

conferences & events: children & young people's participation



nsw commission for
children & young peop





PART 1
conferences & events
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION **principles &**
resources

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Participation in practice

Mara is in Year 9 at North Sydney Girls High School, is Assistant Secretary of her school's Student Representative Council (SRC), Secretary of Ryde district SRC and a NSW state lacrosse team member.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

I would say I am most involved with my school SRC, because it is close to me - at my school! - and consequently the one that I have put the most time into.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

I was encouraged to become more involved in youth participation/leadership by my sister, who is extremely active herself. I wanted to be doing more at school, so I thought about taking something up. I wanted it to be something that would allow me to become more involved with my school and also leadership in general. Becoming a school SRC member was the first step in getting involved.

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

Banana Power's leadership camp in 2001, and a dance that was organised by my school SRC and was a great success!

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

The Banana Power camp was an unbelievable experience. It was a leadership camp run by young people for young people. Most of the sessions were run in small groups and used activities and games to get to know each other. The people there were all so friendly and

the atmosphere was incredible. All the young people there made heaps of new friends and learnt a lot about student leadership from the organisers and also from each other.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the event?

First of all, Banana Power 2001 was an event run by young people. The people running the camp were young themselves, so the participants felt comfortable and could relate more to the people who were in charge. All the delegates were encouraged to have fun, to share their ideas and to be themselves.

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

Yes, last term I attended a conference about mental health and it didn't make much of an impact on me. The young people there didn't participate as much as I thought they would, and as a result, the conference wasn't that interesting. We were talked at rather than talked to and didn't come out of it with much to take back to our schools (other than some stickers!).

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

Not yet, but it is improving.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

An effective way youth can have more of a say is by becoming involved with Student Representative Councils. Through SRCs young people can voice the opinions of the students they represent and take action to improve things the students believe need to be changed (be it at a school, district or state level).

introduction

"Too often, at conferences where children and young people's issues are discussed, the voices of children and young people are drowned out by competing voices.

Most conference models tend to cater for the needs of adults and professionals with substantial keynote addresses, lecture style workshops and highly structured agendas. Such an inflexible environment can discourage children and young people to participate so their voices may not be heard. The difference in skills, confidence and experience between young conference delegates and older delegates can also inhibit young people's participation."

- Asaf Fisher, 18, Youth Reporter at World Forum 2000

"Participation is more than just giving the younger members of our community a say – it is about listening to their views, taking them seriously and wherever possible giving practical effect to their ideas and suggestions. Children and young people are a resource in our community and organisations can only benefit from the qualities they are able to bring."

- Gillian Calvert, Commissioner for Children & Young People

TAKING PARTICIPATION seriously

TAKING PARTICIPATION seriously is a toolkit for organisations who want children and young people's participation to move from rhetoric to reality. It is made up of separate booklets to give you good ideas that are practical and fun.

Sharing the Stage is a booklet which sets out an approach to help improve the way your organisation includes children and young people in its work. You might find it helpful to read **Sharing the Stage** before you move on to **Conferences and Events**.

Conferences and Events is about how to plan, organise and run meetings, conferences and major events so that children and young people can participate fully in them.

Including children and young people is an information sheet that explains why participation is important and how it benefits organisations and children and young people.

The Commission will continually be producing more resource materials to help organisations interested in TAKING PARTicipation seriously. They can be found at the Commission's website at www.kids.nsw.gov.au.

Audience for this guide

This guide is written for children, young people and adults, with a focus on organisers of conferences and events. It uses Plain English, diagrams, examples and interviews, and we hope these get the messages across to readers of all ages! Readers can suggest updates and share their own ideas at www.kids.nsw.gov.au

Children and young people

While we do not often differentiate between children and young people in this material, some of the participation roles we identified, children 11 years and under may not have skills or knowledge to fill – however, with additional support and assistance and the right mix of skills, children as young as 5 or 6 years can have vital roles to play at conferences and events.

Participation in practice

Children and young people as speechmakers at conferences

The important role that children and young people can have at conferences and events has been demonstrated by a number of organisations who have captured wide media attention through supporting children and young people's speeches and public appeals.

Organiser's efforts to include children were one of the key factors in the success of the Sydney 2000 Olympics bid, when then 11 year old Tanya Blencowe hit national headlines for her speech as part of Sydney's presentation in Monte Carlo in 1993. Tanya's '15 minutes of fame' can also show some of the drawbacks for young participants and the need for ongoing support and debriefing, but overall Tanya reports she got a lot from her role: "The speech in Monte Carlo was an experience I'll never forget," she said in 2001. "It had a profound impact on my life and my understanding of the Olympic movement... but a lot of people still tend to think I'm 11 years old and forget that I've grown up."

Tanya's speech drew attention to the role of children and young people as ambassadors and promoters of the Olympic spirit. Other organisations which have asked children and young people to take part in conferences and events have been rewarded with similar support and publicity, including - in recent examples - Australia's Federation Celebration organisers in May 2001, when 15 year-old Sydney school student Hayley Eves gave a speech about the changes in society in the 100 years since Australian Federation.

Conferences and events

Even though this guide focuses on conferences and events, these terms are used loosely and many of the principles covered here work just as well with a wide range of group and gathering types, including meetings, workshops, forums, roundtables, festivals and performances. See Chapter 3 for more information.

Inside

Inside this guide you'll find an overview of participation roles and models, sample checklists and materials and activities and games that can be adapted for many uses, including forming the basis of programs for children and young people.

While we do not endorse any single model for participation (as each event or conference is different in scope, participants, aims and funding), we do present some sample participation models as examples that can be adapted by organisations seeking to involve children and young people.

Designing a final event model, program and resources (including facilitation guides etc) is an important process that is all too often ignored in favour of a 'put everyone in a room with some keynote speakers' approach. Experienced program designers (and youth advisors) should be used where possible to help determine final program contents.

Forms

You will find forms in this guide to help you involve children and young people (see pages 76-80). Please modify or combine them as needed to suit your organisation/event.

You will also find tips for organisers before, during and after an event (see page 81). We suggest you photocopy these pages and distribute them within your organisation or to children and young people who may be involved in a meeting, conference or event. Please email any additions or suggestions you have for possible future editions to kids@kids.nsw.gov.au.

You can use or adapt these resources for your organisation's needs by downloading the text version of this document from www.kids.nsw.gov.au.

How this guide was developed

We sought to put into practice 'In everything you do, pass skills on to children and young people by mentoring them in appropriate roles'. We used many of the techniques described in this resource in completing this project.

Throughout the two-month project period children, young people and adults involved in community organisations were consulted widely. A project advisory group was formed which met at the beginning of the project and again towards the end to review materials and suggest changes.

Children and young people were interviewed throughout the project and their ideas were included in the text and as interviewees.

Feedback and questions

We hope adults and children and young people find the resources in this guide useful, and we value your feedback for future editions that may be produced. Please share your ideas at www.kids.nsw.gov.au.

Participation in practice

Heath is in year 11 at Davidson High School. He sits on the Warringah Youth Council and is very involved throughout his community with youth leadership. He is also a member of the Australian delegation who are travelling to America in June/July 2001 to participate in leadership conferences across America and Canada.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

I am a part of the Warringah Youth Council, as I want to see more opportunities made available to the youth of the Northern Beaches.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

Through my local community youth council of Terrey Hills, and the drop in centre that they run every Friday night for teens. I wanted to make a difference in my community and I thought that this would be a fun way of doing it.

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

Seeing an improvement in community spirit and involvement. The relationship between adults and the youth has been dramatically improved with stereotypes being re-evaluated. I've made lifetime friends and matured as an individual, learning from the mistakes of my friends and my personal experiences.

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

I was the youth photographer at Youthfest - a youth concert held by three local youth councils - Manly, Pittwater and Warringah. The event was aimed at youth coming together to enjoy live entertainment in a drug-free and alcohol-free environment next to Dee Why Beach. The concert was great as it had a participation of youth from varied ages, genders and backgrounds.

The adults and youth worked together to make sure that the event was safe and enjoyable for all. Together they ran surfing and skating competitions, skating demos, food stalls, live entertainment and various other activities. The emphasis of the day was getting high on life!

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the conference/event?

Youth were involved in every step of the process from the planning stages to the clean up at the end. Their opinion was listened to and valued throughout the process. It was a success because of the way that they worked together as a team. Youth were given a chance to work with local authorities like the police and gain a mutual respect.

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

I was once a part of a committee where communication between the organisation and the members was difficult. The adults of the group weren't entirely sure on the main aims and outlook of the group and ignored the youth on the committee. When youth are part of a committee it is important to ensure that not only are their ideas heard but they are given as much weight as adults, which makes the process more equal and youth friendly.

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

At the moment I feel that youth could play a larger role in the decision-making processes that relate to them. They should also be a part of the decisions that relate to the society that they will be stepping into.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

This can be achieved by more roles being delegated to the youth in organisation, as well as a greater understanding of participation of the youth in the organisations that are currently and potentially on offer to them.

Chapter 1

conferences & events

The five key elements of effective participation

Sharing the Stage – discusses fully the key elements of effective participation summarised below – please read and consider it early in the process of planning your event. It contains detailed information and case studies.

1. PARTICIPATION IS PART OF THE ORGANISATION'S **culture**

For participation to be effective, it needs to be part of the belief system of the organisation, reflecting the importance the organisation places on children and young people and on giving them a say in decisions which affect their lives. Organisations that value children and young people's participation develop a culture of participation in their everyday work and in the way they describe themselves. They develop structures that support day-to-day and long-term participation, document it in their policies, make participation a written part of staff duties, and make sure participation is real and not tokenistic.

2. KIDS HAVE A **place** IN DECISION-MAKING

When children and young people understand their role in the organisation's decision-making processes and the organisation itself is clear about children and young people's role, participation is effective. These organisations involve children and young people from a range of backgrounds in their processes, they involve children and young people in deciding how they will participate, they bring children and young people close to the decision-makers, they are open about the limits of participation and they set aside funds and staff time to make participation happen.

3. **Adults adapt** TO KIDS' WAY OF WORKING

Systems and arrangements that work for adults may not suit the needs of children and young people. More often than not organisations try to fit children and young people into a decision-making framework designed by and for adults. To make the most of children and young people's contributions to decision-making, organisations can create an environment in which children and young people feel comfortable to participate and which fit with their way of doing business: times, dates, venues, meeting formats, the type of refreshments, minute taking and length of meetings can all be scrutinised to ensure that they suit children and young people.

4. **STRONG relationships** WITH KIDS

Children and young people see the world through their relationships with others. The stronger these relationships the easier and more actively they participate in their world. So, the more adults in the organisation are able to engage children and young people, the more successfully the organisation will achieve participation. Organisations can use techniques like making sure you're accessible to children and young people, setting time aside to get to know them and then to meet with them and having a staff member (who children and young people like) formally responsible for supporting the participation activities.

5. PARTICIPATION **rewards kids** AND THE ORGANISATION

If children and young people are to maintain their enthusiasm for participating in decision-making they must find the experience enjoyable, challenging and fun. They must feel that their time and effort is valued. It is also important that the organisation benefits. Remember too, that children like adults come in all shapes and sizes with quite different views.

Children and young people become more involved when they have the opportunity to work on issues that interest them and have clear goals about what they can do. It helps if the organisation acknowledges their contribution; this can include paying them (particularly if adults in similar advisory roles are paid), giving awards,

Children & young people at conferences & events:

A participation model

Major principle

In everything you do, pass skills on to young people by mentoring them in appropriate roles.

Throughout all stages:

5 Key Elements of Effective Participation

1. Participation is part of the organisation's culture
2. Kids have a place in decision-making
3. Adults adapt to kids' ways of working
4. Strong relationships with kids
5. Participation rewards kids and the organisation

Involve children and young people in some/all these roles:



EXAMPLE: A 3-DAY ISSUES CONFERENCE

BEFORE: 2 young people are part of a 10 person organising committee, 50 children and young people surveyed about conference content

AT: 20 children and young people attend (of 100 total), 10 present (some on panels) and 3 co-present with adults. Small group sessions held for all participants. Children and young people complete diaries and 5 young people produce a 2 page 'conference newsletter' each day.

AFTER: 1 hour debrief for children and young people at end of conference, 2 voted onto next year's committee, email/phone follow-up for all.

Participation models

There is no one best model for participation by children and young people at a conference or event – each event must be organised according to the needs of its participants and its organising bodies. The major factors that will influence the design and selection of final program or models will include:

- What are the aims and budget of the event?
- Has our organisation put the five key elements of effective participation into practice (or is our organisation working towards this)?
- Are children and young people the sole organisers of the event (this is currently rare) or are they co-organisers with adults (more common)?
- Will children and young people be the only participants, or will they be co-participants with adults?
- Who will present at and/or facilitate the event – children, young people, adults, or a combination?

Despite the problems involved in presenting models, people and organisations consulted for this guide felt that concrete examples should be given for organisations that may be thinking about involving children and young people, but have little idea of where or how to start. To meet this need, some examples, sample facilitator guides and other materials are given in Chapter 3.

Dealing with 'If it's not broken...' attitudes

For existing conferences or events, the main factor against increased participation using some of these roles and models may be responses like: 'If it's not broken, don't fix it' or 'That's the way we did it last year and it worked OK'.

It's important that someone in the organisation (perhaps even a child or young person) champions the idea of increased participation, for example by using the materials and interviews in this guide as examples of how increased youth participation can bring about positive benefits for children and young people and their communities.

Another effective way to increase the role of children and young people can be to ask a group of them to produce an annual report on projects (or selected projects). The US-based Oakland Fund for Children & Young People (www.ofcy.org) takes this approach with a youth evaluation group aged 12-15 years old.

Participation in practice

Nathan is in year 10 at Inverell High. He is a part of the Aboriginal Student Leadership Program.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

I am a part of the Aboriginal Student Leadership Program and the Aboriginal Student Representative on the New South Wales Student Representative Council.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

I got involved at school. I had heard a little bit about it through friends. I was approached by some of the students on the board and a couple of teachers and I thought it might be interesting. It was really appealing as we got to have lots of fun, meet heaps of new people and even get out of a bit of maths now and then!

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

The best thing about participating is just meeting new people. You get to make new friends and hear another person's point of view. You can learn so much from them and build lifelong friendships! From just being a delegate at a conference I have acquired so many leadership skills. Like the ability to communicate properly and feel like it makes a difference. I have learnt a lot about myself, how to treat other people and my culture.

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

My favourite event is 'Let's go to UNI!' this is basically a week at uni where Aboriginal school students get to see what it's like. We get to stay on campus and so we get a real understanding of what happens at university. The event shows us what our options are when we leave school and inspires you to work hard at achieving what you want. It involves a lot of people and that makes it fantastic 'cause so many people get to experience it. They treated us just like uni students!

I have also been involved with SLIKK (Student Leadership: It's Koori Kids) – this involves a conference where we get to talk to elders about what it was like for them growing up. It teaches us skills and really interesting information about our culture. It is aimed at students and one of its best features is that you meet lots of people your own age that you can relate to and understand.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the conference/event?

At 'Lets go to UNI!' it was all aimed at us being a uni student – we were treated with respect and given extra responsibilities. I think that this gave us the opportunity to really listen and take part, as it wasn't all rules and lectures. It was about experience and participation – not just listening. Also it was of no cost and this was particularly good, as young people don't usually have enough money to spend on conferences and events.

SLIKK was also free and this ensured that everyone could experience it at one stage. For SLIKK, Aboriginal students are on the planning committee and their opinions are listened to, valued and used. The two group leaders were also young people in year 12 and this meant that they were easy to relate to and you could turn to them with any questions.

The groups were small and the workshops only went for around 15-20 minutes. That meant that you could stay focused throughout and didn't lose interest. We had lots of energisers to keep us on track in between and this was lots of fun as well. The folders that we used were basic and to the point, not full of lots of sheets of typing or questions. It was all about interaction between students and learning from one another.

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

I was once an Aboriginal representative on a board where they would discuss Aboriginal issues but they didn't understand it. In my opinion you don't open your mouth unless you know what you are talking about. In this case it caused a lot of anger throughout the board and quite a number of the members - myself included - were offended by the remarks. I think that a key point in involving someone in the event is to make them feel accepted and have a good knowledge of what is going on in their group. Its important to let the person have a say – instead of talking to them, talk with them. This often happens at sit down meetings where the conversation is focused around one person. It should include everyone – that way it is fair and equal.

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

I think that we are fortunate to have an excellent support structure for our children today however a few areas need to be addressed. While in some cases it can be discrimination against race and also age, it is more often a need for less talking, more action. Too often young people are token members on a board of adults. While it can be a benefit to be on a board like this, it is important to remember that young people aren't just there to be seen, but also to be heard.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

I think that there has to be greater promotion of youth facilities outside of school. We are lucky to have a lot of committees in schools and I'm sure that there are a lot more outside of school as well but at the moment they aren't public enough. We need to be given a chance to voice our opinion at every possible moment no matter our age. Getting youth involved with councils is a perfect first step in bridging the age gap.

Chapter 2**participation roles & tips**
FOR CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

This section includes information on the benefits of involving children and young people, tips for contacting them and three single-page handouts with information on roles for children and young people that can be photocopied and given to

Participation in practice

Peter is in year 11 at Caringbah Selective High School. He was first involved in youth participation when he was a 5 year old at Summer School Convention, and he is now a volunteer facilitator for children attending the convention.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

I was a facilitator with the pre-school section of the Summer School Convention at Katoomba in Christmas. I would say this is the most recent activity I was involved in and I was an important member of the team.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

I had attended my mother's preschool a few times and decided I wouldn't mind trying a kind of youth leadership. The leader of the preschool team told me that the 3 to 5 age group was the easiest and I would enjoy it.

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

The highlight for me was the awesome time I had with the little kids. The way they look up to you as a big person and the way you get to be

a preschooler all over again. I enjoyed the fellowship I had with the other leaders too but the smile that can be put on a 3-year-old's face with a play-dough shaped dog was just great.

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

Summer school was a great conference. It was aimed at getting young people to become missionaries and younger couples brought their children. A huge number of preschool kids came each day and the group enjoyed great times together. I was also encouraged by how much a 3 year old knew about God. It was so encouraging to know that the young are still learning a lot about God from their parents.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the conference/event?

I think the only way the children were directly involved in the conference was on the last day when we got up and sang preschool songs in front of the adults (numbering about 2000). The whole idea of the preschool was to mind the children while the adults were in the seminars in the morning

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

I suppose I've been reasonably lucky, I've only been to one REAL conference (summer school) and I had a great time because it was run by such a good group of people.

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

I think the 3 to 5 year-olds wouldn't have too many meaningful things to say about society yet, but I do and I'm pretty sure the other leaders do as well, since the leaders' ages ranged from 17 to 20.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

They have to want to speak out and for that to happen the opportunity to speak out needs to be presented more often. Someone should be working at presenting the opportunity for the youth to have their say more often.

Benefits: why involve children and young people?

Involving children and young people in events and conferences has many benefits including:

- Event and conference participants (of all ages) can gain new understanding, ideas and perspectives
- Event and conference organisers (of all ages) can have the chance to pass skills on to children and young people
- Children and young people involved can develop self-esteem, participation and democratic skills
- The wider community benefits from positive children and young people as role models and from the projects and organisations with which they are involved.

How to get children and young people involved

Often adults organising events and conferences wonder: "How do I contact children and young people to get them to attend my event?"

While it may be easy to contact local schools and ask for interested students, it's often harder to get in touch with children and young people from many different backgrounds, including those who don't go to school. Some suggestions for involving a wide range of children and young people include:

Contact youth networks

Contacting existing youth networks is a simple first step. However, this may have the disadvantage that the young people you attract are those who are already empowered and active in their communities. It is important to use other methods besides this one in order to include a wide range of participants (see below).

In New South Wales, youth networks (local to state-wide) can include:

- Local Councils (including Youth Officers and Youth Advisory Councils if available)
- Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYCs)
- YMCA & YWCA
- Scouts, Guides, Cubs, Venturers, Rovers
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- St John Ambulance
- Outward Bound
- Greencorp
- Youth Accommodation Association
- Local Youth Centres
- Local Sports and Activities Clubs
- Reachout
- Youth Action and Policy Association
- NSW Commission for Children and Young People
- Cleanup Australia
- Ethnic Community Councils
- NSW Premier's Youth Advisory Council

Reaching young people

- Target diversity – rural and regional, disadvantaged, Young people out of schools etc
- 'Outside the Loop' – eg. nominations from those who don't usually get a go
- Experience not needed!
- Help for filling in forms – keep simple, phone for assistance etc
- Simple language
- No/low cost to participate

Reaching parents

- Letters, phone calls, brochures etc aimed at parents
- Appropriate messages – education, safety, skills development
- Positive messages from trusted sources – other parents, teachers, children and young people who have benefited

Attracting Children & Young People to Conferences & Events

Different media

- Word of Mouth – other organisations (see 'Working with Partners'), friends, speakers etc
- Pre-event seminars/visits – eg. school assemblies, 1 hr workshops (have brochures and/or sign-up sheets ready)
- Emails – forwarded from friends etc
- Brochures – simple, colourful, friendly
- Media – local papers, community radio, school newsletters etc
- Posters – with above

Working with partners

- Allow TIME to find the right people and FOLLOW UP: Youth centres, schools, appropriate business, govt organisations, non-profits
- In NSW there is a register of children and young people who want to be on boards – see www.youth.nsw.gov.au/info/yac

Contact schools, youth centres and youth employers

Schools are often contacted to invite children and young people to local or wider events. Follow up and be prepared for a low direct response rate – many services and schools receive a large number of requests each month. Local youth employers should also be contacted and these may include local stores, takeaway food outlets, department stores etc. Local Job Network providers may be able to refer event organisers to the major local employers of young people.

If approaching schools for participants, discuss with them whether you want to choose their 'best' students to represent them. Students who do not normally have the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities of this type are often the most likely to benefit and to contribute to the event.

Organisations may contact a principal or teacher directly (if possible, call first to confirm who it is best to talk with and to give some background about your conference/event). Some events may produce advertisements, posters or other invitations to target children and young people – if so, make your invitations as informal/fun as possible. Have children and young people help with this whenever possible.

It is important to follow up these invitations, encouraging children and young people directly, perhaps using youth ambassadors (past participants or other children and young people who support your event).

Contact children and young people directly

You may be able to approach children and young people directly to participate in your conference or event, depending on your contacts. This can be done with the assistance of advertisements, posters, youth ambassadors and other past participants (if available).

While this can be a useful method of contacting children and young people, we recommend that in most instances it is most effective when combined with the other methods above.

Written invitations

Where possible, send written invitations and/or some short, simple introductory material to each of the young participants finally identified. This gives you the opportunity to explain the event in detail (and can help clarify what you hope to achieve!).

Try to make the invitation/information as simple, interesting and appealing to children and young people as possible – get some children and young people involved in putting it together if you can.

Participation is for ALL children and young people

Some children and young people are reluctant to take the first step towards getting involved because of shyness, concentration on schoolwork, cultural/family issues or even apathy. This is when communication and getting a chance to experience participation is vitally important. All children and young people should be given the opportunity through their local schools and communities to participate in different forms of community.

Some children and young people think that they should only participate if they are good public speakers or high achievers – this is not true. Everyone has something to offer a group or organisation that interests them – often they just need to find the right place to get started.

Children and young people can talk to their school Student Representative Council coordinator, call their local council and ask if there is a youth projects co-ordinator they can talk to, or even call agencies like Reachout, who have a fantastic national website that can be used to identify services you can get involved with in your area – visit www.reachout.com.au/whocares.

www.reachout.com.au/whocares



Asking for more participation – tips for children and young people

Sometimes children and young people are involved as organisation or event participants but realise that children and young people do not have much control or say in the organisation or event. In these cases, it is sometimes enough to get some adults on your side and ask for more participation (perhaps by sharing some of the material in this guide with them).

Look for things you can do

Look through the list on pages 22-26 and identify ways in which the organisation or event could include children and young people. Talk to other children and young people involved in the organisation and look for places to create more opportunities for participation.

Approach organisers/adults for support

Look for support from other children and young people and adults involved. Write a short letter explaining why you think there could be more participation and suggesting ways it could happen.

Approach the media for support

If other avenues fail, you can consider approaching the media to draw attention to the problems you see. Note that this can cause problems with the organisation's leaders and it can be the polite thing to do to call the organisation and tell them you are doing this. Doing this may help get a speedy response to your issue! Ring your local paper/radio station and explain the situation to them – tell them that if they are interested you and/or other children and young people involved are happy to answer questions on the issues involved.

Participation in practice

Matt lives in Northern Coastal NSW and is in year 10 at Alstonville High School. He attended the International Student Representative Conference in Sydney in December 2000 and was a member of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People's Reference Group for 2000.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

This year I'm taking it a bit easier than last year! I'm on the Student Representative Council which I've been on since I was twelve, in Year 7. The

SRC works well – we have excellent relationships with the school council, the Principal and the P&C (Parents and Citizens). We raise \$15-20,000 a year through a soft drink machine, a fun day and socials and that gives us the ability to really help the school. We're effective because we spend our time working on helping the students, not just raising money.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

We had a great teacher who encouraged us to get involved in participation. I suppose in many ways you could call me a meeting junkie now! I was on the School Council for three years, I've been to District SRC meetings and when I was 14 I went to a conference on rural issues in Kyogle, which was run by three young people from the NSW Youth Advisory Council. Because of that I applied for the Youth Advisory Council and got on the Register of Young People interested in serving on Boards & Councils (see <http://youth.nsw.gov.au/info/nswgov/bboards1.html>) and through that I was invited to be on the Commission for Children and Young People's Reference Group.

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

In December last year I went to the International SRC held at Sydney University. It had over 300 participants - aged from 13 to 24 - from twelve countries, including Slovenia! It cost about \$400, which included accommodation and meals, but most people were sponsored by their schools or other organisations. A friend and I ran a workshop about youth advocacy and it was a great experience.

I attended advocacy training for young people two weeks before the conference and that was fantastic. I learnt so much – it was run by a woman called Kathy and it was a really eye opening experience and really made you want to get your point of view across in a positive way.

Doing these conferences and being on the Commission for Children and Young People's (CCYP) Reference Group last year was the best time of my life! Just flying to Sydney and getting a cab to a hotel and seeing those bloody big buildings was amazing. And through the CCYP I learnt

so much about how the bureaucracy works and you meet really interesting people who work there who are genuinely interested in what you have to say. We had meetings every 8 weeks – they prepared us really well with summaries of the issues beforehand and the Commissioner Gill attended every meeting we had. We had some really interesting issues to deal with like corporal punishment and youth involvement and some of our recommendations were implemented, which was fantastic.

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

I would say the International SRC Conference – there were some age and culture differences, but everyone was there to bring information back to their local school or TAFE or country and there were some great people. I still keep in touch with most of the twelve people from the Thailand delegation on email.

It was fantastic because of the great people, the international perspective and the fact that it was run by young people.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the conference?

The young people were trained as group leaders two days before the conference by BP - Banana Power - and they were great. They were called International Guides – IGs. The whole thing was organised in Australia by a committee that included adults and young people so it had topics that young people wanted. And all the skills sessions were run by young people too.

Each day had a theme like 'youth participation' or 'poverty'. At the end there was a formal youth forum with motions made on issues like discrimination, cultural diversity, participation and democracy. So we had recommendations that went to the United Nations which is fantastic – whether they get acted on or not is the next question I suppose!

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

I've mostly been very lucky with the councils I've been on. I was on one council that I thought was a bit tokenistic – I got the impression that it was designed just so they could say that they had youth participation.

I was involved in Youth Week last year and it was great but a lot of work, so I didn't get involved this year. Things like insurance and GST can really take a lot of effort to organise!

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

That's a hard question to answer – I think there's some great participation now and it's getting better and better. In New South Wales I know there's a lot of effort being put in.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

Children and young people wanting to be involved is the first step. Then the councils already in place have to push for a greater say and to a certain extent some greater power over money. Not a lot of money but a little would be good! And I suppose the final step is what we say being taken on board by the decision-makers and change actually happening. When young people get to have a say that's fantastic. We don't want to run society, but we do want to have a say.

Before an event

Participation roles for children and young people

Event organisers – youth committee or youth advisory board

Children and young people may nominate, volunteer or be elected to a youth committee that oversees or advises an event or organisation. Children and young people can submit ideas, conference plans or oversee/report on what is done. Their meetings will generally be informal and assisted by an experienced youth facilitator (see Handy Hints – Facilitating small group sessions, page 89).

Event organisers – children or young people as part of organising committees

Children and young people may be appointed as members of an organising committee – extensive briefing, support and chairperson preparation to involve the young participants is often needed.

Advisers/mentors

Children & young people who have been involved in past events can assist as advisers/mentors to those helping plan the current one.

Focus group members

Focus groups may be held before the event to clarify issues. Children and young people can participate, choose issues for discussion, and may facilitate or co-facilitate any focus group meetings held.

Pre-event meeting attendees

There may be roles that can assist event organisers which can be carried out through pre-event meetings (eg. publicity or logistics co-ordinators). In these cases, children and young people assist at these meetings sessions but may not attend the event itself (eg. due to money/travel restrictions).

Ambassadors/promoters/publicists

Each of these roles is slightly different – ‘ambassador’ can be a formal role (eg. lasting one year), ‘promoters’ could be more informal, ‘publicists’ may be responsible for more ‘behind the scenes’ media liaison. Some organisations may offer children and young people a chance to learn these skills during a previous event, others may skill them through training and support after an event.

Survey creators/completers

Some events/conferences ask potential participants - or even wider groups - to complete pre-event surveys asking for topic/speaker ideas, ways that children and young people can be involved etc. Surveys can be face-to-face, online, by phone etc.

Idea providers

Children and young people who do not have one of the roles above can still provide ideas. A freecall (1800) phone number, website polls, suggestion boxes, school visits etc can give quieter and more remote children and young people a chance to be involved

Other

Your organisation may identify other positive roles for children and young people to play. Please let us know if you do!

Before an event

Tips

- Set clear goals and roles – be upfront about what is involved. A position description (written by children and young people if possible, with milestones) may be useful.
- Set final dates/times to work to and stick to them.
- Use different processes (phone, meetings, internet).
- Arrange informal meetings, provide food and (soft) drink and opportunities to get to know each other – through dinner, movies, tours etc.
- Provide practical support (reimburse travel expenses etc, provide space in office and intrays etc).
- Meet after school hours and provide ample notice of all meetings – eg. 4 weeks with reminders.
- Research similar events/conferences – look for connections and build on previous experiences of conferences.
- Provide simple early 'wins' and weekly inspiration.
- Ensure children and young people of different backgrounds have inputs.

Traps to avoid:

- Watch out for 20% of people doing 80% of the work.
- Watch out for 'junior politicians'/dominators/people with set agendas.
- Ensure good communication and decision making if there is a main committee & youth committee.
- Avoid tokenism – it is obvious to all involved.

Tools:

- Set up mentorships and partnerships – perhaps run mentor training sessions.
- Develop activities for the design of a program (eg. use cards which can be 'shuffled' on a timeline).
- Promote good group processes – everyone has a turn speaking.
- Support internet skills – provide email reminders for meetings.
- Survey young people about what they want (keep it short and simple).
- Build in ways so that people with quieter voices can be heard (eg. brainstorming, small groups).
- Use facilitators who are experienced working with children and young people and youth issues.
- Provide experienced administrative support.

At an event

Participation roles for children and young people

Participants

Sadly, it is still often the case that conferences about child and/or youth issues are held without inviting many - or in some cases any - children or young people. Participant briefings (through pre-event information and workshop session/s, for example) can be very important, as can small group sessions where children and young people get to make friends and discuss the issues (they are often not as comfortable as adults in formal presentations, breaks and lunches). Children and young people (and adults) can participate in introductory issues and skills sessions eg. networking skills so they feel comfortable introducing themselves to other participants at the event.

Speakers/Performers/MCs

Unfortunately, children and young people have traditionally not often been asked to present at conferences and events about issues that directly concern them. This should not be the case, since they can present traditional speeches (they may need assistance/training on presentation techniques, Powerpoint skills etc), or may choose to co-present or present as a group (perhaps through a performance or panel).

