

## **Workshop: *Adult***

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## **Adult Workshop**

This training curriculum is designed primarily for adults who have responsibility for designing, implementing and evaluating youth programs. This workshop is designed to be presented as a workshop of approximately 2-2½ hours. The overall purpose is to increase adults' ability to work in partnership with young people to develop, implement, and evaluate youth programs, events, and activities. By doing so, we meet the developmental needs of young people while providing them with leadership roles to improve the conditions in which they live.

**Goal:** To help adults understand the need for young people to be involved in making decisions about the programs that affect them and to understand that young people have significant contributions to make to the current programs as well as future endeavors.

**Objectives:** Participants will assess the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for working in partnership with young people, and develop action steps for their own development.

Participants will understand how young people are treated and why this understanding is significant to the work they do.

Participants will be able to articulate the ways young people bring both benefits and challenges in youth-adult partnerships.

Participants will identify three viewpoints from which adults tend to view the potential contributions young people make to society: youth as objects, recipients, or partners.

Participants will practice ways to treat young people as partners.

Participants will be able to articulate ways they intend to work with young people as partners.

## **Annotated Outline**

### **Opening/Welcome/Warm-Up -30 minutes**

Participants are welcomed to the workshop and then asked to stand next to one of four statements along the wall related to their role in working with young people. Their expectations for the workshop are requested and are related to what will and won't be covered in the two-hour agenda that is planned. An overview of the workshop is given and the purposes of the workshop are discussed.

### **Participant Self-Assessment**

Participants are asked to rate themselves on the self-assessment tool as to where they have been and where they hope to be. Each participant meets with another participant to determine one or two assessment items s/he will work on during the workshop.

### **Examining a Young Person's Point of View - 20 minutes**

This activity is a visioning process that asks adults to remember their teenage years and then react to some of the statements they may have heard at that time. Questions are asked that provoke participants to explore how they felt and thought, and relate these feelings to their work with young people today. The participants are given tips that they can use in working more equitably with youth and are asked to focus on one they will use after this workshop.

### **Benefits and Challenges - 30 minutes**

Participants are asked to brainstorm the benefits and the challenges of working with young people. A correlation is made between the challenges of working with youth and adults. This piece is designed to be used later in the youth-adult workshop where participants offer strategies to the challenges of working with youth as partners.

### **Youth as Partners - 25 minutes**

Bill Lofquist's Spectrum of Attitudes toward young people is introduced and used as a framework in developing solutions to case studies designed to focus on the participant's role with youth solutions are shared and discussed from a Youth as Partners perspective.

### **Visioning/Evaluation - 25 minutes**

Each participant revisits the self-assessment tool and uses this to help determine the action steps. Participants are asked to vision how they will use the information from the workshop in their work with young people and develop one action step they intend to take. This action step is put on a self-addressed postcard that is mailed to them three months after the workshop. The participants are asked for what worked and what didn't about the workshop.

**OPENING/WELCOME/WARM-UP**

**Purpose:** To have participants begin to explore the elements of effective youth-adult partnerships. To provide an overview of the workshop. To have participants introduce and get to know each other.

**Materials:** Questions along the walls, agenda on newsprint

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Procedure:**

Begin by welcoming people, have trainers introduce themselves, and explain briefly about the purpose of the workshop: “To increase the capacity of adults to work in full partnership with young people.”

“To begin, we want you to think about the issue of youth and adults as partners.”

Point out the questions along the walls and read each one out loud and ask participants to go stand by the question of their choice to discuss.

Questions:

- How can young people and adults work together as equal partners?
- What are some of the greatest barriers an adult brings in his/her ability to effectively work with young people?
- What is your vision of how young people will most benefit from working with adults?
- What is your vision of how adults will most benefit from working with youth?
- What is your greatest personal asset in working with youth?

**Leader’s Notes**

→ After a few minutes, ask them to sit down and pose the discussion questions.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What was brought to mind for you when you read and discussed the question?
2. What is something you remember about your discussion?
3. Why would we begin a workshop this way?
4. What is significant about these questions in discussing youth-adult partnerships?

Have each participant introduce himself by stating:

Name

What do you do with young people?

What makes you proudest about the work you do with young people?

