

## Head Heart Feet Spirit Sheet: An Introductory User's Guide

### What the HHFS Sheet Does and When and How to Use It

This measure is a unique and open-ended way to collect responses from participants on their engagement experiences. The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (CEYE)<sup>1</sup> defines youth engagement as the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity, which has a focus outside of her or himself (Pancer et al., 2002). The Sheets can be used in many different contexts to understand experiences of engagement. Specifically, the different components of the HHFS Sheet examine the following aspects of participants' experiences:

*Head:* what they learned from the experience (cognitive aspect)

*Heart:* what they felt about their participation in the experience (affective aspect)

*Feet:* what they intend to do as a result of their participation (behavioural aspect)

*Spirit:* how their experiences relate to who they are and/or connect them to something outside of the self

According to the CEYE's research, full engagement consists of all of these aspects (Pancer et al., 2002).

The Head Heart Feet Spirit (HHFS) sheet is flexible for reflecting on an experience of engagement, for evaluating the experience, and for providing feedback about an engagement activity. The HHFS Sheet can be filled out independently by individuals to reflect on their experience, and/or completed in groups. The Sheets are often used at the end of an event. However, if your activity/event consists of many phases, or takes place over multiple days you may want participants to complete a HHFS sheet after each phase to notice shifts throughout the duration and adjust accordingly.

### The Story Behind the HHFS Sheet

The HHFS Sheet and similar variations are used by a number of different organizations, such as the Innovation Center ([www.theinnovationcenter.org](http://www.theinnovationcenter.org)), and the 4H Clubs (<http://4h.uwex.edu>). At the Innovation Center, their "Head, Heart, and Feet" is recommended for use at the close of a meeting to: 1) reflect on the meeting's events; 2) describe what was learned and felt during the meeting, and; 3) discuss what the individual's or group's next steps would be. While not explicitly stated, the Innovation Center frames this activity as one that can be conducted by the entire group, rather than done individually. The Wisconsin 4H Clubs also use a similar tool to evaluate a program or activity at its conclusion, using a diagram of a person and writing down what they think, feel and would do next. This 4H Club activity was adapted from work done by Marsha Sfeir, a Toronto-based educator. Sfeir's work is discussed in the book, *Educating for a Change* (Arnold, Burke, James, Martin, & Thomas, 1991).

Originally, the HHFS Sheet only consisted of the Head, Heart and Feet components. Spirit was added at a later time, driven by feedback from young people at an Indigenous Youth event in Saskatchewan in 2009. These youth believed it would be valuable to examine how individuals' experiences connect to something bigger than themselves. The Spirit component is complemented by the work of Daniel G. Scott, a CEYE champion. Dr. Scott's work suggests that youth engagement experiences can be an important context for the exploration of spirituality (e.g., Scott, 2003).

### A Companion Tool to the HHFS Sheet

There are times when the HHFS Sheet may not be the right tool for you. Perhaps you don't have a lot of time to analyze data, or you would prefer to use a tool that asks close-ended questions (i.e., "on a scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree..."). If this is the case, another tool is available to you. The *Snapshot Survey* was developed based on extended research conducted on the HHFS Sheet. Participants' responses on the HHFS Sheet were coded, and from there items were developed that addressed the prominent themes found. Thirteen items assess the head, heart, feet and spirit components of activity participation. Additional items collect the demographics of the respondent, and a description of the activity. The Snapshot Survey takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete, and has been found to be valid (e.g. measures what it intends to measure) and reliable (e.g. provides consistent results). Paper and online/electronic versions of the Snapshot Survey are available from the Centre<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Please visit the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement website for more information: [www.engagementcentre.ca](http://www.engagementcentre.ca)

<sup>2</sup> For more information about the snapshot survey or other tools for measuring youth engagement, please visit the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement website at: [www.studentscommission.ca](http://www.studentscommission.ca)

## Now What? Obtaining Results from the HHFS Sheet

Once participants have completed the HHFS Sheet the fun can begin! If the Sheet is used on an ongoing basis throughout the duration of an activity, these responses can provide informal insight into young people's experiences of an activity and inform changes for the future of the activity. It is important to consider anonymity so that young people can feel comfortable writing feedback. The responses can also be used more formally in evaluation.

