

# Workshops



(The basics)

**A workshop is a group activity that allows communication, interaction and discussion among people on a certain topic.**

**When you are putting together a workshop remember the formula: W W W H W W**

## TIPS FOR PREPARING YOUR WORKSHOP

- Confirm the time, place and number of participants with the group/organization you'll present the workshop to.
- Make your plan for the workshop: include the purpose, materials needed, the workshop outline, and the amount of time it will take. It is also helpful to know the source of the information you use so those who want to learn more have a place to start.
- Make a check list with all the materials that you are going to use. Don't assume that the school, organization or group will supply pens, paper, projectors etc. Try to keep your requirements simple.
- As you gather all the materials you will need to run your workshop, check them off your list.
- If you want to use handouts, print them and photocopy them the night before you need them. Bring a couple of extra handouts just to be safe. Being prepared in advance will help you avoid last minute running around.
- Know the key points you want the group to take away from the workshop so you will be aware of them while you facilitate the group. (See What Makes a Good Facilitator.)
- Be organized and know what you are doing. That way the workshop will go smoothly and your participants will have a good experience.
- Make an evaluation form. It is always good to know how you did on the workshop, what was positive, or not too positive about the workshop, what needs to be improved etc.
- Bring along the "Release and Licence - No Fee" forms and get each participant to sign one once they are comfortable with what's going on. Workshops provide us with diverse youth perspectives on issues of importance to them and as such their comments are vital to what we do. At The Students Commission we try to ensure that young people's opinions are heard and that we respect everyone's right to be informed about how their contributions will be used. So be sure to bring a copy for each participant and get them to sign.

## W

What issues are you going to be talking about?...

## W

Why are you doing the workshop? Objectives, Goals...

## W

Who is the workshop meant for? How many people do you expect?

## H

How are you going to present the workshop: what activities are you going to do, what material are you going to need?

## W

Where will the workshop be held?

## W

When is your workshop scheduled and how long will it take?

# Young Women Connect Workshop

Our workshop is divided into 2 parts. (2 hours)

## Part I: (45 minutes)

Get to know the participants and define and discuss the issues that YWC deals with (poverty, racism, violence)



### TIPS FOR RUNNING THE WORKSHOP

- It helps to hold the workshop in a comfortable space.
- Groups of 5-10 people work best.
- Have participants sit in a circle... it's more friendly.
- Workshops are about getting people involved so, as facilitator, try to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak.
- If people get bored, distracted or too stressed, just play another icebreaker.
- You may want to have a break between Part 1 and Part 2.
- Food is always a good idea, whether it's snacks or drinks or whatever.

### Getting To Know Each other - Introductions, Icebreakers, etc. (15 minutes)

Because the topics of violence, racism and poverty can be sensitive, the group has got to feel comfortable together. So if they all don't already know each other, the way that you do Introductions and Icebreakers is especially important.

So make the Introductions fun by doing something like asking people to give their name, where they're from and what the funniest thing they've ever done is. Or, you could try anything! Just give 'em a chance to share something personal (but not too personal) about themselves.

There's a ton of Icebreakers that you can do. Icebreakers are meant to get people feeling comfortable with the group and to get them into the topic. So use one that you've tried and has made you feel comfortable.

In case you can't remember how to do Introductions and Icebreakers, we've included some that we recommend at the back of this package. Check 'em out. See what you think.

### Introduce the Project:

Many times at workshops and conferences, not everyone has a clear idea of why they're there. This is a good time to explain that to them. Whether you're working on your own project or just doing a Young Women Connect workshop with a group of girls, you should explain the purpose to them.

You could tell them: *Young Women Connect is a project that was started by a youth organization called The Students Commission. It's a national network of young women who gather together to talk about and deal with the issues that affect their lives and the lives of their friends. The three main issues that YWC group focuses on are violence, poverty and racism, as these are three topics that effect many of us daily.* Or you can tell them whatever you want. The stuff written in italics, above, is just the description that we sometimes use to explain Young Women Connect. In the explanation that you decide to use, you might want to include, how you got involved and why you are facilitating the workshop. If you've ever participated in anything like this you know that it's nice to know who you are listening to and why.



