Discovering Me
An experiential educational program for young adolescents
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Note: This publication contains a number of activities adapted by the authors from a variety of sources. See references at the end of this publication.
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Table of contents

Welcome 3
What is “Discovering Me”? 3
Purpose and assumptions of the program 3
Role of leadership 4
How to use “Discovering Me” 4
Working with young adolescents 5
Some additional suggestions 6
Additional questions that could be used 7
Unit descriptions, discussion aids, and worksheets
  Unit 1—My Unique Self 9
  Unit 2—Belonging 19
  Unit 3—Self-evaluation 33
  Unit 4—My Successes and Failures 49
  Unit 5—Making Choices for Myself 59
Congratulations and what next? 71
References 71
Welcome

Welcome to the exciting opportunity of learning about an often ignored and misunderstood age group, the 10- to 13-year-olds. This guide has information and activities designed to help these young adolescents develop greater self-understanding. Congratulations on your decision to provide a caring and learning environment for these youth.

"Discovering Me" is a learn-by-doing program for youth which allows them to discover more about themselves. It is primarily designed for youth ages 10- to 13-years, who are in the sometimes awkward stage of life involving the early transition from childhood to adulthood. This stage is called early adolescence.

"Discovering Me" addresses the unique developmental characteristics of young adolescents, including:

- rapid physical growth
- developing sexual characteristics (puberty)
- developing sense of self
- having friends and belonging to peer groups
- reasoning abstractly (able to argue a point)

The program is organized into five units with suggested activities designed to involve small groups of youth in enjoyable learning experiences. To orient you to the objectives and importance for the youth participants, each unit starts with a description of the unit and its purpose, followed by a summary of activities to do and required materials. The units are:

Unit 1—My Unique Self
Unit 2—Belonging
Unit 3—Self-evaluation
Unit 4—My Successes and Failures
Unit 5—Making Choices for Myself

You will find a balance involving technical information about this age group and practical activities and lessons which will guide you as you provide a supportive setting for youth to discover more about themselves.

Another important aspect of the "Discovering Me" program is the focus on involvement with peers. Youth will learn more about themselves from each other. But it takes a special atmosphere to be able to make this happen. Youth participants need to know that they are a very important part of the group. For personal growth to occur, they must feel comfortable, safe, and valuable. The youth participants must feel that they can trust each other. The "ice-breaker" activities are designed to start the process to build this group trust.

The purpose of "Discovering Me" is to help youth better understand who they are and why they think, feel and behave the way they do. A major concept behind "Discovering Me" is that if youth know who they are and why they think and feel the way they do, they will be more empowered to take responsibility for their actions. An underlying assumption of the program is that self-understanding will strengthen youth's ability to make personal choices that maximize their realistic potential for further success. Youth will have a stronger sense of self-control and greater ability to deal with the various environments they encounter.
Role of leadership

One of the leader’s most important responsibilities in conducting “Discovering Me” is creating a comfortable, safe environment where youth feel accepted and where trusting relationships can be established. This curriculum is designed to be conducted through group interaction with experiential learning activities. Because young adolescents are becoming more interested in peer involvement, youth participants are likely to be more receptive to this format. While many young adolescents are interested in peer interaction, some may feel quite intimidated, especially when members of the opposite sex are present. Explaining or discussing expectations for group behavior and peer interaction at the initial meeting and reinforcing them throughout might guide them and lessen their fears (e.g., no making fun of others’ ideas even though we might not agree; not repeating what people say outside of the group setting; letting everyone have the chance to share if they want to).

As a leader, you have a very special part. Youth will look to you for answers. Many of the activities and questions do not have right or wrong answers. It is important to allow youth to explore multiple possibilities and to decide what makes the most sense to them. Not all youth will agree with each other or with the leaders—that is OK too. Finding a balance that all can feel comfortable with is a key to a successful project.

A unique part of “Discovering Me” is the personal journal. Writing their ideas and thoughts will help participants learn more from their experiences.

How to use “Discovering Me”

The curriculum can be used in a variety of group settings. It can be utilized in a weekend retreat, as a camp theme, or in a series of workshops for young adolescents. The maximum benefit for the youth is to spend several meeting times on each unit. The curriculum designers also encourage leaders to go through each unit in order. Skipping around will not help youth meet the objectives described in the units. The process of self-discovery takes time.

“Discovering Me” has five units to help young adolescents understand why an individual thinks and feels the way he or she does. Each unit contains a description and a review of the potential activities to orient you. Background information is provided to increase your understanding of objectives and explain why the unit is important for the youth participants. Several activities are provided as options for you to choose from. Group characteristics, available resources, and the meeting time frame are all significant components to consider when determining the schedule for completing each unit.

The activities rely on an experiential learning theme. Active participation in the learning process is very important for getting the most out of the “Discovering Me” curriculum. Each unit has an active set of ice breakers to set the stage for group cohesion. Activities vary in their level of action. Most activities require discussion and reflection time for considering the feelings and reactions of the youth. Therefore, for youth to get the most from participating in “Discovering Me,” encourage them to be active instead of observing. You will need to be encouraging and supportive. Certain guidelines, when established, can create that trusting, supportive environment. These guidelines can include the following:

- Each person in the group is a valuable member whose individuality and personal rate of growth is acceptable.
- It is important to be as honest as you can with yourself and with group members in order to see more clearly the process of growth.
• No feeling, idea, or reaction brought before the group should be put down. Each person's feelings, ideas, and reactions are important and should be treated with respect.

• Everyone has a right to experience, to share, and to grow in the directions that seem most appropriate for him/herself.

• It is not so important that all group members agree on every issue as it is that each opinion be heard and accepted.

When working with this age group, it is important to be very clear and specific about the expectations for behavior and participation.

A unique part of "Discovering Me" is the personal journal. Writing their ideas and thoughts will help participants think more about their experiences as part of the project. It will be useful for helping them to know what they have learned. You will want to be sure that the journals remain confidential and are being utilized in the correct manner.

Youth between the ages of 10 and 13 years differ in their physical appearance. Some may have begun puberty and may look older than their chronological age, while others may still look very much like children. Regardless of the differences in outer appearances, these youth are in transition. Besides the obvious transition to puberty, youth at this age experience many other changes. These include changes in thinking patterns, changes in relationships, and changes in emotion. These often unexpected changes can be very confusing for youth. For the first time they are able to think about possible consequences and seem very concerned about what their friends and others think. Experiencing these "firsts" may be why young adolescents often seem moody or unpredictable.

It is important for a leader of a group of adolescents to be supportive and encouraging. Through the changes they or their friends are experiencing, youth need a sense of stability and consistency. This often is provided by parents or family members. Sometimes, there is increased conflict between young adolescents and their parents. As a concerned, caring adult outside of the family unit, the group leader can provide another (possibly the only) situation where youth can feel safe and accepted.

Just as youth develop physically at different rates, they also develop mental, social, and emotional characteristics at different times. The activities in this curriculum have been designed to involve youth, whether they can think about abstract ideas or not. Recognize that some youth are more prepared to think and process the lessons than others. Youth may appear fully developed physically, but may not be fully developed mentally or socially. Be patient and accepting of youth, whether they seem advanced or behind the others. This is another way in which trusting relationships can be established.

Activities which require movement and social interaction are very appropriate for youth of this age. Youth will welcome the chance to "socialize." Be sure to observe closely how willing individuals are to mix. Be extra encouraging if you notice that one or two youth hold back and do not get involved. Do not allow them to just observe. Perhaps introducing them to another youth or joining an activity with them would help the shy or uncomfortable youth to become involved.

If you need more information about this age group, see the unit overviews or contact your county extension agent.
Some additional suggestions

You may need to reconsider your presentation or facilitating actions. A group leader has the responsibility for overseeing the smooth facilitation of “Discovering Me” activities. The following materials offer suggestions for several of the common situations encountered by leaders working with young adolescents.

What to do if your group has trouble communicating

- Before the meeting become very familiar with the information and activities.
- Provide clear instructions and be as specific as possible, yet not too democratic at this point (democratic leadership style will be more appropriate later).
- During the activity be responsible for instructing and distributing materials only; as the leader/facilitator try not to become involved. (Observe closely but don’t get drawn into the action.)
- Try to help youth relate their experiences to their existing knowledge by questioning individuals about their actions/participation. The intent is to draw out their feelings and reactions. When necessary you will need to help them in expressing understanding and acceptance, presenting observations, ideas, or related information, and by clarifying or redefining the procedures and roles of the young adolescents when necessary.

Another possibility is that the group just might not feel enough trust or just might not feel comfortable discussing out loud their thoughts and feelings. Be patient and try to mix activities wherein action and small group interaction are possible. Call on people to share their feelings, but be sure not to call on the same person too frequently. Allow for silence. Try not to speak too quickly or speak for youth. Just remain quiet for longer than you may feel comfortable, and eventually someone will talk. The quiet time will allow for thought as well. Do not get too personal too fast. Let closeness come from shared activities, not from talk. Depending on the age of the youth (especially age 14–15 years), it may not be acceptable for the youth to do what an adult wants done.

What to do if youth become emotional or upset

- Do not minimize their feelings. What they feel is very real to them. Be accepting and understanding, yet at the same time try to calm them.
- Ask these youth to talk to you at the end of the meeting/session. Be sure to find out what it was that upset them. Be aware of what each youth is saying as well as what s/he is not saying. Body language often can give away what someone is trying to hide. Be supportive if the activities and not something external caused one or more individuals to become upset. If the activities were upsetting, be sure to get recommendations about changes or what went wrong.
- If threats are expressed, help the youth to see that there are other ways to cope or deal with conflict or stressful situations. Discuss calmly what it is that upset each of the individuals and what the consequences of acting violently or carrying out threats would do to solve the problem. Help them consider healthy, positive alternatives to deal with the problem.

What to do if you are concerned about a particular youth

Young adolescents can be moody. If you notice a youth who is very quiet or uninvolved despite efforts made to include him or her, the youth may be facing a more serious problem. As the leader, it is your responsibility to find out what may be bothering the particular individual. Be sensitive to what the youth is saying, both through verbal words and through body
language. Do not jump to conclusions. Be sure to contact your extension agent to discuss the youth’s behavior before taking any more serious action. Remember, you as a leader are not a professional counselor and some youth may need professional help.

If any of the young adolescents are depressed or seem anxious for any reason, be sure to write down your observations. Then talk to your extension agent before doing anything else. Remember, you want to provide a comfortable, accepting atmosphere for all the youth involved. Try not to further isolate a participant you think is experiencing some personal difficulties. Sometimes youth are crying out for help, but are not sure how to ask for it. Other times, adults do not recognize a troubled youth’s attempt to get attention. Be very sensitive and supportive and be cautious before you form any conclusions or think that you can “solve” the problem. Don’t hesitate to visit with other professionals who can be a resource with you.

Listed below are a number of open-ended questions that you may want to consider using to supplement the activities suggested.

Directions
Select a few questions from the list below and ask the group to answer them. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions are just something to think about and discuss. Ask youth if they are willing to share their answers and discuss the reasons why they answered that way.

