

Re:Action4Inclusion Curriculum

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Training Module Part One: Understanding the Project Background and Facilitator's Role

Background

Community Living Ontario (CLO) is undertaking an initiative aimed at changing the way youth with intellectual disabilities are engaged. Through the development of a curriculum and a framework of engagement for youth with intellectual disabilities, CLO intends to engage youth with/without intellectual disabilities in changing the culture of their community to one that embraces equity and equal access.

This curriculum includes 4 modules that will help to increase young people's capacity (with and without disabilities) to change the culture of their community and advocate for equality. These modules are written for youth. Youth with/without intellectual disabilities will have the opportunity to enhance their skills, act as leaders and advocate in their community and broaden their networks. The themes of the 4 curriculum modules are outlined below:

- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ Creative leadership
- ✓ Inclusion
- ✓ Community Development

What is a curriculum?

A curriculum is a document that outlines a set of learning objectives for a particular subject. The curriculum modules in this resource are intended to help guide you through a series of activities with a group of your peers in order to increase your ability to advocate for youth with intellectual disabilities and help increase equity and equal access for you and your peers.

Defining the term "Intellectual Disability"

An intellectual disability is a life-long condition that significantly affects one's ability to learn and use information. It is a disability that is present during childhood and continues throughout one's life. A person who has an intellectual disability is capable of participating effectively in all aspects of daily life, but sometimes requires more assistance than others in learning a task, adapting to changes in tasks and routines, and addressing the many barriers to participation that result from the complexity of our society.

Many people who are labeled as having an intellectual disability are able to communicate, engage in social activities, work and participate in life as we all do, with very little support other than the natural supports we all require. Others with more severe disabilities may participate in different ways and with different levels of support. As with any individual, people who have an intellectual disability are capable of many accomplishments, and simply require an opportunity to be included in the daily life of their community in order to make their unique contribution (Community Living Ontario, 2015).

Facilitator Introduction

A facilitator is a “discussion leader” for the group. Your job as a facilitator is to encourage participation by all members of the group and to guide participants through an activity or conversation. You can act as the facilitator on your own, or share the role with a partner. As the facilitator(s), you understand that there is no “right” or “wrong” answer. There are a few important considerations that you should keep in mind when facilitating activities designed to promote a youth voice.

Tip 1: Reflect the mood you want to see – respect and enthusiasm!

As a youth facilitator, your job has three parts: 1) lead the activities, 2) guide the reflection, and 3) be enthusiastic. Remember that your peers are being asked to share personal experiences with others and are learning about concepts that may be new to them – it can be a scary experience. As the facilitator, it is up to you to set the mood of the workshop, including being positive, open-minded, and having fun with the experience.

Tip 2: Create Guidelines

Have participants create ground rules or guidelines before you begin a workshop. Brainstorm potential rules and write them down – but avoid too many of them! There are three essential guidelines:

- Safety first. Never compromise the safety of yourself or others.
- Challenge by choice. If someone wants to sit out, that’s cool.
- HAVE FUN!

Tip 3: Framing the Activities and Questions

The purpose of these modules is to increase the capacity and skill set of young people to be advocates and leaders in their community. The modules will also educate youth on how to identify and create inclusive environments and build community capacity. The introduction or “framing” of the modules needs to clearly set the purpose, goals, and guidelines of the workshop.

It may be that the group that you brought together has never learned together. If you are doing the workshop outside of suggested sequence, consider which exercises you want to do in which order. Always start with an icebreaker – the sequence after that is up to you. We suggest, after the icebreaker, to move into a large group exercise, then individual work, then an exercise that involves either smaller groups, or goes back into large group sharing. Take advantage of the energy early in the day to get people working together and feeling comfortable with one another.

Tip 4: Reflect

One way to highlight the importance of youth participation in the workshop is through group reflection. An easy way to see the relevance of reflection is to picture workshops as a circle: you start with an explanation of what you are going to learn and frame its purpose and goals to the group. As the activity progresses, the facilitator guides the group as needed. Group reflection helps participants see how they met the goals of the workshop and brings the group back to the reason why they are answering the questions and participating in the activities.

Tip 5: Create Safe Space

It is important to create and support safe spaces for you and your peers to participate in the workshops. Young people are not usually asked to participate in their communities. Therefore, this will be a new experience for many. Creating an environment that is free of judgement and criticism will make participants more comfortable sharing their voices.

