



Curriculum for Empowering Self-Advocates

Volume 3 Chapter 4

Being On the Team

Purpose:

This session addresses the value of teamwork, and behaviors that are used by effective teams. Roles of team leaders and team members are discussed, and opportunities for practicing leadership and teamwork skills are offered.

Goals of the Session:

Participants will:

1. Identify the various types of teams or groups in their lives, and recognize behaviors that contribute to successful teams.
2. Practice effective teamwork skills such as active listening and solving problems.
3. Understand and practice effective leadership skills.



*Support and Techniques
for Empowering People*

Chapter 4 Being On the Team

Description of the Activities

Activity	Approximate Time
4-1 What is Teamwork? This activity gives participants an opportunity to identify the types of teams or other groups in areas of their lives, such as at work, in volunteer positions, and in service planning. Participants examine various behaviors and their impact on team effectiveness.	30 minutes
4-2 Communicating with the Team This activity introduces active listening and gives a review of assertive communication skills. Opportunities to practice skills, in participant-designed role plays, are offered.	90 minutes
4-3 Teamwork in Solving Problems This activity presents methods for dealing solving problems cooperatively. Participants work through several situations relevant to needs or issues they've faced.	90 minutes
4-4 Leading the Team In this activity, participants discuss leadership and what makes a good leader. Skills for specific leadership situations are addressed.	90 minutes



What is Teamwork? Activity 4-1

Purpose:

This activity gives participants an opportunity to identify the types of teams or other groups in areas of their lives, such as at work, in volunteer positions, and in service planning. Participants examine various behaviors and their impact on team effectiveness.

Time Required:

Approximately 30 minutes.

Learning Experiences:

Large group discussion.

Materials:

Handout:

Behaviors that Affect the Team

Flip chart and markers

Tape (to secure flip chart pages to the wall)

Preparation:

Prepare two flipcharts: One should be headed up “Behaviors that HELP a Team” and the other should be headed “Behaviors that HINDER (or DO NOT HELP) a Team.” Read over “Behaviors that Affect the Team.” Note that the items on this handout are just some examples of behaviors that can help or hinder a team; you can add your own ideas if you like.

Welcome And Reconnect:

If the class has not met for several days, welcome them back. Follow up on any significant or common issues that arose during the last session, and see how participants are feeling about the situation. If participants tried a new skill or used new information away from the class, help them to reflect on the outcomes, ask if they want more information or more practice with the skill, and continue to encourage them. Remind them of the spiral model. Indicate that using a new skill or new information usually takes lots of trials and practice before it becomes automatic and comfortable. Make a connection between the specific issue and today’s topic.



Introduce The Activity:

Talk with the participants about different settings in which they interact with others as part of a team or group. You may want to offer some examples from your own life. List the situations the participants describe on the flipchart. Groups may describe situations involving co-workers, housemates, fellow volunteers, members of organizations such as People First, etc. Indicate to the participants that people who are in groups or teams usually have a similar goal (or reason) that they are in the group – generally this is something they want to accomplish or get out of the experience of being on the team.

Be sure to call attention to common or similar experiences among those mentioned by the participants.

Ask The Group:

Help the participants to probe more into their experiences on teams and their perceptions by asking questions such as:

- “Describe a team that you’ve enjoyed being on.”
- “Tell us about a team or group of people that you haven not enjoyed.”
- “What teams or groups are you involved with now?”
- “What is the goal of [name a specific group or team]?”
- “What are the benefits of working on a team?”
- “What are the pitfalls or problems of working on a team?”
- “What role or job would you like to have in [name specific situations]?”

Provide additional direction by narrowing the discussion if necessary.

Ask participants what kinds of actions or behaviors they’ve observed in team or group settings. As they offer responses, ask whether the behavior helped or hindered the team, and list the response on the appropriate flipchart. If participants get stuck, refer to “Behaviors that Affect the Team” and stimulate some discussion from that. Be aware that participants may become focused on specific issues facing a team, rather than concentrating on behaviors or actions of the team members; tactfully redirect the focus if needed.

Follow through with discussion on any situations that seem of most importance to the participants. If the group focuses on a specific issue that they want to address, help them begin to identify courses of action available to them, support them in selecting action(s), and make a note to follow up (assist with reflection and further planning if needed) during the next session.





