



# **Our Voices: Our Community C U R R I C U L U M**

**2004 Revised Edition**

*We do not believe in ourselves until someone reveals deep inside us something is valuable, worth listening to, worthy of our touch, sacred to our touch. Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit.*

—e. e. cummings

VERMONT CHILDREN'S FORUM  
VERMONT RURAL PARTNERSHIP



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**PART I**  
**I N T R O D U C T I O N**



# WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

**W**elcome to the *Our Voices: Our Community* curriculum, a leadership development guide for young people. It is also a leadership development guide for all of us, for leadership is about how we live our lives every day.

The curriculum requires participants to draw on their experience, build on their strengths, and work in partnership in order to bring to bear all their resources. It guides them through Circles of Leadership centering on the personal and extending outward to their community and beyond. And it concludes with the contribution individuals and groups make to the life of their community through a project.

We wish you well and thank you for your efforts. When we commit ourselves to our neighbor's health, we all benefit.

*Different points of departure. Different destinations. Varied Paths.  
Always moving in the same direction.*

## **Moving From**

I do not feel that others value my voice.

I am unable to take control of my own life.

I do not believe that I can make a difference in the world.

I do not have the skills and/or the knowledge to be a leader in my life or in the lives of others.

I do not feel valued by adults.

*Therefore, I am silent and alone.*

## **Moving Toward**

I know that what I have to say has value.

I can set personal goals and reach them.

I am confident that I can make a positive difference in the world.

I have the knowledge or skills I need, or know how to get these, to be a leader in my life or in the lives of others.

I can and will work in partnership with adults to create change because my input is respected and valued.

*Therefore, I speak, I am heard,  
I contribute, I am valued by my  
community.*

*As eleven young people and nine adults from throughout the state met for the first overnight retreat to develop this curriculum, there was one thing we were sure about: The only right way to develop a leadership curriculum for young people was with young people.*

—Helen Beattie

*Our Voices: Our Community* has a rich history and clear beliefs. “Guiding Principles and Practices” describes five principles derived from the founding beliefs about leadership and learning present in all learning modules. Finally, specifics about the curriculum, the role of facilitators, and themes throughout the modules are offered.

The curriculum itself is divided into individual modules, each focusing on a fundamental component of leadership skill-building. These modules include goals, objectives, methods designed to meet a wide array of learning styles and individual needs, self-assessment tools, and additional resources.

This curriculum is extremely flexible and provides for a broad range of learning capacities and styles. It is a resource for you to use in a school or community setting to help participants’ identify and reach their goals.

The following founding beliefs about leadership and learning shaped all aspects of the curriculum development:

## **Founding Beliefs**

### ***About Leadership***

- All people are leaders in their own right.
- People learn how to exercise leadership through actively engaging in efforts to take charge of their own life and by improving their world.
- There are certain known skills that will help a person be effective as a leader.
- Positive relationships are key to leadership.
- Self-awareness and moral integrity are key to building positive relationships.
- It is more powerful to honor and build on strengths rather than to focus solely on fixing deficits or problems.
- Leaders nurture others to take initiative, solve problems, and assume leadership roles.

### ***About Learning***

- Learning should be personally relevant and engaging.
- People learn best through experience, discovery, and reflection.



- We learn from one another; facilitators and participants share opportunities to exchange thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
- Instructional methods must be varied to meet a diversity of learning styles.
- A positive learning environment is best fostered through cooperation versus competition.
- Taking risks is an important ingredient for true learning to take place.
- Trust, safety, and mutual respect are key to taking risks in learning.
- Learning is thought provoking and fun.
- Every person deserves to be known and heard.
- Learning is empowering and builds confidence

## Guiding Principles and Practices

The *Our Voices: Our Community* curriculum is extremely flexible in design and use. However, the founding beliefs and the following guiding principles are considered non-negotiable because they are the curriculum's source of power to promote positive growth:

1. Youth-Adult Partnership
2. Connecting to Communities: The Project
3. Learning by Discovery
4. Circles of Leadership Development: From Personal to Beyond
5. Positive Youth Development

### ***Youth-Adult Partnerships***

*Further development of human society depends upon the existence of a continuing dialogue in which the young, free to act on their initiative, can lead their elders in the direction of the unknown. . . . The children, the young, must ask the questions that we would never think to ask but enough trust must be re-established so that the elders will be permitted to work with them on the answers.*

—Margaret Mead

Cofacilitation of the course by a youth and an adult models an effective youth-adult partnership. If the curriculum is used in a middle school, ideally a high school student can partner with an adult to cofacilitate, or a middle school student can take a significant supporting role. Youth are encouraged to consider becoming cofacilitators after participating in the

course, creating a ladder of leadership opportunities within the *Our Voices: Our Community* program.

Youth-adult partnerships are explored in the Systems and Change module. Age stereotypes are explored in the Embracing Diversity and Systems and Change modules. A goal of this curriculum is that facilitators and participants are messengers of the need to shift from doing things *for* and to young people to doing work *with* young people.

*Typically and traditionally in many cultures, young people have been excluded from efforts to rebuild their communities. This marginalization of our youth not only harms them and endangers our future, but it also cheats the world of a valuable resource. If we are to function effectively as local and even global communities, then we must incorporate all significant voices.*

—Youth on Board 14 Points for Successfully  
Involving Youth in Decision Making

## ***Connecting to Communities: The Project***

*Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people that have come alive.*

—Harold Thurman Whitman

Project work is a powerful way to anchor abstract concepts and skills in real-life applications while connecting to the community. Through the projects, participants test and strengthen their new skills and learn how to work effectively with others in their community or school. Participants determine their projects based on their passions and interests, their needs and strengths, and their communities' needs. The project helps participants to develop connections with their school or larger community, between themselves and others, and with some interest or issue they care about. Fostering helpfulness, providing opportunities for meaningful participation, and developing competencies all promote resiliency and are key elements of leadership development (Henderson, 1996).

The project may be taken on individually, or in partnership with one or more classmates, or the entire class may choose a project to pursue. The critical factor is that the undertaking has personal meaning to the participants involved. The Project module defines essential steps in project design and implementation.

An alternative for school-based courses is to include an already clearly defined project as part of the class. When participants sign on, they do so because they are excited about this aspect of their learning.

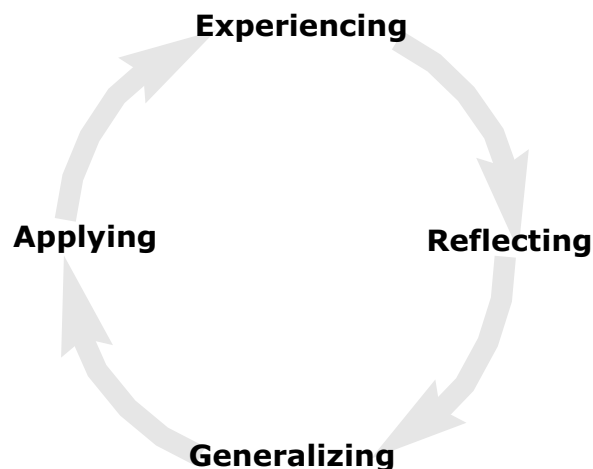
## ***Learning by Discovery***

*Tell me, and I will forget;  
Show me, and I may remember;  
Involve me, and I will understand.*

This curriculum is based on the premise that the facilitators' primary job is to structure opportunities for participants to discover the lessons inherent in each module. This teaching strategy is based on John Dewey's work (1902, 1938) and the field of experiential education. It is founded on the belief that true learning occurs when individuals actively participate in their learning rather than passively being told what they should know. The learning methods also draw heavily from the work of Project Adventure, an organization that has spent over thirty years building curricula—activity and training resources to further the use of adventure-based or experiential strategies. The basic principles of adventure-based facilitation include: the Experiential Learning Cycle, the Full Value Commitment, Challenge of Choice, and Goal-Setting.

### **Experiential Learning Cycle**

This cycle, developed by David Kolb (1984), lies at the heart of all experiential strategies:



The task of facilitators is to choose activities that create an intentional leadership skill-building experience for participants. After participating, the group reflects on each activity—a process often referred to as “de-briefing.” Initial reflections spark personal generalizations about how the activity mirrors the individual’s life or, in this case, an aspect of their leadership development. The final piece in the cycle entails applying this knowledge to the world at large. Activities serve as metaphors, bringing personal relevance to learning objectives. Each subsequent pass through

this cycle, through the activities you choose, builds on earlier cycles—a deepening spiral of personal growth and skill development.

### The Full Value Commitment (FVC)

*Everyone shared what was important to them. That can tell you a lot about a person. . . . It [the FVC] will make everyone think about what they are doing before they do it.*

—Seventh Grader

The Full Value Commitment is an activity to help group members establish clear guidelines for the way they will treat one another, and want to be treated, throughout the class. It is a means to quickly establish a safe, respectful, and trusting climate—one in which participants are willing to take risks necessary for learning. The class must then take responsibility for not only creating but also sustaining its guidelines. It is therefore important to have the Full Value Commitment available for each class and periodically review and revise it as the participants grow in their understanding of themselves and as a group. It can be a helpful tool for goal-setting and ongoing individual and class reflections. The directions for this activity are found in Who Are We? Where Are We Going? Getting Going Together! module, based on Project Adventure's Full Value Commitment.

### Challenge of Choice

The principle of Challenge of Choice refers to the participant's responsibility to choose his or her level of risk-taking in the learning experience. It is based on the belief that significant learning occurs when one pushes oneself out of a known "comfort zone," while at the same time recognizing that each person's comfort zone will be different. Challenge of Choice does not mean that a person can choose whether he or she will be involved at all in an activity, but rather how that person will be involved. Participants are expected to remain in the group process and add value to the experience. Participants should be told that participation in all activities is based on Challenge of Choice, which means:

- 1. Participants will decide how much they will reach beyond their comfort level in the experience.** For example, when asked to tell something about him- or herself that no one else knows, the participant can choose a superficial fact or share something on a deeper emotional level, depending on his or her comfort level. Another example is an activity that requires blindfolding participants. The activity should be prefaced with alternatives for those who might not be comfortable with this level of risk (i.e., spotting, encouraging, not wearing a blindfold, and peeking when they need to). Facilitators need to offer meaningful alternatives to a given activity when necessary.

- 2. Participants will respect their classmates' choices.** Challenge of Choice provides participants with increased self-awareness about where their comfort level begins and ends, a sense of empowerment when naming and exercising their choice, and a sense of safety. Facilitators need to reinforce the importance of respecting different choices.

## Goal-Setting

*Goal-setting allows one to isolate specific needs and act on them. It allows participants to be intentional, to carry through with their intentions, and to discuss outcomes (Schoel and Maizell, 2002).*

The development of clear, attainable goals is a key to personal growth and successful leadership (Lewin, 1944; Erickson, 1963; Glasser, 1965, Henton, 1996). This skill is introduced in the introductory module and should be creatively integrated throughout each class. Facilitators have many opportunities to model and build this skill. One simple means is to start off each class by sharing the module goals and end the session by seeing if the goal was met. It is important for participants to write down their own goals and check back to note progress toward reaching them. Otherwise, these goals risk the same fate as millions of forgotten new year's resolutions!

## Circles of Leadership Development

*So the point is not to become a leader. The point is to become yourself, to use yourself completely—all your skills, gifts and energies. . . . You must . . . become the person you started out to be and . . . enjoy the process of becoming.*

—Warren Bennis

The heart of leadership is taking charge of one's own life and working toward desired change in the world, as described below in the three Circles of Leadership.

**Leadership of the Self:** The inner circle of leadership concentrates on the participant's personal growth. This includes the ability to know one's strengths and challenges and the commitment to change based on one's own personal needs and goals. For example, a leadership goal in this circle might be that an individual listens more carefully to what she feels she can't do when faced with challenges and replaces this with specific things she can do. It may require working with others to help with these personal goals. This introspective work is important for moving successfully to the outer circles.



**Leadership Beyond the Immediate Self:** The first outer circle consists of building interpersonal skills to help make change in the world surrounding the individual. School, community, and family are all areas in which the individual could choose to make positive change. A leadership goal in this circle might be joining a group of community members working on accessibility issues for disabled people in town or changing school policy to assure greater youth participation in decision-making.

**Systems Level Leadership:** The third and final outer circle concerns being involved in change on a much broader level (i.e., instigating legislative action or engaging in regional, state, or national work around an issue).

This curriculum focuses on the two innermost circles of leadership development, but it provides the essential skills and experiences needed to move to systems level leadership.

## ***Positive Youth Development***

*We do not believe in ourselves until someone reveals that deep inside us something is valuable, worth listening to, worthy of our touch, sacred to our touch. Once we believe in ourselves we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit.*

—e.e. cummings

Positive youth development is based on defining community not by how many problems it has or that its young people exhibit, but on the depth and quality of its overall environment and support for young people. Historically, youth policies, government funding for programs, and community leaders have focused on problems such as substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and school failure. Similarly, educators and mental health professionals have focused primarily on specific issues individuals are struggling with. Positive youth development takes a different approach by creating supports for all teens and building from personal and community strengths.

Please see Part III, Facilitator Resource Guide, for an in-depth review of two aspects of positive youth development—the Residency Theory and Developmental Assets.

## Summary of Guiding Principles and Practices

### Principles

### Practices

#### ***Youth-Adult Partnerships***

Youth are partners in decision making regarding their learning and lives. They are valued community members.

- Youth-adult cofacilitators
- Youth-adult project work
- Youth-adult partnership skill building

#### ***Connecting to Communities: The Project***

Skills and ideas are best learned when applied to one's own life. Service to community is valued.

- The project goal is to change something in the participant's own school, community, or life

#### ***Learning by Discovery***

Participants are actively engaged in their learning, always discovering its personal relevance.

- Active learning strategies
- Opportunities for challenging oneself
- Group-designed ground rules
- Ongoing goal setting and reflection

#### ***Circles of Leadership Development: From Personal Change to Influencing the World***

Each individual is a leader. The first leadership act is to make positive changes in one's own life. Personal growth leads to having a positive influence in the lives of others.

- Activities and reflection focus on both personal change as well as how to make positive changes in the world.

#### ***Positive Youth Development***

Youth have many resources, are resilient, and will be most successful when building on their strengths.

- Activities focus on identifying and building on participants' abilities and skills.
- Developmental assets used as way to analyze systems.



# ABOUT THE CURRICULUM

## **How Did we Create *Our Voices: Our Community*?**

The Vermont Children's Forum and the Vermont Rural Partnership, with funding from the Bell Atlantic/Verizon Foundation, joined forces in 1999 to help strengthen communities by better meeting the needs of young people. The project goal was to develop a teen leadership curriculum that could provide Vermont teenagers, *particularly young people who are not identified as traditional leaders*, with an opportunity to better understand, develop, and use their leadership skills. By identifying their strengths, setting goals, and building skills to reach their goals, teens would understand how to bring about desired changes in their own lives and in their communities.

### **Phase One. *Developing the Curriculum***

A working committee of eleven teens and nine adults formed to tackle this task—a process that modeled a commitment to authentic youth-adult partnerships. Over the course of three two-day retreats spanning nine months, committee members grappled with personal beliefs about leadership and learning, defined what were thought to be key skills in leadership development, tested activities on one another, and ultimately created this curriculum.

### **Phase Two. *Training Facilitators and Piloting Courses***

Once the curriculum was drafted, committee members piloted the program in both school and community settings, fine tuning the modules. A training of facilitators with teams of youth and adults from school- and community-based sites from around the state was hosted, resulting in seven courses held between 2000 and 2002. The courses have been held in middle schools and high schools, as part of a summer school program, in an alternative community high school, as a summer recreation program, and as part of an Outing Club. In the 2002–2003 school year, an innovative yearlong credit-bearing course was underway in three schools.

### **Phase Three. *Taking Our Voices: Our Community Across Vermont***

In 2003, with funding from the Vermont Department of Employment and Training, *Our Voices: Our Community* classes were held in over twenty school and community settings. Additional classes are anticipated for 2004 and 2005, after our next Facilitator Training in the spring of 2004.

### **Who Is It For?**

This curriculum was designed for use with teens. (Note, however, that the flexibility of the curriculum and basic nature of skill-building allows for adaptation for multiage groups.) Each module includes a variety of teaching strategies so that any topic can be approached in a developmentally appropriate manner, meeting the unique needs of the participants. All youth in the community should be invited to participate, including those not enrolled in school. Our desire is to engage young people who were previously not identified as leaders in their schools and communities, along with those who are already involved in positive change efforts.

### **How Does It Accommodate Diverse Learning Styles?**

Adventure-based and experiential strategies are designed to address participants' multiple learning styles. Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory (Gardner, 1993) identifies nine different intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic and existential (see "Multiple Intelligences Overview" in the appendix of the "Who Are We? Where Are We Going?" module). Facilitators are asked to be aware of choosing activities that tap a variety of these intelligences to assure that all participants have an opportunity to freely and fully explore issues and express themselves.

### **What Is the Optimum Class Size?**

This curriculum works best with eight to eighteen participants. However, the wide range of activity choices and overall flexibility allows this curriculum to be readily adapted to both smaller and larger groups. Ideally, cofacilitators will define a maximum class size that matches their expectations for outcomes. The ongoing commitment of participants to attend the classes is key to the program's success.

## What Is the Time Commitment?

The flexibility of *Our Voices: Our Community* curriculum precludes an easy answer to this question. Addressing the eight core leadership modules requires at least 25 hours of time together. This does not include the time devoted to participants' projects or facilitator planning time.

Here are some other course alternatives, each requiring different time commitments:

- a 60-hour semester-long credit-bearing course
- a yearlong, alternative school, social-skill-building program, using modules that need approximately 3 hours of class time per week
- a summer school setting in which students meet every morning for 2 hours before academic subjects
- an afterschool community-based program meeting twice a week for 8 weeks (total 32 hours)
- a community-based evening course meeting weekly over 10 weeks with a group service project (e.g., Habitat for Humanity summer work week) as a culminating event (30 hours meeting time, 40 hours service project)
- a retreat format including two weekend retreats with a project extending over a longer period of time (48 hours)
- a 2-week full-day summer program with a significant outdoor adventure component including a culminating hike (80 hours)
- a teacher-student advisory system curriculum (40 minutes per week for students advisory leadership class)

It can be helpful for cofacilitators to first explore the outcomes they wish to accomplish through this course experience, and then define what program components they need to include to reach this end.

## Is This Curriculum Linked to Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities?

This curriculum is linked to the Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities. The relationship of each module to the Vermont standards is summarized in Part III, Facilitator Resource Guide.

This curriculum integrated place-based and service-learning concepts through The Project module. Vermont is the only state in the country to have included educational standards relating to learning place, honoring our communities as such, and engaging learning "laboratories."

## What Are the Facilitators' Roles and Responsibilities?

Those who are leading the group are purposely referred to as “facilitators,” and those taking the class are identified as “participants.” This shift from the use of the more traditional “teacher” and “student” titles was made to avoid preconceived notions of the roles and power relationships triggered by these terms.

The cofacilitators' job is to organize and facilitate a rich and engaging leadership skill-building experience for participants. The two-day Training of Facilitators helps facilitators become familiar with the curriculum and practice their facilitation skills. It provides time for cofacilitators to talk about their unique goals and skills and to plan their work together. The strength of the cofacilitation team will directly impact the tone set in class meetings and the course's overall effectiveness.

### ***Primary Responsibilities***

- Define course format issues: (1) length of course, (2) context (i.e., after school, for credit school-based course, etc.), and (3) grading if appropriate for schools only (pass/fail preferred).
- Create a budget, locate in-kind donations such as meeting space, and secure necessary funding for the course.
- Recruit participants through appropriate avenues, keeping in mind the intent is to attract disengaged youth or youth who are feeling disenfranchised.
- Hold regular course planning meetings with your cofacilitator
- Solicit participant feedback for all sessions, and complete final evaluation material.
- Assure a safe and nurturing class climate, keeping activities relevant to the curriculum and tailoring activity choices to the class needs.
- Provide necessary individual support and guidance to assure successful project design and completion.
- Provide program assessment and evaluation to the *Our Voices: Our Community* Planning Team and contracted evaluators.
- Model leadership and reinforce the Full Value Commitment at all times—leadership is a way of life.
- Recognize that, like participants, facilitators are also learning.

## How Do Participants Serve as Leaders?

It is important that participants be given the opportunity to assume leadership responsibilities in the group. Initially, this might be as simple as asking them to choose an inspirational quote to start the session, or lead the group in an ice-breaker of their choice. Later on, participants may help shape curriculum choices and cofacilitate segments of modules. This course is designed as a leadership learning laboratory, and facilitators are encouraged to create every possible opportunity for participants to try out their skills.

## How Are Leadership Skills Presented?

Leadership skills and concepts are presented in individual units called modules. Modules include opportunities for reflection and skill-building and move between personal growth and skill development to help participants successfully affect change in their world. What follows are the goals and descriptions of each module.

### ***Who Are We? Where are We Going? Getting Going Together!***

**Goal:** Establish a safe, positive, and productive learning climate using activities that (1) build relationships among participants and between participants and facilitators, (2) clarify personal and class expectations, and (3) build goal-setting competency as the vehicle to move from intent to action in all leadership skill areas.

*Our Voices: Our Community* requires ongoing risk-taking throughout the process of personal growth and leadership skill development. It is essential to feel safe and supported and to trust the group members. This module provides time for participants to get to know one another, to create ground rules that will guide each member's behavior, and to begin to form a group identity. Activities encourage participants' commitment to the group and enhance their sense of safety so that they can venture beyond their ordinary "comfort zone." An overview of the course and clarity about founding beliefs and expectations help to create a solid frame for the experience. The important capacity to set reachable goals is introduced.

### ***Exploration of Leaders and Leadership***

**Goal:** Examine definitions of leadership, explore personal beliefs, and identify one's own inherent leadership ability.

Our definitions of leadership are varied and sometimes contradictory. Each person comes to this program with beliefs about what leadership is

and is not, although he or she may never have been asked to articulate these thoughts. Through an examination of these beliefs and ethical issues that confront leaders, individuals can begin to shape a deeper understanding of the complexity of leadership and their relationship to this elusive concept. This module provides an opportunity to explore and discuss the Founding Beliefs About Leadership upon which this curriculum was developed. It also draws on participants' experience and aspirations to explore leadership in their own lives.

## ***Decision Making***

**Goal:** *Develop decision-making skills and identify ways to facilitate effective decision-making in one's life and community.*

We make many decisions for ourselves everyday. When we are part of a group sorting out an issue, we have more than our own needs and interests to consider. Whether we are making a personal decision or are part of a group decision process, there are helpful steps that can guide us as we grapple with complex issues or goals. This module will explore those helpful steps. By exploring the pros and cons of each decision-making model presented in this module, participants can better understand the usefulness of any one approach and analyze if the decision-making models used in their family, peer groups, community groups, and so on are a good match with the goals of these groups. Participants will develop decision-making skills, identifying ways to facilitate effective decision-making in their own lives and in the life of their community.

## ***The Project***

**Goal:** *Identify an issue of personal importance, develop an action plan, implement this plan, personally reflect on its learning value, and share and celebrate this experience with others.*

Significant and enduring learning occurs when individuals have an opportunity to test and develop their skills and knowledge in meaningful ways. This module leads participants through the steps necessary to identify and address a personal goal, a desired leadership skill, or a larger change effort that has personal relevance. The project is about making choices, planning ahead, taking action, and celebrating learning and doing.

## ***Communication***

**Goal:** *Explore and develop two essential skills of effective communication—listening and speaking.*

Effective communication is the foundation of positive relationships; positive relationships lie at the heart of successful leadership. Communication skills enable individuals to work with each other to shape and artic-

ulate a goal, organize and implement a plan, and reach a desired outcome. Effective communication sustains friendships and the many other relationships that enrich our lives. Communication involves the art of listening to what is said and noticing what is not said. It involves asking open-ended questions to seek understanding and to summarize accurately what is heard. This often requires setting personal agendas aside and being open to opposing views.

Communication also involves speaking effectively, whether in conversation, providing feedback, or in a formal presentation. This module builds basic communication skills and lays a foundation for conflict-resolution strategies.

## **Conflict Resolution**

**Goal:** *Define the nature of conflict and understand the styles, strategies, and tactics for managing conflict.*

Conflict is inevitable and essential if you are committed to growth and change. Dealing with conflict enables people to learn about themselves and others. The challenge of leadership is to mediate conflict and determine a resolution that opens up new possibilities. Constructively resolving conflict requires developing a common understanding of the issues and helping those involved to move forward by working together to resolve their differences. Conflict is a healthy and necessary part of life when it allows hidden feelings and needs to surface and be addressed. The skills explored in this module are valuable tools for each of us in our own lives—in our personal relationships and in our leadership roles.

## **Team Building**

**Goal:** *Develop an understanding of group dynamics, one's preferred role within team efforts, and alternate ways to contribute to successful group work.*

The team-building module explores ways individuals can build and sustain collaboration in group settings. Research has confirmed that the most important attribute of people who work in groups is the quality of their interpersonal relationships. This module explores different roles within a group, the role one typically plays in a group setting, and the stages of group development.

## **Embracing Diversity**

**Goal:** *Participants will share and honor their own cultural heritage, understand their own stereotypes and biases, and identify ways to change prejudice and discrimination.*

Exploring diversity helps us to value and promote equity, fairness, and justice in our leadership efforts. Discriminatory social messages surround

us. This inevitably leads to stereotyping and prejudice and can spark harassment, bullying, and violence. This module helps participants identify their own biases and how they affect actions and decisions in their lives. Only by naming these internal messages can they be changed, thus stopping the harm often unintentionally perpetuated by these biases.

## ***Systems and Change***

**Goal:** *Identify and explore the dynamics of systems in one's own life and in one's community, and develop skills to affect change in these systems.*

We live in a world of complex systems—families, peer groups, and educational, political, religious, economic, and social institutions. This module provides several ways to make sense of complex systems and explores how effective growth or change can be brought about. Understanding how individuals and groups react to change helps to anticipate resistance and nurture support for new ideas.

## **How Are Modules Sequenced?**

Facilitators must decide how to sequence this curriculum to best meet the needs of their group. The first module, *Who Are We? Where Are We Going? Getting Going Together!*, is an essential start for all programs. However, what comes next is largely influenced by four variables:

- Project status and skill demands
- Existing leadership skill development
- Stage of group development
- Total length of program

### ***Project Status and Skill Demands***

Groups that form around one particular project can assess what leadership skills are required and sequence the modules accordingly. For example, if a group's project is organizing and leading a community dialogue night, group members would sequence the Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Team Building modules early on. They might then shift to Decision Making and Systems and Change as they take the information from their community meeting and develop an action plan.

Groups who are just deciding on a project would use the Decision Making and Project modules early in their sequence as a means to make their project decision and get this work underway. Subsequent modules would support project work to the greatest extent possible.

If the group chooses individual projects, each of which require varied skills at different times, the facilitator is faced with another set of decisions



regarding what modules will best serve the group as a whole. Module choices will not be specifically tailored to project demands in this instance. However, the skills included in this curriculum are so fundamental that they will undoubtedly find a place in participant project work.

### ***Existing Leadership Skill Development***

Your group's leadership skill development will vary based on prior leadership training and be influenced by participant age and life experiences. For example, middle school classes may need more basic training than a group of sixteen-year-old participants who have already had multiple opportunities for leadership experiences.

It is important to assess existing leadership skill development and use this as a starting point for module sequencing (and activity choices), avoiding redundancy.

### ***Stage of Group Development***

Existing, established groups who choose to use this curriculum to help them in their work will have different needs than groups that form for the program and disband at the end of it. If the group has never worked together before, they will need to spend more time in the beginning of the class to create a group identity that assures a sense of safety and support. For example, the Leaders and Leadership and Embracing Diversity modules might follow the introductory module for this purpose.

When a group is experiencing conflict, they can choose the Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Team Building modules to provide the skills to resolve this conflict. It is recommended that Communication should always precede Conflict Resolution, unless the group has clearly demonstrated strong communication skill development.

### ***Total Length of Program***

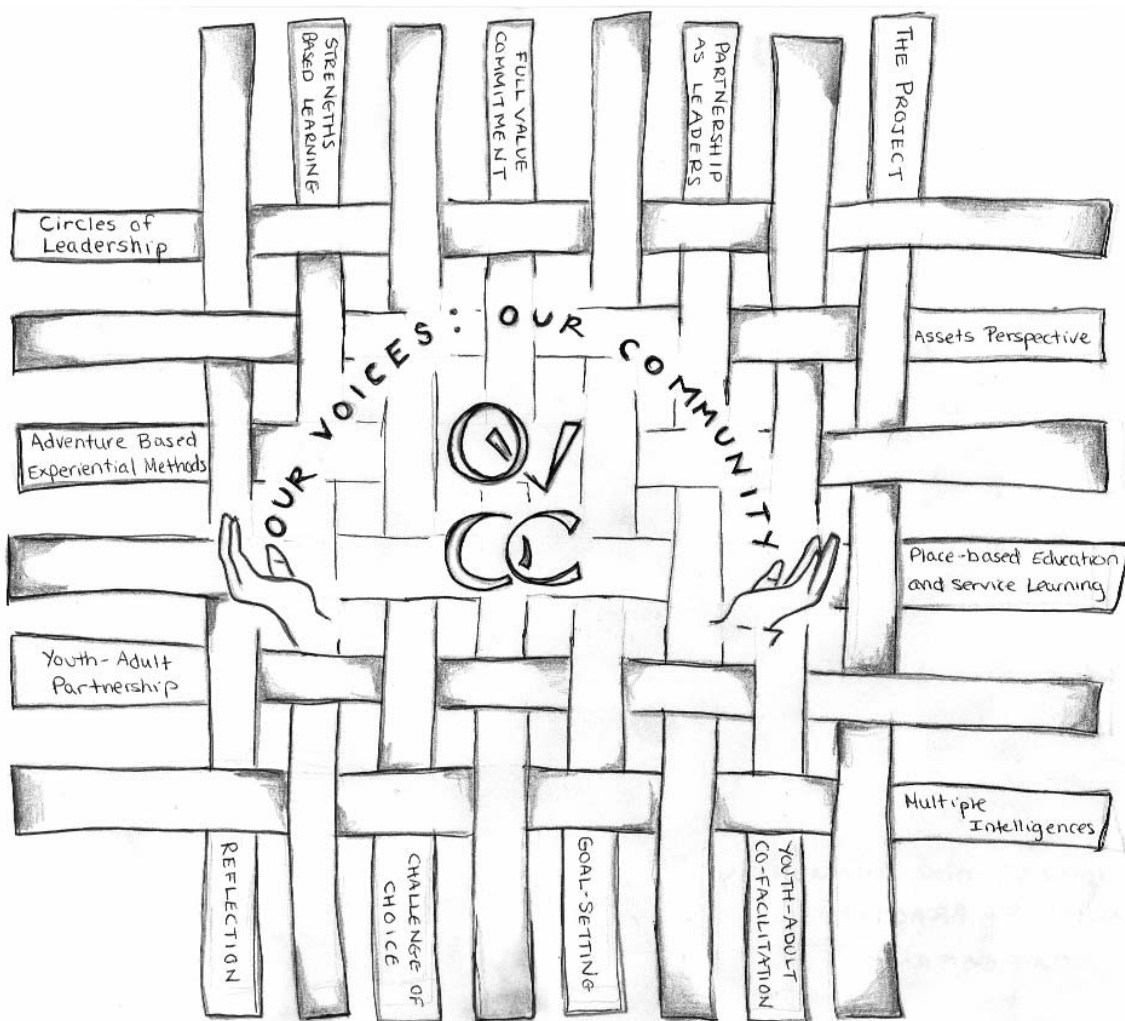
Shorter programs must balance pursuing depth in any one skill area with a more broad-based exposure to leadership skill development. Shorter programs may choose to focus on only four or five of the modules to assure that participants are able to integrate the skills into their lives in a meaningful way. If time allows, facilitators might supplement these core modules with one or two objectives from the remaining modules that best match group needs. *The principle of quality of experience versus quantity of activities completed should drive sequencing decisions.*

A weeklong program will sequence The Project module early on so that participants can choose and complete a project in this short time frame. Longer programs may build more skills and group identity before turning to the project.

## Conclusion

The *Our Voices: Our Community* tapestry is created with many threads. Each principle and practice is important in its own right, but the true power of this curriculum rests in weaving these threads into a whole.

Participant needs and desires, along with facilitator choices, will create a novel tapestry pattern in each new setting that *Our Voices: Our Community* is offered. However, the threads remain constant and the source of its strength. Facilitation teams are the artists in this creative process, where both form and flexibility give life to the work.



**PART II**  
**T H E   M O D U L E S**



# Who are We? Where Are We Going? Getting Going Together!

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# Who Are We? Where Are We Going? Getting Going Together!

*You can learn more about a person in  
an hour of play than in a day of work.*

—Plato

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## **Goal**

Establish a safe, positive, and productive learning climate using activities that (1) build relationships among participants and between participants and facilitators, (2) clarify personal and class expectations, and (3) build goal-setting competency as the vehicle to move from intent to action in all leadership skill areas.

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## **Rationale**

*Our Voices: Our Community* requires ongoing risk-taking throughout the process of personal growth and leadership skill development. It is essential to feel safe and supported and to trust the group members. This module provides time for participants to get to know one another, to create ground rules that will guide each member's behavior, and to begin to form a group identity. Activities encourage participants' commitment to the group and enhance their sense of safety so that they can venture beyond their ordinary "comfort zone." An overview of the course and clarity about founding beliefs and expectations help to create a solid frame for the experience. The important capacity to set reachable goals is introduced. Observing participants during these initial activities provides very useful information for facilitators regarding the mix of participants and group dynamics—Plato was right!

## **Objectives Summary**

Participants will:

1. *know the names of all other participants and facilitators, as well as new information about each person's life, interests, goals, and Intelligences Profile;*
2. *know the basic components of the curriculum and general expectations for the experience, providing facilitators with information about aspects of the curriculum that interest them most;*
3. *mutually agree on the basic ground rules that will serve as a foundation for time together by means of the Full Value Commitment; and*
4. *understand the basic elements of goal-setting.*

**OBJECTIVE 1:** *Participants will know the names of all other participants and facilitators, as well as information about each person's life, interests, goals, and Intelligences Profile.*

Have you ever spent days, maybe even weeks, with a person and not known his or her name? After a day or so it gets embarrassing to even ask! Remember what it feels like to know that someone you are working with doesn't even know your name?

"Every person deserves to be known and heard" is a founding belief of this curriculum. It begins with learning each others' names and getting to know each other better. Icebreakers help build and reinforce a climate of mutual respect, dispel the anxiousness that typifies the beginning of a group experience, and create an openness to learning. They also help individuals transition from their outside lives into this class experience. If the class is comprised of people who are not familiar with each other, use of name games in subsequent sessions are recommended.

It is important to do enough initial icebreakers until you feel that the group is starting to be comfortable taking risks. This can be judged by observing such things as the participants' level of participation, willingness to risk being silly, and amount of helpfulness and inclusiveness. Facilitators should participate in these activities, reinforcing their role as learners and their willingness to share and be vulnerable along with participants.

### **ACTIVITY 1: GROUP JUGGLE**

*(Adapted from Project Adventure, Silver Bullets, p. 112)*

**Materials:** Odd assortment (10–15) of soft objects that can be thrown about 15–20 feet. Stuffed animals are great. Stay away from traditional balls so that people do not feel self-conscious if they have trouble throwing or catching.

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

**Step 1.** Have the group make a circle. Pass one object around the circle. When group members receive it, they must say their name and one *positive* thing about themselves (i.e., enthusiastic Emma, thoughtful Jake). Do not accept descriptors that are negative. If positive personal qualities are hard to voice, you can offer the option of identifying some activity or hobby they are good at and enjoy. You can ask that the description start with the same letter as their first name, although this is not necessary. One of the facilitators should start the activity off with their own descriptor. Go around the circle a second time reviewing descriptors and first names.

**Step 2.** Start a pattern by giving the following directions: "We are going to start throwing in a pattern. Find someone in the circle who you don't



know very well. Make eye contact, say their name and descriptor, and throw the object to them underhand. When the person receives the object, they must say 'thank you' using the person's descriptor and name." These three directions are very important to repeat and demonstrate. The person who has the object then throws it to someone who has not caught it, following the same directions. It is helpful to ask individuals who have had the object to hold their hands behind their back so that it is easy to see who still is available to receive the object. When everyone has caught the object once, it should come back to the facilitator. Clarify that most people will not remember everyone's description and name, so don't be shy about asking what it is—maybe several times over! Try this same pattern a few times with one object, encouraging them to pick up the speed each time. Ask group members how they are doing and if anyone has any ideas how to minimize drops.

**Step 3.** Add several more objects (you can ask the group for suggestions of which objects) and ask them to pick up the pace. The only additional rule is that you can't "stockpile" someone by throwing an object to him or her when he or she already has an object. You can drop the "thank you" if the group suggests this. Try adding all the objects for a round.

**Step 4.** Tell participants that there will be no pattern; they are free to throw the objects to anyone as long as they make eye contact, say their name and descriptor, throw underhand, and do not throw to anyone who already has an object in his or her hand.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What did the group do particularly well in this activity?
- What qualities of the group came out that will help them work together throughout the course (i.e., patience, creativity, humor)?
- How did people feel about throwing in the pattern versus the random throws? Note: You will usually find some who loved the chaos and some who preferred the pattern. This is a good opportunity to talk about diversity and how it is important to blend these differences to have a well-balanced group.
- Does this game remind you of any other part of your lives?

**Facilitator Note:** This activity is particularly effective with groups no larger than eighteen to twenty.

### Adaptations

- Play this game around a table, sliding the objects from one individual to the next rather than throwing them. (*Adapted from Project Adventure activities.*)

- Play the game by tossing the object around the circle (clockwise or counterclockwise) rather than having to remember a random pattern.
- Play the game using only names, rather than a descriptor.
- Rather than tossing and catching an object, toss verbal cues. For example, the facilitator may say “Bubbly Bob! — Kathy?” and Kathy responds with, “Thank you, Bob. Chatty Kathy! — Sara?” and the round continues with Sara. The next round is to remember the descriptors and the pattern.

## ACTIVITY 2: LET ME INTRODUCE YOU

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

Have the group congregate in a circle shape. Tell them that their task is to go up to as many individuals as possible during this activity. The first step is for Person 1 to ask Person 2 his or her name and one interest, hobby, or talent. Persons 1 and 2 then each find a third person who is not engaged in a conversation. Person 1 must enthusiastically introduce Person 2 to Person 3. Now Person 2 will find out the name of Person 3 and an interest, hobby, or talent and introduce him or her to a fourth person, and so on.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- Did you learn anything about anyone that surprised you?
- Did you find any themes in interests, hobbies, or talents?

## ACTIVITY 3: WHEN THE WILD WIND BLOWS

**Materials:** Placeholders on the floor that fit an individual’s feet (small carpet squares, pieces of oak tag, etc.—something durable enough not to rip when stepped on).

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Position placeholders on floor (or it’s OK to circle up chairs for this activity). Participants first form a circle with a placeholder to mark their position in the circle. One person stands in the middle of this circle, which means that there is one less place on the outside circle than participants. The person in the middle begins by noting something about his life or something he has done in his lifetime and follows this with the words, “Move when the wild wind blows.” For example, he might say, “Loves pepperoni pizza. Move when the wild wind blows.” Only after he has given the

"wild wind blows" command, do participants who share this interest or life experience leave their spots and move to another spot—which cannot be immediately next to the one they were on. People who do not like pepperoni pizza stay put. The person in the middle also moves to a spot as quickly as possible. This will leave one person in the middle who repeats this process. Some other examples of things typically offered are: "Has blue eyes," "Has traveled outside the United States," "Speaks a foreign language," "Likes the Red Sox," "Favorite color is yellow."

#### **ACTIVITY 4: GETTING TO KNOW YOU**

**Materials:** "Getting to Know You Interview Form" handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Explain that each group member has special skills, knowledge, and talents that will help to make the group stronger as a unit. When group members are aware of each other's strengths, the group can function more effectively. Distribute one copy of the form to each group member. Collect the completed forms, duplicate them, and bring copies for each group member to the next meeting. Let people review them and reflect on what they have learned. Facilitators should complete their own forms as participants in this activity.

**If you have more time:** Distribute one copy of the form to each member. Ask members to pair up and conduct five-minute interviews of each other, using the form as a worksheet. Tell members to be prepared to introduce their partners to the rest of the group by spotlighting three interesting pieces of information learned during the interview.

**Facilitator Note:** Make any additional insertions or modifications to the form as you deem necessary. When conducting paired interviews, if the group is not divisible by two, ask one group to work as a trio. Each person in the trio is allotted three minutes for their interview. To keep the interviews on schedule, announce when the allotted time for each round of interviews has elapsed.

#### **Adaptation**

Circle up chairs so that everyone is sitting. Allow plenty of time and room for movement so that people in wheelchairs can participate fully.

## ACTIVITY 5: HUMAN ASSET BINGO

**Materials:** “Human Asset Bingo” handout (see appendix of this module); pencils or pens

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Facilitators and participants circulate among themselves with their bingo sheets. When an individual finds someone who can answer yes to a bingo square, she has that person sign the square and moves on. It is a good idea to limit any one person’s signatures to a maximum of two squares, forcing everyone to circulate among as many people as possible.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- How many people got at least one bingo? Two? Three? Four?
- Pick different assets (mix of silly and serious) and have people raise their hands if they were able to say yes to this one. Probe for more information.
- Were you surprised by anyone’s answers during this activity?

### Adaptations

- This activity can be overwhelming for individuals with hearing difficulties. Try conducting the activity in silence!
- This activity is impossible for individuals who cannot see well. Use an alternate activity.
- Please use this activity in a space large enough so that people with mobility disabilities can move around easily.

## ACTIVITY 6: BALANCING STONES

*(Adapted from Project Adventure Activity)*

**Materials:** An assortment of rocks (either outside or brought to the class)

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes for sculpture building; 3 minutes for each participant to share the meaning of the sculpture

Lead the participants outside to an area where there are loose rocks of varying sizes; or form a circle around the rocks you collected for them to use. Ask them to think of the major things in their life that are important to them—their interests and activities. This might include sports, hobbies, family life, extracurricular activities, or spiritual life. They are to build a stone structure to represent the way these activities fit together to shape their lives. Give them ten minutes to create their “balancing stones sculpture,” which must be done individually and in silence. When completed, travel from sculpture to sculpture having participants explain as much of their sculpture as they wish to share. Facilitators should also build their own rock structure and can lead off the sharing phase. Allow questions at

the end of each presentation and honor the work of each individual with a round of applause before moving on.

**Facilitator Note:** This can be a very powerful activity. It is important that the facilitators participate. The extent to which they share the meaning of their sculpture will shape the depth of sharing of the class members. If you have a stream nearby, adding water as a setting for the sculptures can be magical. If you have no outdoor space for this, can't take the time to go outdoors, or participants' have physical disabilities that preclude doing this outside, bring a wide variety of rocks inside and let folks build from your assortment.

### **Adaptations**

- If participants are unable to bend and lift stones, do this project from a bowl full of smaller pebbles and/or flat stones.
- If balancing is extremely difficult, consider using multicolored Lego or other blocks that fit easily together. The colors can be meaningful also.
- If using rocks is not an option, consider allowing participants to create their own jigsaw puzzle out of stiff paper or modeling clay.

## **ACTIVITY 7: LOOK WHAT I FOUND IN MY POCKET**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 1 minute per participant

Instruct participants to take two items (e.g., family pictures, ID, rabbit's foot, calculator) from their purses, bags, wallets, or pockets. When introducing themselves to the group, they should use whatever they took out to help describe themselves in at least two ways (e.g., "I am superstitious"; "This is the first dollar I ever earned").

**Tips:** Allow one minute per person. When introducing this activity to groups whose members already know each other, point out that there is always something new group members can learn about each other that will strengthen their relationship with one another.

## **ACTIVITY 8: MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES INVENTORY**

**Materials:** "Multiple Intelligences Overview" and "Multiple Intelligences Checklist" handouts (see appendix of this module)

**Time:** 40 minutes

Howard Gardner's model of eight intelligences (1993) presents an opportunity for participants to identify their strengths, honor differences, and

relate this knowledge to the way they learn best. The questionnaire, created by the Center for Learning Connections, is a useful way to have individuals understand this model on an individual level.

Provide an introduction to Gardner's eight capabilities or intelligences. A "Multiple Intelligences Overview," adapted from the work of Thomas Armstrong (1994), can be found as a handout for participants in the appendix of this module. As you review each intelligence, ask participants what professions individuals with the differing intelligences might gravitate toward. Alternately, you can have the class split into eight groups, each group introducing one intelligence after having talked among themselves about likely professions for this intelligence area, classes in the school that particularly draw on this intelligence, and so on.

Have participants take the Multiple Intelligences Checklist (Center for Learning Connections) and fill in their Multiple Intelligences Summary.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Was anyone surprised about your checklist results?
- If you are comfortable, please share your dominant intelligence(s).
- What does the fact that there are a variety of dominant intelligences mean about our time together?
- How does knowing our intelligences help in school? Life?
- Do we typically assign stereotypes to the intelligences? What are those stereotypes? (Brainstorm for each intelligence.) What is the impact of stereotyping in this way?
- Given your more dominant intelligence(s), what does it tell you about the ways you learn best?
- What do you want the facilitators of this course to know about your learning style and intelligences so that they can create the best learning situation possible?

### **ACTIVITY 9: CLASS PARTICIPANT DIRECTORY**

**Materials:** Digital camera and software to integrate pictures and interviews with participant list (or the old tried-and-true scissors-and-glue collage method can be used)

**Time Commitment:** Mainly out-of-class work on the part of a few participants

A great starting point is a straightforward list of participants with names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mails. If you have a class member who likes using digital cameras and wants to create a more exciting participant directory, have him or her take pictures of each person in the class to add to the list. Another person can join in the project and interview each member, adding some tidbit about the person (i.e., his or her

goal for the class, special interests, favorite ice cream, etc.). This sort of effort is fun and helps form a sense of unique identity for individuals and the group.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** *Participants will know the basic components of the curriculum and general expectations for the course, providing facilitators with information about aspects of the curriculum that interest them most.*

**Facilitator Overview:** It is important to balance providing an overview of the course with reinforcing the integral role participants will have in shaping the curriculum. This is a time to offer information and explore participant expectations, interests, and desires. It is an opportunity to frame why this course is likely different from most other learning experiences participants have had by sharing “Beliefs About Learning” and exploring the different roles and responsibilities of participants and facilitators. Participant discussions and feedback will provide valuable information to inform curriculum decisions.

Community-based *Our Voices: Our Community* groups may have more freedom in the content and flow of the experience. School-based classes will likely require more structure and clarity about expectations (see Activity 4: Course Overview). However, it is critical that whatever the setting, participant input always be central to curriculum choices. Flexibility and following the lead of the participants lies at the heart of experiential education and this learning experience, whatever the setting.

### **ACTIVITY 1: REVIEW “FOUNDING BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING”**

**Materials:** “Founding Beliefs About Learning” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 20–30 minutes

Distribute the list of the “Founding Beliefs About Learning.” Go around the room, inviting each individual to read one of the beliefs if he or she is comfortable doing so. Lead a discussion:

- What beliefs ring truest to you?
- If you can pick only one belief to guide this course, which one would it be? Why?
- What do these beliefs mean about the role of the facilitators?
- What do these beliefs mean about the role of the participants?
- What will make this facilitator-participant partnership most suc-

cessful? (Note: record responses to this question and reflect on how this will occur in future class activities)

## **ACTIVITY 2: MODULE LINEUP**

**Materials:** “Module Overview” handout (see appendix of this module); three pieces of 8.5-by-11-inch paper with the following words: Really Interested, Moderately Interested, Little Interest

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

Place the three pieces of labeled paper in a line on the floor, spaced about 5 to 7 feet apart. Tell participants that you are going to provide a brief summary of each major area or module in the curriculum, which is also provided for them in the handout. After each module description is read, ask that class members place themselves around the “station” that best represents their level of interest in this particular aspect of leadership development. Once everyone is positioned, have them talk for three minutes among themselves why they chose this spot. Finally, ask for a brief summary from each group before moving on to the next module.

**Facilitator Note:** The facilitators should be taking careful note of the distribution of participants during each module shift. It might be helpful to even take a series of pictures. Ask the group to offer any conclusions they might draw from doing this activity. Summarize your observations and how this might shape your design of the curriculum.

### **Adaptation**

Be sure there is plenty of room for movement.

## **ACTIVITY 3: HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS CHALK TALK**

**Materials:** Large piece of newsprint paper or roll of art paper (3 by 5 feet); tape; markers

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

Tape the paper up on the wall or place in some accessible location. Write in large letters in the center of the paper, “Course Hopes and Expectations.” Ask participants to silently write their hopes and expectations for the course experience on the paper. (See Chalk Talk directions in the Part III: Facilitator Resource Guide.) Join them in this activity. Participants can add their thoughts to other participants entries or connect comments that are related in some way. After five minutes, have everyone step back and see what they have written.

### **Discussion Question**

What themes do you see?



**Facilitator Note:** Summarize what you see are important points, which will guide your curriculum decisions from the feedback received.

### **Adaptation**

Be certain that accommodations are in place (readers, scribes, other interpreters) so that everyone can participate fully.

## **ACTIVITY 4: COURSE OVERVIEW**

**Materials:** “Sample Course Overview” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Distribute the course overview, which describes all major components of the class experience. This overview will vary from program to program, depending on the skills and interests of the facilitators and participants, as well as the context of the program. For instance, a credit-bearing school course will likely have a more detailed syllabus than an afterschool or weekend community-based program.

Reinforce the point for class members that although certain course components are defined in the overview, their input will shape much of what happens during each meeting.

It is important to introduce the project during this session, clarifying that it serves as an anchor for all the leadership skill development. Encourage participants to begin thinking about what they might want to do for a project.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What is your reaction to hearing this overview?
- Does this description match your expectations?
- What are your hopes for this experience?
- What are your fears?
- What excites you most about the experience as it was explained?

## **ACTIVITY 5: COMFORT ZONE AND BEYOND**

*(Adapted from L. Frank, *The Caring Classroom*, 2001, p. 59)*

**Materials:** Rope or tape on the floor in three concentric circles; “Comfort Zone and Beyond” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

This activity is important to introduce the concept of Challenge of Choice, which is a constant throughout the entire course experience.

Create the three large concentric circles on the floor and label them as follows:

- Inner circle: COMFORT ZONE
- Middle circle: GROWTH ZONE
- Outside circle: PANIC ZONE

The inner circle should be large enough so that all participants can stand in it at the same time. You may considering doing this before the session begins.

Pass out the "Comfort Zone and Beyond" handout. Explain the following two points:

1. *Participants will decide how much they will reach beyond their comfort level in the experience.*

Challenge by Choice is a principle that we will operate by throughout the *Our Voices: Our Community* experience. This means that at many points you will have to decide the level of risk you want to take on in any given discussion or activity. We know that most learning occurs when a person pushes himself out of his comfort zone to what we will call the "growth zone." If you take on too much risk, you venture into the "panic zone," where the threat is too high to invite learning.

2. *Participants will honor the diversity in their classmates' choices.*

Each of us defines our comfort, growth, and panic zones differently. For some, speaking up in certain classes or meetings or with certain family members can cause panic. For others, physical risk will be most frightening. It is important that at all times we honor the diversity of comfort, growth and panic zones of others in this experience so that we create a safe place where people can go to that circle where growth happens.

**Directions:** I am going to read out some questions, and I would ask that you put yourself into one of the three circles depending on your level of comfort with the issue. After each question, be aware of where everyone else is. How do you feel about:

- Spiders?
- Speaking in front of a large group?
- Singing solo in front of a group?
- Bungee jumping?
- Telling a family member that you love him or her?
- Heights?
- Confronting a friend about something he or she did or said?
- Taking a math test?
- Snakes?
- Walking into a room where you don't know anyone?
- Walking in the woods alone at night?
- Walking into a meeting of all adults?
- Spending a day alone?

- Introducing yourself to someone new?

Invite participants to ask their own questions.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Were you surprised by where you placed yourself relative to others? When?
- Some people want a lot of encouragement to step out of their comfort zone. Others find this sort of encouragement uncomfortable—it feels like pressure. What is your preference?
- How can we all support one another to step out of our comfort zones? (Write these ideas down and refer to them during the Full Value Commitment activity later in the module.)

### **Adaptations**

- Be sure to use masking tape or other relatively flat material to create the circle so that people in wheelchairs can easily move between circles.
- Allow enough space for individuals to move easily.
- Be certain that everyone clearly understands the directions; use interpreters, readers, or other accommodations if necessary.

### **OBJECTIVE 3:** *Participants will mutually agree on basic group ground rules by means of the Full Value Commitment.*

Participants develop the norms for their group during the Full Value Commitment (FVC) activity. It is helpful to provide them with an engaging problem-solving initiative before beginning the FVC, which they can reflect upon as they identify what will make them successful as a group. The Warp Speed activity is offered as one such alternative. Other initiatives that are relatively low risk and have a high success probability are also appropriate here.

### **ACTIVITY 1: WARP SPEED**

*(Adapted from Project Adventure activity)*

**Materials:** Soft object such as a Nerf ball; stopwatch

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Tell participants that their challenge is to have the given object pass through (which means touch) both hands of each participant in the shortest time possible. More than one participant is not allowed to touch the ball at the same time. Ask them to guess how long they think it will take. The

facilitators will be timers. Make sure someone in the group is responsible for telling you when to start and stop the stopwatch.

**Facilitator Note:** Let the group go through multiple trials, hopefully trying increasingly more successful strategies each time. Generally the most efficient way to complete this task is to use gravity, such as creating a funnel of hands through which the object falls. You might consider writing down participant comments about what made a strategy successful on newsprint to be referred to in the FVC activity.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- Were you successful with the problem-solving task? What contributed to your success?
- What qualities did you have to draw on as individuals and as a group, which together allowed you to be able to do this task? (i.e. patience, persistence, etc.)
- Any ideas about what you might do differently on the next problem-solving activity to make you even more successful?

### Adaptation

Be certain that everyone can fully participate in the passing of the object. If not, use another method such as trying to get a slinky to move down a series of objects. In this way, everyone can participate by offering suggestions to only one individual that maneuvers it.

## ACTIVITY 2: THE FULL VALUE COMMITMENT

*(Adapted from Project Adventure, Exploring Islands of Healing, J. Schoel and R. Maizell, p. 41)*

**Materials:** A large sheet of paper (approximately 3 by 7 feet); assortment of washable colored markers; other art materials (Note: The number of options you provide depends on the amount of time you have to devote to this aspect of the FVC. The more varied the materials, the longer the amount of time—and possibly the greater the group involvement and ownership.)

**Time Commitment:** 80 minutes; it can be completed over multiple sessions.

The Full Value Commitment (FVC) is an activity that helps participants establish clear guidelines for the way they will treat one another and create a group identity. It first requires reaching consensus around a common visual image for the group. This process introduces the group to the challenge and benefits of working together and establishes a safe, respectful, and trusting learning environment. This activity is helpful for all members

and critical for individuals who have not had positive group experiences within family, peer, or school settings. Observing how and what participants contribute to this activity gives facilitators important insight into the dynamics of the group. If you have a larger group or particularly quiet members, split into small groups during brainstorm sessions of this activity to make sure everyone is heard.

The Full Value Commitment provides a foundation for participant ownership of the course experience. (See Full Value Commitment sample in the appendix of this module.) Underlying messages in the process of developing the FVC are:

- You know what you want and have a right to ask for it.
- You are capable of creating your own learning environment and do not need rules and regulations provided by others.
- You are creative.
- Diversity makes for a richer experience.
- Compromise will be needed for everyone to feel satisfied.
- The facilitators trust the participants' voices and visions.

A large sheet of paper (approximately 3 by 7 feet) is placed on the floor or table and participants circle around it. The Full Value Commitment activity is facilitated as follows:

**Step 1. Deciding on the Image** (20 minutes). Participants are asked to identify a visual image, somewhat like a mascot or a logo, which in some meaningful way represents their *Our Voices: Our Community* class. First exploring qualities of their school mascot or a popular logo helps ground this somewhat abstract task.

Participants first brainstorm the qualities they hope will define this class experience and make them satisfied and proud to have been a part of it (e.g., creativity, risk-taking, teamwork, etc.). From this list, they can then suggest visual images that fit these qualities. Their task is to reach consensus on this image and then to transfer it to the large piece of paper.

It can be helpful to link this activity to the participants' own personal lives early on. You can prompt participants to think of a personal experience with a group (drama, sports team, peer group) that has been particularly positive. Ask them, "What could you count on from each other which made this time together so good? What qualities of how you treated one another or attributes of the experience made you look forward to your time together?" Make sure these qualities are written down and shared.

This is always an interesting and often challenging process, where the divergent ideas of a new group must be melded into one ultimate decision. It is not uncommon for multiple ideas to be creatively incor-

porated into one visual image to minimize compromise. It is important to let the group struggle with the form of the image, but assure that they do not become stuck or polarized. The facilitator is the timekeeper for this activity and has the sometimes hard task of keeping decision-making moving.

**Step 2. *Creating the Image*** (20 minutes). Decide who or how many participants will create this image on the large piece of paper. Ideally, everyone has some role in the artwork. Reinforce that the quality of the art product is not what is important—just getting the concept down on paper is what matters. Two simpler and less time-intensive alternatives (10–15 minutes) are:

1. **Circle of Hands:** Have all participants create an unbroken circle with their hands, tracing around their own fingers and those of their neighbors. Ask that some space be left on the outside of the circle.
2. **The Being:** Have one person lie down and trace around his or her body. Alternately, let each group member “contribute” one part of their body which, when put together with everyone else’s body parts, represents the group.

### **Adaptation**

Use clay to fashion the logo instead of paper and markers. Offer participants the option to write a rap, song, poem, or commercial for the group.

**Step 3. *Positive Group Qualities Identified*** (30–40 minutes). The group is then asked to fill the middle of the image with words describing the positive qualities that will be valued and upheld by this group. The facilitator might say, “We will all be challenged in this class to take risks and to solve difficult problems together. What do you need from each other to allow you to be successful in doing this? When you wake up in the morning, what do you want to know about the way this group works that will make you feel safe and want to be part of this group?” Have the class refer back to the list of qualities developed when they were creating their visual image.

One person offers an idea (i.e., teamwork, caring, positive attitude) and asks group members if they have any questions. Tell participants, “Often words mean different things to different people. In this case we all want to be clear about the meaning of any word that is offered because when we are finished, we are agreeing to live by these words.” When all questions have been answered, the person asks if everyone agrees. *Unless consensus is reached, the word(s) cannot be recorded on the FVC.* When there is an agreement about an attribute, the per-

son who suggested it writes the word in the middle of the image. It can be helpful to establish thumbs up (agree), thumbs to the side (I still have questions), or thumbs down (I don't think this word belongs in the FVC) as an efficient way for the person offering the idea to check the group for agreement.

The group will typically identify many of the following: trust, support, mutual respect, good communication, honesty, humor, healthy conflict resolution, honoring differences, caring, taking risks, constructive feedback, courage, teamwork, cooperation, good listening, patience, fun. Facilitators should ask for clarification on any ambiguous or ill-defined words. For example, one might ask, "What does *respect* mean? What does it look like?" The facilitator should help the individual who offered a word reach consensus on whether or not it belongs on the FVC and help to draw out quiet participants.

There are three words that facilitators should identify and explore if not already offered by participants: *participation*, *confidentiality*, and *safety* (physical and emotional). Facilitators should ask about the desired minimum level of participation. "Is it OK to be late or come and not engage in an activity or disrupt an activity? Why might a commitment to participation be important?" The facilitators should also always identify confidentiality as a group issue. It is important that group confidentiality be defined minimally as never recounting a personal incident of any other participant to anyone outside the group. General information about what happened can certainly be discussed, but this cannot include person-specific stories. Finally, the facilitator and the group must be responsible for each other's physical and emotional safety. *Safety* can be offered for discussion, with these two components hopefully being brought up by the group. Part of safety from the facilitator's perspective will come from participants listening to and following safety directions.

**Step 4. Negative Group Qualities Identified** (10–15 minutes). The next step is to identify all those negative group qualities that would assure a bad experience in the group. The facilitator can prompt, "When you wake up in the morning, what negative qualities of this group would make you want to crawl back into bed rather than look forward to coming?" You can ask them to remember a negative group experience they have had in the past and list those things that made it so miserable.

The same process for offering individual ideas and reaching consensus before recording the trait is followed. Often energy is getting low at this point and the facilitator may offer to write down what is suggested unless someone voices a question or concern about it. Frequently offered negative qualities are: cliques, dishonesty, put-downs or negative criticism, rigidity, sarcasm, selfishness, physical aggression, apathy, unwillingness to make mistakes, uncooperativeness, and competition. It can be helpful to clarify that negative put-downs include criticizing

others or putting yourself down (verbally or through our own internal messages).

**Step 5. *The Signing*** (3 minutes). The final step is to have all participants sign this commitment. Their signature signifies their intent to uphold the FVC vision by aligning their personal actions with the commitment to the best of their abilities. Facilitators should also sign.

Clarify that the FVC is a vision or a destination in a journey. No individual or group has ever been able to fully “live inside” a FVC for extended lengths of time. It is a learning process. Mistakes are an important part of making the FVC real and growing as individuals and as a group.

Reinforce that participants are guardians of this vision and responsible for making it happen. This work is a leadership act.

**Step 6. *Walking the Talk*** (throughout the course). Bring the Full Value Commitment to each class. When appropriate, it can serve as a powerful tool for reflection. Some ideas:

- Have each individual identify one goal regarding the FVC quality that will be most personally challenging. Have him write this goal on the commitment. Suggest that the individual can ask the group for help reaching this goal if help is wanted. Later, have the individual create a realistic plan to reach this goal and check-in regularly on progress.
- Use the FVC as a reflective tool, always starting with strengths: “What do you think you are doing really well as a group? As an individual? Only after this should you go to areas they might identify that they want to improve. If it is only referred to during dysfunctional times, the class will quickly grow to resent it.
- Keep the FVC alive: add to it, clarify it, make it a living document. One strategy that works well is to put the individual attributes on separate pieces of paper and have each participant draw one FVC quality. Each student becomes either a detective (looking for examples of when this is happening) or a guardian (calls the participants back when they are straying from their assigned quality).
- Transfer your FVC to T-shirts for the class.
- Have participants keep journals about their personal strengths and challenges, which have been noted in the FVC. Ask them to reflect on what might be missing in the FVC and add it to the document if class agreement is reached.
- Offer participants the option to write a song, poem, or commercial summarizing their FVC.



**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like for you to do this activity?
- What did you like about it? Why?
- Were there difficult parts in completing the FVC? What made them difficult?
- Have you ever been in a group that actually lived the inside qualities most of the time? What did it feel like to be part of that group?
- Have you ever been in a group that mostly lived outside your vision in the negative qualities? What did it feel like to be part of that group?
- How can we use the FVC as a class as we move on?

**Facilitator Note:** Creating a visual image takes a long time but is usually worth the effort. If you have only limited time, using the “Circle of Hands” or “Being” option works well. If time is extremely limited, simply solicit ideas of what individuals do and do not want as part of their experience, record these on newsprint, and have them sign this document signifying their commitment to support this vision.

**OBJECTIVE 4:** *Participants will understand the basic elements of goal-setting.*

*If you do not know where you are going,  
Every road will get you nowhere.*

—Henry Kissinger

**Facilitator Note:** Goal-setting is an essential life skill that will anchor personal growth and leadership skill-building. It is the bridge between good intent and action. SMART goal-setting is a simple yet useful way to develop goals that set people up for success.

**ACTIVITY 1: SMART GOAL-SETTING**

**Materials:** “SMART Your Goals ” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Ask participants why they think goal-setting might be useful in this course and in their lives. Share with them the “SMART Your Goals” overview. Have participants split up into five groups. Ask each group to take one of the five attributes of a SMART goal and talk about why this particular attribute is important for attaining a goal (5 minutes). Each

group then presents its case for the importance of its attribute to the whole group.

**Step 2.** Review the SMART goal example found in the Appendix.

**Step 3.** Refer back to the FVC. Study the words on both the inside and outside. Identify one aspect of the commitment which you know is an area you want to work on. Write a goal for that area that meets the SMART criteria. Have participants share this goal if they feel comfortable. It is an opportunity to ask others for help getting what you want or may simply inform them of something which is important to you that you are addressing as an individual. If individuals don't want to share it with the group, reinforce that it is important for them to share it with someone.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What has been your past experience in setting goals?
- When have you been most successful in reaching a goal?
- What barriers have you typically run into reaching a goal?
- How comfortable are you asking others for help with goals?

# **Appendix**

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**GETTING TO KNOW YOU INTERVIEW FORM**

**Name of person interviewed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hometown:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hobbies:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Favorite (or dream) vacation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Best accomplishments**

**Family:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal** \_\_\_\_\_

**Childhood:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School/work:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Most memorable moments**

**Family** \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Childhood:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School/work:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Favorite colors:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Favorite holiday:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Favorite foods:** \_\_\_\_\_

## HUMAN ASSET BINGO

Has peacefully resolved a conflict in the past month. <i>Which one?</i>	Has the same color eyes as you have.	Has been involved in reducing local or world hunger in some way. <i>How?</i>	Licks an ice cream cone in the same direction you do.	Born in the same month you were.	Plays a musical instrument. <i>Which one?</i>
When you draw a circle in the air with your finger, this person goes in the same direction you do.	Is actively involved in a community, committee, group, or organization. <i>Which one?</i>	Can speak a foreign language. <i>Which one?</i>	Has stood up for a belief even though it was hard. <i>What was it?</i>	Uses the same foot you do when you tap your foot to music.	Has helped his or her neighbor sometime in the past month. <i>What did you do?</i>
Gives a spontaneous wink with the same eye you use.	Has given a comment in the last two days to someone from a different generation. <i>Who?</i>	Has the same number of siblings you do.	Has been an advocate for equality. <i>When?</i>	Has a climbed a mountain over 5,000 feet.	Has traveled outside the United States. <i>Where?</i>
Reads three or more hours a week. <i>What type of book? (fiction, non-fiction, etc.)</i>	Has the same shoe size you do.	When you put your pants on, this person puts the same leg on first that you do.	Cares about his or her school and community. <i>Give an example.</i>	Can roll his or her tongue. <i>Demonstration required.</i>	Is actively engaged in learning something. <i>What?</i>
Has established a record (not jail related). <i>What was it?</i>	Has helped someone else in the past month. <i>What did you do?</i>	Knows someone famous. <i>Who?</i>	Turns a twisty in the same direction you do when you close a plastic bag.	Values people of different ages. <i>Give an example.</i>	Has been elected to a political position in the school or community. <i>Doing what?</i>
Has been a positive role model for peers. <i>In what way?</i>	Pronounces tomato the same way you do.	Is physically active. <i>Doing what?</i>	Has been on TV, radio, or in the news. <i>Why?</i>	Has a unique skill or talent. <i>What?</i>	Is actively involved in school decision making. <i>How?</i>

## **MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES OVERVIEW**

### **Linguistic Intelligence or “Word Smart”**

The ability to use language with ease. Often individuals with this intelligence like to tell stories, enjoy word games, have a good vocabulary, and enjoy communicating by talking or writing.

### **Logical-Mathematical Intelligence or “Logic Smart”**

The ability to think things through logically and reason well. Often individuals with this intelligence like to do math, enjoy puzzles or brain teasers, are good at categorizing things and finding patterns, and are curious about what makes things work.

### **Spatial Intelligence or “Picture Smart”**

The ability to accurately see the shapes and forms around us either in the outside world (i.e., hunter, guide) or in more abstract ways (i.e., architects, artists). Often individuals with this intelligence like to draw, like maps and jigsaw puzzles, and can clearly see a picture in their heads when they close their eyes.

### **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence or “Body Smart”**

The ability to use the body in athletics or other hands-on activities. Often individuals with this intelligence like to play sports or enjoy working with their hands on craft projects or just taking things apart and putting them back together. They often enjoy touching or holding things, may tend to always be fidgeting with something in their hands, and enjoy movement of many kinds.

### **Musical Intelligence or “Music Smart”**

The ability to understand and often produce music. Often individuals with this intelligence like to listen to music or play a musical instrument. They are particularly aware of noises and rhythms.

### **Interpersonal Intelligence or “People Smart”**

The ability to get along with others. Often individuals with this intelligence like to socialize and can read peoples nonverbal cues well. They are able to see others’ points of view and are good listeners.

### **Intrapersonal Intelligence or “Self Smart”**

The ability to know yourself and what you stand for and value. Often individuals with this intelligence set goals and pursue them, feel comfortable and confident with who they are, and stand up for what they believe.

### **Naturalist Intelligence or “Nature Smart”**

The ability to understand and feel comfortable in the natural world. Often individuals with this intelligence enjoy outside hobbies (i.e., fishing, collecting things from nature, tracking) and are fascinated by nature.

## MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES CHECKLIST

Directions: Check the statements that describe you, adding up the totals for each category.

### Linguistic Intelligence (Word Smart)

- ☐ I write well and enjoy putting thoughts on paper (or in the computer).
- ☐ I enjoy telling stories and jokes.
- ☐ I can remember names, places, dates, or trivia.
- ☐ I enjoy word games.
- ☐ I enjoy reading books and magazines.
- ☐ I am a good speller.
- ☐ I enjoy nonsense rhymes, limericks, puns, etc.
- ☐ I enjoy listening to the spoken word.
- ☐ I have a good vocabulary.
- ☐ I enjoy communicating.
- ☐ TOTAL

### Logical-Mathematical Intelligence (Logic Smart)

- ☐ I ask questions about how things work.
- ☐ I can do arithmetic problems in my head.
- ☐ I enjoy math classes.
- ☐ I enjoy math games, such as computer math games.
- ☐ I enjoy chess, checkers, or other strategy games.
- ☐ I enjoy logic puzzles or brain teasers.
- ☐ I like to put things in categories or hierarchies.
- ☐ I like to use a variety of thinking skills to figure things out.
- ☐ I am good at thinking on an abstract or conceptual level.
- ☐ I clearly see cause-effect relationships.
- ☐ TOTAL

### Spatial Intelligence (Picture Smart)

- ☐ I can visualize things clearly in my mind.
- ☐ I like maps, charts, and diagrams better than words.
- ☐ I often daydream.
- ☐ I enjoy artistic activities.
- ☐ I am good at drawing things.
- ☐ I like movies, pictures, and other visual presentations.

- ☐ I enjoy mazes, jigsaw puzzles, and Rubik's Cubes.
- ☐ I can manipulate three-dimensional drawings in my head.
- ☐ I frequently doodle or sketch.
- ☐ I enjoy creating designs on paper or by computer.
- ☐ TOTAL

**Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence (Body Smart)**

- ☐ I am good at sports.
- ☐ I fidget when asked to sit for very long.
- ☐ I am good at mimicking others' gestures.
- ☐ I like taking things apart and putting them back together.
- ☐ I like touching or holding objects and moving them around.
- ☐ I enjoy being on the go: running, jumping, moving, wrestling.
- ☐ I like working with my hands: sewing, repairing, making things.
- ☐ I use many gestures when expressing myself.
- ☐ I experience different physical sensations when thinking or working.
- ☐ I enjoy expressing myself through movement, such as dance.
- ☐ TOTAL

**Musical Intelligence (Music Smart)**

- ☐ I can distinguish among different sounds or tones.
- ☐ I remember melodies easily.
- ☐ I can carry a tune.
- ☐ I can play a musical instrument.
- ☐ I often hum or sing to myself.
- ☐ I am sensitive to noises, such as rain, traffic.
- ☐ I like doing things in a rhythmic way.
- ☐ I can hear music in my head.
- ☐ I enjoy reading music.
- ☐ I can keep time to a variety of music.
- ☐ TOTAL

**Interpersonal Intelligence (People Smart)**

- ☐ I enjoy socializing.
- ☐ I am a natural leader.
- ☐ I am a good listener when friends have problems.
- ☐ I make a friends easily.
- ☐ I enjoy clubs, committees, and organizations.
- ☐ I like teaching things to others.



- \_\_\_ I have many good friends and close acquaintances.
- \_\_\_ I am good at seeing another person's point of view.
- \_\_\_ I enjoy talking to groups.
- \_\_\_ I enjoy exchanging ideas with others.
- \_\_\_ TOTAL

**Intrapersonal Intelligence (Self Smart)**

- \_\_\_ I know how to set goals and reach them.
- \_\_\_ I clearly know my strengths and weaknesses.
- \_\_\_ I am comfortable with myself and enjoy my own company.
- \_\_\_ I feel good about who I am and what I stand for.
- \_\_\_ I would be described as someone who "has their act together."
- \_\_\_ I stand up for what I believe, regardless of what others think.
- \_\_\_ I am continually learning from my successes and failures.
- \_\_\_ I am not much concerned about fads, fashion, or what is "in."
- \_\_\_ I am always honest and up front about how I am feeling.
- \_\_\_ I almost never feel bored or down.
- \_\_\_ TOTAL

**Naturalist Intelligence (Nature Smart)**

- \_\_\_ I am good at noticing and classifying plants, animals, rock formations, and other natural phenomena.
- \_\_\_ I would describe myself as having a green thumb.
- \_\_\_ I enjoy collecting and studying items from nature.
- \_\_\_ I have a way with animals.
- \_\_\_ I learn more from the great outdoors than I do from a classroom.
- \_\_\_ I can name many different types of plants and animals.
- \_\_\_ I have always been interested and fascinated by nature.
- \_\_\_ I watch many nature programs on TV.
- \_\_\_ I can detect subtleties in appearance and texture.
- \_\_\_ I view a walk in the woods or through the neighborhood as a great learning experience.
- \_\_\_ TOTAL

This checklist is adapted from one developed by Thomas Armstrong, which appears in *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, a 1994 publication of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia.

## MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES CHECKLIST SUMMARY

Total Scores	
<b>Linguistic Intelligence</b> <b>Word Smart</b>	_____
<b>Logical-Mathematical Intelligence</b> <b>Logic Smart</b>	_____
<b>Spatial Intelligence</b> <b>Picture Smart</b>	_____
<b>Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence</b> <b>Body Smart</b>	_____
<b>Musical Intelligence</b> <b>Music Smart</b>	_____
<b>Interpersonal Intelligence</b> <b>People Smart</b>	_____
<b>Intrapersonal Intelligence</b> <b>Self Smart</b>	_____
<b>Naturalist Intelligence</b> <b>Nature Smart</b>	_____

**Note your two strongest or dominant intelligences (highest scores):**

**1.**

**2.**

**Note your two weakest intelligences (lowest scores):**

**1.**

**2.**

**FOUNDING BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING**

- Learning should be personally relevant and engaging.
- People learn best through experience, discovery, and reflection.
- We learn from one another; facilitators and participants share opportunities to exchange thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
- Instructional methods must be varied to meet many different learning styles.
- A positive learning environment is best fostered through cooperation versus competition.
- Taking risks is an important ingredient for true learning to take place.
- Trust, safety, and mutual respect are key to taking risks in learning.
- Learning makes you think and is fun.
- Every person deserves to be known and heard.
- Learning is empowering and builds confidence.

## MODULE OVERVIEW

### **Who Are We? Where are We Going? Getting Going Together!**

*Our Voices: Our Community* requires ongoing risk-taking throughout the process of personal growth and leadership skill development. It is essential to feel safe and supported and to trust the group members. This module provides time for participants to get to know one another, to create ground rules that will guide each member's behavior, and to begin to form a group identity. Activities encourage participants' commitment to the group and enhance their sense of safety so that they can venture beyond their ordinary "comfort zone." An overview of the course and clarity about founding beliefs and expectations help to create a solid frame for the experience. The important capacity to set reachable goals is introduced.

### **Exploration of Leaders and Leadership**

Our definitions of leadership are varied and sometimes contradictory. Each person comes to this program with a belief system about what leadership is and is not, although he or she may never have been asked to articulate these thoughts. Through an examination of these belief systems and ethical issues that confront leaders, individuals can begin to shape a deeper understanding of the complexity of leadership and their relationship to this elusive concept. This module provides an opportunity to explore and discuss the Founding Beliefs About Leadership, upon which this curriculum was developed. It also draws on each participant's experience and aspirations to explore the complexity of leadership into his or her own lives.

### **Decision Making**

We make many decisions for ourselves every day. When we are part of a group sorting out an issue, we have more than our own needs and interests to consider. Whether we are making a personal decision or are part of a group decision process, there are helpful steps that can guide us as we grapple with complex issues or goals. This module will explore those helpful steps. By exploring the pros and cons of each decision-making model presented in this module, participants can better understand the usefulness of any one approach and analyze if the decision-making models used in their family, peer groups, community groups, etc. are a good match with the goals of these groups. Participants will develop decision-making skills, identifying ways to facilitate effective decision-making in their own lives and in the life of their community.

## **The Project**

Significant and enduring learning occurs when individuals have an opportunity to test and develop their skills and knowledge in meaningful ways. This module leads participants through the steps necessary to identify and address a personal goal, a desired leadership skill, or a larger change effort that has personal relevance. The project is about making choices, planning ahead, taking action, and celebrating learning and doing.

## **Communication**

Effective communication is the foundation of positive relationships; positive relationships lie at the heart of successful leadership. Communication skills enable individuals to work with each other to shape and articulate a goal, organize and implement a plan, and reach a desired outcome. Effective communication sustains friendships and the many other relationships that enrich our lives. Communication involves the art of listening to what is said and noticing what is not said. It involves asking open-ended questions to seek understanding and accurately summarizing what is heard. This often requires setting personal agendas aside and being open to opposing views.

Communication also involves effectively speaking, whether in conversation, providing feedback, or in a formal presentation. This module builds basic communication skills and lays a foundation for conflict resolution strategies.

## **Conflict Resolution**

Conflict is inevitable and essential if you are committed to growth and change. Dealing with conflict enables people to learn about themselves and others. The challenge of leadership is to mediate conflict and to determine a resolution that opens up new possibilities. Constructively resolving conflict requires developing a common understanding of the issues and helping those involved to move forward by working together to resolve their differences. Conflict is a healthy and necessary part of life when it allows hidden feelings and needs to surface and be addressed. The skills explored in this module are valuable tools for each of us in our own lives—in our personal relationships and in our leadership roles.

**Team Building**

The team-building module explores ways individuals can build and sustain collaboration in group settings. Research has confirmed that the most important attribute of people who work in groups is the quality of their interpersonal relationships. This module explores different roles within a group, the role one typically plays in a group setting, and the stages of group development.

**Embracing Diversity**

Exploring diversity helps us to value and promote equity, fairness, and justice in our leadership efforts. Discriminatory social messages surround us. This inevitably leads to stereotyping and prejudice and can spark harassment, bullying, and violence. This module helps participants identify their own biases and how they affect actions and decisions in their lives. Only by naming these internal messages can they be changed, thus stopping the harm often unintentionally perpetuated by these biases.

**Systems and Change**

We live in a world of complex systems—families, peer groups, and educational, political, religious, economic, and social institutions. This module provides several ways to make sense of complex systems and explores how effective growth or change can be brought about. Understanding how individuals and groups react to change helps to anticipate resistance and nurture support for new ideas.

## SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW

### OUR VOICES: OUR COMMUNITY

#### *Facilitators:*

Sally Smith  
5 Alley Lane  
Greensboro, VT  
533-6600  
smithy13@nvista.com

Graham White  
7 Bowling Green  
Morrisville, VT  
888-5948  
grahamw@nvista.com

### What is the class all about?

Let's face it, being a teenager today can be tough. There are a million and one things we can do in our own life, let alone in our community and in the rest of the world. Sometimes we just don't have the time or resources to focus on what we wish we could change in ourselves or the world around us. Maybe you wish you were more confident with others or yourself. Maybe you wish you could change unfair policies or rules at school, home, or work. Maybe you wish you could make a lasting impact on your community or on someone you know. This class will:

- give you a chance to build leadership skills that help you do whatever is important to you;
- build confidence and self-awareness, because you have to understand yourself, before you "conquer the world";
- help you find support within your community and elsewhere to make your dreams come true;
- strengthen your voice and build something solid to stand on to make changes in your life; and
- be a place to make new friends.

You will learn about your strengths and those of your community, identify something specific thing you want to change, and then change it. The skills you learn in this course will help you be successful in this effort and confident that you can continue to make a difference.

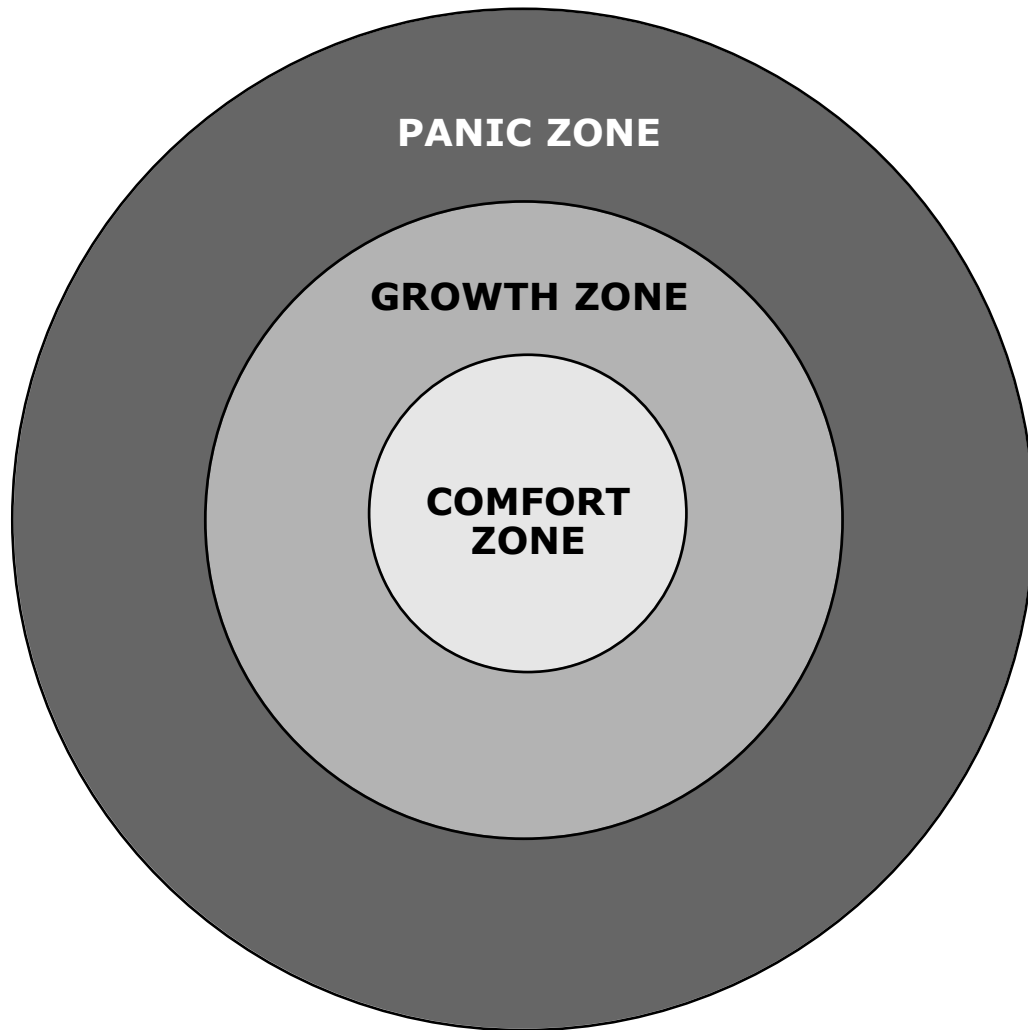
**Time Commitment:** We will be meeting every Wednesday night from 5:30–8:00 at the town hall for 10 weeks in a row. Pizza will be provided! It is really important that people attend all the sessions. We will be doing many activities as a full group and the absence of any one member is a loss for everyone. Please call one of the facilitators in advance of the session if you know you will not be able to make it to a class.

**What will be expected of you in this course?**

- Be willing to take risks and challenge yourself.
- Set your own goals and figure out ways to reach them.
- Help others problem-solve.
- Speak your mind.
- Do a project that is meaningful to you.
- Share project challenges and successes on a regular basis.
- Participate in discussions, activities, and assignments.
- Be a valued team member.
- Attend all sessions.
- Keep a journal throughout the experience.



## COMFORT ZONE AND BEYOND



## SMART YOUR GOALS

- Specific:** Decide exactly what it is you want to accomplish, learn, or do. Be very specific about what you want to achieve.
- Measurable:** How will you know when you've accomplished your goal? Figure out a way to measure your success.
- Attainable:** Set yourself up for success. Reach high but not so high that the goal is out of reach.
- Relevant:** Make sure the goal is personally meaningful.
- Timed:** Set a deadline and stick to it!

Once you have defined a SMART goal, check in regularly and see how you are doing. If the goal isn't helping you accomplish what you want to accomplish, consider changing it. If it is helping you be successful, learn from what is working for you in this situation. This can help you with new goals.

## EXAMPLE OF SMART GOAL

**Un-SMART Goal:** *I will do more to help others who are in need.*

**SMART Goal:** *I will become involved in efforts to address local hunger by volunteering for the local food bank once a week starting the beginning of next month.*

**Specific:** You are very clear how you want to help others both relative to the issue of hunger and the place in your community that addresses this need.

**Measurable:** Simple to measure: Have you volunteered for the local food bank? Are you there at least once a week? Did you set it up this month so you will be volunteering at the food bank by the beginning of next month?

**Attainable:** You believe that once a week is reasonable given all the other things in your life. You know they need help as you have seen ads asking for volunteers. Even though they might ask you for more time, you will be clear that once a week is all you can do.

**Relevant:** Helping with food distribution will contribute to reducing local hunger while addressing an issue you have always cared about.

**Timed:** You have set a clear time line for your goal.



# Exploration of Leaders and Leadership

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# Exploration of Leaders and Leadership

*There go the people. I must follow them  
for I am their leader.*

—Gandhi

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## **Goal**

Participants will examine their definitions of leadership, explore their own beliefs, and identify their inherent leadership ability.

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## **Rationale**

Our definitions of leadership are varied and sometimes contradictory. Each person comes to this program with beliefs about what leadership is and is not, although they may never have been asked to articulate these thoughts. Through an examination of these beliefs and ethical issues which confront leaders, individuals can begin to shape a deeper understanding of the complexity of leadership and their relationship to this elusive concept.

This module provides an opportunity to explore and discuss the Founding Beliefs About Leadership (see page 86) upon which this curriculum was developed. It also draws on each participant's experience and aspirations to explore the complexity of leadership into their own lives.

The Circle of Leadership model is used to help understand leadership (see pages 13–14). The idea that we are all leaders of our lives is defined as the first Circle of Leadership: leadership of the self. This responsibility to act as leaders in our own lives is central to this curriculum. The second Circle of Leadership requires that we engage in the life of our community and make a contribution. *Our Voices: Our Community* culminates in a project of this nature. The third and final Circle of Leadership calls on us to embrace the world as our community and challenges us to act in a manner that affects people beyond the boundaries of our own home.

## **Objectives Summary**

Participants will:

1. *examine their own beliefs regarding leadership, identifying essential qualities and attributes of a leader;*
2. *conduct a personal leadership inventory to assess their own strengths and needs as leader;*
3. *develop their capacity as leaders to integrate core values and beliefs into ethically challenging situations; and*
4. *explore a personal, community and world history of leaders and leadership.*

**OBJECTIVE 1:** *Participants will examine their own belief systems regarding leadership, identifying essential qualities and attributes of a leader.*

**Facilitator Note:** Activities 1 and 2 are intended to reveal traditional definitions of leadership, identify alternative definitions of leadership, and reinforce the notion of flexibility in our thinking about leadership: there is no one definition of leadership that is right all the time.

### **ACTIVITY 1: THE LEADERSHIP SIMILE ACTIVITY**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; masking tape

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Create four large-size pictures (stick figures work fine) of (1) a V formation of Canada geese entitled “lead goose”; (2) a chameleon; (3) a worker ant; (4) a queen bee. Title each picture with the names noted above and post on the wall. Alternately, think of other images that embody different leadership models.

**Step 2.** Hang the four (or more) pictures up around the room with as much space as possible between them.

**Step 3.** Instruct participants that their task is to decide which picture best completes the following sentences and to go to that picture.

1. Being a student/young person is like being \_\_\_\_\_
2. Leadership is like being \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4.** Participants will then talk among their peers and identify all the ways that this picture fits for them. They will report to the others in one to two minutes, trying to convince others that their perspective is a valid one.

**Step 5.** Encourage individuals to make up another simile if they do not feel that the four are sufficient.

**Step 6.** Allow eight minutes for groups to organize their thoughts and approximately two minutes for each to report (approximately fifteen minutes for each of the following questions).

#### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What did you think about this activity?
- Did anything about it surprise you?
- Are there any other images you can think of that are a better fit for leadership?
- Which image of leadership do you think fits for most people? Why?



**Facilitator Note:** This activity is a safe one to use because it does not require participants to reveal a great deal about themselves. It is also an effective way to get participants moving, talking with one another and interacting with people they may not know.

### **Adaptation**

If there is someone with visual impairments in the group, consider building clay figures rather than drawing pictures.

## **ACTIVITY 2: LEADERSHIP AS AN ART FORM**

**Materials:** "Circles of Leadership" handout (see Introduction, page 14)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Introduce the "Circles of Leadership."

**Step 2.** Choose one of the following options. These options allow participants to explore the "Circle of Leadership" through a variety of artistic representations.

### **Option 1: Skits**

Split the class into two groups. Give each group fifteen minutes to develop a skit. One group will portray an example of what leadership looks like in its purest form. The second group will portray an example of poor leadership.

As facilitators you may need to act as drama coaches to give the participants suggestions about roles and situations that would inspire their acting.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

1. What themes emerged about effective and ineffective leadership?
2. What does it feel like to be in a group that is poorly lead? Well lead?

### **Option 2: Mixed Media**

**Materials:** Oak tag; colored paper; markers; paint; pipe cleaners; tissue paper; paper cups/plates; wire; tape; clay

Participants are instructed to create a picture, sculpture or some other artistic representation of either good or bad leadership. Have the participants present their creations to the class by describing what they have made and how it represents leadership.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

1. What was unique about approaching the topic of leadership through an artistic medium?
2. Does your experience with artistic expressions influence your thinking about leadership?

**Facilitator Note:** Incorporating artistic expression can be fun, although it is often challenging for participants to get started. You may need to encourage, give suggestions, and get involved by acting in a skit or making your own piece of art. Getting directly involved in these ways demonstrates your willingness to take risks and learn alongside of the participants.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** *Participants will develop and conduct a personal leadership assessment to identify their own strengths and needs as leaders.*

**ACTIVITY 1: VISION ACTIVITY: LEADER ATTRIBUTES**

**Materials:** Paper; pens; newsprint paper; markers; masking tape

**Time Commitment:** 25 minutes

Begin by pointing out that every person has leadership qualities or abilities. Every person also has areas where he or she needs or wants to improve skills and character.

**Step 1.** Have participants write at least one paragraph about “The Best Leader I Have Ever Known.” Include examples of character (honest, talkative, understanding), attitude (curious, excited, caring), and any other characteristics that will illustrate their choice (5 to 7 minutes).

**Step 2.** Share stories.

**Step 3.** Ask three volunteer participants to act as recorders and write down on pieces of newsprint hung on the wall what is noted in the stories for “character,” “attitude,” and “other characteristics” (each taking one of the three categories). Discuss the master list that develops after all descriptions are read.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Does everyone agree with these descriptions of a leader?
- Are there any missing qualities?
- What do you think is the one most important attribute?

**Facilitator Note:** This activity gives you the opportunity to draw out a personal story from every participant in the process of developing the master list. If you have time constraints, you will need to decide how much additional detail to ask for.

### **Adaptation**

If writing is difficult, simply allow the group members to take turns creating their own story of a leader—each member adding to the story of the preceding member.

## **ACTIVITY 2: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION**

**Materials:** Paper; pens

**Time Commitment:** 10–15 minutes

Return to the lists of characteristics and attitudes generated in the Vision Activity (Activity 1). Ask participants to relate these characteristics to themselves. Which characteristics and attitudes are existing strengths and which ones do they want to work on? Ask participants to write down their reflections. You can make this activity quiet and intrapersonal by limiting it to a private writing exercise, or interactive and interpersonal by adding partner sharing to the private writing.

## **ACTIVITY 3: INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT**

**Materials:** newsprint paper; markers; masking tape

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Ask the group why it might be important for us as leaders to be aware of our strengths and weaknesses.

Explain to the group that they are going to conduct a personal and group leadership assessment with the following activity.

Set up three stations in the room with the following titles: "Strength," "Average," and "Needs Improvement."

Return to the positive attributes or qualities generated in the "Vision" activity. Read aloud as many qualities and attributes as you have time for, focusing on one at a time. Instruct all participants to move to the station that represents their self-assessment. Draw their attention to the grouping and patterns that emerge.

### **Process Questions**

- What was it like to identify your own strengths in front of your peers?

- What was it like to identify areas needing improvement in front of your peers?
- What else did you learn/gain from this activity, and where in your life could you apply that learning?

**Facilitator Note:** By introducing a group dynamic into this reflective exercise, there is a greater risk of revealing one's weakness. Recognizing this dimension of the activity, you can use it to look at and talk about how the group is working together, how each participant is contributing, and how you can build on each other's strengths.

#### **ACTIVITY 4: WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT ME**

(From Search Institute *"Building Assets Together,"* J. Roehlkepartain, 1997, p. 121)

**Materials:** "What's Great About Me" handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Have each participant tape the "What's Great About Me" sheet on his or her back. Have participants then mingle and circle those one to three words on each person's back that they think are descriptive of the person wearing the sheet. Make sure that everyone is getting "visited." Reinforce that positive feedback about what a person brings to the group is a gift and ask participants to be serious in their feedback. When you have stopped the mingling, form a circle and have participants recount one attribute that was circled that stands out for them for any reason.

**Facilitator Note:** This is an engaging and fun activity that gets participants moving, interacting with one another, and focusing on the positive qualities of each person.

#### **Adaptations**

- Allow individuals to write additional attributes, as well as circle them on backs.
- If writing or circling is difficult, use a scribe at the front of the room to list attributes of each individual. Ask the individual to leave the room as the group creates the list.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** *Participants will develop their capacity as leaders to integrate core values and beliefs into ethically challenging situations.*

### **ACTIVITY 1: LEADERSHIP CORE BELIEFS**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 60 minutes

We all have deeply held beliefs that guide our decisions and actions. We have talked about characteristics and attitudes of leaders and leadership. Now your task is to identify the underlying beliefs and values that inspire leaders and our own personal acts of leadership.

**Step 1.** Begin by asking participants to describe an act of leadership. This example could come from their own experience, from observing someone they know or hearing about someone from a different time and place. (For example: A young person speaks out at town meeting to endorse the school budget increase to pay for a new music program.)

**Step 2.** Then ask about the effects of that action. What happened as a result of the person's act of leadership? What was the impact on other people? What was the impact on the leader? (For example: One of the effects of his or her action would have been the addition of a youth perspective to the discussion.)

**Step 3.** Now move on to asking about values and beliefs. Beliefs and values are the deeply held assumptions about the way the world works or should work that reinforce the leader's action and intent. (For example: His or her intent might be to help get the votes to pass the budget, and the underlying belief would include the conviction that young people should have a voice in decisions that affect them.)

Create a master list of core beliefs of leadership. Ask the participants to vote for the five most important beliefs. (You can do this by giving each participant five votes, which he or she uses by making check marks or placing sticky dots beside the belief of their choice. Participants can elect to use more than one of their votes for a particular belief.)

**Additional Activity:** Put each of the five core beliefs receiving the highest votes on a different piece of note paper. Split the class into small groups and have each group pick one belief to act out. Have the rest of the class try to figure out which belief is being portrayed. This is similar to charades but with talking allowed.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Is this method effective for identifying beliefs?
- Why is identifying beliefs challenging?
- How does your understanding of beliefs influence your thinking about leadership?
- How does your understanding of beliefs influence your leadership actions?

**ACTIVITY 2: ETHICAL DILEMMAS AS LINE UPS**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Facilitator Note:** Participants will have to place themselves along an imaginary line based on their response to one of several ethical dilemmas. Once they have made a stance, they will share their perspective with someone who holds a different point of view. This will happen by “folding the line in half”—matching the people from opposite ends of the line. In each instance, remind participants that when they talk about their stance, they are only to listen or ask clarifying questions (Why did you choose to stand in that particular spot? What guided your decision?). Do not allow them to begin to disagree with another’s stance or be put into a position of having to defend their own. This is an excellent opportunity to practice listening skills. You may want to ask for the participants to line up once more in response to the same dilemma, having heard a perspective different from their own.

Have everyone stand at one end of the room. Read one of the following ethical dilemmas:

1. Imagine you were absent one day during exams and now you are taking a makeup exam. The teacher has you sit in a room by yourself to take the exam. After the teacher leaves, you realize there is an answer sheet to the makeup exam lying on the table very close to you. Think about what you would do and then in a moment I’m going to have you walk across the room as a way of stating your position. If you’re sure that you absolutely would not use the answer sheet, you should walk all the way to the other end of this room. If you’re absolutely sure you would use the answer sheet, stay at this end. Or you can position yourself anywhere in between the two extremes to show if you’re leaning one way or the other. Have students make their choices and move in silence.

Tell the group that if they pass the exam, they'll graduate; but if they don't pass the exam, they'll have to repeat their senior year. Again, ask people to move across the room.

2. Picture yourself at a local store with several of your friends. As you turn down the aisle, you notice a young person you do not know shoplifting. What would you do? Approach the person and confront them? Tell the store owner? Do nothing? One end of the line would be confrontation; the other end would be avoidance.

Same situation, but this time you see your friend shoplifting. What would you do? One end of the line would be confrontation; the other end would be avoidance.

3. Should it be made illegal for a woman to abort an unwanted pregnancy? Participants position themselves at one end of the room if they oppose abortion, at the other end if they support the right to choose.

Same situation, but it is illegal for a woman to get an abortion. She would inevitably go to a back-alley unlicensed practitioner and would be at great risk of injury or death. Participants should move accordingly.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What were some feelings you had doing this activity?
- What was it like to talk with someone who held a different opinion?
- How does this activity relate to leadership?
- Do our core values change depending on the situation? If so, what are the implications for people in leadership positions?

**Facilitator Note:** These are engaging activities and they often generate energetic discussions. In addition to having participants talk with someone at the opposite end of the line, you may have them relate their point of view to the whole group or with someone on their own end.

### **ACTIVITY 3: GROUP VALUES AND ETHICAL DECISIONS**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 45 minutes

Divide people into groups of five to seven participants per group. Explain that each of these leadership groups is going to address the same ethical dilemma, and the group's job is to come to a decision about what to do based on its values. The group members' task is to arrive at a consensus regarding this decision. (Consensus is defined as a decision where everyone agrees to go along with the will of the group. For more on Con-

sensus Building, see Decision Making module.) If this is not possible, the group may have to seek a majority vote to decide the issue.

The situation is as follows:

*Your leadership group agreed at the beginning of the year that in order to participate as a member of the group, people had to be positive role models in the school and community. However, recently two freshman members of your leadership group have gotten into some trouble. Each of them was caught smoking cigarettes, which is not allowed since they are only fourteen years old. The first person was caught smoking at school and was suspended. She has never been in trouble before and in fact has been one of the most positive and energetic members of your leadership group. The second person was caught smoking by his parents at home over the weekend. He was not suspended since the incident took place off school property. However, this person has been somewhat of a negative leader and a drain on your group, and he has consistently been a poor role model for other students at school.*

Each leadership group will have fifteen minutes to discuss the situation and decide what, if any, action will be taken in response to what has happened to these two students. Will there will be any consequences for them in terms of their participation in the leadership group? If so, will they receive the same or different consequences? After fifteen minutes, give each group a few minutes to present its decisions and explain the underlying values that guided the group's decision-making.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like for your group to reach a decision on what action should be taken?
- Did everyone feel comfortable expressing his or her opinion?
- Did everyone feel heard by group members?
- What ways does this activity relate to leaders and leadership?

**Additional Activities:** Draw on the issues and scenarios that are addressed in your local newspaper, or turn to national publications that respond to ethical questions (such as Randy Cohen's column in the *Sunday New York Times* magazine section) and pose those same questions to the participant.



**OBJECTIVE 4:** *Participants will explore leaders or leadership from a personal, community, and world history perspective.*

Who are you? Where do you live? What do you want to create in your life? What do you want to contribute to your community? These questions guide our work throughout *Our Voices: Our Community*. At this point on the journey, it is time to tell your story: a story about yourself that relates to where you are in time and space, a story about the people who are important to you, a story about dreams for your own life and hopes for the world around us.

**ACTIVITY 1: YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT**

**Materials:** "Personal Mission Statement" and "Sample Mission Statement" handouts (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 1–2 hours

**Step 1.** Explain the purpose of this activity: In the process of exploring leaders and leadership, we have looked outside ourselves for examples, characteristics, and qualities. We have also looked within ourselves in search of those same attributes. In concluding this module, creating your personal mission statement lets you bring together the external and internal understandings of leadership. This activity offers everyone the opportunity to begin the important task of setting out a mission for his or her own life.

**Facilitator Note:** Decide ahead of time whether you want participants to share their statements and explain your decision. This exercise can be valuable as a private undertaking and it can contribute to the growth and connectedness of the group. You should decide based on what the participants are ready for and what the group needs. This is an important measure of your respect for their thoughts.

**Step 2.** Provide each participant with a copy of the "Personal Mission Statement" worksheet to help them develop a personal mission statement (see example on page 89).

**Step 3.** Allow fifteen to twenty minutes for private, quiet work, making notes on the worksheet. If you have decided to ask participants to share their notes, allow one to two minutes for each person to present.

**Facilitator Note:** This first draft will benefit from more time to revise the original statement. Consider having the participants refine their state-

ments overnight or in time for the next meeting. You may also want to return to their mission statements during other activities.

### **Dialogue Questions**

These questions are designed for a dialogue between participants to share their private inventory.

- What leadership qualities do you possess?
- What leadership qualities would you like to build?
- What is scariest for you when you think of being in a leadership role?
- What is most exciting for you when you think of being in a leadership role?
- What can you do, or others help to do, to address the challenge noted above?
- What one SMART leadership goal will you set for yourself? (See SMART You Goals" in appendix of this module.)

### **ACTIVITY 2: A STORY OF INSPIRATION**

**Facilitator Note:** This activity provides an opportunity for participants to explore the lives of individuals who have influenced history in a local or global context. Make sure participants consider a diverse and balanced array of leaders including women, minorities, and other often overlooked groups in traditional history courses. Participants will present their findings to the class. It can be done in any number of creative mediums. Use the following questions to guide your work:

- Has anyone had experiences like your own? Has anyone pursued dreams like yours? What can you learn from them?
- Think about people in all aspects of your life—your family and friends, your neighborhood and community, the state, nation, and world. Find someone you admire and find out more about them.
- What were the important moments, decisions in their lives? How did they decide what to do? What did they learn along the way? How did they change through their experiences? What was happening around them that contributed to their experiences and choices?
- The abiding idea is learning: What can you learn from someone you admire? How can that learning help you grow? How will their experience help you define what is important to you?

This activity can take the form of an interview with a person in your family or community. It can take the form of a research project, making use of records and other sources of information. In either case, the activ-

ity is designed to come together through a presentation. In the case of an interview, it could be an edited tape, a collage of images, or a written account of that person's life and acts of leadership. In the case of a research project, it could be a dramatic rendering of a pivotal moment, a talk given in the words of your subject, or a written account of his or her life.

**Facilitator Note:** Provide realistic guidelines and support, based on the needs of the participants and the time frame of the class (semester-long class, one-week summer program, etc.). Based on the context for this activity—from a one-week summer session to a semester-long class—you can structure this activity to be a meaningful and successful pursuit by providing realistic guidelines and support along the way.

### ACTIVITY 3: SELF COLLAGE

**Materials:** White construction paper; tissue paper; glue; scissors; pipe cleaners; cardboard; paper clips (pretty much anything!)

**Time Commitment:** 40 minutes

This activity offers participants another way to communicate important aspects of themselves and their leadership styles. Each person needs one piece of construction paper. Instruct them to divide the paper into four equal sections:

- top left: "how I see myself"
- top right: "how I think my family sees me"
- bottom left: "how I think other people/the world sees me"
- bottom right: "how I want to be seen"

Participants create a collage from the materials given for each quadrant and write a brief description on the back of each quadrant. Finally, participants give a short presentation to the class about their answers for each question and how their collage represents these emotions and beliefs.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What was it like to do this activity?
- Did anything surprise you as you developed these four themes?
- Did this activity make you want to take any particular actions or do anything differently in your life?



## **Appendix**

<b>Founding Beliefs About Leadership</b>	<b>86</b>
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**FOUNDING BELIEFS ABOUT LEADERSHIP**

- All people are leaders in their own right.
- People learn how to exercise leadership through actively engaging in efforts to take charge of their own life and by improving their world.
- There are certain known skills that will help a person be effective as a leader.
- Positive relationships are key to leadership.
- Self-awareness and moral integrity are key to building positive relationships.
- It is more powerful to honor and build on strengths rather than to focus solely on fixing deficits or problems.
- Leaders nurture others to take initiative, solve problems, and assume leadership roles.

## **WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT ME**

**advises      agrees      analyzes      asserts**

**assists      calms      complies      coordinates**

**creates      directs      empathizes      encourages**

**energizes      facilitates      follows      initiates**

**intellectualizes      jokes      leads      listens**

**mediates      organizes      persists      questions**

**relinquishes      resists      supports      trusts**

**withdraws      clarifies      compromises**

## **PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT**

### **What is important to you?**

(What motivates, inspires, influences your choices, habits, lifestyle?)

### **Who is important to you?**

(Think about people from your past, present, and future.)

### **List a few people you admire. What characteristics do they have that you would like to emulate?**

(What do you admire about them?)

### **Describe your strengths and talents.**

(Think of the things that enable you to make a contribution.)

### **Describe you habits and tendencies.**

(What helps you? What gets in your way? What makes you happy? What causes you stress?)

### **Describe the things that you want to commit yourself to in your life—your core values. This is the heart of your mission.**

(Begin your thoughts with "I will . . . ")

### **Project yourself forward; envision a celebration.**

(What do you want to have accomplished in two years, five years, twenty-five years, the end of your life? What would you like people to say about you?)



## **SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT**

I am dedicated to my family. I will forever be honest, loyal, supportive, encouraging, and loving toward my wife. I will be honest, supportive, encouraging, guiding, and nonjudgmental toward my children. I will live a life that I would want my children to emulate. I will not expect perfection. I will be a supportive brother and will value all other kin. I will have reverence for my parents and other ancestors. I will maintain a healthy home for Morey and Shadow and any other animals in our household. I will provide financial security for my family, but I will not be possessed by my possessions.

I am committed to my profession. I will assist my students in becoming the best that they can be. I will be patient, encouraging, supportive, and nonjudgmental. I will set high standards and will understand that students are not perfect. I will advocate for excellence in education for all. I will recognize that students learn in different ways and that some education takes place outside books. I believe that all students have value and something to contribute. I will continue to grow professionally by reading, taking classes, participating in workshops, and spending time with other professionals.

I value my friendships. I will ensure that I spend time to enjoy and support those whom I care about. I will strive to be dependable and caring. I will remain sensitive to the needs of others. I will attempt to give more than take from friendships and relationships.

I will uphold great reverence for mother earth. I will give back to the world and leave this earth a better place. I will tread lightly, live simply, and respect all living things.

I will treat my body with respect. I will exercise and not contaminate my body by indulging in unhealthy consumption. I will strive to balance my life with work, play, and improvement. I will maintain a sense of humor. I will take time to reflect. I will pay attention to my mental health.

I will continue to improve myself by reading, learning, and accepting challenges without fear of failure. I will always be inquisitive. I will not beat myself up if I am not perfect. I will not become discouraged by setbacks. I will live life in the present as much as possible.

I will refrain from judging others and will strive to understand other peoples, cultures, and religions. I will not exploit others. I will participate in the democratic process. I will be a contributor to my community.

I will remain positive. I will seek a balance in my life. I accept responsibility for my actions. I have gratitude for all that I have.

*—Bill Minard's Personal Mission Statement*



# Decision Making

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# Decision Making

*Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it.*

—A. A. Milne

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## Goal

Participants will develop decision-making skills and identify ways to facilitate effective decision-making in their own lives and in the life of their community.

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## Rationale

Edward Bear, also known as Winnie the Pooh, has a problem. Every time Christopher Robin brings him downstairs, he bumps his head on each step of the staircase. He has a sense that if he could just stop bumping and think for a moment, he could come up with a solution.

This module is dedicated to that moment in time when we can stop and think, gain some perspective on our situation, and apply a thoughtful process for decision-making.

We make many decisions for ourselves every day. When we are part of a group sorting out an issue, we have more than our own needs and interests to consider. Whether we are making a personal decision or are part of a group decision process, there are helpful steps that can guide us as we grapple with complex issues or goals. This module will explore those helpful steps.

It is also important for leaders to understand four established decision-making models that are used in everyday situations: autocratic, democratic, consensual, and laissez-faire. By exploring the advantages and disadvantages of each style, participants better understand the usefulness of any one approach.

Finally, to bring about meaningful change, a helpful decision-making process has to uncover the underlying causes of a problem rather than focusing only on the symptoms. Winnie the Pooh could put on a helmet, carpet the stairs, or try to hide from Christopher Robin, but if he asked Christopher to carry him in his arms, he would enjoy the journey.

## Objectives Summary

Participants will:

1. *examine their current approach to decision-making and explore existing models for decision-making;*
2. *understand and apply decision-making models; and*
3. *reflect on their decision-making process.*

**OBJECTIVE 1:** *Participants will examine their current approach to decision-making and explore existing models for decision-making.*

**Materials:** “Decision-Making Overview” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 15–30 minutes

**Step 1.** Inform participants that they will have an opportunity to observe themselves in the midst of a decision-making quandary.

**Step 2.** Review the decision-making steps noted on the “Decision-Making Overview” handout.

**Step 3.** Choose one of the problem-solving activities noted below.

**Facilitator Note:** If you have a video camera and a TV/VCR setup, record the activity so that participants can witness their decision-making process. If their decision-making breaks down at some point, you may choose to stop and let them watch, reflect, and analyze their actions before continuing the activity.

Participants can use the “Decision-Making Overview” form while they watch themselves on the videotape or to note and discuss their roles in the process after the activity is over. This reflective discussion can be challenging and uncomfortable for some participants. Take care to structure and guide it in a way that enables each person to feel safe.

Be sure to keep your own observation notes to use in the concluding activity of this module.

### **ACTIVITY 1: UP CHUCK**

**Materials:** Two pieces of paper for each participant

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Circle up. Ask participants to put their hands out in front of them, palms up. Put one piece of paper on each person’s hand. Next, instruct them to crumple up the paper using one hand, resulting in each person having two paper balls. Ask them to toss the wadded balls of paper in the air and catch them to test for aerodynamic qualities. Now introduce the challenge: Ask them to throw their balls up simultaneously, at least two feet above their heads. They must prevent as many balls as possible from hitting the floor, but they cannot catch their own balls.

**Facilitator Note:** Most groups try throwing the balls to one another, which usually is not very successful. The most effective way to solve the problem is to create a human carpet and let the paper balls fall in the laps

of other participants. Facilitators should keep count of drops and make sure that the group is abiding by the two feet above the head requirement.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- How did the group make decisions?
- Why did the group make decisions in that way? Was it effective? Why? Why not?
- What was your role in the group's decision-making process?
- What do you do best in making decisions and what do you struggle with when you consider the steps outlined on the overview form?

### **Adaptations**

- If throwing/tossing/catching is difficult, try using feathers and blowing them around.
- Balloons are also more easily thrown than wadded-up paper. Perhaps the need to catch could be eliminated.

## **ACTIVITY 2: HUMAN KNOT**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

Have the group stand in a circle. Each person puts his or her right hand into the center of the circle and takes hold of someone's hand. Next, each person repeats this move with his or her left hand. Participants should not hold the hand of anyone next to him or her, or both hands of the same person. The challenge is to untangle this human knot without letting go of hands to create a full circle once again. (Sometimes two interlocking circles can be created.)

**Facilitator Note:** If you want to allow greater personal space, give every participant a two- to three-foot length of rope and use it as an extension of his or her arm in creating the knot. The rope alternative also allows this activity to be physically comfortable for fifteen to seventeen participants.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

1. What do you do best in making decisions and what do you struggle with when you consider the steps outlined on the overview form?
2. How did the group make decisions?

3. Why did the group make decisions in that way? Was it effective? Why? Why not? Note: Keep a record of the answers to questions 2 and 3 to use in Activity 3.
4. What was your role in the group's decision-making process?

### **Adaptations**

If physical mobility is difficult, try an alternate problem-solving activity. Put a facilitator at the front of the room with the supplies needed to make a peanut-butter and jelly sandwich (bread, knife, peanut butter, jelly). Ask participants to give the facilitator directions, which he or she takes literally. (For example: "Put the knife in the peanut butter" leads the facilitator to forcefully put the knife through the lid of the jar and into the peanut butter.) Participants must decide the best way to give directions for making a sandwich!

### **ACTIVITY 3: TYPES OF DECISION-MAKING**

**Materials:** "Decision-Making Alternatives" handout (see appendix of this module); newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

**Step 1.** Return to the comments participants made in response to the Dialogue and Journal Questions (How did the group make decisions? Why did the group make decisions in that way? Was it effective?) on the first two activities. Post those responses.

**Step 2.** Ask the group to organize those comments and responses into like categories and give each category a name that characterizes the type of decision-making described by their comments.

**Step 3.** Hand out "Decision-Making Alternatives" summary. Ask participants to think about their experience in the activities they have just completed and use this handout as a point of reference. Be sure to emphasize the pros and cons associated with each.

### **ACTIVITY 4: THE DEEP DIVE**

**Materials:** *Deep Dive* video (20 minutes). Make sure you have seen the videotape before using it!

**Time Commitment:** 45 minutes

The *Deep Dive* video presents a real-life example of an internationally respected design team doing its work. The team's particular task is to build the perfect shopping cart in one week. Participants have an opportunity to



observe and discuss two key aspects of project work: (1) the steps necessary to make good decisions and (2) the qualities team members need to make the project successful.

Key points to introducing the videotape:

- A world-famous design team was charged with creating the perfect shopping cart in one week.
- These team members are famous for how well they work together to address challenges.
- Notice what you think is helpful about the steps the team took to do their work and how they work together, so that you can incorporate what you like into your decision-making process.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Is this a place you think you might want to work some day? Why?
- What did you like about the way they worked together?  
Didn't like?
- What do you think are the key factors that make them so successful?
- Describe the steps of the team's decision-making process.
- When did you see them move from a consensus model to autocratic? Why do you think they did that? (Highlight the importance of flexibility in leadership and decision-making. Consensus was clearly valued, yet they balanced that with the need to move to action.)
- Look at the Full Value Commitment. Anything we need to add to our vision based on what we just saw that we liked? (Reach consensus before adding any new attribute or quality.)

**Facilitator Note:** There are some wonderful phrases or points you might want to spark dialogue around if participants don't mention them:

- Everyone is valued.
- Diversity of perspectives is key to success.
- Fail often to succeed sooner.
- Enlightened trial and error succeeds over the planning of the lone genius.

### **Adaptations**

- As the video is not closed-captioned, be sure to send it to sign language interpreters well in advance of using it.
- Make sure a "reader" is in place to describe the happenings in the video to those that cannot see the images.

## ACTIVITY 5: TOWER POWER

**Materials:** Packet of the following materials for each team of 6 to 7 participants (note: you can put almost anything in your packet; this is just a sample list): 12 sturdy note cards; 4 paper towel cardboard center rolls; 10 paper clips; 10 pipe cleaners; 5 pieces of 8.5-by-11-inch paper; masking tape (give each group 5 to 6 inches); "Decision-Making Overview" handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

This activity lets participants immediately apply what they have experienced and seen demonstrated in the videotape and in their own problem-solving activity.

Divide the class into groups of six to seven participants. Give each group a packet of materials. Tell the groups that their design task is to make the tallest tower possible within fifteen minutes using only the materials provided. Ask one person to be the observer in each group and give this person the "Decision-Making Overview" handout. His or her job is to notice if the group is following the steps outlined, jotting down specific behaviors indicating that the group is addressing a given step.

When time is up, ask the groups to talk among themselves for five to ten minutes about how they addressed this task and the steps necessary to be successful. The observer will provide an important outside perspective.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What was hardest about working together as a team?
- What was most satisfying about working together as a team?
- What effect if any did the time limit have on your work?
- What one thing did you learn in this activity that you can bring to your decision-making process? (It can be something that you did well or was challenging.)

### Adaptations

- Use modeling clay instead of the trickier materials. Construct your towers in a stable manner. For example, which is more stable: a long thin "snake" or a series of clay "blocks"?
- Pair participants, with one person giving directions and the other person implementing them.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** *Participants will understand and apply decision-making models to real-life situations.*

## **Your Deep Dive**

Having immersed participants in decision-making situations and stepped back to reflect on those efforts, now it is time to apply a step-by-step process for making a relevant decision. This six-step process includes:

1. State what you want to change or accomplish.
2. Gather information.
3. Brainstorm solutions.
4. Choose the best solution.
5. Do it.
6. Evaluate.

### **PART 1: *State what you want to change or accomplish***

Have participants state one issue or problem that is relevant to their lives (i.e., changing the food in the cafeteria, reducing hunger in their community, promoting youth voice in decision-making). Have the participants describe the current situation as well as the result or outcome they desire. Have the participants state this outcome in the positive. For example, rather than saying "Decrease the inefficient qualities of a shopping cart," you might say, "Increase the efficiency of a typical shopping cart." One is problem focused, the other solution focused. Talk about the impact of stating the same thing from these two different perspectives. What are the benefits of using the solution-focused language?

### **PART 2: *Gather information***

This step fine-tunes what has been stated in Part 1. It is important that participants get as much information and as many perspectives as possible on this issue before finalizing their next steps. Information gathering occurs in two ways:

1. Exploring root causes of the problem.
2. Gathering additional information.

**1. Exploring Root Causes.** The next step in this decision-making process is to make sure the underlying root causes have been explored. All too often individuals jump from the symptom of a problem (i.e., high drug and alcohol use, discriminatory practices, poor school climate) to a solution without ever considering the underlying causes for the symptom—and fail. Only by understanding why

this issue hasn't changed for the better up until now, will we make the right choices. Listen to the following story and explore the root cause of the problem in Activity 1 below.

- 2. Gather Additional Information.** The next decision-making step is to explore or research the issues (i.e., ideas that concern and motivate members of the group as well as information from other sources in your community). This type of research provides a place to hear differing points of view.

## ACTIVITY 1: THE TREE

**Materials:** "Tree Diagram: High School Story" and "Tree Diagram" handouts (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 45 minutes

**The Story:** *A high school in Vermont recently discovered it had the second highest drop-out rate in the state. Thirty-seven percent of the students who began the ninth grade did not complete high school. In order to reduce the drop-out rate, the school developed an alternative program for students who were at risk of dropping out. Quickly, the alternative program was full and had a long waiting list of students. In response to the long waiting list and an increasing frustration on the part of teachers who were struggling with students unable to meet academic expectations, the school started a second alternative program. The demand for the second alternative program was far greater than the program could support and within a few years the school had instituted a third alternative program. Within that short period of time roughly one-third of the ninth grade students were enrolled in alternative programs.*

**Facilitator Note:** The high school story is developed throughout this module. It will be helpful to refer to this example, as you introduce the steps participants will take in refining their own decision-making process.

**Step 1.** Share the "Tree Diagram: High School Story" handout. Review the symptoms and then the root causes. Explain how actions to treat the symptoms lead to decisions like the ones in the story. However, when you look at the root causes, you see an entirely different set of options. Reflections on the tree activity:

- Look at the basic decision-making steps. Which steps did they take? Which steps did they miss?
- Talk about their choice of action. Why did they make the choice they did?

- What did they need to do instead of building more alternative programs?
- Have you ever seen any examples like this in your own lives?

**Step 2.** Ask participants to create their own tree relative to the issue they have chosen at the start of this sequence. Small group work would be effective here, having groups share their ideas. Some individuals may be working on personal issues. They may choose to work alone on this analysis or may partner with another to share their thoughts. Facilitators will need to check in with individuals working on personal issues to make sure they are supported in their efforts.

**Step 3.** Ask participants to identify the result/outcome they want to focus on in their decision-making. In order to achieve the result they desire, participants need to decide which root cause are they most interested in addressing. Once again, state outcomes in positive terms. Instead of "Lessen the disrespect between teachers and students," try "Improve the student-teacher relationships".

One method of gathering additional information is using the fishbowl technique (see Activity 2: Fishbowl Dialogue below).

By facilitating this type of conversation, you also provide a time for participants to take important risks by sharing their experience and talking about what is important to them. This is particularly true if one or several participants have concerns/ideas that are not shared by the rest of the group.

In every case, the challenge is to enable each voice to be heard. In this way, the dialogue extends the sense of trust among the group. Therefore, it is important to have established some of the building blocks of trust and communication through activities that introduce participants to one another before starting out on this sequence of decision-making activities.

## **ACTIVITY 2: FISHBOWL DIALOGUE**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Explain the purpose of the fishbowl and describe how the process works: The fishbowl enables each person to be involved in the discussion, but also gives them a chance to observe the discussion, take notes, and reflect.

### *Ground Rules*

- The group is divided into two parts.

- One group makes an inner circle and begins discussing the topic.
- The second group sits around the first group in another circle and quietly observes, takes notes, and reflects on what is said inside the circle.
- Participants in the inner circle should encourage those who have not spoken to speak their opinion.

**Step 2.** Begin the group in one large circle (the facilitator begins in the fishbowl: a smaller circle inside the large group circle)

**Step 3.** The facilitator asks an opening question and invites participants to join him or her in the fishbowl.

- In the case of a group trying to gather additional information about an issue or problem, start with a broad question. In the high school story: Why were so many students dropping out? For a general discussion: What is it like to be a teenager?
- Begin with the problem statement and ask why. Then you can move the focus onto related issues, such as peers, parents, social life, academic life, school, community.
- Some possible questions include: What is happening in your school and community and the world at large that makes life good for young people? What worries you? What frustrates you? What would you like to change? Of the things you want to change, which ones do you think you can realistically impact?
- In the case of an individual trying to gain insight into a personal issue, you may follow the same format starting with a broad question and moving toward specific parts of the issue. It is important to respect confidentiality while drawing on the experience of the other members of the group.
- In the end you are trying to gather information that will enable the participants to make a good decision.

**Step 4.** The facilitator asks clarifying questions and prompts follow-up questions: Anytime a participant uses a word or phrase you don't understand, ask for more information. Encourage participants to ask each other this type of question as well.

**Step 5.** The facilitator also makes a time and place to encourage and challenge observers to join the conversation

**Step 6.** Collect the perspective and solutions from the fishbowl on a piece of newsprint hung on the wall so everyone can see. The list of issues generated by the group will be the basis for the next steps in the process.

**Facilitator Note:** This activity requires that you pay attention to keeping everyone involved. You can accomplish this by asking questions inside the fishbowl as well as pausing and asking observers to join the dialogue by coming into the Fishbowl. The design of having a place for those who want to participate in the dialogue and those who want to observe is intended to make participants comfortable, because some people like to talk in order to see what they think while others like to think before they speak.

### **PART 3: *Brainstorm Solutions***

It is time to brainstorm all the possible solutions to the issue you have chosen. Remember that wild ideas are OK — in fact they may be the key to your success! Make sure everyone's ideas are heard and understood without judgment or being cut off.

#### **ACTIVITY 1: BRAINSTORMING**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Groups create their own brainstorm list of solutions or individuals brainstorm their alternative actions.

#### **ACTIVITY 2: BALANCING INQUIRY AND ADVOCACY**

*(adapted from Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*)*

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 30–45 minutes

The focus in this activity is on understanding another person's point of view. This is a challenging focus to maintain because we are often more interested in expressing our opinion than in trying to understand someone else.

**Step 1.** Begin by explaining that good communication and decision-making is a balance between advocating for our own point of view, inquiring about another person's point of view, and reflecting on both sources of information.

**Step 2.** Ask for participants to propose a solution from the brainstorm group to focus on.

- Guide the person presenting an idea to make his or her thinking and reasoning more visible to others by using phrases like: "Let me explain my thinking . . ."

"Here is what is important to me about this solution . . . "

"What questions do you have for me?"

- Guide the people listening to the presenter to ask about the other person's thinking and reasoning by using phrases like:  
 "What information is your conclusion based on?"  
 "Can you explain how you got from the information to your conclusion?"  
 "When you said \_\_\_\_\_, did you mean \_\_\_\_\_?" (This last question helps you come to agreement about the words you use to explain an idea.)
- Allow enough time for a common understanding to emerge, then move on to the next issue/solution.

## **PART 4. Choose the Best Solution**

### **ACTIVITY 1: CONSENSUS BUILDING**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 30–45 minutes

"The essential feature of a consensus decision is not that a decision has been agreed on by all participants, but that all participants have complete understanding of the reasoning leading to the decision, and that all members are willing to support the decision." (See "Decision-Making Alternatives" handout in appendix of this module.)

**Step 1.** Gather the group in a circle so everyone can see each other.

**Step 2.** Post the list of solutions the group has generated in the Brainstorming and Inquiry and Advocacy session.

**Step 3.** Ask someone to propose a solution for the group to endorse.

**Step 4.** Ask for an indication of consensus once everyone has had an opportunity to express his or her thoughts and ask questions: do you all agree that this is a workable solution?

**Step 5.** Instruct each participant to indicate his or her level of agreement by holding his or her thumb in one of three positions: straight up—full agreement and interest in going forward with this solution; to the side—willing to go along with this solution even with some reservations; straight down—questions, concerns, or reservations, unwilling to endorse the solution



**Step 6.** Provide the opportunity for other solutions to be presented and considered for consensus.

**Facilitator Note:** It is important to have participants who have reservations or do not support a solution to explain their concerns. The perspective and information they provide may be incorporated into the proposal making it workable for everyone.

The group comes to consensus when everyone responds to a proposal with their thumbs either straight up or to the side. This indicates that everyone is willing to support the decision. The consensus-building process should be repeated for every solution that is proposed in the group.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- In what way was this decision-making process constructive?
- How can you apply this decision-making process to your own life?
- How can you apply this decision-making process to your role as a leader?

## ACTIVITY 2: COMPARING DECISION-MAKING MODELS

**Materials:** "Decision-Making Alternatives" handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

There are many ways for groups to make decisions. At any given time, you and the group may choose one of the means discussed earlier in this module. Choosing which decision-making process to use is part of the challenge of facilitation and leadership, which vests the group with the power to make change.

**Step 1.** To explore the relative value of each type of decision-making, ask the group to identify the benefits and costs associated with each of the following scenarios:

- For autocratic, you would decide what is best for the group.
- For democratic, the majority would decide on the basis of a vote.
- For laissez-faire, you would endorse the person who spoke loudest.
- For consensus, everyone would endorse the same solution.

There are, however, times and places where each of the other decision-making approaches listed above (autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, and consensus) are appropriate. To illustrate their appropriate application, ask

the group to think of examples when each decision-making style is used appropriately.

**Step 2.** Ask the group to list examples for each of the following types of decision-making:

- For autocratic, include situations where safety is a concern.
- For democratic, include large scale elections.
- For laissez-faire, include scenarios where you want someone to take initiative and responsibility.
- For consensus, include scenarios where the group needs to sustain its efforts beyond the decision-making step.

The final two parts, Parts 5 and 6, will apply to the project you select. They are included here to complete the model.

## **PART 5: *Do It***

Decision-making is preparation for action. Once you have arrived at a decision, it is time to act. For your actions are the fulfillment of your decision-making, the means for making a contribution to your community and an experience which will contribute to better decision-making in the future.

## **PART 6: *Evaluate***

### **ACTIVITY 1: DECISION-MAKING EVALUATION**

**Materials:** "Decision-Making Assessment" handout (see appendix of this module); newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

How did it go? Was your action successful? Did your action fulfill your expectations and goals? Did it produce the results you wanted?

Were there any unexpected results? Did your action contribute to new or different goals from the ones you set out to address?

These questions are the basis for the "Decision-Making Assessment" handout. Hand out the evaluation form and give the participants five to seven minutes to complete their initial observations and thoughts. Then bring the whole group together so participants can share their observations. Record their comments on the newsprint to create a group response.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** *Participants will reflect on their decision-making process.*

**ACTIVITY 1: LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD**

**Materials:** Video tape and/or overview form from Objective 1 of this module; newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Show the video tape and/or review the observation notes from the group's first activities in this module. (Objective 1, Activities 1 and 2: Participants will examine their current approach to decision-making and explore existing models for decision-making.)

**Step 2.** Review the "Decision-Making Overview" form.

**Step 3.** Ask the participants to look back over their problem-solving and decision-making efforts as a group throughout this module.

**Step 4.** Collect their observations and reflections on newsprint for everyone to see.

**Step 5.** Instruct the group to sketch a "road map" (or drawing) for problem-solving and decision-making that captures the group's learning and best work.



# Appendix

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## **DECISION-MAKING OVERVIEW**

### **Does the group state what they want to change or accomplish?**

- Describe the current state: what they already know.
- Describe desired state: the result they want to achieve.

### **Does the group gather information about the problem or issue?**

- Explore root causes: why the issue/problem still exists.
- Gather additional information: what you need to know.

### **Does the group brainstorm solutions?**

- Brainstorming.
- Other creative means.

**Does the group choose the best solution?**

- Address root causes of the problem.
- Achieve your desired result.
- Is it workable?

**How much do group members participate in decision-making?**

- Are everyone's ideas heard? Considered?

**What are the pivotal points in the decision-making process?**

- What moves the group forward?
- What impedes the group's progress?

## DECISION-MAKING ALTERNATIVES

**Autocratic:** One person makes the decision for the entire group. This is usually a person who holds a prominent position in the group (such as president, coach, etc.), or someone who feels that he or she does.

*Pros:* This is efficient and not time consuming if the person who makes the decision has the authority and enough information.

*Cons:* Group may not go along with the decision; mutiny may occur and the person making the decision may not have enough information.

**Democratic:** The group resolves differences by voting. Each member has an equal say in the discussion, and has equal representation in voting. The choice that gets the most votes wins.

*Pros:* The group is involved to a larger extent than in an autocratic system and all members provide input so the decision is more informed.

*Cons:* A majority and a minority is formed, so a portion of the group is unhappy, possibly leading to tension and conflict in the group.

**Consensual:** After a thorough discussion, the group finds a solution that everyone can agree on.

*Pros:* This allows everyone to express their opinions and feel valued; everyone supports the outcome.

*Cons:* This is time consuming and requires good facilitation to be successful.

**Laissez-faire:** Decision-making is left to the initiative of the group. The group may choose a variety of methods and may or may not choose to make a decision at all.

*Pros:* This acknowledges the wisdom and power of a group to know when and how to make decisions; everyone is heard.

*Cons:* Participation may or may not be full; the group may not be able to handle that much freedom; individuals will dominate the process, and it takes time.

**Power Group:** The decision is made by the most vocal or powerful subgroup. These groups often are defined by their popularity.

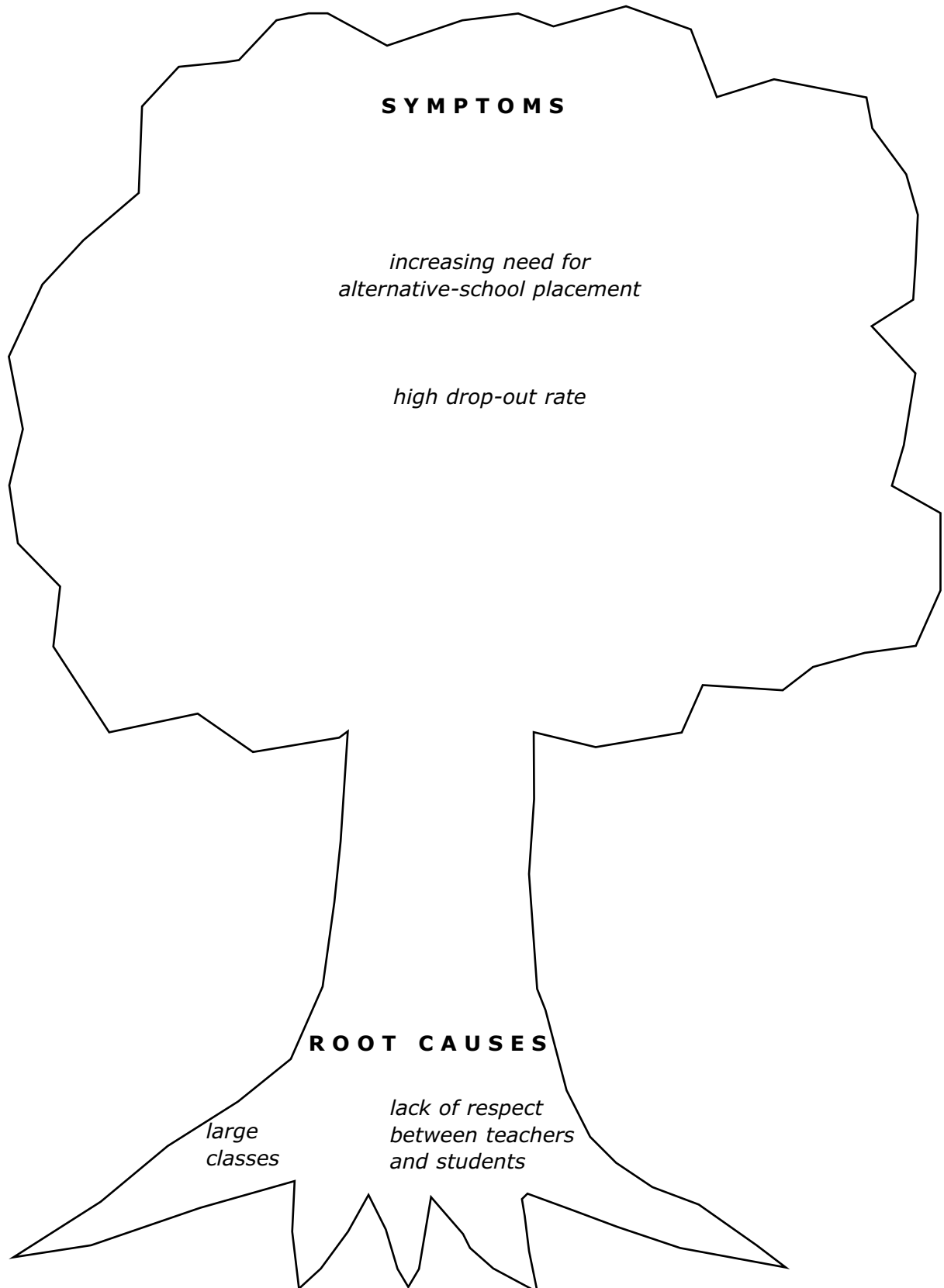
*Pros:* The subgroup gets what it wants.

*Cons:* The needs and desires of the majority are not heard or considered.

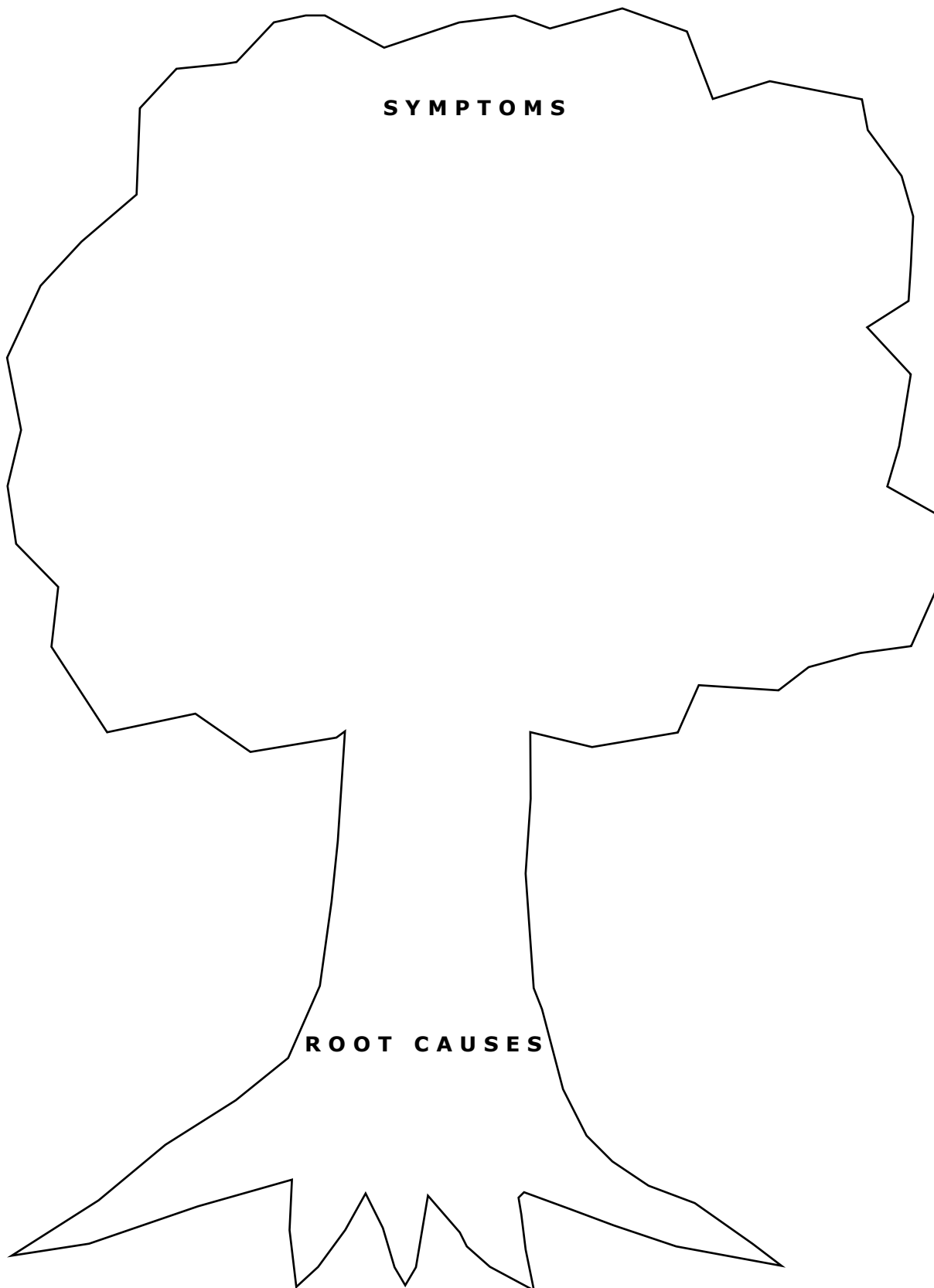


## **TREE DIAGRAM: HIGH SCHOOL STORY**

### **Symptoms and Root Causes**



**TREE DIAGRAM**



## **DECISION-MAKING ASSESSMENT**

### ***Decision***

What action did you agree to take?

### ***Goal***

What goal did you intend to address through your action?

Was your goal fulfilled?

Did your action address any other goals?

### ***Results***

What did you set out to accomplish?

Did your actions produce any unexpected results?

### ***Conclusion***

What have you learned from the consequences of your actions?



# The Project

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# The Project

*In every community there is work to be done,  
In every nation there are wounds to heal,  
In every heart there is the power to do it.*

—Marianne Williamson

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## Goal

Participants will develop the necessary skills to identify an issue of importance to them, develop an action plan, implement this plan, personally reflect on its learning value, and share and celebrate this experience with others.

---

## Rationale

Significant and enduring learning occurs when individuals have an opportunity to test and develop their skills and knowledge in meaningful life applications. In this course, “the project” is the way participants put into practice what they are learning. Very often, an exciting project will be the basis of ongoing involvement and maturation of participants.

Only 44 percent of youth report that they have control over “things that happen to me,” and one out of three youth feel that they have the skills to plan ahead and make choices (Search Institute survey, 2002). This module leads participants through the steps necessary to identify a personal goal, a desired leadership skill, or a large group project, then provides the skills needed to reach that goal. The project is all about making wise choices, planning ahead, taking action, and celebrating the learning. Such an experience reinforces participants’ confidence in their capacity to “take control over things that happen to them,” actively shaping their own life.

## Objectives Summary

Participants will:

1. *identify project topics that have personal meaning;*
2. *review examples of youth-initiated and youth-adult partnership work around Vermont and the country to expand the possible scope of project work;*
3. *decide on the project focus(es) and project format (full group, small group, or individual);*
4. *understand and complete the five basic steps in project planning; and*
5. *reflect on, share, and celebrate project accomplishments.*

**Facilitator Note:** This module is unique because it stretches over the entire course. This module kicks off the project planning process, the majority of the project implementation work is done outside class while other modules are being addressed, and the project closing occurs near the end of the course.

It is important that time is set aside during most modules for participants to focus on their project. It is recommended that cofacilitators become “project advisors” and provide assistance to individuals and groups as needed. Participants can also serve as consultants to fellow participants, as they encounter challenges in their projects—a leadership building role.



**OBJECTIVE 1:** *Participants will identify project topics that have personal meaning.*

### **ACTIVITY 1: PROJECT OVERVIEW AND BRAINSTORM**

**Materials:** “The Project Overview” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 40 minutes

Participants begin to identify topics that have personal meaning or relevance to them. Providing a clear overview of the project and facilitating a brainstorm about project alternatives sets the stage for further research and refining of project ideas.

**Step 1.** Review project overview. Projects can focus on any one of the following:

- Addressing a personal development goal (i.e., speaking up in situations where the individual usually is tongue-tied, reducing or stopping alcohol or drug use, moving from anger to understanding in a difficult personal relationship)
- Developing a desired leadership skill (i.e., taking a public speaking course, becoming a facilitator for a diversity program for younger students, volunteering in a local nonprofit organization)
- Engaging in a school-community change effort (i.e., making a video about a topic youth care about and using it to spark community dialogue, becoming more active in the 4-H Youth Council, joining a local group committed to reducing the drop-out rate)

**Project Format** (full group, small group, individual): The project may be taken on individually, in partnership with one or more classmates, or the entire class may choose a project to pursue. The critical factor is that the undertaking has personal meaning to the participants involved.

**Facilitator Note:** Another alternative is to build the class around a clearly defined project. (In the instance that the project is already defined, the majority of Objective 1 and 2 activities will be irrelevant. It is suggested that facilitators begin this module with Objective 2, Activity 5 and then proceed to Objective 3.) This would most likely occur in a school setting but could also be the premise of a community program. When participants sign on, they do so because they are excited about this aspect of their learning. This option has been successfully used at South Burlington High School where every fall the class hosts a schoolwide Diversity Day and a great deal of leadership development evolves through its planning. In another *Our Voices: Our Community* course, “The Project” entailed creating and premiering a thought-provoking

video about the participants' community, designed to inform and influence community decision-making.

**Step 2:** Project Alternatives Defined

**Facilitator Note:** Project Brainstorm and Fishbowl Dialogue are alternate means to surface project ideas of interest to participants. Choose the method you feel most comfortable with. It is important to have established some of the building blocks of trust and communication through activities that introduce participants to one another before starting out on this sequence of project decision-making activities.

**ALTERNATIVE 1: PROJECT BRAINSTORM**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

Have the group brainstorm a list of possible projects, reviewing brainstorming rules (see Part III: Facilitator Resource Guide). Remind participants that projects can be related to a personal growth goal, a desired leadership skill, or desired changes in their school and/or community. Brainstorming will provide information about the diversity of participant ideas (write these on newsprint and display). Participants should be asked to consider new ideas and directions, to stimulate group involvement and motivation.

Remind the class that projects may be individual, in small groups, or taken on by the whole group. Inform the group that they will be deciding on exactly how the class will organize project work after they consider the options.

**ALTERNATIVE 2: FISHBOWL DIALOGUE**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Facilitator Note:** See "Fishbowl Dialogue" (Decision Making module, page 99–100) for overview of this activity. Have a participant record the suggestions which are made by participants in the fishbowl. If the "recorder" moves to the fishbowl, he or she needs to find another person to take over this responsibility.

Create the fishbowl. The following are possible questions to trigger project thoughts and ideas:

- What is happening in your personal life, school, or community or the world at large that makes life good for young people?
- What worries you?

- What frustrates you?
- If you could change one thing in your personal life, or in your school or community, what would it be?
- If you had all the time and money in the world to develop an action plan that would move you toward your life goals, what would that be?
- Of the things people have voiced wanting to change, which ones do you think you can realistically impact?

**OBJECTIVE 2:** *Participants will review examples of youth-initiated and youth-adult partnership work around Vermont and the country to expand the possible scope of project work.*

**ACTIVITY 1: BEYOND KNOWN BOUNDARIES:  
EXPLORING THE POSSIBLE**

Learning what other youth are doing around the state and country can help us see what is possible. School and community OV:OC groups have initiated some very exciting projects, among them:

- Used OV:OC leadership training to transform the student council into a credit-bearing class open to all students (Peoples Academy).
- Used OV:OC to train summer youth staff who offered participants engaging activities in support of academic standards to increase students' performance during the school year (Hazen Union High School, Montpelier High School).
- Used OV:OC as the basis for an 11th and 12th grade youth-adult led advisory system for all 9th graders; each group initiates its own project (South Burlington High School).
- Used OV:OC to structure leadership development for "Operation Days Work Course"—a school-wide service learning project (Thetford Academy).
- Used OV:OC to develop a middle school community group, "Unity in Community," allowing kids who go to different schools after 6th grade, a place to get together on a monthly basis throughout the year (Peacham).
- Used OV:OC to create and perform a puppet show for middle and elementary school kids that addressed such issues as drug problems, how to communicate with your friends when you are mad, hurt feelings, sexist remarks, and prejudice (Cabot).
- Used OV:OC to plan and implement a series of teen center youth

trips, requiring youth to engage in fundraising activities that “played an unexpected role in leadership development for our group” (Bradford).

- Used *OV:OC* to host a safe and drug-free gathering for youth and adult partners from various schools and youth groups across Vermont. This project not only provided the *OV:OC* participants a great sense of accomplishment, but also helped them learn to plan, think ahead, pay attention to details, and work together cooperatively toward their goal (Spaulding High School).
- Used *OV:OC* to train youth council members as a cohesive group for their yearlong activities with other area youth (Rutland).
- Used *OV:OC* to develop individual leadership plans and projects for each participant (Vermont Center for Independent Living).
- Used *OV:OC* in Upward Bound summer enrichment program, emphasizing team-building, problem-solving, and diversity.

