



Refining Outcomes for Flourish Agenda's Healing Centered Engagement Training and Akili Camp

Laying the Foundation for Future Learning

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Executive Summary

Flourish Agenda partnered with the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) to radically shift school culture across the district using a Healing Centered Engagement (HCE)¹ approach. In 2023 and 2024, 86 SDP educators² completed Flourish Agenda's HCE Certification program, designed to infuse healing-centered strategies in their work. Flourish Agenda also delivered several Akili Camp sessions, a multiday summer experience for high school-aged students of color to learn about and experience healing-centered work. Approximately 170 young people participated in Akili Camp in 2023 and 2024. HCE Certification and Akili Camp are both guided by Flourish Agenda's overarching CARMA principles: Culture, Agency, Relationships, Meaning, and Aspiration.

This report presents a data derived logic model that clearly represents the core components and outcomes of Akili Camp and the HCE Certification program. The logic model, developed through a multiphase, collaborative project between Flourish Agenda and the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®), links the HCE Certification and Akili Camp activities to desired individual, interpersonal, and institutional outcomes for youth and adults. AIR paired the logic model with an exploratory study of outcomes to help Flourish Agenda lay the groundwork for an evidence-building strategy—one that can inform organizational priorities, support ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and pave the way for future rigorous impact and implementation studies.

In Phase 1 of the project, the logic model was developed through a series of interviews and focus groups with members of the Flourish Agenda team and SDP staff; a document scan; a literature review; and a focus group with Akili Camp participants. In Phase 2, AIR used a multi-perspective approach to rigorously explore the extent to which youth and adult participants' lived experiences aligned with the outcomes highlighted in the logic model. This exploratory study involved two types of multiple-perspective ("dyad") interviews: focal interviews with Akili Camp participants and HCE-trained adults ("Akili Fellows"), and paired interviews with trusted individuals who could speak to the focal interviewee's development. In the spring of 2025, AIR conducted a total of nine interviews, representing four complete dyads and one partial dyad.

¹ Ginwright, S. (2018, May 31). *The future of healing: Shifting from trauma informed care to healing centered engagement*. <https://ginwright.medium.com/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c>

² Flourish Agenda engaged more than 200 SDP educators in its HCE Certification program, and 86 completed the full certification.

We found that the logic model represented many of the most meaningful changes shared by Akili Fellows and Camp participants. The outcomes they identified provided evidence for the outcomes in the logic model. Campers we spoke with experienced improved self-esteem, increased optimism, more frequent critical reflection, and improved self-regulation after attending camp. Regarding interpersonal relationships, young people's experiences reflected an enhanced sense of mattering, feeling loved, increased emotional support and care, increased sense of empathy, improved communication skills, and an increase in conflict-resolution skills because of camp participation. Akili Fellows highlighted a healing-centered mindset shift when working with young people as their most meaningful change after experiencing HCE training and Akili Camp. According to Akili Fellows this shift resulted in increased empathy and more intentional communication with youth. We also found evidence of the formation of healing-centered institutional climates, with interviewees sharing examples of Akili Fellows bringing healing-centered strategies and activities back to their workplaces.

Several new outcomes also emerged from our interviews with Akili Fellows and Camp participants. Collaborative meaning-making discussions with Flourish Agenda staff were pivotal in identifying these new outcomes. Camp participants shared how Akili Camp sparked a renewed sense of happiness, energy, and motivation, which Flourish Agenda staff referred to as “Spirit” and “Contagious Agency.” Akili Fellows also experienced meaningful mindset shifts that enabled them to recognize the value of young people's voices and experiences. Both Camp participants and Akili Fellows also reported experiencing the opportunity to heal in community, or feelings of interpersonal safety and being understood. These feelings of emotional safety enabled Camp participants and Akili Fellows to be vulnerable with each other and experience reciprocity in healing. These individual and interpersonal outcomes were deeply interconnected and cyclical, ultimately strengthened by the opportunity for youth participants and staff to learn directly from one another during camp.

Ultimately, the exploratory outcomes study provided evidence for many of the logic model outcomes. However, given the limited size of the study's sample, AIR recommends future studies that (a) seek to corroborate and build evidence for the youth and adult outcomes articulated in the logic model and expand those outcomes if needed, (b) further explore how the CARMA principles might show up in participant experiences both in and outside of Flourish Agenda's programs, (c) explore more deeply the institutional outcomes, which require more time to emerge, and (d) continue to leverage the expertise of Flourish Agenda staff through participatory methods. Overall, the findings that emerged from this collaborative exploratory study provided valuable insight into the transformative impacts of Akili Camp and HCE Certification and laid the groundwork for future inquiry.

Introduction

Flourish Agenda partnered with the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) to radically shift school culture across the district using a Healing Centered Engagement (HCE)³ approach. HCE is a concept and strategy developed by Flourish Agenda to promote the “conditions for wellbeing” for youth of color. In 2023 and 2024, Flourish Agenda engaged more than 200 SDP educators in its HCE Certification training program, and 86 completed the full certification. During these years, Flourish Agenda also delivered several Akili Camp sessions, a summer experience for high school-aged students of color to learn about and experience healing-centered work. Approximately 170 young people from Philadelphia participated in Akili Camp. The intentional pairing of HCE Certification and Akili Camp in a district was a new endeavor for Flourish Agenda. This deep investment provided an opportunity to develop a logic model that aligns with Flourish Agenda’s unique approach and is grounded in the lived experiences of youth and adults who participate in Akili Camp and HCE Certification, respectively.

A logic model is a visual representation of a program’s resources and activities and the outcomes the program is expected to have. Logic models are useful for guiding the following:

- Monitoring and evaluating progress
- Financial planning
- Providing staff training and support
- Strategic planning
- Program planning and development
- Cultivating buy-in with partners

Flourish Agenda commissioned the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to refine its existing logic model to reflect its novel approach to offering programming in SDP and to conduct an exploratory outcomes study based on the outcomes in the logic model. Together, the logic model and study can be seen as a foundation from which Flourish Agenda can develop an evidence-building strategy. For example, Flourish Agenda could undertake future studies to examine the relationships between components of the logic

model and their outcomes for youth and adults—and to examine resulting shifts in organizational culture. Logic models are useful for guiding organizational priorities, such as providing staff training, developing and refining programs, and monitoring and evaluating progress. As such, investing in a logic model represents an investment in multiple facets of an organization.

³ Ginwright, S. (2018, May 31). *The future of healing: Shifting from trauma informed care to healing centered engagement*. <https://ginwright.medium.com/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c>

HCE Model in Philadelphia

Akili Camp is a multiday retreat for young people, specifically Black and Brown youth of color, to learn about and experience healing-centered strategies in community with youth and adults from similar backgrounds. It promotes wellness, reflection, healing, and activism through activities involving youth and adult mentors working together. Reflecting traditional African and other indigenous cultural structures, participants are placed in smaller groups called tribes, which are led by an adult facilitator. Camp components include workshops, games, self-care assessments, music, chants, discussions of identity, and other community-building activities.

All Flourish Agenda Programs Are Guided by CARMA Principles

Through self-reflective and group-centered processes, HCE activities engage participants in five guiding principles:



Culture – the values and norms that connect us to a shared identity



Agency – the individual and collective power to create and change personal conditions and external systems



Relationships – the capacity to create, sustain, and grow healthy connections



Meaning – the discovery of who we are, why we are, and what purpose we were born to serve



Aspiration – the capacity to imagine, set, and accomplish goals for personal and collective livelihood and advancement

HCE Certification refers to a specific training program developed by Flourish Agenda and designed for adults working with youth of color. The HCE Certification is completed through a set of learning modules that focus on the CARMA Principles (see textbox) and their use in supporting young people. In working with SDP, Flourish Agenda used a hybrid model to deliver the program: SDP staff completed a set of online modules and paused at specific points to come together in person to discuss and debrief the content.

