



Y-TAC C.A.V.E Training Michigan, 2019

In the crazy and fast-paced world in which we all now exist, sometimes we need a moment to pause and refresh. That is exactly what Y-TAC was able to do in October along with VR professionals from Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP), and partner organizations. Trainers from the [San Diego County YMCA Youth and Family Services](#) spent four days across Michigan sharing the [C.A.V.E. model](#) (i.e., Compassion, Awareness, Validation, and Empowerment)—“an evidence-informed approach to working with transition age youth to increase their well-being and engagement in services”. MRS is using C.A.V.E. as a catalyst to support staff as they reach and engage youth with disabilities in foster care.



(Photo: participants from the Michigan C.A.V.E. Training)

Almost 200 participants worked through scenarios and engaged in open discussion around each of the components of C.A.V.E. (i.e., Compassion, Awareness, Validation, and Empowerment). Since the development of C.A.V.E., it now includes an additional component—Acceptance—added to further complete the model (now known as C.A².V.E.). Participants learned about brain science and adolescent brain development, chronic stress, and healthy interactions and relationships. Many participants indicated



the training was a nice reminder of putting the “human” back into human services, regardless of the bureaucracy or procedural obstacles creating barriers in our work. Participants identified strategies or ideas for using the information, such as:

- “My goal will be to incorporate as many aspects of CAAVE as possible, specifically compassion and awareness. I never realized the importance/significance of validation.”
- “...Just the mindfulness of my own bias and judgements and allowing the space for them no matter how busy I am.”
- “I will always think about my response to a youth through the ‘frustrate’ or ‘facilitate’ framework.”

These participant quotes sum up nicely the intent of the training and the importance of building relationships.

- “Thank you for reminding us of the need to see the people we serve as human beings who have had a wide range of experiences and the importance of establishing a relationship.”
- “CAVE is such a solid way to help, not judge, empower, and allow people to be who they are—which is what we all desire.”

For more information about receiving C.A².V.E training, contact Kim Osmani, Technical Assistance Liaison, at y-tac@iel.org.