Engaging Youth

What do we mean? “Engaging youth” refers to welcoming youth to participate in the shaping of our community. Young people have unique perspectives and individual strengths to offer. Youth want to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives. They want their voices to be recognised and heard. They are willing to share, learn and work... if you are willing to share, learn and work with them.

Training Module Part Two: Leading the Group

Time Required: Between 90-120 minutes for each module (including one 10 minute break)

Learning Objectives

This curriculum has been designed to:

- Provide young people with the knowledge and tools to become advocates and leaders in their community
- Educate young people on how they can identify and create inclusive environments
- Explain the concept of community building and the role young people have in changing the culture of their community when it comes to equality and diversity

Materials Required

- ✓ Participant Workbook (one per participant)
- ✓ Flipchart paper
- ✓ Flipchart markers
- ✓ Cue Cards
- ✓ Tape
- ✓ Laptop
- ✓ Projector
- ✓ Extension Cord

Schedule (for each module)

- 1 Icebreaker – 10 minutes
- 2 Introduction – 10 minutes
- 3 Activity #1 – 50 minutes
- 4 Break – 10 minutes
- 5 Activity #2 – 30 minutes
- 6 Reflection – 10 minutes

Ice Breaker Option #1 – “It’s a comb! It’s a plane! It’s Superman?!” (10 minutes)

- A. Ask participants to form a circle in the middle of the room. Tell them that they will now play a game that requires innovative thinking and performance skills.
- B. Introduce yourself and one interesting thing about you. Take the prop (comb, handkerchief, pencil, rope, etc.) and improvise how it can be used – to paint, to brush one’s teeth, etc.
- C. Ask the person to your right to introduce him or herself and say one interesting thing about themselves. Hand over the prop to that person and ask him/her to improvise something new. After his/her performance, the participant hands over the comb to the next person to show something new (using the same prop).
- D. Ask other participants to guess what each demonstration is about.
- E. Continue this exercise until everyone finishes one performance.

Guidelines and Ground Rules

1. Ask participants to brainstorm a few rules for the workshop. Some possible rules might include “respect others’ opinions” or “listen to someone’s point before responding”.
2. Write down rules on chart paper so that they are visible throughout the day.

Before you begin, be sure to set the ground rules for the discussion. Make sure all participants are comfortable with the rules and agree to follow them.

Please note that each module has a series of questions labelled “Consider This”. These are intended to get the group thinking about a topic, and are meant to be used as prompts if a group has a hard time understanding the topic or getting started. It is up to you to decide if you want to use these questions, and whether you want to use one or all the questions.

Recording the Group’s Responses

For all the activities, ask participants to spend a couple of minutes recording at least one of their responses in the Participant Workbook – even when they have written down the information elsewhere (e.g., Post-it notes, flip chart, etc.). As the facilitator, have a plan in place for recording information (e.g., on a flipchart).

About this Curriculum

Who is the curriculum for?

Youth with and without intellectual disabilities. The activities will be led by youth, for youth.

What is the purpose of the modules?

To engage young people in a conversation about advocacy, creative leadership, the principles of inclusion and community development.

The modules are intended to introduce (or reintroduce) young people to the term “intellectual disability” and build capacity amongst these individuals to help change the culture of their community to one that embraces equity and equal access.

Where should the activities take place?

These activities can take place in any space that is accessible! The space should be large enough for individuals to breakout in small groups and should be relatively private so participants can hear each other and feel comfortable sharing.

You may want to run these activities at your school, community centre or library.

What does this curriculum include?

Background information, discussion questions and activities, tips and all the material you need to lead your peers through the module activities.

How many activities should our group do? How long will the conversation take?

There are four modules included in this curriculum. You may choose to focus on 1 or 2 of the themes, depending on how much time you have.

1. Advocacy

Introduction

Read aloud to participants:

The term “advocacy” means active promotion of a cause or principle. Advocacy involves taking action in order to achieve a selected goal or outcome. Here is an example to help you understand the difference between advocacy and being a volunteer. An example of being a volunteer is joining a “buddy system” that pairs individuals with and without an intellectual disability during recess. An example of being an advocate is organizing an extracurricular activity to take place during recess (such as a kickball league, craft club, etc.) that is available to all of your classmates, independent of their skill level. As an advocate for individuals with intellectual disabilities you see all your peers as equals and try to create an environment where everyone has a role to play regardless of their skill level.

Consider this:

Which one do you think is advocacy: volunteering in the school cafeteria or organizing a snack program at your school that provides healthy snacks to kids that don't have a lunch?

