



YOUTH COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT MANUAL

*An adaptable manual that assists with problem
solving the needs of youth in a community*

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Welcome!

This curriculum is a useful, feasible, and concise manual that provides the information and resources you need to help you to lead your own youth-led community needs assessment. Although it was originally created for the Utah Well Connected Communities initiative and designed and piloted in rural communities in Utah, its principles and activities apply beyond health and well-being work, are relevant to different age groups, and work well in both small communities and larger urban ones.

If you have any questions about the use of this manual or need support as you work through an assessment, please reach out to us:



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What Is 4-H?

One of the largest youth-development organizations in the United States, 4-H operates in almost every county across the nation and enjoys a partnership among the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), state land-grant universities (e.g., Utah State University), and local county governments. The organization focuses on youth and adults working together as partners in designing and implementing club and individual plans for activities and events.

Positive youth development is 4-H's primary objective. All of its projects help members to learn and master the skills needed to live successfully in a diverse and changing world. Indeed, participation in 4-H programs significantly benefits youth, particularly those that emphasize youth thriving. Members involved in these types of programs tend to be more civically engaged and prepared for college and careers, make healthier lifestyle choices, and pursue an interest in science (Gagnon et al. 2023). As you can see, 4-H helps youth to grow and to meet their goals.

The 4-H Motto

“To Make the Best Better!”

The 4-H Pledge

I pledge: My HEAD to clearer thinking, my HEART to greater loyalty, my HANDS to larger service, and my HEALTH to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

4-H Clubs

The club is the basic unit and foundation of 4-H. An organized club meets regularly (once a month, twice a month, weekly, etc.) under the guidance of one or more volunteer leaders, elects its own officers, plans its own program, and participates in a variety of activities. Clubs may choose to meet during the school year, only for the summer, or both (Utah 4-H Extension n.d.).



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Additional Curriculum Resources

Gagnon, R. J., M. E. Arnold, J. Lingard, and J. Mullendore. 2023. *2022 National 4-H Index Study*. Washington, DC: National 4-H Council.

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). 2016. *Creating a Healthier Life: A Step-By-Step Guide to Wellness*. Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services. <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4958.pdf>.

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CHAPTER

1

YOUTH-LED ASSESSMENT ORIENTATION



How to Use This Manual and Taking the First Steps with Your Team

We hope this manual helps you facilitate a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) that is led and driven by the youth you work with.

This brief section provides you with

- the basics about how to use this manual;
- an overview and the objectives of completing a CNA;
- information you need as a facilitator to guide youth during the initial step and throughout the rest of the CNA; and
- an overview of a timeline to use or adapt to fit your team's needs.

We hope you find everything you need to complete a youth-led CNA. However, if you need support or have questions as you go through the process, please contact Paige Wray (pwray@uidaho.edu) or Cris Meier (cris.meier@usu.edu).

Why Would I Even Do a Project Like This One with My Youth Team?

Although this manual can be used for many different youth groups, it was created as part of a 4-H initiative. One of the purposes of 4-H and other youth groups is to prepare youth for future experiences in life and leadership. After all, 4-H was formed from the idea that by providing youth opportunities to learn new agricultural technologies in “hands-on” settings, they could then implement what they learned in their communities with adult supervision.

Providing meaningful experiences for youth participation and leadership takes planning and intentionality, but that is achievable. As represented in Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation, ideally, youth programs should seek maximum youth involvement (Figure 1) by empowering youth — transforming them from being “objects” or tokenized participants to partners in programming.

The youth-led CNA described in this manual seeks to move youth up the ladder into the top rungs with the intention that youth initiate and direct not only a CNA but also a project resulting from their CNA findings.

By using this manual to provide a youth-led, adult-supported experience, we make youth partners in the program, enabling them to explore the needs of the youth community and to improve community conditions by forming initiatives to address those needs.



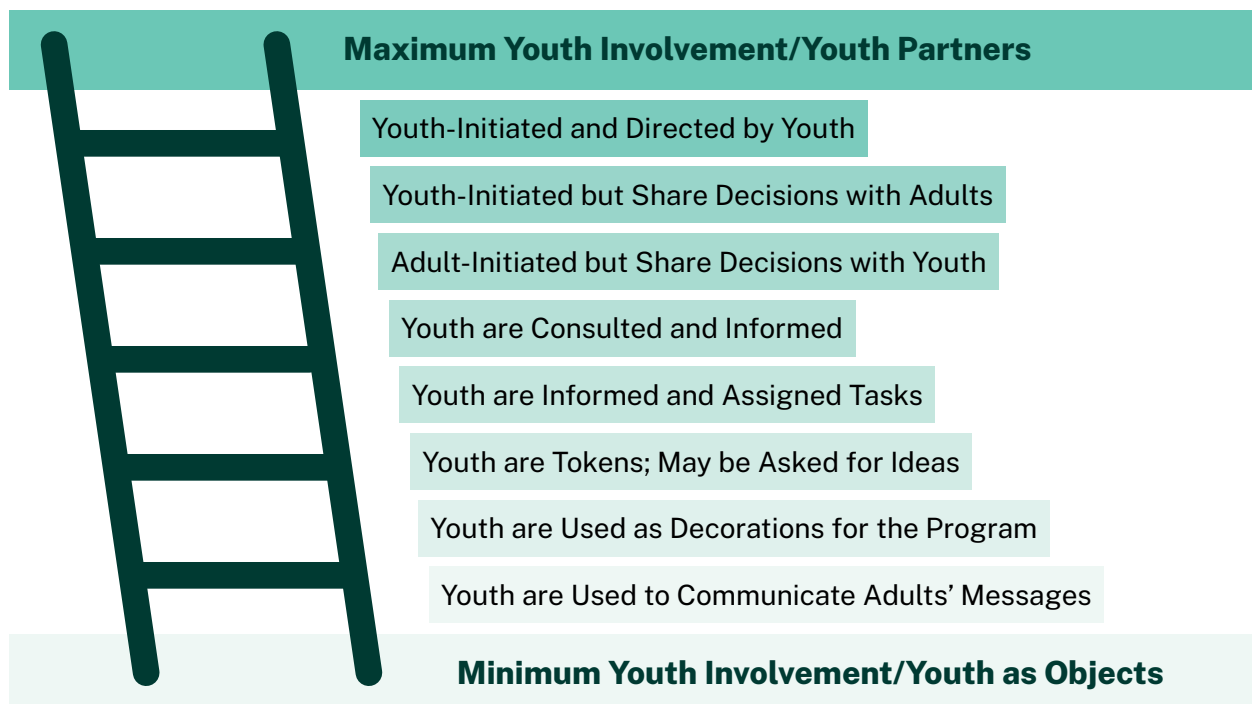


Figure 1. Hart's Ladder.

Manual Basics

This manual provides most of the tools and information needed to facilitate youth through a CNA. It is written for you as the facilitator to guide a youth team, not for a youth team — its formal language and instructions likely will bore and/or overwhelm them. Read through the manual first to guide yourself through the process (Figure 2). Follow the steps outlined throughout to ensure you are following the evidence-based approach to conduct the needs assessments.

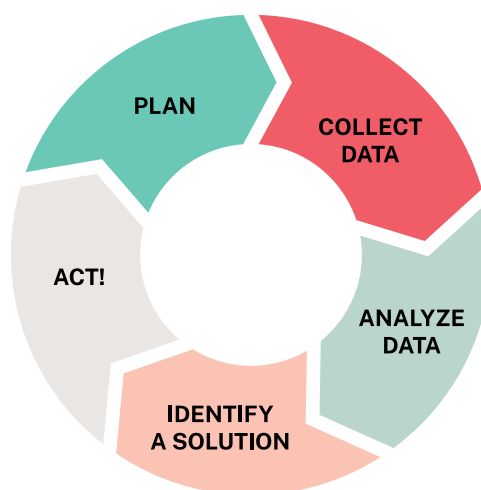


Figure 2.
The CNA process.

Although you need to follow the process we outline, feel free to adapt the activities and other materials provided to your style or employ materials found outside of this manual on your own. Indeed, the toolkit is intended for you, the facilitator, to outline and guide you and youth through the process so that the youth can bring the CNA to life. Good luck!

Chapter 1 Checklist

After you read the contents of this chapter, do the following with your youth group:

- ☐ Describe a CNA and its objectives.
- ☐ Decide if a CNA is right for your group: discuss the documentation process, set group goals.
- ☐ Lead an activity for youth to get to know each other (optional).

Introduction to the Manual

While assisting a youth team in a CNA, you have two primary goals:

1. To help them initiate change that improves their youth community.
2. To facilitate the process where youth participants exercise leadership skills and eventually become experts.

Your role:

- Provide guidance
- Provide youth with the information to follow the CNA process
- Help youth work through challenges

Focus on understanding the process and providing support as they design their CNA, rather than telling them what to do.

In this toolkit, our instructions assist you as an adult facilitator so that you can guide the youth team. Your responsibility is to take charge and lead them through each step of the CNA. This means you give instructions, explain the processes, answer questions, set up activities, and help with any problems youth run into. There are opportunities to provide visuals and materials for them, but ultimately, you provide support and resources as they lead their assessment.

A youth-led CNA means that youth play a major role in the assessment. The youth involvement program is the main priority in 4-H; it is where youth become more involved and start to take on a leadership role. The youth in the community lead the assessment on an issue that the community currently faces, with adults available for guidance and/or to help meet their needs.

However, it is important for the youth to be independent throughout the process because the youth are the ones experiencing the issue they select and developing a solution. Who better to identify a problem and resolve it than the directly affected people?

Keep in mind that they are the decision-makers. Help them flourish; avoid making decisions for them. Whether it be brainstorming an issue, conducting a focus group, or enlisting other youth to help with the final plan, the youth are the decision-makers throughout every step. The youth team should be aware of the responsibilities of conducting a CNA, especially as the leaders.

Let them know that the first step is the hardest in any project. Starting from scratch is intimidating, but this toolkit and you (the adult facilitator) are here to guide them. Before beginning, make sure the youth team is fully equipped for what lies ahead.

The youth should rely on each other as teammates, asking questions, discussing their progress and setbacks, and encouraging each other — basically working things out together.

What Is a CNA?

A CNA is conducted by members of a defined community. During a CNA, community members evaluate local problems and determine how best to solve them by taking advantage of the strengths and resources of their community. While CNAs are typically led by and completed for adult purposes, this project helps youth conduct a CNA that focuses on youth problems and solutions.

A CNA's procedure has a logical flow that is clear to follow and understand. The steps include, but are not limited to,

- picking and investigating an issue;
- collecting data; and
- developing an action plan.

In your case, youth determine who or what makes up their community and decide which issues they face. Your role is to follow the steps outlined in this toolkit and be actively involved in the design and execution of the CNA.

Through the process and by making positive change, youth can develop a better understanding of their community and its specific needs.

Objectives of a CNA

Understanding the objectives of a CNA helps your youth and you as the facilitator become more aware of what they will accomplish in their project. The objectives of the CNA are as follows:

1. Be able to identify youth-specific community issues and analyze them
2. Practice conducting data collection and the research process
3. Apply problem-solving skills
4. Assess the progress and the outcomes of a project
5. Become more involved and active in a community



As you introduce the idea of the youth conducting a CNA, explain to them what a CNA is and what its objectives are. This helps them to decide if a CNA is right for them.

Some questions you may ask youth when leading them in a discussion of the objectives:

- What research skills do you think this project will involve?
- What does community engagement mean to you?
- Why is it important to evaluate the end result of a project?
- What counts as a problem-solving skill?
- What skills or strengths do you have that relate to these objectives?

This discussion does not need to take a long time, but it should last long enough that the youth feel comfortable with the outcome — that they are able to come to their own understanding of the objectives and decide if a CNA is right for the group.

Documenting the Process with a Reflection Log

Throughout the entire project, it is helpful for youth to document their experiences. When something goes wrong, encourage them to write it down. It also might help you as the facilitator to take notes to keep track of discussions and where the group is in the process.

When they have a success, write it down. This helps not only with the evaluation conducted at the end, but also with giving advice and guidance to future youth CNA leaders.

Youth should also take notes during or after meetings and write down their ideas and recap what has transpired after the team completes a chapter. Indeed, it is helpful for them to consistently document the process. Remind them to bring their notebooks every time you meet.

Setting Goals

Once the group has agreed that the CNA is right for them, they should set team goals. Having goals reminds youth why they're involved. Even if a goal is simple, sticking to it and using it as a guide throughout the rest of the CNA is beneficial for individual and team growth.

While you discuss the purpose of goals and setting them with the youth team, keep the process simple. First, allow the youth team to figure out what they want to achieve. Then, as they write, help them keep their goals concise, simple, and realistic.

A goal is an action that needs to be or can be accomplished. It has a time frame and needs to be an ambition of yours whose achievement is desirable. Indeed, it's important to set goals because it helps to keep everyone on track and to stay focused.

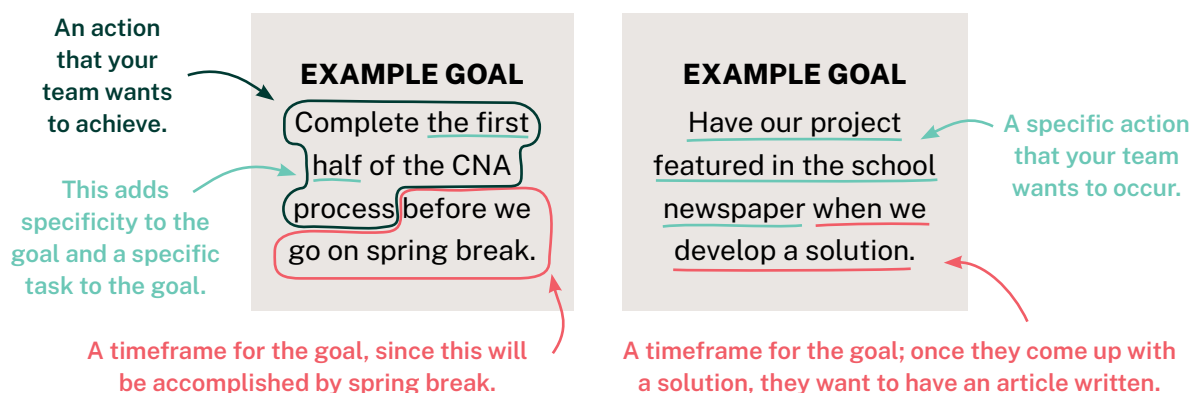
Set goals that are attainable and realistic to accomplish. The youth know their own limits, which they will need to consider and analyze as a group. To be sure, goals that are too challenging may discourage the group.

Always keep the purpose of a goal in mind; it motivates the youth to work toward achieving it!

While setting a team goal, make sure it's something that everyone is comfortable with and able to complete. What may be easy for some may not be easy for others. Try to be specific with team goals by breaking each up or specify if one is a long or vague goal. This makes it easier to identify progress. However, don't have so many small goals that the process becomes discouraging and overwhelming. The goals should also assist the team throughout the entire project in completing the CNA.