In the appendix of this module are an annotated list of resources of project ideas (“Beyond Known Boundaries Resource Guide”), a list of suggested projects (“Sample Project Ideas”), and an overview of current efforts around Vermont (“Youth and Youth-Adult Partnerships”). These resources provide a wide range of project alternatives and networking opportunities.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** *Participants will decide on the project and project format (full group, small group, or individual).*

### **ACTIVITY 1: GROUP BRAINSTORM AFFINITY ACTIVITY**

**Materials:** Post-it notes, 1 note for each participant; large sheet of paper (2 by 3 feet)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Give all participants one Post-it note. Ask them to write down a personal development goal, a skill, or a school-community change they would like to undertake that will serve to build their leadership skills. Their idea can come from the brainstorm options, the fishbowl, exploring other examples or options, or be a new revelation. The bottom line, however, is that participants can offer only one project idea. It should be something that is meaningful, that they care deeply about, and that involves some degree of risk taking or challenge (i.e., not something they would have done anyway or is unrelated to leadership skill development). It should also be doable within the time frame and resources given. Keep in mind that the more ambitious and exciting the project

is, the more people will invest time into it, and the more rewarding it will be to complete.

**Step 2.** Lay the larger piece of paper on the floor or table and have the group circle around the paper. Ask that everyone silently put their post-it down on the paper and review all the other “offerings.” Then ask the group to silently group the pieces of paper in any way they think makes sense.

Reinforce that individuals may choose to not share their personal development goal or desired skill area if they feel uncomfortable sharing this with the group. They can still take part in this grouping activity and all subsequent discussions.

**Step 3.** Lead a dialogue about the ideas offered, encouraging clarifying questions or observations but discouraging critiques of ideas.

**Step 4.** Facilitate a dialogue regarding the trends and patterns observed and the implications for the project:

- How small or wide is the diversity in project ideas?
- Are there any themes or connections across your groupings?
- Now that everyone has seen the ideas offered, have you changed your thoughts or wishes relative to a project?
- What would be the benefits of a full group project? What would be the drawbacks?
- What would be the benefits of small group or individual projects? What would be the drawbacks?
- How should we handle the decision about whether we do a full group project, or small group and individual projects?

**Step 5.** Seek consensus on the project topic(s) and class project configuration (full group, small group, individuals). Be aware of individuals who did share their personal development or skill-building goals. Make sure that their opinions are heard and respected. A class member can agree to a group project because of the benefit of team involvement, as well as pursuing a personal development or skill-building goal if they wish.

## **ACTIVITY 2: SO WHAT DO I GET OUT OF THIS? THE PERSONAL ACTION PLAN**

**Materials:** “So What Do I Get Out of This? Personal Action Plan” handout (see appendix of this module); each participant’s Personal Mission Statement and/or self-collage (see appendix of Exploration of Leaders and Leadership module) if these activities were completed.

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Clarifying personal relevance of the project and the individual's role in the project is key to the participant's commitment and learning. This exercise gives individuals a chance to step back and think about why this issue is so important to them, how it ties to their Personal Mission Statement or self-collage, and how the skills to be attained fit into a larger life perspective.

Give each participant a copy of the "So What Do I Get Out of This? Personal Action Plan" handout and ask them to get out their Personal Mission Statements. Give them ten minutes of silence to complete this reflective piece. Have them share what they have written with a partner.

### **ACTIVITY 3: CELEBRATE!**

This level of decision-making takes a great deal of energy. Finalizing a project focus and format is testimony to the group's decision-making capacity. Create a celebration for this hard work! Call it a warm-up for the end-of-project celebration.

### **OBJECTIVE 4:** *Participants will understand and complete the five basic steps in project planning.*

Facilitators present an overview of the project planning process and then help participants apply each step to their own planning. Participants will use "Gathering Information" handout in the appendix of this module to record questions that need answers and sources of answers.

Participants can review the "Project Planning Overview" handout, also in this module's appendix, as you go over these steps:

1. *Develop and state a goal.*
2. *Gather information.*
3. *Create an action plan.*
  - Brainstorm change effort or skill-building alternatives.
  - Choose the best solution.
  - Figure out exactly what has to happen.
4. *Do it!*
5. *Did it work?*

**Activity:** Ask participants to outline the questions they need answered and where the source for answers are on the "Gathering Information" handout. They will need to seek out their answers before Step 3.

### **STEP 1. GOAL DEVELOPMENT**

The first step in project planning is deciding on an issue of importance and setting a clear goal.

Projects can relate to a personal development goal, building a leadership skill, or changing something in the school or community. For this reason, examples are offered of these three options. Facilitators will need to tailor the review of planning steps to project choices made by this group. For example, if the group is doing a school-related project, there is no need to review information about personal goal projects.

The goal should be: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timed—a SMART goal. Participants should be able to clearly visualize and state the outcome they want. For example:

**Personal Goal:** I am going to improve my relationship with my mother and lessen the number of times we fight and stop talking with one another by having dinner with her every Monday night for the next month and asking questions to better understand her point of view before stating mine.

**Leadership Skill Goal:** I am going to sign up for the July facilitator training for the diversity program for middle school students and facilitate classes throughout the fall so that I can learn how to teach kids to be more caring.

**School or Community Change Goal:** Our class is going to sponsor a “Diversity Day” on May 27 where our common cultural heritage will be explored and celebrated.

Have participants record their project goal on the “Project Planning Overview” (see appendix in this module) and share their project goals, answering any clarifying questions that come up.

## STEP 2. GATHER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The information a participant might need is very project dependent. Examples of information needs are as follows:

### Personal Development

- Why has it been hard for me to change my behavior? What have I learned from these times?
- What support systems might be available to me to help me succeed?
- How have other people been successful in changing their attitudes, values, or behaviors?
- Can other close friends or family help me understand this issue better? Can they offer me a different perspective on my choices and behaviors in the past and what might work now?
- What internal resources do I have that I can draw on to be successful?

**Leadership Skill**

- Who provides this sort of skill or competency training?
- What will I be qualified for when I finish their training?
- What are their qualifications?
- Has the organization I want to volunteer in ever had youth volunteers?
- Who works there that I know and what can they tell me about the organization?

**School or Community Change**

- Why hasn't this issue or problem been addressed before?
- If it has been addressed before, why didn't anything change?
- What are the symptoms of the problem? What are the root causes?\*
- How have other schools or communities addressed these root causes?
- Is there technical information or research I need to understand?
- Is there any survey data or other information that may be helpful?
- Who would not want this change and why?
- Are there any policies in place that would block the change I want?
- Who would be my best allies in making this change happen?

*\*Two alternative activities to explore root causes of issues can be found in the Decision Making and Systems and Change modules. All too often individuals jump from a symptom (i.e., high drug and alcohol use, discriminatory practices, poor school climate) to a solution without ever considering the underlying causes for the symptom—and fail. Only by understanding why this issue hasn't changed for the better up until now, will we make the right choices.*

Gathering additional information can help participants begin to get other people invested in the focus of their project. They might consider including others in their school/community-change project work as well.

*When people work together to create conditions that promote their mutual well-being, not only is a clear sense of the common good strengthened and pursued, but the individuals involved are provided opportunities for personal growth and development as well.*

—William Lofquist, *Discovering the Meaning of Prevention* (1983)



**Facilitator Note:** Ideally, participants can pursue these questions before your next session and then continue walking through the steps.

### STEP 3. CREATE AN ACTION PLAN

Brainstorm all the possible solutions to the issue you have chosen. Remember that wild ideas are OK—in fact they may be the key to your success! If you are doing a group project, make sure everyone’s ideas are heard and understood without judgment or being cut off.

**Facilitator Note:** If the group has done the Decision Making module, remind them of the brainstorming effort in the *Deep Dive* shopping cart video.

**Activity:** Groups create their own brainstorm list of solutions or individuals brainstorm their alternative actions. Narrow down your solutions to the two or three that you or your group are most excited about. Take a few minutes to analyze the resources (people, time, policies, advocacy groups, money, etc.) you could muster for each solution and the challenges or barriers you can anticipate. (See “Resources and Challenges Chart” in the appendix of this module.) This provides helpful information to decide on the best solution. What can you reasonably accomplish in the time frame you have, with the resources available to you? Even though you might have come up with a great idea, the barriers may be overwhelming or it might take much more time or resources than you have.

**Activity:** Create the Project Action Plan. Figure out exactly what has to happen. The action plan flows out of this work:

- Define exact steps of what needs to happen.
- Identify who is going to be responsible for each step.
- Note the time frame for completion.
- Identify resources needed (money, people, materials, etc.).
- Define the results to assess your progress.

Have participants grouped by project and complete their individual or group Project Action Plan (see appendix in this module). Make sure there is time to brainstorm resources (people, supplies, money), sharing the combined knowledge of the group. Individual personal growth plans might be quite simple and straightforward. However the act of thinking things through and writing them down deepens clarity and the participant’s commitment to this work.

**STEP 4. DO IT!**

Align what you do during class time with project needs to the greatest extent possible. This is easiest in situations where the entire class is engaged in one project. It is nearly impossible when the class has chosen all individual projects. Even in the latter instance, the skills in this curriculum will undoubtedly generalize to project work.

**Facilitator Note:** Participants need support during this phase. Check on project progress on a regular basis. Journal questions and individual conversations are another way to assess the project progress.

**STEP 5. DID IT WORK?**

Review the “M” (measurable) in the SMART goal and assess progress on the identified “leadership skill(s) you hope to build during the course of your project” on the “So What Do I Get Out of This?” handout in Appendix.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What excites you most about your project?
- What do you anticipate will be the harder aspects of completing this work?
- How will you keep track of how the work gets done or your team-work, as well as the work itself?
- What was it like for you to go through this planning process? What was helpful about it? Hard about it?

**OBJECTIVE 5:** *Participants will reflect upon, share, and celebrate their project accomplishments.*

**ACTIVITY 1: REFLECT, SHARE, CELEBRATE**

**Materials:** Up to you!

**Time Commitment:** As long as it takes to present and honor the work.

Reflection is an important part of the project, helping individuals explore the impact of their learning. Sharing their accomplishments with fellow participants deepens their understanding of the impact of the project. It also builds their presentation skills. Celebration is the only fitting end to the project. The group should decide the exact format for this event.

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## BEYOND KNOWN BOUNDARIES RESOURCE GUIDE

### **Books**

*The Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose and Turn Creative Thinking into Positive Action*

This publication offers a wide variety of examples of social action youth projects, stretching from elementary-school-age efforts through high school. Major sections focus on skill-building (telephone use, letter writing, interviewing, speeches, surveys, petitions, fundraising, media coverage and advertising, campaigning), initiating or changing laws (local and state laws, lobbying, resolutions), and resources (government and nonprofit social issues groups).

*Ideas that Cook: Activities for Asset Builders in School Communities*

This book is full of examples from asset-building efforts in schools and communities around the country. The book is organized into sections: "Appetizers" are activities that are easy to implement, don't require a lot of preparation or materials and provide fairly immediate benefits. These are followed by "Main Courses," which are projects that require notable coordination and cooperation from school and community. "Side Dishes" and "Desserts" are also offered.

*Kids as Planners: A Guide to Strengthening Students, Schools and Communities Through Service Learning*

This is an excellent resource for an in-depth introduction to service learning and group project design. It originated from the KIDS Consortium in Maine and was designed to "provide inspiration and guidance" for community-based project work. It has a few examples of what youth have done and is an excellent how-to guide.

*The Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference*

This book is full of a diverse array of service project options.

### **Video**

*Building Connections: Concrete Ideas to Improve School Climate*

This video features Mark Scharenbroich, who has traveled throughout the United States and Canada collecting examples of youth efforts that have positively influenced schools. He is charismatic and engaging as he walks viewers through "100 slides of easy, innovative and affordable solutions to improving your school's climate." He begins the video by talking about the importance of building relationships across all sectors of the school. Most examples, however, relate to more concrete projects (i.e. ways to honor students involved in the arts and drama, painting lockers, etc). The range and creativity of these examples are inspiring.

**Internet**

[www.Project540.org](http://www.Project540.org)

Project 540 is a nationwide effort to conduct youth lead dialogue groups (100,000 youth nationally in the 2002–2003 school year), resulting in schoolwide action plans. This group created a *Civic Resource Guide*, which is an extensive review of “Resources for Activism and Youth Empowerment.” The guide is divided into sections focusing on: resources for activism and youth empowerment, human rights and global justice, and resources for civic education and participation. It is a remarkable compilation of testimony to the power and importance of youth voice and participation.

[www.whatkidscando.org](http://www.whatkidscando.org)

This Web site provides multiple examples of youth generated school and community work from around the country.

**Other**

*Panel Group Discussion:* You may consider getting a panel together of young people who have engaged in personal development work, developed a leadership skill, or been engaged in school/community-change efforts.

## THE PROJECT OVERVIEW

### Project Focus

Projects can focus on any one of the following:

- Addressing a personal development goal (speaking up in situations where the individual usually is tongue-tied, reducing or stopping alcohol or drug use, moving from anger to understanding in a difficult personal relationship).
- Developing a desired leadership skill (taking a public speaking course, becoming a facilitator for a diversity program for younger students, volunteering in a local nonprofit organization).
- Engaging in a school or community effort to bring about change (making a video about a topic youth care about and using it to spark community dialogue, becoming more active in the 4-H Youth Council, creating a community youth group).

### Project Format (full group, small group, individual)

The project may be taken on individually or in partnership with one or more classmates, or the entire class may choose a project to pursue. The critical factor is that the undertaking has personal meaning.

### Project Steps

- Define project and your learning goals.
- Plan and do the project.
- Reflect on what you have learned.
- Share and celebrate what you learned with others.

**SAMPLE PROJECT IDEAS**

- Developing a local nature trail.
- Advocating for a student seat on the local school board.
- Tutoring at a school or afterschool program.
- Choosing and acting on a personal goal regarding using your voice when confronted with discrimination.
- Analyzing school asset data and creating an action plan.
- Volunteering at a nursing home, soup kitchen, Habitat for Humanity.
- Serving and helping older citizens who live alone.
- Rallying students to work on an important school issue such as having an open campus.
- Organizing an afterschool play group for children.
- Organizing a community dialogue night.
- Assuming a mentoring role for a younger person.
- Becoming a board member of a youth-serving community organization.

## **YOUTH AND YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Examples of Involvement and Leadership**

#### **School Decision-Making**

##### Administrative/Policy:

- Youth middle school mentoring management team develops and runs mentoring program.
- Youth on school hiring teams.
- Youth positions on school boards (nonvoting and voting status).
- Youth-adult or youth-dominated school management team.
- Student-led dialogue groups resulting in Civic Action Plans (Project 540 and study circles).
- Dialogue days/nights.

##### Classroom:

- Teacher feedback systems to shape classroom experience.
- Capstone projects.
- Personalized Learning Plans.

#### **Economic Development**

- Sugaring business.
- Student aquaculture project and business (Lubec, Maine).
- Student initiated community revitalization efforts: disposable income study (Howard, North Dakota).
- School-based graphic design business (California).

#### **Environmental Issues**

- Student environmental project leads to testifying before legislature to protect fragile ecosystem in home town: legislation passed (Vermont).
- Development of nature trails for school and community.
- Water quality projects: tracking for state.

#### **Local- and State-Level Policy**

- Youth push for voting student seat on Vermont State Board of Education and get it!
- Statewide annual dialogue session on "Changing Conditions That Impact Youth" with legislators.
- Recommendation: "Vermont Youth Cabinet" now under consideration.
- Youth-initiated grant councils in each region of Vermont. Disseminate \$10,000 annually.
- Five Truancy and Drop Out Prevention Projects around state engage youth as active members of committee work.
- Youth-initiated town meetings throughout Vermont.
- Youth involved in drafting of new Vermont standards relative to place-based education.



### **Media and Technology**

Student-run TV news station.

Student-generated town newspapers.

### **Rural Arts and Cultural Development**

Collecting and cataloging historical information.

Renovation of one-room schoolhouse.

Gorilla Theater and other traveling youth drama groups—  
many with social themes.

Helping with renovation of local town house as new town cultural resource.

## **SO WHAT DO I GET OUT OF THIS? PERSONAL ACTION PLAN**

Please review your Personal Mission Statement and then answer the following questions:

**Why does this project have personal significance to you?  
What made you pick it before all others?**

**What leadership skill(s) do you hope to build during the course of your project?**

**How do these skills relate to your future life interests or goals?**

## PROJECT PLANNING OVERVIEW

**Step 1:** *State your goal:* what you want to change or accomplish.

State a SMART goal relative to personal development, skill-building, or a school/community-change effort.

**Step 2:** *Gather information.*

Figure out what you already know and what you need to know. Make sure you are looking for the reasons why change hasn't happened before—the root causes.

**Step 3:** *Create an action plan.*

- Brainstorm change effort or skill-building alternatives.
- Choose the best solution.
- Figure out exactly what has to happen.

**Step 4:** *Do it!*

**Step 5:** *Did it work?*

See if you met your goals by looking at how you decided to measure your success and the skills you wanted to develop.

*Now start all over again!!*

## Questions to Be Answered

## Source of Information

## Answers

## **RESOURCES AND CHALLENGES CHART**

### **Solution Alternative Being Considered:**

Resources

Challenges

### **Solution Alternative Being Considered:**

Resources

Challenges

### **Solution Alternative Being Considered:**

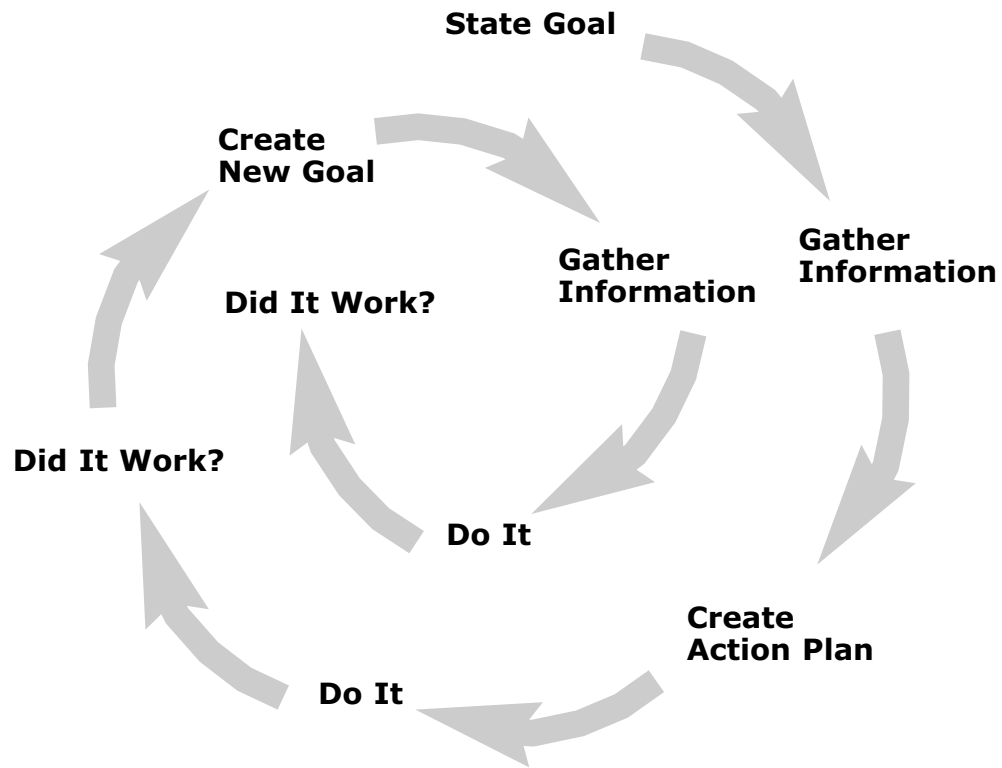
Resources

Challenges

**Project Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Time Frame	Outcome/Result

## MAKING CHANGE CYCLE







# Communication

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# Communication

*Nature has given us one tongue but two ears that we may hear others twice as much as we speak.*

—Zeno of Citium

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## **Goal**

Explore and develop two essential skills of effective communication—listening and speaking.

---

## **Rationale**

Effective communication is the foundation of positive relationships; positive relationships lie at the heart of successful leadership. Communication skills enable individuals to work with each other to shape and articulate a goal, organize and implement a plan, and reach a desired outcome. Effective communication sustains friendships and the many other relationships that enrich our lives.

Communication involves the art of listening to what is said and noticing what is not said. It involves asking open-ended questions to seek understanding and accurately summarizing what is heard. This often requires setting personal agendas aside and being open to opposing views.

Communication also involves effectively speaking, whether in conversation, providing feedback, or in a formal presentation. This module builds basic communication skills and lays a foundation for conflict resolution strategies.

## **Objectives Summary**

Participants will:

1. *experience and identify challenges to effective communication;*
2. *understand the essential components of communication: listening and speaking;*
3. *practice listening skills including: attending to nonverbal cues, using open-ended questions, and restating and summarizing what was heard;*
4. *practice providing constructive feedback; and*
5. *develop and practice formal presentation skills.*

**OBJECTIVE 1:** *Participants will experience and identify challenges to effective communication.*

### **ACTIVITY 1: VISITORS IN A FOREIGN LAND**

**Materials:** Blindfolds for half your group; 8-foot rope; 7-foot rope;  
1 foam “noodle” (used in swimming)

**Time:** 40 minutes

This activity is a powerful way to begin to explore communication in its most basic form—without use of the English language. It is a way to bring up discussion about the following:

- Communication is complex and often difficult.
- We make assumptions that we are being clear in our communication, when in fact we have not been clear at all.
- We have different natural responses when communication is hard—a range between withdrawing to being assertive in finding a way to understand.
- We rely on nonverbal communication
- Behaviors speak louder than words.

#### **Overview**

Half the participants are unsuspecting visitors who land in the airport of a foreign land. They must successfully master a local ritual before they can leave the airport terminal and safely enter the country. The natives are responsible for helping them master this ritual.

#### **Physical Set-Up**

Lay the 7-foot rope down (or tape the floor), dividing the room into two halves leaving ample space on one side of the rope for the visitors and enough space for the remaining participants to be on the other side of the rope, with the props (8-foot rope and foam noodle).

#### **Instructions**

**Step 1. Divide the Group:** Divide the group by asking the participants to characterize themselves as type A personalities (self-starters, jump in head first and figure it out as you go) or type B personalities (step back and think before speaking or acting). Once the group is divided in two roughly equal parts, send group B to the hallway or another space out of sight and hearing of group A.

## Step 2. Instructions to Groups

### *Type A Group Directions: The Natives*

- You must teach the visitors a basic ritual of your country before they can leave the airport terminal. The ritual is as follows:
  1. Pick up the rope and tie it so that it forms a circle.
  2. All participants must hold the foam noodle at the same time
  3. The entire group must step inside the rope circle and pass the rope up over their heads, while continuing to hold the noodle.
- You can only speak in your native language, which is *not* English and has no relationship to English. For example, you cannot use “yup” or “ah-ha” types of words for yes. You must come up with a unique language.
- You do *not* understand English. Therefore, if the visitors ask you questions in English, you can not respond to them. You can only respond to the behaviors you see; they must act out what they are asking. For example, if one of the visitors asks you if he should search the floor for something that will help him, the natives *cannot* respond. If that same person bends down and starts patting the floor in an attempt to find something that will help him, the native would want to verbally reinforce this effort in their own language.
- You will not be able to physically touch the visitors.
- You should develop your language and a greeting for the visitors.

**Important:** *Do not tell them that the visitors will be blindfolded.* They will therefore be surprised and have to regroup when the visitors arrive. This aspect of the activity highlights that we cannot make assumptions about the people we communicate with and may have to try many ways to communicate before we find the one that is clear to both parties. Give them ten minutes to develop their language and greeting. In the meantime, provide instructions to the visitors.

### *Type B Group Directions: The Visitors*

- You are going to be in the airport of a foreign land and you must master a complex local ritual to gain entry to the country.
- You will be blindfolded when you enter the country. Because of the length of this activity, blindfolds are recommended. (However, if someone is uncomfortable wearing it, tell the individual that if he or she happens to peek, they cannot use the information they get to help the group with the task.)
- You only speak English. You will not understand the language of the country you are visiting.
- The natives do *not* understand English. They will therefore not be

able to respond to the visitors' questions—only to their actions. Repeat this and give an example to make sure they understand.

- You will serve as an interpreter and promise to keep them safe; you are new on the job and will do the best you can.

Ask them to create a unique greeting for their hosts while you go and make sure the "natives" are ready.

**Step 3. The Airport Encounter:** Lead the blindfolded visitors into the room and place them on the visitor side of the rope, where the props are located. Make sure you keep them safe by creating a human chain and spotting both ends of the line. Stay on the visitor side to assure their physical safety and explain that you are an interpreter but new to your work and not sure how helpful you will be. Make sure the natives observe the communication rule of not responding to questions but only to physical gestures.

Do not let the natives use English to deal with discovering that the visitors are blind, even if their language included visual cues. This is an important part of their communication challenge.

**Facilitator Note:** Carefully monitor the dynamics of this activity. It is designed to be stressful, but within bounds of reason. If a visitor is getting particularly anxious or the natives particularly frustrated and unable to move forward, give them an opportunity to regroup.

### Dialogue or Journal Questions

- How was communication established? What worked well? What didn't?
- What was the experience like for the visitors? What did it feel like and how did you respond when communication was so difficult?
- What was the experience like for the natives? What did it feel like and how did you respond when communication was so difficult?
- Relate your response in this activity to communication difficulties to your life. Do you tend to respond the same way or differently when you are not understanding what someone is saying or asking?
- What does this activity highlight about communication? (See activity introductory facilitator notes.)

## ACTIVITY 2: GEOMETRIC DESIGN

**Materials:** "Geometric Design Pattern" handouts (see appendix in this module, use both designs); pencils; blank piece of paper for each participant

**Time:** 20 minutes

Have participants pair off. Ask them to move their chairs so that they are back to back, facing away from each other. Give one participant one geometric design and explain that they will have ten minutes to give his or her partner verbal instruction about how to replicate this design. Participants with the design can only use words and can at no time show the design to their partner. After ten minutes, pass out the second design, switching the roles.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was the experience like when you were giving instructions?
- What was the experience like when you were receiving instructions?
- What does this experience tell us about communication?
- Have you ever had moments when you felt like the person with the geometric design? The blank piece of paper? How did you respond?

**OBJECTIVE 2:** *Participants will understand the essential components of communication: listening and speaking.*

### **ACTIVITY 1: COMMUNICATION: PAINTING THE BIG PICTURE**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers

**Time:** 40 minutes

This activity lets participants define key attributes of listening and using their voice, which are then used as a reference point in subsequent activities.

**Step 1.** Identify that there are two primary sides to communication—listening and speaking. Listening includes attending to both what is said, as well as to the body language of an individual or a group. Speaking includes:

- how you participate in a dialogue, discussion or debate with one or more individuals,
- how you provide feedback to others, and
- doing a formal presentation to educate or sway a group to a certain way of thinking.

**Step 2. Preparation:** Title one piece of newsprint “Listening.” Create two sections: “listening to what is said” and “nonverbal listening.” Title the

second piece of newsprint "Speaking" and provide three sections: "participating in a dialogue or discussion," "providing feedback to others," and "doing a formal presentation."

Split your group in half. Have one group focus on identifying the skills needed for listening and the second group focus on the skills needed for speaking. Then have each share their work and invite the listening group to add to the list. Here is an example of what a group might come up with:

### **Listening**

#### *Listening to what is said:*

- genuinely wanting to listen
- good eye contact
- body language—head nodding, clearly physically present
- empathizing
- asking questions to clarify
- checking that you really understand
- being neutral—put your own agenda or opinions aside

#### *Nonverbal Listening*

- attentive to body posture—pulling away, sitting up and forward
- energy level
- amount of eye contact
- hand gestures

### **Speaking**

#### *Participating in a dialogue or discussion*

- open minded
- can restate other's opinions or position
- speaks for self—"I statements"
- reacts to topic at hand—does not attack person
- understands there may be many legitimate points of view

#### *Providing feedback to others*

- first states what they agreed with or was positive
- does not put down or demean other
- focuses on topic, not person
- respectful and nonjudgmental
- good eye contact

#### *Doing a formal presentation*

- confident



- clear
- well organized
- written/visual materials that back up key points
- simple points
- eye contact

**OBJECTIVE 3:** *Participants will practice the following listening skills: attending to verbal and nonverbal cues, using open-ended questions, restating or summarizing what was heard.*

The first four activities relate to appreciating verbal and nonverbal cues and serve as nice icebreakers for this objective.

**ACTIVITY 1: BACK-TO-BACK**

*(Adapted from PA Back Pocket Adventure, p. 29)*

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

Pick a partner. Look each other over before turning back to back and changing five things on yourself (i.e., roll up a cuff, change wrist your watch is on, take earrings off). Turn around and see if the person can identify what you have changed, and vice versa. You can then make teams of two, four, etc., and repeat the activity.

**ACTIVITY 2: POIGNANT PICTURE**

*(Adapted from PA Back Pocket Adventure, p. 83)*

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

Explain that you are going to do another version of "Back-to-Back," this time acting out a nonverbal response to a situation you will be given, introduced by the phrase: "What do you look like when . . ." Ask participants to stand back to back with a partner and offer the following cues:

What do you look like when . . .

- you first get out of bed
- your teacher says you have a test on everything you have learned to date the next day
- your friend says he or she *really* needs to talk to you

- you slept through your alarm by an hour
- you gave a presentation or report but later realized you had a piece of lettuce stuck between your two front teeth the whole time
- you learned that you will get to see a friend you haven't been in touch with for two years
- you learn you won the lottery
- you are at the end of your first hour of listening to a lecture on glow worms

Count to three after each cue, at which time participant pairs turn to face each other and observe the other person's nonverbal response to the cue.

**Step 2:** Identify three possible choices of nonverbal gestures (i.e., anxiety, joy, fear, confusion, embarrassment, boredom, confusion, sadness, anger) and agree on a signal to turn around simultaneously. The goal is to have both partners expressing the same "Poignant Picture" out of the choice of three. Have pairs shift to other participants and try again. (The Project Adventure author of this activity, Rhonda Aubry, reports that the record was six consecutive matches from a couple married for fifty-two years!)

### **ACTIVITY 3: COMMUNICATION: VIDEO/MOVIES**

**Materials:** Video clips of your choosing, approximately 2 minutes in length, where verbal and nonverbal communication is key.

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes (Alternative 1); 1–2 hours (Alternative 2)

**Alternative 1:** Choose several TV or movie clips that serve as powerful examples of different nonverbal behaviors. Watch the same clip three times without clarifying what you are doing.

#### ***First Viewing: Sound OFF, Picture ON***

Discussion Questions

- How are the characters expressing themselves nonverbally? (face, body gestures, etc.)
- What would you guess is going on in this scene?

#### ***Second Viewing: Sound ON, Picture OFF***

Discussion Questions

- Now what do you know about what is going on in the scene?
- How do you know that? What tells you?

**Third Viewing: Sound ON, Picture ON**

## Discussion Questions

- Is communication just speaking? Just body movements?
- How do they work together?

**Alternative 2:** Have small groups of participants create and videotape a one-minute drama. Do not let groups witness what the others are doing. Follow the viewing sequence above.

*The teeth are smiling,  
But is the heart?*

—Congolese proverb

**ACTIVITY 4: PASS IT ON**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Have the group sit in a circle. Choose a short phrase such as “That is quite interesting” or “Tell me about your day” or “You’ve got to be kidding.” Tell the participants that they are going to “pass” this phrase around the room, but each participant must say it in a different way.

**Dialogue or Journal Questions**

- What stood out for you in this activity?
- What should you do when you see big differences between the words, the tone, or the nonverbal gestures of what a person is saying?

**ACTIVITY 5: ACTIVE LISTENING—OR WHAT?**

**Materials:** 1 set of Listening Cards and “Listening or What? Observer Form” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 40 minutes

Ask for six volunteers who will do this activity in pairs in front of the rest of the group. Three will be instructed to talk five minutes each about a decision they have to make or a story about an instance in their life that was meaningful to them. Three will be listeners.

Ask the three who want to be talkers to go to another part of the room and decide what topics they will talk about. They can each choose different topics. In the meantime, meet privately with the other three volunteers and pass out a listening card to each one. Tell them that for the first minute or

two they are to start with active listening. For the remaining minutes, they are to assume the behaviors noted on the second side of the card.

Ask the remaining participants to brainstorm ways that they know people are not actively listening while you are briefing these two groups.

Call the group back together and ask for one talker and one listener to volunteer. Let them do their role play. Ask observers to be observing listening behaviors—taking notes on what they see (observation form).

Do the other two role plays before processing this activity.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Ask the talkers: What was the experience like for you?
- Ask the listeners: What was the experience like for you?
- Ask the observers: What active listening behaviors did you observe?
- What other behaviors did you observe? (record these)
- What does this activity tell us about communication skills?

## **ACTIVITY 6: ROADBLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION**

**Materials:** “Roadblocks to Communication” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Pass out the “Roadblocks to Communication” handout. If you have done Activity 5, point out that the first three roadblocks relate to the listener behaviors they acted out or witnessed. Have each participant read one of the remaining roadblocks.

**Step 1.** Split the class into groups of three and have each group complete one other example of what each one of the roadblocks “sounds like.”

**Step 2.** Split the list into as many groups as you have in your class. Assign each group to two to four of the roadblocks and ask them to *add the nonverbal gestures that usually go with that behavior*. Once they have worked this out, have each group demonstrate what they look like.

**Step 3.** Ask them to talk for five minutes with another participant about:

- which roadblocks most irritate them and
- which roadblocks they tend to put up with when communicating with others (family relationships, teachers, bosses, etc.).

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Which roadblocks are most irritating? (have a go-around)
- Which roadblocks do you most often use? (show of hands)

- How does using these roadblocks serve us?
- How does using these roadblocks not serve us?
- How can knowing these roadblocks help us in our communication with others?

### **ACTIVITY 7: IF NOT THAT, THEN WHAT: HEADING FOR OPEN ROAD**

**Materials:** “Listening Techniques,” “Grab Bag of Open-Ended Questions,” and “Interviewing Activity: Recording Sheet” handouts (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 25 minutes

When the roadblocks are taken away, what does effective communication look like? This activity provides a way to experience the importance of open-ended questions.

**Step 1.** Review the “Active Listening Techniques” and “Grab Bag of open-ended Questions” handouts.

**Step 2.** Have participants pair with another participant they do not know that well. Tell them that they are going to interview this person to find out as many new things about them as possible using three strategies:

- Strategy 1: nonverbal methods only
- Strategy 2: yes-no questions only
- Strategy 3: open-ended questions only

Give them 3 minutes for each strategy and have them record what they have found out on the “Interview Activity: Recording Sheet.” Then switch roles with the same partner so both have a chance to interview.

**Step 3.** Regroup in a circle and ask participants to tell one thing they learned about their partner they didn’t know before and which strategy they were using when they found this out.

#### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like using only nonverbal means of getting information?
- What was it like using only yes-no questions?
- What was it like using only open-ended questions?
- How did each strategy feel as the person being interviewed?
- When are open-ended questions most important and helpful to communication?
- What road blocks do open-ended questions help us avoid? (refer to roadblock handout).

**Suggested Supplemental Activities**

- Listen to a professional highly competent interviewer like Terry Gross on National Public Radio. Listen specifically for the quality of her questions.
- Conduct an interview using open-ended questions with someone you want to know more about. Challenge yourself to get as much information as possible.

**OBJECTIVE 4:** *Participants will practice providing constructive feedback.***ACTIVITY 1: FRIENDLY FEEDBACK**

**Materials:** Piece of paper and pencil for each participant pair; “Friendly Feedback” handout: “Attributes” on one side, “Scenarios” on the other (see appendix of this module); newsprint paper or blackboard

**Time Commitment:** 30–40 minutes

As leaders, we will be in situations where we need to provide critical feedback in positive ways so that we can successfully make personal change in our lives, help others change, or make sure groups are working together effectively. Communicating feedback where the individual must receive some constructive criticism is an art and a science. We know individuals are better able to hear constructive criticism if they feel respected, valued, and heard—not judged.

The science of giving constructive feedback is as follows (pass out handout and review):

**Step 1.** *Summarize* what you believe the person has said or done. Check for understanding.

**Step 2.** *Empathize:* Acknowledge the person’s perspective has value by offering something that you agree with, is understandable, or is positive about the person’s perspective or work.

**Step 3.** *State your perspective:*

*I feel . . .* [state the emotion]

*When you . . .* [state the specific behavior]

*Because . . .* [state the effect of the behavior has on your life]

*And I would like . . .* [state specific desired behavior]

**Facilitator Note:** Many participants may feel that they have been introduced to “I” statements at various times in their school guidance experiences. You may want to acknowledge that both youth and many

adults have received training in using “I” statements, but it often does not translate into using them in real life. This activity integrates summarizing and empathizing skills with “I” statements and provides another opportunity to develop this powerful leadership and life skill.

Offer the following example:

*Your parent/guardian tells you that you can't go to a party you really want to go to.*

**Summarize:** I hear you saying that you are worried about me going to this party because you think it will not be chaperoned.

**Empathize:** I understand that you are concerned about my safety and I appreciate that.

**State Your Perspective:**

*I feel . . . hurt and upset.*

*When you . . . do not trust my judgment that it will be safe and question my truthfulness when I tell you that there are chaperones.*

*Because . . . I am a truthful person and am old enough to make good decisions. I have earned your trust and your trust is important to me.*

*And I would like . . . you to let me go to this party.*

**Practice:** Pair participants up and give them two minutes to come up with one scenario (one or two sentences) where an individual must give constructive feedback to someone. It might be a situation from their past where they avoided giving feedback because they just weren't sure how to do it, did try to give feedback but struggled, or regularly see feedback being offered in unconstructive ways.

**Facilitator note:** If time is limited, provide scenarios that you know participants will relate to.

Get participants back together and create a list of all the possible scenarios. Assign three scenarios each to groups of two to three participants. Give them 10 minutes to write down these scenarios on the “Friendly Feedback” handout and complete their feedback response.

Have groups report back what they have come up with.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What was it like to develop these responses?
- What relationships in your lives do you think would benefit most from using this type of feedback?
- Why do you think so many people have learned about “I” statements, but so few use them regularly?

**OBJECTIVE 5:** *Participants will develop and practice formal presentation skills.*

**Facilitator Note:** Developing public speaking skills is a course unto itself. The activities and materials offered here provide a review of the basics and some simple ways to practice these skills.

**ACTIVITY 1: "THE WORST PRESENTATION EVER" SKITS**

**Materials:** Flip chart or newsprint paper or chalkboard; markers or chalk

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Skits:** Divide participants into groups of three. Give them five minutes to develop a one- to two-minute skit of individuals giving a presentation on how to change a tire, scramble an egg, or any other simple informational piece. Instruct them that they should include all the wrong things to do when presenting to an audience. Have them enact their skits for the class.

**Summarize the Learning:** Make a "T" chart and label the left-hand column "Qualities of Great Presentations" and the right-hand column, "Qualities of Horrific presentations." Have participants think back to their skits and to speeches or presentations they have seen in other settings—school, community, on television, etc. Ask them to brainstorm the qualities that made the presentation either very good or very bad.

**ACTIVITY 2: "I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH**

**Materials:** Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* videotape, available in many video stores; TV/VCR machine

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

Play the "I Have a Dream" speech and have participants reflect on what made Martin Luther King such a powerful presenter. Refer to the list developed in Activity 1 and add to the list if there are qualities not already listed.

**ACTIVITY 3: PUBLIC SPEAKING OVERVIEW AND COMMON FEARS**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Review the two primary purposes for presentations or speeches:

- *To Inform:* You are offering information which others do not have.



- *To Persuade:* You want to convince others that your perspective is correct and compelling.

Review the two ways speeches or presentations are developed:

- *Impromptu:* You are challenged to present a perspective or tell a story on the spot with little preparation time.
- *Prepared:* You are challenged to present a perspective or tell a story with significant time for preparation.

Inform participants that they will have an opportunity to practice an impromptu presentation that is either informative or persuasive after they have gotten some tips about public speaking.

Offer the following fact: Surveys support that public speaking is the top anxiety-provoking activity of any life activity for people of all ages.

Offer the following quote to frame the goal for public speaking skill-building in this module: "Remember, the trick is not to get rid of the butterflies in your tummy, but to get them to fly in formation." Ask participants to brainstorm physical symptoms of typical "stage fright" (i.e., dry mouth, tense voice, sweaty palms, shaky legs, down-turned eyes, fast breathing, butterflies, hands in pockets, shifting from foot to foot, pounding heart, red face). It is helpful if facilitators share a story or two about their experiences and fears with public speaking.

### Dialogue or Journal Questions

- If 1 equals "piece of cake" and 10 equals "terrified," what would you rate your response to the task of presenting before a group?
- Which is easier for you—providing information or persuading someone of something you believe in?
- Have you had to do an impromptu presentation? What were the benefits of not having time to prepare?
- Any good stories about public speaking experiences?

## ACTIVITY 4: PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS

**Materials:** "Public Speaking: Preparing the Content" and "Guidelines for Developing Confidence in Public Speaking" handouts (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

Review these two handouts by having participants read the different tips out loud. If you have any good stories to go with any one of these items, tell them! Have participants form into groups of three and ask them to share with others their public speaking strengths and challenges, using the list as a catalyst for ideas.

**ACTIVITY 5: IMPROMPTU SPEECHES**

Tell participants that they will have an opportunity to develop and deliver an informational or persuasive two-minute impromptu speech and receive “friendly feedback” (using the form) from fellow participants. If you have the capability, videotape the speeches so that they can observe themselves at another time.

Give participants the choice of either choosing their own topic or drawing a topic from a hat. Personal stories that might have a lesson are fine.

Tell participants that when they are delivering their story, the audience is going to help them monitor their eye contact. They will do this by raising their hand when they feel that the presenter has made eye contact with them for at least three seconds. The presenter should have a goal of making eye contact with as many audience members as possible. Look for patterns. People often favor one side of the room or the other.

**Feedback:** After every presentation, have presenters first talk about what they felt they did well and then what they would change if they were to do it again. Next, allow participants to offer “friendly feedback,” always starting with what they liked about the presentation and then offering possible changes.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Does your project require that you inform or persuade anyone?
- What will your “hook” be to get them listening to you?
- What are your presentation skill strengths?
- What presentation skills would you like to further develop?
- Who can help you with these skills?
- What SMART goal can you set for yourself relative for developing your presentation skills?

**Closing:** Remind participants that everyone will be doing a presentation about their project to the class. This will be another opportunity to practice and develop their public speaking skills.

**ACTIVITY 6: GOING FOR THE GOLD**

Now take five minutes to prepare the same speech, taking into account the feedback you received after the first time you spoke.

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## LISTENING TECHNIQUES

### Find out more information. Ask open-ended questions.

- When did this begin?
- Why do you feel this way?
- What do you think is causing it?
- Where did you last see it?
- Have you felt this way before?

### Reflect back the information (paraphrase).

- So you think he wants to break up with you.
- You're saying that you don't know why you flunked the class.
- So you don't have the money to pay her back now.
- You're saying that your parents won't let you do something that is important to you to do.

### Reflect back the feelings.

- You sound upset about possibly breaking up.
- You seem confused that you didn't know you were flunking.
- You seem worried that you don't have the money to pay her back.
- You sound angry that your parents just don't understand how important this is to you.

### Encourage the person to talk.

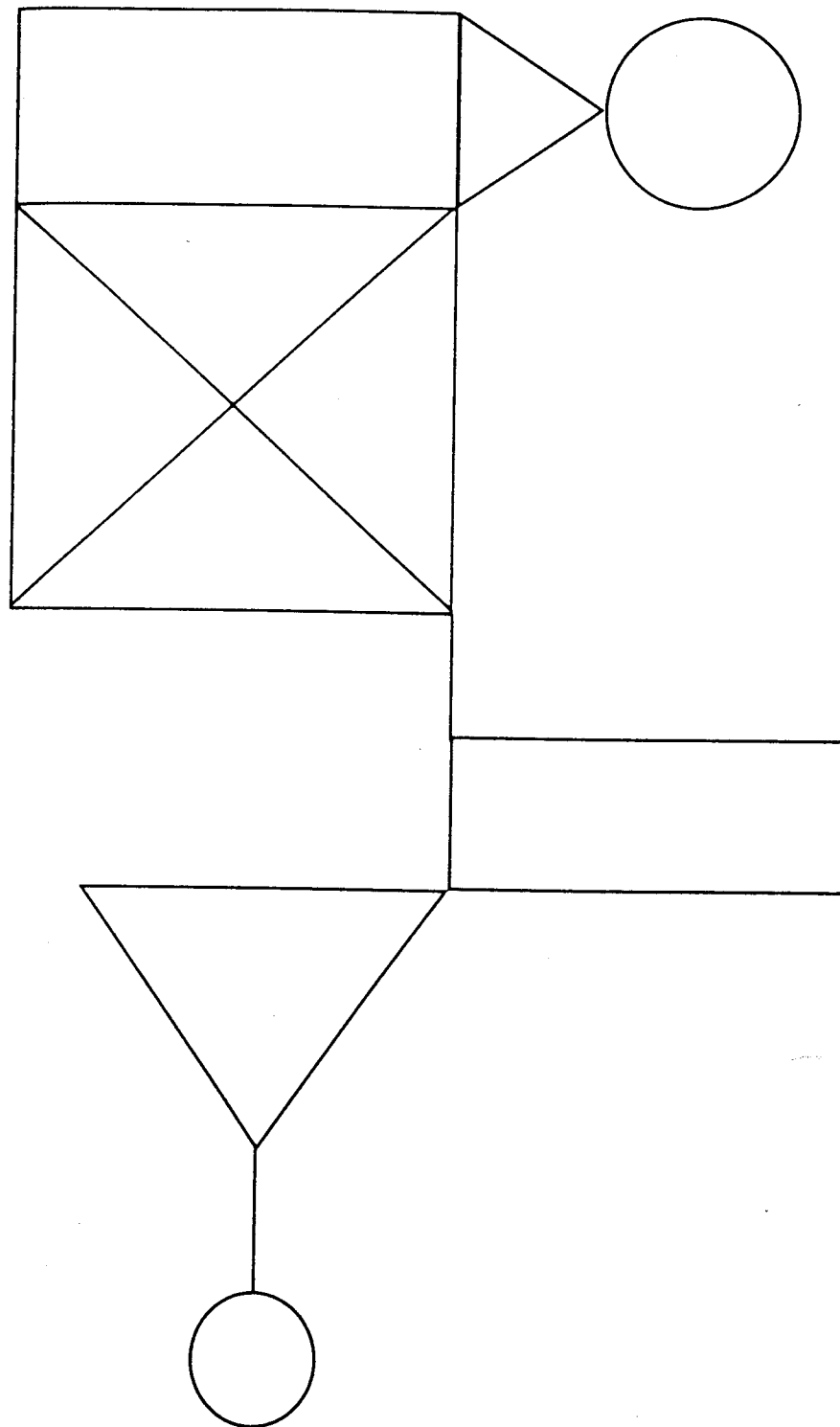
- Tell me more, I really want to understand what is going on.
- Help me understand the reasons you feel this way.
- Can you say more about what you think?
- Please go on.

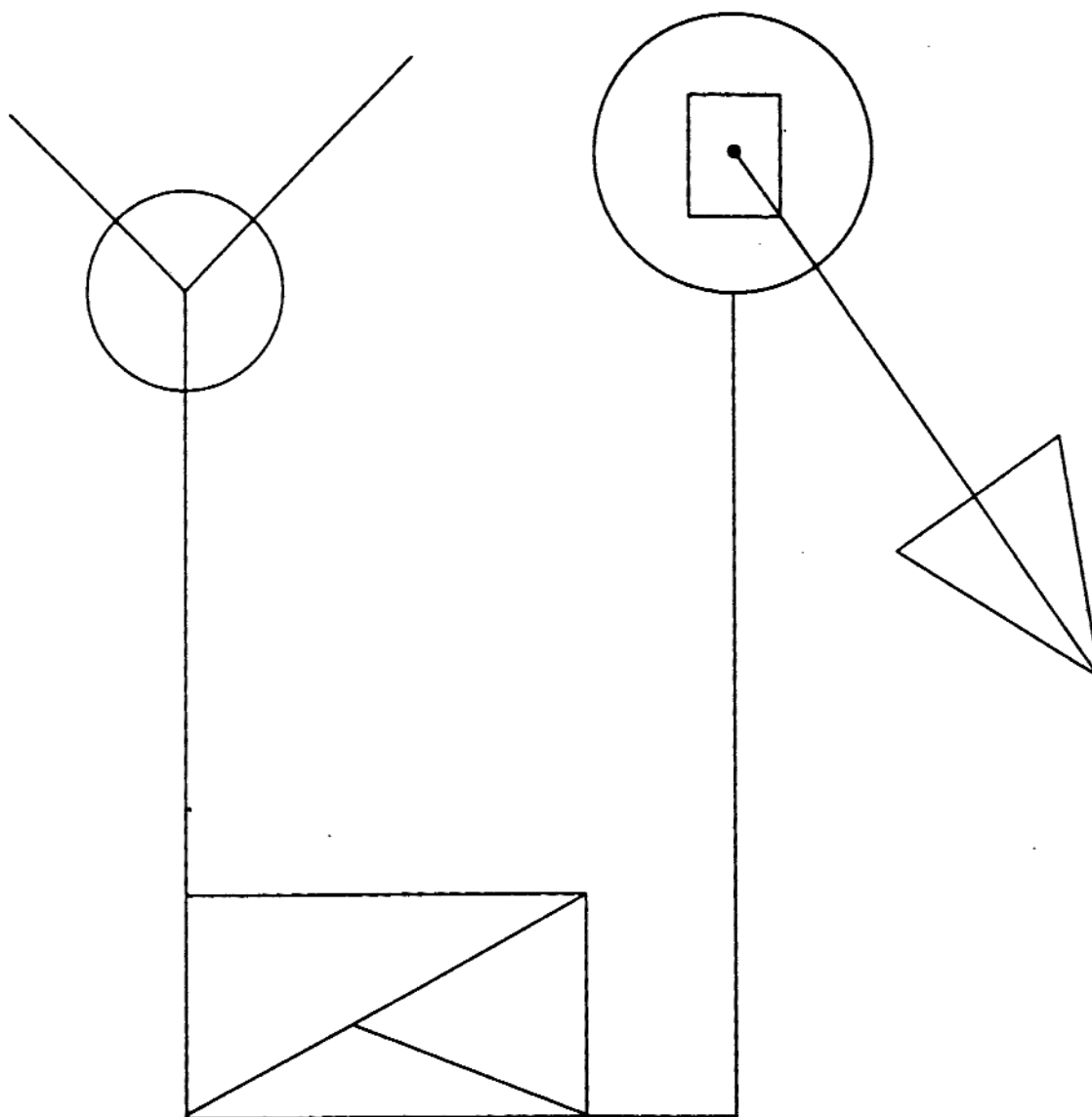
### Summarize what you heard the person say.

- So you are saying that you are upset that you may be breaking up with Sam, but you are not sure if he really does feel this way or not.
- You are confused and upset that you didn't know you were flunking math and don't know what to do next.
- So you owe money, can't pay your friend back right now, and are worried. Your friend doesn't know your situation at the moment.
- You really want to go on this trip with friends but your parents have said you can't, which has made you really angry. You don't feel like your parents understand you in this situation.

*Adapted from "Active Listening Techniques" from "Educators for Social Responsibility Conflict Resolution Workshop and Implementation Manual, 1993, 28 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138. (617) 492-1764.*

## GEOMETRIC DESIGN PATTERN



**GEOMETRIC DESIGN PATTERN**

**LISTENING CARD 1**

After you sit with your partner for about a minute, gradually, subtly start avoiding the issue. Make jokes, interrupt, change the subject. Gradually stop active listening, making it clear that you are only interested in avoiding the issue. Says things like:

"Just ignore it."

"Read a book for a while, then you'll feel better."

"Let's talk about something else."

Please turn the card over.

**LISTENING CARD 2**

After you sit with your partner for about a minute, gradually, subtly start passing judgment. Criticize the speaker, blame him or her for the problem, be sarcastic. Gradually stop active listening, making it clear that you are only interested in passing judgment. Say things like:

"I can't believe you let that happen."

"It's your own fault."

"Great job!"

Please turn the card over.

**LISTENING CARD 3**

After you sit with your partner for about a minute, gradually, subtly start to give advice. Tell him or her what to do, and try to solve the problem for him or her. Gradually stop active listening, making it clear that you are only interested in giving advice. Says things like:

"Don't do that."

"You ought to . . ."

"If I were you, I'd . . ."

Please turn the card over.

**LISTENING CARD 1**

As you sit with your partner demonstrate Active Listening:

**Reflect.** *Reflect the facts.*

**Attention.** *Pay attention.*

**Reflect.** *Reflect feelings.*

**Encourage.** *Encourage the other person to talk.*

Please turn the card over.

**LISTENING CARD 2**

As you sit with your partner demonstrate Active Listening:

**Reflect.** *Reflect the facts.*

**Attention.** *Pay attention.*

**Reflect.** *Reflect feelings.*

**Encourage.** *Encourage the other person to talk.*

Please turn the card over.

**LISTENING CARD 3**

As you sit with your partner demonstrate Active Listening:

**Reflect.** *Reflect the facts.*

**Attention.** *Pay attention.*

**Reflect.** *Reflect feelings.*

**Encourage.** *Encourage the other person to talk.*

Please turn the card over.



**LISTENING OR WHAT? OBSERVER FORM**

Note instances of what was said or done that indicate either good or poor listening:

---

**Good Listening****Poor Listening**

---

***First Role Play***

---

***Second Role Play***

---

***Third Role Play***

**ROADBLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION**

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Sounds Like</b>	<b>Your Example</b>
Disinterested	So what, big deal.	
Providing answers	What I think you should do is . . .	
Judging	You are ridiculous.	
Ordering	You must do . . .	
Threatening	Do this or else.	
Preaching	It is your responsibility to . . .	
Lecturing	Here is what I know you should do . . .	
Belittling issue	It's not such a big deal.	
Diagnosing	I know what you need . . .	

*Adapted from material produced by the Center For Human Development. Copyright 1980.*

**GRAB BAG OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS**

- Tell me more.
- Why do you feel that way?
- Do you agree with that?
- What do you think is really going on here?
- What is your opinion on that?
- How do others you know feel about the situation?
- Do you think there would be any other options?
- Are there other things influencing your feelings?
- Why do you think that happened?
- How do you want it to end?
- Are there other possible reasons why it happened?
- What bothers you most about this?
- Help me understand your reasons.
- Could you say more about what you think?

**INTERVIEWING ACTIVITY: RECORDING SHEET**

Record what you learned about the individual you are interviewing during or immediately after each strategy.

**Strategy 1: Using nonverbal methods only**

**Strategy 2: Using yes-no questions only**

**Strategy 3: Using open-ended questions only**

**FRIENDLY FEEDBACK: ATTRIBUTES**

**Step 1.** *Summarize* what you believe the person has said or done. Check for understanding.

**Step 2.** *Empathize:* Acknowledge the person's perspective has value by offering something that you agree with, is understandable, or is positive about the person's perspective or work.

**Step 3:** *State your perspective:*

*I feel . . .* [state the emotion]

*When you . . .* [state the specific behavior]

*Because . . .* [state the effect of the behavior on your life]

*And I would like . . .* [state specific desired behavior\

## FRIENDLY FEEDBACK: SCENARIOS

-----  
**Situation:**

**Summarize:**

**Empathize:**

**State your perspective:**

*I feel . . .*

*When you . . .*

*Because . . .*

*And I would like . . .*

-----  
**Situation:**

**Summarize:**

**Empathize:**

**State your perspective:**

*I feel . . .*

*When you . . .*

*Because . . .*

*And I would like . . .*

-----  
**Situation:**

**Summarize:**

**Empathize:**

**State your perspective:**

*I feel . . .*

*When you . . .*

*Because . . .*

*And I would like . . .*

## PUBLIC SPEAKING: PREPARING THE CONTENT

*Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you just told them.*

—Cicero's Mandate

**Introduction.** Clearly state the purpose of the presentation. (Inform? Persuade?) Make sure you have a “hook” — something that immediately gets the audience interested in what you have to say.

**Body.** Make your case, provide your information, or tell your story. Try to have no more than three main points.

**Conclusion.** Summarize your main points.

## GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

**Prepare thoroughly.** The more prepared you are, the more poised and self-confident you will feel. Practice!!

**Take a few deep breaths.** Deep breathing helps you relax.

**Remind yourself of your audience goal.** You are not here to act; you are speaking to make a change in your audience—to inform or persuade.

**Start well.** Have your first two to three sentences memorized so you can say them without mumbling or stumbling. Have a “hook.” A good start is worth a zillion.

**Reduce signs of nervousness.** If you remove change, keys, etc. from your pockets before starting, you can’t play with them. Push your hair back and leave your pen (or pencil) behind.

**If a visual aid will help, use it.** “A picture is worth a thousand words,” and energy used in setting up the aid will help you lose some of your nervous energy. Keep visual aids simple and effective.

**Pay attention to your listener’s feedback.** If you try to respond to your listeners, you won’t pay so much attention to yourself.

**Use your energy productively.** Nervousness is a good thing; you’re keyed-up, ready to go. Psychologically, you are at the peak of your performance readiness. Transmit that energy to positive ends, and don’t let it become fear.

**Dress appropriately.** Wear something that is familiar, comfortable, and appropriate to the setting.

**Voice.** Be aware of your voice volume, rate, pitch, and clarity. You can play with all these variables to make your speech interesting.

**Facial expression and eye contact.** Varied facial expressions and good eye contact will draw the audience to your words.

**Movement do’s.** Take a few steps during major transitions; stay balanced on both feet; move in the direction you are facing.

**Movement don’ts.** Pace; rest your weight on one foot; gesture all the time.

**Use imagery, color words.** Many people translate words into pictures in their minds as they listen. Help them paint that picture by incorporating images, colors, smells, or touch descriptions into your presentation.



**IMPROMPTU SPEECH OPTIONS**

Your most embarrassing moment.

The most significant learning experience you ever had.

A story about your favorite pet.

A person who has made a big difference in your life.

A time when you took a big risk.

Something you would like to change in your school or community.

A favorite hobby.

The best vacation you ever took.

A time when you felt discriminated against.

A political issue you care about.

A social or environmental issue you care about.

Where you see yourself in ten years.



# Conflict Resolution

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# Conflict Resolution

*Leadership has a harder job than just choosing sides,  
it must bring sides together.*

—Jesse Jackson

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## **Goal**

Participants will develop knowledge of the nature of conflict and an understanding of the styles, strategies and tactics for managing conflict.

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## **Rationale**

Conflict is inevitable and essential if you are committed to growth and change. Dealing with conflict enables people to learn about themselves and others. Coming to a resolution opens up new possibilities. The challenge of leadership is to facilitate conflict so that it is constructive.

Constructively resolving conflict requires a common understanding of the core issues and a mutual commitment to resolve their differences. Conflict is a healthy and necessary part of life when it allows hidden feelings and needs to surface and be addressed.

The skills for resolving conflict — listening, asking questions, reflecting on the situation, and creating new possibilities—can be learned and developed. These skills are valuable tools for each of us in our own lives and in our lives as leaders and facilitators dedicated to the productivity of a group.

## **Objectives Summary**

Participants will:

1. *develop knowledge of the nature of conflict and the five different styles of managing conflict;*
2. *develop listening skills; and*
3. *develop an understanding of strategies and tactics used to de-escalate conflict.*

**Facilitator Note:** It is important for a group to have solid communication skills before taking on these conflict resolution activities. We recommend that you begin with the module on communication which provides participants with those fundamental communication skills.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** *Participants will demonstrate knowledge of the nature of conflict and five different styles of managing conflict*

### **ACTIVITY 1: CONFLICT BRAINSTORM**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

**Step 1.** Write the word *conflict* on the top of a sheet of newsprint. Ask participants: Who knows what a brainstorm session is? Ask those who indicate they know to describe the way a brainstorm works and the “rules” of brainstorming.

**Facilitator Note:** Brainstorming is a way to bring out a lot of information quickly. During a brainstorm all responses are legitimate; there is no discussion about someone’s response so as not to inhibit people’s creative responses.

**Step 2.** After the (brief) discussion about brainstorming, invite participants to call out words or phrases which come to mind when they hear the word *conflict*. Either the facilitator or a participant volunteer records the responses on the newsprint.

**Step 3.** Ask participants to look over the list that they have generated to determine if there is any pattern to their responses. Generally one pattern will be that the word *conflict* has many negative connotations. There are also many positive dimensions to conflict. Point out that conflict can describe any situation in which there are two points of view. If the group has not identified examples of positive conflict, ask group members to think of situations in which they were faced with a difficult choice, as an example of positive conflict.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What are the common attitudes about conflict?
- How might those attitudes get in the way of dealing with conflict well?
- What are ways to frame conflict in a positive light?
- How might those positive frames help us deal with conflict effectively?

## ACTIVITY 2: CONFLICT STYLE INVENTORY

**Materials:** “Understanding Conflict Management Styles” handout (see appendix in this module)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Explain that the handout is a questionnaire that will help participants think about and identify their approach to conflict. There are no right or wrong answers because each style has its uses and limitations.

**Step 2.** Hand out the questionnaire and allow enough time for everyone to complete the answers and look at the descriptions of each style.

**Step 3.** Encourage participants to share their dominant style and comment on their experience with managing conflict.

**Facilitator Note:** It is important to discuss the uses and limitations of each style (see explanations included with questionnaire). Help participants understand that people usually have more than one style and that there are times when each style may be appropriate. Remember conflict styles are learned and can be changed.

## OBJECTIVE 2: *Participant will demonstrate listening skills.*

Listening is an essential element of good communication. When we listen well, we focus on the person talking to us and we pay attention to the things happening inside us. By asking questions and expressing the thoughts that come up in response to another person’s words, we are working to understand another person’s point of view. This is very different from waiting for a turn to express your own point of view.

## ACTIVITY 1: SAY WHAT???

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 40 minutes

Communication depends on true understanding of what the other person is saying. Often communication breaks down when we assume we understand the other person’s perspective, but really don’t. Restating (paraphrasing) and/or summarizing what another person has said are direct means to cross-check if we really do understand the other person’s position or perspective. This activity helps develop these skills.

**Step 1. Model restating/summarizing:** Ask a class participant to volunteer to talk to one or both facilitators about a situation in his or her life that is important to him or her and entails some dilemma, emotions, or questions (i.e., not just recounting the results of a sporting event or “information only” type of situation). Let this individual talk for three minutes. Paraphrase what you just heard.

**Step 2. Practicing restating/summarizing in pairs:** Ask participants to pair up with another classmate. Instruct the pairs that they will now take turns being “talkers” and “listeners.” The “talkers” will talk about their situation for three minutes. The “listeners” can only ask open-ended questions during this time to seek understanding. At the end of three minutes, the listener will restate what the individual has said. The “talker” gives feedback to the listener regarding the paraphrase—where it was correct and any information that he or she thinks was important that the listener might have not included in the restatement. The participants then switch roles.

**Step 3: Group restating/summarizing activity:** So often our ability to listen is compromised by the strong opinions we hold on an issue. While the individual we are communicating with who holds a differing opinion is talking, we are often already composing our rebuttal in our heads—which means we are not truly listening and trying to understand his perspective. This activity forces us to understand other perspectives before we offer our own by requiring restating before giving opinions.

Form a circle and tell participants they are going to discuss a controversial issue. Have them choose a highly controversial topic about which they are likely divided in their opinions. Provide the following rules for this dialogue: Each person who wants to speak must first restate what the person just before them said before offering their perspective.

**Facilitator Note:** Facilitators must make sure this requirement is adhered to. Close the dialogue after ten to fifteen minutes.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like to converse in this way?
- What was helpful about it?
- What was frustrating about it?
- What does it tell us about communication?
- What did you learn about yourself in this activity?
- Where might it be helpful to use this strategy in other settings?
- How does this activity relate to empathy?
- Why is empathy important in communication?



## ACTIVITY 2: DEBATE ACTIVITY

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

Take the same topic from Activity 1. Do a quick lineup to see where the group stands on the issue, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Ask for three volunteers from the strongly agree group and three volunteers from the strongly disagree group to take part in a debate.

Allow each debating team five minutes to prepare its arguments in support of its viewpoint. In the meantime, meet with the remaining participants and ask them to notice the qualities of effective debaters.

Set chairs up so that each group is sitting together and opposite the group with an opposing viewpoint. Announce the debate has begun and only intervene if it gets out of control.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What were qualities of effective debaters? Examples?
- Who won the debate?
- Contrast the dialogue we had about the same issue and this debate. How were they the same? Different? What feelings did each one spark for you?
- Talk about how it felt to be a participant and/or observer of these different activities. Which one did you prefer? What implications does that have for you as a person? Your leadership?

## ACTIVITY 3: CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** With the group sitting in a circle, ask them to count off by twos. Ask the “ones” to move their chairs into a circle so that they are each facing the person who was seated to their right. There should now be two circles facing each other.

**Step 2.** Explain that you will make a statement and that the ones should complete the statement, speaking for about one minute. Ask the twos to listen attentively, using all their listening skills. When one minute has passed, call time. The listeners (twos) then complete the same statement, and the ones listen: an inner circle of ones facing an outer circle of twos.

**Step 3.** When both partners have completed the same statement, ask the outer circle to move one chair clockwise, so that there are now new pairs. Repeat the process with the next statement. This time ask the twos to respond first. When both partners have responded to the statement, ask the inner circle to move one chair counterclockwise. Repeat until all the statements have been addressed. There are suggestions included below. Add your own. Ask for suggestions from the group.

### Sample Statements

1. When I get mad at someone, I usually . . .
2. A conflict that I was involved in that ended poorly . . .
3. A conflict that I was involved in that ended well . . .
4. The conflict style that I use most often is . . .

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What physical response does conflict spark in you?  
Emotional response?
- Are there any insights you have gained about your conflict style?
- How would you like to deal with conflict?
- What one SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Responsible, and Timed) goal do you want to set to help you think through and plan for your work on conflict resolution? (See Who Are We? module, Objective 4, Activity 1: SMART Goal-Setting.)

**OBJECTIVE 3:** *Participants will demonstrate an understanding of strategies and tactics used to de-escalate conflict, including acknowledging and incorporating various viewpoints into a comprehensive solution through:*

1. *Conflict de-escalating behaviors*
2. *Identifying and expressing points of agreement*
3. *Separating positions from interests*

### ACTIVITY 1. CONFLICT ESCALATORS/DE-ESCALATORS

**Materials:** "Conflict Escalators/De-escalators" and "Conflict Role Plays" handouts (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Facilitator Note:** Explain that there are behaviors that escalate conflict and other behaviors that serve to de-escalate conflict. When we have started up the conflict “escalator,” it is hard to get off. The AEIOU vowels can help us remember the difference between the two behaviors. A and E behaviors tend to escalate conflict; I, O, and U behaviors begin to de-escalate conflicts.

- A** Attacking behavior (hitting, name calling, “you” messages).
- E** Evading behavior (avoiding, escaping, ignoring, running away).
- I** Informing behavior (telling the other person how you are feeling without attacking; “I” messages are examples of this informing behavior).
- O** Opening behavior (asking a question that encourages the other person to open up, to explain where he or she is coming from, to give his or her point of view, etc.).
- U** Uniting behavior (statements like “I hope we can find a way to work this out together” or “Perhaps if we do \_\_\_\_\_, we can both get our needs met”).

Distribute the handout. Have a participant read one of the behaviors out loud. Ask the group to discuss the handout, giving examples of each form of behavior.

**Step 1.** Draw a set of stairs on newsprint. Title the stairs “The Conflict Escalator” and ask participants to keep the stairs in mind during the role.

**Step 2.** Have a group of participants act out one of the following role plays:

1. Pat accidentally bumps into Chris while they are standing in line. Chris says “Watch where you’re going jerk.” Pat ignores Chris. As Pat is walking back to his seat, Chris trips him (or her), and says “I told you to watch where you’re going jerk!” Pat gets in Chris’s face and says, “You got a problem?” “Yeah you’re the stupid problem,” Chris responds and shoves him (or her). They start to fight.
2. Anna is talking with a group of her friends when Danielle walks by. Danielle overhears Anna say something mean about a friend of hers. Danielle stops and glares at Anna. Anna ignores Danielle until a member of the group points out that Danielle is listening. Anna and Danielle exchange heated words, and Danielle walks away.

**Step 3.** Ask the group to identify the moments in the plot where the conflict escalated or got more intense.

**Step 4.** Write each moment on the top of a step that characterizes the action.

**Step 5.** Ask what participants think the characters were feeling at each escalating moment, and note the feelings underneath that step.

**Step 6.** Discuss what could have sent the conflict down the escalator. What would need to change, and when? In what way could other people intervene?

## **ACTIVITY 2: BECOMING A PEACEMAKER**

**Materials:** “Guides to Becoming a Peacemaker” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Distribute the handout “Guides to Becoming a Peacemaker.” Go around the circle, asking each person to read one “guide” aloud, pausing between speakers.

**Facilitator Note:** Be clear that anyone can pass, as some people may not be comfortable reading aloud.

**Step 2.** Let the group reflect for a moment, and then go around the circle again, this time asking participants which guide they particularly like or would like to work on. Be conscious of extending the ideas beyond the individual to the interpersonal (with another person) and communal (in the larger community) realms. Follow the same format with “Help Along the Way” (see appendix of this module).

**Facilitator Note:** In this activity, you are facilitating a dialogue that asks participants to share their thoughts and reflections. This will open the door to sharing feelings as well. In this way, this activity is a good opportunity for you to model the listening skills from Activity 1.

## **ACTIVITY 3: QUICK DECISIONS**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 20–30 minutes

**Facilitator Note:** In this activity, small groups of participants are told several problems that might occur in real life. The activity requires the group to come to a quick agreement on the solution or a way to cope with the problem. After several scenarios, the large group discusses the solutions. These discussions could lead to some important insights about personal and group behavior, conflict styles, moral leadership, and other aspects of human behavior. Time should be planned to allow for these discussions.

### Scenarios

1. You and your friends are waiting for a bus. Also waiting is a mother and her toddler who is too young to stand steadily. The child is beginning to cry and the mother has slapped him without comment. She now says "shut up" and starts to slap him again. What do you do?
2. You and several of your friends are at a party where alcohol is being served. One person has had too much to drink and has just had a fight with another person. Angry, he grabs his car keys and leaves the room. It is clear that he is too drunk to drive. What do you do?
3. You and some friends are in one of your friend's houses. Your friend is having an argument with her parents. What do you do?
4. At school there is a person who is usually the butt of others' jokes and is disliked by most of the students because he is "different." You are walking down the hall with some friends and see this student surrounded by others who are calling him names and pushing him. What do you do?
5. You are working with a group of friends on a project. One person will not cooperate and disrupts your meetings. He has been asked to stop and to help with the project. His behavior does not change. What do you do?

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- If you had tried to resolve these situations by yourself, would your responses have been different? Why?
- How can you stay true to what you believe is the right response when you are part of a group?

## ACTIVITY 4: HASSLE LINE ROLE PLAYS

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

**Step 1.** Count off by twos and form two lines, with each person facing a partner in the other line.

**Step 2.** Explain that each line will have a different role to play in a conflict scenario which the facilitator describes. Disputants can gesture and wave their arms as much as they want to, but there is absolutely no touching. Stress that there must be no physical contact. Walk down the aisle between the two lines to make sure that there is adequate space between them. During the "conflict," when the facilitator shouts out

“freeze,” all participants should go silent and freeze in their position so that body language can be observed.

**Step 3.** Describe the scenario twice, and begin.

**Step 4.** Give participants two to three minutes to enact the scene. Watch for any striking body language that might make a good “freeze frame.”

**Facilitator Note:** Watch the action for any signs that the acting has turned real, and a potential violent situation is arising. If such a situation arises, end the scene immediately. Here, you may have a “teachable moment.” Depending on the severity of the situation, the degree of emotional involvement, and the maturity of the disputants, it might be possible to talk about what happened between the two people, which began to turn into a real fight. If they are able, ask the disputants about how the acting began to turn real. What might they have done differently to keep it from getting too heated? A review of escalating/ de-escalating behavior and, perhaps, listening skills might be appropriate at this time.

**Step 5.** End the scene when there has been enough time for the participants to really get into the argument. Give the participants a moment to talk with each other. Let them diffuse their emotions. Ask each group to report on the outcome of the scene, or ask whether there were any especially good solutions. Ask them to describe any behavior that reduced the tension and moved the argument toward a positive solution. If energy and interest levels warrant it, repeat each scenario, switching roles.

## Scenes

1. *Person 1:* You have heard that a friend is telling people that you have been drinking too much at parties. You run into this friend on the street and want to confront him or her about this.  
*Person 2:* You have been talking with others about your concern for your friend.
2. *Person 1:* You are angry that your friend never seems to include you in any activities that he or she is doing. You meet him or her at a party and you want to tell him or her how you feel.  
*Person 2:* You have not included your friend because other people you hang out with do not like him or her.
3. *Person 1:* Your parents have grounded you for a week. It could not have happened at a worse time. While you admit that you have not been at your best lately, you do not think you deserve this severe punishment. You want to state your case to them.  
*Person 2:* You are very concerned that your son or daughter has

been out late during the week and he or she was not called home to let you know where he or she is. You are tired of promises that seem never to be kept. You have decided to put your foot down.

