

Unit 2, Session 8**Collaboration**

Rationale	Identifying and valuing collaboration are elements of a positive identity, social competencies, and assets in participant's development. Participants who describe or display collaboration skills are more likely to engage in positive, constructive behaviors and avoid negative, destructive behaviors.
Target Audience	Out-of-school participants who have completed at least secondary education
Facilitator Expertise	Construction Industry Class leaders and local counterparts who have been trained in how to use and adapt the Life Skills and Leadership Manual.
Time	90 minutes
Pre-requisites	Unit 2, Session 7
Version	Nov – 2014

Facilitator preparation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make four different signs each with a different number: 4, 3, 2, 1 (one sign has a "4," another has a "3," etc.)
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Materials:

Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip chart • Tape or pins • Pens or pencils, paper • Clock, watch, or timer
Prepared flip charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip chart 1: Review • Flip chart 2: Problem-Solving Steps
Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout 1: Levels of Agreement • Handout 2: Solving Problems My Way
Trainer materials	(None)

Learning Objectives:

1. After responding to a series of short statements, participants will practice at least one constructive method to handle conflict in friendships without resorting to violence or combative behavior.
2. After practicing positive responses and a discussion, participants will model at least one adaptive and flexible response to problems; including at least one strategy to deal with setbacks and feedback.

Instructional Sequence**Motivation (15 minutes)****Materials: None****Yes, And ...**

Participants practice using “yes and” instead of “yes but” as a strategy for collaboration.

Ask participants to choose a partner.

Say:

“I would like you and your partner to imagine that you are going to plan a fun activity that you can do together over the weekend. Before we start, I would like you to decide together which of you will be the color ‘red’ and which will be the color ‘blue?’ Choose now!”

Pause while participants choose a color, then say:

“The person who chose red will go first. I would like you to state an idea for a fun activity the two of you could do together. The person who chose blue will listen, and then give a reply. Blue’s reply must begin with ‘Yes, but ...’ then state a reason the idea won’t work. Red will share another idea and blue will reply with ‘Yes, but ...’ Continue in this manner, with red sharing ideas and blue giving reasons they won’t work. Begin and keep going until I tell you to stop.”

Stop the conversations after two minutes and ask:

“For the reds, what did it feel like to have the blue always say ‘Yes, but’? (Possible answers: Discouraging. It wasn’t much fun. It got harder and harder to come up with ideas.)

How would you rate the quality of your ideas?

Were they very interesting or fun?

Did anyone decide on a fun activity to do?” (Most people will have been unable to make a decision.)

Say:

“Let’s try it again. Red will start as before, with an idea for an activity.

This time, blue will respond by saying, ‘Yes, and we could ...’ then finish the statement with another idea.

Red will give another idea and blue will reply again with ‘Yes, and we could ...’ adding to the idea each time. It might go like this:

“Red: Let’s go for a walk.

Blue: Yes, and we could bring a picnic lunch. Red: Oh, I can make some sandwiches.

Blue: Yes, and we could stop for ice cream after we eat.

... and so forth.”

Ask participants to begin. Stop them after two minutes.

Ask:

For the reds, what did it feel like this time when the blue said ‘Yes, and ... ’? (Possible answers: It was more fun. She took me seriously. It was easier. There was less pressure.)

For the blues, what was it like to switch from ‘Yes but ...’ to ‘Yes and ... ’?

How would you rate the quality of your ideas? Were they more interesting and fun or less so? Did anyone decide on a fun activity to do? (Most people will have at least come up with more ideas.)

Why do you think saying ‘Yes, and ...’ is easier or more fun? (Possible answer: Because it opens the door to more possibilities.)

“When we say, ‘Yes but ...,’ it’s like saying ‘No.’ It discourages the other person from sharing ideas or suggestions. It slows the conversation. It makes it harder to make decisions or agree about what to do. When we say, ‘Yes and ...,’ more possibilities are opened up. People have more ideas, they feel less criticized, and a solution is more easily found. When people are working well together we say they are collaborating. We mean they are focused on the same goals that are good for all of them.”

Summary

Summarize by saying:

“Today we are going to talk more about collaboration. You’ll learn ways to work together that you can use when you need to make decisions or solve problems with other people in a group or team.”

Information (15 minutes)

Materials:

- Handout 1: Levels of Agreement
- Four signs, each with a different number: 4, 3, 2, 1
- Tape or pins for putting the signs up on a wall – or the signs can also be just placed on the floor

Levels of Agreement

Participants learn a method to determine agreement and promote collaboration in a group.