Goal-writing tips:

- Keep it specific. A goal should focus on one subject.
- Make your goal an action plan.
- Don't require too much time to accomplish a goal. Your goal shouldn't need weeks or months to achieve, especially considering the time frame of this project.



Encouraging the Youth

Throughout the CNA process, it is a good idea to provide incentives or goodies to encourage the youth team to make progress on their project. Compliment their work and explain that the incentives or goodies demonstrate how grateful you are for their dedication. Acknowledging the quality of their work and commitment to the CNA keeps them motivated and inspires them to continue their work.

Tip: If possible, provide youth with incentives/swag like candy, shirts, journals, etc.



Suggested Timeline for Your CNA

Completing an entire CNA should take your team approximately 8–12 weeks. However, this is just a suggestion and should not impact your group's process. The length varies, depending on

- how often your team meets;
- the complexity of the issue youth pick; and
- how long your team needs to spend on certain steps, such as data collection and developing an action plan.

Following a schedule or having goal dates in which you would like to move to the next step helps to keep your team focused and on track. It also prevents youth participants from feeling overwhelmed and thinking too far ahead, which can distract them from present tasks.

A timeline (Table 1) helps you start to think as a facilitator about how to best work through the process. See also suggested time frames for specific chapter topics that are included in Table 1.

If your team cannot spend 8–12 weeks on a CNA, adapt your own shortened model. It is more important to follow each step fully than complete them according to the offered schedule.

Table 1. A timeline is a great organizational aid for this project. The following provides suggested time frames for specific chapter topics.

Topic	Chapter	Suggested Time Frame	What Will Be Covered
Orientation	1	2 Weeks	As youth become familiar with the process and objective of a CNA, they may have questions or be confused. Allotting two weeks to talk through the introduction, have discussions, set goals, and fully understand the project's purpose should help them get more comfortable with what they are being asked to do. The aim of this step is to learn and prepare the youth team for the work ahead.
Selecting an Issue	2	1 Week	This can be a tricky step. The team could have trouble picking realistic issues or even have so many ideas that the team can't decide on one. There will be an opportunity to conduct a brainstorming activity to help your team. Get some ideas on paper. A week should be enough time to brainstorm, discuss your ideas, and make a decision as a team. At the end of the week, you should have a specific issue and have discussed it in depth.
Planning for Data Collection	3	2 Weeks	Spending two weeks on planning for data collection is adequate. Plan accordingly for the entire team to become acquainted with the methods presented in this manual. Since you will be setting yourself up for the next step, spend a good chunk of time making sure you have a solid plan and that everyone fully understands their role.
Data Collection	4	2–3 Weeks	You should give your team 2–3 weeks for the because data collection takes a while. Anticipate some minor delays. For example, if you decide to conduct a survey, it might take a few days to find enough people to participate in the survey and record the results.
Data Analysis	5	1 Week	You will only need one week for the steps since you'll take an informal approach to data analysis, using the data collected during the previous step. This involves discussing patterns, findings, and the youth team's individual thoughts. The team may actually start analyzing the data in their heads as they collect data. Therefore, the team will most likely already have ideas and suggestions to share with the team when you make it to the step.
Identifying a Solution	6	2–3 Weeks	Set aside 2–3 weeks for this step to start the process of solving the group-identified issue. Your analysis from the previous step guides your team as you brainstorm for a solution and develop a plan. Your team needs to allocate enough time for creating a detailed and realistic plan, as well as its implementation.
Reporting Findings	7 and 8	1 Week	After instituting a solution, the team looks back on the entire process. This includes both group and individual reflection. Discuss what worked well for your team, what didn't work, what you liked, what you would change, and your team's overall experience. Also evaluate your solution or review the goals you set. A week should be enough to compile a fine final summary of and conclusion for your project and findings.

Things to Keep in Mind During the CNA Process

1. Although youth conduct the assessment, they need to incorporate inclusivity and diversity. **Inclusivity** means providing the same opportunities and resources to everyone, especially those who are usually left out. To achieve the best results, youth should consider race, ethnicity, social class, age, religion, and social groups (school clubs, extracurriculars, volunteer programs, different schools, etc.) when constructing their program. In addition, they should think about the area in which the group lives: consider its shortcomings or limitations, as well its strengths and the resources that are available. Indeed, identifying a problem to work on is easier when you have a keen awareness of the population.
2. This is a learning process; as the youth complete their first youth-led CNA, they may run into complications, setbacks, and confusion.
3. The two main goals are to make a change in the community that help youth and to help youth develop important skills that grow their abilities.

Activities to Get to Know the Team

If your youth team doesn't already know each other, conduct an ice breaker activity. It improves their ability to rely on one another as a team moving forward. Feel free to use the following options or come up with something of your own.

1. Candy Introductions

Supplies:

- Bowl
- Candy in colors that correspond to the question sheet
- Question sheet (a simple question sheet or display using the questions and colors listed on the next page)

How to Play:

- Pass around the candy bowl and let each person take a few pieces.
- Before eating, have each person answer a question that corresponds to one of the piece's colors they chose.

- ♦ Green: Favorite Place on Earth
- ♦ Red: Favorite Hobbies
- ♦ Blue: Something on Your Bucket List
- ♦ Yellow: Dream Job
- ♦ Orange: Wildcard (tell us anything about yourself)
- ♦ Purple: Favorite Food

2. Three Things in Common

How to Play:

- Divide your group into groups of three or four.
- Give the groups 5–7 minutes to find three things they have in common with each other. The weirder the better.
- After the time is up, each group announces the three things they have in common.
- Everyone votes to decide which group has the most bizarre three things in common.

3. Who Has the Most in Common?

Supplies:

- Paper
- Pens

How to Play:

- Divide your group into pairs.
- Give each pair 3–5 minutes to come up with everything they have in common (i.e., hair color, position in the family, favorite color, etc.).
- After the time limit, have the groups come back together and find out who came up with the most connections.
 - a. Ask the group with the most to share what they found out.
 - b. Afterward, each group shares a few of the things they found in common.

Program Evaluation

As the program facilitator, make sure that the youth-led CNA is doing what it is supposed to do. In order to do so, conduct a program evaluation at the end of the CNA process. Appendix 1 provides instructions and a focus group guide that you can use to conduct one. Use it to identify and make future improvements to your process as well as to document the successes of the program. Incorporate the program evaluation into chapter 7's activities. We hope that by utilizing the evaluation tools the youth will have a great experience conducting a CNA.

Additional Chapter Resources

The following are several additional resources that relate to the chapter 1's content. They supplement the required material and are included to provide more insight. Many of them provide multiple tips and suggestions. Feel free to adapt their advice to what works best for you and your team.

Publication

Krause, C. 2012. Ice Breakers and Mixers that Promote Inclusion. Fond du Lac County: University of Wisconsin-Extension. 8 p. https://fonddulac.extension.wisc.edu/files/2012/12/Icebreakers_and_Mixers_that_Promote_Inclusion-WebVersion.pdf.

Videos

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CHAPTER

2

SELECTING AN ISSUE



Introduction

In this chapter, the youth team brainstorms and completes team activities to move toward choosing a specific issue or range of issues that their CNA assesses. At the end of this chapter, youth decide what their CNA's issue is.

- Don't rush this step.
- Make sure that each teammate shares their ideas and opinions and everyone comes to an agreement about the team's focus.

It is important that the youth team investigates their ideas for an issue thoroughly. A core principle of a CNA is examining the areas needing intervention in their community. By discussing the problems affecting youth in their community, the team actively practices community engagement.

Picking an issue or range of issues that your CNA assesses should be one of the most exciting steps in the process for youth. The decision they make determines the direction of the rest of the assessment. Since this CNA belongs to the youth, the issue or range of issues should reflect the youth team's community and peers.

Things to keep in mind during this step:

1. Encourage youth to be kind and respectful to teammates' ideas.
2. Keep realistic expectations; make sure the ideas are possible to achieve.
3. Make sure identified community issue ideas are not too specific or too broad.
4. Dig deep and look beneath the surface when exploring issue ideas.

Tip: For this chapter, we encourage you to do each of the following steps in order, unless a step does not make sense for your youth team.

Chapter 2 Checklist

After you read the contents of this chapter, do the following with your youth:

- ☐ Complete a Golden Circle for the CNA so that everyone is on the same page.
- ☐ Use the SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Wellness Wheel to start framing the discussion of community issues.
- ☐ Brainstorm ideas for possible issues with the following activities or your team's own brainstorming strategies.
- ☐ Use the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunity, table) Analysis to make a final decision about an issue or range of issues.
- ☐ Finalize an issue or range of issues and answer any lingering questions or concerns.

Simon Sinek Golden Circle

The Simon Sinek Golden Circle was developed to understand how people make decisions and to maximize marketing and sales in professional settings. The creator of this model, Simon Sinek, explains that most people know exactly what they do for work or know how their organization operates, but they may not be able to put into words why they do what they do. By understanding why, an individual or group can feel inspired and dedicated.

In the case of your project, your youth team can use the Golden Circle to help them understand why they are performing a CNA at all. As the facilitator, lead them through the discussion and encourage them to come up with their own “whys” but also remind them of the purpose of the CNA when it is needed during the discussion.

This activity is an essential step because the youth team needs to fully understand what they will do during a CNA, how a CNA is different from any other community project, how they will be working as team to complete it, and why they are doing it.

Although the Golden Circle figure is meant to help guide your youth team’s discussion, they don’t need to fill in the figure itself. It’s just meant to help guide the conversation. While discussing or using the Golden Circle, your team works from the inside out from the figure. For example, you start the discussion with “why,” then answer “how,” and finish with “what.”

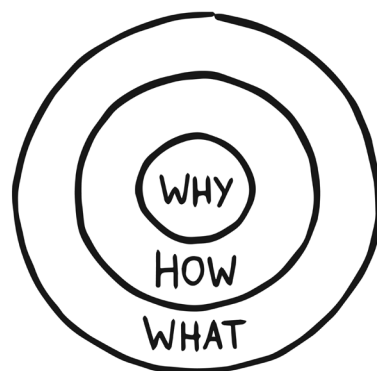


Figure 3. The golden circle.

Leading This Activity

Use the discussion questions below to help guide the conversation. This conversation intends that youth create a shared sense of purpose for this project.

- **WHY.** Discuss why the youth team thinks it is even doing this at all. What is the reason? What is the purpose? By starting with defining your team’s “why,” your team should be motivated to act.
- **HOW.** The “how” doesn’t necessarily refer to the actual steps of a CNA, but rather how a CNA is unique. Ask youth how they think this CNA experience will go. What makes your team different? What are the strengths of the team? Is there a specific goal they have related to while participating in this project?
- **WHAT.** This is the simplest component of the golden circle — your team defines what they will do during their CNA. However, different points of discussion could include the following: What are you hoping to do? What do you want my role to be (facilitator)?

SAMHSA Wellness Wheel

The SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Wellness Wheel (Figure 4) can be used by your youth team to begin thinking about identifying issues related to health and wellness in the community. Consider introducing the wellness wheel to them before engaging in brainstorming activities. This section provides an overview of the wellness wheel to help you to determine if you want to share it with your youth team. The examples within each dimension are not meant to be examples tied to the CNA. Instead, they are intended to provide you with an example of what falls within a dimension.

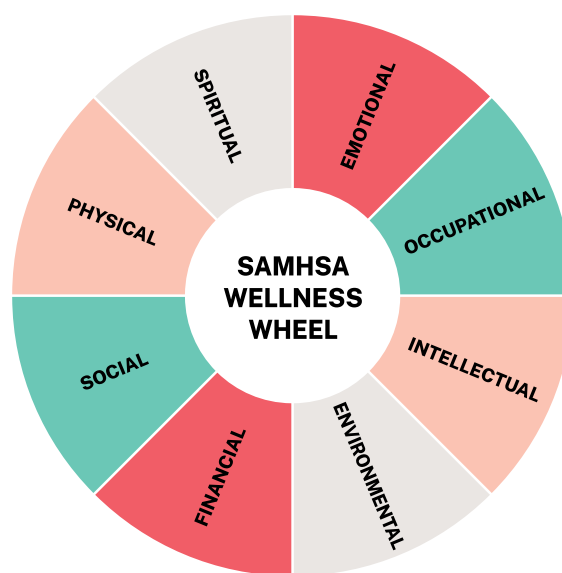


Figure 4. The SAMHSA wellness wheel.

Explanation of the SAMHSA Wellness Wheel

There are eight dimensions of wellness: emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual. A core concept of the SAMHSA wellness wheel is that many dimensions of health connect or support overall well-being (SAMHSA 2016). These eight sections all connect to each other, enabling the youth team to use the wheel to explore the various factors that inform a community-based issue and that issue's impact.

Using the SAMHSA wheel reveals a topic's possible interconnections by relating them to neighboring dimensions. For example, discussing financial insecurity in a community may lead you to acknowledge ties between financial issues and occupational ones, such as competitive industries or job scarcity. Indeed, the Wellness Wheel is a helpful resource during the brainstorming process because its setup encourages cross-dimensional discussion.

EMOTIONAL

Emotional wellness refers to fulfillment from relationships with other people and successfully getting by in life. Its expression includes coping mechanisms, resiliency, confidence, and other qualities that may make someone happy in life. When considering the emotional dimension of a community, consider the emotional health of community members and how emotional factors affect the community itself.

Example: A community has a strong connection with a local university. Locals participate in traditions, which engenders a lot of school pride and spirit, including exciting college game days that community members actively celebrate. The emotional aspect thus fosters relationships among locals, encouraging them to bond and giving them something to look forward to.

SPIRITUAL

Spiritual wellness refers to a sense of purpose and satisfaction that comes from having meaning. It is associated with personal morals or values as well as positive practices, such as volunteering, meditation, religious activities, or spending time outside. As long as it allows an individual or group of people to develop or build on their defined purpose and a sense of inner peace, it falls under this dimension of wellness. In a community sense, spiritual wellness relates to relationships and what a community stands for.

Example: Every Thanksgiving, community members can volunteer to prepare and serve a Thanksgiving dinner for the homeless. The service attracts dozens of volunteers for at least one hundred guests. Local businesses donate the food, school children create decorations and cards, and local musicians take turns performing. This community-wide event is looked forward to by many and is important to community members as a way to give back to the less fortunate.

INTELLECTUAL

Intellectual wellness involves challenging the mind. Exercising their brain allows people to improve intelligence, hone their creative side, and broaden their skills. Developing intellectual wellness enables people to build on their quality of life as they practice lifelong learning habits. Community expressions of it include valuing cultural events, promoting museums or exhibits, and supporting local public schools and universities.

Example: A local university puts on a community panel event in which professors, guest speakers, and spotlight students participate in a selection of topics that community members express interest in. The event is free and open to the public and has a specific theme. One year it focuses on racial topics, another year on climate change and solutions; this year it focuses on mental and physical wellness. Panel members include professors of kinesiology, public health, and psychology; guest speakers are sports medicine doctors, physical therapists, psychiatrists, and mental health therapists. Students conduct research on these topics.