4. *Person 1:* Your teacher made a joke in class at your expense. You are hurt and angry. You want this kind of behavior to stop. You run into your teacher in the cafeteria and decide it is a good time to tell him or her how you feel.

*Person 2:* You know that your student has been getting into what you think is inappropriate behavior and you tried to give him or her a gentle warning by making a joke in class.

### ACTIVITY 5: POSITIONS AND INTERESTS

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

People generally argue from positions. They present their positions as opinions, demands, problems, stories, and/or solutions. Interests often underlie positions and usually are why something is a problem. Interests are often not stated and sometimes may be unconscious, and yet must be satisfied before a person can agree to a resolution of a conflict. Separating positions and interests is a skill that people trained in mediation or arbitration learn. A parent who takes the position that her son cannot use the family car because he did not fill the gas tank the last time he used it might have as an interest her son developing a sense of personal responsibility. In a divorce negotiation, the husband's position is that he does not agree to his wife getting custody of the children until his interest in being a responsible and connected parent is satisfied.

**Step 1.** Using the previous hassle line conflicts, ask participants what were the positions of each disputant and what might have been their interests.

**Step 2.** Write these on newsprint with "Positions" on the top left and "Interests" on the top right. List the position and the possible interest related to that position. Ask participants if they can think of and describe a position someone might take and what his or her underlying interest(s) might be. Leave time for discussion.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- Why are interests often hidden behind positions?
- Have you ever found yourself in a conflict where you were stuck in positions? What was the situation? What kept you stuck? What would have enabled you to move forward?

**ACTIVITY 6: ROLE PLAY****Materials:** None**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

Role playing takes some planning. A quick review of conflict resolution skills might be appropriate before the group enters into role playing. Role playing can be used for participants to practice the conflict management skills that have been covered. It can be an opportunity for participants to evaluate themselves in a real conflict and to try out different conflict management styles. Enough time should be allowed for the role play and for reflection afterward.

**Facilitator Note:** If there are more participants than there are roles, some can be observers who will, in a nonjudgmental way, report what they saw and heard in the role play. They might also ask questions of the players to explore various behaviors that worked to escalate or de-escalate the conflict. For all participants to be able to be players and observers, it may be necessary to conduct more than one role play and dialogue. Have the various roles typed out on strips of paper so that each player has an opportunity to become familiar with his or her role.

**Sample Role Play**

Five roles are provided; several participants can be in each role.

**Role 1:** You are a skateboarder in Montpelier. You enjoy the sport and try to be careful not to run into people. You feel there is very little for people your age to do in the city and think that you and your friends should be allowed to skateboard anywhere in town as long as you do not hurt anyone else.

**Role 2:** You are a businessperson in Montpelier. While you want young people to have something to do in town, you do not think skateboarding is safe. Also you feel that because older people are afraid of being hurt by skateboarders, they tend to stay out of downtown and therefore hurt your business. You support an ordinance to keep skateboarding in clearly defined areas away from downtown.

**Role 3:** You are a member of the Montpelier City Council. You have heard some complaints from older residents of the city that they feel unsafe on the streets when young people are skateboarding. You want to be fair to everyone, but have to respond to the concerns of these older residents.

**Role 4:** You are police officer and must enforce any laws that the City Council passes. You know and like many of the young people who skateboard in town. You also know many of the residents who are concerned about skateboarding where lots of people walk.



**Role 5:** You are a young person who does not skateboard. You see that there is a great need for resources for young people to occupy their time and activities that are fun and allows them some degree of control over their lives. You are neutral about a skateboard ordinance but think it does not address the real issues that young people are facing.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What did you do to escalate the conflict? (specific action)
- What did you do to de-escalate the conflict? (specific action)
- How can you apply that learning to other situations in your life?



# Appendix

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## UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

The following questionnaire gives individuals an opportunity to become more aware of their conflict management styles. There are no right or wrong answers, since each of the strategies has appropriate uses.

### Directions

After reading each of the techniques listed below, decide whether you use it frequently, occasionally, or rarely. If it describes your frequent response, write 3 in the blank. If it is an occasional response, write 2 in the appropriate blank. Select 1 if you rarely make the response described.

### Key

1. Rare response
2. Occasional response
3. Frequent response

How do you usually handle conflicts?

- \_\_\_ 1. Try to intimidate the other person.
- \_\_\_ 2. Try to deal with the other person's point of view as well as your own.
- \_\_\_ 3. Look for a middle ground.
- \_\_\_ 4. Admit that you are wrong even if you do not believe you are.
- \_\_\_ 5. Avoid the person.
- \_\_\_ 6. Firmly pursue your goals.
- \_\_\_ 7. Try to find out specifically what you agree on and disagree on to narrow down the conflict.
- \_\_\_ 8. Try to reach a compromise.
- \_\_\_ 9. Give in.
- \_\_\_ 10. Change the subject.
- \_\_\_ 11. Whine or complain until you get your way.
- \_\_\_ 12. Try to get all concerns out in the open.
- \_\_\_ 13. Give in a little and try to get the other party to do the same.
- \_\_\_ 14. Pretend to agree.
- \_\_\_ 15. Try to turn the conflict into a joke.

**Scoring**

Transfer your response to each item to the scoring grid below. Now add all the numbers in each column. The columns reflect five styles of resolving conflict.

After completing your scores, find which of the styles described below correspond to your highest score. Does this style fit your perception of yourself? What about your second and third highest score?

<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____	5. _____
6. _____	7. _____	8. _____	9. _____	10. _____
11. _____	12. _____	13. _____	14. _____	15. _____
<b>Total: I</b> _____	<b>II</b> _____	<b>III</b> _____	<b>IV</b> _____	<b>V</b> _____

**I. *Competing:* hard bargaining or might makes right**

Pursuing personal concerns at another's expense. Competing can mean standing up for your rights, defending a position that you believe is correct, or simply trying to win.

**II. *Collaborating:* negotiating or two heads are better than one**

Working with someone by exploring your disagreement, generating alternatives, and finding a solution which mutually satisfies the concerns of both parties.

**III. *Compromising:* splitting the difference**

Seeking a middle ground by splitting the difference; the solution partially satisfies both parties.

**IV. *Accommodating:* soft bargaining**

Yielding to another person's point of view; paying attention to their concerns and neglecting your own.

**V. *Avoiding:* leaving well enough alone**

Not addressing the conflict, either by withdrawing from the situation or postponing the issues.

## Uses and Limitations

### A. **Competing**

*Potential Uses:* When immediate action is needed; when you believe you are correct.

*Potential Limitations:* Intimidates people so they are afraid to admit problems and give you important information.

### B. **Collaborating**

*Potential Uses:* Learning from another's perspective; helpful when you need a decision that addresses the concerns of both parties.

*Potential Limitations:* Not as helpful for minor decisions or when time is limited.

### C. **Compromising**

*Potential Uses:* When all else fails; for fast decision-making on minor disagreements; when two parties of equal strength are committed to mutually exclusive goals.

*Potential Limitations:* Losing sight of larger issues and values and possibly not pleasing anyone.

### D. **Accommodating**

*Potential Uses:* When you see that you are wrong; when you want harmony or credits toward a more important issue.

*Potential Limitations:* You may never get your concerns addressed.

### E. **Avoiding**

*Potential Uses:* When confronting is too dangerous or damaging; when an issue is unimportant; when a situation needs to be cooled down or you need more time to prepare.

*Potential Limitations:* Issues may never get addressed.

(Adapted from Barbara Stanford and Project Adventure)

**CONFLICT ESCALATORS/DE-ESCALATORS**

- A** Attacking behavior (hitting, name calling, "you" messages).
- E** Evading behavior (avoiding, escaping, ignoring, running away)
- I** Informing behavior (telling the other person how you are feeling without attacking; "I" messages are examples of this informing behavior).
- O** Opening behavior (asking a question that encourages the other person to open up, to explain where he or she is coming from, to give his or her point of view, etc.).
- U** Uniting behavior (statements like "I hope we can find a way to work this out together" or "Perhaps if we do \_\_\_\_\_, we can both get our needs met").

## CONFLICT ROLE PLAYS

### ***Role Play 1***

Pat accidentally bumps into Chris while they are standing in line. Chris says "Watch where you're going jerk." Pat ignores Chris. As Pat is walking back to his seat, Chris trips him (or her) and says, "I told you to watch where you're going jerk!" Pat gets in Chris's face and says, "You got a problem?" "Yeah you're the stupid problem," Chris responds and shoves him (or her). They start to fight.

### ***Role Play 2***

Anna is talking with a group of her friends when Danielle walks by. Danielle overhears Anna say something mean about a friend of hers. Danielle stops and glares at Anna. Anna ignores Danielle until a member of the group points out that Danielle is listening. Anna and Danielle exchange heated words, and Danielle walks away.



**GUIDES TO BECOMING A PEACEMAKER**

1. Try to resolve conflicts by looking for what we have in common.
2. Look for positive behavior in others.
3. Listen and try to understand where the other person is coming from before I make up my mind.
4. Be truthful. Try to find the truth; no position based on lies can last.
5. Be ready to change my position if I discover it is not fair.
6. Being clear about what I want gives me the power to act in a courageous and positive way.
7. I will not always be able to ward off danger. If I cannot avoid risk, I'll try to be creative rather than violent.
8. Surprise and humor may help change the situation and the attitude and behavior of the people in the conflict.
9. Learn to trust my inner sense of when to act and when to withdraw.
10. Find ways to overcome injustice.
11. Be patient and persistent in solutions to injustice.
12. Help build community based on honesty, respect, and caring.

**HELP ALONG THE WAY**

1. Build my own self-respect.
2. Respect and care about others.
3. Try to discover a nonviolent solution.
4. Pause—give myself time—before reacting. It may make me open to transforming power.
5. Trust my inner sense of what's needed.
6. Don't threaten or put down, even in a joking way.
7. When I have done wrong, admit it, make amends if I can, so that I can forgive myself, then let it go.
8. Don't rely on weapons, drugs, or alcohol. They weaken me.
9. Make friends who will support me. Support the best in them.
10. Risk changing myself.

# Team Building

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**OBJECTIVE 4:** *Participants will develop and practice group facilitation and observation skills, including ways to deal with difficult group situations.*

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# Team Building

*A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.*

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

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## **Goal**

Participants will develop an understanding of group dynamics, their preferred role within team efforts, and alternative ways to contribute to successful group work.

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## **Rational**

Change often involves a group of people working toward a common goal. Individuals can assume a leadership role as either facilitators of such efforts or as effective, contributing team members. This module explores ways individuals can build and sustain collaboration in group settings.

Research has confirmed that the most important attribute of people who work in groups is the quality of their interpersonal relationships. This begins with personal insight about one's typical role within a group and the differing roles played by others. Exploring stages of group development and what the group needs from participants and facilitators at any given point to be successful, is the primary tool leaders need to be effective team builders.

## **Objectives Summary**

Participants will:

1. *identify essential positive qualities of a group;*
2. *explore their personal styles and roles in a group and predictable challenges and benefits of these styles and roles;*
3. *understand the five stages of group development and positive roles for facilitators and group members at each stage in the life of a group; and*
4. *develop and practice group facilitation and observation skills, including ways to deal with difficult group situations.*

**Facilitator Note:** The activities provided can all be done in normal meeting facilities or classrooms. Access to a low ropes course or providing to provide an outdoor wilderness team-building experience as a frame of reference for understanding groups is encouraged. Dialogue questions would shift to these adventure-based group experiences, which often are quite powerful ways to bring out and explore group dynamics.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** *Participants will identify essential positive qualities of a group.*

**ACTIVITY 1: STEPPING STONES TO EFFECTIVE TEAMS**

*(Adaptation of Project Adventure activity, Quicksilver, p.186)*

This activity introduces team building by identifying its basic qualities, and then integrating these qualities into a team-building activity. Note: You may want to consider doing this activity outside if possible.

**Materials:** 10–12 pieces of oak tag or pizza cardboard circles for stepping stones (they need to be strong enough to endure many feet on them and be made of something that can be written on); markers; 2 pieces of rope (each approximately 5 feet long); newsprint paper; “Full Value Commitment” handout (see appendix of Who Are We? module)

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Ask participants to close their eyes for a few minutes and think of an experience when they were part of a group that was cohesive, strong, and successful (during this or another class, drama group, sports team, or club, or time with family or friends). Ask them to identify the most important qualities of this experience that made them feel positive about being part of that group. Ask participants to open their eyes. You may offer them the option to look at their Full Value Commitment as a way to trigger ideas. Ask participants to choose a partner and to briefly share their group experience, naming the most memorable group quality. Now combine the ideas of the entire group by recording them on newsprint. It is likely that most ideas will fall under one of the following headings:

- *Ownership.* People feel ownership and a sense of responsibility for the success of the team.
- *Clear Communication.* People “say what they mean and mean what they say.” Conflicts are resolved in a respectful climate.
- *Shared Common Vision and Purpose.* People hold a common picture of the outcome.
- *Commitment.* People are willing to follow through, maintain high standards, and are loyal to each other.

If no participant mentions one of the qualities above, offer it yourself.

**Step 2.** Take each “stepping stone” and write in marker one of the qualities identified. Make sure that you have one fewer stepping stone than the number of participants.

**Step 3.** Create boundaries for the activity using ropes to mark the only two safe zones at either end of the room or area you are using, leaving at least fifteen feet of space between safety zones. Make sure that

your “pit” (area between safe zones) is large enough so that participants must reuse stones to reach the other side.

Now explain the group’s task:

- Have participants stand behind one of the ropes and point out their destination, which is past the rope on the far side of the room. Explain that the space between the ropes is a perilous pit, which will swallow the voices of young people if given a chance.
- The stepping stones are their only means to traverse this pit. If they are successful, they will forever drain the pit of its perilous power.
- No stone can be left without human contact or it will be lost and the person nearest it will be made mute.
- Anyone touching the pit must return to the start and will be mute for the remainder of the activity.
- Give them a time limit, after which their roped-off space will be consumed by the pit.

Carefully monitor the stepping stones, removing one if there is no human contact. If someone steps on the floor, the consequences will be that he or she loses his or her can no longer speak and/or he or she has to return to the beginning. You can also provide the group with time checks.

When the group has completed the activity, lay out the stepping stones as a reference point for the processing session.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What teamwork qualities noted on your stepping stones did you employ to solve this problem?
- What challenges did you confront as a group?
- Did everyone feel heard in creating a strategy for this challenge?
- What are your strengths as a group that you can build on in later activities?
- What strategies might you employ to strengthen your group’s ability to solve problems—addressing your areas of challenge?

**Facilitator Note:** Identify and record the participants’ reflections regarding strengths and challenges they encountered as a group. Review this before the next activity and revise accordingly after each activity, noting changes and improvements in the group’s teamwork qualities.

### **Adaptation**

If necessary, use the discussion piece of the activity, without the obstacle course, to illustrate it.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** *Participants will explore their personal styles and their roles in a group.*

**Facilitator Note:** It is recommended that you start this objective with Activity 1. Compass Points serves as a simple yet powerful way for individuals to understand their role in a group. Activity 2 expands their understanding of the complexity of groups by introducing and asking them to assume multiple group roles. Activity 3 focuses again on self-reflection regarding their roles, building on these new perspectives.

**ACTIVITY 1: COMPASS POINTS**

**Materials:** “Compass Points” handouts (see appendix of this module); pens or pencils

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

This activity helps participants better understand how their personal style affects the roles they play in a group. It is an opportunity to identify the strengths of their style and ways to grow or become more flexible as group members. Importantly, Compass Points gives individuals a way to gain an appreciation for people with differing styles who might otherwise be judged and dismissed as an unproductive or annoying group member.

Sample introduction: One way we are all different is relative to our own “personal styles.” We are going to use a helpful tool, called Compass Points, to explore this aspect of our differences. After we identify our own personal style, we will talk about how it serves us well and how it can present challenges when we work with people who operate in different ways.

**Step 1.** Pass out “Compass Points” materials. Briefly review the four personal style options.

**Step 2.** Tell participants that people are a mix of styles but usually individuals have a dominant style that they use more often than the others. For this activity, their job is to name that dominant style. Designate four areas in the room, one for each compass-point group. Have them go to their respective corners when they have decided their own personal style, bringing their compass point materials and a writing utensil.

**Step 2.** When the groups are formed, ask each group to talk about the four questions provided for fifteen minutes. What are the strengths of our style? What are the limitations of our style? What style do we find the most difficult to work with and why? What do other people need to know about us so that we can work together more effectively? Ask that each group have a facilitator, a recorder, and a timekeeper. (Be prepared for the North group to be done in record time!).



**Step 3.** When they have finished, ask each group to report their answers to the four questions.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What was it like to do this activity and talk about differences in this way?
- Did the four styles ring true to you?
- What did you find helpful about doing this activity?
- How does your dominant style affect your school life? relationships with peers? Life outside school? Any examples?
- Does understanding personal styles help you understand any relationships in your life that are sometimes challenging?
- What are some of the common stereotypes we assign to each compass point? What happens when we stereotype in this way?
- What happens when we have a big task to address as a group and any one “compass point” is missing?

**Facilitator Note:** Frequently the North group is identified as the most difficult to work with. Make sure you honor the important, positive role they play in the class.

## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP ROLE CHOICES

**Materials:** Cut up the “Group Roles” handout so that each role is on its own strip of paper (see appendix of this module). There are 11 roles listed. If you have more than 11 participants, randomly select additional roles from the handout.

**Time:** 30 minutes

Review the “Group Roles” handouts. Emphasize that taking on any one of the roles is a leadership act. This moves away from the traditional perception of leaders as the facilitators and reinforces that all group members are potentially leaders.

Choose a hot topic that you believe everyone is likely to have an opinion about. One option is to let the group brainstorm options and pick one. Have each person draw a role. Tell the group that they are going to enter into a dialogue (or perhaps debate) about this issue for approximately ten minutes. Each person is to only assume the role they have drawn. They should be aware of not assuming their usual roles.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What role did you play in the group? What was it like to assume that role?
- What is your more natural role in a group?

- Are there other roles within a group that you would like to feel more comfortable or confident assuming? If so, what would you need to do to develop this confidence?

### **ACTIVITY 3: FEEDBACK SNAPSHOTS**

*(Adapted from the Project Adventure "Interpersonal Feedback" activity.)*

**Materials:** Whatever is needed for the problem-solving activity chosen from the appendix; "Group Role Snapshots" handout (see appendix of this module)

**Facilitator Note:** This activity allows participants to identify either positive or negative roles they play in groups. You may want to preface the activity with a reminder about how to give constructive feedback in a positive manner when sharing reflections with a fellow participant (see Communications module, Objective 4, Activity 1).

**Step 1.** Give each participant the "Group Role Snapshots" handout and briefly review the words noted. Tell participants that they are going to engage in a problem-solving activity and then identify four words that best describe roles they took during the activity.

**Step 2.** Conduct one of the problem-solving activities noted in this module's appendix (Traffic Jam, Shaping the System, Key Punch, Continental Divide, and Magic Carpet).

**Step 3.** Ask participants to pretend that they had a digital camera focused on them throughout the activity. They were able to trigger four snapshots of themselves capturing four different roles they took during this experience. Review the "Group Role Snapshot" sheet and circle the four words that best describe the pictures they took of themselves capturing their roles within the group.

**Step 4.** Follow the directions on the top of the handout describing the next steps, making sure both participants give feedback to one another.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Were your perceptions consistent with the person you paired with?
- Were your behaviors in this activity consistent with the roles you usually play in groups? How were they the same? Different?
- What was the balance between your behaviors or roles that supported the group's success and those that did not help the group solve the problem?
- What did you learn about yourself from this activity?
- What SMART goal(s) might you set for yourself regarding your role in a group? Do you want help from anyone else to reach this goal?

**OBJECTIVE 3:** *Participants will understand the five stages of group development and positive roles for facilitators and group members at each stage.*

### **ACTIVITY 1: STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT**

**Materials:** “Growing a Great Group” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time:** 15 minutes

Introduce the concept of stages of group development:

- Groups have a life of their own and therefore go through predictable stages.
- At each stage, the group has different needs and capabilities.
- Understanding the life of a group is a powerful leadership tool. It allows group members and facilitators to continually move the team forward toward a desired goal. It is particularly helpful to address inevitable times of tension and conflict.
- Groups can be as small as two. Understanding stages of group development can help you understand individual relationships, as well as help you with larger groups.

Hand out and review the five stages of group development. If possible, provide an example from the school, the community, a popular movie, or your own life, where these stages were clearly evident.

### **ACTIVITY 2: SKITS**

**Materials:** The name of each stage of group development on separate pieces of paper and a container so that individuals can draw one of the five. (See “Growing a Great Group” handout in appendix of this module.)

**Time:** 30 minutes

Split the class into five groups (if there are fewer than three in a group, couple norming and performing as one group). Let each group pick one of the five stages out of a hat. Read the following scenario:

*You have come together to design and implement a school-wide or community-wide recycling program. The group is diverse, with individuals of varied interests but who all have this common desire.*

Think about what conversations might be going on in your group during the stage you have drawn. What one minute role play of a conversation would best represent the group stage you have been given?

Give groups 5 minutes to develop the role play. Then let the plays begin, with the audience guessing which stage was captured. Let the role-play group reflect on its process of decision-making and role-play choices.

### **ACTIVITY 3: HOW ABOUT US???**

**Materials:** “Growing a Great Group” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time:** 20 minutes

Divide the participants into small groups of three to four. Make sure everyone reviews the “Growing a Great Group” handout. Ask the small groups to review the stages of group development: “What’s Up with the Group,” “Focus,” and “Common Member Thoughts.” Ask group to:

- identify which stage they think the class is in,
- provide one example of something that happened or was said that would indicate that stage and any prior stage, and
- reflect on how the facilitator responded to this phase.

Lead a discussion about what the small groups have decided.

**Facilitator Note:** It is important that you have done your own analysis of your group and can provide examples of instances that suggested to you that the group was in or between a certain phase. Provide your examples at the end of the discussion session.

### **ACTIVITY 4: GROWING A GREAT GROUP: FACILITATOR AND GROUP MEMBER TIPS**

**Materials:** “Growing a Great Group” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time:** 20 minutes

Being a leader requires flexibility in the roles a person plays in a group at any given stage. A wise facilitator or group member will be able to read the stage of the group and know what role he or she can take to move the group toward their goal.

Review the Leader Task on the “Growing a Great Group” handout. Lead a discussion using any or all of these questions:

- What different roles have you seen the OV:OC facilitators play? Were these roles consistent with the stage the group was in?
- Think about different groups you have been part of. What other examples do you have of a teacher, facilitator, coach, or another group member taking a needed role to help you succeed as a group?

- Which phase of group development would be easiest for you to facilitate? (Think about your personal style and preferred roles).
- Which phase of group development would be most difficult to facilitate? Why?
- Think about a personal relationship you have with a family member or friend. Reflect on what stage this relationship is in and what roles you each play. How can knowing about groups help you in this relationship?
- What did you learn about stages of group development that surprised you?
- Do you feel that knowing this information about group life will be helpful in any way? How?

**OBJECTIVE 4:** *Participants will develop and practice group facilitation and observation skills, including ways to deal with difficult group situations.*

#### **ACTIVITY 1: YOU'RE HIRED**

**Materials:** "Facilitator and Leader Characteristics" and "Facilitator Job Description" handouts (see appendix of this module); newsprint paper

**Time Commitment:** 25 minutes

**Facilitator Note:** This activity introduces key responsibilities of a facilitator and allows for personal reflection regarding qualities that help someone be successful in this role. Preface this objective by telling participants that individuals who want a chance to lead the class in an activity or discussion and receive feedback on how they did will have an opportunity to do so.

**Step 1.** Brainstorm: Ask the participants to think about leaders they have known who have done a really good job. Have group members brainstorm what they noticed about what they did and how they did it, recording this list on newsprint.

**Step 2.** Tell participants that they are going on a job interview to be a group facilitator. They are lucky enough to have friends (you, the facilitators) who are experienced facilitators, so they can ask questions about the job description and their roles and responsibilities. They will also have an opportunity to figure out their strengths as facilitators and skills and qualities to be developed with a friend before the interview.

**Step 3.** Review the "Facilitator Job Description" (see appendix of this module), asking if it captures what they brainstormed. If not, modify the

job description according to suggestions. Ask participants if they have any questions about this job description—either the responsibilities or strategies they will be expected to use.

**Step 4.** One classic interview question is: “What are your strengths as a facilitator and what areas would you like to improve on?” Have participants pair up and silently complete the “Facilitator and Leader Characteristics” form, sharing their reflections with each other upon completion.

Tell participants that miraculously they have all completed their interviews and been offered the job. Now it is up to them to decide whether or not they want to take it. Ask for a show of hands for individuals who would like to try facilitating an activity and receive feedback from participants on the experience.

**Step 5.** Tell facilitator volunteers that you will be doing a few more activities that help build facilitation skills. They will then have their opportunity to lead the group in an activity of their choice.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Why did you choose to take the job or not take the job?
- If you chose to try facilitation in this class, what do you hope to gain from the experience?
- Do you have to be called “the facilitator” to help facilitate? How are facilitators and positive group members both leadership roles and equally necessary to the success of a group?
- If you did not choose to practice facilitating in this class, are there any skills you would like to work on to be more confident taking on this role?

## **ACTIVITY 2: MY WORST NIGHTMARE!**

**Materials:** Flip chart or chalk board; markers or chalk; “What Do I Do Now? Common Facilitator Dilemmas” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 40 minutes

This activity focuses on classic facilitator challenges and offers helpful strategies. It is important to review these before participants assume the facilitator role so that they can be successful.

**Step 1.** Separate into groups of three and have each group brainstorm a list of “worst group experience nightmares” or instances facilitators are most anxious about.

**Step 2.** Review the “What Do I Do Now? Common Facilitator Dilemmas” handout by having each group of three review one of the dilemmas for the group. Solicit other ideas for each dilemma.

**Step 3.** Make sure the “worst nightmare” list (steps) is covered in the “What Do I Do Now? Common Facilitator Dilemmas” handout. If not, have the group identify their own do’s and don’ts ideas.

### **ACTIVITY 3: FACILITATION ROLE PLAY**

**Materials:** None

**Time commitment:** 30 minutes

**Facilitator Note:** Volunteer facilitators will model for the rest of the group facilitation skills and strategies in a role-play situation in this activity. Please be aware that often participants will take their roles to an extreme in this sort of role play, which can set up an impossible situation for facilitators. Ask participants to be aware of this tendency and make it as realistic as possible.

Assign the following group roles to a select number of participants:

*Monopolizer:* You interrupt others constantly and are long winded when you talk.

*Shy Person:* You basically look at the floor for most of the role play.

*Clique Leader:* You actively try to get others to support you, while judging or excluding others.

*The Joker:* You get the group off track with your humor.

*Know-it-All:* You clearly think you are right and put down or dismiss others’ ideas.

*Debate Instigator:* You start a debate with another participant and don’t let anyone else interrupt as this debate escalates.

Ask the remaining participants to assume constructive group member roles. Choose a hot topic that will make for lively discussion and let the role play begin. OV:OC facilitators can also shadow the class participant facilitators, offering suggestions as the role play evolves.

**Facilitator Note:** Facilitators can “freeze frame” the group by stopping action at particularly difficult points and asking for suggestions of how to best address the facilitation challenge at hand.

#### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What did it feel like to be in this group role play?

- What did the facilitators and/or group members do to effectively address the problem roles people took?
- Which of the challenging roles will be easiest for you to address as a facilitator or group member? Why?
- Which of the challenging roles will be hardest for you to address? Why?

#### **ACTIVITY 4: I HEARD YOU!**

**Materials:** Four 8.5-by-11-inch pieces of paper labeled: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

**Time Commitment:** 40 minutes

Being able to effectively summarize or paraphrase what someone has said, even if your personal opinion is quite different, is one of the most useful tools for a facilitator or leader. It makes that individual feel heard and understood. It is a cross-check that there is common understanding. It also is key to helping move through conflict. This activity helps participants practice this skill.

**Facilitator Note:** This skill was developed in Objective 3 of the Communication module. It is a key facilitation skill. This activity is included as a refresher if you have already done activities relating to paraphrasing, or to introduce the concept if you have not gotten to the Communications module yet.

Place the pieces of paper in a straight line across a space, which will allow participants to move freely and talk in small groups at each “station.” The basic steps of this activity are:

- Choose a station based on your opinion.
- Talk with like-minded individuals.
- Find someone with a differing opinion.
- Take turns listening and paraphrasing viewpoints.

**Instructions:** I am going to give you an opinion about some topic. You are to move to the “station” that best matches your opinion on this subject. Your choices are “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “agree,” or “strongly agree.” You cannot be neutral. You have to come down on one side or the other of this issue. When you all get the station of your choice, you will talk among yourselves about why you have this opinion.

I will then ask the groups to “fold in half.” This means that everyone in the “strongly disagree” group will partner with someone in the “strongly agree” group. Similarly, the “disagree” group will find some-



one from the “agree” group. If numbers are uneven, you can form a group of three. Once you have found a partner from a group with a different opinion from your own, one person will:

- Listen to that person’s reason why he feels the way he does about the issue for two minutes. The listener can only ask clarifying questions during this time. The listener cannot debate the person’s perspective. You are just listening to get the person’s main points.
- The listener will restate the other person’s perspective and check to see if she has done this clearly. “What I heard you say was . . . .” The two individuals then switch roles.

**Facilitator Note:** This can be confusing for the first round, so walk participants through it one step at a time and be the timekeeper through all phases. Restate the ground rules for active listening and paraphrasing each time (see Communication module). Suggested statements:

- It is OK to tell an ethnic joke.
- The death penalty is a good thing.
- War is the way to address terrorism.

**Facilitator Note:** Facilitators should ask questions that will provoke a variety of opinions and also be developmentally appropriate.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What did you discover when you talked at your stations? (Often it surprises individuals that others have the same opinion but for very different reasons.)
- What was it like to listen to someone who had a differing opinion from yours and you couldn’t debate?
- What was it like to restate the other person’s point of view?
- How will you use this skill in facilitating?

## **ACTIVITY 5: PARTICIPANT FACILITATION PRACTICE AND FEEDBACK**

**Materials:** “Facilitator Observer” and “Team-Building Problem-Solving Activities” handouts (see appendix of this module).

**Step 1.** Facilitators work with participants who wanted to facilitate an activity:

- Encourage cofacilitation teams.
- Help participants choose an activity from “Team-Building Problem-Solving Activities” or another activity the participants or facilitators

might know of from this curriculum or books listed in the Facilitator Resource Guide. You will have time constraints, which may dictate the options.

- Help participants be clear and comfortable with their task. Make sure they have access to all props.
- Talk through any facilitation issues they might anticipate, reviewing the participant's reflections on their strengths and areas of growth. Set them up for success.

**Step 2.** Create a schedule for this sequence of activities. Review the participant "Facilitator Observer" form so that all are clear what sort of feedback facilitators will receive. Let facilitators ask for specific feedback of other skills if it is not otherwise noted.

**Step 3.** Ask for several observers for each activity, rotating this job.

**Step 4.** After each facilitation experiment, ask the facilitators to reflect on what went well and solicit positive feedback from participants and observers.

## **CULMINATING ACTIVITY: HUMAN SCULPTURE**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 1 hour

Ask participants to create a human sculpture that represents what they have learned about team building or feel is central to effective teams.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- How does your human sculpture relate to team building?
- What is most memorable or helpful about what you have learned about teamwork during this module?
- How can you relate what you have learned to your project work?
- How can you relate what you have learned to other aspects of your life?
- What one goal do you have regarding building your ability to be a leader in group activities or tasks?

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## COMPASS POINTS PERSONAL STYLE DESCRIPTIONS

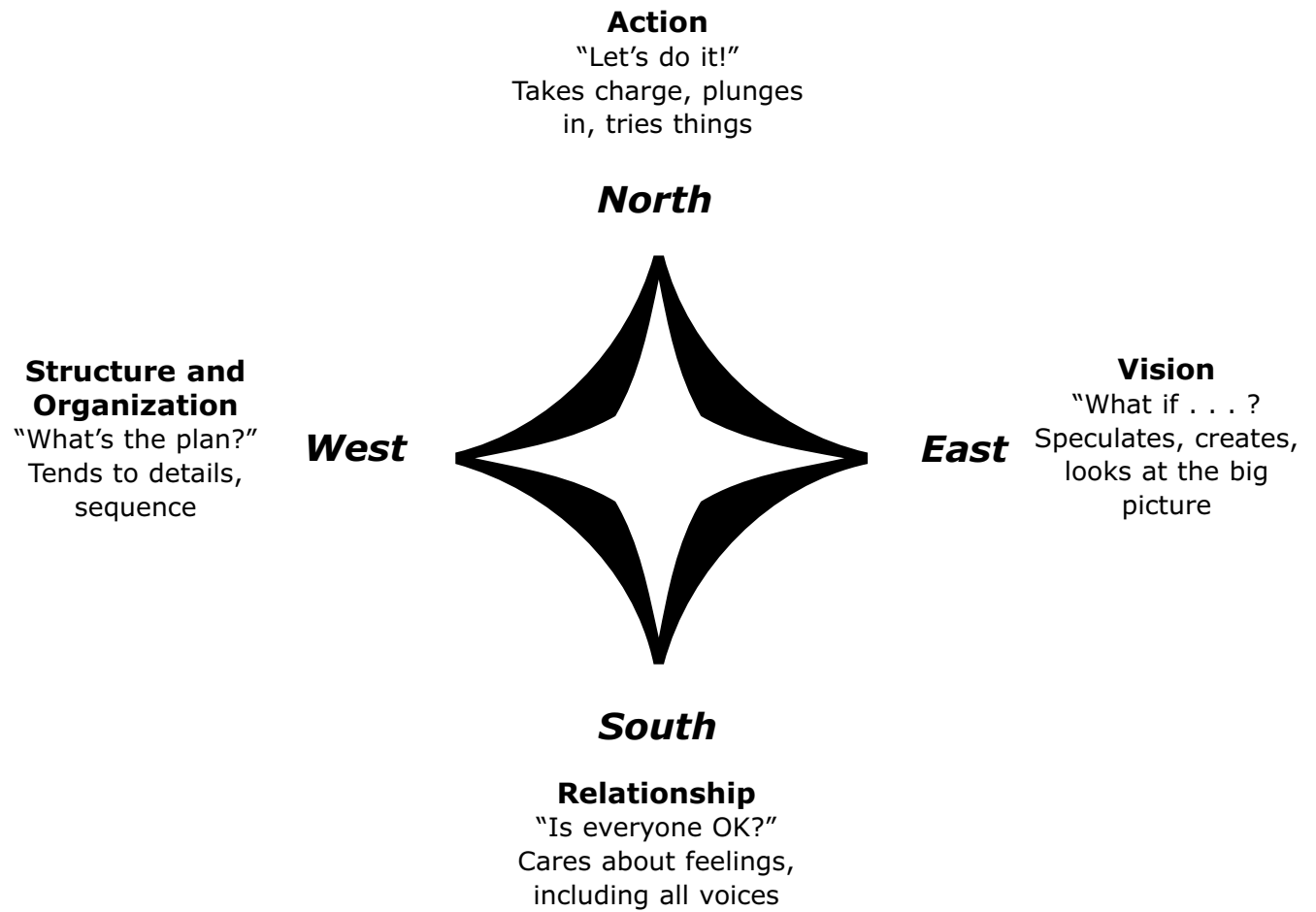
**North Person:** This action-oriented individual takes charge, plunges into a new challenge without hesitation, and is not afraid to try new things. The North Person will not find it necessary to understand all the details of a task to start problem-solving. They learn by doing and adjust as they go along. When presented with a new task, north people will be the ones saying, "All right! Let's do it! When do we start?!"

**East Person:** The East Person likes to step back and get a sense of the big picture before taking action. They explore options and "what if" scenarios to make sure that what they are going to do makes sense. When presented with a new task, east people will be asking for more information, thinking of many creative solutions, and seeking a clear and rich vision for what lies ahead before acting.

**South Person:** The South Person is sensitive to the quality of the relationships of individuals in his or her life and is often guardian or caretaker of these relationships. This individual will be aware of the process of making decisions. They will note when there is conflict or tension, seeking to reach a compromise acceptable to all. When presented with a new task, south people will be most attentive to including differing ideas and checking if everyone is feeling OK about group decisions.

**West Person:** The West Person seeks structure and organization. They want to know the practical aspects of any new task: What exactly is our endpoint? What do we do first, second, third? What resources will we need? Who will be responsible? They have the ability to think through details and transform ideas into concrete steps in a logical sequence. When presented with a new task, west people will want clarity about exactly what the destination will be and can then help identify the steps to get there.

## COMPASS POINTS



1. What are the strengths of our style? (four adjectives)
2. What are the limitations of our style? (four adjectives)
3. What style do we find the most difficult to work with and why?
4. What do other people need to know about us so that we can work together more effectively?

## GROUP ROLES

People play different roles at different times when they are members of a group. "Task Roles" help the group keep moving toward completing its work. Others help the group maintain a supportive and positive process of making decisions and doing the work together, assuming "Maintenance Roles." Each role is a leadership act focused on helping the group be successful.

### Task Roles

**Initiating:** Proposing tasks or goals; defining a group problem; suggesting a procedure or ideas for solving a problem.

**Seeking Information or Opinions:** Requesting facts; seeking relevant information about group concerns; seeking suggestions or ideas.

**Giving information or opinions:** Offering facts; providing relevant information; stating a belief; giving suggestions or ideas.

**Clarifying and elaborating:** Interpreting ideas or suggestions; clearing up confusions; defining terms.

**Summarizing:** Pulling together related ideas; restating suggestions after discussion; offering a conclusion for the group to accept or reject.

**Consensus Testing:** Asking to see if the group is nearing a decision; testing a possible conclusion; reviewing and recording decisions.

### Maintenance Roles

**Peacekeeper:** Attempting to reconcile disagreements; reducing tension; getting people to explore differences.

**Gatekeeping:** Helping to keep communication channels open; making sure everyone is involved; suggesting ways to make sure everyone is heard.

**Encouraging:** Being friendly, warm, and responsive to others verbally and nonverbally.

**Compromising:** Offering a compromise that honors the differing perspectives; admitting error; mediating to protect group cohesion.

**Describing Feelings:** Letting people know how you feel about the way the group is working, or is not working, together.

*Adapted from Carew, Parisi-Carew and Blanchard, "The Group Development and Situational Leadership II" article.*

## GROUP ROLE SNAPSHOTS

You have just completed an activity in which a group effort was required. Pretend you had a digital camera and remote trigger to take snapshots. Think back to four different moments during this activity where you assumed some role in the group. Label each picture with one of the words below that best describes your behavior interacting with others. Circle or check the word on this sheet.

Pair with another participant. Describe your four snapshots and the words that you chose from this list as a label for the behavior you captured in your snapshot. Ask your partner for his or her comments as to whether he or she perceives you in the same way or differently.

**advises****follows****agrees****hesitates****analyzes****initiates****asserts****intellectualizes****assists****judges****blames****leads****calms****lectures****complies****listens****coordinates****manipulates****criticizes****mediates****directs****persists****disapproves****rationalizes****distracts****relinquishes****dominates****resists****encourages****rushes****evades****supports****facilitates****withdraws**



## GROWING A GREAT GROUP

	FORMING	STORMING	NORMING	PERFORMING	TRANSFORMING
<b>What's up with the group?</b>	Participants begin to define their tasks, roles, and relationships.	Participants compare expectations with reality and differences in group surface.	Participants' roles and responsibilities become clear. Diversity in group understood and accepted. Norms established.	Participants get to work on the task at hand, working as a cohesive team, resolving conflict as it arises.	Participants finish work together. May disband or regroup.
<b>Focus.</b>	Getting oriented; getting acquainted; defining the task; setting goals; figuring out roles; taking first steps; seeking safety and trust.	Reconciling difference between reality and expectations. Expressing differences (feelings and opinions). Figuring out power and control in group decision making.	Resolving; new beginnings focus on task.	Getting the task done. Group bigger than sum of its parts.	Ending the experience.
<b>Common member thoughts.</b>	Looks like a great group of people. We all have the same goal. I wonder if I will really fit in this group? Will people respect me?	I'm not sure this is what I signed up for. I'm not sure I want to work with these people. We need to get clear about our task and who is going to decide what. I'm not sure about this leader.	I am clear what role I can take in this group. My expectations are different from when we started, but OK. I know what I can expect from others. Everyone is feeling valued, even if their ideas are different.	I am amazed at what we are able to do together. Our differences are helping us get our work done. I am finally sure that we will be successful.	Wish this group could go on forever! Time to get back to my regular life. It's hard to say good-bye. Things will never be quite the same.
<b>Leader Task.</b>	Create a shared vision and allow time for trusting relationships to begin to develop.	Help group work through conflict and create their own expectations and identity.	Clarify new norms, expectation, and roles decided on by group. Help build consensus.	Let the group do its work, supporting as needed.	Provide opportunity to honor the work done and participants contributions. Reflect on what was learned.

*Adapted from Carew, D. Parisi-Carew E., and Blanchard, K.; Group Development and Situational Leadership II article: A Model for Managing Groups.*

## **FACILITATOR JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **1. Assure progress on getting the group's task done.**

- Task or topic is clear.
- Group stays on task.
- Issues are explored thoroughly before moving on.
- Progress is tracked and recorded.

### **2. Maintain a safe and supportive process.**

- Everyone is heard who wants to speak.
- Differing views are honored and considered.
- Conflict is surfaced and addressed in a positive way.
- All interactions are respectful.

#### *Strategies*

- Ask open-ended questions—always seek clarity.
- Watch for both nonverbal and verbal cues.
- Focus on one issue at a time.
- Summarize what you are hearing and check it out with the group.
- Restate or paraphrase what an individual is saying.
- Ask group members to figure out where they are and what they need.
- Stay neutral and nonjudgmental.
- Model good communication.
- Seek consensus.
- Don't be afraid of silence.

## FACILITATOR AND LEADER CHARACTERISTICS

The following are key characteristics of successful facilitators and leaders. No one person is strong in all areas. Each person builds on strengths while addressing areas requiring growth.

Please review the following list and first reflect on those characteristics that are your strengths. Then, think about those characteristics that will be a challenge for you.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>This Is Harder for Me</b>	<b>OK at This</b>	<b>One of My Strengths</b>
Good listening skills			
Nonjudgmental (words and nonverbal cues)			
Focused; good eye contact			
Organized and on time			
Patient			
Observant			
Genuinely enthusiastic			
Well prepared/competent			
Confident			
Willing to learn and grow			
Good sense of humor			
Articulate and professional			
Assertive			
Open and friendly			
Able to paraphrase what a person has said			
Comfortable with conflict			
Comfortable with silences			
Flexible			

## WHAT DO I DO NOW?! COMMON FACILITATOR DILEMMAS

**Situation: Participant keeps monopolizing the conversation and cutting people off.**

### *Do*

- Handle the situation.
- Break eye contact. Do not focus on this individual when you sense he or she is monopolizing.
- Thank the individual for his or her thoughts and state that it is important that the ideas of others now be heard.
- When the individual interrupts, tell him or her that the speaker was not yet finished and he or she will need to wait until that individual is finished.
- Establish a go-around where each person who wants to talk is heard.
- Refer to the Full Value Commitment regarding listening and communication. Be clear that your job is to give "air time" to all participants.

### *Don't*

- Ignore the situation.
- Be sarcastic or embarrass the individual.

**Situation: Participant is very shy, withdrawn, or fearful**

### *Do*

- Use the individual's name when talking to him or her.
- Use go-around strategies inviting participation.
- Have the group talk in pairs then report back to the full group.
- Do icebreakers that help create safety and comfort.
- Talk to the participant outside meeting time to see if there is anything that you can do to make him or her more comfortable.
- Accept his or her quietness.

### *Don't*

- Embarrass the individual.
- Allow increasing withdrawal.
- Put individual on the spot.

**Situation: The group is breaking down into cliques or subgroups and participants are feeling judged and excluded.**

*Do*

- Review the Full Value Commitment. Ask participants to name what they are doing well relative to the qualities they identified and what is challenging for them. Ideally participants will talk about this issue in the group; the group can brainstorm ways to break this pattern and set a clear group goal regarding change.
- Choose activities that develop trust and mutual dependency.
- Purposely choose a mix from cliques or subgroups when creating smaller groups for activities or other small group work.

*Don't*

- Ignore the behavior.
- Support one clique or subgroup over another.
- Model judgmental or excluding behavior.

**Situation: A participant jokes around so much that the group continually loses its focus.**

*Do*

- Honor that the individual's sense of humor is a strength, but also note how his or her behavior can have a negative effect on the group. Encourage alternative times for the joking.
- Do trust-building activities so that the person feels accepted without being a jokester.
- Give this individual the job of monitoring on-task time of the group.
- Pick an activity in which some participants are mute and choose this individual to be a mute participant. Process what this was like for the individual and the group at the end of the activity.

*Don't*

- Discourage having fun.
- Try to get even or compete.
- Try to embarrass the individual.

**Situation: A know-it-all participant keeps putting down or dismissing the ideas of others.***Do*

- Acknowledge that person's opinion and reinforce that there is no right answer. State it is important to now hear what others think and to listen without judging.
- State clearly something like this:  
"I heard you judged (or dismissed) Joe's ideas when you said \_\_\_\_\_. I am uncomfortable with this because it is not consistent with the FVC or ground rules we all agreed to. I need everyone to please keep an open mind and consider sometimes very different perspectives or opinions."
- Create opportunities for others to speak without this individual dominating through small group dialogue or go-arounds.

*Don't*

- Ignore the put-down.
- Get into a disagreement with the individual, defending the other person's stance.

**Situation: Two participants get into a heated debate while other participants become disengaged.***Do*

- Summarize what you hear as the two different points of view in a neutral way. Tell them that it is time to hear from other people who may help them find a compromise or see things from different perspectives.
- Invite other people to state their perspective on the original topic. Clarify that individuals do not need to be siding with either one of the two who were debating—it is a time to explore new perspectives.

*Don't*

- Let the debate go on.
- Let the remaining discussion focus only on the issues the two individuals were debating—allow the conversation to shift if needed or desired.
- Side with either individual debating the point.

**FACILITATOR OBSERVER FORM**

<b>Things to Notice</b>	<b>Examples Observed</b>
Made sure the group made progress getting the task done.	
Made sure the task was clear.	
Helped the group stay on task (without taking over)	
Helped the group track how it was doing.	
Maintained a safe and supportive process.	
Made sure people were heard who wanted to speak.	
Honored differing views.	
Addressed conflict in a positive way.	
Made sure interactions were respectful.	
Used open-ended questions to clarify.	
Was attentive to verbal and nonverbal cues.	
Summarized what was said or what was going on in the group effectively.	
Stayed neutral and nonjudgmental.	
Allowed silences when appropriate.	
Appeared comfortable and confident.	
Used clear communication.	
<b>Other</b>	

## TEAM-BUILDING PROBLEM-SOLVING ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY 1: TRAFFIC JAM

*(Project Adventure)*

**Materials:** Enough rubber pads or pieces of oak tag to have one more than the number of participants

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

Two groups of people exchange places on a line of squares that has one more place than the number of people in both groups.

**Step 1.** On the ground, set up a line of squares (rubber pads, pieces of oak tag) that has one more place than the number of people in the group. Separate the squares one stride apart from each other so there is space for participants to move comfortably.

**Step 2.** Split the group into two equal groups and have one group stand on the places to the right of the middle square; the other group stands to the left. Each person stands on one square. Both groups face the middle unoccupied square.

**Step 3.** Explain that using the following moves, people on the right side must end up in the places on the left side and vice versa.

- *Illegal moves:* any move backward, any move around someone facing the same way you are (in other words you are looking at their back), any move that involves two people moving at once. Individuals are not allowed to step out of line to get "the big picture."
- *Legal moves:* A person may move into an empty space in front of him or her. A person may move around a person who is facing him or her into an empty space.

Note: Participants will appreciate these rules being written and posted to refer to.

In your introduction to the activity, ask the participants to pay attention to the role they play in the group. As the facilitator, you will want to watch and listen for actions and comments that indicate how the group is functioning. Those observations, the participants' and your own, will provide the structure for the conversation reflecting on what happened and how those thoughts, actions, and comments are similar to other patterns.



### Activity Debriefing Questions

- What happened?
- How did the group solve the problem?
- What role did you play in this activity?
- Is that role similar to or different from the role you usually play in groups? Why?

## ACTIVITY 2: SHAPING THE SYSTEM

*(Adapted from Project Adventure)*

**Materials:** Blindfolds for all participants; one 3-foot rope, tied at the ends to create a circle

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

This activity adds a level of complexity and challenge to communication and group problem-solving by blindfolding all participants. Removing the ability to see may be uncomfortable for some. Remind participants of “Challenge of Choice,” and give people options like stepping out of the activity or peeking. If someone does peek, establish the ground rule that what he or she sees cannot be shared with the group to help solve the problem. Assure the group that you will keep your eyes open and spot participants to assure safety.

**Step 1.** Put the rope on the ground. Explain that the group’s task is to create the shape of a square from the circle of rope without being able to see.

**Step 2.** Ask everyone to adopt a “bumpers up” position until they are holding the rope, being careful not to bump into each other.

**Step 3.** Instruct the group to find and pick up the rope and create the shape of a square: equal length sides and right angle corners.

After they have looked at their result, you can ask if the shape they have made lives up to their standards, and give them more time to improve if they choose. Spend a few moments reflecting on their decision-making process and, if time permits, try a triangle next—or more complex geometric form if they are ready.

### Activity Debriefing Questions

- What happened during this activity?
- How did the group solve the problem?
- What role did you play in this activity?

- Is that role similar to or different from the role you usually play in groups? Why?
- How did the lack of sight affect you? The group?
- How is the lack of sight related to the challenge of leadership?
- What did you learn about yourself and/or the group that will help you in other problem-solving situations?

**Adaptation:** Let the group hold the rope first and then lose their sight.

### **ACTIVITY 3: KEY PUNCH**

*(Project Adventure: include picture)*

**Materials:** 100-foot rope; rubber pads or their equivalent numbered 1–30

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

**Step 1.** Set up a large rectangle (approximately 15 feet by 30 feet) using a piece of rope. Place thirty spot markers (rubber pads, or their equivalent, 6 inches in diameter) numbered one to thirty inside the rectangle. Use the entire space inside the rectangle: place the spots more than one step inside the boundary and arrange them in a random order, but keep even numbers toward the left of the rectangle and odd numbers toward the right. Establish a start/end line, thirty feet from the rectangle, with another piece of rope or marker.

**Step 2.** Tell the group that their task is to touch all thirty spots in numbered sequence as quickly as possible. They must follow these guidelines to be successful:

1. The entire group must begin and end beyond the start/end line. The watch starts as soon as the first person steps over the line. The watch stops when the last person crosses back over the line.
2. Only one person can be inside the rectangle's boundary at a time. (You can add penalty time if two or more participants are inside the boundary at the same time.)
3. If any number is touched out of sequence, penalty time is added.
4. Any part of the body can be used to touch the numbered spots in sequence.
5. The group cannot return to the key pad between attempts in order to study the number set up. All planning must occur behind the line where the group starts each round. Any time the group or a player crosses this line, it is considered an attempt.
6. Tell the group they have fifteen minutes or three attempts, whichever comes first.

**Activity Debriefing Questions**

- What happened?
- How did the group solve the problem?
- What role did you play in this activity?
- Is that role similar to or different from the role you usually play in groups? Why?
- Are there other group roles you would like to try out?
- How were differences of opinion resolved?

**ACTIVITY 4: CONTINENTAL DIVIDE**

**Materials:** Blindfolds (4 or 5); 10-foot rope

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1. Set-up:** Divide the group in half. Have one half line up shoulder to shoulder on one side of the room and the other half on the other side directly opposite, with both groups looking at each other. Clear the middle space, which should be at least 15 to 20 feet. (If possible, do this activity outside.) Put a rope across the middle of the floor, which will mark their destination.

**Step 2. Directions:** Explain that each group is on an expedition and nearing its destination—the continental divide. Point out the rope as their destination. Their mode of travel is unique—they must have the outside edge of their foot touching the outside of the person's foot to the left and right of them and this connection can *never* be broken as they travel. If it is, there will be natural consequences. Note: Only the individuals on either end of each line will have just one foot connected to another person's foot.

**Step 3. Oversight:** Let the groups begin, watching for any breaks in foot contact. As soon as you see this happen, stop the whole group and give this person a blindfold to wear. (You can also offer that one of the individuals immediately beside this person can choose to wear the blindfold in his or her place.) Resume action. If a person breaks a second time, you can ask him or her to turn around so that the individual is facing backward and opposite the rest of the group.

**Activity Debriefing Questions**

- Was it harder or easier than you thought?
- How did the group figure out this problem?
- What was it like to be blindfolded or turned around?
- What roles did different people take?

- What were the key decisions in addressing this challenge? How were these decisions made?
- What happens to decision-making when people can't make eye contact or eye contact is hard?
- What can you learn about to be successful as a group from this activity?

### **ACTIVITY 5: MAGIC CARPET**

*(Adapted from Project Adventure, Zip Lines)*

**Materials:** Old blanket—size depends on the size of your group

**Time:** 30 minutes

Put the blanket on the floor and have all participants stand on it. Once settled, explain that they are on a magic carpet but you just realized that you have made a big mistake. The carpet is up-side-down, *but* they cannot get off the carpet to turn it over. They have to figure out how to turn it over while all feet remain on it.

Monitor that all feet remain on the blanket—or up in the air and administer consequences as needed (lose sight, voice).

Note: The smaller and more crowded the blanket is, the more stress you add to this activity. Make sure your group is comfortable with little personal space.

#### **Activity Debriefing Questions**

- What was hardest about this activity?
- What was easiest?
- How many solutions did you try? Who's solutions were they? Why were these particular solutions chosen?
- Did everyone feel that they could voice their opinions and they were heard?
- What did you learn about problem-solving from this activity that you can apply to other problem-solving situations?

# Embracing Diversity

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# Embracing Diversity

*When there are walls of ignorance between people, when we don't know each other's stories, we substitute our own myths about what that person is. When we are operating with only a myth, none of that person's truth will ever be known to us and we will injure them—mostly without ever meaning to.*

—Paula Laurence Wehmiller  
*Harvard Educational Review*

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## **Goal**

Participants will share and honor their own cultural heritage, understand their own stereotypes and biases, and identify ways to change prejudice and discrimination.

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## **Rationale**

Exploring diversity helps us to be leaders who value and promote equity, fairness, and justice in our change efforts. Discriminatory social messages surround us throughout our lives. This inevitably leads to stereotyping and prejudice and can spark harassment, bullying, violence, and oppression. This module helps participants identify their own biases and how these affect actions and decisions in their lives. Only by naming these internal messages can we change them, stopping the harm we can often unintentionally perpetuate.

The impact of discrimination and oppression in systems is then explored, along with strategies to challenge these realities. Special attention is given to classism, a phenomena that impacts all other forms of discrimination. Those who are poorer in any one oppressed group experience additional prejudice. *Employing strategies to break the misuse of power is a fundamental responsibility of any leader.*

The activities in this module bring deeper meaning to the Full Value Commitment. It is easy to write and agree to “respect the differences of others,” but practicing this value is challenging.

**Objectives Summary**

Participants will:

1. *increase their understanding of the differences among people, which may or may not be visible, exploring stereotyping and prejudice from both personal and societal perspectives;*
2. *explore discrimination and oppression;*
3. *honor their own ethnic and cultural differences; and*
4. *identify ways to change closed attitudes toward differences.*

**Facilitator Note:** These activities might trigger painful memories of prejudice, discrimination, or oppression. It is very important that the facilitators assure a safe, supportive, and respectful process for this important work and be particularly attentive to nonverbal cues.



**OBJECTIVE 1:** *Participants will increase their understanding of the differences among people, which may or may not be visible, exploring stereotyping and prejudice from both personal and societal perspectives.*

One of the best ways to begin exploring stereotyping and differences is in the participants' immediate world. Cliques and the feeling of being excluded are a logical starting point.

### **ACTIVITY 1: TRIANGLE TAG**

*(Adapted from Project Adventure workshop materials.)*

**Materials:** None. This is a tag game, so you will need open space for individuals to move freely.

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Have participants separate into groups of four. Ask that three of the four members of the group hold hands, forming a triangle. Identify one member as the "Head Honcho" of the triangle, with the other two triangle members being the "Head Honcho's Protectors." This group of three must stay connected.

The objective of the activity is for the one person not connected to the triangle to tag the Head Honcho. This person cannot reach across the human triangle but can only circle around the outside to make the tag. The job of the Head Honcho's Protectors is to continually reposition themselves so that the tagger can not reach the Head Honcho.

Once all groups have been formed and are clear about the task, let the activity begin. You will witness how hard it is for the outside person to break through the protectors' maneuvers and get to the Head Honcho. Rotate four times so that each person can experience being in each role.

This is a great opportunity to open up a discussion about cliques, talking about how groups can be either inclusive or exclusive and how it feels to be excluded.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like to be the Head Honcho?
- What was it like to be the protectors?
- What was it like to be the outside person?
- Was there anything that surprised you about this activity?
- How does this tag game relate to social groups in school or in the community?

**Debriefing Alternatives**

Remember:

- Debriefing doesn't necessarily mean taking.
- You don't necessarily need to debrief every activity.

**Alternatives**

- one word whips
- an emotional weather report
- video of the event—freeze action
- pose or mime a memorable moment
- rank 1–10
- quick lineup around a theme
- make a face
- draw a picture or sculpt with pipe cleaners
- use journal; provide a focus question
- pick response to activity from a selection of Beanie Babies
- write one "learning" on a Post-it note
- create a newspaper article headline
- talk in pairs or trios
- solo sit or walk
- guided imagery
- write a letter to yourself
- write a post card to someone else
- find something in nature that represents your experience in the activity
- thumbs up; thumbs sideways; thumbs down

**ACTIVITY 2: CLIQUE MARKETPLACE**

**Materials:** Newsprint or poster board; tape; markers

**Time Commitment:** 30–45 minutes

Lead a discussion about stereotyping, bigotry, and prejudice. The following definitions are helpful starting points:

*Stereotyping:* An oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences. Even seemingly positive stereotypes that link a person or group to a specific positive trait can have negative consequences (Anti-Defamation League, 2001).

*Bigotry:* Harboring unreasonable or irrational negative stereotypes.

*Prejudice:* Prejudging a person or group without adequate knowledge.

**Step 1.** Ask participants to brainstorm the youth cliques they know exist within their school or community. Write each clique on the top of a separate piece of newsprint or poster board and make two columns underneath, labeled “positive” and “negative.” Tape the pieces of paper up around the room. Now have participants wander from “Clique Station” to “Clique Station” in silence, writing down some of the stereotypes of these different groups—both positive and negative. Be sure to ask, “What are some of the major stereotypes about each clique?” rather than, “What do you believe about each clique?”

**Step 2.** After participants have had time to contribute to each station, ask the group to position itself so that one person can read what has been written for each clique, starting with all the negative comments.

**Step 3.** Ask participants to silently go from station to station, identifying their own stereotypes and prejudices they know they hold about particular groups. Have them write these down in a journal or on a piece of paper. Clarify that they will *not* be asked to share this list with anyone else (other than perhaps the facilitators, if you choose to have them keep a journal about these prejudices).

**Step 4.** Ask each participant to take part in shredding at least one of the stereotypes. Do this in silence and collect the shreds in a container, which is to be discarded. You can also burn the paper pieces if you can manage to not trigger a fire alarm in the process. Lead a discussion around the following questions

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- How did you feel about doing this activity?
- Which clique would you place yourself in, if any?
- How exclusive or inclusive are these cliques? To what extent can individuals move in and out of the groups? (Note: the definition of a clique is “a small, exclusive group of people.”)
- Some people don’t think they are in a clique but others perceive they are. Does this occur in your school? Talk about it.
- What was it like to listen to the stereotypes you wrote?
- Did you notice anything in particular about the stereotypes (recurring positive and negative traits)?
- Why are positive stereotypes as potentially harmful as negative?
- How do multiple intelligences relate to cliques? (Note: Have overview from appendix of Who Are We? module available to review.)

- What are some of the feelings that people might feel when they experience bigotry or prejudice?
- Have you ever been discriminated against because of being in your clique? What was that like?
- What does it mean to you that we shredded these assumptions and stereotypes? Do you think we can ever be free of these?
- What have you learned about yourself in this activity?

**Key Points:** Often cliques are created around differences—interests, ethnic background, race, religion, etc. Don't ignore these differences or feel that they shouldn't be acknowledged. Differences make our culture richly diverse. It is the negative labeling and value judgements associated with cliques, and the tendency to exclude others who are different, that are damaging.

### **ACTIVITY 3: THE STIR-IT-UP CHALLENGE**

*(Adaptation of "Mix-It-up" activity; see Web site in Appendix A.)*

**Material:** None

**Time Commitment:** Out-of-class time: about 1 minute; follow-up discussion: 30 minutes

"Mix-It-Up" is a network for teen activists who want to challenge social boundaries in schools and communities sponsored by the Teaching Tolerance Program and Southern Poverty Law Center. Over half the young people they surveyed across the country reported that their schools were "quick to put people in categories." They frame their mission in the following way:

*In many situations in life, we divide ourselves along the lines of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, and many other factors. Hanging out with people who share our backgrounds, experiences, or interests is a natural thing. It helps us define and understand who we are. But these kinds of divisions can also make it hard to understand each other and can lead to many challenges and difficulties—inside school and in our communities. If we can break down the barriers between us, we can create schools where there are fewer misunderstandings that can lead to conflicts, bullying, or violence. (Reaching Across Boundaries: Talk to Create Change. Mix It Up Handbook, p. 2)*

The official Mix-It-Up program entails students leading dialogue groups throughout their school. One suggested means to introduce this work is to have one lunch period where everyone is "mixed-up" or sits with a group they never would have sat with before. On November 21, 2002, over

200,000 students in 3,000 schools across the country tried this with some great results.

If participants of the *Our Voices: Our Community* course wish to pursue either a “Mix It Up” lunchroom experience or more involved dialogue process, excellent materials to help you organize it can be found at their Web site. It offers a remarkable leadership and diversity appreciation opportunity. The following activity is a quick “taste” of Mixing It Up.

**Introduction:** “Imagine walking into the lunchroom and feeling like you would be welcome to sit anywhere.” This is the Mix-It-Up vision. In this activity, you will experiment with “stirring it up” with a person or group of your choice, in a setting of your choice. It is an opportunity to further explore some of the stereotypes we identified in the previous activity.

**Directions:** Think about the Clique Marketplace, identifying the stereotypes you know you and others hold about particular groups in school.

**Step 1.** Pick a person or group who you know you would particularly benefit from knowing better to help break down your own stereotypes. Remember the “Challenge of Choice” principle where you choose the level of challenge you will take on in this activity. This activity will no doubt take you out of your “comfort zone”—the question is how far you want to go.

**Step 2.** Decide on the setting for your “stir-it-up” meeting with a person or group you otherwise would not normally interact with in this way. Examples of choices:

- Telephone an individual you haven’t called before.
- Walk between classes with that person.
- Join a new group of people at a social gathering spot.
- Ask a person for help on something he or she would be knowledgeable about.
- Sit at the lunch table of a different clique at school.
- Choose a seat at a sporting event next to that group and talk to the members.
- Make eye contact and say hi to someone you never would have—maybe several days in a row.
- Go to a meeting of a group for the first time (such as Gay-Straight Alliance).

Clarify that they can choose to do this with a fellow participant but both have to speak! The class might also choose to do this on the same day so they can support one another in their efforts.

**Step 3.** Set a clear SMART goal, for example: Leslie and I will sit at a table where the people are all into sports and where we know no more than one person. We will talk to these people for one entire lunch period. Share this goal with the other participants.

**Step 4.** Let participants talk about their fears and hopes with this task, as well as the potential value of the activity. You can create a simple “T” chart to record both sides. Note: The fear of potentially being ridiculed for this effort is a feeling many individuals who are regularly discriminated against or who are excluded from cliques confront every day.

**Step 5.** Help participants brainstorm a list of what they might say when they introduce themselves. For example, in the cafeteria option they might take the direct approach of: “I believe that there are a lot of cliques in this school and sometimes staying in these groups really creates barriers. I want to break down some of those barriers and the way we label one another. Is it OK if I eat with you this lunch period and we just get to talk?” Alternately, it is fine to sit down and just start asking questions in a more informal way.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like when you “stirred-it-up”?
- What were the verbal and nonverbal responses to you doing this?
- What did you talk about?
- What did you learn about the stereotypes you held about a person or group?
- Would you do it again? Why or why not?
- Do you think it made any difference to the people you talked with? How would you describe that difference?
- What other ways can we continue to help break down barriers?
- What personal strengths did you draw on to do this activity?
- How does what you did relate to leadership?

Either at the beginning or end of the next session, make sure you acknowledge the courage it took each individual to participate in this activity and, more important, have the participants congratulate themselves for this risk-taking.

### **ACTIVITY 4: VILLAPE EXERCISE**

**Materials:** “The Villape Story” handout for each participant; “Facilitator Instructions for Villape,” “Facilitator Dialogue Questions,” and Villape Story Key” for facilitators only (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

This activity lets participants experience what it might be like to have a learning disability affecting reading. It is estimated that one out of every ten individuals will have difficulty learning to read.

Pass out “The Villape Story” and follow the steps outlined in the “Facilitator Instructions for Villape,” conclude with “Facilitator Dialogue Questions.”

## **OBJECTIVE 2:** *Participants will explore discrimination and oppression.*

**Facilitator Comment:** It is likely that participants may have personally dealt with prejudice. Knowing your group and being sensitive to this possibility is essential. You must feel confident that the group is respectful of each other and consistently caring to assure the safety necessary to do these activities. If your group is not ready, consider consulting the book *Diversity in Action* (1998) for a larger variety of lower-risk lead-up activities.

### **ACTIVITY 1: UNTIL WE SEE WHAT WE ARE . . .**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Write quote below or quote on page 235 on newsprint and post:

*Until we see what we are, we cannot take steps to become what we should be.*

—Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Lead a discussion regarding what participants think the quote means.

**Key Point:** Although harboring stereotypes and prejudices is unavoidable, we need to continually question these stereotypes and move beyond them.

### **ACTIVITY 2: THE WHEEL OF DISCRIMINATION**

**Materials:** “Wheel of Discrimination,” “One Spoke at a Time,” “Startling Statements Summary,” and “Startling Statements About Teens in Vermont” handouts (see appendix of this module); large wheel of discrimination for you to refer to as you review the theory

**Time Commitment:** 1 hour or more

**Step 1.** Review the “Wheel of Discrimination” handout. Each spoke represents one of the major ways prejudice and discrimination occur in our society. Review each spoke and their definitions.

*Mental or Physical Ability:* Prejudice and/or discrimination against people with mental and/or physical disabilities.

*Age:* Prejudice and/or discrimination against people because of their age.

*Physical Appearance:* Prejudice and/or discrimination based on an individual’s looks.

*Religion:* Prejudice and/or discrimination against people based on their religion. (Note: Anti-Semitism refers to discrimination against Jewish people due to their religious beliefs, their ethnicity, and sometimes the erroneous belief that Jews are a “race.”)

*Class:* Prejudice and/or discrimination against people based on their real or perceived economic status.

*Sexual Orientation:* Prejudice and/or discrimination against people who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual. (Homophobia is defined as a fear of people who are believed to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual.)

*Race:* Prejudice and/or discrimination based on an individual’s race. Often physical characteristics are used to define race and support a system of discrimination.

*Sex:* Prejudice and/or discrimination based on an individual’s sex.

Ask participants why class is part of the hub of this wheel rather than just another spoke. Talk about how class discrimination cuts across all spokes, with those who are poorer in any oppressed group experiencing additional prejudice.

**Facilitator Note:** Facilitators can choose to build this wheel with participants rather than providing it. In this instance, the facilitator needs to bring up class as a “hub” issue. If you choose this alternative, just make sure all major forms of discrimination are identified and explained.

**Step 2. Dismantling the Wheel of Discrimination.** Discrimination and prejudice involves an individual prejudging a person or group without adequate knowledge. The first thing any individual can do to dismantle the “Wheel of Discrimination” is to personally stop discriminating against others.

Oppression takes this a step further, adding the element of power. Oppression is defined as an unfair use of power (subjugation) over a social group, by a group with access to social, economic, and/or political power. This element of power makes it very hard to dismantle the



wheel because people usually do not want to lose the privilege that goes with power.

Introduce the concept of oppression by asking participants what the following means:

$$\text{Prejudice} + \text{Power} = \text{Oppression}$$

Introduce the following terms and ask for examples:

*Target group:* Those who are being discriminated against (i.e., people of color, Jews, economically poor).

*Agents:* Those who hold the power and benefit from keeping this group oppressed (i.e., white people, Christians, economically comfortable groups).

*Allies:* Individuals who act to stop oppression and remove power from the Agents.

How we break the wheel of discrimination and oppression:

1. Understand when we are agents of discrimination and oppression and commit to change our own beliefs and behaviors by becoming allies of the targeted group.
2. Commit to changing system norms and policies that feed the oppression.

Take the “One Spoke at a Time” handout and provide an example using one spoke identified in the prior activity, having participants provide the information. For example:

*Spoke:* Sexual Orientation

*Target Group:* individuals who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender

*Agents:* heterosexuals

### **Evidence**

*Personal:* Jokes and put-downs (fags, queer, etc.)

*School:* Members of the Gay-Straight Alliance are put down  
Homosexual students are bullied  
Children of gay or lesbian couples are harassed

*Institutions:* Some religious stands against homosexuality  
Differences in rights of homosexual versus heterosexual couples (health insurance)  
Boy Scout policy concerning scout leaders

*Culture:* TV images of homosexuality often stereotyped

**Be an Ally**

Do not tell jokes about people who are gay or lesbian.

Do not stereotype or judge classmates that I know are homosexual.

Join the Gay-Straight Alliance.

Speak up when I hear about prejudice toward gay or lesbian people.

**Step 3.** Have the participants split into small groups, each completing either one or two of the “One Spoke at a Time.” *Save the class analysis for the “Classism Shuffle” activity.* When they are done, have each group present its work, inviting additions from other class participants.

**Step 4.** Ask participants if they are willing to share stories of stereotyping and discrimination that they have personally experienced or that they know others have experienced. Share the “Startling Statements Summary” or the more detailed “Startling Statements About Teens in Vermont.”

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Do you think that we can ever see with a truly “clear lens”—without discrimination? Why or why not?
- What have you learned about yourself through this activity?
- Do you think any of your typical behaviors might change based on what you learned or how you felt during this activity?
- What are the challenges you face in trying to be an ally in any one area?
- What support systems exist to become an ally?
- What do you know now about being an ally to people different than yourself that you might not have realized before?

**ACTIVITY 3: THE PERFECT COMMUNITY**

**Materials:** Large room or outdoors

**Time Commitment:** 1 hour

This activity is designed to have participants experience the feelings evoked when groups of individuals share common desires, but their ability to attain what they want is bounded by their class in society. (Note: Thanks to Bill Minard and Jake Diaz for their input into creating this activity.)

Separate the group into three groups of differing size. A 3:2:1 ratio is effective. Give each group a bag or container with items to develop the “perfect community.” These items might include building blocks, cardboard, scissors, tape, paste, magic markers, toy cars, etc. As well, each group will receive a sum of play money. *Resources within the bags, how-*

*ever, will not be evenly distributed, thus establishing three distinct "classes" of communities. Groups should not be told in advance that the resources are not evenly distributed!*

Divide the room into three areas (using masking tape on the floor works). The group with the most resources and fewest members will be assigned to the largest space, and the least "wealthy" and largest group will be assigned to the smallest space. The groups will be given 30 minutes to construct the "perfect community."

Additional facilitator options to build stress:

- Issue "building permits" with the wealthiest community having the easiest access to the permits (establish fees for permits, reject permits not filled out properly, etc.).
- Have a general store that sells various education options, life's pleasures (entertainment), food, playground equipment, etc., with most being unaffordable to the least wealthy.
- Sell additional building materials, with most being unaffordable to the least wealthy.
- Be a "Public Safety Officer" to maintain order and discipline. This individual may overlook breaches by the privileged group and speak abruptly or harass those with fewer resources.
- Serve food part way through the activity with notably different offerings for each group (i.e., pizza for the wealthy, bread and cheese for the middle group, plain rice for the least wealthy group). Ask them to keep working on their community while they eat.

**Note:** If individuals will be moving around to a common general store or building permit station, you may want to give each group a different color necklace (different yarn colors are fine) so that you immediately know which group they are in.

At the end of the hour, each group is given three to five minutes to present their "perfect community."

Processing:

- In what ways do these communities reflect the real world?
- At what point did you realize that there was an uneven distribution of wealth?
- How did you feel to be wealthy, poor, etc.?
- How did your group react to your "neighbors"?
- How did your group function in this activity?
- What did you learn about classism in this experience?

**Key Point:** We will never truly know what it is like to be discriminated against unless we are experiencing it ourselves. However, we can develop empathy and respect for individuals confronting discrimination and make a commitment to not cause further hurt through stereotyping and prejudice.

