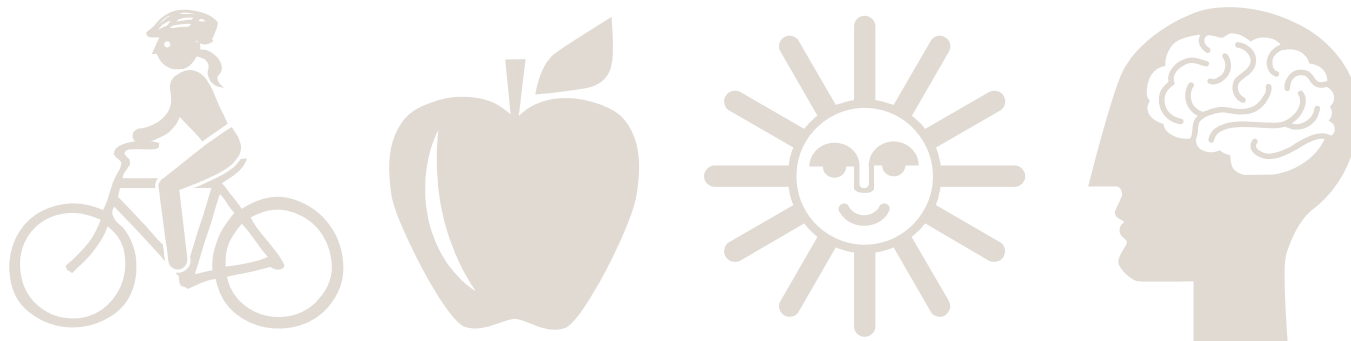




# YA4-H! Youth Advocates for Health

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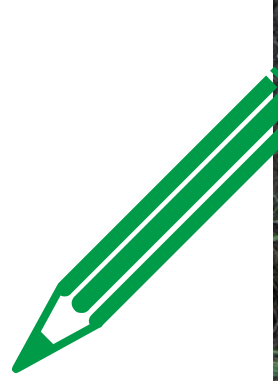
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# Introduction to YA4-H!



## YOUTH ADVOCATES FOR HEALTH Healthy Youth, Healthy Communities

Have you looked at a community bulletin board lately? Chances are it is filled with opportunities to engage around health-related topics. You can participate in “fun runs” for the whole family, or attend a special workshop on eating well or losing weight. Topics related to health and wellness have received increased attention in recent years – from obesity, to chronic disease, to mental illness, and stress, we are bombarded with information that tells us we need to take better care of ourselves. Each day brings messages related to watching what we eat, getting plenty of physical activity and sufficient rest, and reducing stress. What is the goal of these messages? To help us all lead healthier lives, of course!

Young people are increasingly aware of and concerned about health as well. A recent study co-sponsored by National 4-H Council and Molina Health Care (2014) revealed that teens have concerns related to:

- **Obesity** – both for youth and their families. *And* youth reported understanding the connection between improved food and nutrition and increased physical activity in preventing or eliminating obesity.
- **Sleep, Stress, and Mental Health** – young people know they don’t get enough sleep! They need to find ways to reduce stress and manage time as well.3 Teens are also troubled by the mental health concerns in their communities. *And* teens know that getting enough sleep, reducing stress, and maintaining good mental health are all important aspects of what it means to be healthy.
- **Healthcare Access and Cost** – While it is easy to see that adults are concerned about access to affordable health care, teens are too! Teens understand that their families need good health care at a cost they can afford. *And* teens understand the interconnection between personal, family, and community health, as well as the healthcare policies that are needed to create and support a vibrant, healthy lifestyle.

Furthermore, teens know that taking care of their own personal health is only the first step. Teens know that health concerns, and the solutions to address them are

present at every level of the community! Youth have great ideas for addressing some of the most pressing health concerns today – from personal health to social policy – and they are ready to take action to make a difference in the health of their families and communities!