- Do you think the world will be a better or worse place 100 years from now?
- If you were able to live to the age of 90 and keep either the body or the mind of a 20-year-old for the last 70 years of your life, which would you want?
- Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you choose as a dinner guest? As a close friend?
- If you could wake up tomorrow in the body of someone else, would you? Whom would you pick?
- If you could see into the future but not change it, would you want to do so?
- If you could make a TV show about anything you wanted and you knew that millions of people would see it, what would it be about?
- What do you think your parents worried about when they were your age? What do you think they worry about now?
- If you could grow up to be famous and successful, what would you like to be known for? Do you think you will be famous one day?
- If you knew that by practicing hard every Saturday you could become the best in your school at whatever you want, what would you work on?
- If you knew that by never again eating junk food and candy, you would live until age 75 rather than 60, would you give them up?
- If you had a lot of money and could use it in any way you wanted, what would you do?
- If someone really wanted to find out what you thought and felt, how could s/he best go about getting to know you?
- If you bought something in a store and the clerk gave you a dollar extra in change, would you say anything about his/her mistake?
• If you were to be stranded for 10 years on a tiny island paradise about the size of a football field, how many people would you want with you and who would they be?

• If you could gaze into a magic mirror and see exactly what is happening anywhere in the world, where would you look and what do you think you would see?

• If you were given $1,000,000 to use to help other people, how would you spend it?
Unit descriptions, discussion aids, and worksheets

Unit 1—My Unique Self

Description
Individuals have an image of themselves from an early age. It provides a sense of self that separates the individual from other individuals. The self is the picture individuals have of themselves.

Young children see themselves in concrete terms. They often describe themselves in terms of what they look like or what they own (I am a girl; I have a blue bike). Later children see themselves in relation to other people. In adolescence youth mature and their thinking begins to include abstract ideas; the self begins to be seen in terms of personality traits such as gentle, honest, competitive, and loyal.

Individuals’ abilities are important to their self image. School-age children include their abilities in their sense of self and can assess them. They are aware of their strengths and weaknesses—both mental and physical. They may excel in math but be so-so in sports. Most individuals have a mix of abilities and focus on areas where they excel (like athletics) rather than areas where they are less proficient (like academics). Adults, parents, teachers, and others can help adolescents recognize their strengths and accept the mix as normal.

In Unit 1 youth can enhance their sense of who they are by defining their unique qualities. The group setting can help them see themselves as both similar to others and different from others.

Purpose of unit activities
To help youth:
- recognize that each individual is unique
- identify each individual’s unique qualities
- recognize that each individual has different sides to him or her self
- learn to respect or appreciate uniqueness of others and of self

Before the meeting
Read through Unit 1—Description. Review the activities listed in the table on page 10.

Select one or more of the activities to do within the meeting time. You may want to schedule two meetings to include more of the activities. You will need to have copies of handouts and other materials for each member.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ice Breakers:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Find Someone Who...</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #1, pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What Am I?</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Paper, pencil, poster, markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select one or more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Egg Lecturette</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gifted</td>
<td>Whole meeting</td>
<td>Special box, paper, pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tuning into Yourself</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #3, pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Apple Game</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Apples, potatoes, bag or box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Things I Love to Do</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #4, poster, markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I Feel Good About Myself When...</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Poster board, markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Mirror Image</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #5, tape, pen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What to do**

Hand out copies of Worksheet #1 and pens to each youth. Explain to the youth that they have five minutes to find someone with the following characteristics and get their signature on the blank following that item. The goal is to meet as many people and get as many signatures as possible in the time allowed.

**Note:** If your group is larger than twenty, explain that a person can only sign someone’s paper one time. This will help create more interaction.

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**Activity 2**

**What Am I?**

10 minutes

**You will need:**
- paper
- pencils/pens

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**What to do**

1) Hand out a half sheet of paper and ask each youth to write down three of their positive characteristics.

2) Discussion questions:
   - Who wrote down a physical feature/characteristic?
   - Did anyone put down anything about their personality?
   - What about something you do or a role you fill at home, in school, or in the community?

**Option**

1) Ask each youth to circle one thing they listed which they like the most about themselves.

2) Now give them three minutes to try to find someone who circled the same thing and to tell each other why they circled it as their favorite thing about themselves.

(Continued on next page)
3) Give the youth another three minutes to find someone who circled something different than they did and tell each other what and why the circled item is their favorite thing about themselves.

4) Discussion questions:
   • Was it hard to explain the thing you like most about yourself to someone else?
   • Were you surprised by what others told you about themselves?

**Activity 3**

**The Egg Lecturette**
15 minutes

**You will need:**
- Worksheet #2
- copy of the story

**Activity 4**

**“Gifted”**
Entire meeting time

**You will need:**
- 2 specially decorated boxes
- blank papers
- pens

**Activity 5**

**Tuning into Yourself**
15 minutes

**You will need:**
- Worksheet #3
- pen

**What to do**

1) Read aloud the story in Worksheet #2.

2) Discussion questions:
   • How does this story help you think about yourself differently?
   • Do you understand what helps to form one’s “self”?

**What to do**

1) Explain to youth that each person has unique, special qualities and we need to recognize those qualities. In order to do so, we will select two individuals to be the special people of the day. Announce their names. Everyone will have the chance to be the special person of the day at some point during the program.

2) Every youth in the group is asked to write positive messages about the person(s) of the day and place the messages in their boxes. But don’t have them sign their names. The special people are allowed to read their special messages at the end of the session.

3) Consider reviewing the notes before they are given out to screen any negative messages that may have been dropped in.

**What to do**

1) Pass out Worksheet #3 to each youth.

2) Ask youth to read each phrase carefully and complete the statement by writing down the first thing that comes to mind.

3) Explain that this will NOT be shared with the entire group, but perhaps with a partner if they wish to discuss it with him or her. Allow ten minutes for answering the questions and then five minutes for discussion.
**Activity 6**

**The Apple Game**
15 minutes

**You will need:**
- an apple for every person in the group
- bag or box

**What to do**
1) Give each youth an apple. Ask them to study the apple and give it a name.
2) Ask the youth to get into pairs and introduce their apples to each other.
3) Collect all apples and place them in the bag or box.
4) Pour the apples out and have everyone reclaim their apples.
5) Explain that apples, like people, are unique and even though apples are different, they all still can be used to make apple sauce just as all people have a place in society. If anyone would like to, they can eat their apple as a snack!
6) Discussion:
   - Was it easy to find your apple? How could you tell your apple from others’ apples? Are apples all the same on the inside? Are all people the same on the inside?
   - As a follow-up discussion question, you could ask: What does this activity have to do with learning about ourselves and our relations with others? The following statements point out some ideas from the discussion you may want to highlight if the youth do not discover them.

Sometimes we cannot help being the same or different from others, but in some ways we decide to be the same or different from others.

We are different from each other because of characteristics we are born with and because we have different likes and dislikes. Things on the outside make us different from others, such as the color of our eyes or hair or because of our height or weight. We are different from each other because of what is on the inside too. Examples of internal characteristics which make us different from each other are preferences such as our favorite sports teams, favorite things to do or hobbies we like. Even our favorite flavor of ice cream is something that makes us special and different from others.

**Activity 7**

**Things I Love to Do**
20 minutes

**You will need:**
- Worksheet #4
- pencils/pens
- poster board
- markers
- tape

**What to do**
1) Hand out a copy of Worksheet #4 to all of the youth and have them fill in the blanks with their top-ten list of things they love to do. Then instruct them to place the following codes next to their responses.

Give them these instructions:
- Place an “A” by any item you do alone.
- Place an “O” by any item you do with others.
- Place a “1” and “2” next to your top two favorites.
- Place an “I” by any item your parents or important adults did when they were your age.
- Place a “P” by those things you have been praised or received compliments for doing.

(Continued on next page)
2) Then ask each youth to write his or her favorite thing to do on the poster board list. Hang this list for all to see. Allow youth to take their worksheet home with them to discuss with their parents if they want.

3) Discussion questions:
   - How do you feel about the ten things you are doing?
   - Can you see other things you would like to spend more time doing?
   - Are you doing important things for yourself?

In simple ways others can show us they appreciate us or make us feel better about ourselves.

In just as simple a manner, negative feedback can make us feel very bad about ourselves.

We can show our acceptance of others by showing them we appreciate them through positive feedback and simple caring acts.

When we try to make others feel good, it often builds increased self-confidence in others as well as ourselves.

**What to do**

1) Ask youth to think about what someone has said or done for them in the last week which made them feel good about themselves.

2) Then ask them to share their experiences by listing these experiences on the poster board. (Examples might be a smile, or hug, their name remembered, or being listened to by a friend.)

3) Encourage youth, as their take-home assignment, to try to make everyone in their family feel better about themselves through positive comments. And remind them to notice how each person responds and how it feels to be building self-confidence. Note: Remember at the next meeting to follow up and to get feedback to see if youth took this activity home with them and how their families reacted.

**What to do**

1) Divide into groups of four youth or other number that is feasible. Have each youth write five words which describe themselves on Worksheet #5, and then tape it to their backs.

2) Then go around the group asking each of the members to write five positive words which describe the individual, trying not to repeat what others have written.

3) Once each of the group members has written five complimentary descriptors for every other member, have them take the worksheets off their back.

4) Discuss these questions.
   - Were you surprised at how others see you?
   - Were the words you used to describe yourself similar to what others wrote?
   - Do you see yourself any differently now?
   - Do you agree with how others see you? Is this the image you want to portray to others?

5) Encourage youth to try this with family members or other important peers or adults in order to receive additional feedback.
Find Someone Who . . .  

1. has green eyes
2. likes the Miami Dolphins
3. sews as a hobby
4. enjoys building snowmen
5. eats spinach
6. reads science fiction
7. has gone fishing
8. has brown hair
9. does not like chocolate
10. has seen a bear
11. wears glasses
12. has two sisters
13. has a pet hamster
14. plays a musical instrument
15. likes mint-chocolate chip ice cream
16. is less than five feet tall
17. has a birthday in April
18. enjoys reading
19. listens to country music
20. likes the color purple

(NAME)
Finding out about who you are can be an exciting and rewarding adventure. But, like all adventurers, the "self" seekers need a good starting point. Since no one can predict what will happen on an adventure, it's important to begin with flexible ideas about the things you want to find. Finding your "self," that special group of characteristics unique to you, is your goal. It's hard to picture a "self," so let's substitute something else that we all can relate to in order to help us understand.

Let's think about an egg. It has a shell (the crunchy white stuff), a yolk (that yellow thing), and a white (it's slimy). Believe it or not, the egg is very much like our "self." No, we are not a bunch of eggheads. We're talking about our "self." Let's break it down. The egg shell is your defense system—ways to act and feel that you've learned to keep yourself from being hurt too much. Just like an eggshell lets air through to the chick, your defense system lets some feelings come and go and locks out others. The eggshell also defines the shape and space of the developing chick or the yolk and white. You know we have grade A large, medium, and small eggs in the grocery store. Just like eggs, people have different sizes and personalities. Your defenses and feelings, like the eggshell, define your "self" because they help to shape what you can do, think, and feel. The more you defend yourself against the world or try to keep out the uncomfortable feelings by not facing them, the thicker your shell becomes, keeping out important things like good feelings and happy thoughts because there is less space for a complete "self" inside the shell. Building up defenses (the shell) doesn't allow the yolk and white to develop completely. We need to balance letting feelings and ideas in and out.