Reporters

Children and young people can write and produce - with or without the assistance of adults - images (paintings/photos/collages), a news sheet or newspaper, even conference/event videos that show the issues through their eyes. Reporters can work in diverse teams and should have training in ethics, reporting skills, audience awareness etc.

Facilitators

Children and young people can and should be trained to act as group leaders/facilitators. Note that this usually involves attendance at a past event to give a clear idea of context, facilitator training skills sessions (usually at least 2-4 days training in facilitation techniques) and a detailed facilitation guide for all sessions they facilitate. Facilitators can also share feedback roles, scribing (eg. writing up the results of brainstorm) and even run activities in partnership with young attendees.

Assistants

While not often an effective form of participation, children and young people can assist at a conference by helping to organise registrations, computer support, meals and other logistics. Perhaps children and young people who have been participants in earlier years can volunteer for these roles if they would still like to be involved.

Peer-educators/Mentors/Support people

Children and young people, particularly those who have been involved in the event/conference in past years can be involved during and after the conference through mentor and support roles (even if only via telephone/email). They can pass on skills and experience to other children and young people through programmed 'peer-education' sessions or reflection time or through informal talks.

At an event

Tips

- Ensure a wide variety of children and young people – balance of cultures, rural and regional.
- Empower participants: make people welcome, be accepting, overcome apathy and build trust.
- Encourage access (not all children and young people have internet access or know how to use/find stuff).
- Prepare well and reach out to all listeners.
- Have presenters with different backgrounds/experience.
- Offer open and accessible opportunities to learn skills.
- Give presenters scope to be creative – involve the audience, present stories in different ways (video, song, multi-media).
- Offer opportunities to people who haven't done it before.
- Have children and young people come up with own topic.
- 'Seed' audiences with questioners if needed.
- Careful selection of facilitators – listeners who are experienced culturally aware and sensitive.
- Support inexperienced presenters by pairing them up with a more experienced person for a joint presentation, so they get the benefit of training and mentoring.
- Make sure facilitators are skilled in the difference between facilitating and leading groups.
- Provide training in communication, ice-breakers, games, dealing with difficult people, role-plays, group interaction, questioning skills and listening skills for facilitators.

Traps:

- Avoid expensive costs to attend.
- Be careful of cultural differences – some children and young people may not be allowed to attend live-in camps etc.
- Avoid formality – eg. too many presentations/talks, and not enough workshops/small groups.
- Don't get locked into traditional presentations – avoid formality.
- Tokenism – especially when other participants don't understand the role of children and young people.
- Avoid elitist events – cost, venue, location and even language used may exclude some children and young people who want to participate.
- Watch out for always choosing 'articulate' children and young people.
- Make sure it is the young person's choice to be involved.

Tools:

- Give children and young people opportunities to voice opinions and practice public speaking – get support from public speaking organisations.
- Logbook (participants record their feelings – share with all participants).
- Support/resources for different presentation styles – role plays, song, slides with narratives etc.
- Joint presentations (eg. children and young people and adults).
- Dialogue – eg. interviewing each other.
- Provide background information on written/spoken communication.
- Include relevant information (eg. let children and young people write their own biographies).
- Skills training – eg. workshops, website resources.

After an event

Participation roles for children and young people

Children and young people can be involved as:

Debriefed and debriefers

It is important that children and young people (indeed all participants) feel supported and empowered at the end - and after - a conference or event. Children and young people can assist in this process through debriefing sessions at the event and through phone/email/meeting contacts afterwards.

Evaluators

Children and young people can write (or be interviewed to create) evaluation reports that can be submitted to the organisation running the conference or event.

Linked to other organisations

Children and young people should feel they could continue to be productive and have their say on issues after an event or conference by linking them with community organisations according to their interests.

On-going project members

Often project groups and community plans can come out issues raised at a conference or event. These projects can have a wide range of positive effects for children and young people (including project management, group skills, and media skills) and can be an exciting way of increasing the event/organisation's influence.

Alumni, ambassadors, members or discussion participants

Past participants can be given pathways to be involved in the organisation in ongoing ways after an event or conference – as alumni (past members), ambassadors, ongoing organisation or event members and participants in surveys/discussions etc that will affect future events and conferences.

Organisers of the next event

Children and young people may volunteer or be elected to assist in the organisation of future events as organisers, group facilitators, specialist roles eg. community or media liaison.

After an event

Tips

- Provide appropriate advisors/mentors – committed, trustworthy, sociable, supportive, non-judgemental people.
- Give sufficient relevant training.
- Educate children and young people, parents and friends about the benefits of continuing involvement.
- Make websites easy to locate, simple and fast to load.
- Encourage school/youth centre involvement.
- Provide support for ongoing work/groups.

Traps:

- Potential role confusion – make sure there is a ongoing path for ex-participants (eg. clear process from election to advisory board).
- Access – not everyone has a PC or knows how to use it.
- Expectations that ideas and strategies will be supported by other children and young people in the community. (You'll need to get support and give newcomers a feeling of ownership for this to happen.)

Tools:

- A written debriefing strategy.
- Training needs analysis.
- Designing appropriate support materials.
- People's real life stories on website.

Participation in practice

Laura lives in Launceston, Tasmania and is in her final year at Launceston College. She attended Riverside High until Year 10 and worked on suicide prevention issues after two young people in her year, including one of the School Captains, committed suicide within six months. Laura was a member of the National Youth Roundtable in 2000 and won Lions Youth of the Year for the Northern Tasmania Region in 2001.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

I've recently been speaking at Lions and Rotary Clubs about depression and my National Youth Roundtable project, which was to help local schools implement workshops on suicide prevention. It can be a controversial subject but I'm hoping we'll have some success. This year is my HSC year and I want to get into Bachelor of Communications at Canberra University, so I'm trying to mainly concentrate on studies for the next few months.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

For me it was debating that started it all - I started when I was 14 and then I started to get invited to things on behalf of my school - once you can debate they tend to invite you to these things. I used to be involved in sport and drama too, but I don't really have time for them this year.

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

Probably the highlight was being on the National Youth Roundtable last year with 50 other young people from all around Australia – I was just thinking last week what an amazing experience it was. All the people that I met were so fantastic and they had such passion and such diverse backgrounds.

When the big report that documented all our work arrived in the mail I just thought it was fantastic to open it and that my report on depression and my project was in it.

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

The Roundtable was great because you got to have your say and we felt like our opinions mattered.

I also went to the Tasmanian Model United Nations when I was 15 and that was really good. The Model United Nations is run around Australia - ours was run by Rotary - and you represent a country. I represented Iran and you can dress as a local and you get to research the country and its history. It's like the United Nations, so there's over 50 young people. It was over two days and we were billeted by a local high school.

It was fun - you have to take on the opinions of that country, rather than your own. You have to put your own opinions to one side. We debated things like child labour and environmental issues - issues that the United Nations were talking about at the time. The winner was Pakistan and they went on to a National level event. Adults pretty much ran it but I think it was great because the more opportunities there are for young people the better.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the conference/event?

With Model United Nations it was pretty much adult-organised but it was still a great experience. We had more impact on what happened at the Roundtable - they really took notice of what we said at the first workshops and changed the process if we asked for changes, or at least took our requests seriously and explained why if they couldn't change things. There were heaps of feedback sheets and I know they had changed a lot from the year before thanks to the feedback.

You never got the impression that the politicians or the organisers were the most important - it was all focused on the young people which was pretty fantastic.

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

The events I've been to were pretty good, but sometimes school committees haven't been that great. My first school had a prefect board that wasn't very representative - even though it's student-elected, teachers have votes that count more and in my year it was very elitist.

But one good thing was that all the Year 10s who were interested could volunteer for leadership positions like counsellors or equal opportunity officers - so pretty much everyone who wanted some leadership position got something.

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

I don't know - I'm very opinionated and I don't reckon I do. But there are opportunities there for young people if you want them. It's just a shame that a lot of young people don't know the opportunities are there.

Most days I want to be a political journalist but then some days I think it would be much easier if I just wrote articles for Cosmo.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

I think the voting age should be lowered - I think it you should be able to vote at 16 if you want. I want to vote in the upcoming election but I won't be 18. A lot of my friends will be but it's a shame because most of them don't care.

Chapter 3

models & samples**FOR CONFERENCES AND EVENTS**

This section provides information on the major event types and ways to encourage maximum participation by children and young people. It also includes samples of different types of events and forms to encourage and value children and young people's participation.

Participation in practice

Robert is in year 12 at Caringbah High. He is involved with the local Venturers and has been since a young age.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

Venturers, a division of the Scouting movement, because it's an ideal way to meet other young people interested in the things I enjoy and do things that most people never get an opportunity to do.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

About 10 or 11 years ago I joined the Scouting movement mainly as a time-filler, but in the last couple of years I have adopted more of a leadership and planning role, mainly as a way to have my opinion and that of my peers expressed.

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

Seeing a turn-around in declining numbers in the movement due to more youth involvement in planning at regional and state level as well as in individual groups.

Also the meeting of Venturers at the last Jamboree was concerned with the introduction of a less formal uniform – approximately 400 Venturers turned up in full uniform, united in a stance against losing tradition.

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

'Dragon Skin 2001' was almost completely organised by the youth of scouting and provided a chance for like-minded young people to meet each other and participate in a challenging weekend with an emphasis on teamwork. It was fun that wasn't reliant on drugs and alcohol.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the conference/event?

It was organised by youth and for youth. Everyone involved at every level fulfilled the trust that was placed in them, sending a message that young people aren't all bad. Over 1000 people from vastly different backgrounds meshed without problems.

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

Adults often have a tendency to act in more than a supervisory role, often attempting to skew the opinions of a meeting towards their own prejudices rather than allowing youth members to debate the issue and reach a conclusion. Although their experience is often called upon by the meeting they can misinterpret this as meaning that what they think is how the meeting should think.

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

I think youth is largely an untapped resource, dismissed as immature and not able to have an intelligent opinion. Although things are improving, decisions on issues that will affect today's youth tomorrow are often made without any consultation, and token gestures are made that are really quite meaningless.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

Young people often complain about things without ever even attempting to get them changed. If young people just say what's wrong without ever offering a solution they can never expect to be taken seriously. By getting involved in youth affairs we can at least show those in power that we have a worthwhile opinion and want to be heard.

Designing events for children and young people

In general, children and young people report they prefer small group sessions to large group presentations/discussions at an event, although there is a place for both styles. While small group sessions may require more time and preparation, children and young people (and often adults) generally feel more connected to the issues discussed when they meet in small groups, forming partnerships and friendships with other participants.

Informal small group sessions

Small group sessions for children and young people are generally informal (eg. sitting outdoors, on the floor or on couches/beanbags). They can include getting to know you sessions, skills sessions, discussion sessions and a range of activities to help develop groups and break down barriers between group members.

Activities used in these sessions should be experiential, informal and encourage teamwork and respect among group members. There are a wide range of books and internet resources available with suggested group activities, energisers and games (see Part 2). These can enable group members to have fun and result in an environment where members feel comfortable to participate openly.

Example Getting To Know You Activity – Life Story

The facilitator asks group members to take 2-5 minutes to write their life story (whatever they feel comfortable sharing) in four sentences or draw it in four pictures. Each person then reads or explains their story to the group. Encourage the group to ask questions to get to know each other more if time. Allow 10-15 minutes for a 10 person group.

Example: Brainstorming Activity

A facilitator can use this activity to help the group brainstorm ideas around an issue eg. 'How can children and young people be more involved in their/our local communities?'

Ask the group to spend 5 minutes writing down their own answers to the question, then form into groups of three to discuss the answers and brainstorm more for 5 minutes, then come together as a whole group to record their answers on a flip chart. The facilitator can highlight the most common or effective ideas with stars eg. 'Is this a 3 star, 2 star or 1 star idea?'

(For more activities, see Part 2)

Introductory getting to know you sessions

Small group introductory sessions (sometimes called getting to know you sessions) should be run when forming a group that will work together for a short time. These sessions can be held at the beginning and end of each day and allow participants to meet others, exchange ideas and debrief. Using activities/games can help with this process by promoting an informal and safe way for participants to share personal information and experiences.

Skills sessions

Skills sessions provide participants with opportunities to increase personal and group skills such as listening, conflict resolution, planning projects, speaking in public and communication. These skills can be useful at and beyond the event. Sessions could be run or co-run by children and young people.

Issues sessions

Participants at an event can participate in issues sessions, designed to explore issues/problems and perhaps plan solutions or projects to affect the issues.

Facilitators can lead the groups through a sequence of problem-solving steps, where they:

- identify and discuss issues of concern
- develop strategies to solve them
- plan how this can be done
- develop recommendations to governments (local, state, federal) about the issue
- present their ideas/solutions/plans to other attendees and invited guests.

Issue groups can be identified before the event (through participants' feedback) or formed at the event, with participants joining a group of particular interest to them. Particularly in the second case, organisers should identify ways to deal with participants who want to move to different groups later in the forum/event process.

Resource people sessions

Sessions can be held where resource people share knowledge and experience that can help participants to deal with the issues they are working on. Resource people may include children and young people but are typically community workers experienced in working with children and young people and their issues (eg. local youth workers, public servants, counsellors, health care workers, police, lawyers etc).

Resource people can give background information, eg. 'youth support services are available in your community', and answer questions that children and young people have. Young participants should retain control over the issues being considered. Resource people come to talk with children and young people on the basis of what the children and young people want to know, rather than telling children and young people what they should or should not do. Briefing resource people as a group at the event can facilitate this process.

The benefit of resource people sessions is maximised by allowing children and young people time to discuss the issues among themselves first and to prepare questions to put to the resource people.

Presentation sessions

Traditional keynote speakers will not capture the attention of most children or young people. Instead, conference and event organisers can use multi-media presentations, group presentations, question/answer sessions and panel formats to create interest. These sessions usually work well for adult participants as well.

Children and young people can present their ideas and plans to forum participants and invited guests that may include parents and friends, teachers, community leaders/decision-makers such as local politicians, community service club leaders, school principals, police officers etc.

Social sessions and free time

At residential forums, it is particularly important that participants have opportunities to enjoy themselves and socialise. This can be achieved partly by structured activities, eg. meals, dance parties, discos, theatre sports, trivia nights, sporting events, mini-Olympics, bush dances, 'mock tail parties') but there should also be substantial unstructured free time (1-2 hours per day if possible). Participants need complete breaks from the program for new ideas and experiences to be absorbed – work does happen during free time!

Facilitators

Children and young people or adults who act as facilitators/group leaders should be trained in facilitation skills including listening and communication skills; how to focus on group members more than the issues; dealing with personal/group conflicts, offering positive support for the group and how to encourage and value the ideas of the group, rather than their own ideas about the topic. This training may include a practice run for some of the sessions that children and young people will facilitate.

Children and young people can generally make excellent facilitators with support from trained adults and the skills they gain can be used for life.

Meetings/workshops – sample

Meetings have been included here since they are widely used to help organise conferences and events. Workshops refer to longer sessions (up to a day or two) for small groups. Young people and children can participate in meetings and workshops very effectively when they receive support before, during and after the meeting.

Sample two hour meeting/workshop program

A sample child and youth friendly two hour meeting program follows. It has been designed for 5-50 participants with one or two chairpeople or facilitators – adults or children and young people. Support people can be used when the group divides into smaller workgroups if needed.

Objectives

- To generate ideas for what we can do to work together on the issue/s of... (insert issue/s)
- To get to know each other better

15 mins Welcome, Objectives

Go around the group – ask everyone to share their name and organisation or suburb they live (or what you ate for breakfast, for groups that know each other well!) and what you hope to get out of this meeting/workshop. Facilitators/chairpeople can check with the group if they would like to add any new items as objectives for this meeting – or the next meeting, if possible.

30 mins Group Issue Discussion

Introduce the issues under discussion which may involve a short presentation from a youth or adult resource person.

Brainstorm the action members of this group could take on the issue if applicable. Use drawings, a collage or paired discussions for younger groups. Bear in mind the formation of groups for the next session (groups/ways to organise the issues may become clear).

The facilitators/chairpeople should make sure everyone in the group has had a chance to have a say.

Leave five minutes at the end to check in with those who have not spoken much, but avoid putting quiet/shy people on the spot (everyone has the right to 'pass' if they want to).

30-40 mins Small group discussion/planning

Break into small groups to work on the action identified. Groups can be nominated by the facilitators/chairs or self-selected during the process above. One method is to write key ideas on ie. butchers' paper and stick it around the walls of the room – people write their name underneath the idea they are most keen on working on.

20-30 mins Report back

The small groups report back to the large group about the ideas/projects they have developed and the next steps they want to take, if applicable.

15 mins Reactions and wrap-up

Evaluation (See Part 2).

If appropriate, a whole group celebration, eg. Whoosh! or Magic Chant (see Part 2).

Before the meeting/workshop

Brief the young participants on the organisations involved in the meeting/workshop, how it will be run and what it is seeking to achieve. This may involve asking them to attend for a briefing before the official session (especially useful if it is the first meeting or workshop they will attend) and/or a phone or email briefing. If this is a child or young person's first meeting or workshop ever, providing additional support can be effective eg. ask them if they would like to talk to past young participants.

At the meeting/workshop

The same principles for effective adult meetings apply to children and young people: clearly identify the purpose of the meeting and outcomes sought, have an agenda and have an effective chairperson or meeting co-ordinator who consults with meeting participants. It is very important that a meeting chairperson (and all participants at the meeting) make an effort to include all participants in the meeting, and this may involve a special focus on asking for children or young people's opinions or structuring time to hear from everyone in the group in turn. Children and young people should be encouraged to voice their opinions and 'put up their hand' to be heard. All participants at a meeting should have a chance to speak at least once every 10 minutes or it is an indication that there are too many people at the meeting or the chairperson is ineffective.

After the meeting/workshop

Children and young people should have a chance to de-brief. Did they enjoy the meeting? Did they feel their opinion was heard? What would improve the meeting next time?

Forums/roundtables – sample

Forums and roundtables can involve anything from ten to many thousands of participants, but ideal forum numbers are generally from 50 to 500 participants. The title forum generally refers to discussion-based events, while conferences will often be more focused on providing information. Forums can run from one day to one week, with most being one to three day events.

Successful forums are events in which everyone is free to participate (at their choice) and all opinions are listened to and valued. Children and young people of different backgrounds and experiences can work together on areas of common concern and are often encouraged to implement practical change at a local level after the forum. Participants learn from their experiences at the forum – meeting new and different people, sharing and listening to a variety of views and having their own views heard.

Roundtables generally have slightly less participants and more opportunities for informal small group sessions and discussions. There will often be 20-100 participants who can sit at one table (unfortunately, it's usually not round!) and participate in question and answer/report back sessions.

Sample one day forum program

This sample forum for 25-200 participants could be held in a Neighborhood Centre, school or hall. Young facilitators could introduce the forum or lead small group discussions. Two experienced facilitators are recommended for each group of 10-15 participants.

Objectives:

- To discuss issues which affect children/young people in our area.
- To form issues groups that can deal with the issues that concern us most.
- To get to know other children/young people in our area and have fun!

Program:

- 8.00am Arrive and set up (organisers)**
- 8.30 – 9.00am Registration**
- 9.00 – 9.15am Welcome and introduction – whole group**
Welcome by young facilitator/s. Overview – how small groups, issue groups will work.
- 9.15 – 10.15am Small group session 1 – intro groups**
Small group introduction activities and issues that affect you.
- 10.15 – 10.30am Break**
- 10.30 – 11.15am Issues session 1 – intro groups**
Brainstorm and discussion of issues. Clarify key issues (vote into priority order if needed). Younger people can draw/collage issues or talk in small 2-3 people groups.
- 11.15 – 11.30pm Choose issues groups – whole group**
Sample method: Each groups' priorities are written on butchers' paper and stuck on the walls.

Participants write their names on sheets or stand in front of the idea they most want to work on.

(Facilitators may need to combine groups if needed).
- 11.30 – 11.45am Break**
- 11.45 – 12.30pm Issues session 2 – issue groups**
Work in the groups selected before the break.

Discussion about issues and what can be done about them (break into sub-groups if needed).
- 12.30 – 1.15pm Lunch**
- 1.15 – 1.45pm Issues session 2 – issue groups**
Discussion about issues and what can be done about them continued.

Project plans developed, if applicable. Choose report-back people for wrap up session.
- 1.45 – 2.30pm Small group session 2 – intro or skills groups**
eg. Project planning, getting support for your ideas and media relations skills (could be a number of sessions and participants choose one).
- 2.30 – 2.45pm Break**
- 2.45 – 3.30pm Report back and wrap up – whole group**
Hear from a spokesperson (or two) from each issues group.

Contact details for groups to be distributed.
- 3.30 – 4.00pm Clean up, debrief (organisers)**

Conferences/events – sample

Sample two day conference/event program

While the following has been provided as a starting point, it is impossible to provide a sample ready-to-use program for a large scale 2-5 day conference or event. We recommend organisations should seek advice from conference organisers/program designers experienced in working with children and young people.

Objectives:

- To learn more about (issue).
- To network with others interested in (issue).
- To make recommendations about (issues) to (organisation).

Sample conference/event program – Day 1

- 9.30 – 10.45am Large group session – welcome, main meeting room**
Includes welcome speech/presentation by individual or groups of children/young people.
- 10.45 – 11.00am Morning tea – courtyard**
- 11.00 – 12.30pm Small group workshop 1 – getting to know each other, small group rooms**
Includes sessions for children/young people facilitated by trained children/young people.
- 12.30 – 1.30pm Lunch – dining room**
- 1.30 – 2.30pm Large group – presentation sessions, main meeting room**
May include 2 or 3 traditional presentations with brief Q&As after each. Can also include presentations by children and young people.
- 2.30 – 3.30pm Small group workshop 2 skills sessions – project planning, media etc, small group rooms**
May include sessions for children/young people facilitated by trained children/young people.

- 3.30 – 4.00pm Break**
- 4.00 – 5.00pm Small group workshop 3 skills sessions – project planning, media etc, small group rooms**
May include sessions for children/young people facilitated by trained children/young people.
- 5.00 – 6.00pm Large group session – day 1 report back, main meeting room**
Includes presentations by children and young people.
- 6.00 – 7.00pm Break**
- 7.00 – 8.00pm Conference Dinner**
- 8.30 – 10.30pm Free time (City tours available for those interested)**

Sample conference/event program – Day 2

- 9.00 – 10.30pm Large group session – introduction & day 2 presentation sessions, main meeting room**
May include welcome speech and presentations by individuals/groups of children/young people.
- 10.30 – 10.45am Morning tea – courtyard**
- 10.45 – 12.30pm Issues sessions – small group rooms**
Discussing issues for this afternoon's resolutions session. Children and young people are paired with Mentors who sit with them and brief /debrief them for these sessions.
- 12.30 – 1.30pm Lunch – dining room**
- 1.30 – 3.30pm Large group – resolutions sessions, main meeting room**
This is a long session and children/young people need to meet separately for the first 60 minutes or have a 15 minute break in the middle. They may have 15-30 mins set aside to present their ideas.
- 3.30 – 4.00pm Break**

4.00 – 5.00pm Conference concludes – main meeting room
Including a speech and/or MC role from children/young people.

5.00 – 5.30pm Conference concludes – children and young people have special 30 min debriefing time
Complete reaction sheets. Can be in a group or one-on-one with Mentors.

Before the conference/event

Brief the young participants on the time involved, their responsibilities and the objectives of the event. This can include ambassador visits/briefings (eg. ex-participants schools or community centres), briefing meetings, written documents and phone and email contact before the event. If available, it can also be helpful to send material aimed at parents/teachers/friends – for example, a five minute 'video briefing' of a previous event.

At the conference/event

Conferences for children and young people work best when they are:

Children and young people led – children and young people should be trained as facilitators to work with other children and young people.

Adult supported – many children and young people appreciate the training, support and mentorship roles that can be provided by experienced adults. Adults may be called 'support people', 'resource people', or '(organisation name) staff' to differentiate them from young 'facilitators', 'group leaders' (or other name).

Based on experiential learning – experiential learning is based on the premise that the most effective learning comes through active experience. This can be applied even to theory and abstract topics through the use of cleverly designed activities and training programs which are focused on experiencing the key issues (see Chapter 4). Projects that are carried out after the event, peer education, outdoors

activities and simulations can also be important elements in experiential learning. See 'key elements of successful events' below for more information.

After the conference/event

Children and young people should share their feelings at the event through small group sessions and reaction sheets, and be debriefed after the event by linking them with other organisations, follow-up phone calls and emails etc. They can also be involved after the event as alumni, ambassadors, mentors or support people.

A sample feedback sheet can be found on page 81.

Sports/arts and other events – sample

Other types of events organised for and/or by children and young people can include sports camps, arts events, festivals, band competitions, personal development workshops etc. Although it's hard to recommend specific strategies or program elements for these events since they can be so different, the following notes may help.

Before the sports/arts/other event

Children and young people can be involved in the planning and running of sports/arts/other events, even if the event has traditionally been organised by adults, an association or company in the past. Organisers of these events may find that by inviting children and young people to join an adult or youth event committee/team, they gain credibility and ideas to improve attendance and all participants' experiences.

Children and young people have successfully organised sports, music and other types of art events, eg. singing/theatre/dancing/film events, with little or no adult assistance in the past. It may be useful for event organisers to check with youth networks or other clubs, councils and websites for stories of successful events and strategies for involving children and young people. If this is the first event of its type, we recommend forming a youth committee (or youth advisory committee) that can be made up of representatives from schools, youth groups and other interested organisations.

At the sports/arts/other event

Children and young people will generally be involved in these types of events as participants, but it is important that where possible they also be involved as event organisers, MCs and other behind the scenes and 'up-front' roles. For example, if a band competition wants to support and reflect children and young people, an organising/advisory committee of children and young people could invite a young celebrity or local identity to host the event and to organise young judges.

At youth sports events, too, children and young people can take part as more than just players – again, a youth committee could help organise young entertainers before/during a match, a young MC could be found, and perhaps the event could be opened or launched by a child – a player of the future.

After the sports/arts/other event

Children and young people can continue to be involved after the event through networking and future growth opportunities – for example, share email addresses of band competition participants and set up a egroup for networking and other assistance. A similar strategy can be used for sports or arts competitions, and past participants could help promote future events as ambassadors, mentors, and other support roles.

Participation in practice

Martin Robinson is in year 12 at Caringbah Selective High School. He is a member of the NSW State Emergency Services working as a volunteer.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

At the State Emergency Services I participate in weekly training and I am actively on call for rescue and storm damage. The team that I work with is very open and friendly and we get along well... it's just enjoyable!

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

I started at the service whilst completing my Queens Scout Award. I got involved with Scouts through my brother and all my friends. I have always liked the outdoors and adventurous activities and the Scouts and the SES both meet these criteria.

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

I've learnt a lot of new skills and met a lot of friendly and fun people. Most of all I've been given opportunities that I would not normally be able to participate in – to learn new skills and see new things.

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

With the SES I was part of the crowd control for the Sydney 2000 Olympic games torch relay. It was a fantastic opportunity to witness the pride of Australia and the smiles on the youth's faces of the Sutherland Shire. During this event we were working to ensure that everyone got the most out of the day.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the conference/event?

Children and young people were given the opportunity to be a part of the spectacular event bringing the nation together by joining in and cheering on the runners. It highlighted the important role of youth in the Sutherland Shire and in our nation.

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

Yes, I have taken part in a course that didn't cater for the needs of youth. It is important to remember that while youth aren't always in a full time job and locked down with commitments, we still have other things in our diary. This course ran late into the night making it difficult to get home from and bad for the next day of school. It also ran workshops in the day so we missed out on school. If you want youth to be involved you have to take things like transportation, cost and school into consideration.

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

Yes I do. At the moment I feel like I am being heard whether it be first hand through the Scout movement or expressed by members on my school SRC or local youth council.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

Just by becoming involved whether it is once a month you walk into the local youth centre and have a chat about what you can do, or by voicing your opinions when you get the chance!

Working with people at risk

Adults and children and young people may facilitate or be a member of groups that include people at risk – ranging from those who are shy to those who are depressed, abused or feeling marginalised. These feelings or issues may come up in discussion and it's important to know how to deal with them if they do.

In all cases you should support and listen to anyone who talks about these feelings or issues. In some cases you may not be able to talk at length about the problem in front of the rest of the group – make it clear why and talk with the person in the next break.

Remember that for many children and young people this will be their first experience of a conference or event and they may feel worried or threatened. That's why it's important to have as many chances to express their feelings as possible.

It's important to invite all participants to be involved in group discussions, and to talk to all participants outside structured group time about how they are going. For big or very emotional events/topics, a trained support person should be available at all times to talk with participants.

Share your feelings

Some ways children, young people and adults can express their feelings at conferences and events include:

- * Talking to a clearly identified support person.
- * Drawing or creating collages (provide coloured paper, magazines etc) about how they feel.
- * Writing daily diary entries (which can be shared with others or not shared).
- * Writing formal reaction sheets (which can be signed or anonymous, whichever they prefer).
- * Talking with a group during a workshop session.
- * Talking in front of a large group as part of a presentation, discussion or question time.

Cost to participants

If at all possible, events should be offered to children and young people free or at a small cost. It's probably better to run a non-residential forum at low or no cost to participants than a residential forum which some can't attend for financial reasons.

Participation in practice

Jayne currently studies in Bathurst but comes from Port Macquarie, NSW. She is in her second year of a BA (Communications) course at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, majoring in Journalism & Public Relations. She is Student Representative Council Women's Officer, a member of her University Student Representative Council, and is on the Federal Department of Health Intersectoral Committee with a special interest in youth health issues. She attended the first World Health Organisation International Meeting on Women & Health held in Australia in March 2001.

What youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

Most constantly it would be the University Student Representative Council because I'm at uni every day – well I'm supposed to be! Being Women's Officer is a big commitment. The other things I'm currently involved in are mostly one off events, not huge projects – which is the way to go because otherwise I'd just have way too much.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

I was on my SRC when I was 11, but I don't think it was really that effective. When I was 14 I got involved in working on events like 'Battle of the Bands' and by the time I was 16 I ended up organising them. Around that time I got interested in issues like youth suicide and I got involved in those issues too.

There was a girl in the year above me - her name was Jane too - and she took an interest in me and bought me along to a lot of things. We still keep in touch. She ended up doing journalism like me and now she works at Prime TV.

What have been some highlights of your participation so far?

Probably Reachout because I've been involved with them for 5 years and there's always something you can do with them to keep involved.

And the World Health Organisation meeting because I got to meet really interesting people from all around the world – they were all women who were leaders in health and community issues. I was the youngest person there and they were all very encouraging.

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

The WHO meeting was held at Canberra University for 40 people. I was told that people in the Australian Department of Health had really pushed for me to go and the organisers in Japan at first didn't think that a young person could handle the issues. But I had a lot of support and was voted as one of the participants to give a speech of thanks at the end and I know that now they are looking at inviting more young people next year.

The focus of the meeting this year was maximising women's capacities and leadership. We looked at third world countries and how to change their systems to allow women to participate more in their communities. Creating new models of leadership.

So many young people I know don't want to put their hands up because they don't see themselves as speechmakers.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at this conference/event?

Really they didn't focus on it – I was just one of the participants. Which was good and bad. Some of it was a bit disorganised – one thing that didn't really work was that if they went over time they would have a big group discussion about what to cut from the program and I think the organising committee should have just decided.

At first I guess I was worried about being a token young person, but you're only token if you accept that label. If you start to speak out you won't be seen that way.

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

Some of the adult events I've been to haven't included young people very well. But then sometimes after the first few days people start to loosen up and let you have a go. Sometimes it's hard at first because they all talk in jargon and acronyms and often you don't know what they're talking about. But you just have to ask or write them down and ask people in the breaks. Usually after a while it's ok.

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

No – I think it's getting better but there are still a lot of groups that don't care or don't think much about children and young people. I suppose the newer movements like reconciliation or the republicans seem to do a better job than some of the older issues like health groups or even women's groups which have been around for so many years they're a bit set in their ways. But that can change if young people make an effort to get it changed!

How can children and young people have more of a say?

By the organisations making the effort to think of young people and recognising they have something to input. They might have great ideas that can really broaden support for the organisations.

