

How to Run a Structured Meeting: A Toolkit for Field-Trip Chaperones

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Introduction

There is very little research on the impact chaperones have on youth and others who participate in afterschool programs, field trips, or other chaperoned learning-related activities. Therefore, evidence of outcomes must rely on research from other disciplines, with most of the research coming from school field-trip studies (Burtnyk and Combs 2005). These field-trip studies are used as the basis for developing the tools discussed in this publication. This research recommends the use of structured activities to improve youth outcomes, both in learning content and social and emotional life skills. Youth view these structured activities as a way to enhance good decision-making skills, accept differences in other people, improve leadership skills, and develop job skills (Hansen, Larson, and Dworkin 2003).

Field trips provide great opportunities for youth to gain new knowledge, as well as develop stronger social and emotional skills, or what the 4-H program calls life skills (Astroth 1996). Day and multiday field trips are a part of many young peoples' experiences in youth programs. Many of these field trips rely on chaperones that are often untrained volunteers. These chaperones are responsible for trip participants after formal trip activities are over, and this often involves running end-of-the-day meetings. This publication offers chaperones and other interested adults and youth some tools for running an effective and engaging meeting that promotes a positive learning experience for participants.

Structured Meetings and Meeting Activity Cards

- **Purpose of Structured Meetings**

The purpose of the structured meeting is to provide a consistent process for engaging youth in activities and discussions that will increase participation and a positive learning experience. By having a consistent meeting structure, youth become comfortable with the process and more engaged in the discussions (Durlak, Weissberg, and Pachan 2010). The discussions are meant to help youth remem-

ber more of their new learning and strengthen life skills.

- **Purpose of Meeting Activity Cards**

When running a youth meeting, resources that make conducting a meeting easier will ultimately lead to an increase in learning and make the chaperone's role easier. (Fox et al. 2009). Meeting activity cards (located in the appendices) are one resource that can be used when holding youth meetings. These cards provide chaperones with structured activities and exercises that make it easier to reach meeting goals, such as community building, group agreements, learning support, and the like. These activity cards are designed to be flexible, so chaperones can pick and choose activities that will work best based on the nature and makeup of the group, the chaperone's skills, the trip schedule, and the meeting site's physical layout.

Structured Meetings and Experiential Learning Techniques

Discussion is of central importance in any structured meeting. Discussion is part of an approach called Experiential Education (EE). This approach originated with John Dewey (1938), who focused on the need for an experience on which to reflect. David Kolb (1984) furthered experiential education by developing the model Do, Reflect, Apply. In terms of field trips, "Do" takes place with activities during each day of the trip, "Reflect" takes place when the chaperone and participants explore their daily learning, and "Apply" takes place when chaperones encourage participants to use their learning the next day and into the future.

There is much research on school field trips that show discussing what participants learned on a trip improves school-related learning (Davidson, Passmore, and Anderson 2010). In particular, questions from adults positively influence learning content and life skills (Fogarty et al. 2009).

One of the Washington State University (WSU) 4-H program's discussion techniques is derived from the

Kolb model (Figure 1), but it starts with a step called the “Frame,” which lets group members know what life skills they will be working on during the trip. By letting participants know up front what life skills they will be focusing on, learning may be increased. There is no one method for selecting life skills for development during a field trip. Methods of selection often depend on the amount of time available for selection, the length of the trip, the trip-related content, and the needs and interests of the trip participants. However, research suggests that trying to work on too many life skills at once is less successful than focusing on only a few (Hendricks 1998). If you select a specific life skill to work on, use the three general life skill questions on the learning support and closing reflections cards. Three life skills that can be included are Personal Safety, Accepting Differences, and Marketable Skills.

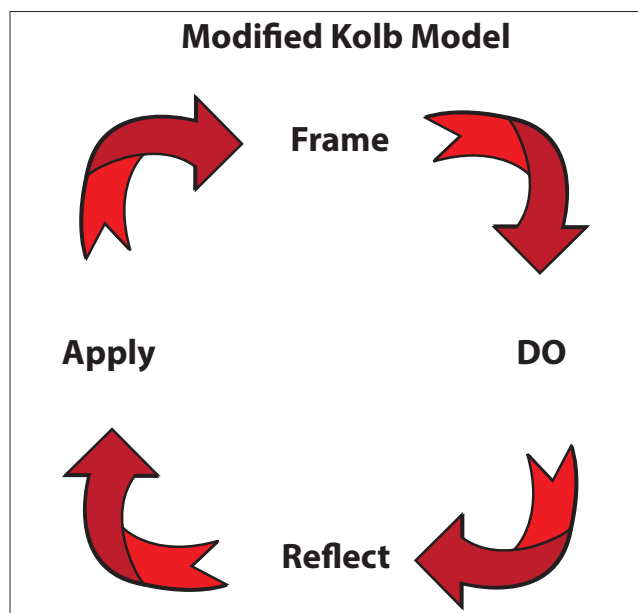


Figure 1. WSU 4-H program modified Kolb discussion model.