Tell The Group:

“All of us participate with others as part of a team or group, in various settings. Although people have different personalities, most of them have joined the group or team for the same reasons – to accomplish what the team is all about. We’ve talked about some actions or behaviors that can help a team, and some that can hinder or hurt a team.”

Summarize And Transition:

Ask the participants to tell what were the highlights of this activity for them, or provide a brief summary of the material.

“Now that we’ve talked about teams and groups working together, let’s take a look at some skills for communicating with other people on a team or group.”

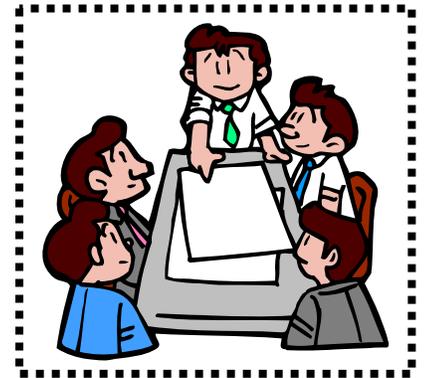
Activity 4-1

Behaviors that Affect the Team

Here are some actions or behaviors that can have an impact on the team. You can add to this list if you would like to.

Behaviors that **HELP**:

- Being on time. Being courteous.
- Being prepared.
- Being honest and open with others.
- Listening with respect.
- Sticking to the agenda.
- Being optimistic and positive.
- Avoiding criticism of people.
- Not using threatening language.
- Following up and doing what you promise to do.
- Supporting others.
- Being committed to work out problems.
- Having a sense of humor.
- Being realistic with goals.
- Sharing the work and the praise.



Behaviors that **HINDER** (that **DO NOT HELP**):

- Being critical.
- Being negative.
- Being late or rude.
- Using name-calling. Speaking with a threatening tone of voice.
- Jumping from one topic to another.
- Failing to do what you promised.
- Not allowing others to speak up for themselves.
- Acting helpless.
- Being prejudiced.
- Making assumptions.
- Having a closed mind to the ideas of other people.
- Judging others.
- Whispering or talking while others are talking.
- Doing things that distract people.





Communicating with the Team

Activity 4-2

Purpose:

This activity introduces active listening and gives a review of assertive communication skills. Opportunities to practice skills, in participant-designed role plays, are offered.

Time Required:

Approximately 90 minutes.

Learning Experiences:

Large group discussion and small group exercise.

Materials:

Handouts/transparencies:

What Is Active Listening?

Listening Is Hard Work

Flip chart and markers

Tape (to secure flip chart pages to the wall)

Preparation:

Read through the handouts, and prepare to present the key points. Also review the material on assertive communication from Activity 3-4.

Welcome And Reconnect:

If the class has not met for several days, welcome them back. Follow up on any significant or common issues that arose during the last session, and see how participants are feeling about the situations. If participants tried a new skill or used new information away from the class, help them to reflect on the outcomes, ask if they want more information or more practice with the skill, and continue to encourage them. Adjust the lesson as appropriate to respond to the participants' needs and interests. Remind them of the spiral model. Indicate that using a new skill or new information usually takes lots of trials and practice before it becomes automatic and comfortable. Make a connection between the specific issue and today's topic.

Introduce The Activity:



Ask the group to review the highlights of assertive communication. Solicit their experiences using the skills of assertion in situations since the last class meeting, if they have not already discussed this. Go over the handouts from Activity 3-4 if needed.

Tell The Group:

“As we’ve seen, communicating assertively is a very important skill to have. One aspect of assertive communication that we’ve talked about is listening with respect to others. We’ve also seen that listening is a factor that helps a team or group do their work. But most people are not taught *how* to listen. We can learn a skill called active listening that can help us to communicate better with others. By using active listening, we can better understand other people’s points of view and we can avoid making assumptions that can hinder communication.”

Present a mini-lecture summarizing the highlights of “What Is Active Listening?” and “Listening Is Hard Work.” Have examples ready, or ask the participants to give examples of the key concepts or skills.

Have the participants form groups of three to practice the elements of active listening.

Tell The Small Groups:

“There are three roles in this exercise – a speaker, a listener, and an observer. Begin by deciding who in your group will play each of these roles.”

“The speaker’s role is to describe an experience that you have feelings about. It could be an experience with a friend, at work, at home, or whatever you would like. Choose an experience that you can describe in a couple of minutes.”

