

# Four Core Principles

In the continuing work of the Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine and National Resource Center for Youth Services, College of Continuing Education University of Oklahoma, four principles have emerged as essential in order for adolescent transitional living programs to be successful. With these principles in place, it is thinking of current experts in the field that programs are more likely to be successful regardless of the type of services provided. These principles are defined below and form the basis for the Promising Practices Personal Check Sheet on the pages that follow.

## 1. Youth Development

A process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. Positive youth development addresses the broader developmental needs of youth, in contrast to deficit-based models which focus solely on youth problems.

*(National Collaboration of Youth Members)*

## 2. Collaboration

The process by which several agencies or organizations make a formal, sustained commitment to work together to accomplish a common mission. *(The Community Collaboration Manual, National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations.)*

## 3. Cultural Competence

Culture is difference in race, ethnicity, nationality, religion/spirituality, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical ability, language, beliefs, values, behavior patterns, or customs among various groups within a community, organization, or nation. *(A Guide To Enhancing Cultural Competency of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, HHS, ACF, ACYF)* Gaining cultural competence is a longterm process of expanding horizons, thinking critically about the issues of power and oppression, and acting appropriately.” Culturally competent individuals have a mixture of beliefs and attitudes, knowledge, and skills that help them establish trust and communicate with others. *(Advocates for Youth)*

## 4. Permanent Connections

Positive relationships that are intended to last a life-time. They may be either formal (e.g. adoption or reunification with family) or informal in nature (e.g., mentors or peer support groups). Very often they are identified by the youth. *(National Resource Center for Youth Services)*