PHYSICAL

Physical wellness involves physical activity and healthy habits, such as good eating and sleep patterns. Drinking enough water or moving the body at least once a day contributes to developing good physical health. To create physical wellness, an individual must practice mindfulness over their body. Prioritizing physical health establishes a baseline for other areas of wellness — it makes it easier to have the energy and ability to focus on the other dimensions. Communities that value physical wellness may host events or create initiatives to promote physical health.

Example: A community hosts a city-wide annual fundraiser ski run and donates the money back to city recreation. The community also focuses on the city's physical recreation by maintaining trails, campsites, and parks and by promoting healthy physical habits.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Environmental wellness refers to the combination of social and environmental factors that surround someone or a community to contribute to other areas of wellness. The social or natural environment influences your physical health, your mental health, the community events you participate in, who you interact with, your career, or what you do in your free time. Furthermore, community environmental factors such as pollution, city layouts, the number of green spaces, how much community members value sustainability, accessibility of recycling, waste systems, and even plastic bag bans are important in determining environmental wellness.

Example: A community hosts an annual trash pickup in its biggest city park, where many community members participate. A plastic bag ban is in place in stores, as are large fines for littering and heavy regulations on pollution from companies in the area.

FINANCIAL

Financial wellness factors include managing one's finances, following a budget, practicing responsible spending habits, and overall consciousness about savings and spending. Financial security in the present tense, as well as preparation for future financial security, buttresses mental security. As someone's financial standing determines many other aspects of their life, financial wellness allows someone to practice being practical and responsible, therefore setting them up to succeed. When a community aims for financial wellness, they are not only looking out for their future, but also the security of their community members.

Example: Every semester, a local high school invites accountants, financial advisors, and analysts to talk to high school seniors about making smart financial decisions, the stock market, taxes, and other important topics for soon-to-be adults. It is a special day of assemblies, panels, and classes offering information that many community members regard as essential knowledge for seniors.

OCCUPATIONAL

Occupational wellness refers to the satisfaction an individual gets from working or maintaining a career. Indeed, work reflects how we feel about our goals and our value. When someone enjoys their work, they probably feel enriched because work contributes to a person's sense of purpose, which aligns with other dimensions, like emotional and intellectual wellness. When an individual feels challenged by their work and engaged with their responsibilities, they enjoy their time and, therefore, enjoy their work. On the flip side, outside factors can negatively affect occupational wellness, such as not having a job in a field of interest or changes in job responsibilities.

Example: Businesses come to job fairs at colleges and universities and network with students. Communities that actively support these kinds of events directly support young employees in finding fulfilling work.

SOCIAL

Social wellness involves how well we feel connected to others, have a sense of belonging, and feel supported. It thus largely stems from our relationships and interactions with other people. It includes a variety of relationships, from coworkers, friends, and family members to the barista who serves you coffee every day. This dimension of wellness also depends on all the qualities and skills that come from social interactions and relationships, such as healthy communication, setting boundaries, spending time with others, forming friendships, and being socially conscious. In a community sense, just being involved with a community and giving back means an individual is socially connected, emotionally invested, and therefore can develop social wellness. Relationships and social connections allow us to feel secure and reinforce positive emotions, enhancing the quality of all the other wellness areas.

Example: Participating in community events such as concerts, exhibits, volunteer opportunities, farmers markets, cultural activities, or sporting events contributes to relationship building and social interactions.



Leading This Activity

Always use the SAMHSA wheel with the community in mind. Also, use the wheel to identify an issue to guide your CNA and to develop it as a well-rounded idea.

Look for additional resources online to employ as visual resources and talk your youth team through the Wellness Wheel to identify within what dimension category each idea fits. Encourage them to come up with their own ideas of what might fit within each domain.

Brainstorming Ideas

The goal of each brainstorming activity is that the youth team both becomes aware of what's happening in its community and generates innovative, out-of-the-box ideas for addressing those challenges. As a result, they will be able to compile a list of community issues that they believe affect youth. Brainstorming can thus help with identifying one issue or a range of issues that their CNA covers.

- Brainstorming can take place in various ways. Use the approach that works best for the team.
- Let the youth decide on the format they want to use.

Leading This Activity

A few suggestions:

1. Use sticky notes, on which the youth write as many ideas as they can.
 - a. Stick them up where everyone can see them.
 - b. Organize them into clusters of similar ideas. This provides a record of their own personal ideas in a visual format.
 - c. Provide the youth with a time limit to help them stay on track.
2. Conduct a group discussion.
 - a. Assign a teammate to take notes to record everyone's thoughts.
 - b. Everyone takes turns sharing their ideas. Ask someone to share one, have the team pause and discuss it, and move on to the next teammate's idea.
 - c. Encourage everyone to share at least once (to ensure everyone's participation) but allow teammates to share as many ideas as possible.
3. Direct the team to sit in a circle and give one teammate a piece of paper to start with.
 - a. Give them 10–15 seconds to write down an issue. Ask them to pass the paper on to the next person until everyone has written out an idea.
 - i. The time constraint forces each to write down the first idea that comes to mind, which they may have thought wasn't "good enough."
 - ii. Likely, each teammate won't write the same idea since each won't be able to write more than once.
 - b. Rotate through the group at least five times or until you have at least twenty ideas on your page. That way, you will have several ideas to go through and several options to narrow down.

As you do these activities, make sure the youth identify issues they are facing, not the solutions. Solutions come later in the process. At the same time, don't restrict them. Tell them to write down an idea no matter how silly it seems. Every idea is a good idea when brainstorming.

- An idea that seems unrealistic can be shaped and transformed into something more realistic.
- Don't stay silent! Speak up!
 - » When everyone shares their thoughts, it helps the team.
 - » The more ideas you have, the better.
 - » When everyone participates, a team comes up with more ideas than one person could have thought of alone.

Once you have identified all of the possible issues you can think of in your community, choose one, two, or even three ideas your youth team likes the most. With those ideas in hand, use a SWOT Analysis to help you pick the right issue for your group to move forward with.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT Analysis helps youth identify the strengths and weaknesses of your youth community, which can also be applied to your team itself. The results of the analysis eventually help a team identify a solution.

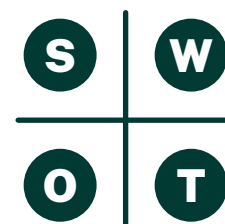
To do a SWOT Analysis, first identify a solid issue or range of issues that the youth team wants to focus on.

Explanation of SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis help your team determine how best to utilize the strengths and weaknesses of a community and how these align with the community's needs.

The SWOT acronym describes the four main aspects of this activity:

- S** trengths (of your community and youth team)
- W** eaknesses (of your community and youth team)
- O** pportunity (for your CNA)
- T** able (medium for analysis)



During this activity, the youth team lists the strengths of the youth community and the CNA team, as well as the weaknesses of both. Following the instructions and using the table template should help you to flesh out an issue affecting youth in the community.

Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of your community is another core piece of CNAs and community engagement. Practicing this recognition helps the team find other community needs to address.

Leading This Activity

It may be a bit difficult at first to connect the dots between the boxes in the table, so as the facilitator, guide youth through their analysis. Don't tell them what to write or think; ask them to compare strengths and weaknesses. Also be prepared to share some ideas if they seem stuck or are struggling to get started. As always, help them to stay on track and to record their ideas.

Example: If they list that their team strength is writing skills, their youth community strength is athletics, their team weakness is access to technology, and their community weakness is transportation to sporting events, it might be difficult to make a connection among all of the areas. Indeed, they don't really connect as a whole. However, with the table, it's easier to encourage youth to imagine their interrelation because they are graphically represented as boxes. Their team boxes (writing skills and access to technology) are related, as well as their community boxes (athletics and transportation to sporting events).

In this section, we walk through an example of a SWOT Analysis and what the template might look like after the process is completed. The template (Figure 5) contains boxes for strengths as well as for weaknesses (which you can also think of as areas for growth). Also, two boxes are

located above and below the main table. Use the first box (located above the table proper) if you already have an idea for an issue or range of issues. Use the bottom box to record a possible solution for that issue.

Tip: If you start this activity without a specific idea, feel free to ignore the bottom box. It isn't necessary for the activity, but more an opportunity for the team to get a head start on preparing for the rest of CNA if they are confident with a direction.

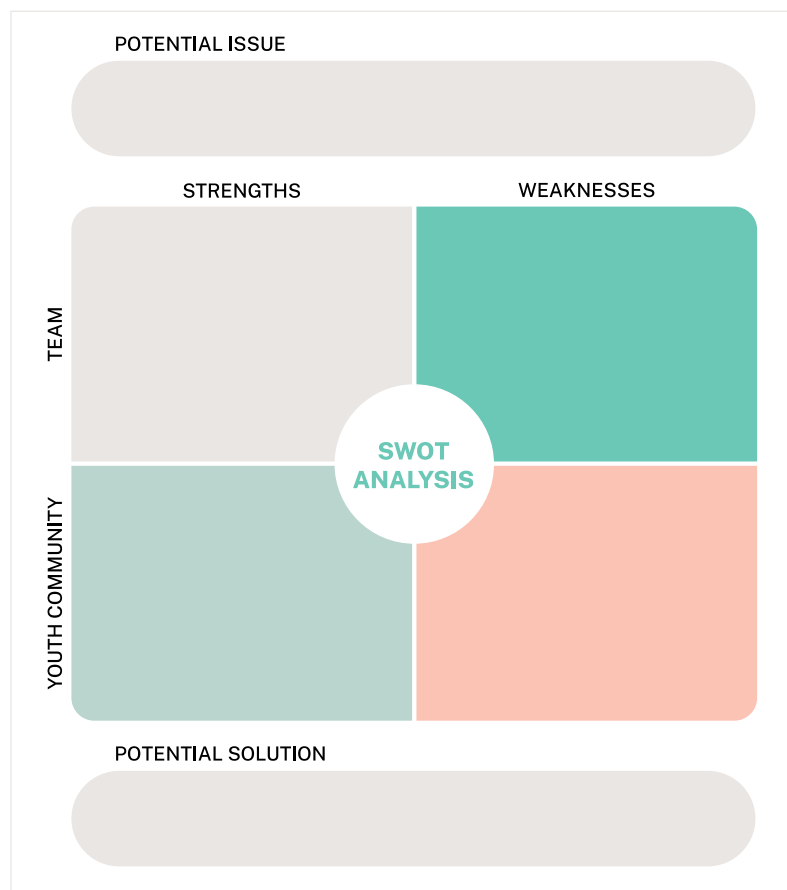


Figure 5. SWOT analysis box.

As your team works through each box, they are free to fill out the boxes in any order, especially in any order that works the best for the team. Likely the order will bounce around as new ideas surface, but the following offers a steps-based run-through with using the box:

Step 1: A Potential Issue

Step 2: Team Strengths

Step 3: Team Weaknesses

Step 4: Youth Community Strengths

Step 5: Youth Community Weaknesses

Step 6: Putting It All Together

STEP 1: A POTENTIAL ISSUE

For step 1, a potential issue could be “There is a lack of artistic opportunities and events for youth.”

From there, write the issue in the top box and save the bottom one for a solution idea.

For steps 2 and 3, identify the strengths and weaknesses of your youth team. In steps 4 and 5, identify the strengths and weaknesses of your youth community.

STEP 2: TEAM STRENGTHS

Have the youth team ask themselves what their own personal strengths are. Discuss them out loud as a group, with the youth deciding on traits that encapsulate them or give them time to think through the question as individuals and then share. Whichever approach you choose, encourage them to think outside the box and of traits that will be helpful for a CNA, such as artistic abilities, writing skills, organizational skills, leadership, etc. (Figure 6).

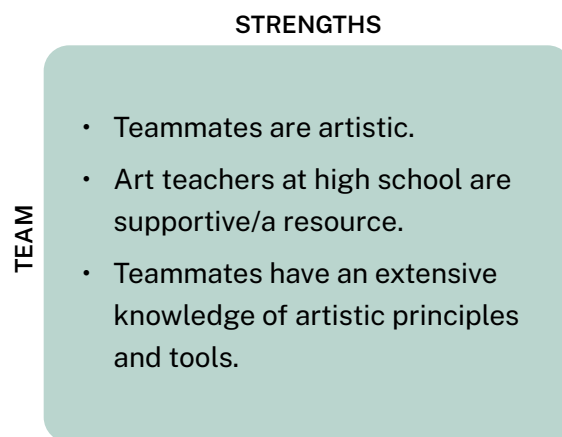
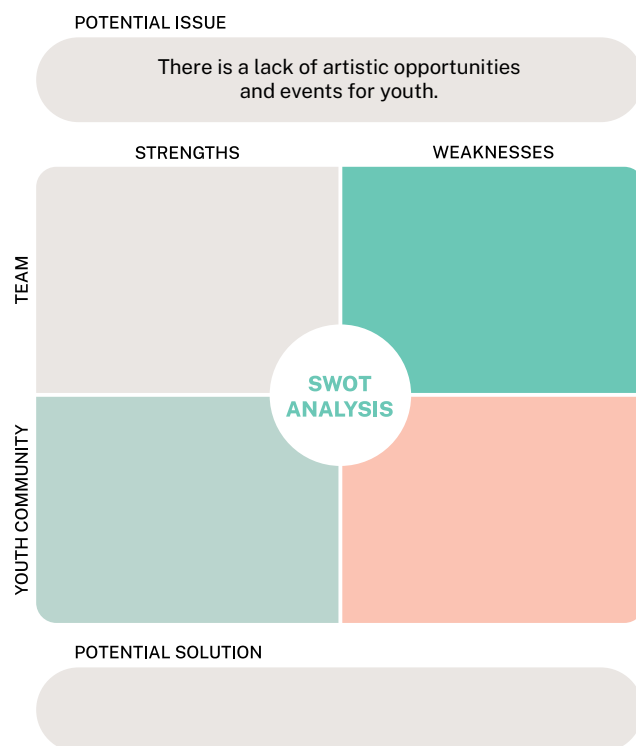


Figure 6. Team strengths example.

STEP 3: TEAM WEAKNESSES

This step involves figuring out team growth areas, the kind for which it might be harder to develop specific solutions. The point of step 5 isn't to make the team feel bad about themselves but to be realistic about the issue that they are working to identify and to determine a direction that aligns with the team's abilities. Focus the conversation on the weaknesses of the youth team as a whole.

Example: Consider what the youth may be worried about when they think about the team or working as a team. If they are concerned that a particular aspect of the team slows them down or prevents the teams from progressing, discussing it is essential. Clearing the air helps the youth team figure out what they should be aware of as they address the identified issues or range of issues (Figure 7).