“The listener’s role is to listen to the speaker, pay close attention, and use the skills of active listening that we discussed.”

“The observer’s role is to watch and at the end, give the listener feedback on how well he or she used the skill of active listening.”

Allow the groups about two to three minutes to complete the first round of this activity and tell them to wrap up their stories. After they have finished, ask the observers to give feedback on what they saw the listener do well, and what the listener might do to further use active listening.

Repeat the process two more times, having the participants switch roles so that each participant has the chance to play the role of the speaker, listener, and observer.

Lead the group in a discussion, using some of these questions:



- “What were some of the difficulties you encountered when trying to use active listening?”
- “How did the speaker feel when the listener used active listening?”
- “How did the listener feel about using active listening?”
- “What kinds of feedback did you give each other?”
- “Were there any suggestions or ideas for using active listening?”
- “What skills were easiest to use? Most difficult?”

Ask the participants to think about how active listening contributes to understanding one another, and to the effectiveness of a team or group. If they can identify specific situations in which they can try out active listening, encourage them to do so and to share the outcomes with the class at the next meeting.

Summarize And Transition:

Again, ask participants to indicate what the highlights of this activity were for them, as a way of reviewing the material. Supplement their comments as necessary. Transition to the next topic by saying:

“You’ve learned about and practiced some skills that will help you to be effective self-advocates. You can use assertive communication, active listening, and the behaviors that help teams. This will help you to influence the way others respond to you when you express your wants and needs. Now let’s take a look at some methods you can use to deal with problems a team faces.”



What Is Active Listening?

A. LISTEN RESPECTFULLY

Be sure to listen carefully to others. This will help you avoid misunderstandings and be better able to express yourself clearly.

1. **Be attentive** - Pay close attention to what is being said.
2. **Be impartial** – Try to avoid jumping in and agreeing or disagreeing with the person right away. Just focus on understanding what the other person is saying.
3. **Say the words back to the person** - Use the same or similar words to say the speaker's idea back to him or her. This helps to show your interest and to get more information.
4. **Listen for feelings** - If something is important to the speaker, he or she will have feelings about it. Often, the feelings themselves are the most important part of the message. Acknowledge the feelings the other person is conveying to you. (Recognize voice inflection, body language, etc.)
5. **Summarize** – Pick out what you think were the most important parts of the speaker's message. Summarize them back to the speaker, to be sure you understand and can convey your understanding. Ask the speaker to make things clearer for you if you're not sure you understand.

<p>B. USE BODY LANGUAGE</p> <p>Be sure that you are using assertive body language such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facing the speaker • Making eye contact • Using facial expressions that convey you are interested in what the speaker has to say • Avoiding threatening gestures, such as pointing <p>If you are communicating with a person from a culture that is different from yours, try to understand what body language conveys respect <u>in his or her culture</u>. You can ask if you are not sure.</p> <p>Watch the body language of the person who is speaking. Does he or she look happy? Upset? Sad? Discouraged? Angry? The speaker’s body language is part of their message.</p>	
<p>C. EXPRESS YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be open and honest. It’s okay to disagree. Share your opinions, concerns, fears, understanding of the facts, etc. 2. Know what you want to say. Speak clearly. Choose words carefully. Give examples. Ask listeners if you have communicated your message clearly. 	
<p>D. COMMUNICATE ASSERTIVELY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Express your concerns without judging the other person. 2. Respond to their comments without being defensive. 3. Use “I-messages.” For example say “I feel ..,” rather than “You make me feel ...” 	



Activity 4-2



Listening Is Hard Work

Active listening is more than just skill; it's also a matter of attitude. To be an active listener, you must accept people for who and what they are, not what you want them to be.

Blocks to active listening -- these are things to avoid:

1. *Judging people.*

If you judge people, it keeps you from really understanding what they have to say. Don't think of people as being a certain "type," and don't criticize them.

2. *Thinking that you already know what someone is going to say.*

People can become angry or frustrated if they feel that you are not open to hearing what they want to say. Even if you think you've already heard it, be respectful and let the person express him or herself.

3. *Twisting a message to make it sound like what you want.*

This is just another way of trying to make people into what you want them to be instead of accepting them for who they are. The result is that you only hear the message you want to hear, not what is really being said.