Once people have completed their introductions, explain that we are all in this learning together. Go over the agenda - amplifying what will be covered in each piece:

Opening/Welcome/Warm-Up

Self-Assessment

Examining a Young Person's Point of View

Benefits and Challenges of Working with Youth

Youth as Partners

Visioning/Evaluation

**Leader's Notes**

Give participants a few minutes to discuss feelings and reactions to the questions as a small group. This piece is important to them feeling comfortable in the workshop.

You might want to spend some time explaining "why" we do youth-adult partnerships and who is promoting and doing them. How both national and local agencies are finding it a highly effective way to accomplish more.

Assess how much time you have. You may not be able to do full introductions that take at least two minutes per person.

Go over agenda while referring to newsprint.

**Workshop Objectives:**

Participants will assess the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for working in partnership with young people, and develop action steps for their own development.

Participants will understand how young people are treated and why this understanding is significant to the work they do.

Participants will be able to articulate the ways young people bring both benefits and challenges in youth-adult partnerships.

Participants will identify three viewpoints from which adults tend to view the potential contributions young people make to society: youth as objects, recipients, or partners.

Participants will practice ways to treat young people as partners.

Participants will be able to articulate ways they intend to work with young people as partners.

Check in with the participants to see if there are any questions. Explain that we will begin by exploring what it takes to work in partnership.

**Leader's Notes**

Put a shorter version of the workshop's objectives on newsprint.

How can young  
people and adults  
work together as  
equal partners?

What are the greatest  
barriers an adult  
brings in their ability  
to effectively work  
with young people?



What is your vision of  
how young people  
will most benefit from  
working with adults?

What is your vision of  
how adults will most  
benefit from working  
with youth?

What is your greatest  
personal asset in  
working with youth?

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT**

**Purpose:** To have participants complete a self-assessment of their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors to effectively work in partnership with young people. To use this assessment to determine action and improve participants' ability to work in partnership.

**Materials:** Self-Assessment tool, pen or pencil

**Time:** 15 minutes

### **Procedure:**

As we've conducted these workshops with different audiences across the nation, it has become clear that many people already know a lot about working in partnership with young people. They understand the challenges and the benefits and attend this workshop to fine tune their ability - because they are truly committed to this approach. In the next few minutes you will be assessing your own competencies and determining areas where you want to make changes. We are all at different places and that is okay. This is a confidential tool. You will not be asked to share the results with anyone. You will be asked to choose a couple of areas you want to work on and share this with a partner. This is not to judge but to reflect and be candid about where you personally would like to improve. The handout we will give you has two columns. The first column is for where you feel you are now. The second column is for where you would like to be. Take a look at the tool. Any questions on how to complete it? Please take a few minutes to complete this in silence.

Once you notice that people are done, ask that they look through the list and determine one or two they would like to focus on today. When they have chosen, have them turn to the person sitting next to them and discuss the tool and one or two areas they've chosen to work on and to share with a partner.

### **Leader's Notes**

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Anything surprise you about the tool?
2. What kind of feelings did you have when you were filling out this self-assessment?
3. Did you see any patterns once you finished?
4. What was the purpose of filling out the self-assessment?
5. What was one personal learning for you?
6. Does anyone want to share what they hope to work on and why?
7. How might you use this tool in the future?

“We will re-visit this self-assessment again at the end of the workshop. You will check-in with your partner and you will develop some action steps for when you leave the workshop. Any additional comments? Then let’s take a few minutes and go back to what it was like when we were a teenager.”

**Leader’s Notes**

## **Youth-Adult Partnership Self-Assessment Tool**

### **Adult Self-Assessment**

Rate yourself on a scale from 1-5, “one” being a beginner in this area. In the first column put where you see yourself now. In the second column put where you would like to be. Choose at least two of these from the entire list that you hope to focus on during this workshop. You will revisit this at the end to determine which ones you would like to focus on after this workshop.

### **Knowledge**

*Where I  
am now:*

*Where I would  
like to be:*

- |       |       |   |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | Know techniques for working in equitable partnerships with youth.   |
| _____ | _____ | Understand child development (physical, social, cognitive) and how this affects the types of partnerships.  |
| _____ | _____ | Realize that it is more effective for youth to construct their own personal beliefs from their own experience rather than blindly following the directions of others. |
| _____ | _____ | Understand how adultism influences our attitude towards young people.   |
| _____ | _____ | Familiar with resources about youth participation and youth and adult partnerships (e.g. speakers, films, curricula, books, pamphlets).                               |
| _____ | _____ | Aware of the current issues significant to young people.  |
| _____ | _____ | Know how youth-adult partnerships assist in achieving positive youth outcomes.  |

