

## Youth Development Curricula and Other Sources of Group Activities

**Note:** Some of these resources have been developed for younger groups of students, but they can be adapted for use with your older YouthBuild students.

**104 Activities that Build: Self-Esteem, Teamwork, Communication, Anger Management, Self-Discovery, and Coping Skills** by Alanna Jones, 1998. Published by Red Room Publishing (ISBN 978-0-9662341-3-8).

This is a useful resource to have around when you run out of ideas for things to do. Most of the activities are perfectly suited to being led by youth, require minimal materials, and can be used by small groups or in one-on-one sessions.

**BAM! Boys Advocacy and Mentoring: A Leader's Guide to Facilitating Strengths-based Groups for Boys, Helping Boys Make Better Contact by Making Better Contact With Them** by Peter Mortola, Howard Hiton, and Stephen Grant, 2008. Published by Routledge (ISBN 978-0-41596-318-3).

This in-depth resource provides a complete guidebook for implementing a program aimed at working with groups of adolescent males. Many of the activities involve strategic storytelling and other communication styles likely to be effective with young men, and most of the facilitated activities can be useful outside the highly structured BAM! framework.

**The Best of Building Assets Together: Favorite Group Activities That Help Youth Succeed** by Jolene L. Roehlkepartain, 2008. Published by Search Institute (ISBN 978-1-57482-159-8).

This comprehensive activity guide offers 166 activities that can get groups of youth—including mentor-mentee pairs—sharing, thinking, collaborating, and reflecting together. Built around the 40 Developmental Assets framework, the activities cover topics such as raising self-awareness, strengthening relationships, developing character, and setting goals. Included is a CD-ROM with reproducible handouts and other materials.

**Beyond Bars ... A Curriculum for Life: Building Resilience Through Life Skills Development** by Trina Brooks and Virtual Research Group, 2006. Published by Girl Scouts of the United States of America (ISBN 0-88441-699-2).

Originally designed for working with girls who have a parent in the correctional system, this curriculum provides over a dozen activities that address issues common to all youth, such as managing friendships, making healthy choices, identifying personal values, and setting goals. The materials are designed for working specifically with girls, but could be adapted for use with boys as well.

**Brave New Girls: Creative Ideas To Help Girls Be Confident, Healthy, and Happy (Revised & Updated Edition)** by Jeanette Gadeberg, 2008. Published by Fairview Press (ISBN 978-1-57749-179-8).

This resource is designed mostly as a workbook for individual teen girls, but many of the worksheets and activities can easily be adapted for use by mentees or even mentor-mentee pairs. It covers a wealth of topics that are relevant to teen girls, such as managing friendships, setting goals, improving self-esteem, and understanding and reflecting on messages about young women in popular culture.

**Dare to Be King: What if the Prince Lives? A Survival Workbook for African American Males** by David C. Miller, 2003. Published by Hotep Press/Urban Leadership Institute (ISBN 0-9659028-2-X).

This resource focuses on many lessons and reflection activities for African-American boys and other adolescent males living in harsh urban environments. The often blunt subject matter of the lessons, which address topics such as violence in society, peer pressure, gang activity, interactions with law enforcement, and hip-hop culture, may be too graphic for younger mentees. But it is a culturally relevant tool for working with middle and high school youth who are living in tough urban neighborhoods.

## Youth Development Curricula and Other Sources of Group Activities (cont.)

***The Essential Guide to Talking with Teens: Ready-To-Use Discussions for School and Youth Groups*** by Jean Sunde Peterson, 2007. Published by Free Spirit Publishing (ISBN 978-1-57542-218-3).

The discussion activities in this book can easily be adapted to working with mentor-mentee pairs in a group setting, and some may even be useful as one-on-one activities for peer mentors and mentees. The activities are designed to produce thoughtful reflection and conversation in focus areas such as handling stress, forming identity, processing feelings, and creating a positive vision of the future. Reproducible handouts are provided.

***Girls Inc. Presents: You're Amazing! A No-Pressure Guide to Being Your Best Self*** by Claire Mysko, 2008. Published by Girls Incorporated (ISBN 978-1-59869-713-1).

This resource is designed primarily as a workbook for individual teen girls, but some sections could be adapted for use by mentor-mentee pairs or groups of girls. The topics covered are based on the issues and concerns of girls as identified in Girls, Inc.'s 2006 survey of third through 12<sup>th</sup>-graders, many of whose comments and stories are included in the book. Topics include dealing with stereotypes, looks, friends, academics, dating, relationships, family, stress, talents, setting priorities, and tough breaks. There is a good resource list of Web sites and national organizations at the back of the book.

***Helping Teens Handle Tough Experiences: Strategies to Foster Resilience*** by Jill Nelson and Sarah Kjos, 2008. Published by Search Institute Press (ISBN 978-1574822489).

This book gives an overview of many difficult issues facing teens, provides tips for working with teens on the topic, includes a list of online and print resources, and provides a summary handout that is included in a CD accompanying the book. Programs may find it useful in training to help mentors deal with tough issues that may come up in mentoring relationships. Topics covered include anxiety, bullying and relational aggression, depression, eating disorders, foster care, gangs, physical abuse, and many more. Some handouts are provided for teens to coach them on how to help themselves and each other.

***A Kids' Guide to Helping Others Read & Succeed: How to Take Action!*** by Cathryn Berger Kaye, 2007. Published by Free Spirit Publishing (ISBN 978-1-57542-241-1).

This resource is intended as a self-directed guidebook for youth who would like to set up a peer-tutoring program as a service project. The first section has general background on literacy, tutoring, and working with younger children. The second section helps youth get started, and includes a template for a service learning proposal.