#### **ACTIVITY 4: THE CLASSISM SHUFFLE**

**Materials:** Four 8.5-by-11-inch pieces of paper with the following labels: Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree; “One Spoke at a Time” and “Startling Statements Summary” handouts (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

**Step 1.** Put the four pieces of paper in a line across the room, leaving space for people to move to one of the four spots. Explain that you are going to read a list of statements. In response, participants are to choose which of the four stations best represents their beliefs and move to it as quickly as possible. Once people have positioned themselves, ask individuals at each station to talk among themselves regarding why they stood at that station and then have each group present its viewpoint. (Note: There is purposefully no neutral option. Participants must make a harder choice, coming down clearly on one side or the other.)

Statements:

- Working-class people and college-educated people are equally valued in our community.
- Those who begin poor clearly have to work harder to make it in our society than those who do not start poor.
- Those who are wealthy have clearly worked harder than others.
- People who are poor need to be taken care of.
- Working-class people are more highly valued in our community than those who are poor.
- People who dress a certain way are given less respect in our school or community than others.
- College-educated people are more highly valued in our community.
- People who don’t plan to go to college are not quite as smart as those who do plan on going to college.
- People who speak a certain way are given less respect in our school or community.
- A lot of people who get help from the state don’t need it.
- I have heard jokes that target people who are poor.

It is advisable to also have these statements written down as a hand-out or on newsprint for participants to read.

**Step 2.** Reinforce the discussion from the Wheel of Discrimination regarding the role classism plays in oppression. As a class, complete the “One Spoke at a Time” Class sheet. Share “Startling Statements Summary” on classism.

**Key Point:** Individuals who are poorer experience greater oppression than those who have more financial resources. Disabled people, people of color, women, and elderly people are all over-represented among the poor.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- How did this activity challenge your thinking about class issues?
- What stereotypes did it surface for you?
- What will be the hardest stereotypes for you to change? Why?

## ACTIVITY 5: ONE WORLD: COLOR BY NUMBER

**Materials:** “If the World Were Shrunk” (make sure that the “village” is copied on both sides) and “Color by Number” handouts (see appendix of this module); crayons; note cards for each participant; pens or pencils

**Time:** 40 minutes

Philip M. Harter, a medical doctor at Stanford University School of Medicine, asked himself the question, “If the earth’s population were shrunk into a village of just 100 people—with all the human ratios existing in the world still remaining—what would this tiny, diverse village look like?” You are going to discover what he found out in this activity.

**Step 1.** Pass out the “Color by Number” handout and a crayon to each person. Explain that these are Dr. Harter’s 100 people, representing the world. Explain that you are going to instruct them to color in a certain number of people, a few at a time. Ask everyone to color in individuals right next to each other so that they are clustered. It doesn’t matter where they start as long as they keep their coloring clustered. At each point let them complete the specified coloring, then share the fact(s) about the world ratio, pausing to let them think about this information. Read each fact twice and write the information on a piece of paper, developing a visual summary as you go along. There should be a marked contrast between the “lightness” of coloring and the “weight” of what the coloring represents.

### Color by Number Summary

If the world were shrunk to a village of just one hundred, with all the human ratios existing in the world remaining, this is what the village would look like:

- 1 individual would have a college education.
- 1 individual would own a computer.
- 6 individuals would possess 59 percent of the entire world's wealth *and* all 6 would be from the United States.
- 11 individuals would be homosexual; the remaining 89 individuals would be heterosexual.
- 20 individuals would live in adequate housing, the remaining 80 individuals would live in substandard or inadequate housing.
- 30 individuals would be able to read; the remaining 70 individuals would be illiterate.
- 30 individuals would be Christians; the remaining 70 individuals would be non-Christians.
- 30 individuals would be Caucasian or white; the remaining 70 individuals would be people of color.
- 48 individuals would be males; the remaining 52 individuals would be females.
- 50 individuals would have adequate food; the remaining 50 individuals would be malnourished.

**Facilitator Note:** Try this activity yourself before you facilitate it to understand the task, the pacing, and how you will use a written summary to reinforce each point. The intent is simply to give a visual reference for a number of separate ratios in our shrunken world. The facts are not additive; rather each stands on its own.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What stood out for you as we did this part of the activity?
- What does it tell you about our world? Our own society?
- Which statistic was most surprising?
- Which statistic was most troubling?

**Step 2.** Now ask participants to turn the paper over to a fresh village. This time you will see how the village separates out based on whether you are Asian, European, African, or from the Western Hemisphere (North and South America). Take guesses from participants before you start this part of the activity. Pass out three different color crayons per person (or have them share). Have them label each group (African, European, etc.) before moving on.

**Number to Color In****Fact to Share About World Ratio**

8

These are individuals from Africa.

*Get a new color crayon and color in . . .*

21

These are Europeans.

*Get a new color crayon and color in . . .*

57

These are Asians

The remaining fourteen individuals would be from the Western Hemisphere—North and South America.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Any surprises?
- How do the statistics compare with your guesses?

**Step 3.** Pass out Dr. Harter’s “If the World were Shrunk” handout. Ask participants to take turns reading one of the points.

**Step 4.** Pass out note cards and ask that participants do a two-minute silent write, asking them to focus on what they want to remember from this activity. Invite anyone who is willing to share theirs.

**Adaptation**

Use manipulables (buttons, clothespins, etc.) instead of coloring in people on the handout.

**ACTIVITY 6: PIECES OF THE PIE**

*(Adapted from Diversity in Action activity, p. 183.)*

**Materials:** Pie-shaped pieces of paper in different colors for different categories

**Time Commitment:** 30–45 minutes (prep time: 45 minutes the first time you do this activity)

This activity provides a means to personally identify the amount of power each participant has relative to the areas of stereotyping and oppression that have been explored.

Start by making a list of attributes that affords someone status or power in your setting, along with the target group who does not have power. Here is a start:

Attribute	Agent (holds power)	Target Group
1. Gender	Male	Female
2. Race	White	Person of color
3. Age	Older than 15	15 or younger
4. Physical abilities	Physically able	Physically challenged
5. Socioeconomic level	Middle class or higher	Blue collar or working poor
6. Academics	High academic standing academically	Average or struggles
7. Sports	Good athlete	Not such a good athlete
8. Appearance	Considered nice looking	Not considered nice looking
9. Language	English primary is language	English is secondary language
10. Group identity	Part of the "in" group	Not part of the "in" group
11. Religion	Christian	Non-Christian
12. Sexual orientation*	Heterosexual	Homosexual

*\*Note: Some individuals may not feel comfortable revealing this information; category can be omitted.*

**Facilitator Note:** Add your own from the Clique Activity or other discussions.

The goal is to have each person to create his or her own personal "pie," which will be color coded, reflecting either the agent or target group. Your prep work is as follows:

**Step 1.** Identify two different colors for your pie pieces, with one color for those who are "Agents" and a different color for those who are the "Target Group." (For example—all "Agent" attributes are red, all "Target Group" attributes are yellow). You will make both an "Agent Pie" and a "Target Pie" for each participant. If you have 15 participants, you should have 15 pieces of red paper and 15 pieces of yellow paper.

**Step 2.** Count up the number of variables for your pie—see the left-hand column above (gender, race, etc.). You will need this many pieces in each pie. In the example above, you will need 12 pieces per pie (excluding sexual orientation). Make one master pie with 12 pieces and use it to cut all your colored pieces of paper into the same size slices. In our example, you will end up with 15 red pies and 15 yellow pies, with each having 12 slices.

**Step 3.** Label pie pieces of one color with the words in the Agent column. In this example, you would take all your red pieces (the Agent color)



and label 15 of them “male,” the next 15 “white,” the next 15 “older than 15,” etc. Next take your yellow or “Target Group” pieces and label them in the same manner (15 “female,” 15 “persons of color,” etc.). This assures that you have enough pieces in each category for each participant to take one.

**Step 4.** Put all the pieces of the pie on the table mixed together, and ask participants to select the pieces that describe them. When they have completed their choices, have them put their pieces together to form a pie. In this example, each person will have twelve pieces in his or her pie. Now, explain your color coding, identifying which color represents the group who holds power and which color represents the target group. Break participants into groups of three to four and have them talk about their pies, discussing:

- What do you notice about each person’s pie?
- How does it feel to look at your own pie and see the power you do or do not have?

**Key Point:** If you are from any of the dominant groups which hold power and become an ally for any targeted group, you are in a powerful position to change prejudice within your dominant peer group. Don’t underestimate your influence!

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What did you learn from your discussion with others?
- What pie pieces have the most influence over your sense of power or lack of power?
- What school or community rules or norms or policies exist to make sure that the power group stays in control?
- If someone’s pie is mostly the color of the target group, do you think they have equal access to opportunity in our society?

## **ACTIVITY 7: CIRCLES OF MYSELF**

**Materials:** “Circles of Myself” handout, including “Descriptor Choice” (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 25 minutes

Distribute the “Circles of Myself” handout. Ask participants to put their name in the middle and choose four “identifiers” from the list used in the “Descriptor Choices,” which they feel best defines them. Separate the class into pairs and have them discuss the questions noted at the bottom of the form.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What did you discover in this activity about how you define yourself?
- Did the way you define yourself come primarily from the “agent” or “target” group, or both? What are the implications of this?
- What can we learn from this activity?

*Do not judge any man  
until you have walked two moons  
in his moccasins.*

—Native American Saying

**OBJECTIVE 3:** *Participants will honor their own ethnic and cultural differences.*

Once oppression is explored, it is important to also develop an experience of honoring differences. The antidote to racism is not being color blind but rather acknowledging and exploring differences with an open mind and recognizing the impact race may have on the individual’s life.

**ACTIVITY 1: ARTIFACTS**

**Material:** None

**Time Commitment:** 3–5 minutes per participant

Ask participants to bring in to the next gathering some artifact (object, piece of art, music, etc.) that represents something meaningful about their race, ethnicity, religion or some other aspect of their individuality. Encourage participants to not choose something that is more superficial or stereotypical about what they are representing, but rather something that has personal significance.

Allow each participant time to tell his or her story and respond to questions. Honor each artifact sharing with a round of applause.

**Options:** You might choose to provide a variety of artistic mediums (clay, pipe cleaners, newspaper, masking tape) and have participants create an artifact that has personal relevance to them regarding their heritage or background.

**Facilitator Note:** This activity may be difficult for people who have never really thought about their cultural heritage or had many family traditions related to their culture. For this reason, it is even more important than ever that we ask participants to participate in this activity, exploring their background and ethnic identity.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- Did anything surprise you during the sharing process?
- What was it like to have to reflect on and choose your own unique artifact?
- What does this activity have to do with leadership?
- How does it relate to the bigger issue of diversity?

### **OBJECTIVE 4:** *Participants will identify ways to change closed attitudes toward differences.*

The final step in this module asks that we explore ways to change attitudes that promote discrimination and prejudice as individuals and as a group. It is a commitment to being leaders in this aspect of needed school, community, and world change.

### **ACTIVITY 1: A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE . . . HERE, NOW**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; “Challenging Oppression” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 45 minutes

Put pieces of newsprint up each labeled with key places in your school and community (i.e., hallways, classrooms, lunch room, gym, downtown stores, town hall, etc.). Make sure the students have looked at the options and add if some are missing.

On the top third of the paper write “Vision.” On the remaining two-thirds of the paper make three columns. The left column is for “Existing Resources” to make this change happen, the second for “Barriers,” and the third for “New Ideas for Change.”

**Step 1.** Review the handout “Challenging Oppression” by having participants each read one point out loud (invite people to pass if they are uncomfortable with this). Then ask:

- Which will be the hardest step for you to take?
- Which will be the easiest step for you to take?

**Step 2.** Tell the participants that they are to walk around to each area and write what it would look like if the barriers of stereotypes and prejudice were eliminated from this part of their world. Any examples you can offer would be helpful. Here is one:

### Lunch Room Vision

Students would shift their seats from group to group freely, knowing that they would be respected wherever they sat.

Existing Resources	Barriers	New Ideas for Change
Student council year's Theme of Diversity	Long-standing cliques and a sense that some don't want to change	Student council hosts mix-it-up
Gay-Straight Alliance is developing	People are afraid of being picked on if they join the alliance	Write article for school newspaper about this issue

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What personal goal can you set regarding contributing to a more inclusive and respectful community? (Remember SMART!)
- What are things that can be done soon or in the near future?
- What are longer range goals?
- How do we build on strengths as well as address barriers?

## ACTIVITY 2: SKIT

**Materials:** "Role Options in Response to Bias and Discrimination" handout (see appendix of this module) (Note: You will break participants into groups of 5 and you will need one set of these for each group.)

**Time Commitment:** 45 minutes

Share the five different options or roles we can take in response to discrimination (Anti-Defamation League, 2001):

*Ally:* Someone who speaks out or takes an action that is supportive of the person being discriminated against.

*Bystander:* Someone who witnesses discrimination but doesn't say anything or intervene in any way.

*Confronter:* Someone who directly intervenes with words or actions in an incident where bias or discrimination were evident. This individual not only allies with the person being targeted but also speaks out against bias and discrimination on a group or systems level as well.

*Perpetrator:* Someone who says or does something discriminatory against another person.

*Target:* The individual who is the focus of discrimination or mistreatment.

Separate the participants into groups of five. Ask each group to identify a situation that includes stereotyping or discrimination which they know occurs in their school or community. Ask them to create a 2 minute skit around this situation, making sure that the five responses to bias and discrimination are incorporated into the character roles.

Have participants draw one of the five roles out of a hat. Ask them to assume this role when they premiere their skit to the other participants.

Have the skits enacted.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like to play in the role you were assigned? (review each option)
- Was this a role you were comfortable with? Why or why not?
- What are the potential costs of being an ally or confronter?
- What are the potential benefits of being an ally or confronter?
- How does this activity relate to leadership?

### **ACTIVITY 3: DIVERSITY OBSTACLE COURSE**

**Materials:** Rope; paper cut into interesting shapes; assortment of other objects (stuffed animals, hula hoops, blankets, etc.); blindfolds; note cards; hat to hold note cards

**Step 1.** Create an obstacle course area, liberally distributing all objects except the paper shapes.

**Step 2.** Ask participants to name ways in which discrimination and prejudice are promoted (i.e., bullying, stereotypes etc.) and write each one on a separate "obstacle paper." Distribute these obstacle papers throughout the course.

**Step 3.** Ask participants to brainstorm ways that we can help change attitudes to move toward embracing diversity (i.e., not assume, not tell racial or ethnic jokes, speak up when someone is being discriminated against, etc.) and put each suggestion on a note card.

**Step 4.** Have participants pair with someone they do not spend much time with. One individual in the pair will volunteer to be the first to go through the maze blindfolded, being guided by the words of the partner. Partners must stay outside the obstacle course boundaries and cannot use touch to guide the individual.

**Step 5.** Have two pairs work through the course if space allows, to keep the activity moving. As those in the course reach the halfway point, a new set of pairs can start. (Just try to avoid jams in the course.)

If any person touches one of the “Diversity Obstacles” with a foot while in the course, stop action (have some bell or cue to get everyone quiet quickly as this can be pretty noisy when it gets going). Have a sighted person grab one of the note cards of an action that will help counter this (or other obstacles) and have it read out loud. Action can then resume.

**Step 6.** The partners switch roles, with the guide being led through the obstacle course.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like to be in the maze?
- What was it like to be the guide?
- Which role did you like better? Why?
- How was this activity similar to addressing the issue of diversity in our own personal lives and in the communities around us (family, friends, work, etc.)?

## **CLOSING**

### **ACTIVITY 1: PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER**

**Materials:** “Full Value Commitment” handout (see appendix of Who Are We? module)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

The Full Value Commitment (FVC) offers an opportunity to capture final reflections and learnings for this module and brings deeper meaning to the original FVC. This activity is an opportunity to name new commitments that will create a more inclusive and caring community, or affirm existing commitments to promote equity, fairness, and justice in all aspects of our lives.

Bring out the Full Value Commitment. Have participants silently study it to see if any of the words have gained meaning and if there are words that are missing either inside or outside the image to fill out their vision. Offer an opportunity to add words, making sure consensus is reached as in the original activity.

### **ACTIVITY 2: POETRY SLAM**

**Time Commitment:** 45 minutes minimum

Offer participants the opportunity to create a piece of poetry individually or in a group about some aspect of their learning regarding diversity. Alternately, some may prefer creating a “rap skit” or use some other artistic medium to represent what was meaningful about this module experience.

Allow 30 minutes for to create their work and time for all to enjoy the fruits of their efforts.

# **Appendix**

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## THE VILLAGE STORY

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## **FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR VILLAGE ACTIVITY**

Explain to the class that you are their teacher and they are students in sixth grade. They should not be offended if you are mean to them; you are going to be a bad teacher.

Pass out The Village Story facedown.

- Tell the class that this is an easy reading assignment and should only take a few minutes to read through.
- Have the class turn over the paper and pick someone to start reading out loud.
- Ask students to read who look like they do not want to read out loud. Put pressure on them to read quickly.
- Walk around the class looking over people's shoulders, making them uncomfortable.
- Do not let people who are not reading give hints to the person reading.
- When people make mistakes:  
Ask them if they are trying to be funny.  
Ask them if they did their homework the night before.  
Tell them the word is *easy*.  
Tell them to hurry up!

**VILLAGE FACILITATOR DIALOGUE QUESTIONS**

After the Village exercise, ask the students the following questions:

- How did you feel doing the exercise?
- How did it feel when you were called on? Or put pressure on to hurry up? Or told the word was easy?
- Imagine that you were the only one whose reading looked like this and everyone else had the decoded version. What would that be like? Would you volunteer to read out loud?
- You are all intelligent people. But did you feel intelligent reading this?
- Do you know what happened in the story?  
Who did the milkmaid dance with? (a jolly butcher)  
Who came to village? (a fiddler)  
What did the small boy do? (skipped through the crowd)  
What was his dog doing? (nipping at his heels and yapping loudly)  
What were people doing with coins? (tossing them into the fiddler's hat)
- How much do you remember from the story?
- Imagine if all your test books looked like this.  
What would that be like? (Point out the following to the class.)  
You would have to read slowly.  
You would have to figure out what the individual words are.  
You would have to put them within the context of the sentence.  
You would have to figure out what the words and sentences mean.  
No wonder people with learning disabilities need extra time for exams; they are doing several more tasks than the rest of the class.
- Can you understand why many people with learning disabilities give up trying to read or why they are extremely frustrated?

**VILLAGE STORY KEY**

Once, many years ago, a fiddler came to the village. He stood in the village square and played and sang until the people came to listen and to dance. A jolly butcher danced with the milkmaid. A small boy skipped through the crowd with his dog nipping at his heels and yapping loudly. After the fiddler stopped, the people tossed coins into his hat and brought him milk and cookies for his trouble. It had been a long weary day and the fiddler was glad of a rest in this pleasant village.

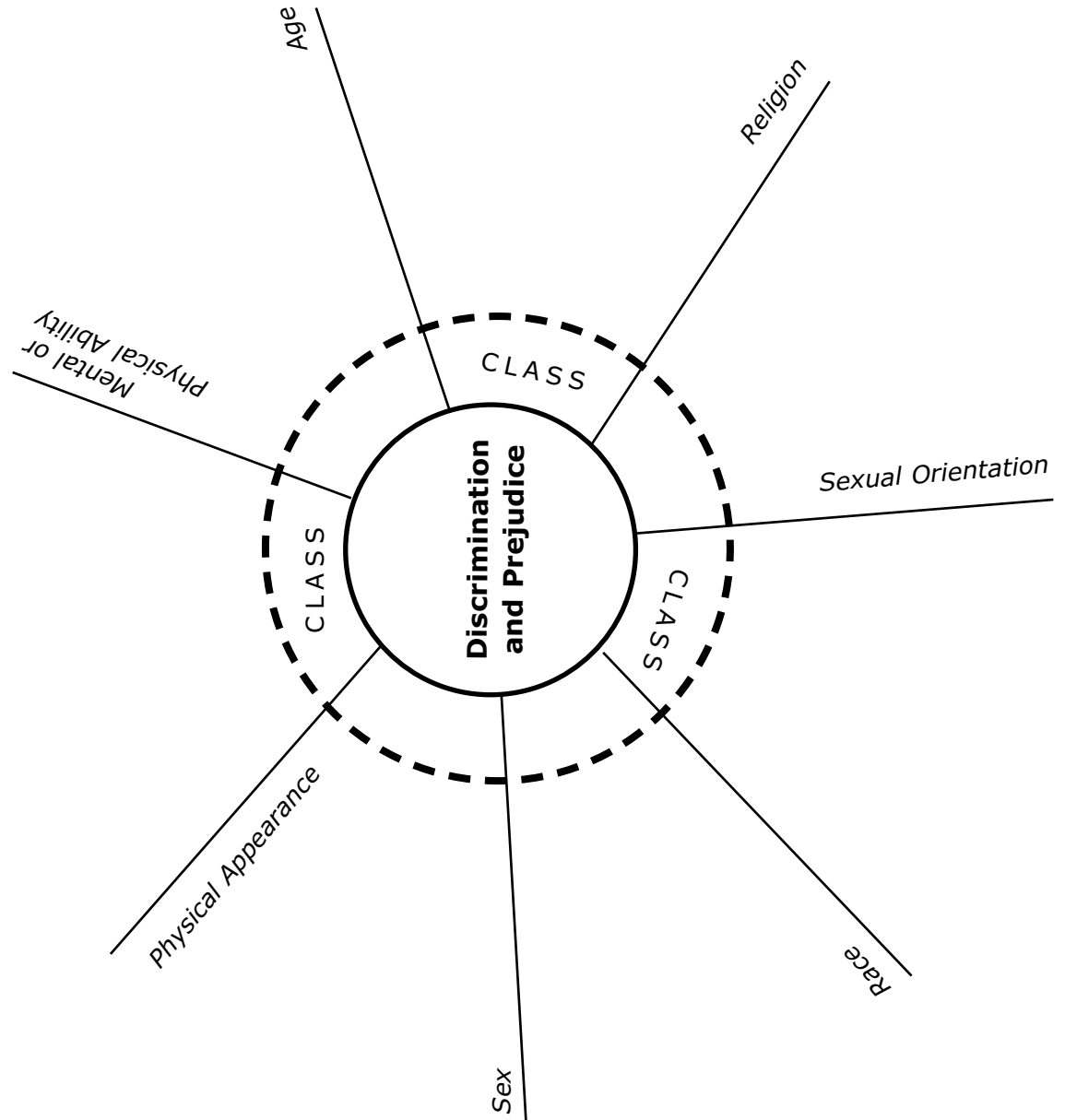
ONE SPOKE AT A TIME

What Discrimination and Oppression Look Like and What I Can Do About It

Target Group/Spoke of the Wheel: \_\_\_\_\_

Agents (who hold the power and benefit from oppressing)	Evidence That Oppression Exists			How I can be an ally and stop this oppression
	Personal	School	Institutions	Culture

## WHEEL OF DISCRIMINATION



## WHEEL OF DISCRIMINATION: SPOKE DEFINITIONS

**Mental or Physical Ability:** Prejudice and/or discrimination against people with mental and/or physical disabilities.

**Age:** Prejudice and/or discrimination against people because of their age.

**Physical Appearance:** Prejudice and/or discrimination based on an individual's looks.

**Religion:** Prejudice and/or discrimination against people based on their religion. (Note: Anti-Semitism refers to discrimination against Jewish people due to their religious beliefs, their ethnicity, and sometimes the erroneous belief that Jews are a "race.")

**Class:** Prejudice and/or discrimination against people based on their real or perceived economic status.

**Sexual Orientation:** Prejudice and/or discrimination against people who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual. (Homophobia is defined as a fear of people who are believe to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.)

**Race:** Prejudice and/or discrimination based on an individual's race. Often physical characteristics are used to define race and support a system of discrimination.

**Sex:** Prejudice and/or discrimination based on an individual's sex.

## STARTLING STATEMENTS SUMMARY

### ***Sexism***

Girls and boys are treated differently from birth onward. They are given different messages about their capabilities, what they “should” and “should not” do, and what is expected of them. These differences result in many different outcomes for girls and boys, even though they are equally capable.

#### **Evidence**

##### **Math SAT Scores\***

<b>Year</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Gap</b>
2001	529	489	40
2002	529	497	32
Met NSRE Standard** for 2002	30%	55%	25%

*\*Note: This trend of an approximate 40-point difference has been stable over the last 10 years.*

*\*\* NSRE is the New Standards Reference Exam. This data is for 10th graders in 2002.*

Only one out of seven students in computer classes is female. (Vermont Department of Education, 2002)

Vermont women earn on average 84 cents for every dollar Vermont men earn. At the current rate of change, working women in Vermont won’t have equal pay until 2033! (Vt. Governor’s Commission on Women, 2003)

### ***Racism***

Students of color living in Vermont are less likely to feel safe in school than white students do.

#### **Evidence**

A U.S. Office of Civil Rights (1999) and the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2001) report documented pervasive racism in Vermont schools, including both blatant and subtle forms of harassment and discrimination:

	<b><i>White Students</i></b>	<b><i>Students of Color</i></b>	<b><i>Gap</i></b>
Report not going to school because they felt unsafe during last 30 days	4%	14%	<b>10%</b>
Injured or threatened with a weapon at school in last 12 months	6%	19%	<b>13%</b>
Someone stole or damaged property at school in past 12 months	26%	39%	<b>13%</b>
Fought during the last 12 months	28%	46%	<b>18%</b>

### ***Heterosexism and Safety***

Vermont students who report having sexual behavior with same gender partners feel less safe in school than students who report having sexual behavior with the opposite gender partners. (Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2001)

#### **Evidence**

	<b><i>Sexual behavior same gender partner</i></b>	<b><i>Sexual behavior opposite gender partner</i></b>	<b><i>Gap</i></b>
Skipped school because of feeling unsafe on route or at school during past 30 days	25%	6%	<b>19%</b>
Injured or threatened with a weapon during last 12 months at school	32%	10%	<b>22%</b>
Someone stole/damaged property at school in last 12 months	55%	30%	<b>25%</b>
Physical fighting during past 12 months	66%	40%	<b>24%</b>
Carried a weapon to school in past 30 days	39%	13%	<b>26%</b>



## ***Classism***

Students who live in economically poor families in Vermont are, on average, less likely to be academically successful than students who live in families with greater economic means. Research shows that students from families with less money are as capable of achieving and can be as successful as students from families with more money if they are given as many opportunities to learn as are given to their wealthier peers. Generally, however, students from poorer families do not get as many learning opportunities as their wealthier peers and consistently score lower on most tests.

### **Evidence**

Students on Free and Reduced Lunch program	
passing Basic Reading standard*:	36%
Students not on Free and Reduced Lunch program	
passing Basic Reading standard:	56%
<b>Gap:</b>	<b>20%</b>

Students on Free and Reduced Lunch program	
passing Writing Effectiveness standard*:	25%
Students not on Free and Reduced Lunch program	
passing Writing Effectiveness stand:	45%
<b>Gap:</b>	<b>20%</b>

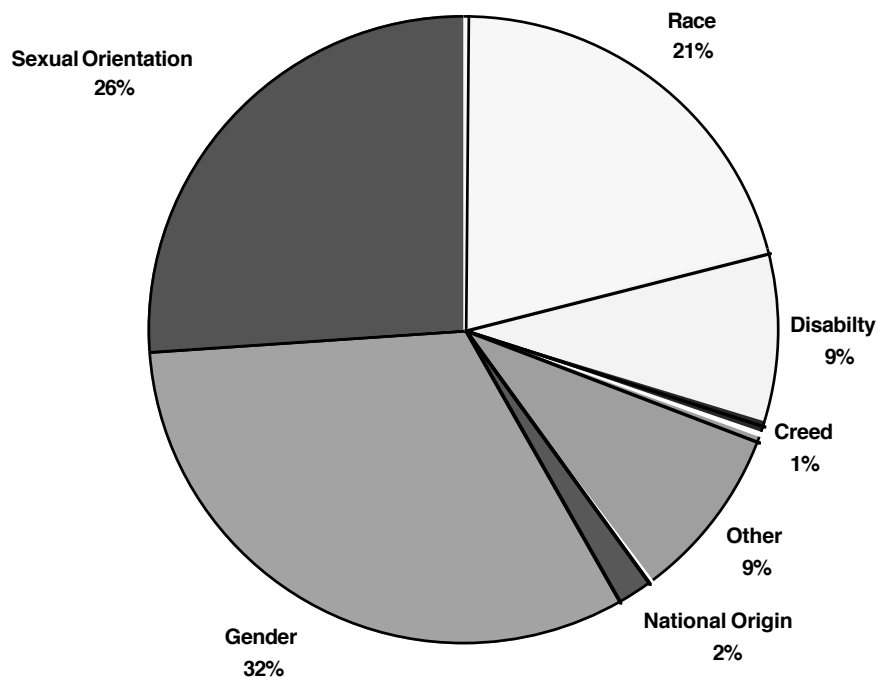
Students on Free and Reduced Lunch program	
passing Basic Math skills standard*:	44%
Students not on Free and Reduced Lunch program	
passing Basic Math skills standard:	67%
<b>Gap:</b>	<b>23%</b>

### **Average Vermont SAT score in 2002**

Students from families who earn	
less than \$20,000 per year:	464
Students from families who earn	
\$70,000 or more per year:	539
<b>Gap:</b>	<b>75</b>

*\*Vermont Department of Education, 2002, National Standards Reference Exam, Grades 4–10. Average SAT scores for Vermont Students in 2002*

**2001-2002 - Student to Student Harrassment in Vermont Schools**  
**Categorical Breakdown of 1629 Reported Incidents**  
**VT Department of Education**



### ***Harassment in Schools***

In the 2001–2002 school year, 1,629 cases of Student-to-Student harassment were reported to the Vermont Department of Education. Of those cases:

- 525 incidents were Gender Harassment (32 percent)
- 428 were Sexual Orientation Harassment (26 percent)
- 340 were Racial Harassment (21 percent)
- 148 were Disability Harassment (9 percent)
- 149 were labeled “other” (9 percent)
- 28 were National Origin harassment (2 percent)
- 11 were based on creed (1 percent)

*Data compiled by Kathy Johnson, Director of Equity Initiatives, Vermont Institutes  
([www.vermontinstitutes.org/equity](http://www.vermontinstitutes.org/equity))*

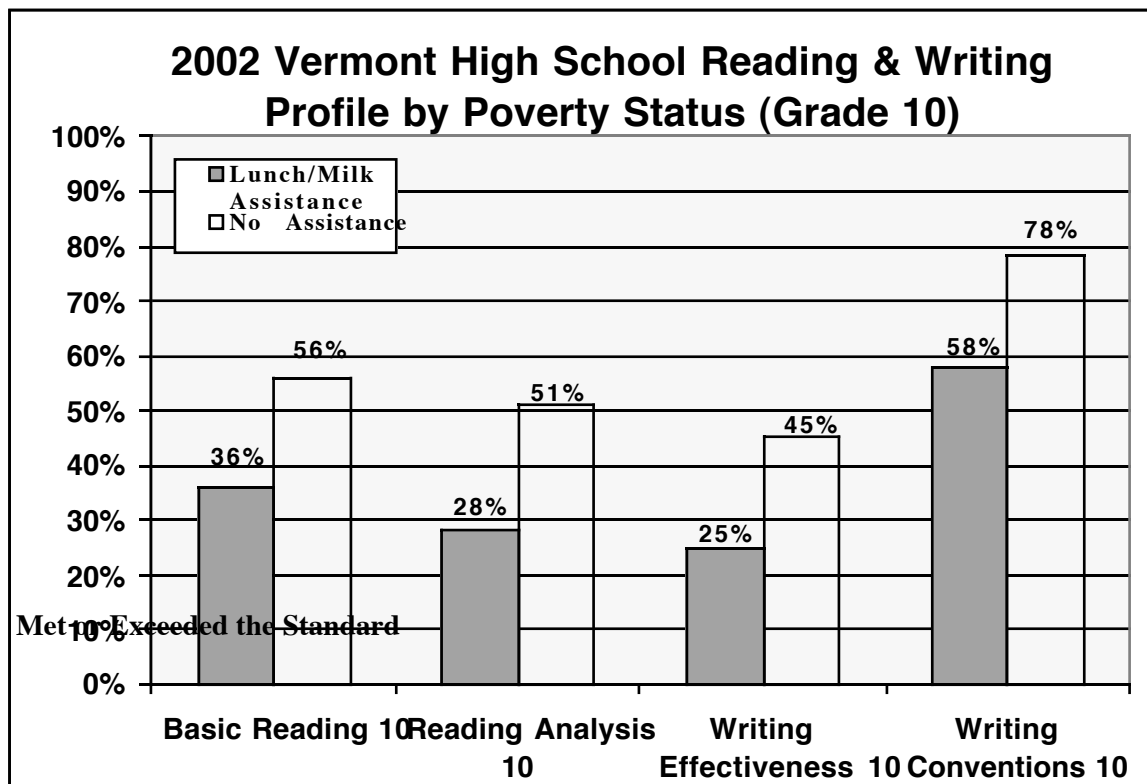
## STARTLING STATEMENTS ABOUT TEENS IN VERMONT

*How the isms (classism, racism, sexism,  
heterosexism) affect teens in 2002*

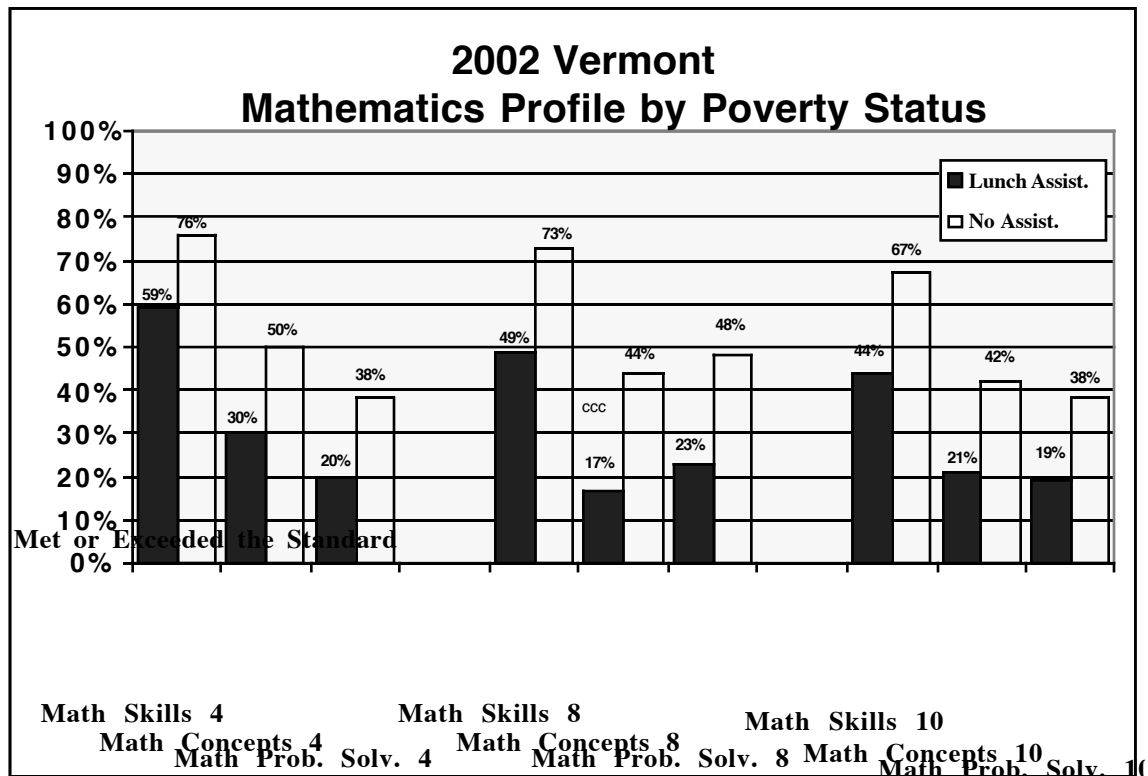
### Classism and Academic Achievement

Students who live in economically poor families in Vermont are, on average, less likely to be academically successful than students who live in families with greater economic means. Data from state achievement tests, and the SATs demonstrate this trend over many years. Research shows that students from families with less money are as capable of achieving and can be as successful as students from families with more money, if they are given as many opportunities to learn as are given to their wealthier peers. Generally, however, students from poorer families do not get as many learning opportunities as their wealthier peers, and consistently score lower on most tests.

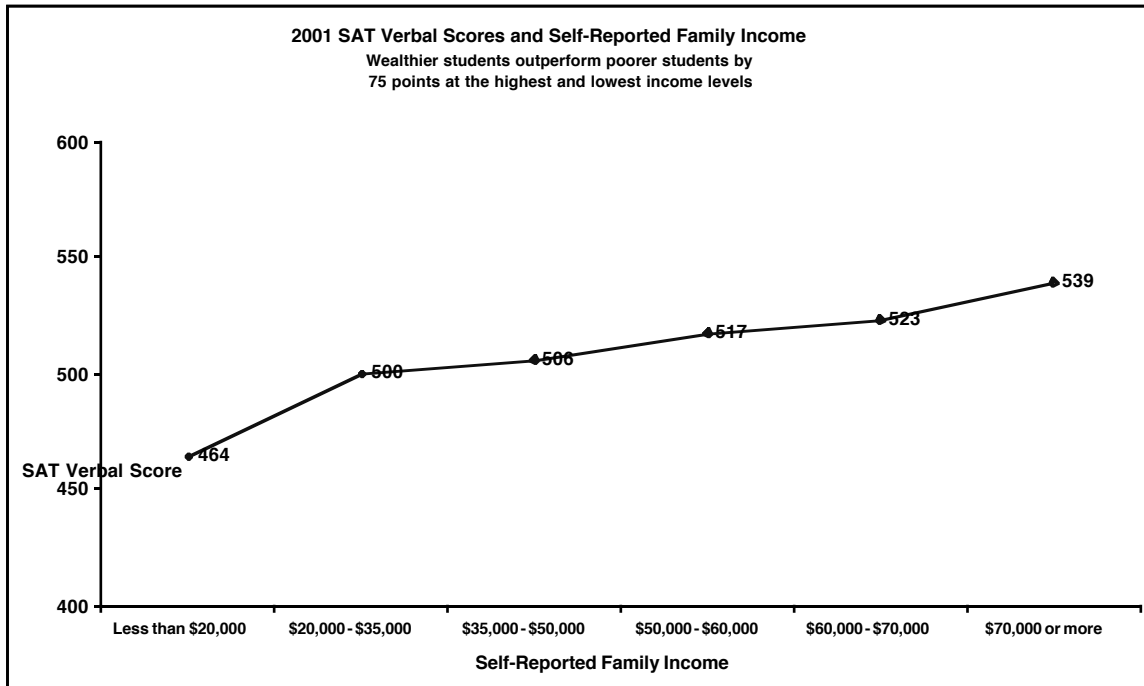
For instance, 56 percent of Vermont tenth graders who don't qualify for free or reduced lunch met the Basic Reading standard in 2002. For students whose families do qualify, 36 percent of those Vermont tenth graders met the standard (a 20 percent gap) (Vermont Dept of Education, 2002, NSRE Grade 10). See graph below:



In another example, 67 percent of Vermont tenth graders who don't qualify for free or reduced lunch met the Basic Math Skills standard in 2002. For students whose families do qualify, 44 percent of those Vermont tenth graders met the standard (a 23 percent gap). (Vermont Dept of Education, 2002, NSRE Grades 4–10). See graph below:



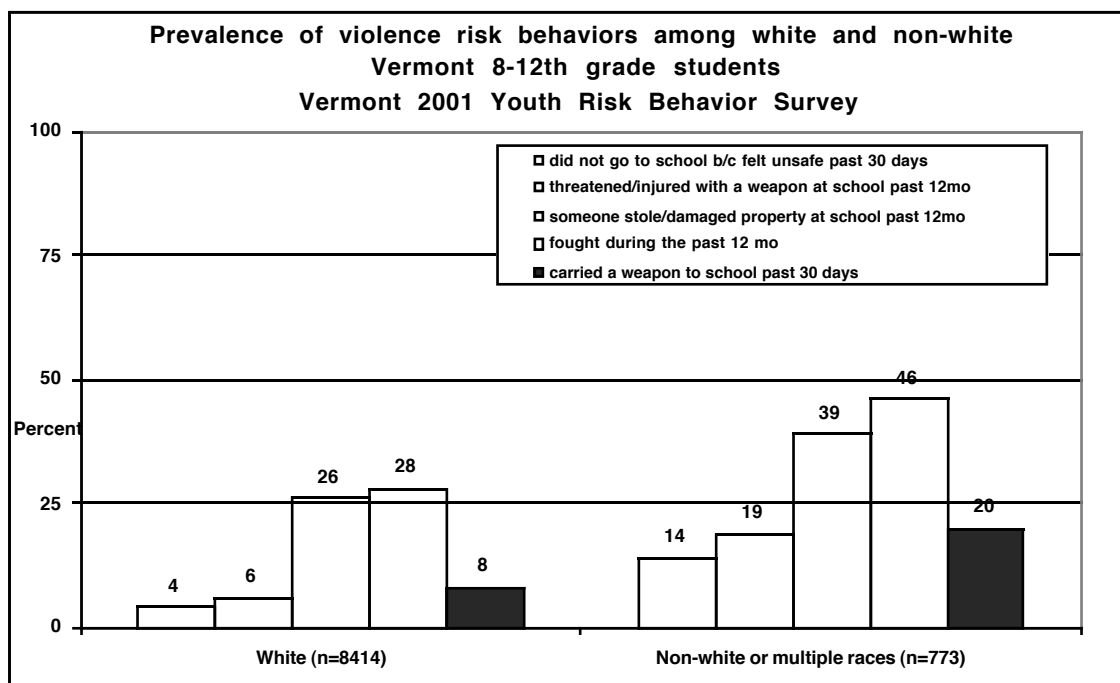
In a third example, students who took the SAT in 2002 whose families earned less than \$20,000 per year scored an average of 75 points less on the SATs than students whose families earned more than \$70,000.



## Racism and Safety in Schools

Students of color living in Vermont are less likely to feel safe in school than white students do. A report commissioned by the U.S. Office of Civil Rights (1999) documented pervasive racism in Vermont schools, including both blatant and subtle forms of harassment and discrimination. The Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2001) shows that students of color are at a much greater risk of violence than white students, evidenced by five distinct indicators.

For instance, only 4 percent of white students had not gone to school because they felt unsafe in the past thirty days when the survey was taken, but 14 percent of students of color had not gone to school due to feeling unsafe (10 percent gap). Only 6 percent of white students had been injured or threatened with a weapon at school in the last twelve months, but 19 percent of students of color had (13 percent gap). Other indicators are shown on the chart below:

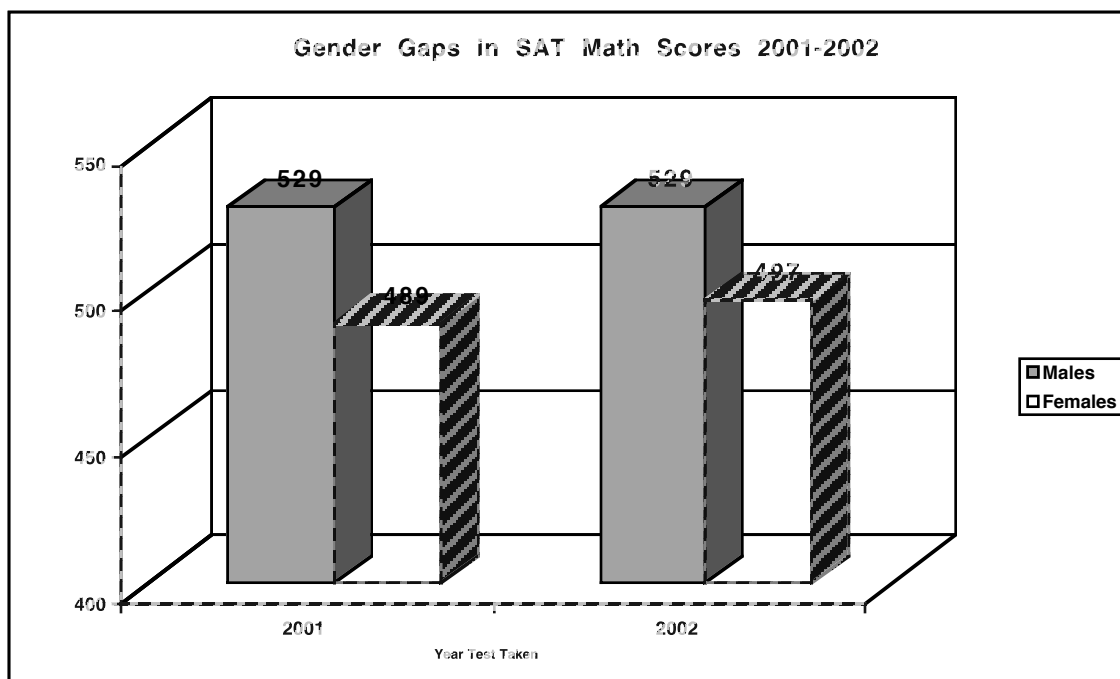


### Sexism and Academic Achievement and Educational Choices

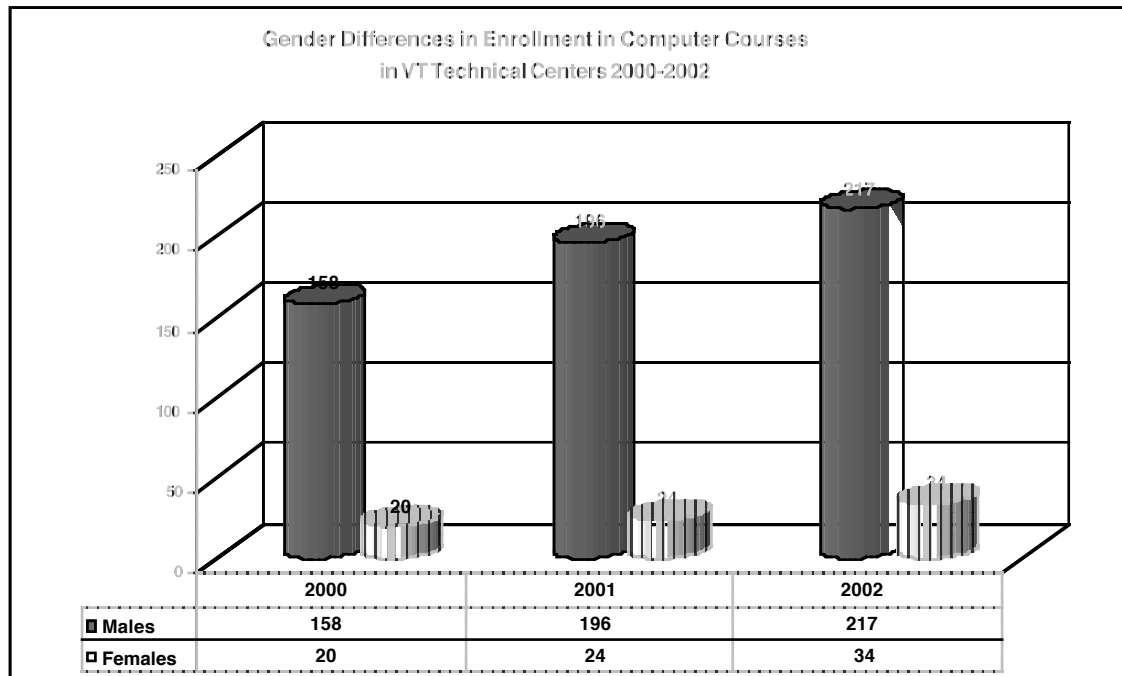
Girls and boys are treated differently from birth onward. They are given different messages about their capabilities, what they “should” and “should not” do, and what is expected of them. These differences in treatment result in many different outcomes for girls and boys. Research and time have shown that both males and females are capable and able to overcome cultural boundaries. Research has also established that there are no genetic reasons why either females or males “cannot” do math, science, technology, read or have successful relationships. Below are some of the “gaps” that result from different treatment.

Vermont males outperform females on SAT math scoring. The gap in 2001 was 40 points higher for males than for females; the gap in 2002 was 38 points. The math SAT gender gap in Vermont has remained at approximately 40 points for over ten years. There are some individual Vermont schools, however, in which the females get higher scores than males.

In the year 2000, Vermont’s working women earned 83.5 percent as much per hour as men. While better than the national wage gap average of 77.6 percent, that gap is significant: at the current rate of change, working women in Vermont won’t have equal pay until 2033! The wage gap costs Vermont’s working families thousands of dollars a year. (VT Governor’s Commission on Women, 2003)

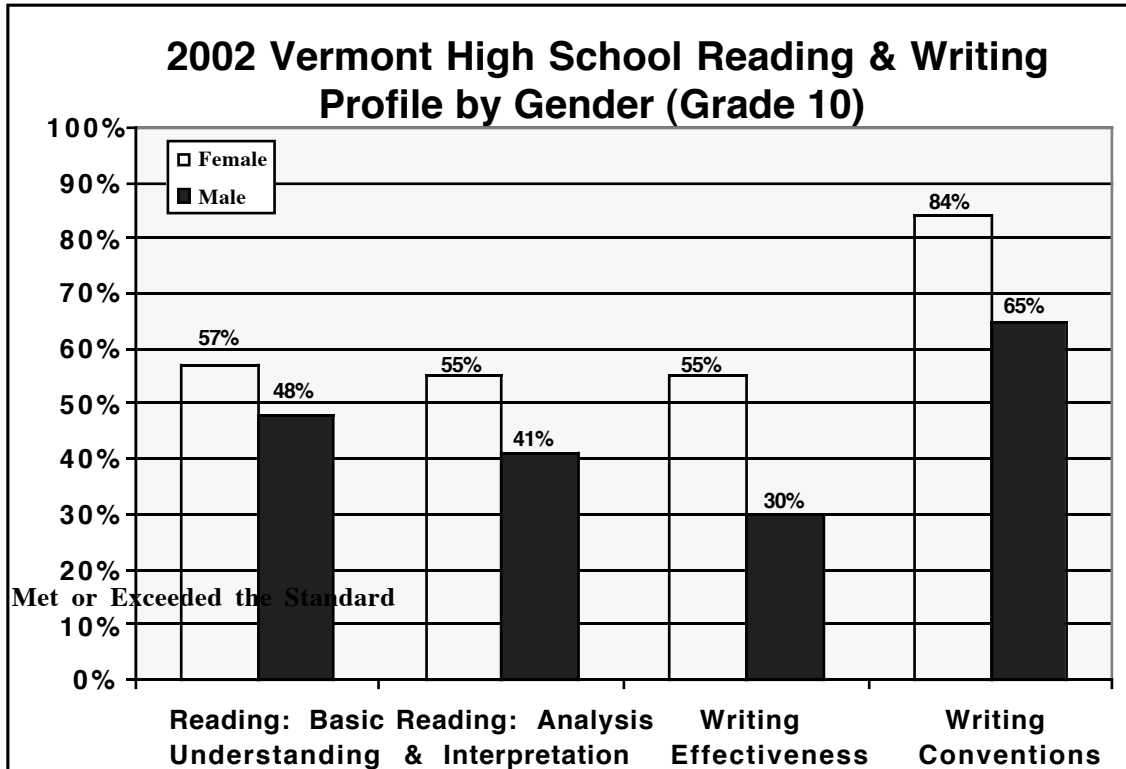


2002 Data from VT Technical Centers shows only one out of seven students in Computer classes is female. The graph below shows changes from 2000 to 2002. When females are given greater opportunity and encouragement to learn technology, many enjoy and succeed at it.





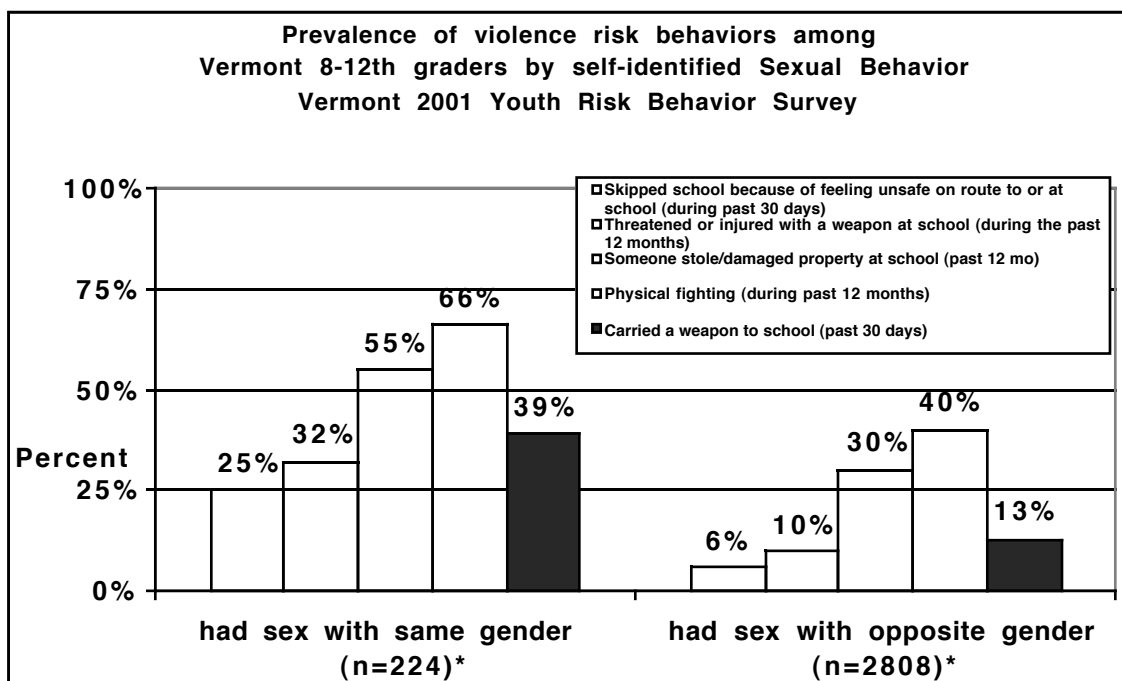
Vermont male teens score less well than females on reading and writing tests. When males are encouraged to read and taught writing in effective ways, they are very successful at it. In 2002, 30 percent of Vermont male tenth-grade students met the standard for writing effectiveness, compared to 55 percent of Vermont female tenth-grade students (25 percent gap).



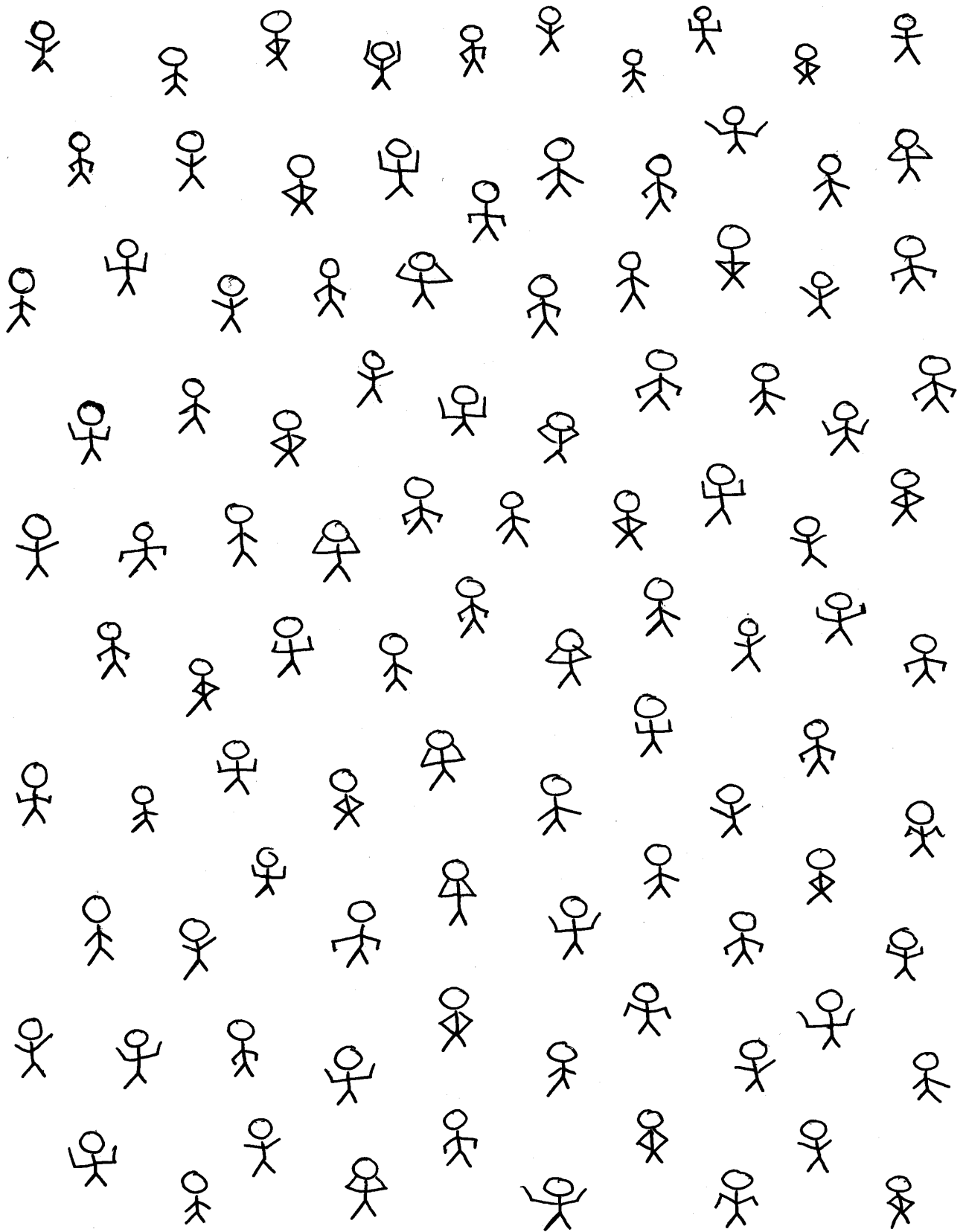
## Heterosexism and Safety in School

Students who report having sexual behavior with same gender partners in Vermont feel less safe in school than students who report having sexual behavior with opposite gender partners (Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2001).

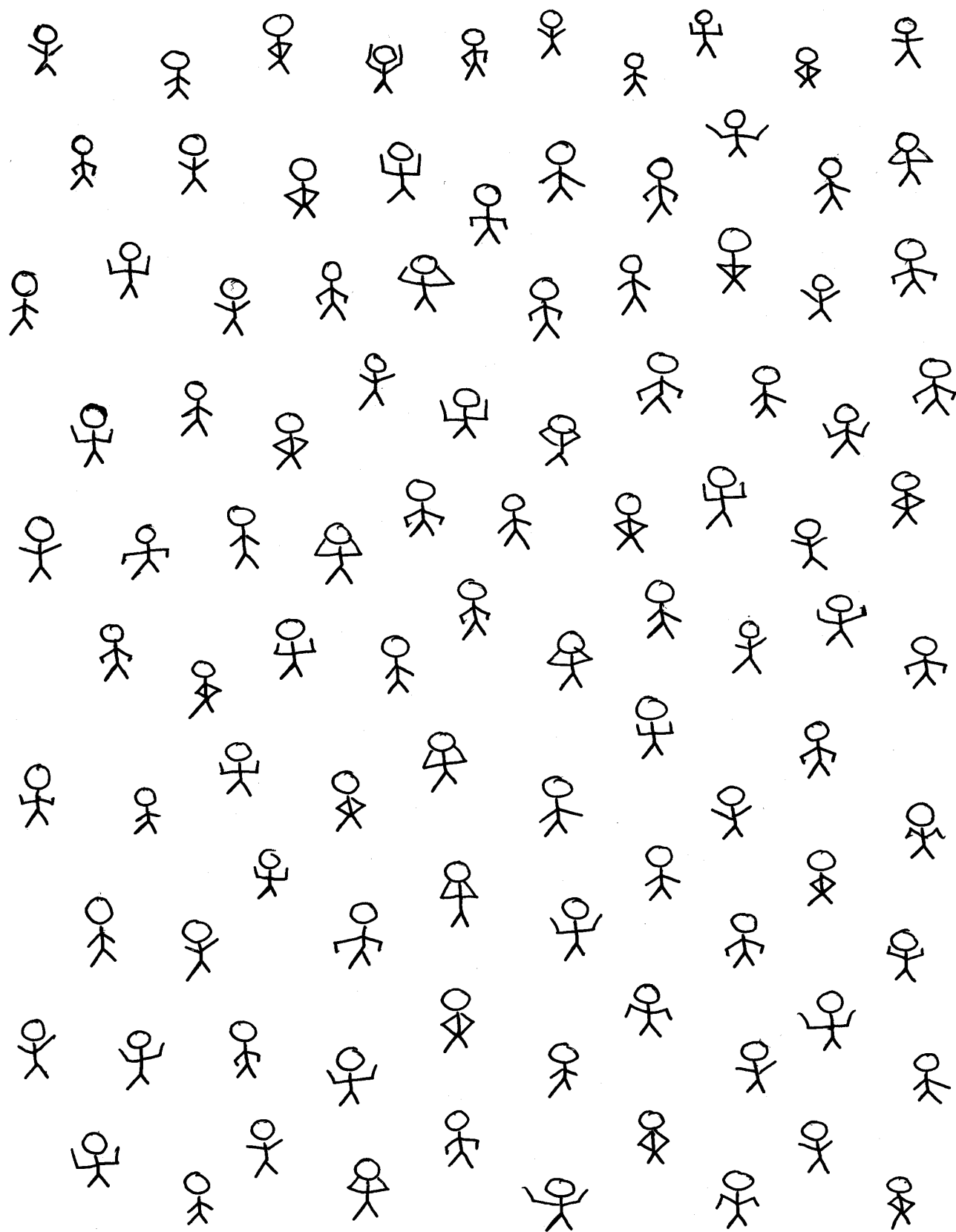
For instance, only 6 percent of heterosexual students had not gone to school because they felt unsafe in the past thirty days when the survey was taken, but 25 percent of students self-identifying as homosexual had not gone to school due to feeling unsafe (19 percent gap). Ten percent of self-identified heterosexual students had been injured or threatened with a weapon at school in the last twelve months, but 32 percent of students self-identifying as homosexual had (22 percent gap). Other indicators are shown on the chart below:



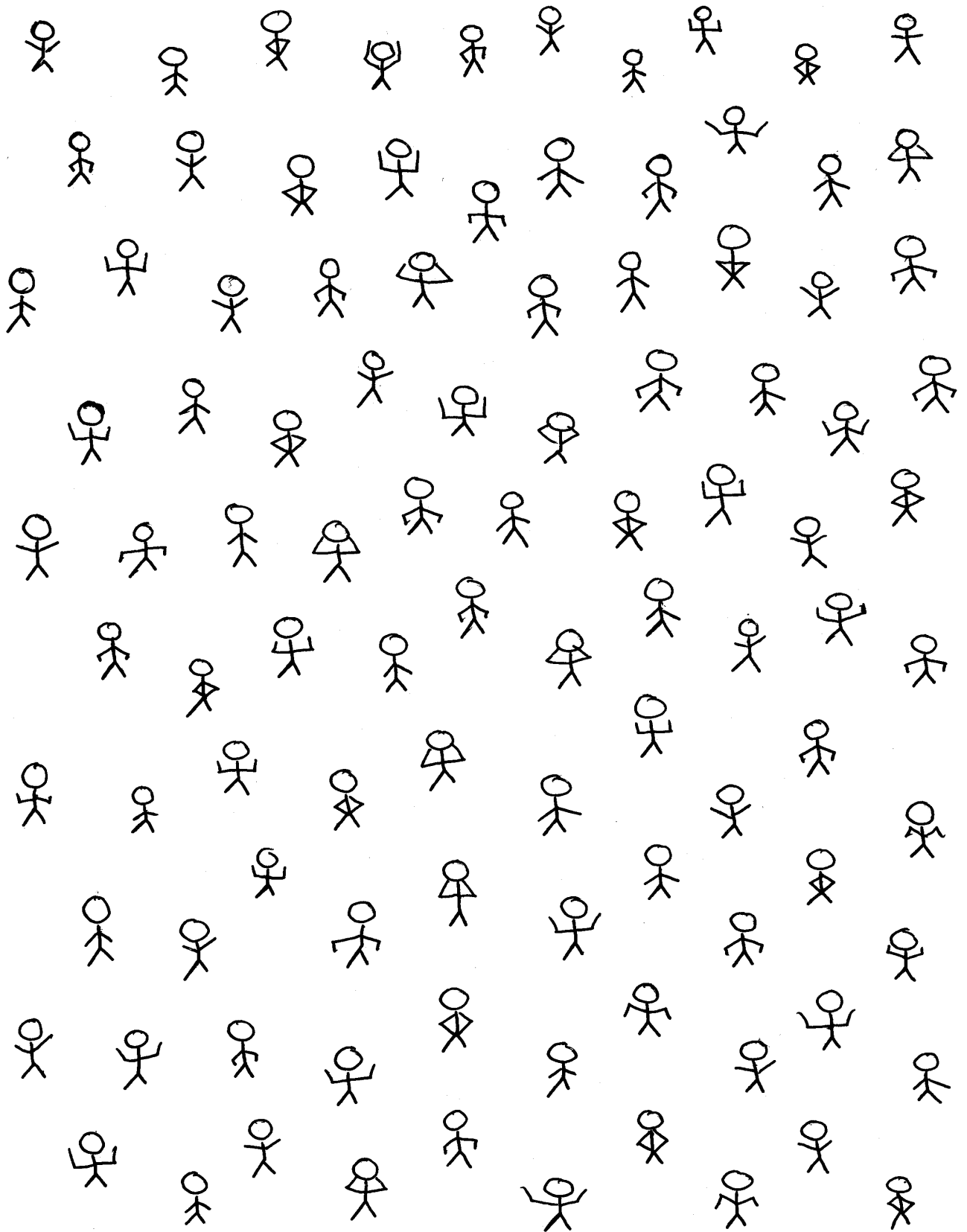
COLOR BY NUMBER



## COLOR BY NUMBER



COLOR BY NUMBER



## IF THE WORLD WERE SHRUNK

### ***Perspective***

If Earth's population were shrunk into a village of just 100 people—with all the human ratios existing in the world remaining—what would this tiny, diverse village look like?

That's exactly what Philip M. Harter, a medical doctor at the Sanford University School of Medicine, attempted to figure out. This is what he found:

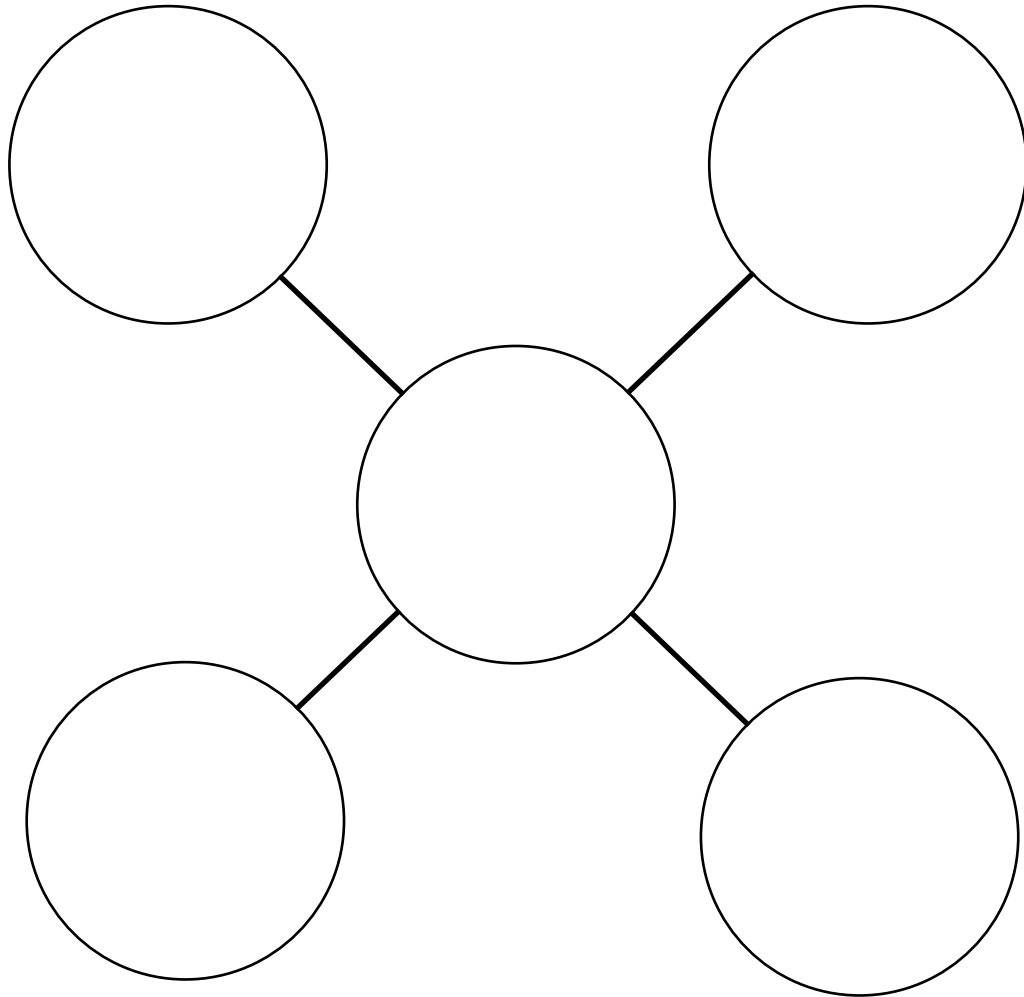
- 1 would have a college education; 1 would own a computer.
- 6 would possess 59 percent of the entire world's wealth *and* all 6 would be from the United States.
- 11 would be homosexual; the remaining 89 individuals would be heterosexual.
- 20 would live in adequate housing, the remaining 80 would live in substandard or inadequate housing.
- 30 would be able to read; the remaining 70 would be illiterate.
- 30 would be Christians; the remaining 70 would be non-Christians.
- 30 would be Caucasian or white; the remaining 70 would be people of color.
- 48 would be males; the remaining 52 would be females.
- 50 would have adequate food; the remaining 50 would be malnourished.

### ***Think of It This Way***

- If you live in a good home, have plenty to eat, and can read, you are a member of a very select group. And if you have a good house, can read, and have a computer, you are among the very elite.
- If you woke up this morning healthy and not ill, you are more fortunate than the million who will not survive this week.
- If you have not experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.
- If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are fortunate—more than 3 billion people in the world can't.
- If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head, and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75 percent of this world.
- If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish some place, you are among the top 8 percent of the world's wealthy.
- If your parents are still alive and still married, you are very rare, even in the United States.

**CIRCLES OF MYSELF**

Put your name in the middle circle. Now chose four identifiers from the list on the back of this paper that are the major ways you define yourself.

**Questions**

1. Share with someone an experience when you were proud to identify yourself with one of these descriptors.
2. Share with someone an experience when it was painful to be identified in this way.
3. Share a privilege that has been granted to you because of one of these identifiers.

***Descriptor Choices***

Male

Female

White

Person of color

Older than 15

15 or younger

Physically able

Physically challenged

Middle class or higher

Blue collar or working class

High academic standing

Average or struggles academically

Good athlete

Not such a good athlete

Considered nice looking

Not considered nice looking

English is primary language

English is secondary language

Part of the in group

Not part of the in group

Christian

Non-Christian

Heterosexual

Homosexual

From two-parent family

From single-parent family

Others of your choosing?



## **CHALLENGING OPPRESSION: MAKING A BETTER WORLD**

### **Challenge Discrimination**

Silence can send a message that you agree with what happened.

Stand up, speak out, become an ally.

Even though it is hard to confront someone, take the risk. Change will only happen through many acts of such courage.

Confront the discriminatory behavior, not the person. People are less likely to change when they have been shamed.

### **Be Aware of Your Own Bias, Stereotypes, and Discriminatory Behavior**

Be willing to discover how discriminatory messages in our society have affected you.

Be open when others may help you discover these biases.

### **Personally Explore and Honor Diversity**

Actively explore the diversity which surrounds you.

Keep an open mind; do not judge differences.

Have a vision for what we want a social life to look like that does not include oppression.

Explore if you have been given privilege in your life because of your skin color, religion, gender, or some other factor.

### **Model a Willingness to Embrace and Advocate for Diversity**

Use language that is nonbiased.

Explore friendships or acquaintances with those who differ from you.

Share an interest in learning about differences with others.

Listen carefully to others who are sharing stories of discrimination or oppression and do not discount their reality.

Join in larger efforts to make the world a more inclusive and caring place.

*It ain't what you don't know that gets you in trouble;  
it's what you know that ain't so.*

—Mark Twain

## ROLE OPTIONS IN RESPONSE TO BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION

**Ally:** Someone who speaks out or takes an action that is supportive of the person being discriminated against.

**Bystander:** Someone who witnesses discrimination but doesn't say anything or intervene in any way.

**Confronter:** Someone who directly intervenes with words or actions in an incident where bias or discrimination were evident. This individual not only allies with the person being targeted but also speaks out against bias and discrimination on a group or systems level as well.