The Kolb model is further modified by changing Do, Reflect, Apply to the questions What, So What, and Now What, which can be used as questions for content or life skill learning, for example:

WHAT? Describe an event or experience; for example,

“WHAT happened in your workshops or with your assigned life skill today?”

SO WHAT? Highlight the meaning or impact of the experience; for example,

“SO WHAT did you learn in that workshop or about that life skill?”

NOW WHAT? Connect the experience to a next step; for example,

“NOW WHAT will you do with that learning or life skill? Where, how, when will you use it?”

Components of a Typical Structured Meeting

The following list provides an example of a typical structured meeting. However, this is not the only way to structure a meeting since each group and trip is different. The general outline or agenda provided here is an example of a three-meeting sequence, which will work for a weekend trip where there are two evening meetings, with a final meeting occurring at the end of the trip (see information under Final Meeting). Again, these are only agenda examples, and the activity cards are designed to be flexible (see Appendix A for agenda suggestions).

- **Community Builders** ◆
Help members become more comfortable with each other.
- **Compliments and Appreciations** ◆
Promote a positive environment and supportive group.
- **Group Agreements** ★
Help reduce conflict, create an optimal learning environment, and build team success.
- **Learning Support** ●
Improves learning and keeps the focus on life skill development.
- **Program Business**
Provides relevant trip information and details.
- **Closing/Reflection** ■
Provides meeting closure and an opportunity for trip participants to share feelings, plans, and insights.

Final Structured Meeting

The final meeting of the trip includes the same elements found in the typical meeting, but includes two additional components.

- **Goal Setting**
Goal setting is the most important part of the trip. Setting goals encourages participants to plan for how they will use what they have

learned after the trip is over, which increases the likelihood that they will use their new knowledge and skills in the future.

- **Trip Evaluations**

Evaluations provide an opportunity for sponsoring organizations, trip leaders, and trip participants to assess whether and to what extent the trip's goals were met. Consult with the sponsoring organization on the types of evaluations and evaluation questions to use.

Structured Meeting Components Explained

Community Builders ◆

Community builders are activities that foster a sense of group connection. These activities have participants ask each other questions like, What did you like about the trip generally? What did you like most on the trip? What do you want to learn while on this trip? By getting to know each other better in a fun and friendly environment, participants will become more comfortable with each other (Hedrick, Dick, and Homan 2011). These introductory activities begin the process of creating a safe environment in which the group can learn to give and receive support.

Many participants will be familiar with these types of activities, so they can be invited to lead these exercises. Additional questions may encourage participants to start talking about life skill development, but time and energy are factors to consider if additional questions will be used. It is okay to skip questions if the meeting time is short, it is late, or the group is too tired.

Compliments and Appreciations ◆

Compliments and appreciations reinforce positive events and experiences and build a caring and supportive environment (Biglan et al. 2012).

“I appreciated how quickly we got on the bus.”

“I appreciated how we dealt with the stress of getting our luggage checked.”

When chaperones and participants point out what is working well, group members notice and appreciate their strengths and positive contributions, which foster continued positive behavior. Youth who are aware of what is going right may be more willing to share what they have learned and their ideas for future growth. Chaperones should model this behavior by observing what the group does well and praising the

group for their strengths and achievements, both big and small.

Group Agreements ★

Group agreements are a tool that can be used to encourage group members to exhibit positive behaviors that create a sense of belonging and ensure group safety and success (Frank 2011). Group agreements help establish behavioral boundaries and practices that should become stronger as the group develops. Many trip programs have published rules that include specific consequences when rules are broken. Group agreements go beyond these rules and focus on how group members want to be/ behave as a group.

The WSU 4-H program uses a team-based approach to create group agreements. However, there are two non-negotiable items: physical and emotional safety and the “Challenge Yourself” option. No one should ever be subjected to physical or emotional harm, and chaperones should ALWAYS intervene immediately if harm appears to be a possibility. The “Challenge Yourself” option allows members to choose different ways of participating in an activity. For example, a participant who may not want to share his or her learning experiences with the whole group can opt to write about them in a journal. This does not mean a group member has chosen not to participate, it just allows for a different way of participating.

Learning-Support Activities ●

Learning-support activities help group members get the most out of their trip. For example, the “Growth Scale” exercise helps youth understand how they control their learning during a field trip. The growth scale concept comes from the work of Vigotsky (1933), who observed that growth in humans requires discomfort in order for learning to occur. In other words, for learning to happen it must be cognitively uncomfortable, although learning will shut down if it is too uncomfortable.

The growth scale activity (see Appendix B for description of this exercise) shows group members that individuals may have different skills and talents, but everyone has opportunities for growth during a trip if they choose to take advantage of them. Learning requires risk and can have an element of stress, but the uncomfortable aspect of learning is both acceptable and encouraged on the trip.

Other learning-support activities include the “Slam Dunk Suggestions” exercise, which encourages good group brainstorming behaviors, and the “Talking

Circles” exercise, which gives everyone a chance to speak. (See Appendix B for a description of these exercises.)

