

Open/closed circle (Topic 1)

Purpose:

To highlight the social tensions young people may experience when newly joining a board or council.

Instructions:

1. Choose two adult volunteers from the group who seem good-natured and seem to easily verbalize their ideas and feelings. Say to the group that you are going to give these two volunteers special instructions for the activity, and you will give the rest of the group its own instructions.
2. Ask the two volunteers to step outside the room with you. When you are outside the room, say “Your instructions for this exercise are to do whatever is necessary – physically or verbally – to get into the group.” Prompt them to wait outside the room until you call them in.
3. Invite the group still in the room to stand, circle up in an open area (not around a table), and lock arms. Say to the group, “Your instructions for this exercise are to keep the two volunteers out of your group at all costs. Don’t let them in the circle. Don’t speak to them or make eye contact.”
4. Now invite the two volunteers to come in. Allow them to attempt getting into the circle for a couple of minutes, then say “OK – stop.”
5. Ask the two volunteers to leave the room again. Outside the room, say to them, “For round two, your instructions are exactly the same. Do whatever you need to do – physically or verbally – to get into the group.” (They may start asking you questions, but refrain from answering.) Ask them again to wait until the prompt to come back into the room.
6. To the group in the room, say, “For round 2, your instructions are to physically let the two volunteers into the circle, but only when they make a movement or ask to be included. Even when they are allowed to join the circle, ignore them. Do not make eye contact or talk to them.”
7. Now invite the two volunteers back in the room. Let them to attempt to get into the circle, allowing enough time for both to join the group, but to realize the group is ignoring them. Then say “OK – stop.”
8. Ask the two volunteers to leave the room for a final time. Outside, instruct them, “For round three, your instructions are once again the same. Do whatever you need to do to get into and be a part of the group.” Finally, ask them to wait until your prompt to return.
9. To the group, say, “For round 3, let both volunteers into the circle, once they make a movement or ask to be included. Choose one of the two volunteers to talk to and make eye contact with, but refrain from speaking to or making eye contact with the second volunteer. Ask the group to pick which volunteer they will “adopt.”
10. Finally, invite the two volunteers into the room. Allow them time to get into the circle, and for the one volunteer to recognize he/she is getting “preferential” treatment and the second volunteer to recognize he/she is getting left out. Now say “OK – stop.” Thank the volunteers and the group for participating, and ask all to return to their seats.

Reflection questions:

1. Ask the two volunteers: “What happened the first time you came back in the room? How did it make you feel?”
2. What happened the second time you came back in the room? How did it make you feel?
3. What happened the last time you came back in the room? Ask the first volunteer who received “preferential” treatment: how did it make you feel? Ask the second volunteer who was ignored by the group: how did it make you feel?
4. What does this activity illustrate about the experiences young people may have when first joining the council?
5. What can the council do to ensure a new youth representative is not treated preferentially over another?

Make a change (Topic 3)

Purpose:

To help the group have fun with the topic of change and “newness” as it pertains to adding youth representatives to the council.

Instructions:

1. Ask the group to pair up with someone else in the room. Invite each young person to pair up with an adult and vice versa.
2. Ask each pair to stand facing their partner, and to pick which person in their group will do the activity first (options: choose by birthday, favorite number, etc.).
3. This activity involves the person who is not “it” turning around so they cannot see their partner. The person who is “it” then changes at least three things about their appearance (remove watch, undo belt, adjust glasses, roll up pants leg, etc.) The person then turns back around and sees if he/she can pick out which things the partner changed.
4. Ask the people who are not “it” to turn around, facing away from their partners. Ask the people who are “it” to change at least three things about their appearance.
5. Now invite all to turn back around and guess what their partners changed.
6. After all pairs have had several minutes to finish identifying changes, switch and have the other person turn around, while the other changes three things about their appearance. Complete the rest of the steps.

Reflection questions:

1. Were you able to find everything that your partner changed about his/her appearance?
2. What was difficult to detect about what your partner changed?
3. State “this activity helps us to recognize that change in organizations is always constant.” Ask “what changes are you anticipating by bringing youth representatives on to your council?”

