

Connect!

LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN ASSETS

I



Interpersonal Competence

WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY:

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Introduction

THE CONNECT! I LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN ASSETS

Curriculum is based on strengthening the “Developmental Assets” of Youth. These 40 “Developmental Assets” as identified by the Search Institute of Minneapolis have proven to be crucial building blocks that youth and families need in order to succeed in life.

Throughout the country, organizations and schools recognize that these assets can be built and strengthened in our youth with the quiet revolution termed “mentoring.” A mentor is defined as a “wise and trusted friend; or someone that shows the way.”

In the 1997 Summit on America’s Future, leaders from all across the country hailed mentoring as one of the necessary solutions to help ensure a stable future for America’s Youth. They were supported by research proving that mentoring works. Goals were set to find and enlist two million mentors by the year 2000. That goal has been met!

Volunteer mentors come with a variety of education and experience. Asking mentors to work in a structured program to build or strengthen “Developmental Assets” in youth without prior training, raises serious concerns. In order for meaningful interaction to occur between mentors and youth, a basic asset-related curriculum was needed. **CONNECT! I** was developed out of this need.

CONNECT! I is designed to give meaningful interaction during the time mentors spend with their youth. It is designed to be flexible enough to be conducted informally on a one-on-one basis, or it can also be used during family trainings or family activity nights. The activities are designed to help the youth develop life-long competencies based on the “Developmental Assets” model.

From the volunteer/mentor perspective, **CONNECT! I** is a readily available, concrete set of materials and activities that can be prepared and used quickly. **CONNECT! I** will help mentors effectively meet the individual needs of each youth.

Using This Book: To The Mentor

Each of the Units/chapters in this curriculum is dedicated to one of the “40 Developmental Assets” as identified by the Search Institute. The Individual units or chapters are designed to: 1) identify the asset or quality that you, would like to work on with your youth, 2) give specific instructions for fun, active learning activities, and 3) follow up with concrete discussion questions that will help the youth achieve higher level thinking and processing skills. Each unit is self-contained. Activities can be printed off for use to be used individually by one or several sets of mentors and their youth.

Goal And Objective Page

Following the title page is a goal and objective page. This page lists the asset or quality, followed by the goal the youth is expected to meet if successfully achieving that quality. Each goal is broken into three concrete objectives for you and your youth to work on. To the right of each objective is a list of activities that can be completed by you and your youth.

Activity Page

The activity pages are written so that at a quick glance, you can see:

1. Topic of the activity
2. Whether the activity is better as a one-on-one or as a whole group activity
(This is indicated by the two-people graphic or the group graphic)
3. Time required to complete the activity
4. Necessary materials
5. How to set up the activity
6. Detailed directions to conduct the activity
7. Discussion topics to focus and reinforce the purpose of the activity
8. Specific questions to guide the youth’s thinking and processing

Checklist Page

Following each set of activity pages, is a Checklist page. After completing the activities, use this page to evaluate the progress your youth is making on a particular asset. Mentally answer the questions. If the youth is not ready to move on to the next objective, additional activity and resource suggestions are included.

Handouts

At the end of each set of activities there will be a copy of any related activity sheets or handouts to be copied for the youth. Make as many copies of this material as you need for your youth.

INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCE ASSET #33

GOAL: The youth has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

OBJECTIVES

The youth will:

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Critical Ingredients in Making “Friends”

GOAL: The youth has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

Objective

The youth will identify relationship skills that are needed for making and keeping friends.

Materials

- 1 piece of lined paper for each participant
- 5-10 (3" x 3") note papers for each participant
- Fine point markers
- Mixing bowl labeled “Friends”
- Big spoon
- Big piece of chart paper

Activity (30 minutes)

- Arrange the youth in a circle. Give each one a marker and 3" x 3" note papers. Stand by a big piece of hanging chart paper, ready to take notes. The mixing bowl and big spoon are located in the middle of the circle.
- Have the youth think about the important characteristics (ingredients) that are needed to make and keep friends. Remind the youth that in order to make friends, you also have to be a friend.
- Give the youth 2-3 minutes to write down as many characteristics (ingredients) as they can. Then go around the circle having each youth: 1) write down an ingredient, 2) verbally announce the ingredient, 3) tell why it is important, and 4) put it in the mixing bowl. **Rule:** Once an ingredient has been put in the bowl, it cannot be used again. This process continues until the youth feel that all the ingredients have been added. (While the youth are adding the ingredients, write the ingredients on the chart paper for everyone to see.)

Discuss

- Talk about important relationship skills.

Ask

- Which ingredients were common to everyone’s list?
- If we were to go back and add amounts (tsp., cup, etc.) to each ingredient, what would those amounts be? (As the youth agree on amounts for each ingredient, write them on the chart paper.)
- In order to finish the recipe, have the youth discuss the method for mixing, cooking, storing, etc. (use words like: season, spice, rise, gently add, beat, air tight container, etc.). Write directions down as the youth agree on them.

Relationship Skills Inventory

GOAL: The youth has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

Objective

The youth will identify relationship skills that are needed for making and keeping friends.