Akili Fellows are HCE-certified adults who participate in additional training to serve as mentors and facilitators working with young people during Akili Camp. The Akili Fellow training is a practicum-like experience that prepares adults with youth development backgrounds, who come from the same communities as the youth they serve, to support the youth experience at camp. During this preparation, adults work through the very camp activities and processes they will facilitate with youth.

The adults of focus in this study are Akili Fellows. We refer to the training received by Akili Fellows as “HCE training,” which refers to both the Certification program and the Akili Fellows training together.

Overall Approach

To commence the project, AIR team members developed a partnership profile to share the lived experiences and social identities that we bring to this project with the Flourish Agenda team. This transparency was intended to build trust with the Flourish Agenda team and generate conversation about our approach to the work. We shared positionality statements with Flourish Agenda to make explicit how our social positions influence our approach to research and evaluation. To learn more about the AIR team, see excerpts from the partnership profile in Appendix A: Meet the AIR Team.

The project unfolded in two phases: (1) discovery and foundation, and (2) further exploring logic model outcomes.

Phase 1: Discovery and Foundation

The main goal of the discovery and foundation phase was for the AIR team to develop a logic model for intentionally pairing HCE Certification and Akili Camp. We leveraged multiple sources of data to develop the logic model (see text box), including nine one-on-one or small-group interviews in summer 2024 with 17 people (the Flourish Agenda team, SDP district-level staff, and young people who previously participated in Akili Camp). We also reviewed program materials. Appendix B describes each data source in more detail.

Data Sources for the Logic Model

- Interviews and focus groups with the Flourish Agenda team and district staff
- Document review
- Literature scan
- FA focus group with Akili Camp participants

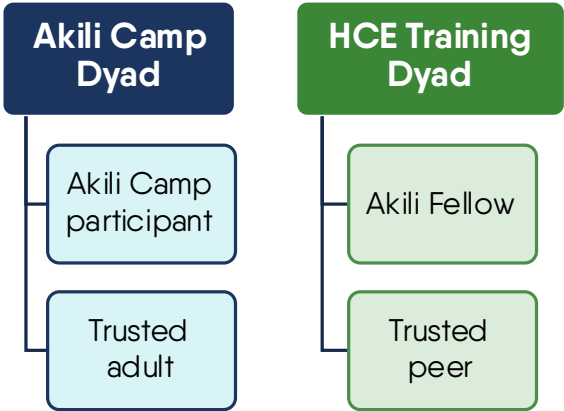
Through a collaborative process with Flourish Agenda, including a series of discussions and data reviews, AIR identified key outcomes of Akili Camp and HCE Certification. Then, we created a logic model, which links HCE Certification and Akili Camp activities to hypothesized individual, interpersonal, and institutional outcomes. This first phase of the project culminated in a draft of the Flourish Agenda’s logic model, which we present later in this report.

Phase 2: Further Exploring Logic Model Outcomes

In Phase 2, the AIR team conducted an exploratory inquiry focused on youth and adult outcomes articulated in the logic model. This was an opportunity to “pressure test” the draft logic model developed in Phase 1. Specifically, we sought to understand more deeply how youth and adult participants benefited from their involvement in Flourish Agenda’s programs and the extent to which their lived experiences aligned with the outcomes in the logic model.

The exploratory inquiry consisted of sets of multiple-perspective interviews—referred to here as dyads—about Akili Camp and HCE training. Each dyad included a focal person and a trusted person who could speak about the focal person’s development (Exhibit 1). For Akili Camp interviews, we first spoke with a youth participant (focal person) and then spoke with a trusted adult identified by the youth participant. For HCE training interviews, we first spoke with an adult who served as an Akili Fellow and then spoke with a trusted peer identified by the Akili Fellow. We asked interviewees to identify the most meaningful changes experienced as a result of participating in HCE training and Akili Camp.

Exhibit 1. Dyads in the Exploratory Inquiry



AIR conducted a total of nine multiple-perspective interviews (representing four complete dyads and one partial dyad) in spring 2025. Appendix C describes these interviews in more detail.

Phase 1: Presentation of the Logic Model

The logic model, shown in Exhibit 2 (pages 8–9), illustrates the relationship between organizational investments or **inputs**, key **activities**, and expected **outcomes**. Supportive organizational structures (e.g., the willingness and readiness of partnering entities, such as districts) are necessary to facilitate successful implementation of the core activities: HCE Certification and Akili Camp. These activities, guided by [CARMA principles](#),⁴ are designed to support key outcomes for youth and adults. The logic model articulates anticipated outcomes at the individual, interpersonal, and institutional level. Below, we describe the core program activities and define outcomes that emerged from analysis.

Activities

Flourish Agenda staff described HCE as a mindset and approach for transforming relationships between adults and youth. The two core activities in the logic model, **Akili Camp and HCE Certification**, are HCE learning vehicles—or “twin strategies” that convey the [CARMA principles](#). Importantly, Flourish Agenda described Akili Camp and HCE Certification as flexible and adaptable to the contextual needs and community desires for this work:

“CARMA and HCE is not a step-by-step program. It is not, “If you do A, B, and C, then you get [something].” It’s not that. It’s both an awareness and understanding that helps shape how you think about your programming and your strategy for young people of color.”

Akili Camp aims to empower Black, Brown, and other marginalized youth by centering Black and Afro-Indigenous cultures and traditions in immersive shared experiences. As shared by Flourish Agenda staff, Akili Camp aims to address White supremacist mindsets internalized by youth—through core activities, the creation of peer communities, emotion-centered conversations, and intensive supports for youth by adults. Camp leaders shared their desire for partnering communities to “own” the camp experience by tailoring it to their unique youth populations and priorities. A Flourish Agenda staff member explained:

⁴ For more on the CARMA principles, please see Flourish Agenda’s website: <https://flourishagenda.com/our-process/>



[Akili Camp] is designed for people who have historically not been able to be proud of the way that they show up in the world, to be able to show up and develop confidence and pride about who they are, what their people have endured.

As described above, through **HCE Certification**, adults engage in an immersive series of trainings—either in-person, online, or hybrid—and learn how to improve conditions and create spaces that center the needs and agency of youth of color. Flourish Agenda staff shared that the guiding belief of this training series is that if adult professionals address their own healing, they will better show up for youth in their work:




*For the short-term goals, when it comes to HCE [training] and people who are doing the work, so to speak, is to be in a space of believing that you're **worthy of healing**. And that worthiness is, of course, it's a long-term goal by itself, but worthy enough to even start [the process of healing]. A lot of the people we work with are already at a space of high-level burnout, high level of vicarious trauma [where] that's necessary to even start the process.*

HCE trainings center Flourish Agenda concepts, such as spirit, wellbeing, and joy, with an aim to make participants feel seen and safe. Importantly, the typical experience of HCE Certification trainings, which are often online and self-paced, are distinct from the training of Akili Fellows, which tends to be more intensive, in-person, and preparatory for adults who will facilitate and engage in Akili Camp activities.

