

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT FACILITATION GUIDE

DISCUSSING AND SUPPORTING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

[Engagement & Discussion Guide](#) from filmmakers.

Number of Participants

- 2 facilitators (youth and adult pairing)
- 50 participants (about 5 small groups of 10 max)

The maximum number of participants is highly flexible depending on physical space, AV setup, and the comfort of the facilitator(s). The number of participants should allow for varied active participation in small groups of 2, 5, and 10.

Arrangement of Physical Space

Whenever possible, arrange chairs and tables in a large U-shape that includes everyone. For larger groups, create layers of U-shapes as allowed by room size. The U-shape setup takes a note from restorative circles where everyone can make eye contact with each other. Mindful of training needs, a U shape increases nonverbal micro-communication among participants while keeping the focus on the facilitators/screen.

If allowable, chairs and tables should be arranged in a way that allows for easy re-arrangement and movement. Areas at the center of the U-shape, in-between multiple U-shapes, and in front and behind the U-shape are all spaces that can be used in standing and seated small group activities.

The 'front' of the room/U-shape should be opposite to or furthest from the entry/exit door to the extent possible. This is to minimize the potential discomfort of stepping in and out as the screening is ongoing.

Ideally, snacks, water, and warm drinks will be readily available throughout the conversation. These should be placed away from the 'front' of the room to avoid distraction and possible discomfort from participants. If your program can host a meal in advance of the screening or plan one for after the screening (dinner starting at either 4 PM or 7 PM ET) this can be a great opportunity for the community to connect informally in the midst of some intense conversations.

Consider having an individual in a cozy space in the back of the room for 1-on-1 conversation/ crisis in case someone is triggered by the content and would appreciate the support.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FILM

A documentary about the mental health crisis among youth in America, [Hiding in Plain Sight](#), follows the journeys of more than 20 young Americans from all over the country and all walks of life, who have struggled with thoughts and feelings that have troubled—and, at times—overwhelmed them. The documentary presents an unflinching look at both the seemingly insurmountable obstacles faced by those who live with mental health challenges and the hope that many have found after that storm.

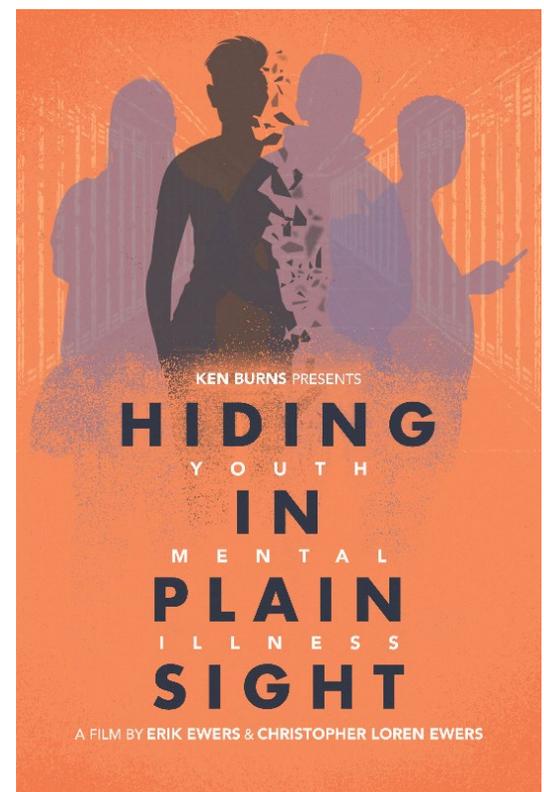
We're sharing the film with you (with gratitude to the producers, directors, and participants who made this possible) because, in conversations and visits with you and your team, youth, adult, and community, mental health has been at the forefront of your thoughts. A focus of many conversations – locally, nationally, and globally before the pandemic, the need to engage on this issue is now even more pressing. This recently released documentary, [Hiding in Plain Sight](#), centers the voices and experiences of young people. This documentary film highlights youth mental health, wellbeing, and resilience. We are thrilled to offer the opportunity to screen a 60-minute version of the series in partnership with you, your community, and the youth spotlighted in this film.

In addition to opening an essential conversation in our communities, sharing this film with you also highlights a few other important themes in our work together:

- Centering youth voice
- Providing an opportunity for community conversation
- Collaborating across communities and programs to build a better understanding with youth

We're hopeful that this process, with help from all of you, will bear all that fruit.

