




# Thriving Youth Coaches Guide

An actionable book study for anyone working to help young people thrive.





This coaching guide was created by the 4-H Nebraska state leadership team and Stephanie Malia Krauss. Every day 4-H helps young people find their sparks and prepare for the future. This resource combines 4-H wisdom with actionable insights from Stephanie's books—*Making It: What Today's Kids Need for Tomorrow's World* and *Whole Child, Whole Life: 10 Ways to Help Kids Live, Learn, and Thrive*.

We hope this guide helps you prepare and care for young people in a rapidly changing game of life.





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A tool to reflect on your work coaching young people to thrive. This exercise is about you and your growth

## A1 Sample Schedules

- Short studies: 4 or 6 sessions
- Long study: 10 sessions
- Intensives: Single or Multi-Day Retreats

## A2 4-H Thriving Model

A copy of the 4-H Thriving Model to reference throughout the experience

## A3 Action Step Template

A template or worksheet to track actions you want to take after each session

## A4 Section Index

An at-a-glance index with section titles, page numbers, and recommended readings





01

# Getting Started

Welcome Message  
Tips for Getting Started

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# Welcome!

Welcome to the Thriving Youth Coaches Guide! Like America's favorite pastime, 4-H has been a constant presence in the lives of young people and communities for more than a century. Both baseball and 4-H have withstood the test of time, enduring world events, national crises, societal shifts, and historic firsts. Baseball and 4-H are timely and timeless sources of joy for countless young people and communities.

Whether you're a fan of baseball, part of 4-H, or neither, your dedication to young people makes you the coach they need to navigate the changing game of life. In challenging times, youth need coaches to get them beyond ready for whatever the future holds.

As coaches, we must learn the evolving rules of the "game" and update our understanding of what thriving and readiness require. This guide invites you to reflect on your "coaching" work and commit to strategies that help youth thrive in today and tomorrow's world.

This guide is designed as an actionable book study. It uses two books rooted in research on positive youth development and readiness to provide a reflective process you can use personally, with peers, or with your program team.

This experience is for adults working directly with young people or overseeing youth programs and partnerships. If you use the 4-H Thriving Model, we have included it in the back (A2, page 50).

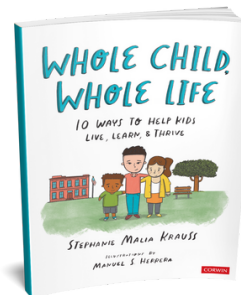
By using this Coaching Guide and applying these concepts in your work and relationships with young people, we hope you feel better equipped to help them thrive and reach their full potential.



# Tips for Getting Started

## ✓ DECIDE HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

- Personally for individual growth
- Peer discussion guide
- Program staff development or retreat



## ✓ CHOOSE A SCHEDULE (SEE A1)

- 4 sessions
- 6 sessions
- 10 sessions
- Single or multi-day intensive
- Custom schedule

## ✓ GET YOUR BOOKS

- Making It: What Today's Kids Need for Tomorrow's World
- Whole Child, Whole Life: 10 Ways to Help Kids Live, Learn, and Thrive

## ✓ DO THE PRE-WORK

- Set your intentions
- Create a Scouting Report

### Tip

This coaching guide uses two books rooted in positive youth development and readiness.

For the best experience, we recommend personal copies of each book. This enables maximum flexibility and personalization.

If this isn't possible, consider sharing books. Or, skip recommended readings and build a custom experience based on content in the guide.



02

# Setting Intentions

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# Setting Intentions

Take time to reflect on why you are using this coaching guide and what you hope to gain. Preview sections. See how topics are organized and questions are phrased. Review the pre-work assignments.

## STEP 01

### Consider your why

- What prompted you to use this guide?
- How does this connect to your work and priorities?
- What do you hope to gain from this experience?

## STEP 02

### Consider your how

- Review A1 (pp. 45–49) to choose a schedule, or create your own
- Identify any support you need to make this worthwhile
- Consider how to hold yourself accountable for taking action

## STEP 03

### Consider your goals

- What topics are you most excited about?
- What program do you plan to focus on?
- What would “success” look like at the end of this experience?

**YOUR INTENTIONS CAN  
EVOLVE AS YOU PROGRESS  
THROUGH THIS  
EXPERIENCE. RETURN TO  
THEM PERIODICALLY TO  
REFLECT AND ADJUST.**

Approach this guide with an open mind, a collaborative spirit, and a commitment to implementing research-backed ideas that help youth thrive now and in the future.

This guide will be as good as you make it. Customize and adjust as you go. Create an experience that works for you!

03

# Scouting Report

Demographics and Determinants

Age and Stage

Brain and Body

People and Places

Strengths and Struggles

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# Scouting Report

## Get to Know Your Players

**Demographics & Determinants**



**Age & Stage**



**Brain & Body**



**People & Places**



**Strengths & Struggles**

This pre-work activity takes approximately 3 to 4 hours, depending on your approach, access to information, and whether you respond anecdotally or with data. This report provides an in-depth look of youth in your program and community. To complete it, you may need input from partners and access to publicly available data and/or program data.



