

Planning and facilitating sessions in each phase



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Specific guidance for facilitators in planning and facilitating sessions for each of the four Phases follows.

Planning the Starting our Circle phase



To plan a sequence of activities for the **Starting Our Circle** phase:

- ▶ Focus on keeping things simple and fun for adolescents coming together for the first time.
- ▶ Choose activities that can be completed in one session as opposed to longer-term projects, as some adolescents may not be able to participate in every session, and new adolescents may be joining the group.
- ▶ Choose activities that are simple and easy to understand, since adolescents in a new situation may find it difficult to concentrate, and in some cases there may be language barriers.
- ▶ Include a mix of high energy and quiet activities to support adolescents' natural process of recovery after a difficult experience
- ▶ Include activities that allow adolescents to decide on a name for their circle, design their opening and closing rituals, and agree to their group rules – these activities give adolescents a chance to create structure and routine, which gives them comfort, certainty and a sense that the circle is a special place.
- ▶ Repeat activities that the adolescents enjoy. This gives adolescents a chance to practice and feel comfortable with something familiar -- However, it is important to vary activities so that they are fun for adolescents with different interests and abilities.
- ▶ Plan and adapt activities that all adolescents can and will participate in, since the first sessions send an implicit message to the entire community – including those adolescents who may not join on the first day – about who they are intended for; It is especially important to include activities that are accessible and inclusive. For example, if adolescents with disabilities do not participate at first, the activities they see or hear about will influence their impressions about whether or not they are welcome.

- ▶ Including activities that have been typically considered appropriate for both adolescent boys and girls in adolescents' cultural context sends a message that the programme is for both boys and girls. Keep in mind that both boys and girls should be supported in exploring any activities that interest them, and Adolescent Circles should create spaces for them to challenge or even transform limiting or harmful gender norms.



Include all adolescents

- ▶ Encourage adolescents to play games that they know already, especially during the Challenge step of the session. Traditional games can be a way for adolescents to connect with their cultural roots, and playing something familiar can remind them of their abilities.



Build on the positive

- ▶ Introduce some new activities and games (such as those in **Energizer Cards**). This allows everybody to try something new, and helps adolescents with different abilities to participate on an equal level with others.
- ▶ Focus on activities that allow the adolescents to get to know each other during this cycle. Games and activities where the adolescents work in groups and pairs can work well.
- ▶ Support adolescents in setting group goals that are simple and attainable in relation to how they will spend their time together in their circles (such as "having fun" or 'making friends.'). Use the ideas they share to help you understand what they want; avoid pushing adolescents to take on challenges when they are just getting started.

Planning and facilitating sessions in each phase

Tips for facilitating sessions in the Starting our Circle phase

Use the same steps recommended in the **'Planning Sessions'** section of the Adolescent Kit, but move smoothly from one step to another, spending no more than 10-20 minutes on each.

Follow the same session structure consistently, and include some of the same activities from one day to the next. This is particularly helpful for adolescents who may be adjusting to new circumstances or coping with difficult experiences, and for participants who can't come to every session.



Provide structure and support

Include discussions, but keep the amount of time talking and listening brief. During this phase, adolescents should spend more time playing and doing than talking.

Include name games and activities where the adolescents work in pairs or small groups for short periods of time, to help them to get to know each other. Encourage adolescents to work in different groups and pairs every session, so that all members of the circle get to know each other.

Encourage adolescents who are sitting quietly to participate more actively, but allow them to sit back and observe quietly if they prefer.

Welcome adolescents even if they arrive late, leave early, have trouble remembering names, misunderstand directions or make other mistakes.

Allow adolescents to decide on a name for their circle, contribute ideas for an opening and closing ritual, and agree to their group rules. These activities give adolescents a chance to create structure and routine, which gives them comfort, and a sense that the circle is a special place that belongs to them.

Planning and facilitating sessions in each phase

Planning the Knowing Ourselves phase



When planning and running sessions for adolescents in the **Knowing Ourselves** phase facilitators should...

- ▶ **Include many activities for adolescents to describe and express themselves.** Adolescents can experiment with different arts, games and physical movements to learn about themselves and interact with others.

