



Teen Council Program Strength & Connectedness Model

While this model was created for the Teen Council program, we believe any youth development program can benefit from incorporating the Program Strength and Connected Model into their planning and facilitation.

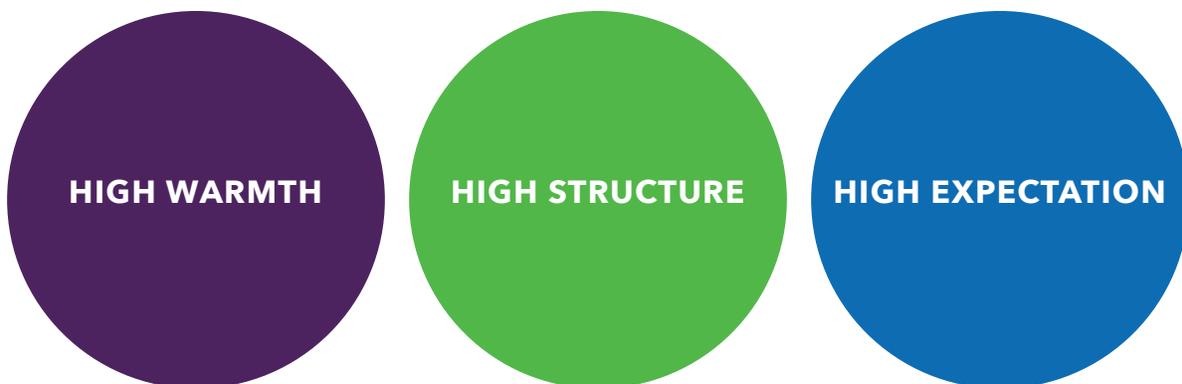




The Program Strength and Connectedness Model (PSCM) is the framework that PPGNHI's Teen Council peer education program is built upon. It is comprised of three components: high warmth, high structure, and high expectation. This combination builds the foundation for the strength and sustainability of the Teen Council program.

Each component on its own has value. However, as with most Venn diagrams, the sweet spot is where all the elements overlap. Programmatic success requires activities and approaches that reflect and balance all three core components. From the way we recruit, to the design and structure of the meetings, to how we support the Teen Council members to become excellent peer educators, the combination of high warmth, high structure, and high expectation are woven into all our interactions. These elements ensure the group is high functioning, each individual is thriving, and our programmatic goals are being met. It is key that all components are used equally and together.

For example, high warmth by itself sets up a support-group environment, which is why high structure and expectations are so important. High expectations without high warmth and structure leaves youth feeling stressed and unsupported. Meanwhile, high structure without warmth and expectation leave the youth without connection and shared purpose. The efficacy of the model relies on an integration of all three components.





HIGH WARMTH:

High Warmth guides how facilitators welcome, recognize, and connect with teens. It is the culture that we build through our interactions, our rituals, and our planning. It helps youth participants to feel welcomed, safe, and builds trust between everyone. High warmth contributes to an environment where youth can learn because they are safe, feel a sense of belonging, and are encouraged to take care of their needs. This is highly connected to creating a trauma-informed/aware space by welcoming youth to bring their full selves and experience empowerment through personal autonomy.

HIGH STRUCTURE:

High Structure guides our consistency and planning. Having systems and a consistent flow in place for group meetings and other programmatic elements allows us to build trust with teens and be reliable, supportive adults. In the Teen Council program, this is most notable is having a consistent meeting date, time, and agenda and clearly communicating this with participants. It also ensures that the program is run in a way that creates space for the warmth and expectations we hold for teens. This is deeply connected to creating a trauma-informed/aware space by ensuring group norms are consistently upheld and the program structure is stable and predictable.

HIGH EXPECTATION:

High Expectation guides us in appropriately challenging young people in a way that build their sense of ability and achievement. This is highly focused on shared accountability, skill building, and opportunity for leadership. In Teen Council we hold high expectations specific to attendance, peer education goals, program engagement, and commitment. These expectations are created so that teens can see what they are capable of achieving and feel proud of the time they spent in the program. This is tied to theory of self-efficacy, which states that as we see ourselves setting and achieving goals we begin to see ourselves as people who are capable of being effective in our own lives.