friendsofyouth

beyond the client survey and suggestion box: collective inquiry and co-constructing solutions

by: Velezia Anderson, Elijah Hopkins, & Eric Buley

agenda

Introduction & Overview

Willows Young Adult Leadership Council

Panel Conversation

Power Audit: Self-Assessment & Action Planning

Q&A

learning objectives

- Evaluate organizational power dynamics
- Transition from tokenization to co-design
- Redesign participant-centered policies

who we are



Velezia Anderson

(she/her)



Elijah Hopkins

(he/him)



Eric Buley

(he/him)

friends of youth

Behavioral Health

Foster Care

Housing & Homelessness Services

Vision: Friends of Youth envisions all youth having every opportunity to succeed

Mission: We partner with youth and families to provide the relationships, resources, and skills they need to attain personal growth and success

Last year, we helped more than 3,200 youth, young adults, and families find housing, healing, and stability

willows service center

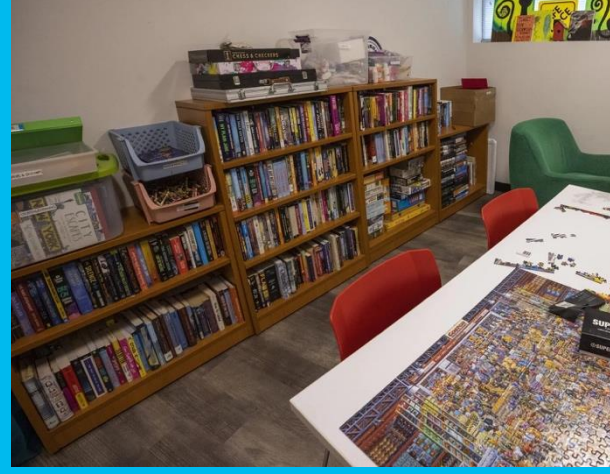
- Only young adult (YA) shelter in King County open 24/7
  - Only YA shelter and drop-in center in East King County
- On-site wrap-around services
  - Housing navigation, employment services, therapy, substance use counseling, health clinic, commercial kitchen
- 26 beds (day and overnight)
  - Expand to 35 beds during severe weather
- Serves 295 young adults annually



Willows Services Center

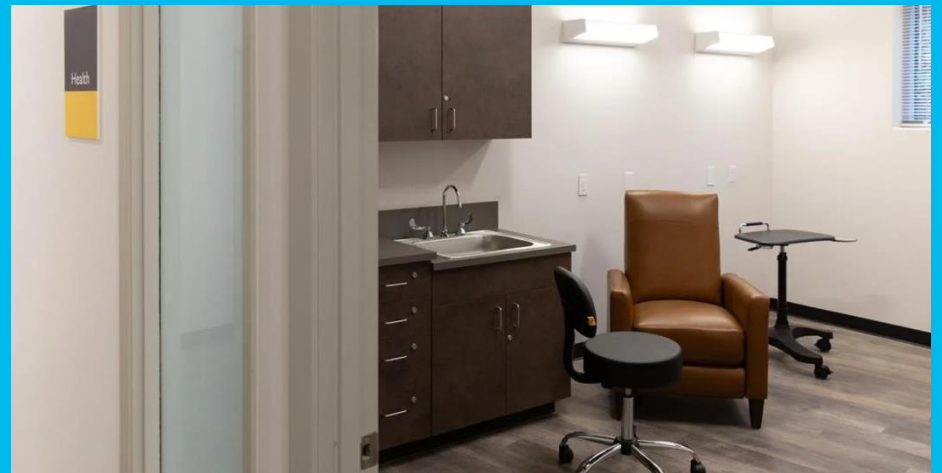














collective inquiry

"A continuous process… a process that requires the openness to consistently name problems, co-design solutions, test them out, and reflect on the findings together, using the relationships that are built as a way to collaboratively problem-solve."

–Dr. Ann Ishimaru

making the shift

Previous:

- QR codes around Willows to share anonymous feedback
- Quarterly feedback surveys
- Informal conversations

Current Additions:

- Community meetings
- Young Adult Leadership Council

willows young adult leadership council

- Meets monthly
- Open to all Willows participants
- Young adults drive the agenda
  - Identify program improvements
- Staff report back at the beginning of each meeting on changes made—remaining accountable to the leadership council

changes made

- Facilities
  - Co-designed mural; added water bottle refill station; added coat rack; changed shower curtains; added bike locks
- Operations
  - Shifted to 24/7 operations; changed lights-out time; replaced smoke breaks open outdoor access; expanded shower access; posting meeting notes in shelter; increased cleaning of bathrooms; added kitchen apprenticeship