### **Skills**

*Where I  
am now:*

*Where I would  
like to be:*

- |       |       |   |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | Can establish a positive learning environment for young people.                         |
| _____ | _____ | Able to continually assess and reflect upon performance in achieving full partnerships. |
| _____ | _____ | Affirm and validate youth’s feelings and ideas.   |

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**Workshop: Adult**

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*Where I  
am now:*

*Where I would  
like to be:*

- |       |       |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | Proceed from the position of “what youth need” rather than from a stance of “how can I get youth to do what I want.”   |
| _____ | _____ | Articulate and maintain appropriate boundaries (such as roles, responsibilities, relationships, and confidentiality) with youth.                                     |
| _____ | _____ | Actively and continuously consult and involve youth.   |
| _____ | _____ | Build trust and openness in a group.   |
| _____ | _____ | Treat all group members with respect.  |
| _____ | _____ | Can establish rapport with young people.   |
| _____ | _____ | Appreciate and incorporate the strength of commonalities and differences among youth (gender, racial, cultural, ethnic, spiritual, class, economic and orientation). |
| _____ | _____ | Ask young people questions about what they think about everything.   |
| _____ | _____ | Curb inclinations to take over.  |
| _____ | _____ | Validate the thinking of young people.   |
| _____ | _____ | Communicate in a non-judgmental manner.  |
| _____ | _____ | Listen carefully to young people.  |
| _____ | _____ | Ability to identify positive possibilities in difficult situations.  |
| _____ | _____ | Actively engage youth.   |
| _____ | _____ | Careful about interrupting a young person.   |
| _____ | _____ | Ability to assess young people’s needs, interests and competencies.  |
| _____ | _____ | Provide training, practice and support for young people.   |
| _____ | _____ | Provide on-going opportunities to have young people reflect on learning.   |

**Attitude**

***Where I  
am now:***

***Where I would  
like to be:***

- |       |       |   |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | Believe in the potential and empowerment of all youth.  |
| _____ | _____ | Believe that I can make mistakes openly and without self-deprecation.   |
| _____ | _____ | Trust youth to be powerful.   |
| _____ | _____ | Believe in the positive nature of children and that young people are fundamentally good, capable of generosity and empathy.         |
| _____ | _____ | Reject efforts to scapegoat young people for today's problems and see them as assets rather than liabilities.                       |
| _____ | _____ | Believe that youth must actively create ethical meaning from their own experience rather than being told what is ethical by adults. |
| _____ | _____ | Believe in the value of respectful dialogue with youth.   |
| _____ | _____ | Believe in the value of process of engagement over outcome.   |
| _____ | _____ | Expect youth to make their own decisions.   |
| _____ | _____ | Believe that every community is filled with useful opportunities for young people to contribute to the community.                   |
| _____ | _____ | Don't expect more from a young person than I would from an adult.   |
| _____ | _____ | Don't excuse indiscretions just because I am dealing with a young person.   |
| _____ | _____ | Believe my role is partner, not parent or authority/expert.   |
| _____ | _____ | Believe young people will learn through their mistakes.   |
| _____ | _____ | Assert that young people and adults can accomplish more together than accomplished alone.   |



**Behavior**

*Where I  
am now:*

*Where I would  
like to be:*

- |       |       |   |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | Intervene supportively where young people's rights and due respect are being denied by adults.                                    |
| _____ | _____ | Actively work to help youth develop their own autonomy.   |
| _____ | _____ | Willing to give up and share power with youth.  |
| _____ | _____ | Help youth become active "meaning-makers," testing out theories and trying to make sense of themselves and the world around them. |
| _____ | _____ | Work to create an environment where youth feel safe enough to challenge each other -- and even me!                                |
| _____ | _____ | Treat youth with the respect and dignity of an equal.   |
| _____ | _____ | Help youth participate in the creation of rules and guidelines which affect all of us.  |
| _____ | _____ | Work to help youth create a sense of community, to construct a place where they feel trusted, respected and empowered.            |
| _____ | _____ | Enjoy engaging in rational discussion with youth about issues that concern them.  |
| _____ | _____ | Listen <u>to</u> youth more than I talk at them.  |
| _____ | _____ | Give youth real options and decision-making opportunities rather than commands or dictums.  |
| _____ | _____ | Engage youth in helping generate possibilities rather than simply choosing among predetermined options.                           |
| _____ | _____ | Intervene supportively when a teen puts down or devalues another or her/himself.  |
| _____ | _____ | Celebrate young people's successes.   |
| _____ | _____ | Ensure that youth are involved in meaningful, not meaningless, roles.   |

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- \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      Cultivate opportunities for young people to teach and to lead.
- \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      Don't make one youth represent all youth.
- \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      Give young people real information about the way the world works, my experiences, relationships and sex, and the contribution of young people to humankind.
- \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      Establish team and organizational priorities and strategies that value youth and adult partnerships.
- \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      Advocate for continual improvement of youth-adult partnerships in teams, organization and communities.
- \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      Seek to learn from youth.