Another learning-support exercise is goal setting. For most groups, this goal-setting activity will take place at the trip’s conference site during the last meeting. Participants are asked to discuss their learning experiences, and how they plan to use what they have learned in the future. Developing a plan and setting goals will increase the likelihood that learning will be used in the future. The more specific the goal, the greater the success. Chaperones should model this behavior by planning and sharing their learning goals with the group. After the trip, chaperones can also inspire group members to follow through on their goals by making contact by phone, email, Facebook, and/or other creative methods. Sometimes there are post-event meetings or post-trip celebrations that include a discussion on accomplishing goals.

Program Business

Program business items include the logistical information trip participants and their parents need to know, for example, schedules and schedule changes, meeting locations, task deadlines, trip requirements, clothing recommendations, upcoming events, and the like.

Closing Reflections ■

Closing reflection activities provide trip participants with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences from the day, as well as what they learned and what ideas they have for learning improvement. These reflection exercises are usually calm, relaxing activities that finish the day on a positive note. Reflection exercises should include the What? So What? What Now? questions to help group members *make meaning out of direct experience*. These questions can be used at any time during the trip to talk about what participants are learning.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluations are recommended and are typically conducted during the last meeting of the trip. By collecting participant feedback, chaperones can better understand what learning took place during the trip and how this learning will be applied in the future. It also allows chaperones to report the impact of the trip to program officials, trip sponsors, parents, and others. Follow-up surveys can provide more information on how effective the trip was in terms of application of trip-related learning. Program spon-

sors are a good resource for determining the types of evaluations and evaluation questions they will find useful.

Appendix A—Sample Meeting Agendas

Sample Agenda—Meeting One

1. Community Builders: Categories exercise
2. Compliments and Appreciations: Use something from journey to the conference location.
3. Learning Support: Explain life skills, experiential education, and Growth Scale concept.
4. Group Agreements: Circle exercise
5. Business Items: Discuss tomorrow's workshops and day-trip planning.
6. Closing/Reflections: Two Positives and a Wish exercise

Sample Agenda—Meeting Two

1. Community Builders: Circle-Up exercise
2. Compliments and Appreciations: Use something from day one of the trip.
3. Learning Support: Slam Dunk Suggestions exercise (For next day-trip ideas)
4. Group Agreements: Revisit what we did well.
5. Business Items: Discuss details about going home.
6. Closing/Reflection: Graffiti Wall exercise

Sample Agenda—Final Meeting (last time together)

1. Community Builders: Weather Forecast exercise
2. Compliments and Appreciations: Discuss what the group did to help everyone's learning.
3. Learning Support: Skip this for more time on goal setting.
4. Group Agreements: Which part of the agreement did they get better at?
5. Business Items: Details for leaving in the afternoon
 - Goal Setting: Group journals for three minutes on what they enjoyed about the group, and four minutes on what they learned and when and where they will use it.
 - Complete evaluations.
6. Closing/Reflections: Group Poem (Take a phrase from journal to share.)

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Community Builder

Exercise: *Back to Back*

Purpose: To get participants up, moving, and mixing with more than just their usual group of friends

Materials: None

Introduction: Ask each group member to stand back-to-back with another member. Ask a question and then instruct partners to:

- turn and face each other
- introduce themselves
- answer the question posed
- when finished, stand back-to-back with someone different, and wait for a different question

Questions start simply and progress to questions about the day and participant learning.

Sample questions:

What was one highlight from your last school year?

What do you enjoy most about this group?

What are you excited about today?

What do you want to learn today?

What can other people do to support you on this trip?

What can the chaperone do to support you on this trip?

What can you do to support others on this trip?

What is something that made you laugh today?

What did the group do well today?



Community Builder

Exercise: *Brain Break*

Purpose: To help a group celebrate, reenergize, or refocus

Materials: None

Introduction: This exercise can be used to diffuse group tension but is not a substitute for directly addressing a problem. Ask group participants to high-five (with BOTH hands) another group member three times as fast as they can. With each slap of the hands, both participants should simultaneously jump in the air and shout, "You're the best!" (Option: Tell the group that you may call a brain break at any time during the trip.)

Optional Debrief Questions:

What impact did this exercise have on your energy level and/or mood?

So what are other times when someone has told you "good job" or given you a high-five? How did you feel?

Now what can you do to give encouragement to others? How can you get the encouragement you need?

Notes:

Notes:



Community Builder

Exercise: *Yes and ...?*

Purpose: To revisit a sequence of events or build on a topic of discussion

Materials: None

Introduction: This exercise can be used to review the day, help members recall what happened, and become more aware of opportunities for reflection on learning. As a discussion tool, it allows participants to add to the topic because everyone has a chance to contribute. Tell the group they will revisit the day by recalling it in chronological order. This is not about being totally accurate because it is really hard to remember the exact order of the day. Group members should help each other by adding in forgotten parts or what comes next in the order of events.

Places to Start:

Tell the group that you will start out by saying something like, "We woke up this morning and went to breakfast." Then tell them you skipped a lot in between there, so someone should say something like, "Yes, and after we woke up, we had to share the bathroom, and then went to breakfast." And someone else could say, "Yes, and after sharing the bathroom, we shared the sink, and waited for the elevator."

