

Willing Participants: Recruiting and Retaining Youth In Programs



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Disclaimer

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And A Little About You...

- Name
- Name of organization
- Curriculum you are implementing
- Your setting(s)
- How the card selected represents one current strategy for recruitment or retention



(3)

Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to;

- Identify commonly used strategies to recruit and retain youth in programs
- Assess current recruitment and retention efforts using a root cause analysis technique
- identify strategies for improving recruitment and retention efforts; and
- develop a draft recruitment or retention plan.



(4)

Defining RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

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Definitions

- **Recruitment** is the process of attracting, screening, identifying, and selecting appropriate participants for your project.

- **Retention** refers to the efforts used to keep participants in your project.



(6)

R&R Plans

A **recruitment plan** involves knowing who your potential youth are and how to reach them.

A **retention plan** involves creating a sense of community, shared norms, and safety.

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Recruitment and Retention

A well-thought-out and integrated recruitment and retention plan is critical to enabling projects to maximize their impact on youth.

[8]

Recruitment and Retention

To be successful, we must actively compete for youth's time and attention, and that retention is ongoing, active recruitment.

[9]

Reasons Youth Don't Get Involved

- No one asked them
- Don't know how to become involved
- Lack of time
- Feel they can't make a commitment

(10)

Reasons Youth Don't Get Involved

- Family or job commitment
- Lack of interest in the issue
- Don't know what they will gain
- Lack of transportation or other support
- Don't think it's cool

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Reasons Youth Do Get Involved

- Learn more about the issue
- Join friends who are participants
- Spend free time more productively
- Meet other teens

(12)

Reasons Youth Do Get Involved

- Desire to achieve success
- Gain status among peers
- Know they can make a difference

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Challenges of Recruitment and Retention ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

(14)

Root Cause Analysis

The purpose of a **root cause analysis** is to discover the underlying cause of a problem, so we can focus our efforts on treating the cause, rather than just the symptoms.



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Root Cause Analysis

1. Start by defining the problem.
2. Analyze the causes using a visual map.
3. Analyze the causes by asking, "Why is this happening?" as many times as it takes to get to the root of the problem.



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Root Cause Analysis: Modeling



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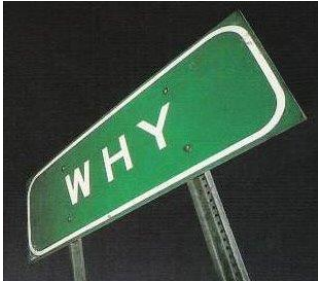
Root Cause Analysis: Challenges of Recruitment and Retention

Large Group Brainstorming

- What are your current recruitment challenges?
- What are your current retention challenges?

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Root Cause Analysis: Activity



[19]

Root Cause Analysis: Debriefing



[20]

Exploring Strategies
OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES

[21]

Overcoming Challenges: Small Group Activity

- You will be divided into groups of 4 or 5 participants.
- In your groups, brainstorm as many strategies as possible to address the challenge assigned.
- Be prepared to report out and discuss with the large group.

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Overcoming Challenges: Small Group Activity Debriefing



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Strategies for Recruitment

1. Think about why a young person would want to get involved.
2. Reach young people through the organizations and institutions they frequent.
 - School
 - Place of worship
 - Community centers
 - Department of Health, Social Services, Parks & Recreation, and Juvenile Justice

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Strategies for Recruitment

3. Don't just recruit young people directly; also recruit young people through the adults in their lives.
 - Attend parent night at the school
 - Back-to-school packet
 - Attend community events
 - Provide information to school staff
 - Appeal to state agencies, such as Department of Social Services, to recruit youth in foster care

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Strategies for Recruitment

4. Be specific and concrete in your recruitment message.
5. Don't think of recruitment as a one-shot deal.
6. Recruit youth in pairs or groups.
7. Use media that appeal to young people including video, slides, text messages, and music.

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Strategies for Recruitment

8. Produce a printed brochure sharing with young people and others why and how to get involved.
9. Participate in large community events.
10. Involve young people.

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What Does the Research Say?

