



SESSION 8: OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

Definition

Self-determination means believing that you can have an impact on life's events rather than passively submitting to the will and whims of others. Youth must exercise a sense of influence over their lives, developing their potential to become self-directing, autonomous adults.

Application

Self-determination includes several aspects. Youth must believe that they can influence life's events rather than life's events having control over their lives. We must help our 4-H youth foster that personal sense of influence over their lives, exercising their potential to become self-directing, autonomous adults. We can guide and help youth feel that they have influence when they have choices and get to "call the shots" (adapted from Ferrari, 2003).

Introduction to the Session

Adults will often find that their reactions to youth and standards or expectations for behavior may be in conflict with those of the adolescent peer group or the resources available to the youth. Examining one's own attitudes about youth is critical. The success of 4-H programs will often hinge on the attitudes and beliefs adults have about young people. How adults see youth—as capable or as incapable—will establish a precedent for all that happens in a local program. Adults and youth can work together as full partners in all kinds of ways, from decision-making to planning programs. It is important to view youth as resources to programs and consider it a part of their responsibility to participate. Activity 1 helps adults understand their view of young people and the impact these perceptions can have on youth/adult partnerships and program success, while Activity 2 focuses on helping youth determine the positive or negative influences they can have over life's events.

This Element is present when:

- Youth members choose projects, activities, or hobbies or decide to step-out of organizations or teams based on their changing interests and abilities.
- Youth consider for themselves "What went well, and what would I do differently the next time?"
- Youth choose and plan activities, team events, and projects.

Ways to support the Element:

- Give youth numerous opportunities to set their own goals.
- Provide an atmosphere where youth can safely try new things and challenge themselves.
- Avoid the tendency to solve problems for youth. Be supportive and allow them to come to their own solutions.
- Act more as "guides on the side" rather than the "sage on the stage".



Goal of Lesson

To help adults working with youth be more successful in creating youth/adult partnerships and providing opportunities for self-determination

Objectives

The participants will:

- Examine attitudes about youth/adult partnerships
- Role-play scenarios involved in creating youth/adult partnerships

Activities

Teen/Adult Partnerships

Role Play—Influencing the Outcome

Materials Needed

- Agreement Signs (Duplicate and post.)
- Tape
- Scenarios: 1 or more per group (Duplicate and cut apart.)

Time to complete lesson: Approximately one hour

Activity One: Examining Teen/Adult Partnerships

Do the Activity

1. Clear space in the room so that participants can move easily from one end to the other. Designate one side of the room as “Strongly Agree” and the opposite side of the room as “Strongly Disagree”. Tape the signs to the wall or on the floor.
2. Explain that the first step in forming youth–adult partnerships and being effective with all youth is to examine how one feels about working with, trusting, and communicating with individuals often two or more decades apart in age.
3. Have participants examine their beliefs about such relationships by taking part in the activity and responding to the attitudinal statements based on their feelings about each of them.
4. Read each statement and ask the participants to move to the end of the continuum that most closely demonstrates their opinions or views.
5. Use the discussion tips provided after each statement to conduct a very short de-briefing of each attitudinal statement.

Attitudinal Statements

Young people should speak when spoken to.

Discussion point: Youth need to feel they are free to voice opinions and make suggestions; however,

as a facilitator, be sensitive to potential cultural differences among participants.

Adults are usually careful about not interrupting youth.

Discussion point: Youth should be allowed to express their opinions without interruption from adults who dismiss them as inexperienced.

Young people are valuable resources to their community.

Discussion point: Youth should be seen as assets to programs and communities and not problems to be dealt with.

Adults I know usually listen carefully without being judgmental

Discussion point: Adults should listen to youths’ points of view so they feel comfortable expressing opinions, and should want to help youth work out solutions to problems.

Because of their experience, adults know what’s best for young people.

Discussion point: Adults may be able to provide guidance based on their experience; however, involving youth in decision-making creates self-confidence and a sense that they matter.



Adults I know usually provide opportunities for youth to reflect and learn.

When youth learn by doing, they are more likely to become engaged, retain knowledge, and apply it to their lives.

The opinions of young people should be welcomed and valued.

Discussion point: Adults should listen to youths' points of view so they feel comfortable expressing opinions and feel the youth are willing to help work out solutions to problems.

Young people have no place in adult society.

Discussion point: Experiencing adult roles in appropriate settings is what prepares youth to be successful in adult life.

Adults I know treat all (teen and adult) group members with respect.

Discussion point: Adults serve as role models 24/7—youth learn more by observing and modeling than through lectures.

Young people should be involved in making decisions affecting them.

Discussion point: Unless an emotional or physical safety issue is involved and requires an immediate decision, youth are capable of expressing their wants, needs, and desires.

Adults should always expect youth to make their own decisions.

Discussion point: Youth decision-making should be based on the maturity of the youth, the type of decision being made, and the potential consequences.

Young people are capable of making program plans with no adult direction.

Discussion point: While youth, and especially teens, may say they don't need direction, they

may not know all of the factors to consider and may need someone to ask the "right" questions in guiding them towards positive consequences.

Asking young people about their program plans is a sign of distrust.

Discussion point: Attitude makes all the difference—the same question asked in different tones can take on a completely different meaning.

Adults I know usually listen to all of the facts before jumping to conclusions.

Discussion point: Past experience, timing, and emotions can all affect conclusions—it's important to give all youth and adults the same consideration.

Share

- How would each of you summarize your responses? Give a thumbs up if you think your attitudes and perceptions demonstrate a willingness to form partnerships.