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# Scouting Report

## Get to Know Your Players

### Demographics & Determinants

**What are the personal characteristics (demographics) of youth in your program &/or community?**

Socioeconomic status  
Gender  
Disabilities and differences  
Sexuality (if relevant)  
Citizenship status (if relevant)

**What are the living conditions (determinants) of youth in your program and/or community?**

Environmental  
Social  
Political  
Historical

**What demographic or determinant differences do you expect between young people you work with now and those you may engage in the future?**

**What is one challenge young people in your program face because of their demographics and determinants that you can address?**

### Tips

- Decide where and how you want to record responses
- If doing this as a group, assign responsibilities, set a deadline, and meet to discuss findings
- Consult public and program data sources for detailed information



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# Scouting Report

## Get to Know Your Players

### Age and Stage

#### Instructions

- Review developmental milestones for each stage of childhood and adolescence on pages 14 and 15
- Select milestones that best describe young people in your program
- Reflect on your assessment of young people's developmental stages and range
- Identify one developmental challenge you can address

#### Tips

- If you don't work with youth, complete this exercise with those who do
- Ages and stages don't always match



# Scouting Report

## Get to Know Your Players

### Age and Stage

#### Infancy

- Fully rely on caregivers and family
- Recognize and respond to familiar people
- Developing gross motor skills and increased body control
- Developing early social interactions and give-and-takes (e.g., smiles)
- Developing early language and communications, often by copying
- Initial signs of obvious health concerns and physical differences

#### Young Children

- Learning through imaginative play, games, and role-playing
- Developing fine motor skills, such as holding a pencil or tying shoelaces
- Fluent in first language (whatever is spoken at home)
- Easily play with others and form fast friendships
- Rely on caregivers and adults for safety and permission to take risks
- Initial signs of less obvious physical limitations, such as hearing loss

#### Older Children

- Learning through active engagement, experiences, and reflection
- Strengthening significant friendships that could last for years
- Rely on caregivers for safety, structure, and limits on risk-taking
- Initial signs of certain cognitive differences and disabilities
- Initial onset of certain mental illnesses, like anxiety and OCD
- Developing more complex thinking and independent decision-making
- Heightened awareness of self, and social pressures



# Scouting Report

## Get to Know Your Players

### Age and Stage

#### Tweens

- Initial onset of puberty
- Developing capacity for abstract thinking and executive functioning
- Able to see self in the context of relationships and a bigger world
- Exploring who they are and where they belong (identity formation)
- Emerging awareness of others being treated poorly
- Increasing sensitivity around image, peer perspectives, and pressure
- Increasing reliance on peers over family and other adults

#### Teens

- Continued progression of puberty, including physical and cognitive growth
- Intensified reliance on peers over family and other adults
- Hyper-social with a need to be socially connected
- Pushing for increased independence and autonomy
- Increasing independent risk-taking
- Possible start or intensifying of certain behavioral health risks, like addictions
- Starting to explore and think about sexuality

#### Young Adults

- Mostly independent and autonomous
- Maturing sense of self
- Growing awareness of the impacts of demographics and determinants
- Stabilizing puberty-related body and hormonal changes
- May engage in longer-term romantic relationships and friendships
- May be able to live independently and launch into adulthood



# Scouting Report

## Get to Know Your Players

### Brains & Bodies

#### Nourishment

- Eats nutritious food, including plant-based options
- Obtains various healthy food options
- Drinks toxin-free water

#### Sleep

- Gets enough sleep
- Gets restful, quality sleep with limited disruptions
- Uses naps if needed

#### Movement

- Regularly exercises the brain and body
- Limits sedentary activities

#### Relationships

- Engages in positive social interactions
- Has healthy relationships with friends and family
- Limits social isolation

#### Stress Management

- Copes with life's challenges
- Has positive ways to calm down after stressful events
- Has healthy relaxation strategies

#### Sobriety

- Avoids illegal substances
- Avoids mood-changing or addictive substances
- Avoids addictive and negatively mood-altering activities

### Instructions

- Review each essential health activity
- Assess the state of health for young people in your program
- Reflect on your assessment and identify a challenge you can address

### Tips

- Decide where and how you want to record responses
- If doing this as a group, assign responsibilities, set a deadline, and meet to discuss findings
- Consider getting input from others, including youth and their families
- If you don't know information or feel it's not relevant for your program, move on





# Scouting Report

## Get to Know Your Players

### People & Places

#### Education

- Schools
- Postsecondary programs
- Early childhood centers
- Educational services

#### Youth Development

- Afterschool programs
- Before school programs
- Summer programs
- Sports programs
- Community programs

#### Health

- Pediatric health facilities
- Dental care facilities
- Speciality health services (e.g., OT and PT)

#### Neighborhoods

- Housing complexes
- Areas of town
- Areas of a county
- Specific neighborhoods

#### Community Spaces

- Library
- Public parks
- Museums
- Restaurants
- Popular hangouts

#### Virtual

- Social media platforms
- Video games
- Popular apps
- School-required platforms

### Instructions

- Review each category and examples of where youth spend time
- Replace examples with a customized list for youth in your program
- Brainstorm key relationships youth have in each place
- Reflect on this map of people and places and choose one challenge you can address

### Tips

- Decide where and how you want to record responses
- If doing this as a group, assign responsibilities, set a deadline, and meet to discuss findings
- Consider getting input from others, including youth and their families



# Scouting Report

## Get to Know Your Players

### Strengths & Struggles

#### Instructions

1. Consider how your program helps young people develop readiness competencies
2. Select any competencies from the list that your program focuses on
3. Brainstorm sparks your program helps young people discover and pursue
4. Identify one way to broaden or deepen activities for young people to develop competencies and sparks

#### Readiness Competencies

- Focus and get things done
- Think and create in ways that help youth navigate, experience, and contribute to the world
- Apply learning in the real world
- Solve problems and make decisions
- Get and stay physically, emotionally, and cognitively fit
- Feel and express emotions appropriately
- Persist through struggles and maintain hope
- Persist through struggles and maintain hope
- Relate to others and the world by forming, managing, and sustaining positive relationships
- Be present and engage in appropriate ways
- Use insights to grow and develop

#### Additional Competencies

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- 
- 

#### Sparks

- What special skills does your program help young people develop?
- What are some personal interests your program helps young people discover and pursue?
- What personal qualities does your program help young people strengthen?