**Perpetrator:** Someone who says or does something biased or discriminatory against another person.

**Target:** The individual who is the focus of bias or discrimination.

# Systems and Change

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# Systems and Change

*We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them.*

—Albert Einstein

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## **Goal**

Participants will identify and explore the dynamics of systems and change in their own lives and in their community and develop skills to affect change in these systems.

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## **Rationale**

We live in a world of complex systems—families, peer groups, educational, political, economic and social institutions. As individuals we are also complex systems—a unique mix of emotions, actions, thoughts and desires. The one constant in our own lives and the systems around us is change—it is unavoidable. The challenge of leadership is to be able to understand and work toward positive change.

This module provides several ways to make sense of systems and change. We first need to understand how systems work: what makes them stable and what allows them to grow. Second, we need to understand how individuals (including ourselves) and groups react to change. Then we can anticipate resistance and respond to it by enlisting allies and developing strategies which nurture support for new ideas. Finally, we need to be able to identify the building blocks of complex systems so we can direct our efforts at the most important sources for change: the resources and strengths in systems and within ourselves.

## **Objectives Summary**

Participants will:

- 1. identify and explore patterns in their own lives and their community;*
- 2. understand how change occurs;*
- 3. develop skills to bring about change; and*
- 4. create effective partnerships.*

**OBJECTIVE 1:** *Participants will identify and explore patterns in their own lives and their community.*

**Facilitator Note:** Objective 1 offers two different models for participants to better understand themselves and their communities. You can choose either model, or use both. It is important, however, to help participants first understand the model from a personal perspective (Activity 1 in both instances) and then apply it to their community (Activity 2 in both instances).

Our lives are full of patterns—how we start the day, interact with others, complete tasks, pursue our dreams—some of which are full of possibility and some of which limit us. Our ability to maintain a healthy balance for ourselves is the challenge of everyday life. The challenge of leadership is to be able to contribute to stability and growth in those patterns and systems within us and around us: our community, nation, and world.

**BENDTRO MODEL**

Larry Bendtro, in his work with youth in risky environments, describes a Native American way to achieve balance and stability in one's life. Bendtro uses the Circle of Courage developed by Lakota Sioux artist George Blue Bird to help heal young people and communities alike. The Circle of Courage portrays the four universal human needs for Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity. Simply put, when these needs are met, the individual is living in balance and has achieved a sense of stability.

**Facilitator Note:** In beginning your work with "Your Own Circle," turn to the picture attached at the end of this module and consider the tale of George Blue Bird the artist. George Blue Bird describes himself as a former youth at risk whose circle was broken. George dropped out of school when the art teacher resigned. He subsequently became involved in a violent alcohol-related crime. For the past fifteen years, George Blue Bird has been serving a life sentence in prison. He is now writing and illustrating children's books with Native American cultural themes and hoping to someday regain his freedom.

**ACTIVITY 1: YOUR OWN CIRCLE**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape; paper; pens or pencils; "Circle of Courage" handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Note: A beautiful poster of "The Circle of Courage" can be purchased by calling 1-800-647-5244, or visiting [courage@reclaiming.com](mailto:courage@reclaiming.com).

**Step 1.** Draw the Circle of Courage on newsprint paper and tape it to the wall so everyone can see it. Ask the participants to define the words: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity. You can do this in a brainstorming fashion or go around the room asking each person to add meaning to the word. It is important to come to a general understanding of the words while leaving space for individuals to interpret them in their own way.

**Step 2.** Instruct the participants to sketch the Circle of Courage on their own piece of paper and use the four universal human needs (Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity) to think about their own lives.

- Are there times and places when you experience a sense of belonging in your life? Briefly describe or list those times and places.
- Are there times and places when you experience a sense of mastery in your life? Briefly describe or list those times and places.
- Are there times and places when you experience a sense of independence in your life? Briefly describe or list those times and places.
- Are there times and places when you experience a sense of generosity in your life? Briefly describe or list those times and places.

**Step 3.** Ask each participant to share one of the examples included in their circle. Participants can share their examples through a story, a picture, movement, or other form of expression. This is a good place to encourage questions from other members of the group that help the presenter relate more of the important details of their presentation.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Did you think about or learn something new about yourself?
- How can you apply that learning to your future?
- In which area do you have the greatest strength or experience? How can your strengths and experience help you develop the other areas of need on the Circle of Courage?
- What one goal would you like to set for yourself on one of each of the areas on the Circle of Courage?

## **ACTIVITY 2: YOUR COMMUNITY CIRCLE**

**Materials:** Poster board; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

**Step 1.** Create the Circle of Courage using four pieces of poster board. Each piece of poster board will be labeled with one of the four universal human needs: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity.

**Step 2.** Divide the group into four equal groups and have the groups work together on one of the directions to think about their community.

- Are there times and places in your community when and where young people experience a sense of belonging? Briefly describe or list those times and places.
- Are there times and places in your community when and where young people experience a sense of mastery? Briefly describe or list those times and places.
- Are there times and places in your community when and where young people experience a sense of independence? Briefly describe or list those times and places.
- Are there times and places in your community when and where young people experience a sense of generosity? Briefly describe or list those times and places.

**Step 3.** Ask each group to summarize its conversation and give examples included in their Circle. This is a good place to encourage questions from other members of the group that help the presenters relate more of the important details of their story.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Did you learn something new about your community?
- How can you apply that learning to the future of your community?
- What SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Responsible, Timed, see Module One for SMART goal explanation) would you like to set for your community on each of the areas of need on the Circle of Courage?

### **Questions to Pose When Activities 1 and 2 Are Completed**

- If you have already defined your project, into which area of need does it most fit? How can you use the resources you identified on Your Community Circle to make your project most successful. Do the other areas of need inform your work in any way?
- If you don't yet have a project, how does this activity direct your thinking about what you might do either personally or in your community for your project?



## DEVELOPMENTAL ASSET MODEL

**Facilitator Note:** Please review the enclosed material “The Asset Approach” to familiarize yourself with the theory and research behind this model. You will need to explain some basics about developmental assets before participants can do the following activities. Key points are as follows:

- One specific way to explore an individual’s or community’s resiliency and strengths, as well as areas of challenge, is by use of “developmental assets.” In the 1990s an organization called Search Institute decided to comb the research to find out the most important factors that contributed to the health and well-being of young people. They came up with a list of forty qualities that all clearly helped young people succeed.
- Their research is convincing, showing that the more assets an individual, a school, or a community has, the healthier young people will be. (See “The Power of Assets to Promote Thriving Indicators” and “The Power of Assets to Protect Against Risk-Taking Behaviors” handouts in appendix of this module [Vermont State data].)
- The average community in the United State and the average young person in that community will have about twenty of the forty assets. We have a choice to either say “We *only* have, on average, half of what we need” or “We have a solid foundation of twenty assets to build from as we strengthen ourselves, our schools, and our communities.” It is important to take the latter, strengths-based perspective.

**Opening Activity:** As a means to demonstrate the potential in a strengths-based approach, post the two lists included below without titles. Ask the participants to describe their reaction to reading the lists. Finish with a conversation comparing or contrasting the two lists.

### The Asset-Building Difference

#### ***Moving From***

Focusing on problems  
Youth as problems  
Reacting to problems  
Blaming  
Professionals fix problems  
Crisis management  
Competition  
Negativity and cynicism

#### ***Moving To***

Focusing on assets  
Youth as resources  
Proactive response  
Claiming responsibility  
Everybody is part of solutions  
Vision, strategy building  
Cooperation  
Hope

**ACTIVITY 3: ASSET STORY**

**Materials:** List of “40 Developmental Assets” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Turn to the list of “40 Developmental Assets,” and ask participants to choose one type of asset that seems most meaningful to them. You might also set up eight stations around the room, one for each asset type, and ask them to choose one station that seems most meaningful to them.

**Step 2.** Ask participants to tell a story that shows how the asset type they have chosen has been valuable in their lives.

**Facilitator Note:** Begin by telling your own story as a way of modeling what you expect from the group and as a way of developing stronger personal connections with participants.

**Step 3.** Encourage the listeners to ask clarifying questions to better understand the story. This is not a time to engage in a dialogue with questions and answers, but rather a time for the storyteller to have everyone’s attention.

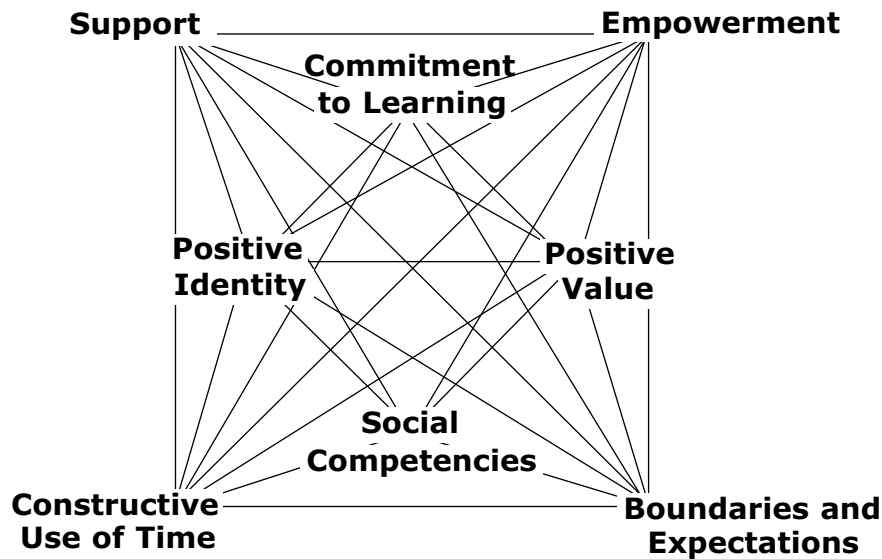
**Facilitator Note:** We strongly advise to not have individuals use the 40 asset checklist to find out where they stand with assets during class time. This could lead to hurtful comparisons. This self-assessment might be done at home and coupled with a journal assignment or some way to help understand the individual’s processing of this concept, reinforcing a strengths-based perspective.

**ACTIVITY 4: ASSET WEB: WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS IN OUR COMMUNITY?**

**Materials:** Poster board (8 pieces); markers; “40 Development Assets” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 45 minutes

Take eight pieces of poster board (or four pieces cut in half). Lay them out four over four on the floor. Sketch a spiderweb over the entire area with a marker. Title each of the eight panels with one asset type (e.g., Support, Empowerment, etc.). The diagram on the following page may help you visualize this task (External Assets: Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations, Constructive Use of Time; Internal Assets: Commitment to Learning, Positive Value, Social Competencies, Positive identity):



The whole group is broken down into either four or eight small groups. The number of groups depends on the number of participants and the facilitator's preference for size of small groups. Each group is assigned one or two internal or external asset types (i.e., support, empowerment, positive values, and so on). If a group is given two asset types, make sure one is an internal asset and the other is an external asset.

**Step 1.** Explain that the group member's task is to write down on their pieces of web poster board, all those activities or attributes of their school and community that already exemplify this asset type. Good questions to continually ask while doing this are: How do you know that this asset is present in your school or community? What do you see available or happening in your school or community that tells you it is present? For example, one group member might identify the following examples of "community values youth": active recreation program, good attendance at sporting events and plays, youth community service award at town meeting, stores welcome young people, or voting for the school budget

**Step 2.** When this is done, each group reports back the individual assets that comprise the "asset type" and all the things that already exist that demonstrate the presence of this asset. Put each panel up on the wall as each report is finished to create the full web. It is called the "web activity" because all these attributes together create a web of support for young people. It is this web that will be strengthened through work in and with the community, including participants' projects.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What do you notice about the web of your community assets?

- Are there any patterns or systems evident in your web? Clear strengths? Things missing? Things that seem to repeat in many panels?
- How does describing your community with assets affect your thinking?
- Does the project you have selected build on or contribute to one or more assets?

The Search Institute has created an extensive asset survey entitled “The Survey of Student Resources and Assets.” The Search Institute will analyze and summarize this school data. If this survey data is available, consider either of the following activities:

### **Alternative Activity 1**

Have one or more participants research what has been done with the data. They would develop a plan regarding how this task will be done (i.e., who needs to be interviewed, what key questions should be asked, etc.) and report back to the class when their work is completed.

### **Alternative Activity 2**

Participants read and analyze the school-wide data. They write a summary highlighting major strengths and areas of concern. This is a significant undertaking that requires approximately six to eight hours to complete when done with a group. A manual defining a format for this work can be acquired by contacting Helen Beattie at (802) 472-6846.

## **OBJECTIVE 2:** *Participants will understand how change occurs.*

How do you respond to change? Is your response to change the same if you initiate it or if it is initiated by someone else? Is your response to change the same if you agree or disagree with the initiative? Is your response to change the same if you have power or feel vulnerable?

We respond to change in different ways depending on the issue, the context, and our own circumstances. At the same time, there are patterns that appear with remarkable consistency in groups dealing with change. (The following is adapted from Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*.)

- Innovators (8 percent) are eager to try new ideas, open to change and willing to take risks. They are usually perceived as naïve or a little crazy and, therefore, not closely connected with the larger group.
- Leaders (17 percent) are open to change, but more thoughtful about getting involved. These people are trusted by other group members and sought for their advice and opinions.

- The Early Majority (29 percent) people are cautious and deliberate about deciding to adopt a new idea.
- The Late Majority (29 percent) people are skeptical of adopting new ideas, although they can be won over with patience and persistence.
- Resistors (17 percent) are critical thinkers who have questions, reservations, and concerns that can be based on experience and/or principle. Like the Innovators, they are often seen as separate from the larger group.

At different times we may find ourselves in any one of the five roles. Understanding our own responses can sensitize us to the range of reactions we will encounter in a group and is an important foundation for working with people.

### **Notes on Strategies**

1. Don't try to sway the resistors or judge your success on whether you changed their minds or not; they are highly unlikely to change.
2. Try to anticipate and address the fears of the early and late majority folks. If you address these early they will not resist you as much and may well become supporters.
3. Get the innovators as your ally, but contain and channel their enthusiasm and ideas so they don't scare the early and late majority people back into being skeptical of change.

### **ACTIVITY 1: WHERE DO YOU STAND AND WHY?**

**Materials:** Rope; poster board; markers

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Create a circle on the ground with the rope as the boundary. Place five large cards (cut from the poster board) with each of the responses to change (Innovator, Leader, Early Majority, Late Majority, Resistor) at equal intervals along the border of the circle.

To see if this pattern of typical responses to change applies to your group, ask the participants to answer the following questions by moving to and standing near the type of response that most closely matches their answer.

- Do you think schools should have a dress code?
- Do you think students should be required to take CPR and first aid in order to graduate?
- Do you think people should be able to get a driver's license at age fifteen?
- Do you think people should be able to vote at age fifteen?

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Why is each response listed above (innovator, leader, early/late majority, resistor) important?
- Have you been a resistor? What were the circumstances?
- Have you responded every way? What were the circumstances?
- When confronted with change, is your response consistently the same? Can you give an example.

**ACTIVITY 2: WHERE DO THEY STAND AND WHY?**

**Materials:** Paper (five sheets); markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Write the names for each group from Rogers' theory on responses to change (Innovator, Leader, Early Majority, Late Majority, Resistor) on the paper, one name on a sheet, and spread them out on the floor to create a continuum from Innovator to Resistor.

**Step 1.** Explain that the activity is designed to have participants look at different responses to change.

**Step 2.** Read the following comments:

- "We tried that fifteen years ago and it didn't work. Why should it work now?"
- "Let's throw out the regular school day—have night school and let kids work."
- "I am worried that if we change the lunch program we might lose those kids who like it now."
- "I like the idea of young people running the summer program, but I don't see how we can afford it."

Ask the group for other scenarios; add others from your own experience.

**Step 3.** Have the people clustered around each response take a few minutes to explore their assumptions about who would respond this way and why.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Can you identify others in your life who have different responses to change? How does it affect your relationship with them?
- What group is hardest for you to work with when you are suggesting some change? Which group is easiest?

### ACTIVITY 3: CHALK TALK ON UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT RESPONSES TO CHANGE

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Having looked at responses to change, ask participants how they can anticipate them and help themselves and others to feel comfortable with the change process. This activity participants look at the underlying reasons for their different responses to change. From that understanding, they can build a thoughtful approach to their work and the people it involves.

**Step 1.** Post a large piece of newsprint paper on the wall and write this question in the middle of the paper: Why do people respond to change in the way they do?

**Step 2.** Explain that the conversation in response to the question will take place through participants writing thoughts, questions, comments, and ideas on the newsprint. Their writing can refer to the original question or build off other ideas and comments. (See Walk Talk Overview in introduction.)

**Facilitator Note:** Challenge the participants to find a balance between positive and negative in their comments and questions.

**Step 3.** Make sure all the participants have markers and invite them to come up to the newsprint to write, read, and respond. They can step back to think and watch as well.

**Facilitator Note:** Once the exchange on the newsprint has slowed to the point where you feel everyone has had an opportunity to express themselves, give time for everyone to read over the entire “Chalk Talk.” Then proceed to the follow-up questions.

*Project:* Are you asking anyone to change through your project? How will you approach them in order to be successful?

*General:* Are you asking anyone to change through other efforts? (This could apply to personal issues as well as public ones.) How will you approach them in order to be successful?

As you develop a strategy consider the following:

- If you are dealing with early or late majority folks—what do you think their fears may be and how can you address them before they bring them up?
- If you are dealing with resistors—how will you know who they are and how to respond to them with respect and integrity?
- If you are dealing with innovators or leaders—how can they be your allies? Help you? Work with you?

## ACTIVITY 4: REFLECTING ON CHANGE AND YOUR PROJECT

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

Ask the participants to think back over the material on groups dealing with change. Remind them of the patterns and roles that are typical of a group dealing with change, and ask them to reflect on their own reaction to ideas for change. You can use this conversation to reflect on the changes they hope to bring about in their project.

- How did your response to change affect your work?
- How can you make the project meaningful to the greatest number of people?

**OBJECTIVE 3:** *Participants will develop skills to bring about change.*

## ACTIVITY 1: HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR COMMUNITY TO WORK?

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

Read the following scenario to set the stage for this activity.

*Imagine you are not feeling well and you have decided to see a doctor. Your appointment would begin with a description of your symptoms. In response to the question "How are you feeling?" you might answer that you have recurring headaches. If the doctor were to focus only on the symptoms, he or she might recommend that you take aspirin. But aspirin only treats the symptom; it does not address the cause. To understand why you are having headaches, the doctor would need to ask for more information. That information would describe the cause of your headaches. It might be that you are not getting enough sleep, not eating well or drinking enough fluids. With that additional information, you and the doctor can begin to understand the cause of your headaches and make changes to the conditions that are contributing to the headaches. You might decide to change your diet and increase the amount of time you sleep. By changing the conditions that contribute to the headache, you can hope to feel good.*

**Step 1.** Ask the participants to describe a problem in their community. They can name symptoms of the problem by describing what it looks like. This



is a description of where the community is now. (For example: Young people are hanging out on the village green causing problems.)

**Step 2.** Now ask why does this problem exist? How long has the issue been a problem and why hasn't it changed over time? This is an attempt to identify the factors that contribute to problem, the underlying conditions. (For example: There is no other place for young people to gather.)

**Step 3.** Have the participants imagine changes in the conditions that would solve the problem. Here they are focusing on discrete parts of the solution. (Think about Bendtro and Asset models. For example: Provide a place for young people to gather and do constructive things together.)

**Step 4.** Now picture what the community would look and feel like if it worked the way you wanted it to. This is a vision of what you want, believe is possible, hope for. (For example: Young people are a part of the day to day exchange in the village and valued by adults.)

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What do you think of this model for making change?
- Was it difficult to identify underlying conditions? Why?
- Does the model apply to individual as well as community change?
- How might this model help you manage the resistance any new idea encounters?
- Does this exercise make you think differently about your project?

### **OBJECTIVE 4:** *Participants will create effective partnerships.*

True partnership begins with an understanding of what encourages growth and development and thereby creates conditions for change in people and communities. This is true for partnerships between young people and adults as well as partnerships among young people and among adults.

### **ACTIVITY 1: COMMUNITY MAPPING**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes, or longer

Divide participants into groups of three to four. Ask them to draw a map of their community. Include all important institutions (schools, public services, religious organizations, etc.), resources (natural, man-made, human,

etc.), gathering places (informal [social, private events] and formal [business, public events]), workplaces, and their homes. What are the sources of power within the community? You may want to take a week and construct the map as you go along.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What do you notice about the map of your community?
- Are there any patterns or systems evident on your map?
- Where are the resources? Where are the sources of power?
- Do these patterns of resources and power lead to stability and growth for young people? All citizens?
- Where do you fit into the community system?
- Do you want to make any changes in the systems you have identified? How would you do it?

## **ACTIVITY 2: PARTNERSHIP MAPPING**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Have participants draw their community as an effective partnership between young people and adults. Include all the important elements from their first drawing (institutions, resources, gathering places, workplaces, and homes). Indicate where the sources of power have moved within the community by showing who holds the resources and where people who hold resources live, where decisions are made, and where people who make the decisions live.

### **Alternate Activity**

Guide the group in a visualization of their community as a partnership by taking them on a walk through town. As you lead them on the journey, be sure to mention all the important elements mentioned above as guidelines for the community drawing.

**Facilitator Note:** The community drawings could become three dimensional works of art as a way of engaging the participants in a more involved and creative exercise. Calling on their artistic expressions gives credibility to different intelligences and can offer new and different insights.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What do you notice about the Partnership Map of your community?
- How are the patterns or systems different on this map?

- Where are the resources? Where are the sources of power?
- Do these patterns of resources and power lead to stability and growth for young people? All citizens?

### **ACTIVITY 3: THAT'S WHAT I THINK ABOUT YOU**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape; "Defining Adulthood" handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

**Step 1.** Explain to the group that this activity is intended to uncover stereotypes that young people and adults hold about each other in order to reduce misunderstandings and build a healthy partnership.

**Facilitator Note:** To maintain a sense of safety during this activity, remind the participants that they can be honest and compassionate at the same time.

**Step 2.** Post a piece of newsprint on the wall with the phrase: "What young people think of adults." Invite participants to brainstorm the words and phrases they have said, heard, or thought about to characterize adults.

**Step 3.** Post a piece of newsprint on the wall with the phrase: "What adults think of young people." Invite participants to brainstorm the words and phrases they have heard or imagine adults use to characterize young people. (See "Defining Adulthood" handout.)

#### **Additional Options**

Post additional pieces of newsprint on the wall with the phrases: "What young people think of their own peers" and "What adults think of their own peers." Invite participants to brainstorm the words and phrases they have heard, said, or thought about.

**Step 4.** Have individuals read silently and share responses that struck them the most.

**Step 5.** Write a SMART goal identifying one step in strengthening youth and adult partnerships in your school or community.

#### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Why do people use stereotypes?
- What do you notice about the lists? What is similar? What is different?
- How can those similarities and differences contribute to a better understanding of each other?

### **ACTIVITY 4: WHY YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE DECISION-MAKERS**

**Materials:** “Why Young People Should Be Decision-Makers” handout (see appendix of this module)

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

**Step 1.** Distribute copies of “Why Young People Should Be Decision-Makers” to each participant.

**Step 2.** Go around the circle asking each person to read aloud one of the points included on the handout.

**Step 3.** Ask participants to choose the one reason that was the most compelling to him or her.

**Step 4.** Facilitate a dialogue about the decisions people made.

### **ACTIVITY 5: OUR COMMITMENT**

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

This activity takes the goals identified in Activity 3: That’s What I Think About You and develops a plan to reach those ends. It also asks every participant to make a commitment to work toward strong youth-adult partnerships in his or her school or community.

**Step 1.** Post the goals from That’s What I Think About You on a piece of newsprint taped to the wall.

**Step 2.** Divide the participants into small groups of two to three.

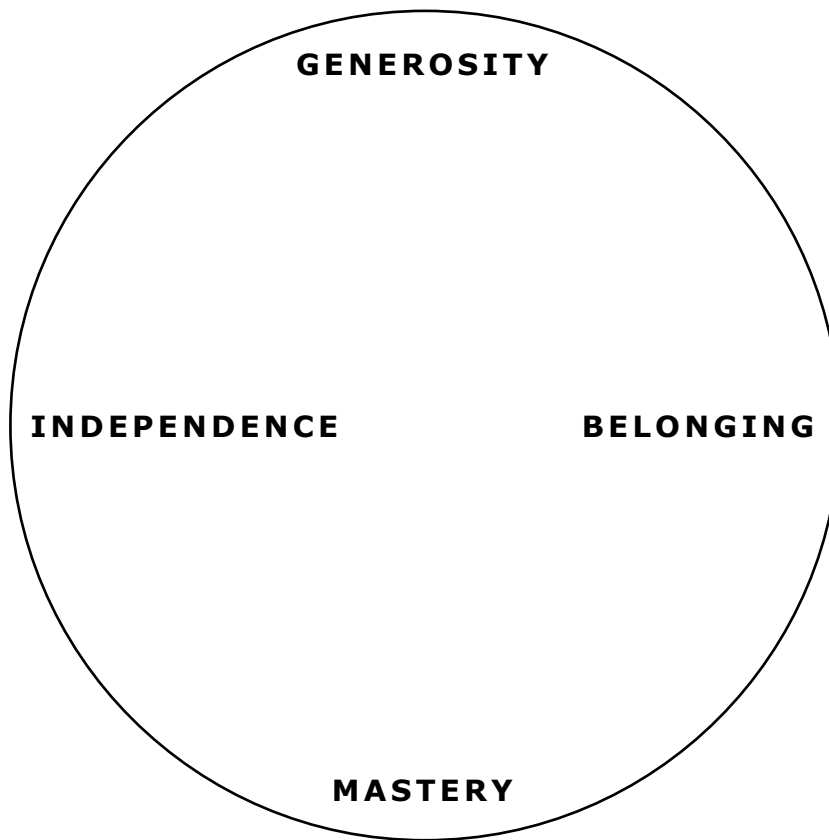
**Step 3.** Use the SMART approach to goal-setting by sketching out a personal action plan that is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Responsible, and Timed.

**Step 4.** Ask the small groups to report back explaining the action plan, taking input from the other participants and refining their plan so every member of the group is ready to sign on and commit him- or herself to the work.

**Facilitator Note:** This commitment is required from all members of the group, young and old alike.

## **Appendix**

<b>Circle of Courage</b>	<b>310</b>
<b>40 Developmental Assets</b>	<b>311</b>
<b>The Power of Assets to Promote Thriving Indicators</b>	<b>314</b>
<b>The Power of Assets to Protect Against Risk-Taking Behaviors</b>	<b>315</b>
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<b>Why Young People Should Be Decision-Makers</b>	<b>317</b>

**CIRCLE OF COURAGE**

## **40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS**

### **External Assets**

#### ***Support***

1. *Family Support:* Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. *Positive Family Communication:* Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. *Other Adult Relationships:* Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. *Caring Neighborhood:* Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. *Caring School Climate:* School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. *Parent Involvement in Schooling:* Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

#### ***Empowerment***

7. *Community Values Youth:* Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. *Youth as Resources:* Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. *Service to Others:* Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. *Safety:* Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

#### ***Boundaries and Expectations***

11. *Family Boundaries:* Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. *School Boundaries:* School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. *Neighborhood Boundaries:* Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. *Adult Role Models:* Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. *Positive Peer Influence:* Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. *High Expectations:* Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

**Constructive Use of Time**

17. *Creative Activities:* Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. *Youth Programs:* Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. *Religious Community:* Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. *Time at Home:* Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

**Internal Assets*****Commitment to Learning***

21. *Achievement Motivation:* Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. *School Engagement:* Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. *Homework:* Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. *Bonding to School:* Young person cares about her or his school.
25. *Reading for Pleasure:* Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

***Positive Values***

26. *Caring:* Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. *Equality and Social Justice:* Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. *Integrity:* Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. *Honesty:* Young person tells the truth even when it is not easy.
30. *Responsibility:* Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. *Restraint:* Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.



**Social Competencies**

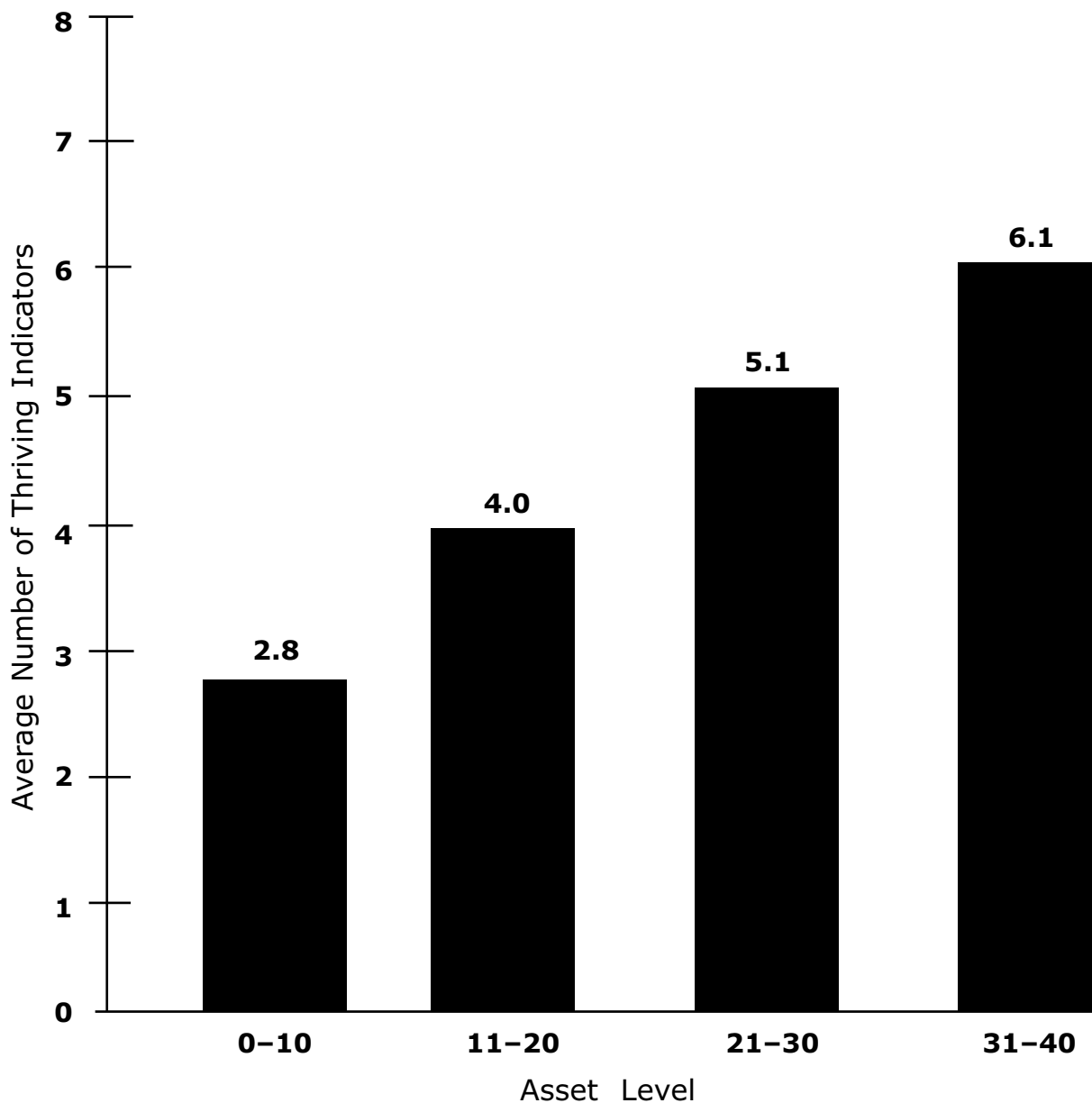
- 32. *Planning and Decision-Making:* Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- 33. *Interpersonal Competence:* Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
- 34. *Cultural Competence:* Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural, racial, ethnic backgrounds.
- 35. *Resistance Skills:* Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- 36. *Peaceful Conflict Resolution:* Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

**Positive Identity**

- 37. *Personal Power:* Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
- 38. *Self-Esteem:* Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- 39. *Sense of Purpose:* Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
- 40. *Positive View of Personal Future:* Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

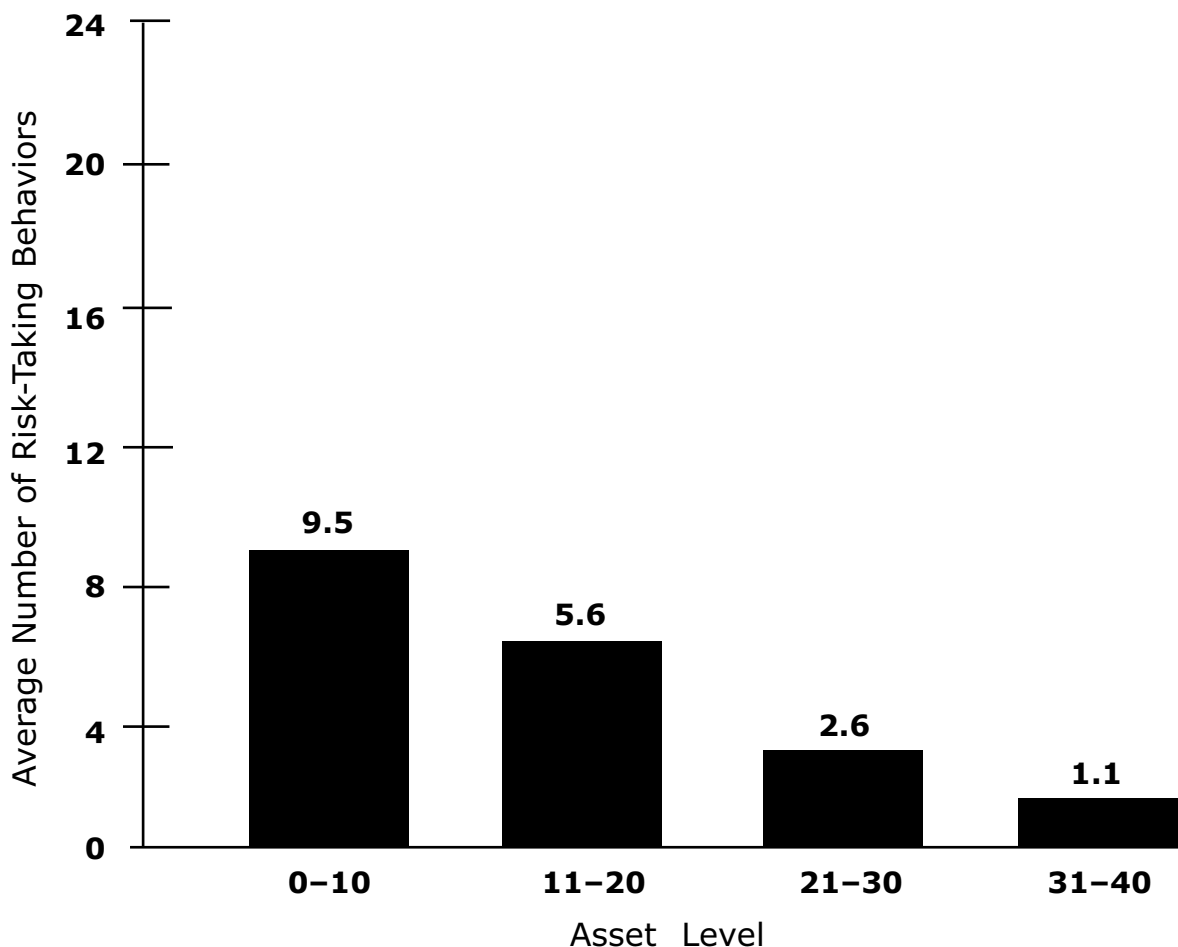
### THE POWER OF ASSETS TO PROMOTE THRIVING INDICATORS

This figure shows the power of assets to promote thriving indicators among your youth. Search Institute's research consistently shows that youth with higher levels of assets are more likely to report more thriving indicators. Each vertical bar shows the average number of eight thriving indicators among all youth grouped by asset level (0–10, 11–20, 21–30, and 31–40). The eight thriving indicators are: school success, informal helping, valuing diversity, maintaining good health, exhibiting leadership, resisting danger, impulse control, and overcoming adversity.



## THE POWER OF ASSETS TO PROTECT AGAINST RISK-TAKING BEHAVIORS

This figure shows the power of assets to protect from risk-taking behaviors. Search Institute's research consistently shows that youth with higher levels of assets are involved in fewer risk-taking behaviors. Each vertical bar shows the average number of 24 risk-taking behaviors among all youth, grouped by asset level (0–10, 11–20, 21–30, and 31–40). The 24 risk-taking behaviors are: alcohol use, binge drinking, smoking, smokeless tobacco, inhalants, marijuana, other illicit drugs, drinking and driving, riding with a driver who has been drinking, sexual intercourse, shoplifting, vandalism, trouble with police, hitting someone, hurting someone, use of a weapon, group fighting, carrying a weapon for protection, threatening physical harm, skipping school, gambling, eating disorders, depression, and attempted suicide.



## DEFINING ADULTISM

Consider these examples of adultism created by active young people. What do the examples have in common? What motivates adults to act this way? In the space below, create a definition for the word *adultism*.

*Example 1:* Writing “Tasha, age 17” rather than “Tasha Martin.” While it’s great to demonstrate that young people are involved, you should be very careful to not be condescending. Adults would never write “Jim, age 54” in a professional setting.

*Example 2:* Considering only age, not experience. Young people’s experiences are extremely valuable, even if they are not traditional professional experiences.

*Example 3:* Asking young people “Do you understand?” in a condescending way. It’s great to be thoughtful when someone looks lost, whether an adult or a young person, but be careful not to put young people open the spot.

*Example 4:* Assuming young people won’t be able to understand a topic or concept rather than taking time to explain it to them.

*Example 5:* Making condescending comments like “You’re still a little wet behind the ears!” “When you grow up you’ll understand.” “It’s just a phase; you’ll grow out of it.”

*Example 6:* Asking young people to handle only small or menial tasks. As with an adult, these need to be balanced with important and challenging work.

*Example 7:* Being surprised when young people say something intelligent, when they are dressed appropriately, or when they are well organized. Comments like, “You’re so smart! I can’t believe you’re only fifteen!”

*Example 8:* Assuming that young people only know about issues concerning youth.

*Example 9:* Ignoring young people when you are busy with “more important things.”

*Example 10:* Using jargon that is unfamiliar to young people. Help young people learn the language used in your field. In the meantime, remember to phrase things so everyone can understand.

Your definition of adultism:

## **WHY YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE DECISION-MAKERS**

### ***It's a diversity issue.***

Even though they may not have years of formal experience, youth offer intelligence, creative thinking, and a valuable outlook on the world that is seldom introduced into the governance of organizations. While age diversity might not show up on a typical diversity chart, it is a critical element for boards that want to embrace many voices and perspectives.

### ***It's a democracy issue.***

To make democracy work, all people need to be heard. This includes the voices of young people. We need to hear their view, ideas, and passions. We also need to act on their ideas, so that democracy continues to thrive in future generations.

### ***It's a bottom-line issue.***

Quite simply, young people are uniquely qualified to say what works for young people. By relying on young decision makers to provide persona insights, talk with friend and organize youth focus groups, organizations can save time and money by catching decisions that might not work well with young people *before* they are enacted and fail.

### ***It's a civil rights issue.***

Nowhere in the United States Declaration of Independence is there a stipulation concerning age. "All men are created equal," *all* are entitled to "certain unalienable rights." In far too many situations, young people are not being heard. Their rights are being disregarded or violated, and adults do not seem to hear or care about it. This needs to change.

### ***It's a youth development issue.***

Leadership helps young people develop confidence in their opinions and their ideas. In addition to fostering confidence, participating as a leader can introduce youth to a range of other skills—public speaking, budgeting, leading projects and committees, and networking, to name a few. By creating viable youth decision-making positions, you can impact the self-esteem of young people in your organization and throughout your community.

***It's a long-term, growth issue.***

Adding young people to the governance of an aging organization can usher in a new generation of leadership.

***It's an organizational culture issue.***

Youth can enliven the atmosphere of your organization by bringing energy and enthusiasm. They often remind us that work and fun are not mutually exclusive. In addition, most organizations incorporate more interactive work processes when they involve youth. Techniques like small group discussion or brainstorming encourage teamwork and foster better communication by giving people a chance to be heard.

***It's a community outreach issue.***

Young people bring an entirely new community of contacts to your organization. If young people are out front and vocal about your committee or organization, other young people will be drawn to find out about what you are doing. Keep in mind that word-of-mouth advertising is extremely effective among young people. By adding youth to your decision-making body, you are expanding your circle of clients, or constituents, and adding to their understanding of your group.

***It's an integrity issue.***

It is important for any organization to involve its constituents. Just as it would not make sense for NAACP (National Association of the Advancement of Colored People) to be run exclusively by Caucasians, it does not make sense for youth-serving organizations to be run exclusively by adults.

**PART III**  
**FACILITATOR**  
**RESOURCE GUIDE**





## **Relationship of *OV:OC* to Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities and Developmental Assets**

For those *Our Voices: Our Community* groups who meet in schools, we have added the following descriptions of how each model meets specific standards outlined in the Vermont Framework of Learning. We have also shown each module's relationship to Developmental Assets.

### ***Who are We? Where Are We Going? Getting Going Together!***

#### **Relationship to Vermont Standards**

- 3.3** Respect: Students demonstrate respect for themselves and others.
- 3.10** Teamwork: Students perform effectively in teams that set and achieve goals, conduct investigations, solve problems, and create solutions.

#### **Relationship to Developmental Assets**

- Planning and Decision Making
- Personal Power
- Sense of Purpose
- Responsibility
- High Expectations
- Safety

### ***Exploration of Leaders and Leadership***

#### **Relationship to Vermont Standards**

- 1.0** Types of Questions: Students ask a variety of questions.
- 2.7** Information: Students respond to new information by reflecting on experience and reconsidering their opinions and sources of information.
- 12.1** Respect: Students demonstrate respect for themselves and others.
- 3.11** Interactions: Students interact respectfully with others, including those with whom they have differences.
- 12.2** Historical Connections: Students identify major historical eras and analyze periods of transition in various times in their local community, in Vermont, in the United States, and in various locations world wide, to interpret the influence of the past on the present.

- 12.3** Identity and interdependence: Students understand the variety of influences and impacts of the construction, preservation, and change of identity, within families, other social structures, and nations.

### **Relationship to Developmental Assets**

#### *Positive Values*

- Integrity
- Honesty
- Responsibility

#### *Social Competencies*

- Cultural Competence

#### *Positive Identity*

- Positive View of Personal Future

### **Decision Making**

#### **Relationship to Vermont Standards**

- 2.0** Problem-solving Process: Students use reasoning strategies, knowledge, and common sense to solve complex problems related to all fields of knowledge.
- 3.0** Types of Problems: Students solve problems of increasing complexity.
- 10.0** Taking risks: Students demonstrate a willingness to take risks in order to learn.
- 10.0** Fluency: Students generate a variety of ideas using several approaches.
- 2.12** Flexibility: Students modify or change their original ideas and/ or the ideas of others to generate innovative solutions.
- 1.0** Goal-setting: Students assess their own learning by developing rigorous criteria for themselves, and use these to set goals and produce consistently high-quality work.
- 3.7** Informed Decisions: Students make informed decisions.
- 11.0** Teamwork: Students perform effectively on teams that set and achieve goals, conduct investigations, solve problems, and create solutions (e.g., by using consensus building and cooperation to work toward group decisions).
- 4.1** Democratic Process: Students participate in democratic processes.

### **Relationship to Developmental Assets**

#### *Positive Values*

- Integrity
- Honesty
- Responsibility

*Social Competencies*

- Planning and Decision Making
- Interpersonal Competence

*Positive Identity*

- Self-Esteem

***The Project*****Relationship to Vermont Standards**

4. Students plan an activity

**Relationship to Developmental Assets***Empowerment*

- Youth as Resources: Young people assume useful roles in the community.
- Service to Others: Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.

*Positive Values*

- Caring: Young person places high value on helping other people.
- Integrity: Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
- Responsibility: Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.

*Social Competencies*

- Planning and decision making: Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.

*Positive Identity*

- Personal Power: Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
- Positive View of Personal Future: Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

***Communication*****Relationship to Vermont Standards**

13. Clarification and Restatement: Students listen actively and respond to restatements
26. Speaking: Students use verbal and nonverbal skills to express themselves effectively.
29. Respect: Students demonstrate respect for themselves and others.

**Relationship to Developmental Assets***Positive Values*

- Integrity: Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
- Honesty: Young person tells the truth even when it is not easy.

*Social Competencies*

- Interpersonal Competence: Young person has empathy, sensitivity and friendship skills.
- Resistance Skills: Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

*Positive Identity*

- Personal Power: Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."

**Conflict Resolution****Relationship to Vermont Standards**

- 13.** Listening: Students listen actively and respond to communications.
- 15.** Speaking: Students use verbal and nonverbal skills to express themselves effectively.
- 2.1** Questioning: Students ask a variety of questions.
- 3.1.** Problem Solving Process: Students use reasoning, strategies, knowledge, and common sense to solve complex problems related to all fields of knowledge.
- 3.2.** Taking Risks: Students demonstrate a willingness to take risks in order to learn.
- 3.3** Respect: Students demonstrate respect for themselves and others.
- 3.10** Team work: Students perform effectively in teams that solve problems and create solutions.
- 3.11** Interactions: Students interact respectfully with other, including those with whom they have differences.
- 3.12** Conflict Resolution: Students use problem solving processes to negotiate and resolve conflicts.
- 6.18** Nature of conflict: Students analyze the nature of conflicts, how they have been or might be resolved, and how some have shaped the divisions in various times in their local community, Vermont, the United States, and the world.

**Relationship to Developmental Assets***Positive Values*

- Integrity
- Honesty
- Responsibility

*Social Competencies*

- Interpersonal Competence
- Peaceful Conflict resolution

*Positive Identity*

- Personal Power
- Self-Esteem

**Team Building****Relationship to Vermont Standards**

- 3.** Respect: Students demonstrate respect for themselves and others.
- 10.** Teamwork: Students perform effectively in teams.

**Relationship to Developmental Assets***Positive Values*

- Responsibility

*Social Competencies*

- Interpersonal Competence
- Peaceful Conflict Resolution

*Positive Identity*

- Personal Power

**Embracing Diversity****Relationship to Vermont Standards**

- 3.3** Respect: Students demonstrate respect for themselves and others.
- 12.** Institutional Access: Students analyze the access various group have to justice, reward and power.
- 13.** Human Rights: Students identify and evaluate the concept of human rights and various times.
- 17.** Impact of Economic Systems: Students evaluate the impact of economic systems on the needs and wants of all people and on the environment.

- 23.** Identity Changes: Students understand how changing social roles and beliefs contribute to identity and changes within the family and other social structures.
- 24.** Identity Construction: Students understand the variety of influences on the construction and preservation of identity.

### **Relationship to Developmental Assets**

#### *Positive Values*

- Equality and Justice
- Integrity
- Caring
- Responsibility

#### *Social Competencies*

- Interpersonal competence
- Cultural competence

#### *Positive Identity*

- Self-esteem

### **Systems and Change**

#### **Relationship to Vermont Standards**

- 4.1.** Types of Questions: Students ask a variety of questions.
- 4.2.** Types of Problems: Students solve problems of increasing complexity.
- 4.3.** Improving Effectiveness: Students devise and test ways of improving the effectiveness of a system.
- 3.1** Goal-Setting: Students assess their own learning by developing rigorous criteria for themselves, and use these to set goals and produce consistently high-quality work.
- 4.4.** Informed Decisions: Students make informed decisions.
- 4.5.** Sustainability: Students make decisions that demonstrate understanding of natural and human communities, the ecological, economic, political, or social systems within them, and awareness of how their personal and collective actions affect the sustainability of these interrelated systems.
- 3.10** Teamwork: Students perform effectively on teams that set and achieve goals, conduct investigations, solve problems, and create solutions (e.g., by using consensus-building and cooperation to work toward group decisions).
- 4.6.** Interactions: Students interact respectfully with others, including those with whom they have differences.
- 3.13** Roles and Responsibilities: Students analyze their roles and responsibilities in their family, their school, and their community.

- 4.7.** Democratic Process: Students participate in the democratic processes.
- 4.5** Continuity and Change: Students understand continuity and change.
- 4.8.** Cause and Effect in Human Societies: Students examine complex webs of causes and effects in relations to events in order to generalize about the workings of human societies, and they apply their findings to problems.
- 4.9.** Use of Evidence and Data: Students understand the varied uses of evidence and data, and use both to make interpretations concerning public issues.
- 6.3** Analyzing Knowledge: Students analyze knowledge as a collection of selected facts and interpretations based on a particular setting.
- 4.10.** Meaning of Citizenship: Students examine and debate the meaning of citizenship and act as citizens in a democratic society.
- 6.11** Institutional Access: Students analyze the access that various groups and individuals have had to justice, reward, and power, as those are evident in the institutions in various times in their local community, in Vermont, in the United States, and in various locations world wide.
- 6.16** Impact of Economic Systems: Students evaluate the impact of economic systems on the needs and wants of all people and on the environment in various times in their local community, in Vermont, in the United States, and in various locations worldwide.

### **Relationship to Developmental Assets**

#### *Support*

- Other Adult Relationships

#### *Empowerment*

- Community Values Youth
- Youth as Resources

#### *Boundaries and Expectations*

- Adult Role Models
- Positive Peer Influence

#### *Positive Values*

- Equality and Social Justice
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Responsibility

#### *Social Competencies*

- Interpersonal Competence

#### *Positive Identity*

- Personal Power
- Self-Esteem

## Relationship of *OV:OC* to Resiliency Theory

Several years ago, researchers discovered that preventing and treating problems in youth, while essential to their well-being, did not necessarily help prepare them to meet the challenges of adolescence. Instead, after looking more closely at some extraordinary youth in at-risk environments, they learned why some young people are able to succeed despite such odds as neglectful families, unsafe neighborhoods, and exposure to drugs and alcohol. It was found that these “resilient” youth did have similar inner strengths and external support systems in common. These beneficial conditions and influences helped these young people to become healthy, engaged, and competent adults.

Using the results of this research, a broader approach to youth policy emerged, known as positive youth development. It focuses on building up and reinforcing these positive strengths in all young people, at every level of their lives—in their neighborhoods and communities, at home, in school, on the playing field, at recreation and youth centers, in local businesses, and in government.

Positive youth development efforts are respectful and inclusive of all youth—including those who are more likely to be harassed or feel isolated because of their economic status, ethnic group or race, sexual orientation, religion, or culture.

The resiliency research has proven that all individuals are born innately resilient and possess a natural tendency to “self right,” even if they have made some unwise choices early in life. Resiliency theory affirms that each individual has the potential for change, an essential component of motivation and taking charge of one’s life.

On the following page are some key characteristics of resiliency-fostering programs, which are woven throughout all aspects of *Our Voices: Our Community*.



**Attributes of a  
Resiliency-Building Program**

Promotes close bonds, caring, and support.

Uses high-warmth, low-criticism style of interaction.

Promotes opportunities for meaningful involvement.

Holds high and realistic expectations.

Helps develop critical life skills.

Creates clear and consistent boundaries.

Builds on strengths rather than only focusing on fixing deficits or problems.

**OV:OC Curriculum  
Implications**

Positive class climate where respectful and caring relationships are fostered among participants and between participants and facilitators.

Respectful questioning and mutual problem solving replace criticism.

Participants assume facilitator role when appropriate. Class Project provides opportunity for helpfulness in larger context.

Participants set ambitious yet realistic goals. Verbal and nonverbal messages affirm a belief in each individual's capacity for success.

Modules match the needs of participants. Develop goal-setting capacity, check back on goals frequently, and support revisions along the way.

Participants identify what they want and need from one another and develop the skills to be guardians of this vision through Full Value Commitment.

Reflection throughout the course first focuses on identification of strengths and positive coping strategies before exploring challenges.

## Relationship of **OV:OC** to Developmental Assets

*We chose this term [developmental assets] because the things we identified—building blocks for human development—act like assets in a young person’s life. They increase in value over time. They provide a sense of security. They are resources upon which a child can draw again and again.*

—Benson, Galbraith, and Espeland (1995)

The Minnesota-based Search Institute has developed a method of measuring the kinds of experiences, values, and behaviors that support healthy youth development. Based on extensive research, the Search Institute identified forty developmental assets essential to positive youth development.

The Search Institute divides these forty assets into internal and external categories. External assets are the networks of support, opportunities, and people that help foster positive development in teens. Internal assets are the commitments, values, and competencies that help young people make wise and responsible decisions and create a positive identity and sense of purpose. The more “assets” a young person has, the more likely he or she will be curious about learning, want to finish high school, contribute to the community, and be engaged in satisfying activities and social lives. Conversely, the fewer assets a youth possesses, the greater chance he or she will engage in patterns of risky behavior and poor decision making. The Framework of Developmental Assets operates under the same concept of the positive youth development approach: focusing on all youth and concentrating on the strengths, values, and skills that youth possess. (*Youth Count: The Vermont Youth Report, Kids Count Publication, Vermont Children’s Forum, 2002*)

Developmental assets are formally introduced in the Systems and Change module as a tool to analyze personal and community strengths and challenges. Facilitators will also notice that the developmental assets primarily addressed in each module are itemized. Asset development permeates this curriculum, which fosters positive values, social competencies, a positive identity, and a commitment to learning.

## Sample Module Sequence

Clearly there is no one template for sequencing modules. Even though facilitators might outline a likely sequence in the beginning of their class, it is important that they continually be sensitive to the needs and desires of the class participants and adapt accordingly. A sample module sequence follows. If your group has the following attributes:

- no preconceived idea about project,
- minimal prior leadership training,
- a newly formed group,
- twelve-week course, meeting three hours per week,

then here is a possible sequence:

<b>Module</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<i>Who Are We? Where Are We Going? Getting Going Together!</i>	Basic foundation piece for course.
<i>Leaders and Leadership</i>	Further community building; affirm all are leaders.
<i>Decision Making</i>	Introduce decision making while also providing team-building experiences.
<i>The Project</i>	Identify project and create work plans so that this can get underway and ground future learning.
<i>Communication</i>	Foundation piece in successful project work and leadership development
<i>Conflict Resolution</i>	Build higher level communication skills for possible use in project work.
<i>Team Building</i>	Personal insight and group facilitation skill built. Class can reflect on stage of group development from own experience.
<i>Systems and Change</i>	Alternate way to look at self and systems; explore ways other youth have participated in meaningful change
<i>Embracing Diversity</i>	Personal insight and foster commitment and means to not perpetuate oppression. (Note: Embracing Diversity should be integrated early on if the newly formed group is struggling with diversity issues.)

## Sequencing Considerations: GRABBSS Model

*(Adapted from Project Adventure, Exploring Islands of Healing, Schoel & Maizell, p. 67.)*

### Goals

- How does this activity relate to your goals for the class and/or the goals of individuals in the class?

### Readiness

- Do participants have the skills they need to do this activity?
- What was their last learning experience like and how might it affect this one? (satisfying? frustrating?)
- Do they like challenge and stick with the task or do they get easily frustrated and fall apart early on?

### Affect

- What is the emotional/feeling state of the group?
- What is the level of tension in the group?
- What is the level of caring in the group?
- What is the sense of safety? Are people willing to take risks?

### Behavior

- How is the group acting?
- Do participants generally go along with what you ask or is there resistance from some or all members?
- If the activity involves touch, what is the group's comfort level with physical touch?
- Are participants generally cooperative or competitive?
- How good is the communication between participants?

### Body

- What is the physical status of participants/the group?
- What is the energy level of participants?
- What are physical issues or considerations for individuals?

### Setting

- Where should the group meet? What space does the group need?
- Does this group like full group activities or would the activity work better in smaller groups?
- Would the group benefit from being outside? Inside?
- Is there enough space to do what you want to do?

### Stage of Group Development

- How cohesive is the group?
- Are they just forming and establishing trust, or are they highly cohesive and trusting?
- Are group roles clear and comfortable?
- Are all members feeling valued?

## Experiential Learning Cycle: What? So What? Now What?

One simple and effective way to move through this cycle is by asking three basic but powerful questions. Some sample questions are offered as examples:

- 1. What? (Reflecting):** Explores what went on during the activity and focuses on both the task itself and the interactions of class members.
  - What just happened in this activity?
  - What was hard about the task?
  - What role did you take as a participant?
  - Did each of you feel heard?
  - How did the decisions get made?
- 2. So What? (Generalizing):** Explores what the group learned from the experience, focusing on drawing personal meaning. Class goals and personal goals are questioned. Consequences of actions are discussed.
  - In what ways were you successful in working together as a group?
  - What happened when the group wasn't successful at first?
  - How did the group and/or individuals handle frustration?
  - What parts of your problem-solving process worked well?
  - What did it feel like to have your idea go unvoiced/unheard?
  - Did anyone purposely take any risks in this activity that he or she would be willing to share?
- 3. Now What? (Applying):** Explores how this experience relates to other experiences the individual is having in situations outside the class. Insights can lead to newfound strengths and possible new goals.
  - How does this new understanding relate to the skills you need for your project?
  - How does this activity help you better understand your abilities as a leader?
  - How can you use the strengths you've just identified in your life outside this class?

Facilitators can use these three levels of questioning for all activity reflection. It is important to have people think about what they have learned in creative ways.

## Session Guide for Facilitators

*The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but to reveal to him his own.*

—Benjamin Disraeli

What follows is a suggested sequence for facilitating a group meeting.

### Before You Begin

The following list of questions will help a group facilitator get to know his or her group before even walking into the room.

- How many people are in this group?
- What is the space we'll be meeting in like? How large is it? How many chairs or other pieces of furniture are there? Can the furniture be moved? Are we allowed to? Do the windows open and close? Are we able to control the indoor climate (heat, air-conditioning)? What is the lighting like? Can we turn off the lights? Where are the bathrooms? Are they accessible?
- How many men, women, and children are in the group?
- What is the age range?
- Is the developmental age range different? If so, what is it?
- Have these participants met or worked together as a group before? How?
- What is the physical ability level of the participants? Are people athletic? A mix? Is there anyone in a wheelchair? Is there anyone with other physical limitations? What are they? What accommodations do participants usually receive or need?
- What is the learning ability level of the participants? Is anyone learning disabled? What accommodations do these participants usually receive/need? Can everyone read?
- Do any group members have sensitivity to light, noise, chemicals, food?
- Can everyone in the group write independently? If not, is there a note taker who can assist people who need assistance?
- Is there emergency contact and medical information on group members if such information is needed?
- Is there an emergency procedure in place at the site where the meetings or group sessions are being held? Is the facilitator aware of what the emergency protocol is for that specific site in the event of emergency? What is the emergency procedure for people who are wheelchair users or have other special needs?
- Are nutritional snacks and drinks provided for the group? Can they be enjoyed by all? Does anyone in the group have any diet restrictions?

**Check In**

The Check In provides you with an opportunity to find out what participants are thinking about as you begin a session. Asking about their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and experiences will build connections among group members and can contribute to how the participants work together and even what they work on.

**Review Agenda**

While the agenda already reflects what has happened in previous group meetings, it is important to review the specifics of the current session to make sure the participants understand what they are doing and why—this can include a review of larger goals—as well as giving them an opportunity to question, comment and add to the plan.

**Icebreakers**

Icebreakers enable the participants to begin working with one another and the content of the session in a safe and constructive way. Icebreakers can be helpful at different points during a session to move into a new and/or challenging situation.

**Activity/Exercise**

The Activity/Exercise is the focus of your session. The curriculum guide offers suggestions for how to present, facilitate, and reflect on an Activity/Exercise.

**Reflection**

While Reflection is included in the curriculum guide for each Activity/Exercise, it is important to underscore the value of reflection. Taking time to look back on what has just happened, what the group has learned, and how to apply that learning in the future is central to the experiential learning process.

**Planning and Next Steps**

Planning and Next Steps takes the comments from the group's reflections and incorporates them into the agenda for the next session or another appropriate time and place for follow-up. In this way, the agenda includes the group's input.

**Feedback/Evaluation**

Feedback/Evaluation is the final task. Here you want to capture the participant's experience with the process and the content of the session. Questions include:

- What worked well in this session?
- What could be improved in this session?
- How is the group doing?
- How are you (the participant) doing?

## Fun Ways to Divide a Group

(Adapted from: L. Frank, *The Caring Classroom*, Goal Consulting, 2001, p. 35, and K. Rhonke and J. Grout, *Back Pocket Adventure*, Project Adventure, Inc., 1998, p. 74.)

- Pick two words that go together (i.e., dragon and fly, salt and pepper) or a word that can be broken into two logical parts (dandy-lion, Rumpel-stiltskins) and have them count off with these words (rather than the classic one-two count).
- Find someone who has the same shoe size, eye color, thumb size, or any other fun variable.
- Think of your birthdate. Find someone whose birthdate added to yours produces an even number.
- Ask people to decide whether they are an “either” or an “or” person (alternates: sun or moon, helper or helpee, doer or thinker, etc.). Once separated, have them find a partner who defines him- or herself as the opposite.
- Find someone who was born in a different season than you.
- Put your right thumb or your left pinky in the air. Find someone displaying the same digit as you.
- Draw a circle in the air. Find someone who draws his or her circle in the opposite direction you chose.
- Find someone who puts his or her pants on with the same leg first that you do.
- Keep a deck of cards with pairs that number the size of your class. Each person picks one card and then finds the other person with the same number.
- Keep a can of tongue depressors with the name of every student on a depressor. Choose pairs of depressors to create partners.
- Have everyone cross their arms. Ask them to find someone who crosses their arms the opposite way.
- Cut index cards in half in puzzle shapes, each cut differently. Have participants take one half and then find the matching half—and their new partner.
- Put no fingers or up to five fingers in the air. Find a partner whose fingers added to yours comes to an odd total.
- Wink with the eye that is most comfortable for you to wink with. Find another person who winks with the opposite eye from yours.



## Facilitation Techniques: The Brainstorm, Chalk Talk, Fishbowl, The Affinity Diagram

### THE BRAINSTORM

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers

**Time Commitment:** 5–10 minutes

Brainstorming is a way to bring out a lot of information quickly. During a brainstorm all responses are legitimate; there is no discussion about someone's response that might inhibit people's creative process.

- Post a piece of newsprint on the wall.
- Title the newsprint with the question, issue, or idea the group wants to consider.
- Ask participants for their thoughts, questions, and reactions.
- Record the responses using the participant's words as much as possible. Ask for confirmation from the participant if you change the words or phrase.
- Make sure to involve everyone. You can do this by moving around the group, giving each participant an opportunity to offer one comment each time you come around to him or her. Remember to allow participants to pass if they do not want to contribute.
- End the process when the energy of the group indicates.

### CHALK TALK

*(Adapted from the National School Reform Faculty.)*

**Materials:** Chalk board or newsprint paper; chalk or markers

**Time Commitment:** Variable, from 5–40 minutes

Chalk Talk is a silent way to do reflection, generate ideas, check on learning, develop projects, or solve problems. Because it is done in silence, it gives groups a change of pace and encourages thoughtful contemplation.

**Step 1.** The facilitator explains that Chalk Talk is a silent activity. No one may talk at all and anyone may add to the Chalk Talk as they please. You can comment on other people's ideas simply by drawing a connecting line to the comment.

**Step 2.** The facilitator writes a relevant question in a circle on the board. Sample questions:

- What did you learn today?
- How can young people play a role in the community?
- What are the obstacles to community building?

**Step 3.** The facilitator either hands a piece of chalk to everyone, places many pieces of chalk at the boards, or hands several pieces to people at random.

**Step 4.** People write as they feel moved. There are likely to be long silences; that's natural, so allow plenty of wait-time before deciding it is over.

**Step 5.** How the facilitator chooses to interact with the Chalk Talk influences its outcome. The facilitator can stand back and let it unfold or expand thinking by:

- circling interesting ideas, thereby inviting other comments
- writing questions about a participant comment
- adding his or her own reflections or ideas
- connecting two interesting ideas or comments together with a line and adding a question mark

Actively interacting invites participants to do the same. A Chalk Talk can be an uncomplicated silent reflection or a spirited, but silent, exchange of ideas.

**Step 6.** When it is done, it's done.

**Step 7.** Lead a discussion about trends or themes, anything that was surprising, any next steps.

## FISHBOWL

**Materials:** Newsprint paper; markers

**Time Commitment:** 20–30 minutes

The fishbowl technique provides a place for each person to voice his or her viewpoint about any topic. Participants have a forum in which to take risks by talking about what is important to them. This is particularly true if one or several participants have concerns or ideas that are not shared by the rest of the group.

The fishbowl technique enables each person to choose his/her level of involvement in a dialogue by sitting in the outside circle as an observer, or

joining the inside circle (the Fishbowl). Some people talk to see what they think, while others think before they speak.

**Step 1.** Review the following ground rules:

- Participants come into the middle when and for as long as they choose.
- Participants remain on the outside as observers for as long as they choose.
- Participants can speak or listen inside the Fishbowl
- Participants may only listen when they are sitting on the outside as observers.

**Facilitator Note:** For visual learners, have these ground rules written down and posted, along with a diagram.

**Step 2.** Begin the group in one large circle, with the facilitator alone defining the beginnings of a smaller, inside circle. Once the first question is asked, participants who want to talk will move to the inner circle. Ask for someone on the outside circle to be a recorder of possible ideas that emerge from the dialogue. If this person moves into the circle, they he or she find another recorder.

**Facilitator Role:** The facilitator asks clarifying questions, prompts follow-up questions, asks for more information or clarification, encourages and challenges observers to join the conversation, keeps the dialogue focused on exploring ideas, encourages participants to ask each other this type of question as well, and debriefs the activity.

**Facilitator Notes:** Participants can assume any or all of these roles if they are ready! This activity requires that you pay attention to keeping everyone involved. You can accomplish this by asking questions inside the Fishbowl as well as inviting observers to join the dialogue by coming into the Fishbowl.

## THE AFFINITY DIAGRAM

*(Adapted from The Memory Jogger Plus + cards)*

**Materials:** Pack of Post-its; flip chart; blackboard or bulletin board for posting notes

**Time Commitment:** 35 minutes

What the affinity diagram does:

- Sorts major themes from a large number of ideas, opinions, or issues.

- Groups items that are naturally related.
- Is creative rather than logical process.
- Supports consensus.

When to use it:

- Chaos reigns.
- The team/group is drowning in a large volume of ideas.
- Breakthrough thinking is required.
- Broad issues/themes must be identified.

**Step 1.** Pass out Post-its to each person in the group.

**Step 2.** Each person brainstorms ideas, quietly by themselves. Ask participants to observe the following in capturing their ideas (5 minutes):

- Record one idea per card.
- Write clear and big enough so it can be read from a distance.
- Try to keep ideas fewer than seven words long.
- Avoid one-word ideas; try for at least a verb and an object.

**Step 3.** Go around the circle and have each person share ideas. As each idea is shared, post it on the wall randomly. Clarify wording as needed (5 minutes).

**Step 4.** Review the cards on the wall and capture any additional ideas that surface. Post them (one idea per card) on the wall (5 minutes).

**Step 5.** Ask the group to sort the cards into related groupings (5 minutes):

- silent process
- gut reaction
- quick process
- if disagree, move cards, don't discuss

**Step 6.** Ask the group to create header cards (10 minutes).

- Use advocacy and inquiry.
- Make it concise but complete.
- Don't use one-word headers.
- Make sense standing alone.
- Place at top of each grouping.

**Step 7.** Debrief group process and capture notes on a flip chart (5 minutes).

- What worked well?
- What do you want to improve on?
- What got in the way?

## **PAIRS AND SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Groups can tire of full-group discussions. It is not uncommon for a few vocal members to dominate, while others disengage. Sometimes good questions are met by silence. In these instances, ask people to pair up with another person (or two) and focus on the issue for a limited time (2 to 3 minutes). Each small group can then report to the whole group. It is amazing how at times a quiet, low-energy group will “explode” into dialogue with this simple strategy.

## Icebreaker and Energizer Alternatives

The following icebreakers and energizers can be used to bring the group together at the beginning of a session or whenever a group is beginning to look lifeless, fidgety, or inactive.

### NAME CHALLENGE

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 1 minute per participant

Ask each group member to state his or her name and attach an adjective that not only describes a *positive* characteristic, but also starts with the first letter of her or his name (e.g. Serious Stan, Mathematical Mary, Creative Cathy, etc.).

**Tips:** Allow one minute per person. Only allow positive descriptors! This activity is not limited to use with newly formed teams. It also can be effective as a meeting warm-up with established groups.

### A CLEAR IMAGE

**Materials:** Chart or transparency with the question(s) you intend to ask the group written on it.

**Step 1.** Review the following sample statements:

1. Who am I?
2. What I value most is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What motivates me is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What I like most about my job/school is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What I like least about my job/school is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Money, time, and responsibility aside, I would rather be doing \_\_\_\_\_ more than anything else.
7. One social issue I feel strongly about is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Step 2.** Select one statement and write it on the board, on a sheet of flip-chart paper, or create an overhead transparency. Alternately, hand out a sheet with all the statements.

**Step 3.** Ask group members to complete each statement. Tell them the next step in the process is to introduce themselves to their teammates by sharing their statements about themselves.

**Step 3.** Group members introduce themselves to their teammates and share their statements. Point out that these introductions may reveal basic values held by the group members.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What did your answer to the question posed tell you about your values?
- What commonalities in our values were revealed by our answers?
- What differences in our values were revealed by our answers?
- How can we divide group responsibilities so that assignments/projects are compatible with each individual's values, as well as his or her expertise, skills, and abilities?

### **ZAPPER LOOK**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

This activity is a great quick energizer. Have participants form a tight circle. Make sure everyone can make eye contact with each other. Tell them that their first task is to secretly look around the circle and pick out a person they will stare at when the time comes. Don't let that person know you have picked him or her. Next, have everyone look at their feet and explain that when you have finished counting to 3 you will say "Look." At that time, everyone will bring their heads up and stare at the person they picked out of the circle. Anyone who finds that the person they picked is also staring at them (zapped them) steps out of the circle and the circle closes in. You can add some laughter by asking that if you make eye contact with someone, you must scream dramatically before you step back outside the circle. The game continues until only one to two people remain.

**Facilitator Comments:** This can be a great way to start an activity that requires the group to break down in pairs. Pairs are formed by those who "zapped" one another. It can be effective in splitting up typical cliques.

### **QUICK LINEUPS: (10 MINUTES)**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 10–20 minutes

Have people line up by the date of their birthday without talking, designating one end of the line as the smallest number and one end as the largest number. Next, have group members line up by the last two digits of their phone number (make sure everyone in the group has a phone) or shoe size, without talking or using their hands (must be kept behind their

backs or in pockets). If your group is particularly trusting and caring with one another, give each person the name of an animal (cat, horse, monkey, owl, snake, etc.) and have them keep their animal a secret. Next, tell them that they are going to line up from the smallest animal to the largest, but they have lost their eyesight and can only make the sound of the animal.

Cover safety issues: (1) small steps and (2) bumpers up (hands up in front of the chest). Offer that not all people will necessarily feel comfortable keeping their eyes closed throughout the activity. Peeking is OK if that is important to the person to be comfortable. Offer that if someone is uncomfortable participating in the lineup, he or she could always use another sighted spotter to help him or her. As the sighted facilitator, make sure everyone is safe and do not allow people to make any other noise beside that of the animal they were assigned. When the group looks done, have them maintain their line but bring it into a circle shape. Let each person share his or her noise and animal.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

#### *Basic Lineup*

- What strategies did you use to solve the problem?
- What was this activity like for you?
- What helped you be successful as a group?
- What would you do differently next time when confronted with a similar problem?

#### *Animal Lineup*

- What was this activity like for you?
- What was it like to be blind?
- What personal qualities did you need to draw on to take part in this activity?
- What did you do well as a group? How can we use these same skills during our time together?

### **DRAW A PLACE TO LIVE**

*(Project Adventure: Diversity, p. 105)*

**Materials:** Paper; pencils or pens

**Time Commitment:** 20–30 minutes

Have participants partner up with someone they do not spend much time with or they perceive is somewhat different from them. Instruct them to get comfortable so that they can share the pencil or pen and ask them to draw a “place to live” without talking. Sharing means that both individ-



uals have one of their hands on the pencil at all times. (The pencil is not being passed back and forth.) Give them about ten minutes for this task.

When you have called time, ask the pairs to talk amongst themselves about why they picked one another, how they communicated nonverbally about their place, who tended to lead or follow and more about the place they drew.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like to do this activity?
- Why did you pick your partner?
- How did you communicate?
- What was it like for you personally? What were your thoughts and feelings as you began? Ended?
- Who led and who followed (if that was clear)?
- Did you have similar or different ideas about where you would like to live?

### **TWO-PERSON WALKING TAG**

*(Project Adventure: Back Pocket Adventure, p. 41)*

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Ask participants to pair up with another person. When they are in pairs, ask that they decide who will be the “it” and who will be the “tagee”. Define a relatively small area for the tag game to take place in (for example, fifty by fifty feet for fifteen to eighteen people). Explain that the it must give the tagee time to get away by doing a “Great Nordic Yelp,” which consists of jumping up in the air, turning 360 degrees, and yelping loudly (or however you want to define the yelp). When the it lands, he or she looks for the tagee and tries to respectfully (you may want to define this) tag that person. *Both individuals in the pair can walk.* When the person is tagged, he or she becomes the it, does a great Nordic Yelp, and pursues his or her partner. It is helpful to demonstrate this to make sure everyone understands.