Advocacy is important because there is still a lot of unfairness, exclusion and misunderstanding within our society. People are not all treated fairly and equally. As such, it is important that we have advocates in our community that support and stand up for their own rights and the rights of their peers and neighbours.

Activity #1: Identifying and Articulating your Message (Total time: ~50 minutes)

PART A: Identifying your Message (Total time: 40 minutes)

Materials:

- Cue cards (blue)
- Pens
- Flipchart paper and markers
- Participant Worksheet

Directions:

1. Divide the large group into smaller groups of 3-4 people.
2. Give each group 4-5 blue cue cards and ask them to brainstorm different issues/causes that they would like to be advocates for (5 minutes).
3. As the participants are writing down their answers, collect the filled out cue cards and tape them onto chart paper at the front of the room.
4. As a large group read through all of the issues/causes and have each group select two that they would like to explore further (5 minutes).

5. Give each group a worksheet and 3 green cue cards and ask them to work through the following questions (20 minutes):
 - Thinking about your issue/cause, answer the following questions (on the worksheet):
 - Who is affected by the issue?
 - Who is your target audience and how will you engage them?
 - How does the issue link or divide different people within your community?
 - What are the impacts of the issue?
 - What is/are the goal(s) of your advocacy campaign?
6. Debrief the exercise by asking a representative from each group to share what they wrote (10 minutes).

PART B: Articulating your Message (Total time: 10 minutes)

This part of the exercise will provide participants with the opportunity to identify the key message(s) associated with their campaign from Part A and think about how they would articulate this to their target audience. An example of a campaign and three key messages is outlined below, but you are encouraged to replace this example with your own project. This is the perfect time to introduce your project to the group and outline 1-3 of your key messages.

Read aloud to participants:

Now that you have defined the goal of your advocacy campaign and identified the target audience, it is time to articulate your message. Think about what you want to tell people about your campaign. What do you want people to remember and react to? What can you tell people that will encourage them to act in a manner that will help you achieve the goal of your campaign?

Campaign: Organizing a waste program that provides parks with garbage bins, recycling bins and compost bins

Key Messages:

1. **Recycling saves the earth!** Recycling helps to preserve natural resources, such as trees, because new products are made from recycled products instead of raw materials.
2. **Recycling reduces pollution!** Factories that make new products put greenhouse gases into the air. By recycling our products, not as many new products are needed.
3. **Sorting waste helps to reduce the size of landfills.** Sorting your waste in the three appropriate bins will reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills which have social and environmental impacts.

Materials:

- Cue cards (green)
- Pens

Directions:

1. Participants will continue to work in their same group.
2. Provide each group with 3 blue cue cards and ask them to write down 1-3 key messages (10 minutes).

Activity #2: Moving from Advocacy to Action

Total time: ~50 minutes

After completing Activity #1, participants will have gained a better understanding of what advocacy means and why it is important. This second activity will have participants brainstorming tools that can be used to move from advocacy to action.

Read aloud to participants:

The first step to becoming an advocate is identifying the need (“the issue/cause”), the audience you are supporting and your key message. We have done this in Activity #1. The second step is actually creating a plan to take action to solve the issue or improve the experience of your target audience. We will now start to think about the ways you can engage people to participate in your campaign and achieve your goal.

Here are some examples of traditional advocacy tools:

- **Rally** - A gathering intended to inspire enthusiasm for cause
- **Sit-in** - Any organized protest in which a group of people peacefully occupy and refuse to leave an area
- **Demonstration** - A public meeting or march protesting against something or expressing views on an issue.
- **Petition**

In the age of the Internet, many advocacy campaigns are using online tools, such as: emails, websites, social media, podcasts, blogs and electronic newsletters to name a few. Other modern advocacy tools include the development and distribution of fact sheets, brochures and posters as well as hosting special events and information sessions.

Keep these advocacy tools in mind as we review a case study.

Barriers to Advocacy

- Not understanding the importance of advocating for yourself, your peers, the environment, etc.
- Feeling uncomfortable or worried about what others will think
- Not knowing how you can make a difference (what steps should you take to put your idea in action?)

Case Study - Freedom Riders

What was the goal of their advocacy campaign?

The Freedom Riders were civil rights activists who challenged the status quo by using “whites-only” restrooms and lunch counters at bus terminals in southern United States in mixed racial groups. The Freedom Riders challenged local laws and customs that enforced segregation in seating and bus terminals. The goal of the campaign was to fight racial segregation and eliminate segregation in interstate bus terminals.

Who was affected by the issue?

