

Summary of the Advanced Youth Leadership Training results

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Introduction

In August 2009, the Pierz Area Coalition (PAC), in Morrison County, implemented an advanced youth leadership training for youth currently participating in the local ATOD prevention youth group, as well as other interested youth. The purpose of the training was to provide youth with an opportunity to develop leadership skills and learn about positive role modeling and goal setting. The training was intended as a follow-up workshop to the Youth Leadership Academy held in May 2009 to encourage youth to further develop the skills they were introduced to at the Academy. A total of 16 youth participated in the training over the course of two days. The following summarizes feedback about the training from the youth.

Description of respondents

Participating youth represented grades 8 through 11, with half of the youth in the tenth grade at the time of the training. Youth reported participating in a number of extracurricular activities, most commonly the Pierz Area Coalition (PAC) Student Network and sports teams. About half were also involved in church youth groups (Figures 1-2). Half of the youth indicated they held one or more leadership positions within these activities (Figure 3).

1. Grade of participating youth

Grade	(N=16)	
	N	%
8 th	3	19%
9 th	2	13%
10 th	8	50%
11 th	3	19%

2. Youth participation in extracurricular activities

Activity	(N=16)	
	N	%
Pierz Area Coalition (PAC) Student Network	14	88%
Sports team	14	88%
Church youth group	9	56%
Peer Helpers	4	25%
National Honor Society (NHS)	4	25%
Band	3	19%
SADD	3	19%
Business Professionals of America (BPA)	2	13%
Team Captain	1	6%
Other ^a	5	31%

^a "Other" activities included: choir (n=1), youth leadership (n=1), science club (n=1), drama (n=1), and fine arts (n=1).

3. Youth leadership in extracurricular activities

Item	(N=15)	
	N	%
Holds a leadership position	8	53%
Does not hold a leadership position	7	47%

Note. Leadership roles reported include: Band Officer/Section Leader (n=3), Youth Leadership (n=1), NHS Co-Officer (n=1), BPA Officer (n=1), Science club Secretary-Treasurer (n=1), Drama Leader (n=1), SADD Treasurer (n=1), and sports enthusiast/support (n=1).

Results

Perceptions of the training and accommodations were very positive. All of the youth thought the training was useful, that presenters were knowledgeable, and would recommend the training to other youth. All youth felt that they could contribute to discussions and ask questions when they wanted. They also felt connected to other youth following the training (Figure 4).

Furthermore, all participating youth "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they had developed a variety of leadership skills and learned about positive role modeling. One

youth did not feel he or she had a better understanding of group dynamics following the training (Figure 5). All 16 youth also reported feeling committed to setting and carrying out their personal goals as a result of the training workshop. All but one youth expressed commitment to helping with the 7th grade orientation (Figure 6).

When asked how they will use the information and skills they gained, youth cited a variety of ways, including listening to others more, attempting to include others in the process, and generally “stepping up” as needed. Youth also found several different aspects of the training to be particularly helpful, such as the importance of trusting and collaborating with others, communication skills, and engaging others. Several recommendations were also made about ways to improve future trainings. Incorporating more activities was the most common suggestion. See the appendix for a full list of the respondents’ comments.

4. Perceptions of training overall

Item	Number and percentage who “strongly agree” or agree” (N=16)	
	N	%
Overall, this training was useful.	16	100%
The activities were well organized.	15	94%
The adult presenters were knowledgeable.	16	100%
I was able to ask questions when I needed to.	16	100%
I had an opportunity to personally contribute to the discussions.	16	100%
I feel more connected to the other youth participants after attending this training.	16	100%
I would recommend this leadership training to other youth at my school.	16	100%
I liked the accommodations for the training.	16	100%

