Youth Tips for Conference Calls

Making Conference Calls Work for Youth

Conference calls can feel confusing; lots of voices, people talking over each other, and topics changing quickly. If you're unsure when to speak or who's talking, you're not alone. **Here's what can help:**

- Ask questions if you don't understand or if you need someone to slow down.
- Say your name before speaking so others know it's you.
- Speak up about what works for you. Your input matters.
- Join an orientation if it's offered. It can make calls way easier to follow.

Remember: your voice is important, and you deserve to feel comfortable and heard on every call.

Youth and young adults must be included in planning. Our intelligence and insight are often underestimated, yet our lived experience makes us the true experts. When asked, we can provide the most valuable perspective on what will and won't work. Excluding youth voices from decision-making isn't just a missed opportunity; it can cause real harm.

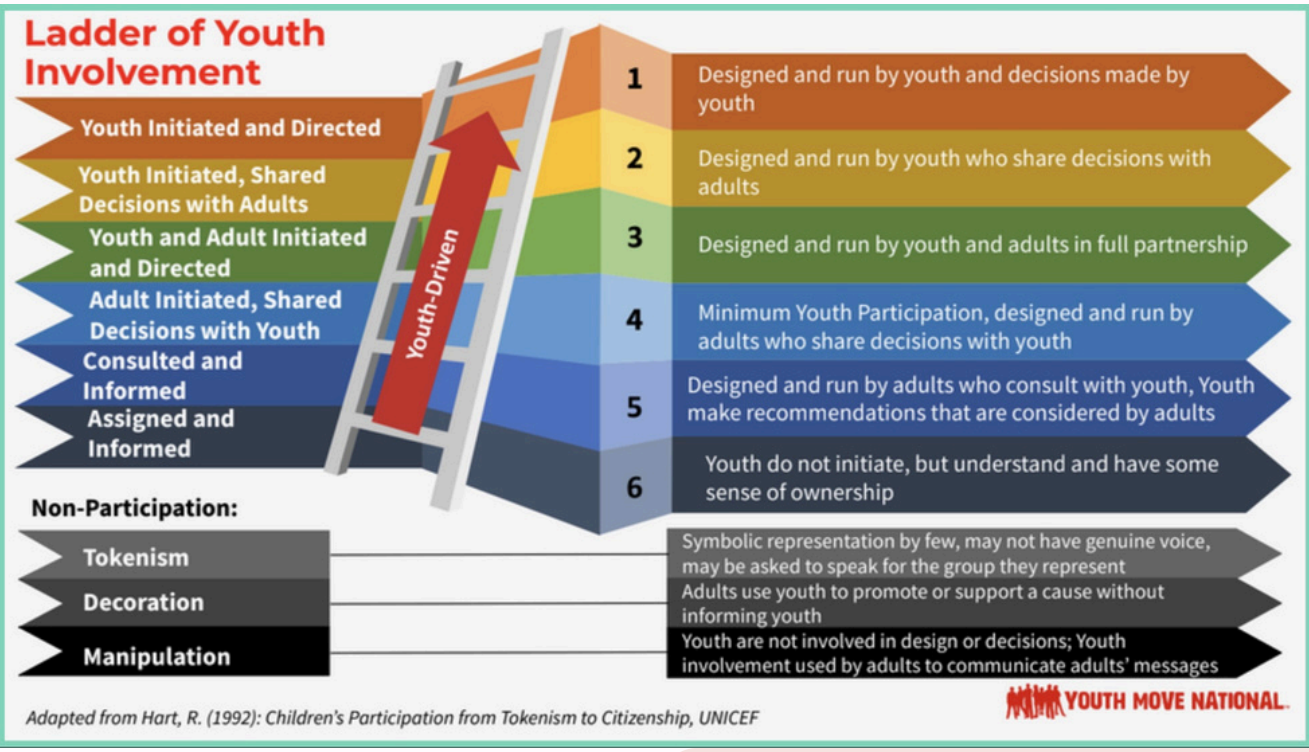
"Youth-driven" means youth have a real say in the programs, policies, and decisions that affect them. Youth are active partners in outreach, activities, and evaluation.

"Youth voice" highlights the unique ideas and perspectives young people bring to represent themselves.

Tips for Conference Calls

- Make sure you have an agenda ahead of time.
- Keep a list of who is on the call.
- Ask for support, if needed, from somebody on the call that you trust.
- Ask people to state their name before they speak if it is not a video call.
- If you do not understand what someone is referring to, ask for clarification.
- Start with a simple introduction or icebreaker so you can get acquainted with one another.
- Work together to create an order of when people will speak, if this is easier for you.
- Write notes for yourself prior to the call so you can keep track of what you would like to say.
- Take notes during the call.

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Tips for Climbing the Ladder

Speak Up About Your Needs

- If something in a program doesn't work for you, say so.
- Share what would make meetings, events, or calls easier for you to join in.

Ask for Real Roles, Not Just a Seat at the Table

- Volunteer to help with planning, outreach, or presenting.
- Remind adults that you want to be more than "just a participant."

Build Confidence in Your Voice

- Practice sharing your ideas with friends or other youth first.
- Remember: lived experience makes you the expert.

Team Up With Other Youth

- Work together to share your ideas. A group voice is harder to overlook.
- Support each other if one person feels nervous speaking up.

Hold Adults Accountable

- Ask, "How will my feedback be used?"
- If adults don't follow through, bring it up respectfully.

Take Initiative

- Suggest new projects or activities.
- Offer to co-lead a meeting, training, or event.

Learn and Share Knowledge

- Join orientations or trainings to understand how things work.
- Teach other youth what you've learned so everyone can climb the ladder together.

The more you ask for space, share your voice, and push for partnership, the higher up the ladder you'll go and the stronger youth leadership becomes.

PPAL
Parent/Professional Advocacy League, Inc.
www.ppal.net

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