This list was excerpted and is being printed by permission from the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research/Academy for Educational Development's publication, Definitions, Language, and Concepts for Strengthening the Field of Youth Development Work, August 1995; Bonnie Benard, "Resilience Research: A Foundation for Youth Development," New Designs for Youth Development, Summer 1996 (c/o National Network for Youth, 1319 F Sweet, NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20004, 202-783-7949, fax 202-783-7955 or Bonnie Benard - Resiliency Association, Berkeley, CA., (510) 528-4344); Jim Thormahlen, Developmental Tasks and Adventure Based Education, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services; Ellen Meredith Ilfeld, Learning Comes to Life: An Active Learning Program for Teens, High/Scope Press, 1996.

## **EXAMINING A YOUNG PERSON’S POINT OF VIEW**

**Purpose:** To have participants remember what it was like when they were young. To have participants use their feelings of being young to understand what it is like to be young today and to understand their role as an adult with a young person. To explore how adultism can hurt young people. To introduce additional techniques for participants to use when working with young people.

**Materials:** Handout titled “Implications for Our Work with Young People”

**Time:** 20 minutes

### **Procedure:**

(Taken from Helping Teens Stop Violence by Allen Creighton and Paul Kivel-Hunter House 1991)

Begin by asking people to relax. Invite people to close their eyes if it is easier for them to go back to their teenage years. Very slowly have them think back to their younger days by having them imagine a few things.

“Remember the high school you went to.... remember what it looked like. How did you get to school? Did you ride your bike, walk, drive, take a bus? Who were your best friends at school? Can you remember your locker? Did you have one? What was it like when you were at your locker? How about during lunch? What did you do? Can you imagine your teachers? How did you get along with them? How was it as you sat in your classroom? Can you imagine going home from school? What did you do after school hours? Who were you with? What did you feel like when you were with your classmates? Can you imagine your evenings?”

### **Leader’s Notes**

It is important to speak very slowly as you do this so people really have time to go back to what it felt like to be a teenager.

How about Friday nights? What did you do? Were you with friends? Did you have a boyfriend or girlfriend? Where might you go on the weekends? Did you participate in after-school activities?"

"Please try to hold on to these memories of being a teenager. Think about this period in your life as I say the following statements to you. Imagine that you are a young person and I am one of the adults in your life. You can keep your eyes closed if it helps you stay in that young place."

Read about ten items from the things we say to young people. Say them directly to individuals.

- Not now. I don't have time.
- You're too young to understand.
- We'll talk about it later.
- Go to your room.
- I work my fingers to the bone for you.
- When I was your age, I had it a lot harder.
- Do what I say. It will be good for you.
- Because I said so.
- Don't talk back to me. You have to do this whether you like it or not.
- You're just a kid.
- Pay attention when I am talking to you.
- You show me some respect.
- How many times do I have to tell you?

**Leader's Notes**

Say these statements directly to individuals. Say them forcefully when appropriate, speaking as if you are exerting your power over another individual.

“Now take a moment or two and slowly come back to the training room. Please try and hold onto how it felt to be this age again and let’s discuss what this is all about.”

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What were some of the strongest images that came to mind for you as a teenager?
2. How did it feel to have those things said to you?
3. Did you have some memories of your own when you were young that you’d be willing to share that were triggered by these statements?
4. Which of these statements do you think a young person might hear today? Who might use these statements with young people? Why?
5. How do you think that makes them feel?
6. What does this have to do with the work we do with young people?
7. What is our most important role with young people?
8. How might we use what we’ve talked about and thought about today?
9. What is our responsibility to change some of these social behaviors/norms as people who work with youth?