04

# Preparing Players

Evolution of the Game  
Get to Know Your Players  
Develop Essential Skills & Relationships  
Advanced Education & Training  
Required Resources

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# Evolution of the Game



## LIKE BASEBALL, THE “GAME OF LIFE” IS EVOLVING WITH TIME.

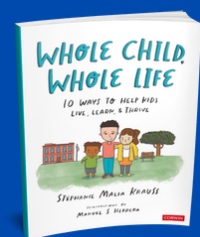
Today’s young people must be able to live, learn, and work in a rapidly changing world. Everything is fast and demanding. Young people are growing up amid unprecedented events and historic firsts. To help young people be ready and well, we must understand how these forces shape their lives and futures.

“Today, young people are transitioning into an adult life full of rapid change and unpredictability. It is time for us to update our understanding of what young people need and upgrade their educational and preparatory experiences accordingly.”



“This world is different from the one most adults grew up in. Kids have to deal with school shootings, a huge mental health crisis, changing weather like snow in Texas, and tons of war. And that’s our normal!”

JUSTICE KRAUSS, AGE 11  
PREFACE





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# Evolution of the Game

## READ OR REVIEW



- Introduction, pp. xxvii – xxxi
- Tomorrow's World, pp. 21–49



- Preface, pp. xiii–xv

## REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Three powerful forces are shaping the future: machines, momentum, and markets.

- How are these forces impacting you and your community?
- How are these forces changing how young people in your program live, learn, and prepare for the future?
- How is your program evolving to address these forces?

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted many disparities, including a significant digital divide.

- What technology gaps did young people in your community face?
- What technology gaps still exist?
- How can you help young people, including those with limited technology access, prepare for a tech-dependent future?

## ACT

- Look at the challenges you identified in the Scouting Report. Choose one that relates to this section.
- List steps you can take to address this challenge or opportunity.
- Identify any resources and partners you need.
- Record the first step you want to take (see A3, page 51).
- Stay accountable! Schedule time with a colleague to follow up on this action.



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# Get to Know Your Players

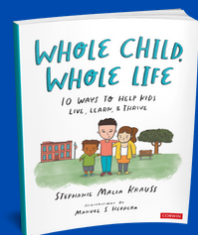
## A MAJOR PART OF COACHING IS HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE PREPARE FOR A LIFETIME OF LEARNING AND WORK.

We want young people to build skills and participate in programs that set them up to thrive over the long haul. Many young people will live longer than ever. They could live 100 years and experience a 60-year career! Like any good coach, your guidance and decisions should be based on knowing who young people are, what they are going through, and what they will need to play in many contexts and conditions.

“Our de facto ‘checklist for adulthood’ – finish high school, go to college, graduate, get a job, make money, get promoted (or find a better job), retire, and live comfortably – no longer holds. Tomorrow’s world is a vast and ever-evolving opportunity marketplace that demands certain life currencies to make it.”



“Our portrait of a whole child is complete when we take our working knowledge of who kids are, where they come from, how they are doing, and the stage of life they’re in, and blend those features with an authentic understanding of their real-time strengths and struggles.”





# Get to Know Your Players

## READ OR REVIEW



- Today's Kids, pp. 3–20



- Introduction, pp. 1–4
- Part 1, pp. 7–77

## REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Today's young people are digital and disruption natives.

- How have you seen this play out in your program?
- How has technology impacted your work with youth?
- How have disruptive events impacted your work with youth and your program?

Consider your Scouting Report.

- What parts of the “whole child” portrait do you want to learn more about?
- How has the portrait of young people in your program changed over time?
- What did the Scouting Report pre-work and these readings teach you about yourself?

## ACT

- Return to your Scouting Report and identify areas where you have more to learn.
- List steps to get the information you need.
- Identify resources you need to move forward.
- Record the first step you want to take (see A3, page 51).
- Stay accountable! Schedule time with a colleague to follow up on this action.



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# Develop Essential Skills & Relationships

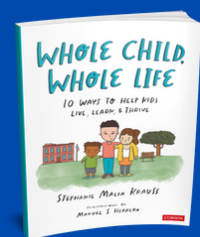
**AS A COACH, YOU HELP YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOP COMPETENCIES AND CONNECTIONS THEY WILL NEED THROUGHOUT LIFE.**

In your program, you help young people develop skills and supports that will help them thrive now and in the future. What they gain in your program can benefit them for years to come.

“The competencies look different, depending on how old kids are, who they are, where they are developmentally, and what they are trying to do. In spite of the fact that we organize most youth experiences by age or grade, it doesn’t always match where they are or what they need. As we know, kids develop on their own unique timelines.”



“Relationship skills can be learned, practiced, and strengthened. Young people must be able to use them in person and online. Without specific instruction, kids will relate and respond to people in ways that have been modeled for them, whether those are healthy or not.”







