

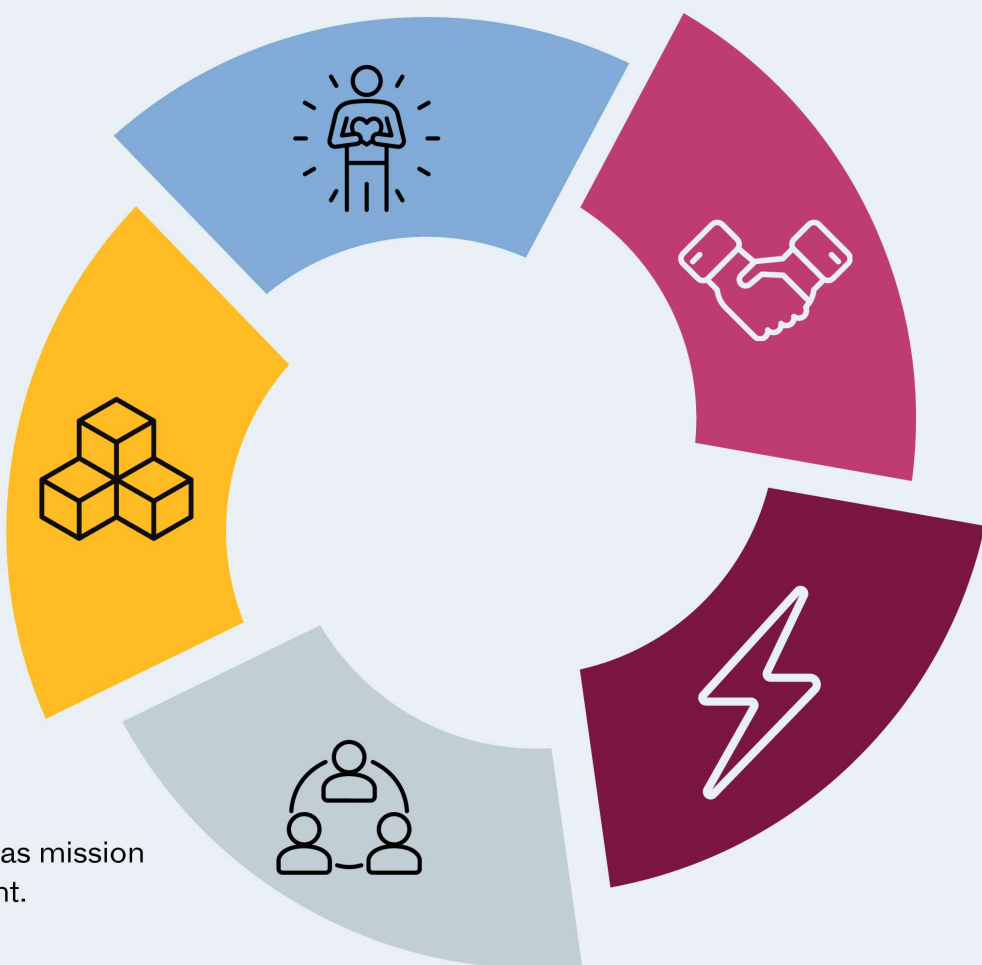
5 Conditions Supporting Strong Practice



Lessons from YCPRT

Strong YCPRT practice takes hold when a team shares ownership and purpose, shows up consistently for youth, and uses clear structure to create the trust that allows young people to truly shape decisions.

Insights from an implementing county suggest strong YCPRT practice is supported by a set of conditions rather than any single strategy or technique. These conditions appear to reinforce one another, creating an environment where youth voice, relationship-building, and sustained staff engagement can develop over time.



1

Belief & Purpose

YCPRT is experienced as mission work, not a requirement.

2

Relational Depth with Boundaries

Youth experience consistent, meaningful attention paired with ongoing reflection about fairness and roles.

3

Youth Power in Practice

Youth influence the work in visible and meaningful ways.

