

developing a common vision

purpose • To help a group create a common vision for building successful youth–adult partnerships

time 45 to 60 minutes

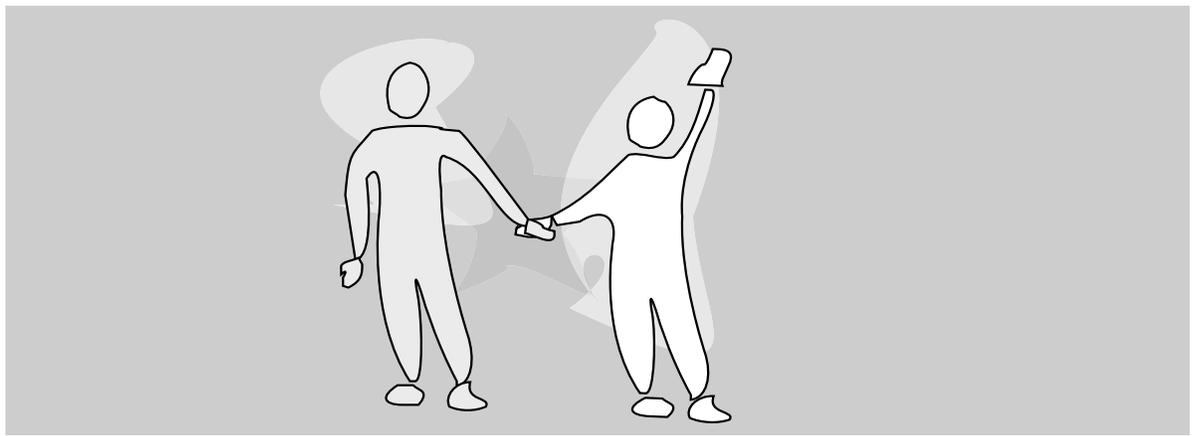
group size 20 to 30 youth and adults who are working together

materials • Flip chart paper and easel
• Markers
• Sticky wall

introduction

This exercise helps participants articulate what kind of youth–adult partnership they are striving to build or maintain. Ask participants to envision the future of the group using a series of questions, such as “What specific project or projects might we work on? What roles can the young people and adults play to get the work done? What outcomes do we want to achieve in a year or two?” The questions are to get participants thinking about what they want their youth–adult partnership to be and to accomplish. You can ask for a couple of answers to the questions, but don’t draw out the conversation.

trainer note: Posting the questions on a flip chart may be helpful to participants who are visual learners. If necessary, develop additional questions that are applicable to the group that is doing this visioning activity. It might be a vision for the future of the group, or it might be specific to a project that they are working on. The questions will vary according to the situation.



step one

After participants have had a chance to think about the above questions, pose the “vision question.” Below is a sample vision question for a youth–adult partnership:

- In 2 to 3 years, what do we want to see in place?

Some probe questions to help the group begin to think about its vision for a youth–adult partnership include the following:

- Imagine it is 2 years from now. What are our accomplishments?
- What have we learned?
- What are others saying about this group?
- Who has been affected?

step two

Ask each person to write down his or her responses to the questions. Allow at least 5 minutes.

step three

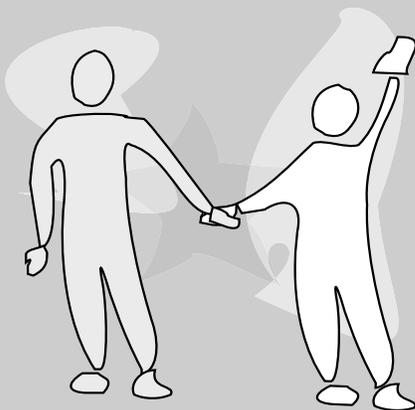
Ask each person to find a partner. Give the first partner 3 to 5 minutes to share his or her vision. Ask the other partner to facilitate by posing the questions. After 3 to 5 minutes, ask the partners to switch roles and repeat the process.

step four

Ask each person to find another partner. Repeat the process, but allow less time, perhaps 1 to 3 minutes per person—this forces people to prioritize and highlight. Encourage participants to steal good ideas that they hear and pass them along.

step five

Repeat the process two or three more times, allowing participants to speak with several different people. This process creates lots of energy.



step six

Gather the group back together and begin a discussion to pull the ideas together. Proceed question by question, asking participants what they learned from their partners. After all the questions have been discussed, ask what themes people heard repeated and record them on flip chart paper.

step seven

From the themes, have the group create three to five vision statements that they want to use as they work in youth–adult partnerships. Post the statements on flip chart paper.

reflection and discussion

Using the following questions, have the group briefly reflect on the work that it has just done to create a common vision for its youth–adult partnerships.

- What vision statement stands out?
- Where did you struggle during this activity?
- What was easy to do?
- What did you learn about yourself and your partners during this activity?
- How will these statements help your partnerships be effective?
- What are the next steps for this partnership(s)?

trainer note: A logical next step is a planning meeting. The plan should be consistent with the group vision and should be based on goals and objectives that are determined collectively and fit with the purpose of the group. The plan should include tasks, responsibilities, a timetable, and resources needed.