# Develop Essential Skills & Relationships

## READ OR REVIEW



- Competencies, pp. 53–71
- Connections, pp. 73–90



- Nurture Healthy Relationships, pp. 137–150

## REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Look at the “Strengths and Struggles” section of the Scouting Report on page 18.

- Which readiness competencies does your program focus on?
- Chose two competencies. What are your favorite strategies or activities to develop each one?

Healthy relationships are essential for thriving.

- How does your program provide young people with lifelines, navigators, and door openers (see “Connections” in Making It for details)
- What strategies or activities work best for building each of these relationships?

How can you leverage new partnerships and resource to help young people develop essential skills and relationships?

## ACT

- Identify 2–3 competencies you want to focus on over the next few weeks.
- Identify one way to strengthen relationship-building.
- Plan to do specific activities to develop those competencies and connections.
- Identify resources you need to move forward.
- Record the first step you want to take (see A3, page 51).
- Stay accountable! Schedule time with a colleague to follow up on this action.



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# Advanced Education & Training

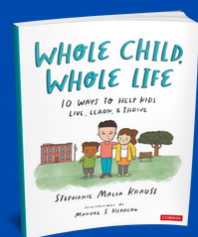
**LIKE COACHES OF FUTURE PRO ATHLETES, WE HOPE YOUNG PEOPLE TAKE WHAT THEY LEARN FROM US, AND USE IT TO THRIVE IN THE FUTURE.**

Studies and stories clearly link young people's education and youth development experiences with future educational and employment choices. Update your understanding of how the postsecondary world works before advising young people on their postsecondary directions.

"Today's kids must understand that they are consumers in the US credentialing marketplace. It will be about credential readiness, which goes beyond college readiness. They are purchasing postsecondary products, which will require smart consumer behaviors."



"Let's not pressure kids when they're young to choose a single career path or passion to pursue. Instead, let them discover the causes, questions, and careers they want to explore. In a long life, the first credential will probably not be the last, and we should adjust our expectations accordingly."





# Advanced Education & Training

## READ OR REVIEW



- Credentials, pp. 91-107



- Act With a 100-Year Mindset, pp. 201-210

## REFLECT AND DISCUSS

The postsecondary credentialing landscape is massive. In 2024, nearly 60,000 credentialing providers offered over 1 million credentialing options in the United States.

- What postsecondary education and training options are available to young people in your program and community?
- What does this mean for getting them ready for the future?
- How do you need to update or change how you talk about postsecondary options?

Reflect on whether you think a college degree is still worth it.

- What do you advise young people who don't want to go to college?
- How do you think this could change over the next few years?

## ACT

- Identify program activities where you plan for postsecondary learning and work.
- Brainstorm ways you better prepare young people and families for this vast and still-growing marketplace.
- List steps to get the information you need.
- Identify resources you will need to move forward.
- Record the first step you want to take (see A3, page 51).
- Stay accountable! Schedule time with a colleague to follow up on this action.

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# Required Resources



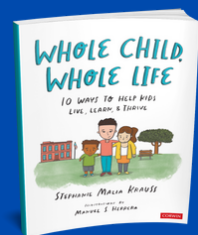
## LIKE TRAINING TO BECOME A PRO BASEBALL PLAYER, PREPARING AND PAYING FOR THE GAME OF LIFE IS EXPENSIVE.

Cash and basic resources are required for most things, including many education and youth development opportunities. Resources often determine what young people can access and enjoy. We know cash is important, but we don't always talk about it with young people. We must support young people and families who struggle to get by, offering assistance and helping them learn ways to save and spend money.

“For older kids and young adults, the recession triggered by Covid-19 was not their first. The high school graduating class of 2020 was in kindergarten when the Great Recession hit. The major economic crises of our lifetime have bookended their K-12 experience, defining their childhoods and now their transitions into adulthood and the job market.”



“Young people can have unmet essential needs for many reasons. Sometimes their families can't afford essentials, or they don't have access to them. Sometimes they are denied essentials or given resources that are unhealthy or dangerous, like contaminated water. Sometimes essentials are cut off due to disaster or an emergency. There are young people whose essential needs hinge on medical treatments and medications, like a breathing machine or trach. In these cases, meeting essential needs requires ongoing access to specific medical treatments and supplies.”





# Required Resources

## READ OR REVIEW



- Cash, pp. 109–127



- Meet Basic Needs, pp. 81–99

## REFLECT AND DISCUSS

If you have *Whole Child, Whole Life*, look at Figure 3 on p. 96.

Young people have many basic needs, including the need for essentials like food, housing, and safety. Young people also need downtime, play, purpose, belonging, and more.

- What unmet basic needs do young people in your program experience?
- How does your program try to address those needs, if at all? Are there things you want to do differently?

Life is expensive, and young people must plan and pay for financial realities they face in the future.

- How do you teach financial literacy or money management?
- Are there ways you prepare youth to become financially resilient?
- How does your program provide financial assistance to young people and families?

## ACT

- Review the text boxes about supporting kids who struggle to get by, and opportunity costs, found on pages 115 and 123 of *Making It*.
  - Choose one suggestion from each list to try.
- Identify specific activities where you can put these suggestions into action.
- Identify resources you need to move forward.
- Record the first step you want to take (see A3, page 51).
- Stay accountable! Schedule time with a colleague to follow up on this action.