Other options would be to say something like, "This trip started when the announcement for the trip was advertised. Yes, and ...?" Or you can say, "We can talk about ways that we were safe during the trip. We were safe when we met at the airport. Yes, and ...?"

What did you remember or forget?

So what did you learn about memory?

Now what can we do to remember better tomorrow?



Community Builder

Exercise: *Card Mixers*

Purpose: To have members intermix, so they talk to a variety of people

Materials: Deck of cards

Introduction: Pull out cards from the deck that have similarities, such as kings, queens, and jacks, or lower cards, such as ace, two, or three. Give each person a card. Ask everyone to find another person with a similar card (color, suit, sequence, etc.). If a few participants are left without matched cards instruct them to find any partner. You might say, "Quickly find a partner with a similar card, if you can. With this partner, you will answer a question that I give you. When you are done, find a new partner, and wait for the next question. Those last few without a match quickly partner up with anyone." Give groups some time to answer and move on when most groups are done.

Sample questions:

What are you excited about today?

What do you want to learn or try today?

What is exciting about traveling with a group? *What* is difficult?

So what ideas do you have about staying safe on this trip?

So what ways might skills that you used today be useful in the work world?

So what difference did you notice in your group members?

Now what do you want to pay attention to next about personal safety?

Now what do you want to do to improve one specific skill?

Now what can you do to use differences to strengthen your team?

Notes:

Notes:



Community Builder

Exercise: *Weather Forecast, Weather Report*

Purpose: To get members talking with each other about their day by using metaphors

Materials: Images of different types of weather (10 to 15), for example, wind, sun, rain, tornado, etc.

Introduction: It may be easier for youth to use a metaphor rather than just saying it was a great or challenging day. The following exercises can give chaperones and participants some insight into what group members are feeling at the moment. At the beginning of an event/day, lay out the weather cards so each image is visible. Ask participants to point out an image that reflects their personal "Weather Forecast" for the day, and ask each of them to share (with a partner or the group) the reason why they picked that image. Then ask group members to identify an image that depicts the kind of day that they would "like" to have, and ask them to share what they think they need to do to create that kind of day for themselves. Ask each person to choose an image that reflects the "Weather Report" from his or her day and share this choice, then ask them to describe what they can do to influence their "weather," and what they can do to get different weather.

What did you notice about the group?

So what did you learn about others? Differences and similarities?

Now what can we do to get to know more about each other?



Community Builder

Exercise: *Playing Card Greeting*

Purpose: To encourage youth to interact and get to know each other better

Materials: Deck of cards

Introduction: Prepare by selecting the lowest value cards (ace to four) from a deck of playing cards. Distribute one card to each member of the group. Ask participants to pair up with another group member (doesn't need to be with someone holding the same card number) and share the same number of facts about themselves as the number on the card they are holding. For example, participants holding a three card must share three things about themselves. After each conversation, partners should trade cards with each other and find a new group member with whom to share. Encourage group members to avoid sharing the same personal fact more than once throughout the activity.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What was the most unique thing you heard?

So what did you learn about the group?

Now what can group members do to get to know more about the great ways that we are similar and/or different?

Notes:

Notes:



Community Builder

Exercise: *Circle Up*

Purpose: To train the group to form a circle quickly (a technique that can be used during the trip when you need the group's full attention)

Materials: None

Introduction: A circle allows everyone to see who is talking, and chaperones can see if group members are listening. Tell participants to quickly form a circle in which no one is standing next to someone they know well (include yourself in the circle), and introduce themselves to the people on either side of them because they will be asked to remember their names and the order in which they are standing. Tell participants that when you say, "Go," everyone should mix in the middle of the circle and when you yell, "Circle up!" everyone should resume their previous order. Instruct participants to build the circle from where you are standing, so the people on their right and left need to be the same people that were there before. Mention that you won't be in the same place every time. Count out loud to see how fast the group can circle up, and challenge them to do better next time.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What is the purpose of standing in a circle? (Explain that it helps everyone see each other and communicate better.)

So what are the benefits when everyone is heard and included?

Now what can we do on the trip—besides circling up—that will help everyone be heard and feel included?



Community Builder

Exercise: *You're First*

Purpose: To encourage members to become more familiar and comfortable with each other

Materials: None

Introduction: Ask group members to share their first experience with something or their best memory of a first experience, so participants can get to know more about the similarities and differences in the group. As the facilitator, you can also come up with alternate "firsts" that are related to the event or program; for example, you could ask about their first travel experience that felt uncomfortable or their first group experience.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What did you notice about the group?

So what did you learn about others? Differences and similarities?

Now what can we do to get to know more about each other?

Notes:

Notes:



Community Builder

Exercise: *Categories*

Purpose: To help members become aware of and get more comfortable with similarities and differences within the group

Materials: None

Introduction: Ask participants to quickly form groups with people who have the same response to the category you call out. Tell them you will call out a favorite color, and participants should form groups based on their favorite color. For example, participants who like the color blue should form one group, participants who like black form another, etc. If a group is too large, split it into smaller subgroups, by shades of a color, for instance. Then tell the participants they will have one minute to introduce themselves and share something about their category with one other participant in the group; for example, what they like about the color or why they chose it. Ask each group or subgroup to shout out their commonality. Start out with simple categories, such as color, and then move on to categories that relate to the trip and life skills.

