

Session 1

Getting to Know You

Outcomes

Students will...

- understand the importance of building community within the group
- understand the group outcomes
- develop group discussion guidelines
- identify stressors/pressures that impact youth (friends, family, relationships, etc.)

Materials

- chairs for all students and the facilitator
- pen/pencil for each student
- masking tape
- object to use as a talking stick: stress ball, etc
- poster board or chart paper and markers
- *Fishbone: Stressors for Youth (1.0 H)*
- *Fishbone: Stressors for Youth – Possible Responses (1.0 REF)*

TAKE NOTE



It is important to provide a comfortable environment for youth, so that they can discuss freely their thoughts / ideas as they relate to the topics. Prior to the start of the session, it's important to have the room set up with chairs in a circle formation. You may want to consider creating a PowerPoint presentation or using a SMART board for visuals.



KEY CONCEPTS

Building Community
Stressors

PREPARATION

- Photocopy handout: *Fishbone: Stressors for Youth (1.0H)* - one for each group
- Set up the circle - there should be only enough chairs in the circle for the students who are present and the facilitator.



WARM UP

Introductions



- Once all students are present, join the students by sitting on the remaining chair in the circle. There should be only enough chairs in the circle for the students who are present and you. Welcome the group and introduce yourself. Discuss meeting times for the group, and provide a brief description of the purposes of the group. This includes providing students with an opportunity to learn about healthy relationships, to improve their communication skills, to build resilience, learn coping strategies and to provide a place where students have a voice to discuss what matters to them. In addition, students will take part in activities that work toward developing leadership skills.
- Explain to students that each session is set up in the format of a warm up, game and cool down. The warm –up will begin with a circle formation such as this one, and each session also will end in the same set-up for the cool down. The game section will be a series of activities to help meet the goals of the program. Explain to students that while in the circle, it is a time for sharing information. For this reason, you may want to provide some sort of object that the person who is speaking will hold when it is time to share individual ideas in the circle. For example, this might be a stress ball, or another small object that serves as a type of “talking stick.” Explain to students that everyone in the group is equal and that everyone will always have an opportunity to share ideas if they choose.
- Tell students that it is important that everyone in the group works on knowing each other by name to begin with. State that you would now like the group to just state their name, and one hobby/ activity that interests them going around the circle to the right of the facilitator. Model this with the chosen object in hand and then pass it to the right after speaking. (eg., My name is Mr Jacob, and I like to play basketball.)
- After everyone has had a chance to state their name, and a hobby/activity, you will move into the next set of activities.

GAME

Activity: Has Anyone Ever...



- Explain to the students that you are going to play a game called, “Has Anyone Ever?” Stand in the middle of the circle and remove your chair from the circle. Explain that students are going to make a statement starting with “**Has Anyone Ever...**” and the rule is that whatever you say has to be something you actually have done yourself. For example, you could say, “Has anyone ever eaten pizza, or has anyone ever brushed their teeth, or has anyone ever been to New York City” etc. The person in the middle will make one statement and then if you are sitting on a chair and you have done this same thing, you must get up from your chair and run to an empty chair to sit down. You may not sit in the chair next to you on either side. While everyone is running to a new chair, the person in the middle is also supposed to run to sit on a chair. The person left standing without a chair now goes into the middle of the circle and makes a statement starting with, “Has anyone ever...” and the game continues.
- During this activity, remind students about safety. It is important that students keep their heads up and watch where they are going so that they don’t run into others!



Activity: Getting to Know You...

- From where students are now sitting, which will be different from where they originally were sitting, start at one point in the circle and pair students with the person sitting next to them. Tell students that the tallest person in each pair is going to speak first. The tallest person will be Partner A and the other will be Partner B. While Partner A speaks, it is Partner B’s job to listen and try to remember the details of what Partner A said. These details will be important later when students will have an opportunity to introduce their partner to the group.
- Explain that Partner A is now going to have thirty seconds to speak. Explain that when talking about yourself, it is a good idea to remind your partner of your name, tell about your family, pets, favourite things to do, etc. When 30 seconds are up, tell them to stop. Then, ask the second partner to start talking for 30 seconds. When 30 seconds are up, explain that you are going to go around the circle and each person will introduce their partner. When introducing their partners, students should say their partner’s name and try to remember at least three main points to share. After everyone has been introduced, thank them for introducing their partners.