05

# Caring for Players

Build a Strong Foundation  
Nurture the Team  
Support Player Pathways  
Cultivate a Love of the Game  
Focus on the Goal

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# Build a Strong Foundation

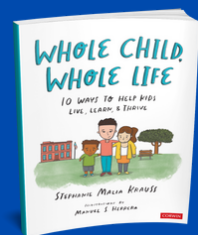
**QUALITY OF LIFE IS FOUNDATIONAL FOR LEARNING AND WORK. TO THRIVE NOW, YOUNG PEOPLE MUST BE ABLE TO ENDURE AND ENJOY THEIR EXPERIENCES.**

Young people's foundational needs extend beyond physical safety and security to include exploration, play, community, purpose, and belonging. These are crucial for healthy growth and development. As coaches of thriving, we must prioritize young people's mental health and personal interests, finding ways to support both in our programs.

“Our current realities and the unknown future will stretch today's kids to the max and their health will directly impact their ability to show up to school and perform on the job. Education exercises the mind, and the mind is part of the body. Kids' health directly affects how they learn and develop.”



“We hold power that shapes and shifts kids' interests based on our attention and responses . . . investing in kids' personal interests is an investment into everyday interactions with kids themselves . . . investments of time and attention are as important as connecting kids to programs and offering them new opportunities.”





# Build a Strong Foundation

## READ OR REVIEW



- Let's Face It – the Future Is Now, p. xxx–xxxi



- Prioritize Mental Health, pp. 103–123
- Invest in Personal Interests, pp. 125–134

## REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Review “Common Signs of Youth Mental Health Challenges” on pp. 105–106 of Whole Child, Whole Life, or, download “Youth Mental Health Red Flags” at [www.wholechildwholelife.com/resources](http://www.wholechildwholelife.com/resources).

- Which signs have been observed in your program?
- Have any been increasing in ways that worry you?
- How have you responded, and what do you want to do if it happens again?
- How do you want to address mental health needs if you aren't a licensed professional?
  - What can/should you provide?
  - What resources can you access or refer to?

Every young person needs purpose, but not everyone needs a passion.

- Do you agree with this and what does that mean for your work with young people?
- What does it take to help young people find their purpose and spark, especially in challenging times?

## ACT

- Over the next few weeks, try two or more of the “Try This” activities from the Whole Child, Whole Life readings (described below and detailed in the chapters).
  - Sign up for a Mental Health First Aid class.
  - Memorize 988, the 911 for mental health emergencies.
  - Develop an emotional “wound care” kit to help young people in emotional pain.
  - Print a roster of youth in your program, and list personal interests next to each name. If you don't know them, make a plan to find out.
  - Try a new activity that interests you!



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# Nurture the Team



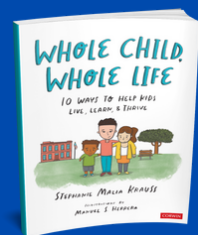
**RELATIONSHIPS MATTER. THE PEOPLE AROUND US PROFOUNDLY IMPACT HOW WE LIVE, LEARN, AND WHETHER WE LOVE OUR LIVES.**

We are all social beings, but young people are developmentally primed to be hyper-social. From the end of elementary school to early adulthood, young people are discovering who they are and where they belong. A positive sense of self protects young people from harm, and helps them feel healthy, happy, and whole.

“Imagine living to be 100, or older. The quality of your life – as demographers and scientists have discovered – will be determined, in large part, by the vibrancy of your social network and supports. As social animals, our bodies and brains correspond to how we are doing relationally.”



“[To] cultivate belonging with kids we care about, we must double down on teaching and encouraging empathy, compassion, courage, and conflict resolution. We must prioritize and make time for relationship building and team building, nurturing meaningful connections, and helping young people form a sense of shared identity and purpose.”





# Nurture the Team

## READ OR REVIEW



- Build Community and Belonging, pp. 155–167
- Embrace Identities and Cultures, pp. 169–184

## REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Youth programs provide different types of community. There are communities that form because of convenience, cohorts, crews, culture, causes, and even crisis. See Table 18 on page 157 of *Whole Child, Whole Life* for details.

- What communities are present in your program?
  - Which communities are strongest?
  - Which communities cause problems?
  - What communities do young people build in your program?

There are five stages of cultural connection: coming together, connecting to self, connecting to each other, connecting to community, and connecting to the world. See Figure 6 on p. 174 in *Whole Child, Whole Life* for details.

- When and how do you help young people explore and experience their cultures?
- When and how do you help young people explore and experience different cultures?

## ACT

Over the next few weeks, try two or more “Try This” activities from the *Whole Child, Whole Life* readings (described below, detailed in book).

- List communities you were a part of growing up. Brainstorm the benefits you experienced.
- Over the next few weeks, observe how youth in your program gather and organize. See if you can identify which communities are present in your program.
- Plan an “equalizing” team-building experience for youth where everyone is doing something new and working together.
- Ask youth to learn and share the stories of their name.
- Write or record your story of cultural awareness and connection.

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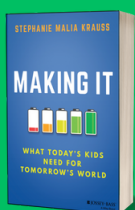
# Support Player Pathways



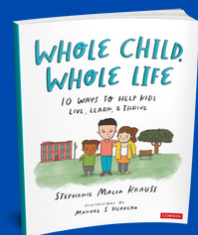
**YOUNG PEOPLE ARE GROWING UP AND ENTERING ADULTHOOD IN UNCERTAIN TIMES. THEY COULD LIVE LONGER THAN EVER, 100-YEAR LIVES MIGHT BECOME THE EXPECTATION, NOT EXCEPTION.**

Living longer does not mean living better. To get youth beyond ready, prioritize future pathways that go in many directions, not one. Consider how young people's past, including family history, shapes how they live now, and what they will need later. Understanding young people's histories and possible futures will help them thrive.

