and self-management
4	Emotional safety	Rule development and sports	Responsible decision-making
5	Physical safety Younger self/youth video recordings	Questions and answer session Panel discussion on bullying	Social awareness and responsible decision-making
6	Younger self/youth video recordings	Recordings	Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making