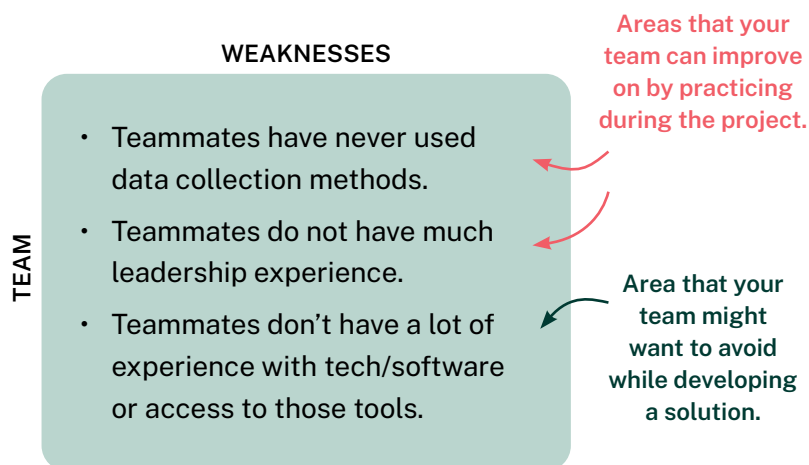


Figure 7. Team weaknesses example.

STEP 4: YOUTH COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

To complete this step/box, consider the advantages and strengths of the community, specifically the youth community as a whole.

These could be

- sports clubs
- extracurriculars your peers excel at
- awards received
- health factors
- traditions

List the positive aspects of the youth community and what makes the youth proud of their peers (Figure 8).

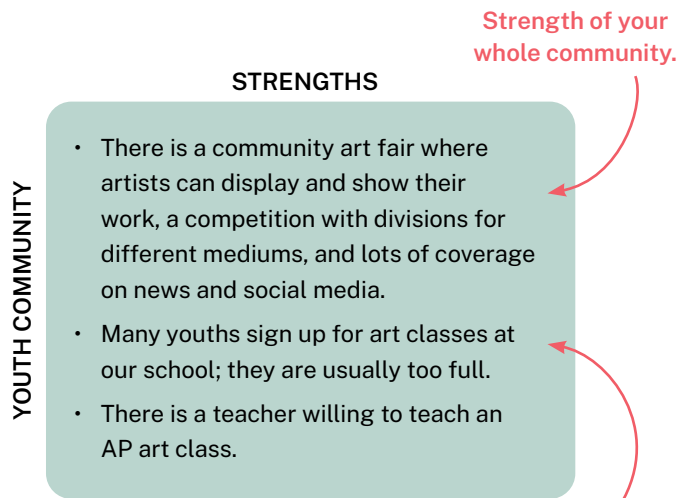


Figure 8. Youth community strength box example.

Recording strengths helps your team to recognize the areas in which to pursue your solution. Comparing the strengths to step 3 (youth community weaknesses) also helps you to figure out the areas of your community that need assistance, with the knowledge of the assets available to your team.

STEP 5: YOUTH COMMUNITY WEAKNESSES

The weaknesses of the community or youth community are qualities that teens struggle to define. They may include an area that has the attention of public officials and adults. The step may require youth to investigate and think outside the box since a significant youth issue may not directly affect the team. Think about the subjects that your school talks about a lot, such as safe driving, substance abuse, food security, etc. (Figure 9).

The conversation may be uncomfortable because some might have experience with a youth issue that they might not want to disclose in front of their teammates. Consequently, prepare the youth team that the discussion might involve a difficult conversation and that they must treat each other with respect. Mention that some topics are sensitive and, since we don't know the background of everyone we talk to, it is good to be respectful and considerate to one another. If someone suggests an issue, encourage the group not to immediately shoot it down or insult it. Instead, encourage them to practice kindness and thoughtfulness with one another during this step.

Additionally, youth may come up with ideas based on the strengths the youth team identified in the previous step. That is, they may come up with ideas by identifying the opposite of a strength. For example, in the previous step, if they determined that no youth participate at a community art fair, lack of engagement qualifies as a community weakness.

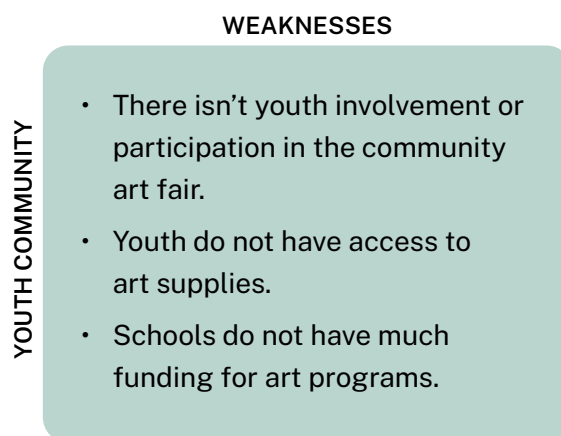


Figure 9. Youth community weaknesses example.

STEP 6: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

In the run-through example, the youth team might complete the table with or without the main idea of art and a lack of artistic opportunities for youth. Regardless of the box(es) they complete first, they might come to the same conclusion about developing an art-based solution (Figure 10).

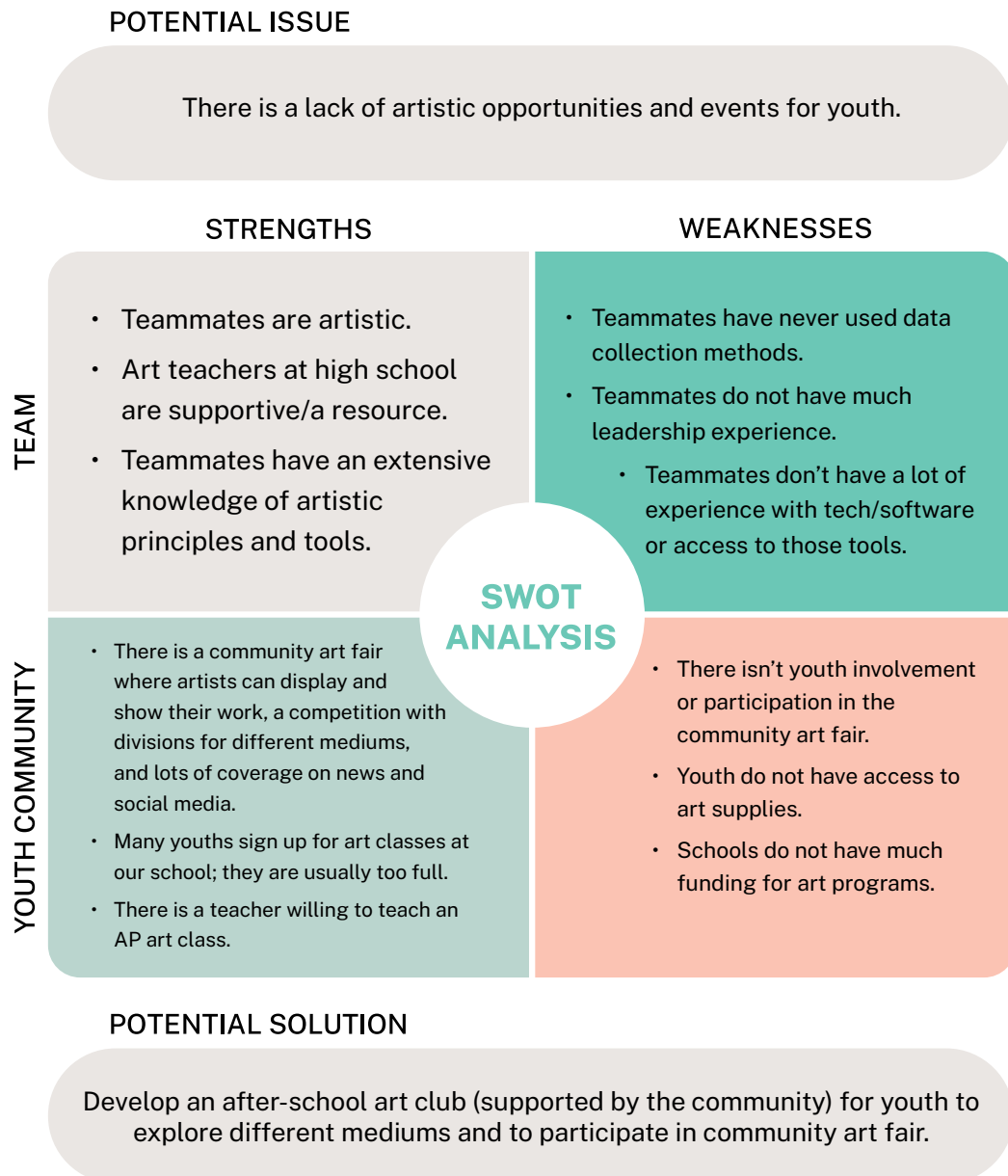


Figure 10. Example of a completed, filled-in SWOT analysis box.

Hence, go in any direction that feels right for your team: if you want to address the community's weaknesses first and then identify the community's strengths, go ahead. If you want to list the weaknesses and then work on the strengths, that's fine too. The purpose of completing this table is to write down the ideas and make visual connections between the different areas. Such a process helps the team examine the chosen issue or range of issues in-depth and gets them thinking about possible solutions. An empty table is available at end of this chapter to print out and use with your youth team.

Finalizing the Issue

Completing the exercises provided here should help your team pick a final issue to address and explore in your CNA. Encourage the youth team to pick an issue about which they are passionate or one that impacts them. With any project, the more involved they are, the better the outcome and investment in the project.

Finally, there is a lot to consider when picking an issue because the youth will want to make sure it is one that they not only can work to address, but one that is right for the group. Ensure that when the group discusses it, they come to a consensus before moving on to the next phase.

Empty SWOT Template for Your Activity

	POTENTIAL ISSUE	
	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
TEAM		
	SWOT ANALYSIS	
YOUTH COMMUNITY		
	POTENTIAL SOLUTION	



Additional Chapter Resources

The following are several additional resources that relate to the chapter 2's content. They supplement the required material and provide more insight. Many of them provide multiple tips and suggestions. Feel free to adapt their advice to what works best for you and your team.

Printable Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2016. "Learn the Eight Dimensions of Wellness." Poster, SAMHSA (2016 SMA-16-4953). <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4953.pdf>.

Videos

AJ&Smart. 2021. "Facilitation Technique: How To Deal With Difficult Participants (Parking Lot)." YouTube. 4 min., 46 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZiYUSau5LM>.

Brownlee, D. 2017. "Facilitation Skills Training: Managing Difficult Meeting Personalities." YouTube. 5 min., 13 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbKB-yzDSOA>.

Girdler, A. 2021. "Meeting Facilitation Skills [Favourite Facilitation [sic] Techniques]. YouTube. 11 min., 54 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuKgxhcBW5c>.

Patterson, P. 2017. "The Eight Dimensions of Wellness." College and Careers Ready Labs. 3 min., 40 sec. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NR4_5dt7JA.

Rendall, D. 2020. "How Our Weaknesses Can Become Our Strengths." TEDx, Zurich, Switzerland. 10 min., 44 sec. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6klc_nSWrQ.

Sinek, S. 2016. "Golden Circle Speech." TED Talk. 5 min. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jeg3lIK8lro>.

CHAPTER

3

PLANNING FOR DATA COLLECTION



Introduction

In this chapter, the youth team learns about data collection. Go over the instructions for each method and guide the team as they pick the methods to use. To be sure, before they start collecting data (chapter), the youth need to be fully informed and prepared.

Unlike professionals, who conduct surveys, interviews, and any other methodology using specific processes that reduce bias, protect human subjects, and ensure the use of an adequate sampling, the youth collect data using informal methods. Consequently, we introduce youth to various methodologies to make them feel comfortable with using them in the context of a CNA and without the pressures and emphasis on well-designed, robust data collection methods.

Let the youth know that they can adapt each method to their own needs. The primary goal is for their team to collect the correct information and data they need to complete the rest of their assessment.

As a part of the introduction, youth also learn about the differences between quantitative and qualitative methods. The different methods covered include surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations. Although there are other methods to collect data (e.g., photo-voice), these are the most common types. Try to go in the direction the youth prefer for collecting data, even if it doesn't align with the methods described in this manual.



Chapter 3 Checklist

After you have read the contents of this chapter, do the following:

- ☐ Discuss the differences between qualitative and quantitative data and methods and how they apply to the data collection they will conduct for their CNA.
- ☐ Learn about the different methods of data collection.
- ☐ Pick a method for the CNA.
- ☐ Create a plan for data collection and create the materials that the team will implement for the next step.

Sharing information in this order is recommended, but it is also okay to mix things up and present information and engage in discussions about the project based on the youth team's preferences.

Qualitative Versus Quantitative Methods and Data

It is not imperative for the youth team to fully understand all of the principles of research and data collection. However, a basic understanding of qualitative versus quantitative data is helpful, especially when they analyze their data. Review the definitions and distinctions between the two and answer questions so they can develop a sufficient understanding.

Qualitative Versus Quantitative

To keep it simple: **qualitative data** refers to words, while **quantitative data** refers to numbers. Qualitative data is what you cannot describe in numbers or measures, although you can count and measure quantitative data.



QUALITATIVE DATA



QUANTITATIVE DATA

QUALITATIVE DATA EXAMPLE

If youth led a focus group, the worded responses they record (either via note taking or a word-for-word transcription) are qualitative data.

- This type of data is driven by questions that often begin with “why” or “what.”
- If a focus group were asked their opinions about a recently released movie and five participants said they liked the movie while five others said they didn’t, their specific opinions and thoughts about the movie serve as qualitative data. The number of people who agreed either way are quantitative data.



- Statements like, “I didn’t like the main character” or “The ending was disappointing and felt anticlimactic,” all count as qualitative data because they can’t be counted or numerically measured against each other and are subjective.

QUANTITATIVE DATA EXAMPLE

Data that consists of numbers and is often answered by questions such as “how many” or “how much” is quantitative. For example, if we take the same responses from the previous question about viewers’ reactions to a movie, adding up categorized responses such as “liked” or “disliked” produces quantitative data.

Although giving specific opinions about a movie is considered qualitative, questions that provoke measured answers provide quantitative data.

- If five out of ten participants say they like the movie and the remainder say they dislike it, then 50% of focus group members liked the movie and 50% didn’t like it.
- Counting numbers is a crucial characteristic of quantitative data.

When a team collects their data, they need to look at the quantitative and qualitative data from different perspectives. For instance, if the youth discuss a possible solution to an identified issue, understanding the team’s quantitative and qualitative data can provide more context and information about how to move forward with a solution.

Once the team grasps the basic distinctions between qualitative and quantitative data, discuss which methods of data collection will work best, depending on the data goal.



Leading this Activity

To lead this activity, describe the two types of data to the youth team. Provide youth enough time to ask questions. Don’t move on to methods without making sure the entire youth team is confident they understand the difference between the two data types.

Tip: Although you can use the examples provided, feel free to use your own ideas as well.

Explanation of Selecting a Qualitative or Quantitative Method

While the youth team learns about each method and decides which they will use, make sure they fully understand the differences between the methods and which ones match their team goals and CNA.

It's also important that the chosen method aligns with the number of participants the team anticipates having and how much work and time their team is capable of. A team that has only a few members but intends on interviewing over ten people might require a lot of effort to coordinate the interviews to meet a deadline. Consequently, encourage youth to ask themselves how feasible their data collection plan is before they select a method to move forward with.

