

# **PROBLEM STATEMENT AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT**

### **Statement of Research Focus**

Co-production is a new, complex concept developed by Edgar Cahn. In its most simple articulation, co-production is a framework and set of techniques used by social service organizations to enlist active client participation in service programming (Cahn, 2004). In the co-production framework, youth are no longer viewed as “clients.” Instead, they are viewed as citizens with important contributions to make. Co-production interventions enable them to become genuine resources, contributors and change agents.

Co-production has considerable potential for intervention theory and practice. This potential awaits a more rigorous theoretical framework for co-production. Such an enhanced framework needs to be grounded in empirical data. This study responds to this need.

Three questions structure this inquiry: (1) What theoretical concepts facilitate an improved framework for co-production interventions? (2) Do data gathered from a two site pilot study provide initial empirical support for this enhanced theoretical framework? (3) Do these data indicate the need for additional theorizing and/or practice changes? This research addresses these questions as well as a variety of sub-questions that derive from them. It focuses on interventions designed for involuntary youth receiving services from community child welfare and juvenile justice organizations.

Researchers, practitioners and administrators in a host of client systems grapple with challenges related to service delivery as they strive for effective outcomes in meeting the needs of involuntary youth. The findings from this study promise to guide administrators and service providers in planning and designing innovative interventions.

Researchers also may benefit from this study's theoretical framework and methodological findings. Details follow.

### **Challenges in Serving Involuntary Youth: Introducing the Importance of this Study**

As noted above, the child welfare and juvenile justice systems face formidable challenges as they strive to meet the needs of youth and families. Most of the youth in these systems are involuntary participants. Involuntary youth are either mandated to work with an agency due to a court order or pressured to accept help from agencies. If they had their choice, most of the youth in these systems would not be participating in the services that are provided by these organizations (Ivanoff, Blythe & Tripoli, 1994; Rooney, 1992; Trotter, 1999).

In addition, while the child welfare and juvenile justice systems face system-specific challenges, additional challenges exist in serving youth and families that cross systems. For example, youth adjudicated as delinquents may be at risk of a residential placement within the foster care system. Also, many youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice system are "cross-over" youth. These youth may originate in other systems (e.g., special education) before they move into the child welfare and juvenile justice systems or originate in child welfare or juvenile justice and move, for example, into the mental health system (Lawson & Anderson-Butcher, 2001).

Providers face many challenges in serving this population. These include co-occurring problem behaviors, service system failures, challenging environmental factors, challenges in engaging youth and their family members, and difficulty in sustaining positive outcomes over time. These challenges are described below.

### *Co-occurring Problem Behaviors*

“Cross-over” youth often evidence a multitude of co-occurring problem behaviors. These problems include substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, school-related problems, mental health problems, especially depression, and association with peers involved in illegal activities (i.e., gang association) (Wandersman & Florin, 2003; Yohalem & Pittman, 2001).

These youth also experience many risk factors. Risk factors are predictors of problem behaviors and negative outcomes (Burt, Resnick & Novick, 1998). Risk factors for these youth include individual indicators such as academic failure or an aggressive temperament. However, most of the risk factors involve family level (meso) and macro level environmental conditions. These conditions may include poor supervision by adults, lack of parent involvement and support, frequent moving of household that impedes a connection to school and societal factors such as living in a socially excluded neighborhood characterized by concentrated poverty (Burt et al., 1998; Lawson & Anderson-Butcher, 2001). Research suggests that the many of these risk factors are interlinked and often sequential (Smith & Carlson, 1997). The cumulative effect of these risk factors often leads to co-occurring and interlocking problem behaviors and poor outcomes (Resnick, Harris & Blum, 1993) including delinquent and criminal behavior (Hawkins, Jenson, Catalano & Lishner, 1988).

### *Service System Failures and Challenging Environments*

Innovative, complex and tailored interventions often are required to meet youths’ co-occurring problems. These special interventions are especially needed for troubled youth to be safely maintained in their home community or be successfully re-integrated

into communities after having spent time in residential facilities, detention centers, or juvenile justice placements (Mandel, 2001, 2000; Yohalem & Pittman, 2001).

Unfortunately, most localities, if they invest at all in community interventions, fund a hodge-podge of specialized programs. These programs often involve single issue interventions (Mandel, 2001). It is not surprising then, that recent evaluations of intensive and brief casework service models, such as some family preservation programs, have produced mixed results, especially for “cross-system” youth and families. Single issue interventions often fail to prevent out-of-home placement (Lindsey, Martin & Doh, 2002) with this population in part because of their limited intervention period, they do little to alleviate the harms associated with poverty and its correlates, and also because they often entail “one size fits all” protocols. Of note is the limited success of these interventions for delinquent youth with multiple behavior problems and complex needs (Coleman & Jensen, 2000; Fraser & Nelson, 1997; Guerra, 1998).

Furthermore, the interlocking service needs of many of these youth necessitate the involvement of multiple service systems. In addition to child welfare and juvenile justice, mental health, alcohol, substance abuse, health and special education services are often needed. A number of design and delivery system failures occur in planning for and in providing services. These failures include an undersupply of services in high poverty areas, poor “hand-over” of information between systems and when simultaneous interventions are needed, an inability of systems to collaborate (Lawson & Anderson-Butcher, 2001).

The roughly 457,000 youth returning to their communities after having served time in prison or detention (Wertheimer, Croan & Jager, 2001) is an especially vulnerable

population (Yohalem & Pittman, 2001). So are the approximately 20,000 youth who age out of the foster care system each year (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999). Many of these youth are residing in or returning to communities that present significant obstacles to their healthy development.

For example, these communities may have a host of “social toxins” (Garbarino, 1995). Toxins may include violence, poverty, domestic violence, and family disruption that become poisonous to their well-being. In addition, some are living in or returning to neighborhoods faced with concentrated poverty causing a loss of viable employment and social networks from which youth can benefit (Wilson, 1987).

McLaughlin and Heath (1993) coined the term “social death” to describe the self-perceptions of young men and women in these environments of their lives and the lives of their parents and other neighborhood adults who are not meaningfully employed and lack social mobility to improve their lives. Many of these disadvantaged youth are likely to have few resources for civic participation and little access to social networks that they can tap to improve their lives, compounding the challenges that they face (Winter, 2003). Also, those most in need of social supports are often the least able to access them, having used up their supports by asking for help too many times or disappointing those sources of support upon which they relied previously (Ivanoff et al., 1994; Marks & Lawson, 2005).

In addition, these youth often have limited education and job related options. Although they are teens, who, in one light, should be permitted the luxuries of youth; many are expected to help support their families. They may be called upon to support siblings or contribute to family income. Some may have families of their own. All of

these circumstances can limit their ability to invest and plan for the future (Yohalem & Pittman, 2001).

Race and class issues affect these youth as well. African-American and Latino youth are disproportionately represented in the child welfare (Fluke, Yuan, Henderson and Curtis, 2003; US Department of Health and Human Services, 2001) and juvenile justice systems (US Department of Justice, 1999). This over-representation supports the belief that youth and families are not the ones “at risk.” Instead, these youth and families are vulnerable to risky situations, environments and service systems (Burt et al., 1998; Lawson & Anderson-Butcher, 2001). Youth and families are often blamed for these toxic environments and institutional failures (Lawson & Anderson-Butcher, 2001).

#### *Engagement and Retention Challenges*

Another ongoing challenge for service providers is securing the engagement, active participation and retention of youth and their families referred for service. Engaging involuntarily referred youth and parents and enlisting their active ongoing participation are important initial objectives of service provision (Ivanoff et al., 1994; Marks & Lawson, 2005; Rooney, 1992). Unfortunately, high dropout rates plague community service agencies, especially youth and family members referred for treatment services (Dawson & Berry, 2002; Kasdin, 2000; Owens, Hoagwood, Horwitz, Leaf, Poduska, Kellam & Ialongo, 2002). Additionally, getting youth and families to actively participate in, and accept joint responsibility and accountability for their plan’s success is a persistent challenge (Beckerman & Hutchinson, 1988; Bruns, 2004; Marks & Lawson, 2005)

The impact of client dropout and retention is significant in both child welfare and juvenile justice. For example, the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) sets forth in policy a reduced time frame for biological parents to improve their life circumstances so that their children can be safely returned home from foster care. As a result, community child welfare agencies working with families face increased pressure to quickly engage youth and families and are evaluated on these efforts by federal and state authorities (McGowan & Walsh, 2000). Similarly, juvenile justice agencies face increasing impatience from judges and probation officers with youth who do not comply with court ordered service provisions (Mandel, 2001).

For both regulatory and service/treatment reasons, identifying service components and strategies that are associated with successful client engagement is gaining new interest by practitioners and researchers alike (Altman, 2004; Dawson & Berry, 2002). This new interest is being propelled by the developing link among compatible service components and program settings, engagement and participation, and positive outcomes for youth and families (Fredericks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; Littell, 2001; Littell & Tajima, 2000; Littell, Alexander & Reynolds, 2001).

#### *The Difficulties in “Sustaining the Gains”*

Community child welfare and juvenile justice agencies often work diligently to “wraparound” a range of supports and services around troubled youth and families. Staff in these organizations seeks to stabilize families in crisis. They advocate for youth who are excluded from schools and mainstream recreational and youth programs to be reintegrated into these systems.

Unfortunately, there is an unintended consequence of intensive community based service provision for some youth and families manifesting multiple needs. This consequence is the fostering of a dependency on the service program and its staff (Marks & Lawson, 2005). This dependency has the potential to create short and long term negative impacts.

For example, researchers have found that long-term dependency on professionals for social support can be counterproductive, having the negative effect of lowering client self-esteem and self-efficacy (Cutrona, 2000). This kind of dependency can also make discharge from services a difficult and at times risky proposition (Marks & Lawson, 2005). Also, for some youth and families with multiple needs, gains made during service provision prove difficult to sustain once service provision ends (Marks & Lawson, 2005; Ryan, Davis & Yang, 2001; Smith, Lizotte, Thornberry & Krohn, 1995).

Research on programs for high-risk youth support the challenges of sustaining gains. The few evaluations of programs that do exist show only short-term gains that did not last over time (Public/Private Ventures, 2002). Failure to sustain the gains has important implications. For example, recidivism within the juvenile justice system has major costs. Snyder (1996) reports that 45% of the 15 year olds who appear in juvenile court at least one time can be expected to come back for another offense. The odds increase to 69% for those with two offenses and 80% for those with three offenses.

Similarly, concerns arise from child welfare data regarding foster care re-entry after family reunification. These concerns are about the sufficiency and quality of services being provided in both bringing about reunification and sustaining reunification success post-discharge (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). For

children with severe emotional disturbance, the data are alarming: 75% were placed in another restrictive setting at least once within the 6 years after successfully being discharged from a residential treatment facility or a community based special education program (Greenbaum & Dedrick, 1996). There is a growing recognition that for some families, more is needed than conventional services, especially if long-term impacts are to be realized (Burt et al., 1998).

### **The Need for Complex Interventions**

Despite continued heavy reliance on restrictive out-of-home placement as a sanction for juvenile delinquents (Gies, 2000); jurisdictions are seeking to expand community-based sanctions and interventions for delinquent but non-dangerous youth (Mandel, 2001). This trend is important because the majority of youth entering the juvenile justice system are non-violent. The implication is that safety issues often do not preclude returning or maintaining youth in their community (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003; 2006).

Also, while there are many programs for delinquent youth, few programs are supported by high quality research to help guide leaders in local jurisdictions. Those programs for high-risk involuntary youth that have been rigorously evaluated have produced few sustaining outcomes for the target populations studied (Public/Private Ventures, 2002). For example, the “Blueprints Project” at the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado identified only eleven programs that had been evaluated with research designs strong enough to produce credible evidence of effectiveness. Of those eleven, only a few targeted youth already involved in the juvenile justice system. And of those studies, only a few treatment models have been identified

and those were for specific sub-populations within juvenile justice (Butts, Mayer & Roth, 2005). In short, innovative interventions supported by empirical research are needed.

Establishing innovative service models for involuntary youth with multiple needs necessitates an investment in complex change initiatives. Complex initiatives seek to promote protective factors for vulnerable youth while reducing and preventing risk factors. To reiterate, risk factors are indicators that increase the probability that youth will engage in problem behaviors such as delinquency or substance abuse (Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott & Hill, 1999; Smith & Carlson, 1997). Protective factors influence, modify, ameliorate or alter a person's response to risk antecedents that lead to poor outcomes (Rutter, 1985).

In promoting protective factors, complex initiatives involve working across multiple sectors (i.e., social, economic, physical, political). They seek to foster simultaneous changes at multiple levels. Changes are sought at the individual, family, organizational, community and system levels (Kubisch, Weiss, Schorr & Connell, 1995; Schorr, 2003).

Implementing complex change initiatives in communities for troubled youth is wrought with challenges. For example, programs are not currently constructed to address the challenges noted above including the persistent poverty faced by many youth and their families. For some youth and families, it is difficult for agencies to provide meaningful help (Briar-Lawson, 2000; McGowan & Walsh, 2000). For many involuntary youth where protective factors are not occurring naturally, new environments will need to be "manufactured, recreated for youth whose life structures lack such opportunities" (Smith et al., 1995, pp. 238-239). In addition, interventions will need to be well

structured, well implemented and provide youth with a variety of program activities for extended periods of time for impacts to be realized (Public/Private Ventures, 2002).

Some program leaders are responding by seeking to extend their programs' presence in family and community-oriented activities. Others are building partnerships to enhance community service integration. New models of service integration have been developed but only a few have targeted youth with multiple needs (Burt et al., 1998). Innovation is clearly needed to address these challenges.

In addition, organizations have not adequately prepared staff and administrators to work collaboratively with other professionals and organizations (Lawson, in press). Complex change initiatives will require a re-training of human services staff. New skill building and a restructuring of work environments will be required. Professionals will need to adapt their specialized work practices to work effectively in collaboration with other providers and with clients themselves.

For example, Lawson (in press) calls for the development of "citizen professionals." Here, collaborative democratic professionals cease viewing people as dependent clients and strive to develop equitable relationships with them in order to capitalize on their expertise and engage them in service planning and delivery. These kinds of professionals work to enhance sustainable, integrated and equitable social and economic development in communities. Professionals would be committed to democratic practices and to building civil society. They would work with the citizens they serve within an environment that is conducive to a free exchange of ideas. Changing organizations and environments to facilitate the work of this new type of professional

will necessitate a substantial commitment of resources, including time and money (Edelman, 2001; Lawson, in press).

In summary, the task for leaders of community child welfare and juvenile justice programs, many of which are designed to be short in duration and transitional, is a daunting one. They need to develop innovative, structured and well implemented complex change interventions for youth and families with co-occurring needs in an era of diminishing resources and an environment that requires documentation of impacts to justify new community investments. These organizations will also need to change their operation in the face of convincing evidence that they cannot go at it alone if the goal is to effectuate long-term sustainable changes for youth living in challenging environmental and social conditions. These new models of service integration and community building are especially needed for youth where protective factors are not sufficiently present to build upon.

In response to these realities, a number of leaders are experimenting with co-production theory and practice. As a complex change initiative, co-production interventions hold promise in achieving individual results for involuntary youth and their families as well as positively impacting on organizations and communities.

### **Introducing Co-production Theory and Interventions**

For the purposes of this study, co-production is a framework and set of techniques used by social service organizations to enlist active client participation in service programming (Cahn, 2004). Its proponents, drawing on the original work of Edgar Cahn, call for a transformation of the client/worker relationship such that formerly viewed “passive recipients” partner with organizations in designing, planning and delivering

services as a way of improving service outcomes and rebuilding local community (Burns, 2004). Interested leaders and their organizations are developing interventions that create opportunities for clients to be resources, contributors and agents of change not only within their own lives but also within the service organizations and communities they are involved with.

The most frequent strategy to reward participant action within the co-production framework is Time Dollar Banking (Cahn & Rowe, 1992). Time banking is a unique transaction based system for mutual aid and assistance. Time bank systems are used to enlist, record and reward clients for their contributions.

For example, one client can cut another person's hair. The person who receives the haircut delivers groceries for an elderly person. Services provided are counted as hours in a time bank. Hours are entered into a computer bank for use when clients need help or support from others. Members can include fellow clients, family members, other community members, businesses, community organizations and staff. Each hour of service equals a time dollar.

Time dollars is a local, tax-exempt currency. It rewards people for the contributions they make to help others and build community. These contributions comprise a range of co-production activities.

By involving participants in co-producing interventions and outcomes, it is hypothesized that clients will be more engaged and active participants in services, resulting in higher retention and fewer "no-shows." In addition, by serving as "contributors," clients will enhance their self-esteem (Cahn, 2004, p. 210). Client social skills will also be enhanced through the exchange process and meeting new peers and

adults with whom they might not have had a chance to previously engage. Active participation will enable clients to benefit further from services provided. Desirable client outcomes will result.

In addition, as leaders in organizations find ways of honoring and rewarding exchanges and transactions made among family, friends and neighbors, between service providers and service recipients and between service recipients and other community organizations, multiple impacts will occur. Specifically, organizational investments in local communities will build and contribute to the informal non-market economy of family, neighborhood and community. These investments will help build trust, safety and mutual support within communities and its members, enhancing both individual and collective social capital (Cahn, 2004).

In fact, co-production's emphasis on asset building, the fostering of new definitions of "work" to include client contributions and social capital building are linked to each other and create benefits to clients, service providers and local communities. Taken together, co-production holds the promise of creating "contagion effects" and "inoculation effects" by spreading, for example, positive outcomes and benefits with a program of service or to other community organizations and settings. Co-production's notion of reciprocity is one key to these multiple outcomes and impacts.

Reciprocity is the notion that giving and receiving is a "two-way street." It includes a new relationship between client and staff through mutual exchanges that is collaborative, i.e., partner-like in its equality. Within the co-production framework, reciprocity also involves exchanges between neighbors and the asking of "givebacks" from other community organizations that might benefit from client contributions. With

co-production, individual assets turn into contribution to others. These mutually beneficial contributions evolve into reciprocal obligation. Reciprocal obligation ultimately enhances community and collective social capital (Cahn, 2004, p. 33).

In summary, co-production driven interventions are a distinct method of empowerment practice that emphasizes the importance of mutually beneficial transactions between clients and staff and clients and members of the community. Co-production is an asset-based approach that rewards contributions and alters the notion of work within human service programs and in communities. Its core principle of reciprocity aims to expand the benefits of co-production activities from individuals, to organizations, to groups of organizations and to neighborhoods and communities. Co-production initiatives impact on individual client and staff outcomes, but also seek broader organizational, community and system change.

From an individual client perspective, co-production initiatives seek to enhance self-esteem, promote social skills, build family support and enhance protection in the broader environment. Each of these areas has been highlighted as foci of interventions that enhance protective factors for vulnerable youth (Smith & Carlson, 1997). As an additive service feature for involuntary youth and their families, co-production interventions also hold promise in enhancing client engagement and active participation in services. In building youth competencies and assets as well as new social capital and attendant social supports, co-production interventions can enable clients to sustain the benefits stemming from service interventions.

However, for these benefits to be realized, co-production interventions need to be fully explicated and made operational. Only then can these special interventions be more

easily understood, implemented and evaluated. Intervention design and implementation protocols comprise a special priority and this priority drives the development of the ensuing dissertation inquiry.

### **The Dissertation Inquiry**

The preceding analysis introduces co-production and why it is an attractive and appealing concept. It also indicates why it is hard to understand and make operational (Boyle, 2004a). This problem is compounded when theorists alternatively refer to co-production as a theory, framework, construct, an approach and a set of standards and processes (Boyle, 2004a, Burns, 2004, Cahn, 2004). These alternative conceptualizations, plus the complexity of interfacing on multiple levels (e.g., client, program and larger system), create challenges in terms of implementation and evaluation.

From an implementation standpoint, co-production has not been satisfactorily conceptualized as a method of treatment, an intervention or a system of practice. More work is needed in developing a conceptual and an operational framework for co-production interventions. Practitioners also need theoretically-sound and research-supported guidance regarding “how to do it.”

Guidance for implementing a time banking project in the form of a “how to” manual has been developed (Time Dollar Institute, 2004). The manual provides useful information to assist organizations in planning time dollar programs. It also offers concrete examples of organizations partnering with their clients and collaborating with other organizations.

However, for those programs that seek to diversify from time banking as the source of rewarding reciprocity, more assistance is needed. Assistance is especially

needed for service organizations not linked with an already existing community time bank to draw expertise from. For these organizations, guidance in integrating time banking within current operations and core service model features are critical needs.

From a research and evaluation standpoint, the lack of program theories of change and detailed logic models drawn from relevant theory and practice, have curtailed research and evaluation studies of co-production completed to date. Specifically, more work is required in identifying necessary conditions for co-production initiatives. In addition, a fuller understanding of the relationship between co-production activities and desired results; in particular, detailing the sequence of activities and important strategic choices intended to facilitate program effectiveness, is needed.

As with any new complex initiative, co-production experimentation has outstripped relevant theorizing and research. In effect, this dearth of theoretical and empirical work means that there is little guidance for organizational leaders desiring to establish an intervention based on co-production principles or a researcher wishing to study the potential outcomes and impacts generated from this complex change initiative.

The main questions for this research respond to this need. *What theoretical concepts facilitate an improved framework for co-production, with a special focus on engagement of involuntary youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems? Do data gathered from a two-site pilot study provide initial empirical support for this enhanced theoretical framework? Do these data indicate the need for additional theorizing and/or practice changes?* This study is designed to address these questions and sub-questions deriving from them.

To the extent that this study is successful in its efforts to enhance theoretical understanding and provide empirical support, leaders will be assisted in efforts to infuse co-production into their organizations. In addition, by developing detailed logic models, researchers and evaluators will be better able to study co-production driven interventions, including identifying essential preconditions and antecedents, specifying core and secondary intervention components and measuring outcomes and impacts.

These goals and research questions recommend a three-phase implementation strategy. In the first phase, the key priorities are to identify and describe the core components of co-production. *Sub-questions* for this phase include:

- ✓ What are the defining features of a co-production intervention?
- ✓ What are the core essential components of such an intervention?
- ✓ What distinguishes it from other interventions?
- ✓ What variations are acceptable during implementation, i.e., what are its degrees of freedom?
- ✓ What outcomes stem from co-production interventions?

These intervention questions require a return to the original co-production theory.

In phase 2, the original co-production theory will be evaluated. To evaluate original co-production theory, the researcher will conduct an extensive, expansive literature review. This will include a review of the literature of empowerment, collaboration, youth development and services for involuntary clients. This review enables the development of an enhanced theoretical framework for co-production and a more detailed description and explanation of co-production interventions. A specific focus of the theoretical inquiry will be the import of co-production strategies and

processes on the engagement of involuntary youth. This theoretical elaboration sets the stage for an empirical investigation of co-production.

The empirical study (phase 3) will focus on micro-level constructs and processes associated with co-production in “real life service settings” for involuntary youth. Data from the exploratory case study research will then be used to analyze and revise the proposed program theory and intervention logic models. Sub-questions to help guide this review include (see appendix 1-1):

- How was the theoretical model related to the interventions in use?  
Similarities/differences? Between site differences? Similarities?
- How aspects of the theoretical model were salient to clients? To staff?
- Were there differences between sites in observations/perceptions?
- If there were differences in observations and perceptions between sites, what are some theories to help explain the differences?
- What changes can be recommended to the theoretical model in light of the empirical findings?
- What changes in practice with involuntary clients can be recommended in light of the results of the exploratory study?

### **Structure for the Remainder of This Analysis**

Chapter 2 begins with an analysis of the literature of the original framework of co-production and time banking. This review yields a preliminary intervention framework, one that incorporates the initial theorization of Cahn and other contributors.

The methodology of the proposed study is presented in chapter 3. Both the theoretical and empirical dimensions of the dissertation study will be outlined. The

empirical inquiry will utilize a descriptive, exploratory case study approach involving a qualitative methodology. Both sites are sponsored by a national community child welfare and juvenile justice organization.

Chapters 4 through 8 provide progressive theoretical enhancements. All are derived from selective literature reviews. Each chapter serves as a building block for a larger theoretical edifice.

Chapter 4 reviews the positive youth development literature. Chapters 5 through 7 reviews, in order: (1) empowerment research and practice, (2) collaboration and related processes and (3) engagement theory and methodology. Chapter 8 explores the special nature of co-production with involuntary youth. Chapter 9 builds on the previous ones by outlining a comprehensive theory of change for co-production. This chapter highlights co-production processes and practices designed to move youth along the involuntary-voluntary engagement continuum.

Findings and analysis of findings from the empirical investigation of co-production in the pilot test sites are presented in chapters 10 through 15. Here, the proposed program theory of change and its relevant micro-level constructs will be described as implemented in the two pilot sites. Cross-site and cross participant (e.g., staff and youth) comparisons will be made. In addition, data from the case study sites will be compared with the enhanced theoretical framework. The study's three main research questions structure this analysis.

The final discussion chapter cites study conclusions and focuses on the implications of the research for social work practice and policy. Recommendations for social work education as well as for future research will also be offered.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE ORIGINAL FRAMEWORK FOR CO-PRODUCTION**

### **Introduction**

Co-Production, a framework and set of techniques used by social service organizations to enlist client engagement in service programming, is gaining interest among service providers. However, as noted in chapter one, in order to assist leaders in infusing co-production into their organizations and to assist researchers in studying co-production, co-production interventions need to be more richly theorized and made more operational.

Questions that will help guide the literature review include:

- What are the defining features of a co-production intervention?
- What are the core essential components of such as intervention?
- What distinguishes it from other interventions?
- What variations are acceptable during implementation, i.e., what are its degrees of freedom?
- What outcomes stem from co-production experiments?

This chapter will assess the literature base on the original co-production framework and its most frequent strategy, Time Dollar Banking. It will describe and critically analyze salient methodologies, findings and interpretations associated with the research conducted on the original framework to date. Conceptual and methodological challenges will also be identified.

Based on this review, a preliminary framework for co-production research and practice will be presented. This framework will provide the beginning foundation for the development of logic models for co-production interventions within the context of

services provided to involuntarily referred youth and their families by community child welfare and juvenile justice organizations.

### **Co-Production and Time Banking: A Review of the Literature**

This section provides a review of the co-production literature. It includes its most frequent intervention companion, time banking. This review begins with an overview of co-production including its origins, rationale and core values. A description of time banking as well as examples of co-production interventions will be included in this section. The section will conclude with a review of co-production's research and evidence base, including the identification of a number of methodological issues associated with studying co-production.

#### *Overview of Co-Production*

##### *Origins*

The term "co-production" originated in the 1970s as a critique of centralized bureaucracies operating in the developing world that failed to encourage a high level of citizen participation and active engagement (Boyle, 2004a). Initially, co-production referred to the process in developing countries by which normally inactive citizens who are not involved in public bureaucracies provide input into the production of public goods and services such as the educational system (Ostrom, 1996).

Cahn (2004) expanded this initial definition to include both a framework and set of techniques to be used by social service organizations to enlist active client engagement in service provision. This engagement includes developing a partnership between clients and service providers in hospitable organizational settings such that the recipient is assisting in the design, planning and delivery of services in order to improve service

outcomes and rebuild the local community (Burns, 2004; Cahn, 2004). Service providers and their organizations are experimenting with interventions that create opportunities for clients to be transformed into resources, contributors and agents of change. In other words, instead of being passive service recipients, clients become actively engaged in designing and implementing interventions and services.

### *Co-Production's Rationale*

Co-production is designed to address two fundamental issues confronting the delivery of human services. The first is the challenge of engaging clients and sustaining their participation in service programs. The second is the diminishing capacity of the informal non-market economy of family, neighborhood and community to meet the ongoing needs of its citizens (Cahn, 2004). Each merits explanation.

Regarding the first challenge, Cahn observes anecdotally that professionals lament client “no-shows” and low turnout rates. This challenge is especially relevant to work in community child welfare and juvenile justice. The literature in these areas indicates that challenging life circumstances and complex service needs often make it difficult for youth and family members to participate in services and comply with court mandates (Dawson & Berry, 2002; Littell, 2001; Littell & Tajima, 2000; Marks & Lawson, 2005; Mandel, 2001).

For co-production theorists, service provision and the expectations placed on clients are implicated in these unacceptable, problematic levels of service engagement, participation and retention (Cahn, 2004). For example, clients have routinely not been asked to play an active role in producing outcomes, have not contributed their own energies in search of solutions. An unintended consequence of this relationship with

clients is that many have not accepted the services and benefits afforded to them. Also, some clients who have engaged in services but have not contributed or been viewed as resources might end service provision without feeling that they can succeed on their own without agency support.

Regarding the second issue, Cahn (2004) refers to the informal, non-market economy of family, neighborhoods, voluntary associations and civil society as an economic system of voluntary exchanges and mutual assistance with its own production and distribution principles. In contrast to the market economy, the non-market economy maintains interdependence as a core principle of production. Also, the distribution of goods and services in the non-market economy is different from the market economy as it is driven by “normative considerations of need, fairness, altruism, moral obligation and contribution” (Cahn, 2004, p. 50). This contrasts with the market economy, which emphasizes specialization in production (e.g., if you have a specialized skill, you are likely to be rewarded with a higher salary) and scarcity and price in distribution (e.g., what is scarce generates more money and higher prices than goods and services that can be easily attainable).

Co-production theorists note that when the informal economy fails, trained and credentialed specialists are often brought in to either “fix” the family and neighborhood or repair its broken connections with the market economy of work (Boyle, 2004a; Cahn, 2004). These theorists propose that service strategies have not focused on ameliorating these conditions in a sustainable way. Without investing in the informal economy, service providers work to “relieve symptoms” as opposed to improving opportunities and creating new positive trajectories for clients.

For example, according to co-production theorists, providers have not invested sufficient energy and resources into helping families create new peer relations that can provide the necessary social supports in times of need. These supports include access to people who provide clients with a combination of emotional, tangible, informational and companionship support (Cutrona, 2000). In addition, clients who are not put in an active role in contributing their own energy and skills to change their life circumstances and those of their communities might not develop the self-confidence needed to attract new social supports.

Also, failure to enlist clients in maintaining and enhancing their social capital networks can put clients at a disadvantage post program discharge. Social capital refers to “resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and mobilized by people for purposive action” (Lin, 2001, p. 29). Resources could include access to information such as job opportunities and resources such as business loans or grants. Social capital can be accessed through social connections, relations and networks. It can provide opportunities for informal socialization as well as community solidarity that can lead to improvements in social control, such as crime reduction (Coleman, 1988; Sampson, 2001). It is a critical element for individuals, social groups and communities in achieving objectives and goals (Lin, 2001, p. 2). The availability of positive productive social capital is often important for vulnerable youth who succeed in difficult environments (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Raffo & Reeves, 2000; Teachman, Paasch & Carver, 1996; Wright, Cullen & Miller, 2001). According to Cahn, it is “as essential as roads, bridges and utility lines” (Cahn, 2004, p. 24).

Co-production theorists contend that service providers provide insufficient attention to putting clients in situations where their assets and skills can be utilized to create new opportunities. Failure to fortify and improve a client's social capital can make it difficult for clients to sustain the gains made during service provision. Theorists also note that by investing in co-production activities, providers also are investing in the communities where they are situated, contributing to long-term sustainable community improvement.

### *Time Banking*

Time banking (Cahn & Rowe, 1992; Time Dollar Institute, 2004) is viewed as the most common tool for fostering and rewarding co-production. Time banking schemes often originate in neighborhoods and communities and are open to residents in a geographic area. These so-called "neighbor-to-neighbor" (N2N) time banking models have been described as "community-based volunteer schemes whereby participants give and receive services in exchange for time credits" (Seyfang, 2003, p. 258). Members list the services they can offer and those that they need and are matched with other members by computer and the help of a time bank coordinator. Every transaction is recorded on a computer "time bank" with members receiving a regular "bank" statement. One hour is one credit regardless of the skills offered (Cahn, 2004).

While many N2N projects are housed in local charities or public agencies (Seyfang, 2002), these models are not restricted to an organization's clientele. Their missions usually are broader, transcending just one organization. These broadened missions include the fostering of social inclusion, generating community self-help and

enhancing voluntary activities among community members who do not normally volunteer (Seyfang, 2003, p. 258).

Consistent with these missions, local charities and businesses commonly become members of neighbor-to-neighbor time banks that they do not directly operate. These other organizations are recruited so that the range and kind of services that can be exchanged among enrollees are expanded. For example, local cinemas are recruited to attract time bank enrollees with the promise of discounted movie tickets that can be “purchased” through their service contributions. Businesses are attracted to becoming time bank members in order to market their product or service and enhance their standing among community members. Businesses can also “purchase” needed services from an active volunteer base that can assist their business operation (Cahn, 2004; Seyfang, 2001a).

Presently 65 time banks operate in the United States with another 44 under development. Most of the time banks in the US are in the Northeast, Midwest and the West (Maine Time Bank, 2005). England has over 130 time banks, some of which are in development and most of which have been developed within the past 5 years. Forty exist in London alone. Community Time Banks also exist in Israel, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Curacao, Slovakia, South Korea and China (Cahn, 2004). A recent publication estimated membership in time banking programs to be around 60,000 worldwide with over 500,000 hours exchanged in 15 countries (“Charting the Course,” 2004).

A less common aspect of time banking and one that is more relevant to this investigation are time banks created by service organizations as a specialized program either parallel to or integrated within its core operation. These kinds of specialized time

banking operations can be separate from, or attached to, a neighbor-to-neighbor time bank (Time Dollar Institute, 2004).

For human service organizations, time banks offer a range of new tangible incentives to build participation in the program. Service participants are rewarded for time spent in mission enhancing activities by receiving credits which in turn can be spent on accessing desired services such as training or refurbished computers (Cahn, 2004; Seyfang, 2001a). Participants can transact with each other, other community members in the time bank, or staff could organize groups of clients to work together on a community project or as part of a support/mutual aid group. Staff might also participate in the time banks on their own time (Time Dollar Institute, 2004) or on time allowed for by their employer (Callison, 2003).

#### *Examples of Co-Production Initiatives*

Examples of co-production initiatives that have enlisted participants as active contributors are identified below. They include stand-alone programs, co-production programs that run parallel to core program operations and complex interventions that have incorporated co-production into core operations. Exciting new developments in co-production programming concludes this section.

##### *“Stand-Alone” Programs.*

The Time Dollar Youth Court in Washington, D.C. and the Chicago Cross-Age Peer Tutoring Program are two examples of stand-alone programs that have enlisted youth as “co-producers” with staff to achieve enhanced juvenile justice and educational outcomes. In D.C., youth comprise a teen jury that hears cases of first-time non-violent offenders. The jurors earn time dollars for serving on the jury and helping others. Jurors

can cash in their time dollars earned for incentives and rewards such as a refurbished computer. Sentences imposed include community service and a requirement that the offenders serve on a jury, enabling them to also help other youth (Time Dollar Institute, 2003a).

In Chicago, over a thousand youth annually participate in a Cross Age Peer Tutoring Program in which students earn Time Dollars either tutoring or being tutored by other youth. These educational “co-producers” are rewarded for their work with a recycled computer once they have provided 100 hours of service. Parents are also mandated to contribute by serving eight hours in their community, either helping with the tutoring program, serving on the PTA or attending police/community relations meetings. (Cahn, 2004)

Examples of programs without time banking as an incentive for contributions also exist. In Brazil for example, Bolsa Escola found a unique method of attacking truancy. Escola paid mothers to serve as “school attendance monitors” for their children. Payment to the mothers was contingent upon regular school attendance of their children and was set at a rate to compensate for the lost income resulting from the child not being able to go to work to help support the family (Time Dollar Institute, 2003b).

#### *Parallel Time Banking Programs.*

Parallel time banking programs involve time banks that support the goals and objectives of an organization by operating as an additional service component. Participants can voluntarily choose to enroll and participate. Incentives are provided to encourage participation. Two examples of parallel time banking projects involve turning patients into co-producers of health care outcomes.

In Brooklyn, Elderplan, the Metropolitan Jewish Health System Social Health Maintenance Organization, created a parallel voluntary time banking program as part of the benefit package available for enrollees. Members provide needed services to each other to help them remain independent in their own homes (Elderplan, 2004). These services include home repair, shopping, camaraderie and attendance at social functions. Participants were also able to redeem service credits for health products at a credit shop. The network, with 325 members, had an average age of 80 with over 60% of its members living alone (Elderplan, 2004).

In Rushey Green, a medical practice in East Lewisham, South London with six partners and over 8000 patients (Burns, 2004), a specialized time bank program was formed in one of the most deprived areas of the United Kingdom. The time bank assisted traditionally excluded populations whose networks of informal mutual support, essential to enhancing health care outcomes, were either eroded or inadequate (Seyfang, 2003). The time bank worked to enlist patients to help each other by providing peer support for health conditions such as asthma and diabetes as well as social support between neighbors. In exchange, participants received help when they needed it, access to training opportunities provided by a local college and the opportunity to earn a refurbished computer when they reached a certain threshold of time credits earned. The time bank, with 112 participants at last count, including local organizations, generated over 9000 hours of mutual care and support (Burns, 2004).

#### *Integrating Co-production within Complex Interventions.*

Co-Production processes can also be fully integrated into agency operations. Contributions in the form of time-banked hours can be the currency that transforms the

way an agency, with a multitude of programs, operates and delivers services. In San Diego, POWER (Positive Opportunities for Women, youth and families Engaged in Recovery) altered their programming for substance abusing women living in a “therapeutic community” (Cahn & Gray, 2004).

At POWER, staff took an inventory of the strengths, capabilities and desires within their client population and translated them into resources for their community. Time Dollars became the currency that operated the program. No service was provided for free; everything was earned through time dollars. For example, time dollars were used to “pay” rent for living in the group home. Time dollars could also be earned participating in the program, painting their rooms or to reward clients for conducting training sessions. The Time Dollars earned exceeded “rent” or “tuition” so that each of the women would have resources to spend on items requested such as toiletries or cosmetics.

These co-production activities fostered a dynamic of “parity, self-respect and mutual respect” as women brought “their knowledge, capacities and wisdom to the program” (Cahn & Gray, 2004 p. 6). Initial activities generated sustainable organizational changes and new economic trajectories for the women. For example, an alumni club was created and women involved in programming applied to become “natural helpers” so that they could earn money helping others.

Abriendo Puertas Family Center, a family resource center in the Little Havana section of Miami, provides another example of an organization that integrated co-production throughout program operations. A professional/natural helper partnership called EQUIPO el Barrio was developed at the organization. Supported by the Annie E.

Casey Foundation, the EQUIPO approach recognizes the importance of providing informal supports by natural helpers in neighborhoods in order to enhance child and family well being (Natural Helpers, 2002).

At the Center, professional treatment for families is combined with the provision of informal support systems provided by natural helpers, called Madrinas and Padrinas. These natural helpers completed leadership and advocacy training programs. The training included preparing natural helpers and professional providers to “learn to recognize, respect and utilize the strengths that each can bring to the community” (“Natural Helpers”, 2002, p. 8). Natural helpers were also trained to be trainers, producing generative benefits for both the organization and the helpers.

In addition, time banking was introduced into the organization, serving first as a tool to assist in engagement of new clients and then as a source of mutual assistance. Time banking assisted in “turning strangers into non-strangers, trusted friends and finally into extended family” (Cahn, 2004, p. 140). Also, of note was the introduction of time dollar assignments into the professional mental health treatment programs of clients receiving services.

#### *The Next Generation of Co-production Projects*

Exciting new developments are occurring by which co-production is serving as a unifying theme in fostering collaboration between service providers and a greater sense of community within large service operations. One example is in South East London. Here, an entire network of mental health agencies is incorporating time banking into its practice (Cahn, 2004).

Another is the Hexagon Housing Association of London. Hexagon covers 5000 properties in five mainly low-income boroughs. Hexagon is providing first aid courses and other benefits for residents who share skills and provide mutual support for their neighbors (Seyfang, 2004b).

The Member Organized Resource Exchange (MORE), based in St. Louis, appears to be the most complex time bank program in the world (Boyle, Burns & Krogh, 2002). MORE coordinates a network of community centers, a training program and a touch-screen computer system that can alert people to services and assistance in more than 30 neighborhoods. Patients can pay in time dollars for a visit from a doctor or a medical check-up.

In addition, MORE runs 39 courses through its “community college” including accredited courses in parenting, first aid, asthma management and smoking cessation. These courses are largely taught by neighbors for neighbors. Neighbors are paid in both time credits and stipends. Graduates also earn time credits and certificates to show potential employers. MORE is perhaps the best example of how co-production strategies are being used to enable participants to contribute to their community, earn access to goods, services and educational opportunities and, in many cases, meet important unmet needs caused by poverty.

#### *Core Values of Co-Production*

Four key values help guide co-production interventions. Important in their own right, the relationship among these core values is especially significant. These values are asset building, redefining work, reciprocity, social capital building and a social justice perspective.

### *Asset Building.*

Within co-production, every human being can be a builder and contributor and their assets must be enlisted in creating solutions (Cahn, 2004). The approach seeks to tap into under-utilized strengths and assets within a given community (Trevino & Trevino, 2004). Within service programs, co-production includes the notion of clients as “partners in the treatment process” (McCammon, Spencer & Friesen, 2001). Here, clients provide their own time, financial, physical and social resources in bettering their circumstances (Miller and Stirling, 2004). Co-production theory and processes goes further, insisting that those assets and resources be used to further organizational and community goals as well (Cahn, 2004). Clients’ partner with agency staff to accomplish mutually identified objectives.

### *Redefining Work.*

Co-production theorists call for a redefinition of work both within human service organizations and in the broader community. Expanding the notion of who performs labor and how it is rewarded are critical concerns within co-production. Within service programs, clients are to “play a more active role in defining the nature of the problem, contributing their own energies and skills to search for a solution and then earning the help and resources needed for change” (Boyle, 2004a, p. 8). In intervention language, clients contribute to program theory and the companion theory of program intervention (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004; Weiss, 1997). In the process, the passive compliant client is transformed into an engaged partner who co-produces desired outcomes.

Contributions by clients are to be individualized and broadly defined, to include “whatever it takes to rear healthy children, preserve families, make neighborhoods safe

and vibrant, care for the frail and vulnerable, redress injustice and make democracy work” (Cahn, 2004, p. 24). Under co-production, it is essential that staff acknowledges client efforts as work and value or compensate them accordingly. It is important for contributions to be “recorded and externally validated” (Cahn, 2004, p. 34).

Time Dollar Banking is one method of validating participant contributions. Within service programs, recipients receive “credit” for their skills and assets through service to the organization, in mutual aid activities to fellow clients or community members or in assisting their neighborhood or community in a services project. With time banking, youth and families can bank hours of service and then “buy” the goods and services they need with their hours of credit. Building this non-monetary network is often critical in high poverty communities in which money is always in short supply while needs for goods and services are high (Seyfang, 2003; 2004b; Seyfang & Smith, 2002).

“Payment” in Time Dollars as well as other methods to reward and recognize contributions confers new status and power for service participants (Cahn, 2004). However, for these contributions to occur, the relationship between service provider and client needs to be altered to allow for more parity (Cahn, 2004). In most cases, this will require changes in organizational setting, structure and processes (Boyle 2004a, 2004b; Burns, 2004).

For example, co-production theorists’ call for the rethinking of entitlements and a restructuring of government contracts to ensure that there is sufficient funding to reward participant contributions and facilitate multi-level partnerships and collaborations (Boyle, 2004a; Cahn, 2004). Organizations are to use a portion of their contracts to “fuel” and

“incentivize” these contributions. This new use of government money helps to create a mixed economy of money and service contributions that can be used to support programs.

For example, resources could be dedicated to purchase refurbished computers for youth who tutor other youth. Gas money could be budgeted for recipients to transport other recipients to appointments. By doing this, self-worth will be validated and organizations will be investing in the informal economy, generating long-term sustainable gains (Boyle, 2004a).

Finally, time banking can be a tool to bridge participants into mainstream employment. In addition, many co-production theorists view time banking and the community building that ensues as an alternative way of bringing benefits and happiness to people. Participation allows individuals to feel useful and to secure support, friendship and health. For these theorists, time banking “poses a radical challenge to existing structures” (Seyfang, 2004a, p. 64), with adherents questioning whether paid employment is the only route to regaining social inclusion for the unemployed and the poor.

#### *Reciprocity.*

The notion of “reciprocity” (mutual giving and receiving) is a core principle underlying the social support neighbors, friends and relatives provide to each other during the course of their interactions (Cutrona, 2000). In fact, the theoretical concept of a “Support Bank” has been offered by social support theorists as a way to conceptualize a long-term developmental view of their relationships and interactions with other people (see Antonucci & Jackson, 1990). Actual social support banks have developed in Ireland based on this notion of reciprocity, to build human social capital to assist individuals under stress (Dolan & McGrath, 2006). The current notion of co-production builds on

these themes by incorporating reciprocity as a guiding principle in the operation of all human service programs.

In addition, reciprocity is critical in guiding staff/client relationships. Under co-production, “one-way acts of largesse” by service providers are replaced by “two-way transactions” (Cahn, 2004, p. 24). Staff is no longer to be seen as the givers and clients as the receivers. Instead, clients are asked to contribute to a shared vision that is mutually beneficial and involves both parties as collaborators working toward a desired end (Boyle, 2004a; Cahn, 2004). In co-production interventions, incentives are established for clients to become engaged in reciprocal exchanges and resources are available to reward this new definition of work provided by clients. Clients in turn come to value their impact in assisting other clients or community members and seeing the value of their collective impact on their community (Trevino & Trevino, 2004). Also, these multiple sources of reciprocal exchange may lead to the cultivation of individual social support networks. These networks have the potential to provide clients with emotional, tangible, informational and companionship kinds of social support (Cutrona, 2000).

Furthermore, reciprocity can operate at the individual and at the organizational level. At the individual level, it is important to note that in time banking, reciprocal transactions need not be made to the individual who directly provided the service. Time bank systems allow for indirect reciprocity with hours performed and used directly going into the time bank. At the organizational levels, client contributions to community agencies call for a concomitant response from that agency. Here again, the response can take the form of giving back directly to the client, to improve his/her well-being. It could

also include a “give back” to the sponsoring organization or in the case of a time banking system, to any member of the time bank.

Reciprocity also becomes synergistic. More exchanges lead to more participants interested in contributing. As contributions based on the norms of reciprocity occur within organizations and communities, enhanced trusting relationships result among a diverse group of people. These contagion effects fortify the informal non-market economy in communities (Cahn, 2004).

*Social Capital Building.*

Social capital refers to interpersonal networks characterized by norms of reciprocity and cemented by trusting relationships, networks that provide members access to resources (Coleman, 1988). This social capital concept has special relevance to co-production theory and to human service providers. Here, co-production theorists note that human service providers have to do more than help individuals (Cahn, 2004). They need to enlist participants in building and maintaining the social networks that comprise a community's social infrastructure.

Unfortunately, available social capital both between people within a family and outside of a family system that in the past has supported children and youth in communities is now in much less supply (Coleman, 1988). Time banking projects for the most vulnerable families can serve as a catalyst in creating a new 21<sup>st</sup> Century structure within organizations that seeks to increase the supply of this public good (Cahn, 2004). This is especially important for vulnerable youth and families that often lack a number of forms of social capital.

Co-production theorists tend to emphasize the collective nature of social capital within communities. The expansion of “bridging” and “linking” social capital in communities is often identified as one impact stemming from co-production investments (Seyfang, 2004a). “Bridging” social capital refers to the ability to access resources outside their own community. “Linking” social capital refers to alliances between people in different power relations in a community (Bailey, 2005; Schneider, 2004).

Time banks have among their expressed aims the desire to promote the bridging and linking of social capital (Collom, 2005; Seyfang, 2004a). It is hypothesized that through the fostering of new kinds of community participation and service exchanges, that neighbors will build trust among themselves over time (Cahn, 2004). The building of “relational trust” can occur at the individual, group and associational level (Warren, 2005).

For example, recipients and providers of service can build relational trust to collaborate to improve an organization’s mission (Cahn & Gray, 2004). In addition, service organizations can enlist their members to improve community capacity, including strengthening a valued and under-funded community organization (Chaskin, 2006). Relational trust can also be built across institutions, schools and communities (Warren, 2005), rekindling hope among neighborhood residents and invigorating local change efforts (Trevino & Trevino, 2004).

In fact, institutions can assist in building social capital as they bring resources and groups of people together in a single location. Enhanced trust facilitates social integration and generates sufficient social capital to spur collective action (Warren, 2005). Collective action can then be marshaled to improve, for example, community safety, in

impoverished communities (Cahn, 2004; Sampson, Morenoff & Earls, 1999; Schneider, 2004), combat structural racism by building the political capacity of neighborhood residents to address the inequality of under funding in inner-city school (Warren, 2005) or unify staff and youth together to improve the juvenile justice system in a large city (Cahn & Gray, 2004).

Time banking also holds promise as a tool in fostering transformative social networks (Bailey, 2005). The goal of transformative networks is the creation of the network itself. Here, by design, the network offers “the people connections that support the development of lasting relationships” (Bailey, 2005, p. 13). These lasting relationships affect the participants’ sense of identity and self-confidence that supports the risk-taking in community change activities.

Transformative social networks can be contrasted to instrumental networks. Instrumental networks tend to be staff run. Instrumental networks also seek to achieve special results such as job or educational enhancements for its members. Bailey (2005) notes that the small infusion of instrumental social networking within existing service programs can generate more social capital for participants that can enhance program results. As such, instrumental social networks are a more likely first result of time banking and co-production programming within specialized programming for hard to serve youth and their families.

Finally, involvement in co-production interventions can also enhance positive bonding social capital. Positive “bonding” social capital (see Bailey, 2005; Schneider, 2004) occurs when a social group is formed as a result of the social connections created from neighbors helping each other and making change in communities. Enhancing

positive bonding social capital tends to be de-emphasized within the original co-production framework, in favor of potential changes in bridging and linking social capital. Nonetheless, fortifying bonding relationships with members of a group can occur when participants in a local time bank project work together to improve their community.

*A Social Justice Perspective.*

Underlying each of the core values is the utilization of the core principles and tools of co-production to remedy or prevent injustice (Cahn, 2004). Seeking to ameliorate injustice may occur at the individual level when clients in a dependency position are empowered through their new role as collaborators with staff to contribute to improving their own circumstances; or, at the neighborhood level, where, with the help of professionals, the use of client capacities are nourished to improve local conditions through collective action. In short, co-production interventions are designed to be transformative at a number of different levels.

Cahn (2004) notes that the core values of co-production move in a logical progression, “from individuals to society, in expanding concentric circles” (p. 33). Co-production also produces contagion effects, moving from individual capacity building, to linking with others through contributions, to reciprocal obligation and concluding with the building of community social capital (Cahn, p. 33). Central to the “transactional dynamic” of co-production (Boyle, 2004a, p. 13) is the unifying of citizens and institutions to redress injustice.

*Research and Evidential Base for Co-Production*

Current research on the original co-production framework is presented next. Trends in research methodology and foci will be summarized. In addition,

methodological issues associated with the study of co-production will be identified. It is important to note that co-production initiatives have not been guided by a conceptualization explicating potential program results and impacts; the processes by which these results and impacts are achieved or a clear rationale based on empirical evidence for the expected benefits. This lack of an articulated program theory (Rossi et al., 2004) has impeded research efforts of co-production to date.

#### *Evaluation of Specific Initiatives*

Only one study focused on youth programming and co-production. A longitudinal study was completed on recidivism rates for youth who were referred to the Washington, DC Youth Court, which utilized time dollars as an incentive for involvement.

Data from police arrest records were compiled for youth who were referred from January 1, 2003 through September 30, 2003. Results showed that one-year recidivism rates were 18% for participating youth. These results were compared with recidivism rates in the 30% range for comparable groups of youth who were either dismissed or processed through the traditional juvenile justice system (Time Dollar Institute, 2003a).

Design features for this study were not detailed in the evaluation report. For example, there was no indication that the comparison group was comparable to the Youth Court group in areas such as prior history, service needs or even demographic characteristics. Thus, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the groups were significantly similar or different at intake, mitigating the conclusion that Youth Court participation made the difference in the recidivism results.

A number of studies focused on the benefits afforded to patients who became partners with medical personal in the provision of health care. The evaluation of

Elderplan's Time Dollar project at Brooklyn's Metropolitan Jewish Health System (Kyriacou & Blech, 2003) involved a two-phased study. Each phase employed different methodological processes.

The first phase was an exploratory, descriptive and retrospective study. Methods included survey completion, selected interviews and focus groups of time dollar members. Successes, challenges, as well as lessons learned were highlighted.

The second phase involved a quasi-experimental prospective study using a four-fold matched control group design. The objective was to analyze the differences in health-related quality of life and other social outcomes between Elderplan enrollees who participated in the member time dollar program and those who did not. The findings in Phase two suggest that participation in the member time dollar program may provide a "protective" effect for time dollar participants against both declining mental health status, increased levels of loneliness and declining health over time (Kyriacou & Blech, 2003).

Seyfang (2003) studied the Rushey Green Time Bank, a health care center in an economically deprived area of South London. A survey of time bank participants at the center revealed that the members were disproportionately drawn from socially excluded groups. Most of the members were women who were not formally employed.

Findings also revealed that time bank members were more likely to have been involved with formal agencies but were less likely to have received benefits from informal voluntary assistance. Members reported the following outcomes: enhanced community involvement, participation in new social networks and feeling valued for their contributions. In addition, respondents reported that they provided more assistance to members than had received help.

Finally, 37% of survey respondents reported that they would not have received help at all without the time bank. 27% would have had to employ persons to do the work they received. The researchers concluded that the time bank filled a gap for people whose network of informal social support was eroded or inadequate.

A recent study conducted by researchers and students at Lehigh University on the Allentown (PA) Community Exchange program (Lasker, Baldasari, Bealer, Kramer, Kratzer, Mandeville, Niclaus, Schulman, Suchow & Young, 2006) is especially relevant. Researchers used newly created and established scales of quality of life, social support, self-efficacy, community attachment and collective self-esteem to gain an understanding of the impact on members participating in the Time Bank. Researchers used a participatory action approach to administer a survey to members. A 47% response rate was elicited. Comparisons before and after time bank involvement were made using a retrospective data collection approach.

Findings from this Lehigh study indicated that more members offered services than received services. Transportation was the most popular service offered and household services were the most popular service received. In addition, females, older, retirees and people with lower incomes reported higher attachment to the Time Bank.

Furthermore, findings suggested that the Community Exchange helps build social networks, provides a system of social support and increases participant self-efficacy. For example, the majority of respondents reported that their physical and mental health improved as a result of involvement in the Community Exchange. The authors concluded that the Time Bank may not only provide general social support and health related

activities but also may create “a normative environment for promoting healthy behaviors” (Lasker et al., 2006, p. 38).

Recent work by Collom (2004; 2005) at the University of South Maine found some support for the social integration benefits of time banking. In his study of the Portland, Maine time bank, the largest neighbor-to-neighbor time bank in the United States, Collom (2005) found that each defined group of participants (female non-senior, female senior, male senior, and organizations) tended to statistically “under-transact” within their group. For example, Collom (2005) noted that senior citizens were more apt to engage in transactions with other groups of participants than with each other. In other words, evidence suggests that “bridging” social capital was being fostered.

The Maine research supported the findings of Seyfang (2002). Seyfang found some evidence of the social integration benefits of time banking in a National Study of time banking in the United Kingdom. More research is needed to assess the social capital enhancement impacts of co-production initiatives.

Moreover, the previously described EQUIPO project was also formally evaluated. A mixed method approach was utilized. Methods included interviews with families who had received services from the project, interviews with the natural helpers, file reviews and a network analysis (“Natural Helpers”, 2002). The network analysis looked at the construct of social support by examining the relations among the 204 individuals who participated in EQUIPO, including recipients, the natural helpers, formal service providers and informal supporters of program participants.

The evaluation yielded important findings. For example, almost every person from whom data were collected showed an enhanced network of social supports after

program participation. The findings also highlighted the importance of becoming a natural helper after being a recipient of services. In addition, the evaluation revealed the challenges that professional staff had in working in partnership with the natural helpers, especially in using the helpers in support of and to enhance their professional work with families (“Natural Helpers”, 2002).

*First National Study in the United Kingdom*

The most comprehensive evaluation of time banking to date has been the National Study of Time Banking in the United Kingdom (Seyfang, 2001b; Seyfang, 2002; Seyfang & Smith, 2002). The research took several forms and occurred in stages. The first stage included a survey of time bank coordinators in the UK. The survey included closed and open-ended questions with the quantitative data used for descriptive purposes.

Subsequent stages utilized a multi-method, community-based, action research approach. This approach involved the use of participant surveys, case studies, semi-structured interviews and focus groups to assess the impact of time banking (Seyfang & Smith, 2002). A major strength of the study design was its multi-method data collection strategy.

Time Banks in the UK were set up by existing organizations. The majority of these banks had voluntary organizations as members. Organizations recruited to run time banks included a drop-in café, local schools, adult education centers, a doctor’s practice, a garden center, nursing homes, a credit unit and a football club (Seyfang, 2001b)

In the first phase, coordinators reported that a disproportionately high number of social excluded members who do not traditionally volunteer (poor people, unemployed, elderly and those with disabilities) were attracted to time banking. Coordinators estimated

that 72% of participants were not in formal employment; 42% of them were retirees and 20% were disabled or had a long-term illness (Seyfang, 2001b). In addition, most participants (two-thirds) were women (Seyfang & Smith, 2002). There was also some evidence of community members bonding together to participate in neighborhood group projects such as street clean-ups and inter-generational mixing with participants.

A major contribution of the study was the development of a wide range of objectives and indicators that sought to measure progress in fostering social inclusion via the building of social capital networks. Indicators of participant well-being were categorized into the broad areas of social, economic and political citizenship. Findings revealed evidence of social and economic benefits for participants as well as organizational benefits for the charities.

The study also identified a number of “lessons learned” in start-up and implementation. For example, the need for time banks to adapt to local conditions was noted. In addition, facilitating social events was often essential in building group cohesiveness and to stimulate member exchanges.

This research also identified challenges. For example, findings revealed that members were more apt to provide services for other members than to ask for services. Community time banks struggled with finding new ways to encourage members to use the accumulated hours to address their needs and wants and to allow for other members to have the opportunity to “give-back.” Another challenge was widening the range of services available for exchange. Maintaining a range of services available in the time bank is important so as to increase the attractiveness of the time bank for new and existing members.

This study also faced a number of methodological obstacles. First, time bank coordinators collected most of the data. These data represented coordinators' impressions.

In addition, there were poor survey response rates from time bank members (21-28% in only two of case study sites). These poor response rates limited the utility of the data from the surveys. Thus, data from the focus groups became the main method by which time bank participants participated in the research (Seyfang & Smith, 2002). In the end, these operational obstacles detracted from the strength of the study's original multi-method data collection design.

#### *Most Recent National Study in the United Kingdom*

In 2006, a second national study of time banking and co-production occurred in the UK (Boyle et al., 2006). The research focused on how public and voluntary sector organizations used co-production to support and enable their clients to play an active role in their recovery and that of their neighbors.

Three project sites were studied; Glasgow, Scotland, Southeast London and in Wales. Multiple data collection methods were used. Methods included face to face interviews, written surveys and focus groups. In addition, local people were recruited and trained to collect data. Case study methods were also employed.

Findings revealed an emerging "co-production" sector in the health, social services and educator sectors. However, this sector remained "on the fringes." In other words, this sector remained generally outside of nationally funded services in the UK.

Evidence also supported multi-faceted impacts associated with co-production. Impacts of co-production were realized at the individual, community and institutional

levels. For example, data showed that hard- to-reach groups were attracted to time banking schemes. In addition, staff morale emerged as an important variable linked to co-production success. Also, findings indicated that the narrow focus of government services presented a significant barrier to incorporating co-production interventions into mainstream services.

Recommendations were offered for policy changes. Changes included the creation of a new category of work (time banking) to be rewarded and recognized through the benefits system. Also, a properly resourced intermediary sector was proposed, especially one that would work to infuse co-production strategies into core service areas (Boyle et al., 2006).

#### *Summary of the Research to Date*

Most of the studies on co-production's original framework have been exploratory and descriptive in nature. The studies have also been limited in scope, focusing on specific client outcomes that are tied to organizational goals. Befitting a relatively new field of inquiry, qualitative methods predominated. Two studies utilized quasi-experimental designs; comparing clients/patients that participated in co-production related programming to those who did not. However, progress has been made in defining and making operational outcome measures of time banking and co-production.

#### **Conceptual and Methodological Challenges in Studying Co-Production Initiatives**

Several conceptual and methodological challenges are associated with the study of co-production initiatives. These challenges are described next.

### *The Primacy of Community Time Banking*

As indicated in the previous research, in many circles, co-production has become synonymous with community time banking. For example, in a recent proposal to a foundation in the United Kingdom, authors defined co-production as an “informal mutual support that builds social capital by rewarding activity and support for people excluded from paid work” (C. Gray, personal communication, December 8, 2004). Time banking, with its special emphasis on building neighbor-to-neighbor mutual assistance communities, has been the major focus of study within the co-production literature. It has often been viewed as an end in and of itself in contrast to it being considered one method by which co-production can be made operational.

Apparently, the emphasis on community time banking has created a schism. This schism divides proponents of citizen-citizen co-production and proponents of citizen-state co-production. Citizen-citizen co-production involves neighbors providing assistance to neighbors. In this approach, a time banking system of exchanges is implemented and it requires a commitment that all participants agree to both give and receive service. Staff or volunteers follow suit. They facilitate citizen-citizen co-production in a manner that is consistent with co-production values of asset-building, redefining work, reciprocity, social capital building and fighting injustice. Researchers of these citizen-citizen interventions seek to understand the extent to which co-production represents a new form of mutual assistance and peer driven service (Boyle, 2004a; Burns, 2004).

In contrast, citizen-state co-production involves staff and clients exchanging resources to work together. Together, they strive to improve client circumstances and, at

the same time, to expand the mission of the agency and rebuild the local community. This citizen-state co-production requires a fundamental re-thinking of client/staff relationships. Staff must begin to view clients as more than just service recipients. Clients are instead civic resources.

Researchers interested in citizen-state interventions focus on understanding the strategies involved in implementing complex interventions and the impacts of these interventions. For example, they focus on how to persuade clients to jointly steward the mission of the agency. They also focus on how the synergistic capacity of the agency and its client base can contribute to community improvements.

*Co-Production Initiatives: Singular Interventions or Complex Community Change?*

The complexity of co-production theory was identified in the earlier. Change is sought at many levels, including the individual, family, provider staff, the sponsoring organization, other community organizations and the larger neighborhood or community. Co-production theory hypothesizes synergistic impacts between the various levels affected through the changing relationship between client and provider, reciprocal exchanges between community members and new collaborative relations between community stakeholders.

Co-production initiatives at their fullest dimensions resemble a comprehensive community initiative (CCI). CCI's seek to strengthen many sectors of neighborhood well-being. They also work to enhance community building among its stakeholders in order to promote healthy communities (Kubisch, Fulbright-Anderson & Connell, 1998). These initiatives involve "complex efforts with multiple interacting components that require

constant mid-course correction and the active engagement of committed human beings” (Schorr, 2003, p. 5).

To date, co-production initiatives have been a cross-section of diverse kinds of interventions. Stand-alone projects, such as the D.C. Youth Court, seek to achieve results for a defined client population (i.e., recidivism improvements for juveniles). Others have resembled complex initiatives seeking larger macro policy impacts (i.e., addressing social exclusion).

Different interventions exist within the broad category of “citizen-state” co-production. These interventions need to be defined and explicated. This dissertation study aims to make progress toward this end by contributing to the theorization and “operationalization” of the many forms of co-production, creating the conditions by which more comprehensive research efforts can occur.

#### *Inadequate Definition of Co-production Outputs and Outcomes*

Outputs, defined as the direct results of program activities, the size and scope of the services and products delivered and produced by the program (W.T. Kellogg Foundation, 2001, p. 8), have received limited attention in the co-production literature. Some programs have developed simple tools to fill the gap. For example, a youth program in Wales simply measured the number of time hours produced, the number of new activities in which the youth becomes involved and the number of new people whom the youth meets (Wales Institute for Community Currencies, 2004).

Collom (2004) developed a template for a quantitative analysis of the East End Time Exchange in Portland, Maine. Examples of measures include system size (the number of transactions per quarter), network growth (the growth rate of active

participants per quarter) and network density (percent of total transactions of active participants per quarter). Such measures will allow time banks to track progress in recruiting and maintaining members as well as distinguish active from non-active participants. Analyses of broad categories of service usage, participant profiles which link demographics with trading activity and social network analysis that can describe trading activity by member type will also now be possible. Additional work linking membership characteristics and outputs, such as trading activity, with outcomes will enhance the ability of programs to track who is benefiting the most from time banking.

A similar challenge exists in defining outcomes. Within the original co-production framework, community level outcomes, such as community social capital formation are highlighted. Individual youth and staff related outcomes and their inter-relationships require further delineation and definition. Understanding the link between youth and staff engagement and other youth related outcomes is a key focus of this dissertation inquiry.

#### *The Need for Intervention Theory and Implementation Guidelines*

Co-production has not been satisfactorily conceptualized as a method of treatment, an intervention or a system of practice. More work is needed in developing a conceptual and an operational framework for co-production interventions, including theoretically sound and research-supported guidance regarding “how to do it.”

Staff and administrators often have difficulty in grasping co-production, in particular, what needs to be altered within the organization to move co-production forward (Boyle, 2004a). Beginning work on identifying contextual enabling factors as well as challenges has occurred. For example, staff resistance, including the difficulty in

handing over responsibility to clients and the fear that their job will change or that they will lose status, has been noted (Boyle, 2004a; Boyle, 2004b; Boyle et al., 2006; “Natural Helpers,” 2002). Institutional resistance to change, including a hesitancy to alter program procedures and methods of working, has also been identified (Boyle, Clark & Burns, 2006; Burns, 2004).

However, limited research has occurred that focuses on the import of place, timing, and organizational context on co-production interventions. For example, in a review of HMO sponsored service credit initiatives, Dentzer (2003) found that organizations faced a number of challenges in integrating time bank programs within existing medical and social programs. One challenge concerned start-up.

For example, mismatches often occurred between services immediately needed by seniors such as transportation and a ready supply of volunteers willing and able to transport. This mismatch may have impeded the use of time banking as a tool used by staff to further health related outcomes (Dentzer, 2003). Another challenge resulted from time banking not generating needed revenue, even to support its infrastructure. As a result, the researcher found that time banks were often the first budget cuts that were made when cost conscious organizations needed to pare down operations (Dentzer, 2003).

Additional studies are needed to identify the characteristics of organizational and community settings (e.g., Sarason, 1989) conducive to co-production interventions, including factors linked to successful implementation and to maintaining sustainable program operations. More work is also required in understanding the relationship between co-production activities and desired results; in particular, detailing the sequence

of activities and important strategic choices that are thought to facilitate program effectiveness. Findings from the second national UK study focused attention to this area (Boyle et al., 2006).

For example, researchers identified challenges with making operational the concept of reciprocity. Organizations struggled with the issue of rewarding contributions through agency incentives or maintaining the primacy of voluntary exchanges between participants as the core method. Findings revealed that youth valued rewards. Many youth converted their service hours into something of value, such as driving lessons. An unintended consequence of relying on agency incentives occurred: Youth began to stop using their hours for attendance at social events. By using their accumulated hours in this manner, expanding social capital opportunities for involved youth was compromised.

A core dilemma emerged: Should adults be more assertive in guiding youth choices because adults “know better”? How would this assertiveness impact on youth empowerment and self-determination? To what extent will these choices influence levels of youth engagement? Researchers noted that finding the correct balance of adult direction and facilitation can be problematic. Also, finding the right mix of agency incentives and naturally occurring incentives resulting from voluntary exchanges between community members can also be challenging. These issues of choice, self-determination, the role of staff and adult volunteers and the impact on youth engagement within co-production interventions will be the subject of subsequent chapters of this dissertation inquiry.

Similarly, the study also revealed challenges with “sustaining the co-production dynamic” once paid staff were introduced into the program (Boyle et al., 2006). Here,

findings revealed that valuing community leadership and contributions were shortchanged when time banks moved from a volunteer run program to a program with a number of paid staff. Findings from the new UK study have relevance in planning for the interventions to be piloted and studied in the dissertation inquiry.

Finally, it is important to understand how staff and clients view co-production and whether anticipated results and community/organizational impacts correspond with staff, participant and stakeholder notions of change possibilities. Here, theory based evaluations (Weiss, 1995; 1997) can be designed to uncover numerous individual theories of change and their similarities and differences. Comparing individual theories of change with the understood program theory of change is also important. For example, in complex change initiatives, it is often essential to identify competing theories of change and reconcile significant disagreements so that staff and other stakeholders are working in a unified manner to accomplish espoused program goals (Connell & Kubisch, 1998). Findings from these kinds of studies can inform the development of organizational strategies that would create active staff and client participation in program design. This would help in stakeholder engagement and buy-in. Staff preparation and training programs can also build off these findings.

Outlining program dynamics and mechanisms are also important because theorists are finding that co-production implementation is highly contextual to organizational settings and local leadership (Boyle, 2004a; Burns, 2004). Such modeling can begin to sort through the complexity of design and implementation. Modeling also facilitates knowledge generation gleaned from experimentation.

## **The Initial Theory of Change for Co-Production**

A preliminary framework for co-production research and practice can be derived from the work of the co-production theorists (see figure 2-1). Proposed client and staff benefits and pathways are described below.

### *Client Benefits and Pathways*

By investing and utilizing client talents and assets in new ways, co-production theorists hypothesize that enhanced client benefits will occur within the services program. Examples of hypothetical causal mechanisms are presented next.

First, involvement in co-production activities will enhance client engagement. This involvement will also increase self-confidence and self-esteem (Cahn, 2004, p. 210). Increased self-confidence and self-esteem yield other positive client benefits. These benefits can then generate new opportunities for youth to contribute, yielding additional client and staff benefits as well as positive community and organizational impacts.

Examples exist within the original co-production framework of levels or degrees of co-production activity that build over time. A concrete example of a client/staff partnership that grew to greater levels occurred in the Washington, DC time dollar youth court. Here, a number of youth that served on the youth court also agreed to be a community watchdog. With the guidance of adult staff, they convened a Youth Grand Jury to investigate the juvenile justice system in the District, assessing government efforts to prevent and reduce substance abuse and dropout rates as well as improve community/police relations. Testimony and information were gathered to support eight policy recommendations to improve city government. Teens wrote the report that was submitted to officials (Time Dollar Institute, 2000).

Client level results and benefits require additional theorization, especially as it relates to youth. Questions include: (1) Are there other developmental benefits afforded to youth participants in addition to self-esteem and social support? If so, what are they, and what causal pathways explicate them? (2) Within social support, what kinds of support occur from participation in co-production activities? (3) In addition to community level social capital enhancement, can individual social capital be enhanced as a result of participating in a co-production driven intervention? Can bonding social capital occur, in addition to bridging and linking social capital? And, finally, and most relevant to this dissertation study, (4) What are the mechanisms through which these benefits can be realized? In other words, what changes in staff/client roles and interactions need to occur for co-production interventions to be successful?

In particular, co-productions link to social support outcomes is under-theorized in the literature. It appears to be overshadowed by discussions of social capital benefits. The cultivation of individual social support networks, fueled by reciprocal exchanges, can provide clients with emotional, tangible, informational and companionship kinds of social support (Cutrona, 2000). Working together on a project to improve their community could strengthen these bonding relationships.

Positive “bonding” social capital (Bailey, 2005; Schneider, 2004) could also result from a newly created social group, drawn together through mutual assistance. An example here would be a group of teens supporting each other during early recovery from alcohol abuse as well as sharing resources to assist in finding and maintaining employment. This group can be open to new members, promoting solidarity as well as mechanisms of informal socialization, social control and social support (Coleman, 1988)

Pathways resulting in client level benefits include the following possibilities:

1. Enhanced client engagement occurs through participation in co-production interventions with staff.
2. Through this participation, clients are able to meet more of their needs by earning the help and resources needed for change (Boyle, 2004a), either through accumulated time banked hours or some other form of exchange that rewards them for their activity.
3. In turn, clients receive recognition for their work in addressing organizational and community goals. Positive client results, including enhanced social support and social capital generation, result from this activity.

These hypothesized pathways require further theorization, especially for youth.

For example, what is the range of co-producing roles that youth can undertake? What are the mechanisms by which clients work together with staff? How does working together contribute to enhanced engagement? Is the current pathway accurate? Are there alternatives?

Finally, the notion of co-production phases requires additional theorization. If there are phases of co-production, what are the defining features? Also, is there a nature progression between the phases and if so, what is the progression?

#### *Staff Benefits and Pathways*

There is some discussion within the co-production literature regarding the impact of co-production on staff. For example, co-production theorists call for service organizations to embrace co-production by creating mechanisms for client work and contributions to be valued and rewarded (Cahn, 2004). In addition, there is recognition

that for co-production interventions to succeed, the role of professional will need to change. As Boyle notes, co-production means no longer “doing the work” for participants but instead exploring ways to “incentivize” participation so that clients can “purchase” what they need through using, in the case of time banking, the hours that they have earned (Boyle, 2004b).

However, there is insufficient theorization within the original framework regarding articulating new roles for staff in working in partnership with clients. In addition, there is little discussion on how to prepare staff for leading and facilitating co-production interventions and how organizations can support these change efforts.

It is also unclear what impact staff will play in achieving client results and organizational and community impacts. For example, to what extent will staff play an active role in introducing clients to new situations by which client assets can be utilized? Will staff be organizing community change projects or overseeing projects led by clients? Will these new staff roles be context driven? Based on client capabilities?

There are a number of recent approaches in working with clients, such as strength-based work (Saleebey, 1992) and empowerment practices (Lee, 1996), by which staff move away from demanding change to instead serve as coaches, supporters and team-builders for client directed change efforts to occur (McCammon et al., 2001). Is the role of staff in co-production interventions similar to the role that staff plays in these approaches? Or, are there differences?

Clarifying staff roles and preparing staff for these role changes are also essential. Findings from the most recent study of co-production programming in the UK identified

the development of staff capacity to be as important as cultivating volunteer involvement for co-production programming to be successful (Boyle et al.).

Finally, the impact of co-production interventions on staff efficacy and well-being is not well articulated in the co-production literature. Reduced staff burnout is identified as a potential impact (Boyle, 2004a), but has not been tested empirically. In addition, the hypothesized mechanisms by which reduced burnout occurs have not been set forth. Additional theorization and conceptualization is needed.

#### *Organizational Impacts and Pathways*

There is discussion within the co-production literature regarding the range of potential organizational dividends that can be afforded organizations that invest in co-production. Examples include:

- Co-producing clients can generate a new labor pool for financially strapped agencies (Cahn, 2004), building internal capacity (Trevino & Trevino, 2004) and provide additional services to clients outside of contractual mandates (Boyle et al., 2006). They also form a pool of potential recruits that may qualify for certain difficult to fill entry-level jobs.
- Hours of contribution by clients can become a source for in-kind contributions that can assist in drawing down government dollars and enhance program sustainability (Cahn, 2004; Trevino & Trevino, 2004). Contributions from clients even in small programs can add to the attractiveness of grant applications that require in-kind matching resources.
- Co-producing clients can also grow to become a constituency that is empowered to speak up on behalf of programs facing budget cuts (Cahn, 2004).

- An active client pool can also assist in action-based research and program evaluation, monitoring and providing feedback on service delivery effectiveness (Cahn, 2004; Trevino & Trevino, 2004).
- Clients can also serve as a vehicle to help document unmet community service needs (Cahn, 2004).

The mechanisms by which these impacts are achieved require further articulation and theorizing. In particular, what changes would need to be made within organizations to accomplish these benefits? Are the costs associated with these new activities less than the benefits that can be afforded from these changes?

#### *Community Impacts and Pathways*

Co-production theorists have also articulated potential community impacts of co-production interventions and initiatives.

For example, theorists (Cahn, 2004; Seyfang, 2004a) emphasize the potential of building collective community social capital through co-production initiatives. The building of community collective efficacy is relevant here. It refers to the capacity of a group to regulate its members according to desired principles. It is present when community members actively and willingly prevent acts of public disorder by getting involved in their community (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1997). Studies have shown that communities with high concentrations of disadvantage and residential instability that are associated with measures of violence can have these effects mediated if these communities exhibit high measures of community collective efficacy (Sampson & Raudenbush).

It is hypothesized that co-production initiatives will build trust among community members through the trading of services, and the building of informal supports. This in turn will generate contagion effects, building community collective efficacy and community social capital. It is hypothesized that co-production programming involving communities as a focus can contribute to anti-violence and crime prevention efforts (Cahn, 2004).

Co-production activities can also advance social justice and community health. For example, time dollar exchanges can provide an avenue into paid employment, allowing clients to expand their skills and interests and find new ones to test out. This could assist long-term TANF recipients in taking initial steps toward employment (E. Cahn, personal communication, September, 2004). Neighbor-to-neighbor time banking exchange systems can also provide back-up support to families so that vulnerable and overstressed workers can maintain their jobs when crisis hits (Cahn, 2004). It can serve as an employee assistance program for low income and dependent families.

Time banking initiatives have also been proposed to assist ex-offenders returning to their communities. With time banking, offenders are provided opportunities to give back (E. Cahn, personal communication, September, 2004). Time banking can also serve as a means to foster community reintegration for youth returning from residential facilities or detention centers.

It is important to note that most of these proposed community impacts have not yet been tested empirically. For example, the impact of time banking on promoting community collective efficacy has not been piloted for study in any community as yet.

Doing so would necessitate a complex change initiative with all its attendant challenges in terms of implementation and research design.

In addition, there is evidence that community benefits will vary by project focus (Boyle et al., 2006). Articulating a program theory of change with an attendant logic model depicting how outcomes and impacts would occur would be an initial essential step in designing the program.

### **Core Features of Citizen-Citizen Co-Production**

As noted earlier, co-production has been categorized into “citizen-citizen” and “citizen-state” initiatives (C. Gray, personal communication, October 11, 2004). To reiterate, citizen-citizen co-production represents a new form of mutual assistance and peer driven service (Boyle, 2004a; Burns, 2004). Findings from the research and literature review on co-production, with its emphasis on neighbor-to-neighbor mutual assistance communities, can be used to set forth the key features of citizen-citizen co-production (see appendix 2-2). Review and analysis of the literature in other fields of study (e.g., positive youth development) will be required to make operational the various kinds of citizen-state co-production (see chapter 4).

Time Banking is a dominant tool in citizen-citizen kinds of initiatives. However, direct client/staff exchanges are not a core feature. Here, the role of the human services provider is one of facilitator or matchmaker of service exchanges. Staff facilitates exchanges of service between clients or between clients and other community members. In fact, the active role of agency staff in facilitating the mutual assistance process is a defining feature of citizen-citizen co-production. This separates citizen-citizen co-production from other mutual assistance initiatives.

Also, the role of staff in effectuating service exchange matches is an important one. There is a growing literature on the importance of cultivating informal supports for troubled youth (Dolan & McGrath, 2006). Optimal matching of social supports for troubled youth is increasingly being viewed as important in order to foster independence and self-efficacy and prioritize direct intervention by staff (Cutrona, 2000; Cutrona & Russell, 1990). For example, for youth with complex service needs, when to directly intervene, when to mobilize the natural support network and when to introduce new potential supports become important service strategies (Dolan & McGrath, 2006; Warren, 1997). Appropriate matching of time bank members with troubled youth requires an assessment of need with active participation from youth and family members.

In addition, organizations that seek to cultivate mutual assistance transactions may be confronted with the necessity of altering staff job descriptions to adjust to this new priority (Dolan, Pinkerton & Canavan, 2006; Gerzer-Sass and Pettinger, 1997; Warren, 1997). For example, staff that provide services to clients who are now tasked with matching clients with other clients, neighbors or time bank members, will need to prioritize their time differently.

Furthermore, as job roles change toward assisting in the facilitation of mutual exchanges, workers may perceive a loss of status; power and control (see Dolan & McGrath, 2006; Gerzer-Sass & Pettinger, 1997; Warren, 1997). Organizational policies, such as retraining and support systems for staff, will be important to the success of client-client co-production interventions. New accountability systems, that encourage and provide incentives to staff that satisfactorily perform these new tasks and achieve outcomes for youth, will need to be established (Boyle et al., 2006).

Also, it is important to note that direct exchanges between staff and clients may become a priority over time, depending upon the mutual exchange system being developed. For example, organizations may want to recruit a cadre of clients to serve as leaders of the mutual assistance effort, to assist in both convening and attracting clients to participate in mutual assistance initiatives. Within time banking, a “kitchen cabinet” of participants is often created to help set policy and plan for the time bank. This is done in collaboration with paid staff (Time Dollar Institute, 2004). In these situations, the agency through its staff may enter into direct exchanges with participants to assist and reward them for their active participation in contributing to the success of the time bank.

As a core group of contributing clients emerges, citizen-citizen co-production may morph into citizen-state co-production, with organizational benefits realized. In the above example, participants are supporting organizational change through the development of the time bank. Other organizational impacts can also begin to occur. For example, youth and families that rely on neighbors and friends in the time bank to meet a number of its service needs would mean less of a reliance on agency services now and in the future.

In addition, citizen-citizen interventions usually involve transactions between individuals in one-on-one settings. However, as evidenced in the literature review on co-production’s original framework, small groups of participants can work together to perform a service for other community members, local non-profits including the host organization or government-run organizations. Each participant can earn time dollars or be individually reciprocated in other ways (e.g., receiving special services) for the services delivered.

Finally, it is important to note that large neighbor-to-neighbor time banking exchange systems need not be the only setting for service exchanges. Service organizations can develop “mini” service exchange programs. These programs could be between family members, within smaller support groups facilitated by the organization or within groups of clients convened for training or skills development. Facilitating the development of smaller time bank projects designed with specific target populations has only recently been gaining interest within the time bank community (see Time Banks USA, 2007). As a whole, they have been insufficiently studied, dwarfed by the emphasis on larger community time bank programs.

### **The Need for an Expanded Theoretical Foundation**

Notwithstanding its contributions, the original co-production framework needs to be enhanced theoretically and empirically. Specifically, more work needs to be done in identifying specific co-production intervention strategies and causal pathways that yield one or more benefits. In addition, potential outcomes for clients and staff need further articulation.

Additional theorizing is also needed in articulating pathways for change. Here, core theoretical determinants of co-production interventions need to be identified, described and justified. A core area requiring further articulation is the relationship and interaction between staff and youth in facilitating exchanges and transactions. Setting forth preconditions and antecedents necessary in preparing organizations and contexts for co-production interventions are also lacking in the original co-production framework.

Furthermore, and as noted earlier, citizen-state co-production remains under-theorized. Understanding the core theoretical concepts associated with citizen-state

interventions, including its variations, defining features, important preconditions and outcomes and the relationships between the relevant core concepts, promises to be a key contribution of this dissertation inquiry. A review of relevant theory and research in the field of positive youth development (see chapter 4) will provide a more clear articulation of citizen-state interventions, as it applies to youth involved in intervention where they are serving as contributors, resources and community change agents.

In addition, the literature on positive youth development will reveal key determinants and correlates of youth engagement. This review will pave the way for a new and expanded literature search that will incorporate relevant theories, concepts and lines of research found in three fields of study that were often noted in the original co-production framework. These areas include: (1) empowerment-related research and practice, (2) collaboration and related processes and (3) engagement theorization and methodologies.

The objective is to utilize relevant theorization in these areas to enhance the understanding of co-production, to assist in further articulating its essential ingredients and distinguishing features. Exploring these relevant areas will also assist in developing design principles associated with co-production interventions, essential contextual preconditions to ensuring successful interventions and a further definition of proximal and distal outcomes and impacts that can be linked to co-production activities.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY FOR THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

### **Research Questions**

Three research questions structure the proposed study: (1) What theoretical concepts facilitate an improved theoretical framework for co-production, with a special focus on engagement of involuntary youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems? (2) Do data gathered from a two-site pilot study provide empirical support for this enhanced framework? (3) Do these data indicate the need for additional theorizing and/or practice changes?

### **Study Rationale**

The challenges associated with the engagement and retention of youth and families in the child welfare and juvenile justice system are of profound concern to policy makers, practitioners and administrators. Most of the clients in these systems are involuntary participants. They are either mandated to work with an agency due to a court order or pressured to accept help from agencies. If they had their choice, most of the youth in these systems would not be participating in services with these organizations (Ivanoff et al., 1994; Rooney, 1992; Trotter, 1999). Due to these challenges, identifying service components that are associated with successful client engagement, retention and active participation are gaining interest among practitioners and researchers alike (Dawson & Berry, 2002), especially as more is learned of the link between compatible service components, engagement and participation and positive outcomes (Fredricks et al., 2004; Littell, 2001; Littell & Tajima, 2000).

Co-production initiatives are designed to enhance engagement so that clients involved in service programs can achieved intended outcomes. These initiatives also

generate reciprocal benefits for clients, staff, organizations and communities. However, to date, co-production has not been satisfactorily conceptualized as a method of treatment, an intervention or a system of practice. More work is needed in developing a conceptual and an operational framework for co-production interventions, including theoretically sound and research-supported guidance regarding “how to do it.” Findings from this dissertation promise to guide administrators and service providers in planning and designing innovative interventions for hard to serve youth.

In addition, the lack of a theoretical framework for co-production interventions and detailed logic models drawn from relevant theory and practice, have constrained research and evaluation studies of co-production completed to date. More work is required in identifying conditions conducive to the success of co-production initiatives. Also, a fuller understanding of the relationship between co-production activities and desired results; in particular, detailing the sequence of activities and important strategic choices intended to facilitate program effectiveness, is needed. Unfortunately, organizations are moving forward with evaluation and impact studies (see Boyle et al., 2006; Seyfang & Smith, 2002) without a full understanding of co-production as a change process. This dissertation aims to create an empirically grounded theoretical framework for co-production interventions. Researchers will benefit from this inquiry, as they will now have a framework to help guide future research and evaluation efforts.

### **Overview of Methodology**

The methodology for the dissertation is presented below. Methodological considerations are included for both the theoretical and empirical investigation of co-production.

### *Methodology for Theoretical Investigation*

As identified in chapter 2, potential benefits stemming from co-production interventions were identified for clients and staff. However, co-production's original framework falls short in terms of identifying specific intervention strategies and causal pathways that yield one or more benefits. In addition, further articulation of benefits as well as pathways for change, are needed. Setting forth preconditions necessary in preparing organizations and contexts for co-production interventions are also lacking in the original co-production framework. Finally, the relevance of co-production as an intervention designed to foster engagement in involuntary youth has not been satisfactorily explored.

To address these limitations and at the same time contributing to co-production theory and research, an expanded literature search was undertaken. A content analysis of the original co-production framework resulted in the selection of three areas of study for further exploration. These areas are: (1) empowerment research and practice, (2) collaboration and related processes with a special focus on staff/client collaboration theory, and (3) engagement theorization and methodologies. Chapters 5 to 7 of this dissertation inquiry will focus on these areas of study. In addition, further articulation of citizen-state co-production and its variations, through a review of the literature on positive youth development, will occur in the next chapter of the dissertation.

The overall objective of the expanded literature search is to further articulate the essential ingredients and distinguishing features of co-production interventions in working with involuntary youth. The search focuses on identifying relevant theories, concepts and lines of research that are relevant to enhancing an understanding of co-

production. Exploring these relevant areas assists in developing design principles associated with co-production, including core intervention features and identifying essential contextual preconditions and antecedents to ensure successful interventions. Further definition of proximal and distal outcomes and impacts associated with co-production also occurred from this search. .

This literature review and additional theorizing is both disciplinary and interdisciplinary. It is unavoidably specialized. Such specialization is manifested in language and complex theoretical constructs and concepts. Due to the presence of specialized disciplinary language and theoretical systems, researchers are often unable to see what they have in common or how they differ. More specifically, researchers from different disciplines often use different language and theory to depict and study the same phenomenon. At the same time, researchers from different disciplines may use comparable and identical language but on close inspection, they are studying different phenomenon. Numerous examples of these inter-disciplinary challenges occurred in this theoretical investigation of co-production.

In response to these challenges and in order to develop a coherent theoretical framework for co-production, cross-disciplinary and cross paradigm bridge-building was required. This integrative and bridge-building is an important result of this dissertation. It enabled the articulation of co-production theory. It also facilitated the explanation of the data that was analyzed in the empirical investigation. Furthermore, by bridging and integrating theory from a number of different disciplines, new pathways for future research are better articulated.

The envisioned end-product of the theoretical investigation is ambitious but achievable. It is the development of a comprehensive theoretical framework that illustrates a theory of change associated with co-production interventions. The theoretical framework includes an articulation of longer-term outcomes, interim outcomes that often include changes in contextual conditions that support the complex change initiative, activities to be initiated to accomplish the outcomes articulated and the resources needed to implement the activities (Connell & Kubisch, 1998). A logic model format will be used to depict the sequence of events and linkages among the various elements.

From the expanded literature review, essential preconditions and antecedents associated with co-production interventions are revealed. In addition, core and advanced intervention features are set forth. Proximal as well as distal outcomes associated with co-production interventions are then presented. Proposed propositions, which depict pathways to youth and staff outcome attainment, are also outlined. In short, the proposed theoretical framework gleaned from the expanded literature review describes how co-production interventions can be made operational in its ideal format. The theoretical framework and propositions create the necessary edifice to guide research studies for co-production in the future.

Due to the emphasis in the literature on voluntary clients, this expanded theorization initially focused primarily on this expansive group of youth. However, in this investigation, a more specific targeted focus emerged: the paradox of involuntary youth who participate semi-voluntarily in co-production programs and services. Due to this focus, additional theorization was required. In particular, the relevance and applicability of the proposed theoretical framework of co-production for voluntary clients

will be explored for youth involuntarily referred for services in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

To assist with this analysis, micro-level intervention theory associated with involuntary clients are described and analyzed. Propositions and pathways associated with staff/youth collaboration and youth engagement for involuntary clients are derived from this analysis, integrating the research and theory from the voluntary and involuntary service literatures.

During the empirical investigation phase, aspects of this complex articulation of co-production are revealed, through an in-depth case description and comparison of intervention features in two pilot sites. The pilot sites specialize in the delivery of services to primarily involuntary youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Through a number of data collection and data analysis strategies, aspects of the proposed theoretical framework are reviewed, to determine the extent to which it is grounded and supported in actual interventions (Weiss, 1995).

*Specifically, the focus of the empirical investigation is on describing micro-level processes related to youth and staff interactions within co-production interventions.*

Empowerment and collaboration related processes, key determinants and antecedents and their link to co-production outcomes, specifically youth engagement, are explored. However, constructs specific to involuntary youth, such as motivational congruence and its relevance to youth engagement, are not be a specific focus of the empirical investigation. The proposed methodology for the empirical investigation is described next.

### *Proposed Methodology for Empirical Investigation*

The proposed methodology for the empirical investigation is a hybrid. It involves three key features: (1) A theory of change approach, (2) Case study methodology, and (3) An action science approach. Each is described below.

#### *Theory of Change Evaluation*

In this dissertation, aspects of the proposed theoretical framework for co-production are investigated to determine if the framework is supported in practice. Data from this descriptive, exploratory research study is then used to analyze and revise the theoretical framework. Recommendations for practice improvements will also be presented.

The research involves a genus of evaluation called theory based evaluation (Weiss, 1997) and theory of change evaluation (Fullbright-Anderson, Kubisch & Connell, 1998). A theory of change evaluation involves a “systematic study of the links between activities, outcomes and the contexts of the initiative” (Connell & Kubisch, 1998, p. 16). It is designed to uncover in as detailed a way as possible the explicit and implicit theories about how and why programs work (Birckmayer & Weiss, 2000; Savaya & Stinchcomb, 2001; Weiss, 1995, 1997).

Theory of change evaluations differ significantly from traditional evaluation methods. These evaluations are most appropriate for complex change initiatives such as co-production. As a complex change initiative, co-production interventions often seek to foster change at multiple levels and within multiple systems. Co-production interventions also involve complex change processes, seek outcomes that are multi-faceted and difficult to make operational, are highly contextual in implementation strategy and often

take long periods of time for outcomes and impacts to be realized. Due to these features, traditional evaluation methods are not applicable to co-production interventions, as articulated in its original framework.

Traditional evaluations of interventions (e.g., experimental designs, randomized clinical trials) seek to randomize subjects, insist on consistency of experimental intervention, look to standardize intervention strategies across sites and seek temporal order to assess the impact of the intervention on pre-determined outcome measures. These methods are ill-matched with complex interventions, including social services in general as well as those associated with mutual assistance initiatives (Connell & Kubisch, 1998; Schorr, 2003; Trevino & Trevino, 2004).

Complex initiatives like co-production often involve working across multiple sectors (i.e., social, economic, physical, political). These interventions are structured to foster change at multiple levels including individual, family, organizational, community and system. These initiatives entail horizontal and vertical complexity (Kubisch et al., 1995). They necessitate the development of multiple outcomes and activities that are difficult to identify and articulate.

An additional challenge: outcome measures associated with complex change initiatives are often difficult to operationalize. For example, important constructs associated with co-production, such as “social capital,” “collaboration” and “empowerment” presents measurement problems individually because they are not easily measurable. Problems are also present when these constructs are combined because most instruments focus on just one construct. In addition, single point assessment of outcomes will not capture the complexity of the change processes inherent in complex change

initiatives (Kubisch et al., 1995). Many of these interventions and initiatives, such as those involved with co-production, take time to develop before results can be shown (Trevino & Trevino, 2004). These same limitations are being raised to explain the poor research findings associated with complex program interventions for high-risk youth (see Public/Private Ventures, 2002).

Furthermore, complex change initiatives are highly contextual. They and studies of them require adaptation to local circumstances, constant changes in intervention frameworks and flexibility over time (Kubisch et al., 1995; Schorr, 2003; Trevino & Trevino, 2004). As identified in chapter 2, this reflects the reality of the implementation of co-production interventions.

In response to these several research and evaluation challenges, theory of change approaches move away from traditional impact evaluation and its requirements for isolating and controlling variables. Instead, “richly detailed qualitative descriptive methods” are undertaken to understand connections between actions and results (Schorr, 2003, p. 7). Although the quest for causal relationships remains, it is modified. More modest objectives include ascertaining “reasonable estimations of the likelihood that particular activities have contributed in concrete ways to observed effects” (Patton, 1997, p. 217).

To reiterate: The search for causality remains. Theory of change evaluations are based on the premise that beliefs and assumptions underlying a program can be expressed in a cause and effect framework (Weiss, 1995, 1997). Of import in this dissertation is ascertaining theories of change from a number of different perspectives, including staff and youth. Underlying this study is the recognition that staff and youth are active

implementers of service delivery (see Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Fallara & Furano, 2002). Both hold beliefs and assumptions about change features and how to effectuate them within the project context.

In this dissertation study, theory of change evaluation methods are used to review the proposed theoretical model in light of the “theory in use” (see Argyris, 1996) as articulated by staff and youth as they participate in co-production interventions. Similarities and differences between the proposed model and the various theories in use are ascertained. Between site similarities and differences are also assessed, as are similarities and differences in theories in use between intervention participants.

Additional sub-questions related to theory of change methodology, help guide the empirical investigation. These sub-questions include:

- How was the theoretical model related to the model in use?  
Similarities/differences? Between site differences? Similarities?
- What aspects of the theoretical model were salient to youth? To staff?
- Were there differences between sites in observations/perceptions?
- If there were differences in observations and perceptions between sites, what are some theories to help explain the differences?
- What changes in practice with involuntary clients can be recommended in light of the results of the exploratory study?

From this analysis, changes to the theoretical model are presented. In addition, changes in practice are offered in light of the results of this descriptive, exploratory study.

### *Case Study Methodology*

Case study methodology is often utilized to help understand and articulate theory (Yin, 2003). When Yin's (2003) specification for case study methodology is applied to the research questions at hand, this methodology is the preferred approach. Specifically, Yin (2003, p. 8) recommends that a case study approach be utilized when the following circumstances are present:

- ✓ Large site-by-site variability
- ✓ Instability in field sites
- ✓ Inability to utilize common measurement instrumentation
- ✓ Boundaries between context and phenomenon are not clearly evident
- ✓ How and why questions are being asked about a contemporary set of events
- ✓ A complex phenomenon is being studied in real life contexts
- ✓ Causal links are to be explained in real life interventions that are too complex for survey or experimental strategies.

These circumstances describe the challenges associated with integrating co-production within complex settings such as the pilot sites selected for inclusion in this study.

A nationally known service provider agreed to permit the piloting of co-production into its current complex and innovative services model. Two pilot sites were selected for study. The sites sought to integrate co-production features in real life contexts.

Numerous challenges were anticipated as co-production was incorporated into its wraparound and mentoring/advocacy service model for involuntary youth (see chapter 10 for a detailed description of agency context, original model of service and co-productive

additive features). For example, it was anticipated that both sites would experience levels of instability as new intervention features are introduced into the complexity of program operations. In addition, both sites present a somewhat different contextual and environmental setting for co-production intervention.

For these reasons, a case study approach was selected. The case study approach involves an in-depth description of the intervention processes in both sites, from the perspectives of youth and staff. Through the descriptive process, core theoretical concepts and their connections are revealed. Evidence from the descriptive findings of “theory in use” (Argyris, 1996) will be compared to the original theorizing. Analytic generalization (Yin, 2003, pp. 32-33) will be sought. The proposed theoretical framework will be supported if features of the proposed framework are present in the pilot demonstration sites. On the other hand, if evidence runs contra to the original theorizing, then the original theorizing will need to change, changes in practice will be recommended or both responses will be forwarded.

Additional features of the case study design also inform the investigation. These features are:

- The co-production intervention employed in each site is the unit of analysis for the case study.
- No embedded subunits of analysis (e.g., individual youth or categories of youth) are employed in this study (Yin, 2003, p. 42-43). However, examples of intervention processes affecting specific youth and outcomes associated with youth participants are employed to illustrate change dynamics associated with co-production involvement.

- Each case comprises an entire study, followed by cross-case analyses.
- The interventions in the pilot sites are then compared to the overall theoretical model developed.
- Intervention processes are reviewed during the first two years of initial project implementation.

### *An Action Science Approach*

The researcher in this study served as an action scientist. An action scientist is a researcher that also plays a role in the intervention. The action scientist seeks to both contribute to general knowledge as a researcher and also to promote learning within the client system (Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985). According to Friedman (2001), action science has four distinguishing features.

The first feature is the creation of a community of inquiry within a community of practice. Here, the researcher seeks to create conditions under which staff can build and test “theories of practice” for the purpose of on the job learning (Friedman, p. 160). Theories of practice refer to a set of interrelated theories of action that staff uses in dealing with problems that they face in everyday practice situations (Friedman, p. 161).

The second feature is to make explicit theories of practice, which staff or other actors hold in their minds. Here, action scientists inquire into the actor’s behavior and seek to understand the reasoning and logic behind why certain actions are taken. These actions are made overt, not for the purpose of proving the actor right or wrong but for the purpose of jointly determining if these theories hold true in real life (Friedman, p. 161)

The third feature involves the rigorous testing of the theories in practice. Here, theories of practice are tested using a range of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

These theories are tested in an action context. The final feature involves working in partnership with practitioners in creating alternatives to current service practices, to improve service delivery and change the status quo (Friedman, 2001)

In this investigation, the researcher served as an action scientist. The researcher is a paid employee of the host organization, serving as an internal consultant. Prior to serving in this capacity, the researcher held the post of Associate Vice-President for the host organization within the state that housed the two pilot sites.

As an internal consultant, the researcher worked closely with program staff to infuse co-production into existing program operations. He was involved in introducing co-production to program staff. He explored reasons for undertaking co-production programming with staff during orientation sessions. He also conducted training sessions on the original co-production framework outlined in chapter 2.

In addition, the researcher was involved in detailed planning for the two pilot sites. He facilitated planning sessions with staff, youth and parents. He also provided group facilitation which was observed by program staff. In addition, the researcher provided ongoing consultation support for the project, “trouble-shooting” obstacles and challenges and assisting program staff in deciding upon mid-course corrections. In short, the researcher was a key factor in the intervention in both of the project sites.

While serving as a consultant for the intervention, the researcher conducted the literature review that culminated in the proposed theoretical framework for co-production presented in this dissertation. Thus, the consultation and the theorizing that occurred during implementation followed an iterative process. Specifically, as the researcher learned more “on the ground,” his theorizing was impacted. At the same time, as new

theorizing progressed, the researcher offered practice suggestions to program staff. In short, combining the role of an internal consultant (and former administrator) with the role of researcher afforded benefits as well as constraints in moving an action science approach forward. These benefits and constraints will be reviewed as part of the findings of this inquiry.

Finally, the mere fact that the researcher was part of the intervention presents challenges. Challenges include ensuring trustworthiness, credibility and objectivity of the research conducted. Steps to ensure quality and rigor in project design in light of the dual role of the researcher will be reviewed later in this chapter.

### **Data Collection Plan**

The primary aim of the empirical investigation is to articulate theory. For this reason, a multi-method qualitative approach to data collection was implemented (Fortune & Reid, 1999). A two-phased data collection strategy was employed.

#### *Phase One: Semi-Structured Interviews and Participant Selection*

Interviews were the primary method of data collection used in this study. During the first phase of data collection, semi-structured and focused interviews were conducted. Interview questions were designed to provide data that addressed the research questions. These questions broadly corresponded to the key components and features of the proposed theory of intervention framework developed.

Semi-structured questions allowed each staff member and youth to share their individual program theories of change with the interviewer. Each informant was able to discuss his/her beliefs and attitudes about the program, including important intervention features, challenges and barriers to implementation and outputs/impacts achieved.

Questions developed by Anderson-Butcher et al., 2002), Lawson (2002) and those used by Surko, Lawson, Gaffney & Claiborne (2006) to uncover components of change theory, were used to help focus the interview questions. A draft of the interview instrument is attached to this document, in appendix 3-1).

Staff and youth were key participants in both sites. A purposive sampling approach was used to select youth participants. A purposive sample is a non-probability sample of handpicked respondents chosen because they represent a specific characteristic to be studied (Fortune & Reid, 1999). Because of the focus on gaining understanding of the correlates and preconditions associated with youth engagement, the researcher selected youth for inclusion in the study who, in the view of staff, were “active” participants in co-production activities. This selection allowed for the study of micro-processes associated with youth engagement and preliminary outcome attainment to occur.

Another part of the rationale is important. Including youth who were active participants enables the researcher to identify potential “success stories.” Through studying these success stories, a greater understanding of intervention practices associated with successful co-production interventions can be ascertained.

In site one, “active” participants was defined as youth who successfully completed a co-production group project (see chapter 10 for a further description of intervention features associated with each pilot site). All youth who fit this definition of active participants were contacted for inclusion in the study. Due to the shortage of potential participants, alumni youth were also contacted.

In site two, “active” participants was defined as youth who successfully completed a co-production agreement or had a significant number of time bank exchanges (e.g., greater than 10 hours of exchange at the time of the interview) while receiving services from YAP, Inc. As with site one, alumni were also included in the selection process if they met the criteria for active participants.

13 participants took part in the study from site one (7 youth and 6 staff). 12 participants (5 youth and 7 staff) participated in the study from site two. 25 total participants took part in this research study.

All participants were encouraged to add archival information to their verbal testimony to buttress points being made. Archival information included memorandum, case vignettes and written reports. Examples of archival information, where applicable, are included in the appendix of this dissertation.

#### *Phase Two: Focus Groups and Participant Selection*

Yin (2003) notes that an important feature of data collection with case study methodology is to corroborate and augment evidence gleaned from a specific source. This study was designed accordingly. For staff participants, focus groups were employed in each site as a second method of data collection, with the aim of corroborating and augmenting the evidence gathered from the interviews.

A focus group is normally convened to encourage participants to share perceptions and points of view, without pressuring participants to vote or reach a consensus (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Furthermore, because the nature of this inquiry is not thought to be especially sensitive or controversial, convening focus groups was identified as a useful complement to personal interviews. This additional method of data

collection was selected despite the warning from experts that grouping people in focus groups, who regularly interact (e.g., staff involved in the co-production interventions, may inhibit disclosure on certain topics (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

The focus groups occurred after the interview process. Staff focus groups were convened in each of the two sites. To ensure equity, staff members involved in phase one were asked to participate in the focus group. For site one, three of the six staff members who were interviewed actually participated in the focus group. For site two, four of the original seven staff took part in the phase two focus group.

The focus group had two main purposes: To corroborate key themes, processes and linkages discovered from the initial data collection phase and to explore in more depth the findings from the initial phase. Regarding the first purpose, respondents were provided with a draft report of initial findings from the interview phase (see appendix 3-3 and 3-4) and were asked to consensually validate the findings (see LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Focus group members were then given a second opportunity to address in depth some of the findings revealed during the interview phase (see focus group questions in appendix 3-2 for site one and appendix 3-3 for site two for more details).

#### *Data Collection Implementation*

The researcher collected all of the data for the investigation, including conducting interviews and eliciting focus group information. As an “insider,” the researcher brought to the interviews intimate knowledge of project planning and implementation. He also was in a unique position to ask probing questions designed to elicit individual theories of change from the participants. In addition, by knowing the staff involved in the two sites, the researcher was able to draw out answers and lead discussion during the focus group

process. For often-reticent youth, this proved to be invaluable so as to generate sufficient data to address the research questions proposed.

All interviews as well as the focus group sessions were audio taped and transcribed. Phase one data collection (interviews) occurred from May-October 2007. Phase two data collection (focus groups) occurred during April and July of 2008. The site of data collection varied, depending upon the individual circumstances of the youth. For example, due to transportation issues, many of the interviews occurred in the youth's home or in a neutral site such as a coffee shop. All staff interviews except for one, as well as the focus groups took place in an office setting. Upon request of the youth, two interviews, one in each site, involved a joint interview between the youth and his parent. Also, one interview in site two involved two brothers jointly being interviewed.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Yin (2003) describes three general strategies in analyzing case study evidence. Strategies include (1) following the theoretical propositions that led to your case study; (2) defining and testing rival explanations and (3) develop a descriptive framework for organizing the case study. In this dissertation study, a combination of general strategy one and three were used to analyze the data collected.

The proposed theoretical framework of co-production gleaned from the literature review formed the structure for the data analysis as well as the detailed case description of co-production in both pilot sites. The theoretical framework also provided the structure for a variety of comparisons that occurred between the pilot sites and between respondents in the two pilot sites.

In addition, two specific analytic techniques (see Yin, 2003) were utilized in analyzing the data. The first is pattern matching. Here, the pattern of specific variables associated with the theoretical framework was compared with findings from the descriptive analysis of both sites.

The second analytic technique is the use of cross-case synthesis. Through comparisons of co-production phenomenon described between the two sites, aspects of the proposed framework of co-production were reviewed and analyzed. Similarly, findings from descriptive data that elucidated micro-level constructs and processes were compared between sites as well as were compared to the theoretical model developed.

With these general and specific strategies serving as a framework for data analysis, the following steps were included in the data analysis plan of the phase one interviews material:

- ✓ Data transcription of interviews
- ✓ Deductive analysis begins: Developing a first level coding template using the proposed theoretical framework. Coding commenced using the broad coding template developed
- ✓ Inductive analysis begins: Secondary categorization of raw data within each of the broad categories established using a grounded approach,
- ✓ An in-depth descriptive and exploratory analysis of co-production constructs, variables and pathways in each project site
- ✓ Review and synthesis of focus group data, including integrating focus group findings with interview data gathered
- ✓ Comparison of findings between sites

- ✓ Analysis of findings from the empirical study in relation to the proposed theoretical framework developed.

Each step in the plan is briefly reviewed below.

### *Data Transcription*

A two person team (the researcher and a recent MSW graduate consultant) were involved in the data analysis. Data analysis began with data transcription. The consultant took on primary responsibility for data transcription.

#### *Deductive Analysis: Developing and Utilizing a Broad, First-Level Coding Template*

Data analysis began using a deductive approach called template analysis. According to King (1998), a template analysis approach occupies a middle ground between content analysis and a grounded theory approach. In content analysis, codes are predetermined. In grounded theory, there is no initial definition of codes prior to data analysis. In template analysis, data are used, as needed, to alter a coding scheme that has evolved from theory. In short, template analysis enables a priori theory to be instrumental in data analysis, but does not rule out innovative data and findings enabled by grounded theory.

For this study, a preliminary coding template was developed using the proposed theoretical model as a guide. Each core area of the proposed logic model (e.g., select antecedents related to co-production, core intervention features of co-production, proximal outcomes, distal outcomes and impacts associated with co-production) was used as a broad, first level coding template in analyzing the interview data. First-level coding commenced using the template framework. Inadequacies in the broad coding template were revealed, as applicable.

### *Inductive Analysis: Secondary Coding Using a Grounded Approach*

Data analysis then proceeded inductively. Here, themes within each broad area were categorized and coded using a grounded approach, with the theoretical framework serving as a guide. Sub-themes were identified. Using Atlas-ti software, analysis of findings occurred for participants in both sites. Comparison of findings then occurred within key areas, corresponding to the theoretical template.

### *In-depth Descriptive and Exploratory Analyses*

Using the data from the interviews and focus group meetings, the co-production interventions in both sites were described. Core intervention features, including empowerment and collaboration related processes, were identified and prioritized. Youth and staff outcomes, with an emphasis on levels of youth engagement, were revealed and summarized. Youth/family circumstances and select antecedent factors were also described.

In addition, links and relationships between constructs were highlighted, with a special focus on pathways associated with higher levels of youth engagement. Through this analysis, certain propositions of import were identified, setting the stage for future research exploration.

### *Review and Synthesis of Focus Group Data*

Data from the two focus group meetings with staff were analyzed, assisting in verifying themes, confirming results and adding to dissertation findings.

### *Comparison of Findings between Sites*

The use of comparative structures was a critical aspect of data analysis (Yin, 2003, p. 153). First, the researcher compared and contrasted findings between the two

sites. Comparing and contrasting findings by participant group followed, with significant differences between staff members and youth highlighted. These analyses allowed the researcher to adjust, confirm, disconfirm or add to the proposed theoretical framework for co-production.

#### *Comparing Findings with Proposed Theoretical Framework Developed*

From the description and analysis above, the proposed theoretical framework for co-production was evaluated. Proposed design principles were reviewed as were select micro-level proposed propositions set forth in the theoretical framework.

Recommendations for prioritizing the propositions also occurred, gleaned from the descriptive analysis presented. These findings shape a future research agenda for co-production.

#### **Planning for a Quality Design: Addressing Reliability and Validity Concerns**

A number of methodological safeguards were taken to ensure a quality design. These steps are designed to address reliability and validity concerns associated with the qualitative research method implemented.

#### *Reliability*

LeCompte & Preissle (1993) define reliability as “the extent to which studies can be replicated” (p. 332). The goal of reliability is to minimize errors and biases in a study (Yin, 2003). Reliability can be divided into internal and external reliability.

Internal reliability refers to the extent to which two or more researchers agree about what happened within a study. In the case of this research design, can it be shown that there is an agreement among researchers on themes or constructs revealed during co-production interventions, on linkages or relationships between the constructs and in the

identified pathways to individual, staff, organizational and community change? External reliability refers to the extent to which similar findings will be revealed in similar settings using similar data collection processes (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

LeCompte & Preissle (1993) note that some researchers take the position that replication is not an important concern for studies that are qualitative in nature. This is due in part to the unique circumstances that are often involved in data collection, making replication very difficult to achieve. In addition, researchers tend to de-emphasize reliability concerns when research goals involve theory generation or theory refinement.

Both of these circumstances describe the empirical investigation of this dissertation. However, *developing a quality design that addresses reliability issues remains important in order to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings* (Yin, 2003). This is especially important because the researcher played multiple roles in this study. Three methodological safeguards were taken to enhance reliability, trustworthiness and credibility of the findings in this study. These safeguards are described below.

#### *Pilot Testing of the Interview Instrumentation*

The interview instrument was piloted with a staff member in site one. After piloting the interview instrument, changes were made to ensure clarity of the questions and improve the flow of the interview.

#### *Developing an Evidentiary Chain for Key Findings*

The investigator created a chain of evidence for findings related to a number of key constructs. Specifically, an evidentiary chain was developed for findings related to empowerment and engagement. For empowerment, steps involved in the template

analysis and grounded theory applications were outlined. Empirical support for findings related to youth engagement was also made concrete.

These evidentiary links are available to other researchers. In other words, other researchers have the opportunity to review and evaluate the analysis completed in this study. Moreover, by creating a sort of audit trail, the reliability of the case study strategy was enhanced (Yin, 2003). For example, the evidence used to confirm or corroborate specific findings was reviewed as part of the “peer” debriefing held with dissertation committee members (see design features for validity; set forth in next section of this chapter).

#### *Investigator Triangulation*

As noted, a consultant was hired to work with the researcher in data analysis activities. The researcher trained this consultant to perform several data analysis tasks. For example, the consultant reviewed and critiqued the initial coding done by the researcher for each of the 25 participants in the key areas of intervention features and youth outcomes identified. The consultant determined if the codes accurately reflected the responses offered by the participants. In conducting this task, the consultant referred to the operational description of the codes developed by the researcher. In addition, the consultant also reviewed a small sample of coded interviews in its entirety. The consultant generated a report summarizing her findings (see appendix-3-4).

Key findings included the following:

- Overlap and lack of clarity were identified in a number of the codes for key intervention features. Specifically, it was recommended that general intervention categories required more specific categorization.

- There was some confusion regarding differentiating between an outcome and an intervention features/strategy.
- More specificity is required in distinguishing between staff and organizational outcomes.

The researcher was tasked with addressing the issues raised. The following action steps occurred:

- Operational definitions were refined
- Additional categorization was developed as noted
- Select coding decisions were revised; in particular, more attention was paid to differentiating between outcome and intervention data.

#### *Validity*

LeCompte & Preissle (1993, p. 341) describe validity as demonstrating that the propositions generated or tested match what occurs in real life. Internal validity is the extent to which researchers observe and measure what they think they are measuring and observing. External validity addresses the issue of transferability of findings across other groups and in other project sites. Construct validity refers to establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied (Yin, 2003).

Seven design features are included to enhance study validity. They are described below.

#### *Use of Theoretical Modeling Based on Extensive Literature Review*

The use of theoretical modeling driven by an extensive literature review enhanced the credibility of the research study. Specifically, empirical grounding of a model based

on theory advances the potential for the study's findings to be applicable across similar contexts and similar groups of youth.

#### *Principal Investigator Involvement in Project Implementation*

The researcher was a paid internal consultant for the host organization and was directly involved in project implementation. These multiple roles afforded benefits in terms of study validity. Here, the researcher became a consistent presence in project sites throughout the length of the pilot study and the investigation.

The researcher, being an agency insider, had an active role in identifying core features of a co-production intervention and assisted staff that he may have had a prior working relationship with, in translating these constructs into familiar program operations. This combination of having an intimate knowledge of program operations, camaraderie with project staff and theoretical knowledge of co-production served as an advantage in generating and testing complicated constructs in real life settings.

#### *Use of a Multiple Case Study Approach*

The use of a two case study design enhanced external validity of project findings. In this study, findings from a two site descriptive and exploratory case study were used to ground features of a theoretical framework for co-production. Findings from more than one site added to the empirical grounding.

#### *Method Triangulation*

The use of two methods for data collection (interviews and focus groups) enhanced study validity. Multiple methods presented an opportunity to confirm project findings.

### *Data Source Triangulation*

The use of multiple data sources (e.g., youth and staff) also allowed for opportunities to confirm findings. This tactic enhanced construct validity as multiple lines of inquiry converged to reveal aspects of co-production interventions and its pathways.

### *Participant Review of Draft Case Study Report Findings*

Participant review of initial findings through participation in a focus group also enhanced study validity. Here, staff was able to confirm preliminary findings. This tactic is a control for researcher subjectivity and builds trustworthiness and credibility of study findings.

### *Peer De-briefing*

Finally, the researcher employed a variation of “peer debriefing” (see LeCompte, 2000), by asking two members of the dissertation faculty to serve as “critical friends,” assisting in the verification of study findings. The professors met with the researcher after the data analysis was completed, to review the findings and the documentation collected in support of the findings. This process was employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the study’s findings.

## **Participant Cooperation and Human Subject Issues**

A number of steps were taken before data collection commenced. First, University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was secured. As part of University IRB approval, letters of support were attained from county social service departments. This step was required because participants include some youth who were under the legal jurisdiction of county social service departments. In addition, the State

Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), who regulates and oversees the work of local county departments, reviewed and approved the research design.

Furthermore, special due process procedures were instituted for youth no longer participating in the service program, having been discharged from service. Similar procedures to ensure privacy and informed consent were put in place for staff no longer in the employ of the agency involved in co-production pilots.

## **THE THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION**

## **CHAPTER 4: CO-PRODUCTION AND POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND RESEARCH: A FURTHER EXPLICATION OF CITIZEN-STATE CO-PRODUCTION INTERVENTIONS**

This chapter begins phase 2 of the dissertation study: the evaluation and expansion of original co-production theory. This chapter analyzes the contributions of positive youth development theory and research to the development of co-production intervention theory. This analysis enables the identification of the core components of co-production intervention theory. It also identifies important micro-level processes to be analyzed in more detail in subsequent chapters, while paving the way for a more detailed definition of citizen-state co-production interventions. As indicated in chapter 2, citizen-state co-production refers to interventions where youth serve as contributors and resources to further agency mission and youth also serve as developers and change-agents to improve communities.

The analysis begins with a selective overview of the youth development literature. It is selective because it emphasizes youth as “contributors” in both programs and communities. This selective review encompasses salient meta-theories, which provide the theoretical and conceptual bases for youth serving as contributors.

After reviewing the literature on nine youth development initiatives that focus on youth serving as “contributors,” the analyses turns to the correspondence between co-production driven positive youth development initiatives and the emerging intervention framework of co-production. The aim is to identify the contributions of positive youth development theory and research to co-production theory, with special interest in the organizational and systemic factors essential to co-production, intervention features

central to youth serving as “contributors” and outcomes afforded to youth participants including developmental competencies.

## **Overview of Positive Youth Development**

### *Introduction*

The field of positive youth development (PYD) focuses on each child’s and youth’s unique talents, strengths, interests and future potential (Damon, 2004). PYD earns the label “positive” because it has a universal scope-it is applicable to all young people and also because of its selective attention to assets, strengths, opportunities in lieu of deficit, problem-centered discourses. The PYD field provides a framework that defines the developmental tasks of adolescence in five broad areas: (1) competence, (2) confidence, (3) character, (4) connections, and (5) contributions (Pittman, Irby & Ferber, 2000). Within this framework, youth development programs are “developmentally appropriate programs designed to prepare adolescents for productive adulthood by providing opportunities and supports to help them gain the competencies and knowledge needed” (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray & Foster, 1998, p. 427).

