**NEEDS ASSESSING AND BRAINSTORMING:**

1. **What do youth with disabilities in your community need and want?**
2. **Considerations: Where can I find youth to ask?**

* pull youth from other centers to collaborate,
* talk with people who have had their disabilities since a young age
  + ask them questions such as what they would have liked to have known or had access to as a youth,
* use the “collective youth” Such as:
  + APRIL, Youth Leadership Forum’s, special education classes, boys and girls clubs, People First, Parent-Training Centers, University/college Disability Student Services or student groups,
* consumers who have children who have a disability themselves or are involved in the disability community.
* Who do you know in Voc Rehab, schools, VSA, ADAPT, and other organizations that can get the word out for you.

***Connections or people we already have or know:***

***Connections or people we want to initiate contact with to begin a relationship:***

1. **Decide how you are going to ask for input:**

* Hold a listening session or conversation: Ex: Hold a meeting at your organization (make sure it is at a time when young people are typically available, after 4 or weekends) and offer food.
* Facebook or Twitter chats: Make an online event and share it. Ask a few questions to start the dialogue.
* Tabling at youth resource events: Ex. college fairs, career fairs, transition fairs/conferences, YLF’s etc.
* Survey groups: For example, we put together a survey that a special education teacher made as an assignment for their class. Other ways to survey include electronic methods like Survey Gizmo, leaving surveys with organizations you know work with youth like Disability Student Services, Vocational Rehab, Parent Training Centers, etc.
  + If you are able to offer a prize/drawing for completing the survey, that is preferred.

***How is your organization going to get feedback on what youth need or want?***

1. **Decide what you want to find out:**

Ask questions to get the dialogue started examples:

* What are some barriers they experience in the community?
* If your organization could help them learn one skill or overcome one barrier, what would it be?
* What is their preferred way of learning about an upcoming event or class? (facebook, email, phone tree, text message, posters, from a friend, Chat groups or video game groups, from a teacher, etc.)
* Think back to your favorite group that you belonged to or a meeting or event you attended, why did you like it? What would make you want to come back?
* What are some things that keep you from participating in community events and other groups? (ex. Transportation, money, time,)
* Tell us about what scares you about graduating school or going out on your own?
* What are some things you are excited to do or learn more about when you leave school or go out on your own?

***What are some questions to ask or what do you want to find out from youth?***

1. **What do you as an organization want out of a youth program or think you can offer?**

* Do you want to teach disability history classes in high schools? Advocacy curriculums in schools? or maybe in your organization?
* social/activity or advocacy groups for youth?
* online forums to get involved in?
* volunteer or internship opportunities at your CIL
* find potential employees or board members
* provide information and referral in transition IEPS? Or otherwise help youth transition to community living.
* prepare students to conduct self-directed IEPS?
* assist with pre-vocational training programs or soft skills trainings
* get more young people to attend classes or advocacy events you already do?
* Leadership preparation for youth to sit on community boards and get involved in their communities and talk about disability awareness in groups they are already apart of.

***List your organizations youth program goals below (incorporating what you found out from the needs assessing process):***

**INTERNAL SURVEY OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

1. **Sit down as an organization or team and brainstorm what you already have that might benefit youth.**
2. **Do you already have classes/activities that might appeal to youth?**

* Examples: employment readiness classes, cooking classes, peer support groups, computer classes, recreational groups, healthy relationship classes, travel training, driver’s license study groups, other curriculums that are engaging with activities and teach-reteach methods that are easy to follow etc.

***List out the classes an activities you already have that you think might be appealing to young people (If you have a young person on board already this is a great place to get input).***

1. **Infrastructure you already have that makes you accessible and exciting to youth as well as have capacity to serve.**

* Free computer lab, accessible gym in your organization, inviting interior such as pictures on the wall etc., have an accessible kitchen, internship opportunities…
* Near a bus line, near youth hang-outs, have hours that work for youth (weekend hours or late night hours),
* Have funding to be able to offer food, subsidize transportation, outreach materials,
* Youth or another staff involved who could take the lead on outreach and becoming the “youth culture expert” who also can make flexible hours and have flexible methods of contacting youth,
* Skilled facilitators and/or dynamic speakers on staff.
* Staff members who are skilled at program development including curriculums and workshops.
* Buy in from organization leadership and willingness to work on creating an organizational culture of inclusion of youth for all programs.
* Already have a consumer base : ex schools/VR asking you to fill a need

***Your organizations existing infrastructure assets:***

**COMMUNITY RESOURCE/ASSET MAPPING**

1. **“Who do you know?” Have a form to assess it completed by all staff and interested youth.**
   1. **Create a list of family, friends, businesses, and other potential supporters such as board members or Research and Training Centers who might have a stake in helping youth with disabilities.**
   2. **Indicate how they might be supporting:**
      * recruiting/finding youth with disabilities
      * In Kind goods: goods like snacks, space, equipment,
      * In Kind services: printing or time like a yoga instructor who will lead adaptive yoga
      * funding
      * potential collaborators on grants
      * volunteers
      * evaluation
      * public relations

***List out your community resources/assets below:***

***What do you still need to find/work on to serve youth in the capacity your organization has identified (Weaknesses):***

**Plan for Evaluation:**

1. **Having a plan for evaluating your programs in the beginning is important.** 
   1. **Shows growth, success rates, and the potential of your programs to potential funders and/or legislators and other policy makers.** 
      * It helps to focus the objectives of your programs and continues to ensure the participants are enjoying, engaging with, and understanding the materials you hope they are. We can’t be everything to everyone- focus is good.
      * Remember, nobody gets it right the first time around. Evaluations can only make us stronger.
   2. **What do you hope young people get out of what you are offering them? Ie. what can I measure?**
      * Are there direct skills you are trying to increase such as concepts like budgeting or cooking or leadership such as number of IEP meetings they attended or number of community leadership positions they belong to that you can measure?
      * Are there indirect outcomes you are hoping for that you can measure such as self-determination, relatedness to peers, disability identity, comfort and ease with transition…
      * Are you looking for qualitative testimonials to use for future PR?
   3. **Who is your target audience?** 
      * Is it youth who are in the VR system or using pre-ets?
      * Is it youth in universities or who are college bound?
      * Youth in high schools?
      * Youth who are in danger of being wait listed for other services?
      * Those who are youth to disability or new to disability?
   4. **Are you asking what you think you are?**
      * Make sure evaluation questions only ask one question at a time to avoid “double barreling” or potentially measuring two different things at once without you knowing which way the participant took it to understand.
      * Make sure questions are accessible and easy to understand. Run it through a Grade level reading test like Microsoft’s Flesch-Kincaid, aiming for a 6th grade reading level. If using likert scales, try adding in pictures or other descriptors that might clarify what you want.
      * Find those interested in evaluation who can help.

**List your plan for evaluation below including: Target audience, potential things you want to measure, and who can help:**