### Discussion: (30 minutes)

The discussion about racism, poverty, violence and other issues should flow easily once you've explained what the purpose of the workshop is. Here are some questions that you might want to use to get the conversation going. If the group is too big you can divide it into small teams and each team can define one issue.

- What is poverty, violence & racism? How would you define these terms?
- How does it affect young women?
- Do these topics interest you as an individual?
- What are some other things that impact your life as a young woman? You can ask each group to present their comments in a creative way (posters, a tableau, skits are some suggestions)
- What do you think about the magazine and video?

## Part 2: (45 minutes)

Now, discuss violence, racism and poverty in more depth using the stories from the magazine as a starting point.

### Activity (30 minutes)

Each participant or group will choose an article from the magazine. After reading the article a group discussion can begin. Here are some questions that you may want to use to get the conversation going.

- What was the article about? (explain briefly)
- How did it make you feel? What did you like the most?
- If you were given the chance to change or help the writer deal with the issue she is facing, what would you do?
- What images, pictures or thoughts came to your mind after reading this article?

### Wrap-Up (15 minutes)

When you're wrapping up the discussion, it's a good time to get feedback from the participants. Ask them how they feel about the workshop and what they think about the YWC initiative. Explain that the YWC project is ongoing and find out if anyone would be interested in contributing further to the project, or any other project that you're working on. Perhaps they have an idea for their project. Here are some more questions that you might want to use in your wrap-up.

- From what you know about YWC, what do you think of it?
- Is there anything you'd like to see happen with YWC that isn't?
- What would you like to do?
- Where do we go from here?

\*\* These questions can bring both positive and negative feedback, so try to be prepared and open for either one. In most cases people attending your workshop have given of their time so it is likely that their criticism is meant to be constructive.

Thank everyone for coming out and contributing.

## MUTUAL RESPECT

- Suggest that anything said in the workshops will stay in the group. If you intend on sharing what the group learned with others ask people to sign the "Release and Licence" form included with this magazine.
- If you plan to shoot video, ask if it is okay with the group. If people are not comfortable with the idea, don't shoot.



# Icebreakers

Some activities work better than others for large groups. Select the ones you think are most appropriate for your group.



## “Can It”

**Materials:** strips of pink and white paper, a jar, candy & pens

This activity is good for use in classrooms. As an introduction to this activity it can be explained that we all have a ton of things going on in our lives. Each person is invited to take a pink and white piece of paper and write down something that they need to let go of for the next hour or so in order for them to more fully participate in the group (this could be a happy thought or something they are struggling with). The white papers will be burned and the pink ones the facilitator will read (Not aloud). All participants write on both pieces of paper so no one is singled out. Participants are welcome to sign their name to the pink sheet. This way the facilitator can connect them with an appropriate resource if necessary. The participants are invited to take a candy out of the jar when they put their slips into the jar.

## “Weather Check”

Before beginning a group/session participants are asked to check in – this can be done in a variety of ways.

- Where are you at/what’s bugging you? What do you need to leave behind – what did you leave behind? etc.

- have a weather thermometer drawn on paper and have participants rate where they are at and explain briefly why

## “Dice Game”

**Materials:** dice (one per table), pen (one per table), paper (one per person)

This game is good for groups of 4-6 around a table.

This activity begins by one person at the table rolling the dice. Once this person rolls a 6, they grab the pen and start writing down numbers on their paper as fast as they can. In the meantime, the person to their left has grabbed the dice and is trying to roll a 6 as soon as they can. Once that person has rolled a 6, they grab the pen from the person to their right and begin writing numbers as fast as they can on their own paper. The person to their left tries to roll a 6 and it continues around the circle like this until someone reaches 100 (or whatever).

## “Balloons”

**Materials:** balloons, markers

This activity is good for groups of up to 12 and helps facilitate the discussion of issues.

Have the group stand in a circle. Ask what issues they are facing, what

responsibilities they have etc (i.e. school, boyfriend, music lessons). As the issues are identified they are written on the balloons and tossed into the group. The group then has to keep the balloons in the air. As more and more balloons are added, it becomes evident how difficult it can be to keep on top of all the things going on in our lives. Another version – juggling different sized balls (each representing something different).

