

Positive Youth Development

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF - DETERMINATION

Meeting Plan

Background



Self-determination is defined as the belief that one has the freedom or ability to decide matters for oneself. It is imperative that youth develop a personal sense of influence over their lives so that they may become self-directing, autonomous adults. The 4-H club experience should provide many opportunities to foster the development of each youth's confidence and personal identity. "Youth are encouraged to try new things and learn about themselves. As a result, they discover and practice their individual interests and skills, test their independence, and take control of their lives" states Sheri Seibold, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development, State 4-H Office. This means that youth determine their own levels of involvement without criticism. In a 4-H club, youth control the club goals and activities as related to their own interests and abilities. Thus, youth are empowered to make their own decisions and determine appropriate solutions to problems. Age appropriateness is also a key factor as youth are encouraged to take on responsibilities relevant to their age and abilities.

Assessment: Does our environment provide opportunities for self-determination?

- Do youth and adults partner together to plan and implement activities?
- If not, a program planning committee comprised of members, one or two parents, and the leader should be planning the year's activities with input from the membership.
- Are youth encouraged to take on new challenges and responsibilities? Adults sometimes think that leaders should handle only certain club responsibilities, but leaders don't have to handle all of the tasks! There are probably a few youth who'd be willing to help if they were just asked! Just be sure to allow flexibility and creativity and you may be surprised at some of the innovative approaches they generate!
- Are there planned opportunities for youth to evaluate themselves and assess their own accomplishments?
- Do members have the opportunity to apply subject matter content and life skills learned in 4-H to their everyday lives? The more practical, relevant, and applicable the skills are, the more useful and meaningful they will be to a 4-H'er both now and in the future.

Anything mentioned here we need to discuss or work on together?
(Write it down.)

Positive Youth Development
OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION
Meeting Plan
- 2 -

Roll Call Suggestions



Report something you have an interest in seeing the club explore, be it a tour, speaker, special activity, etc.

OR Tell one new activity you would like the club to consider during the next program planning cycle.

State one thing you learned from the last meeting and how you used that information.

State one rule of Parliamentary Procedure.

Name a life skill that you have learned in 4-H and explain how you learned it.

Activities to Encourage Opportunities for Self-Determination

Refer to the following Activities Guides:

Examining Youth/Adult Relationships

Youth as Partners

Perceptions of Power

Lessons borrowed from: *Creating Youth/Adult Partnerships*, National 4-H Council

Activity Guide for OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION - 1 -

Examining Youth/Adult Relationships

Materials needed:

Role-play scenarios, newsprint, m
Time: 30 minutes.



This activity allows 4-H members to explore the dynamics of youth and adult relationships and approaches to positive interactions.

- Explain to youth that they will be participating in role-plays with the help of adult volunteers. The role-plays are designed to show youth and adult interactions in both a negative and positive way.
- Ask for volunteers to do the first role-play and have them handle the situation in a *negative* manner.

"Examining Youth/Adult Relationships" Processing Questions (Negative)

Sharing

- (Ask the volunteers) What was it like to do this role-play?
- Describe how you feel about the roles you just acted out.

Processing

- What did you see or hear in this role-play?

Generalizing

- What are other experiences that you've had that are similar?

Applying

- What does this say about our work with adults?

Say to the youth: "Before we think through how we might do this differently, let's give the volunteers a chance to present this same role play and show us an approach that is *positive*." Then ask the following processing questions:

Activity Guide for OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION - 2 -



"Examining Youth/Adult Relationships" Processing Questions (Positive)

Sharing

- (Ask the volunteers) What was it like to do it this time?

Processing

- How was this one different?

Generalizing

- Which is most like you in real life?
- What can we learn from this about our working with adults?

Applying

- What are some of the elements in this last example that are necessary for partnership with adults? (Write these on newsprint)

Thank the volunteers for their assistance. Ask for another pair of volunteers and have them conduct a different scenario, then use the following questions to process the experience.

"Examining Youth/Adult Relationships" Processing Questions (Negative)

Sharing

- (Ask volunteers) How did that feel?

