

INNOVATIVE METHODS TO REACH YOUTH

Free Templates for Adult Mentors

TEXT CONVERSATION STARTERS

Especially to youth, a brief text can speak volumes to how much a community leader cares about them. A text or two can give leaders the opportunity to ask how the youth is doing with the cancelations and express that they are happy to have them in the group or class. Group messages can also help youth feel a sense of community, even without sharing a physical meeting location.

“HOW IS YOUR _____ PROJECT COMING ALONG? HAVE YOU BEEN SLOWED DOWN WITH ANY LACK OF SUPPLIES? WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?”

“WHAT IS THE HARDEST PART OF (WHATEVER YOUTH ARE WORKING ON) RIGHT NOW?”

“JUST CHECKING IN! HOW IS THE (INSERT TOPIC/PROJECT) COMING ALONG? WHAT’S THE NEXT STEP?”

“HAVE YOU TOUCHED BASE WITH (YOUTH PEER) ABOUT (YOUTH PROJECT)?”



EMAIL UPDATES

Most youth these days have an email that they use for school, similarly parent emails can also be used to send a message to team/class youth. Parents can be asked to forward or share the email content. An email can help youth know that you see and value them as well as be a way to provide any group updates.

HI ALL!

WE ARE LIVING IN SOME EXCITING TIMES! WITH THE ADVISED SOCIAL DISTANCING, I WANTED TO REACH OUT TO YOU TO KEEP OUR (INSERT PROJECT) ON TRACK! IT WOULD BE GREAT TO CONTINUE REACHING OUR GOALS OF (INSERT GOALS) BY MEETING REGULARLY ON (INSERT PLATFORM). I WAS THINKING WE COULD MEET VIRTUALLY DURING OUR NORMAL TIME (INSERT TIME) ON (INSERT PLATFORM). DOES EVERYONE HAVE A DEVICE WITH A CAMERA AND MIC THAT WOULD MAKE OUR MEETINGS EFFECTIVE?

IF YOU NEED ANY HELP, I SAW THAT (INSERT LATEST RESOURCE FROM RELIABLE SOURCE) IS AVAILABLE AND MIGHT BE HELPFUL. PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU OR YOUR FAMILY ARE IN NEED OF ANYTHING SPECIFIC. LET’S KEEP IN TOUCH AND FIND WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED WHILE WE ARE MAKING SURE WE AND OTHERS STAY HEALTHY THROUGH DISTANCING!

LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU SOON!

SINCERELY,
(INSERT NAME)

EXTENSION 
UtahStateUniversity.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE.
IMPROVING LIVES.

ONLINE MEETINGS

Today's technology brings the ability to meet virtually. Even a brief meeting to check-in on the group or team and express care would go a long way. Keeping youth's current interests or traditional meeting objectives at the center of the discussion can help bring a sense of normalcy to an unusual delivery mode.

HOME SCAVENGER HUNT - WHOEVER CAN GRAB THE ITEM AND GET BACK TO THE WEBCAM THE FASTEST WINS!

Treasure Hunt Items:

SOMETHING ROUND

SOMETHING MADE OF PLASTIC

SOMETHING RED

SOMETHING MADE OF CLOTH

SOMETHING THAT STARTS WITH THE LETTER "H"

SOMETHING OLD

SOMETHING SMALLER THAN A PAPER CLIP

SOMETHING WITH NUMBERS DISPLAYED ON IT

SOMETHING TALLER THAN YOU

SOMETHING YOU CAN PLAY WITH

SOMETHING USED ON A HOLIDAY

SOMETHING YOU CAN THROW AWAY

SOMETHING YOU CAN ONLY USE OUTDOORS

SOMETHING YOU CAN ONLY USE INDOORS

SOURCE: WWW.KIDACTIVITIES.COM

YES/NO GAME - TAKE A MINUTE TO HAVE EACH ATTENDEE MAKE A SIGN WITH "YES" ON ONE SIDE AND "NO" ON THE OTHER AND THEN HOLD UP TO ANSWER QUESTIONS; ASK QUESTIONS RELATED TO YOUR USUAL MEETINGS AND LET EACH PERSON ANSWER.

GET TO KNOW YOU GAME - ASK YOUTH TO ANSWER QUESTIONS AHEAD OF TIME, THEN ASK THE GROUP TO MATCH THE ANSWERS TO EACH PERSON AS YOU READ THEM ALOUD.

Get to know you questions:

WHO IS THE MOST FAMOUS PERSON YOU HAVE EVER MET?
WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST FEAR?

WHAT IS A BIG PET PEEVE OF YOURS?

WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP?

IF YOU WERE A SUPER HERO WHAT SUPER POWER WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO HAVE?

IF YOU WON THE MEGA LOTTERY WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST BIG SPLURGE?

IF YOU COULD MEET ANY CELEBRITY (PAST OR PRESENT) WHO WOULD IT BE?

IF A MOVIE WAS MADE ABOUT YOU, WHAT ACTOR/ACTRESS WOULD YOU WANT TO PLAY YOU?

