

Cultivating (Online) Community for Youth

Developed by Clementine Utchay, YouthREX Research Assistant, during *Cultivating (Online) Community for Youth*, a YouthREX webinar held on November 25, 2020. Guests included Michelle McClure (Ability Online), Hayley Moody (LGBT Youth Line), and Jonathon Reed (Next Gen Men), with co-facilitator Katelyn Wang (L.I.G.H.T.).

How can we leverage online platforms to facilitate connection, community-building, and peer support among youth?

Engagement:

"For Ability Online, we have seen an exponential increase in activity because of COVID" - Michelle

Why?

- platform is open 24/7
- members from across the country
- volunteers and mentors
- wellness check-in
- having something to look forward to at the same time every week to feel connected



Successes:

"youth are very interested in co-creating, in leadership opportunities, and interested in how to create space for each other" - Jonathon



"For us, success is a young person feeling loved, cared for, supported, and that they have access to a space, creating collaborative opportunities like zines" - Hayley



"There's nothing more rewarding than the gratitude from the people you are helping" - Michelle

Anticipating

Access Needs:

- Food
- Childcare
- Internet bandwidth

??? What other aspects affect their ability to participate ???

Pivoting:

"Adaptation of in-person programs through zoom didn't work. We decided to give discord a try"

"creating partnerships bumped up participation"

"relational aspect of youth programming hasn't changed"

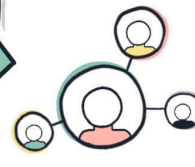
- Jonathon

Activities: trial and error

- Minecraft
 - Dungeons and Dragons
 - Netflix party
 - Short film festivals
- Sometimes things don't work out or youth are not interested

Burnout/Boundaries:

- Creating a **flex-schedule**
- Using a separate number for work
- Important to **disconnect and recharge**
- Drawing boundaries when you notice you no longer enjoy things you usually do
- Having lunch with others



Platforms:

- Discord → text to speech features
- Instagram → Live features
- Facebook
- Email
- Clean Speak
- Slack
- Skype

Hi, just checking in

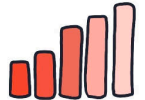
What do you have access to already??

Social accessibility/inclusion:

- "Not being judged for the way they look, walk, or talk"
 - Living in a small community where people like them are not plentiful
- Michelle

Inclusive spaces:

- Build relationships with other 2S/LGBTQ youth in the province from more isolated regions
- ★ **Share space**
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Text-based services



Evaluation:

- (optional) Feedback forms
- Focus groups
- Integrating feedback into programming
- Hard to quantify "success"