Inside the eggshell are the yolk and the white. We can compare these to the main parts of your "self"—the characteristics you are born with and the characteristics which change and develop over time. Let's call the yolk your inborn characteristics, or the characteristics you were born with. These include your basic temperament or your overall outlook on life. Is your outlook on life hopeful or doubtful? Are you mostly quiet and shy or loud and outgoing or in-between? Do you feel more comfortable doing things with others or do you prefer to be alone? Like the yolk, our temperament does not change easily. We are born with it and it always grows with us. It is what makes us feel most comfortable with ourselves.

The egg white is the part of our "self" made up of acquired traits that we collect and adapt as we grow. These characteristics are ones which we choose to take on or learn from our surroundings, family, friends, and society. These characteristics include the way we say hello, the manners we learn, and the way we treat one another. Our actions change depending on the people and situations we meet. No one ever has exactly the same experiences, coping style, and outlook on life as we do. Our "self" is so special and unique because we are born with characteristics that no one else has, and our living experiences combine in a way that is special just to us.

All of our experiences and the way we deal with them, our outlook on life, and the characteristics we learn from others all come together to make up our "self." Self-discovery and feeling comfortable with ourselves are a process that we go through the rest of our lives. As we grow and increase our "selves," we will gain more ability to understand our "self."

Adapted from Peer Plus II. See references.
Worksheet 3

Tuning into Yourself

1. The best way to describe myself is by saying ________________________________

2. The thing I like best about myself is ________________________________

3. The thing I like least about myself is ________________________________

4. One of the people who has made me feel important is ________________________________

5. The hardest thing for me to discuss with others is ________________________________

6. The person who best understands me is ________________________________

7. I would feel better about myself if ________________________________

Any comments: ________________________________

____________________

____________________

____________________
Worksheet 4

Things I Love to Do

As quickly as you can, list ten things in life which you really, really love to do. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
4. __________________________________________
5. __________________________________________
6. __________________________________________
7. __________________________________________
8. __________________________________________
9. __________________________________________
10. __________________________________________

Place an A by any item you do alone.

Place an O by any item you do with others.

Place a 1 and 2 next to your top two favorites.

Place an ! by any item your parents or important adults did when they were your age.

Place a P by those things you have been praised or received compliments for doing.
Worksheet 5

Mirror Image
Unit 2—Belonging

Description
From birth onward, individuals are surrounded by people, alone and in groups, who contribute to the individuals' sense of self. Children are initially influenced by their family. They develop a sense of who they are with respect to their family. Belonging to a family, regardless of its composition or number of members, constitutes the first group and sense of belonging. The family acts as a screen or filter through which children view the world around them. The child's sense of self is enhanced, grows, and matures in the security of the family group. The family group can provide a sense of being wanted, valued, and loved. It also can provide a secure environment where children begin to see themselves as separate, distinct individuals.

Youth moving into early adolescence tend to select and be selected by those who are similar to themselves with respect to family values, social and economic status, and interests. Group expectations tend to be similar to those of family members, and youth become increasingly peer-group oriented. School and nonschool activities provide opportunities for peer-group involvement. However, while adolescents place a great deal of importance on these groups, the peer group does not replace the family or parents with respect to influence. The family continues as an important influence on young adolescents. The peer group competes with the family for the adolescents' time. The peer group is a safe place where the teens are accepted. Teens try out ideas about clothes, music, and so forth with their peers. They seek the counsel of their parents, however, in matters such as future education, beliefs, and values. Indeed, recent research shows that young adolescents view their parents as important and their relationship with them as satisfactory.

Purpose of unit activities
To help youth:
• recognize the variety of groups to which youth belong
• identify advantages and disadvantages of groups (short/long term)
• identify the expectations and responsibilities which each group role involves
• learn to effectively manage conflict that various group members can potentially create

Before the meeting
Read through Unit 2—Description. Review the activities listed in the table on page 20.
Select one or more of the following activities to do within the meeting time. You may want to schedule two meetings to use more of the activities. You will need copies of the handouts and other materials for each member.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select one or more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICE BREAKERS:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Group Trust</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Open space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. More Like A...</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Open space with chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select one or more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Labeling</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Printed labels and tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Why Do I Do It?</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #1, pen, tape, newsprint, markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rope Burn</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>Clothesline/small rope cut into 5 four-foot lengths and 20 ten-foot lengths, chairs for each youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Group Rules</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Chairs for each youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is It Worth It?</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #2, pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Belonging</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #3, pen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 1

Group Trust
15 minutes

You will need:
• room to move around

WARNING: This is a trust activity which requires physical strength for participants to support one another. If your group has difficulty being supportive, please avoid.

What to do
1) Divide the large group into smaller groups of about eight. Ask one person from each group to volunteer to be “It.”
2) Ask the other group members to form a circle around the person who is “It.” The most supportive position is to stand shoulder to shoulder facing the center with hands held at chest height and palms forward. Each person around the circle should have one foot slightly behind the other for good balance.
3) Let “It” stand in the center of the circle with feet together, arms crossed over the chest, and eyes closed.
4) Ask “It” to keep feet stationary and body straight but relaxed, then let themselves sway into the arms of those in the circle and be passed back and forth gently around the circle. Two people are to support the person at all times.
5) Let others volunteer to be “It” and repeat the trust activity.
6) Discuss how the person felt when “It” and when a group member supporting another person who was “It.”

Activity 2

More Like A...
15 minutes

You will need:
• nametags
• chairs arranged in small circles

What to do
1) Prepare the room by randomly placing nametags on chairs. (Or, members could draw names from a hat.)
2) Ask participants to enter the room and instruct them to find their proper places.
3) Inform the groups that their initial task is to discover why they were grouped as they were. (Look for similarities and differences.)
4) Allow enough time for groups to decide why they were grouped together.
5) Ask each group to report its conclusions.
6) Help the youth process this activity by asking some of the following questions:
   • How did you feel about being grouped together?
   • How did the group reach its decision?
   • In general, what are the consequences of being categorized?
   • How do we group ourselves in real life?
   • What is communicated by the categories?
   • In what sense does this activity relate to real-life situations?
   • Who led the discussion (male, female)?
   • Who did not participate? Why not?
   • Was anyone excluded or cut off?
   • Did appearance or other “baggage” make a difference in an individual’s ability to interact?
Activity 3

Labeling
15 minutes

You will need:
• printed labels
• tape

What to do
1) Before the session, prepare copies of the labels printed below so there is a label for each member. (Depending on the size of your group, you may have to use the same label twice.) If you don’t have stickers, you can make headbands or hats with labels taped to them.

2) Explain that labels placed on us by other people often limit our participation in a group.

3) Place a label on each student’s forehead or face so s/he doesn’t know what it says. Ask members to walk around and talk with as many others as possible, but to respond to the labels, not to the people.

4) After five to ten minutes, depending on the group, stop and discuss using some of the following questions:
   • How was this experience for you?
   • What does this activity tell you about labeling of people?
   • What happened to you when people responded to just your label and not to the person you really are?
   • How did you feel?

Labels (enlarge on copier and cut apart for use)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>listen to me and get me to talk</th>
<th>as you talk to me tell me I am NOT OK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>don’t let me say anything</td>
<td>don’t say anything to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disagree with all my ideas</td>
<td>look into my eyes as I talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tell me I’m OK</td>
<td>back away as you talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask me about myself</td>
<td>walk away while I talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yell at me</td>
<td>YOU talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>put me down</td>
<td>help me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ignore me</td>
<td>support my ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>look at my shoes</td>
<td>pity me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speak softly to me</td>
<td>stay away from me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 4

Why Do I Do It?
30 minutes

You will need:
• Worksheet #1
• pen
• tape
• markers
• newsprint

Note: Review this activity and consider your group’s characteristics. If your group is not able to think about abstract ideas very well, you may not want to incorporate this activity into the program.

What to do
1) Divide youth into groups of three to five people. Pass out Worksheet #1 and ask them to select the five items that best answer the question, “Why do I participate in this group?”

2) After five minutes, instruct the members in each of the small groups to read to each other the reasons on their lists. Members can change their lists. Save the lists.

3) Give each of the small groups one of the problem situations to consider.

Problem situations:
• How would you get your brother/sister to stop offering your tapes and CDs to friends?
• How would you get a friend to stop using cuss words and four-letter words all the time?
• How would you get a friend to stop talking about people behind their backs and being critical (making fun) of others?
• How would you get the student council to consider and propose activities for an ethnic celebration week?
• How would you organize your class or group to do a community service project?

Allow them ten minutes to discuss three ways they would motivate the person in the problem/situation, and have them identify a few advantages and disadvantages of the methods they choose.

4) Have a volunteer from each group write his/her solutions on a newsprint sheet to share with the whole group.

5) Once everyone has written their solutions, discuss the solutions and ask the group the following questions.

A. Did you use the “carrot” (some type of reward)?
B. Did you use the “stick” (some type of power)?
C. Did you use some sort of outside influence?
D. Did you rely only on the person in conflict with you?

Place the appropriate letter by each of the solutions.

6) Reflect on the activity by asking the following questions:

• What are the pros and cons of each method?
• What is the relationship between what you said that motivated you and how you tried to motivate others?
• How might you use this knowledge in the future?
**Activity 5**

**Rope Burn**
30 minutes

**You will need:**
- clothesline or small rope
- 5 four-foot lengths (waist belts)
- 20 ten-foot lengths
- open space

**What to do**

1) Select those scenarios that are most appropriate for your group. Then ask five or six volunteers to come forward and assign the following roles to the group individuals. (Names can change, gender too; usually in early adolescence, peer groups tend to be the same gender.) The rest of the large group should observe the volunteers in action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family setting</th>
<th>Peer settings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mom</td>
<td>Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandmother</td>
<td>Shari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>son, Bill</td>
<td>Karen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daughter, Marie</td>
<td>Erin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>son, Jack</td>
<td>leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilitator</td>
<td>facilitator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Pass out waist belts (4-foot lengths) to each group member except the leader.

3) Pass out three or four (depending on group size) 10-foot lengths to each group member and connect them to other group members.

4) Pass out the scenarios to the group facilitator.

5) After the volunteers have completed their first set of instructions, have the whole group respond to the following questions:
   - Do you ever feel like your family controls or limits you in real life?
   - Think about your friends. Do they limit or influence you so much that you can’t do as you wish or what you need to do?
   - Read aloud, “Sometimes, we feel pulled in a direction that we don’t want to be pulled in. We find that because of our family ties or peer relationships, we feel anything that happens to anyone else in the group. We might get irritated or bothered that we can’t do what we want to do because of our limited freedom or dependence on the family.”
   - What can we do to resolve the ties we presently have to our family or friends which might be causing conflict? (NOT just untie the ropes either. You want them to talk about the way they feel with whomever they are feeling the conflict or the pull.)