Bring me... (Topic 4)

Purpose:

To introduce the topic of recruitment by engaging groups in a quick light-hearted competitive game.

Instructions:

1. Break the entire group into two or more teams, ensuring that youth and adults are working together on each team.
2. Introduce the rules of the “Bring me...” game, stating that you the facilitator will ask for an item (like a watch or a shoe), and the groups are to find such an item and bring it to you as quickly as possible. The group who gets each item to you first will score a point. The group with the most points at the end of the game wins.
3. Note to facilitator: you can monitor the pace and score of the game, selecting items make it easier or more difficult for groups, or adding in special rules, such as an adult has to run the item to you.

Reflection questions:

1. What objects were easy to find?
2. What objects were difficult to hunt down?
3. Did groups encounter any obstacles with getting the items to the facilitator?
4. State that the object of this game is to get groups thinking about recruitment – who they currently have on council and who they still need to go out and find.

Spell it out (Topic 5)

Purpose:

To allow youth and adults to express collaboratively how they are feeling about working together as a team.

Instructions:

1. Ask each team of youth and adults (team: one county) to think of one word that describes how they are feeling about the training/meeting so far.
2. Give the group(s) several minutes to come up with a word that all agree on.
3. Now invite the entire group to stand, line up, and spell out the word they have chosen using arms and legs (for instance, for the word “amazing” one person might form the letter “A,” the next two people might form the letter “M,” and so on.
4. If more than one group is participating in the training/meeting, allow each group an opportunity to spell out their word and see if others can guess it.

Reflection questions:

1. What did you think of this activity?
2. What does it remind us of in terms of checking-in periodically as a team to see how we're all doing?

Human map (Topic 6)

Purpose:

To illustrate how caring adults make a difference in the lives of youth, and specifically how mentors can ensure youth representatives have a positive experience.

Instructions:

1. Describe the meeting room in terms of a map of Missouri, the U.S., or the world. Identify the geographical boundary that each wall represents. For instance, the wall to our left is California; the wall to our right is New York.
2. Ask participants to think about an adult who positively influenced them as a young person (ex. coach, pastor, teacher, family member.) What did that person say and do that made a difference in your life?
3. Now, locate yourselves on the “map” according to where that person influenced you.
4. Give participants a few moments to move around the room. Then begin asking participants to briefly tell a brief story of who their person is, and what he/she said and did that made such a difference.
5. Thank participants for sharing a part of their lives, and what helped mold and shape them.

Reflection questions:

1. What did you hear during the stories?
2. Were there any patterns or similarities that emerged?
3. What does this tell us about the role of young people and adults working together?

The ARCHallenge! (Topic 7)

Purpose:

To involve youth and adults in problem-solving together to construct a model of the St. Louis Gateway Arch – a representation of a youth-adult partnership. (The ARCHallenge! model is available for check-out from the 4-H Center for Youth Development upon request.)

Instructions:

1. Assemble the triangular segments of the model with binder clips. Spread out the seven segments on the floor.
2. Invite the entire group of participants to assemble a model of the St. Louis Gateway Arch. Point out that the Arch should be about 5 feet tall freestanding when finished.
3. Provide tips only if the group gets stuck or asks for help.

Reflection questions:

1. How do the segments of the Arch model hold together? What forces keep it upright? What other factors in the room are needed for it to stand freely?
2. How do these principles apply to a youth-adult partnership with your Extension council?
3. Congratulate the group on finishing the training and reaching the point of implementing a plan for youth representation!

The ARCHallenge is a final team-building activity for adults and youth completing the ECYL module. Patterned after the construction of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, the activity involves a cardboard model of the Arch, made up of seven triangular sections that fit together to form a replica. Teams are challenged to work together to construct the model so that it is free-standing.

Similarly, youth-adult partnerships require laying a foundation, building readiness among youth and adults, and putting pieces of the structure in place one at a time. As the structure rises and the last section is set in, councils create interdependence between youth and adults in which both bear responsibilities, and are also supported by the contributions of the other side.

For more information, see: [The Building of the Arch](#) (2002). Arteaga Productions: United States of America.

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