



maintaining our philanthropic partnership

purpose • To develop strategies to sustain youth and adult philanthropic partnerships

time 75 minutes

group size 15 to 25 participants

materials • “Fishbowl” questions (see Step Four)
• Flip chart
• Markers

introduction

Ask the group to think about dating, a long-term relationship, or marriage. What does it take to sustain a good dating or marriage relationship? (For example, does it take good listening skills? Do you need to have respect for your partner?) Have them briefly brainstorm a list of what it takes to build and maintain a good relationship. How does what they listed as important in dating or marriage translate into their philanthropic work with each other?

Ask the participants to take a few minutes to reflect on how they can sustain philanthropic partnerships between youth and adults. How do they keep their giving going?

trainer note: It is helpful to write answers to the above questions on the flip chart.



step one

Divide the group in half. Tell them that they are going to engage in a “fishbowl” activity to help focus on partnership in philanthropy.

step two

Ask the first group to take their chairs and create a small circle, seats facing into the circle, big enough for 8 to 10 people and the trainer to have a seat. Ask the second group to form a circle around the inner circle, also facing in. Ask all participants to take their seats.

step three

Explain that we have created a fishbowl, where the people on the “outside” of the fishbowl can observe those who are “inside” the fishbowl but cannot speak. Only the people inside the fishbowl can talk. This arrangement is designed to help us listen. Too often, when we listen, we spend a lot of time thinking about what we’re going to say. By taking away the need to think about our response, our listening skills will be sharper. Also explain to the “fish”—the inner circle—that although you will be prompting them with questions, what you’d like to see is a discussion, not just answers. They should feel free to talk to each other, ask their own questions of each other (as long as they relate to the topic), and build on what others are saying. They can agree, disagree, or add on to each other’s comments.

trainer note: Each discussion should be no longer than 15 to 20 minutes. As the trainer, try to let the group lead its own discussion as much as possible. Keep them on task, prompt them with questions, and try to keep the conversation flowing.



step four

Ask the “fish” the following questions:

- What experiences have you had with philanthropy?
- What strengths do youth bring to a youth–adult philanthropic partnership?
- What problems might arise in such a partnership? How might we solve those problems?
- What would youth need from adults to make that partnership work?
- How do we keep our philanthropy and our partnership going over time?

After this group has finished its discussion, thank everyone and ask the groups to switch.

step five

Explain that the same rules are in effect. Only those on the inside can speak, and the people outside observe. Repeat the fishbowl questions above.

step six

When the discussion is finished, thank both groups for their participation and openness. Have them reassemble into the large group for discussion, using the following questions:

- What did you hear from the different groups?
- What surprised you?
- What did you hear that pertains to maintaining our philanthropic partnership?
- What did you hear that might affect how we act with each other?
- What did you hear that might affect how you might take action in your community?



step seven

Explain that the group has had the opportunity to listen to and learn from each other, but what will sustain a partnership isn't an activity. People need to commit to the partnership and identify ways to keep their communication flowing, show their respect for each other, and strengthen their philanthropy.

Tell them that the group is now going to create a code of ethics to describe how the group will act to show that members care for each other and for their community. It will be their Philanthropic Partnership Promise.

Have the group identify actions and attitudes to which they want to commit for the coming year to help strengthen their youth–adult partnership in philanthropy. They should describe how they want to treat each other to build their partnership and how they want to serve their community. Write their suggestions on a flip chart, and then have a small group of volunteers take the list and finalize it into a document they can all agree to as a Philanthropic Partnership Promise.

Variations

variation one: Ask the participants to write a letter to themselves that describes what they want to remember from the discussions. Ask them to list the partnership and philanthropic goals they are setting for themselves. Have them seal their letters in envelopes and address them to themselves. Hold the letters for 2 to 4 months, and then mail them to the participants.

variation two: Have the group develop a series of philanthropic projects they will complete over the coming year to serve their community while having fun and building relationships among the members.