At the community level is probably the easiest and the most important to get started – but at a higher level too things are changing.

Young people need to be involved now so they can implement these ideas in the future, in five or ten or twenty years.

The conferences and events checklist

While this checklist does not contain all the steps needed for effective participation, it should provide a useful starting point.

Consider each element below and develop strategies to implement those applicable to your event or group.

Important Elements

Briefing	Brief the child/young person about the organisation and their role, face to face if possible. Include brochures, reports, websites, videos etc. See briefing/skills form.
Skills Training	Help the child/young person to learn participation and board skills. We suggest at least a half-day training session, depending on age/experience. See briefing/skills form.
Computer Skills	Where possible, link children and young people in regular contact to the organisation and others through email and the internet. See computer skills form.
Youth Mentors	Where possible, link them (eg. emails, a monthly 15-30 minute phone call) with a person around their age who has been through this or similar process before. See mentor briefing form.
Adult Mentors Advisors	Where possible, link them monthly 15-30 minute phone call) with an adult who works in an area of concern to them eg. youth affairs, employment, environment etc.
Effective Chairing	Chairpersons and other key participants should be briefed about young participants, and where possible meet/call them before the first meeting. See meeting participant/chairperson briefing form.

Effective MCs/chairing	At conferences/events, MCs and chairpeople should be briefed about young participants and how to best involve them. See meeting participant/chairperson briefing form
Other links	Where possible, help put the young participant in touch with others who may support them (other young people, local workers, local council, State or Federal MPs, media etc).
Debriefing	Sit down with the child/young person and give them information about their future options (include brochures, reports, look at websites and videos together etc). See debriefing form.

Briefing/skills form

Dear [Name]

We hope to give you, your family and others you know who might be interested as much detail as possible about your involvement in [name]. We can also put you in touch with support people if you feel you need more skills in the areas below.

Please answer these questions and give this form to [name] or email this form to [insert address] by [date/time].

Yours,

[Youth Committee Representative or other adult advisor]

General Survey

Your name:

How well do you feel you understand [name of organisation] – its history and how it works (very well, ok or not very well)?

Are there any questions about [name of organisation] you'd like answered?

What did you like about the briefing you received?

How could we have briefed you better?

Are there any skills you would like training in [eg. public speaking, media training etc]?

Do you have any other comments?

Board Skills Survey [Delete this section if not applicable]

How well do you feel you understand how the board works?

Are there any areas of meeting procedure you'd like more help with?

Would you like us to put you in touch with someone who has participated on the board before?

Computer skills form

Dear [Name]

Thanks for your participation so far in [name of organisation/event]. We would like to help you participate fully in the [event] process, so we are surveying your computer skills and where you think you'd like more help.

As you know, using emails/the internet effectively is important to successful participation at/after the event – although we do have other supports in place for a few of our participants without access. Answering the following questions can help us to help you. If you don't know how to reply to this email, feel free to call us on [phone number] from 8am-6pm for help.

Yours,

[Youth Committee Representative or other adult advisor]

Computer/Email Skills Survey

Your name:

How often can you get to a computer with internet and email access (every day/week/month/never)? Why?

How well do you feel you understand sending emails and using the internet (very well, ok or not very well)?

What did you like about the briefing/training you have received so far?

How could we have briefed/trained you better?

Are there any skills you would like training in [eg. public speaking, media training etc]?

Do you have any other comments?

Mentor briefing form

Dear [Name]

Thank you for agreeing to be a mentor for [name of young person or group of young people] at [name of event]. We would like to give you some more information about the event and your role and conclude with a short survey, asking you to get back to us if you would like additional information.

[Event/organisation name] is [information here]. For more information, please see the attached file [name of file].

Your role at [event/organisation] is to support our young participants by acting as a mentor for [group or individual name]. You will be meeting [name] at [date/time]. At the event, we hope you will exchange contact details and may be able to act as an ongoing resource for [name]. We estimate that this will involve one or two emails/phone calls a month over [duration of the project], with perhaps a few more in the first few weeks.

[Delete the following section if not applicable] Finally, could you please complete the short survey below and email it back to us in the next week. We will use it to assess the preparation of mentors and the amount of support you would like from us (if we do not hear back from you we'll assume you have enough information).

Yours sincerely,

[Youth Committee Representative or other adult advisor]

Mentor Survey

How well do you feel you understand [name of organisation], its history and how it works (very well, ok or not very well)?

Are there any questions about [name of organisation] you'd like answered?

How do you feel about your role as mentor?

Would you like any additional support or information?

Do you have any other comments?

Meeting participant/chairperson briefing form

Dear [Name]

As you know, [name of organisation/event] is holding a meeting [or series of meetings] on [date] and we have invited [number of names of children and young people] to participate, as the meeting[s] will cover a number of important issues for young people. We would like you to help [name] participate fully in this [or these] meetings in your role as a chairperson/meeting participant by:

- * Being aware that this may be one of the first organisational meetings the young participants have ever attended.
- * Explaining what is happening and look for opportunities to include the young participants.
- * Specifically asking for their opinions at stages throughout the meeting and before any important decisions are made.

Keeping an eye on these three elements will help ensure that young participants in the meeting will have a positive experience and are able to contribute to the group's decisions.

If you have any questions or would like any assistance please do not hesitate to contact [details].

Yours sincerely,

[Youth Committee Representative or other adult advisor]

Debriefing form

Dear [Name]

Thank you so much for your involvement in [name of event].

We hope you got as much out of your participation as we did from having you involved. We will be sending you a [certificate of participation/reference letter] for your CV in the post by the end of next week. A youth mentor will also call you in the next week or two to help discuss your future involvement in youth participation. In the meantime it would be great if you could complete and [email/post back/hand in] the feedback form below.

Once again thanks for your time and commitment.

Yours sincerely,

[Youth Committee Representative or other adult advisor]

Feedback Form

Overall, how would you describe your experience with [name of organisation/event] (excellent, ok or not great)?

What were the highlights for you?

What did you think could be improved?

Do you have any comments on the [adult support team etc] and their level of support?

Is there anything you would like done differently?

How could we debrief you better?

Do you have any other comments?

Sample feedback sheet

This page contains a simple example of a feedback sheet that can be used at the end of meetings or conferences – please adapt/customise it to create your own if needed.

Feedback Sheet

Contact details

(optional)

Name:

Organisation

(if applicable):

If you would

like us to

contact you:

Phone:

Email:

Address:

I enjoyed...

I didn't enjoy...

I learnt...

I would prefer...

As a result of

what we

discussed, I will...

Any other

comments?

Participation in practice

Lachlan is in year 11 at Epping Boys High School. He was a leader at 'Follow the Leader', a camp for primary school children and has volunteered on his school Student Representative Council and Baulkham Hills Shire Council.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

I am primarily involved in the Student Representative Council (SRC) system that exists within public education. Maybe it shouldn't be classified as a 'organisation', but for me it has been the main thing from which all other involvement flows.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

Firstly it was for my personal benefit, however as I became further involved and went to higher levels of representation I began to observe a real need for youths to be heard as well as the need to break the common negative stereotypical portrayal of Australian youth. In many suburbs and regions young people do not have outlets for participation and involvement and hence can turn to the taking of illegal substances for reasons that range from feelings of euphoria and easy-going to just something to do. Australian youth have a lot to offer; however at the moment, opportunities for this to be showcased do not exist.

I first got involved through school in the SRC. And from there are moved to working with Rotary's Interact Program, to NSW Working Party, HYPE, Baulkham Hills Shire Council and now Pasta.

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

Organising a leadership camp for student leaders of the primary schools that operate within Hornsby. Titled 'Follow the Leader',

the camp, run by Hornsby District SRC members, demonstrated how to set up and operate SRCs and other leadership programs within primary schools. Its other main objective coincided with the 2000 State SRC Conference program of 'Participate – It's Great'. The camp gave examples of many opportunities and how to stimulate further student participation for primary school children. The organisers of this camp are very pleased to see that a new Leadership guideline booklet has been released for all primary schools in the state.

This camp was such a highlight, as I believe younger children - especially those in their final years of primary school - are in need of greater training before entering high school. The importance of student participation and a background in leadership can be greatly beneficial to a student just entering high school. Our primary school delegates were so motivated by this camp and reports have indicated that it has stimulated considerable action throughout the schools.

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

The Hornsby District 'Follow the Leader', covered above. It was so great as the delegates were so thankful and all recognised how beneficial the information would be not only for themselves but their school.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the conference/event?

The primary school student delegates were able to interact with a range of high school students, which in many ways extinguished stereotypical character portrayals and calmed many concerns or worries concerning the transition to high school.

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

Annually an organisation runs a 'Young Leaders Day' for students from across the NSW board of studies. This is a great initiative in combining

state and private schools. However, the information itself is not really beneficial or related. Personal motivation and inspiration is, of course, an important part of any leadership program but an opportunity to have such a large range and capacity of students together is currently wasted.

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

Yes. I believe the theory that youths are oppressed in the expression of their opinions, has just been so widely accepted, that it just has not been further researched since its establishment. There are great numbers of possibilities and avenues for youth expressionism, I just think that at the moment the majority of youths just do not really care enough to take the initiative required. For so long a negative stereotype of youths has existed and now it has just been accepted by a large number of youths, who believe they just can't do anything. This state of mind can result in a lack of initiative and unawareness to possibilities for expression.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

I believe the question should be, "How can children and young people be motivated to take the initiative to have more of a say?" The possibilities and revenues exist for youths to be heard, just the motivation for them to understand that they are important is needed.

An occasional motivational camp and seminar will not reach and affect a large enough range of youths.

Chapter 4

HANDY hints

These handy hints are to help conference and event organisers and participants. They can be circulated as part of the conference/event papers either before or at the conference/event.

Assertiveness

An assertive person usually has four characteristics:

1. They feel free to tell people about how they feel.
2. They can communicate with all sorts of different people – openly, honestly and appropriately.
3. They are a 'doer' – someone who attempts to make things happen.
4. They are someone who is happy to like themselves.

There are three typical ways we can behave:

1. Submissive: Suffering put downs, being dominated by others, being afraid that you will always fail and generally allowing other people to control the situation.
2. Aggressive: demanding that things go your way, dominating others with your view point, expecting others to solve your problems for you, not taking others ideas seriously, always wanting your own way.
3. Assertive: making your own decisions and choices, having no need to impress others, stating your needs but not putting down others' opinions or needs, not playing games like "I won't talk to you unless you go out tonight" and being respectful of others.

People sometimes confuse assertiveness and aggression, thinking that assertiveness

is demanding your rights. But demands are usually a sign of aggressive behaviour.

Being assertive is something you do rather than something you are. You may easily assert yourself in one situation, or with one particular person, yet find it hard with others.

Assertiveness and self-esteem are linked. When you feel good about yourself and the things you do, you continue to do things well and set yourself more goals. If you feel that you have done something badly it can affect everything else you do.

Assertiveness is a skill that you can learn and practice. It means you recognise your rights and stand up for them. If you don't, other people will tell you what to do and you stop being yourself.

Communication

Communication is a two way process. It takes at least two people – a sender and a receiver.

Effective communication moves freely in both directions. One way of thinking about good communication is that you are meeting someone in their world and helping them to meet you in your world.

Many different things influence the way we communicate including:

- The words we use
- The tone of our voice
- The way we use our body
- Our mood
- Our attitude to the person we are communicating with (and their attitude to us)
- Outside distractions.

If we are more aware of possible interferences to communication we can develop skills to overcome them. The following are some things that make communication difficult:

- People describe and see things based on their own experiences. For this reason, everybody's interpretation of things is different.
- Our perceptions are based on who we are (our values, attitudes etc) rather than what we hear or see – no two people react to anything in exactly the same way.
- People learn to see things in a certain way. Our values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and feelings influence what we see.
- Everyone 'colours' their observations with things that are unique to them. Age, position, sex, physical condition and state of mind all colour observations.

- People tend to see and interpret things the same way as they have always done – the way they are used to.
- People almost always find in others what they expect to find.
- People often simplify things if they don't understand them well.

The heart of good communication is not in the words used, but in understanding and actions achieved.

Even though we are often unaware of it, we communicate as much through our actions as through our words.

Facilitating small group sessions

Small group sessions are an important part of any conference or event. The more people know about each other, the easier it is for them to work together and to accept others' points of view and ideas.

Activities and games that are run in small group sessions can help everyone find out things about each other they wouldn't get to know at standard meetings or events. This will make the group more comfortable and help them work better together.

Groups of 10-15 people work best. Many activities and games will not work with more than about 20 people.

As a facilitator, you need to remember that some people find it easy to tell others about themselves, but some find it very hard. If people are not used to sharing personal information, they will not be able to change easily just because they are in a small group. Encourage these people to participate but at the same time let them 'pass' if they are really uncomfortable – they may join in next time.

Remember, there is big difference between someone who is finding it a bit hard to tell others about themselves and someone who is being deliberately disruptive. Some young people who have not chosen to participate, but been 'volunteered' by their school or other group may be deliberately disruptive. The best thing to do is calmly ask them not to spoil the group for others and then ask them to either participate or sit quietly. If they decide to sit quietly, give them the chance to join in a bit later. If they continue to be deliberately disruptive, ask them to leave the group and offer to talk with them in the next break.

If you are cheerful and positive, most people will join in without any trouble.

Sit everyone in a circle to start with and put yourself as part of that circle. If you move around, get everyone back into the circle before you start the next activity. This way everyone can see everyone else and feel part of the group.

Sitting on the floor, on beanbags etc can be great if the group is young and it's ok with them. Chairs are ok but you often have to keep moving them during activities.

If you have any people with a disability in your groups, they may find the physical activities difficult. If possible, change the activities to some which are less physical eg. buzz see Part 2: Games & Activities.

Small groups are supposed to be friendly, happy places to be. It is up to the group leader to be both friendly and happy to help the group members to join in.

Training and notes on how to facilitate small group sessions should be provided – get together with other young people and compare notes or run practice sessions before the event if you can.

Fundraising

There are many different resources you can draw on to raise money – your school eg. teachers, parents and students, local community eg. local businesses and groups and even government departments and programs. Three possible fundraising categories include:

1. Sponsorship/grants/donations

To be successful you will need to convince people of the benefits of your project and give them reasons why they should support you. This usually means writing at least a one page letter or brochure to explain:

- What your group is and its aims
- Why your group's activities are worthwhile
- Why you need the money and what you will do with it and
- How the activity relates to the organisation you are seeking money from.

Government Programs

Some Federal and State government departments have funds set aside for projects that are relevant to their interests and aims. The first step is to approach a government department and find out about the programs you can apply for – this can be difficult because there are so many departments and programs!

You can research on the internet, but even better might be to start by contacting someone that you think might be relevant and follow up on the information you get from that source to another until you find the right people and programs. You will then need to understand the guidelines for the programs you apply to and write a submission which shows how your project will meet their requirements. The process of applying for and receiving grants can take a long time (usually at least six months to one year).

Non-Government

Local organisations like Apex, Rotary, Lions or school P&C associations often raise money to help their local communities and may be able to give some financial support to your local community project. Local businesses are also sometimes interested in helping their local communities and are worth asking for support.

This includes the local branches of large companies like Woolworths or K Mart, or large companies with factories in your area. They may be able to give you in-kind sponsorship (contributions of something other than money). For example, you may be able to convince a local butcher to donate some sausages for a BBQ or maybe they will offer you a low price for something you need to buy. In-kind help also includes people allowing you to use resources they have, such as the use of a telephone, photocopier or fax machine.

2. Activities

Running activities or special events is another way to raise money. They can be a lot of fun and can involve a lot of people. Some examples of what you could do include talent quests, school dances, school non-uniform days, busking, walkathons or recycling materials like aluminium cans.

3. Selling services or goods

This is different to organising an activity and usually involves a smaller number of people directly. You sell something to someone who might be interested in buying what you are selling or they may also want to help support you. Either way, their only real involvement is in giving you money in exchange for what you are offering. Some examples include car washes, lamington drives, concerts, garage sales etc.

Getting support for your ideas**Try to get support from other people because:**

- You have more chance of success.
- You have more people to help.
- You will get different ideas about your idea which will help develop it fully.
- It is very hard to achieve anything if others don't want it.
- The idea could be against policies and regulations – you might not find out unless you involve others.
- Teachers/school executive/parents etc can stop an idea if you don't get them onside.

Things to remember about getting support:

- Have your idea thought out and present it as clearly as possible.
- Spend some time thinking about who should be approached to help – the English teacher may not be best to help with the program for a sports competition but could help with the wording for a poster to publicise the competition.
- Plan your approach – don't ask someone for help when they're in the middle of something else.
- If the first person you ask can't help, ask them for advice on who to ask next.
- Don't whinge – a well thought out argument is worth 100 whinges.
- Some people will want you to write your ideas down before they will consider them. If the idea is important enough, write it down.
- Think about the how to approach people – by letter? at a meeting? Ask for advice from others if you are not sure of the best method.
- Other students can be very important support for student council ideas – let them know what your ideas/projects are by assemblies, notice boards, newsletters, meetings etc.

Finally, remember before you ask for support it will be useful to ask yourselves:

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Who | – | will I ask for help? |
| Why | – | that person? |
| What | – | help do I want? |
| When | – | will I approach them? |
| Where | – | is the best place to approach them? |
| How | – | will I make the approach? |

Interviews/meetings

You may need to interview or conduct meetings with people to get information you need. The following points are worth remembering and as always, try out your skills on someone friendly who can give you feedback before you go for the real thing.

For interviews

It's important to be as fully prepared as possible. Don't rely on your memory – it may desert you at the worst possible moment. Always research your interview subject and your questions thoroughly and write down key questions.

- Have a list of questions. You may want to give your interviewee the questions before the interview so they have time to prepare.
- Make sure you do the interview somewhere that you won't be interrupted or disturbed.
- Decide how you are going to record the answers you get. Using a tape recorder may be easier at the time but means more work later when you have to write it up. Taking note is an art form, and needs practice. If you are writing up what happened, make sure you do so soon after the interview, otherwise you may forget vital information.
- Give the person you are interviewing an estimate of how long you expect the interview to take and stick to it.
- Ask open-ended questions, rather than ones that have yes/no answers. Open questions often start with who, what, where, why, how and will always generate more information. If you were interviewing Cathy Freeman you could ask a closed question like "Has racism affected your career?" and she might answer "yes" or "no", end of answer. But if you asked "How has racism affected your career?" she would have the chance to give a detailed answer.
- If the interviewee obviously does not want to answer a question, respect her/his wishes.

- If you use quotations from the interview, make sure they are accurate and give the true meaning in the context in which they were said.
- Let the interviewee know how the information is going to be used and give them a copy if they are interested.
- Thank the interviewee for their time.

For meetings

Sometimes you may need to meet with people to discuss a particular matter or to get some information. Again, preparation is the key to conducting a successful meeting. Many of the hints for interviews also apply to meetings with people.

- Prepare an agenda, or a list of topics to be discussed and distribute it to all participants.
- Set a finishing time and stick to it.
- Take notes about the meeting.
- Allow everyone to have their say.

Presentations

What is a presentation?

- An informative and interesting way to express your ideas.
- There is no set way to make a presentation – computer assisted presentations, speeches, interviews, skits, songs, videos, question and answer sessions or other methods of audience involvement are all possible. Pick the combination of methods that will best get your messages across to the audience.
- The most important thing to keep in mind is that if you use interesting methods to communicate your opinions, you encourage your audience to listen. This will help you to get them concerned and involved.

Where can we use a presentation?

Presentations can be used by anyone as a way to express their opinion on any issue such as:

- A problem you (or other children or young people) have
- What you think about an issue
- Something you've done and would like them to know about or
- Some constructive ideas you have to solve a problem in your community.

Starting to prepare a presentation

You probably have a rough idea of what ideas and information you would like to include in your presentation. (If not you might need to do some research – see below). Here is one way to prepare a presentation you might like to try.

Make a list of all your thoughts and ideas about your topic, no matter how irrelevant or silly they seem at first. Try to look at the topic from all different angles. Next, go through your list and talk about each idea with your co-presenters or with your friends/family. You can cross off the ones you don't want. If you've still got lots of ideas on your list, you might try grouping them under main headings.

Then, decide if you want to cover everything on your list. Perhaps you might want to deal with only some of the ideas, so that you can cover them in greater details and avoid information overload – it's up to you. Make a list of areas that you need to find out more about and think of possible sources for this information.

Research – finding out what you need to know

Research is usually needed to get better information for your presentation.

Methods include:

- Other young people, teachers, parents, people with special knowledge
- Newspapers, magazines, videos, books
- Government and community groups eg. your local council, church, other schools etc
- Department of Education and Training and other State/Federal government departments.

You can also use surveys to get ideas from people, but try to find information from existing surveys rather than doing your own – a few hours searching the internet can save days of typing in survey results! Often one or two case studies of real people can be more effective than statistics – interview people affected by the issues you want to discuss (perhaps take a photo or video of them if they are happy for you to do this) and share their stories.

Methods of presentation

Once you've got your ideas and the necessary information together, you can begin working out how to present them.

A varied and interesting presentation does not mean you sing, tap dance, play a film and show slides all at the same time! Rather, it means that you use methods that you are comfortable with and which you think will appeal to your audience to illustrate your point of view.

Methods of presentation include video, slides, photo albums, films, posters, skits, speeches, overhead transparencies, written handouts, music, songs, question and answer panels your imagination is the only limitation!

Ask yourself:

- What methods will my audience appreciate? How will they react to music? skits? a speech?
- What methods will suit my venue? For example a video may not be suitable for a large assembly hall where only people at the front would see properly.
- What methods will suit my ideas? Will I get my message across better with a film, a speech or a skit?

If you use audio-visual equipment, make sure you test it beforehand. Allow some time before the audience arrives to set up any equipment. Computers should be tested, slides and films focused, volume levels set etc.

Don't forget to allow time at the end of your presentation for audience questions, as this is an important aspect of communicating your ideas and getting other people involved. Don't spend so much time on the presentation that you have no time left for questions.

It's important that in working out your method of presentation you do not lose sight of the idea you are trying to present. Always keep in your mind the message you are trying to get across.

Presentations are simply a way of communicating your ideas – stay calm, practice and have fun!

Taking notes and writing reports

Taking notes

If you are at a meeting or workshop and you have to write a report or give a spoken report about what happened, then take notes.

Nobody can remember everything that happened, especially days later! Make your notes brief – write down only the main points that will help you to write minutes or a report.

You must carefully write down any decisions that are made. Always ask people to repeat the decisions if needed. It's easy to miss important points when you are taking notes and other people can be unsure what's been decided too – they'll appreciate the chance to go over it once more. Remember, it's better that you clarify and the meeting takes a little bit longer than that you write down decisions incorrectly.

The other thing to write down clearly and carefully when you're taking notes is the things people say they will do – the actions to be taken.

For example:

The meeting discussed what band we should have at the fundraiser. We decided to get the Midnight-to-dawners if they are available.

Action: Gino will contact the band and let us know at the meeting next week if they are available.

Writing your report

Reports do not need to be:

- Complicated
- Very long
- Written in jargon (special words that only some people understand).

Remember that reports are written to:

- Help people make decisions about real-life issues and situations
- Help people get to the point quickly
- Help the reader find the answers to her/his questions
- Give credibility to a meeting or workshop or any other activity (in other words, to show people that the meeting/workshop/activity was worthwhile and useful and should be taken seriously).

If you write a report people often take your ideas and decisions more seriously!

Using the telephone

Using the telephone is very important and is often your first (or only) point of contact with someone, so it is important to make a good impression. It's not always as easy as it seems and using the telephone is a skill which can be developed and improved. Here are some hints to help develop good telephone skills. Remember, we learn by doing, so practice. A telephone skills session can be worth running for groups.

Before you start

It's a good idea to do some homework. Write some notes about what you are going to say and what questions you are going to ask. Practice with someone else in a role play. Ask for help if you don't feel confident.

- Make sure you know:
 - Who you are calling and their title or position.
 - What do you want to say to them?
 - What do you want from them?
 - What message will you leave if they are not available?
- If you can, use a private phone, in a place where you won't be disturbed.
- Make sure you have a pen that works and some paper to take notes if you need them.
- Have your notes handy.

After you ring the number

- Smile when you talk – this may sound weird, but it can help you come across as enthusiastic and interested.
- Identify yourself and where you are from.
- Ask for the person by name.
- If the person is not available, leave a clear message with a contact number if possible.

During the conversation

- Speak clearly, not too quickly or slowly.
- Explain why you are calling and what it is you want.
- Make sure it is a good time for the person to talk to you. Arrange to call back if it's not.
- Don't be afraid to ask the person to repeat something if you didn't hear, or didn't understand.
- Write brief notes as you go.
- Thank the person for their time.

After the conversation

- Write up your notes while you still remember what was said.
- If appropriate, write and thank the person for their help.

Try not to worry about making phone calls or what other people may say. Just pick up the phone and do it!

Working with the media

Media coverage can be really helpful in some projects and it can be great to be in a newspaper, on radio or on television. But you need to manage the media's involvement in your project. As a general rule, the bigger the media, the more careful you have to be to manage what they do and say. Remember, journalists are looking for "newsworthy" stories and they usually work to tight deadlines. The journalist will decide for themselves whether they want to report your event and if so, will probably do the article or report very quickly.

What you may not know is why you are considered newsworthy. The journalist or reporter may not really be very interested in what you are doing, but may want to quote you in something else they are writing or presenting. What a reporter sees, understands and reports may be very different to the story you wanted presented eg. a forum where young people get together to talk about how to make their communities better, could end up as a story on young people complaining about problems in their community.

It is important to do what you can to make sure that what you say and do is not presented differently. Your words or actions might be taken out of context. For example "We had a huge fight. And it was great, because afterwards we all talked about what upset us and why we were fighting and we solved our problems," could become "We had a huge fight, it was great!"

This doesn't mean you should be scared of the media, but you do need to be careful and check with the reporter about the story they are going to present. The presence of the media, especially TV reporters and camera persons, can change the way people behave and even badly affect your event eg. at forum presentations people might watch the media people working more than they watch and listen to the presentations. The camera and sound people will really only be interested in getting good pictures and sound and may not care if they stand and move so that no one else can see the presentations.

How to write a media release

A media release is a written statement informing journalists of an event (usually upcoming), a decision or a particular viewpoint on an issue. It is sometimes called a press release, but this can imply that it will only be sent to newspapers.

Media releases are usually faxed (so phone the organisation you want to send your fax to and find out the fax number and the name of the person to address your fax to). It should outline all the essential details and clearly indicate contact names and a phone number for journalists to obtain further information or to arrange interviews. Don't write more than one page unless you absolutely have to and remember the KISS motto – Keep It Simple, Silly!

The media release is not a ready prepared newspaper article or TV/radio announcement. Its purpose is to spark the interest of the journalist, and to give him/her a good reason to follow it up with a story.

The Big W motto will help you in working out what to write in your media release.

- Who – the people involved and who they should contact for more information
- What – the event/issue
- When – day, date, time
- Where – the place (and it might be helpful to say how to get there)
- Why – the reason
- How – the event came about, how a decision was reached.

Give your media release a catchy opening. An interesting title can do the same thing. Remember that news organisations, especially big ones, get lots and lots of media releases every day.

Say the most important things right at the beginning, in the first and second paragraphs.

Each point must then be made in descending order of importance. The progression must be logical. Use a separate paragraph for each point. Your paragraphs should be short and straight to the point – this makes it easier to read.

Check that your facts, and that the spelling of names and titles of people mentioned in your release are correct. Contact names and phone numbers (day and night) for further information are essential. Call these to make sure they are right.

Short catchy phrases will create the impression that the event/issue you are writing about is new! exciting! interesting!

For local media it is important to make your story relevant to the local community. This is the reason for mentioning Mark Donelly and his mum and dad in the sample media release below. People who read the story may know Patrick or Maureen Donelly, or will know of Harry's Tyre Mart and Drabsville Council. This makes the story more interesting to them.

Try to think of what will interest the journalist and his/her readers/listeners/viewers rather than what interests you.

If you have additional information which is not essential to the media release but you think is interesting, send it along but do not add it to your media release. A photo of the people mentioned in the media release or relating to the event will increase your chances of getting media coverage.

The organisation sending the media release (eg. Drabsville High SRC, Kirrawee Peacemakers) must be clearly indicated. Your group may have a letterhead but if not it's OK to type your group's name, address and number at the top.

Where, when and who to send it to

Your media release should be sent to the editor of the local newspaper, or the news director or station manager for local radio/TV. When you're publicising a forthcoming event it is best to send your media release so that the journalist will receive it at least three days before. You also have to be aware of deadlines (the time when a journalist has to have his/her story prepared for printing/broadcasting) especially

if you want your event to be given coverage in a specific edition of the local newspaper or local radio/TV stations. Ring and ask when these deadlines are.

It is important to follow up your media release with a phone call to the person you sent it to. Give him/her time (24 hours) to receive the media release and read it. Then call them and ask if they have received the information and had a chance to read through it. Hopefully they'll say "yes" then you can speak to them about following up the media release with a story. Your chances of getting your story in the local media will increase if you take the initiative rather than leaving it up to them.

Sample Media Release

24 August 1997

AKIKO BRINGS JAPANESE CULTURE TO SAMPLE TOWN

17 year old Akiko Saito from Wakayama, Japan, will enjoy our Aussie way of life during the coming year at Sampletown High. At the same time she'll be helping Sampletown students to understand more about life in Japan.

Sampletown High's sixth Rotary exchange student, Akiko, will be welcomed by the Student Council at a special barbeque at 1.30pm Tuesday 30 August 1997 at the oval off Giraffe Street (open to interested members of the public).

Drabsville's Mark Donelly and his family will host Akiko during her Australian visit. The Donellys are real locals – Mark is in Year 9 at Drabsville High, his dad Patrick works at Harry's Tyre Mart in Station Street, and his mum, Maureen, is on Drabsville Municipal Council.

For more information, please contact:

Daytime: Mrs Santos, Co-ordinator, Sampletown High Student Council –
Ph: 9999 1111

After Hours: Jim Antarakis, Secretary, Sampletown High Student Council –
Ph: 9999 2222

Writing letters/emails

Writing letters/emails is an important skill for any project group member. Often, what you write in your letter will determine how much assistance you get from someone. As always, practice makes perfect, so write some practice letters first and get someone to comment on them. When writing letters it is important to follow a few basic rules to make sure you get your message across.

- Make sure you know to whom you are writing. If you're not sure of the person's name, address or title, ring up and ask. If you can't find out, write "To The Manager" or "To Whom It May Concern".
- Keep your sentences short and to the point. Don't use big words just because they sound impressive. Make sure you understand what you have written.
- If you can, type your letter. If not, make sure that your handwriting is readable. Sign your name, and then write your name underneath if your signature is hard to read.
- Get someone to read through your letter before you send it to check for things like spelling mistakes and whether or not it makes sense. Remember, you know what you mean, but someone else might not.
- Keep a copy of the letter in a project folder

Here is an example of a letter written by a fictional project group to a fictional women's health centre.

*Ted O'Brian
2 Quick Street
Samletown 2222
Ph 9999 555*

27 June 2010

*Ms Deborah Cane
Health Education Officer, Samletown Women's Health Centre
69 Cuning Street
Samletown 2222*

Dear Ms Cane

My name is Ted O'Brian, and I am member of the Samletown Safety Group (SSG). We are a group of young people who are concerned about the safety of women in our community and I am writing to you for information about domestic violence.

Our project group was formed at a forum recently held in Samletown that looked at issues of violence in the community. We are interested in doing things to help solve the problem of domestic violence. We are collecting information to be included in a kit about domestic violence which will be distributed to students at our high school.

We are writing to different organisations in the area for information about the services they provide regarding domestic violence. Please send us any relevant information you might have about domestic violence and the services you provide. We are hoping to have all our information collected by the end of September, so we can launch the kit in December, just before the school holidays. Please send the information to my home address at the top of this letter.

Thank you very much for your assistance. If you would like any further information about our project, or have any questions, please phone me on 9999 5555. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Ted O'Brian

Getting involved

Participation can take many forms – from helping to organise your local sports club to representing your country on international committees.