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panel conversation



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programmatic power audit

power audit & institutional transformation framework

- Tool to explore how power is shared
- We created it in the context of a shelter, but it can be adapted to other settings
- Designed to spark individual reflection, group conversation, and collaborative action



focus areas

- Measure several areas:
  - Community Expectations
  - Physical Space, Access, & Safety
  - Employment Collaboration
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Financial Distribution
  - Self-Determination

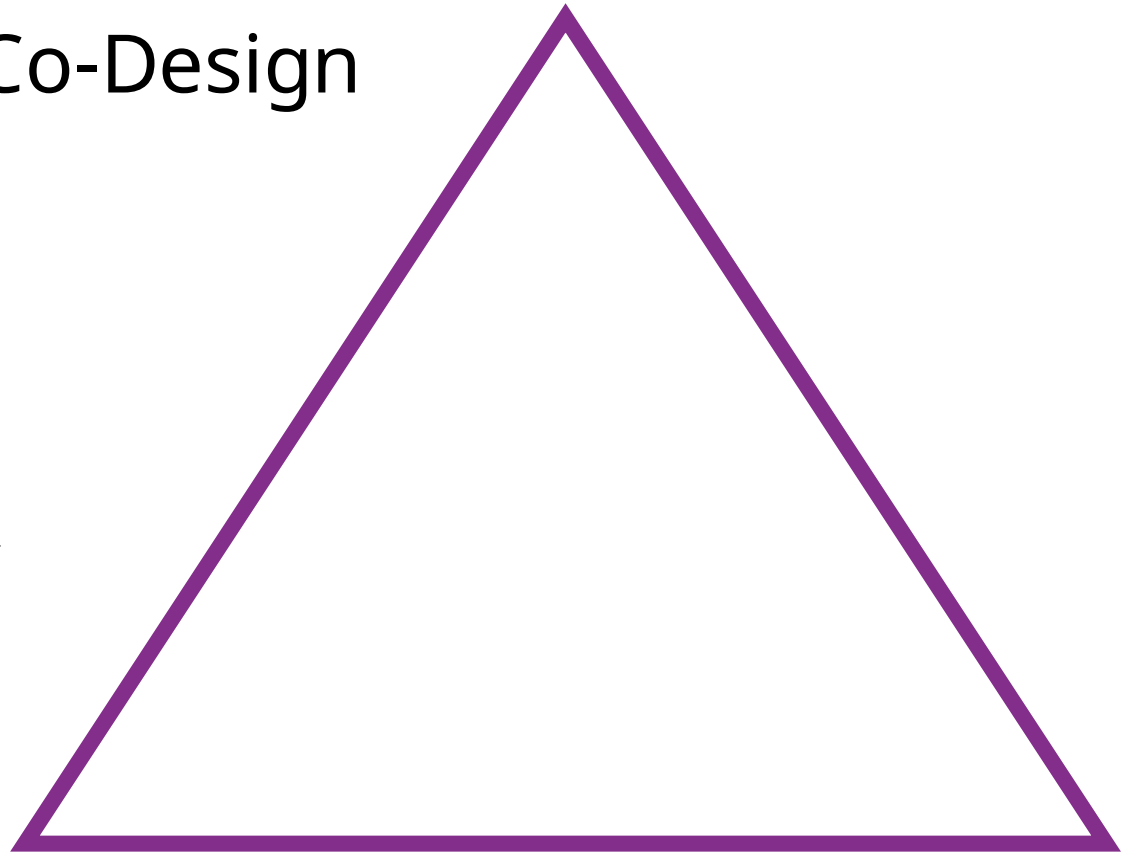
rubric

4. Community-Driven Co-Design

3. Staff-Led Teamwork

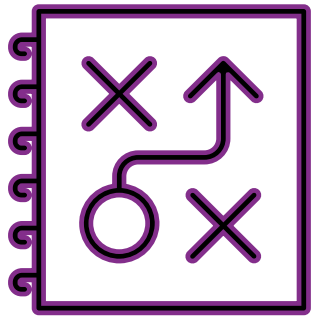
2. Tokenized Feedback

1. Staff Control



power audit

- Equity check within each focus area
- Questions to explore power leaks
- Prompts to action plan



activity: self-reflection

- Individually complete the power audit for your program
  - Assign a level for each focus area
  - Reflect on the Equity Check questions; jot down notes
  - Answer the Power Leak diagnostic questions
  - Identify specific action steps

activity: share with a partner

- Turn to a partner and share:
  - What was it like to complete the power audit?
  - What questions or reflections came up for you?
  - Did anything surprise you?
  - What were your strongest focus areas?
  - What focus areas have the most opportunity for growth?
  - What power leaks did you identify?
  - What are your action steps?

large group share out

What's resonating or standing out for you?

What are your takeaways?

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thank you!

Learn more at friendsofyouth.org, or
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