Materials

- Chart paper with list of ingredients used in Activity 1
- Pencil/pen
- Lined paper for each youth

Activity (1.5-2 hours)

- Have the youth fold their lined paper so that it has 6 columns. Label each column as follows: Ingredients, Very High, Above Average, Average, Below Average, Weak. Under the column "Ingredients", have the youth write down the ingredients listed on the chart paper.
- When the youth are finished, ask, "How do you rate yourself on each of these very important ingredients? All of them are, in varying quantities, important relationship skills." Have the youth put a check mark in the column that most closely represents their skill level for each ingredient. "Fill these with in-depth thought and honesty."
- At the bottom of their paper, have the youth write down their five strongest ingredients and three weakest ingredients.

Discuss

- Have the youth describe the relationship skills they listed in their inventory.

Ask

- In order to check "very high" for this ingredient, what are some examples of behaviors and actions that you would need to have.
- If someone checked "weak" for this ingredient, what are some examples of behaviors and actions that they would have.
- Of the five ingredients that were your highest, what are some behaviors and actions I might observe from watching you?
- Of the three ingredients that were your weakest, what are some behaviors and actions you can do to improve your relationship skills?

Interpersonal Competence

GOAL: The youth has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

After completing activities 1 and 2, is the youth ready to move on?

1. Can the youth list a variety of relationship skills that are needed for making and keeping friends?	YES	NO
2. Has the youth identified his/her strongest relationship skills?	YES	NO
3. Has the youth identified his/her weakest relationship skills?	YES	NO
4. Is the youth still demonstrating his/her strongest relationship skills?	YES	NO
5. Is the youth currently working on his/her weakest relationship skills?	YES	NO

If you answered “yes” to at least 4 of the 5 questions, you are ready to move on to the follow-up questions. Otherwise, continue with the activities listed below.

More Activities

- Evaluate the relationship skills of his/her best friend.
- Have the youth think back to a relationship that had some problems. Talk about which ingredients were lacking or missing.

Follow-Up Questions

- Which of your ingredients need to be strengthened?
- Which ingredients are you really proud of? Why?
- How would a good friendship be maintained?

Additional Resources

- *Friendships: The Power of Friendship and How It Shapes Our Lives* by Jan Yager, Ph. D. (Stanford, CT: Hannacroix Creek Books, 1997).
- *How Rude! The Teenagers Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior, and Not Crossing People Out* by Alex J. Packer, Ph. D. (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1997).

Positive Sunglasses

GOAL: The youth has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

Objective

The youth will understand the importance of interpersonal skills in relationships.

Materials

- Sunglasses for each participant

Activity (20 minutes)

- The youth are arranged in a circle. Explain that when the youth are wearing the sunglasses their comments to one another and verbal responses are positive and “FULL OF SUNSHINE”. Reinforce that in order for this activity to be successful, everyone needs to be serious and focus on one another’s strengths. Begin by having each youth share one positive attribute about each person in the circle.
- Next, give each youth a couple of minutes to think about some positive experiences/actions they have observed or experienced. These may be in any setting (school, home, park, pool, etc.). Everyone needs to share at least one.
- Have the youth take the sunglasses off and ask them to think about a negative experience/action they have observed or experienced. During the thinking time, have the youth “rewind” the experience/action and have them think of a way that it could have been made to be a positive experience..

Discuss

- Compare the effects of an honest compliment and a phony compliment.

Ask

- How did you feel when you gave positive compliments to someone?
- What is easier—to give or receive compliments? Why?
- How do you feel when someone says positive things about you?

“Fortune” Cookies

GOAL: The youth has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

Objective

The youth will understand the importance of interpersonal skills in relationships.

Materials

- Strips of paper (3-4 per youth)
- Cookie jar
- Some fortune cookies

Set Up

- Before beginning, write a couple of sample fortunes and insert into fortune cookies to illustrate positive friendship skills.

Activity (20 minutes)

- The youth are arranged in a circle with a cookie jar placed in the middle. Explain that each youth is taking on the role of a professional writer for a fortune cookie company. Their challenge is to write several fortunes which will promote positive interpersonal skills in relationships.
- Select and read from the fortune cookies in the cookie jar: “Those who respect others will flourish with friendship: and “A trusted friend is a lifelong companion.”
- The youth are now given time to write at least three fortunes or positive statements and put them in the cookies. When the youth are finished, give them the opportunity to select, read, and discuss their chosen fortune from the cookie jar.

Discuss

- Tell how positive interpersonal skills can bring you good fortune.

Ask

- Which interpersonal skills were included in the fortunes?
- What interpersonal skills were repeated in the fortunes?
- What other skills might be added that were not used?
- How are interpersonal skills similar to the fortune in the fortune cookie?

Interpersonal Competence

GOAL: The youth has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

After completing activities 1 and 2, is the youth ready to move on?