Every form of participation - no matter how small - can benefit you and your community. Many children and young people who attend meetings or events at state or national levels say that they are surprised how easy it was for them to be chosen – as long as they had developed a track record of participation first.

Often once you participate in a few events/organisations, you get invited to attend more and more meetings and events. In fact, sometimes you are invited to so many that it can get to be a problem – you may need to ask others for help in identifying priorities, referring enquiries to others and the fine art of saying ‘no’ in a positive way.

For participation opportunities to occur, children and young people generally need to take the first step of membership of a local committee or organisation. Here are some ideas for getting involved at a grass-roots level.

Student Representative Councils

Many children and young people report that they had their first positive experience of youth participation through membership of their schools’ Student Representative Council (SRC).

SRCs are generally run by and for students, working with other school decision-makers (Principals, school boards, Parents & Citizens) for the benefit of students and the school community. Most SRCs are elected by students and participation can usually continue for more than one year – some students remain on their school SRC each year from years 7 to 12. TAFEs and universities also have SRCs that students can become part of. For more information about SRCs in New South Wales, visit www.schools.nsw.edu.au/students/sf/voice/sf_about.html

Local sports organisations

Many schools and local clubs run sports clubs for young people and they generally have roles for young people both as sportspeople and as organisers, fund raisers and publicists.

Lifesavers Australia is a good example, with over 5,000 young members Australia wide.

In New South Wales the NSW Department of Sport & Recreation also runs courses, coordinates camps and can provide funding for local sports clubs. Contact them via their website at www.dsr.nsw.gov.au

Local youth and arts organisations

Many local councils have a youth officer or youth drop-in centre where children and young people can find out more about services available locally. Call your local council (check the number in the white pages) or search for the council name on the internet (many, but not all, are in the format www.area.nsw.gov.au – eg. www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au).

There may be local youth theatre groups, singing or dance classes etc that young people can be involved in as well. The local council should be able to refer you to any youth health services, arts organisations, drop-in centres or other youth organisations in your area.

State or national youth organisations

In New South Wales, children and young people can register their interest in being on boards and committees (including the NSW Premiers Youth Advisory Council) on the web at www.youth.nsw.gov.au/info/bboards1.html

Nationally, there is a similar register at www.thesource.gov.au/speak_out/boards_and_committees/index.htm

Note that less than half of all children and young people who register will be asked to join government committees or attend events – and the more local memberships you can list in your application the better your chances are likely to be.

Acting as resource people

The rewards of supporting children and young people's participation in terms of growth for the organisation, the young participants and adult resource people can be fantastic.

The first step: awareness

The first step towards promoting participation is awareness of the issues that involve or impact on children and young people and of the fact that children can have a say and a positive impact on these issues.

The next step: support

The next step is taking the time and effort to support children and young people's involvement in organisations, conferences and events that deal with these issues. People in the organisation need to decide what forms of participation they can support, and look for opportunities to involve and develop children and young people in meaningful ways.

Adult resource people at conferences and events

The main role of a resource person at a conference or event is to provide children and young people at the event a favourable experience of an expert or person of authority being helpful and supportive.

Because of their inexperience in the adult world, young people may not understand all that adults have to say, or the inter-relationships between various disciplines, departments or organisations. So please keep your explanations to the broad essentials, try to explain all acronyms and use the simplest language you can – free of jargon!

Participants will usually approach resource people with a clear idea of who they would like to talk to. Sometimes they will be unsure of who to approach. Bear in mind that the real need might be to help the group of young people clarify the question - to ask the right question - and to know to who it should be addressed.

Don't be disappointed if your personal expertise appears not to be used on every occasion. If you have given young people the experience of a helpful person when needed, you will open the door for later access!

A great answer for many of the questions asked will be to explain how young people can find their way to the right information source – how they can ask for direction from one contact to another, networking their way to the right person.

Participation in practice

James is in year 12 at Woollooware High School. He is a dedicated performing arts student as well as being the vice-captain of the school.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

Well, since I'm at school every day of the week, the extent of my involvement is usually limited to those activities that are available to me at school. I'm involved with the Rock Eisteddfod – you can also participate in this through your local Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC). I also take part in the school musicals and I help teach a year 9 drama class at school.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

Well, not many guys normally take part in the performing arts side of school activities. But somebody had seen me acting around in drama and it sort of went from there. My teacher approached me to help with the drama class and I was only too happy to help out, it seemed like it was going to be fun and entertaining!

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

I would have to say that the best thing about participating is just being involved in something new, exciting and different. The thrill of a new challenge and making new friends. At school we got all the years to come together it was excellent.

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

Rock Eisteddfod at school was awesome. The energy levels and the way that people come together on the night is excellent! It teaches you skills in developing relationships with people and maintaining them afterwards as well. Youth work together and are united in the stand against drugs and alcohol.

Our school musicals were also a great event to be a part of. You can do this in your local musical group, even just by being a stagehand or helping with lighting. For the school it was excellent the way we came together. The teachers and the students working as a team and we made friendships and built better relationships. It made us feel like we belonged to a really special school. The involvement of teachers, students and parents ensured that it was all about the school community and school spirit.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the event?

The best thing was most probably the opportunity that the teachers gave us by relying on us and making us responsible for our own actions. It taught us a lot about ourselves and showed the teachers what we were capable of at the same time. Youth involvement is all about getting a chance to shine and show what you are capable of.

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

A problem with some youth is that they don't always tend to put in the full 100% and that wrecks the experience for others. This can also be the case for adults, where they don't want to devote their time to a cause that doesn't involve them entirely. It comes down to selfishness and people being lazy. This is a hurdle that can be hard to overcome. But if you keep things appropriate, to the point and fun from the beginning then hopefully you won't get this happening.

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

Not at the present time. I feel that a lot of youth only feel able to talk about issues that they have been instructed on by adult figures. They don't really say what they are thinking, instead relying on the adults to instil views and thoughts in their heads. I'm not saying that the youth of today don't think for themselves, I just feel as though our message often reflects what the adults are saying to us.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

By proving that they have to say something important and taking the roles that they have seriously.

Chapter 5

websites, books & articles

Some major websites – NSW


NSW Commission for Children & Young People www.kids.nsw.gov.au

Information about what the Commission's doing and how children and young people can get involved in its work. There's a separate section for children and young people and a children and young people's discussion forum.

Check out the events page for upcoming participation events, and the publications pages for the latest versions of participation material.


Youth NSW www.youth.nsw.gov.au

State government youth portal with links to youth programs, public space planning information, work, education, relationship and health information for young people in NSW.

Check out the policy link for copies of NSW Government Youth Policy.


Youth Action & Policy Association (YAPA) www.yapa.org.au

A non-government organisation made up of young people (12-25) and youth workers, YAPA identifies priority issues for young people and plans action around these issues.


Community Builders www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au

This site helps NSW communities share ideas on how to build participation and local action. Not aimed just at children and young people, but it does contain many great examples of youth involvement (search for 'children or youth').

Look for the list of web-based funding sources for community projects.

Some major websites – national



Youth Gas www.youthgas.com

A volunteer project by Richard Lenn, a 24 year old Sydney resident, Youth Gas aims to be a comprehensive list of organisations and events for young people in Australia – and comes very close! In particular, check out www.youthgas.com/youth/participation.htm for participation resources and links to organisations that young people can contact to get involved.



The Source www.thesource.gov.au

Australian Federal Government's funky youth portal site with links to key Federal projects and resources.

The 'Speak Out' section contains information about State and Federal programs young people can get involved in. There is also careers information and a comprehensive Federal youth services link.



Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies www.acys.utas.edu.au

ACYS, run by the School of Education at Tasmania University, collects information for those working in the youth field in Australia and publishes the 'Youth Studies Australia' journal.

The site contains an extensive database of press reports about young people and summaries of articles in 'Youth Studies Australia', a directory of organisations working with young people and a calendar of events (including international).



Who Cares? www.reachout.com.au/whocares

A database maintained by Reachout (part of the non-profit internet-based Inspire Foundation – see www.inspire.org) which allows young people to search for organisations they can get help from - or offer help to - by entering their postcode.

Some major websites – international



(Kids Can) Free the Children
www.freethechildren.org

When Craig Kielburger was 12 (he is now 17), he read about a young Pakistani boy who was murdered for speaking out against child labor. Craig founded (Kids Can) Free the Children, now the world's largest network of children helping children, in 27 countries.



Peace Child www.peacechild.org

Takes its name from a Papua New Guinean tradition that tribes that made peace would send a child to be brought up in the old enemy's tribe – if any future conflicts arose, the 'Peace Child' would negotiate them.



Infoyouth
www.unesco.org/webworld/infoyouth/

The United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation's main youth information page has links to reports and a database of major youth organisations by country.

www.unesco.org/webworld/infoyouth/database.html contains national youth information from over 40 countries including Australia.



Youth Link www.youthlink.org

An international collaboration of youth and youth-serving organisations to share information, resources and solutions. You can view by country and see a basic calendar of key international youth-related events.



Taking IT Global
www.takingitglobal.org

A global network of active young people. Visitors can sign up for newsletters and participate in discussions on issues including places, people, and identity and business and technology issues.

Books and articles used in the development of this guide

The YALP Book: Empowering Young People for Community Change by Elizabeth Maund, 1992 (ISBN: 0 646 11198 1).

Available through the NSW State Library, this book tells the story of the Youth and the Law Project (funded by the Law Foundation of NSW and the then Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training) in the Macarthur Region (south-west Sydney) in 1991 and includes many practical sample programs, games and materials that can be used by youth workers.

Youth Participation Handbook, 2000 (South Australian Office of Employment & Youth).

An up-to-date resource with some case studies and examples from South Australia. Available as a 50 page download in PDF format from www.maze.sa.gov.au.

Taking the Initiative: promoting young people's participation in public decision making in Scotland, 2000 by Anne-Marie Dorrian, Kay Tisdall and Douglas Hamilton.

An interesting 56 page booklet built around a mapping study/survey and containing good case studies throughout especially in Chapter 4.

How Local Councils Consult with Young People, 1997 (NSW Department of Local Government).

A report of a survey of New South Wales local councils that indicates councils feel the most effective consultation of young people was by word of mouth and local meetings.

Youth Partnership & Participation, 2000 (The Foundation for Young Australians).

Contains a version of the 'Strategies for Youth Participation' guidelines mentioned in the introduction.

Focus on Young People, 1998 (NSW Office of Children & Young People).

A summary of NSW Youth Policy written in a youth-friendly style, with case studies, quotes etc.

Youth Studies Australia has been publishing excellent articles on youth education and empowerment since the 1980s – searchable article summaries and back-issues/reprints can be ordered through the Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies (www.acys.utas.edu.au).

Participation in practice

Rebecca currently works as an office assistant and is chairperson of the Macarthur Youth Drug & Alcohol Centres' Drug & Alcohol Advisory Group. She was a youth advisor to the NSW 'Drink, Drunk – the Difference is U' campaign when she was 16.

What child or youth organisation would you say you are currently most involved with and why?

I'm the chairperson of the Drug and Alcohol Advisory Group now and I've been on it for the past three years. It's for young people between 15 and 24 – there's around twelve young people and one adult advisor and we meet every 6 weeks or so.

The Centre runs drug education in schools, harm minimisation and education campaigns and the Drug & Alcohol Advisory Group give our opinions on issues and are involved with other committees that might want young people to help. We also have youth workers and other adults come to talk to us and get our opinions.

How and why did you first get involved in youth participation?

I first got involved through my Mum who works at the Drug & Alcohol Youth Centre. I like trying to help with youth issues and I think making my friends aware of the issues has been great – I've learnt a lot. One of my friends that I went to school with got into a bad crowd and died of an overdose. I think some parents are in a fantasy land where they think their child won't try drugs so I want to work to help them learn about the issues too.

What have been two or three highlights of your participation so far?

One of them was when I spoke at Parliament House in front of the Health Minister at the 'Drink, Drunk the Difference is U' campaign launch. I had to do a five minute speech – I was nervous but it went

well! I talked about young people and drink driving. I was also involved in a youth committee that advised on the project.

Through the Drug and Alcohol Advisory Group when I was 15 I was employed to go and buy cigarettes from shops to see if they would sell them to under-age children. That was pretty interesting!

Have you been part of any great conferences or events? Why did you think they were great?

I help out at Youth Week every year – we run an information stall and it's great to get the information out there.

When I was working on the 'Drink, Drunk' project I went to five or six organisation meetings and they were good because they listened to us – we helped out with decisions about ads, the launch, what photos are used to get young people's attention.

What do you think were the two or three best things about the way children and young people were involved at the conference/event?

With 'Drink, Drunk' they gave us the power to make decisions – although they didn't always do what we recommended! With the Drug and Alcohol Advisory Group it's giving young people a say in what happens. You get to meet great people who are interested in issues that you are working on.

Have you been to any conferences/events or been on any committees that weren't so great?

I have been to some things where I felt they didn't listen to us, or just had us as a token and then went and did what they want. Another thing I don't like is when people come and ask your opinion and then you never hear back from them – it's like you've given them your time but they're not prepared to let you know how it went.

Do you think children and young people have enough of a say in our society about things that affect them?

No – not really. Often young people get told what to do by parents and adults. It depends on the people through – sometimes you meet some really great adults who listen to you. You can tell by their attitude – whether they come up to you and ask questions afterward and listen to the answers. It's pretty obvious who's really interested.

How can children and young people have more of a say?

It's hard to say – I think there should be more mixed committees where young people and adults work together. Maybe we could work together with adults to solve problems, not just be an advisory group all the time!



PART 2
conferences & events
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION **techniques**
activities & games

Facilitation TECHNIQUES

Many events, especially meetings, conferences or forums require participants to share their ideas and then to be part of a group process to develop the issues that have emerged. 'Traditional' techniques such as formal meeting procedures are often ineffective when working with children and young people and can be intimidating as they rely on a level of experience and skills that some participants may not have.

The techniques described here are structured yet informal and have been designed to support involvement of all participants. The majority of techniques are best used with groups of 10 to 15 participants. Small group processes are one of the most effective strategies for ensuring maximum participation by young people in conferences and events.

While the techniques can be used independently, it should be noted that they are most effective when they are part of a structured workshop approach. If the group has just come together, the techniques should follow on from 'Getting to Know You' Activities (see page 92 onwards). The best outcomes are achieved if the techniques are run with groups where there is trust and respect.

The Group Development Activities (see page 98 onwards) have been designed to accelerate the development of trust and respect among group members.

Idea Generation and Discussion Techniques

These are techniques designed to support groups in generating and sharing ideas in a way that is non-threatening.

Decision Making and Problem Solving

These techniques can be used to assist groups in prioritising their ideas and in analysing problems.

Goal Setting and Action Planning

These techniques are designed to help individuals and groups to set goals and plan effectively.

Briefing, debriefing and evaluating

These techniques for briefing, debriefing and evaluation can be applied to single workshop sessions as well as complete events.

Acknowledgements

While these games and activities have not been published in this format before, the majority have been learnt experientially from other facilitators, trainers and adult advisors. Special thanks go to NSW Youth Forum participants and staff (1979-86).

Some notes on developing your own activities and games

If you are interested in developing activities and games like the ones described here, we recommend you try some ideas with a group and ask them for feedback on how the activity/game could be improved.

If you read the activities and games here you will notice that many of them are based on similar patterns – for example, GTKY games are often ‘talking’ games; energisers are often ‘chasing’ games; and concentrators are often ‘going around the circle’ games. Group Development Activities can involve handouts, questions, puzzles, and Communication Activities often involve ‘turning off’ a part of normal communication eg. being able to ask questions to see how this affects interaction.

IDEA GENERATION AND DISCUSSION

Brainstorming

Time: 10 minutes.

Materials: • Butchers’ paper, textas and tape, or a blackboard and chalk, or a whiteboard. Pen and paper for the group.

Objectives: • To collect a broad range of ideas about a problem or issue.

What to do:

- Decide what the problem/issue you want to look at is eg. nothing for young people to do at night in Mudgee, or getting publicity for our youth and police project.
- Turn it into a focus question eg. what night entertainment should young people have in Mudgee? or how can we publicise our youth and police project?
- Write the question in big letters on the butchers’ paper.
- Ask everyone to sit in a semi-circle facing the question.
- Quickly explain the question and the rules of Brainstorming.
 1. *All* ideas are good ideas, even those that may seem silly.
 2. No discussion or criticism is allowed during the brainstorm
 3. Speak one at a time.
 4. Think positive! The solutions do exist, we just have to find them.
- Ask participants to spend a few moments jotting down some answers to the brainstorm question on a spare piece of paper.
- Go around the semi-circle and get one idea from each participant. Write down the answers as quickly as you can (you may need someone to help you if there are lots). Transcribe as literally as possible – don’t change the participants’ words or you may be changing their ideas. When every participant has had a chance to put up an idea, go back and see if anyone has any additional ideas.

- Notes:**
- Discussion and criticism destroy a good brainstorm, because they make participants self-edit and worry about their ideas, rather than getting everything out to be discussed and prioritised later. Make sure your group understands this.
 - Brainstorming is one of the fundamental tools that a group leader has at their disposal. It is adaptable to an incredible variety of situations, it involves every member of the group and it isn't hard to run.

- Variation:**
- All participants write down each idea they have on a separate piece of paper, then place all the pieces of paper in the middle of the group. Each participant then takes one piece of paper and reads that idea to the group. Participants 'give up' their ideas to the group and read others' ideas.

Collecting ideas

- Time:** 45 minutes.
- Materials:**
- Butchers' paper, textas and tape, or a blackboard and chalk, or a whiteboard. Pen and paper for the group.
- Objectives:**
- To generate quality ideas. Use as an alternative to brainstorming when you want quality rather than quantity.
- What to do:**
- Decide the problem/issues you want to look at eg. nothing for young people to do at night in their area or getting publicity for our disco.
 - Turn the problem/issue into a question eg. what night entertainment should young people have in our area? or how can we publicise our disco?
 - Write the question in big letters on the butchers' paper or chalk board.
 - Ask everyone to sit in a semi-circle facing the butchers' paper.
 - Read out the question and ask people to think about ideas they have to solve the problem/issue.

- Stress that there is a solution to the problem so to think positively and that no-one is going to judge their idea harshly – all ideas are valid.
- Ask them to write down as many ideas as they can to answer the question. Give them time - say five minutes - to think and write individually.
- Go around the circle taking one idea from each person, then go around again until all ideas are on the butchers' paper. Do not allow discussion on the ideas until they are all written up.
- You can now discuss or prioritise ideas, etc.

Butchers' paper pictures

- Time:** 30 minutes.
- Materials:**
- Butchers' paper, textas, coloured pencils, crayons, magazines etc (whatever is on hand).
- Objectives:**
- For participants to clarify and express visually their feelings on a particular issue.
- What to do:**
- Explain: "I want you to find a space in the room where you won't be disturbed. In the next 30 minutes we will be making a picture of whatever it is: ourselves, our school, our friends etc. There are magazines, textas, etc. for you to use. You can draw pictures, write words, stick down images, make a comic strip – whatever you want".
 - Let the group work on their pictures. Remind them regularly of how much time they have left.
 - When the group has finished, you may want to ask each participant to explain their picture, or you may want to put them all up on the wall. This may not be appropriate if your topic elicited very personal responses.

- Notes:**
- Works best with affective/emotional stuff, like how participants feel about themselves, or friends, or school.
 - Can be done as a follow up to Guided Recall if you want your group to share what they visualised.
- Variation:**
- With less personal issues where group members won't have objections to sharing their feelings, butchers' paper pictures can be done in small groups of between three and 15.

Discussions

- Time:** Varies: 15-60 minutes.
- Objectives:**
- To allow the group to share their thoughts. Discussion is a very useful way of tackling a problem. Research by Kurt Lewin (an American psychologist who specialised in group dynamics) has shown that a group that discusses and agrees to something is five times more likely to carry out the suggested action than a group who has an action decided for them.
 - A good discussion is like a conversation with friends. The group leader won't have to do much because the discussion will run itself. Your role should be to facilitate the discussion by beginning it, taking it in new directions, clarifying issues and restarting it if it gets bogged down.
- What to do:** Hints for running a good discussion:
- Begin the discussion yourself with a general rave about the problem. But don't talk too long (one minute maximum).
 - It is often useful to start by asking how the participants feel about the problem or issue. A discussion which starts from what motivates the participants, encourages personal responses, lets people get things off their chests and validates a range of opinions as opposed to simple right/wrong answers is more likely to involve all participants and therefore be a better discussion.

- This feeling focus is particularly important when using discussion to debrief from a longer or more involved activity, as extended activities, particularly simulations, generate strong feelings, which often need to be dealt with before general points can be made or learned.
- Allow time for discussion and be patient. Don't worry about silence – wait ten seconds. If the group is still silent you may ask a question.
- Questions can be open or closed. Open questions generate discussion: eg. What do you think about...? or When do you feel...?. Open questions generate a lot of possible answers.
They often start with:
- WHO •WHAT •WHEN •HOW
- Closed questions generate yes or no answers and don't start a discussion. eg. Do you think... is good?, or Should young people have more say?.
- Always sit in a circle during a discussion. You can't listen and talk to someone in front or behind you easily. If people are restless or bored, you may notice it in their body language. Asking them to sit back in the circle may help.
- Use activities to change the mood of a group before and during a discussion. Activities that involve speaking or even just making noises in front of a group (The Domain, Word Association, Transformations) are good for warming a group up to speak freely, energisers can get a quiet group started and concentrators will help focus a distracted group.
- Try to listen carefully to show you value the discussion and to help you to frame a question if discussion is faltering. Make sure your question is relevant and if possible relate it to something the group has said before.
- Some people will be very quiet in a discussion. Try to draw them out by asking them a question, but don't put them on the spot!

- You can write up the main points of a discussion on butchers' paper if you feel the group would benefit from a list to look at – it sometimes generates more ideas and discussion. It is not necessary to always do this – sometimes a good talk can be just as valuable.
- Try to finish the discussion on a positive note – if the discussion was a bit depressing try to look on the good side before you finish.
- Always thank the group for their participation in the discussion.
- Ten questions you could ask to start a discussion are:

How do you feel when?

Can you tell us more about?

And what happened then?

What sorts of problems are there?

How does that affect you?

Who do you think could change that?

Why do you think that?

How did that happen?

How would you like that to be different?

Why do you think that happens?

Some suggestions for people in discussion groups:

- Speak your mind freely – discussion is based on exchanging ideas. Here is a chance to say what you think, so say it! You have a responsibility to contribute, not just to listen.
- Listen thoughtfully to others – try to appreciate the feelings behind what people say. On almost every question there are several points of view.
- Make the discussion pleasant for everyone – have fun and help others to enjoy the discussion. Act towards others as you want them to act toward you. Accept criticism graciously.

- Speak when the thought is fresh in your mind – you don't have to wait to be called on to speak. What you may say may clarify the discussion or clear the way for action.
- Let other people talk too. Don't speak for more than a minute or two at a time. Give others a chance.
- Speak up if you don't understand what is being said – ask questions and clarify if you need to. Don't just accept what others say.
- Don't fight over the ownership of ideas – once you have given an idea to the group, let it become group property. Don't try to defend it or be resentful if it is later passed over for another idea.
- No name calling or personal remarks. Differences of opinion are to be expected and enjoyed, but hostile arguments, name-calling, and personal digs are death to discussion.
- Stay on the track. Keep on the track unless the whole group wishes to change the subject.
- Talk one at a time – no "private conversations" on the side.

Snowball discussion

- Time:** 45-60 minutes.
- Materials:**
- Butchers' paper.
- Objectives:**
- To develop a small number of well thought-out ideas on a given topic.
- What to do:**
- Explain: "We are going to think in some detail about your topic: eg. getting publicity for our disco. We will be working by ourselves first, writing down any thoughts or feelings on the topic. Then we will combine in groups of three to discuss what we have come up with. Then we will combine two groups of three to further develop and prioritise our ideas. Each of these groups of six will report back on what they have come up with."
 - Ask each person to get a pen and paper and start writing down any thoughts on the topic that occur to them. Give participants five minutes for this.
 - Ask everyone to form groups of three. Ask the groups to share their initial thoughts, discuss them and make a group list on butchers' paper (ten minutes).
 - Ask groups to combine to form groups of six.
 - Tell them their task is to come up with a few well thought-out ideas which the group feels are the best ones for the topic and to write these down on butchers' paper (10 minutes).
 - Ask each group to report back on the ideas they came up with. Discuss the ideas further if there is time. Thank the group.
- Notes:**
- Snowball Discussion is like the opposite of a Brainstorm. In a Brainstorm, any idea is a good idea, so you get lots of undeveloped ideas from which to then choose. In a Snowball Discussion, all ideas are discussed in detail, so you get fewer ideas, but more consideration. It is useful for topics that are complex, intangible and require thinking through.

Word tree

- Time:** 30 minutes.
- Materials:**
- Butchers' paper and texta.
 - A pen or pencil for each participant.
- Objectives:**
- To explore concepts and preconceived notions about a topic or word.
- What to do:**
- Write the word you wish to explore eg. leadership in the middle of a piece of butchers' paper.
 - Give participants a few minutes to think about what the word means to them and other words they associate with it (they can write their ideas on a piece of paper).
 - Go around the group asking for one word from each group member. Write the words eg. 'communication', 'trust', 'friendship', 'distance', 'strength' etc. up on the butchers' paper as branches of the Word Tree. Some words may branch off other words – eg. 'good voice' and 'body language' may branch off 'communication'. You will need to judge this and discuss it with the group as you go. Keep asking for ideas from everyone in the group – words that are written up may give them new ideas.
 - Now you have a visual description of the group's ideas around a word.
- Notes:**
- This technique is best used as a lead in to another activity – it is a good way of getting people to focus on a particular topic or idea.

Decision MAKING & PROBLEM SOLVING

Prioritising ideas

- Time:** 45 minutes.
- Materials:** • Butchers' paper, texta, 3-2-1 voting forms, a list of ideas to prioritise.
- Objectives:** • To take a list of responses to a given question and put them in priority order using a weighted voting method. (Usually follows a Brainstorm or Collecting Ideas.)
- What to do:**
- Discuss the ideas generated by the Brainstorm or Collecting Ideas session to be sure that everyone understands them. Ask the person who had the idea to talk about it (don't try to explain ideas for others).
 - If any two ideas are the same or very similar, delete one or combine them. Get the agreement of the people who originally had the ideas. As people will only have three choices it is better if ideas that are the same are joined together so the vote is more realistic.
 - Mark each idea A, B, C, D etc. to make voting easier.
 - Explain that the group is now going to vote on the ideas and we will vote in order of importance so we end up with the ideas in priority order. Ask everyone to give three points to the idea they think best, two points to the next best and one point to the next.
 - Hand out voting forms which you have prepared beforehand.
 - Give people time to list their priorities on the voting forms.
 - Read out each idea one at a time and ask people to put up their hands if they voted for that idea. Count and add the votes, and write them on the butchers' paper – eg:

$$\begin{aligned} A - 2+1+1+3+1 &= 8 \\ B - 3+3 &= 6 \\ C - &= 0 \\ D - 2+1 &= 3 \text{ etc...} \end{aligned}$$

- Write up a list of the top three or four ideas on butchers' paper. Now the group have three or four possible ideas to work on in order of priority.

Troubleshooting

- Time:** 30-45 minutes.
- Materials:** Butchers' paper, textas.
- Objectives:** • To identify strategies to deal with problems that a group faces.
- What to do:**
- Define the 'trouble' you want to 'shoot' eg. concerns about being a group leader, fears and worries about speaking in public, problems facing our student council, a particular problem facing a project group etc.
 - Write up the topic/area of trouble at the top of a sheet of butchers' paper.
 - Explain to the group that this is a way to help us consider some problems and come up with some strategies to help solve them. Ask everyone to jot down two or three things which concern them about the area of trouble.
 - Go around the circle and ask everyone to give their top concerns. Write these down on butchers' paper, **writing only three ideas evenly spaced on each sheet of butchers' paper** (this leaves space for strategies and solutions). Write down the problems in the same words as people say them to you – if you change the words you might be changing the idea.
 - If someone's idea is already covered by someone else, take their second or third idea. Go around the circle again and again until you have all of everyone's ideas written up.

- Ask if there are any concerns which need to be explained – if so, ask the person who first said the concern to explain what they mean.
- Lead a discussion (see Discussions) about each concern raised, and write down the strategies and solutions suggested by the group underneath each trouble.
- Encourage the participants to take their own notes.
- Sum up the session by reading through the problems and strategies, highlighting how many ideas and solutions have been discussed.

Planning & GOAL SETTING

Action Planning

Time: 45 minutes.

Materials:

- *Action Planning Sheet* drawn up on butchers' paper.
- One *Action Planning Sheet* for each participant.
- Butchers' paper, pens and paper for each participant.

Objectives:

- To recognise the need for planning to achieve a goal.
- To practice putting a plan together with an Action Planning Sheet
- To discuss the difficulties experienced in trying to get something done.

What to do: Introduction/Discussion

- Explain that in this session we will be looking at planning solutions to problems using a technique called Action Planning.
- Start by running a discussion with the group about why they think planning is important, using some questions such as:
Do we plan everything we do? How do you plan things? (Shopping lists, diaries etc.)
What difficulties do you have when you try to get a project organised?
What good things happen? What goes wrong?
- If the group is not warming to the discussion, then move onto planning their project and give them more time on the planning stage.

Explain the *Action Planning Sheet*

- Go through the *Action Planning Sheet* drawn up on butchers' paper. Explain to the group that this is a method of planning that group members may use for school or community projects.

They may also use it for a personal project such as a party, a school project such as a disco, or something else.

- Give everyone an *Action Planning Sheet* and go through it quickly. Explain that they should fill out the top half. On a blank sheet of paper they should write the steps they need to do in any order, then transfer these to the bottom box and write who will do them, by when and any resources they might need. You might like to fill in a sample Action Plan on the butchers' paper.
- Plan projects in small groups
- Form small groups of 2-8 people (depending on the sorts of projects the groups are planning). Ask them to think of a project they would like to do and use the planning sheet to plan it. Tell them they have 20 minutes.
 - In the last ten minutes ask the groups to come together and share their ideas (you might like to make notes on butchers' paper).

Notes:

- Be flexible – take direction from the group. Sometimes it will be better to spend more time on discussion and less on planning, or less on discussion and more on planning! Do what you think is best at the time.
- This technique may be used as a follow up to young people generating ideas about things they might want to do. This gives you possible projects for the groups to plan and makes the idea they are planning real.
- Letting everyone talk about their experiences in trying to get something done in the discussion will give everyone a chance to be heard and help them understand other views.

Setting SMART goals

Time: 15-20 minutes.

Materials:

- Definitions of SMART drawn up on butchers' paper.
- One pad of large and one pad of small Post-It notes per small group.

Objectives:

- Butchers' paper, pens and paper for each participant.

- To recognise the need for planning to achieve a goal.
- To practice putting a plan together by working backwards from the goal and defining milestones.

What to do:

Introduction/Discussion

- Explain that in this session we will be looking at setting goals.
- Start by running a discussion with the group about goal setting and why it is important to set specific measurable, achievable, relevant and timely goals.
- Introduce the SMART acronym and work with the group to make a statement like 'I want to be healthy' into a SMART goal.
- Go through the *SMART definition* drawn up on butchers' paper. Explain to the group that this is a method of setting goals for personal or group challenges or projects.

Use a current real challenge and ask small groups to turn it into a SMART goal. Give them 5-10 minutes.

- In the last five minutes ask the groups to come together and share their ideas (you might like to make notes on butchers' paper).
- Use the SMART goal as the basis for Action Planning using the PERT Planning Process outlined below.

SMART GOALS (draw this on Butchers' Paper)

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Timed

Questions to ask when setting goals:

Specific – How could we make this goal clearer?

Measurable – What could we do to make this goal more quantifiable and able to be evaluated against measurable outcomes?

Achievable – Is the goal realistic? Is it achievable, given your skills and resources and what you can call on from others?

Relevant – Is it relevant to the achievement of key objectives?

Timed – When do we want the goal completed by?

Planning using PERT

Time: 60 minutes.