***The Kid's Guide to Service Projects!*** by Barbara A. Lewis, 1995. Published by Free Spirit Publishing (ISBN: 978-0-915793-82-2).

This resource may be helpful for peer programs as a brainstorming tool of different ideas and activities for service projects. It is designed as a self-guided book for youth, with over 500 different ideas, running the gamut from environmental projects to working with senior citizens in their communities.

***Letter 2 a Teen: Becoming the Best I Can Be*** by Robin Cox, 2008. Published by Essential Resources (ISBN 978-1-877440-57-1).

This resource from New Zealand offers a number of ready-to-use activities for teens on setting goals, building friendships, communicating, managing time, handling stress, writing résumés, and becoming positive role models. Although designed for individual teens, many of the worksheets could be adapted for peer mentoring matches.

## Youth Development Curricula and Other Sources of Group Activities (cont.)

***Make a World of Difference: 50 Asset-Building Activities to Help Teens Explore Diversity*** by Dawn C. Oparah, 2006. Published by Search Institute (ISBN 978-1-57482-868-9).

The topic of cultural and ethnic diversity is one that all mentoring programs—and mentoring relationships—must address to be effective for all participants. This activity book offers 50 ready-to-use sessions that can be used to either train peer mentors or give mentors and mentees unique and fun ways to think and talk about diversity. Specific topics include boundaries, sexism, disability awareness, classism, gender roles, and body image. This is a great resource for teaching young people to value and respect others.

***Making Choices: Life Skills for Adolescents*** by Mary Halter and Barbara Fierro Lang, 1994. Published by Advocacy Press (ISBN 978-0-91165-549-0).

This full curriculum provides multiple lessons in each of a dozen topic areas, including cultural diversity, self-esteem, personal integrity, family relations, personal health, and career exploration. Many of the lessons could be conducted as a mentor-mentee joint activity, although some of the content would probably be too advanced for elementary age mentees. This resource could also be valuable in mentor training and skill development, providing older youth with the tools and values to assist younger students.

***Mentoring for Meaningful Results: Asset-Building Tips, Tools, and Activities for Youth and Adults*** by Kristie Probst, 2006. Published by Search Institute (ISBN 978-1-57482-875-7).

This resource provides a dozen worksheets, handouts, and accompanying activities that can help mentors and mentees establish a close trusting relationship and get them talking about important issues. It also provides worksheets and activities for use with the mentee's family. All materials are ready-to-use and come with full instructions.

***Meaningful Mentoring: A Handbook of Effective Strategies, Projects and Activities. Helping You Become a Co-Pilot in a Child's Life (Grades 6–12)*** by Robert P. Bowman and Susan C. Bowman, 1997. Published by Youth-Light Inc. (ISBN 978-1-88963-604-7).

This revised version of the classic *Becoming a Co-Pilot* series provides many activities that mentors can do with their mentee. Activities are focused on issues such as self-esteem, character, handling difficult life situations, and having confidence in school.

***More Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth*** by Liana Lowenstein, 2002. Published by Champion Press (ISBN 978-0-96851-991-2).

This collection features over 30 activities that can be done by individuals, groups, and even whole families. The topics fall into five main categories: engagement, feelings, anger management, social skills, and self-esteem. Most of the activities would be useful for mentor-mentee pairs to do together or separately, followed by discussion time. Full facilitator notes, handouts, and lists of supplies are provided.

***Reviving the Wonder: 76 Activities That Touch the Inner Spirit of Youth*** by Ric Stuecker with Suze Rutherford, 2001. Published by Research Press (ISBN 978-0-87822-474-6).

This resource strives to provide young people with values, understanding, and skills that can help them take care of themselves and their communities. The activities are a mix of hands-on arts and crafts projects, worksheets, and other creative and fun reflection exercises. Each exercise comes with detailed facilitator instructions and discussion points. These activities could be used in groups or done by individual mentor-mentee pairs with some supervision and coaching.

## Youth Development Curricula and Other Sources of Group Activities (cont.)

***The Teen Guide to Global Action*** by Barbara A. Lewis, 2008. Published by Free Spirit Publishing (ISBN 978-1-57542-266-4).

Designed as a workbook for individual youth, some of the material from this resource would be easily adapted to a peer mentoring programs seeking to design service projects. There is an initial section with useful checklists on identifying a cause, researching it, and planning for action. The areas of action covered are human rights, hunger and homelessness, and peace and friendship.

***Tools for Teaching Social Skills in School: Lesson Plans, Activities, and Blended Teaching Techniques to Help Your Students Succeed*** by Michele Hensley, Jo C. Dillon, Denise Pratt, Jacqueline Ford, and Ray Burke, 2005. Published by Boys Town Press (ISBN 978-1-88932-264-3).

Originally designed to assist teachers in creating more orderly and productive classrooms, this activity guide has many tips and lessons that can be adapted for use in youth and peer mentoring programs. Topics include handling conflict appropriately, proper ways of getting attention, staying on task, sharing with others, and many others that would be useful for mentors and mentees alike.

***What Do You Stand For? A Kids' Guide To Building Character*** by Barbara A. Lewis, 2005. Published by Free Spirit Publishing (ISBN 978-1575421742).

This book provides activities to help youth build character. Each chapter starts with a description of a character trait (from a long list including integrity, tolerance, loyalty, citizenship, empathy, etc.) and presents several "dilemmas" to use for journaling, writing essays, and discussion. There are "check it out" sections with suggestions for Web sites, books, and movies. Each chapter ends with an inspirational true story of a young person who exemplifies that trait.