Thank you!¹



¹ At Youth Collaboratory, we've been thinking deeply of different ways of collaborating with our community partners: bringing deliverables off the page and into your communities, sharing concrete tools to get our work done, and making space to say some of the hard things.

WELCOME, AGREEMENTS, AND ICE BREAKER

Estimated Time: Up to 10 minutes

Welcome and Check-in

Intentionally checking in can be a useful tool to create safety, set intentions, and build community.

Introduce co-facilitators

You will need a talking piece (a stuffed animal, a textured small stone, a talking stick, etc.)

Suggested introduction to check in:

“ A key assumption of our community-based work is that we are full people regardless of where we go. This is important because we are often asked to show up as a portion of ourselves most places we go - our employee self, our friend self, our family self, and so on - and we know that mental health behavior does not impact just one portion of ourselves or of where we go. As we engage in conversations about mental health, we encourage you to show up and participate completely. For some people, this means being quiet and thoughtful, for others this means telling their own stories or asking questions. We like to start this with a simple check-in. When the talking piece gets to you, please share three things:

1. Your name and meaningful identifiers
2. How are you today?
3. What is one thing (thoughts, emotions, physical sensations) that lets you know you are at your best?

Tip: Introducing the talking piece
A talking piece is a tool passed around the room inviting people to share and listen respectfully. People can speak for as long or as little as they need when they have the talking piece. No one is forced to check in, passing is acceptable and normalized.

Tip: Timing during a check-in and welcome
An intentional check-in is ideal for groups of up to 20-25 people. Be the first to check-in and model the amount of time/detail you hope others to share (generally speaking, people take cues from the very first speaker).

A large group (25+) would benefit from a similar introduction up to this point. Due to time constraints, do not lead individual check-ins and instead ask people to introduce themselves to their immediate neighbors before transitioning to the space agreements.

Space Agreements or Community Agreements

These acknowledge our collective and individual need to be heard and feel respected. Edit this list to best meet the needs of those present, focusing on fostering trust and respect. *Allow enough time to explain or provide an example of each agreement.*

- **Honor privacy**, it is possible that examples from each person's life come up today, but this does not mean people want to be approached to talk about what they share today. In general, please be mindful of how you speak about what you take from today. We encourage you to avoid using any identifying details.
- **Take space; make space**, there are people who are talkers and there are others who talk less. It is important that if you feel like you want to say something, you can – regardless of who and how you are. We encourage you to be mindful of how much or little you participate and contribute during our time together today. Make space for others.
- **Assume good intent**, we do not always have the best language to talk about difficult moments. There will be times when comments come across as rude or disrespectful – even if that is not the intention. We encourage you to take responsibility if you say something that comes across in this way and, also, encourage others to assume the intention was most likely not to be disrespectful.
- **Take care of yourself**, do whatever you need to take care of yourself during this session – stand up, pace in the back, get water **or** turn the camera/mic on and off as needed, turn off the audio for a moment, stretch.
- **Speak for yourself**, we are living in a time when we talk about mental health too much, and not enough. We talk about it too much, often with derogatory or stigmatizing language; and not enough with the intention of understanding how to best support each other. With that in mind, we challenge you to speak for yourself (rather than about others).

Tip: Checking for consensus

Consensus is a great way to gain buy-in and keep participants accountable around respectful interactions during the training. If a challenging interaction comes up, you can refer to this list and XAZZ way to check for consensus is by asking for a thumb indication:

 Agree

 Question or would like to add a thought.

 Disagree

Prepare a visual cue with these and other agreements. Ideally, these would be on a piece of paper that can be easily edited and visible throughout the training, or on a dedicated slide.

AGENDA

Review the three parts of our evening. We will begin with community conversations centering our own experiences of mental health struggles and resilience, we'll then join our wider youth centered community for a nationwide screening of the film, and then finish with a panel discussion with the film participants.

This is a good time to discuss other relevant logistics like breaks, intended end time, and any other relevant details.

| Time | Agenda | Facilitator |
|------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 10 minutes | Welcome, Agreements, and Ice Breaker | Host Site |
| 30 minutes | Facilitated Conversation + Small Group Breakouts | Host Site |
| 60 minutes | The Film | Youth Collaboratory - Virtually |
| 30 minutes | Panel Conversations with the Filmmakers | Youth Collaboratory - Virtually |
| 10 minutes | Closing, Thank Yous, and Outro | Host Site |

Transition to the facilitated conversation.