6) Have the volunteers act out their resolution to the conflict.
**Family Scenario**

You are at home with your family members. Place chairs in a circle no more than three feet from the center of the circle, and everyone in the particular group sits down. They talk normally among themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Question(s)</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The phone rings and Bill jumps up to get the phone.</td>
<td>What happens?</td>
<td>Come back to the circle and discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grandma left something cooking on the stove about fifteen feet away.</td>
<td>What happens?</td>
<td>Come back to the circle and discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. By now Jack is bored and he gets up and goes for a walk.</td>
<td>How does everyone feel?</td>
<td>Come back and discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Marie goes over and sits in front of her mother so her hair can be braided.</td>
<td>How does Jack feel?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now redo the scenarios, but this time when you feel the pull between someone or before you pull, say what you are feeling. Try to resolve the conflict. Then you can get your lines back from the others so you are free. Remain in the circle until all have dealt with their situation.

---

**Peer Scenario 1**

You are at tryouts for a school play. Shari or Dave has convinced your group of friends to try out for a part. Sit down in the circle of chairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Question(s)</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bob (or Jan) is the first person to get called into the room to audition. He jumps up and runs into the room.</td>
<td>What happens?</td>
<td>Come back and discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Then, Karen (or Mike) decides she doesn’t want to try out after all—she is too nervous. She gets up and leaves.</td>
<td>What happens to the friendship ties?</td>
<td>Come back and discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Next, Andy (or Erin) is called in to audition, but before he leaves, he goes around and says farewell to his friends with a hug or a handshake as if he won’t see them again.</td>
<td>What happens? How does this make everyone feel?</td>
<td>Come back and discuss.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now redo the scenarios, but this time when you feel the pull between someone, say what you are feeling. Try to resolve the conflict. Then you can get your lines back from the others so you are free. Remain in the circle until everyone has dealt with their situation.
## Peer Scenario 2

You are at the mall with a group of your friends, just cruising the mall and hanging out. Sit down in the circle of chairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Shari (or Dave) sees someone she wants to get to know better; so she tries to pick up a guy. She runs over to flirt.</th>
<th>What happens? How do you handle it?</th>
<th>Discuss.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Mike and Andy (or Jan and Erin) found something they really want, but don't have the money right now to buy. They get up and decide to go take advantage of a five-finger discount (shoplift).</td>
<td>What happens? How do you handle it?</td>
<td>Discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Karen is hungry and wants to get something to eat around the corner.</td>
<td>What happens? How does this make everyone feel?</td>
<td>Come back and discuss.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Activity 6**

**Group Rules**
15 minutes

**You will need:**
* circle of chairs

**What to do**
1) Sometimes it is important for groups to sit down and, through a series of questions, discuss issues critical to the group. The following questions are designed to help a group set rules for itself. It is not necessary to use these questions like a cookbook; it is the direction in which the questions take members that is of value.

2) Have all members sit in a circle. Make one request—people must listen to each other and not interrupt one another.
   - How do you feel when someone takes something of yours?
   - What keeps people from taking things from other people?
   - What would happen if we had no rules or laws?
   - Would not having laws or rules make any difference?
   - If we say we need rules to protect our individual rights, what rules should we have to protect group rights?
   - What are the rules in other groups you belong to?
   - Are they written down, spoken, or unspoken?
   - How are the rules made or changed?
   - Who makes the rules?

3) Let’s make a few, simple rules. Examples: One person talks at a time. Speak about yourself, not others. Respect someone’s right to remain silent. Have what is said in the group, stay in the group. Show genuine appreciation.

4) Reflect on the activity by asking youth to respond to the following questions:
   - How hard is it to follow rules set up by others?
   - What about our own rules?
   - How do people go about changing or adding to the rules?

**Activity 7**

**Is It Worth It?**
15 minutes

**You will need:**
* Worksheet #2
* pen

**What to do**
1) Pass out Worksheet #2 and read the directions. Allow ten minutes to complete.

2) When most youth are done, reflect on the responses by asking some of these questions:
   - How do you feel about your responses?
   - Would caring adults be surprised if they could see your responses?
   - Would your friends or those you are trying to fit in with be surprised?
   - What might the consequences be of some of these actions?
   - Are those consequences or results really worth it?
   - What are the alternatives?

3) Give youth the opportunity to talk to you about this activity if they need to. Remember to be supportive and understanding. Don’t get stuck on issues of right or wrong. Think about what is the most healthy situation for the youth involved. Seek help from other concerned adults or the extension agent if individuals truly need help that you cannot provide.
Activity 8

Belonging
15 minutes

You will need:
- Worksheet #3
- pen

What to do
1) Pass out Worksheet #3. Read the directions and allow ten minutes for completion.
2) Review a few questions, but allow youth to keep personal situations private. Encourage some thought about the various situations by asking:
   - In which situation do you feel more content, including someone or excluding someone?
   - What are some of the reasons for excluding people?
   - What about their side of the story? How do you think they felt?
   - How do you usually feel when someone includes you?
Think of a group you belong to or have been a part of in some way. Read through the following list and choose five items (circle number) that best answer the question, "Why do I participate in ____________?"

Feel free to add your own reasons in the spaces provided.

1. I like it; it's fun.
2. It's easy for me to do; I'm good at it.
3. I like the other people who are doing it.
4. I'm getting paid to do it.
5. I don't trust someone else to do it.
6. I get out of doing something I don't like doing by participating in this.
7. It's something that has to be done, and no one else is going to do it.
8. People trust me doing it.
9. People respect me when I do it.
10. It gives me a chance to do something I can do well.
11. It's an important thing to do.
12. If I don't do it, there will be more trouble than if I did it.
13. I've been in on the planning, so I should see it through.
15. It gives me a chance to do it the way I want to.
16. It's something I believe in.
17. I like working with the chairperson.
18. It's something that can help me develop new skills.
19. I may not be getting money, but I'm getting something else.
20. If I do this, then I'll get ________________.
21. It's a good way to make new friends and meet important people.
22. It's something I've always wanted to do.
23. It will help a lot of people who really need it.

Others ________________

______________________
### Worksheet 2

**Is It Worth It? Checklist**

What would you do to be included in a group?

Think about a group you are or want to be a part of, and then fill out this checklist (√).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In order to be part of this group, I would:</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>MAYBE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk giving up friends I have now</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do something I think is wrong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do something I know is against the law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink alcohol</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do something that might harm me physically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do something that would cost a lot of money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do something that might interfere with my schoolwork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a snob</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change my behavior, act differently</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do something caring adults would not approve of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do something against my religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Belonging

One of the best feelings for most people is the feeling of belonging or being included by others, yet practically everyone has felt left out or pushed out by other people at least once. Think about such times in your life. Write down the situation in one column and write your feelings about it in the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITUATION</th>
<th>YOUR FEELINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A time when you included someone:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A time when you were included:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A time when you were left out or excluded:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A time when you excluded someone:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 3—Self-evaluation

Description
The sense of self is initially both fragile and a bit confusing. It is fragile because young children are dependent on their family for everything from food and shelter to emotional warmth and a sense of belonging. A sense of separateness combined with a growing sense of control can be confusing. Young adolescents tend to operate in two worlds: home/family and other—composed of the community/school/peers. Each world influences the developing individual to varying degrees.

Self-development requires individuals to evaluate themselves with respect to the expectations of the family, their peers, and many others. Young adolescents begin to have expectations of their own. Values play an important role in self-evaluation. They are the criteria used to conduct self-evaluation. As youth move into young adolescence, they compare their real self with their ideal self. Both selves are influenced by family, peers, and society at large. They begin to recognize and understand their personal qualities. These are especially important during early adolescence. Friends and friendship, including being a friend, making and keeping friends, take up a great deal of adolescents’ time. As they move into even wider circles in the community, they have to create friendship groups. Social acceptance or popularity is a normal concern during adolescence. This is the concern for how others within and beyond the friendship groups regard the individual. Physical appearance and athletic ability are also important to self-evaluation during early adolescence. Both girls and boys may struggle with concerns about their appearance during periods of fairly rapid physical growth.

Gradually, youth may evaluate themselves based on an acceptance of reality while at the same time using their ideal selves as goals for improvement. They may need assistance in balancing reality with their ideals. Concerned adults and friends can be helpful here if they accept individuals as they are and also provide support for growth and improvement. Just as youth experience physical development at different times in adolescence, self-development and self-evaluation occur at different times for different individuals.

Purpose of unit activities
To help youth:

• identify their personal standards or ideals
• identify the source of their personal standards
• develop strategies to effectively utilize criticism and compliments
• identify and adopt personally chosen standards

Before the meeting
Read through Unit 3—Description. Review the activities listed on page 34.

Select one or more of the following activities to do within the meeting time. You may want to schedule two meetings to use more of the activities. You will need to have copies of the handouts and other materials for each member.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICE BREAKERS:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select one or more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Human Knots</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Open space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Magic Box</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Index cards, pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select one or more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What Are You Like?</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Open space, posters with writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Discussion of Influences and Values</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Overhead #1, #2, and #3, projector screen or flip chart paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Values Continuum</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>Signs from “What Are You Like?,” tape to hang signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I’m Okay—Praising Myself</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>Paper bag puppets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tower Building</td>
<td>45 min.</td>
<td>Paper, rubber bands, pencils, paper cups, tape, Worksheet #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The Jelly Bean Game</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Jelly beans, slips of paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Learning to Cope</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Overhead #4, projector screen or flip chart paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Six Values</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #2, pencil, poster/chalkboard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Activity 1**

**Human Knots**

15 minutes

You will need:
- open space

**What to do**

1) Divide the group into smaller groups of odd numbers (either five or seven works best). These small groups are to remain standing and form a circle.

2) Explain that they are to reach their right hand into the circle and grab someone else’s hand, but it can’t be the person next to them. They must do the same with their left hand, but it can’t be the same person who is holding their right hand.

3) Ask them to work together to “untie” their human knot and end up in a complete circle again (without letting go of hands).

**Activity 2**

**Magic Box**

1.5 minutes

You will need:
- index cards
- pen

**What to do**

1) Tell the members to imagine that a parcel service has delivered a box to the house of each member. The boxes can be any size and can contain anything.

2) Give the youth an index card or paper and pencil. Have them write down what they want their boxes to contain. Tell them they will hand the cards in and what they have written will be read to the group. They don’t have to sign the cards.

3) After collecting the cards, read each one to the group. Be accepting and make sure the group is accepting of all items.

4) Discuss why some things may be important to one and not to another.
   - In what ways do each of the things suggested have more than one value?
   - How do we often judge another’s values by our own?
   - In what ways can we be more accepting of others’ values?
   - What can we gain by interacting with people whose values differ from ours?

**Options:**

1) Members can read their items to the group.