Positive youth development theory and research encompasses a broad and comprehensive literature. This literature is too expansive and diverse to be reviewed thoroughly in this dissertation. By necessity, the ensuing analysis relies on integrative research reviews.

To begin with, substantial research links quality youth development programming with a range of positive outcomes. These outcomes include enhanced academic achievement, school attendance and engagement, enhanced social competences and improved mental health. Programs also have been shown to prevent or reduce problem

behaviors (i.e., less substance use, delinquency, truancy, aggression, high-risk sexual behavior) by reducing risk related factors (e.g., Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins, 2002; James & Jurich, 1999; Roth et al., 1998).

In addition, a number of studies have identified core characteristics associated with successful positive youth development programming. For example, Roth and his colleagues (1998) used the findings of 15 methodologically rigorous evaluation studies to identify key features. These features included individual attention, cultural appropriateness, the willingness to provide youth with choice and responsibility, opportunities for active participation and real challenges, the primacy of adolescent-adult relationships, family involvement in programming and the cultivation of skill development.

Utilizing information from a compendium of 49 highlighted program initiatives, James (1997) identified a number of guiding principles associated with effective youth programming. Principles included adult support, structure and expectations, creative forms of learning, guidance and rich connections to the workplace, support and follow-up post program completion and implementation quality. Specific program features contributing to successful youth outcomes included a focus on job-readiness skills, intensive hands-on job training, active employer involvement, continuity of contact with caring adults, financial incentives, recognizing achievements, the importance of paid work and internships, post-placement support and leadership development.

In addition, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) reviewed youth-related intervention research. They found in their review of 48 soundly evaluated programs for non-adjudicated teen participants that 73% developed a curriculum of intervention and half

were short term, lasting 6-15 weeks. Curiously, only one-third included activities that afforded youth the opportunity to engage in authentic activities, including leadership experiences, community service or employment.

A review of 25 evidenced-based positive youth development programs partially contradicted these findings. Catalano et al. (2002) found that 96% of the identified programs used training manuals or other forms of structured content. In addition, 80% operated for longer periods of time (nine months or more), allowing sufficient time for behavior change to occur.

Prior research and theory have not emphasized the construct identified at the outset of this chapter, namely, “contributions.” The need exists to articulate this relatively new construct and integrate it with relevant PYD theory (Lerner, Brentano, Dowling & Anderson, 2002). This analysis makes a start in the next section.

#### *The Fifth “C”: Youth as Resources*

The “c” of contributions is the fifth task of adolescent development, and it is salient to co-production. Theorists attending to contributions stress the importance of developing ways for youth to be fully engaged through providing “access to pathways to full participation in the community, the workplace and the broader society” (Pittman et al., 2000, p. 5). Through the opportunity to contribute within contexts of family and community, youth learn to be productive, develop a greater sense of competence and self respect, learn to connect with others and learn to navigate and act appropriately in diverse settings (Gambone, Klem & Connell, 2002; Youniss & Yates, 1997).

Contributions depend in part on leadership. Youth need opportunities to take on leadership roles such as peer counselors and mediators as well as assuming leadership or

governance positions within an organization (Gambone, 2006; Nicholson, Collins & Holmer, 2004). In other words, in the expanded PYD perspective, youth are not merely clients or recipients of programs and services (Pittman et al., 2000).

Youth leadership includes involving young people in developing fresh visions for themselves, organizations and communities. For example, theorists have noted that youth, given their developmental status, have the time, energy and optimism to envision a brighter future, to be “creators, disseminators and implementers of knowledge” (Kurth-Schai, 1988, p. 124). Proponents of this view advocate for change in schools and social service organizations to create settings that tap into the talents and perceptions of youth. Moving beyond contributing to their own development and personal growth, youth can “play a critical role as change agents in their families, peer groups and communities” (Pittman et al., 2000, p. 8).

This important construct of youth as “contributors” is supported by a number of larger meso and macro theories. For example, Zeldin (2004) identifies ecological systems theory (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and a “life-span” view of human development (e.g., Lerner, 1982; Lerner et al., 2002) as especially important in explaining both the processes and impacts associated with youth participation as contributors. Life span theory is a precursor to the study of developmental systems theory and its application, applied developmental sciences.

Developmental system theorists espouse the notion that individuals are products as well as contributors to their development. According to this view, developmental change involves a contextual view of the person “being reciprocally embedded in his/her world” (Lerner, 1982, p. 361). Developmental theorists, in turn, seek to understand

through explanatory research how variations and changes in person-context relations in the ecology of people's lives; can alter developmental trajectories and life paths. To assess the "plasticity" of human development, researchers introduce "policies and/or programs as experimental manipulations of proximal and/or distal ecology" (Lerner, Wertlieb & Jacobs, 2005, p. 9). Here, designed person-centered relations are substituted for naturally occurring relations. In other words, researchers have adopted intervention perspectives that seek to alter the relations between young people and their life-influencing and changing environments and contexts. To reinforce a key point, co-production interventions aim to create the same kinds of environmental and contextual changes.

"Thriving" is an important construct in applied developmental theory. Thriving refers to the involvement of youth in healthy positive relations with his/her community (Lerner et al., 2002). Thriving can be fostered through mutually beneficial and reciprocal exchanges between individuals and contexts.

Accordingly, planned interventions in natural settings are designed to further the thriving process for youth with special interest in enhancing their developmental contexts. Contexts can include the full ecology of human development. Contexts include other people such as peer groups and family members as well as institutions in society such as schools and youth organizations. Drawing from empowerment theory, successful interventions seek to "change the self to support the context or alter the context to support the self" (Lerner et al., 2002, p. 17).

Furthermore, developmental changes can be bi-directional, such as between youth and communities (Lerner et al., 2005). In other words, youth can impact on communities

and changes in communities can impact on youth functioning. Moreover, both kinds of changes (youth and their contexts) can be generative. According to developmental theorists, the relative plasticity of social ecology means that actions taken at any level of a youth's ecology have the potential to change the course of development. Such developmental changes include reducing high-risk behaviors (Benson, Scales, Hamilton & Sesma, 2006; Forum for Youth Investment, 2002).

Finally, developmental systems theorists have begun to develop a structure for studying and evaluating PYD interventions. For example, changing relationships between youth and their contexts as these changes result from interventions is the unit of analysis (Lerner et al., 2002). Documenting and measuring these developmental changes requires tracking the development of both individual and contextual developmental assets (Taylor, Lerner, Von Eye, Balsano, Dowling, Anderson, Bobek & Bjelobrck, 2002). For example, the Search Institute's list of 40 developmental assets (see Benson, Leffert, Scales & Blythe, 1998; Scales, Benson, Leffert & Blyth, 2000) provides a framework from which changes in social relationships, social experiences and social competencies can be tracked over time and linked with experimental changes in a youth's social ecology (Lerner et al., 2002).

Two sub-fields have developed within the broad field of PYD; community youth development and social justice youth development. Both promote youth as contributors and change agents within communities. Each is briefly reviewed below.

### *Community Youth Development*

Community youth development supports the utilization of youth as resources and contributors. It is relevant to co-production because it emphasizes community impacts and reciprocal benefits.

Consistent with ecological and contextual-developmental theory, community youth development shifts the focus from the individual to the interaction of the individual with the many facets of his/her own environment (Perkins, Borden, Keith, Hoppe-Rooney, & Villarruel, 2003). Programming involves youth working in partnership with adults on behalf of communities. This involvement provides youth with opportunities for skill and competency development.

Here, communities and organizations are viewed as constructs for achieving youth development goals and also as vehicles for positive youth development (Delgado, 2002, p. 118). For example, Catalano et al. (2002) found that of the 25 featured youth development programs in their compilation, 17 operated in two or more environments (community, school or family). Many utilized community resources to enhance youth, family and school strategies. One program placed youth and their adult mentors into nursing homes, working together with residents. Another program involved youth and their parents working in neighborhoods mobilizing for change. Family members and youth participated in communication skills training while they worked together to help change neighborhoods.

With community youth development, communities are intervention targets. Here youth programming intersects with community development (e.g., McLaughlin, 2000; Perkins et al., 2003). Predictably, relevant theorizing emphasizes reciprocal exchanges

and generative impacts. Notably, as youth provide services, they also influence groups that they become involved with. For example, when youth assist seniors, they improve the senior's quality of life and gain valuable skills while doing so. Or, when adults volunteer to work with youth in communities, the adults gain valuable new job skills while assisting the youth. These multiple benefits can also include a change in adult perceptions of youth, resulting from youth serving as contributors and leaders (Delgado, 2000; McLaughlin, 2000).

These complex community development initiatives may change public policy. For example, Hancock (1994) notes that youth working in partnership with adults within community organizations can “devise their own customized solutions to youth development and other social issues, thus co-producing in partnership with the public sector, the policies and services needed to direct and sustain community change” (p. 145). Reciprocally, community development initiatives, to achieve their potential, often depend on public policy changes.

### *Social Justice Youth Development*

Social Justice Youth Development (SJYP) is a variation of community youth development. SJYP calls for youth and adults to jointly examine the larger economic, social and political forces that impact the lives of youth. Based on their examination, youth and adults work together “toward a common vision of social justice” (Ginwright & James, 2002, p. 35).

SJYP is action-oriented. For example, staff works with youth to “contest, challenge, respond to and negotiate the use and misuse of power in their lives” (p. 35). Within SJYP, youth are viewed not just as assets but also as agents of change. As agents

of change, youth are “capable of transforming toxic environments, not simply developing resiliency to them” (p. 40).

Practice strategies and principles in this social justice approach are derived in part from empowerment theory. Practice strategies include political education, group support and community action including organizing and attending rallies and working on political campaigns. These strategies are founded on identifiable practice principles. These principles include the analysis of power in social relationships, making identity a central feature, promoting institutional social change, encouraging collective action and embracing youth culture. The promotion of critical consciousness, defined as the “awareness of how institutional, historical and systemic forces limit and promote opportunities for particular groups” (p. 40), is an essential component of SJYD. Staff facilitates critical consciousness in two stages, a self-awareness stage, which involves the exploration of identity issues and a social awareness stage, which encourages the capacity to think critically about their communities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002).

In addition, the SJYD model encompasses organizational and community change goals. For example, the model emphasizes the creation of opportunities to enhance youth participation. This participation, in turn, can result in the creation of youth-run organizations.

Working models of SJYD include the previously mentioned expansion of the Time Dollar youth court project in Washington DC (see chapter 2). Here, youth, with the guidance of adult staff, moved beyond participation on the youth court to serve as a community watchdog. Staff and youth teams investigated the juvenile justice system in the District, assessing government efforts to prevent and reduce substance abuse and

dropout rates as well as improve community/police relations. Information was gathered to support eight policy recommendations to improve city government. Youth advocated for these changes while testifying at public hearings and forums (Time Dollar Institute, 2000).

A similar project in Oakland used data from a survey of youth to draft proposals to prevent crime in their community. With the help of local organizers and lawyers, youth drafted a ballot initiative calling for dedicated money to be directed toward after-school programs, including music, art and tutoring services for youth. The measure appeared on the ballot and was approved by voters (Ashley, Samaniego & Chuen, 1997).

### **Integrating Positive Youth Development Theory and Research with Co-Production Intervention Theory**

Informed by findings from a number of highlighted co-production driven youth development interventions, PYD theory and research and co-production intervention theory can be joined and integrated. Appendix 4-1 provides an overview of the contributions gained from this integration.

The overview derives from an integrative analysis of 9 co-production driven youth development initiatives. Because of their complexity, all nine are best described as “initiatives” (or summaries of multiple initiatives) and not as programs, services or interventions. For example, one of the featured initiatives is a case study of 6 featured but disparate organizations and their respective programs, services and interventions. The construct “initiative” thus is apt because each one harbors multiple interventions.

All nine initiatives represent citizen-state interventions where youth serve as contributors and resources to further agency mission and as developers and change-agents to improve communities (see Marks & Lawson, 2007 for a more detailed review).

Several of these initiatives were identified from two major compendiums of youth development practice produced by the American Youth Policy Forum (see James, 1997; James & Jurich, 1999). The remaining initiatives were gleaned from a literature review of positive youth development (see Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Holden, Crankshaw, Nimsch, Hinnant & Hund, 2004; Lewis-Charp, Hanh Cao Yu & Lacoé, 2003; Zeldin, 2004; Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, 2000)

Criteria for selecting initiatives for review and analysis are important. To qualify for inclusion, each initiative had to be community-based, sponsored by a community organization, included as part of a research effort and incorporated a number of co-production features highlighted in the previous sections of this dissertation. These initiatives represent examples of evidence-based practices involving youth serving as resources, contributors, community developers and change-agents. An analysis of the import of these findings follows.

#### *Essential Organizational and Systemic Factors*

Organizational and systemic factors are important in each initiative, as indicated in appendix 4-1. Findings 1-6, presented in appendix 4-1 correspond to organizational and systemic factors that are associated with successful co-production-driven youth development interventions.

Research on these nine initiatives reveals that co-production is embedded in a diversity of settings. Organizational diversity is a prime example. Organizations that embrace co-production include those with a youth development mission as well as organizations with broader missions.

Significantly, the level of integration of the co-production initiatives within participating organizations varied. For example, some initiatives fit the definition of “stand-alone” while other initiatives can be categorized as “complex integrative” (see chapter 2). To reiterate, stand-alone refer to co-production initiatives within separately created organizations whose sole mission is co-production-driven. In contrast, complex integrative initiatives occurred when co-production interventions were infused within existing complex and multi-faceted programming.

Also, the initiatives vary in terms of range of project sites. Multiple sites (7) were most prevalent. Two of the projects were instituted in single sites only.

When the findings from the nine initiatives are joined, it becomes apparent that co-production interventions are innovations. As innovations, these interventions were implemented progressively and often unevenly, in stages or phases. Time delays and start-up challenges were common. Sufficient resources (money and time) were important factors, to allow for organizational preparation, staff and youth training and for groups of staff and youth to bond.

Cross-initiative analysis also revealed the importance of developing strategies that create a compatible working environment for co-production. For example, organizational and structural changes are often required to accommodate the changing roles of youth and staff in co-production interventions. To facilitate the development of conditions conducive to and supportive of co-production, organizations often employed an intermediary organization to assist with the transitions to co-production. Learning groups were often convened by staff from the intermediary to support staff during

implementation. In addition, flexible funding was available to facilitate staff creativity and responsiveness to diverse client needs.

Moreover, co-production innovations require an investment in empowerment-related practices and policies (see chapter 5). Other needs-as-challenges follow suit. These challenges, generic to most service providers, included staff recruitment and retention, addressing uneven staff and the lack of sustainability of funding to support co-production efforts.

Furthermore, co-production interventions included universal as well as targeted approaches. Some of the initiatives targeted “at risk” and “vulnerable” youth, especially older youth (e.g., Lewis-Charp et al., 2003; “Youth as Resources” in James & Jurich, 1999). Findings revealed positive results for this targeted group of youth, indicating the breadth of co-production’s potential. Also, it is noteworthy that just one of the initiatives specifically targeted youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. For this reason, this dissertation study appears to be timely.

#### *Core Intervention Features*

Findings 7-11, as presented in appendix 4-1, identify core intervention features associated with co-production interventions. Across the highlighted nine initiatives, youth were utilized in a range of roles as contributors and resources. Youth roles include: (1) Youth assuming leadership or governance positions within an organization, (2) Youth serving as staff assistants/service providers and (3) Youth working in partnership with adults in community service/civic engagement projects. This typology, developed by Marks and Lawson (2007), is a variation on a model developed by Nicholson et al., (2004).

In addition to the above-mentioned kinds of roles, findings revealed that youth often had a range of choices and opportunities to be contributors and resources within the highlighted initiatives. For example, seven of the nine initiatives involved youth in a multitude of roles. Three of the initiatives utilized youth in all three categories of roles. In contrast, only two of the initiatives involved youth in a singular kind of service or leadership role. Also, findings revealed that the roles established for participating youth were context dependent, addressing specific organizational needs and realities.

Significantly, several defining intervention features were utilized consistently within the nine initiatives. The most important ones are listed below.

- *Group work with peers*: Group participation using peer influences, relations and change mechanisms, was viewed as an important intervention component linked to outcome attainment (see Lewis-Charp et al., 2003; Holden et al., 2004).
- *Peer mentorship* was a key intervention feature in four of the initiatives (see the “4-H,” “Youth as Resources” and “Youth River Watch” initiatives in James & Jurich, 1999; Finn & Checkoway, 1998).
- *Community recognition and celebration* were seen as a valuable component identified in two of the initiatives (see “Youth as Resources” and “Youth River Watch” initiatives in James & Jurich, 1999)
- *Time for reflection and praxis* (e.g., the process of action, reflection and return to action) was a built in feature in five of the initiatives (see Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Zeldin et al., 2000; Zeldin, 2004; Lewis-Charp et al., 2003; Holden et al., 2004). In some participating organizations, staff and youth became a form of family, mutually engaged in self-improvement through reflection and action while

seeking to build community capacities and alter conditions of social inequality (Finn & Checkoway, 1998).

- *Service oriented or career skills training* was a feature in all of the initiatives.
- *Payment/reward for service/contributions* was a feature present in the seven of the nine projects.
- *Continued roles for youth* in the service organization over time, to build sustainability and create generative benefits, was present in four of the initiatives (“Beacons project,” “Youth as Resources” and “Youth River Watch” in James & Jurich, 1999; and in a number of the case studies that were part of the Finn & Checkoway, 1998 compilation).

*It is important to note that many of the above intervention features correspond to warranted empowerment practice designed for youth* (see Chinman & Linney, 1998; Gibson 1993; Jennings, Parra-Medina, Messias & McLoughlin, 2006; Kim, Crutchfield, Williams & Hepler, 1998). Examples include the primacy of group work, community recognition, the celebration of youth accomplishments, and time for reflection and praxis. (Note: For more detail on empowerment processes and strategies, see the next chapter of this dissertation.) These findings cement the links between empowerment theory and practice, and co-production driven youth development.

Similarly, a number of the highlighted initiatives emphasized the import of continuous roles for youth over time within organizations. Two aspects of this cross-initiative finding are noteworthy. The first is intervention “dosage”--in this case, import roles for youth over time. The second is organizational supports, resources and overall conditions conducive to co-production interventions with sufficient dosage. Both aspects

require organizational capacity-building, including capacity building directed toward institutionalization and sustainability. .

Organizational and community capacity building activities were also a core focus of many of the nine initiatives. For example, new empowering roles for staff within organizations were a core feature (see Finn & Checkoway, 1998; “Youth as Resources” and “Youth River Watch” in James & Jurich, 1999; Lewis-Charp et al., 2003; Zeldin, 2004; Zeldin et al., 2000). Here, staff was viewed less as providers of service and more as collaborators and facilitators (Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Lewis-Charp et al., 2003). These changing roles were connected to organizational challenges, including exacerbating staff turnover and organizational conflict. As in other aspects of co-production interventions, needs for capacity-building were presented.

Community capacity-building also was identified as a priority. For many of the initiatives, communities and organizations served as the context, the vehicle as well as a target of youth contributory activities. Chaskin’s (2006) framework for community capacity enhancement can be used to categorize the range of community impacts resulting from youth contributory efforts. In this framework, planned interventions focus on four capacity building areas: (1) Leadership development or the building of human capital, (2) Strengthening the capacities of particular community organization, (3) Focusing on community organizing and mobilization for purposes of advocacy and associational action and (4) Building the organizational infrastructure of the community by promoting effective inter-organizational relations.

Findings revealed that adult and youth leadership development as well as organizational capacity building were special attributes of the co-production initiatives

and also a priority for capacity-building. Community mobilization and social action were a primary focus in a number of the highlighted initiatives. In contrast, only a small number of initiatives focused on the building of the community's organizational infrastructure through promoting partnerships and effective inter-organizational relations (see Marks & Lawson, 2007 for further detail).

Finally, analysis of the nine initiatives revealed that different mixes of intervention features occurred. Some intervention features, such as service work and career and skills training were present in virtually all of the initiatives. In contrast, features such as an emphasis on empowerment activities, professional/client collaboration activities, group interventions led by competent adults and a social change emphasis, were not present in every initiative.

In brief, differences among the nine initiatives serve as evidence for different kinds of co-production initiatives. These differences also imply developmental differences in intervention design as well as differing levels and kinds of capacity. Finally, these differences can be interpreted as an indicator of the need for better theory and research.

#### *Results and Impacts, including Developmental Competencies*

Indicators of the import of PYD theory and research for co-production's results and impacts are provided in findings 12-19 in appendix 4-1. Cross-initiative analyses corroborate the prevalence of multi-level and bi-directional outcomes and impacts achieved as part of co-production interventions. Predictably, outcomes and impacts were both diverse and of variable comprehensiveness and complexity. For example, all but two of the initiatives targeted the impact of youth participation on the targeted youth and

other involved youth, adults in the organization, the sponsoring organization or the community at-large.

Organizational and staff impacts resulting from co-production interventions were especially important. For example, in the Zeldin (2004) study, findings revealed that adults (staff and board members) working with youth on agency governance projects experienced an enhanced sense of belonging and identification with the organization. Many of the adults exhibited a reinforced collective purpose through these activities and a renewed sense of commitment to the agency's mission.

Similarly, in the Zeldin et al. (2000) study, participating youth and adults working together on advisory groups, youth councils and as co-trainers and conference presenters began to exhibit a "shared identity" as they both become more attached to the organization. According to Claiborne and Lawson (2005), developing a shared identity is a higher-level phase of collaboration, often accompanied by youth and adults working together on projects that have agreed upon aims and strategies as well as defined responsibilities.

In addition, organizations benefited from youth involvement in quality assurance activities. Youth also sparked agency innovation by working on new program development initiatives. This contribution often led to a diversification of agency programming. Furthermore, youth leaders cultivated links to other circles of youth, which led to increased enrollment in program activities and enhanced youth participation (Lewis-Charp et al., 2003; Zeldin, 2004). Also, in some organizations, organizational restructuring occurred, with formal positions for youth created on staff and on the Board of Directors (Lewis-Charp et al., 2003).

The cross-initiative analysis yielded examples of both contagion effects and generative benefits within organizations sponsoring co-production interventions. Contagion effects occurred as youth leadership and activism was infused into other program areas within the organization (Lewis-Charp et al., 2003). Generative benefits resulted as youth roles expanded over time, often as stereotypes were overcome and benefits of youth participation were realized (“Youth as Resources” in James & Jurich, 1999; Lewis-Charp et al., 2003; Zeldin, 2004).

Cross-site analyses also provided evidence of the support of the link between youth participation and the achievement of certain youth developmental competencies. Enhanced self and collective agency and efficacy, motivation, self-determination, youth initiative and identity development were competencies identified and studied. Specifically, positive identity development was associated with youth involved in organizational leadership and civic action projects (see Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Zeldin et al., 2000) and was found to be a core intervention focus that attracted older teens to co-production programming (Lewis-Charp et al., 2003).

Consistent with the original co-production framework, social capital gains were documented as a key outcome for youth serving as contributors and resources. Examples of both “linking” and “bridging” social capital gains were noted in the selected initiatives.

The work of the Search Institute in identifying developmental assets for youth is relevant here. The Institute’s 40 developmental assets are categorized in terms of internal and external factors. External factors include assets related to social supports, boundaries and expectations and constructive use of time. External assets also include youth empowerment related outcomes such as youth perception that the community values

youth, measures of youth as resources, assets that reflect a young person's service to his community and the young person's feeling of safety at home, school and community. Internal assets include a youth's commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity (Benson et al., 1998).

Using Search's framework, Marks & Lawson (2007) found that the enhancement of empowerment related external assets occurred for youth studied in a number of the selected initiatives (see Lewis-Charp et al., 2003; "Youth as Resources" in James & Jurich, 1999; Zeldin, 2004; Zeldin et al., 2000). However, internal asset generation, especially positive identity formation, was also identified (e.g., Zeldin et al., 2000; Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Lewis-Charp et al., 2003). With the Search Institute's framework as a guide, it appears that both internal and external asset development is relevant to co-production driven positive youth development initiatives.

These findings on asset generation are significant because they contrast with the original co-production framework presented in chapter 2. The original framework emphasizes external asset development, such as social support and social capital formation resulting from involvement in co-production activities. In contrast, the framework emerging from the analysis of the nine initiatives supports the association of both internal and external asset development with youth involvement in co-production interventions.

Analysis of the nine initiatives also yields findings that support the importance of youth engagement within co-production interventions. Youth engagement was "operationalized" differently, however. It was identified as an important control, mediating and outcome variable, depending upon the specific research design used in the

initiative (see Holden et al., 2004; Lewis-Charp et al., 2003; the “4-H project” in James & Jurich, 1999; Zeldin, 2004).

Lastly, findings from the highlighted studies and follow-up studies provide beginning evidence to indicate that experimental manipulations of program settings, including the “bundling” of co-production intervention features can yield specific competency benefits for participating youth (see Lewis-Charp et al., 2003; Gambone, Yu, Lewis-Charp, Sipe & Laco, 2004). As noted earlier, developmental theorists hypothesize that changes in environmental contexts through targeted interventions can positively impact on young people and enhance developmental successes (Benson et al., 2006). In these studies, interventions were classified based on the focus of the intervention (e.g., “identity support” or “youth organizing”). Specific intervention features (e.g., staff model, group focus such as critical education or support activities and the presence of role models) were found to be associated with each type of intervention model. Findings revealed that intervention outcomes varied according to intervention focus and intervention features.

These findings are significant because they support a main theoretical thrust of this dissertation-namely, the links between empowerment, collaboration, engagement and co-production. The emerging theory for co-production interventions provides a structure by which these relationships can be tested.

## **Citizen-State Co-production-Driven Youth Development Interventions**

### *Essential Features of Citizen-State Co-Production*

Drawing from the analysis of the nine co-production initiatives, essential features of citizen-state co-production can now be revealed. In particular, citizen-state co-production can be compared with other, generic youth interventions.

To begin with, co-production is clearly different from generic youth participation in service and civic engagement activities. Co-production resembles features of social justice and community youth development with its emphasis on bi-directionality of outcomes, shared adult/youth mission-driven activities and the promotion of youth leadership in communities (see Checkoway, 1998; Zeldin, 2004). Appendix 4-2 presents intervention features and outcomes/impacts associated with the two prototypes (generic youth development and citizen-state co-production).

Intervention features are categorized and then contrasted according to kinds of sites/contexts, level of organizational integration, role(s) of youth participants, staff/adult roles, staff/youth collaboration, the nature of exchanges/transactions and empowerment processes, the function of community and community organizations and the importance of inter-organizational partnerships. Outcomes/impacts are contrasted based on the level of youth engagement, range of impacts/outcomes sought, the kind of community impacts sought, the nature of youth competencies enhanced through participation in the intervention, sustainability and generative nature of benefits and the kinds of contagion effects achieved.

As appendix 4-2 reveals, co-production is a distinct intervention. The following essential ingredients characterize co-production interventions:

- ✓ Integration of co-production activities within core program services
- ✓ Multiple opportunities for youth to serve as contributors, resources and change agents
- ✓ Mutuality and reciprocity between staff and youth involving two way flows of giving and receiving
- ✓ Staff facilitating two-way reciprocal transactions for youth in other community settings and organizations.
- ✓ An emphasis on staff/youth collaboration, leading to shared goals and mutual interests
- ✓ A staff and youth empowerment focus. Mutual growth through critical action and reflection in later stages.
- ✓ A reliance on group modalities to foster individual and staff outcomes and community and organizational improvements.
- ✓ The promotion of social change and social justice goals in later stages of development and implementation.
- ✓ Community contexts and community organizations in a three component system: (1) Settings for co-production interventions, (2) Targets for intervention and capacity-building, and (3) Vehicles for PYD.
- ✓ Inter-organizational partnerships developed to expand youth opportunities and build community capacities.

Moreover, co-production interventions are also distinctive by the kinds of outcomes/impact sought. For example, co-production interventions seek cognitive and emotional levels of youth engagement in program activities. Bi-directional and reciprocal

outcomes and impacts are also sought, at the youth, staff, organizational and community levels. Also, social capital enhancement, both individually and collectively, is a stated goal. In addition, organizational capacity building is sought as is social justice and social change within communities.

Finally, consistent with the broad goals of building capacities, co-production interventions are designed to produce sustainable, long-term outcomes, generative benefits and contagion effects. Innovations are embedded within organizations, with program impacts spread to other program areas within the host organization as well as to other community organizations as they begin to embrace and replicate features of co-production.

Appendix 4-3 depicts youth outcomes associated with citizen-state co-production. The categorization of outcomes builds off the work done by Catalano et al. (2002). Youth outcomes are categorized according whether the outcome is asset building or addresses risk or problem reduction.

#### *Different Kinds of Citizen-State Co-Production*

As evidenced by the nine highlighted initiatives, citizen-state co-production is complex and can take many forms. For ease of description, citizen-state interventions are categorized below into three kinds of interventions; youth-organizational, youth-organizational-community and youth-social justice. The three types differ primarily by the locus and emphasis of co-production activity, as the following analysis indicates.

Appendix 4-4 depicts the characteristics of each.

Within youth-organizational co-production, youth are involved in governance and other internal service roles, including working as staff assistants and direct service

providers assisting other clients. Participation may be broad and formalized (e.g., serving as members of the organization's Board of Directors) or be task-based and informal (e.g., reviewing agency budgets or requests for proposals). Roles included serving on advisory groups to the Board of Trustees, participating in youth councils, serving as board members, conducting public speaking in representing the organization, serving as a proposal reviewer, designing and implementing projects, participating in agency budgeting and educating adults on community and youth needs.

In addition, youth can provide services to clients within organizations. Here, youth are provided with meaningful role, including roles that remain the same or evolve over time. In all cases, youth can be current service recipients or former recipients (e.g., "program graduates"). Their roles include trainer, workshop coordinator, peer counselor, mentor, tutor, volunteer, paid staff, service provider to seniors, staff intern and peer project leader. These tasks can be combined with governance and leadership opportunities within a given intervention. (See Lawson, Claiborne, Hardiman & Austin, 2007; Zeldin, 2004; Zeldin et al., 2000 for further descriptions of youth-organizational co-production.)

In addition to staff and youth outcomes, improving organizational functioning is a clear aim of youth-organizational interventions. For example, staff may enter into an agreement with a youth to provide a specific service for a family member involved in the program. The youth would voluntarily agree to provide the service in exchange for specific benefits to be negotiated, such as earning time bank hours, money or an in-kind service.

In this kind of co-production, staff is usually a direct participant in exchanges with youth. For example, youth may agree to tutor other youth involved in the program. To reciprocate, the youth receives a benefit, a special privilege or if available, a time bank hour. In addition, individual or small group modalities allow for intensive support to be provided by adult staff. For this reason, youth-organizational co-production may be advantageous for hard-to serve youth involved in the juvenile justice or child welfare system, especially youth that require one-on-one staff assistance to address issues of personal responsibility, reduction of self-blame, self-efficacy needs or deficiencies in social skills.

In contrast to youth-organizational co-production, youth-organizational-community co-production involves the community as the target, locus and vehicle of change. This kind of intervention is best exemplified by the “Youth as Resources” initiative in James and Jurich (1999). A primary focus of the intervention is community capacity building (see Chaskin, 2006).

Here, staff, youth, organizational and community outcomes and impacts are intentionally sought, through staff and youth working together on community projects. Staff members have a dual role in this kind of co-production: Staff may be a direct participant in exchange processes with youth or serve as an intermediary/mediator between youth and another organization.

For example, staff may contact another community organization, introducing the organization to a group of youth willing and able to provide services (e.g., tutoring, mentorship) for that organization’s clientele. Staff negotiates with the organization for certain benefits for the youth (e.g., discounts on membership, access to facilities). This

negotiation could be separate from or in addition to benefits that the youth provide to the host organization.

In addition, this kind of co-production is distinguishable by the importance of inter-organizational partnerships, an emphasis on group modalities and enhanced opportunities for social capital enhancement through youth showcasing their talents in new settings. Generative and contagion effects are also important in this kind of co-production as new community organizations become involved in contribution-based activities and youth, serving as resources, become increasingly valued by local communities.

The third kind, youth-social justice co-production, has as its focus community change and social justice outcomes. Organizational, staff and youth change occurs through collaborative and empowerment practices that bring youth and staff together in seeking agreed upon community change goals. Here, staff often transacts directly with youth. Benefits may be of an in-kind nature, supporting skill-building competencies. “Youth River Watch” in James and Jurich (1999) and the case studies that are part of Finn and Checkoway (1998) best represent this kind of intervention.

Youth-social justice co-production resemble features of the “identity supporting” programming noted by Gambone et al. (2004). Here, “critical education” and the introduction of healthy role models into the youths’ lives, including those with similar racial and ethnic backgrounds, are key features. Key empowerment oriented intervention methods include political education, group support and community action (see Ginwright & James, 2002 and previous discussion in this chapter on social justice youth development). Consistent with empowerment theory, individual empowerment

preparation may be required prior to or concurrent with participation in group activities and collective action.

Moreover, working with similar others help youth cultivate a sense of life purpose. Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) refer to this outcome as “healing,” developing in a young person a “sense of optimism, emotional stability, intellectual stimulation, positive self-regard and resilience when facing life challenges” (Ginwright & Cammarota, p. 88). This kind of co-production can also involve staff working on their own development while assisting youth in their development. As such, youth-social justice programming often involves high levels of youth/staff collaboration.

Inter-organizational partnerships are also a key feature as groups and organizations work together to address inequality and other social concerns. Because of its community change emphases, sustainability of programming, generative benefits and contagion effects are core design features. Youth and staff serve as role models, to attract other youth and adults to work on social change activities.

Together, these three kinds of citizen-state co-production reflect a developmental progression. Youth-social justice co-production appears to be the most advanced kind co-production. The “c” of contributions, emphasized at the beginning of this chapter, is very important. In general, as one moves from youth-organizational to youth-social justice co-production, the range and breadth of opportunities for youth to contribute increases. As these opportunities to contribute increase, staff and youth cultivate more trust and come to rely on each other in mutually beneficial ways. At the same time, more opportunities will be available for youth to be empowered to act autonomously, to serve as leaders and to design programs.

### **Summary: The Contribution of Positive Youth Development Theory and Research to the Enhanced Intervention Framework of Co-Production**

As noted in this chapter, aspects of co-production theory and practice are infused within the positive youth development literature. This infusion lends support to co-production as a unique intervention for youth. Four areas are especially important.

The inclusion of youth as contributors, as a core feature of youth development theory and practice is the first area. Here, contributions are identified as one of the five developmental tasks of adolescence. Youth development theory stresses the importance of providing all youth with opportunities to contribute within contexts of their family and community. By providing these opportunities, youth develop new skills, are taught to be productive, enable youth to connect with others and provide youth with an opportunity to navigate new settings that will assist them in future development (Gambone et al., 2002; Pittman et al., 2000). Furthermore, these experiences can create new economic and educational pathways and trajectories for youth that might not have had these benefits without the opportunity to contribute (Yohalem & Pittman, 2001).

The support of youth as contributors from larger meta-theories of positive youth development is the second area. These theories provide the edifice for viewing youth as “beyond recipients” (Pittman et al., 2000), an essential premise of co-production theory. For example, meta-theories such as ecological systems theory, life span theory and applied developmental theory generate assumptions and propositions that substantiate co-production. Assumptions include:

- Experimental manipulations of a youth’s ecology involve changing the self to support the context and changing the context to support the self.

- Inherent in the notion of change is fostering a youth's sense of a spiritual commitment to contribute to self, family, community and civil society.
- A necessary starting point to planned change is to conduct a full ecological assessment of a youth's social context and the reciprocal relations of its key components. The purpose of the assessment is to determine which areas of the environmental context are changeable and those, which cannot be altered through experimental manipulation.
- The unit of analysis for co-production interventions is the changing relations that result from the interventions instituted. The Search Institute's 40 individual and ecological assets provides a framework from which developmental enhancement can be targeted and studied.

Drawing on these assumptions, the researcher has generated three propositions.

These propositions include:

- As youth are placed in positions where they are contributors and resources, youth influence the contexts of their own development. (This relationship is reciprocal. For example, as youth influence contexts, contexts are altered that then can influence the range and breadth of youth contributions.)
- Policies and programs, introduced as experimental manipulations of a youth's proximal and distal ecology, influence person-context relations.
- As experimental manipulations of a youth's ecology are instituted, developmental trajectories for youth may improve.

These propositions can help conceptualize co-production. Within co-production, new program settings and supportive environmental contexts are created that allow for

mutually beneficial and reciprocal exchanges to occur between youth and people in their immediate environment. Settings that embrace positive youth development best practices can be designed to facilitate these supportive mutually beneficial person-context exchanges.

The third area: Evidence provided in this chapter supports the premise that co-production is a unique intervention, in comparison to generic youth development interventions. Co-production interventions encompass a number of essential features. These features are summarized in Appendix 4-2 and 4-4.

Additional key features of citizen-state co-production were identified and described. Building on this work, distinctions among the three different kinds of citizen-state co-production interventions were identified. Distinctions in intervention strategies and potential outcomes and impacts resulting from the interventions were also noted.

Finally, twin findings from the analysis are noteworthy. This analysis revealed: (1) The importance of youth engagement and its correlates (youth empowerment and professional/client collaboration) within co-production-driven youth development interventions, and (2) The increased knowledge that experimental manipulations of organizational and community settings, including the “bundling” of co-production intervention features, can yield specific competency benefits for participating youth.

Evidence from the highlighted initiatives suggests the importance of youth empowerment practices and processes as well as collaborative relationships between adults (including staff) and youth in securing youth engagement and achieving positive outcomes for youth serving as contributors. In many of the initiatives, youth were provided with multiple opportunities to contribute, which allowed them choice. Multiple

opportunities also allowed for staff flexibility in addressing individual youth needs and to match youth skills, interests and strengths with planned service projects. In turn, staff roles and their relationships with youth adjusted as youth took on leadership roles. Furthermore, organizational change was required, to prepare youth and staff for these changing roles.

## **CHAPTER 5: CO-PRODUCTION AND EMPOWERMENT THEORY**

This chapter continues the process of expanding co-production's theoretical foundation by striving to integrate empowerment theory and practice with co-production intervention theory. The chapter starts with a brief review of empowerment theory and practice. Youth empowerment intervention strategies follow, including three youth empowerment models. Then, the literature on empowerment strategies for involuntary youth is briefly reviewed. The chapter ends with the joining of co-production theory and empowerment theory. Design principles and suggested outcome areas are offered in this concluding section.

### **Introduction**

The empowerment of clients in their dealings with staff and community stakeholders is a core process of co-production interventions. It is not surprising, therefore, that the theoretical and conceptual roots of co-production can be found in empowerment theory and practice.

The empowerment approach involves a dual focus on individual needs and social problems. For this reason, empowerment practice is often described as a set of strategies and techniques used to integrate individual and social transformation (Lee, 1996). The definition used in this study derives from this view of empowerment. Here, empowerment practice entails identifying strategies that enhance involuntary youths' engagement as staff strives to prepare them for active, positive roles as resources, contributors and change agents for organizations and communities.

Empowerment theory can be utilized to help explain co-production driven interventions. For example, many of the intervention methods outlined in the

empowerment literature can be incorporated into the co-production framework. Similarly, articulated goals of empowerment practice can expand the proximal and distal outcomes noted in co-production's original framework.

As noted earlier, co-production has not been satisfactorily conceptualized as a method of treatment, an intervention or a system of practice. Outside of citizen-citizen interventions driven by time banking exchanges, co-production processes, intervention methods and modalities of service are not clearly articulated within the original co-production framework. Furthermore, the preceding chapter on positive youth development revealed empowerment practices and processes to be important determinants of youth engagement within citizen-state co-production interventions. Thus, empowerment theory and practice can be helpful in further defining the co-production intervention framework.

Conversely, co-production interventions represent a unique method of empowerment practice. Some of its tools, processes and strategies can add to the knowledge base of empowerment theory and practice.

### **A Brief Review of Empowerment Theory/Practice**

Empowerment theory and practice encompass a formidable literature. In the analysis that follows, key themes, which are salient to co-production, serve as organizing frames.

#### *Empowerment Processes and Foci of Change*

Empowerment theory and practice deals with issues of power, powerlessness and oppression and how these issues contribute to a range of individual, family and community problems (Gutierrez et al., 1995). Empowerment is a process that can take

place on the individual, interpersonal and community levels of intervention (Gutierrez et al., 1995). Three dimensions of empowerment include the “development of a more positive and potent sense of self,” the “construction of knowledge and capacity for a more critical comprehension of social and political realities of one’s environment” and “the cultivation of resources and strategies to attain both personal and collective goals” (Lee, 1996, p. 224). Efforts toward change can be directed at any level of intervention or can include multiple levels of intervention (Gutierrez et al., 1995).

Empowerment as a process is increasingly being recognized as being centered in local communities. Theorists recognize that for empowerment to occur, people need to be assisted in obtaining and creating the resources that they may need to make use of their competencies (Rappaport, 1994). Thus, interventions need to be focused on assisting people to gain access and control of these resources through an ongoing process of community involvement, participation and contribution (Jennings et al., 2006; Rappaport, 1995).

#### *Goals of Empowerment Practice*

Empowerment theorists have expanded the notion of empowerment as a process to also include empowerment as a goal. Several goals can be sought. For example, empowerment goals can include an increase in personal power and control, interpersonal success or political power for community groups and communities (Gutierrez et al., 1995). Cowger (1997) makes a distinction between “personal empowerment” and “social empowerment.” Personal empowerment is akin to self-determination while social empowerment refers to larger environmental and social justice goals. According to Simon

(1990), empowerment includes “the process of gaining power, the capacity to wield it and the degree of control that actually exists” (Staples, 1990, p. 41).

At the individual and interpersonal level, Gutierrez et al. (1995) identify a number of sub-processes of empowerment practice including the reduction of self-blame, the assumption of personal responsibility, the enhancement of self-efficacy and the development of group consciousness. These also could be considered goals of an empowerment intervention. Some might be applicable to co-production interventions targeted to juveniles in community programs.

While clients can increase psychological empowerment, including their knowledge and personal feelings of self-efficacy through individual and group work, empowerment interventions can also be designed with a broader focus (Simon, 1990; Heflinger & Bickman, 1996). For these theorists, increased power and authority to influence daily existence is viewed as a product of empowerment. This includes materialistic empowerment involving the actual attainment of concrete resources (Lawson, 2003a; Rappaport, 1994; 1995; Simon, 1990; Staples, 1990).

Empowerment at the community level can also vary by approach. Paralleling processes at the individual and interpersonal level, community intervention approaches can seek to promote process goals such as building the capacity of communities to make collaborative and informed decisions. This is in contrast to more radical community social action interventions that seek to achieve objective power and re-distribution of resources for disenfranchised groups through political and civic activism (Rothman, 2001).

### *Intervention Methods*

There is a number of existing intervention methods associated with empowerment practice. These include building on client strengths and accepting the client's definition of the problem, raising the client's consciousness of the issues of class and power, skill-building activities, mobilizing resources and advocating for clients (Gutierrez et al., 1995). An important focus of empowerment intervention is assisting clients in identifying how powerless social roles can undermine individual and family functioning (Pinderhughes, 1995). Consciousness-raising, praxis and critical education are processes designed to accomplish the goal of psychological empowerment.

Consciousness-raising is the process of developing "heightened awareness and knowledge about situations of oppression" (Lee, 1996, p. 232). Clients and families are assisted in viewing problems within the larger societal context. Here, clients begin to understand that their behaviors, albeit maladaptive, are often pursued to cope with environmental situations that are untenable (Pinderhughes, 1995). To proceed with consciousness raising activities, the client must have significant levels of motivation and psychic comfort. Worker activities often focus on these needs at the onset of intervention.

Praxis involves the process of action, reflection and return to action as clients begin to understand and act to improve their life circumstances. Guiding the processes involved in praxis is important as painful feelings may arise as participants are faced with the realities of their oppressed conditions and face obstacles to changing those conditions (Lee, 1996).

Critical education (Freire, 1973) involves a five-step group process that addresses a problem or theme that has personal, institutional and cultural perspectives. These

activities are designed to promote coping, improve client motivation, maintain emotional comfort, improve problem-solving skills and build self-esteem (Lee, 1996).

Intervention methods and pathways designed to attain new material resources for disenfranchised clients have not been well defined within empowerment theory and practice (Gutierrez et al., 1995). Common strategies include linking families with natural supports such as church or social groups. Helping people within a group of common interest builds a sense of competence and self-esteem. Participation also builds group cohesion, a necessary step in changing powerless roles (Pinderhughes, 1995). Also, developing new social networks that focus on organizational, community and policy change is a focus of newer empowerment models (Pinderhughes, 1995). Co-production interventions seek to develop pathways for the attainment of both psychological and materialistic empowerment.

Finally, implementing these strategies requires a certain level of staff training and expertise. A mix of generalist and specialist skills is needed, including expertise in group work, clinical expertise and knowledge of the community (Lee, 1996).

#### *Intervention Modalities*

Intervention modalities for empowerment practice include individual empowerment work, empowerment oriented group work and community action (Lee, 1996). Key to empowerment practice is the focus on how environments can be changed to improve the person's fit in their environment (Gutierrez, 1994). Facilitating social interaction through involvement with similar others is an important feature of empowerment work.

The empowerment group is at the heart of empowerment practice, providing the setting for “the integration of personal/clinical and political in a direct practice approach relevant to poor and oppressed people” (Lee, 1996, p. 220). Group contact can take the form of participation in mutual aid or involvement with a voluntary organization (Gutierrez, 1994). Targets of change include organizations and agencies as well as communities and government policies (Gutierrez, Parsons & Cox, 1998).

Zimmerman’s theory of learned hopefulness and subsequent research is relevant here. The theory suggests that social interaction through participation in empowering organizations can contribute to a sense of psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman & Maton, 1992). Such group involvement provides individuals with a source of support through the change process, an opportunity to learn new skills through role modeling. This can create a solid base for larger social change efforts (Gutierrez, 1994).

Many empowerment theorists view empowerment practice as essentially a political and economic change process through active participation in institutions such as schools and workplaces (Simon, 1990). For these theorists, the notion that individual action can address collective inequality is not realistic. Empowerment, according to this viewpoint, must be “conceptualized, made operational and measured in collective as well as individual terms” (Staples, 1990, p. 37). Collective goals accomplished through the enhancement of collective efficacy must be included as part of empowerment practice.

In addition, some radical empowerment theorists stipulate up front that the very nature of collective empowerment of the powerless will lead to some individuals and groups to lose power (Staples, 1990). Others view power as more infinite with

empowerment being viewed as “mutual and contagious.” For example, instead of losing power, professionals can benefit from client empowerment achieved through participation in co-producing activities. Empowered clients lead to more effective services, which can enhance worker efficacy (Lawson, 2003a).

Co-production theorists would also agree with the generative nature of empowerment interventions. With the building of new social capital networks and collaborative arrangements, access to resources is expanded as untapped or underutilized individual and community assets are identified and exchanged. This enhanced access to resources can drive both the informal economy and civil society (Cahn, 2004).

#### *Current Status of Empowerment Strategies by Social Service Providers*

Despite its collective action and system change emphasis, studies of empowerment practice have shown that practitioners tend to limit their focus on fostering individual processes of change. For practitioners, empowerment is linked to fostering self-determination (Ackerson & Harrison, 2000; Gutierrez et al., 1995). In fostering self-determination, the goal of practitioners is often to assist clients in seeking adaptation to environmental circumstances. In seeking individual change, practitioners assist clients in enhancing the power that they might have in a given situation, helping clients understand the choices that they have and to develop confidence and enhanced feelings of control (Ackerson & Harrison, 2000; Gibson, 1993; Gutierrez et al., 1995).

Many theorists, including co-production theorists, view this limited focus as unfortunate. Failing to direct client efforts toward gaining access and control of new resources, including obtaining new opportunities, means that practitioners are “relieving symptoms” as opposed to ameliorating conditions in a sustainable way. In addition,

practitioners are missing an opportunity to tap a vast reservoir of underutilized talent and energy that can be used for civic activism (Cahn, 2004).

Theorists cite a number of reasons for the focus on individual change and adaptation. First, the push to document case specific outcomes may be driving practice. For example, it is easier to measure changes in client perception as opposed to measuring improvements in specific skill building competencies, the attainment of concrete resources or the expansion of opportunities (Staples, 1990). Second, agencies tend to be more comfortable in working to improve individual client circumstances and not to mobilize clients toward challenging the power structure in a community (Gutierrez et al., 1995). Collective action, when sought, is often viewed as a vehicle by which individual empowerment can be enhanced in contrast to fostering the notion of collective empowerment itself (Staples, 1990). Finally, practitioners may be choosing to focus on aspects of their client's problems that they can address, rather than the more challenging tasks of changing environments or organizations (Ackerson & Harrison, 2000).

Another challenge is that empowerment practices tend to be packaged for social agencies to use on people (Rappaport, 1994, p. 367). This one-size fits all package does not take into account the necessity of empowerment meaning different things to different people depending upon their circumstances in life, organizations which they are affiliated and communities in which they live. Empowerment is an intentional ongoing process that is context driven, not easily amenable to program design or time limited structures (Rappaport, 1994).

Furthermore, for empowerment-based practice to occur, organizations need to allow for power sharing between clients and professionals (Ackerson & Harrison, 2000;

Gutierrez et al., 1995; Saleebey, 1997). However, many practice environments present limits to fostering self-determination. For example, in institutional settings, individuals often have to adapt to group rules. Personal limitations of the client population, which at times necessitates staff acting on behalf of their clientele, was also cited by staff as limiting empowerment practice. In addition, for certain involuntary clients, social control may require a degree of protective intervention that limits client self-determination (Ackerson & Harrison, 2000).

Despite these challenges, organizational conditions can be altered to foster empowerment practice. For example, Gutierrez et al. (1995) identified the importance of staff preparation and development in support of empowerment strategies. Similarly, findings from this study revealed the importance of creating a working environment that fosters an entrepreneurial spirit and allows staff to take be creative and to take risks. Here, staff needs to have the freedom to develop new programming and experiment with new interventions if empowerment driven practices are to be realized.

In addition, cultivating a team approach within the organization was seen as important. Here, desired empowerment strategies with clients are mirrored between staff members. These parallel empowerment strategies need to extend up to senior management as well. For example, it is important that senior leaders support and encourage risk taking and experimentation and directly address the organizational barriers to program success (Gutierrez et al., 1995; Rooney, 1992).

For this to occur, sharing of power and information between all levels of staff was viewed as important. Building relationships and support systems among staffs, including cultivating worker led mutual support groups (Hegar & Hunzeker, 1988) were seen as

enabling strategies to facilitate teamwork. Organizations that empower workers through opportunities for skill development, participatory management, risk taking and the ability to make independent decisions will promote a culture that empowers clients and communities (Gutierrez et al., 1995). In short, staff empowerment begets client empowerment. Findings support the development of working conditions compatible to youth empowerment practices and processes.

Also, findings from the empowerment literature reveal that client empowerment strategies can yield organizational benefits, in addition to client benefits. Consistent with the findings from the youth development literature (see prior chapter); empowerment-related studies have focused on the expanded role and influence of client activity within an organization. According to Lee (1996), the empowerment approach is compatible with a strength-based perspective. The strength-based perspective stresses the active role of participants in planning, implementing and evaluating their own services plan and in being partners in the treatment process (Saleebey, 1992). However, within empowerment practice, communities and organizations become new contexts by which clients can contribute.

For example, Gutierrez et al. (1995) found that client activities can move beyond their commitment to working together with staff on individual treatment planning to the setting of rules for program operation, involving participants to serve on agency boards of directors and asking clients to assist their fellow clients. Friesen and Stephens (1998) expanded these roles, providing examples of clients serving as trainers, researchers and staff assistants within organizations. These contributive activities can “help engage clients, enhance self-esteem, further clients’ sense of belonging, break-down client

isolation while encouraging mutual assistance” (Gutierrez et al., 1995, p. 540).

Participation in program planning and implementation also creates an educational experience for clients.

Utilizing data from a longitudinal study of a large mutual help mental health organization, Rappaport (1987) observed members contributing in a host of different ways, from providing social and interpersonal comfort and support to peers, learning how to be a helper and a “helpee,” to taking on more formal roles in the organization. Such contributions can be individualized. According to Rappaport (1987):

“The creation of formal roles and responsibilities for every member, regardless of that person’s level of functioning, the culture of the groups, the way of construing problems and the structure of the organization are all empowering mechanisms for the organization” (p. 138).

Furthermore, McGowan (1988) notes that developing mutual helping systems within organizations can increase client comfort levels with agency services. It can also lead to a “sense of ownership about the agency” (p. 25).

In short, there are a myriad of organizational impacts resulting from an expanded role for clients. These impacts generated from the empowerment literature, many of which are compatible with those identified in the youth development literature, become valuable features of the proposed theoretical framework for co-production.

For these impacts to occur, staff and client relationships need to be altered, to include an equalizing of relationships and mutual respect. Gutierrez et al. (1995) noted in their study of empowerment practices that practitioners treat clients as “co-participants and equals” (p. 541). Here, adult and youth strengths and expertise were valued. More

important, they were put to good use in furthering the service projects. Opportunities were built into project design to allow for youth and adults to work together to solve problems and to assist youth team members.

Furthermore, more recently, theorists are calling for social service providers to focus attention on interventions that strengthen the capacity of communities to provide new opportunities for youth and families. As an outgrowth of the family support (e.g., Chaskin, 2006, Pinkerton, 2000) and youth development movements (see prior chapter plus e.g., Batavik, 1997; Checkoway, 1998; Delgado, 2002; Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Perkins et al., 2003), these theorists and researchers view communities not just as contexts of individual change in clients but as a target and focus of intervention as well.

Here, local residents, including organizational clients, are engaged as part of a planned initiative to build community capacity, including developing local leadership and strengthen targeted community organizations (see prior chapter and Chaskin, 2006). Through participating in the planned intervention, individuals feel more empowered. In addition, it is proposed that clients are able to gain materially through social capital opportunities resulting from new relationships forged as part of the capacity building effort. Improved educational, vocational and employment trajectories result (Chaskin, 2006).

As individuals realize these benefits, communities benefit. As with the citizen-social justice model of co-production described in the previous chapter, clients can be viewed as participants and change agents for social justice (Jennings et al., 2006). Education and political action strategies are used to change organizational, community and legal structures that are oppressive to disenfranchised groups (Pinderhughes, 1995).

For example, depending upon the focus of the intervention, crime or housing conditions are improved through these efforts. Political empowerment can also result as a new voting block advocating for change is created (Chaskin, 2006).

As with Rappaport's conception, these interventions do not lend itself to time-limited involvement and packages of service to be provided by single organizations. Instead, to be successful, interventions need to transcend program and organization, necessitating an ongoing commitment to broader community participation (Chaskin, 2006; Pinkerton, 2000). These features will be important in designing co-production initiatives to foster empowerment in vulnerable youth and disadvantaged communities. Examples of youth empowerment strategies that incorporate many of these core elements are described below.

### **Youth Empowerment Intervention Strategies**

Intervention frameworks for youth have been developed which incorporate many of the key features of empowerment theory and practice noted above. Frameworks developed by Chinman & Linney (1998), Kim et al. (1998) and Cargo, Grams, Ottoson, Ward & Green (2003) will be highlighted below. Each model draws from broader social theories to help guide intervention theory. In addition, each model illustrates specific structural components of empowerment driven interventions as well as mechanisms and pathways of change for youth participants.

#### *A Model of Adolescent Empowerment (Chinman & Linney, 1998)*

Chinman and Linney (1998) draw on developmental theory, bonding and social control theory and theory associated with rolelessness, to support their model. Using Erikson's (1968) notions of identity and ego development during adolescence, the

researchers propose that youth involvement in action-oriented positive activities such as community service can have a positive effect on youth developmental outcomes. In addition, meaningful roles for youth can address the problems of rolelessness for teens, which can contribute to negative behaviors and unhealthy development (Kurth-Schai, 1988). Also, Hirschi's (1969) control theory asserts that delinquent acts result from weak or broken ties to society. Enhancing those ties and strengthening social bonds with individuals and institutions would be an important feature of a youth empowerment intervention.

Chinman and Linney cite the importance of the "social development model" in informing their empowerment model. Within the social development model (see Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992), adolescents need to have opportunities to make active, significant and positive contributions to families, schools, peer groups and community institutions. In doing so, youth will bond to these social units and have a stake in them. At the same time, they will learn more skills as they are contributing and experience recognition for their efforts from people and institutions now important to them.

The authors utilize empowerment theory to describe pathways to change resulting from this enhanced bonding. In their model, youth are to develop a "critical awareness" of their environment including an ability to set goals for themselves (also see Zimmerman, 1990). It is hypothesized that through participation in this cycle of activities, social bonding will take place. A number of developmental benefits will then accrue including that "adolescents will feel more confident, in control, have higher self esteem and enhanced self-efficacy" (Chinman & Linney, 1998, p. 400). These pathways

are supported by empirical research. This research identifies the link between working together with others in community activities and organizations, including mutual assistance activities, reduced alienation and greater psychological empowerment (e.g., Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Zimmerman & Maton, 1992).

From the literature review and noted theories, Chinman & Linney (1998) developed a “positive adolescent empowerment cycle” to help structure empowerment interventions for youth. The model includes providing adolescents with opportunities to participate in positive, meaningful activities, bonding to positive institutions and adult role models, learning new useful and relevant skills and establishing opportunities for youth to be recognized for their contributions. Key intervention features of the model include the importance of the role of adults, group work so as to attain peer approval, meaningful activities and experiences that are important to the community, proper recognition of their work and a time for adolescents to reflect on their experiences.

Finally, Chinman & Linney note the importance of community and family context in providing opportunities for youth to participate and in reinforcing positive accomplishments. The authors identify work, community service and mentoring relationships with older youth or adults as important settings for empowerment activities to occur.

However, there is recognition by the authors that not all contexts are similar in terms of resources and capacities to provide these opportunities for youth. Given this complexity, the notion of designing interventions that address individual circumstances and different contexts becomes important. Empowerment gains also occur differently for

different people. All of these issues need to be taken into account in designing youth empowerment interventions.

One example of a context that seeks to empower participating youth is youth courts. Forgays & DeMilio (2005) refer to empowerment theory and the work of Chinman and Linney (1998) to help explain the impact of youth participation in the teen court process. According to Forgays and DeMilio, “modeling and mandates are only effective if the youth offender is able and motivated to engage in pro-social behaviors” (p. 108). They attributed this motivation to personal empowerment, achieved through the admission of guilt before peers, the acceptance of a sentence from peers and positive engagement with the Teen Court jury, that enabled the offender to “internalize pro-social community values and avoid future crimes against the community” (p. 108).

A key finding from the study was the decision by sizeable numbers of offenders to voluntarily “contribute” to the youth court, serving as jurors, bailiffs, clerk and advocates post mandatory sentence. For these youth, no money or reward was offered. According to the authors, it is the empowerment processes, with its emphasis on bonding with peers, involvement in interesting and challenging activities and recognition for accomplishments, which help explain the voluntary involvement of offenders as “contributors” to the Teen Court. In other words, initial mandated participation in the youth court, fostered in part by a welcoming climate and a level of collaboration with adult staff and peers, empowered youth to further contribute and continue to be involved voluntarily with the organization.

*The Youth Development and Empowerment Approach (Kim et al., 1998)*

Kim et al. (1998) complement and enhance the work of Chinman and Linney.

While both frameworks provide structural components as well as the mechanisms that bolster the empowering processes, the Kim et al. model goes further in terms of details in both areas. The model explicates a number of core structural components that are vital to establishing the essential social bonds between youth, significant others and institutions. In addition, it provides further explanation as to empowerment mechanisms that allow for new and fortified social bonds to occur.

The authors designed a youth development and empowerment approach (YD&E) for substance abuse prevention interventions. Key components of this approach include providing the youth with ample opportunities to learn life skills, assume responsibilities and demonstrate abilities and successes. The model stresses the importance of providing youth with high expectations and frequent reinforcement of their achievements.

A number of structural components are identified in the model. They include: (1) The establishment of a community task force of adult advisors from business, government, education, religious and community organizations to support empowerment programming, (2) The creation of youth leader/adult advisor dyads to work together on community projects and (3) The importance of family supports.

These structural components involve adults and youth or groups of peers working together on community projects. Each of the structural components is also designed to enhance social bonding for the youth involved. For example, the role of the task force would be to provide leadership and guidance for the youth teams in support of their service projects. The task force would also be called upon to provide social capital by

“tapping their networks.” In tapping their networks, community leaders would be encouraged to identify and access resources from friends and colleagues who might have specific skills and resources to offer the youth and the project as a whole. In addition, task force members would be called upon to lend credibility to the project, by getting involved as needed to secure support for a community project, identify service opportunities for the youth, recruit adult leaders and take part in recognizing accomplishments.

Youth/adult dyads are designed to maximize the core components of social bonding including cultivating attachment, commitment and belief (Kim et al., p. 6). The dyads begin by training together in core skill areas, such as team building skills, communication and problem solving. They then together train other youth team members in these areas. The youth and adult dyads would also provide special service and career development skills workshops to youth team members. These trainings are designed to assist youth team members in completing specific service projects. For youth, social bonds are established with adult role models as well as with other peers.

The service projects are designed to address social concerns in their school or community, such as promoting academic success in schools through a newly designed peer-tutoring program. The youth/adult dyads work together throughout the project to successfully implement the service or career project determined by the specialized skills that have been attained. For this process to be successful, adults need to treat youth as co-participants, sharing and valuing each other’s strengths and skills. Members of the task force also participate in the projects, lending their expertise and social contacts to help ensure its success.

In addition, the family support aspect of the model is unique. It calls for parental and family roles to move beyond providing encouragement for the youth. In effect, the YD&E model seeks to involve parents as “co-producers” with staff in planning and administering the empowerment intervention. Parents are asked to perform tasks such as information gathering, publicity and fundraising for the project. Parents and family members are engaged in working closely with staff to achieve project goals. They are an essential ingredient in providing caring and support to youths as part of the empowerment process. Parents are also important in reinforcing the achievements of the youth and in celebrating accomplishments (Kim et al., 1998, p. 8).

Finally, Kim et al. utilize social learning theory and expectation-states theory to explain the processes by which these social bonds are established. The authors refer to social learning in explaining the differential reinforcement that accompanies these new opportunities afforded to youth. The goal is for the reinforcement associated with these new and positive opportunities and interactions to replace the perceived benefits that youth were receiving in participating in criminal behaviors and joining gangs, as examples.

Expectations-states theory is driven by the notion that self-concept is for the most part driven by how others in the family and the social network treat us. Through the “ongoing, repetitive and cyclical processes” of the empowerment processes built into the model, youth can achieve self-worth, purpose, competences and control over their lives (Kim et al., p. 10). According to the authors, the YD&E model is generative. Success builds on success, as youth develop enhanced self-worth and become change agents in their community.

*The Transactional Partnering Model (Cargo et al., 2003)*

Cargo et al. (2003) used findings from a multi-year participatory health promotion project in British Columbia, Canada to develop the Transactional Partnering model of youth empowerment (also see Jennings et al., 2006). Cargo et al. (2003) obtained qualitative data to understand an intervention aimed at engaging youth as active participants in addressing quality of life issues. 123 youth participated in the project during the 32-month study, working side by side with seven adult facilitators.

The researchers found youth empowerment involves a transactional process between youth and adults. This transactional process was mutually constructed and it was achieved by shifting practice and programming. Specifically, practice and programming shifted from a top-down, adult driven approach to one involving egalitarian (mutually designed) programming and practice. In this egalitarian approach, youth have increasing decision-making power and responsibility, especially as they gain competencies and confidence. Moreover, adults gave youth the opportunity to voice opinions, make decisions and take actions to achieve their goals. Adult facilitators also provided youth with a roadmap to help guide the assessment of quality of life issues and to develop action plans to address the mutually-determined priorities (Cargo et al., 2003).

Moreover, Cargo et al. (2003) identified individual and community level youth empowerment outcomes. Individual outcomes included self-esteem, collective esteem and increased levels of self-confidence. Community-level youth empowerment outcomes included the ability to work together with others, a clearer understanding of local communities and the development of voice and advocacy competencies (Cargo et al., p. S75).

From these findings, the researchers constructed a special model called the Transactional Partnering Model (TPM). The TPM emphasizes the importance of youth being exposed to new opportunities and challenges within a safe and supportive environment. Through dialogue and reflection with other youth and trusting adults, both learning and empowerment occur. Participation in projects such as the one studied can create individual level outcomes such as increased autonomy and self-confidence as well as community level empowerment outcomes such as enhanced integration in the local community (Jennings et al., 2006).

### *Dimensions of Youth Empowerment Interventions*

Jennings et al. (2006) identified six common dimensions of youth empowerment models. Their findings were gleaned from a review of core models of youth empowerment, three of which have been reviewed in this chapter. The core dimensions of youth empowerment models are: (1) a welcoming and safe environment, (2) meaningful participation and engagement, (3) equitable power-sharing between youth and adults, (4) engagement in critical reflection on interpersonal and socio-political processes, (5) participation in those socio-political processes to affect change and (6) the integration of individual and community level empowerment.

According to the Jennings et al., these dimensions form the basis of critical youth empowerment (CYE). Critical youth empowerment describes the processes by which youth create change in organizations, institutions and social policies (Jennings et al., 2006, p. 40). Each dimension is briefly described below because many of the processes are incorporated into the proposed intervention framework for co-production.

#### *A Welcoming and Safe Environment*

A welcoming and safe environment is “a social space in which young people has freedom to be themselves, express their own creativity, voice their opinions in decision-making processes, try out new skills and roles, rise to challenges and have fun in the process” (Jennings et al., 2006). Adults have a key role in creating a welcoming and safe environment, in allowing for mistakes to occur and to support youth so that they can learn from those mistakes. (Adult roles in fostering youth empowerment will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter on collaboration.)

### *Meaningful Participation and Engagement*

Meaningful participation and engagement refers to youth making an “authentic contribution” (Jennings et al., 2006). Here, participation provides youth with opportunities to learn leadership skills and to experiment with different roles. Significantly, meaningful participation and engagement goes beyond just showing up for an activity. Instead, youth are actively engaged because they experience challenges by participating. In turn, these challenges promote youth competencies and intrinsic motivation (Kim et al., 1998). (The link between youth empowerment and youth engagement will be explored in detail in chapter 7 of this dissertation.)

### *Equitable Power-Sharing Between Youth and Adults*

The movement toward more equitable power-sharing between youth and adults is a common dimension within youth empowerment models, including the TPM model offered by Cargo et al. (2006). This power-sharing, however, is easier to identify than to implement because the research indicates that true power-sharing between adults and youth is a major challenge. For adults, for example, power-sharing requires a balance between support and guidance and knowing when to intervene without taking over the

project (see Cargo et al., 2003). (Other challenges associated with equitable power sharing will also be addressed in the next chapter on collaboration.)

Power-sharing between youth and adults involved in the involuntary service settings, such as the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, is especially challenging. One reason is obvious: Participants are required or pressured to be there. The question is, when mandated attendance and participation provide the back-drop, does genuine power-sharing occur? (The special challenges in fostering youth engagement for involuntary clients are explored in chapters 8 and 10 of this dissertation study.)

#### *Engagement in Critical Reflection on Interpersonal and Socio-Political Processes*

Empowerment models for youth also emphasize critical reflection of empowerment-related activities. Especially important is cultivating each youths understanding of community resources and community and political structures, especially ones that might provide barriers to attaining project goals (Jennings et al., 2006).

Empowerment-oriented reflection also poses special challenges. For example, according to Jennings et al. (2003), critical reflection is a feature of youth empowerment that is often less emphasized in practice. For these several reasons, critical reflection merits special attention. (Obstacles to critical reflection in involuntary service systems will be identified in chapter 8 of this dissertation study.)

#### *Participation in Socio-Political Processes to Effect Change*

Participation in socio-political processes is identified as an essential feature of critical youth empowerment. Intended to foster civic engagement, this feature involves youth in social change efforts. Jennings et al. (2006) make a distinction between youth participation in social actions and projects designed specifically to change policies and

social systems. These distinctions parallel the different characteristics of youth-organizational-community co-production and youth-social justice co-production proposed in the prior chapter of this dissertation.

### *The Integration of Individual and Community-Level Empowerment*

Last but not least, critical youth empowerment involves multi-level change. It combines positive change at the individual and community levels. Community-level empowerment involves additional youth competencies and gains (e.g., a greater understanding by the youth of community resources). It also includes enhanced community impacts and social change, as noted above. In fact, this integration is an essential feature of critical youth empowerment. When it is integrated with co-production interventions, it paves the way for multi-level theories of action and attendant outcomes.

## **Empowerment Theory and Involuntary Youth**

### *Outcomes of Empowerment Practice*

Hopelessness and low levels of individual self-efficacy and agency are often associated with youth involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems (Ivanoff et al., 1994; Rooney, 1992). Consequently, empowerment strategies and practices are important for involuntary youth. These strategies also are permissible, regardless of the youth's legal status.

Much of intervention theory and practice involving empowerment and involuntary youth focuses on fostering psychological empowerment through individual modalities. Here, staff members strive to achieve two main outcomes: improved self-efficacy and youth self-determination (Rooney, 1992). Henceforth, these empowerment-related outcomes associated with involuntary youth are referred to as "level-one"

outcomes. Level-one outcomes are essential precursors to accomplishing higher level empowerment related outcomes for involuntary youth.

Self-efficacy is defined as a person's perceived, as opposed to actual capability of carrying out a particular action (Bandura, 1986). Bandura (2001, p. 10) notes that efficacy beliefs are the foundation of human agency. In brief, unless youth have strong beliefs in their own ability to attain desired results, they will not exert sufficient effort or persevere in the face of obstacles, nor will they manifest resilience.

When efficacy beliefs develop, agency often does too (Bandura, 2000). Agency involves the ways that people exercise control over their lives (Bandura, 2000). Low levels of individual agency can lead to feelings of hopelessness (Zimmerman, 1990). In turn, self-determination is defined as the ability to think for oneself and to take action consistent with that thought (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins, 2004).

Research indicates that without sufficient efficacy beliefs, youth might not be prepared to take advantage of new developmental opportunities (Bandura, 2001), such as those offered by co-production. Research on youth resiliency supports this proposition. Here, resilient youth are characterized by their ability to take advantage of new opportunities and circumstances that can lead to betterment of their lives (e.g., Masten, Best & Garnezy, 1990).

The construct of "proxy agency" is relevant here. Proxy agency involves the enlisting of other persons who have greater access to resources and expertise. Proxy agents then act on the person-in-need's behalf to secure the important goals and resources needed (Bandura, 2001). Theorists note that involuntary youth often enlist foster parents, adult mentors and agency staff for proxy agency to improve their own circumstances

because they feel incapable of doing so by themselves due to their own perceived low level of individual agency (see Hegar, 1989). Securing proxy agency may be an important outcome of empowerment practice for involuntary youth.

In short, the affirmation of client self-worth and dignity while improving the ability of youth to resolve their own problems, are important goals to achieve for involuntary youth (Rooney, 1992). Empowerment theory and practice are implicated. A commitment to “empowering, co-planning and contracting” within legal limits, must guide worker behavior with involuntary clients (Rooney, 1992, p. 59). Co-production interventions expand the menu of empowerment strategies and processes available to staff to further empowerment outcomes.

Finally, fostering psychological empowerment for involuntary youth is viewed as essential if youth are to succeed after mandatory service involvement terminates. For example, enhancing intrinsic motivation in clients is viewed as essential if clients are to succeed without the benefit of staff being present to reward positive behaviors and punish negative behaviors (Beckerman & Hutchinson, 1988; Rooney, 1992; Simons, 1985; Trotter, 1999). The often-transitional period of involvement in child welfare and juvenile justice systems provides an optimal time for these developmental outcomes to be enhanced, preparing the youth for new opportunities and possibilities (Bazemore & Terry, 1997; Yohalem & Pittman, 2001; Zeldin, 2004).

#### *Intervention Methods and Involuntary Youth*

To achieve psychological empowerment for involuntary youth, implementation fidelity with specially designed empowerment-oriented strategies and interventions is required. Rooney (1992, p. 65) identifies a number of strategies designed to enhance

client self-determination and cultivate feelings of hopefulness and optimism. Strategies include: (1) Reframing client concerns to blend in with mandated requirements, (2) clarifying areas of discretion and negotiation, (3) Emphasizing freedoms untouched by mandated requirements and (4) Addressing additional client concerns voluntarily. Many of these strategies are designed to address challenges associated with empowerment practice in involuntary settings. These strategies present an array of opportunities for youth and staff to transact.

For example, a status offender who is truant from school might be more amenable to attending school regularly (a legal mandate) if a staff member is able to advocate for an extra school period of music, which is the subject that the youth most looks forward to during the school day. Or, staff might agree to advocate on behalf of a client, based on the condition that the client agrees to make certain behavioral changes. Here, a staff member might be willing to negotiate with court personnel to reduce court mandates, such as changing curfews, if youth remain crime free for a defined period of time and agrees to use evening time to work on community service projects.

Similarly, there is often discretion and choice in working together with youth on how to implement the specifics of a court order. It is important that staff is aware of areas of discretion and choice. Once the boundaries are clear, staff can then turn over decision-making authority in these areas to the youth, as appropriate. For example, a court order may mandate that a youth perform community service. However, the specifics of the requirement could be left to the youth to decide, in consultation with staff members, probation officers and other key stakeholders, including the victim of the crime perpetrated by the youth.

Also, despite the use of compliance-oriented strategies to motivate change in involuntarily referred clients, most theorists advocate the use of persuasion methods to accompany strategies that foster empowerment related goals (Beckerman & Hutchinson, 1988; Rooney, 1992). Persuasion methods seek to change behavior without the promise of reward or threat of punishment. Persuasion methods are more likely to promote self-attribution and attitude change (Rooney, 1992; Simons, 1985). As risk levels are reduced, the use of persuasion methods can be enhanced and the use of compliance methods can be reduced (Rooney, 1992).

Furthermore, theorists identify the importance of establishing “naturally occurring positive consequences.” Once established, these consequences can be linked to client changes in behavior (Simons, 1985). Over time, symbolic incentives replace actual incentives.

For example, providing a bonus or stipend for youth that perform an enhanced community service above and beyond their mandatory requirement communicates an appreciation for the contributions made to their community. This differs from providing youth with money or goods after each time a youth provides a service. Receiving in-kind services during the service experience (e.g., an adult volunteer at a community services site helping youth to get a better job) is an example of a symbolic incentive produced naturally through participation. As noted in chapter 6, the former is more apt to enhance intrinsic motivation. These so-called “natural reinforcers” also help to sustain the gains post services termination (see Trotter, 1999).

Research also indicates that a range of intervention strategies can be employed to foster self-efficacy and influence individual agency (see Furstenberg & Rounds, 1995). These strategies also seek to foster proxy agency.

For example, youth working closely with adults on leadership and community development projects can enhance self-efficacy. In particular, projects that involve youth/adult dyads working and training together on community projects of similar interests can provide youth with an opportunity to witness efficacy behaviors in adults and learn from observation (Halpern, 2005; Kim et al., 1998; Musick, 2000). Here, youth observe trusted adults “being assertive and confident in their own efficacy” (Hegar, 1989, p. 379). Building in time for reflection and review under the guidance of a trusted adult can enhance the learning experience for the youth as well as increase bonding and connection to the adult (Halpern, 2005; Musick, 2000). These processes enable youth to internalize the adult’s expertise and perspective on work, problem-solving and life view.

Moreover, research suggests that for these benefits to occur, trust and suspicion of adults by youth must be overcome. Intentional implementation strategies can build staff/youth bonding and trust. For example, Jarrett, Sullivan & Watkins (2005) found that a movement toward egalitarian relationships and willingness of adults to open up personal aspects of their lives so that staff can be seen by the youth as “real people” can result in a reduction of trust and suspicion and more meaningful youth/adult connections.

Finally, empowerment-related interventions cannot be standardized with the assumption that they fit every client. Special interventions must be tailored to fit with individualized client needs and changing circumstances. Individual youth circumstances, such as child service needs, influence empowerment approaches to be used by staff. For

example, a child's mental and physical condition might limit delegating certain decisions to youth who are not ready to handle such decisions (Gutierrez et al., 1995). Also, for certain youth at risk of re-offending, it might be unrealistic and be in fact illegal and unethical to allow certain youth enhanced freedoms and decision-making power (Gibson, 1993; Hegar & Hunzeker, 1988).

In addition, providing clients with choices and freedoms should not preclude workers from confronting youth with anti-social or pro-criminal behaviors (Trotter, 1999; Beckerman & Hutchinson, 1988). Special care is needed so that fostering choice does not interfere or conflict with community protection goals (Rooney, 1992). In these situations, workers may need to return back to more compliance-oriented techniques if the consequences of choice or freedoms become detrimental to the clients or others. Choices and freedoms may need to be constrained, until behaviors change and safety concerns return to acceptable levels.

#### *Intervention Modalities and Involuntary Youth*

As noted earlier in this chapter, group work is the modality of choice for co-production interventions. Moreover, findings from the positive youth development literature (see chapter 4) revealed a number of benefits afforded to "co-producing" youth while working in groups with peers and adult role models. These benefits include an enhanced sense of psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman & Maton, 1992) and a source of social support to assist youth through the change process (Gutierrez, 1994). In addition, research supports the link between well-run groups and enhanced youth participation (Evans, Ulasevich & Blahut, 2004).

However, for hard to serve youth, group modalities present challenges. Findings from a broad base of research support caution the use of group approaches for high-risk teens. In fact, in some circumstances, group work involving groups of high-risk teens has been found to be contra-indicated.

For example, findings from studies originating out of the Oregon Social Learning Center at the University of Oregon have revealed “iatrogenic effects” associated with aggregating high-risk adolescents into certain group interventions (Poulin, Dishion & Burraston, 2001; Dishion, McCord & Poulin, 1999). Specifically, findings from two experimentally controlled intervention studies, both involving longitudinal tracking, suggest that peer-group interventions increase adolescent problem behavior and negative life outcomes in adulthood, in comparison with youth in control groups (Dishion, McCord & Poulin, 1999).

These findings were supported by another study that aggregated high-risk youth into cognitive-behavioral groups. In this study, teens from these groups were compared in certain behaviors with the behaviors of teens not involved in any intervention, teens whose parents participated in a parent-focused curriculum and teens involved in “self-directed” change. Here, findings associated the group intervention to 3-year escalations in self-reported smoking and teacher-reported delinquency (Poulin et al., 2001). These findings support previous studies of anti-social behavior reinforcement in naturally forming friendship networks (Dishion, Spracklen, Andrews & Patterson, 1996; Dishion, Capaldi, Spracklen & Li, 1995).

This same line of research emphasized the importance of “deviancy training.” Deviancy training refers to situations where aggregating peers in group settings might

inadvertently reinforce problem behaviors. The findings support the importance of mixing pro-social behaving youth with high-risk youth within group interventions (Poulin et al., 2001).

Furthermore, these findings are consistent with studies of youth in employment situations. Here, delinquent youth working with other delinquent youth in paid employment may model antisocial behavior, thus reducing social control benefits. The mix of youth can negatively impact on pro-social modeling (see Bazemore, 1991; Uggen & Janikula, 1999).

Similar results have been found in studies of court-ordered community service programs for youth. For example, in comparing youth working alone or in groups, Trotter (1995) found that offenders working with groups of other offenders at community worksites had substantially and significantly higher recidivism rates, controlling for factors such as risk. Trotter (1999) notes that similar results were found in other studies of community service (see McIvor, 1992). Trotter's identification of "contamination effects" from anti-social peer group members in community service settings is similar to the findings of "deviancy effects" previously noted.

More recent studies have identified potential mediating factors that reduce peer contagion effects in projects that aggregate high-risk youth within group settings. For example, subsequent research on deviancy effects has identified the importance of a sufficient adult presence in the groups to provide pro-social modeling and to monitor and reduce deviant peer involvement. (see Leve & Chamberlain, 2005). Training and mobilizing care-giving adults, including volunteers and parents (Poulin et al., 2001) and developing a family focus to the group interventions (Dishion et al., 1999) may safeguard

against the potential of deviancy effects. Additional study is needed; to test the potential positive influences of adult participation, including parents, on youth and parent outcomes and on proximal indicators of co-production interventions, such as engagement and empowerment-related outcomes.

### *Conclusion*

Despite the challenges of changing client circumstances, theorists note that empowerment-related approaches, even if semi-voluntary, are essential to achieve desired outcomes. Empowerment approaches are considered an important feature of involuntary practice (Rooney, 1992). More than what staff members adopt and implement their work organizations must support empowerment interventions.

For example, Gutierrez et al. (1995) note that for organizations that practice empowerment approaches, abandoning empowerment due to client circumstances are rare. Also, as noted in an earlier section of this dissertation, most youth involved in the juvenile justice system are not violent offenders. The majority of youth are in the system due to minor offenses or due to status offenses, such as truancy and do not present significant safety risks to themselves or other (U.S. DOJ, 2003; 2006). Precluding individualized empowerment approaches that are tailored to client circumstances, even early in service delivery, may be a disservice to youth and staff alike (Pinderhughes, 1995).

### **Integrating Co-Production and Empowerment**

Co-production theory and practice continue to evolve, and the same can be said of empowerment theory, interventions and practice. It is timely to explore how co-production and empowerment theory, interventions and practice can be joined and

integrated. For example, co-production brings new dimensions to empowerment driven intervention strategies.

In turn, empowerment theory and practice contribute to the breadth of the co-production intervention framework by providing valuable design principles. These design principles help structure interventions and identifying potential outcomes and impacts stemming from co-production intervention activities.

Finally, empowerment theory and practice involving involuntary youth help set forth potential distinctions in the applicability of co-production intervention theory to this target population. Theoretical claims are instrumental in the analysis that follows. This analysis yields new research questions, especially ones that guide the empirical research conducted for this dissertation study.

*Assumption 1: Co-Production Theory and Practice bring new dimensions to empowerment driven intervention strategies*

Co-production provides new tools, methods and strategies that can further the individual, interpersonal and larger collective goals of empowerment. In addition, co-production can also bridge efforts that link individual empowerment strategies, both psychological and material, with efforts to promote organizational and system change. Furthermore, co-production interventions produce generative results, yielding process and product innovations. *A key actionable strategy linked to each of these enhancements is reciprocity.* Specifically, the transactional nature of co-production exchanges provides the link in integrating the multiple dimensions of empowerment work.

For example, under citizen-citizen co-production, the rewarding of contributions made by clients, to the betterment of family, neighbors, community organizations or the

neighborhood itself, creates new opportunities for clients to “purchase” needed goods and services through “cashing-in” the time banked hours earned. Under the category of youth-organizational co-production interventions, reciprocal transactions between staff and youth equips youth to participate in a more equal way not only with regard to their own service planning but in furthering organizational improvements. Personal self-determination outcomes are attained as well as enhanced interpersonal skills, through participation in intervention processes.

Also, for youth contributing to community and larger societal/collective goals, material goals can be furthered. Here, members of disempowered groups can work together to access material goods and services that they need to improve their life circumstances. These goals can be attained formally through the earning of time bank hours for time spent improving local community or local community organizations. Or, transactions between people and between people and organizations can occur informally, by meeting new community contacts and social supports through participating in empowerment programming. In either scenario, mechanisms can be put in place to achieve psychological and material goals for individual clients.

Building multiple collaborative relationships, a core element of co-production interventions, could also be built into broad based empowerment practice. For example, empowerment practitioners can experiment with fostering collaborative relationships between youth and staff or between youth and parents. Mechanisms by which these relationships can occur include: (1) creating new opportunities for youth to contribute, (2) while contributing, youth transact (e.g., give and receive services) with positive adult and youth role models, (3) while contributing, engagement is enhanced, (4) through

contribution-based activities, new competencies are cultivated and new social support and social capital gains are generated, (5) access to new resources and opportunities occur directly through the transactions that are effectuated through time banking or indirectly through meeting new people and (6) new social and economic trajectories are effectuated. Through these processes, the traditional practice reference of individual work with clients to improve psychological empowerment is enhanced to include materialistic empowerment.

In addition, through exchanges and new collaborations, social capital networks are generated or augmented. For vulnerable youth, creating the opportunity to be introduced to new adults and peer networks as a result of their contribution activity, gaining new social and employment skills and gaining respect and self-confidence in the process can become a powerful sequence to effectuate successful reintegration to community life. These processes were identified in both the PY& D and Transactional Partnering Empowerment models. What were not sufficiently emphasized in the models were the micro-level strategies and processes fostered by reciprocity between individuals and between individuals and organizations. Co-production theory and practice can add these dimensions to empowerment interventions.

Co-production theory and practice may also help bridge empowerment practice from the individual-level empowerment to organizational and community empowerment. For example, time banking systems of exchange may help foster community partnerships and enhanced inter-organizational relationships. This can occur when networks of service providers with similar missions adopt time banking (examples can be found in chapter 2). When this happens, clients and organizations involved in the same service system use the

time dollar exchange currency. This increases the value of the currency, as a wider network is available to address client needs and reward client contributions.

Organizations that connect through shared technologies could begin to partner in other areas (see Claiborne & Lawson, 2005). This is an example of how individual efficacy enhancement can generate collective benefits, generating new resources that fuel the informal economy (Cahn, 2004).

In short, the mechanisms of exchange within co-production, that allow for the development of individual, organizational and community social capital building, takes empowerment practice back to the public domain, in a manner that is resource generating. Through the establishment of service exchange networks reinforced by the awarding of time dollars, groups of previously marginalized populations can be elevated to contribute to community improvement. New collaborative arrangements between organizations and between clients and staff can also be established. Through these processes, new contexts are developed that can foster individual and collective empowerment.

Finally, co-production's emphasis on generative benefits can add to the knowledge base within empowerment theory and practice. To reiterate, generative benefits refer to building upon the gains made through new opportunities. For youth, it could mean more challenging leadership roles leading to even better outcomes. For organizations, success in utilizing parents as contributors for specific projects could result in encouraging parents to advocate for additional organizational funding in the halls of Congress or the State legislature.

Potential generative benefits afforded from empowerment practices are noted in the empowerment literature. For example, Rappaport (1987) identified the contributions of clients as a resource not to be used but once embraced in practice, can lead to more available resources. Also, in describing the YD&E youth empowerment model, Kim et al (1998) noted that “success breeds success” (p. 13). However, core intervention features linked to generative benefits, a clear delineation of generative outcomes and impacts and pathways to generative outcomes have not been well articulated within the empowerment literature. Co-production theorizing may address this unmet need.

*Assumption 2: Empowerment theory and practice can assist in the explication of core features of a broad co-production intervention framework*

Aspects of empowerment theory and practice can assist in explicating co-production interventions, especially interventions focused on youth development. The following features for co-production interventions are derived from the empowerment literature. Empowerment practices are categorized according to general practices, group practices and advanced empowerment practices.

As noted in this chapter, empowerment theory encompasses practices as well as a set of outcomes/impacts. As such, potential outcomes and impacts stemming from empowerment theory are also outlined. Co-production driven interventions for youth are emphasized below.

#### *General Practices*

- ✓ Identify youth strengths, interests and assets. Utilize them to further organizational and community improvement goals, in addition to personal goals

- ✓ Identify new roles for youth in the organization. Roles can include assisting other clients, serving as trainers, researchers and staff assistants and working with agency staff on community improvement activities
- ✓ Provide opportunities for youth to contribute to family, organizational, neighborhood, institutional and community improvement.
- ✓ Use reciprocity and mutuality to guide exchanges and transactions between people, including staff/youth interactions and transactions
- ✓ Ensure flexibility in modality selection (e.g., individual, small group, larger group) in planning empowerment interventions
- ✓ Provide time for individual and group reflection
- ✓ Provide incentives (tangible and intangible) for youth to foster engagement
- ✓ Provide opportunities for youth to secure new resources and material gains
- ✓ Ensure equitable power sharing between youth and adults, including youth and staff. Specifically, youth are to share in decision-making authority and responsibility.
- ✓ Provide youth with opportunities for “voice and choice” in selecting which activities to participate in and the roles they play in the intervention.
- ✓ Provide a range contribution options that allows for maximum choice.
- ✓ Opportunities are adapted to different family, organizational and community contexts. Packaging of programs is to be avoided. One size does not fit all.
- ✓ Place youth in opportunities where they can contribute in settings and institutions that enhance social bonding. This includes settings and institutions where youth have been excluded due to prior anti-social behavior.

- ✓ Present youth with opportunities to contribute to highly visible community projects that are of interest and import to youth.
- ✓ Design activities that foster a pro-social youth identity
- ✓ Present youth with career building opportunities in order to learn and demonstrate a variety of competencies.
- ✓ Provide activities that build social and life skills as well as competency skills of interest and import to youth
- ✓ Provide opportunities for new kinds of contributions, so that youth can build upon successes and test out new competencies.
- ✓ Ensure that social interaction with other adults and youth with similar interests and in some cases, similar circumstances, is facilitated.
- ✓ Mobilizes resources for youth, including linking youth with natural supports for which they can both give and receive services
- ✓ Present opportunities to meet new pro-social peers and adult role models.
- ✓ Assist youth in accessing new resources and opportunities.
- ✓ Provide needed family supports so that family member participation in youth empowerment interventions occurs.
- ✓ Encourage family members to serve as “co-producers” with staff, assisting with planning and implementing intervention activities.
- ✓ Provide time for reflection, to allow youth to reflect and discuss their individual and group contribution experiences.
- ✓ Provide sufficient incentives and rewards for youth to participate in contribution based activities

- ✓ Recognize youth for their contributions and accomplishments.
- ✓ Provide youth with opportunities to celebrate their work.

#### *Group Practices*

- ✓ Group to serve as the primary intervention modality
- ✓ Provide opportunities for support and mutual assistance between youth and between adults and youth
- ✓ Ensure that activities are action-oriented and meaningful for youth
- ✓ Provide structure, consistency and clarity of expectations.
- ✓ Provide a welcoming setting by ensuring cultural sensitivity and using language that the youth is familiar with.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for team building and cooperative learning.
- ✓ Provide a safe environment for youth to thrive
- ✓ Provide opportunities for consciousness raising, praxis (reflection-action-reflection) and critical education intervention activities
- ✓ Provide opportunities for one-on-one work with an adult mentor, to assist the youth in obtaining the benefits of the group process.

#### *Advanced Practices*

- ✓ Social and economic justice as core goal of the intervention
- ✓ Provide opportunities for staff and youth to engage in collective action to improve communities
- ✓ Foster inter-organizational partnerships
- ✓ Incubate innovate by design; Transfer learning and technology throughout the organization and to other organizations involved in the intervention

- ✓ Youth and staff work in groups in collective action to improve organizational effectiveness, neighborhood revitalization or community development.

The following outcomes and impacts of co-production interventions are also drawn from empowerment theory and practice.

*Individual Youth Outcomes-Psychological Empowerment*

- ✓ Fostering self-determination
- ✓ Developing a more positive and potent sense of self
- ✓ Increase in self-confidence
- ✓ Increase in self-control
- ✓ Improved ability to work well with others
- ✓ Learning new life skills
- ✓ Reduction of self-blame
- ✓ Assumption of personal responsibility
- ✓ Bonding to positive social institutions
- ✓ Meeting new positive role models
- ✓ Better understanding of local communities
- ✓ Providing a voice for youth

*Individual Youth Outcomes-Material Empowerment*

- ✓ Access and control of new resources that youth need to make use of their competencies
- ✓ The obtaining of goods and services to assist youth and family members to meet their concrete needs

*Interpersonal Outcomes*

- ✓ Development of group consciousness
- ✓ Development of collective efficacy

*Organizational and Staff Impacts*

- ✓ Clients as stakeholders of the service agency, of its mission and service delivery
- ✓ Increase comfort levels of youth toward agency/services
- ✓ Improvements in staff efficacy, empowerment and engagement

*Community Impacts*

- ✓ Community organizing and social network building to make improvements in communities
- ✓ Building youth leadership within communities
- ✓ Enhancing organizational infrastructure
- ✓ Cultivating and improving inter-organizational partnerships
- ✓ Disenfranchised populations achieving objective power and redistribution of resources

*Generative and Contagion Impacts*

- ✓ Within individuals
- ✓ Within organizations
- ✓ Within communities

*Assumption 3: The needs, challenges and practical necessities of working with involuntary youth and the research on intervention efficacy and effectiveness in working with this population, illuminate the need to integrate empowerment theory and practice with co-production intervention theory.*

Empowerment theory and practice for involuntary youth are important in assisting practitioners in structuring co-production interventions for involuntary youth. Three salient examples follow.

First, client characteristics are an influential factor in determining the kind of empowerment oriented strategies available to staff serving involuntary youth. Here, risk factors matter and may preclude certain client choices and limit staff flexibility. Second, psychological empowerment goals are important for many involuntary youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice system. Enhancing self-efficacy, individual agency and client self-determination are proximal outcomes of empowerment related service activities for involuntary youth. Third, the challenges associated with group interventions for certain high-risk involuntary youth must be taken into account. These challenges necessitate the consideration of planned and well-structured interventions that mediate potential deviancy effects of aggregating high-risk youth in group settings.

All three findings influence co-production strategies and processes for involuntary youth. The impact of these findings for co-production theory and practice is explored further in chapter 8 of this dissertation.

### **The Need for Additional Research**

As reviewed in this chapter, empowerment theory contributes to a further explication of co-production as an intervention, especially in identifying intervention practices, impacts and outcomes associated with youth empowerment. A number of research questions are derived from this analysis. These questions help guide the empirical investigation of co-production that will be undertaken as part of this dissertation.

- ✓ Which empowerment-driven intervention features and outcomes/impacts are associated with citizen-citizen co-production?
- ✓ Which empowerment-driven intervention features and outcomes/impacts are associated with the three proposed kinds of citizen-state (youth-state) co-production?
- ✓ Are there differences? Similarities?
- ✓ Which empowerment-driven intervention features are specifically linked to the engagement of involuntary youth? Which features are linked with specific youth development outcomes?
- ✓ What pathways exist that create effective youth engagement and positive youth outcomes? Which features and pathways corresponding to the three identified youth empowerment models resemble co-production features and pathways, in its different proposed versions?

Finally, there is a dearth of research within the empowerment literature on important organizational and larger contextual factors compatible to co-production. In particular, additional knowledge is needed in identifying conditions that can help facilitate staff and youth preparation and involvement in co-production interventions. The next chapter on collaboration theory and its relevance to co-production will address this important component of the evolving intervention framework.

## **CHAPTER 6: CO-PRODUCTION AND COLLABORATION THEORY**

As noted in chapter 2, a key feature of co-production interventions is the fostering of collaborative relationships between key stakeholders, with staff/client collaboration most prominent. Unfortunately, the exact nature of these collaborative relationships has not been specified. This chapter continues phase 2 of the dissertation; the evaluation and expansion of original co-production theory, by incorporating recent theoretical advances in collaboration theory in conceptualizing co-production interventions.

In particular, collaboration theory can assist in highlighting pre-disposing characteristics (e.g., preconditions and antecedents) within organizations that are essential in starting up co-production interventions. To clarify terms, preconditions are facilitators, barriers and constraints already “out there” at the time of the intervention. These features are generally difficult to change through manipulation of environmental conditions. On the other hand, antecedents are factors that are engrained in and are essential for the intervention to succeed. Antecedents are part of the intervention, are changeable and can be the target of intervention efforts (Lawson, 2006).

In addition, movement through the various phases of collaboration can serve as progress markers for co-production advancement. Conversely, the primacy of reciprocity within co-production theory can assist in further making operational collaboration processes, especially those involving staff and clients. These contributions will be made explicit in this chapter as well.

This chapter begins with a brief review of the literature on collaboration theory. It will include kinds of collaboration as well as a review of specific issues related to collaboration as an intervention itself. Advances in the conceptualization and theorizing

of collaboration have focused primarily on inter-professional and inter-organizational collaboration. Despite this selective emphasis, much of the conceptual work completed to date can be applied to professional /client collaboration as well.

Next, the focus will shift to specific issues involving professional/client collaboration, including collaboration involving staff with youth as clients. Recent findings will focus on the importance of developing equitable relations between youth and adults in systems that reinforce natural power imbalances. Then, the relationship between empowerment and collaboration within co-production interventions is reviewed. Setting forth clear pathways for how empowerment and collaboration related processes intersect within co-production interventions is essential from both a research and practitioner perspective.

The chapter concludes with additional proposed design principles for co-production. These principles will emphasize preconditions and antecedents necessary to prepare organizations for co-production interventions. Principles guiding reciprocal exchanges will also be presented, to help guide organizations and practitioners in furthering staff/youth collaboration.

### **Kinds of Collaboration**

Collaboration is defined as two or more stakeholders mobilizing and developing capacities for collective action (Lawson, 2004). These stakeholders decide to work together to address interdependent needs and complex problems. They choose to collaborate because no single stakeholder can achieve its mission without the contributions of others. This approach to collaboration assumes a level of stakeholder autonomy, including the choice to engage in interdependent working relationships

(Claiborne & Lawson, 2005). Lawson (2003b) identified ten varieties of collaboration. In this analysis, these varieties are condensed into three broad categories (Claiborne & Lawson, 2005).

#### *Professional/Client Collaboration*

This is the most salient kind of collaboration highlighted in the co-production literature. It involves staff and clients identifying shared interests and determining responsibilities for attaining desired benefits. These shared interests could include attaining client, organizational or community goals. The dissertation inquiry will focus specifically on youth-centered collaboration within community child welfare and juvenile justice organizations. Here, staff views youth as experts and partners, contributing to programs, program strategies and results and to community improvement.

Because power is shared with clients, youth-centered collaborations are empowerment-oriented (Lawson, 2003b). In sharing decision-making authority and responsibility, youth gain self-confidence and self-efficacy. In addition, by putting youth “out-front” in sharing credit for project results, they are recognized and rewarded for their contributions. Tangible rewards can include securing previously inaccessible goods and services as well as inclusion in new social capital exchange networks. As noted in the earlier chapter on empowerment, gains need not be “zero-sum.” For example, staff sharing of power can be beneficial to staff in terms of client outcomes and job satisfaction (Lawson, in press).

#### *Inter-Organizational or Interagency Collaboration*

This kind occurs between the sponsoring organization of the co-production initiative and other community, governmental or business partners. Organizations that

chose to collaborate may have different missions but they chose to work together toward common goals (Claiborne & Lawson, 2005; Lawson, 2003b).

For example, a community child welfare and juvenile justice agency that has primary responsibility for service delivery for youth and families might seek to enter into collaboration with other organizations as part of the co-production initiative. As noted in chapter 1, for long-term client change to be sustained and built upon, community child welfare and juvenile justice organizations need assistance. Investments need to be made in communities and in organizational change. In identifying organizations with which to collaborate, the common goal would be to assist in the integration or re-integration of youth into their community. As youth become viewed as resources and contributors, it becomes easier to find collaborators. Transactions become two way reciprocal exchanges between parties.

#### *Broader Community Collaboration*

This kind involves would involve stakeholders such as residents and community organizations working in coalitions and community-based partnerships to improve community life (Lawson, 2003b). Here, an entire community as geographic area comprises the “community of interest.” For example, a coalition comprising the probation department, local police, a local housing department, five area churches and two juvenile justice diversion programs working together to create a meaningful set of community service projects for first time juvenile offenders constitutes a community collaboration.

## **Issues Related to Collaboration as an Intervention**

A number of issues are important in structuring collaborations. These issues include marrying collaboration to setting and context, assessing the costs/benefits of entering into collaborations, understanding the various phases of collaboration and pre-collaboration activity and differentiating between collaboration as an outcome to be achieved and a process to be implemented. Each is briefly discussed below.

### *Collaboration is Context Dependent*

People grapple with various kinds of collaborations to address needs, opportunities and problems (Lawson, 2004). Collaborations are also part of local settings, organizations and environments. For example, prior success in participating in collaboration with other organizations bodes well for future successes. Also, rigid public policy regulations and involvement with large bureaucratic structures can provide challenges for collaboration processes because they can impact on timeliness of decisions and flexibility to respond to emerging needs.

In addition, organizations may have different degrees of readiness to embark on collaborations. For example, within youth-centered collaboration, structural factors such as caseload sizes, administrative supports and the extent to which risk-taking and entrepreneurial activities are fostered within the organization can make a difference (Bronstein, 2003; Graham & Barter, 1999). An organization's experience in working with diverse clients, to address racial, cultural and ethnic issues, can be an important factor in the success of staff/youth collaborations. Degrees of readiness will drive the kind and level of preparation that will be needed for organizations to succeed as collaborative partners (Lawson, 2004).

Organizational history and treatment/service modalities used are also important readiness variables. For example, operating values such as the fostering of mutual assistance among clients, a teamwork focus, a strength-based perspective and the engagement of natural helping networks would place organizations in good stead to embark on staff/client collaboration activities, including youth-centered collaboration (Graham & Barter, 1999).

### *The Benefits/Costs of Collaboration*

Collaboration theorists have identified a number of potential benefits and costs of collaboration. Benefits include effectiveness gains such as improved client results; efficiency gains (e.g. cost savings); resource gains such as access to new funding options; capacity gains (e.g. reduced staff turnover) and legitimacy gains, such as greater standing for the organization in their community (Lawson, 2004). Similar benefits associated with co-production initiatives were noted early in chapter 2 (see Cahn, 2004; Trevino & Trevino, 2004).

Entering into collaborative relationships also entails costs and risks. Collaboration theorists (Lawson, 2004; Reilly, 2001) identified transaction costs associated with instituting the many changes in program operations that are needed to support collaboration. For professional/client collaboration, transaction costs may include resources for staff training and special support in changing casework processes to prepare clients for their new roles as contributors. In addition, resources may be needed to hire consultants to assist organizations in the preparation and implementation of collaboration efforts.

A number of risks are also associated with collaboration (Lawson, 2004). Within professional/client collaboration, dissemination and reputation risks appear to stand out. Dissemination risks involve the sharing of knowledge with clients who then gain new abilities and competencies. With this new knowledge, clients can become trained as service providers and educators, potentially threatening the jobs of current employees.

Reputation risks involve collaborating with stakeholders that have less favorable reputations in the community. The very notion of working in collaboration with ex-offenders in community settings in a non-punitive way can produce negative feelings on the part of certain stakeholders. Furthermore, organizations that sponsor restorative community projects that are collaborative in nature are faced with the potential of youth re-offending while working together on these high profile joint projects, even with tight supervision.

Risks associated with inter-organizational collaboration include strategy risks, capacity risks and resource risks (Lawson, 2004). Strategy risks refer to the threat of organizations robbing the technology of a collaborative partner for their own benefit. Capacity risks refer to a new dependency on other organizations for the success of a program or project. Withdrawing that support can doom a project and leave the organization unprotected. Resource risks are similar to strategy risks, involving the threat of a collaborator using resources for other than collaborative ends. Community child welfare and juvenile justice organizations that seek to collaborate with other human service, youth development, and government and business organizations will need to consider these potential risks as collaborations are explored.

Claiborne and Lawson (2005) emphasize that collaboration is a special intervention tailored for some needs, problems and opportunities, but not for others. Thus, they emphasize the importance of entering into collaborations only when it is warranted. Professionals need to assess the contingencies, risks and requirements of collaboration before moving forward with implementation. In intervention logic, collaboration must relate directly to the theory of the problem requiring resolution. It is best incorporated into organizational operations when it is clear that results cannot be attained without the contributions of others. Cost/benefit analysis of collaboration is important even when collaborations are mandated as part of a government contract or forced upon an organization in times of adversity (Reilly, 2001).

This framework is useful in analyzing the efficacy of co-production interventions and attendant collaborations within the context of community child welfare and juvenile justice service provision. As noted earlier, research shows that many of these organizations cannot go at it alone if they are to achieve long-term sustainable gains for clients. Investments in communities and in organizational collaborations make logical sense. But, if organizational accountabilities are not focused on long-term sustainable goals, then the costs of community investment and organizational collaboration might not exceed the potential benefits.

The same logic would apply for professional/client collaboration activities. This means that the costs of changing operations to support clients, as contributors must not exceed the projected benefits associated with these changes. Do the benefits in terms of enhanced engagement; active client participation and greater retention exceed the

organizational and financial costs of building internal processes and structures required for staff/client collaboration to succeed?

*Collaboration as a Developmental Progression*

Collaboration may be viewed and made operational as a developmental progression. Lawson (2003b) identified seven developmental phases that occur prior to full collaboration. These related “c” words include communicating, connecting, cooperating, coordinating/consulting, co-locating, community-building and contracting. Activities are associated with each phase.

For example, when two parties connect or communicate with each other, they begin the process of developing a shared language. This initial stage occurs even in involuntary situations such as between court-involved youth and their probation officer. This phase can progress to cooperation. Cooperation involves a voluntary activity that includes reciprocity and the beginning of mutually beneficial exchanges or transactions. In turn, coordination builds on cooperation. It includes “deliberate efforts aimed at harmonizing and synchronizing” the efforts of people and organizations. Shared goals emerge (Lawson, 2003b, p. 47). Community building builds off coordination, with consensus building focused on community action being key activities. Contracting, the final pre-collaboration phase, involves legal and social contracts, outlining mutual responsibilities and accountabilities between the two parties (Lawson, 2003b).

Each phase represents an increasing level of complexity. Earlier phases entail minimal risk and expenditure of resources. Later phases lead to more complex organizational structures and operational processes, new identities, and new inter-agency and inter-professional transaction systems (Claiborne & Lawson, 2005).

Given the context of community child welfare and juvenile justice organizations, collaboration is especially difficult to achieve. Challenges and constraints include the time-limited duration of the intervention, the risky client population of juvenile offenders and the experimental nature of the intervention. For reasons like these, it is likely that the later phases of collaboration will not be realized during the time frame of the dissertation inquiry. This claim applies to youth-centered collaboration as well as inter-organizational and community collaborations sought.

On the other hand, the developmental progression for collaboration provides a developmental lens for co-production interventions with involuntary youth. For example, movement through the development phases prior to collaboration can serve as progress markers for the growing relationship between the interacting parties. Moreover, in early phases, youth and staff might cooperate with each other by seeking each other out for opinions and advice. Here, staff might convene a one-time only focus group of youth to help plan for a new initiative. In turn, youth may be rewarded for their contribution in participating in the focus group by receiving an added benefit (e.g., use of agency computers, attendance at a special field trip). In time bank systems, youth would receive a time bank hour for participating in the focus group and perhaps “cash” in the hour for the added benefit. However, in this phase of pre-collaboration, exchanges are limited. Staff and youth may not be joined in working together on the new project.

A more advanced stage of their relationship might involve the two parties coordinating and consulting on a joint project such that there is a clear division of labor and more formalized discussions of strategy. The project might involve an improvement in program services or a project outside of service provision, such as working together on

a community project indirectly related to the service mission of the organization. Here, norms of reciprocity and trust might begin to emerge between youth and staff. Ongoing reciprocal transactions might occur between youth and staff directly or between youth and another community organization, facilitated through staff contact.

An even more advanced stage might involve mechanisms for inter-dependent relations. Here, adults and youth recognize that they need each other to accomplish common goals. A formal agreement in contract form might be developed to solidify these mutual obligations and responsibilities (Claiborne & Lawson, 2005).

In addition, development in conformity with the several phases leading to collaboration could represent progress about the nature of the relationship between staff and youth. This movement could serve as a benchmarks or indicators of relational trust between the two parties. As noted in the previous section on empowerment, the bonding of youth to caring adults in the community is an important mechanism in achieving youth empowerment and the attendant benefits associated with it. The progression of youth/staff relations could serve as a proxy measure for youth social bonding, an often-noted necessary element of reintegration and community acceptance for youth involved in the juvenile justice system (Bazemore & Terry, 1997; Bazemore & Karp, 2004).

#### *Collaboration as a Process and Product Innovation*

Theorists view collaboration as a complex process innovation designed to meet special needs, problems or opportunities. However, at its fullest, collaboration is designed to become part of an organization's core operation, one of its core technologies. This means that collaboration becomes a routine, institutionalized practice, and perhaps a defining feature of optimal practice. When this occurs, collaboration influences how the

organization works, accomplishes its goals and meets its internal and external accountabilities (Lawson, 2004).

The examples of co-production interventions noted in chapter 2 (stand-alone, parallel and integrated) represent different levels of integration. For example, parallel projects, often demonstrations and pilot initiatives, require little activity in integrating aspects of collaboration into program operations. In contrast, stand-alone projects by which co-production is a key feature of the intervention and projects that seek to integrate co-production within complex service models, tend to require sizeable commitments of time and resources in order to institute practices and policies that allow collaboration to be successful for the long-term.

Here again, organizational setting and context can serve as facilitators, barriers and/or constraints to accomplishing levels of integration. For example, agencies with poor administrative mechanisms to disseminate and oversee program policy may face challenges in integrating new staff roles and responsibilities associated with youth-centered collaboration. Also, the extent to which collaboration is integrated into core program operations can become a progress indicator for co-production interventions.

Theorists have also begun to articulate benchmarks for collaboration processes. Examples of benchmarks include shared visions and goals between the collaborative partners, coordination of organizational systems, shared data and examples of continuous negotiation to address conflicts (Claiborne & Lawson, 2005). These benchmarks, although adaptable to staff/client collaboration, are most applicable to inter-organizational and inter-professional collaboration. Due to the power imbalances between youth and adult staff, the very nature of introducing and beginning to engage in

reciprocal exchanges may serve as an initial benchmark of collaboration. Expanding the volume and quality of reciprocal exchanges as trust between youth and staff is enhanced, can serve as further evidence of enhanced collaboration. Clearly, more work is needed in the development of benchmarks that apply to staff/client collaborative processes.

Finally, collaboration is also a product innovation. Collaborative teams of adults and youth working on a services project to help other youth in the community are an example of collaboration as a product. Also, similar to co-production, collaboration is seen by some theorists as generative, with innovation fostering more innovation, building new and more advanced forms of collaboration (see Bronstein, 2003).

### **Youth/Adult Collaboration: The Importance of Changing Roles and Relationships**

#### *Introduction*

A core feature of a genuine collaboration is the extent to which stakeholders treat each other equitably, fairly and justly (Lawson, 2004). Lawson (2003b) notes that for client empowerment to occur, professionals must work in collaboration with clients, to create the conditions for co-production strategies to succeed. Conditional equality needs to be developed that is manifested in the willingness of professionals to share power and resources with clients (also see Gutierrez et al., 1995).

This conditional equality is especially important when there are differences in power between participants involved in collaboration related activities, such as youth working with adults. In community juvenile justice and child welfare organizations, the power differential between staff and clients can be huge, especially if staff is involved in monitoring and supervising a youth's behavior or enforcing court ordered restrictions on a youth's freedom (e.g., Ivanoff et al., 1994; Rooney, 1992). Creating a supportive

organizational climate that fosters collaboration related activities between youth and staff is essential to the success of co-production interventions.

There is a growing literature that is relevant to co-production and its relationship to collaboration theory and practice. This literature focuses on youth-adult partnerships (Y/APs). This literature, like other literatures, conflates partnership and collaboration. A content analysis of this Y/AP literature indicates that it addresses interpersonal relationships, not inter-organizational relationships. Substantively, this Y/AP literature contributes to collaboration theory and practice. Consistent with a new area, researchers have focused on theory building and conceptualization of Y/APs as a construct. Early research findings both parallel and build upon the work of the collaboration theorists previously noted.

*Youth/Adult Partnerships: Definitions, Principles, Values, Measures*

Youth/adult partnerships (Y/APs) are defined as “mutuality in teaching and learning between youth and adults” (Camino, 2000, p. 13). This mutuality plus youth being granted power in decision-making is what distinguishes Y/AP’s from other forms of adult/youth relationships, including parent-child, student teacher or mentoring relationships. Y/AP’s have become increasingly viewed as a key strategy to promoting positive youth development and building healthy communities (Camino, 2000).

In a study of fifteen community and youth development initiatives purposively selected as quality programs, Camino (2000) used ethnographic and qualitative methods, including her role as an action researcher, to more fully understand Y/AP’s and how they operate on the ground. Findings revealed Y/AP’s to be multi-dimensional constructs. Y/APs include a set of principles and values, a set of skills and competencies through

which behaviors are focused and methods to implement and achieve collective action (p. 14).

Camino also found that adults showed a commitment to working “with rather than for youth” (Camino, 2000, p. 5). The principles of respect and equality dominated the relationship of youth within all aspects of work. In addition, these partnerships alter in a fundamental way, notions of youth and adult roles by incorporating consideration of adult development as well as youth development (see also Camino, 2005).

Mitra (2005) identified similar findings in a study of student/adult collaboration in schools. Qualitative data was collected for three years from a high school that made a commitment to work with students on school reform efforts. To “seed” new opportunities for youth leadership in school reform, an apprentice model was developed, allowing for youth to increase their competencies in leading groups and engaging in leadership activities. Findings revealed that adults needed to work “conscientiously and continuously” (Mitra, 2005, p. 520) on patterns of interaction with students to reinforce equitable relations between student and adults.

More recently, a model of youth-adult relationships has been developed (Jones & Perkins, 2005). The model categorizes youth-adult relationships on a continuum. Three constructs are instrumental in this theoretical continuum; youth involvement, adult involvement and youth-adult interaction. Framed by this continuum, Jones and Perkins (2005) have developed a typology of five kinds of youth/adult relationships. The five kinds are: an adult-centered leadership relationship, an adult-led collaboration, a youth-adult partnership category, youth-led collaborations and groups that involve youth-centered leadership.

In addition, Jones and Perkins (2005; 2006) have developed a measurement tool for adult-youth relationships. The Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale assesses the perceptions of adults and youth working together on community-based projects. The scale assesses which category along the continuum of youth-adult relationships best describes the functioning of the group.

With regard to the developmental progression associated with collaboration described earlier, the mutuality and reciprocity of interactions of some youth/adult partnerships resemble the more advanced developmental phases of pre-collaboration. For example, for youth-adult partnerships measured by the Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale, youth and adult participants have equal chances in utilizing skills, making decisions, mutual learning and carrying out tasks independently to reach group goals (Jones & Perkins, 2005). Also, in the educational example noted above, relations progressed to higher phases of collaboration, as youth and adults worked together in reviewing data collected for the project. A common language and set of skills were developed that resulted in a shared knowledge base from which both youth and adults could work (Mitra, 2006). The benefits afforded to both youth and adults incorporate a crucial aspect of co-production interventions.

#### *Challenges with Implementing Y/APs*

Findings revealed significant challenges in implementing youth/adult partnerships. First, young people and adults have limited experience in working together on projects as partners (Zeldin, Larson, Camino, & O'Connor, 2005). Role stereotypes can also limit youth and adult contributions and benefits. For example, assumptions that youth are the sole source of creativity and energy while adults are viewed as having

experience and wisdom limits the identification and maximization of individual assets and strengths.

Also, adult desires to be “empowering” can be counterproductive, often inadvertently reinforcing old stereotypes. It can lead to inappropriate uses of adult power that can preclude the building of youth/adult trust. For example, the notion of adults removing themselves from projects so that youth gain power can be counterproductive. Findings from the Camino (2000) study revealed that youth need adult guidance as they often have little experience in undertaking program tasks related to co-production leadership projects. Separating youth from adults to “do their own thing” can reinforce the stereotype of adults as managers and approvers. When this occurs, adults, perhaps inadvertently, maintain power while they are in fact trying to relinquish it. It can also lead to situations where youth are “dysfunctionally rescued” by adults who had delegated assignments and responsibilities and then had to bail youth out as deadlines approached (Camino, 2000). Mitra’s (2005) study of youth leadership in school reform yielded similar findings.

The stakes are often high for youth with more complex service needs participating in collaboration related projects with adults. Inappropriate responses by adults to youth shortcomings can reinforce within youth their sense of shame and negative self-esteem (Camino, 2000). For isolated youth with few community connections with adults and who are outside of social structures and networks (such as those youth traditionally a part of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems), these types of interactions could reinforce a distrust of adults and a negative self-identity (Halpern, 2005; Jarrett, Sullivan & Watkins, 2005). For these reasons, there is a growing recognition that both youth and

adults need training and preparation for Y/AP's to be successful (Camino, 2000; Camino, 2005; Libby, Rosen & Sedonaen, 2005). Findings from the Cargo et al. (2003) study outlined in the prior chapter support those of Camino's.

As a reminder, Cargo et al. (2003) used qualitative processes to study a multi-year participatory health promotion project in British Columbia, Canada. This study was used to develop a Transactional Partner model for youth empowerment. The authors found youth empowerment to involve a transactional process between youth and adults. This was achieved through a shifting of practice toward egalitarian programming. This approach gave youth the power to control the process. A welcoming social climate and a process of enabling youth contributed to this partnering approach.

The major consequence of a welcoming social climate was engaging and maintaining youth participation. Creating the conditions for collaboration with adults was viewed as a necessary precondition for youth empowerment. The empowerment process involved a commitment to allowing youth to direct the course of the project, to "actualize" youth potential and cultivate constructive change in the community. Establishing a welcoming social climate that respects, encourages and provides opportunities for youth leadership was viewed as a key task of the adults involved.

Results from the Cargo et al. (2003) study confirmed the importance of adults assisting youth to perform project tasks. This assistance might take the form of helping with activity planning, group decision-making and negotiating broader political concerns. This enabling included facilitating, teaching, mentoring and providing feedback to youth as they approached tasks that for were foreign to many of them. Adults also helped to guide youth through difficult implementation challenges (i.e., mediating conflicts,

overcoming obstacles) while at the same time ensuring that youth directed the course of the project.

Similar to the Camino study, adults in this study confronted challenges in negotiating these proper roles. Results from both studies revealed that coaching was an especially difficult task for adults (Camino, 2000; Cargo et al., 2003). This task was made even more difficult as youth participation was often cyclical, involving stages of “getting involved, staying involved, dropping out and then re-engaging” (Cargo et al., p. S73). Such cycling is an ever-present reality in dealing with teens, especially those involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and can lead to frustration by adults involved.

#### *The Importance of a Welcoming Organizational and Community Climate*

To address these challenges, a welcoming organizational and community climate is a pre-requisite for successful youth/adult collaboration to occur (Camino, 2000; Cargo et al., 2003). In other words, researchers, program developers, practitioners and policy makers confront the main challenge of “getting the conditions right” for co-production, empowerment, collaboration and their relations. Getting the conditions right starts with organizations and it includes community settings and their climates.

Camino (2000) notes that youth and adults need “consistent access to support” as they engage and promote youth/adult partnerships (p. 16). Ongoing training to build skills, necessary time devoted to networking and dialoguing with colleagues, supervisory support, capacity building to support staff and youth through the change process are all important. All need to be factored into intervention designs for partnerships to be effective (Camino, 2000; Cargo et al., 2003).

In addition, time for practitioners' reflective practice was viewed as essential while working on staff/youth collaboration (Camino, 2005; Zeldin, Camino & Mook, 2005). Reflective practice refers to cultivating a practitioner's knowledge base such that the practitioner understands how he/she is contributing useful responses to addressing client needs (Dolan et al., 2006). Additionally, supportive supervisor and/or colleagues are needed to assist in the reflection process.