## Health and 4-H Youth Development

In 2014, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) Health Task Force identified positive youth development for health as one of Extension’s six priority areas (2014). This emphasis on a systems-based approach to ensuring health has prompted Corporate Extension Services across the country to invest more and more in Health Extension programs, and the accredited College of Public Health and Human Sciences at Oregon State University is leading the way with one of the first Public Health Extension programs, of which the Oregon 4-H Youth Development program is a part. But really, 4-H has been about health since its beginning over 100 years ago! The importance of health and wellbeing is reflected in the last lines of the 4-H pledge, recited regularly by all 4-H members since 1927: “*I pledge my HEALTH to better living... for my club, my community, my country and my world!*”

The primary aim for the 4-H youth development program is to help youth develop on a “thriving” trajectory. Research shows that youth who are thriving (Scales et al, 2011; Search Institute, 2014a; Lerner et al, 2011):

- Are open to challenge and discovery
- Have a hopeful sense of purpose
- Possess a spiritual or transcendent awareness
- Have a pro-social awareness
- Have positive emotions
- Can set, change, and achieve goals for themselves

Research also shows that youth on thriving trajectories do better on important things, like school motivation and achievement, reduction in risk-taking, social-emotional well-being, and well... HEALTH!



### Youth Advocates for Health (YA4-H!)

The goal of the *Youth Advocates for Health (YA4-H!)* program is to engage 4-H teens in health-related learning and action, with the ultimate goal of preparing youth to lead health-related change in their communities. YA4-H! prepares young people to work in partnership with adults and other teens in their communities by equipping and empowering them as learners, teachers, researchers, and advocates to address critical health-related concerns. Along the way, YA4-H! provides opportunities for teens to develop and practice the skills that will help them as they navigate the transition into young adulthood.

The YA4-H! program is designed with the developmental needs of teens in mind. Unlike younger 4-H members, who focus on learning content related to their 4-H projects, teens need a different kind of programming; programming that supports the things they are naturally exploring at this stage in their lives, like personal identity, greater autonomy, leadership skills, and career exploration. Developmentally, teens desire to take on more responsibility and leadership. Teens long to contribute their ideas to programs and decisions, and they are ready to have more freedom and self-determination in 4-H. Teens also have an increasing desire to find their place in the community and to identify ways in which they can make a meaningful contribution to others.

Although they are increasingly capable and independent, teens still need the support, guidance, and mentorship of adults as they navigate the time between childhood and adulthood, and practice their emerging skills. Youth-adult partnerships play a critical role for teens during this time! Research shows that *developmental relationships* between youth and adults (and youth and their peers too!) provide some important things that help youth *grow and thrive* (Search Institute, 2014b). They are:

- Expressing care
- Challenging youth to stretch and grow
- Providing support
- Sharing power
- Expanding possibilities

The entire YA4-H! program is based on strong partnerships between youth and adults, which is why we have an entire curriculum devoted to preparing youth and adults to work effectively together.

### Components of YA4-H!

The YA4-H! Curriculum consists of four components that focus on different areas where youth can get involved in health-related 4-H learning:

1. **YA4-H! Building Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships:** Because the YA4-H! program depends on strong youth-adult partnerships (Y-APs), this curriculum is essential. The other three program components are based on the presence of already formed Y-APs, so all YA4-H! programs should begin with this curriculum first. There are options for short (4-hour) or long (up to a day-and-a-half, or a full weekend) training outlines depending on the needs of your group.
2. **YA4-H! Teens as Teachers:** Teens love to teach! And emerging research shows that teens are particularly effective as teachers of younger youth. Research also shows that teens learn the health-related information they teach, and make changes in their own health behavior too (Smith et al, 2014)! This curriculum prepares teens to be effective teachers with the support of their adult partners.
3. **YA4-H! Youth Participatory Research and Action:** Teens have great ideas for addressing health-related concerns in their communities, but they often lack skills in understanding the issue they want to change, and don't know how to go about making change happen. This curriculum prepares teens to research health concerns in their communities that are salient to youth and to take action to address them. Research has revealed the powerful effects that youth participatory research and action programs can have on youth as well as the communities that are enhanced by these efforts (Arnold & White, 2013).
4. **YA4-H! Career Exploration:** Most youth can readily identify some health careers- like being a doctor or a nurse. But there are many health-related careers that youth may not even think of! For example, biological researchers, lab technicians, athletic trainers, and community nutrition educators. Developmentally, teens need to strike a balance between being a teenager and thinking about the future. This curriculum addresses both by engaging teens in an exploration of the vast career options that are focused on improving health in a fun, youth-friendly format.