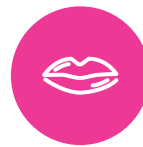


Improvise and adapt

- ▶ **Include activities that give adolescents an opportunity to work individually on activities** during this cycle. This can be an opportunity for adolescents to have quiet time away from hectic households or responsibilities, and to focus on mastering new skills. Consider giving them individual activities such as drawing, building or making crafts during the Challenge step. During the Challenge step, adolescents may want to work on a project over the course of several days.
- ▶ **Include activities that introduce adolescents to new words to describe characteristics, feelings, and other aspects of their identity.** If they speak different languages or are learning a new language, help them to learn a few vocabulary words.
- ▶ **Include activities that give adolescents a chance to learn about each other, and to exchange information and ideas about themselves.** Help adolescents to recognize their similarities and differences.
- ▶ **Use the Agreeing to group rules and Reviewing group rules activities** to help adolescents agree to how they will share feedback in a way that makes everyone feel encouraged and free to experiment. Adolescents will be sharing information about themselves with each other, so it is important that

they feel safe, supported and respected.

- ▶ **Encourage adolescents to consider new possibilities for their group goals.** Introduce them to new terms and concepts, such as those related to the **Ten Key Competencies**, that can help them to articulate new possibilities for what they want to do, learn or achieve. However, do not push them to take on challenges if they prefer to focus on more basic goals such as enjoying their time together, trying new kinds of activities, or taking a break from stress. Tips for facilitating sessions in the Knowing Ourselves phase.
- ▶ Continue to vary sessions so that there are both high intensity and quiet activities. If the Challenge step involves quiet, independent work, use a Warm-Up that gives adolescents a chance to move around and interact with each other.
- ▶ Use the Discussion, Review and Take Away steps as opportunities for adolescents to share information, give each other positive feedback and encouragement, and learn more about each other.



Listen to adolescents

- ▶ Follow adolescents' lead in taking more or less time for these steps, depending on their level of interest and comfort.
- ▶ Ask for feedback from the participants during the closing review step of each session, and discuss any questions they have. If necessary, repeat the same topic again during another session.

Planning and facilitating sessions in each phase

Planning the Connecting phase



Adolescents in this cycle can work on activities with less support, including projects that they continue over the course of several sessions. When planning and running sessions for adolescents in the **Connecting phase** facilitators should...

- ▶ Plan a sequence of activities on a related topic that adolescents can work together on over the course of several sessions.
- ▶ Include activities that give adolescents a chance to practice skills for communicating and relating. They can use drama, games, and other arts to simulate real-world situations, and learn from each other in different ways. Adolescents in this phase should have a chance to form friendships and supportive, respectful working relationships with each other.



Build connections

- ▶ Include activities that give adolescents a chance to explore and connect with the world around them. They may venture outside the space where their circle usually meets to look at their physical environment, find locally available materials to use in their activities, and map their community in different ways. They can discover cultural traditions or new art forms that they want to try for themselves. They can meet with and learn from adults in the community, formally or informally, individually or in groups.



Challenge and encourage adolescents

- ▶ Give adolescents opportunities to start to plan and carry out projects together during this cycle -- but they should not feel pushed to do so. Use the activities in this cycle to allow adolescents to explore and express what they feel and see in different ways. This cycle should give them time to focus on their own priorities, discover new possibilities and continue to practice new skills for communication and expression.

- ▶ Include plenty of opportunities for adolescents to discuss and reflect on their process for working together as a circle. Use the Reviewing group rules activity to do so. As teamwork skills are an important focus of this cycle, adolescents should take time to reflect on their progress in working together.
- ▶ Encourage adolescents to challenge themselves as they set group goals. Acknowledge their potential and foster their confidence. Help them set goals at an attainable scale in relation to things that they can do, learn and achieve with the resources available.

Tips for facilitating sessions in the Connecting phase

When planning and running sessions for adolescents in the Connecting phase facilitators should...

Give adolescents an opportunity to facilitate steps of the session, or even plan and facilitate entire sessions if they are interested and feel ready.

Check with adolescents to see if they want more time to work on the same activity from one session to the next, especially if they have not finished something that they are enjoying working on, or need to complete in order to be prepared for the next session. The Review and Take-away steps of a session are good opportunities to do this.

