

Me as a Tree Activity

OVERVIEW

This activity helps young people begin to consider, talk and learn about themselves and/or each other. The *Me as a Tree* activity is ideal to use to build group cohesion and facilitate a group discussion.

How does it work?

- 1) Ask youth to draw or paint themselves as a tree. Let them know that everyone can draw a tree, but everyone's trees will be unique. Allow for flexibility in that, if some youth want to draw a flower or plant, they can. Encourage youth to think about what the tree would look like and what might be around it. By representing oneself as a tree, it enables the youth to talk about themselves in a more abstract and 'safe' way that may be more comfortable for them. You can also discuss the diversity in the group by pointing out all of the unique trees, and how diversity is a positive characteristic. Encourage youth to draw the tree without thinking too much about it.
- 2) After youth have completed their drawings of themselves as a tree, facilitate a discussion. Sample questions that can be used include:
 - Please tell us about your tree.
 - What kind of tree is it?
 - Your trunk appears... (adjective – solid, strong, small, colorful)
 - Your tree has lots of... (objects - roots, branches, leaves, animals, fruit). Can you tell us about that?
 - If you gave a title to this drawing, what would you call it?
 - It looks like your tree is in a (season – winter, spring, fall, summer) scene. Why did you decide this?
 - You used a lot of colors to draw your tree. Why did you choose these colours?
 - How do you feel about your tree?
- 3) If youth are comfortable, have them share their tree with each other or in small groups.
- 4) With permission from youth, you can also use their tree drawings to post around the program location (or take pictures) which can be used to be presented in a newsletter, on a program website, or social media.



GOOD TO KNOW

- You can adapt the complexity of the instructions based on the age of youth participants in your program. For example, this program has made me feel.....and then they draw themselves as a tree.
- You can adapt this activity to any objective based on the topic or focus of your program (e.g., Me as an Animal, Me as a Place). Instead of drawing a tree, draw a flower. On each petal have the youth write something positive about themselves.



Learn more:

- Taken from Coholic, D. (2010) Arts Activities for Children and Young People in Need Helping Children to Develop Mindfulness, Spiritual Awareness and Self-Esteem. England: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- <http://www.kidsplayandcreate.com/me-tree-self-esteem-character-building-arts-and-crafts-project-for-kids/>