The different methods include the following:

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Observations

Surveys

Have you ever answered questions for a company after buying their product? Have you been asked for your opinion about a local issue in front of a grocery store? Have you been asked to evaluate different areas of your school? If you said yes to any of these questions, you've taken a survey. A **survey** gathers quantitative or qualitative data. It includes questions related to thoughts and feelings and/or questions related to specific data.

A survey is

- a type of questionnaire used to collect information or data on its participants and
- it assesses thoughts, opinions, feelings, and, especially in your team's case, it can be used to guide actions and decisions in a project.

Suppose a team chooses to conduct a survey. In that case, the survey's purpose is to judge youth opinions on a selected issue, possible solution ideas, or any other opinions youth have about the community. Surveys work well if a youth's issue is multifaceted and affects most of them. Their style and their ability to measure ranges of answers can make it easier to identify patterns, especially if the group gathered many responses. If a team's issue is broad, conducting a survey helps pick out patterns that help a team narrow down solution ideas.

Conducting a survey means a team designs the questions, surveys their peers, records data, and eventually analyzes the data. When a team analyzes the survey results, they compare responses to the same questions, compare qualitative and quantitative data, calculate the frequency of responses, and identify patterns.

TAKE SURVEY



The analysis

- tells the youth team if the issue is significant and reasonable enough to pursue and
- it gives your team information about your peers' experiences and opinions, which helps the team develop a solution.

The team should select a method to collect data for their survey in the most reasonable method possible — one that works the best for their situation, including being realistic and fun. The method may be

- formal or informal and
- conducted via texting or in-person, after class, or with multiple people, just as long as the team is collecting the data for their assessment.

Ultimately, a team should adapt the survey to fit their schedules and needs to achieve the best results.

The team should also work according to any rules in the setting they will conduct a survey in. For example, if a youth team surveys students at school, they may need to ask for permission from a teacher or principal.

If you need help working through what rules or ethics the youth team should consider, reach out to our team so we can help you work through this.

Table 2 lists some of the pros and cons of the youth team conducting a survey. These might help the youth team decide if doing a survey is right for them.



Table 2. Pros and cons of surveys as a data-collection method.

Pros of Surveys	Cons of Surveys
■ Provides large group data ■ Comparing responses is easier ■ Easier to understand participants' opinions and feelings better ■ Confidential ■ Straightforward and simple for participants ■ Does not take up a lot of time for the participant	■ Designing questions can be difficult ■ Not as effective for a small group ■ Likely, you won't get as many responses as you expect ■ May require statistical analysis, which can be challenging

Interviews

Interviews, as a data collection method, are qualitative and typically involve asking an individual a series of open-ended questions. They help researchers to understand a group's opinions about certain topics. In some cases, researchers use them to gather quantitative data.

An interview provides in-depth information and direct contact with a participant. It is a good choice if youth already have ideas for solutions and want to record in-depth opinions and thoughts about their issue from a smaller group of participants. This can be an effective tool to use for your CNA.

Interviews are usually done face to face; if youth are comfortable talking to others and asking questions, interviews are a great data-collecting option. Pondering the pros and cons about conducting an interview (Table 3) might help a youth team decide if doing one is right for them.

Other considerations before deciding to conduct interviews include the following:

- Since interviews require direct communication, establish some kind of relationship with a participant to make them comfortable.
 - » Interviewees are more vulnerable during an interview. They may disclose answers to serious questions. Participants need to trust the youth to provide their honest opinions.
 - » Interviews in which a participant feels it is safe to speak freely likely provide the best results.



- Keep the interviews relatively short. Participants may become tired or bored and not give accurate answers.
- Pose straightforward questions. Allow participants to provide as much information as they prefer.

Table 3. Pros and cons of interviews as a data-collection method.

Pros of Interviews	Cons of Interviews
■ Gives people the chance to clarify their answers ■ More likely to get every question answered ■ Allows for a welcoming approach ■ Can reach people who are normally hard to reach	■ Requires strong interview skills ■ Slow method ■ Interviewer bias could appear in the answers ■ Participants could lie or present inaccurate information

Focus Groups

Focus groups differ from interviews in that they involve interviewing a small group of youth together rather than as individuals. The method allows everyone the chance to share and join in on a discussion at once. It is thus helpful to gather a diverse group to hear as many opinions as possible. Because you will ask questions about what a group specifically thinks and feels about selected topics, this type of data collection is considered qualitative.

- With focus groups, you gain new perspectives on an issue, because a representative group of your youth community directly responds.
- Focus groups are an excellent way for people to bounce ideas off each other and to gain different perspectives on the topics covered.

If youth have identified a large number of people to talk to, direct them to organize participants into smaller groups of 3–4 people or a maximum of 6–8 people.



- Like with interviews, gather participants from different backgrounds, based on social class, race, ethnicity, gender, etc.
- There are pros and cons to conducting focus groups.
 - » Pro: Gathering a variety of opinions is more likely when including participants who don't share a common identity.
 - » Con: Participants might clash during discussion, debating rather than discussing all of your questions.

Considering other pros and cons about conducting a focus group (Table 4) might help a youth team decide if doing a focus group is right for them.

Table 4. Pros and cons of using focus groups as a data-collection method.

Pros of Focus Groups	Cons of Focus Groups
■ Allows people to clarify their responses ■ Offers greater number of responses ■ Helps others to be creative ■ Generates in-depth information about a specific subject	■ Time consuming ■ Does not provide confidentiality ■ Participants' responses might be influenced by peer pressure, group thinking, or dominating opinions ■ Responses can be difficult to analyze

Observations

The observation method involves witnessing an event and taking notes on it or being in an environment that provides youth with information for the youth CNA. In these situations, youth are passive observers, silently watching and/or listening to what happens, not interfering or disrupting. Observations are either qualitative or quantitative, depending on the type of data gathered.

- Note-taking methods include shooting photographs or videos, as long as the setting is appropriate.
- Observations are more removed and provide data that youth can't get from interview or focus group methods.



Some pros and cons of the youth team conducting observations (Table 5) might help the youth team decide if doing an observation is right for them.

Table 5. Pros and cons of relying on observations as a data-collection method.

Pros of Observations	Cons of Observations
■ Allows for witnessing first-hand reactions and behaviors of subjects ■ Provides information usually not available from direct contact ■ Occurs in a natural setting	■ Uncontrollable environment ■ People might become self-conscious and start to act differently ■ Does not provide direct data, such as opinions on specific subjects

Leading the Activity and Making a Plan

Plan ahead before deciding on a research method. Ask your team to consider what it wants to accomplish, what youth participants are like, and the nature of an issue before picking the method(s) that align(s) with their team's overall project.

First, explain each of the ways youth can collect data. Explain what surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations are. Discuss the pros and cons for each and gain a consensus about which method they would like to move forward with.

Second, develop a plan for the selected method (e.g., survey) and work through it — establish deadlines, assign teammate responsibilities, choose data-recording techniques, etc. Apply the following checklist (**example: survey**):

☐ Design your method:

Prepare survey or interview questions, discussion topics for focus groups, and subjects for observations. Only after youth write questions, scripts, or goals can youth actually jump into data collection. Review method(s) and ensure the design is ready for use. The youth team should submit an adequately prepared plan.

☐ Set a timeline:

Youth determine how much time they will spend on collecting data. Refer to the instructions for the method youth selected so they can plan it out effectively, according to what the chosen method requires.

☐ Identify participants:

■ Figure out who youth will recruit to participate.

- » Who will youth ask to take a survey?
- » How many people will youth have in a focus group?
- » Do youth have a list of people to interview?

■ To fully prepare, youth should be aware of possible participants so they don't spend valuable time trying to find people who will help. Write out a list of other youth that your team can ask to participate and communicate with them.

☐ Decide data-recording methods:

■ Where will youth take notes and record their results?

- » Will they use notebooks?
- » Do they have a USB?
- » Is there an online shared drive they can store and share the data on?

■ Since the data they collect will influence the rest of the youth's CNA, youth need to make sure that they have a safe and reliable source for recording and storing their data. Every team member should have access to all of the information/data and the data should be compiled and accessible in one place. This makes it easier for youth to refer back to when needed.

☐ Review materials/equipment needed:

The materials youth use may not be the first thing that comes to mind. However, they are important for the efficiency and success of data collection. Arrange to acquire them and train the youth team to properly use them before collecting any data. Having backup supplies is always a good idea as well.

☐ Divide up the work:

Make assignments among the youth team so that everyone plays an equal role. This can be difficult at times, especially if the number of "tasks" the team has may not coordinate well with the number of team members. When an equal workload is shared among teammates, it's easier to get work done, practice efficiency, and complete the best work. Don't let one teammate take on too much nor be the one who always pitches in when team members need a helping hand.

Preparing to Do a Survey

Start by brainstorming questions for a survey, those that focus on the issue selected or on the youth community. Otherwise, the project may come to feel confusing or like too much work. Next, direct youth to write out their questions, a procedure that helps youth to identify what they want to learn from the survey.

For example:

- Do they want to know more about what their peers are struggling with?
- Do they want to ask their peers about possible solutions?
- Do they want to know their peers' suggestions for a solution?
- Do they want to ask their opinions about certain topics?

Starting with a general idea or theme for a survey gives your team a direction during the design process. As the facilitator, encourage them to ask the least number of questions needed that directly relate to what they are trying to figure out. This is not a formal research study, so they should try to ask questions as broadly as possible and in a way that protects their peer's confidentiality.

With the youth team, make a list of all of the possible questions the youth think they want to ask in their survey. It is easier to cut down multiple options rather than trying to come up with more.

Tip: If a youth team has a hard time coming up with survey questions, consider using a framework, such as the SAMHSA Wellness Wheel, to help them discover them.

Youth use two main types of questions and responses in a survey:

- A **closed-ended question** with a selection of responses from which a participant chooses.
- An **open-ended question** that provides respondents the option to write their own answer. Use open-ended questions sparingly, because people tend to get tired of answering too many of them.

Closed-Ended Example: On a scale from 1 to 5, how likely are you to use this product?

Open-Ended Example: Why do you like this product?

There are two ways to include open-ended questions: providing a text box into which participants write their own responses; or providing a selection of responses, with an option for "other," where the participant elaborates on a response.

Make sure that youth provide participants every possible option for an answer. If a question is "Why do you like this product?" and the only options are "It is inexpensive," "It lasts a long time," and "I like the color," the answers fail to cover every possible reason for liking a product.

The following are a few examples of a more effective design for survey questions:

1. Have you ever traveled out of state before?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
2. Select the statement that best represents your reaction to the following: Math is easy for me.
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
3. How likely are you to recommend this product to a friend?
 - ☐ Extremely likely
 - ☐ Likely
 - ☐ Neither likely or unlikely
 - ☐ Unlikely
 - ☐ Not at all likely

Youth questions should also be direct and straightforward. Make sure questions are not biased and/or don't pressure participants to pick a certain option. For example, consider the effect of the following question: "Would you agree that food insecurity is a problem for youth in your community since 65% of youth have reported having to go hungry?" The phrasing of this question could influence a participant to pick that they agree or strongly agree. Using a statistic in the question could also bias the response because it implies that food insecurity is indeed an issue since a majority of youth have experienced it.

Another way to write questions is have youth imagine asking someone the questions in person. It would be difficult for a participant to say "Neither agree nor disagree," "Disagree," or "Strongly disagree" when their surveyor asks if they agree it's a problem, not if they think it's a problem.

A more appropriate way to phrase this question would be "In my opinion, I _____ that food insecurity is a problem for youth in my community."

When youth ask questions with multiple degrees of choices, a variety of ranges for answers are possible. A few examples:

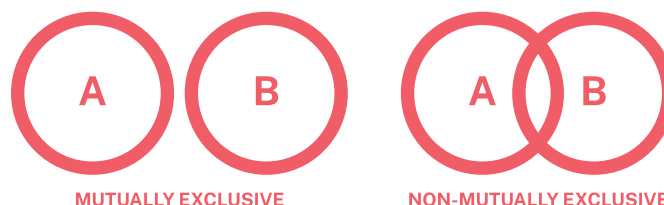
- “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree”
- “Very satisfied” to “Very dissatisfied”
- “Extremely likely” to “Not at all likely”

Youth that design a question using a rating scale should balance the response choices. As shown in the previous example questions, the rating scale, called a Likert scale, includes “strongly agree,” “agree,” “neither agree nor disagree,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree.”



For questions with multiple response choices, such as age and relationship status, provide a set range of answers. For example, if youth are surveying teenagers only, the age range includes ages 13–19.

Additionally, design mutually exclusive answers. **Mutually exclusive** refers to two or more events that cannot exist or happen simultaneously. A person cannot be fifteen or sixteen years old at the same time.



For example, when asking about age, do not include the response options of 13–16 and 16–19 because they overlap. If youth ask a question and a participant’s response fits within more than one answer, survey takers won’t know which answer to select and often select both if they can.

A few ways youth can administer or share their survey:

1. Conduct the survey face-to-face where youth ask them questions and record their answers (either paper or online survey).
2. Provide participants with a paper copy of the survey or online access to it so they can fill it out on their own time.
3. Use a free survey builder online, such as Google Forms, Qualtrics, or SurveyMonkey. These are especially helpful because they summarize the results.

Tip: A commonly used survey writing technique is called the “funnel technique,” where you ask broad, general questions at the beginning and more specific ones as the survey goes on.

Finally, keep the survey relatively short (under five minutes), comprehensive, and straightforward and one that provides the most important information needed. Encourage the youth to practice taking it themselves to find errors and to determine if its time length is appropriate.

Preparing to Do Interviews

As the youth team writes the interview questions, tell them to imagine asking their questions face to face with the survey group. This can help them determine if a question isn't biased, too long, too short, etc. Have them imagine how they would respond to the question being asked, which can help them make decisions about the right questions to ask.

Encourage youth to pay attention to the tone and structure of their questions. Also, remind them that by the interview's end they should learn a participant's personal experiences in the community, their opinions on your issue, and their thoughts on your solution ideas.

Because interviews are a one-sided conversation, focus on listening to the answers and to making the conversation comfortable. Give the youth the following advice:

- Don't fire off questions.
- The participant should feel heard and feel like their opinion is valued.
- Make the interview feel like a natural conversation, not an interrogation.
- Be friendly with the interviewee.

Youth also need to decide what question formats to use: structured or unstructured.

- **Structured questions are direct and straightforward.** They don't stray or go off-topic — every participant responds to the same questions.
- **Unstructured questions are less formal.** Each participant responds to different questions; therefore, youth can go off-topic and discuss more than what the questions focus on.

Both formats have benefits. Answers to structured questions are easier to compare among participants, since they were asked the same questions, with the same tone and intent. However, answers to unstructured questions might provide more and surprising detailed data, given that they allow participants to explore their responses in more depth. Youth have to decide with their team which format works best, given their goals and the data they need.

Lastly, youth need to decide which method to use to record the data. They can take notes during the interview or ask to audio-record the interview. If they choose the former, account for needing to take pauses to record a response fully. If they choose the latter, ask the participant's permission beforehand — that you will record their responses as they answer.