Coding - the process of investigating, looking for themes, recurring answers, and interesting responses - will help to summarize and understand the results. However, it can also be quite daunting when you haven't analyzed open-ended responses before. Below are some simple instructions for coding the responses on the HHFS Sheets. If/when appropriate, you may want to involve youth participants to co-analyze the results with you to strengthen the accuracy of the themes.

1. Randomly select a portion of the Sheets and read through the responses. Doing this will give you a sense of the responses you're likely to find. You don't have to read through all of the sheets, but you should read as many as you need to in order to get a sense of the responses. You can stop reading when no new information emerges.
2. Starting all over again, read through the responses on each sheet and highlight/underline any key phrases that convey a message you believe to be important. It may be useful to go through one question at a time (i.e., read and code all of the Head responses first, then the Heart, etc.) It is recommended that you develop a keyword or phrase (known as codes or themes) that is descriptive of the key point(s) you've coded (e.g., personal growth). As you identify more key phrases you should consider whether this phrase can be explained with an existing code you've already developed, or if you need to develop a new code to explain it. You should keep a list of the keywords/phrases that you've developed and it may be helpful to jot down additional detail about the code.
3. When you've read through and coded all of the responses you should take some time to go over your codes. You may find that some codes are very similar and can be combined, or that you have a code that isn't frequently used and can be either deleted or highlighted as something interesting. This revision can be done as you go along, or you can leave it to the end.

When all of your coding is done, the emerging themes can help to better understand and evaluate your activity. You can develop a report or presentation that summarizes your findings, which may be a useful way to bring your findings back to the youth that participated and other stakeholders. Reports often include a description of your event to provide context, a description of the participants/individuals who completed your HHFS Sheets, and a description of your codes. When you describe your codes in the report it is helpful to illustrate the code/theme by providing quotes of some participants' responses. Be sure that you have asked for permission from your participants to use their quotes. When looking for a quote you want to find one that is rich and very descriptive of the theme that you're explaining. These quotes/examples provide your audience with more insight into the themes that you found.

## Themes/Codes to Get You Started

Below are some themes/codes that have been previously used in our analysis of HHFS Sheets. These codes can act as a jumping off point, or as suggestions for you as you begin coding. Themes will vary depending on the event. You may find that the themes we have used may not be appropriate for the responses in your Sheets. In this case you will need to develop codes that are more appropriate for your Sheets.

### Head

*Learning/Gaining Knowledge:* Achieving a new understanding of the topic.

*Personal Growth:* Learning something about oneself.

### Heart

*Enjoyment:* Positive feelings and emotions.

*Accomplishment:* Feelings of achievement, of being able to do something.

*Education:* Feelings experienced regarding their learning.

*Negative:* Negative feelings such as sadness, disappointment.

*Conflict:* Conflicting feelings, experiencing both positive and negative emotions.

## Feet

*Inform*: Sharing information they learned with others.

*Use*: Putting the information learned into practice.

*Involvement*: Developing projects, activism.

## Spirit

*People*: A connection with others involved in the activity, and the stories/experiences that others shared.

*Discussion*: Connection through the process of discussion, talking, and listening.

*Depth of Connection*: Descriptions of the intensity of the connection.

## **References**

- Arnold, R., Burke, B., James, C., Martin, D., & Thomas, B. (1991). *Educating for a change*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Pancer, S.M., L. Rose-Krasnor and L. Loiselle. (2002) "Youth conferences as a context for engagement," In B. Kirshner, J.L. O'Donoghue and M. McLaughlin (Ed). *Youth participation: Improving institutions and communities*. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 96:47-64
- Scott, D. G. (2003). Spirituality in child and youth care: Considering spiritual development and "relational consciousness". *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 32, 117-131.