

# Trainer's Guide: Understanding Youth Rights



This Guide is designed to support legal clinic workers who want to train community workers about issues related to youth rights in Ontario. It is part of a series of Trainer's Guides that cover a range of legal topics.

### **Toronto: Community Legal Education Ontario, September 2021**

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) developed this Trainer’s Guide with the invaluable assistance and expertise Justice for Children and Youth. We are also very grateful for the input and support of the project advisors, including: The Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario; Community Advocacy & Legal Centre; Community Legal Clinic for Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk; Connecting Ottawa; Don Valley Community Legal Services; Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic; and Ontario Justice Education Network.

We also gratefully acknowledge funding for this project from The Law Foundation of Ontario.

This is one in a series of Trainers’ Guides for community workers. Visit the [CLEO Connect website](#) for a list of legal topics.

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Companion to Trainer’s Guide: [PowerPoint Slides](#) with notes and instructions for trainers

# 1. Introduction

## About the Trainer's Guide

### *Who is the Trainer's Guide for?*

This Trainer's Guide is for legal clinic staff who are training workers at local community organizations about youth rights in Ontario.

Front-line workers at community organizations often help people who come to them with questions about their legal rights, and community workers can give good help and solid referrals if they have the knowledge and skills to do so. Training from legal clinic experts can help.

### *The Trainer's Guide Series*

This Trainer's Guide is part of a series that provides training materials for trainers on several legal topics that community workers often ask for.

We developed our Trainer's Guides with flexibility in mind: each legal clinic can use them to adapt and customize a training workshop for their communities. We designed the training for a session that lasts approximately **2 hours**, but trainers will want to adapt it to suit their own style and to meet the needs of their audience.

We have included a companion piece for the Trainer's Guide: [PowerPoint slides](#) that include activities and resources, as well as notes and instructions for trainers.

- **The Trainer's Guide**

The Trainer's Guide includes the following sections:

1. **Introduction (p. 1):** This section provides a training snapshot, and outline of the training. It also includes background information about youth rights for trainers.
2. **Summary of Training and Instructions for Trainers (p. 3):** This section provides a summary of the PowerPoint slides and training activities. It includes some instructions for trainers. The slides and notes are adaptable and intended to be edited by the trainer.
3. **Activity Handouts (p. 9):** This section shows handouts that trainers can use during the training. It includes [a link to the handouts](#) so trainers can download and email them to participants before the session, share their screen during an online training, or print and provide them at a face-to-face training.
4. **Supporting Documents (p. 14):** This section shows sample documents to help trainers plan their training. It includes links to a [flyer](#), [agenda](#), and [evaluation form](#) that can be customized.

- **The PowerPoint Slide Deck**

The [PowerPoint slides](#) are intended to be customized by the trainer.

## Getting Ready and Learning Goals

Before you deliver the *Understanding Youth Rights* training, spend some time on the following preparation activities and think about the learning goals. Expect to spend at least 2 hours. For an online training session, ask a colleague to assist you, to monitor the chat, etc.

### 1. Review the goals of the training

The goals of the training are to help community workers:

- Understand the concept of youth as independent rights holders
- Learn about various age-based laws and legal rights
- Apply a Youth Rights Framework to common scenarios
- Reflect about assumptions they may have about youth rights
- Learn about Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY), a specialized community legal clinic

### 2. Familiarize yourself with the resources

Get familiar with the tips and resources listed in **slide 31** of the slide deck. **Read the Trainer's Guide and PowerPoint presentation.**

Add local resources and information about your legal clinic — location, hours, and intake procedures. Do what you need to feel comfortable sharing the content, including editing and printing notes. See [tips](#) to print PowerPoint content in black and white to reduce ink, and [how to](#) remove slide notes before you share them with participants. If you have any questions about legal content as you prepare, or after the training, contact Emily Chan at Justice for Children and Youth at [chane@lao.on.ca](mailto:chane@lao.on.ca).

Think about ways to engage your audience. Anticipate possible questions from participants and think through how you will respond. Consider the timing suggestions and think about how you will keep the training moving to finish on time. Make note of any questions you are not comfortable answering and say that you will get back to the person.

