

Two-Minute Tips

This Week's Topic: Collaboration

Collaboration is an important life skill. It builds problem-solving, listening, and social skills that will help young people create productive working relationships at school and later in life.¹ When young people collaborate with their peers and adults they are becoming better leaders by learning how to work with others to solve problems, share a workload, and respectfully resolve differences.² As staff, there are many ways to facilitate activities where participants can collaborate. Peer-to-peer teaching, small group projects, and group discussions all are examples of ways to give participants the chance to practice collaborating with each other and with you.³ Providing participants with the opportunity to work in small groups or accomplish a shared goal as a team helps them become successful adults. Collaboration is a skill needed for almost all career paths and in personal relationships.

Practice Tips

Here are a few quick tips to encourage collaboration.

Program Norms of Kindness and Respect

Establishing program norms that focus on treating each other with kindness and respect is a great first step. Participants can work together to create these norms. Some ideas of norms might include: everyone tries their best, we talk to others the way we want to be talked to, we let everyone have a turn. Encourage the group to all agree to these norms.

Forming Groups

Groups with 3-6 participants are ideal for small group work.³ Think about mixing up group formation. Some of the time, randomly assign groups (e.g. find someone wearing the same color shoes as you). Other times let participants pick their teammates. Use your best judgement and be aware of how participants are treating each other.

Activities That Allow for Collaboration

Think about ways for each group member to have a role during an activity. Participants can help identify the roles needed for an activity and choose who does what.

Provide Support

If you see signs of frustration, name the emotion, offer support, and refer to program norms. Discuss ways to address frustrations that can keep everyone working together. Suggest using their peers or other groups as a resource for problem-solving.

Tips in Action!

[Watch](#) staff at Village Theatre facilitate a collaborative group activity.

Want more two-minute tips?

Check out:

<https://depts.washington.edu/cqel/expand-ed-learning-opportunities/>

There you will find the latest tip, an archive of past tips, and a discussion board to connect with peers!

¹ Major, E. (2016, November 15th). 3 great ways to encourage student collaboration: Emphasize core values such as, respect, patience, and teamwork [blog]. Retrieved from <https://www.common sense.org/education/blog/3-great-ways-to-encourage-student-collaboration>

² Przystas, B. (2016, November 22). Encouraging youth to learn collaboration skills. Retrieved from https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/encouraging_youth_to_learn_collaboration_skills

³ Stanford University. (Winter 1999). Speaking of teaching. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.