Outcomes

Through analysis of Flourish Agenda staff interviews, learning materials, and past research on Flourish Agenda's HCE activities, we identified a set of commonly observed changes that occur for youth and adults after participation in HCE activities. In the logic model, we highlight changes at the individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels. For individual participants, we further categorized outcomes into changes in mindsets, knowledge, and skills and behaviors. The logic model also features outcomes that can occur at the interpersonal level—that is, positive changes in interactions and connections between peers, colleagues, and youth and adults (e.g., youth and family members, youth and educators). Individual and interpersonal outcomes are considered short-term outcomes: those that can be observed within 1 year of participation in the core activities. Flourish Agenda staff also discussed observed and desired changes at the institutional level, including their hopes for HCE practices to be infused within classrooms, school policy, and public safety, and within a range of public institutions that engage and interface with

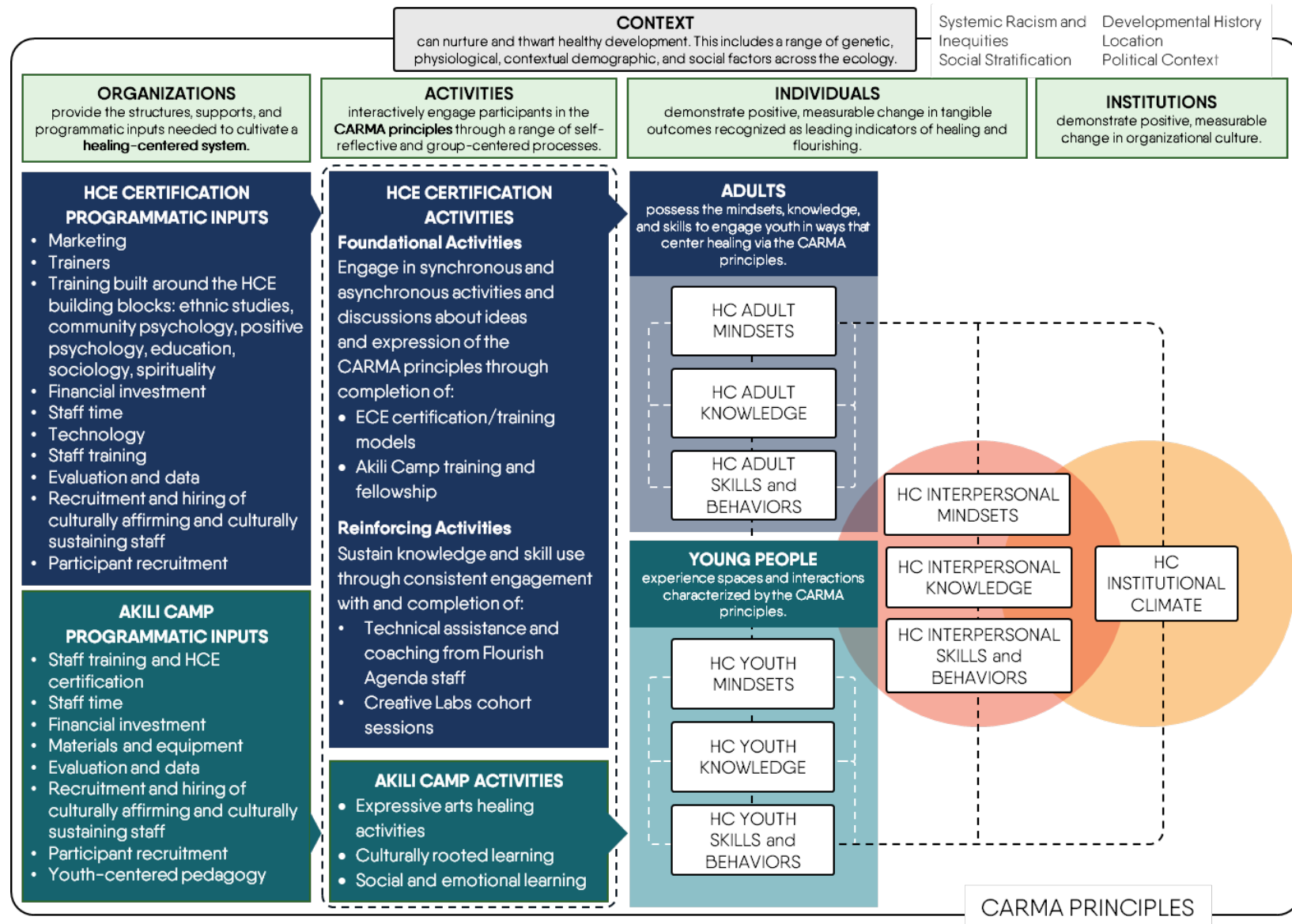


youth of color. Institutional outcomes are considered longer term outcomes: those that may take several years to observe. The full breadth of identified individual, interpersonal, and institutional outcomes for both youth and adults are presented in the logic model, Exhibit 2.

Context

It is critical to recognize that the components described above exist within a context defined by place, community, culture, politics, and policies. Contextual factors that influence HCE-related activities and outcomes may include broad issues such as systemic racism, developmental history, and social stratification. Other factors to consider include local community demographics; state, city, and county policies; and organizational characteristics like school district policies, support from administrators and local leaders, resources, funding, and how local agencies (e.g., public health departments, city agencies, schools) work together. We include context in the logic model to acknowledge that it will shape how the Flourish Agenda programming and outcomes will unfold in different settings.

Exhibit 2. Flourish Agenda Logic Model





ADULT OUTCOMES

Mindsets

- A shift in mental models from disciplinary to healing-focused responses to youth behavior
- Positive racial identity

Knowledge

- Understanding of CARMA principles
- Understanding of policies and processes that constrain the use of CARMA principles

Skills and Behaviors

- Increased self-awareness (e.g., assets, purpose)
- Increased self-regulation
- Use of CARMA-aligned practices to facilitate youth learning
- Engaging in individual and collective action to change policies and practices that perpetuate inequities



YOUTH OUTCOMES

Mindsets

- Improved self-esteem
- Enhanced critical motivation
- Positive racial identity
- Increased optimism

Knowledge

- Increased knowledge of systemic oppressions
- Understanding of CARMA principles

Skills and Behaviors

- More frequent critical reflection
- Increased self-awareness (e.g., assets, purpose)
- Increased school engagement
- Increased communication (e.g., deliberative dialogue)
- Increased prosocial behavior
- Improved self-regulation
- Increased planning for the future (e.g., goal setting)



INTERPERSONAL OUTCOMES

Mindsets

- Enhanced sense of mattering
- Increased trust
- Feeling loved

Knowledge

- Understanding of how to use the CARMA principles to promote healthy relationships

Skills and Behaviors

- Increased emotional support and care
- Increased sense of empathy/perspective taking
- Balance of accountability and encouragement
- Improved communication
- Increased conflict resolution



INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES

Healing-Centered Institutional Climate

- Form an institutional culture of healing
- Explore and expand healing strategies to create well-being within an institution
- Actively participate in and voice support for the integration of health practices into the institutional culture of educational systems, community-based organizations, and communities

Phase 2: Findings About Key Logic Model Outcomes

We examined the extent to which the most meaningful changes shared by youth and adult participants in the dyads aligned with outcomes in the logic model. Many of the most meaningful changes (also referred to as key outcomes) confirmed the existing logic model outcomes, while others were new.

Confirmatory Findings About Key Logic Model Outcomes

Our analysis of participant experiences confirmed that Akili Camp and HCE training led to meaningful outcomes for youth and adults. Notably, many of those outcomes were articulated in the logic model developed during Phase 1. Campers we spoke with experienced improved self-esteem, increased optimism, more frequent critical reflection, and improved self-regulation after attending camp. Regarding interpersonal relationships, young people's experiences reflected an enhanced sense of mattering, feeling loved, increased emotional support and care, an increased sense of empathy, improved communication skills, and an increase in conflict-resolution skills as a result of camp participation. Akili Fellows highlighted a healing-centered mindset shift when working with young people as their most meaningful change after experiencing HCE training and Akili Camp. This mindset shift, confirmed by trusted peers, resulted in increased empathy and creating space for more intentional communication with youth.

Most Meaningful Logic Model Outcomes for Youth

As described above, individual and interpersonal outcomes fall into three broad categories: mindsets, knowledge, and skills and behaviors (Exhibit 3). One of the individual mindsets that was most affected for young people by the camp experience was **improved self-esteem**.



Young people and their trusted adults reported that after attending camp, campers expressed greater self-confidence and reported a more positive self-image.



I can be great, I do have a certain greatness to myself. I didn't know that before, or I didn't see it before. ... I didn't know my worth at first. I learned my worth being [at camp].

