

Mission:

EYEJ drives social justice reform by empowering young people to advocate for change.

Vision:

An equitable and inclusive world.

YODJ: Youth Online Discussing Justice

The coronavirus pandemic hasn't altered EYEJ's mission to drive social justice reform by empowering young people to advocate for change. Discussion Series groups are still meeting, virtually, through a program called Youth Online Discussing Justice (YODJ). Like the in-person Discussion Series, YODJ affords public school students the chance to meet regularly with trained professionals to engage on a wide array of practical topics in a judgment-free setting. At this time, EYEJ has a relationship with 13 schools and four recreation centers in Cleveland.

Youth Online Discussing Justice (YODJ) connects students in grades 6 through 12 with the necessary resources for day-to-day life and professionals trained in emotional learning development. Guests, including local community members, peers, and any one of EYEJ's 900 other volunteers, meet with students in a safe, intimate setting that encourages honesty on difficult subjects. Of the over 1,600 participants in the program to date, 65 percent have reported learning about social justice issues for the first time, and 45 percent have promised to employ that new awareness in their everyday lives.

The 10-week YODJ program consists of seven weeks in discussion and three weeks in a "Reflection Event." The most recent "Reflection Event" was a Photo Display Project. Five students impressed the public with an exhibition of photographs about toxic stress, self-esteem, body image, poverty, and Cleveland's ongoing Digital Divide.

Topics

- Toxic Stress
- Conflict Resolution
- Exploring Money
- Civil Rights
- Achieving a Positive Mindset
- Invest In Your Future
- Exploring Violence
- Photography Reflection Project

Impact



74.1% of the students felt valued and appreciated by others



93.2% of the students agree they learned something in the Discussion Series



72.7% agreed that the Discussion Series conversations help them with friends



82.7% agreed that the Discussion Series help them during school



80.3% agreed that the Discussion Series conversations help them outside of school



68.8% agreed that the Discussion Series conversations help them with teachers

Discussion Series has increased conditions for learning scores from 1-8% depending on the school.

Testimonies

Students Quotes

- "I've taken what we've talked about and applied them to how I live, really YODJ has taught me a lot but has also made me realize a lot about myself that I didn't know. It has inspired me to be more me instead of anything less." - 11th grader from MC2 STEM High School
- You can use it as ways of coping with how the world is and also use it as inspiration to make a change even in the slightest way. You can take activities used in the program and use them in school, church, or wherever. I feel that
- would influence change and be more positive. It would, like it did for me, open people's eyes. - 8th grader
- "I can express my emotions better and I can influence others by being a good role model" - 10th grader from Ballard High School
- "We are taught from a young age to be worried about so many things that do not matter but it's up to us to break that cycle and focus on what matter" - 11th grader from Northeast Ohio College Preparatory School after our conversation about Exploring Violence
- "I have started addressing the problems in my life to spread awareness to others" - 11th grader from Saint Joseph Academy

Volunteers Quotes

- "YODJ helps because it allows students to dive deeper into issues that may not be addressed anywhere else in their lives. It offers a safe space to share personal experiences." - Volunteer Speaker and Graduate student at Case Western Reserve
- "YODJ gives youth a platform and connects them with people who could be mentors and role models." - Volunteer Facilitator and Educator at Campus International
- "I think a lot of young people want to talk about these topics that are relevant to them, but aren't always given the opportunity or the tools to engage in these conversations, which is why YODJ is so unique and important" - Volunteer Facilitator and East Cleveland Educator

EYEJ



Youth
Council