Category Suggestions:

Favorite food Type of leader you are
Favorite school subject Which life skill you are good at (Use the life skills that were selected for the trip.)
Number of brothers and sisters Which life skill you want to develop (Use the life skills that were selected for the trip.)

Optional Debrief Questions:

What did you notice about the group?
So what did you learn about others? Differences and similarities?
Now what can we do to get to know more about each other?



Compliments and Appreciations

Exercise: *Specific Appreciations*

Purpose: To build a positive and supportive environment by sharing positive comments and appreciations

Materials: None

Introduction: Start by telling group members that part of their time together will be spent on teambuilding, where they will talk about what they do as a group that helps them get along and adds to the quality of the trip. Explain that one way to do this is to share compliments on things they appreciate about the group. Tell them you will start and then go around the circle. (Posting sentence starters on a wall nearby may encourage members to participate more.)

Suggested Questions:

As a result of the trip, I will be able to _____.

As a result of the trip, I will be able to use my new knowledge to _____.

As a result of the trip, I will be able to use my improved life skills to _____.

Notes:

Notes:



Group Agreements

Exercise: Circle

Purpose: To create a safe learning environment where groups work on behaviors that support success

Materials: Paper and markers

Introduction: Instruct group members to draw a large circle with a smaller one inside. Show them a sample drawing (Figure 1). Have them place individual and group goals in the inner circle. Then ask them what the goals are for the trip, what they want to learn, and what life skills they want to focus on for improvement. The desired behaviors after the trip is over should be made part of the goals. The purpose of the trip is to learn information and life skills that can be used in the future, so what happens after the trip is very important.

Ask the group which behaviors, individual and group, if done well, will help them reach their goals. Provide an example, such as If we include good communication in the agreement will this help the group? If we agree to use personal safety skills, will this make for a better trip? The group needs to brainstorm the behaviors they want to include in their agreements, getting the list down to four or five behaviors that everyone can agree on. The group should reach its individual and collective goals (the inner circle) by working on positive behaviors (the outer circle). Remember, this is about progress, not perfection, when creating this list of behaviors. This agreement will be used throughout the trip.



Figure 1. Circle graphic used as a tool for choosing group goals and behaviors.

Suggested Questions:

As a result of the trip, I will be able to _____.

As a result of the trip, I will be able to use my new knowledge to _____.

As a result of the trip, I will be able to use my improved life skills to _____.



Group Agreements

Exercise: A Sunrise

Purpose: To create a safe learning environment where groups work on behaviors that support success

Materials: Paper and markers

Introduction: Have participants draw a sun rising with rays of light coming out of it, and have them leave space below the horizon line to write in their goals. Have them draw the sun large enough to hold a lot of information. Show them a sample drawing (Figure 2). Ask the group members what they hope to learn and what life skills they hope to get better at. The desired behaviors after the trip is over should be made part of the goals. The purpose of the trip is to learn information and life skills that can be used in the future, so what happens after the trip is very important. Under the drawing's horizon have participants put the answers to the following questions:



Figure 2. Sunrise graphic used as a tool for choosing group goals and behaviors.

Suggested Questions:

As a result of the trip, I will be able to _____.

As a result of the trip, I will be able to use my new knowledge to _____.

As a result of the trip, I will be able to use my improved life skills to _____.

Ask the group which behaviors, individual and group, if well done, will help them reach their goals. Provide an example, such as If we include good communication in the agreement will this help the group? If we agree to use personal safety skills, will this make for a better trip? Ask participants to choose four to five general behaviors on which they can all agree and put them around the inner circle. Let them know you will revisit these behavior choices throughout the trip. They can then pick one of the behaviors they feel is especially important and write it on one of the rays of the sun. They can also add specific details of what that behavior looks like, sounds like, and feels like in more detail in the ray area. They can practice these behaviors the next day.

Notes:

Notes:



Group Agreements

Exercise: *Recipe Card*

Purpose: To create a safe learning environment where groups work on behaviors that support success

Materials: Paper and markers

Introduction: This group exercise uses the concept of a recipe to list the ingredients needed to make a good trip experience and to achieve individual and group goals. Ask group members what the group's goals are, as well as what they hope to learn, and what life skills they hope to get better at. The desired behaviors after the trip is over should be made part of the goals. The purpose of the trip is to learn information and life skills that can be used in the future, so what happens after the trip is very important.

Have group members write down the answers to the following questions on their recipe card.

As a result of the trip, I will be able to _____.

As a result of the trip, I will be able to use my new knowledge to _____.

As a result of the trip, I will be able to use my improved life skills to _____.

Ask group members what their recipes are for a successful group and what behaviors it takes to be successful as a group. Ask them what behaviors (or ingredients) are in a successful group (cooperation, respect, fun, etc.), and what behaviors, individual and group, if done well, will help them as a group.

List these behaviors (ingredients) as a recipe.