2) Have the group decide on one item that could be in the box that they all would like.

3) Discuss what they would put in the box for a parent to find.
### Activity 3

**What Are You Like?**

20 minutes

**You will need:**
- room to move
- posters

**What to do**

1) Place the papers/posters with choices on opposite sides of the room. The choice may include any of the following:
   - Are you more like a Volkswagen or a Cadillac?
   - Are you more like a ping-pong paddle or a ping-pong ball
   - Are you more like a roller skate or a pogo stick?
   - Are you more like the sun or the moon?
   - Are you more like a mountain or a valley?
   - Are you more like breakfast or dinner?
   - Are you more like summer or winter?
   - Are you more like a director or an actor?
   - Are you more like a follower or a leader?

2) To start the activity, all youth are to stand in the center of the room. Ask a question such as, “Are you more like a Volkswagen or a Cadillac?” Members should decide which choice they identify with the most and stand on the side of the room with the poster.

3) Each participant then should find a partner on the side s/he has chosen and discuss with the partner the reason for the choice.

4) After the partners discuss for a minute, everyone then returns to the center of the room to repeat the activity with another choice. This time, once they have decided on a side, they are to find a new partner.

5) Discussion:
   - How do different situations affect how you act or the decisions you make?
   - In what ways could this change in one year?
   - What things did you find you had in common with others?
   - What in your life experiences do you think influenced some of your choices?

### Activity 4

**Discussion of Influences and Values**

15 minutes

**You will need:**
- Overhead #1, #2, and #3
- Overhead projector and screen
- or put information from Overhead #1, #2 and #3 on newsprint

**What to do**

1) Values are a part of our definition of self. Values help us know who we are. Values are beliefs, attitudes, and principles to which we are strongly committed. They are guidelines or standards by which we make daily decisions. It is important to realize that we do have opinions and that they project our “selves.” In addition our reactions to others’ values can affect their view of us. (Show Overhead #1.)

2) A value is something that is important to you. A standard is how far you want to go with a value. Ask the youth to share examples of values and standards that came out of the earlier activities. Explain how they relate to everyday living.

3) Our values are developed through our contact with things or people in everyday life. (Show Overhead #2.) The people around us play a very important role in the development of values and standards. Our parents and family members are two very big influences in developing values and standards. Ask if anyone can identify some value or standard which their parents have passed on or which has influenced them.

(Continued on next page)
Other influential groups include our church, community, and even our country. Our own experiences play the most important role in developing values and standards. It is important to recognize the role that people and things around us play in developing our values and standards. Values and standards are a very important part of who we really are.

4) We use values and standards every day. They are used in many different ways. Can anyone think of how we do use values and standards? (Show Overhead #3.)

5) Values and standards are a part of everyday life and are developed over time. We cannot just say “I am going to develop a value or a standard today.” We are influenced by the different experiences and people we are around from day-to-day. Values and standards make us who we are and what we are. The decisions we make and the different experiences we have influence who we are. They also influence society and how society views us.

What to do

1) Post signs with the following words on the walls around the room:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGREE</td>
<td>NOT SURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISAGREE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Explain to the group that you will be asking a series of questions about a variety of issues and everyone will be voting on these questions all at once without talking. Each person is to stand under the sign on the wall that best describes his/her opinion on each topic. Everyone has the option of standing under the “Not sure” sign.

3) Possible voting sentences:
- I had a good day yesterday.
- I would like to try hang-gliding. I would like to try scuba diving
- I would like to change something about my school.
- I like yogurt. I like liver. I like pizza.
- I think of myself as a happy person.
- I think it is OK for girls and women to cry.
- I think it is OK for boys and men to cry.
- I have a private place to go when I want to be alone.
(Think of more sentences on your own. Include other items of this nature related to what’s going on at the present for you and the group.)

4) Either on a piece of paper or on a handout, have the youth write or answer the following unfinished sentences:

I learned...
I was surprised to find...
I discovered...
I was happy to find....
I was displeased that...
A person participating in this activity is likely to learn...
I see that I need to...

5) Discussion questions:
- What did this session mean to you?
- What do you think the group learned from this?
- What does this tell us about ourselves? About our values?
**ACTIVITY 6**

I'm OK—Praising Myself
30 minutes

You will need:
* paper bag puppets
* room to move

**What to do**
1) As a group, discuss bragging. Do you like to be around someone who brags all the time? Is it good to praise yourself? Then tell the group, “Yes, it is OK to praise yourself, both to yourself and to others in order to drive out negative thoughts.”

2) Explain that there are acceptable ways to say I'm OK. Give some examples using the following phrases:
   - I feel good about the way I did . . .
   - I was surprised to have won . . .
   - I am pleased I was able to . . .
   - I'm glad I made others proud . . .

3) Using their puppets, participants should think of one thing they are proud of that they can share with the group. Give feedback to those who participate. Try to get everyone to share something.

4) Without the puppets, everyone should think of one thing to share with the group that they are proud of. Give feedback to those who participate. Try to get everyone to share something.

5) Discuss:
   - Who likes to hear you praise yourself?
   - Do you praise yourself much at home? At school?
   - How do you feel about praising yourself?

**Option**
Depending upon your group, youth could break into small groups and prepare role-playing scenarios to share with the rest of the group what it is that they are proud of. Follow the steps above, but instead of using puppets, use the role-playing scenarios.

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**ACTIVITY 7**

Tower Building
45 minutes

You will need:
* Worksheet #1
* paper cups
* pencils
* rubber bands
* scrap paper
* tape

**What to do**
1) Divide participants into groups of eight to twelve.
2) Have each group select one member to act as the observer.
3) Give each observer a copy of Worksheet #1. Distribute the other materials to each group.
4) Have participants move through the task of building a tower (using the materials provided) according to the following schedule:
   a. Each group should work for five to ten minutes while being watched by the observer. (The younger the group, the shorter the time necessary.)
   b. On a given signal from you, all work on the tower building should stop and the observers should discuss the first group of questions with their group.
   c. Continue with another five to ten minute work period. This should be followed by a discussion led by the observers of the second series of questions.
   d. Continue with a final five to ten minutes of work. (This can vary a little to give all groups time to complete their plans.) Observers should lead a discussion of the third set of questions.
   e. Ask each group to explain to the others what their tower means to them, what experiences they had within their group, and what feelings they had about the experience.

(Continued on next page)
f. To reinforce the experience, participants might want to write down what they learned about themselves and about working in groups.

4) Bring the groups together. Ask participants what they learned about themselves in a group. How did the groups react to each other? What did participants learn about leadership? Cooperation? Competition?

What to do

1) Read the following paragraphs to the group:

You have peers; I have peers. We all have them. What are peers? They are people our own age. Your peers are the other class members; my peers are other teachers or leaders. Whether you are aware of it or not, your peers [friends and acquaintances] have a great deal of influence on you. This influence is called peer pressure.

Think about it a minute. Why does a particular brand of jeans, style of shoes, or fashion fad seem to spread through your school? It all begins with the influence of one or two people and grows from there. Today that influence often starts from a popular movie or television program.

Peer pressure can be both good and bad. An example of good peer pressure is to do well in school: A test is scheduled for tomorrow and two of your classmates want you to meet with them after school to study.

We hear more about bad peer pressure than good peer pressure. Two examples of this are:

• You are with friends after school. They are smoking and laughing at you because you won’t smoke.
• You are in a record shop with friends. They decide to shoplift for kicks. You are afraid. They call you “chicken.”

2) Form groups of four to eight youth.

3) Place jelly beans or other treats in the center of each group.

4) Give one member of each group a slip of paper that says, “Do not take or eat (candy). Resist all efforts of anyone attempting to make you eat.”

5) Give everyone else in the group a slip of paper saying, “Eat the (candy) and encourage anyone not eating (candy) to do so.”

6) Let the group interact with this information for about five minutes. It may help if you also attempt to coerce anyone who isn’t supposed to eat the (candy).

7) Discussion:

• Ask those who were not to eat how it felt and why.
• Ask other group members how they felt, pushing someone to do something s/he didn’t want to do.

Option

Repeat the Jelly Bean Game after going over “Learning to Cope.” (See Activity 9, page 40, and Overhead #4.) Be sure to ask groups how they did or did not use the strategy offered in “Learning to Cope.”
What to do
Show Overhead #4 and discuss the material based on the following outline:

When we’re faced with peer pressure, we don’t always know how to handle it in the best way. We need to learn some ways to help us deal with this pressure and remain true to ourselves.

1) First, decide how you feel about the situation. Do you really want to go along with the group? Do you want to get out from under the pressure?

2) Say “no.” Keep repeating it and be firm. Don’t back down.

3) Don’t make excuses. Saying, “I just don’t want to” is OK, but it gives others a chance to “talk around the excuse” and then you find yourself in a corner.

4) Use your credit. When you are part of a group of friends, you like them and they like you. They value you for who you are, and you have a special credit with them. You can turn this around by saying some of these things:
   - You mean I have to ______ to be your friend?
   - If I have to ______ to be your friend, then I don’t want to be your friend.
   - I like you and want to be around you, but not if I have to ______.
   - If you are my friends, why would you want me to do something I don’t want to do?

5) Recruit a friend. Turn to someone else in your group who seems to feel as you do or does not want to participate, and suggest that you and your friend will be fine not participating.
   - We don’t drink, but you go ahead if you need to.
   - If you want to smoke, that is up to you. We don’t like it.
   - If you are going to steal something, we don’t want to be involved.

6) Delay the decision. These are some things you can say to put off deciding.
   - Not now, maybe later.
   - I don’t feel like it right now.
   - I’ll tell you later.

Delaying a decision is good for handling some pressures when you want to think about a commitment, for example, when you want to do something, but aren’t sure you have the time for the activity. The disadvantage is that you will have to give the person an answer eventually. The issue isn’t resolved, just delayed.

Peer pressure is difficult for everyone to handle, even for adults. You feel pressured into doing things you don’t want to do throughout your life. You may feel you are faced with going along with the gang or losing your friends. Today we have looked at some alternatives to help you deal with peer pressure.
**Activity 10**

**Six Values**
30 minutes

**You will need:**
- Worksheet #2
- pen
- posters/flip chart
- markers

**What to do**

1) Give each member a copy of Worksheet #2 and a pencil. Set up the activity with the following story.

> "You have just been told that you must move to a new town—tomorrow. There will not be time to pack much; so you will only be able to take a few of the things in your home with you at this time. However, later you will be able to send for some of the things you leave behind."

- Think of two things in your home that you believe you could do without for a short time—not forever, but for a few days or a week. Write their names or make a quick picture on the worksheet to remind yourself of your answer.

- Now I’d like you to decide upon two things you would be willing to give away forever to someone who might need them. Write the names or make pictures of these on your paper, too.

- Finally, choose two things in your home that you simply must have—that you couldn’t do without. Write or draw those two possessions on your paper.

2) Working in a group of four people, decide on two things you could not do without.

3) After groups have had time to complete this task, ask a spokesperson from each group to report the results to the total group. Record their responses on a flip chart or chalkboard. Show the group the values represented in these collective answers.