Process

- Were any of the statements more difficult to respond to than others? Which ones?
- Are any of the actions more difficult to practice than others? Why?

Generalize

- What are situations where partnerships work extremely well?
- In what situations are partnerships more challenging?

Apply

- How can you change your program to make the partnership more successful for both the youth and adults involved?



Activity Two: Club Program Planning Role Play

Introduction

Adults are often in positions to help youth, and especially teens, process through self-determining their responses to difficult situations. Allowing youth to talk or roleplay through scenarios and potential outcomes can help them form a repertoire of positive reactions and desirable consequences to draw from when difficult situations arise or bad things happen.

Do the activity

1. Divide participants into small groups of 4-5.
2. Give each group a role-play scenario to discuss how youth might respond.
3. If time allows, have groups act out role-play scenarios.

Share

- How do you think youth would determine their responses? What things would you encourage them to consider?

Process

- Were any of these situations more difficult than others to work through? How is that representative of life's decisions?

Generalize

- What have we learned from the other essential elements that could make a difference in how youth respond?
- What are other similar opportunities for self-determination that might occur?

Apply

- How can you let youth know they have the ability to influence the outcomes?
- What are some areas of self-determination, from simple to more advanced, that are age-appropriate for youth?

Some practices the 4-H club may want to implement if they are not already in place include:

- Allowing all youth to have a voice in selecting activities for the club.
- Encouraging project leaders to use the experiential learning cycle (experience, share, process, generalize and apply) when working with members in large or small groups.
- Allowing plenty of time at meetings for each member to talk about their own experiences.
- Providing opportunities for older youth to test their independence by matching them with younger members as mentors.
- Having the older members plan, implement, and evaluate a program or activity for younger members.
- Making certain that young people are heard and taken seriously by others.
- Ensuring that, once youth have joined decision-making groups, they are not ignored.
- Encouraging youth to participate in decision-making activities within the club as well as urging them to apply for leadership positions at the county, regional, or state level.

(Adapted from www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/4hfacts/pyd05.html)



Customer Survey

Use the Target evaluation and/or the retrospective evaluation provided to evaluate this session.

Essential Elements Program Checklist

Evaluate your program for evidence of the essential elements of successful, positive youth development programs by referring to the Essential Elements Program Checklist in the Appendix on p.103. Explore additional strategies for deliberate and intentional ways to incorporate the essential elements in the Web Appendix at: www.4-h.org/resources/essentialelements.

Digging Deeper

I Believe—Top Ten

Make a list (as a group or individually) of the top ten things you believe about youth, their abilities for self-determination and how they can influence the outcomes of situations they may find themselves in. Begin the list with the following text, “As an adult working with youth, I believe all youth have the ability to...”

References

Baker, R., Harris, M., Larson, B., Martz, J., Stone, C. & Zieglowsky, S. (2007) *FUNDamentals of Youth Development – Unit 2*, 4-H Center for Youth Development - Montana State University.

Ferrari, T. M. (2003). *The key ingredients* [Lesson plan] (Available from Ohio 4-H Youth Development, 2201 Fred Taylor Dr., Columbus, OH 43210).



**STRONGLY
AGREE**



**STRONGLY
DISAGREE**



Leader/Youth

The leader won't admit that she evaluated a project incorrectly after you prove it to her with your project book.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!

Coach/Youth

You missed practice because of a family emergency. Your coach won't let you participate in the big contest.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!



Youth/Local Store Owner

You are accused of stealing. You often shop in this small convenience store, and some of your friends have been caught stealing.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!

Youth/Police Officer

An officer pulls you over, only (you think) because you drive a decked-out pick-up truck. You have done nothing wrong.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!



Parent/Teen Daughter/Son

You are 17 years old and your parents insist that you come home at midnight after the fair. Your friends have other plans.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!

Youth/Girlfriend/Boyfriend's Parents

Your boyfriend/girlfriend's parents have been receiving hang-up calls in the middle of the night. They accuse you of making the calls.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!



4-H Staff Member/4-H Member

You have an idea to start an activity at your school. The 4-H staff person continually says that it would be a waste of time.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!

Leader/Youth

You are participating in an activity that requires your parents' permission. Your parents cannot attend, so they sign a note. You are accused of forging their signature.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!



Youth/Employer

Your employer asks you to work every weekend. When you ask to have the weekend off to attend an important youth event, you get fired.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!

Youth/Extension Support Staff

You returned a resource book that was in poor condition when you checked it out. The extension support staff wants you to pay for the replacement of the book.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!



Youth/Leader

You want to apply for scholarships that your leader must sign. He won't sign them promptly; therefore, you miss several opportunities.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!

Youth/Agent

You found a missing bag in the community center bathroom and turned it in to your leader. You were accused of stealing it.

Handle the situation in a negative role-play!

Handle the situation in a positive role-play!



SESSION 8—EVALUATION —OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

About Your TRAINING Experiences . . .

We are interested in how you view your experiences with the Training on Essential Elements- Key Ingredients. Please circle the answer that best describes how much you agree with the following statements both AFTER and BEFORE the training.

AFTER THE TRAINING						BEFORE THE TRAINING				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	N	A	SA	I know the definition of opportunity for self-determination.	SD	D	N	A	SA
SD	D	N	A	SA	I can list examples of self-determination.	SD	D	N	A	SA
SD	D	N	A	SA	I can recognize self-determination in a youth development program.	SD	D	N	A	SA
SD	D	N	A	SA	I can explain ideas and concepts of self-determination to others.	SD	D	N	A	SA
SD	D	N	A	SA	I can choose appropriate activities to promote self-determination.	SD	D	N	A	SA