Recipe Name:

Ingredients: top four or five behaviors

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____



Group Agreements

Exercise: *Follow-up Debrief Questions for Group Meetings*

Purpose: To make sure agreements continue to meet the group's needs and goals

Materials: Current group agreement

Introduction: A group agreement is only effective when it is put to use and upheld by the members it binds. However, the agreement created must continue to fit individual and collective needs and goals. It is a "living" document and should be updated to meet the needs of the team as it evolves. Groups should revisit their agreements on a daily basis to make sure they still reflect the group's needs and goals.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What did you see today that reminded you of our group agreement?

So what did you do to use the group agreements well? Not so well?

Now what are you going to do to uphold these agreements even more effectively?

What have you noticed about how we have used our agreement lately?

So what do you think that says about how our team has changed?

Now what would you add to or change about our agreement?

What part of the agreement have you noticed could use some practice?

So what was the impact of it not working well? *So what* are you learning about that part of the agreement?

Now what can you and the other group members do to get better at it tomorrow?

What part of the agreement did the group do well today?

So what is the impact on the group members when it is done well? *So what* are you learning about this part of the agreement?

Now what can you (or the group) do tomorrow to do things even better?

Notes:

Notes:



Exercise: *Growth Scale*

Purpose: To highlight the target areas for individual growth

Materials: Three pieces of paper and space on the floor

Introduction: On the growth scale, the “Comfort Zone” is on one end of the scale and the “Danger Zone” is on the opposite end of the scale. Things that are familiar or very easy are in the comfort zone and things that are unfamiliar and very difficult are in the danger zone. New and/or challenging ideas, experiences, or skills lie in the center of the scale, called the “Growth Zone.” This is where learning and change occur.

Intellectual, social, and emotional growth mean going beyond things that are easy or familiar and experiencing things that are difficult and uncomfortable. The payoff for “working the Growth Zone” is the development of greater comfort in life because difficult tasks become easier and more comfortable. On the other hand, the Danger Zone causes too much discomfort and should be avoided, since little learning occurs there. It can even make people withdraw and shrink even from their comfort zones.

Tell participants about the three zones. Explain that one side of the room will be considered the Comfort Zone. It represents areas with comfortable, easy, or familiar ideas or experiences. The other side of the room will be considered the Danger Zone. It represents areas with uncomfortable, often frustrating, and even risky ideas or experiences. The middle of the room will be considered the Growth Zone. It represents areas with new, difficult, or unfamiliar ideas or experiences that may feel uncomfortable but not overwhelming. Tell participants that you will read some individual phrases. After each phrase, invite group members to stand in the zone that feels most true for them. Participants can also opt to watch the activity from the sidelines.



Exercise: *Growth Scale*

Use the following phrases:

Being in a new city. Being in a new city at night.

Skateboarding. Skateboarding downhill. Skateboard jumping.

Singing loudly in the shower, at school, on your hometown’s main street, leading the national anthem for a national baseball game.

Taking a math test. Taking a spelling test.

Sitting next to someone who looks different from you.

Sharing pizza with friends. Sharing pizza with strangers.

Having your own bedroom. Sharing a room with one person, two people, three people.

Optional Debrief Questions:

Focus: We all have areas where there is room to grow.

What do you notice about the zones people are standing in?

So what are you learning about each other? *So what* surprising differences or similarities are you finding? *So what* assumptions did you make before starting?

Now what can you do tomorrow with this new understanding that we have differences and similarities? *Now what* healthy risks can you take?

Focus: We control how we grow by how we challenge ourselves.

What would this trip be like if you spent all your time in your Comfort Zone? The Growth Zone? The Danger Zone?

So what zone would make this trip most meaningful to you? Why?

Now what is one thing you can do to safely explore your “Growth Zone” and stretch yourself on this trip?

Notes:

Notes:



Learning Support

Exercise: *Explaining Life Skills*

Purpose: To explain the opportunities for life skill development on the trip

Materials: None

Introduction: In your trip literature, it may state, "On the trip we will all focus on improving the life skills of accepting differences and personal safety." It may also state why the trip is a great opportunity to develop those skills. Share these statements with participants at the orientation meeting. You can relate the trip to the group's mission and vision. Ask the group how the trip relates to the life skills they have been working on, and how the trip can be another opportunity to get better at these life skills. Ask participants to think of skill development like this—when someone wants to strengthen a muscle, they have to stress it, work it, and practice a lot. It's like lifting weights. This work results in the muscle getting stronger. Our team skills are similar. We have to work at them, practice them. Also, the better our team skills or life skills are, the better our time together will be.

Suggested Questions:

Throughout the course of our program, what skills have you been improving?

(Most participants will talk about their program activities, for example, their team sport, art project, or other applicable program activity.)

What team skills or life skills are you using to be successful in your trip activities?

Optional Debrief Questions:

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve on this life skill?