1. Is the youth able to “see” the positive attributes of his/her friends?	YES	NO
2. Is the youth able to identify what actions contribute to a positive relationship?	YES	NO
3. Can the youth take a negative situation and turn it into a positive experience?	YES	NO
4. Has the youth been giving positive compliments to his/her friends?	YES	NO
5. Has the youth been modeling positive action in his/her interpersonal relationships?	YES	NO

If you answered “yes” to at least 4 of the 5 questions, you are ready to move on to the follow-up questions. Otherwise, continue with the activities listed below.

More Activities

- Have the youth practice the “Positive Glasses” activity with his/her family.
- Have the youth choose a friend and then treat him/her to a fortune cookie and include what the youth thinks is their strongest ingredient.

Follow-Up Questions

- In what areas of your life do you feel you need “positive sunglasses”?
- In which areas is it “sunny”?
- How can sincere compliments strengthen a friendship?
- What are some of the relationship skills that you learned?

Additional Resources

- Life Stories (game) 1-800-433-4263
- The Gifted Kids’ Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook by Judy Galbraith, M. A., and Jim Delisle, Ph. D. (Free Spirit Publishing Inc., 1996).

Six Pillars of Character

GOAL: The youth has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

Objective

The youth will focus on interpersonal actions and the results that occur from these behaviors.

Materials

- Character Counts! 6 pillar strips (Fairness, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Caring, Citizenship, and Respect)
- 6 pieces of chart paper
- Markers

Set Up

- Arrange each pillar heading over each piece of chart paper.

Activity (30 minutes)

- Arrange the youth around the pillars. Begin by having the youth define/ explain each of the pillars. Explain that the pillars represent the strong support each provides in a relationship. The pillars are the cause and the relationship is the effect. For example under the heading RESPECT: Treating people as equals (cause) provides us with positive interpersonal relationships (effect).
- Give the youth time to brainstorm and write other cause and effect actions under the appropriate pillars. The cause will be unique within and for each of the pillars. However, the effect will be to provide positive interpersonal relationships.

Discuss

- Tell how good actions bring about good consequences.

Ask (view next page)

- Look at the cause and effect actions under each heading. Which pillar do you believe is your strongest? Weakest?
- What are some actions that could strengthen your weakest pillar?
- Which pillars do you feel are the most important? Why? If you could add another pillar to strengthen relationships, what would it be?

TRUSTWORTHINESS

RESPECT

RESPONSIBILITY

FAIRNESS

CARING

CITIZENSHIP

Doctor's Orders!

GOAL: The youth has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

Objective

The youth will focus on interpersonal actions and the results that occur from these behaviors.

Materials

- Prescription card
- Pencils
- Chart paper
- Markers

Set Up

- Put the chart paper in a visible location for everyone to see.

Activity (30 minutes)

- Arrange the youth around the chart paper. Explain to the youth they will be taking on the role of a physician who will be diagnosing and treating their patients.
- Have the youth diagnose (brainstorm) all the possible scenarios of problems individuals may be having in regards to interpersonal relationships. For example: A student moves to a new school and doesn't have any friends. All of the friends made the cheerleading squad except one. A friend of yours is extremely upset about his/her parent's divorce, etc.
- Give each youth a couple of prescription cards. Have them write the diagnosis (choosing a problem that was brainstormed) and treatment (the intervention that is needed from a good friend) for each prescription card.

Discuss

- Talk about the importance of having a good doctor (friend) in a time of crisis.

Ask (view next page)

- Why are some doctors (friends) not able to diagnose the problem accurately?
- What happens if the problem is not diagnosed?
- What qualifications do you look for in a good doctor (friend)?

Interpersonal Competence

GOAL: The youth has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

After completing activities 1 and 2, is the youth ready to move on?

1. Has the youth identified his/her strongest pillar?	YES	NO
2. Has the youth identified his/her weakest pillar?	YES	NO
3. Is the youth currently working on strengthening his/ her weakest pillar?	YES	NO
4. Is the youth aware of the effect that his/her actions will have on his/her interpersonal relationships?	YES	NO
5. Is the youth currently putting into practice the qualifications it takes to be a good friend?	YES	NO

If you answered “yes” to at least 4 of the 5 questions, you are ready to move on to the follow-up questions. Otherwise, continue with the activities listed below.

More Activities

- Identify a character in a book/movie that is having interpersonal relationship problems. Make a diagnosis and prescribe treatment.
- Have the youth evaluate someone who is a “role model” and uses the 6 pillars of Character Counts!

Follow-Up Questions

- What are some of the most important elements in a good relationship?
- What are some of your interpersonal behaviors you are proud of?
- What are you doing to strengthen your relationship skills?

Additional Resources

- Talk with Teens About Feelings, Family, Relationships, and the Future by Jean Sunde Peterson, Ph. D (Free Spirit Publishing Inc., 1995).



Utah's Youth and Families with Promise Program (YFP) is designed to address youth problems through early intervention with at-risk youth, ages 10-14, and their families. YFP is a mentoring program designed to reduce and prevent delinquent behavior. The program addresses three goals:

- 1) improve academic performance
- 2) increase interpersonal competence
- 3) strengthen family bonds.



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