Activity: Developing Guidelines for the Group

- Explain to students that because of the nature of the group, it is important to develop some guidelines that the entire group can follow throughout all of the sessions. This is so that everyone feels respected and listened to, and so that the group runs smoothly during each session. Ask students to think to themselves about guidelines they think the group should follow. Tell students they are only to think to themselves, and are not to speak to anyone else at this point. After 20 seconds, ask students to turn to the partner they introduced during partner introductions, and to share ideas of what they were thinking about. After 20 - 30 seconds, ask pairs to identify some of the guidelines they had considered. Write each of these on the poster board or chart paper with a marker. The title should be "**Group Guidelines**". You may want to consider having all students sign the poster along the sides to indicate that they are in agreement with the guidelines to be followed. Once these ideas have been shared, the poster should remain up in the room for the remainder of all sessions.

Group Guidelines (Sample)

Arrive on time.
Listen while others are speaking.
Be respectful of what others are saying.
What is said in the room stays in the room.
You have the right to pass.
Observe the no name rule.



Activity: Youth Voice - Discovering Concerns of Youth: Fishbone Activity and Numbered Heads

- Divide students into six groups. If you have very few students, you may want to make three groups.
- Hand out a **Fishbone: Stressors for Youth (1.0 H)** to each group. Explain to students that as a starting point for this program, it is important to know about the kinds of stressors group members are faced with as today's youth and leaders of the future. Explain that this is an opportunity to hear their voices about what it is that concerns them or causes them stress. Explain further that while stress is a normal part of life, it is good to identify WHAT is stressful to them, and HOW they are coping with the stress in their lives. Explain that these topics will come up again several times throughout the program.
- It is important to assign roles within each group. To assign roles in the group, use the concept of "numbered heads." This means that you will ask each group to number off from 1-4 (or whatever number is in their groups), and then you will call out a number to assign this task. For example you might say number ones are going to be the recorder for each group. Call out another number and the person in the group with that number will be the timekeeper. Call out a third number, and that person will be the presenter, etc.
- If you have six groups, assign one fin to each group. If you have three groups, assign two fins to each group, etc. Explain that students will only work on the fin they have been assigned. Ask students to identify stressors/pressures that affect them by recording their thoughts that relate to their fin on the fishbone. You may want to give them an example for each heading to get them started. You can refer to the **Fishbone: Stressors for Youth – Possible Responses (1.0 REF)** to provide suggestions. Ask that students only record their ideas inside of the fin in each case. Explain to students that they should work through their topic, and that they only have 4 minutes to write ideas therefore, it is up to the timekeeper to keep the group on task.
- Once all students have had an opportunity to share ideas within their groups, explain to students that they will have an opportunity to share ideas they have come up with about stressors for youth within the larger group.

- Ask the “speakers” to identify the topic assigned to their group and to state the responses from their group. Ask if any other group has stressors to add to that topic. Ask another group to present on a different topic, etc., until all groups have shared their information. You may want to add to their discussion by including some of the ideas from the **Fishbone: Stressors for Youth – Possible Responses (1.0 REF)** sheet. Tell students it is helpful for you to have an idea of the many struggles that youth face, as it helps to shape future discussions within the group. Collect the fishbones from students. There is an optional opportunity in session 9 to use these completed fishbones again.
- Summarize this activity by telling students that it is important to realize that many youth struggle with a lot of the same stressors. Unfortunately, people will always have stress in their lives. It is how we learn to cope and deal with stress that helps to make us able to lead healthy, productive lives. It’s also important to consider that at certain times in our lives, we may have more stress than others. Explain that through this program, the hope is that students will learn some different strategies they may not have used in the past to work through some of the difficult situations they deal with.