Materials:

- Definitions of PERT drawn up on butchers' paper.
- One pad of large and one pad of small Post-It notes per small group.
- Butchers' paper, pens and paper for each participant.

Objectives:

- To recognise the need for planning to achieve a goal.
- To practise putting a plan together by working backwards from the goal and defining milestones.

What to do: Introduction/Discussion

- Explain that in this session we will be looking at planning solutions to problems or challenges using a technique called PERT.

- In small groups ask participants to start by writing a SMART goal.
- Develop a mind map to identify possible courses of action to achieve the goal – decide on course/s of action you will take.

Give them an overview of the PERT process:

- Start by identifying the outcome you want, the key goal.
- You can use a mindmap to help you clarify the goal and sort out some of the action you could take.
- Chart out the planning by using large post it notes to mark the major milestones and smaller post-it notes to mark the intermediate steps.
- Work your way from the outcome you want and identify what outcome comes before this until you reach the beginning ie. where you are at the moment.

Instruct the small group/s to do the following:

- Develop a PERT chart on the wall – at one end write the SMART Goal.
- Working back from the goal think of the milestones that come before this until you reach the beginning.
- Write up a large post it note to represent each milestone – milestones are the key deliverables or mini goals that you will achieve – the big chunks.
- Use the small post-it notes for the intermediate steps ie. little chunks.

Once you have achieved this add to the post it notes the following:

- The time it will take to achieve this step eg. 2 weeks.
- The person/people responsible for the task.
- Resources required to achieve this step.
- In the last ten minutes ask the groups to come together and share their ideas.

PERT PLANNING *(draw this on Butchers' Paper)***Project****Evaluation****Review****Technique****PERT PROCESS****Overview:**

- Start by identifying the outcome you want, the key goal.
- You can use a mind map to both help you clarify the goal and sort out some of the action you could take.
- Chart out the planning by using large post it notes to mark the major milestones and smaller post-it notes to mark the intermediate steps.
- Work your way from the outcome you want and identify what outcome comes before this until you reach the beginning ie. where you are at the moment.

Instructions:

- 1 Start by writing a SMART goal (see 'Setting Smart Goals').
2. Develop a mind map to identify possible courses of action to achieve the goal – decide on course/s of action you will take.
3. Working back from the goal think of the milestones that come before this until you reach the beginning.
4. Write up a large post it note to represent each milestone – milestones are the key deliverables or mini goals that you will achieve – the big chunks.
5. Use the small post-it notes for the intermediate steps ie. little chunks.
6. Once you have achieved this add to the post it notes the following:
 - The time it will take to achieve this step eg. 2 weeks.
 - The person/people responsible for the task.
 - Resources required to achieve this step.

Backpack**Time:**

20-30 minutes.

Materials:

- A backpack.
- Around 30 objects that participants use as metaphors when 'packing' their bag. These can be almost any objects that will fit in a bag. The greater the variety of objects the better the stimulus and the greater the resulting range of metaphors. A few examples: toothbrush, pen, tennis ball, liquid paper, sharpener, toy gun, note pad, Barbie doll, baseball cap, etc.

Objectives:

- To encourage participants to think more deeply about a focus topic.

What to do:

- You will need a focus topic: whatever your group is discussing can be turned into a backpack focus question eg. "What things will I need to pack in my backpack to be a good student council member?"
- Explain: "What we are going to do now is each pack a bag for ourselves. I have here a backpack, and a bunch of things that you can put in the backpack. We'll go around the circle, and each person will put three things in their bag that they think they need to (whatever your topic is, eg. be a good group leader)."
- Rather than take the punch out of the activity by saying that what each person has to do is come up with three metaphors using the available objects, it's best just to demonstrate by going first. So start off yourself: "In my bag I'm going to take a pen to write down ideas, this globe (tennis ball) because it's important to think globally and this toothbrush to clean out my ears so I can listen properly". It's important to use this first go to show that the metaphors can be as literal or as figurative as each participant wants.
- Now go around the circle, asking each participant to pack three things in their bag. Empty the bag after each turn, otherwise you'll

end up with no objects left. Repeating the same thing is OK, but encourage participants to try to come up with new things.

- When everyone has had a go, thank the group and explain what's next.

Notes:

- Backpack is an excellent activity to get participants thinking, and is a bit like a Brainstorm in some ways. It is useful because it is demanding and suitable to any topic, but doesn't require pen and paper, so it seems like a break from work.

Motivation map

Time: 15 minutes.

Materials: • Textas, butchers' paper, masking tape.

Objectives: • To provide a concrete motivational reminder for groups about their goals, how they can achieve them and what their skills are.

What to do:

- Explain that this activity will help make our group stay on track and committed to our goals. We will be making two charts. The first will help us work together towards our goals and the second will remind us of the worth of our ideas and abilities. (These can be stuck on a wall at a group meeting place to help keep people focused.)
- Head one piece of butchers' paper 'What we need to make our project happen'. Draw a circle in the middle of the page. Write in the name of the project group (if they have one, otherwise just 'us' will do) and have each group member draw a little picture of themselves with their initials underneath (stick figures are OK). Don't forget to draw in any members who are missing or have them do a drawing at the next meeting! Then ask the group for all the things they might

need to complete their project. For each idea, draw an arrow from the circle pointing outwards with a key idea at the point.

- On a second piece of butchers' paper, write the heading 'We believe in (name of group – eg. GRAB)!' Underneath this heading write a list of positive statements to improve group self esteem and help create the belief that the project goals are achievable. Where possible, the statements should begin with the word 'we'. Try to limit the list to one page.
- As a group, decide on a suitable place for the lists to be hung so they can remind the group of their aims, goals and abilities.

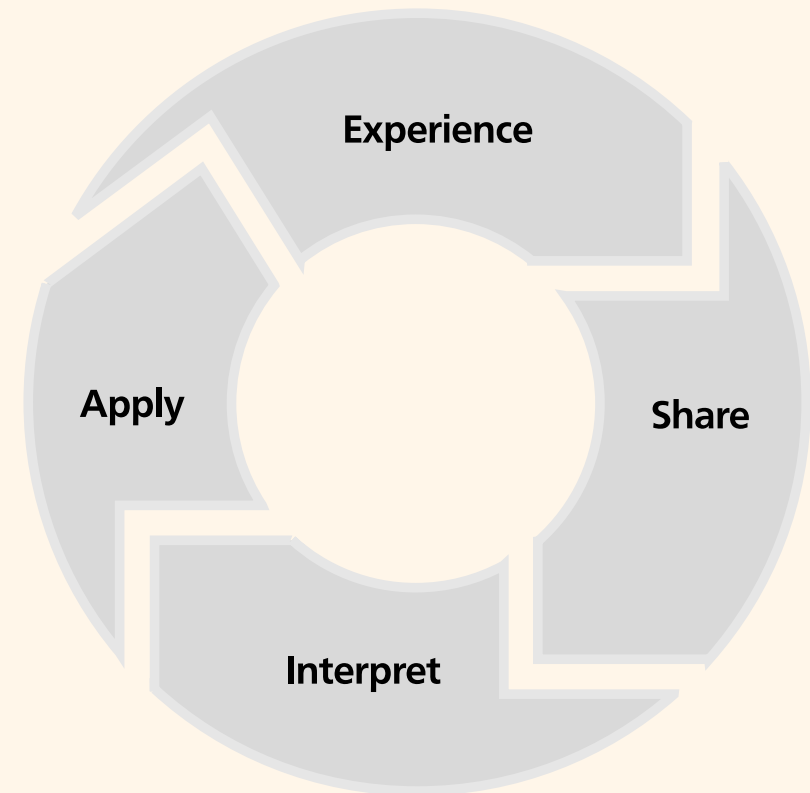
Briefing

DEBRIEFING & EVALUATING

Briefing and debriefing

- Time: 10-15 minutes.
- Objectives:
- To help guide participants through learning experiences so they can see the reasons for doing an activity, learn from it and move through the Experiential Learning Cycle.
- What to do:
- **Briefing** is about preparing participants for the learning ahead and giving them the right information to undertake an activity. It is done before the activity or game begins.
 - To brief an activity or session you should give group members a context for the session (why you are doing it, how long it will take) and help to get them interested and emotionally involved in an issue or idea (how does it affect them?).
 - You will need to give group members all the information relevant to their involvement, including:
 - the objectives of the activity (if you should reveal them at this stage)
 - what they need to do
 - how long the activity will take and
 - what materials they will use and anything else they need to know in order to participate fully in the activity.
 - **Debriefing** is about questioning the participants **after** the activity is finished. This helps the participants to process their way through the learning cycle. Below are a series of questions designed for each stage of the experiential learning cycle. Choose some appropriate ones from each stage to ask your group when debriefing an activity. Remember the idea is for the participants to process their own learning in a way that is meaningful for them.

The Experiential Learning Cycle:



Debriefing Questions

Experiencing

When the individual is involved in sensing, thinking, feeling, wanting, or doing something. Here are some questions participants may be asking themselves as they are involved in an activity:

- How do I react to this activity?*
- What is going on?*
- How do I feel about this?*
- What do I need to know?*
- Could I offer a suggestion?*
- What would I prefer?*
- What are my suspicions?*
- What is my objection?*
- If I could guess the answer what would it be?*
- Can I say that in another way?*
- What is the worst/best thing that could happen?*

Sharing

To report back to the group after the experience. Remember everyone's experience will be different and it is important that everyone is given the opportunity to share how it was for them.

- How did everyone else react?*
- What went on/happened?*
- How did you feel about that?*
- Who else had a similar experience?*
- Who reacted differently?*
- Were there any surprises/puzzlements?*
- How many felt the same?*
- What did you observe?*
- What were you aware of?*

Interpreting

To make sense of the data generated for both the group and individuals.

- Why did I/we react like that?*
- How do you account for that?*
- What does that mean to you?*
- How was that significant?*
- What struck you about that?*
- How do those fit together?*
- How might it have been different?*
- Do you see something operating there?*
- What does that suggest to you about yourself/your group?*
- What do you understand better about yourself/your group?*

Applying

To look at the future by understanding/planning how these generalisations can be tested in a new place.

- What did you learn?*
- How does the activity relate to your real life?*
- How could you apply that?*
- What would you like to do with that?*
- How could you repeat this?*
- What could you do to hold on to that?*
- What are the options?*
- What might you do to help/hinder yourself?*
- How could you make it better?*
- What would happen if you did that?*

Evaluating

- Time:** 15 minutes.
- Materials:** • *Reaction Sheets* for workshops or *Project Group Report Forms* for Project Group meetings – whichever is appropriate.
- Objectives:** • To evaluate or reflect on what you have done so as to develop ideas about how you can improve your practice in the future.
- What to do:**
- *Reaction Sheets* are an informal questionnaire given to participants at a workshop, asking them what they liked, disliked, would have preferred, learnt etc at the workshop. They are anonymous and are filled out at the end of the workshop in the following way:
 - Explain to the group that you are going to hand out a reaction sheet to each participant to fill out individually. Explain that a reaction sheet is a way for participants to let you know how they felt about the workshop (what they learned, what they didn't like etc). Also, that reaction sheets help you plan further workshops in the future, by considering the comments on the reaction sheets.
 - Give participants 5-10 minutes to fill in their reaction sheet. Encourage participants to fill in their sheet individually and to be honest.
- Variations:**
- *Project Group Report Forms* record what happened at each Project Group meeting, serve as a record of how the Project Group is going, and can be invaluable if a group slows down or feels they are not achieving as much as they would like. They also provide case study material if you need to write up the experience of the group later on. They are filled out by group members at the end of each meeting.
 - Go around the circle and ask everyone to say a word/make a noise/say a sentence about how they feel about today/the workshop.

Activities AND GAMES

This section contains sample games and activities for use at meetings, conferences and events. They can be used for groups with children and young people as participants (or for adults!) and can be run by young or adult facilitators. What we call 'Games' are short and fun, usually last about 5-10 minutes and require few/no materials. What we call 'Activities' are longer events usually lasting 15 minutes or more, requiring materials organised beforehand.

A young (or wrinkly) facilitator would typically run these games and activities for a small group of 8-16 people (there is also a section on 'Big Group Games for 20-200 people'). They can be used in programs that look at almost any subject – from Student Council/youth group activities; to issues like boredom or youth health. Please remember that groups do not run on games and activities alone! This section can't train you how to be a good facilitator. You'll need experience, training, and a well thought-out program (see **Section 4** for some suggestions).

The games have been identified as one of five 'types', according to which stage of a group's development you would use them: (*Note – designer could develop five icons for these!*)

Activities can help group members to learn about other people, learn about listening and public speaking and learn how to better communicate as an individual and as a member of a group. They will often require briefing the group about what is going to happen beforehand and debriefing about what happened afterwards (see *Briefing and Debriefing*, page 88 onwards).

These activities are based on principles of experiential education, which assumes that learning is more valuable when it is physically experienced by a participant, not just taught or discussed by a group leader. Learning through experience can offer powerful and valuable lessons for all group members.

In many cases, the activities described here can be combined or run with games to form longer (30 minute +) skills sessions – eg. a Communication Session which includes Rules of the Game, Ball of String and Paired Listening.

The activities described here have been divided into the following types:

Getting To Know You

Getting To Know You (GTKY) Games and activities help group members break the ice when they first meet, or get to know more about each other as a workshop goes on. Things you can learn range from life stories, families, favourite bands and hobbies to faiths, values and attitudes. You would typically use these games in Getting To Know You Sessions, especially at the beginning and end of workshop days.

Group Development

These are games and activities designed to build trust, respect and unity within a group. The games listed are short (up to 10 minutes), while the activities take longer and need materials to be prepared before the forum or workshop.

Skills Development

These activities cover a couple of areas of skills development relevant to preparing young people for maximum involvement in events. Skills areas covered include communication skills, self esteem, assertiveness and leadership.

Energisers and Concentrators

Energisers are short, fun activities which pack a punch! They can be used to liven up a group, break up long sessions, or to perk up group members during a tiring day. Concentrators are thinking games, good for calming people down and running before a tough decision has to be made. They will usually help in focusing the group on the task at hand.

Big Group Games

These are games to use with anywhere from 20 to 200 people, usually run at the start or end of a workshop before participants move into small groups. It is also possible to adapt some of the games from the four other sections for a large group. (See Other games which can be used with a big group, page 151).

Getting to know YOU ACTIVITIES & GAMES

Photolanguage

Type:

Getting To Know You Activity

Time:

20-30minutes.

Materials:

- A set of 30 or so large photos, with a range of images, themes or feelings expressed. In Sydney, the Catholic Education Office sells packs of Photolanguage photos, or you could buy a second-hand photography book and cut it up (don't just use your holiday snaps!).

Objectives:

- To stimulate participants into thinking about a given topic using a set of photos.

What to do:

- Set up your photos in a circle so that people will be able to walk around them and see them clearly.
- Ask people to look at the photographs and choose two images that represent your topic for them (ask them to remember the images, but leave them where they are, they can pick them up later).
- Ask someone to volunteer to show the group the images that they choose, and to explain to the group why they chose them. Give everyone in the group the chance to do the same. Ask people to replace the pictures after they have spoken about them.
- Debrief. Ask if any group members have questions for others in the group. Run a general discussion on the topic area.

Notes:

- Photolanguage can be applied to a whole range of questions, but is most useful for conceptual stuff eg. "What images represent leadership to you?"

Adjective circle

Type: *Getting To Know You Game*

Time: 5-10 minutes.

- What to do:**
- The group sits in a circle. The first person introduces themselves with a descriptive word that starts with the same letter as their name eg. I'm Wonder Wendy; I'm Pleasant Peter, I'm Jubilant Jad etc.
 - Each person in turn says the name of the first person, then the second, etc, then adds their own name eg. 'You're Wonder Wendy, you're Pleasant Peter, you're Jubilant Jad, and I'm Swinging Suzie.

- Notes:**
- The activity becomes more difficult towards the end. The leader should be the last to introduce themselves, to help them remember all the names of the people in the circle!
 - Can also be used as a secondary getting to know you activity for a group which is coming together after a break, eg. on the second day of a workshop.

Boundary breaking

Type: *Getting To Know You Activity*

Time: 15-60 minutes.

Materials: • Boundary Breaking questions (see below)

- What to do:**
- Explain the activity to the group: 'I'm going to ask a series of questions and I would like everyone to answer every question. If you can't think of an answer you can pass or take a raincheck and we'll return to you. Try to be honest in all your answers and listen to other people. You can ask them questions as well if you want (if there's time).
 - The group leader then asks some questions from the list below. Some questions are less threatening than others – start with

some easy ones first, then move on to more difficult ones as people become more open. Each time you ask a question, start with a different person, preferably a volunteer and go round the circle seeking people's responses. The leader answers the questions along with the rest of the group. This activity works well if you can create an atmosphere of openness and trust.

- Towards the end you may like to ask the group if they have any Boundary Breaking questions they would like to ask each other.

Notes:

- When you have finished the questions, you can have a discussion about the activity using discussion starters such as:
 - a) Why did we do this?
 - b) What happened during this session?
 - c) Why don't we ask these questions in normal life?

Sample Boundary Breaking Questions:

1. What is your favourite television show?
2. What is the most significant book you have ever read?
3. If you could build or invent one thing, what would it be?
4. What is the most honest thing you have known?
5. What is the most entertaining movie you have ever seen?
6. What is the most beautiful quality about people?
7. What do you like to do most with a free hour?
8. What is the most overwhelming thing you know?
9. What is the greatest problem in Australia?
10. What thing makes you feel most humble?
11. If you could be any animal other than a human, what animal would you be?
12. If you could smash one thing (only one thing) what would you smash?
13. What is the greatest crime one person can commit towards another?
14. If you could tape-record the ugliest sound you know, what would it be?
15. Choose a word which best describes your total life up to this moment.
16. What do you think of when you think of tragedy?
17. When do you sense being most alive?
18. What comes to your mind first when you hear the word happiness?

19. Choose a word that you feel describes old people.
20. What is the biggest waste you know of?
21. What future discovery do you most hope for?
22. What do you love the most?
23. When you think of children under three years old, what comes to your mind?
24. Give another word for God.
25. What one day in your life would you like to live over?
26. What is the most powerful force in the world today?
27. What kind of leadership makes a difference in the world?
28. What do you hope to get out of this Forum/workshop/meeting?
29. What was your childhood nickname and how did you feel about it?
30. What is your favourite possession?
31. What is the silliest thing you have ever done?
32. Which quality do you like most about yourself?
33. What is your best physical characteristic?
34. What emotion do you have difficulty with?
35. What part does religion play in your life?
36. Describe something you no longer have that you used to value.
37. With which member of your family do you most identify? Why?
38. What in life is most important to you?
39. If you were a teacher, how would you teach your class?
40. What part does money play in your life? What does it mean to you?
41. What has angered you recently?

Good Morning!

Type: *Getting To Know You Game*

Time: 5 minutes.

What to do:

- Ask everyone to jump up, walk around the room, shake hands with everyone they meet and say 'Good Morning!' loud and enthusiastically!

Notes:

- You can vary what people say eg. they can ask each other's names if it is an early session, or they can tell each other what they did last weekend and/or the physical action they do eg. they can give each other a high five, or stand with palms pressed together.

If this person were...

Type:

Getting To Know You Activity

Time:

15-60 minutes.

What to do:

- One person silently chooses another in the group. The rest of the group (including the chosen one), tries to work out who they have chosen by asking questions in the form: 'If this person were a what would they be?' eg:
'If this person were a fruit, what sort of fruit would they be?'
'If this person were a car, what sort of car would they be?'
'If this person were a TV personality, which would they be?'
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to ask questions. After three questions, anyone may guess who they think the person is, but if wrong, another question must be asked before another guess is made.
- The person who guesses correctly then has a turn and chooses someone else. You can keep playing until everyone in the group has been described.

Notes:

- This activity can be quite threatening even if people know each other well. It takes quite a bit of trust as there is the potential to hurt someone's feelings, even unintentionally.

Map of the human heart

- Type:** *Getting To Know You Activity*
- Time:** 20-30 minutes.
- Materials:**
- Butchers' paper and textas for each participant.
- What to do:**
- Hand out the butchers' paper and ask everyone to write their name at the top and draw a small heart in a big circle in the middle of it.
 - Now ask everyone to spend ten minutes drawing and/or writing on the map of their heart the people and things that are important to their life: put the things closest to their heart nearer to the centre.
 - Ask the group to hold up their drawings and explain them one by one. Stick the drawings to the walls if appropriate and the group wants to.
- Notes:**
- Can be run with Timeline – draw Timeline on the top half of the butchers' paper, and Map of the Human Heart on the bottom half. But leave at least three minutes per person if you're going to do this.

Name tags

- Type:** *Getting To Know You Game*
- Time:** 10-15 minutes.
- Materials:**
- A name tag and a pen for each person
- What to do:**
- Each person writes their name in the centre of their name tag. Then each person writes the following things in the corners of their name tags:
 - a) In the top left hand corner – where they would most like to be now.

- b) In the top right hand corner – what animal they'd like to be.
 - c) In the bottom left hand corner – their favourite food.
 - d) In the bottom right hand corner – their favourite colour.
- Everyone then mingles and reads each other's name tags.

- Notes:**
1. You can announce that so that we can get an idea of what everyone has written on their tags, we are going to form pairs with someone we don't know who has similar things written in the corners of their name tags. This can lead well into Paired Biographies.
 2. As well as writing these things in corners, each person can write three adjectives to describe themselves in the centre.
 3. Vary the things people write in the corners to suit the situation.

Paired biographies

- Type:** *Getting To Know You Activity*
- Time:** 30 minutes.
- What to do:**
- This game is run in pairs. The leader should join one pair to make a group of three if there is an odd number of people in the group.
 - Explain how the game works, then run it. 'The group splits into pairs and each partner spends one minute telling the other person about her/himself: their life story, including family, where they've lived, school, sport, etc. Then they swap and the second person tells the first about her/himself. Then we'll come back into the circle and everyone can introduce their partner to the rest of the group and tell us everything you can remember about what they told you.'

- Variations:**
1. Instead of telling the whole group about the other person, participants find a new partner and tell/hear their story. This can continue until everyone has paired with everyone else or time runs out. After 3-4 rounds of this variation, it may make it more interesting if you give the pairs a theme to talk about each round, such as: their ambitions, childhood, hobbies, family or whatever.
 2. Paired biographies collage
(You need magazines, textas, glue and half-sheets of butchers' paper)
After the five minutes talking, the group leader asks everyone to spend five minutes making a collage of what they have just heard on a half-sheet of butchers' paper: a picture of their partner's life story.
Then reform the circle and introduce the partners using this collage (afterwards you can stick them on the wall).

Planting a seed

- Type:** *Getting To Know You Game*
Time: 5 minutes.
- What to do:**
- The group stands in a circle.
 - Each person in turn steps into the middle of the circle and says a word or sentence about what this day or event has meant to them, then mimes planting a seed in the ground (push down into the soil with your thumb).
- Variations:** You may use actual seeds, or plant a real tree in the centre after everyone has had a turn.

Simple name circle

- Type:** *Getting To Know You Game*
Time: 5 minutes.
- What to do:**
- The group sits in a circle. Each person in turn gives her/his name, where they come from and what they had for breakfast this morning.
- Variations:**
1. Instead of everyone saying what they had for breakfast, they could say the toothpaste they use; their favourite colour; how many brothers and sisters they have etc.

Timeline

- Type:** *Getting To Know You Activity*
Time: 20-60 minutes.
Materials:
- Butchers' paper and textas for everyone in the group.
- What to do:**
- Hand out the paper and ask everyone to write their name at the top, draw a line down the middle and label their timeline from 0 at the left, to the age they are now eg. 20 at the right.
 - Now ask everyone to spend five minutes drawing their life so far on the timeline: put in significant events (family events, love life, study, overseas travel etc.)
 - Go around the circle and ask the group to hold up their butchers' paper and explain their drawings.
- Notes:**
- Can be run along with 'Map of the Human Heart' – draw Timeline on the top half of the butchers' paper, and Map of the Human Heart on the bottom half. But leave at least three minutes per person if you're going to do this.
 - Works better with older people (aged 16+) and/or a mixed group of adults and young people, since the older you are the more you have to put on your timeline!

What's your story?

- Type:** *Getting To Know You Activity*
- Time:** 20 minutes.
- Materials:** • *What's your story?* Questionnaire (see next page) and a pen for each person.
- What to do:**
- Hand out a questionnaire and pen to each group member. Ask everyone to fill in their name in the box which best applies to them, then to mingle and ask people questions from the questionnaire, trying to get a name for every box.
 - Feel free to stop the activity whenever you feel it is appropriate – ie. you don't have to make it go on until everyone has filled in all the boxes.
- Variations:**
1. Whoever completes the questionnaire first wins a chocolate.
 2. Design your own questionnaire for variety.

What's your story? Handout

Please write down the name of at least one person in the group who fits each of the descriptions below:

- Someone who eats cornflakes for breakfast:*
- Someone who comes from a large family (six or more):*
- Someone who has been on TV or Radio:*
- Someone whose star sign is Leo:*
- Someone who has a pet. What is it?*
- Someone who likes the colour red:*
- Someone who likes asparagus:*
- Someone who has an unusual hobby: What is it?*
- Someone who has been skiing. Water or snow?*
- Someone who has visited other countries: Which ones?*
- Someone who knows how to make chocolate crackles:*
- Someone who has written a letter in the last two months:*
- Someone who hates football.*
- Someone who has lived in another country or state: Which one?*
- Someone who enjoys horror movies:*
- Someone who likes spinach:*
- Someone who knows somebody famous: Who?*
- Someone who likes the Beatles or Beethoven:*
- Someone who has read a book recently: Which one?*

Group DEVELOPMENT

Black jelly bean

- Type:** *Group Development Game*
- Time:** 5-10 minutes.
- Materials:**
- Black jelly beans if they are available (if you have other colours, call the activity something else eg. Green Lifesaver).
- What to do:**
- Explain that we are going to do an activity that looks at peer group pressure and ask for a volunteer who is willing to be subjected to peer group pressure. Explain that the rest of the group is going to try to convince that person to take a black jelly bean, using all the peer group pressure tactics we have grown to know and love and that the person who volunteered does not want to take the jelly bean and will use every ounce of stubbornness they have to try to refuse. Give them time to have a fair go.
 - Debrief looking at how it felt to be pressuring someone, how it felt to be pressured, what it was like compared to real life experiences (ask the group to share some of these experiences – they will be fairly revealing). Ask whether the activity has changed their perspective on peer group pressure and how it works etc.

Circle Compliments

- Type:** *Group Development Game*
- Time:** 10-30 minutes.
- What to do:**
- Start with a volunteer: everybody in the group gives positive feedback to that person (things they like about them, good things they've done in the workshop, things they've learnt about them etc). Go around the circle one by one.
 - A good activity to use at the end of a workshop. Be sure to finish on a positive note for everybody.
- Variations:**
1. Each person puts their name at the top of a piece of paper. Send the sheets round the circle and everybody writes something nice on everybody else's sheets.
 2. The group stand up and mingle, walking around and saying nice things to each other.
 3. This activity can also be used to give feedback: eg. in a leadership workshop, go around the circle giving feedback on good and leadership qualities each person has displayed. For a group that has known and trusted each other for a while you may also be able to give feedback on things that they could improve.
 4. In a more imaginative version of this game (and good for you too!) every participant has an apple, sitting on a table. Participants make complimentary flags, out of paper and a toothpick and stick them in people's apples.

Knots

Type: *Group Development Game*

Time: 5-10 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Stand together in a tight circle with arms outstretched in front of you. Each person grasps one hand of someone close and one hand of someone further away. Make sure that two people aren't holding both of each other's hands.
 - Now, as a group, attempt to untangle the knot. Hand grips can be changed but not broken.

- Variations:**
1. One person can stay out of the knot and try to help.
 2. A large group version: Form a circle and hold hands. Break the circle and ask one end person to move under, over and through the rest of the group to form a knot. Then the person on the other end tries to untangle it.

Magic envelopes

Type: *Group Development Activity*

Time: 5-10 minutes to brief then completed throughout the conference/forum/workshop

- Materials:**
- Large (A4) envelopes, magazines, pens, scissors and glue to decorate them if possible.

- What to do:**
- Ask group members to write their names (and decorate if time) the back (flap side) of the envelopes and stick them on the wall (this is usually done at the beginning of a workshop and takes 10-20 minutes).
 - Tell group members that during the workshop they should put 'warm fuzzy' messages into each other's magic envelopes. Warm fuzzies are short, positive messages about that person... something you like about them or something positive they did at the workshop.

- Give group members 15-30 minutes at the end of the workshop to make sure they've written something nice to everyone in the group.

- Variations:**
- Group members can give each other gifts – these can be images of nice things cut out of magazines and signed by the giver.

Rule of the game

Type: *Group Development Game*

Time: 10-20 minutes.

- What to do:**
- The group forms a circle. One person leaves the room, and the others decide on a rule for group communication – eg. scratch your head while speaking, answers must contain a number, answers must begin with the initial of the speaker's name etc. The person then comes back and tries to discover the rule by asking people questions eg. about their families, favourite movies etc. Players must answer according to the rule.
 - Don't let it drag on – you may need to have a three guess limit.
 - If a person is having trouble guessing the rule, the group should help out by making the rule more obvious.

Similarities and differences

Type: *Group Development Activity*

Time: 10-30 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Explain that the group are going to use the length of the room as an 'attitude line' – one end of the room is for those who strongly agree with the statements made, the other end

is for those who strongly disagree. If you are neutral, stand in the middle, if you agree a bit, you stand half way between the middle and strongly agree etc.

- Each time the leader reads out a statement everyone places themselves on the attitude line according to how they feel about the statement. The leader should place themselves on the line as part of the group.

Sample statements:

- *Education standards have risen since our parents were at school.*
- *Coffee beats tea hands down.*
- *In the 1990s religion is needed more than ever.*
- *Women should have the right to abortion.*
- *Anzac Day is necessary to remind young people about war.*
- *Dogs make better pets than cats.*
- *In Australia Unions have too much power.*
- *White South Africans should not be allowed into Australia.*
- *The voting age should be lowered to 16 years.*
- *Smoking should be allowed in special areas at school.*
- *Capital punishment is needed for some crimes.*
- *Marriage is an old fashioned institution.*
- *Most young people could find a job if they tried harder.*
- *Australia should make room for all refugees.*
- *Most people are prepared to lie if it's in their own interests.*
- *Under age drinking is an exaggerated problem.*
- *Blondes (either male or female) have more fun.*

Variations:

- Ask group members to make up some statements like those above (if time, make it that everyone in the group must make one statement)
- Can be used as a longer (30 minutes) communication activity by talking about why people are standing where they are and debriefing the activity by talking about what happened using starters such as:

Were you always next to the same person? Did other people surprise you?

What things made it difficult/easy? Did others influence you?

Structures

Type:

Group Development Game

Time:

5-10 minutes.

What to do:

- Form small (3-6 people) groups. The leader names something, which each group constructs with their bodies. Repeat several times with different structures. Examples: Sydney Harbour Bridge; Empire State Building; Crane; Plane/Helicopter, Car/Truck/Bus; Ship; Church/Temple; Lighthouse.

Variations:

- Groups can use sound and you can judge the best structures.

Transformations

Type:

Group Development Game

Time:

5-10 minutes.

What to do:

- Form the group into a circle. The leader makes a nonsense sound to the person next to them, who repeats the sound to the next person and so around the circle until the sound gets back to the leader.
- The leader then makes a nonsense sound plus a facial expression and passes that around the circle.
- The leader then adds a movement to the sound and expression and passes it on as before.
- Another combination of sound, expression and movement is then passed across the circle from person to person by eye contact.

- The leader then explains that he/she will pass a sound-facial expression combination to the person next to them, who will repeat it back to the leader. The person then turns around and gives a totally new combination to the next person who repeats it back and then passes on his own combination.
- Can be threatening. Use only with workshop experienced or expression oriented people.
- Each stage can be repeated once or twice at a quicker speed to get the group going and assure that all inhibitions are broken down. In the initial stages do not stick to the same combination of sound, expression and movement. It is up to the leader to show the group the variety that is possible. Each stage except the final one should be relatively short (20-30 seconds).