“Our job is not finished with a handoff at 18 to a college, employer of the United States military. Instead, it should be viewed as a partnership with young people throughout the first quarter of their lives, to support them in getting what they need to make it during the next three quarters. We are preparing young people for the possibility of a 100-year life.”



“Young people live according to the daily rhythms of their life circumstances, health, development, learning, and well-being. Change can happen at any point and for many reasons. By starting with and centering a young person and their family as individuals, you open up the possibility of being able to meet and support the whole child.”





# Support Player Pathways

## READ OR REVIEW



- Becoming a Currency-Builder, pp. 131-145



- Attend to the Past and Present, pp. 187-199
- Six Stages of Future Forecasting, pp. 207-208

## REFLECT AND DISCUSS

When making rounds at the hospital, doctors funnel questions – they start with questions about what is happening now, then move to prior experiences, and finally family history.

- In your program, what is your strategy for learning about young people's past experiences and family histories?
- Do you want to know more about young people's backgrounds? If so, why?

Imagine if every young person in your program lived to be 100.

- Would that change your programming and long-term outcomes or goals?
- Consider how young people are doing now. Are they on track to build long lives they love?
- How can you take a lifelong and long-life perspective in your work with young people?

## ACT

- Plan a “future forecasting” activity in your program. For an outline of each step, see pp. 207-208 In Whole Child, Whole Life, or download an overview at [www.wholechildwholelife.com/resources](http://www.wholechildwholelife.com/resources).
- Brainstorm how you can regularly use this forecasting exercise in your program.
- Identify any resources or partnerships you need.
- Commit to your next action and record it (see A3, page 51).
- Keep yourself accountable! Schedule a check-in to follow-up on your decision.



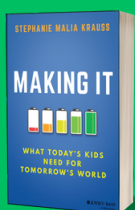
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# Cultivate a Love of the Game

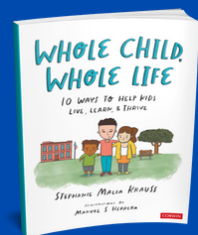
## THRIVING IS MORE THAN ENDURING LIFE. IT IS BEING ABLE TO ENJOY IT.

Growing up in today's world means facing many historic and complex challenges. Our programs can be safe harbors where youth build skills, find purpose, have fun, and prepare for futures that excite them. Young people need to feel connected to something bigger than themselves. They want to make positive change and help people. Service and spirituality are ways youth thrive. They should be prioritized in your programs.

“While they may not be the generation to start new companies and take economic risks, they are the generation to see the many ways their lives are on the line, and the many injustices pushing them down and holding them back. We must support them in whatever ways we can to achieve their demands for something different and better.”



“It can be difficult to think of ways to support a child's spiritual development, especially in places like public schools that are expressly nonreligious. However, it is important to make it a priority, because when we dismiss or denigrate this part of a child, we make their lives harder. By generating or sharing experiences that spark awe, strengthen spirituality, and encourage the development of a moral compass, we invest in core assets that will support young people's well-being and wholeness for the rest of their lives.”





# Cultivate a Love of the Game

## READ OR REVIEW



- Today's Kids, pp. 12–15



- Be a Force for Good, pp. 213–223
- Seek Awe and Wonder, pp. 225–233

## REFLECT AND DISCUSS

As we grow up, we ask ourselves: Who am I? Where do I belong? Am I a part of something bigger than myself? Service and spirituality help answer all three.

- In your program, how do you help young people connect to causes they care about?
- How do you help young people be forces for good?

Young people are wired for spirituality. They experience it through service, music, art, animals, and more (see Table 20 on pp. 231–232 in *Whole Child, Whole Life* for details).

- When and how do you help young people tap into their natural spirituality?
- What parts of your program promote or prohibit spiritual development?

## ACT

Over the next few weeks, nurture your spiritual development by implementing 2–3 of these spiritual care strategies:

- Be of service.
- Immerse yourself in art or music.
- Get outside and enjoy nature.
- Try a new activity or experience.
- Spent time with people or pets you love.
- Engage in religious or spiritual traditions.
- Do something where you're a fan/spectator.
- Play and have fun.
- Enjoy alone time and make a gratitude list.
- Attend a service, ceremony, or celebration.

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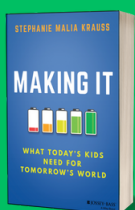
# Focus on the Goal



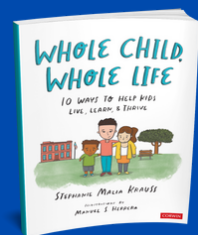
**THE GOAL OF ANY COACH SHOULD BE TO SEE PLAYERS SHINE IN THE GAME. TO PLAY THEIR BEST AND ENJOY WHAT THEY ARE DOING.**

To support young people’s thriving, we learn who they are. We consider their context and regularly assess how they are doing. We determine what they need now and prepare for the future. Young people thrive in relationships and environments where they are known, safe and supported, healthy and healing, rooted and connected, learning and growing, and living with joy and purpose.