Importantly, researchers and scholars have note that staff training and time for reflection is often necessary but insufficient. For example, Camino and Zeldin (2002) found that staff training could be compromised if community structures and organizational conditions are not in place. The authors cited the importance of facilitative policies and structures that address typical problems in the implementation of Y/AP's. Problems included staff turnover, youth burnout, insufficient resources, poor group chemistry and well-meaning adults who control or co-opt the agenda. The importance of supportive organizational and community settings as a precondition for co-production is especially relevant for involuntary youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. These preconditions will be addressed in detail in chapter 8 of the dissertation.

### **Integrating Co-Production and Collaboration**

Theoretical and conceptual advances in collaboration add to the development of program theory for co-production interventions. Specifically, necessary preconditions and antecedents for co-production interventions draw heavily from the collaboration literature. A compatible organizational setting, a program services model conducive to co-production, favorable external environmental factors and essential organizational

needs assessment activities, comprise precondition categories. Design principles for each area are set forth below in appendix 6-1.

In addition, collaboration theory, including the articulation of collaboration's developmental phases as well as the distinctive mechanisms and processes associated with each phase, assist in articulating co-production processes. This theorization is especially relevant in articulating the key features of professional/client collaboration, a core intervention feature of co-production. The construct of reciprocity, as articulated in co-production theory, can be integrated with features of collaboration theory, to provide a more full description of staff/youth collaboration processes.

Appendix 6-2 describes the nature of staff/youth reciprocal exchanges within each of the collaboration phases articulated by Lawson (2003b). Six main premises are foundational for this theoretical formulation:

1. Reciprocal exchanges between professional and youth and between youth and other community members can be tracked and measured. Time bank systems track reciprocal exchanges.
2. Reciprocal exchanges have both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. In other words, hours of exchange are just one measure of reciprocity between staff and clients; other measures are needed and justifiable.
3. Staff can be direct parties to reciprocal exchanges with youth or they can facilitate exchanges between youth and other adults, other youth and between youth and representatives of community organizations.
4. As with other forms of collaboration, staff/youth collaboration occurs in phases, which is to say that collaboration develops progressively, in a non-linear fashion.

5. Given the power differential between adults and youth, the introduction and beginning implementation of reciprocal exchanges between professionals and youth represents an important initial benchmark of collaboration.
6. Adults need to exercise concerted effort over periods of time in order to build trust with youth. In turn, levels of trust will impact on phases of collaboration.

Other theoretical developments are relevant to this dissertation inquiry. To begin with, in early phases of collaboration, one-way transactions with staff providing the services and clients remaining passive recipients are replaced with two-way transactions by which youth and staff both give and receive services. In the connecting and communication phase of collaboration (see appendix 6-2), youth and staff begin to recognize each other in ways that may move beyond staff as the power authority. For example, in this phase, staff may approach youth to provide feedback on services offered. The beginning step in the movement of youth from being passive recipients in receiving services to being active agents begins. However, in this phase, mutual transactions are not yet realized.

Also, in this initial phase, communicating and connecting on involuntary as well as voluntary issues occurs. However, as with voluntary interactions, these activities are one-way in nature. For example, staff may approach youth with ideas to consider that result in mandatory activities (e.g., school attendance) to be more agreeable to youth. Chapter 9 of this dissertation will explore involuntary transactions in detail.

The next phase of development, the cooperation phase, begins two-way transactions between staff and youth. Here, norms of reciprocity and mutually may begin to occur. Transactions in this phase may only involve one-time only exchanges and may

result in low levels of exchanges (quantity) and exchanges of poor quality. However, in this phase, trust begins to develop between youth and staff and communication improves.

Quality of exchanges is especially important. This construct refers to the intensity of the involvement of the parties (e.g., emotional or cognitive engagement by both adults and youth in the exchange) or the extent to which the exchange contributes to both the youths' stated goals and the staff members' goals. Quality of exchanges will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter on engagement.

Both involuntary and voluntary exchanges can occur during cooperation. Two-way transactions may involve youth and staff working together on addressing a mandated concern, such as a court-ordered curfew. Or, using the example above, staff may voluntarily seek out a young person's advice and opinion by asking the youth to participate in a focus group. However, in this phase, the youth participant receives a benefit from staff for participating, such as a gift certificate or an intangible benefit, such as praise or a special privilege.

The third phase, coordination and consulting, involves an increase in both the quality and quantity of exchanges. Here, staff and youth make intentional their desire to work together on shared projects and goals. This phase involves solely voluntary endeavors. During this phase, power sharing begins. Important manifestations include youth "choice" and "voice."

Next, in the community-building and contracting phases, the volume and quality of exchanges grow. During this phase, third parties in addition to youth and staff may become involved in exchanges. The role of the staff member may change to one of facilitator in addition to or in lieu of being a direct party in the exchange with the youth.

For example, staff may seek out a local business of interest to the youth, such as a roller-skate rink. Here, staff may broker a deal by which the youth works at the rink five hours per week in exchange for free use of the facilities. Staff may agree to transport the youth to the rink as part of the three way exchange transactions.

During these latter two phases, consensus building and mutual reciprocity develop and characterize interactions and relationships. Heightened trust develops concomitantly between the youth and the staff member. A formalization of the planned exchanges in a written contract may serve to further solidify the agreement.

In each of these successive developmental phases leading toward collaboration, reciprocal transactions can be quantified and tracked over time. Both quantitative and qualitative measures of transactions can and need to be developed within each phase. For example, time bank systems of exchange facilitate the tracking of measures of reciprocity and in turn, can assist with tracking progress in professional/client phases of collaboration.

As with the construct of empowerment, collaboration includes intervention processes as well as outcomes. Key collaboration outcomes are presented in appendix 6-3. As appendix 6-3 signals, outcomes and impacts as well as benchmarks of collaboration can be articulated. Outcomes and impacts can be client, staff or organizationally related.

For example, improved client outcomes resulting from collaboration processes can include the range of empowerment related outcomes (psychological, interpersonal and material) that were articulated in the prior chapter of this dissertation. Proposed staff impacts include increases in levels of staff empowerment, efficacy and engagement as well as improvements in staff morale and in job satisfaction. Organizational measures

include efficient, resources, capacity and legitimacy gains for the organization (see Lawson, 2003b). Many of these proposed measures require further articulation and need to be made operational.

Benchmarks of staff/youth collaboration processes include the following: (1) An increase in the volume (quantity) and quality of staff/youth exchanges, (2) Movement to progressively higher collaboration phases, (3) Documentation of enhanced levels of staff/youth integration while working jointly on projects (see Jones & Perkins, 2005) and (4) Evidence that collaboration processes has become a core part of the organization's operation and services model. As with proposed outcomes, work is needed on the development of empirically tested measures to capture these constructs.

### **Developing the Theoretical Connections between Empowerment and Collaboration in Co-Production Interventions**

Appendix 6-4 depicts the hypothetical relationship between empowerment and collaboration in co-production interventions. This amended framework for co-production can be contrasted with the initial theory of change shown in appendix 2-1.

In the amended framework, certain preconditions and antecedents are necessary for youth-centered collaboration and its related processes to occur (see appendix 6-1). These conditions conducive to successful collaboration are also necessary for successful empowerment-driven co-production interventions. In short, “getting the conditions right” for one helps to “get the conditions right for the other.”

Complimentary and interdependent relationships are implicated here. In fact, targeted strategies can be put in place that focus on improving the conditions by which co-production can thrive. For example, improvements can be made in the climate of the organization to foster youth-centered collaboration. Providing staff time for reflective

practice or instituting incentives so that staff is recognized for developing creative approaches to youth leadership within the organization, are examples of changes that can foster an environment conducive to youth empowerment within a co-production framework.

Furthermore, in the amended framework, empowerment and collaboration processes, in combination, galvanize staff and clients. Once both populations are empowered to work together toward common goals, positive outcomes result for both. Positive outcomes for clients include psychological and material empowerment. Enhanced staff engagement in program activities can result.

As staff and clients collaborate and become empowered, “snowball effects” may follow. For example, it is also hypothesized that organizational and community impacts are achieved. In turn, advanced forms of collaboration are developed, resulting in enhanced empowerment on the part of clients and staff. As staff and clients are empowered, generative effects, manifested in innovative development, follow. Thus, the complex change process yields both contagion and generative effects.

#### *A Hypothetical Example*

A hypothetical example using time banking illustrates this underlying logic. An example of a precondition for co-production would be an organizational context that places clients in situations where they are empowered to voice their needs and aspirations. This opportunity for voice could occur during a family team meeting convened to develop an individualized service plan for an identified youth in trouble. During the team meeting, clients can be provided the opportunity to begin accessing

resources that they need to support changes in their life circumstances and living conditions, enabling them to meet needs that they have identified as priorities.

As a member of a time bank, clients could work to assist their neighbors, their own family members, contribute to organizations, (including the service organization that they are directly involved with) or contribute to their community. Clients may work closely with staff members on a joint project. An example of a project may be engaging older youth to tutor younger youth active in the program. Staff might serve as consultants to the project. Since the project is mutually beneficial to the agency and the clients, both staff members and clients are tasked with giving and receiving services.

Clients would in turn earn time dollars for these contributory activities. Client can then use the accumulated hours that they have earned and deposited in the time bank, to “go shopping” for services that meet their needs. New resources accessed on their own terms can be secured.

Organizations that have committed staff time and energy to creating a time bank are providing a different kind of service for their client base. These organizations recognize the importance of co-production interventions in terms of fostering client empowerment and achieving empowerment related goals.

In addition, clients can also be recruited to work with staff as part of a “kitchen cabinet” (Time Dollar Institute, 2004). This kitchen cabinet helps plan and oversee the time bank operation. For this process to work well, conditional equality and mutual respect would exist between staff and clients. Staff and administration would recognize the mutual benefits that the time bank brings to the organization.

Furthermore, mixed groups of staff and clients could be working together on tasks and assignments. Staff and clients would be engaged in “coordinating” and perhaps “consulting” on tasks (Claiborne & Lawson, 2005). A division of labor between working groups might occur. In effect, staff and clients would be participating in a range of pre-collaboration activities in order to successfully implement the time bank. Both of these examples illustrate the dimensions of empowerment and collaboration processes and empowerment and collaboration outcomes that are part of the proposed co-production framework.

### *Staff Outcomes*

For co-production interventions to achieve collaboration-related outcomes and impacts, staff and the organizations where they work would need to recognize that their success as employees can be enhanced through investments of time and energy in co-production activities (Lawson, in press). Internal and external accountability systems must reinforce the importance of co-production interventions. When these organizational preconditions are in place, it is more likely that collaboration related activities would be embraced.

Co-production theory also predicts benefits for staff. When co-production theory is joined with collaboration and empowerment theory, the predicted relationship is strengthened. For example, changes in client engagement and empowerment will contribute positively to staff morale and to job satisfaction. These changes will in turn, lead to enhanced staff efficacy and well-being. As these benefits accrue, staff engagement and retention, two other important benefits in the human services, are facilitated.

Contagion effects are predicted to follow. Administrators, for example, will begin to recognize that new job skills and professional expertise will be required to successfully engage clients in co-production activities. In turn, staff will be rewarded for their expertise as new staff positions are created and existing positions are re-engineered to incorporate new job tasks and responsibilities.

Generative benefits are also predicted. For example, as enhanced outcomes are achieved, staff morale improves, professional recognition is enhanced and working conditions are changed to support co-production interventions. In short, success breeds success.

#### *Client Outcomes*

In this expanded theoretical frame, client change processes and outcomes can occur. For example, client change processes are viewed as non-linear. Mirroring enhanced co-production interventions, they are iterative and generative.

Moreover, once collaboration is added and integrated, empowerment-driven co-production interventions can result in enhanced levels of staff/client “relational trust” (Warren, 2005). Relational trust can initially occur when staff provides the emotional and practical support and guidance for youth during a crisis or major life event. A positive sense of self and self-identity can result from the security and support provided by staff (Dolan & McGrath, 2006). As staff and youth collaborate on joint projects, the movement to more advanced phases of youth-centered collaborative activity occurs. With this movement, more opportunities for youth empowerment and engagement may result.

In short, if co-production interventions are to succeed, professionals must strive toward collaboration because increasing levels of client empowerment depends on it.

Under this framework, collaboration-related activities become an essential component in co-production interventions. Thus, preparing human services staff and their organizations for collaboration appears to be an essential pre-condition for expanded co-production interventions, especially interventions enriched by empowerment theory.

These tasks are essential yet challenging, as the literature on power sharing and mutuality indicate. For example, research from the family support literature (e.g., Gerzer-Sass & Pettinger, 1997; Warren, 1997) and the growing literature evaluating co-production interventions (e.g., Boyle et al., 2006) indicates that staff working with community members in support of mutual assistance efforts are often reluctant to give up knowledge and power to clients for fear of their expertise being devalued. Per collaboration theory, for staff, the perceived costs of collaboration outweigh the benefits. Establishing internal accountability systems that reinforce collaboration are important preconditions to successful co-production interventions. Articulating and implementing new staff roles and responsibilities, preparing staff to lead and facilitate co-production intervention efforts and altering program settings and policies in support of these efforts will require experimentation and evaluation.

Finally, involuntary clients present special challenges. Here, where statutory goals for community safety and risk management are primary, collaboration and empowerment efforts can be impeded. Subsequent chapters of this dissertation will focus on these challenges.

### **The Need for Further Research**

As reviewed in this chapter, collaboration theory contributes to a further explication of co-production as an intervention, especially in identifying preconditions

and antecedents compatible with co-production. In addition, collaboration theory sets the stage for the development of proposed phases of collaboration associated with staff/youth working together to improve organizational functioning and community conditions. In turn, proposed outcomes and benchmarks for staff/youth collaborative activity were developed and linked to the proposed phases of staff/youth collaboration.

A number of research questions are derived from this analysis. These questions will help guide the empirical investigation of co-production that will be undertaken as part of this dissertation.

- ✓ Which preconditions and antecedents identified in this chapter are of significant import for co-production interventions? Are there differences or similarities in the significance of specific preconditions and antecedents between citizen-citizen co-production and citizen-state co-production?
- ✓ Are the proposed phases of staff/youth collaboration grounded in empirical data?
- ✓ Which empowerment practices identified in the preceding chapter is associated with each proposed phase of staff/youth collaboration?
- ✓ Are the proposed benchmarks and outcomes related to staff/youth collaboration identified in this chapter grounded in empirical data? If so, which outcomes/benchmarks show primacy? Which do not?
- ✓ Can pathways be documented between youth collaboration, youth empowerment and youth engagement? Do the pathways differ between citizen-citizen and citizen-state co-production?

## **CHAPTER 7: CO-PRODUCTION AND CLIENT ENGAGEMENT**

### **Introduction**

The evaluation and expansion of original co-production theory continues in this chapter which focuses on client engagement in co-production interventions. As noted in earlier chapters, client engagement is a key feature of this study's amended theoretical framework for co-production. More specifically, co-production is manifested in both client engagement processes and outcomes. In other words, varying degrees of engagement signal differences in the degree and kind of client co-production.

This means that client engagement is linked causally to co-production outcomes. Within the co-production intervention framework, client engagement is a mediating variable; it is a driver for outcomes and impacts. When engagement is not fully secured, sub-optimal outcomes and impacts occur. In other words, failure to secure client engagement can negate all or part of the potential impact of empowerment-driven and staff/youth collaboration-based intervention features.

This chapter is structured to provide salient details. It integrates findings from an interdisciplinary literature, one that spans mental health, social services, education and youth development. This integrative theoretical review yields design principles that enhance client engagement. The progression is as follows:

First, client engagement is defined. This definition includes important distinctions between engagement and related terms such as participation and compliance.

Then, different kinds of client engagement are summarized. Common measures of client engagement, processes and outcomes are linked to this typology.

Next, important influences on client engagement outcomes are identified and described. These influences include individual needs and motivators. Programmatic settings and organizational contexts influence the needs and motivations of clients. These settings and contexts influence the motivations of staff as well. In addition, settings and contexts are influential in programs and services for involuntary, youth clients. In short, client engagement depends upon supportive programmatic settings and organizational contexts.

The chapter concludes with proposed micro-level assumptions and propositions focusing specifically on features of co-production interventions that are related to enhanced engagement. The grounding of these assumptions and propositions will be a core focus of the empirical investigation of co-production that will be conducted.

### **Defining Client Engagement**

A review of the literature from the mental health, education and social service fields yields an important finding. *Client engagement is defined in vague and imprecise ways.* For example, engagement is often used synonymously with treatment participation, involvement and compliance (Littell et al., 2001). This imprecision and inconsistency creates a related problem. *Studies employ a variety of measures of engagement* (Fredricks et al., 2004; Littell et al., 2001).

These two related problems, one involving conceptualization and the other involving operationalization and measurement, complicate literature reviews. For example, researchers may employ “engagement” as their main operational construct, but on closer inspection, it becomes apparent that some are proceeding with fundamentally different conceptualizations, operationalizations and measurements. Conversely, other

researchers may focus on “participation” and “involvement,” but on closer inspection, their operationalizations and measurements appear to focus on engagement processes and outcomes.

In short, in some cases, researchers use the same engagement terminology, but have in mind fundamentally different phenomena. In other cases, researchers employ different terminology even though some of them appear to be focusing on engagement processes and outcomes. The review that follows is an attempt to unravel some of the knotty issues stemming from these twin problems.

One key to unraveling these issues is to understand the specialized discourses used in the relevant literatures. For example, participation, attendance, cooperation and compliance are terms commonly used in the social services and mental health literatures. These terms are especially prevalent for youth and families mandated or court ordered into services or families pressured into participating in services by court or social service personnel, i.e., so-called involuntary clients and client systems. In contrast, engagement is the often-used terminology in the education and youth development literatures.

For clarity, coherence and valid operationalization and measurement, it is important to define engagement. Such a definition starts with what it is, and it includes what it is not. This definition also includes a conceptual framework for engagement, especially a developmental progression that starts with basic, minimal involvement and compliance and proceeds toward the kind of intensive engagement characteristic of successful co-production interventions.

## **Client Engagement as a Developmental Progression**

In a comprehensive review of the literature on school engagement, Fredericks et al. (2004) note that the dictionary definition of engagement includes the notion of “being actively committed,” to “involve oneself” or “become occupied.” All of these meanings are salient to co-production interventions.

In this co-production framework, engagement has three components: Behavioral, emotional and cognitive components. All three are voluntary activities. This volunteerism, together with the identity-related, often intensive participation it engenders, is characteristic of engagement in co-production interventions.

The engagement of involuntary clients begins differently. Where involuntary clients are concerned, required involvement and participation are compliance-oriented. Here, clients must adhere to mandated requirements imposed by others. Many of these requirements are related to ensuring community safety and minimizing risk of harm. In fact, the roles and orientations of staff and clients in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are based in large part on ensuring that these requirements are met so that the statutorily mandated outcomes are attained (see Costello, Toles, Spielberger & Wynn, 2001; Schwartz, 2001; Brown, DeJesus, Maxwell & Schiraldi, 2003).

Within the involuntary services sector, this emphasis on compliance drives both the structure of service settings within individual programs and the larger context in which service organizations are embedded. The funding environments, organizational culture and historical background of many child welfare and juvenile justice organizations in communities forms the overall context of service provision.

This larger context profoundly influences program service settings. Service settings in turn influence kinds of youth participation. What results in terms of youth engagement is that for most programs currently constructed, if youth had a choice, most of them in these systems would opt out of service participation (Ivanoff et al., 1994; Rooney, 1992; Trotter, 1999). From a research perspective, findings may indicate that participating clients are active and even positive about services. Even so, these clients may also be compliant, emotionally disengaged or cognitively disinterested.

In short, compliance and compliance-driven involvement and participation are involuntary activities. They are indicative of a lack of genuine commitment and ownership. In addition, this level of engagement is not conducive to attaining empowerment-related outcomes.

On the other hand, compliance-oriented attendance, involvement and participation are not totally at odds with engagement, especially in the case of involuntary clients. Placed in a developmental framework for co-production interventions, compliance-oriented attendance and participation may be precursors or antecedents to more active engagement.

In other words, merely complying, i.e., “showing up” for program activities may constitute a first step toward genuine, authentic engagement. This is especially the case for hard to serve youth. In this developmental perspective, it is important to identify, explain and then create the conditions that encourage the development of genuine engagement from initial, compliance-oriented, mandated attendance and participation.

This compelling idea of required, or compliance-oriented participation leading to active and intensive client engagement is gaining attention in the school improvement

field (e.g., Fredericks et al., 2004). The integration of youth development principles and practices into child welfare and juvenile justice programming is also prompting interest in client engagement and its impacts (e.g., Burt et al., 1998; Collins, 2001; Marks & Lawson, 2005; Yohalem & Pittman, 2001). Details follow.

### **Kinds of Client Engagement**

#### *Compliance-Oriented Participation*

In a review of the mental health and social services literature on client engagement, Littell et al. (2001) focus primarily on psychosocial treatment interventions. These interventions usually involve one-on-one helping relationships between a therapist and a client. Within this helping relationship, client roles and boundaries are negotiated. The process of participation includes involvement in problem identification, goal setting and treatment planning, attending sessions and carrying out recommendations, providing feedback on outcomes and identifying new problem areas and barriers to change (Littell et al., 2001).

However, research on participation emphasizes the clinician's view of client participation. This clinician-focused perspective is consistent with a compliance-oriented view toward participation. This conceptualization still predominates in services associated with involuntarily referred clients within the child welfare and juvenile justice fields.

Within this framework, participation is conceptualized in terms of cooperation or resistance to treatment. Two dimensions are used. The first is level of activity and it involves the distinction between passive and active participation. The second is the

client's perceptions of treatment services as viewed by the clinician's perspective; it involves the distinction between negative and positive perceptions (Littell et al., 2001).

In this framework, clients who are active and view treatment services as positive are considered cooperative. In contrast, resistant clients are passive and negative toward treatment. Also, active and negative clients are considered hostile and disruptive and positive and passive clients are labeled acquiescent.

Littell and Tajima (2000) expand on this conceptualization. The researchers divide participation into two constructs, collaboration and compliance. Collaboration is defined narrowly, as client participation in treatment planning. Client compliance refers to behaviors such as keeping appointments, completing tasks and cooperating with staff.

In reviewing the literature, Littell and her colleagues (2001) recognize the limitations of conceptualizing participation in this manner. First, clients and clinicians view client participation in treatment in different and often inconsistent ways. For example, a therapist may view a client as resistant or even hostile if the client is assertive about treatment strategies. In contrast, the client may perceive her actions differently, perhaps as being active and positive.

Second, client participation changes over time. For example, changes may stem from new barriers to participation (see Kazdin, Holland, Crowley & Breton, 1997; Kazdin & Wassell, 1999).

Littell and her colleagues (2001) conclude that these new models of client participation view participation as dynamic. Participation is driven by client views and beliefs and by external factors, which may influence the consumption of treatment services. Consistent with theorization on co-production, participation can be enhanced by

certain interventions. Indeed, full participation is viewed as an intermediate outcome of effective interventions (Littell et al., 2001).

These findings bode well for co-production interventions. It is hypothesized that co-production interventions positively impact on client participation, attendance and adherence to mandated service requirements. Enhanced compliance is accomplished in part because co-production interventions create service settings within organizations that are conducive and welcoming to client contributions. Through the act of contributing, co-production interventions influence client beliefs about services. In addition, co-production interventions address external constraints to service participation.

The hypothesized impact of co-production on client participation is a precursor to client engagement at a more full and voluntary level. The conceptualization of the construct of engagement in a school setting contributes to an understanding of the mechanisms by which the transformation to voluntarily engagement occurs.

### *School Engagement*

Similar to scholars in the social services and mental health fields, researchers studying school engagement have begun to conceptualize engagement as a multi-faceted, comprehensive and dynamic construct (Fredericks et al., 2004). School engagement is defined in three ways: behavioral engagement, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement (Fredericks et al., p. 60).

Behavioral engagement refers to the notions of participation and involvement. In a school setting, behavioral engagement is often associated with levels of attention, asking of questions or contributing to class discussion. Behavioral engagement is similar to the previously described construct of participation.

Emotional and cognitive engagement differs from behavioral engagement.

Emotional engagement is associated with positive or negative reactions by clients to services or in the context of education, student feelings toward school. Emotional engagement also involves a youth's personal interest in an activity. It includes the extent to which an activity is enjoyable. It is also related to the immediate value that a youth receives from engaging in an activity and the importance of the task in attaining future goals (Eccles, Adler, Futterman, Goff, Kaczala, Meece & Midgley, 1983).

Cognitive engagement draws on the notions of investment and exertion of energy to accomplish a task or to master new skills. Cognitive engagement draws on motivational and cognitive theory to develop activities where youth become "psychologically invested and internally motivated" (Fredericks et al., pp. 64-65).

Furthermore, the three aspects of engagement (behavioral, emotional and cognitive) are "dynamically inter-related within the individual and not isolated processes" (Fredericks et al., p. 61). Degrees of engagement occur along each component. Consistent with this conceptualization is the notion that engagement can change in frequency, intensity and duration over time. Here, engagement is a dynamic, malleable process, not a static process (Fredericks et al., 2004).

Finally, evidence is beginning to emerge that client engagement is responsive to different environmental variations (Fredericks et al., 2004). Levels of engagement result from an interaction between the individual and the contextual circumstances created. This finding is consistent across the interdisciplinary literatures reviewed (e.g., Altman, 2004; Anderson-Butcher, 2005; Dawson & Berry, 2002; Fredericks et al., 2004; Littell et al., 2001).

### *A Hypothetical Illustration*

A hypothetical example of a youth involved in the community juvenile justice system serves to illustrate the dynamic nature of youth participation and engagement within a services program. The example illustrates the movement from compliance-oriented involvement to engagement that is voluntary, including behavioral and cognitive dimensions. It also depicts the changes in engagement intensity and duration during the course of service provision.

Assume a youth mandated to attend a court diversion program per a court order begins by attending half of the required meetings during the first month of service provision. When in attendance, the youth participates by voicing his interests in community activities involving art and drawing at the local YMCA.

By the third month, the youth is attending 75% of the planned activities. During those meetings, he/she becomes emotionally engaged in activities, as evidenced by calling his worker to ensure that the worker is planning on meeting the youth at a given time. In addition, the youth is suggesting a range of activities regarding art that he would like to undertake. While participating in these activities, he becomes committed to the project, as evidenced by choosing supplies that are needed and seeking advice from staff as to how to proceed. He is also beginning to have fun in the program, meeting new friends in the process.

By the fifth month of service, the youth is co-leading activities with the worker involving other youth in the program and spending time outside of appointments planning activities for the group. As termination from the mandated program approaches, the worker approaches the youth about staying on voluntarily as a peer worker, assisting in

program activities. The youth is offered the position of assisting new referrals to the program who might be interested in art related programming. The youth accepts the position. It involves a commitment of 10 hours per week. The youth will be paid a stipend for his contributions.

Although rarely occurring in such a linear fashion (Littell et al., 2001), this example illustrates a youth progressively becoming more engaged behaviorally and more committed to the program emotionally and cognitively, with later stage co-production interventions offering promise in terms of benefits and outcomes.

#### *Co-Production Interventions and the Fully Engaged Youth*

Within the co-production intervention framework, engagement is both a process and a developmental outcome. The developmental outcomes features of engagement are most salient within the intervention framework. Here, engagement milestones encompass a full continuum, including attendance, participation (behavioral engagement), and emotional and cognitive engagement.

Involuntarily referred clients start with compliance oriented participation and attendance. Per the proposed co-production intervention theory and practice principles articulated in earlier chapters, it is theorized that youth who are provided with opportunities to be resources, contributors and change agents, will become cognitively and emotionally engaged in project activities. In essence, the involuntary client progresses to become voluntarily engaged.

For hard to serve youth, improved attendance, participation and engagement are milestones or proximal indicators of success associated with involvement in co-production activities. Once developed out of compliance-oriented attendance and

participation, engagement then becomes a driver for other outcomes and processes. As will be illustrated in subsequent sections of this chapter, by engaging cognitively and emotionally in co-producing activities, youth are afforded developmental benefits associated with these levels of engagement.

### **Measures of Client Participation and Engagement**

Despite recent theorization of client participation as a multi-dimensional construct, most studies of participation in the social services and mental health field use single and often simple measures of participation (Littell et al., 2001). For example, measures of attendance or rates of “no-shows” are commonly used. If quality of participation is measured, most use staff ratings; few studies seek client perspectives on participation in social services (Littell et al., 2001).

Similarly, measures of behavioral engagement predominate in school settings. Common measures include teacher and student self-reports of engagement, scales measuring student conduct in the classroom, scales of student participation and observational techniques to track levels of student effort and participation.

Additionally, measures of emotional and cognitive engagement are limited in school settings. Those that exist are general and not attached to specific projects or assignments. In addition, these measures fail to track qualitative differences in levels of engagement within the three areas of engagement, behavioral, emotional and cognitive (Fredericks et al., 2004).

Measures of youth engagement in the field of positive youth development are more comprehensive and qualitative. Youth development researchers, unlike researchers in other disciplines, actually ask youth about areas of programming that are of interest, to

identify, among other things, motivational factors associated with participation. Unlike schools, there is often a good deal of choice in youth programming. In addition, participation in youth programming is voluntary.

Within youth development programming, youth tend to “shop” for activities and programs that address their needs (Anderson-Butcher, 2005). They can choose not to attend programming. By not attending or attending sporadically, the long-term effectiveness of youth development programming is diminished (Anderson-Butcher, 2005). As a result, there has been more attention to understanding why youth attend programs and in creating programming that attracts youth for the long-term.

Researchers have used simple behavioral measures of engagement to track youth participation in community youth programs over time (e.g., Anderson-Butcher, Newsome & Ferrari, 2003; Bartko & Eccles, 2003). Qualitative as well as quantitative self-report measures of youth involvement in after school programming have also been developed (e.g., Winston & Massaro, 1987).

In addition, researchers have promoted methods of measuring emotional and cognitive engagement. These measures seek to identify what motivates youth to attend programming and to understand the kinds of project activities that create a psychological investment for youth that would entice them to keep coming back (e.g., Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003). To capture this information, focus groups and open-ended questionnaires are often employed, augmenting quantitative measures of behavioral engagement (e.g., Anderson-Butcher et al., 2002; Dworkin, Larson & Hansen, 2002; Larson, 2000).

## **Outcomes Associated with Levels of Engagement**

### *Compliance-Oriented Participation and Outcomes*

In a comprehensive review of the literature on client participation in the health, mental health and social services arenas, Littell et al. (2001) found mixed results regarding the effects of participation on service outcomes. Many of the studies reviewed grappled with methodological challenges.

Persistent challenges included selection and attribution biases. Selection bias occurs if random assignment of clients with different levels of participation is not used to measure effects. In studies measuring the impact of participation, clients made choices as to their level of participation. These choices in turn were based on a host of factors. These factors, rather than participation per se, may be influential in the outcomes resulting from differential levels of participation (Littell et al., 2001).

Attribution biases occur when caseworkers as well as clients incorrectly base positive outcomes of treatment on treatment participation, when the positive results might have been caused by other factors. Staff rating cooperative clients as “more successful” is an example of an attribution bias that can impact on results (Littell et al., 2001).

Regarding specific studies, there is evidence to suggest that more frequent and consistent participation is associated with better outcomes in child welfare (Atkinson & Butler, 1996; Jellinek, Murphy, Poitras, Quinn, Bishop & Goshko, 1992). In contrast, Littell (1997) found duration and intensity of home-based services not to be a strong predictor of child welfare outcomes. Different measures and operational definitions of participation levels are important in explaining the differential findings.

For example, in the Atkinson and Butler (1996) and Jellinek et al. (1992) studies, parental compliance with court ordered service requirements and child welfare outcomes was linked with returning children to their custody. Here, worker perception of client compliance may have contributed to professional recommendations and decisions. These recommendations in turn impacted on client outcomes (Littell et al., 2001).

Other studies support these findings. For example, there is evidence suggesting that cooperative clients are rated more highly in terms of success than less cooperative clients, even if client outcomes are similar (Littell et al., 2001). Littell's (2001) work on client participation and outcomes in family preservation services supports these findings. Findings revealed a link between client compliance and reductions in the likelihood of subsequent reports of child abuse and neglect and out-of home placement.

From these studies, researchers warn of the potential of a "halo effect" of worker perceptions. Replacing perceptions of compliance with risk assessment strategies can have detrimental impacts on case decision-making in child welfare (Littell et al., 2001)

Littell's study (2001) revealed other important findings. For example, in the study, greater client collaboration (defined as client participation in treatment planning), was associated with greater client compliance, controlling for case characteristics, duration of services and prior maltreatment and out of home placements. Thus, client collaboration with staff in working on treatment plans impacted on compliance levels. In turn, compliance levels were predictive of certain child welfare outcomes.

In summarizing the relevant literature, Littell et al. (2001) propose that the relationship between participation and outcomes is nonlinear. Theorists note that there are probably limits to the amount of change that can occur between increased levels of

participation and outcomes at the high end. In other words, it might not make much of a difference in reaching specific child welfare or juvenile justice outcomes if a youth attends 10 as opposed to 12 sessions with a probation officer or is 75% as opposed to 85% compliant with court ordered requirements.

However, while this might be the case for early developmental phases of engagement such as attending sessions or participating behaviorally in program activities, it is probably not the case for the more advanced kinds of emotional and cognitive engagement. Youth who become emotionally and cognitively committed to working on a project, in concert with staff, might continue to experience gains as new challenges are confronted and overcome. Fledgling research in the youth development area, which will be reviewed in subsequent sections of this dissertation inquiry, lends support to this theorization.

Finally, Littell et al. (2001) introduces the notion that participation and outcomes may be reciprocally related. As clients improve their circumstances, they may be more apt to enhance their engagement. This in turn can lead to further improvement.

This theorization supported by empirical study contributes to the proposed framework for co-production interventions. Here, collaboration between staff and clients in empowering settings impacts on client engagement in a manner that is both reciprocal and generative.

### *School Engagement and Outcomes*

Educational researchers have found that behavioral engagement, as evidenced by measures of participation and conduct, is correlated with higher achievement. There is also some evidence of a relationship between cognitive and emotional engagement on

achievement. However, measurement challenges exist that make it difficult to isolate the impact of each type of engagement on achievement. In addition, most of the studies are cross-sectional which precludes conclusions on directionality of the relationships (Fredericks et al., 2004).

In addition, there is evidence suggesting that behavioral disengagement is related to dropping out. Also, while there is less evidence linking emotional engagement to school dropout, findings from qualitative research studies are beginning to show a potential link between an emotional attachment to teachers and peers and maintaining youth in school (Fredericks et al., 2004; Wilson, 2004).

Similar to findings in the area of mental health and social services, researchers are calling for additional studies that identify aspects of school contexts and classroom setting that promote different kinds of engagement and the link between engagement and achievement outcomes and reduce dropout rates (Fredericks et al., 2004).

#### *Engagement in Youth Development Activities and Outcomes*

Recent research has begun to uncover the myriad of benefits afforded to youth who are emotionally and cognitively engaged in activities. Researchers in youth development have utilized findings from motivational and cognitive theory to develop activities where youth become psychologically invested and internally motivated (e.g., Anderson-Butcher, 2005).

Self-determination theory (SDT) is important in understanding the link between engagement, motivation and outcomes. Self-determination theory is an approach to human motivation that involves “the investigation of people’s inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that are the basis for their self-motivation ... as well as

the conditions that foster these positive processes” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68). Studies have shown that different kinds of motivations influence behaviors. Consistent with self-determination theory, youth who are cognitively or emotionally engaged in activities tend to be both intrinsically and autonomously motivated to undertake a learning behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

For example, motivation can be authentic, that is, both intrinsic and self-authored. This occurs when conducting an activity becomes inherently satisfying, like when youth are emotionally engaged in an activity. In contrast, motivation can also be extrinsically driven, tied to an activity in which some separable outcome is to be achieved.

It is important to note that some but not all examples of activities performed under extrinsic motivation circumstances involve compliance with an external regulation, such as a youth attending a community service program because they are mandated to do so. For example, an adjudicated youth could be motivated to attend because it could lead to a paid position at the work site after mandated service is completed. This is an example of an externally motivated behavior that can become internalized.

Similarly, within SDT, levels of internalization can differentiate motivation. Motivation that is driven by volition and choice is autonomous. This contrasts with motivation that is driven by pressure, coercion or guilt, driven by an external locus of causality (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006).

The notion of identification is also important within SDT. Identification is the process of identifying the value of the activity with the youth accepting the regulation of the activity as his own (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006).

SDT research has focused primarily on how contexts can be structured to be more autonomy supportive so as to support intrinsic motivation or to facilitate the internalization of extrinsic motivated behaviors (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick & Leone, 1994). Autonomy supportive contexts allow opportunities for self-initiation and for choice, provide meaningful rationale if choice is constrained, refrain from rewards and punishments to motivate behavior and provide timely and positive feedback to the youth (Deci et al., 1994). Such contexts tend to satisfy rather than impede the youths' basic psychological needs for relatedness, competence and autonomy (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). Contexts that are structured to address these needs are contexts that will foster cognitive and emotional engagement.

Here, research supports theory. A myriad of research studies demonstrate that autonomy supportive environments are linked to many benefits, including academic competence, school achievement and youth well-being (see Vansteenkiste et al., 2006).

In addition, exciting new research provides evidence linking the framing of a youth's learning activities in terms of achieving intrinsic goals with positive learning outcomes. In other words, working with youth on establishing intrinsic goals, such as health, personal growth and contributing to one's community had an independent effect on autonomous motivation. Also, both intrinsic goal setting and autonomous motivation had an independent, positive effect on deep learning, achievement and persistence (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006).

Larson's (2000) notion of initiative builds off the work of motivational and cognitive theorists. Initiative refers to being motivated from within in directing attention and effort toward meeting a challenging goal (Larson, p. 170). Initiative can be thought

of as a state of advanced engagement that involves all 3 kinds of engagement; behavioral, cognitive and emotional.

According to Larson (2000), three critical elements are needed for initiative to occur: (1) Having intrinsic motivation, experiencing inherent satisfaction in an activity and being invested in the activity, (2) Concerted engagement and attention to the activity (e.g. emotionally and cognitively engaged), which involves structuring an activity to include rules, challenges, complexity and order and (3) Concerted engagement over time, involving a temporal arc of effort directed toward a goal (Larson, p. 172).

The path toward initiative often involves setbacks and re-evaluations. To address these challenges, youth participate in collaborative agency, with other youth and adult mentors, to participate in the process of learning and problem solving (Larson, 2000, p. 175).

There is growing evidence of both short-term and long-term benefits of adolescent engagement in structured and satisfying youth activities that involve initiative. For example, it has been found that youth can develop a “language of agency” (see Heath, 1999). Here, youth show ownership of project outcomes. In addition, youth began to use adult language in terms of understanding strategies, contingencies and options in planning for their project. Youth internalize this language, in part, to be part of the group and to feel included. Most important, evidence of language of agency has been shown to appear within three to four weeks of youth participation in initiative enhancing projects (Heath, 1999).

The potential for long-term generative benefits are also being uncovered. Here, skills and benefits gained from participation in a structured voluntary project are utilized in other settings and contexts post project completion.

For example, in a meta-analysis of Outward Bound, an intensive and challenging wilderness program, researchers found that program effects for many developmental competencies such as self-efficacy, assertiveness and decision making, increased rather than decreased 25 months after program completion (Hattie, Marsh, Neill and Richards, 1997). One interpretation of these findings is by participating in activities that required intensive attention and engagement, youth developed a new way of thinking, new skills and new modes of action that are generative and transferable (Larson, 2000).

These theories and research findings have influenced practice within the youth development field. For example, McLaughlin (2000) set forth a template for creating intentional learning environments within youth organizations that fosters autonomous motivation and initiative. In addition, Anderson-Butcher (2005) utilized the work of the self-determination theorists to develop a checklist of key program components necessary to encourage autonomy and independence for youth participants. Best practice program components are in place in youth developing programming, utilizing the findings from motivational and cognitive research, to structure solid learning and growth experiences for youth.

### **Influences on Client Participation/Engagement**

Building on the work of Kasdin and Wassell (1999) and Leventhal, Lambert, Diefenbach and Leventhal (1997), Littell et al. (2001) developed a conceptual model of

treatment participation. The model provides a useful framework for assessing key influences on youth engagement in service programs.

Components of the model include pretreatment client characteristics, treatment and setting characteristics, staff/clinician characteristics, external stressors, obstacles and supports and within treatment factors such as client beliefs, perceptions of treatment and alliance formation between the client and the therapist impacting on participation.

In addition, Fredericks et al. (2004) identified key antecedents to youth engagement in a school setting. These factors mirror many of those set forth by Littell and her colleagues. They include larger school level factors, classroom context, including classroom structure and teacher support. Individual needs and motivators were also identified as key factors. Factors and influences of client participation/engagement are reviewed below.

#### *Client characteristics*

Evidence suggests that client characteristics such as socio-economic status, single parenthood, mental health diagnosis and severity of presenting problems are predictive of dropping out of treatment services (e.g., Kazdin et al., 1997). However, these characteristics, which were once a primary focus of the research on engagement, are of less interest today. This diminished interest is attributable to these characteristics not being easily changed by interventions. Also, research is beginning to show that these characteristics do not predict variance in treatment participation (Littell et al., 2001).

Thus, while severity of problems, for example, might influence initial client motivation to attend treatment, other factors, including type of intervention, program setting, and worker responsiveness, also impact on motivation and treatment

participation. It is these areas, due to their malleability, that is gaining interest among researchers and practitioners (Littell et al., 2001).

### *Staff Characteristics*

In the mental health and social services arena, Littell et al. (2001) note that there has been scant research on the impact of clinician attributes and attitudes on client participation. Existing studies provide some evidence of a potential relationship, although the potency of the relationship is unclear at this point in time.

Littell and Tajima (2000) found that a deficit, non-strengths based orientation employed by staff toward clients is associated with low levels of parental collaboration and compliance in family preservation programs. In addition, Littell et al. (2001) identified a number of studies in children's mental health that suggest that parent blaming by staff impedes participation.

Worker confidence and optimism may also impact on participation. The direction of this relationship is unclear and may be reciprocal. For example, participation may be linked to worker optimism and/or worker optimism may impact on participation, with both or either impacting on outcomes (Littell et al., 2001).

The fostering of staff optimism has also been found to be an essential ingredient to working successfully with involuntary clients, such as many youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (Trotter, 1999; Clark, 1999). Due to challenging life circumstances and high fate control/high loss of perceived freedoms, most involuntary clients show little reason for optimism (Rooney, 1992). The same can be said for workers who often experiment with several different approaches in attempting to engage youth with little to show for it (Cingolani, 1984). For these reasons, practice

theory dictates that in working with involuntary clients, incremental progress needs to be a critical goal, to build hope for staff and clients that change can occur (Rooney, 1992).

In addition, worker perception of their working conditions appears to influence client participation. For example, Littell and Tajima (2000) found worker perceptions of the quality of their supervision to be positively associated with client participation. Job clarity was also linked with higher levels of client collaboration while burnout was linked to lower levels of collaboration. Also, worker autonomy was linked to better client compliance.

While worker beliefs and job settings appear to be related to client engagement, the relationships are far from clear. As noted earlier, relationships may be reciprocal, i.e., engagement influences worker confidence and optimism and worker confidence and optimism influences levels of engagement. Or, worker optimism may mediate between service setting and participation (Littell et al., 2001). While the literature on engagement may pose more questions than answers, staff characteristics and work settings appear to be linked to engagement and participation, warranting further study.

Within the co-production framework, it is theorized that worker motivation and efficacy will be enhanced, due to enhanced levels of engagement and improved outcomes resulting from youth being empowered to take on more responsibility and leadership. The relationship between these constructs is reciprocal. Generative benefits also accrue. For example, as positive outcomes and benefits accrue, levels of engagement are enhanced and worker efficacy increases.

Furthermore, it is theorized that as these changes occur, resources allocated for organizational and worker preparation increase. Additional resources are then invested in

improving working conditions conducive to co-production. Greater job autonomy and enhanced worker optimism and confidence are attained.

In the educational sphere, studies link teacher support (academic and interpersonal) with behavioral engagement (Fredericks et al., 2004). Studies have also linked teacher support with emotional and cognitive engagement.

A combination of academic and social support seems to be important for both emotional and cognitive engagement. In other words, supportive relationships with their teachers as well as with peers in the classroom may be as important as academic support in fostering cognitive and emotional engagement (Fredericks et al., 2004). The differential impacts of these kinds of support on the different kinds of engagement may vary with student age and background; further study is again called for (Fredericks et al., 2004).

#### *External Stressors, Obstacles and Supports*

Research findings have linked the presence of supportive family members and peers to client participation in treatment. In addition to encouraging participation, family members and peers help clients address identified obstacles to participation.

For example, extended family support is linked to greater collaboration (defined as participation in treatment planning and compliance (meeting mandated requirements) within family preservation programs (Littell & Tajima, 2000). In the youth development area, parents requiring or encouraging attendance at youth programming and the presence of friends at the program are important factors related to youth participation (Anderson-Butcher, 2005; Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003).

Conversely, non-supportive family and peers can impede participation (Littell et al., 2001). For example, Kasdin et al., (1997) found that client conflicts with significant others, competing demands such as work and child care commitments and barriers such as transportation, present barriers to mental health treatment. Barriers predicted higher rates of dropping out, fewer weeks in treatment and higher rates of cancelled appointments.

In the area of education, peer support has been identified as an important variable in understanding student engagement. Fredericks et al. (2004) identified a number of studies that link peer acceptance and rejection to school engagement, especially in the areas of behavioral and emotional engagement. Similarly, Ogbu's work (1987, 2003) with minority youth, in which youth were fearful of "acting white" in seeking good grades, provides evidence of the negative influences that a peer group can have on school engagement.

Also, there may be a link between peer interactions and cognitive engagement. For example, cognitive engagement can be enhanced when class members take on specific roles that encourage debate, discussion and critiques of each other's class work (e.g., Meloth & Deering, 1994; Newmann, 1992). Here, peers are acting more than as friends (Fredericks et al., 2004) but seemingly as "co-producers," working with teachers to enhance student engagement.

The link between peers serving as leaders in the classroom and cognitive engagement of fellow students is important for co-production theorization. Two brief hypothetical examples follow. One illustrates the connection between co-production and external obstacles. The other links co-production and external supports to participation.

### *Hypothetical Illustration #1*

Time banking systems are a tool that can address client obstacles to participation. For example, clients who have earned time dollars in service to other clients or to the community can use the earned dollars to “purchase” services, such as transportation or child-care, that may preclude participation in services. Being able to obtain these services through their own efforts is empowering to clients. In addition, it indicates a commitment to service participation. The availability of these services also relieves pressure on staff to directly meet these unmet service needs.

### *Hypothetical Illustration #2*

Time banking can also support enhanced levels of teacher/student collaboration, which would encourage enhanced engagement. For example, rewarding students who help teachers in mentoring other students or students who help teachers understand neighborhood assets and problems (see Mitra, 2004), can receive time dollars for their efforts. These dollars can be used to meet student needs and wants. Within a co-production framework, it is hypothesized that empowering students to take on leadership roles in schools or service programs will positively impact on engagement.

These potential positive impacts assume that empowering activities are designed to meet client needs, as they perceive them. Characteristics of program settings that meet core psychological needs of youth and thus enhance engagement are discussed below.

## *Characteristics of Program Settings*

### *Program Settings and Compliance-Oriented Engagement*

In the review of the literature, Littell et al. (2001) identified studies that linked client perceptions of treatment, their perceptions of need and problem definition and the alliance formed between clients and clinicians to levels of client participation.

Altman (2003) provided comparable findings. In a qualitative study of non-voluntary clients, Altman found client perceptions of need, perceptions of program fit independent of need, choice, the efficacy of services and staff providing those services, and the cost/benefits of participation to be themes related to client decisions to accept or reject agency offered services.

In addition, there is evidence to suggest that treatment and setting characteristics, including case management practices and strategies, may have strong effects on participation levels and compliance with mandated treatment. For example, within family preservation programs, Littell and Tajima (2000) found that offering a wide variety of concrete services was associated with enhanced compliance levels. In addition, providing advocacy services was predictive of collaboration in treatment planning and compliance in areas such as completing tasks and attending sessions.

Studies of welfare to work programs found that an emphasis on client choices and a focus on personal attention, in contrast to formal penalties, were associated with better compliance rates (see Riccio & Hasenfeld, 1996; Weaver & Hasenfeld, 1997). Also, there is evidence that quality of programming, in contrast to dosage or intensity of participation, may be linked to positive outcomes (Littell et al., 2001).

### *School Settings and Levels of Engagement*

Within schools, classroom structure has been positively linked with behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement as well as student attitudes (Fredericks et al., 2004). Structure refers to the clarity of teacher expectations for academic and social behavior and the consequences for failing to meet those expectations (Connell, 1990). Although there have been only a few studies linking classroom structure and engagement, these initial findings add to the evidence that altering contexts can influence youth engagement in schools. Similarly, Fredericks et al. (2004) notes that few studies have sought to understand the link between context, needs, motivators and engagement in school settings. This is also a key area for future study.

Within school engagement, Fredericks et al. (2004) proposes that individual youth needs for relatedness, autonomy and competence serve as a mediator between school settings and engagement. The authors noted, however, that few studies have linked context, needs and engagement in the same study in the educational area.

### *Program Settings and Engagement in Youth Development Settings*

In the youth development field, researchers have identified program features that attract youth to programming as well as features associated with retention. For example, studies have shown that youth are initially more attracted to less structured, activity-based programming such as game rooms and unstructured sports activities. This is in contrast to programming with formal curriculum designed to promote certain skills or competencies (e.g., Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003).

Other program elements have been shown to be “hooks,” or program features that help retain youth in programming (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2002). These include

settings that provide for pro-social peer groups, linkages to adults, meaningful relationships and opportunities for youth leadership (Anderson-Butcher, 2005; Anderson-Butcher et al., 2002).

In addition, researchers have found that programs need to develop a diverse set of activities that can attract and retain many different kinds of youth. These activities need to be designed to develop skills and competencies because that is what youth typically desire. (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2002; Dworkin et al., 2003) Providing opportunities to participate in new and exciting activities, including activities where youth can make a difference to their community and institutions that they are involved with, are also factors that contribute to youth participation (Anderson-Butcher, 2005; Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003).

In short, to retain youth participation and involvement, programs need to tailor to individual youth needs, be settings that allow youth to develop skills and build new competencies, allow for the building of relationships with peers, and provide fun and challenging new activities that provide youth with opportunities for growth (Anderson-Butcher, 2005). McLaughlin (2000) has identified core features of youth programming that assist in retaining youth. These features include establishing caring supportive communities that are youth centered (e.g., build on strengths, respond to diverse talents and provide personal attention), knowledge-centered (e.g., contains quality instruction with a clearly focus) and assessment centered (e.g., involve adults that provide feedback and recognition as well as projects with cycles of planning, practice and performance, a temporal arc, culminating in celebration).

Similarly, Anderson-Butcher (2005) has set forth a number of program strategies within youth programming to assist in recruiting and retaining youth. In both the education and youth development areas, staff aligning with youth often means seeking to address the psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence (Anderson-Butcher, 2005; Fredericks et al., 2004). Addressing autonomy needs have also been noted in working with adults in the child welfare and social service systems (Littell et al., 2001). These factors will be explored below.

#### *Program Settings and Autonomy Needs*

Autonomy may be defined as a desire to show personal control over their environment (Anderson-Butcher, 2005). In terms of engagement, people have a desire to do things for personal reasons as opposed to their actions being controlled by others (Ryan & Connell, 1989). Cultivating autonomy is an essential feature for engaging both youth and adults. A number of strategies have been identified as important to fostering autonomy.

In the social services and mental health fields, studies have shown that active client participation in treatment planning appears to be linked to participation in family preservation services (Littell, 2001). For involuntarily referred clients, fostering choice, personal control and self-determination are important determinants to choosing to participate (Altman, 2003; Ivanoff et al., 1994).

In education, studies have found that autonomy supported classrooms that provide students with choice, shared decision making on areas of curriculum and the absence of external controls such as rewards or grades are linked with enhanced engagement (e.g., Connell, 1990; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Positive behavioral and emotional engagement has

been linked to the reporting of autonomous reasons for involvement (Fredericks et al., 2004).

However, studies linking autonomy to cognitive engagement are lacking (Fredericks et al., 2004). Additional research is needed to assess the correct mix of autonomy support and classroom structure, with different age groups of youth, different ethnic and cultural samples of students and the extent to which these factors impact on levels of engagement (Fredericks et al., 2004).

In addition, cultivating autonomy influences a youth's motivation to be involved in youth development activities (Anderson-Butcher, 2005). Feelings of personal power, choice and control over what they do and how they do it is related to intrinsic motivation. As noted earlier, intrinsic motivation is associated with both cognitive and emotional engagement.

Anderson-Butcher (2005) has developed a list of strategies to address a youth's need for autonomy. These strategies are listed in the appendix of this chapter (see appendix 7-1). These strategies are adapted to serve as essential design features for co-production interventions to enhance youth engagement.

#### *Program Settings and the Need for Relatedness*

The psychological need for relatedness refers to a youth's need for high quality emotional relationships (Fredericks et al., 2004). There are a number of constructs that encompass the notion of relatedness. Two of these constructs include the notion of belonging and connectedness (Anderson-Butcher, 2005).

Belonging refers to an individual's sense of being included, accepted, valued, and encouraged by others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Under this definition, belonging is

linked to the sense of attachment to people, usually in a group or program setting. Related to belonging is the construct of connectedness. Connectedness is a construct often associated with an institution, such as a school or a services program (Resnick, Bearman, & Blum, 1997) Unfortunately, many of these terms are used interchangeably within research on school engagement (Libbey, 2004) and engagement in youth development programming (Anderson-Butcher, 2005). This lack of clarity complicates theorization, operationalization and measurement of engagement constructs and processes.

In the educational literature, studies have found a link between perceived school relatedness and the related construct of school belonging to behavioral and emotional engagement. In contrast to behavioral and emotional engagement, there has been little study on the impact of perceived relatedness on cognitive engagement (Fredericks et al., 2004).

For example, some studies indicate that a sense of belonging and attachment to school, as evidenced by perceived caring from peers and teachers, is an important factor related to academic achievement and risk behaviors (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming & Hawkins, 2004; Wilson, 2004). In addition, McNeely and Falci (2004) found teacher support to be protective against the initiation of health risk behaviors. However, in this study, teacher support was not related to the reduction or cessation of risky behaviors once initiated, with the exception of violence. Evidence suggested that unconventional connectedness with peers engaged in harmful behaviors might mitigate the protective elements afforded from teacher support (McNeely & Falci, 2004).

Interestingly, the researchers hypothesize that engagement, which was referred to as an advanced form of teacher/student attachment, may be linked to the reduction of risk

behaviors. In this study, engagement is defined as “the reciprocation by student’s of teacher support,” “the extent to which students are invested in and committed to their relationships with teachers” (McNeely & Falci, 2004, p. 291). This definition of engagement is akin to notions of collaboration discussed in chapter four. From these findings, it is hypothesized that teacher/student collaboration will foster school connectedness.

Also, it is important to note that engagement, as defined above, was not a measured variable in this study. The authors hypothesize that had they identified circumstances where engagement (collaboration) was occurring and had measured it, an association might have occurred between engagement (collaboration), school connectedness and reduction or cessation of risky behaviors (McNeely & Falci, 2004). The desire for belonging and connectedness also draws youth to youth development programming. In these programs, youth often seek out friendships with peers and adults (Anderson-Butcher, 2005). Continued involvement in youth programming is based on the amount and type of social reinforcement received (Harter, 1978). The more programs satisfy this need, the more likely that youth will continue their involvement (Anderson-Butcher, 2005).

In addition to autonomy, Anderson-Butcher (2005) also developed a list of strategies to address a youth’s need for relatedness. These strategies are listed in the appendix 7-1. An adapted version of these strategies is incorporated as essential design features for co-production interventions to enhance youth engagement.

### *Program Settings and Competence Needs*

Competence involves beliefs about control, strategies and capacity (Connell & Wellborn, 1991). Self-determined behaviors, where youth take responsibility for projects and work with a certain level of independence, contribute to a youth's sense of competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Environments that build competence beliefs in youth will facilitate an understanding of what it takes to succeed. It will also assist in accomplishing the tasks presented (Fredericks et al., 2004). For these benefits to accrue, tasks need to be sufficiently challenging. Youth need to be stretched in their abilities and apply effort over time (Harter, 1978).

In the educational arena, there are no studies that test the relationship between classroom structure and competence (Fredericks et al., 2004). However, in a number of studies, perceived competence has been linked to behavioral and emotional engagement but not to cognitive engagement (Fredericks et al., 2004). A recent study by Wilson (2004) identified the complexity of identifying school setting characteristics on school connectedness. The author noted that identifying processes and structures within schools that enhances engagement and also influences negative peer influences, requires further research.

Similar to the other developmental needs, Anderson-Butcher (2005) also developed a list of strategies to address a youth's need for competence (see appendix 7-1). An adapted version of these strategies is incorporated as essential design features for co-production interventions to enhance youth engagement.

### *Larger Contextual Determinants of Engagement*

A final area of influence on client participation and engagement is the larger context in which organizations are embedded. Features of larger contexts include the funding environment, regulatory factors, service delivery, the organization's historical context, and the community where the organization is situated (Benson & Saito, 2001; Delgado, 2002). In addition, the structure of the larger service system can also impact on client engagement.

In all areas of the literature review on engagement, little attention is paid in research to the link between larger contextual-environmental factors, program settings, and interventions that enhance engagement. When a co-production framework is added to youth engagement, especially the developing framework enriched by collaboration and empowerment, a key theoretical premise emerges: Organizational and larger community contexts influence service settings and these contexts and settings in turn, influence co-production interventions.

The findings in chapter 6, which identified contextual conditions associated with youth-centered collaboration and inter-organizational partnerships, are relevant here. Elements of larger environmental contexts that are conducive to fostering collaboration and partnership include sufficient integration of the organization into the community, experiences in inter-organizational partnerships to expand co-production opportunities for youth, an organizational history of working in collaboration with clients and other service providers and a welcoming regulatory, funding and contractual climate in support of co-production interventions. Favorable environmental contexts yield program settings conducive for co-production, which are associated with youth engagement.

Finally, it is theorized that over time, the reciprocal and generative changes created by co-production will positively impact on developing working environments, internal policies and inter-organizational partnerships that are conducive to co-production. These influences are especially important in services for involuntary clients. Here, it is important that service settings and larger contextual environments be altered, if involuntarily referred youth and families are to transform their level of engagement from involuntary participation to a level of voluntary engagement, and to be afforded the attendant benefits offered from this higher level of commitment and participation.

### **Integrating Engagement Theory and Co-Production**

#### *Levels of Engagement and Associated Outcomes*

There is increasing consensus among researchers regarding engagement. It needs to be viewed as a multi-faceted construct. Conceptualized in this way, engagement impacts social service and academic outcomes as well as client well-being. As noted earlier, involuntary clients start with compliance-oriented participation and attendance. This level of engagement is often an initial developmental outcome for service provision and a phase that can be built upon.

As engagement is progressively developed, benefits follow. These relationships are depicted in appendix 7-2. Findings from the literature reveal both the short and long term benefits afforded youth involved in structured, voluntary activities in which youth are intrinsically and autonomously motivated, are cognitively and emotionally engaged and maintain that level of motivation over time. In fact, theorists propose that in contrast to lower levels of engagement such as when youth are merely complying with mandates by attending sessions, youth who are cognitively and emotionally engaged in program

activities may continue to experience gains even after their engagement in program activities cease. These findings hold significant promise for co-production interventions with involuntary clients. Their affective, cognitive and behavioral engagement becomes a key intervention target and priority.

*The Co-Production Innovation: New Intervention Features to Enhance Engagement*

To reiterate, a number of different intervention strategies are available to enhance client participation and engagement. These empowerment-related strategies include involving clients in problem identification, goal setting, treatment planning and task completion. Involuntary clients in involuntary settings pose special challenges in effecting empowerment strategies. Unique opportunities are also presented.

For example, in involuntary settings, clients are faced with a number of often non-negotiable service mandates. A goal of staff is to seek motivational congruence with clients. As client motivation become more congruent with what the staff is attempting and often mandated to provide, participation and initial levels of engagement can occur.

Recent research suggests that clients choose to accept or reject services based on a number of factors. These factors begin with the alliance formed with staff, an alliance that may result in genuine collaboration. Other factors include client perception of need, the perceived fit between program services and perceived needs, the efficacy of services and staff providing those services and an assessment of risk/reward in accepting services. In traditional services for involuntary clients, the staff is the provider of service and the client is the receiver of service. Staff is generally active and clients passive. In short, staff seeks the motivational fit and the client makes a decision on whether or not to participate.

In comparison with genuine compliance-oriented interventions, co-production interventions present a different dynamic and a unique set of opportunities. In contrast to most involuntary settings, which emphasize behavioral compliance and conformity conditioned by top-down behavioral change technologies controlled by staff, co-production interventions require active client engagement, driven in part by voice and choice. Staff roles change accordingly. They enter into negotiations with clients to exchange and transact in order to meet each others' perceived needs.

*Reciprocity is a key driver.* Reciprocity guides the increasingly collaborative relationship between staff and clients. Staff works with clients in specifically designed interventions so that clients are contributors, resources and change agents to organizations, communities and in assisting other youth/families. Appendix 7-3 depicts the co-production innovation and differences between co-production and more traditional engagement strategies.

#### *Professional/Client Collaboration Strategies and Client Engagement*

Recent research identifies the importance of interventions that foster a sense of attachment to an adult, a sense of connectedness to the organization and a sense of belonging to a group, program or activity. For many youth, working with professional staff or adult volunteers on projects of interest to youth may provide a sufficient sense of belonging and attachment to foster youth engagement.

Staff/client collaboration (see previous chapter) can address essential attachment and belonging needs of youth. Collaborative activities also reinforce youth connectedness to essential organizations and institutions in the community. These connections enhance

social bonding and youth reintegration, especially for the most vulnerable hard to serve involuntary youth.

In addition, parental and peer involvement in co-production activities support the youth by encouraging participation. Such supports also help address obstacles to participation. Also, parent and peer involvement may also address attachment and belonging needs, especially for youth that may be estranged from parents and family members or are socially isolated from positive peer groups. Finally, parents serving as “co-producers” with staff, working together to achieve a successful intervention, may also be an important feature linked to youth engagement.

#### *Key Preconditions/Antecedents Associated with Engagement*

Furthermore, the research in this chapter and the preceding chapter on collaboration revealed key factors that influence levels of engagement. Appendix 7-4 compares influential factors associated with high or low levels of engagement. For example, client characteristics, such as severity of problems and levels of risk and treatment factors, were identified as important preconditions associated only with initial levels of client engagement, such as compliance or participation. On the other hand, treatment and setting characteristics (e.g., working conditions) were found to influence both initial levels of engagement and higher levels of engagement. Interestingly, family and peer factors were often viewed as stressors in initial levels of engagement but assets in higher levels of youth engagement.

In addition, staff characteristics were emphasized as key determinants of initial engagement within the mental health and social services arena. Specifically, the link between worker confidence, optimism and autonomy and achieving initial levels of youth

participation in services was identified. Furthermore, these relationships may be reciprocal. For example, staff characteristics may influence youth engagement and increasing levels of youth engagement may influence staff characteristics such as confidence, optimism and autonomy. These generative benefits may also occur within co-production interventions involving youth as contributors. The relationship of these influential factors to each other and to levels of engagement warrant further study, especially with involuntary youth engaged in co-production interventions.

### **Developing the Theoretical Connections between Engagement Theory and Co-Production**

The theorizing in this chapter and in preceding chapters provides the edifice for the intervention framework for co-production. Core intervention components include important external and system related influences as well as organizational, staff and youth related preconditions and antecedent factors. Core empowerment and collaboration related practices and strategies have been identified and these practices and strategies directly impact on enhanced levels of youth and staff engagement. Enhanced engagement leads to youth and staff related outcomes. A more in-depth discussion of important theoretical connections between these core intervention components is provided below.

First, research findings on engagement show that there are certain organizational preconditions that create an environment conducive to voluntary engagement. This means that features of program context can be linked causally to engagement. When these features are in place, they serve as mediating variables, linked causally to voluntary engagement. Alternatively, when they are not in place, they serve as moderating variables, inhibiting levels of engagement.

A similar relationship exists between engagement and outcomes and impacts associated with co-production. When engagement is secured, it serves as a mediating variable; it is a driver for outcomes and impacts. Alternatively, when client engagement is not fully secured, it serves as a moderating variable. When engagement is a moderating variable, it helps explain sub-optimal outcomes and impacts.

Furthermore, levels of engagement are a key proximal outcome of co-production interventions. When voluntary engagement is secured, it serves as a mediating variable, as a driver for outcomes and impacts. Alternatively, when voluntary client engagement is not fully secured, it serves as a moderating variable, which helps explain sub-optimal outcomes and impacts.

In addition, within the co-production intervention framework, the relationship between co-production inputs (core preconditions and antecedents, including preparation of program settings and compatible environmental contexts), core intervention elements, proximal outcomes and more distal outcomes are both reciprocal and generative. For example, enhanced engagement can positively impact on staff efficacy, including job satisfaction that can further enhance youth engagement and contribute to positive outcomes. These changes can then impact on designing program settings that are increasingly compatible with co-production interventions. New outcomes and impacts are fostered.

Thus, the final proposed intervention framework for co-production will include specific propositions. These propositions will link these core components of the model. This theorizing will guide the empirical analysis of co-production in two pilot test sites.

## **Engagement and the Involuntary Client: The Need for Further Research**

Nearly all of the research on programs and interventions guided by co-production theory, including the impact of co-production on engagement, exhibits an important feature. The focus is on youth in *voluntary* programs and services. In other words, the “voluntary youth” serving as research participants have enjoyed a fundamental freedom. They have been able to decide whether they will participate in these programs and interventions.

The experiences of these voluntary youth differ from those of *involuntary youth*. As the descriptor “involuntary” suggests, these latter youth participate initially because they are required or compelled to do so. They lack a choice, experience pressure to participate, or both. “Court-ordered youth” from the child welfare and juvenile justice systems provide special cases in point.

Most of the research in this chapter has focused on clients involved in voluntary programs and services. Few studies to date have focused on “involuntary youth.” Court-ordered youth from the child welfare and juvenile justice systems provide special cases in point. Nonetheless, findings from this chapter on engagement, especially those related to higher levels of cognitive and emotional engagement, are potentially potent for youth involved in community child welfare and juvenile justice programming.

For example, the findings that link collaboration, compliance and child welfare outcomes are important and potentially relevant to co-production interventions in these settings. As indicated in chapter 4, collaboration between client and staff within a co-production framework has a precise, intervention-oriented meaning, one that differs from “collaboration” as defined by Littell and her colleagues. Further study is needed on

understanding the impact of new forms of youth/staff collaboration on levels of engagement, especially projects that are outside the realm of treatment planning. Understanding the relationships between new kinds of collaboration, levels of engagement and child welfare and well-being outcomes should be a primary focus of future research efforts.

Especially in the child welfare and juvenile justice arenas, researchers have emphasized the impact of participation on compliance, collaboration and system related outcomes. However, little or no study has focused on the effects of emotional and cognitive engagement on child welfare or juvenile justice outcomes or youth well-being. Co-production theory and practice provides a framework by which youth and parents can become voluntarily engaged. This new level of engagement can become a driver for the myriad of additional outcomes and benefits.

Furthermore, findings from this chapter reveal both the short and long term benefits afforded youth involved in structured, voluntary activities. Community child welfare and juvenile justice programming is usually short term, intensive and designed to serve as a transition for the youth and family in order to effect community re-integration and family stabilization (e.g., Bazemore & Terry, 1997; Bazemore & Karp, 2004; Frazier & Nelson, 1997; Marks & Lawson, 2005). Preparing youth and their families for successful discharge necessitates that participation and engagement are swift. To what extent can new co-production engagement strategies foster intrinsic and autonomous motivation in community juvenile justice and child welfare program settings? What policy and practice changes would need to be made to create settings that can enhance emotional and cognitive youth engagement in project activities?

Due to these recent findings and the challenges inherent in providing services for hard to serve youth, there is renewed interest programmatically in the interface between youth development and child welfare and juvenile justice services (Butts, 2008; Butts et al., 2005; Collins, 2001; Mandel, 2000, Yohalem & Pittman, 2001). Researchers and practitioners have recognized the developmental gains afforded to mainstream and at risk youth engaged in youth development programming and are interested in determining if these gains are transferable to new settings and target populations. Specifically, researchers are calling for exploration that compares types of interventions, intensity and dosage of services and child outcomes within new program settings (Dworkin et al., 2003; Forum for Youth Investment, 2002; Roth et al., 1998; Zeldin, 2004).

Lerner's work with a developmental systems approach in changing the course of youth development provides an important case in point. Lerner identified the need for more theories "about how positive development of diverse youth in specific communities can be enhanced" (Forum for Youth Development, 2002, p. 4). Similarly, in a study on the impacts of youth governance and leadership, Zeldin (2004) identified the need for studying settings where youth are involved in "lower levels" of leadership (e.g., short-term involvement, less intensive models), such as what might be developed for youth within transitional community child welfare and juvenile justice settings. Yohalem and Pittman (2001) go further, viewing the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, with their predominately "closed systems," as presenting solid opportunities for youth development programming to be tested.

In short, infusing co-production driven positive youth development interventions within child welfare and juvenile justice settings may present unique opportunities to

enhance youth engagement. However, taking advantage of this opportunity will require additional theory building applicable to involuntary youth. Fortunately, there is a body of theory and research on micro-level interventions for involuntary clients that have import for the development of co-production theory. This literature, reviewed in the next chapter, can help guide the extension of co-production theory to programs and interventions for involuntary youth.

## **CHAPTER 8: CO-PRODUCTION, MOTIVATIONAL CONGRUENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT MICRO-LEVEL INTERVENTION CONSTRUCTS FOR INVOLUNTARY YOUTH**

The primary aim of this chapter is to develop a theoretical rationale for co-production theory's import to programs and interventions with involuntary youth. The chapter begins with a brief introduction of micro-level intervention theory. A case will be made of the need for additional theorizing to assist researchers and practitioners in understanding the dynamics of involuntary youth participation in service programs.

In section two, aspects of intervention theory for involuntary youth that relate to staff/youth collaboration, empowerment and engagement will be explored. Key theoretical assumptions will be presented and the construct of motivational congruence will be introduced. Motivational congruence as defined in the literature on services to involuntary clients will be expanded and integrated into the emergent co-production theoretical framework. As will be presented in this section, motivational congruence is a key construct in understanding what drives participation of involuntary youth. In other words, motivational congruence helps explain the "black box" of collaboration, empowerment and engagement and at the same time facilitates their development.

In section three, co-production theory and intervention theory for involuntary clients are joined. One product of this union is additional theorizing. Additional theorizing related to co-production begins in this chapter with design assumptions. These assumptions will assist in the development of propositions and pathways that enable the core constructs of co-production theory; collaboration, empowerment and engagement, to be applicable for services to involuntary clients (see chapter 10).

## Introduction

Micro-level intervention theory associated with involuntary clients encompasses a large literature base. The researcher confronts choices, including the choice of the primary frame of reference. This ensuing review of micro-level intervention theory will draw primarily from Ronald H. Rooney and his work, *Strategies for Work with Involuntary Clients* (1992) and associated theorists.

Micro-level intervention theory for involuntary clients is grounded in part in connections among client circumstances, intervention strategies and anticipated outcomes, including engagement. A developmentally sensitive and responsive framework is implicit in this theory. For example, theorists identify levels or degrees of involuntariness and they note that levels can change during the course of service provision. In fact, staff-client transactions and interactions influence levels of involuntariness. Furthermore, intervention strategies can influence the kinds of transactions that take place between staff and clients.

Notwithstanding such developing knowledge and accompanying practice guidelines, a micro-level intervention framework for involuntary youth remains underdeveloped and incomplete (Rooney, 1992). For example, Rooney (1992, p. 331) notes that intervention models within involuntary practice have often been implemented with insufficient model development and testing. Needs remain for theory-based and empirically tested models to guide intervention strategies and provide a structure for intervention research. In fact, intervention research remains an unmet need in the field of involuntary services (Rooney, 1992).

A companion development also holds promise for intervention theory with involuntary youth. Researchers are seeking fresh understanding of the dynamics of youth participation in involuntary service settings. The impetus for this work is coming from the restorative justice field.

Restorative justice theory and practice seeks to incorporate features of youth development and co-production theory within the field of juvenile justice (Butts, 2008; Schwartz, 2001). Here, scholars have argued for a new conceptualization of community service and restitution activities for youth mandated to perform such activities (Bazemore & Maloney, 1994; Bazemore & Terry, 1997; Bazemore & Karp, 2004). A balanced approach is sought, seeking to ensure community protection and offender accountability while also enabling offenders to become competent and productive citizens (Maloney, Romig & Armstrong, 1996).

In addition, restorative community service interventions are to be viewed as “gateway” interventions (see Bazemore & Terry, 1997). These interventions earn this label because they are viewed as a first step toward offender change and reintegration. As a “gateway” intervention, restorative community service represents a beginning phase of a larger community comprehensive youth development effort for troubled youth.

Per emerging co-production theory, achieving outcomes associated with positive youth development interventions necessitates incorporating empowerment and collaboration practices within restorative interventions. Incorporating these practices within restorative interventions will not only enhance the potential impact of the interventions but also pave the way for future benefits once involvement in the juvenile justice system terminates (Bazemore, Karp, McLeod, Vaniman & Weibust, 2003).

Moreover, there is growing recognition that superficial labels such as “voluntary” are not always accurate. To wit: Some alternative restorative programs are not truly voluntary because offenders are often pressured to participate (see Bazemore et al., 2003; Umbreit, 1991). Also, recent studies have shown that fear motivates many offenders to participate in restorative programs (Karp, Sweet, Kirshenbaum & Bazemore, 2004). Clearly when fear trumps choice, the programs are not voluntary.

Creating opportunities for offenders to exercise choice within restorative programming offers possibility for collaborative planning, which in turn can be empowering and may result in higher levels of engagement (Bazemore & Walgrave, 1999; Bazemore & Karp, 2004). Developing an intervention framework for involuntary practice that depicts pathways to collaboration, empowerment and engagement benefits both researchers and practitioners alike. Co-production intervention theory, adapted for services to involuntary clients, may address this unmet need.

### **Micro-Level Intervention Theory and Research for Involuntary Clients**

Two constructs are central in the research on involuntary services. They are *level of involuntariness* and *motivational congruence*. Findings related to these constructs are reframed below as theoretical assumptions and propositions.

#### 1. Levels of Involuntariness

Assumption 1A: Client circumstances, such as the level of involuntariness perceived by the youth upon referral for services, is an influential factor associated with youth engagement.

Assumption 1B: Clients mandated or pressured to accept services manifest varying degrees of involuntariness, which may change over time. Varying levels of involuntariness exist for clients mandated or pressured to accept services.

Assumption 1C: Developing research constructs enable fine-grained distinctions among different kinds of clients and the dimensions accompanying their varying degrees of involuntariness.

Discussion: Rooney (1992) developed a three-dimensional model to describe involuntary clients. The three constructs used are *legitimacy of the sanction*, *perceived loss of valued freedoms* and *fate control* (pp.. 24-27).

The legitimacy of the sanction dimension refers to the legal consequences that result when clients fail to comply with mandated requirements. Under this dimension, clients are categorized as *legally mandated*, *non-voluntary* or *voluntary clients*. This categorization is described below.

Legally mandated clients are clients that are faced with legal consequences should they not comply with the program of services. Non-voluntary clients are clients pressured to comply with service provision. These pressures may involve formal or informal sanctions but do not involve legal consequences for failure to comply. For example, in the case of non-voluntary youth, parents, social workers or probation officers often apply pressure to participate in service programs.

Voluntary clients comprise the third category. Here, clients work with staff on issues of concern to them without any associated sanction, legal, formal or informal.

The second dimension, loss of valued freedoms, contains objective and subjective features. Objective loss of freedom may differ from a client's perception of loss of

freedom. For example, a youth subject to court-ordered curfew requirements may be faced with an objective loss of freedom. But, if the youth adapts to the court order by coaxing his drug-involved friends to come over to his home for parties and his parents are unable or unwilling to set limits, then he may not feel a subjective loss of freedom from the court order. With regard to level of involuntariness, subjective perceptions are most relevant (Rooney, 1992, p. 27).

*Fate control*, the third dimension, refers to the degree to which the worker or other persons in power (e.g., judge, probation officer), can affect, impact or influence client circumstances. This dimension represents the power that staff can exercise over clients, to coerce or constrain a client's actions or choices (Rooney, 1992, p. 26).

Rooney (1992) uses his analysis of legal mandates, loss of valued freedoms and fate control to develop four categories of involuntariness. These categories are: (1) "Highly involuntary" clients: these clients are saddled with legal mandates and perceive high fate control and high-perceived loss of freedom. This situation fits many youth referred for service to community juvenile justice agencies in which both youth and agency staff are bound by restrictive court orders limiting a youth's freedom, often with punitive consequences for noncompliance; (2) "Inaccessible" clients: these clients face legal mandates, face high fate control due to their circumstances and perceive low loss of valued freedoms; (3) "Invisible" clients: these clients do not face legal mandates (e.g., are not court ordered into services but could be pressured to participate) yet experience high fate control and high-perceived loss of freedom; and (4) "Voluntary" clients: these clients do not face legal mandates and do not experience high fate control or loss of valued freedoms.

Risking complications and even conceptual confusion, it is important to note that highly involuntary clients are, to some degree, semi-voluntary. Alternatively, they can become semi-voluntary over time (Rooney, 1992). “Shades of gray” like these are unavoidable because staff offers most clients choices in determining service plans and activities. In other words, there is an unavoidable paradox with involuntary clients. Required or pressured to attend and participate, often in compliance with court orders, these young people nevertheless are afforded choices related to alternative programs and activities. The mere fact that these young people choose to participate adds an element of “voluntariness” to their involuntary status.

Assumption 1D: The varying levels of client involuntariness present different challenges to client engagement.

Discussion: Per the theorization outlined above, constructs defining levels of involuntariness are broadened, to consider factors other than the nature of the legal mandate. Thus, within this conceptualization, two clients faced with similar legal mandates can experience different levels of involuntariness. For example, an inaccessible involuntary client may present serious challenges to engagement because the client may not perceive loss of freedoms resulting from a failure to comply with a court mandate (Rooney, 1992). A young person that refuses to participate in a court-ordered substance abuse treatment program because of a perception that there will not be consequences for their inaction may fit the categorization of an inaccessible involuntary client. In these situations, interventions may focus on alerting the young person to the consequences of this decision on the potential for loss of additional freedoms.

Inaccessible involuntary clients can be contrasted with highly involuntary clients. Highly involuntary clients, faced with court mandates, high fate control and high-perceived loss of freedoms may demonstrate feelings of hopelessness and despair with their situation (Rooney, 1992). In these situations, the goal of interventions may be to provide clients with new opportunities to make decisions, within the bounds of court orders.

In summary, clients' subjective loss of freedoms and perception of fate control are key factors in determining each person's level of involuntariness. Taken together, these factors present a typology of involuntariness that moves beyond legal mandates. Service interventions can vary according to where a young person fits on the proposed categorization.

Assumption 1E: Level of involuntariness influences and is influenced by levels of client reactance.

Discussion: Reactance is the normal response by clients to a threat of loss of valued freedoms (Rooney, 1992, p. 130). Reactance theory identifies a number of common responses by clients to involvement in involuntary services. Responses include hostility toward the source of the threat of the loss of freedoms, finding loopholes in an attempt to restore freedoms, inciting others to restore freedoms or valuing prohibited behavior more than previously valued (Rooney, 1992). Levels of involuntariness influence these behaviors. Conversely, reactance behaviors can influence staff and other professional responses to clients, potentially impacting on legal mandates and restrictions on valued freedoms.

Assumption 1F: Level of involuntariness can change during the course of service provision, as a function of staff orientations, service model used, interventions employed and developmental changes in client circumstances.

Discussion: Level of involuntariness can change over time. Some changes occur naturally over the course of service provision. For example, legal requirements governing participation can come to an end or can become less onerous over time. In these circumstances, legally mandated clients may become non-voluntary or voluntary clients.

On the other hand, some clients can start out as non-voluntary (e.g., pressured to participate in services) and become legally mandated through a court order to participate (Rooney, 1992, p. 33). This situation occurs for youth pressured to participate in services while awaiting a formal disposition from family court.

In addition, level of involuntariness can change due to the introduction of a new agency policy or service approach. For example, incorporating asset based tools into case assessment processes provides workers with valuable information from which to build programming that may interest referred youth. This could be part of a reorientation of the agency programming toward a strengths-based, asset development services approach. As the policy is implemented, staff has new tools to create interventions that may enhance a youth's perception of perceived freedom and choice.

Finally, level of involuntariness can change due to introducing new service interventions. A service intervention involves a specific set of strategies to enhance a client's subjective sense of fate control or to expand a client's perceived sense freedom (Rooney, 1992). Developmentally appropriate co-production interventions that involve

youth as contributors, resources and community change agents, responsive to a youth's identified interests and assets, can alter his/her level of involuntariness.

In short, levels of involuntariness are not static. They are influenced by changes in legal circumstances, changes in agency policy and intervention strategies (Rooney, 1992, p. 35). Co-production interventions can influence levels of involuntariness for involuntary clients.

Assumption 1G: Client engagement strategies need to meet three design criteria: (1) developmentally appropriate, (2) tied to risk factors and (3) tailored to level of involuntariness.

Discussion: Moreover, these criterion-driven engagement strategies are related to phase of client service. Phases of service include an initial phase, a middle phase and a termination phase (Rooney, 1992). Engagement strategies designed to influence degree of involuntariness may vary by phase and client circumstances.

For example, legal mandates may be "front-ended." In these circumstances, required actions more pronounced early in service provision. These required actions may limit the amount of time that staff can spend with youth on voluntary endeavors, inhibiting strategies that may reduce levels of involuntariness.

Also, for clients with significant risk factors, there may be pressure on staff to obtain client participation and compliance with service mandates. These pressures may be especially salient during the initial phase of service provision. An over-reliance on inducement and punishment (e.g., compliance-oriented approaches) to encourage participation and compliance may result (Rooney, 1992).

Risk factors may include clients that do not recognize that their behavior is problematic or fail to accept responsibility for their actions. Inducement and punishment strategies are designed to influence client behavior. Unfortunately, because they are often not empowering, these approaches may be counterproductive in terms of reducing a client's level of involuntariness (Rooney, 1992).

However, by the middle phase of intervention, pressures on the client may change as the time period for service provision begins to come to a close. Also, by the middle phase, there is an expectation that the client has made progress in acknowledging their problems. During this phase, more time is often spent addressing voluntary concerns of clients (Rooney, 1992). With these changes, a wider range of motivational strategies is available to workers. As interventions progress, inducement and punishment approaches can be replaced by "naturally occurring positive consequences" (Simons, 1985, p. 58).

For example, during the middle phase of service delivery, positive social networks need to be located that serve as "natural reinforcers" so that gains can be sustained post termination. In addition, boundaries between worker and client need to be sharpened, to reduce issues of dependency (Trotter, 1999). Rooney (1992) identifies a key goal of the middle phase of service to be to facilitate intrinsic motivation and self-attribution of change. These goals and the accompanying strategies may also influence degrees of involuntariness.

Finally, the middle phase of services prepares youth for termination. By this phase, it is hoped that the client has not come to depend on the worker as a major source of support and assistance in addressing problems. A reduction in the worker's role in formulating tasks for the youth and overcoming obstacles, while expressing confidence in

the client's ability to solve their own problems, helps set the stage for successful discharge (Rooney, 1992).

Proposed Propositions Associated with Levels of Involuntariness

Proposition 1A: *As client engagement is enhanced, level of involuntariness and client reactance are reduced.*

Proposition 1B: *As level of involuntariness and client reactance are reduced, the breadth and range of empowerment-driven co-production intervention strategies are enhanced.*

Proposition 1C: *Level of involuntariness and client reactance are reciprocally related; as level of involuntariness is reduced, client reactance is reduced; as level of involuntariness increases, client reactance increases.*

Discussion: Appendix 8-1 depicts the factors and pathways associated with levels of involuntariness. Within this framework, it is proposed that the level of involuntariness influences engagement strategies. It is also hypothesized that when these strategies succeed such that engagement is enhanced, reduced level of involuntariness can result. In effect, level of involuntariness is both an important antecedent factor influencing engagement and a proximal outcome variable linked to enhanced engagement. This relationship is reciprocal and causal, indicating the primacy of client engagement as an outcome within services to involuntary clients.

Also, of note are the proposed bi-directional and reciprocal relationships between the process and outcome variables associated with level of involuntariness. For example, as appendix 8-1 shows, service interventions influence and are influenced by levels of client reactance, levels of initial involuntariness and client engagement. Within this framework, positive cycles can be created as new interventions are introduced. Similarly,

negative or vicious cycles can form if determinate factors such as client reactance are not addressed. It is hoped that these relationships and pathways will be uncovered as a result of the empirical investigation in this dissertation study.

Finally, it is important to highlight that empirically tested measures for many of these constructs have not yet been developed. For example, measures of client reactance and levels of involuntariness remain an unmet need within the field of micro-level intervention theory for involuntary clients. Here again, it is hoped that the empirical study will provide findings that can assist in beginning to make operational a number of these core constructs.

## 2. Motivational Congruence

Assumption 2A: Staff members strive for motivational congruence with clients.

Assumption 2B: Motivational congruence is both a process and outcome variable.

Discussion: Motivational congruence is defined as the fit between the client's motivation and what the staff is attempting or required to provide and accomplish (Reid & Hanrahan, 1982). Motivational congruence involves staff and clients agreeing to transact with each other by exchanging resources. To achieve congruence, staff interests are joined with client interests (Rooney, 1992).

Also, motivational congruence is a "clue" to effective interventions for involuntary clients (Rooney, 1992). Here, evidence from numerous research studies (see Rooney, p. 84) suggests that motivational congruence is a proximal indicator of intervention success. Also, there is research that supports motivational congruence as a key variable that may explain findings that reveal similar outcomes occurring between involuntary and voluntary clients participating in the same intervention (Reid &

Hanrahan, 1982; Rooney, 1992). Motivational congruence may also be linked to youth engagement, helping to explain why certain clients choose to remain or drop out of programming.

In addition, motivational congruence represents a process, a set of techniques used by workers to facilitate youth engagement. Similar to the construct of collaboration (see Claiborne & Lawson, 2005), motivational congruence is both a process and outcome variable. Similar to the construct of level of involuntariness, the construct of motivational congruence has not yet been made operational. To date, there is no known measure of motivational congruence.

Assumption 2C: The construct of motivational congruence can enrich staff members' micro-level intervention theories, facilitating the developmental progression from involuntary services to semi-voluntary and then voluntary services.

Discussion: The processes and mechanisms by which staff seeks youth engagement are represented by the action steps employed in seeking motivational congruence with youth. Understanding and conceptualizing these action steps will help uncover the "black box" (see Anderson-Butcher et al., 2002) of the actual dynamics of youth engagement.

Voluntary or semi-voluntary transactions with clients present staff with opportunities to further motivational congruence for involuntary youth. .

As noted earlier, transactions between staff and clients occur in all phases of service intervention (Rooney, 1992). For example, for many youth, complying with mandated requirements may involve only a portion of a youth's time. Emphasizing freedoms untouched by mandated requirements allows staff to address the often misperception by youth that their freedoms have been fully taken away as a consequence

of the wrongdoing that they have committed. Time and resource permitting, staff can work with youth on utilizing their free time to build upon a youth's strengths, interests and assets, outside of mandated requirements. It enables staff to build upon and create internal and external developmental assets for involved youth.

In these situations, staff mandated to oversee and enforce court-ordered curfews could use this time together to build upon a youth's interest. For example, a youth interested in music could use the evening curfew hours to write music or poetry. Staff time spent assisting and supporting the youth in these activities helps build motivational congruence between the youth and the staff member.

Similarly, staff can agree to work with youth on issues or problem areas that are unrelated to mandated concerns. In return, youth agree to work on mandated concerns. The so-called quid pro quo option (Rooney, 1992, p. 185) involves staff providing additional benefits or services to youth that they are not required to provide.

For example, referring to the above example, in a quid pro quo exchange, a staff member may seek to secure a commitment that the youth will abide by the curfew in exchange for the youth receiving music lessons supported by the staff and his/her host organization. These kinds of transactions can achieve what can be called "semi-voluntary" motivational congruence between staff and youth. Co-production interventions can be part of semi-voluntary motivational congruence strategies. These interventions can also expand transactional options for staff by focusing on joint activities outside of service mandates that benefit both staff and youth. When this occurs, "voluntary" motivational congruence with involuntary youth can result.

Assumption 2D: Increases in motivational congruence depend on specially designed and implemented intervention strategies. .

Discussion: According to Rooney (1992, p. 84), motivational congruence can be furthered through interventions that stress (1) client choices and a sense of self-control, (2) socialization to role expectations, (3) behavioral contracting and (4) treatment adherence by facilitating client participation and commitment to designing treatment plans and activities. The third option, behavioral contracting, can be an intervention in and of itself (see Ivanoff et al., 1994). Contracting can also be a tool used to facilitate other interventions that support client choice, socialization or client participation in treatment planning (Rooney, 1992). The use of contracting as a strategy that facilitates motivational congruence is briefly described below.

Rooney (1992, p. 177) differentiates between involuntary case plans, semi-voluntary contracts and voluntary contracts. Involuntary case plans that specify requirements and consequences, are often presented in a contractual format. However, these plans are often not negotiated and thus, do not represent mutual agreements and accountability for both parties (e.g., staff and client). Instead, they are tools to hold clients accountable to mandated requirements. Thus, these so called agreements are “corrupted,” and for some theorists, are not considered contracts (Seabury, 1976).

Semi-voluntary contracts combine non-negotiable items with negotiable options, including problems and needs identified by the client (Rooney, 1992, p. 178). Semi-voluntary contracts involve negotiation between staff and youth. These contracts are often utilized to implement strategies designed to facilitate motivational congruence and youth participation in services.

For example, semi-voluntary contracting is compatible with implementing an “agreeable mandate” approach. Here, favorable conditions for youth compliance with service mandates are identified and built into an agreement between staff and youth. For example, youth may agree to attend school and put more effort into homework if staff agrees to work to secure a transfer for the youth out of a certain class where relations with teaching staff have become strained. Rooney (1992) notes that semi-voluntary contracts can become “a powerful service method designed to enhance compliance, motivational congruence and self-attribution” (p. 178). Contracting can facilitate motivational congruence because it involves levels of consensual agreement and acceptance of reciprocal obligations and responsibilities (Rooney, 1992).

Voluntary contracts are also be negotiated between clients and staff. Voluntary contracts involve a mutual agreement between client and staff on goals, problems to be addressed, time limits and methods to be used. Advocates of voluntary contracts note that these contracts need to be de-coupled from the original service plan agreements that attach rewards with compliance (Ivanoff et al., 1994; Seabury, 1976). Decoupling is important to help address a client’s fear of repercussions with courts or persons in authority should the voluntary agreement not be carried out.

Moreover, in negotiating voluntary or semi-voluntary contracts with youth, distinctions need to be made between notions of real and perceived choices. Rooney (1992) advocates for structuring real choices that clients can influence as opposed to creating an illusion of free choice and control (p. 86). A focus on real choices will further motivational congruence and other service related goals.

Assumption 2E: Intervention strategies designed and implemented to achieve motivational congruence must be developmentally appropriate, tied to risk factors and tailored to level of involuntariness.

Discussion: According to Rooney (1992), levels of involuntariness impact on staff/client relations, in particular, the nature of transactions, or exchange of resources that can occur between staff and youth. Level of involuntariness has a moderating effect on motivational congruence. In other words, level of involuntariness influences the success of interventions designed to improve staff/client motivational congruence.

For example, as noted earlier, youth that fit the criteria of “highly involuntary” (e.g., legally mandated, high fate control and high perceived loss of freedoms) may exhibit little reason for optimism (Rooney, 1992). One of the major initial goals in working with these youth is to foster a sense of optimism with both youth and staff (Trotter, 1999; Clark, 1999). Here, staff may use a strategy of emphasizing freedoms untouched by court mandates. Or, staff may offer the potential of advocating for a loosening of court mandates if certain changes in behavior can be documented (Rooney, 1992). In both examples, the level of involuntariness influences interventions and their impact on motivational congruence

Similarly, client circumstances impact on the kinds of interventions to be considered in increasing motivational congruence. For example, low levels of optimism by clients can impact on worker feelings of power to influence change in client behaviors. Staff can become discouraged as they experiment with several different approaches to engage youth but have little to show for it (Cingolani, 1984).

On the other hand, clients who fit the categorization of “invisible involuntary” (e.g. no legal mandate but perhaps pressured to participate, high fate control, high perceived loss of freedom) may warrant a different strategy. “Invisible involuntary” clients often have stronger negative reactions to services than other clients because they may find the services offered unattractive or burdensome and perceive that there is no legal recourse to mandate compliance (Rooney, 1992). In these circumstances, staff may need to be more creative in developing an intervention that is attractive to the client.

For example, certain youth pressured to participate in a community services program by their parents or a probation officer, could be given the option of participating in a program that allows for more interaction with other youth and a setting that is congruent with his/her interests. The youth may decide to participate because it is the quickest avenue to get off probation “off his back” (e.g., reduce fate control). In addition, agreeing to participate may be the best route to regain certain freedoms taken away by parents or probation officers.

Assumption 2F: Client reactance affects motivational congruence and vice versa.

Discussion: As noted earlier, reactance is the normal response by clients to a threat of loss of valued freedoms (Rooney, 1992, p. 130). Clients may be hostile to the source of the perceived threat, which could be the staff person working most closely with the client. Depending upon the response by staff to these behaviors, motivational congruence may become limited or curtailed.

For example, staff pressured to ensure youth compliance with court mandates (see (Mandel, 2001; Schwartz, 2001) may respond to reactance by propelling staff to use compliance oriented techniques to modify youth behavior (Ackerson & Harrison, 2000).

Furthermore, for some staff, concerns of deception and manipulation on the part of the youth are ever-present, potentially souring relationships with their clients (Ivanoff, Blythe et al., 1994, p. 113).

In addition, feelings of lack of control can be anxiety provoking for staff. Powerlessness can result, negatively impacting on staff morale and optimism (Hegar & Hunzeker, 1988; Rooney, 1992). In worst-case scenarios, staff feelings of powerlessness can lead to exploitation of clients. Exploitation occurs when the practitioner inflates his/her power and control of the client circumstances while maintaining client negative self-perceptions (Pinderhughes, 1995). A more common consequence of powerlessness is the lessening of trust, negatively impacting on the potential of collaboration between youth and staff.

Conversely, enhanced levels of motivational congruence can positively impact on client reactance. In other words, indicators of a trusting working relationship between staff and client may reduce client hostility and associated behaviors.

Assumption 2G: Within involuntary systems, insufficient motivational congruence may exist between staff and supervisors or administrators within the agency that they work and between staff and oversight bodies.

Discussion: A lack of motivational congruence between staff and internal supervisors or administrators (e.g., “staff motivational congruence”) may occur when staff preferences regarding service activities and methods differ from the agency’s preferred model of service. Motivational incongruence may also occur between staff and oversight bodies that govern and review staff performance. Here, policies or procedures may be in place, which constrain preferred service activities.

Referring to the latter circumstances, staff in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems is often confronted with multiple sources of accountability. For example, a myriad of actors may be mandated to be involved in the service planning of youth and families involved in these two service systems. These include attorneys, judges, agency supervisors as well as public agency case managers, perhaps from a number of different government departments (e.g., probation and child welfare). All oversee and monitor client progress. Some of these actors also provide direct client services. These actors often restrict worker choice and flexibility in tailoring service options to individual client circumstances (see Costello et al., 2001).

Multiple levels of accountability and restrictions in choice/flexibility can negatively impact on staff performance and how they view their job. Staff may feel a loss of freedom and autonomy, and reduced levels of fate control, similar to what clients may experience. Congruent to client responses, staff may exhibit reactance. In fact, staff may become semi-voluntary actors in relation to the larger system, especially if staff feels that trapped in their jobs due to salary and benefits afforded with the position. Burnout and job stress can result (Rooney, 1992).

#### Proposed Propositions Associated with Motivational Congruence

Proposition 2A: *When motivational congruence between staff and clients is attained, client engagement improves, in turn facilitating movement on a developmental continuum from involuntary to voluntary services.*

Proposition 2B: *As levels of involuntariness and client reactance are reduced, opportunities for attaining motivational congruence are enhanced.*

Proposition 2C: *As staff motivational congruence improves, a fuller range of staff/client motivational processes is available, enhancing levels of staff/client motivational congruence.*

Discussion: Appendix 8-2 depicts the factors and pathways associated with motivational congruence. Within this framework, it is proposed that the construct of staff/client motivational congruence is linked causally to levels of client engagement. That is, the attainment of motivational congruence impacts, in whole or in part, intervention features designed to enhance involuntary youth engagement (e.g., empowerment and collaboration processes).

Finally, there is staff as well as client-related precondition factors of motivational congruence. Level of reactance is an example of a client-related factor. Staff motivational congruence is an example of a staff-related factor. These factors influence both motivational congruence and the service intervention strategies and processes to be deployed to influence motivational congruence. In addition, these factors can be influenced by tailored interventions and/or strategies and processes. Co-production interventions and associated strategies and processes can influence motivational congruence processes and outcomes.

### **Pathways to Engagement for Involuntary Clients**

Appendix 8-3 is an amalgam of the previous two diagrams. It depicts pathways to engagement for involuntary clients, as revealed from the literature review and the added theorizing that occurred. As shown in this diagram, level of involuntariness and motivational congruence are constructs that influence involuntary youth engagement. It is hypothesized that the two constructs vary in their influence.

For example, it is proposed that level of involuntariness moderates the effectiveness of intervention strategies designed to influence youth engagement and empowerment. In other words, different levels of involuntariness affect the relationship between intervention strategies and empowerment and engagement related outcomes. On the other hand, motivational congruence serves as a mediating variable to the attainment of youth engagement and empowerment. That is, within services to involuntary youth, staff and youth must reach an accommodation to work together if strategies to enhance engagement and empowerment are to be effective.

Also, these moderating and mediating variables influence each other as well as the empowerment-driven strategies, process and interventions employed to achieve engagement and empowerment outcomes. For example, theorists note that empowerment strategies impact on motivational congruence (Ivanoff et al., 1994). Here, staff can provide youth with opportunities to gain power, control and choice (see chapter 5, empowerment). As staff does so, motivational congruence can be enhanced. Similarly, as motivational congruence between youth and staff increases, a youth's sense of competence may increase due in part because youth have negotiated successful an accommodation with staff (Ivanoff et al., 1994; Rooney, 1992).

Moreover, the literature on involuntary services also reveals a number of proximal service delivery outcomes, linked to client engagement, levels of involuntariness, motivational congruence and client empowerment (see appendix 8-4). These proximal outcomes include enhanced levels of hopefulness, reduced levels of perceived involuntariness by youth, enhanced levels of youth/staff trust, the attainment of motivational congruence between staff and youth, enhanced levels of compliance with

mandated service requirements, enhanced levels of participation in service planning activities, enhanced use of persuasion methods of motivation, effective use of semi-voluntary and voluntary contracts and the enhanced use of naturally occurring systems to reinforce positive social behaviors. As noted earlier, many of these proximal outcomes lack operational measures. Also, it is not clear from the literature which proximal outcomes represent progress in the attainment of which core constructs in the proposed model. It is hoped that the empirical portion of this dissertation study will shed some light on these unexplored and unanswered questions.

Finally, there are similarities in the preconditions/antecedents associated with each of the three core constructs. Staff and client factors influence each of the constructs. For example, regarding client factors, the legal mandate governing service provision, a client's perception of fate control and perceived loss of freedom directly or indirectly influence level of involuntariness, motivational congruence and empowerment processes outcomes. In addition, levels of client reactance, a measure of client response to loss of freedoms, influence both empowerment outcomes and motivational congruence. Regarding staff factors, staff motivational congruence was also highlighted as an influential factor of the three core constructs. These findings bode well for interventions, such as co-production, targeted to address these sub-factors since improvements in one area may have multiple impacts on other areas.

### **Integrating Co-Production Intervention Theory within Practice Theory for Involuntary Clients**

Theoretical and conceptual advances in practice theory for involuntary clients add to the development of program theory for co-production interventions. A number of design assumptions are presented. These guiding principles will be utilized in chapter 10

to develop micro-level propositions and change pathways associated with co-production interventions for involuntary clients.

*Motivational Congruence, Involuntary Clients and Co-Production*

Assumption: Strategies and processes employed by staff to achieve motivational congruence with involuntary clients are important, but under-developed facilitators for staff/youth collaboration, empowerment and engagement. The objective is to reduce levels of involuntariness for involuntary youth.

Assumption: When semi-voluntary motivational congruence is present, a negotiated agreement between staff and youth (formal or informal) to work together on involuntary service mandates is effectuated.

Assumption: When voluntary motivational congruence is present, a negotiated agreement between staff and youth (formal or informal) to work together on voluntary areas of mutual interest is effectuated.

Discussion: As noted earlier, motivational congruence represents the actionable strategies employed by staff to facilitate youth engagement. These strategies can involve voluntary and semi-voluntary transactions with clients. The processes for conducting semi-voluntary transactions are well documented in the involuntary services literature. Incorporating voluntary transactions as an added strategy to enhance youth engagement is an area requiring further conceptualization. Co-production interventions, guided by staff/youth collaboration and empowerment features, provide an additional set of tools and options for staff to utilize in structuring voluntary transactions with involuntary clients.

Assumption: Different processes and intervention features are required to enhance staff/youth motivational congruence, dependent upon if the process is semi-voluntary or voluntary. Co-production strategies, processes and interventions can be incorporated into semi-voluntary and voluntary motivational congruence activities.

Discussion: As noted earlier within the literature of involuntary micro-intervention theory, motivational congruence is achieved when youth and staff agree to cooperate with one another and respond to each other's requests. Traditionally, this has involved integrating involuntary or mandated concerns with client needs and desires. The introduction of co-production interventions for involuntary clients can involve semi-voluntary transactions and voluntary transactions between youth and staff. Different processes are involved with each kind of interaction. Each process also involves unique outcomes. As proposed, co-production interventions can further both kinds of motivational congruence. As such, co-production interventions are adaptable to involuntary service settings.

The first kind of motivational congruence is semi-voluntary. It involves an agreement between youth and staff addressing, at least in part, involuntary or mandated service requirements. Semi-voluntary motivational congruence attempts to directly impact on a youth's level of involuntariness by enhancing freedoms and reducing levels of fate control. Previously identified quid pro quo and agreeable mandate strategies are often built into semi-voluntary agreements.

However, expanded roles for youth guided by co-production intervention features can become part of a strategy to achieve semi-voluntary motivational congruence. Incorporating creative interventions as part of youth fulfilling mandated community

service requirements is an example of this approach. In fact, recent practice principles established to help structure restorative community service activities utilize empowerment theory and principles to encourage youth engagement (see Bazemore et al., 2003).

For example, these practice principles guide practitioners to include offenders and community members in the planning and executing of projects. Also, the specific interests of participants are important considerations in assigning offender to service assignments. Here, youth assets and expertise are used to improve communities, repair harm and develop competencies often as part of a court mandate or fulfilling some requirement imposed by a person in authority.

The second kind of motivational congruence is referred to as voluntary motivational congruence. Here, contingent upon risk levels of individual client circumstances, youth and staff agree to work together on interests outside of the conditions placed on youth for referral to the service program. With voluntary motivational congruence, youth strengths, interests and assets can be more readily deployed in seeking voluntary motivational congruence.

For example, youth and staff may agree that it is in both interests to work together to improve the service model of the organization in which they are both a part. Here, staff may team up with youth to secure additional funding for the program. Or, youth and staff may choose to work together to address a community problem or issue, such as reducing asthma rates in the inner city. Activities may involve, for example, youth serving as staff assistants, community resources or helpers to other youth and families in the community.

Voluntary motivational congruence allows staff to employ the full range of collaboration and empowerment features to facilitate youth engagement. Consistent with solution-focused approaches (see DeJong & Berg, 2001; Clark 1999), staff can work with youth to develop their own goals, and work with staff as partners to accomplish these goals. Here, staff can work with youth to “co-construct expanded possibilities for a client’s future without advice or confrontation” (DeJong & Berg, 2001, p. 362).

Also, as part of voluntary motivational congruence efforts, staff can work with youth to find areas where youth are the experts (e.g., Clark, 1999). Expertise might coincide with a youth’s sense of identity or future identity (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Staff represents the agency’s interest in identifying unmet community and organizational needs, with the assistance of youth. Then, staff, youth and if applicable, community representatives, match youth skills and interests with these unmet needs. These activities become part of a voluntary negotiation between youth, staff and community representatives. As reciprocation for youth serving as contributors, youth receive benefits, either directly or indirectly from the organization. Because youth are empowered to choose how they would like to contribute and are working in areas of interest to them, higher levels of engagement can be realized.

Assumption: Semi-voluntary and voluntary motivational congruence are distinct processes, even though they often interact.

Discussion: As noted in the discussion on contracting, strategies such as contracting, to attain voluntary motivational congruence need to be distinct and separated from strategies used to attain semi-voluntary congruence efforts. This principle is important so that youth

who decide not to proceed with voluntary agreements are not sanctioned, as may be the case for involuntary or semi-voluntary transactions that are not adhered to.

Although these two kinds of congruence processes are analytically separable, the fact remains that they interact and influence each other. This “messy” theoretical and empirical reality is inescapable. For example, semi-voluntary agreements often need to be in place for voluntary motivational congruence to be initiated. Youth who breach a court order such as failing to adhere to a curfew requirement may not be in a position to negotiate a voluntary agreement with staff. In other words, dependent upon risk levels and the nature of non-negotiable mandates, failure to address involuntary concerns may have ramifications for voluntary agreements. .

However, the reverse does not apply. That is, failure to meet voluntary concerns need not have ramifications for involuntary concerns. In other words, efforts to achieve voluntary motivational congruence need to be separate and distinct processes from semi-voluntary engagement activities.

Notwithstanding the differences between these processes, they interact and influence each other. For example, success in negotiating and achieving voluntary motivational congruence can have a positive impact on compliance with semi-voluntary concerns. In other words, it is proposed that staff which is successful in achieving voluntary motivational congruence will also increase the likelihood of success in achieving semi-voluntary motivational congruence with youth. Why would this occur? Because it is reasoned that youth may be more apt to comply with service mandates if they become cognitively and emotionally engaged in voluntary co-production related

interventions. Levels of involuntariness may also be reduced, improving the conditions for collaboration, empowerment and voluntary engagement.

*Staff Motivational Congruence, Involuntary Clients and Co-Production*

Assumption: Strategies and interventions designed to enhance staff motivational congruence are necessary to facilitate co-production interventions for involuntary clients.

Discussion: Staff motivational congruence with direct supervisors, administrators and oversight bodies are influential factors in co-production interventions for involuntary clients. These factors help explain workforce variables such as efficacy, empowerment, engagement and retention-turnover. They also directly influence empowerment strategies and levels of staff/youth collaboration; both of which are linked to levels of client engagement.

For example, it was noted earlier that staff in the child welfare and juvenile justice fields are often faced with pressures to quickly engage youth who are referred for services. Also, staff within these systems is often required to adhere to highly prescriptive legislative mandates. High levels of accountability are imposed on staff; to ensure that these mandates are followed.

In addition, a myriad of actors are often mandated to be involved in the service planning of youth and families, including attorneys, judges, agency supervisors as well as public agency case managers, perhaps from a number of different government departments (e.g., probation and child welfare). All oversee and monitor client progress, in addition to providing direct client services (Costello et al., 2001).

One impact of these pressures is that staff may become overly involved with their cases. Concern about client progress can result in micromanaging a case.

Micromanaging may involve the use of social control mechanisms, including using punitive options to ensure compliance with mandates (Ackerson & Harrison, 2000; Rooney, 1992). Furthermore, some staff may become ever vigilant for deception and manipulation on the part of clients. This can lead to a souring of staff/client relationships, negatively impacting on the attainment of motivational congruence (Ivanoff et al., 1994, p. 113).

In addition, feelings of lack of control can be anxiety provoking for staff. Powerlessness can result, negatively impacting on staff morale and optimism (Hegar & Hunzeker, 1988; Rooney, 1992). In worst-case scenarios, staff feelings of powerlessness can lead to exploitation of clients. Exploitation occurs when the practitioner inflates his/her power and control of the client circumstances while maintaining client negative self-perceptions (Pinderhughes, 1995). However, a more common consequence of powerlessness is the lessening of trust.

From a youth's perspective, lack of trust reduces their willingness to voluntarily engage with staff in activities outside of their service mandates. For example, youth that are under supervision and subject to court orders might not want to share personal concerns with staff whose primary role is to enforce court mandates, for fear of retribution or punishment (see Reamer, 1982; Rooney, 1992). The confluence of these dynamics can produce a vicious cycle (see appendix 8-5), undercutting or preventing efforts at collaboration and empowerment and in turn, limiting client engagement.

The challenges facing staff working with involuntary clients necessitate an assessment of staff motivational congruence, efficacy, engagement and empowerment and if necessary, an investment of resources up-front to improve staff interactions with

supervisors, administrators and funding authorities. In many involuntary settings, co-production is likely not to be accepted or implemented successfully without initially investing in improving the working environment and organizational setting to ensure compatibility with co-production interventions.

*Client Circumstances, Involuntary Clients and Co-Production*

Assumption: Co-production interventions for involuntary clients must focus on reducing perceived levels of involuntariness in the context of changing client circumstances.

Discussion: As noted in the literature review on engagement (see previous chapter), client characteristics, such as socio-economic status, single parenthood, mental health diagnosis and severity of presenting problems, are commanding less attention by theorists and practitioners. This is due to the reality that these factors associated with engagement are thought of as less amenable to change through intervention strategies (see Littell et al., 2001).

However, for involuntary clients, it is proposed that client circumstances, including level of involuntariness, influences both initial participation in services and the kind of intervention strategies, including co-production, which can be employed by staff. Also, influencing perceived level of involuntariness is one area of client circumstances that can be addressed through interventions. Determining which kinds of co-production empowerment features is most salient in reducing levels of involuntariness is an important research question to be tackled.

### *Empowerment, Involuntary Clients and Co-Production*

Assumption: The utilization of empowerment practices is influenced by factors such as client characteristics, client reactance, levels of involuntariness, staff motivational congruence and staff/youth motivational congruence.

Assumption: Strategies used to achieve semi-voluntary motivational congruence are empowering because the strategies involve youth voice and choice and negotiation between staff and youth.

Assumption: Reduced levels of involuntariness, client reactance and hopelessness are important proximal outcomes (level 1 outcomes) associated with empowerment practices for involuntary youth.

Assumption: Participation in co-production interventions can enable involuntary youth to achieve other internal and external asset gains including enhanced levels of agency and initiative and material gains such as improvements in employment and educational statuses (level two outcomes).

Discussion: In chapter 5, a number of empowerment strategies were identified in working with involuntary youth. These strategies primarily sought to influence client compliance with mandated requirements. Empowerment practices and associated processes (see chapters five and six), can be incorporated into services for involuntary clients. These practices can begin with attaining semi-voluntary motivation congruence with youth, which will involve an understanding of mutual goals and negotiation between staff and youth. A key focus of the empirical investigation of co-production will be on understanding the strategies, processes, features and outcomes of empowerment-oriented co-production interventions associated with involuntary youth.

*Staff/youth Collaboration, Involuntary Clients and Co-Production*

Assumption: With involuntary youth, staff/youth collaboration is influenced by semi-voluntary and voluntary staff/youth motivational congruence.

Assumption: With involuntary youth, staff/youth collaboration is also influenced by factors such as client characteristics, client reactance and level of youth involuntariness.

Assumption: Increased levels of staff/youth collaboration and staff/youth motivational congruence are important proximal outcomes for co-production interventions for involuntary youth.

Discussion: In chapter 6, phases of staff/youth collaboration were described with key processes associated with each phase. These phases are relevant for involuntary youth as well as voluntary youth. Indeed, the movement across these phases is an indicator of progress for co-production interventions.

Also, motivational congruence is a key determinant of staff/youth collaboration for involuntary youth. As discussed earlier in this chapter, accommodation on involuntary concerns (e.g., semi-voluntary motivational congruence) needs to occur before higher levels of staff/youth collaboration can be realized. The exploration of these pathways and inter-relationships for involuntary youth is a fertile area for future research.

## **CHAPTER 9: A COMPREHENSIVE THEORY OF CHANGE FRAMEWORK FOR CO-PRODUCTION RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

This chapter concludes phase 2 of the dissertation which involved an evaluation and expansion of original co-production theory. This chapter builds on the previous five chapters, each of which offered specific theoretical contributions to co-production theory and interventions. This chapter brings these contributions together. It presents a comprehensive theory of change framework for co-production research and practice, with a special priority accorded to involuntary youth.

Five sections structure this analysis. The first section includes an overview of the proposed framework. Here, a unifying structure for co-production is presented, incorporating the findings from previous chapters 4-8.

The second section is a detailed presentation of each of the components of the theory of change framework. These essential components include necessary preconditions and antecedents, core and advanced intervention features, important youth and staff outcomes and proposed organizational and community impacts. Complexity is apparent in all cases and is unavoidable.

In the third section, important hypothetical relationships derived from the core components of the proposed framework are presented. These relationships are presented in the form of assumptions and propositions. Micro-level and meso-level theorizing are included. Micro-level theorizing focuses on youth and staff related characteristics and circumstances conducive to co-production as well as collaboration processes and empowerment practices linked to enhanced engagement. Meso-level assumptions and propositions include characteristics of program settings and organizational contexts that are relevant to co-production interventions.

Proposed causal pathways for achieving desired outcomes are introduced in the fourth section. Youth and staff outcomes and pathways are highlighted. Suggested hypothetical relationships are included in each area. These suggested hypothetical relationships create an edifice for future study and research exploration. A number of these relationships will be explored in the dissertation study.

### **Overview of the Proposed Co-Production Framework**

Appendix 9-1 presents the proposed theory of change framework for co-production interventions. The theory of change framework represents an ideal type. In other words, it is ideal because it is ordered logically and it is typical because it derives from the existing theoretical and empirical literature. This ideal type provides a coherent framework for designing, implementing and evaluating co-production interventions and a guide for learning and improvement.

Appendix 9-1 refers to other appendixes that describe in detail core components of the co-production framework. For example, appendixes 9-2 and 9-3 identify preconditions and antecedents associated with successful co-production interventions. In the co-production framework, preconditions and antecedents serve as mediating or moderating influences on levels of engagement and on youth and staff outcomes.

Appendixes 9-4, 9-5 and 9-6 describe the core intervention features of co-production interventions. Core intervention features of co-production include empowerment practices and staff/youth collaboration processes. Appendixes 9-4 and 9-5 outline categories of empowerment interventions and describe key practice features within each category. Appendix 9-6, drawn from chapter 6 (collaboration), outlines staff/youth collaboration processes. These processes are linked to collaboration phases

which are distinguished by the quantity and quality of reciprocal exchanges occurring between staff and youth. In the co-production framework, co-production intervention practices and processes directly influences levels of engagement.

Moreover, in the co-production framework, youth engagement is an essential proximal outcome of interventions, strategies and practices. Within services to involuntary youth, a primary goal of co-production is to progress the level of youth engagement from involuntary engagement to voluntary engagement. Appendix 9-7, drawn from chapter 7 (engagement), depicts the developmental progression of levels of youth engagement. Within each level, youth roles, behaviors and outcomes sought are described.

Furthermore, within co-production, enhanced staff and youth engagement and empowerment create the conditions for positive youth and staff outcomes to occur (see appendixes 9-8 through 9-12). Youth outcomes include empowerment related outcomes such as individual psychological and interpersonal gains as well as material gains. Youth outcomes also include reduction in problem behaviors as well as enhancement of specific developmental competencies. Under the proposed framework, youth and staff engagement and empowerment, as well as phases of staff/youth collaboration are considered benchmarks and proximal indicators of progress.

Also, as articulated throughout this dissertation, co-production interventions have impacts on organizations and communities (see appendixes 9-13 and 9-14). For example, it is hypothesized that youth and staff engagement and empowerment contribute to improvements in staff efficacy and staff retention rates. This occurs as staff; working with more empowered and engaged youth, witness the positive results of their hard work.

In addition, many of the relationships between key components of the intervention framework and specific intervention processes between the key components are reciprocal. For example, youth engagement and empowerment may improve working conditions such that new organizational investments are made in co-production which creates an impetus for further investment in core intervention processes. The reciprocal nature of co-production is illustrated in appendix 9-1.

Finally, co-production interventions may also yield contagion and generative effects. Contagion effects involve the spreading of outcomes and impacts to new settings and stakeholders. In turn, generative effects include improvements in program settings and organizational contexts. Examples of both contagion and generative effects are included in the detailed presentation of theory of change components provided below.

### **Detailed Description of Theory of Change Components**

#### *Preconditions and Antecedents*

Appendix 9-2 outlines proposed preconditions and antecedents conducive to co-production interventions. To reiterate, preconditions refer to barriers, facilitators and constraints already present at the time of the intervention. Preconditions can be viewed as indicators of readiness for the intervention. These features are generally difficult to change through manipulation of environmental conditions. Preconditions tend to have moderating effects on the relationship between co-production service components and proximal and distal outcomes (Lawson, 2006). For example, an absence of certain key features of a working environment compatible to co-production, such as unclear or unfocused job descriptions or staff lacking in job autonomy, can negatively impact on the kinds of staff/client collaboration processes and empowerment practices that can be

undertaken as well as the success of these processes and practices in furthering youth engagement.

On the other hand, antecedents are a priori forces and factors that are engrained in and essential for the intervention. Antecedents are often part of the intervention and are changeable (Lawson, 2006). Antecedents often have mediating influences on the relationship between intervention components and outcomes such that they dictate, in whole or in part, the relationship between intervention processes and practices and desired outcomes (Fortune & Reid, 1999). Because antecedents are more amenable to interventions, they as opposed to preconditions are a priority focus of the proposed intervention framework

In the co-production framework, preconditions comprise three broad categories that are especially salient to co-production theory and practice: (1) Favorable external environments, (2) Favorable organizational setting features and (3) Favorable program model features. These features are identified below (see appendix 9-2).

In addition, staff and youth related factors are especially important to co-production interventions for involuntary youth. These factors comprise a unique mix of both preconditions and antecedents. These features are also outlined below (see appendix 9-3).