Preparing to Do a Focus Group

- Pose easy-to-follow and understandable questions.
- Start the session by explaining why the team is conducting a focus group, what they hope to accomplish, and the types of questions they'll ask.
- Direct questions to the group as a whole, since the purpose is to understand what the entire group thinks about something, not just what an individual thinks.
- Let the group thoroughly discuss each question before moving to the next.
- Ask follow-up questions, if needed, by saying, "That's a good point. Can you elaborate on that?"
- Make sure everyone feels heard and is being heard.

The questions should explore the group's opinions on the issue of interest by the youth team and the possible solutions to the issue. To craft questions, determine exactly what the youth team would like to learn.

Determining a time and place where everyone can meet and feel comfortable is essential. Indeed, participants who are at ease might discuss and share more. Some prefer in-person setups while others feel more secure sharing via free audio-conferencing software (e.g., Zoom).

If the focus group is done in person, direct the participants to sit in a circle. The arrangement usually allows for better discussion since everyone can see each other, creating a cohesive group. While asking questions, pause intermittently to record answers or to split responsibilities for recording and asking questions with another. To facilitate this process, use an audio recorder or, again, take notes. If you record the focus group, ask participants for permission before starting the recorder.

Preparing for Observations

If the youth decide to complete an observation, they must first decide what they want to observe and where and when the observations will take place. Otherwise, they will likely be distracted and unable to fully focus on what they wish to observe.

- Determine how youth will record their observations.
 - » Will they write them down?
 - » Will they type them on a smart device?
 - » Will they record themselves saying their observations out loud?

- Set a time limit for the observation and stick to that schedule.
- Practice being silent and not drawing attention to themselves to prepare for the observation.
- Determine what information to record.
 - » Time, date, and place of the observation.
 - » The context.
 - » The event or activity taking place.
 - » Any personal observations.
- Discuss how to manage an observation.
 - » Watch for clues and hints that provide context and new information about your community and the issue you are addressing. Youth can obtain information in many ways, via participants' actions or facial expressions, body language, and language cues; time of day, location, and environment; who the subjects are; or the activity/event itself.
 - » Note that assigning more than one person to observe might be helpful since each person might see or interpret something differently or witness something the other missed.
 - » Write down everything you see and pick up on. Even if something doesn't seem important, it may make more sense later on.
 - » Forewarn youth that they may not get the complete picture just by observing — that there are limitations to observing from the outside. Discuss what these might be.
- Encourage youth to ask themselves the following questions while observing:
 1. What does this tell me about my community?
 2. What does this say about youth in the community?
 3. In what ways may my observation be limited?
 4. What assumptions am I making?
 5. What does this observation tell me that differs from what I previously thought?

Done effectively, observations give a youth team more information about the community, the youth, and the issue.

Additional Chapter Resources

The following are several additional resources that relate to chapter 3's content. They supplement the required material and are included to offer more insight. Many of them provide multiple tips and suggestions. Feel free to adapt their advice to what works best for you and your team.

Article

George, T. 2023. "What Is an Observational Study? Guide and Examples." Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/observational-study/>.

Videos

Dr. Dee. 2018. "Six Tips for Designing a Semistructured Interview." Semi-Structured Interviews Guide — Semi-Structured Interview Protocol. 4 min., 6 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z8XV1S7548>.

Johnson, J. 2020. "Google Forms — Creating a Research Survey." YouTube. 13 min., 3 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEp3KPG7k8g>.

Market Research Society. 2015. "Conducting Research with Kids and Youth." YouTube. 6 min., 12 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2qRAc4GYxc>.

Mod-U: Powerful Concepts in Social Science. 2016. "Preparing for Focus Groups: Qualitative Research Methods." Duke University. 4 min., 41 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSwtvkTsOvI>.

Mr. Sinn. 2019. "Qualitative and Quantitative Research." YouTube. 4 min., 29 sec. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69qP8kFJp_k.

SAGE Video. 2018. "Designing a Survey." YouTube. 5 min., 20 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdVWbuffdNY>.

Teachings in Education. 2017. "Mind Mapping." Teaching Strategies #3. 3 min., 26 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCyjFipyRE>.

Website

Thompson, H. n.d. "Evaluate Your Plan." Community Youth Development, University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension. <https://youth.extension.wisc.edu/articles/evaluate-your-plan/>.

CHAPTER

4

DATA COLLECTION



Introduction

In this chapter, youth go out and collect data to help them better understand the views and experiences of their peers. It's a tricky process at times and takes up a lot of time and energy. However, it's the most important action for a team's CNA.

Data that comes straight from youth community members is a valuable resource for developing a better understanding of a community. Therefore, properly completing this step is crucial to formulating a solution or future project led by youth.

Chapter 4 Checklist

After reading the contents of this chapter, do the following with a youth team:

- ☐ Review the data collection process decided by the team in the last chapter.
- ☐ Review safety procedures and data collection procedures to increase accuracy of data.
- ☐ Identify possible problems that could occur during data collection.
- ☐ Begin a team's data collection.

A few other helpful reminders and tips to consider when preparing for data collection:

- Check in on the youth's progress.
- Make sure they follow the plan outlined.
- Ensure they keep track of their data and how and where they chose to compile it.

As the adult facilitator, help youth organize their data, but (to protect the integrity of the CNA) you should not have sole access to the data, share the data with others, or use the data for other work. In other words, the data belongs to the youth **for their use only**.

Leading this Activity

After guiding a youth team through the options available to them for data collection and helping them make a decision (chapter 3), they are ready for your assistance and guidance throughout the actual collection process. Indeed, your guidance is not just technical, for as youth near the middle of their CNA, they often tire and lose momentum.



Review the Data Collection Procedures and Tips

Bumps in the road are a natural part of completing a team project. Because this one is most likely a new experience for the youth, there is much for them to learn, like how some issues are an easy fix, while others prove unsolvable. That's why it's important to document the project so a team and future ones can learn from their mishaps. Be honest about issues, mistakes, and misunderstandings.



For example, when participants do not fully complete a task during data collection, such as leaving answers blank or unfinished; giving less-than-desired answers in interviews; and not speaking in focus groups, continue to collect their information. Alas, you can't force participation. Try your best to collect as much data as possible but understand that not every participant may provide complete data.

The following reminders and tips are worth keeping in mind as youth review the method and data collection procedures they decided on in the previous chapter:

- Although it is important for the team to be comfortable with their methodology and process, it is alright for them to alter them along the way. Indeed, circumstances can change, necessitating new approaches. In those instances, help them to find out what works best for them and what helps them best accomplish their goals.
- Encourage youth to work together and support each other. Remind them to have good attitudes, to encourage teammates, and to offer a helping hand when needed. Advise them to check in on each other periodically.
- Make sure everyone understands the plan and implementation. If teammates are confused or lost, review the plan and address their questions.
- Remind the youth of their timeline, so teammates know how to pace themselves given the deadlines.
- Tell them that if the data does not support their original plan for the rest of the CNA, that's fine. Following what the data says is more important than following the team's own expectations.

Safety Tips

Prioritize youth safety during the data collection process. Make sure to discuss with youth to never work alone to collect data while out in public. For example, if youth plan to collect data in the community (and not in school), encourage them to bring a friend.

Identify Possible Problems

Before the team ventures out to collect data, also discuss with them potential issues that may come up during data collection and identify solutions (for example, fewer participants than anticipated, time constraints in data collection, or difficulty approaching peers). Make sure youth know you are available to help them and to troubleshoot problems as they come up.

Accurate Data Collection

Maintaining accurate data collection helps the youth stay organized and on top of their work. The best way to manage this is to compile data in one accessible location, keep all teammates in the loop, and gather the most precise data possible. Such intentions set up the youth team for success when analyzing all the data amassed.

To prevent data from being biased, encourage youth not to let their own opinions influence its collection. For example, remind youth to avoid talking about questions or giving their own answers to participants. This is especially important because unbiased data is more accurate, making its analysis more effective and useful.

Since the team's data collection is informal (compared to professional research), youth may find that surveys may not be fully completed, interviews may not be detailed, or focus group discussions possibly shallow. Advise them not to let the shortcomings of informal data collection discourage them. Encourage them to continue to record all of their findings.

Reflection Log

Direct youth to continue reflecting on their experiences conducting the CNA in each of their own personal notes. Keep track of their growth too, for instance, when witnessing the development in them of new skills. To facilitate this process further, assign them to write about good and bad experiences.

Sharing what teammates learn prepares future youth leaders to carry out their own CNAs. Since this step requires teammates to go out, implement a plan, and interact with community members, there is much to reflect on. Check in periodically with youth team members by asking what they've written about in their reflection logs so far. Remind them to continue to write about their experiences in their reflection logs for the rest of this CNA.

Additional Chapter Resources

The following is an additional resource that relates to chapter 4's content. It supplements the required material and is included to offer more insight and multiple tips and suggestions. However, viewing it is not required. Feel free to adapt its advice to what works best for you and your team.

Videos

Mod-U: Powerful Concepts in Science. 2016. "When to Stop Gathering Qualitative Data: Qualitative Research Methods." Duke University. 2 min., 40 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysuieMxuZ3o>.

CHAPTER

5

DATA ANALYSIS



Introduction

In this chapter, the youth team learns about data analysis — to scrutinize the data and use the results to begin to identify a solution and create an action plan (chapter 6). As the facilitator, keep in mind that data analysis is often just as difficult as data collection. It requires critical thinking, patience, organization, interpretation, and discussion of the data to make informed decisions throughout the rest of the CNA process.

The instructions for data analysis in this chapter are simplified for ease in understanding and to take in to account the age and skill level of youth-led CNA participants. Regardless of this adaptation, analysis is still challenging for youth and requires solid teamwork.

Chapter 5 Checklist

After reading the contents of this chapter, do the following with your youth team:

- ☐ Review and analyze the data collected by the youth team.
- ☐ Discuss the analysis as a team.
- ☐ Draw conclusions based on the data to use in the next step of the CNA (chapter 6, picking a solution and creating a plan).

The following subsections offer ideas on how youth can review their data based on the method they selected previously. Note that this process has been simplified; you are encouraged to guide youth through this process, because the information is likely to be new to the youth team.

Surveys

While reviewing data from surveys, direct the team to

1. Count all of the surveys they have collected so they know how many participants responded.
2. Review the surveys and remove invalid responses. For paper surveys, go through them and check that they are filled out and that the response makes sense given the question. Track responses on a piece of paper with a pen or pencil. For online surveys, replace the value in the table with a blank space. Invalid responses are those that don't make sense given the question asked.

	A	B
1	Favorite Ice Cream	
2	Vanilla	
3	Vanilla	
4	Chocolate	
5	Phish Food	
6	Mint and Chip	
7	Cookie Dough	
8	Vanilla	
9		
10	Favorite Ice Cream	Frequency
11	Vanilla	3
12	Chocolate	1
13	Phish Food	1
14	Mint and Chip	1
15	Cookie Dough	1

Figure 11. An example of keeping a tally of survey responses.

3. Sort survey responses and count the frequencies of the responses. Keeping a tally or grouping similar answers together is an effective technique (Figure 11).
4. Make a note about answers that stick out or are different than the majority of the others.

Focus Groups and Interviews

Focus group and interview data are very similar. While reviewing data from focus groups and interviews, direct the team to

1. Gather all of the notes and records from the focus group (Figure 12).

What makes it hard for youth to find jobs?

I don't have any way to get there. I can't afford a car and there is no bus in town.

Being able to play softball is important to me and most places in town won't work with my schedule.

There are a lot of other kids trying to find jobs.

Because I am only 15, they want to pay me less than other people and I don't think that is fair.

Figure 12. An example of what focus group or interview data might look like.

2. Read through each question asked in the focus group and then the responses.
3. Note similar or repeated answers and unique ones (Figure 13).

What makes it hard for youth to find jobs?

I don't have any way to get there. I can't afford a car and there is no bus in town.

Being able to play softball is important to me, and most places in town won't work with my schedule.

There are a lot of other kids trying to find jobs.

Because I am only 15, they want to pay me less than other people and I don't think that is fair.

Commented [KC1]: Transportation

Commented [KC2]: Scheduling

Commented [KC3]: Few Jobs

Figure 13. Highlighting text is one way of noting the occurrence of similar, repeated, and/or unique responses when preparing to analyze focus group or interview data.

- Note the tone, attitudes, or phrasing of participants' responses.
- Look for consensus or disagreements in the focus group responses. One way to do this is to count and record the frequencies of similar responses (Figure 14).

	A	B
1	Job Barriers	Frequency
2	Transportation	4
3	Scheduling	2
4	Few Jobs	1
5		

Figure 14. An example of how to record the frequencies of similar responses when preparing to analyze focus group or interview data.

Observations

While reviewing the data from observations, direct the team to

- Allow each youth team member to share their observations.
- Allow each youth team member to compare settings, participants, and notes.
- Take note of similar or repeated observations, as well as unique ones. This can be done by counting observations.
- Discuss themes and theories team members may have developed after finishing their observations.

Leading this Activity

To lead this activity, use the outlined review of the data (subsections Surveys, Focus Groups and Interviews, and Observations) to lead the youth team through the process depending on the type of data they collected. Make sure to give youth time to ask questions. Be patient and encourage all youth to participate and share their thoughts as the youth team reviews and analyzes the data.

Discussing the Data

After reviewing and analyzing the data, the youth team discusses their findings. The discussion of the results and data lead the youth team to a deeper understanding of the needs of your community and how the youth team will work to address those needs with a solution. To discuss their results, the youth team poses “why,” “what,” and “how” questions, reviews which answers

were selected or discussed the most frequently, identifies outliers (extreme or different answers), and fields a general consensus of opinions. Once the general discussion of the data has occurred, the youth can dialogue more specifically about data trends and characteristics and their potential meaning, which might include the following:

- Why are the most common answers common?
- How are the responses related?
- What do these answers tell us about the youth community?
- What do these answers tell us about our issue and/or potential solution ideas?

Encourage youth to look at the answers outside of their own perspective to extend their understanding of the responses to determine what the answers mean in the context of the youth community. Ask them, What are its members telling you? What needs are they expressing?

Making Conclusions

The final youth team discussion, coming up with a solution, is crucial for carrying out the CNA. The solution the team develops should be created with the community in mind and informed by the results of the data collection. We recommend youth prioritize the preferences and needs identified in the data collection when possible.

Following a discussion of the data and analysis, youth discuss their interpretations of their data collection results. Remind the youth to take notes so they can recall the topics and conclusions that were made.

Some questions to guide the discussion:

- What did you learn about your community from your data?
- What did you learn about your community members/peers?
- Were you surprised to learn anything?
- Were you already knowledgeable about some of your data findings?
- What strengths and weaknesses of your community were illuminated?
- What are the attitudes of members in your community?
- How did the attitudes of the community members affect your data?
- What did you learn about your community's culture?
- How did your community's culture impact your findings?

