

For Staff: Group Activities for Youth

Getting to Trust

1. Opinion Continuum: 10 minutes

Tell the group that they are going to do an activity where they listen, see, and respect where others stand. While the group is still seated, review the directions. Tell them:

“On either end of the room, there are signs that read ‘Agree’ and ‘Disagree.’ I will read a statement and then you will decide whether it’s true for you (agree) or not (disagree). You will move toward the sign that reflects your opinion. If you’re unsure, you should stand somewhere in the middle. Once everyone has moved, I will invite volunteers to share why they chose to stand where they are.”

Next, ask the group to stand up and move to the center of the room. Read the first statement and ask group members to move toward the sign that reflects their opinion:

“You can’t trust anyone.”

Once all group members have moved, ask them to notice where other group members are standing. Ask for volunteers to share why they are standing where they are. Ask at least one group member from each end of the continuum. Tell group members they may change their position if they are influenced by another group member’s opinion.

After each question, have everyone return to the middle. Repeat for two more statements:

“I have people I can turn to for help.”

“Trust is something people can earn.”

Thank group members for sharing their opinions.

2. Read the Story: 20 minutes

As a group, read aloud “Slightly Open Arms,” by Chantel Jackson (p. 24). Let teens pass if they don’t want to read.

3. Silent Conversation: 15 minutes

Place group members in pairs. Each partner will independently respond in writing to the following prompt:

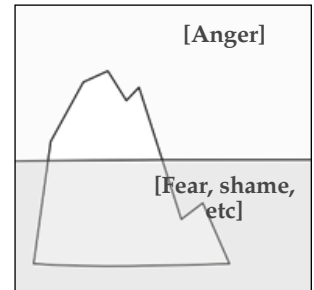
“How do you communicate your feelings and needs to adults? Which adults do you confide in and why?”

Once finished, partners exchange papers and, silently, write a response to their partner’s response. Partners can then take a minute to discuss what they wrote. If there is time, have group members share out some of their thoughts.

Communicating My Emotions

1. The Anger Iceberg: 10 minutes

Draw a picture of an iceberg on a board or on flip chart paper and label the top of the iceberg, “Anger”.



Ask group members: “Think of a time you were angry. What other emotions accompanied your anger?”

Write responses on the bottom half of the iceberg.

Explain to group members that while “anger” might be the emotion being displayed it is often a “secondary emotion,” meaning there are a number of other primary emotions that actually lie beneath its surface.

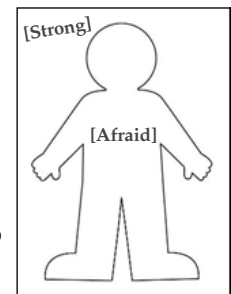
Ask volunteers for other primary emotions that might be beneath the surface of anger and add them to the drawing.

2. Read the Story: 15 minutes

As a group, read aloud “Helping Me With Control” by Lance Hill (p. 4), taking turns. Let teens pass if they don’t want to read.

3. Inside vs. Outside: 20 minutes

Ask group members to draw a figure or outline of a body.



Ask group members to write, on the outside of the body template, how Lance is displaying his emotions on the outside. On the inside of the template, ask group members to write how Lance is really feeling internally.

Discuss your findings together. Ask group members to point to positive ways that Lance communicated and handled his difficult emotions. [He talked to Ms. Wells about losing his parents. He cried and felt calmer afterwards. He came to understand his parents messed up and he didn’t, and that helped him focus on his future. He apologized to his previous foster mom and foster sisters. He wrote down his feelings.]

Close: Ask if they have any new emotions to add to the bottom of their iceberg