“Beyond making it, young people need us to help them flourish in changing and challenging times. To take whatever life looks like, and make it something worthwhile, meaningful, and healthful – to not just prepare, but provide today’s kids with the promise of well-being and well-becoming.”



“These practices are dynamic and personal, changing depending on context and circumstances . . . It can be hard to prioritize these whole life practices when there is little time and competing demands. Stay motivated! These are what matter most for kids, and when they’re not present, young people struggle and suffer unnecessarily. When they are in place, young people experience health and happiness, and they are better able to learn and develop.”





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# Focus on the Goal

## READ OR REVIEW



- Taking It to the Next Level, p. 145



- Aiming for Wholeness, pp. 237–244

## REFLECT AND DISCUSS

There are five dimensions of thriving: being safe and supported, healthy and healing, rooted and connected, learning and growing, and living with joy and purpose.

- Imagine a scoresheet from harmful to helpful. How would you rank your program for each dimension of thriving?
- Does this change for different young people in your program?
- When it comes to helping youth thrive, what barriers do you face?

Look at the 4-H Thriving Model In Appendix 2 (A2, page 50).

- How does your program alignment with and advance this framework?
  - What is your developmental context?
  - How are you helping youth thrive?
  - What developmental and long-term outcomes do you hope to achieve?

## ACT

- Brainstorm practices that ensure each dimension of thriving.
  - What are specific strategies you want in place every time you are with youth?
  - What are strategies you only need every once in a while or for certain activities?
- Select one of these practices to implement immediately.
- Identify resources you need to move forward.
- Record the first step you want to take (see A3, page 51).
- Stay accountable! Schedule time with a colleague to follow up on this action.



06

# Wrap-Up

Your Role as Coach

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COACH

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# Your Role as Coach

**AS A “COACH” OF THRIVING, YOU PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN YOUNG PEOPLE’S LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND PREPARATION.**

Take time to consider your work with young people.

- How would you describe what you do and why you do it?
- What does it take to coach when the game is changing?
- What is your coaching philosophy?



“This work can be a call, a choice, and a chore. It spans caregiving, teaching, coaching, counseling, mentoring, advising, and more. Through it all, we journey alongside humans who are growing up and into themselves. Getting to play a role in their great creation story is sacred and a privilege.”

**Write your reflections on the following page**

---

# Your Role as Coach

- How would you describe what you do and why you do it?
  - What does it take to coach when the game is changing?
  - What is your coaching philosophy?
-

A1-A4

# Appendices

A1 – Sample Schedules

A2 – 4-H Thriving Model

A3 – Action Step Template

A4 – Section Index

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## Four Sessions

00.

### PRE-WORK

- Set Intentions
- Scouting Report

01.

### SESSION 1

- Evolution of the Game
- Getting to Know Your Players

02.

### SESSION 2

- Developing Essential Skills & Relationships
- Advanced Education & Training
- Required Resources

03

### SESSION 3

- Build a Strong Foundation
- Nurture the Team
- Support Player Pathways

04.

### SESSION 4

- Cultivate a Love of the Game
- Focus on the Goal
- Your Role as Coach

## Six Sessions

00.

### PRE-WORK

- Set Intentions
- Scouting Report

01.

### SESSION 1

- Evolution of the Game

02.

### SESSION 2

- Getting to Know Your Players

03

### SESSION 3

- Developing Essential Skills & Relationships
- Advanced Education & Training
- Required Resources

04.

### SESSION 4

- Build a Strong Foundation
- Nurture the Team

05

### SESSION 5

- Support Player Pathways
- Cultivate a Love of the Game

06.

### SESSION 6

- Focus on the Goal
- Your Role as Coach

# Ten Sessions

## A1: SAMPLE SCHEDULES

00.

### PRE-WORK

- Set Intentions
- Scouting Report

01.

### SESSION 1

- Evolution of the Game

02.

### SESSION 2

- Getting to Know Your Players

03.

### SESSION 3

- Developing Essential Skills & Relationships

04.

### SESSION 4

- Advanced Education & Training
- Required Resources

05.

### SESSION 5

- Building a Strong Foundation

06.

### SESSION 6

- Nurturing the Team

07.

### SESSION 7

- Support Player Pathways

08.

### SESSION 8

- Cultivate a Love of the Game

09.

### SESSION 9

- Focus on the Goal

10.

### SESSION 10

- Your Role as Coach

## Single Day Retreat

### PRE-WORK

- Set Intentions
- Scouting Report
- Evolution of the Game
- Getting to Know Your Players

01.

### MORNING SESSION

- Developing Essential Skills & Relationships
- Advanced Education & Training
- Required Resources
- Building a Strong Foundation

02.

### AFTERNOON SESSION

- Nurture the Team
- Support Player Pathways
- Cultivate a Love of the Game
- Focus on the Goal

### POST-WORK

- Your Role as Coach



## Multi-Day Retreat

00.

### PRE-WORK

- Set Intentions
- Scouting Report

01.

### SESSION 1

- Evolution of the Game
- Getting to Know Your Players

02.