Learning Support

Exercise: *Experiential Education Discussion*

Purpose: To discuss the experiential education approach to learning, so participants can use this approach in the "Reflections" exercises

Materials: None

Introduction: Tell participants that during their time together they will get the most out of their trip experiences by talking about them and connecting them to the life skills they are working on. Let the group know that after they talk about their experiences, they need to figure out what they have learned from them. Then, most importantly, they need to figure out what they will do with what they have learned. Let participants know that what they have learned and what they will do with it are personal, as each participant is unique and can use learning in different ways.

Ask the group to remember the experiences of the day. By revisiting the day, participants will be better able to answer the question "What did I learn from the day's experience?" Ask questions that will help participants figure out how to use their learning the next day and after the trip is over.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve on this life skill?

Notes:

Notes:



Learning Support

Exercise: *Listen/Talk Circle*

Purpose: To stimulate and regulate discussion on any topic, including topics that come up during the business part of a meeting

Materials: Rope, string, or chalk that can be used to form a circle large enough for several participants to stand inside or all participants in some cases

Introduction: Have participants form a circle. Let them know that the inside of the circle is the place for talking, while the outside of the circle is a place for listening. Ask questions and members of the group can enter the circle to respond and step out when they are done, or they can remain outside just listening. This exercise pulls people together, gets eyes focused on the speaker, creates a sense of connection, and decreases side discussions. You can use other versions of this exercise; for example, you can give every participant a turn in the circle and have each one answer a question until everyone is in the circle.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve on this life skill?



Learning Support

Exercise: *Slam Dunk Suggestions*

Purpose: To gather anonymous comments and ideas in a fun way and help participants become more comfortable with sharing

Materials: Paper and pens for every member

Introduction: Have participants take a sheet of paper and write about something that occurred during the day that was either meaningful to them or that could have been improved upon. Tell participants not to include their names on their responses. Next, ask them to crumple the paper and toss it into a bin located in the center of the room. Have a volunteer select a piece of paper from the bin and read it aloud. Ask the group to talk about the information and ideas written on each selected piece of paper.

This exercise can be used at the beginning of the trip when the group is uncomfortable with sharing. It encourages discussion but also stops any one person from dominating the conversation. You can also use the Slam Dunk Suggestions to come up with ideas for free time activities, or for ideas on how to be a stronger team. Some of the questions you might ask are:

What are you learning about opportunities that the group has?

So what can you do to support a stronger team?

Now what can you do to be a better team member?

Optional Debrief Questions:

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve on this life skill?

Notes:

Notes:



Learning Support

Exercise: *Goal Setting*

Purpose: To help group members plan out what, where, why, and when they will use what they have learned on the trip

Materials: Paper and pencils

Introduction: Emphasize that goal setting is one of the most important parts of the trip. Ask participants to talk about the ways they can use their learning from the trip. Explain that if they don't make plans for the future, they are more likely to lose the learning they have acquired. If they don't practice after the trip is over, newly learned skills won't become permanent. Ask each participant to write down a goal for each life skill they practiced on the trip. Have them use the four "W" questions to help them come up with ideas. For example, "what" is important about this life skill, "where" will I use it, "why" will I use it, and "when" will I use it. Have the group share their responses and ask questions such as:

What is one goal you now have for learning and/or improving your chosen life skill?

So what change do you hope to see in your home/school/community life by practicing these skills or by making these improvements?

Now what commitments can you make in regard to these skills or improvements for the next three to six months?

Optional Debrief Questions:

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve on this life skill?



Closing Reflections

Exercise: *Mental Picture Postcard*

Purpose: To reflect on the day using a different format for learners who like to draw

Materials: Note cards (postcard size) or use real postcards that can be mailed after the trip

Introduction: Have participants picture themselves in one significant experience that occurred during the day in which they practiced one of the trip's selected life skills. Have them draw that image on a postcard and write a short explanation next to it. Ask them who they would send it to.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What happened today with the life skill we are working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve on this life skill?

What does your postcard show or say? What doesn't it show?

So what does or doesn't your card show or say about the life skill(s) you practiced today?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve this life skill?

Notes:

Notes:



Closing Reflections

Exercise: *Group Journaling*

Purpose: To give participants a different way to record and reflect on the trip

Materials: Group journal and stickers

Introduction: This exercise can be used in multiple ways and at different times during the trip to support learning by recording things like ice breakers, group wishes, norms, and growth opportunities. You can assign one person to be the scribe, who writes in the journal for the group, or you can ask a question and have each participant write his or her response on a large sticker or label. These stickers can then be pasted into the group journal. By using stickers, you allow everyone to add in something, and they can be used later to review the group's history together.

As part of this exercise, give participants a sentence to complete.

The 4-H skills that could help me in the working world include...

I can improve my marketable [job] skills on this trip by...

My chaperone can help me hone my [job] skills by...

Another life skill or knowledge area I want to improve on this trip is...

I can improve my skill and knowledge in this area by...

My chaperone can support me by...

Optional Debrief Questions:

What happened today with the life skill we are working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve on this life skill?