FACILITATED CONVERSATION + SMALL GROUP BREAKOUTS

Estimated Time: Up to 30 minutes

Part 1: Full Community Conversation

1. Ask people to think about what comes to mind when they hear the phrase “mental health.” If there is a way to record answers in real-time (on a whiteboard, large post-it paper) ask people to voice them out loud and record as many as they have within a 40-second timeframe.
2. Facilitators can then notice and reflect on themes and flows.
3. Ask: *“How are you doing today?” or “other than the community agreements, what do you need from the group to feel like you can participate fully?”*
4. Divide into two groups (youth and families with youth facilitator, and mentors and staff with staff facilitator)

Transition to Small Group Breakouts.

Tip: You can use **flip charts or white boards** in your space to highlight key messages for participants. It can be helpful to set up one or two blank pages as “parking lots or sand boxes” to hold participants thoughts that are constructive but not entirely relevant.

Similarly, selecting a volunteer notetaker to write folks’ thoughts on a flip chart in real time can help them feel heard (as long as the attention can stay on the speaker and not the notetaker.)

*The attention should stay in the circle of conversation, not on the technologies (such as note taking) that enable it.

Part 2: Small Group Breakouts

Youth-led Conversation

Describe Format for Group Conversation

Questions will be offered to the group in three levels so that we can slowly go deeper into the conversation together. Folks are welcome to share as much or as little as feels comfortable. Some people might say things that are different than your own experience – this is why we only speak for ourselves. Please feel free to take breaks (reminder about the support person in the back of the room.)

1. What is our experience? Starting with stories.
2. How can we understand our experience? Contextualizing our stories.
3. What is possible? Identifying resources or behaviors for positive change.

Questions About Mental Health for Youth-led Group

First round of conversation (10 minutes)

Pose three questions and invite folks to answer any or all of them. Use the talking stick so people can take turns (acknowledge the cultural complication of turn-taking.)

““ *Let’s discuss our experience, starting with stories:*

- *What experiences in your life, your school, your work, your time with friends, or your family inform your understanding of mental health?*
- *If you have, what prompted you to get care or support?*
- *How have you cared for or considered the mental and emotional health of people you love? What was that like?*

As you’re nearing the 10-minute mark, let folks know that “we have time for two more comments,” so that participants can prepare for the transition.

Tip: *Sitting in silence*

As facilitators our minds sometimes move at a different speed than participants – 5 or 10 seconds can feel like an eternity and we can feel compelled to fill the empty space with our own voices. Try to think of that silence as time for people to think or gather their gumption. Pause and reflect for yourself, catch the vibe of the room, or just count to five slowly in your head before jumping in. Likely someone else will jump in before you even get to three.

Second round of question (10 minutes) using the same format

“ Our mental health doesn't live in isolation, we don't live on an island separate from the communities where we live. Considering the communities we belong to can help us better understand our experiences.

- What is the impact of mental health in your community? Or how has your community been impacted by mental health challenges?
- How does religion, race, culture, or some other aspect of identity or background, influence how you think about mental health?
- How is mental health impacted by the environment in which someone grows up?

As you're nearing the 10-minute mark, let folks know that “we have time for two more comments,” so that participants can prepare for the transition.

Third round of questions (10 minutes) using the same format

“ Is change possible? Let's identify resources or behaviors that might help our community.

- How do you care for or consider your mental and emotional health? What is the impact of that?
- What can you say to someone who is struggling? How do you initiate a conversation?
- How can we support BIPOC youth's mental health in the wake of racial violence? Queer youth in the wake of homophobic violence?
- How can youth create safe spaces for their peers to talk about mental health?

As you're nearing the 10-minute mark, let folks know that “we have time for two more comments,” so that participants can prepare for the transition.



Wrap Up in Gratitude

Thank you all, we're going to rejoin the large group, please take any moments you need to transition. When we get there, we're going to share reflections, please continue to speak for yourself, and keep the confidences of other folks in this room/circle.

Part 2: Small Group Breakouts

Adult-led Conversation: Conversation with Staff, Mentors, and Parents

Describe Format for Group Conversation

Questions will be offered to the group in three levels so that we can slowly go deeper into the conversation together. Folks are welcome to share as much or as little as feels comfortable. Some people might say things that are different than your own experience – this is why we only speak for ourselves.