## Introduction to YA4-H! (continued)

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We hope the YA4-H! curriculum will prepare youth in your community to spearhead health-related change and become capable and enthusiastic young adults. Comments and questions about the YA4-H! curriculum can be directed to Mary Arnold at [Mary.Arnold@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Mary.Arnold@oregonstate.edu). We welcome your feedback and wish you success in your partnerships with youth!

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# About This Curriculum



Youth-adult partnerships (Y-APs) are the foundation of the Youth Advocates for Health (YA4-H!) program. The success of YA4-H! depends on the development of strong partnerships between youth and adults who work together on projects at the local level.

Successful establishment of Y-APs facilitates healthy developmental relationships that are marked by feeling cared for, challenged, and supported by adults. These relationships open doors to shared power, expanded possibilities, an enhanced thriving trajectory, and skills in teamwork, personal agency, critical thinking, communication, networking, and problem solving (Zeldin & Collura, 2010). But youth-adult partnerships don't just happen! There are important things that both youth and adults need to learn and practice if partnerships are to be successful.

## Forming Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships

It is important to remember that adults need as much training in Y-APs as youth do! Too often we focus on teaching youth and assume that adults have the skills, awareness, and knowledge to work with youth. In order for Y-APs to be successful, adults have a lot of things to learn and think about as well! Training youth and adults together can set the stage for strong and effective Y-APs that lead to better overall program outcomes.

Successful Y-APs break down the traditional barriers between youth and adults, which allows for a real partnership to emerge. Many of the barriers that prevent youth and adults from working together effectively are due to an imbalance of power. Traditionally, adults have power, and children are taught to defer to that power. Think for a minute about how young children are taught to interact with adults. Certainly there is an expectation of respect, but there is also an expectation of deference to power-- meaning that young children simply have to obey the adults in their lives, with little room for making their own decisions! At an early age, children learn to hold tight to hands when walking in crowds and crossing streets. As children grow and are able to navigate their worlds safely with more independence, they become increasingly responsible for making good decisions about their lives. How-

ever, the balance of power remains with the adults, and it is not always easy for teens and adults to work together unless this imbalance is brought to light and seen for how it plays out in both positive and negative ways. Adults are used to calling the shots, and teens are used to deferring to the expectations of adults. This can be a difficult pattern to break without purposeful training for youth and adults!

It is worth trying to do so! Research (Zeldin & Collura, 2010) shows that successful Y-APs can help youth:

- Develop more mature social and communication skills and be able to resolve conflict more competently
- Develop skills in critical thinking and creative problem solving
- Learn to work in collaboration where everyone's contribution is valued
- Interact purposefully with peers to initiate constructive activities
- Develop better verbal, physical, and creative self-expression
- Identify opportunities to define problems that matter to them, and take action to help address them
- Make connections with people who serve as inspiring role models
- Become motivated to work collaboratively with others for a greater good
- Develop a sense of personal agency and contribution to society
- Feel that they belong and are valued
- Develop a sense of purpose and belief in a bright future
- Develop an understanding of systems of oppression and create strategies for overcoming them





### How to Use This Curriculum

This curriculum is designed to equip youth and adults to:

- Work together to facilitate a YA4-H! program at the local level
- Provide training to additional youths and adults through a train-the-trainer approach
- Boost youth ease in navigating adult situations and contexts
- Enhance youths' ability to understand power differences and work effectively with and through them
- Build teens' interest in contributing to society
- Reinforce teens' thriving trajectory, and
- Deepen teens' commitment to personal and community health

The curriculum is written for 4-H and other youth program educators, volunteers, and teens with an interest in developing Y-AP programs. It is critically important that the trainings are conducted with an appropriate balance of youth and adult participants. Our experience shows that successful Y-APs have more than one committed adult, and enough youth to bring energy and commitment to the project, without becoming so large that the Y-AP loses quality and turns into an adult-driven program. Ideally, the ratio will be at least two adult partners with four to eight teens. Should more teens be interested, more adults should be recruited as well to keep the Y-AP balance ideal, thus helping to ensure success.

The curriculum is designed as a series of activities that allow participants to learn by doing, which is a hallmark of the 4-H program. Through these activities, the curriculum supports learning how to forge and maintain effective Y-APs as well as how this knowledge and skill-set promotes positive youth development and applies to YA4-H! programs.