Recruitment Strategies	Low RRT	High RRT
Post fliers at school*	90%	64%
Outreach to parents	76%	67%
Outreach to social services in area	59%	56%
Outreach to schools	86%	90%
Ask youth to recruit for program	95%	85%
Provide transportation	51%	64%

RRT= Recruitment and Retention

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Conley, Henderson, & Hynes (2011)

What Else Does the Research Say?

Project Characteristics	Low RRT	High RRT
Offer work-related opportunities	41%	74%
Most staff members had a college degree	52%	88%

RRT= Recruitment and Retention

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Conley, Henderson, & Hynes (2011)

Strategies for Retention

1. Provide young people with opportunities to lead and grow in the program.
2. Engage young people in the design and implementation process of the project.
3. Link youth to outside leadership or community service opportunities.

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Strategies for Retention

4. Foster a sense of community.
5. Provide developmentally appropriate incentives if approved by your project officer.
6. Keep staff informed about and connected to youth.
7. Incorporate family engagement.
8. Capitalize on technology.

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What Does the Research Say?

Retention Strategies	Low RRT	High RRT
Track attendance	95%	100%
Pay youth to attend	23%	35%
Offer incentives	81%	90%
Conduct outreach to youth who stop coming	79%	80%
Sanction youth who do not attend regularly	45%	40%
Allow youth to change their schedule	71%	78%
Offer leadership opportunities	92%	88%

RRT= Recruitment and Retention

Conley, Henderson, & Hynes (2011)

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What Else Does the Research Say?

- Projects were more likely to be full early in the project year (successful recruitment) if they hired older youth to work at the project.
- Projects were more likely to be full later in the project year (successful retention) if they
 - Maintained separate space for older youth (high school age) instead of mixing elementary/middle- and high school-aged youth;
 - Provided case management to link youth to other services; and/or
 - Combined career programming and social programming (mentoring, social skills building, or service learning).

Conley, Henderson, & Hynes (2011)

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Small Group Activity
DEVELOPING A PLAN

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The Importance of Developing a Plan

- Capture all recruitment and retention efforts in your organization.
- Identify best practices and innovative approaches to recruit and retain targeted youth.
- Help your organization to use resources wisely and sustain your efforts.
- Use the plan as a living document, which is always current.

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Developing a Plan


- In your groups, complete the handout keeping in mind
 - the scenario provided;
 - Establish a goal;
 - Identify action items & activities to reach goal; and
 - the reality of working with youth.

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CLOSURE

(37)


Reflection




What from today **squared** with what you already thought?



What from today made you view something from a **new angle**?



What new learning **completed a circle** of thought?



Write down an **action step** or a new approach you want to take.

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Resources

Family and Youth Services Bureau. (2012). *Recruitment and Retention of Teens for State and Tribal PREP Programs Webinar*. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/recruitment-tpp-20120619>

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Cooney, S.M., Small, S.A., & O'Connor, C. (2007). *Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Participants in Prevention Programs*. http://whatworks.uwex.edu/attachment/whatworks_02.pdf

Fields, N. I. (2011). *Strategies for 4-H Youth Development Educators on Outreach Programming*. http://www.agnr.umd.edu/FileExchange/NFields_Strategies_for_Outreach.pdf

Gillard, A. & Witt, P. (2008). *Recruitment and Retention in Youth Programs*. http://faculty.wiu.edu/P-Schlag/articles/Recruitment_and_Retention_in_Youth_Programs.pdf

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Resources

Harvard Family Research Project. (2004). *Moving Beyond the Barriers: Attracting and Sustaining Youth Participation in Out-of-School Time Programs*.
<http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/moving-beyond-the-barriers-attracting-and-sustaining-youth-participation-in-out-of-school-time-programs>

Kennedy, E., Wilson, B., Valladares, S., & Bronte-Tinkew, J. (2007). *Improving Attendance and Retention in Out-of-School Time Programs*.
http://www.childtrends.org/files/child_trends-2007_06_19_RB_AttendandReten.pdf

The Points of Light Foundation. *Tips for Recruitment of Youth Volunteers*.
http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/POLF/vol_recruit_youth_pol.pdf

Thank You!

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