

Growing Opportunities
Final Grant Report

PRESENTED BY

HOPEWORKS 'N
CAMDEN

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Growing Opportunity Grant Report

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- Use qualitative interviews and other techniques to collect efficacy data on the success of these interventions in preparing interns for successful integration within corporate culture.
- Use the curriculum and data developed to provide a replicable framework for preparing individuals with high levels of adversity for successful integration into corporate cultures.

Progress Towards Key Goals

Goal 1: Trainings on Adversity and Trauma-informed tools

As planned, Hopeworks staff and Youth Healing team conducted multiple trainings on the impact of adversity and key trauma informed tools to both youth interns and to key stakeholders at Subaru of America. These trainings were tied to key skills in succeed in the corporate workplace, as identified by Subaru employees.

Subaru employees, in interviews, identified the following key skills that they felt were important to succeed in a typical Fortune 500 environment:

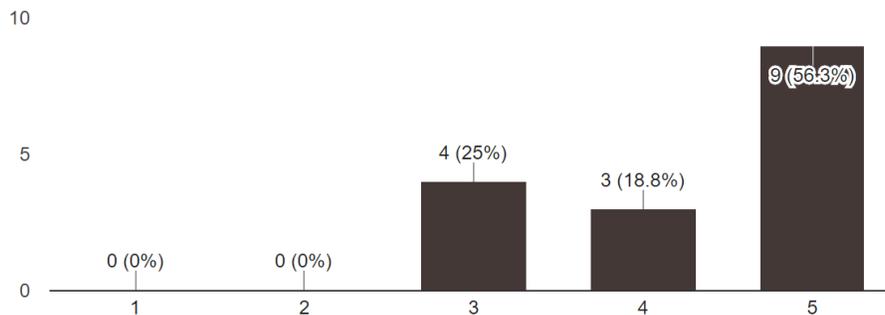
- Effective workplace communication, including
 - Email writing
 - Professional context and language
 - Understanding the role and permanence of texts and IM's
- Dealing with conflict in the workplace
 - When and how to escalate issues
 - "Rule of engagement" in corporate America
 - Appropriate client communication
- Social media skills
 - Leveraging social media
 - Sculpting your social media image
 - Using social media as a career advantage
- Dress and presentation
 - Understanding business casual
 - Deciphering what the "real" dress code in a workplace is
- Supervision and management
 - Understanding different types of supervisors
 - Handling criticism in the workplace
 - Knowing when it is ok to ask for help
- Self management
 - "Working for job you want, not the job you have"

As planned, Camden youth interns were placed at Subaru of America and other companies after receiving training on key trauma informed tools. The

results were very positive. According to exit surveys, over 75% of employees who encountered Camden interns stated that it is “true” or “very true” that “I think it is possible for Camden residents to be successful employees at Subaru with appropriate training and preparation. No Subaru employees who had encountered Camden interns felt it was “not true” or “somewhat true”

I think it is possible for Camden residents to be successful employees at Subaru with appropriate training and preparation

(16 responses)



Anecdotal comments on the surveys were also positive. Some comments included in the post-project survey were:

I love how engaged they are and that they genuinely love learning. Keep it up! I know it sounds like a cliché, but the harder you work at it now, the easier it will be later in life.

This is a great program. It would be nice to see an integration with youth having other socioeconomic upbringings. The key message is that through diversity and inclusion everyone can learn from anybody.

The Camden young people I met were outgoing and solicitous. They welcomed our participation in various activities. It is truly gratifying to interact with such engaged youth.

Perhaps most telling, Subaru has elected to continue the internship program, offering more positions to appropriately trained Camden youth.

Goal 2: Workshops on Corporate Culture and Workplace Communication

Another key element of this project was developing and providing individualized workshops on corporate culture and workplace communications within a corporate environment, led by staff members at Subaru of America. These workshops were focused on the key skills that Subaru of America staff members felt would be helpful for youth operating in the corporate environment.



Presented at Subaru of America, a team of Subaru employees presented interactive workshops on key elements of success for corporate culture, including many of the key areas identified by Subaru employees. The workshop also included additional information on multi-tasking, setting priorities, and how to manage multiple projects.