## “Cooperative Juggling Game”

**Materials:** bean bags or cush balls

This activity is good for large numbers of people.

Have participants stand in a circle. Start a pattern of throwing (always throw to and receive from the same person). Add more balls and continue the same pattern of throwing.

This activity can be used with unique metaphors (have participants throw while hopping on one foot or with one hand behind their back to represent, for example, cultural and language barriers). Or, before throwing, have people call the name of the person they’re throwing too to help people remember each other’s names.

## “Pencil”

Put an imaginary pencil in your belly button and write your name.

Note: caution around use as some people may have body issues and not be comfortable with this activity.

## “Conviction”

This activity can be introduced by saying that this activity involves a word that you have to add to your vocabulary and a word that you have to take out.

Have the participant stand up and put one of their arms out to the side. Ask them to think of something they would like to do. Have them say the statement in the following way...

1) I will try to... (i.e. go for a walk everyday, be a better violinist or some other resolution)

After they make the statement the facilitator tries to push down their arm. Next ask the participant to say the following...

2) I will absolutely... (i.e. go for a walk everyday, be a better violinist or some other resolution)

After they make this statement the facilitator tries to push their arm down again.

The point of this activity is that there is no conviction in the word try and that our own personal messages have a huge impact on what we are able to do.

Note: in this activity the participant “should” find it easier to hold their arm out in spite of the pressure after the 2nd statement.

## “Untangle the Knot”

Participants stand in a circle. Each person crosses their arms and takes the hand of two others in the circle. The task of the group is to untangle the knot they have created. Illustrates cooperation and what can be done by working together.

Note: use caution and sensitivity with this exercise as it involves touching and some may not be comfortable with this.

Variation: One person stands outside of the circle and the participants in the circle have their eyes closed. The one person then tries to help the group untangle by giving instructions. After doing it this way, have the group do it again this time with everyone involved with their eyes open.

## “Introductions”

Have participants break up into pairs. Get them to learn a bit about the other person by asking a few questions.

- 3 unique things about the person
- something you are looking forward to
- what you wanted to be when you grew up etc.

Have the partners introduce each other and share what they learned.

## “Icebreaker”

**Materials:**-name tags with different characters on them (each should have a corresponding name/partner) i.e. Kermit and Miss Piggy, Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen, Abbott and Costello etc.

Each participant has a name attached to their back and they must determine who they are and then find their partner by asking yes/no questions to other participants i.e.) am I on T.V, am I male. A version of 20 questions.

Once they determine who they are they can place their name tag on their front and wait for their partner to determine who they are. These partners can be used later for small group activities.

## KEY CONCEPTS FOR INTERACTION

- Be positive
- Allow the other person to talk uninterrupted
- Think before you speak
- Give everyone the benefit of the doubt
- Speak for yourself - own what you say
- Always be calm
- Talk about one issue at a time
- Offer solutions and compromise
- Respect the other person's feeling and thoughts
- Support people
- Always show your appreciation
- Enjoy yourself
- Set out to learn something
- At all times treat others as you would want to be treated

# Release and Licence - No Fee

to use for educational purposes the material you contribute to the workshop



NAME:

.....

ADDRESS:

.....

.....

POSTAL CODE: ..... TELEPHONE: .....

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SIGNATURE: .....

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EVENT: .....

# Facilitator's Guide

**Facilitate: make easy, promote, help forward**

**Facilitator: responsible for assisting a process to success**

## What is a Students Commission Facilitator?

A Students Commission facilitator is a guide on an incredible experience. You will assist participants through the process that is a Workshop. You will help them listen, understand, learn, contribute, lead and grow. You will be a role model, an information source, a helping hand, and a friend. Sound like a lot? Well it is, but nothing you can't handle! The key to success as a facilitator is caring about the people around you and being a positive force for them.