“This activity is taken from a book called Helping Youth Stop Violence. It is a curriculum designed to be led by young people with other young people in schools. This piece is on adultism and helps us identify that like other ‘isms’ the way we treat young people and were treated is accepted in this society. This activity raises a lot of feelings for a lot of people and I am sorry if you are in pain right now because of your memories. I hope these memories act as a catalyst for changing how we treat young people today and in our youth programs.”

**Leader’s Notes**

Be silent for just a moment so people will be able to emotionally come back to the present.

You don’t need to use all of the questions. Choose which ones you think will be best for the group and use those—probably only 4 or 5. One suggestion is using 1,2,6, and 8.

“In the handout by John Bell, he gives some specifics about how to break these patterns. Take the next couple of moments to glance through this handout and write down one thing that you might use in your work with young people. I hope that you will read this more thoroughly as you continue your work and use some of these techniques as you move forward with your own partnerships with young people.”

**Leader’s Notes**

Pass out John Bell handout found on next two pages.

## **Implications for Our Work with Young People**



A few general guidelines might be helpful as we proceed:

- Listen to young people. Really listen. In particular, listen to their thinking and to their experiences and feelings of what it has been like being young.
- Ask questions. Ask what they think about everything.
- Lay back. Curb your inclination to take over. Support the initiatives of young people.
- Validate their thinking. Welcome their ideas. This is where major invalidation has hurt them.
- Be willing for them to make mistakes. Putting their ideas into practice will bring mixed results. They will learn. We need to learn to support the process of their taking leadership.
- Reverse the power relationships when appropriate. When, for example, can we refrain from using our authority, from making the final decision, from being the “real power” behind the youth leadership?
- At the same time, do not thrust young people into decision-making and leadership positions without training and practice and understanding their responsibilities. Otherwise, we set them up for frustration, confusion, possible failure and humiliation.
- Always respect all young people, no matter the age, and expect them to respect each other, at all ages. This is the starting point for reversing the internalized oppression.
- Have high expectations to their potentials, and a real assessment of their current abilities. Never sell them short and always be prepared to lend a hand with a difficulty.
- Do not dump our distress about them on them. They get this from adults all the time. It only adds more hurt. We need to take care of our upsets about them some other way with other adults.
- Give young people real information about the way the world works, about our experiences, about relationships and sex, about the contribution of young people to humankind, etc. Never lie to them.

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- Be patient with ourselves when we unknowingly slip into our old adultist habits. It will take time to undo them. Always appreciate how well we are doing. No blaming ourselves or others.



### Good Policy

Of course, we want to avoid the ditch on the one side of adultist authority running the show, and the ditch on the other side of the permissive attitude that says “anything the young people want is OK.”

The oppression of young people has left them, to varying degrees, with irrational feelings, tendencies to act out their hurts, and wrong or distorted information. Without clear guidelines, these distresses can wreck any human effort.

A sound policy for behavior in our work together includes expecting all people, despite age, to treat each other with nothing less than complete respect.

- To think and not just react.
- To do the thing that will improve the situation.
- To be trustworthy, honest, and reliable in relations with each other.
- To put the interest of the group ahead of one’s own.
- To care about each other.
- To struggle against everything which keeps us in conflict among ourselves.

Reproduced from *Adultism* by John Bell



## **BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES**

**Purpose:** To have participants consider the challenges and the benefits of working in partnership with young people.

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** Half sheets of standard size paper (8.5" x 11") for people to write on - about 3 sheets for each participant, markers, paper or some material on wall to put all ½ sheets, spray adhesive or masking tape rolled to put on the back of the ½ sheets.

### **Procedure:**

Note: This approach with the use of ½ sheets and a ‘sticky’ wall is taken from the ICA workshop methods.

“We talked a little in the introduction about the benefits of working with young people, and you shared what made you the proudest about your work with youth. Let’s focus for a minute on what we think young people bring to the table that adds to the experience. You will be working in small groups to come up with a list and we will compile all your responses to see what some of those benefits might be.”

Instruct people to take a moment or two to write down every benefit that they can think of that a young person brings to the table in an equal partnership. Give people time to think through a number of ideas, and then have them join a group of about four additional people to discuss their entire list. Have each group choose five to seven benefits that they will put on the half sheets.

- ⇒ Write big
- ⇒ One idea per sheet
- ⇒ 5-7 words per sheet

### **Leader’s Notes**

Help get people into small groups quickly if they are having trouble.

As you go through each element (write big, one idea per sheet, 5-7 words per sheet), have these on ½ sheets of paper and post each one as you read the item.