-Camper

Exhibit 3. Most Meaningful Individual and Interpersonal Youth Outcomes That Aligned With the Logic Model

 INDIVIDUAL YOUTH OUTCOMES	 INTERPERSONAL YOUTH OUTCOMES
<p>Mindsets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved self-esteem• Enhanced critical motivation• Positive racial identity• Increased optimism <p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased knowledge of systemic oppressions• Understanding of CARMA principles <p>Skills and Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More frequent critical reflection• Increased self-awareness (e.g., assets, purpose)• Increased school engagement• Increased communication (e.g., deliberative dialogue)• Increased prosocial behavior• Improved self-regulation• Increased planning for the future (e.g., goal setting)	<p>Mindsets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced sense of mattering• Increased trust• Feeling loved <p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of how to use the CARMA principles to promote healthy relationships <p>Skills and Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased emotional support and care• Increased sense of empathy/perspective taking• Balance of accountability and encouragement• Improved communication• Increased conflict resolution

Note. The most meaningful outcomes observed are bolded.

Prior to camp, young people shared that they felt like they did not have much going for them in their lives and were admittedly hard on themselves. After camp, they reported that due to connections and relationships formed at camp, some of the pressure they put on themselves had been relieved. Campers realized they had the “power to have people listen” to them, and that they deserved to be heard. As a result of attending camp, youth also reflected on their **increased optimism**. Overall, young people had a more positive outlook on their lives after their camp experience. One camper specifically described learning ways to address challenges they might experience in their life. Another discussed how negative things that happened in their past continued to affect their present mood, but that interactions with camp counselors showed how young people can focus on a more positive future.

Improving self-regulation is a powerful outcome of youth participation in Akili Camp. Campers talked about learning coping skills at camp that helped them control their emotions, such as anger and rage, in everyday situations. Young people learned ways to calm themselves down and control their reactions to others' judgments or actions. Participants now use techniques acquired at camp in their daily lives to manage their emotions and behaviors.



*I used to be a really **angry** person before going to Camp Akili. I mean, I still have my anger, but it's better controlled now ... they gave a bunch of coping skills that you could use ... now I use [them] at home because whenever I'm feeling angry or whenever I'm feeling upset, I take a deep breath, and I walk upstairs to my room.*

– Camper

Better self-regulation also allows young people to engage in more **critical reflection**, looking at themselves, their situations in life, and others differently, and considering multiple viewpoints. Engaging in activities during camp that involved storytelling and listening to the perspectives of others, including their personal histories, led participants to engage in reflection:



Everyone has their own experience ... being in a position where you need to be vulnerable to hear somebody else's story just changes how you look at yourself, how you look at other people, how you look at life as a whole. There's a new level of understanding for everything around you.



Key Insight

Participants who attended multiple camp sessions (in 2023 and 2024) reflected on how repeated exposure deepened the outcomes they experienced. As one young person shared, “The first time [attending camp] it was like, okay, I don’t care about anything, I’m angry. The second time [attending camp] it was like, okay, now that I’ve got these feelings, how do I use them correctly?” This suggests that increasing exposure to Akili Camp principles, activities, and people can create more profound and lasting impacts for youth.

Interpersonal relationships and connections also meaningfully shifted as a result of camp participation. Young people felt a deeper **sense of mattering**—feeling valued and seen by others—after attending camp. Engaging in activities and conversations with peers and adults at camp helped campers more clearly see that others appreciated their worth and

talents. This empowered young people to see themselves and be seen by others as mentors and advocates for youth. As one trusted adult explained about their camper,

“ They [referring to adults and peers at the camp] make her feel like she has that talent, they invite her to participate. They kind of support her, in that sense. ... They invited her to be a mentor [and] talk to kids; to talk about the camp.

We also found evidence that young people felt **more loved** after attending camp. The relationships formed at camp, and the conversations that adults engaged in with youth, created powerful perception shifts for campers. These conversations helped young people recognize and appreciate the love they have from caring people in their lives:

“ Camp taught me to appreciate the time that I have with my family, because they're really the ... people that saved me. ... So it's like it kind of gave me an eye opener. It's like, OK, [they] really love me. I need to start treating them better.

Interviewees also reported that camp participation resulted in **increased emotional support and care** by and for young people. This was reflected in campers' increased care and support for their peers, and in the recognition that they themselves deserved to be cared for as well. One camp participant described noticing a peer in distress during camp and reaching out to comfort that person. In doing so, this camper realized that she herself deserved the same level of support:

“ And I think in encouraging him to be vulnerable, it took a minute for me to look back at myself and be like, hey, like, you need the same kind of patience for yourself. Like, it's okay to be vulnerable in the same way that you're telling him.



Key Insight

Throughout this project, we discovered that some outcomes were not mutually exclusive. For example, we found evidence of “increased emotional support and care” overlapping with “feeling loved.” We also found evidence in our data that supported both “communication” and “conflict resolution.”

As a result of camp participation, young people and their trusted adults reported that young people's **communication** and **conflict resolution skills** had improved in meaningful ways. Campers were better at explaining their feelings, listening, being patient with others, not reacting immediately, and staying calm during difficult conversations. One trusted adult shared about their camper,



*They've changed. They're **more open to communication now** when it comes to having a communication about how they feel or things that are expected from them. **Before, let's say that we were having a conversation, they will feel attacked, right? And they would just answer right away in a very aggressive way. But now it's more like: You will say something, and they will just listen, and they actually let you explain.***

A camp participant described their improved conflict resolution skills as a “big leap” from their pre-camp behavior. The camper now uses coping techniques learned at camp to keep calm during arguments with loved ones, including apologizing and explaining their intentions, which helps diffuse the conflict.

Young people also reflected on an **increase in empathy** after attending Akili Camp. They talked about learning the importance of listening to other peoples' stories and seeing their perspective, and applying those relational skills to their daily lives:

