



A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders Personal Development

Ages and Stages of Youth P-1

My kids change so fast I can't keep up with them.

Young people change as they grow. While physical growth is obvious, sometimes growth in thinking, social growth and emotional growth are not quite as visible. When working with youth in an educational program like 4-H, you need to be sensitive to growth and development in all four areas. The ages and stages of development of youth greatly influences how they learn and what is of interest to them. Teaching methods must be adapted to the physical, mental, social and emotional capabilities of the age group(s) you are working with. Research on youth development provides insight into what to expect in terms of the physical, mental, social and emotional development of youth aged 6-8 years, 9-11 years, 12-14 years, 15-17 years and 18-19 years. That research is summarized in "Ages and States of Child and Youth Development: A Guide for 4-H Leaders," RP-292, available from your local Nebraska Cooperative Extension office or the State 4-H Office. Other states may have their version of this Nebraska Cooperative Extension publication.



A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders Personal Development

Family Strengths P-2

When times are good, parents are taken for granted.

Today the home and family life are sometimes remarkably similar to a busy airport (refueling, servicing the equipment, directing traffic --getting people to other places). It is of crucial importance to its passengers but hardly an isolated place of retreat from the surrounding world. No family is immune from the change, pressure and new ideas of the world which invade each home in both benign and damaging ways.

We now increasingly recognize that parents cannot be held solely responsible for the ways in which their children develop. Families are perceived as open systems heavily affected by the more powerful systems of society (political, social, religious and economic). Problems, however, lie within individuals and families as well as systems. Individuals can make a difference.

Parents, educators, researchers, counselors and ministers are among the many people who are increasingly aware that if we are to strengthen families in America we must learn more about what strong families are like. What are the characteristics of successful families? How can family strengths be developed? How can we enhance the quality of our family relationships?

Family strengths are defined as those relationship patterns, interpersonal skills and competencies, as well as the social and psychological characteristics which create a sense of positive family identity, promote satisfying and fulfilling interaction among family members, encourage the development of the potential of the family group and individual family members, and contribute to the family's ability to deal effectively with stress and crises in everyday life.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the time you finish this module you should be able to:

1. Describe characteristics of "strong families."
2. Identify a dozen new ideas to strengthen your family.
3. Choose three family strength builders to complete in one month.
4. Complete the 3 strength builders and discuss the results with family members.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG FAMILIES

Through research and educational program experience, characteristics of families which successfully cope with pressures, changes and threats, have been identified. They include at least six general characteristics.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Time together -- These families organize their lives (not just free time) to make sure they spend time on activities that everyone enjoys. This means individual family members make sacrifices to be together.

Able and willing to communicate -- which includes skill in listening and expressing feelings. They do not allow individual members to be laughed at or "put down."

Each individual makes a commitment to the family -- which promotes the general welfare of the family over personal desires.

Problem solving -- includes skill in resolving conflicts and commitment to help each other as problems arise that threaten the family or its members.

Community involvement -- The family is viewed as part of a community which provides support to community members and expects members to contribute to the community.

IDEAS FOR STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Following is a list of specific ideas to enhance these characteristics of strong families.

1. Plan time to be together. Put these plans ahead of other opportunities or demands. Choose activities that interest everyone to some degree. Gradually include activities which are a primary interest to each family member.
2. Establish a balance between outside activities, work schedules, and the family. This may mean cutting out some of the current outside activities and overtime commitments at work.
3. Post a family master calendar on a wall so all can see and remember their family commitments well into the future.
4. Set aside time to talk to each other and to really listen. See module C-2 for a review of listen skills.
5. Work through module C-1 (interpersonal communication) as a family.
6. Give recognition to family members (see module V-8 for specific guidelines and ideas for giving recognition).
7. Show each family member consideration and appreciation for everyday sacrifices.
8. Resolve problems and conflicts constructively and creatively (see module M- 3).
9. Help each other and be willing to accept help from each other.
10. Contact and build ties with other families.
11. Develop a spiritual focus within your family (this may or may not include attending religious services together).

12. Take part in community activities and use community services (i.e., go to the library together).
13. Designate one meal each week as a special family time when everyone will participate, talk and listen.
14. Make a family tree together. Discuss where your family came from. An exercise for this activity is described in the 4-H leaders guide, "And My World, Unit I" on page 30 (currently available through the national 4-H Catalogue).
15. Start a "Celebrate the Family" group (through 4-H or another organization). Get materials like the "Strengthen Your Family" series available through Penn State Cooperative Extension to give your group ideas for activities.
16. Plan an "intergenerational family meal" where each generation of your family is involved in menu planning, cooking, and serving. Don't be afraid to try a new dish -- start a new family tradition. Discuss what it was like for each generation to be young.
17. Play a board game together. Do a jigsaw puzzle together.
18. Have an intergenerational songfest where each generation teaches the family a favorite song.
19. Start a family band. Play something simple together. Rhythm instruments and singing are acceptable for those who do not play other instruments.
20. Adopt an older friend who is not part of your family. Include the friend in family activities. Help the friend with some chore (like shopping or yard work).
21. Host an international guest. Many opportunities are available from many organizations for short or long term hosting. Involve all family members in the planning and preparation for the guest.
22. Conduct a home energy check. Get a checklist from your county extension office, a utility company, or a community organization interested in energy efficiency.
23. Ask older adults to teach quilting, carpentry, stamp collecting, sewing, or cooking skills to your family. So something similar for them. This is called a "skill exchange."
24. Plan a community beautification project (clean up, landscape, paint trash cans).
25. Plan and conduct a physical fitness seminar.
26. Grow a family garden. Let each family member have a special area to experiment with something special.
27. Plan a nature walk. Make it a photographic expedition.
28. Discuss heroes. Who were your past heroes, current ones?

29. Interview an older member of your family...perhaps with a tape recorder. Have a prepared list of questions but follow the direction that the interviewee wants to go with the interview.

30. Begin a collection (stamps, coins, rocks) that everyone in the family can help maintain and expand.

31. Create holiday decorations such as snowflakes from paper.

32. Make a book of leaves.

33. Start an album of family photographs and keepsakes (school programs, postcards).

34. Go fishing together; take a picnic.

35. Make a get-well card for someone.

36. Make a meal for someone and deliver it.

37. Plan a family holiday that is something you don't normally celebrate (i.e., presidents day, United Nations Day, Arbor Day, May Day, birthday of a famous person).

38. Design a family ceremony for a special occasion. Select music, or a poem, or a reading, or a combination of these.

39. Prepare a secret supper. Each family member is responsible for part of the meal but no attempt is made to coordinate or reveal who is fixing what.

40. Make a family flag. Design and make it to express unique things about your family.

41. Have a garage sale of things you need to get out of the house. Do it with two or three other families in your neighborhood.

EXERCISE:

Choose three of the ideas from the list above to complete during the next month. Involve all family members in the decision.

EXERCISE:

Use the following scale to evaluate your family. Have each family member complete the scale then compare answers and discuss.

Assessing Your Family Strengths

Rate your family overall for each of the following characteristics of strong families. Remember that every family has strengths and weaknesses. Low ratings will help identify areas to strengthen. The list above will give you ideas for activities to help strengthen your family.

weak	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (strong)
1. The family spends time together.							
2. The family is a priority for all members.							
3. Communication is frequent among members.							
4. Family members listen to each other carefully.							
5. Feelings are expressed without fear.							
6. Appreciation is expressed and accepted.							
7. Members support each other in times of crisis.							
8. Self-esteem is promoted for all members.							
9. Members work together.							
10. Members play together.							
11. Problems are quickly noted and do not get ignored.							
12. Problem solving is practiced							
13. Family participates in community activities.							
14. Members are allowed to participate in activities apart from the family.							
15. Family can accept help from outside.							



A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders Personal Development

Values Development P-3

Whoever wishes ill on someone, invites ill onto himself. What goes around, comes around.

We all have values--a personal idea of what is good or bad. While helping other people build communities we need to be aware that they have values too and that their values may be (and often are) different from ours. To be effective in helping communities we need to recognize our own values and practice tolerance and empathy for other peoples' values.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the time you finish with this module you should be able to:

1. Identify at least 10 values that you hold.
2. Describe how you should work with a community whose values are different than your own.

WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES?

Everyone has personal values, as well as values related to family, community, nation and world. People who say "I think we ought to take care of our own backyard before we go running around the world trying to fix other countries' problems," are expressing a value about the world. Personally I find that statement extremely naive and objectionable. If I want to work with people who hold that value, however, I have to accept the fact that it is one of their values. I can respect them as persons without sharing all of their values. If, however, I do not clarify my own values and try to understand the other person's values I may simply conclude that the person is objectionable. Then I have created a barrier to working with that person and I have created an unnecessary conflict.

So let's start by identifying some personal values.

EXERCISE:

State some of your own values by answering the following questions. You should be able to give more than one answer to many of these questions.

1. Who am I?
2. What is important to me?
3. What is my purpose in life?



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

4. How should I treat other people?
5. What are my key religious beliefs?
6. When I die I hope this will be my epitaph (the way people remember me):
7. My responsibilities to my family include:
8. I believe that people should never put their elderly parents in a rest home. Yes No Why:
9. I believe that parents should teach their kids to:
10. Among the things that my parents taught me are:
11. I believe that all citizens should vote in elections:
12. I vote (do not always vote) because:
13. All citizens should pay taxes. Yes No Why:
14. Every adult should have the right to own automatic weapons. Yes No Why:
15. Schools have the responsibility for:
16. I believe the following actions are immoral:
17. What makes my community a community (what keeps it from falling apart) is

Share your answers with a friend or with the discussion group. Does everyone agree on every answer given? Can you tolerate values that you do not hold and still respect the person who holds that belief?

NATIONAL VALUES

Review the discussion of "American values" in module P-4. Do you agree with all of the values discussed as American values?

EXERCISE:

Write down (add to your list of values in the answers to the 18 questions above) any values that you find in module P-4 with which you strongly agree.

Should all Americans hold the same values? How do differences in values strengthen a country? How do they lead to conflicts? How should citizens deal with value conflicts?

WORLD VALUES

Many writers, philosophers, religious leaders, and political leaders say that too many Americans are apathetic about the world, that we can no longer afford to isolate ourselves as a country or as individual citizens. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

EXERCISE: Answer the following questions.

	I Agree - I Disagree - I don't care?
1. Environmental problems like global warming and acid rain need international solutions.	
2. The world economy affects me greatly.	
3. Unrestricted immigration between all countries should be allowed.	
4. I can do something about world hunger.	
5. The issue of "global survival" concerns me.	
6. All strategic nuclear weapons should be eliminated.	
7. The violation of human rights around the world concerns me.	
8. I strongly identify with the slogan, "Think globally, act locally."	

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT VALUES

Following is a set of guidelines (values) that were written by a community development specialist to guide his work in international community development. Review the guidelines and mark those statements which you find useful in your work as a community leader. Add any other statements to the list which are important to you.

Preparation

1. Get as much background as possible on the community situation.
2. Clarify my own values of nonformal education (module E-3) as they relate to the situation.
3. Anticipate issues and problems.
4. Prepare alternative approaches for resolving the issues and problems.
5. Review this checklist before working directly with the community.

My Personal Value Positions

1. The learner should help determine learning objectives.
2. Educational efforts should increase the independence of learners.
3. Community development (C D) efforts should encourage local initiative, self-help and innovation.
4. C D efforts should foster critical awareness to identify and analyze problems.

5. C D efforts should promote action to resolve problems.
6. C D efforts should emphasize common sense approaches rather than theoretical approaches.
7. C D efforts should have immediate and practical benefits to learners.
8. C D efforts should avoid excessive structure, programmed systems, and centralization.
9. Educators (community leaders) should treat learners (community members) as subjects, not objects.
10. Community developers should help find local solutions to local problems.

Introducing Myself

1. Start with an informal dialogue in a relaxed environment.
2. Establish credibility by showing interest, asking questions, and indicating preparations made to work with the community.
3. Invite community members to describe the situation, then clarify it by tactfully asking questions.
4. Accept the needs identified by clients as the starting point.
5. Establish myself as a catalytic consultant (collaborator) by:
 - a. dialogue on personal values
 - b. encouraging teamwork
 - c. modeling facilitator behaviors
 - d. emphasizing the problem rather than my expertise.

When I am Viewed as an Expert

1. Offer options not solutions.
2. Dialogue, explore alternatives.
3. Emphasize their expertise.
4. Demonstrate respect for others.
5. Build confidence in others.
6. Support their efforts to define or redefine the problem.

7. Question, listen and point out possible solutions from the answers.
8. Use nonverbal communication to support others.
9. Avoid paternalism and manipulation.
10. Keep the responsibility for solving the problem on the community members.

As the Situation Develops

1. Transfer leadership to others but share responsibility.
2. Transfer skills and information in order to make myself more dispensable.
3. Try to lower my own profile as time passes.
4. Observe local ceremonies, customs, and hierarchies while keeping the problems and values in focus and foremost.
5. Emphasize participatory and "hands on" discussion and learning.
6. Avoid "pulling rank" by using my titles or experience as a defensive or offensive weapon against those who disagree with me.
7. Suggest procedures that might be followed to gather more information.
8. Treat others as equals as much as possible (slightly more than the client is comfortable with, but not enough to destroy communication).
9. Avoid taking myself too seriously.
10. Review this checklist occasionally.

Analyzing Alternatives

1. Consider the effects on all involved.
2. Check each alternative against the personal value positions (above).

Post Mortem

1. Communicate problems/issues yet unresolved in a final discussion or by letter (preferably both).
2. Communicate confidence in community members to carry on.

SUMMARY

The answers to the questions in the first three exercises tell you about some of your values. Remember that these are not cast in stone. Values change. Be open to new ideas, consider them carefully, and when appropriate rewrite your values. Writing them down helps you to solidify them and remind you of them.

The last exercise will help you to identify your values as a community developer or nonformal educator. These statements, when modified to express your personal values, will provide you with guidelines to help you in your role as an educator, community development worker or community leader. The guidelines can also help you to evaluate your actions when your efforts appear to be unsuccessful.



A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders Personal Development

Cultural Awareness P-4

No matter how long the log lies in the river, it will never become a crocodile.

Cross-cultural awareness is very important. If you can become more sensitive to your own cultural biases, you will become a more effective leader. If you can become more aware of minority group values, you will be able to work more effectively with members of that minority group.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After mastering this chapter you should be able to:

1. Become more aware of your own cultural values.
2. Become more sensitive to cultural values which are different than yours.

CROSS CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

"Culture" refers to the accumulation of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, religion, roles in society, concepts of time and concepts of self and universe that a large group of people acquires over generations. We can discuss "traditional Hopi culture" more easily than "American" culture since the first group is smaller and concentrated mainly in one small part of Arizona. However we need to be able to define American culture, even though our definition may be full of exceptions, so that we may begin to see ourselves as others see us.

Time is very important to Americans. We treat it as a material thing ("time is money"). We value promptness and often criticize people who are not time-conscious. Non-western people are not nearly so concerned about time--they often think we are very strange to try to "master, manipulate, or save" time.

Americans value *scientific reasoning*. They try to analyze and understand everything in a rational way. Nature is a resource to be controlled and used for one's benefit. Other people may rely more on religion, tradition or mysticism, in order to understand their world. They may see nature as something to work with rather than something to master.

Americans are *materialistic*. They seek results that can be measured, delight in gadgets, and often judge other cultures by the presence or quality of their refrigerators. Other cultures are more likely to emphasize aesthetic or spiritual values.

Tradition has a unique meaning to Americans. We have no aristocracy, no bourgeoisie, no peasantry--just people. But other cultures often view us in terms of our "Puritan" values: moralistic, humanitarian, competitive, certain that our way is best, and sometimes arrogant. We put great emphasis on "progress." These attitudes often collide with other cultures that have a different history than ours. Our Puritanism often strikes them as "cold, impersonal and naive."

Americans value *individualism* which includes autonomy, resourcefulness and success. As a result we are often indifferent to laws, rules and regulations which may limit our freedom. In other



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

cultures much more value is placed on family, on ancestors and on the good of the group. Decisions are more often made by groups or by an authority.

Religion has generated more conflicts among cultures than any other factor. The Christian religion tends much more toward sharp distinctions between good and evil, right and wrong. We send out missionaries to convert "them." Other religions are more accepting of the world as it is and are less inclined to want to change it.

In our interpersonal relations Americans tend to be hospitable, generous and informal. We make new friends easily. We are often viewed as "careless" in our manners, our dress, our homes, and our friendships. Other cultures place more emphasis on correctness of actions, on ceremony and loyalty to old friends.

Finally Americans tend to be romantics. We have enjoyed almost unlimited natural resources throughout our brief history so we usually take a "can do" approach to any challenge. We expect to be happy. As a result of these values other cultures sometimes view us as self-indulgent and naive.

If we carefully consider our "American values" we can find many strengths and weaknesses within each of the categories discussed above. Likewise we can find many strengths and weaknesses to the values of people in other cultures.

When we compare other cultures to our own to discover who is right and who is wrong, we erect barriers to understanding. We also make leadership and cooperation difficult if not impossible.

Of course cross-cultural sensitivity is also important within our country where "American" values often come in conflict with the values of minority groups. Ironically we are often less tolerant of cultural differences within our own communities than we are in our international relations.

In order to work with members of minority groups, in order to recruit them as members of our organizations, in order to respect them as leaders or potential leaders, we need to understand our own cultural values as well as "their" cultural values. We need to be continually sensitive to potential conflicts in values.

Even understanding cultural differences may not be enough. Minorities in the United States are constantly being torn between their traditional values and those of the "dominant" majority. Sometimes a Navajo may appear to act from "American" values in one situation and from traditional Navajo values in another.

Answers to these problems are not easy. Awareness, however, is the first step. Then a constant effort to be sensitive is required for those who would work in cross-cultural situations.

EXERCISE:

Read the following article silently.

FROM "BODY RITUAL AMONG THE NACIREMA" by HORACE MINER

Professor Linton first brought the ritual of the Nacirema to the attention of anthropologists twenty years ago, but the culture of this people is still very poorly understood. According to Nacirema mythology, their nation was originated by a culture hero, Notgnihsaw.

Nacirema culture is characterized by a highly developed market economy which was evolved in a rich natural habitat. While much of the people's time is devoted to economic pursuits, a large part of the fruits of these labors and a considerable portion of the day are spent in ritual activity. The focus of this activity is the human body, the appearance and health of which loom as a dominant

concern in the ethos of the people. While such a concern is certainly not unusual, its ceremonial aspects and associated philosophy are unique.

The fundamental belief underlying the whole system appears to be that the human body is ugly and that its natural tendency is to debility and disease. Incarcerated in such a body, people's only hope is to avert these characteristics through the use of the powerful influences of ritual and ceremony. Every household has one or more shrines devoted to this purpose. The more powerful individuals in the society have several shrines in their houses and, in fact, the opulence of a house is often referred in terms of the number of such ritual centers it possesses.

While each family has at least one such shrine, the rituals associated with it are not family ceremonies but are private and secret. The rites are normally only discussed with children, and then only during the period when they are being initiated into these mysteries. I was able, however, to establish sufficient rapport with the natives to examine these shrines and to have the rituals described to me.

The focal point of the shrine is a box or chest which is built into the wall. In this chest are kept the many charms and magical potions without which no native believes he could live. These preparations are secured from a variety of specialized practitioners. The most powerful of these are the medicine men, whose assistance must be rewarded with substantial gifts. However, the medicine men do not provide the curative potions for their clients, but decide what the ingredients should be and then write them down in an ancient and secret language. This writing is understood only by the medicine men and herbalists, who, for another gift, provide the required charm.

Beneath the charm box is a small font. Each day every member of the family, in succession, enters the shrine room, bows his head before the charm box, mingles different sorts of holy water in the font and proceeds with a brief rite of ablution. The holy waters are secured from the Water Temple of the community, where the priests conduct elaborate ceremonies to make the liquid ritually pure.

The daily body ritual performed by everyone includes a mouth rite. Despite the fact that these people are so punctilious about care of the mouth, this rite involves a practice which strikes the uninitiated stranger as revolting. It was reported to me that the ritual consists of inserting a small bundle of hog hairs into the mouth, along with certain magical powders, and then moving the bundle in a highly formalized series of gestures.

The ritual life of the Nacirema has certainly shown them to be a magic-ridden people. It is hard to understand how they have managed to exist so long under the burdens which they have imposed upon themselves. But even such exotic customs as these take on real meanings when they are viewed with the insight provided by another anthropologist, Malinowski, when he wrote:

"Looking from far and above, from our high places of safety in the developed civilization, it is easy to see all the crudity and irrelevance of magic. But without its power and guidance early man could not have mastered his practical difficulties as he has done, nor could man have advanced to the higher stages of civilization."

Now answer the following questions **silently. Do not consult with anyone else!**

1. Where (area, country, continent) do you think the Nacirema live?

2. Why do you think the Nacirema live there?

3. What words best describe the Nacirema culture?

Write down your answers before you go on to the next page.

Share your answers with the group or with a friend before you read the next section.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PREVIOUS EXERCISE

*****Do the exercise above, if you haven't already, before reading further.

Nacirema is "American" spelled backwards. This description is how Americans might appear to an anthropologist from another planet. The facts are accurate but the assumptions and interpretations may seem distorted.

All of the terms refer to American culture:

Notgnihsaaw = Washington
shrine = bathroom
box or chest = medicine cabinet
medicine men = doctors
herbalist = pharmacist
font = bathroom sink
bundle of hog hairs = toothbrush

The moral of this exercise is that unless we are sensitive and careful, we may make assumptions about other cultures which are equally distorted. Cross-cultural awareness is especially important when we desire to work with people from other cultural backgrounds either as members of our organizations or as clients or partners of our organizations.

One common (and insensitive) reaction to cultural differences is to say, "Well, they are living in America so they ought to act like Americans." In this case, "American" is understood to refer to the majority (usually White Anglo Saxon Protestant) values, language and behaviors. To become more sensitive culturally we need to be aware of our own culture, then become aware of common mistakes in cross-cultural contacts.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Skim the section above on "American Values," noting the key phrases (underlined). Which ones are most often in conflict with minority groups or individuals in our community? What adjustments could we make to be more culturally sensitive? For example:

Dress is a problem. - We might all dress less formally and stop making negative comments about those with long hair.

Religious differences may become a problem. - We might all agree to stop arguing about which is the "true" religion. We can agree to disagree and to stop talking about it.



A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders

Personal Development

Career Skills P-5

To get a job you must become a warrior, not a victim.

After setting personal goals (See module L-5) an individual needs to develop and update a Professional Improvement Planning guide to reach those goals.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After finishing this module you should be able to:

1. Identify activities which will help prepare you for (or grow in) the job you want.
2. Prepare for a job interview.

PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING GUIDE

Use the following outline as a planning form to identify personal development activities.

I. GOALS

What are my long-range professional goals? (Type of position, responsibilities, activities, accomplishments, clientele).

What are my academic goals?

1. Degree - M.S., Ph.D., focus/major, supporting area:
2. Non-degree:

What are my personal goals? (lifestyle, geographic, financial)

What are my job-related goals?

II. NEEDS

What are my content needs which would help me meet any of the above goals? (subject matter, background information, experiences)

What are my process needs which would help me meet any of the above goals? (interpersonal skills, personal characteristics, educational methods, communication techniques)

Which of the needs listed above fit the needs of the organization for which I am currently working?



III. ANNUAL OBJECTIVES

What are my personal improvement objectives for this year? (from goals and needs already identified)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What activities will help me meet those objectives?

- A. Courses at _____ university, school.
- B. Short courses or correspondence courses.
- C. Professional conferences and conventions
- D. Workshops
- E. Contacts with colleagues
- F. Reading (books, journals, field manuals)
- G. Writing (articles, field manuals)
- H. Organizing workshops, conferences, meetings
- I. Using community resources
- J. Dialogue with Experts
- K. Self-training

What are my expectations of my family and my current employer in helping me accomplish these activities?

Keep a copy of this guide for your files. Update it annually or when you are tempted by a new position.

INTERVIEWING SKILLS

We will assume that you have prepared yourself to do the job that you want. Now let's turn our attention to landing the job. You will need a resume. Many books are available on writing resumes so that topic will not be discussed here. Do not, however, underestimate the importance of a well designed resume that has been reviewed numerous times by a variety of individuals and refined until it is error free and accurately presents your strengths and experience.

In preparing for an interview, three steps are important: (1) find out as much as you can about the job, the organization, and the people you will be meeting; (2) prepare yourself mentally; and (3) practice, practice, practice.

Step one has no secrets or magic tricks involved. You simply have to do as much homework in the time you have using as many sources as you can. When you have contact with the people where you will interview (usually a secretary) ask lots of questions (without pushing the person

beyond her/his level of patience). Be prepared and organized in the questions that you ask. Ask for brochures on the organization, annual reports, descriptions of current activities, etc. Find out about who was in the job before you and why that person left. What did the organization like about that person and what changes do they want. Assess your strengths and weaknesses in view of the expectations expressed by the organization for the person in the job. Write down 3 or 4 key attributes that you have for the job that you want to communicate to the interviewers. With these written attributes you know what the content of the interview should be if you are in control.

Next let's discuss the mental attitude. You have to convince yourself that YOU WILL BE IN CONTROL OF THE CONTENT OF THE INTERVIEW. You must convince yourself that you are the hunter, not the hunted, the person in control, not the victim. Think of yourself as already having the job that you want. See yourself "performing and producing" in this job. Now all you have to do is sell the interviewer who will decide if you get the chance. The interviewer controls the outcome of the interview but you can control the content by communicating your attributes every time the interviewer's questions give you the slightest opening. One of the questions you will likely be asked is "tell a little about yourself." Another is "why are you interested in this job." These are perfect openings for you to talk about your attributes and how you acquired them. In this way you control the content of the interview. You can also control the content by preparing questions for the interviewer which allow you to get to your agenda (communicating your attributes). These might be used if the interviewer is getting away from the content you wish to emphasize or if the interviewer is not well prepared and wanders. Keep telling yourself, "I am qualified for this job and I am going to decide, as a result of this interview, if I really want to work for this organization.

In summary the hunter is in control, is confident and shows it, controls the content of the interview, and will decide if this job is the right one (the hunter knows that there will always be other opportunities). The hunted is not in control, is scared to death and shows it, does not control the content of the interview, and puts himself/herself at the mercy of the interviewer. The hunter is unlucky if s/he does not get the job. The hunted is lucky if s/he does get the job.

Look at job hunting as a game where you can strike out 99 times then get a job on the 100th time... and be a success.

For the third step in preparation, the practice, use the checklist below to gradually improve your interviewing skills. Role play the interview with a friend asking you questions. If possible, video tape an interview and evaluate yourself using the checklist. Get other friends to evaluate you as you rehearse for the interview.

CHECKLIST FOR INTERVIEWEE

1. Did the interviewee know as much as possible about the job before the interview.
2. Was the interviewee well aware of the qualifications and characteristics s/he possessed that applied to the job?
3. Was the interviewee aware of what to expect at the interview?
4. Did the appearance of the interviewee show self-confidence and interest in the job? Neat dress? Promptness? Nonverbal communication?
5. Did the conduct of the interviewee show attention and confidence? Sincere tone of voice? Poised and professional? Answered questions fully and honestly?
6. Was the interviewee appropriately aloof?
7. Did the interviewee ask appropriate questions?

8. Did the interviewee maintain eye contact?
9. Was the interviewee relaxed and natural?
10. Did the interviewee communicate qualifications?
11. Did the interviewee interject appropriate humor?
12. Did the interviewee know how a decision will be reached and communicated?
13. Did the interviewee offer to provide additional information?
14. Was the interviewee's overall impression positive and professional showing competence? Did it show the interviewee to be a team member who would not be difficult to work with?



A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders Personal Development

Current Issues P-6

Everyone knows where the shoe pinches.

We have already discussed a technique for identifying community issues, the nominal group process (module E-5). This technique works well for community meetings of 15 or more individuals. For smaller groups, and for individual work, you need another way to identify current issues.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the time you finish this module you should be able to:

1. Identify issues which are currently important to your community.
2. Use other resources to identify "future" issues which may affect your group, organization or community.

A CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNITY ISSUES*

Use the following checklist to determine issues which may be important to members of your community. For this checklist "community" is defined as a geographic area where people live. This may be a small town, a city, a neighborhood, or a rural area with an identifiable shopping center. Not all of the items on the list will be relevant to your community.

Need to Improve
Now --- In the Future

Community Appearance

Entrance(s) into town are attractive.

Business district is clean & attractive;

- landscaping,
- attractive street signs.
- signs to points of interest,
- attractive window displays,
- program for eliminating "blighted areas,"
- recommended architectural "theme,"
- trash disposal containers.

Public parks are adequate (number & size),

- generally attractive and clean,
- landscaped,
- painted, attractive play equipment,
- attractive benches,
- clean, attractive bathrooms.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Public buildings are attractive & clean,

attractively landscaped,
painted and identified,
recommended architectural theme is used.

Streets & sidewalks - adequate amount,

attractively landscaped,
clean & maintained,
well lighted,
attractive fire hydrants,
dying & diseased trees are replaced.

Residential areas have clean yards,

nicely landscaped homes,
homes painted & maintained,
house numbers visible from street,
generally attractive neighborhoods.

Ordinances or programs for dust control,

control of litter, junk cars, shacks, etc.,
maintain clean vacant lots,
recycling center,
placement of utility lines & signs.

Community Facilities & Services

Public water.

Gas service.

Telephone.

Electricity.

Sewer.

Fire Department -- Fire house.

Police Department.

Garbage collection

Trash pick-up.

Civil Defense.

Community center.

Courthouse -- City hall.

Jail.

Water works.

Flood control.

Street cleaning.

Drains & gutters.

Park maintenance.

Cemetery

Public land fill or dump.

Public library.

Planning & Zoning.

Newspaper.

Radio -- TV.

Bus.

Railroad access.

Airport access.
Stop lights.
Crosswalks.

This checklist can be expanded for items related to:

Health Services personnel,
Health Services facilities,
Health Services equipment,
Health Programs (immunizations, AA, insect control, etc.),
Housing Options (including finance, building codes, rentals),
Industrial Development (sites, buildings),
Services for Industrial Development (electricity, security, access to highways, waste disposal, etc.),
Labor Force for Industrial Development, Promotion & Financing for Industrial Development,
Outdoor Recreation facilities,
Indoor Recreation facilities,
Recreation programs (personnel, funding, organizations),
Retail Services (variety, organizations, cooperation, sales tax, training programs),
Shopping (parking, quality merchandise, competitive prices, sales),
Tourism (promotion, lodging, food choices, special events).

*This checklist was developed by Eldon E. Moore and Edward A. Parmee, Community Development Specialists, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arizona, 1976.

FUTURE ISSUES

To be effective a community leader, whether educator or community development worker, needs to be aware of future trends, projections and predictions. Many community issues can be anticipated and planned for before they become problems or concerns of local citizens. Some of the long term predictions are in the realm of science fiction. Other short term projections are as certain as death and taxes.

A variety of sources will help you to keep aware of wild predictions and solid projections based on current trends.

The Futurist magazine can be found in many local libraries.

In late December and early January many news magazines focus on national and international trends that will affect people in the coming year.

American Renaissance: Our Life at the Turn of the 21st Century, by Marvin Cetron and Owen Davies (second edition, 1994), St. Martin's Press, describes 74 trends that will affect America's future. Reprints of the 74 trends can be ordered from the World Future Society, 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 450, Bethesda, MD, 20814.

Libraries have a variety of books on future trends. Check under "future."



A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders

Personal Development

Problem Solving P-7

If your only tool is a hammer, then every problem looks like a nail.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the time you finish this module you should be able to:

1. Describe the traditional problem solving process.
2. Identify 20 techniques for solving different types of problems.

THE TRADITIONAL PROCESS

Most problems can be solved by using a five step process.

- 1. Identify the problem.** One of the most common mistakes in problem solving is to work on a problem that is not well understood. Sometimes we start working on a problem (or worrying about it) only to find that the problem was different than we originally thought. In order to avoid wasting time we have to carefully identify the problem. If other people are involved we need to get their agreement to the precise way we have defined the problem.
- 2. Accumulate information about the problem.** This can be done in a variety of ways. Using multiple sources of information usually benefits the problem solver. We usually cannot afford to know everything about a problem before we start solving it. Neither can we afford to know too little about a problem (which leads us to a wrong conclusion and the necessity to go back and start over).
- 3. Evaluate the body of information.** Decide what is important and what is not. During this process several optional solutions usually emerge. Then more questions are raised and we must gather more information in order to select the best option.
- 4. Choose a solution.** If we have carefully done the first three steps, this step will usually be obvious. Now is the time to be decisive. If we decide too soon (during steps 1, 2, or 3) then we will be biased by the time we get to step 4 and the solution will not work. Then we have to start over and deal with a failure as well as the original problem.
- 5. Implementation and evaluation.** These usually happen simultaneously during problem solving. We begin working on the solution and get feedback that our solution is working or not working.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

TWENTY TECHNIQUES

Most of these techniques fit into the traditional process at one point or another. A problem solver can be more effective more often by understanding and using different techniques depending on the specific problem.

1. Library research
2. Interview an expert
3. Hire a consultant
4. Use a program planning process (see module E-4)
5. Mapping (works well when the problem is "how to use a plot of land")
6. Brainstorming (see module LT-3)
7. Role playing (see module LT-13)
8. Small group discussion (see module L-4)
9. Self Training (see module LT-10)
10. Simulation games (see module LT-11)
11. Debate
12. Nominal Group Process (see module E-6)
13. Needs assessment (see module E-5)
14. Resource assessment (see module E-8)
15. Program evaluation (see module E-10)
16. Consensus decision making (see module ____)
17. Conflict resolution (see module M-3)
18. Checklists
19. Mind storming
20. Force field analysis

Many other problem solving techniques can be used. These twenty are often used. Some additional description is needed for 18-20.

Checklists are all around us. If your problem is that people are unhappy with your workshop, use the checklist in module LT-1 (on workshops) to prepare your next workshop then to evaluate that workshop. If your problem is preparing for a job interview, use the checklist in P-5 to prepare for the interview, to evaluate yourself during practice, then to evaluate your actual interview.

Mind storming is a technique for dealing with a very perplexing problem. It is an alternative to "worrying." When you find yourself worrying, find a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. State the problem clearly, write it down, then put it on your bulletin board or in a place which you will see occasionally. Now tell your "mind" to work on the problem and give you some possible solutions. Then forget about the problem for a while. Answers will "pop" into your consciousness when you least expect them. When this happens you need to write the answers and begin to evaluate the options and eventually resolve the problem.

Force field analysis is a four step problem solving technique. (1) State the problem in very clear and precise terms then check the problem statement with a friend to see if it is very clear and precise. (2) List factors that contribute to the problem (which make it a problem or make it worse). (3) List factors which alleviate the problem (which make it less of a problem). (4) What actions can be taken to eliminate factors which contribute to the problem or to strengthen the factors which alleviate the problem? By completing step 4 can the problem be resolved? If not try another problem solving technique.

An example of how it works:

Force Field Analysis;
A worksheet for problem solving

1. **The Problem:** Should I accept a job offer in another town?

2. It will mean time and expense to move.
I know my current job.
My kids do not want to leave their school.
I would lose part of my health benefits.

3. It would mean an increase in my paycheck.
New opportunities.
I'm tired of my current job.
I would be closer to my family.
Vacation benefits are better.
Retirements benefits are better.

4. I can negotiate with my new employer to see if they will help me with moving expense and if I can delay the starting date until June so the kids will at least finish the school year. If I can get those two concessions from my new employer the benefits (column 3) will far outweigh the costs (column 2) and the problem will be resolved.