First round of conversation (10 minutes)

Pose questions and invite folks to answer any or all of them. Use the talking stick so people can take turns (acknowledge the cultural complication of turn taking.) You don't need to ask all the questions at once as you could overwhelm folks, try to hold an easeful space where you sprinkle questions to move folks deeper.



Let's discuss our experience, starting with stories:

- *What type of challenges do you see in young people compared to adults? How does that dictate how you treat them?*
- *Have you known a young person who was dealing with depression and/or anxiety? How did you know?*
- *Have you ever had a concern that a youth in your life may be participating in bullying, or being bullied?*
- *When caring for the youth in your life, how do you tell the difference between normal behaviors and feelings and mental illness? (i.e., feeling sadness vs. depression, not feeling hungry vs. anorexia, etc.)?*

As you're nearing the 10-minute mark, let folks know that "we have time for two more comments," so that participants can prepare for the transition.

Tip: *Intervening when group agreements aren't kept or harm is done*

Folks come into conversations with different sets of experiences and skills in following group agreements, especially when coming together for the first time. What can you do if you notice a participant not attending to a group agreement?

- Notice the energy of the group (are other people noticing or impacted?)
- Gently redirect (rather than call out)
- Find time or an ally to pull them aside and ask some restorative questions:
 - What happened?
 - What were you thinking at the time?
 - Who was impacted and how?
 - What needs to happen to make things right

Second round of question (10 minutes) using the same format

“ Our mental health doesn't live in isolation, we don't live in an island separate from the communities where we live. Considering the communities we belong to can help us better understand our experiences.

- *What resources are available in our community to assist with finding a good counselor or supportive group?*
- *What do you believe is important for anyone to be aware of if they know someone with a mental health issue?*
- *How is mental health impacted by the environment in which someone lives/loves/laughs/learns?*

As you're nearing the 10-minute mark, let folks know that “we have time for two more comments,” so that participants can prepare for the transition.

Third round of questions (10 minutes) using the same format

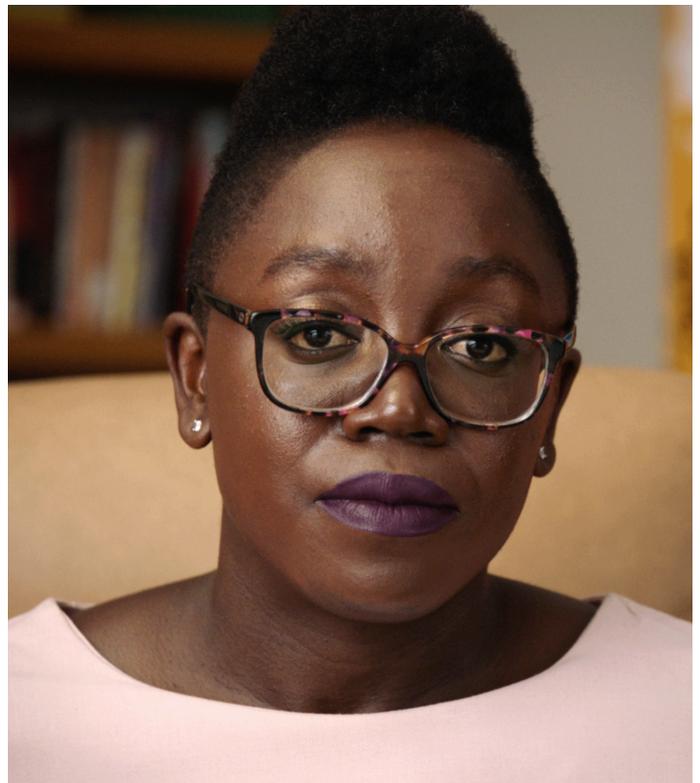
“ Is change possible? Let's identify resources or behaviors that might help our community.

- *What should someone do if they're worried about their mental health? Or about the mental health of someone they care about?*
- *How can adults collaborate with young people to create safe spaces to talk about mental health?*
- *As individuals and as a community, what can we do to better meet youth mental health needs?*
- *How can we promote emotional, psychological, and social well-being with our BIPOC and queer youth?*

As you're nearing the 10-minute mark, let folks know that “we have time for two more comments,” so that participants can prepare for the transition.

