

Positive Youth Development

WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Meeting Plan

Background



A welcoming and inclusive environment means that everyone is included, regardless of one's gender, ethnicity, abilities, or other personal characteristics. Group members and leaders strive to make the atmosphere comfortable for newcomers. Activities are incorporated that allow for interaction with other members of the group. Successes of individuals and of the whole group are celebrated.

Assessment: Is our environment a welcoming one?

- Do adults call youth by name? How often?
- Do you get rewarded for accomplishments? If not, what do we need to change?
- Are there opportunities for engagement with other members of the group? What kinds of activities?
- Do group members treat each other with respect? How do we know?
- Do group members and their families feel comfortable attending meetings, events, or activities? How do we know?
- Are our facilities accessible? If not, what do we need to do?

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

**Positive Youth Development
WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT
Meeting Plan
- 2 -**

Roll Call Suggestions



Tell one thing you have done to make someone else in this group feel comfortable.

Tell one thing that you have in common with someone else in this group.

Share your favorite celebration or tradition that this group has.

Share a unique way you could praise someone in this group.

Tell one way that others in this group have made you feel welcome.

Activities to Emphasize a Welcoming Environment

Refer to the following Activities Guides:

Culture Quest

Name Banners

Have You Ever?

Magic Carpet Ride

Celebrate YOU

Activity Guide for WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT - 1 -

Culture Quest

Materials needed:

Newsprint, markers, tape

Time: 15 minutes



This activity allows each group member to explore his/her own culture and see the similarities and differences among group members.

Before the program begins, have the Wall of Culture prepared as follows:

- Tape several pieces of chart paper together around the room
- Write the following headings along the top of the chart paper (you can substitute different headings that are more appropriate for your group):
 - Name
 - Culture(s) you identify with
 - State where you were born
 - Favorite holiday
 - Number of years in 4-H
 - Favorite music
- The facilitator should write his/her own information on the charts first, and then have participants fill in their information.
- Once participants have had an opportunity to write their information, the facilitator should share his/her information and then continue down the list, asking each individual to share his/her information.

If your group is too large or there is no space to put the newsprint on the walls, here are two suggestions:

- Have participants write their individual answers to the questions and share in small groups.
- Have participants find a partner and interview the other person using questions from the Culture Quest.

Activity Guide for WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT - 2 -



"Culture Quest" Processing Questions

Sharing

- Was it hard to think of something to write in each category?
- Did you learn anything new about the people in this group?

Processing

- Name one thing that you learned that makes you want to talk more with that person.
- Can you find any similarities among the people in this group? Any differences?

Generalizing

- How does knowing about each other help us appreciate each other?
- Look at the cultures listed. Can you think of other cultures you are a part of?

Applying

- What is a good way to learn about someone else?
- What can you do to help others feel that they are a part of the group?

This activity is adapted from Cultural Competence in Prevention Service Delivery provided by Prevention First, Inc.

Activity Guide for WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT - 3 -

Name Banners

Materials needed for each participant:
Construction paper and markers or crayons



This activity allows the group members to learn more about each other while highlighting their own unique abilities and interests.

- Give each member a piece of paper and either markers or crayons.
- Tell them to think of a word that describes them or something unique about themselves for each letter of their name. Here is an example:
 - B - biology is my favorite subject
 - R - run track at school
 - I - interested in computers
 - A - always eat pizza
 - N - new at school this semester

When the 4-H members are finished, have them introduce themselves by sharing the information they have on their banners.

If more time is available, here are some suggestions:

- Ask 4-H members to make a collage that represents them. They can select words or pictures that go along with each letter of their name.
- Ask 4-H members to create a banner for their group, using the letters that make up their group name.

"Name Banner" Processing Questions

Sharing

- Was it difficult to find something unique for each letter of your name?
- Did anyone else have qualities or characteristics similar to yours?

Processing

- Why is it important to know about the people in our group?

Generalizing

- Did your perception of anyone change after you learned something new about him or her?

Applying

- What are some ways you can learn more about people in our group?

Activity Guide for WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

- 4 -

Have You Ever?

Materials needed for each participant:
Worksheet and pencil



This activity allows individuals to learn more about people in a unique way-by guessing what they think they know about someone. This can lead to an important discussion of first impressions and assumptions and how they affect the way we interact with one another.