### SESSION 2

- Developing Essential Skills & Relationships
- Advanced Education & Training
- Required Resources

03

### SESSION 3

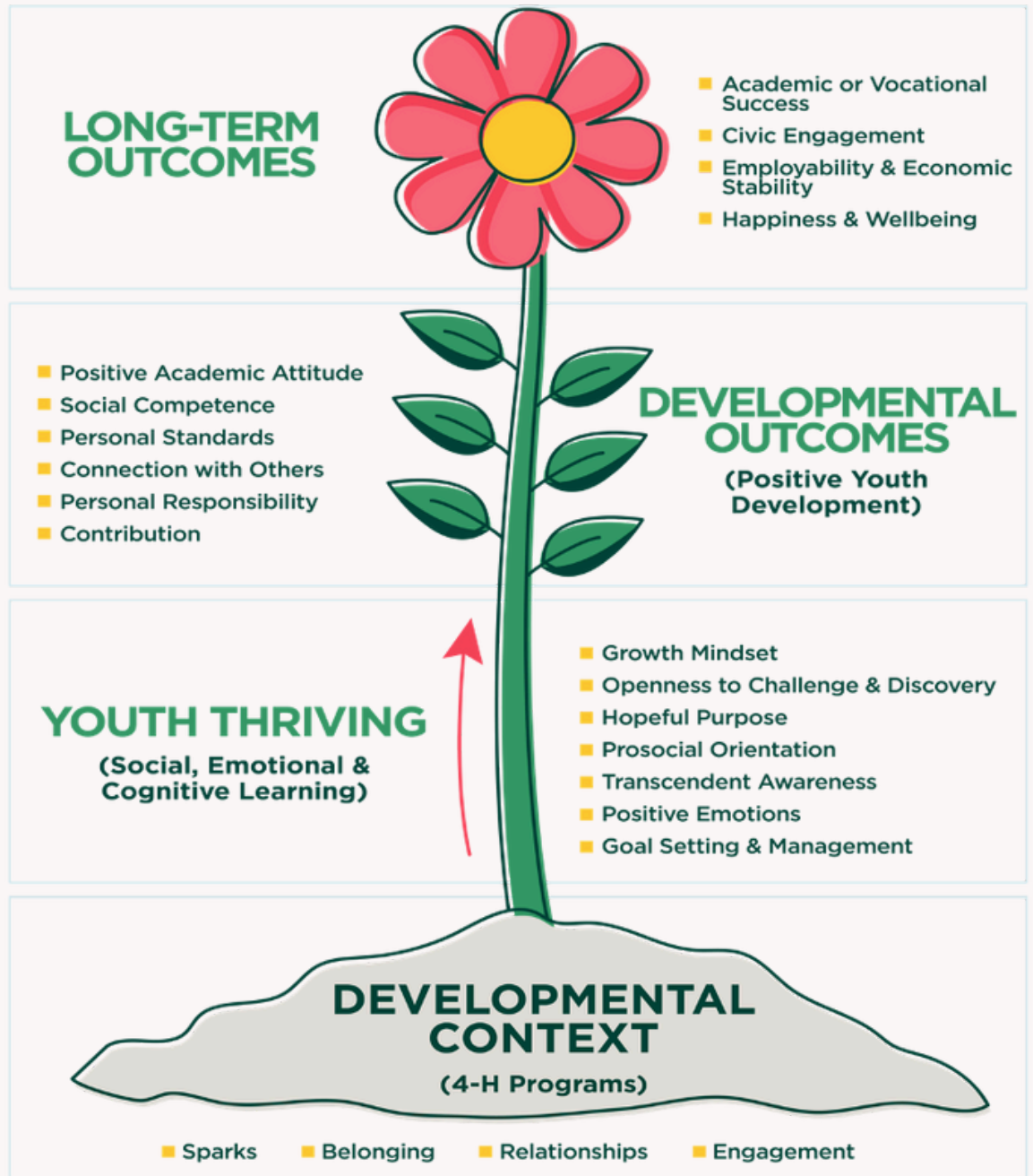
- Build a Strong Foundation
- Nurture the Team
- Support Player Pathways

04.

### SESSION 4

- Cultivate a Love of the Game
- Focus on the Goal
- Your Role as Coach

# A 2: 4-H THRIVING MODEL





# SECTION INDEX

## COACHING GUIDE

SECTION	PAGES	RECOMMEND READING
SET YOUR INTENTIONS	9	
SCOUTING REPORT	11-18	
EVOLUTION OF THE GAME	20-21	MI: INTRO & CHAPTER 2 WCWL: PREFACE
GET TO KNOW YOUR PLAYERS	22-23	MI: CHAPTER 1 WCWL: INTRO & CHAPTERS 1-5
DEVELOP ESSENTIAL SKILLS & RELATIONSHIPS	24-25	MI: CHAPTERS 3 & 4 WCWL: CHAPTER 9
ADVANCED EDUCATION & TRAINING	26-27	MI: CHAPTER 5 WCWL: CHAPTER 13
REQUIRED RESOURCES	28-29	MI: CHAPTER 6 WCWL: CHAPTER 6
BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION	31-32	MI: PAGES XXX-XXXI WCWL: Chapters 7 & 8
NURTURE THE TEAM	33-34	WCWL: CHAPTERS 10 & 11
SUPPORT PLAYER PATHWAYS	35-36	MI: CHAPTER 7 WCWL: CHAPTER 12; PAGES 207-8
CULTIVATE A LOVE OF THE GAME	37-38	MI: PAGES 12-15 WCWL: CHAPTERS 14 & 15
FOCUS ON THE GOAL	39-40	MI: PAGE 145 WCWL: CHAPTER 16
WRAP-UP: YOUR ROLE AS COACH	42-43	

# NOTES

# NOTES

# NOTES



**EXTENSION**