**Option**

Encourage youth to take this task home and share it or discuss it with a concerned adult or caregiver. Be sure to ask youth the next time you see them if they shared the activity with their parents and how it went.
Worksheet 1

Tower Building

Observer's Guidelines

Try to observe:
- Leadership patterns within the group
- Personal commitment or involvement of each member

When reporting to your group:
- Try as much as possible to ask questions rather than give facts. If the group members discover what's happening, it is more effective than having you tell them.
- Also give your reflections on what was happening in the group.

Observer's Questions

Discussion questions after first time period of tower building:
1. Does your group have a plan?
2. Does your group have a leader, or are a number of people sharing leadership?
3. How did the group go about making plans?
4. How many people were involved in acceptance of the plan if there was one?
5. How committed were most people to this plan if there was a plan?
6. Does anyone feel left out?
7. What can the group do to involve some people who are left out or are not interested?
8. Do you feel your group is utilizing its members and materials most efficiently?

Discussion questions after second time period of tower building:
1. How do you feel about tower building now?
2. Is leadership shared or concentrated between one or two people?

Discussion questions after third time period of tower building:
1. Has leadership changed from the first building experience to the third building experience?
2. How do you feel about the tower?
3. Does everyone feel that the tower is satisfactorily completed?
Six Values

Two things I could do without for a short time:

1

2

Two things I could give away forever:

1

2

Two things I could not do without:

1

2
VALUES and STANDARDS

Value: belief, idea, or attitude that is important to you

Standard: how far you want to go with a value
ORIGIN of VALUES

- Parents and family
- Community groups
- Own experiences
- Contact with people
- Contact with things
HOW WE USE VALUES

• To make personal decisions
• To determine if we are OK
• To please someone else
• To get positive or negative attention
• To improve communications
LEARNING to COPE

• Decide how you feel about the situation.

• Say "no."

• Don’t make excuses.

• Use your credit.

• Recruit a friend.

• Delay the decision.
Unit 4—My Successes and Failures

Description
Success is usually described as meeting or exceeding expectations for achievement in a given situation. Youth need clearly expressed expectations with respect to achievement or behavior. They require support as they learn about expectations. Failure to meet expectations is perceived as disappointing or failing adults. Since children are concrete thinkers, they view only two results—one either succeeds or fails. As individuals move into early adolescence, with its increasing facility with abstract thinking, they can begin to understand that many, although not all, expectations exist in a continuum. There are numerous points between success and failure. Some situations require adherence to right and wrong, and others have a continuum of responses. Youngsters need assistance in understanding that disappointment isn’t the same as failure.

Adolescents need to accept responsibility for their successes and disappointments in meeting their own and others’ expectations. Adolescents learn about themselves through such experiences. It is important that these experiences take place in supportive settings. The family is a primary setting for youth to be supported as they learn about themselves. The family can provide the unconditional love that cheers success, cushions disappointment, and sends its members forth to try again, secure in the knowledge that they are OK.

Purpose of unit activities
To help youth:
• recognize causes for personal successes and failures
• understand emotional reactions to success and failure
• cope with success and failure
• learn from success and failure

Before the meeting
Read through Unit 4—Description. Review the activities listed below.
Select one or more of the following activities to do within the meeting time. You may want to schedule two meetings to use more of the activities. You will need to make copies of the handouts and other materials for each member.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select one or more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICE BREAKERS:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Card Me</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Index cards, pencils, open space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Zip Zap Zoom</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Open space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select one or more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pat on the Back</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #1, pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Being Successful</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #2, pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Good Planning vs. Good Luck</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Index cards with scenarios, poster board or chalkboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Silver Lining</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #3, pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I Meant to But . . .</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Worksheet #4, pen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Activity 1**

**Card Me**
15 minutes

**You will need:**
- pencil
- an index card for each participant
- open space for mingling

**What to do**
1) Pass out cards and have each youth write three things about him/herself on the card. DO NOT write a name.
2) Collect the cards and throw them in the air. Each person then grabs a card and uses the information given to find out who wrote it.
3) Once s/he finds out who the card belongs to, s/he can introduce the person to the group.

**Activity 2**

**Zip Zap Zoom**
10 minutes

**You will need:**
- open space to make a circle

**What to do**
1) Arrange the group in a circle with youth standing shoulder to shoulder and facing inward. Be sure that everyone finds out the name of the persons to the left and to the right.
2) Ask for a volunteer to be “It.” This person should stand in the middle of the circle. “It” wants to get out of the center and does so by trying to confuse people in the circle.
3) “It” will point to a person and call out Zip or Zap or Zoom. Depending on what “It” says when pointing, the person who is pointed to has three seconds to:

   - **Zip** means: say the name of the person on the right
   - **Zap** means: say the name of the person on the left
   - **Zoom** means: say his/her own name

   If the person pointed to does not make the time limit or says the wrong name, he or she must now be “It” and must continue calling out Zip or Zap or Zoom to anyone in the circle until another person gets confused.

**Activity 3**

**Pat on the Back**
15 minutes

**You will need:**
- Worksheet #1
- pen

**What to do**
1) Pass out Worksheet #1 and ask youth to think about the things which motivate them the most to set and achieve a goal.
2) The handout is a list of possible rewards that might appeal to them. Ask them to write yes, or no, or maybe on the line to indicate whether the reward is satisfying to them.
3) Then discuss the following with the youth:
   - What five motivators are most important to you?
   - What rewards usually are associated with success in school?
   - What rewards usually are associated with success in sports?
   - What rewards usually are associated with success in the arts?
   - What rewards usually are associated with youth organizations?
   - What symbolizes success with friends and peers?
   - If you could achieve your most important goals, what rewards would you probably receive?
**Activity 4**

**Being Successful**
15 minutes

**You will need:**
- Worksheet #2
- pen

What to do

1) Pass out Worksheet #2 and explain that they are to read each characteristic and place a plus or a minus sign by statements that describe achievers and nonachievers. The plus sign describes achievers; the minus describes nonachievers. The question-mark sign means they are unsure of the answer.

2) Once the group has completed their activity, share the following information. Some studies have been done to find out about what makes people successful and achievers. Many people agree that an achiever has some of the following characteristics:
   - Skills—has ability and education in his/her interest area
   - Need to succeed—has motivation and ambition to meet challenges
   - Problem solving—can figure out better ways to do things and find creative solutions
   - Self-awareness—is realistic about his/her strengths and weaknesses
   - Positive self-image—has confidence in his/her own abilities
   - Self-motivated—is goal-oriented, wants to change for the better
   - Responsible—thinks about consequences of his/her actions
   - Plans for success—plans to achieve goals; does not wait for things to happen
   - Uses resources—has received help from others

3) Be sure to share with the youth that it is just about impossible for one person to have all of the above characteristics of success and achievement at the same time. The key below is just a guide for discussion and does not measure the requirements for every person to be successful. Be sure to emphasize that this activity is a good way to discuss and share opinions about being successful.

**Key:**

1. - 6. - 11. + 16. -
3. + 8. + 13. + 18. +
5. - 10. + 15. + 20. +

**Activity 5**

**Good Planning vs. Good Luck**
20 minutes

**You will need:**
- index cards with scenarios
- posters and markers

What to do

1) Divide youths into small groups of three or four (depending on size of the group).

2) Pass out a set of scenario cards to each group. (See situations which follow.)

3) Explain that the groups must decide whether each of the scenarios was caused by planning or luck (either good or bad).

4) Encourage them to discuss the situation and explore the causes of the situation. If a bad outcome occurred, have them discuss what they could have done (plans or actions) to make a good outcome occur. Have them answer the questions on each of the cards.

5) After about ten minutes, have the groups share their responses and explanations and write them on the board or paper.

6) Discussion questions:
   - What can be learned from each of the situations?
   - Help youth to see that in certain situations, they have the ability to act to control a situation, and sometimes they have very little control

(Continued on next page)
(such as when working with other people or the weather).
  • Consider the differences among the responses to each question.

Option
Ask youth to think of times in their lives when they did or did not have control over the situation they found themselves in. Have them write down those times in a journal or on a piece of paper. Encourage them to think of how they felt. If they could react to either situation again, what would they do differently?

Good luck versus good planning scenarios
Copy situations onto 3 x 5-inch notecards. Make one set of notecards for each group.

SITUATION:
Jendi made plans to go on a Saturday bike ride with Cathy and Jolene. They were to meet at 8:30 a.m. at the drugstore. When they got to the drugstore, it was raining. They had to cancel their big bike ride.
  • Was this luck or planning?
  • How much control did the girls have?
  • How would you deal with the situation above?

SITUATION:
Randy left his skateboard on the sidewalk while he ran into the grocery store to get a candy bar and a blow pop. His skateboard was gone when he came out.
  • Was this luck or planning?
  • How much control did Randy have?
  • How would you deal with the situation above?

SITUATION:
Zach took his history book home with him to study for the test he had the next day. When he got home he watched MTV, played catch with his neighbor Brian, ate dinner, watched “Tool Time,” and called his friend before going to sleep. He took the history test and was disappointed to receive a D+.
  • Was this luck or planning?
  • How much control did Zach have?
  • How would you deal with the situation above?

SITUATION:
When Ann Marie called her boyfriend, Calvin, she didn’t know he had just gotten in a fight with his mom about the laundry he didn’t do. When Calvin said he was in a bad mood and had to go, Ann Marie’s feelings were hurt; so she hung up on him.
  • Was this luck or planning?
  • How much control did Ann Marie have?
  • How much control did Calvin have?
  • How would you deal with the situation above?

Other situations can be added to better fit your area or group. You can be creative.
Activity 6

Silver Lining
20 minutes

You will need:
• Worksheet #3
• pen

What to do
1) Divide the youth into small groups of three to four participants. Explain to the youth that part of being a success and an achiever is making the best of our situations and learning from difficulties and the positive situations we face. Part of dealing with our successes and our failures is to look back and learn. It is just like that saying, “In every rain cloud, there is a silver lining.” Can anyone explain what that means? Explain that when we look for and find the silver lining in a difficult or disappointing situation, there can be no failure!

2) Hand out Worksheet #3 (one per group). Read the following directions. Below are four scenarios; two are successful and two are disappointing. Have your group select one of each and together decide what the person in both situations can learn from his or her experience. Also provide suggestions about what he or she should do next.

3) After about ten minutes, bring the whole group back together for discussion. Ask the group(s) to select an individual (in each group) to share ideas from the group. Go through the rest of the situations. Be sure, if the group has not considered the questions below, that during discussion the group reflects on the following questions for disappointing situations.
   • What did it take to get this far?
   • What was learned that was not known before?
   • What was learned from the efforts?
   • What can be done differently the next time?
   • What was gained from the efforts?
   • What was given up to get this far?
   • Who should be thanked for helping the person to get this far?
   • What can be done to share the experience with others?
   • What were the benefits of trying?