After the youth team discusses these points, the team is ready to identify a solution (chapter 6).

Additional Chapter Resources

The following are two additional resources that relate to the chapter 5's content. They supplement the required material and are included to offer more insight and multiple tips and suggestions. Feel free to adapt their advice to what works best for you and your team.

The videos go into more depth about analyzing qualitative data. However, because the youth team is working on getting a general idea of the meaning of their collected data, they are not expected to go into as much depth as the instructions from these videos suggest. Again, the videos provide more insight for facilitators only, not a model youth are expected to follow.

Videos

Mod-U: Powerful Concepts in Social Science. 2016. "How to Know You Are Coding Correctly: Qualitative Research Methods." Duke University. 3 min., 31 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL7Ww5kpnIM>.

Mod-U: Powerful Concepts in Social Science. 2016. "What Is a Code?: Qualitative Research Methods." Duke University. 3 min., 19 sec. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAKRKZq_Ebo.

CHAPTER

6

PICKING A SOLUTION/ CREATING A PLAN



Introduction

At this point, the team begins to work on identifying a solution based on the data analysis conducted for chapter 5. It can feel overwhelming to have come so far and to create a plan from scratch to enhance a youth community, but let the youth team know that every step along the way has prepared them for this task.

In this chapter, the youth create a plan that addresses the Who, What, Where, When, and Why of their solution. After developing their plan, the team implements it with the intention that it positively impacts the youth community.

Chapter 6 Checklist

After reading the contents of this chapter, direct the youth team to do the following:

- ☐ Complete at least one or both of the following exercises to decide on a solution.
- ☐ Complete a feasibility analysis of the team's solution idea.
- ☐ Develop a plan for implementation by using the 5 W's method.
- ☐ Implement the team's solution, using the plan they developed.

Exercises for Picking a Solution

The youth team chooses one of three following activities to help them to define a solution informed by the data analysis they've completed. The activities from which to choose are the dot wall, pros and cons list, and a feasibility analysis. Coming up with a solution is crucial, because the team uses it to develop an individual or team project to fulfill the purpose and goals of the youth team overall. Thus, before the youth team moves to the last section of this chapter (in which they create and implement those projects), the youth team must have already defined their solution.

Dot Wall Activity

A simple way to brainstorm solution ideas, involve the entire youth team, and get ideas on paper is to create a dot wall. In this exercise, the youth team gathers as many sticky notes as they need, writes down on them their solution ideas, and sticks them on a wall.

LEADING THIS ACTIVITY

By completing this activity, the youth will be able to physically record and see their ideas, which makes it easier to talk through and consider all of them as a group. Use the following instructions to help guide the group activity.

1. Hand out sticky notes and pens for youth to record their ideas on.
2. Set a timer for brainstorming. Either set it for a short amount of time to challenge the team to write down as many ideas as possible in an allotted time frame or set it for a longer amount of time so they can ponder their ideas before writing them down.
3. After brainstorming, direct the youth team to affix their sticky notes up on a wall.
4. Talk through the ideas, move similar Post-it notes together, create groups of ideas, or do whatever else helps the team narrow down their selections.

Hopefully, after this activity, the youth team has a better idea of the direction they want to move toward for identifying a solution.

Pros and Cons List

If a youth team has a specific solution idea or a few they would like to explore, using a pros and cons list might be helpful. It's another simple way to think through an idea, get a discussion started with a team, and/or figure out if it is plausible.



LEADING THIS ACTIVITY

As the facilitator, use the following instructions to help guide the group activity.

1. Direct one teammate to write out the pros and cons list. It may be helpful to write it on a large surface in front of the whole group, where everyone sees it.
2. Start with one side (either the pros or the cons). It makes it easier to focus on one aspect at a time. Indeed, switching back and forth makes the discussion confusing.
3. Take turns so that each teammate shares a suggestion. If needed, discuss and present each idea as long as it is needed, but keep in mind that the team will discuss the entire list at the end.
4. Give every teammate a turn and multiple turns if needed.
5. Discuss the final list.

After completing a pros and cons list, the youth have a visual image that illustrates their solution ideas so they can more easily begin to consider each one's feasibility.

Example: If one solution idea inspires a lot of pros and only a few cons, it's probably a good one! However, if there are a lot of cons and only a few pros, you can probably eliminate it as a possibility. Tallying the pros and cons also helps set up the team to complete their feasibility analysis.

Tip: If youth are having a hard time getting started, use the brainstorming idea strategies discussed in chapter 2, “Brainstorming Ideas” to get the conversation started: Also remind your team that they should habitually reflect about each experience they encounter as they develop their CNA.

Also, consider the following questions while you and your team brainstorm possible solutions:

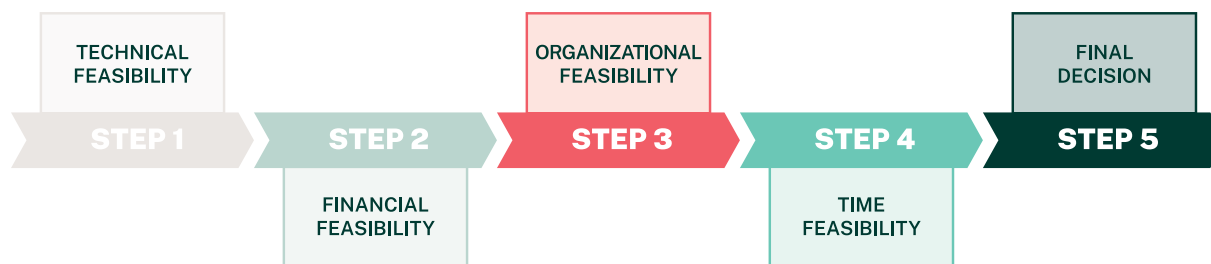
- Do our solutions align with the opinions and attitudes of the participants?
- Will the community be in favor of these solutions?

Feasibility Analysis

A feasibility analysis makes it easier for a team to judge whether a project or plan is feasible or practical. It requires reviewing data, determining its strengths and weaknesses, and facing the team’s opportunities and threats. Typically, professional businesses and organizations use them, which means they can be complicated and confusing because they incorporate market research, operations information, and economic costs. A youth team feasibility model is a simplified version adapted to fit the nature of a CNA and the needs of a youth team.

Leading this Activity

During each step, a team thoroughly discusses their answers in order to critically analyze how reasonable a solution idea is. Because the discussion is so central to this activity, assign a teammate to record team responses during the discussion. The following steps outline how to organize a feasibility discussion.



STEP 1: TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY

Evaluate the technical side of a team’s possible solution. The technicalities include the resources available to the team and the team’s ability to carry out the solution. Encourage members to think about the supplies they will need and what they can accomplish as a team.

Youth also discuss as a team what each member is comfortable doing, their personal strengths and weaknesses, and how well they work as a team. Ask the youth to identify what resources they can use for their solution.

Example:

- Are there other groups that they can work with?
- What technological resources are available?
- Do they need a specific location?
- What other resources do they need and can they acquire them?

Overall, encourage a team to think about the physical aspect of their project and what they need in order to physically carry it out.

STEP 2: FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

If a youth team's solution requires a budget, they need to identify where their financial support will come from. To be sure, projects easily fail without proper financial planning and/or an organized budget. Discuss how the team can fund a potential solution idea, which helps them decide if a solution is practical.

They also need to create a budget — essentially, how they will spend project funds. Creating a budget and sticking to it takes a lot of planning and discipline, so a youth team needs to define and agree on a budget plan. A project budget should be modest and reasonable regardless of the financial source. Deciding how to spend the money ahead of time helps the youth team to craft a detailed and thoughtful budget plan, which ultimately helps the team successfully carry out a solution.

STEP 3: ORGANIZATIONAL FEASIBILITY

While evaluating a solution idea, think back to the team's overall goals, as well as the purpose of the CNA. The solution should align with the functional objectives of a CNA.

Encourage the youth to discuss if a solution idea coordinates with all the work they've achieved in their CNA so far.

- How well does it address their selected issue?
- Is it sustainable?
- Does it help the team develop new skills?
- Does it provide the youth with a challenge or keep them in their comfort zone?
- Will it help them to learn more about their community and get them more involved?

STEP 4: TIME FEASIBILITY

Having a schedule that a team adheres to helps them to stay on top of their goals and carry out a plan. Therefore, the youth team should evaluate their schedule to determine whether it is both realistic and flexible enough to adjust in case unexpected circumstances develop.

Some questions to discuss include the following:

1. Will the youth be able to stick to the schedule?
2. Are all youth team members dedicated to whatever meetings will be necessary?
3. Will they be able to follow through on a final deadline?
4. Discuss what the team is capable of and willing to agree on in terms of a timeline for implementing a solution.

STEP 5: FINAL DECISION

After considering the technical, financial, organizational, and time feasibility of the solution idea identified by a team, the youth team makes a decision about the solution's overall feasibility for implementation. If it checks all the boxes, you may have a well-thought-out and realistic solution. Although extra steps are necessary to take to actually plan out an implementation, a team can move forward after concluding a feasibility analysis, because they'll know whether or not it is practical given their abilities and goals as a team.

Creating a Plan for Implementation: The Five W's Activity

A five-stage model helps a youth team create an implementation plan. Using ours, called the 5 W's Activity, the team plans for implementation according to the Who, What, Where, When, and Why of their solution idea. During this stage, the discussion changes from solution ideas to planning a project.

Knowing the whole story of this project helps the youth continue their work, keeps them motivated, and helps them to write out their plan. In addition, writing a plan that includes the five W questions helps a team identify the important facts about their project.



Leading this Activity

As the facilitator of a youth team, help members work through each of the five stages in order to create a carefully thought-out project.

STAGE 1: WHO

The “Who” refers to who will be involved in the solution a youth team selected and who will be affected by its implementation.

When it’s time to implement the solution, the team should be fully aware of who will work with them and who will receive the benefits of the solution or project. Whether it’s just youth team members or external volunteer recruits or a combination, being aware of who will work with the team helps them to delegate assignments. Knowing exactly who will accomplish certain tasks makes it easier to stick to a schedule and the overall goals and stay organized throughout the implementation process. Indeed, each person should know their responsibilities and their role on the team.

During this stage, the youth team also determines who will be specifically impacted by the implementation of the solution. Once the team figures their audience (also called the target population), the team should involve them in the development and implementation of their plan.

Example: If a team decides to create a buddy program for teenagers and senior citizens, they should find a retirement home to work with and adapt their plan to fit the facility’s organizational needs.

The solution the youth team pursues is not only about creating a change, but also about positively impacting their community and its members. Therefore, the community members the youth team hopes to help should be fully aware and involved in the process of creating a solution.

STAGE 2: WHAT

Discuss “What” the youth team thinks they will accomplish with their project. During the exchange, the team writes out detailed steps to their project, what the end goal is, what actions they will take, and what they supplies they need. Think of any possible questions that begin with “what” in regard to creating a solution and answer them.



A few examples of questions:

- What supplies do we need?
- What are the overall steps of the plan?
- What takes place in each step? (Thorough details of what each team member will do.)
- What is the end goal?
- What will the solution entail?

Other discussion questions also include specific ones, such as “What media outlet will we use to advertise our plan?” Encourage the youth team to cover all their bases and that the team isn’t making a plan that is too open-ended. A lack of organization and effective planning often lead to projects falling apart.

The team’s main question for this step should be, “what will we accomplish?” This is the guiding question for how they intend to carry out a plan and implement a working solution.

STAGE 3: WHERE

The logistics of a project plan are important to figure out ahead of time. Early on the youth team should decide “Where” their project will be implemented so they can fully prepare. They’ll need to consider a variety of factors for its location, including the following requirements or adhering to a venue’s rules in order to use a specific location for an event or project.

Example: Some spaces have time-use restrictions — access to a space may be available only for certain times. Also, they may have to share the space with others (e.g., a park). More than likely, they’ll need to get prior approval to secure the use of a space.

To sift through all of this, encourage the youth to discuss the following questions as they create a plan:

- Where will they implement their project? What location(s) will they use?
- Is it a permanent or temporary location?
- Is it reasonably accessible to the youth team and community members?
- Do they need permission to use a location?
- Does use of the location cost money?



Fully consider the team needs in terms of physical space to carry out their project. Without identifying a location to host a project, the team might struggle to carry out their plan.

STAGE 4: WHEN

Planning out an entire project ahead of time is tricky, but it's important to help a team to stay on track, to be organized, and to be able to fully implement their plan by an agreed-upon timeline. Indeed, deadlines keep a team moving and progress flowing.

The “When” question helps a team develop a schedule it can follow and agree to. Discussion involves questions such as

- When will the final timeline or deadline be?
- When will we accomplish each step?
- When will we continue to meet?
- When will we work on specific tasks? (This can refer to the specific components of your solution.)



Example: If a team's project is to create a food pantry, when will the team hold a food drive to stock the pantry?

Another question to ask a team includes “Is your schedule flexible?” If issues or other time conflicts arise, can other team members step up and/or can dates be adjusted?

Creating a thorough timeline that includes specific tasks and actions with the dates to accomplish them helps to create a visual guide that a team more easily follows. The team can refer back to the timeline to practice time management and stay on top of their work. This is especially helpful for time-sensitive tasks. If a team's project involves an event, using a specific space, outside involvement/volunteers, or anything else that is time-sensitive and requires preplanning, having a schedule is necessary. A physical schedule or timeline is very important to have on display to keep a team on track.

The “When” question is thus a very important and logistical aspect of a teams' plan. Figuring out the technical details of their plan helps a team translate it to real life in a practical and reasonable way.

STAGE 5: WHY

As the youth team develops a project implementation plan, keeping the “Why” question (the solution's purpose) at the forefront of their mind guides them to serve their community fully. Ultimately, with a CNA the youth seek to develop a positive and possibly sustainable resolution. Addressing the “Why” of the solution may seem difficult, however, because of its subjective and abstract nature. But really, the team is just reminding itself why the solution is the team's solution in the first place — why it will help, why the community needs it, and why the youth are helping their community.

Other discussion questions include the following:

- Why did we select this solution?
- Why does the solution work for the team?
- Why does this community issue need to be addressed? (This reiterates the entire purpose of the CNA and the effects of your issue.)
- Why will this solution help the community?

Discuss these questions with the youth team. As the last step, stage five wraps up the planning process of a team's project. By this point, they should have addressed the logistics and motivations for it and recorded the steps they will follow. After completing their plan and answering the "Why" question last, their planning work ends on a note of encouragement. The fifth stage, therefore, functions as a catalyst for action.

Project Implementation Tips

Inspired by thinking through the Why stage and working together as a team and with a plan for implementation in hand, a youth team is ready to go out and help their community.

From here on out to the project's conclusion, encourage youth periodically to track their progress, revisit their plan and steps, and communicate problems or concerns with each other, particularly to assess whether or not the team is still following their agreed-upon plan and accomplishing the goals they set for their solution and project. The team can set markers for their progress by going back and looking at the Who, What, Where, When, and Why stages after completing a step in their project plan.

Basically, inspire a youth team to follow their plan!