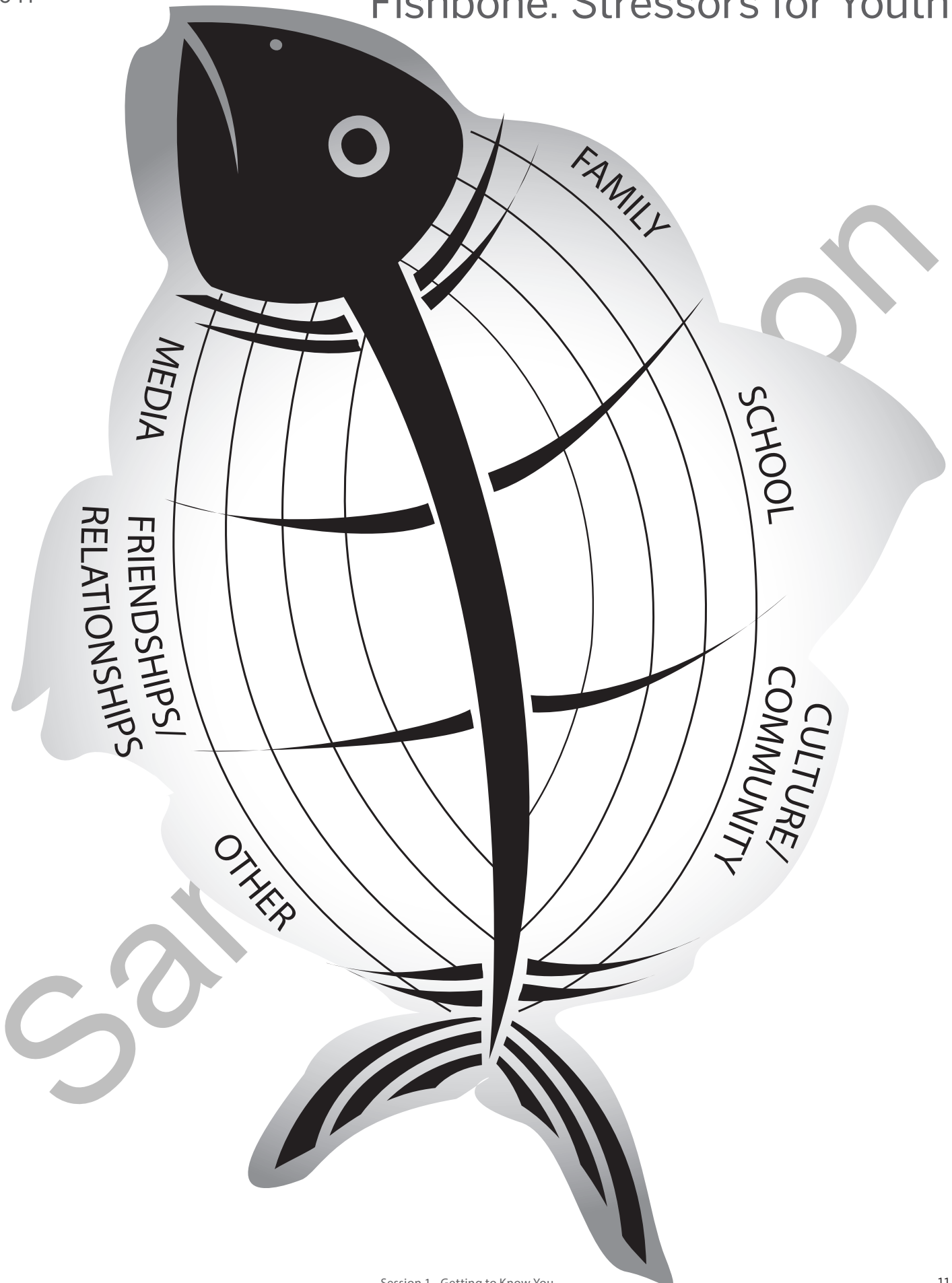
COOL DOWN

Activity: Exit Statement



- Ask students to return to the circle for the cool down.
- Remind the group that all sessions will be closed with a final closing circle. Ask students to think for a few seconds to themselves about the following: What do you hope to discuss or learn about in future sessions of this program? Each person can start with, “I hope we get to discuss...”
- Model a response with the talking stick/object in hand and then pass it on. (For example, you might say, “I hope that we get to discuss good ways to deal with some of the stressors we talked about today.”)
- After each person has had an opportunity to speak, thank the students for coming and remind them of the time and date for the next session.

Fishbone: Stressors for Youth



Fishbone: Stressors for Youth - Possible Responses

Family

- parents fighting
- sibling always borrowing clothing
- fights over gaming electronics/ television/ gaming units
- pressure to do well in school
- money/ poverty
- family members using substances
- for LGBTQ youth, worrying about family finding out if they are not "out"

School

- tests and assignments
- don't understand the content
- feel like not part of the "in" group
- nervous to try out for team/ play, committee, etc.
- don't like the teacher
- too much work/not enough time
- trying to be a better athlete, team member, etc.
- nervous to present in class

Culture/Community

- don't always agree with cultural beliefs
- a lot of crime in my community
- conflicts between people in my culture and others in my community
- gangs
- people criticizing my cultural beliefs/values
- inability to access mental health supports because of beliefs

Media

- pressure from ads to eat junk food
- pressure to look thin, be perfect
- pressure to be muscular, etc.
- always trying to keep up with facebook and worrying about what friends think
- pressure to post pictures

Friendships/Relationships

- trying to do things with all friends but not enough time
- trying to attract someone
- trying to be part of the "in" crowd
- feeling alone
- for LGBTQ youth, worrying about people finding out if they are not "out"
- not knowing how to support a friend in need
- having friends tell their problems all the time

Other

- feeling pressured by problems disclosed from friend/ partner
- pressure to use substances
- pressure to cut in order to cope
- pressure to have material things
- lack of self-esteem