5. Gains in leadership skills and positive role modeling

As a result of this training workshop...	Number and percentage who “strongly agree” or agree” (N=16)	
	N	%
Leadership skills		
I have learned how to run a meeting and achieve consensus.	16	100%
I have learned how to effectively communicate with others in a group.	16	100%
I have a better understanding of group dynamics.	15	94%
I feel a sense of ownership in the groups to which I belong.	16	100%
Positive role modeling		
I know specific ways in which I can be a positive role model for others.	16	100%
I recognize that I have the power to influence others.	16	100%
I know what kind of role model I want to be.	16	100%

6. Commitment to setting and achieving goals

As a result of this training workshop...	Number and percentage who “strongly agree” or agree” (N=15-16)	
	N	%
I am committed to the goals I set for myself and/or my group during the leadership training.	16	100%
I am looking forward to carrying out the goals I set.	16	100%
I feel committed to helping manage the 7 th grade orientation.	15	100%

Future leadership training needs

When asked about areas in which they would like additional information during future trainings, three-quarters of the youth identified wanting more information about conflict resolution. At least half of the youth also requested more information or training in public speaking, creative thinking/brainstorming, and decision-making (Figure 7). Few youth identified additional needs; one youth did ask for ways to better present information, while another mentioned needing practice (see full list of comments in the appendix).

7. Areas in which youth requested additional information in future trainings

Topic areas	(N=16)	
	N	%
Conflict resolution	12	75%
Public speaking	11	69%
Creative thinking/brainstorming	10	63%
Decision-making	8	50%
Using media or technology	7	44%
Goal setting	6	38%
Being a role model	6	38%
Running a meeting	5	31%
Upholding standards of fairness and honesty	5	31%

Appendix

Open-ended comments

A1. In what ways do you plan to use the information and skills you learned through this training in a group to which you belong?

In what ways do you plan to use the information and skills you learned through this training in a group to which you belong?

By helping out and being a leader in all my groups.

By listening and involving everyone.

Contribute and give input.

Finish my goals and be a leader.

I plan on communicating better with peers.

I plan to become more trustworthy in groups by listening to and affirming others and by opening up and being vulnerable myself.

I plan to use it every day by trying to step it up when it's necessary.

I plan to use their skills and information by helping lead my younger peers and also be a positive role model.

I want to help keep everyone positive and keep my friends and others involved.

I want to use the things I learned to guide me throughout school and to help others.

In every way possible of course.

No response.

To get everybody involved in what is a good thing.

To help people I know and don't know to become better leaders.

When there is a disagreement or conflict I will help it be resolved.

When there is not someone there to run the meeting I will step in.

A2. What was the most helpful thing you learned at the Youth Leadership training?

What was the most helpful thing you learned at the Youth Leadership training?

Be open and trust what others say.

Communication and team work where very helpful.

Different ways to get people's attention.

Drugs and alcohol are bad.

How to become a better leader.

How to run a meeting and how to communicate more effectively with a group.

How to set goals.

I learned how to prep and set up for a presentation effectively – how to set the mood, connect with and engage the audience and how to be compelling by using different techniques and formats of information and learning.

Not to give up.

Public speaking.

That if you like to be supported, you need to support others.

The activities.

The trusting of the others in any group.

To me the most helpful thing I have learned was that conflict is good and also that there are ways to make a presentation fun.

We all need to work together. We can't get things done or even accomplish something if we aren't helping each other out.

No response.

A3. What could be done to improve the Youth Leadership training?

What could be done to improve the Youth Leadership training?

Make it a little longer.

More activities that give strong points that they will remember for a long time.

More activities.

More examples, better meaning.

More knowledgeable activities.

Nothing much. It's pretty amazing.

Really I think that adding more people would help improve.

Softer beds.

Time management.

Use more multi-media methods and have more participants.

We get here early or stay longer.

Nothing. (2)

No response. (2)

I don't know.

A4. Is there anything else you need in order to be a successful leader?

Is there anything else you need in order to be a successful leader?

Better ways to be able to present ideas.

Practice.

Nothing much.

No response. (4)

No. (9)