Notes:**Who calls the tune?**

Type: *Group Development Game***Time:** 5-10 minutes.

- What to do:**
- The group sits in a circle. One person leaves the room and another is chosen to be the leader. The leader begins an action, eg. clapping, scratching head, whistling etc and immediately the entire group copies the leader. The first person returns to the room and stands in the middle of the circle.
 - The leader regularly changes the action and the group immediately follows the change of action. Group members should try not to look at the leader.
 - The person in the middle has three guesses to pick who the leader is.

Word association

Type: *Group Development Game***Time:** 5-10 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Sit the group in a circle. The first person says the first word that comes to mind. The next person repeats that word and then adds one to it. The third person repeats the previous two words and adds another and so on around the circle.
 - People should feel free to say whatever comes into their head at the time and not plan what they will say.

Notes

- If group is large, do without repeating the words or only repeat the previous word.
- You can try making a 'word at a time' story with the group.

Guided recall

Type: *Group Development Activity***Time:** 15-30 minutes.

- Objectives:**
- To help the group think reflectively and deeply.
 - To allow participants to focus on their own feelings without having to share them with the group.

- What to do:**
- Use with a mature group
 - Explain: "We are now going to do an activity called Guided Recall. I want everybody to find their own place on the floor where they can lie comfortably for about 30 minutes. Give yourself plenty of space, make sure you don't crowd other participants. The activity involves first doing some exercises to completely relax your body, then we're going to do some thinking about ourselves." Once the participants have all found a space on the ground and are lying down, wait until they are

completely quiet, have their eyes closed, have stopped talking and fidgeting etc, before moving on to the next stage. You may get people who want to lie on their stomachs, or sides or whatever. This is sometimes a sign that they don't want to take the activity seriously – it may be threatening for some people. While the activity doesn't work as effectively this way, it's probably best just to let them lie how they want, rather than make an issue of it.

- Take around ten minutes for the next section. This is a warm up for the recall or visualisation. It is a way to transfer physical relaxation into mental concentration, to use relaxation to help reflection. Two alternatives are presented below, but there are other variations on the theme.
- Say: "I want you to picture the most relaxing colour you can think of... let the relaxing colour fill your sight... forget everything but your relaxing colour... picture the relaxing colour flowing around inside your body... everywhere it flows becomes relaxed... imagine your feet filling with the relaxing colour... as the colour flows around your feet feel them relax... feel the relaxing colour move up into your calves... etc". Continue to move the colour up through the participants bodies: knees, thighs, bottom (avoid this if it will make the group giggle), stomach, chest, shoulders, arms, hands, neck, head then face last.
- A variation is to go through the same process, asking participants to tense their muscles, then relax them. This is more effective with a restless group, as it relies on working through tension, rather than against it.
- Now take the participants on a journey into their past. Say: "You are going on a journey, back in time, to a point five years ago... take yourself back, back in time...". Remember that people remember in different ways, with different

senses. Some people are visually oriented, some feeling oriented. Sound, touch and particularly smell are very important to the workings of memory. Say things like: "Go to a place that is special for you... the place you feel happiest at... look around... what can you see... reach out and touch what's there... how does it feel... what can you smell... listen... listen to the sounds around you there... what can you hear... how does it feel to be there...".

- Continue the journey, with three different points, five years ago, two years ago and one month ago. Remember that you're not telling a story, you're giving a framework which the participants will use to make their own story. *So go slowly!* The pauses indicated should be anything from ten to thirty seconds, even a minute long at the end of each "visit".
- When the group has finished the journey, give them plenty time to come back to reality – they will be sleepy and have a lot going on.

Notes:

- This is an excellent late-afternoon activity. Groups are generally too restless in the morning and too sleepy and self-obsessed after the activity for any other work, so late in the afternoon is the best time, when they'll be more likely to relax and less interested in something more active.
- In tone and volume say nothing startling or jarring, imagine you are telling a bed-time story to a child and you are hoping to put them to sleep. If this actually happens it isn't a concern unless the person starts to snore.
- The language you use is very important.
- Use "you" rather than "we" as this is a highly personal activity.
- Don't issue commands "Now you have to..." but rather suggestions "Now go back to...".
- Use simple words and phrases so participants can concentrate on their own thoughts instead of you.

- Use open ended and nonspecific suggestions “look at who’s around you... where are you... what are you doing...” not specific instructions “think about what school was like...”. They may have hated school, or been thinking about something completely different.
- Some people will be threatened or amused by this activity – they may think it’s a little “hippyish.” We don’t often think about ourselves at all, let alone as intensely as this activity requires. Make sure you explain in general terms what the activity involves.
- If people laugh or comment during the activity, simply pause until it subsides and try to avoid drawing everyone else’s attention to the distraction.

Variations:

- The method is not only useful for events in the participants’ pasts, it can be used as a visioning exercise, to picture a future that participants may want to move towards, as part of a goal setting session, for example.
- The exercise can work well if run outside, but make sure the space is a good one. Lots of sun and lots of grass to lie on is good – too much traffic noise, other people walking past or animal noises are bad.

Crocodile river

Type:

Group Development Activity

Time:

45 minutes.

Materials:

- A copy of the Crocodile River story for each participant.

Objectives:

- For participants to reveal some of their values by the way they react to the characters in the story. Later on, in examining their reactions to the characters, people become more aware of their own attitudes. This strategy also illustrates how difficult it is for any one person to say “I have the right values for other people”. This strategy often generates a good deal of emotional involvement. People may attempt to attack and criticise each other’s ranking. Try to use reflective listening techniques and summaries to achieve a reasonable approach. Ensure that all group members get to express their views.

What to do:

- The leader tells the story of the Crocodile River.
- Following the story, ask the participants to privately rank the five characters from the most offensive character to the least offensive. The character who they think acted best is first on their list; then the second best and so on, with the fifth being the person they think acted worst.
- After participants have made their own ranking, form groups of four in which they share their thinking, discuss the rankings with one another, and produce a group ranking from 1-5.
- Get into one big group and discuss how and why each group ranked each of the characters. For example: “How many felt Abigail was the best character? How many felt she was the worst character?”. You can ask some thought provoking questions about the character they ranked as the most offensive, the kind of person you least want to be like. See Debriefing.
- Also discuss how each group came up with their group ranking.

Handout • Crocodile river

Once there was a woman called Suki who was in love with a man named Greg. Greg lived on the shore of a river. Suki lived on the opposite shore of the river. The river which separated the two lovers was teeming with people-eating crocodiles. Suki wanted to cross the river to be with Greg. But last week the bridge was washed out in a flood. So she went to ask Rodney, a river boat captain, to take her across. He said he would be glad to if she would go to bed with him before they went. She angrily said no and went to a friend named Kim to explain her problem. Kim didn't want to be involved at all in the situation. Suki felt her only alternative was to accept Rodney's deal. Rodney fulfilled his promise to Suki and delivered her into the arms of Greg.

When she told Greg about what she had done to get across the river, he told her to get out and never come back. Devastated, Suki told Paulo the whole sad story. Paulo, feeling sorry for Suki, went looking for Greg and beat him up. Suki was very happy when she saw Greg beaten up. As the sun sets in the west, we hear Suki laughing at Greg.

Rankings

Give everyone in the story a ranking from 1 to 5.

Write a 1 beside the person you think acted best in the story, a 2 beside the person who was next best, and so on, writing a 5 beside the person you think acted the worst.

Then get together in a group and work out a group ranking.

Your Ranking	Small Group Ranking
Suki	Suki
Greg	Greg
Rodney	Rodney
Kim	Kim
Paulo	Paulo

I'm okay, you're not

Type:

Group Development Activity

Time:

60 minutes.

Materials:

• Some food.

Objectives:

• To experience what prejudice and discrimination do to majority and minority groups. The emphasis is upon feelings and emotions.

What to do:

- Use only with a mature group that knows each other.
- The group leader divides the group into inferior and superior people. To do this select a quality that will distinguish about one third of the people into a minority classification, eg. blue eyes, freckles, blond hair, those born in winter, etc.
- Read the Rules once the groups are established.

For the majority:

Always refer to the minority group as "goons" or "scum".

Take and defend your proper place in life and be proud of your status.

Make sure that the minority group do not receive any privileges, and remain in their proper place.

Call attention to anything that a minority person says or does that is out of line.

Occasionally nag or harass the minority people for no particular reason.

For the minority:

Never speak to a majority person unless spoken to.

Always refer to the majority person by using the title "Mr" or "Miss" before their name and address that person as "Ma'am" or "Sir" when speaking to them.

Always sit on the ground when in the presence of superiors. If a majority person is coming your way, make room for them to pass.

Never raise your voice to a majority person.

Stay in the proper 'goon' or 'scum' area.

Never drink from the same cup or fountain as a majority person.

If food is being served, always wait until the majority person has finished eating before you eat at all.

Never interrupt a majority person while they are speaking to you or others.

- After the rules have been read out and all people are clear about them, the game can proceed. A meeting is called to discuss some topic, eg. a presentation, business meeting, or some idea that may effect both groups. Refreshments may be served during the meeting and the above rules must be followed. Each group may be given 20 minutes before the meeting to discuss the topic amongst themselves and prepare arguments for their dialogue. The majority people find reasons why their rules should be imposed upon the minority people. The minority people must find reasons why they should not be discriminated against.
- The leader may have to prompt the groups in the beginning to help the discussion get under way. The leader may end the discussion when she/he feels that the groups have both explored how it feels to be in these positions. The discussion may not have been one which flowed naturally because of the rules imposed, but hopefully members of both groups will have experienced moments when their roles were 'real' for them.
- Give participants a few minutes to disengage themselves from their roles, perhaps get them to move from their positions in the room into a circle for group discussion. Remind the players that their roles have ended, they are now themselves. Enough time for discussion of how each person felt in their roles is very important.

Steer the evaluation away from 'roles' by asking people how they felt in third person eg. "How did the majority player feel?" rather than "How did you feel Paul?"

Ask people what insights they got about prejudice, anger, hatred, power and powerlessness. Remind the players that they felt these emotions because of their roles and the rules imposed on them.

If any minority players felt hurt or angry, consider how much anger there might be in people who have known years of prejudice? How close to the surface does anger dwell in most of us? Why?

Evaluate how the majority people rationalised their unfair rules upon the minority people, and see if they can find parallels with any situations existing in this society today. Did the participants come to understand more clearly how injustices against minority groups can become an unquestioned part of the rules that govern our society? Who makes and maintains these rules ?

Note:

- In any role playing activity it is possible that hostilities may develop between people which are not easily or quickly forgotten. The cooling off period is important. It is also important that the role playing does not continue once the evaluation has begun. Remind participants of the false sense of security and superiority the majority players feel and the anger that the minority people possibly feel is a reaction to the humiliation experienced
- Finish with a positive group building activity eg. 'Magic Chant'

Shifting feelings

- Type:** *Group Development Activity*
- Time:** 45 minutes.
- Materials:**
- Three pieces of butchers' paper with a series of statements on each.
- Objectives:**
- To share ideas, feelings and values.
- What to do:**
- Put up the three pieces of butchers' paper in separate parts of the room and cover all but the first statement. Read out all three first statements and ask everyone to go and stand under the statement that they most agree with.
 - Once everyone has grouped together, ask people to look around them and note the people who are with them in the group.
 - Do further rounds, uncovering one new statement on each piece of butchers' paper each time. Suggest to the group after three rounds that they might have noticed that they have the same or different people in their groups each time.
 - Debrief the activity using questions such as:
Did they have the same or different people in their groups each time?
How did they feel when they were alone? In a big group?

Sample groups of three statements:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. To be well known. | 1. To be affectionate and close with people. |
| 2. To be alone sometimes. | 2. To be unafraid. |
| 3. To like myself. | 3. To guide and teach others. |
| 1. Porsche. | 1. Chocolate. |
| 2. Beetle. | 2. Big Mac. |
| 3. Mercedes. | 3. Chips. |

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. To be rich. | 1. To have a calm life. |
| 2. To be warm-hearted. | 2. To have children. |
| 3. To be competent. | 3. To accept others. |
| 1. Dolphin. | 1. To be well liked. |
| 2. Tiger. | 2. To not have to do what people told me. |
| 3. Koala. | 3. To be able to tell others what to do. |

Use as many or as few of the statements as you like.

Stark

- Type:** *Group Development Activity*
- Time:** 60 minutes.
- Materials:**
- Pens, paper.
 - Butchers' paper, textas, masking tape.
 - *Stark List of Things to Take* for each participant.
 - *Stark List of Things to Leave Behind* forms for each participant.
- Objectives:**
- To think about and discuss how groups make decisions and the differences between making decisions as an individual and making decisions as a group.
 - To discuss values which affect the decisions we make.
 - To think about and discuss what we value about the earth and human culture.
- What to do:**
- Ask the group to sit in a circle on the floor so that everyone can easily see and hear each other. Don't forget to participate in this activity with the rest of the group.
 - Explain that in this activity we are going to think about and discuss the values we hold and how they affect the decisions we make as individuals and in groups. Explain that we are going to do a simulation activity and then discuss what we felt and thought during the activity and what we have learnt from it.

- Explain to the group that it is the Year 2035 and the earth is dying. Poisoned beyond repair by environmental abuse, it will no longer support the current population. Many people have chosen to stay, in a final attempt to save the planet, but this group has been chosen to board one of the many Starks, or Star Arks, to go into space and start new worlds on far away planets. In just under 60 minutes we will all be frozen for our journey into space at the speed of light.
- Before we go, we have four important decisions to make. We will have to choose things to take with us on our journey and then choose things to leave behind. We are going to be making individual decisions and group decisions.
- Explain that you are the group's Stark Commander and will pass on our orders as they come down to us from Stark One. All our basic necessities, such as food, standard clothing, medical equipment and other things needed to sustain life will be provided. What we need to decide is what we want to take with us and leave behind, from the old Earth and human culture and civilisation.
- The things we choose do not have to be physical things. (See Notes below if this is unclear to you.) Our super-duper computer and robot system called Halo, will make sure that our choices come true, even if it means reprogramming people's brains and personalities while we are on our frozen journey.
- Ask the group to ask you questions if they don't understand the instructions or anything else at any time in the activity.
- Hand each participant (don't forget to include yourself) the *Stark List of Things to Take* and explain that our first set of orders have come from Stark One. We can all choose ten personal things to help us overcome homesickness on our journey and in our new world. These lists must be completed in seven minutes so that they can then be entered into the Halo

- super-duper computer and robotics system. Explain that these are personal lists which no one else will see without the permission of that person and the things we choose can be anything – they do not have to be physical things.
- Remind the group when they have two, then one minute left.
- At the end of seven minutes, ask everyone to tear off the Personal List of Things to Take section of the form, fold it over and write their name on the outside. Explain that everyone will get their list back later in the activity and no one else will see it. Collect all the forms and place them somewhere away from everyone. (You could have a special box with a hole in the top to simulate giving these instructions to the computer.)
- Explain that our next orders have come down from Stark One. We have all chosen the personal things that we want and they are going to come with each of us. Now we have to divide into four small groups and choose ten things we want to take as a group. We can choose ten things to help us start a new culture and civilisation and remind us of the old Earth, on our new planet.
- Ask the group to break into four small groups and complete their Small Group List of Things to Take.
- Explain that each group has five minutes to come up with a list of ten things to take with them. The things we choose do not have to be physical and can come from anywhere on Earth.
- Explain that each group will read out and share their list in five minutes.
- Remind the group when they have two, then one minute left.
- When the five minutes is up, ask all the groups to come together and read out their lists to each other.
- Explain that new orders have come down from Stark One and we can only take ten things from the whole group. (The group

will have up to forty different things on their lists). We have ten minutes to decide as a whole group what things we will take. It is up to the group to decide how it will make its decision.

- Explain that the group must come up with one list of ten things to go into the computer at the end of ten minutes.
- Remind the group when they have two, then one minute left.
- Hand each member of the group (don't forget to include yourself) a *Stark List of Things to Leave Behind* form and explain that our next set of instructions have come from Stark One.
- Explain that we can all choose ten personal things to leave behind. We all have five minutes to make our own personal lists. These lists must be completed in five minutes so that they can then be entered into the computer, which will make sure that these things are left behind. Explain that these are personal lists which no one else will see without the permission of that person and the things we choose can be anything – they do not have to be physical things.
- Remind the group when they have two, then one minute left.
- At the end of five minutes, ask everyone to tear off the Personal List of Things to Leave Behind section of the form, fold it over and write their name on the outside. Collect all the forms and place them somewhere away from everyone. Again, you could have a special box with a whole in the top to simulate giving these instructions to the computer.
- Explain that our next orders have come down from Stark One. All the things on our personal lists of things to leave behind will be left behind. As part of our mission we have the chance to start humanity anew on our new planet. We have the chance to choose ten things to leave behind so we can start a new culture and civilisation in a new world. For example, the people

on Stark Four have chosen to leave behind all clothing and Stark Six now call them "Starkers".

- Ask the group to break into four small groups (they can be different groups from before) and complete the *Stark Small Group List of Things to Leave Behind*.
- Explain that each group has five minutes to come up with a list of ten things to leave behind. We can choose anything we like, from anywhere on earth and these things do not have to be physical.
- Explain that each group will read out and share their list in five minutes.
- Remind the group when they have two, then one minute left.
- When the five minutes is up, ask the groups to all come together as one group and read out their lists to each other.
- Explain that our final orders have come down from Stark 1. It is now only ten minutes until we must be frozen for our long journey into space. We can only choose 10 things to leave behind from the whole group. (There will be up to forty different things chosen by the small groups.) We have ten minutes to decide as a whole group what things we will leave behind and it is up to the group to decide how it will make its decision.
- Explain that the group must come up with one list of ten things to go into the computer at the end of ten minutes.
- Remind the group when they have two, then one minute left.
- Collect the list of ten things and thank the group for their participation in the activity. Wish everyone well on their journey and remind them that we are now all going off to be snap frozen.
- Explain to the group that the activity is now over and we are going to debrief by discussing what happened and what we learnt from doing the activity.

- Debrief. This is the most important part of the activity, as it helps the group members to think about, discuss and learn from what they have experienced. The activity may produce some conflict and it is vital that everyone gets to be heard during the debrief. (See Debriefing).
- Start by going around the group and asking each participant about how they felt doing the activity and how they feel now.
- Ask if anyone wants to share some of the things they put on their personal list and why they put them there. Lead into a brief discussion on these personal choices and where they might come from.
- Below is a list of questions for you to read and think about and then use during the debriefing.

How did everyone feel about the activity?

What did you choose to save? Why did you pick those things? (No one has to share anything on their personal lists if they don't want to).

How did you feel about making that decision and how strongly did you feel about your choices?

How similar and different were our personal lists and our group lists?

How similar and different were our personal lists and our group lists?

We only had to use our own values to make our personal lists. How did our values affect our group lists?

Was everyone happy with the group lists? Did they contain all or some of what we personally wanted? Why?

Did everyone get to say what they wanted to in the discussions and feel that they contributed to the group's decisions? Did everyone get to say why they thought some things should or should not go on the lists? Why?

Are group decisions just individual decisions added together or subtracted, or do people work together to come up with new and different ideas and decisions? Why?

Did the group make both whole group decisions the same way? How? Why? Did all the small groups give their ideas and then the whole group made the list smaller, or did the whole group all get together and make a brand new list? Was anything new added to the ideas all the small groups came up with?

How did the small group decisions affect the whole group decisions?

Did people join up with friends in the small groups? How might this influence decisions? How do our values affect our friends and who we choose to work with?

How did time affect how decisions were made? Was there a rush to fill the lists as the deadline got closer? How is this like other things we do? (eg. doing school assignments just before they are due).

What difference did it make to know in advance why and how we made decisions? (eg. finding out after the first small group lists were made that these weren't the final choices).

How do expectations of how decisions will be used affect the way we make them?

Was it easier to choose what to leave behind than what to take? Why?

How did knowing how the decision would be made affect choosing what to leave behind, compared with choosing what to take? (The group didn't know how they would make their decision the first time through, but had just done it once when it came to the second time.)

Notes:

- This activity asks participants to take risks by asking them to reveal and talk about their values and beliefs. This might be new or threatening for some people. There will also probably be conflict in the decisions of the groups. This should not be avoided, but conflicts need to be handled with care and skill. It is important to stress to the group that there are no rights and wrongs when it comes to these kinds of discussions. Different people have different priorities, but very few people make choices without reasons that make sense to them. Learning to make decisions as a group involves learning to understand and respect the values of others and to see what they have to contribute to the decisions of the groups.
- The things people choose do not have to be physical things and some people may be more creative than other people in thinking of things for their lists.

Some lists might include things like a photo of my family, my pet dog, a brooch my grandmother gave me, a pressed flower...

Or they might say things like the love and care of my family, the comfort of my home, my family heritage, all the plants in the world...

If you think about it, both lists are probably saying very similar things but with different words and ideas. So it is important that you, as the Group Leader, treat everyone's ideas with respect and make sure that the activity does not become a test or a competition to come up with the most imaginative or clever responses. The lists people come up with will be different and people will interpret the instructions differently, but all honest responses are just as valuable to the activity.

- Some participants may find it difficult to think of things to put on the lists and to understand what they are being asked to do. It is important not to make anyone think that there are only some things, or types of things, they can take or leave behind. But it might make it easier for some people (and they might ask you) to give some suggestions. If you do this, stress that this is not a list for people to choose from, they are just some suggestions and everyone can choose anything they want.
- Personal things people might choose to take: diaries, photos, pets, jewellery, toys, trophies, books, computers, games, CDs, cosmetics, clothes, sporting equipment, car, food, my ability to get along with people, my interest in learning and doing new things, boy/girlfriend, other people, memories, video games, swimming pool...
- Things the groups might choose to take: works of art, animals, plants, music, literature, technology, rivers, mountains, the Pyramids or other ancient ruins, books, languages, love, hope, respect for other people, the Bible, creativity, public transport, water, a game of Twister, horses, a deck of cards, a picnic basket, paint and paint brushes, movies, videos, cricket, video games, television shows...
- Personal things people might choose to leave behind: different types of fears (rejection, heights, darkness, meeting people, standing up for myself, wetting the bed...), problems, parents, financial worries, bad attitudes, brothers and sisters, being misunderstood, enemies, neighbours, television shows...
- Things the group might choose to leave behind: racism, war, talk-back radio announcers, street gangs, pollution, illness, pornography, criminals, bad television shows, hatred, vicious dogs, politicians...

Survival

Type: *Group Development Activity*

Time: 45 minutes.

Materials: • One *Survival Sheet* for each participant.

Objectives: • To explore the group decision making process.

What to do: • Give to each member of the group a copy of the Survival Sheet. Allow them time to read the explanations and the characters. The group can then begin discussion aimed at deciding which six characters should live. Allow the group 30 minutes discussion time.

• Debriefing – Ask questions such as:

How did the group come to its decisions?

Was there consensus or was it impossible to reach agreement?

Did any one person take command and direct proceedings? If so, was this good or bad? etc.

Was everyone in the group happy with the decision?

What things helped you come to a decision?

What things made it hard for you to come to a decision?

Is the process different in group decision making than in individual decision making?

How do we usually make decisions in our groups?

Variation: • Give each individual member of the group a character. (It's best to pre-cut characters from the page so that the group do not know each other). As group leader, read out the explanations of the situation. The group then has to explain who they are and become that person in justifying why they should remain in the shelter. A decision still has to be reached.

Handout • Survival Sheet

Widespread thermonuclear warfare has occurred. The following fourteen people are the only humans alive on earth. They are safe in a deep concrete-lined shelter. It will take at least two weeks for the external radiation to drop to a level where it is safe for anyone to venture out; however the supplies of food for that period will be enough for only six people, even if the most stringent rationing is applied. In brief, only six of the fourteen people can survive. Which six would you choose if it were up to you? Remember that the six people will have the responsibility for regenerating the human race in a devastated world.

1. SISTER MARY: Twenty-one; white; Roman Catholic teaching nun; criticised for liberal views; good health.
2. PROFESSOR JOHN WILKINS: Thirty three; American citizen; white; no religious affiliation; three postgraduate degrees in history; good health; married; one child (Michael); active; enjoys politics.
3. MRS FREDA WILKINS: Thirty two; Vietnamese; MA in Psychology; worked in a mental health clinic; good health; married; one child (Michael).
4. MICHAEL WILKINS: Ten; Vietnamese-American; has lived in Australia for three years; attends special education classes; mentally retarded; IQ 65; good health; loves dogs and cats.
5. MRS JULIE HUNTER: Twenty-four; atheist; ninth-grade education; barmaid; prostitute; has had V.D. but now cured; abandoned as a child; in foster home as a girl; attacked by foster father at the age of eleven; ran away from home; placed in institution; stayed until seventeen; married at seventeen; divorced at nineteen; one child three weeks old (Margaret).
6. MAGARET HUNTER: Three weeks old; part Aborigine; still unweaned; good health.
7. MARY ROBERTS: Nine; full-blooded Aborigine from reserve; was travelling with a school excursion when war broke out; Protestant; good health.
8. JAMES JONES: Twenty six; atheist; in fifth year of medical school; homosexual.
9. MRS CATHY CLARK: Twenty nine; white; Protestant; married; no children; qualified industrial chemist; was seriously injured three years ago in a car smash; grew up in a caravan park in a depressed area.
10. CHARLES BLACK: Fifty eight; white; Jehovah's Witness; former missionary; engineering degree; very handy; married; four children; good health; enjoys outdoor life and working in his workshop.
11. NADIA BLACK: Fifty eight; qualified nurse; suffers from occasional attacks of asthma and arthritis.
12. FELIX JOHNSON: Fifty five; ex-doctor; struck off medical register for performing illegal abortions ten years ago; has worked since as a clerk; has had one heart attack at the age of fifty three.
13. and 14. The only information we have on the other two is that they are the military president of an African state, and one of his four wives.

Skills development ACTIVITIES

A listening exercise

Type: Skills Development – Communication

Time: 15 minutes.

Materials: • A recent article from a local paper and pre-prepared questions on it (or use the article below).

Objectives: • To explore our capacity to listen and retain information.

What to do: • Without any introduction, casually say to your group, “Some of you might have seen this item in the paper the other day” and read aloud the newspaper story. eg. – Sample story:

Unlucky Mladin ends 13th in debut year

Mathew Mladin’s horror run of bad luck over the past three months came to an end at Jarama, Spain, when he finished a career best sixth in the FIM 500cc Grand Prix.

The result in the 14th and final round of the world championship on Sunday elevated Mladin, 21, to the 13th place overall in his debut year.

Mladin, of Camden, had been hoping for a top ten finish in his first full season with Cagiva in the world championship but team politics and bike failures have thwarted that ambition.

Eight weeks ago he lost his regular bike and spare machine to Cagiva new recruit John Kocinski and was forced to contest the remaining races of the season on an inferior bike.

While Kocinski has been impressing team management by winning the US Grand Prix and dicing for the lead before

crashing at Jarama, Mladin failed to finish the last three GPs.

Despite a testing and at times frustrating first full season in the world championship, Mladin remains positive about his future in grand prix racing.

“It’s been a tough year, but of course I never expected it to be an easy road,” Mladin said.

“It’s been frustrating with the never ending mechanical dramas, but I’ve learnt a lot, particularly about the circuits, most of which I’d never seen before.”

Mladin’s debut season started well but a crash at Asses in the seventh round soured his year. He missed two races because of injury and then his bike broke down in five GPs.

• Hold up a dollar coin in front of you and say, “OK, I’ve got a few questions for you based on the story you just heard, whoever gets them all right wins this dollar”.

• Hand out pens and scrap paper and explain to the group that you are going to read out ten questions about the article and you would like everyone to write down their answers on the paper.

• Read out ten questions about the article eg. names, dates, places, etc.

Sample Questions for ‘Unlucky Mladin’

How old is Mathew Mladin? (21)

Who does Mathew Mladin ride for? (Cagiva)

What cc bike does he ride? (500cc)

Where was the final round of the championship held? (Jarama, Spain)

Where did he finish in the championship? (13th)

How long ago did he lose his regular and spare bikes?

(Eight weeks ago)

How many races did he miss due to injury? (Two)

Where did he hope to finish in the championship?

(In the top ten)

How many races did his bike break down in? (Five)

What Grand Prix did John Kocinski win? (US)

- Ask everyone to give their answers to someone else in the group eg. get everyone to put their answers in the middle of the room and then pick up one which isn't theirs. Read out the correct answers. Usually nobody will have them all correct. If anyone does, give them the dollar – they deserve it if they get them all right.
- Debrief the group about what they experienced in the activity. (see Debriefing)

Use questions and statements like:

You all heard the story, yet few could remember very much about it. Why do you think that might be? eg. disinterest, no objective, no advance reward.

If you were told at the start that you could win some money, would you have listened better? Why?

Why didn't we listen? Is this typical of other situations?

- Suggest to the group that it has been said that we only listen at about 25 percent level of efficiency.

You need a reason to listen before you listen effectively.

Listening is a skill that can be improved.

Notes:

- Can be used as the introduction to a listening skills or communication session. After running the activity, explain that in this session we are doing some more activities to help us think about and improve our communication/listening skills.

Ball of string

Type: *Skills Development – Communication*

Time: 15-30 minutes.

Materials: • A large ball of string.

Objectives: • To increase awareness of the power that speaking in a group entails and show patterns of communication in a group.

What to do:

- Explain that this group is going to have a discussion and in the discussion the following rules will apply:
 1. **Only the person holding the ball of string may speak.**
 2. **The person with the ball will choose who to pass it on to when they have finished speaking.**
 3. **People may indicate non-verbally that they want the ball.**
 4. **The person with the ball may pass it to anyone.**
 5. **A person receiving the ball must say something.**
- Announce the topic. Possible topics include:
The voting age should be lowered to 16 years.
Our student council would work better if...
(Similarities and Differences will provide some possible topics – choose one which has lots of “different angles” to it)
- Give the ball of string to someone. Explain that the person will start the discussion by saying what they think. They will then hand the ball of string to someone else, BUT keep hold of the end of the string. The next person will also pass on the ball under the rules and keep hold of the string. In this way we will have a communication pattern for our group. Ask the first speaker to start.

- Allow the discussion to go on for about ten minutes.
- Have a brief follow-up discussion using the following starters:
Did anyone feel frustrated during the activity? Why?
Did patterns of conversation emerge?
Were there people who didn't get the ball? How did they feel?
Did anyone get the ball more often than others?

Follow the instructions

- Type:** *Skills Development – Communication*
- Time:** 10 minutes.
- Materials:**
- An instruction sheet for each participant.
- Objectives:**
- To demonstrate the importance of following instructions.
- What to do:**
- Hand out the instruction sheet (photocopy the next page) to each participant.
 - Ask the participants to follow the instruction sheet.
 - Quickly debrief the activity (See Debriefing).

Handout • The Instruction Sheet

1. Read all instructions carefully before going on.
2. Put your name in the top right hand corner of this sheet.
3. Put an 'x' in the bottom left hand corner of this sheet.
4. Count from 1-10 and 10-1 four times whilst doing star jumps.
5. Out loud, act like and make a noise like a rooster.
6. Sit down cross legged and hum softly whilst clapping your hands.
7. Now stand up and hug the person closest to you.
8. Spell your whole name out loud (middle and last name included) backwards.
9. Go to the furthest corner of the room to you and take this sheet with you.
10. Now that you have read each instruction carefully, only do the first two instructions.

Hand to chin

- Type:** *Skills Development – Communication*
- Time:** 15 minutes.
- Objectives:**
- To show that actions speak louder than words (and that using hand gestures should act as reinforcement to the message).
- What to do:**
- Without any introduction, give the group the following instructions and demonstrate as you say them:
 - “Hold your right arm out to the side... parallel to the floor.”
 - “Bring your arm around so that... it’s stretched out in front of you.”
 - “Now make a circle with your thumb and... first finger.”
 - “Now very firmly bring your hand to... your chin.”
 - As you say “Bring your hand to your chin”, bring your hand to your cheek, not your chin. Pause, look around the group, but don’t say anything. Some people will also put their hand to their cheek. Give people the chance to realise what happened – if any still don’t catch on, explain it to them.
 - Briefly discuss the activity using discussion starters such as:
 - What did the exercise show?*
 - How can we use the saying “Actions speak louder than words” when we are communicating to ensure a better understanding of the message?*

Eg. you could be listening to someone and saying “How interesting”, but if your eyes are wandering around the room you are giving a message that you are not really interested at all.
 - This activity also helps us to understand that if our actions and words give out the same message people will take what we say more seriously. People won’t trust what we say if our

actions give out a different message to our words.