4. *Letting your own emotions keep you from understanding the person.*

Try to be aware of your feelings while the person is speaking. If you allow yourself to get upset or angry right away, you might not hear the person's full message. Make sure you have all the important information before forming your opinion.



Tips for active listening

1. *Be respectful.*

Don't daydream while someone is speaking to you. Choose to listen with respect. Focus on the speaker and the message.

2. *Learn to listen.*

We must be willing to focus on others when they are speaking. Learn to have an interest in either the person and/or the topic. Practice concentrating on the speaker's words and feelings. Practice shutting distractions out, not allowing them to interfere with your effective listening.

3. *Listen now, repeat what you heard later.*

Repeat what you heard to someone else later. The act of speaking out loud what you heard helps you to remember the information. It also helps you identify what was not totally clear about what you heard.

4. *Listen with your whole body.*

To be active listeners, we must involve our whole body. Not only are our ears tuned in, but so are our eyes, our minds, our bodies. Good listeners give signs that they are listening. They sit or stand attentively; they nod; they make good eye contact; and they smile when it is appropriate.

5. *Control distractions.*

Distractions affect our ability to listen well. Try to "filter out" noises such as telephones, other conversations, car horns, etc.



Teamwork in Solving Problems

Activity 4-3

Purpose:

This activity presents methods for solving problems cooperatively. Participants work through several situations relevant to needs or issues they've faced.

Time Required:

Approximately 90 minutes.

Learning Experiences:

Small and large group discussions.

Materials:

Handouts:

- Problem-Solving Steps
- Example of Problem-Solving
- Problem-Solving Steps – a form you can use
- Another Approach to Problem-Solving with a Team

Flip chart, markers, and tape

Welcome And Reconnect:

If the class has not met for several days, welcome them back. Follow up on any significant or common issues that arose during the last session, and see how participants are feeling about the situation. If participants tried a new skill or used new information away from the class, help them to reflect on the outcomes, ask if they want more information or more practice with the skill, and continue to encourage them. Adjust the lesson as appropriate. Remember, adult learners get the most out of information when it is directly tied to their needs at the time. Remind the participants of the spiral model of learning. Indicate that using a new skill or new information usually takes lots of trials and practice before it becomes automatic and comfortable. Make a connection between the specific issue and today's topic.



Introduce The Activity:

Ask the participants for some examples of problems they've faced. Some situations that may be mentioned are getting along with roommates, inconsistent work schedules, lack of disposable income, limited entertainment opportunities, etc. Ask participants how they have approached different problems. Try to help them to focus not so much on the details of the problem but on how they went about creating a solution. Solicit their experiences with processes or approaches that worked out well, and those that did not have a satisfactory result. Also get a sense of what kinds of problems they address themselves, and what kinds other people may have tried to solve for them. Record the key points on the flip chart.

Identify themes or common issues.

Tell The Participants:

“You’ve identified some problem situations that required you to think about possible solutions. We will always face circumstances that are not perfect, that we may be able to devise improvements or solutions for. Part of being a self-advocate is helping to change situations (or solve problems) so that your needs and preferences are met. Let’s take a look at one method for solving problems.”

Refer participants to “Problem-Solving Steps.” Use an example from the group, or a problem situation that came up during an earlier class discussion. You can use the situation shown on the “Example of Problem-Solving” handout, but make sure whatever example you use is relevant to the participants. You may want to provide the participants with opportunities to practice brainstorming, as participants may not have experience with this technique for generating ideas.

Divide the participants into smaller groups. Instruct them to choose one problem (you may refer to the earlier discussion) and work through the steps of the problem-solving process as much as possible. Move from group to group to provide support as needed. Indicate that the groups will most likely not be able to gather all the information they need to choose a solution, but that they should use their imaginations and work through as much of the process as they can. Provide any materials the groups may need (flipchart paper, markers, etc.).

When the groups have made progress, call them back to the large group. Ask each small group to give the highlights (or the main points) of their work, such as

- The problem they selected
- What problem-solving approaches they used (if other than the handout)
- How the group felt about the problem-solving process
- What ideas they had for making the process go more smoothly in the future



Acknowledge the strengths the groups have demonstrated in their problem-solving. If the participants would like to pursue any of the problem situations together, provide supports as needed and appropriate. Encourage this empowerment of your participants! Make any necessary adjustments to the curriculum to incorporate this hands-on experience.

