



2017 NJJA Conference | **MAY 17-19, 2017** | Younes Conference Center - Kearney, NE

2017 NJJA YOUTH DAY ATTENDANCE TIPS & TRICKS

The annual NJJA Youth Day is just around the corner! We are so excited you have decided to participate. Your voice is very important. Attendees will include young adults like you, probation officers, lawyers, judges, youth advocates, service providers, and other professionals. We hope you will take away lots of helpful information, ask tons of questions, meet new people, and share your voice. To prepare for the event, please take a look at this list of tips and tricks. We can't wait to see you May 18th in Kearney!

TO PREPARE

- ▶ Check in with adults about the support I'll need during the conference.
- ▶ Read the agenda of workshops and activities, and plan which sessions to attend.
- ▶ Talk to my supporting adult about their expectations for me during the conference.
- ▶ Talk with my supporting adult about what I hope to get out of the conference.
- ▶ Have a sweater or jacket. Conference centers are typically kept very cold.
- ▶ Confirm travel details with my adult supporter.
- ▶ Pick out what to wear. Ask yourself, "Would I wear this to a job interview?"

DURING THE CONFERENCE

- ▶ Put your phone away during sessions.
- ▶ Be brave. Challenge yourself to ask at least one question.
- ▶ Be cautious about sharing your story. Don't share out of anger – share only if it will add to the speaker's topic. Please be direct, specific and solution-focused.
- ▶ Network! Use breaks and meal times to meet other people (professionals and youth).
- ▶ Visit resource tables.
- ▶ Be the best version of yourself. Be prepared to run into someone you know from your time in the system.

SHARING STRATEGICALLY

Step 1: Know your Red, Yellow and Green light topics.

Green Light: Information that can be shared with anyone at any time.

Ex: I have a sister.

Yellow Light: Information that requires you to slow down, consider the consequences.

Ex: I have a sister I haven't seen in over a year.

Red Light: Information that should be kept within family and close friends.

Ex: My sister and I were physically abused.

Step 2: Know why you're sharing.

Positive Reasons:

- » **Self-Advocacy:** Sharing to assert your own interests, desires, needs or rights.
- » **Community Advocacy:** Sharing to assert the needs, interests or rights of others.
- » **Stigma Reduction:** Sharing to normalize experiences and dispel negative beliefs or presumptions.

Negative Reasons:

- » **Exploitation:** Sharing because you feel like you have to and/or you don't agree with or know the reason for sharing.
- » **Anger:** Share because you want retribution or justice for what happened to you.
- » **Attention Seeking:** Sharing because you want the spotlight.



Step 3: Always weigh the Risks and Benefits of why you're sharing!

Benefits of Sharing

1. You can **EDUCATE** professionals and the public using your unique and powerful life experiences to allow them to do a better job with those currently in care.
2. Sharing your story or promoting a program/idea/issue can foster your own **PERSONAL GROWTH** by making your individual needs known and practicing self-advocacy.
3. Your personal experience has the power to strongly impact people with the power to make **POSITIVE CHANGE**. Your story can stick with them and bring a new light to an issue that they'll think of when doing their job or making new policies.

Risks of Sharing

1. Sharing can damage **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**. Sometimes people mentioned may be upset or hurt by how you talked about them or exposed parts of their stories.
2. Putting your story out into the public means it could stick around for a long time. This could impact **PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS** in your career, especially if your story was ever in the media.
3. Speaking out about your time in care means you may be **EXPOSED TO STIGMA** that others hold.
4. Sharing your story can impact your **EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING** when you regret sharing a certain part of your story or when sharing brings up painful memories.