Make a transition from the Motivation activity to Levels of Agreement.

Say:

“When I asked you to practice using ‘Yes and ...’ a moment ago you saw that doing so would give you more ideas and it was fun. If you had been planning a real activity for the weekend you also would have gotten more done than if one of you had kept saying ‘Yes but ...’ When we collaborate, or work together, we usually are able to accomplish more and have more fun in the process.

“We also saw this the last time we met when we talked about the interests a person has – what they really want – as opposed to their position – what they think should or must happen. This is also collaboration. It’s a way for people to get more done by working together on the things they both care about.

“Unfortunately, you can’t say ‘Yes’ all the time. The other person may have just shared an impractical or risky idea and sometimes it’s difficult to figure out what interests you have in common with the other person. Or maybe they only want to stick to their position. How can you still get more done when people don’t seem to want to collaborate?”

“I’d like to share a strategy you can use when a group is having trouble collaborating.”

Distribute Handout 1: Levels of Agreement and invite a class leader to read it.

Customize the handout with the group, if necessary. You can do this by asking:

“Do the categories for agreement, the levels, make sense? Are there other ways we might define the levels? For example, Level 3 might be ‘sort of agree’ or ‘somewhat agree,’ or even ‘I’m OK and can go along with the group.’”

Note: To make this more physically active, levels of agreement could be expressed with body position. For example, Level 4 could be standing up, Level 3 – squatting or leaning against a wall, Level 2 – sitting, Level 1 – sitting and arms folded across the chest or head down on a table. Or ask the group what body postures they recommend, perhaps relating back to nonverbal communication in Unit 2, Session 1: Active Listening.

Try using levels of agreement. Share two or more of the statements below, as appropriate, and ask participants to express their personal levels of agreement.

Say:

“I am going to give you sample statements. After each statement, please go to the sign that best describes your level of agreement. So if you are in full agreement, you go to the sign with the number 4 on it – and so on.”

Note: If time allows, you could ask a few participants to share why they chose that level of agreement.

Statements:

The school day should be longer.

Soccer is the best sport to play or watch.

Our community could use better transportation for getting to the nearest city.

Family is the most important thing in the world.

I* think that I am good at solving problems and resolving conflicts.

(*The “I” is meant to reference the participants – not the facilitator.)

Summary

Summarize by saying:

“Using levels of agreement is a way to keep people working together (collaborating) because it gives them a chance to talk about why they like or dislike a situation. The levels of agreement are also useful when working with others to resolve conflicts and to find solutions to problems. We will practice more with this. You might want to try the levels of agreement handout with your family, too.”

Practice (15 minutes)

Materials:

- Handout 1: Levels of Agreement

“Agreeing to Go on a Trip”

Participants will practice stating their own levels of agreement as applied to a group decision.

Practice with the levels of agreement. Provide the following example, or ask the group for one that is even more relevant to them.

Say:

“You can use levels of agreement to help make decisions with just one other person or with a group. Let’s try it together as a group by planning a trip for us all to take.”

Note: This can be a real trip or outing the group can take, or an imaginary trip. Be clear about which it is.

Facilitate a discussion. Explore possibilities for where the group could go and things that the group could do on the trip.

Ask:

“Where would you like to go? What would you like to do?”

After participants have made a list and discussed possibilities, you should state a decision about where the trip will be and what you will do on the trip. It does not have to be executed; this decision is for purposes of using the levels of agreement.

Ask participants to vote on their individual level of agreement with the decision.

Say:

“We will go around the group and check on everyone’s level of agreement. You can raise 1, 2, 3, or 4 fingers to indicate your agreement. First, tell me your level of agreement about where we will go on our trip.”

Then repeat collecting levels of agreement regarding the various activities that will be experienced, what you will do, what supplies you will need, etc. on the trip.

If there are one or more persons that cannot support the decision (expressing a Level 1), lead a discussion about what needs to happen next, such as revisiting the decision, having more discussion, or leaving the decision alone for a few days.

If no one is a Level 1, you can lead a brief discussion about what would happen if someone had chosen Level 1 and could not support a decision.

Ask:

“How might levels of agreement be useful in the steps of problem solving? (Possible answers: It would be useful in the first step of Defining the problem. It could be used in step 5 to weigh the pros and cons. You could use it in the last step to decide which option to take.)