Call the participants' attention to "Another Approach for Problem-Solving with a Team," as a resource they may want to use in the future.

Summarize And Transition:

Again, provide a brief summary of the problem-solving process, or ask one or more participants to give the highlights of this section. Transition to the next activity by asking participants:

"Do you think that solving problems as a team is easier if the team has a good leader? Let's talk about some of the attributes or characteristics of good leadership."



Activity 4-3

Problem-Solving Steps

1. State the problem as clearly as possible.
2. Try to state the problem in a positive way.
3. Get the facts you need about the problem.
 - What are the challenges?
 - What are the opportunities?
 - What information is needed?
4. Come up with as many ideas as you can.
 - Record all the ideas, no matter how they sound at first
 - Avoid criticizing or judging any ideas
 - Use your imagination
 - Do not discuss the details, just get the ideas on paper
 - Go fast (don't stop to dwell on any one idea)
 - Remember, just be creative and come up with as many ideas as possible
5. Think about each idea and consider
 - Does the solution involve all the people who are affected?
 - Is the solution practical (can it be done)?
 - Will people accept the solution?
6. Select an action.
7. Develop a plan.
 - What action steps are needed?
 - Who will do what?
 - When will each step be completed?
 - How will you know the if plan is working?
8. Implement the plan. Watch how things are going. Make changes to the plan (the solution) if needed.



Example of Problem-Solving

<p>1. State the problem.</p>	<p><i>No weekend, evening, or out of city limits transportation for individuals with disabilities.</i></p>
<p>2. Say the problem in a positive way.</p>	<p><i>There is wheelchair accessible public transportation to meet weekday needs.</i></p>
<p>3. Get the facts you need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the challenges? • What are the opportunities? • What information is needed? 	<p><i>Availability limitations; not outside city limits.</i> <i>Many city activity resources; social opportunities.</i> <i>Bus, special transportation schedules, demand, safety, and liability information.</i></p>
<p>4. Come up with as many ideas as you can.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record all ideas. • Avoid criticizing. • Use your imagination. • Do not discuss. • List as many ideas as possible. 	<p><i>Agency collaboration for use of vehicles, volunteers, etc.</i> <i>Barter system.</i> <i>Expand services already available.</i> <i>Apply for a pilot project grant.</i></p>
<p>5. Think about each idea and consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of people affected • Practicality • Likelihood of people accepting it 	<p><i>Discuss each of the ideas above.</i></p>
<p>6. Select an action.</p>	<p><i>Assess, research, and write grant.</i></p>
<p>7. Develop a plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What action steps are needed? • Who will do what? • When will each step be done? • How will you know if the plan is working? 	<p><i>Establish transportation committee - Multi Agency - 2 months.</i> <i>Assess need - Special Projects Coordinator – within 3 months.</i> <i>Develop a collaborative plan - Committee – within 6 months.</i> <i>Write a grant - Coordinator – within 9 months.</i></p>
<p>8. Implement plan and watch how it goes; make changes if needed.</p>	



Activity 4-3

**Problem-Solving Steps –
A form you can use**

1. State the problem.	
2. State the problem in a positive way	
3. Get the facts you need <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the challenges?• What are the opportunities?• What information is needed?	
4. Come up with as many ideas as you can. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record all ideas.• Avoid criticizing any ideas.• Use your imagination.• Do not discuss the details.• List as many ideas as possible	
5. Think about each idea and consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involvement of people who are affected• Practicality.• Likelihood of people accepting it	
6. Select an action.	
7. Develop a plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What action steps are needed?• Who will do what?• When will each step be done?• How will you know if the plan is working?	
8. Implement the plan.	





Activity 4-3

Another Approach to Problem-Solving with a Team

1. What is the problem? Try to focus on the “core” or most important part of the problem situation.
2. What are all the possible choices or solutions?
3. What is good and what is bad about each choice? What are the consequences of each choice?
4. What do I want? What do the other people on the team want?
5. Will any of the choices harm me or anyone else?
6. Can the team members all come to agreement? If not, what else can we do to reach a decision that everyone will support?



Leading the Team

Activity 4-4

Purpose:

In this activity, participants discuss leadership and what makes a good leader. Skills for specific leadership situations are addressed.

Time Required:

Approximately 90 minutes.

Learning Experiences:

Small and large group discussion.