Once they have their five to seven benefits, have each group choose two that they think are the most important. Read through all of the responses and then ask people to put up two that no one else has put up. Ask for any others that should go up. Go through all out loud and ask the participants....

- What was it like to come up with benefits that young people bring to the table?
- Are there items up here that are particularly unique to being young?
- How can we use this information as we go forward?
- Now ask the participants to do a similar process with the challenges of working with young people.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How easy was it to come up with benefits? Challenges?
2. What is there about the benefits that can help overcome the challenges?
3. Where else might you look for ideas on how to overcome the challenges?
4. What is one learning from this activity?
5. How might we use this information?

One way we will be using the challenges in the Youth-Adult Workshop is developing strategies to overcome the challenges when we meet in our youth-adult teams.

**Leader's Notes**

You will record this information after the training and give to participants.

One trainer has posted on one side of the blackboard the brainstorming of benefits and challenges from other workshops and then flips it over to show a comparison between other groups and the brainstorming done by this group.

You will be saving all the responses for the workshop when youth and adults are together.

## **YOUTH AS PARTNERS**

**Purpose:** To provide participants with a framework to have them approach young people as partners. To have participants practice with case studies the approach of youth as partners.

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Materials:** Handout: “Case Studies”; signs on the wall: Youth as Objects/Youth as Recipients/Youth as Partners

### **Procedure:**

“There are reasons why we interact with young people in particular ways we do. Often, if we are going to work in true partnership with young people, we need to work differently than many adults who worked with us in our lives. We need to look at where our approach came from, and think about how that needs to change or stay the same. Lofquist (1989) has developed and popularized what he calls a ‘Spectrum of Attitudes’ that covers three different attitudes adults can hold toward young people. Often the attitudes that adults hold toward young people determine the degree to which they involve them as significant partners in decision-making, and believe them capable of autonomy or making decisions about the issues that affect them.”

“Let’s look at each one:”

“The first one is Youth as Objects.”

“If we work this way with youth, ‘adults know what is best for young people and control situations in which they allow them to be involved.’ In this approach the attitude is that young people have little to contribute. Adults may work to keep young people in a relatively powerless position. Adults with such opinions have no intention of allowing youth participation. Adults may truly believe that they need to protect young people from ‘suffering’ from mistakes.

### **Leader’s Notes**

Point to the sign “Youth as Objects.”

However, we know that involvement in meaningful roles is essential to positive growth and the development of successful young adults.”

“In the second - Youth as Recipients - adults allow young people to take part in decision-making because they think the experience will be ‘good for them.’ This has a real focus on young people learning from ‘adult society,’ and that young people need to be guided through their participation in adult society. This attitude is characterized by adults allowing young people to take part in decision-making because they think the experience will be ‘good for them’ and an excellent opportunity to practice for when they become ‘real people.’ Consequently, responsibilities and tasks often delegated to young people are either trivial (it won’t matter if they mess up) or those which adults find distasteful (roadside cleanup campaigns). Adults with such viewpoints on youth involvement often control the terms and conditions of involvement For example, adults invite two youth representatives to participate on a board or committee composed mainly of adults. Such participation still leaves youth in a relatively powerless position. They realize that their role remains trivial and that adults are retaining the position of authority and much of the responsibility.”

“The third piece at the other end of the spectrum represents attitudes where the contributions of young people are welcomed and valued. ‘Adults respect young people as having something significant to offer now and youth are encouraged to become involved.’ Adults feel that young people are critical to the success of a program or, in this case, an organization focused on youth needs and issues. When adults hold such opinions, youth are seen as equal partners in decision-making. Adults who view young people as partners are comfortable working with groups which have equal numbers of youth and adults. Youth are asked a series of questions such as: How do they want to be involved? What kind of training do they need? What would they like to learn? What do they think their role is? What would they like their role to be? As a result of these relationships, programs and organizations are more effective while young people meet real developmental needs.”

**Leader’s Notes**

Point to the sign “Youth as Recipients.”

Point to the sign “Youth as Partners.”

“In moving to full partners, we are moving to an attitude of *youth as partners*. This is to say that both youth and adults bring strengths to the table and work in an equitable relationship.”

- “Any comments on what you’ve heard here?”
- Can you give examples of how these work in your area?
- What do you think is the biggest challenge to having an attitude that a young person is a partner in his/her own development?”