IF A MOVIE WAS MADE ABOUT YOU WHAT REAL MOVIE TITLE WOULD BEST DESCRIBE THE MOVIE?

IF YOU HAD A WARNING LABEL WHAT WOULD IT SAY?

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU HAVE DONE THAT YOU NEVER WANT TO DO AGAIN?

IF YOU HAD A PERSONAL MOTTO OR SAYING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

WHAT SKILL OR TALENT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE (THAT YOU DON'T ALREADY HAVE)?

QUESTIONS DEVELOPED BY ROB GRIFFIN, USU EXTENSION

VIRTUAL COLLABORATION CHALLENGE

Adults can inspire youth to see possibilities in their future by connecting them with peers who are currently facing the same challenges. Adults can create shared online resources through Google Docs or other platforms for youth to share new ideas and connect with others. These forums can be formal with specific challenges for youth to solve based on their current interests, or informal, virtual gatherings in an environment where it is safe to share new ideas.

“LUCK OF THE DRAW” PROJECT CHALLENGE

WRITE DOWN AT LEAST ONE CHALLENGE IDEA FROM EACH YOUTH ON A SMALL PIECE OF PAPER. THE CHALLENGE SHOULD BE RELATED TO THE CLASS/TEAM/GROUP TOPIC/PROJECT AREA. FOLD AND PUT THEM INTO ONE CONTAINER. WHEN THEY EACH SHARE THEIR IDEA, WRITE DOWN THEIR NAME ON A SEPARATE PAPER. FOLD THAT PAPER AND PUT IT INTO A SEPARATE CONTAINER MAKING SURE THAT EACH YOUTH'S NAME IS INCLUDED. MAKE SURE IDEAS ARE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CONTAINERS, DRAW A NAME FIRST AND THEN A CHALLENGE THAT THAT YOUTH NEEDS TO DO.

EXAMPLES: TEACH, SHOW, OR EXPLAIN A TECHNIQUE/SKILL, ANSWER A QUESTION, ETC.

Note: this activity can be used as a way to prepare for the next virtual meeting!

CHATROOM CHALLENGE

SET UP A GOOGLE DOC OR SLACK CHANNEL AND SHARE THE LINK WITH YOUTH IN YOUR GROUP. POST A NEW QUESTION EVERY COUPLE OF DAYS TO ENGAGE YOUTH IN ANSWERING FUN CHATS.

Rules for discussion: answer one, respond to the answers of two others, and be respectful and kind.

TOPICS:

- IF YOU WERE STUCK ON AN ISLAND AND COULD HAVE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING, WHAT WOULD THEY BE:
 - ONE TYPE OF UNLIMITED FOOD
 - ONE TOOL
 - ONE FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT
- WHAT IS YOUR BEST MEMORY FROM THE LAST YEAR?
- WHAT ARE THREE THINGS YOU ARE MOST GRATEFUL FOR?
- WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST PET PEEVE?
- IF YOU COULD HAVE ONE SUPERPOWER, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?



Best Practices

Community adult leaders should always review program policy prior to connecting with youth outside of program class/team/group meeting times. Including a second adult regardless of the communication type is highly advised. Even when a note is written, it can be addressed so that it is sent in-care-of the parents. Texts can include both parent and youth numbers or be addressed to youth through parent phones. These and any similar types of practices help protect both the community adult leaders and the youth. As communication content is chosen, keep in mind that discussions that occur virtually can be interpreted very differently from each viewer. Especially during a time when youth are turning to adult mentors for increased protection and advocacy, adults should create safe, inclusive, and engaging environments. The five developmental relationship elements from Search Institute should act as an umbrella over youth interests maintained as the focal point of the meetings and communication.



Community Adult Leader Connection and Positive Youth Development

Community recreation center art class teachers are doing more than teaching techniques; on the field, soccer coaches are doing more than prepping the team for the next game; the space that church youth group leaders create for youth do more than grow faith. Community adult leaders can provide impactful positive youth development, regardless of the settings and time contributed.

Developmental relationships are essential to helping youth grow up successfully. There are five elements exhibited by mentors to foster developmental relationships between youth and adults (Search Institute, 2018). These elements are:

Express Care – Leaders show youth that they matter to them

Challenge Growth – Youth are pushed to keep getting better

Provide Support – Leaders help youth complete tasks and achieve goals

Share Power – Youth are treated with respect and given a say

Expand Possibilities – Leaders connect youth with people and places that broaden their world

At this time when it is less safe for adult leaders to hold meetings or practices, these elements can continue to be nurtured. Communication focused around youth's current interests is key to creating engaging content that will foster environments for mentoring relationships (Arnold, 2018).

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For more resources or information about Utah 4-H, visit: www.utah4h.org

RESOURCES

Search Institute and Developmental Relationships

<https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/developmental-relationships-framework/>

Youth Development and Sparks (Youth Interest)

<https://health.oregonstate.edu/thriving-model/training-materials-educators>