Materials:

Handouts:

AAMR Fact Sheet: LEADERSHIP

Roll of butcher paper or newspaper

Enough *washable* markers for small groups to use

Flip chart, markers, and tape

Preparation:

Review the AAMR Fact Sheet, and prepare to present the highlights to the participants.

Welcome And Reconnect:

If the class has not met for several days, welcome them back. Follow up on any significant or common issues that arose during the last session, and see how participants are feeling about the situation. If participants tried a new skill or used new information away from the class, help them to reflect on the outcomes, ask if they want more information or more practice with the skill, and continue to encourage them. Adjust the lesson as appropriate. Adult learners get the most out of information when it is directly tied to their needs at the time. Indicate that using a new skill or new information usually takes lots of trials and practice before it becomes automatic and comfortable. Make a connection between the specific issue and today's topic.





Introduce And Begin The Activity:

Ask the participants to reflect on their experiences with strong leadership and with poor leadership.

Solicit their ideas on what makes a good leader. Record their ideas on a flipchart. See if the group can develop their own definition of leadership. A straightforward definition will be along the lines of “someone who leads or guides others to reach a shared goal.” You may want to refer to “AAMR Fact Sheet: LEADERSHIP,” and discuss the points included. Be sure to offer clarification or ask participants to offer explanations of points that may not be clear to everyone.

Ask the participants, “What other things can you think of that make a good leader?” Some examples might be

- listens to and thinks about new ideas
- motivates and encourages the team members
- gives credit to team members when things go well
- doesn’t try to blame other people for mistakes
- cares about the team members and is sensitive to them
- respects confidentiality
- doesn’t gossip about team members
- can set own problems aside to work on the team’s goal
- doesn’t try to do all the work himself or herself

Divide the participants into small groups, using a fun random method, or a method suggested by the participants themselves.

Instruct the groups that they are going to think about the ideal leader for an annual individual services planning team. Roll out about 6 feet of paper for each group. Show the participants how to have one member of each group lie on the paper while the other members draw around his or her body; be sure that the markers you have are washable, or suggest that the drawers use pencil first, then go over the pencil lines with markers after the “model” is off the paper. This diagram will represent a “Good Leader.” Then, instruct the groups to draw on their papers items that a good leader might use, or that symbolize good leadership. If the participants need some examples or ideas, you might get them started by suggesting two or three things such as:

- ❑ A smile on a leader’s face would show that the leader is pleasant and up-beat.
- ❑ A binder or file in the leader’s hand would mean that the leader is prepared with the materials that he or she needs to lead the meeting.
- ❑ A telephone would mean that the Good Leader communicates with the team.
- ❑ A calendar could show that the leader plans ahead and keeps his commitments.



When the groups have finished, have them gather in the large group and present their drawings, with descriptions or explanations. If there is space, you may want to post the drawings for the participants to enjoy and reflect on during future sessions.



Conduct The Follow-up Activity:

Facilitate a discussion of specific situations the participants face in which they wish to take a more active leadership role. Identify the main issues or challenges facing the participants, and ask them to select which two or three issues they want to address. Try to help them focus on skills or competencies they want to acquire in order to be effective leaders. Then, obtain any needed information, develop appropriate role plays or other learning methods, and support the participants to practice those skills. It is important that the skills the participants practice are directly relevant to their own needs and experiences. Be sure to follow-up in subsequent sessions to allow the participants to reflect on their experiences and learn from one another's successes. Adjust the class schedule as needed to accommodate further practice or additional information on leadership.

Summarize And Transition:

Encourage the participants to reflect on those aspects of leadership that made the greatest impression on them during this session. Ask how the participants can use their new knowledge or skills in situations they face. Follow up during future sessions.

Transition to the next activity by indicating that good leadership skills are needed in a variety of settings. These skills will be especially critical for people who want to be in charge of their own planning meetings.



Activity 4-4

AAMR

Fact Sheet: LEADERSHIP

Q. What is Leadership?

A. Leadership is when a person learns the skills they need to run a group or be a part of a board or committee. It is also speaking up for yourself and helping each other learn how you can work together as a TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More). It is learning new things and sharing what you have learned with others. Leaders also know how to listen to people when they are talking and know when a person might need support. Leadership sometimes is letting other people take over a discussion and have a chance to practice being a leader while they are learning new skills. Being a leader is being a part of the community and knowing what is going on and getting involved. Leadership means a lot of different things to a lot of people so it is important for people to figure out what is best for them. Being a leader is not always easy but it should be fun.