While the facilitator's task is important, interaction by the entire group facilitates the best learning. The activities are designed to be participant-led, fun, and engaging for youth and adults alike. Through the activities, youth and adults learn about teamwork, power differences, and the developmental stages of Y-APs. The training also brings to light individual preferences and abilities, how these qualities

manifest in groups, an appreciation for the skills of others, and effective strategies for group success.

With this training as a foundation, youth and adult partners are prepared to be trained in other components of the YA4-H! program in order to teach, research, promote, and advocate for health concerns in their local communities.

### Contents

Establishing effective Y-APs does not happen without engaging teens and their adult partners in intentional training. Training for Y-APs includes:

- ***Ice-Breaker Activities.*** More than just casual fun and games, ice-breaker activities help youth-adult partners get to know each other and begin working as a team. These ice breakers also set the stage for unveiling and understanding some of the road blocks that prevent Y-APs from being successful.
- ***An Honest Exploration of Power Balances.*** Teens and adults need to look honestly at the power differences that exist between them. Bringing these differences to light and identifying ways in which the power differences show up in partnerships brings something that is often unspoken to the forefront. This allows both teens and adults to talk openly about the ways in which power differences are impacting the work they are trying to do together. Exploring issues of power helps youth and adults gain an understanding of how much influence each side has in the partnership, and appreciate the different qualities each age group brings to the partnership. It also reveals ways in which traditional power balances might be shifted and sets the stage for shared decision making, which is key to a solid Y-AP.
- ***Understanding Youth-Adult Partnerships.*** Understanding power differences between youth and adults is not the sole ingredient to forming a successful Y-AP. Additional training is needed to understand Y-APs more fully. Together, youth and adults need to identify and understand their personal strengths, and some of the benefits and challenges of working together in order to create and maintain equitable youth-adult partnerships.
- ***Personal Traits in Groups.*** Of course, partnerships are made up of individual people. Whether youth or adult, each member of the team brings unique strengths as well as areas that are not within his or her comfort zone. Effective Y-AP training also needs to focus on helping youth and adults work well on a team by dis-

## About This Curriculum (continued)

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covering individual preferences and abilities, and developing an appreciation for the skills that each member brings to the team.

- **Reflection, Application, and Evaluation** – A final important component of Y-AP training involves pausing for intentional reflection on what has been learned, with an emphasis on the application of learning to real-life settings. This step helps teams identify what they have learned, and what they deliberately plan to put into practice as they go forward into their Y-AP project.

### Training Agenda

The total time required to complete the entire curriculum is approximately twelve hours, including periodic breaks. While ideally the curriculum will be used in its entirety in order to facilitate the strongest partnerships possible, not everyone has this amount of time to devote to Y-AP training. As such, the curriculum is designed to be adapted for half-day, full-day, one-and-a-half day, or weekend retreat training sessions. Activities may also be incorporated singly or in small batches.

Below are four sample agendas that will help groups plan their training workshops according to how much time they have. In each example, participants learn through games, role play, and other fun, interactive activities designed to create experiential learning opportunities.

### Half-Day Workshop (4 hours)

This abbreviated agenda introduces some fundamental concepts about Y-APs, including the benefits and challenges of youth and adults working together as well as the skills and knowledge required for creating and maintaining successful Y-APs. Participants also learn how to bring out the best in teams by working with the strengths of individual team members.

Name Games and Warm-Ups: Name Toss – 10 minutes

Glued to a Stick – 20 minutes

Establishing a Community Covenant – 10 minutes

Subtle Discrimination – 20 minutes

Benefits and Challenges – 45 minutes

*15-minute break*

Stages of Youth-Adult Partnerships – 45 minutes

Doing What You Do Best – 40 minutes

Clover Reflection – 20 minutes

### Full-Day Workshop (7.5 hours)

With a full day, participants can build greater rapport as a group, delve into issues of power, and explore the meaning of limits and challenges. These activities offer team members a broader perspective on what it takes to start and maintain effective Y-APs.

