Let Them Lead!

Strategies for Developing or Enhancing your Peer Leadership Groups

Emil Ramnarine

Emil.Ramnarine@fairfuturesny.org
Purpose & Benefits of Peer Groups

A Peer Group is a youth-led group that provides opportunities to:

1. Develop and practice leadership skills.
2. Experience what it’s like to exercise power and effect change.
3. A place to feel safe and discuss issues that are important to them.
4. Use positive peer influence to promote responsibility and respect.
5. Improve self-esteem and develop problem-solving skills.
What You Need to Get Started

1. Be Clear On Your Purpose & Goals – Is it for support? project-based? personal goal?

2. Support from the larger agency community – consistent, committed adult leadership

3. Who Is This Group For? – Be specific – Open/closed participation? Are there any requirements?

4. What is the meeting format and protocol? – What time? How often? Where? Who is going to set the agenda and take notes? Is the a cap on the # of participants?

5. Create a safe, trusting environment – set group promises and decide how this will be maintained; Allow room for mistakes, risks, reflection and feedback

6. Identify a leader
Qualities of a Leader

• Ability to influence others
• Ability to encourage others and establish goals
• Can demonstrate empathy and understanding of others
• Comfortable taking calculated risks
• Basic organizational skills
• Accepts criticism and feedback; Can listen to other opinions
Peer Group Best Practices

• Allow the Youth Leader a chance to shadow and co-facilitate before having them facilitate on their own

• Be clear with the Youth Leader around what their role is IN the meeting and OUTSIDE of the meeting

• Can demonstrate empathy and understanding of others

• Comfortable taking calculated risks

• Basic organizational skills

• Accepts criticism and feedback; Can listen to other opinions