If adolescents venture outside their activity space during this cycle, make sure that community members are aware and supportive of their activities. Accompany them if necessary.



Let adolescents take the lead

Give adolescents the opportunity to try to overcome challenges and resolve disagreements they face in working together before you intervene to support them.

Planning and facilitating sessions in each phase

Planning the Taking Action phase



Adolescents in the **Taking Action** phase should have the skills and experience to take the lead in some (or perhaps all) of the facilitation and planning of sessions. They should feel enthusiastic about working independently, and ready to experiment with different strategies. They should have the skills, relationships and emotional strength to cope when things don't go as planned, and to resolve differences when they emerge. Adolescents in this cycle can work together with very little support from the facilitator. The facilitator should work with the adolescents to choose and plan activities that guide adolescents through a set of activities that enable them to explore their own interests and priorities, decide on a specific topic of interest, and plan and carry out a project together over several sessions.

When planning sessions for adolescents in the Taking Action phase facilitators should...

- ▶ **Consult and collaborate closely with adolescents about activity plans, and let them take the lead** in deciding how they want to use each upcoming session to help them work on their projects or initiatives together. One good way to do this is to develop an outline of activities, and then consult with adolescents regularly to change and adapt plans based on how their projects are progressing.
- ▶ **Plan sessions that include flexible time** for adolescents to create their own structure and process for working together, for example by using the [Practice and project time activity](#).
- ▶ **Continue to include sessions for adolescents to assess how they are working together as a circle** (for example, using or adapting the [Reviewing group rules](#) activity). Even adolescents that are experienced and comfortable working together as a team will benefit from this process.
- ▶ **Suggest that adolescents take a break from their work on projects from time to time**, and plan occasional fun or relaxing sessions for them to do so. However, do not force them to stop their work together if they do not want to do so.
- ▶ **Include sessions for adolescents to reflect on their progress in achieving their group goals.** (Use [Reviewing progress toward group goals](#)).

A good time to do this is after the adolescents have completed work on a project together and are ready to start on the next.

- ▶ **When adolescents have completed work together on one project over the course of several sessions, support them in starting again when they are ready.** Consider using the same sequence of activities that you used before to guide them through planning and carrying out a project together, since they may be able to take even more leadership in managing a process with which they are already familiar. Alternatively, to give them a sense of variety and help to stimulate new ideas for the types of initiatives they might work on together, you may wish to consider choosing or creating different activities that help guide them through a project planning process.
- ▶ **Encourage adolescents to challenge themselves as they set group goals.** Acknowledge their potential and recognize what they have already accomplished together as a circle. Recognize that especially in this phase adolescents may become more ambitious, so **continue to help them set goals at an attainable scale in relation to things that they can do, learn and achieve in their context and with the resources available.** In some cases adolescents can learn positive things even when they don't fully achieve the goals they set for themselves, but in others, experiences of disappointment may compound other feelings of discouragement they face in difficult circumstances.

Tips for facilitating the Taking Action phase

Encourage adolescents to explore a wide range of possibilities for their projects and initiatives, including those that are helpful or practical for themselves and their communities, and others that are fun and inspiring.

Let adolescents come up with their own ideas for projects. Try not to make suggestions before adolescents have had some time to think of ideas themselves, and avoid allowing other adults in the community to impose their priorities on the circle. **This includes allowing adolescents to take on projects that may not turn out exactly as they hope, as long as they won't be overwhelmed or disappointed by the outcome.** Be prepared to step in and help with alternative strategies or adaptations to their plans.

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Challenge and encourage adolescents

Allow adolescents to try to solve problems for themselves when these come up, including by resolving disagreements among themselves, and trying new strategies their when steps in their projects don't go as planned.



Build connections

Facilitate discussions between adolescents and adults in the community about their plans and ideas. Encourage adults to support the adolescents. Make sure adults and the community are aware of adolescents' projects, which builds trust.

Step in and offer support if adolescents seem very angry, hurt, upset or disappointed. Remember that adolescents are still growing to adulthood, and many have been through difficult experiences. Use the [Reviewing group rules activity](#) to help with these interventions.