### 3. Customize the slides and learn about the activities

Consider the participants and the manner in which you will deliver your training (webinar or face-to-face training). Think about how long each activity may take. Choose the activities you want to use from the options provided. Revise the slides to reflect your choices. Build in time for discussion and questions.

Depending on the level of engagement and discussion during each session, you may not be able to cover all of the activities. This is expected. They are there for you to choose from.

If you'd like to create a Word Version of your PowerPoint slides, follow the tips in this short [video](#).

If you have any questions about using these training materials, please contact Kristin Marshall at CLEO, at [kristin.marshall@cleo.on.ca](mailto:kristin.marshall@cleo.on.ca).

## 2. Summary of Training & Instructions for Trainers

This section gives an overview of the training. It is meant to be read as you go through the PowerPoint presentation. It will help you get a general sense of the training and understand the approximate time that you want to allocate for each part. It also provides some instructions and suggestions for how to offer the training activities.

The time allocations are estimates, assuming a total training length of **2 hours**.

### Training Snapshot (for trainer)

	Slides	Suggested Time
1. Welcome, Agenda, Introductions	1–4	10 mins
2. <b>Activity 1:</b> Introduction to Youth Rights — Myth Busting	5–11	35 mins
3. <b>Activity 2:</b> Youth Rights Video and Discussion	13–14	10 mins
4. A Youth Rights Framework for Community Workers	15	5 mins
BREAK	16	10 mins
5. <b>Activity 3:</b> Scenarios for Discussion	17–28	30 mins
6. Self-Reflection Questions	29	5 mins
7. What can community workers do?   Useful Resources	30–31	10 mins
8. Wrap-up, Feedback, and Evaluation	32–34	5 mins

## Training Summary and Instructions

Read this section as you review and adapt the PowerPoint slides. We highlight specific slides to provide training tips for activities that engage participants.

<b>1. Welcome, Agenda, and Introductions</b>	Slides 1–4	10 mins
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- Welcome participants and introduce yourself and your clinic
- Share the agenda and participant expectations
- Discuss logistics of the training or workshop
- Discuss role of community workers
- Provide a land acknowledgment

### Set Ground Rules and Expectations

Share the outline so participants know what to expect. Emphasize that the goal is to create an anti-oppressive environment. Briefly discuss: the right to pass (participants don't have to answer a question or make a contribution if they don't want to); confidentiality (what is learned, leaves, and what is shared, stays); and respect for each other.

Tell them if you will take questions as you go or at specific times. If the training is held in person, point out where the bathrooms are, water, and other logistics. State up front that there will be a break. Reflect this in the agenda and confirm with the audience at the outset, adjusting timing if necessary. Tell participants to make themselves comfortable. For online, say whether you prefer them to use their video, if this is possible. Let participants know that they will get a copy of the slides after the presentation.

<b>2. ACTIVITY 1: Introduction to Youth Rights — Myth Busting</b>	Slides 5–11	10 mins
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This activity presents the five statements. Participants decide if they are true or false, followed by a discussion of the correct answers included in the slide notes. The legal rights may be unsettling for some participants, who resist the idea of youth exercising their rights in these ways. Be prepared to acknowledge this discomfort as you reinforce the importance of learning about youth rights.

- A 16-year-old can get married with their parent's permission. **TRUE**
- A child under age 12 can only get medical treatment if their parent approves. **FALSE**
- A child of any age can drink alcohol in a private place if supervised by a parent. **TRUE**
- A 7-year-old can't be adopted unless they want to be. **TRUE**
- A 12-year-old can only consent to sexual activity with someone their own age. **FALSE**



Handout note: **Slide 10** explains the law related to age and sexual consent. This is also available as an [Activity Handout](#).

Show **slide 11** so participants can see the correct answers at the end.

**Discussion:** Ask participants to share any questions they have about youth rights that they hope will be addressed in the training. Tell them they will get a chance to ask more questions later.

### Slide 12: Learning Goals

- Review the learning goals with participants.
- This is also a good opportunity to reinforce the idea of legal rights being granted to people at different ages and at different stages of development, **not just at age 18**.
- Point out that youth rights do not apply only to “extreme” situations such as police involvement or abuse. Young people face legal issues in all aspects of life. It may be helpful to say this phrase: “It’s not just about poor kids and “bad kids” who may have broken the law.”

