

ACTIVITY: DEFINING “YOUTH” AND “ADULT”

Many difficulties of youth-adult partnerships result from the partnership’s lack of a definition for “youth” and “adult.” Exploring different perceptions and definitions of these terms can help participants come to a common understanding of the dynamics of the partnership.

OVERVIEW

This activity explores various definitions of youth and adults. Some groups may end up with a common definition that your entire group can agree upon, or your group may realize that everyone’s definition is going to be different. Either way, articulating definitions – however many – of “youth” and “adult” will strengthen your partnership’s foundation.

OBJECTIVES

- To help partners, groups, and organizations begin to define the terms “youth” and “adult”
- To strengthen the partnership through a better understanding of what each age group brings to it

TIME REQUIRED

Approximately 35 minutes

SUPPLIES

You will need a sticky wall, paper, and markers for this activity. Art supplies are optional. See **Mapping the Sectors of Involvement** activity on page 5 for instructions on how to obtain or create a sticky wall.

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 1: Setting the context	5 min	Explain to the group, “Forming and working in youth-adult partnerships reveals the challenges and benefits of working with the opposite age spectrum. A common difficulty in this work is not having a definition of what ‘youth’ and ‘adult’ is. So, today we are going to come up with our own definitions of these terms and talk about how these definitions relate to our work.”	
Step 2: Creating definitions	10 min	Have participants divide into groups (no more than 10 members per group) that include both youth and adults. Provide each group with paper and markers (optional: and art supplies). Instruct each group to develop a definition of “youth” and a definition of “adult” and to write its definition on the paper. Once the groups are done, ask them to prepare a presentation representing the definition. It can be anything from a skit to a song, a poem, or a message for a bumper sticker. Encourage the groups to be creative. Ask the groups to post their definitions on the sticky	Flip chart paper Markers Art supplies (optional)

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WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 3: Presenting definitions	10 min	wall, one group at a time. Then have each group read its definition aloud and perform its presentation.	Sticky wall
Step 4: Reflecting and discussing	10 min	<p>After all the groups have presented, ask a series of discussion questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What did you notice about the definitions? ■ What words, phrases, or images caught your attention? ■ What similarities do you see across the definitions? ■ Can we come up with a single definition for “youth” and “adult”? ■ What are the benefits of coming up with one definition? ■ What differences do you see across the definitions? ■ What are the benefits of operating with multiple working definitions of these terms? ■ How is this information important to you in this youth-adult partnership? 	