4

Team Culture That Protects the Model

The team shares ownership, operates with limited hierarchy, and learns together over time.

5

Structure That Sustains Quality

Consistency and clear processes create the stability that trust depends on.

1

Belief & Purpose

Why This Matters

When staff experience YCPRT as meaningful relational work rather than an additional task, they may be more willing to invest the time, flexibility, and emotional energy the process requires. This shared sense of purpose can help teams stay engaged during difficult cases or periods when progress feels slow. It also shapes the experience for youth, who often notice the difference between adults who are genuinely invested and those who are simply completing a requirement.

In Practice:

- Sharing success stories widely and often
- Team members support one another during difficult stretches
- Meetings feel authentic and relationship-centered
- Staff experience YCPRT as reconnecting them to their purpose

2

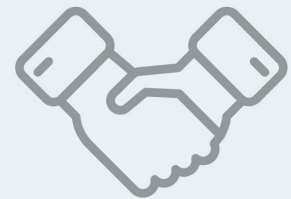
Relational Depth with Boundaries

Why This Matters

Youth participating in YCPRT may have experienced inconsistency or limited adult engagement. Small, reliable actions can communicate that they matter. At the same time, sustainable practice requires attention to equity, appropriate boundaries, and a focus on building permanent connections rather than replacing them.

In Practice:

- Staff remember details about youth and follow up over time
- Personal gestures reflect youth interests or milestones
- The team offers consistent support
- Boundary and equity questions are discussed openly
- Team involvement shifts as natural supports strengthen



3

Youth Power in Practice

Why This Matters

Youth engagement often deepens when young people experience genuine influence over decisions and feel psychologically safe to speak honestly. Over time, repeated experiences of being heard and seeing adults respond may support confidence, openness, and self-advocacy.

In Practice:

- Youth help shape the tone of the meeting
- Youth ask questions, raise concerns, or revisit decisions
- Meetings adjust to youth comfort and readiness
- Preparation focuses on reducing anxiety and building confidence
- Youth participation becomes more active over time



4

Team Culture That Protects the Model

Why This Matters

YCPRT requires emotional effort and coordination. A cohesive team culture helps distribute that responsibility, reduces reliance on individual champions, and supports ongoing adjustment. When authority is experienced as shared rather than top-down, team members may be more willing to speak candidly and take responsibility for practice quality.

In Practice:

- Shared ownership rather than reliance on one champion
- Leadership participation that is supportive rather than directive
- Team members feel comfortable raising concerns or alternative perspectives
- Honest reflection about what is and is not working
- Regular course correction and learning
- Attention to team alignment, engagement, and expectations



5

Structure That Sustains Quality

Why This Matters

Reliable structure helps youth and team members know what to expect. This predictability can build trust and support relationship development. Consistent routines also help prevent gradual drift and create a stable framework that allows the meeting to remain flexible and responsive to youth needs.

In Practice:

- Meetings follow a consistent process
- Required roles are filled and responsibilities are clear
- External partners are actively engaged and included
- Follow-through on commitments is consistent and visible
- Preparation and reminders occur routinely
- The process continues even when circumstances change



Using the Conditions to Support Practice

These conditions are not intended as a checklist or new requirements. They can be used as a reflection tool to help teams understand what is supporting their work and where additional attention may be helpful.

YCPRT teams may consider discussing:

- *Which conditions feel strongest in our current practice?*
- *Where do we see inconsistency, strain, or drift?*
- *What experiences are youth and team members having that tell us these conditions are present or missing?*
- *What small changes could strengthen the conditions that matter most right now?*

Because the conditions reinforce one another, improvement often comes from small adjustments, like protecting preparation time, strengthening follow-through, revisiting team norms, or creating space to reconnect to purpose. Strong YCPRT practice develops over time when teams intentionally support the relational, cultural, and structural conditions that help youth to experience real voice and consistent support. Regularly reflecting on these conditions may help practice remain both effective and sustainable.