### 3. ACTIVITY 2: Youth Rights Video and Discussion

Slides 13–14

10 mins

This activity involves viewing a 4-minute video in which Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY) lawyer Emily Chan talks about children and youth as independent rights holders. If there are technical issues with screen sharing for online presentations, you can put the [link](#) in chat and tell them to come back to the session after they view it.

Pose the following three questions:

- When might child’s or youth’s rights be affected by *your* work?
- Think of examples in your own youth where you wish adults had listened to you better.
- How do you think children and youth benefit (short or long term) from being viewed as “independent rights holders”?

Review the **slide 14 notes** for other discussion prompts and information to share. Try to keep discussion to 10 minutes. Say there will be further opportunity to discuss these issues.

**A note about criminal law.** Often during discussions about youth meeting with lawyers, participants wonder whether a young person can be questioned by the police without a lawyer or parent. There are very specific laws that apply to youth criminal law, but those laws are beyond the scope of this training. In general, a young person has the right to have an adult of their choice in the room if being questioned by the police. Tell participants that JFCY delivers specialized training on youth criminal justice.

**4. A Youth Rights Framework**

Slide 15

5 mins

This section introduces a framework for community workers to consider when working directly and indirectly with youth. The framework consists of four questions they can ask themselves to help ensure young peoples' rights are recognized and protected. Participants apply this framework to each scenario in the next activity.

1. Are a child's or young person's rights engaged?
2. What are the views and wishes of the child or young person?
  - The best information comes directly from the young person.
3. What obstacles may they face?
  - Legal, social, and personal problems
4. What resources can you share or refer them to?



Handout: Share the **Youth Rights Framework** [handout](#)

**Slide 16 — Break:** Tell participants to take a 10-minute break. Tell them when to return.

**5. Activity 3: Scenarios for Discussion**

Slides 17–28

30 mins

Ask participants to apply the Youth Rights Framework when considering the two or three questions related to each scenario. Read each scenario aloud, followed by the questions. Give participants time to think about the questions for themselves, or within small groups. Discuss their answers and include additional points from the slide notes as you move to the next slide with the answers.

We provide detailed notes in the slides for each scenario to help facilitate discussion. Trainers can also draw from Justice for Children and Youth's six-page guide about age-based laws:

<https://jfcy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Age-Based-Laws-April-2019.pdf>

You don't have to use all the scenarios if you don't have time. Choose which you think are most relevant and what you are most comfortable discussing. Adjust your slides.



Handout: Share the [Scenarios](#) [handout](#) at in-person trainings

**6. Self-Reflection Questions**

Slide 29

5 mins

Invite participants to think about these questions. If they feel comfortable, they can share their answers with the entire group, or you can set them up in small groups.

1. In my work with adults, do I intentionally consider the rights of affected children?
2. In my work, do I assume adults get to make decisions for their child, or do I meaningfully consider the child's rights and preferences?
3. At work, do I have tools, resources, and information about children and youth rights that I can share with clients?
4. What will I do if my personal beliefs conflict with the way that a child wants to exercise their legal rights?
5. What will I do if another adult is preventing a child from exercising their rights?

**7. What can community workers do? | Useful Resources**

Slides 30–31

10 mins

Repeat the key “takeaway” concepts that participants should remember from the training that they can apply to their work. This includes working directly with children and youth, and also indirectly through work with adults where children's rights are also affected.

Reinforce the idea of legal rights being granted to people at different ages and at different stages of development, not just at age 18.

Remind participants that the aim was not for them to become experts in youth rights, but rather to increase their understanding, and to appreciate the resources that are available (see next slide).

**Slide 31: Resources**

Participants are introduced to three key resources related to youth rights.

If there is Wi-Fi (in an in-person workshop), go to the Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY) website (<https://jfcy.org/en/you-have-rights/>) to show participants the variety of resources there.

Explain that JFCY is a specialized legal clinic that serves youth up to age 25 throughout Ontario. They also offer summary advice and referrals, and work with local community clinics to help youth together.

