



# Spotlight on YPC

## Community Events

Rutgers Fall Festival, Rutgers Gardens, New Brunswick	10/ 13
Sleep Hollow, East Jersey Old Town Village, Piscataway	10/ 11-20
4-H Haunted House and Hayride, 645 Cranbury Rd, E. Brunswick	Every Fri and Sat
Hub City Sounds, Kilmer Park, New Brunswick	10/ 27

## PLEASE NOTE:

YPC is now operating on our school schedule. Program is Monday- Thursday from 3:45-6:45.

## Month in Review

During the month of September, we covered the topics of self awareness, positive thinking, conflict resolution, and social skills.

Self-awareness is having a clear perception of your personality, strengths and weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, and motivations. Clients participated in an activity in which they decorated flower pots by identifying their values and what is important to them, as well as their vision for their lives. Then they planted seeds in those pots. The pots are currently sitting in the YPC windowsills where the clients can see their plants and their identities grow and flourish.

Positive thinking is cultivating a mental and

emotional attitude that focuses on the bright side of life. Clients practiced this skill by making "scribble drawings" and working together to turn these into works of art.

Conflict resolution is a normal and healthy aspect of relationships. Clients learned how to manage conflicts in a way that is productive and serves to strengthen relationships. Activities during this week were designed to create conflict in a safe and controlled way, so that clients would have the opportunity to practice and troubleshoot their conflict resolution skills. Clients played several live-action games to assist with building this skill. They



also utilized the group therapy process to discuss interpersonal conflicts they are facing in their own lives and work with their peers to come up with possible solutions.

Social skills refers to the ability to interact with others in a way that builds relationships and enables one's needs to be communicated and met in appropriate ways. Clients were provided with psychoeducation on this topic and then practiced these skills through various games, teamwork exercises, and role plays.

## Spotlight on: Positive Thinking



YPC clients identified their personal positive mantras and then painted them on blank canvasses to display in program. Pictured canvasses read, "There is no rule against happiness," "I can do anything," "I deserve to be loved no matter what," and "It's ok to make mistakes."





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# Family Activity: Eating In

Preparing and sharing a meal together is a great way to bond as a family! By preparing the meal together, you can enjoy quality time with your child while also teaching them valuable life skills. You and your child can work together to pick out a new or exotic food that you have never tried before. You can find recipes and ingredient lists online. Then create a shopping list together and shop for the ingredients as a team. You and your child can cook the meal together. When everything is ready, you can enjoy your hard work together as a family. Amp up the fun factor by using fancy table settings and pretending you are in a nice restaurant, or spread a blanket on the floor and have a "picnic." Make sure to enjoy your meal "device-free" so that you can have more quality conversations.



## Spotlight on Social Skills: "I Messages"

Part of assertive communication is using "I" Messages to describe your feelings without yelling, threatening, or engaging in acting out behaviors. By using "I" messages, we are accepting responsibility for our own feelings, and communicating to others in a calm and respectful tone what we need from them in order to build a relationship or resolve a conflict.

### **What is an "I" Message?**

Let's say you are growing concerned because your child is spending more and more time in the community with peers, and is not telling you where he or she is going or when they will be returning home. You want to communicate your concerns, but you are worried that doing so will cause a big blow-up and put more strain on your relationship with your child. You feel that you have two options: either

"pick your battles" and don't say anything to your child, or outright tell your child that they are no longer allowed in the community unsupervised.

What if there was a 3<sup>rd</sup> option? How do you think your child would react if you said this instead:

"I feel worried when you go out without telling me because I don't know where you are or when to expect you home, and I am afraid that something may happen to you. From now on, can you please tell me where you are going and what time you plan to come home?"

This is a basic formula to create "I" messages: "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_ happens, because \_\_\_\_\_." Once you have expressed your feeling, you can then make a request for a change or suggest a resolution. "I" messages are a good way to reduce arguments and

resolve conflicts with your child because they require everyone to take responsibility for their own feelings, and express their needs in a respectful tone. Practice using "I" messages when you talk to your child, and encourage your child to use "I" messages in interactions with you as well.