- Notes:**
- Can be used as part of a communication or listening session, to demonstrate the problems caused when the verbal and visual messages aren't consistent and how the visual message usually overrides the verbal in this situation.

Speak out!

Type: *Skills Development – Communication*

Time: 60 minutes.

- Materials:**
- A sheet of butchers' paper with these five ideas written on it:
Have a message.
Know your subject and audience.
Make it interesting.
Think about your appearance and body language.
Use your voice.
 - One sheet of butchers' paper with "What are some things we need to do to be an effective speaker?" written on the top of it.
 - Blank cue cards, one for each participant.
 - Textas and tape, pen and paper for each participant.

- Objectives:**
- To become more confident when speaking in front of a group of people.
 - To speak about local issues that are important to the participants.
 - To practice some strategies to improve speaking skills.
 - To hear about issues that are important to other people.

- What to do:**
- Introduce the session by saying that this session will give us all an opportunity to have a say on issues that are important to

- us. At the same time we will also learn some new skills in speaking before a group.
- Explain that in this session we'll be looking at the issues that are important to us individually and everyone will get the chance to make a one minute speech in front of the group.
- Ask the group to sit in a semi circle and place the piece of butchers' paper with "What are some things we need to do to be an effective speaker?" up on the wall.
- Explain that we are doing this so we can incorporate some of these things into our speeches later.
- Ask the group to take about a minute to think about this question and then ask if there is someone who would like to start.
- You may need to throw some ideas in yourself to get things rolling eg. speak slowly and clearly, have eye contact etc.
- Watch the time, this whole section so far shouldn't take longer than ten minutes!
- Place the piece of butchers' paper with the five ideas on being a good speaker written on it.
- Compare these to ones that the group came up with.
- Explain the ideas on the sheet showing the connection between the group's ideas and those on the effective speaker sheet.
- Thank the group and move onto the next step.
- Explain we are going to have a chance to practise using some of the ideas we've come up with. To do this everyone will go out the front and give a one minute speech to the rest of the group.
- Explain that everyone will talk about an issue that concerns them in their area.

- Speeches should at least go for one minute, but can go longer than one minute if you like.
- Explain that everyone must at least have a go.
- If people are a bit hesitant, then say that they may want to consider these things.

It's an opportunity to have a say on issues.

People will listen to you.

You can learn some new skills from it.

- Hand out blank cue cards.
- The cards might help if you want to write the major things you want to say on them but don't write sentences, you don't have time and it will just confuse you. You have ten minutes to prepare your speech.
- You can do whatever you like during your speech.
- When ten minutes is up ask the group to come back together.
- Ask if there is someone who would like to start off with a speech. You may need to start if there are no volunteers.
- Go around the group and listen to the speakers.
- Encourage clapping after each speaker.
- If there is time to have open discussion at the end, then this is OK but don't allow discussion during the groups speeches.
- Be very positive about the speeches.
- Watch the time and make sure you leave enough time for everyone's speech.

Looking at a texta

Type:

Skills Development – Communication

Time:

15 minutes.

Materials:

- One texta.

Objectives:

- To illustrate the importance of key words in instructions and that different people will pick up different keywords in the same instruction.

What to do:

- Ask for a volunteer to help you with the activity. Hold a texta/pen out in front of you and ask the volunteer to look at the texta and describe everything s/he can see.
- It's likely they will describe the texta in detail, but nothing else in their range of vision eg. your face, the floor. If so, after about 30 seconds say "can you see me?", giving them the hint that they can see more than just the texta.
- Point out that we often think we know what people want us to do without clarifying what they actually mean – this can cause problems.

For example, if asked to sit down when you came into the room, some of you might have sat in chairs and some on the floor.

In this case the sender and the receiver of the communication could improve the way they communicate.

The SENDER – should give clear/precise information.

The RECEIVER – should clarify the instructions by asking questions.

- Debrief. Ask the participants:

"Can you think of other situations where this could or has happened?"

In the exercise with the texta, many people pick up on the

Handout • Observed Discussion – Observer sheet

Your task is to observe the group during the discussion and to report on what you saw and experienced, after the discussion.

You will do this by observing the group in general and by watching one particular person closely. Each observer must observe a different person, so quickly decide who will observe whom. Don't make it obvious who you are observing (do not stare at the person).

Don't be an outsider to the discussion. Participate in the discussion but take notes of what you see, using these questions to guide you:

Did participants look interested?

Were people sitting up or lying down?

What shape were the group sitting in (a circle, random, a square, oblong)?

Were some people sitting on chairs and others on the floor?

Notice and report on the contribution of the particular person you are observing:

How many times did the person speak?

How did they sit?

Could you see and hear them?

Did they seem interested in the discussion?

What contributions did they make?

How do you think the things you observed affected the discussion?

You will be asked to give a brief report (two minutes absolute maximum).

Do not make comments which are personal criticisms. Assume that everyone is contributing to the discussion as best they can. Your role is to report on the things you saw, not to judge the contributions of people.

Handout • Observed Discussion – Outside observer sheet

Your role is to leave the room for a couple of minutes when the group begins its discussion.

After about two minutes come back to the room if you have just arrived late for the session.

Sit down close to the circle but do not ask anyone to let you in. If someone makes room for you to sit in the circle, move in and participate in the discussion. If no one makes room for you, sit at the edge of the circle and join in as best you can. Do not draw attention to yourself as you join the group.

At the end of the discussion you will be asked to say how it felt to come in late to the discussion and whether or not you were able to sit in a place where you felt comfortable and able to contribute to the discussion. You will also be asked how being included or not being included made you feel.

You can still make comments about what you observed, along with everyone else.

Paired listening

- Type:** *Skills Development – Communication*
- Time:** 10 minutes.
- Objectives:**
- To experience what it feels like to be fully, unconditionally listened to and to see what use this skill can have in everyday situations.
- What to do:**
- Explain to the group that we are going to do an activity that is based on the idea of “active non-judgmental listening”.
 - Ask the group to form into pairs. Explain that one person in each pair will be the talker, you must talk for two minutes without major pauses on the topic *“The things I really like and the things I really don’t like”*. The talker can look around the room while talking – eye contact with the other person doesn’t have to be made, simply do what you feel most comfortable with.
 - The other person is the active listener. The active listener is not allowed to talk or give verbal feedback to the person who is the talker, but must use their body language to encourage the other person to continue talking. The active listener should try to make the talker feel comfortable enough to continue their ramble. Constantly maintaining eye contact with them is one essential part of this but there are other things you can do as well.
 - When the activity is over (or if you are doing a number of different activities throughout a listening session, at the end of the session), debrief, focusing on how it felt to be listened to, whether it happens often, what that feels like, and how the skill of active listening could be used in real life etc.

Putting on a jumper

- Type:** *Skills Development – Communication*
- Time:** 15 minutes.
- Materials:**
- A jumper or sloppy joe.
- Objectives:**
- To demonstrate the danger of making assumptions about a person’s background knowledge and common vocabulary.
 - To illustrate the advantages of demonstration and interaction as opposed to one way communication.
- What to do:**
- Lie a jumper on the floor. Ask for a volunteer and tell them to act as if they are from another planet and don’t know what the jumper is, or what to do with it. Then ask for a second volunteer and tell them that their job is to tell the first volunteer (the “doer”) how to use a jumper (how to put it on). The “doer” must follow the instructions of the second volunteer (the “instructor”) exactly, regardless of the result. Nobody is allowed to give clues to the instructor or the doer. Now, ask the instructor to turn their back so they cannot see what’s happening and ask them to begin and continue until they think the instructions are complete.
 - Run a discussion. Begin by asking the volunteers what was difficult about the exercise. Ask the group what could have made this exercise easier eg. explain how to do it, demonstrate how to do it, allow the doer to ask questions etc. Distinguish between one way communication (as in the exercise) and two way communication (where the doer can ask questions, give feedback etc) showing how the participation of both people (the instructor and the doer) can make communication more effective.

Repeating before answering

- Type:** *Skills Development – Communication*
- Time:** 20 minutes.
- Objectives:**
- To give people practice in listening to others and make them aware of poor listening habits.
- What to do:**
- You might like to use Similarities and Differences (page 72) to divide the group into opposing pairs.
 - Explain to the participants that what we are going to do is have a discussion, in pairs, about an issue. The discussion has one rule:
After each speaker has made a statement, their partner must repeat that statement before she/he can state her/his own view.
Eg. Kim: "I think that students should be allowed to smoke in special areas at school, if their parents let them smoke."
Sean : "So you reckon that kids should be allowed to smoke in certain areas at school, as long as their parents let them smoke. Well I think that smoking is unhealthy and it shouldn't be allowed at schools at all."
Kim: "You think that smoking is unhealthy and so it shouldn't be allowed at school, but I think it's your right to smoke if you want to..." etc.
 - Make a statement and ask the group to divide into those who agree and those who disagree. Ask each person to choose a partner from the other group (join in if numbers are uneven). Make sure everyone is clear about what is expected of them.
 - Ask pairs to sit down and start their discussion.
 - After five minutes, stop the discussion, draw the group together and debrief with lead questions such as:
What did you find hard about that activity?

Did anyone find it easy?

What did you learn about listening?

What did you learn about yourself?

- Finish up by saying that this activity helped show us all how difficult it can be to listen and how listening is more than just not talking. Listening is hearing and taking into account what another person is saying and being able to show them that you heard and understood them.

Twilight zone

- Type:** *Skills Development – Communication*
- Time:** 10-15 minutes.
- Objectives:**
- To become more aware of the factors which can influence how well a group works together
- What to do:**
- Explain that this activity will help us look at the effect that seating arrangements have on how well a discussion runs.
 - Tell participants that in this activity you are going to ask them to travel through new dimensions by moving into a new physical position when you make the sound of the *Twilight Zone* music (you know it! – Do da Do Do, Do Da Do Do... – if not, just say *Twilight Zone!*).
 - Explain that when we have travelled through a few dimensions of the Twilight Zone we will stop and discuss what effects these different physical shapes and ways of working had on the discussion.
 - Choose another discussion topic from Similarities and Differences (or another issue you think people will be interested in discussing.)

- Ask the group to sit in a circle and begin discussing the topic.
- After a couple of minutes (no more than three minutes) make the sound (or say Twilight Zone!) and get the group to sit in a figure eight form.
- Continue the discussion.
- After a couple more minutes make the sound again and ask some of the group to sit on chairs, some on the floor, wherever anyone wants to sit.
- Continue the discussion.
- After a couple more minutes ask the group to all lie on their backs in their own space in the room. Continue the discussion for a few minutes.
- Ask everyone to sit back in the circle.
- Debrief:

What effect did sitting in the figure eight have?

What was it like for you (Quang) having (Spiro and Natasha) speak across the front of you?

What effect did scattering and sitting on chairs have?

How did you feel (Nadia) having (Jason) sitting on the chair talking down to you?

Why did you sit in the corner (Alice)?

What effects did lying on our backs have?

What affect did not seeing other people talking have on you when you were talking? When you were listening?

How interested were you in the discussion when you were in the circle? Figure eight? Lying down?

Transmitting information

Type:

Skills Development – Communication

Time:

15 minutes.

Materials:

- Butchers' paper.

Objectives:

- To show that communication can be misunderstood and that messages need to be clearly stated.
- To develop more effective ways of communicating.

What to do:

- Explain to the group that you are going to split into groups of four. Count off group members – No.1, 2, 3, 4 etc. so each person knows their number.
- Ask the No.1s to stay in the room and all others to move outside.
- Explain to all the No.1s (who are all the people still in the room) that you are going to read them a story. They cannot take notes or ask questions, they should just listen to it. Explain that each person will have to pair up with one of the No.2's and repeat the story to that person. Only that person is allowed to hear what they say (whispering would be a good idea).
- Read the story to all the No.1's.

A Sample Transmitting Information story

A young woman was driving a red Porsche along the old Northern Road at Dural. As she turned left, a man driving a green Holden ute was trying to get on to the highway.

Because he couldn't see properly he drove into the young woman's car. The impact pushed the young woman's car onto the wrong side of the road and caused it to collide with a minibus carrying a mother, father, three young children and an elderly grandmother.

The collision dented all three cars but no one, including the 14 month old baby who had just learned to talk, was hurt. Everyone was able to continue their journey.

- After you've read the story, ask the No.2's to come back into the room. Each No.1 repeats the story to one of the No.2's.
- The No.3's now hear the story from the No.2's with the No.1's observing.
- If you have more people, keep doing this until everyone has had their turn.
- Ask all the No.3's (or whatever is the last number) to write what they remember of the story on butchers' paper and stick it up on the wall. Stick up the original story next to what the No.3's have written.
- Ask the group to sit in a semi-circle so they can see both sheets of butchers' paper, ask them to read both stories and debrief the group about what they experienced in the activity.

How much of the story was lost in the telling?

How much was added to the story?

What errors or differences did you see as the story passed from person to person?

How is this activity similar to your experiences at school or home?

How is this activity different from what happens in the "real world"?

Behaviours

Type:

Skills Development – Self Esteem

Time:

45 minutes.

Materials:

- Textas, butchers' paper.

Objectives:

- To get the group to look at some of the behaviours they engage in, analyse the messages that they send to other people when they engage in these behaviours, decide whether they agree with these messages and work out where to go from there.

What to do:

- Introduce the session, explaining a bit about the aim of the next 45 minutes. "We will be looking at some of our behaviours and examining the messages behind them (the things that people understand us to mean by our actions/what people think we think when we do a certain thing). Then we will look at whether these messages are statements we believe in/agree with or not and what we should do about it."
- Brainstorm: "*What are some of the things we do when we are in groups of our peers or with our friends?*". (For boys groups a suggested focus is the particular behaviours that boys engage in that girls don't, to highlight gender inequality and the way it shows itself eg. "*What are some things boys do that girls don't?*") If the group is having difficulty, you may need to make some suggestions eg. go to parties, talk in the classroom, eat in school uniform.
- An alternative, as the exercise is at least partly in order to see ourselves as others see us, is to run two brainstorms, parallel to each other. One would be "*What are some things we do that teachers do approve of?*". The other would be "*What are some things we do that teachers don't approve of?*".
- Put up two pieces of butchers' paper next to each other. Write

Behaviours at the top of the left hand sheet, pick out three to six of the most important ideas from the brainstorm and write them up. Write *Messages* at the top of the other sheet and next to each of the ideas on the behaviours list, write up what the group thinks the message of each behaviour is ie. what someone would think a person was who was performing this kind of behaviour was like. Ask the group to look carefully through the lists of behaviours and messages.

- Now got through the list of messages one by one and ask the group whether they agree with each message or not ie. whether this is the type of message they want to be sending to the people around them.
- Run a discussion on the conclusions that can be drawn from analysing your behaviours through the eyes of other people (see Debriefing). Make sure that you don't blame the group for their behaviour, or give them the impression that you are judging them or think they are "bad". Stress that you do not necessarily want them to change their behaviour. The message someone perceives behind a behaviour may mean something completely different to the person doing it.

Goal setting

Type:

Skills Development – Self Esteem

Time:

45 minutes.

Materials:

- Half a pack of cards per participant (get cards that have a matt finish or old cards – new ones are too smooth to build towers).
- A copy of *The Goal Setting Sheet* for each person.
- Butchers' paper, pens, textas, tape.
- A prepared sheet of butchers' paper with three columns headed:

Participants names	Goal	Actually Achieved
--------------------	------	-------------------

Objectives:

- To understand that a goal is a clear picture of something you want to achieve.
- Recognise that sometimes we set the goals that we think other people will like, rather than our own goals.
- Recognise that you can build confidence through realistic achievable goals.
- Have experience working towards a goal.

What to do:

- Explain that in this session we are going to look at goals. What are some goals that you have set for yourself lately, or in the past?
- Encourage a range of ideas, not just sporting or money.
- Explain that what we are going to do now is spend some time setting and working towards goals and after that we'll discuss the experience. We'll build card houses as an example of how you might set goals.
- Demonstrate building a card house (or get a group member to if you can't!).
- Hand out half a pack of cards to each person. Allow a few

minutes for people to practise building a card house – make sure everyone has got the basic idea before going on.

- **Round 1.** Ask participants to turn to their *Goal Setting Sheet*. Each person sets a goal of how many stories they can build in five minutes, then writes this number down on the sheet. The leader then writes everybody's name and goal on the prepared butchers' paper.
- Allow five minutes for tower-building.
- Now ask each person to write the actual number of stories they achieved on their sheet and the leader records these on butchers' paper in the 'Actually Achieved' column. Encourage people to think about the comparison between their goal and what they actually achieved. Ask them to write their thoughts down on the *Goal Setting Sheet*, or have a brief discussion.
- **Round 2.** As before, each person sets a goal of how many stories they can build in five minutes and writes this number on their sheet, but this time they do not tell anyone else their goal.
- Allow five minutes for building.
- Each person again writes the number they achieved on their sheet. Once again, encourage people to think about the comparison between their goal and what they achieved and to write any thoughts down on their *Goal Setting Sheet*, or discuss again.
- **Round 3.** Divide the group into teams of three or four people. Each team decides how many stories they will aim to build as a team. They can build up to three towers side by side if they wish and count each story in their final tally. The winning team is the team with the greatest number of completed stories standing at the end of the five minutes. Allow each team five minutes for building.

- Each person records the number of stories their team achieved. The leader records each team's goal and achievement on butchers' paper.

- Debrief:

Ask people how they felt during the activity.

Discuss the experience, looking at some of these issues:

The difference between Round 1 and Round 2

e.g. goal public or private; more experience in Round 2.

The difference between working alone and in a group.

The effect of competition.

Different measures of success – meeting your own goal versus beating other people.

- You may find it better to run the discussion in the small groups first. Give each small group three questions, eg:

How did you feel during the activity?

What happened when your group was building the card house?

What difference did it make when you set a public goal?

This sometimes works better, particularly with less vocal groups. Then get the small groups together in the big group for a discussion.

- The Discussion is a very important part of the session, so leave enough time for it. If this part of the session is rushed or left out, the activity remains an activity – fun to do and a good way to fill in an hour. But a good discussion here means that group members can apply the activity to real life and it then becomes a learning experience.

Ask how this activity relates to real life – for example to the sorts of goals people mentioned at the start of the session?

Possible issues include:

Goals need to be important to you (was there anyone who found building card houses boring or stupid? How seriously did they take the goals?).

If your goals are realistic then you have more chance of achieving them. If you haven't tried to achieve something before, it is difficult to know how much you could achieve.

How do you feel when you:

- Achieve a goal
- Fail just a bit
- Fail by a long way

What is the effect of publicly declaring your goals?

- Finish the session by giving participants a few minutes to write down a goal for themselves on the bottom of the Goal Setting Sheet.

Handout • Goal Setting Sheet

ROUND 1: Individual

How many stories I aim to build in five minutes: _____

How many I actually built: _____

Comments: _____

ROUND 2: Individual

How many stories I aim to build in five minutes: _____

How many I actually built: _____

Comments: _____

ROUND 3: Group

How many stories we aim to build in five minutes: _____

How many we actually built: _____

Comments: _____

SOME GOALS OF MINE

A goal of mine would be to: _____

I'd like to achieve it because: _____

To achieve it I'd need: _____

Letter to myself

- Type:** *Skills Development – Self Esteem*
- Time:** 30-45 minutes.
- Materials:** • A pen, paper and envelope for each participant.
- Objectives:** • For participants to think about a given topic, express their ideas on it in writing, and then receive a reminder of it down the track when they receive their letter back.
- What to do:**
- Ask participants to find a space where they will not be disturbed. Explain: "You have 30 minutes now to write a letter to yourself about (put your own topic in). When you've finished, put the letter in the envelope you've been given, write your own name and address on the front of the envelope, and hand the sealed envelopes up to me. In one year's time, you'll receive this letter from yourself in the mail. It will be like a time-capsule, reminding you of what you were thinking one year ago."
 - Give the group time to write their letters. Collect them.
 - One year later (or however long you've told the group): stamp the envelopes, and pop them in the mail.
- Notes:**
- A good follow up to Guided Recall, as it is individual and doesn't require participants to feedback to the group, but still makes concrete what participants have thought about. Tends to be most powerful when used with personal, affective issues, particularly goal-setting stuff like "Where do I want to be in one year's time?"
 - Make sure you will be in a position to post the letters back when you promised to.

Strengths

- Type:** *Skills Development – Self Esteem*
- Time:** 15-25 minutes.
- Materials:** • A copy of the *Strengths Sheet* for each participant.
- Objectives:** • To appreciate our strengths and share them with someone else.
- What to do:**
- Hand out the *Strengths Sheet* and give group members five to ten minutes to complete it.
 - Ask group members to pair with someone they haven't spent much time with yet at this workshop and explain their sheet to them.

Handout • Strengths sheet

The following are some areas in which strengths can be found. Some of us may have most of our strengths in one area, such as sports, others may have one or two strengths in a number of areas. Use this guide to help you think of all the possible strengths you may have: circle the ones you do. Those listed are only examples, so include any others which have not been mentioned. Remember they are to be your strengths - it doesn't matter if you have a long or a short list of important strengths - no one else can have quite the same mixture as you.

Skills:

1. Able to do sums quickly in your head.
2. Able to write clearly about facts or ideas.
3. Able to work well with your hands in making or repairing things.
4. Able to convince others about an idea.
5. Able to talk easily to different kinds of people.
6. Able to make the most of your appearance.
7. Able to grow plants.
8. Able to cook well.
9. Able to speak a foreign language.
10. Able to climb mountains.
11. Able to play a particular sport well.
12. Able to play a musical instrument.

Using your reasoning abilities:

1. You can stick at a problem until you've sorted it out.
2. You can pick up plots of films, plays and books easily.
3. You have a curious mind. You can accept new ideas.
4. You can talk or write clearly about ideas.
5. You have new ideas of your own.
6. You can make decisions by considering both sides of a question.
7. You can think well under pressure.

School strengths:

1. What were you good at in primary school?
2. What are you good at in high school?

What activities do you enjoy?

1. Reading.
2. Making things eg. pottery, jewellery, models.
3. Being with other people.
4. Solving puzzles and problems.
5. Selling things.
6. Outdoor activities and sports.
7. Helping people.
8. Listening to or playing music, singing, dancing.
9. Watching, or helping in plays.
10. Painting or designing things.
11. Speaking another language.

What other strengths do you have?

Social strengths:

1. Helping others eg. elderly people or young children.
2. Being active in your local community.
3. Able to make friends easily.
4. Have a sense of humour.
5. Understanding people's feelings.
6. Getting on with your family.

Leaders in Space

Type: *Skills Development – Leadership*

Time: 60 minutes.

Materials: • Leaders in Space story for each participant.

Objectives: • To promote discussion about leadership and working in groups.

What to do:

- Hand out the Leaders in Space story and read through it.
- Ask participants to form groups of three to discuss the story and answer the questions at the bottom (give them five minutes).
- Then ask each group of three to join another (making sub-groups of six) and see if they can come to a group consensus about who did the most and who did the least.
- Finally, come together as a group and discuss the activity using questions like:

How did you feel doing the exercise?

How difficult was it to reach agreement in each group?

In the Leaders in Space story did anyone really do more than anyone else?

What were the different styles of leadership used? (Hint: there may be some clues in the Saturnian's names!)

Should one person try to use all these styles?

How is this like real life leadership situations?

Handout • The Leaders in Space Story

In the deep reaches of space, five blue Saturnians (Org, Mot, Cre-at, Od and Ofni) were trapped on a planet, and their supply of breathable liquid was running out!

Cre-at had an idea, a way to build a spaceship that would carry them all back to Saturn. It was only a vague idea at first, but Cre-at knew that if she could get her spaceship built, it would be their big chance (perhaps their only chance) to escape.

However, Cre-at's idea was so strange (it was like a giant slingshot) that when Cre-at tried to convince Org to help her build the spaceship, Org thought the whole idea was ridiculous. Cre-at's plans for escape looked doomed.

Cre-at mentioned the plan to Ofni. Ofni, listening carefully, realised that it was really quite brilliant and was sure to work. Ofni then went to Org and convinced her that the plan was brilliant.

Org knew that all five Saturnians would have to agree to the plan before it could go ahead (an ancient Saturnian custom), so she asked Ofni to call a meeting. Everyone got together, and after a great deal of arguing (and some help from Mot, who made sure everyone got a say and was listened to), the Saturnians agreed to go ahead with Cre-at's plan.

But when it came to drawing up the plans, there was a crisis. Cre-at thought of the spaceship as her own work of art. She wanted to take a lot of time to design it, so that it would be the most beautiful spaceship ever seen. Org knew that they didn't have much time to get off the planet, and so she demanded that the plans be made very quickly. But Cre-at refused to design the ship without making it beautiful, and so she stopped working. No one else could design the ship. The Saturnians seemed doomed!

Mot talked to Org and Cre-at, and got them to agree on a compromise. A plan was drawn up which was a bit beautiful, and could be built just in time.

Org was the only Saturnian skilled in engineering, so she worked out where to get

the materials for the ship, and how to build it. But she couldn't do much of the building, as she was too short.

Od was the only one strong enough to do the incredible tasks needed to build the spaceship. She was 15 metres tall and covered in thick, strong tentacles. With Org giving advice. Od was able to build the ship without major hassles.

A few times, however, Od walked off the job when Org or Cre-at criticised her work. But each time Mot bought them back together with encouraging words all round. The ship was completed and the five Saturnians were able to return home just in time.

Which of the five Saturnians (Org, Mot, Cre-at, Od and Ofni) did the most to help the rescue?

Who did the least?

Leadership styles

Type:

Skills Development – Leadership

Time:

60 minutes.

Materials:

A *Leadership Style Questionnaire*, a *Leadership Situations Sheet*, pen and paper for each participant.

Objectives:

- To examine different styles of leadership.
- To relate leadership styles to different situations.

What to do:

- Introduce the exercise by stating that it will be about leadership styles. In order to obtain information and analyse these styles, participants will need to fill out and mark the Leadership Style Questionnaire.
- Hand out the Questionnaires and read the directions. Ask participants to complete the Questionnaire items and mark them themselves (giving themselves a score on Task Style, a score on People Style and a score on Laid Back Style).
- Have a discussion on the meaning of Task, People and Laid Back styles.
- Individual scores can be written up in order to demonstrate the range. Discussion can then centre on the differences noted within the group.
- Hopefully, the discussion will lead to a point where it is obvious not only that people have different leadership styles, but that the situation, or context, of leadership is important. At this point the *Leadership Situations Sheet* can be handed out and used to focus discussions (see Debriefing).

Variation:

- An interesting variation is to place, say, all highly task-oriented people together to solve some problem, eg. the structural experience 'Symbol', and for the remainder of the group to task as observers. Often the discussion of what happens will

lead to a realisation that perhaps both aspects of leadership are important in a group, whether they come from one, or a number of members.

Notes:

- **Leadership styles** – Experienced leaders use many complex and subtle means to exercise influence and stimulate participants to creative and productive efforts. From the complex range of leader behaviour, we have selected five of the most typical patterns, ranging from highly leader-centred to highly group-centred:
- “Telling”... The leader identifies a problem, considers alternative solutions, chooses one of them, and then tells the group what they are to do. They may or may not consider what they believe the group members will think or feel about the decision, but participants clearly do not participate directly in the decision-making. Coercion may or may not be used or implied.
- “Selling”... The leader, as before, makes the decision without consulting the group. However, instead of simply announcing a decision, they try to persuade the group members to accept it. The leader points out how they have considered organisation goals and the interests of group members and states how the members will benefit from carrying out the decision.
- “Testing”... The leader identifies a problem and proposes a tentative solution. Before finalising it, however, they get the reactions of those who will implement it. The leader says, in effect, “I’d like your frank reactions to this proposal, and I will then make the final decision.”
- “Consulting”... The leader here gives the group members a chance to influence the decision from the beginning. They present a problem and relevant background for the group’s ideas on how to solve it. In effect, the group is invited to increase the number of alternative actions to be considered. The

leader then selects the solution they regard as most promising.

- “Joining”... The leader here participates in the discussion as “just another member” – and agrees in advance to carry out whatever decision the group makes. The only limits placed on the group are those given to the leader by others. (Many research and development teams make decisions this way.)

Handout • Leadership Styles Questionnaire

Circle the way you would most likely act if you were a leader of a group. Would you:

- | | | | |
|--|-----|------------|----|
| 1. Criticise poor work. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 2. Most likely act as spokesperson of the group. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 3. Encourage people to work overtime. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 4. Do personal favours for group members. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 5. Put most suggestions made by group members into operation. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 6. Treat all group members as equal to myself. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 7. Work to a plan. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 8. Make sure all group members are working hard as they can. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 9. Make sure all group members follow the rules. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 10. Take time to listen to group members even if they want to talk about things other than work. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 11. Explain all my actions. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 12. Consult with all the group members before making a decision. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 13. Decide what should be done and how it should be done. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 14. Stress being better at the work than other groups. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 15. Make sure everyone knows what is expected of them. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 16. Be friendly and approachable. | Yes | Don't Know | No |

- | | | | |
|--|-----|------------|----|
| 17. Allow group members to do their work the way they think best. | Yes | Don't Know | No |
| 18. Do everything to make group members feel at ease when talking with me. | Yes | Don't Know | No |

Scoring: Add your scores on the three styles of leadership (Task, People and Laid Back)

Task: Give yourself one point for answering yes to questions 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14 and 15

People: Give yourself one point for answering yes to questions 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17 and 18

Laid Back: Give yourself one point for all the "Don't Know" answers.

In each of the following situations what do you think the leadership style should be: Task, People, Laid Back, or some combination of these?

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. A rescue team at a mine disaster. | _____ |
| 2. A discussion session in your group. | _____ |
| 3. A soccer player with a penalty shot at goal. | _____ |
| 4. A group studying for a final exam. | _____ |
| 5. A committee meeting concerned with the expulsion of a student from school. | _____ |

Leadership that fails to act

- Type:** *Skills Development – Leadership*
- Time:** 45 minutes.
- Objectives:**
- To realise the effects upon participants if the person designated as leader fails to act.
- What to do:**
- The group leader should choose someone from the group (or ask someone from outside) to be the 'leader'. Brief them beforehand on what they should do.
 - The group leader introduces the new 'leader' who stands up, expresses their pleasure at being present, says "I'm sure we will have a good time together," then sits down. The 'leader' remains seated and observes the behaviour of the group. He does not answer questions.
 - No leadership action occurs for two minutes. (If group confusion requires earlier intervention, shorten the time).
 - At the end of the two minutes, the group leader explains the activity is designed to show what happens when the person designated as a leader fails to act clearly. Debrief the experience with questions like:

How did you feel when the person who was introduced sat down without giving leadership?

What did you think was happening?

What were you thinking of doing?
 - The group leader summarises with the conclusion that the person who is designated as leader has an opportunity and unless they act in some manner, others will take over or there will be confusion. There should not be a vacuum.

My best leader

- Type:** *Skills Development – Leadership*
- Time:** 20 minutes.
- Materials:**
- Paper and pens, butchers' paper and textas.
- Objectives:**
- To help participants identify leadership in action more clearly.
- What to do:**
- Ask each person to recall the best leader they ever had – at any age. Ask them to get a specific person in mind, someone with whom they spent considerable time. After they have this person in mind, ask each person, working alone, to jot down the three most important things this person did that made them such a good leader.
 - After several minutes of each working alone, ask participants to form groups of four or five people and to compare their answers. They should make a list of all the important things that make a group leader.
 - Asks each group in turn to give one idea and write it up on butchers' paper until you have written up all the ideas. If any groups have the same or a similar idea, underline the idea.
 - Read ideas (especially the underlined ones) and ask the group if these would be characteristic of effective leadership.
- Variation:**
- Instead of recalling "the best leader" participants may recall "The most helpful person" each has known, and try to identify why they remembered them as being so helpful.