If there is time, you can also go to the Steps to Justice website (<https://stepstojustice.ca>) to highlight the variety of legal questions there, particularly those regarding youth rights. Explain

that Steps to Justice has clear legal information on many common questions. Tell them the links are embedded in the slide and remind them that you will share the PowerPoint after the presentation. CLEO also has many print resources that can be ordered for free to distribute or they can be viewed online and printed.

CLEO's Steps to Justice website also has COVID-specific legal information on [education](#) and [other legal topics](#).

You can also reference Ontario Justice Education Network (OJEN) which has training in justice education for teachers, and youth and community workers: <http://ojen.ca/en/training>.

Explain and add any other local resources where clients can call or go for help.

## 8. Wrap-up, Feedback, and Evaluation

Slides 32–34

5 mins

As you conclude your training, respond to any outstanding questions, offer to follow up with additional information, if applicable.

Tell participants that this training was developed in collaboration with Justice for Children and Youth, whose expertise and assistance has been invaluable.

Give participants the evaluation form, acknowledge the funders and thank participants.



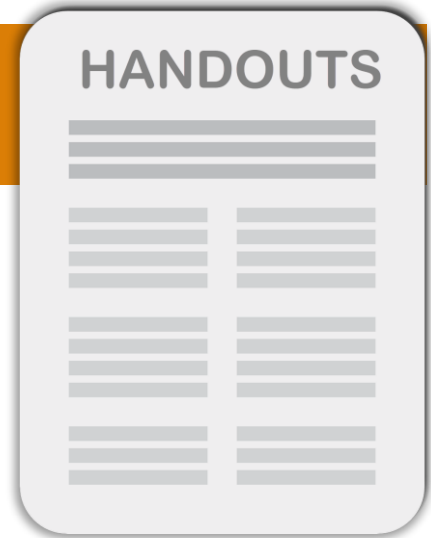
**Handout:** Share the [Evaluation Form](#)

### Your Feedback

We also want your feedback as the trainer. Please answer the 5 questions in this [survey](#).

## 3. Activity Handouts

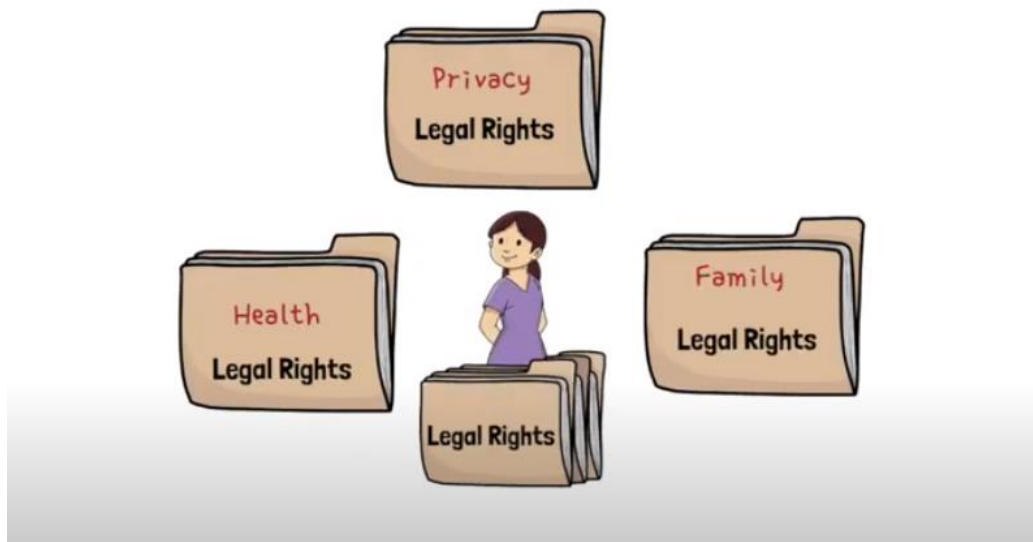
This section shows the handouts that trainers can give to participants during the session.



<a href="#">A Youth Rights Framework</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Scenarios for Discussion</a> .....	11
<a href="#">Age of Consent</a> .....	13

## A Youth Rights Framework

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This framework consists of four key questions that act as a guide to ensuring that young people's rights are recognized and protected. Community workers can ask themselves these questions in every situation that involves a young person.