After about five to seven minutes, ask everyone to stop. If you have seen that people are being safe, try Walking Cyclops Tag. Ask people to make a periscope with their hand, putting it up to their dominant eye. They must be able to close their other eye. Explain that you will play walking tag again but that both the it and the tagee can only move around using their periscope or cyclops eye. Reinforce that it is important that people only walk because there will be more bumping in this version of tag. At the end of the activity, circle up and talk about the game.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Did people feel safe?
- What was the shift to the cyclops like?
- In what ways did the activity feel like any other part of their lives?

You might choose to make the analogy that sometimes we limit our choices or solutions (the cyclop's view) but the retreat will be about opening our vision and thinking and doing in new ways.

**BACK TO BACK**

*(Project Adventure: Back Pocket Adventure, p. 29.)*

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

Pick a partner. Look each other over before turning back to back and changing five things on yourself. Turn around and see if the person can identify what you have changed, and vice versa. You can then add more people and make two "teams."

**THE GREAT FINGER GRAB**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

This is a fun, quick energizer that works for groups of any size. Form a circle. Instruct everyone to extend his or her left hand out, palm up at waist level. Next, ask participants to position the index fingers of their right hands about one inch above the palm of the person's hand who is on their right. On the count of three, participants should try to grab the index finger of the person poised above their left hand, while avoiding having their own right-hand index finger grabbed. After everyone has gotten the hang of this, switch hands, with the right hand flat and the left index finger pointed.

**HEAD AND HANDS**

**Materials:** 1 soft, bouncy beach-style ball

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

The group stands in a semicircle around the facilitator, who holds the ball. Lightly throwing the ball toward one of the participants, the facilitator will say either head or hands. If he or she says head, the participant is expected to tap the ball back to the facilitator with his or her head. If the facilitator says hands, the participant should use his or her hands.

When each participant has been tossed the ball a couple of times, the facilitator will describe the new rules to the group. If the facilitator says head when tossing the ball, the participant should use his or her hands to tap it back. If the facilitator says hands, the participant should use his or her head. This activity is not only amusing, but it increases brain activity by requiring participants to connect verbal commands with physical actions.

### **HA HA: LAUGHTER ENERGIZES!**

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Everyone lies down on the floor on his or her back, each person putting his or her head on someone else's stomach—thereby forming a zig-zag line. The first person in the line begins the energizer by saying ha, ha, ha.

### **STRETCHES**

Stretching the body and breathing deeply boosts circulation, helping to restore vital energy and clear the mind. Try a group stretch with each person offering one for the group, including counting off the repetitions, if appropriate.

## Closings

The following activities provide several ways to conclude a session or module that call on participants to reflect, set goals, and extend their learning to the future and to their community.

### POSTCARDS

**Materials:** Postcards for each participant

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

This activity extends the time for reflection and goal-setting. Provide the participants with postcards, which they will write to themselves. You can pose a specific question for them to address, have them spell out a goal they want to work on, or invite them to write whatever thoughts are in their mind.

Collect the cards and tell the group that you will mail them out in three months as a reminder of the work you have just completed, of the goals they have set for themselves, and of the experience they have just had.

### WEB OF APPRECIATION

**Materials:** Ball of yarn

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

This activity builds observation skills and connections among the group members. While this activity takes place at the close of a session or module, you will need to prepare the group at the beginning. Give each participant the name of one other member of the group (hand out a piece of paper with one name to each participant and ask the observer to keep the name to themselves), and instruct them to collect some observations of the other during the session or module. Ask the observer to notice what the other person contributes to the group.

At the close of the session, build the web by passing a ball of yarn from one participant to the next as each relates his or her observations. Each time the ball of yarn is passed, the speaker holds on to the yarn and passes the ball.

Once the web is complete, ask for any comments on the process of building a web and any learning they will take with them from this activity. There is great strength in a web made up of many strands.

## JOURNEY BAG

**Materials:** Note cards; pencils or pens; bag

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

This activity builds a resource for extending the group's learning. At the close of a session or module, distribute note cards and ask the participants to write down a significant learning on their cards. Place the cards in the "Journey Bag," asking participants who are comfortable to share their reflection. You can draw on these cards at any time during a later session or module to remind the group of earlier learnings or to explore the connections between their past and current work.

## NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

**Materials:** Paper; pencils or pens

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

This activity is a playful way to summarize the group's work. Ask the group members to think up the words in a newspaper headline that would characterize their work, learning and/or hopes from the session or module you have just completed. Begin by having the participants work quietly by themselves and then open the process to a small or full group brainstorm where people can build on each other's ideas.

## STONE SCULPTURE

**Materials:** Large supply of stones of varying sizes

**Time Commitment:** 40 minutes

This activity is included as an icebreaker to help participants get to know one another. If you have used it early on, you can return to it as a reflective exercise. The lead direction is to create a stone sculpture that represents you.

Tell the participants that their task is to create a stone sculpture that represents their learning, questions, or goals from the session/module you have just completed.

Give the group ten to fifteen minutes to find the stones and build their sculptures.

Take a gallery tour of the sculptures stopping at each one to hear a brief explanation from its creator. You can have the other participants ask questions of the sculptor to enrich the understanding of each person's work.

## **COLLAGE**

**Materials:** Variety of collage materials

**Time Commitment:** 30–40 minutes

This activity is included in the Exploration of Leaders and Leadership module as a means to develop a personal mission statement. As a closing activity, it can draw on participants' learning and growth through visual means.

Provide the participants with materials for making collages (paper, paint, markers, magazines, glue, tape, etc.) and instruct them to create an image that captures something about who they are or where they are on a topic or issue you have just explored.

Take a gallery tour of the collages stopping at each one to hear a brief explanation from the creator. You can have the other participants ask questions of the creator to enrich the understanding of each person's work.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**Materials:** "Personal Mission Statement" handout from appendix of Exploration of Leaders in Leadership module

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

The Personal Mission Statement, found in the appendix of the Exploration of Leaders and Leadership module, helps participants detail their hopes and aspirations. Because it is a large task to take on at any one time, returning to it at different points along the journey can provide an opportunity for personal reflection and further clarification of goals.

## **FULL VALUE COMMITMENT**

**Materials:** Full Value Commitment

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

The commitment that you build early on provides a touchstone that you can return to many times during the module and project work. Returning to the commitment can provide a reflective dimension by asking the group to consider the following: How well have they upheld the commitment? What were the challenges? What were the successes?

## **OPENING ACTIVITIES USED AS CLOSING ACTIVITIES**

Many of the activities included in the modules as icebreakers or opening activities—which are designed to help participants learn about one another and explore a new topic—can be used as reflective exercises as well. As reflective exercises, the facilitator simply puts the emphasis on looking back at what has happened as well as looking forward to what will happen now and in the future.

**FACILITATOR MODULE FEEDBACK**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Site:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Module:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list the activities you did from this module:**

**How would you rate the overall effectiveness of this module?**

**1**  
**Poor**

**2**

**3**  
**OK**

**4**

**5**  
**Highly**  
**Effective**

**What worked well?**

**What would you change?**

**Please describe any additions you made to the curriculum which you feel should be added to *Our Voices: Our Community*:**





## Making Accessibility Real

## A project of: HCBS (Home and Community-Based Services Resource Network)

**In a successful meeting EVERYONE participates.**

### OUR POLICY

In accordance with ADA policy, it is our policy that all handouts provided during meetings and conferences must be available in multiple alternative formats. Alternative formats include: Braille, large text, cassette tape, and computer disk. Similarly, all videos must be close-captioned and accompanied by audio description.

All speakers must meet this requirement. Speakers may either provide the alternative formats or provide the materials in advance of the conference so that the sponsor can reproduce them in alternative formats.

Funding for this project provided by:

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services through a contract with The MEDSTAT group
- The Community Living Exchange Collaborative

*The views expressed by the Resource Network are not necessarily those of our funders.*

**[www.HCBS.org](http://www.HCBS.org)**

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Home and Community-Based Services Resource Network Board would like to thank the Boston College Graduate School of Social Work Resources Network staff, Lee Bezanson, Leandre Waldo-Johnson, and Mohini Mishra, as well as the many interested individuals across the country that contributed to this guide. We also thank June Isaacson Kailes, Darrell Lyn Jones, and ILRU (Independent Living Research Utilization), a program of TIRR (The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research) for permission to reprint portions of *A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings*.

We gratefully acknowledge Andrea Williams, HCBS Resource Network board member, for a more expansive vision of access based on functional need rather than on disability label or category and for the content on cognitive disability. Her efforts ensure that this guide addresses inclusion for all people with disabilities.

**OUR VOICES: OUR COMMUNITY  
INFORMATION RELEASE FORM**

I give permission for the Vermont Children's Forum and *Our Voices: Our-selves* to use information and photographs gathered from Youth Leadership Training. The purpose of this release is to aid in the grant writing and public relations process to ensure the continuation of a quality program. Personal quotes and specific information will not be identified by name unless expressly permitted.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

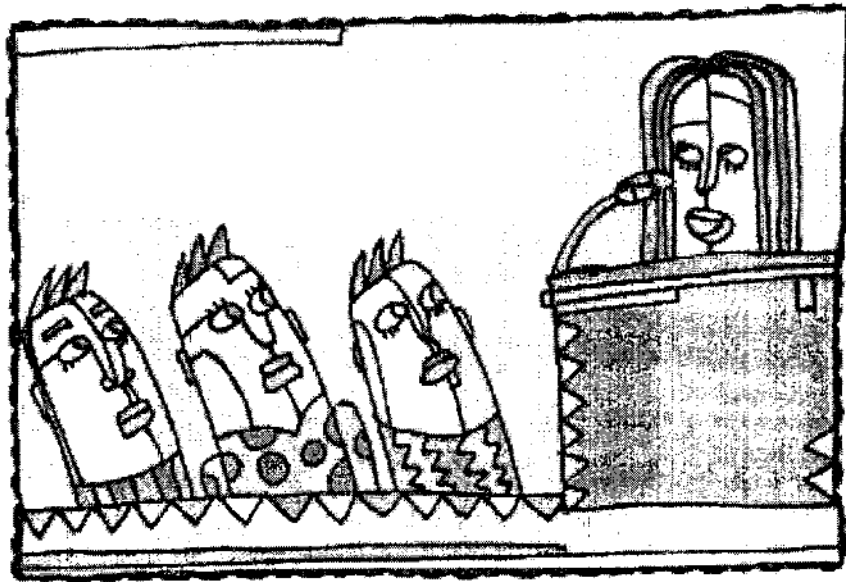
**Class Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **MAKING ACCESSIBILITY REAL:**

### A Guide for Planning Meetings, Conferences and Gatherings



A project of:



**In a  
successful meeting  
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## PART ONE: Introduction

**T**he mission of the HCBS Resource Network is to bring together the federal government, states, and persons with all types of disabilities of all ages to expand access to high-quality, cost-effective, consumer-directed home and community-based services and supports. To achieve our mission, we believe that all of us must improve our understanding of how to make our discussions, meetings and conferences more accessible to everyone. The ultimate success of our collective efforts will depend upon whether we can find ways to include individuals with a wide range of disabilities in all aspects of work.

Disability and chronic health conditions are far more common experiences for people than we might appreciate. Many functional disabilities and chronic health conditions are invisible. Individuals with invisible or unrecognized disabilities are too often forgotten as we plan meetings and conferences.

We developed this guide to help ourselves think more broadly about the term “accessibility” in the context of planning for meeting and conferences. Given the uniqueness of each person, it is not possible to anticipate the individualized needs of every person by creating a checklist or other made-to-order document. Others have created authoritative and extensive technical guides on accessibility. See, for example June Isaacson Kailes’ and Darrel Lynn Jones’ 1993 work for the Independent Living Research Utilization Project (ILRU), Research and Training Center on Independent Living in Houston: A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings. (Please Part Six for information on obtaining this document.) **Our publication does not eliminate the need to refer to these other authoritative sources to understand the technical requirement for an accessible meeting.**

Our goal is to add to these existing resources. We have tried to identify a generic approach to the development of improved accessibility strate-

gies and to stimulate conversations on the inclusion and participation of everyone in meetings and gatherings of all types. This guide provides common-sense strategies to help improve the accessibility of all meetings and conferences for everyone. It is designed so that meeting planners and participants can pick and choose those strategies that are appropriate and feasible for each particular meeting. We hope our suggestions will stimulate new discussions and new ideas for improving inclusion strategies.

### What do we mean by “accessibility”?

The dictionary defines “accessible” as “easily approached or entered.” However, this definition is especially limiting when we consider that a meeting is not accessible simply because a person can enter the facility easily. A sense of belonging is necessary for accessibility to be fully realized. Belonging in this context means having a sense that you are in the right place and feel comfortable participating, rather than just being a spectator; this kind of belonging requires respect and equity. This means that the physical accommodations must be appropriate for all the participants and that the materials, the pace of a meeting and the time allotments for different activities must respect differences among individuals.

Our goal is to present both specific and general strategies that will promote new common-sense approaches to improving accessibility for everyone. In keeping with this theme we ignore—as much as possible—approaches based on particular disabilities or chronic conditions. Instead, we approach the issue in terms of the functional needs of people. By functional needs we mean simply that on any given day and in any given place, individuals may experience situations that limit their ability to participate fully unless some adjustment to their external environment is made.



## **PART TWO:** Attitudes Happen

Individuals with disabilities will tell you that one of the most painful and effective barriers to their full participation in community life comes from attitudes displayed by people every day.

Many people express pity, scorn, discomfort, and disgust when they encounter an individual with a disability. Anyone who is treated this way feels angry, shamed, blamed, pitied, child-like, and dependent, or invisible. None of these are positive feelings that make an individual want to participate.

This guide to accessibility will not eradicate the reality that some people have these attitudes and behave in ways that are exclusionary. However, we do hope that by creating more awareness about how to have accessible meetings and gatherings that we contribute to the elimination of negative attitudes and behaviors toward individuals with disabilities.

## PART THREE: Understanding Appropriate Accommodation

Before we offer strategies for making meetings and conferences accessible to all participants, we will share our position on the idea of appropriate accommodation.

Have you ever stopped to consider all the accommodations that are made for people to attend a meeting or a conference? Someone thought to develop an appropriate agenda or curriculum and to provide you with audiovisual or printed materials. Someone made sure there were tables and chairs, a registration area, lighting, microphones, bathroom facilities, parking and refreshments. These are appropriate accommodations for individuals without disabilities that we take for granted. For individuals with disabilities, “appropriate accommodations” means nothing more, and certainly nothing less, than the basic accommodations that most of us take for granted when we attend meetings and conferences. Individuals with disabilities simply require a different set of environmental accommodations that enable each individual to participate actively and meaningfully.

The following are some examples of appropriate accommodations that you may not have considered previously.

- Participant A won’t use the facility’s chairs because she will bring her own—she needs a space at the table.
- Participant B doesn’t need a microphone—instead, he uses a qualified interpreter who can sign. For the interpreter to be effective, Participant B needs good lighting to see the interpreter and presenters must speak in a way that allows the interpreter to translate accurately.
- Participant C cannot attend unless the meeting is scent-free, otherwise she will become ill.
- Participant D needs his materials ahead of time—he had difficulty or-

ganizing information and needs to review the materials before he comes if he is to participate.

- Participant E needs the materials ahead of time so he can read them and assimilate the information. He will also want to invite a friend to the meeting to help ensure he understands all of the conversation.
- Participant F needs the material in an alternate format and she will need access to an electrical outlet for her PC.
- Participant G has recently come to this country and is still learning English. She will bring a language interpreter. The interpreter will need good acoustics to be able to hear the speakers. The pace of the speaking must be modulated so that there is time for accurate interpretation to occur.

Participants H–Z have other needs. How can we know what they are?

One way to ensure that we have shown respect for everyone is by asking individuals directly what their needs are. The key to this asking is in the listening that follows.

The registration and follow-up segments of a conference or meeting provide excellent opportunities for establishing relationships and making people feel welcomed as full participants. Building these relationships engenders confidence that it is okay for every participant to ask for accommodations that will allow them to participate fully.

On the following pages we have created a set of suggestions for making meetings and conferences accessible for every participant, including presenters. More detailed information is available on every topic presented here. Please refer to Part Six of this paper for a list of relevant resources, including information on standards for hotels as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

A note on choosing a facility for your next meeting or conference: Although all hotels are required by the ADA to make their facilities accessible for people with disabilities, hotels across the country are in various stages of compliance with the Act. We recommend that before choosing any location for your next event, you conduct a site visit to determine its level of accessibility and appropriateness for your group. **Never assume that a facility is accessible just because the facility staff says it is.**

## PART FOUR: Strategies for Making Accessibility Real

In the following sections, we provide a series of actions we can take to ensure that every meeting is truly accessible. The first section is dedicated to helping meeting and conference planners identify the needs of both participants and presenters. Second, we offer general guidance for making meetings and presentations accessible, even when the specific needs of participants may be unknown. The third section provides a series of recommendations for making meetings accessible for individuals with specific functional limitations.

### **Section One: Identifying Accessibility Needs of Participants and Presenters**

In order to identify the specific needs of individuals attending each meeting/conference, we recommend asking participants about their needs at the time of registration. A sample registration form has been included in Appendix A. Note that registration forms themselves must be accessible; be prepared to provide the registration form in alternate formats. The registration form should query participants and presenters about dietary restrictions, services and materials they require in order to participate effectively, and whether they require a fragrance-free environment. It is important to indicate a deadline for submission of the registration form so that planners have adequate time to arrange the necessary accommodations.

In addition to asking participants about their needs for the conference itself, all participants should be provided with a hotel reservation form which outlines how many accessible rooms are available and what amenities are included with such rooms. Such forms must be approved by the hotel and include their specific policies. An example of a hotel registration form is provided in Appendix B.

## Section Two: General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

Guidelines for Physical Space	Notes
<p>Prior to booking any conference space, conduct a site visit to the hotel or conference center to be sure that the facility will meet the needs of meeting attendees and presenters. Note that all hotel rooms labeled “accessible” are truly accessible, and some are more accessible than others. Use a site survey tool to guide you through the site inspection. (Information on some of these tools is provided in Part Six.) <b>Never assume that a hotel or conference is ADA compliant just because they state that they are.</b></p>	
<p>Choose a meeting/conference location which provides the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully accessible meeting rooms with good lighting and acoustics</li> <li>• Meeting area large enough to provide space for interpreters, ample room for individuals using mobility aids to maneuver, and sufficient space for all participants</li> <li>• Clear signage and maps</li> <li>• Limited stimuli environment (consider the “busyness” of carpeting and wall coverings)</li> <li>• Multiple sets of outlets in the meeting rooms for individuals using laptops or other electronic aids</li> </ul>	
<p>Reserve a quiet space close to the main meeting area where participants can take breaks from the meeting or conference.</p>	

**General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences****Guidelines for Organization of Meeting Materials****Notes**

Meeting/conference registration packets should include:

- A notice that provides detailed local information on the availability and costs of: transportation, home health agencies that offer personal assistants, medical equipment vendors and durable medical equipment vendors (see Appendix C for a sample list);
- A questionnaire regarding the attendees' preferred format for printed materials (Braille, large-type, computer disk, cassette tape), as well as their need for interpreter services and dietary restrictions;
- A map of the meeting facility with indicators as to where specific events will take place;
- Information on transportation to and from the conference/meeting site; and
- A copy of the emergency evacuation plan for the hotel/meeting site.

## General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

### Guidelines for Organization of Meeting Materials

(con't)

Design of conference evaluation forms:

- Create the evaluation form in several alternate formats (including Braille, audio cassette, large print and diskette).
- Offer assistance in completing the evaluation. At registration and throughout the conference, announce that assistance is available and ensure people are designated to provide assistance.
- Having alternate format copies will give participants time to review the evaluation questions in advance. They will appreciate this and it will make things go faster as they work with an assistant to complete the evaluation.

Design of conference/meeting materials:

- Tab and index conference packets.
- If feasible, color code different sessions, being cognizant that certain color combination, like black on blue, are very difficult to read.
- For longer conferences, provide a list of accessible restaurants, including their location, type of cuisine, cost, type of ambience and degree of accessibility.

### Notes

## General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

### Guidelines for Organization of Meeting Materials

(con't)

Whenever possible, mail meeting/conference materials to participants in advance of meeting. In addition, or when pre-mailing materials is not possible, offer an opportunity for participants to check-in and receive materials the night before the meeting.

Alternate-format materials.

- Well in advance of meeting/conference, establish a reliable source for Braille and large-print materials.
- Once aware of participants' needs for alternate-format materials, be sure to provide all meeting materials in these formats, including flyers, menus and directions.
- Package and organize alternate materials in a manner similar to that provided to other participants. For example, if material is tabbed or organized in separate packets, do the same for the alternate materials.
- List room name and location next to each session in the index.

Use nametags that hang around the neck instead of requiring pins or clips. Print the nametags in at least 20 point font.

### Notes



General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

Guidelines for Presentations

Notes

Presenters should adhere to these guidelines when speaking:

- Keep the presentation clear and simple.
- At the start of the session, provide an overview of the presentation. At the end, provide a summary of the key points.
- Present key concepts in multiple ways. Keep in mind that people learn in a variety of ways. Consider presenting information using visual, auditory and tactile approaches.
- Plan presentation to allow for a Q&A break every 30 minutes.
- Use well-modulated tones and a moderate pace.
- Avoid acronyms—use real words.
- When interpreters are being used, do not walk while speaking. Also, speak at a pace slow enough to allow the interpreter to translate accurately.
- When addressing an individual that is using an interpreter, be sure to speak directly to the individual, not the interpreter.
- Always use the microphones/amplification system provided.

## General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

### Guidelines for Presentations

(con't)

Presenters should adhere to these guidelines for visual aids:

- Limit slide and overheads to 3 bullets per page.
- Create slides that are uniform in color, font and layout.
- When using graphics (such as charts and pictures), explain each in words and allow extra time to look at each slide/overhead once you are finished discussing it. Remember that individuals using interpreters cannot look at the slide when they are watching the interpreter.
- Audio descriptions and closed-captioning must be provided for all videos.
- Either provide alternate formats of all visual aids, or deliver such materials to the meeting sponsors in advance of the conference so that the materials can be reproduced in the necessary formats.
- Avoid flash graphics and sudden noises.

### Notes

## General Strategies for All Meetings and Conferences

### Guidelines for Presentations

### Notes

Educate speakers about your requirements of them well in advance of the conference/meeting. (A pamphlet entitled “Guidelines for Speakers” is available from the HCBS Resource Network.) Also, explain what types of functional impairments guests have so that speakers can prepare an appropriate presentation.

Always inquire whether individuals invited to speak at the meeting/conference have any accommodation needs, e.g., ramp podium, type of microphone.

Ensure that the presentation area is well lighted and that the interpreter can still be seen when the lights are dimmed.

### Guidelines for Presentations

Provide a list of necessary requirements to all conference vendors.

When in doubt, ask the individual participant what is needed.

When interpreters are appropriate, be sure they are available for all conference events, including social events, so that all participants can network.

### Section Three: General Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Experiences acute sensitivity to everyday chemicals.	<p>When registration forms indicate that one or more individuals experiences environmental illness, issue a written statement requesting that all meeting participants/presenters refrain from wearing perfumes or scents to the meeting.</p> <p>Do not choose a facility that has scheduled renovations during the conference. Contract with the hotel that no non-emergency renovations take place during the conference.</p> <p>Ensure that the conference space is smoke-free, including the area immediately outside the entry to the hotel/meeting space.</p> <p>Ask hotel staff to avoid using caustic or scented cleaners and scented air fresheners several days before the conference commences in areas where meeting participants will be located and in designated guest rooms.</p> <p>Provide plenty of fresh air through open windows and/or by opening air intakes of mechanical vents.</p>	
Experiences fatigue easily	<p>Choose site location close to airport and/or other travel gateways, including public transportation.</p> <p>Arrange access to wheelchairs and scooters to help people move themselves around the conference site.</p> <p>Provide a breakroom close to the meeting area where individuals can rest between or during meeting sessions.</p> <p>Offer regular break times throughout the conference.</p>	

**Section Three: General Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges**

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Experiences low visual acuity	<p>If one or more participants will be bringing a service dog, be sure hotel/meeting place has an easily accessible area to walk service dogs.</p> <p>Prior to conferences, establish a reliable source of Braille and large-print materials.</p> <p>Prepare all materials in alternative formats. This may include using large fonts, Brailing printed materials or using audio cassette tapes or CD-R disks.</p> <p>If Braille renditions of materials are needed, be sure speakers get the information prepared in time for the Braille transcription to be completed (also applies for other alternative formats).</p> <p>Orient individual to the meeting site upon arrival.</p> <p>Provide appropriate lighting during all presentations.</p> <p>Use large-font signage or station staff to direct individuals to entrances, meeting rooms, etc. If participants use Braille, provide directions to breakout rooms, bathrooms and elevator in Braille.</p> <p>Offer assistance of a guide.</p> <p>Remove barriers in hallways; ask hotel cleaning staff to be cognizant of where cleaning carts are left.</p> <p>Offer to read menus aloud.</p> <p>Have moderator make an announcement of when session will begin.</p> <p>Require speakers to describe verbally any graphics used.</p>	

### Section Three: General Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Experiences diminished peripheral vision	<p>Orient individual to the meeting site.</p> <p>Remove barriers in hallways.</p> <p>Offer reserved seating directly in front of speakers.</p> <p>Remind presenters to maintain a clear line of sight when speaking to individuals one-on-one.</p>	
<p>Use supports to maximize mobility.</p> <p><i>(Some individuals may experience difficulty walking but choose not to use supports.)</i></p>	<p>Before reserving a conference/meeting site, ensure that ramps are installed at all access points and that there are multiple elevators.</p> <p>Choose site on mass transit lines or have wheelchair van transportation available.</p> <p>Ensure that hotel has a wheelchair accessible registration counter or inform hotel staff that they will need to come around the counter to assist some guests</p> <p>Reserve accessible rooms and inform participants of the amenities provided in such rooms (number of beds, roll-in shower). See Part Six for information on standards for accessibility.</p> <p>Arrange meeting rooms with access to tables throughout the area.</p> <p>Leave room for an individual to have his/her chair/walker/service dog at the table.</p> <p>Remove barrier in hallways.</p> <p>Schedule additional time between sessions for individuals to move from one location to another.</p> <p>Avoid buffet-style meal service or provide assistants at the buffet table.</p>	

Section Three: General Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Uses supports to maximize hand mobility	<p>Serve food that an be easily managed (i.e., no spaghetti)</p> <p>Provide straws for beverages.</p> <p>Use tabs to divide presentation and meeting materials.</p> <p>Provide “roving”personal assistants.</p> <p>Use name tags that hang around the neck instead of stickers or labels which require the use of pins.</p> <p>If possible, provide tote bags with long shoulder straps which can fit all meeting materials and handouts.</p> <p>Keep doors open until session begins and schedule staff person to open all doors at session end.</p>	

### Section Three: General Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
<p>Experiences diminished hearing or does not hear</p> <p><i>(Some participants may be unaware of their hearing loss.)</i></p>	<p>Ask individuals what kind of interpreters they require or prefer and provide those interpreters for presentations, workshops and social gatherings.</p> <p>Provide interpreter with information about meeting and presentations before the event so that they can prepare. (Kailes, J.I. and Jones, D. [1993] <i>A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings</i>. Houston, TX: Independent Living Research Utilization [ILRU], Research and Training Center on Independent Living.)</p> <p>Provide seating facing speaker and interpreter.</p> <p>Make space for interpreter to stand on a raised platform. (Kailes, and Jones. <i>A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings</i>.)</p> <p>Provide adequate lighting for viewing interpreters.</p> <p>In advance of meeting, determine how the individual wishes to communicate and what, if any, assistive listening devices will be necessary to ensure their participation.</p> <p>Require audience to ask questions with a microphone; if none is available, have speaker repeat question before answering it.</p> <p>Ensure that TTY phones and TV's with closed-captioning are available.</p> <p>Confirm that the facility uses both audio and visual alarms to alert participants of an emergency.</p> <p>Consider providing listening devices or provide information on where in the area these devices can be rented.</p>	



**Section Three: General Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges**

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Speaks slowly or has difficulty with verbal expression	<p>Allow sufficient time for individual to articulate questions.</p> <p>Allow written questions.</p> <p>If appropriate, make interpreters available to facilitate communication.</p>	
Has dietary needs	<p>Ask about dietary needs on registration form.</p> <p>Ask if individuals have specific requirements (e.g., refrigeration of meds).</p>	
Uses supports to absorb complex material	<p>Make materials available before conference.</p> <p>Offer companion during the meeting.</p> <p>Require speakers to be clear and avoid unnecessary “acronym-speak.”</p>	
Requires supports to organize and/or sequence information	<p>Remind presenters to focus on providing clear and organized presentations. All speakers should provide an overview and summary of their presentation.</p> <p>Offer assistance after each session to go over information with the individual.</p> <p>Tab and label material clearly.</p> <p>Offer materials before the conference.</p>	

### Section Three: General Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Uses supports to store, absorb and retain information	<p>Provide materials in advance when possible.</p> <p>Provide audio or video tapes of the session or allow taping.</p> <p>Repeat a question as it is answered, as in, “Where is registration? It is on the third floor, turn left [point to the left] off the elevator.”</p>	
Uses supports to assist with orientation and decision making	<p>Provide a handout at hotel check-in of registration time and location.</p> <p>Offer pre-registration and orientation to the facility.</p> <p>Change the color of the paper in the conference packet to indicate morning and afternoon sessions.</p>	
Experiences periodic interference with electronic impulses of the brain	<p>Avoid excessive or flickering lights, including flash photography.</p> <p>Have at least one staff person trained in seizure management.</p> <p>Ask the individual what stimuli create problems for him/her and when possible, eliminate such stimuli.</p>	
Cannot read/has trouble reading	<p>When presenting, use picture graphics whenever possible.</p> <p>When using textual material during a presentation, provide overview of information verbally.</p> <p>Offer assistance of a staff person when reading is necessary.</p>	

**Section Three: General Strategies for Specific Functional Challenges**

Functional Issue	Functional Response	Notes
Experiences diminished auditory processing	<p>Speak clearly and slowly. Do not “talk down” as if to a child.</p> <p>Speak without subtleties, inference or colloquialisms.</p> <p>Look at the individual as you speak.</p> <p>Manage traffic in and out of the meeting room.</p>	
Experiences difficulty with the English language	<p>Invite the individual to bring a language interpreter.</p> <p>Inform the speakers to slow their pace for the interpreter.</p> <p>Offer materials in the individual’s native tongue.</p> <p>Ask if the individual has other needs (dietary, for example).</p>	
Experiences difficulty understanding the structure, format and purpose of the meeting unless it is laid out clearly beforehand	<p>Invite participant to bring a companion or offer a mentor to accompany the individual to answer questions and explain what is coming next.</p> <p>In advance of the conference, prepare individual for what will take place during the meeting, e.g., how many people will be in attendance, what will be going on during each part of the meeting. This is especially useful when done at the conference center/hotel the evening before the meeting begins.</p>	

## PART FIVE: Summary

Our meetings and conferences are accessible when we create an environment that invites individuals to participate with a sense of belonging. We do best at creating this environment when we respect and welcome *everyone*. By encouraging respect and honesty, we will learn new ways to improve accessibility for all.

This document is a work in progress—a living document. In future versions, we hope to broaden our focus to provide guidelines that work for additional types of gatherings in our communities. As America ages and individuals with disabilities or chronic health conditions participate fully in community life, including the workplace, it will be important for everyone to learn how to create accessible, participatory environments.

The HCBS Resource Network invites additional suggestions and comments from the public as well as other interested individuals and organizations. A User Feedback Questionnaire appears in Part Nine.

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## Useful Resources

### Web-sites

#### ADA — Conference Manual

[www.acm.org/sig\\_volunteer\\_info/conference\\_manual/5-7-5-DIS.HTM](http://www.acm.org/sig_volunteer_info/conference_manual/5-7-5-DIS.HTM)

The Association for Computing Machinery's conference manual provides information on the Americans with Disabilities Act and describes how meetings can be made available to individuals with disabilities.

#### ADA Hotlinks and Document Center

[www.jan.wvu.edu/links/adalinks.htm](http://www.jan.wvu.edu/links/adalinks.htm) The Job Accommodation Network provides extensive information about several issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act, such as Supreme Court rulings, building accessibility guidelines, and technical assistance.

#### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Home Page

[www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahoml.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahoml.htm) The home page for the Americans with Disabilities Act provides several links for various ADA-related topics, including ADA design standards, enforcement, code certification, ADA business connections, status reports, new and proposed regulations, and the ADA mediation program.

#### Americans with Disabilities Access Strategies

[www.thearc.org/ada/adachart/html](http://www.thearc.org/ada/adachart/html) The Arc (the national organization of and for people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities and their families) provides suggestions on how businesses can make themselves accessible to people these disabilities.

#### Brain Injury Association of America

[www.biausa.org](http://www.biausa.org) The Brain Injury Association of America provides useful information about brain injury prevention, research, education and advocacy in both Spanish and English. The web-site also hosts a nation directory of brain injury rehabilitation services that range from rehabilitation centers to brain injury units, lawyers to neurophysiologists.

#### Disability Law Resource Project

[www.dlrp.org](http://www.dlrp.org) The Disability Law Resource Project (DLRP) is a resource for trainings, technical assistance and materials on ADA. The DLRP is authorized by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to provide training information, materials, and technical assistance to individuals and entities that are protected or have obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

#### Disability Resources Monthly

[www.disabilityresources.org](http://www.disabilityresources.org) Disability Resources monitors hundreds of publications, audiovisual materials, on-line services, and other information sources every month. The organization reviews and reports on the worthwhile materials they find in their on-line newsletter, Disability Resources Monthly (DRM). The site hosts an extensive database of disability-related resources which enables individual to perform customized searches, as well as an on-line guide to disability resources on the World Wide Web. The site also has a section entitled, "Conferences and Meetings" Planning for Access." This section can be found under the letter "C" in the alphabetical directory on the site's home page.

## Useful Resources

### **ILRU (Independent Living Research Utilization)**

[www.ilru.org](http://www.ilru.org) The ILRU (Independent Living Research Utilization) program is a national center for information, training, research, and technical assistance in independent living. ILRU provides an on-line directory of Independent Living Centers located across the United States. These Centers can provide information regarding services and products necessary to make your meeting/conference accessible.

### **Lighthouse International — Effective Color Contrast**

[www.lighthouse.org/color\\_contrast.htm](http://www.lighthouse.org/color_contrast.htm) Lighthouse International provides useful information on designing text materials for people with partial sight and color deficiencies. The article provides several examples of effective and ineffective uses of color in documents.

### **Medicaid Reference Desk**

[www.thedesk.info](http://www.thedesk.info) This useful site provides information about Medicaid in plain language for people with developmental disabilities.

### **Multiple Chemical Sensitivities**

[www.healsoaz.org](http://www.healsoaz.org) The Human Ecology Action League of Southern Arizona gives guidance on preventing, coping with, and accommodating Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS), including information about products that are safe(er) for people with MCS.

### **Ontario, Canada — Planning for Accessible Meetings**

[www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/english/accessiblemeetings.htm](http://www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/english/accessiblemeetings.htm) This link from the government of Ontario, Canada, provides useful information regarding planning accessible meetings.

### **Professional Development on Disability and Non-Coercive Practices**

[www.normemma.com](http://www.normemma.com) The web-site of Norma Kunc and Emma Van der Klift provides information on professional development related to disability and non-coercive practices. The site's articles include, "The Right to Be Disabled," "Workplace Climate," and Inclusive Education."

### **Quality Mall**

[www.qualitymall.org](http://www.qualitymall.org) This web-site is designed to provide individuals with disabilities with up-to-date information about person-centered supports. The site is divided into "mall stores" such as "Family Place" and "Housing Office," which are further broken down into "departments" where visitors can find information on positive practices related to issues such as family support and estate planning.

### **Regional Disability and Technical Assistance Centers**

[www.bcm.tmc.edu/ilru/dbtac/Links/regional.html](http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/ilru/dbtac/Links/regional.html) This link from the web-site of Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Medical Center, Texas, provides information about regional disability and business technical assistance centers. There are no regional centers serving states across United States.

### **The White House/New Freedoms Initiative**

[www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov) The on-line source for information about President George W. Bush's New Freedom Initiative for Americans with Disabilities.

## PART SEVEN: About the Home and Community-Based Services Resource Network

**T**he Home and Community-based Services Resource Network was established in September of 1999 to bring together the federal government, states, and person with disabilities of all ages to expand access to high-quality, cost-effective, consumer-directed home and community-based services. The Resource Network supports state efforts to engage in collaborative planning and policy development, and focuses on practical and immediate next steps to expand access to supportive services in ways that are realistic, equitable, and affordable.

The Resource Network's projects are focused on linking the resources of centers of expertise in states and communities with those of advocacy and consumer groups through the dissemination and development of useful materials. Specific activities include maintenance of web-site and resource inventory ([www.hcbs.org](http://www.hcbs.org)), which together serve as a comprehensive resource for HCBS systems change. The Resource Network

has also developed a Consumer Direction Tool intended to encourage state officials and persons with disabilities to discuss options for expanding consumer direction in their programs. The Resource Network Project Board and staff regularly make presentation at conferences and meetings including the annual System Change Conference hosted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The Resource Network also serves as an advisor to the Community Living Exchange Collaborative and The Formative Evaluation Exchange.

The Resources Network is governed by a 14-member project boar; half the members represent state agencies that operate HCBS programs and half the members are consumers that represent individuals with various communities.



## PART EIGHT: Appendices

### Appendix A: Sample Conference/Meeting Registration Form.

This registration form can be obtained in large print, on audio tape, or Braille by calling the following number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ (voice/TTY). If you have difficulty writing or would prefer to register by telephone, please call the above number.

#### General Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name for Name Badge: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

I am bring a personal assistant: ☐ yes ☐ no

Personal Assistant Name Badge: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Registration Fee Schedule:

Includes access to all sessions, one lunch and two coffee breaks

Early-bird registration fee: (Before \_\_\_\_\_ [date]): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Regular fee:(Before \_\_\_\_\_ [date]): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment (Check appropriate form):

☐ Check enclosed ☐ Voucher enclosed ☐ MasterCard/VISA

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Check, voucher or charge card information must accompany this form.

Additional information:

Please check materials and services needed. (To ensure your request is fulfilled, registration must be received by [date]).

☐ Interpreter Services:

☐ ASL ☐ Oral ☐ Voice ☐ Signed Voice

☐ Other, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

Note taker Reader

Assistive Listening Device, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Printed Materials

☐ Large Print ☐ Braille

☐ Audio Cassette

☐ Computer Disk

☐ 3.5" ☐ CD-R

☐ Orientation to the meeting site

☐ Fragrance-free environment

☐ I will be using a wheelchair at the conference. (This information is needed to project space accommodations for meals, reception, and workshops.)

☐ Special diet requirements. Please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to: Meeting Sponsor, One State Street,  
Anytown, USA 00000

Adapted from: Kailes, J.I. and Jones, D. (1993) *A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings*. Houston, TX: Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), Research and Training Center on Independent Living.



## Appendix A: Sample Hotel Reservation Form.

*The following is an example of information included in the confirmation letter for an actual conference. The Resource Network makes no recommendations regarding the services noted.*

**Accommodations and Alternate Formats:** (This section serves as a follow-up to the questions posed in the registration forms; it is not intended to replace those questions.) If you require interpreter services, real-time captioning, assistive listening devices, training materials in alternate format (i.e., Braille, audio, etc.) or any other accommodations, please contact [program sponsor's name] no later than [date] at [e-mail and telephone numbers, including voice, TYY and fax].

**Hotel Arrangements:** Hotel Sleepwell, One Main Street, Anytown, USA 00000, [telephone number], [web-site]

Please contact the hotel directly for reservations and identify yourself as part of [group name] in order to receive the discounted rate of \$149.00 per night. The cut-off date for the discounted rate of \$149.00 is June 1, 2001. If you do not make your reservation before that date, your room will then be \$234.00 per night. Check in is at 4:00 p.m.; checkout is 12:00 noon. The hotel will store baggage after check out upon request.

**Travel Agent:** We have had very good experiences with the following travel agent. However, please feel free to use whatever agent you feel most comfortable with. You are responsible for payment of your own airfare:

Super Travel  
[telephone number]  
[web-site or e-mail address]

For further information on [city] you may access [provide web-site link to the local tourist board or other relevant information].

**Fragrance-Free and Smoke-Free Conference:** Please note that this will be a fragrance-free and smoke-free conference. Participants are asked to avoid perfumes and fragrances that could affect persons with environmental illness or chemical sensitivities. Please refrain from smoking in the conference and meeting room areas of the hotel.

### Ground Transportation

**Taxi:** Taxis are available 24 hours a day at the airport. Taxi fare is \$30 from the airport. The taxis are not accessible.

**Checker Cab** [telephone number]

**Airport Shuttle:** You may contact the airport shuttle at [telephone number] for shuttle service from the airport to the hotel. For accessible transportation from the airport to the hotel, call 24 hours in advance to make reservations for a lift-equipped van. Tickets are available from ground transportation in the baggage claim area and pick-ups are every 20 minutes. One-way shuttle from the airport is \$18.00 to \$20.00 of the round-trip fare. Returning to the airport from the hotel, you will need to schedule enough time to reach the airport. The airport is approximately 35 minutes from the hotel.

**Paratransit Service:** XYZ Transportation operates a paratransit service which may be scheduled 24 hours in advance by eligible patrons registered with the system. For information and to schedule airport transfers, contact customer service at [telephone number].

Airport transfers may be scheduled several days in advance of a trip to ensure vehicle availability. You can also fax your information: name, address, hotel, and transportation needs [fax number].

**Bus:** The local bus system has a pick-up and drop-off location at the airport and the hotel. Bus schedules are available by telephone at [telephone number]. Generally, the bus runs twice an hour and the fare is \$1.75 per trip.

**Parking:** Hotel Sleepwell provides parking for hotel guests at \$8.00 a day in the covered parking lot and \$15.00 a day for valet.

**Personal Assistance Arrangements:** If you will be traveling with a personal attendant and require meals for them, please contact [program sponsor's name] no later than [date] at [e-mail and telephone numbers, including voice, TYY and fax]. Also, if you require personal attendants at services during the conference you may contact the following agencies in the local area: *[List 2 or more home health or nursing agencies with their correct telephone numbers.]*

**Equipment Rental and Repair:** If you have specific equipment needs for your room, such as an electric bed, please coordinate these items through the Hotel Sleepwell [telephone number]. You can also rent equipment from the following companies: *[List 2 or more equipment rental companies and their telephone numbers.]*

**Van Rentals:** *[List 2 or more van rental companies and their telephone numbers.]*

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## PART NINE: Feedback Questionnaire

*The Home and Community-Based Services Resource Network and the authors would like to know your impression of this publication. Please use this form to tell us what you think.*

The overall quality of this publication was:

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Was the level of content appropriate for your needs?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Was the information provided useful?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How did you or how will you use this information?

What part of this publication did you find helpful? Why?

What part of this publication did you find the least helpful? Why?

The level of detail in this was:

☐ Too detailed ☐ Not detailed enough ☐ Well suited to my needs

I would have appreciated more information on (please specify):

Are there other topic areas you would like to see covered in future publications? Please describe, in detail:

The following information is optional:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for taking the time to provide us with feedback.*

The Home and Community-Based Services Resource Network  
Boston College, Graduate School of Social Work  
140 Commonwealth Avenue, McGuinn Hall, Rm. 602  
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467  
617.552.6728 (phone), 617.552.1975 (fax)

Adapted from: Kailes, J.I. and Jones, D. (1993) *A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings*. Houston, TX: Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), Research and Training Center on Independent Living.

## **APPENDICES**



## **Appendix A**

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Youth on Board, P.O. Box 440322, Somerville, MA 02144. 617-623-9900  
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- [www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org) A national organization with free resources for teachers
- [www.mixitup.org](http://www.mixitup.org) A project of the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Study
- Circles Resource Center. It outlines and provides training materials for students to run study groups regarding diversity and intolerance in their school and create an action plan for change.

[www.teachtolerance.org](http://www.teachtolerance.org) A site developed by a teacher who has developed a curriculum entitled, "Promoting Tolerance through Understanding," as a high school elective class. Lesson plans are offered.

[www.vermontinstitute.org/equity](http://www.vermontinstitute.org/equity) The Vermont Institute promotes learning opportunities and equitable outcomes for all students. This Web site provides a great deal of information, including projects and efforts in place within the school community to address equity, anti-racism, and diversity issues, means of gathering information from other students, and curriculum content and instruction.

[www.pbs.org/peoplelikeus/](http://www.pbs.org/peoplelikeus/) This site deals with class issues.

A World of Difference Peer Training Program. The Anti-Defamation League has developed a program to train high school students to assume a leadership role in creating respectful and inclusive school environments. They believe that learning about social justices is a lifelong process and have developed a rich and engaging middle school curriculum that is delivered by youth facilitators. Both the middle school students and trainers benefit by deepening their awareness of diversity issues and building skills and a commitment to create a more caring school and community. The Vermont Institute and Vermont Department of Education have partnered to bring the weeklong training opportunity to any school interested in this program. Note: A class could choose to become trainers for their school as their project.

A special note of thanks to Kathy Johnson, Director of Equity Initiative of the Vermont Institute, who provided significant input into the development of this module.

## Systems and Change

*The Asset Approach*. Search Institute, 700 S. Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55415; 800-888-7828; [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org).

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Lofquist, W. *The Youth Opportunity Planning Process: A Systematic Approach to Involving Community Groups in Strategic Planning*. Associates for Youth Development, 1990.

Youth on Board. 58 Day Street, Somerville, MA 02144; [www.youthonboard.org](http://www.youthonboard.org)

## ***Appendix B***

### **The Vermont Children's Forum**

The Vermont Children's Forum (VCF) is a statewide child and youth public policy research, advocacy, and community education organization. Founded in 1983, the mission of VCF is to promote public policy that enhances the lives of children and youth in Vermont. VCF represents a broad spectrum of issues affecting children and youth and responds to these concerns by participating in and organizing coalitions of state- and community-based organizations and individuals concerned with issues affecting children and youth. VCF fulfills its mission through three important programs: public policy advocacy and education, research and public policy development, and community involvement and leadership initiatives. VCF has a strong commitment to working with youth. This is evidenced by its:

- cosponsorship of "Youth Speak" days at the Vermont Statehouse with the coalition of Teen Centers and the Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs;
- commitment to recruiting youth to attend and provide input at our public forums;
- Youth Count organizing effort that focuses on building an adult/youth partnership that will help create a strong youth public policy platform; and
- collaboration with the Vermont Rural Partnership (VRP) to develop a Teen Leadership curriculum and training of trainers, and pilot both community-based and in-school classes. A primary objective of the project was to ensure that youth identified as "at-risk" or as "nontraditional" leaders participate in the leadership classes.

## ***Appendix C***

### **The Vermont Rural Partnership**

The Vermont Rural Partnership (VRP) is a coalition of seventeen small rural schools in Vermont, largely residing in the poorest areas of the state. The VRP has been in existence for seven years with an overall mission to “enlarge student learning and improve community life by strengthening relationships between rural schools and communities and engaging students in community-based public work.” Two of the four primary goals of the partnership are “Youth Empowerment” and “Place-based education.” The involvement of the VRP in the development of *Our Voices: Our Community* serves as testimony to the organization’s commitment to developing youth leadership throughout the member schools and its expertise in furthering this work statewide.

In the initial years of the VRP, developmental asset data served as a catalyst for reflection and goal setting. VRP facilitated numerous VRP student asset retreats to help youth set a direction for change in their communities. This led to statewide trainings to promote youth voice in developmental asset data analysis and action planning. In short, the VRP has a proven history of a commitment to youth leadership development for all youth and a capacity to develop means to this end, a willingness to work collaboratively, and the ability to broaden its resources to serve the state.

## ***Appendix D***

# **The Vermont Center for Independent Living**

The Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) was created in 1979 by Vermonters with disabilities and their families. The purpose of the organization is to make independence and equal opportunity possible for individuals with different disabilities through information, peer support, education and training, and institutional and social change.

To accomplish its mission, VCIL develops and operates programs that respond to the issues, needs, and concerns of Vermonters with disabilities. VCIL also builds strategic partnerships with other organizations and state agencies to develop inclusive programs and services that promote greater equality of opportunity for individuals with disabilities. VCIL aims to create full participation for Vermonters with disabilities in the life and work of their communities.





***OUR VOICES: OUR COMMUNITY***  
**A YOUTH LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM**

**A C T I V I T I E S**  
**A D D E N D U M**

Published by the Vermont Children's Forum and the Vermont Rural Partnership  
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# INTRODUCTION

The activities included in this addendum have been found most helpful by the students from South Burlington High School, who used *Our Voices: Our Community Curriculum* in their Student Leadership Advisory Meetings (SLAM). In addition, we have included a collection of energizing icebreaker activities and facilitation techniques.

At the suggestion of SLAM, the activities are organized around the four universal human needs for Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity, portrayed by Lakota Sioux artist George Blue Bird in his Circle of Courage. When these needs are not met, the individual is not living in balance and stability.

The work of Larry Bendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern with youth in risky environments and their use of the Circle of Courage is described in the Systems and Change Module in *Our Voices: Our Community Curriculum* (pages 294 to 295), and the Circle of Courage is found following page 310.

When applicable, we have identified the modules where these activities can be found in the *OV:OC* curriculum and when and why they are well received by participants.

# BELONGING

## **YOUR COMMUNITY CIRCLE** *(from Systems and Change, page 295)*

This activity is used to explore the basic emotional needs of all humans.

**Materials:** Poster board; markers; tape

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

**Step 1.** Create the Circle of Courage using four pieces of poster board. Each piece of poster board will be labeled with one of the four universal human needs: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity.

**Step 2.** Divide the group into four equal groups and have the groups work together on one of the directions to think about their community.

- Are there times and places in your community when and where young people experience a sense of belonging? Briefly describe or list those times and places.
- Are there times and places in your community when and where young people experience a sense of mastery? Briefly describe or list those times and places.
- Are there times and places in your community when and where young people experience a sense of independence? Briefly describe or list those times and places.
- Are there times and places in your community when and where young people experience a sense of generosity? Briefly describe or list those times and places.

**Step 3.** Ask each group to summarize its conversation and give examples included in their Circle. This is a good place to encourage questions from other members of the group that help the presenters relate more of the important details of their story.

**Step 4.** Create individual "Circles of Courage," giving participants the opportunity to examine balance in their own lives.

**Step 5.** Invite participants to set a personal goal to strengthen their own "Circle of Courage."

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Did you learn something new about your community?
- How can you apply that learning to the future of your community?
- What SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Responsible, Timed, see Module One for SMART goal explanation) would you like to set for your community on each of the areas of need on the Circle of Courage?

## Getting to Know You Activities

### **THE FULL VALUE COMMITMENT** (*from Who Are We? Where Are We Going?, page 44*)

This activity is used when the group first comes together. It is a powerful way to form trust within the group.

**Materials:** A large sheet of paper (approximately 3 by 7 feet); assortment of washable colored markers; other art materials. (Note: The number of options you provide depends on the amount of time you have to devote to this aspect of the FVC. The more varied the materials, the longer the amount of time—and possibly the greater the group involvement and ownership.)

**Time Commitment:** 80 minutes; it can be completed over multiple sessions.

The Full Value Commitment (FVC) is an activity that helps participants establish clear guidelines for the way they will treat one another and create a group identity. It first requires reaching consensus around a common visual image for the group. This process introduces the group to the challenge and benefits of working together and establishes a safe, respectful, and trusting learning environment. This activity is helpful for all members and critical for individuals who have not had positive group experiences within family, peer, or school settings. Observing how and what participants contribute to this activity gives facilitators important insight into the dynamics of the group. If you have a larger group or particularly quiet members, split into small groups during brainstorm sessions of this activity to make sure everyone is heard.

The Full Value Commitment provides a foundation for participant ownership of the course experience. (See Full Value Commitment sample in the appendix of *Who Are We? Where Are We Going?* module in *Our Voices: Our Community Curriculum* [2004 revised edition].) Underlying messages in the process of developing the FVC are:

- You know what you want and have a right to ask for it.
- You are capable of creating your own learning environment and do not need rules and regulations provided by others.
- You are creative.
- Diversity makes for a richer experience.
- Compromise will be needed for everyone to feel satisfied.
- The facilitators trust the participants' voices and visions.

The large sheet of paper is placed on the floor or table and participants circle around it. The Full Value Commitment activity is facilitated as follows:



**Step 1. Deciding on the Image** (20 minutes). Participants are asked to identify a visual image, somewhat like a mascot or a logo, which in some meaningful way represents their *Our Voices: Our Community* class. First exploring qualities of their school mascot or a popular logo helps ground this somewhat abstract task.

Participants first brainstorm the qualities they hope will define this class experience and make them satisfied and proud to have been a part of it (e.g., creativity, risk-taking, teamwork, etc.). From this list, they can then suggest visual images that fit these qualities. Their task is to reach consensus on this image and then to transfer it to the large piece of paper.

It can be helpful to link this activity to the participants' own personal lives early on. You can prompt participants to think of a personal experience with a group (drama, sports team, peer group) that has been particularly positive. Ask them, "What could you count on from each other which made this time together so good? What qualities of how you treated one another or attributes of the experience made you look forward to your time together?" Make sure these qualities are written down and shared.

This is always an interesting and often challenging process, where the divergent ideas of a new group must be melded into one ultimate decision. It is not uncommon for multiple ideas to be creatively incorporated into one visual image to minimize compromise. It is important to let the group struggle with the form of the image, but assure that they do not become stuck or polarized. The facilitator is the timekeeper for this activity and has the sometimes hard task of keeping decision-making moving.

**Step 2. Creating the Image** (20 minutes). Decide who or how many participants will create this image on the large piece of paper. Ideally, everyone has some role in the artwork. Reinforce that the quality of the art product is not what is important—just getting the concept down on paper is what matters. Two simpler and less time-intensive alternatives (10–15 minutes) are:

1. **Circle of Hands:** Have all participants create an unbroken circle with their hands, tracing around their own fingers and those of their neighbors. Ask that some space be left on the outside of the circle.
2. **The Being:** Have one person lie down and trace around his or her body. Alternately, let each group member "contribute" one part of their body which, when put together with everyone else's body parts, represents the group.

**Step 3. Positive Group Qualities Identified** (30–40 minutes). The group is then asked to fill the middle of the image with words describing the positive qualities that will be valued and upheld by this group. The fa-

cilitator might say, "We will all be challenged in this class to take risks and to solve difficult problems together. What do you need from each other to allow you to be successful in doing this? When you wake up in the morning, what do you want to know about the way this group works that will make you feel safe and want to be part of this group?" Have the class refer back to the list of qualities developed when they were creating their visual image.

One person offers an idea (i.e., teamwork, caring, positive attitude) and asks group members if they have any questions. Tell participants, "Often words mean different things to different people. In this case we all want to be clear about the meaning of any word that is offered because when we are finished, we are agreeing to live by these words." When all questions have been answered, the person asks if everyone agrees. *Unless consensus is reached, the word(s) cannot be recorded on the FVC.* When there is an agreement about an attribute, the person who suggested it writes the word in the middle of the image. It can be helpful to establish thumbs up (agree), thumbs to the side (I still have questions), or thumbs down (I don't think this word belongs in the FVC) as an efficient way for the person offering the idea to check the group for agreement.

The group will typically identify many of the following: trust, support, mutual respect, good communication, honesty, humor, healthy conflict resolution, honoring differences, caring, taking risks, constructive feedback, courage, teamwork, cooperation, good listening, patience, fun. Facilitators should ask for clarification on any ambiguous or ill-defined words. For example, one might ask, "What does *respect* mean? What does it look like?" The facilitator should help the individual who offered a word reach consensus on whether or not it belongs on the FVC and help to draw out quiet participants.

There are three words that facilitators should identify and explore if not already offered by participants: *participation*, *confidentiality*, and *safety* (physical and emotional). Facilitators should ask about the desired minimum level of participation. "Is it OK to be late or come and not engage in an activity or disrupt an activity? Why might a commitment to participation be important?" The facilitators should also always identify confidentiality as a group issue. It is important that group confidentiality be defined minimally as never recounting a personal incident of any other participant to anyone outside the group. General information about what happened can certainly be discussed, but this cannot include person-specific stories. Finally, the facilitator and the group must be responsible for each other's physical and emotional safety. *Safety* can be offered for discussion, with these two components hopefully being brought up by the group. Part of safety from the facilitator's perspective will come from participants listening to and following safety directions.

**Step 4. Negative Group Qualities Identified** (10–15 minutes). The next step is to identify all those negative group qualities that would assure a bad experience in the group. The facilitator can prompt, “When you wake up in the morning, what negative qualities of this group would make you want to crawl back into bed rather than look forward to coming?” You can ask them to remember a negative group experience they have had in the past and list those things that made it so miserable.

The same process for offering individual ideas and reaching consensus before recording the trait is followed. Often energy is getting low at this point and the facilitator may offer to write down what is suggested unless someone voices a question or concern about it. Frequently offered negative qualities are: cliques, dishonesty, put-downs or negative criticism, rigidity, sarcasm, selfishness, physical aggression, apathy, unwillingness to make mistakes, uncooperativeness, and competition. It can be helpful to clarify that negative put-downs include criticizing others or putting yourself down (verbally or through our own internal messages).

**Step 5. The Signing** (3 minutes). The final step is to have all participants sign this commitment. Their signature signifies their intent to uphold the FVC vision by aligning their personal actions with the commitment to the best of their abilities. Facilitators should also sign.

Clarify that the FVC is a vision or a destination in a journey. No individual or group has ever been able to fully “live inside” a FVC for extended lengths of time. It is a learning process. Mistakes are an important part of making the FVC real and growing as individuals and as a group.

Reinforce that participants are guardians of this vision and responsible for making it happen. This work is a leadership act.

**Step 6. Walking the Talk** (throughout the course). Bring the Full Value Commitment to each class. When appropriate, it can serve as a powerful tool for reflection. Some ideas:

- Have each individual identify one goal regarding the FVC quality that will be most personally challenging. Have him write this goal on the commitment. Suggest that the individual can ask the group for help reaching this goal if help is wanted. Later, have the individual create a realistic plan to reach this goal and check-in regularly on progress.
- Use the FVC as a reflective tool, always starting with strengths: “What do you think you are doing really well as a group? As an individual? Only after this should you go to areas they might identify that they want to improve. If it is only referred to during dysfunctional times, the class will quickly grow to resent it.

- Keep the FVC alive: add to it, clarify it, make it a living document. One strategy that works well is to put the individual attributes on separate pieces of paper and have each participant draw one FVC quality. Each student becomes either a detective (looking for examples of when this is happening) or a guardian (calls the participants back when they are straying from their assigned quality).
- Transfer your FVC to T-shirts for the class.
- Have participants keep journals about their personal strengths and challenges, which have been noted in the FVC. Ask them to reflect on what might be missing in the FVC and add it to the document if class agreement is reached.
- Offer participants the option to write a song, poem, or commercial summarizing their FVC.
- Focus on one word for a week or a given period of time, looking for evidence of this quality in the group.

**SELF COLLAGE** (*from Exploration of Leaders and Leadership, page 83*)

This activity allows participants to explore the role they play in different aspects of their lives. It allows group members to learn more about each other and allows individuals to decide at what level they feel safe sharing personal information.

**Materials:** White construction paper; tissue paper; glue; scissors; pipe cleaners; cardboard; paper clips; magazines

**Time Commitment:** 40 minutes

This activity offers participants another way to communicate important aspects of themselves and their leadership styles. Each person needs one piece of construction paper. Instruct them to divide the paper into four equal sections:

- top left: "how I see myself"
- top right: "how I think my family sees me"
- bottom left: "how I think other people/the world sees me"
- bottom right: "how I want to be seen"

Participants create a collage from the materials given for each quadrant and write a brief description on the back of each quadrant. Finally, participants give a short presentation to the class about their answers for each question and how their collage represents these emotions and beliefs.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like to do this activity?
- Did anything surprise you as you developed these four themes?
- Did this activity make you want to take any particular actions or do anything differently in your life?

## COCOON OF MY CULTURE

This activity gives members of the group a chance to show others their cultural background. These cocoons are good to have hanging around the room to remind the group where everyone is coming from.

**Materials:** Blank sheets of paper; pens, pencils, crayons

**Step 1.** Give each participant a sheet of paper. Ask participants to draw a free-form shape that will represent their cocoon. Then ask them to draw an outside line to form a shell around their cocoon.

**Step 2.** Ask participants to fill in their cocoons. In the outer shell, they should write the names of people who have loved, protected, and guided them in life. In the inner part of the cocoons, they can write or draw pictures to represent these things:

- their date and place of birth
- the neighborhood they grew up in
- the foods they grew up eating
- games they played as children
- the music they grew up listening to
- family pets
- rituals and traditions they practiced
- how their family celebrates special events
- words they live by
- the most important thing they have given to others
- what they believe makes them unique
- what helps them keep balance in their life
- a special dream they have

Ask them to add anything else that they would like to express as a part of their culture cocoon. Encourage them to be creative.

**Step 3.** Post the cocoons for others to see.

**BALANCING STONES** (*from Who Are We? Where Are We Going?*, page 36)

This activity is a way to help participants open themselves up and begin to share who they really are.

**Materials:** An assortment of rocks (either outside or brought to the class)

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes for sculpture building; 3 minutes for each participant to share the meaning of the sculpture

Lead the participants outside to an area where there are loose rocks of varying sizes; or form a circle around the rocks you collected for them to use. Ask them to think of the major things in their life that are important to them—their interests and activities. This might include sports, hobbies, family life, extracurricular activities, or spiritual life. They are to build a stone structure to represent the way these activities fit together to shape their lives. Give them ten minutes to create their “balancing stones sculpture,” which must be done individually and in silence. When completed, travel from sculpture to sculpture having participants explain as much of their sculpture as they wish to share. Facilitators should also build their own rock structure and can lead off the sharing phase. Allow questions at the end of each presentation and honor the work of each individual with a round of applause before moving on.

**Facilitator Note:** This can be a very powerful activity. It is important that the facilitators participate. The extent to which they share the meaning of their sculpture will shape the depth of sharing of the class members. If you have a stream nearby, adding water as a setting for the sculptures can be magical. If you have no outdoor space for this, can’t take the time to go outdoors, or participants’ have physical disabilities that preclude doing this outside, bring a wide variety of rocks inside and let folks build from your assortment.

**Adaptations**

- If participants are unable to bend and lift stones, do this project from a bowl full of smaller pebbles and/or flat stones.
- If balancing is extremely difficult, consider using multicolored Lego or other blocks that fit easily together. The colors can be meaningful also.
- If using rocks is not an option, consider allowing participants to create their own jigsaw puzzle out of stiff paper or modeling clay.

## PEER GROUP INTERVIEW

This activity encourages good listening and getting to know others in the group.

**Materials:** Depending on how you structure this activity, you may want to reproduce copies of the questions on the next page for everyone.

**Time Commitment:** Varies depending on how the activity is structured.

There are numerous ways to use these questions. Some include:

- Pair people off and have them ask each other three to four of the questions (their choice or the facilitators may assign questions). Then each partner in the pair introduces the other person to the group by telling his or her name and what he or she learned about them.
- Pair people off and have them ask each other three to four of the questions. Follow this with a second round of different pairs, using either different or the same questions. Give the pairs a time limit (5 minutes or so) for each round. Form a circle. Each person in the circle says his or her name; the people who interviewed that person then volunteer information they learned about him or her. Go around the circle until everyone has had a turn.
- Participants can use these questions and/or others of their own choosing to interview the facilitators.
- Use the first question, "What is your name and how did you get it?" (or any of the others), to focus the group at the beginning of an activity.



**PEER GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is your name and how did you get it?
2. Describe the members of your family.
3. If you were given a free day without commitments, what would you like to do?
4. What is your biggest pet peeve?
5. Who was your best friend in your old school?
6. What are your interests outside school?
7. What is your earliest childhood memory?
8. What is the characteristic you like most about yourself? The least?
9. Describe yourself as a student/person.
10. What would you like to be when you grow up?
11. What is the one thing about you that drives other people crazy?
12. What do you usually do when you are scared? Angry? Silly? Hurt? Excited?
13. Do you plan to get married when you grow up? Have kids? How many?
14. What is your proudest accomplishment?
15. If you could pick one person, real or imaginary, who would you most like to be like?
16. If you were reincarnated, what would like to come back as?
17. What do you think is the biggest problem facing the world today?
18. Who or what would you be willing to die for?
19. If you went to Fantasy Island, what would you wish for?

## COMMONALITIES

A chance to experiment with diversity? Or just an excuse for people to talk to each other for a few minutes? Give this a try.

**Materials:** Pieces of paper; pens or pencils

**Step 1.** Ask participants to arrange themselves into groups of twos, threes, sixs, or eights, or whatever suits the mood. Give each group a piece of paper and a pen.

**Step. 2.** The task is to generate a list of things that are common to all group members that cannot be identified by looking at them (for example, wear glasses, have brown hair, have blue eyes, etc.). Ask people to come up with a specific number of commonalities or as many as they can in a couple of minutes. Some examples:

- speak a foreign language
- have the same number of brothers and sisters
- have traveled to a certain country
- have the same letter starting their last names
- are vegetarians
- ride motorcycles
- wear contact lenses

Given a few minutes, it's sometimes amazing how many commonalities people can find about each other. This is a simple and fun way to learn about other people.

## VALUES AUCTION

This activity helps people determine their values and show others in the group what is important to them.

**Materials:** The person(s) leading the activity will need a copy of the items to be auctioned (or a copy for each person so they have a preview of what the options are). Each person in the group gets \$1,000 in play money. A black or white board is helpful for listing who purchased what “value.”

**Time Commitment:** About 30 minutes.

In advance: make up as many packets of play money, as there are players, to total \$1,000 each.

**Step 1.** Hand out packets of money (and lists of auction items if you decide to do so) to all the players.

**Step 2.** One leader takes the role of the “auctioneer,” being as authentic as possible—talking fast, encouraging the bidding process, and closing out the bids (“Going once, going twice . . .”). Another person keeps track of collecting the money as the bids are finalized, and a third can write the results on the board. Go through item by item until everything has been auctioned off.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What did you notice about your decision-making process? How did you decide which item(s) to bid on?
- Notice what items received the highest and lowest bids. What do you think that says about the different values?
- How comfortable were you bidding on the value(s) that *really* mattered to you?
- If we did this activity again, would you change anything about how or what you bid on?
- What is the connection “in real life” between how you spend your money and your values?

**VALUE AUCTION**

Each person has a total of \$1,000 with which to bid.

1. To be a famous rock star or famous model.
2. To never be sick.
3. to be extremely smart.
4. To be beautiful.
5. To be president of the United States.
6. To have a great-looking body.
7. To be a great teacher.
8. To graduate from a prestigious college.
9. To help underprivileged children.
10. To be doctor.
11. To be a successful politician.
12. To raise contented, healthy, contributing children.
13. To be a successful artist.
14. To live a long life.
15. To own whatever car I would like.
16. To marry a good-looking person.
17. To own a mansion.
18. To be liked by everyone.
19. To be a famous movie or sports star.
20. To help solve the homeless problem.
21. To find a cure for AIDS.
22. To have a lot of close friends.
23. To be happy in life.
24. To be a millionaire.
25. To help others.
26. To travel around the world.
27. To have a great relationship with my parents.

## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS ACTIVITY

This activity is a great way to reinforce the concept of goal setting and what it takes for any of us to reach our goals. It highlights that the way you reach your goal is just as important as attaining the goal itself.

**Materials:** Bandannas (you will split your group into teams of 4–6 people; you will need enough bandannas for each group); transparent plastic cups; full water pitcher; large bowl or pail; note cards (2 per person); pencils or pens

**Time Commitment:** 40 minutes

Begin by introducing the “Recipe for Success”:

- 1 part goals
- 1 part resources within ourselves (patience, persistence, courage, etc.)
- 1 part outside support (teachers, parents, peers, organizations, funding, etc.)
- 1 part time
- 1 part ?? (to be discovered during the activity)

**Step 1.** Ask participants to write down a goal that meets the SMART criteria (see SMART Activity). Ask them to share this goal with the group and collect it in your large bowl or pail. (Note: It may be that there is a single group goal that can be identified if you are working on a group project rather than individual goals. The important thing is that it is relevant).

**Step 2.** Ask participants to identify what resources they have within and outside themselves to reach this goal. Have them write down these resources on a note card and share them as a full group or in smaller groups.

**Step 3.** Explain the following challenge:

- You will divide into groups of four to six.
- Each group will have a bandanna as their sole resource to transport their cup of “liquid” time to the destination. The group challenge is to pour the liquid time in the bowl or pail, which now contains the groups’ goals. Identify where you are placing their destination/ goals. Do not be afraid to create a challenging route that may include opening doors, avoiding chairs, going up or down stairs, etc.

Important rules:

- The bandanna can only be held on the very outside edge (within one inch of the edge).
- The bandanna *must be kept taut*; the group *cannot* cradle the cup of water but must keep it balanced on the bandanna, which is being stretched to stay rigid and table-like.
- Everyone must keep both hands on the bandanna while it is off the floor.
- No other part of the human body can touch the cup (mouths are a favorite).
- Liquid time can *only* be transported in the cup (not in people's mouths!).
- If they spill liquid time, they will be required to begin again at the start, learning from what happened along the way.

**Step 4.** Give each group their bandanna and cup, which should be filled approximately two-thirds full. Start with the bandannas on the floor. (Note: If a participant has health problems that precludes squatting, allow the groups to start on a table.) Instruct them to bring their resources along with them because they will be essential to reaching their goal.

**Step 5.** Monitor the groups, replacing "liquid time" when necessary. Do not allow participants to move obstacles you have set up.

### Dialogue or Journal Questions

- How did your group meet this challenge? What were your strengths as a group?
- What ways did this challenge stress your group? How did you handle the stress?
- What different roles did people take? Are these familiar roles in your life? Are you comfortable in your role or would you like to try something new?
- How does this challenge mirror the process of reaching our goals? What are the un-named ingredients in the recipe?
- If you reached your goal but the group fell apart in the process and was not supportive of one another, would you say you were successful?
- What will you need from one another as you move forward toward a shared group goal?

## Embracing Diversity Activities

**GROUP JUGGLE** (*from Who Are We? Where Are We Going?*, page 32)

The Group Juggle is a good way for people to warm up to each other and begin to feel more comfortable in the group. This is best used when the group meets for the first time.

**Materials:** Odd assortment (10–15) of soft objects that can be thrown about 15–20 feet. Stuffed animals are great. Stay away from traditional balls so that people do not feel self-conscious if they have trouble throwing or catching.

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

**Step 1.** Have the group make a circle. Pass one object around the circle. When group members receive it, they must say their name and one *positive* thing about themselves (i.e., enthusiastic Emma, thoughtful Jake). Do not accept descriptors that are negative. If positive personal qualities are hard to voice, you can offer the option of identifying some activity or hobby they are good at and enjoy. You can ask that the description start with the same letter as their first name, although this is not necessary. One of the facilitators should start the activity off with their own descriptor. Go around the circle a second time reviewing descriptors and first names.

**Step 2.** Start a pattern by giving the following directions: “We are going to start throwing in a pattern. Find someone in the circle who you don’t know very well. Make eye contact, say their name and descriptor, and throw the object to them underhand. When the person receives the object, they must say ‘thank you’ using the person’s descriptor and name.” These three directions are very important to repeat and demonstrate. The person who has the object then throws it to someone who has not caught it, following the same directions. It is helpful to ask individuals who have had the object to hold their hands behind their back so that it is easy to see who still is available to receive the object. When everyone has caught the object once, it should come back to the facilitator. Clarify that most people will not remember everyone’s description and name, so don’t be shy about asking what it is—maybe several times over! Try this same pattern a few times with one object, encouraging them to pick up the speed each time. Ask group members how they are doing and if anyone has any ideas how to minimize drops.

**Step 3.** Add several more objects (you can ask the group for suggestions of which objects) and ask them to pick up the pace. The only additional rule is that you can't "stockpile" someone by throwing an object to him or her when he or she already has an object. You can drop the "thank you" if the group suggests this. Try adding all the objects for a round.

**Step 4.** Tell participants that there will be no pattern; they are free to throw the objects to anyone as long as they make eye contact, say their name and descriptor, throw underhand, and do not throw to anyone who already has an object in his or her hand.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What did the group do particularly well in this activity?
- What qualities of the group came out that will help them work together throughout the course (i.e., patience, creativity, humor)?
- How did people feel about throwing in the pattern versus the random throws? Note: You will usually find some who loved the chaos and some who preferred the pattern. This is a good opportunity to talk about diversity and how it is important to blend these differences to have a well-balanced group.
- Does this game remind you of any other part of your lives?

**Facilitator Note:** This activity is particularly effective with groups no larger than eighteen to twenty.

### Adaptations

- Play this game around a table, sliding the objects from one individual to the next rather than throwing them. (*Adapted from Project Adventure activities.*)
- Play the game by tossing the object around the circle (clockwise or counterclockwise) rather than having to remember a random pattern.
- Play the game using only names, rather than a descriptor.
- Rather than tossing and catching an object, toss verbal cues. For example, the facilitator may say "Bubbly Bob! — Kathy?" and Kathy responds with, "Thank you, Bob. Chatty Kathy! — Sara?" and the round continues with Sara. The next round is to remember the descriptors and the pattern.