#### *Favorable External Environments*

There are multiple external environments and each is home to contextual factors that influence co-production interventions. Environments include those related to funding, overall policy, accountability, inter-organizational relationships and the community where the organization is situated (Benson & Saito, 2001; Delgado, 2002).

Favorable external environments include organizations with a history of collaboration with youth and partnerships with other organizations; a larger services system that is structured so as to be compatible with co-production interventions, sufficient integration of the organization with the broader community and a welcoming regulatory, funding and contractual climate supportive of co-production interventions.

Many of these conditions constitute preconditions because they represent barriers or constraints already “out there.” Some of these preconditions may be amenable to change. However, to enhance the effectiveness of co-production interventions, change strategies will need to be developed prior to the implementation of the co-production intervention. Altering regulatory, funding and contracts so that they are conducive to co-production interventions is an example of this kind of precondition. As noted in earlier chapters, each of these environmental conditions presents significant challenges to change processes, especially within the context of service systems for involuntary youth.

#### *Favorable Organizational Setting Features*

Favorable organizational setting features are drawn primarily from collaboration theory and were originally presented in chapter 6 (see appendix 9-2). Features are categorized into two component areas: (1) Larger organizational features and (2) Job structure and role-related features. Examples of larger organization features conducive to co-production include a welcoming organizational climate, systems of power sharing between staff, accountability structures compatible with co-production and an environment that is conducive to risk-taking and entrepreneurship. Examples of job structure and role-related features include professional roles conducive to co-production

such as allowing for role flexibility, job clarity and job autonomy as well as compatible caseload sizes, and the provision of quality supervision.

Some of these precondition features may be more amenable to investments in change improvements more than others. For example, compatible caseload sizes may be driven by contractual realities with funding authorities, which could limit change efforts. On the other hand, opportunities may be present within organizations to begin to institute systems of power sharing between staff and youth prior to the implementation of the co-production intervention.

#### *Favorable Program Model Features*

Favorable program model features are drawn from the youth development and empowerment literatures (see chapters 4 and 5). Examples of program model features conducive to co-production include an asset/strength-based approach, the fostering of natural helping networks among youth and family members, instituting quality standards for co-production, family and peer involvement in service provision and sufficient length and dosage of services provided. Similar to the discussion above, contingencies may limit change efforts. For example, altering dosage and length of service provisions may be challenging due to contractual realities. On the other hand, instituting time for reflective practice may be more within the control of the organization through internal policy-making.

#### *Staff and Youth Antecedents and Preconditions including Motivational Congruence*

As noted in the previous chapter, staff and youth factors, including conditions and circumstances, matter in effectuating engagement. For example, staff motivational congruence is an important precondition associated with the success of co-production

interventions for involuntary youth. To reiterate, staff motivational congruence refers to congruence between staff members, internal supervisors, administrators and oversight bodies regarding service activities and methods of service delivery. Failure to attend to potential differences can result in negative or vicious cycles of interaction between staff members and their supervisors, derailing the potential impact of co-production. An investment of resources up-front may be required to reconcile differences and improve interactions between staff, supervisors, administrators and oversight bodies.

On the other hand, youth-related circumstances, such as level of youth reactance and level of involuntariness, represent important antecedent conditions associated with co-production's success. As noted in the preceding chapter, targeted empowerment-driven interventions can impact on levels of involuntariness and reactance, concurrent with or prior instituting co-production. Co-production interventions can also directly address perceived level of involuntariness and client reactance through its related empowerment practices and collaboration processes.

Finally, staff/youth motivational congruence represents a critical antecedent to co-production's success. Here, an agreement needs to be reached between staff and youth on addressing involuntary service mandates. Once this occurs, negotiations between youth and staff can begin in earnest, to work together on areas of common interest such as improving communities and enhancing organizational performance. As noted in the prior chapter, levels of staff/youth collaboration essential to co-production are unattainable without semi-voluntary motivational congruence being in place.

In short, achieving semi-voluntary motivational congruence opens the door to the full range of empowerment-oriented intervention strategies, designed to foster high levels

of youth engagement. In the co-production framework, staff/youth motivational congruence (both semi-voluntary and voluntary) is a mediating variable to youth engagement, dictating in whole or in part the success of empowerment practices and collaboration processes.

#### *Co-Production Intervention Features: Key Empowerment Practices*

Appendixes 9-4 and 9-5 depict key empowerment practices associated with co-production interventions. These practices derive from the literature review on youth development (see chapter 4) and empowerment theory (chapter 5). As noted in earlier chapters, empowerment practices seek both individual and social transformation. Within co-production, empowerment practices are designed to facilitate mechanisms of exchange to encourage greater levels of youth engagement. As youth are placed in increasingly responsible positions as resources, leaders, and change-agents, individual as well as organizational and community gains are realized.

Five categories illuminate these empowerment practices: (1) Essential practices-general, (2) Essential practices-group practices, (3) Practices that enhance youth autonomy, (4) Practices that enhance youth competencies, (5) Practices that build relationships and connections for youth and (6) Advanced empowerment practices. Each category is described below with examples of key practices comprising each category.

#### *Essential Practices-General*

Essential practices-general are those practices that need to be in place for co-production outcomes, including enhanced engagement, to occur. These practices are in essence, non-negotiable. Once these general practices are incorporated into the structure of the intervention, practices associated with enhancing specific developmental areas

(e.g., autonomy, competencies and building relationships and connections) can be pursued. Examples of essential practices-general include the identification of youth strengths and assets so that they can be utilized to further organizational and community goals, in addition to personal goals; the availability of new roles for youth to contribute, the use of reciprocity and mutuality in guiding exchanges and transactions between people, including between staff and youth; the availability of incentives for youth to foster engagement in co-production activities and providing opportunities for youth to secure new resources, including material gains.

#### *Essential Features-Group Practices*

Essential Features-Group Practices also draw from empowerment theory (see chapter 5), and youth development theory (chapter 4), specifically the work of Anderson-Butcher (2005) and McLaughlin (2000). Group practices provide the safety and the structure within which youth can experiment with new roles, cultivate new and existing interests and develop competencies. Examples of essential group practices include providing activities for youth that are action-oriented and meaningful, ensuring that settings provide structure, consistency and clarity of expectations, providing a safe environment for youth to thrive and providing opportunities for team building and cooperative learning and sharing. As noted in chapter 6, ensuring effective group practices requires preparation and planning as well as clarity of roles between staff and youth.

#### *Practices that Enhance Youth Autonomy*

Findings from chapter 5 (engagement) revealed the importance of empowerment practices designed to cultivate autonomy for engaging youth. Examples of intervention

features that foster autonomy include involving youth in designing programs, providing opportunities for youth leadership, providing youth with opportunities to exercise “voice and choice” in selecting which activities to participate in and the role to play in the intervention and designing programs with youth that foster a pro-social identity. As noted in the previous chapter, youth autonomy practices are especially salient in interventions for involuntary youth, to address feelings of hopefulness, poor self-esteem and low self-efficacy.

#### *Practices that Enhance Youth Competencies*

Co-production interventions can also be structured to enhance youth competencies. Here, the co-production intervention framework draws from the empowerment and engagement literature (see chapters 5 and 7) in identifying intervention practices associated with competency enhancement. Examples of these practices include providing a range of contribution-based program options available to participating youth, optimal matching of youth skills and needs in designing programs, providing a range of career building and vocational opportunities, developing skill-building activities in areas that are interesting and meaningful to youth, and creating experiences that are sufficiently challenging so that the youths’ abilities are stretched.

#### *Practices that Build Relationships and Connections for Youth*

The analyses in chapter 5 (empowerment) and chapter 7 (engagement) highlight several key intervention components and they need to be joined here. For example, it is important to develop positive, pro-social adult and peer relationships for participating youth. Cultivating a sense of belonging is important for youth (Baumeister & Leary,

1995). It is also important to augment connections that youth have with neighborhood organizations and institutions.

Belonging and connections comprise the construct of relatedness. In co-production intervention, addressing relatedness needs are important. For example, the desire for belonging and connections initially draws youth to youth development programming (Anderson-Butcher, 2005). Also, when these needs are addressed, voluntary youth engagement is more likely to occur.

In addition, building relationships with pro-social adults in the community can also create opportunities for social capital development. Specifically, bridging social capital gains in the form of access to new material, educational or vocational resources may result from working together with other adults on community service projects. Examples of empowerment practices that build relationships and connections include providing opportunities for youth to contribute to organizations and institutions that are of interest and import to youth, facilitating opportunities to meet new pro-social peers and adult role models, facilitating social interaction with peers and adults who have similar interests, providing opportunities for family members to serve as “co-producers” with staff, in planning and implementing youth development activities, and supporting families to address obstacles to youth and family member engagement.

#### *Advanced Empowerment Practices*

Advanced empowerment practices of co-production are depicted in appendix 9-5. Advanced practices involve social and economic justice as a core goal of intervention activities. Practice features include staff/youth collection action in improving communities. Advanced practices also involve later phases of staff/youth collaboration

(e.g., community-building and contracting), so that mutual respect and trust occurs between staff and youth in working together on higher profile community projects. Advanced practices may occur in a number of community venues outside of the host organization. Multiple venues may necessitate inter-organizational partnerships between the host organization and other service providers or organizations in the community.

Also, an advanced feature of co-production includes designing and incubating innovation. This involves organizational planning in transferring technology learned through experimentation and evaluation. This technology may be transferred both within the organization in which co-production is occurring and between the target organization and other partner organizations.

Finally, as identified in chapter 5 (empowerment), advanced empowerment interventions may occur after more basic phases of empowerment practice have been successfully completed. For example, individual empowerment work may precede youth involvement in group activities, especially those involving collective action in communities. Also, as noted in chapter 4, advanced empowerment practices are associated with citizen-state co-production, especially citizen-social justice interventions.

*Co-Production Intervention Features: Collaboration Phases and Processes*

Appendix 9-6, drawn from chapter 5, describes the key processes associated with staff/youth collaboration and its various phases. To reiterate, staff/youth collaboration is evident when staff and youth identifying shared interests and jointly determine responsibilities for attaining desired benefits. Shared interests could include attaining client, organizational or community goals. Conceived and operationalized in this way,

collaboration is founded on an implicit understanding—namely, that youth and staff depend on each other. Each needs the other to achieve their respective and shared goals.

Staff/youth collaboration is conceptualized as a developmental progression. For example, the quality and quantity of reciprocal exchanges increases by phase. Higher levels of staff/youth collaboration are sought as a result of involvement in co-production interventions. In fact, progression from lower to higher levels of collaboration represents a proximal indicator of co-production's success.

As with empowerment practices, staff/youth collaboration directly influences levels of youth engagement. In addition, staff/youth collaboration and empowerment practices are reciprocally related. For example, because of the primacy of reciprocity and mutuality in guiding staff/youth interactions within empowerment practices, the attainment of certain levels of staff/youth collaboration (e.g., coordinating/consulting, community building or contracting) needs to be in place for empowerment-driven interventions to be successful.

### *Co-Production-Related Outcomes and Impacts*

#### *Youth Engagement*

Appendix 9-7, drawn from chapter 7, depicts a co-production framework for youth engagement. Youth, especially engagement of involuntary youth, is a key feature of this study's amended theoretical framework for co-production. More specifically, varying degrees of engagement signal differences in co-production interventions. The implication is important: It means that youth engagement is linked causally to co-production outcomes. In other words, outcomes depend in part on youth engagement.

Within the co-production intervention framework, youth engagement is a mediating variable; it is a driver for outcomes and impacts. When youth engagement is not fully secured or lower levels of engagement occur, sub-optimal outcomes and impacts occur. In other words, failure to secure youth engagement can negate all or part of the potential impact of empowerment practices and staff/youth collaboration processes associated with co-production interventions.

Finally, the relationship between engagement outcomes and other co-production related outcomes and impacts are reciprocal. For example, the attainment of enhanced staff engagement and efficacy will impact on voluntary youth engagement and vice versa. These proposed relationships are depicted in appendix 9-8.

#### *Empowerment-Related Outcomes*

Appendix 9-9 depicts empowerment-related youth outcomes associated with co-production. These outcomes, garnered from the literature review in chapter 5 (empowerment) are categorized accordingly. The categories are individual/psychological, interpersonal/group and other internal developmental outcomes.

Within the category of individual/psychological, outcomes are further categorized as level 1 and level 2 outcomes. Level 1 outcomes represent proximal outcomes of co-production interventions, especially applicable to involuntary youth. These outcomes include reduced levels of involuntariness, reactance and hopelessness. As noted earlier in this chapter, low levels of involuntariness and reactance are also important antecedents conducive to the success of co-production interventions for involuntary youth.

Level 2 individual/psychological empowerment outcomes encompass a full-range of individual/psychological outcomes resulting from involvement in co-production

interventions. Examples include developing a more positive and potent sense of self, enhanced self-control and fostering self-determination and motivation. These empowerment outcomes are also important for involuntary youth. They are linked to levels of youth engagement and are also associated with readiness to participate in higher phases of co-production interventions.

The category interpersonal/group outcomes include the development of group consciousness and achieving of collective efficacy. The category of other internal outcomes includes a broad range of outcomes. Examples are the building of life skills, access and control of new resources and the ability to work well with others.

#### *Youth Development and Problem-Reduction Outcomes*

Appendix 9-10 depicts youth development and problem-reduction outcomes. These outcomes are drawn from the literature review in chapter 4 (youth development). Youth agency and initiative, enhanced bonding to positive adult role models such as teachers, staff and other significant adults and an expansion of autonomous behaviors are examples of developmental competencies afforded from co-production involvement.

The similarities between many of the youth developmental competencies and empowerment related outcomes are especially noteworthy. For example, fostering enhanced self-determination and developing a positive identity are included as both empowerment-related and youth development related outcomes. Moreover, empowerment related outcomes constitute a large portion of the youth developmental competencies that may result from high levels of youth engagement. Also, these empowerment and youth developmental competencies can serve as proximal indicators/outcomes of co-production interventions for involuntary youth.

### *Staff/Youth Collaboration-Related Outcomes*

As noted in chapter 6, a range of collaboration-related outcomes are associated with co-production interventions. Appendix 9-11 depicts these outcomes.

It is theorized that increased quantity and enhanced quality of transactions and exchanges between youth and staff are benchmarks and proximal indicators of youth engagement and co-production intervention success. For example, enhancing the quantity of staff/youth exchanges indicate that youth are increasingly engaged, at least behaviorally, in co-production interventions. Quality of staff/youth exchanges can also be used to as a proxy measure of cognitive or emotional engagement of both youth and staff.

Similarly, the movement between phases of staff/youth collaboration is an outcome measure within the co-production framework that also indicates engagement progress. For example, as youth progress from better communication with staff, to coordination of activities and ultimately to collaboration, higher levels of youth engagement result. These relationships will be explored in more detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

### *Staff-Related Outcomes*

Staff influences the design, implementation and continuous improvement of co-production interventions. Reciprocally, these interventions influence staff orientations and outcomes. Such is the expanded theoretical framework for co-production.

Appendix 9-12 outlines staff outcomes. Examples of staff outcomes include enhanced staff well-being, reduced burnout, changes in staff roles and job descriptions to fit within a co-production framework and increases in staff optimism. Significantly, staff outcomes are in some ways similar to youth outcomes. Moreover, staff involvement in

co-production interventions will enhance both staff and client levels of self-determination, intrinsic motivation, autonomy behaviors and perceived competence. Insofar as all of these outcomes are related to empowerment, co-production interventions are empowering for both youth and staff.

### *Organizational Outcomes and Impacts*

Co-production interventions, when optimized, yield organizational outcomes (e.g., improved staff retention rates and reduced staff turnover), at the same time, offer beneficial impacts (e.g., a new labor pool for agencies in youth contributors). Outcomes and impacts are related. For example, when staff efficacy increases, staff is more apt to work collaboratively with youth as contributors, building new organizational capacities. Appendix 9-13 depicts the proposed organizational outcomes and impacts resulting from youth contributions.

### *Community Impacts*

Appendix 9-14 describes proposed community impacts resulting from youth contributions. Community impacts can result directly from individual contributions, a group of youth partnering with staff to work on community improvements or collective action in mobilizing a larger group of residents to lobby for change at the political level. In addition, community impacts can occur through large groups of people providing mutual assistance to their neighbors, through a neighborhood time bank.

Two categories of community impacts are established: (1) Improving community conditions and (2) Building community capacity. Improving community conditions including building community level social capital and enhancing neighborhood collective efficacy. Examples of building community capacity include cultivating new local

leadership and building organizational infrastructure by promoting inter-organizational partnerships (see Chaskin, 2006).

### *Contagion Effects*

Co-production interventions may yield contagion effects. Contagion effects involve the spreading of impacts and benefits to new settings and stakeholders. For example, an organization that adopts empowerment-related practices may operate within a network of providers serving emotionally disturbed youth. Partner organizations may observe positive changes in levels of client and staff engagement in the organization that has experimented with co-production. Partner organizations may then seek technical assistance from the organization, in order to plan and implement co-production interventions within their organization. Here, co-production experimentation in one organization impacts on the practices and the services model employed by other service providers in the community.

Another example is when new service organizations join a time bank. Here, transactions between youth and family members, transactions between organizations and transactions between staff from other organizations and youth clients increase. Increased transactions can create an expansion of available services and supports within a given community.

Furthermore, these contagion effects can create new investments in co-production that can strengthen the informal, non-market economy (Cahn, 2004). This can occur when co-production interventions are focused on enhancing community capacities, such as strengthening existing non-profit organizations in a community or building new and effective inter-organizational partnerships (Chaskin, 2006).

### *Generative Effects*

Generative effects can also occur as a result of co-production. Here, co-production interventions become incubators for new process innovations (e.g., new ways of “doing business”) and product innovation (e.g., new structures and programs) within organizations. Generative effects can include improvements in program settings and organizational contexts.

For example, these improvements in settings and contexts pave the way for increase experimentation with co-production interventions, including more advanced phases of staff/youth collaboration and new strategies by which client strengths and assets can be utilized to improve organizational functioning. The generative propensity of co-production interventions is illustrated in the following example.

#### *A Hypothetical Example of Generative Impacts*

Youth work with staff from a juvenile justice organization on a community improvement project. The community project involves neighborhood beautification. Specifically, youth collaborate with staff in improving a small patch of green next to the program’s offices that is often littered with drug paraphernalia and used condoms.

Youth work closely with staff in planning and implementing the project. By doing so, the youth are afforded opportunities to learn new competencies. With coaching and oversight by staff, youth begin to act autonomously in conducting certain tasks. For example, they are given a budget to purchase equipment to beautify the green space. Youth also have the opportunity to work closely with staff from the City Parks and Recreation Department. In doing so, they meet other adults from the community.

Youth experience cognitive and behavioral engagement while conducting these tasks. The project is successfully completed in 12 weeks. A public celebration of their accomplishments takes place at the Mayor's office.

Youth and staff also experience enhanced levels of trust and mutual respect during the initial intervention. As a result, program leaders decide to create a youth advisory board to help staff plan future community projects. Five of the original youth are invited to serve on the advisory board. The five youth become the first group of youth leaders in the organization. More advanced levels of collaboration are developed between these five youth and staff. As collaboration develops, joint ownership follows. More specifically, staff and youth begin to develop a joint ownership of the organization's mission and work hard together to improve program services and outcomes.

### **Deriving Core Assumptions and Propositions**

The core theory of change components described above yields theoretical assumptions and propositions. This section includes micro and meso level assumptions and propositions. This theorizing integrates the core components of the co-production framework previously identified.

The assumptions and propositions regarding youth and staff characteristics reflect those developed in the preceding chapter and are repeated here. The other assumptions and propositions are newly derived. Each is presented below.

#### *Micro-Level Theorization*

##### 1. Engagement as a Developmental Progression

Assumption 1A: Youth engagement in co-production interventions involves a developmental progression.

Assumption 1B: A developmental progression for engagement starts with attendance and participation, which together facilitate behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement.

Assumption 1C: This transformation from compliance-oriented attendance and participation to voluntary engagement depends on core elements of co-production interventions.

Assumption 1D: Improved attendance, participation and later, behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement are proximal indicators of the efficacy and effectiveness of co-production interventions.

Proposition 1A: *In comparison with youth without co-production interventions, youth who participate in co-production interventions will be more likely to experience behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement.*

## 2. Levels of Involuntariness, Reactance and Engagement

Assumption 2A: Youth circumstances are important in structuring co-production interventions for involuntary youth.

Assumption 2B: Youth mandated or pressured to accept services manifest varying degrees of involuntariness

Assumption 2C: Levels of fate control, legal mandates and perceived loss of freedoms are determinants of the construct level of involuntariness.

Assumption 2D: Levels of involuntariness may change over time and are amenable to service interventions.

Assumption 2E: Co-production interventions must focus on decreasing the level of involuntariness and reactance of involuntary youth so that engagement can be enhanced.

Proposition 2A: *In comparison with youth without co-production interventions, youth who participate in co-production interventions will be more likely to experience reduced levels of fate control and reduced perceptions of loss of freedoms.*

Proposition 2B: *In comparison with youth without co-production interventions, youth who participate in co-production interventions will be better able to reduce or eliminate the influence of legal mandates on their life circumstances.*

Proposition 2C: *In comparison with youth without co-production interventions, youth who participate in co-production interventions will be more likely to experience reduced levels of involuntariness, levels of youth reactance and levels of hopelessness (level one empowerment outcomes).*

Proposition 2D: *As levels of involuntariness and reactance decrease, the effectiveness of co-production interventions is enhanced. These changes may lead to increasing levels of youth and staff empowerment and engagement.*

### 3. Staff Motivational Congruence and Engagement

Assumption 3A: A range of interventions designed to enhance staff motivational congruence with supervisors, administrators and oversight bodies may be necessary to facilitate co-production interventions for involuntary youth.

Proposition 3A: *As staff motivational congruence increases, the range of available empowerment oriented intervention strategies increases, enhancing the potential benefits afforded to youth from participation.*

Proposition 3B: *As staff motivational congruence increases, staff efficacy, empowerment and engagement improves.*

Proposition 3C: *Staff motivational congruence and staff/youth motivational congruence are reciprocally related: As one improves, the other improves.*

#### 4. Staff/Youth Motivational Congruence and Engagement

Assumption 4A: Staff/youth motivational congruence can be semi-voluntary or voluntary

Assumption 4B: When semi-voluntary motivational congruence is present, a negotiated agreement between staff and youth (formal or informal) to work together on involuntary service mandates is effectuated.

Assumption 4C: When voluntary motivational congruence is present, a negotiated agreement between staff and youth (formal or informal) to work together on involuntary service mandates is effectuated.

Assumption 4D: Both semi-voluntary and voluntary motivational congruence facilitates the developmental progression from involuntary services to voluntary services.

Assumption 4E: Semi-voluntary and voluntary motivational congruence are distinct processes, both employing empowerment practices.

Assumption 4F: Staff/youth motivational congruence influences the availability and selection of empowerment practices and collaboration processes available to foster youth engagement.

Assumption 4G: The attainment of semi-voluntary staff/youth motivational congruence is essential to the attainment of voluntary staff/youth motivational congruence. This relationship is one-dimensional as the reciprocal relationship may not occur.

Proposition 4A: *Youth who earn time dollars through their service and contribution efforts (or are reciprocated in some other manner) will be more likely to achieve semi-voluntary motivational congruence with staff than those youth who do not.*

Proposition 4B: *Youth who earn time dollars through their service and contribution efforts (or are reciprocated in some other manner) will be more likely to achieve voluntary motivational congruence with staff than those youth who do not.*

Proposition 4C: *Those youth and staff who attain both semi-voluntary and voluntary motivational congruence will be more likely to engage in higher levels of staff/youth collaboration than those who have not attained motivational congruence.*

Proposition 4E: *As staff/youth motivational congruence moves from semi-voluntary to voluntary, levels of youth and staff engagement increases.*

#### 5. Family and Peer Support and Engagement

Assumption 5A: Family member and peer involvement in interventions may mediate or moderate youth engagement.

Assumption 5B: Youth have attachment and belonging needs, which may serve as obstacles to attendance and participation; and both family members and peers are instrumental in meeting these needs.

Assumption 5C: Levels of family member and peer engagement in service interventions can influence targeted youth in terms of the youth's engagement.

Proposition 5A: *When family member and peers are engaged in client's co-production interventions, youth engagement is facilitated.*

Proposition 5B: *When family members and peers engage in co-production interventions, youth evidence increases in their sense of connection to the agency and their sense of belonging to the program.*

Proposition 5C: *As youth become more engaged, empowered and connected, they are more prepared to enhance the quality of their family life.*

Proposition 5D: *As youth become more engaged, empowered and connected, they are more prepared to enhance the social competences of their peer group.*

## 6. Staff/Youth Collaboration and Engagement

Assumption 6A: With involuntary youth, staff/youth collaboration is influenced by semi-voluntary and voluntary staff/youth motivational congruence.

Assumption 6B: With involuntary youth, staff/youth collaboration is also influenced by factors such as client characteristics, level of reactance and level of involuntariness.

Assumption 6C: Staff/youth collaboration occurs in phases, with a progression occurring from connecting/communicating, cooperating, coordinating/consulting, community-building and contracting. Heightened trust and mutual reciprocity are determining factors in this progression.

Assumption 6D: Higher phases of staff/youth collaboration are accompanied by an increase in quantity of exchanges and an improvement in quality of exchanges.

Assumption 6E: Empowerment oriented interventions facilitate staff/youth collaboration and are also influenced by levels of staff/youth collaboration

Assumption 6F: Levels of staff/youth collaboration may mediate or moderate youth engagement.

Assumption 6G: Increased levels of staff/youth collaboration are important proximal outcomes for co-production interventions for involuntary youth.

Proposition 6A: *When staff and youth collaborate in projects that aid youth and families in the community, foster agency improvement or improve local communities, youth engagement is facilitated.*

Proposition 6B: *When staff and youth collaborate on projects, youth evidence increases in their sense of connection to the agency and their sense of purpose to the program.*

Proposition 6C: *When staff and youth collaborate on projects that seek to enhance organizations and institutions of import to the youth, youth evidence increases in their sense of connection to that organization and institution.*

## 7. Empowerment-Oriented Interventions and Engagement

Assumption 7A: Essential features that guide general practice and structure group practice characterize empowering interventions (see appendix 9-4).

Assumption 7B: The utilization of empowerment practices is influenced by factors such as client characteristics, level of reactance, level of involuntariness, staff motivational congruence and staff/youth motivational congruence.

Assumption 7C: Strategies used to achieve semi-voluntary motivational congruence are empowering because the strategies involve youth voice and choice and negotiation between staff and youth.

Assumption 7D: Reduced level of involuntariness, client reactance and hopelessness are important proximal outcomes (level 1 outcomes) associated with empowerment practices for involuntary youth within a co-production framework.

Assumption 7E: Participation in co-production interventions can enable involuntary youth to achieve other internal and external gains such as enhanced levels of agency and initiative and material gains such as improvements in employment and educational statuses (level 2 outcomes).

Proposition 7A: *Co-Production interventions that are empowerment oriented will be more likely to facilitate staff/youth collaboration and youth engagement than those interventions that are not.*

## 8. Autonomy Enhancing Interventions and Engagement

Assumption 8A: Empowerment-oriented intervention practices that foster youth autonomy are an essential component of co-production interventions (see appendix 9-4).

Assumption 8B: Autonomy development can be a proximal indicator/outcomes of co-production interventions for youth.

Assumption 8C: Both staff and youth have needs for autonomy, self-determination and intrinsic motivation, and co-production interventions may yield them when the intervention practices in appendix 9-4 are adopted and implemented.

Assumption 8D: Autonomy enhancing practices and interventions provide opportunities for initiative (Larson, 2001) among both staff and youth.

Assumption 8E: The fostering of autonomy, self-determination, intrinsic motivation and initiative are linked to emotional and cognitive engagement.

Proposition 8A: *When youth interventions are autonomy enhancing, enhanced levels of engagement for youth may occur.*

Proposition 8B: *When enhanced levels of youth engagement resulting from participation in autonomy enhancing co-production interventions occur, both youth and staff*

*autonomous behaviors, levels of self-determination, intrinsic motivation and opportunities for initiative increase.*

#### 9. Competency-Enhancing Interventions and Engagement

Assumption 9A: Empowerment-oriented intervention practices that foster youth competencies are an essential component of co-production interventions. These practices are outlined in appendix 9-4.

Assumption 9B: Competency development is a proximal indicator/outcomes of co-production interventions for youth.

Assumption 9C: Both staff and youth have needs for competency development and co-production interventions may yield them when the intervention practices in appendix 9-4 are adopted and implemented.

Assumption 9D: The fostering of new competencies is linked to emotional and cognitive engagement.

Proposition 9A: *When youth and staff participate in co-production interventions that are competency enhancing, enhanced levels of youth and staff engagement may occur.*

#### 10. Relationship and Connection Building Interventions and Engagement

Assumption 10A: Empowerment-oriented intervention practices that foster personal relationships with pro-social adult role models and connections to community organizations of interest to the youth are an essential component of co-production interventions (see appendix 9-4).

Assumption 10B: The desire for belonging and connectedness draws youth initially to youth development programming.

Assumption 10C: The fostering of relatedness and belonging is linked to heightened levels of staff/youth collaboration and emotional engagement.

Proposition 10A: *When youth participate in co-production interventions that are relationship enhancing and build connections, enhanced levels of youth engagement may occur.*

Examples of specific hypothetical propositions generated from the above list of assumptions and propositions include:

- ✓ Interventions that foster family engagement are more likely to address a youth's need for belonging, thus fostering enhanced levels of engagement (controlling for presenting levels of family conflict or discord).
- ✓ Interventions that foster youth "voice and choice" in designing project activities are more likely to foster a youth's need for autonomy, thus fostering enhanced levels of engagement.
- ✓ Interventions that foster power sharing between youth and staff, in designing project activities are more likely to foster both a youth's needs for autonomy and levels of staff/youth collaboration, thus fostering enhanced levels of engagement.
- ✓ Interventions that foster both youth and staff competencies are more likely to foster levels of staff/youth collaboration, thus fostering enhanced levels of engagement.

#### *Meso-level Assumptions and Propositions*

Meso setting and contextual factors include both preconditions and antecedents that may be amendable to change processes. These factors influence interventions processes and practices, mediating and moderating the success of co-production

interventions. In addition, the presence of these factors is essential to the attainment of generative and contagion impacts of co-production referred to in prior sections of the dissertation.

### 1. Organizational Setting Features

Assumption 1A: Organizational setting features influence staff/youth collaboration processes, empowerment practices and in turn, levels of voluntary engagement.

Assumption 1B: Organizational setting features can be categorized into: (1) Larger organizational features and (2) Job structure and role features.

Assumption 1C: Examples of larger organizational features compatible to co-production include administrative and staff “buy-in,” accountability structures that further co-production and the presence of systems of power sharing between youth and staff.

Assumption 1D: Examples of job structure and role features compatible to co-production include job clarity, job autonomy, quality supervision and the presence of ongoing training and capacity building.

Assumption 1E: Co-production interventions may modify organizational settings and interactions between setting features.

Proposition 1A: *When interventions create organizational settings that are conducive to co-production, collaboration processes and empowerment practices will be enhanced, resulting in enhanced levels of voluntary engagement.*

Proposition 1B: *When co-production interventions emphasize collaboration and empowerment, these interventions also generate improvements in organizational settings.*

### 2. Program Model Features

Assumption 2A: Organizations have their preferred program service models which staff is expected to implement with fidelity.

Assumption 2B: Preferred program service models utilized by organizations need to be conducive to and compatible with co-production interventions for voluntary engagement is to be achieved.

Assumption 2C: Program service model features that are compatible with co-production include but are not limited to: (1) asset/strengths-based services/treatment practice approaches, including active client participation in service planning and implementation, (2) family and peer involvement in support of the target client, (3) time for reflective practice and (4) sufficient dosage and length of service provision (see appendix 9-2).

Proposition 2A: *When the organization's preferred program services model contains one or more of the features identified in appendix 9-2, co-production interventions will be facilitated.*

Proposition 2B: *When co-production interventions emphasize collaboration and empowerment, these interventions also generate improvements in program service model features that are compatible with co-production.*

Examples of specific hypothetical propositions generated from the list of meso-level antecedents and preconditions include:

- Organizations that maintain asset-based services approaches are better prepared to experiment with staff/youth collaboration processes and empowerment related practices that go beyond youth contributing to their individual service plans and activities, than organizations that follow different models of service/treatment approaches.
- Organizations that foster an entrepreneurial spirit and a working environment that allows for staff risk-taking are more likely to be successful in advancing

staff/youth collaboration, even if such experimentation involves potential strategy risks or risks to an organization's reputation.

- Organizations that have developed clear staff expectations that foster power sharing and conditional equality with youth are more likely to be successful in develop empowerment practices that foster youth autonomy.
- Organizations that have developed internal accountability structures in support of co-production are more likely to reinforce the importance of empowerment practices and collaboration processes.
- Staff members who are rewarded for successfully supporting youth as they serve as resources, contributors and change-agents are more likely to become engaged in co-production intervention activities and experience psychological empowerment while performing these new tasks and roles.

### **Pathways for Change**

The aforementioned theoretical analysis enables the identification of predictable change pathways. In other words, pathways identify causal chains indicating how interventions lead to desired outcomes (e.g., Schorr, 2003). Predicted change pathways for youth and staff are described below.

#### *Benefits and Pathways for Youth*

Seventeen core propositions are presented. Each proposition represents predicted causal relationships. These relationships derive from youth involved in co-production interventions. As youth become engaged as resources, contributors and change agents, their outcomes will improve and their retention problems will be reduced.

1. As levels of youth engagement are realized, positive client outcomes will occur.

2. As youth collaborate with staff, the level of trust between youth and staff will increase.
3. As positive collaboration develops between youth and staff, generative effects follow. One example of generative effects is that successful co-production interventions involving staff/youth collaboration will result in advanced phases of collaborative working relationships between youth and staff.
4. As youth gain experience collaborating with staff, new opportunities for collaboration will occur (e.g., with other service providers and community groups, simultaneously building a youth's sense of connection to his/her community).
5. As youth/staff and youth/adult collaboration increases, levels of youth empowerment and engagement also increase.
6. As new kinds of collaborations develop between youth and other adults (e.g., staff from other organizations), new social capital building opportunities for youth will result.
7. As youth are empowered to taken on new roles within the organization and in the community, self-efficacy will be enhanced and levels of hopelessness, involuntariness and reactance to services will be reduced.
8. As youth are empowered to take on new roles within the organization and in the community, new educational and employment opportunities will result, creating material as well as psychological benefits for youth.
9. As youth are empowered to take on new roles within the organization and in the community, new youth competencies will develop and levels of youth autonomy and self-determination will increase.

10. As youth are empowered to take on new roles within the organization and in the community, levels of voluntary youth engagement in service activities and interventions will increase.
11. As youths' levels of voluntary youth engagement increase, their levels of intrinsic and autonomous motivation also will increase.
12. As youths' levels of intrinsic and autonomous motivation increase, they will exhibit increased levels of initiative and agency while engaged in program activities.
13. As youth empowerment is enhanced, additional generative effects will occur (e.g., new opportunities for reciprocal transactions, with staff, family, friends, neighbors, and staff from other service organizations in the community).
14. As youth become increasingly involved in reciprocal exchanges with staff, family members, friends and neighbors (including other adults), positive informal social support increases, reducing social isolation and enhancing personal relationships.
15. As youth engagement in co-production interventions is enhanced and the outcomes attained in the previous propositions are realized, youth will be better able to sustain the gains made during service provision.
16. As youth engagement in co-production interventions is enhanced, sustainable improvements in problem reduction outcomes will also occur.
17. As youth engagement in co-production interventions is enhanced, staff/youth motivational congruence is enhanced as well as compliance with mandated service requirements (e.g., curfews, school attendance, substance abuse treatment participation, etc.).

### *Benefits and Pathways for Staff*

Two core assumptions and five core propositions are presented. Each proposition represents predicted causal relationships, stemming from staff participation in facilitating and overseeing co-production interventions. As youth become engaged as resources, contributors and change agents, staff efficacy and empowerment increase. Generative impacts can result from these changes, including when staff work with involuntary youth.

#### Core assumptions

1. Co-production interventions necessitate new job orientations and work roles for staff, especially as youth are prepared and trained for their new roles as “co-producers.”
2. New staff roles will require new orientations, knowledge, sensitivities, and skills.

#### Core propositions

1. As enhanced youth engagement and other youth benefits occur, behavioral, cognitive and emotional staff engagement improves.
2. As youth and staff engagement improves, staff efficacy and well-being increases (individually and collectively), in turn improving staff morale.
3. As youth benefits accrue and staff morale and individual/collective efficacy is enhanced, staff retention improves
4. As youth benefits accrue, staff will implement organizational changes designed to create conditions conducive to co-production interventions. As organizations embrace co-production innovations, there will be a greater demand for professional expertise in the skills required to mobilize youth assets and strengths and link youth to community supports.

5. As demand for staff expertise in leading co-production processes increases, generative benefits result (e.g., staff efficacy and well-being further increases).

### **Co-Production Interventions for Involuntary Youth: Creating a Virtuous Cycle of Change for Youth and Staff**

Appendix 9-15 depicts a model for a virtuous cycle of change for involuntary youth and staff involved in co-production interventions. This model can be contrasted with a vicious cycle of interaction that may dominate transactions between involuntary youth and staff (see appendix 8-5). Within this proposed intervention model for involuntary youth, there are multiple pathways of change for youth and staff using co-production interventions as a catalyst.

For example, positive change for staff and youth can occur through the following mechanisms:

- (1) Strategies, processes and interventions that seek to create conditions compatible to co-production can independently create change in staff circumstances. For example, an investment in internal policy improvements such as more flexible job responsibilities that allow time for reflective practice can result in an improvement in staff motivational congruence with internal administration. This change in and of itself can result in enhanced staff morale and empowerment. These investments can also springboard enhanced levels of staff/youth motivational congruence, creating the conditions for co-production interventions to succeed.
- (2) Improvements in staff/youth motivational congruence can directly influence youth and staff outcomes. For example, youth and staff that negotiate a semi-voluntary agreement to work collaboratively on mandated service requirements can impact on staff efficacy and levels of trust with youth. These changes can also reduce levels of youth

involuntariness and reactance. Similar to the above example, these improvements can set the stage for co-production interventions.

(3) Improvements resulting from co-production interventions create the mechanisms for staff and youth outcomes to occur. As depicted in appendix 9-15, enhanced levels of youth empowerment and engagement can yield greater levels of youth cooperation and compliance on mandated concerns, in turn providing the opportunity for staff to use persuasion methods over coercion methods. Here, reduced levels of involuntariness and reactance result in enhanced staff morale, efficacy and engagement as well as youth outcome improvement.

In addition, improvements resulting from co-production interventions can directly result in staff and youth outcomes. Here, staff experience enhanced levels of trust with youth during the process of working collaboratively with youth on projects of mutual interest. Enhanced staff morale, efficacy and engagement result from collaboration activities and participating in empowerment practices with youth. This can occur simultaneously as youth experience gains in empowerment, engagement and other youth outcomes.

The generative changes of co-production are also depicted in appendix 9-15. For example, as co-production interventions are successful in involuntary settings, there may be more of an impetus to invest in policy and programmatic changes that support co-production. Improved working conditions and changes in service models in support of co-production may result. New kind of co-production interventions can then be explored as cycles of trust between staff, oversight bodies and youth develop. Given the challenges facing staff and administrators to move co-production forward within the child welfare

and juvenile justice systems, these generative features may be the most important impact of co-production.

### **The Movement from Involuntary to Voluntary Engagement: The Contributions of Co-Production Interventions to Theory and Practice**

Theorizing in this chapter identified a developmental continuum for youth and staff engagement. Per co-production theory, the movement along this continuum is dependent upon tailored interventions comprising a range of staff/youth collaboration and empowerment oriented processes and strategies. In turn, the kinds of collaboration processes and empowerment practices that are available depend upon the presence of certain organizational, programmatic and environmental preconditions and antecedents that are conducive to co-production interventions.

The empirical investigation will focus on co-production interventions in two pilot service sites involving involuntary youth. The influence of select staff and youth-related precondition and antecedent factors, such as that level of youth involuntariness and staff motivational congruence, on co-production intervention processes will be explored. Also, priority intervention features, included related strategies and processes, that enhance the movement across the across the developmental continuum of engagement will be uncovered. Empowerment and collaboration related outcomes associated with levels of engagement will also be explored, with differences and similarities noted by kind of co-production intervention (e.g., youth-citizen, youth-organizational, youth-organizational-community).

This exploratory study will ground the proposed theoretical framework for co-production in real-life service settings. Recommended changes to the theoretical model as well as recommendations to improve practice for involuntary youth will be presented. .

The contribution of co-production intervention theory to the selection of tailored interventions designed to move youth and staff along the developmental continuum of engagement will be revealed. Suggestions for future research and program improvements will be offered, emanating from the findings from the research.

## **THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

## **CHAPTER 10: INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDY SITES**

### **Agency Background**

A nationally known service provider, Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP, Inc.), agreed to pilot co-production within its existing innovative, complex intervention model. YAP's mission helps account for this decision. YAP, Inc. has a rich history of providing services to involuntary youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

YAP, Inc. provides community-based alternatives for the care and protection of individuals who are, have been, or may be subject to compulsory placement in public or private institutions. Agency services focuses exclusively on non-residential community-based programming. In addition, YAP, Inc. works with public agencies to re-allocate program funds that would have been spent on out of home placement and treatment to serve youth/families in their home community.

Based in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the organization currently operates 120 programs serving 75 counties across sixteen states and Washington, DC. The organization has annual revenue in excess of \$60M. It has over 2000 staff serving 4,500 young people and their families at any one time. In addition, YAP, Inc. operates programs in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland. The organization also provides support and assistance to sister agencies in Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Belfast, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Hawaii.

Advocate Programs target high-risk individuals and families, including those least likely to be accepted by other agencies. The population served by YAP, Inc. includes child welfare, juvenile justice and mental health system referrals. Also, YAP, Inc. has a history of helping transition high-risk youth from secure care facilities.

## **Core Services Model**

The core YAP, Inc. model of service consists of four key components. The four components are: (1) Intensive case management based on wraparound principles, (2) Local leadership and advocate support, (3) Supported employment, and (4) the availability of ancillary funds. Each is described briefly (see Fleischer, Warner, McCulty, & Marks, 2006 and Marks & Lawson, 2005, for more information on YAP, Inc. and its service model).

### *Intensive Case Management Based on Wraparound Principles*

Organizations that follow wraparound philosophy in guiding service planning and service delivery operate a model of service that ostensibly is consistent with co-production values and principles. Specifically, a wraparound philosophy emphasizes the utilization of client assets and strengths. Additionally, wraparound encourages partnerships with community organizations and institutions that are important in the lives of youth and families allows for compatibility with co-production.

Drawing on the theory of environmental ecology (see Munger, 1998), wraparound-based interventions are predicated on an important assumption. It is assumed that a child will function best when the larger service systems (i.e., school, neighborhood) surrounding the youth coordinate with the home and family environment (Burns, Schoenwald, Burchard, Faw & Santos, 2000). Work within core life domain areas, such as family, school and neighborhood, needs to be coordinated and in many cases, enhanced, for the purpose of facilitating improved behavior (Burns et al., 2000).

YAP, Inc.'s wraparound elements are consistent with this overall philosophy of care. Specific elements include the development of individualized, strength-based

services and supports within community settings. An important activity that occurs early in the life of a case is the convening and facilitation of the child and family team. Team meetings, facilitated by YAP, Inc. staff, involve professionals as well as important people in the child's life (parents, teacher, clergy, therapist, friend, relatives). YAP, Inc. facilitators work to ensure that youth and family members have voice, access and ownership of the service plan created.

In addition, YAP, Inc. strives to implement a number of other core features of wraparound service planning. For example, wraparound plans change as circumstances change, and crisis/safety planning is an important initial product developed by the wraparound team. In addition, wraparound plans are individualized. Rather than fitting family needs into designated service slots, wraparound connects families with resources to accommodate specific needs or creates services where none exist. Wraparound plans often include non-traditional services such as job coaching, respite for the family and the development of after-school activities that build on a youth's interests and talents. A core value of wraparound is that the more complex the service needs, the more individualized the service plan must be to address those needs (VanDenBerg & Grealish, 1996, p. 18).

Moreover and consistent with wraparound philosophy, YAP, Inc. operates under a "no-eject, no-reject" intake policy. Services never terminate due to case management difficulties or similar problems. In situations where short-term restrictive placement is necessary, the program seeks permission to stay involved with the family to ensure a successful transition for the youth back to the community.

### *Local Leadership and Advocate Support*

YAP, Inc.'s staffing model and local recruitment policies apparently are compatible with co-production. This compatibility is especially evident in relation to co-production's emphasis on community development and attaining community impacts. For example, to lead programs, YAP seeks to attract the best person locally to serve as program director. The program director facilitates and oversees wraparound planning and service delivery.

The YAP model also emphasizes the recruitment of local staff members, called advocates. Advocates are hired to strengthen families and provide services to youth. Advocates are paid staff, usually paraprofessional, recruited to work with families and mentor youth. Ideally advocates live in the same neighborhood or locality as the youth/family receiving service. They are matched with youth from the same ethnic background and culture as the families they serve. This practice promotes cultural competence as well as knowledge of community assets and strengths. It also facilitates engagement as youth and family members often find it easy to work with local staff from their neighborhood. This strategy of hiring locally is also important to local communities that have high unemployment as dollars are kept local and money is reinvested into the local economy.

Advocate staff provide supervision and support through face-to-face contact. Services are intensive as service levels often exceed 15 hours per week, including a high percentage of evening and weekend hours. Advocates introduce youth to positive pro-social youth development opportunities that exist in their communities; opportunities that are geared to a youth's strengths and interests. Advocates also reintroduce youth to

community programming where they might have “burned bridges” due to prior behavior issues or criminal activity. For example, an advocate’s presence at a local youth program can allow for social reintegration and renewed community acceptance. Also, teams of advocates are sometimes employed in homes with complex needs, including staff assigned to work directly with adults and siblings.

Finally, staff and the project director provide “24/7” coverage. This level of staff support assures public sector social workers, family court judges and probation officers that youth returning to communities and those at imminent risk of out of home placement will receive sufficient supervision and support.

### *Supported Employment*

Supported employment is a key component of the YAP, Inc. model. Supported employment allows for subsidized wages to be available to pay youth to work in local businesses or assist other local non-profits. It is usually targeted for youth under the legal working age or to allow youth not yet ready for outside employment to begin working in a safe, structured environment under the tutelage of a YAP advocate. Parents and adult members of the household can also participate in supported employment. Supported employment is designed to be a short-term transitional service to mainstream employment.

This occupational development strategy is important to youth as well as to local communities. Supported employment allows youth who are excluded from working in local businesses because of their acquired negative reputation in the community, to reintegrate back into community life. It also provides a safe environment for youth to learn new competencies and gain autonomy.

Moreover, small local businesses that may be financially unable to hire local youth are able to do so through supported employment. It enables local businesses to recruit entry-level staff positions at little or no direct cost. Participating as a supported work site also is a solid marketing strategy for local businesses, allowing the business to showcase its commitment to improving community conditions by giving at risk youth a “second-chance.”

Ostensibly, supported employment is a valuable program feature in support of co-production. Here, youth and adults can receive subsidized wages to participate in co-production activities, including working individually or in group settings to support local community organizations, assist neighbors in need or contribute to improving the local YAP, Inc. program in which they are involved.

#### *The Availability of Ancillary Funds*

YAP builds into its contract with local funding authorities’ flexible, non-categorical dollars to be used to support families who have crisis needs. These funds can also be used to cultivate specific youth interests and pro-social community activities.

Access to ancillary funds can be essential in developing creative responses to individualized service needs. In addition, ancillary funds can be used to provide incentives to youth who contribute to local organizations, participate with staff in community development activities and help neighbors, including families and other youth involved with YAP, Inc. Ancillary fund availability is a feature of wraparound that is compatible with facilitating successful co-production interventions.

## **The Rationale for Introducing Co-Production**

The introduction of co-production processes into YAP sites occurred with due recognition by program leadership that for some youth, new strategies were needed to address their complex life circumstances during service provision and to ensure their continued progress after discharge. These challenges included social exclusion, insufficient social supports, extreme poverty, poor prospects for positive economic and social trajectories, shame and stigma and underutilization of participant skills and talents (Marks & Lawson, 2005). These challenges often impacted on the extent to which youth and family members became engaged in service delivery. These challenges also provided obstacles to the full implementation of wraparound processes.

For example, attendance at child and family team meetings was often poor, especially in terms of representation from informal youth and family social supports from the community. Also, poor follow-up occurred after team meetings. Here, members of the child and family team were often unwilling or unable to meet commitments made during the team meeting. As a result, families became overly dependent on local advocate staff to meet basic needs. Such an over-dependence presented obstacles to “sustaining the gains” made during service delivery once discharge from the program took place (Marks & Lawson, 2005).

Interestingly, many of these challenges are similar to other reports of programs that utilize wraparound principles in serving hard to serve populations. For example, research indicates that wraparound teams struggle to build plans that are primarily reliant on informal services. In addition, developing truly individualized plans that address specific client needs and interests is often the exception rather than the rule in serving

challenging youth and their families (Huffine, 2002; Walker, 2004, Walker, Koroloff, Schutte & Bruns, 2004).

These limitations impact on program engagement and program success. For example, Bruns (2004) uses research results to posit that lack of individualization of services and the inability to tailor care to expressed needs, explains why families often feel that the care that they are receiving is not helpful or appropriate to their circumstances. Also, Simpson, Koroloff, Friesen and Gac (1999) found in their research of promising practices, that staff/parent collaboration, a cornerstone of solid wraparound work, is “a goal rather than a reality” in many settings (p. 8).

In addition, sustainability of social supports was identified as a challenge for programs following wraparound philosophy. For example, social support interventions are usually geared toward helping families address crisis needs. Little attention is paid to linking social supports for long-term positive youth development and thriving related outcomes (Walker & Sage, 2006).

Through informal discussions with staff, it became clear that new methods were needed for youth and parents to engage in the wraparound process, to assume joint responsibility and accountability for both the process of service delivery and the outcomes to be achieved. Opportunities to increase social supports and economic opportunity were also needed.

Following these discussions, staff became involved in brainstorming new approaches. A series of introductory meetings at the senior management level and at select local sites sparked interest in co-production.

## **Site Selection**

Two sites within the YAP, Inc. organization were selected to be included in the investigation. The sites were chosen in part based on an assessment of program readiness and the presence of solid and secure local leadership. A favorable funding environment for experimentation and a supportive stakeholder environment, including support from the program's funding authority, were other conditions that promoted the selection of the two sites.

Both sites are in New York State. The familiarity of the researcher to New York State operations within YAP, Inc. was a key reason why New York based sites was selected. Also, both sites are in rural counties. One county has a small but prominent city within its environs. The other county is rural covering a large geographic area.

### *Co-Production Intervention Features*

Intervention features in each pilot site were socially constructed. That is, interventions features stemmed from input from the researcher, staff, youth, funding authorities and other local stakeholders. As a result, different as well as similar co-production features were planned for each site. Appendix 10-1 compares and contrasts the intervention features in the two project sites.

For example, the target population involved in co-production in site one was youth involved with the juvenile justice system. Some of the youth were adjudicated by family court as juvenile delinquent (JD) or as a person in need of supervision (PINS). Here, youth were able to address their mandated court requirements for community service by becoming participants in the planned co-production intervention.

Group intervention is the primary service modality in site one. The length of service provision was defined, approximately 6 months. This included participation in an initial 12-14 week group activity (phase 1). Then, certain youth who successfully completed the 12-14 week group activity and met all or a significant part of their mandated community service work requirements were to be asked back to serve as peer leaders for the next group project sequence (phase 2).

An active role for parents is an essential feature of the co-production strategy in site one. Parents were asked to participate in a range of leadership activities, working with their children and other children in the program to make the group experience a productive one.

Furthermore, site one programming involved a special co-production intervention that was to operate as a parallel program to the core program model (see chapter 2 for description of parallel co-production program). Full integration of co-production into all programming at that specific site was not the initial goal of the project. However, with the exception of one intervention, youth and family involvement in co-production activities was designed to augment the full array of services available per the core components of the YAP service model reviewed earlier.

In contrast, site two developed a specialized integrated time bank (see chapter 2) was developed to facilitate exchanges of services. Time bank members included targeted youth and their family members open as cases within the local YAP, Inc. program, members of the child and family team involved with each targeted youth, staff members of the local YAP, Inc. program, local businesses and non-profits, other service organizations working with YAP, Inc. in serving youth and families and alumni youth

and parents. Youth and families served by YAP, Inc. at this site included families that were active and open cases with the local county Department of Social Services, Child Welfare Unit. Some of the involved youth were also involved with the local probation department, either as adjudicated youth or youth involved in an earlier phase of legal processing. Length of services in site two is variable, lasting approximately 6-9 months on average.

Also, to facilitate time bank participation, agency staff sought to enter into co-production agreements with youth and parents. Here, a youth or parent could earn time bank hours in providing services to YAP, Inc., or to a YAP, Inc. involved client or to a partner community organization. In exchange, YAP, Inc. agreed to facilitate the exchange or arrange the logistics of the exchange. In addition, YAP, Inc. could encourage youth and adult contributions by providing additional incentives for contributions, such as offering, for example, supported employment or available ancillary funds for the youth or parent to purchase an item of interest or import to them. Finally, individual service exchanges predominated in site two.

In addition, in site two, time banking and co-production additive features are integrated within total program operations. In other words, involvement in time banking was an added intervention for all youth involved in agency services. As in site one, the full array of YAP services were available to youth and families.

Because both sites are focusing on co-production, the empirical investigation will have some similar goals and features. *A core focus of the empirical investigation in both sites focused on gaining knowledge about the micro-level concepts and processes (e.g., youth empowerment, staff/youth collaboration and youth engagement) associated with*

*involvement in co-production activities.* This includes an understanding of the correlates and pathways associated with the progression from involuntary engagement to voluntary engagement for participating youth (see chapters 8 and 10).

In addition, a review of staff and youth related preconditions in support of co-production interventions will be included in the empirical study. Specifically, youth and family related circumstances, including levels of involuntariness and staff motivational congruence will be included in the study in both sites. However, the construct of motivational congruence, a proposed integral feature of involuntary youth engagement, was not part of the empirical investigation.

However, because of the different strategies utilized in each site and the variability and uniqueness that both sites offer, separate foci will also guide the investigation. For example, in the site two, the formal time bank site, special attention was focused on understanding the changes in program setting, including changes in the original services model, that were instituted to facilitate the integration of time banking into full program operations. Organizational working conditions conducive to time banking as well as external environmental factors supportive of time banking was also a priority in the investigation of site two.

On the other hand, a range of unique opportunities for investigation and inquiry is available in the interventions that occurred in site one. Here, an emphasis was placed on understanding the use of the group modality in furthering co-production processes and outcomes. In addition, the impact of parent “co-producers” will be described and analyzed. Within both settings, phases of engagement and potential determinants associated with youth engagement will be explored. This may occur as youth move from

being viewed as just a participant to one where their contributions are encouraged and validated. Appendix 10-1 illustrates the similarities and differences present in both case study sites.

## **CHAPTER 11: FINDINGS FROM SITE ONE: DESCRIBING THE CO-PRODUCTION INTERVENTION INCLUDING KEY EMPOWERMENT AND COLLABORATION PRACTICES**

### **Introduction**

The findings presented in this chapter derive primarily from interview data collected from youth and staff participants. The chapter begins with a general description of co-production interventions implemented in site one. A summary of characteristics of youth and staff participants follows. Then, a review of findings associated with initial level of youth involuntariness is presented.

Next, the main findings are presented. Findings related to two primary theoretical constructs that comprise the proposed co-production intervention framework are emphasized. These constructs are *empowerment* and *collaboration*.

The chapter concludes with a review of findings from the staff focus group. Areas where focus group findings corroborate interview findings are presented. Key differences between interview and focus group findings are also emphasized.

### **General Description of Co-Production Interventions in Site One**

Four distinct co-production interventions were implemented by staff in site one. These interventions were implemented over more than a two-year period. All interventions were project-focused, time-limited and theme-based. Each intervention involved a group of teens working with staff on service projects to improve the capacity of local organizations to achieve its mission. Two of the interventions also involved active parent participation.

An “adopt a local organization” concept was designed in each of the interventions to introduce youth to new potential adult role models and to further connect youth to their

local community. These interventions resembled targeted service learning programs established in self-contained schools and residential facilities for hard to serve youth or students with emotional/behavior disorders (McNamara, 2000; Muscott, 2000; Sandler, Vandegrift & VerBruggen, 1995; Zoernick, Magafas & Pawelko, 1997). Specific characteristics of the four interventions included the following features:

- ✓ Projects generally lasted 12-14 weeks
- ✓ Project activities occurred approximately twice/week. Staff, parents and youth met on average once per week and youth and staff met separately on average once per week.
- ✓ Each session lasted about 2-2 ½ hours.
- ✓ A range of organizational partners were involved in each project, including the community organization that hosted the project.
- ✓ Each project ended with a public recognition ceremony, during which staff, parents and representatives from participating organizations celebrated youth accomplishments. Local media also attended the celebratory event.

Although the four interventions had these similar features, each was somewhat unique. Appendix 12-1 compares and contrasts the four interventions. Interventions were reviewed according to project theme, number of involved youth, description of target population, parent involvement, specific intervention activities employed, organizational partners involved, nature of transactions and other salient features.

For example, the target population for the four interventions differed somewhat. This occurred because within the rural and sparsely populated composition of the county in which the pilot was adopted, the availability of eligible referrals was limited. In the

first project (Fire Safety), which was designed as a pilot for the others, only families who were active in child welfare services were targeted; none of the youth were involved with the juvenile justice system. In contrast, the other three projects included a mix of juvenile justice and child welfare involved youth or youth involved only in the juvenile justice system.

Additionally, only two of the interventions involved active parent participation (Fire Safety, Army Reserves). In the fire safety intervention, parents were very active, meeting separately once per week, under the guidance of a parent advocate. Parents were active in the Army Reserves project as well, although they met less frequently as a group due to turnover in the parent advocate staff position during the course of project implementation. Resource limitations precluded organizing an active parent presence for the other two projects.

Intervention activities also varied. For example, two of the interventions (Fire Safety, Army Reserves) involved fundraising in support of an organizational partner. Three of the four projects (Fire Safety, Environmental, Boys and Girls Club) involved active outdoor work of some capacity. Outdoor work included building of osprey nests, conducting community surveys and planting flowers to beautify the grounds of a local organization.

Furthermore, each project had a main organizational sponsor and at least one business or organization that also contributed to the project. Each organizational partner gave and received services. However, the nature of the partnership between YAP and other organizations as well as the number of organizational partners involved differed by intervention.

For example, the Fire Safety intervention involved the most diverse set of organizational partners, individual participants and exchange variations (see appendix 11-2 for description). Here, the local Fire Department, Department of Parks and Recreation, the YAP program, YAP-involved youth and family members of YAP-involved youth, a local bicycle repair shop and a local Pizza Hut restaurant exchanged services, to the mutual benefit of each party. Also, as identified in appendix 11-2, not all parties directly exchanged with each other. In addition, some exchanges were made only one-time; others were more intensive and ongoing. For example, youth assisted the fire department over time on fire prevention activities and also raised money to improve a local skate park. In contrast, a local Pizza Hut hosted a single event whereby youth raised money for the skate park by working at the restaurant.

Significantly, the findings presented in this chapter are structured by these several common and unique features of the four interventions. In other words, just as these intervention differed somewhat, so do the findings about them. For example, the presence or absence of these distinctive features within the four interventions impacted on the kind and range empowerment oriented practices and strategies utilized within each intervention. In turn, empowerment practices, strategies, and outcomes impacted other co-production theoretical constructs (e.g., collaboration). In other words, benefits and intended outcomes depended in part on the specific features of the intervention.

## **Characteristics of Youth and Staff Research Participants**

### *Youth Participants*

#### *Demographics*

Seven youth participated in the research study from site one. Six were male and one was a female. All were Caucasian. The majority of the youth were between 15-16 years of age. The age breakdown of the youth is as follows:

- One youth is between 13-14 years of age
- Five youth are between 15-16 years of age (check on sibling group)
- One youth is between 17-18 years of age

#### *Youth Involvement in the Four Interventions*

Each of the four interventions is represented by one or more youth research participants. However, some of the interventions are more represented than others. For example, two of the youth participated in the Fire Safety project, two of the youth participated in the Environmental project, one youth participated in the Boys and Girls Club project and two of the youth participated in the Army Reserves project. One youth participated in two of the interventions. This youth participated in the Boys and Girls Club project and also served as a formal peer leader in the Army Reserves project.

#### *Youth Services History*

The youths' services histories with YAP also varied. Some of the youth were relatively new referrals to YAP, while other youth were participants in the program for a significant period of time prior to participating in the co-production project. Youths' service histories are as follows:

- ✓ Two youth were enrolled in YAP for greater than one year prior to the group beginning.
- ✓ One youth was enrolled in YAP between 6 months and 1 year prior to the intervention commencing
- ✓ One youth was enrolled in YAP 3-6 months prior to the intervention
- ✓ Three of the youth were enrolled in YAP less than three months prior to the co-production group intervention beginning.

Participating youth reported similar reasons for referral into YAP (see appendix 12-3). For example, five of the seven youth identified school problems. School problems included not attending school and school behavior problems such as fighting on school grounds. School behavior was the primary reason for juvenile justice involvement.

Five of the seven youth participants were involved in the juvenile justice system: Four of these were adjudicated: One as a juvenile delinquent and three as a person in need of supervision (“PINS”). Each of the four adjudicated youth was required to perform community service, which was to be satisfied through participation in the co-production project. Finally, two youth were active only within child welfare and one youth, a foster child, was a cross-system youth, jointly involved in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

#### *Staff Members Participating in the Study*

Six staff members participated in the research study in site one. Staff participants were involved in the full range of interventions. Staff breakdown is as follows:

- ✓ Two of the staff participants were administrators.

- ✓ One staff participant was a project coordinator for two of the four interventions (Boys and Girls Club and Army Reserves). The project coordinator facilitated group sessions and oversaw the work of the advocates.
- ✓ The other three participants served as advocates. One of the advocates oversaw the parent group for the fire safety project. A second advocate oversaw the youth group involved in both the fire safety and environmental projects. The third advocate helped facilitate the army reserves group project.

### **An Important Antecedent: Level of Youth Involuntariness**

Level of involuntariness was identified earlier in this research study as a core antecedent in the proposed theoretical model for co-production interventions. For example, it was proposed that low levels of youth involuntariness are associated with successful co-production interventions. Similarly, it was proposed that youth who participate and are engaged in co-production interventions will be more likely to experience reduced levels of involuntariness over time. As proposed in chapter 8, level of involuntariness represents an both an important antecedent factor as well as a proximal outcome of co-production interventions.

As a reminder, perceived level of involuntariness is a complex construct, comprising a number of different sub-constructs. Sub-constructs of level of involuntariness include the legitimacy of the sanction (e.g., the presence of a court order to comply with a mandate), a youth's perceived loss of valued freedoms and the youth's perceived level of fate control (see Rooney, 1992 and chapter 8 for a fuller explanation). Unfortunately, there is currently no valid, reliable instrument that measures level of involuntariness.

The absence of a formal instrument did not preclude a crude attempt to measure the construct. During the interview process, an attempt was made to ascertain perceived level of involuntariness of youth participants. Youth were asked to share with the researcher the extent to which they viewed participation in the co-production project as voluntary or involuntary at the time of intake. The reasons for their answers were also explored.

In explorations of level of involuntariness, three themes emerged. First is the complexity of attempting to ascertain level of involuntariness. Second is the pressure that youth faced to participate in project activities. Third is the perceived level of involuntariness identified by participating youth. Each theme is discussed below.

First, findings revealed that *ascertaining level of youth involuntariness is challenging*, in part, due to the nature of service provision to court-involved juveniles. For example, youth participation in the local YAP program is often semi-voluntary in that youth are rarely court-ordered directly into YAP. YAP staff also view the service as voluntary or at least semi-voluntary. However, youth are often pressured to attend. A staff member explained this complexity below:

YAP is a voluntary agency and all the services we offer are voluntary. However, probation or the referring authority, whoever that may be, may tell the kid that it's extremely in their best interest to cooperate with the service. . . . Yeah, I would say that's pressure, but not pressure from YAP, not pressure from us. It's pressure from the referring authority. . . . We never pressure or mandate any service.

The second finding *revealed the extent and nature of the pressure that youth experience in participating in services with YAP*. Youth referred to YAP are often pressured to participate, either by a probation officer, a DSS caseworker or by a youth's parent. As illustrated in appendix 11-3, four of the seven youth participants revealed that they were pressured to participate in the co-production group project. All four of these youth were involved in the juvenile justice system and three of the four were adjudicated by the courts. Not surprisingly, the two youth who participated in the initial Fire Safety that were not involved in the juvenile justice system, did not perceive pressure to participate.

Third, despite facing pressure including court mandates, two of the four "pressured" participants voiced that they had an *element of choice in participating in the co-production project*. For example, a number of the youth appeared to initially "shop the service." In other words, youth collected information about the project and explored the extent to which the project suited their needs and interests. Thus, although pressured to participate, many youth behaved as if participation in the co-production project was semi-voluntary or voluntary in nature. Three of the youth participants shared with the researcher their freedom to choose.

Youth #1: I just wanted to see what it was like so I did it anyways.

Researcher: So you tested it out, basically.

Youth #1: Yeah, because when you read it, it sounds kind of corny in a way.

Researcher: Is that what most kids do, they may be a little cautious at first but like you, they may try it out to see if they like it.

Youth #1: Yeah.

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Researcher: You think after one day you would know enough whether you want to come back.

Youth #2: Yeah, pretty much.

Researcher: Kind of scope it out and say this looks pretty cool?

Youth #2: Yeah, depending on how the instructor is and if they're easygoing.

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I would tell them [other youth] to join and if they can try it and if they don't like it, they can leave. But, I'd tell them it's worth a try, because you can make a lot of new friends and stuff.

In summary, data supported the complexity of ascertaining level of youth involuntariness for certain involuntary youth. Youth faced court orders and parental pressure yet staff perceived the service to be voluntary. Youth also voiced elements of choice in participating in YAP services.

What resulted was that many of the youth participants manifested low levels of involuntariness. This finding occurred even though they felt some pressure or even a mandate to participate in services. And there is more: Autonomous behaviors indicative of high levels of choice and freedom accompanied this low perceived level of involuntariness. In short, many of the participating youth appeared to be initially participating "semi-voluntarily." Strategies that helped build upon the initial low levels of youth involuntariness, to further encourage youth engagement, are described in this

chapter. These strategies begin with a description of empowerment-oriented practices used by staff to encourage the movement of “involuntary clients” toward semi-voluntary and voluntary engagement.

### **Salient Empowerment-Related Intervention Features and Practices**

A staff participant’s comment provides an appropriate way to introduce empowerment-related features and practices:

I think that we empowered youth, that they had a voice, that they had ownership over things in their life that they didn’t think they had any choice. The fact that they had strengths that they could bring to their community, that they could take action to improve their community, that they were empowered to make a difference, to make a change, to decide what they wanted to do and go to families and neighbors and business owners saying we need your assistance, because we would like to do this, and we will help you get this, I mean, those kids felt great.

Findings from the interviews indicated that for the target population of involuntary youth, *empowerment practices and strategies are a driver of staff/youth collaboration and enhanced levels of youth engagement*. In other words, empowerment practices and strategies employed by staff were complex and multi-faceted. These practices are described in detail below.

Using a template derived from the theoretical model of co-production (see chapter 9, appendix 9-4), key empowerment-related intervention features were identified from the interview data provided by youth and staff. Three intervention categories from the theoretical model provided the template for the data analysis. These categories were: (1)

*Group practices, (2) Autonomy-building practices, and (3) Relationship-building practices and practices that build community connections for youth.*

This *a priori* categorization is consistent with template analysis. Also consistent with template analysis, the initial categorization was expanded to accommodate an emerging intervention category: *empowerment-oriented intake practices*.

In total, four main categories of empowerment practices emerged from the data. Each of the four main categories encompasses subcategories. Important themes, strategies and processes were gleaned within each subcategory. These themes, strategies and processes enhance the proposed theoretical framework, grounding the model in real life contexts. Intake practices are described first below.

#### *Empowerment-Oriented Intake Practices*

##### *Key findings*

- ✓ Staff employed empowerment-oriented intake practices and strategies which focused on providing opportunities for participants to exercise autonomy to guide their participation.
- ✓ Staff strategies that emphasized youth “voice and choice,” opportunities for experimentation, parental “buy-in” and active parental participation were especially salient in fostering initial youth participation.

##### *Evidence and Analysis*

Six participants, mostly youth, (staff=2; youth=4) identified the importance of empowerment-related intake practices to initially attract youth and parents to participate in co-production interventions. Three categories of intake practices emerged from the data: (1) Referral source preparation, (2) Intake strategies for parents, and (3) Intake

strategies for youth. Within each category, strategies and processes were revealed. These strategies and processes are reviewed below (also see appendix 11-4).

### *Referral Source Preparation*

The first practice sub-category is the *importance of referral source preparation*. For this project, probation officers were the most frequent source of referral to the project. Probation officers wield a good deal of influence in youth decisions to participate. A staff member identified this influence below:

I think it also has a lot to do with how receptive [the probation officer is] because there are a number of different probation officers that we work with and how receptive that individual probation officer was [is important]. Because each probation officer kind of came at this with their own hesitations . . . the kids placed a different amount of value in it because of how they [the officer] thought [about the project].

Participants also indicated that referral sources were inadequately prepared to communicate the purpose of the co-production intervention, explain to the youth why he/she should consider participating and offer potential benefits that participation could afford the youth. One staff participant highlighted the importance of probation officers preparation to “sell” the service to eligible youth:

I mean they [probation officers] made the referrals and they told the youth that they made the referrals. So based on what they told the youth what they can get out of the service, changed what the youth, you know, when we went out there for intake, what their attitude was toward us from the

very first day. . . my perception is that they [probation] did not understand enough.

A youth participant corroborated the comments made by the staff member, noting that probation officers did not fully understand the project:

Basically you should have a talk with probation. Their probation officer should explain more than just saying, “I think you’re gonna need an advocate.” You know? It just makes you think what the heck is an advocate?

*Empowerment Oriented Intake Strategies for Parents*

A second practice category emerged from the interviews. *This category is the intake strategies used by staff to encourage parental involvement.* Strategies were developed that sought parental “buy-in” so that youth are supported to participate. Other strategies were used to attract parents to serve as active participants in project activities.

Staff members were particularly strident in emphasizing the importance of involving parents as decision-makers for their children. Securing parental “buy-in” of project activities was important to enable youth to feel comfortable to participate. A sample of staff responses of the importance of parent “buy-in” are included below:

Yup, I really do [think that parental support is a key factor to kids benefiting]. . . . When parents say stuff like, that, this is stupid or something like that, what is the kid going to do. There is permission right there to say, the heck with it.

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I think it comes down to the parent’s decision whether the kids are gonna participate or not. . .

Strategies were also developed by staff to foster both parental “buy-in” and to secure active parent participation. One strategy was to share with parents’ accurate information about the project and what to expect from their participation and their child’s participation. Here, staff focused on the end result of involvement and encouraged parents to view the project as an “opportunity.” An administrator identified the following intake strategy to encourage active parent involvement:

I think it’s how you present it. . . . Families are often scared off by those services and programs, so saying it’s really an opportunity and a process that we’re gonna get from point A to point B and here’s what you’re going to get out of it. And really showing the benefits and the involvement on their part and not so much that it’s going to be now you have YAP in your life and you have to meet with this person so many times a week and you have to drive here and drive there.

Another empowerment strategy used by staff to encourage active parent participation was to tap into the parent’s vision of what is best for their children and their community. A staff member involved in the fire safety project reflected on this strategy below:

The families that I worked with, *their* [italics added] mission was to keep kids out of trouble. Some thought at the time, the skate park was a major thing that kids liked to do, and it wasn’t very up-to-date, so they wanted to fundraise for money for the skate park.

A third strategy employed by staff was to inform and educate the entire extended family about the project. This up-front investment enhanced initial youth participation and influenced ongoing engagement. According to the staff member:

If you can get all the parents together [in a given family] or the majority of them, I think that is *the idea* [italics added]-Grandma, grandpa, cousins, that is many more people that know what is going on in your [youth's] lives-they can sit around on the deck in the summer and [ask] when are you going to do that YAP thing again.

*Empowerment-Oriented Intake Strategies for Youth*

A third category emerged from the data. This category involved *intake strategies used by staff to attract youth to participate in the co-production project*. Youth participants highlighted the importance of allowing youth to experiment; to try out the project to see if it meets their interests. For example, when asked how to attract youth interest in the project, two youth participants involved in the environmental project responded in the following manner:

I'd tell you [other youth] to do it. Like, it's worth it. Go ahead and give it a try. And if you don't like it, talk to them [staff] and they'll probably put you in something different. . . Get them (the youth) together and first see if they get along. If they all get along and work together good, say, "Guess what? Who would like to do this?" and we'll make stuff and it'll be inside [describe the project].

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Bring them there [to DEC where the environmental project was held] and tell one group of kids that they're gonna come or it's all right to come.

And show them how to do things that you've been doing so that they can get the feel of, see if they want to help out or not.

These same two youth noted that, in addition to allowing youth to scope out a project, they should have permission to leave a project if it does not meet their needs or interests. One youth noted that "I would tell them to join and if they can try it and if they don't like it, they can leave." The other youth responded this way to a disengaged youth participant:

I think we were all engaged, other than one of the kids. He just, it wasn't his thing and didn't like doing it. I mean, you can't force someone. So he basically just puttered around and if he wanted to help out with a few things, he'd help out. Basically, help clean up and stuff but he didn't care to do it. *I mean, it's not his problem, it's not his fault.* [Italics added].

#### *Summary*

The preceding examples illustrate the importance of parental acceptance of the project as a key antecedent factor related to initial youth participation. In short, youth listen to their parents. If parents are not accepting of their child's participation, then initial youth participation is likely not to occur. Intake practices designed to educate and inform parents about the co-production project assisted in securing parental buy-in.

Moreover, active parent participation was an important part of two of the co-production projects. Parents were empowered to create a vision of the project and this contributed to active parental participation. Similar strategies were identified for youth. For involuntary, "system-involved" youth, first impressions mattered. Participants identified the importance of preparing referring authorities and program staff responsible

for intake on how best to present the intervention to potential youth participants. In particular, highlighting empowerment-related features, such as allowing for youth experimentation and choice, were identified as important strategies in initially attracting youth to participate in project activities.

### *Empowerment-Oriented Group Practices*

#### *Key Findings*

- ✓ Staff attention to creating a favorable mix of group participants was important in cultivating an “environment of safety” for involuntary youth.
- ✓ “Action-oriented” projects and those that tap into a youth’s altruistic motives were identified by youth and staff as important intervention features that fostered youth participation.
- ✓ Staff developed strategies that created a welcoming and safe environment among group members. These strategies facilitated youth experimentation and risk-taking.
- ✓ Well-structured and planned group projects provided the opportunity for youth to become involved in decision-making and allowed for sufficient time to complete project tasks. These strategies, which enabled youth to succeed, provided youth with a sense of completion and accomplishment.

#### *Evidence and Analysis*

Per the proposed theoretical framework, empowerment-oriented group practices comprise an important component of co-production interventions. These practices are especially salient for involuntary youth who often arrive with low self-esteem and self-efficacy. Low self-esteem and self-efficacy can lead to hesitancy on the part of

participants to experiment with new situations and opportunities. Participants, particularly youth, identified a number of practices employed by staff that sought to provide the safety and the structure within which youth could experiment with new roles, cultivate interests and develop competencies.

Within the component of group practices, four categories of favorable group practice emerged from the interview data. These features included: (1) Creating a favorable mix of group members, (2) Developing an attractive group project that built on youth interests, (3) Establishing a welcoming and safe group environment, and (4) Allowing for sufficient time to adequately plan for project activities and to provide structure and organization so that the group project runs smoothly.

It is important to note that the findings regarding favorable group composition are new. They were not anticipated and identified in the expanded theoretical rationale for co-production interventions. These findings thus comprise a significant contribution to co-production theory with the populations studied here.

Strategies within each of these categories are especially important in initially attracting youth to participate in co-production activities. In addition, these strategies set the stage for higher levels of youth engagement because they provide a proper context for youth to grow. Themes and accompanying strategies associated with each of these group practice features are identified below (also see appendix 11-5).

#### *Favorable Group Composition*

Creating a favorable group composition by staff was highlighted by staff (n=3) and youth (n=5) as being an important empowerment-oriented intervention feature.

Within this category, two themes emerged. The first theme is achieving a compatible mix of participants. The second theme is maintaining sufficient numbers of participants.

*Achieving a compatible mix of participants* was identified as important in order to foster a sense of comfort and safety for youth. Placing youth with similar issues together in the same group and knowing group members beforehand were identified as important strategies related to initial youth participation. A staff participant identified the benefits of group homogeneity below:

Working with one another-working with other YAP kids-“bad” [quotes added] -they were all on the same page here-all bad kids-there are advantages to putting them all together-nobody felt out of place.

Youth participants voiced comfort in knowing other members of the group, either from school or from the community. A sample of comments made by youth on this theme included:

I like the fact that I knew some of the kids that were in the group.

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Get to work and hang out with kids and stuff, a little bit similar to you. . .

Kinda [have] the same issues. Kids kinda get along with kids that are a little similar to themselves, you know.

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And a few of the other kids I knew, so it was easy to get along with them, easy to try to get them to work with things and do what they need to do, you know?

A second staff member went so far as to challenge the research findings on “deviancy training” that may occur from aggregating high risk youth together in group

activities (see chapter 5). In her comments below, she noted that well-run groups of high-risk youth can be productive:

You know, [people say], don't put them together, don't have that population work together because there will be bad outcomes, but I think if you give them a focus, it kinda shows there can be positive outcomes

Gender balance was also identified as important by one staff member. For example, in the initial fire safety project, only one female was recruited for the project. Her participation was limited and ultimately, she dropped out.

In addition, three of the respondents (one staff, two youth) indicated that the *size of the group mattered*. These respondents noted that the groups had too few participants; and this hampered the success of the group experience. According to one youth participant:

If you want to do a project, you probably want more than 3 or 4 kids [showing up]. You probably at least want a group of kids trying to work together and have teamwork and motivation. Because, say if there is just 2 or 3 brothers doing a group, they gonna go home, say I don't want to do this. . .then say there's a different kid from a different house saying "C'mon, let's do this," [It] gives the kids motivation. At least one of the brothers and then the other brother like all of them did this and this today. And, then the other brothers would be like, oh that sounds fun, let's do this.

### *Developing Attractive Group Projects*

Findings revealed the importance of staff structuring projects that were driven by specific youth interests. Strategies linked to developing attractive group projects fostered initial youth participation and set the stage for behavioral and emotional engagement. Within this category, two themes emerged. The first theme is the importance of staff planning interesting “action-oriented” activities, especially for boys. The second theme is staff planning projects that enable youth to work toward “a higher cause.” Seven respondents, including five youth addressed these themes in their responses.

All five boys identified interesting “*action-oriented*” activities as being an important factor linked to their engagement. Findings showed that youth interest needs to be sparked. If interest is not sparked, then youth were likely to go through the motions of participation, curtailing the prospects of attaining higher levels of engagement. For example, in responding to the question as to what made the environmental project successful, one youth responded, “Because it was hands-on stuff, like working with tools and making stuff. It wasn’t something boring like washing a car or something like that.” This same youth mentioned that some of the youth “lollygagged” because “they were bored and couldn’t care less.”

A youth involved in the Army Reserves project also identified the importance of cultivating youth interests. He responded in the following manner to the question as to whether he merely showed up and went through the motions or was genuinely excited about the project: “I just showed up. I wasn’t very all that interested but it was fine doing it though.”

In addition, youth were asked how the project could be improved. In responding to this question, a number of youth identified the theme of assessing and cultivating individual youth interests. In the comment below, a youth involved in the fire safety project suggested making the project more hands-on:

It got boring after a while, just sitting there watching the guy [the firefighter]. I don't have much interest in being a firefighter so I didn't see the interest in learning how to run the fire truck.

Another youth offered the following suggestion to improve participation for youth who were not really "into" the project:

I betcha if you woulda made something that was more interesting, like a downhill, one of those soapbox cars or whatever you call them. . . Or made something interesting like that, where they'd be all excited to see what it does in the end, they probably would get into it.

Finally, a youth below identified the negative consequences that occurred when youth interests were not identified and addressed. According to this youth, disinterested youth presented obstacles for those youth who were interested in project activities. He shared the following with the researcher:

If the kid doesn't want nothing to do with it [the project], they should stay home and have the other kids go and work. Because it's not fair for them [the kids that want to work].

*"Giving back" to a "higher cause"* also made projects attractive. Six respondents, almost all youth (n=5), mentioned this theme. Youth commented on how they enjoyed cleaning up the environment, supporting a local non-profit through

fundraisers or helping build up the morale of military personnel and their families. The following were examples of youth comments:

I felt engaged. Other than when I had something really important to do, then I would do that [the project]. . . But other than that, I actually liked going and spending some time there, and you know, helping the community. Wildlife, anyways.

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The Army thing, that was wicked cool. . . . I thought it was pretty cool because they [the soldiers] work pretty hard and they finally got something back from it, something different back. We got to show them appreciation for it.

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I took pride in the Army one, because that's our country and stuff. Because they are fighting for us.

A youth leader also voiced the theme of giving back to YAP, an organization that helped him in a time of need:

Because it's to help out the kids and stuff like that. And they've [YAP and the advocates] done a lot of stuff for us kids, you know, try to help us out and keep us out of trouble.

#### *Establishing a Welcoming and Safe Group Environment*

Strategies that seek to establish a welcoming and safe group environment were highlighted in the proposed theoretical framework for co-production as an important empowerment practice. In the literature, a welcoming and safe group environment is a

“social space in which young people have freedom to be themselves, express their own creativity, voice their opinions in decision-making processes, try out new skills and roles, rise to challenges and have fun in the process” (Jennings et al., 2006). The importance of a welcoming and safe environment was confirmed in the empirical study by all but one of the study participants (n=12: staff=5, youth=7). These strategies helped set the stage for higher levels of youth engagement.

Three themes emerged from the interviews: (1) Creating group cohesion, (2) Establishing and implementing rules and norms governing group functioning, and (3) Fostering social interaction and fun. These themes and their accompanying strategies and processes are explored below.

Eight respondents (staff=3, youth=5) highlighted strategies and processes associated with creating *group cohesion*. Teamwork was cultivated by staff and high levels of teamwork that were fostered worked to enhance group cohesion. Two youth participants (one who participated in the environmental project, and one who participated in the fire safety project) commented on the importance of fostering teamwork. The youth who was involved in the environmental project remarked:

Everybody had their own part and they were doing certain things and it made it a lot easier instead of trying to do it all by yourself. . . .Well, one of us would cut the wood; one of us would screw it together and help with the fencing and drill holes in the metal and bend the metal and hold on to the frame . . .

The same youth told the researcher with pride how the team solved problems together:

While we were making the . . . nests for the birds. . . the sides for some reason didn't work and we'd have to figure it out. And it took us about fifteen minutes to figure out we couldn't use this something and once we all got together and figured it out.

Here is how the youth who was involved in the fire safety project identified the importance of teamwork:

Like when we were doing the car wash, if someone missed a spot, we'd make sure because we'd go over it twice. . . .Working together as a team, instead of doing one person wants to do this or one person wants to do that, they just worked together as a team.

Findings also showed that group cohesion provided the conditions of safety by which youth could showcase their skills and assist one another in tasks. A staff member told the story of a reticent youth who knew how to make blankets for the Army Reserves personnel overseas and then showed other youth how to stitch a blanket:

She was the only one that was doing it (making the blankets) at the time. She already learned how to do it. She made the original one. She knew what she was doing and I think that made her feel better about herself, because you would teach the kids how to do it and she could be like well I already know how to do it, I'll show you. . . . She was confident in doing it. This was normally a kid who would want nothing to do with any of them (the other youth) and she was like I know what I am doing and she went around and showed the room how to do it.

According to this staff person, it was the group experience that helped motivate this youth to participate and become engaged. Specifically, it was the “social bonding” that occurred in the group that enabled the youth to succeed. A second staff person from the fire safety project echoed a similar theme when she noted that “the group motivated the kids.”

Staff employed strategies that fostered group cohesion. For example, communication exercises and group games were utilized to build cohesion. A staff participant involved in the army reserves project explained the importance of these strategies:

Exercises, yes. Board games, exercises. From day one, I always promoted to the kids that, look around, these are the people that you’re with. These are the people that are gonna have your back. We are a group, we move together, and I’ve always, from day one, made the kids aware of the importance of connecting with each other.

A second theme emerged in establishing a welcoming and safe group environment: The importance of *establishing and enforcing rules and norms* governing group functioning. Four participants identified this theme, more youth (n=3) than staff (n=1). A staff person said the following: “I would have discharged the two troublemaker boys earlier; when they left, the remaining two boys did very well. I would have moved on that sooner.” The same staff person shared a comment made by a youth, which addressed youth misbehavior that occurred during a group session:

[The kids would tell me] “that group wasn’t fun today.” [One kid] said to me: “I can’t believe that guy said that to [the adult staff leader].” And they

would be like, “you know, he shouldn’t talk to you that way, that’s not right.” The kids would tell me that.

A youth responded this way to a query by the interviewer of the importance of setting standards for conduct and enforcing those standards:

Yeah, being more strict, probably. . . . The kids would get pissed off, go outside, they wouldn’t even listen to the advocates or anything. . . [They should not] leave the group unless you’re at the end of the group [meeting].

A third theme under the category of establishing a welcoming and safe group environment is the importance of *fostering social interaction and having fun* during project activities. Youth enjoyed interacting with adults and socializing with other youth who became their friends. Social interaction in turn, facilitated group cohesion and comfort levels for the youth.

One strategy that staff utilized to enhance social interaction was allowing youth from the community not involved in the YAP program to participate in project activities. This enabled friends of participants to become involved, which enhanced the fun and social dimensions of the project. A youth involved in the fire safety project described this experience below:

Because we would knock on the door and them (neighbors) information (about fire safety), some of the kids, they were interested and they just started coming with us for no reason, just to see what we were doing. . . . It started with just 3 or 4 of us and by the end; it was like 15, 16, and 17. . .

They (the staff) did not care what we did, as long as we had fun and tried to do what they wanted us to do.

Another youth suggested that additional fun activities be built into the project plan. He offered the following suggestion to improve the project: “Make it funner for kids. Like instead of meeting indoors all the time, like meet at a park or something like that.”

A third youth agreed with the researcher in saying that “all work and no play are not good.” In answering the question of what he would tell other youth about the project, one youth responded by saying that “you’d have fun. It’d be something to do besides just hanging out.” A fourth youth suggested adding cookouts, playing basketball, fishing and swimming to the community service activities.

#### *Project Planning and Structuring Project Activities*

The importance of planning for the group project and structuring the project according to youth development best practices emerged as a fourth category of group practice. Nine participants, including all but one youth, identified intervention features related to project planning and structure. Surprisingly, more youth participants than staff identified the importance of allowing for *sufficient time to adequately plan* for group activities (staff=2, youth=4). Two youth participants described the importance of planning as follows:

You make a list with like time and place and like when they’re going to do it. You plan it out. And you have to make sure you have like, time in your schedule. Like everybody’s go like time for it. Because you know how people have different hours that they are free.

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The fire department, probably would've planned at least a month ahead of time. Got them to really give their promise that they're gonna be there when, and give a talk, show us what they wanted to show us and stuff.

Two staff participants concurred with these observations. However, staff also noted that sufficient planning time was often a luxury in programs for involuntary youth because once youth are referred for services, activity planning must begin immediately. Time to allow for group formation and providing youth with voice and choice was viewed as incompatible with contractual mandates and safety realities. A staff participant described below the pressure that she felt when the planned group project with the senior citizens home was cancelled at the last moment:

So, then we were scrambling for a project. Kids had been in program for a while, we needed to get the kids going. We didn't have anything planned for them [at that point].

In response to the question, what factors prevented success?, the staff person responded in this way: "The short time span and quick project planning [for the Army Reserves project] was an obstacle to its success."

In addition, creative, youth empowerment-oriented approaches takes time to develop. In the case of the Army Reserves project, a strategy designed to be empowering for youth was shown not to be fruitful, stalling project activities and adding to staff stress. For example, a decision was made early in the army reserves project to send a letter to local organizations, soliciting their interest in having youth provide services to their organization. The plan was for youth to meet with interested organizations and then

choose the site that they would want to work with. This process was designed to promote youth voice and choice in shaping project activities.

However, responses to this solicitation did not materialize. Meetings with representatives from the organizations were then hastily arranged. Ultimately, due to time pressures, staff chose a site and a project proceeded. A staff person commented on this process: “We wasted a lot of time on something that we thought was going to work and did not work.”

*Adequately structuring the group project* emerged as a second theme under this category. Comments reflected the importance of structuring the project per youth development best practices (see chapter 5 and appendix 9-4). For example, moving a project to completion (e.g., maintaining a “temporal arc” for the project, with a beginning, middle and end) was identified as important by a number of the youth. Findings also revealed that youth, even those mandated or pressured to participate, want projects to be run effectively and efficiently. Sample responses by youth included:

I think it was successful, just because our demands, like what we had to get done, all got done. . . . I see it, [if] they told us to do something and we didn't finish it because there's too much problems, then it wouldn't have been successful.

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I think everybody benefited equally because we all did our part. . . .We got everything we needed to be done, done.

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[The project would be considered successful] is they reached the goals of what the project was, and we did. We sent out care packages (to the reservists) and made the spaghetti dinner.

In addition, staff and youth (n=3: staff=1, youth=2) were positive about the recognition ceremony that culminated project activities. A youth participant commented on the final recognition ceremony below:

Well, like our picture was in the paper and everything, and I was wicked proud of that. I was like, “look at that.” My grandparents cut it out and put it on their fridge and stuff, they still have it.

Another youth offered a suggestion to improve recognizing youth for their accomplishments:

[Within YAP programs] maybe there could be a prize on who does the best job maybe like you could get news reporters in and stuff like that. . . Because like if you got like the news reporters, maybe the kids would want to be on TV. . . have like a big thing on like helping somebody like the Boys and Girls Club maybe they could like have prizes at the end or something, like compete and stuff.

### *Summary*

As the findings above indicate, group practices were important in facilitating initial youth participation and setting the stage for higher levels of youth engagement. For example, youth participants revealed that the composition of the group was an important feature in initially attracting youth to programming. These youth were most comfortable participating in projects where they know the other youth involved in the project.

Furthermore, findings revealed a range of factors associated with creating a pro-social caring environment. These factors included fostering group cohesion and teamwork and establishing and enforcing proper behavior expectations. When a pro-social environment was established, youth were able to experience sufficient levels of safety to experiment and take risks, testing out new skills and competencies.

Youth also enjoyed spending their time involved in productive, action-oriented activities. Working to give back to organizations in need was especially attractive to youth. In addition, youth wanted to be involved in projects that were structured and well planned, so that their time was put to good use.

Finally, findings revealed challenges to cultivating solid empowerment-oriented group practices. Cultivating group cohesion and structuring projects to ensure success required adequate planning time. Planning time was a scarce resource for staff serving involuntary youth, as youth referred for service often required immediate attention to address presenting risk factors.

### *Autonomy-Building Empowerment Features*

#### *Key Findings*

- ✓ Strategies and processes used by staff members were designed to enhance youth autonomy were the most prevalent empowerment-oriented intervention feature associated with the co-production intervention in site one.
- ✓ Staff employed creative methods for youth to exercise “voice and choice” in influencing project activities, guide their own involvement in activities and provide informal opportunities for youth to serve as leaders.

- ✓ Opportunities for youth to exercise voice and choice enhanced initial youth participation and ownership in project activities, paving the way for emotional engagement.
- ✓ When staff cultivated youth leadership opportunities, this strategy allowed youth to identify and showcase their interests and talents, which paved the way for both emotional and cognitive engagement.

### *Evidence and Analysis*

Per the expanded theoretical framework, practices that foster youth autonomy comprise an important component of empowerment-driven co-production interventions. Fostering autonomy is especially salient for involuntary youth. Involuntary youth often present with low self-esteem; low self-efficacy, high levels of involuntariness and reactance and high levels of hopelessness (see chapter 8). Cultivating feelings of personal power through providing youth with opportunities to exert choice and control over what they do, fosters an enhanced sense of youth self-efficacy.

Also, per the proposed theoretical framework for co-production interventions, youth leadership strategies enhance personal agency, levels of self-determination and intrinsic motivation (see chapter 5). In turn, fostering youth leadership helps retain youth in programming through creating higher levels of project ownership by youth, leading to gains in emotional and cognitive levels of youth engagement (see chapter 7).

Data confirmed the primacy of autonomy practices within co-production interventions for involuntary youth. From the data, intervention strategies that focus on youth autonomy are categorized into two broad areas: (1) Fostering youth voice and choice and (2) Promoting youth leadership. Staff and youth participants identified

important themes and strategies within these categories of practice. These themes are reviewed below.

### *Fostering Youth Voice and Choice*

Strategies fostering youth voice and choice were identified by 12 of the 13 research participants. All of the youth participants highlighted voice and choice opportunities afforded by staff or recommended new strategies to improve youth decision-making opportunities. A key theme that emerged from the data *was the multiple opportunities afforded by staff to youth to influence decisions on project activities.*

Youth influenced project decisions in the following areas:

- ✓ Allowing youth a voice in selecting the service project
- ✓ Providing youth with an opportunity to help select specific activities within the chosen project
- ✓ Allowing youth a voice in making decisions on how to conduct specific activities
- ✓ Enabling youth to choose specific roles within projects
- ✓ Providing youth with opportunities to invite friends and family to participate in project activities

Seven participants (staff=2, youth=5) noted the importance of youth having a voice in selecting the service project, including the organizational site where services were to be delivered. A range of strategies and processes to involve youth in decision-making were noted, some representing recommended improvements in practice. For example, three youth suggested providing youth with a number of options for group projects and then allowing youth to choose the option that is of most interest to them. Reaching consensus on selecting a project was also identified as being important to

secure youth “buy-in,” if multiple project options were not practical. Youth comments on this theme included the following:

Make sure you’re getting the opinions on all the kids before they start the project. And try to find something that all the kids agree on together, and not just like 4 of them [agree] and two of them don’t.

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And maybe some of the other kids didn’t want to do it [the project] and we should’ve had a vote on what we were doing.

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We could’ve sent like a paper out to the clients and everybody, asking their opinion for what they want to do. . . .They [the staff] should ask everybody’s opinion.

Other suggestions to improve practice were also offered. For example, one staff member advocated for youth to conduct an assessment of community needs and to also inquire community issues of import to youth. This assessment would enhance youth voice and choice and perhaps result in further ownership by the youth of project activities. In the words of this staff member:

I think that the kids need the opportunity to define what they see as community. . . .If you allow the kids to define who they feel is their community, you might’ve come up with a very different population and some very different projects. . . . [If you allowed them to define community], they would’ve targeted the people who were important to them.

Data also indicated that staff provided youth with opportunities to help select specific activities within a project site; to make certain decisions regarding project activities and to decide on specific roles to take within projects. These strategies allowed youth to guide the intervention according to their interests and needs. Three youth identified these decision points as important. For example:

We talked about what we were going to do for the project . . . who was gonna do what part of it and like who was like cook or go to the store with people. . . .So when we had to do fundraising, like they'd ask who wants to do the fundraiser, like stand in front of Wal-Mart. . . .Then we got to make signs and boxes and pictures that says like "Go Army Reserves" and stuff.

Another youth noted that staff "asked us what we wanted to do with the [gift] box [for the troops] and we decided on putting paper around the box to give it a little more color and draw on it and stuff, making like American flags." A third youth commented on being able to decide to "dis-invite" a group of youth who were invited to assist with the environmental project.

Not everything went according to plan. According to this youth, some invitees misbehaved and exhibited a lack of commitment to the project. When this occurred, staff gave youth the responsibility to establish a code of conduct for visiting youth, contributing to youth ownership of the project. As this youth noted:

Yeah, [they attended] just once. We told them they couldn't come back.

We told them that we did not like how they were just basically there. . .

They weren't there to really help out. I mean, a couple of kids were

helping out but one of them weren't and we just thought, seeing as how they're hanging out, trying to talk to us when we were trying to work, just wasn't a good idea.

Finally, on occasion, staff provided youth with an opportunity to choose other members of the community and family to participate in project activities. For example, in the initial fire safety project, siblings and neighbors were allowed to participate in project activities. As noted in an earlier reference, inviting neighbors to participate assisted with youth engagement because the project generated excitement and became a special activity in the community.

#### *Youth Leadership*

Fostering youth leadership was identified by most of the respondents (n=10: staff=4, youth=6) as a key autonomy-related intervention feature. Within the category of youth leadership, a number of themes emerge from the interviews. Themes included: (1) Methods of creating leadership opportunities for youth, (2) The range of leadership roles developed by staff and (3) Challenges associated with fostering youth leadership. Each theme is reviewed below.

Staff used a number of methods *to create leadership opportunities* for youth. The original plan was to “promote” youth into leadership positions after they had successfully completed a group project and after they have satisfactorily addressed mandated service requirements. This second youth leadership phase was to involve a self-selection process. Youth who express a desire to continue to be involved in the program after they have been discharged and are not longer required to attend can choose to remain with the project as a formal peer leader. However, due to a number of challenges, only two youth

had the opportunity to become formal “phase-two” leaders. Only one of those youth participated in this research study.

Although formal leadership opportunities were curtailed, staff created other leadership opportunities for youth within the initial phase one group project. These opportunities were created ad-hoc and informally. Thus, staff developed two types of leadership opportunities: (1) Formal opportunities of youth chosen to be leaders and (2) Informal and ad hoc leadership opportunities.

Three youth were selected as formal leaders by staff. Although limited in scope, peer leaders were generally well-received by both youth and staff. Peer leaders assisted staff in planning and conducting sessions. In addition, one leader had an opportunity to “tell his story.” Being from a small community, many of the youth knew the youth leader and was surprised at the changes that he made in his life. A staff member explained the impact that the youth leader had on other youth:

Great peer leader. They thought he was just great. They want to know his story. . . . Because he’s young, and he has a girlfriend and he has a daughter. And to them, having a kid, still going to high school, being with his girlfriend and being a good father, seeing this kid every day participating. And yet, he would still come to group for YAP. And they were kinda like, “why are you here?” And he would just, he would talk openly with them and be like “I used to be like this too.” I think that it did impact a few of the kids. For many of the youth, assuming leadership roles with their peers was a new experience.

Staff developed informal and ad-hoc leadership opportunities, in part, in response to the circumstances of the involved involuntary youth. For many of the youth, assuming leadership roles with their peers was a new experience. Affording opportunities for informal leadership helped involuntary youth recognize their assets and strengths. A staff member below reflected upon the benefits afforded to youth of discovering their previously undiscovered potential:

I would say that when the kids start, it's even hard for them to identify that they have strengths and they have capabilities and skills that somebody would want to tap into. . . And it's not until they start identifying and looking at all the other skills and abilities that other people see, that they start saying "Well, wait, I can do that too, I can tie a fly and go fly-fishing. . . I can play basketball and teach basketball to a younger youth."

In developing these leadership roles, staff was flexible, accommodating and inclusive. As one staff member explained:

We tried to get kids to participate-asked them to give ideas-probing to get them involved-[We] picked kids who are quiet, to them-*give everyone a chance to become leaders* [italics added].

In addition, *staff developed a range of informal youth leadership roles*. Youth assisted staff in co-facilitating sessions, in assisting with behavior management and in helping their peers in task completion. For example, in the environmental project, as noted earlier, another group of youth joined the original team in building osprey boxes. Youth were empowered to teach the visiting youth how to build the boxes. In the words of one youth participant:

When they came in, they [the group] showed them. And they thought they were good but they ended up needing us to help out. And it kind of made everybody on my team feel more better because instead of the instructor telling us how to do it, and then we're helping them out, how to do it, we feel like the instructor.

Another example of an emerging role for youth leadership occurred in the Army Reserves Project. Here, a shy girl with low self-esteem led a team building exercise and also became an instructor on how to knit blankets for the troops. A staff member recalled the situation of the girl taking over a group session:

We did an exercise to build teamwork. Some of the kids surprised us. She [previously] walked out of a session. But, this kid took charge of the exercise. She never talked. She was miserable most of the time. . . [the same kid] We had one kid do a blanket- I [the staff person] taught her how to do it and she began to teach the other kids, including the boys, how to do it. She took the lead. She did it real well. . . .She made the original one [blanket]. She knew what she was doing, and I think that made her feel better about herself, because you [she] would teach the kids how to do it and she could be like, "Well, I already know how to do it, I'll show you..." This was normally a kid, who would want nothing to do with any of them, and she was like, "I know what I'm doing," and she went around the room and [showed] how to do it.

Finally, *staff and youth participants shared a number of challenges* in cultivating youth leadership. For example, staff noted that sufficient staff time is needed to support

youth in their new role as leaders. Youth leaders also required a list defined tasks so that they understand what is expected of them. Sufficient staff time to structure the roles of the leader was also important so that selected leaders remain engaged. Two staff members noted these challenges and offered solutions below:

I think that the most wonderful thing that I found was that the kid recognized how responsible this peer leader was. And unfortunately, I don't think that we defined his role enough. Because he slowly started to drop-out. I think that the peer leader's role needs to be identified from day one.

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I know that it was very tough for us because utilizing their leadership [the youth]. . . I think what we ran into is that it wasn't always clearly defined. . . . And I think they would finish a group. . and there's often a long period of time between the group that they completed and the group that they were supposed to play this leadership role in, in which time we would lose track of them because they were not in the program. . . How to handle the peer leaders [was to] define exactly what it was they were going to be doing and they would have a specific role in the lapse between one group and another in terms of assisting with intakes and . . . almost be a supervision that she [the project leader] would hold with them in which certain tasks would be delegated. . . As the peer leader pool gets bigger and bigger, as you do this over the years, it's just gonna get out of control for what the staff can handle.

In addition, the importance of carefully selecting formal youth leaders was noted by youth and staff participants. Failure to carefully select leaders can hurt the credibility of the program. One staff member shared the following example:

We have to make sure that they (the selected leaders) have the resources they need to complete whatever it is their role is going to be,” noted one staff participants.

According to another staff member:

We had one peer leader who actually stopped coming to groups, and being a peer leader because he was being inappropriate. And, you could tell with the kids, they were like, “Wow, why was he talking about that?” They look up to him and when we was talking inappropriately, it affected them? They were like, “He’s a peer leader?”

### *Summary*

The most frequent set of empowerment-related strategies noted by participants involved cultivating youth autonomy. Staff provided youth with multiple opportunities to shape the intervention. Also, youth were encouraged by staff to voice their preferences and to choose the roles that they would like to take in the project.

Similarly, staff members were creative in promoting youth leadership. Formal and informal leadership opportunities were cultivated. Staff arranged for ad-hoc leadership tasks, catering to individual youth desires and capabilities. Also, both youth and staff offered recommendations for improving the youth leadership component.

Per co-production intervention theory for involuntary youth (see chapter 8), youth experienced enhanced personal power and control when they are presented with

opportunities to exhibit voice and choice as well as leadership. These strategies fostered an enhanced sense of ownership of the project which contributed to both initial participation and higher levels of youth engagement, including emotional engagement. As will be discussed later in this chapter, these opportunities set the stage for increasing levels of staff/youth collaboration.

### *Relationship-Building Empowerment Practices*

#### *Key Findings*

- ✓ Parents serving as “co-producers,” working with staff on assisting with the implementation of the group co-production projects, became a core intervention feature in two of the four interventions studied.
- ✓ Active parent involvement as “co-producers” motivated youth participation because they serve as an advocate for the child’s interests.
- ✓ Active parent involvement contributed to the building of group cohesion because parents assist in managing the behavior of the group.
- ✓ In projects designed explicitly as “youth-centered,” e.g., focused on youth and led by them, youth voiced a mixed response to active parent participation.

#### *Evidence and Analysis*

Participants identified enhancing personal relationships and community connections as important empowerment features of the proposed intervention framework for co-production. While practices designed to build personal relationships between youth and pro-social peers and adults in the community were emphasized, a number of youth empowerment models incorporated strategies to enhance family relationships (see chapter 5). Here, empowerment theorists identified the importance of family support to

address obstacles to youth engagement. Also, models emphasized roles for parents as active participants in facilitating youth programming, working side by side with staff and their children.

In site 1, family relationship building practices were key intervention features in two of the four interventions. In these interventions, parents served as “co-producers,” working closely with staff on project activities. In one of the interventions (Fire Safety project), parents formed their own group. One of the key tasks of the parent group was to assist with the services project. In the other intervention (Army Reserves project), parents did not form their own group. Instead, parents working jointly with staff and youth on the service project.

Two themes emerged from the interview data as participants discussed parent involvement. First, participants identified the presence of multiple roles for parents as “co-producers” and the benefits afforded from their participation. Second, participants identified challenges/cautions in involving parents in youth-centered co-production interventions. Findings associated with each of these themes are outlined below (also see appendix 11-6).

*“Co-producing” parents served in a variety of roles.* For example, parents served as “activity-organizers.” In the Army Reserves project, a staff member shared that parents “helped out with fundraising, [with] the spaghetti dinner. They helped out with everything that we did.”

Also, parents served to motivate their own youth and other children to participate. Three youth participants described how parents impacted on youth motivation:

Definitely [think it is a good idea to involve parents]. Because then if your parents are doing it [participating], maybe the kids will want to help out too.

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I think it was good [parents participating]. Because they like, when our parents would come up to the door with us [in conducting door to door survey of residents]. . . if we got shy and didn't talk, they took over. They explained what we didn't know.

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The older kids have trouble getting along with their parents, that can actually bring them together and get them more along and that way both parents and kids [are] more motivated to be in the group.

Parents also served as staff advisors, sharing information with staff about their child's likes and dislikes. As one youth explained: "They [parents] know what's going on in their kids' lives and what they're [the kids] are doing and stuff. . . . So they could suggest things about their child."

Furthermore, a critical role for parents was assisting in group behavior management. This role was identified by a youth participant:

I'd say that it is a pretty good idea [involving parents]. Because maybe if their parents were there. . . [and] they mouth off or something, the parents are there to, you know, give them a swift kick in the. . .

A staff member concurred with the youth's observation:

Yes, surprisingly, the kids listened to their parents-when the parents were not there, the kids were wiseacres-mis-behaved.

Participants noted important *cautions and challenges* regarding parental participation. For example, a number of youth (n=3) expressed reservations about parent involvement. Youth comments ranged from not wanting parents to interfere with *their* [italics added] project to potential embarrassment that parents would cause youth if they were present during project activities. A sample of youth comments illustrated these reservations:

I don't really think so [involving parents], because honestly, any kid's just gonna be like, "no, my mom's just gonna be there nagging me on this and that."

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[In referring to the environmental project and parent involvement] I think it's more of a kid project saying, "look at what we accomplished. . . with no help, with no parents, we did this ourselves."

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Because some kids are close to them [parents] and want that and some people wouldn't. Like me personally, I wouldn't because I don't see my ma going with me. . . But my father, my stepfather, I see him going.

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It's embarrassing [working with my mom]. She talked a lot during the meetings and she laughs funny.

One youth identified the importance of allowing youth to have a voice in deciding to involve their parents in project activities. He stated:

[In responding to parent involvement] It really depends on, I'd just ask the son or what-not or daughter, in the program if it'd be a good idea.

In summary, staff employed family relationship building practices and strategies in two of the four interventions. In these interventions, parents worked closely with staff to assist with project implementation. Participants identified a number of potential benefits of active parent involvement. Chief among the benefits was the role of parents in motivating youth participation. Active parent involvement also enhanced group cohesion and safety, as they assisted staff in managing group behavior.

On the other hand, findings revealed challenges in involving parents in youth-focused projects. A number of youth voiced concern with parental involvement, fearful that the project would not remain youth-centered. Individualized approaches allowing for youth voice and decision-making regarding parental involvement was noted, so as to not diminish youth enthusiasm and ownership of project activities.

### **Staff/Youth Collaboration: Practices and Strategies**

#### *Key Findings*

- ✓ High phases of staff/youth collaboration (e.g., coordination/consulting and community-building) were attained in a number of the co-production interventions studied.
- ✓ Movement between staff/youth collaboration phases occurred within specific interventions studied
- ✓ Specific youth empowerment practices were associated with new phases of staff/youth collaboration
- ✓ Staff roles changed during the implementation of a number of the interventions; roles changed from adult leader to facilitator/consultant.

- ✓ Opportunities for youth empowerment, including youth leadership, accompanied changes in staff roles.
- ✓ Different kinds of staff/youth exchanges and interactions occurred during co-production interventions, serving as indicators of higher phases of collaboration.

### *Evidence and Analysis*

Per the proposed theoretical framework for co-production, staff/youth collaboration is a core intervention feature of co-production. In particular, collaboration theory, including the articulation of collaboration's developmental phases as well as the distinctive mechanisms and processes associated with each phase (see chapter 6 and appendix 6-2) assists in articulating co-production processes occurring between staff and youth. Per proposed theory, enhanced collaboration opens the door for more opportunities for youth to exercise their autonomy in directing project activities. In turn, as youth and staff are empowered to work together toward common goals, positive outcomes result for both. In other words, collaboration and empowerment gains are reciprocal and generative, leading to higher levels of engagement. Empowerment and collaboration processes, in combination, galvanize staff and clients.

Data revealed higher phases staff/youth collaboration emerging in a number of the co-production interventions studied in site one. Higher phases of collaboration were also found to be associated with specific empowerment practices. Staff roles also altered as well as the nature of staff/youth exchanges and interactions. Findings corroborated aspects of the proposed model of co-production (see appendix 9-6) but also added to the understanding of how collaboration and empowerment processes contributed to co-

production processes. These findings are summarized in appendix 11-7 and in detail below.

*Phases of Collaboration: Coordination/Consulting*

Per the theoretical model, the coordination/consulting phase of staff/youth collaboration is characterized by the beginning of staff/youth power sharing, evidenced in part by opportunities for youth voice and choice. Findings earlier in this chapter supported the presence of this phase of collaboration. Examples were provided of youth exercising voice and choice in deciding on project activities. Here, staff relinquished power in allowing youth to select specific activities, decide how to conduct specific activities and were given choice in specific roles to take within projects.

Additional features of this collaboration phase were also revealed. Evidence of *defined changes in staff roles occurred* as staff and youth worked together on projects. Findings revealed that staff altered their role from director and leader of project activities to instead, serving as facilitators and consultants. These findings were most apparent in the environmental and fire safety projects.

For example, a youth in the environmental project described the role of the staff member this way:

[The staff member] basically directed and helped, when we needed help he was there. Didn't really throw a fight about everything. . . The instructor did pretty good and kept us right on task and we basically made everything perfect. . . . I think a leader is someone who actually gets out there and proves that, and shows them how to do it, not just someone who

sits there and says, “Do that, do that, figure this out, figure that out.” [The advocate] helped us figure out the instructions and everything. . .

A second youth from the environmental project identified below how the staff member delegated responsibilities to youth:

[The advocate] would say, “Well, listen to these guys because they know what they are doing. They’re not going to screw you around, take you down the wrong path to get you in trouble. They’re just telling you how you’re gonna get it done and what to do and if you don’t wanna take their advice, go sit over on the side.”

A staff member from the fire safety project echoed similar themes below, describing her role as a facilitator:

I/we got people involved. . . I just was there to help facilitate it. I gave them a place to meet and gave them direction. . . [I helped produce engagement] by just encouragement and recognition. . . let them know that other people were knowing [about the project]. That they were doing something.

The administrator overseeing the fire safety project agreed with the staff member’s assessment of her role:

We talked about having a parent group that went and ran independently and she’d almost be a consultant for that group to run independently for a period of time [post discharge]. She gave them a lot of exciting ideas for purposeful activities . . .

### *Empowerment Practices and New Phases of Staff/Youth Collaboration*

Findings revealed that changes in staff roles were accompanied by empowerment practices, specifically opportunities for youth and parent leadership. These linkages occurred in the environmental and fire safety projects. As noted earlier, staff established informal and formal leadership roles for youth and parents. To briefly recap, staff increasingly encouraged youth to guide project activities. As an example, youth were provided with the opportunity to mentor a new group of youth to assist with building the osprey boxes in the environmental intervention. When the visiting youth did not meet the level of commitment expected by the original youth team, they were no longer welcomed back to participate. In the fire safety project, parents took on major leadership roles with the assistance of their children. In both projects, changes in staff roles were associated with parents and youth stepping up, to be prepared and ready to fill the leadership void. Here, empowerment oriented strategies, including opportunities for youth leadership, were linked to changes in staff roles. The directionality of this association, however, was unclear, requiring further exploration.

Moreover, new roles for youth and staff and increased power-sharing led to beginning levels of staff/youth community building, a more advanced phase of collaboration. Per the proposed theoretical model, this phase of collaboration involves heightened trust, consensus building and a greater awareness of mutual reciprocity between youth and staff. As with the prior collaboration phase, findings revealed that this higher phase of collaboration is associated with higher level youth empowerment strategies.

For example, as trust developed between staff and youth, youth were afforded additional opportunities by staff to act *autonomously*. A staff member from the environmental project discussed below how he would allow the group to solve problems that arose:

Kids would hash things out among themselves. I might say, "Time out-let's explain it together. Let's discuss why to move forward on this strategy-As a group, we may come up with an even better strategy." They [the youth] learned that quick.

*Furthermore, recognition of staff/youth interdependence* accompanied this phase of collaboration. Interdependence was identified as a key theme in the following comment by the same staff person from the environmental project:

That one kid [the youth leader] was more attuned with what was going on in the group. And, I owe a lot of the success to that one kid. That helped out-[he] would take on the initiative-sometimes you don't have to say anything, all you have to do I start working and the other kids will start as well.

*Finally, new levels of youth and parent independence also emerged.* As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the fire safety project morphed into its own independent project, operated by parents. The initial project of the independent group involved working with senior citizens. A staff member shared the following to illustrate how the working group evolved post discharge: "The first one [the fire safety group], they felt empowered that at the end, they could implement this [the project] themselves. They didn't need us."

*The Changing Nature of Staff/Youth Relations and Exchanges*

Collaboration processes spurred by new kinds of empowerment opportunities for youth set the stage for a different kind of relationship between staff and youth. Evidence of mutual respect and teamwork emerged as staff and youth worked together on projects with shared goals. The changing nature of staff/youth relations and exchanges served as an indicator of heightened staff/youth collaboration.

Mutual respect was noted below by the staff person for the environmental project:

Being treated like an adult-not talked down to. I don't care if you are 5 or 50, you don't need to be talked down to. You can talk in a different tone-give them room to make a small mistake. . . . They were enjoying themselves, they were having fun, probably because they were being talked to as they were more important than I am. . .

A youth in the environmental project showed his respect for the value of the staff person as well:

And, if it wasn't for him, I think we woulda had more problems. I mean, he has more experience because he's older, so he basically was a big part of that. We had some problems but we had to figure it out.

Moreover, as staff/youth collaboration is enhanced, *youth began to view advocates almost as peers or friends*. A youth who was involved in the environmental project noted the change in the staff/youth relationship: "He was just always nicer to me, you know? Like I got along with him. Me and him, we were more like friends than an advocate."

The youth leader who participated in the Army Reserves Project voiced the same theme in describing his relationship with the advocate staff:

You know, [I] kinda grew attached to them [the staff] and stuff like that.

Advocates were pretty good guys. . . I know I get along with my YAP worker wicked good.

### *Summary*

Phases of staff/youth collaboration with distinct features emerged in a number of the co-production interventions studied. Evidence corroborated and enhanced the key processes and nature of reciprocal exchanges associated with the phases of staff/youth collaboration. Findings also supported the link between empowerment strategies employed and heightened levels of staff/youth collaboration.

The reciprocal and generative nature of the changes is especially important because they indicate the dynamic nature of co-production interventions. For example, staff roles changes were linked to both youth and parent role changes. New levels of collaboration occurred as enhanced trust developed and new kinds of empowerment strategies were employed. As staff and youth coordinated and consulted with each other on project activities, opportunities for community-building occurred. Evidence of community building was accompanied by enhanced opportunities for youth autonomy, a greater recognition of staff/youth interdependence and higher levels of staff engagement. Finally, changes in staff/youth interactions served as indicators of the changing nature of staff/youth collaboration.

## Focus Group Results

Key findings from chapter 11 were reviewed by staff at a focus group session convened by the researcher (see appendix 3-3 for specific focus group questions for site one). As a reminder, the primary purpose of the focus group was to corroborate findings generated from the interview data. The focus group was structured so that staff had an opportunity to review and comment on the findings related to the core theoretical constructs of co-production; levels of involuntariness, empowerment practices, staff/youth collaboration and engagement.

Findings related to the first three core constructs are reviewed below. Findings specifically related to youth engagement and other youth/staff outcomes are reviewed in the next chapter.

### *Finding: Initial Youth Level of Involuntariness*

#### *Focus Group Results*

Participants corroborated the interview findings which showed that despite youth feeling pressure to participate, youth experienced low levels of involuntariness in choosing to participate in the co-production intervention. According to staff, systemic challenges associated with the juvenile justice system helped to explain this finding. Youth interactions with the probation officer, the primary referral source for the project, also impacted on level of involuntariness. The latter factor was identified during the interview process. The former factor represents an additional determinant or set of determinants associated with level of involuntariness.

Regarding service system challenges, staff pointed out that there is a long court delay, often six to 12 months, before a disposition is reached on a juvenile's case. During

that time interval, the connection between their presumed offense and the consequences (e.g., punishment) was often lost on the youth. Referring to involuntary services theory, the legitimacy of the sanction (see Rooney, 1992) perceived by the youth became compromised. This contributed to the low levels of involuntariness experienced by the youth. A staff member explained below:

You can't give kids this long span, like 6 months or 12 months or say well, in 12 months we're going back to court. It's just too much, they can't use that time frame. So that's one of the things that comes to mind, with regard to whether or not they feel that they have to participate or not [in the service].

Despite few court-ordered youth and low perceived legitimacy of the sanction, staff reinforced the findings from the interviews which identified the pressure that many youth experienced to participate in project activities. For many youth, pressure to participate increased as the court date approached. According to staff, the date of the court session is a key factor affecting initial youth attendance/compliance:

When I think back to the specific kids that participated, their level of participation, I think some of them, it was related to where they were within the court system, how far they had gotten, and if they're closer to it [the court process] being finalized, maybe the more willing they were to participate.

Pressures to participate also came from their probation officer directly. According to staff attending the focus group, at times the interaction between the officer and the youth morphed into an overt power struggle, with the youth becoming victimized.