#### MORNING (APPROXIMATELY 3.5 HOURS)

Name Games and Warm-Ups: Name Toss – 10 minutes

Crossing the River – 30 minutes

Glued to a Stick – 20 minutes

Establishing a Community Covenant – 10 minutes

Perceptions of Power – 15 minutes

*15-minute break*

Benefits and Challenges – 45 minutes

Stages of Youth-Adult Partnerships – 45 minutes

*1 hour break*

#### AFTERNOON (APPROXIMATELY 4 HOURS)

Name Games and Warm-Ups: Cacophony – 10 minutes

Identifying Barriers to Effective Partnerships – 45 minutes

Bound: Perceiving Limits – 60 minutes

*15-minute break*

Tips for Success – 40 minutes

Doing What You Do Best – 40 minutes

Can the Balance of Power Change? – 15 minutes

Clover Reflection – 20 minutes



## About This Curriculum (continued)

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### 1.5-Day Workshop (11.5 hours)

This agenda offers participants a full introduction Y-APs, including power dynamics, discrimination and stereotypes; understanding and overcoming challenges; maintaining effective Y-APs; bringing out individual strengths in groups; and reflections and evaluation. This sequence of activities offers youth and their adult partners thorough preparation for engaging in health-related teaching, research, and advocacy in their communities.

#### DAY 1: MORNING (APPROXIMATELY 3.5 HOURS)

Name Games and Warm-Ups: Name Toss – 10 minutes  
Crossing the River – 30 minutes  
Establishing a Community Covenant – 10 minutes  
Glued to a Stick – 20 minutes  
*15-minute break*  
Perceptions of Power – 15 minutes  
Benefits and Challenges – 45 minutes  
Identifying Barriers – 45 minutes  
*1-hour break*

#### DAY 1: AFTERNOON (APPROXIMATELY 4 HOURS)

Take a Stand – 30 minutes  
Bound: Perceiving Limits – 60 minutes  
Stages of Youth-Adult Partnerships – 45 minutes  
*15-minute break*  
Name Games and Warm-Ups: Cacophony – 10 minutes  
How Decisions Are Made – 30 minutes  
Spectrum of Attitudes Role Play – 45 minutes

#### DAY 2: MORNING (APPROXIMATELY 3.5 HOURS)

Name Games & Warm-Ups: Stretching Circle – 10 min.  
Assemble the Square – 10 minutes  
Tips for Success – 40 minutes  
Solving the Challenges Together – 40 minutes  
*15-minute break*  
What's Your Role? – 60 minutes  
Doing What You Do Best – 40 minutes  
*15-minute break*  
Can the Balance of Power Change? – 15 minutes  
Clover Reflection – 20 minutes

### Weekend Retreat Schedule ( 13 hours)

This training is particularly well suited for a weekend retreat schedule. In many ways, a full weekend is desirable as it affords opportunity for youth and adults to spend time together informally in a relaxed setting, which in turns increases the strength of the developing Y-APs. Like the one-and-a-half-day agenda, the weekend structure offers participants a full introduction Y-APs and thorough preparation for engaging in health-related teaching, research, and advocacy in their communities.

#### FRIDAY EVENING (APPROXIMATELY 3.5 HOURS)

Name Games and Warm-Ups: Name Toss – 10 minutes  
Crossing the River – 30 minutes  
Glued to a Stick – 20 minutes  
Establishing a Community Covenant – 10 minutes  
*One-hour dinner about 6 pm*  
Perceptions of Power – 15 minutes  
Subtle Discrimination – 20 minutes  
Benefits and Challenges – 45 minutes

#### SATURDAY MORNING (APPROXIMATELY 3.5 HOURS)

Assemble the Square – 10 minutes  
Identifying Barriers to Effective Partnerships – 45 minutes  
Bound: Perceiving Limits – 60 minutes  
*15-minute break*  
Stages of Youth-Adult Partnerships – 45 minutes  
How Decisions Are Made – 30 minutes  
*1-hour break*

#### SATURDAY AFTERNOON (APPROXIMATELY 3.5 HOURS)

Name Games & Warm-Ups: Two Truths – 10 min.  
Spectrum of Attitudes Role Play – 45 minutes  
Tips for Success – 40 minutes  
*15-minute break*  
Name Games and Warm-Ups: Cacophony – 10 minutes  
Solving the Challenges Together – 40 minutes  
*15-minute break*  
What's Your Role? – 60 minutes  
*Dinner and Free Time*

## About This Curriculum (continued)

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### SUNDAY MORNING (APPROXIMATELY 2.5 HOURS)

