Youth Inclusion Workshop Guide:
Developing Reflection Skills

Workshop Description: This workshop includes information and practice for developing reflection skills necessary for creating an inclusive environment for youth. It supports staff's development of skills that they can utilize to engage more deeply reflective practices. These reflective skills will ultimately improve program quality as well as program staff's ability to interact and develop relationships with youth.

This workshop guide includes two activities that work to identify community agreements to create an inclusive environment as well as recognizing and adopting reflective skills for both individual and program purposes.

Preparation Time: The designated preparation time for this workshop is approximately 15 to 20 minutes. This preparation time should include reading background information on the Youth Inclusion Training website and in this workshop guide, collecting materials, and gathering any additional information you may need.

Instruction Time: It will take approximately 1 hour to complete all activities within this guide.

Materials:

- Large sheets of paper and a marker to write down suggested rules.
- Paper for staff to write responses on.
- Pens.

Preparation Instructions: You should read the content related to this topic on the Youth Inclusion Training website, specifically the content related to Understanding Bias and Values. In addition, you should review the background information in this workshop guide and any others related to this topic (e.g., Understanding Bias and Value). Finally, gather all necessary materials and familiarize yourself with the workshop guide.

In this activity, you will facilitate a discussion with staff around community agreements, engaging them in several reflective exercises and the creation of a draft of community agreements. Before the workshop, review the guide and think about agreements you think are important for your staff to consider if they don't come up with them on their own. Some suggestions on agreements can be located at the end of this workshop guide under Resources.

Knowledge: Understanding Strategies to Develop Reflection Skills

There are two important parts to productive reflection: *observation* and *examination*.

> **Observation**, or taking the time to consider, assess, look at, or review a statement or thought, allows a person to pay attention to what is important. Since an individual is reflecting on their unconscious bias and prejudice, they should think about what it is about other people that makes them uncomfortable and why they feel the way they do.

Examination, when coupled with clearing one's mine, allows a person to set aside distractions and consider the topic, person, or attribute with fresh eyes. An individual should ask himself or herself: Is this bias or prejudice fair or relevant? How did I get this bias? Why is it so powerful? Why is it so important to me?

This may feel uncomfortable. This discomfort is likely because the person truly does not know anything about the object other than what their bias tells them and they are ignoring the bias for the first time, causing feelings that they are being untrue to themselves, giving up part of their distinctiveness, or betraying their cultural identity. Through reflection, youth program staff can begin to understand their unconscious biases and prejudices as well as begin to let them go by putting less of an emphasis on them.[51]

Community agreements help to create safe and caring spaces that will enhance any activity. These are a useful tool for helping a group of individuals to come to an agreement on how they will work together respectfully and effectively. They serve as a set of clear, co-created guidelines to help participants feel comfortable with each other in an atmosphere of safety, respect, and trust. Community agreements should be developed and adapted for every unique context. Community agreements will depend partially on age, region, and other contextual factors. Everyone shares the responsibility for the experience, and once developed, a group can regularly re-visit the agreements to see if they are still working and make changes if issues come up.

Objectives:

- Understand how to engage in self-reflective practices.
- Create and facilitate the development of community agreements.
- Incorporate reflective skills for staff and program improvements.

Introduction (5-7 minutes):

- Describe community agreements and reflection skills by highlighting how they work to improve program quality and staff engagement while reducing bias. Reflection is a tool that can help staff think about their actions, thoughts, and statements to gain insight.
  - What to say: "Reflective skills are important for improving the quality of a program and its staff. Today we are going to work to develop reflective skills while establishing community agreements to create an inclusive environment for youth."

Prior Knowledge (5-7 minutes):

- What to say: "To start off, I want to get a sense of your current knowledge of the subject."
- Ask the staff to share how they think reflective skills should be used. What does reflection look like/how is it typically done? Record responses on large sheet of paper.
- Ask the staff what they think are examples of community agreements. If staff are unfamiliar with community agreements, define them by saying "Community/group agreements are a set of co-created guidelines to help participants feel comfortable with each other in an environment." Again, record responses.
- Ask the staff what they want to know about this topic or if there is anything they need clarification on. Record responses.