Well, I think it comes across, instead of punishment, you have to do it, it comes across like, you know, the probation officer and the Family Court plays this game with kids like you have to do this, the kid says no, so it becomes a power struggle until, ultimately, it ends up with the kid in care or the kid breaks down.

Another staff member categorized the interaction between the key players in the system this way:

It is like a “huge game.” . . . It’s a big struggle and like, to see who’s going to come out on top with this youth’s life. . . the law guardian’s going back and forth trying to come to a settlement and it’s like, wait a minute, aren’t we talking about this kid who vandalized this neighborhood, and why aren’t we dealing with [that].

Staff noted, however, that pressure to participate varied by probation officer.

According to staff, some probation officers “have come a long way in working with us.”

These officers may have presented the service more as an opportunity, as “voluntary” to youth participants, instead of a mandate to be addressed. According to staff, a positive attitude exhibited by the probation officer toward the youth and toward the project also contributed to the low levels of involuntariness exhibited by the youth participants.

*Finding: Empowerment Practices Related to Initial Youth Participation: Parental Buy-in,*

#### *Intake Practices and Group Practices*

##### *Focus Group Results*

Focus group participants unanimously corroborated the finding that linked parental buy-in with youth participation. The only exception noted were youth in the

foster care system. These foster care youth participated in the project without foster parents' involvement. A staff member summarized staff views on this issue:

I feel that if the parents aren't bought into what the kids are doing. . . if they can't cultivate them to come, encourage them to come, if they don't come and participate as well, get that excitement in there, if they show no interest in it [the project], the kids can't carry it on afterwards. But if the parents were involved with it, keep talking about it, you know coming and sparked interest, then you would have a better chance [of youth participation].

The importance of empowerment-oriented intake practices to facilitating youth engagement was also corroborated by staff. Consistent with the interview findings, first impressions by the youth mattered:

I think who within YAP is doing intakes and the initial engagement with the youth, whoever's doing that intake is really going to determine how excited the family is to participate in YAP. If the first person they meet is really excited about the project, and really presenting it as something helpful, then the family is much more likely to buy into it than if it's not presented that way.

The same staff person stressed the consistency between YAP's values and principles and empowerment-oriented co-production practices. According to this staff person, YAP strengths-based, asset development approach allowed for a smooth transition to co-production programming. The organization's emphasis on youth voice

and choice, beginning at intake and continuing throughout the life of the case, was an important antecedent factor affecting youth participation:

YAP's approach is different in that we expect kids to make good choices for themselves and we set positive expectations for the kids, whereas sometimes Probation or DSS set negative expectations for the kids and when you set those expectations, that's often what you get. . . we assume that they'll make the right choices, and I think that makes the difference, really.

In addition, staff corroborated many of the empowerment-oriented group practices identified during the interviews and also added a few more. Empowering the parents and youth to determine a theme for the co-production project was identified as an essential strategy linked to higher levels of engagement. Maintaining a consistent, focused agenda and providing sufficient structure and planning for the activities were also identified as important factors related to participation. Action-oriented projects that kept the youths' attention were also emphasized. The final celebration was noted as important to ensure that everyone worked together toward a goal and that the community recognized the hard work of the youth.

A good deal of dialogue occurred during the focus group concerning the issue of at risk youth working together in group settings involved in co-production interventions. Staff argued that homogeneous groups of at risk youth can work together in group settings as contributors. Staff corroborated interview findings suggesting that for these interventions to be successful, the following empowerment-oriented practices need to be in place:

- ✓ Staff preparing for the group project by “doing some homework” on youth relationships within the group to ensure a compatible composition
- ✓ Creating a safe environment where “youth feel equal with other kids in the group.”
- ✓ A strong presence of adult leadership
- ✓ Creating a family-like setting of trust, acceptance and bonding

Staff offered a number of additional practices designed to fortify the group experience and protect against potential deviancy affects. For example, one staff member suggested that staff develop a “safety plan” with the group and for the group. A safety plan would identify potential risk areas around group functioning and incorporate a series of strategies to predict and prevent risky situations from occurring. The safety plan would also include a plan to address crises when they occur in the group.

Staff also suggested enhanced group empowerment practices to allow youth to work with staff more directly on behavior management problems as they arise. The following response illustrated this point:

Whereas some of the things [behavior issues] I think maybe, we could've handled, if it was an issue that placed the whole group at risk, maybe more debriefing [with the entire group] to say, “all right, that was handled this way. What do you guys think? What should be the consequences? What should be the follow-up? How should we handle this? We're a group, we're a team.”

Moreover, staff encouraged more group reflection before and after group sessions. This was not formally built into the group process but was suggested as an

improvement to consider. The use of adventure based counseling principles was suggested to assist in structuring group reflection.

*Finding: Autonomy-Related Empowerment Practices*

*Focus Group Results*

The importance of cultivating opportunities for youth voice and choice was corroborated by staff participants. Staff reiterated the choices made available to youth. These choices included picking the project theme, selecting project activities each week and deciding upon roles to take within group projects.

Focus group dialogue focused extensively on the importance of youth leadership practices and the relative merits of informal versus formal leadership opportunities. There was general consensus among participants, consistent with findings from interview data that organically developed leadership roles were preferable to formal leadership assignments determined by staff. This strategy was viewed as more in line with allowing youth and parents to structure their own project. A staff member voiced her position on this issue below:

I think for specifically, to these groups, that maybe if we had just let it evolve on its own terms. . . I think in their [the youth leader] mind, if they start accepting money [pay through the supported work program], that they would lose their position in the group; it would've changed the dynamic and they didn't want that.

This approach was contrasted with formal peer leadership programs that go through a process of selecting youth leaders. As a staff member explained

I think our approach is the way we always approached families; that we just get individual strengths and everybody has the opportunity to share.

That's probably the difference.

In developing informal, ad-hoc leadership opportunities, staff noted that they were better able to be creative and develop the strengths and assets of more youth. This approach was viewed as inclusive, in contrast with the formal leadership approach, which could result in excluding certain youth and their potential to gain from the experience.

Two staff members explained their positions below:

I think that activities are delegated based on strengths and if we saw a kid that had leadership capabilities, then they would have appropriate stuff delegated to them based on that, so I think it was all about matching.

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If kids have something to contribute, they should all be encouraged to. And so I think back to when we tried to encourage youth leadership, it was like, "oh, you're good at this, you should be the leader." It's like, "well, what about what some other kids might be good at," but that kid is maybe a little shy or something and so we didn't tap into that as well.

Finally, the use of alumni youth as leaders was identified as an untapped resource that needed to be explored. An example was shared of a returning youth coming back to the program requesting an opportunity to "give back."

I actually had a girl that I worked with before she was placed in a residential facility and she came back and requested me to work with her as a parent advocate. And the information she gave to me. . . as far as how

kids return from placement, what needs to happen and what worked for her and what she knows, I think all that was great information.

The staff member continued:

They'll stop by the office and . . . they stay for however long. And some of them stop in more than others. I guess I've never really tried to tap into it in any kind of way, it was just more of a social. . . .

*Finding: Family Relationship-Building Empowerment Practices: Parents as “Co-Producers”*

#### *Focus Group Results*

Staff corroborated and augmented interview findings which revealed family relationship-building strategies and the impact of these strategies on youth engagement. Staff reiterated the link between active parental participation and youth participation. In addition, staff identified a number of key roles for parents. One role mentioned during the interviews was to transport youth to programming. Another role which was not mentioned previously was parents utilizing their own community connections, their “social capital,” to assist with project implementation. Furthermore, staff noted that parental involvement directly impacted on improving family relationships and family functioning. A staff member commented that “just delegating the roles and responsibilities so that the kids can see how the parents can actually be necessary” was important for youth to witness.

Finally, staff members were surprised by the finding that some youth were ambivalent about parental involvement for fear that the project would move away from being youth-centered. To avoid this situation, staff spoke of the importance of parents

“not taking over roles of the kids so that the kids feel that they still are able to have their ownership piece.”

*Finding: Staff/Youth Collaboration*

*Focus Group Results*

Staff corroborated key processes involved in fostering enhanced levels of staff/youth collaboration. Specifically, staff identified the change in their roles, from leader to facilitator. For example, the staff person involved in the successful fire safety project spoke about her role in assisting the increasingly autonomous parent and youth group in this manner:

I occasionally provided transportation and an office for them to do their activities, to make fliers, use the computer and help facilitate the meetings.

That's what my role turned into.

Consistent with the interview findings, staff role changes in the fire safety project corresponded to youth and family members stepping up, to leadership positions. Positive recognition from the community also spurred the youth and families on to greater levels of self-determination. The staff member explained this transition below:

I think it was taking on role. They [youth and adults] took on roles for the group. And then I think they got feedback from the community, that initial feedback or acknowledgment motivated them.

Levels of staff/youth collaboration were also influenced by organizational features such as job structure. Projects that were staffed by a single advocate who maintained both responsibility for providing individual advocacy services for the youth and also oversaw the co-production group project were identified as more successful than

projects that had a different staff configuration. In this preferred staffing model, the single advocate was better able to integrate each of the core program features and to satisfactorily address individual service needs as they were identified.

## **CHAPTER 12: FINDINGS FROM SITE ONE: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND OTHER YOUTH/STAFF OUTCOMES**

The outcomes of co-production interventions are presented herein. The chapter begins with findings related to youth engagement, an important proximal indicator of co-production interventions. Levels of youth engagement are then described and key determinants of youth engagement are reviewed per the evidence gathered.

Then, the most salient youth and staff related outcomes associated with youth engagement are presented. The challenges of integrating co-production interventions to help address core risk factors are identified in conclusion.

### **Youth Engagement**

The proposed theoretical framework for co-production includes a description of levels of youth engagement within co-production interventions. Levels of engagement are categorized according to involuntary, semi-voluntary and voluntary engagement. Within each level of engagement, proposed youth behaviors and outcomes are set forth (see appendix 9-7). The literature on engagement theory (see chapter 7) was used to develop this developmental progression. The empirical study sought to ground this theoretical progression with data from youth participants and staff.

7 key findings emerge from the data. Findings from the empirical study corroborate as well as expand upon aspects of the proposed theoretical progression of youth engagement within co-production interventions for involuntary youth. These findings are revealed below.

*Finding 1:* Levels of engagement for involuntary youth varied among participants. Some youth experienced involuntary compliance and other youth experienced high levels of voluntary engagement.

*Evidence and Analysis:* Findings revealed a wide disparity in youth engagement. Some youth shared that they were merely “going through the motions” of participation. Other youth were genuinely excited and committed to the project early on and continued an active level of engagement throughout the project.

For example, two youth, one involved in the Army Reserve Project and one involved in the Boys and Girls Club and Army Reserve Projects, noted that although they attended and completed the project, that they were not truly active participants. The youth responded this way to the following question posed by the researcher: “Did you experience engagement when you were involved in the project?”

I just showed up. I wasn’t really all that interested, but it was fine doing it though.

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I just kinda went through the motions. You know, I mean, yeah, it’s a good project and stuff but I wasn’t all that excited about it.

Contrast these responses to a youth who was involved in the environmental project. His excitement and commitment to the project was apparent in the response below:

I would do it [participate in the project]. I woulda done it, straight up. I would still do it to this day. If they said [to me], “will you come and be a peer leader and help these kids do this?” I would say, “yes,” straight up. . . I just really enjoyed everything about it, you know? I just, I can’t stop thinking about it. I liked it.

*Finding 2:* Some of the youth who were mandated or had been pressured to participate initially became semi-voluntarily engaged in program activities over time. As these youth

progressed from mandatory to semi-voluntary participation, they exhibited both emotional and cognitive engagement.

*Evidence and Analysis:* For some youth, changes in youth engagement occurred during the course of the intervention. One staff member reflected on this theme below:

If I can compare the beginning of the program with the end of the program, I was not very happy at the beginning of the program. Kids were not showing up but as it got going, it seemed that I did not have to beg them to come. They were some who did not want to go before that would be waiting [for me to pick them up].

Another staff member identified a dramatic shift in a youth's participation level:

I think he had been in the program for about two years. When I see him he still says that one of the staff from that first project was his favorite advocate and will specify certain activities that they did as a group as highlights in his time, not just in YAP but they're things that stand out to him. . . they were opportunities that really made him feel a part of something. . . I can remember the advocate [initially, before the project started] going to pick him up and he'd be barely out of bed and not seeming engaged or ready or actively participating. So, but if you ask the kid now, two years later he will say that those [things about the project].

An administrator for the project corroborated the staff member's statement:

We had one youth that slept 22 of 24 hours a day who was getting up at 7am to raise funds [for the fire fighters]. I think that tells it all.

In the dialogue below, a staff member who participated in the environmental project revealed to the researcher that about a half of the youth participants became actively engaged in the project by the end of the project and would have chosen to continue to work on the project voluntarily after discharge:

Researcher: For those kids that did participate regularly, do you think that they would participate in the project if they were not pressured or mandated to participate?

Staff member: I would definitely say yes, talking to some of the kids by the end of the group, they were at least three of them that, money or no money, said that they would definitely help out. I do not know if it was YAP or me, or you but something touched them somewhere, which were a success.

*Finding 3:* Participants identified youth engagement as an important proximal outcome of co-production interventions.

*Evidence and Analysis:* In discussing how to measure project success, both youth and staff members indicated that youth engagement was a key variable to measure. A youth commented on this theme below:

Look at the group and watch the kids, like see how much their attitude changed from the beginning. Because at first, the first day at YAP all of us just sat there, like pissed off looks on our face. And at the end we were like, all fine and talking with everybody.

A second youth identified engagement as an indicator of success:

Researcher: How would I know if you guys were really engaged in the project?

Youth: Like if we keep coming back. Keep talking about it. Constantly show up like excitement in it.

Two staff members also commented on this theme. The first staff member, who was involved in the Army Reserves project, shared her views, in dialogue with the researcher:

Researcher: What outcomes or results would you measure in terms of the youth?

Staff member: Youth participation. Change in behavior. . . . Like how kids participated in the group-some of the kids did a lot of work and others just sat there.

A second staff person who was involved in the fire safety project corroborated the initial staff member's views:

[A] sign of progress? That they come each week. . . That involvement is more, the same or as much as when they first began the project. Should be more, that they are enthusiastic. . .

*Finding 4:* Youths' behavioral changes and language changes provided evidence of the transition from involuntary participation to semi-voluntary engagement. These changes also indicated the presence of cognitive and emotional engagement.

*Evidence and Analysis:* Participants offered examples of behavior and language changes that illustrate progression in levels of engagement. Some of the comments below reflected actual participant observations and experiences. Other comments were

suggestions as to the kind of observations to look for when changes in levels of engagement occur.

For involuntary youth, behavioral changes were viewed as more indicative of changes in levels of engagement than youth comments about the project. For example, two staff members observed that youth often complained about the project yet nonetheless appeared to be engaged in project activities. In other words, the youths' level of participation was high even as they complained. Staff commented on this theme below:

She would complain otherwise about everything about group. . . but yet I would see her in group, talking with, versus sitting way out there sulking, like she did in the beginning. So her actions spoke differently than what her mouth was speaking. So, I think that it was social bonding. I don't know if I would say that is a success but she was definitely an improvement.

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If you look over and they are hard at work, I asked the kids, "you just said how you hated this stuff, why? Do you really hate it?" They would say, "No, not really." [I would say to them] "Please don't say it then, because I take it as negative feedback."

Participant responses provided evidence of behavioral changes linked to *emotional engagement*. One indicator of emotional engagement was youth engaging family members and friends in discussion about project activities. Two staff members illustrated these instances below:

The kid does not go home and feel that it is done and it ends. They can talk about it as a family. Hopefully, they sit around after dinner for ten minutes or something and go over some study and [ask the youth], “Do you think this is helping you?” . . . If you talk to the parents and you explain what you are doing-I would do that just to see if the parents knew what was going on. And, if the parent said, “yes, that is what my son is doing at the DEC,” that is a sign, he came home and talked about it with his family.

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Sign of progress? That they come each week. That they tell their friends about it. That after the project they are still talking about it.

Another indicator of emotional engagement was youth voicing pride in their accomplishments. In the following example, a youth compared his production in the environmental project to other less engaged youth, bragging about his contributions:

We did more of the work. We actually got really into it. Like, we were making two boxes a day. The other guys just kinda lollygagged.

The same youth voiced a sense of accomplishment in participating in project activities. Signs of emotional engagement were reflected in the responses below:

Sure, if like, they wanted their father to come. . . But, I think it’s more of a kid project, saying, ”Look at what we accomplished. We’re kids, look what we accomplished with no help, with no parents, we did this ourselves. We have more to be proud of, you know what I mean?”

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Well, like, our picture was in the paper and everything and I was wicked proud of that. I was like, “Look at that.”. . . My grandparents cut it out and put it on the fridge and stuff, they still have it. . . . We were the only kids that had done it and no one’s done it since then, I mean, that was a great project [DEC project].

Two other youth provided evidence of emotional engagement through identifying pride in their accomplishments. The first youth reflected upon the additional work that he completed in refurbishing a canoe with the sale proceeds going to a local charity. The second youth noted with pride his productivity in surveying residents as part of the fire safety project:

I did most of the work on that canoe, actually.

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Researcher: How many people did you survey in total [for the fire safety project]?

Youth: Like 4 or 5 pages full, with 20 people on a page.

Researcher: Serious? You surveyed about 100 people.

Youth: Yeah, we almost got nearly everyone covered everywhere in [town]. . . . We did the most money for YAP at that time doing the walk-a-thon [for the skate park]. We took the most sponsors.

Both staff and youth also indicated the importance of *cognitive engagement*. A staff member identified cognitive engagement when she observed youth and parents “participating, giving ideas, criticizing.” Cognitive engagement was revealed in the following description made by a staff member of youth involvement:

The ones that are active and engaged, they're doing it, they're talking. They're giving ideas. We can do this, we can do that. They're actually talking about different ways we can do this or that.

A youth identified when he is engaged cognitively in the following statement: "Like you work hard and you're focused all the time. You're driven to get it done."

Youths' suspension of a sense of time was another indicator of cognitive engagement. In other words, youth were so engaged that they lost track of the time devoted to the respective activities. A staff member related a circumstance when a youth complained to the advocate that a session is over:

Just dropping a couple of kids off, one time, two of the better kids were like, "we are going home already-can't we go back to [the store] and see what they need?" [The kids] did not want to go home. I thought, "is something [bad] going on at home today?". . . . But, that turned out not to be the case. They were enjoying themselves.

Moreover, some youth exhibited a "language of agency" (see Heath, 1999 and chapter 7 for further description) in describing their experiences. Language changes are indicators of cognitive and emotional engagement. Examples of "agency language" occur when youth begin to employ adult language to describe their strategies, contingencies and options in planning for projects (Heath, 1999).

Examples of agency language by two youth in the environmental project are presented below. As the examples below indicated, youth used the pronoun "we" to show solidarity, group cohesion and ownership of project activities. The link between agency language and cognitive engagement was apparent in these statements by youth.

We had some problems but we had to figure them out.

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We could tell the other ones what to do because, like I said, we were the ones doing the majority of the work and if we said something and they didn't do it, all we would have to say [to the advocate is], "We asked them to do it and they're not doing it."

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While we were making the nest for the birds, a couple of times, the sides [of the nests] did not work and we'd have to figure it out. And it took us about fifteen minutes to figure out we couldn't use this something and once we all got together and figured it out, we put together the cage. . .

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We had another group [of kids] who came in.[to work with our group] . . . We told them they couldn't come back. We told them we didn't like how they were just basically there, to be there. They weren't there to help out.

*Finding 5:* Empowerment-oriented practices employed by staff were associated with distinct levels of engagement.

*Evidence and Analysis:* Findings revealed a link between specific empowerment practices and levels of youth engagement. In the example below, a staff member identified the association between youth working together in groups to solve problems encountered and the presence of cognitive engagement:

Kids that hash things out among themselves. I might say, "Time out. Let's explain it together. Let's discuss why to move forward with this strategy.

As a group, we may come up with an even better strategy."

Reflections by a youth participant first individually, then in dialogue with the researcher, further supported the link between youth working together in problem solving and cognitive engagement:

We were making the nest for the bird and a couple of times actually, the sides for some reason didn't work and we'd have to figure it out. And, it took us about fifteen minutes to figure out we couldn't use something and once we all got together and [we] figured it out.

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Researcher: How did you feel when everybody solved the problem.

Youth: Felt good. I don't know, relieved.

Researcher: Was there a lot of "high fiving" going on?

Youth: Yeah.

Furthermore, findings revealed a link between youth taking ownership of project activities and both emotional and cognitive engagement. A youth described the circumstances when a group of outside youth joined the group project:

Researcher: So you think that these new kids who came kind of like almost, rained on your party?

Youth: Yeah

Researcher: You had your team there, right?

Youth: Yeah and they came in and think they're the boss of us.

Group cohesion, an empowerment-related outcome indicator, is also linked to emotional engagement. This association was illustrated by a staff member below as he shared with the researcher a situation when youth took charge in policing themselves to maintain standards of behavior within the group.

The kids would tell you “group wasn’t fun today.” “I can’t believe that guy said that to [the staff person]” or “that guy said that to you.” And they would be like, “you know, he shouldn’t talk to you that way, that’s not right. . .” Or some of them would tell him [the offender], “while we were in the group you shouldn’t be doing that.”

*Finding 6:* Successful experiences in co-production interventions became a “gateway” to continued civic engagement for involuntary youth post-project completion.

*Evidence and Analysis:* Findings revealed that high levels of youth empowerment, collaboration and engagement which occurred during project activities resulted in some participants deciding to continue to contribute (or desiring to contribute) post project completion. In the following comment, a youth in the environmental project revealed his desire to continue to contribute after the project ended and what factors led him to that decision:

Because I liked going (to the project site after mandated community services were complete). And I really had no choice anyway, because they would just pick me up. But, I said, “why not?” It wasn’t that bad, you know? I remember that I washed the ambulances and my community services were done but I still did it anyway. . . . If they said, “will you come and will you be a peer leader and help these kids do this,” I would

say, “Yes, straight up.” . . . I just enjoyed everything about it [the DEC project].

The staff person for the environmental project corroborated the statement made by the youth:

Some of the kids by the end of the group, there were at least 3 of them that they will be there, [they would say] “money or no money-we will definitely help out.” I do not know if it was YAP or me or you, but something touched them somewhere, which was a success.

Also, as noted earlier, some of the participants in the fire safety project started their own group after the project ended. An administrator for the project described this circumstance:

I remember that they started their own little group after this one that lasted for a while. . . The first one, they felt empowered that at the end, they could implement this themselves.

Findings further revealed that tapping into participants’ sense of mission and purpose impacted on the desire of parents and kids to continue project activities. The advocate for the fire safety project identified the importance of this empowerment practice as a key factor in continued involvement:

They (the parents and the kids) would have done it voluntarily—they had a mission set in mind-they already had their goals, so this was just an avenue for them [to achieve those goals]

Similarly, a youth in the fire safety project identified in his comment below the desire to help other youth transitioning to a new community as a reason why he wanted to

continue with the project. His found desire to make change, to help other youth in a similar situation, motivated him to continue to contribute:

We were planning on doing it again [the project] a few months later because people kept moving into town so we would just keep going [when] more people needed stuff.

Finally, a young person identified post-project continuation as a key indicator of a successful co-production project:

[One sign of success] is if they wanted to keep going on, for more projects. If they kept coming back asking about if more were going on or something. That's how I would think if it [the project] was good.

*Finding 7:* Specific empowerment and collaboration-related practices and strategies were linked to distinct levels of youth engagement. Distinct patterns emerged, including: (1) Practices yielded cumulative and generative effects, (2) Later phases of engagement necessitated youth experiencing earlier phases, and (3) Specific practices were linked to multiple phases of engagement.

*Evidence and Analysis:* Appendix 12-1 summarizes the findings from this chapter and the previous chapter, linking empowerment and collaboration-oriented practices to levels of youth engagement. Important empowerment strategies and practices associated with each level of engagement are described. In addition, aspects of staff/youth collaboration, including key processes and the nature of reciprocal exchanges are linked with levels of youth engagement.

For example, data from the interviews revealed that empowerment-oriented intake practices and empowerment-driven group practices, including creating a favorable mix of

youth participants, were key factors linked to initial youth attendance. Empowerment-oriented group practices, including strategies that created a pro-social caring environment for youth to take risks and experiment, and securing parental “buy-in,” also were important factors in fostering youth participation. On the other hand, autonomy related empowerment practices were associated with higher levels of youth engagement, including cognitive and emotional engagement. These practices included opportunities for youth to exercise voice and choice and to serve as leaders.

Moreover, successful collaborative practices were linked with higher levels of engagement. For example, cognitive and emotional engagement was linked with changing relationships between youth and staff. As youth and staff work together as co-owners of projects and roles become interdependent, youth took on leadership roles and become cognitively engaged in project activities. Emotional engagement was also developed, especially as youth took charge of projects and bonded with staff in furthering project goals.

Furthermore, evidence indicated that co-production interventions produce both cumulative benefits and generative effects. These interventions are, in short, dynamic; they change and create changes as they are implemented. And this means that co-production interventions need to be carefully monitored over time in order to understand them and the outcomes they yield.

An example of how the interventions and outcomes changed over time occurred with the flexibility that staff exhibited in structuring the youth leadership component in a number of the interventions. Staff’s creation of ad hoc, informal leadership opportunities in response to the challenges faced in developing a larger, more formal leadership

component, resulted in additional leadership opportunities for more youth. In turn, additional leadership roles contributed to higher levels of engagement for more youth.

Achieving cumulative benefits also necessitated that youth experience early levels of engagement as a precursor to higher levels of engagement. This required certain factors to be in place. For example, parental buy-in and empowerment-oriented intake practices are important features associated with initial youth participation. The presence of these factors set the stage for youth to progress to higher levels of youth engagement.

In the same vein, youth need to experience emotional and cognitive engagement while participating in project activities before they decide to participate in service projects post discharge. In other words, both kinds of engagement are prerequisites for youth to voluntarily participate in service projects post discharge. This later level of engagement required intrinsic motivation and initiative by youth and parents for post-discharge projects to be successful.

Furthermore, a number of empowerment and collaboration factors were linked to different kinds of engagement. For example, youth leadership opportunities contributed to both emotional and cognitive engagement. As leaders, youth became more emotionally committed to project activities while also becoming more engaged cognitively in addressing the challenges inherent in performing as a leader. Further study is required to document these inter-relationships and pathways, including clarifying directionality of constructs, within projects where youth and parents serve as co-producers and contributors.

## **Staff-Related Outcomes**

### *Key Findings*

- ✓ Youth engagement and staff efficacy and empowerment co-vary: As youth engagement goes up, staff efficacy and empowerment increase and vice versa.

### *Evidence and Analysis*

Per the proposed intervention framework for co-production, it is proposed that enhanced youth engagement results in positive staff outcomes, including improved staff efficacy, empowerment and engagement. In other words, as staff experience success with engaging youth, their self-efficacy and confidence are enhanced. In turn, job satisfaction improves. As these conditions materialize, improved staff engagement in co-production activities occurs. Findings from the interviews lend support to these proposed inter-relationships.

First, findings revealed that when co-production projects did not meet performance expectations or when youth were disengaged, staff efficacy and empowerment were negatively impacted. For example, certain staff was faced with the challenge of working with youth experiencing high levels of crisis, either in their home, in school or with police and the courts. Also, due to budget limitations, some of the co-production projects had insufficient staff to deliver basic YAP services, including wraparound planning and individualized advocacy support designed to support the co-production additive. In these circumstances, a mismatch occurred between available programming and success in addressing core youth needs. As a result, youth participation and engagement within the co-production innovation waned. As engagement waned,

staff frustration became evident. The following comment offered by a staff member illustrated this frustration:

I would say for other staff, basically frustrating. . . .Playing that balancing act because what they're contracted to do-meeting individual needs of cases and trying to run the group project and always having to feel they're dividing up their time. . . say you're supposed to meet [the group meets] Friday afternoon, but Friday morning, you've got six probation officers who all call mad because none of the kids went to school. It's tough [to be] proactive about running your group that afternoon when you have got six kids who did not go to school that day.

Two other staff members directly linked below poor youth engagement with low levels of staff efficacy and empowerment:

I was really discouraged about kids not showing up. And, trying to get kids to understand that I am not doing this for the money-I can get this money anywhere-I care about you.

\*\*\*

I think there was negative impact on staff. I just think that the project did not meet up with our standards. Obviously it's gonna play negative on the staff. . . The kids, they were there every week but they were hard to engage sometimes.

In contrast, in those circumstances where youth and their parents were engaged, positive staff outcomes followed. In other words, it appeared that client successes led to

staff feelings of accomplishment. An administrator recalled below the excitement of staff involved in the successful fire safety co-production intervention:

I think the first one [the fire safety project], staff was very excited about it.

I can remember the parent advocate was very excited and we had talked about having the parent group that went and ran independently and she'd almost been a consultant for that group to run independently

Another advocate discussed below the kudos he received from his peers as youth began to excel in the co-production project that he was involved with:

I think on the positive side, you got people in the office, it is a lot of

stress-it is positive and people can see a part of the program excelling-

Different advocates would say, "what are you doing with these guys? A year ago, these kids were obnoxious." I would tell the kids, "good job- people are talking."

Moreover, there was evidence of advocates having fun and enjoying project activities. A youth participant in the environmental project illustrated this point in describing his advocate:

Well, the advocate always worked on it [the project] with us. He helped us figure out the instructions. . . . He was always excited about it. He always had a laugh on his face and he was always funny.

Similarly, the advocate for the Army Reserves project appeared to enjoy the project she was involved with. This was due in part to her prior work history in the military. This prior work experience contributed to both her enjoyment and the experience afforded to the youth:

Well, I really liked it [the Army Reserves Project] because I was a part of the military. So, I was really excited when they were all like, “yeah, let’s do that.” All my kids knew I was a part of the military. They asked me questions all the time and they were so excited about it, because a lot of the people don’t get to do that. [So they asked], “what happened here? What happened here? Maybe I want to join the military.” . . . Like they knew, my kids knew it was important to me, because I am a veteran. So they knew that. So they’d be doing something, they’d be like, “what was your job [in the military]?”

Finally, findings also indicated that higher levels of youth and parent empowerment were associated with enhanced levels of *staff engagement*. In the example below, the parent advocate for the successful fire safety project, which evidenced high levels of youth and parent leadership (see previous chapter), chose to use her own social capital to further project goals:

We [the staff] in the beginning, helped set up the connections. For some of the ideas, we helped them to appropriately connect with the community member that they needed to connect with. . . I set up the opportunity with Pizza Hut [fundraiser for the skate park], I still have the pictures of it. The kids, I thought initially this is a great idea. Then I started thinking. I’m like, “oh, they’re never going to hold down tables.” They got there and they loved it.

Importantly, this staff member also chose to volunteer her own time in support of the fledgling group so that the project could continue after the initial 12 week project

ended. (Note: This did not involve a major time commitment.) Here, staff voluntarily decided to support the parents and youth as a “community-member” as opposed to a staff member, working jointly to improve the community.

### **Other Salient Youth Outcomes**

#### *Youth Empowerment Related Outcomes*

##### *Key Findings*

- ✓ Internal Outcomes/Asset Development: Social skill development and positive identity changes, including self-esteem enhancements, were the most pronounced internal youth empowerment-related outcomes identified by participants.
- ✓ External Outcomes/Asset Development: Youth earned redemption, as evidenced by an altered community perception of the individual youth. In addition, improved youth/family relationships and improved family functioning were identified as important outcomes.

##### *Evidence and Analysis*

Per the expanded theoretical intervention framework for co-production, enhanced youth engagement leads to the attainment of a range of important youth outcomes (see chapters four and nine). Outcomes are categorized according to empowerment-related youth outcomes, developmental competencies and problem-reduction outcomes. Youth development and empowerment outcomes are further categorized into internal and external asset building, per the framework developed by the Search Institute (see chapter 4).

Findings emphasized *two key areas of internal youth outcome attainment* associated with co-production. These areas are social skill development and identity

changes, including self-esteem enhancement. Findings associated with each outcome area are reviewed below.

### *Social Skill Development*

Ten participants (6 youth, 4 staff) identified social skill development as a key outcome of co-production. Social skills development includes youth cultivating interpersonal competencies such as working with difficult youth and exhibiting friendship and empathy; working well in a group and cultivating conflict resolution skills such as addressing differences nonviolently (see Scales & Leffert, 2004). For example, three youth below highlighted an enhanced ability to work with other youth whom are perceived as difficult to work with:

I learned to work with people a little better. . . . [with challenging kids]. I just started talking to them and acting like I was his friend and I was saying, “Look, [the] guys are gonna kill you if you don’t stop.” I was like, “I’ll stick up for ya, but if you screw me over, you’re done.”

\*\*\*

I learned how to work with other people a little better. . . Basically [participating in the project] helped me work all together. Because one of the kids was a real pain in the rear and I was ready to fix him. But I just couldn’t. . . . Like, I got more patience.

\*\*\*

I had to, like, learn how to get along with people that I like, never got along with before. . . Couple of people I knew beforehand before I got into

the program. I didn't like them one bit and then I had to be like, nice to them and stuff. And like, not get into any fights.

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Two youth identified the importance of making new friends as a result of project participation:

I would see if they learned how to be friends with someone they never met.

\*\*\*

What did we get out of it? Not to be as shy and. . . made a couple of new friends, here and there.

Furthermore, staff identified the ability of youth to work successfully in groups as an important outcome. For example, an administrator noted that the project gave youth "a sense of group responsibility." An advocate identified teamwork as a key learning outcome: "Teamwork. They learned teamwork. Not all of them-the majority of them did-they did a good job learning that."

Two staff identified below the group bonding that emerged from project participation:

[The project] gave the kids a sense of social belonging, like they're part of a group.

\*\*\*

I think with the group project, that if it's run correctly, then I think the group bonding that occurs within the group is something that is very

powerful, and they could actually form relationships with one another that would last well past any service provider involvement.

*Building a Positive Identity, including Self-Esteem Enhancements*

Findings revealed that for many youth, the project became the first time that they were able to identify and use their assets and strengths. Two staff members reflected below on the opportunities afforded to youth participants, to gain self-worth, to recognize assets and strengths and to become part of a special group.

I would say that when the kids start, it's even hard for them to identify that they have strengths and they have capabilities and skills that somebody would want to tap into. . . And it's not until they start identifying and looking at all the other skills and abilities that other people see, that they start saying, "Well, wait, I can do that too, I can tie a fly and go fly-fishing. . . I can play basketball and teach basketball to a younger youth."

\*\*\*

A lot of families didn't identify initially, strengths or areas where they could assist, but I know toward the end . . . I think people realized, "Oh, I'd have something to offer that someone else needs". . . It wasn't just us [staff] pointing it out, but they were recognizing for themselves, based on hearing what other people needed, where they could fill in and assist.

A staff member and a youth identified a specific youth participant who gained self-confidence from taking on an informal leadership role in the project. This compelling example is discussed by the youth participant in dialogue with the researcher:

Youth: She [the other youth participant] had to stand out there and get donations. So that was really cool, I think.

Researcher: So, what did that provide for her, do you think?

Youth: Ummm.

Researcher: Did she feel better about herself, maybe?

Youth: Yeah, probably more self-confident because she got to stand out there and like ask for money.

A staff member shared the following observations with the researcher concerning the same youth:

She knew what she was doing [sewing the blankets for the soldiers]. I think that made her feel better about herself, because she would teach the kids how to do it, and she would be like, “I already know how to do it, I’ll show you.” You know she had the upper hand. . . She was confident in doing it. This was normally a kid who would want nothing to do with any of them and she was like, “well, I know what I am doing,” and she went around and showed the room how to do it.

Findings also emphasized *two key areas of external youth outcome attainment* associated with co-production. These areas included a changed community perception of the youth and improvements in youth/family relationships. Findings associated with each external outcome area are reviewed below.

#### *Earning Redemption: A Changed Community Perception*

Nine participants (5 staff, 4 youth) identified a changed community perception of the youth as a key outcome resulting from participation in the co-production intervention.

Both youth and staff noted that engaging in projects that assisted their community altered the youths' image of themselves from "juvenile delinquents" to "contributing" community members. A sample of staff responses to this theme are included below:

I think [they benefited] from involvement in their community. I think, mostly, the opportunity to show that they had something to offer, and being given the opportunity to be a productive member of society.

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Just getting their names out there-getting recognized. . . I think recognition, even though the kids don't always say [that]. [They might say], "I don't care what you think," they really do care. I said the same thing when I was a kid-you go home wondering what they think. . . . you broke into someplace, now you are labeled a bad kid, you see your name in the paper-I know that kid-he has made a change. Bad reputation is hard to get rid of. . . . we are getting your name out there on the different side of newspaper, maybe not the second page-the public record-a lot of those kids by the end, when you talk to them, they got the idea as to why we we're doing it [the project].

\*\*\*

You know, these kids are labeled in this town and at the end, they were put in the paper donating all this money and I think that was kind of like, you know, redeeming themselves. . . . they're making a difference in their community, that they feel more important in their community. . . . we did

bottle drives and we did car washes [to raise money for the skate park] and people started seeing them in a different light.

\*\*\*

I think YAP moved forward with it [the project] to give the kids a chance to change their face in the community. How the community views these kids sometimes is; you put a PINS or you put a JD behind the kids and it defines who they are. This [opportunity] gives the kids a chance to change that.

This outcome resonated with youth as well. As the comments below revealed, some youth participated in project activities so that they would be seen as responsible in front of the family court judge:

It'll help you because you got community service and you need to do it and it's a really good impression for like court.

\*\*\*

Maybe recognized as a good thing and not always for the bad things, you know.

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#### *Improved Youth/Family Relationships and Family Functioning*

Six participants (3 youth, 3 staff) identified improved youth/family relationships and improved family functioning as an important outcome of co-production participation. These outcomes occurred in the two interventions where parents served as active participants. For example, a staff member noted below how time spent together working on the fire safety project improved communication between children and parents:

It [the project] gave them a scheduled time to get together, and then the scheduled time turned into just wanting to be doing things together. . . . this just opened the lines of communication. The parents felt more of a role, responsibility with coming up with the ideas for the children to do and kept them following through.

### **Integrating Co-Production Interventions to Address Problem/Risk Factors**

The use of co-production practices and strategies to address important youth problem/risk factors was identified by a number of participants. In this section, specific outcome areas related to problem/risk factors that are amenable to change through involvement in co-production interventions are identified. Challenges associated with the integration of co-production into problem/risk areas are then reviewed. Addressing these challenges represents an advanced level of sophistication and commitment by staff, requiring special training and expertise.

First, in addition to empowerment related outcomes, *participants identified a number of problem or risk reducing outcomes resulting from co-production involvement. Improvements in school were most often noted.* Specifically, four participants identified school attendance gains (2 staff, 2 youth). School behavior improvements were also noted by four participants (2 staff, 2 youth). The link with improved school outcomes is important because, as noted earlier in this chapter, most of the youth participants brought histories of school-related problems; and success in school provides a critical pathway to improved well-being and overall functioning. School problems included not attending school, and behavior problems such as fighting on school grounds. A staff person below

linked involvement in the co-production project with improved school attendance for an identified youth:

One thing that could easily be measured is increase in school attendance. Increase in getting up in the morning. I mean those kids were very isolated and not wanting to get up early in the morning. They stay up late playing on the computer and this group [the co-production group] really gave them a focus outside of the house, in the community.

Another staff person identified how the project might have contributed to improved behavior at school:

It is to try to get them [the youth] back on the right track. In doing so, they are getting praise [for their accomplishments in the project]. School sometimes changed -- for this one kid, I believe that school changed a little bit. Instead of saying “whatever” or swearing at a teacher, it went from that to “I will keep my mouth shut.”

A third youth, in dialogue with the researcher, identified school behavior improvements as a potential outcome measure of co-production participation:

Researcher: How do you know if the project was successful?

Youth: How well the kids improved, since they were in the program.

Researcher: In what areas?

Youth: Education. Like if they got into fights before, and like they are doing better.

*Participants also identified other problem-related outcomes resulting from co-production involvement.* Traditional child welfare and juvenile justice outcomes, such as

reduction in out-of-home placements, reduced instances of neglect and fewer instances of police calls to homes were noted as important outcomes to include as part of co-production outcome evaluation system. It is important to note that only staff identified these other system related outcomes; no youth identified these outcomes as associated with co-production involvement. The importance of linking co-production involvement with improvements in core system-related outcomes is reflected by the following comment offered by a staff participant:

I think that an outcome that the department [social services] was interested in was kids that did not come into their custody. So I think that we would have to measure at discharge whether or not they went into custody during their stay in the program. And, I think it would be nice to do some follow-up, like in six months and at twelve months.

*Despite the findings above, the potential link between co-production involvement and reduction in risk/problem behaviors was for many participants, a tenuous one.* For example, a number of youth advocated for a clear separation between co-production group activities and problem areas, such as school performance. For these youth, co-production was viewed as fun and outside the realm of traditional YAP services. A youth, in dialogue with the researcher, commented on this preferred separation:

Researcher: Is there any way that the project could have been more related to the reasons why you were referred to YAP?

Youth: Well, we have like YAP, that's more like about that, you know.

Like one-on-one, you know, we talk about stuff like that. So that's [the

project] is like a little different. Because like when we do group projects, we're with a group, we shouldn't talk about our business and stuff.

Researcher: Do you think it would have been a good idea to talk more about your business in a group? To help each other out?

Youth: Maybe some of the kids, maybe they want to talk about it, but if you did talk about it, you'd get them all pumped up and pissed off.

A second youth echoed the same theme, in responding to the researcher's question of integrating the co-production project with school programming:

Maybe best to keep it separate. . . Once you are out of school for the day, you just want to . . . Like no kid wants to go spend six to seven hours in school and then come back and have YAP like "okay, we're going to teach you some more."

Staff faced a number of challenges in attempting to integrate co-production into problem areas such as school performance. One challenge was a sense of hopelessness voiced by youth in making improvements in their educational experiences. Two youth expressed a form of resignation about school in comments below:

I know with school, nobody really wants to go. I don't think you can help them. A lot of kids just hate school. Because of like, pressure, the work, other kid, you know, all the stupid stuff.

\*\*\*

It [the project] couldn't help me because the school wanted to keep me back. YAP couldn't help me with that problem.

Integration challenges were further hampered by administrative realities. A staff person identified below the planning time that would be needed in integrating co-production into school programming:

When you're implementing this [project] as a new thing in a county, it is important to look at the relationship that the existing YAP program has with schools. . . I completely agree with integrating it with schools but unfortunately, in this county, that would have taken some additional work. . . to get the school on board with this. . . in a twelve-week [project] there's not enough time, you're not gonna get them on board with a phone call. . . up-front work would have been needed.

Findings also revealed that YAP's relationship with some schools was strained. YAP's mission is to support troubled youth so that they can remain in their home community and in community schools. This mission was often in conflict with school officials who viewed court intervention and possible suspension and expulsion as the surest path to address behavior issues. The same staff person touched on this conflict below:

The schools are [generally] on board with YAP but they also see YAP as someone who stands in the way of getting PINS petitions filed on some kids that they really want filed. . . I hate to say this but it is true.

Despite these challenges, some youth saw potential benefits in integrating co-production programming with their educational experience. For example, one youth identified that it would be cool to have teachers involved in the project in some capacity. This youth said, "If the teachers were helping out in the project, you'd get to know them

better. It'd help you go to school every day, probably.” Another youth liked the idea of receiving extra school credit for participating in the co-production project to assist the community.

Despite this small bit of optimism, integrating co-production with educational programming requires addressing the myriad of challenges noted above, including resolving the organizational and contextual differences between community child welfare and juvenile justice providers such as YAP and educational institutions in the community. Addressing these challenges requires the attention and time commitment of local leaders, including heads of participating organizations and their staff. Special expertise is also necessary, to identify organizational tensions and to assess the potential organizational gains that could be achieved from participation in co-production activities.

### **Generative and Contagion Effects: The Potential for Co-Production Interventions**

Generative and contagion effects were identified in the proposed theoretical framework as important features of co-production interventions. As a reminder, contagion effects involve the spreading of outcomes and impacts to new settings and stakeholders. Generative effects are improvements in program settings and organizational contexts, including the development of process and product innovations.

Findings revealed examples of contagion and generative effects of co-production. The first set of examples below involved situations where gains made by youth and family members as a result of participating in co-production interventions were translated into improvements in other life domain areas. In the first example, a youth who served as an assistant to a staff member for the Boys and Girls Club project used this experience to

gain confidence in trading her services for benefits at a horse farm. A staff member explained this circumstance below:

She was involved somewhat with the project with the Boys and Girls Club, kind of a secretarial position. And although she did not stay with the project, she went with the theme of reciprocity. One of the things she liked very much was horseback riding. She found a farm where she did supported work there but closer to discharge supported work was going to end. She and the advocate approached the owner about continuing to work there in exchange for her lessons. . . I think it [the secretarial leadership position] gave her the idea that “I have skills and abilities that I can trade in exchange for.”

In the second example, participation in the co-production intervention for one family translated into improvements in overall family functioning. As the staff member for the project explained, the co-production project became both a venue for family time and an opportunity for parents and youth to excel.

I think both the children and parents were interested in the project. It gave them scheduled time to be together and then scheduled time turned into just wanting to be doing things together. . . . they all, you know, got into a role in the group. And then this role sort of carried through at home and they started to become accountable for different parts of the group. . . it [the group] gave them, I don't know, structure that they needed.

According to the staff member, in this example, roles also changed in the home as a result of participating in the group project:

When we began this project, I went into [it] thinking, “well, dad’s gonna be the leader.” That wasn’t the story, mom was the leader and then everyone else followed in line. . . I mean she was the leader at our groups and she became the head honcho at home too.

Finally, co-production’s promise, as both a method of integrating voluntary and involuntary aspects of a youth’s service plan and as a tool for system change, was illuminated by a staff member:

There was one young lady. . . she had quite a few JD charges in the school and doing negative things in the school. And probation was especially really down on this young lady. And then what happened was when she really got involved in this project, she got excited to be able to tell her friends and different people in the school, that she was raising money and doing all this work, to get a skate park [for the community]. Now, she was not even liked in the school, the kids started getting excited, the school is like, “are you kidding me?” So the school, of course, reacted negatively at first, and called leadership in [at YAP] to complain, because they felt that “how can this kid be doing this, this is just going to create an arena where kids are going to be smoking dope.” The school then saw the child in a completely different light, as well as her peers, who thought, “Wow, look at her doing this for us.” And the one thing that we should’ve [done] really involving other kids, I think, in the school, if there was any way to do it. Because they [the school] were really amped up and wanted to and that would’ve created this peer group for her that she never had.

## Focus Group Results

Key findings from chapter 12 were reviewed by staff at a focus group session convened by the researcher (see appendix 3-3 for specific focus group questions for site one). As a reminder, the primary purpose of the focus group was to corroborate findings generated from the interview data. The focus group was structured so that staff had an opportunity to review and comment on the findings related to the core theoretical constructs of co-production; levels of involuntariness, empowerment practices, staff/youth collaboration and engagement. Findings specifically related to youth engagement and other youth/staff outcomes are included below.

### *Finding: Transitions and Key Determinants of Youth Engagement*

#### *Focus Group Results*

As a reminder, staff identified three categories of youth engagement during the individual interviews. These categories included: (1) Youth who went through the motions of participation throughout the project, (2) Youth who were engaged early on in project activities and continued engaged throughout the project, and (3) Youth who underwent a transition, from low levels of engagement to higher levels of engagement as the project progressed. Staff corroborated these three categories as well as factors affecting engagement transition. However, staff also identified other factors related to engagement that were not included during the interview process.

For example, staff highlighted predisposing individual factors as key determinants associated with certain difficult to engage youth. These factors were most important for youth that were unmotivated and remained unmotivated throughout the project. For these youth, past involvement with service providers, their relationships at

home, and their current involvement with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems were key factors associated with engagement. A staff member explained:

I just think, in terms of individual, some kids in general are faster to warm up than others. And that has to do with a lot of different factors, like their past involvement with service providers, their relationships at home, those kinds of things. So some of the kids who were unmotivated in the beginning, that through individual services in our program, they just don't warm up to staff as quickly as others.

Empowerment-oriented co-production practices were also identified that swayed some of the difficult to engage population to becoming engaged. In corroborating interview findings, group practices, such as a favorable group composition and building a pro-social caring environment, were identified as key factors. A staff member explained:

Sometimes you just get a bunch of kids that work really well together and so, there might be some unmotivated kids, but it doesn't last long because everybody else just clicks really well and things move forward. And then, for whatever reason, the next group, nobody clicks at all and everything just doesn't move forward and it's just how people interact and how they get along and you know, the different mix between the motivated and the unmotivated and how many you have of each.

For those youth who were difficult to engage, staff recommended allowing for sufficient time with an individual advocate to prepare the youth for group participation. This service feature could occur separate from and before or concurrent with group

participation. A staff member recounted an example of a youth that she worked with in supporting this point:

I remember it took her a long time to be able to accept being in a group and little by little, she became more comfortable in her situation, in that setting. And began to participate more. But I think for her, that individual work [with her advocate], just a sense of how comfortable she was [was important].

Another staff member supported and added to this discussion:

As far as trust for service providers, or who they think service providers are, and what our goal and our agenda is for them. . . .Building that rapport. Maybe it's just a matter of them building rapport with the group and with staff before they become engaged and invested.

Finally, autonomy related practices, such as identifying and cultivating informal leadership roles for youth, were also identified as important factors related to engagement. This finding corroborated a key finding from the interviews. A staff member commented on this point below:

I think it's reading the person, engaging them, I mean, maybe it's giving them a role but behind the scenes, like creating fliers or something and just kinda getting to know the person or the kid and figuring out what their strengths are and working with off them.

## *Finding: Staff Empowerment and Engagement*

### *Focus Group Results*

A lively discussion ensued involving the interaction between staff empowerment and engagement outcomes and youth engagement. Not surprisingly and consistent with the interview findings, the influence of larger organizational factors dominated the discussion. These factors included insufficient resources, complicated job remits, and inadequate worker preparation on staff empowerment and engagement outcomes. As an example, the failure to provide adequate staffing for one of the projects led to an inability of staff to address presenting youth risk factors/problem areas. The impact on staff morale and empowerment was reflected in the following comment:

My motivation dwindled at the end. For a couple of different reasons. Mostly, because I felt that, as I was getting to know the kids, I felt like they had so many more issues that needed to be addressed and they were not getting addressed. . . And I felt like it became all about the project that wasn't meeting the needs of these kids and it was a big frustration for me.

An unwelcoming external environment, including a disconnection with the funding authority regarding the co-production innovation, was also noted. This theme was addressed in the following comment:

On my level, I think my challenge with the groups was always trying to meet the needs of the group and what the participants and the staff wanted to do and also meet the needs of the funding authority who was saying with certain populations, do these things with them That was my challenge.

However, when properly resourced and with sufficient staffing to address youth risk issues, staff empowerment and engagement increased from overseeing co-production activities. The link between youth engagement and positive staff outcomes, a key finding from the interview data, was corroborated in the following comments offered by staff:

Often advocates or whoever will come to me and say, “I don’t want to be on this case anymore.” And what that statement usually boils down to is that they feel they’re ineffective and they haven’t either been able to develop a relationship or they haven’t been able to move anything forward so there is definitely a link between [youth engagement and staff morale].

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I was an advocate during the project [fire safety]. Once the family was engaged and we started with the weekly schedule, that I became more motivated. And having a specific goal to work toward was motivating too.

One strategy that was not identified during the interviews but was discussed in the focus group was the staff selection process that was employed for the co-production initiative. Staff was able to volunteer to be part of the innovation. According to a staff member, this self-selection strategy was a factor related to high levels of staff engagement when that outcome occurred:

It was voluntary as to whether staff wanted to participate [in the co-production project]. So if the advocates wanted to do it, they did it. If an advocate wanted to do [only] individual time, they could continue to do individual time. But, if they felt they wanted this opportunity to do above and beyond, they were given this opportunity.

*Finding: Other Youth Outcomes*

*Focus Group Results*

Staff corroborated findings from the interviews that outlined youth outcomes associated with co-production. Additional potential youth outcomes were also identified.

These outcomes include:

- ✓ Making friends; building relationships
- ✓ Parents exchanging information with one another; building new social supports
- ✓ Youth gaining a better understanding of their community, both needs and resources

In addition, a lively discussion occurred regarding the interview findings which revealed little recognition of improved community connections, new community role models, building new social capital and bonding to social organizations resulting from co-production involvement. As a reminder, these external outcomes were highlighted within the proposed theoretical framework for co-production (see chapter 9, appendix 9-10). Interestingly, although predisposing youth characteristics were noted by staff as a factor limiting the attainment of external outcomes noted above, structural and organizational constraints were more often noted as key antecedent factors impacting on the attainment of these specific outcomes. For example, in the comments below, time limitations were noted as a restricting factor:

I think because it's only a 12-14 week program and we're trying to engage the families intensively in activities that it's difficult to, in that span of time, create those relationships with community.

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We as an agency built those relationships [with community organizations and their representatives] but we didn't have time in 12-14 weeks to really facilitate the family doing it for themselves.

Lack of intentionality in seeking to foster new community connections for youth was also noted. As noted in the following comments by staff and supported in the interview findings, intentionality required up-front planning time to effect desired changes and this time was often not available to staff:

I think that a little more prep work before the groups got started, so that we're not scrambling to organize things and maybe we've made the initial connection [with other community members and staff members] but that requires follow-up work for the do in facilitating those. And maybe just making that a piece of what we're trying to do because I think that sometimes parents or staff are going out and facilitating these relationships. They weren't necessarily emphasizing that piece –to build connections with the kids. . . . I think explaining to them [the other organizations] the bigger picture. [That] it's not just a site [for the project] we're looking for. . . it's more of a, we're looking to build connections for these kids, it's not just a project.

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I think it's going back to program planning. Having your agenda before instead of going week to week flying blind. You have your family, you're trying to empower them to come up with these creative idea but you need to incorporate how you're going to connect the community.

The latter staff person suggested a next phase to the co-production project, extending its length, which would result in incorporating the community connections piece more explicitly. She used the fire safety project as an example to illustrate her point:

Sort of refocusing [the project] so that they [the families and the youth] had more of a hand or something going on with the skate park, like maybe incorporating the project that they buy materials that they're going to go install in the project and they [in exchange] get one free night or a month where they can invite all their friends.

Finally, different group compositions and individual youth capabilities and circumstances also impacted upon the goal of group activities. For example, youth with under-developed social skills were not prepared to build new relationships with community members. For some youth, building close ties and relations with their advocate was the extent of what could be accomplished during their involvement in YAP and in the co-production project. A staff member identified this limitation below:

Maybe the social skill development [is all that can be accomplished]. You know, kids going through the motions. They're still getting the social [benefits], I mean, over time, it occurs a little bit.

*Finding: Co-Production and Problem Reduction: Lack of Integration*

#### *Focus Group Results*

Findings from the interviews revealed a tenuous integration between co-production interventions and problem/risk reduction strategies. For example, many of the youth participants favored a separation between co-production interventions seeking to

build youth assets and strengths and other aspects of YAP programming designed to focus on problem areas. Others favored integration but cited the challenges in partnering for example, with schools in directing co-production initiatives toward addressing specific risk factors, such as truancy, behavior problems and academic issues. Findings from the staff focus group corroborated these interview findings but added more clarity regarding potential solutions.

For example, staff stressed the important benefits of the co-production project. One staff member described it as a “useful tool because they’re getting community involvement, they’re getting volunteerism, they’re getting connections.” However, according to this staff member, co-production group work needed to remain “separate from individual advocacy, the case management aspect of it, the individual needs.” Other staff participants saw the potential for integration but stressed the importance of an individualized approach. Here, the readiness of the youth to participate in the group project needed to be assessed as well as the extent to which the youth’s individual needs could be addressed outside of the group or within the group setting. A staff member offered this perspective:

Well, isn’t there a way to do both [co-production and individual work on problem areas]. . . at an initial intake, you assess that the child has this goal and it could be fulfilled through co-production.

This discussion led to a consensus position regarding co-production. Basically, the consensus position was that co-production interventions take the form of a “step-down” service. In other words, youth would first receive intensive, individualized service

and then progress to group projects where they would contribute to organizational and community improvement.

With this “step-down” model in mind, the first priority of YAP services would be to address individual crisis needs through one-on-one advocacy work. As discharge approached, youth could voluntarily choose to participate in a co-production driven project, working closely with staff and perhaps alumni. Group participation would coincide with a reduction in individual advocacy and would drive discharge. Staff advocated for this additive service to remain within YAP.

A staff member shared her vision below of the co-production project as a complimentary service to the primary services to be offered by YAP. Youth who have attained sufficient stability to be able to participate in mutual exchanges with others would participate. This project would include alumni and perhaps be led by alumni and facilitated/supported by YAP staff as needed.

I can think of some kids who have come back with a specific need after discharge. . . who came back and wanted to know if he could use our computer to write a resume. If they knew that at a specific day and time at YAP, a group of people met who used to be involved in YAP, and you could have your needs met, you bring your needs and you bring your resources and they can kind of meet each other’s needs and they can have this sharing and YAP would be there to provide the building and if they wanted to ask them [staff] to come to one of the meetings, we would do that.

## **CHAPTER 13: FINDINGS FROM SITE TWO: DESCRIBING THE CO-PRODUCTION INTERVENTION INCLUDING KEY EMPOWERMENT AND COLLABORATION PRACTICES**

### **Introduction**

As with the preceding chapter, the findings presented in this chapter derive primarily from interview data collected from youth and staff participants. The chapter begins with a general description of co-production interventions implemented in site two. A summary of characteristics of youth and staff participants follows. Then, a review of findings associated with initial level of youth involuntariness is presented.

Next, the main findings are presented. Findings related to two primary theoretical constructs that comprise the proposed co-production intervention framework are emphasized. These constructs are *empowerment* and *collaboration*.

The chapter concludes with a review of findings from the staff focus group. Areas where focus group findings corroborate interview findings are presented. Key areas of difference between interview and focus group findings are also emphasized.

### **General Description of Co-Production Interventions**

Staff in site two developed a specialized integrated time bank model (see chapter 2) as a method of promoting co-production among YAP's youth population. Time bank members included targeted youth and their family members involved with the local YAP program, members of the child and family team recruited to assist each targeted youth and their family, staff members of the local YAP program, representatives from local businesses, individual community members, other service organizations working with YAP to assist youth and families, and YAP alumni youth and parents. The Time Bank

coordinator, an employee of YAP, facilitated the exchange of services between time bank members.

The intervention model in site two included the following features:

- ✓ Youth provided and received services as a member of the Time Bank. Youth earned time bank hours in providing services to other time bank members. Similarly, youth “cashed in” their hours for services received from time bank members. Time Bank hours were also to acquire goods donated from area businesses and for access to special privileges, such as admission to a group trip.
- ✓ YAP staff members facilitated the exchange or were a direct party to the exchange with the youth.
- ✓ An individual intervention modality was dominant in this site. In other words, youth exchanged services with other individual members of the Time Bank, under the supervision of advocate staff. Small group work was also instituted in this site, but was not the primary modality.
- ✓ Co-production and time banking additive features were integrated within total program operations in site two. Involvement in time banking was an added intervention open to all YAP enrolled youth.
- ✓ A program guideline was established that encouraged staff to facilitate time bank exchanges for their youth on average twice per week.

Although a guideline was established for staff to assist youth in facilitating time bank exchanges at least twice per week, the use of the Time Bank by youth varied considerably. Unlike the intervention in site one, time banking was designed as a semi-voluntary activity, to be incorporated as part of a youth’s services plan as needed. Youth

were encouraged but not mandated to participate in time bank activities. Also, no defined amount of time banking was imposed on youth participants who did participate.

Also, the length and intensity of time bank involvement was determined by the nature of the planned activity. For example, a given youth might have agreed to provide three hours of tutoring service to another youth in the program. This may have occurred on one occasion. In contrast, another youth may have entered into an agreement with staff to provide services to an area farm on a weekly basis for three months over the summer. In other words, youth involvement in the Time Bank differed according to youth interest and the availability of requested exchanges. This important feature influenced intervention design. Specifically, each youth experienced a somewhat unique intervention. In other words, each youth's opportunities were individualized and unique.

Thus, site two's experiences with co-production interventions have a dual character. Commonalities defining co-production interventions were evident, but so too were uniquely tailored interventions for each youth. It is within this context that the common and unique intervention features of co-production are explored in this chapter.

## **Characteristics of Youth and Staff Research Participants**

### *Youth Participants*

#### *Demographics*

Five youth from site two participated in the research study. Four were male and one was female. Four of the youth were Caucasian; one was African-American. The age breakdown of the youth was as follows:

- One youth was between 13-14 years of age
- One youth was between 15-16 years of age
- Three youth were between 17-18 years of age

### *Youth Services History*

The youths' services histories with YAP varied. Some of the youth were relatively new referrals to YAP, while other youth were participants in the program for a sizeable length of time prior to participating in co-production. The youths' service history included:

- ✓ One youth was enrolled in YAP for greater than one year prior to the project beginning.
- ✓ Two youth were enrolled in YAP between 6 months and 1 year prior to participating in time banking.
- ✓ Two youth was enrolled in YAP, 3-6 months prior to the intervention. However, for one of these youth, this was the second time he was participating in YAP, having received services 5-7 months prior to re-entering the program.

Participating youth reported a range of reasons for referral into YAP (see appendix 13-1). All five youth were active within the child welfare system. They were either returning from foster care residential care to the community or at risk of foster care institutional placement. Three of the five youth were in the foster care system during project participation, living in either a group home or with foster parents. Four of the five youth were involved in "dual-systems," e.g., they were involved in the juvenile justice system as well as the child welfare system.

However, only one of the youth reported school related issues as a primary reason for referral into YAP. Also, two of the youth used the project to fulfill mandated community service requirements. Two of the five youth had a previous history of

inpatient psychiatric care. Both of these youth entered YAP after a brief period of hospitalization.

### *Staff Members Participating in the Study*

Seven staff members participated in the research study in site two. The staff characteristics may be summarized as follows:

- ✓ Two of the staff participants were supervisory level, either serving as a program director or an assistant director.
- ✓ Two of the staff participants were directly involved in administering the Time Bank. One of the two staff also worked as a part-time advocate.
- ✓ Two of the staff members were advocates
- ✓ One staff member was a former program director at the site. She worked closely with the researcher as a consultant to the project, assisting the staff in implementing the project.

### **An Important Antecedent: Level of Youth Involuntariness**

Per the proposed enhanced intervention framework for co-production, the researcher identified level of youth involuntariness as a core antecedent factor associated with co-production interventions. For example, low levels of involuntariness were found to be associated with successful co-production interventions. Thus, interventions that focus on reducing levels of involuntariness are wise investments of staff time and energy.

During the interview process, the researcher made an attempt to ascertain perceived level of involuntariness of youth participants. The researcher asked youth to identify the extent to which they viewed initial participation in the co-production project

as voluntary or involuntary. The researcher also asked staff to share their perceptions of level of youth involuntariness. The researcher explored reasons for their answers.

As noted earlier, four of the five youth participants were involved in the juvenile justice system and two youth utilized their stay in YAP and their involvement in the Time Bank to fulfill mandated community service requirements. Also, according to staff and youth participants, the remaining youth felt some pressure to attend the YAP program, either from parents or caseworkers, who sought out the service as a last ditch attempt not to have their youth placed or replaced into the foster care system. A staff member explained:

All of our kids are mandated, they all have open mandated preventive cases with the Department of Social Services. They're at risk of being placed out of the home or we're helping them return to the community.

A youth participant explained the parental pressure she experienced in participating with YAP:

Well, as soon as I got out of the hospital, they needed to put me in some kind of thing so either on PINS or something like this, and I had that option so I obviously chose this [YAP].

Despite pressure to attend YAP, some staff noted that participation in the Time Bank was semi-voluntary; youth were encouraged but not mandated to participate. Participation was also adaptable to individual case circumstances. This strategy assisted in achieving low levels of youth involuntariness with regard to time bank participation. A staff member below explained how she encouraged staff to describe to youth that the

participation in the Time Bank was voluntary, a part of the overall set of services that were offered, to assist youth and families:

The way that it's approached is that it's part of the program. No one is forced to join [the Time Bank]. It's a part of our program if they [youth and families] want to access different things, if they want to be able to earn hours or exchange to get different things that other members of the Time Bank can provide. They may need to join but nobody is forced to join.

Sometimes the distinction between the pressure to participate in YAP and a free choice to participate in the Time Bank was too subtle to grasp for the youth, their parents or even the staff. For example, in the situation above where a youth was pressured to attend YAP in lieu of juvenile justice involvement, the youth was told by her mom in relation to the Time Bank to "just do this." She commented that "my mom started me in the [time bank] project." Staff also was conflicted with the semi-voluntary and voluntary distinction. A staff member illustrated this dilemma below:

I've struggled with that. Because, if you make it mandatory, the kids want to rebel; they don't want to do it because it's mandatory. [If] you make it voluntary, well then they have an option. If they don't like it, they're not gonna do it.

Despite this confusion, certain youth liked the Time Bank option in part because youth were able to use the Time Bank to address their community service mandates. The Time Bank offered a broad array of potential projects for youth to become involved with to meet mandates. Also, while performing mandated service, youth were allowed by their

probation officers to earn time bank hours. A youth and staff member responded to this theme below:

I think they [youth] should be able to [earn time bank hours while meeting mandated requirements]. People will show up to. Like that could stop a lot of cases from going to court. Like if I had the Time Bank when I was doing community service, I'd rather come here than down in the green van, go and pick trash up. I'd rather help somebody than just do something they made up for the day.

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[The kids] would rather do their service through a time bank type of structure, as opposed to meeting at a bus and picking up the garbage on the side of the road type of thing. . . You know, having the kids involved with non-profits doing meaningful community service, time banking as opposed to you know, the meaningless picking up of garbage.

Interestingly, some staff noted that they saw no difference between mandated and non-mandated youth in terms of their level of participation in the Time Bank. One staff member made a distinction between “system kids” (e.g., youth with a history of involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems) and “non-system kids” (e.g., youth with only initial involvement in either or both systems). This staff member commented that “system kids” were more likely to be attracted to the Time Bank because “it’s easier for those kinds of kids to get excited about doing things differently, novel activities, like time banking.”

One staff member commented that in the end, it is how you sell it to the youth and his/her family:

It's really how you present it to them. If it's another thing to add to their plate, they're going to be more resistant to doing it. But, if it's something that they see other kids doing, having fun doing, enjoying or getting something out of it. . . then it's different. It's not about somebody making them do something.

In summary, despite the pressure that many youth experienced to participate in YAP overall, youth were encouraged but not mandated by staff to participate in the Time Bank. Initial findings revealed low levels of involuntariness toward participating in time bank activities. In other words, youth were not constrained by loss of valued freedoms or by the presence of a court order. In fact, youth mandated to perform community service enjoyed the time bank option to meet court requirements.

### **Salient Empowerment-Related Intervention Features and Practices**

The proposed enhanced theoretical model of co-production (see chapter 9, appendix 9-4) provided a useful template in analyzing the key empowerment-related intervention features identified from the interview data provided by youth and staff. Four intervention categories from the theoretical model provided the template for the data analysis. These categories were: (1) *General and group empowerment practices*, (2) *Autonomy-building practices*, (3) *Competency-enhancing practices*, and (4) *Practices designed to enhance personal relationships and organizational connections*.

This initial categorization was expanded to accommodate two emerging intervention categories: *Empowerment-oriented intake practices and empowerment-oriented assessment and service planning practices*. The latter set of practices and

strategies were developed to facilitate an individualized approach to facilitating youth contributions and service involvement. In total, six main categories emerged from the data. Practices and strategies were identified within each of the six categories. These practices and strategies enhanced the proposed theoretical framework, grounding the model in real life contexts.

As with the findings from site one, *empowerment practices and strategies served as a driver of staff/youth collaboration and enhanced levels of youth engagement* in site two. However, as will be shown below, the mix of empowerment practices and strategies identified by participants in site two was slightly different from those identified by participants in site one. Empowerment-oriented intake practices are described first below.

#### *Empowerment-Oriented Intake Practices*

##### *Key findings*

- ❖ To facilitate initial youth participation, staff employed empowerment-oriented intake practices that emphasized flexibility and allowed youth to experiment and “try-out” the Time Bank.
- ❖ Staff utilized strategies that provided youth and family members with new resources from the Time Bank in the form of both goods and services, to initially attract them to become involved in the Time Bank.

##### *Evidence and Analysis*

10 participants (staff=6, youth=4) identified the importance of empowerment-related intake practices to initially attract youth to participate. 2 categories of intake practice emerged from the data. These categories were reflected in the proposed intervention framework for co-production (see appendix 9-4). They included: (1) The

importance of staff flexibility by allowing for youth experimentation, and (2) Providing opportunities for youth and family members to first secure goods and services from the Time Bank resources, especially in times of crisis. Intake strategies and processes are reviewed below (also see appendix 13-2).

*The Importance of Youth Experimentation and Flexible Participation*

Participants, especially youth, emphasized allowing youth to experiment with Time Bank involvement on their own terms. Youth voiced caution, at least initially, to participating in time bank activities. Youth recommended that staff utilize strategies that fostered experimentation, allowing youth to “dip their toes into the Time Bank pond.”

For example, one youth responded that when he heard about the Time Bank, he wanted to learn more about it first before he chose to participate so as to “make sure that it’s something I’d actually like and want to be involved with.” Another youth stressed below the importance of experimentation, introducing youth to time banking slowly, and allowing for participation at a comfortable pace.

Maybe doing a fun community activity first, before we’ll be starting to have these meetings. Just to get to know the other children first, before you just start making meetings and have them come out of nowhere, where you don’t even know them and you don’t know what their personality is like, you don’t know what type of background they have.

A third youth corroborated the above findings. This youth voiced initial discomfort and even fear at participation. At first, this youth did not pay attention to the Time Bank and wasn’t interested. However, feeling accepted and getting along with the other youth and adults in the program eased her discomfort. She explained below:

Well, it was after the initial couple of assignments, I got to know the people here. I was really uncomfortable at first, because I thought everybody would be really mean and stubborn because they're [the kids] are forced to do this. . . . The people were really nice.

In addition, this youth liked the idea of both adults and kids being involved in time bank activities. For this youth, the initial presentation of the project was viewed as an important factor in attracting youth to participate. She recommended that staff "just state the things that you can get out of it [the time bank], talking about people all around the world who are participating in this kind of thing."

Another youth participant identified the importance of starting slow, of building a young person's confidence:

If one of the kids had a strong skill in whatever they're doing and they want an opportunity to teach it [to others], then you can start slowly starting a teaching program for him or her to teach other people how to do that, which is what they [the staff] did with me.

Moreover, allowing for experimentation included staff accepting youth freedom to choose when and if to participate. For example, although youth were encouraged to join the Time Bank at initial program intake, many chose not to join at that point. Some joined when their parents joined but chose not to initially participate in exchanges. Others were unable to join because their schedule was full, needing to comply, for example, with drug counseling requirements, regular contact with a probation officer, after-school requirements or a desire or need to work to earn money. Staff needed to determine the

timing of introducing the time bank to youth, and to assess Time Bank's relevance to addressing emerging service needs or to build on identified youth strengths.

A staff member described introducing time banking to youth as "an experiment. . . if it goes well, you gotta continue, run with it." Another staff member described the process of introducing the Time Bank as "trial and error." The first staff member cautioned not to "force-feed" the benefits of the time bank to the youth, but instead, to encourage the youth to give it a try. He explained below the process by which he encouraged one youth to participate in a time bank-sponsored event. In this event, the youth earned time bank hours assisting with a local fundraiser:

I had a young man that, we had a chili festival here and one of the things that they asked us to do was to come set up tables, help clean up, pick up the garbage. And the kid said, "there's no way I'm doing that." [I said] "Let's give it a try for an hour." We get out there and we end up spending you know, like four or five hours, because as he's picking up [the garbage], people are coming by and saying, "hey, you're working, good job" and this and the other. And, so the kid's you know, running to the next garbage can.

In addition, becoming a time bank member required a commitment by the youth *to both receive and to provide services* (see reciprocity, chapter 2). Staff asked youth up-front to contribute to YAP, to local communities and to help neighbors. However, for youth to be able to respond to this request, staff needed to work with youth in *identifying youth strengths, interests and passions*. A staff member identified finding youth interests

as the area “where we struggled the most.” A second staff member explained below the importance of this identification process to initial time bank involvement:

You know, even with the mental health part [problems], we haven’t found the passion. And that’s one of those things that’s going to be up to the time bank coordinator and myself and the advocate and the parents. . . to find the kid’s passion. What are you passionate about?

Staff commented that identifying youth strengths, interests and passions often took time. They witnessed that many involuntary youth often perceive a sense of hopelessness and that youth may not be aware that they can contribute and be a resource for others (see chapter 8). *Building a trusting relationship with their advocate* set the stage for youth to share aspects of their life that are important to them. Because this trust may not occur quickly, time bank participation proved to be problematic for many youth at the beginning of service involvement. A staff member explained the link between building trust and time bank participation:

I think its minimal basic trust. . . I mean as far as the advocate and the client, the advocate really needs to know enough about the client to be able to make the time bank more real to them. So, knowing a lot about the kid, there’s gotta be somewhat of a relationship where the trust could come into it. . . If we just met the kid for the first week and have only seen him once or twice, and all of a sudden you present this [the time bank] to them. . . I think as the relationship builds and the advocate knows the kid a little bit more, I think that it’s more successful that way.

The link between building trust building and time bank participation was echoed by comments made by a youth participant:

Just to get to know the other children first, before you [the advocate] start making meetings and have them come out of nowhere, where you don't know [the youth], you don't know their personality.

Addressing these obstacles required that staff maintain a flexible, unconditional care approach toward working with their assigned youth. A staff member shared the following: "Don't give up. That is just takes some time and once they get to that spot, it's gonna be easier to engage them."

*Providing Needed Goods and Services to Attract Initial Participation*

Participants recommended that staff work address a pressing need or desire through the Time Bank and to use this strategy as the initial entry point to encourage time bank participation. Staff shared that once a youth or family member gained a material good or a needed service, then contributions would follow. Two staff members explained this strategy below:

I would say the sooner that they feel that an exchange has genuinely helped them, the easier it's going to be and the more exchanges they're going to make, the more involved they're going to feel. To listen to what their needs are and not just guess and put what you think they should get out of the time bank into the Bank.

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He actually cashed in some hours to get his girlfriend a present. We had gotten a spa to donate some lotions and things for Valentine's Day. And

so, I think slowly, we started showing him things he could get out of it, and how he could use it. And, so now he's more involved and willing to do more.

Addressing a perceived need often began with a young person wanting a material good. By staff addressing this need, youth understood that time bank involvement could provide desired goods without requiring money. The attractiveness of time banking grew as a result. A staff member recounted below an instance when a youth called in a panic, wanting to earn time bank hours so that he could secure proper attire needed to attend a high school prom:

I think there's several cases with kid where I have a kid who just kinda called last night and says he wants to go to the prom so now it's like, "I'm willing to do anything [for the Time Bank] to get the tuxedo." So he's willing, before he wasn't willing but now he's like calling and saying, "I want to do some time banking stuff."

Addressing a crisis need also assisted in initiating time bank involvement. A staff member recounted below an example when time bank members organized a helpful and sensitive response to a family in crisis:

One of our moms was moving, had been evicted. Had to move. Had no money. Car had broken down. She tapped into the time bank for a loan and we were able to get a bunch of people to cook dinners for her, so she was able to save money out of her paycheck. And a bunch of kids went out and helped her pack and take down her pool and different things.

According to a staff member, this exchange was successful because a staff member made it comfortable for the family to accept help from neighbors. For example, staff worked to maintain the family's identity as confidential from time bank members.

The staff member outlined the protections afforded to the woman and her family:

Nobody knew it was her. We arranged that the food be dropped off at the YAP offices. . . We made arrangements to bring her the food. I think that was a big help. Just things like that, little things, being conscious of people's comfort level. And then the next time, she had all the kids helping her with her move, it wasn't a concern for her.

In addition, a staff member identified the importance of immediately responding to emergent needs. By responding immediately, participants understood the time bank to be an effective option to meeting their crisis needs. The staff member commented on this theme below:

I think when an intake is done, specifically, right then and there and a specific thing needs to [occur], an exchange almost needs to be set up right then and there. . . what happens is we take an application, let's say on a Friday, we put into the computer, we don't get back to it until Monday, then we've forgotten about it or something else comes up.

Moreover, in the case circumstance above, the woman who was helped by time bank members became so touched by the outpouring of support that she welcomed the opportunity to give back. This natural, evolving form of reciprocity was cited as an ideal example of time banking in action. The staff member described this situation below:

For months [prior] I could not get out of this woman what she liked to do. But, then all of a sudden, she was able to think of something and that something was that she totally loves arts and crafts. So, she was able to come in and actually run a class. I was there to help out with the supplies and was able to do a class for the kids, to make, I think it was gifts for some holiday.

### *Summary*

To encourage initial participation in the Time Bank, staff employed intake strategies that were empowering to youth and family members. Of import were strategies utilized by staff which encouraged flexible participation and youth experimentation in providing or receiving services from time bank members. Staff identification of youth strengths, interests and assets were a necessary precondition in determining with youth how youth could best contribute to the Time Bank. Staff also addressed emergent needs, including crisis services, to show reluctant participants that the Time Bank could be a source of support. Both strategies necessitated the building of a trusting relationship with staff at YAP. Because establishing a trusting relationship took time, time bank participation often did not occur at intake. Initial ground-work was laid, for time bank participation as opportunities arose during the course of service intervention.

### *Empowerment-Oriented Assessment and Service Planning Practices*

#### *Key Findings*

- ❖ Staff developed or refined case assessment and case planning tools and strategies to assist in the identification of individualized co-production activities tailored to each youth

- ❖ Staff negotiated co-production agreements with youth. Youth were empowered to select and structure projects that they wanted to participate in, to earn time dollars and chose how they wanted to “cash” in dollars earned.

### *Evidence and Analysis*

Three case assessment and case planning tools were developed to assist with the integration of co-production into existing programming. The tools included an amended strengths-inventory, an amended contribution-based life domain bubble chart and a co-production agreement template. The first two amended tools are described below by the researcher; these tools were not identified by the research participants during the interviews. In contrast, all seven staff participants identified the co-production agreement as an important new tool emanating from the co-production innovation. Each tool is described below, along with strategies and processes supporting them.

#### *Assessment and Case Planning Tools*

YAP leaders espouse the importance of adhering to a simple, user-friendly empowerment approach to case assessment processes. For YAP staff, the most important moment of intervention is the initial meeting with the family. The goal of the initial meeting is to ensure that the family perceives the YAP approach to be “genuine, realistic, non-blaming, respectful, meaningful and optimistic” (Youth Advocate Programs, Inc., 2007). When first meeting a family, three basic questions are asked: What do you need? How can we help?, How can we work together as equal partners to better your circumstances?

The life domain “bubble chart” is a signature tool used by YAP staff to assess youth and family needs and resources. This chart structures a staff assessment of youth

and family needs and assets in the following life domain areas: family, education, social development, employment and training, financial, housing, legal, spirituality, recreation and cultural, mental health and medical. Reviewing the bubble chart with staff enables the youth and family members to tell their story. It also provides a ready-made tool to assist with service plan prioritization since the domain areas of import to the youth are selected for inclusion in the development of the individualized services plan.

With the introduction of co-production and time banking in site two, the life domain bubble chart was amended. The amended chart included an identification of community needs and assets (see appendix 13-2). The youth and family determined what “community” meant to them. For example, community could mean a geographic area or a “community of interest.” Community needs and resources as well as ways in which the youth could contribute to his/her community, were also identified as part of the assessment process.

Similarly, the strengths/skills based inventory is an integral part of YAP’s strengths-based assessment process. Implementation of the inventory begins at the initial meeting between the worker and the youth/family. Each youth is asked to identify, for example, favorite hobbies, sports, and favorite people in his/her life. Youth also are asked to identify part-time job interests and career goals.

With the introduction of co-production and time banking within site two, the inventory was changed to incorporate questions about the youths’ perception of community (see appendix 13-3). Community needs were identified as well as how the youth would want to contribute to the community. Both the revised bubble chart and

strength/skill inventory assisted staff and youth in identifying time banking projects that the youth would want to become involved with.

Additionally, the co-production and time banking project in site two led to the agency adopting a fourth question to pose to youth and families early on in the assessment process. The fourth basic question reads: How can we work together as equal partners to better the community? This fourth question became a cornerstone of the assessment process in the second pilot site and eventually became agency policy (Youth Advocate Programs, Inc., 2007).

#### *Co-Production Agreements*

To facilitate youth contributions and time bank participation, staff members entered into co-production agreements with youth and parents (see appendix 13-4). Co-production agreements provided the structure by which a plan for youth contribution to families, organizations and communities could be developed. Agreements stipulated who the youth would be exchanging with and the nature of the exchanges including how each party provided and received services. Benefits and obligations of all involved parties were set forth in the co-production agreement. The agreement included the hours to be earned, the role of staff in assisting with the exchange, any obstacles that the youth may face in completing the exchange and a plan as to how the hours earned would be “cashed in.”

Co-production agreements became an empowerment tool. Youth were provided with opportunities to decide the specifics of the exchange agreement. This included how they wanted to contribute, who they wanted involved, the length of the contribution project and what they were to receive from contribution efforts. Agreements also

provided structure, consistency and clarity of expectations for all parties involved. Agreements built on identified strengths and interests and focused on aspects of the community that the youth wanted to improve. Most important, agreements were linked to the life domains of import to the youth and family and to the individualized service plan goals identified during the child and family team meeting. (See appendix 13-5, which visually depicts how co-production agreements were integrated within wraparound processes)

Staff participants offered examples of negotiated co-production agreements. In the first example below, a youth parlayed his auto mechanic skills to teach members of the Time Bank how to change car oil. The co-production agreement included roles for his foster parents and YAP staff, to assist the youth in fulfilling the agreement. For example, YAP staff agreed to publicize the project to encourage community member participation (see appendix 12-6). Also, as a condition of the youth completing the project, YAP agreed to lend the youth money to pay off an outstanding fine that the youth had failed to address, with a local court. A staff member explained the specifics of the agreement:

We had one youth that was very interested in auto mechanics and was top in his class at BOCES. [He agreed] to teach other youth in our program, as well as community time bank members, how to change the oil in a car and what to look for when buying a used car. We planned it out for I believe, was an eight week process. He developed a [training] curriculum, gathered materials that he needed and worked under the supervision of a local mechanic. He worked with his school and worked with his foster parents to get the material he needed and make sure his process was correct.

In the second example, a youth in the program participated in a music project hosted by a staff member at YAP. The youth was taught how to create music and was allowed access to expensive music equipment. In return, the youth over time was asked to “pay back” for the use of this privilege by agreeing to recruit other youth to the music project as well as to advertise and market the Time Bank in the community. The staff member recounted the agreement below:

We had one youth that was resistant to joining the Time Bank, didn't want to do any projects. . . wasn't engaging with his advocate. The director was able to find one venue in which the kid really cared about and contracted with him to be able to use music equipment to record [his own music]. He began encouraging other youth to do the same thing, giving them different advice [on how to record music], being a leader in terms of the other kids in developing co-production contracts and following through. He brought in community members, his friends and started engaging them in the Time Bank to do exchanges revolving around music.

### *Summary*

Staff developed and refined case assessment and case planning tools to enable staff to incorporate the additive co-production intervention into everyday service practice. These tools were empowering because they facilitated youth to exercise voice and choice in setting forth parameters and structure for their participation in time banking activities. Additional voice and choice practices and strategies employed by staff are set forth in a later section of this chapter.

*Empowerment-Oriented Intervention Features: General and Group Practices*

*Key findings*

- Developing opportunities to contribute: Staff developed a broad range of opportunities for youth to contribute. Staff tailored projects to youth interests, circumstances and abilities.
- Cultivating creative benefits and incentives: Staff developed creative strategies in making available a range of benefits (e.g., goods and services), to provide incentives for youth to participate in co-production programming.
- Utilizing small group modalities: In addition to working one-on-one with youth, staff organized small groups of youth, working together on community and organizational improvement projects.
- Planning and implementing short-term projects: Short-term and time limited co-production projects were designed and implemented by staff and youth participants.
- Creating an environment of trust and support: Staff developed a welcoming and safe environment, recognizing youth accomplishments.
- Stressing social dimensions of co-production: Staff noted the importance of social benefits, such as establishing new friendships, in structuring co-production projects.
- Appealing to a youth's need to "give back": Youth identified the importance of service and working toward a higher cause. Youth recommended that staff emphasize these features in structuring projects.

### *Evidence and Analysis*

The proposed enhanced intervention framework for co-production included a set of general and group empowerment practices designed to encourage youth participation and engagement (see chapter 9, appendix 9-4). The practice areas identified above from the interview findings correspond to a number of the general and group empowerment practices articulated in the proposed framework. An overriding theme common to each of the areas is the importance of staff creating flexible alternatives for youth by developing a range of possible projects and opportunities according to each youth's interests, strengths and availability. In short, these practice areas facilitated youth autonomy because they provided youth with a range of opportunities and modalities, to both contribute and receive services. Each practice area is described below.

#### *Developing Contribution Opportunities*

Staff facilitated a broad range of opportunities for youth to contribute. Youth earned time bank hours in the following ways: (1) Youth provided services to other YAP involved youth, (2) Youth assisted YAP families in need, (3) Youth helped local businesses, (4) Youth added capacity to local community organizations, (5) Youth assisted the local YAP program, and (6) Youth provided goods and services to their own family members. Examples of each type of exchange are included below.

Youth utilized their assets and skills to *provide services to other YAP-involved youth*. Time bank hours were earned tutoring youth in math, teaching computer skills or providing music lessons. A staff person and a youth participant offered examples:

We helped with one of the kids who had a rough time in mathematics. . .

We showed him some of the basics, how he could figure out some of the

mathematic problems for multiplication, some division. He had a specific hard time doing [math] in middle school and we showed him an easier way to do it. . . with us helping him for a two week period, made him become more successful on his grades for his math tests.

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One kid didn't know how to do stuff with computers, so one kid exchanged [earned] hours to teach a kid how to work on the computer, and that both sides were a success, because the one who was receiving the service was learning how to do the computer, it made him feel good and the one teaching, it made him feel good and build some self-esteem.

Youth also teamed with staff *to assist YAP-involved families in need*. In the example below, a group of youth worked together to assist a family active in the YAP program who was in crises:

There was a family who did not have a whole lot of money. They were moving from one apartment to another and were having trouble getting the security deposit together. They needed to have some repairs done at their old apartment so they would get the old security back so they could pay the rent at the new home. . . so they were able to access the time bank. We had some youth go to their house and they helped clean up the yard and they helped move some of the items from the old house to the new house.

In addition, youth earned time bank hours *helping local businesses*. A farm, a restaurant, and the local food cooperative were examples of businesses that joined the time bank. Some requested youth to assist them with their operations. Some of the

businesses opted for time bank arrangements in addition to or in lieu of participating as sites in YAP's supported work program. In the example below, two youth worked at a local farm earning time bank hours. A staff person described this arrangement and the benefits afforded for one of the youth:

We had a farm that really wanted some of the kids to come. We had one youth one summer that spent the entire summer there every single day, loved it. And, what he really liked was that he got to see the whole process. He helped plant the plants and then when the basil grew, he helped pick it and then they taught him how to make it into pesto. That was a great project for them [the owners] and he absolutely loved it.

Youth also contributed *by adding capacity to local community organizations* in need of assistance. There were a number of examples of youth working either individually or in group assisting local community organizations. Examples included youth earning time bank hours fundraising for local special events, participating in mentoring and tutoring projects, or assisting with the time bank itself, serving on the Time Bank advisory council or helping with publicity, marketing materials for the Bank. An older youth participant discussed his time spent assisting an alternative school as a mentor and tutor for students:

I volunteered in a class over at the middle school. I was like a student teacher, for a little while. . . . I was just like a tutor. I helped the kids with math and reading and stuff, and trying to just be a mentor to them.

Another youth discussed with pride how she developed marketing materials and donated her art work to the Time Bank:

I made a flier to hand out, to get the youth's attention. I also did this drawing for the youth picnic the other day, on the fliers. . . . I usually don't give my original copies of my art away but I donated one of them, the picnic one, to the time bank and it's on the bulletin board downstairs.

A staff member described how an older teen earned time bank hours by doing a rap presentation to raise money for a special community event:

Well, for instance, the young man that did the rap, he didn't [initially] want anything to do with time banking. We got him to one event where he helped at the chili cook-off. I think he left after an hour. Really had no interest and then we presented him with the rapping [option] and he said, "you can do that through time banking?" [He earned hours] and actually cashed in those hours to get his girlfriend a present.

Furthermore, youth earned time bank hours by *assisting the local YAP program*.

In one project, YAP involved youth worked with other community youth, staff and students from a local University to paint the YAP offices and beautify the outside surroundings. For both the local youth and the University students, a cultural divide was bridged by working together. A staff member explained:

I wasn't there [at the event] but from what I hear, he [one of the youth] had a smile on his face. But I think that internally, it probably did a lot in the sense that he's [the youth] used to the street and these [the University students] are all high class white kids. So I think it was an eye-opening experience for him that he would not have had if he wasn't in the time bank.

Significantly, *youth provided goods and services to family members*. For example, youth earned hours helping with their family move, assisting parents in gardening and providing child care to younger nieces and nephews. In the latter example explained below by his mother who accompanied the youth to the interview, a youth worked with his mother earning time bank hours caring for extended family members:

He [the youth] has a niece and nephew that he almost helped me raise when I was watching them full time. . . when they were little, he was right there and he loved to play with them, he kept them busy.

#### *Cultivating Creative Benefits and Incentives*

A range of goods and services were made available to youth to “cash in” hours accumulated. Examples included: (1) Services provided by community members, (2) Benefits/privileges provided by family members, (3) Access to special events, and (4) Goods provided by local businesses. Examples of goods and services made available are provided below.

First and consistent with findings from neighbor-to-neighbor community time banks (see chapter 2), youth *cash in their hours for services provided by community members who entered the Time Bank*. However, because the Time Bank was in an early stage of development, there were not many community members enrolled and active in the Time Bank. As a result, exchanges between youth and community members were limited. This limitation required staff to be creative in identifying attractive options for youth to “cash-in” their hours. A staff participant described the range of services provided by community members in the Time Bank:

We have people who want music lessons, want Spanish lessons or their hair or nails done. . . because they need food. We have people who cash in hours because they need somebody to come out and mow their lawn, shovel [their driveway]

Youth cashed in their hours to access studio time to create their own music; to participate in art classes offered in the community, to learn Spanish or to participate in a police “ride-along.” The use of the music studio attracted strong interest from youth. In a situation described below, the youth was “loaned” hours with the expectation of pay-back. A staff member, who staffed the music studio, described this arrangement:

I have a few kids in the program that use the recording, music stuff and it’s not like they use it every month. They call me every Monday to be able to use it. And we got time bank applications signed with them. Now, they have to start making exchanges and these are the kids that I see benefiting the most.

*In addition, youth engaged in closed exchanges with family members to gain certain special privileges.* A closed exchange is when a time bank member both gives and receives services from another time bank member. In these circumstances, a youth provided a service to a family member and in exchange, a family member did something special for the youth. These exchanges were often facilitated by a staff member who helped negotiate the arrangement with both parties. The example below shared by a youth participant illustrated an exchange that occurred between a youth and his foster parent:

I [the youth] helped her plant her garden. She helped me get a lot of hours on my driving permit, so we did that together. . . . She let me drive her

car. . . . She worked with the [staff person] who helped her set up doing respite up at her house. Because I wanted to get a respite kid [in the home]. . . . [The kid] came to stay for a short time, because they needed a place for him to go.

*Youth were also able to “cash-in” hours to gain access to special events*

sponsored by the local YAP program. For example, to participate in a special summer trip to an amusement park, participants needed to cash in time bank hours as a form of an admission fee. Attending a Harlem Globetrotter event, tickets to a local college basketball game and admission to a local dance were all accessible using the time bank currency. Here, the culture of “give-back” and civic engagement were reinforced with access to privileges linked to participation. A staff member described below how time banking was linked to special events:

For instance, we put up a sign that said everyone’s invited to the Globetrotters but it costs give time bank hours. And so we had kids saying right away, “I only have two hours, what can I do so that I get to go?” And we’re doing another incentive program in a few weeks and the number one thing that they [the youth] want out of the time bank is tickets to the [amusement park]. . . We can buy tickets and have them [the kids] earn them.

*Furthermore, youth cashed in their hours for donated goods made available by local businesses.* For example, time bank hours were used to access tuxedos for end of year proms; to “purchase” Spiderman comics and to “buy” food for a youth’s family.

Youth also used earned time bank hours to “purchase” gifts for family members from goods donated by businesses. Unique kinds of exchanges resulted.

Staff shared instances where youth earned Time Bank hours assisting local businesses. Youth used accumulated hours to access goods from that business. In one instance, a young man worked on a local farm and he cashed in hours for flowers from the farm that he then gave to his sister as a gift. Another arrangement is described below:

We had a young man who did time banking at a local business, then in return, he cashed in his hours to be able to get something for his foster parent. The feeling that the foster parent had and the relationship that was built from that exchange right there--that was a success for me.

In many of the above examples, staff utilized all available tools to encourage co-production activity. For example, in developing co-production agreements, mixed economy rewards were instituted. In mixed economy rewards, time banking was combined with federal money accessed through YAP’s ancillary/flex fund (see chapter 10 for further description) to acquire goods and services desired by the youth. This enabled youth to work toward a larger desired benefit. A staff member explained this arrangement by noting that “usually we try to do a mixed economy reward for them, where they get so many time bank hours but they get a physical reward out of it or maybe a trip somewhere or sometimes they want a pizza.”

As an example, a younger youth communicated during negotiations with his advocate in developing a co-production agreement that he wanted new Spiderman comics. These comics were costly so they were purchased with agency ancillary funds

contingent upon a fixed number of hours of service participation in the time bank. The staff member who supervised this arrangement explained the arrangement:

Before he was eligible for supported work, he'd usually just go down and volunteer two days worth of work. And he received, he likes Spider-Man, he reads, we bought him a Spider-man book with his time bank hours.

Before he got the book, he would go up to Borders and he would go get the Spider-man book and read it. He'd sit there for hours. But, now, through the time bank, he was able to earn the time bank hours to purchase the book.

#### *Using Small Group Modalities*

In addition to individual work with advocates, staff organized small groups of youth working together with advocate staff to earn time bank hours. Youth had the opportunity to choose the projects they wanted to become involved with and whom they wanted to work with. A youth noted this flexible arrangement by sharing that "there's many options, like you can work with groups of people, you can work with one single other person, and you can work with the advocates. There's a whole bunch of choices."

Staff members identified the attractiveness of small group work. For example, small groups under the supervision of the advocate provided involuntary youth and family members with the support they often needed to succeed. A staff member focused on this theme in her comments below:

Maybe small groups. . . we did some where a mom came and helped make jewelry with the youth. . . That actually worked out really well. . . She [the mom] did not have a whole lot of social skills but she had, you know, a

motivated advocate who really was into [the project] that worked out really well. And that was because the advocate was going with it and the mom did not have a whole lot of social skills and there were a lot of issues but I think, you know, we really, she came to the group and she helped teach making the jewelry.

Another advocate concurred with the preference for small groups, referring to youth in general and youth involved with YAP especially, “wanting the friendship, the relationship with peers, they need it. . . the group co-production contracts would be more beneficial.” A youth participant concurred, voicing her need to work with peers on projects:

We could always use more people. It would be great to have more young people in the project that are willing to help out. . . I’m like, going to be the only young person in the parade [representing the time bank].

In addition, small group co-production-driven activities fit nicely into the core YAP services model. In the model, advocate staff often work with two to three youth at any one time. Involving all of the youth in an advocate’s caseload on a planned service project was logistically feasible. An advocate explained below how youth on his caseload worked together to earn time bank hours:

[Got youth involved together] in mini-group projects. . . . Two kids. . . . We did the poster for the DSS project. . . we handed out fliers. I took two children up to the farm . . . I took another group to hand out stuff, advertising about the time bank.

This advocate described a project by which youth worked together to assist a community member who needed his yard tended to. While doing the work, the youth learned social skills and teamwork:

We also raked leaves for some people in the community. So I got there and did it and we turned it into fun, with some music. Some of the kids got frustrated about raking the leaves or got mad at another guy, so we took a time out, sat down for a few minutes and then came back to work. So, you know, it was a learning thing and a team effort for the kids to work together and see the end of the project. The leaf thing was a very good one because some of the kids I had, one kid in particular, he's kind of lazy and the other kids wanted to get the stuff done.

Other group projects involved a mix of different youth, across advocate caseloads, working together. For example, two youth worked with staff to put on a Halloween party for the youth in the program. Under the supervision of a local park official, a group of youth associated with YAP “adopted a local green space” next to the office. An advocate described this project:

We have a project coming up. . . it's going to be beautification of a street corner where we're gonna do some flowers. . . . I think we can do [this kind of project] in other areas of the [City]. I mean, to just do it as a project, time bank, or as a group project, or with a couple of individuals.

#### *Planning and Implementing Short-Term Projects*

Four staff members commented on the duration of co-production projects. Co-production projects were mostly short-term and time-limited. Some projects involved

preparing for an actual event, such as advertising for a local poetry slam or a fundraiser for a DSS project. Others involved a one-time only service activity. For example, the leaf-raking project described above was a weekend project, starting on a Friday and continuing through Sunday. Posting fliers in the community to advertise the DSS fundraiser was a one day event. The advocates explained this latter project below:

This was for one day. We came down, we met at the YAP office, and we went out. It was a day that school was closed, for some reason. . . . we planned this out and we just for about an hour, hour and a half, went out in the community and did some handing out fliers.

A staff member offered a rationale for the short term nature of the projects:

I think it [projects] would be short-term, because we all know, in YAP, we lose our kids interests real fast. And, yeah it's our job to try to get them [motivated] but bottom line is, if they're not interested, they're not interested. But, I think if we come up with good projects, you know, short term, one, two, three weeks. Or even a nice big one, for one day, we set it up maybe with a couple of kids and then all of a sudden, we go and do it, like the beautification project.

Finally, due to the above factors, long-term, larger scale projects were not developed. A staff member noted that "for the most part, we have maybe one or two kids that will work together on a project, but we haven't done a large scale group project yet."

#### *Creating an Environment of Trust and Support*

In those projects that were staff-directed, an environment of trust and support was created for the youth. Staff accomplished this by fostering teamwork and mutual

assistance. Recognition and praise was also used to encourage the youth. Three staff members and two youth participants (n=5) articulated these themes.

In the following example, a staff person described how he built teamwork by utilizing the other youth to encourage a youth who was having difficulty completing tasks:

At one point like I said, one child, he's a little bit incapable of really working, but he tried his hardest, he got frustrated, took a time out. So we got things resolved. We sat down, we talked about, "okay we need your help." It was not only me saying "we need your help," it was the other kids which was very interesting. . . other kids sat down for a few minutes. . . . He [the troubled youth] thought about it, he came back and worked side-by-side.

The staff member used a similar approach to solve a crisis within the team:

We had a crisis. I go through a thing where I process with the kids, process with both kids [that had the argument]. The incident happened, we kind of walk them through the steps and we talk about it and then after they talked, after we got back to work, I praised them.

In addition to staff, youth received recognition for their work from community members. Small gestures, like neighbors praising the kids for their work or feeding the youth lunch and snacks can make a big difference in the attitude of the youth. Two comments, one by staff, the other by a youth, illustrated these themes:

We had a chili festival here and one of the things that they asked us to do was to come set up tables, help clean up, and pick up the garbage. . . One

kid said, “there’s no way I’m going out there, picking up garbage and my friends are out there, people are gonna see me all dirty.” [I responded by saying] “Let’s give it a try for an hour.” We get out there and we end up spending four or five hours, because he’s picking up, people are saying hey, “you’re working, good job,” this and the other. And, so the kid, you know, [he’s] running to the next garbage can.

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Researcher: So, it was a fun project for four of you guys?

Youth: And the guy that we were cleaning up the lawn for, like, we would take breaks and he would give us soda.

Researcher: He kept good care of you.

Youth: Every time I took two. And I ate my sandwich, so I had two and a half sandwiches.

### *Stressing Social Dimensions*

11 of the 12 youth and staff participants identified the importance of structuring projects so that youth have fun, meet new people and cultivate new friendships, while contributing to community and organizations. Common themes identified by youth included having meals together, hanging out with friends in the program and with the advocates, doing something in the community instead of just staying home, learning new things and meeting new people. A sample of youth responses to these themes included the following:

Getting to meet new people. Having fun. Food. And hanging out with people. But not only were we hanging out with my friends that were in YAP with me. I was actually getting to hang out with the advocates.

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I would get other kids to get involved because if they don't ever really have time to do other things, besides watch TV or something, or never really get the chance to go and do things, it's an opportunity to be able to work with a youth advocate and go to a time bank meeting to make ideas with other members and other kids. Just to have fun.

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Well, as long as its fun, then I think that people would be interested in it. Fun and helpful. Those are the two main things.

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Yeah, it was fun. Because, I like doing music so . . . Just do a little work and I can come in here and like just schedule a time [to use the equipment]. It was for free.

According to a staff member, youth participated in Time Bank activities primarily to feel a part of something, to gain a sense of "belonging" that he/she might not feel at home:

To be a part, a part of a project, whether it being they're not getting the nutrients that they need on their own or at home. . . . Nutrients being somebody wants me around, somebody wants me there. I'm able to do something and I'm able to get something out of it. I'm able to be around people, and talk and share.

Another staff member stressed that it was the social component of the project, rather than earning the time dollar currency that made the difference in participation:

He [the youth] enjoyed it [time bank activity] because it was social, he enjoyed the social component of it. For him, the time dollar, the currency aspects, really had no relevance.

To encourage participation, staff employed creative strategies that emphasized the social and recreational dimensions of co-production activities. In the example below, a project was created to provide incentives for youth to make exchanges. In this example, a puzzle was presented in a prominent location in the office. Each time two exchanges were made, a puzzle piece was uncovered. When all the puzzle pieces were uncovered, the site for the trip was then revealed. A staff member explained:

First of all, we're not going to tell them about the project and what we're going to do is illustrate it on the wall with a puzzle. And so however many kids want to go to the amusement park is [dependent upon] how many puzzle pieces [are uncovered]. So if there are five kids, there will be five puzzle pieces. And once there had been two exchanges and it doesn't necessarily have to be for that kid, so if it's two exchanges for five kids it'll be ten exchanges. So once there is two exchanges, one piece of the puzzle will go up on the wall. And they'll see okay, we need so many more exchanges. . . . When the puzzle is finished, the kids earned the trip to the amusement park.

#### *Appealing to a Youth's Need to "Give-Back"*

"Giving back" was a theme identified by 3 of the youth respondents. One youth was attracted to the time bank because it enabled him to help the community. A second youth tutored middle school youth and stated that he wanted to start-up a basketball

league in the future, to “keep kids away from violence and stuff.” A third youth liked the idea of helping others. This theme is important for staff to consider in structuring future projects.

However, concurrent with findings noted earlier, the last youth commented that her willingness and ability to contribute and assist others was dependent upon her circumstances at the moment. She shared this qualifying point:

I mean, there are times when you don't want to help anybody but yourself.

But, there are times that you want to, you really want to help somebody.

And there are lots of kids who are like that. So, this is your chance, practically. So you can like help someone with something they need, or want to learn.

### *Summary*

Staff employed a range of general and group empowerment practices to attract youth to participate in time banking exchanges and service projects. These practices facilitated youth choice in determining how they wanted to participate. Of import was the range of contribution opportunities afforded to youth. The opportunities were adapted to individual capabilities and circumstances, shaped mostly by youth interests and expertise. In addition, staff was creative in determining a range of methods by which youth could “cash-in” their service hours. In addition to “purchasing” services offered by community time bank members, youth used their hours to acquire donated goods from local businesses and to access special privileges provided by the local YAP program. These goods were often given to family members and friends, in turn strengthening peer and family relationships.

Moreover, staff employed individual and small group modalities to structure exchanges and service projects. Staff used the co-production agreement tool to set forth project expectations, including youth contributions and a plan for “cashing in” hours. Staff combined strategies, using Federal dollars accessed through budgeted “ancillary funds” plus accumulated time bank hours to provide incentives for youth to contribute. Most of the projects implemented were short term and time limited, designed to maintain and reinforce youth interest.

Finally, staff worked to develop a welcoming and safe environment for youth to test out skills. In small group projects, teamwork was fostered. Staff understood and stressed the social needs of the youth. Play was combined with work as youth had the opportunity to meet new friends and cultivate relationships with adults. Youth also identified the attractiveness of projects by which they could “give back.” Giving back to the YAP program was a theme articulated by a number of youth who felt that they benefited from YAP while they were in the program.

#### *Autonomy-Building Empowerment Practices*

##### *Key findings*

- ❖ Staff provided youth with opportunities to exercise “choice” in deciding upon their specific involvement in time bank activities.
- ❖ Staff also provided youth with opportunities to exercise “voice” in shaping the time bank as a whole.
- ❖ Staff worked with youth on cultivating a wide breath of formal youth leadership roles for youth.

- ❖ Staff cultivated ad-hoc, informal opportunities for youth leadership. These opportunities enabled youth to showcase their interests and talents.
- ❖ Youth and staff alike identified the import of a “learn and lead” approach to leadership.
- ❖ An ongoing commitment of time and attention by staff was required, to cultivate and sustain youth engagement as leaders.

### *Evidence and Analysis*

Data from the empirical analysis of site two further confirmed the importance of autonomy practices within co-production interventions for involuntary youth. As noted earlier, staff created flexible opportunities that allowed for youth choice in the kind and nature of time bank participation that they desired. In this section, specific autonomy-related practices are reviewed. These practices are categorized into two broad areas: (1) Fostering youth voice and choice and (2) Promoting youth leadership. Strategies employed by staff within both of these categories are outlined below.

#### *Fostering Youth Voice and Choice*

Fostering youth voice and choice was identified as an important empowerment strategy by all 12 of the participants. A number of strategies were used to foster youth voice and choice. First, staff members were clear to *communicate that participation in co-production projects was voluntary*; that there were no negative repercussions for choosing not to participate in the time bank. A mother of a youth, who accompanied her son to the interview, stressed the importance of staff not forcing the issue, but, instead, making the time bank attractive in order to encourage participation:

Don't force, make it seem more attractive than a job. You know, usually if you say it's work, kids will not want to do it. But if you approach it as being something fun to do, or a project or something like that, they would see it as not a big workload kind of thing.

A staff member concurred, sharing the strategies he employed:

Not to force them to sign up. Not to force them to participate. Um, definitely, focus on their strengths and the things they're good at, things that they're interested in to give them opportunities to excel and to get a feel for the project.

Being voluntary did not curtail staff members' energy in trying to persuade youth to participate. A staff member explained:

Let's give it a try. We're not force-feeding them anything, but let's go up here for an hour [to try out an activity] and if it doesn't work for us, then it doesn't work for us. . . . Just speaking with them, letting them know we're here to help you and support you, this is no type of punishment.

To further promote the voluntary nature of co-production, *staff allowed youth full choice in the kind and level of their participation*. The co-production agreement, introduced earlier in the chapter, was the tool utilized by staff to structure participation. Youth chose what they wanted to work on and what they wanted to receive in return. A staff member explained the process:

You know, whatever they want to work on and then what they'll receive out of doing this. It can be time bank hours. It can be rewards. . . It's [the co-production agreement] an agreement between the two parties, usually

agreed upon for some type of exchange for them to receive or give a service to others and then they'll receive something in return.

Furthermore, staff saw the time bank participation as empowering for youth because it reduced dependency on service providers and the stigma of asking for help.

Two staff explained:

Everybody needs something and most of us are not willing to ask for it. This [the time bank] allows them access to all of these services without having to feel ashamed. . . The time bank sets it up so that you don't have to feel that you're just receiving help. You help someone else, you complete thirty hours [for example] and so now you have the right to use those thirty hours however you see it. And, so I think it helps because people don't see it as a charity; they see it as something they have earned.

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I think it also gives kids an opportunity to be leaders and really work toward their own goals instead of having people do it for them and always to be reliant on an advocate for everything or another service provider.

Staff offered examples of projects developed by and for youth based on their specific interests. In the first example below, a youth revealed a passion to a staff member, which was turned into a reciprocal set of exchanges that benefited both the youth and the YAP program:

There was a young man who really didn't want to do much with the time bank. And we kind of were getting frustrated with him and finally, one day the time bank coordinator and I were sitting with him, talking and we

were like “well, what do you want to do” and of all things he told us he wanted to be was a police officer, which kind of shocked us a little. And so, I think he expected us to brush it off and say, “well, that’s nice,” but instead, we actually contacted a police officer who joined the time bank and was willing to earn hours by allowing this young man to do a ride-along with him. And he was so excited about the ride-along with him. . . . After that, he was more than willing to do anything we asked of him. If we needed painting done, we asked him to join the advisory council. . . .

In this next example, a young person revealed her love of graphic art and design and how she used these skills to contribute to the Time Bank:

I had some co-production contracts which involved making a flyer for youth when I was doing graphic arts here. So I made a flier to hand out, just to get youth’s attention. I’m also part of starting a youth newspaper with several other kids. And, I also did this drawing for the youth picnic the other day, on the fliers. . . . Another thing is I made the Youth Advocate home page, I designed it. . . . Everything I’ve been working on is all art-based and that’s what I’m really into.

Finally, staff provided youth with opportunities to exercise “voice” in shaping the time bank as an entity. For example, focus groups of youth were convened by staff to enable youth to contribute ideas about ways to improve the time bank, to facilitate youth involvement. Youth identified attractive projects as well as goods and services that they would like to receive in return, to “cash in” their time bank hours. A youth participant shared his enjoyment in being part of the planning process:

We just sat in a group. One of the members goes next and the next person [talks about] an idea. And we write it down on a big piece of paper and we talk about those ideas, how they would work or work to achieve those ideas. Being able to make an idea that might not work out, to make it successful in the future. It may not happen at this period of time, but most likely it will be able to get started in the future. . . . It made me feel good, making something that's never been started, to start.

Another youth commented on how important it is to obtain feedback from the youth, to foster youth ownership of the Time Bank:

To find out what they want, what they like to do and talk to the kids that are involved to like come up with a way to get everybody's idea involved. . . to have like one big thing off the kids ideas. . . that will bring the kids [in because] like, "oh, that's my idea, I came up with that."

A staff member suggested that these kinds of group discussions occur regularly, notwithstanding the challenges of bringing youth and staff together, with the myriad of meetings and appointments that the youth have:

I think we need to do maybe, an hour to 45 minute group discussion about the Time Bank, let them know the improvements, let them know what needs to be strengthened or areas of concerns [to them]. We need a group thing at least once a week.

For many of the youth, participation in focus group meetings attracted their interest in the Time Bank and led to them serving in a variety of leadership roles. Leadership opportunities afforded to youth are reviewed below.

### *Youth Leadership*

Consistent with the findings from site one, fostering youth leadership was identified by almost all of the respondents (n=10, staff=7; youth=3) as a key autonomy-related empowerment feature of co-production. Findings revealed that youth involved in leadership activities exhibited cognitive and emotional levels of engagement as well as an enhanced commitment to the time bank as an entity. Also, youth working as co-leaders with staff led to opportunities for staff/youth collaboration.

Within the category of youth leadership, a number of themes emerged from the interviews. Themes included: (1) The breadth of leadership roles developed by staff, (2) Staff strategies that were used to develop leadership opportunities for youth, and (3) Challenges in fostering youth leadership. Each theme is reviewed below.

First, staff developed strategies and approaches that produced *a wide range of formal leadership roles for youth*. The work that youth accomplished in association with these roles included:

- ✓ Youth worked on a youth-run newspaper
- ✓ Youth trained and prepared to market the Time Bank in the community
- ✓ Youth served on the Time Bank Advisory Council
- ✓ Youth served as tutors to younger kids
- ✓ Youth taught others a specific skill
- ✓ Youth co-led projects with staff
- ✓ Youth conducted fundraisers for local non-profits

Second, *staff employed a number of strategies to foster youth leadership*. One strategy involved developing opportunities in an informal and ad-hoc manner. In

developing leadership opportunities staff was flexible, accommodating, and inclusive. In some situations, youth naturally morphed into leadership roles while completing aspects of their co-production agreement. In the first example described below by a staff member, two youth worked with staff to organize a special event for YAP and while doing so, took on leadership roles:

For instance, one girl helped, well both helped, with the Halloween party. And for them, that was something that was really fun. . . And that was great for them. I don't think they realized that they served as leaders, they learned a little bit about event planning, about budgeting, usually we have so much to do about pulling off an event. . . . probably afterwards they realized that they got benefit out of it but at the time, it was something fun.

In another example, a youth became involved in learning how to use music recording equipment in a studio run by a YAP staff person. As trust was developed between the staff person and the young person, the youth's role progressed to becoming a peer leader, assisting the staff person in managing and overseeing the project. A staff member described this transition to leadership:

The director contracted with him [the youth] to be able to use music equipment to record and from that, he began encouraging other youth to do the same thing, given them [youth] different advice, being a leader in terms of the other kids develop co-production contracts and following through [with them]. He brought in community members, his friends and started engaging them in the time bank to do exchanges revolving around music.

Staff also developed naturally occurring leadership roles for youth within small group projects. In the example described below by a staff person, each youth who participated in an outdoor project assisting a community member was given a leadership role during the project:

So it was a yard and out front of the house, so you guys do this area and I'll go over here and do this area. But, first I started out, I started out raking the back of the yard and go to this area but I'll kind of go out front and do another area but this is what you guys need to do step-by-step, this part here. You know, it's just like a construction project where you're the leader. . . . and then I kinda turn it over to each child to be a leader and now I ask them what do we do next. . . Each child had the opportunity to be the leader and they did well, and I praised them. So I mean the children learned something out of that. . . the kids are the boss for a while so we need to do this, we need to do that, this kid's actually bossing me around, you know.

In these and other circumstances, some staff favored a “*learn and lead*” approach. A “learn and lead” approach involved cultivating a skill learned through the time bank and then asking the youth to teach that skill to others. In the music example above, the young person learned how to operate the music equipment and then proceeded to teach other youth how to use the equipment. In an example identified earlier, a young person learned auto mechanics in school and then had the opportunity through the time bank to teach others how to change the oil in a car. Although this approach occurred organically

and naturally, one staff member advocated for a more formal adaptation of this approach in the future:

If the youth is interested in playing the guitar, the youth can actually contact the time bank coordinator, because that's what he is interested in, and say to them, "you know, is there somebody in there [the bank] that can help me play the guitar?" Then how can the youth give back to the time bank? Hopefully, ideally, and this is just my take on it, if the youth is getting guitar lessons, ideally I would like to see the youth probably give back guitar lessons back into the time bank or be able to offer that particular service that he learned out of the time bank to give that back to the community.

The youth participant who taught community members how to change oil in a car supported the "learn and lead" approach:

If one of the kids that you know that you talk to has a strong skill in whatever that they're doing and you know that it's a strong skill, and they want to have an opportunity to teach it, then you can start slowly starting a teaching program for him or her to teach other people how to do that, which they did with me.

Finally, findings revealed that *youth leaders required support and mentoring* to both help in successfully completing and maintaining commitment and enthusiasm for the project. As noted earlier in this chapter, involuntary youth are often easily distracted, attracted to activities that may be harmful to them. Staff needs to oversee youth in leadership projects, to keep youth "on-track." In the first example below, the youth

leader, who was an editor for the youth-led newspaper, shared that a key to her success was the support and guidance she received from staff:

It's probably the fact that everybody's there, helping me. You don't have to do it all on your own. And like, if you need help, you just have to ask.

In the next example, a youth leader recounted his experience as a leader, noting that he often became distracted from the task at hand and wishing, in hindsight, that he had received support from staff prior to leaving his post:

First I was really into working. Then, like a month or two passed, I kinda started slacking off [tutoring younger kids]. The high school's right next to me and I was like 16, like I would start traveling over to the high school and dealing with people over there. I started off good. Like I really wanted to do it, but I kinda got distracted by kids my age. . . . I think I should've told the staff what was going on. I just let the high school kids keep coming to class [where I was tutoring] and stuff like that.

### *Summary*

Staff employed autonomy-building empowerment practices and strategies to cultivate youth participation and engagement. Staff provided youth with opportunities to exercise choice in deciding upon their specific involvement in time bank activities and voicing in shaping the Time Bank as a whole. Staff stressed the semi-voluntary nature of participation; that youth were not required to participate but it was in their best interests to participate so that they could receive needed and desired goods and services for themselves and for their families.

Staff also promoted youth leadership. Leadership opportunities were most often developed in an informal, ad-hoc manner. As youth felt comfortable in their involvement in service projects, staff encouraged youth to “step-up” into leadership roles, often to “pay-back” for a good or service received. A “learn and lead” approach to leadership development was favored by staff and youth. As youth comfort levels and skill development expanded, youth were in a better position to lead. Staff encouraged youth to teach newly learned skills to other youth or community members, under staff support and tutelage.

Moreover, support and tutelage by staff took time and commitment. Without sufficient support and oversight provided by staff, youth swayed from agreed upon responsibilities. In some situations, attention was diverted to other activities, some of which were not pro-social or asset building.

### *Competency-Enhancing Empowerment Practices*

#### *Key finding*

- ❖ Staff structured time bank participation so that youth had opportunities to learn new skills, including some that evolved into enhanced vocational competencies.

#### *Evidence and Analysis*

Competency-enhancing empowerment practices were a component of co-production interventions in site two. 8 participants (staff=5, youth=3) identified this practice area. Within this area, staff provided youth with opportunities to *build vocational skills tailored to their interests and passions*. For example, youth interested in exploring an interest in music had an opportunity to cash in time bank hours for the use of use

equipment in a music studio. Or, in earning hours helping out on a farm, youth learned about how to fertilize and maintain crops.

Examples occurred where participants identified the link between time bank activities and new skill development. In the example below shared by a staff member, a time bank member assisted a youth in fixing a window that the youth had broken, in a fit of anger directed toward his mother:

Instead of YAP just giving him money to repair the window, we actually had him cash in some of his time bank hours to have someone help him show him how to fix the window. . . . He also learned a trade, he learned how to fix a window. . . he now has a skill that he learned from the time bank.

In another example, a youth participant with aspirations to be an artist got to test out her skills in the time bank, assisting YAP and the Time Bank with developing promotional materials. She intended to use this experience to help her with her college applications and jobs in the future:

Well, I'm gonna be like the artist and writer for it [the youth newspaper]. I am sure that it could also help if you're doing a job thing or trying to get into college or something like that. You might want to write it down, saying that you helped other people doing these certain things and put that in your application or your portfolio and stuff.