**PIECES OF THE PIE** (*from Embracing Diversity, page 255*)

This activity is a good way for the group to see the different social advantages each participant has relative to the others. Creating the pie pieces is a somewhat confusing process, so go step by step.

**Materials:** Pie-shaped pieces of paper in different colors for different categories

**Time Commitment:** 30–45 minutes (prep time: 45 minutes the first time you do this activity)

This activity provides a means to personally identify the amount of power each participant has relative to the areas of stereotyping and oppression that have been explored.

Start by making a list of attributes that affords someone status or power in your setting, along with the target group who does not have power. Here is a start:

The goal is to have each person to create his or her own personal “pie,” which will be color coded, reflecting either the agent or target group. Your prep work is as follows:

**Step 1.** Identify two different colors for your pie pieces, with one color for those who are “Agents” and a different color for those who are the “Target Group.” (For example—all “Agent” attributes are red, all “Target Group” attributes are yellow). You will make both an “Agent Pie” and a “Target Pie” for each participant. If you have 15 participants, you should have 15 pieces of red paper and 15 pieces of yellow paper.

**Step 2.** Count up the number of variables for your pie—see the left-hand column above (gender, race, etc.). You will need this many pieces in each pie. In the example above, you will need 12 pieces per pie (excluding sexual orientation). Make one master pie with 12 pieces and use it to cut all your colored pieces of paper into the same size slices. In our example, you will end up with 15 red pies and 15 yellow pies, with each having 12 slices.

**Step 3.** Label pie pieces of one color with the words in the Agent column. In this example, you would take all your red pieces (the Agent color) and label 15 of them “male,” the next 15 “white,” the next 15 “older than 15,” etc. Next take your yellow or “Target Group” pieces and label them in the same manner (15 “female,” 15 “persons of color,” etc.). This assures that you have enough pieces in each category for each participant to take one.

**Step 4.** Put all the pieces of the pie on the table mixed together, and ask participants to select the pieces that describe them. When they have completed their choices, have them put their pieces together to form a pie. In this example, each person will have twelve pieces in his or her pie. Now, explain your color coding, identifying which color represents the group who holds power and which color represents the target group. Break participants into groups of three to four and have them talk about their pies, discussing:

- What do you notice about each person's pie?
- How does it feel to look at your own pie and see the power you do or do not have?

**Key Point:** If you are from any of the dominant groups that holds power and you become an ally for any targeted group, you are in a powerful position to change prejudice within your dominant peer group. Don't underestimate your influence!

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What did you learn from your discussion with others?
- What pie pieces have the most influence over your sense of power or lack of power?
- What school or community rules or norms or policies exist to make sure that the power group stays in control?
- If someone's pie is mostly the color of the target group, do you think he or she has equal access to opportunity in our society?

## HEADBANDS

This activity is used to demonstrate the impact of prejudice and stereotyped expectations on behavior.

**Materials:** 1 headband or hat for each participant; 1 piece of paper for each participant; pencils or pens; tape

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes.

**Step 1.** Print the following messages on separate pieces of paper:

- Clown: Laugh at me.
- Stupid: Criticize me.
- Senile: Patronize me.
- Helpless: Interrupt me.
- Insignificant: Ignore me.
- Expert: Ask my opinion.
- Important person: Listen to me.
- Powerful person: Agree with me.
- Genius: Ask me to speak.
- Attractive person: Play up to me.

Tape the pieces of paper to the headbands or hats.

**Step 2.** Ask participants to sit in a circle in the center of the room. Place a headband or hat on each participant, making sure he or she cannot see his or her own message.

**Step 3.** Introduce a topic for discussion and instruct each participant to interact with the others in a natural way. Further instruct the participants to react to each person who speaks by following the instructions on the speaker's headband. Emphasize that participants are not to tell each other what the headbands say, simply to act consistent with them. Begin the discussion and let it continue for 15 to 20 minutes until everyone has participated. Then stop the discussion and ask each participant to guess what his or her headband says and then take it off and read it.

**Step 4.** Begin the follow-up discussion by asking participants to share their reactions. What is it like to be consistently misinterpreted by the group? Did you find yourself changing your behavior in reaction to others' treatment of you?

**THE CLASSISM SHUFFLE** (*from Embracing Diversity, page 252*)

This activity explores class issues and often leads to very involved discussions. It is important that this activity leads to constructive discussion regarding classism and does *not* serve to simply reinforce stereotypes (and probably alienate some of the participants). Your role as a facilitator is very important!

**Materials:** Four 8.5-by-11-inch pieces of paper with the following labels: Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree; “One Spoke at a Time” and “Startling Statements Summary” handouts (see appendix of Embracing Diversity module in *Our Voices: Our Community Curriculum* [2004 revised edition])

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Put the four pieces of paper in a line across the room, leaving space for people to move to one of the four spots. Explain that you are going to read a list of statements. In response, participants are to choose which of the four stations best represents their beliefs and move to it as quickly as possible. Once people have positioned themselves, ask individuals at each station to talk among themselves regarding why they stood at that station and then have each group present its viewpoint. (Note: There is purposefully no neutral option. Participants must make a harder choice, coming down clearly on one side or the other.)

Statements:

- Working-class people and college-educated people are equally valued in our community.
- Those who begin poor clearly have to work harder to make it in our society than those who do not start poor.
- Those who are wealthy have clearly worked harder than others.
- People who are poor need to be taken care of.
- Working-class people are more highly valued in our community than those who are poor.
- People who dress a certain way are given less respect in our school or community than others.
- College-educated people are more highly valued in our community.
- People who don’t plan to go to college are not quite as smart as those who do plan on going to college.
- People who speak a certain way are given less respect in our school or community.
- A lot of people who get help from the state don’t need it.
- I have heard jokes that target people who are poor.

It is advisable to also have these statements written down as a hand-out or on newsprint for participants to read.

**Key Point:** Individuals who are poorer experience greater oppression than those who have more financial resources. Disabled people, people of color, women, and elderly people are all over-represented among the poor.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- How did this activity challenge your thinking about class issues?
- What stereotypes did it surface for you?
- What will be the hardest stereotypes for you to change? Why?

**CLIQUE MARKETPLACE** (from *Embracing Diversity*, page 242)

This activity is used to analyze different cliques, or social segregation that happens within schools or communities.

**Materials:** Newsprint or poster board; tape; markers

**Time Commitment:** 30–45 minutes

Lead a discussion about stereotyping, bigotry, and prejudice. The following definitions are helpful starting points:

*Stereotyping:* An oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences. Even seemingly positive stereotypes that link a person or group to a specific positive trait can have negative consequences (Anti-Defamation League, 2001).

*Bigotry:* Harboring unreasonable or irrational negative stereotypes.

*Prejudice:* Prejudging a person or group without adequate knowledge.

**Step 1.** Ask participants to brainstorm the youth cliques they know exist within their school or community. Write each clique on the top of a separate piece of newsprint or poster board and make two columns underneath, labeled “positive” and “negative.” Tape the pieces of paper up around the room. Now have participants wander from “Clique Station” to “Clique Station” in silence, writing down some of the stereotypes of these different groups—both positive and negative. Be sure to ask, “What are some of the major stereotypes about each clique?” rather than, “What do you believe about each clique?”

**Step 2.** After participants have had time to contribute to each station, ask the group to position itself so that one person can read what has been written for each clique, starting with all the negative comments.

**Step 3.** Ask participants to silently go from station to station, identifying their own stereotypes and prejudices they know they hold about particular groups. Have them write these down in a journal or on a piece of paper. Clarify that they will *not* be asked to share this list with anyone else (other than perhaps the facilitators, if you choose to have them keep a journal about these prejudices).

**Step 4.** Ask each participant to take part in shredding at least one of the stereotypes. Do this in silence and collect the shreds in a container, which is to be discarded. You can also burn the paper pieces if you can manage to not trigger a fire alarm in the process. Lead a discussion around the following questions

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- How did you feel about doing this activity?
- Which clique would you place yourself in, if any?
- How exclusive or inclusive are these cliques? To what extent can individuals move in and out of the groups? (Note: the definition of a clique is “a small, exclusive group of people.”)
- Some people don’t think they are in a clique but others perceive they are. Does this occur in your school? Talk about it.
- What was it like to listen to the stereotypes you wrote?
- Did you notice anything in particular about the stereotypes (recurring positive and negative traits)?
- Why are positive stereotypes as potentially harmful as negative?
- How do multiple intelligences relate to cliques? (Note: Have overview from appendix of Who Are We? module in *Our Voices: Our Community Curriculum* [2004 revised edition] available to review.)
- What are some of the feelings that people might feel when they experience bigotry or prejudice?
- Have you ever been discriminated against because of being in your clique? What was that like?
- What does it mean to you that we shredded these assumptions and stereotypes? Do you think we can ever be free of these?
- What have you learned about yourself in this activity?

**Key Points:** Often cliques are created around differences—interests, ethnic background, race, religion, etc. Don’t ignore these differences or feel that they shouldn’t be acknowledged. Differences make our culture richly diverse. It is the negative labeling and value judgements associated with cliques, and the tendency to exclude others who are different, that are damaging.

**BOYS ARE, GIRLS ARE**

**Materials:** 2 pieces of newsprint per group; markers

**Time Commitment:** 20–30 minutes

**Step 1.** Split participants into two groups by gender (if you have many participants, you may divide into more than two groups, but all groups must be separated by gender).

**Step 2.** Instruct each group to pick a recorder.

**Step 3.** Allow five minutes for each group to brainstorm a list describing its own gender.

**Step 4.** Allow five minutes for each group to brainstorm a list describing the opposite gender.

**Step 5.** Come together and allow each group to report back on the list it created.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What do people notice about the lists?
- What is similar?
- Any themes for male or female lists?
- Would one list have been dramatically different twenty years ago?



## TRIANGLE TAG

This is a fun, active game that initiates great dialogue about bullying in schools.

**Materials:** None. This is a tag game so you will need open space for individuals to move freely.

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Introduce the following terms:

**Bully Target:** The individual who is being bullied

**Bystanders:** Individuals witnessing a person being bullied

**Bully:** Self-explanatory!

Have participants separate into groups of four. Ask that three of the four members of the group hold hands, forming a triangle. Identify one member as the Bully Target of the triangle, with the other two triangle members being the Bystanders. This group of three must stay connected.

The objective of the activity is for the one person not connected to the triangle, the Bully, to tag the Bully Target. This person cannot reach across the human triangle but can only circle around the outside to make the tag. The job of the Bystanders is to continually reposition themselves so that the Bully cannot reach the Bully Target.

Once all groups have been formed and are clear about the task, let the activity begin. You will witness how hard it is for the Bully to break through the Bystanders' maneuvers to get to the Bully Target. Rotate four times so that each person can experience being in each role.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

This is a great opportunity to open up a discussion about bullying.

- What was it like to be the Bully Target?
- What was it like to be the Bystanders?
- What was it like to be the Bully?
- Did anything surprise you in this activity?
- How does this tag game relate to our school or community? Do you think bullying happens in our school?
- What different choices do the bystanders have? What might influence their choice?
- What different choices do Bully Targets have?
- Have you ever experienced being in one of these roles? Please describe what happened and how you felt.
- Why do you think people bully others?
- What can we do to lessen bullying in our school?

# **MASTERY**

## **TEACH THE GROUP SOMETHING**

Offer individuals in the groups the opportunity to teach their peers something they know. It can be a subject they are very knowledgeable about, can relate to a hobby of theirs, or can include a demonstration of some random skill, such as rolling their tongue. All group members should be offered this opportunity, though people with different levels of comfort within the group will be ready to accept this challenge at different times.

**COMPASS POINTS** *(from Team Building, page 20)*

An extremely well-received activity, Compass Points is an excellent way to explore different aspects of leadership as well as the individual styles of each participant. It is strongly recommended that this activity is done early on in group development, as it is an effective way to positively recognize people's differences.

**Materials:** "Compass Points" handouts (see following pages); pens or pencils

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

This activity helps participants better understand how their personal style affects the roles they play in a group. It is an opportunity to identify the strengths of their style and ways to grow or become more flexible as group members. Importantly, Compass Points gives individuals a way to gain an appreciation for people with differing styles who might otherwise be judged and dismissed as an unproductive or annoying group member.

Sample introduction: One way we are all different is relative to our own "personal styles." We are going to use a helpful tool, called Compass Points, to explore this aspect of our differences. After we identify our own personal style, we will talk about how it serves us well and how it can present challenges when we work with people who operate in different ways.

**Step 1.** Pass out "Compass Points" materials. Briefly review the four personal style options.

**Step 2.** Tell participants that people are a mix of styles but usually individuals have a dominant style that they use more often than the others. For this activity, their job is to name that dominant style. Designate four areas in the room, one for each compass-point group. Have them go to their respective corners when they have decided their own personal style, bringing their compass point materials and a writing utensil.

**Step 2.** When the groups are formed, ask each group to talk about the four questions provided for fifteen minutes. What are the strengths of our style? What are the limitations of our style? What style do we find the most difficult to work with and why? What do other people need to know about us so that we can work together more effectively? Ask that each group have a facilitator, a recorder, and a timekeeper. (Be prepared for the North group to be done in record time!).

**Step 3.** When they have finished, ask each group to report their answers to the four questions.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like to do this activity and talk about differences in this way?
- Did the four styles ring true to you?
- What did you find helpful about doing this activity?
- How does your dominant style affect your school life? relationships with peers? Life outside school? Any examples?
- Does understanding personal styles help you understand any relationships in your life that are sometimes challenging?
- What are some of the common stereotypes we assign to each compass point? What happens when we stereotype in this way?
- What happens when we have a big task to address as a group and any one “compass point” is missing?

**Facilitator Note:** Frequently the North group is identified as the most difficult to work with. Make sure you honor the important, positive role they play in the class.

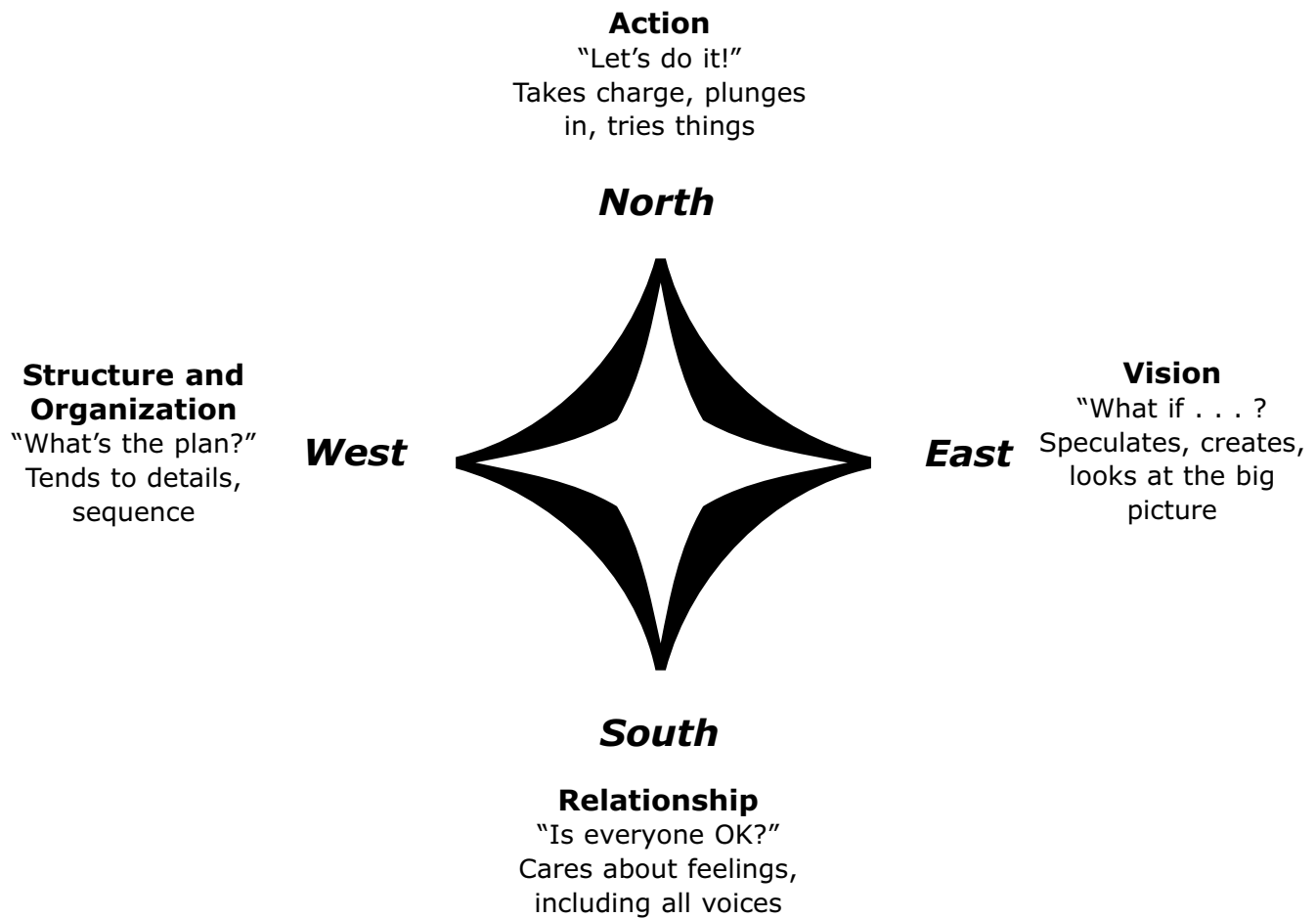
## COMPASS POINTS PERSONAL STYLE DESCRIPTIONS

**North Person:** This action-oriented individual takes charge, plunges into a new challenge without hesitation, and is not afraid to try new things. The North Person will not find it necessary to understand all the details of a task to start problem-solving. They learn by doing and adjust as they go along. When presented with a new task, north people will be the ones saying, "All right! Let's do it! When do we start?!"

**East Person:** The East Person likes to step back and get a sense of the big picture before taking action. They explore options and "what if" scenarios to make sure that what they are going to do makes sense. When presented with a new task, east people will be asking for more information, thinking of many creative solutions, and seeking a clear and rich vision for what lies ahead before acting.

**South Person:** The South Person is sensitive to the quality of the relationships of individuals in his or her life and is often guardian or caretaker of these relationships. This individual will be aware of the process of making decisions. They will note when there is conflict or tension, seeking to reach a compromise acceptable to all. When presented with a new task, south people will be most attentive to including differing ideas and checking if everyone is feeling OK about group decisions.

**West Person:** The West Person seeks structure and organization. They want to know the practical aspects of any new task: What exactly is our endpoint? What do we do first, second, third? What resources will we need? Who will be responsible? They have the ability to think through details and transform ideas into concrete steps in a logical sequence. When presented with a new task, west people will want clarity about exactly what the destination will be and can then help identify the steps to get there.

**COMPASS POINTS**

## Goal-Setting Activities

### **SMART GOAL SETTING** (*from Who Are We? Where Are We Going?*)

This activity provides a framework for reasonably setting and successfully achieving goals. It may be most meaningful if introduced when the project is becoming central to the group.

**Materials:** "SMART Your Goals " handouts (see following pages)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Ask participants why they think goal setting might be useful in this course and in their lives. Share with them the "SMART Your Goals" overview. Have participants split up into five groups. Ask each group to take one of the five attributes of a SMART goal and talk about why this particular attribute is important for attaining a goal (5 minutes). Each group then presents its case for the importance of its attribute to the whole group.

**Step 2.** Review the SMART goal example on page 41.

**Step 3.** Refer back to the Full Value Commitment (see activity on page 8). Study the words on both the inside and outside. Identify one aspect of the commitment which you know is an area you want to work on. Write a goal for that area that meets the SMART criteria. Have participants share this goal if they feel comfortable. It is an opportunity to ask others for help getting what you want or may simply inform them of something which is important to you that you are addressing as an individual. If individuals don't want to share it with the group, reinforce that it is important for them to share it with someone.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What has been your past experience in setting goals?
- When have you been most successful in reaching a goal?
- What barriers have you typically run into reaching a goal?
- How comfortable are you asking others for help with goals?

**SMART YOUR GOALS**

**Specific:** Decide exactly what it is you want to accomplish, learn, or do. Be very specific about what you want to achieve.

**Measurable:** How will you know when you've accomplished your goal? Figure out a way to measure your success.

**Attainable:** Set yourself up for success. Reach high but not so high that the goal is out of reach.

**Relevant:** Make sure the goal is personally meaningful.

**Timed:** Set a deadline and stick to it!



## EXAMPLE OF SMART GOAL

**Un-SMART Goal:** *I will do more to help others who are in need.*

**SMART Goal:** *I will become involved in efforts to address local hunger by volunteering for the local food bank once a week starting the beginning of next month.*

**Specific:** You are very clear how you want to help others both relative to the issue of hunger and the place in your community that addresses this need.

**Measurable:** Simple to measure: Have you volunteered for the local food bank? Are you there at least once a week? Did you set it up this month so you will be volunteering at the food bank by the beginning of next month?

**Attainable:** You believe that once a week is reasonable given all the other things in your life. You know they need help as you have seen ads asking for volunteers. Even though they might ask you for more time, you will be clear that once a week is all you can do.

**Relevant:** Helping with food distribution will contribute to reducing local hunger while addressing an issue you have always cared about.

**Timed:** You have set a clear time line for your goal. Once you have defined a SMART goal, check in regularly and see how you are doing. If the goal isn't helping you accomplish what you want to accomplish, consider changing it. If it is helping you be successful, learn from what is working for you in this situation. This can help you with new goals.

## SMARTIES

This activity is fun and high energy. It is a good way to follow up the introduction of SMART goals. The purpose of this activity is to:

- practice setting and achieving realistic and ambitious goals;
- understand the influences on individual and group settings; and
- experience the impact of competition and the achievement motive on goal setting.

**Materials:** Smarties candies (two rolls per person); “Smarties Record Sheet” (one per person: see page 44); 1-minute timer (a watch or timer with alarm is best); tables, each with 4 or more chairs (enough for everyone to have a seat)

**Time Commitment:** 20–30 minutes

**Step 1.** Distribute Smarties and “Smarties Record Sheets.” Tell participants they are to stack as many candies as possible in a vertical column in one minute, using only one hand. They must first estimate the number of candies they can stack (i.e., set a goal). The scoring system is as follows:

- Candy stacks must be standing 5 seconds after the buzzer to count.
- If the goal is not reached, count 5 points for each candy stacked.
- If the goal is reached, count 10 points for each candy stacked up to the goal. Add 5 points for each additional candy stacked over the goal.

**Step 2.** After everyone has set a goal, say “go” and start the timer. Circulate to be sure the one-hand-only rule is being followed.

**Step 3.** After the buzzer sounds, count 5 additional seconds out loud (stacks must be standing 5 seconds after the buzzer to count). Ask people to calculate their scores and record them on the record sheet. Determine who stacked the most and who had the highest score (not always the same person). Discuss any unusual approaches participants used.

**Step 4.** Ask participants to set and record a new goal for Round 2, using what they learned in Round 1 to make a better estimate. After they have recorded their goals, but just before you start the time, announce that in Round 2, they must stack with their nondominant hand. (If there are moans and groans, explain that life is full of surprises!) Proceed with the second round, repeating the process explained above.

**Step 5.** Announce that Round 3 will be a team competition, with each table being a team. Four people at each table will stack candies, same rules as before. (Tables with more than four people should choose four members to be the stackers for their team.) Each team will build four vertical columns and set a goal for the total number of candies stacked and standing 5 seconds after the buzzer. Obviously, if any one stack does not survive, the team goal is affected. Allow teams time to negotiate and records their team goals.

**Step 6.** Conduct Round 3, then ask teams to calculate their scores. Warning: Competition tends to heat up in the team round, so be ready to mediate disagreements.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- In the first round, how accurate were your goals? Too low, too high, or right on target? How did goal setting change in the second and third rounds? What strategy did you use?
- What environmental influences came into play? How did you respond to those?
- Which was your best round? Which did you like better, working alone or on a team? Why?
- How did team members motivate and encourage each other?
- What lessons about goal setting can we draw from this exercise?
- Introduce and discuss the goal-setting acronym SMART. See "SMART Your Goals."

Explain that participants will be asked to set SMART goals frequently to help make the business-planning process more manageable.

**SMARTIES RECORD SHEET****SCORING**

- Candy stacks must be standing 5 seconds after the buzzer to count.
- If the goal is not reached, count 5 points for each candy stacked.
- If the goal is reached, count 10 points for each candy stacked up to the goal. Add 5 bonus points for each additional candy stacked over the goal.

**ROUND 1**

**Goal** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Actual Performance** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Score** \_\_\_\_\_

**ROUND 2**

**Goal** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Actual Performance** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Score** \_\_\_\_\_

**ROUND 3**

**Goal** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Actual Performance** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Score** \_\_\_\_\_

## Problem-Solving Activities

### **STEPPING STONES** (*from Team Building, page 206*)

This activity allows individuals to reflect on their own rewarding group experiences while strengthening the group bond. It is best done when working on team building.

**Materials:** 10–12 pieces of oak tag or pizza cardboard circles for stepping stones (they need to be strong enough to endure many feet on them and be made of something that can be written on); markers; 2 pieces of rope (each approximately 5 feet long); newsprint paper; Full Value Commitment (see activity on page 8)

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Step 1.** Ask participants to close their eyes for a few minutes and think of an experience when they were part of a group that was cohesive, strong, and successful (during this or another class, drama group, sports team, or club, or time with family or friends). Ask them to identify the most important qualities of this experience that made them feel positive about being part of that group. Ask participants to open their eyes. You may offer them the option to look at their Full Value Commitment as a way to trigger ideas. Ask participants to choose a partner and to briefly share their group experience, naming the most memorable group quality. Now combine the ideas of the entire group by recording them on newsprint. It is likely that most ideas will fall under one of the following headings:

- *Ownership.* People feel ownership and a sense of responsibility for the success of the team.
- *Clear Communication.* People “say what they mean and mean what they say.” Conflicts are resolved in a respectful climate.
- *Shared Common Vision and Purpose.* People hold a common picture of the outcome.
- *Commitment.* People are willing to follow through, maintain high standards, and are loyal to each other.

If no participant mentions one of the qualities above, offer it yourself.

**Step 2.** Take each “stepping stone” and write in marker one of the qualities identified. Make sure that you have one fewer stepping stone than the number of participants.

**Step 3.** Create boundaries for the activity using ropes to mark the only two safe zones at either end of the room or area you are using, leaving twenty feet of space between safety zones. Make sure that your “pit” (area between safe zones) is large enough so that participants must reuse stones to reach the other side.

Now explain the group's task:

- Have participants stand behind one of the ropes and point out their destination, which is past the rope on the far side of the room. Explain that the space between the ropes is a perilous pit, which will swallow the voices of young people if given a chance.
- The stepping stones are their only means to traverse this pit. If they are successful, they will forever drain the pit of its perilous power.
- No stone can be left without human contact or it will be lost and the person nearest it will be made mute.
- Anyone touching the pit must return to the start and will be mute for the remainder of the activity.
- Give them a time limit, after which their roped-off space will be consumed by the pit.

Carefully monitor the stepping stones, removing one if there is no human contact. If someone steps on the floor, the consequences will be that he or she loses his or her voice and can no longer speak and/or he or she has to return to the beginning. You can also provide the group with time checks.

When the group has completed the activity, lay out the stepping stones as a reference point for the processing session.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What teamwork qualities noted on your stepping stones did you employ to solve this problem?
- What challenges did you confront as a group?
- Did everyone feel heard in creating a strategy for this challenge?
- What are your strengths as a group that you can build on in later activities?
- What strategies might you employ to strengthen your group's ability to solve problems—addressing your areas of challenge?

**Facilitator Note:** Identify and record the participants' reflections regarding strengths and challenges they encountered as a group. Review this before the next activity and revise accordingly after each activity, noting changes and improvements in the group's teamwork qualities.

### **Adaptation**

If necessary, use the discussion piece of the activity, without the obstacle course, to illustrate it.

## TRAFFIC JAM

This is an excellent problem-solving activity. It is challenging, frustrating, interesting, and fun. Because it is difficult, arguments may arise or participants may express a desire to give up without completing the objective. Facilitators should be prepared for this and consider whether the group is ready for such an activity.

**Materials:** Chalk or masking tape; 1 placeholder for each person (paper plates or poster-board or oak-tag squares), plus 1 extra

The object of this activity is to have two groups of people exchange places on a line of squares that has one more place than the total number of people.

**Step 1.** Place or draw squares on the floor or ground—one square per participant, plus one extra square. The squares can be drawn with chalk, marked out with masking tape, scratched in dirt, or be made of squares of poster board, paper plates, or oak tag. The squares should be placed an easy step from one another.

**Step 2.** Divide participants into two equal groups. One group stands on the squares to the left of the middle square; the other group stands to the right. Both groups face the middle, unoccupied square (see illustration below).



**Step 3.** People to the left of the middle square must end up in the squares on the right, and vice versa. They may use the following moves:

- A person may move into an empty space in front of him or her.
- A person may move around a person who is facing him or her into an empty space.

The following moves *cannot* be made:

- A person cannot move backward.
- A person cannot move around another person who is facing in the same direction.
- No move can be made that involves two people moving at the same time.

**Step 4.** Eventually, the group will discover that one person giving commands is the most efficient way to solve this traffic jam. Have the group choose a traffic controller or leader (or ask for a volunteer). Have the leader direct the group a couple of times until he or she, along with the group, becomes confident about his or her solution.

**Step 5.** After the leader has solved the traffic jam, ask the group to try once again, but this time all the participants must hold their breath. The leader, who stands apart, is the only one allowed to give commands and breathe. If anyone breathes before the last move, the whole group must begin again.

**Facilitator Note:** This is one of the few problems in which a group will eventually decide to have one person take charge and for the others to be quiet and follow directions. This is worth talking about in comparison to other initiative tests and life situations. It can lead to a useful discussion of leadership styles, the selection process of the leader, and the experiences of being a follower and a leader. The decision-making alternatives described on the following page can be useful when debriefing the traffic jam activity.



## DECISION-MAKING ALTERNATIVES

**Autocratic:** One person makes the decision for the entire group. This is usually a person who holds a prominent position in the group (such as president, coach, etc.), or someone who feels that he or she does.

*Pros:* This is efficient and not time consuming if the person who makes the decision has the authority and enough information.

*Cons:* Group may not go along with the decision; mutiny may occur and the person making the decision may not have enough information.

**Democratic:** The group resolves differences by voting. Each member has an equal say in the discussion, and has equal representation in voting. The choice that gets the most votes wins.

*Pros:* The group is involved to a larger extent than in an autocratic system and all members provide input so the decision is more informed.

*Cons:* A majority and a minority is formed, so a portion of the group is unhappy, possibly leading to tension and conflict in the group.

**Consensual:** After a thorough discussion, the group finds a solution that everyone can agree on.

*Pros:* This allows everyone to express their opinions and feel valued; everyone supports the outcome.

*Cons:* This is time consuming and requires good facilitation to be successful.

**Laissez-faire:** Decision-making is left to the initiative of the group. The group may choose a variety of methods and may or may not choose to make a decision at all.

*Pros:* This acknowledges the wisdom and power of a group to know when and how to make decisions; everyone is heard.

*Cons:* Participation may or may not be full; the group may not be able to handle that much freedom; individuals will dominate the process, and it takes time.

**Power Group:** The decision is made by the most vocal or powerful subgroup. These groups often are defined by their popularity.

*Pros:* The subgroup gets what it wants.

*Cons:* The needs and desires of the majority are not heard or considered.

**BLIND PUZZLE**

This activity is good for building teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. It may involve unintentional physical contact between those involved, so it may not be a good idea for groups without high levels of trust.

**Materials:** 1 children's puzzle with very large pieces; blindfolds

**Time Commitment:** 25 minutes

**Step 1.** Blindfold participants.

**Step 2.** Lay out puzzle pieces on a flat surface and tell blindfolded participants to work together to complete the puzzle.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What was it like to do this activity?
- Were you successful? Why?
- Was there conflict at any point? How did you handle it?

**MAGIC CARPET**

*(Adapted from 101 Teambuilding Activities, Priest and Rohnke)*

This activity encourages cooperation, communication, and problem solving and patience. Participants should be prepared to be physically crowded.

**Materials:** Plastic tarp (large enough for the whole group to fit on one half of the tarp); tape; markers

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Participants are to stand on the tarp and turn it over to stand on the other side without anyone stepping off.

**Step 1.** Ask the participants to write their hopes and dreams for the school year on pieces of tape and stick them on one side of the tarp. Once they have done this, ask them to turn the tarp over and write down all the things they have not liked about school in the past and stick them on that side. Then have the group stand on the side with the things they have not liked facing up.

**Step 2.** Tell the participants that their task is to turn the tarp over and stand on the other side without stepping off. This will symbolize their effort to make their hopes and dreams for the school year come true.

**Step 3.** Instruct the participants that if one person steps off the tarp, the whole group must start over.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What enabled you to be successful at the task? What did you do individually that helped? What did the group do that helped?
- What will enable you to be successful at realizing your hopes and dreams? What will you have to do by yourself? What can other people do that will help you?

**PIPELINE**

*(Adapted from 101 Teambuilding Activities, Priest and Rohnke)*

This activity encourages teamwork, cooperation, communication, and systems thinking.

**Materials:** Variety of balls (marbles, golf balls, ping-pong balls, tennis balls, etc.); 1-foot-long section of pipe, dowel, or wood per person

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Participants must transport a variety of balls using short pieces of pipe, dowels, or wood.

**Step 1.** Explain to the participants that they have to transport the balls from start to finish using only the sections of pipe, dowel, or wood. They can do this by holding two pieces of pipe, dowel, or wood close together to make rails like a train track. When they have a ball on the tracks, the participants cannot move their feet or touch the ball with any other part of their body. If the ball drops, they must begin again.

**Step 2.** Set up the start and finish lines farther apart than the combined length of the rails.

**Facilitator Note:** To make the task more challenging, you can restrict the rails from touching, restrict the participants from touching each other, or have them work in silence. You can also set the start and finish lines in an area that is uphill, downhill, or bumpy.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What enabled you to be successful at the task? What did you do individually that helped? What did the group do that helped?
- How did the group deal with frustration?
- What was it like when the ball dropped when you were responsible for it? Did you feel blamed or did the group take responsibility?

**KEY PUNCH**

*(Adapted from 101 Teambuilding Activities, Priest and Rohnke)*

Participants learn communication, planning, and cooperation.

**Materials:** 1 long rope; 30 sheets of paper numbered 1 to 30; stopwatch for timing

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Participants must touch the spaces numbered 1 to 30 in sequence as quickly as possible.

**Step 1.** Set up the numbered spaces randomly on the floor inside a boundary created by the rope so that no space is more than one foot from the next one. Assemble the group far enough away so that group members cannot see the numbers, but are close enough to see the general area.

**Step 2.** Explain that the task is to touch the spaces numbered 1 to 30 in sequence as quickly as possible, but only one person may be inside the rope boundary at a time. (You may want to establish consequences such as adding time if two or more people are inside the rope boundary or the numbers are touched out of order before the group makes its first attempt, or ask the group to come up with consequences on its own.)

**Step 3.** Tell the group that members have three tries to reach their fastest time. Explain that the timing begins when the first person leaves the planning area and ends when the last person returns.

**Step 4.** Time the three attempts.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What enabled you to be successful at the task? What did you do individually that helped? What did the group do that helped?
- What does this activity tell you about successful teamwork?

**HELIUM POLE**

*(Adapted from 101 Teambuilding Activities, Priest and Rohnke)*

This activity encourages conflict resolution, cooperation, and communication.

**Materials:** One 6-foot-long lightweight rod (aluminum pole, wooden dowel, or bamboo wand); 2 large washers

**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

Participants must support a horizontal rod and lower it to the ground while keeping it level.

**Step 1.** Put washers on each end of the rod and hold it horizontally at waist level. Direct participants to hold two fingers together on one hand and keep the rod level by supporting it from underneath using only the tips of those two fingers. Encourage them to sit the rod in the crotch between their two fingertips. Caution them to keep contact with the rod at all times.

**Step 2.** Direct them to lower the rod to the ground without dropping the washers.

**Facilitator Note:** In this activity, the rod tends to go up in spite of one's best effort to lower it. This can lead to conflict among the group, who may be looking for someone to blame. Watch for serious conflict in the group, and use the dialogue and journal questions to understand the conflict and lessons for successful teamwork.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What enabled you to be successful at the task? What did you do individually that helped? What did the group do that helped?
- What does this activity tell you about dealing with conflict?
- What does this activity tell you about successful teamwork?

**Alternative**

You can do this same activity with a light hula hoop.

## VANISHING CIRCLES

This activity encourages a group to set goals, create a plan, and work together to accomplish a task.

**Materials:** 1 rope (allow several feet per group member)

**Time Commitment:** 25 minutes plus debriefing

For this activity to succeed, the group should be comfortable working closely together in a small area.

Using the rope, participants first make a circle that the entire group can fit within. After successfully completing this challenge, the group then makes a smaller circle with the rope and continues decreasing the size of the rope circle until participants arrive at the smallest possible area the group can fit within.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- How did it feel to work in close contact with one another?
- What strategies did you employ to reach your goal?
- What contributed to your success?
- Describe any frustrating moments.
- What advice would you offer to another group doing this activity?

**V-8 BRIDGES**

This activity encourages a group to set goals, create a plan, and work together to accomplish a task.

**Materials:** Newspapers; masking tape; one can of V-8 juice per group

**Time Commitment:** 25 minutes plus discussion

Members of the group must work together to plan and build a bridge of newspaper.

Divide participants into groups of three to four students. Give each group a small stack of newspapers, some masking tape, and a can of V-8 juice. Each group must construct a bridge, high and wide enough to allow the can of V-8 juice to slide under it without touching the sides or top and strong enough to hold up the can.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- Did any group member emerge as a leader? Who was the leader and what leadership strategies did he or she use?
- Were there moments of frustration? Explain.
- What contributed to your success?
- What did you find challenging?
- What would you do differently?
- How does this activity relate to life?



# INDEPENDENCE

## **ETHICAL DILEMMAS AS LINEUPS** *(from Exploration of Leaders and Leadership, page 78)*

This activity strengthens individuals by asking participants to thoughtfully and critically explore their values and opinions. It is good to do with a group that is trusting and respectful, as some issues raised are controversial and are likely to be personal to some people.

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

**Facilitator Note:** Participants will have to place themselves along an imaginary line based on their response to one of several ethical dilemmas. Once they have made a stance, they will share their perspective with someone who holds a different point of view. This will happen by “folding the line in half”—matching the people from opposite ends of the line. In each instance, remind participants that when they talk about their stance, they are only to listen or ask clarifying questions (Why did you choose to stand in that particular spot? What guided your decision?). Do not allow them to begin to disagree with another’s stance or be put into a position of having to defend their own. This is an excellent opportunity to practice listening skills. You may want to ask for the participants to line up once more in response to the same dilemma, having heard a perspective different from their own.

Have everyone stand at one end of the room. Read one of the following ethical dilemmas:

1. Imagine you were absent one day during exams and now you are taking a makeup exam. The teacher has you sit in a room by yourself to take the exam. After the teacher leaves, you realize there is an answer sheet to the makeup exam lying on the table very close to you. Think about what you would do and then in a moment I’m going to have you walk across the room as a way of stating your position. If you’re sure that you absolutely would not use the answer sheet, you should walk all the way to the other end of this room. If you’re absolutely sure you would use the answer sheet, stay at this end. Or you can position yourself anywhere in between the two extremes to show if you’re leaning one way or the other. Have students make their choices and move in silence.

Round 2: Tell the group that if they pass the exam, they'll graduate; but if they don't pass the exam, they'll have to repeat their senior year. Again, ask people to move across the room.

2. Picture yourself at a local store with several of your friends. As you turn down the aisle, you notice a young person you do not know shoplifting. What would you do? Approach the person and confront them? Tell the store owner? Do nothing? One end of the line would be confrontation; the other end would be avoidance.

Round 2: Same situation, but this time you see your friend shoplifting. What would you do? One end of the line would be confrontation; the other end would be avoidance.

3. Should it be made illegal for a woman to abort an unwanted pregnancy? Participants position themselves at one end of the room if they oppose abortion, at the other end if they support the right to choose.

Round 2: Same situation, but it is illegal for a woman to get an abortion. She would inevitably go to a back-alley unlicensed practitioner and would be at great risk of injury or death. Participants should move accordingly.

4. Would it be OK to sacrifice the lives of a thousand people if it would end world hunger? Participants position themselves at one end of the room if they would sacrifice the thousand people and at the other end if they would not.

### **Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- What were some feelings you had doing this activity?
- What was it like to talk with someone who held a different opinion?
- How does this activity relate to leadership?
- Do our core values change depending on the situation? If so, what are the implications for people in leadership positions?

**Facilitator Note:** These are engaging activities and they often generate energetic discussions. In addition to having participants talk with someone at the opposite end of the line, you may have them relate their point of view to the whole group or with someone on their own end.

**ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO JOIN A GROUP**

Facilitators should be aware of groups, clubs, teams, etc. that are available in the community and encourage students to become involved in one that interests them. This gives people the opportunity to exercise leadership skills in an area that is personally relevant.

# GENEROSITY

## **WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT ME** (*from Exploration of Leaders and Leadership, page 76*)

This is an extremely popular activity that gives groups members the opportunity to directly hear how and why they are valued by their peers. The activity is especially effective when the group brainstorms positive attributes of a leader and then uses this list as a guide for the activity (rather than just circle already provided words on the "What's Great About Me" worksheet). People often keep lists resulting from the activity, referring to them when they're having a bad day.

**Materials:** "What's Great About Me" handout (see next page)

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Have each participant tape the "What's Great About Me" sheet on his or her back. Have participants then mingle and circle those one to three words *on each person's back* that they think are descriptive of the person wearing the sheet. Make sure that everyone is getting "visited." Reinforce that positive feedback about what a person brings to the group is a gift and ask participants to be serious in their feedback. When you have stopped the mingling, form a circle and have participants recount one attribute that was circled that stands out for them for any reason.

**Facilitator Note:** This is an engaging and fun activity that gets participants moving, interacting with one another, and focusing on the positive qualities of each person. As facilitator, it may be necessary to develop some sort of system that makes sure *every* group member is included in the process.

### **Adaptations**

- Allow individuals to write additional attributes, as well as circle them on backs.
- If writing or circling is difficult, use a scribe at the front of the room to list attributes of each individual. Ask the individual to leave the room as the group creates the list.

**WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT ME**

**advises      agrees      analyzes      asserts**

**assists      calms      complies      coordinates**

**creates      directs      empathizes      encourages**

**energizes      facilitates      follows      initiates**

**intellectualizes      jokes      leads      listens**

**mediates      organizes      persists      questions**

**relinquishes      resists      supports      trusts**

**withdraws      clarifies      compromises**

**CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS**

Recognizing people's birthdays with snacks or a small celebration builds group connections and affirms participants' individuality. To find famous people who were born on the same day as a participant, or a list of events that have occurred throughout history on that day, go to [www.famousbirthdays.com](http://www.famousbirthdays.com).

## WEB OF APPRECIATION

This is a great closing activity that focuses on the strengths of individuals and the power of a group.

**Materials:** Ball of yarn or toilet paper

**Time Commitment:** 30 minutes

This activity builds observation skills and connections among the group members. While this activity takes place at the close of a session or module, you will need to prepare the group at the beginning. Give each participant the name of one other member of the group (hand out a piece of paper with one name to each participant and ask the observer to keep the name to themselves), and instruct them to collect some observations of the other during the session or module. Ask the observer to notice what the other person contributes to the group.

At the close of the session, build the web by passing a ball of yarn from one participant to the next as each relates his or her observations. Each time the ball of yarn is passed, the speaker holds on to the yarn and passes the ball.

Once the web is complete, ask for any comments on the process of building a web and any learning they will take with them from this activity. There is great strength in a web made up of many strands.

## STRENGTH BOMBARDMENT

This activity offers genuine and spontaneous positive reinforcement for each group member. It is best for a group that is very comfortable and respectful of one another.

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** Varies, depending on size of group

**Step 1.** Have the group sit in a circle. Ask for a volunteer to sit with his or her back to the group for one minute.

**Step 2.** The rest of the group calls out, one by one, that person's strengths, such as:

- One of the things I like about you is . . .
- I like the way you . . .
- You have a . . .

Go around the circle and have each person in the group respond positively to the volunteer.

**Step 3.** Continue with the activity until each participant in the group has had a turn at being "bombarded" with positive reinforcement.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- How did it feel to be the person getting bombarded?
- How did it feel to offer positive feedback to other group members?
- Do you feel you would ever encounter a situation like this in your real life? Why or why not? Do you think there is any way to make sure this sort of positive reinforcement happened in your daily life?



## The Project

### RATIONALE

Significant and enduring learning occurs when individuals have an opportunity to test and develop their skills and knowledge in meaningful life applications. In this course, “the project” is the way participants put into practice what they are learning. Very often, an exciting project will be the basis of ongoing involvement and maturation of participants.

Only 44 percent of youth report that they have control over “things that happen to me,” and one out of three youth feel that they have the skills to plan ahead and make choices (Search Institute survey, 2002). The project is all about making wise choices, planning ahead, taking action, and celebrating the learning. Such an experience reinforces participants’ confidence in their capacity to “take control over things that happen to them,” actively shaping their own life.

**SAMPLE PROJECT IDEAS**

- Developing a local nature trail.
- Advocating for a student seat on the local school board.
- Tutoring at a school or afterschool program.
- Choosing and acting on a personal goal regarding using your voice when confronted with discrimination.
- Analyzing school asset data and creating an action plan.
- Volunteering at a nursing home, soup kitchen, Habitat for Humanity.
- Serving and helping older citizens who live alone.
- Rallying students to work on an important school issue such as having an open campus.
- Organizing an afterschool play group for children.
- Organizing a community dialogue night.
- Assuming a mentoring role for a younger person.
- Becoming a board member of a youth-serving community organization.

## **FRESHMAN COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY**

The entire freshman class at South Burlington High School spent a day doing community service on May 17, 2004. The projects were planned within SLAM groups, with the student and adult leaders providing guidance and logistical support. A celebration was held (ice cream and music) when the students returned to school. Most of the groups had five to six SLAM meetings to plan their activities.

Projects for SLAM groups, 2004:

- Three SLAM groups visited local elementary schools (Orchard, Chamberlain, Central) and engaged as one-on-one mentors or assisted with school projects.
- One group visited an assisted-living center for seniors and sponsored a "tropical day."
- Two groups conducted a car wash with proceeds (\$500) going to Ronald McDonald House.
- One group spent the day at the Ronald McDonald House moving a garden.
- Two groups traveled to Grand Isle to volunteer services at Camp Hochelega.
- The Lund family Center was chosen by another group.
- One group painted and prepared for a benefit horse show at a horse farm in Charlotte.
- Another group sewed "Day of Hope" flags for the Oncology Center.
- Two groups cleaned up the Burlington waterfront.
- One group spent the day at the Allenbrook group home.
- One group prepared meals (lasagne) and delivered to COTS.
- One group traveled to Cap Greylock to provide clean-up services.

# **ICEBREAKERS AND ENERGIZERS**

## **TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE**

Participants sit in a circle and, in turn, introduce themselves and give three statements about their lives. Two of the statements must be factual, and one must be a lie. The rest of the group guesses which statement is made up.

**WHEN THE WILD WINDS BLOW** (*from Who Are We? Where Are We Going?*, pages 34–35)

**Materials:** Placeholders on the floor that fit an individual's feet (small carpet squares, pieces of oak tag, etc.—something durable enough not to rip when stepped on)

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Position placeholders on floor (or it's OK to circle up chairs for this activity). Participants first form a circle with a placeholder to mark their position in the circle. One person stands in the middle of this circle, which means that there is one less place on the outside circle than participants. The person in the middle begins by noting something about his life or something he has done in his lifetime and follows this with the words, "Move when the wild wind blows." For example, he might say, "Loves pepperoni pizza. Move when the wild wind blows." Only after he has given the "wild wind blows" command, do participants who share this interest or life experience leave their spots and move to another spot—which cannot be immediately next to the one they were on. People who do not like pepperoni pizza stay put. The person in the middle also moves to a spot as quickly as possible. This will leave one person in the middle who repeats this process. Some other examples of things typically offered are: "Has blue eyes," "Has traveled outside the United States," "Speaks a foreign language," "Likes the Red Sox," "Favorite color is yellow."

**HUMAN ASSET BINGO** (*from Who Are We? Where Are We Going?, pages 36*)

**Materials:** “Human Asset Bingo” handout (see next page); pencils or pens

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Facilitators and participants circulate among themselves with their bingo sheets. When an individual finds someone who can answer yes to a bingo square, she has that person sign the square and moves on. It is a good idea to limit any one person’s signatures to a maximum of two squares, forcing everyone to circulate among as many people as possible.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- How many people got at least one bingo? Two? Three? Four?
- Pick different assets (mix of silly and serious) and have people raise their hands if they were able to say yes to this one. Probe for more information.
- Were you surprised by anyone’s answers during this activity?

**Adaptations**

- This activity can be overwhelming for individuals with hearing difficulties. Try conducting the activity in silence!
- This activity is impossible for individuals who cannot see well. Use an alternate activity.
- Please use this activity in a space large enough so that people with mobility disabilities can move around easily.

# HUMAN ASSET BINGO

Has peacefully resolved a conflict in the past month. <i>Which one?</i>	Has the same color eyes as you have.	Has been involved in reducing local or world hunger in some way. <i>How?</i>	Licks an ice cream cone in the same direction you do.	Born in the same month you were.	Plays a musical instrument. <i>Which one?</i>
When you draw a circle in the air with your finger, this person goes in the same direction you do.	Is actively involved in a community, committee, group, or organization. <i>Which one?</i>	Can speak a foreign language. <i>Which one?</i>	Has stood up for a belief even though it was hard. <i>What was it?</i>	Uses the same foot you do when you tap your foot to music.	Has helped his or her neighbor sometime in the past month. <i>What did you do?</i>
Gives a spontaneous wink with the same eye you use.	Has given a compliment in the last two days to someone from a different generation. <i>Who?</i>	Has the same number of siblings you do.	Has been an advocate for equality. <i>When?</i>	Has a climbed a mountain over 5,000 feet.	Has traveled outside the United States. <i>Where?</i>
Reads three or more hours a week. <i>What type of book? (fiction, non-fiction, etc.)</i>	Has the same shoe size you do.	When you put your pants on, this person puts the same leg on first that you do.	Cares about his or her school and community. <i>Give an example.</i>	Can roll his or her tongue. <i>Demonstration required.</i>	Is actively engaged in learning something. <i>What?</i>
Has established a record (not jail related). <i>What was it?</i>	Has helped someone else in the past month. <i>What did you do?</i>	Knows someone famous. <i>Who?</i>	Turns a twisty in the same direction you do when you close a plastic bag.	Values people of different ages. <i>Give an example.</i>	Has been elected to a political position in the school or community. <i>Doing what?</i>
Has been a positive role model for peers. <i>In what way?</i>	Pronounces tomato the same way you do.	Is physically active. <i>Doing what?</i>	Has been on TV, radio, or in the news. <i>Why?</i>	Has a unique skill or talent. <i>What?</i>	Is actively involved in school decision making. <i>How?</i>

**LOOK WHAT I FOUND IN MY POCKET** *(from Who Are We? Where Are We Going?, pages 37)***Materials:** None**Time Commitment:** 1 minute per participant

Instruct participants to take two items (e.g., family pictures, ID, rabbit's foot, calculator) from their purses, bags, wallets, or pockets. When introducing themselves to the group, they should use whatever they took out to help describe themselves in at least two ways (e.g., "I am superstitious"; "This is the first dollar I ever earned").

**Tips:** Allow one minute per person. When introducing this activity to groups whose members already know each other, point out that there is always something new group members can learn about each other that will strengthen their relationship with one another.



## COUNT TO TWENTY

This is a quick, challenging activity.

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 5 minutes

The instructions are simply for the group to count to twenty, with each person in the group contributing at least one number. Every time two (or more) people offer a number simultaneously, the group must start over. Although this sounds simple, you will be amazed at how difficult it can be.

If the group quickly decides on a given pattern that assures easy success, exercise your facilitator veto power and tell them that although this solution is creative, no such clearly defined pattern is allowed.

## QUICK LINEUPS

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 10–20 minutes

Have people line up by the date of their birthday without talking, designating one end of the line as the smallest number and one end as the largest number. Next, have group members line up by the last two digits of their phone number (make sure everyone in the group has a phone) or shoe size, without talking or using their hands (must be kept behind their backs or in pockets). If your group is particularly trusting and caring with one another, give each person the name of an animal (cat, horse, monkey, owl, snake, etc.) and have them keep their animal a secret. Next, tell them that they are going to line up from the smallest animal to the largest, but they have lost their eyesight and can only make the sound of the animal.

Cover safety issues: (1) small steps and (2) bumpers up (hands up in front of the chest). Offer that not all people will necessarily feel comfortable keeping their eyes closed throughout the activity. Peeking is OK if that is important to the person to be comfortable. Offer that if someone is uncomfortable participating in the lineup, he or she could always use another sighted spotter to help him or her. As the sighted facilitator, make sure everyone is safe and do not allow people to make any other noise beside that of the animal they were assigned. When the group looks done, have them maintain their line but bring it into a circle shape. Let each person share his or her noise and animal.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

#### *Basic Lineup*

- What strategies did you use to solve the problem?
- What was this activity like for you?
- What helped you be successful as a group?
- What would you do differently next time when confronted with a similar problem?

#### *Animal Lineup*

- What was this activity like for you?
- What was it like to be blind?
- What personal qualities did you need to draw on to take part in this activity?
- What did you do well as a group? How can we use these same skills during our time together?

## LIFE WITH THE WRIGHT FAMILY

The group sits in a circle, each person holding a small object (a ball, or crumpled piece of paper). The facilitator instructs the group to pass their object to the right when they hear the word *right* (or *Wright!*) and to the left when they hear the word *left*. The facilitator then reads the following story.

### Life with the Wright Family

One day the **Wright** family decided to take a vacation. The first thing they had to decide was who would be **left** at home since there was not enough room in the **Wright** family car for all of them. Mr. **Wright** decided that Aunt Linda **Wright** would be the one **left** at home. Of course, this made Aunt Linda **Wright** so mad that she **left** the house immediately, yelling "It will be a **right** cold day before I return."

The **Wright** family now bundled up the children, Tommy **Wright**, Susan **Wright**, Timmy **Wright**, and Shelly **Wright**, and got in the car and **left**. Unfortunately, as they turned out of the driveway, someone had **left** a trash can in the street, so they had to turn **right** around and stop the car. They told Tommy **Wright** to get out of the car and move the trash can so they could get going. Tommy took so long that they almost **left** him in the street. Once the **Wright** family got on the road, Mother **Wright** wondered if she had **left** the stove on. Father **Wright** told her not to worry: he had checked the stove, and she had not **left** it on. As they turned **right** at the corner, everyone started to think about other things that they might have **left** undone.

No need to worry now, they were off on a **right** fine vacation. When they arrived at the gas station, Father **Wright** put gas in the car, and then discovered that he had **left** his wallet at home. So Timmy **Wright** ran home to get the money that was **left** behind. After Timmy had **left**, Susan **Wright** started to feel sick. She **left** the car saying that she had to throw up. This, of course, got Mother **Wright**'s attention, and she **left** the car in a hurry. Shelly **Wright** wanted to watch Susan get sick, so she **left** the car too. Father **Wright** was **left** with Tommy **Wright**, who was playing a game in the back seat.

With all this going on, Father **Wright** decided that this was not the **right** time to take a vacation, so he gathered up all the family and **left** the gas station as quickly as he could. When he arrived home, he turned **left** into the driveway and said, "I wish the **Wright** family had never **left** the house today!"

**ZAPPER LOOK****Materials:** None**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

This activity is a great quick energizer. Have participants form a tight circle. Make sure everyone can make eye contact with each other. Tell them that their first task is to secretly look around the circle and pick out a person they will stare at when the time comes. Don't let that person know you have picked him or her. Next, have everyone look at their feet and explain that when you have finished counting to 3 you will say "Look." At that time, everyone will bring their heads up and stare at the person they picked out of the circle. Anyone who finds that the person they picked is also staring at them (zapped them) steps out of the circle and the circle closes in. You can add some laughter by asking that if you make eye contact with someone, you must scream dramatically before you step back outside the circle. The game continues until only one to two people remain.

**Facilitator Comments:** This can be a great way to start an activity that requires the group to break down in pairs. Pairs are formed by those who "zapped" one another. It can be effective in splitting up typical cliques.

## TWO-PERSON WALKING TAGS

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** 15 minutes

Ask participants to pair up with another person. When they are in pairs, ask that they decide who will be the “it” and who will be the “tagee”. Define a relatively small area for the tag game to take place in (for example, fifty by fifty feet for fifteen to eighteen people). Explain that the it must give the tagee time to get away by doing a “Great Nordic Yelp,” which consists of jumping up in the air, turning 360 degrees, and yelping loudly (or however you want to define the yelp). When the it lands, he or she looks for the tagee and tries to respectfully (you may want to define this) tag that person. *Both individuals in the pair can walk.* When the person is tagged, he or she becomes the it, does a great Nordic Yelp, and pursues his or her partner. It is helpful to demonstrate this to make sure everyone understands.

After about five to seven minutes, ask everyone to stop. If you have seen that people are being safe, try Walking Cyclops Tag. Ask people to make a periscope with their hand, putting it up to their dominant eye. They must be able to close their other eye. Explain that you will play walking tag again but that both the it and the tagee can only move around using their periscope or cyclops eye. Reinforce that it is important that people only walk because there will be more bumping in this version of tag. At the end of the activity, circle up and talk about the game.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- Did people feel safe?
- What was the shift to the cyclops like?
- In what ways did the activity feel like any other part of their lives?

You might choose to make the analogy that sometimes we limit our choices or solutions (the cyclop’s view) but the retreat will be about opening our vision and thinking and doing in new ways.

**THE GREAT FINGER GRAB****Materials:** None**Time Commitment:** 10 minutes

This is a fun, quick energizer that works for groups of any size. Form a circle. Instruct everyone to extend his or her left hand out, palm up at waist level. Next, ask participants to position the index fingers of their right hands about one inch above the palm of the person's hand who is on their right. On the count of three, participants should try to grab the index finger of the person poised above their left hand, while avoiding having their own right-hand index finger grabbed. After everyone has gotten the hang of this, switch hands, with the right hand flat and the left index finger pointed.

**NEEDLE AND THREAD**

Ask participants to form a circle so that each person can, with arms partially extended, grab the hand of the person next to him or her. The "it" person begins within the circle, while the person to catch positions him- or herself outside the circle.

Every time the person being chased runs between a pair in the circle, the pair grasps hands, effectively sewing up that previously open space. The object of this one-on-one tag game is for the chaser to catch (tag) the chasee before that person sews up the entire circle with extended arms and clasped hands. There is more to this tag game than being simply fleet of foot.

**DRAW A PLACE TO LIVE**

*(Adapted from Diversity in Action, Chappelle and Bigman)*

This activity builds trust and encourages problem solving.

**Materials:** Sheets of paper; markers

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

Participants draw a picture of a place to live with a partner who is holding the same marker.

**Step 1.** Have participants pick a partner they perceive as different from themselves.

**Step 2.** Have each pair take a piece of paper and a marker. Without talking to each other, both people in each pair put one hand on the marker, and together they draw a place to live. Note: It is important to say place to live, not house or home.

**Step 3.** When the pairs have finished their drawings, ask them to talk about why they picked each other and how they communicated non-verbally about a place to live. If they are willing, they can share their experience afterwards with the whole group.

**Dialogue and Journal Questions**

- How did you pick your partner?
- How did you communicate with each other?
- Was it clear who led and who followed?



## TAKE THE CHALLENGE!

This activity allows people to contribute their individual talents and skills to the group.

**Materials:** Paper; pens or pencils

**Step 1.** Divide the group into teams of five to fifteen members each (the bigger the teams, the better). Give each group paper and a pen or pencil and give them five minutes to come up with five challenges for the other groups to attempt to successfully accomplish. The group creating the challenge must be able to demonstrate that they can do it before another team is challenged. The challenges may be physical (build a pyramid, one person can carry five people, everyone stand on his or her head, etc.). Or the challenges may be anything else (our group has the most birthdays in one month, our group can sing any TV theme song you name, etc.). The challenge must not be obviously impossible for the other groups to accomplish (our group has the person with the longest hair).

**Step 2.** Once the challenges are written down, each group give out one challenge at a time and demonstrates it, then the other groups get a chance to try to accomplish this task in a given amount of time. You may give points to teams who can take the challenge successfully.

## MAFIA

This activity is purely for fun, although it can help build group dynamic and is a good activity for breaking up the day's rhythm of activities and discussions.

**Materials:** Deck of cards

**Step 1.** The class is a town that includes two to four mafia members, one sheriff, one doctor, and the townspeople (the rest of the class). The goal is for the townspeople to correctly identify and jail all the mafia members.

Town characters are determined by handing out playing cards: two to four aces for mafia members, king for the sheriff, queen for the doctor, and all other numbered cards for the townspeople. Participants look at their cards and then return them to the facilitator without allowing any one else to see their cards.

**Step 2.** Once everyone is set with his or her character and cards are handed back, tell everyone to go to "sleep," by putting their heads down and closing their eyes.

**Step 3.** Tell the mafia members to "wake up," or open their eyes. Mafia members must silently agree on a non-mafia member to "kill." Then tell the mafia members to go back to sleep.

**Step 4.** Tell the doctor to wake up and silently choose someone to save who he or she thinks has been killed. Tell the doctor to go back to sleep. (If the doctor chooses correctly, that person will no longer be "dead.")

**Step 5.** Tell the sheriff to wake up and have him or her point at someone he or she thinks is a member of the mafia. Silently let the sheriff know whether he or she is correct or not. Then tell the sheriff to go back to sleep.

**Step 6.** Have everyone wake up. Tell a short story about who got killed. Have the townspeople discuss who they think the mafia members are. (The sheriff, with his or her extra knowledge, is in a position to influence or advise the townspeople.) Ask them to accuse one person.

**Step 7.** Once the townspeople have decided on a person to accuse, the accused gets to state his or her defense: Why he or she is not a mafia member. After the accused makes his or her case, the townspeople vote to put him or her in jail; majority rules. Congratulate the towns-

people if they put away a mafia member—too bad if they’ve jailed one of their own. The jailed participant and the killed participant (unless saved by the doctor) are out of the game.

**Step 8.** Tell everyone to go back to sleep and repeat Steps 3 through 7. Continue the activity, with one person jailed and one person dead for each round, until either all mafia members are jailed or the mafia wins by exceeding the number of townspeople remaining.

## Name Games

**GROUP JUGGLE** (*from Who Are We? Where Are We Going?*, page 32)

**Materials:** Odd assortment (10–15) of soft objects that can be thrown about 15–20 feet. Stuffed animals are great. Stay away from traditional balls so that people do not feel self-conscious if they have trouble throwing or catching.

**Time Commitment:** 20 minutes

**Step 1.** Have the group make a circle. Pass one object around the circle. When group members receive it, they must say their name and one *positive* thing about themselves (i.e., enthusiastic Emma, thoughtful Jake). Do not accept descriptors that are negative. If positive personal qualities are hard to voice, you can offer the option of identifying some activity or hobby they are good at and enjoy. You can ask that the description start with the same letter as their first name, although this is not necessary. One of the facilitators should start the activity off with their own descriptor. Go around the circle a second time reviewing descriptors and first names.

**Step 2.** Start a pattern by giving the following directions: “We are going to start throwing in a pattern. Find someone in the circle who you don’t know very well. Make eye contact, say their name and descriptor, and throw the object to them underhand. When the person receives the object, they must say ‘thank you’ using the person’s descriptor and name.” These three directions are very important to repeat and demonstrate. The person who has the object then throws it to someone who has not caught it, following the same directions. It is helpful to ask individuals who have had the object to hold their hands behind their back so that it is easy to see who still is available to receive the object. When everyone has caught the object once, it should come back to the facilitator. Clarify that most people will not remember everyone’s description and name, so don’t be shy about asking what it is—maybe several times over! Try this same pattern a few times with one object, encouraging them to pick up the speed each time. Ask group members how they are doing and if anyone has any ideas how to minimize drops.

**Step 3.** Add several more objects (you can ask the group for suggestions of which objects) and ask them to pick up the pace. The only additional rule is that you can’t “stockpile” someone by throwing an object to him or her when he or she already has an object. You can drop the “thank you” if the group suggests this. Try adding all the objects for a round.

**Step 4.** Tell participants that there will be no pattern; they are free to throw the objects to anyone as long as they make eye contact, say their name and descriptor, throw underhand, and do not throw to anyone who already has an object in his or her hand.

### Dialogue and Journal Questions

- What did the group do particularly well in this activity?
- What qualities of the group came out that will help them work together throughout the course (i.e., patience, creativity, humor)?
- How did people feel about throwing in the pattern versus the random throws? Note: You will usually find some who loved the chaos and some who preferred the pattern. This is a good opportunity to talk about diversity and how it is important to blend these differences to have a well-balanced group.
- Does this game remind you of any other part of your lives?

**Facilitator Note:** This activity is particularly effective with groups no larger than eighteen to twenty.

### Adaptations

- Play this game around a table, sliding the objects from one individual to the next rather than throwing them. (*Adapted from Project Adventure activities.*)
- Play the game by tossing the object around the circle (clockwise or counterclockwise) rather than having to remember a random pattern.
- Play the game using only names, rather than a descriptor.
- Rather than tossing and catching an object, toss verbal cues. For example, the facilitator may say "Bubbly Bob! — Kathy?" and Kathy responds with, "Thank you, Bob. Chatty Kathy! — Sara?" and the round continues with Sara. The next round is to remember the descriptors and the pattern.

**WHERE IN THE CIRCLE AM I?**

**Materials:** None

**Step 1.** Ask participants to stand or sit in a circle. Go around the circle and have each participant state his or her first name.

**Step 2.** Ask the participants to alphabetically rearrange themselves by their first names, without use of verbal communication.

**Step 3.** After participants have finished rearranging themselves, ask them to once again go around the circle and state their first names. Then ask them to reshuffle themselves again alphabetically, correcting any alphabetizing errors; however, they must once again do this nonverbally. At this point, indicate that each circular declaration of names counts as one turn or round. Their goal is to accomplish a perfect alphabetical arrangement in as few rounds as possible.

**Step 4.** Continue the name announcements and rearranging until the group is alphabetical. (Note: Few groups will need more than four rounds to successfully alphabetize themselves.)

**BLANKET NAME GAME/PEEK-A-WHO**

**Materials:** Blanket, bedspread, or sheet

**Step 1.** Ask two participants to hold the blanket (or sheet, bedspread) between them with arms extended upward so that the blanket provides a vertical shield that can be lowered and lifted easily. Divide the rest of the group into two teams, one on either side of the blanket.

**Step 2.** Choose one person from each team to sit on either side of the raised blanket. When the blanket is dropped, they must verbally identify one another by name. The loser (the one who can't remember or answers second) moves to the winner's side.

**Step 3.** Continue with two new participants until one team has eliminated the other (or until competitive ennui sets in).

**Alternative**

Ask two players to sit back-to-back (blanket between) and attempt to identify the other player by listening to how their teammates describe the other person. Spelling out names is not allowed.

**ALLITERATION NAME GAME**

This activity is used when the group first comes together as a way for everyone to learn each other's names and one item of interest about each other.

**Materials:** None

**Time Commitment:** Depends on the number present, but it exponentially increases (and becomes more of a challenge) in larger groups.

The Alliteration Name Game is a fun way for group members to get to know each other's names and test their memory at the same time. The alliterative part of the activity comes in when people pair their name with an adjective that begins with the same letter as their first name. They then combine this with an interest that begins with the same letter. Begin with one person modeling:

"My name is Active Annie, and I like alpine skiing.

The next person continues:

"This is Active Annie, and she likes alpine skiing. I'm Savvy Sam, and I like snails."

Each person in the circle continues prefacing their name alliteration with *all* those who went before him or her.



# FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

## DEBRIEFING ALTERNATIVES

Remember: (1) Debriefing doesn't necessarily mean talking. (2) You don't necessarily need to debrief every activity. (3) You can make debriefing an engaging activity in itself!

- **One-word whips:** Form a circle and ask each person to contribute one word or phrase about his or her response to an activity or a specific question.
- **An emotional weather report:** Ask the participants to describe the weather of the group, providing a few examples. Is it sunny with occasional showers coming through? Hot and humid? Thunderstorms? etc.
- **Videoscan of the event; freeze action:** Ask participants to imagine they were videotaping the activity. Ask them to rewind the film, review it, and stop at the one moment in the video that was most memorable. Describe that moment. Make sure you give them time to review their own memory of the event.
- **Pose or mime a memorable moment:** Tell participants that at the count of five they will assume a pose of their most memorable moment in the activity. Have them freeze in the pose and look around at their classmates. Next let everyone relax while you have each individual assume his or her pose and explain what he or she chose.
- **Rank 1 to 10:** Have a number of questions that the participants can give feedback based on a 1-to-10 scale, with one being poor and 10 being awesome or any other descriptors you want. For example, ask: How would you rate your teamwork during this activity? How would you rate including everyone in decision making? How would you rate resolving conflict? Once all participants have ranked their responses to the questions, you can discuss their choices for one or all of the questions.
- **Quick lineup around a theme:** Ask participants to form a human line relative to their responses to a question. Provide two extreme responses as anchor points. For example, you might say, "Line up between this anchor point which is 'I hated this activity' to 'I loved this activity' based on how you felt about the activity."

- **Make a face:** Ask participants to make a face that captures their response to a key question. Ask them to freeze this expression and then invite people to explain their choices.
- **Draw a picture or sculpt with pipe cleaners:** Provide an artistic medium that can be used to capture participants' responses to a question. Pipe cleaners are particularly easy to use.
- **Writing opportunity, providing a focus question:** You can ask for a quick one-minute writing or a longer journal-type entry as a way to trigger thoughts and feelings.
- **Pick response to activity from a selection of pictures/ Beanie Babies/etc:** Have a diverse selection of visual or hands-on options that participants can choose from to answer a debriefing question, for example: Pick the Beanie Baby or magazine picture that best expresses how this activity felt for you and describe why you picked that particular object or picture.
- **Write one "learning" on a post-it note (learnings that stick):** Have participants write one thing they learned during a session on a post-it note. Have them read their own. Alternately, you might have participants circle up, crumple up their papers and throw them into the middle of the circle, and then read whatever learning they pick up.
- **Create a newspaper article headline:** Form small groups and ask each group to come up with a newspaper headline that describes how group members did during a particular activity.
- **Talk in pairs or trios:** Pair participants or divide them into small groups (see "Fun Ways to Divide a Group" on the next page). Provide a focus question for them to discuss. This can be a great strategy for those times when you put out the "perfect" question to the full group, but receive only a single response or have the same old participants dominate the conversation. It can be amazing how participants can "explode" with conversation when they don't have to talk in front of the entire group!
- **Solo-sit or walk:** Ask participants to go off by themselves and maintain silence while they think about a focused question.
- **Guided imagery:** Have participants reconstruct what happened during an activity by telling it in "real time," for example: "Here I am trying to figure out what these pipes are and I am hearing Bill offer a suggestion . . ." Each participant can help rebuild the activity in this way.

- **Write a letter to yourself:** Give participants a card or sheet of paper to write a letter to themselves. Give a focused question(s) for them to write about.
- **Write a post card to someone else:** Same as above except that the post card is going to another person.
- **Find something in nature that represents your experience in the activity:** Have participants take a short walk in woods nearby and find some object from nature that symbolizes some aspect of learning or the response to a focused question.
- **Thumbs up, thumbs sideways, thumbs down:** Ask questions that participants can respond to with a thumbs-up, thumbs-down, or thumbs-sideways vote. This can then spark discussion.

**FUN WAYS TO DIVIDE A GROUP**

- Pick two words that go together (i.e., dragon and fly, salt and pepper) or a word that can be broken into two logical parts (dandy-lion, Rumpelstiltskin) and have them count off with these words (rather than the classic one-two count).
- Find someone who has the same shoe size, eye color, thumb size, or any other fun variable.
- Think of your birthdate. Find someone whose birthdate added to yours produces an even number.
- Ask people to decide whether they are an “either” or an “or” person (alternates: sun or moon, helper or helpee, doer or thinker, etc.). Once separated, have them find a partner who defines him- or herself as the opposite.
- Find someone who was born in a different season than you.
- Put your right thumb or your left pinky in the air. Find someone displaying the same digit as you.
- Draw a circle in the air. Find someone who draws his or her circle in the opposite direction you chose.
- Find someone who puts his or her pants on with the same leg first that you do.
- Keep a deck of cards with pairs that number the size of your class. Each person picks one card and then finds the other person with the same number.
- Keep a can of tongue depressors with the name of every student on a depressor. Choose pairs of depressors to create partners.
- Have everyone cross their arms. Ask them to find someone who crosses their arms the opposite way.
- Cut index cards in half in puzzle shapes, each cut differently. Have participants take one half and then find the matching half—and their new partner.
- Put no fingers or up to five fingers in the air. Find a partner whose fingers added to yours comes to an odd total.
- Wink with the eye that is most comfortable for you to wink with. Find another person who winks with the opposite eye from yours.