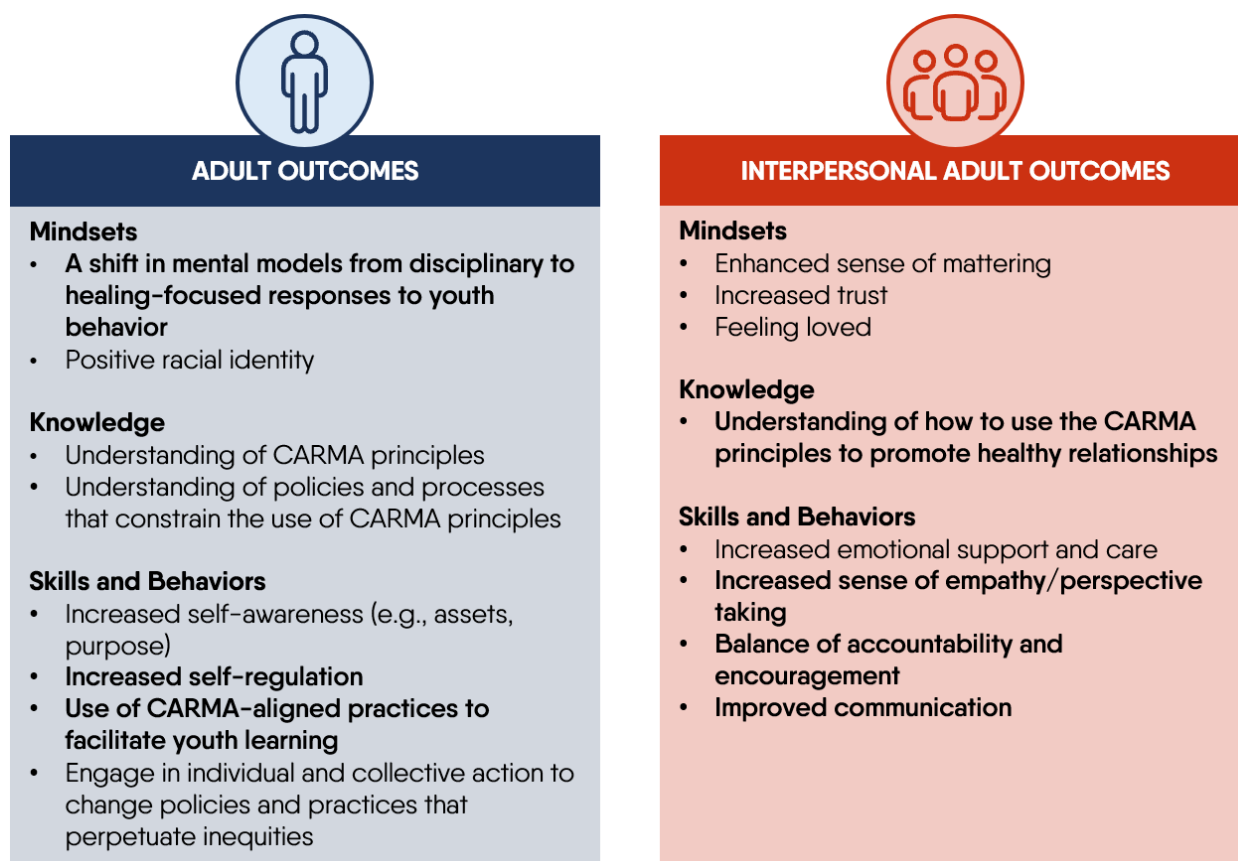


*Before, not a lot of people were able to come to me and tell me stuff because I was like, “I don't care,” I'll brush it off. Now, when someone comes and tells me, I'm able to give them advice from the advice that I was given. **And I'm actually able to put myself in their shoes ... I'm able to give that advice now that I couldn't give before. I'm able to sit down and have those out-of-body uncomfortable conversations that I couldn't have before.***

Most Meaningful Logic Model Outcomes for Adults

The most meaningful change for the two Akili Fellows we interviewed was a significant **mental model shift toward a healing-centered approach** of understanding and responding to youth behavior. This aligned with expected adult outcomes in the logic model (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4. Most Meaningful Individual and Interpersonal Adult Outcomes That Aligned With the Logic Model



Note. The most meaningful outcomes identified in interviews are bolded.

Both Akili Fellows shared that trainings—as well as learning experientially from Flourish staff and young people at camp—were pivotal in facilitating this shift. Specifically, **increased awareness and understanding of trauma** helped Akili Fellows shift their mindsets to interpret youth behavior as a response to something happening externally rather than as a personal affront or a demonstration of disrespect. One Akili Fellow shared,



*I had this **aha moment**. ... I was kind of like being on top of the kids, like, hey, you need to be here by this certain time. And I'm kind of like that structured person, like, hey, the rules are rules. You need to abide by the rules. ... **And [shifting my mindset after being coached in the moment by Flourish Agenda staff] gave me a whole 'nother experience where it was like, hey, if ... you do your own thing and you know the rules and you make those choices, like, I'm not gonna feel it here [points to heart] or I'm not gonna react to what you're doing.***

Both Akili Fellows told us that they **intentionally changed how they interacted with young people** as a result of this perspective shift. After seeing how young people at camp responded when adults made space to listen, one Akili Fellow shared that they intentionally worked to create a safe environment when engaging with students in conversations—so that students in their school could feel more seen and heard. Another Akili Fellow shared that practicing healing-centered interactions helped them let young people “take their own process and steps.”

These examples, which incorporate cultivating relationships and practicing empathy, demonstrate how Akili Fellows’ mindset shifts helped them **understand how** to use **CARMA principles to promote healthy relationships** and enabled them to use **CARMA-aligned practices to facilitate youth learning**.



Key Insight

Akili Fellows’ **mindset shift** from disciplinary to healing-centered approaches **was an essential prerequisite** for meaningful changes they experienced within themselves and **interpersonally** with young people, as well as changes they influenced **institutionally** in their school communities.

A common theme for Akili Fellows across the outcomes already included in the logic model was that individual and interpersonal outcomes were highly connected, with changes in individual mindsets, knowledge, and skills and behaviors leading to interpersonal and/or institutional change. For example, once Akili Fellows had a deeper understanding of how trauma affects young people and had shifted their mindset to a healing-centered approach, they were able to more **mindfully self-regulate** their reactions to youth behavior, which resulted in **improved communication and a more balanced communication dynamic of accountability and encouragement** with youth. Akili Fellows we spoke with were also better able to **empathize** with young people and critically **consider their perspectives**. This supports the visual representation of

outcomes in the logic model (i.e., where individual outcomes are situated to the left of interpersonal and institutional outcomes, with dotted lines acknowledging the interconnected, cyclical nature of these changes).

Institutional Logic Model Outcomes

While our study focused on short-term outcomes—centering individuals and their interpersonal relationships with peers, family, colleagues, and others—we saw some evidence of movement toward the institutional outcomes in the logic model.

Akili Fellows spoke about bringing healing-centered activities learned during HCE training back to their schools and workplaces, including the song “I am Somebody” and music stations. An Akili Fellow explained how they modified an activity and implemented it at their school:



*I twisted it for elementary school, but I did “four corners of music.” [Students] would go into different corners based off how the music made them feel, and just understanding that music can sometimes dictate our mood ... it seems like, especially with younger kids, [that] it would **really help them talk about their feelings**.*

Akili Fellows also shared how engaging in **healing-centered activities** with youth at HCE training reinforced the work they were already doing in their schools. For example, one Akili Fellow observed that young people wanted to continue conversations in smaller groups following a “fishbowl” activity, where young people were encouraged to be vulnerable in a larger group setting. For this Akili Fellow, viewing youth engagement in these smaller, informal conversations reinforced the importance of an initiative at their school where every young person has a designated staff person they can go to if they need to talk to someone safe.

Finally, colleagues of interviewed Akili Fellows confirmed the effectiveness of HCE training. For example, one individual described how one Akili Fellow widened their “trauma-informed lens” because of their participation.

Exhibit 5. Institutional Outcomes






HEALING-CENTERED INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE

- Form an institutional culture of healing
- Explore and expand healing strategies to create well-being within an institution
- Actively participate in and voice support for the integration of health practices into the institutional culture of educational systems, community-based organizations, and communities

New Findings About Key Outcomes Not Initially Included in the Logic Model

While many of the most meaningful changes shared in interviews were already reflected in the logic model, some were not. The AIR team and Flourish Agenda staff engaged in a participatory, collaborative meaning-making session to identify common themes for these newer changes that did not fit neatly into the logic model. The new key outcomes that emerged from this collective analysis were relatively evenly distributed between individual and interpersonal outcomes (Exhibit 6). Of note, both camp participants and Akili Fellows (as opposed to only camp participants or only Akili Fellows) shared many of these newly identified outcomes as most meaningful to their experience.

Exhibit 6. New Key Outcomes That Emerged From Multiple-Perspective Interviews


 Individual	 Interpersonal	 Institutional
Spirit (feeling safe enough to authentically feel)	Healing in community	Motivation to make change and apply healing-centered strategies within institutions
Joy	Mental model shift: From self-care to possibility of collective care	
Purpose	Feeling heard/understood	
Contagious agency	Reciprocity in love and healing	
Mental model shift: Valuing of youth voices (by adults)	Interpersonal safety	
Self-actualization	Vulnerability	

New Individual Outcomes

For camp participants, one of the most meaningful changes they experienced was the ability to feel **true happiness** and a **renewed sense of energy and motivation**. Both trusted adults of these camp participants noted that they saw an immediate change in their young people's energy and enthusiasm upon returning from camp, which a Flourish Agenda staff member described as "reigniting the inner child in children" during the meaning-making session. An Akili Fellow also described their excitement to return to

school in anticipation of sharing what they had learned with students. Flourish Agenda staff named these outcomes “**spirit**,” which represents the transformative experience of feeling safe enough to experience authentic feelings; and “**contagious agency**,” which represents a reignited zest, zeal, or motivation that is palpable to others. We also identified spirit as a precursor to “**joy**” (Exhibit 7).