- Divide the large group into smaller groups of 5-6 members each.
 - Give each group member a worksheet and a pencil.
 - Ask them to circle yes or no for each question on the worksheet without discussing the answers with group members and without allowing others to see their answers.
 - When everyone is finished, have members guess how many people in their small group (including themselves) answered yes to each question and write that in the ESTIMATE column.
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- When members are finished, read off each question, asking for a show of hands by the people who answered yes. Group members should then write down how many people in their small group answered yes in the ACTUAL column.
 - To figure out the score column, simply subtract the smaller number from the larger number and write it in the score column. Prizes can be awarded for the lowest number, which means they knew the most about people in their group.

If the group members have difficulty with the scoring, here is a suggestion:

- Have the groups record the actual score, but don't go through the scoring process. Instead, just record how many they had right.

"Have You Ever?" Processing Questions

Sharing

- Ask 4-H'ers to share something they learned about someone in the group.

Processing

- Was it difficult to guess who did what activities? Why?

Generalizing

- Have you ever guessed something about someone and been wrong before?
- Why is it important to learn about people in our group without making judgments?

Applying

- How can you help others in your group learn more about you?
- What are some other activities you could do in your group to get to know each other better?

Activity Guide for WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT - 5 -

Magic Carpet Ride

Materials needed:
Blanket or tarp (4'X5')



This activity allows group members to work together to achieve a goal. This creates a sense of teamwork and pride in their accomplishment.

- Lay a blanket or tarp on the floor (It should be around 4 feet by 5 feet for a group of around 8-12 people).
- Have everyone in the group step onto the blanket. Explain that this is a "Magic Carpet" that is taking them high above the countryside. They suddenly realize they are going the wrong direction because the magic carpet is UPSIDE DOWN.
- The group's task is to turn the blanket over while a part of each person's body (foot, hand, etc.) is still on the blanket.

If your group is too large or there are individuals who are unable to participate, here are a few suggestions:

- Have only part of the group participate and the others can be observers of the group. Ask the observers to pay attention to the group interactions—who is in leadership positions, who looks frustrated, who is being heard, etc.
- To increase the difficulty of the activity, assign different roles to different group members—some who can talk, some who are blindfolded, etc. To make the activity easier, have fewer group members on the blanket and allow the others to observe and offer comments or suggestions.

"Magic Carpet Ride" Processing Questions

Sharing

- Was it easy or difficult to get the blanket flipped over?
- Did one person seem to be the leader of the group or did the leadership change throughout the activity?

Processing

- What were some of the challenges of this activity?
- Did everyone feel like part of the group? Why or why not?

Generalizing

- How does working together as a team help us?

Applying

- What were some things that made you successful in this activity that would be important for you to remember for future activities?
- How can you make sure that everyone feels as if they are part of the team?

Activity Guide for WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT - 6 -

Celebrate YOU

Materials needed for each participant:
Celebrate YOU activity sheet, pencils



This activity allows group members to plan a celebration(s) that recognizes a special event within the group. Members learn the importance of recognizing individuals and also get to have a leadership role in planning the activity.

- Discuss with the group members different celebrations they have in their homes, schools, religious organization, and communities. Discuss the purpose of these celebrations. Is it to recognize a success, celebrate an event, honor an individual, greet newcomers or say farewell?
- Have youth work in pairs to brainstorm celebrations that could be done in this group. (birthdays, project completion, finishing everyone's talk or demonstration, welcoming new member) Discuss the purpose of the celebration, timing, obstacles to creating the celebration, cost, etc.
- Have youth share their celebrations with the group. As a large group select at least one celebration that you could include in the group.
- Note to remember: a celebration doesn't have to be a large or elaborate event. It can be as simple as an activity/story to recognize a group member.

"Celebrate YOU" Processing Questions

Sharing

- How did it feel to be creating a celebration for your group?
- Did you have similar ideas to other groups or were all the ideas different?

Processing

- What was your celebration idea?
- What was the purpose of your celebration?

Generalizing

- Are there some special events you could celebrate in your group that you aren't currently doing?
- Why is it important to celebrate special events in your group?

Applying

- When planning a celebration, what are some things to consider that might help members feel more welcome in your group?