More generic vocational related skills, such as project planning, budgeting, public speaking and motivating others, were also developed as youth took leadership roles in organizing projects and marketing the time bank. One staff member noted that youth

could gain valuable skills in “money management” and in being industrious to save up for something that they want. He explained:

Sometimes they’ll [the youth] come back wanting something. . . where [the youth will say] “I’ll work the time bank and save some hours” because now he’s going to really work the time bank and he’s going to have to put in a lot of hours, but if you’d been working it all along, you’d have had the what you need right there, you wouldn’t have to work so hard. So, I think it’s a teaching thing with kids, almost like a bank account. You save some money, you work, you save some money, and you can go get stuff.

*Empowerment-Practices Designed to Enhance Relationships and Connections*

*Key findings*

- ✓ Staff utilized the Time Bank to facilitate opportunities for youth to meet pro-social peer and adult role models, to develop and enhance community support networks for participating youth.
- ✓ Both staff and youth participants identified joint participation in time bank activities as a method of solidifying advocate/youth relationships
- ✓ Staff developed strategies for parents and family members to work with youth in completing co-production projects, designed to strengthen family relationships.

*Evidence and Analysis*

Participants identified a number of empowerment-related practices that sought to build pro-social relationships and connections for participating youth. Three themes emerged from the findings: (1) Practices that enhanced community supports, (2) Practices

which solidified advocate/youth relationships, and (3) Practices that strengthened family relationships. Findings associated with each of these themes are revealed below.

All of the staff participants (n=7) identified the importance of using the Time Bank to create opportunities for youth to *expand their community social support networks*. A sample of staff responses included:

YAP adopted it [the Time Bank], I believe, because of its potential to network; to serve youth to help youth make connections in the community that could serve the youth after they're done with the program.

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We've really worked on building assets for them so when they leave the Youth Advocate Program, they'll still have a support network. Because many of our kids have been in residential or respite going into residential, and a lot of the same problems that got them into that situation are still going to exist once they're finished with YAP, so making sure that we have an outside support system established for them before they leave is basically our biggest motivation in this project.

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They're actually meeting new people in the community, getting different options in the community, so that once this formalized service is done, they'll have non-formalized services that they can rely on. They can say, "you know, when I did this time bank project, I met Pete over here at you know, the auto mechanic's, I met Jan over here at the ice skating rink." So you know, it's going to give them options to go to more informal services, as opposed to more formalized services once YAP is out of the picture.

Staff identified examples of youth who met and worked with community members while they were earning hours, assisting community residents, local businesses or non-profit organizations. In an example below, a young person worked with a community resident to repair damage that he did to his home:

There was a young man who, during a fit of anger, I think he punched a wall and broke a window. And instead of YAP just giving him money to repair the window, we actually had him cash in some of his time bank hours to have someone show him how to fix the window. So, not only did he fix the window but he also learned a trade, how learned how to fix a window.

In the previously identified circumstance where the youth cashed in his time bank hours for the police ride-along, the staff member noted that the youth made a solid connection with a professional, a respected member of the community:

And he was so excited after the ride-along. . . he told us every single detail about the entire day and just had this wonderful time for four and a half hours with this police officer, who, you know, that's a great connection for him, he [the police officer] can serve as a mentor.

A youth noted below how representing youth on the advisory council put him in a position to connect with new adults:

I mean, we'd come down here, get to talk to a lot of people, meet some people and just be able to like now what the time bank is trying to do. . . And I thought it was interesting to sit in and give your opinion.

Also, staff noted that time banking worked best when a mentoring-like relationship developed between the youth and a community member or worker from an organization/business, as the youth is performing a task. A staff member shared the following in support of this point:

I think it's a connection. I think it's, you know, there's a mentoring piece there. I think they look up to [the worker]. . . I think it's a personality style. I think they've clicked with the different personalities.

In recounting the project where youth earned time bank hours helping on a farm, this staff person identified the business owner taking the youth "under her wings" as a key to the project's success:

I mean, I think of [the owner of] the farm. That's where I think personality plays a lot into it. Where the kids felt worthy and they felt that they were giving something back. They're warm and welcoming and respectful of the kids. . . almost like a family.

A second staff person concurred, describing what made the farm project successful:

I think the people who supervised the kids and showed them what to do were people who really got along with kids, so they took the extra time to be nice and [showed them] how to do something. If you have any questions, come back and ask.

While cultivating community connections were important practices identified by staff, in contrast, youth participants highlighted working closely with their assigned advocates and other YAP staff as the most important connection made during time bank

participation. *Four of the five youth participants highlighted the mentoring relationship with their advocate as primary*, with the time bank being the vehicle to enhanced bonding. One youth noted that “not only were we hanging out with my friends that were in YAP with me, I was actually getting to hang out with the advocates.” A second youth shared the following:

What I got out of it is respect, that everybody can earn, but just mainly respect and bonding with the other staff members. . . . The time bank and having a youth advocate is another way to I guess, bond with the person. To get to know each other better, to do activities together.

Staff concurred with these observations. One staff member noted that youth closely working with their advocate on time bank projects was a key to the success of the time bank for the youth:

It’s been successful when the advocate really leads the exchange. I think when the advocate has taken the kid to mow the lawn, or paint the fence. The advocate participates, it’s you know, a relationship-builder between the advocate and the kid and also a relationship-builder between the kid and whoever [else] received the exchange.

Staff/youth working together helped build youth/staff trust, acceptance and rapport. In the following example, staff worked with a youth on an outdoor beautification project, earning time bank hours. This activity led to an improved relationship with the youth because more time was spent in productive activities which both enjoyed, counterbalancing time spent focusing on problem areas:

I think it was a way that the advocate found they could spend time outside of the car, outside of the house, outside of the school, where they were always bickering. . . . I think they made it [the project] successful because they were able to see more of each other in that [situation], it was able to be more bonding time. Which then, later on helped out in the services and different things that were going on in the youth's life.

Another staff member shared the following, illustrating how working jointly with youth on community projects changed a staff member's view of a youth:

Working in partnership with them [the youth] instead of reading a case file and this was a kid who was a terror in residential and I don't know that he can make it in school. And then working alongside him in a community situation and being able to go to school and say, "listen, this kid was great, he can do this."

Finally, *staff developed opportunities for parent and family members to work together with targeted youth in completing co-production projects*. Strategies employed enhanced youth participation in the Time Bank and strengthened family relationships, often a key goal of YAP services. The importance of youth and parents working together contributing to their community was articulated by a staff participant in the following comments:

Ideally, what I'd like to see, if there's somebody in the time bank that can give [for example] tennis lessons. OK, the advocate takes the youth, why not take mom and dad to do the tennis also? You, know, because eventually, like I keep saying, the Youth Advocate Program is going to be

out of the picture. It's going to be pretty much on those parents to take care of their family. If we can get mom and dad and the youth involved in a particular activity, that's building relationships.

According to a number of the participants, parent involvement triggered youth involvement. For example, a youth participant recommended that the Time Bank focus on a local public housing project, where "everybody needs help. . . go over to places around there, talking to the parents, that's how you get the kids [involved]. A staff member concurred, noting that the youth that most benefited from the Time Bank (and the YAP program as a whole) were those that had parents directly involved in the Bank:

I saw, you know, there was so much more of a connection with the staff with those parents [who were involved in the Time Bank], so much more of a connection with the kids and those parents. . . I think that's where it has been such a success. . . . Yeah, involved together [youth and parents], parents involved on their own, without the kids.

A second youth confirmed youth and parent participation as being reciprocal but viewed youth participation as the driver of parent participation:

If you can get a kid involved, you're one step closer to getting a parent involved. Because, as soon as they see their kid, wow, that this time banking is really helping my kid focus, it's changing him, they're going to be like, "what's going on?" "I want to see what's going on."

Staff employed a number of different strategies to involve parents and youth working together on time bank activities. First, kids and parents exchanged goods and services between themselves, in a "closed exchange." As a reminder, a closed exchange

involves two people giving and receiving with each other. A youth offered an example of a closed exchange between himself and his foster parent, assisted by a staff member:

Youth: I helped her [my foster parent] plant her garden. She helped me get a lot of hours on my [driver's license] permit, so we did that together. And then finally for time banking, she started to do respite [care for other foster kids].

Researcher: How did that work with your license?

Youth: Because she let me drive her car.

Researcher: Did she earn time bank hours for doing that?

Youth: She worked with the staff person to help. He helped her set up doing respite up at her house. Because I wanted her to do that, I wanted a respite kid. So, in return for me getting my permit, she said we can go and get a respite kid.

A second example involved a foster parent who worked with staff to assist a young person in the oil change community project (see previous example). A staff member described the circumstances of this exchange below:

He taught other youth in our program, as well as community members and time bank members, how to change the oil in a car and what to look for when buying a used car. We planned it out, I believe it was an eight week process, where he developed a curriculum, gathered the materials that he needed, worked with a local auto mechanic, worked with his school and worked with his foster parents to get the materials that he needed.

A final example occurred when parents and young people worked together on a project, each earning time bank hours in the process. Staff members described these instances:

Well, a co-production contract was signed by one of the youth and his father, to be able to do electrical work [together]. This is something very positive, you know, this kid and dad, you know, they're always butting heads. But now they are on the ladder together, working together.

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When we started co-production contracts, we had a mom come help make jewelry, we were doing some summer groups with the girls. That actually worked out really well. . . she came and she made a connection with YAP and she didn't have a whole lot of social skills. . . she came to the group and she helped teach the jewelry and she brought her other kid along [to help].

Involving parents in exchanges with their youth was viewed with such import that YAP decided to invest in a parent advocate position to help secure parental participation in the Time Bank.

Finally, two youth offered caution and hesitancy in instituting practices that sought to involve youth and parents working together on co-production projects.

If they're willing to get involved, yes. But from what I've seen, they'll never want to. It's just like fine, let the kids out of our hair for a few hours.

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Researcher: How about working with your mom?

Youth: No, I don't like working with my mom but if I have to , I will.

Researcher: How come you feel that way?

Youth: Well, I see enough of her every day.

### *Summary*

Both staff and youth participants identified within co-production interventions, the importance of empowerment practices designed to enhance relationships and connections for participating youth. Interestingly, while staff highlighted practices to enhance community supports through time bank exchanges, youth focused on the bonding and connection that occurred with YAP staff while participating in time bank activities, as most essential. Finally, over the course of project implementation, staff recognized the importance of practices and strategies that helped parents and family members to work with their own child in completing co-production projects. Such strategies contributed to youth and parent engagement, especially in the cases of projects through which youth had the opportunity to work individually with their advocate and contribute to organizational and community improvement.

### **Staff/Youth Collaboration: Processes and Outcomes**

#### *Key findings*

- ✓ Staff altered their roles to accommodate opportunities for youth to serve in leadership capacities in co-production projects.
- ✓ Staff and youth who worked together on projects to improve organizational functioning altered the nature of their interactions and relationship. This finding indicated a link between youth leadership and higher phases of staff/youth collaboration.

### *Evidence and Analyses*

Practices that sought to further levels of staff/youth collaboration were not well-articulated by participants. For example, it was difficult to glean from the findings specific changes in phases of staff/youth collaboration resulting from co-production participation. However, despite these challenges, participants were able to identify practices and strategies utilized by staff to improve working relationships with youth. In turn, these practices led to changes in staff/youth interactions. Altered interactions served as indicators of enhanced staff/youth collaboration. Findings linked to the two themes—changes in staff roles and changes in the kind and quality of staff/youth interactions—are revealed below.

*Staff took on two different roles as they participated in time banking and in co-production projects.* First, staff served as facilitators and coordinators of projects where youth earned time bank hours assisting community members or working to improve their community. Numerous examples of staff serving in this role were reviewed in this chapter. Examples included staff organizing teams of youth to help fundraise for local charities, preparing youth to work for an area farm or helping to negotiate an arrangement with a local ice rink for youth to help with concessions in exchange for youth receiving free ice time. In these instances, youth were transacting with another person or organization. Co-production agreements often were negotiated, clarifying how youth were to give and benefit from the arrangement and identifying the role that staff would play in facilitating the transaction.

A second role emerged for staff. In this role, staff was a direct party to a co-production agreement with a youth. In these situations, youth agreed to perform services

to improve the local YAP program and/or clients involved in the program. Examples, some of which were revealed earlier in this chapter, included youth participating with staff on the Time Bank advisory council, youth serving as tutors and teachers for other youth and youth helping in organizing group projects such as music recording and planning for a YAP Halloween party. In these projects, staff served in mentoring roles, assisting youth in performing tasks. Co-production agreements were negotiated with youth serving in a leadership capacity assisting the organization to perform its mission. Youth and staff members received and provided services, to meet the mutually defined goals of the project.

Interestingly, projects that involved staff members working with youth leaders on activities that benefited the YAP program cultivated greater levels of staff/youth collaboration. Within these projects, *youth leaders identified a change in their relationship with staff, moving beyond worker/client to more of a friend or peer.* The following were a sample of youth responses on this theme:

Not only were we hanging out with my friends that were in YAP with me, I was actually getting to hang out with the advocates, not on an advocate basis.

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What I got out of it is respect, that everybody can earn, but just mainly respect and bonding with the other staff members. . . They [the advocates] look at me more of a younger adult than a teenager. . . . The time bank and having a youth advocate is another way to I guess, bond with the person. To get to know each other better, to do activities together.

Moreover, youth in leadership positions gained status in the organization; they felt a part of the “inner-circle.” This contributed to as well as strengthened the relationship and bond between youth and staff. A youth participant who helped plan the poster project with staff (as mentioned earlier) to raise awareness of the time bank explained with pride how she worked closely with the staff on the project:

Participant: Yeah, it’s fun because we can brag about knowing the trip together. Like, “ha, ha [to the other youth], you don’t know.”

Researcher: Like a private inner circle.

Participant: Yeah, so it’s like we’re more in tune with the adults, where the other kids are just being lazy, sitting around. So, you’ve kinda worked for these kinds of benefits, and if you do enough work, me and the other person [a youth] have a higher amount of powers than the other kids.

### *Summary*

In implementing co-production activities, the role of staff changed. Staff assisted youth in exchanges with other time bank members, facilitating and coordinating projects that showcased youth talents and expertise. In addition, staff members were also direct parties to exchanges with youth. Some of these exchanges involved youth working in collaboration with staff on organizational improvement projects.

Evidence indicated that while working together, the nature of the relationship between youth and staff was altered. Youth began to view YAP workers as less staff members and more as peers. Such altered relationships and the interactions associated with these altered relationships were indicators of enhanced levels of staff/youth collaboration.

## Focus Group Results

Key findings from chapter 13 were reviewed by staff at a focus group session convened by the researcher (see appendix 3-4 for specific focus group questions for site two). As a reminder, the primary purpose of the focus group was to corroborate findings generated from the interview data. The focus group was structured so that staff had an opportunity to review and comment on the findings related to the core theoretical constructs of co-production; levels of involuntariness, empowerment practices, staff/youth collaboration and engagement.

Findings related to the first three core constructs are reviewed below. Findings specifically related to youth engagement and other youth/staff outcomes are reviewed in the next chapter, chapter 14 of this dissertation.

### *Finding: Initial Level of Youth Involuntariness*

#### *Focus Group Results*

Participants corroborated the interview findings which showed that youth experienced low levels of involuntariness in participating in co-production activities. In discussing level of youth involuntariness, some participants made a clear distinction between pressure to enroll in YAP and the choices available to them once they are enrolled. Because there were no consequences or sanctions for not participating in Time Bank activities (e.g., placement in residential care or called back to Family Court), youth experienced freedom to make choices. A staff member shared her thoughts:

On intake, if it's told to them that it's part of their program and what they have to do, that part is involuntary and they may feel like they have to participate. But once they're in the mix, they get to choose what it is they

do, so that might be the piece that they see as their choice in the matter and how they get to control what they do.

In addition, staff members made a link between youth participation in involuntary aspects of the program and participation in co-production activities. However, the directionality of this relationship was viewed as one-dimensional. In other words, youth compliance with involuntary aspects of their service plan impacted on engagement in co-production activities. The inverse of this relationship was not discussed. Two staff members explained:

For those kids that are participating more in the actual YAP program, they were the ones that were going to be voluntarily doing something for the Time Bank. Those that were actually taking advantage of the YAP program, those were the ones we were at first trying to target to participate. . . . Then you have those that just don't want to participate in any program and those were the ones that we have to put pressure on to try to get them to participate.

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Some of the kids might've felt it [the Time Bank] more voluntary because some of them participated more in YAP, so they found that participating in the Time Bank, because they enjoyed it. . . they enjoy getting out of the house.

A staff person elaborated, viewing his core responsibilities to be implementing the "traditional YAP piece." The traditional YAP remit was defined as "things that you're supposed to be able to do to maintain them in the community and the household: going to

school, coming in for curfew. . . things that are mandated by the court system.”

According to this staff person:

Those are the things they [the youth] need to be focusing on right now and it’s our job to assist them and support them in trying to get that piece of their life back together. . . . Once that piece of their life is back together, to an extent and they’re feeling good about themselves, then they’re more open to participate in giving back to the community.

*Finding: Empowerment-Oriented Intake Practices*

*Focus Group Results*

Much of the discussion in this area focused on the utility of co-production interventions for youth and families in crisis. Staff members recounted a situation, previously identified during the staff interviews, when a family in need of practical, concrete supports, agreed with staff and utilized the Time Bank. Time Bank members assisted the family in an emergency housing situation by helping them move and cooking meals for them. A staff member explained the utility of the Time Bank in this circumstance:

I think when you’re in crisis, that’s an opportunity to learn a new skill or a new resource to manage your crisis. And the Time Bank, in that situation, served as that new tool and resource to help them out of the crisis. So it was a good time for her [the mother] to engage, because she had not engaged before that.

However, another staff member insisted on making a distinction between kinds of crisis that are amenable to Time Bank interventions. This staff member commented that

in the circumstance noted above, the family “felt that they had their back against the wall, they had no one else to turn to. . . so they did take advantage of it [assistance from Time Bank members].” He contrasted this situation with other situations facing YAP families:

It [the circumstance above] was practical. . . that crisis was, I have nobody to help me move furniture, garbage. . . that is something that could easily be attended to. . . . But, as far as like a different type of crisis, like you know, if mom and dad are substance abusers and they’re fighting each other at night, how can the Time Bank really help that situation? . . . you know, youth keep running out of their home every single night, getting into fistfights, how much can the Time Bank patch that crisis up?

In addition, a key finding from the interviews was corroborated by staff: The link between staff building a trusting relationship with the youth/family and time bank participation. The staff member commented:

It’s pretty accurate, if you don’t know a kid, you don’t know what he likes doing, you can’t even send a kid off in crisis if you say “you’re gonna go do this today,” without the relationship. So, it’s best to have that relationship and you know the kid, the kid kinda knows you and trusts you. It makes it easier for your presentation of [the Time Bank].

Another staff member recounted the instance when a parent allowed her son to fix a window that he broke, instead of pressing charges. The son cashed in time bank hours to employ a member of the community to help him with the task. In this instance, the parent listened and agreed with the staff member when she raised the possibility of using a time bank exchange to assist in the restitution. According to the staff member:

“Because we helped [the mother] in a past instance, she was more forgiving and felt more support, just in general and was able to maintain him longer [living in her home].”

*Finding: Empowerment-Oriented General and Group Practices*

*Focus Group Results*

Participants corroborated the flexibility exhibited by staff in developing a broad range of opportunities for youth to contribute. An individualized approach was stressed, tailoring to each youth’s interests and strengths. Staff echoed the importance of allowing for youth experimentation, including staff accepting a youth’s freedom to choose when and if to participate. Trial and error was the norm as staff continued to experiment with ideas that would “strike a chord” with an individual youth. A staff member explained:

Yeah, it’s definitely gonna be individualized. . . . it might be seven attempts to find out exactly what’s going to spark their interest. You know, on Tuesday, they might say, “bicycle’s the thing for me” [to work toward earning], on Wednesday, they might say, “computers are my thing,” Thursday, it’s a video game and then you know, Friday [it’s] “I like to ride motorcycles.” So, it’s really going to find out what the kid is passionate about and what he really is interested in.

As noted during the interviews, freedom to choose was accompanied by sporadic attendance, with youth changing their minds on the fly. As noted by the staff person below, youths’ attention was often diverted. This made it increasingly difficult for staff to achieve continuity of attendance and participation for certain projects. A staff member noted that “it is very difficult to get a kid to do something, like, you know, on a scheduled

routine, like the basketball thing [group project]. That was every Tuesday and Thursday. Then, something comes up at home [and kids will not show up].”

Obstacles to youth participation were also noted, confirming interview findings. Many youth involved in the program are overscheduled. Mandated activities such as appointments with counselors, probation officers and medical appointments are time consuming and often require advocate transport. Other pro-social activities built into their services plan, such as employment, remedial educational services or participating in sports, may compete with the scheduling of Time Banking activities.

An additional obstacle was identified by staff that was not addressed during the interviews. In a small city surrounded by mostly rural areas, identifying a common sense of “community” for youth participants was challenging. For example, staff noted that it was difficult for a youth living in a rural area to become excited working on a community improvement project in center city because the youth did not feel that the project was bettering his/her community. Staff felt that this presented a structural barrier in forming co-production groups and impacted on levels of youth participation.

Moreover, staff corroborated interview findings that individual work and small groups were the ideal modality for facilitating youth participation. One staff person noted that small groups “built trust and teamwork” with kids helping out other kids. According to another staff person, small groups “gave them [the youth] a better opportunity to build relationships.” Small groups also enabled staff to prevent kids from bullying other kids, ensuring youth safety.

Interestingly, some staff felt that larger groups could be successful if a trained facilitator led the group and if the facilitators were allowed time to prepare for the

sessions. A staff member commented that larger group sizes presents challenges to staff tasked with managing group behavior and keeping all of the youth interested and engaged.

It's gonna be very hard to do larger groups. The kids are gonna be playing off each other, they're gonna be picking, and just not being able to sit them down. You know, a lot of them can't focus for more than an hour, that's why in school they're in specialized classes that give them breaks every 15 minutes. . . . the group might work but is everybody getting something out of it. That's the main thing: Is everybody participating. . .

Here again, the importance of establishing a relationship with the youth prior to the youth participating in a co-production project was noted as key factor related to the success of the project. A staff member explained:

Before the actual project happens, whatever advocates have whatever kids, [that they] on and off get with each other, so that there's a relationship between the kids and between staff members. So that there's trust there instead of all of a sudden throwing these two kids who were working with this [one] staff member, and this [second] staff member doesn't even know them and that staff member's kids don't even know those [other] kids. There would have to be some kind of interaction between them, on several occasions, before they're actually thrown into a group project together.

## *Finding: Autonomy-Building Empowerment Practices*

### *Focus Group Results*

Participants confirmed the importance of autonomy-building staff practices and strategies and its relationship to youth outcomes, including youth engagement. Providing youth with opportunities to exercise “voice” and “choice” in structuring their participation and cultivating youth leadership opportunities were corroborated by staff as key practice areas associated with co-production interventions.

Participants also addressed the mechanisms and pathways by which practices associated with fostering “choice” were linked to youth engagement. One staff member highlighted the importance of fostering youth choice when she noted that when youth “felt listened to and a part of that [the project], they were more likely to maintain their engagement.” Another staff member linked the identification of specific interests to cognitive engagement by noting the following: “If it’s what they specialize in, they’re going to put more into it and it’s more or less their plan.” This same staff member linked strategies that allowed for youth choice to higher levels of youth participation:

I think sometimes we talk about the outcome, the step-by-step and then the outcome. The rewards that you would get at the end of the project. That’s how we kind of got them involved, you know, you gotta walk these steps and then you know, you get this, you get a chance to pick out a reward or something that you need. So, that’s how I got some of the kids engaged in the Time Bank.

In addition, according to a staff member, voice and choice strategies employed by staff influenced perceived levels of youth involuntariness:

Some of the kids might've felt it [the Time Bank] more voluntary because some of them participated more in YAP, so they found that participating in the Time Bank, because they enjoyed it. . . they enjoy getting out of the house. . . . So some of them really had input on different things that they would do in the Time Bank. So, if they felt more like it's something they want to do, then it's going to become voluntary.

Regarding the association between youth leadership and outcomes, a staff member linked leadership opportunities with enhanced self-esteem. This same staff person identified how youth leaders became role models and positively influenced other youth.

A good deal of discussion centered on informal and formal leadership strategies. Staff agreed that the best approach was to identify opportunities for leadership as they arose in project activities (e.g., informal) and then to encourage a more formal role as youth gain more confidence in their abilities. This approach is consistent with interview findings which identified the preference by staff to tailor interventions to individual needs and circumstances and for staff to be flexible in seeking and taking advantage of opportunities for growth as they arise. The statement below reflects the preferred strategy:

I would say that the ideal for me would be for it to be informal, to lead into formal. So, if you're doing a project and you see somebody naturally showing those abilities, you could say to that kid, "Wow, you're doing a great job. Would you consider..... I think that you should do this or would you be willing to do that." Then it's real and it's genuine instead of "You

know, I think you have the potential to be a good leader, why don't you sign up for...." But, if it's there, you know, in the mix of the group project or whatever situation they're displaying those abilities and you say, "I saw you do this specific example," or "the way that you're handling this group is really cool."

In addition, staff corroborated interview findings which recommended a "learn and lead" strategy in fostering youth engagement. As a reminder, this approach involves cultivating a youth skill through time bank exchanges (learning phase) and then asking the youth to teach that skill or competency to others in the Time Bank (lead phase). Staff members confirmed the potential benefits of pursuing a "learn and lead" strategy. A staff person noted that "if an older kid's doing tutoring with a younger kid, at some point, hopefully, that kid that was receiving [tutoring] would go tutor someone else." A second staff member commented:

I mean, it could be useful. If there is, you know, one kid interested in something that he learned and you know, somebody comes along in the program and they're interested in the same thing, well, why can't he or she show that kid how to do that?

However, staff discussed pursuing "learn and lead" using methods similar to those recommended to further general youth leadership opportunities. Informal approaches and approaches tailored to individual circumstance were recommended. A staff person shared the following in support of this approach:

I think it might be intimidating to present [a learn and lead idea] to a kid right off the bat. . . . I mean, if you said to me, "I'm going to teach you

how to crochet a sweater and then you're going to teach somebody else,"  
I'd be like, "yeah, good luck with that."

*Finding: Practices and Strategies Related to Enhancing Personal Relationships and  
Organizational Connections*

*Focus Group Results*

Staff concurred with interview findings which revealed the primacy of staff practices and strategies focused on relationship building between youth and staff and between youth and family members as well as the insufficient focus on solidifying relationships with other community members and connections with other community organizations. Interestingly, staff attributed these findings primarily to structural obstacles imposed on them in serving involuntary youth.

For example, internal agency policy required that advocates accompany all youth on exchanges with community members. This policy was designed both to ensure the protection of the youth and to address liability concerns of the organization. A possible unintended result of this policy was restricting the building of ties with new community members. A staff member explained:

Because of YAP [policy], we had to [be involved] with every single exchange. . . they're engaging in a process that might be meaningful to them [the youth] but maybe the advocate is the one that gets the focus of the attention versus the community member. . . they've had this exchange with this community member, but they [the youth] don't see that because we're the ones that are helping them meet their needs.

Because an explicit goal of YAP services is increasing long term informal community supports for youth, staff members identified strategies to enable youth to build new community relationships. Greater intentionality by staff in integrating community members within the support team for youth was identified. A staff member offered suggestions:

Potentially invite those resources, I mean, if there was someplace that a kid consistently made exchanges, to invite them [community members] into the planning process of their services plan, if a kid was open to that.

Another suggestion involved advocates stepping back from exchanges, to facilitate new relationship building with the community member:

If the advocate was supervising the exchange, maybe not participate in the actual exchange. Because I know there's some hands-on stuff that the advocate would help, but, you know, just be there but have them [the youth] more together with the business owner or whoever.

Facilitating more frequent closed exchanges with community members was also identified as a strategy to pursue. A staff member responded to this suggestion as follows:

Yeah, that builds community. . . . If you're dealing with somebody outside of your home that you know, once a month you're going to go help Mr. John cut his grass and you know, once a month Mr. John is gonna go to the grocery store to take care of your groceries, that is what I think ideally, the Time Bank is supposed to be about: building that

community. Closed exchanges inside a community. I think that would be very helpful.

Finally, despite recognizing concrete examples of closed exchanges with family members that fostered improved youth/parent relationships, staff members were mixed regarding the efficacy of this approach. One staff member objected to the use of time bank exchanges within families, stating that he objected to the “time bank label,” noting that “closed exchanges between family members should be happening anyway.” Separating exchanges that are relevant to time banking, such as those building on a skill or interest from normal household chores was also raised as an issue. A staff member shared the following:

My thing, the reason why I say we shouldn't put no label on it, if you will is because now every time Jimmy does something for Bobby, they're going to expect something [back] where this is their family. You guys need to work that out and you need to be doing this stuff anyway.

## **CHAPTER 14: FINDINGS FROM SITE TWO: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND OTHER YOUTH/STAFF OUTCOMES**

The outcomes of co-production interventions are presented in this chapter. These outcomes derive from the interview and focus group data collected from youth and staff participants in site two. The chapter begins with findings related to youth engagement, an important proximal indicator of co-production interventions. Levels of youth engagement are then described and key determinants of youth engagement are reviewed based upon the evidence gathered.

Then, the most salient youth and staff related outcomes associated with youth engagement are presented. Integrating co-production interventions to help address priority risk factors are discussed next. Here, a number of process outcomes are revealed. These process outcomes serve as indicators of co-production's progression as an important tool by which staff members creatively use the identified practices and strategies to address core service needs that predicated the youths' involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The chapter concludes with a discussion of contagion effects that emerged from organizations working together under the aegis of the Time Bank, to address unmet organizational and community needs.

### **Youth Engagement**

Findings from the empirical study of site two corroborated and expanded upon the aspects of the proposed theoretical progression of engagement for involuntary youth who participated in co-production interventions. Specifically, evidence revealed changes in youth engagement over time. As predicted by co-production theory, co-production interventions were instrumental in mandated attendance morphing to higher levels of voluntary engagement, including emotional and cognitive engagement. Findings also

revealed the link between empowerment practices, phases of staff/youth collaboration and engagement levels. In additions, behavior changes and the quality of service exchanges served as indicators of higher levels of youth engagement. Seven key findings emerged from the data and are revealed below.

*Finding 1:* Some youth who had been mandated initially or pressured to participate in program activities changed over time: They became semi-voluntarily or voluntarily engaged.

*Evidence and Analyses:* A number of youth began their time bank involvement by using the time bank to work off mandated community service requirements or to address other requirements. Some of these youth became active spokespeople for the time bank, working to encourage other community members to participate. A staff member noted that “some of the ones who were mandated initially, continued to do so [participate] and would after the program as well, because they had fun doing it and got something out of it as well.”

Another staff member shared below the circumstance when a youth continued to exchange services with a local business, after he met his service requirements:

Might've been closer to 20 [mandated hours]. After we did that, he enjoyed it so much he wanted to continue to work there and he wanted to arrange an exchange with the business; a services for good exchange. . . In exchange for this time working there, he wanted to get a jacket that the business was selling, for this foster mom for Christmas.

In the example below, a youth initially pressured to participate to address court requirements mandates, became one of the time bank's most active members. A staff person recounted this transition in her comments below:

I can think of one person right now that actually had mandated community service hours that I think that's probably what initially got him involved, because I mean, he had to do it. And he did his forty hours and I think he would've stopped except that we had exciting things for him to do. . . . And I think the more he did, the more he liked it.

Emotional engagement in time bank activities was apparent in the staff person's description of this youth's growing commitment and excitement:

He told us he wanted to be a police officer, which kind of shocked us a bit. . . . We contacted a police officer from the local force who joined the time bank and [he] was willing to earn hours by allowing the young man to ride-along with him. And, he was so excited after the ride-along, not only did he tell us the things like "oh, we went to court, we went here," he was like, "first we went and we got gas, and then we went here and got breakfast and then we went back to the office and faxed," he told us every single detail about the entire day. . . . And after that, we was more than willing to do anything that we asked of him. . . . We asked him to join the advisory council and he was so excited about time banking that he took it upon himself, in his role on the advisory council, to go to his school and talk to them about joining the time bank. . . . it was very exciting to see that transition.

In the next example presented by a staff member, a youth in the foster care system initially joined the time bank to address a requirement to complete an independent living skills program:

He was kicked out of the program and used the time bank to enable him to earn credits for independent skills completion. He agreed to teach other youth in our program and adults in the community how to change oil in a car and what to look for when buying a used car. An eight week program was developed, where he created a curriculum, gathered the materials that he needed and worked with a local mechanic.

Cognitive engagement was apparent as he noted during the interview that he had to “prepare the tools for the class. . . provided all the tools and the equipment” for the presentation.

From this initial experience, the youth decided to earn time bank hours tutoring a younger YAP child in math and also teaching another youth how to play a musical instrument. His description of these experiences to the researcher provided evidence of high levels of emotional engagement:

I don't know how to put this, it was just a fun, exciting moment to be able to teach someone else that wants to learn something. I felt like I was not in control of the person but in control of teaching that subject to that person. . . . Doing the math and my instrumental, I was really nervous how the other child would outcome with it. . . How the person would benefit with the help I gave them.

Furthermore, there were examples of other youth who were not faced with court mandates but nonetheless, were less than enthusiastic about initially participating in the Time Bank. A staff member told of situations where youth went to project activities “moaning and groaning.” However, over time, some of these youth began to evidence a commitment toward the project. A second staff member explained:

You know, sometimes activities, they don’t want to do if it’s something that’s not fun. It’s “I’m only here because my advocate made me come here and I’m going to stand in the corner and I’m not going to talk.” You know, the fact that they come and that they engage and they help out and they talk and they lead some of the events, that’s them engaging, taking a role.

A staff member recalled a youth who undertook this transition:

Like the girl always would walk into this office with an attitude. She never wanted people to talk with her. Did not want to participate in anything. But then when she was over there [working on the community beautification project] planting flowers, it was like she was free. She had smiles on her face; she was talking with everybody.

Another staff person told an amusing story of how this youth reacted to a situation where a neighbor was ruining the work that she did on *her* (italics added) plot of land that she helped beautify:

Kids that normally wouldn’t engage in anything, you know, they took the time to go out and do this particular project [beautification]. So, one day, I had one of the kids come grab me from back of the office and say, “there’s

a dog going to the bathroom over there where we beautified that property and I don't appreciate that. Could you please go over there and say something?" I could tell right then and there that it [the project] gave them a sense of pride, accomplishment.

In a third example, a staff member told of an instance of a youth who was not engaging with his advocate until he found a venue of interest to earn hours and contribute. After that occurred, his engagement increased.

The director was able to find one venue in which the kid really cared about and contracted with him to be able to use music equipment to record [his own music] and from that point, he began encouraging other youth to do the same thing, giving them different advice, being a leader with other kids in developing co-production contracts. He brought in community members, friends and starting encouraging them to join the time bank and do exchanges. . . . it was a big snowball effect with him . . . he just lit on fire with wanting to bring others to get involved.

*Finding 2: Youths' behavioral changes were evidence of the transition to higher levels of youth engagement.*

*Evidence and Analyses:* Participants offered examples of behavior changes that illustrated a progression in levels of engagement, including instances of behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement (see appendix 14-1). Some of the comments below reflected participant observations and experiences. Other comments were suggestions offered as to the kind of observations to look for when changes in level of engagement occur.

Staff identified a number of examples of behavioral engagement. One example of behavioral engagement occurred when youth began to take the initiative in contacting staff seeking new opportunities to contribute. Three staff members identified this theme and a sample of their comments is included below:

Well, first of all, they seek us out. . . .There's actually two young men that do the rapping [cash in hours to participate in the music project] and they stay at the same foster home, that's how the second one learned about it. And he calls here every week. We do not call him.

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We had a young man asking what he could do for the time bank this week. . . .Because I want to do this, I want to do that.

Behavioral engagement also occurred when youth exhibited teamwork and commitment to a project. In the example below, a staff member spoke of a group of youth who were not fooling around during project activities but instead, took the job seriously, working together to complete a task:

So you actually see them working side-by-side and being helpful.

Sometimes it's when you see them raking leaves; one child needs to hold the bag, while the other child rakes the leaves. You actually see them completing the task.

Instances of emotional engagement were also revealed by participants. Emotional engagement occurred when youth began to talk about a specific activity with their friends and with staff. Emotional engagement also was evident when youth showed interest in

the impact of their work. Youth voiced pride about their accomplishments, revealing levels of emotional engagement.

Examples of pride exhibited by two youth are included below. The first youth was referring to his role as teacher and mentor to younger youth; the second youth discussed her work designing promotional materials for YAP.

I don't know how to put this, it was just a fun exciting moment to be able to teach someone else that wants to learn something. I felt like I was not in control of the person but in control of teaching that subject to that person. To be able to be helpful to that person.

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It was more of a brochure, talking about Youth Advocate Program, just to capture people's attention. Oh, another thing is I made the Youth Advocate home page, I designed it. . . . the web page, I chose the colors and the background and stuff like that. . . . I usually don't give my original copies of my art away but I donated one of them, the picnic one, to the time bank and it's on the bulletin board downstairs.

Cognitive engagement occurred when youth exerted concerted effort in, for example, preparing for presentations or planning events. Cognitive engagement was evidenced in the following comments offered by a youth:

Researcher: Anything else? Like when you're really into something?

Youth: Oh, you get really addicted.

Researcher: Talk about that. What's addicted mean?

Youth: Well, some projects you just don't want to give up. Like the one I had to do, this drawing for the [time bank] picnic. I get really addicted when I'm drawing and stuff.

Researcher: Describe addicted to me. I'm not sure what that means

Youth: You don't want to stop. So, like it's something you don't want to stop doing, you just wanna keep erasing and then do it again. Kind of thing. But, sometimes when you really finish, you're kinda relieved.

Another young person exhibited cognitive engagement as he recounted his participation in a focus group meeting with other youth and staff, planning for the time bank:

We just sat in a group. One of the members goes next and the next person for each idea. And we write it down on a big piece of paper and we talked about those ideas, how they would work or work to achieve those ideas. . . . It made me feel good, making something that's never been started to start.

Finally, according to staff, a key indicator of higher levels of engagement occurred when youth, who typically looked toward the reward or benefit that they would receive from participation, ceased to talk about the reward and instead, concentrated on the task at hand. In these instances, youth showed a level of intrinsic motivation. A staff member illustrated an example of this occurrence below:

When we participated in the chili cook-off, to help clean the [area], the advocate and then in return, the kids, got some tickets to get free chili. And also, it was giving back, I mean they were doing the work. Whether

or not they got the chili, I don't think that mattered. Do you know what I'm saying? I think they felt good about being able to help.

A second staff member concurred with the staff member above, as he emphasized the importance of youth being present in the moment as opposed to attention to a future reward:

I don't think you should push the time bank as a charity thing, as a giving thing. Because, that's not what it is. I think if you can facilitate the exchanges, inspired or motivated by the time dollars, when kids are out there doing, like with JH working at a nursing home. I don't think while he's there [at the home] he's thinking about all the time earning. I think he's having this really good interaction, you know, this service interaction, and that's, you know, benefiting. . . .the time dollars are secondary.

*Finding 3:* Despite some successes, engaging involuntary youth in co-production interventions was especially challenging. In addition to challenges in initial engagement, ongoing engagement was often episodic and disjointed. The chronic crises surrounding the nature of many of the youth and their families as well as feelings of unworthiness and hopelessness exhibited by youth moderated their engagement.

*Evidence and Analysis:* Findings revealed the episodic and changeable nature of engagement for involuntary youth. Chronic crises and feelings of hopelessness and unworthiness deterred participation. These circumstances provided staff with special challenges, especially in maintaining youth enthusiasm in completing agreed upon projects.

As noted in the preceding chapter, many involuntary youth served by YAP was in crisis, especially at referral and intake into the program. While in crisis, youth and parents often chose not to participate in time banking. Some initially chose to participate only to withdraw from project activities. One staff member explained that “times of crises are your most private time and you don’t necessarily want people involved in your business.” She explained the impact of crises on time bank participation:

I think that the population we work with wax and wane through crises, so there may be situations where they might not actively exchange but come and exchange [later on]. . . . In terms of, you know, if they don’t exchange for a while, I can see them coming back if they were in a crisis situation or once they get through a crisis situation.

In addition, youth initially presented with feelings of unworthiness and hopelessness, which made engagement in time banking especially challenging. A staff member recounted an instance of a young man referred to the program with these characteristics:

We have another young man that, he just feels like he’s worthless, he’s meaningless and he’s meant for jail. And he’s definitely not ready for co-production or time banking. This is the thought process of his: “I’m ready for jail. I don’t care if I live or die.” . . . We’ve got to identify what’s going on within his family to make him feel that way and try to stabilize him.

In these circumstances, the time bank was not an appropriate alternative. The staff member commented below on these challenges:

I mean, it really depends on the situation. I mean, I think it's difficult. I think I've had, on a personal level, difficulty using the time bank when there's a crisis, because I'm not, you know, maybe I just need to think out of the box or something, I'm not sure. But I think it's been difficult in trying to access something out of the time bank when people are feeling so. . . .

Also, according to staff participants, engagement often occurred in "fits and starts." For example, youth told their worker that they wanted to do something on a Monday and by Wednesday, they changed their minds. Two staff members described these flip/flops and its implications on participation/engagement this way:

For those kids that it's not working for, they can't stay consistent five hours of the day. I say to them, "I need five hours of consistency from you," and I know, you know, in that third hour, I'm going to get a telephone call. Those kids are going to be more difficult to engage in time banking.

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That's probably another reason why it's [time banking] not as successful as it can be, or should be with the kid. Because they lose interest too fast. Real fast. You know you can sit down and say something and get them intrigued, "oh yeah that sounds good. . . I'm getting this out of it." A week later, so you know, that's the attitude.

*Finding 4:* The success of co-production interventions was evidenced by the “quality” of exchanges completed by youth participants. Quality exchanges provide a proxy measure of youth engagement.

*Evidence and Analysis:* Staff made the distinction between “quality” exchanges and “other” exchanges. According to one staff member, “quality” exchanges were those that either addressed an identified service need or built upon a youth’s assets, strengths or interests. In other words, exchanges occurred with youth helping a community member—for example, in “being a good neighbor”—but “quality” exchanges were “long-lasting” and designed intentionally to address a service need or to foster a particular interest. A staff member described these distinctions in more detail:

Exposing them to a different cultural event or for example, helping at a soup kitchen. That is what I feel is a meaningful exchange because it shows them [the youth] what it’s like for people not to have food. And what it takes to run a soup kitchen and all that goes into it. . . . I really don’t consider a quality exchange to be something like, well, receiving a t-shirt [from cashing in the hours earned]. Now, certainly, if they need clothing, that’s important. But, is there something better that they can get out of the time bank that really meets their individual needs, such as if they have problems with safety or problems with family, what can they do to improve their relationship or that situation versus receiving a material item?

Also, according to this staff member, the volume and percentage of completed quality exchanges was an indicator of the success of the co-production intervention. The

presence of quality exchanges also served as a proxy for engagement since quality exchanges involved youth participation in addressing strengths, needs and interests. A staff person offered this observation:

You could have a hundred exchanges but if it's fifty kids picking up trash for two hours, that's not all that meaningful. But, you could have ten exchanges where youth are working on a newspaper and working on their leadership and social skills and it might be a smaller number of exchanges, but they're much more meaningful.

*Finding 5:* An integrated set of specific empowerment-oriented practices employed by staff were identified as drivers of staff/youth collaboration and enhanced youth engagement.

*Evidence and Analyses:* Three case examples are revealed (see appendix 14-2), which illustrate the link between the specific empowerment practices employed by staff and the attainment of empowerment, collaboration and engagement outcomes. The identified empowerment practices are: (1) Fostering staff/youth relatedness and bonding, (2) Providing leadership opportunities for youth, and (3) Fostering youth competencies.

In each of the case examples, youth were provided with opportunities by staff to exercise leadership. Leadership projects were primarily geared toward improving organizational performance, both at the programmatic level and in assisting staff in providing services to other enrolled youth and family members. In addition, each of the youth worked with staff or significant others (e.g., foster parents, teachers) in completing leadership projects. Thus, the importance of cultivating relatedness with family and staff

was an important factor, as were strategies that fostered community, belonging and safety while completing the projects. New or existing vocational skills were also cultivated.

Furthermore, the synergy that resulted from the integration of each of the intervention strategies was exhibited in the case examples. For example, fostering staff/youth relatedness and bonding impacted on available youth leadership opportunities. In other words, these strategies had bi-directional and reciprocal effects.

Moreover, higher phases of staff/youth collaboration emerged over time as trust developed between staff and youth working together on organizational improvement projects. Higher levels of youth engagement resulted. Emotional and behavioral engagement outcomes dominated although select examples of cognitive engagement also occurred.

*Finding 6:* Involvement in co-production activities while participating in the YAP program became a “gateway” to continued interest in civic engagement, after mandates were met and post-discharge from YAP services.

*Evidence and Analysis:* Findings revealed examples of youth who continued to participate or returned to participate in the time bank post-discharge. Interestingly, in some cases, youth exhibited more enthusiasm for the time bank post discharge than during participation in YAP services. According to a staff member, youth continuing or returning to the time bank was a strong measure of the intervention’s success:

Once they’re discharged, they don’t have to be involved with YAP anymore, they don’t have to be involved in the time bank. But they’re invited to, they’re still members of the time bank so when kids who have been relieved of the obligations to participate in YAP, participate in the

time bank, that's a strong measure of it, if they're getting any benefits out of it.

For one staff member, it was the missed feeling of belonging that motivated youth to return to the Time Bank:

Like I said, with alumni now coming back and wanting to be involved, most of them received something out of the time bank. . . . I think they really saw the value of it. I think they liked the community aspect, which is why a lot of people get involved, to meet other people. I think they liked feeling a part of something. And all of us like that warm and fuzzy feeling we get when we do something good. So many of these kids have been labeled "bad" their whole lives, they've gotten detention, even suspended. They're constantly told the things they do wrong and so doing something where they get gratification and they're told they did a wonderful job and people appreciate their hard work, I think that stays with them.

Moreover, participants viewed the time bank as a vehicle for youth to receive informal support and services without having to enter the formal services system. This was especially salient for older youth including youth moving into independent living status. A staff member identified this theme:

I think [for alumni] it's a way to get support. I think most of the kids who come through feel comfortable with YAP and it's safe. And they might not want to be on services anymore, they might not want to go a formal route and deal with paperwork or different things like that and the time bank is user-friendly.

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I think kids that are moving toward independent living, being able to figure out that there are people in the community that they can access, if a crisis happens. It's [the time bank] is a bit of a safety net to be able to think that you can call someone and get help with something without having to wait three months on a waiting list.

However, youth participants were more equivocating on this theme. For example, one youth identified a target population of youth who would be attracted to the time bank:

It [the time bank] could [be useful]. Because I mean, this might seem odd, but a lot of teen are getting pregnant at young ages. So, I think the time bank could be there to help people a lot.

However, this same youth was hesitant about how the time bank might be useful to him:

I really don't know for sure right now [about myself], because I really don't know until I turn 18 and I have to, and then I will, most likely, I will be looking to the time bank for help after the first couple of months.

A second youth responded this way to the prospects of his continued participation in the Time Bank::

I would still, yes, I would still be in it. But some people don't understand that those hours you earn, you can exchange it into some of the things you want.

Finally, staff viewed alumni as a potential cadre of youth leaders, assisting currently enrolled YAP youth. For example:

I think if the alumni come back and maybe show the clients what they have now, I think come back and show them, it's like trickle down, and I think these guys [current kids] might use or utilize the time bank more.

Another staff member offered creative examples below of opportunities for alumni to contribute to the Time Bank, to serve as role models for current YAP youth:

A good example I think would be a youth who had a positive supported work experience, this supported work continues post-YAP to regular employment and you know, sometime later you stayed in touch with this kid who graduated YAP. He has hopefully stayed involved somehow through the time bank. Now there's this other youth in YAP who has an interest in whatever. So you approach this graduated youth and ask if this person [current YAP youth] could shadow you for a day on the job. . . Or would you mind swinging by for lunch someday and you tell us about what you did on the job because this person [current YAP youth] has similar interests.

*Finding 7:* Specific empowerment and collaboration related practices employed by staff were linked to different levels of youth engagement. Distinct patterns emerged including: (1) Practices yielded cumulative and generative effects, (2) Levels of youth engagement were reciprocally related, and (3) Later phases of engagement necessitated youth experiencing earlier phases.

*Evidence and Analysis:* Appendix 14-3 summarizes the findings from this chapter and the previous chapter, linking empowerment and collaboration-oriented practices to levels of youth engagement. Important empowerment practices and strategies associated with

each level of youth engagement are described. In addition, specific collaboration strategies and processes are linked with youth engagement outcomes.

For example, data from the interviews revealed that empowerment-oriented intake practices, such as staff allowing for and encouraging experimentation, fostered initial youth attendance and participation in co-production activities. Also, staff structuring projects so that a salient youth need or want was addressed, was found to be an important factor in encouraging youth attendance and participation. In other words, involuntary youth needed to experience the benefits of participation first, before a more ongoing commitment could occur.

In addition, new empowerment-oriented assessment and service planning tools enabled staff to uncover youth interests and skills as well as community organizations and community issues of import to youth. These tools provided data for staff to tailor individual service options for youth, which assisted in attracting youth to participate in the Time Bank.

Furthermore, certain general and group empowerment practices fostered initial participation. For example, staff was able to allow youth to participate in projects of their choosing because numerous contribution opportunities were available for youth. In addition, staff creatively developed a range of options for youth to “cash in” their time bank hours. Youth also were provided with opportunities to participate in exchanges individually or in small groups. Each of these practices was autonomy-building and empowering, providing youth with choices.

Staff members furthered ongoing youth participation and engagement with specific practices and strategies. For example, emotional engagement was enhanced by

staff fostering a welcoming and safe environment for youth to contribute as well as providing opportunities for youth to “give back” to YAP and to the community. In addition, staff members’ implementation of autonomy-related empowerment practices, including a range of opportunities for youth voice and choice and for youth to serve as leaders, fostered emotional engagement. These practices enhanced a youth’s sense of commitment and ownership to individual projects and to the Time Bank as an entity.

In addition, staff usage of empowerment practices that sought to enhance relationships and community connections for youth contributed to emotional engagement. These practices fostered instances of youth/staff relationship building as well as enhanced closeness between youth and family members. New peer relationships as well as connections with other community adults, although less pronounced, nonetheless fostered emotional engagement when they occurred. Finally, staff/youth collaboration processes, which occurred when youth worked with staff members on organizational improvement projects within YAP and when adults served as facilitators of youth exchanges with other community members, also facilitated emotional engagement on the part of participating youth.

Staff efforts to build new competencies in youth also led to enhanced levels of cognitive engagement. For example, challenging assignments created for youth by staff fostered high levels of cognitive engagement. Staff identification of youth leadership opportunities, especially in projects that involved planning and organizing (e.g., assisting with the Time Bank advisory council), facilitated the attainment of cognitive engagement.

Furthermore, evidence indicated that co-production interventions produced both cumulative and generative effects. An example of how the interventions and outcomes changes over time occurred with the changing roles of staff and youth within co-production projects. As youth took on enhanced leadership roles with outside organizations, staff increasingly served as facilitators and consultants. In contrast, in projects that involved organizational improvement, staff worked more directly with youth as collaborators, both overseeing work and supporting youth. These role changes necessitated staff to be flexible and adaptable, as youth capabilities was revealed and opportunities for growth were presented.

Achieving cumulative benefits also necessitated that youth experience early levels of engagement as a precursor to higher levels of engagement. This required certain factors to be in place. For example, factors such as identifying and addressing a youth's most salient need or desire, which was found to be linked to initial participation, needed to be in place before youth could feel committed to the Time Bank and thus be able to experience higher levels of emotional or cognitive engagement. The example described earlier of the young person who participated in the police ride-along and then proceeded to participate in a range of activities, including serving on the Time Bank advisory council was a good illustration of co-production's cumulative and generative possibilities.

Similarly, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement are linked in site two; one begets the other. In the case of involuntary youth, emotional engagement fostered cognitive engagement. For example, small group modalities that addressed a youth's social needs enticed youth to continue to participate, leading to opportunities for

cognitive engagement. The example described earlier of the youth who voiced cognitive engagement when she led efforts to start-up a youth-run newspaper illustrated this point. She identified the importance of other youth participants in the project, so that she was not the only young person participating, as a key factor linked to her level enhanced level of engagement.

Finally, experiencing emotional and cognitive engagement were prerequisites for youth to participate voluntarily in time banking, as alumni. As discussed earlier, youth who had solid experiences in the time bank continued to participate or return post discharge. Some returned to address specific material needs; others returned to receive social support and to continue to connect with staff and friends whom they trusted. In either circumstance, high levels of engagement experienced within YAP created new opportunities post discharge.

### **Staff-Related Outcomes**

Enhanced staff efficacy, empowerment and engagement emerged as an important finding from the data collected in site two. Enhanced staff engagement was evidenced in two ways: (1) Staff participating in the Time Bank as community members/citizens, and (2) Staff utilizing their personal social capital to further the mission of the time bank and to assist youth with exchanges.

In turn, findings revealed that enhanced staff engagement contributed to the success of the Time Bank. Enhanced staff engagement also contributed to positive youth outcomes including enhanced youth engagement.

Also, factors associated with enhanced staff efficacy and empowerment were revealed. Certain co-production practices were found to be associated with enhanced staff

efficacy and empowerment because they made the advocates' job easier and less stressful. Conversely, some staff members experienced stress and discomfort in their involvement in co-production, negatively impacting staff outcomes. These key findings are reviewed below.

*Finding 1:* Enhanced staff engagement occurred from staff overseeing and facilitating co-production interventions.

*Evidence and Analyses:* Two themes emerged that documented enhanced staff engagement. First, *many staff decided voluntarily to join the time bank as community members*. Staff provided examples of services received from time bank members in comments below:

I didn't know how to pick out a Christmas tree. Being a single mom, didn't know how to pick out one, didn't know how to get it back, didn't know how to cut it down, and didn't know how to put it up. So, one of the community members went with me. We picked out the tree. Taught me what to look for and then helped me get it out to my house and we stood it up.

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I received a CD player, a couple of subs [sandwiches] here and there. Somewhere down the road, I will need a plumber.

Staff also provided services to other time bank members. For example, staff earned hours by running errands for people whose cars were broken down. Or, staff oversaw on their own time a studio where youth recording music. In one situation, a staff

member assisted an alumni youth. In return, as part of a closed exchange, the youth worked on the staff member's car.

In addition, staff on their own time, earned time bank hours to assist staff at an alternative school in handling emergent crisis situations at that school. A staff member explained this exchange as follows:

That [exchange] involved the principal of the school giving a call to the time bank coordinator and saying, "Is there anybody in the time bank right now that could come speak with a youth on his level, because the youth is having a difficult time in school, in the community, at home?". . . . We sent two people over there to actually speak with the youth, one being myself and the other being an advocate.

Second, *staff used their social capital to further project goals*. In the first example, an advocate arranged through a friend, a work placement for a youth at a construction project. The advocate, who worked with the youth at the site to ensure a successful experience, described the arrangement:

It was an ideal situation because I knew the owner of the business and I knew the owner is one who's open to these kinds of things. I brought the youth to the site of the work. . . . You asked what made this exchange possible and I think a big part of it was me knowing the business owner. He was comfortable enough to let us come in and he didn't even really watch us do the work. He thought highly enough of me or he thought I was capable of doing the kind of building that he wanted done. He wasn't really checking on our progress.

In the second example, an advocate alerted his community “connections” that youth would be stopping by asking for donations. He did this to prepare his friends for the visit and to enhance the chances of the youth being successful:

I know through my connections with people, I can just, I say, call them ahead of time and say, “this kid’s gonna come to you and ask you for something.” But it’s you know, it’s a process where the kid is learning something, learning how to communicate.

Despite these examples, staff differed in their view that the time bank and co-production facilitated staff engagement. For example, the second staff member discussed that he often used his community connections to assist youth in the program prior to the time bank being developed. The first staff member disagreed, having observed that staff use of community connections to assist youth was under-utilized and emerged anew as a result of co-production. The latter staff member commented below:

Researcher: Do you think that it’s common for advocates to use their contacts in the community to facilitate those kinds of exchanges?

Staff Member: I don’t think it’s common. I wish it was more common. I mean I think it’s potentially a very valuable. . . a necessary contribution to the job. And I think there would be value to hiring with that in mind.

*Finding 2:* Higher levels of staff engagement contributed to positive outcomes for the youth and to the success of the Time Bank.

*Evidence and Analyses:* Evidence provided by staff participants linked the presence of enhanced staff engagement to macro and micro level outcomes and impacts. On a macro level, findings revealed that a number of core staff members worked extra to engage

businesses and personal contacts that they knew to join the time bank. One staff member noted that “we [the staff] got our core initial people and businesses in the Time Bank. People that we all knew as staff, that how we started the whole network.” Also, staff worked together, brainstorming ways for the time bank to succeed. A staff member explained:

Yes, I see staff try to pull together, like try to put their brains together to make the time bank work. When I first started with the time bank, I really didn't understand it, so I'm trying to you know, figure it out, ask questions about it and go out and do the time bank.

On a micro level, a number of staff identified the link between voluntary advocate staff participation in the time bank and the ability/effectiveness to staff to successfully engage youth. One staff member explained this association:

I mean, they're ultimately the ones that work with the kids every day. So their attitude about the project is key. . . If they're accessing the time bank and they're getting something out of it, it's going to be easier for them to tell the kids about it or relay that “yeah, this is useful,” versus in theory, “this is a good idea, you should do it.”

This viewpoint was shared by another staff member:

Well, if staff are also exchanging, they're also valuing it, as an important community asset, and that means they're buying into it and they're more likely to assist their youth in finding things in the time bank that they want or accessing a need in the time bank. So I would say that it is important to have the staff on board, in order for the project to work.

In a statement below, a youth participant recognized the importance of staff “volunteering” their time to assist in furthering the time bank and serving members of the community:

Just having advocates being able to come on their own time, taking the kids out to play ball or something like that, or go see a movie. . . It’s their time that they’re taking out of their day, just to spend time with another person.

Also, the use of staff social capital was viewed by staff as important to the success of co-production projects. For example, a staff person recounted a circumstance where his personal contacts made the difference in a youth experiencing benefits from a time bank exchange:

You had asked what made this exchange possible, and I think a big part of it was me knowing the business owner. He was comfortable enough to let us come in and he didn’t even really watch us do the work. Apparently he thought highly enough of me or he thought that I was capable of doing the kind of building that he wanted done. He wasn’t even really checking our progress.

A second staff member agreed. In her statement below, the link between advocate employing personal social capital and project success was described:

They’re being less workers and more community members, in a way. . . they’re putting themselves out there to say this kid can really do it. . . Like an advocate who set up his kid to earn time bank hours to work off his mandated community service hours at a friend’s running store because he

saw the kid being a leader and he saw that he could do it and be positive so he opened up his circle, got a person to join the time bank, and now this kid has another person available to him in the community. . . . I'm friends with this guy here who has a business who can really use someone in the time bank. I think so-and-so would be perfect. You know it really opens up another door for integrating kids into the community.

It is important to note that not every advocate chose to voluntarily join the Time Bank or to share their personal or professional contacts to further project goals. Some balked at pressure to join the Time Bank as a "citizen," instead choosing to keep their private and personal lives separate. This reluctance proved to be a source of frustration for staff administering the time bank:

I typed up a list [of potential services] and gave them to the advocates, of things that they would receive, what they would like to get out of the time bank, what they would like to give. . . A lot of them [the advocates] didn't want anything. . . A lot of them would be quick [in saying], "It's work; they're only there for the job."

*Finding 3:* Staff efficacy and staff empowerment increased as they implemented co-production interventions.

*Evidence and Analyses:* Findings revealed an association between co-production practices and enhanced staff efficacy and empowerment. A number of themes emerged from the data. First, co-production practices including the introduction of time banking, augmented staff involvement in the community, which positively impacted on job success. A staff member shared her thoughts on this theme:

I think it's given the staff more involvement in the community. I think that the staff has gotten a lot more independent with the things that they do with the kids, they've taken on their own leadership roles with setting the kids up, they're making connections for the kids with people that they know in the community and I think that's been a positive difference too.

Second, according to a number of staff members, co-production interventions made the advocate's job easier. For example, in structuring co-production agreements, advocate roles became clearer. In addition, weekly purposeful activities were better targeted to service plan goals. Improving staff performance occurred as a result. Select responses by staff to this theme are included below:

I think it makes their job [the advocate's] easier. They have more defined roles and especially when we do have things [activities in place] that are related to their ISP's [individualized services plan], here they are accomplishing goals that the family and child team has set out and they're doing it really easily.

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I think staff performance as well might be one [positive impact]. I think that having the structured projects and time banking and co-production, it gives the advocates purposeful activities to do with the youth, more options, more choices, for the kids as well, to spend time in the community, to get involved, to do something positive.

According to a number of staff members, the availability of the time bank also provided advocates with more choices and options, helping with creative approaches to engage kids in community activities:

It [the time bank] gives the advocates. . . more options, more choices, for the kids as well, to spend time in the community, to get involved, to do something positive. . . . It helped the staff in terms of . . . structured activities to do with the kids, and not getting stuck in a rut.

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I think the time bank, it's given me more power, or more energy, more motivation to go out there and say "hey," making the time bank work, or making these connections with the community. Even with the kids, try to get them [to participate], it's kinda lifted me up, given me more, re-energized me.

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The time bank coordinator, already having these things already laid out for you to do, as opposed to you going out individually, you and a youth trying to find all these things, look on the time bank list, there's your activities, right there.

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They actually have like a venue now, to go to in order to get some volunteer work for the kids. You know, sometimes its difficult to think of creative activities that are going to work, that are going to develop the kids

ISP's goal. So sometimes, this [the time bank] has been more of a venue in order to get to those. To think about creative ideas.

According to supervisory level staff, the time bank and co-production agreements provided a method of holding staff accountable to specific tasks:

I think that there was more accountability because of the structure through co-production and time banking which made my job as a director easier, to hold the advocate accountable but which also created, and you know, some resistance in them to be accountable to different behaviors. It wasn't as comfortable as taking the kid out and riding them around town all day. They needed to do something purposeful and this was a way to keep track of that and monitor that.

A staff member also shared that the presence of the Time Bank facilitated partnerships with other community organizations. From these partnerships, she felt that she was no longer alone in trying to help challenging youth and their families. Her comments included the following:

Made my job easier. I wasn't fighting alone for these kids. Other people on the team were then seeing what we were able to see as advocates and directors, being with the kids day to day, what they were capable of, in terms of positive stuff, helping families, helping communities, other neighbors. . . . Other community members could then come and speak up for the kids as well, as part of a team, to speak on the youth's behalf.

*Finding 4:* Staff members experienced added stress and discomfort in leading and participating in the co-production innovation, factors that negatively impacted on staff outcomes.

*Evidence and Analyses:* Findings also revealed that co-production interventions are not panaceas for staff. Staff indicated that co-production innovations produced added stress, which negatively impacted on their engagement and commitment. For example, some staff interpreted the in-house guideline of two contacts per week per youth to be time-bank or co-production related to be a requirement that needed to be met instead of a standard to help guide practice. Other staff viewed co-production as part of the existing YAP model and objected to the formalization of the project as a separate initiative. A staff member explained her viewpoint below:

I mean, maybe the [supervisory staff] feels differently about it, feels it's been more of a requirement and that we've done things like that [co-production] in the past and we haven't necessarily called it co-production. . . . I feel like it's so formalized and like we have to have all this extra paperwork that we already have and we're already documenting on so many other things.

Another staff member was more graphic in his response, noting that the time bank feels like "it's being crammed down our throats." He went on to state that the time bank "needs to be communicated to staff better. . . that we want to try to make this work, we want this to be on your brains, at the same time like you know, this is one of a variety of avenues to go." The relationship between instituting accountability structures in support

of co-production on staff efficacy, empowerment and engagement represents interesting research questions for future study.

### **Other Salient Youth Outcomes**

#### *Youth Empowerment Related Outcomes*

##### *Key Findings-Internal Outcome/Asset Development*

- The most pronounced empowerment-oriented youth development outcomes were social, life skill and vocational skill development and positive identity changes, including self-esteem enhancements.
- Knowledge of their community plus cultivating a positive caring attitude to those less fortunate, were other assets identified but by far fewer participants.

##### *Key Findings: External Outcome/Asset Development*

- Youth “earned redemption,” evidenced by an altered community perception of the individual youth, and was identified as a critical outcome of co-production interventions.
- Social capital gains, provided by adults in positions of power, were identified by one youth participant.
- New positive discharge and social support resources were outcomes identified by staff participants.

##### *Evidence and Analysis*

Per the proposed theoretical intervention framework for co-production, enhanced youth engagement led to the attainment of a range of important youth outcomes (see chapters 4 and 9). Findings from site two reveal five salient categories of youth

outcomes. These categories are organized into internal and external asset building, per the framework developed by the Search Institute (see chapter 4).

*Internal Outcome/Asset Development*

Within this category, *social, life and vocational skill development were outcomes identified by participants*. Youth more than staff identified this outcome area (n=6: staff=2, youth=4). Improvements in social skills included the ability to work well in teams. Life skill development included improvements in controlling anger and handling conflict. Staff, as well as youth, described circumstances wherein youth learned specific vocational and employment related skills, through time bank exchanges. These outcomes were described in chapter 13.

In addition, *positive identity changes* by youth occurred as a result of their new role as “contributors.” Through participating in the time bank and undertaking service projects to better their community and fellow community members, youth improved self-worth and self-esteem. In contrast to gain in skill development, staff members (n=5) rather than youth identified the importance of positive identity changes. A sample of staff comments regarding this theme are included below:

He signed a contract to help other youth that came into the program to do music. He would bring the kids up [to the studio] and the look on his face, the pride that he was able to show, because he was the only one allowed to touch the equipment and show them how it works, that was the happiest I've ever seen him.

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You know, a lot of times on this day and age, the kids are playing video games, they're "chillin," they're hanging out, they have no sense of accomplishment, no sense of motivation or pride. . . they can do a time bank project where they see an actual result, it's going to give them a sense of pride.

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The youth that helped with the construction project. I saw it extremely valuable in his case, because it was, time spent doing that, it allowed the youth to build self-esteem, self-confidence. . . . He was very receptive to learning things, he was very interested in doing quality work.

A lone youth participant discussed the importance of identity changes resulting from co-production participation:

Researcher: What else about the time bank contributed to its success?

Youth: Learning new stuff that they always wanted to learn. . . . Or, just to prove themselves that they are a better person than they are maybe on a report or something, or they just want to be able to be more successful in the future for life or even in school.

Other internal outcome gains identified by participants *included a gained knowledge of the community* (n=1) and a *positive caring attitude to those less fortunate* (n=2). Only youth participants identified these outcomes. The comment below from a youth participant illustrated how youth began to look outside of themselves, to assist others in need:

I want to try to get like a basketball team with like middle-school kids and stuff like that. I think that would be, that could contribute to keeping kids away from violence and stuff. If I had that, I don't think I would be in YAP.

*External Outcomes/Asset Development*

The most often identified outcome identified by participants stemming from co-production involvement was *youth earning redemption from the community* for harm that they might have created due to past misbehaviors. Community members, including adults in positions of authority, altered their perception of youth participants. Through time bank participation, youth were identified as being positive contributors. This outcome was identified by both youth (n=2) and staff (n=4) alike. Staff responses included the following:

It [time banking and co-production projects] allowed them to utilized their strengths so they also got to become a member of the community and be seen as an important role and many of these youth are really categorized when they come out of residential as being "bad seeds." Yes, they may have been the person who painted the graffiti on the side of the building but now they're also the youths that are helping to clean it up, and helping plant the flowers at the skate park.

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I think it gives opportunities for caseworkers and schools and businesses to experience youth in a different way, rather than [stereotyping them as] punks or hoodlums or whatever.

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I would hope that they would look at the kids differently, ones that are labeled “at risk,” will hopefully see beyond that and see that there’s more to the “at risk” label.

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I think for other area businesses, and other people in general, I think they see the YAP kids as not being criminals, or that kids have positive strengths.

A youth participant concurred with staff, highlighting how participation in co-production projects enabled him to regain the trust of key adults in his life:

Youth: I earned their [staff] trust, and just the respect out of it, and being able to do things

Researcher: Anybody else besides staff that looked at you differently?

Youth: My foster parents and slowly, social services. My case manager up there, the one I had at the time before I got the new one.

Furthermore, earning back trust resulted in the emergence of adult supporters, who chose to use their *social capital to assist youth who re-offended or got into further trouble*. Although this was reported by only one youth below in dialogue, this instance was worth highlighting, because of its potential to assist high risk youth in need.

Researcher: I heard that you got into some trouble with the law, toward the end of when you were in YAP. Do you think being involved with the time bank, did that help you when you had to face the charges?

Youth: It did because if it wasn’t for YAP being there when I went back to court to try to fight to get out of jail, I probably would still be sitting in jail

right now. But, having DSS and YAP behind me, talking to the judge, they helped me. They talked to the judge and they helped me get released to the group home.

Assisting youth to obtain jobs was another area where adults used their social capital. A staff member reported that building connections in the community, which occurred as a result of working with the advocate on co-production projects, became a “new component in their lives.” Another staff member identified “speaking with new people, trying something different, exposing oneself to a possible career, to a skill that they might not know that they had,” as an important outcome of participation.

Securing discharge resources and supports was also cited as an important outcome of co-production participation. Interestingly, four of the seven staff participants identified this outcome; none of the youth participants mentioned it. A sample of staff responses included the following:

Making sure that we have an outside support system established for them before they leave is basically our biggest motivation for this project at this point.

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You know, where we try to, we want to develop their assets and make sure that they have some kind of discharge resources and widen their resources at discharge.

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If they can get involved in the time bank, do a couple of co-production projects, they’re actually meeting new people in the community, getting

different options in the community so that once this formalized service is done, they'll have non-formalized services that they can rely on. . . as opposed to going to DSS or YAP or another program.

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They don't know a lot of people in the community, they don't have a lot of access to different things that might help them, so they lean on us a lot so that when they're out, they're still stuck or they go back to how things were before [they entered] the program. I think [the time bank] opens doors to better improve their families as their life goes on, when they're out of the program.

Finally, virtually all of the participants (n=11) identified *specific resources gained* by youth and family members as a result of time bank participation as an important outcome attained. Youth and family members benefited from specific supports in times of crisis. Participants also noted the attaining of new tools to further themselves both educationally and vocationally. For example, participants cited tutoring assistance, learning a trade or skill, automotive care, cooking lessons, budgeting, and receiving goods such as sneakers and tuxedos to attend a prom as examples of material resources that were garnered through time bank exchanges.

### **Integrating Co-Production Interventions to Address Problem/Risk Factors**

The use of co-production practices and strategies to address important youth problem behaviors/risk factors requires an advanced level of staff expertise. It appears that the greater the co-production expertise of staff, the more that the potential of co-

production interventions can be realized. This relationship is evident in the examples provided next.

In the first set of examples below, *staff utilized the Time Bank and negotiated co-production agreements with youth to develop non-traditional resources to address identified service needs/risk areas*. As noted in chapter 10, cultivating informal resources is a key feature of wraparound and therefore, is a core goal of YAP services. Cultivating informal resources is also a challenge in fully implementing wraparound. A staff member explained how time banking “added value” to YAP’s core wraparound services model:

We meet with the youth and the family and different stakeholders in the kid’s life and work out a set of goals that they want to work toward, that they see would be beneficial to moving them forward in their lives.

Typically, YAP focuses on those goals with the advocate weekly. . . What we tried to do with time banking and co-production is to use these tools to achieve them [the goals] in a different way without depending on formalized services as much. . . Instead of YAP writing out a check, they [the youth and family] were able to access the time bank and help meet their needs to do [for example] cooking lessons or nutrition classes or different things that might address the goal.

Time banking opened up a broad range of informal resources to help address priority service needs. In the example below, a staff member explained how another YAP involved youth active in the Time Bank assisted a fellow YAP youth:

We tried setting up one of my girls in being a peer leader. She had a co-production contract. . . to help another one of my youth that can’t get out

of bed [in the morning]. For some reason, one day, when I went inside to wake this one girl up, I had this other girl with me. So I went out there and asked the other girl to come in [to speak with the girl], after getting permission from mom. Immediately, the girl got up, and so we found that for a couple of weeks, every single time I couldn't get her up, as long as this girl either called her or was in the car with me, she was able to get her up.

In another example, staff utilized the time bank to help a youth to address his anger management issues through non-traditional ways. Here, a youth's interest in rap music became the vehicle to address an identified service need. The staff member explained below:

There was a young man who did not want to go to therapy. He said he did not want to talk about his problems. So we had a business in the Time Bank who was willing to record his rap and teach him about recording and he was able to talk about problems in his life and therapeutically, get out a lot, what was going on in his life.

A second staff person noted that with these "informal" services were available to the youth even after discharge from YAP. .

In a second set of examples below, *staff used the Time Bank and negotiated co-production agreements with youth to develop creative, competency-building alternatives to address service mandates.* Referring to the case example previously described in this chapter where the youth entered into a co-production agreement with staff to conduct a workshop for time bank members on changing oil in an automobile, a

staff member also noted below that the workshop enabled a youth to earn back credits toward meeting a social services requirement. He described this situation, as follows:

He was in the foster care system and needed to complete Independent Living requirements. He was kicked out of the DSS Independent Living program and did not have another way to accomplish this. The co-production agreement that we put in place was going to enable him to earn credits for those Independent living skills

Similarly, a youth identified his role sitting on the time bank advisory council as a way for him to meet his mandated community service requirement. In this situation, the probation officer allowed hours on the job to be deposited to the youth's time bank account. The youth explained this situation:

It [the Time Bank] helped me do community service. I had about 4 months into the time bank project. I had 40 hours of community service to do. The Time Bank helped me to do that.

A third youth used the time bank to cultivate a skill, while addressing mandated service requirements. In this case, a young person learned construction skills while helping out a local business. In doing so, he was able to build on learning that took place in a shop class that he attended in school. This service experience was eventually parlayed into a supported work job for the youth at that site. A staff member told the story of this youth in this way:

I approached the youth [about a construction job], thinking you know, maybe he's never done this but we're gonna give it a shot. It turned out he was, at the same time, taking a shop class at his school so it fit really well

and I was impressed with how adept he was in that setting. . . . He was excited to kind of apply what he had been learning in shop class and to show me that he know how to do this and to really apply it in a real-life setting. . . . He was excited about the prospect of obtaining a job through the supported work program [at the site].

In the last example below, the time bank was used to remedy a situation where a youth damaged property. Using restorative justice principles, time bank exchanges enabled the youth to repair the harm that he caused as well as to develop new competencies. The arrangement satisfied the victim, who chose not to press charges. A staff member described this circumstance:

There was a young man who during a fit of anger, punched a wall and broke a window. Instead of YAP giving him money to repair the window, we actually had him cash in some of his time bank hours to have someone [in the time bank] show him how to fix the window. So, not only did he help repair the window. . . he also learned a trade he learned how to fix a window. . . he now has a skill that he learned from the time bank.

*A third set of examples occurred when staff members sought to integrate time banking with the youths' educational program.* Staff intentionally used time bank projects to build upon skills that youth learned in school. In two situations, youth parlayed their automotive and carpentry skills learned in their BOCES school program to contributions to their community. The former situation was documented earlier. The latter situation is described below by a staff participant:

He [the youth] was excited to kind of apply what he had been learning in shop class and to show me that he knew how to do this and that to really apply it in a real life setting. You know, he's not in class, he's out at a place of business, helping to build something and I think he really likes that.

Notwithstanding these example, a youth participant offered caution in utilizing the time bank to address problem areas. His preference was for staff to focus the time bank on asset development and to tread carefully in integrating time banking to address risk areas. He described his view as follows:

I think you should slowly get into [the problem areas], but not enforce it. . . . You should slowly, not just jump in there like what's wrong, why are you not doing this? If they're willing to come out with their problems, you should be able to slowly help them. But, if they don't confront it, I don't think you should get involved, because it could make those problems worse. [Confront problems] only naturally, because if you make the fear at the wrong time, it could make it worse.

In each set of examples described above, staff developed expertise in co-production such that co-production plans of action were used to address priority service needs, whether it was to address service needs of the giver or the receiver in the exchange. In these instances, staff recognized the generative potential of co-production. This transition, integrating co-production into core risk areas, represents an enhanced developmental stage of staff competence in the use of co-production strategies. The

presence of this advancement can serve as a process indicator of co-production's maturation within an organization.

### **Contagion Effects: Time Banking and New Organizational Partnerships**

Findings revealed that the use of time banking spread to other organizations and businesses within the community, resulting in a multitude of creative exchanges with wide ranging outcomes and impacts. For example, a multi-faceted set of exchanges occurred involving the local YAP program, an alternative school in the community, the local social services department and professional community members who joined the time bank. Appendix 14-4 illustrated this four-way set of exchanges.

In this example, each of the three organizational partners worked with the time bank coordinator on identifying organizational services needed and services to be provided by the organization through the time bank. Organizational as well as individual time bank accounts were created. For example, the alternative school offered the use of its meeting space to YAP and its computer equipment to the youth enrolled in the YAP program. Individual YAP youth was required to cash in their time bank hours for the use of the equipment. In exchange, the school received both support from YAP advocates (acting as community members enrolled in the time bank) and other members of the community (e.g., a law guardian, a police officer) to provide enhanced programming in its in-school suspension program.

New exchanges are in the planning phase, as organizations work together. For example, the alternative school is seeking to use the Time Bank as a source of potential adult mentors for their students. DSS discussed with the time bank coordinator enrolling the Life Skills program in the Time Bank. This would provide individual youth with real-

life situations to use skills learned in the training program. This example illustrates the generative potential of time banking as well as the potential of time banking to address individual, organizational and community needs.

### **Focus Group Results**

Key findings from chapter 14 were reviewed by staff at a focus group session convened by the researcher (see appendix 3-4 for specific focus group questions for site two). As a reminder, the primary purpose of the focus group was to corroborate findings generated from the interview data. The focus group was structured so that staff had an opportunity to review and comment on the findings related to the core theoretical constructs of co-production; levels of involuntariness, empowerment practices, staff/youth collaboration and engagement. This chapter includes findings related to youth engagement and other youth/staff outcomes.

#### *Finding: Determinants and Pathways to Enhanced Youth Engagement*

##### *Focus Group Results*

Discussion centered on practices and strategies impacting on youth engagement. Finding 5 from this chapter, which identified an integrated set of practices linked to higher levels of youth engagement, was shared with staff. Staff corroborated the identified empowerment and collaboration practices as important factors associated with youth engagement within a co-production framework

Asked by the researcher to identify priority factors, staff responded by highlighting the importance of strategies that enhanced staff/youth relationship building. Establishing a trusting relationship with the youth was viewed as primary. As the trusting relationship increased, youth and parents began to view staff as family members. In turn,

barriers to the relationship were removed and youth begin to view staff less as service providers. A staff member shared his views:

The relationship part is very helpful. Because, if you can build a trusting relationship with these kids, I mean, they don't want to let you down.

They kinda look up to you and they start to come around. . . They start to look at you, not as a service provider but as like a part of their family.

Another staff member interjected the importance of staff providing youth with leadership opportunities as a method of building staff/youth relationships. For this staff member, leadership opportunities were the vehicle to closer working relationships and in turn, higher levels of youth engagement:

If we recognize their skills. . . we're in the process, communicating to them, "you have strengths and we believe in you and let's do it. I'll support you." And, that in turn builds the relationship and gives them more a sense of staff, more a sense of having a relationship with YAP. . . and helps them to feel more engaged.

This staff member also noted that belongingness and trust building strategies as well as fostering youth leadership were complimentary and reciprocal. Combined, these strategies generated empowerment gains as well as enhanced levels of youth engagement:

So, if they feel safe, that you're going to be able to support them if they fail. A lot of the time that's why people don't want to take risks or go out and put themselves out there as a leader, because they're afraid they're gonna make a fool of themselves or fail. So, you feel that if you have a relationship with them first, that they're more likely to feel comfortable in

taking that risk because they know you're going to be there to support them and help pick them up if they falter.

Finally, the link between parent support for the project and parent participation with youth engagement was also noted by staff. Parent engagement was characterized by staff as a "powerful tool" in dealing with the engagement of youth. Also, longitudinal gains would not be realized for youth post discharge if parents are not actively involved in a youth's co-production plan. Despite specific examples of success, staff felt that strategies to engage parents were not well articulated and required more careful exploration and experimentation.

*Finding: Other Youth Outcomes*

*Focus Group Results*

Staff responded to the inattention paid in the interview findings to staff working to build sustainable community connections for youth while working on time banking projects. Staff reasserted the important role for staff to help connect youth to community organizations and to build positive relationships with pro-social adults in the community. Staff also discussed factors which impeded the attainment of these goals.

Organizational factors were mentioned. For example, to minimize agency liability, staff members were required to accompany youth on all exchanges with community members. According to a staff member, this policy may have contributed to the challenge of cultivating youth ties with community members.

It's probably because we facilitated all that [the exchanges]. . . . Their advocate is the one who attended each of those exchanges with them. . . maybe the advocate is the one that gets the focus of the attention versus

the community member. . . . I think if it wasn't about liability, we could've introduced the kid to the person in the community that they were doing the exchange and maybe been there for the first exchange or whatever. And, then let them go back and continue exchanges.

Another staff member identified geographic issues as an impediment. He noted that many youth lived outside of the major city where most of the group time bank activities occurred. These youth participated in the activities but since they did not live in the city, they were not as personally committed to the project as other youth who were city residents. This detracted from certain youth gaining sustainable local community ties from time bank activities. He explained this point below:

We're their transportation to that location. They're [some of the youth] are not gonna come from [where they live] back to the neighborhood down here, to remember the lady that did the beautification project with them. You know, I'm thinking it really stems on that neighborhood part. You know, trying to rebuild your community and getting involved in the community. . . their communities [the rural and urban youth] are worlds apart.

A brief discussion ensued regarding solutions. One staff member identified building on "closed" exchanges with community members, to intentionally incorporate the new person into the youth's child and family team:

Potentially invite those [community] resources. I mean if there was someplace that a kid consistently made exchanges, to invite them into the planning process of their [the youths] service plan, if the kid is open to

that. Because that opens another door a more personal door, to involve them in the service plan or engage them [the community member] a little bit more.

This staff member advocated for staff to “step back” purposefully and take on a facilitation role in fostering new relationships for the youth:

If the advocate could supervise the exchange, maybe not participate in the actual exchange. Because I know there’s some hands-on stuff that the advocate would help [with] but, [instead] just be there, to have them [the youth] engage with the business owner or whoever.

*Finding: Staff Outcomes*

*Focus Group Results*

Reviewing findings related to staff outcomes during the focus group yielded interesting and important data. In particular, discussion with staff corroborated the finding which linked co-production interventions with enhanced levels of staff engagement. Staff noted that the use of personal social capital, to attract friends and relatives to participate in the Time Bank, enhanced staff’s commitment to the project. One staff member commented: “It makes it personal. It’s not just about a job, then. When you’re connecting your own personal people, your own relatives. . . you have more of a vested interest.” A second staff participant agreed: “If we use our own personal connections, it’s gonna make it more personal to us and we’re going to want them to succeed a little bit more.”

Staff also identified the link between working with youth on co-production activities and enhanced staff performance. Two staff corroborated this important finding gleaned from the interview data:

I think there's more follow-through, too, on behalf of the advocates and the staff. If you're connecting the kids with someone that you know personally, you're going to make sure that they do a good job, because you've made that connection and your relationship-nah, it's not on the line but realistically, it is. So I think there's a great level of follow-through and making sure that the kids are happy and the person [community connection] is happy versus just "here you go, do this."

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It [the Time Bank] gave us [advocates] some activities to do. It gave the kids a chance to get into the community, meet people and start trusting people. . . It gave us, you know, ideas, community stuff to do; community activities.

In addition, the organizational partnerships that began to form as a result of Time Bank participation improved staff morale and performance. A staff member discussed below the fledgling partnership that YAP developed through the Time Bank with an alternative school that educated a number of YAP involved youth:

The school that we deal with. That helped greatly because we deal with the same population of kids so we now can bounce [ideas] off each other. And it helped with my job in having those other community organizations recognize what we do at YAP. . . now we can work together, because that

youth is also involved in our program and we can have another hand to plan for that particular youth.

Finally, staff corroborated the finding that linked higher levels of staff engagement resulting from co-production involvement to enhanced youth outcomes. Here, the following pathway to outcomes was revealed: staff engagement led to greater levels of trust and safety experienced by youth, which led to higher youth self-efficacy/agency. A staff member shared his thinking on these relationships:

If we use our personal connections. . . we're going to want them to succeed a little bit more. It's gonna offer the kids more opportunities to meet different people in the community. . . . A lot of times, the kids don't feel like they're safe. And they see another service provider or somebody else, they're like, "I'm not dealing with that person. I don't trust them." But, if they can see it coming from our mouth, you know, "this is a good guy right here that I want to hook you up with," then they're [the youth is] going to somewhat trust him a bit more. And be more apt to work with that particular person.

*Finding: Co-Production and Problem Reduction*

*Focus Group Results*

Participants corroborated the relevance of integrating co-production interventions into involuntary service concerns. In particular, using the Time Bank to build and expand upon school programming was viewed as a solid strategy when individual circumstances warrant it. However, discussion moved toward advocating for separating co-production and time banking interventions from core YAP program activities. Staff reaffirmed the

importance of taking an individualized approach with some youth ready to participate in co-production activities early on in service provision but most requiring a period of stabilization and maintenance prior to be ready to participate in co-production activities.

A staff member responded to these themes:

We have to get them [the youth] focused and stabilized and maintained and structured in their daily lives. . . . We are doing the things [with the youth] that are court mandated. . . You go to court on Monday, the judge says you have got to do x, y and z. You know, Tuesday comes, you're [the youth is] doing a, b and c. We gotta be able to help you [the youth] regain your focus. That is what the Youth Advocate Program is set up to do.

A second staff member concurred with the first by responding as follows: "I agree with some of the kids that come in, dealing with crisis or they tend to lead up to crisis. And you can't do co-production or time banking with them."

In addition to client circumstances, staff cited systemic failures as contributing to integration challenges. A specific example raised was the breakdown of referral protocols to the program. YAP has been increasingly faced with the challenge of responding to referrals of youth in crisis, with little information shared about client circumstances by the referral authorities. For many referrals, YAP staff needed to begin intake "from scratch." A staff member explained during the focus group that just last week, he received a call on a Tuesday that a youth needed to be picked up in a nearby city and plans needed to be developed by Thursday. This systemic breakdowns delay an orderly approach to intake, potentially negatively impacting on relationship-building and youth engagement.

*Finding: Co-Production and Contagion Effects*

*Focus Group Results*

Staff voiced excitement regarding the growing partnership occurring with the alternative schools in the community, facilitated through time bank exchanges (see appendix 14-4). However, staff commented on the amount of time that it is taking to foster partnership activities and questioned the cost/benefits of working on projects that perhaps only a few youth will choose to participate in. The costs of accomplishing small incremental gains were noted. The extent to which community work of this nature takes away from implementing YAP's core initial activities; stabilization and crisis intervention, was also noted. A baseball analogy was used by a staff member to describe this new venture and its relevance to core priorities:

Helping [a staff member] hit that single. If I got somebody tying [the staff members] shoes, putting his belt on. I then got somebody wiping him down, putting on his helmet, carrying him to the plate, standing him up, is all that energy and time even worth that single. And, it didn't happen like that every time. But, how much effort do you build into getting that single?

## **CHAPTER 15: CROSS-SITE FINDINGS AND THEIR THEORETICAL IMPORT**

This chapter presents commonalities, similarities and unique findings from the two study sites. Findings and relevant theoretical interpretations of findings to each core construct for co-production are presented. Cross-site findings are provided in appendices at the end.

### **Core Features of Co-Production Interventions and “Degrees of Freedom”**

#### *A Synthesis of Empirical Findings*

The researcher proposed a four-part categorization of co-production interventions (see appendixes 2-2 and 4-4). Overall, the empirical findings corroborated the presence of different kinds of co-production interventions. As theorized, each kind of co-production had some unique features. .

For example, features of youth-organizational-community co-production were evident in site one. In this site, youth were involved in community improvement activities to address a mandated service obligation or as a new intervention comprising a large part of their YAP services involvement. Youth and staff “adopted” local organizations and these organizations served as both the site and target of the intervention. Staff also utilized a group work modality for site one interventions.

In contrast, staff in site two maintained features of citizen-citizen (youth-citizen) co-production. In this site, youth participants were involved in individual tangible exchanges. These youth provided and received services from other time bank members. One-on-one work between a youth and advocate was evident in site two. In this form of co-production, staff members were involved in exchanges with youth or served as

collaborators, facilitators and matchmakers. Staff played these several roles to assist youth in their exchanges with community members.

Significantly, in both sites, co-production changed over time. Similar features indicative of these changes emerged in both sites. For example, staff members in site two facilitated a broad range of opportunities for youth to contribute. In addition to exchanging with other time bank members, youth earned time bank hours by helping local businesses, adding capacity to local community organizations and by assisting the local YAP program (see chapter 13 for details). In other words, citizen-citizen co-production was quickly expanded to incorporate features of citizen-state co-production.

Similarly, in site one, participants, especially staff, voiced the importance of broadening the initial intervention modality, to allow opportunities for youth to work one-on-one with their advocates in planning and structuring co-production activities. For example, staff identified that certain youth involved with group community service projects might have been better served if they work with staff on individual projects, to better address their interests and strengths and prepare them for group participation at a later date (see chapter 11 for details). In other words, in order to adapt to individual circumstances, participants in site one expressed a desire for citizen-citizen co-production to accompany citizen-state co-production activities.

These findings support the presence of core features of co-production that serve to connect the unique variations, indicating that all are co-production interventions. Chart 15-1 depicts these core features. Examples of core features of co-production interventions for involuntary youth include: (1) New roles for both staff and youth, (2) The importance of empowerment practices tailored to involuntary youth, (3) Staff/youth collaboration

processes that facilitate joint endeavors to achieve organizational and community change, and (4) Inter-organizational partnerships that allow for the establishment of new contexts through which youth can serve as leaders, resources, and contributors.

Core outcomes/impacts were also identified in both pilot sites. These outcomes/impacts are unique to co-production. Examples of outcomes and impacts include: (1) The importance of enhanced levels of staff/youth collaboration and staff and youth engagement, (2) The generation of internal and external youth competencies with an emphasis on internal gains in facilitating enhanced positive identity and self-esteem, (3) A commitment to sustainability of outcomes, and (4) Generative and contagion effects which seek to positively impact on the host organization, other community organizations as well as target communities.

#### *Additional Theorization*

Findings confirmed the complexity of co-production interventions. Co-production took on hybrid dimensions. In both sites, staff sought to adapt co-production practices and strategies. They adapted co-production interventions to fit their local contexts and to better respond to unique individual youth circumstances. By broadening the range of opportunities and roles for youth to contribute, staff provided youth with additional choices and opportunities to exercise their autonomy. With this autonomy, youth were able to decide how and in what ways to contribute.

Also, staff gave youth more choice. Greater choice appeared to be a factor associated with youth initial participation. Choice also opened up possibilities of higher levels of youth engagement over time.

Staff members' expansion of offerings followed a developmental progression. *It is noteworthy that this progression differed from the proposed theoretical articulation presented in chapter 4.* Contrary to the proposed progression, findings supported youth-organizational co-production as a latter phase of co-production for involuntary youth. During this latter phase, youth worked closely with staff in governance and internal service roles. These roles included working as staff assistants and as direct service providers assisting other clients. Here, youth and staff collaborated to improve organizational functioning.

Youth-organizational co-production took time to come to fruition. One explanation as to why this occurred may be that staff members were reticent to put youth in positions to influence other youth in the program, until youth could be trusted to serve as positive influences. In other words, staff assessed that the initial risks were greater than the potential rewards of involving youth in organizational improvement projects.

To prepare youth to work with staff on organizational improvement projects, staff developed informal leadership opportunities for youth. In site one, staff provided these opportunities while youth were involved with initial community service projects. In site two, youth provided service to other community members through Time Bank exchanges.

In both sites, it appeared that successful completion of these projects enabled youth to show staff members that they were prepared to “step-up” and serve as leaders. Predictably, not every youth successfully completed their respective projects. As a result, in site one, only a few formal youth leaders emerged and only after youth successfully completed phase one of program activities. Similarly, in site two, youth leaders were selected to be a part of the Time Bank advisory council. Selection occurred only after the

youth successfully completed exchanges with community members, under the direction of the advocate.

In summary, youth-organizational co-production turned out to be an advanced form of co-production within services to involuntary youth. Evidence of the co-occurrence of high levels of engagement, higher phases of staff/youth collaboration and staff/youth bonding associated with youth-organizational co-production in site two (see appendix 14-2) supports this finding.

*Significantly, a new kind of co-production intervention emerged from the empirical study. “Youth-community” co-production represents a fourth kind of citizen-state co-production intervention. Youth community co-production is associated with the prevalence of community service as a method of rehabilitation for juvenile offenders.*

### **Level of Youth Involuntariness**

#### *A Synthesis of Empirical Findings*

Findings revealed low levels of involuntariness for participating youth. Despite pressure to participate in YAP services by parents and probation officers, including a number of youth court-ordered to provide community services as part of co-production involvement, participants in both sites appeared to view youth participation in co-production activities as semi-voluntary. This finding was corroborated by both youth and staff participants.

In addition, low levels of involuntariness were found across the spectrum of youth participants. For example, low levels of involuntariness were associated with youth mandated or pressured to participate in services as well as youth who entered the program more voluntarily. Surprisingly and perhaps counter-intuitively, “system-involved” youth

(e.g., youth with a history of involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems) appeared to view co-production in a more favorable light than youth who were first-time offenders or who just recently became involved in either of the two systems.

These findings about involuntariness may be an artifact of the sampling. A purposive sample of youth was employed for inclusion in this study. Youth participants were deemed by staff to be “active” participants in co-production, although as we learned from study findings, some youth were more “active” than others. Nonetheless, low levels of involuntariness appeared to accompany “active” participation. This association represents an important finding from this study.

#### *Additional Theorization*

Per proposed intervention theory for co-production, level of involuntariness is a core antecedent variable associated with co-production interventions. Also, it was theorized that changes in level of youth involuntariness represent a proximal outcome afforded from youth participation in co-production interventions. Findings revealed possible correlates associated with level of youth involuntariness.

Participants identified the importance of systemic factors, especially factors that operated as constraints for co-production. For example, findings revealed that many youth viewed court mandates with less import than would be expected. This view occurred in part because court delays led to the inability of many youth to understand the link between the offense committed and the punishment/consequence meted out by the court. Constraints like these apparently caused some youth not to take the mandate to participate seriously or, at best, to be confused by the mandate’s relevance.

There is another way to frame this constraint system. In the language of practice theory for involuntary youth, youth perceived the legitimacy of the sanction to have been compromised. As a result, many youth did not experience an initial loss of valued freedoms or a loss of fate control resulting from failure to comply with court mandates. In other words, youth did not feel compelled to participate as one might expect when being subjected to a court mandate. This finding may help to explain the low levels of involuntariness experienced by youth.

Intervention practices and accompanying strategies were influential factors associated with perceived levels of youth involuntariness. Empowerment approaches utilized by staff appeared to have contributed to the low levels of involuntariness experienced by youth. For example, findings revealed that staff provided youth with many choices as to how to structure their participation in co-production activities. The availability of choices may have contributed to higher levels of autonomy for participating youth. In turn, higher levels of autonomy may have led to youth experiencing new levels of freedom, contributing to the low levels of involuntariness described.

In summary, empirical findings corroborated level of involuntariness as a key construct and component of the theoretical framework of co-production interventions. Level of involuntariness was found to be an important antecedent variable, one that helps predict youth readiness to participate in co-production interventions. It can also serve as proximal outcome with change in level of involuntariness a measure of co-production's success. Possible correlates of level of involuntariness were also identified. Of import was the identification of empowerment-driven practices and strategies utilized by staff to

influence levels of youth involuntariness, setting the stage for enhanced youth participation and engagement.

## **Empowerment-Related Intervention Practices**

### *A Synthesis of Empirical Findings*

Appendix 15-1 identifies the commonalities as well as the unique features of empowerment-related intervention practices employed within the two co-production intervention sites. Empowerment practices in each site were driven in part by the kind of co-production intervention utilized (e.g., citizen-citizen, citizen-organizational-community). Empowerment practices also were influenced by the staff members' attempted integration of the co-production additive intervention with features of YAP's core service model.

For example, in site one, staff members implemented a parallel co-production initiative. Youth were referred by probation officers to the new co-production intervention. Features of the core service model were retained but on an ad-hoc basis.

In contrast, time banking was integrated into the full core services model in site two. Youth who were active recipients of YAP core services participated in the Time Bank and related co-production activities. Programmatic and organizational changes to accommodate the co-production additive were a part of the pilot test in this site.

In sum, differences were evident in the two sites. These between-site differences were responsible in part for the unique mixes of empowerment practices. Appendix 15-1 provides a summary. For example, staff in site two developed new or amended existing assessment and case planning practices and tools to assist in the integration of the co-production additive intervention with the core services model.

In contrast, staff in site one relied on group modalities and fashioned empowerment strategies designed to create a favorable mix of youth working together with staff on community improvement projects. Also, in site one, staff members' goals were to integrate parents as "co-producers" within the special initiative. Empowerment practices designed to encourage parental buy-in emerged to support their youth. Strategies to encourage active parent participation were also employed.

Unique empowerment practices were accompanied by many commonalities between the two sites. Common practices and strategies occurred within each of the core categories that helped define empowerment practice within a co-production framework. These areas included intake practices, general and group practices, and specific areas such as strategies that sought to build youth autonomy, enhance personal relationships and augment youth competencies.

#### *Additional Theorization*

Empirical findings revealed the primacy of empowerment practices in both sites. Empowerment practices were drivers of youth engagement and the attainment of other outcomes. As indicated in the next section, empowerment practices also dominated the practices and strategies used to foster higher levels of staff/youth collaboration.

Two priority empowerment practices emerged from the empirical findings. Staff in both sites employed autonomy-building practices to foster youth engagement. Building opportunities for youth to exercise choice began at intake and continued throughout service provision. While attending and participating regularly, youth were provided with opportunities to exercise voice in shaping project activities. In addition, youth were

afforded leadership opportunities, adapted to their preferences and individual circumstances.

Strategies that fostered staff/youth and family/youth relationship-building comprised a second priority area. Fostering belonging with family members and with staff members was not specifically highlighted in the enhanced theoretical framework for co-production interventions. Instead, strategies that sought to foster belonging with other adults in the community and connections with community organizations were emphasized instead. Staff strategies that fostered belonging with significant people in the youths' lives are an important finding from the empirical study. It emphasizes the importance of youth building an attachment with at least one caring adult outside of the youth's immediate family as a key protective factor for vulnerable youth (e.g., Jennings, 2003).

This key finding also is an important additive feature in theorizing co-production interventions for involuntary youth. For involuntary youth, it appears that bonding with family members and with select staff members who are working closely with vulnerable youth is an important antecedent to relationship building with other pro-social adults in the community. Research supports and helps explain the findings related to autonomy and relatedness practices. Examples of this research follow.

Bandura's (1986) self-efficacy theory is one such supportive line of research. Bandura defines self-efficacy as a person's perceived, as opposed to actual, capability of carrying out a particular action. Research supports the premise that efficacy beliefs are the foundation of human agency (Bandura, 2001). In other words, unless youth have strong beliefs in their own ability to attain desired results, they will not exert sufficient

effort to take advantage of new developmental opportunities such as those offered by co-production.

The constructs of relational trust and proxy agency, introduced earlier in this dissertation, also are relevant here. Relational trust was identified in chapters 2 and 6. It refers to the bonding that occurs between individuals (e.g., between staff and youth), between groups and between community organizations as new kinds of community participation and service exchanges occur (see Trevino & Trevino, 2004; Warren, 2005). Relational trust can also occur through the security and support provided by staff to youth during times of crises or during a major life event. Relational trust is often an important correlate to achieving an improved sense of self and fostering a positive self-identity (see Dolan & McGrath, 2006).

Moreover, proxy agency appears to have theoretical salience to co-production interventions with involuntary youth. Proxy agency involves the enlisting of other persons who have greater access to resources and expertise. These other persons then become proxy agents who act on the person-in-need's behalf to secure important goals and needed resources (Bandura, 2001).

Proxy agency is relevant to involuntary youth involved in co-production interventions. For example, theorists note that involuntary youth often enlist foster parents, adult mentors and agency staff for proxy agency to improve their own circumstances because they feel incapable of doing so by themselves due to their own perceived low level of individual agency (see Hegar, 1989). Findings suggest that it is relevant to understanding empowerment-related strategies and practices designed to enhance staff/youth relationship building.

In addition to autonomy and relatedness practices, findings revealed a number of other priority empowerment practices employed by staff common to both sites. These practices included:

✚ The importance of establishing a pro-social caring environment for youth.

Achieving a pro-social caring environment for youth allowed youth to feel safe in experimenting with newly identified interests. Developing the correct mix of participants for youth to feel comfortable working with in a group setting and developing and implementing rules for proper group behavior were specific strategies utilized by staff to create a safe environment for youth.

✚ The importance of providing a range of choices and opportunities for youth to

contribute, tailored to individual needs and interests. This included the availability of multiple modalities for use by staff (e.g., individual and small group projects): projects that were “action-oriented” and projects that enabled youth to witness the benefits afforded to others from their active participation.

✚ The importance of youth being able to receive concrete services/benefits from

their engagement in co-production, early on in the process. Staff implementation of short-term, time-limited projects helped in providing early reinforcement and feedback to youth.

*These priority general and group practices can be best understood as a series of strategies utilized by staff that supported the dominant practice methods associated with autonomy and staff/youth relatedness building. For example, when staff worked to create a safe, caring environment, they helped build youth trust and bonding with their primary staff person. Also, when staff incorporated youths’ suggestions in creating a compatible*

mix of youth participants within a group project, staff allowed youth to be heard and provided them with evidence that they were being cared for. Similarly, when staff created multiple opportunities for youth to contribute and allowed youth to “shop” for service activities that best met their needs, staff paved the way for further youth autonomy strategies (see findings from site two, chapter 13). These findings, it must be emphasized, are tentative. Although they are warranted by the data, the data are more suggestive than definitive.

Furthermore, three new categories of empowerment practice for building autonomy and relatedness emerged from the empirical findings. These categories will be added to the enhanced theoretical framework. These areas include: (1) Empowerment-oriented intake practices strategies, (2) Empowerment-oriented assessment and service planning practices and (3) Empowerment practices designed to integrate co-production into involuntary service areas. Appendix 15-2 presents these findings.

For example, participants identified the importance of referral source and staff preparation in orienting youth to the possible benefits of participation. Youth were informed early on that they would be allowed choices in how to structure their participation in project activities. Similarly, the development of new or improved assessment and service planning practices and accompanying tools allowed staff to gather data on youth interests and their idea of community, so that programming could be tailored to individual circumstances.

Finally, the researcher will add to the theoretical framework practices that integrate co-production interventions into involuntary service areas. These practices represent an important new dimension of empowerment work with involuntary youth.

Their addition is important because findings revealed that when such an integration occurred, youth and staff were both empowered.

For example, in site two, participants provided examples of instances where staff utilized co-production interventions to develop non-traditional resources to address identified risk areas. Staff also developed activities that addressed service mandates while at the same time were competency-building for youth. In addition, community time bank activities were structured so as to build upon the skills and knowledge gained as part of the youths' educational program. In each of these instances, youth and community members were viewed by staff as resources and employed as such, to address risk areas. Staff members who supported these approaches were entrepreneurial and took calculated risks. In fact, use of these creative, integrative practices may represent a more advanced form of empowerment practice. The presence of these practices may be an indicator of staff advancement in instituting empowerment practice to further youth engagement.

### **Staff/Youth Collaboration**

#### *A Synthesis of Empirical Findings*

Appendix 15-2 compares findings related to staff/youth collaboration in both case study sites. Common findings were categorized by collaboration processes, indicators and outcomes. Interestingly, as with empowerment, there were more commonalities than unique features when the two sites were compared and contrasted.

Each site offered examples of staff role changes related to collaboration. Changes involved staff transitioning from being the sole leader of activities to sharing leadership with youth and serving as a facilitator/consultant. In turn, enhanced levels of collaboration were associated with staff providing youth with opportunities to act

independently and inter-dependently with staff on projects of joint import to both youth and staff.

In addition, indicators of collaboration were present in both study sites. Changes in staff/youth interactions and exchanges accompanied movement to higher collaboration phases. Evidence that youth began to view staff as “people” indicated advanced phases youth/staff collaboration, characterized and cemented by relational trust and youths’ growing affinity to adult staff.

Indicators of advanced or higher phases of staff/youth collaboration were evident in both pilot sites. Intriguingly, features of community-building began to appear in some of the interventions in site one and in a number of smaller organizational improvement projects in site two. These findings support the proposition that higher phases of staff/youth collaboration can occur between staff and involuntary youth as they work together on co-production related activities.

#### *Additional Theorizing*

Several important theoretical claims derive from the collaboration-related findings. These claims were not anticipated and identified in the theorizing provided in chapter 9. Each claim is highlighted in italics and discussed briefly below.

#### *Enhanced levels of staff/youth collaboration are difficult to attain for involuntary youth*

Findings revealed contextual factors operated as constraints. These constraints limited the attainment of staff/youth collaboration. Chronic crises confronting youth and families comprised an important constraint. Failure to abide by service mandates was another. Staff observed that it is difficult for them to move from a traditional supervisory role with youth to a role that elevates a youth’s role and status to conditional equality if

youth continue to be truant from school, avoid curfews and commit crimes in communities.

Another constraint was evident when agency policy was incompatible with co-production goals. One example: Agency policy required youth to be supervised at all times while participating in co-production activities. This policy, while designed to reduce agency liability and also to protect youth from harm, was identified by staff as potentially patronizing and infantilizing. This constraint was especially salient for older youth whom staff believed were adequately prepared to act independently and take on more responsibility.

*Collaboration processes emanate from empowerment practices*

Findings revealed that many collaboration processes derive from empowerment practices. For example, staff and youth role changes were linked with practices that sought to enhance staff/youth relatedness. As trust increased, staff provided youth with more opportunities to exercise voice and choice in shaping interventions and more opportunities to exercise leadership. Opportunities to act independently and inter-dependently with staff occurred as empowerment practices bore fruit and youth and staff were able to adapt to changing roles.

These findings corroborated the predicted bi-directional and reciprocal relationship between empowerment and collaboration within a co-production intervention framework. For example, as collaboration outcomes occur, staff members implement more advanced empowerment practices. In turn, empowerment practices yield greater levels of collaboration. In short, as one is instituted, it facilitates the other.

*Collaboration and related constructs serve as indicators and proximal outcomes of co-production*

As noted above, collaboration processes were offshoots of empowerment practices. Reciprocally, these empowerment practices also drove collaboration outcomes. Within the co-production framework, enhanced staff/youth collaboration is best identified as an indicator and proximal outcome of co-production's success.

Relational trust and proxy agency are constructs related to staff/youth collaboration for involuntary youth involved in co-production interventions. Relational trust is a correlate and indicator of gains in levels of collaboration. The presence of proxy agency provided by staff may predict and moderate level of staff/youth collaboration. Both constructs are influenced by empowerment-related practices and strategies.

Furthermore, the findings that revealed examples of high levels of staff/youth collaboration may represent a developmental progression experienced by some youth and staff. This progression includes attaining high levels of staff/youth relational trust, facilitated by a combination of intentional staff/youth relatedness strategies, and the provision of autonomy supports by staff, such as providing youth with opportunities to exercise voice, choice and leadership. The "bundling" of practices and strategies to produce enhanced levels of staff/youth collaboration represents an important finding from this study.

*There is a relationship between motivational congruence and staff/youth collaboration*

Findings suggest a possible link between staff/youth motivational congruence and staff/youth collaboration. This finding was not anticipated and may be very important. Motivational congruence appears to be an early developmental step in staff working

together with youth to achieve mutual goals. Success in negotiating an arrangement to address often distasteful, involuntary service mandates enhances staff/youth trust and relatedness, setting the stage for staff and youth to work together on semi-voluntary co-production activities.

However, evidence points to this relationship being one-dimensional. *Enhanced motivational congruence impacts on staff/youth collaboration but not vice versa.* Thus, motivational congruence may be an antecedent factor for attaining collaboration with involuntary youth.

## **Youth Engagement**

### *A Synthesis of Empirical Findings*

Appendixes 15-3 through 15-5 depict findings from both sites associated with youth engagement. Appendix 15-3 presents descriptive findings. These findings include variations found in youth engagement, movement between engagement levels, potential measurement indicators of youth engagement advancement and barriers to studying and measuring youth engagement. Each of the findings was corroborated by at least one other data source, appeared in both case study sites or was evidenced in both interview and focus group data.

For example, movement between levels of engagement was confirmed by interview data from both case study sites. This finding was also corroborated from data gathered from the staff focus groups. While some of the other interview findings were limited to only one case study site (e.g., finding 5, episodic and disjointed engagement) or to one data source (e.g., finding 6, quality exchanges), they were often corroborated during the staff focus group meeting, adding to the validity of the results.

Key correlates and intervention practices associated with initial attendance/participation are depicted in appendix 15-4. Empowerment-oriented intake strategies are highlighted including adequately preparing referral sources to introduce co-production to youth and addressing pressing service needs to encourage youth to begin exchange processes. Co-production preparation interventions are also noted, including staff working with youth on fulfilling involuntary service mandates. These interventions seek to build trust and set the stage for initial participation in co-production interventions.

Similarly, practices associated with higher levels of behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement appear in chart form in appendix 15-5. Group empowerment practices employed by staff, such as providing opportunities for youth to “give back” and planning for interesting action-oriented projects, were found to be linked with emotional and behavioral engagement. Autonomy-supportive practices, such as staff developing challenging assignments for youth, were found to be linked to enhanced levels of cognitive engagement.

Findings from both sites supported an important theoretical relationship: Specific empowerment and collaboration practices employed by staff were linked to distinct levels of youth engagement. Important patterns emerged in identifying the link between empowerment and collaboration practices and advanced phases engagement. These patterns include: (1) Practices yielded cumulative and generative effects including later engagement phases necessitating that youth already experienced earlier phases of engagement, (2) Certain practices and strategies were associated with multiple engagement levels and (3) Certain levels of engagement were reciprocally related. As an

example, emotional engagement was linked to the attainment of cognitive engagement and vice versa.

Significantly, an exciting finding emerged in site two: *The identification of integrated packages of empowerment and collaboration practices associated with higher levels of youth engagement.* Three case examples were used to illustrate how intentional and multiple staff practices and strategies created the conditions to positively influence levels of youth engagement for involuntary youth. These findings are significant because they support a main theoretical thrust of this dissertation; namely, that there are important links among empowerment, collaboration, engagement and co-production.

#### *Additional Theorizing*

Cross-site findings enable additional theorizing of youth engagement and its correlates. Specifically, findings illuminate the importance of levels of youth engagement resulting from co-production involvement, the movement between and sustaining of engagement levels, drivers of engagement for involuntary youth within a co-production framework and potential indicators of enhanced youth engagement when it emerges. These themes are discussed below.

#### *Levels of Engagement for Involuntary Youth*

Findings revealed that many youth, including those not under court mandate, felt pressure from parents, probation officers, social workers and program staff to participate in co-production interventions. This perception of pressure occurred despite staff efforts to plan attractive projects and allow for maximum possible autonomy in structuring youth involvement. Despite these attempts, separating the involuntary facets of services from the voluntary facets of services was challenging for staff.

These findings are consistent with the challenges noted by theorists and researchers in integrating positive youth development practices and strategies within involuntary juvenile justice settings (see Schwartz, 2001). For example, staff members within juvenile justice programs are required to meet the goals of control, punishment, treatment, supervision and training of youth, often at the same time. In juggling the roles of case manager, monitor and enforcer of court mandates and helper and supporter, choices are required. Tasks associated with enforcement are often given highest priority (Schwartz, 2001). In short, co-production interventions occurred within a larger context of pressure to address perceived youth risks in a timely and effective manner. As a result, it is best to describe the engagement of involuntary youth involved in co-production activities as “semi-voluntary” in nature.

*Significantly, findings revealed that semi-voluntary engagement can lead to voluntary engagement.* This outcome may occur as the time of discharge draws near. It is during this time that staff strives to assist youth for life beyond their involvement in the juvenile justice or child welfare systems.

Data indicated that certain youth who experienced positive outcomes while participating with staff in co-production activities voiced interest in continuing to participate voluntarily as “contributors” post discharge. These findings are consistent with studies within the restorative justice field. These findings showed that some youth choose to voluntarily remain at community service sites after court mandates were addressed (e.g., see Doob and MacFarlane, 1984; Forgays & DeMilio, 2005; Harding 1977).

*Movement between and Sustaining of Engagement Levels*

Findings revealed variations in initial levels of youth engagement as well as movement in engagement levels during the course of the intervention. Specifically, involuntary youth facing court mandates or pressured to participate initially in services began to experience both cognitive and emotional engagement, resulting from co-production involvement.

Even so, these youths' engagement was not singular or uniform. Participants often characterized this engagement as episodic and disjointed. This genus of engagement was most readily apparent in site two where experimentation and testing out the Time Bank was encouraged by staff. Paradoxically, the more autonomy that staff provided youth in terms of choice to participate, the more erratic youth engagement appeared. Here, participation and engagement within co-production interventions for involuntary youth began to resemble participation and engagement of community youth within "normalized" youth development programs, with the attendant challenges of retaining voluntary youth in programming (e.g., Anderson-Butcher, 2005; Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Fallara, & Furano, 2002). As with community youth programming, staff members serving involuntary youth undertook experimentation to determine program elements that would be "hooks" to retaining youth in programming over time (see Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Fallara & Furano, 2002).

#### *Drivers of Engagement of Involuntary Youth*

As identified earlier, empowerment practices and strategies were found to be drivers of youth engagement. For involuntary youth, staff relied on autonomy-building strategies and supports as well as relatedness-enhancing strategies. Staff used both kinds

of strategies to reduce feelings of hopelessness, enhance self-esteem and build youth/staff and youth/parent relatedness and bonding.

In addition, there was preliminary evidence that packages or bundles of empowerment strategies were used by staff to foster youth engagement. These findings support a growing literature base within the youth development field which shows that experimental manipulations of program settings by staff can produce improved outcomes for youth. In particular, the “bundling” of intervention features can yield specific competency benefits for participating youth (see Lewis-Charp, Hanh Cao Yu & Lacoé, [2003], Gambone, Hanh Cao Yu, Lewis-Charp, Sipe & Lacoé [2004]). Multiple strategies, although time consuming and challenging to implement, may yield greater rewards than employing a single set of strategies to enhance youth engagement.

In addition, it is important to note that engagement practices employed by staff for involuntary youth within a co-production framework have similarities to engagement practices used by staff to attract and retain youth in voluntary community youth development programs. Research shows that youth involved in voluntary community programs seek out settings that provide for pro-social peer groups, linkages to adults, meaningful relationships, opportunities for youth leadership and interesting project activities. In turn, staff members employ practices and strategies to address these needs (see Anderson-Butcher, 2005; Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Fallara & Furano, 2002; Dworkin, Larson & Hansen, 2003). Empowerment practices employed by staff to address the autonomy and relatedness needs of involuntary youth, which were key findings of this study, are practices that are not unique to involuntary youth.

Moreover, findings from the empirical study de-emphasized the development and implementation of vocational competency and skill development strategies within the co-production interventions. These findings are best understood, not as an omission by staff or a lack of interest by youth, but as a set of youth competencies that can be addressed only after basic youth needs for self-efficacy and self-determination are attained. A possible implication follows: empowerment practices associated with co-production may need to be phased-in. Two such phases appear to be salient.

Phase one interventions would focus on achieving level one and level two individual/psychological related empowerment outcomes (see chapter 9 and appendix 9-9). Strategies employed by staff to address these needs would be accomplished during the relatively short time period that youth are involved in transitional community child welfare and juvenile justice programming. This transitional programming would serve as a “gateway” (see Bazemore & Terry, 1997) to phase two youth development programming available in communities.

Phase two programming would focus on attaining higher level empowerment outcomes and include but not be limited to specialized job and vocational skills training as well as practices and strategies associated with advanced co-production interventions (see chapter 9 and appendix 9-5). Thus, a goal of co-production interventions for involuntary youth would be to prepare youth to engage more fully in community programming to address these higher level empowerment goals post discharge.

#### *Possible Generative Effects from Engagement Gains*

Findings revealed two kinds of important changes which accompanied higher levels of youth engagement. New discourse systems, together with higher quality of

interpersonal interaction between youth and adults and youth and their peers, emerged over time. These changes are indicative of generative effects. Specifically, new, more positive discourse systems and styles of interaction are indicative of changes in organizational climates, starting with the climates for program-service delivery.

### **Other Youth Outcomes**

#### *A Synthesis of Empirical Findings*

Appendix 15-6 summarizes empirical findings associated with other youth outcomes. As a reminder, these are perceived outcomes identified by participants.

Both youth and staff participants identified gains in both internal and external outcomes/developmental assets for participating youth. Common internal outcomes identified included social skill development, self esteem improvements and positive identity gains. In addition, findings in both sites identified youth renewing community trust (e.g., “earning redemption”) as a core external outcome linked with participation in co-production interventions.

Findings also revealed site-specific youth outcomes. For example, life and vocational skill development were identified as important outcomes for youth in site two but not in site one. In contrast, improved youth/family relationships and family functioning were identified as important outcomes in site one but not in site two.

Finally, many of the findings on youth outcomes were corroborated by both youth and staff participants. This data source corroboration helped validate the research findings in this area. Also, some findings were supported by roughly equal numbers of youth and staff. In contrast, there were other findings where youth and staff participants supported the findings but to different degrees.

For example, more youth than staff identified social skill development as a key outcome. In contrast, positive identity gains were identified by primarily staff members in both sites. Staff members identified positive discharge and social support resources as an important outcome of co-production in site two. However, youth participants did not identify these findings.

### *Additional Theorizing*

Several related theoretical claims can be offered about this study's findings. Each claim is highlighted in italics and discussed briefly below.

*Co-production interventions have the potential to reinforce and enhance both internal and external individual youth developmental assets and outcomes*

This theoretical claim contrasts with the original co-production framework (see chapter 2) which emphasized macro level outcomes (e.g., community level social capital gains) resulting from co-production initiatives. Also, the original framework identified the potential for individual outcome gains through co-production but focused almost exclusively on external social support and social capital benefits with little mention of internal asset gains afforded from participation.