- 1 Are a child's or young person's rights engaged?
- 2 What are the views and wishes of the child or young person?
- 3 What obstacles may they face?
- 4 What resources can you share or refer them to?

## Activity 3: Scenarios for Discussion

Five scenarios are presented on PowerPoint slides 17–28. Choose the ones you want to use and revise your slides. You can present all scenarios to the larger group and discuss the application of the Youth Rights Framework. Or you can divide participants into groups to discuss one scenario each, apply the Youth Rights Framework and report back to the larger group. Answer slides are included for you to share after each discussion.

Each scenario is shared below on a separate page to allow for easy printing and sharing. Or you can download the scenarios on the [CLEO Connect site](#).

### Scenario 1: Leaving Home



A parent of a 16-year-old boy who is transgender tells you that the boy wants to change his legal name from Jane to John. The parent does not want him to change his name. He told his parent that he is going to move out, get his own apartment, and change his name. The parent wants to stop the boy.

1. Can a 16-year-old move out of their parent's home?
2. Can a 16-year-old rent an apartment?
3. Can a 16-year-old change their legal name?

### Scenario 2: Medical Decisions and Information



A 15-year-old girl tells you she wants birth control pills. She and her 16-year-old boyfriend are thinking about having sex. At her last medical appointment, the doctor said she won't give the girl the birth control pills unless the girl's mother gives parental permission.

1. Is it legal for a 15-year-old and a 16-year-old to have sex?
2. Can a doctor give a 15-year-old girl birth control pills?
3. Can a doctor talk to a parent about their child's medical information?

### Scenario 3: Special Education



The parent of a 16-year-old says she has a meeting at the school to discuss a special education program for her child. She doesn't want her child at the meeting because she doesn't want them to feel embarrassed or "dumb". There's a report about their reading level in their student record, but she doesn't want her child to see this report because she thinks it makes them sound "dumb".

1. Can a 16-year-old be involved in special education decisions even if their parent doesn't approve?
2. Can a 16-year-old access their own student records?

### Scenario 4: Starting and Quitting School



A single mother of two just moved to your town in the middle of February. The school won't allow her 5-year-old to register for school until they turn 6, even though there is a kindergarten program. Her 17-year-old was allowed to register for high school, but they hate it there. They've been skipping school, and plan to drop out.

1. Does a 5-year-old have the right to start school?
2. Can the 17-year-old be charged for skipping school?
3. Can the 17-year-old quit school?

### Scenario 5: Children's Aid and Adoption



The mother of a 7-year-old and a 12-year-old tells you that she has a chronic health problem and can no longer take care of her kids. She wants to give the kids to the Children's Aid Society (CAS), but the kids don't want that. She says that another option might be to let the kids' aunt formally adopt them, but the kids don't want that either.

1. Can a mother give her children to a CAS if the children don't want to go?
2. Can someone adopt a child who doesn't want to be adopted?

## Age of Consent

In Canada, there are three main components of consent to sexual activity: **voluntarily** saying “yes” to a **specific sexual activity**.

- **Voluntarily:** “Voluntarily” means that if the person is forced, manipulated, or exploited to say yes, then their “yes” means nothing.
- **Yes:** Only “yes” means yes. Silence is not enough. And only people within the age of consent can legally say “yes”.
- **One specific sexual activity:** Voluntarily saying yes to one specific sexual activity (for example, oral sex), does not mean that the person has said “yes” to all sexual activity. The person must consent to each activity.

Sexual activity is not just sex. It includes things like kissing and touching, if done for sexual pleasure.

Age	Can consent to sexual activity with someone less than...	Can consent to sexual activity with a person in authority (boss, teacher, camp counsellor, etc.)
12 or 13	2 years older	NO
14 or 15	5 years older	NO
16 or 17	Any age older	NO
18 +	Any age older	YES