Discuss for successful situations:
• What did it take to get to this level of achievement?
• What was learned that was not known before?
• What sacrifices were made? What can be learned from the efforts?
• Who should be thanked because of their help in reaching the goal?
• What can be done to share the achievements with others?
• What can be done to help others be successful?
**ACTIVITY 7**

**I Meant to But...**
20 minutes

**You will need:**
- Worksheet #4
- pen

**What to do**
1) Pass out Worksheet #4 and explain that sometimes we make excuses when things don’t go the way we planned or when we aren’t as successful as we wanted to be. Sometimes we use excuses to avoid dealing with a situation. If we can become aware of the excuses we make, then we can change our actions before we have to rely on excuses to make up for our lack of success.

2) Ask youth to read through all of the situations and select four of the six options. Complete the sentences in the way that best applies to them.

3) Once they have completed the four sentences (give them about ten minutes), have them think of ways they can change these excuses for each situation.

4) Discussion questions:
   - Look at the excuses you gave. Do you blame someone else or pass the buck to someone else? Is this really fair? True? Helpful?
   - When you made the excuses, who was affected?
   - How do you think that excuses can get in the way of positively dealing with a situation?
   - How does making excuses help you take or lose control of a situation?
Worksheet

Pat on the Back

INSTRUCTIONS: Check (✓) one response for each numbered item to indicate if the reward is satisfying to you.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>MAYBE</th>
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</table>

1. getting a good report card
2. checking it off your list
3. knowing you did a good job
4. getting money
5. getting a compliment from someone you respect
6. scoring a point
7. beating the competition
8. producing something worthwhile
9. doing it perfectly
10. hearing the crowd cheer
11. getting a smile from a friend
12. gaining inner satisfaction
13. being chosen to fill the job
14. having a newspaper article written about you
15. making the team
16. getting an award
17. having your success mentioned in letters or phone calls to relatives
18. receiving a pat on the back
19. receiving a hug from someone important to you
20. getting recognition at an awards assembly
21. achieving a high rank or position
22. receiving a certificate of merit
23. getting an “A” on a test
24. hearing your close friend say, “That’s great.”
25. getting accepted to a select group based on your performance
26. doing better than your friend

Others: ____________________________________________
Being Successful

Place plus symbols (+) beside the characteristics that describe an achiever or person who is successful. Place minus symbols (−) beside the characteristics that describe nonachievers. Place question marks (?) beside numbered items when you are unsure of the answers.

A person who achieves or is successful is someone who . . .

1. _____ only cares about how he or she looks.
2. _____ lets other people make all the decisions.
3. _____ sets goals he or she will have to work at in order to achieve.
4. _____ thinks about how actions will affect other people.
5. _____ wants to do just the bare minimum to get by.
6. _____ feels he or she cannot do anything well.
7. _____ is afraid to take risks.
8. _____ makes good use of time.
9. _____ is only concerned about being very popular.
10. _____ approaches problems creatively.
11. _____ understands own strengths and weaknesses.
12. _____ does absolutely everything well.
13. _____ is energetic and hard working.
14. _____ gives up easily when things don't go as planned.
15. _____ wants to achieve success.
16. _____ always does what other people want.
17. _____ will keep working on a job no matter how difficult it is.
18. _____ has some talent or ability in the area he or she has chosen for achievement.
19. _____ gets help from others when it is needed.
20. _____ wants to do the best job possible.
Worksheet 3

Silver Lining

Below are four scenarios; two are success stories and two are disappointments. Have your group select one of each and together decide what the person in both situations can learn from his or her experience. Also provide suggestions about what he or she should do next.

**SITUATION A**
Jona has her favorite art work to display in the young artists’ art competition. She tells her art instructor that she wants to win first place. In the afternoon, she finds out she did not place in the competition.
- What can Jona learn from this situation?
- What should Jona do next?

**SITUATION B**
Dave just learned that he did not pass the written part of the examination that would qualify him to be a lifeguard this summer.
- What can Dave learn from this situation?
- What should Dave do next?

**SITUATION C**
Sheila has been studying for the final exam in math for the last two weeks. She wants to receive an “A” on it to raise her grade for the semester from a “B+” to an “A”. She gets her test back and has a grade of 96 percent written on it.
- What can Sheila learn from this experience?
- What should Sheila do next?

**SITUATION D**
Craig wants to play a part in the community theater’s upcoming play. After the auditions, he gets a call from the director letting him know he received the part.
- What can Craig learn from this situation?
- What should Craig do next?

**SUGGESTIONS TO MENTION FOR DISAPPOINTMENTS**
When thinking about the more disappointing situations, ask yourselves . . .
- What did it take to get this far?
- What was learned that was not known before?
- What was learned from the efforts?
- What can be done differently the next time?
- What was gained from the efforts?
- What was given up to get this far?
- Who should be thanked for helping him/her get this far?
- What can be done to share the experience with others?
- What were the benefits of trying?

**SUGGESTIONS TO MENTION FOR SUCCESSES**
When thinking about the successful situations, ask yourselves the following questions:
- What did it take to get to this level of achievement?
- What was learned that was not known before?
- What sacrifices were made?
- What can be learned from the efforts?
- Who should be thanked for helping him/her reach the goal?
- What can be done to share the achievements with others?
- What can be done to help others be successful?
Worksheet 4

I Meant to But . . . Situations

I meant to finish my homework but ______________________________________________________________________

I meant to keep my friend's secret but ______________________________________________________________________

I meant to be on time but ______________________________________________________________________

I meant to tell the truth but ______________________________________________________________________

I meant to keep my room clean but ______________________________________________________________________

I meant to help at home but ______________________________________________________________________
Description
Throughout early adolescence, individuals learn to define themselves in terms of their abilities or strengths. Ideally, an individual’s abilities are congruent with interests. They try out interests that test their abilities. Some interests are pursued only briefly or not at all. There may be barriers that limit pursuit of particular interests, such as lack of time, money, or ability. Also, young adolescents may drop an interest if it is not supported by the peer group. However, exploring new interests is part of growing.

Youth may require assistance in sorting their abilities and interests. As decisions become more serious in terms of consequences, youth need to have a good understanding of their own strengths and limitations. Goals, such as those dealing with future plans, career, and education, require a realistic understanding of oneself.

Positive goals and dreams for the future can be incentives for acting today. When youth lose hope for a bright future, their actions often reflect this in self-destructive behavior. However, there is power involved in setting goals that are meaningful to an individual and able to be achieved. While not all goals are achievable, adolescents need to understand the connection between hard work and goal achievement. Being able to achieve a goal and being interested in achieving a particular goal are not enough. Goal achievement results not from magic but from sustained efforts or work. Athletes perfect their skills by daily practice as do musicians and others. Long-term and short-term goals are achieved in a variety of ways, but all require sustained work.

The dreams of childhood are not always tempered by an understanding of our limitations. As adolescents come to understand themselves, their interests, and their abilities, they also must face up to their limitations. All of their dreams can’t become achievable goals. Individuals must contend with other situations that may set limits on their goals regardless of their abilities and strengths. Further, they simply don’t have time to pursue all of their interests; they have to choose.

Purpose of unit activities
To help youth:
• connect personal strengths to long-term goals
• identify limitations that interfere with goal achievement
• identify positive and negative role models that are linked to identified goals
• maintain personal standards and goals under pressure

Before the meeting
Read through Unit 5—Description, which will provide you with background information for the unit. Review activities listed on page 60. Select one or more of the activities to do within the meeting time. You may want to schedule two meetings to use more of the activities. You will need to have copies of handouts and other materials for each member.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Materials</th>
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</table>
| **ICE BREAKERS:**  
1. Which Famous Person Am I?  
2. Birthday/Height Lineup  
15 min.  
10 min. | Blank mailing labels or stickers  
Room to move around  
2 small balls or a spoon and fork |
| **These two activities from Unit 3 complement this unit:**  
—Activity 8  
The Jelly Bean Game  
—Activity 10  
Six Values | | |
| **Select one or more**  
4. What Would You Do If . . . ?  
5. Step-by-Step  
6. Goal-line Strategy  
7. Removing Barriers  
8. Obstacle Course  
9. Identifying Your Resources | 15 min.  
15 min.  
30 min.  
20 min.  
20-30 min.  
15 min. | Worksheet #1, pen  
Worksheet #2, pen  
Worksheet #3, pen  
Blank paper and pen  
Worksheet #4  
Worksheet #5, pen, posters, tape, local phone book |
**Activity 1**

**Which Famous Person Am I?**

15 minutes

You will need:
- plain mailing labels or stickers

**What to do**

1) Make enough labels with the name of a famous personality on each so there is one for each person in the group.

2) Ask each person to place a sticker with a famous personality’s name on their forehead so they can not see who they are.

3) Explain that each individual is to figure out the type of person or the name of the person they are; they do this by talking and interacting with others. Treat everyone as if they were the person that their sticker indicates, but no one can actually say the type or name the person.

4) After about ten minutes, see how many youth were able to guess the name on their labels based on the way others treated them.

5) Possible labels or make up your own. (Make sure names selected will be recognized by youth in the group.)

- George Bush
- Bill Clinton
- Hillary Clinton
- a brain surgeon
- Richard Simmons
- Arsenio Hall
- Dan Rather
- Jay Leno
- Julia Roberts
- Oprah Winfrey
- Bill Cosby
- Cindy Crawford
- Billy Ray Cyrus
- Michael Jackson
- Michael Jordan
- Larry Bird
- Whitney Houston
- a palm reader
- Murphy Brown
- a school principal
- Roseanne Barr
- Reba McIntyre
- Kathy Lee Gifford
- Connie Chung
- Ed McMahon
- Ross Perot

6) If your group is large and you can’t think of enough famous personalities, divide the groups into several smaller groups of eight to ten and use the same eight to ten celebrities with each group. Allow the individuals to interact only with those in their small group.

**Activity 2**

**Birthday/Height Lineup**

15 minutes

You will need:
- room to move around

**What to do**

1) Tell the group to first line up in order of their birthday during the year, but there is one catch—they cannot talk!

2) Clues:
   - Use your fingers to communicate.
   - You might have to tell the group which end of the line is December or January.

3) Now have the group line up by height, but with their eyes closed!
**Activity 3**

**What?**
10 minutes

**You will need:**
- 2 balls
- a spoon or fork

**What to do**
1) Have everyone stand in a circle facing the center.
2) Person 1 takes a ball (or spoon), hands it to the person on the right, and says, “This is a banana.” The person on the right is confused and asks the first person, “A what?” The first player repeats, “A banana.”
3) Person 2 hands the ball to the next person on the right and says, “This is a banana.” Now, person 3 is confused and asks, “A what?” Then person 2 turns to person 1 and asks, “A what?” The first person answers, “A banana!” Then person 2 answers, “A banana!” Now, person 3 can pass the ball to person 4, saying, “This is a banana!” (The whole process begins again.)
4) Now to make things more confusing, the first person introduces the other ball (or fork) by passing it to the person on the left saying, “This is a pineapple!” And the process continues on.

**Activity 4**

**What Would You Do If . . . ?**
15 minutes

**You will need:**
- Worksheet #1
- pencil

**What to do**
1) Pass out Worksheet #1.
2) Ask the youth to think about what they would do in each of the situations on the handout. Their responses will help them discover what they want and value.