Processing

- What did you see that was similar or different from the last one?

Generalizing

- Where in your life does this fit?

Applying

- How do you deal with it?

Now have this pair do the *positive* role-play.

Activity Guide for OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION - 3 -



"Examining Youth/Adult Relationships" Processing Questions (Positive)

Sharing

- (Ask volunteers) Did this one make you feel different? How?

Processing

- What is a key phrase or expression you remember from this role-play?

Generalizing

- What are some words to describe the overall feeling between these two people?
- What were major characteristics of the adult? Of the youth?

Applying

- What can we add to our list about how to work in partnership?

Say to the members: "We have been talking about both the benefits and challenges that youth and adults bring trying to work in partnership. Let us explore what these benefits and challenges are a little more specifically."

Activity Guide for OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION - 4 -

Benefits and Challenges

Materials Needed:

Newsprint sheets, markers,
masking tape.

Time: 30 minutes



The purpose of this activity is to have older 4-H members consider the benefits and challenges of working in a peer mentoring relationship with a younger member.

Say: "There is much to gain by pairing an older 4-H member with a younger member. As older members, you have some very useful information and experience that you can share with others, especially those who are new to 4-H. We will call this very special role a "4-H Big Friend". We'd like to do an activity that will help us explore what this relationship may look like."

- Instruct youth to divide up into small groups of four so that they can work together to compile a list of responses.
- Instruct the youth to take a moment or two to write down every benefit that they can think of that a younger person may bring to the table in an equal partnership. If necessary, have the youth close their eyes and imagine themselves at the age of eight. What did they look like? What things were important to them? What were their fears? What were their interests? What things were they good at?
- Give the youth an ample amount of time to think through a number of ideas. Then have each group join another group of four.
- Have each combined group choose 5-7 benefits that they will post on their newsprint.
- Once listed, have each group choose two they think are the most important.
- Continue to ask for new ideas not already mentioned.

Activity Guide for OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION - 5 -



"Benefits and Challenges" Processing Questions

Sharing

- What was it like to come up with benefits that younger members may bring to the table?

Processing

- Are there items up here that are particularly unique to being very young, at the very beginning of one's 4-H career?

Generalizing

- How can we use this information as we plan for our 4-H Big Friend program?

Applying

- How might we use this information to deal with a situation in the future?

Now ask the youth to go through a similar process with the challenges of working with younger members.

"Benefits and Challenges" Processing Questions (Younger Members)

Sharing

- How easy was it to come up with benefits? Challenges?

Processing

- What is there about the benefits that can help overcome the challenges?

Generalizing

- Where else might you look for ideas on how to overcome the challenges?
- What is one key item you learned from this activity?

Applying

- How might we use this information?

Activity Guide for OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION - 6 -

Perceptions of Power

Materials needed:

Space for all to stand in one line.

Time: 15 minutes.



The purpose of this activity is to have 4-H members examine what they feel is their position of power in the group. They will explore their perceptions of the distribution of power amongst the youth and adult leaders.

- Explain to participants that they are to put themselves in just one line that stretches from the person who feels they have the most influence in the group to the one who feels they have the least influence.
- Explain that this must be done without talking or comparing notes. They are doing this only on *their own perception of their influence*, not anyone else's.
- When the youth are in a single line, have the group number off "1- whatever number of participants there are" with number one beginning with the person that feels s/he has the most influence. *Be clear about which end you want the strongest influence and least influence.*

"Perceptions of Power" Processing Questions

Sharing

- How did it feel to do this activity? How did it feel to be at one end of the line or the other?

Processing

- What did you notice when everyone stood up?

Generalizing

- Where in the line did you think your group members would stand? Where did you think the adults would be standing? The youth?
- What do you think made different people stand in different places?

Applying

- What can we learn about youth relationships from this activity?
- What would you most like to remember about this activity?
- How will you tie this activity to what you are doing?

Understanding the balance of power in true partnerships is critical to the work we are trying to do within our clubs. The power balance can often be one the greatest challenges as youth may often feel slighted if they don't feel that they have enough control when it comes to decision-making.