Exhibit 7. Spirit as a Precursor to Joy and Contagious Agency



Joy

“ ...Camp gave them an experience to actually be kids. A lot of times, like growing up in Philly, a lot of children don't get to be children.... Or they go into stuff and people take it as them going off the wire. But they just don't know how to put that out there in a positive way. Because there's so much negative stuff tying them down.... And I've been seeing genuine smiles. I've been to the point where I had to fake a smile before. So...I can tell when it's genuine or not. I see the change in them. I see they look brighter. Their auras is lighting up. Them smiles are stretching from cheek to cheek.

—Youth participant



Contagious Agency

“ When I left Camp Akili, I felt refreshed. I just felt like nothing could like stand in my way. Like I had no obstacles...anything that I did have an obstacle for, [I felt] like I could get over it, and before that wouldn't be the case.

—Youth participant

“ I was super excited running into the school year.... I think it was because like, with all of our chants and stuff that we learned during the fellows training, I brought that back with me to my school.... I think [the kids] loved the excitement of me, which made them even more excited for school.

—Fellow

Both Akili Fellows also shared that one of their most meaningful changes was a **mindset shift that recognized the value of young people's voices and experiences**. For the Akili Fellows we spoke with, this resulted in interpersonal outcomes of improved communication and increased empathy and perspective taking when interacting with students, as well as the implementation of institutional practices that ensured young people had a trusted adult in the school they could go to for help. One Akili Fellow explained,



I was more open to receiving from youth, letting them voice their thoughts and their opinions, rather than having this uppity way of, like, “Hey, they don’t know what they’re talking about.” And really, they do. ... They know what they need. They know what they want. They just feel like, “Oh, I might as well just keep it to myself because nobody’s listening.” So, I feel like that’s one thing that also changed with me, was having more of an open mind for me to listen to them express themselves.

Notably, both Akili Fellows described specific transformative instances at camp that led to this mindset shift. These instances involved **learning directly from young people**. One Akili Fellow shared that they witnessed young people’s eagerness to start or continue conversations in smaller groups after the fishbowl activity. The other Akili Fellow described a situation where they witnessed a camp participant and another Akili Fellow going back and forth. When debriefing later, the camp participant expressed that they just wanted someone to listen to them.



Key Insight

Many of the most meaningful changes experienced by Akili Fellows happened because they had the opportunity to **learn directly from young people** and **learn experientially** at camp.

In our subsequent meaning-making session, Flourish Agenda staff named this transformative experience of change more generally as “**becoming**.” Flourish Agenda staff further contextualized this outcome by noting that transformative experiences occur at different times for everyone—for example, some might happen during an activity, and some might happen during informal interactions.

New Interpersonal Outcomes

The opportunity to **heal in community** was one of the most frequently named meaningful changes that both camp participants and Akili Fellows reported. During the collaborative meaning-making session, Flourish Agenda staff noted that this change demonstrated a mindset shift, from a solution of individualized self-care to recognizing that an ecosystem of collective care was a possibility. Intertwined in community healing was a feeling of **interpersonal safety (a “sibling” of spirit)** and **being understood**, which allowed camp participants and Akili Fellows to be **vulnerable** with others. One Akili Fellow explained,

“

I realized that relationships and connections are more important when operating and healing. ... You never heal alone, you have to have people in your life to heal. ... Because that's the way healing is set up for, connection. Healing is always set up with others to be involved.

Similarly, a youth participant shared,

“

I would say the most prominent thing that I think I learned was just the importance of vulnerability. I think there was a really big takeaway that there is a certain level of strength in allowing myself to need help ... a lot of the activities at camp were like bonding with other people ... we did an activity called a fishbowl, and everyone talked about what they had going on in their life—their traumas, their moments, the good and the bad. In that moment I realized that I'm not the only person out there who goes through things.

Reciprocity in healing was a specific aspect of healing in community that arose in interviews with camp participants and Akili Fellows as most meaningful to their experience. For young people, this meant that the care and love they received from trusted adults at camp was then shared out with others. It also showed up as increased power sharing between adults and young people, fostering youth agency in alignment with the CARMA principles. A youth participant shared,


“

I helped [the camp counselors] heal as well as them helping me heal ... in three days. ... I made such a big impact on their life as much as they made an impact on mine. So it's like I not only, not only do I have an impact on my life but I gave them one too.

An Akili Fellow explained,

“

[Flourish Agenda] taught us a lot in terms of ... working with the older kids and ... being yourself and even like, healing with them. That's what they kept saying. Like, this is not just a healing for them. This is a healing for yourself too. So, I did really appreciate that.



The interconnected and cyclical nature of these individual and interpersonal outcomes was apparent throughout the interviews and subsequent meaning-making session. Flourish Agenda staff noted that **purpose** could be an underlying mechanism of contagious agency in young people, as well as a driver of the existing logic model outcomes of optimism and critical motivation. In interviews, camp participants shared various transformative interpersonal experiences that helped them realize their value and potential (**self-actualization**). The transformed view of self that stemmed from impactful interpersonal experiences demonstrates how individual and interpersonal outcomes can reinforce each other and create a trajectory of healing.

Future Learnings

Through a multistage study, AIR and Flourish Agenda collaboratively developed and assessed the Flourish Agenda logic model. We found evidence that supported the outcomes in the logic model and, through collaborative meaning-making with the Flourish Agenda team, learned of ways to expand the outcomes in the logic model. This is a strong start for future learnings.

However, this study was not without limitations. While our exploratory outcomes study yielded rich data and some robust findings, our sample was small ($N = 9$). In addition, we used a convenience sample, which means interviewees were likely not representative of all Akili Camp and HCE-trained adults in Philadelphia. The sample may have been biased toward the perspectives of people who were most engaged with the programming and most likely to reflect intended changes. We also used one method (interviews) to gather data. Multiple methods (e.g., including a pre/post questionnaire or another type of survey) would have provided an opportunity to triangulate or corroborate findings. Finally, some of the logic model outcomes were easier to observe than others via interview. For example, it is difficult to observe knowledge gained using interviews but easier for people to talk about how they or someone else communicates or behaves. As a result, our methods may have lent themselves to elevating certain outcomes.

There are multiple directions for future learnings that could be pursued from the logic model. Based on our findings, **we recommend that future studies seek to achieve the following:**

- **Build Evidence for the Full Scope of Outcomes for Youth and Adults.** We found evidence for many (but not all) outcomes in the logic model. We saw that potentially new key outcomes emerged. To ensure that the proposed outcomes encompass the many ways in which participants benefit from programming, we encourage Flourish Agenda to engage in additional data-generating activities with a larger group of youth and adults about the outcomes they experience. For example, a future study could help determine whether to add the emerging outcomes to the logic model.
- **Tease Out How Youth and Adults Learn About and Embrace the CARMA Principles.** We heard repeatedly from staff that the CARMA principles were infused into every aspect of their work. In interviews, however, campers and Akili Fellows rarely mentioned the CARMA principles, even though many of the outcomes they shared aligned with those principles (e.g., interpersonal outcomes align with relationships).