How might levels of agreement be useful in PAUSE decision making? (Possible answers: It could be used in Pause to agree on the decision to be made. Use it in Select to make sure everyone likes the option chosen. It would be helpful in Evaluation to see if everyone liked the way the decision turned out.)

**How might you change levels of agreement to handle conflicts with your friends?”
(Possible answers: Once you have figured out each other’s interests, you can use levels of agreement to see how happy people are with the solution to the conflict.)**

Note: This activity serves as an assessment for Learning Objective 1.

Summary

Conclude by stating:

“Agreements can increase collaboration and allow people to work together by forming the foundation of a relationship. Being flexible in your views and accepting others’ views helps to build a sense of community. Using the levels of agreement can help minimize or resolve conflict and help solve problems by increasing collaboration.”

Application (30 minutes)

Materials:

Paper and pencils (if you want participants to write down their lists of problems to address)
Timer, clock, or watch

What If ... Then What?

Participants examine setbacks and articulate the opportunities embedded within.

Introduce the concept of setbacks turning into opportunities.

Say:

“In the opening activity, the blues consistently said, ‘Yes but.’ during the first round. It was like they were saying ‘No’ or putting up a big stop sign. Sometimes everyone is at a level 4 of agreement and wants to do something, collaborating together, but they still get a ‘No’ or run into a big stop sign. That ‘No’ doesn’t always come from a person. Sometimes things we can’t control go wrong and suddenly we are faced with a big stop sign!

“Sometimes – no matter how much we plan – something happens that we had not expected. These ‘setbacks’ can happen as we try to solve problems. However, often the setback actually creates an opportunity where something good can happen. It’s like saying ‘Yes and ...’ to a really crazy or silly idea and turning it into something useful. It takes practice!

“For example, in one community a center for participants was being built. The person who was doing most of the building hurt his back. This was a setback. The people in the community realized that they really wanted the center to be built, so all kinds of people stepped in, from grandmothers to little children, to strong participants and adults.

Everyone found something they could do to contribute and together they finished the job while the builder gave his instructions from a chair. As a result, members of the whole community felt proud and thankful for the participants' center. They worked hard for years to keep it in good repair.

“Another example is that a town got flooded and electricity was wiped out. The townspeople were going to lose their refrigerated food. So everyone got together and shared all of their food. They had big community breakfasts and suppers. This was the first time that some people in the town had even met each other. It was such a wonderful experience that after the electricity was restored, the community continued to share some meals together. Years later they still have a community supper once every month.”

Split the group into two teams.

Say:

“We will look further at setbacks and the opportunities they can create. For this next activity we will work in two teams. Get in a group on my right if your birthday is between January and June. If your birthday is July through December, get in a group on my left.”

Note: Be sensitive to the fact that some participants may not know their date of birth. Check with your community partner to see if this is likely the case. In this case, ask people to choose their favorite season (winter/summer, dry/rainy, etc.)

Note: If the groups are very uneven by number, move a few people to the smaller group. For example, you could select a month and ask all of those participants to move to the other group. Also, for very large groups, you can further divide into three or four teams. When it comes to the activity step of challenging a team by thinking of setbacks, any opposing team can state a setback. The intention of having smaller groups is to foster more opportunities for individuals to contribute to their group.

Instruct the two groups to create a list of problems that they would like to solve by stating:

“Think of things that you would like to change in your community, in school, or even bigger societal issues. Work with your group members to identify several situations that you can all agree upon. Select problems that:

Involve some conflict. For example, there might be situations where people have very different ideas – they are on opposite sides, or situations that need improvement or are causing discomfort or harm.

Have opportunities for possible solutions. (You can quickly think of possible ways to address the situations – even if they are not easy solutions.)

All members in your group think the problems are important and need to be addressed. Using the levels of agreement, all group members should be a 3 or a 4 for the situation you pick.”

Note: An example could be creating or improving participants meeting space, such as a park, playing field, or boys’ and girls’ club. Another example could be providing more opportunities for employment or small businesses in the community. Another: moving the community solid waste dump away from a stream or water source.

Give the groups about 10 minutes to identify at least five specific problems.

If they are having a difficult time deciding, tell them:

“For the next idea that someone shares, everyone else in the group will clap and say, ‘Yes! Great idea!’ (It’s like saying, ‘Yes, and ...’) That will be a problem your group will address for the sake of the activity. Continue to do this until you have identified at least five problems.”

Explain the instructions:

“Each team will have a chance to solve problems and also try to challenge the other team by suggesting setbacks. The team that is most able to create opportunities from the setbacks and continue to solve its problem will be the winner.”