Activities:

Activity: *Establishing Community Agreements* **(30 minutes)**
- Describe the *Establishing Community Agreements* activity:
    - What to say: "We are going to transition into an activity that will introduce the elements and purpose of youth program community agreements and how they are incorporated into youth programs. These agreements are a set of guidelines or rules that participants agree upon to help facilitate smooth discussion and interactions. These are similar to classroom rules you may have created on the first day of class in school and serve as guidelines for how you as program staff will work together and with youth in the program. The intent is to begin thinking and reflecting on what kind of interactions you want within the program."
    - By going through the process of developing a youth program community agreement, you will have begun to utilize reflective practice to lay down guidelines for an inclusive and smooth-running program.
- Lead the *Establishing Community Agreements* activity:
    - Start by asking staff: "What makes you feel uncomfortable in a group setting and what makes you feel comfortable in a group?"
    - Have the staff pair up and share their thoughts and answers to the first question.
    - Identify individuals or pairs who are willing to share with the larger group. Write on a large sheet of paper what the staff shared with you.
    - Explain to the staff that as a group you are going to take what you have just written regarding what makes them feel comfortable or uncomfortable in a group and turn them into statements. These statements can serve as a guideline for how staff can work together within the program.
    - Next, take what the staff said made them feel comfortable when they are in a group setting and ask the group to propose statements that support staff's feelings of comfort and respect. Write these statements on a large sheet or paper. Examples may be positive attitude, treat everyone with respect, etc. These statements should be action statements that describe specifically how the program will act to make individuals feel comfortable.
    - As a facilitator, you can add any agreements you feel the group did not come up with that are necessary to support a respectful and comfortable working environment, but it is not necessary.
        - Some possible statements might address confidentiality, respectful listening, understanding that feelings happen, "I" statements, openness to trying new activities or experiences, accountability, and commitment to being present.
    - Go through each statement and discuss what this might look like when working together.
    - Ask the staff if there are any statements they do not feel comfortable with and if they would like to share why.
    - Complete the list and explain to staff that they have just created a draft of their youth program community agreement.
    - Have staff write down what they enjoyed about the process of developing a youth program community agreement and what they found hard or uncomfortable.
    - Ask if anyone would like to share with the group.

Activity: *Chat With Your Neighbor* **(30-40 minutes)**
- Describe the *Chat With Your Neighbor* activity:
    - What to say, "This next activity will challenge you to answer reflective questions related to your own personal performance as a staff member as well as the program as a whole."
- Lead the *Chat With Your Neighbor* activity:
    - Have the staff turn to the person next to them so that everyone has a partner. Read one of the questions from the *Chat With Your Neighbor Reflection Questions*. Depending on time, you as a facilitator can decide to read the questions from the top down, or pick and choose a few for the staff to answer. Each partner should take a turn and share their answer to one of the reflection questions. Allow a few minutes or so for each person to answer.
    - Next, have the staff find a new partner and share their response to the next reflection question.
    - Continue in this manner until either all of the questions have been asked or there are no new partners for the staff.
    - In a large group, ask if anyone would like to share with the whole group something from their chat with their neighbor. If no one volunteers to share, be prepared to share one of your answers to a reflection question of your choice.
    - Discuss as a group the importance of utilizing reflection in a youth program. This can either be reflection about the program or an individual program staff's reflection.

Reflection and Recap (5 minutes):

- Return to the staff's responses gathered at the start of the workshop (see Prior Knowledge activity). Ask the staff what they learned during the course of the workshop and record the information on the same paper or a new blank page if there is no room. Draw attention to topics that were on the list generated earlier, new topics, and questions that were answered.
- Ask follow-up questions, such as "What part of the activity made you realize that?"

Resources:

Handout: *Chat With Your Neighbor Reflection Questions*

Sources:

Footnotes in this document can be found as references within the Youth Inclusion Implementation Guide at http://reach.umn.edu/inclusion/pdf/Youth_Inclusion_Implementation_Manual.pdf

The *Community Agreement* activity adapted from Setting Group Agreements with Youth. (2014). Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education. Retrieved August 18, 2018, from https://heartmindonline.org/resources/setting-group-agreements-with-youth

The *Chat With Your Neighbor* activity was adapted from 4-H. (n.d.). Chat with your neighbor. In *Program planning & reflection activities* (pp. 5-6). Retrieved from https://fyi.uwex.edu/ncrvd/files/2015/04/Program-Planning-and-Reflection-Activities-11.12.13.pdf

Youth Inclusion Handout:
Chat with Your Neighbor Reflection Questions

Directions: Think about the *Chat With Your Neighbor* activity as you try to answer the following questions. Find a partner and share your response to each reflection question. Allow enough time for each individual to share with his/her partner.

1. Share one thing that surprised you during this activity.

2. Complete the sentence: Something I really like about how this group works together is _____

3. Complete the sentence: One thing I'd really like to see this program accomplish this year is _____

4. Complete the sentence: As a group, we need to _____

5. Complete the sentence: One thing I would personally like to get out of being involved in this group is _____

6. What is something you are proud of about this experience?

7. What great idea did you get from another person today?

8. What skills from the first activity (*Establishing Community Agreements)* could you use as part of a program in real life?

9. How can you help other team members when they are struggling?

10. What was it like working with a partner? What things are easier with a partner? What things are harder with a partner?

11. What do you think is the importance of reflection?

12. How can we implement reflective skills into youth programs?