- **Further Explore Institutional Outcomes.** Future studies could look at mechanisms and indicators of institutional change. Knowing that it can take time to change systems, identifying and measuring indicators of change could provide evidence that Flourish Agenda programs help to promote change within institutions. In this study, we heard about Akili Fellows learning activities through their involvement in camp and HCE training and using them in their schools. This is likely just one indicator of healing strategies being used for wellbeing. In the meaning-making session, Flourish Agenda staff noted that a mindset shift was necessary before Akili Fellows could take action to transform their institutions. They proposed adding an outcome to “institutions” that describes a shift in motivation to change systems. This motivation to change systems could be an individual outcome and an indicator of progress toward an institutional outcome. Future studies focused on institutional outcomes could help make these kinds of distinctions. Given the time needed for systems change, we encourage Flourish Agenda to embark on studies of institutional change within strong partnerships that they believe will be lasting.
- **Leverage the Expertise of Flourish Agenda Staff Through Participatory Methods.** These methods should give the Flourish Agenda team early and frequent opportunities to share feedback on the direction of future projects for organizational learning and impact. These methods should also provide the Flourish Agenda team with opportunities to interpret data. The interviews with Flourish Agenda staff, the dyads, and the insights from collaborative meaning-making built on one another. Ultimately, the iterative process used to develop the logic model produced a more authentic reflection of programming, and the outcome findings were richer because of the discussions with Flourish Agenda staff.

Appendix A. Meet the AIR Team



Linda Galib (she/they), MPH/MPP, Researcher

Project Roles: Outcomes Study Lead and Qualitative Analyst

I am a program evaluator and a doctoral student in research methodology at the Loyola University Chicago School of Education. I see evaluation as an incredible opportunity to collectively amplify voices and experiences. In partnerships, I strive to co-create, intentionally share (or relinquish) power, and take a strengths-based and youth-centered approach. I bring awareness of the structural privilege afforded to me by way of being racialized as white, being a U.S. citizen, and growing up middle class. I am also influenced by my identities as a person who is queer and exists outside of the gender binary. I bring a critical lens to my evaluation practice and actively interrogate how the confluence of my identities shows up in professional settings.



Nada Rayyes (she/her), PhD, Senior Researcher

Project Roles: Qualitative Lead and Project Manager

I am an education researcher with a passion for lifting up the voices of youth and marginalized communities. Being a first generation American, the daughter of immigrants from the Middle East, and growing up in the suburbs of Los Angeles gave me a unique perspective. I subscribe to critical theories that surface identity and intersectionality when understanding human and social behavior in the United States, including within schooling and youth development. I bring a community-oriented perspective to my research and my understanding of the educational and social landscape.



Femi Vance (she/her), PhD, Principal Researcher

Project Role: Project Director

I am a youth development professional, trained as a mixed-methods researcher. I center relationships, lived experiences, and social justice in my work because they reflect my values of community, justice, and truth. I believe that my lived experiences and those of community members are assets that enhance research and practice. Through self-reflection, I recognize overlapping experiences and identities that

I share with community members, and curiosity prompts me to better understand different experiences and perspectives.



Deepa Vasudevan (she/her), PhD, Researcher

Project Role: Qualitative Researcher

As a youth work scholar, I strive to listen deeply to the experiences of youth, families, and educators in my research. I apply sociological and human development theories to interrogate and illuminate the sociocultural dimensions of program activities and educational systems. As a research and evaluation collaborator, I have a lifelong commitment to reflecting on how my identities, both of privilege and marginalization, shape my interactions and interpretations. With a stance of cultural humility, I aim to create opportunities for collective interpretation and co-constructed meaning-making with community partners.



Rachel Blume (she/her), Research Associate

Project Roles: Qualitative Analyst

I am a program evaluator and an aspiring social work scholar who strives to leverage community-engaged research methods to advocate for positive social change. My approach is informed by my positionality as a white, cisgender woman and U.S. citizen, as well as by formative experiences in school and youth development programs. I bring a commitment to respectful, strengths-based research practices that aim to elevate marginalized voices and advance youth-centered approaches that support holistic development.

The AIR team would like to acknowledge the important contributions of Amy Syvertsen and Angela (Angie) Whistler to this work. Amy was integral to the design of the overall project and to the development of the initial logic model in Phase 1. Angie supported project management, interview recruitment, data collection and analysis throughout the majority of Phases 1 and 2. We are extremely grateful for their hard work and collaboration. Their significant contributions made this final report possible.

Appendix B. Methods for Logic Model Development

Phase 1: Discovery and Foundation Phase

The AIR team used qualitative methods to develop the logic model, including interviews and a document review. We also conducted a scan of literature focused on summer camp experiences and professional development for teachers to help our team develop strong interview protocols.

We collaborated with the Flourish Agenda team at multiple points during the development of the logic model. We involved the Flourish Agenda's Evaluation, Research and Impact team and some organizational leaders in member checks. A member check is when you share what you learned in an interview or other discussion with respondents to ensure their thoughts are captured accurately. We also held a 1-hour member check with the full Flourish Agenda team in which they provided feedback on how to refine the logic model.

Interviews

Who Did the AIR Team Interview?

We conducted six virtual interviews with 13 Flourish Agenda staff and an additional two interviews with SDP staff. The Flourish Agenda team provided a list of their staff and SDP staff who were integral to the development and implementation of Akili Camp and HCE Certification in the district.

How Did the AIR Team Recruit Interview Participants?

We sent a recruitment email to potential interview participants that included the purpose of the study, the topics that would be covered in the interview, and an invitation to participate in an interview. If the staff member responded to the recruitment email with interest in participating, the AIR team sent a study information sheet that described the risks and benefits of participating in the interview and asked each person to schedule an interview at a time that worked for them. All interview protocols and processes were approved by AIR's Institutional Review Board and SDP before we began recruiting or interviewing participants.

What Topics Were Discussed in the Interview?

The AIR team began each 45- to 60-minute interview by describing the purpose of the study and the risks and benefits of participating. We also described confidentiality and how we would use the interview findings. We sought permission from the interviewee to record. In Exhibit B1, we present the number of interviews by respondent and the topics covered in the interviews.

Exhibit B1. Overview of Interviews

Respondent	Number of interviews	Topics ^a
Flourish Agenda staff	6	Goals of HCE Certification and Akili Camp, core components of HCE Certification and Akili Camp, how HCE Certification and Akili Camp informed one another, and desired outcomes for participants
School District of Philadelphia (SDP) staff	2	Involvement with Flourish Agenda programming and understanding of CARMA principles, expectations and goals for Flourish Agenda programming, value of the programming, perceived outcomes for those participating in Flourish Agenda programming
Akili Camp participants ^b	1	Overall impressions of camp; how camp experiences may have contributed to stronger relationships, a sense of belonging, positive racial/gender identity, and sociopolitical awareness

^a The American Institutes for Research team provided Flourish Agenda with all interview protocols.

^b We conducted one interview with two Akili Camp participants.

How Did the AIR Team Approach Analyzing Interview Data?

AIR researchers collaborated to create a codebook for qualitative analysis of interviews with Flourish Agenda staff, SDP staff, and Akili Camp participants. Through an iterative process, we used the project goals of logic model development and our interview protocols to guide codebook development and refinement. After pilot coding one transcript independently, three researchers compared coding for a discussion of interrater reliability. Based on discussions of discrepancies, the team reached consensus about final codebook edits and coding strategies. We used a combination of inductive and deductive approaches, allowing codes and themes to emerge throughout the analysis process, while applying *a priori* codes to the data set. Our analysis focused on articulating logic model elements, specifically individual, interpersonal, and institutional outcomes.

Document Review

What Was the Purpose of the Document Review?

The AIR team sought to develop a thorough and nuanced understanding of the HCE Certification and Akili Camp model that Flourish Agenda implemented in SDP. With this knowledge in hand, the AIR team was better positioned to develop an authentic logic model. The documents that the Flourish Agenda team uses for communication, program development, and program implementation provided an insider view of the programs. We used what we learned from program documents to inform interview protocols and supplement what we learned in interviews.

What Documents Did the AIR Team Review?

The AIR team reviewed the following documents to enhance our understanding of the programs.

- Akili Camp Family Information Packet
- Camp Activity Curricula for a select set of Akili Camp activities
- Akili Camp Staff Manual
- Akili Camp Schedule
- A guide for HCE participants to continue their learning
- A crosswalk of Healing Centered Engagement and social and emotional learning competencies outlined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's (CASEL) SEL framework
- Publicly available evaluation reports written by or about Flourish Agenda

The AIR team also participated in an abbreviated HCE training facilitated by an experienced Flourish Agenda team member. During this session, the AIR team experienced what it was like to participate in HCE Certification training.