Note: It would be great if “winners” got a prize – even if it was assuming a leadership role or gaining another privilege related to the program, the facility where the program is being taught, or to spending more one-to-one time with you. At the very least, give the winning team an enthusiastic round of applause.

“The team that has the tallest participant will go first. (Note: This could be the shortest participant instead.) This team will have a group member share one of the problems they have identified and will talk about how the problem could be solved. Other group members on this person’s team can help explain possible solutions. As soon as a member from the other group has an idea for a setback, that group member shouts out, ‘What if ___? Then what opportunity do you see?’”

Note: The group member fills in the blank.

For example,

“What if a big storm comes in and resources have to go there instead of going toward your project? Then what opportunity do you see?”

“The team members who shared the problem has to quickly work together to address the ‘setback’ and decide how they could turn it around to be an opportunity. Once they have a response that makes sense, they get a point. Then, the other team gets to share one of its problems and the first team tries to stump it with a setback.

“When it returns to the first team’s turn, that team can keep working with its original problem or can select a new problem from its list. Either way, team members will talk about solving the issue and the other team will find a setback for them to examine.

“We will move back and forth from team to team for 15-20 minutes so try to think quickly and keep the game moving. The team that thinks the fastest and finds opportunities in setbacks will likely be the winner.”

Note: If you have more than two teams, when one team is sharing its problem any of the other teams can shout out a setback. Make sure all teams have a chance to talk about a problem.

A few points about the activity:

Walk through a round or two of the “game” until there is a flow.

Encourage participants to think quickly and not “over think” their responses – but make sure the responses do make sense.

Cheer for all teams and help keep the energy up and the game moving.

Summary

Conclude the activity by congratulating the winner and acknowledging that everyone did a great job.

Say:

“It can be fun to turn something that seems negative into something positive. There’s more energy in doing that than spending time discussing what’s not going well. When ‘Yes but ...’ or a stop sign comes from things or situations you can’t control, you really need the collaboration of people working together, sharing ideas to find a solution. It’s like seeing the whole elephant. Everyone has something to contribute. That’s collaboration!”

Assessment (15 minutes)**Materials:**

- Flip chart 1: Review
- Flip chart 2: Problem Solving Steps
- Handout 2: Solving Problems My Way

“Visitor from another Planet”

Participants review the concepts learned during the day.

Ask for a class leader who will pretend to be a visitor from another planet. Once one of the participants has stepped up or raised a hand and you have selected that person, bring him or her to the front or center of the whole group.

Say to this class leader in front of the group:

“You have observed our group while we have been working on problem solving, solution seeking, collaboration, and conflict resolution. In a minute, and in the native language from your home planet, we would like you to share the major things you observed. Tell our group what you saw and what you learned. Remember that since you are from another planet, we will not be able to understand your language. But please don’t worry, as we will have someone who will translate for you.”

Ask for another class leader who will interpret what the visitor shares and translate it for the whole group.

Say to this class leader:

“Thank you for agreeing to provide your translation services. We will let our visitor explain a few things and then we will give you a chance to translate into our language what the visitor has shared about solving problems, seeking solutions, collaboration, and resolving conflicts. You can refer to Flip chart 1: Review to explain what our visitor is saying. So please listen carefully and then tell us what our alien visitor observed.”

Start the activity by asking the “visitor” to speak to the group in her or his “native language” for just a few seconds about what she or he has observed. The visitor’s speech will likely make the group laugh. Then, more seriously, ask the “translator” to share what the visitor said, revealing key points about the unit on solving problems, seeking solutions, collaboration, and resolving conflicts. Depending on time and the points covered, you might invite a different class leader to come forward to translate another comment from the visitor.

- To help with transfer of learning, invite participants to complete Handout 2: Solving Problems My Way.

Introduce the handout.

Say:

“Having a plan for how you’ll handle conflicts or solve problems before things get out of hand is a great way to keep things from getting nasty or even violent. Keeping the strategies that we learned in your mind will make them easier to use when the appropriate time comes.

“Take a few minutes to write in the handout – which is like your own personal action plan. Think of the strategies you would like to use, a situation where these might come in handy, and someone who can help you practice or with whom you may need to use the strategies.”

Note: “Visitor from another Planet” and completion of Handout 2 are an assessment of Learning Objective 2.

Summary

Conclude by asking each person to share one of the strategies that she or he plans to use. Remind participants that you will check back in a week or two to see how they are doing making use of these problem-solving and conflict resolution strategies.

References: (None)