**Activity 5**

**Step-by-Step**
15 minutes

**You will need:**
- Worksheet #2
- pencil

**What to do**
1) Hand out Worksheet #2 to each person. Explain that there are fourteen statements which reflect what happens at each of the achievement steps. Before each statement, write the number that corresponds to each step.
2) After about ten minutes, check their answers with the key below. These answers are open to debate and serve as a guide for discussion.

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3) Discuss how and why people may have responded differently. Ask them to share why they may have given a different answer. Emphasize that no one is really right or wrong. This activity just helps us to think about what it takes to set and achieve goals.
**Activity 6**

**Goal-line Strategy**
30 minutes

**You will need:**
- Worksheet #3
- pencil

**What to do**

1) Review the strategies for setting goals. (See Unit 4, Activity 3, page 50.)
2) Break up into smaller groups of three to four. Pass out Worksheet #3 to each person in the small groups. Explain that the small groups must decide the steps to take to achieve a goal. Select a particular scenario and set the appropriate goals for a week, a month, and a year.

**SCENARIOS:**
- Your group wants to organize a skating party.
- Your group wants to have a bike hike.
- Your group is having a fund-raiser for a homeless shelter.
- Your team wants to have a perfect record this season.
- Your group wants to learn to ski.
- Your group wants to be in the Guinness Book of Records.

3) Once the small groups have had about eight to ten minutes to finish their goal-setting strategy, encourage them to set their personal goals using the goal-line strategy worksheet.

**Activity 7**

**Removing Barriers**
20 minutes

**You will need:**
- paper
- pencil

**What to do**

1) Ask group members to write at the top of a paper some goal or task they would set for the group and themselves. (It should be an action which they are having some difficulty taking.)

*Note: If your group is having difficulty deciding on a specific goal, then use any of the scenarios provided below.*

2) Then they are to draw a line lengthwise down the middle of the paper.
3) On the right-hand side of the paper, they are to list all the barriers (perceived or real within or without themselves) which seem to be keeping them from accomplishing the task or action.
4) On the left-hand side of the paper, they are to list steps they could take to make that task easier to accomplish (remove the barriers). Also list any person they know or could get to know that could help them overcome the barriers.
5) On the back of the paper, they are to develop a plan of action to achieve that task.

**POSSIBLE SCENARIOS:**
- Your group would like to begin a monthly newsletter.
- There has been an anonymous donation of $200 to your youth group. What will your group do with the money?
- Your group wants to go to an amusement park on a summer trip.
- Your team has an undefeated record, and the tournament begins next week.
- Your English class wants to put on a play for the school.
**What to do**

1) If time and space allow, set up a mini obstacle course and have the youth try to find their way through it. If there’s not time, ask the kids to imagine an obstacle course they have seen on TV or have completed in person. Ask them what they would do if they came to a four-foot-high fence?

2) Stress the point that in an obstacle course, people can use different strategies (going over, under, or around) to deal with different obstacles.

3) Define an obstacle as something that gets in our way and ask what kinds of obstacles could be encountered by someone striving to reach a goal. Obstacles can be a variety of things, such as world obstacles (situations, people, rules, traditions, or things that are beyond our own control) or personal obstacles (things about ourselves, such as personal characteristics, personalities, attitudes, or handicaps).

4) Ask youth to think about and share any obstacles they have faced and how they dealt with them.

5) Discuss the following four main strategies for overcoming obstacles:
   - create ways to overcome the obstacle
   - change the goal to one that doesn’t have the obstacle if it can’t be overcome
   - get help
   - keep working

6) Decide which of the four strategies would work best in the following situations:
   a. Joe wants to be a lawyer but is afraid to speak in front of groups.
   b. Elisa wants to bowl a 200 game, but her parents say she must quit the bowling team so she can baby-sit for her sister.
   c. John wants to have a lead role in the Nutcracker ballet, but he is afraid that other kids in school will make fun of him.
   d. George wants to raise $1,000 for starving people in developing countries, but people won’t donate money to an individual because they are afraid that some individuals will keep all the money for personal use.
   e. Trisha wants to be the top swimmer on the swim team, but most other members of the team have been swimming competitively for three years more than she has, have more experience, and have more developed swimming skills.
   f. Elena wants an “A” in math, but her class meets after lunch and she falls asleep almost every day.

7) Now hand out Worksheet #4 and have the youth complete the Obstacle Course worksheet. This is the key.

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<td>8. no</td>
<td>12. no</td>
<td>16. no</td>
<td>20. yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These responses are the suggested answers, but are designed to lead into discussions. Be sure to allow for disagreements in opinions while encouraging youth to accept those differences.
What to do

1) Ask youth to think about a time when they received help. What kinds of help do they receive on a daily basis? Who gives the help? What difference does the help make in their life? Have them write their responses on the paper. Be sure that the following types of help or resources are mentioned:

- more information
- coaching to develop their skills
- encouragement
- introductions to people who can help
- advice to offer solutions to problems

2) Hand out Worksheet #5 and give directions. Explain that when we try to reach our goals, as we discussed earlier, barriers sometimes get in our way. Receiving and getting help is important as we try to reach our goals. Your task with this activity is to think about the help or resources these people need to remove the barriers they are faced with. Remember to be as creative and specific as possible; give the names of people, places, or services that might be helpful. Check your local phone book to see what help might be available.

3) Review the activity with them. Ask several youth to share their suggestions. Tie their responses into the ones written on the posters by asking if anyone suggested any of the ideas written on the board earlier.

Also, be sure to be sensitive to responses to number 7 on Worksheet #5. Encourage youth to get help if they answered number 7 concerning their own personal barriers, or offer suggestions if they are unsure where to find help for themselves.

Recognize that youth may be able to offer suggestions to others, but their personal barriers may be overwhelming and they might not easily see resources or use them to meet their own needs.
Worksheet

What Would You Do If . . .

. . . you were president of the United States?

1. ______________________________________

2. ______________________________________

3. ______________________________________

. . . you were given $1,000,000?

1. ______________________________________

2. ______________________________________

3. ______________________________________

. . . you could do anything for one year?

1. ______________________________________

2. ______________________________________

3. ______________________________________
**Worksheet 2**

**Step-by-Step**

**Steps** that lead to the successful accomplishment of a goal:

1. Know yourself,
2. Select your goal.
3. Plan how to achieve your goal.
4. Work to meet your goal.
5. Evaluate your achievement.

**Statements** that reflect what is happening in each of these steps:

(Before each statement, write the number that corresponds to each step.)

1. ____ I know that I usually have a hard time getting started.

2. ____ I'll ask Mr. Jimenez to go over my project and make suggestions.

3. ____ I am really pleased with the results. I did the best I could.

4. ____ I did so well, I think I'll enter my project in that state competition.

5. ____ I am really tired, but I have to keep going if I am going to get this done.

6. ____ I think this would be easier if I did it in three phases.

7. ____ I'll make a list of all the things I could do for a special project in this class.

8. ____ I am very good in art and music.

9. ____ I'm interested in lots of things. Most are in the areas of athletics, electronics, and music.

10. ____ I think I could realistically finish this project in three months.

11. ____ It's not working the way I had planned, so maybe I had better think of some other way I could do this.

12. ____ I could get some help from my older brother.

13. ____ One big problem could be getting the materials I need.

14. ____ The thing I really want to do is to build my own computer and write an original program.
Goal-line Strategy

My number one GOAL

STEPS:
1.
2.
3.

My goal for NEXT YEAR

STEPS:
1.
2.
3.

My goal for NEXT MONTH

STEPS:
1.
2.
3.

My goal for NEXT WEEK

STEPS:
1.
2.
3.
Obstacle Course

Here is a list of behaviors that people may choose when they encounter an obstacle to reaching their goals. Read each statement and decide if the statement describes an action that would be useful in overcoming the obstacle or one that would not be helpful. Check (✓) the appropriate box.

YES  NO  MAYBE

1. Make a plan for dealing with the obstacle.
2. Keep trying the same methods that you have been using.
3. Make a list of new ways to tackle the problem.
4. Keep thinking clearly about what the ultimate goal is.
5. Blame other people.
6. Feel sorry for yourself.
7. Look for ways to get more information, skills, or help.
8. Tell yourself that you are just not good at this particular thing and try something else.
9. Complain about the unfairness of the situation.
10. Modify your goal if necessary.
12. Give up because the goal was not very important in the first place.
13. Make a new list of tasks that you must accomplish in the order that they should be done.
14. Get someone else to do the job for you.
15. Look for a cause of the obstacle and find a way to deal with the real problem.
16. Don't worry because things usually work out the way they should in the end.
17. Get mad.
18. Stay calm and deal with the situation in a rational manner.
19. Read your fortune cookie and follow the advice.
20. Remind yourself how important the goal is to you so you will be motivated to find a solution.
Worksheet 5

Identifying Your Resources

Achievers realize they can't always do everything by themselves. They know when they need to ask for help in accomplishing their goals. They get various kinds of help: more information, coaching to develop their skills, encouragement, introductions, and advice in solving their problems. They get this help from many different sources: other people, institutions, books, other places, and classes. It is important to remember that when they ask for help they must go to the appropriate person or place for the help, and then be specific about what kind of help they need.

Here are some situations that describe people who need help. Write your ideas for the kind of help they seek. Be specific about what kind of resources they need and where they are found—try the local phone book.

1. Trisha just learned that she did not pass the written part of the examination that would qualify her to be a lifeguard this summer. ____________________________________________

2. John wants to place in the top five in the junior division of the triathlon, but his bike is an old five-speed bike that will really slow him down. ____________________________________________

3. Matt wants to get on the honor roll this quarter, but his average in English so far is a C. __________

4. Stacy wants to play in the all-city marching band, but she does not have transportation to the practices that are held across town twice a week. ________________________________

5. Jonna wants to win first place in the young artists' art competition, but she doesn’t know which of her pieces has the best chance of winning. She can enter only one piece. ________________________________

6. Paul wants to learn more stunts with his skateboard, but his community just passed an ordinance which doesn’t allow skateboarding. ________________________________

7a. Do you have a barrier to a goal that could be solved by getting help? What is it? ________________________________

7b. What are your resources? What kind of help could you get? ________________________________
Congratulations and what next?

As mentioned at the beginning of this publication, young adolescents are in the early transition stage between childhood and adulthood, which sometimes can be awkward. Congratulations on your efforts in working with them and engaging them in some meaningful and positive youth development activities. We also hope you had a positive experience as well.

We encourage you and the young people you worked with to consider becoming involved in other youth development programs offered by Penn State Cooperative Extension. You can find out about these programs by contacting the extension office in your county. Some young adolescents are ready to move beyond themselves and express their concern for others. They may welcome the opportunity to become involved in a community service activity, for example, or serve as teen tutors for younger children. They also may be interested in teen leadership programs, such as "Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow." We wish everyone who participated in the "Discovering Me" experience the best of luck in future youth development activities.

References


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