

Tips for Facilitating Groups of Young People¹

Meetings with youth should be facilitated in a fun, relaxed way. While structure is important, meetings that are too rigid or facilitators who are over-controlling will turn off group members.

- ✓ Create an agenda before the group meeting. Include the intended outcomes and post it on a flip chart.
- ✓ Welcome youth and help them feel comfortable. Model a friendly and positive attitude.
- ✓ Start and end on time. Respect young peoples' time schedules and commitments, which are often demanding.
- ✓ Introduce yourself and ask group participants to introduce themselves. Take time at each meeting to get to know each young person personally, and allow each youth to get to know you too. Remember to always address group member by their names.
- ✓ Guide the group to establish and record group rules at the beginning of the group session. Keep the list of ground rules and make it available at future meetings. Kindly remind participants of the ground rules when they are broken. And, be sure to update or revise the ground rules, if needed.
- ✓ Keep the session moving. Keep discussion focused and the participants from straying too far from the agenda.
- ✓ Include food and fun!
- ✓ Ensure all voices are heard, but convey the idea that quiet is OK. Allow time for young people to think.
- ✓ Thank each person for his/her verbal contribution, but avoid evaluative comments, such as good or great. (If you forget to comment on a contribution, it may infer the statement was not worthy.) Nonverbal acknowledgement, such as nodding and smiling works well too.
- ✓ Help the group determine the date, time, location, and purpose of the next meeting.

¹ Adapted by the National Training Institute for Community Youth Work / National BEST Network.