Closing Reflections

Exercise: *Graffiti Wall*

Purpose: To allow members to share their learning in written or artistic form

Materials: Butcher paper or easel paper to make a paper wall and markers that do not bleed through (washable preferred)

Introduction: This exercise can be done in silence if you want a reflective ending to the night, or it can be used at the beginning of the trip, with more activities added on each day. Tell the participants they will create a graffiti wall out of their experiences that day. Give them a topic and have them draw pictures and write phrases on the paper wall for the group to see. This exercise could be done on the floor to avoid damaging the wall. Ask participants to draw a picture that represents some key learning from the day or that represents the most exciting time they had during the day, or have them draw a picture of themselves using a life skill during the day.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What do you see represented here? What is missing?

So what does this graffiti wall say about how our group and/or its members are changing or growing?

Now what do you want to make sure to highlight or include next time the group meets?

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve on this life skill?

Notes:

Notes:



Closing Reflections

Exercise: *Two Positives and a Wish*

Purpose: To have members recognize their positive aspects and think about what they can practice tomorrow

Materials: None

Introduction: Ask participants to take a moment to consider what they have learned about themselves during the day. Invite them to state two positive things about themselves and share one wish for how they would like to grow and improve tomorrow.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What was this activity like for you?

So what was easier for you to give yourself: the “positives” (compliments) or the “wish” (a suggestion for growth or improvement)?

Now what tips can you give people (peers, coaches, chaperones, etc.) about the kinds of messages that are most helpful to you? Strokes? Wishes? Both?

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve on this life skill?



Closing Reflections

Exercise: *A Sweet and Salty Review*

Purpose: To reflect on what was nice (sweet) today and what was maybe not so nice (salty)

Materials: One pretzel and one piece of candy per person

Introduction: This exercise encourages members to think less negatively about times during the trip when things were not fun (sweet) but salty, like a salty pretzel without water. Give each member one salty and one sweet snack and instruct them not to eat them until it is their turn to speak. Tell them that each group member will have experienced a highlight during the trip, which is like eating a sweet, but other experiences on the trip are like eating a pretzel with no water—kind of dry. Ask participants to share one difficult experience they had during the day and have them eat their salty snack if they choose to. Then ask them to share one positive experience, thought, or feeling and have them eat the sweet snack if they choose to. Remind them that at the end of the day, they can take a drink of water to quench their thirst, or brush their teeth to get rid of the pretzel taste, and then they can move on. Tomorrow is a new day.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve on this life skill?

What experiences are you holding onto after today—salty or sweet?

So what is the message, memory, or experience that is leaving that taste in your mouth?

Now what is the “taste” (message or memory) that will help you to do your best tomorrow?

Notes:

Notes:



Closing Reflections

Exercise: *Group Poem*

Purpose: To quietly reflect on each participant's experiences on the trip

Materials: Note cards and pens

Introduction: This exercise supports group members who prefer writing as a form of communication. An anonymous poem is created when everyone's writings are joined together to form a single poem. Give a note card to each participant. Tell them you will ask a question and you want them to write an answer on their card. Ask them to keep it short and to write legibly. Collect the cards, shuffle them, and read the group poem that they create.

Suggested Questions:

What does it mean to treat others with respect? • How do you feel when someone listens to you? • How do you feel when someone gives you the help you need? • How does it feel to be getting better at a life skill? • What new risk will you take as a result of your improved life skills? • What will you do with your learning from the trip that will benefit you, your community, or the world?

Optional Debrief Questions:

What did you notice about the poem?

So what did you learn about this group that you hadn't realized before? Is there anything that the group could do better?

Now what will you do better tomorrow?

What did you notice about what members plan to do with their learning?

So what are you learning as a result of the trip?

Now what do you think you can do with your learning for yourself, your community, or the world?

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve this life skill?



Closing Reflections

Exercise: *Keywords*

Purpose: To sum up the group's learning and life skill development and celebrate the trip experience

Materials: Paper and pens

Introduction: Ask the group to generate a list of keywords that describe their experience together. They can create multiple keyword lists, such as keywords describing what they learned on the trip, that describe the trip itself, or describe the impact the trip had on them. When the generation of ideas slows or stops, review the lists. Check to make sure all items are accurately captured and that everyone understands what is listed. Group members need not agree on what is listed. This exercise can be done at the conclusion of the day or at the beginning of the next day or meeting.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What did you notice about the keyword list?

So what are the ways in which our life skills relate to the keywords?

Now what can you do tomorrow to focus on the skills and ideas that are most important to you?

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve this life skill?

Notes:

Notes:



Closing Reflections

Exercise: *The Magic Circle—Stop and Go*

Purpose: To get the group moving and sharing, especially if they are tired

Materials: None

Introduction: Have participants stand in a circle facing the back of the person in front of them. Instruct them to march around the circle while you pose a question. Let them know that anyone may call 'Stop!' (thereby freezing the circle) and share their response to the question. When the speaker says 'Go!', the movement of the circle resumes.

Optional Debrief Questions:

What was the best part of your day?

Where were you most challenged today?

Do you have an example of someone in the group showing one of the selected life skills?

Where will you take risks tomorrow and talk to members from different groups?

What happened today with the life skill we have been working on?

So what did you learn about how to improve this life skill?

Now what can you do tomorrow to improve this life skill?



Notes:

Notes:



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