## What is the role of a Facilitator?

- to impart the philosophy of the Students Commission at all times through conversation, action, and leadership;
- The Students Commission is a community and certain things, like respect, honour, and responsibility, can be expected in a community. Leading by example is the best way to develop it.
- to create a full experience for workshop participants;
- Assist people in getting settled in, answer questions and point out the activities or projects they can participate in outside the discussion group.
- to facilitate the group's discussion;
- Guide the participants through the process of dialogue, provoke thought, encourage participation, and focus ideas into concrete action.
- to be a friend;
- Listen, interact, make participants feel included and valuable. You can reinforce their discoveries, build their self confidence, and encourage their skill development.

**RESPECT**  
**LISTEN**  
**UNDERSTAND**  
**COMMUNICATE**

These are our four pillars, the foundation of all Students Commission programs and events. They are pretty simple, but referring to them gives us all a touchstone for our behaviour when we are together.

When we truly respect another person, we can really listen to what they are saying; by listening, we can understand who they are and what they mean; by understanding each other we open the door for real communication, learning and growth. Leading by example is the best way to develop it.

## Letting Others Lead

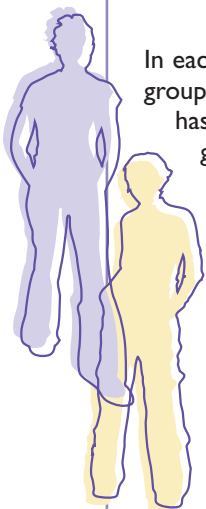
In each workshop group there will be one facilitator (that's you). However, you will probably find in your group, a young person who has experienced a Students Commission conference before, or someone who has the skills and confidence to assume a position of co-facilitator. Sometimes, several people in your group each perform some aspect of this role. We encourage you to support and encourage young people assuming the role of co-facilitator in your group.

### Experienced Facilitator (You)

- resource and support person
- mentor for the inexperienced facilitator
- participates through active listening and asking thought provoking questions
- operates as a discipline source if necessary on request of young facilitator or group

### Inexperienced Facilitator

- inspires and maintains discussion
- maintains the group focus
- participates by active listening
- develops the break out group as a community, and reminds them of what that means



# Communication Skills



We all like to think we can communicate, you know..... talk and listen..... right?

Well, there are a lot of skills involved in communicating and sometimes we need to brush up on them. A workshop is all about communication. Through communication we learn, build relationships and help others. This can be an intense experience so here are some pointers to make it easier. Above all else remember that being a successful part of something requires you to be sensitive to those around you.

## What are the things that encourage the aids?

Attending Behaviour  
Active Listening  
Body Language  
Empathy

### Attending Behaviour

This means "be here now" and it indicates that you are physically and emotionally present and builds rapport.

#### Nonverbal Cues

- make eye contact
- your face is a source of feedback so smile, frown, show expressions.
- use your body posture. If you relax others around you will relax. Be aware of yourself. Are you sitting toward the group, leaning forward, indicating interest? Are you distanced from everyone? Are you talking when someone else is talking?

### WHAT AFFECTS COMMUNICATION?

#### BARRIERS

time pressure  
language  
mistrust  
emotional state  
misperception  
stereo-types  
information overload  
lack of information  
peer pressure  
hostility

#### AIDS

mutual respect  
listening  
honesty  
self-esteem  
clarification  
non-judgmental  
facilitation  
knowledge  
freedom of expression  
interaction

Body language makes up 75% of communication.

#### Verbal Cues

- it's okay to be quiet, to use that time to think, absorb, prepare. Always count at least three seconds before you speak or respond.
- "yeah", "uh-huh", "really", "right", "oh" are all ways to express interest and concern without interrupting
- summarizing what the speaker has said indicates that you were listening, you are interested, and you validate their efforts.

#### Active Listening

Listening is a difficult job and one we all have trouble with at different times. However, this is a key skill for communication because it involves a lot more than just hearing. There are three parts to active listening:

- listening to and understanding

words

- listening to and understanding the person
- listening to and understanding body language

#### Body Language

It means posture, facial expressions, tone of voice, mannerisms, and level of excitement. Be aware of the people around you and how they are acting or reacting.

#### Empathy

Empathy is the act of understanding by putting yourself in someone else's shoes! Remember that people are complex! If you don't know them extremely well you don't know them or their experiences. Try to see things from their perspective without losing yours. Ask questions! Strive to learn about everyone around you! This builds understanding.