

Reference Handout:

Elements of a High-Quality Session



Planning

(30-60 min., prior to session start)

- All aspects and components of Targeted Program sessions and High-Yield Activities must be planned.
- Throughout the session or activity time, include two group sizes in each activity (i.e., the whole group, smaller groups, pairs or individual work).
- Make sure the space, equipment and materials are set up before youth arrive.



Warm Welcome

(1-3 min.)

- Welcome each person in the group, and thank them for being present. If necessary, you can also take attendance during this time.
- Engage youth in meaningful conversations.



Community Builder

(3-10 min.)

- Include various types of activities to enhance social relations and define roles within groups. These often involve collaborative tasks.
- Use these to build supportive relationships, familiarity, and trust among youth and staff.
- Facilitate these throughout a session.
- Work with your group to pick an attention getter of the day. This is a gesture, signal or phrase to quickly capture everyone's attention when needed.



Group Agreements

(45-50 min. to create initially;
1-3 min. to review whenever
the group comes together)

- Create during the beginning of the first session, and revisit during each subsequent session.
- Provide a sense of structure and standards of behavior among participating members of the group. This helps to create emotional safety.



Main Activity: Working With Materials and Ideas

(25+ min.)

- For at least half of the session or activity time, engage members in working hands-on with their materials. They could also talk and engage with their peers around specific ideas, critical thinking or new perspectives.
- Try to include real choices for youth that influence the outcome of the activity.



Reflection

(5-10 min.)

- Give youth an opportunity to review what they have done, what they learned, and how it may apply to or influence their lives.
- Ask reflection questions and give youth time to write, draw, act out or discuss their reflections.



Recognition

(3-5 min.)

- Plan formal and informal ways to recognize and encourage youth.
- Make space for youth to provide positive recognition to each other.
- Encourage youth throughout the session.



Closing and Transition

(3-5 min.)

- Engage youth in putting away the materials and creating a nice space for the next activity. This can include pre-assigned jobs or working together as a group.
- Provide structure for youth by clearly explaining what they can expect to experience in their next program session or activity.