*Positive identity gains, including self-esteem improvements, comprise a core outcome of co-production interventions for involuntary youth*

These individual/psychological empowerment outcomes were highlighted in the enhanced theoretical framework for co-production (see chapter 9). Furthermore, the primacy of identity change as an outcome for co-production in both study sites lends support for co-production to be classified as an "identity support" intervention (see Gambone et al., 2004), especially in targeting services for involuntary youth.

*Bonding social capital is an important outcome of co-production interventions for involuntary youth*

Results from the empirical study emphasized the creation of positive “bonding” social capital for involuntary youth participants. Bonding social capital occurs when a social group is formed from the social connections created from neighbors helping each other and affecting change in communities (Bailey, 2005; Schneider, 2004). For involuntary youth involved in co-production interventions, a unique form of bonding social capital emerged.

For involuntary youth in both case study sites, intimate social groups formed, comprised of a combination of peers, trusted staff, family members of youth and select community members, often friends or colleagues of staff members. This social group provided youth with a sense of safety and a trusting environment in which to experiment with newly identified interests and assets. During the focus groups, staff offered suggestions to enhance bonding social capital. One strategy offered was to intentionally identify community members who would consistently and over time exchange services with youth in reciprocal “closed” exchanges. Through closed exchanges, the edifice of a social group for youth would solidify over time, as trust developed and neighbors worked to help each other and assist the sponsoring organization. The goal would be for this group to continue to function informally post discharge as youth moved out of the child welfare and juvenile justice system.

Bonding social capital contrasts with “bridging” or “linking” social capital (see chapter 2). “Bridging” social capital refers to the ability to access resources outside their own community. “Linking” social capital refers to alliances between people in different

power relations in a community (Bailey, 2005; Schneider, 2004). Both bridging and linking social capital have been identified by co-production theorists as a key goal of co-production involvement (see Seyfang, 2004a). These two kinds of social capital goals were not achieved in this dissertation study.

The failure to document the development of bridging and linking social capital may be an artifact of the study design. As with the previous discussion concerning the implementation of vocational and skill-development strategies, activities supporting the acquisition of social capital might be best understood as following a phase-in process. It is important for involuntary youth to first acquire bonding social capital, by securing trusting and bonding relationships within a tightly constructed social group. As relatedness and autonomy needs are addressed, youth are prepared and staff members are better able to implement practices designed to achieve bridging and linking of social capital. The characterization of co-production as a “gateway” intervention for involuntary youth once again applies--in this case, with regard to the promotion of social capital generation for participating youth.

Constraints operating in both sites may also explain the limited import of bridging and linking social capital gains for participating youth. For example, findings from the empirical study revealed challenges faced by staff in building organizational connections and in securing attachments to new pro-social adult role models for youth participants in the community. These challenges included organizational constraints as well as barriers related to individual youths’ circumstances.

Despite these constraints, staff identified the importance of bridging and linking social capital gains for participating youth. For example, staff members engaged with the

researcher in determining potential responses to these constraints with the hope of ameliorating them. In other words, fostering new relationships and community connections for youth was important for staff, so that youths' chances of succeeding in the community post-discharge could be enhanced.

### **Staff-Related Outcomes**

#### *A Synthesis of Empirical Findings*

Appendix 15-7 summarizes empirical findings associated with staff-related outcomes. Of note is that staff participants in both study sites identified similar organizational and external environmental factors that influenced staff's ability to successfully implement co-production interventions. Findings also revealed a number of site-specific findings pertaining to staff outcomes.

For example, findings from site one supported the premise that gains in youth engagement and staff efficacy and empowerment co-vary. Findings from site two found that enhanced staff efficacy, empowerment and engagement occurred during project implementation. Also, staff participants in site two noted that higher levels of staff engagement are linked with the attainment of both positive outcomes for youth and the overall success of the Time Bank in that site.

Furthermore, the findings regarding staff outcomes were gleaned from staff interviews. Certain findings were also corroborated from the staff focus groups. This cross-method corroboration added to the validity and trustworthiness of research findings in this area.

### *Additional Theorization*

A number of theoretical claims can be offered about this study's findings. Each claim is highlighted in italics and discussed briefly below.

*First, staff engagement increased through co-production participation.* For example, many staff joined the Time Bank as “citizens,” exchanging services with other community members. For these staff, incremental movement toward becoming a “citizen professional” emerged (see Lawson, in press). Within this new paradigm, staff began to view youth clients as citizens, working together to improve organizations and communities.

*Second, predicted gains in staff efficacy and empowerment resulted from their involvement in co-production interventions.* For example, staff noted that they were better able to engage youth. Staff also commented that their job was made easier with the opportunities that co-production provided.

*Third, changes in staff/youth relationships, as evidenced by improvements in interactions and quality of exchanges occurred.* These changes may be indicators of larger changes in the climate and environment of service provision. These positive changes in climate and environment help create conditions conducive to the successful implementation of co-production interventions.

*Fourth, a reciprocal and bi-directional relationship between youth engagement and positive staff outcomes was documented.* Here, increasing levels of youth empowerment and engagement were linked with improvements in staff morale and job satisfaction. Also, enhanced staff engagement furthered positive outcomes for youth.

*Significantly, not all staff embraced and benefited from co-production, in part because of the stress, constraints and barriers they encountered with this innovation.*

For example, some staff experienced stress and discomfort at perceived new job requirements and responsibilities. Organizational and environmental factors contributed to this discomfort. Findings revealed that many factors associated with a supportive organizational context for co-production innovation were not in place prior to the initiatives beginning. Inadequate organizational responses to emerging challenges also furthered staff discomfort and stress levels, impinging on the success of certain planned co-production practices and strategies. Moreover, some staff questioned the appropriateness of encouraging youth participation in co-production activities. Staff members were especially likely to raise questions when the youth they served faced chronic crises or exhibited significant risk and safety challenges.

To reiterate, not all staff embraced elements of co-production practice. For example, some staff balked at pressure to join the Time Bank as a “citizen,” instead choosing to separate their private lives from work lives. Moreover, some staff viewed co-production activities as outside of core YAP service responsibilities. These staff members advocated for being held accountable to the core mission of keeping youth safe and preventing youth from further penetration into the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. The link between greater levels of youth engagement and the enhancement of internal and external developmental assets to alleviation of risk factors, while supported in research (e.g., Taylor et al., 2002), was not recognized as essential by many staff. Instead, some staff members identified co-production interventions as a potential “step-

down” intervention from YAP’s core activities, to occur after crisis stabilization was attained.

*These findings corroborate the importance of ensuring that certain preconditions and antecedents are in place for co-production practices to be effective and for staff benefits to be realized. “Getting the conditions right” (Lawson, in press), a colloquial umbrella for readiness indicators and required capacities, is important in instituting co-production interventions for involuntary youth. Readiness indicators include providing incentives for staff to take risks and become more engaged as community members as well as establishing accountability structures that are compatible with co-production goals. Findings reinforced the necessity of allocating time and money investments to alter organizational settings and working environments so that a new type of “citizen-professional” (Lawson, in press)--one who embraces developing equitable relationships and strengths-based service methods--can emerge in the workplace.*

### **A Theoretically-Based and Empirically-Grounded Theory of Change for Co-Production and Involuntary Youth**

Appendix 15-8 sets forth a theoretically-based and empirically-grounded logic model. This logic model structures a theory of change for co-production interventions and involuntary youth. It is important to highlight key components of this empirically-grounded, enhanced theorization. Key components include:

- ✓ The importance of interventions designed to create both readiness and new capacities needed to “[get] the conditions right” for co-production
- ✓ The inclusion of empowerment-oriented practices and strategies that address involuntary/mandated service concerns and the integration of these strategies within the co-production framework

- ✓ The incorporation of interim outcomes/indicator of readiness for co-production participation, including the *a priori* identification of motivational congruence, relational trust and proxy agency
- ✓ The primacy of empowerment practices as the driver of engagement and outcome gains
- ✓ The establishment of collaboration and related constructs as proximal indicators of co-production success and evidence of implementation fidelity.
- ✓ A more refined graphic description of the generative and bi-directional relationships between core co-production constructs, including the link between staff and youth outcome attainment

This revised logic model provides a guide to a future research agenda for co-production interventions. This future agenda will advance the understanding of co-production's key correlates, priority practices and pathways to outcomes and impacts.

## DISCUSSION

## **CHAPTER 16: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **The Rationale and Purpose of this Dissertation Study**

Co-production is a new complex, concept developed by Edgar Cahn. In its simplest articulation, co-production is a framework and set of techniques. Cahn recommended that social service providers use co-production to enlist active client participation in service programming (Cahn, 2004). In the co-production framework, youth are no longer viewed as “clients.” Instead, they are viewed as citizens with important contributions to make. Co-production interventions enable them to become genuine resources, contributors and change agents. As youth are prepared for active, productive roles like these, their participation improves and later their engagement increases.

Co-production has particular import for working with involuntary youth or those mandated to receive services. After all, researchers, practitioners and administrators are grappling with challenges related to service delivery and with achieving outcomes for involuntary youth (e.g., Public/Private Ventures, 2002). A special challenge exists in securing the active participation and engagement of involuntary youth in services (Beckerman & Hutchinson, 1988; Bruns, 2004; Marks & Lawson, 2005). Because co-production strategies have the potential to obtain active participation, leaders are experimenting with them.

Experimentation without theory and research will not advance co-production’s potential. For this potential to be realized, a more rigorous theoretical framework for co-production interventions is required. This enhanced theoretical framework must be subjected to empirical tests, both in efficacy-focused laboratory trials and via

effectiveness research endeavors that are undertaken in sometimes-messy, real-world practice contexts.

The promise of this theoretical and empirical work is actionable knowledge. Specifically, such actionable knowledge, as presented in theory-of-change logic models, will be invaluable to providers and their organizations because they promise to improve outcomes. This dissertation study was structured to address these important needs.

### **A Theoretical and Empirical Investigation of Co-Production Interventions**

The twin goals for the dissertation were to enhance co-production theory and to subject this enhanced theory to empirical testing in two pilot sites. Three questions structured this inquiry: (1) What theoretical concepts facilitate an improved framework for co-production, with a special focus on engagement of involuntary youth? (2) Do data gathered from a two-site pilot study provide initial empirical support for this enhanced theoretical framework? and (3) Do these data indicate the need for additional theorizing and/or practice changes?

These goals and research questions recommend a three-phase implementation strategy. In the first phase, the key priorities were to identify and describe the core components of co-production interventions. Sub-questions for this phase included:

- ✓ What are the defining features of a co-production intervention?
- ✓ What are the core essential components of such an intervention?
- ✓ What distinguishes it from other interventions?
- ✓ What variations are acceptable during implementation (i.e., what are its degrees of freedom)?
- ✓ What outcomes stem from co-production interventions?

These intervention questions required a return to the original co-production theory.

In phase two, the original co-production theory was evaluated. Drawing from the literature of empowerment, collaboration, youth development and services to involuntary clients, co-production intervention theory was expanded. The results of this phase were an enhanced theoretical framework for co-production and a more detailed description and explanation of co-production interventions.

It is noteworthy that both the expanded co-production theory and interventions are inherently interdisciplinary. The kind of interdisciplinary integration required in this second phase requires investigators to grapple with a variety of theories, each with their respective disciplinary discourses. Each theory has its own disciplinary discourses, but upon close inspection, they are focused on different phenomena. Alternatively, some theories use different discourses, but upon close inspection, they are focused on the same phenomena. Theorists and empiricists alike must cope with enormous challenges like these.

Striving to maintain disciplinary and theoretical integrity, the researcher needed to integrate these challenges and, at the same time, integrate these compartmentalized theories and discourse systems with a focus on co-production theory, interventions, and practice. In the end, the expanded co-production theory is a modest exemplar of what Thomas Kuhn (1970) envisioned for normal science—namely, fresh evaluation of familiar data and strategic, cross-paradigm bridge-building that enables better knowledge and understanding.

Integrative, cross-paradigm bridge building is inherently challenging and risky. Empirical confirmation is a practical necessity. Phase three of this dissertation was designed accordingly.

The expanded theoretical framework set the stage for the empirical investigation of co-production. The empirical investigation focused on understanding micro-level constructs and processes associated with co-production in “real life service settings” for involuntary youth. Sub-questions used to help guide this review included:

- How was the theoretical model related to the interventions in use?  
Similarities/differences? Between site differences? Similarities?
- How salient were aspects of the theoretical model to clients? To staff?
- Were there differences between sites in observations/perceptions?
- If there were differences in observations and perceptions between sites, what are some theories to help explain the differences?
- What changes can be recommended to the theoretical model in light of the empirical findings?
- What changes in practice with involuntary clients can be recommended in light of the results of the exploratory study?

To address these questions, a descriptive, exploratory case study using qualitative data was designed and implemented. Interview data from 25 youth and adult participants were collected. A purposive sampling of “active” youth participants was used in order to gain an understanding of micro-level processes associated with youth engagement. Focus group data was analyzed to corroborate interview findings.

Data analysis included both deductive and inductive techniques. Template analysis (King, 1998) was used to match empirically observed events with theoretically predicted events. Data were then categorized using the proposed framework to code information. Grounded inductive analyses followed. Cross-site comparisons were used to elucidate micro-level constructs and their inter-relationships. These findings were then compared with the enhanced proposed theoretical framework.

### **Dissertation Findings**

Co-production interventions encompass both unique and diverse practices. For example, the different types of co-production interventions found in the pilot sites emphasized unique mixes of empowerment and collaboration strategies and in turn, different pathways to youth engagement. Moreover, evidence indicated that variable mixes of intervention strategies mattered in affecting changes in youth engagement over time.

In particular, findings revealed a range of levels of engagement for involuntary youth involved in co-production interventions. For some youth, engagement changed. It “morphed” from involuntary to semi-voluntary, and this change produced some promising progress markers. For example, these youth exhibited emotional and cognitive engagement over time.

Not all youth experienced this engagement-oriented progression. Some youth were faced with chronic crises. These crises impeded their ability to participate in co-production interventions.

Other youths attended project activities because they were mandated to do so. In these circumstances, youth were not interested in project activities available to them.

Other reasons for lack of engagement included very low self-esteem, high levels of depression and hopelessness, and projects not meeting the youths' needs for relatedness, autonomy and competency development.

In both sites, empowerment practices and strategies served as a driver of staff/youth collaboration and enhanced levels of youth engagement. These practices were designed to address high levels of hopelessness and client reactance as well as low levels of trust as exhibited by many of the participating youth.

Autonomy-related empowerment strategies were especially important. Staff employed these hybrid strategies to give youth "voice and choice" in project participation and to provide informal, individualized leadership opportunities. Relatedness practices structured to yield staff/youth and family/youth bonding and trust were also important. Here, staff provided opportunities for youth to work closely with key staff on projects of interest to the youth, in bettering communities and improving local organizations, including the local YAP program. Moreover, youth were encouraged to work with parents and family members on co-production projects.

Staff also employed general and group empowerment practices in support of relatedness and autonomy practices and strategies. For example, staff sought to establish a pro-social caring environment and to provide youth with a range of choices and opportunities to contribute, tailored to individual needs and interests. Combining these practices and strategies appeared to be most fruitful for staff. For example, higher levels of youth engagement were linked to youth taking on leadership roles, working collaboratively with staff members on projects of import for the organization.

Participants identified common asset building youth outcomes associated with higher levels of youth engagement in both project sites. In particular, improved self-esteem and positive identity emerged as common themes. External youth outcomes identified by participants included increased levels of bonding social capital and youth renewing community trust (e.g., “earning redemption”).

Positive staff outcomes from leading co-production interventions were also discovered. Evidence suggested that staff became more actively engaged in their work and that co-production interventions assisted staff in doing their jobs. Findings also indicated that youth engagement and enhanced staff efficacy, empowerment and engagement may be reciprocally related. As each is advanced, the other is also advanced.

Not all staff embraced and benefited from co-production. Some of the reasons for this absence of enthusiasm and/or benefit included the stressors, constraints, and barriers staff encountered in working with this innovation. Some staff members also experienced stress and discomfort as they came to grips with the realities of new job requirements and responsibilities; these experiences affected their willingness to embrace co-production.

Organizational and environmental factors contributed to staff discomfort. Findings revealed that many factors associated with a supportive organizational context for co-production innovation were not in place prior to the initiatives beginning. Similarly, inadequate organizational responses to emerging challenges furthered staff discomfort and stress levels. These factors impinged on the success of certain planned co-production practices and strategies. These factors were also instrumental in the identification of key readiness indicators for co-production interventions.

## Study Conclusions

Drawing from the findings, ten conclusions appear to be warranted. Each is presented next; each is accompanied by a brief explanation.

- 1. Co-production is a distinct type of intervention, comprising a core set of common features.*

Co-production comprises a distinct set of intervention practices, characterized by essential ingredients. These essential ingredients (see chart 15-1) differentiate co-production from other interventions, providing evidence of its uniqueness.

- 2. Co-production interventions' complexity is further evidenced in a new typology that encompasses five kinds of interventions.*

Five kinds of co-production interventions emerged from the study. Kinds of co-production interventions include youth-citizen, youth-organization, youth-organization-community, youth-community and youth-social justice. Each kind of intervention has unique as well as shared features.

This typology also enables the developmental progression for co-production interventions to be analyzed by researchers and anticipated by practitioners. With involuntary youth, this progression typically begins with youth-citizen co-production. The other types, each of which represents added complexity and more readiness by youth and staff alike, follow from initial progress indicators and achievements.

For example, it appears that youth-organization co-production represents a latter phase of co-production in working with involuntary youth. It is during this phase that youth work closely with staff in governance and internal service roles, including working as staff assistants and as direct service providers assisting other clients. Here, youth are

provided with additional opportunities to act autonomously and staff and youth are engaged in higher levels of collaboration to improve organizational functioning.

*3. Co-Production interventions change over time, both as a function of youth and staff member transitions as well as changing circumstances; and this inherent propensity to “morph” attests to these interventions’ complexity.*

The attendant implications are enormous for intervention theory, research, and practice. For example, because developmental changes in the intervention are inevitable and unavoidable, compliance-oriented and rule-driven implementation formats and schedules are ill-suited to co-production. Staff members’ ability to take cues from their interactions with young people and also from their environments comprised a critical competency in this study because staff used these cues to develop hybrid interventions, ones that also “morphed” as needed. The apparent finding is also an important implication: Co-production interventions depend fundamentally on specially-prepared and very talented staff.

*4. Co-production interventions are non-linear and have generative and contagion effects.*

As co-production interventions are implemented and both staff and youth participate and engage, mutually beneficial and reciprocal exchanges occur between youth and people in their immediate environment. For example, youth empowerment gains set the stage for additional opportunities to contribute, as self-esteem rises and staff/youth mutual trust and bonding are enhanced. Also, youth engagement begets gains in staff outcomes and vice versa.

Generative outcomes may also emerge. For example, as youth become more engaged, staff efficacy improves. As staff exhibit pride in their accomplishments, they are more apt to become more engaged. In turn, enhanced staff performance and engagement creates the conditions for further gains in youth engagement.

Co-production interventions generate new discourses and new, more positive interactions among staff and youths. These new discourses and interactions are indicative of changes in organizational climate, starting with program-service climate. These changes are another instance of co-production's generative effects.

Co-production interventions also create contagion effects. They are instrumental in the development of product and process innovations that spread to other community organizations. Host organizations that initially sponsor co-production interventions bring this innovation to community partners. These community partners begin to transact on an organizational level with the host organization, involve its client base in staff/client transactions or facilitate client/client mutual assistance transactions. Client and staff level empowerment, collaboration and engagement gains may result.

Significantly, outcomes and impacts of co-production interventions are inherently non-linear. Innovation linked to changes in staff and client roles necessitates organizational, programmatic and systemic adjustments. These adjustments take time, energy and resources. Set-backs, mid-course corrections and even significant readjustments are to be expected. Successful co-production interventions require strong leadership and an across-the-board organizational commitment to experimentation, risk taking and learning.

*5. Important theoretical connections exist among the constructs of empowerment, collaboration, engagement and youth outcomes, within a co-production intervention framework.*

Specifically, empowerment practices drive collaboration and engagement outcomes for involuntary youth. Findings from this dissertation study support a growing research base which supports the premise that changes in environmental contexts, through targeted interventions such as co-production, can positively impact on young people and enhance developmental successes (see Benson, Scales, Hamilton & Sesma, 2006).

*6. Motivational congruence may be a key antecedent variable linked to the success of co-production interventions.*

Although not a direct focus of the empirical study, findings revealed that motivational congruence may be a key variable within the co-production theoretical framework. To reiterate, motivational congruence is the fit between the youths' motivation and what the staff is attempting or required to provide and accomplish (Reid & Hanrahan, 1982). In addressing involuntary or mandated issues, it is important for staff to succeed in joining their interests with youth interests (Rooney, 1992). Failure to do so will mediate the impact of co-production practices and strategies on achieving youth and staff outcomes.

On the other hand, success is a key for building staff/youth trust and mutuality. In other words, staff/youth motivational congruence is a co-requisite for building staff/youth collaboration. As noted earlier, staff/youth collaboration is an essential feature of co-production, linked to higher levels of youth and staff engagement.

*7. Co-production interventions may be an important additive dimension to working with involuntary youth.*

Co-production interventions seek to enlist active client participation through opportunities for youth to be resources, contributors and change agents. Staff can access a broad range of practices and strategies to encourage enhanced youth engagement and positive outcomes. Incorporating co-production opportunities within services for involuntary youth provides opportunities to infuse semi-voluntary practices and strategies within involuntary service mandates. For co-production interventions to be most effective, semi-voluntary co-production practices need to be integrated and coordinated with involuntary practices. This integration facilitates the attainment of empowerment-related youth outcomes and builds staff/youth trust and bonding—these are proximal outcomes associated with enhanced levels of youth engagement within a co-production framework.

*8. Co-production interventions have the potential to become a “gateway” service for involuntary youth to achieve gains in internal and external asset building post-discharge.*

Engagement in co-production interventions while involved in community child welfare and juvenile justice programs prepares youth for life after service involvement. Self-esteem and positive identity gains made by youth, as well as successful reintegration of youth into communities and organizations, sets the stage for further gains in developmental competencies post-discharge. Also, youth involvement in empowerment and collaboration driven service projects has the potential to mitigate the potential negative impacts of discharge from intensive (high dosage) wraparound and mentoring related programming.

*9. Co-production interventions require conducive settings, contexts and environments, in support of their practices and strategies.*

Due to factors such as diffuse staff roles, resource limitations and external pressures from funding authorities, the infusion of semi-voluntary co-production practices and strategies within the field of services for involuntary youth presents implementation challenges. Incompatible organizational settings and larger environmental constraints are barriers to staff's ability to implement innovative co-production practices and strategies, limiting the potential benefits and impacts afforded by co-production participation.

*10. Co-production interventions require additional theorizing and more detailed empirical work, both of which need to be aimed at a greater understanding of the degrees of freedom in co-production interventions, the outcomes attainable from them and the guiding theory of change logic models they enable.*

Specifically, articulating and empirically grounding a theory of organizational and system capacity-building is required to better understand the necessary conditions that are conducive to co-production's success. Conducting rigorous mixed method research studies of priority micro- and meso-level co-production propositions are essential to a fuller understanding of co-production, its key constructs and their inter-relationships.

### **Implications for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research**

#### *Practice Recommendations*

*1. Program leaders of co-production initiatives require special knowledge, skills, abilities, and sensitivities that depend in part on tailored, preparation programs.*

Leaders of co-production programs operate on macro, meso and micro levels. As a result, they require a broad range of experience and a diverse and specialized skill set in order to be successful. If social workers are to become leaders in the development of co-production interventions, then schools of Social Welfare need to adapt curricula and course offerings in order to prepare social workers for the skills required to lead complex, co-production driven change initiatives.

To accomplish these goals, an interdisciplinary approach to advanced social work education is needed. This approach must be grounded in the following claim: Co-production leaders are change agents, managing complex change initiatives (see Schorr, 2003). To be successful, critical analysis of social problems and knowledge of political systems are important. Training in core competencies such as leading effective, empowerment-driven group work, motivating and engaging staff, overseeing strengths-based service interventions and cultivating leadership skills in addressing system and contextual barriers, will be required. Depending upon the target group for co-production, (e.g., youth, aging, adult offenders), special training in fields such as youth development, gerontology and criminal justice will also be important.

Special attention is needed to impart skills to leaders so that they are able to manage and implement change management strategies within complex organizations. These skills are necessary for co-production innovations to be successful. As an example, for co-production to succeed, leaders will need to work with existing staff on changing their existing mental models of the roles of “client” and “staff” (see Briar-Lawson, Lawson, Hennon & Jones, 2001; Warren, 1997). Changing mental models facilitates staff creativity and the development of new innovative practices. For example,

paradoxical practices, such as those that emerged during the pilot tests, can be instituted with a more expansive view of staff and youth roles and capabilities. These practices involved using troubled youth to help other troubled youth address common risk factors (Briar-Lawson, Lawson, Hennon & Jones, 2001).

For paradoxical, creative practices to occur, co-production leaders in agencies will need to receive training and ongoing tutelage, especially coaching, mentoring and embedded professional development. Pre-existing biases will need to be identified. Teams of professionals will need to work together in planning, instituting and evaluating new strategies. New curricula, combined with creative methods of interactive and peer learning, will need to be developed, so that leaders have opportunities to translate knowledge gained in the classroom to real life situations.

## *2. Co-production requires leadership training in inter-organizational collaboration.*

Co-production program leaders require expertise in identifying and negotiating inter-organizational collaborative arrangements, especially collaborative partnerships. This preparation is especially relevant for leaders within community child welfare and juvenile justice organizations working with involuntary youth. To accomplish long-term sustainable change, leaders need to invest in communities, identifying organizations with which to collaborate.

Findings from this dissertation study support this recommendation. Findings revealed that staff struggled with planning and implementing collaborative arrangements with other community organizations. These arrangements are important in order to expand youth opportunities to contribute both during and after services involvement. Staff members need guidance and tools in assessing the contingencies, risks and

requirements of collaboration before moving forward with implementation (Claiborne & Lawson, 2005). Degrees of organizational readiness to embark on collaboration also need to be reviewed (Bronstein, 2003; Graham & Barter, 1999). Finally, to pursue inter-organizational collaboration, effective negotiating skills are required, to secure mutual benefits identified by both organizations.

*3. Co-production interventions require special expertise in instituting practices and strategies to promote active parent participation.*

Developing parental roles as “co-producers” and working with staff in planning and implementing youth-centered co-production interventions were important intervention features identified in the study sites. Findings revealed that staff sought active parental participation both to enhance youth engagement and improve youth/family relationships and family functioning. These findings support a growing literature and research base within the fields of youth development and family support which highlights the variety of positive roles that parents and family members can provide as planners, providers of needed services, advocates and policy makers, evaluators, researchers and educators and trainers (Catalano et al., 2002; Freisen & Stephens, 1998; McCammon, Spencer & Freisen, 2001). Utilizing both parent and youth strengths, assets and resources within a co-production framework can combine a family support and youth development agenda, especially if groups of parents, staff and youth are involved in joint tasks that provide multi-directional benefits (see Batavick, 1997).

Engaging family members to serve as “co-producers” is a challenging task. Staff members will need to address barriers to initial family member participation such as child care pressures, transportation and severity of presenting mental health problems (see

Kazdin, Holland, Crowley & Breton, 1997; Kazdin & Wassell, 1999). Ongoing participation and engagement will require that parental autonomy and relatedness needs are addressed. These concerns will need attending while staff focus on the needs and interests of youth participants.

Moreover, staff and youth responses to active parental involvement, although generally positive, were cautious. For example, some youth favored a limited parental involvement, preferring instead that parents form their own group. This finding was consistent with theorists who note that direct parental involvement might refocus activities away from youth concerns to addressing parent needs and interests (see Delgado, 2000). Staff also raised concerns regarding compromising confidentiality and in breaching appropriate boundaries, resulting from involving parents as active partners working with staff and youth in group co-production settings. Social work professionals as co-production leaders require special training in structuring programming so as to reap the many potential benefits of active parental involvement in fostering youth participation.

*4. Successful co-production interventions for involuntary youth require staff expertise in coordinating and integrating involuntary and voluntary service dimensions.*

Social workers as co-production leaders require special expertise in coordinating and integrating involuntary service components such as compliance with court orders, with semi-voluntary service features, such as those associated with co-production interventions. Staff strategies used to encourage compliance and participation with involuntary service mandates (e.g., strategies that seek to foster motivational congruence) need to be aligned with strategies used to encourage participation and engagement in co-

production activities. Success in cultivating trust and bonding with involuntary youth, while addressing service mandates, impacts on the success of engagement in co-production interventions.

Careful planning and strategizing will be required in integrating both components. For example, as noted in chapter 8, practice theorists in the field of involuntary services recommend that involuntary case plans remain separate from voluntary or semi-voluntary contracts or agreements between staff and youth (Ivanoff et al., 1994; Seabury, 1976). This separation, commonly called decoupling, is important: Decoupling helps address a client's fear of repercussions with courts or persons in authority should the voluntary or semi-voluntary agreement not be carried out. "Real" choices available to youth need to be clearly outlined by staff, to foster youth autonomy (Rooney, 1992). Although the involuntary and semi-voluntary agreements need to be separate, staff strategies need to be integrated because both processes have complementary goals: to encourage youth participation and engagement.

Special clinical training is required for social workers to master the complexities of integrating involuntary service provision with semi-voluntary interventions. Micro-level course offerings focusing on service provision for involuntary clients needs to be expanded and reconfigured in light of the knowledge gained in fashioning practices and strategies that enhance youth engagement and service outcomes.

#### *Policy Recommendations*

*1. Co-production practices and strategies should be incorporated into restorative justice programming to help guide restorative community service and restitution interventions.*

Co-production intervention theory can contribute to the current theorization of “positive community service work” (Bazemore, Karp, McLeod, Vaniman & Weibust, 2003, p. 29). It provides a theory-based intervention template to help structure restorative community service and restitution programming. Co-production intervention theory expands the propositions and practice principles articulated by restorative justice theorists (see Bazemore et al., 2003; Bazemore & Karp, 2004) by focusing on core micro-level determinants of client engagement and the potential impact of that engagement on staff, organizations and communities. Co-production intervention theory helps explain how restorative community service and restitution programming can yield positive outcomes and impacts for offenders, staff, organizations and communities.

*2. Investments in co-production interventions targeted for older, system-involved involuntary youth as they address life transitions should be piloted and evaluated.*

Findings revealed that co-production interventions may be especially salient for youth and young adults returning to communities from foster care, detention and prisons or aging out of the foster care system. For example, regarding youth leaving foster care, studies have indicated that youth are leaving care without proper supports or competencies (e.g., Courtney, Piliavan, Grogan-Kaylor & Nesmith, 2001; Mallon, 1998, McMillen & Tucker, 1999; Scannapieco, Schagrin & Scannapieco, 1995). There is a growing recognition that fortifying a youth’s positive support network both before and after emancipation is important to long term outcomes (Smith & Carlson, 1997).

Furthermore, evaluations of independent living programs have found them to be falling short in preparing youth for emancipation with the link between youth support and competency needs and program focus lacking in many programs (Collins, 2001). For

these youth, community support systems may have to be recreated (Collins, 2001; Mallon, 1998; Mech, 1994). Co-production intervention theory, including establishing time bank systems of mutual exchange for emancipated youth, may fill this void.

In fact, experimentation in innovative practices for aging out youth incorporates aspects of co-production intervention theory. For example, to support emancipated youth, foster youth boards have been organized (Eckholm, 2007). These boards, comprised of current and former foster children, provide mutual aid and support for youth who are set to age out of the system. Concrete services (e.g., luggage to help a youth carry their possessions to their new home) as well as informational and emotional support are provided.

Consistent with co-production theory, these boards are expanding into areas of policy advocacy. Through collective action, youth are influencing public policy, calling for new resources such as free tuition for former foster youth and policies that maintain a youth's contact with family members and former friends while in care (Eckholm, 2007). Utilizing the proposed framework for co-production interventions, foster youth boards are transforming from a citizen-citizen mutual exchange intervention to a citizen-state intervention with an emphasis on policy changes (see chapter 8).

Targeted time bank investments also are being explored. The Maine Youth Opportunities Initiative (MYOI), part of a nationwide effort sponsored by the Jim Casey Foundation to ensure successful transitions for youth aging out of the foster care system, sought to partner with the Portland (ME) Time Bank to help provide youth with the financial, social and vocational supports necessary to succeed after discharge (Maine Youth Opportunities Initiative, 2006). An Americorps/VISTA volunteer was hired to

serve as a liaison between a variety of newly established youth leadership groups and core Time Bank members, to fashion programming within the Time Bank suitable to the needs of soon-to-be former foster youth.

In summary, the policy climate is increasingly conducive to introducing creative interventions for vulnerable youth populations. Co-production interventions that tap into the previously unrecognized or underutilized strengths and assets of youth, in settings that are nourished by adults and directed by youth, may yield promising results. Rigorous planning and study of co-production interventions in these settings and for these target populations are necessary to better understand their core features and potential outcomes/impacts.

*3. A welcoming regulatory, contractual and funding climate for co-production interventions should be developed so that organizations have incentives to experiment with practices and strategies that support youth engagement and competency development.*

Contextual improvements, including establishing favorable environmental conditions conducive to co-production experimentation, need to occur. For example, internal and external accountability systems need to be established and “in sync,” reinforcing and providing incentives for organizations that are able to achieve gains in youth developmental competencies. Contracts need to be structured to allow time for staff to serve as “citizen-professionals” (Lawson, in press). Creative strategies such as those used by Callison (2003) to reimburse staff for time spent engaging in time bank activities as community members need to be considered. Finally, organizations must have access to flexible funding, to support program graduates who choose to serve as peer

leaders even after they are no longer involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice system. The specific and cumulative benefits of these innovative practices need to be evaluated as part of comprehensive implementation studies of co-production innovations.

### *Research Recommendations*

*1. Rigorous mixed-method research studies of priority micro- and meso-level co-production propositions are needed to add to the stock of knowledge about co-production, its key constructs and their inter-relationships.*

A key element of the enhanced proposed intervention model for co-production was the generation of theoretical assumptions and propositions (see chapter 9). These assumptions and propositions served to integrate the core components of the co-production framework. They defined proposed inter-relationships between correlates, antecedent and intervention features and pathways to enhanced youth engagement and outcome attainment.

In light of the empirical findings from this dissertation, these theoretical assumptions and proposition are reviewed in appendixes 16-1 and 16-2. Assumptions that have been validated by the empirical findings are highlighted. In addition, from the empirical findings, key propositions are identified and prioritized for future study.

Proposition are divided into three categories: (1) Priority 1 are propositions empirically supported by study findings, (2) Priority 2 are propositions with some degree of empirical support from study findings, albeit indirectly, and (3) Priority 3 are propositions of interest that were not addressed by the empirical study. This prioritization structure provides researchers with a blueprint for the development of future rigorous quasi-experimental and experimental research studies designed to further an

understanding of co-production driven interventions, its key correlates, priority practices and pathways to outcomes and impacts.

*Of import for future study are micro-level propositions linking relatedness and autonomy related practices and strategies with involuntary youth engagement and other staff and youth outcomes.* Quasi-experimental designs that study the influence of key correlates of co-production interventions (e.g., levels of youth involuntariness, staff/youth motivational congruence), identify core empowerment related autonomy and relatedness practices linked to youth engagement, track the presence and influence of select proximal outcomes associated with priority empowerment practices for involuntary youth within a co-production framework (e.g., staff/youth relational trust, proxy agency) and chart pathways to enhanced youth engagement and service outcomes are especially relevant given key findings from this dissertation study. Appendix 16-3 presents a logic model which illustrates a priority research design that builds upon the research findings.

*2. Research designs developed to study co-production will need to be flexible and elastic, befitting the complex change that is its focus.*

Co-production interventions involve complex change processes. Outcomes sought are multi-faceted, often difficult to make operational, and highly contextual, and it may take long periods of time for outcomes and impacts to be realized. Research designs will need to accommodate this complexity.

A developmental approach to studying co-production may be most useful. Co-production can be best understood as occurring in phases. For example, organizational and programmatic readiness may represent an early phase of co-production and be a specific focus of study. Studying this initial phase illustrates the importance of flexibility

and elasticity of research design. Here, key antecedent variables associated with the entire intervention framework (e.g., level of involuntariness, motivational congruence) would be potential outcome variables in a research design with readiness as a focus.

On the other hand, a study that focuses on staff outcomes may begin with a different proposition. It may be proposed that levels of youth engagement are an important independent variable influencing variables such as staff efficacy, empowerment or engagement. Within the larger intervention framework for co-production, youth engagement is an important proximal outcome associated with unique co-production related empowerment and collaboration practices. Careful crafting of research designs will be a necessity in studying this kind of co-production, including its effects on fostering change at multiple levels and within multiple systems.

*3. Articulating and empirically grounding a theory of organizational and system capacity-building is a necessary next step to further a research agenda for co-production.*

Capacity-building research and development in order to get the conditions “right” for co-production interventions is needed. Research foci include: understanding macro and meso level opportunities, needs and challenges; intra-organizational alignment challenges starting with motivational congruence between front-line staff members and agency leaders with their preferred practice model; inter-organizational and inter-professional challenges, including methods of securing cross-system motivational congruence; and studying the commonalities, similarities and important uniqueness of youth involved in voluntary and involuntary service settings. Additional theorization plus

well-structured implementation studies of co-production in a range of program settings will be required in order to accomplish this ambitious research agenda.

*4. Better measurement tools for key co-production constructs are required to further study co-production interventions and their impacts.*

Constructs such as “levels of involuntariness,” staff/youth “motivational congruence,” “staff/youth collaboration,” “proxy agency,” “relational trust” and “youth and staff engagement” lack operational definitions and measurement tools. Operational definitions and measurement tools are needed in order to conduct more rigorous and advanced research designs of co-production practices, interventions and impacts.

### **Study Limitations**

A number of important limitations are inherent in this study. The first limitation is the transferability of the research findings to other program models and project sites serving involuntary youth. As a reminder, the researcher sought theoretical or analytic generalization as a primary aim for the study. Analytic generalization refers to the replication that can be claimed when two or more cases are shown to support or ground a theory (Yin, 2003). In using a multi-site case study, the researcher was successful in claiming analytic generalization of key findings. However, this claim is limited because replication occurred in two sites of a single, large community child welfare and juvenile justice organization (Youth Advocate Programs, Inc., or “YAP”). As with many organizations, YAP has a distinct history, corporate philosophy and services model. It is important that co-production intervention theory be tested in other study sites in organizations with a similar mission to YAP’s. This approach will enable the researcher

to test out propositions within diverse contexts and agencies with distinct service models and approaches. If successful, stronger support for co-production theory will be provided.

Second, the youth participants sampled for the research made a difference in this study, and it is expected that characteristics of the youth sampled will matter in future studies. In one light, this study's youth participants were a strength of this study. In another light, this study's youth participants created certain limitations.

For example, the study purposively focused on youth who staff perceived were "active" in co-production activities. Youth who were not actively participating in the interventions were not included in the research sample of youth interviewed. Consequently, a comparison of co-production variables and their pathways between active and inactive youth did not occur in this study. This analytic approach, which was considered, was abandoned in favor of a more streamlined approach in line with the descriptive and exploratory nature of the study goals.

It appears to be safe to assume that including other than "active" youth in the study sample would have altered the findings from the study. For example, staff offered numerous examples of youth that were experiencing significant crises at intake. Some of these youth presented risk and safety issues that may have prevented them from participating in the full range of co-production activities available to them. From these experiences, some staff viewed co-production as instituted in the study sites as a latter phase of service for youth--a "step-down" service from the core advocate model that requires a focus on crisis stabilization and addressing mandated aspects of a youth's services plan as articulated by courts, probation and social service departments. For these

youth, the nature of co-production interventions, including empowerment and collaboration practices, and strategies employed, may have differed in whole or in part.

A third challenge concerned the multiple roles of the researcher in the study. As identified in chapter 3, the researcher also served as a paid internal consultant for the host organization and was directly involved in project implementation. A number of steps were taken in an attempt to control for this potential bias (see chapter 3). For example, a research assistant was employed. The assistant worked with the researcher in data analysis activities, including reviewing and critiquing the initial coding done by the researcher for each of the 25 participants in the key areas of intervention features and youth outcomes identified. In addition, the researcher was versed in self-reflection, introspection and self-monitoring, important qualities to have as a qualitative researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Nonetheless, it must be emphasized that the researcher maintained a strong commitment to the project and to its success. Also, the researcher was a former supervisor for some of the staff involved in the project and was perceived as an influential member of the organization's leadership team. In short, the presence of the researcher as former supervisor and active consultant to implementation may have been a source of threat to the internal validity of the study.

A final study limitation was the difficulty that the researcher and the participants experienced in separating the co-production innovation from the original YAP services model. This is a consistent challenge in studying complex change initiatives (see Connell & Kubisch, 1998; Schorr, 2003; Trevino & Trevino, 2004), such as co-production.

As noted in chapter 10, YAP's original services model followed a wraparound philosophy in guiding service planning and service delivery. A wraparound philosophy emphasizes the utilization of client assets and strengths. Additionally, wraparound encourages partnerships with community organizations and institutions that are important in the lives of youth and families. These core features are both consistent and compatible with co-production values and principles. Because of the similarities between the core model and the co-production additive, the researcher found it difficult at times to discern when the participant was referring to a core model activity or an activity related to co-production. This potential confusion was most apparent in site two, where integration of co-production intervention features into core model activities was a stated goal.

The researcher took steps to ensure that the co-production intervention was the subject of study. For example, during the interviews, questions were specifically worded to ask participants to focus on co-production activities. Also, when it appeared that the participant was describing a core services activity, clarification was requested and the interview was gently brought back to the desired subject. (Note: the researcher's intimate knowledge of the agency, the service model and the co-production interventions employed assisted in this redirection.) Nonetheless, data from core model activities that accompanied the co-production intervention may have been included in the interview and focus group findings. These non-specific threats to internal validity (Fortune & Reid, 1999) need to be recognized.

Despite these challenges, the goals of the empirical study were accomplished. The proposed enhanced theoretical framework for co-production was revealed in real life service settings involving involuntary youth. Micro-level intervention processes were

studied and compared with the enhanced theoretical framework. Recommendations for altering the theoretical framework were offered.

As a result, researchers benefit from this study's theoretical framework and methodological findings. In particular, the new empirically grounded theoretical framework provides the edifice for more sophisticated research designs that study co-production's key constructs and their interrelationships. In addition, the findings from this study guide administrators and service providers in planning and designing innovative interventions. By explicating and making operational co-production, the interventions are now made more easily understood for social workers who may seek to use the practices described to help engage involuntary youth.

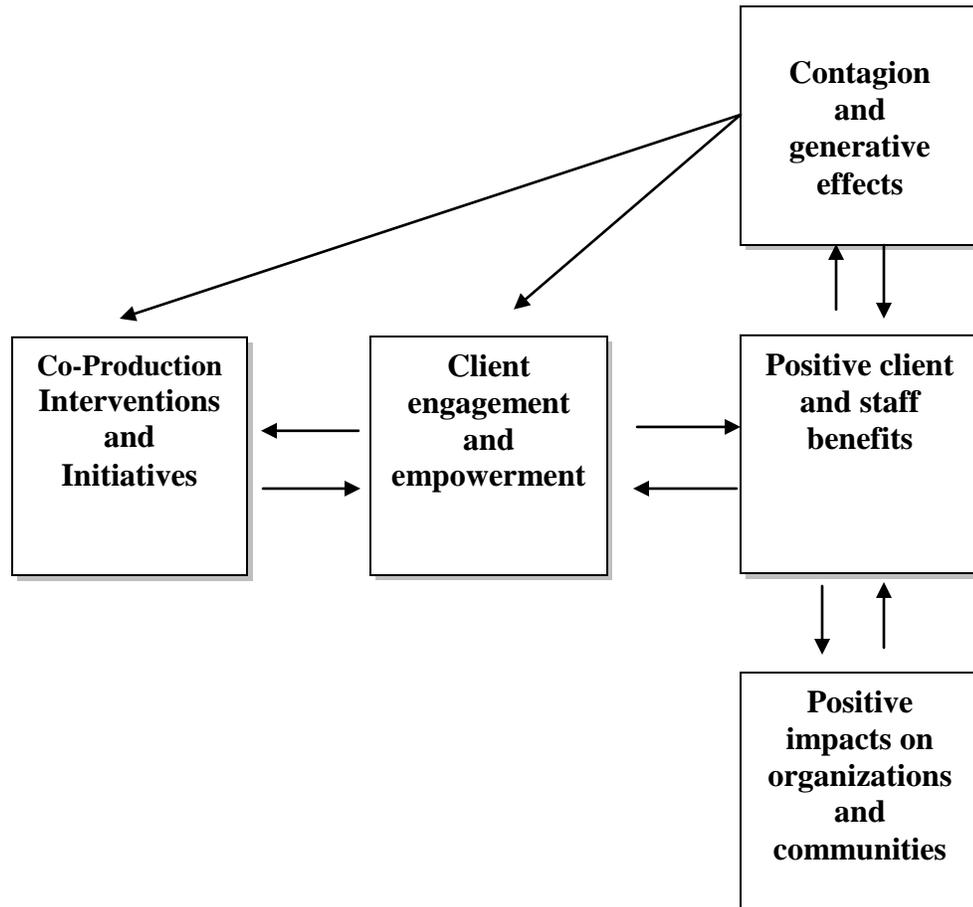
Practice benefits follow suit. The findings and conclusions from this study help guide administrators and service providers in planning and designing innovative interventions. By explicating co-production and making co-production interventions operational, the road ahead is paved for practitioners, specialized social workers and agency leaders to implement new strategies for engaging involuntary youth, improving outcomes for them and the adult staff who serve young people.

## **APPENDIXES**

**Appendix 1-1: Summary of Research Questions: Dissertation Inquiry**

Core Research Questions	Sub-questions
<p>1) <i>What theoretical concepts facilitate an improved framework for co-production, with a special focus on engagement of involuntary youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems?</i></p> <p>2) <i>Do data gathered from a two-site pilot study provide initial empirical support for this enhanced framework?</i></p> <p>3) <i>Do these data indicate the need for additional theorizing and/or practice changes?</i></p>	<p>1a. What are the defining features of a co-production intervention?</p> <p>1b. What are the core essential components of such an intervention?</p> <p>1c. What distinguishes it from other interventions?</p> <p>1d. What variations are acceptable during implementation, i.e., what are its degrees of freedom?</p> <p>1e. What outcomes stem from co-production experiments?</p> <p>In comparing the proposed theoretical model with the model in use;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How was the theoretical model related to the interventions in use? Similarities/differences? Between site differences? Similarities?</li> <li>▪ How aspects of the theoretical model were salient to clients? To staff?</li> <li>▪ Were there differences between sites in observations/perceptions?</li> <li>▪ If there were differences in observations and perceptions between sites, what are some theories to help explain the differences?</li> <li>▪ What changes can be recommended to the theoretical model in light of the empirical findings?</li> <li>▪ What changes in practice with involuntary clients can be recommended in light of the results of the exploratory study?</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2-1: The Initial Theory of Change for Co-Production



## Appendix 2-2: Features of Citizen-Citizen Co-Production

<b>Intervention Feature or Outcome/Impact Sought</b>	<b>Citizen-Citizen Co-Production</b>
Role of Youth Participants	Youth give and receive services from community members
Staff Roles	Staff serves as collaborator, facilitator and matchmaker to assist youth in exchanges.
Nature of Exchanges	Youth primarily involved in individual tangible exchanges, providing and receiving services from other youth, adults, family members, through family exchange systems, mutual aid support group or time dollar networks.
Staff/Youth Interaction	Conducive to one-on-one work with youth in mentoring role. May lead to direct exchanges between youth and staff
Function of Community and Community Organizations	As context and at times, vehicle for change
Range of Impacts/Outcomes	Bi-directional focus often limited to targeted youth and other clients or youth/families in the community Can morph into creation of instrumental networks that generate social capital for participants.
Kind of Community Impacts	Broader organizational and community impacts longer-term as citizen-citizen network of exchanges through time banking matures

## **Appendix 3-1: Interview Instruments**

### **Interview Instrument for Staff**

#### **General Information (1-3)**

1. Please describe as thoroughly as possible the co-production or time banking project that you were involved in?
2. Please describe the kids in the program in terms of their court status and status with DSS/probation?
3. What aspects of the special initiative did you participate in? Please describe your role and responsibilities.

Follow-up questions:

#### **For site one-Time Bank**

- 3a. What kind of exchanges did you help facilitate between youth and other time bank members? Please give examples?
- 3b. Please describe co-production contract(s) that you helped facilitate for participating youth? Parents?
- 3c. What services did you provide to help implement the contract? Please give examples.
- 3d. How long have you been involved with the initiative?

#### **For site two-Community Service**

- 3e. Please describe your role in the group community service project?
- 3f. What services did you provide to help implement the 12-14 week project?
- 3g. How long have you been involved with the initiative?
- 4a. What does co-production mean to you?
- 4b. In the project(s) you were involved in, how was reciprocity done? How did all parties give and receive services?

### **Priority Questions (5-19)**

5. In your view, why was the time bank initiative (site 1) established? Or, for site 2, in your view, why was the group community service/youth and parent leadership project established?

6. Assume that you are the evaluator charged with evaluating the project.

(a) What outcomes or results would you measure? How would you measure them?

For youth?

For YAP?

For the local community or a local community organization that was involved in the project?

(b) It sometimes takes a long time to see results. In the meantime, you need to know if you're on the right track. What progress indicators (interviewer prompt: shorter-term measures that tell you that the project is on track) would you look for? How would you measure them?

7. In your view, has the initiative been successful? If so, please describe your success stories. If not, what factors prevented success?

8. What makes the initiative successful? In other words, what about the project made it successful?

9. In retrospect, what specifically did you and other staff members do to produce these successes? In other words, what actions did you take that contributed to the success of the project?

10. Sometimes projects have "sleeper effects." That is, they provide benefits, but these benefits don't show up for years. Do you suspect that participation in the project has such sleeper effects for youth? On YAP as an organization? On the community? Please explain. If not, why not?

11. Sometimes projects have "generative effects." That is, did changes beget more changes (Prompt possibility: such as youth showing advocate staff that they can take on leadership tasks which then grow to taking on even more responsibilities either within YAP or outside of YAP)? If yes, please explain. If not, why not?

12. Sometimes projects have "contagion effects." That is, the program influences other programs within YAP that might not be participating in co-production or time banking or influences other community programs. Did the project have contagion effects? Within YAP? Outside of YAP? If yes, please explain. If not, why not?

13. Some participants in YAP may benefit from the project more than others. Is this the case in your project? If so, without naming names, which kids/families benefited from the project more than others and which did not? Also, please explain why you think there were differences in benefits?

14. Now think of yourself as an expert consultant for people who are just getting started with a new program in YAP similar to the project like what you participated in. What advice would you give them about “dos” and “don’ts”?

14a. Advice in structuring the program?

14b. Advice in the kinds of co-production activities (prompt: kids as contributors, resources and community developers) that kids could be involved in with staff support?

14c. Advice in staffing for the project? (prompt—kinds and numbers of staff to be involved)

14d. Advice in involving parents

14e. Advice in the kinds of kids for the program to focus on?

14f. Other?

15. Have you encountered barriers in your role in moving the initiative forward? What were they?

16. How did you overcome these barriers? What strategies did you use that worked?

17. What strategies did you try that did not work? Why did they not work?

18. Are there barriers/challenges that impeded progress in successfully implementing co-production that have not yet been addressed? Please explain.

18a. Barriers/challenges in the outside community?

18b. Barriers/challenges in the social services/juvenile justice system?

18c. Barriers/challenges within YAP?

18d. Do you have suggestions to address these barriers/challenges?

19. Think back to when you first got involved in the project. If you could start all over again, what would you do differently (and better)? Why?

### **Specialty Questions-Engagement and Staff Outcomes (20-30)**

20. Most of the youth are mandated or “pressured” to participate? But, not all who were referred end up participating regularly. Why did some youth participate while others do not?

21. For those who participated regularly, do you think they would participate in project activities if they were not pressured or mandated to participate? If so, why? If not, why not?

22. Did some youth become actively engaged in project activities? That is, did they do more than merely show up or go through the motions of participation, but instead, became excited about the project and began to assume ownership for project successes? If yes, please give examples. If not, why not?
23. How do you know when kids are genuinely engaged? What indicators do you observe in a youth if they were genuinely engaged?
24. What specifically did you as a staff member do to produce engagement?
25. What outcomes did the co-production project have on staff? Were the outcomes positive? Negative?
26. What outcomes did the co-production project have on you specifically? Were the outcomes positive? Negative?
27. If positive, what features of the project contributed to the positive outcomes for staff?
28. If positive, what features of the project contributed to positive outcomes for you as a staff member?
29. Regarding this special initiative, did you get all of the help and supports you needed to be effective and successful? If yes, which supports helped the most and why? If not, what do you need that you were not getting? (Prompt may be needed here-Training? Supervision?)
30. Has the YAP services model been altered in any way to accommodate the new initiative? If yes, what changes were made? Have these changes been beneficial? If not, why not?

### **Closing Questions (31-32)**

31. Do you have suggestions for improving the time bank/co-production initiative?
32. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences with the initiative?

### **Potential Supplemental Questions:**

1. Did some youth share in decision-making authority and responsibility for the project. If yes, please give examples. If not, why not?
2. How do you recognize (prompt-indicators) when staff/youth collaboration exists?
3. What would you observe in a youth if they were serving as collaborators?

4. If collaboration did occur, how did it occur? In other words, what specifically did you do to create collaboration?
5. If collaboration did occur, why did it occur?
6. Did some parents share in decision-making and responsibility for the project. If yes, please give examples. If not, why not?
7. How do you recognize (prompt-indicators) when staff/parent collaboration exists?
8. What would you observe in parents if they were serving as collaborators?
9. If collaboration did occur, how did it occur? In other words, what specifically did you do to produce these successes?
10. If collaboration with parents did occur, why did it occur?
11. Were some aspects of the project empowering for the youth? That is, did they have choices as to what role(s) they would play and what tasks they would perform in the project? Did they use their expertise to achieve positive results, either individually or for the group? If yes, please give examples. If not, why not?
12. How do you recognize when the project is empowering for youth? What indicators would you observe in a youth if they were empowered?
13. Did youth empowering occur? Why or why not.
14. What specifically did you do to create an empowering environment for the project?

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE  
INTERVIEW!**

## **Interview Instrument for Youth**

### **General Information (1-4)**

1-How long have you been involved with YAP?

2-Why are you involved with the YAP program?

3-What aspects of the time banking/co-production initiative did you participate in?

Follow-up questions:

#### **For site one**

3a. What kind of services did you provide for time bank members? What kinds of goods or services did you receive in exchange for the services you provided?

3b. Please describe your co-production contract(s) with YAP? What services did you provide? What services/benefits did you receive?

#### **For site two**

3c. Please describe your role in the community service project?

3d. How did you contribute to the group project?

3e. What benefits did you receive as a result of participating in the community service project?

3f. Did you participate in a second, phase two group project, as a peer leader? What leadership role(s) did you play?

### **Priority Questions (4-15)**

4. Has the project been successful for you? If so, please describe the successes? If not, why hasn't the project been successful for you? (Prompt-what did you get out of the project?)

5. What makes the project successful? In other words, what about the project contributed to its success?

6. What would you tell other kids about the project? Would you advise other kids to get involved in the project? Why? Why not?

7. Suppose you were in charge of judging whether the project was successful? How would you know that youth benefited from participating in the project? And, how would you measure the benefits?

8. Sometimes it takes a long time to see benefits from being involved in a program. That is, the project provides benefits, but these benefits don't show up for years. Do you

suspect that participation in the project may have long-term benefits for you in months or years to come? Please explain. If not, why not?

9. Some youth in YAP may benefit from the project more than others. Without naming names, which kids do you think benefited from the project more than others? Which kids do you think will not benefit from the project more than others? Please explain the reasons for these differences.

10. Now think of yourself as an expert, helping other YAP programs in getting started with time banking/co-production. What advice would you give them about “dos” and don’ts”?

10a. Advice in structuring the program?

10b. Advice in the kinds of activities to involve youth in as contributors, resources or help out their community?

10c. Advice in staffing for the project (prompt—kinds and numbers of staff to be involved?)

10d. Advice in involving parents

10e. Advice in the kinds of kids for the project to focus on?

10f. Other?

11. Have you encountered barriers in being a part of this project? What were they?

12. Were you able to overcome these barriers? If yes, how did you overcome them? In other words, what did you do to overcome barriers to being a part of the project?

12b. What did staff do to help you in overcoming barriers to being part of the project?

12c. What did your parents do to help you in overcoming barriers to being part of the project?

13. What strategies did you, staff or your parents try that did not work? Why didn’t they work?

14. Think back to when you first got involved in the project. If you knew then what you know now, is there anything you would want to see done differently in the project? Please explain

15. What are the most important lessons that you have learned while participating in this project?

### **Specialty Questions (16-21)**

16. If you were not being seen by a probation officer or by social services and you found out about this project, would you choose to participate in the project? If not, why not? If so, which project activities would you participate in and why?

17. What do you experience when you are engaged in a project?

18. Did you experience engagement while in project activities? That is, did you merely show up or go through the motions of participation or were you excited to be in the project and begin to feel pride and ownership for project successes? If yes, please give examples. If not, why not?

19. Think for a minute about other youth in the program. Keeping in mind that I do not want to hear other kids' names, in your opinion, why did some youth participate in the time bank and others did not (site one)? Why did some kids regularly work on a co-production agreement with their advocate and others did not? (Site one). Why did some kids regularly participate in the group project while others do not (site two)? Reminder: Please don't mention names of other kids.

20. How does engagement occur? In other words, what features of a project help produce engagement (prompt if needed: excitement pride, ownership in project successes)?

21. Were any of these features present in the project that you participated in? If yes, what were they? If not, why not?

**Closing Questions (22-23)**

23. Do you have suggestions for improving the time bank/co-production initiative?

24. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences with the initiative?

**Site Two: For Peer Leaders only:**

1. Did you participate in a second, phase two group project, as a peer leader, either within YAP or with an outside organization? How did you contribute to the group project?

2. Did you benefit from participating in the second project? If yes, Please explain. If not, why not?

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE  
INTERVIEW!**

## **Appendix 3-2: Focus Group Agenda and Questions: Site One**

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### **Focus Group Agenda and Questions** **Site One** **April 15, 2008**

**I-Focus Group Introductory Script**

**II-Ice-Breaker**

**III-Discussion Themes**

**IV-Open-Ended Discussion**

**V-Closure**

## **Probes for Researcher**

**Introduction:** As you know, YAP has been implementing co-production interventions in the form of pilot tests around the country. In St. Lawrence, as a reminder, four interventions were piloted over the course of two years: The fire safety project, the DEC project, the Boys and Girls Club project and the Army Reserves Project. These interventions were designed to produce voluntary commitments and behaviors with involuntary youth clients, those that are pressured or mandated to participate in services. The goal is that through more voluntary participation, we will achieve better outcomes for kids and families and staff members as well as the agency will benefit.

As you know, there is a tension in this work. It is the tension between involuntary clients and voluntary-like interventions. I need your help in understanding this tension and how you dealt with it during the pilot interventions. Toward that end, I'll ask you to review the most important preliminary findings coming from the interviews that I did with you and the youth. (As a reminder, I conducted 13 interviews in St. Lawrence; 7 youth and 6 staff members. The youth and staff spanned all four of the interventions). I'm looking forward to your comments and thoughts regarding these findings. I also look forward to brainstorming together on ways to improve the projects so that future staff benefit from your experiences and knowledge.

### **Finding 1: Initial Youth Level of Involuntariness as it relates to Empowerment Practice and Engagement**

**Overview:** A number of the participating youth seemed to initially view the project as semi-voluntary or even voluntary, despite being pressured to attend via court order or from their Probation officers or parents. In other words, some participating youth seemed to perceive that they had a good deal of choice to participate in interventions even if they were pressured or mandated to participate.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

Are these findings accurate?

How would you explain these findings?

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

### **Finding 2: Factors Related to Initial Youth Participation**

**Overview:** As you know, at the beginning involuntary clients are often hard to reach. It's especially hard to motivate them to initially participate, to "hook them" into the project. Co-production interventions and accompanying strategies are designed to help with initial participation, to begin to spark their interest in participating.

Findings reveal four sets of broad strategies that may influence initial youth participation (Note: Some were more developed than others in the 4 interventions but all were noted by research participants as being important).

- (1) Parental acceptance or “buy-in” and cultivating extended family interest in the project, appear to be factors related to initial youth participation.

*Regarding parent buy-in:*

- ✓ Is this finding accurate?
  - ✓ Is there anything else that you would like to add?
- (2) Empowerment-oriented intake practices, employed by both staff and probation officers, are important intervention features to attract involuntary youth and their parents to participate in co-production interventions. Specifically, intake practices that allow for youth and parent choice on how and how often to participate and those that cater to youth and parent specific interests and visions for their community, were particularly effective.

*Regarding empowerment-oriented intake strategies:*

- ✓ Are these findings accurate?
  - ✓ Is there anything else that you would like to add?
  - ✓ What other/new approaches at intake might YAP or referral authorities (e.g., probation officers) employ to attract youth and parents to participate in co-production projects?
- (3) Group practices such as creating a favorable mix of youth participants within the group and creating a pro-social caring environment so that a safe environment can be created to allow for youth experimentation and risk-taking, were also noted. In short, youth need to be comfortable with the other youth in the group. Kids they know from school and kids in the same situation as they are in allow youth to feel more comfortable and safe in the group. Establishing group rules and norms of behavior are also important so that kids feel safe.

*Regarding group practices:* The findings regarding group homogeneity contrast with research findings regarding the potential dangers of deviancy training (e.g., creating homogeneous groups of at risk or high risk kids together)

- ✓ What are your thoughts about that?
  - ✓ How can you protect against deviance training while catering to youth desires to be in group settings where they feel comfortable?
- (4) The importance of hands-on, action-oriented projects that also tap into a youth’s altruistic motives, such as giving back to the community or to the community organization that they are working in.

*Regarding action oriented projects:*

- ✓ Are these findings accurate?
- ✓ How can YAP cater to the variety of youth interests given the limitations on staffing, resources, geography and the time pressure to provide services that you all faced?

### **Finding 3: Staff (and Client) Empowerment and Engagement**

**Overview:** As you know, when you are successful with clients, your progress and success with them also benefits you and the agency overall. In short, you tend to become more engaged and empowered and clients becomes more engaged and empowered.

*Let's start with client empowerment and engagement.*

Findings revealed that co-production interventions built autonomy and self-determination in the youth participants. This was accomplished by intentional efforts at fostering youth voice and choice and creating informal and formal leadership opportunities for youth. Regarding voice and choice, youth provided input on structuring projects and guided their own involvement in project activities. Regarding youth leadership, youth were allowed to showcase their interests and talents in informal youth leadership roles. For example, youth assisted staff in co-facilitating sessions (such as when a group of other kids visited the DEC project to help build the osprey boxes), assisted with behavior management and in task completion, such as when a youth taught other youths how to sew blankets. However, formal youth leadership opportunities were underdeveloped.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- ✓ Are these findings accurate?
- ✓ Did these empowerment strategies enhance youth engagement?
- ✓ If so, how? If not, why not?
- ✓ How did these strategies work to empower and engage some clients and not others?
- ✓ What obstacles and challenges did you face in empowering youth?
- ✓ Do you believe that other youth (e.g., leaders, informal or formal) have a role in facilitating youth engagement?
- ✓ How did you get other youth to get their peers motivated and engaged?
- ✓ How can we improve the youth leadership component within future co-production interventions?
- ✓ Do you have anything else about these findings that you would like to add?

*Now, let's move to staff empowerment and engagement*

Findings reveal that advocates appeared engaged and empowered to work with involuntary youth in achieving project goals. For example, there were examples where advocates felt that they had what they needed in terms of support, felt that they could be

entrepreneurial and creative in empowering and engaging youth, enjoyed their new roles as facilitators and consultants in project activities and even, at times, used their personal contacts in the community to further project goals. This occurred despite the challenges faced by administrators including the lack of buy-in from central office to the project and high turnover and at times, inexperienced project leadership.

### **Discussion Questions**

- Are these findings accurate?
- How do you explain these findings?
- Think about your own motivation, engagement and sense of empowerment. Did they grow or improve?
- If so, how did this happen? Specifically, what are the forces and factors that energizes, engages and empowers you to do your job well?
- If not, why? What forces and factors reduce energy, engagement and disempower you as a staff person?
- What is it about co-production interventions (specifically to the interventions studied or in general) that might help, support, or empower you to do your job well?
- Is there a relationship between youth empowerment and engagement and staff empowerment and engagement? Are they inter-dependent?

### **Finding 4: Parents as Co-Producers and Youth Engagement**

**Overview:** Evidence from participants in the fire safety and army reserves project supports the value of parents serving as co-producers with staff. For example, some staff and youth suggested that parents took on a number of important roles in the project (e.g., fundraising, co-facilitator of group sessions); can serve to help motivate their youth to participate and can assist with behavior management of the group. Challenges in incorporating parents in this way were also noted. For example, some youth voiced displeasure about having parents present, were embarrassed by parents being present and felt that parental presence interfered with youth ownership of project results and accomplishments.

### **Discussion Questions:**

Please respond to these findings:

- Are these findings accurate? Do you concur that parents in the Fire Safety and Army Reserves projects had a role in facilitating youth engagement?
- How did the co-production interventions help you get parents involved and engaged?
- How do we decide in the future about involving parents as co-producers with staff? What roles should they take? And, how can they be involved without negatively influencing on youth ownership of the project?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

### **Finding 5: Transitions in Levels of Involuntariness**

**Overview:** One of the key goals of co-production interventions is to create a developmental progression by which levels of involuntariness decrease (levels of voluntariness increase) during the course of the project. Findings reveal that participation and engagement varied considerably within co-production interventions for involuntary youth. Participation and engagement varied from involuntary compliance to high levels of voluntary engagement. For example, some youth noted that they were going through the motions of participating. Others said that they loved participating, were into project activities and accepted co-ownership of the project. For yet other involuntary youth, their engagement appears to have morphed from involuntary to semi-voluntarily engagement, exhibiting emotional and cognitive engagement over time. In short, it appears as if there are three different groups of youth regarding their engagement.

### **Discussion Questions**

- ✓ Are these results accurate? In other words, do you see three different groups of youth here, i.e., youth who were unengaged and stayed unengaged; youth who began the project fairly engaged and youth who morphed from involuntary or semi-voluntary engagement?
- ✓ How do you explain these differences among the youth?
- ✓ What did you as staff members do to facilitate or bring about these changes?

### **Finding 6: Staff/Youth Collaboration**

**Overview:** Findings reveal examples of staff/youth collaboration in conducting project activities. For example, staff and youth coordinated and consulted together on projects. In this phase of collaboration, staff roles appeared to change to facilitator/consultant in contrast to staff being directive. In this phase there was also evidence of youth leadership. In short, staff role changes appear to be related to changes in youth roles. In addition, mutual respect and teamwork characterize the quality of staff/youth exchanges.

Also, as projects matured and staff and youth coordinated and consulted with each other, it appeared that youth and staff began to build a community together. The community-building phase of collaboration occurred as trust developed and new kinds of empowerment strategies were pursued. Here, new levels of youth autonomy emerged, facilitated by higher levels of staff engagement including recognition of youth/staff interdependence in project activities. Also, new kinds of staff/youth interactions and relations occurred in this phase. For example, youth began to view advocates almost as peers or friends, pointing to more of an equalization of power in the relationship. This phase led to youth/families continuing the project after the YAP project ended (see Fire Safety) or a desire of some of the youth to continue to work with YAP as peer leaders post project completion (DEC).

### **Discussion Questions:**

What are your views about these findings? Did you witness examples of staff/youth consulting and coordinating together on projects? Did you witness the early signs of community building between staff and youth?

If so, how do you explain these findings emerging with involuntary youth in projects that lasted only 12-14 weeks?

The findings seem to imply that as empowerment strategies were enhanced for youth, staff/youth collaboration phases matured. Do you agree with this finding? Why? Why not?

### **Finding 7: Youth Outcomes**

**Overview:** As you know, co-production interventions are designed to leverage enhanced youth engagement to accomplish a range of important youth outcomes. Findings reveal 3 consistent kinds of youth outcomes resulting from co-production participation. The 3 kinds of outcomes include social skill development, identity changes in the youth participants and self-esteem enhancement.

For those projects that involved parents as co-producers, improved youth/parent relations, improved family functioning, and improved relations between siblings were also identified.

However, I expected that community connections would occur that would help kids get ahead, but this outcome was rarely mentioned.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- Are these findings accurate?
- How would you explain these findings?
- Regarding community connections as an outcome, was I wrong to expect it or did something happen that interfered with achieving this outcome? Please explain
- What other youth outcomes resulted from co-production participation?
- Were there expected youth outcomes that did not come to fruition? What were they? Why did they not occur for participating youth? Why is it important for these other outcomes to occur?
- What other empowerment oriented interventions strategies would you employ in an attempt to address these other outcomes?
- Please relate the 3 different kinds of youth engagement with the youth outcomes identified. Do you think there is a relationship between the different kinds of youth engagement and these other youth outcomes? Please explain.

## **Finding 8: Co-Production and Problem Reduction: Lack of Integration**

**Overview:** A number of staff and youth identified outcomes relating to problem reduction emanating from co-production involvement. These problem reduction outcomes included improved school attendance and behavior, reduced instances of child neglect, and improved family functioning.

However, the link between co-production interventions and these problem reduction outcomes are unclear to me. For example, some of you revealed that co-production interventions were not well integrated with other service components, especially those that focused on problem behaviors.

Is this accurate? How did this happen?

Findings revealed that a number of the kids supported this lack of integration between co-production and other service components within YAP, especially those focused on problem reduction. Some youth liked not having to address their problem areas within the co-production project and wanted to keep the project separate. Or, they felt that it was difficult to involve, say the school, in project activities and had trouble seeing the connection with the schools, as an example.

Is it important to improve integration of co-production with the involuntary or mandated aspects of service provision? If so, how can we improve integration between co-production and involuntary aspects of a youth's service plan without turning kids off/disengaging kids from co-production involvement?

What factors and forces make it difficult to integrate co-production interventions with other service components?

## **Appendix 3-3: Focus Group Agenda and Questions: Site Two**

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**Focus Group Agenda and Questions**  
**Tompkins County: Site 2**  
**July 25, 2008**

**I-Focus Group Introductory Script**

**II-Ice-Breaker**

**III-Discussion Themes**

**IV-Open-Ended Discussion**

**V-Closure**

## Probes for Researcher

**Introduction:** As you know, YAP has been implementing co-production interventions in the form of pilot tests around the country. In Tompkins, as a reminder, we implemented a time bank to allow youth to give and receive services in exchanges with YAP staff, other YAP youth, community members and staff and clients from local businesses and other community organizations. These exchanges, often structured as short-term interventions because of the necessity for planning time and tutelage from staff, were designed to produce voluntary commitments and behaviors from involuntary youth clients, those that are pressured or mandated to participate in services. In fact, one of the key goals of co-production interventions is to create a developmental progression by which levels of involuntariness decrease (levels of voluntariness increase) during the course of the project. Through more voluntary participation, we will achieve better outcomes for kids and families. In turn, staff members as well as the agency will benefit.

As you know, there is a tension in this work. It is the tension between involuntary clients and voluntary-like interventions. I need your help in understanding this tension and how you dealt with it during the pilot interventions. Toward that end, I'll ask you to review the most important preliminary findings coming from the interviews that I did with you and the youth. (As a reminder, I conducted 12 interviews in Tompkins, 5 youth and 76 staff members). I'm looking forward to your comments and thoughts regarding these findings. I also look forward to brainstorming together on ways to improve the projects so that future staff in YAP and elsewhere benefit from your experiences and knowledge.

**One final comment:** This was not an outcome study! I conducted an in-depth study of those youth that were participating in time banking/co-production. I looked at the "success stories" to better understand the practices and strategies that were successful. We know that there are other youth who did not participate and were therefore, not engaged. The goal of the study is to learn from the successes-to try to understand the practices and strategies that were successful for those youth that were engaged and to understand the sequencing and strategies that were most helpful. Once this occurs, we can then use these strategies and practices in combination or in whole or in part, to attempt to improve engagement possibilities for a broader range of youth participants.

### **Finding 1: Initial Youth Level of Involuntariness as it relates to Empowerment Practice and Engagement**

**Overview:** The youth that I interviewed said that their participation was semi-voluntary or even voluntary. In other words, youth told me that they actively chose to participate and this was true even for youth with mandated community service requirements and other youth pressured to participate by their parents.

#### **Discussion Questions**

- ❖ Please reflect on this finding about how so-called “involuntary” youth actually voluntarily chose to participate in the time bank and in co-production arrangements.
- ❖ Are these findings accurate?
- ❖ How would you explain these findings?
- ❖ Is there anything else that you would like to add?

### **Finding 2: Empowerment-Oriented Intake Practices Related to Initial Youth Participation/Engagement**

**Overview:** As you know, at the beginning involuntary youth are often hard to reach. It’s especially hard to motivate them to initially participate, to “hook them” into the project. Empowerment-oriented intake practices and strategies were designed by staff (or recommended by staff and youth) to help with initial participation, to begin to spark their interest in participating.

**(I will need to give staff examples or they may not understand above)** These practices included, for example, the introduction of co-production agreements, staff flexibility in allowing for youth experimentation, to “dip their toes into the Time Bank pond,” to allow participation in “fits and starts,” and to allow youth to choose not to participate, as appropriate. Also, staff led with the Time Bank addressing a good or service that the youth either desired or needed, to allow youth to experience the benefits of being part of the Time Bank first before we asked for a contribution/give-back.

#### **Discussion Questions: Regarding these empowerment-oriented intake practices:**

- ✓ **Are these findings accurate? What other/new approaches at intake might YAP or referral authorities (e.g., DSS staff or probation officers) employ to attract youth and parents to participate in co-production projects?**

Staff also noted that flexibility and choice was dependent upon staff being able to identify youth strengths, interests and passions. Due to the time it takes to develop trust with youth and chronic crises that many youth experience, this identification process often took time. Due to these factors, time bank and co-production involvement often did not occur at intake.

#### **Discussion Question: Please comment on this finding.**

### **Finding 3: Empowerment-Oriented General and Group Practices Related to Youth Participation/Engagement**

**Overview:** Staff and youth participants identified (or were recommended by staff and youth to consider) a range of *general and group practices* used to encourage youth participation/engagement. These practices included:

1-Staff developed a broad range of contribution opportunities available to youth (**Staff will require examples here!**) For example, youth providing services to other YAP involved youth, youth assisting YAP families in need, youth earning time bank hours helping local businesses, youth adding capacity to local community organizations, youth assisting the local YAP program, youth helping to improve the local community at-large and youth providing goods and services to their own family members.)

**Discussion Questions:** Are these findings accurate? For involuntary youth such as those referred into YAP, is each of these contribution opportunities equally important to cultivate youth engagement or are some opportunities more important to cultivate than others?

2-Staff cultivated a range of creative benefits and incentives that youth can access through cashing in time bank hours including accessing services provided by community members, benefits/privileges provide by family members, access to special events and goods provided by local businesses.

**Discussion Questions:** Are these findings accurate? For involuntary youth such as those referred into YAP, is each of these contribution opportunities equally important to cultivating youth engagement or are some of the benefits/incentives more important to cultivate than others?

3-Staff chose to work one-on-one with their identified youth or created small group projects involving their identified youth (or youths), in providing services to others. Larger group projects occurred sparingly. Also, projects overseen by staff were time limited and short term.

**Discussion Questions:** Is this finding accurate? Why were individual and small group modalities utilized by staff as opposed to larger groups? Why were projects time-limited and short-term?

### **Finding 4: Autonomy Related Practices Linked to Youth Engagement**

**Overview:** Staff employed autonomy related practices as a strategy to foster youth engagement. More specifically, staff fostered youth voice and choice (**Staff will require examples here as well!**) Examples: Youth were encouraged not forced to participate; youth got to choose their specific involvement in the time bank, youth got to shape the time bank as a whole through participating in focus groups and choosing to be advisory council members).

Staff also created informal and formal leadership opportunities for youth (**Staff will require examples here as well!**) Examples: Formal and planned-Youth tutored other youth, youth worked to develop a youth-run newspaper, youth served on the advisory council, youth taught community members a specific skill; *Informal and ad-hoc*: Youth

working with staff on planning for a special event with youth roles morphing into leadership; youth participating in the music project with a staff person and his role morphing to one of peer leader; all youth in an outdoors project taking turns being leaders)

The youth I interviewed responded positively to this autonomy-related approach. Youth stressed the importance of not forcing the issue, of tapping into their strengths and interests. Youth especially liked being consulted about how to structure the Time Bank. Youth also revealed the importance of staff time in supporting and preparing youth for leadership roles so that they stay on point, are not distracted and are successful in job tasks. Here is a sample response:

“It’s probably the fact that everybody’s there, helping me. You don’t have to do it all on your own. And like, if you need help, you just have to ask.”

### **Discussion Questions:**

- ✓ Are these findings accurate?
- ✓ Did these empowerment strategies enhance youth engagement? If so, how?
- ✓ How did these strategies work to empower and engage some clients and not others?
- ✓ What obstacles and challenges did you face in providing youth with opportunities to exercise “voice and choice” and youth leadership?
- ✓ Do you believe that youth leaders (e.g., leaders, informal or formal) facilitate other kids to become engaged? If so, why?
- ✓ How can we improve the youth leadership component within future co-production interventions?
- ✓ Do you have anything else about these findings that you would like to add?
- ✓ A “Learn and Lead” approach from recommended by some staff. This involved youth learning a skill through the time bank and then parlaying that skill in the Time Bank by asking the youth to train, teach or tutor others on the new skill learned. Please comment on this finding-I am interested in everyone’s view on this.

### **Finding 5: Practices and Strategies Related to Enhancing Personal Relationships and Organizational Connections and its link to Youth Engagement**

**Overview:** Staff employed and stressed the importance of employing a range of practices and strategies to build pro-social relationships and connections for participating youth. These practices were designed, in part, to enhance youth engagement in co-production.

Interestingly, youth primarily stressed strategies employed that fostered a closer mentoring relationship with their advocate (e.g., omitting community connections) while staff focused on strategies that fostered connections with other community members, other family members and with staff.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- ✓ Are these findings accurate?
- ✓ Does relationship building influence youth engagement? If so, how? If not, why not?
- ✓ How did these strategies work to empower and engage some clients and not others?
- ✓ What obstacles and challenges did you face in building relationships for YAP youth?
- ✓ As noted above, youth rarely mentioned cultivating individual new relationships of import with other community members or ties with community organizations as being important; instead discussing family and staff relationship-building as primary? What do you make of this finding? Accurate? Why? Why not?
- ✓ How can we improve fostering meaningful and sustainable community connections for YAP youth using co-production interventions/activities as a tool? What strategies would you employ?
- ✓ Do you have anything else about these findings that you would like to add?
- ✓ **“Closed” Exchanges:** Staff and youth offered examples of “closed” exchanges. Closed exchanges involve youth giving and receiving services from the same party. Family members were most often the party of closed exchanges. Please comment on the efficacy of this approach, to building youth relationships. Would fostering closed exchanges be a viable option to fostering meaningful ties to other community members?

### **Finding 6: The Link between Empowerment-Driven Youth Leadership Practices, Competency Enhancing Practices, Staff/Youth Collaboration and Youth Engagement**

**Overview:** Youth and staff responses revealed that youth became cognitively and/or emotionally engaged when they are involved as youth leaders, when they have an opportunity to build on a skill or interest, and when they work closely with staff on internal YAP or Time Bank projects. *Review case example chart. (see attachment)*

### **Discussion Questions:**

- ✓ **Are these findings accurate? Why? Why not?**
- ✓ **Which of the identified factors; e.g., youth leadership opportunities, the chance to work closely with advocate staff (e.g., relatedness), the building of new competencies, are most important in creating youth engagement?**
- ✓ **In reviewing the case example chart, please comment on the findings which revealed youth identifying a change in their relationship with staff, moving beyond worker/client to more of a friend or peer? Are these findings accurate?**
- ✓ **Do you have anything else about these findings that you would like to add?**

## **Finding 7: Transitions in Levels of Involuntariness**

**Overview:** Youth and staff revealed that some of the youth who were not initially interested in participating in time banking or co-production projects (e.g., “reluctant” participants), becoming emotionally and cognitively engaged in project activities over time. Other youth working off mandated community service work requirements stayed on to earn extra time bank hours even after their mandated hours were finished. Still other youth who were discharged from YAP asked to come back to re-join the Time Bank.

Findings also revealed that for many youth, ongoing engagement was often episodic and disjointed, resulting from the chronic crisis nature of youth and family circumstances and feelings of unworthiness and hopelessness exhibited by youth.

### **Discussion Questions**

- ✓ **Are these results accurate? Why? Why not?**
- ✓ **What factors influenced the transition to higher levels of engagement? Specifically for mandated community service involved youth? For youth initially reluctant to participate?**
- ✓ **Why did some alumni ask to come back post discharge to participate in the time bank?**
- ✓ **Are there new strategies that can be employed to reduce the episodic and disjointed nature of some youths’ involvement in time banking and co-production activities/projects?**

## **Finding 8: Staff Engagement and Outcomes**

**Overview:** As you know, when you are successful with clients, your progress and success with them also benefits you and the agency overall. In short, you tend to become more engaged and empowered and clients becomes more engaged and empowered.

Staff reported higher levels of personal engagement in their jobs and work as youth became more engaged. (**These next prompts are needed-this is a controversial finding!**) This was evidenced by staff voluntarily joining the time bank as “citizens” and staff using their own social capital (e.g., personal and professional contacts in the community) to build up the time bank and to help youth achieve success in co-production projects.

Staff also reported higher levels of efficacy, a “can-do” attitude. In other words, co-production and time banking helped staff to do their jobs better. (**These next prompts are needed-this also is a controversial finding!**) For example, staff shared with the researcher that they had greater staff involvement in the community through the time bank, that co-production agreements helped to structure advocate work with kids, that the time bank provided more choices and options for purposeful activities to involve youth in, that co-production agreements served as accountability tools to help supervisors oversee the work of the advocates, and that greater partnerships with other community

providers occurred, which enabled staff not to feel alone in trying to assist challenging youth and their families.

### **Discussion Questions**

- **Please reflect on these findings. Are they accurate? How do you explain them?**
- **Think about your own motivation, engagement and sense of empowerment. Did they grow or improve through involvement in time bank projects with youth?**
- **If so, how did this happen? Specifically, what are the forces and factors that energizes, engages and empowers you to do your job well?**
- **If not, why? What forces and factors reduce energy, engagement and disempower you as a staff person?**
- **What is it about co-production interventions (specifically to the interventions studied or in general) that might help, support, or empower you to do your jobs well?**
- **Do you agree that there is a relationship between youth empowerment and engagement and staff empowerment and engagement? Are they inter-dependent?**

### **Finding 9: Other Salient Youth Outcomes**

**Overview:** As you know, co-production interventions are designed to leverage enhanced youth engagement to accomplish a range of important youth outcomes. Findings revealed a mix of internal outcomes/assets and external outcomes/assets associated with co-production involvement.

Internal assets included:

- Social, life skill and vocational skills development
- Positive identity changes including self-esteem enhancement
- Enhanced knowledge of their community

### **Discussion Questions:**

- **Are these findings accurate?**
- **How did they assets get developed? In other words, what factors/strategies were employed in what sequence to accomplish these outcomes?**
- **What other internal youth assets resulted from co-production participation?**
- **Were there expected youth internal assets that did not come to fruition? What were they? Why did they not occur for participating youth? Why is it important for these other assets to occur?**
- **What other empowerment oriented interventions strategies would you employ in an attempt to address these other assets?**

External assets included:

- Youth earned redemption, evidenced by altered community perception of youth as assets
- Social capital formation provided by adults in position of power
- New positive discharge and social support resources
- New resources received, addressing a material want or need

**Discussion Questions:**

- **Are these findings accurate?**
- **How did they assets get developed? In other words, what factors/strategies were employed in what sequence to accomplish these outcomes?**
- **What other external youth assets resulted from co-production participation?**
- **Were there expected youth external assets that did not come to fruition? What were they? Why did they not occur for participating youth? Why is it important for these other assets to occur?**
- **What other empowerment oriented interventions strategies would you employ in an attempt to address these other assets?**

**Finding 10: Co-Production and Problem/Risk Reduction**

**Overview:** Staff was creative in utilizing time banking and co-production strategies to develop non-traditional resources to address identified service needs/risk areas.

**(Again, examples will be needed or staff will answer, huh?)** For example, a youth was employed to help an advocate get another youth out of bed and into school on time. Or, a youth used the music recording project to help address his anger problems. In addition, the time bank was used to develop creative responses to address youth mandates. Here, a youth addressed independent living skill requirements by working on a project to teach community members how to change car oil and shop for a used car. Or, a youth was able to meet mandated community service requirements by assisting with the Time Bank or helping a local business with a construction project. Or, a youth avoided criminal charges by employing a time bank member to help him fix a window he smashed.

Also, staff was able to integrate the time bank with school programming. **(Ditto)** For example, in two cases, youth were able to build on skills learned in school by employing these skills in real life situations in the community, once in construction, the other in auto mechanics.

**Discussion Questions:**

**Is this accurate?**

**I want to know how and why this occurred. Please explain.**

**Why did this integration happen? How did this integration happen?**

**What other strategies/practices can we employ to improve integration between co-production and involuntary aspects of a youth's service plan, such as school attendance, court ordered services, etc.**

**What factors and forces make it difficult to integrate co-production interventions with risk factors/service needs? Youth factors? YAP factors? System or school related factors?**

### **Finding 11: Co-Production and Contagion Effects: Building New Inter-organizational partnerships**

**Overview:** You are all familiar with the growing partnership that occurred with TST BOCES and other organizations. Please refer to the figure diagram that attempts to depict these partnerships (see attached).

### **Discussion Questions**

- ✓ **Does the figure diagram accurately depict the transactions that occurred between YAP, TST BOCES, DSS and Time Bank members? Any additions? Changes?**
- ✓ **How did these partnerships occur? Please explain their origins?**
- ✓ **What in your mind would be the next step in furthering these inter-organizational partnerships? How can we learn from past successes as well as past challenges?**

## **Appendix 3-4: Consultant's Report on Primary Coding Done by Researcher**

**January, 2008**

### Method and Summary of Findings

All first-level intervention and outcome codes were reviewed. Of the 16 first-level intervention codes, ten required further attention. Of the twenty first-level outcomes codes, five required further attention.

In most cases, the codes appeared to be improperly assigned. However, it may be that the operational definition of the targeted code did not capture the entirety of the category and therefore some quotes appeared to be miscoded.

Codes were reviewed individually. All quotes attached to the code were examined thoroughly. If there was a question regarding the rationale for coding the selected quote, that question was recorded. A list of these specific questions and suggestions were forwarded to the PI (see below).

Some suggestions were given regarding combining or clarifying codes. Additionally, some suggestions were offered for amending the operational definitions of the codes.

Two primary documents (e.g., full interview transcripts) were randomly selected for review. All codes were reviewed and some suggestions made. However this review revealed that the documents were generally properly coded. Most suggestions were not related to removing a code but rather, adding another code to the same quotation.

### Intervention Codes

#### 1: Intervention Feature- General Description

In operational definition: "General terms" then "specific activities"- which one? Include "roles"

- 3:1 names of projects but too general and administration doesn't fit
- 3:2 not a project. Includes philosophy/goal and what they received as a result of participation.
- 3:4 defines co-production but doesn't describe a group project.
- 3:5 talks about how it works
- 3:9 does not belong – suggestion
- 5:75 does not belong – suggestion
- 15:7 describes a result, not the intervention. Maybe empowerment?
- 15:27: Empowerment
- 18:5 staffing pattern (break down)
- 21:45 philosophy- doesn't describe the intervention

- 21:51 Staff-youth collaboration
- 34:6 describes an outcome

Recommendation: I think you need to have two “general” categories/codes: One for describing the intervention and one for describing the actual group activities. Activities are how the intervention is applied so the descriptions are much different. You also mixed the counties so you’re using the same definition for co-production and time banking. That’s group vs. individual work...can they really be defined the same way?

2: Intervention Feature-Intake Strategy

- 2:60 – does not name a “strategy”

3: Intervention Feature- Staff/parent collaboration

- 21:12 no staff-parent collaboration

4: Intervention Feature- Integration- Involuntary core areas

- 15:23 no school

5: Intervention Feature- Integration with core model

- 2:15 ??
- 18:39 code as parent/staff?

9: Intervention Feature- YE- PYD-Group Practices

- 10:11 competency
- 18:38 code as parent/staff?
- 21:53 code as intake strategy?
- 25:21 codes as parent/staff?

10: Intervention Feature- YE/PYD- Group characteristics

- 2:22 and 2:23 combine; not group composition
- 21:53 not all applies

13: Intervention Features: YE-PYD-Emp-Relatedness-Family involvement

- isn’t this part of parent/staff collaboration?
- 21:45 just mentions siblings/kids
- 21:63 just mentions siblings/kids

15: Intervention Features-YE-PYD-Empower-Relatedness-Other

- 25:30 ?
- 25:40 ?

Outcome Codes

2: Outcome-Community/System Impacts

- 3:4 is this an outcome?
- 15:35 is this an outcome?
- 21:39 is this an outcome?
- 25:65 is this an outcome?
- 34:16 doesn't give a concrete example

9: Outcomes- YAP Org Impacts

- 3:86 more of a staff outcome
- 3:87 more of a staff outcome

\*There is a lot of overlap with this and "staff outcomes." You may want to consider either splitting or combining the two.

Outcomes- YE/FE (Youth Engagement/Family Engagement)

2: Outcomes-YE/FE-Involvement/Compliance

- 25:38 ?
- 3:107 no answer
- 3:132 refers to adults, not youth
- 5:66 does not imply investment

5: Outcomes-YE/FE-Voluntary/Cognitive/Emot

- 10:9 not really a psychological gain
- 10:43 not really a psychological gain
- 34:12 is a [suggested] measure not an actual outcome

7: Outcomes-Youth-/Emp-Material

\* Can this be combined with others? Is this the general code for all gains/outcomes, etc.? Need to break down and stick with the code.

Review of two randomly selected interviews

P18: R and W

- Be careful with the family circumstances code. Sometimes it's been used in reference to the youth only.
- Line 160-162: more of an outcome? Or recognition?
- Line 533+: not a reason for the referral, not family circumstances

P16: J

- You have the general family circumstances code with the reason for referral code every time...is this necessary?
- Line 124+ : reason for referral and family circumstances...why?
- Line 620+ : add 2IF-GP- Safety code?
- Line 823+ : why is this family circumstances?

## Appendix 4-1: Integrating Positive Youth Development Research and Co-Production Theory: Key Findings from the Highlighted Studies

<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Interface with Co-Production Theory</b>
<b>Findings 1-6</b>	<b>Essential Organizational and Systemic Factors</b>
<p>1-Co-production initiatives were implemented in a variety of organizational sites and program settings.</p> <p>2-The level of integration of co-production initiatives within participating organizations varied among project sites.</p> <p>3- Co-production is an innovation that is implemented progressively and unevenly, in stages or phases.</p> <p>4- Organizational and structural changes (e.g., including changes in the working environment) are needed to accommodate the changing roles of youth and staff in co-production interventions.</p> <p>5- Challenges accompany the infusion of co-production within participating organizations.</p> <p>6-“At risk” and “vulnerable” youth were utilized as contributors in a number of the highlighted initiatives.</p>	<p>1-Majority of projects embedded in organizations with broad missions other than positive youth development.</p> <p>2-Co-production initiatives included “stand-alone” as well as complex integrative projects. Initiatives varied from single to multiple sites. Stand-alone multiple sites were most prevalent.</p> <p>3-Sufficient resources (money and time) are important preconditions, to allow for organizational and staff preparation and for staff/youth groups to bond. Due to resource shortages, time delays and start-up challenges are common.</p> <p>4- Strategies to create a compatible working environment for co-production included positioning an intermediary organization, convening of learning groups and establishing flexible funding.</p> <p>5-Altering services model to reflect co-production results in staff divisions and staff turnover. Challenges generic to service providers (e.g., staff recruitment and retention, uneven staff skills, sustainability of funding) remain while infusing co-production into service models.</p> <p>6-Some co-production initiatives open to all groups of youth. Some were targeted initiatives. Only one initiative specifically targeted youth in CW/JJ systems. Evidence presented that co-production interventions attract older, harder to serve youth.</p>
<b>Findings 7-11</b>	<b>Core Intervention Features</b>
<p>7- Youth were utilized in a range of roles as contributors and resources across the initiatives.</p> <p>8. Within a given initiative, youth have a range of choices and opportunities to be contributors within.</p> <p>9. A number of intervention features were utilized consistently within the highlighted initiatives.</p> <p>10. Community and organizational capacity building activities were a core focus of many of the highlighted initiatives.</p> <p>11. Different mixes of intervention elements occurred in the highlighted initiatives.</p>	<p>7- Typology of youth roles include youth in leadership or governance positions, youth serving as staff assistants or service providers and youth working in partnership with adults in community service/civic engagement projects</p> <p>8- All initiatives provided multiple opportunities to contribute. Individual needs and organizational context guide contribution opportunities.</p> <p>9- Common intervention features included group work with peers, peer mentorship, community recognition and celebration, time for reflection and praxis, service oriented or career skills training, payment/reward for service contribution and continued roles for the youth in the service organization over time. Youth empowerment and staff/youth collaboration practices identified.</p> <p>10-Cultivating youth leadership and individual organizational capacity building most prevalent features</p> <p>11-Essential intervention elements emerge. However, evidence suggests that some co-production initiatives more highly developed than others.</p>

**Appendix 4-1: Integrating Positive Youth Development Research and Co-Production Theory: Key Findings from the Highlighted Studies (cont.)**

<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Interface with Co-Production Theory</b>
<p align="center"><b>Findings 12-19</b></p> <p>12-The multi-level and bi-directional foci of co-production outcomes and impacts are revealed in the highlighted initiatives</p> <p>13-A range of organizational and staff impacts were identified in the highlighted initiatives.</p> <p>14-Social capital gains were a key outcome for youth serving as contributors and resources.</p> <p>15. Specific youth developmental competencies are enhanced through participation in co-production driven interventions.</p> <p>16- Youth engagement was an important construct studied within the highlighted initiatives.</p> <p>17- The impact of co-production interventions on “problem reduction” outcomes was included as a focus in only a few of the highlighted initiatives.</p> <p>18. Participation in co-production interventions has generative outcomes for youth post program services.</p> <p>19. There is beginning evidence to indicate that experimental manipulations of program settings, including the “bundling” of co-production intervention features can yield specific competency benefits for participating youth.</p>	<p align="center"><b>Results and Impacts, including Developmental Competencies</b></p> <p>12-Results and impacts focused on target youth, other youth, adults in organizations, sponsoring organization itself and the community. Comprehensive and multi-directional nature of results and impacts a distinguishing feature of co-production.</p> <p>13-Measures and focus varied. Exploratory and descriptive studies used. Beginning list of outcomes and impacts identified to be added to theoretical framework. Generative and contagion benefits also noted.</p> <p>14-“Linking” and “bridging” social capital gains were identified</p> <p>15. Internal and external asset development identified. Positive identity change is an internal asset identified in a number of the highlighted studies.</p> <p>16-Youth engagement identified as an important control, mediating and outcome variable within the research designs. Correlates of engagement were also studied. A range of measures was used to make engagement operational.</p> <p>17- Only three studies focused on the impact of youth participation on improvements in problem behaviors-Improving academic outcomes was the most common focus.</p> <p>18. Findings confirm an important feature of co-production intervention.</p> <p>19. Findings represent a growing understanding of the link between empowerment and collaboration practices, intervention features including staffing and developmental outcomes for youth.</p>

## Appendix 4-2: Contrasting Essential Features of Citizen-State Co-Production Driven Youth Development Interventions with Generic Youth Programming

<b>Intervention Feature</b>	<b>Co-Production</b>	<b>Generic Programming</b>
Kinds of Site/Context	Occurs within a broad range of program sites and organizations	Usually associated with youth development organizations
Level of Organizational Integration	Co-Production is integrated within program services	Co-Production may be ancillary to core service provision
Role of Youth Participants	Multiple opportunities for youth to serve as agents of change, resources and contributors.	Youth primarily as service recipients
Nature of Exchanges/Transactions	Youth/Staff partnerships-Mutuality; reciprocal exchanges-two way flow of giving and receiving	One way flow—staff/adults provide services to youth
Staff Roles	Collaborator/Facilitator/Matchmaker of Exchanges. As a service provider, also involved in direct exchanges with youth	Counselor/Mentor/Provider of service
Staff/Youth Collaboration	Working together on mutually defined and beneficial activities	Not a priority although could include lower levels of collaboration, e.g., communicating and connecting
Nature of Empowerment processes	Fostering youth and staff autonomy and choice as well as community and organizational change Collective action, Social change and social justice goals in later stages. Primarily group modality. Mutual staff/youth growth through critical action and reflection in later stages.	Individual and group work designed to foster individual change and to promote youth resiliency.
Function of Community and Community Organizations	As context, vehicle and target of change-community and organizational capacity building a priority	As context and at times, vehicle for change
Importance of Inter-Organizational Partnerships	Partnerships through organizational reciprocity and exchanges a priority- Leads to expanded youth opportunities.	Not necessarily a priority
<b>Kind of Outcome/Impact</b>	<b>Co-Production</b>	<b>Generic Programming</b>
Level of Youth Engagement	Seeks Cognitive and Emotional levels of youth engagement	Not necessarily a priority
Range of Impacts/Outcomes	Bi-directional/reciprocal-youth, community and organizational impacts	Primarily one-dimensional youth improvement focus
Social Capital Enhancement	Individual and Collective gains sought	Not necessarily a priority
Kind of Community Impacts	Ranges from community and organizational capacity building to social change and social justice focus	Not necessarily a priority
Sustainability of benefits	Ongoing commitment of youth and adult participants to continue to “give back” to the project, the host organization or the community	Not necessarily a priority
Generativity of benefits	Ongoing commitment to expanding youth and adult leadership opportunities and other youth assets and competencies during and post program participation	Not necessarily a priority
Kinds of Contagion effects	Embedding innovation within organizations and expanding program impacts within communities	Not necessarily a priority

### Appendix 4-3: Youth Outcomes in Citizen-State Co-Production Interventions

Common Youth Outcomes	Category
Enhanced client motivation and self determination	Asset Development
Competency/autonomous behaviors	Asset Development
Initiative and agency	Asset Development
Positive identity formation	Asset Development
Self and collective efficacy	Asset Development
Psychological empowerment	Asset Development
Social capital enhancement	Asset Development
Social bonding with key institutions	Asset Development
Enhanced attachment to adult role models	Asset Development
New pro-social peer relationships	Asset Development
Social skill building	Asset Development
Employment related skill building	Asset Development
Lower school dropout rates	Problem/Risk Reduction
Advancement to next grade level	Problem/Risk Reduction
Improved academic and school outcomes	Problem/Risk Reduction
Reduced recidivism	Problem/Risk Reduction
Improved classroom and home behavior	Problem/Risk Reduction
Drug and alcohol usage	Problem/Risk Reduction

## **Appendix 4-4: Co-Production-Driven Citizen-State Youth Development Interventions: A Developmental Progression**

### **Youth-Organizational Co-Production**

- Youth participation on organizational governance issues, in leadership roles, as provider of services or as staff assistants
- Organization as vehicles, settings and targets of intervention
- Staff is direct participant in exchanges with youth (e.g., youth receive direct benefits in exchange for assisting with organizational functioning)
- Individual and small group modalities used
- Self-efficacy and self-agency gains for youth sought.
- Staff benefits and organizational impacts afforded
- Inter-organizational partnerships usually not an emphasis
- Sustainability and generative benefits a priority within the organization
- Contagion effects become a priority within the organization



### **Youth-Organizational-Community Co-Production**

- Youth involvement in community development and community improvement activities
- Communities and community organizations as setting and target of intervention
- Host organization as vehicle for change
- Staff may be a direct participant in exchange process with youth or intermediary/mediator between youth and another organization (e.g., youth may receive direct benefits from 3<sup>rd</sup> party in exchange for contributions)
- Group work a primary modality
- Youth, staff, organizational and community benefits and impacts afforded
- Collective efficacy, collective agency and social capital gains sought
- Inter-organizational partnerships are a priority
- Sustainability and generative benefits a priority, within and outside organization
- Contagion effects were a priority within and outside of organization



### **Youth-Social Justice Co-Production**

- Youth involvement in collective action
- Social and economic justice a core goal of the intervention
- Staff a direct participant in exchange process with youth
- Features of “youth identity programming” (see Gambone et al., 2004)
- Often involves advanced levels of youth/adult collaboration and empowerment processes
- Youth, staff, organizational, and community benefits and impacts afforded
- Positive identity and collective efficacy gains sought
- Inter-organizational partnerships are priority
- Sustainability and generative benefits a priority
- Contagion effects are core design features: Transferring of technology throughout the organization and to other organizations

## **Appendix 6-1: Organizational and Systemic Antecedents and Preconditions Conducive to Collaboration and Co-Production**

### *Compatible Organizational Settings*

- ✓ Welcoming Organizational Climate: A welcoming organizational climate is important for staff and youth to work collaboratively with each other
- ✓ Systems of Power Sharing: Systems of power sharing and conditional equality with youth
- ✓ Conducive Professional Roles: Professional roles conducive to co-production interventions, including seeking client involvement in problem identification, goal setting and task completion
- ✓ Compatible Accountability Structures: Internal and external accountability structures that reinforce and provide incentives for staff serving as facilitators in support of youth/centered collaboration
- ✓ Ongoing Training and Capacity Building: Ongoing training to build skills, necessary time devoted to networking and dialoguing with colleagues, supervisory support and capacity building to support staff and youth through the change process that is associated with staff/youth collaboration
- ✓ Compatible Caseload Sizes: Sufficiently low caseload sizes to allow for commitment to collaboration
- ✓ Job Clarity: Clear job roles and responsibilities that include the facilitation of co-production activities and practices
- ✓ Job Autonomy: Job autonomy including an environment of entrepreneurship within an organization

- ✓ Entrepreneurship: A culture of entrepreneurship exists within the organization
- ✓ Optimism and Confidence: Staff is optimistic and confident to make changes and improvements in the program model of service
- ✓ Quality Supervision: Quality staff supervision and support
- ✓ Staff Incentives: Sufficient rewards and incentives for staff to engage in collaboration activities
- ✓ A Learning Organization: The presence of embedded evaluations for learning & improvement
- ✓ Resource Investments: Ongoing investment in staff/youth collaboration and mutual empowerment, including resources to “seed” co-production initiatives and reward work performed by youth and monies for re-training to build on successes and advances to later phases of staff/youth collaboration
- ✓ “Buy-in”: Staff and administrative recognition and acceptance of potential positive benefits and impacts of staff/youth collaboration

*Compatible Program Model*

- ✓ Asset-Based Approaches: Asset/strength based services practice approach, including active youth participation in service planning and implementation.
- ✓ Fostering of Natural Helping Among Clients: A services model that fosters natural helping networks is compatible with staff/youth collaboration
- ✓ Fostering of Mutual Assistance Among Clients : A services model that fosters mutual assistance among clients is compatible with staff/youth collaboration
- ✓ Quality Standards for Co-Production: The presence of quality standards in support of youth as contributors, resources and change agents.

- ✓ Internal Processes in Support of Co-Production: The presence of internal rules and processes in support of youth as contributors, resources and change agents.
- ✓ Use of Agreements and Contracting between Staff and Youth: The presence of formal or informal agreements and contracts solidifying collaboration between staff and youth are important in the later stages of collaboration related activities.
- ✓ Reflective Practice: Time for staff and youth to engage in reflective practice and action-based research
- ✓ Family and Peer Involvement in Service Provision: The presence of family and peer support and active participation in services programming in support of target client
- ✓ Sufficient Length of Services: Sufficient duration of intervention to allow for staff and youth to work together to generate trust
- ✓ Sufficient Dosages: Sufficient intensity of contact (e.g., dosage) during service provision to allow for staff and youth to work together to generate trust,

*Organizational Needs Assessment Activities*

- ✓ Context Assessment: A sufficient understanding of environmental contexts needs to be in place, to enable co-production intervention to be tailored to contexts and settings.
- ✓ Client Assessment: An assessment needs to be undertaken of ways in which the client population can contribute to organizational functioning, to improvements in community and toward service provision/assistance of fellow clients and neighborhood residents.

- ✓ Organizational and Community Assessment: In turn, these interests need to be matched with organizational and community unmet needs. From this matching process, structured co-production interventions can be planned and implemented.
- ✓ Cost-Benefit Assessment: Cost-benefit analysis of collaboration options needs to occur.

*Favorable External Environmental Context*

- ✓ History of Collaboration and Partnership: Organizations as well as project sites that have a history of working in collaboration-related activities with youth and their families and in partnership with other organizations
- ✓ Community Integration: Sufficient integration of the organization into the community
- ✓ Current Availability of Partnerships: The availability of inter-organizational and community partnerships that allow for the development or expansion of co-production opportunities for youth
- ✓ Compatible Larger Services System: A larger service system that is structured so as to be compatible with staff/youth collaboration and other co-production features
- ✓ Favorable Community Factors: Community factors that favor collaboration experimentation with youth
- ✓ Welcoming Regulatory, Funding and Contractual Climate: A welcoming regulatory, funding and contractual climate, in support of collaboration and co-production interventions.

## Appendix 6-2: Staff/Youth Collaboration Phases and Reciprocal Exchanges: A Developmental Progression

Collaboration Phases	Nature of Reciprocal Exchanges	Key Processes
Connecting and Communicating	<p>Youth and staff recognize each other</p> <p>Often one-way transactions with youth remaining passive recipients in receiving Services.</p>	<p>Could involve involuntary as well as voluntary activities</p> <p>Might involve youth providing feedback on services offered</p> <p>Sets the stage for two-way transactions.</p>
Cooperation	<p>Two-way transactions begin. Norms of reciprocity and mutually occur.</p> <p>Could involve one-time only exchanges</p> <p>Involves low amounts of exchanges (quantity) and low levels of quality exchanges</p>	<p>Could also involve both involuntary as well as voluntary activities.</p> <p>However, two-way transactions occur with youth agreeing to take a certain action in exchange for staff agreeing to take a certain action.</p> <p>Example: Staff voluntarily seeking out youth's advice and opinions, in exchange for youth receiving a benefit from staff</p> <p>Trust begins to develop and communication improves</p>
Coordination/Consulting	<p>Quantity and quality of exchanges increase</p>	<p>Involves deliberate efforts to work together on shared "voluntary" projects and goals.</p> <p>Often involves the beginning of power sharing and youth involvement in choice, voice and decision-making regarding the project</p>
Community-Building	<p>Exchanges often involve third parties, in addition to youth and staff.</p> <p>Exchanges occur between each of the parties resulting in a huge growth in numbers of exchanges</p> <p>Quality of exchanges between youth and staff improve.</p>	<p>Involves consensus building, awareness of mutual reciprocity needs and heightened trust between youth and staff.</p> <p>Can involve organizational as well as community change activities</p>
Contracting	<p>Can involve multiple-party contracting, including youth and staff</p> <p>Quality of exchanges improves as exchanges are formalized.</p>	<p>Formalized exchanges between youth and staff using written contracts, agreements or unwritten agreements such as social contracts</p>

## **Appendix 6-3: Collaboration Outcomes and Benchmarks**

### **Outcomes**

Youth: Improved client results, including progress of empowerment-related outcomes (e.g., psychological, inter-personal and material empowerment gains)

Staff: Staff empowerment, efficacy and engagement improvements; Staff morale and job satisfaction increases

Organizational: Efficiency, resource, capacity and legitimacy gains for the organization (see Lawson, 2003c)

### **Measures**

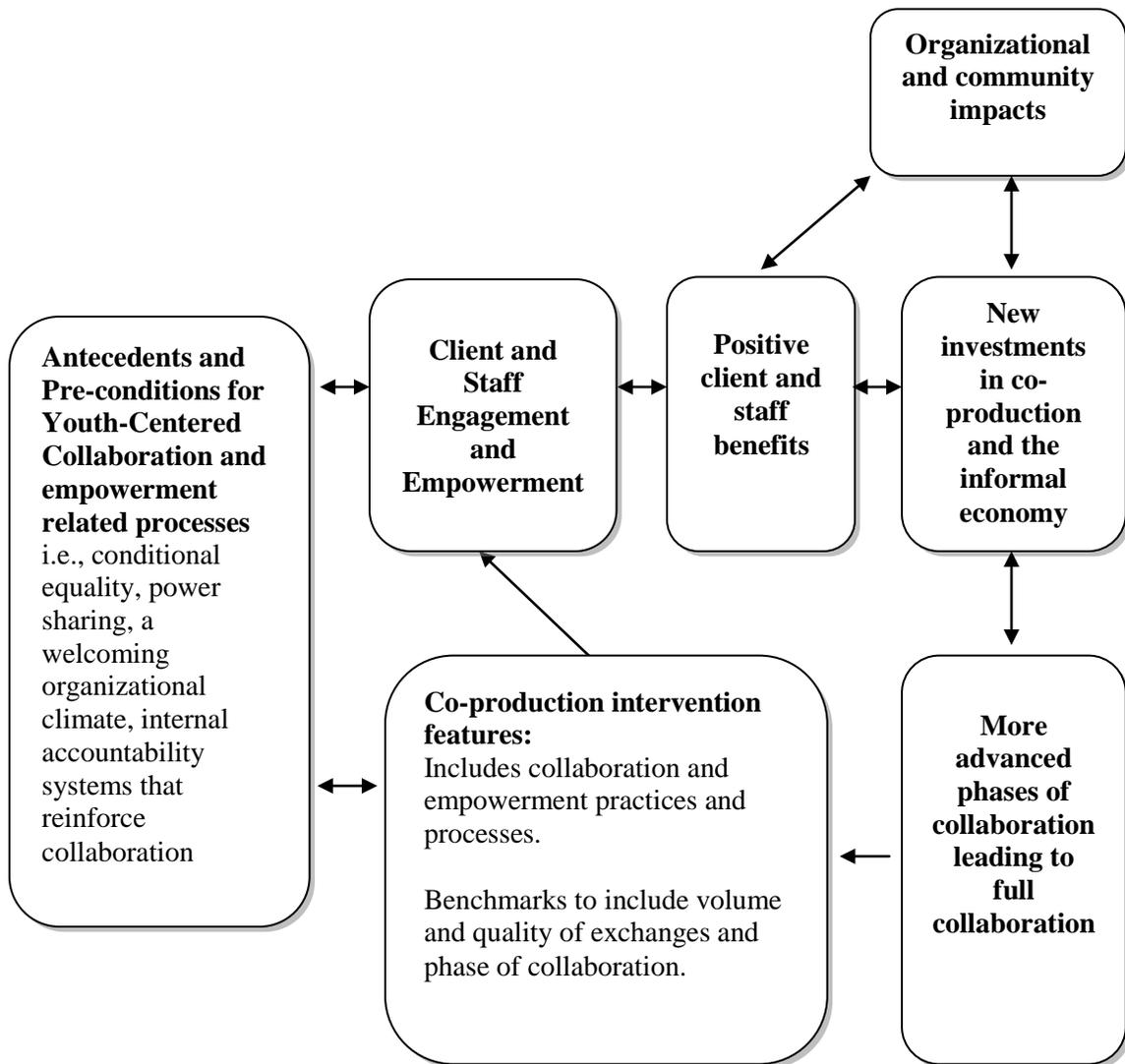
Volume and quality of staff/youth exchanges increase

Movement to a higher collaboration phase

Enhanced levels of staff/youth integration (see Jones & Perkins, 2005).

The extent to which collaboration is becoming an increasingly important part of the organization's core operation and services model

## Appendix 6-4: An Amended Theoretical Framework for Co-Production



## **Appendix 7-1: Design Features to Enhance Youth Engagement (See Anderson-Butcher, 2005)**

### *Design Features to Enhance Autonomy*

1. Involve youth in designing programs, incorporating their ideas, interests and needs.
2. Provide opportunities for youth to serve as leaders
3. Provide youth with choices and freedoms, allowing them to exercise personal control and power
4. Allow youth to choose their level of involvement in activities. Avoid requirements of strict attendance.
5. Find out what motivates participants and what gets them excited about participating.
6. Provide structure and consistency. Be clear about expectations.
7. Design programs with youth that foster identity development.
8. Provide self-rewards and internal regulation. Minimize external rewards and incentives such as prizes, imposed goals or tangible rewards.
9. Teach youth to set realistic goals and how to accomplish them through effort and perseverance.

### *Design Features to Enhance Relatedness*

1. Strive for youth to feel welcome, supported and included by ensuring cultural sensitivity and using language that the youth is familiar with.
2. Provide opportunities for team building, cooperative learning and sharing

3. Assist youth in developing and maintaining positive peer relations. Cultivate new relationships outside of the youths' current social network.
4. Develop and reinforce positive pro-social identities and connect these identities with new opportunities.
5. Provide social approval by having peers and significant adults praise and recognize youth contributions.
6. Provide opportunities for youth to serve others.
7. Develop programming so that a sense of community is achieved.

*Design Features to Enhance Competence*

1. Optimally match youth skills and needs in designing program activities
2. Develop skill-building activities in areas that are interesting and meaningful to the youth.
3. Offer new opportunities for youth to utilize these skills and talents.
4. Provide informative, contingent and specific feedback as youth learn new skills.
5. Help youth make the connection between effort and perseverance and successful completion of task and new mastery of skills.
6. Encourage risk taking. Provide an environment challenging so that their abilities are stretched.