Name Games and Warm-Ups: Stretching Circle – 10 minutes

Take a Stand – 20 minutes

Doing What You Do Best – 40 minutes

*15-minute break*

Can the Balance of Power Change? – 15 minutes

Clover Reflection – 20 minutes

Back to the Future – 10 minutes

### Reference

Zeldin, S., and Collura, J. (2010). *Being Y-AP savvy: A Primer on creating and sustaining youth-adult partnerships*. Ithaca, NY: ACT for Youth Center of Excellence. Retrieved from <http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/bitstream/1813/19325/2/YAP-Savvy.pdf>

# YA4-H! Youth Advocates for Health—Building Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships

## Program Logic Model

INPUTS		OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES	
<p>What we have...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Y-A4-H! Youth Adult Partnership Training Curriculum</li> <li>• Funding and other resources to provide training</li> <li>• Trainer expertise</li> <li>• Commitment from local 4-H programs in development of a robust YA4-H! program locally</li> </ul>	<p>What we do...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training on Youth-Adult Partnerships via a train-the-trainer model</li> <li>• Support local programs in utilizing the Y-AP training to build and maintain effective YA4-H! programs utilizing the Y-AP model</li> </ul>	<p>Who we reach...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-H educators interested in developing a local Y-AP program</li> <li>• 4-H educators and volunteers interested in forming Y-APs with teens</li> <li>• Teens and adults interested in forming effective Y-APs</li> </ul>	<p>Short-Term (Learning)</p> <p><b>TRAINING PARTICIPANTS WILL:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn ice breakers and how to use them to set the stage for developing effective Y-APs</li> <li>• Identify and understand power differences between youth and adults and how to navigate them</li> <li>• Understand the developmental stages of Y-APs</li> <li>• Identify stereotypes that youth and adults hold about each other</li> <li>• Identify and understand benefits and challenges of creating and maintaining Y-APs</li> <li>• Discover individual preferences and abilities for working in partnerships</li> <li>• Develop an appreciation for the skills of others</li> <li>• Learn strategies for sharing power in decision making</li> <li>• Explore strategies for overcoming limits and challenges to group success</li> <li>• Learn how personal strengths can also be weaknesses in partnerships</li> </ul>	<p>Medium-Term (Action)</p> <p><b>AFTER THE TRAINING PARTICIPANTS WILL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use knowledge and skills learned in the training to form successful local Y-APs</li> <li>• Utilize Y-APs that are formed in the <i>Youth Advocates for Health (YA4-H!)</i> program to teach, research, promote, and advocate for health concerns in their local communities through participation in other <i>YA4-H!</i> program components</li> <li>• Youth Participants Will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience the benefits of healthy developmental relationships that are marked by feeling cared for, challenged, and supported by adults.</li> <li>• Experience shared power with adults</li> <li>• Experience expanded possibilities because of Y-APs</li> <li>• Experience an enhanced thriving trajectory as indicated by an increase in the thriving indicators</li> <li>• Develop skills in teamwork, personal agency, critical thinking, communication, networking, and problem solving</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Long-Term (Social)</p> <p><b>AS A RESULT...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth will report the Y-AP experience supported their transition to young adulthood by giving them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opportunity to stretch in areas beyond their comfort zone.</li> <li>• A greater understanding and ease in navigating adult situations and contexts</li> <li>• The ability to understand power differences and work effectively with and through them</li> <li>• An enhanced commitment to make a personal contribution to others and society</li> <li>• An enhanced thriving trajectory</li> <li>• An enhanced commitment to personal and community health</li> </ul> </li> </ul>





# Ice-Breaker Activities

## SECTION OVERVIEW

More than just casual fun and games, ice breakers set the stage for unveiling and understanding some of the road blocks that prevent Y-APs from being successful. The goal of these activities is to help youth and adult partners to:

- Get to know each other
- Establish trust
- Build shared experiences
- Begin working as a team, and
- Practice effective listening and communication skills.

## ACTIVITIES

- Name Games and Warm-Ups – 10 minutes each
- Crossing the River – 30 minutes
- Establishing a Community Covenant – 10 minutes
- Glued to a Stick – 20 minutes
- Assemble the Square – 10 minutes
- Take a Stand – 30 minutes