“To work a little with this approach, we are going to break you into groups and give you a case study to respond to in a ‘youth as partners’ approach. To help you with this, I’m going to read a sample for you.”

Read the following case study. Ask participants what they would do in a “youth as partners” approach. Read what this case study says as a “youth as partners” approach and ask people what they think. Ask if they’d like to hear “objects” and “recipients” to see the differences.

### **Case Situation 1: An Activity on Practicing Adult-Youth Interactions**

**Case 1:** Sally is involved in a community project. She has skills in writing letters. She volunteered to write a letter to the Mayor asking for permission to do the group project. It’s time for the letter to be written. What do you say or do?

**Youth as Objects:** Have Sally sit down and tell her exactly what she should write. “I’ll tell you what to write because I’ve done this before and I know the Mayor, so just do what I say. I know more about what we want from the Mayor than you do. And I know what the Mayor will respond to.” (Adults know best; youth feel put down.)

**Youth as Recipients:** “I could write this letter, but it will be a good learning experience for you to write a letter to the Mayor. If I help you do it this time, you’ll know how to do it next time.” (Youth will benefit in the future.)

### **Leader’s Notes**

You probably will need to read the case study twice at a slow pace.

**Youth as Partners:** “What do you think should go into this letter? What do you want the Mayor to do? If you don’t know the administrative procedure that the Mayor needs to follow, I could help you find that out. How else can I be helpful to you?”  
(Youth can make a contribution now.)

Explain that this is a model of how you’d like them to think through the case study...knowing that what they are striving to do is figure out how best to approach this with the young person as a partner.

Remind them that their task is to come up with a youth as partners approach Break them into small groups and give them about 10 minutes.

Once in a large group, have one group begin with their answer and then have the others add on or reflect on what they heard.

What about this is treating a young person as a partner? Are there other ways you might proceed?

**Leader’s Notes**

You may want to cut the case studies in strips and give one to each group.

Help people form groups and get quickly to work. Walk around to see if 10 minutes is the right amount of time. End it sooner or a give a minute or two longer accordingly.

(Note: If you are running short on time, have all groups work on the same case study or do the case study as one large group.)

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What were you thinking when you were doing this activity?
2. What was the most important thing for you about doing this?
3. What does this say to you about your role with young people in 4-H or other organizations that work with youth?
4. How might you use what you have heard and thought about today?

**Leader's Notes**

All of the case studies were taken from Partners in Community Leadership: Youth and Adults Working Together for Better Communities, Regional Center for Rural Development, Iowa State University, October 1993.

# Youth as Objects

Adults know what is best for young people and control situations in which they allow them to be involved.



# Youth as Recipients

Adults allow young people to take part in decision-making because they think the experience will be “good for them.”

# Youth as Partners

Adults respect young people as having something significant to offer now, and youth are encouraged to become involved.

## **CASE STUDIES FOR GROUP ASSIGNMENT**

**Directions: Choose a study that you think is most pertinent to your group. Brainstorm how you would approach this from a “Youth as Partners” perspective.**

### *Case #1*

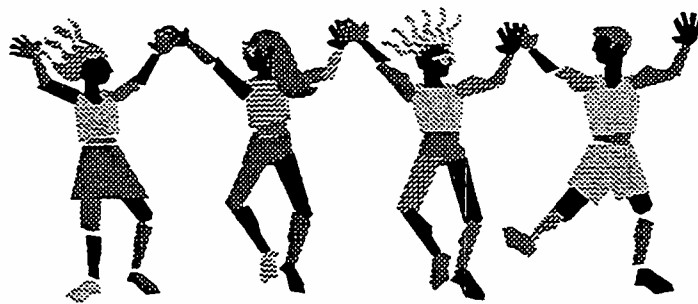
**You are an adult advisor to a group of teens planning a party. The group has scheduled a planning meeting. You are the only adult and they are looking to you to get the meeting started. What do you say or do?**

### *Case #2*

**Your group is meeting to work on the project that has been selected. Instead of getting down to business, the teens are flirting and laughing. You don’t perceive that business is getting done. A youth is chair of the committee and is not doing anything about the situation. What do you do?**

### *Case #3*

**You are a 4-H club leader and the club vice-president, Jan, has approached you about the idea of signing the club up to clean a section of highway as a community service project. This is the first you have heard of the idea, and to your knowledge, there has been no discussion with the rest of the club about this idea. What do you say or do?**



All of the case studies were taken from Partners in Community Leadership: Youth and Adults Working Together for Better Communities, Regional Center for Rural Development, Iowa State University, October 1993.