Q. What Are Qualities Of A Good Leader?

A.:

- * Assertiveness.
 - * Self-determination (or self-advocacy).
 - * Decision-making (and problem-solving) skills.
 - * Being a good listener.
 - * A desire to share and believe in the common vision of the group.
 - * A willingness to take the time to learn leadership skills.
 - * Ability to include all members and not exclude anyone.
-

Q. How To Learn Leadership Skills?

A. There are many ways a person can learn leadership skills. They can take a class, learn from other people in the group, read materials from other people written about leadership, go to workshops on leadership or to conferences. Another approach is "supported leadership". That is an option that encourages the person to select a partner from the group to help them. The partner then offers tutorials or pre-meetings on issues to be discussed during the meetings, and provides the opportunity to practice parliamentary procedures and other formal and informal rules. People with disabilities can then both assist and serve as role models for other people "in training" or "considering" leadership roles. Another alternative is to establish co-leadership positions where two people assume the responsibilities normally done by a single position. This helps lessen the fear of a new role or responsibility.

Q. What Kinds Of Supports Might A Self-Advocate Need?

A. There are many kinds of supports a person might need. What is most important is to let that person pick his/her own supports and to figure out what will work best for him/her. Some people may need help before a meeting, for example, going over the written materials so they will understand the information to be discussed at the meeting. Others may need help during the meeting so that they will understand what is happening throughout the meeting.

It is important for people to know the date and time of their meeting so they can make an informed decision if they will need to leave work. Many groups who hold meetings during a person's work schedule pay an honorarium for the time they will not be

work. People need to know directions on how to get to the meeting and if they will need any money once they get there. It is sometimes necessary for people to receive money in advance



because it is hard for them to wait a long time to be reimbursed. If this is not an option, some people may not be able to afford to be a leader. Before the person joins the group it is often helpful to explain how the meetings are run or to invite them to come to a meeting before they decide to join the group. Most important is for all members to feel welcome.

Q. How Decision-Makers Might Assist Self-Advocates During Meetings?

A. Members of decision making groups need to listen to each other and really try to understand each other's points of view. It is important to treat people with respect and dignity even if it is necessary to wait a long time for the person to answer a question. Patience might be required of all members for each other. Materials that are passed out should be written so that all members can understand it, like not using big or hard to understand words. Frequently asking people if they understand what is being discussed or asking them if they have any questions is helpful. The expectations of a new member should be the same whether they have a disability or not. Ask members at the end of each meeting how they felt the meeting went and if they need any other kinds of supports.



Q. What Is AAMR's Policy Statement On Leadership?

A. AAMR joins people with developmental disabilities in supporting the full expression of citizens with disabilities to speak for themselves in making choices for themselves about their lives. This includes decisions about living arrangements, work, personal relationships and the funding of needed services and supports.

Q. What Are Some Resources To Learn About Leadership?

A.:

Bales, J. (1992). Do you really know what is best for me? OR how to help your board of directors become whole: a guide for including people with disabilities on boards. Illinois: Illinois Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Dybwad, G & Bersani, H. (1995)

New Voices: self-advocacy by persons with disabilities. Boston: Brookline Books.

Gobel, S. Not Another Board Meeting! guides to building inclusive decision-making groups. Oregon: Oregon Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

Hoffman, M. (1992) Leadership Plus. Oklahoma: Oklahoma Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Levitz, M., Nelis, T., & Peterson, M, (1996). Community Advocac Press: People speaking out for what they believe. Leadership: Vc Issue 4. Cincinnati: Capabilities Unlimited, Inc., 2495 Erie Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45208



Pederson, E.L. & Chaikin, M.L. (1993) Voices That Count. Making It Happen: a presenter's guide. Rehabilitation Research and Training



Center Consortium on Aging and Developmental Disabilities,
Cincinnati, OH

Taking Place: Standing Up and Speaking Out About Living in Our
Communities. (1994). Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered. Tulsa,
ARC, 1601 South Main Street, Suite 300, Tulsa OK 74119 Voice: (918)
592-8272 Fax: (918) 582-6328

This Fact Sheet written by Tia Nelis and Esther Lee Peclerson, Capabilities Unlimited,
Inc. and the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Aging with Mental
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