Energisers & CONCENTRATORS

Apple, apple, apple

- Type:** *Energiser*
Time: 5 minutes.
Materials: • A chair for each participant except one.
What to do: • Start with the group sitting in a circle on chairs and one person standing in the middle. Explain that each chair will be named after a fruit and we all need to listen to which fruits are chosen. Go around the circle and ask participants to nominate a different fruit for their chair. Explain that the person in the middle now says one of the fruit names three times (eg. 'apple, apple, apple' or 'pear, pear, pear') and the person sitting on that chair must say the fruit name once before the person in the middle has said it three times. If they do not, they go into the middle and the person in the middle takes their seat.
- Encourage the person in the middle to be quick and to keep saying new fruits if they do not catch people out.
- Variations:
- Have more than one person in the middle.
 - Use some other class of things instead of fruit, eg. animals, towns

Cat and mouse

- Type:** *Energiser*
Time: 10-20 minutes.
What to do: • Ask the group to form a circle, then every second person to

stand behind the person on their right (so you end up with pairs facing inwards in a circle). One person becomes the 'cat' (the chaser) and another the 'mouse' (the person being chased).

- The cat chases the mouse around and through the circle – if they tip the mouse, the cat and mouse swap roles (the mouse becomes the cat and vice versa).
 - To get to safety, a mouse can stand in front of one of the pairs – then the person at the back of the pair becomes the new mouse and the cat must chase them. Keep playing until everyone has been a mouse!
- Variations:
- You can have more than one set of cats and mice going at once (but people must remember which one they're chasing!)

Characteristics

- Type:** *Energiser*
Time: 5-10 minutes.
Materials: • Chairs or place markers (eg. a pen) for each participant.
What to do: • Form a circle, with one person standing in the middle - this should be the leader the first time - and the others sitting on the chairs (or standing behind their place markers).
- The person in the middle tries to get someone else's place by calling out a characteristic, eg. 'anyone with blue jeans'. Those who fit the description must get up and find another place in the circle. They can't go back where they were, or next to where they were.
 - While people change places, the person in the middle tries to get a place, leaving someone else in the middle.
 - This person then begins another round. Example characteristics:

Anyone wearing watches.

Anyone with older sisters.

Anyone who has blonde hair.

Anyone who had a shower last night.

- Notes:**
- Encourage people to remember things they've learnt about people from earlier (eg. Anyone who is 18, Anyone who likes soccer).

Dead blowie

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 5 minutes.

What to do:

- Form the group into a tight bunch at one end of the room, all facing the same way and squashed really close together. Everyone shuffles forward to the other end of the room taking very small steps. When the leader yells 'Dead Blowie' the whole group falls to the floor, lies on their backs, buzzes and waves their arms and legs in the air like a dead fly.

- The result can be spectacular and amusing.

- Notes:**
- A good, silly activity for a large group in a large space – outdoors, hall etc. Don't use if there are lots of women wearing dresses or skirts.

Farmyard

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Form a circle on your hands and knees with backsides facing inwards and eyes closed. The leader touches everyone on the head and tells them which animal they are: (eg. sheep, cow, chicken or dog).
 - Participants then group together (keeping their eyes shut) by making the noise of their animal and moving towards the sounds of other animals of the same type. eg. all the cows to get together etc.

- Notes:**
- This activity is very silly.
 - Other animals can be substituted (pig, llama etc).
 - The first group to get together can be the 'winners'.

Fruit salad

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 5-10 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Form pairs, and sit on the floor in two lines so each person's outstretched legs touch those of their partner. The leader then gives each pair the name of a fruit. (eg. Apples, Oranges, Bananas, Mangos, Cherry etc.)
 - The leader then tells a story about making a fruit salad, and explains that every time she/he mentions the name of a fruit, the pair with that name jump up, race over the legs of the rest of the group to one end of the lines, run around the outside to the other end, and run back over the legs to their position.

- Every time the leader says the words 'Fruit Salad' the whole group run up and around and back to their positions.

Example Story: It was a hot summer's day and I realised that with all the people coming to dinner I had to make a dessert. Of course I had the **apples** from the tree in the garden, and Mum had brought some **oranges** yesterday. But I had to go to the market to buy the **bananas**, the **mangos** and some other fruit because I wanted to make a **fruit salad**. I drove there in my **orange** car, and bought some **mangos, cherries**, lettuce, a pair of **pears** and the **bananas**. Then I drove home and got ready to peel the fruit... etc.

Notes:

- Can be run as a race with large groups. Set up several groups as above (all must have the same fruits in the same order). As you play, give a point to the group which has the pair that is seated first.

Get the pen

Type: *Energiser*
Time: 5 minutes.
Materials: • A pen (or book, or whatever).

What to do:

- The group leader starts by placing the pen between their feet, with their feet about one metre apart. The person with the pen cannot move their feet. The other participants try to get the pen without being tipped. If they are tipped they have to move back two metres and start again.
- If someone manages to get the pen, they put the pen between their feet and the game begins again.

Human Obstacle Race

Type: *Energiser*
Time: 10-20 minutes.

What to do:

- Divide group into teams of five or six. The teams line up. 1 moves down the line patting 2 on the head; crawling through 3's legs; linking arms and spinning with 4; sitting on 5's right knee; blowing in 6's ear etc.
- No.1 then swaps places with no.2 and no.2 goes down the line carrying out the tasks in the same order, and so on. The first team to finish is the winner. Make up your own tasks for the number you have in each team.

Notes:

- Use as an energiser. Be careful that the tasks suit the stage the group is at, ie. avoid close contact if group members don't know each other well.

Human scissors, paper, stone

Type: *Energiser*
Time: 5-10 minutes.

What to do:

- Ask the group to form pairs and explain that you are going to play a full-body version of the scissors, paper, stone game. On the count of three, everyone chooses one of these three body positions:
 1. Scissors – Arms up in a V shape like giant scissors.
 2. Paper – Legs apart and arms out like a giant piece of paper.
 3. Stone – Crouched over like a giant rock.

- Each pair keeps score of how they go in a best of five to ten rounds. Remember:
 - Scissors beats (cuts) paper (1 point each).
 - Paper beats (wraps) stone (1 point each).
 - Stone beats (blunts) scissors (1 point each).
 - If both partners are the same, it's a tie (1 point each).

I'm mowing the lawn

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 10 minutes.

What to do: • Ask the group to form a circle. The leader starts off, saying 'I'm mowing the lawn'. The next person in the circle makes the action of mowing the lawn, and at the same time says a new action, eg. 'I'm brushing my teeth' or 'I'm washing the dog' or 'I'm hoovering the fridge' etc. Continue around the circle for as long as you want.

Notes: • This activity is actually tougher than it sounds. Let the group start off slowly. As the group goes around, people's confidence will increase. Then you can increase the speed. The faster the better.

Magic chant

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: • 'Magic' lollies, fruit bars or ice-creams for everyone in the group.

What to do:

- Ask group members to lie in a circle with their heads facing inwards. Tell them that they are going to shut their eyes and make one of two ancient Sanskrit magical sounds for two minutes (see sounds list, below). They should vary the loudness or pitch of the sound and make lots of noise. If their chant is successful, it will invoke magical powers...
- While the participants makes the sounds, the group leader runs around and puts the 'magic' lollies or ice-cream at the feet of each group member. After two minutes, tell the group to arise: their chant has been successful!
- The magical sounds can include:
 - Cot and Apri (Apricot Fruit bars) etc
 - Num and Mag (Magnum ice-creams)
 - Lo and Rol (Rollo chocolates)
 - Mello and Cara (Caramello chocolates)

Magnets

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 5 minutes.

What to do:

- You need a largish space where nothing can be broken. Ask participants to privately pick two other people in the group – it doesn't matter who.
- Once everyone has two other people in mind, explain that the first person they picked they are magnetically 'attracted' to, and the second person they picked they are magnetically 'repelled' by.
- The leader then asks everyone to 'act like magnets', ie. run after the person they are attracted to, while at the same time running away from the person they are repelled by. Chaos follows for 2-3 minutes!

Mill and grab

Type: *Energiser*
Time: 10 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Everyone mills about (walks around in different directions amongst each other, saying 'mill, mill, mill').
 - The leader calls a number and people grab each other to form a group of this size. When people have the right sized group, they hold hands and bob down. After a short time, the group is asked to 'mill' again.
 - This procedure is repeated a number of times, with the final grab ideally including all of the group together.

- Notes:**
- You can play 'Mill Characteristics' – Ask people to form groups with a size and characteristic. (eg. six people with the same colour eyes, eight people the same height, four people the same starsign etc.) or Mill Sheep – play the game on hands and knees.
 - Or you can make it competitive and eliminate those not in a complete group each time (Call out small group sizes if using this variation).
 - Mill and Grab is a good energiser to lead into small group based activities; especially when you want to randomly separate people into groups – make the last number called the size you want the groups to be (eg. call 'sixteen' or 'fifteen people with the same colour nametag').
 - A group of people who don't know each other well may tend to 'stand next to' instead of 'grab'.

Moving Chair

Type: *Energiser*
Time: 5-10 minutes.
Materials:

- Chairs for each participant.

- What to do:**
- Form a circle sitting on the chairs. One person stands in the middle leaving their chair empty – this should be the leader the first time.
 - The object of the game is for the person in the middle to try to sit down on the empty chair, while the others try to stop them. They do this by quickly moving one chair to their left or right, so the circle keeps 'flowing' around – until the middle person manages to squeeze in somewhere.
 - If the middle person sits down, the person who let them in goes in the middle, and the game is repeated.

Notes: Watch that this game doesn't get too rough.

Circle clap

Type: *Energiser*
Time: 2-5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Ask the group to stand in the circle. Explain that we are going to send a clap around the circle. Start the activity by clapping once and asking the person next to you to clap once, followed by the person next to them and so on until the clap returns to the first person. Set the group the goal of seeing how fast they can 'pass' the clap around the circle.
 - It may be helpful to explain the activity as being like a 'Mexican Wave' that spectators do at the cricket only we are all clapping

- Variations:
- once instead of standing up or raising our arms.
 - Ask people to be creative in how they pass and catch the clap, eg. pretend they are passing and catching some sort of ball (throw it over your head, up high and wait for it to fall back down etc).
 - Use some other physical action instead of a clap. (In a big group you can do a Mexican Wave).

Rabbit, rabbit, rabbit

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- The group stands in a circle fairly closely together, facing inwards. Someone stands in the middle, faces one of the group and says either: 'Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit' or 'Elephant, Elephant, Elephant.'
 - The person spoken to and the two people either side of them have until the person has finished saying 'Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit' or 'Elephant, Elephant, Elephant' to turn into either a rabbit (if the person says 'rabbit...') or elephant (if the person says 'elephant').
- To become a rabbit the person in the middle lifts both hands up in front of their mouth with fingers facing straight down (like buck teeth) and the outside people scratch with their outside legs.
- To become an elephant the person in the middle puts their head down and joins hands in front of their body (like the trunk of an elephant) and the people on the outside place their outside hand on their outside hip with their elbow pointing outwards (like an elephant's ear).

- If a group members does not turn into the animal in time they become the person in the middle.

Notes:

1. Substitute two other animals and actions (eg. monkey, crocodile, wombat, armadillo).
2. You can also make the sounds of the animals.
3. The person in the middle can name any animal, and just the person they face must become it. The rest of the group judges if their animal is good, if it's not, they have to go into the middle.

Shipwreck

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Tell the group that they are the crew of a ship which has just run aground. In order for everything to work out safely, you will yell orders that have to be followed quickly. The orders are:
 - 'Portside' – All run to the left.
 - 'Starboard' – All run to the right.
 - 'Hit the deck' – All fall to the floor.
 - 'Climb the rigging' – Everyone mimes climbing the mast.
 - 'Person overboard' – Sit down and mime rowing a boat.
 - Call out a series of orders, jumbling them up, and keep everyone moving.
 - Don't go for too long. Other orders/actions can be substituted.

The Domain

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 10 minutes.

- What to do:**
- One half of the group are speakers, the other half are the audience. Give the speakers a topic eg. 'Why Cats are better than Dogs', 'Smoking', 'My Family'. The speakers then scatter around the room, and when the leader says 'go', they must speak interestingly for two minutes and attract as many people to listen to them as possible. The speakers can't stop or be distracted.
 - After two minutes, swap the groups around so that the audience are now speakers and vice versa. Give the new speakers a new topic.

- Notes:**
- You can give each speaker a different topic or have a specific theme relevant to the group for the topic. eg. The Future, Why our Student Council works etc.
 - A good exercise for public speaking or assertiveness training. Don't use too early in a group's development.

Who am I?

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 10 minutes.

- Materials:**
- A sticker or tag for each person with a famous name written on it.

- What to do:**
- Begin with everyone in a circle or a line, while the leader attaches a sticker to each person's back or forehead, and explains the activity. On each sticker is the name of one half of

a famous pair. Each person can see other people's tags, but of course not their own.

- Everyone mingles and asks questions of other players to try to discover who they are, and their 'other half'. People can only answer the questions with the words 'yes', 'no' or 'I don't know'.
- Once a player thinks they know who they are and who their pair is, they go with their 'other half' to the leader and ask if they are right. If not, they continue in the activity. If they are a correct pair, they wait at the side, and can still answer other people's questions. Continue the activity until everyone knows who they are and have found their 'other half'.

Examples of famous pairs include:

Romeo and Juliet	Charles and Diana
Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers	Bacon and Eggs
Kylie & Dannii Minogue	Rocky and Bullwinkle
Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse	Maxwell Smart and '99'
Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble	Batman and Robin

Notes:

- You could also use individual famous names.
- Play with three people with stickers on their foreheads asking yes/no questions of the rest of the group. Each person keeps answering questions until they get a 'no' or guess their character (like 'Celebrity Head' from the old TV show 'Hey Hey It's Saturday').

Woosh!

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Tell everyone you are going to make a 'woosh!' (quickly demonstrate) and that everyone should follow what you do.
 - Ask the group to stand in a circle and hold hands. Crouch down low, and very slowly begin humming the 'woo' sound from 'Woosh' and moving upwards. When you reach standing position, get louder, move your hands above your head and finally jump up in the air and shout 'woosh!'.

Variations:

- Say other words instead of 'woosh' eg. the name of someone in the group.

Yes, let's!

Type: *Energiser*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Explain that no matter what instruction you give your group, they are to say, loud and very enthusiastically, 'Yes, let's and then do it. The leader must join in with each activity.

Examples:

- crawl like a baby
- do five push-ups
- squash into the corner
- pretend to be a dog
- hop on your right foot and say your name ten times
- run around the room saying hello to people
- run around in a circle with your hands on the person in front of you

Notes:

- You can make the last instruction lead to whatever is happening next, eg. 'Everyone sit in a circle on the floor' or 'Everyone come to the main hall.'

Buzz

Type: *Concentrator*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- This is a counting game. Sit in a circle. Someone starts by saying '1'. The next person says '2' and so on around the circle, except that any person that has a number containing a 7 (eg. 7, 17, 27 etc) or that is a multiple of 7 (eg. 7, 14, 21, 28 etc) must say 'buzz' instead of the number. If anyone makes a mistake, the activity must start again at '1'. Start with a different person each time.

- Variations:
- You can use other numbers (3, 4, 6 and 8 are good) or increase the complexity of the game by saying 'fizz' for 5's and multiples of 5 as well as 'buzz' for 7's.
 - Create your own words to be used instead of 'fizz' and 'buzz' eg. whizz, glug etc.
 - Play a challenge round (people drop out if they make a mistake) or set a goal to reach eg. 30 or 50.

I'm packing my bags

Type: *Concentrator*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- The leader starts, saying 'I'm packing my bags, and I'm putting in an... eg. something beginning with A ...apple'. The next

person says 'I'm packing my bags, and in them I'm putting an apple, and a... (something beginning with B). The next person has to recall the last two things, and say something beginning with C. Get as close to Z as you can.

Notes:

- Depending on time, you can either stop at the first mistake, start again each time someone makes a mistake, have the person who makes a mistake drop out and keep going around the circle, or just ignore/correct mistakes and keep on going.
- You can specify a particular type of bag, and its contents. This can help the group focus on the purpose of a workshop, or may just be fun. You could make the activity focus on what the group is learning with questions like: 'I'm packing my skills bag with things I've learned to do', 'I'm packing my resource bag with good things for a group leader', or 'I'm packing my bag with things I like about myself'. You can make it a semi-brainstorm: 'I'm packing my bags with fun things to do in the holidays'. If the group is very comfortable with each other, you can focus it on a group member: 'Jane is packing her bags and in them she is putting...'

Killer Wink

Type: *Concentrator*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Sit in a circle with eyes closed. The leader walks behind the circle and nominates a 'killer' by touching someone on the head.
 - Group members open their eyes and the killer now tries to 'kill' others in the circle by winking at them. The victims must 'die' five seconds after being winked at by spectacularly falling out of

the circle. Group members must guess who the killer is. Anyone who guesses wrongly must 'die' and move out of the circle.

Variations:

1. Group stands up and moves randomly around the room while playing.
2. More than one killer can be nominated.
3. All the group can be nominated as 'killer'
4. The leader can become the killer and stand to the side as if not playing.

Mirrors**Type:***Concentrator***Time:**

5 minutes.

What to do:

- Form pairs. One partner begins to move very slowly and the other partner 'mirrors' their actions exactly (you can stand or sit, or move from one to the other). Swap over after a few minutes so the other partner 'leads'.

Variations:

- One person stands out the front and the rest of the group mirror them.

Real time scrabble**Type:***Concentrator***Time:**

5-10 minutes.

What to do:

- Sit in a circle. One person starts by saying a letter, any letter (eg. 'P'. The next person must add a letter, with a real word (not a name) in mind (eg. P-A for 'parrot'). Then the next person adds

a letter and so on (eg. P–A–R–E–N–T). If someone adds a letter and a group member thinks they are bluffing and have no word in mind, they can call their bluff and ask what the word is. If the first person has no real word they are out of the game and a new round begins. If they do have a word, the ‘accuser’ is out of the game.

- If someone cannot add a letter, or if the letter they add completes a word, they are out of the game and a new round begins.

Variations:

- Instead of people being out of the game, you can begin a new round.

Rhythms

Type: *Concentrator*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Sit in a circle. One person starts a simple rhythm, eg. clap–clap, stamp–stamp, clap–clap, stamp–stamp. Everyone joins in, and the person then says in time with their rhythm:
‘Tell me ... types of... eg. Spo–orts..... Foot–ball’.
 - Each person adds another name in time with the rhythm, going around the circle eg. clap–clap, stamp–stamp, clap–clap, Socc–er; clap–clap, stamp–stamp, clap–clap, Swim–ming; etc.
 - If anyone can’t name something, keep the rhythm going and go on to the next person until you have been round the circle.
 - Choose a different person to start the rhythm each time.

Examples: (Types of) fruit; cars; cities; TV shows; drinks; gemstones.

Notes: A fairly hard game. Use with a group that is comfortable with each other.

1. Play a challenge round where people drop out if they can’t name something.

Statues

Type: *Concentrator*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Ask participants to choose partners, and have them designate themselves A and B. A’s job is to mould B into a statue that expresses how A is feeling right now.
 - When this is done (allow a few minutes), ask the Bs to tell the As how they imagine they must be feeling. Give them a few minutes for sharing and swap over.

Tap, tap

Type: *Concentrator*

Time: 5 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Ask people to kneel in a circle with interlocking arms (right arms inside the person on your right and left arms inside the person on the left’s).
 - Explain that we will be passing a signal to the right around the group by tapping our hands on the floor – demonstrate (you tap your left hand, the person on your left taps their right hand, you tap your right hand, the person on your right taps their left hand and so on around the circle – the signal should go quite fast).
 - Now explain the tricky bit – people can reverse the direction of the signal by double-tapping. (Someone else can then double-tap to send it back in the original direction). If someone gets confused about which way the signal is going and taps at the wrong time or forgets to tap, their hand is ‘out’ (they put

it behind their back and that part of the circle re-links so that hands are still inside other hands).

- Keep going until there is one winning hand left (or make the winner the last person left with both hands in the circle).

Trains

Type: *Concentrator*

Time: 10 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Sit in a circle with one person in the middle. Everybody in the circle crosses arms and joins hands. The person in the middle closes their eyes and the group leader (or group) silently selects two people to be 'stations' and someone to start the train.
 - The train then goes around the circle, being passed from person to person by squeezing the next person's hand. The aim is for the person in the middle to spot the train. Players may wait up to five seconds before squeezing.
 - The stations must go 'toot toot' (like a train) when the signal passes through them. They may change the signal's direction to send it back the way it came.
 - Anyone spotted passing the signal becomes the next person in the middle.

- Variations:
- Have animals on the track as well as stations (eg. cows going 'moo' when the signal passes them etc).

Good vibrations

Type:

Concentrator

Time:

10 minutes.

Materials:

- None.

What to do:

- Lie on your backs in a circle, heads toward the middle. The leader begins a sound, the person to the left picks it up and makes the same sound. The sound passes from right to left around the group till everyone is making it. The leader then says 'next', the next person makes a new sound and so on...

Variations:

- Sounds can vary in pitch, volume or type. They may be funny, serious, or show reactions to the workshop through sound.
- If you want the sounds to be serious, you should be careful with which group you use this game.
- Try to pass the sounds on without having to say 'next'.
- There is no 'leader'. Everyone hums at the same time, varying pitch and volume. After a couple of minutes, the group finds a finishing point together and the hum dies away. This can be wonderful if done seriously!

BIG **Group** ACTIVITIES

Rotating conversations

Type: *Big Group Activity*

Time: 15-20 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Ask the group to form pairs with the person next to them.
 - Explain: 'I now want everyone to form two circles facing each other. One member of the pair will be part of the inside circle, the other will be part of the outside circle.'
 - Once the circles have formed, ask the pairs to sit down, introduce themselves if they don't already know one another, and tell each other about their school or community group.
 - Now ask everyone in the inside circle to rotate six people to their right. Ask the new pairs to introduce themselves, and tell each other how old they are and where they were born.
 - Ask the outside circle to rotate four spaces to the left. The new pairs should introduce themselves, and tell each other what they did last weekend.
 - Continue this as long as you want. You can use some of the suggested questions from the Boundary Breaking activity.

Storm

Type: *Big Group Game*

Time: 5-10 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Ask the group to stand in a circle, facing inwards. Try to form a circle where you can make eye contact with all the members of the group. Wait until the group is silent, and explain that the activity will only work if the group does not speak. This is very important. Even a low level mutter can spoil the activity.
 - The first body movement is to rub your hands together, as if warming them. Start at one point of the circle and move slowly around, indicating that participants should follow your lead. Take roughly 30 seconds around the group.
 - When you get back to the point you started from, change your movement to finger-clicking. Go around the circle again. Do this with the following changes to build the power of the storm – thigh-slapping, hand-clapping, finally stomping. Sometimes increasing the speed of the changes can provide a more powerful crescendo.
 - When the Storm has peaked, go backwards, but with a slightly changed order – stomping, clapping, thigh-slapping, hand-rubbing, then lastly a slow finger-clicking. Follow the circle around to the end. Silence.

Notes

- The activity will work if the group is all in front of you, classroom style, but it's easier to maintain eye contact if you're in the middle of a circle, and more fun.

Theatresports

Type: *Big Group Game*

Time: 15-60 minutes.

- What to do:**
- Theatresports is a collection of improvisational theatre games originally developed and assembled by Canada's Keith Johnstone, and now played all over the world.
 - Theatresports may be run as a fun large group activity with volunteers coming up the front to perform short (2-5 minute) skits for the rest of the group. You will need a 'host' who has seen or played Theatresports before introducing and explaining the games below (you can play them in any order), and calling 'ten seconds to go' before the end of each game. Theatresports can also be run as a competition between two or more groups of four 'actors', with a judge awarding scores out of ten for each improvisation.
 - More Theatresports games can be found in 'Impro' by Keith Johnstone, which also explains how to do good improvisations eg. it is important to accept every idea, keep going forwards and say 'yes' to everything.

Expert Double Figures

Type: *Big Group Game (Theatresports)*

- What to do:**
- A group of four 'actors' comes out the front. Two sit on chairs with their arms behind their backs, providing the bodies of two 'experts' (an interviewer and an interviewee). The other two crouch behind the chairs and put their arms through the expert's, so to the audience it looks as though these are the expert's arms.

- The interviewer then interviews the interviewee for two minutes on a silly topic provided by the audience (eg. the sex life of caterpillars). The interviewee must become an expert in the field, and demonstrate with their 'hands' how everything works. This should look very silly and funny!

Group Poem

Type: *Big Group Game (Theatresports)*

- What to do:**
- A group of four 'actors' stand in a line out the front and improvise a one minute poem based on a silly title from the audience (eg. 'Why I love sheep') The first person says the first line of a poem (eg. 'One day when out walking I saw a cute sheep'), the second person the second line (eg. 'His hair was so curly and grey'), the third person the third line (eg. 'So I offered him a ride back home in my jeep') and the fourth person the fourth (eg. 'And we've been in love since that day...') etc. The group continues the poem using the same rhyming pattern and creating a funny story until the host calls 'last lines.'

Murder

Type: *Big Group Game (Theatresports)*

- What to do:**
- Four 'actors' come out the front. The host asks the audience to pick which one of will be the killer (eg. whichever one the audience claps loudest for), and they are sent outside so they can't hear. The audience then chooses a victim, a silly murder weapon (eg. a mango) and a place (eg. in a taxi).

- The killer then comes back and the four act out the scene. The other three actors give the killer subtle clues as to where they are, what the murder weapon is and who they must kill. The killer has two minutes to 'kill' the right victim with the right weapon – if they get it wrong the actors continue as if nothing is out of the ordinary: if they get it right the victim dies and the skit is over. The host then asks killer where they were to see if they know.

Slow Motion Commentary

Type: *Big Group Game (Theatresports)*

- What to do:**
- A group of four 'actors' comes out the front: two stay on stage as the 'competitors', and two crouch down at the side as the 'commentators'.
 - The competitors then act out a slow-motion version of a silly sporting event provided by the audience (eg. Championship Pimple-picking) while the 'commentators' provide a running commentary. Each competitor and commentator work as a team, providing ideas for the other to follow.

Space Jump

Type: *Big Group Game (Theatresports)*

- What to do:**
- A group of four 'actors' comes out the front. The first stands on stage, is given a starting place by the audience eg. the Moscow swimming pool, and has to improvise a 30 second performance by becoming a character in that place. After 30 seconds the host calls 'Spacejump' and the first person freezes

in whatever position they are in. The second person then comes onstage and must use this position as the basis for a new 30 second improvisation, set in a new location (the first person becomes a new character). This continues until the fourth 'spacejump' (with all four characters on stage), then goes backwards through the scenes until the first person does a final 30 second improvisation wrapping up the original scene.

Mini-Olympics

Type:

Big Group Games

Time:

20-60 minutes.

Notes:

- Mini-Olympics is usually run outside as a series of short (5-10 minute) games, with the group divided into smaller teams (up to 18 per team, and up to 10 teams) – if possible use teams that you want to build a sense of group purpose with eg. Intro Groups.
- Have one or two people running the Mini-Olympics (deciding the order of games, explaining how to play, organising and handing out materials, announcing scores etc).
- Vary the types of games: all the teams can compete against each other at once, or each team can do a game one-by-one as the other teams watch (don't do this for long games – be careful the people watching don't get bored!).
- Mini-Olympics may get out of control sometimes. Group leaders should be in each team, supervising the group. A little bit of silliness and fun is OK, but don't let things get out of hand.
- Other novelty games like Tunnel Ball, Captain Ball, Over/Under Ball, Egg and Spoon Race, Lifesaver Toothpick Race, and Apple Bobbing may also be appropriate.

- At the end, you could give a small prize (eg. chocolates) to the winning team.
- Materials are listed as what you need per team. If you are low on materials you may be able to run the game one team at a time, and so only need one set of materials.

Balloon Shoot

Type: *Big Group Game (Mini Olympics)*

Materials: • A hoop or garbage bin and 20 balloons per team.

What to do:

- Participants line up two or three metres from the hoop and attempt to throw the balloon through. Have a team member standing behind the bin to return the balloons.
- Let the game go on for a few minutes, and give one point for each basket.

Bean Sucking

Type: *Big Group Game (Mini Olympics)*

Materials: • 1 packet of jelly beans, 2 paper cups, 1 packet of straws per team.

What to do:

- Team members take turns to suck a jelly bean out of the first cup with their straw, hold it using suction power, carry it to the second cup five metres away, and drop it in.
- At the end of three minutes or so, end the game, and give each team a point for each bean transported.

Bucket Head

Type: *Big Group Game (Mini Olympics)*

Materials: • 1 bucket for each team.

What to do:

- Each team divides into two relay lines 20-30 metres apart. The game is like a traditional relay, except that instead of passing a baton, participants pass a bucket which each runner must wear on their head, so that when they are running they cannot see. (Do not play this game near cliff tops, on roofs etc). Hands must be behind participants' backs as they run.

Notes:

- Vinnie's Marathon: participants must pass on a big coat and tie worn correctly.
- Waddle Relay: done with a ball or balloon between the knees.
- Make up your own! It can even have a theme which matches the workshop.

Group Handstands

Type: *Big Group Game (Mini Olympics)*

Materials: • None.

What to do:

- Each group must find a position where the only contact everyone in the group has with the ground is their heads or hands, and hold it for three seconds. They can do individual head stands, or make shapes that support each other. This isn't as easy as it sounds, but it is possible.
- Give the groups 2-5 minutes or so to nut the problem out, then go through one group at a time. Give ten points to each group that succeeds.

Nose Ball

Type: *Big Group Game (Mini Olympics)*

Materials: • 1 tennis ball and 2 objects to mark the goal per team.

What to do: • Team members must push the tennis ball into the goal with their nose, from a distance of about five metres. Each participant must finish their go before another starts. Each goal earns the team one point.

Orange Necking

Type: *Big Group Game (Mini Olympics)*

Materials: • 1 orange per team.

What to do: • Each group lines up, and the first person in the line holds the orange between their neck and chin. They pass the orange to the next person's chin, without using their hands. This continues down the line.

• If any person drops the orange, the group must begin all over again. The activity is a fairly short one, and hard to master, so a best-of-three tournament may be appropriate.

String of Life

Type: *Big Group Game (Mini Olympics)*

Materials: • 2 metres string, 2 packets lifesavers, 3 blindfolds, and a dish for each team.

What to do: • Hang a piece of string from the roof so that it comes to about shoulder height.

- Put lifesavers into a dish or paper bag underneath the string. Blindfolded, participants must take a lifesaver from the dish, find the string, and thread the lifesaver on the string.
- When they have done this, they call out to the next person who does the same thing. When the second person reaches the string, the first person hands it over to them and returns to the end of the team line, passing on their blindfold. At the end of the game, give one point for every lifesaver that is still on the string.

Throw Down a Tinnie

Type: *Big Group Game (Mini Olympics)*

Materials: • 6 full drink cans, 3 tennis balls per team.

What to do: • Stack the cans up on a bench or wall. With the group in a line four metres from the cans each player takes a turn at knocking the cans over with a tennis ball.

• Have one team member restack the cans and return the ball after each attempt.

• Give one point for every can knocked off the wall.

Twinkle, Twinkle

Type: *Big Group Game*

Time: 1 minute.

What to do: • Explain to the whole group that when people are talking too much you will use a sign to help everyone shut up! The sign is 'twinkling' both hands in the air (hold up your hands and

moving your fingers around). Explain that whenever you see other people twinkling you must immediately stop talking and twinkle, too.

- A variation on this is 'Clap, Clap': the leader claps and the group must stop whatever they're doing and clap back.
- From now on, if the noise gets too loud you should be able to twinkle to stop it!

Other activities/games you can use with a Big Group

GTKY GAMES: What's Your Story?

ENERGISERS: Dead Blowie; Farnyard; Human Scissors, Paper, Stone; Magnets

Mill and Grab; Moving Chair; Circle Clap; Shipwreck; The Domain; Whoosh!; Yes, let's!



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2001 State Student Representative Council Conference Working Party

Western Sydney Youth Forum

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