Additional Chapter Resources

The following is an additional resource that relate to chapter 6's content. It is supplementary material and provides more insight, tips, and/or suggestions. However, it is not required. Feel free to adapt its advice to what works best for you and your team.

Video

NNgroup. 2021. "Dot Voting in the UX Design Process." YouTube. 4 min., 18 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-3q4z7ReSQ>.

CHAPTER

7

REFLECTION —
WHAT WILL YOU
TAKE AWAY FROM
THIS CNA?



Introduction

At this point, the youth team has implemented a project or has a solid plan for one in the community and the CNA is almost over. Yet, it's not quite finished! Before a team wraps up its project, it's important to reflect on the entire process. Remember, a core principle of CNAs is the youth passing on their knowledge and experience so that future youth can successfully complete their own CNAs.

In this chapter, the youth team completes a reflection activity, discusses the entire project, reviews the team's goals, and develops tips for future youth. As the facilitator you guide the conversations. Prompt the team to talk about what they would change about the project, what they appreciated, and what the team wants future youth teams to know.

Chapter 7 Checklist

After you have read the contents of chapter 7, do the following:

- ☐ Complete a reflection activity as a group.
- ☐ Determine what the youth team would change or keep in the CNA.
- ☐ Evaluate their solution/project.
- ☐ Reflect on the teams' initial goals and their progress.
- ☐ Produce tips and advice for future youth teams.
- ☐ Summarize the team's reflection.

Reflection Activities

The goal of a reflection activity is to openly discuss the entire project as a team. Pick an activity or come up with your own that works best for a youth team to accomplish this. The team should complete at least one reflection activity, but can complete however many they want. Encourage them to focus on their own personal experiences to share with the group and also talk about the group's experience as a whole. Make sure during this discussion that teammates are respectful of one another, encourage each other, and try to have meaningful discussions. As the facilitator also lend your own observations, focusing on growth of the group you perceived.

Finally, as the adult facilitator record what the team shares during a reflection activity. Keeping a record is important so that you can share with future teams what previous teams learned.

Reflection Circle

This is a simple activity and mainly consists of having a youth team talk as a group. If you do not think the team needs prompts for the discussion, direct them to sit in a circle and take turns sharing their thoughts. It may be helpful to guide the discussion with specific questions, such as

- What was the most challenging part of the CNA for you?
- Did you find it difficult talking to new people throughout your project?
- Which data collection method would you prefer to use again or which one would you like to try out?
- Which activity in any chapter was your favorite and why?



When the team begins to focus discussion on one area, ask questions that stay on topic but require them to dig deeper. When a talking point seems to tire out, transition into a new topic. Note that discussion should take a long time; if you find that your team isn't able to talk for more than twenty minutes while using a reflection circle, use one of the other following activities.

Free Write

In this activity, team members take a designated amount of time to write down their thoughts about their entire experience. By anything, this means anything. For example, they can write about one specific issue that really frustrated them. Or their group dynamic and if they wished they divided responsibilities differently. They can even write about one specific interview or survey they conducted that affected them.

The point of letting the youth team write about whatever they'd like is that they all had unique experiences throughout the CNA. By having the freedom to cover any part of it, all members' different perspectives come to the table. If multiple teammates write about similar topics, this highlights a weakness in the CNA process that should be addressed. If their experiences are varied and don't relate, this likely indicates personal strengths or weaknesses in teammates. Those experiences can then be translated to future team members who have similar qualities.

After giving a team a certain amount of time (the team decides how long to write), ask each member to share what they wrote with the group. As the facilitator, allow for the discussion to flourish; let the team take the conversation wherever they like. Direct each team member to go in-depth about what they wrote and how they feel and to cover any other topics that may come up.

Think, Pair, Share

During a Think, Pair, Share activity, team members reflect on a discussion question in a short amount of time. Next, they partner up with another teammate and share their thoughts. There should be enough members in a team for at least two pairs.

Following this discussion, all the pairs share their thoughts with the group. This activity uses a **reverse-funnel technique** to get the team thinking. By first quietly reflecting on their own and then gradually including more people, they are more equipped to expand on their thoughts, to develop them further, and to draw new conclusions.

The discussion questions you pose should be similar to the type of questions given as an in the Reflection Circle activity. Phrase them to be individualized so the team discusses their unique experiences and sees how they differ from or relate to one another.

It may be helpful to limit the amount of time per discussion and have the pairs switch for multiple rounds of discussion. This way, they have one-on-one discussions with everyone and increase the variety of their conversations.

Journal Entries

Throughout the entire CNA, a youth team should keep a personal journal or record of their thoughts. In this activity, the team simply shares some of their entries.

Ask the team to pick out at least three entries that they feel comfortable sharing with the group. Next, the team asks each other questions about their thoughts and experiences. Hopefully, they share discoveries they made, personal struggles and achievements, and even small details that set their project experiences apart from each other.

Make sure the team is respectful to teammates who are sharing their entries. It can be scary for someone to share their writing, especially journal entries. Give each team member enough time to fully share the entries they've chosen to read.



Strongly Agree/Strongly Disagree

This activity gets the team up and moving as they share their overall opinions about the CNA. Designate two sides of the room to “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree.” The center of the room represents a neutral feeling of “neither agree nor disagree.” The location for those who “agree” or “disagree” is halfway between the center of the room and the respective walls.

Direct the team to start in the center. Next, read statements about the project that elicit agree/disagree types of answers.

For example:

- Overall, I enjoyed the CNA.
- I encourage other teenagers to participate in a CNA.
- I struggled more than not during this CNA.
- Overall, I was satisfied with the results of our CNA.
- I would not change anything about the process of the CNA.



These statements may be general, but the various degrees of responses demonstrate how every team member had different experiences.

Direct the team move to the spot that best represents their answer to each statement. After they dissemble, ask them to share their personal experiences and why they chose their responses. Let the discussion go in whatever direction it takes and get the perspective of every team member who wants to share. This activity gauges the consensus of the group or how different their opinions are. With a baseline understanding of everyone's opinions, you can open up reflection to be even more specific or detailed.

Takeaways

The discussions and reflections that the team shares hopefully will guide future youth teams. In fact, you might want to compile the team's conclusions in a document, slide show, poster, video, or any other kind of medium to organize the team's thoughts in a way that is more easily referenced. However, its assembly does not need to be another polished project for the team to complete. Simply record the team's overall thoughts in one location that can be given to future teams for advice.

The next chapter wraps up the CNA, the last opportunity for a youth team to discuss the entire process and their specific work. Take the chance to appreciate the work they have done and acknowledge their unique experiences.

Additional Chapter Resources

The following are two additional resources that relate to chapter 7's content. They supplement the required material and are included to offer more insight. Feel free to adapt their advice to what works best for you and your team.

Videos

MIT OpenCourseWare. 2017. "Think-Pair-Share." YouTube. 3 min., 9 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqrOxeL-fwk>.

YOUTRAIN videoproject. 2019. "How to Organize Reflection in Learning? 4 Different Reflection Methods." YouTube. 5 min., 39 sec. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30Bmhads4rA>.

CHAPTER

8

WRAPPING UP THE CNA



Introduction

As the CNA comes to a close, it's time to think about the future. The members of the youth team may not complete another youth-led CNA together, but they possess valuable experience and knowledge to share with future teams.

Chapter 8 Checklist

After you have read the contents of chapter 8, do the following:

- ☐ Discuss how the team will share their knowledge with future youth teams.
- ☐ Celebrate the team's success.

Passing on Knowledge

In the previous chapter, you as the adult facilitator compiled what the youth team learned in a sharable format. Whether with a video, a folder of team members' journal entries, or a letter from the youth team, make sure that their materials are complete and ready to pass on even if you do not return as the adult facilitator. If the youth team received advice and help from a previous one, consider reusing the predecessor's method of passing on the information.

By doing so, the youth team wraps up their work on the CNA. At this point, they've implemented their project and reflected on the process; for the next step, they pass the torch.

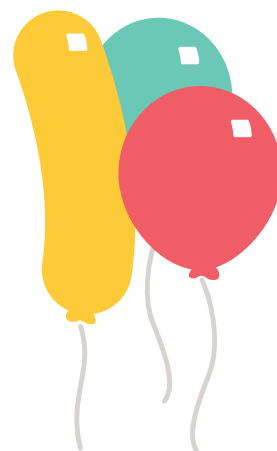
Celebrating the Successes

It's important to recognize what the team achieved and how they succeeded! A youth team should decide on a way to celebrate together and say goodbye to each other.

How you celebrate may vary, based on the resources and budget available to you and the team's schedule.

Some ideas for how the team might celebrate:

- Go out to dinner with the whole team and adult facilitator(s)
- Do a physical/outdoor activity together, such as bowling, roller skating, a park picnic, pool party, hiking, etc.
- See a movie or show together
- Have a pizza party for your last meeting together as a team
- Create a slideshow or video montage, if the team took lots of pictures and videos throughout the process



Besides doing an activity or hosting a get-together with the team, it is also a good idea to consider recognizing individual achievements. This could range from handing out certificates, trophies, or goodie bags or something as simple as complimenting each team member while you celebrate together.

Not only did the team work together, but each individual member made contributions or grew in their own way. It's important to acknowledge how each team member played a crucial role in the completion of the CNA. It can make a team feel special and valued to receive this type of recognition while celebrating together.

Wrapping Up

Congratulations on completing this youth-led CNA! Through hard work, the youth gave back to their community while also learned more about community-supported and community-targeted projects. By participating in this CNA, we hope that the youth learned how they can influence and make an impact in their community. Along the way, they developed important skills and gained valuable experience that will help them in whatever they decide to do in the future.

Thank you for facilitating this group and successfully completing this CNA.

APPENDIX 1: YOUTH-LED COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION

As a facilitator of a youth-led needs assessment, you need to conduct a short and informal evaluation of the process with the youth to ensure that you make changes to your approach that better meet the needs of youth and to help youth understand the outcomes of the process. If you are going through the tenure and promotion process, you can also report results of the evaluation as part of your package.

Carry out the evaluation of this program informally by incorporating it into the activity you do as part of the reflection process (chapter 7). The following provides information relevant for the purpose, method, and ideas for an analysis of your evaluation. If you would like assistance with your evaluation or have questions, please reach out to our team for help.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of your evaluation is likely two-fold:

1. To understand youth experiences conducting the youth-led CNA, including what they liked and thought could be improved for future youth-led CNAs.
2. To describe the **outcomes** of the process as identified by youth participants.

Outcomes can be broadly defined as the upshots or results for the youth participant (e.g., what they learned, the project they did as a result) or for the community (e.g., understanding of community needs, consequent programs).

Method

To explore youth perceptions and outcomes, apply a focus group format with the youth team as part of their reflection activity. Let the youth know that you will take notes that reflect what they say; explain that you are doing this so that you can make changes to the process and understand the outcomes of their efforts. You might say the following to the youth team before you begin asking your questions:

“I am so excited to talk with you all today and to begin wrapping up the CNA. One thing I would like to do is ask the group some questions about how this whole process has gone for you all, what you liked, what you thought could be done differently, and what were the results or outcomes of the work you all did. I am going to take some notes while you all talk, but it won’t hurt my feelings if you tell me things that you thought could be done differently for future youth-led CNAs.”

Once you have your pen and paper ready, ask your questions and record the youth’s answers.

Focus Group Questions

The following are some questions to ask your youth team, but feel free to add additional questions, skip nonrelevant questions, and/or adapt them to fit the group.

1. When you think back to the very beginning of this process, what did you think we would be doing? What were your initial thoughts and reactions to the youth-led needs assessment?
2. Now that we are at the end of the process, what did you like about what we did and learned about? What do you plan to do as a result of this process?
3. Are there any things that you didn’t like, think should be changed, or didn’t provide you with enough information to continue making progress within the CNA? What suggestions do you have to make things better for future youth-led CNAs?
4. I am hoping you can help me understand what you gained from participating and what the outcomes are. How did you benefit from going through this process? What did you learn? About yourself or the community?
5. What do you think were the outcomes or benefits for the youth community from this process? What do you think will be done using the information gained from this process?



Analysis and Reporting

Once you have completed your focus group with youth, identify the patterns across the responses. These can then become categories, which you can quantify or list as categories of responses. Additionally, include direct statements to provide additional context for the responses. An example on how to record your analysis results includes the following:

Question: What were the outcomes or benefits for the youth community from this process?

- Youth got to share their opinions
- Youth learned what the key issues were
- Youth came up with a plan to address mental health by doing a group project: “I think that my friends will really like getting to come to our mental health support day. Being able to pet animals and have a space to decompress will help them a lot.”

APPENDIX 2:

PILOT-TESTING EXAMPLES

This program was first piloted in a rural county in Utah. The facilitator for the youth group recorded examples of how they approached chapters 2, 3, and 6. These examples are included to assist you in adapting chapter content to best fit the needs of your youth group. Please reach out to our team if you are feeling stuck, have any questions, or need any advice.

Chapter 2

For the chapter 2 brainstorming activity, group leaders took a white board and broke it into eight sections, each focused on one wellness dimension. They gave each youth three sticky notes and asked them to spend two minutes thinking of a challenge or something that was lacking in their youth community or something related to a particular dimension of wellness. They spent two minutes on each dimension. Each youth was asked to come up with at least two things for each dimension of wellness that from the wheel. After finishing all eight dimensions, the group reviewed each by discussing the ideas youth wrote, making clusters of things that everyone agreed was an issue. This gave everyone somewhere to focus. After narrowing them down, they discussed which sticky note ideas resonated most with the group.

Using this method, the group decided to focus their CNA on issues relating to three of the dimensions of wellness. Before having a brainstorming framework such as the wellness wheel, the group was not able to generate any ideas. Having a framework, no matter what the area/subject of focus is, is a better way to help youth think of ideas.

Chapter 3

While discussing the different data types and collection methods, group leaders thought it would be helpful to provide some visuals. They made a PowerPoint to show examples during the discussion. This seemed to hold the attention of youth members better than just discussing them.

After going over all the different data collection methods, the group chose to do a survey. Using the three dimensions of wellness chosen in the previous chapter, the group discussed what they wanted to find out by surveying attitudes about each dimension.

This included

1. Asking about solutions.
2. Asking about how a respondent feels about a dimension or challenge.
3. Asking if a respondent feels that there are issues surrounding that dimension of wellness.

After the discussion, each group member wrote three questions for each dimension. Afterward, we discussed them as a group and decided which ones to use. As the adult facilitator, I helped make the questions a little clearer but only after the idea of the question was there.

Going over the different data collection methods and writing survey questions took the group more than one meeting. It is a lot of information to absorb.

Chapter 6

After analyzing the data, adult leaders put large sticky notes on the walls, one for each dimension of wellness that the survey addressed. Each youth group member was given a sticky note and asked to put the statistic or piece of data analysis that resonated most with them under each dimension. After writing them down, they were discussed, and one was picked. Once the group picked what to address, solutions were discussed and then a plan developed for the preferred solution. Before using the sticky notes, the group was having a hard time focusing on one issue/solution.