**Leader Resource****Case #1**

**You are an adult advisor to a group of teens planning a party. The group has scheduled a planning meeting. You are the only adult and they are looking to you to get the meeting started. What do you say or do?**

***Youth as Objects approach:***

The adult chairs the meeting. The adult has all the ideas and suggestions. The adult says or implies to the youth that they don't have experience doing this so they are not capable of doing it.

***Youth as Recipients approach:***

The adult puts the agenda on the board, and then goes through each agenda item asking for ideas from the youth. Adult puts some parameters on kinds of things that can be done (e.g. can't have rap music).

***Youth as Partners approach:***

"How would you like to plan this party? What do you like to do? How should we pay for this party? In planning events, I have found it helpful to use a guide in planning. Would you like to use it or see it? How would you like to divide up the responsibilities? How can I help?"

**Case #2**

**Your group is meeting to work on the project that has been selected. Instead of getting down to business, the teens are flirting and laughing. You don't perceive that business is getting done. A youth is chair of the committee and is not doing anything about the situation. What do you do?**

***Youth as Objects approach:***

The adult yells out above the noise of the group, tells everyone to quiet down and get to work or it will never get done. The youth chair is ignored and specific directions for doing the task are given to the youth.

***Youth as Recipients approach:***

The adult talks to the chair and tells her/him what to do to get the group to get the work done. The adult makes a list of what the group should be doing, tells the teens how to do it, and assigns committees to show how the work can be accomplished.

***Youth as Partners approach:***

The adult and the teen chair have a short session to decide how to get the group back on track. They then involve the group in a planning process, setting goals, dates, responsibilities, etc. so everyone is in agreement about the next steps. The responsibility for accomplishment is shared by all of the group members. The adult works with the group but does not continually “check up” on how well everyone is carrying out their role.

|                |
|----------------|
| <i>Case #3</i> |
|----------------|

**You are a 4-H club leader and the club vice-president, Jan, has approached you about the idea of signing the club up to clean a section of highway as a community service project. This is the first you have heard of the idea, and to your knowledge, there has been no discussion with the rest of the club about this idea. What do you say or do?**

***Youth as Objects approach:***

You decide to bring up this idea with the whole club at the next meeting. You have some particular concerns and specific suggestions about how this kind of project ought to run. After all, your club is very busy and you have the big picture which will help the club members set realistic priorities. Kids really don't have the experience to carry out such a long-term commitment.

***Youth as Recipients approach:***

You bring up the idea at the next meeting. You have spent time thinking about this and have all the options and alternatives lined out ahead of time so the club members don't waste time brainstorming. You have also set some specific requirements for participation: at least 80% of club members must participate in the clean-up activity each year, etc.

***Youth as Partners approach:***

You encourage Jan to bring this up at the next meeting. In addition, you might suggest things that Jan could do to gather some necessary information to share with the entire club when the idea will be discussed.. How often will we have to clean the highway? What kind of training is required by the state highway department? Who will take the leadership for this each year? How can I help you?

## **VISIONING/EVALUATION**

**Purpose:** To have participants reflect on what they've learned and determine how they will apply that in their work with young people.

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Materials:** Postcards

### **Procedure:**

#### *Visioning*

“Pause for a moment. Close your eyes if necessary. Think about the last couple of hours and what you have learned or rethought about. Pull out your self-assessment tool and check-in with your partner about what you worked on today. What is one thing from today that you will use in your work? Please take the postcard in front of you and write yourself a note about what you are going to do in the next three months with this information or other information you think is important in your work with youth. We will collect all of these and mail them to you in three months to remind you of your thoughts.”

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What were you thinking when you revisited the self-assessment?
2. What did you and your partner discuss?
3. Can anyone share what they want to do when they go back to their community?

### **Leader's Notes**

Collect postcards. Copy for your records and evaluation; end back to participants in three months.

“I would like to thank you for participating in this workshop. Before we end the session, it would be helpful to us to get some feedback from you about this session.”

*Evaluation*

On the top of a piece of newsprint write the words “What worked” and “What didn’t” and draw a line down the middle of the page to divide these two. Quickly ask participants to share with you their thoughts about what worked and what didn’t. This tool can help you improve the training each time to better meet the needs of participants.

**Leader’s Notes**

It is important that as you do this you don’t comment, but merely write everything they say.