Literature Scan

The AIR team read literature on summer programs and camp experiences to understand the types of outcomes participants experience and the practices and environmental conditions that may lead to those outcomes. The literature scan informed the interview protocols for Flourish Agenda staff, SDP staff, and Akili Camp participants. We also examined whether the outcomes included in the logic model reflected what was in the literature.

Appendix C. Methods for Multiple-Perspective Interviews

Phase 2: Exploratory Inquiry of Logic Model Outcomes

To examine how peoples' lived experiences aligned with the logic model, developed in collaboration with Flourish Agenda in the first phase of our partnership, AIR conducted a series of multiple-perspective interviews in May 2025 with young people and adults who had participated in Flourish Agenda programs, specifically Akili Camp for young people and HCE and Akili Fellow training (HCE training) for adults.⁵

Multiple-Perspective Interviews

Multiple-perspective interviews are interviews that explore the views of more than one person about the same thing.⁶ They can be especially illuminating when learning about interactions or views in the context of social relationships and connections—a foundational aspect of Flourish's Agenda's healing-centered approach.

For this project, AIR used multiple-perspective interviews to more deeply understand how changes in Flourish Agenda participants were perceived by participants themselves and experienced by the people closest to them. We organized the multiple-perspective interviews into “dyads.” Each dyad consisted of two interviews: one with the program participant, and one with a trusted person identified by the participant who could speak to changes in that person before and after participation in Flourish Agenda's programs. Youth Akili Camp participants identified a trusted adult. Adult HCE training participants identified a trusted peer.

By interviewing the participant along with a trusted person, we were better able to situate the changes experienced by participants in the context of their lives and gain an understanding of how Flourish's Agenda's healing-centered approach extends beyond individuals to create changes within participants' social ecosystems and institutions.

⁵ All Akili Fellows were required to be HCE certified. Throughout the report, we use “HCE training” to reflect both HCE Certification and the Akili Fellow training that adult participants received in 2023 and/or 2024.

⁶ Vogl, S., Zartler, U., Schmidt, E.-M., & Rieder, I. (2018). Developing an analytical framework for multiple perspective, qualitative longitudinal interviews (MPQLI). *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 21(2), 177–190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2017.1345149>

Who Did the AIR Team Interview?

We conducted **five** interviews to explore the most meaningful outcomes of Akili Camp for young people: **three** with young people who participated in camp in Philadelphia in 2023 or 2024, and **two** with trusted adults identified by these young people. In addition, we conducted **four** interviews to explore the outcomes of HCE training for adults: **two** with adults affiliated with SDP who participated in HCE Certification and Akili Fellow training in 2023 and/or 2024, and **two** with trusted peers identified by these adults.

The three camp participants we interviewed ranged in age from 17 to 18 years old. Two had participated in camp in both 2023 and 2024, and one participated in 2024 only. The two Akili Fellows we interviewed were both employed by SDP and held roles where they worked directly with students and/or families in schools.


To protect participant privacy given the planned small sample size, and being mindful of power dynamics in research that can unintentionally cause harm for people in minoritized demographic groups, we did not ask interview participants to share (and therefore do not report) additional demographic information such as racial/ethnic or gender identities.⁷ Within SDP more broadly, approximately half of SDP students (49%) identify as Black/African American, a quarter (25%) as Hispanic/Latine, 14% as White, 8% as Asian or Asian American, and 5% as multiracial or an additional racial/ethnic identity. A little over half of the students (51%) are male and 49% are female. A majority of SDP teachers and counselors (63%) identify as White, one quarter (25%) identify as Black/African American, 5% identify as Hispanic/Latine, and 3% identify as Asian or Asian American. Most SDP teachers and counselors are female (74%) and 26% are male.⁸

How Did the AIR Team Recruit Interview Participants?

To learn about Akili Camp outcomes, the AIR team reached out to 24 young people identified by Flourish Agenda who had participated in Akili Camp through SDP in 2023 and/or 2024. AIR first reached out to all 24 young people by email in March 2025 to explain the purpose of the Flourish Agenda/AIR partnership and request participation. Two follow-up emails were sent in April 2025. Ultimately, three young people expressed interest, had their parent or guardian complete the consent form, and scheduled an interview with AIR staff.

⁷ Chicago Beyond. (2018). *Why am I always being researched?* Chicago Beyond. <https://chicagobeyond.org/insights/philanthropy/why-am-i-always-being-researched/>

⁸ <https://schoolprofiles.philasd.org/citywide/demographics>



To learn about HCE training outcomes, in March 2025 the AIR team reached out via email to 12 SDP staff identified by Flourish Agenda who had previously completed the online training series and/or the more intensive, in-person Akili Fellow training. Several follow-up emails were sent in April 2025. Flourish Agenda staff also helped with interview outreach. Ultimately, two HCE-trained adults expressed interest and scheduled an interview with AIR.

What Topics Were Discussed in the Interview?

The AIR team began each interview by describing the purpose of the study and the risks and benefits of participating. We also described confidentiality and how we would use the interview findings. We sought permission from the interviewee to record. All interview protocols and processes were approved by AIR's Institutional Review Board and SDP prior to recruiting or interviewing participants.

AIR asked adult and youth participants, and the trusted people they identified, to reflect on the most meaningful changes they experienced as a result of participating in Flourish Agenda's programs. Adults and their trusted peers were asked about changes resulting from their Akili Fellow experience. Young people and their trusted adults were asked about changes resulting from their experience at Akili Camp. Prior to identifying their most meaningful changes, we asked Camp participants and Akili Fellows to participate in a "Head, Heart, Hands +" activity, during which they reflected on *all* the changes they experienced as a result of participation. These included changes in what they knew ("Head"), how they felt about themselves ("Heart"), what they did ("Hands/Feet"), and how they related to others ("+"). They were then asked to select the three most meaningful changes and share stories of how these changes showed up in their lives.

How Did AIR Conduct the Interviews?

All interviews were one-on-one conversations conducted virtually on Zoom or Microsoft Teams by an AIR researcher. The interviews were planned to take approximately 45 minutes. Interviews we conducted ranged from 20 minutes to 50 minutes in length.

How Did the AIR Team Approach Analyzing the Multiple-Perspective Interviews?

The AIR team used a sequential and collaborative approach to analyzing the interviews. All coding was done in NVivo.

- First, using logic model outcomes as a codebook (that is, a guide for mapping interview content to categories), AIR staff divided into pairs and reviewed one transcript in a process called “pilot coding.” The staff pairs then met to discuss their coding experience and identify any clarifications needed. This first step of pilot coding helped calibrate the AIR team and identified multiple opportunities to update our codebook to clarify outcome definitions.
- Second, we coded all interview transcripts, tracking each time interviewees named a change that was already included as a logic model outcome. If a participant named a change that was *not* clearly in the logic model, the AIR team separated those responses out into an “other” category for further analysis. We also noted which outcomes were specifically named as “most meaningful” by participants and their trusted counterparts.
- Third, an AIR team member examined the responses coded to “other” and grouped them based on similarity. The AIR team then met to review the initial groupings. While some of these groupings seemed straightforward (for example, youth feeling more “understood” in relationships), other groupings were more complex, presenting more opportunities for interpretation.
- Finally, the AIR and Flourish Agenda teams engaged in a collaborative meaning-making exercise to brainstorm and categorize the more complex “other” groupings. This session was held virtually in the context of sharing preliminary findings from multiple-perspective interviews with Flourish Agenda staff. Flourish Agenda staff discussed the grouped “other” responses in breakout rooms and shared their thoughts and ideas on Google slides, as well as in the full-group debrief following the breakouts.



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