## 4. Supporting Documents

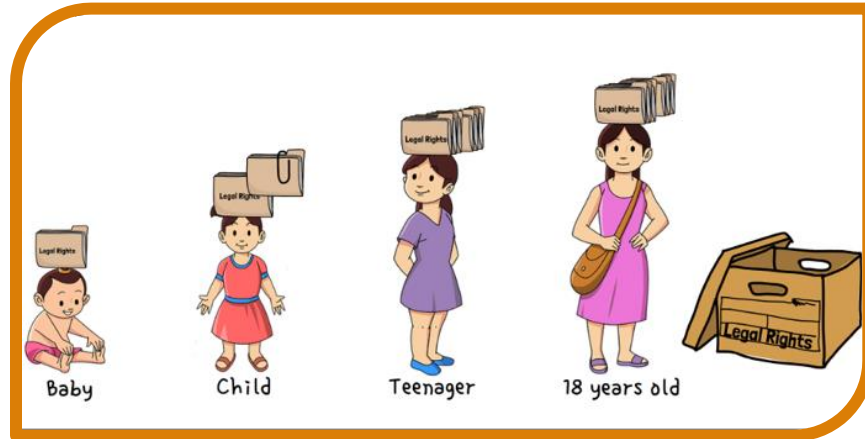
This section provides sample documents that trainers can adapt and use for the training.

<a href="#">Flyer</a> .....	15
<a href="#">Agenda</a> .....	16
<a href="#">Evaluation Form</a> .....	17



# Understanding Youth Rights

## Legal Information for Community Workers



In your work, do you wonder about the rights of children and youth?

This free workshop is for you!

### You will:

- Understand the concept of children and youth as independent rights holders
- Learn about various age-based laws and legal rights
- Apply a Youth Rights Framework to fact scenarios
- Reflect on your assumptions about youth rights
- Learn about Justice for Children and Youth, a specialized community legal clinic

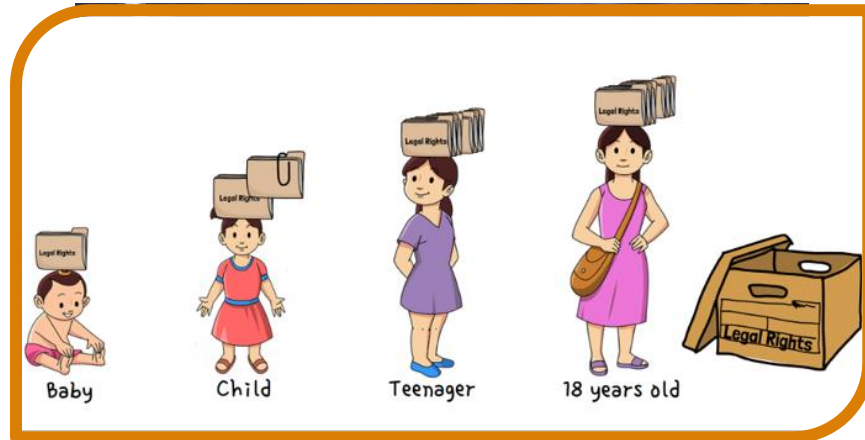
DATE and TIME: *add date and time*

PLACE: *add venue (online or physical)*

REGISTER: *add registration details*

# Understanding Youth Rights

## Legal Information for Community Workers



## AGENDA (sample)

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| • Welcome and Introductory Activity                 | 9:00–9:40   |
| • Video and discussion of Youth Rights Framework    | 9:40–9:55   |
| <b><i>BREAK (10 minutes)</i></b>                    |             |
| • Youth rights scenarios   Q & A                    | 10:05–10:40 |
| • Self-reflection questions                         | 10:40–10:45 |
| • What can community workers do?   Useful Resources | 10:45–10:55 |
| • Wrap-up, Feedback, and Evaluation                 | 10:55–11:00 |

## Evaluation Form

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### Legal Information for Community Workers Training: **Understanding Youth Rights**

	<b>1</b> Strongly <b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>2</b> ↓	<b>3</b> ↓	<b>4</b> Strongly <b>AGREE</b>
1. The objectives of the presentation were clearly stated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The facilitator communicated the ideas clearly and effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Before the presentation, I felt confident about my knowledge of youth rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. After the presentation, I feel more confident about my knowledge of youth rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Before the presentation, I knew where to find legal help for clients about problems with youth rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. What was the most useful part of the presentation and why?

7. Do you have any suggestions for how the presentation could be improved?

8. How will you use this information in your work?

9. Other comments and/or suggestions for future training topics: