

Tool. Reducing barriers to adolescents' attendance



There are a lot of reasons why adolescents may not attend, or may stop attending, sessions with their Adolescent Circle. As a first step, talk to the adolescents to try to understand what may be holding them (or their peers) back, and then adapt your intervention in response.

Use the list below to help you to come up with your own solutions for reducing barriers to adolescents' attendance.



Barrier	Possible response
Adolescents don't have time to attend activities	Find out when adolescents have time available, and consider varying the time and location of some (or all) of activities
Adolescents find the activities too easy, silly or pointless, OR too difficult, serious and challenging	<p>Ask adolescents what activities they would like to participate in, and try to include them in your sessions</p> <p>Adjust the length or complexity of activities</p> <p>Consider reorganising your groups by age or developmental level so that it's easier to find activities that interest them</p>
Adolescents can't come because they have to mind their siblings or children	<p>Consider allowing adolescents to bring their younger siblings/children along to sessions</p> <p>Work with their families to arrange care during session times so that adolescents have a chance to take a break and participate</p>
It's dangerous, expensive or difficult to get to the activity space	<p>Consider moving to a new activity space, or rotating activities among a number of different activity spaces</p> <p>Ask adolescents and the community for support in finding a safe place to run activities</p>
Adolescents think that your intervention is too childish for them	<p>Organise older and younger adolescents in separate groups, and adapt activities to their developmental levels</p> <p>If your activity space is in a Child Friendly Space or a primary school classroom, consider moving to less child-related space</p> <p>Find ways to transform your activity space visually, so that it doesn't look like a place for 'little kids'</p>
Adolescents' caregivers don't want them mixing with the opposite gender	Consider creating separate groups for girls and boys -- Make sure there are female and male facilitators available to run activities with the respective groups

Barrier	Possible response
Adolescents don't know about the intervention	Take steps to raise more awareness about your intervention through community meetings, publicising it in the places where adolescents live, eat, work and have fun, putting up posters and enlisting the support of leaders, parents, teachers and other adolescents
Adolescent girls' husbands don't want them 'playing like children'	Consider setting up a special Circle or group for adolescent mothers or wives, and relabeling it as a 'wives' circle' or a 'young mothers' circle;' include information, activities and skills about parenting (if the adolescents are interested)
Adolescents are worried that they won't be able to participate in all of the activities, or that they will be forced to do things they don't want to do	<p>Reassure adolescents that your work together is voluntary and that no one has to participate in any activity, or to talk about any topic, if they don't want to do so</p> <p>Vary activities so that adolescents with different skills and abilities have opportunities to participate</p> <p>Make sure that activities are accessible and appropriate for adolescent girls, adolescents with disabilities, and other marginalized groups</p>
Adolescent girls and boys with disabilities feel excluded from activities	<p>Provide adolescents with disabilities with assistance to get to your activity space (if they need it)</p> <p>Make sure that the activity spaces, as well as toilets and wash facilities, are accessible to adolescents in wheelchairs or with other disabilities Adapt sessions so that they cater for a range of abilities, and make sure that adolescents with physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments all have an opportunity to participate in some of the activities</p> <p>Support facilitators to work with adolescents with disabilities, and to overcome any discriminatory or insensitive attitudes they may have</p> <p>Consider enlisting the support of more facilitators or volunteers (including parents, caretakers, and friends) to support adolescents with disabilities – if they need/want some extra support</p> <p>Integrate adolescents with disabilities in Circles with other adolescents – don't keep them separate from others in a 'special group'</p> <p>Encourage adolescents to set rules for working together that promote respect and tolerance for everyone, and encourage them to be supportive of their peers with disabilities</p>
Other barriers?	Add any other barriers and responses that make sense in your particular context