Wrap Up in Gratitude

Thank you all, we're going to rejoin the large group, please take any moments you need to transition. When we get there, we're going to share reflections, please continue to speak for yourself, and keep the confidences of other folks in this room/circle.



Part 3: Returning to a Full Community Conversation

Come back together to review what you heard and notice any patterns – ask people to settle in for the screening and let them know that we will spend a moment reflecting on their experience of the group conversation before launching the film.

Ask for Three Reflections

- *How did it feel or what did you learn? Please DO NOT repeat other people’s stories.*

Express gratitude for participation and thoughts.

Share Resource

- *If you are in crisis or experiencing thoughts of suicide, please text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741) or call 988, it is routed to mental/behavioral health crisis lines that can still include:*
- *Both services are free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.*
- *In our own community you can access these other resources: _____*

Acknowledge possible harm and limit of resources.

Transition to Part 4: The Film

Let people know that we’ll be launching the Zoom now then please dial in and join the group.



RESOURCE: CALLING THE POLICE IN A MENTAL HEALTH SITUATION

Reminder: Systems to address crisis in our communities are insufficient and often perpetuate greater harm but they are what we have. We could have future trainings on systems of control, community supports, restorative justice, and de-escalation. In the meantime, please acknowledge the challenges and share the following resources from NAMI about calling the police in a mental health situation.

Calling 911: What to do in an emergency

Stay calm – don’t shout into the phone or at arriving officers or medical professionals. They can’t understand you if you shout.

Ask for a CIT-trained officer. Let them know this is a mental health crisis.

On the phone: Be ready to give concrete examples of the dangerous behaviors and to support your contention that the person is mentally ill. For example, say, “My daughter pulled a knife” as opposed to “My daughter wants to kill me.”

Calmly state over the phone the following information and be ready to repeat it to arriving police officers and/or medical professionals:

- Your name
- Your address
- Loved one’s name
- Your relationship
- Diagnosis
- Medications (on or off)
- Describe what your family member is doing now
- Prior history of psychosis
- Any weapons in the area
- Clothing description
- Prior history of violence
- Things that would help or worsen the situation

Until professionals arrive:

- Be polite, respectful, reassuring, calm, and direct with your family member.
- Maintain ongoing communication directly with the person and do not include others in side conversations.
- Do not try to trick or deceive your family member.
- Avoid immediately moving in close or touching the person unless necessary.
- Remove all objects with which a person may do harm to self or others.

When professionals arrive:

- Have all the lights on inside the house.
- Identify yourself.
- Carry nothing in your hands especially coming outside to meet them, in which case walk, don’t run to meet them.
- Don’t ramble.
- Be prepared to repeat the information you gave over the phone.
- State whether there is a history of suicide attempts.
- State whether your family member is violent or delusional.
- Have the treating psychiatrist’s phone number handy.