African-American citizens

How did this issue divide different people within the community?

African-American citizens were legally and socially segregated from other races. African-Americans were prohibited from using the same facilities. There was a large divide between white citizens and African-American citizens.

What actions did they take to try and solve the problem?

On May 4, 1961, a group of 13 African-American and white civil rights activists began their journey through the southern United States to protest segregation in interstate bus terminals. The group tried to use “whites-only” restrooms and lunch counters, and vice versa. The Freedom Riders encountered horrific violence from white protestors along their journey, but they also brought international attention to their cause. Over the next few months, several hundred Freedom Riders engaged in similar actions and in September 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued regulations prohibiting segregation in bus and train stations nationwide.

Discussion Questions

Host a group discussion guided by the following three questions (10 minutes):

1. Why do you think this movement was effective?
2. What did the advocates of this movement do to achieve their goal?
3. If we were thinking of being advocates for youth with intellectual disabilities, what have we learned from this example?

Putting the Pieces Together - Developing an Action Plan (30 minutes)

Materials:

- Markers/Pens/Pencils

- Action Planning worksheet

Directions:

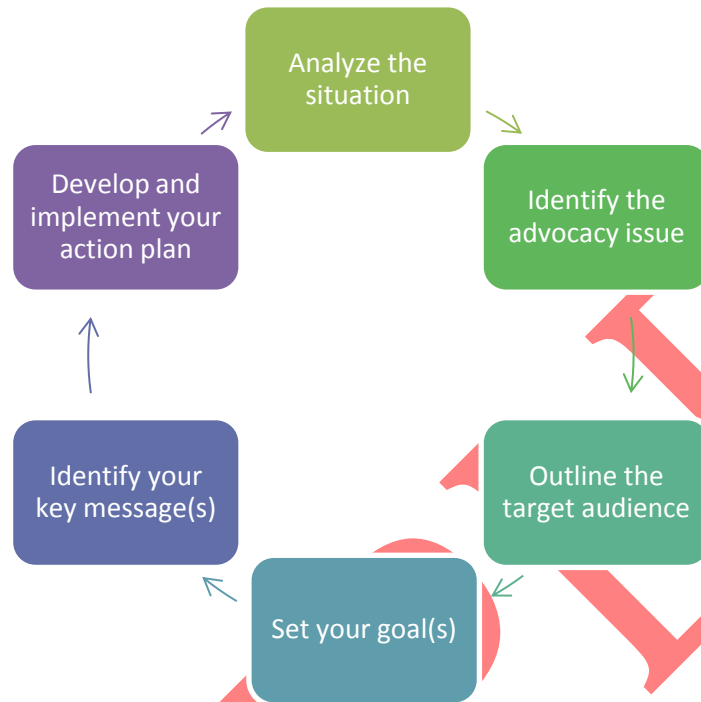
1. Outline to participants that they will be developing an action plan for your project which was explained to the group earlier (or alternatively the example advocacy campaign which is outlined on page #9).
2. Participants will continue to work in their same group.
3. Give each group an Action Planning worksheet and ask them to work through the activity together (25 minutes)
4. As participants are working in their groups, walk around to see if they have any questions.
5. As a large group discuss how each group worked through the planning process. Did they experience any challenges? (5 minutes).

Learning Outcomes for this Module

After completing this module, participants should:

1. *Recognize the difference between being an advocate versus a volunteer;*
2. *Understand the importance to advocating for their own rights and the rights of their peers;*
3. *Be able to identify and articulate the key message(s) of an advocacy campaign;*
4. *Have ideas for advocacy tools they would like to use in the future; and*
5. *Know the steps you need to take to develop and implement an advocacy plan.*

Action Planning Worksheet



1. Identify the advocacy issue (*What must change?*)

A large, empty rounded rectangular box for writing the answer to question 1.

2. Outline the target audience (*Who is affected by the issue? Who do you need to convince?*)

[Empty rounded rectangular box for notes]

3. Set your goal(s)

[Empty rounded rectangular box for notes, containing a large red 'SAMPLE' watermark]

4. Identify the key message(s) (*What does your target audience need to hear?*)



SAMPLE

5. Advocacy tools (*Which advocacy tools will you use to influence your target audience? How will you effectively use these tools? How can you make sure your target audience receives your message and acts on it?*)

SAMPLE

6. Key implementers (*Who are your partners? What is everyone's role?*)



7. Target evaluation and timelines (*How will you monitor and evaluate the progress of your campaign? What is the timeline?*)