## Appendix 7-2: Levels of Youth Engagement



Level of Engagement	Youth behaviors Sought	Youth Roles	Outcomes Sought
<b>Involuntary</b>	Attendance	Youth as “Passive”, “Hostile”, “Resistant”	Compliance with Mandates
<b>Semi-Voluntary</b>	Participation	Youth involvement in problem identification, goal setting, treatment planning, and task completion	Behavioral Engagement
<b>Voluntary</b>	Engagement	Youth as contributors, resources and organizational and community change agents	Enhanced Intrinsic Motivation, Emotional and Cognitive Engagement and “initiative”

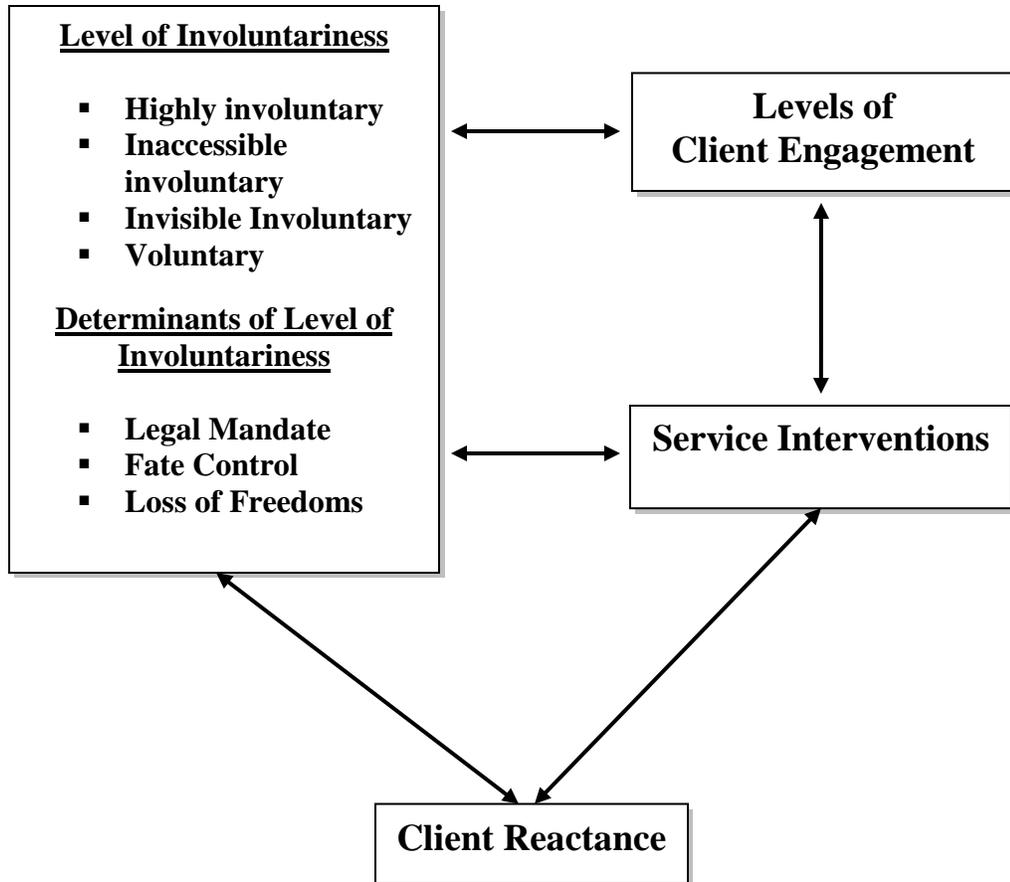
### Appendix 7-3: Co-Production and Traditional Engagement Practices

<b>Co-Production Strategies</b>	<b>Traditional Strategies</b>
Collaboration developed between youth and staff in improving organizational functioning and creating community change	Collaboration in problem identification, goal setting, treatment planning and task completion
Youth as contributors, resources and change agents outside of their own service needs	Youth begin to serve as contributors and resources in addressing their own service needs
Youth as active participants	Youth generally passive
Staff/client collaboration based on mutual interest-Two way exchanges of resources and expertise	One way flow of expertise; Services from staff to youth
Strong role for parent and peer participation in intervention	Parents and peers generally not involved in intervention

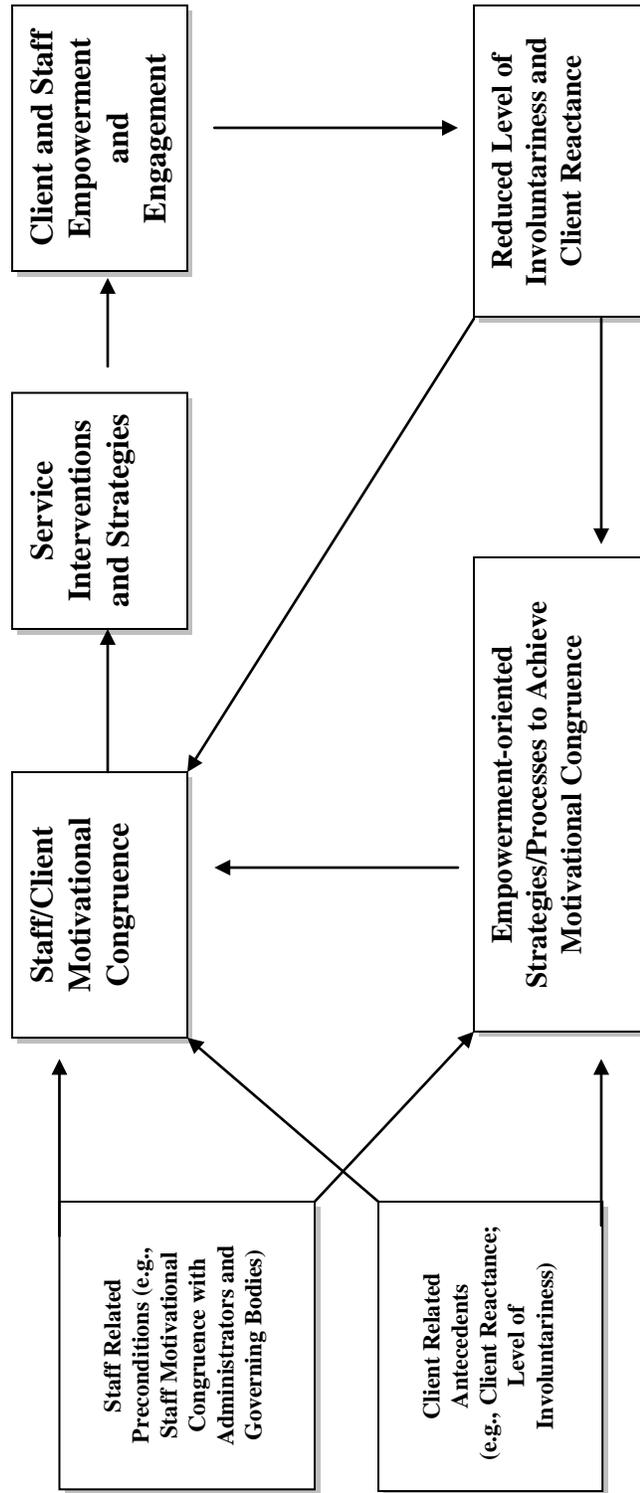
**Appendix 7-4: Influences on Youth Engagement**

<b>Kind of Engagement</b>	<b>Larger Contextual/ Environmental Determinants</b>	<b>Treatment and Setting Characteristics</b>	<b>Staff/Clinician Characteristics</b>	<b>Family and Peer Factors</b>	<b>Youth Characteristics</b>	<b>Treatment Factors</b>
<b>High Levels of Engagement</b>	Not emphasized	X	Not emphasized	X (as asset)	Not emphasized	Not emphasized
<b>Initial Levels of Engagement</b>	Not emphasized	X Increasingly important	X	X (as stressor)	X	X

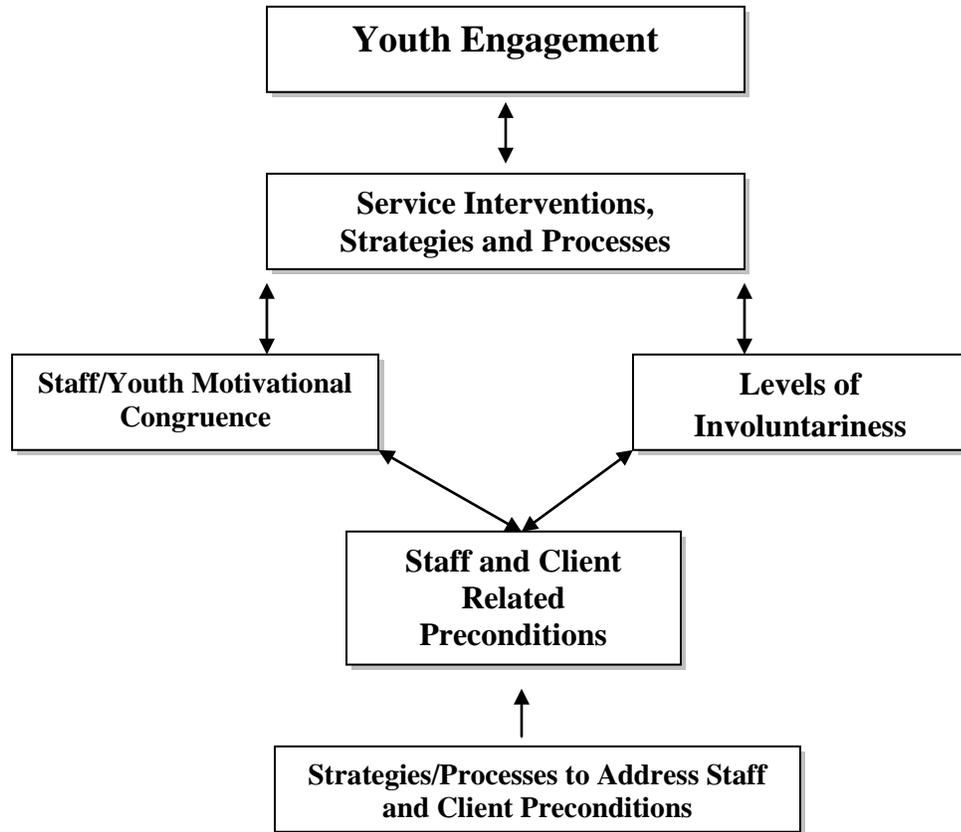
## Appendix 8-1: Factors and Pathways Associated with Levels of Involuntariness



**Appendix 8-2: Factors and Pathways Associated With Staff/Client Motivational Congruence**



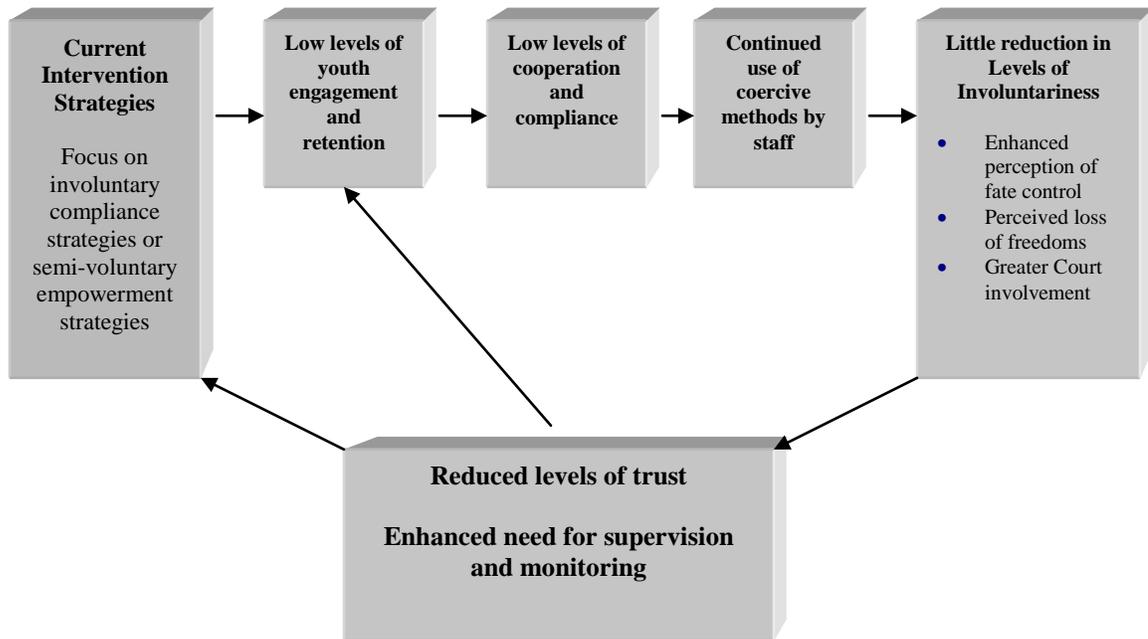
### Appendix 8-3: Pathways to Engagement for Involuntary Youth



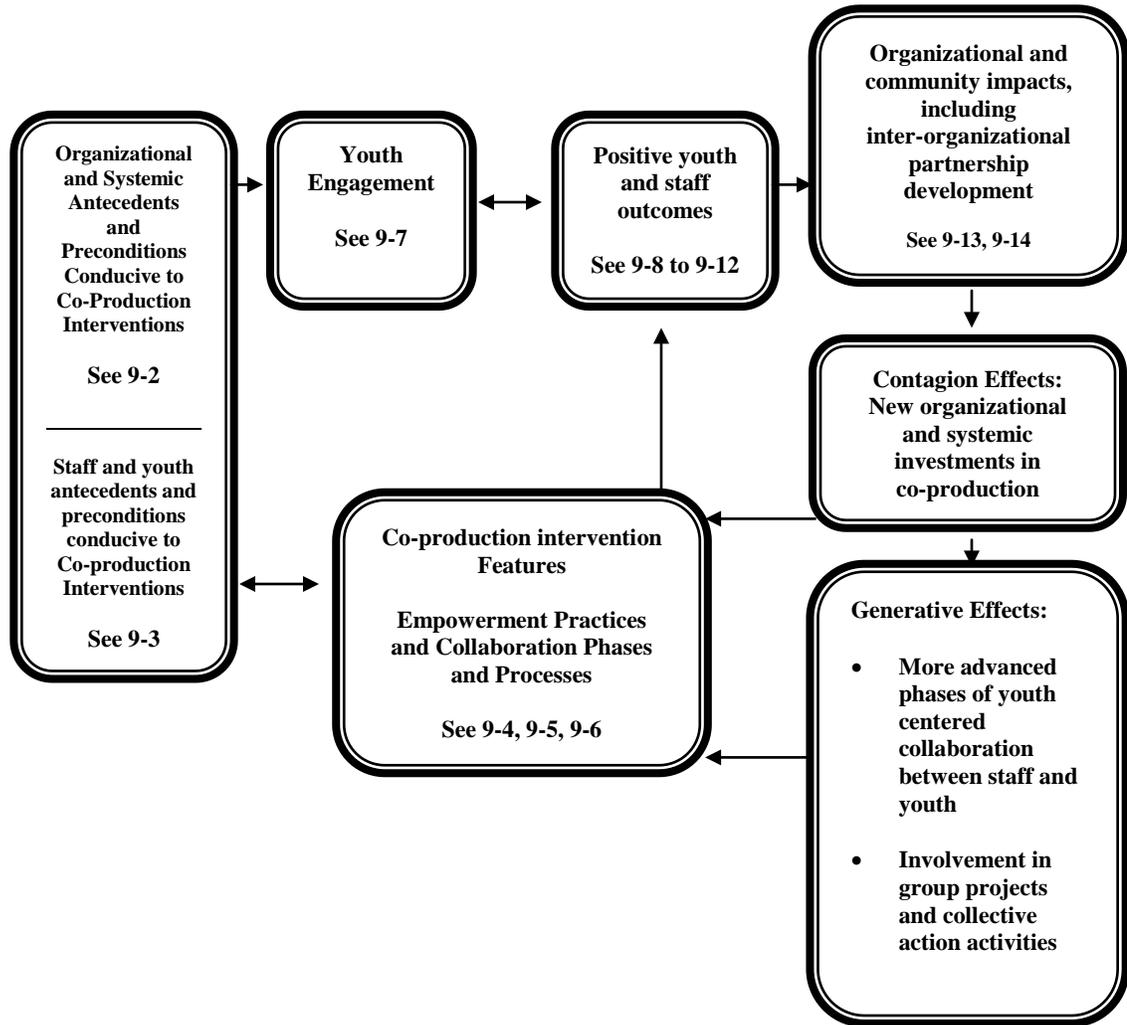
## **Appendix 8-4: Proposed Service Delivery Indicators of Progress: Involuntary Service Settings**

- **Enhanced Levels of Hopefulness (Youth and Staff)**
- **Improved Levels of Perceived “Voluntariness” of Youth**
- **Enhanced Levels of Youth/Staff Trust**
- **Motivational Congruence Between Youth and Staff**
- **Enhanced Levels of Compliance with Mandated Requirements**
- **Enhanced Levels of Participation in Service Planning Activities**
- **Enhanced Use of Persuasion Methods of Motivation**
- **Successful Completion of Semi-Voluntary and Voluntary Contracts**
- **Enhanced Use of Naturally Occurring Systems to Reinforce Positive Social Behaviors of Youth**

## Appendix 8-5: A Vicious Cycle of Staff/Youth Interactions in Involuntary Service Settings



## Appendix 9-1: A Comprehensive Theory of Change Framework for Co-Production Research and Practice



## **Appendix 9-2: Organizational and Systemic Antecedents and Preconditions Conducive to Co-Production Interventions**

### **Favorable External Environments**

- History of collaboration and partnership
- Community integration of organization
- Current availability of organizational partnerships
- Compatible larger services system
- Favorable community factors
- A welcoming regulatory, funding and contractual climate

### **Favorable Organizational Setting Features**

#### **Larger Organizational Features**

- Welcoming organizational climate
- Systems of power sharing
- Compatible accountability structures
- A Learning Organization
- Resource Investments
- Administrative and staff “buy-in”
- Entrepreneurship and risk-taking

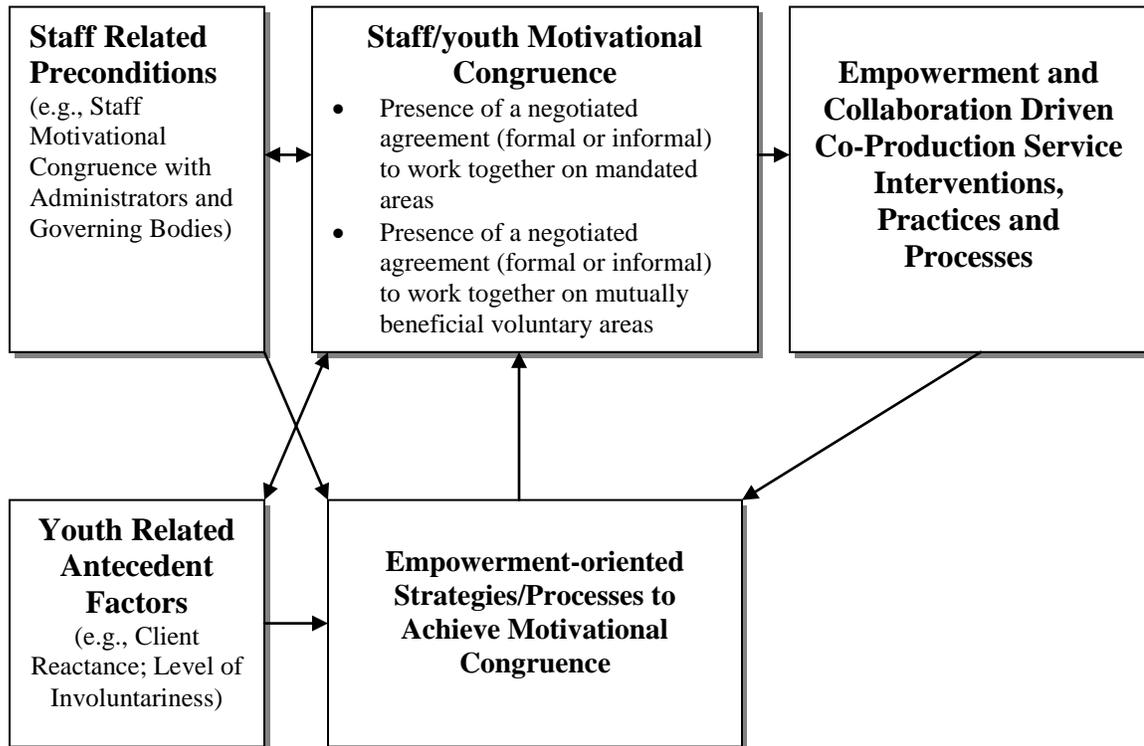
#### **Job Structure and Role Features**

- Conducive professional roles including role flexibility
- Ongoing training and capacity-building
- Compatible caseload sizes
- Job clarity
- Job autonomy
- Quality supervision
- Staff incentives

#### **Favorable Program Model Features**

- Asset/strength based approaches
- Fostering of natural helping networks among clients
- Fostering of mutual assistance among clients
- Quality standards for co-production
- Internal processes supporting co-production
- Use of agreements and contracts between staff and youth
- Reflective practice
- Family and peer involvement in services
- Sufficient length of services
- Sufficient dosage of services

### Appendix 9-3: Staff and Youth Antecedents and Preconditions Conducive to Co-Production Interventions for Involuntary Youth



## Appendix 9-4: Co-Production Intervention Features: Empowerment Practices for Youth

### **Essential Practices-General**

- Identify youth strengths, interests and assets. Utilize them to further organizational and community improvement goals, in addition to personal goals
- Identify new roles for youth in the organization. Roles can include assisting other clients, serving as trainers, researchers and staff assistants and working with agency staff on community improvement activities
- Provide opportunities for youth to contribute to family, organizational, neighborhood, institutional and community improvement.
- Use reciprocity and mutuality to guide exchanges and transactions between people, including staff/youth interactions and transactions
- Ensure flexibility in modality selection (e.g., individual, small group, larger group) in planning empowerment interventions
- Ensure that opportunities are adapted to context and individual youth circumstances
- Provide time for individual and group reflection
- Provide incentives (tangible and intangible) for youth to foster engagement
- Provide opportunities for youth to secure new resources
- Mobilize resources for youth, including linking youth with natural supports for which they can both give and receive services

### **Essential Group Practices**

- Group as primary intervention modality
- Provide opportunities for support and mutual assistance between youth and between adults and youth
- Ensure that activities are action-oriented and meaningful for youth
- Provide structure, consistency and clarity of expectations.
- Provide a welcoming setting by ensuring cultural sensitivity and using language that the youth is familiar with.
- Provide opportunities for team building and cooperative learning
- Provide a safe environment for youth to thrive
- Provide a temporal arc of activities, including cycles of planning, practice and performance, including a concluding event or performance.
- Provide opportunities for consciousness raising, praxis (reflection-action-reflection) and critical education intervention activities
- Provide opportunities for one-on-one work with an adult mentor, to assist the youth in obtaining the benefits of the group process.

### **Practices that Foster Youth Autonomy**

- Involve youth in designing programs
- Incorporate youth ideas, interests and needs in program planning
- Provide opportunities for youth leadership
- Provide youth with a range of contribution options that allows for maximum choice
- Provide youth with opportunities to exercise “voice and choice” in selecting which activities to participate in and the role to play in the intervention
- Allow youth to choose their level of involvement in activities. Avoid requirements of strict attendance
- Determine what motivates participants and get them excited about participating
- Design programs with youth that foster pro-social identity development
- Provide self-rewards and internal regulation. Minimize external rewards and incentives
- Teach youth to set realistic goals and how to accomplish them through effort and perseverance
- Develop equitable power sharing between youth and staff, so that youth share in decision-making and responsibility

## **Appendix 9-4: Co-Production Intervention Features: Empowerment Practices for Youth (continued)**

### **Practices that Enhance Competencies for Youth**

- Provide a range of contribution based program options
- Provide opportunities for youth and family members to “pay back” and “pay forward” services to the organization in exchange for contributions provided
- Provide a range of career building and vocational opportunities
- Optimally match youth skills and needs in designing programs
- Develop skill-building activities in areas that are interesting and meaningful to the youth
- Develop life and social skill building opportunities that are developmentally appropriate
- Provide informative, contingent and specific feedback as youth learn new skills
- Help youth make the connection between effort and perseverance, successful task completion and new skill mastery
- Create experiences that are sufficiently challenging to test youths’ abilities
- Provide opportunities for youth to test new and enhanced competencies either within the host organization or with other organizations, institutions or businesses in the community.

### **Practices that Build Relationships and Connections for Youth**

- Provide youth with opportunities to contribute to organizations and institutions that are of interest and import to youth and that promote social bonding. This includes organizations and institutions where youth have been excluded due to anti-social behavior.
- Provide youth with opportunities to contribute to highly visible community projects that are of interest and import to youth
- Facilitate opportunities to meet new pro-social peers and adult role models
- Facilitate social interaction with peers and with adults who have similar interests
- Provide opportunities for family members to serve as “co-producers” with staff in planning and implementing youth development activities
- Build family support to address obstacles to youth and family member engagement
- Encourage peer support to enhance youth engagement
- Ensure public recognition for youth contributions
- Ensure that contributions are celebrated by family and community

## **Appendix 9-5: Advanced Empowerment Practices**

### **Advanced Empowerment Practices**

- Social and economic justice as core goal of the intervention
- Provide opportunities for staff and youth to engage in collective action to improve communities
- Foster inter-organizational partnerships
- Usually involved more advanced staff/youth collaboration phases and activities
- Incubate innovate by design; Transfer learning and technology throughout the organization and to other organizations involved in the intervention

## Appendix 9-6: Staff/Youth Collaboration Phases and Reciprocal Exchanges: A Developmental Progression

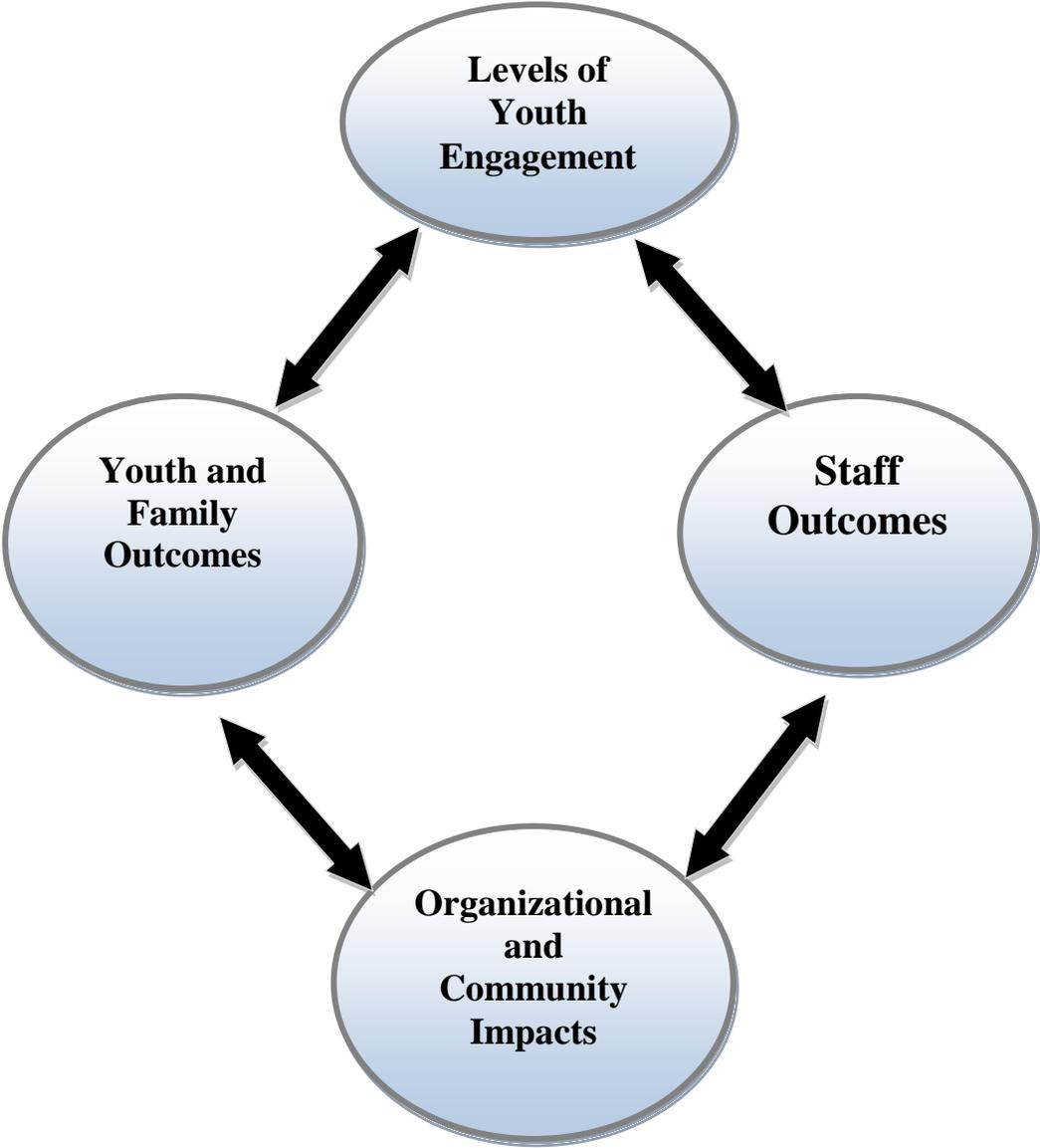
Collaboration Phases	Nature of Reciprocal Exchanges	Key Processes
Connecting and Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Youth and staff recognize each other</li> <li>- Often one-way transactions with youth remaining passive recipients in receiving Services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Could involve involuntary as well as voluntary activities</li> <li>- Might involve youth providing feedback on services offered</li> <li>- Sets the stage for two-way transactions.</li> </ul>
Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two-way transactions begin. Norms of reciprocity and mutually occur.</li> <li>- Could involve one-time only exchanges</li> <li>- Involves low amounts of exchanges (quantity) and low levels of quality exchanges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involves semi-voluntary motivational congruence</li> <li>- Could also involve both involuntary as well as voluntary activities.</li> <li>- However, two-way transactions occur with youth agreeing to take a certain action in exchange for staff agreeing to take a certain action.</li> <li>- Example: Staff voluntarily seeking out youth’s advice and opinions, in exchange for youth receiving a benefit from staff</li> <li>- Trust begins to develop and communication improves</li> </ul>
Coordination/ Consulting	Quantity and quality of exchanges increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involves voluntary motivational congruence</li> <li>- Involves deliberate efforts to work together on shared “voluntary” projects and goals.</li> <li>- Often involves the beginning of power sharing and youth involvement in choice, voice and decision-making regarding the project</li> </ul>
Community-Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exchanges often involve third parties, in addition to youth and staff.</li> <li>- Exchanges occur between each of the parties resulting in a huge growth in numbers of exchanges</li> <li>- Quality of exchanges between youth and staff improve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involves voluntary motivational congruence</li> <li>- Involves consensus building, awareness of mutual reciprocity needs and heightened trust between youth and staff.</li> <li>- Can involve organizational as well as community change activities</li> </ul>
Contracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can involve multiple-party contracting, including youth and staff</li> <li>- Quality of exchanges improves as exchanges are formalized.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involves voluntary motivational congruence</li> <li>- Formalized exchanges between youth and staff using written contracts, agreements or unwritten agreements such as social contracts</li> </ul>

**Appendix 9-7: Levels of Youth Engagement**



<b>Level of Engagement</b>	<b>Youth behaviors Sought</b>	<b>Youth Roles</b>	<b>Outcomes Sought</b>
<b>Involuntary</b>	Attendance	Youth as “Passive”, “Hostile”, “Resistant”	Compliance with Mandates
<b>Semi-Voluntary</b>	Participation	Youth involvement in problem identification, goal setting, treatment planning, and task completion	Behavioral Engagement
<b>Voluntary</b>	Engagement	Youth as contributors, resources and organizational and community change agents	Enhanced Intrinsic Motivation, Emotional and Cognitive Engagement and “Initiative”

**Appendix 9-8: Outcomes Derived from Youth Engagement within a Co-Production Intervention Framework**



## **Appendix 9-9: Empowerment-Related Youth Outcomes**

### **Individual/Psychological Outcomes**

#### Level 1 Outcomes

Reduced levels of involuntariness  
Reduced levels of client reactance  
Reduced levels of hopelessness

#### Level 2 Outcomes

Develop a more positive and potent sense of self  
Identity changes  
Enhance self-confidence  
Enhance self-control  
Increased ability to work well with others  
Reduction of self-blame  
Enhanced willingness to assume personal responsibility  
Fostering of self-determination and motivation  
Build competencies and autonomous behavior  
Build agency  
Build initiative  
Enhanced voice

### **Interpersonal/Group Outcomes**

Development of group consciousness  
Achieving collective efficacy

### **Other Internal Outcomes**

Building social skills  
Building employment related skills and competencies  
Building life skills  
Access and control of new resources  
Ability to work well with others  
Better understanding of local communities  
Enhanced voice for youth  
Achieving educational and vocational gains

## Appendix 9-10: Youth Development and Problem-Reduction Outcomes

Common Youth Outcomes	Category
Enhance client motivation and self determination	Developmental competencies (internal)
Build competency/autonomous behaviors	Developmental competencies (internal)
Create youth initiative and agency	Development competencies (internal)
Positive identity formation	Developmental competencies (internal)
Develop self and collective efficacy	Developmental competencies (internal)
Develop psychological empowerment	Developmental competencies (internal)
Develop social skills	Developmental competencies (internal)
Develop employment-related skill building	Developmental competencies (internal)
Social capital enhancement	Developmental competencies (external)
Build connections to organizations and institution to effect social bonding	Developmental competencies (external)
Enhance bonding to adult role models	Developmental competencies (external)
Develop new pro-social peer relationships	Developmental competencies (external)
Child Welfare: Reduced incidences of abuse and neglect; reduced placements in foster care	Problem Reduction
Education: Improved academic and school outcomes; improved classroom behavior	Problem Reduction
Juvenile Justice: Reduced recidivism, arrests, court petitions	Problem Reduction
Risk Behaviors: Reduced drug and alcohol usage, smoking usage	Problem Reduction

## **Appendix 9-11: Staff/Youth Collaboration-Related Outcomes**

- ✓ Volume and quality of staff/youth exchanges increase
- ✓ Movement to a higher collaboration phase
- ✓ Enhanced levels of staff/youth integration, as measured by Jones & Perkins, 2005.
- ✓ The extent to which collaboration is becoming an increasingly important part of the organization's core operation and services model

## **Appendix 9-12: Staff Outcomes**

- ❑ Enhanced staff well-being
- ❑ Reduced staff burnout
- ❑ Changes in staff roles and job descriptions
- ❑ Increased staff optimism
- ❑ Improved staff retention
- ❑ Improved individual and collective staff efficacy
- ❑ Improved staff self-determination, intrinsic motivations, autonomy behaviors and perceived competence.

## **Appendix 9-13: Organizational Outcomes and Impacts from Youth Contributions**

### **A. Outcomes**

- ❑ Improvements in staff efficacy and empowerment
- ❑ Improved staff retention rates and reduced staff turnover rates

### **B. Impacts**

- ❑ New labor pool for agencies
- ❑ New services available to youth/families
- ❑ In-kind contributions for drawing down grant money
- ❑ Constituency empowered to speak out on behalf of program
- ❑ Source of action-based researchers
- ❑ Source of documenting unmet community need
- ❑ New ideas for program expansion and improvement

## **Appendix 9-14: Community Impacts from Client Contributions**

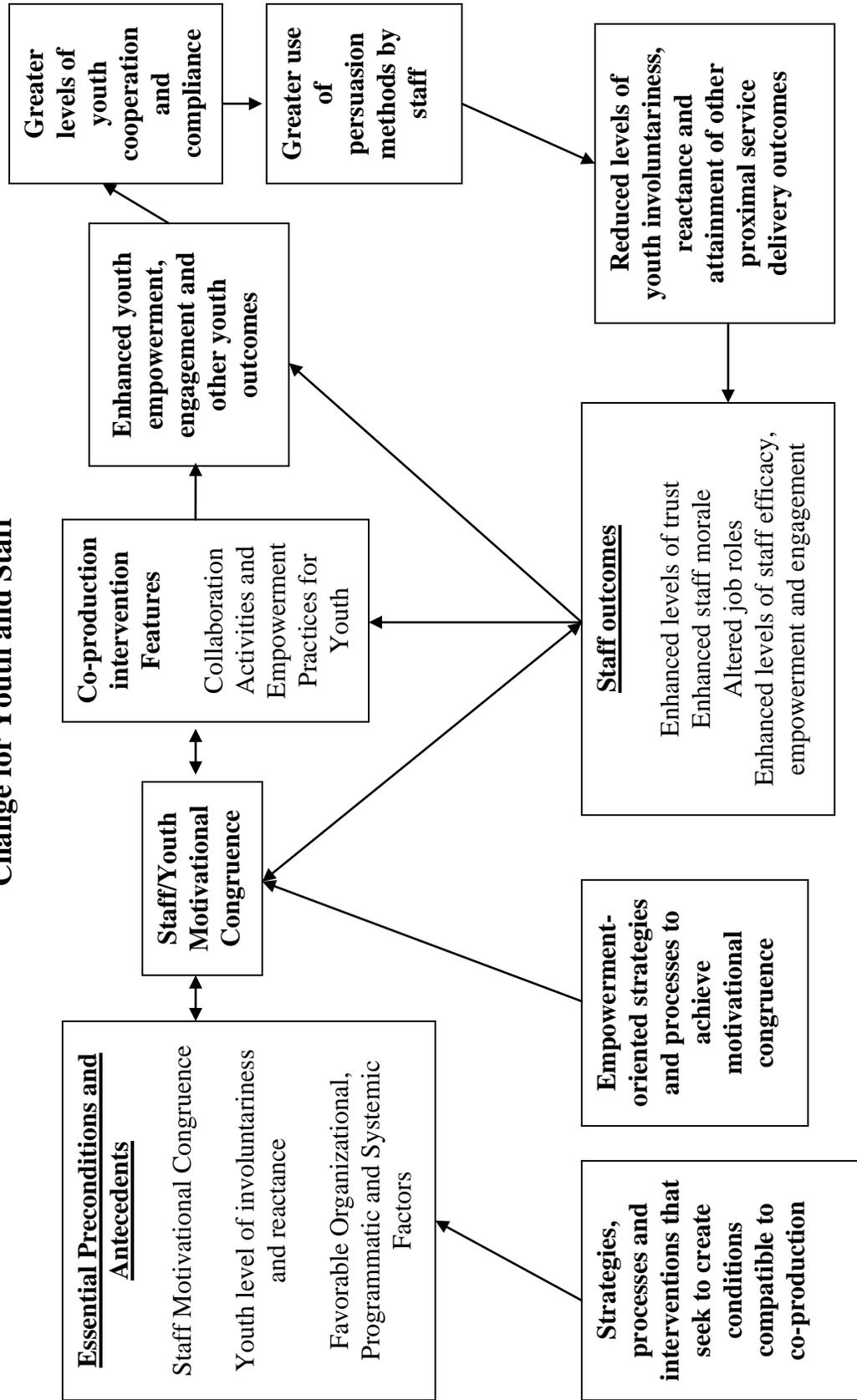
### **Improving Community Conditions**

- ✓ Building community level social capital
- ✓ Enhancing neighborhood collective efficacy

### **Building Community Capacity**

- Cultivating new local leadership
- Strengthening the capacities of a particular community organization in need of assistance
- Mobilizing community action toward a particular community improvement
- Building organizational infrastructure by promoting inter-organizational partnerships

**Appendix 9-15: Co-Production Interventions with Involuntary Youth: Creating a Virtuous Cycle of Change for Youth and Staff**



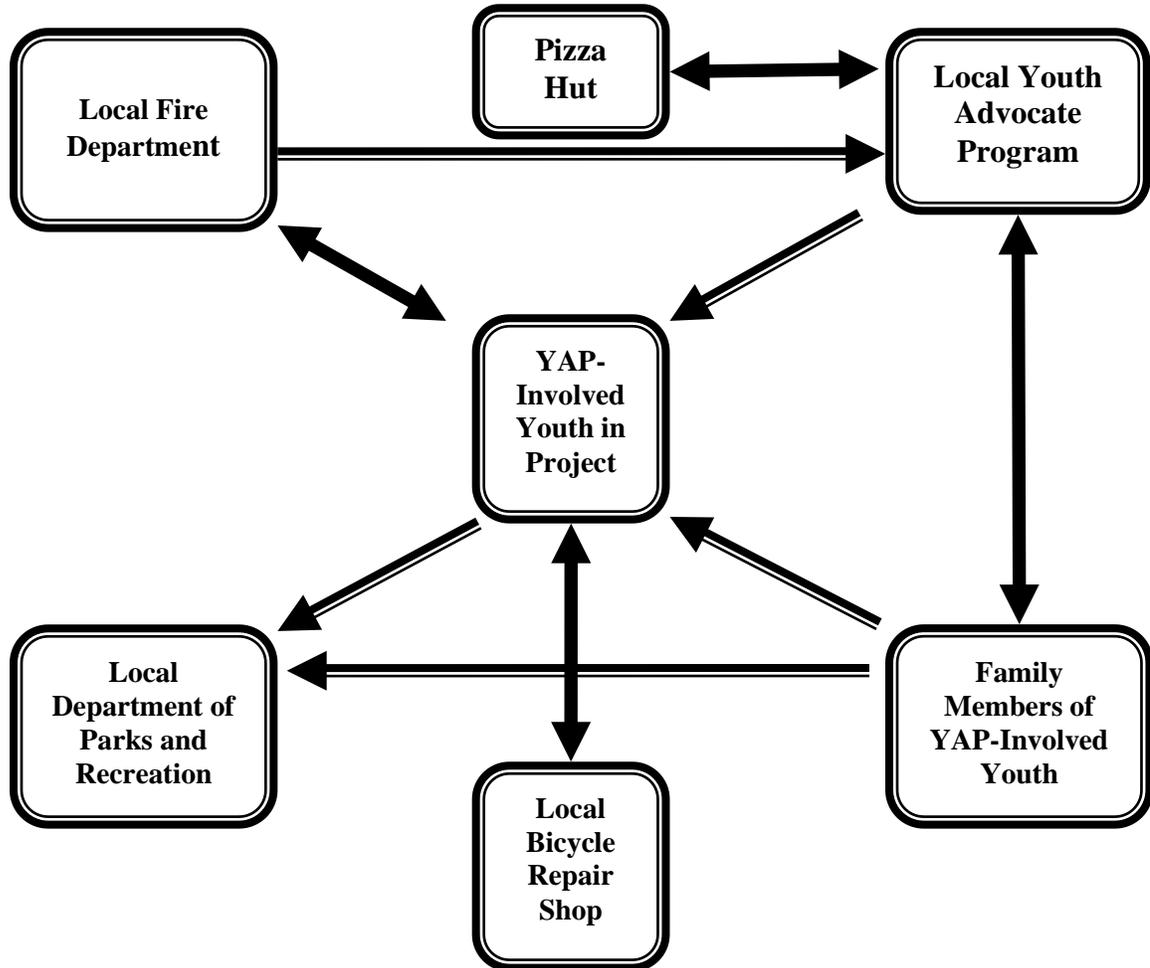
## Appendix 10-1: Pilot Site Descriptions and Foci of Empirical Investigation

Site Description and Foci of Investigation	Pilot Site 1	Pilot Site 2
Planned Co-Production Intervention Features	<p>Two-phased Co-Production Group Intervention for Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Phase One: Mandated, Court-Ordered Community Service Project-Group project-12-14 weeks</li> <li>✓ Phase Two: Peer leadership involvement in Next Group Services Project-12-14 weeks</li> <li>✓ Defined 6 month service involvement</li> <li>✓ Active Parent Participation</li> <li>✓ Parallel pilot project separate from other site programming</li> </ul>	<p>Specialized integrated time bank created</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Youth give and receive services as member of time bank</li> <li>✓ Co-Production agreements between youth and agency</li> <li>✓ Variable 6-9 month length of service on average</li> <li>✓ Individual intervention modality</li> </ul>
Target Referrals	Juvenile Justice involvement; Some Adjudicated Juvenile Delinquent (JD) and Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) referrals	Child Welfare referrals; may include some joint child welfare/juvenile justice cases
Common Foci of Investigation	<p>*Micro-level concepts and processes associated with youth and staff engagement</p> <p>*Correlates and pathways associated with movement between phases of engagement</p>	<p>*Micro-level concepts and processes associated with youth and staff engagement</p> <p>*Correlates and pathways associated with movement between phases of engagement</p>
Unique Foci of Investigation	<p>*Understanding the group modality as it relates to co-production interventions</p> <p>*Unique role of parents as “co-producers”</p>	<p>*Changes and processes associated with the integration of time banking into program operations</p> <p>*Organizational working conditions and external environmental factors conducive to co-production and time banking</p>

**Appendix 11-1: Comparing and Contrasting the Four Interventions in Site 1**

<b>Intervention Theme</b>	<b>Number of youth involved</b>	<b>Target Population of Youth</b>	<b>Parent Involvement</b>	<b>Intervention Activities</b>	<b>Organizational Partners</b>	<b>Nature of Transactions</b>	<b>Other Salient Features</b>
<b>Fire Safety Project</b>	6 youth	Child Welfare- Foster care prevention	Yes Met separately once per week in addition to assisting youth	Assisted fire department with fire safety by handing out smoke alarms and detectors to area residents  Conducted surveys of neighborhood residents assessing needs and priorities  Fundraising for Parks Department to improve local skate park. Included a "bike-athon", "tip" night at a local restaurant, a min-fair, car wash, bottle drive, bake sales	Local Fire Department Parks and Recreational Department Local Bicycle shop, Pizza Hut Local YAP Program	Multiple Level transactions involving the Fire Department, Parks and Recreational Department, YAP, Youth and Parents, Local Bicycle Shop, Pizza Hut for fundraiser (see attached 47)	Parents as Co-Producers
<b>Environmental Project</b>	5-6 youth	Mostly Probation youth with mandated service requirements	No	Built osprey boxes/nests for the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Trail clean-up Built Display Cases/Bulletin Boards for DEC	DEC, Park Ranger School	Youth traded their time and skills to work off mandated community service hours. References were provided for youth	Youth Leadership
<b>Boys and Girl Club Project Beautification</b>	5 youth	Mixed Child Welfare and probation	No	Beautification of the Boys and Girls Club-indoor and outdoor	Boys and Girls Club, Woods (a local flower store)	Boys and Girls Club provided site for community service.	Minimal inter-organizational partnership
<b>Army Reserves Support Project – Family</b>	6-8 youth	Mixed Child Welfare and Probation	Yes Met jointly with youth	Letter writing to the troops Sent gift packages to the troops Fundraiser for the FRG Cooked families a meal Knit blankets	Family Readiness Program Wal-Mart for fundraisers	Youth received military memorabilia, plaques and letter of reference; Military attended final celebration; led career workshop	Project changed from original project with United Helpers (a senior service organization) to Army Reserves

**Appendix 11-2: Reciprocal Exchanges within the Fire Safety Project**



**Appendix 11-3: Legal Status, Reasons for Referral and Perceived Levels of Involuntariness of Youth Participants**

<b>Youth Participant</b>	<b>Child Welfare Involvement</b>	<b>Juvenile Justice Involvement</b>	<b>Adjudicated</b>	<b>School-Related Issues</b>	<b>Mandated Community Service</b>	<b>Perceived Pressure to Participate</b>
<b>1</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
<b>2</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>4</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>5</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>		
<b>7</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>		

**Appendix 11-4: Empowerment-Oriented Intervention Features: Intake Practices (Total sample=13; 6 staff, 7 youth)**

<b>Important Features</b>	<b>Strategies and Processes</b>
<b>Referral Source Preparation</b>	Adequately prepare referring authorities with information about intervention goals and processes
<b>Parent orientation and engagement</b>	Focus on the end result and the intervention as an “opportunity”
<b>Youth orientation and engagement</b>	Provide information about the intervention Foster choice and experimentation Assess and reinforce parent vision for the project

**Appendix 11-5: Empowerment-Oriented Intervention Features- Group Practices (Total sample=13; 6 staff, 7 youth)**

<b>Intervention Features</b>	<b>Important Themes</b>	<b>Strategies and Processes</b>
<p><b>Creating a Favorable Group Composition</b></p> <p><u>N=8 (Staff=3; Youth =5)</u></p>	<p><b><u>To foster youth participation:</u></b></p> <p><b>-Achieve a compatible mix of participants</b></p> <p><b>-Maintain sufficient numbers of participants</b></p>	<p>-Consider gender, age, similarity of youth circumstances and prior relationship with other youth participants: All are important factors in composing groups</p> <p>-Sufficient group size important so that youth feel a part of something important</p>
<p><b>Developing an Attractive Group Project that builds on youth interests</b></p> <p><u>N=7 (2 staff and 5 youth)</u></p>	<p><b><u>To foster youth participation and set the stage for behavioral and emotional engagement:</u></b></p> <p><b>-Action Oriented</b></p> <p><b>-Working Towards a Higher Cause</b></p>	<p>-Importance of activities being action oriented; e.g., building and restoring, outdoor activities, concrete, “hands-on” projects, especially for boys</p> <p>-Developed projects that enabled youth to help the environment, raise money for worthy organizations, support local military and their families and provide opportunities to “give-back” to the host organization.</p>
<p><b>Establishing a Pro-Social Caring Group Environment</b></p> <p><u>N=12 (all 5 staff and all 7 kids)</u></p>	<p><b><u>To set the stage for engagement:</u></b></p> <p><b>-Foster Group Cohesion</b></p> <p><b>-Establish Rules Governing Group Operations</b></p> <p><b>-Fostering Social Interaction and Fun</b></p>	<p>-Importance of working as a team, assisting each other</p> <p>-Opportunities for youth to showcase new skills</p> <p>-Team building exercises</p> <p>-Importance of establishing and enforcing rules and norms governing the group</p> <p>-Combining recreation activities with service activities</p> <p>-Cultivate social interaction so that new friendship emerge</p> <p>-Invite other community youth to participate in the project</p>
<p><b>Planning for and Structuring the Group Project</b></p> <p>N=9 (staff=3; youth=6)</p>	<p><b><u>To set the stage for engagement</u></b></p> <p><b>-Adequate time for planning</b></p> <p><b>-Follow positive youth development best practices</b></p>	<p>-Sufficient time to plan projects and coordinate work with partner organizations</p> <p>-Sufficient time to allow for youth involvement in decision-making</p> <p>-A temporal arc of project activities including a concluding event</p> <p>-Community recognition, media coverage and celebration</p>

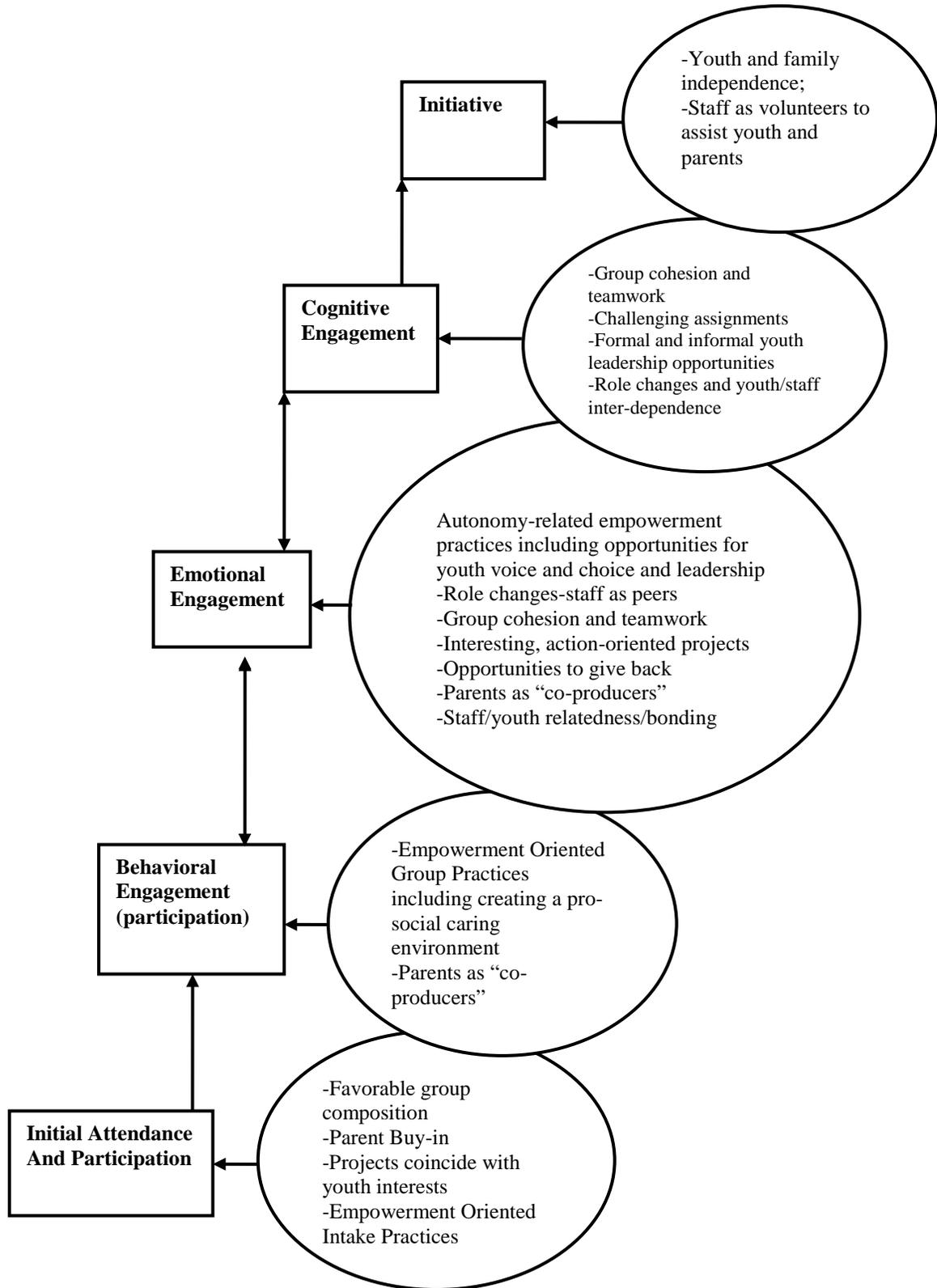
**Appendix 11-6: Empowerment-Oriented Intervention Features:  
Practices that Enhance Youth Autonomy and Build Family  
Relationships (Total Sample=13; 6 staff, 7 youth)**

<b>Intervention Features</b>	<b>Important Themes</b>	<b>Strategies and Processes</b>
<p><b>Autonomy-Fostering Youth Voice and Choice</b></p> <p><u>N=12 (Staff=6; Youth =6)</u></p>	<p><b>Multiple Decision-Points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Allow youth a voice in selecting the service project</li> <li>-Provide youth with an opportunity to help select specific activities</li> <li>-Allow youth a voice in making decisions on how to conduct specific activities</li> <li>-Enable youth to choose specific roles within projects</li> <li>-Provide youth with opportunities to invite friends and family to participate in project activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Autonomy-Promoting Youth Leadership</b></p> <p><u>N=10 (Staff=4; Youth=6)</u></p>	<p><b>Methods of creating leadership opportunities</b></p> <p><b>Leadership roles</b></p> <p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Formal-planned vs. informal-unplanned</li> <li>-A flexible, accommodating and inclusive approach to leadership assignments</li> <li>-Includes co-facilitating of sessions, behavior management of individuals and group, task completion, sharing experiences</li> <li>-Clear role definition for leaders needed, Support for and coaching of leaders need to be planned; Careful selection processes required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enhancing Family Relationships</b></p> <p><u>N=13 (Staff=6; Youth =7)</u></p>	<p><b>Multiple roles for parents as “co-producers”</b></p> <p><b>Cautions/challenges to parent involvement</b></p>	<p>Suggested roles include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Advisor</li> <li>-Teacher</li> <li>-Motivator</li> <li>-Behavior monitor</li> <li>-Activity organizer</li> </ul> <p>Need for individualized and group assessment and rewards and costs of parent involvement</p>

**Appendix 11-7: Findings Related to Staff/Youth Collaboration:  
Reciprocal Exchanges and Key Processes within Two Collaboration  
Phases**

Collaboration Phases	Nature of Reciprocal Exchanges	Key Processes
Coordination/Consulting	Evidence of mutual respect and trust	<p>Involves deliberate efforts to work together on shared projects and goals.</p> <p>Involves the beginning of power sharing and youth involvement in decision-making</p> <p>Change in staff role to one of collaborator/facilitator</p> <p>Change in youth role to include youth as leaders</p>
Community-Building	<p>Quality of exchanges between youth and staff improve, evidenced by equality in roles.</p> <p>Different kinds of exchanges emerge, representing a shift from staff/client to peer relationship</p>	<p>Involves consensus building, heightened trust and awareness of mutual reciprocity needs</p> <p>Increased levels of youth empowerment via new levels of youth autonomy in decision-making</p> <p>Staff and youth recognition of inter-dependence</p> <p>Enhanced youth/parent independence</p> <p>Heightened levels of staff engagement via use of staff social capital to meet project goals</p>

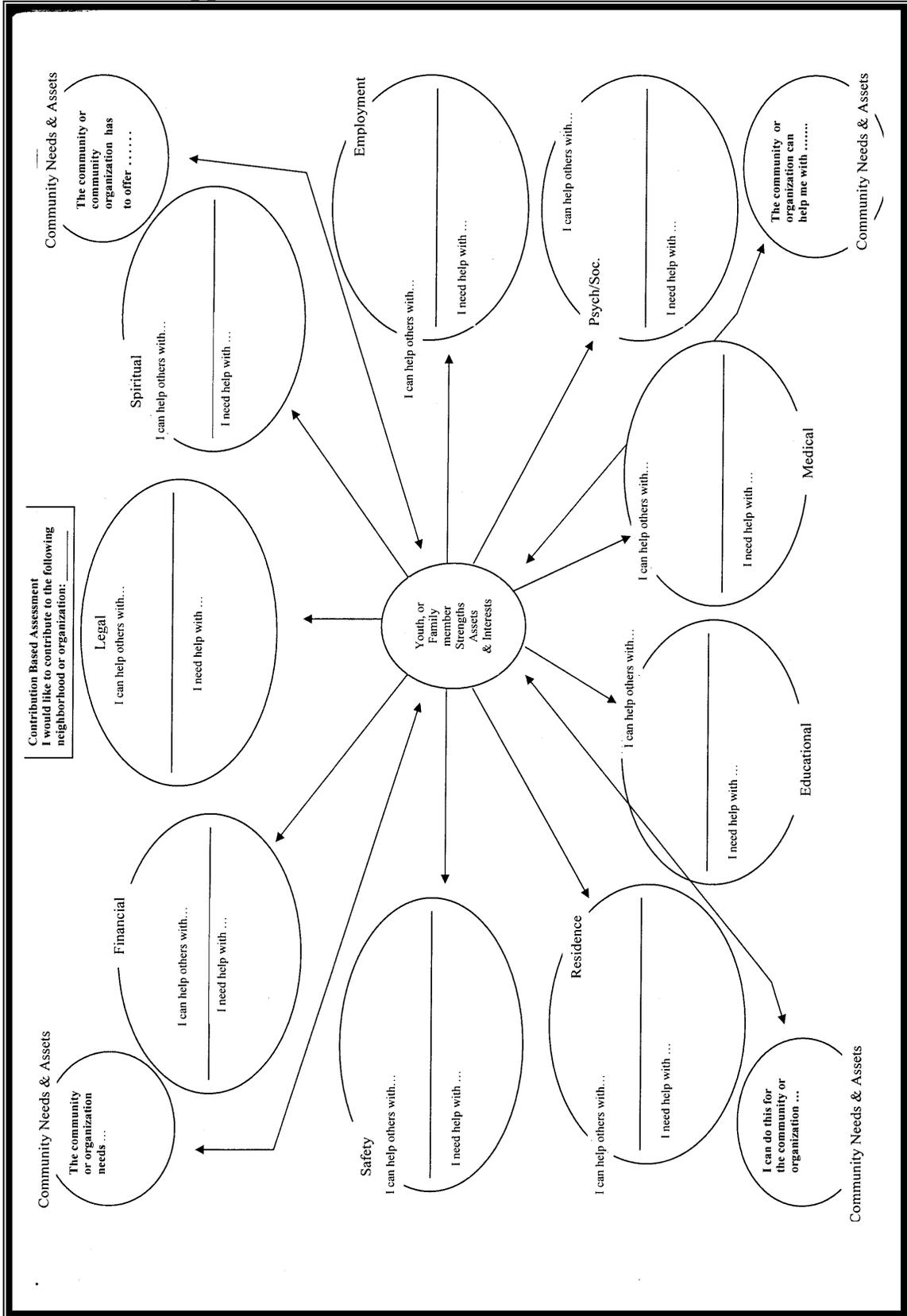
## Appendix 12-1: Empowerment & Collaboration Practices and Levels of Youth Engagement-Site 1



### Appendix 13-1: Legal Status and Reasons for Referral-Site 2

Youth Participant	Child Welfare Involvement	Foster Care Systems Involvement	Juvenile Justice Involvement	Adjudicated	School-Related Issues	Mandated Community Service	History of Inpatient Psychiatric Care
<b>1</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
<b>5</b>	<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>

## Appendix 13-2: New Domain “Bubble” Chart



## Appendix 13-3: Revised Strengths/Skills Inventory

### List the Strengths, Skills, Talents, and Interests of

---

(Name)

Favorite school subjects:

Hobbies:

Skills:

Talents:

Favorite Sports:

Favorite Activities:

Favorite Places:

Special Abilities:

Favorite People:

Areas where I can help others:

Areas where others can help me:

Career Goals:

Part-time job interests:

Interesting things that I have done:

Something that I have overcome:

Special experience I have had:

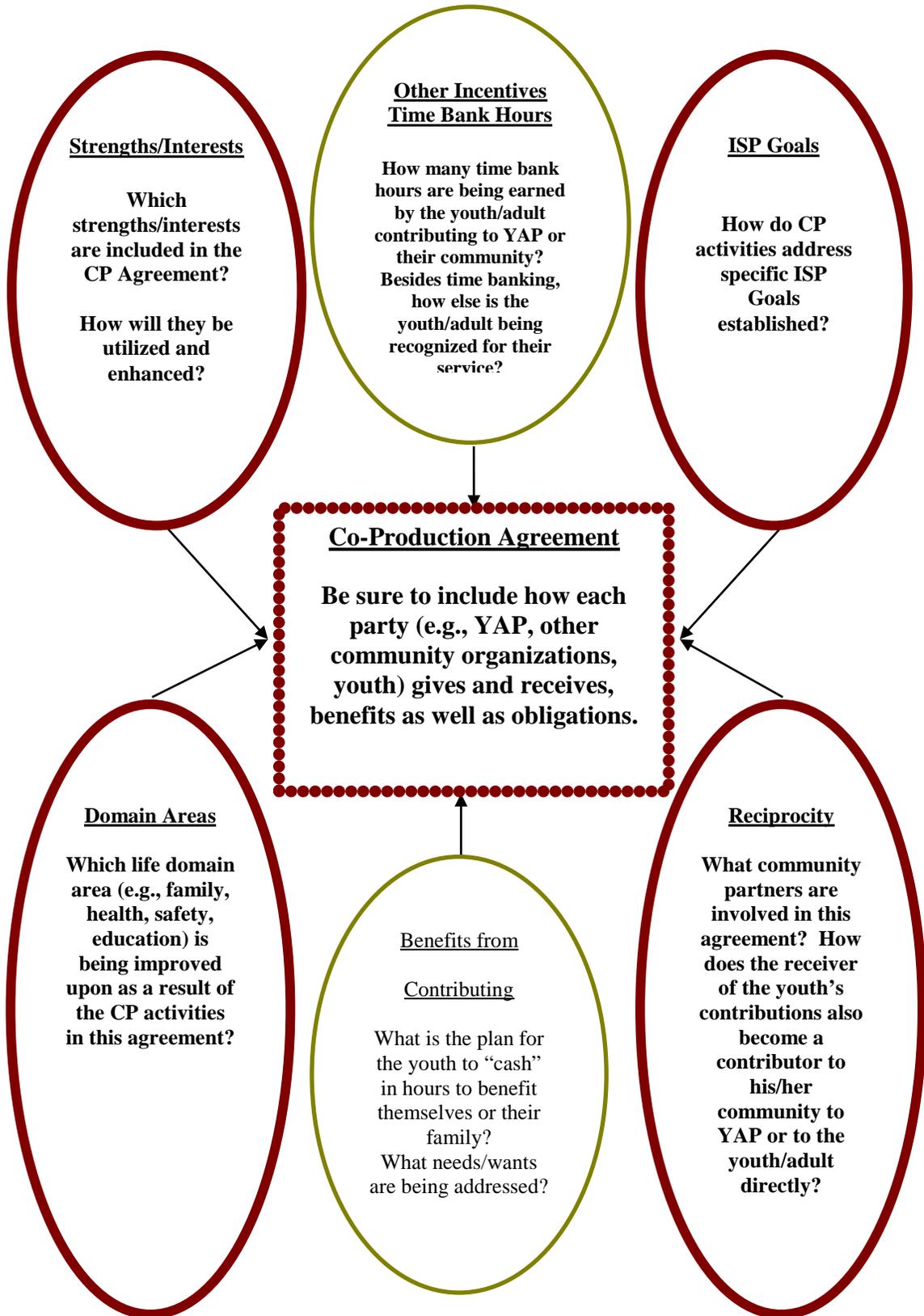
**My community is:**

**My community needs:**

**I can help my community by:**

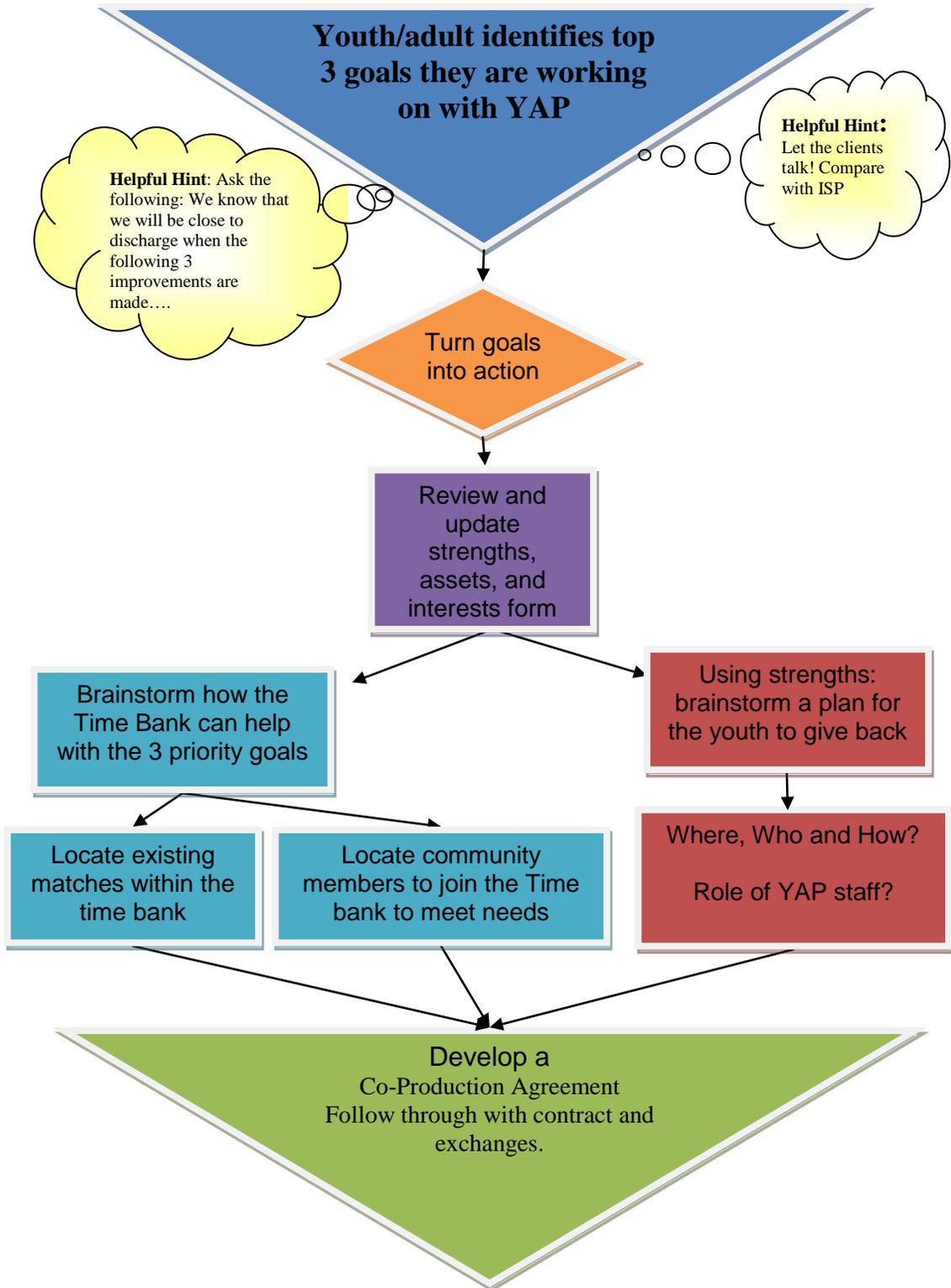
**My community can help me by:**

**Appendix 13-4:  
A Template for Co-Production Agreements**



## Appendix 13-5: Co-Production and Wraparound Processes

### WRAP Update



Appendix 13-6: Flyer



HOW TO CHANGE THE OIL IN YOUR CAR  
WITH

---

Please join us on

**Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**3pm**

at the  
**YAP OFFICE**

To learn basic car maintenance.  
This is the first of 5 sessions.

## Appendix 14-1: Behavioral Indicators of Emotional and Cognitive Engagement

Engagement	Emotional Engagement	Cognitive Engagement
Exhibiting teamwork/commitment	Talking about the project afterwards, sometimes in much detail	Youth involved in preparation
Complaints about the project reduced	Youth concerned about the outcome of their work	Youth coming up with new ideas; involved in problem solving/brainstorming solutions
Not wanting to procrastinate but wanting to get the job done	Youth voicing “control”: Feeling powerful, “I chose...”	Youth forgetting about the reward; forgetting about the benefits (intrinsic motivation)
Seeking out new opportunities to contribute	Voicing pride in accomplishments	

## Appendix 14-2: Empowerment-Driven Youth Leadership, Staff/Youth Collaboration, Youth Competency Practices and the Link to Youth Engagement: A Review of Case Examples-Site 2

### Case Example #1

Case Description and Evidence of Youth Leadership Practices	Evidence of Youth Competency Development Strategies	Evidence of Staff/Youth Collaboration	Evidence of Youth Engagement
<p><b>Staff:</b> “We have a young lady who is very sweet but not the most social girl. So, initially, she was coming in and doing a lot of projects by herself, on the computer. We pitched the idea of a youth newspaper to her and some other people. She actually stepped up and said she wanted to be editor-in-chief of it. And so she is now the editor-in-chief with another young lady who is very social and so they’re completely opposite people. But, they’re getting along really well and they’re working together and they’re leading the newspaper. “</p>	<p><b>Youth:</b> “Well, I’m gonna be like the artist and writer for it [the youth newspaper]. I am sure that it could also help if you’re doing a job thing or trying to get into college or something like that. You might want to write it down, saying that you helped other people doing these certain things and put them in your application or your portfolio and stuff.”</p>	<p><b>Youth responses</b></p> <p><b>Youth:</b> “It’s probably the fact that everybody’s there, helping me. You don’t have to do it all on your own.</p> <p><b>Youth:</b> Yeah, it’s fun because we can brag about the trip. Like, ‘ha, ha, [to the other youth], you don’t know]</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Like a private inner circle</p> <p><b>Youth:</b> Yeah, so it’s like we’re more in tune with the adults, where the other kids are just being lazy, sitting around. So, you’ve kinda worked for these kinds of benefits and if you do enough work, me and the other person [a youth] have a higher amount of power than the other kids.</p>	<p><b>Youth involved in another project, exhibiting emotional engagement:</b></p> <p>“It was more of a brochure talking about Youth Advocate Programs, just to capture people’s attention. Oh, another thing is I made the Youth Advocate home page, I designed it...the web page, I chose the colors and the background and stuff like that. . . I usually don’t give my original copies of my art away but I donated one of them, the picnic one, to the time bank and it’s on the bulletin board downstairs. “</p> <p><b>Youth evidencing cognitive engagement:</b></p> <p><b>Youth:</b> Oh, you really get addicted Well, some projects you just don’t want to give up. Like the one I had to do, the drawing for the [time bank] picnic. I get really addicted when I’m drawing.</p>

**Appendix 14-2: Empowerment-Driven Youth Leadership, Staff/Youth Collaboration, Youth Competency Practices and the Link to Youth Engagement: A Review of Case Examples (cont.)**

**Case Example #2**

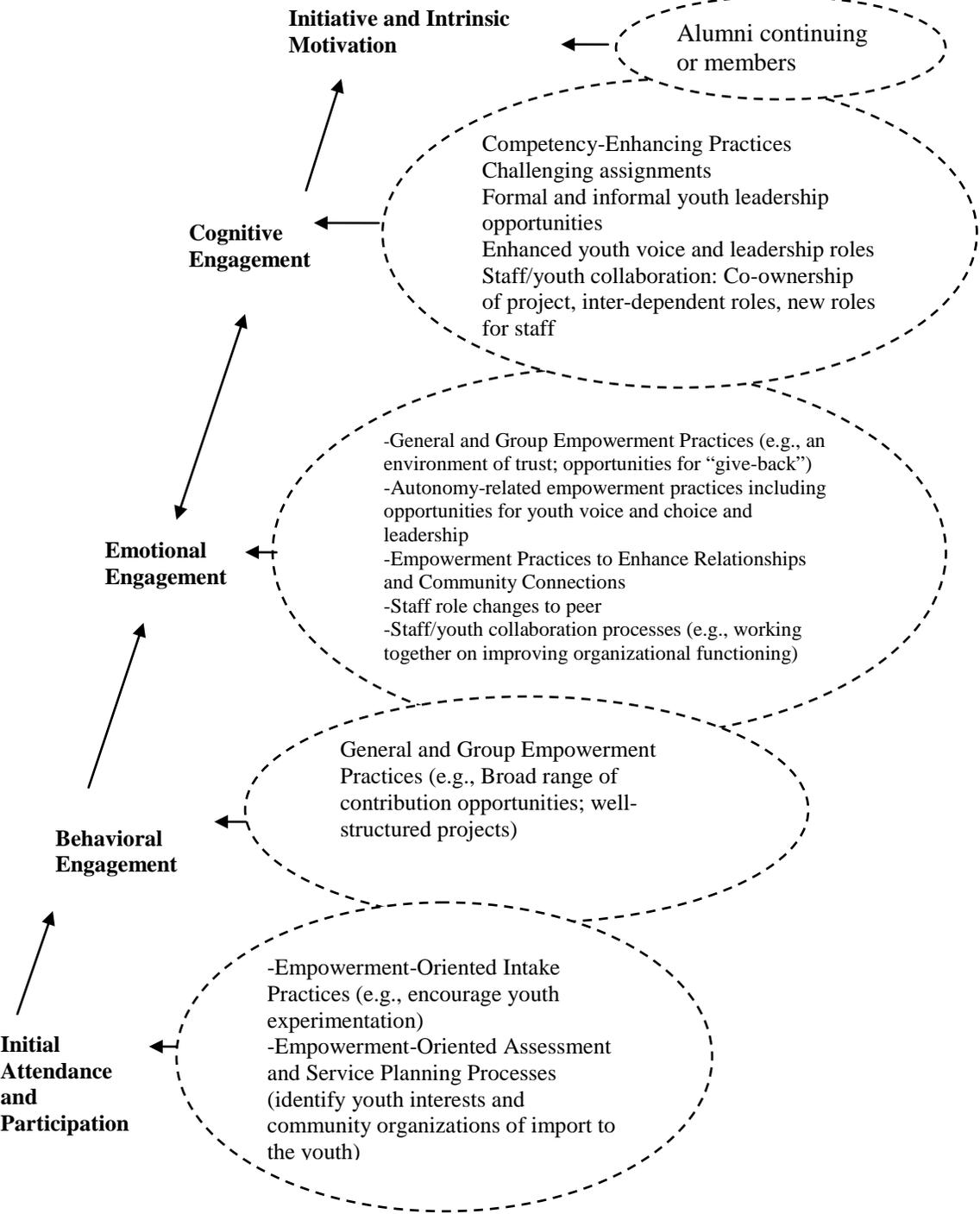
<b>Case Description and Evidence of Youth Leadership Practices</b>	<b>Evidence of Youth Competency Development Strategies</b>	<b>Evidence of Relatedness with Others and Staff/Youth Collaboration</b>	<b>Evidence of Youth Engagement</b>
<p><b>Staff:</b> “He taught other youth in our program, as well as community members and time bank members, how to change oil in a car and what to look for when buying a used car.”</p> <p><b>Youth:</b> “I had the opportunity to teach instead of learning.”</p> <p><b>Youth:</b> “We helped with one of the kids who had a rough time in mathematics. . . We showed him some of the basics, how he could figure out some of the mathematic problems for multiplication, some division. . . With us helping him for the two-week period that we had, made him become [sic] more successful on his grades.”</p>	<p><b>Staff:</b> “We planned it out for, I believe it was an 8 week process, where he developed a curriculum, gathered the materials”.</p>	<p><b>Staff:</b> [He] worked with a local auto mechanic place, worked with his school and worked with his foster parents to get the materials needed and make sure his process was correct.</p> <p><b>Youth:</b> “What I got out of it was respect, that everybody can earn, but just mainly respect and bonding with other staff members . . . . They look at me more of a younger adult than a teenager”</p>	<p><b>Youth, evidencing emotional engagement on an unrelated project:</b> “I don’t know how to put this, it was a fun, exciting moment to be able to teach someone else that wants to learn something. I felt like I was not in control of the person but in control of teaching that subject to that person. To be helpful to that person”</p> <p>“The oil one[project], because I knew exactly what I was doing and how to do it. Doing the math and my instrumental [tutoring], I was really nervous how the other child would outcome [sic] with it. That’s the only thing I was nervous about How, he would, how that person would outcome [sic] with the help that I gave.”</p>

**Appendix 14-2: Empowerment-Driven Youth Leadership, Staff/Youth Collaboration, Youth Competency Practices and the Link to Youth Engagement: A Review of Case Examples (cont.)**

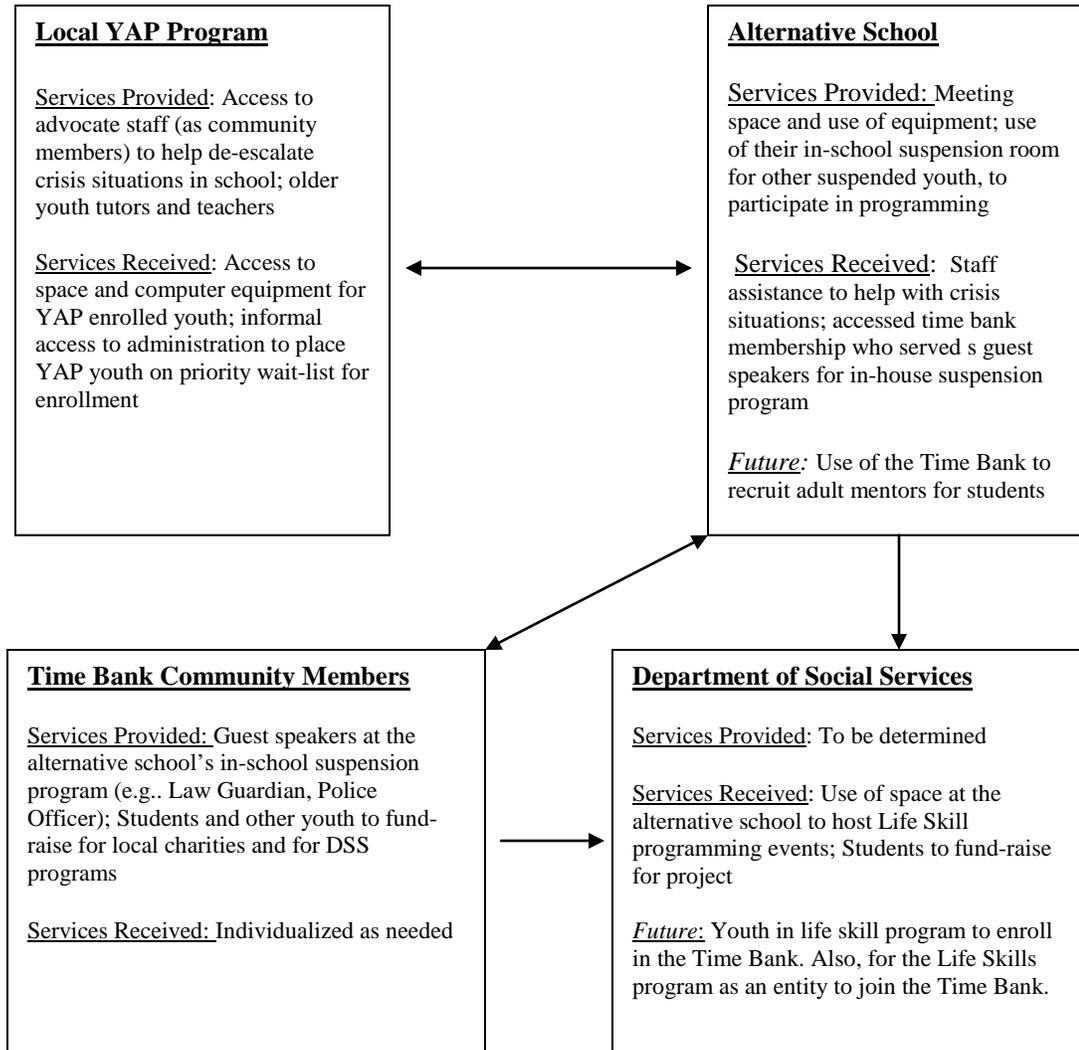
**Case Example #3**

<b>Case Description and Evidence of Youth Leadership Practices</b>	<b>Evidence of Youth Competency Development Strategies</b>	<b>Evidence of Relatedness with Others and Staff/Youth Collaboration</b>	<b>Evidence of Youth Engagement</b>
<p><b><u>Staff:</u></b> “We asked him to join the [time bank] advisory council and he was so excited about time banking that he took it upon himself, in his role on the advisory council, to go to his school and talk to them about joining the time bank. . . it was very exciting to see that transition</p>	<p align="center"><b><u>N/A</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Youth:</u></b> “Not only were we hanging out with my friends that were in YAP with me, I was actually getting to hang out with the advocates, not on an advocate basis.”</p>	<p><b><u>Youth:</u></b> “It [serving on the advisory council] was something that really got me interested in helping the community and learning more about what people’s needs are, other than my own.”</p>

# Appendix 14-3: Empowerment and Collaboration Practices and Levels of Youth Engagement-Site 2



## Appendix 14-4: Contagion Effects: Time Banking and New Organizational Partnerships



## Appendix 15-1: Core Features of Co-Production Interventions for Involuntary Youth

Intervention Feature	Findings from Pilot Sites
Enhanced roles for youth participants	Multiple opportunities for youth to serve as leaders, resources and contributors.
Changes in staff roles and responsibilities	<p>Site 1: Staff served primarily as facilitators of exchanges between youth and outside parties. However, there were examples of staff becoming directly involved in exchanges with youth as youth took on leadership responsibilities</p> <p>Site 2: Staff were both facilitators of exchanges between youth and community members and were direct participants in exchanges with youth participants</p>
Staff/youth collaboration	Enhanced levels of staff/youth collaboration documented in both sites, evidenced by mutual and reciprocal exchanges through a two way flow of giving and receiving, power-sharing, changes in discourse and recognition of inter-dependencies.
Empowerment practices that build autonomy, relatedness and competencies gains for youth	<p>Both sites emphasized practices to foster youth autonomy and youth relatedness as well as early efforts at fostering youth competencies</p> <p>General and group practices documented in support of autonomy and relatedness goals</p>
Multiple and flexible service modalities	Individual and small group preferred by staff in both sites
Multiple functions for organizations and communities	Organizations and communities identified as contexts, vehicles and targets of change.
Organizational integration of co-production values, principles and practices	<p>Site 1: Co-Production designed initially as an intervention distinct from the core services model. During implementation, staff recognized the importance of integrating the co-production innovation with select features of the core services model.</p> <p>Site 2: Co-Production innovation integrated within core services model. For example, actions steps taken to adapt core model assessment and service planning processes to accommodate co-production practices.</p>
Inter-organizational partnerships	Organizational partnerships designed to provide expanded opportunities for youth to serve as leaders, resources and contributors attempted in both sites.

**Appendix 15-1: Core Features of Co-Production Interventions for  
Involuntary Youth (cont.)**

<b>Kind of Outcome/Impact</b>	<b>Findings from Pilot Sites</b>
Enhanced levels of staff/youth collaboration and youth engagement	Higher levels of staff/youth collaboration and youth engagement (behavioral, emotional and cognitive) identified in both sites
Internal and external developmental outcomes and developmental competency gains	Both internal competency gains (Positive identity and self-esteem improvements) and external competency gains (bonding social capital, improvements in community acceptance of targeted youth) identified in both sites
Positive Staff outcomes	Both sites documented gains in staff efficacy, empowerment and engagement
Sustainability of benefits	Both sites sought an ongoing commitment of youth and adult participants to “give back” to the project, the host organization or to the community
A Generative focus on benefits and outcomes	Process and product innovations to further co-production goals were documented in both sites.
Contagion effects	Expanding program impacts of co-production interventions within communities and other organizations were noted, especially in site two

**Appendix 15-2: Comparison of Key Empowerment-Related Practices-  
Sites 1 and 2**

<b>Empowerment-Related Practices</b>	<b>Commonalities</b>	<b>Uniqueness</b>
<b>Intake Practices</b>	<p>-The importance of referral source preparation and staff preparation to orient youth and family members to potential benefits of co-production participation.</p> <p>-Staff fostered empowerment oriented intake practices to encourage youth choice in deciding how to participate in project, to the extent allowable by the intervention modality selected.</p> <p>- An emphasis placed on time needed to build trusting relationship between youth and their advocate, to allow encouragement and support to foster youth participation.</p>	<p>Participants in site one stressed the importance of parental “buy-in” to attract youth participation. Also employed parent specific strategies to encourage direct parent participation in project.</p> <p>Participants in site two identified empowerment-oriented intake practices employed by staff that emphasized flexibility and experimentation in youth participation, including allowing youth to “try-out” the Time Bank.</p> <p>Staff in site two utilized strategies that provided youth and family members with new resources from the Time Bank in the form of goods and services to initially attract them to participate</p>
<b>New Assessment and Service Planning Practices (site 2)</b>		These practices occurred in site 2 only
<b>General and Group Practices</b>	<p>-Established a pro-social caring environment for youth to experiment. Included is staff creating an environment of trust, support and safety for the youth</p> <p>-Developed attractive projects that build on youth interests, circumstances and abilities. Included are projects that are action oriented and projects where youth witness the fruits of their efforts.</p> <p>-Stressed social dimensions of co-production</p> <p>-Appealed to youth need to “give back”</p> <p>-Short-term time limited projects endorsed by participants in both project sites</p> <p>-Staff in both sites provided opportunities for youth to secure new resources</p>	<p>Site 1 emphasized the development of a correct mix of youth participants within the group setting and integrating parents as “co-producers” into the youth-centered intervention.</p> <p>Staff in site 2 provided youth with a broad range of contribution opportunities, allowing for a range of youth roles. Also, staff provided a broad range of creative benefits and incentives for youth to encourage participation.</p> <p>Staff in site two also allowed for youth to participate in multiple modalities; individual or small group settings, to allow for flexibility and catering to individual youth circumstances and capabilities</p>

**Appendix 15-2: Comparison of Key Empowerment-Related Practices-  
Sites 1 and 2 (cont.)**

<b>Empowerment-Related Practices</b>	<b>Commonalities</b>	<b>Uniqueness</b>
<b>Autonomy-Building Intervention Features</b>	<p>-Opportunities for youth to exercise choice in structuring CP involvement occurred</p> <p>-Opportunities to exercise voice in shaping the project as a whole occurred.</p> <p>-Informal opportunities for youth leadership allowed to emerge. Also, a flexible, accommodating approach to leadership assignments was encouraged.</p> <p>-A learn and lead approach was fostered by staff in both sites.</p>	
<b>Practices to Enhance Personal Relationships and Organizational Connections</b>	<p>Participants in both sites recognized the importance of parental buy-in and participation within youth centered co-production projects.</p> <p>Attempts to enhance personal relationships and organizational connections viewed as a priority in both sites.</p>	<p>Site one: Staff fostered multiple roles for parents to serve as “co-producers”.</p> <p>Site two: Staff and youth participants identified joint participation in time bank activities as a method of solidifying advocate/youth relationships.</p> <p>Site two: Staff utilized the Time Bank to facilitate opportunities for youth to meet pro-social peer and adult role models, including advocates, to develop and enhance community support networks for participating youth</p>
<b>Competency-Enhancing Practices</b>	<p>Some mention by staff and youth in both sites but generally, not a major priority.</p>	
<b>Practices Designed to Integrate Co-Production into Involuntary Service Areas</b>	<p>Examples of integration practices and strategies occurred in both sites along with challenges involved in integration.</p>	

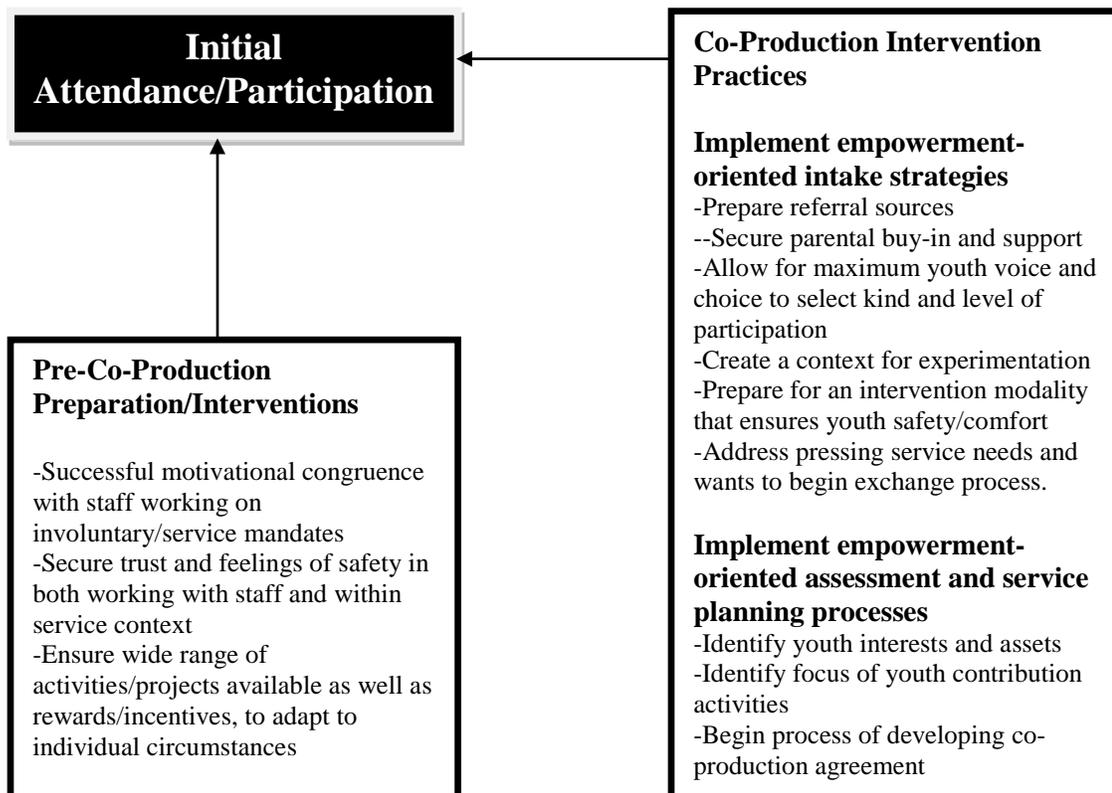
**Appendix 15-3: Comparing Findings Related to Staff/Youth Collaboration: Sites 1 and 2**

<b>Findings Related to Staff/Youth Collaboration</b>	<b>Commonalities</b>	<b>Uniqueness</b>
<b>Antecedent Factors to Collaboration</b>	In both sites, findings revealed that client circumstances and organizational policies were influential factors to staff/youth collaboration	
<b>Collaboration Processes</b>	<p>Specific empowerment practices associated with higher phases of staff/youth collaboration in both sites included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Staff roles changed, from adult leader to facilitator/consultant, during the implementation of a number of interventions</li> <li>-Opportunities for youth empowerment, including youth leadership and enhanced levels of autonomy, were linked to staff role changes</li> <li>-Youth were provided with opportunities to act independently and inter-dependently with staff, representing higher levels of collaboration</li> <li>-Inter-dependent relations with staff on organizational improvement projects were linked to higher levels of collaboration and engagement</li> </ul>	
<b>Collaboration Indicators</b>	-Progressively different kinds of staff/youth exchanges and interactions occurred and accompanied higher (advanced) phases of collaboration (both sites)	
<b>Collaboration Outcomes</b>	-Evidence indicated that co-production interventions were associated with progressively more advanced forms of collaboration, in turn producing important outcomes for staff and youth.	Site 1: Movement from coordination/consultation to community building emerged within specific interventions studied

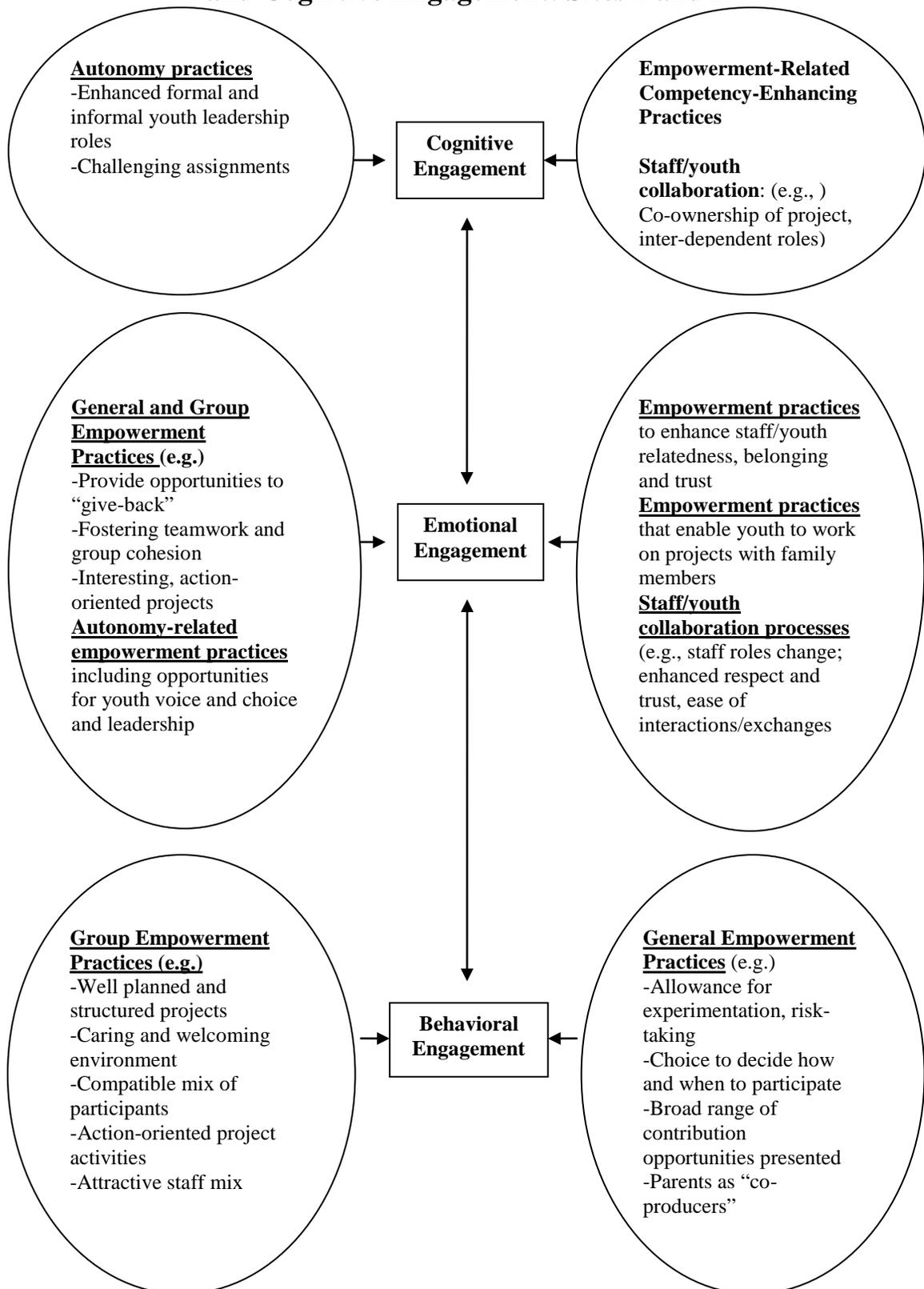
**Appendix 15-4: Descriptive Findings Related to Youth Engagement:  
Comparing Sites 1 and 2**

<b>Key Descriptive Findings: Youth Engagement</b>	<b>Evidence from Interviews</b>	<b>Multiple Case Study Support</b>	<b>Data Source Corroboration (Youth/Staff)</b>	<b>Method Corroboration (Interviews/Focus Group)</b>
<u>Finding 1:</u> Variations in levels of youth engagement	Examples provided	Yes; Site 1 most directly	Yes	Yes
<u>Finding 2:</u> Movement from involuntary to semi-voluntary engagement occurred during intervention	Multiple staff sources in both sites	Yes	Limited: Mostly staff sources used	Yes
<u>Finding 3:</u> Youth engagement as a proximal outcome of co-production	Multiple youth and staff sources from site 1	Site 1 finding only	Yes	Not directly addressed
<u>Finding 4:</u> Youth behavior and language changes provide evidence of cognitive and emotional engagement.	Multiple youth and staff sources from both sites	Yes	Yes	Not directly addressed
<u>Finding 5:</u> Ongoing engagement was episodic and disjointed, and stemmed in part from chronic crises	Multiple staff sources from site 2	A specific finding in site 2; inferred in site 1	Limited to staff sources only	Yes
<u>Finding 6:</u> Quality exchanges provide a proxy measure of youth engagement	Multiple staff sources from site 2	Site 2 finding only	Limited to staff sources only	Not directly addressed
<u>Finding 7:</u> Successful experiences in co-production interventions can become a “gateway” to continued interest in civic engagement post-project completion and post discharge from services	Multiple youth and staff sources from both sites	Yes	Yes	Yes

## Appendix 15-5: Key Correlates Associated with Initial Attendance/Participation: Sites 1 and 2



## Appendix 15-6: Key Correlates Associated with Behavioral, Emotional and Cognitive Engagement: Sites 1 and 2



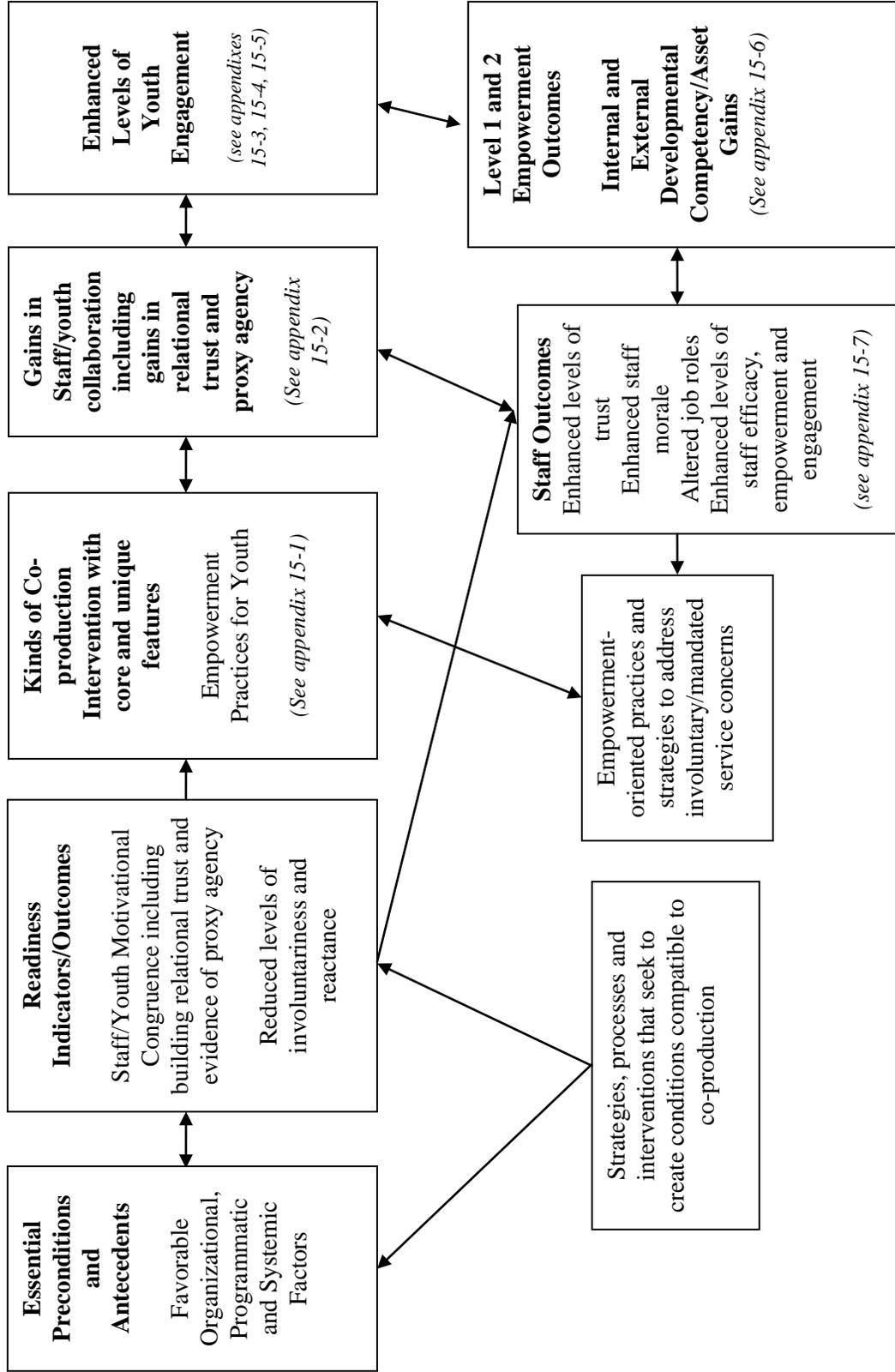
**Appendix 15-7: Findings Related to Youth Outcomes: Comparing Sites 1 and 2**

<b>Key Findings: Youth Outcomes</b>	<b>Commonalities</b>	<b>Uniqueness</b>	<b>Data Source Corroboration (Youth/Staff)</b>
<u>Finding 1:</u> Gains in both internal and external outcomes/asset development reported	Present in both case study sites		Yes
<u>Finding 2:</u> Internal outcome/assets developed included social skill development	Present in both case study sites		Yes, with an emphasis on youth responses, especially in site 2
<u>Finding 3:</u> Life and vocational skill development identified as an outcome of co-production involvement.		Site 2 only	Yes, with an emphasis on youth responses
<u>Finding 4:</u> Positive identity gains, including self-esteem improvements, cited as an important youth outcome	Present in both case study sites		Yes, primarily staff member identification in both sites
<u>Finding 5:</u> Youth “earning redemption”, (altered community perception of the youth) a core external outcome resulting from participation in co-production interventions	Present in both case study sites		Yes
<u>Finding 6:</u> Improved youth/family relationships and improved family functioning identified as important outcomes		Site 1 only	Yes
<u>Finding 7:</u> New positive discharge and social support resources identified as important outcome		Site 2 only	Staff members only

## Appendix 15-8: Comparing Findings Related to Staff Outcomes-Sites 1 and 2

Findings Related to Staff Outcomes	Similarities	Uniqueness	Method Corroboration (Interviews/Focus Group)
<u>Finding 1:</u> Youth engagement and staff efficacy and empowerment co-vary		Unique finding to site 1	Yes
<u>Finding 2:</u> Organizational and External Environmental Factors are important antecedent factors linked to staff outcomes	<p><u>In site 1</u>, organizational factors (e.g., insufficient resources, inadequate planning time, complicated and ambitious job remits, and inadequate worker preparation) and external environmental factors (lack of sufficient support from funding authority for the innovation) found to be important factors linked to staff efficacy and empowerment</p> <p><u>In site 2</u>, some staff members experienced added stress and discomfort in leading and participating in the co-production innovation, negatively impacting on staff outcomes.</p>		Yes-Noted in interviews; corroborated and clarified during site 1 focus group
<u>Finding 3:</u> Enhanced staff engagement occurred from staff overseeing and facilitating co-production interventions.		Unique finding to site 2	Yes
<u>Finding 4:</u> Higher levels of staff engagement contributed to positive outcomes for youth and to the success of the Time Bank.		Unique finding to site 2	Yes
<u>Finding 5:</u> Staff efficacy and staff empowerment increased as they implemented co-production interventions.		Unique finding to site 2	Yes

**Appendix 15-9: Co-Production Interventions with Involuntary Youth: A Theoretically-Based and Empirically-Grounded Theory of Change to Address Youth and Staff Outcomes**



**Appendix 16-1: Micro-Level Co-Production Assumptions and Propositions: A Guide for Future Research**

Proposed Assumptions and Propositions	Empirical Support from this study	Priority for Future Study
<p><u>1. Engagement as a Developmental Progression</u></p> <p><u>Assumption 1A:</u> Youth engagement in co-production interventions involves a developmental progression.</p> <p><u>Assumption 1B:</u> A developmental progression for engagement starts with attendance and participation, which together facilitate behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement.</p> <p><u>Assumption 1C:</u> This transformation from compliance-oriented attendance and participation to voluntary engagement depends on core elements of co-production interventions.</p> <p><u>Assumption 1D:</u> Improved attendance, participation and later, behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement are proximal indicators of the efficacy and effectiveness of co-production interventions.</p> <p><u>Proposition 1A:</u> <i>In comparison with youth without co-production interventions, youth who participate in co-production interventions will be more likely to experience behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement.</i></p>	<p align="center">Yes</p> <p align="center">Yes</p> <p align="center">Yes</p> <p align="center">Yes</p>	<p align="center"><b>Priority 1</b></p>

**Appendix 16-1: Micro-Level Co-Production Assumptions and Propositions: A Guide for Future Research (cont.)**

<b>Proposed Assumptions and Propositions</b>	<b>Empirical Support from this study</b>	<b>Priority for Future Study</b>
<p><u>2-Levels of Involuntariness, Reactance and Engagement</u></p> <p><u>Assumption 2A:</u> Youth circumstances are important in structuring co-production interventions for involuntary youth.</p> <p><u>Assumption 2B:</u> Youth mandated or pressured to accept services manifest varying degrees of involuntariness</p> <p><u>Assumption 2C:</u> Levels of fate control, legal mandates and perceived loss of freedoms are determinants of the construct level of involuntariness.</p> <p><u>Assumption 2D:</u> Levels of involuntariness may change over time and are amenable to service interventions.</p> <p><u>Assumption 2E:</u> Co-production interventions must focus on decreasing the level of involuntariness and reactance of involuntary youth so that engagement can be enhanced.</p> <p><u>Proposition 2A:</u> <i>In comparison with youth without co-production interventions, youth who participate in co-production interventions will be more likely to experience reduced levels of fate control and reduced perceptions of loss of freedoms.</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 2B:</u> <i>In comparison with youth without co-production interventions, youth who participate in co-production interventions will be better able to reduce or eliminate the influence of legal mandates on their life circumstances.</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 2C:</u> <i>In comparison with youth without co-production interventions, youth who participate in co-production interventions will be more likely to experience reduced levels of involuntariness, levels of youth reactance and levels of hopelessness (level one empowerment outcomes).</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 2D:</u> <i>As levels of involuntariness and reactance decrease, the effectiveness of co-production interventions is enhanced. These changes may lead to increasing levels of youth and staff empowerment and engagement.</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Not a focus</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Priority 1</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 1</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 1</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 1</b></p>

**Appendix 16-1: Micro-Level Co-Production Assumptions and Propositions: A Guide for Future Research (cont.)**

<b>Proposed Assumptions and Propositions</b>	<b>Empirical Support from this study</b>	<b>Priority for Future Study</b>
<p><u>3- Staff Motivational Congruence and Engagement</u>  <u>Assumption 3A:</u> A range of interventions designed to enhance staff motivational congruence with supervisors, administrators and oversight bodies may be necessary to facilitate co-production interventions for involuntary youth.</p> <p><u>Proposition 3A:</u> <i>As staff motivational congruence increases, the range of available empowerment oriented intervention strategies increases, enhancing the potential benefits afforded to youth from participation.</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 3B:</u> <i>As staff motivational congruence increases, staff efficacy, empowerment and engagement improves.</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 3C:</u> <i>Staff motivational congruence and staff/youth motivational congruence are reciprocally related: As one improves, the other improves.</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Indirectly Yes</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Priority 2</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 2</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 2</b></p>
<p><u>4- Staff/Youth Motivational Congruence and Engagement</u>  <u>Assumption 4A:</u> Staff/youth motivational congruence can be semi-voluntary or voluntary</p> <p><u>Assumption 4B:</u> When semi-voluntary motivational congruence is present, a negotiated agreement between staff and youth (formal or informal) to work together on involuntary service mandates is effectuated.</p> <p><u>Assumption 4C:</u> When voluntary motivational congruence is present, a negotiated agreement between staff and youth (formal or informal) to work together on involuntary service mandates is effectuated.</p> <p><u>Assumption 4D:</u> Both semi-voluntary and voluntary motivational congruence facilitates the developmental progression from involuntary services to voluntary services.</p> <p><u>Assumption 4E:</u> Semi-voluntary and voluntary motivational congruence are distinct processes, both employing empowerment practices.</p> <p><u>Assumption 4F:</u> Staff/youth motivational congruence influences the availability and selection of empowerment practices and collaboration processes available to foster youth engagement.</p>	<p align="center"><b>Not a focus of study</b></p>	

**Appendix 16-1: Micro-Level Co-Production Assumptions and Propositions: A Guide for Future Research (cont.)**

Proposed Assumptions and Propositions	Empirical Support from this study	Priority for Future Study
<p><u>4-Staff/Youth Motivational Congruence and Engagement (cont.)</u>  <u>Proposition 4A:</u> <i>Youth who earn time dollars through their service and contribution efforts (or are reciprocated in some other manner) will be more likely to achieve semi-voluntary motivational congruence with staff than those youth who do not</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 4B:</u> <i>Youth who earn time dollars through their service and contribution efforts (or are reciprocated in some other manner) will be more likely to achieve voluntary motivational congruence with staff than those youth who do not</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 4C:</u> <i>Those youth and staff who attain both semi-voluntary and voluntary motivational congruence will be more likely to engage in higher levels of staff/youth collaboration than those who have not attained motivational congruence.</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 4E:</u> <i>As staff/youth motivational congruence moves from semi-voluntary to voluntary, levels of youth and staff engagement increases.</i></p>		<p align="center"><b>Priority 3</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 3</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 3</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 3</b></p>
<p><u>5-Family and Peer Support and Engagement</u>  <u>Assumption 5A:</u> Family member and peer involvement in interventions may mediate or moderate youth engagement.</p> <p><u>Assumption 5B:</u> Youth have attachment and belonging needs, which may serve as obstacles to attendance and participation; and both family members and peers are instrumental in meeting these needs.</p> <p><u>Assumption 5C:</u> Levels of family member and peer engagement in service interventions can influence targeted youth in terms of the youth's engagement.</p> <p><u>Proposition 5A:</u> <i>When family member and peers are engaged in client's co-production interventions, youth engagement is facilitated.</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 5B:</u> <i>When family members and peers engage in co-production interventions, youth evidence increases in their sense of connection to the agency and their sense of belonging to the program.</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 5C:</u> <i>As youth become more engaged, empowered and connected, they are more prepared to enhance the quality of their family life.</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 5D:</u> <i>As youth become more engaged, empowered and connected, they are more prepared to enhance the social competences of their peer group.</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Priority 1</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 1</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 1</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Priority 1</b></p>

**Appendix 16-1: Micro-Level Co-Production Assumptions and Propositions: A Guide for Future Research (cont.)**

<b>Proposed Assumptions and Propositions</b>	<b>Empirical Support from this study</b>	<b>Priority for Future Study</b>
<u>6-Staff/Youth Collaboration and Engagement</u>		
<u>Assumption 6A:</u> With involuntary youth, staff/youth collaboration is influenced by semi-voluntary and voluntary staff/youth motivational congruence.	<b>Not a focus of study</b>	
<u>Assumption 6B:</u> With involuntary youth, staff/youth collaboration is also influenced by factors such as client characteristics, level of reactance and level of involuntariness.	<b>Not a focus of study</b>	
<u>Assumption 6C:</u> Staff/youth collaboration occurs in phases, with a progression occurring from connecting/communicating, cooperating, coordinating/consulting, community-building and contracting. Heightened trust and mutual reciprocity are determining factors in this progression.	<b>Yes</b>	
<u>Assumption 6D:</u> Higher phases of staff/youth collaboration are accompanied by an increase in quantity of exchanges and an improvement in quality of exchanges.	<b>Yes</b>	
<u>Assumption 6E:</u> Empowerment oriented interventions facilitate staff/youth collaboration and are also influenced by levels of staff/youth collaboration	<b>Yes</b>	
<u>Assumption 6F:</u> Levels of staff/youth collaboration may mediate or moderate youth engagement.	<b>Yes</b>	
<u>Assumption 6G:</u> Increased levels of staff/youth collaboration are important proximal outcomes for co-production interventions for involuntary youth.	<b>Yes</b>	
<u>Proposition 6A:</u> <i>When staff and youth collaborate in projects that aid youth and families in the community, foster agency improvement or improve local communities, youth engagement is facilitated.</i>		<b>Priority 1</b>
<u>Proposition 6B:</u> <i>When staff and youth collaborate on projects, youth evidence increases in their sense of connection to the agency and their sense of purpose to the program.</i>		<b>Priority 1</b>
<u>Proposition 6C:</u> <i>When staff and youth collaborate on projects that seek to enhance organizations and institutions of import to the youth, youth evidence increases in their sense of connection to that organization and institution.</i>		<b>Priority 1</b>

**Appendix 16-1: Micro-Level Co-Production Assumptions and Propositions: A Guide for Future Research (cont.)**

<b>Proposed Assumptions and Propositions</b>	<b>Empirical Support from this study</b>	<b>Priority for Future Study</b>
<p><u>7- Empowerment-Oriented Interventions and Engagement</u></p> <p><u>Assumption 7A:</u> Essential features that guide general practice and structure group practice characterize empowering interventions (see appendix 9-4).</p> <p><u>Assumption 7B:</u> The utilization of empowerment practices is influenced by factors such as client characteristics, level of reactance, level of involuntariness, staff motivational congruence and staff/youth motivational congruence.</p> <p><u>Assumption 7C:</u> Strategies used to achieve semi-voluntary motivational congruence are empowering because the strategies involve youth voice and choice and negotiation between staff and youth.</p> <p><u>Assumption 7D:</u> Reduced level of involuntariness, client reactance and hopelessness are important proximal outcomes (level 1 outcomes) associated with empowerment practices for involuntary youth within a co-production framework.</p> <p><u>Assumption 7E:</u> Participation in co-production interventions can enable involuntary youth to achieve other internal and external gains such as enhanced levels of agency and initiative and material gains such as improvements in employment and educational statuses (level 2 outcomes).</p> <p><u>Proposition 7A:</u> <i>Co-Production interventions that are empowerment oriented will be more likely to facilitate staff/youth collaboration and youth engagement than those interventions that are not.</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Not a focus of study</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Priority 1</b></p>

**Appendix 16-1: Micro-Level Co-Production Assumptions and Propositions: A Guide for Future Research (cont.)**

Proposed Assumptions and Propositions	Empirical Support from this study	Priority for Future Study
<p><u>8- Autonomy Enhancing Interventions and Engagement</u></p> <p><u>Assumption 8A:</u> Empowerment-oriented intervention practices that foster youth autonomy are an essential component of co-production interventions (see appendix 9-4).</p> <p><u>Assumption 8B:</u> Autonomy development can be a proximal indicator/outcomes of co-production interventions for youth.</p> <p><u>Assumption 8C:</u> Both staff and youth have needs for autonomy, self-determination and intrinsic motivation, and co-production interventions may yield them when the intervention practices in appendix 9-4 are adopted and implemented.</p> <p><u>Assumption 8D:</u> Autonomy enhancing practices and interventions provide opportunities for initiative (Larson, 2001) among both staff and youth.</p> <p><u>Assumption 8E:</u> The fostering of autonomy, self-determination, intrinsic motivation and initiative are linked to emotional and cognitive engagement.</p> <p><u>Proposition 8A:</u> <i>When youth interventions are autonomy enhancing, enhanced levels of engagement for youth may occur.</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 8B:</u> <i>When enhanced levels of youth engagement resulting from participation in autonomy enhancing co-production interventions occur, both youth and staff autonomous behaviors, levels of self-determination, intrinsic motivation and opportunities for initiative increase.</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Priority 1</p> <p>Priority 1</p>

**Appendix 16-1: Micro-Level Co-Production Assumptions and Propositions: A Guide for Future Research (cont.)**

<b>Proposed Assumptions and Propositions</b>	<b>Empirical Support from this study</b>	<b>Priority for Future Study</b>
<p><u>9- Competency-Enhancing Interventions and Engagement</u>  <u>Assumption 9A:</u> Empowerment-oriented intervention practices that foster youth competencies are an essential component of co-production interventions. These practices are outlined in appendix 9-4.</p> <p><u>Assumption 9B:</u> Competency development is a proximal indicator/outcomes of co-production interventions for youth.</p> <p><u>Assumption 9C:</u> Both staff and youth have needs for competency development and co-production interventions may yield them when the intervention practices in appendix 9-4 are adopted and implemented.</p> <p><u>Assumption 9D:</u> The fostering of new competencies is linked to emotional and cognitive engagement.</p> <p><u>Proposition 9A:</u> <i>When youth and staff participate in co-production interventions that are competency enhancing, enhanced levels of youth and staff engagement may occur.</i></p>	<p><b>Some support</b></p> <p><b>Some support</b></p> <p><b>Some support</b></p> <p><b>Some support</b></p>	<p><b>Priority 2</b></p>
<p><u>10- Relationship and Connection Building Interventions and Engagement</u>  <u>Assumption 10A:</u> Empowerment-oriented intervention practices that foster personal relationships with pro-social adult role models and connections to community organizations of interest to the youth are an essential component of co-production interventions (see appendix 9-4).</p> <p><u>Assumption 10B:</u> The desire for belonging and connectedness draws youth initially to youth development programming.</p> <p><u>Assumption 10C:</u> The fostering of relatedness and belonging is linked to heightened levels of staff/youth collaboration and emotional engagement.</p> <p><u>Proposition 10A:</u> <i>When youth participate in co-production interventions that are relationship enhancing and build connections, enhanced levels of youth engagement may occur.</i></p>	<p><b>Yes –staff</b></p> <p><b>Yes-staff</b></p> <p><b>Yes-staff</b></p>	<p><b>Priority 1</b></p>

## Appendix 16-2: Meso-Level Co-Production Assumptions and Propositions: A Guide for Future Research

Proposed Assumptions and Propositions	Empirical Support from this study	Priority for Future Study	Discussion
<p><u>Organizational Setting Features</u></p> <p><u>Assumption 1A:</u> Organizational setting features influence staff/youth collaboration processes, empowerment practices and in turn, levels of voluntary engagement.</p> <p><u>Assumption 1B:</u> Organizational setting features can be categorized into (1) Larger organizational features and (2) Job structure and role features.</p> <p><u>Assumption 1C:</u> Examples of larger organizational features compatible to co-production include administrative and staff “buy in”, accountability structures that further co-production and the presence of systems of power sharing between youth and staff.</p> <p><u>Assumption 1D:</u> Examples of job structure and role features compatible to co-production include job clarity, job autonomy, quality supervision and the presence of ongoing training and capacity building.</p> <p><u>Assumption 1E:</u> Co-production interventions may modify organizational settings and interactions between setting features.</p>	<p><b>Indirectly Yes</b></p> <p><b>Indirectly Yes</b></p> <p><b>Indirectly Yes</b></p> <p><b>Indirectly Yes</b></p> <p><b>Indirectly Yes</b></p>		

**Appendix 16-2: Meso-Level Co-Production Assumptions and Propositions: A Guide for Future Research (cont.)**

<b>Proposed Assumptions and Propositions</b>	<b>Empirical Support from this study</b>	<b>Priority for Future Study</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<p><u>Proposition 1A:</u> <i>When interventions create organizational settings that are conducive to co-production, collaboration processes and empowerment practices will be enhanced, resulting in enhanced levels of voluntary engagement.</i></p> <p><u>Proposition 1B:</u> <i>When co-production interventions emphasize collaboration and empowerment, these interventions also generate improvements in organizational settings.</i></p> <p><u>2. Program Model Features</u></p> <p><u>Assumption 2A:</u> Organizations have their preferred program service models which staff are expected to implement with fidelity.</p> <p><u>Assumption 2B:</u> Preferred program service models utilized by organizations need to be conducive to and compatible with co-production interventions for voluntary engagement is to be achieved.</p> <p><u>Assumption 2C:</u> Program service model features that are compatible with co-production include but are not limited to (1) asset/strength based services/treatment practice approaches, including active client participation in service planning and implementation, (2) family and peer involvement in support of the target client, (3) time for reflective practice and (4) Sufficient dosage and length of service provision (see appendix 9-2).</p>	<p><b>Indirectly Yes</b></p> <p><b>Indirectly Yes</b></p> <p><b>Indirectly Yes</b></p>	<p><b>Priority 2</b></p> <p><b>Priority 2</b></p>	



**Appendix 16-3: A Logic Model of a Quasi-Experimental Research Design for Co-Production Interventions for Involuntary Youth**

Preconditions/ Antecedent Factors	Empowerment- Driven Autonomy and Relatedness Practices and Strategies	Proximal Outcomes/ Indicators	Youth Engagement	Other Youth Outcomes
<p>Level of Youth Involuntariness</p> <p>Levels of Staff/Youth Motivational Congruence on Involuntary Service Mandates</p> <p>Organizational, Programmatic and Systemic Factors Conducive to Co-Production Interventions (see appendix 9-2)</p>	<p>General Empowerment Practices</p> <p>Group Empowerment Practices</p> <p>Autonomy-Related Practices</p> <p>Relatedness Related Practices</p> <p>(See appendixes 9-4; 15-4; 15-5)</p>	<p><u>Autonomy</u></p> <p>-Youth involved in informal and/or formal youth leadership roles</p> <p>-Youth exercising voice and choice</p> <p><u>Relatedness</u></p> <p>-Evidence of Relational Trust</p> <p>-Evidence of Proxy Agency</p>	<p>Compliance with Service Mandates</p> <p>Attendance</p> <p>Behavioral Engagement</p> <p>Emotional Engagement</p> <p>Cognitive Engagement</p>	<p>Level 1 and Level 2 Empowerment Outcomes, including positive identity gains</p> <p>Bonding social capital</p> <p>Evidence of “earned redemption from community members</p> <p>Staff/youth collaboration</p>

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