PART 4: THE FILM

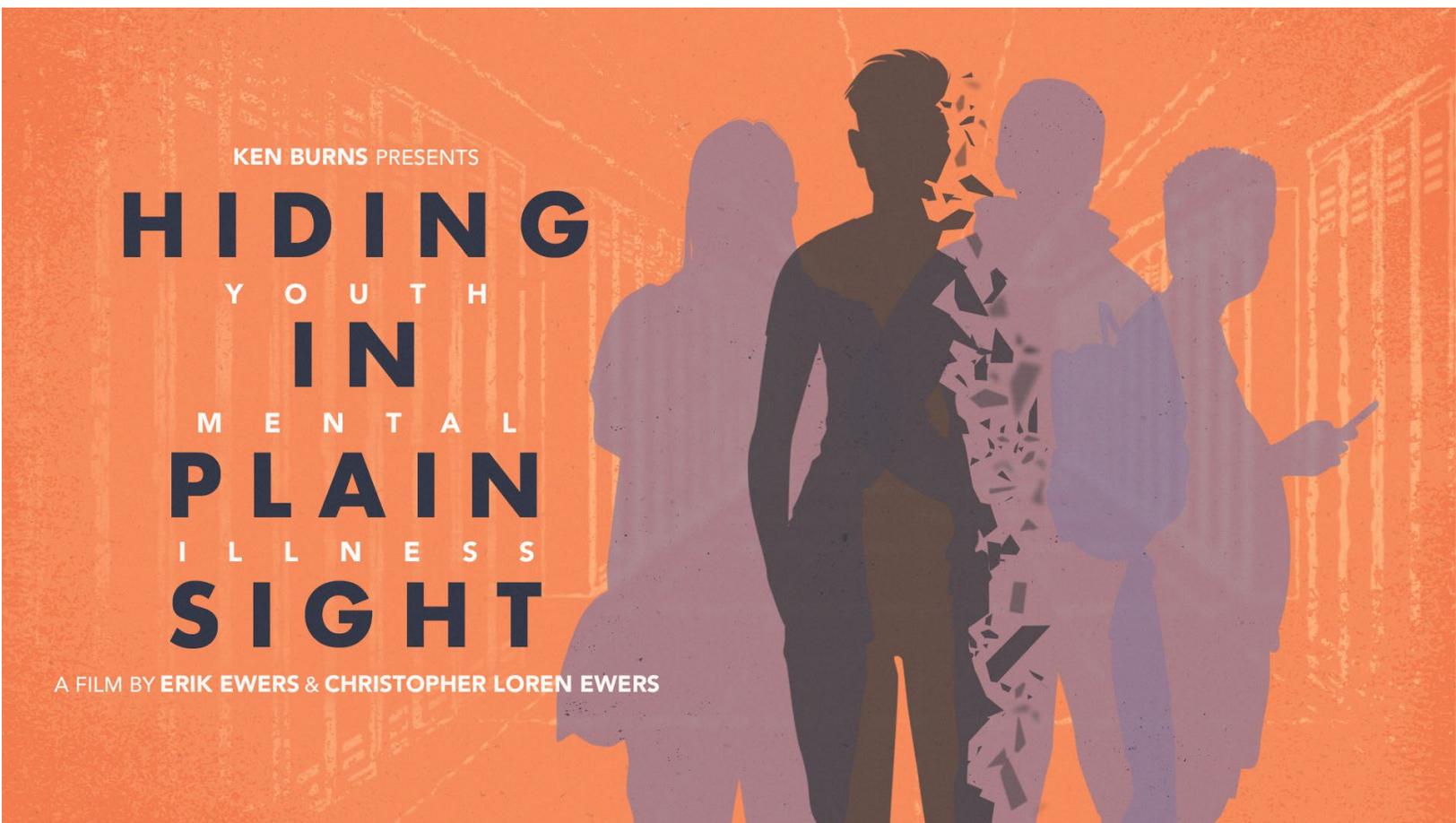
Estimated Time: 60 minutes

Introduction to Film (by Youth Collaboratory Staff)

Welcome

Tech Check – Youth Collaboratory will ask for waves and intros in chat and thumbs up. Youth Collaboratory will provide the phone number of someone teams can call with problems.

Gratitude



PART 5: PANEL CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FILMMAKERS

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

Youth Collaboratory will host this panel conversation.

- Thank folks for joining us for the conversation following the film. Remind/celebrate everyone who is in the virtual room.

Ask for program sites to poll the folks in the room and take a minute to write their questions in the chat. Ask for folks to raise their hand if they have a question that they would like to speak to themselves. Alternate community questions with questions from Youth Collaboratory staff, listed below:

Questions from Youth Collaboratory Staff to Alternate with Community Participants

- What did you learn from making this film?
- How has this project affected the way you speak about youth mental health in your daily life?
- What are the goals of the film?
- Why were you willing to open up and speak about some of your darkest and most personal experiences?
- How do you talk with your peers about mental health?
- What advice do you have for adults who want to support the younger people in their lives who are experiencing mental health challenges?

Give a five-minute warning, that we will take two more questions.

Express gratitude for panelists (applaud)

Express gratitude for youth in programs (applaud)

Express gratitude for adult allies (applaud)

Thanks, everyone, we'll do a final wrap-up in our original groups. Have a great night.

PART 6: CLOSING, THANK YOUS, AND OUTRO

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

This final part is facilitated by the host sites.

- Ask people to break out into groups of two and give 6 minutes or as much time as the group agrees on (switching at the three-minute mark). Debrief with the group:
 - Person B: *What was it like to participate in this screening? How did it feel or what did you think about hearing youth tell their stories?*
 - Person A: *Did you feel heard?*

Thank everyone for coming and encourage them to stick around, eat some food, and chat with each other.



Facilitation Note

This marks the end of the training. Intentionally pause for questions to clarify and hand out feedback forms.