For the youth participating, the results were very positive. Over 91% of the young people participating felt that the workshops were “helpful” or “very helpful” for their future in the workplace.

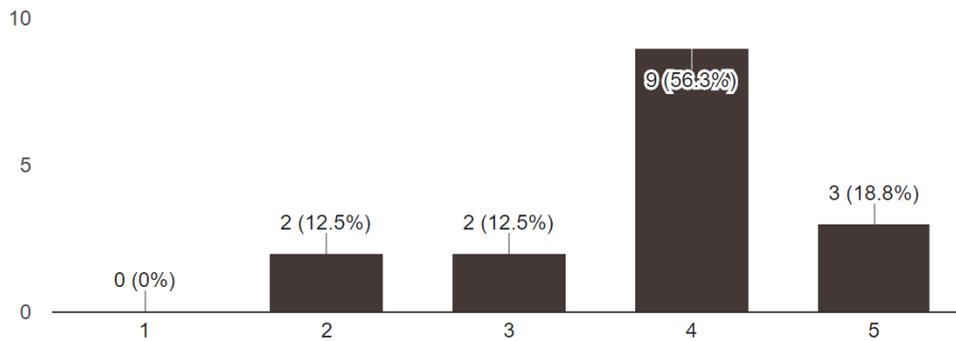


Interestingly, Subaru employees did not feel that their instruction was as helpful to the young people as they young people did. Overall, Subaru’s employees impression of how much they helped the young people was indeed positive, with over 75% ranking their participation as “helpful” or “very

helpful” in helping Camden youth prepare them for professional work. However, the number of Subaru employees ranking their work with youth as “helpful” was higher than those ranking it as “very helpful.” For youth, that dynamic was reversed.

I feel that the experiences I provided to Camden youth helped them prepare for professional work

(16 responses)



Goal 3: Qualitative Research

This funding facilitated a qualitative research study of Hopeworks 'N Camden that was conducted by the Center for Urban Research and Education (CURE) at Rutgers University-Camden (in partnership with Hopeworks N Camden). The research culminated in a report on the efficacy of a trauma-informed organizational methodology, The Sanctuary Model or trauma-informed care. Specifically, the study elucidates how the methodology has been implemented at Hopeworks, and evaluates the effect the new organizational model has had on the organization as a whole. The report continues to be useful for Hopeworks and other organizations operating in vulnerable or trauma-infused geographic spaces by elucidating a) the past and present organizational culture, b) what processes are effective and not effective, and c) suggestions for improvement.

Some of the key findings of the study (explained in more detail [here](#)) include:

Hopeworks before the Sanctuary Model

- Before the Sanctuary Model was implemented at Hopeworks, external factors played a large role in determining a youth's success in the program;
- While further research on youth background is needed to fully understand the implications of external factors on youth success at Hopeworks, the research suggests that trauma-informed care has created an atmosphere that enables success for a wider spectrum of young people, despite individual extenuating circumstances.

Hopeworks' transition to trauma-informed care

- Trauma-informed care requires committed "buy in" from key staff; not all participants will be able to adapt to the Sanctuary Model.

Post-Implementation: Staff and the Sanctuary Model

- While staff communicated differing levels of involvement with the Sanctuary Model in their daily work lives, the commitment by key staff created a culture that leads everyone to grow and adopt the new values;
- As a result of these strategies for addressing burnout, all staff report remarkable satisfaction with their jobs;
- While current leadership highlights the need for democratic management in order to avoid a singular personality run organization,

the tendency to ascribe the recent successes to the current executive director is still prevalent among Hopeworks' staff;

- It is difficult for short-term volunteers to really understand the new model and how it works at Hopeworks. Staff mentioned wanting a more consistent or strategic training program for these volunteers.

Post-Implementation: Youth and the Sanctuary Model

- Youth experience the Sanctuary Model as a set of tools to cope with stress and as a culture of acceptance and growth;
- Many youth express the Sanctuary Model values indirectly and practice them unknowingly. Although they may say they do not utilize certain Sanctuary Model values or tools, they reflect them in their stories of growth and emotional management;
- the Sanctuary Model values are internalized through immersion in the Sanctuary Model culture at Hopeworks;
- Youth tend to selectively implement the Sanctuary Model tools, picking and choosing what tools work for them;
- The environment of grace and warmth created by staff resonates positively on youth dynamics;
- Youth and staff relationships have improved dramatically, and the overall environment resonates understanding, mutual respect and trust. Youth do not feel judged by staff. Quite conversely, they feel respected by staff and, in turn, reciprocate that respect for the staff;
- While youth feel supported and encouraged by staff, the struggle to perform tasks in the midst of their own trauma is a source of stress for youth. There is frustration and a feeling of being misunderstood or disrespected when staff do not let up on the youth who fall behind due to external hardships;
- While staff discuss trauma as something from the present and/or past that may be influencing your current actions, the topic of recognizing past trauma and how that connects to current reactions is mostly absent from the youths' descriptions of trauma informed care or Hopeworks in general;
- Youth feel more open, less shy, like better communicators, like they have a voice, like that they can do something with their future.

Organizational Structure for Workforce Development

- Hopeworks' approach to workforce development is more sustainable within the Sanctuary Model culture;
- Even with the problems with the business model and internship structure, the Sanctuary Model enables greater success for interns and their supervisors;

- Youth report that by the time they complete their internships, they were less shy, more confident, and more capable. They reported feeling like they had something to offer and feeling more confident in their communication skills;
- A clarification in mission and goals is needed within the business development programs. There is a tension between the goals of building a successful, quality business that supports Hopeworks financially versus the goals of training youth in workforce development;
- Some tension exists between youth development staff and business development staff. A clarification in job descriptions, roles and responsibilities is needed to ameliorate contention.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This in-depth, qualitative analysis of the trauma informed methodology as it is implemented at Hopeworks elucidates the organization's journey towards improving success for all its constituents. By examining the time period prior to implementation of the Sanctuary Model, the transition period, and the resulting effects of the model in the post-implementation period, a nuanced understanding of the model's utility in facilitating emotional, professional and organizational growth and sustainability is uncovered. Specifically, staff experience less burnout and a more sustainable and effective work environment. Youth are learning, growing and adapting within the model of safety. Completion rates and numbers of youth who remain in college and attain gainful employment opportunities are rising. Furthermore, this study demonstrates the potential for the Sanctuary Model as a useful model for other youth development organizations or nonprofits working in marginalized and disadvantaged communities.

Goal 4: Key Findings and Framework

In this unique partnership, several key findings for developing an effective framework for integrating Camden youth into corporate employment became very clear. They include:

- **Instruction on adversity and trauma informed tools is effective.** From this project's experience, interns were able to use the emotional management and other tools effectively to successfully complete paid internships at Subaru of America. Clearly, helping youth understand and address barriers to their success before entering a high pressure corporate environment is helpful in making sure they are successful.
- **Explicit instruction in corporate culture and workplace communication is effective, and perhaps more helpful than the instructors realize.** While everyone involved felt that the instruction in corporate culture and workplace communication was effective, the difference in the perceived value between the youth receiving the instruction and the Subaru employees giving the instruction was noticeable. Clearly, youth felt that the instruction was very helpful, even more so than the instructors.
- **Implementation of a trauma informed framework at Hopeworks has had a dramatic impact on its results and effectiveness, but more work remains.** As the report indicates, staff experience less burnout and a more sustainable and effective work environment. Youth are learning, growing and adapting within the model of safety. Completion rates and numbers of youth who remain in college and attain gainful employment opportunities are rising. Furthermore, this study demonstrates the potential for SM as a useful model for other youth development organizations or nonprofits working in marginalized and disadvantaged communities.

Next Steps

With the successful completion of this project, Hopeworks, Subaru, and other business and internship partners do have a clear framework for continued and expanded partnership. Clearly, a trauma-informed approach to preparing young people for employment, combined with explicit instruction in corporate culture and workplace communication form an effective framework for successful integration of youth into corporate employment opportunities. As Hopeworks and other community partners build and expand partnerships in Camden with their new corporate neighbors, this project provides a clear framework for making sure those partnerships are as successful as possible.